

Soleá: The Pinnacle of Flamenco Singing

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Abstract

In this paper we make a study of the currents that influence the development of flamenco art, using as a unit of analysis a variety of “*paló*”² called *soleá*, specifically the one located in an area of the *Triana* neighbourhood in Seville: more precisely, a variety of this “*paló*” called *soleá del Zurraque*. From this study, we advance in our understanding of flamenco and proceed to describe phenomena such as creative synergies, syncretism or the synthesis of different cultures. Finally, we end by emphasizing that flamenco is a music and a dance in full development, which strongly resists the waves of commercialized music that globalization brings with it. All this study we carry out with the tools of social anthropology and ethnomusicology, which analyse the cultural features, not isolated from each other, but putting them in relation with the culture that generates them -which is defined in this case as a set of features in interaction- to perceive most of its meaning.

Keywords: *cantejondo*, *canteabandolao*, Ethnomusicology, Social Anthropology

Introduction. Traits and culture

The controversy between *localizationists*³ and *diffusionists* occupied much space in the anthropological literature of the mid-twentieth century. We will not dwell on this controversy, because instead of reproducing some aspect of it, we will directly break a lance in favour of localizationism.

Cultural features do not have meaning in themselves, but in connection with other features of the cultures that harbour them.

Therefore

A same trait, has different meanings in different cultures.

Moreover:

The existence of a trait does not imply the existence of the culture that gave birth to it (if it were to we know from which culture it comes from). Therefore, if a certain flamenco in cultures that are not Andalusian, it does not have its original meaning, what we not referencing to the culture that originated it, nor to its historical circumstances.

Cultural trait

We can consider that a trait is a set of simpler elements of a culture; which act and evolve in unison. Naturally, the simplest concept is relative, since it depends on what we comparing to a given term.

There are simple and complex features

In our case, flamenco is a complex trait, because methodologically we define it this way in this work, to which we establish a limit of complexity while the different *palos*, will be the simple traits, in the next step of simplicity.

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²This is the name given to each of the varieties of flamenco music or dance.

³This expression and the following one are neologisms created by the author of the paragraph.

Types of features

They can be physical elements as well as the techniques, which we produce with them. They can be customs, practices, expressions (artistic, such as music, or other), or communicative (language).

Flamenco is a cultural trait

Diffusionists would say that flamenco was born in Andalusia, but that it has spread throughout the rest of the world, without losing any of its qualities. Even more, they would say that its elements spread at a certain historical moment, from the Indian Punjab, carried by the gypsy tribes that were expelled from there... We have to be careful with this, because if we follow a strict diffusionist approach, in reality, nothing is generated anywhere, everything is imported, who knows from where.

Nevertheless, wherever it comes from, flamenco, as the cultural trait that it is, only makes sense in its original cultural context. Nowhere else, other than in Andalusia, does flamenco occur naturally. Thus, by *reductio ad absurdum*, we come to the conclusion that we must look elsewhere. So far, only Andalusia has been postulated for this.

As Esteva Fabregat told us in an interview (Brufau et al., 2011: 8):

“Bosch Gimpera was a diffusionist and, therefore, came into conflict with the Mexicans, who were evolutionist in their thinking. And the great debate between the two anthropological traditions took place. In this debate, there was the idea of divergent evolution, which was not unilinear, and we discussed the idea of whether evolution takes shape from the perspective of unilinearity or within diversity, of divergence. The Mexicans did not want to be diffusionists because of a national approach. That is to say, they had created the pre-Hispanic civilizations themselves. Therefore, they had no debt with respect to Egypt, which was the centre of diffusion - let's call it modern - at that time. And obviously we wondered to what extent there had been an influence of the Old World on the New World”.

We will try to demonstrate how at least one flamenco *palow* as forged in one place in Andalusia, without the need for extraordinary contributions, except for those already known. If we manage to show that it has been so in one place, it can also be so in any other place in Andalusia. However, it is that, in addition, the place to which we will refer is not just any place; it is not a place that is a little better than other Andalusian places; but it is a place where we suspect that it all began: the Sevillian neighbourhood of Triana. A place where surely that neo-ethnicity called *Moriscos* started first. Not *andalusies*, but *moriscos*; that is to say, those *andalusies* who resist to abandon their land, and their identity, which they achieve by clinging to cultural traits such as what we will call “proto-flamenco”. Also certain customs, language and others, which we will not list, because others have already done it much better documented than us in this matter and we refer to them (Rodríguez Ramos, 2010, 2018).

About *Zurraque*:

In our case, for this research, the unit of analysis is going to be, from the geographical point of view, a very specific area of the Sevillian neighbourhood of *Triana*, the *Zurraque* area:

“There are several versions of why the *Zurraque*, there are those who believe that in that area the delinquents of the neighbourhood took refuge and the forces of order usually beat them, others say that everyone who approached the area was beaten up, there are those who fantasize that the *Zurraque* was a place where the delinquents were hiding. Personally, and without discarding the first one, I will stick with the theory defended by the writer, poet and huge amateur Emilio Jiménez Díaz, who affirms that in the past the loaded ships docked and unloaded the skins that were then beaten and commercialized in the stores of the area.”



http://soniosnegros1970.blogspot.com/p/normal-0-21-false-false-false-es-x-none_19.html (16-9-1921). From the website: “Soniosnegros”.

This area of Zurraque was part, in turn, of the so-called “Cava de losCiviles”, so called because there was a Civil Guard barracks there. This area also had a greater proportion of “payos” (non-gypsies) and the profession of potter (potter) and its derived trades had a great weight in it.

For those unfamiliar with the area, we must also clarify that the Cava de losCiviles corresponded approximately, following the line of the Guadalquivir River from north to south, with the northern part of the right strip of land bordering the river as it passes through Seville.

Illustration1. Fragment of a map of Seville, 1884; where some of the places mentioned in the text are specified.
<https://www.sevilla.org/cartografia-historica/carto-sevilla-libro-digital.pdf>

Opposite, symbolically and materially, to this Cava de losCiviles, was the Cava de losGitanos, located to the south of the previous one. Here the dominant trade was that of blacksmith, in the many forges in the area. The trades related to navigation were also numerous, since on the side of what is now Betis Street, the ships docked, and their crews spent the night in Triana, or were from the same neighbourhood. Not for nothing did Magellan's ships leave from here, one of which completed the first round-the-world voyage with Juan Sebastián el Cano at the helm⁴.

The Sevillian neighbourhood of Triana was (and is) constituted by the two aforementioned caves, which are understood as a semantic unit before other neighbourhoods of Seville. Especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, since the addition, later, of other newly built urban spaces.

In this historic *Triana*, in addition to the aforementioned trades, lived many cigarette sellers, who daily passed the bridge of boats first and later (1852), passed the one that was named Isabel II⁵, when the latter was built⁶ in place of the former. They used to cross it to go to work at the tobacco factory, and then to return to their homes. All these occupations, so varied, gave the neighbourhood of *Triana* a peculiar personality, popular and with its residents very identified with their neighbourhood.

For this work, we have chosen the sector of *Triana* called *Zurraque*⁷, which we have already mentioned. We did it this way because of the value of this *Zurraque* as a unit of analysis is, for us, that in that place of *Triana*, surely it is where there was greater cohabitation between *payos* and gypsies, and, therefore, cultural elements were exchanged (in its apparent form of features), which initiated a creative dynamics that involved both ethnic groups.

And not only them, but also the Andalusian ethnicity; which, more remotely, but not less certain, must have played an important role. Moreover, this ethnic group - with its resistance to acculturation and underhand ethnocide, which sought to strip them of their identity - was surely the one that produced, at first, with its resistance, the necessary synergy to start the chain reaction that led, a long time later, to the appearance of flamenco. Synergy of which we think that still today makes what we now call flamenco grow.

Those *zarabandas*, *olés*, *jaleos*, are not only musical archaeology, they are the seed, which with the synergy of *Andalus*⁸ self-affirmation, was taking its roots, branching out and flourishing.

The two currents that converge

From a technical point of view, the *soleá* del *Zurraque* is a variety of the flamenco *palo* called *soleá*, which is distinguished from others, in that it is the result of the sum of two others, in that sense, simpler: the *soleáapolá* and the *soleágrande*, always sung in that order. We are going to dwell on these more specialized musical aspects, because they are important to explain which elements of this type of *soleá* help us to better understanding of the flamenco.

First of all, we want to highlight the fact that this is a *palo*⁹, and specifically this variety of *palo*, which enjoys great prestige among flamenco aficionados and specialists. This premise gives relevance to it, and everything that we affirm in reference to it, has an outstanding repercussion in flamenco.

If we listen to both *soleares*¹⁰, which, when put together, result in the so-called *soleás* del *Zurraque*, we will see that each of them represents two currents (not two flamenco palos):

⁴ We refer specifically to “... Muelle de las Mulas, also referred to as Muelle de las Muelas, () was located next to the shrimp pier, already in the neighborhood of Los Remedios. From here the expedition of Magellan and Juan Sebastian Elcano departed on August 10, 1519, which ended with the First Around the World in 1522 / The Triana port of the Muelas (or Mules) pier receives its name because it was paved with millstones. (Diario de Sevilla, April 25, 2024).

⁵ Although it is better known simply as the Triana Bridge.

⁶ Similar to the disappeared Carroussel bridge in Paris.

⁷ But whose exact location seems almost forgotten.

⁸ It is not religious, but ethnic, and refers not only to the cultural heritage of the Muslim period, but certainly to earlier periods.

⁹ This is the name given to each of the varieties of flamenco

¹⁰ Plural of *soleá*.

The *soleá* “*apolá*”¹¹. It is characterized by a distinctive musical technique, common to some of the flamenco palos; we believe that no musicologist will deny that it belongs to the genre of “*abandolao*” music or songs. This expression of “*abandolao*” is usually explained as belonging either to mountain people, who used to wear a garment over their shoulders, as a band to cover themselves, or to people who formed groups of assailants in the Andalusian sierras, called *bandoleros* (bandits) and bands to the collectives of “*bandoleros*”. But these interpretations seem to us to be inaccurate.

In our opinion, the Andalusian term “*abandolao*” does not have to do directly with a garments, called *bandas* -carried in *bandolera*-, nor with the bands of “*bandoleros*”.

The expression “*abandolao*”, we believe, alludes to the technique of lengthening the duration of the notes (not the syllables, as in *melismas*), a lengthening that makes the musical phrases last longer than what, at the beginning, could be expected at the beginning of those songs. Without this “letting go”, the “*abandolao*” *cantes* would not be such. That is, that “*abandolao*” mean: something that, like a band, lengthens; but, in this case, it is the musical notes that lengthen.

This aspect of the elongation is important, because parallels we can find in the Mediterranean and what is today called the Middle East. In this regard, Steingress (Steingress, 2023) clarifies a few things for us, when he looks for similarities between the Flemish and the Greek “*rebetic*” (*Argilé Mou Giati Svinis*, n.d.):

“In the case of rebeticism something similar happened as in flamenco: while in flamenco the supposedly exotic “oriental” character was attributed to the Andalusian gypsies, in the case of rebeticism it was done by resorting to Byzantine music and song, but in both cases the role of the church in popular music in each of the two countries is not taken into consideration. The supposedly oriental character of the rebetiko is to be sought not only in the historical sonorous cohabitation of Turks and Greeks and the later fusion between the *pirenaiko* and *smirnaiko* styles, but also in the compositional technique of harmonizing certain songs through the application of supposed oriental modalities summarized both in the Byzantine chant and the Arab or Ottoman *maqam*. The same refers to flamenco as heir to the chants and psalmodies of the Spanish medieval Church, with its scales based on microtones similar to the oriental *dromoi* and transmitted by the medieval romances, *tonás* or *saetas* until the 19th century. These are melodic cadences already found in ancient Greek and Byzantine music, based on certain tones that were initially seen as similar (although also different) from the *maqam hijaz* (Manuel, 1989: 72). Thus, we are faced with the problematic identification of any exotic trait of certain Spanish scales with “the oriental”. Nevertheless, the question arises as to what extent traditional Spanish popular music has preserved these “orientalizing” or “Byzantine” metaphorical traits, through the insistence or memory of liturgical chants in the popular repertoire.” (Steingress, op. cit.)

But, returning to the *cante* (or *palo*) to which we were referring: the *soleáapolá*, we can say that it receives its name from the *cante* (or *palo*) called *polo*¹², the oldest of which seems to come from the locality of Ronda; that is to say, from the mountainous area where the most clearly defined “*abandolaos*” *cantes* are found.

Note that these mountainous areas have always been areas of resistance (passive or active) to the instituted power. For example, the rebellion of Ibn Hafsun against the caliphate; the rebellion of the Moors against Castile, or that of the bandits against the instituted power or legality. Areas from which, in more favourable times, the old habits and tastes come out to recover old zones of influence.

Seen in this way, it does not seem an exaggeration to say that, from time immemorial, certain cultural traits have been retreating or expanding from the sierras, depending on whether the historical circumstances have been favourable or unfavourable. And all this is applicable to the two Andalusian sierras, those of the North (Sierra Morena) and those of the South (Penibetic System), but especially the one of the South, more abrupt and isolated.

According to studies, an example of a resistant cultural trait could be the *verdiales*, since from remote dates, the inhabitants of La Axarquía, the Alpujarras or the Campo de Gibraltar¹³, go down to the villages, in times of celebration (Mandly Robles, 1996), to sing the so-called *verdiales*, “*abandolao*” song par excellence.

Returning to the work of Steingress (op cit.); he points out multiple similarities between the rebetic and flamenco, but he does not dare to establish a direct connection, since he affirms that these similarities can be due to similarities caused by similar situations, but not by a direct diffusion:

¹¹ So called because of its resemblance to another flamenco palo, called “*polo*”.

¹² “In the polo there is no macho and the *soleá* is *apolá*. The polo has a vigorous style as opposed to the more collected style of the *caña*. Today there are two polos, the natural and the *Tobalo*.” <https://cordobaflamenca.com/articulos-flamenco/cana-polo-cuando/> Retrieved 29-9-2024.

¹³ Three Andalusian counties.

“A similarity can refer to a random coincidence and give rise to an “analogy” if two structures are morphologically and/or functionally similar, although phylogenetically independent. That is, two phenomena resemble each other without being initially related, but are suitable for evolutionary convergence. Remember: syncretism in flamenco is an example of such evolutionary convergence insofar as it has been formed by mixing, fusing, exploiting traditions and musical styles of different regional, local, and even cultural origins. Flamenco did not come out of a cave, from a hoarse throat, it does not belong to a mysterious race, as the anachronistic flamencology insinuates, but already in 1881 Antonio Machado y Álvarez noted about flamenco singing: flamenco is a genre of singers, gypsies or non-gypsies, a construct shaken from found materials. It has been made over time using tones, sounds, rhythms found along the way. The same thing happened in the case of the rebetic.” (Steingress, 2023: 18-19).

The most remarkable of these similarities, however, are not the morphological ones such as the microtones, the Andalusian cadence, the *melismas*, or the Phrygian mode that he cites in various places in his work (op. cit.). The most remarkable, we believe, is the repetition of various forms of “*abandolamiento*” that occur on the shores of very distant points of the Mediterranean. That is to say, chants whose most striking characteristic is the notable prolongation of the syllables and the musical notes associated with them; said also as if letting oneself be carried away by the music or “letting go”.

The cantejondo. Doubts about its origin



Illustration3. Image taken from <https://www.universolorca.com/el-concurso-de-cante-jondo-de-1922/el-cartel-y-los-premios/> (2-10-2024).

In the first contest of *cantejondo*, held in Granada, on June 13 and 14, 1922, there was a strange combination, whose strangeness became evident years later, when the great ideological differences between the main organizers became evident¹⁴. However, on that occasion they coincided in their interest in what they called “*cantejondo*”, a term complicated to understand for the uninitiated in the knowledge of flamenco, because of the difficulty of defining “*jondo*”, despite the apparent simplicity of the term; because the Andalusian expression *jondo* is usually translated as *hondo*, in Spanish. But as soon as we deconstruct the term and its related ideas, we will realize the “*hondas*”¹⁵ differences between them.

It is easier to explain what we have just said about “*jondo*” when we analyze the lyrics or the coplas¹⁶ of the cantes.

Elsewhere (Morgado Giraldo, 2023a, 2023b), we wondered if flamenco was:

“... **Denunciation, self-affirmation or quejío?** It can be said that flamenco is denunciation when it has a combative attitude, generally with a social content. We can find it in the lyrics of José Menese (Moreno Galván), El Gloria, Manuel Gerena, El Cabrero, Carmen Linares... [...] Self-affirmation. Related to identity; whether Andalusian, Andalusian or gypsy. We can find it in Lebrijano, Lole y Manuel, Estrella Morente, Antonia Contreras, Antonio Mairena... (Also in performers such as Carlos Cano, La Banda Morisca, etc., in other flamenco music)¹⁷. [...] Quejío. Perhaps the representative who has innovated the most in this expressive facet of flamenco has been Camarón de la Isla, who recreated hundreds of nuances of quejío, reaching a high artistic level. But all in all, this sad version of the flamenco, does not seem to have gone beyond an aestheticism, which has limited itself to making improvements in the sonority of what is interpreted”. (Op. cit.)

This idea of *quejío* may have been arrived at by its supporters, based on the syllable *ay*, which is pronounced and repeated at the beginning of many *cantes*, or even in the course of them. But this “*ay*” does not have to be an



Illustration2. Buzuki, traditional instrument of Greek music.(reverb.com).

¹⁴ Ignacio de Zuloaga, financier, Manuel de Falla, as a prestigious musical figure and Federico García Lorca, as a great figure in the world of literature.

¹⁵ Deep.

¹⁶ Texts.

¹⁷ We use here references to well-known professionals, to situate the reader well, but in reality, these same tendencies appear among amateur interpreters.

expression of pain, because it seems to us more reasonably that it is an intonation of the *cantaor* or *cantaora*, establishing which are going to be the low “a” and the high “i”. Thus, the “ay” seems to us to be more of a flamenco glossolalia¹⁸, “*lerele*” or “*tirititrán*”, than an expression of pain, at least we do not believe it was originally so.

On that occasion, we came to the conclusion that:

“Self-affirmation seems to us to be the attitude of the Flamencos that leads them more to modernity, since it is the only one that, in the end, leads to avoid depersonalization and anomie, and avoids the disadvantages of cultural globalization, which impoverishes cultural creation and ends up boring its consumers, who are always on the hunt for the latest musical novelty, because the penultimate one no longer says anything to them. “Op. cit., p. 12).

We can even add here that some of the Zurraque's *soleá* lyrics are curses: “May (God) allow you to lack the Sun, the light and the candle...” There are also of rancor: “they say that I have stolen a chalice, oh what a lie that is: since I was baptized, I have never set foot in the temple again.”, or of perspicacity and irony: “This is a great thing, everybody loves my girl, my girl doesn't love anybody” (*Soleáapolá*), of gallantry: “In January there are no carnations, because the ice withers them, in your face there are carnations all year round, why does heaven allow it?”

In short, deep has to do with profound, but to look for the profound is to look for the non-visible meaning of things, not necessarily tragic... In Spain, in general, it is common to confuse the tragic with the profound, in Unamuno's way of understanding it (Unamuno, 1913). But this approach to the tragic is not only shown in Spanish culture (if not in other cultures as well) but also, in general, by phenomenologists and existentialists (Kierkegaard, Sartre...). Nevertheless, the deep analysis is not only the one that understands from the outside in: suffering; we can also understand it from the inside out: transcending, because only starting from the depths, it is possible to make the identity go out and express itself.

It is not only about the “*fatuum*”, the fateful. Not only the *quejío* is *jondo*, but also the au-affirmation, the vindication, the denunciation, the gallantry, the reflection, the paradoxes... One form of the *jondo* comes from the inside to the outside and the other suffers from the outside.

If we begin with the comparison between the *abandolao* and the *jondo*, we intuit that the *abandolao* is related to the telluric and the *jondo* to the identity. Both have their roots in time. It is difficult to know how far they go.

The telluric seems to surround the shores of the Mediterranean, it gives the sensation that it comes from civilizations previous to the Olympic (Greeks, Etruscans, Amazig Turdetans...). The *jondo*, has something to do with the Muslim; but it has to do, mainly with the intimacy, with the ethnic, and surely, it is as old as the *abandolao*, it has a relation, at least partial, with the Islamic call, although that point of view has become almost taboo: almost nobody wants to be related to it, in spite of the evident similarities (not identities). Those who did, it seems, could not stand the pressure, and took a step back.

The union of the *soleáapolá* and the *soleágrande*, appears to us now, as an occasion in which both currents of flamenco, a) all kinds of fandangos *verdiales*, etc. and b) the deepest songs, but not necessarily sad, (the *festeros* (*festive*) can be considered as the complement of the *jondo*) come together and reach a peak of this art.

Ramón el ollero, El sordillo de Triana, Manuel Oliver, Antonio el Arenero¹⁹, Márquez el zapatero, El Teta, Joaquín Ballesteros... and then younger singers known outside the Triana flamenco scene, for being from Triana, like Naranjito de Triana or Chiquetete.

These *cantaores* were able to create this musical prowess²⁰ with hardly any musical training - of the formal kind, it is understood - and understood flamenco better than anyone else, as something common to all these types of singing.

But if we rush, and we want to find, by force, the material roots of the *jondo*, exclusively, in the flamenco *quejío*, or in the song of the Andalusian muezzin... we believe that we would be mistaken. Perhaps the *jondo* is the expression of a special character developed in Andalusia, which leads us always search for the meaning of things, no matter how obvious they may seem. Also, not to be satisfied with the hackneyed answers of generalization. Perhaps it comes from a certain stoic attitude... who knows!

¹⁸On the subject of glossolalia in flamenco, see the work of (Cruces Roldán, 2003).

¹⁹Antonio González Garzón (1930-07/02/2004).

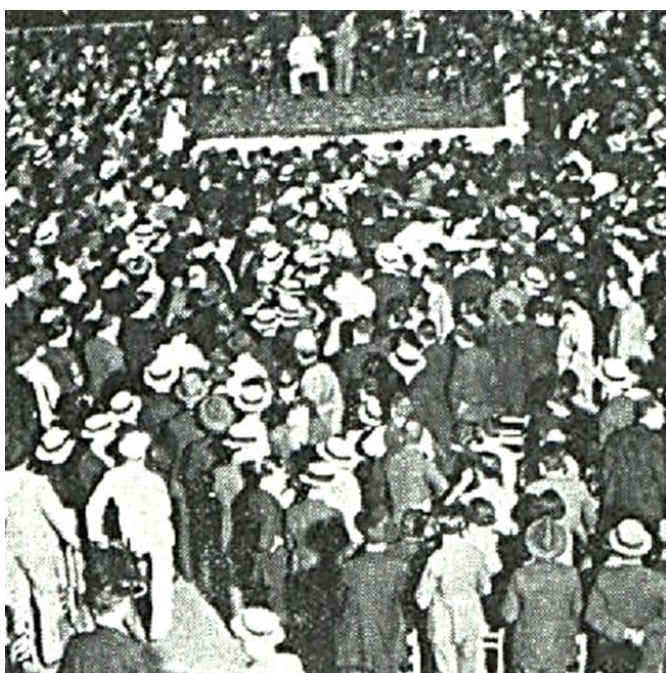
²⁰Although there are also those who say that Pies de Plomo (Manuel Giorgio. 1925-2013) had something to do with it, but his *cante*, melodic and tight, does not have the clear definition of the *cante* of El Arenero and does not set the style of the *soleares*.

Synergies

The first meaning of the term synergy, in the dictionary of the RAE (Various, 2023), tells us that a synergy is an “action of two or more causes whose effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects”. We would say that, in addition, it is a joint action of several forces, which triggers others, whose effects are unpredictable.

This means that (even supposing that there is currently no genetic trace of the Andalusians, nor traces of their culture, after the Castilian conquest) that the trauma caused by the conquest and subsequent expulsion; started up, in historical times, this synergy began, and there is no doubt that it is still generating, even today, cultural currents (one of which is flamenco), from its impulse of rebellion and resistance to losing its identity.

An example of how this synergy has been able to influence situations in cultures very different from those in which it began is the play *AbenHumeya* (Martínez de la Rosa, 1830). In their premiere in Paris seems to have had some role in the upheaval caused at that time by the fall of Charles X, who placed Louis-Philippe of Orleans on the throne. These synergies can only occur through empathy, when one social group assumes the identity of another because it considers its cause to be similar.



In short: we have two currents in Andalusian music, which dispute the prestige of being called flamenco. In this tessitura, appeared the soleás del Zurraque, which as we have said, arise as the collective work of a multi-ethnic group²² of singers, who meet in a closed group of amateurs, and the product of this is a synthesis of the two main trends of flamenco. With it, they go up a step and take flamenco, in our opinion, to its highest quality of expression.



Illustration 6. Echo in the press of Huelva, the anniversary of the cantejondo contest of 1923.

A few lines above, we have spoken of the Concurso de cante jondo de Granada, excluding the fandangos. The following year, in Huelva, they held a contest with the fandangos included and especially highlighted, as a way of redress. We have also talked about the cante abandolao. We can understand in a broad sense, that all the fandangos have the same root as the cantes abandolao, only that the fandangos have synthesized the cante, making the lengthening shorter and the expression of the cante more sober, as a whole, than that of the cantes abandolao, but, for the reasons given, we are inclined to include them both in the same group.

In general, the fandango is attributed more of a payo character than the jondo, because it has more to do with the land: in Huelva, above all, it is the peasants or country people who sing it²¹.

Illustration 4. .

<https://cadenaser.com/andalucia/2023/05/concurso-de-cante-jondo-de-1923-radio-1>



Illustration 5. <https://www.huelva.es/port al/en/noticias/el-gran-teatro-acoger%C3%A1-la-gala-final-del-concurso-de-cante-jondo-1923-2023-%E2%80%98centenario-de>

However, if we were to follow the classical point of view of the genesis of flamenco, we would find ourselves looking for the origins of soleás in the beginnings of flamenco. On the contrary, we believe that, what many authors think are original or fundamental songs²³, are not such. On the contrary, we believe that flamenco does not evolve from the simplest to the most complex, but that it does it by decantation, keeping the best quality expression essays, from the first that appeared.

he root of the word payo: the one who is from the land, the “paisano”.

them (Mairena & Molina, 1963).

Or, better yet, the procedure works by simplifying and condensing the musical expression, but not so much as to reduce it to a minimalist language. Instead, it carries out a process of distillation” and recombination of cantes or palos, which gives rise to a synergy; which, in turn, generates and causes the creative processes in flamenco.

The denial of historical data

Researching history, taking care not to disturb the established power, is a bad way to find the truth of the events. In this way, one ends up making an official chronicle extolling, without evidence, actions that are at least questionable.

Something similar happens when many historians ignore the importance of the *andalusi* culture in contemporary Andalusia, embracing the events of Covadonga as a founding myth of Spain; when it is evident that the political unit called Hispania-Spain was created by the Romans, and did not exist before them.

They also forget that the conquest of Seville by the Castilians meant exile for many Sevillians or “Ixbilians”, if we want to call them that; but for many others it meant hidden resistance to the invasion, in order to maintain their identity. If the medieval Christian chronicles say that the city was emptied, it is difficult to believe, in its totality. Because not only it happens that many will return, but that others could take advantage of the fact that the neighborhood of Triana was outside the walled enclosure, and that it was not strictly the city, so it could serve as a refuge closer to what were their homes. As a proof of this, we collect a paragraph from a work on the conquest of Seville, which reflects the end of one of the *ulemas*²⁴ expelled in those days:

“Sulaymán ibn Yahyà ibn Sulaymáan, died in the river, in Ramadan of 646 h (18 December 1248-16 January 1249), just after the departure of the Muslims following the siege, being buried in Triana...” (García Sanjuán, 2017: 37).

Apparently, he was not the only one who crossed the river to stay close to what was his home. That is to say, that its cultural baggage remained in the vicinity, which could generate the synergy. In this way, it could unite the different cultures that have forged it. But that initial impulse can only be Andalusian, as it is evident that it is the most dramatic event in the known history of Seville.

The different Andalusian music are impregnated with the aroma of this culture and its genesis, and find their origin in it, imprinting their compass in all the subsequent ones. Surely that is why they are interchangeable: a *copla* can be interpreted by *bulerías*, a processional march has a compass²⁵ that resembles the flamenco compasses. Between a *saeta* and a *seguiriya* there is only a difference in the theme of the lyrics that are sung. Christmas carols and *jarchas* are close relatives ... the *nubas*²⁶. The same original culture (although this is not the only root of the Andalusians), and with different beliefs and customs, but at least the music reveals the ancestral connection between them, unless we maintain some prejudice about it.

Perhaps the face of their disappearance, the erasure of their identity, made the Andalusians especially resistant, and they found in music; in this case in the city of which the Andalusian writers of the time considered the most fond of music in Al-Andalus, and made music the main resource for the survival of their identity.

Synthesis and enhancement

With all these ideas in action, we believe we can understand the meaning of the *soleá del Zurraque*, half *abandolá*, half *jonda*: although late, the two Andalusian currents began to merge into one. In Triana, where it seems that the great struggle for the Andalusian survival lived one of its first episodes. What happened then, may be recorded, symbolically, between the stones of the castle of the Inquisition in Triana, because next to them has resounded and resounds that music and the current one: not equal, but related.

In contemporary Andalusia, we preserve not the original one, but the evolution of it, which, in contact with those that came later, ended up forging -although the process continues- at least, in a music that is both traditional and avant-garde.

The *Soleá del Zurraque* seems to us to be the clearest exponent of the fusion between the cultural elements that give rise to flamenco, rather than syncretism.

This fusion of *canteabandolao* and *cantejondo* (not necessarily *quejío*, as we have already said), which is the *Soleá del Zurraque*, was made by a group of flamencos from the Triana neighborhood, who met among themselves

²⁴ Sage; doctor of Islamic law.

²⁵ We have already talked about the fact that flamenco is a music based on *compás*, it is not tonal, nor, although it resembles them, is it modal music (Morgado Giraldo, 2023b).

²⁶ Traditional “Andalusian” music from North Africa. Traditional “Andalusian” music from North Africa.

and who, without any musical academic knowledge, were able to develop this modality, in our opinion, the best synthesis of flamenco ever made.

And this kind of fusion is not the only one in flamenco, which is expressed in the so-called *compás de amalgama*, is an element of flamenco, masterfully interpreted by *cantaores* and *cantaoras* of the gypsy ethnicity: three by four and six by eight, alternating, evolving in the wonderful *bulerías*, of which new versions are continuously appearing.

Those who are not familiar with Andalusian culture, when arguing, usually join the concepts of flamenco and passion, and this association they use for commercial and promotional purposes; however, they may not even suspect the initial synergy, which of the territorial plundering suffered between the 13th and 15th centuries.

We have analyzed this relationship between the South and passion before (Morgado Giraldo, 2011), and we believe we have demonstrated the importance of the myths attributed to it and the important role they play in the creation and maintenance of ethnic or national stereotypes. In this case they influence in good faith; however, in our opinion, somewhat mistakenly. Although in our environment, a very important proportion of the population is still convinced that Andalusians are as passionate and unreflective as they say about us.

Flamenco is the result of that initial synergy, to which we have been referring, but we also believe that flamenco has been forged with all the cultural contributions that have occurred in Andalusia since then; so it is not exclusive to any particular local cultural group.

Although flamencologists tend to overlook this fact, they do not deny, however, that flamenco in general arises from multiple contributions; nevertheless, they focus on the nineteenth century.

“It arises from the evolution of a musical genre of enormous implantation in the 19th century in Andalusia, a style that combines rhythm and meter, with sentimental melodic cadences and a literary support in accordance with the popular expression product of the wise alchemy that in Andalusia la Baja knew how to make with the jota, the fandango and the seguidilla. The *soleá* melody was configured following the process of stirring up the popular *tunes* that the Andalusian singers began to perform from the first decades of the 19th century onwards. This gypsy fashion that embraced the popular theatre and the semi-professional songs that were cultivated in the *ventas* and *colmaos*, in the neighbourhood patios and the theatres of Seville, Cadiz and Madrid mainly, laid the aesthetic foundations that would end up crystallizing in the different flamenco melodies that were applied to styles such as *cañas*, *polos*, *soleares*, *seguiriyas* and finally *bulerías* and *tientos*. The key was to enhance the traditional music, to infuse it with the aroma of the *jaleos*, a new way of expressing Andalusian, agitated, which became the hallmark of the new music. Faustino Núñez.” Retrieved from

https://flamenco.plus/flamencopolis/index.php?id_palo=soleares

On other hand, even a sociologist like Steingress, a rather objective thinker, tends to play down the importance of that initial impulse, which we have called synergy, and advocate something similar to what he calls *alhambrismo*; an expression that, according to him, is used by many academic musicians. It is still a lack of precision to say that.

“The question arises as to the sources of this romantic tendency or fashion of composing on the melodic basis of popular music, especially Andalusian, which has been known in academic music as “musical alhambrismo” since the last decades of the 19th century and which until well into the 20th century characterized the works of numerous Spanish composers (Sobrinó 1993): ‘did they not rely on certain traditional popular songs of the Peninsula, which had preserved some of the elements of the oriental type of music, such as the Andalusian cadence, the *melismas* in the melodies, the turn between the minor and major modes, etc.?’” (Steingress, 2023: 16).

We can include more examples of this timidity in the deepening of the origins (Plaza Orellana, 1999) various.

Conclusions

The creations that the *cantaores* of the Zurraque (Triana -Sevilla-) were contributing with their ability to synthesize the two currents of flamenco: the *jondo* (deep, not necessarily sad) and the *abandolao* (with the aftertaste of the land), achieved a flamenco level that is possibly the highest step, in the creative and cultural sense. We are anxious to know the new step that the flamencos will take to improve it. But, in the meantime, we are left with the aftertaste of those nights in July 1989 and 1990, when Antonio El Arenero elevated flamenco, and Manuel Oliver tempered it. We have not heard anything like it or better since then.

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