

The Light Representation of Religion and Power in Sound

*Toufic Kerbage*¹

A topic seemingly remote to the European continent and intrinsic to the Arabian Peninsula, a few hundred kilometers away from the Mediterranean Levant, it regulates what is «neo-mythically» alleged permitted and not permitted in music-making! From Morocco to the Philippines, hovering like a vaporous ‘Damocles’ sword with controversial issues of the allowed, the feasible, and what is in reality done! The implementation of sacredness in sound mirrors musical-wishes, dreams and nightmares of my «cultural-country-men».

Gregorian Chant, a new sound concept

It is interesting to note that in modern Western music-history books, the debate of the new sounding Gregorian Chant and Ancient Role of Power never occurs; people accept it as an ancient tradition, involving refined listening but without sought criticism or even mention of the influence of the «Divine Power», invested in the «officiant» and its impact on the musical tradition. This or that Chant is supposed to be an ancient heritage, which represents the sounds of a religious, remote and resurrected past! In reality it is a neo-Gregorian tradition with neo-Gregorian sound aesthetics, interpretation and performance². My aim is to show how the lack of Church’s power is inherent to the transformed sound. The reshaping of sound from a tradition that for many centuries «officiated» not only the Divine, but also Man’s power on earth, and maybe the Cosmos.

In a way we live in Quantum parallel worlds, where topics, themes and issues resemble each other and accompany each other, in a different time scale, in different geographical

¹ Dean (C.N.S.M), Associate professor (L.A.U). Email: Toufic@Kerbage.org, toufickerbage@gmail.com

² Pop groups using paraphernalia relevant to that *époque* are not the concern of this paper.

localities, very closely; without that any of each of the protagonists asks oneself if there is at all a link, a resemblance, a déjà-vu.

The «Levant», an aged and nearly obsolete term, still lives in the musical relationships of the geographical area that held the same name. «Our» dream and nightmare, in this part of the world, is the «Rise and Fall of Arabic Music» without ever being concerned that we are actually experiencing the rise and fall of our two centuries old «Entity»: Arabism. As per opposition to the Ottoman Empire and culture, neo-Arab political entity rose two centuries ago and with it “our” rehabilitated musical entity. Thousands of years after the establishing of Monotheistic religion, the Semitic credo remained: «Read Well Your Text, Interpret Well the Law... Enounce well your words, if not the Wrath of God will fall upon you.»

Re-birth

The first renewed «revolution» that could be re-considered Arab in music (around 1800) is in the texts of old and new songs and improvisations, which changed from Turkish and Persian into Arabic. With it came the «sanctification» of good and immutable pronunciation and the respect of the metrics of this «last» Semitic language. In so doing the inherent motto and credo of the Language of Shem, lives on linked to a «holy» issue; an overall foundation for understanding Middle Eastern music in its entirety.

Concerns

Generally speaking, the core of this paper is not the religious music of the Semitic Archetype, but in the factual yet complex reality of the direct link of power, wealth and the musical parameters of the Arabs, in opposition and parallel to the same very delicately «hidden» Western sound realities. The emergence of the «soft» and «disturbance-avoiding»

- Neo-Gregorian Chant versus the «out-spoken» and «frank-sounding» Orthodox Christian and Muslim Chants;
- the older tendencies of musical officiating in Baroque/Classical courts;
- the romantic composers’ explosions of individuality symbolizing the democratic man, or the representations of the «sound of politics».

Noise versus noise-less societies

Asian *versus* European, flagrant versus polite music attitudes, form a continuum. America stands beyond this duality as it simultaneously embraces both antagonisms: noise-full society combined with polite attitude in the bi-presence of classical music idiom and Jazz. Former Islamic Chant, flamboyant and nearly explosive, is a flagrant representation of the believer's love to God, versus the new milder form of chanting linked to a stronger act of group unity? Isn't (neo-) Gregorian chant the seeking for sound-representations of a modern reality, a noise-less realm or haven, a typically European ideal of sound-reality and «Social- Experience»?

The modern Middle East merging with its antipode the New World has belly dancing or Las Vegas shows become polite-vulgarity?

All archetypal forms metamorphosing in order to fit in a re-created society; a dilution of Western hierarchic concepts into Asian mass-populization. A King + friends concept metamorphosed into an Emperor + people concept?

Neo-Arabism

The emergence of «Arabic» music accompanied the emergence of the Arabic nation (no such concept as neo- or post- is present in the Semite's or common Levantine's cultural-brain structure, somehow the daily usage of «godly epithets» has contaminated the human, therefore we have «also» become extemporal.

Music in Egypt finally got its Arabic texts at the time of the Khedive Ismail (1863). Accompanying him to Constantinople for his subtle and diplomatic meetings with the Sultan, the names of two composer singers prevail, Mohammad Osman and Abdo el-Hamouli. They represent the establishment and fulfillment of the neo-Arabic³ song! This,

³ Although useful, the term neo-Arabic is not common or used. The term Arab *per se* is a quite flexible notion; in the Middle Ages (11th to 14th century) Arab-speaking socio-political anthropologists gave that term a meaning of the kind: non-sedentary Arab-speaking person. Obviously after that time, Arab identifications fell into the realms of cultural prestige, as the ruling dynasties in the East were mostly of Turkic and

for a European music-historian and even listener seems to be a forgery, as songs cannot be considered music *per se*.

Vocal chanting is music, and I would like to add: «it is an instrumental music concept». The proceeding of vocal melodies in Levantine-Arabic concert-suites (or Macro-forms) use a very large fan of vocal emission parameters and sound-paraphernalia which are not of the realm of the «instrumentally- simple» or vocally-automatic:

A- *Timbre wise*

- Reminding the rubbing of a bow on a string
- An extremely soft *vibrato*; which is not the *vibrato of* Opera technique

B- Technically:

- Ornamenting that is infinitesimally small and «plucked-instrument-like» going around a note with a *plectrum* in a slow languishing or flat-*legatissimo* manner. (check Mozart's *a la Turca* instrumental mannerisms)
- Fluty notes (*timbral* characteristic) in opposition to *legato* ornament groupings
- A very slow *vibrato*.
- Mordent-like «quavering» or trill; equivalent to a very short *vibrato* with *attacca*.

As mentioned, the vocal-instrument-imitations are numerous and there is more to instrumentality in Arab vocalism, than in the usual European music context with its variety of Chant-like, horn-resembling, or string-technique inspired theme and melody making for instruments. In every first movement (*Allegro*) of a Beethoven symphony, there are at least a few solo-instrument interferences in theme-like manner (in bridge-like sections) within the development section. His 3rd symphony lives the fight of a very «horn-like» theme with

Persian descent. The re-awakening of Arab identity saw the light in the 19th century nearly at the same time with the Greek one.

its own «cardiac arrests». The 5th is again an illustration of duality between the rhythmic and the melodic. The 9th or Choral symphony, which is introduced in the first movement by explosions on the timpani becoming the first thematic material of a work titled «choral»! And then is followed by movements that include a proliferation of choral-melodic material and themes in an inexhaustible way like an *Ouroboros* (a serpent or dragon swallowing its own tail).

Theme and thematic material in European

Music making is very akin vocal music, as the archetype *par excellence* lies in the proto-Christian precepts of «group-singing». The first thematic-motif of Beethoven's fifth symphony, probably the most rhythmical of melodic subjects, is one of the causes why this symphony is a hit? It presents a revolution in the rhythmical-sense of the thematic material, (which in fact is an anathematic one!).

Mozart's concertos a few decades before, do suggest many a sing-able part. Tchaikovsky's 5th and 6th symphonies have themes and melodic motifs that are all sing-able. Surely the development of some of those vocally thematic sentences become principally and totally an instrumental matter, but the first, original, archetypal⁴ character of a theme is one of a vocally sing-able material. In other words, Psalming or psalm-making has never left the Westerner's mind.

Void Vocals and Magical Power

In its most refined way, vocal heights are reached supposedly with the Mawwāl and Layālī⁵, sometimes sounding like the magical incantations of Pharaonic chant with vowels prolonged *ad infinitum*, expecting the moon and stars to answer one's call. *Ya Leyl Ya Eyn*, O Night O Eye, the typical void or «tralala» syllables imploring «Night's Eye», Eyn-Leyl,

⁴ The word «archetypal» is used in psychology in many ways; in this context it only means “very typical of”, or «prototypical model of».

⁵ In its own way, the *Khyal* of Hindustani music is full of those syllables (void of meaning), either slow, hollow and ghostly, or linearly complex, sinuous overcharged ornaments, or as an imitation to the virtuoso plucking of a string instrument!

the Moon. Imploring Enlil the Babylonian God; the Hebrew's *Aylanu*, or lament cry at the end of some psalms shares the same sounds.

Eyn-Líl or Oi Linos ?

Is it a metamorphosed lament to the divinity *Linos* of the Ancient Greeks; the music-god son of Apollo and one of the Muses (Kalliope or Terpsichore). Linos was killed while teaching music and literature to Orpheus and to his brother the turbulent and unruly Heracles (although excellent in physical feats, he was a failure in music making). One day, he made too many mistakes in music class. Admonished by Linos, the young Hercules was angered and threw an object at his tutor, depending on the version, it was «a thrust of lyre» or «blows of stool»; Linos was killed on the spot.

From the Trumpet to the Flute; Beauty or Taboo Conceptions

Salomon of Israel and Hiram of Tyre, two great kings and great poet-singers in the grand Babylonian tradition. In Salomon's grand temple of Jerusalem (built by Hiram his ally and previously a close friend of King David) «And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar. And when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also, and the trumpets, together with the instruments of David, King of Israel ... with the exception of the cymbals, generally speaking, restricted to harps and lutes. It was only on certain special occasions that there was an accompaniment of flutes...» (Chronicles 29:27⁶).

The instruments of David are the stringed instruments or harps. Whilst for Hiram, the trumpets sounded in the temple of Melkart, at the offering of their most precious child, covering the wailing and crying sounds during the sacrificial ritual. In The Book, the Archangel will appear blowing in a trumpet at the end of Time.

⁶ KEIL. C.F. DELITZSCH. F., D.D. "Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament", in German, 19th cent., tr. English 1864-1992 by Martin, Bolton, Easton, Taylor, Kennedy .

Trumpets and Aesthetical Tolerance

Related to law and to esthetical tolerances, the trumpet incarnates a sound-taboo of the «ridicule» in the Islamic world. The trumpet, although most probably being a very antique war instrument. The term *nafir* in Arabic descends from the root *nafara* meaning: to repugnate. *Nafar* being a «man» as a number in an army, *pion* in French, *pawn* of the chess game; *na* = beware, or this one here + *farr* = ran away, that one there ran away...

Aulos, flute or Này

Athena⁷ had fashioned an instrument with a bone and played on it beautiful tunes, she could not understand why Hera and Afrodite were laughing at her. Looking at herself in the reflection of a river, while playing the instrument, she understood how silly she looked... she threw the cursed instrument away from Olympus (Paradise?) and it fell on earth where a very naïve creature picked it up, the faun Marsyas⁸. The Phrygians were so happy with his tunes that Apollo became jealous and challenged him in a contest; he wins and orders his flaying. Shepherds and their instruments had to exit the ‘civilized’ scene of Mankind.

String instruments belonged to gods and woodwinds to the fauns or shepherds? We are at the dawn of the separation of «Court» music and «peasant» music. The great Sun King Louis 14th will re-introduce the musicians of the stables and woodwind instruments usually only used in relation to horse training. By reshaping them and ameliorating their manufacturing, they became more befitting his magnificent court.

The Này or reed-flute

It remains the most respected of woodwinds in the Levant. Representing the Divine Breath for the medieval *Sûfi-s* (Islamic Sophists), it came from a very antagonizing past. At the advent of Christian Byzantium and later in Islamic Syria the instrument saw an alarming

⁷ In other versions it is Medea who plays the flute and throws it away because Eros laughs at her looks...

⁸ The naivety of the character is probably linked to the looks of a flute player while playing.

decline⁹. The great reminiscences of the *ambubae* or Syrian women of the Roman Empire, who had their national identity confused with the name of that instrument: *Ambûb* is the «reed-tube» or «reed-flute» is obviously an acknowledgment that the women of the Province of Syria played so well the reed-flute. In the first periods of monotheisms, the taboo of taboos fell upon the instrument as a phallic symbol, but it could not be taken away from the shepherds of Mesopotamia and the Middle East as a whole. It became in the medieval period the instrument *par excellence* in all *Sûfi* (Sophist) schools of philosophy, arts and sciences; it held a revered place in the ceremonies of those schools, transcending its role to the Divine Soul, «the not contestable». The taboo linked to that instrument is no more the link to “grimaces” and phallic rituals; but to the Divine breath!

In 1920, with the Westernization of the new Turkish republic emerging from the debris of the once magnanimous Ottoman Empire, a law was enforced against all *Sûfi* manifestations. Their colleges and reunion places were closed down; even their clothing habits and music-dance rituals were prohibited. Since then, the once responsible to revivify the Divine Breath, the *Nây* (*Ney* in Turkish) have been experiencing not only a decline, but an extreme agony! This instrument is still played by a handful of master instrumentalists but it has become an outsider to any concert or performance scene. It has become a symbol of obsolete power, or parallel the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

Orpheus, Wailing and the Breaking of Power Systems

Another semi-god or son of king was illustrious in Antiquity for his wailing and sad singing. His beloved had been bitten by a snake, not in the best circumstances; she was fleeing his own envious and flirtous brother (Aristaeus). Orpheus is most reknowned for music-making and in fact uses it to break laws; as he manages to make all Gods and nymphs weep or surrender to his music making and sad singing. Directed by their magnanimity (in reality jealousy of human kind) the gods who listened to him offered to

⁹ Edersheim, *The Temple and its Services*, p. 56 (1874); he adds, quoting Leyrer (art. «Music» in Herzog's Encyd.) "The flute was used in Alexandria to accompany the hymns at the love-feasts of the early Christians, up to the year 190, when Clement of Alexandria introduced the harp in its place." See "*The Psalms in the jewish Church*" by Rev. W.O.E. Oesterley p.114

fulfill his wishes... He managed to soften the heart of Hades and Persephone rulers of the Under-world. A poet, a musician and in some versions, a prophet; Orpheus is a figure that can never be erased from the history of Western music-making. Around the *Renaissance* he incarnates «the new man, less subservient and a power questioning figure!».

Speculations coalescing Genesis stories with Orphic myth

Adam and Eve, subdued by a snake / Orpheus, and Eurydice's parallel. Eve becomes treacherous after an encounter with a snake. Eve and Adam are offered life in an un-heavenly place, Earth. Orpheus and Eurydice are separated! Eurydice is bitten by a snake, she goes to the Underworld. *Orbhao* is an ancient Sanskrit root for orphan, or Orpheus.

Typical to Arab music making until 1860 Orpheus represents a middle figure between Dionysian and Apollonian music-making. In the Levant a strong Arab-European alliance is born against the Ottoman rule, then and only then, we (the Levantines) adopt finally a fully Apollonian style. Songs, pieces, instrumental introductions and interludes are fashioned by one person according to his or her own fantasy and creation!

Refusing the aloofness of a Royal Court, Jazz, Show-biz and pop songs prove to a certain extent that the «brigades of the poor», coupled with the «celebrities of wealth», through money injections and transfusions, achieve Aristocracy. A rule or principle that can easily be applied to the *Renaissance of Arabian music* of the 1800, as it was not aimed to satisfy a group of initiated, but society as a whole.

Wail Back to Linus, Ay Lànu; Dumûzi or Adôni

The Illiad¹⁰ presents us with a type of song or dirge called Linos. The foremost modern version of recounts about Linus says that «in Greek mythology, the word/name Linos represents the personification of lamentation; the name derives from the ritual cry *ailinon*, the refrain of a dirge»¹¹.

¹⁰ The Illiad (xviii. 570-72)

¹¹ «Linus.»: *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

One of the recounts, coming from Argos, claims that Linus being the son of Apollo and Psamathe; her father, King of Argos was very angry with her union to Appolo. She (of fright of her father) forgets their child unprotected (outside the house), it was found killed by the king's sheepdogs, or torn into bits by stray dogs. Apollo avenges him by sending an evil spirit *Poine* (Vengeance) to punish, therefore kills the Argive children, or by snatching children from their mothers¹². A festival day was instituted where dogs were sacrificed. Mourning for Linus started thus. *O wail*, a second vengeance will befall the Argive, a plague will infest Argos, it was sent by Coroebus son of the king of Phrygia, supporter of Troy (of love to Cassandra, and fights Ajax who aimed at raping her).

A Destiny Shared by Many a God

«Women sit by the gate weeping for Tammuz, or they offer incense to Baal on roof-tops and plant pleasant plants. These are the very features of the Adonis legend: which is celebrated on flat roof-tops on which sherds sown with quickly germinating green salading are placed, Adonis gardens ... the climax is loud lamentation for the dead god.¹³»

Dumuzi / Tammouz, his death and wailing happen in the beginning of the summer's heat and desolation; he is the end of nature to be reborn the year after. Nature re-emerges from the burning summer, to be plowed again, to be sown again. Although surrounded with very different mythological and religious recounts: Adonis from Cyprus-Phoenicia, Dumuzi from Mesopotamia, Osiris from Egypt and Jesus of Nazareth share in our calendar one common fate, a yearly Resurrection.

¹² HAMILTON, edith; *Mythology*. Little, Brown & Company in 1942, reprint 1998...

¹³ BURLERT, Walter, *Die Griechische Religion die archaischen und klassischen Epoche*, in the series *Die Religionen der menschheit* vol.15; W. Kolhammer Verlag, Stuttgart 1977. translated by John Raffan, *Greek Religion*, chapter: The Remainder of the Pantheon, part 3.4 "Foreign gods" p 176f; Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Harvard university Press 1985

Mesopotamia remains the land of laments as a yearly ten day lamentations for Hussein¹⁴ the grandson of the Prophet is practiced until this day today. He was known for his beauty (as his name suggests); he shares an ill fated death, with “no immediate resurrection” or at least not a yearly one.

Inanna’s curse. Sentenced to the Netherworld

«The union of Dumuzi with the goddess Inanna (goddess of Heaven) was an unhappy marriage. ... his life ended in tragedy and then, miraculously, in triumph. In these Sumerian songs, Inanna went to the lands of the dead after their union». As she wanted to rule there also, but the goddess of death was not impressed by her, she condemns her to death and the god Enki gives her life back, but no one leaves the realms of the netherworld without leaving a substitute there. Inanna is allowed to leave the netherworld with a company of Ghouls (a reminder of Eurydice); at each encounter with a protagonist or replacement god, the Ghouls would be all rejoicing and she would be all sad as the gods really adore her and she cannot send them to the netherworld. She finally arrives to her own village/kingdom and finds her husband Dumuzi enthroned, ruling and dressed like a king instead of mourning her absence. She gets furious at him and presents him to be her substitute in the netherworld¹⁵..., she had him sent in her place. But he did not die, and he did return for half of each year, while his sister went in his stead.”¹⁶ These Sumerian songs are some of the oldest love songs in the world, and Dumuzi’s death and resurrection long overwritten and forgotten by a new religion.

The Gift of Canaan: In the «The Legacy of Canaan»¹⁷ the Virgin Anat¹⁸, re-establishes the reign of Baal, after a short replacement by El (an older divinity and formerly of the

¹⁴ *Āshûrâ* is a full ten days ritual of lamentations that continues within a very big community of Islam, the Shiites. It is in a way the Passion of Hussein, his sufferings and unjust (according to Shiite Islam) killing or martyrdom, while reclaiming the Caliphate or throne of Commandership of his grandfather the Prophet.

¹⁵ Samuel Noah Kramer; *The Poetry of Sumer*. University of California Press, Apr 1, 1979

¹⁶ HRANFNKLL Haraldsson: “The Religious Right’s Perversion of Sexuality and Marriage”; Politicus usa 21/6/2011.

¹⁷ GRAY. John ; copyright E.J.Brill, Leiden, Netherlands 1957

highest hierarchy). Baal was slowly taking his place, in the same manner as Osiris (Egyptian resurrecting god) will overrun the older hierarchies of Amon-Ra, «the father»?

«The self-laceration of the priests of Baal depicted by the Old Testament with Elijah on the Carmel, are inflicted rituals that announce the end of the drought and the re-appearance of fertility, thunder, rain..»; in the month of Eyloul/September/Enlil... after all the god Baal had invented a new gift to offer the Virgin Anat, Thunder.

The rain stops in the Mount Lebanon in the month of May to reappear exactly each year with a thunderstorm on the night of the 14th of September. It is the signal for the re-discovering of Christ's cross in Jerusalem by the envoys of Helena (mother of Byzantine Emperor Constantine); the signal was that when the cross was found, a fire should be ignited on every hill top, from Jerusalem to Constantinople (over a thousand kilometers)... in the same manner as the god Baal used his thunder to ignite trees on the highest hills of the area at the same moment as the thunderstorms on that eve prove it untill today; or is it out of jealousy that he makes the rain fall on that specific date to put the fires out. The Lebanese continue the tradition of Helena, Constantine and the discovery of the Cross by igniting big bonfires in their house gardens.

Moments, before the lament

Dumuzi, will disappear in September, Eyloul of each year (Eyloul is September of the Zodiac-Arabic calendar). Eynlil, the moon god, god of laments! Dumuzi's astrological sign is Aries, end of March, Spring or the beginning of the year, his Resurrection. In Mesopotamia more than four thousand years ago, a dialogue between Inanna, goddess of heaven and Utu, her brother, the sun god sounds like that:

¹⁸ *Btlt 'nt*, «the Virgin Anat », (*Btlt 'nt*; suggestion for pronunciation: Batuleta 'Aanat or 'ant)

*Brother, after you've brought my bridal
sheet to me,*

Who will go to bed with me?

Utu, who will go to bed with me?

*“Sister, your bridegroom will go to bed
with you.*

He who was born from a fertile womb,

*He who was conceived on the scared
marriage throne,*

*Dumuzi, the shepherd! He will go to bed
with you...*

This was a natural marriage, a marriage that celebrated fertility and sexuality rather than criminalising it, not the “perverted parodies” that is Abrahamic marriage¹⁹

The Boat of Heaven / Is full of eagerness like the young moon.

My untilled land lies fallow. As for me, Inanna, Who will plow my vulva?

Who will plow my high field? Who will plow my wet ground?

As for me, the young woman, Who will plow my vulva? Who will station the ox there?

Who will plow my vulva?”

Dumuzi replied: “Great Lady, the king will plow your vulva?

I, Dumuzi the King, will plow your vulva.”

Inanna: “Then plow my vulva, man of my heart! Plow my vulva!

Out of this marriage came the life that was celebrated each spring.

The Sacred Wedding

Inanna and Dumuzi’s meeting or wedding is a sacred one, as much as Solomon’s and Bilqis, queen of Saba. Including the love texts and recounts of the Canticum in the “Holy Book” had been slow in the beginning then the fusion of this concept with God and the Jewish people as the two lovers became imminent. The same applies to Christ and the Church. Yet the texts of the Canticum remain far too lustful. Although not as openly lustful as the Sumerian texts, they are obviously inspired by them, refurbished with more elegance, less redundant and by far non repetitious.

«Canaanite, if not Sumerian, poems have now been shown to have been the basis of some of the Psalms. In a world in which polytheism had not been the victim of

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

wholesale genocide by monotheists,...»²⁰; Sumerian language was part of the curriculum of school courses of the Ancient Near East²¹.

Laments are therefore an old issue of the «confused woman-idol» who out of vengeance sends clumsily her humble consort to the land of the dead without realising, at first that his absence will cause the death of all on earth. Inana realizes that her vengeance should be damped. Dumuzi is then summoned to put a substitute for a part of his dwelling in the netherworld: «You (Dumuz), half the year! Your sister (Gestinanna), half the year!» Meanwhile, Inanna repenting for her anger, mourned his absence six months, each year.

Wailing for Adonis, Jealousy between Women or the Demon Boar

It is true that wailing is linked to Adonis's worship as is shown in previous quotes. Adonis, was the lover of both Persephone (his nanny) and Aphrodite. As they fought for his love, Calliope on behalf of Zeus orders that he should spend one third of the year with each one of them and would be free the third part of the year. But, the winter lover, Adonis, was killed by Persephone in revenge as he had chosen to spend the third part of the year with Aphrodite.

Catharsis: the Killing of the Boar?

Was the lament done as a cathartic syndrome for persons, or was it done for goods that had disappeared? Somewhere between Mesopotamia, Syria and the «two Lebanons», agriculture was discovered, invented. This invention gave them some comfort, but the people dwelling there did not know of the new animal that would appear the boar for not saying the pig; the dragon, the devil? This animal coming from the Far East devoured the roots of their cherished planted food... they had not yet developed a method of planting that would make it hard for this “monster” to uproot their plants.

Contra-conclusions

A - In a very surprising book about «Our British Ancestors», concludes: the fiction of Adonis being killed by the boar means the diminution of the sun's light in winter.”

²⁰ HRANFNKELL Haraldsson, *opus citat*

²¹ KRAMER. Samuel Noah; *The Biblical Song of Songs and the Sumerian Love Song*.

B- The latest reference²² on the matter concludes, «the special function of the Adonis legend is as an opportunity for the unbridled expression of emotion in the strictly circumscribed life of women, in contrast to the rigid order of polis and family with the official women's festivals in honour of Demeter.»

Il canto Romano, un canto pieno di melismi

Gregorian Chant, an Old Tradition or a Modern Re-adaptation: «Void syllables», are at the core of all Middle Eastern singing: Pharaonic incantations, Jewish-Babylonian demon-ousting, laments for Dumuzi, Enlil and Adhoni, all confirm the inherent sacredness of such manifestation of sounds. Le Chant à Notes Pleines, akin to «le plain chant» as Gregorian Chant is called in French; the controversial concept of the latter being «flat, simple, plain» should in a sense be reconsidered. This is the Chant of a powerful Church. Long time lost in Western art-singing, re-discovered in the early 20th century, Plain Chant has recovered some of its shine, in a very flattened way, more owing to modern society's demand for quiescent-contemplation than to the so-called term «plain», as musicologists of the modern era do not want to re-examine their understanding of the sounds of a Church that was at the centre of political power. (The same applies to Islamic Chant.)

A Re-discovery

As for prototype to this kind of singing or chanting were a group of monks in the convent of Solesmes “discovered” about a hundred years ago. We should wonder whether these monks, as remote from reality/ the late romantic period, did really keep the ancient traditions in chanting as they were! Surely nothing denies or annuls this concept, but unfortunately nothing confirms it neither. (Other musicologists claim there are links to the chanting of the farmers/fishermen of Saintonge area facing the Atlantic). Visually, Christian art can definitely be very violent in the depiction of crucifixions and other ordeals through which the Saints went through, but this does not prove that the sound-arts linked to these abject scenes of torture cannot produce soft sounds! The old central Arabian Christianity or Nestorianism, later metamorphosed or fused into Islam, had never accepted the fact that God's favorite was tortured on a cross.

²² BURKERT. Walter; *opus citat.*

Monk-fighters and Baritones:

The proto-Christian rites of Northern Syria (called Jacobites and which differentiate themselves entirely from Nestorianism) were held by non-armed warrior-monks! The Maronite church of Lebanon has long defended its inheritance from this church and its rites. The monks of the Western Fertile Crescent (Northern: Lebanon, Syria) were trained unarmed soldier to defend their convents from Byzantine Imperial Theocratic dominion. In other words those monks were something like martial arts adepts, and their rites are «earth-shaking mantra-like basses»! Far from the everlasting melodic lines of the Byzantine, but close enough to those officiating Buddhist mantras?

A Difference

The extremely melismatic singing of the Roman Catholic Chant opposes in its essence the absolute “psalm-related” syllabic chant of the Easterners, although it is not very different in its softness, from the «blissful» sounds of the Copts of Egypt! If so, it is then the esthetical result of the at-that-time new concepts of modesty: Christianity and its links to rural Syria/Aramaea; a non-Royal and non-Imperial rite.

More on Empty Notes

Alpharabius (Alfaràbi, The Second Master, the First being Aristotle) has an important part on singing with «empty notes», meaning many notes to each syllable! and the singing with «filled notes» or «notes pleines», meaning one syllable to one note, *Plain Chant* as plain as the musicologists want it to be is not a flat, because it is melismatic. It is simple because of the use of one text syllable for one melodic note, in the fashion of a hymn; or it is very complex as in Roman Catholicism and Byzantine Orthodoxy will continue the inheritance of Pharaonic-Babylonian incantation-formulae, or the Greco-Roman Apollonian singing! Also to include to the list of «ancient-tradition-prolongers» is the Islamic Tajwîd (Koran flamboyant reading) from tradition of Constantinople. Becoming the capital of the Ottoman Empire (called Istanbul after 1920) and until the advent of petro-dollars, the influence of Saudi-Arabian Wahabi Islam which opts for a

simpler reading of the holy text (the Koran), one note for one syllable becomes the order of the day²³, as the North Syrian “*memre*” was to the Christians of the fourth century.

Demonology

Now one of the most marked characteristics of all systems of demonology is the use of formulas, incantations and the like, for the purpose of counteracting, or rendering nugatory, the evil machinations of demons ; the number of Babylonian "magic" texts for exorcising demons that have been recovered is very large. (See JASTROW M. *Die Religion Babylonians und Assyriens*, chap xvi)

.... The following is addressed to a demon :

As long as thou dost not stir from the body of the man, the son of his god, ..When thou desirest to fly to the heavens thy wings will refuse (their office). ²⁴

The Jews also had various means of exorcising demons ; among others was that recommended by Rashi : «If a demon hears his name pronounced (repeatedly), each time with a syllable less, he will flee» ; an example which he gives is the name of the demon Shabiri, which had to be called out thus : Shabiri , abiri , biri , ri.²⁵

This scholar proves how a psalm from the Bible is much more efficient for demon ousting than incantation!

²³ A tradition which is not totally new in Islamic Koran chanting, it was also in favor in the Alaouite Kingdom of Morocco as this Islamic entity followed the precepts of one of the first four doctors of religious laws, namely “Malek”. His relation to chant and music-making was as Nestor’s, very rudimentary.

²⁴ WEBER. O. Dämonenbeschwörung bei den Babyloniern und Assyriern, in " Der alte Orient," vii. 4.

²⁵ WEBER. F. fiidischte Theologie auf Grund des Talmud und verwandter Schrifttn, p. 257 (*ref. unclear*).

The Crying Psalms

A Song for Evil Encounters, as Rabbinical literature calls it²⁶ (Psalm 91).

These *psalms* are *cries* against God and against the enemies of Israel: «God Where Are You?»; (or as in psalm 140 «Kyrie ekekraxa»: Lord I call upon you, hear me...).

...the influence of Babylonian thought upon the exiles was, it is well known, very marked; and it is in the highest degree probable that this influence was as strong in the domain of popular demonology as in any other direction²⁷.

The Voyage of Lamentations:

Laments against laments from Jeremiah's to Tyre or Iran, four thousand years ago!

Chaldeans, Persians and Phoenicians copied each other: "the Phoenicians had much intercourse with the Persians; and Persian mercenaries appear to have been employed in the service of the Tyrians" (Ezek.xxvii). «...according to Thucydides(L.8) they (the Phoenicians) were usually employed as interpreters between the Persians and Greeks».

The Sober Tone; Mawwàl or Yà Mawàliya

The highest form of canto in the Levant, after the *muwashshah*, is the *mawwâl*. A complex sonnet form when excellent; and an exquisite singing built with volatile phonemes. These sung texts were «first found» in the Lament that the *jàriyah* (Dame de compagnie) of Yehya bin Khaled al-Barmaki launched when she cried his death publicly by a sung elegiac poem, ending each verse-line by the term "Oh My Lord": *Yà Mawàliya*. These ending words for each verse-line are an elegant deformation of *Ya Mawlàyà*: Ô My Lord, as is custom in Arabic poetry; deform words in order to attain the heart of your public; or replace them with very rich rhymes. Since then, the mid ninth century c.e, a nearly obligatory part of the concert suite in classical Arabic music always include a sing-wailing of a *Mawwâl*. *Mawwâl*-s will become a major song-genre.

²⁶ E.g. SHEBUOTH, 15 b (Babylonian Talmud). "The Psalms in the Jewish Church" ; Rev. W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D.; Skeffington & Son; Strand, W.C . 1910

²⁷ See also: "*The Demonology of the Old Testament*", by the same author, "Expositor" April 1907, pp. 318

Strangely, in the 16th century, the Persian king who was not then Shi'i summoned the Shi'i clergy of Southern Lebanon to educate his own in this old schism. He wanted his land and people to adopt this re-enforced statement of belief, in order to oppose the Ottomans (a Sunni nation). The Grand tradition of Laments was re-instituted; a flow of texts and melodies was to become the nearly sole musical inheritance of the Shi'a-s. It remains difficult to certify who gave the lament to who; but it has obviously remained masterly in Mesopotamia/ Iraq. Even Baghdad, through the classical music repertoire of Maqam al-Iraqi (Modus Iraqiensis) borrows the *ethos* of lamentations in a collection of melodies and improvisations that are of utmost emotional exaggeration.

An Example to Annul all Other Claims

Surely the claims for the disintegration of musical taste are universal. It is not only a Mesopotamian issue anymore. Neither a Levantine Arab one, as since the great singer Warda Al-Jaza'iriyyah has sung "pop songs" in the 1980-ies. She, the replacement or continuation of the lady of classical Arab singing: Oum Kouloum, has unvoluntarily destroyed the immaculate image of the Arab concert-singer of Art-music. And since then, no singer has dared venture in *Lamentoso* land, void-syllables, eternally-prolonged vowels, «goaty» *timbre* intercalated with nasal cries; angelic tones intercalated by roars.

Adieu Dumûzî, adieu magical incantations, adieu pastoral ambiance, adieu metal bells, adieu angels, adieu lions; all we have left is what is usually and vulgarly called word-counters singers, showy-taximeters. People appearing as artists, an image of «repeating in tune» full texts made of full words, worthy of no meaning! The shallowness syndrome is definitely not an obsession of the Levant; the metamorphosis from acoustic refinement to electronic «cheapness», proves that the machine has surpassed the human. Or is it that «the human» is still with Marsyas whilst the electronic-sound-libraries and samplers are elements of the future-sound practice, only existing in the matter of «now». In other words, actual music is nothing but a retrograde projection of an electronically-perfected Antiquity. Progressive dreams, in pop-up computer programs through electronic music, has shown to us, truly or falsely, that we dwell in the imperfect past!

Western Past as Proof for Change in Ethical Musical Concepts

«I have sung the serious styles for years and have been poor ever poor, now that I am old I am singing the lighter songs, and it is only now that I get remunerated properly». Ibn Jami‘ - singer-composer from the ninth century.

One favorite example of Western music is enough to illustrate this issue. A bridge can be made from any point from one continent to any other point in another continent and time. The music of Palestrina, Mahler, Berg or Boulez, can explain a change in music-social behavior, but the music of the great Bach will give us the simplest of clues.

J.S. Bach, the great composer of church music was the Cantor in the most important church of Leipzig. Yet, where were his Suites or transcriptions of Vivaldi’s concertos and other orchestral works done? Why would a church music composer do works that are not religious? And why would the public mostly remember his profane works? All seem to tend to one answer, social-economical reasons! People know his works for organ, yet the favorite pieces are the «monuments of instrumental music»²⁸ which were written during his six year tenure as Kapellmeister at Cöthen in the court of music-loving Prince Leopold. The four Orchestral Suites (1717-1723); The 24 preludes and fugues of the Well-tempered Clavier; the six French Suite for harpsichord (BWV812-1817); the Six Cello Suite, the Partitas for Violin solo; the Harpsichord and Viola da gamba sonatas, the Harpsichord concertos (BWV1052-6, 1058) and the three violin concertos.. His *Toccata and Fugue in d minor*, although for organ, is a *bravura* show piece. The “Passion according to Saint John” remains a curiosity for the grand public. Only the “Passion according to Saint Matthew” is very well listened to, especially in Easter.

Although the ruling Prince cherished music, Calvinism flourished in Cöthen and its principles were incompatible with religious music making. A short review of some of Calvin’s ideas makes his aversion clear: «... the Levites, under the law, were justified in making use of instrumental music in the worship of God; it having been his will to train his people, while they were yet tender and like children, by such rudiments until the

²⁸ The Companion to Baroque Music, essays by: Peter Holman, Louise Stein, Michael Talbot, Julie Anne Sadie, Stanley Sadie, and David Fuller; ed. By Julie Anne Sadie; Oxford University Press 1998.

coming of Christ. But now, when the clear light of the gospel has dissipated the shadows of the law and taught us that God is to be served in a simpler form...»²⁹

Finally it becomes clear that were official music-making becomes taboo, there emerges a preference to a hidden art, the art of dancing; which in itself was an abhorrence for all Christian law, probably a heritage of the anti-Pharaonic period (with Moses, many centuries before Christianity). In itself the Art of Dance could be seen dangerous as it awakens pleasure, say some; it should be mentioned that in many a land, until this day, it can also be used as a “freeing the psyche” ritual. The link of dance to “apparatus” and *panache*, in other words the «Official representation of the Officiality»³⁰, has another outcome than the rituals of Ancient Egyptians, different from *Gnawa* (Black-Maghrebine ritual music), and the *Zar* of the Arabs of East-African origins, rituals to appease the *Jinns* (interfering elements or beings into the Psyche).

The King’s Dance as to be understood in the courts of baroque Europe has much more to do with showing off the king’s «virile prouesses», garment elegance and physical beauty than exorcism. The ban on dancing is of no doubt a typical monotheistic issue. Although dance was favored in Andalusian times in the form of long suites and concerts for the court they have attained another spiritual value in the Levant with the Whirling Dervishes. The ‘civil’ dance was to be unofficially banned or at least non-extant excepting the dances of the “courtesan-ladies and boys” in Constantinople.

Similarly relevant to the great Bach whenever Representational - officiality does not allow «official» or «office» music, and that the Art of music is kept «behind walls», then “forbidden” arts become prevalent; and then they very easily fall into the realms of «bestiality»³¹! Only virile or feminine dances of exploits and *prouesses* emerge whilst the music of listening disappears. The relation that thrives between Bach’s music in Leipzig, where religious-office music is the most respectable endeavor, and his instrumental music from Cöthen lies in the “similarity” of contrapuntal techniques; yet it is in the rhythmical differences, of religious versus dance energy that the “vivacious” is overwhelming.

²⁹ on Ps. lxxi. 22 ; and on Ps. lxxxi. 3

³⁰ According to Jens Brincker’s Lectures in Copenhagen University about the French Court at Versailles 1980. BRINCKER. Jens: *Wien. Drømmeby og undergangsstad. Musik, mennesker og kultur omkring 1900*. Viborg 1993.

³¹ This comment does not include any prejudice from the author’s side; it is only a view angle.

In Levantine-Arabic music tradition of the last three centuries (1700 and on), nonsensical phonemes³² were a central concern, and are very tightly linked to instrumental techniques of the long-necked lutes (quick and alternate picking and imitating timbre-wise the frictions of the rubbing of a bow on a strong or weakly stretched string). In modern society, the new taboos imposed in Islamic territories force TV performances, as a result to their prohibitions, the promotion of more show-biz like productions. Concerts of art-music lose more and more value in viewers' interests; sooner or later we will experience the implementation of cancelling even the over-sexed video-clips and tv-shows, the procedure of elimination seems quite official!

In the West, democratization of art-music seems to have become a cult for weakness? The industrialization of musical education stands as a double-edged sword that has killed its beholder. The greed behind making people sing more and more (as much in Europe as anywhere else) has actually surpassed the capacity of the human being. It is society's impossible goal to impose on music makers a new form of profit or money making. In the modern world, the subjugation of art to the issue of getting minimal gains (form of democratization or vulgufication) from a very big number of people attending concerts, or "cd" buying, which will eventually sum-up into a huge fortune, which in its turn will render the composer rich, therefore acknowledged, bestowing on him/her the newly acquired *titres de noblesses*. In classical times composers were not poor, but their "profit" came from the generosity of one person, who was «initiated in the *bon gout*». The miserable image of the «poor composer» is a romanticized myth.

Since the 1980-ies, in the Levant, women-singer-dancers shows have prevailed, at the same time with the newer «purifying» ethical codes; surely the Grand art of the classical song has stopped. We have been seeking for an archaic antiquity that surpassed Bacchus worship, Marsyas's just middle and Apollonian elevated lyricism, as if by digging into a remote past we were looking for this conclusion: «Does the condemnation of a practice precede its criminal status or does it really post-cedes it, as it is claimed? ».

³² "tralala" syllables