
Part One



Gypsy bagpipe-player in the Netherlands

Introduction

Historically, Flamenco studies and research on the Gitanos – the Gypsies of Spain – have overlapped very little. As work progresses in these fields – and it must be noted that both are very recent developments, dating only from the 1960s – research has become increasingly specialised, making any attempt at synthesis more and more difficult. There is a danger of concentrating on individual phenomena in isolation from the broader picture. Thus the wrongheaded theories frequently propounded with regard to the relationship between Gypsies and music have been facilitated by their authors' ignorance of the situation beyond the borders of their own country, or even of their own particular region of it. There is even a fairly entrenched tendency among Andalusians to consider 'their' Gypsies – the *Betica** Gypsies, as some call them – as having nothing whatever in common with Gypsies elsewhere, an assumption which has led some imaginative authors to posit an entirely separate origin and history for them. Clearly, such mistakes can only be remedied through international research co-operation.

Long before such collaboration began, though, I had the good fortune to benefit from a very particular set of circumstances. I first visited Andalusia in the 1950s, when I was initiated into flamenco music through my guitar-playing. A little later, in the early 1960s, my perspectives on Gypsy music were broadened through meetings organised by *Etudes Tsiganes* and by unexpectedly meeting André Hajdu, a Hungarian musicologist in exile in Paris. The ensuing years, to 1979, were spent researching a doctorate thesis on Gitano history, and it wasn't until I had completed it that I was able to get back into flamenco circles. This in turn launched me into new research.

The point of this biographical detail is to explain how it has been

possible for me to link up fields which up to now have been entirely separate: Gitano history and flamenco on the one hand, and on the other a comparative study of the music of Andalusian Gypsies and of the Gypsies of Central Europe. If not for these particular circumstances, I would have been unable to perceive the links which eventually proved indispensable in discovering the origins of flamenco. The question is far from being resolved, but at this point we *have* progressed beyond mere speculation. On the contrary, the following pages present a set of data which are precise and, though sometimes subtle, very concrete.

Chapter 1 retraces the crucial stages of the journey of professional Gypsy musicians from India to Spain, and aims primarily at highlighting those shared characteristics which enable us to define a 'family likeness' running through the various styles of Gypsy music.

Chapter 2 deals with the forced settlement of the Gypsy population of Spain between the time of the Catholic Monarchs* and the end of the eighteenth century. This dark period forms an essential backdrop to understanding the conditions of acculturation within which the new art-form known as *flamenco* sprang into being.

Chapter 3 concentrates on a number of families established for the past three or four centuries in a very precise region of Lower Andalusia in what have at times been rather unique conditions, and who have played a decisive role in the development of flamenco music.

The fourth chapter attempts to summarise and critique existing hypotheses on the origins of flamenco, and to draw some conclusions without straying beyond the facts of which we can be certain.

C H A P T E R O N E

The Gypsies, professional musicians

North-west India, the Gypsies' place of origin, appears to have played an important role in the development of Oriental music. Several Iranian texts relate a rather curious legend in connection with this subject. The earliest of these texts is a history of the kings of Persia written by the Arab historian Hamza of Ispahan (Hamza Ibn Hasan-al-Isfahani) in the mid-tenth century, the latest is *The Book of Kings* (*Shahnameh*) by the Persian poet Firdausi, dating from the early eleventh century.

According to these authors, the Sassanid king Bahram V, who reigned in Persia in the early fifth century (420–438), was moved to pity by the realisation that the poorest of his subjects could not celebrate festivities because musicians' fees were beyond their reach. He wrote to his brother-in-law, King Shankal of Kannauj (in northern India), who, so the story goes, responded by sending him musicians from his kingdom (12,000 of them, according to Hamza, who calls them *Zott*; a mere 10,000 according to Firdausi's poem, where they are called *Luri*). Once they had arrived, Bahram gave them donkeys, cattle and seed grain, so that they could cultivate the earth. All he demanded in return was that they play music free of charge for the poor. A year later they returned to him, pale and famished. They had contented themselves with playing music, and had eaten their grain and beef without taking the trouble to sow or to labour. Greatly annoyed, Bahram advised them to string their lutes with silk, take their donkeys and begone, travelling the world and making their living with their music. Of course such anecdotal evidence recalls the Gypsies, particularly as the term *Zott* is among those used by the Arabs to designate them.



'The Little Dancing Girl', detail of a tapestry from Tournai

From East to West

The Gypsies certainly spent a considerable period in Iran, as indicated by the numerous Persian loan-words in their language, Romani. They exercised their talents as professional musicians in that country, and they contributed to the diffusion of Oriental musical instruments and styles both throughout the Arab world and the West. As regards Arab countries, we know that in Egypt – where musical styles (*maqamat*) are generally of Iranian origin – Gypsy musicians continue to play a very important role, as do *ghawazi* or gypsy dancing-girls. Further west, a great deal can be learned through tracing the diffusion of instruments, such as the *tambura*, a Persian lute to be found as far afield as Serbia; the *santur*, a sort of dulcimer, also Persian, which becomes the *sandouri* in Greece and the *cymbalom* (*czimbalom*) in Hungary; and the *nay*, whose name means 'reed' in Iran and designates the Pan pipes in Romania and the straight flute found throughout the Muslim world.

The first instruments Western chroniclers noted as being played by Gypsies were lutes, mentioned in Dubrovnik on the Dalmatian coast, and

Hungarian Gypsy Musicians





Gypsy musicians

in Hungary, both in the fifteenth century. In the latter country the *czimbalom*, mentioned above, was already being cited as a Gypsy specialty. In France, a little later, the Gypsies were considered expert harpists, and indeed for a time appear to have enjoyed a monopoly of that instrument.

Turkey and Greece

In many Muslim countries certain religious prejudices against music left the field wide open to Gypsy practitioners, who sometimes had it entirely to themselves. This is particularly the case among the Kurds of Turkey, where the drums (*davul*), oboe (*zurna*) and triangular violin (*kemançe*) are reserved exclusively for Gypsies. This is why in several regions of Europe, such as Greece, the words *Gypsy* and *musician* are synonymous even today. Nick Davanellos, a Greek musicologist, describes how Gypsies have been going from village to village to celebrate *panegiri* (votive festivals in honour of the local patron saint) for a very long time. Formerly they frequently travelled in pairs, one playing the *pipiza*, a sort of whistle made from a small reed, the other a flat drum called a *daouli* (the Turkish *davul*). The *pipiza* was introduced to Greece between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries by Gypsy musicians coming in from Asia. These also brought in the Arab lute (*'ud*), the *sandouri*, and the *defi* – a drum along the lines of those known as *def* or *duff* in Asia. Dr Davanellos continues:

The Rom did not only play hymns on patron saints' days; they played at weddings, christenings, and in the taverns at night. They went from house to house playing Christmas carols and Easter psalms. They were the only musicians present at every festival, every celebration. They brought life, joy and happiness to everyone taking part.

This is why Greek music is tinged with a Gypsy flavour, at once so remarkable and so indefinable. Gypsies have been professional travelling musicians just about everywhere, particularly in Central Europe, whence the evident 'Gypsification' of Romanian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, Russian and even Ashkenazi Jewish music.

Once we understand that, from the sixteenth century, Gypsies were already playing 'in the Turkish manner' for the pashas occupying Hungary, and 'in the Hungarian manner' for the Magyar princes under occupation, we can form some idea of the incredible musical synthesis achieved by these musicians within the musical cultures of a large part of Europe and the Mediterranean world. While interpreting local music to suit the tastes of their clients, they have always done so in their own way, permeating folk tunes and popular airs with their own musical traditions and, perhaps to an even greater degree, with their own way of living, feeling, and expressing music. In some cases, new musical styles were born out of this extraordinary encounter of East and West through Gypsy intermediaries.

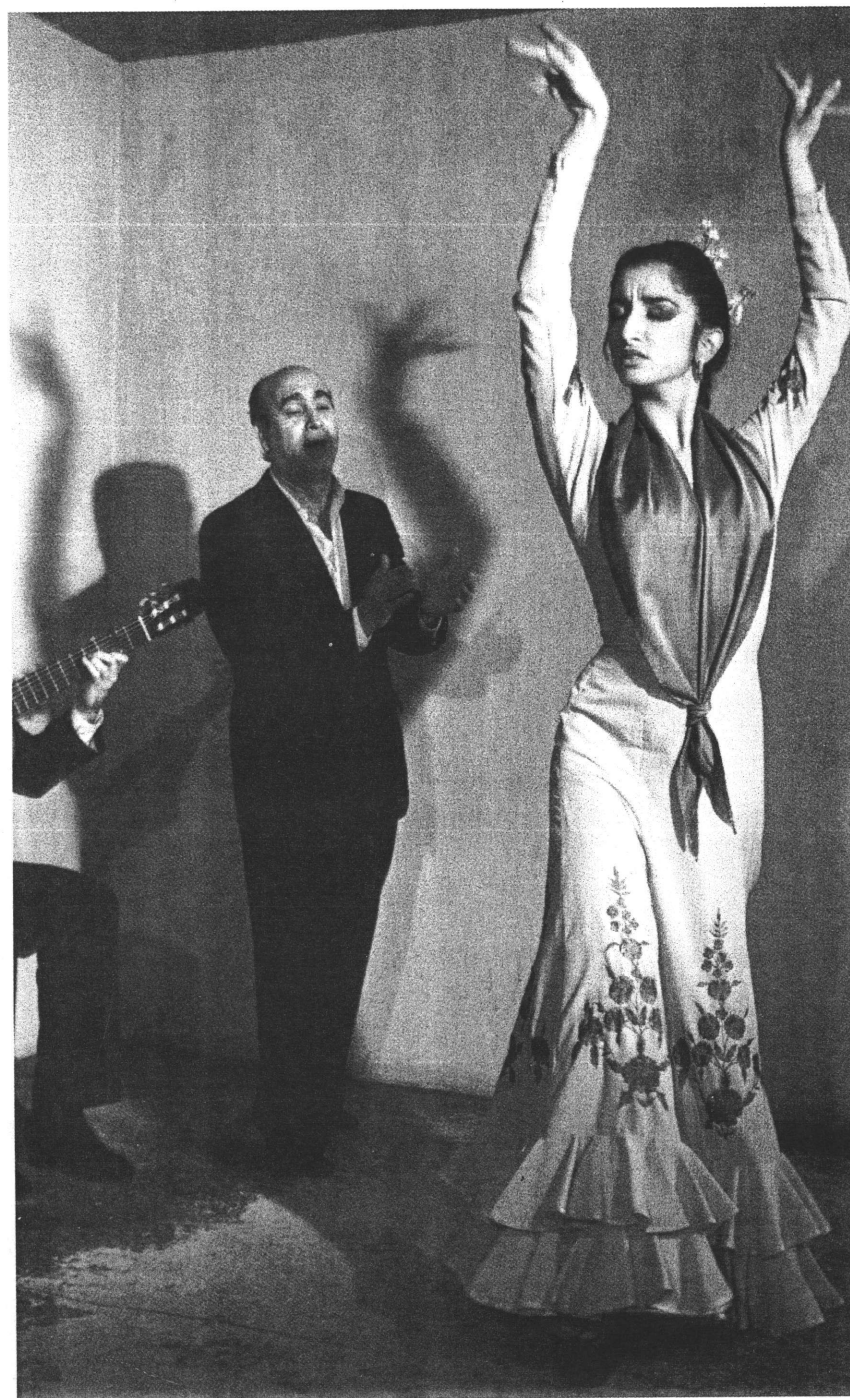
Hungarian 'Gypsy' music falls into this category, as do some types of Greek music, and, of course, flamenco, the subject of this volume.

Hungary

A situation exists in Hungary which is somewhat comparable to that in Andalusia. Leaving aside the 'Wallachians' or *Vlax* for the time being, who will serve as reference points later on, let us consider the music played professionally by Gypsies of the so-called 'Hungarian' or *Romungro**, group. The success of these Gypsy musicians in the sixteenth century continued to grow over the following centuries, and the great Hungarian families kept whole orchestras of them, generally comprising violins, a double bass, sometimes a few bagpipes and/or clarinets, and, of course, the *czimbalom*. Ensembles of this type were also to be found playing at the dances of humbler folk and, more surprisingly, accompanying recruiting sergeants as they made their rounds from village to village. Gypsy musicians, dressed for the occasion in dapper Hussars' uniforms, were set up in a corner of the village square, and drink was plied on local youths, the music and wine together beguiling them into signing up. This was how *verbunkos* music, the so-called recruiting-sergeants' dance, was born; towards 1835 it was to develop into the *csardas*, a name drawn from *csárda*, the tavern of the *puszta*. This music has an Oriental structure, with a fairly slow prelude known as a *lassu*, *lassan*, or *keserrgö* (lament) and a fast and furious finale called a *friss* or *friska*. Its exhilarating effects have become legendary. In a letter dated 1854, Prosper Mérimée recorded:

It starts with something very lugubrious and finishes with a mad gaiety that wins over the listener, who stamps his feet, smashes glasses and dances on the tables.

It should be noted that Gypsies were not only interpreters but generally also composers of the musical styles known as *verbunkos* and *csardas*. The most celebrated of these was Janos Bihari, who in 1808 composed the *Krönungs-Nota* (also known as the *Bihari-Nota*) for the coronation of the Empress Maria Louisa, and who also collaborated in the composition of the famous *Rakóczi March*, later to become the Hungarian national anthem. In an era when conventional wisdom in Hungary as in Spain denies any creative input from Gypsies, it is important to emphasise these details, and to recall that Bihari exerted a very strong influence over his



contemporaries such as Ferenc Erkel, Mihaly Mosonyi and Franz Liszt.

These instrumental styles, some Gypsy, some Hungarian, in fact embrace diverse influences, in particular Turkish ones – notably in the manner of playing the violin – and, of course, a very Gypsy genius for the aptly timed switch from languid melancholy to unbridled frenzy. Apart from these specialties of *Romungro* professionals, Hungary has other, more folkloric music styles, which are more authentically Hungarian. Yet here too the role of travelling musicians had a decisive impact and some of these styles are interpreted in the Gypsy manner to this day. Gypsy influence is also noticeable in popular song, which appeared around 1840 as a sort of *mélange* of the various tendencies mentioned above. We shall return to this subject.

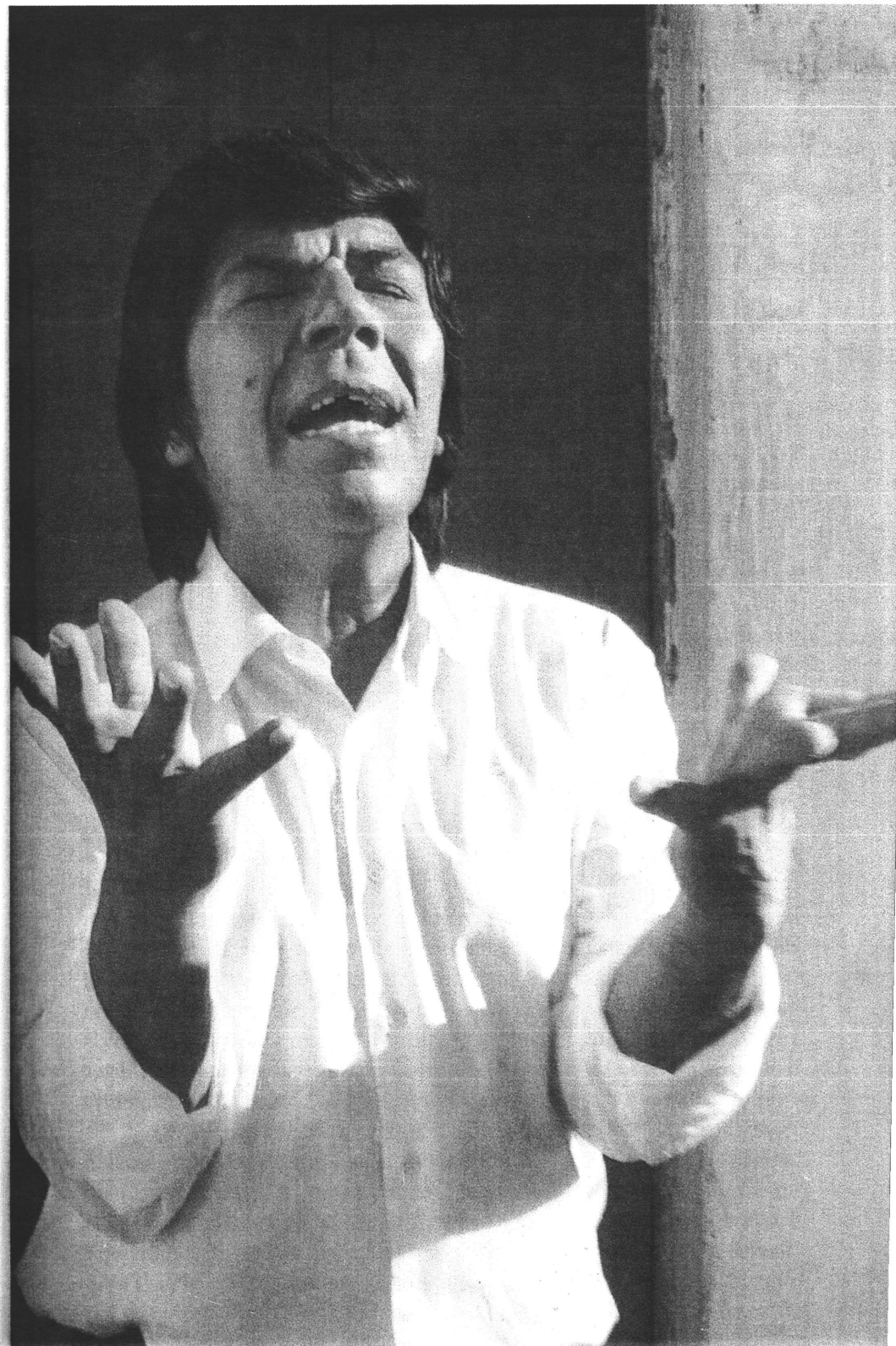
Gypsy 'flavour' and the *duende**

It is impossible to list all the musical styles played by Gypsy professionals, even if we were to limit ourselves to Europe. They display important differences in accordance with the habits and preferences imposed by indigenous musical cultures, yet all demonstrate a singular congruence and even a certain 'family resemblance', attesting to the *Gypsy* temperament of the musicians involved. What exactly is this famous temperament, this strange Gypsy 'flavour', immediately recognisable regardless of instrument or style? This is undoubtedly the hardest thing to define, since it can take such varied forms. In instrumental music it is often a diabolical virtuosity that takes your breath away, for it is never mechanical, but always animated by a sort of Dionysian trance. In slow movements, it is an exaggerated languor, the bitterest and sweetest melancholy, nostalgia at its tenderest and most cruel. In rapid passages it is a fervour, an unchaining of the senses, a paroxysm uniting a singer in Moscow and a dancer in Seville, Ankara musicians and Jerez *buleaeros** in the same raging flame.

Jarko Jovanovic, the great Yugoslavian Gypsy musician who died in Paris in 1986, defined one of the styles he interpreted as follows:

Fevered, soaring, tempestuous, extravagant, erotic, fragile, subtle, bitter and full of the sufferings of love ... It strikes straight at the emotions.

The strings may be squeaky and worn, the voice cracked and hoarse – what counts here is not the pure and polished sound imposed by the anxious academicism of our conservatories, but outrageous expressivity, a



sound too human to be heard without a total upheaval of one's being, a heartrending cry that rips through the guts and immerses the listener in the sacred ecstasy of the *duende**. In the argot of flamenco, one does not say that a voice is beautiful, but rather that it 'hurts'; it is not meant to please the listener, but to wound him like a dagger brandished in passion.

Federico García Lorca noted that the *duende* (which he defined, using an expression borrowed from Goethe, as 'a mysterious power that everyone feels and no philosopher can explain') enables the poorest material, the singer with no breath and no voice, the oldest, fattest dancer, to triumph. The best Gypsy music is by no means that displaying the greatest brilliance or virtuosity, but rather that which comes closest to an ideal which can be summarised as: 'maximum efficiency through minimum means'. Just as the best *coplas** *flamencas* can express the entire gamut of human emotion in two or three sibylline lines, the *duende* verges on the miraculous, like a dance on a tightrope stretched to breaking point. It can never be achieved without risk, it is never repeated and cannot be taught. The Gypsies say it's in the blood; Lorca too:

The *duende* is therefore a power, not a way of behaving; a struggle, not an idea. I have heard an old master guitarist say, 'The *duende* is not in the throat; the *duende* comes from within, from the very soles of the feet.' That is to say, it is not a question of a faculty but of a truly living style, of a very old culture, of creation in action.

Spain

In Spain as elsewhere, the Gypsies quickly gained a reputation as professional musicians, and from the late sixteenth century onwards were regular participants in popular festivities connected with Corpus Christi in many Spanish cities, such as Toledo, where their presence was noted in 1593, 1596 and 1604, and Segovia, where their participation was recorded in 1613, 1624, and 1628. In Grenada, this participation dates from 1607, when the Moors (Arabs recently converted to Christianity) were excluded from the festival and, two years later, expelled from the country. Writing in the same period, Cervantes gives us a description, in *La Gitanilla* (The Little Gypsy Girl), of the travels of the heroine and her troupe from village to village to enliven votive festivals by dancing in the streets. These Gypsy performances enjoyed such success that they were quickly imitated on theatre stages, and prompted a law signed by Philip IV in 1633 which sought to ban them.

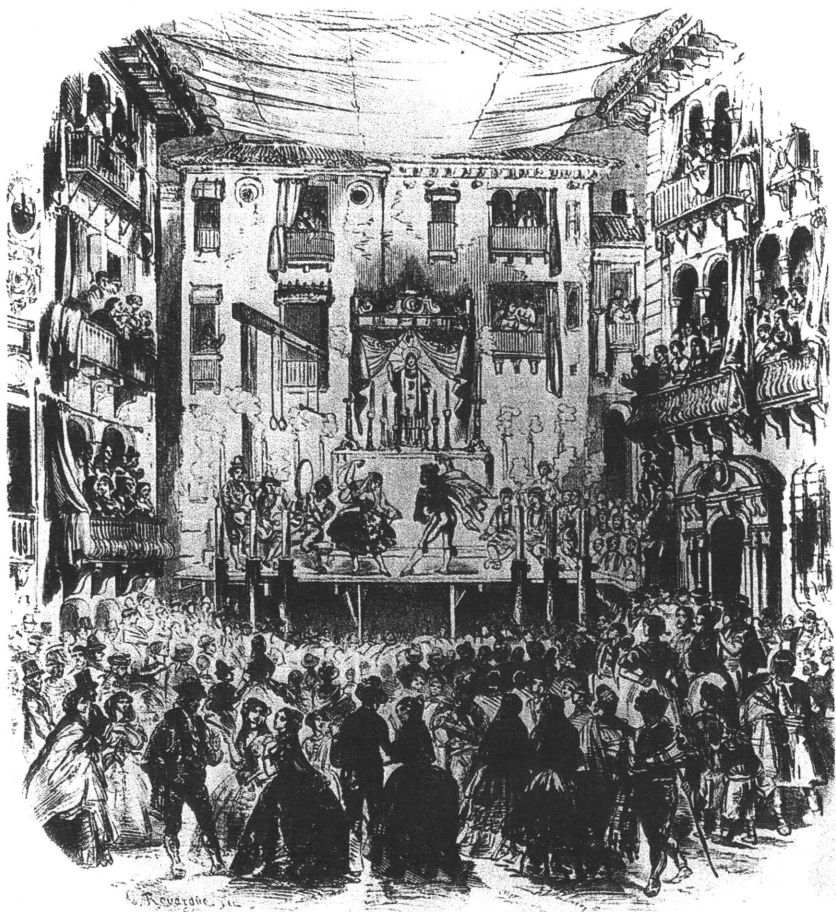


The 'Gypsy' repertoire

Dance with guitar and tambourine

The professional repertoire of the Gypsies of Spain during the Golden Age is well known. Some songs come down from the most authentically Spanish tradition, among them the *romances** – ancient narrative ballads with a fairytale or legendary content, many versions of which have been preserved thanks to their oral transmission in certain Gitano families – and the *seguidillas**, which are generally danced to. Of very ancient origin, these are a living component of Spanish folklore to the present day, having attained enormous popularity under the name of *Sevillenas*.

Over the years, the remainder of the repertoire has comprised the popular dances that come and go with changing fashions, such as the *polvico*, the *zarabanda* and the *chacóna* in the seventeenth century; a little later came the *bolero*, the *cachuca*, the *canario*, the *cucaracha*, the *cumbé*, the *dingo*, the *fandango*, the *guaracha*, the *guineo*, the *jaleo*, the *jopeo*, the *mandingoy*, the *tirana*, the *zarambeque*, the *zerengue*, the *zorongo*, among many others. These dances interpreted by eighteenth-century Gypsies are of very diverse origins: Andalusia, the Canaries, Africa and the Americas. The *guineo* and the *mandingoy* clearly display their African



Spanish festival, Valencia
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origins, as does the *cumbé*, whose refrain evokes Angola; the *guaracha* is Cuban and the *bolero* has two distinct identities: the version that appeared in Cadiz in

the eighteenth century has a very Iberian form and a three-part rhythm, while the version that surged through Europe the following century is distinctly Cuban.

What became of all these musical styles? The most ancient of them were preserved in the bosom of Gitano families, where they underwent some very strange transformations, as we shall see. The others all died out, with the exception of the *fandango*, and the *bolero* which, as already noted, was soon to re-emerge in another form.

Instruments

Quite apart from the theatre, where actors in Gypsy costume performed so-called 'Gypsy' music and dance, we also know a great deal about the participation of real Gypsies in public and private festivities. The essential element of the performance was always the dance, with musical accompaniment usually limited to percussion: a fairly large, slender tambourine (known as a *pandero* or *pandereta*) made of wooden hoops fitted with small metallic jingles (*sonajas*) and sometimes covered with skin on one or both sides. This basic instrument was sometimes supplemented by a guitar and, more frequently, castanets or perhaps strings of tiny bells around the dancers' ankles. Gitano women usually danced in groups of eight, and always outnumbered male dancers.

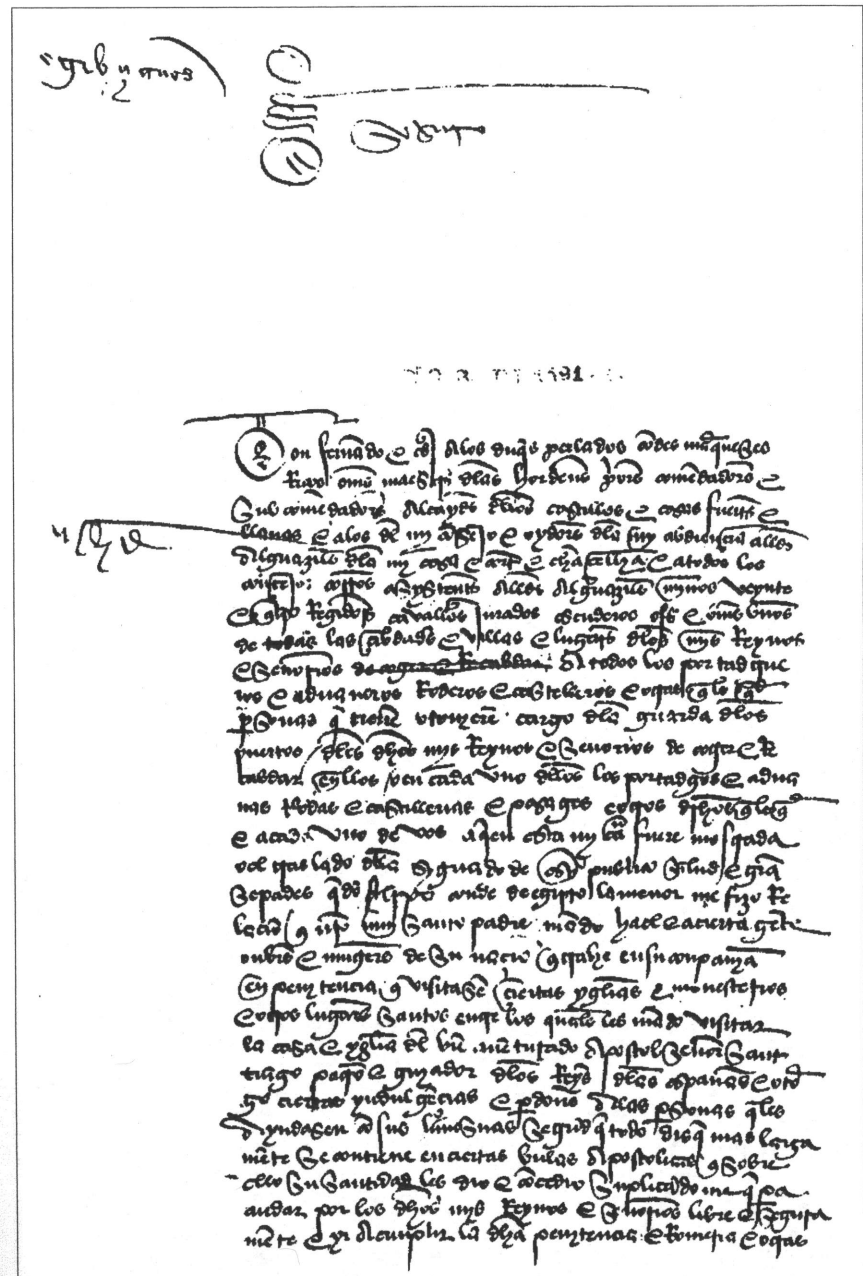
The really remarkable thing about these performances – whether real ones on the streets during festivals, or imitations on theatre stages – is that, despite official prohibitions, their popularity continued to grow even as anti-Gypsy prejudice and persecution intensified. This situation may appear paradoxical, but it provides an excellent illustration of the ever-ambiguous attitudes of sedentary populations towards the Gypsy people, a mixture of fear and envy, hatred and fascination.

CHAPTER TWO

Spain and the Gypsies: a policy of forced settlement

Gypsies began to make their way into Spain from 1425, via the Pyrenees. To begin with, they travelled in small groups of some thirty to a hundred individuals, under the direction of leaders calling themselves 'counts' or 'dukes' in order to impress the local authorities. They claimed to have been driven out of their own country, Little Egypt – a region of Messenia in the south-eastern Peloponnese – by Turkish invaders, and to have been ordered by the Pope to complete seven years of pilgrimage. With this double status as refugees expelled for their faith, and as Christian pilgrims, they were generally well received, and monarchs granted them letters of protection. In May 1425, for example, King Alphonsus V of Aragon intervened on behalf of Count Thomas of Little Egypt, en route to Santiago de Compostela, from whom the inhabitants of the city of Alagon had stolen two magnificent hounds. In 1462, two counts of Little Egypt were accorded a princely welcome by Constable Miguel Lucas de Iranzo, who invited them to dine at his table and provided accommodation for the rest of their troupe – some one hundred persons – in his palace at Jaén, in Andalusia, for a fortnight. Some years later, in 1470, the same constable received a count and a duke of Little Egypt at his Andujar residence, in the same manner.

From 1480, more troupes of Gypsies arrived in Spain. The men leading them no longer called themselves counts or dukes, but 'knights' or 'captains'. Nor did they mention Little Egypt, saying only that they came from Greece. The memory of this division of Gypsies into two groups was to survive in Spain at least until the early seventeenth century: in 1618 a scholar, Salazar of Mendoza, informs us that the 'Greeks' are blacksmiths while the 'Egyptians' are more closely associated with horse-dealing, the women distinguished from their 'Greek' counterparts



Safe-conduct granted by Ferdinand the Catholic to Philip, Count of Little Egypt, at Seville, March 1491

by characteristic costume including a multi-coloured blanket pinned at the shoulder and a great round headdress.

The intolerance of the Catholic monarchs* and their successors

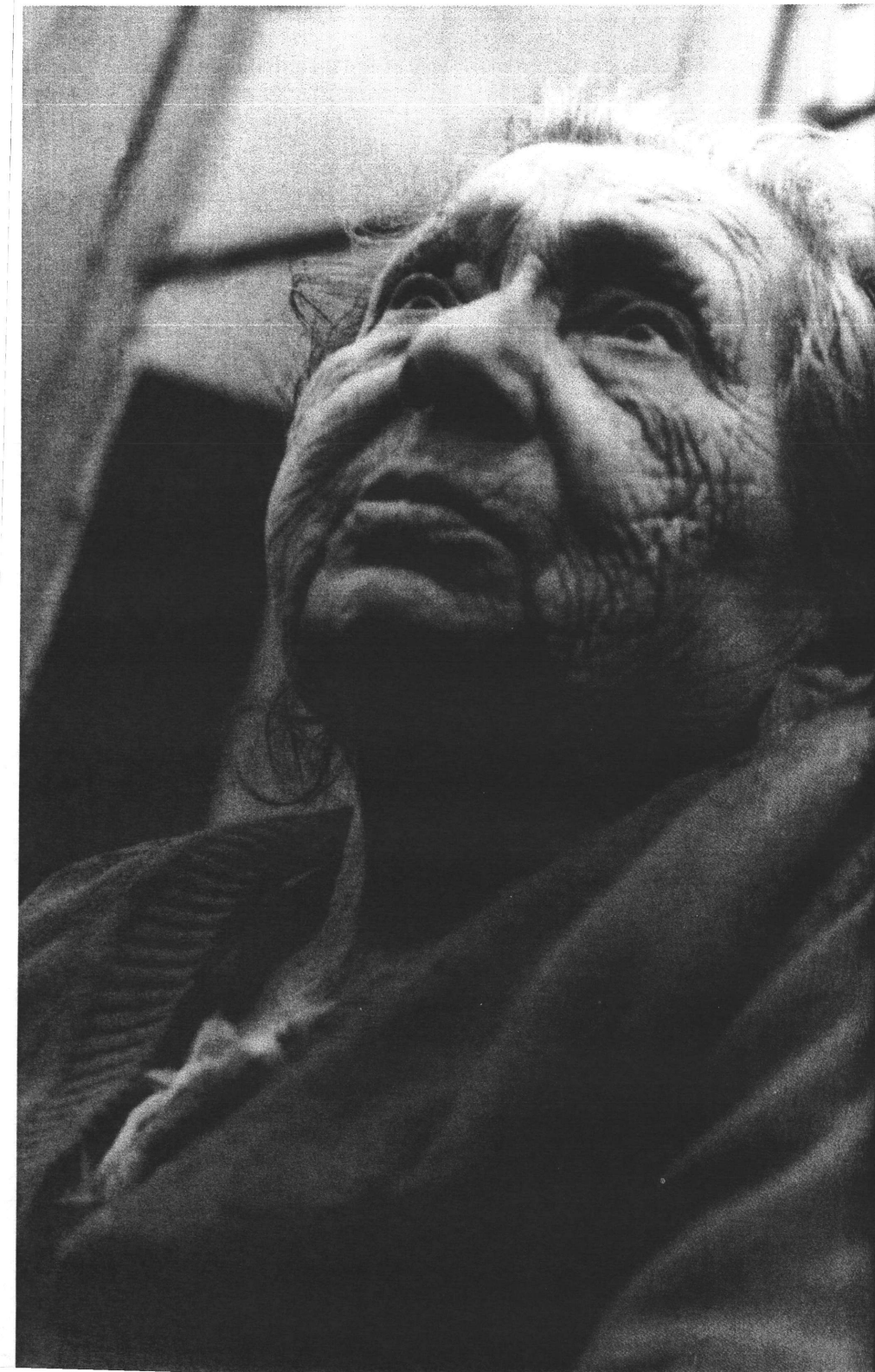
With the instatement of the Catholic monarchs, intolerance reared its head in Spain, a country where three religions – Christian, Jewish and Muslim – had until then co-existed. The Inquisition, set up in 1478, was to harry converted Jews (known as *Conversos* or *Marranos*) before turning its attentions to the *Morisques* or Moors (former Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity) and Protestants. 1492, the year of the reconquest of Grenada* and the discovery of the New World, was also the year the Jews were expelled. Then, in 1499, three years prior to the forced conversion of the Muslims, Ferdinand V and Isabella I, joint monarchs of Aragon and Castile, signed Spain's first anti-Gypsy law. This opens with the gracious salutation,

To you, the Egyptians, who wander our Kingdoms and Domains with your women, your children and your families, Salutation and Grace!

It ends, by contrast, on a less amiable note: the Gypsies were given a sixty-day period in which to settle down and take up a trade or hire themselves out as servants. Those who refused the proposal were given a further sixty days in which to quit the country permanently, on pain of one hundred lashes and condemnation to perpetual exile. In case of recidivism, they were to have their ears slit (the contemporary equivalent of 'having a record'), be incarcerated in chains for a period of sixty days, then re-expelled. Finally, if they persisted in disobeying, they were to become the slaves for life of whoever captured them.

This appalling text (adapted by the poet Felix Grande and interpreted by the Gitano singer Juan Peña 'El Lebrijano' in a celebrated 1979 recording under the title of *Persecution*) appears to have had little impact at the time. Forty years on, in 1539, after many complaints from the States General* (*las Cortes**) of Castile, Charles I* decided to issue a new law. This time, Gypsies were given a three-month deadline in which to choose between settlement and exile: once it had elapsed, any male aged between twenty and fifty caught travelling in a group of three or more was to be sent to the galleys* for six years.

There is evidence that these later measures were indeed enforced since, six years later, when mutiny broke out on a galley ship, there were



Sin secreto de bienes. En el cargo de el

NOS LOS INQUISIDORES

contra la heretica prauedad e apostasia. en la ciudad y Reyno de Toledo, por autoridad Apollolica, &c. Por la presente mandamos a vos

que prendays el cuerpo de Maria Rodriguez: que es una mujer gipsea con nuevos vestidos y muy alta y muy guada y trae una mantellana blanca muy larga, muy encendida de color y en el labio alto al lado izquierdo

y sacado de qualquiera Iglesia, o monesterio, o otro lugar sagrado. o privilegiado adonde estuviere. Y preso, le mirareis su persona, y vestidos: y no se le dexen en esta armas ningunas, ni dineros, oro, ni plata, joyas, ni papeles. Y hecha esta diligencia con el, le traeris a casa en que duerma, y para sus alimentos, y cosas del camino

ducados, si los tuviere en dineros. Y no los teniedo, venderes lo menos perjudicial de sus bienes, hasta en la dicha junta, por ante un escrivano, y comissario de este santo Oficio, si lo huviere, y si no, por ante la justicia del dicho lugar: guardando en la venta y remate de ellos, la forma del derecho. Y no siendo casado el susodicho, hareis poner por inventario los bienes que tuviere, y los depositareis en poder de una persona honesta, legítima, y aborada, qual mejor os pareciere, para que se los tenga y guarde: y que el susodicho d'ellos se pueda alimentar durante su prision. Y preso, y a buen recaudo, le traed a las carceles de este santo Oficio, y le entregad al alcaide de ellas, con este dicho mandamiento. Al qual mandamos que le reciba, y afsiente a las escaldas del calabozo, y hera que le reciba, y diligencia que con el hizo antes que le metiese en las carceles, y en la carcel que le puso. Y el dicho dia, si fuere a hora de audiencia, sino otro siguiente, trayga a la audiencia el dicho mandamiento, y los autos susodichos en el assentado. Y si para la dicha prision vos el dicho alguazil algun favor y ayuda huviere de menester, encargamos y necessario siendo) mandamos a todos y qualquiera jueces y justicias de su Magestad, asy eclesiasticas como seculares, y a otras qualquiera personas que de nuestra parte se lo pidieredes, que vos lo den, y hagan dar, lo las penas que de nuestra parte les pusieredes, y mandaredes poner: y si nos las auemos por puestas, y por condenados en ellas lo contrario haziendo. Y que os den todas las carceles, prisiones, peones, y cauilgaduras que les pidieredes, y huviere de menester para la seguridad y guarda del dicho preso, por vuestros dineros: y posada para vos, y vuestros criados, sin dineros, que no sea ni en casa ni en posada. Con la ropa, y comas necessarias: y que os hagan dar y den los mantenimientos que huviere de menester para vuestra persona, criados, y cauilgaduras, por vuestros dineros, no os los encareciendo mas de como valieren entre ellos. Fecho en Toledo a veinte e tres dias del mes de Julio año del Señor de mil y seiscientos e sesenta e tres.

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Handwritten signatures and names, including 'Diego Jimenez' and 'Por mandado de'.

thirty Gypsies aboard, three of them nearing the end of their sentences. Nonetheless the Gypsies must have succeeded in adapting to these curious interdictions on travelling in groups as, in 1560, Philip II in his turn signed another law, this one specifying that all men of the Gypsy community caught on the roads were to be sent to the galleys even if travelling in a group of less than three at the time of their arrest. This time round, the women were not forgotten: those wearing their traditional costume were to be whipped and banished for life.

'There is no such thing as a gypsy'

The laws of Castile, aimed at the immediate settlement of the Gypsy population, were somewhat original in comparison to those of the rest of Europe and indeed the remainder of Spain, which, deeming nomads to be undesirable, contented themselves with their regular expulsion. This difference of treatment was to have considerable repercussions later on, as we shall see, since the Gitanos were to experience mass settlement over the course of the eighteenth century, in stark contrast to the situation of Gypsies elsewhere in Europe.

The Spaniards hesitated somewhat before arriving at their particular 'solution', however. If settlement remained the official policy, there were still a fair number of proponents of expulsion pure and simple, and these expressed themselves loudest in the States General. In fact every party sought the most efficient method of ridding the country of a group whose mobility disturbed the more sedentary populations. It did not seem wise to send Gypsies over a border that they would simply re-cross when their new hosts' intolerance levels rose in their turn. Moreover, Spanish policy towards the Gypsy minority was based on a peculiar concept which can be summed up as 'There is no such thing as a Gypsy'.

This idea was based on the writings of some sixteenth century scholars, such as Albert Krantz and Sebastian Münster, who claimed that Gypsies were perfectly willing to accept into their troupes individuals from the countries they passed through. Spurred by mistrust and hatred, the scholars had concluded that the Gypsies were not an ethnically distinct people, but a ragbag of vagabonds fearing neither God nor man, the 'dregs of the nations' as one of them put it.

The Spanish were eager to develop this hypothesis, particularly following the expulsion of the Moors during the seventeenth century. Some went so far as to claim that Gypsies dyed their skin each month with the

Warrant for the arrest of a Gypsy woman, Maria Rodriguez, issued by the Toledo Inquisition, dated 20 July 1631

juice of certain plants, in order to appear foreign, and that they had made up a bogus language, a sort of incomprehensible argot, towards the same end. We shall look into how subsequent Spanish law was built around such thinking, and how the denial of Gypsy ethnicity led the Spanish into relentless suppression of every manifestation of distinctiveness, such as language, costume, lifestyle and traditional trades.

Recipes for extermination

However the Gypsy minority was defined, be it as an ethnic minority of foreign origin or as a subculture consisting of local drop-outs, the primary objective was their elimination or, as official texts sometimes phrased it, to *exterminate* them. As we have seen, deportation was not always considered to be the most efficacious way of achieving this, and many Spaniards felt that the ideal approach would be to have this odd section of the population disappear into the masses of ordinary citizenry. The first step, obviously, was to prevent Gypsies from breeding, and in 1594 two deputies to the States General of Castile came up with a rather original approach to this subject. According to them, all that was needed was to make the men live in a province very far from the one where women would be obliged to reside, and of course to prohibit both from travelling. Speaking their own language and wearing distinctive clothing were also to be forbidden. In this way, they would have no option but to marry the good peasants of their respective regions, and the problem would very quickly be solved.

The Assembly was divided on this proposal. A majority leaned towards expulsion, arguing that the supposedly very large numbers of 'false Gypsies' would doubtless prefer to renounce their way of life rather than be run out of their own country, and that the numbers actually expelled would therefore be negligible. Others, by contrast, felt that deportation was ineffectual against a nomadic people and that it would be better to send every one of them to the galleys. This latter solution was in fact largely implemented, with mass arrests of Gypsies decreed throughout the course of the seventeenth century whenever the Navy required new hands on the oars.

In 1610, when the general expulsion of the Moors had begun, the Duke of Lerme and the Council of State considered applying the same method to the Gypsies, but preferred first to complete the expulsion of the former Muslims, whose conversion was felt to be superficial. The

Gypsy project was eventually abandoned, despite numerous and violent protests.

The solution ultimately adopted by the government was the dispersal of Gypsies among cities of a thousand or more inhabitants, where they were to be kept under close scrutiny, with any manifestation of distinctive characteristics expressly prohibited. This project, adopted by the States General that same year, 1610, was to inspire all subsequent law. Its basic premise was the argument that the Gypsies are not a *nation*, or, to put it another way, do not comprise a separate ethnic group.

The law of Philip IV, 1633

Despite numerous petitions in favour of expulsion (all driven by implacable racial hatred and signed by scholars such as Salazar de Mendoza, university professors such as Sancho de Moncada, and court judges such as Juan de Quiñones) or arguing that the mere fact of being a Gypsy was a crime that ought to rate the galleys, the law signed by Philip IV in 1633 held true to the 1610 States General proposal and declared outright:

Those who call themselves Gypsies are not so by origin or nature, but solely because they have adopted this way of life, with measurable harmful effects and absence of profit for the State.

In consequence, Gypsies were banned from speaking a language or wearing costume different from those of other Spaniards. Horse-dealing and trading at fairs – their principal means of livelihood – were also forbidden them. The first article of this law very clearly reveals its ultimate goal: to submerge a conspicuous minority within the broad masses, thus obliterating it. To this end, Gypsies were ordered to quit areas where they lived together, in order to be dispersed into the population at large. They were forbidden to associate, whether publicly or in secret. They were kept under strict surveillance, with particular attention devoted to ensuring that they did not meet or marry among themselves; their religious practices were also closely monitored.

Article 2 applied itself to expunging the very name and memory of the cursed race (or subculture, depending on the point of view). Gypsy or not, no one was to have the right to utter this name, henceforward regarded as a grave insult and thus subject to heavy sanctions. All Gypsy entertainments, whether authentic or theatrical imitations, were prohibited:

Be it in the form of dances or any other occasion, no action or representation will be tolerated; the costume and the name of the Gypsies are to be forbidden.

Article 3 outlined the extremely severe sanctions to be applied to Gypsies daring to leave their places of residence: once again, the penalty was to be slavery for life. Gypsies caught in possession of weapons were to be sentenced to eight years in the galleys.

Gypsy hunting and ecclesiastical immunity

The adopted policy of assimilation of the Gypsy people was to be gradually perfected right up to the mid-eighteenth century. In parallel with it, police measures aimed at any Gypsies still wandering the countryside were reinforced. Within a short period armed militias specialising in this hunting down of humans were formed. In many regions, particularly La Mancha and Extremadura, bounty-hunters levied small troupes of armed cavalry to scour the countryside for Gypsies and deliver up to justice any they came across – dead or alive. They hoped to win honours in recognition of their actions, but above all they did it for the substantial benefits to be gained through confiscating Gypsy goods as well as extorting fines from local judicial administrators, whom they declared guilty of negligence or complicity. *Santa Hermandad* ('The Holy Brotherhood'), the armed league created in 1476 by the Catholic Monarchs, operated along the same lines, so effectively indeed that numerous conflicts arose between these para-militias and the ordinary forces of the law on the one hand, and Church jurisdiction on the other. In 1738, for example, an *alcalde** of Zalamea – a city whose resistance to abuses of power had already been made famous in plays by Lope de Vega and Calderón – confronted *Hermandad* archers in defence of Gypsies living in the municipality.

The question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction was to be a bone of contention for over a century. From 1643 Pedro de Villalobos, Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Salamanca, orchestrated a campaign aimed at demonstrating that the right to sanctuary, under which anyone pursued by the secular authorities could take refuge in churches, monasteries and convents, should not apply to Gypsies.

In 1700 the issue was revived with a trial calling so-called 'cold immunity' (*iglesias frías**) into question. Once an alleged offender had been removed by secular law enforcement agents from a church or other



Privileges of the Santa Hermandad, issued in 1721

venue under ecclesiastical jurisdiction and tried, he had to be returned to the place from which he had been arrested. If the authorities failed to do this, the individual could continue to appeal to the Church if rearrested or implicated in new offences. The Council* of Castile declared itself scandalised by such practices and formulated various proposals for submission to the Vatican with a view to their eradication.

In 1721 a commission was specially created by Philip IV to determine whether ecclesiastical immunity applied to Gypsies, and the question was definitively resolved in 1748 following an accord with the Holy See authorising the transfer of Gypsies claiming sanctuary in churches to

chapels within the grounds of enclosed penal colonies. This measure, which stripped Gypsies of their last protection, was to facilitate the general internment carried out the following year.

The laws of forced assimilation, 1695, 1717, 1745 and 1746

Settlement in closely supervised places of residence was seen as a first step towards the elimination of the Gypsies through assimilation. Numerous laws were passed to supplement the measures of the 1633 Pragmatic*. The first of these, signed by Charles II in 1695, aimed to remedy the failures of all earlier legislation. Its key measures were as follows:

Article 1: All Gypsies were required to register with the authorities of their place of residence within thirty days, declaring their name, age, marital status, profession, names and ages of children (if any), as well as weapons, horses, mules and other animals in their possession.

Article 2: Those who failed to register, or who failed to make a complete declaration, were liable to six years in the galleys.

Article 3: Following a period of a further thirty days, all Gypsies must be gone from the country, under pain of eight years in the galleys for men and two hundred lashes for women. Only Gypsies domiciled within communities of 200 or more inhabitants, under conditions enumerated in the following articles, would be tolerated.

Article 4: The sole occupation authorised for Gypsies was the cultivation of the soil. All infractions were punishable by eight years in the galleys.

Article 5: It was forbidden for Gypsies to possess or make use of horses. Only donkeys and mules essential for field labour would be tolerated.

Article 6: It was forbidden to possess firearms on pain of 200 lashes and eight years in the galleys.

Article 10: The buying, selling and trading of animals of all kinds was forbidden, on pain of six years in the galleys.

Article 11: Gypsies might not live together in the same quarter, nor wear costume distinct from that of other inhabitants, nor speak their own language, on pain of six years in the galleys for men, 100 lashes and deportation for women.

Article 12: Gypsies might leave their place of residence only to go to work in the fields. They might not travel to another locality without written authorisation.

Article 13: The galley penalties mentioned in the preceding articles applied to male Gypsies aged between seventeen and sixty years. Boys between fourteen and seventeen were to be sent to forced labour, while women were to be punished by whipping and banishment.

Article 14: Any Gypsy, settled or not, who travelled with two or more companions and possessed a weapon would be condemned to death, even if not caught in the act.

The 1717 law is merely an amended version of the above. From now on, any Gypsy found in possession of a firearm, whatever the circumstances, was to be subject to the death penalty. Article 4, stipulating agriculture as the sole occupation authorised to Gypsies, was revised to specify blacksmithing as particularly prohibited to them. Finally, its principal novelty lies in its designating forty-one cities as the sole authorised places of residence for Gypsies.

The law of October 1745 is exclusively concerned with Gypsies who desert their places of residence. Those who failed to return within a fortnight were declared to be bandits and could be shot on sight with no further legal process required.

As for the law of 1746, this adds a further thirty-four cities to the 1717 list, and specifies that Gypsies are to be distributed at a ratio of one family per hundred inhabitants. The authorities were to ensure that there was no more than one Gypsy family in any given street or quarter, and were charged with supervising these families' lifestyle and activities, taking particular care to keep them separated from each other.



The Pragmatic of Charles II, 12 June 1695



bour construction and maintenance – transporting extremely heavy stones while up to their waists in mud and water and encumbered by enormous leg chains.

Officials in charge of these establishments feared epidemics and mutiny. In fact mortality was high, but escape bids were rare and quickly brought in hand. Nonetheless the king eventually realised that an injustice had been perpetrated and ordered the release of all Gypsies deemed to be honest: their original places of residence were to reclaim them by honouring their requests for certificates of good conduct. Yet, according to a report issued by La Carraca Arsenal on 29 December 1749, less than half the internees benefited from this concession. In fact the intendant of Cartagena claimed shortly afterwards that those released were not necessarily the best, but simply the poorest, since municipal authorities were none too anxious to return the substantial assets confiscated from the well-to-do at the time of their arrest. Some of these unhappy victims were to rot in prison for up to sixteen years. In effect, the order for the Gypsies' general release, given by Charles III in 1763, was to be greatly delayed by the two Council Prosecutors, Campomanes and Sierra Cienfuegos, who, instead of designating places of residence for liberated internees as requested, became embroiled in endless arguments.

A dark age of enlightenment

The great debate raging around the Gypsies in the second half of this so-called 'enlightened' century is of little credit to the illustrious men involved, admirers of the French Encyclopaedists, such as the Count of Campomanes, Prosecutor of the Council of Castile, and the Count of Aranda, a personal friend of d'Alembert and Voltaire and President of the same Council. The former proposed the incarceration of all able-bodied settled Gypsies in penal colonies, which he euphemistically dubbed 'closed residences'; all others were simply to be deported to America. The Count of Aranda championed deportation for unmarried Gypsies.

He stipulated that boys should be sent to the islands and girls to the mainland, thus reviving the method of extermination proposed by the States General in 1594. As for married couples of childbearing age, Aranda argued simply that there should not be more than one such couple per locality; anyone straying over a quarter of a league (less than two kilometres) from their domicile would be condemned to the gallows, whilst children would be separated from their parents at weaning, or

when they began to talk. Charles III, whom posterity was to take as the very model of an enlightened sovereign, went further still: he wanted Gypsy children to be removed from their parents at birth, and opposed their being sent to school, particularly in the case of girls, since he felt that mixing with boys (there were very few girls' schools at the time) would only encourage their natural licentiousness.

The law of 1783

This debate eventually led to the passing of the last of the Spanish Gypsy laws. Signed in 1783 by Charles III, it was drawn up by Campomanes in collaboration with a far less prominent Councillor, Pedro Valiente. The deportation and 'closed residences' dear to the former were finally dropped and the amendments concerning children, proposed by Aranda and indeed the king himself, were modified and limited to the families of persistent offenders. In fact the principal novelty of this law was that it granted Gypsies equal rights with other citizens, in particular with regard to work and residence. Article 1 reiterates the principle of the 1663 law: '*Those who call themselves Gypsies are not so by origin or nature,*' but adds an important proviso: '*and they do not spring from corrupt stock.*' In other words, there was to be no more talk of an infamous or cursed race – but by the same token any manifestation of distinctiveness, be it language, costume or lifestyle, was to be severely penalised.

Article 3 states that the word *Gypsy* and its substitute *New Castilian** have become very grave insults, the use of which will henceforward be proscribed. Article 5 allows ex-Gypsies (now unnameable) access to all trades and guilds, on condition, obviously, that they renounce all distinguishing characteristics. By contrast the recalcitrant who continue to comport themselves as Gypsies are to be branded with red-hot irons, and, in case of recidivism, condemned to death.

Despite its limitations, the law of 1783 did effectively confer some freedoms on the Gypsies, now permitted to exercise the occupation of their choice and reside wherever they liked. Indeed, considerable movement took place over the following years, and shortly after the death of Charles III, in 1788, more or less as the French Revolution was getting under way, the first families of Gypsy horse-dealers from Barcelona and thereabouts began to cross the frontier and establish themselves in Southern France.

CHAPTER THREE

Gypsy-Andalusians: the 'flamenco families'

The last chapter outlined the official situation of the Gypsies in Spain from their arrival in the fifteenth century to the passing of the law of 1783, a period marked by a long series of assimilative measures. What these laws do not tell us is that some Gypsy families were to settle spontaneously in certain towns and villages – especially in Andalusia – outside the implacable surveillance of the officially approved residences. Sometimes this was by their own initiative, before draconian laws



Gypsy women of Triana, a suburb of Seville

regulating settlement came into operation, sometimes because they enjoyed particular privileges there.

The Moorish heritage

Historians have frequently confused the Moors (Spanish Muslims subjected to forcible conversion from 1502) and the Gypsies. Many nineteenth and early twentieth century authors asserted that the Gypsies were descended from Arabs. More recently a hypothesis emerged which claimed that the Moors disguised themselves *en masse* as Gypsies to evade the general expulsion of the early seventeenth century. This hypothesis quickly gained widespread acceptance and has been used by other authors towards unabashedly racist ends, the aim being to demonstrate definitively that the families of Lower Andalusia, among whom the flamenco phenomenon came into being in the early nineteenth century, were not Gypsy.

This hypothesis rests on rather slender evidence, namely two Inquisition trials and a certain similarity between the characteristic trades exercised by the two communities which, as we shall see, lends itself to a simpler explanation. The first of these trials, before the Inquisition of Grenada in 1577, was of Fernando López, a Moor, arrested because he was taken for a Gypsy. His disguise seems most unlikely to have been in order to avoid deportation (since this project wasn't even on the cards until 1582, and was only implemented between 1609 and 1615); in fact López was en route to North Africa at the time of his arrest. The second trial, conducted before the Inquisition of Valencia in 1590, is even less conclusive, since it concerns one Pedro Orejón who 'became Gypsy' for the love of a beautiful Gypsy girl. There are many such cases of conversion for love, in which neither the fact of being Moorish nor the threat of expulsion are of relevance.

The similarity of occupations can be logically explained by the fact that many Gypsies took advantage of the expulsions to fill the resulting gaps. The Gypsies were also to be subject to general expulsion once the Moorish project had been concluded, but this plan was eventually dropped. In 1763 Campomanes furnishes us with an *a posteriori* explanation for this decision:

Expelling citizens from the Country was not good policy, since when the Moors were driven out in 1613, in considerable numbers, they left behind them deserted houses and fields, and abandoned trades.

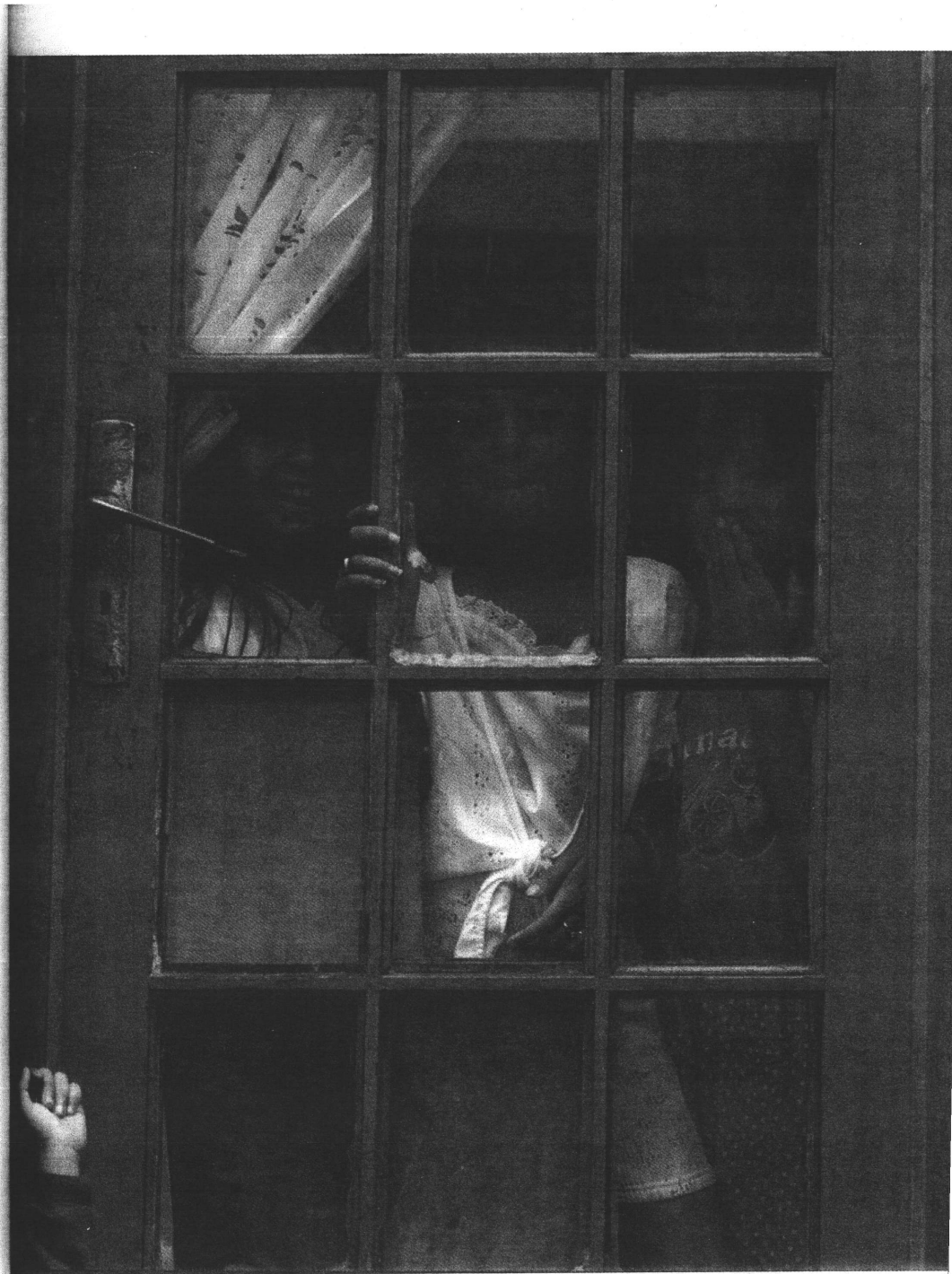
The Council Prosecutor adds that there was more to be gained by encouraging Gypsies to replace the deportees, and that besides some did so spontaneously, with no particular incentive other than the wish to avoid mounting persecution and achieve a degree of security.

This is the explanation for the fact that many Gypsy families, particularly in Andalusia, exercise trades and crafts generally scorned by *Old Christians* (people of Spanish stock) and practised by the Moors up to the seventeenth century. These include not only blacksmithing and horse-dealing – which are in any case traditional Gypsy trades – but also masonry, shoemaking, rope- and mat-weaving, baking and butchery, among others.

The first settled families

This quiet integration of Gypsy families was in fact already going on well before the departure of the Moors. In 1573, many expelled Gypsy families requested readmission to the Navarra villages of Falces and Larraga. Thanks to the service records of some of their members, who had fought with valour under the command of Don Juan of Austria during the Moorish revolt (1569-1570), they were readmitted, despite opposition from residents. All the same, they were required to abandon their language and costume, and to avoid the company of other Gypsies.

It was in 1576, only a very few years later, that the Cortés and Medrano families settled in Antequera, Andalusia. Some twenty years later, as it became more and more difficult for Gypsies to travel the roads of Spain, they applied through the intermediary of the local authorities for a royal pass authorising them to travel freely in pursuit of their trades. Nine witnesses, including two priests, four municipal councillors and a lawyer, testified on their behalf, and this is how we now know that these families were good Christians, dressed like everybody else, owned property in the town and sent their children to school. They were, in fact, indistinguishable from other inhabitants: they were socially integrated, they cultivated their lands, and paid their taxes. Moreover they too had service records, as they helped to defend the cities of Cadiz and Gibraltar when these were under English and Dutch attack, and had also supplied grain to the Army, the border defence forces and the Fleet.



'Old Castilian' certificates

There are a fair number of similar cases, where Gypsy families obtained royal Privileges* in the form of certification officially granting them *Old Castilian* status and exempting them from current anti-Gypsy legislation. One of the most interesting is that of the Bustamante, Rocamora, Montoya and Flores families, who procured a royal warrant at Valladolid (then the Court Residence) in 1602, a second letter in 1620, and a further royal warrant in 1623. The records tell us that they or their near relatives – fathers, brothers, brothers-in-law and nephews – had served with the army in Flanders for a total of twenty-four years, and that many had given their lives for Spain. Consequently the king granted them the right to choose their place of domicile and to trade at fairs and markets despite existing anti-Gypsy law, from which they were exempted.

Recent research, such as that carried out in Andalusia by Manuel Martinez, confirms that the number of Gypsies involved in the war with Flanders was 'much higher than estimated heretofore'. Martinez cites the case histories of many Andalusian Gypsies who were Flanders veterans, among them Sebastián de Maldonado and Sebastián de Soto. In 1639 each of these men offered to recruit, in Seville and elsewhere in Andalusia, a company of 200 men of their own community (*nación*), with whom they would return to the battlefields. It should be noted that the families of these Gypsy soldiers customarily followed the army and that mixed marriages probably took place during their long stays in Flanders; some claim that this could account for the significant numbers of blond, blue-eyed Andalusian Gypsies. Be that as it may, the return of the Flanders veterans between the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) and the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) coincided with a spectacular upsurge in the persecution of Gypsies and it is reasonable to suppose that those with service records would have used them to protect themselves, preferring to pass as Flemish (*Flamencos*) than as Gypsies. Moreover, when we trace the histories of the families most closely involved in the Flanders war, we note that they are intermarried with most of the flamenco families. Indeed, some of the most renowned flamenco families – the Flores, Montoyas and Sotos – have been demonstrated to descend directly from Flanders veterans, and new discoveries will undoubtedly add further names to this list.

Changes in a privileged situation

Even for the privileged, things have a tendency to go awry. A Gypsy woman named María de Montoya, who had obtained a letter from the Council in 1677 authorising her to reside in a number of towns and villages, ran into difficulties three years later with *Santa Hermandad** archers, as well as with the authorities in her place of domicile. When she applied for a fresh copy in 1692 to replace the now badly worn original, the Council refused, on the grounds that she was simply using the document as a permit for vagabondage. Similarly, in the early eighteenth century the González family, domiciled at Brihuega and subsequently at Valdepeñas, were to suffer persecution, despite holding numerous letters from the Council requesting that they be treated as *Old Castilians*.

Saved by their music

In certain cities increasingly restrictive anti-Gypsy laws posed problems for the authorities. This was the case in 1698 in Seville, where Gypsies played the tambourine and fife free of charge for companies of the militia. The grateful town wished to spare them from persecution, especially as they were also blacksmiths: the new law, passed three years earlier, barred them from all but agricultural labour. The Council granted the Seville municipal authorities' request by permitting them to make an exception for these Gypsy musicians.

Official recognition of the Gypsies' contribution to society

After 1717 things became even more complicated, as Gypsies no longer had the right to reside outside those cities expressly designated by law. For a time, families who had become well integrated thanks to their professions, continued to lead a trouble-free existence since the local authorities were not always fully aware of legislative developments in the capital. Yet the Council was implacable: the 1717 law was reiterated in 1726, 1731, 1738 and 1740. In 1746, as explained earlier, the number of approved residences was raised from forty-one to seventy-five, and the authorities in those towns which were not on the list started to become uneasy. At Jerez the *corregidor** and Municipal Council jointly intervened on behalf of a number of families by the name of Monje (one of whose descendants, living at San Fernando near Cadiz, was to become

famous in our own times as *Camarón*). Their statement attested that the Monjes had been living in Jerez for many generations, that they were employed in agriculture and at blacksmithing (which was illegal, but the authors appeared to be unaware of this), and that they were very useful to the farmers' guild. In consequence, they desired that the Monjes remain in Jerez and not be subjected to the new law (on the understanding that they would not wear the costume of the Gypsies, speak their language, or mix with them). Similarly, the *corregidor* of Motril intervened on behalf of the Cortés, de Arroyo, de Cárcamo, de Carmona, Belmúdez and Torcuato families, as these were employed in local sugar refineries, then at the height of operations.

At Vélez-Málaga, the *corregidor* interceded in favour of sixteen Gypsy families who had been living in the town for several generations and whose work as blacksmiths and sheep-shearers – both expressly forbidden occupations – was deemed highly useful to the community. His statement included a plea for recognition of the fact that they had obtained authorisation to reside in the town, and that obliging them to leave their work and move elsewhere would threaten their very survival. Having studied the various cases put before them, the Council granted the *corregidores* permission to keep their Gypsies, provided that they behaved, in every particular, like any other citizens. Having made this decision, the Council planned to extend this type of exemption to all localities requesting it, on condition that the Gypsies concerned, recognised as fulfilling a role of public usefulness, had resided in their locality for a minimum of ten years. As for Gypsies in possession of papers authorising them to be classified as *Old Castilians*, many of which had been confiscated during enforced relocation, the Council decided to return these to their owners, provided they too fulfilled the same conditions. The aim was to avoid the pointless overcrowding of the approved residences with families whose presence was considered beneficial elsewhere.

All this time preparations were under way for the great round-up of 1749. Initially, no one was to be spared, though, as we have seen, some privileged individuals and their families were 'reclaimed' by their places of residence a few months later. Until 1783 most Spanish Gypsies were kept under close surveillance, but we may assume that some well-integrated families, recognised as useful in their Andalusian villages, were less dramatically affected than the rest of the community.

After 1783

The tumult continued throughout Spain for a good five years after the passing of Charles III's law in 1783. Many *corregidores*, accustomed to thinking of Gypsies as outlaws, or indeed as simple gallows fodder, were unwilling to see them regaining even a degree of liberty. In practice the Pragmatic was almost always interpreted negatively, and arrests actually increased. In 1785 an *alcalde* went so far as to write to the Count of Floridablanca, Minister of State and Counsellor to Charles III, to propose the systematic arrest of all transient strangers for an identity-check, and requiring all Gypsies wishing to travel outside their place of residence to carry a special pass. Restrictive clauses reminiscent of these even reappeared in the regulations of the *Guardia Civil*, drawn up in 1943 under the Franco regime:

Article 4: The Gypsies are to be kept under scrupulous surveillance, the documents in their possession examined with the greatest of attention, their clothing closely observed, their way of life monitored, and all other measures taken which will make it possible to form a clear picture of their activities as well as the motive and destination of their travels.

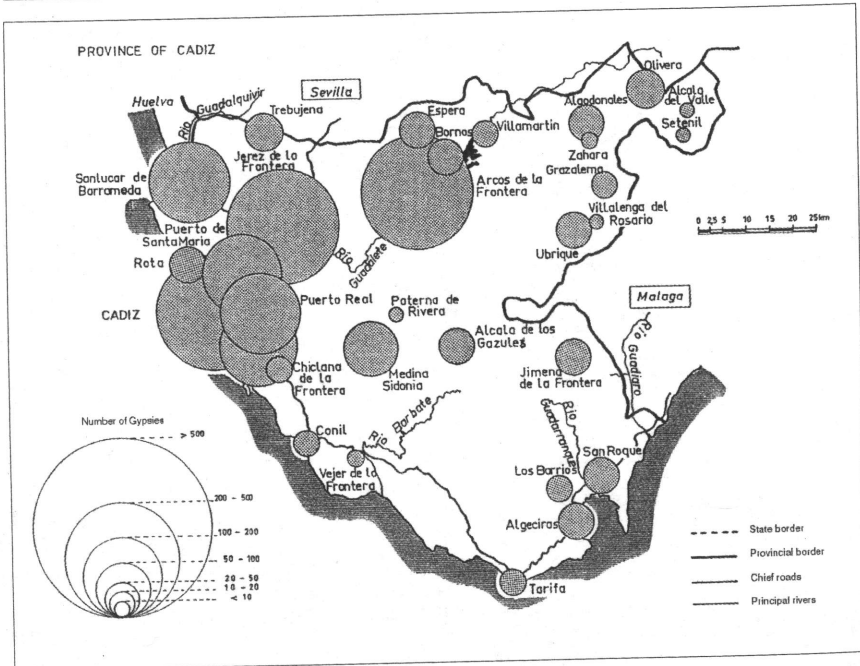
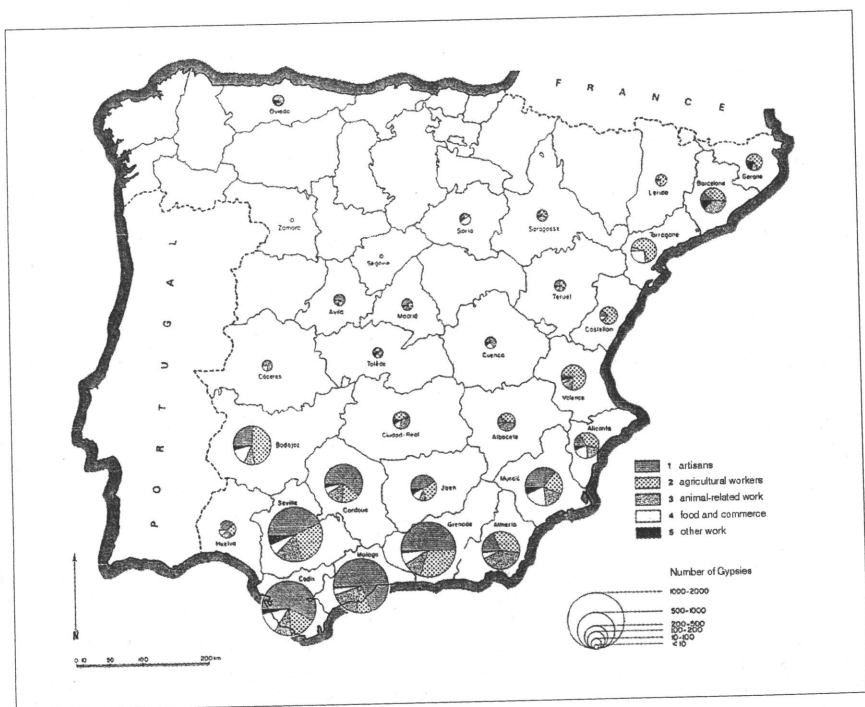
Article 5: Given that individuals in this category are generally of no fixed abode and are continually on the move from place to place to avoid recognition, it is advisable to gather all relevant information about them in order to prevent their stealing horses or goods of any other type.

At the same time it should be noted that not all reports submitted to the Council and the king after the passing of the 1783 Pragmatic were negative. Some courts reported that offences committed by Gypsies over the previous ten years were generally of a petty nature, primarily the theft of foodstuffs, a fact which would seem to indicate that the perpetrators stole from necessity. Magistrates also remarked on the tendency to systematically attribute to the Gypsies all thefts committed in an area, and the fact that many *Payos* (non-Gypsies) took advantage of this situation to hide their own misdeeds.

The censuses of 1784 and 1785

The legislation drafted by Campomanes and Valiente in 1771 called for a

Gypsies and Flamenco



PLAN GENERAL

en que con distinción de Partidos y Provincias se manifiesta el número de personas conocidas con el nombre de Gitanos que se hallan establecidas en los Reynos de la Corona de Castilla, con expresión de las arrendadas antes de la R.º Pragmática de 13 de Septiembre de 1783: de las que lo han ejecutado después, y de los contraventores castigados y penados según refugia de las listas remitidas por los Corregidores y Alcaldes mayores a consecuencia de lo mandado por S. M. en R.º O.º de 20 de Diciembre de 1784 y de las comunicadas en 28 del mismo

PROVINCIA	PARTIDOS	Gitanos arrendados antes de la Pragmática				Gitanos arrendados después de la Pragmática				Contraventores	Total de personas			
		Arrendados de mas de 12 años	Arrendados de mas de 15 años	Arrendados de mas de 17 años	Arrendados de mas de 20 años	Arrendados de mas de 12 años	Arrendados de mas de 15 años	Arrendados de mas de 17 años	Arrendados de mas de 20 años		Cast. de personas por cada Partido	Cast. de personas por cada Provincia		
Alicante	Alicante	3	7	7	3							20	20	
	Cordona	10	16	11	12	2	1	1	2			23	170	
Caceres	Caceres	5	10	4	5	6	5	2	1			40	123	
	San Clemente	7	3	3		11	13	4				35		
Cantabria	Alcortera	10	16	12	7	1	1				2	52		
	Almonacid del Campo	4	1	1	3							11		
	Burgos	51	16	18	25	10	7	7	6			177		
	San Sebastian	3	3			3	4	4	3			14	631	
	Merindad de Urduliza	40	54	25	30	3	3	3	2		5	172		
	Merindad de Biscaya	33	23	27	26	1	1	2				120		
	Merindad de Cantabria	7	1									8		
	Merindad de Castilla	1	1	3	11	4	2					32		
	Merindad de la Sierra	13	7	6	6							32		
	Merindad de Roncesvalles	16	14	14	14	7	8	6	5			85		
Granada	Alhambra	12	17	11	11	4	1	2			4	50		
	Alora	46	40	36	20	12	10	7	6		7	186		
	Armija	26	24	12	12	7	2	2	2		11	86		
	Baza	127	105	72	83	32	23	31	24	1	3	512		
	Guadix	7	4	2	4							11		
	Guadalupe	184	153	114	20	10	7	10	2		11	580		
	Guillem de Dax	38	20	13	14						1	71	2332	
	León	24	31	30	32							120		
	Montealegre	132	118	84	84	1	1	1	3			403		
	San Pedro	3	4	4	4	1	1	1	3			16		
Jaen	Alcazar	23	26	23	20	1	1	1	3			105		
	Alcazarquivir	33	40	34	35	3	10	5	2		1	143		
	Alcazarquivir	73	63	48	42	6	7	6	4			246		
	Alcazarquivir	20	21	18	14							82		
	Alcazarquivir	18	13	12	16	6	7	2	2	1		85		
	Alcazarquivir	14	10	8	8	1	1	1	1			43		
	Alcazarquivir	7	7	5	7						2	27		
	Alcazarquivir	12	12	12	12	4	4	4	4	2		54	370	
	Alcazarquivir	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2			26		
	Alcazarquivir	4	4	4	4	2	1	1	1			15		
Mancha	Alcazarquivir	23	12	5	4	2	6	8				80		
	Alcazarquivir	2	1	2	1	2	4	3				12		
	Alcazarquivir	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				12	74	
	Alcazarquivir	2	2	2	2	1	1	1				8		
	Alcazarquivir	8	2	2	2	2	2	2				26		
	Alcazarquivir	2	1	2	2	2	2	2				11		
	Murcia	Carabanchel	2	2		4	2	4	2				4	
		Carabanchel	18	12	3	3	3	2	2				81	
		Carabanchel	8	11	4	3	3	3	3				28	
		Carabanchel	6	5	3	3						4	183	
Carabanchel		100	94	70	58	6	5	1	2	8	1	14	735	
Carabanchel		6	7			1	1	3				16		
Carabanchel		13	12	4	3	3	2	2				52		
Carabanchel		4	3	1	1	1	1	1				10		
Carabanchel		50	50	33	38	3	2	2				178		
Carabanchel		163	223	22	60		2	1			2	398		
Sevilla	Carabanchel	17	18	2	11	1						124		
	Carabanchel	8	8	2	7							30		
	Carabanchel	13	12	11	6	4	1		1	5	1	50	1084	
	Carabanchel	34	43	20	19							167		
	Carabanchel	8	2	2	2							27		
	Carabanchel	112	76	77	62	2	3	2	2	1	3	372		
	Carabanchel	333	194	204	238	30	50	10	16	3	3	132		
	Carabanchel	3	3	3	3							12		
	Carabanchel	211	274	121	112	2	3	1				876		
	Soria	Castell	1	1	1		1						3	
Castell		3	3	6	2	4	6	2				30	38	
Tolosa	Alcazarquivir	1	1			1	2	1	1		2	40		
	Alcazarquivir	20	24	12	2	2	1	1				40	232	
Vizcaya	Alcazarquivir	24	21	13	18	0	12	8	10			128		
	Alcazarquivir	4	2	1		4	2					11		
Zaragoza	Alcazarquivir	3	2	1		2						4	4	
	Alcazarquivir	7	20	10	4					10	8	50	13	
Regimen General	Alcazarquivir	2768	3788	1776	1467	282	501	314	178	83	28	8172	5822	
	Alcazarquivir													

Map of Spain and of the province of Cadiz showing geographical distribution of the

census of all Gypsies in Spain. Two months after the passing of the Pragmatic signed by Charles III (September 1783), orders were sent out to all *corregidores* to compile a detailed list of Gypsies domiciled in their respective districts. These instructions were interpreted in such varied ways that the Council was obliged to send out numerous memoranda and eventually ended up with two series of lists, drawn up in 1784 and 1785, which largely complement one another and together provide very precise information on a total population of 12,090 Gypsies. This is how we come to know the surnames, first names, ages and occupations of all Gypsy heads of family residing in Spain at the time, as well as of their wives, children and other family members under the same roof. Some of these lists even give physical descriptions of the individuals concerned. Region by region, Andalusia was home to the greatest proportion, registering over 67% of Spain's Gypsy population. Next was *el Levante* (the central Mediterranean coastal region) with 14%, Catalonia (7.9%), Extremadura (5.2%) and New Castile (3.3%). In Aragon, Old Castile and León, the numbers drop below 1%. No Gypsies were registered in the remaining provinces: Galicia, the Basque Provinces, and the Canaries.

The case of Andalusia

Within Andalusia itself, the Gypsy population was distributed as follows: Cadiz had the highest proportion, with 16.5% of the Gypsy population of the country as a whole, followed by Seville with 15%, Grenada (11.1%), Malaga (9.1%), Almería (6.4%), Cordoba (4.1%), Jaén (3.8%) and Huelva (1%). The information available from Andalusia also suggests better than average integration of the Gypsy population: it is here that the percentage of Gypsies working as blacksmiths – a trade expressly forbidden them by law, as we have seen, and a privilege reserved for those deemed to be well-integrated – is highest (41%), while the proportion engaged in the compulsory occupation of farming is lowest, at 23%. Here, too, the highest proportion of mixed marriages was to be found (7.3% of all couples in the Gypsy census), while they rarely amounted to 2% elsewhere in Spain.

The Andalusian miracle

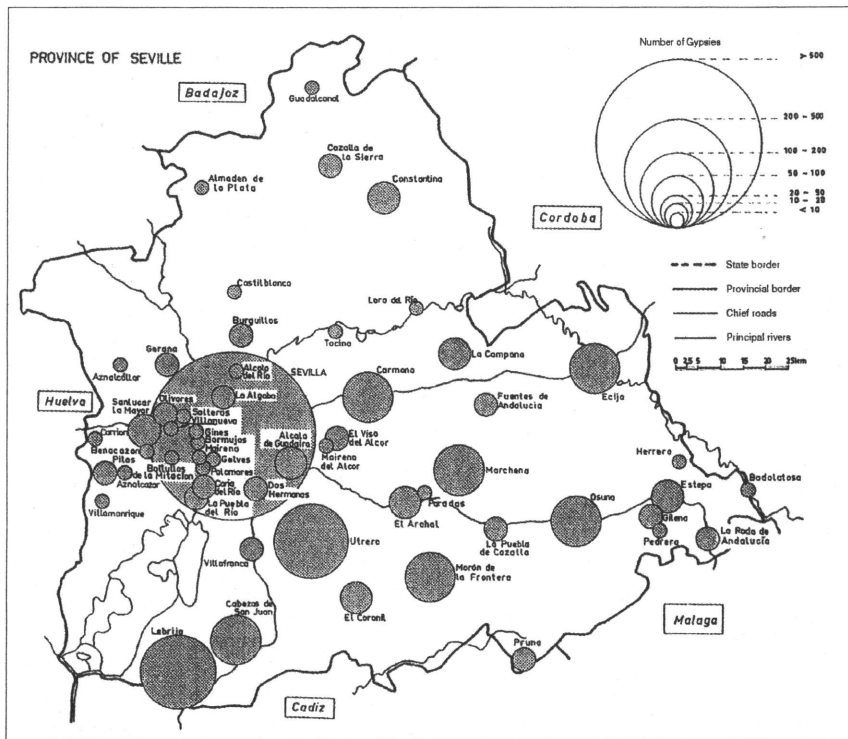
This data establishes that Andalusia was unique with regard to the Gypsy population there. The underlying reasons for this are diverse. Some are

historical: we know, for example, that there had once been a strong Moorish presence in the towns and villages and that the gaps created by their expulsion were filled by Gypsies. We know, too, that social coexistence with ethnic minorities engaged in certain reserved occupations was by no means alien to the tradition of openness and hospitality that characterised the region.

Among the economic factors contributing to Gypsy integration in Andalusia, we note the existence of *latifundia** which provided massive temporary employment through seasonal labour. Even more significantly, it was an agricultural society which had developed horse-trading in a particular way and accorded certain types of work, such as blacksmithing and itinerant trading, special prestige. Thus Gypsy specialisations found a favourable terrain in Andalusia.

Flamenco: a philosophy and a way of life

We cannot overlook the hidden affinities between the Gypsies and the Andalusians, two peoples who are different but nonetheless share a number of values and traits: generosity, hospitality, a strong religious bent (or should we say a form of paganism?), the cult of honour, of courage, in short of a certain *machismo*, an ability to live in the present and, of course, a love of celebration. These shared characteristics facilitated what we might call Gypsy-Andalusian 'osmosis' and gave rise to a 'flamenco philosophy'. The word *flamenco* – which as we have seen originally referred exclusively to the Gypsies themselves – covers not only the musical art shared (and sometimes fiercely contested) by both the Andalusian and the Gypsy communities, but also refers to a way of life, a set of attitudes, chief among which are prodigality, a hair-trigger temper, insane passion and a contempt for 'polite behaviour' and material values. According to a famous saying, *los Flamencos no comen* ('flamenco aficionados do not eat'), and it is true that the search for extraordinary moments of communication and quasi-mystical musical exaltation in the course of intimate gatherings known as *juergas** has nothing whatever to do with the satisfaction of 'vulgar' appetite, despite the fact that consumption of alcohol (in the form of *fino*, the heady wine of Jerez) is a powerful stimulant of the *cante** in this bid to transcend our 'normal' physical limitations.



The geographical framework

Map showing geographical distribution of Gypsies in the province of Seville

At the end of the eighteenth century 'Gypsy Andalusia' was not the whole of the province, and 'Flemish' families were very unevenly distributed within it. In fact the two regions of Cadiz and Seville accounted for nearly half (46.8%) of the Gypsies in Andalusia, with 16.5% in Grenada, 13.5% in Malaga, Almería and Jaén each under 10%, and a mere 1.6% in Huelva, the least Gypsy region of Andalusia. Within Cadiz and Seville, sixteen localities stand in sharp contrast to the area as a whole, with some 821 Gypsy families, nearly a quarter of the entire Spanish Gypsy population at the time. These towns were, in order, Seville, Jerez, Cadiz, Arcos, Sanlúcar, Puerto de Santa María, Lebrija, Utrera, San Fernando (*La Isla*), Puerto Real, Ecija, Marchena, Medina Sidonia, Morón, Osuna and Carmona. All of these towns are considered flamenco strongholds, and most of them are part of what is known as the 'cradle', that special zone where the *cante* first appeared before spreading throughout Andalusia and spilling over its borders.

The great flamenco family

The largest Gypsy families were: Vargas, Jiménez, García, Reyes, Monje, Heredia, Fernández, Moreno, Flores, Cruz, Montoya, Bermúdez, Cortés and Peña. Other families noted were (in alphabetical order): the Carrascos (blacksmiths in Puerto de Santa María, agricultural labourers and sheep-shearers in Lebrija), the Espletas (butchers in Sanlúcar de Barrameda), the Junqueras (concentrated mostly around Arcos), the Loretos (field labourers at Lebrija), the Nuñez (blacksmiths at Cadiz, Puerto de Santa María and Ecija, farmers in Jerez and mule-drivers in Morón), the Ortegas (blacksmiths in Puerto Real), the Pavóns (blacksmiths in Castilblanco), the de los Santos (sheep-shearers and blacksmiths in Seville, and blacksmiths in Puerto Real), the Sotos (sailors and blacksmiths at Cadiz, but also numerous at Malaga), the Torres (butchers, field labourers and sheep-shearers at Utrera, and weavers at Marchena), and the Valencias (merchants and sheep-shearers at Ecija, masons at Jerez and at Sanlúcar de Barrameda).

These are the great names of flamenco, and nearly all twenty-five of these families are related: in the eighteenth century, as in the present day, these same names appear again and again in the marriage records, with the result that the singers of today are all part of one great flamenco family. In fact they are all cousins, and intermarriage has given rise to numerous instances of double surnames such as Peña Peña, Soto Soto, Vargas Vargas and so on.

Instances of people having the same name abound, but Gypsies tend to go by nicknames (*motes*) which sometimes become hereditary (*apodos*) and may be transformed as required into artists' soubriquets. The great majority have achieved fame under these nicknames: *El Fillo* (Francisco Ortega Vargas), *Manuel Torre* (Manuel de Soto Loreto), *La Sarneta* (Merced Fernández Vargas), *Curro Frijones* (Francisco Antonio Vargas), *Curro Durse* (Francisco Fernández Boigas), *El Pinini* (Fernando Peña Soto), *Joaquín El de La Paula* (José Fernández Torres), *Manolo Caracol* (Manuel Ortega Juárez), *Terremoto* (Fernando Fernández Monje), *Antonio Mairena* (Antonio Cruz García), *El Sordera* (Manuel Soto Monje), *El Mellizo* (Enrique Jiménez Fernández), *Manolito El de María* (Manuel Fernández Cruz), *Paco la Luz* (Francisco Valencia), *Parrilla de Jerez* (Manuel Fernández Molina), *El Chozas* (Juan José Vargas Vargas), *El Chocolate* (Antonio Nuñez Montoya), *El Agujeta* (Manuel de los Santos), *Manuel Morao* (Manuel Moreno Jiménez), son of *El Morao* (Manuel

Moreno de Soto y Monje), *José Mercé* (José Soto Soto), *Camarón de la Isla* (José Monje Cruz), among so many others. This brief list already reveals many family links: an inextricably tangled genealogical skein.

These Gypsy-Andalusian families, doubly 'flamenco' (in the literal sense of 'Flemish' [that is, Gypsy, as already discussed], and as the stock whence flamenco artists spring), should serve to put an end to the interminable squabbles – usually of a racist bent – which persistently rock the little world of flamenco. The existence of these families and their enormous contribution to the art are difficult to dispute. Their members include not only a good number of the great interpreters of the present day, but also the majority of the best creative talents of the past. Moreover, the fact that they comprise a numerically small, geographically limited group should convince even the most intransigent of the anti-Gypsy lobby.

At the outset, then, it was not Spanish Gypsies in general who were involved in the flamenco phenomenon, although it has subsequently tended to spread throughout a very large proportion of the Gypsy community, for whom it has become a sort of ethnic music. 'Andalusianists' point out, not without justification, that there are Gypsies all over the world, but that flamenco appeared only in Andalusia. We could go further: only in a small part of Andalusia, limited to the lower valley of the Guadalquivir, with two eastward extensions towards Cadiz and Morón. We can also emphasise that, initially, flamenco was not a generally Andalusian phenomenon either, although it has demonstrated – indeed, continues to demonstrate – extraordinary powers of diffusion. Flamenco is now an essentially Andalusian phenomenon, but this is not to say that all Andalusians accept it or identify with it – far from it. Once again, we are dealing with a family affair, and if the flamenco family today has branches all over the planet, it is nonetheless a single, great family.

C H A P T E R F O U R

The obscure origins of flamenco art

What came to pass within these few Gypsy-Andalusian families, capriciously dubbed *Flamencos* because some of them possessed service records and Privileges attesting to outstanding service in the Flemish campaigns, these families so convolutedly interwoven that in the end they constitute a single entity? To understand this we must go back to the ancient folklore and popular music of which Gypsies were, for so long, the main and almost the exclusive professional performers. We must also consider the slow cultural osmosis which occurred in those localities where, thanks to their various activities, these families were perfectly integrated. We are dealing, in fact, with an instance of acculturation or, more precisely, of *transculturation*, since the successful merger of two musical cultures, the Gypsy and the Andalusian, gave rise to a third, utterly novel form: flamenco. Andalusia is not, as we know, the only place where such a process occurred, but the incomparable character of flamenco is almost certainly due to the extraordinary richness of the Andalusian heritage and the fact that it has a far greater affinity with the Oriental traditions of the Gypsy people than is the case in other Western countries.

Gypsies' professional music

To begin with, the Gypsies contented themselves with reproducing, as faithfully as possible, local styles for a local audience. Needless to say, this fidelity did not preclude a certain adaptation to the musical conventions and interpretation characteristic (to some degree) of Gypsies all over the world. Any music heard and reproduced by a Gypsy performer instantly acquires a distinctive tone, a 'colouring': it is somehow 'Gypsified'.



This is how traditional Spanish song styles like the *seguidilla*, the *villancico* (Christmas carol) and the *romance* (ballad) gradually acquired the qualifying adjective ‘Gypsy’. When these styles, corresponding to the repertoire habitually performed by Gypsies in the streets and market-places during local festivals, came to be adapted for the theatre, the staging instructions nearly always specified that they are to be interpreted ‘in the Gypsy manner’. This tells us that *Payo* imitations of ‘Gypsy’ or ‘pseudo-Gypsy’ music and dance go back a long, long way.

Gypsy ballads

Gypsies were also to play an important role in the conservation of musical genres which would otherwise have died out. Ever quick to take on the latest musical fashion and remodel it in their own style, their loyalty to tradition was equally strong. A nineteenth century observer, Estébanez Calderón, mentions them as the last remaining performers of the very ancient *zarabanda*. As the ballad-sheets once hawked from village to village by blind pedlars gradually disappeared, the Gypsies were to preserve their precious contents, using them only when celebrating amongst themselves, or to lull their babies to sleep: Pepe, brother of the great *cantaor** Manuel Torre, remembered hearing their grandfather singing the ballads *Bernardo del Carpio* and *Gerineldo* as *nanas** (lullabies). The length and somewhat monotonous style of these ancient songs lent them naturally to this adaptation. Dolores Juárez de la O, better known as *Dolores La del Cepillo*, a Gypsy from Puerto de Santa María, took the central portion from a famous ballad, *Las hermanas reina y cautiva* (The Sisters Queen and Captive) – which is in effect a lullaby within the song’s narrative – to transform it into a true *nana*:

Ea, ea, la ea...
 Hija mía de mi alma
 y también del almita mía,
 que si te cogiera yo a ti en España
 que yo a ti te cristianaría
 y por nombre te pusiera
 que y Anita de Alejandría,
 que así se llamaba tu mare
 y una tiíta que a ti te mecía...

(included in *Magna Antología del Cante Flamenco*, Hispavox, S/C. 66.201)

*Sleep, my baby, sleep...
 My daughter of my heart
 And of my little soul too,
 If I could bring you with me to Spain
 I would make a Christian of you
 And I would give you as your name
 Anita of Alexandria,
 For that was your mother's name
 And the name of the auntie who rocked you to sleep...*

The use of *romances* in family celebrations, and in particular at Gypsy weddings, is equally evident in the following version of an *alboreá* (wedding song), sung by Manuel de los Santos Gallardo (*Agujeta el Viejo*), in which scraps of *romances fronterizos* (ballads about relations with the Moors at the time of the reconquest of Spain) intermingle with traditional Gypsy wedding themes (here, the bride's crown and the formula generally employed to evoke the satisfaction felt by her father):

El rey moro con la paz
 ¡qué bien ha queao!
 toíta tu gente t'han coronao,
 pues dile que entre, se calentará
 porque en esta tierra no hay carriá.

*The Moorish king with peace
 How lucky he is!
 Your whole family has crowned him.
 Well, tell him to come in; let him warm himself
 For in this country there is no charity.*

Of course, the *romances* have not been preserved by Gypsies alone. An audio anthology edited by José Manuel Gil under the title *Romancero Panhispánico* (1992) brings together a hundred or so, collected from the various regions of Spain as well as from Sephardic communities throughout the world. It is interesting to observe how these different versions, nearly all of them sung, are influenced by the musical styles of the regions in which they are performed. Among the Eastern Jews, Greek and Turkish influences are very apparent, while in the Castilian regions the melody is rudimentary, often close to recitation – but Gypsy versions stand out from all others in their typically flamenco approach. This should not surprise us, but if we carefully compare two versions of a

single traditional *romance*, one collected from the *Payo* (non-Gypsy) oral tradition, the other among Gypsies, we instantly remark the characteristic traits with which the latter have, quite unconsciously, transformed the original melody. In fact what we can observe is the genesis of a new genre arising from interpretative distortion of the old.

This experiment is significant in more ways than one, for the *romance*, part of the Gypsy repertoire since the sixteenth century, is today considered the oldest of the flamenco song styles. Its features, and in particular its length, have prevented its commercialisation, confining it – as we have seen – to private occasions. Thanks to these circumstances, it has evolved very little – at any rate far less than the other flamenco *palos* (styles) – and it gives us a window onto the most archaic stages of the *cante*. The *romances* appear to be the source of the *tonás**, those supremely original unaccompanied songs from which almost all the others probably derive.

The Seguiriya*

The knottiest problem is posed by the *seguiriya* (or *siguiriya*), whose name is simply the Gypsy-Andalusian pronunciation of *seguidilla*, mentioned above, as it already figured in the Gypsy professional repertoire as far back as the seventeenth century, and perhaps even earlier. The *seguidilla* is probably among the most ancient of the sung dances of the Iberian peninsula, because stanzas constructed in the same form – four alternate lines of seven and five syllables, perhaps followed by a tercet – are also to be found in the *Mozarabic** *kharjas** (or *jarchas**) which sometimes terminate *muwashshah**, Arabo-Andalusian poems dating back to the eleventh century. Its longevity is astonishing, for it continues to stir the passions even today in the form of the *Sevillanas*, Seville-style *seguidillas* which have spread throughout Spain and beyond.

The *seguiriya*, as it is usually written, takes both its name and its metric form from the *seguidilla*. The only difference is that the third line (of quatrains) or the second (of tercets) has eleven or twelve syllables instead of seven, as if a supplementary five-syllable line had been appended. These literary comparisons lose much of their relevance when we note that the sung *copla* (stanza) bears only a distant relation to the written, poetic form. An example will illustrate the point. Here is a classic *seguiriya* in its conventional written form:

Una noche oscurita
 a eso de las dos
 la daba voces a la mare de mi alma
 no me respondió.

*Darkest night
 Two in the morning
 I cried out to my darling mother
 There was no reply.*

Here, by contrast, is how Pastora Pavón, known as *Niña de los Peines*, interpreted this *copla*, with great gaps in the vocal filled by the guitar, heaving sighs, abrupt stops (sometimes right in the middle of a word) and numerous melismata (melodic prolongations of the sung vowel, here indicated by an accent):

aaí	
.....	Le dába vocés
aaa-í-i-i, una noché oscuritá
.....	le daba voces a la mare dé mi arma, nó/
á eso de/	ó me re/
e las dos	espondió.
a esó dê las dós, á eso de/	Voces le daba a mi mare dé mi arma dé/
e las dós.	mi co/
.....	orazón.

Clearly this sung version is no longer susceptible to literary analysis, for its strophic divisions, entirely determined by the rhythm of the melody and the performer's breath control, no longer correspond to the meaning of the words. The metre and the words themselves explode, swept away in a shattering wail broken with sobs. In effect an inexplicable gulf has formed between the *seguidilla*, as light and carefree in its musical form as in its lyrics, and the sublime, dramatic, heart-rending *seguiriya*.

At the close of the eighteenth century a foreign visitor, Henry Swinburne, noted that the Gypsies of Spain still danced and sang the joyful traditional *seguidillas*:

Both sexes are equally skilled at the dance, and they sing *seguidillas* in a manner gay or tender that is particular to them.

Not long afterwards, flamenco was to spring up abruptly among the Gypsy families of Lower Andalusia. One of the jewels of this sombre and





'Gypsi'

tormented art was to be the *seguiriya*, of which Ricardo Molina very aptly says:

The *seguiriya* is the cry of a man mortally wounded by destiny. It can express only profound emotion, radical affliction, the tragedy of the human condition.

So what occurred in the time between these two quotations? The name has not changed, or at any rate not much, nor has the metric form – but the melody and lyrical genre are utterly transformed. The *seguidilla* is a gay and carefree ditty to accompany the dance. Its themes, melodies and accompaniment to a three-beat measure are typical of Spanish folklore. There is nothing surprising about this: musical styles of this sort are always present in folklore, and the Gypsies of long ago interpreted them in response to the demands of their local audience. The *seguidilla* was part of their professional activities, nothing more.

The Gypsy Ethos

The transformation worked upon the traditional *seguidilla* was singular indeed. The light air became 'deep song', a shriek straight from the gut, tinged with the bitter taste of blood. The fate – nearly always tragic, as we have seen – of the Gypsy community, its sufferings and atavistic anguish, here find direct expression. The Gypsy singer/guitarist Pedro Peña once said:

You know how to express the song when you're carrying the pain of centuries with you. The Gypsy who knows how to do this gets it from his ancestors ... These are real experiences which have accumulated within him ... He suffers them; he lives them; he remembers all his own.

The traditional melody – very measured, very syllabic, in a word, very Western – of the *seguidilla* has mysteriously mutated into a long Eastern chant without limit or measure, with no break between tones, with a great unity of breath and silences. The poet Lorca describes it thus:

Listen, my son, to the silence.
It is a rippled silence,
a silence
where echoes and valleys glide
and which turns faces
towards the earth.

Finally, in place of the three-beat measure of the waltz, the fandango, or the *seguidilla*, the guitar accompaniment unfolds in twelve-beat rhythmic sequences comparable to those of Indian *rāgas*. All the ingredients of Oriental modal music are brought together here, including that singular correspondence known as the *ethos* or *modal sentiment* which links each style with a particular time of day or emotion. This is how Pedro Peña describes it, instinctively, without making reference to other musical cultures:

The *soleá* is the song from midnight to one in the morning, when you feel good, when your spirit is still calm and the tears aren't yet brimming at the corners of your eyes. The *soleá* is for feeling fine! The *seguriya*, by contrast, is for two or three in the morning. Your pain is right up at the surface, you've got to lance it. It's a confession. The *tonás* and the *martinetes** are for the dawn, and they crown the lot: they give you goosebumps and make your hair stand on end!

We have shown that the *seguidilla* and the *seguriya* have nothing whatever in common except the similarity of their names. What we are dealing with here is in fact a different musical universe. The Gypsies wholly transformed the traditional ditty to reinvent it as a music forged in their own image, for themselves.

How did this process take place? Under draconian laws, as we have seen, these families were forced to renounce their language, costume, and virtually everything that made up their culture. The 1663 law even targeted music and dance – but it is very difficult to keep a Gypsy from singing for himself and those close to him, in his own home, particularly if he does so in the language of the majority, which will soon also become his own. Let us bear in mind that these '*Flamenco*' families, so well integrated into their Andalusian villages, sent their children to school and their women to Mass, paid their taxes, and dressed and talked like everyone else... but they did not have to sing like everyone else! The musicologist A. Larrea Palacín has suggested that, while language is constantly evolving, melodies may survive almost intact over millennia, and that this may give rise to divergence between words and music. Thus he explains the tendency of flamenco song, observed above in Niña de los Peines' interpretation of a *seguriya*, to destroy the logical order of the text and break the metrical structure of the stanza.

Another hypothesis suggests an alternative explanation for this phenomenon. In this case we need no longer imagine a lengthy process of evolution, but a transformation realised in a relatively short period of

time: the acculturation of an oppressed minority. A community may be dispossessed of its original culture in the space of a couple of generations, as the Gypsies, among many other groups, amply prove. By contrast, musical expression – rooted in the blood, the Gypsies would tell us – is far more difficult to eradicate. In practice what happens when a Gypsy sings verses borrowed from a culture other than his own and in a language imposed by law, but with an ear and ancestral melodies carried with him from the Orient, is the encounter of two incompatible cultural forms, resulting in a sort of explosion.

How to reconcile these diametrically opposed musical traditions? – one in which the melody is slavishly dependent on a text which is in turn imprisoned in a rigorously codified metrical mould, the other where the voice, while bound by other codes, seems as free as a breath of wind, and where the text is fragmented and dissolved in Eastern melismata. How the Gypsies have brought this about forms part of the sorrowful tale of their acculturation: they have unconsciously reconciled the irreconcilable in a song-form born of the harsh encounter of East and West on Andalusian soil.

The *Vlax Rom* of Hungary

The musical styles of the Gypsies of Hungary offer intriguing analogies to what happened in Andalusia. At first glance the situation on the banks of the Danube appears less complex than that in the valley of the Guadalquivir. Professional Gypsy musicians there (who, as we saw in Chapter I, perform a range of hybrid styles all classed as '*Gypsy*') belong to the group called *Romungro* (Hungarian Gypsy) who have been established in the country since the fifteenth century. They were forcibly settled under conditions very similar to those imposed on their cousins in Spain, and speak Hungarian as their usual language. Gypsies of the second group, whom the Hungarians call *Kolompar* or *Vlax* (Wallachian), arrived more recently from Romania; they may be nomadic, or semi-nomadic, and they usually sing in the Gypsy language (*Romani*). Their music, performed solely within the group itself, is limited to two genres. Firstly, there is song proper, known as *loki gili* or *loki djili* ('slow song'), within which two categories are distinguishable: short lyric stanzas similar to Andalusian *coplas*, and narrative ballads comparable to the *romances*. Secondly, there is music to accompany the dance: *k'elimaski gili**, almost purely vocal but usually wordless, characterised by a rhythmic



use of the voice, termed *bögö** or *szaj bögö**. This strange technique, not unlike the use of *bol* syllables in the *tála* (rhythmic part) of Indian *dhru-pad* music, provides a link with certain *jaleo* techniques, the distinctive cries uttered in highly rhythmic sequences to accompany flamenco dancing. Formerly the preserve of festivities within the *Vlax* Rom community itself, these styles have been adapted and launched on the international scene by Hungarian groups like *Kalyi Jag* and *Ando Drom*.

The *loki gili*, which may be considered as a sort of Oriental 'long song', has long intrigued those Hungarian musicologists who have devoted their attentions to it. Hungarian interest in traditional Gypsy music styles, alien to their own folklore yet often in symbiosis with it, goes back to Liszt and Bartók. Nearer to our own times, in the 1950s, a team of musicologists comprising Kamill Erdős, André Hajdu and József Vekerdi, began the task of isolating the original – *non-European* – characteristics of this music. Obviously such research was likely to highlight traits possibly shared with flamenco.

Since both *loki gili* and flamenco are forms rooted in Oriental music, they have quite a number of traits in common. It seems logical to begin by eliminating those shared with surrounding musical styles and which cannot, therefore, be assigned with precision to any single one of them. Hajdu identified monodic conception, a predominance of free rhythm (called *rubato* by European musicians), a general descending tendency in the melodic line, and the modal aspect as broad characteristics shared by all these music styles of Oriental origin.

Everyone who has studied the 'slow song' (*loki gili*) of the Hungarian Rom in detail has been struck by the same peculiarities: the fact that, in lyric song, the stanzas do not constitute a logical sequence with regard to meaning (which is equally true in the *coplas* of flamenco song), and the fundamental severance of melody and lyrics (as observed above with regard to the *seguriya*). In order to break the metric structure of the stanza – which, as in flamenco, is often a quatrain of short (octosyllabic, sometimes hexasyllabic) lines – the Rom use various forms of 'padding': extra syllables, interjections, a range of exclamations at the beginning and/or end of lines, as well as the strange and most remarkable device of breaking off in the middle of a word, particularly in the penultimate syllable of the final line of each stanza, where they are accompanied by a very characteristic melodic formula in the finale.

Musicologists insist that these particularities are not to be found in any form of Central European music except Gypsy singing. We therefore

appear to be dealing with unique characteristics, definitive ones, a sort of signature which enables us to identify and authenticate this music.

(Curiously, we are currently witnessing signs of interference between the musical styles of the *Vlax* Rom, for private use, and the professional, so-called *Gypsy* music traditionally performed by the *Romungro* group. Thus, for example, vocal rhythms of the *bögö* type have been introduced into instrumental *csardas* music and, above all, we observe that popular song in the so-called *Gypsy* style, sung in Hungarian, is rigorously modelled on the melodic schema of the *loki gili*, with its characteristic pause on the penultimate syllable and its formulaic finale.)

The Gypsy signature

These singular traits characterising the music of the Gypsies of Hungary are also to be found – in equal isolation from surrounding musical convention – in the purest and most archaic song styles of the flamenco repertoire: the *tonás*, some *seguriyas*, and 'primitive' *soleares**, where the final break-off is often anticipated on the second or even third syllable before the last. With the exception of certain *alboreás* (wedding songs) of the Cadiz region, these traits are to be found neither in other flamenco song styles, nor in Andalusian folk music. Thus music styles as geographically distant and at first glance as different as the *loki gili* of Hungary and the *toná* of Andalusia manifest extremely tantalising structural analogies. A written example does not convey this as strikingly as actually listening to the music would do, but may give some idea of the phenomenon:

(a) *Loki gili* (performed by Mihaly Varadi, Kotaj village)

	<i>Rat'enca na só/vav</i>	
o ke	<i>numa sa gindinav;</i>	ke jaj!
aj!	<i>sa pal odi gindij,</i>	jaj!
ke mama	<i>so gáno te kér/av?</i>	

	<i>I cannot sleep the whole night long,</i>	
oh!	<i>for I do nothing but think;</i>	kay, aïe!
aïe!	<i>I'm all the time thinking,</i>	aïe!
what, Mama,	<i>what am I going to do?</i>	

(b) Toná (debla performed by Antonio Mairena)

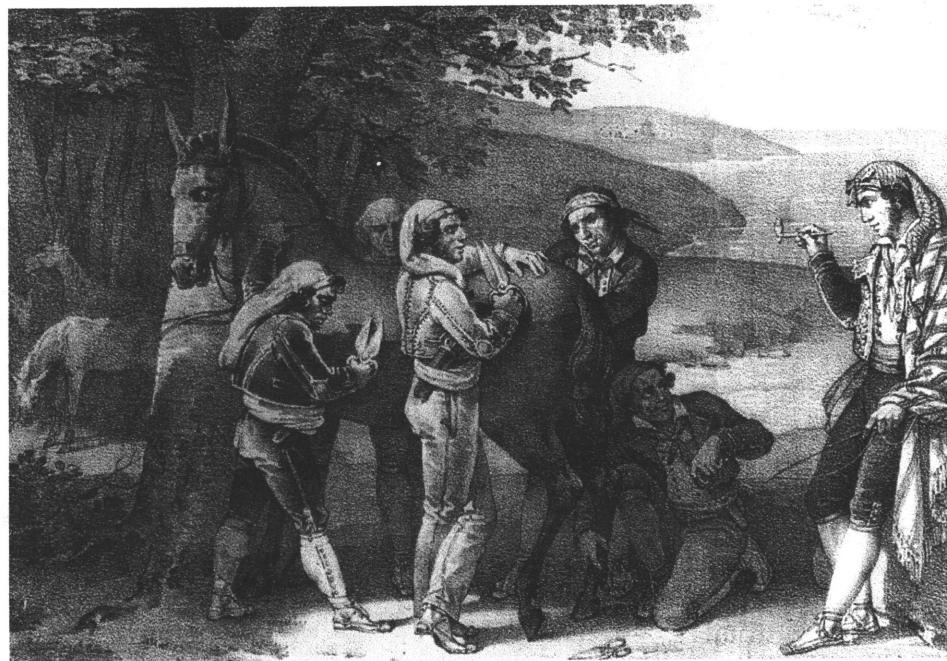
¡Ay!	<i>En el barrio/ de Triana,</i>	
	<i>se escuchabá en alta vóz:</i>	
	<i>– Pena de la viá tiene</i>	¡ay qué!
to	<i>aquel que sea Cállo.</i>	
Aïe!	<i>In the Triana barrio,</i>	
	<i>A voice was loudly heard:</i>	
	<i>– They are condemned to death</i>	aïe, kay!
all	<i>those who are Gypsy.</i>	

The ‘padding’ – which we have transcribed to the side of the lyrics proper – occurs at the beginning and end of the lines of each stanza or *copla*. It is most copious in the Romani version, but we note a number of similarities, for example *ke jaj!* (a) and *¡ay qué!* (b). In both instances the break-offs or pauses are situated in the first and final lines. In the latter case they appear almost systematically in one of the final syllables; in both cases, the pause is followed by a reprise of the preceding vowel and of the same melodic formula in the finale. These can be transcribed as follows:

- (a) kél.../erav
 (b) Cál.../aló

The anti-Gypsy polemic

These technical details may appear insignificant. In fact their rarity, or, more properly speaking, their total absence from the surrounding musical environments of both the *loki gili* and flamenco, and the extreme precision of the traits shared by the two genres, makes them much more than simple coincidences. In the climate of intolerance, even of racial hatred, which regularly divides the flamenco world, they take on a symbolic significance. It is current conventional wisdom to assert – contrary to all the evidence – that the Gypsies had nothing whatever to do with the creation of flamenco; this is the line taken by self-styled ‘Andalusianists’, who think they insult their opponents by dubbing them ‘Gypsyists’. The very terms are misleading, since the Gypsy families in question are also – as we have seen – Andalusian, sometimes more so than their detractors. Didn’t Lorca explain that he chose to christen his celebrated *Romancero* as Gypsy, precisely because, for him, the Gypsy was the most representative constituent of Andalusia?



The book as a whole, though entitled ‘Gypsy’, is the Gypsy sheep-shearers poem of Andalusia. I have called it Gypsy because the Gypsy epitomises the loftiest, the most profound, the most aristocratic characteristics of my country; he is the most representative of its way of living, the keeper of the flame, the blood, and the alphabet of a truth both Andalusian and universal.

While it is legitimate for non-Gypsy Andalusians to lay equal claim to flamenco with the Gypsy-Andalusian community, there is little to be proud of in asserting that Gypsies cannot have contributed to its formation on account of their limited creativity, absence of poetic ability and so on.

The argument is nearly as old as the flamenco genre itself, but it took on a particularly dogmatic tone from the 1950s onwards, in particular with the declaration of Tomás Andrade da Silva, Professor at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Madrid, on the occasion of the launch, in 1954, of the first *Anthology of Flamenco Song*:

There are no longer grounds for attributing a gypsy origin to the basic songs of flamenco: it has now been established that, with a few insignificant exceptions, the gypsies have never done anything more – although, when all is said and done, it is a great deal – than to lend certain Andalusian airs

the stamp of their inimitable personality, by interpreting them with a genius so authentic that we can well speak of a process of re-creation.

The phrase '*it has now been established that...*' is worth underlining, since it is presented as proof in and of itself, with no reference to evidence of any kind and no basis save the personal convictions of the author. One could compile a fair-sized book just by sticking assertions of this sort end to end – assertions which, despite their perpetrators' academic qualifications, demonstrate nothing but their basic ignorance of the facts.

Others were to go further, putting forward the equation: *Gypsies steal chickens = Gypsies steal music*, denying Gypsies any contribution save their performance. It should be noted that the same controversies and arguments have been going the rounds in Hungary since the time of Liszt and Bartók, and that certain contemporary musicologists do not hesitate to assert not only that the Gypsies have never invented anything, but that they are, moreover, very mediocre musicians.

It is obvious that not all Gypsies, nor indeed all Andalusian Gypsies, are musical geniuses. It is equally clear that flamenco could only have come into being in Andalusia, and it would be absurd to expect to see it arising spontaneously in the suburbs of Vienna or Warsaw! On the other hand, there are now enough demonstrative arguments and formal musicological data available to easily refute those who claim, for example, that when the Gypsies arrived in Europe in the fifteenth century they possessed no musical tradition of their own at all, or that they are utterly incapable of artistic creativity.

It is evident that the majority of writers (among whom musicologists are a tiny minority) who have contributed to the enormous bibliography currently available on the subject of flamenco, have had little if any knowledge of Gypsy music elsewhere. Some of them have heard of the 'professional' music played in Central Europe, like the instrumental music played in Hungarian cabarets and known as 'Gypsy music', and which obviously has nothing in common with the vocal music of Andalusia, known as *flamenco*. None of them is aware of the existence of the private repertoire of non-professional Gypsy musicians, discussed above, whence their conviction that Gypsies in general are limited to imitating local musical styles, have no musical tradition of their own, and are consequently incapable of creativity in this field.

As we know, ignorance is at the root of all racial prejudice. It is ignorance which has given rise to diametrically opposed attitudes towards the

Gypsies: attraction and repulsion, fascination and hatred. It is ignorance that accuses them of having dissolute morals – a very revealing error for those familiar with the rigidity of their moral code – and that has charged them with every crime from the abduction of children to cannibalism. It is ignorance, too, which idealises and mythologises them until they come to be seen as the survivors of a lost paradise of natural harmony, *joie de vivre* and unbounded freedom. These contradictory myths have coexisted from the very start and survive to the present day. They mask reality to such a degree that our ignorance of a whole community living in our midst is perpetuated.

Gypsy Andalusia and Payo* Andalusia

In the case of flamenco and Andalusia the problem is complex and cannot always be attributed to simple racism. At the heart of what we may call 'the cradle of flamenco', at Jerez de la Frontera and in the many little villages in this part of Lower Andalusia, the genre is essentially Gypsy, with a handful of exceptions. The most celebrated of these was Antonio Chacón, of unknown parentage but adopted by a *Payo* cobbler who bequeathed him his name and did his best to discourage a precocious talent for an art-form all too often disparaged because of its origins. Chacón's models were Gypsy artists such as Enrique 'El Mellizo' and Curro Durse, as well as another *Payo* of genius, Silverío Franconetti (b. 1839), whose overwhelming passion for the *cante*, which he first heard at a Gypsy forge in Morón, was also discouraged by his father, an Italian serving in the Spanish Army. Essentially, flamenco in, for example, Jerez is a Gypsy phenomenon, and a family affair. Virtually all of today's singers come from famous artistic 'dynasties' or can point to flamenco antecedents (professional or otherwise) as far back as the memory of their lineage goes. All claim that their art runs in their veins, that this is recognised by their fellow citizens, and that they have never encountered the slightest hint of racism in their own region.

Once we start to move away from this most favoured region of Gypsy song, we come across more and more *Payo* (non-Gypsy) performers, both amateur and professional, and, whether we travel in the direction of Huelva or of Malaga, the influence of Andalusian folkmusic becomes more and more pronounced, and the singing style is noticeably transformed. Between these two schools – the Gypsy one of Lower Andalusia and the *Payo* one around its periphery – there is sometimes a total

absence of mutual understanding, each vehemently insisting that it alone gave birth to flamenco.

The origins debate

Most misunderstandings arise with regard to flamenco's origins and antiquity. We know that this singular art first emerged as recently as the nineteenth century; all the evidence agrees on this point, but that does not stop some from asserting that it has been practised on Andalusian soil from time immemorial. To give a concrete example, the birth of the Cadiz *alegrías** can be dated with a fair degree of precision, since we know the historical circumstances (the aftermath of the War of Independence, 1808-1814) under which the form arose, and even the names of its principal originators (all from the nineteenth century). In spite of this, some have claimed that the celebrated dancers of Cadiz, praised by Martial and Juvenal in the 1st century A.D., were performing to *alegrías*.

Research of this kind could go as far back as the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Tarsis or Tartessus, located in the Guadalquivir region between the twelfth and sixth centuries B.C., if successive invaders – Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians – had left us any details about their music. It is more than likely that the Tartessians had some sort of music of their own; one can even suppose that it would have been exposed to Eastern influences and that some of these characteristics would have become integral to Andalusian folk music – but nothing gives us grounds for assuming that this bore any resemblance to present-day flamenco.

Authors grappling with the question of the origins of flamenco do not generally go quite so far back, but they have (quite naturally) made reference to most of the musical cultures present in Andalusia in the period for which we have historical records: the Arabs, the Jews, even the Byzantines*. The Gypsies' role has been emphasised by some, minimised or actively denied by others. As for the Africans – who were a very strong presence in the region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – they are almost completely overlooked.

The Jewish theory

The theory of Jewish influence on flamenco music, put forward in 1930 by Medina Azara in the *Revista de Occidente*, was very effectively

refuted by Hipólito Rossy in his book *Teoría del Cante Jondo* (1966). The analogies Azara draws between certain Jewish religious songs and the *saetas** of Andalusian processions are entirely without foundation, since the examples cited are very modern creations, in particular the *saeta* of Manuel Centeno, adapted to the *seguiriya* model. Moreover all one need do is to listen to Sephardic songs, preserved up to the present day among the descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 – and in particular their versions of *romances* – to observe that these have nothing whatever in common with flamenco.

The Byzantine theory

The Byzantine theory, formulated by the Catalan musician and musicologist Felip Pedrell and taken up by Manuel de Falla, seems to be based on a confusion between the Byzantine liturgy and the early Spanish rite known as the *Hispanic* or sometimes the *Mozarabic** liturgy. One way or another, this particular rite, abolished by Pope Gregory VI in the 11th century, was not reconstructed until Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros took on the task some four hundred years later. When we take into account that the liturgy was written down in *neumes* – simple aides-mémoire to facilitate oral transmission – we have grounds for doubting the fidelity of the reconstruction, let alone the reservations one might have regarding the influence of such a rite on totally secular music that would not make an appearance until the nineteenth century. As for de Falla's 1922 reiteration of Pedrell's Byzantine references – this must be seen in context. What the great Andalusian musician was attempting to do was to persuade the Grenada authorities to finance the first ever *cante jondo** competition. What better way than by convincing them that this music, so reviled and vilified by the generation of 1898*, might be of noble origin and thus merit rehabilitation?

This line of thought was obviously also an attempt to explain the clearly Oriental traits of this Andalusian style, namely its modal, enharmonic character and its distinctive long, unmeasured singing. The Byzantine liturgy – derived from the Syrian modal system – might very well have something to do with it, but why not turn to the more obvious candidate? Arabic music was played on Andalusian soil for over seven hundred years.

Arabic music

On this particular point de Falla once again follows his mentor, Felip Pedrell, according to whom Spanish music owes nothing at all to the Arabs who, by contrast, were greatly influenced by Spain. In connection with this he mentions a number of points common to the so-called *Arabo-Andalusian** music of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia on the one hand, and to some folk and popular music styles in Andalusia itself on the other.

Without re-opening the whole debate, it is clear that musical influences in *Al Andalus* (Muslim Andalusia) operated in both directions. The Arabic poetic form known as *muwashshah* terminates in a refrain or couplet known as a *kharja* (in Spanish, *jarcha*), which was widely borrowed from indigenous folklore and written in a Romance language – Mozarabic – sprinkled with Arabic words. These *kharja* or *jarchas* offer eloquent testimony to the bilingualism of Muslim Andalusia and the musical exchanges that were commonplace there. It is difficult to imagine that the author/composers of these great poems made for singing – the *muwashshah* – could have borrowed the words of their final stanza – the *kharja* – without also taking the music on board.

One of the most vivid traces of this exchange between Arabic music and Andalusian folklore is still visible – and above all audible – today, when we compare an Arabo-Andalusian band from Morocco with a *panda de verdiales**, one of the little folk ensembles from Malaga province. The same elements are to be found in both: metallic percussion in the form of rattles or small cymbals, a type of drum known as *duff* in Arabic and as *pandero* or *adufe* in Spanish, lutes played by plucking the strings (*'ud* in Arabic, *laud* in Spanish), fiddles which in both cases have replaced an ancient bow instrument (known as *rebab* in Arabic, *rabal* in Spanish), not to mention the guitars on the Spanish side. In both cases the singing style is highly syllabic and very far removed from the long melismatic wail characteristic of flamenco.

Certainly, as we have seen, there are similarities between Andalusian and Arabic music, but these must logically be sought in the vestiges of the traditions that co-existed between the seventh and the fifteenth centuries: in other words, in the Arabo-Andalusian music of the Maghreb and in the most archaic folklore of Andalusia – the *verdiales**, for example. If, by contrast, later Arabic musical forms (which reached North Africa from Iran and Iraq via Egypt) and flamenco (which, it must be borne in mind,



came into being in Lower Andalusia only in the nineteenth century) exhibit analogies *absent from Andalusian folklore*, some other factor must have intervened. Despite the precautions de Falla had to take in the course of his 1922 oratory before the Grenada authorities, he does not hesitate to identify Gypsies as the linking element:

And it is these tribes, coming – according to the historical hypothesis – from the Orient, who in our opinion gave Andalusian song the new modality which constitutes the *cante jondo*.

de Falla's demonstration

In the same work from 1922, de Falla analyses, with great musicological precision, the shared traits of flamenco and Eastern music, in a long section entitled *Coincidences with the Primitive Song Forms of the Orient*. Here, curiously enough, there is no further reference to the Byzantines or Arabs (besides, the author has already given us both his own and Pedrell's opinion on this latter point), but only to *the Orient* and more precisely to *India*. Here is how he begins his exposition:

The essential elements of the *cante jondo* exhibit the following analogies with some song forms of India and other peoples of the Orient.

A few lines further on de Falla repeats his allusion to 'primitive styles of India'. India, the Gypsies' place of origin, is thus his main focus, and the purpose of the exposé is to demonstrate, with a wealth of technological detail, Gypsy input into the development of the art form which he and Federico García Lorca call *cante jondo* and which we simply call flamenco. He develops the following five points:

Enharmony as a means of modulation. This comprises the alteration of certain notes of the scale, and more generally the use of intervals of less than a semi-tone to modulate, that is, to pass from one key to another. In other words, de Falla is referring to the non-measurable aspect of the Eastern long chant as opposed to the tempered scale employed in the Occident.

We recognise as proper to the cante jondo the use of a melodic ambitus which rarely exceeds the limits of a sixth. de Falla points out here that the sixth in question is not, of course, limited to the nine half-notes of the tempered scale.

The repeated, almost obsessive use of a single note, frequently accompanied by higher and lower appoggiatura. de Falla adds that, thanks to this

process, all sense of metric rhythm disappears. We have already seen, in the example of the *seguriya*, how the structure of a stanza of verse may dissolve into the melody.

While Gypsy melody, like primitive Oriental song styles, is rich in ornamentation, this is employed only at points where the emotive force of the lyric provokes expansion or exaltation.

The shouts used by our people to encourage or excite the dancers and guitarists have their origin in the custom still to be seen in similar circumstances among races of Oriental origin.

Current knowledge

Posterity took from de Falla only what it wanted to hear. It remembered the Byzantines and Arabs, and strove to relegate the Gypsy contribution to one of simple interpretation. The arguments outlined above were ignored or rejected out of hand, doubtless because they were too technical or simply too 'pro-Gypsy'. This is why, over the ensuing three quarters of a century, all published works on flamenco have covered the same old themes, repeated the same clichés, often reiterated the same errors, without troubling to critically examine or offer evidence in support of their basic hypotheses, which have been accepted as absolute truths.

The origins of flamenco seem likely to remain shrouded in mystery for some time to come, due to the circumstances surrounding its birth and musicologists' unwillingness to tackle the question. As long as the only efforts made in this field have as their sole aim the ruthless elimination of a given community from the competition, there is no chance of our knowledge progressing. The various points outlined in these pages merely take stock of our current knowledge. Yet, despite their limitations, they do enable us to identify the essential issues:

Neither the Byzantines nor the Jews had much to do with flamenco.

The issue of Arabic influences is far from resolved. A process of exchange between Arabic music and the popular music of Andalusia took place over more than seven centuries of Muslim presence in the region, and its legacy is still perceptible today in what remains of the primitive *muwashshah* (even after centuries of oral transmission), in music generally, and in that most authentic manifestation of Andalusian folklore, the *pandas de verdiales*.

It is in any case pointless to look for correspondences between an

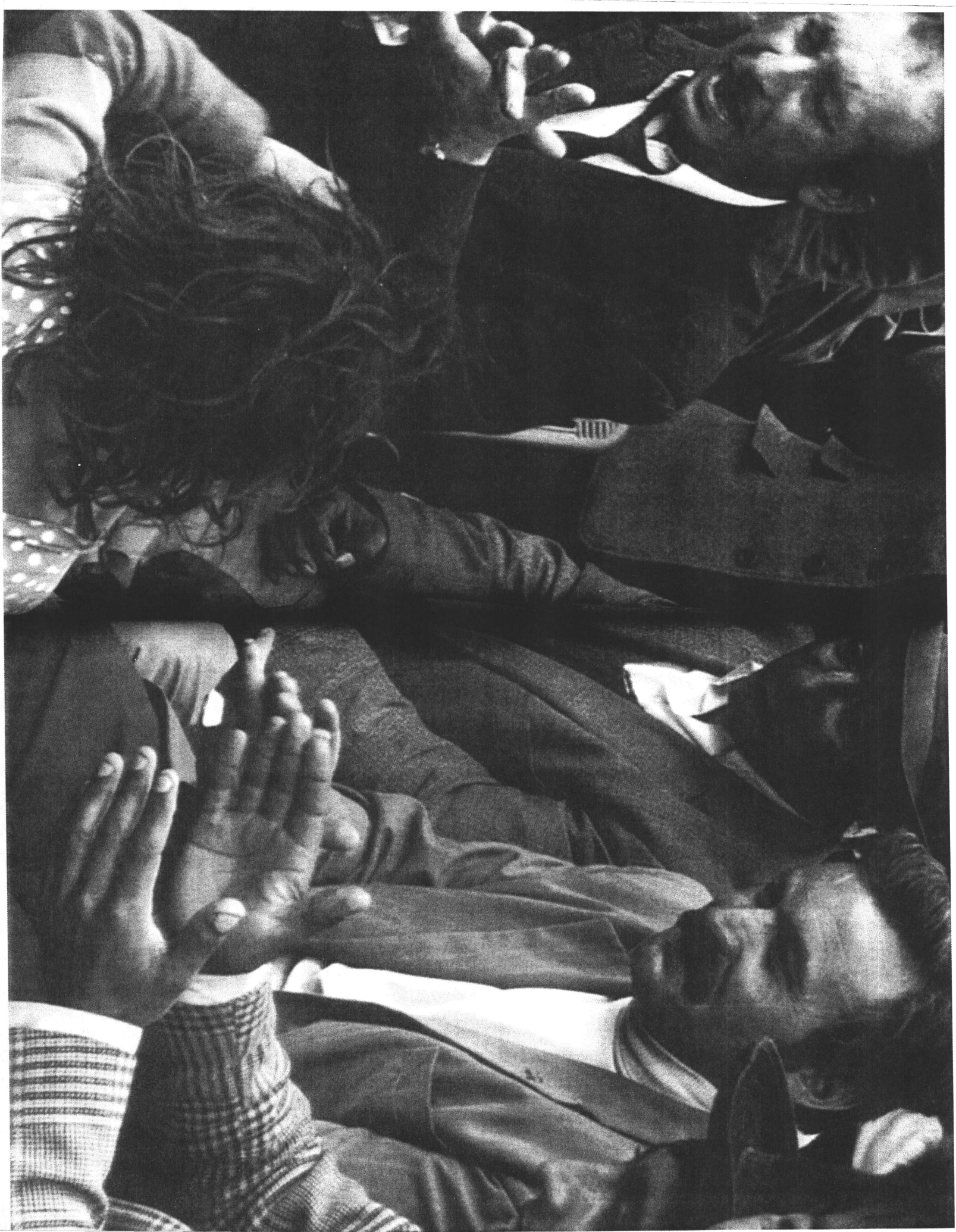
Arabic music which, to all intents and purposes, died out in Spain over the course of the sixteenth century, and another musical style that came into being among the Gypsies of Lower Andalusia at least two centuries later. The exercise would be as absurd as seeking out Arabic etymologies for the word 'flamenco', which only came to designate this music during the nineteenth century.

Any trait common to both Arabic music and flamenco which is not also present in the most traditional forms of Andalusian folklore can only be explained by the intervention of other factors.

Among such factors the only plausible candidates are the Gypsies, whether they brought with them to Spain musical characteristics originating in India and in Iran (this latter being the source of Arabic music), as Manuel de Falla aims to demonstrate, or whether they found and adopted these traits *after* their arrival in Andalusia and kept them from dying out. In fact the most likely explanation seems to be that they reworked the vestiges of Andalusia's Oriental past on their own cultural loom. In any case, the appearance of a phenomenon as singular as flamenco – an island of Oriental music in a sea of Occidental culture – cannot be explained except by reference to active Gypsy participation, and against the background of an Andalusia eternally torn between two cultures. The Gypsy community, with its own particular genius and extraordinary facility for adaptation, finally brought these cultures into harmony.

Conclusion

The present work is unlikely to put an end to the quarrels which have always divided the flamenco world. Its sole purpose has been to extricate the debate from a tangled skein of conflicting theories and put it back on track with the aid of a few basic historical facts and some musical observations. The initial period of flamenco's gestation and development was essentially Gypsy, whereas the second phase, which considerably expanded its repertoire and audience, was primarily *Payo* or Andalusian. The transmission within a number of Gypsy families of certain songs, and above all of a particular interpretative style and a way of *living* the flamenco, is incontestable fact, but this must not blind us to the role played by *Payo* artists of genius such as Silverío Franconetti (1839–1889), Antonio Chacón (1869–1929), Antonio Ortega, known as 'Juan Breva' (1844–1918), and so many other great names of flamenco without whom this art form, a minority phenomenon even in its own birthplace, would never have achieved the universal recognition it enjoys today. With the era of the 'singing cafés' (*cafés de cante*) which spanned the period from 1860–1910, flamenco changed both its range and its aesthetic. Voices were no longer inevitably raucous and broken; they soared towards the high notes with a timbre and tessitura more proper to arabesques and pure virtuosity than to the naked, unfettered expressivity of Gypsy song. The attraction of the *bel canto* was to be particularly strong during the so-called 'theatrical' period from 1910, when flamenco trod the boards and tried to compete with fashionable song. At the same time, the repertoire was enriched by taking on a good part of traditional Andalusian folklore, for example the great family of the *fandangos*, which were in turn to merge into the 'deep song' (*cante jondo*), thus giving birth to such gems as the *malagueñas*, *granaínas*, *tarantas*,



cartageneras and *mineras*. Other musical styles of Iberian origin, like the *farruca* and *garrotin*, or, from Latin America, *guajiras*, *milongas*, *vidalitas* and *rumbas* – were to attempt to integrate into the flamenco genre, with varying degrees of success. The most spectacular instance is that of the Afro-American *tangos*, which were all the rage in mid-nineteenth century Spain. The Gypsies were not slow to adapt these to their own particular sense of rhythm, so thoroughly indeed that these have become one of the noblest of styles, as authentically flamenco as the basic songs for which they are often mistaken.

Today, there are no real divisions within the flamenco genre. All the great *cantaos*, be they *Payo* or Gypsy, have the whole of the repertoire at their disposal, even though certain *cantes* are better suited to one type of voice or personality than another, and of course performers have their personal preferences. The osmosis has been so complete that there are Gypsies who can sing ‘*Payo* style’ and *Payos* who ‘sound Gypsy’. This is all to the good, just as it is legitimate for each side to insist on the originality, the excellence, indeed the primacy of its own style. What is less acceptable is the falsification of history to legitimise personal aesthetic preference. The obscurity of flamenco’s origins has enabled any number of theories to proliferate; now it is time for serious research to provide some more reliable guidelines.

Gypsies assert that they get their basic styles through in-family transmission, and are usually able to cite forebears who – professionally or not – have been involved for three or four generations back. By contrast, as we have seen, the great *Payo* artists such as Silverío Franconetti and Antonio Chacón had to defy their fathers’ wishes in order to embark on the flamenco adventure, and these individual vocations are rarely perpetuated in subsequent generations. These artists deserve no less credit than those born to the genre – quite the contrary, in fact – if we stop to consider that, Gypsy or not, with or without some element of atavism, achieving professional mastery of the flamenco art is always the fruit of a long, patient apprenticeship.

To put it briefly, the transmission of flamenco by traditional methods within certain Gypsy families is a perfectly verifiable fact. The matter is much more complex within Andalusian *Payo* circles, where flamenco and its transmission are not part of local folklore – very much alive in many regions, and too often misunderstood – and where the flamenco audience is a very minor section of the population. The relatively recent appearance of this musical genre in Andalusia allows us to reconstruct

its history with a fair degree of accuracy and to take account of virtually all of its performers. These circumstances ought to suffice to dispel all speculation on the relationships between flamenco and the two communities concerned. The great creative artists of the genre are known, and if those associated with the so-called ‘basic’ styles like the *tonás*, *seguiriyas* and *soleares* are mostly Gypsies, the various forms of the *fandango* have tended to be linked with *Payo* names. Moreover, as we have seen, there is no point in searching the distant past for the origins of a genre that really did not come into being until the middle of the last century, and Andalusian folklore alone was in a position to directly receive the various influences detectable in, or claimed for, flamenco. We are also aware that in 1922 there was speculation which claimed more or less *mythical* origins for flamenco out of a desire to rehabilitate a genre totally rejected by the establishment. This speculation only served to fuel the quarrels that were to split the flamenco world over a common culture claimed by both *Payos* and Gypsies.

The international prestige acquired by flamenco over the course of the twentieth century resolved nothing, and the setting up of autonomous regions under the Spanish Constitution of 1978 rendered the problem even more complex. In effect Andalusia which, unlike Catalonia, the Basque Provinces, Galicia or Valencia, could not claim a distinct language of its own, focussed on flamenco as the symbol of its cultural difference. Yet the racist excesses which followed were not to issue from the Andalusian Flamenco Foundation, set up in Jerez in 1988 at the initiative of the Autonomous Assembly of Andalusia (*La Junta de Andalucía*), but rather from isolated Andalusianist circles, gravely wounded by what they deemed the excessive credit given to the Gypsies for a musical form which they considered their legitimate property. Far from sharing the views of Lorca, for whom the Gypsy epitomised Andalusia, they were infuriated to see the image of their homeland mixed up, both in the rest of Spain and abroad, with an oft-despised minority of foreign origin. Many Andalusians were deeply disturbed by the clichéd image, developed largely for tourists, which was imposed on them during the Franco regime: guitars, castanets and flounced costumes. Today, those Andalusians who identify with a flamenco culture (part of whose appeal is its supposed aristocratic pedigree) cannot reconcile this with seeing Gypsies in the limelight, and this is quite natural.

It is not, however, grounds for a declaration of war, nor for pointless attempts at falsifying historical and musicological facts. The data put forward

in this study are all easily verifiable, and are not intended to form part of a polemic. If Gypsy participation in the development of flamenco is a demonstrable fact, this is not to dispossess Andalusia of something it holds dear. The second stage of flamenco history, during which folk *fandangos* were to be transformed into *deep songs*, is at least as important as the first: flamenco as we know it today is inconceivable without this process. We have also emphasised how the period leading up to the emergence of flamenco was one in which the Gypsy community assimilated indigenous music styles, and that it was thanks to this process that a new art form was born. Flamenco could not have come into being without the concurrence of all the factors described above, and it is precisely its Andalusian character which makes it unique among Oriental musical forms. Like all important cultural phenomena it was born of encounter, and all the components of this encounter – the people, of course, the Gypsy families and the Andalusians, but also the venue itself, the hospitable soil of Lower Andalusia – were indispensable to the process.

The fact that Andalusians have come to recognise themselves in ‘Gypsy’ music, once universally rejected, but which they have so taken to heart that they now dispute the ancestry of their *Caló** compatriots reveals a great deal about a collusion which has been going on for centuries, and which no one can really disavow. Through the songs they perform (especially those known as the ‘basic’ songs), the words they sing (often composed by celebrated Gypsy artists, studded with *Caló* [Gypsy dialect], and loaded with allusions to the ‘Gypsy’ way of living), and their constant reference to a ‘flamenco’ (which is to say a Gypsy-Andalusian) way of thinking and behaving, Andalusians identify with a hybrid culture they can well feel proud of. Another form of identification, no less significant, is the fact that at fiesta time young Andalusian women all dress up as *Flamencas* – that is, as Gypsies – donning the long, flounced, colourful spangled dresses worn by Gypsy women a century ago, when Gypsy horse-dealers still reigned over the great animal fairs of Andalusia. It is true that following a fashion or putting on a costume does not necessarily imply any degree of sympathy for those being imitated, and that carnival disguises are mostly a way of breaking taboos, but it is no less true that these Gypsy symbols, which Andalusians brandish like a banner, testify to a shared past perhaps less small-minded and richer in genuine values than the era in which we presently live. At a time when the *Payo* or *Gadjo* world is foundering in the cheerless anomie of uniformity and devising new ways to strip the Gypsies of the ‘outmoded’ values that they have

succeeded in preserving right up to the present day (solidarity, family, a contempt for material wealth, a strong sense of celebration...), Andalusians cannot be the only ones to recognise the cultural debt we owe to a people too often dismissed as having ‘no culture’ and who can give us, with or without music, a few lessons in humanity.