CULTURAL INTERCHANGE ALONG THE INDIAN OCEAN DURING THE GLOBAL MIDDLE AGES (700-1500AD): THE ROLE OF ARABS AND PERSIANS IN AFRICA-CHINA MUSICAL EXCHANGE.

by

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Table of Content

Chapter four: Socio-cultural considerations through the lens of prominent musicians and their instruments

Chapter five: Later trends: Africa-China relations in the 20th and 21st century

Chapter six

Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature _____ Date: 04/AUGUST/2020

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List of Abbreviations

UN — United Nations

WTO — World Trade Organization

FOCAC — Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

CGTN — China Global Television Network

IOC — International Olympic Committee

List of figures

Abstract

The relationship between Africa and China remains one of the most important geopolitical and economic partnerships of the 20th and 21st centuries. The Africa-China relation, although relatively recent, has its foundation in previous relations dating back over 500 years ago. It is against this backdrop of longstanding relations that this research is situated as it aims to trace and examine Africa-China musical exchange between 700-1500AD. The main goal of this research is to answer the following questions: (1) Are there any musical exchange between Africa and China between 700 -1500AD? (2) If there are, what are these musical exchanges and how did they manifest? (3) Are these musical exchanges mutual? (4) If there are no musical exchanges during this period, why? (5) Are there any musical exchanges at any other time pre-700AD or post 1500AD? (6) What are some of the impacts of such a musical exchange? This research uses a historical framework in understanding and presenting Africa-China cultural relations. My hypothesis, given that Africa and China did not officially meet or establish formal relations until the early 15th century, posits that in the absence of direct musical exchange, the Arabs and Persians may have been the music brokers, circulating music both to Africa and China as they did with trade. Having consulted some translated primary sources, several secondary sources and iconographic materials obtained from libraries and archives, the research findings suggest that my hypothesis is partly correct. The Persians and specifically, the Arabs, were circulating musical and cultural practices around the Indian Ocean, all the way to Al-Andalusia (Arab Spain). This spread of music and culture, I argue, gave the region some musical uniformity within diversity. This uniformity is visible through the circulation of musical instruments such as the short-necked lute; the Persian *barbat*; the Arabian *ūd*; the Chinese *pipa* and the African *kwitra,* as well as the migration of musical ideas and musicians such as Barbad, Ziryab and Kang, throughout Asia, Africa and Europe. The direct musical exchange between Africa and China only takes place in the 20th century.

Keywords: *barbat*, *ūd*, Africa, China, *Kwitra*, *pipa,* pre-colonial, Persia, Arabia, Al-Andsalusia

CHAPTER ONE

An Introduction

The Indian Ocean trade route and the Silk Road, which formed the transportation infrastructure for the early globalism in the middle-ages, have received a new wave of attention from scholars. This is mainly prompted by the economic rise of Asia, China in particular, and the need to understand how to best interact with China as an emerging power. The Indian Ocean trade route has also opened up a part of world history which has received less attention and deserves more research, especially in relation to the African continent. This history of the Indian Ocean trade route and the interconnectedness of its people, economically, socially and culturally, offer us an opportunity to revisit our history and consolidate our past with the present. In this context, Africa-China relations emerge as an important area of research, both historically and currently. The most important legacy of the encounter between Africa and China, is the mutual respect they share for each other due to the nature of their historic relationship. This relationship reached its peak when African ambassadors sent a giraffe as tribute to the Chinese government. This gesture on the part of the African ambassadors, was interpreted from a symbolic view by the Chinese government. This view was based on the superficial association of the giraffe with the mythical unicorn, which signified good omen and was a confirmation that the emperor was divinely ordained to rule. The result of this encounter was that the Chinese regarded Africa as the source of their good fortune and thus adopted a friendly foreign policy towards Africa. This encounter would become a reference point to subsequent Africa-China relations, including the relatively recent rejuvenation of official relations in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Aims and Objectives

This dissertation is part of the Mellon-funded Re-centring Afro-Asia Project, which aims to trace musical and human migration between Africa and Asia in the pre-colonial era (700-1500 AD). Within this framework, my research aims to trace musical exchange between Africa and China. This study investigates the following: (1) Are there any documented musical exchanges between Africa and China between 700 -1500AD? (2) If there are, what are these musical exchanges and how did they manifest? (3) Are these musical exchanges mutual? (4) If there are no musical exchanges during this period, why? (5) Are there any musical exchanges at any other time pre-700AD or post 1500AD? (6) What is the impact of such musical exchanges?

Research Questions

Similarities in certain aspects of two cultures may prompt us to consider whether there might be some sort of intersection or interaction, particularly between cultures that are geographically remote from each other. The apparent similarities might be a result of parallel development or a result of some form and level of interaction and exchange. In the event that there is a recurrent pattern of similarities, perhaps heard but not seen, some degree of mobility and interchange might have taken place and it is at the heart of this research to examine this. In pursuing this quest for answers further questions have arisen: (1) has the trade relations between Africa and China translated into cultural relations and specifically, musical exchange? (2) What is the role of official or unofficial relations in facilitating or impeding musical exchange?

Research problem

This research seeks to contribute to addressing the Eurocentric-dominated view of Africa and African scholarship in academia. This rationale is based on the fact that there are other descriptions and understandings of Africa and Africans by Africans themselves and non-European societies and peoples such as the Arabs, Persians, Indians and Chinese which offer us a different and balanced perspective of Africa. Many of these sources and writings have been well researched and engaged and they predate European presence, description and understanding of Africa as presented in academic discourse. This type of approach to reconstructing the narrative of Africa, especially, in academic discourse, is an important step towards reconciling the way Africa and Africans are represented as opposed to how they represent themselves.

Several scholars, including Agawu (1992; 1995), Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (1986) and V.Y. Mudimbe (1988), have engaged and problematised the representation of African in the academia and beyond. These scholars lament the lope-sidedness of the representation of African culture towards Eurocentric narrative and perspective. One of the most salient voices of the post-colonial African scholarship in the 20th century is V. Y. Mudimbe. He argues in his book *The Invention of Africa* (1988), that the concept of Africa itself is a European invention (29). Mudimbe goes into details in his book on how the idea of Africa was nurtured through the work of various actors such as anthropologists, missionaries and travellers and how this led to the "African Genesis".

Similarly, Agawu, in his article *Representing African Music* (1992), traces the history of African music in the academia and how the opinions of anthropologists, missionaries and travellers set the tone for what would later be known as ethnomusicology. Agawu presents the different phases of the development of the discipline alluding to the creation, maintenance and sustenance of the discipline on Euro-American terms. One of the most problematic concepts inherited from the Eurocentric-

dominated view of African music is the association of African music with rhythm in a way that represents African music as 'synonymous' to rhythm and vice versa. The consequence of the characterization of African music as rhythm-dominated results in the dichotomy between the West and Others which permeates throughout academic disciplines. In other words, African music is characterized as highly rhythmic while Western music is characterized as melodic and harmonic.

In addition to controlling the African narrative, Western scholars have also been accused of trying to control the way African scholars express and represent their own music. A notable example of this is what ensued between Kofi Agawu and Ruth Stone in which the latter characterised Kofi Agawu as an African "enamoured with European tools" (Euba 2008: 155) while asserting that James Koetting, an a non-Africa scholar of African music, was "more sensitive to the African's way of doing things" (ibid). While I do not intend to go into details as to whether Stone's judgement was accurate or not, it should be well registered that Euba's point was that African's should be allowed to tell their own stories without external inhibitions. Euba also stresses the danger of representing other positing that "by studying and representing Others instead of oneself and culture, one poses the danger of objectifying the Other" (Euba 2008: 159). Both Scholars, Euba and Agawu, conclude that the best way to genuinely engage ethnomusicology, and by extension, I add, African related studies, is to empower the 'other' to speak for themselves (2008:159).

In response to this debate, this research highlights alternative ways of knowing, understanding and engaging Africa using several non-European sources which describes Africa, and from which we can begin to reconstruct African narrative. This study will look broadly at Afro-Asian cultural relations and focus on Africa-China relations more specifically. I hope this research offers an alternative perspective to musical discourse on Africa. I also hope that this research will contribute to longstanding debates on whose perspective of Africa we consult and refer to when studying African music history in academia and whose timeline of events we will subscribe to when we study African music history in the academia.

Scope

This research is primarily concerned with musical exchange along with historical, political and cultural context as much as possible. The decision to refer to Africa in general terms in the title and most part of the dissertation, as opposed to more specific terms (e.g. country, ethnic group) is an attempt to open up the conversation and to let the findings lead the way. This is the result of the nature of Africa-China musical interaction during the period under examination. To the best of my knowledge, direct musical or cultural contact between Africa and China between 700 (or earlier) –

1500 AD is either non-existent or undocumented — there is no direct mention or reference to African music, African musical tradition or instrument in the records of Chinese government or individual merchants or traders. I have encountered no evidence of musical exchange coming from China into Africa during this period. This makes any effort to narrow the scope further futile and yielding little or no substantial result. It is based on this rationale that Africa has been referred as a continent and not the individual countries. However, from the time when the Chinese had direct encounter with Africa, the mention of Africa refers to the east coast of Africa. In chapter five, which examines Africa-China relations in the 20th and 21st centuries, (when relations are more established), I have narrowed it down into specific countries in Africa. Also, the reference to China and the Chinese in this context, refers to the official Chinese government.

The intent of this research is to establish a baseline of knowledge from which to move forward. The data for this research mainly focuses on secondary sources and online archival resources. I have focused on secondary sources that are either in English or have been translated from other languages, particularly, Mandarin, into English. Future research on this topic might include more ethnographic data and deeper look into Mandarin sources

Rationale

Anchored to the Afro-Asia project, an empirical research that aims to trace musical and human migrations in the pre-colonial period, 700-1500A.D, my research aims to contribute to the scarce literature available on the musical/cultural exchange between Africa and China. This subject area is under-researched, particularly the musical and cultural aspect of Africa-China relations. This project ultimately aims to make contributions to the scholarly body of works in this area.

In addition, this work has the potential to form part of a body of works that provides a de-colonial curriculum, emphasizing narrative outside of the European-African one. It traces historical literatures and sources that describe Africa, African history, music and culture, documented contributions Africans and people of African heritage that contributed to the global culture and civilization as we know it today. More particularly is that, this research looks at sources that pre-dates Western colonial period, hereby presenting a ‘fresh’ perspective on Africa and African music, which has the potential of redefining our reference to History and History of Africa and its culture as well as music.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation is centred on decolonial theoretical framework. Decolonial theory seeks to disentangle Eurocentric episteme from the monopoly of knowledge production (Zembylas 2018; Mbembe 2016; Weiner 2018; Nyamjoh 2012). It projects the theory that knowledge has been and can

be produced by all cultures and civilizations (Europe inclusive) and that it is not the preserve of one culture or civilization. To achieve this, this dissertation examines information and resources that predates European colonization. In doing so, this dissertation aims to help us make sense of our world not solely through Western prism but through the shared experiences and collective wealth of knowledge that abound among many cultures and civilizations throughout history.

Methodology

This research is conducted primarily using a combination of translated primary sources, secondary sources, both in English and translated versions, archives, onsite and online libraries, online databases, and online collections/museums. The research also draws from iconographic and cartographic evidence and resources found in both text, and other mediums listed above. This information has been systematically used to cross-check information in order to arrive at a conclusion that is as objective as possible. Both written and oral (originally oral but now written) information have been incorporated in a bid to present a balanced view. Although originally planned, ethnographic methods were not possible due to unforeseen circumstances, and thus this dissertation is situated more within the discourse of historical (ethno)musicology.

Essay outline

Chapter one presents an introduction to the dissertation. It sets forth the aim and objective, scope, rationale, methodology, research questions and research problems. This chapter also presents the hypothesis upon which this researched was embarked upon.

Chapter two provides some general history of Africa and China relations up until the 15th century. This chapter explores the nature of this relationship with emphasis on trade but also the prevailing understandings, perceptions and documentation of each other. It also discusses the role of intermediaries such as the Arabs and Persians, who facilitated Africa-China relations, including trade and culture. This chapter is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the secondary knowledge of Africa by the Chinese as passed on to them by Arabs and Persian merchants and presents written documents by early Chinese writers, travellers, merchants and the government gazettes which provide some knowledge on Africa. The second part deals with the first-hand account and understanding of Africa by the Chinese, having sailed across the world visiting countries in West Asia, South Asia and East Africa. Finally, this chapter presents possible African views and understanding of China as a country, the people, culture and society.

Chapter three presents the instrument known as the *barbat*, an instrument that played an important and unifying role in the musical culture of Afro-Asia. This chapter presents the origin and history of

the *barbat*, the organological components and how it transformed as it migrated from Persia to Arabia, China and Africa. It presents the new names it acquires in each new destination, technological advances with time and localization.

Chapter four explores prominent musicians in Persia, the Arab world and China, who used their mastery of the instruments they played, *barbat, ūd* and *pipa* respectively, and the popularity they gained to influence politics and culture in their time. Three musicians, Barbad, Ziryab and Kang are discussed. Their childhood, formative years and accomplished years are presented as well as their contributions and legacy.

Chapter five, the penultimate chapter, revisits Africa-China relations with a focus on the history and music in the 20th and 21st centuries. It presents the revitalized relations between the two, exploring the trade, politicking and cultural interchange in addition to the history and music. This chapter examines the presence of Chinese migrants in South Africa in the early 20th century through the Chinese musical instrument in the Kirby collection housed at the South African College of Music, university of Cape Town. The Nigerian pop star, Hao Ge, who found stardom in China and sings in mandarin is also presented. His contribution as to Chinese culture and music and as a de facto cultural ambassador is presented in this chapter.

The sixth and final chapter provides concluding remarks, summing up the whole dissertation, and poses questions for further investigations on this topic.

CHAPTER TWO

Africa and China: A historical perspective

Introduction

This chapter aims to present a critique of the historical account of pre-colonial Africa-China relations until the 15th century. By presenting this, the aim is to provide the reader with the historical records of Africa-China relations which will serve as a reference point throughout this dissertation. The accounts presented in this chapter highlight important and strategic events that shaped this history and interaction. Expanding on this, this chapter will explore the nature of the relationship, the sources providing information regarding this interaction and the impact of this discovery on both sides. Most of the information in this chapter is based on Chinese sources. Some of these are secondary sources written by Chinese and European scholars while others are translations of primary sources found in Chinese official documents such as the gazettes from different dynasties. Fortunately, there is an account from an African traveller who was able to document his journey all over the world, including China. This account by the North African traveller, helps us balance the perspective which would otherwise have been one-sided.

Pre-colonial Africa-China relations can generally be discussed in two broad sections; (1) before official and direct contact and (2) during official and direct contact. During the first period, the Chinese acquired information on Africa mainly from secondary sources and a first-hand account of an individual who had visited Africa. The individual account, though can be regarded as a primary source, did not constitute an official relation with Africa. As far as we know, all the information pre-Ming dynasty era (before 1368AD), on Africa, were obtained from Arabs and Persians (Duyvendak 1947; Snow 1988; Paul Wheatley 1975). Arab and Persian merchants dominated the Indian Ocean trade between the 7th and 15th Century A.D. and described Africa (particularly, the East coast of Africa that the Arabs were familiar with and had partly influenced) to the Chinese.

The second period represents the era when the Chinese embarked on several voyages to many countries around the Indian Ocean, including Africa. Careful documentation show where they went, the year they embarked upon and reached these destinations and descriptions of what they saw. This section will present information about the voyages and the impact of the encounter on both China and Africa.

Africa and China before the Ming voyages

This section deals with two discussions; first, it establishes the trade relations between China and West and South Asia; second, it examines the understanding of Africa as narrated to the Chinese by Arab and Persian traders. I approach these two issues in dialogue with one another.

There is much debate regarding the first country in Africa to be mentioned in early Chinese records. Several prominent Afro-Sino scholars agree that Egypt is one of the first countries in Africa mentioned in early Chinese sources (Li Anshan 2015; Duyvendak 1949; Kusimba 2013; Jinyuan 1984, 241; Hirth 1909, 47). Duyvendak links this connection between China and Egypt to the "superficial resemblance of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and old forms of Chinese characters" (1949, 5). Other scholars have cited the discovery of Chinese bottles in a tomb near Thebae, Egypt, in 1834, as a possible link between Africa and China (Ibid). However, scholars such as Stanislas and Hirth have debunked such claims. They argue that the discovered bottles and inscriptions on it are recent and doubt that it provides any direct connection between the two ancient cultures (Ibid).

The second reference to Africa in Chinese sources appears during the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD). According to Anshan, "Ethiopia and Alexandria were mentioned in *Shi Ji* (Records of the Grand Historian, 104-91 B.C.), *Han Shu* (History of the Han, 80 A.D.) and *Wei Lue* (Brief Accounts on the Wei Kingdom)" (2015, 12). Philip Snow (1988) cites the Han dynasty as the first (indirect) contact between Africa and China. He dates this contact to around 202 BC to AD 220. Snow claims that the kingdom of Kush and Axum were visited during this period. This information tallies with Anshan's view.

Other scholars, such as Paul Wheatley (1975), focused more on sources that yielded more substantial information on Africa-China relations, such as those from the Tang dynasty (618 – 906 A.D.). Wheatley asserts that "apart from a few probable, but as yet not fully substantiated, references to Alexandria, the earliest account of Africa in Chinese literature appear to date from the T'ang dynasty" (1975, 78). Duyvendak (1949) also corroborates this notion, after mentioning some earlier sources, that it is in the Tang dynasty that the first conclusive information on Africa can be found. During this time, we begin to see the first descriptions of Africans and their lifestyle as well as animals and produce in the region, even though these were still based on secondary sources. This interest, mainly in foreign commodities, continued throughout the Tang dynasty into the Sung dynasty, when the Chinese became more sea-minded, culminating in the Ming dynasty voyages. This commercial venture grew so much towards the end of the tenth century that the government of China monopolized the trade and persuaded traders to come to China often with promises of issuing special

licenses to import goods. The Sung history provide valuable information on the nature and quantity of this trade:

> From 1049-53 the annual importation of elephants' tusks, rhinoceros's horns, strings of pearls, aromatics, incense, etc., was over 53,000 units of count. In 1775, this annual amount had risen to over 500,000 units of count. We do not, unfortunately, know how much a unit was, different for different types of articles, but the figures give us a fair idea of the enormous increase. In order to find a market for these goods the officials were ordered to encourage the people to buy them with "gold", "piece goods, rice, and straw" (Duyvendak 1949, 16).

In addition to the information on the volume of trade during the Sung dynasty history, is the tax levied on traders. An Arab trader by the name, Suleyman, tells us a bit about the tax structure. He says that "in the middle of the ninth century thirty percent in goods was levied as duty on foreign imparts at Canton. Pearls, camphor, and all articles of fine quality had to pay 10 per cent in kind; tortoise-shell, sandal-wood, and all coarse grade articles 30 per cent. After these charges were paid, the remainder belonged to the merchants themselves" (ibid). This gives us an idea of the volume of trade going on and to understand the complexities involved. These activities would have required extensive liaison among those involved and the ports would have been busy too.

The sung dynasty history also gives us insight into the trade policies and regulations enacted by the government. The coins seem to have been discouraged in favour of other products, thus promoting trade by barter. This seems to be an economic policy aimed at fostering export of Chinese goods. For example, both Chinese and foreign ships leaving the Chinese ports of Kuangtung and Fuchein were regularly scrutinized for illegal money on board. If caught taking out money, they would pay a heavy fine including execution, in extreme cases. If they are caught smuggling between one and three strings of cash, they would be banished for one year, for four strings and above, they faced execution (Ibid, 17).

The heavy punishment seems to suggest that the authorities had very stringent economic policies and the outcome would have been so important that they would impose such heavy penalties for going against the law.

Voyages, monsoons, ship technology and timeline

Travelling between China and the Arabian Peninsula through sea took a couple of months. When stop overs, disembarkation and other related issues are taken into account, it is estimated that a round-trip with take about two years to complete. Duvyendak states that "Arab traders usually took two years for the voyage to China and back. Suleyman [is more specific] says it usually takes

between 130 to 140 days of voyage from Persia to China" (Duyvendak 1949, 18). This means that a round-trip from Persia to China would take approximately six months. If Duyvendak's figure of two years would be considered, in light of Suleyman's figures, it means that a year and six months were spent during stop overs, offloading goods, selling them and loading the ship with Chinese goods to take back home (Persia). By extension, it means that travelling to China from Africa would have been longer, considering the distance from Persia to Africa. Snow (1988) subscribes to the estimated two-year timeframe but questions why the Chinese would embark on a two-year journey a couple of times only to shut it down. Some of the implications of the distance and travel duration is that the type of goods that could be shipped would be carefully considered. It is not surprising that most goods were spices, ambergris, rhinoceros horns, elephant tusks, porcelain and silk. The traders were familiar with the monsoons and knew the best time to travel, otherwise, they spend longer time on sea and might encounter disruptive climate.

Some interesting statistics also come to the fore; we get the opportunity to know the volume of trade that went on. Unfortunately, the monetary value is unknown. Between 1049-53, there were over 53,000 units of aromatics, string of pearls, elephant tusks, incense and rhinoceros horns, being imported annually. By 1175, this number had increased to over 500,000 units annually (Duvyendak 1949, 16). This volume informs us that consumption was quite high. Perhaps, the volume was high because the traveling was less frequent. Whatever the case may be, one thing is certain; there was extensive trading going on. The Chinese ships were huge and well-equipped technology-wise. Suleyman describes the Chinese ships as "house-like ships, with five to six decks, provisioned for ocean voyages with a year's grain supply, herds of pigs and jars of fermenting wine. Their navigators possessed the world's most advanced seafaring technology in form of magnetic compasses, water-tight bulkheads, axial rudders, floating anchors and sounding lines" (Snow 1988, 9). The ships carried between 28,000 to 37,000 people, including soldiers, interpreters, civilians etc. and visited over thirty countries in the Indian Archipelago. At this point, the Chinese had not yet ventured into Africa but were gradually becoming prominent in maritime trade.

Description of Africa and Africans in the secondary sources

At this point, we now examine descriptions of Africa and Africans as relayed to the Chinese. In one of the descriptions of Chung-li, a country in Africa around the 12th or 13th century, Chao Ju-kua, an inspector of trade at Ch'an-chou, asserts that "the people of the country of Chung-li go bareheaded and barefooted; they wrap themselves about with cotton stuffs, for they dare not wear jackets, since jackets and turbans are privileges reserved for the ministers and the King's courtiers. In this country, they eat baked flour-cakes, sheep's and camel's milk" (Hirth 1909, 51).

Chao Ju-kua talks about many sorcerers in this country. The sorcerers can change themselves into birds, beasts or other sea animals. if there is a dispute while trading with foreign merchants, they can cast a spell over the ship so that it is stagnant and cannot move, and they will only undo the spell once the dispute is resolved (Duyvendak 1949, 17; Hirth 1909, 51). Hirth says that "annually, countless numbers of birds of passage alight on the dessert parts of the country. When the sun rises they suddenly vanish so that one cannot find a trace of them. The people catch them with nets and eat them; they are remarkably savoury. They are in season till the end of spring, but as soon as summer comes they disappear to return the following year" (1909, 51-52). Chau Ju-kau also talks about the burial ceremony of the people of Chung-li. He asserts that "when one [person] dies and the body has been placed in a coffin, the kinsmen wield swords and ask the chief mourner the cause of the death. If he was killed by man, (they say) 'we shall kill the murderer in revenge with this sword'. If the death was a natural one, then they throw down their swords and burst into violent wailing" (Duyvendak 1949, 21). Many scholars believe this country is Somali/Somaliland (Hirth 1909, 53; Duyvendak 1949,22).

Having emphasized and established the fact that the Chinese had not yet visited Africa at this point, we can reasonably conclude that this information and view of Africa, was passed down to the Chinese by Arabs and/or Persians, and it was not their first-hand observation of Africa. The Chinese perception of Africa and Africans was neither monolithic nor static, but dynamic and changed from time to time depending on the level of interaction and knowledge they had. The volume of trade gives us an idea of how maritime trade was expanding and will eventually lead to the visits to Africa which I will present in the next section.

Direct contact between Africa and China

So far, we have examined trade relations between China and South and West Asia. We now turn to a period where they come in direct contact with African nations. It is at this time that we see the first-hand description of Africa and Africans. It is important to point out that the trade between China and Africa is an extension of what they had established in West and South Asia. The Ming dynasty (1368-1644) saw the beginning of the first official contact between China and Africa. This ambition to embark on extensive maritime expeditions was economically prudent but was in conflict with Confucian ideology. On the one hand, it meant prosperity for those involved including the governments treasury which benefited from import duties. On the other hand, Confucian theory discouraged excessive indulgence in foreign and luxurious goods which might lead into corruption of the elites. Duyvendak explains that "Confucian theory regarded trade as something inferior that the Emperor could not participate in. Therefore, the form in which relations with overseas nations are

always represented is that of tribute-bearing" (1949, 26). This Confucian theory of tribute bearing played a role in the voyages to Africa with the aim of attracting foreign nations to pay tribute.

The official reports and documentation of Cheng Ho's expeditions no longer exist. For such a historic event, one might assume that a detailed report would have been presented to the king and preserved diligently. There seem to have been in-fighting among succeeding Chinese leaders, one faction wanted to revive Cheng Ho's expeditions and the other did not. The story is that Cheng Ho's reports were destroyed (Ibid 27). In the absence of Cheng Ho's reports, we have relied on the information furnished by a few high-ranking officials who accompanied Cheng Ho; Ma Hua, a Muslim interpreter, and Fei Hsin a scholar, who both were part of some expeditions. Kusimba asserts that there are four books published by these officials: "the first book, *Record of the Barbarian Countries in the Western Ocean,* was written by Kung Chen and published in 1434. The second book by Fei Hsin, *Triumphant Visions of the Starry Raft,* was published in 1436. The third book, *The Triumphant Visions of the Boundless Oceans* (1451), was written by Ma Hua. The fourth and final book, *The Records of Tribute-Paying Western Countries* (1520), was a compendium of compass directions and mariners chart incorporating the maritime knowledge acquired by Cheng Ho's expeditions" (1993: 30).

In the early 20th century, at least three stone inscriptions of Cheng Ho's voyages have been found. The first was an inscription on a tablet discovered by an engineer in 1911 in Galle, Sri Lanka. According to the inscription, it was erected on the third voyage[1] and installed in a commemorative spirit in Sri Lanka. This tablet is usually referred to as the trilingual inscriptions of Galle because it was written in three languages: Persian, Chinese and Tamil and it was placed in the city of Galle, Sri Lanka, on the 15th of February 1409, according to the inscription (Dewaraja 2006, 63).The second tablet (date discovered is unknown) became widely known in 1935. This is believed to have been erected by Cheng Ho, says Duyvendak, "in the temple of Celestial Spouse at Lui-chia-chiang, in the region of Tai-ts'ang, on March 14, 1431" (1949, 28). The third tablet is believed to have been discovered in the province of Fukien by an official named, Mr Wang Po-ch'iu, who wrote about it in 1937. The inscription was titled "Celestial Spouse" and must have been written between 5th of December, 1431 and 2nd of January, 1432 This was before the end of the last voyage (1431-1433) (ibid).

[1] Although, this was the third trip, it was Cheng Ho's second trip. He did not go on the second voyage.

The first inscription tells us about the approval and ordaining of the journey by the Ming emperor. The most interesting aspect of this inscription is the description of the list of alms that should be placed at the Buddha temple in the Mountain of Ceylon as oblation. Below is the list:

> 1,000 pieces of gold; 5,000 pieces of silver; fifty rolls of embroidered silk in many colours; fifty rolls taffeta in many colours; four pairs of jewelled banners, gold embroidered, and of variegated silk; two pairs of the same picked in red; one pair of the same in yellow; one pair in black; five antique brass incense burners; five pairs of antique brass flower vases picked in gold on lacquer with gold stands; five pairs of yellow brass candle-sticks picked in gold on lacquer, with gold stands; five yellow brass lamps picked in gold on lacquer with gold stands; five incense vessels in vermilion red, lacquered gold picked on lacquer, with gold stands; six pairs of golden lotus flowers; 2,500 catties of scented oil; ten pairs of wax candles; ten sticks of fragrant incense (Dewaraja 2016, 64)

The above information gives us an idea of the quality and quantity of presents delivered to countries visited during the expeditions, which usually prompted reciprocity. In another inscription, the emperor commands Cheng Ho and others to present gifts to foreign countries and treat them with kindness. Duyvendak asserts that "the emperor ordered Cheng Ho and others at the head of several tens of thousands of officers and hagtroops to ascend more than a hundred large ships to go and confer presents on them in order to make manifest the transforming power of the (imperial) virtue and treat distant people with kindness" (1949, 29). Although, this was a political strategy to attract tributary states, it was also a display of might and resources which could intimidate prospective aggressors. For the most part, the voyages where peaceful, however in one instance, the Chinese used military force. On the third voyage, the Chinese kidnapped the leader of Sri Lanka and brought him to China.

The inscriptions also give us the year of each voyage and the countries they visited. In a chronological order, the expeditions were as follows: the first expedition, from 1405 -1407, visited the following countries: Champa, Java, Lambri, Samudra, Ceylon, and Calicut. The second and third (between 1407-1409 and 1409-1411 respectively) went to some of the places already visited in the first expedition and some others in Indonesia and the coast of India. The fourth voyage (1413-1415) went to the previous places visited and other new destinations such as Hormuz, while a branch of their ships sailed to Bengal. It is on this expedition the Mohammedan interpreter, Ma Huan, went along. The fifth voyage, from 1417- 1419, visited earlier places but went a bit further to Aden and Melinda. This expedition saw the return of many foreign envoys who had been taken to China on previous expeditions. The sixth voyage, from 1421-1422, mostly returning foreign envoys, went as

far as Brava and Mogadisho on the East coast of Africa. The seventh and final expedition (1431-1433) went to Hormuz.

For the first time, the Chinese had the opportunity to see Africa (East Coast of Africa) for themselves and to document the exact location, custom and condition of the countries they visited. After the first trip, a school was established in order to study the languages of foreigners. We are able to get some perspective and descriptions of the places visited. Kusimba furnishes us with some of the descriptions by Fei Hsin. He describes the people who live in the country of Djubo as

> living in solitary and dispersed villages. The country is situated in a remote corner of the west. The walls are made of piled up bricks and the houses are masoned in high blocks. The customs (of the people) are very simple. There [sic] grow neither herbs nor trees. Men and women wear their hair in rolls; when they go out, they wear a linen hood. The mountains are uncultivated and the land is wide; it rains very rarely. There are deep wells worked by means of cog-wheels. Fish are caught in the sea with nets. The products of the country are lions, gold-spotted leopards, and camel-birds which are six or seven feet tall. There are Dragon Saliva (ambergris), incense and golden amber. As merchandise are used vermillion, coloured silks, gold, silver, porcelains, pepper, coloured satins, rice, and other cereals (1993, 30).

It is interesting to note that Fei Hsin describes the houses in Mogadishu as four to five stories high. He also described the people of Mogadishu as troublesome and that they are skilled archers. The rich people among them travel by sea and trade with foreign countries (Duyvendak 1949, 31).

The impact of the visit to Africa

The journey to Africa was an interesting one and certainly one that had a lasting effect on the Chinese. This lasting effect is generally centred around the gift of a giraffe from Africa and the Chinese perception of the giraffe and its significance as a heavenly approval of the emperor. Prior to this, animals exotic to China were included as part of the gifts foreign ambassadors brought to the Chinese emperor as a form of paying tribute. Previously, animals such as lions, tigers, oryxes, nilgaus, zebras and ostriches had been brought to China from Mizr (Egypt). In 1414, a giraffe was presented to the emperor from Bengal, it is believed that this is a precursor for the interest in travelling to Africa. Duyvendak notes that giraffes are not indigenous to Bengal, so it must have come from somewhere else. Scholars, such as Duyvendak (1949) and Wheatley (1975), believe the giraffe was a gift to the new king in Bengal, Saīfu'd-Din, from Africa and that he sent one of the gifts (giraffe) to the Chinese emperor. On realizing that the giraffe was from Melinda, the Chinese must have been interested in the source of the giraffe and word must have reached Melinda that the giraffe was a treasured gift in China. On the fifth

voyage (1417-1419), the Chinese went all the way to Africa, returning African ambassadors that had brought the giraffe from Melinda.

The ki'lin (unicorn) is a mythical animal in Chinese legends. It seems plausible, if not likely, that the Chinese associated the giraffe with the ki'lin hence, the great value attached to the gift. (see Duyvebdak 1947, 33). The ceremony around the second giraffe from Melinda is one worth narrating. The first giraffe from Bengal, which arrived on the 20th of September 1414, caused a stir but did not receive much ceremony as the king turned down the request of the Board of rite to celebrate it. However, when the second giraffe arrived from Melinda, the king turned down the request by the Board of rites again but personally went to receive the giraffe at the feng-t'ien gate. The court officials congratulated the emperor and prostrated before him. The Emperor declared that "this event is due to the abundant virtue of the late emperor, my father, and also to the assistance rendered me by my ministers. That is why distant people arrive in uninterrupted succession. From now on it behoves us even more than in the past to cling to virtue and it behoves you to remonstrate with us about our shortcomings" (ibid). This speech was an indication of the importance of such gift and it marked a memorable beginning of Africa-China relations. The speech and poem that follows from one of the servants, Shên Tu, Shih-chiang-hsüeh-shih, Feng-hsün-ta-fu of the Han-lin-yüan, memorialized this important event. Shên's speech goes like this

> Respectfully I consider that your majesty succeeded to the emperor T'ai-tsu's grand heritage and that your virtue transforms (the world) and cause the Three Luminaries to follow their regular course and all living souls to perform their duty. Consequently a Tsou-yü (vegetarian tiger) has appeared, wonderful ears are produced, sweet dew has descended, the Yellow River has been clear and savoury springs have gushed forth. All creatures that spell good fortune arrive. In the 9th month of the year *chia-wu* Yong-lo period (1414) a K'i-lin (giraffe) came from the country of Bengal and was formally presented as a tribute to the court. The ministers and the people all gathered to gaze at it and their joys knows no end. I. your servant have heard that, when a Sage possesses the virtue of the utmost benevolence so that he illuminates the darkest places, then a k'i-lin appears. This shows that your majesty's virtue equals that of heaven; its merciful blessings have spread far and wide so that its harmonious vapours have emanated a K'i-lin, as an endless bliss to the state for a myriad myriad [sic] years. I your servant, joining the throng, behold respectfully this omen of good fortune and kneeling down a hundred times and knocking my head on the ground I present a hymn of praise as follows" (Duyvendak 1949, 33-34).

This tribute gives us a glimpse into the magnitude of this event in the Chinese court. The arrival of the giraffe marked the beginning of an important relationship between Africa and China but most importantly, it had a domino effect in China. The arrival of the giraffe, according

Duyvendak, "became the emblem of perfect virtue, perfect government, and perfect harmony in the empire and in the universe" (1949, 34). This is the profound effect the encounter between Africa and China had on the Chinese.

African perspectives on China

The only African perspective on China that we know of during this period, comes from the North African Berber traveller, Ibn Battuta. Born in Tangier, Morocco, in 1304, Ibn Battuta travelled around the world, accumulating experiences from different parts of the world and documenting it in his book known as the *Rihla*, which was put together with the help of Ibn Juzayy. His journey was inspired by his desire to go on pilgrimage in Mecca, but this journey ended up taking him twenty-nine years, during which he visited many parts of the Islamic world as well as other non-Islamic countries. Ibn Battuta travelled around 75, 000 miles to many countries including Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Persia, Somalia, Swahili Coast, Anatolia, Central Asia, Byzantium, Afghanistan, India, the Maldives Island, Sri Lanka, the Indonesian Archipelago, Bangladesh, South East Asia, China, Spain and Mali (Lee 1829; Morgan 2001, 3)

Ibn Battuta arrived in Quanzhou[2], China, in 1345, while China was under the Mongol rule. He was fascinated by the level of craftsmanship of the Chinese, particularly, their silk and porcelain. He described the city of Quanzhou as a commercially vibrant city, with one of the largest ports in the world. At these ports, large ships were busy transporting Chinese products to different parts of the world. The locals, he said, eat "frogs, pigs, and even dogs" (Lee 1829, 48). When Ibn Battuta arrived in Quanzhou, he was welcomed with drums, trumpets, flags and musicians by the head of the local Muslim merchant, in celebration of his arrival. He observed that the Muslims in the city lived separately and had their own hospitals, mosques and bazaars.

From Quanzhou, Ibn Battuta went to Guangzhou, where he stayed with some of the city's wealthy merchants for two weeks. He then went to Fuzhou where he lived with Zahir al-Din and met a fellow Moroccan by the name, Al-Bushri of Ceuta (a city in Morocco), in China. Al Bushri had established himself as a very successful merchant in China, he sent Ibn Battuta several gifts during his stay. From there, Ibn Battuta went to Hangzhou (El Khansa) a city he loved. He was enchanted with the beauty of Hangzhou and described the city "as the largest city he had ever seen on the face of the earth" (Travassos and Filho 2016, 72). Ibn Battuta was very impressed with Hangzhou, particularly with the "large number of well-crafted and well-painted Chinese wooden ships, with coloured sails

[2] Guangzhou was known as El Zaitun by Ibn Battuta and other foreign traders and travellers, including Marco Polo, between 11th to 14th century)

and silk awnings, assembling in the canals" (Lee 1829, 53). He noted that the locals worshipped the solar deity and described the Chinese as "pagans, idol worshippers who burn their dead as the Hindus" (Travassos and Filho 2016, 71) This city hosted a large number of Muslims and during his stay in Hangzhou, he met a family of Egyptian origin, who he resided with as a guest in the city's Muslim quarters. Ibn Battuta went back to Hangzhou from Beijing, and then headed to Fuzhou. On reaching Guangzhou, he headed for Southeast Asia by boarding a Chinese junk. On this journey, he reported to have been unjustly charged exorbitant fare by the crew which cost him much of what he had accumulated while in China. Ibn Battuta returned home, in Morocco, from China in 1346, after many years of traveling.

It is important to state that many scholars doubt Ibn Batutta's travels and believe he did not travel to all the places he claimed to have travelled, especially China. Many scholars argue that Ibn Battuta relied on oral information and direct plagiarism of earlier travellers before him to construct his book. It is believed that his description of Mecca, Damascus, Medina and other places in the Middle East were copied from the Andalusian Ibn Jubayr (Gibb 1962), which was written over 150 years earlier. The description of places in Palestine were also believed to have been copied from a thirteenth century traveller known as al-Abdari (Elad 1987). His Chinese chronicles may have been lifted from some of the following sources, Shihab al-Umari, Silaiman al-Tajir, Al Juwayni, Rashid al din and an Alexander romance.

Despite much criticism, Ibn Battuta's account, in the worst case, even if it was not entirely true, provides us with an understanding of perceptions of many parts of the world and particularly, China. One thing that is not disputed are the sources from which he copied. Regardless of the shortcomings of his account, there is truth in much of the information. But then again, Ibn Battuta was just a traveller; there is no record of him carrying notes or a journal. Much of what he wrote down were from memory and with the help of Ibn Juzayy, who helped him write the book. It is believed that Ibn Battuta and Ibn Juzayy relied on hearsay and earlier account to reconstruct Ibn Battuta's journey. Other scholars believe he might have embarked on this journey but since he did not keep a journal, he forgot many things and relied on previous accounts to reconstruct his account. This type of issue plagues many historical accounts of travellers in the early period, including Marco Polo.

Conclusion

It is safe to conclude that Africa-China relations is a long, complicated and dynamic one. The perspective of the Chinese towards Africa was fluid and it changed depending on the information they got on Africa. The views before and after they visited were very different. The Chinese who

made the journeys seem to have had a cordial relation with many countries near and far. Ibn Battuta's account shows us that the Arabs and Persians were part of the Chinese society, living in their own small cities with mosques, bazaars and other necessities. Ibn Battuata's account also corroborates the proposal that the Arabs and Persians were well connected in China and were the intermediaries between Africa and China, describing to them what Africa was like. It corroborates the fact that the Arabs told them about the parts of Africa that they were familiar with and had helped shape — Islamic parts of Africa.

Categorizing Ibn Battuta's account as an African view of China will need some clarification. Although, his account was from the geographical location of Morocco in Africa, and he was a Berber, we cannot say categorically that his account represents an African view of China. I believe it was more of an Arab/Islamic view of China. This is because Ibn Battuta was a staunch Muslim; most of the countries he travelled to were Muslim nations and he only felt comfortable when he met fellow Muslims. In addition, he has been mainly remembered and hailed as an Arab-Muslim geographer as well as honoured in mostly Eastern Arab countries. Having said that, the geographical location is still very important, considering that after leaving China, he travelled to Mali where Mansa Musa was the king, and might have shared his knowledge of China with them. This type of information would usually spread among the people and would give them an impression of foreign lands such as China. This would also be part of the mainstream knowledge of China in the Muslim world which include parts of Africa, the Middle East and Al Andalusia. It is based on this perspective that I argue that it is also an African view of China. One of the most important gifts that Ibn Battuta's travels and account offers is the opportunity to forge a more balanced view of China and Africa in the Middle-Ages.

It is safe to conclude that as far as we know, there was no (documented) musical encounter or exchange between Africa and China during this period. But this is subject to the fact that we rely on fragmented extant accounts of this journey as most of Cheng Ho's records were destroyed. However, if we activate our imagination, we can speculate, albeit without evidence, that there is a high probability that musical interaction or even an exchange may have happened on the fifth voyage where African ambassadors were returned home. This speculation is based on the tradition of preparing for long voyages which included entertainment on board. Considering the length of the journey, it is presumable that music entertainment of some sort would have taken place. This music-making may have been a collective, participatory activity or one group performing for the other. Whatever the case may be, if this speculation were to be true, it is unlikely that this type of event may have a long lasting effect in the form of musical exchange, it may just have been a once-off experience for those involved. In summary, the official relations between Africa and China during

this period ended on a cordial note. There was deep respect for one another which made it easier to rekindle the relationship much later.

CHAPTER THREE

The Barbat

Introduction

In the absence of direct musical exchange between Africa and China during the precolonial era (700-1500AD), as presented in Chapter Two, we now turn to a period of indirect musical influence which spread across the Indian Ocean. My hypotheses proposed that if the Arabs and Persians were the trade brokers between Africa and China, it is likely that they were the cultural brokers too. The information gathered suggests that while the Arabs and Persians were taking goods from Africa to China and vice versa, they were not passing the music between Africa and China, rather, they were passing on their own culture and music to both Africa and China. This era is influenced and shaped by Persian and Arab musical instruments and musicians, who spread Persian and Arab musical styles across the Indian Ocean, giving the region a unique soundscape.

As a means to explore this complicated interchange, this chapter focuses on the *barbat*, a Persian musical instrument, which was adopted by Arabs and circulated around Asia, Africa and Europe. This chapter defines the *barbat* and presents the history of the instrument. Although the origin is debated, there is a majority consensus, based on iconographic evidence, that it originates in Persia. The circulation of the instrument to the Far East, Africa and Europe will also be presented. The organological component and the transformation of the instrument as it migrated from one region to another will be covered in this chapter.

Origin and history of the barbat

The *barbat* is a pear-shaped, short-necked lute which has its origin in Persia. It is one of the earliest known short-necked lutes. The *barbat*, according to James During, can be described as "the prototype of a family of short-necked lutes characterized by a rather flat, pear-shaped sound box which was carved with a neck out of a single piece of wood and covered by wooden soundboard or table that came to have two holes either in the shape of a '3' or an 'S'" (1988, n.p.). The precise origin of the *barbat* is difficult to establish. Determining origins of this nature are generally challenging, and in this regard, the *barbat* is no exception. The debates on the origin of the *barbat* can be divided into two categories: geographical considerations and timeline considerations. With regards to the geography, the divide is between India and Persia while with regards to the time period, it is between the 1st century BC. and the 1st century AD. There is iconographic evidence in both India

and Persia, but the challenge is in the dating. I will present some of the information regarding the origin below.

The origin of the *barbat* can be traced to Central Asia (Dubois 1942, 205). The oldest pictorial representation of this instrument was found in Kalcayan, North Bactria[3] in the first century AD. The oldest evidence of the *barbat* is the terra-cotta statuette from Dal'verzing Tepe which dates back to the first century BC (During 1988). Farmer refers to a *barbat* seen in an Indian sculpture dating to the 2nd century BC that only appears in the 1st century AD in Northwest India (ibid). This instrument is similar if not identical to the *luth énchancré* found in a Gandhara sculpture which dates between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD (During 1988). This *barbat* may have been introduced by the Kushan aristocracy and perhaps, adopted in Persia. Farmer claims that this *barbat* "is said to have appeared during the reign of Bahrām Gōr, when according to Šāh-nāma, 10,000 Lōris arrived from India, 'all excelling in the art of the *barbatÂI'"* (Farmer EI[1] IV: 985, as cited by During 1988).

It is not clear if Farmer is suggesting that a particular type of *barbat* was brought to Iran from India or that the *barbat* generally speaking, originated in India. It is usually very difficult to determine if the name *barbat* refers to is a specific type of short-necked lute or if it refers to lutes in general as sometimes lutes are generally spoken of in broad terms under the name *barbat* during the early development of the instrument. The same is true in Arabia and China where lutes where generically referred to as *ūd* and *pipa* respectively.

Continuing on the question of origin, Laurence Picken makes reference to art of the Ghandara stating that "two types of short lutes can be seen on the Gandhara (most of Afghanistan) sculptures of the 1st century AD. (1) a three-string 'waisted' lute and (2) the three (or four) string ovoid lute" (1955, 32). The first and second types appear at various times in Indian records but at some point, they seem to have been abandoned and they only reappear later. According to Pickens, the first type "disappears from Indian records after the first century and does not reappear until the Muslim invasions; the second type occurs from the second to the fourth century in Southern India — at Amaravati" (ibid). Picken's argument corroborates Farmer's information about a type of *barbat* in Southern India between the second and fourth century AD. As explained above, Gandhara is a possible origin of the *barbat* albeit India is a close substitute. What is not in doubt is that Central Asia is the geographical origin of the *barbat.* Even the area stated by Farmer in India, which is the Northwest of India is very close in proximity to Central Asia and might have been a Central Asian region or have very strong cultural links to Central Asia during this period.

[3] Present day South Uzbekistan

There are many sources and stories with regards to the name *barbat.* Some believe it was coined *barbat* because of the way it is played. In this regard, Majd al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1210) asserts that the name *barbat* was given to the instrument "because the player places the instrument against his breast" (Farmer 1930, 771). There are also claims that the name *barbat* is derived from the resemblance with the shape of some animals. For example, Muhammad ibn Ahmed al-Khuwārizmī (fl. 976-97) believes the instrument resembles "the breast of a duck" (Ibid) and as such, the *barbat* was named after that. Although, Farmer cites Ahmed al-Khuwārizmī, he does not tell us what a duck means or how it is pronounced in Farsi or Arabic. Upon checking the pronunciation of duck in Farsi, it does not give any impression that it relates to *barbat.* Duck in Farsi is pronounced *ordak* (Glosbe online dictionary n.d.). Perhaps, the Arabic word for duck seems closer to *barbat.* The Arabic transliteration for duck is *bata* or *bat* (ibid). This presents another problem, however, as the *barbat* is a Persian instrument and one would assume the name would be derived from Farsi. Since it originated in Persia it is very unlikely that the Arabic word for duck would have inspired the name *barbat.* With the absence of further information on this, the connection between the *barbat* and the duck remains a visual one. Indeed, there is some resemblance between the two as the belly of the duck and the body of *barbat* is comparable, but other than that we do not know why the name is derived from its resemblance to the duck.

A more accurate comparison with an animal is the said resemblance of the *barbat* to a type of fish known as the *shabbūt.* According to Arab lexicographers, "there was 'a species of fish' called the *shabbūt.* This fish was 'slender in the tail, wide in the middle part, small in the head, resembling a *barbat'"* (Farmer 1930, 772). Farmer also asserts that "the Tāj al-'arūs, tell us that the *barbat,* when long, not broad, is likened to this fish, and the fish to the *barbat.* The 'slender tail' of the fish is called shabbūt and is evidently the parallel and separate "neck" of the *shabbūt* lute (*'ud al-shabbūt*)" (ibid). What is notable for the above is the trend of likening the *barbat* with animals and anatomical features. The *barbat* has also been described as "hunchbacked" and "lean bellied" by Yazīd II (720-4)" (Ibid, 771).

Although the sources presented in this chapter highlight diverse views and arguments on several aspects of the *barbat,* we can deduce that the *barbat* is a short-necked, pear-shaped instrument of Persian origin, which dates back to either the first century BC of the first century AD.

The organological component of the barbat and its transformation from region to region

There are a few organological components of the *barbat* which I will discuss here and how it has transformed from region to region eventually becoming what is commonly referred to as the *ūd.* The

major components involved in this transformation are the number of strings, presence or absence of frets, the tuning systems and a one-piece versus two-piece construction.

Strings

The number of strings the *barbat* has been debated as much as the history of the instrument itself. There are records describing three, four and five strings at different times. The original *barbat* is said to have three strings to which a fourth was added (During 1988). Between the 6th – 7th century AD during the time of the master *barbat* player, Bārbad, the *barbat* had four strings. Farmer provides more information on this, he asserts that "during the time of Bishr ibn Marwān (d. 694) and Yazīd II (d. 724) the *barbat* still had four strings. However, both Al-Kindī (d. ca. 874) and Al-Fārābī (d. 950) speak of a fifth string, which is said to have been introduced by Ziryāb (8th-9th century AD)"(1930, 772-773). Ziryāb's contributions include designing a heavier lute than the standard version and replacing the lower strings of the instrument with gut as opposed to the customary silk. These improvements were made while he was at the court of Hārūn between 786-809. Whereas while he was at the court of the Andausian sultan, 'Abd al-Rahmān II, between 822-852 AD. he replaced the old style of using a quill plectrum with a wooden plectrum made from an eagle's feather.

Frets

The word *dasātīn* (sing. *dastān*) which means "frets" were adopted from the Persians by Arabs. This system introduced the Persian tuning system of fourths, A-D-G-c, replacing the old *accordatura* of the lute, C-D-G-a. This Persian system continues to be used in tuning the lute in modern times.

The body

The *barbat* was originally carved out from wood as a single whole unit. The separate-neck *barbat* was later a later development which took place at the Baghdad courts during the Abbāsid dynasty. This development is credited to Zalzal who reconstructed the *ūd al shabbūt*. It is this separate-necked *barbat* that later became the parent of the European lute. Both the old type of the *barbat*, without a separate neck and the newer version with a separate neck, continues to be used side by side (Farmer 1930).

The description of the modified *barbat* or *ūd* as described by Al-Kindī gives us some insight into the construction of the original *barbat.* According to Al-Kindi (d. ca. 874) "the belly and the back of the *barbat* were made with thin wood ensuring that the thinness of the wood was uniform throughout" (Ibid, 773). Farmer presents detailed description of the modified version of the *barbat* as described by Al-Kindi. I will present this description in the next section which deals with the spread of the *barbat* around the world with notable modifications by Arabs.

The spread of the *barbat* throughout Asia, Africa and Europe: a focus on Arabia, China and Africa

Arabia

The *barbat* is the direct ancestor to the Arabian *ūd.* Of the many versions of the origin of the *ūd,* two stand out: the first, a biblical reference, is that Lamech, the descendant of Adam and Cain, invented the *ūd*. Lamech's son, Jubal, is referred to as the "father of all such [instruments] as the handle harp (kinnōr) and organ ('uyāb)" (Biblical reference as cited in Farmer 1930, 768). The second origin, perhaps much more popular and accepted, is that the Arabs adopted the *barbat* from the Persians and it gradually evolved into the *ūd.* Al-Nadr ibn al-Hārith ibn Kalada is said to have introduced the instrument to the Arabs upon returning from a formal mission to the king of Persia (Kisra) in Al-Hira (4th-7th centuries). During this trip, he learned how to play the *ūd* (*barbat)* and a song (ghinā), which he must have learned in the process of learning the instrument. When he returned to Mecca, he taught people how to play the instrument and it was adopted by the singing girls (*qainā*t) (Ibid, 769).

Development of the barbat in the Arab world

For a long time, the *barbat* continued to enjoy popularity among Arabs until the time of Zalzal (d. 791 AD), a famous Baghdād lute player. It is important to clarify at this point that the Arabs had various lutes such as the *mizhar, kirān* and *muwattar* before and during the introduction of the *barbat.* One of the first innovations made to the *barbat* was the separation between the body and the neck explained earlier. The new lute, '*ūd al-shabbūt,* also known as a "wonderful lute", was introduced by Zalzal (Farmer 1930). Another musician, known as Ziryāb, from Baghdād, later made some improvements to the instrument while at the court of the sultan 'Abdal-Rahmān II (822-52) in Al-Andalus.

Ziryāb's contribution to the development of the lute are quite remarkable and worthy of mention. Some of these contributions date from the late eighth century to the early ninth century. During Ziryāb's time at the Hārūn court, between 789-809, he made a few changes to the lute which include designing a heavier lute than the conventional one, and changing the lower strings to gut, replacing silk which was common at the time. He also introduced the quill plectrum which replaced the wooden one in use. Al-Kindī's (d. ca. 874) description of the lute gives us an idea of the instrument. He asserts that "both the belly and [the] back of the lute were made of thin wood, which was to be of uniform thinness throughout" (Ibid, 773-774). Farmer further provides detailed description of the instrument. According to Al-Kindī, the measurements of the instrument is as follows:

> The depth of the sound-chest was half of the width, and the widest part was at the beating place of the *plectrum* or fingers, which was 6.75cm. (=3 asābi') from the bridge-tailpiece (musht). We also get a rough idea of the size

> of the lute because this beating-place was at the tenth part of the strings. This means that the distance from the nut (*anf*) to the bridge-tailpiece (musht) was 75.25cm. in the four-stringed lute of Al-Kindī, the two lower strings, the *bamm* (A) and *mathlath* (D), were made of gut, and were of four and three strands (*ṭabaqāt*) respectively, whilst the higher strings, the *mathnā* (G) and *zīr* (c), were made of silk, and were of two strands and one strand respectively. Al-Kindī realized that for the higher strings, which required a greater tension, silk stood the strain better, and also gave a better tone" (ibid).

In addition to Al-Kindi's information, Ikhwān al-Safā' tells us that

> the length of the lute should be half as much again as its width, whilst its depth should half of its width, and the neck one-quarter of the length. Its boards (*alwāh*) should be made of thin and light wood only, whilst the belly (wajh) should also be of thin, hard, light wood. The "Brethren" say that the four-stringed lute should have all its strings made of silk, and that they should be made of sixty-four, forty-eight, thirty-six, and twenty-seven threads (*tāpa*) respectively, from the *bamm* to the *zīr* (ibid, 774).

There were significant changes made to the *barbat* as it transited from Persia to Arabia. As we have seen above, this localization of the *barbat* into an Arabian archetype saw a transformation of the instrument. For a very long time, the old type of *barbat* without a separate neck continued to be used alongside the newer type, without a separate neck.

The development of the *barbat* in Arabia was perhaps the most significant phenomenon in the trajectory of the short-necked, pear-shaped lutes. The Arabs will go on to introduce this lute to North Africa, Europe and China, promoting the popularity of the instrument and developing a shared regional musical culture and soundscape. As the *barbat* gained prominence in Persia and the Arabian Peninsula, it migrated Eastward, to China, where it went through a process of transformation and localization, becoming the instrument we now know as the *pipa.*

China

The *pipa,* though widely known as a Chinese instrument, is actually of foreign origin. Both the name and the playing technique are not indigenous to China. This instrument was introduced to China from India in the fourth century, although it was originally a Persian instrument. It is very likely that it could have been an early form of the *barbat* which might have undergone some changes before coming to China. As opposed to the name of many Chinese instruments, which have a local meaning, the *pipa* is described by how it is played, a phenomenon scholars attribute to the foreign origin of the instrument. Although early lutes, both long and short-necked, were generally referred to as *pipa*, the name was later associated strictly to the short-necked, pear-shaped instrument of Persian origin.

In the *Archaeology and History of Musical Instruments in China* (2001), Wu Ben tells us that all lutes, from the Han to the Tang dynasty, were generally referred to as *pipa.* There are generally two

understandings of the origin of the term *pipa*: one is that it is a transliteration of the foreign word *barbat* and two; it is derived from the playing technique of the instrument. The playing technique of the right-hand when strumming is "*pi* which means 'to play forward' and *pa* which means 'to play backward'" (Wu 2001). The predecessor of the Chinese *pipa* is the *quxiang pipa*, also a short, pear-shaped curved-neck instrument. This instrument was introduced to China from India in the fourth century, although it was originally a Persian instrument. It is very likely that it could have been an early form of the *barbat* which might have undergone some changes before coming to China.

According to Lawrence Picken, "the *p'i-pa* is sometimes regarded as a phonetic equivalent of the Persian *barbat or barbut*" (1953, 33). The name *pipa* first appears in the encyclopaedia *Shih Ming.* In the *Shih Ming* (Explanations of Names by Liu His [ca. AD 200]) the *pipa* is said to have originated among the (Northern or Western) barbarians. It was described as being played on horseback, the name *pipa* is derived from the playing technique in which the hand moves forward and backward hence, the name *pipa* (ibid). In the *Feng Su T' ung I* (Meanings of Current Customs and Expressions by Ying Chao [ca. AD 200]) the *pipa* derives its name from the description of how it is play: *pi* means play forward, and *pa* means to play backward. Some other symbolic information is provided in this document. The length of the *pipa* was about three feet five inches long which was a symbolic representation of Heaven, man, earth and the five elements: water, wood, fire, metal and earth. The four strings symbolize the four seasons (ibid).

There are iconographic materials available in China, which depict this instrument. One of such materials, according to Wu, is "the celestial deva-musician in the Northern Wei fresco at Dunhuang" (2001). The *quxiang pipa*, had four strings and four frets all through the fourth century AD. to the Tang dynasty (618 - 907). It was held transversely and was plucked with a plectrum. After the Tang dynasty, the name *pipa* was designated solely to this instrument which later, after a few changes, became the predecessor of the modern *pipa.*

There are other iconographic materials that supply more information and suggests possible timeline of the arrival of the *barbat* as well as musicians that may have played a part in introducing the *barbat* to China. In the caves of the Ming-oy monastery (ca. 500 AD.), there are wall paintings that document various instruments used at the time. The array of lutes are quite interesting, they include: *p'ipa-barbat, ghijak, 'oud, dutar,* and *rawap* lutes. Other instruments such as flutes, drums, and dances are also depicted (Karomatov et al. 1987).

The muqam tradition, which is a modal system akin to the maqam tradition in the Arab world, might be useful in informing us about the *barbat-pipa* relationship. Like the maqam, which the modes are

used to tune the *ūd,* the muqam serves similar purpose with the *pipa* and this muqam tradition is common among Uygur's who are of Central Asian origin. The oldest records on the muqam tradition dates back to the Sui dynasty (589-618). In these records, a famous Uygur *p'ipa* player, singer, and theoretician named Sudjup, is depicted. He is likely to be from Turkic or Seljuk descent. Other famous musicians from Kucha and Mantur are also mentioned in these historical Chinese sources. Their importance to the Chinese courts cannot be overstated as they were well known to be highly skilled musicians. During the reign of the Chinese emperor Wen (581-604), a department (number 6) was specifically designed for the music of Kucha (Ehmet 1983, 9; Alibakieva 1988).

During the Tang dynasty (618 – 907AD), many Uygur musicians and dancers were active at the royal court. Alibakieva (1988) asserts that "pantomime and dances depicting lions and monkeys, which were called the 'great performance' (a term that suggests the concept of 'great music') were recorded during this period. Some records concern a specific skill— playing an instrument with the fingers while dancing" (22). Accompanying these musical activities are records of graphical musical notation used by the Uygur people (Ehmet 1983, 9).

There is a web of musical and instrumental exchanges in this region during this period. Just as foreign instruments were introduced into China, many Chinese instruments, some of foreign origin like the *barbat,* were introduced to other countries in Asia, especially Japan, Korea and countries in Southeast Asia. A few valued Chinese instruments from the Tang dynasty have been preserved to this day in Japan, at the Shosoin (Syô ôin) depository in Nara. They were brought to Japan by Japanese scholars who visited China during the Tang dynasty.

The introduction of the *barbat* to China signifies the beginning of the musical 'unity' that spread across Indian Ocean territories, a phenomenon I argue, shaped the soundscape of that region, at least as far as instruments are concerned. The introduction of the short-necked, pear-shaped lute to Africa, which I will discuss in the next section, completes the process of unifying certain aspects of the musical soundscape of the Indian Ocean territories.

Africa

It is the *ūd,* not the *barbat,* that was introduced to Africa. This, I presume, is because of the period in which the instrument was introduced. At the time, the Arabs had developed the *ūd* significantly and the instrument had supplanted the *barbat.* The *ūd* was introduced to Africa during the Islamic expansion and conquest. Most notable of the African variants is the *kwītra*. The Kwītra (also known as the *kouitra, quitra kuitra* or *quwaytara*) is a variant of *ūd* found in North Africa, specifically, Algeria. It is a four-course lute with eight strings, traditionally made from animal intestines.

Although not much is known about its history and development, we know it is a localised and regional version of the *ūd*. The instrument looks similar to the *ūd sharqī* but has a more "elongated, smaller, less budging sound box" (Guettat 2001). This instrument is usually played by the master of the ensemble, the lead lutenist, in classical *nūba* repertoire.

The *kwitra* is currently tuned G2 G3, E4 E4, A3 A3, D4 D4 and is played with a plectrum. The music of North Africa during this period is inextricably linked with that of Al-Andalusia. Several musicians and musical instruments circulated freely between these two regions. Although it was the North African army, for the most part, under the direction of the Umayyad caliphate in Arabia that invaded Iberia, Al-Andalusia soon became the centre of cultural activities, incorporating North Africa.

Later on, other influx of the *ūd* into Africa apparently occurred in East Africa. Instruments such as the *kibangala* and *gabusi* found in parts of East Africa such as Zanzibar, Kenya and Comoros Island seem to have been introduced much later, which fall outside of the time period of this research. As will be explained further in the next chapter, the Middle East, North Africa and Al-Andalusia were deeply connected through religion, language and music. There seems to be a seamless flow of people, culture and activities between this region especially, between North Africa and Al-Andalusia.

Conclusion

The proliferation of the short-necked lute is a classic example of diffusion theory, where an idea, cultural practice, and in this case, a musical instrument, originate from a place and diffuses throughout many parts the world. Although, it is a bit more nuanced than that as the lute is not peculiar to Persia or Central Asia, the Arabs, Africans and Europeans already possessed some form of lutes.

The circulation of the short-necked lutes, such as the *barbat* and *ūd*, helped shaped the Afro-Asiatic soundscape in a unique way that integrates this region musically. Although my initial entry point into this research was to examine musical interchange between Africa and China, precolonial era (700-1500AD), it turns out that most of the dissemination activities during this period, as far as music is concerned, that reached both Africa and China, were happening in the Middle East and its environs. The Arabs and Persians did not serve as cultural brokers between Africa and China, as they did with trade. Instead, they promoted and spread their own culture and musical style.

To the best of my knowledge, there is still no information of an African musician, even if she or he was an Arab or Persian slave, former slave or free person, like the case of Ziryab, that makes

headlines in China. The relationship between Africa and China during this period seems to have been limited to trade while it was the Persians and Arabs that were operating within these spaces, collaborating with their African and Chinese counterparts to pursue their own hegemonic agenda.

CHAPTER FOUR

Socio-cultural considerations through the lens of prominent musicians and their instruments

Introduction

This chapter presents a biographical and organological perspective of the lives of selected musicians, using their proximity to the royal court as a lens through which to learn about the role of music in general, and the short-necked lute in particular, within social and cultural aspects of life. These musicians have been selected based on their popularity, which in many cases rose to celebrity status, but also based on their accomplishment as musicians and instrumentalists, and their overall influence within their respective societies. This chapter has been arranged such that it examines musicians whose sphere of influence span across Persia, Arabia, North Africa, Europe and China. I have merged the Middle East, North Africa and Europe under one section, discussing the life of Ziryab, who lived in all three regions and whose influence still echoes in all three regions. Apart from Ziryab's role musically in the three regions, these regions are inextricably linked together culturally during the Umayyad caliphate (661-750 AD) and Abbasid caliphate (750-1258 AD) reign. While some musicians were active in all three regions, others were only active in one or two regions. The primary musicians examined include Barbad, the master *barbat* player, in Persia and Abu I-Hassan 'Ali Ibn Nafi, popularly known as Ziryab, the master *ūd* player, in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. Also included is Chinese *pipa* player, Kang Kunlun.

An overview of the general musical framework obtainable in these regions

The strategic role North Africa plays in the cultural and musical migration and interconnectedness between Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe is a pivotal one. Early on, the founding and the spread of Islam around the world in the 7th century AD eventually reached North Africa and through North Africa, reached Europe. This ensured a well linked system between the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. This manifests particularly between North Africa and Europe (Al-Andalusia) where strong cultural interaction and integration is evident. Arab music remains the bedrock and a reference point for the music of most Maghreb countries, Al-Andalusia and the Middle East during this period. Migration of people, culture and music accompanied this Arab/Muslim expansion. The Maghreb drew from great intellectual and artistic centers of learning from both the Arab-Islamic Eastern and Western (Iberian Peninsula) regions.

Barbad

The Persian musician and master *barbat* player, Barbad, also known as Bahlabadh, or Balahbadh (Browne 1899, 69; During 1988), was the most revered court musician of the Sassanid empire of Persia. His date of birth is unknown; however, it is known that he was court musician during the reign of Khosrau II, between 590 AD to 628 AD (During 1988). Older sources argue that he was from Marv while later sources argue that he was from Jahrom in Fārs (During 1988). He was often referred to in legendary terms and may well be an indication of how revered he was during his time.

Barbad filled a role that has always been important to kings and rulers throughout history: the need to crystalize their names in history through poems and music. Browne posits that "a king cannot dispense with a good poet, who shall conduce to the immortality of his name, and shall record his renown in dīvāns and books. For when the King receives that command which none can escape, no trace will remain of his army, his treasure, and his store; but by means of the poet's verse shall his name endure for ever" (1899, 56-57). Browne's assertion explains why king Khosrau was so lenient with Barbad, often allowing him much more free rein than other people. This leniency is believed to be connected to Barbad's fame and mastery of the *barbat* and by extension, a person that can crystalize the name of king in the history books through songs and poetry.

Iconographic materials dated to the Sassanid era (224-651 AD) show us the importance of musicians in the royal courts. The Shah-nameh, according to Denny, "includes episodes attesting to the importance of the musician at court, and tells the story of Barbad the lute player, who by secreting himself in a tree managed to get an audition with the Shah Khusraw, resulting in his appointment as chief court musician" (1985, 41). Another account of this event is provided by Jean During (1988) where he adds that Barbad aspired to become one of the minstrels in the court of Kosrow but the chief minstrel, Sargīs (or Sarkās) was jealous of him and kept him at arm's length. According to During, "Barbad hid among the leaves of the tree in the King's garden, where a banquet was being held, and sang three songs to his *barbat.* The first song titled *Dād-āfrīd* means 'created by god' the second song *Peykār-e gord* which means 'battle of the hero' and the last song *Sabz dar sabz* which means 'green in the green'" (1988). Afterwards, the king noticed him, was highly impressed with his performance and made him his chief minstrel.

Barbad is also credited with many theoretical innovations and contributions to music study. The modes, dasātin, are credited to Barbad (Farmer 1965, 99). According to Guettat, "Bārbad had organized melody according to temporal divisions: 360 days in a year, thirty days in a month, and seven days in a week. During Ṣafī al-Dīn's time (thirteenth century), the modes were arranged in

twelve categories, in accordance with the zodiac" (2001)**.** He also composed three hundred and sixty melodies to be sung one per day for the year (Browne 1899, 57). He was highly praised and regarded as a legend with no equal during his time. Apart from being a great player of the *barbat* and being the king's chief minstrel, Barbad also played very important roles as an intermediary between the people and the king. In one case, he served as an intermediary between the king and his wife. Such stories abound and are relayed in legendary terms.

Browne (1899) relays Quazwini's detailed description of Barbad stating that "there were ten people who excelled and were unrivalled in their own field in Persia. These ten are Farīdūn, Alexander, Nūshīrvūn, Bahrām Gūr, Rustam, Jāmāsp, Buzurjmihr, Balahbad, Shabdiz and Farhad" (58). He further distinguished Barbad and described his extra-musical role in the court. He asserts that "the eighth of them was Balahbad the minstrel, who excelled all mankind in minstrelsy, and he was minstrel to Kisra Abarwlz; and when anyone desired to lay any matter before Kisra, yet feared his anger, he communicated it to Balahbad, and gave him gifts to compose a poem on the matter and there to an air, and to sing it before Kisra, who thereby was informed of the matter" (ibid). As an intermediary between the King and the people, he would need to be cautious and discreet. It is a skill that is perhaps often ignored when discussing his role in the court. Barbad would need to have a deep understanding of the royal court, its systems, the important things to the king etc. He would also need to exercise good judgement or else, he would put his life and the lives of others in grave danger.

Among the many legendary tales about Barbad, three stand out: first, is the story of how Barbad helped facilitate the romantic relationship between the king, Khusraw, and Shirin. Khusraw had just married a new wife, Shakar, after his former wife, Maryam, passed away. Soon after this, he started searching for another woman which led him to Shirin. When he went to Shirin's residence, a regal reception was prepared by Shirin to receive him, but she stayed indoors and asked him to return to his wife. Later, Shirin went to a tent near Khusraw's tent and while there, she hears the king's minstrel, Barbad, singing of the king's love for her. In return, Shirin's minstrel returns the message. From there, the King and Shirin consolidated their love for another, and it led to a marriage (see Renard 1994, 69).

The second story is about how Barbad reminded the king of the promise he made to his wife. The king had earlier asked his wife, Shirin, to ask him for a favor; she asked him to build her a castle in his garden, one that no one possessed. He agreed to build the castle but forgot to do it. She could not remind him of his promise so she asked Barbad to remind the king of her request and in turn she would give him her farm in Isfahan. He obliged and composed a poem which he set to music,

describing a great castle. When the king heard it, he remembered his promise to build a castle for Shirin, and he immediately ordered it to be built. She kept to her promise and gave Barbad the farm as promised (Boyce 1957, 24; Browne 1899, 59). This story further emphasizes the influence Barbad wielded in the court.

The third story is that of the king's horse, Shabidz. The favorite horse of the king was named Shabidz. Shabidz health was gradually deteriorating and the king said, "whoever brings me tidings of his death, him will I slay." (Browne 1899, 58). Eventually, Shabidz passed away and the master of horses was unable to tell the king because he was afraid of what the king might do, so instead, he told Barbad what had happened and asked him to tell the king. Barbad relayed the message through poem and singing accompanied by his *barbat.* When the king heard the message, he said, "woe unto thee! Shabidz is dead!" (ibid), Barbad replied, "It is the King that sayeth it" (ibid), the king responded, "well done! How cleverly hast thou saved thyself and saved another!" (ibid). The king grieved the loss of his beloved horse and commanded Futrus, the son of Sinimmār to make a portrait of Shabidz. Futrus obliged and made the portrait very well to the taste and approval of the king.

In the three stories about the life of Barbad, particularly the role he played in the court, we see how crucial he was. He was not only a skilled musician but a skilled courtier and seasoned politician who served as an interface between the king and the people, including the queen. One might assume that the queen would have more access to the king, but it was Barbad, the chief minstrel, who had everyone in his pocket. His job would have required great caution, high discretion and vast wisdom. In the end, Barbad is said to have died from poisoning staged by a jealous rival (Boyce 1957, 34). According to Browne, the king pardoned the offender because he did not want to lose his two best minstrels (1899, 58).

Barbad's role, directly or indirectly, in the development and proliferation of the short-necked, pear-shaped instrument, especially the *barbat*, and subsequent derivatives, cannot be over emphasized. He is the most notable player of such instruments, hence, it is important to discuss him in this chapter. Barbad also represents a certain tradition among lutenists, which is characterized by virtuosity, important role as a court musician and several innovative changes to the instrument as well as the music style. This pattern is emulated by many musicians which followed, including Ziryab's teacher, Ishaq al-Mawsili, and Ziryab himself. Although there is no record of Barbad's music or fame reaching Africa or China during his days, his legacy sure did.

Ziryāb

Ziryāb is arguably the most important musical figure of his time within the Arab-Islamic world, and perhaps beyond. His name reverberated throughout the Mashriq, the Maghreb and Al- Andalusia (Europe). His influence goes beyond music, extending to fashion, lifestyle and the culinary arts. In essence, he was a connoisseur par excellence in the arts. His name at birth was Abu I-Hassan ‘Ali Ibn Nafi, born in the year 789 AD, in Baghdad, the capital of the country now known as Iraq. Some historians believe he was a freed Persian slave (Philip D Schuyler 1978; Kathryn Stately 2007; and Ruth Davis 1996). Epstein (2019) asserts that, “Ziryab was born into an Ethiopian family who were freed slaves in Baghdad” (10). According to Epstein, Ziryab’s father, Havtamo, and mother, Fana, were abducted and sold into slavery. They were later freed due to the bravery of Havtamo, a soldier who defended the king while an assassin attempted to kill the king. Havtamo was praised for his bravery and was granted freedom, including a lump some of money and a meager monthly pension. Epstein says that Havtamo purchased Fana, Ziryab’s mother, who had been betrothed to him as a child (Ibid, 19). It was in this context, according to Epstein, that Ziryab was born.

While there are debates regarding the origin of Ziryab’s family, and whether they were Persian, Arab, African or Kurdish, one thing is almost certain; he was dark-skinned, as evidenced by the nickname for which he was known, Ziryab, meaning “dark nightingale” (Shannon 2007, 314) Ziryab can also mean “blackbird” (Epstein 2019, 5). He was so called because he was dark-skinned, and his singing was likened to that of a bird. Ziryab studied music under the famous court musician, Ishaq al-Mawsili, son of the even more famous musician, Ibrahim Mawsili. During the Abbasid caliphate (750 AD – 1258 AD), Baghdad flourished culturally, particularly under the caliph, Harun al-Rashid, who was a great lover of the arts, especially music. Under his reign, Baghdad became the center for art, science and culture. Its civilization spread across the world, to the West and Far East.

While Ziryab was studying under Mawsili, he was a diligent student and acquired many of his master’s technique both of singing and of playing the *ūd.* Mawsili did not realize how much Ziryab had developed musically until the Caliph, Harun, asked to hear Ziryab. Ziryab was summoned to the court to perform for the caliph. After hearing him perform, the king was very impressed with him and ordered Mawsili to continue teaching the young lad. Before the performance, Ziryab was handed his master’s *ūd,* which he politely declined. He asked the king if he could instead use his own instrument which he built. After playing for the caliph, he was highly impressed with Ziryab but unknown to Ziryab, he had stepped on his master’s toes. Al Mawsili was jealous and sent Ziryab on exile, otherwise, he would kill him. This scene is beautifully captured by Epstein in his book *The Language of the Heart: A Musical, Fantastical Journey Through a Land of Magic* (2019, 52-65).

Epstein gives more details regarding the event. He points out that Ziryab had initially stuck to the classical Arabic rules of improvisation taught to him by his master, al Mawsili, when performing for the caliph but having played for several hours and exhausted his repertoire, he turned to his own compositions which required his personal *ūd* which he had previously built after his was destroyed (Epstein 2019, 62). He requested for his *ūd,* which in addition to the traditional four course *ūd,* had a fifth pair of strings. Al-Mawsili's reaction was based on a couple of things: Firstly, Ziryab broke all the rules taught to him when he played his own personal compositions. Secondly, Ziryab deceived his teacher by not revealing how much he had actually learned until the time when he had to perform for the caliph. Thirdly, Ziryab's performance was excellent even though he broke all the rules of classical Arab improvisation style. Al-Mawsili could not reconcile all his feelings, so he had no option but to exile Ziryab and save him the consequence of his action which was death.

Ziryab had no choice but to leave, and traveled westward to Egypt and then to Kairouan (Also known as Qayrawan) located in present-day Tunisia. Very little is known about Ziryab's life during this period where he moves from Baghdad to Cordoba. This thirteen-year gap in Ziryab's life remains a mystery. We do know a few things though. Many scholars believe he was employed by the ruler, Ziyadat Allah (796-822), in his court in Aghlabid (This is a possible conclusion since the ruler welcomed Ziryab into his royal court and might have employed him). While in Kairouan, Ziryab had written to al-Hakam, the ruler of the Al-Andalusia emirate, and had offered his services as a skilled musician in the court. Al-Hakam was pleased to add another skilled musician to his court, particularly one who came from Baghdad (which at that time was the center of culture and development. Al-Hakam was trying to build Cordoba and turn it into a vibrant cultural center). Ziryab was offered employment and with other benefits.

Ziryab arrived in Cordoba in 822 and upon arrival, he found out that the prince, Al-Hakam I, had passed away. He was shocked and disappointed but fortunately for him, Al-Hakam's son, Abd al-Rahman II, honoured his father's invitation and employed Ziryab. Ziryab was more or less employed as a sort of "minister for culture" as suggested by Lebling (2003, 31). He was initially paid 200 gold dinars (Epstein 2019) but later, as his influence and contribution increases, he was paid more. Grame (1972) claims that he was paid about "40,000 pieces of gold a year". Lebling (2003) asserts that in addition to the 200 pieces of gold per month, "he was given bonuses of 500 pieces of gold at midsummer and the new year and 1000 on each of the two major Islamic holidays. He was further given 200 bushels of barley and 100 bushels of wheat every year. He was given a modest palace in Córdoba and several villas with productive farmland in the countryside" (29).

This handsome remuneration was not out of place considering the reason Abd al Rahman hired Ziryab. Coope (1993) explains that "the emir was eager to import Abbasid style to Córdoba, and he was willing to pay for it. One of his most influential acquisitions was a famous singer and musician named Ziryab who had worked at the courts of both Baghdad and Kairouan" (53). As stated above, Ziryab, coming from Baghdad, studying under al-Mawsili and playing for the caliph, had the necessary credential for the ambitious al-Rahman, who wanted to turn Córdoba into a cultural hub. He hoped that Ziryab could be instrumental in this regard. Ziryab did not disappoint. Referred to as a polymath, Ziryab developed the musical culture of Al-Andalusia as well as fashion, hygiene and the culinary arts, which extended to the Maghreb, and eventually influencing the Mashriq. Al-Andalusia became the center of culture, technology and innovation. Ziryab's contributions are in various levels and areas. Details of his contributions have been divided into three broad sections: music, cuisine and fashion.

Music

Ziryab is credited with adding a fifth pair of strings to the *ūd.* This addition extended the range of the instrument enabling not only other musical possibilities previously unavailable, but symbolic ones as well. Ziryab added these specifically to accommodate his own musical style and technique of playing. According to Epstein (2019), his *ūd* was broken and the instrument maker asked him to participate in the process of rebuilding another one. It is believed that it was at this time he had the opportunity to add a fifth pair of strings in consultation with the instrument maker. We do not know for certain which specific musical reasons for which he extended it, but it is reasonable to conclude that the addition of a string would extend the range of the instrument thereby, accommodating more notes and musical possibilities. The extra-musical reasons for adding a fifth pair of strings are known.

The strings of the *ūd* have always had extra-musical associations. For example, Lebling quotes music historian, Julian Ribera, who asserts that "the medieval lute's four courses of strings were widely believed to correspond to the four humors of the body. The first pair was yellow, symbolizing bile, the second was red for blood, the third white for phlegm, and the fourth, the bass pair, was black for melancholy. Ziryab, it was said, gave the lute a soul, adding another red pair of strings between the second and third courses" (2003, 31). Grame (1972) confirms this, stating that "the lowest and third ones [strings] were made of lion-gut. The fourth string was black, the symbol of melancholy; the third white, for phlegm, the second, red for blood; and the highest, yellow, for bile. He added a second red string in the middle, and it symbolized the soul" (31). In addition to the body parts associated with the *ūd,* Farmer (1932) states that the "*ūd* is also connected with the elements of nature, seasons, winds, natural faculties, colours etc. the four strings of the lute bamm, mathlath,

mathnd, and zir were linked up respectively with earth and black bile, water and phlegm, air and blood, and fire and yellow bile. Ziryab claimed to have added a fifth string to the lute. This he placed between the mathlath and mathnā" (902). Perhaps, one of the most compelling arguments for the addition of one more string to the *ūd* is that it completed the living body of the *ūd.* The fifth string which was positioned in the middle of the strings, according to Guettat, because it "was a synthesis of the four existing elements; it represented the soul and symbolized life" (2001).

Ziryab made several changes including building an *ūd* that was much lighter than the normal ones. He also changed the materials which the strings were made of as well as the plectrum used for strumming. These changes were suited to the style he was developing which Farmer describes as being "one-third lighter" (1939, 42). He continues by saying "Ziryab seems to be the first to use gut strings for his *ūd*" (ibid). The strings were made from the gut of a young lion. Ziryab is said to have described the need for this innovation saying that "the gut gave a much purer tone (taran num) and it was not affected by changes of temperature. Further, it stood the strain of the plectrum (midrdb) much longer. Incidentally it was Ziryab who introduced a plectrum of eagle's talon instead of that of wood which had formerly been used" (ibid).

Ziryab's remarkable knowledge of many songs is also captured in many accounts of his life. He had a reputation of knowing the words to over 10,000 songs (Lebling 2003, 31). Though this is likely an exaggeration, it illustrates he had a remarkable memory and knew immeasurable songs as a result. One of the most important contribution of Ziryab to the music world is the establishment of a conservatory of music in Córdoba. He founded a music school where he developed a new compositional technique based on a system of twenty-four melodic modes (Stapley 2007). Ziryab developed methods for teaching in his music school. His instructions were divided into three main categories: "courses-rhythm, melody and ornamentation" (Trend 1929, 423). There were auditions for prospective students who had to pass tests in voice production. During the auditions, the student was asked to sit straight on a high stool (Miswara) and sing as loudly and emphatic as possible Yā ḥajjām!. 'O barber!' (Guettat 2001). Alternatively, prospective students could be asked to sustain the vowel "ah" as long as possible, starting from a low key to a high key and then they would do the reverse. This allowed the person conducting the audition assess the potential of the candidate. "If the candidates breathe was weak" according to Guettat "a turban was wound around the candidate's stomach; this also facilitated the proper placement of sound" (2001). Those who found it difficult to open their mouth wide "were advised to hold a piece of wood about 7 to 8 centimetres thick between their teeth for several nights" (ibid). In cases where the problem persisted, candidates were advised

to try other activities and abandon singing. Candidates who passed the auditions and showed great promise were accepted. Those who did not pass were unable to continue.

Ziryab's method of teaching songs was quite novel at that time. Before his era, the vocal teachers usually sang through a song, from the beginning to the end as though it is a public performance while the student had to imitate them as best as they could. Something akin to rote learning but might be even worse. Ziryab's method ensured that students start their voice lessons by learning the words of the poem first, then followed by the metre of the song without the music. The student was asked to say the words of the poem repeatedly while simultaneously beating the time with a tambourine or similar instrument to mark the strong and weak accents of the song as well as the different tempos of each movement. Once the students knew the words, Ziryab then proceeded to teach them the melody in its simplest form, without any ornament. Only until the student has been able to do all of the above was the student allowed to add ornaments to the melody. These ornaments would mostly consist of trills, grace-notes, scale-passages, and melismatic passages (Trend 1929). Ideally this culminated in an expressive singing style that explored the full range of expressions and vocal quality of a singer – "an important criteria by which the quality and creativity of an artist, singer, or instrumentalist was judged" (Guettat 2001). This was the training those who made it into the conservatory had. There was only one training for young women at the conservatory. This training, in addition to singing, included playing of an instrument which included the *ūd, rebab* or other instruments.

Ziryab is also credited with the introduction of different song types which progresses from slow/heavy rhythm to a fast/light one. Davis states that "this form culminates later on to what we now know as the nawba in North Africa" (Davis 1996, 423). Wendt also credits the development of the nawba form to Ziryab. She asserts that "the modal structure, vocal style, and phrasing characteristic of the Arab-Andalusian nuba are attributed to the legendary ninth-century musician and theorist Ziryab" (1982). Ziryab's contribution to music pedagogy is not limited to teaching and performance. He also extended the already established musicotherapeutic system which Wendt says is known as the "'tree of modes', or the 'tree of temperaments'" (ibid). This was based on an already established concepts in Arab medicine in which the body parts are associated with elements of heaven and earth. According to Wendt, "Ziryab associated the modes (tubu'; sing. tab'), with body organs (heart, liver, brain, spleen) and human temperaments (anger, calm, joy, sadness). The musical modes were further linked with natural elements (air, fire, water, earth), colours (red, yellow, white, black), and conditions (heat, cold, humidity, dryness)" (ibid). With such associative tendency in mind, Ziryab constructed twenty-four modes, assigning one for each hour of the day.

Cuisine

Ziryab's contributions are not limited to music. He also contributed to the culinary arts. He made imaginative combinations of the regular food in Al-Andaluisa, most notably, "a meal consisting of meat balls and small triangular pieces of dough fried in coriander oil which became known as taqliyat Ziryab or Ziryab's fried fish" (Wendt 1982). The elevation of asparagus to a regular dinner vegetable in Al-Andalusia, which still holds till today in many parts of Europe, is credited to him. He also made a combination of walnut and honey as part of a regular dessert in that era and is still served today in the city of Zaragoza. In Córdoba, "a musician-gourmet is remembered today in an old dish of roasted and salted broad beans known as ziriabi" (Lebling 2003, 32). It is believed by some that Ziryab introduced the three-course meal sequence many are now accustomed to today. He advocated that meals in the palace should be eaten in three courses starting with soups or broths, then to heavier meals which include meat or fish, and then to sweet desserts (see Lebling 2003, 32). This new dining arrangement and etiquette permeated the upper and merchant class, including Christians and Jews, and was soon established as the norm. The custom was eventually adopted throughout Europe. Lebling asserts that "the English expression, 'from soup to nuts', can be traced back to Ziryab's innovation at the Al-Andalusia court" (ibid). Shannon encapsulates Ziryab's contributions which are still in use today. She says that "if you eat asparagus, play chess, or wear different clothing for the different seasons, thank Ziryab, for he is thought to have introduced these practices to medieval Spain, from where they spread to the rest of Europe" (2007, 315).

Today, many of these practices are likely to be attributed to European civilization as opposed to the Arab civilization which had previously ruled in Spain. Ziryab in particular, deserves a wider awareness and recognition in our history books in general, and specifically, in our music history books. Many of the European musical traditions that follow in the late Medieval era, the renaissance period and the early baroque era, can be traced back to the some of his contributions. For example, you cannot fully understand Domenico Scarlatti's music without understanding Spanish music. But to fully understand Spanish music, one must understand lute music which has its root in Arabian *ūd* music. Equally important is the impact of his contribution in promoting the technical training model, pedagogical procedures and general appreciation for *ūd* music which I believe form a backbone for the unification of musical cultural trends across continents and regions.

Fashion

Ziryab's sense of dressing and grooming are also remarkable, and he contributed to the culture of Al-Andalusia in this regard. He promoted shaving among men in Al-Andalusia. Although, he did not invent it, he made it fashionable, thereby gaining wide acceptance. He is said to have introduced the

first toothpaste in Europe, although this is highly debated and there is no knowledge of the ingredients (see Lebling 2003, 33). He introduced the use of salt in addition to the established rose water usually used to wash clothes. Ziryab is also said to have introduced seasonal fashion calendar. Being in charge of courtly dressing, he advocated that in spring, men and women should wear shirts, blouses and gowns with bright colours made of cotton and linen. He recommended that in summer, white clothing should be worn while in winter, "a long cloak trimmed with fur" (ibid) was preferable. He is credited with the introduction of chess to Al-Andalusia when he invited "astrologers from India and Jewish doctors from North Africa" (ibid). The Indians knew how to play chess, so Ziryab made them teach chess to the royals in the court.

Ziryab passed away five years after his benefactor and patron, Abd Al-Rahman II died. He was survived by his wife and children who continued to promote his work. Ziryab's influence continued to spread throughout Europe, Africa and the Middle East. It took two centuries until we see another musician of Ziryab's caliber, who goes by the name Abū Baker Ibn Bājja also known as Avempace (Touma 2001). He later developed many forms and methods Ziryab had pioneered

It is important to note that while there are debates around some of the inventions attributed to Ziryab, it is noteworthy to highlight the fact that many of these innovations and inventions are associated with him may be more important, in this context, than the actual truth. We do not know of any other individual who is associated with or contesting with Ziryab for inventing and innovating these discoveries. His contributions, spanning across music, the culinary arts and fashion, places Ziryab at an important intersection in the dissemination of music and culture in the Middle-Ages. His influence spans across Asia, Europe and Africa, making him one of the most notable musical figures in history.

Pipa players

The introduction of the *pipa* to China from Central Asia brought with it great musicians such as Sujiva from Kucha, Pei Luoer from Shule and Kang Kunlun from Kangju. Like their Persian and Arab counterparts and predecessors, Chinese *pipa* players were of subaltern class and had to rise through the ranks using their talent as a tool in navigating the social, economic and political arena. In the process of achieving fame, some contributed immensely to the development of the instrument and the genre associated with it. A notable example is Kang Kunlun who features briefly in the Tang records. Meyers narrates a story about Kang Kunlun in his book *The Way of the Pipa: Structures and Imagery in Chinese Lute Music* (1992). He asserts that

> Kang Kunlun, who is a foreign lutenist, was renowned as the finest musician around. Following a drought, the king arranged for a rain ceremony to be performed in the marketplace. Two groups were to offer musicians who would offer music to please the rain spirit. One group nominated Kang Kunlun while the other group was represented by a girl. After Kang Kunlun's brilliant performance on the *pipa*, the girl began her performance on the *pipa* and evoked thunder, and successfully appeased the spirit of rain. After Kang Kunlun begged to become her student. The performer removed his disguise and it turned out to be the great Duan Xiaben (a Buddhist monk who had been active as a Latinist in an earlier period). After many years of study, Kang Kunlun absorbed master Duan's teaching and reached even greater heights of musicianship (15-16).

This story brings to light a few things. Firstly, it tells us that the *pipa* was an important instrument at the time for it to have been used in the rain ceremony. It also tells us that Chinese musicians had developed their playing technique as at when prominent foreign musicians were in vogue.

Like the *barbat* and the *ūd,* the *pipa* had extra-musical associations with seasons of the year, body parts and the five elements. Myers states that "by the Tang dynasty, the *pipa* had already been vested with number symbolism, reflecting its integration into China's ancient system of correlative cosmology, in which numbers, time, directions, instrumental timber, colours, politics, and many other phenomena are associated with each other by traditional belief and ritual" (1992, 16). Myers furthers states that Duan Anjie, in the beginning of the *pipa* section in the *Yuefu Zalu*, says that, "the four strings [of the *pipa*] represent the four seasons of the year, while the instruments' length of three by five units represent the three powers (heaven-earth-man) and the five elements" (ibid). This is very similar to the *ūd*, however, it is not stated if this concept was derived from the introduction of the instrument to China or if it was solely based on the Chinese custom of associating instruments and its body parts to other extra-musical elements.

Conclusion

Like Barbad, Ziryab's story has been told with a touch of legend in it. Some parts of his life, I would like to think, are akin to legends; however, other parts are tangible and can be backed by material evidence. Perhaps many claims, particularly in the case of Ziryab, can be categorized in a few useful ways. Clearly, some are purely legendary, whereas others are simply exaggerated. Moreover, some are indeed factual. In some cases, such as the addition of the fifth pair of strings and the establishment of the first conservatory of music, those are based on fact. In other cases, such as memorizing about 10,000 songs, I would say that is an exaggeration. This is common when we are using multiple forms of evidence to establish fact. For example, the use of oral evidence and information, as well as written documents, iconographic evidence, cartographic evidence and so on. It is inevitable that the multiplicity of information will often generate controversy. I have therefore

included the myth, the legend and the ‘facts’, as we know that in legends and myths, lies ‘facts’ and in ‘facts’ lies legend and myth.

These musicians, having mastered their art, including an instrument, be it the *barbat* or the *ūd,* capitalized on their wide-spread acceptance in society to exert further influence beyond music. Barbad was an interesting case but Ziryab even extends this case. It can be seen throughout history how musicians from every part of the world, and still in our present society, gain tremendous recognition and influence through music. Webb describes Ziryab as “the most cultivated man of his age, spent thirty years in the Emir's service, not only founding a conservatoire of music, but setting the trend for everything involved in gracious living, from polite manners and haute cuisine to fashion, hygiene and beauty culture” (1990, 29).

There is one thing that Barbad, Ziryab and Kang have in common; it is the ability to use music as a tool to negotiate a place for themselves in the arena of power. In all three cases, they were able to transcend their social and economic disadvantage and turn it around to work for them. While we do not know the socioeconomic background of Barbad (he is likely to have come from a modest socioeconomic background as most musicians did back then), we know Ziryab was black and a son of a freed slave, a combination that meant that he was at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy. Yet, he managed to turn the tide around and secure for himself one of the most covetous positions in the court, moving from a working-class status to elite status in a twinkle of an eye. Similarly, much is unknown about Kang’s socioeconomic background, but we know he was a foreigner and of dark skin because the Chinese referred to people of darker skin tone as *Kunlun.* He too, Like Barbad and Ziryab, rose to very high position, in his case, in the Chinese society. These three musicians were trail blazers, who transformed the musical scene of their era and set the trend for many musical practices that came afterwards. They contributed to forming the musical landscape of Afro-Asia and Eurasia.

CHAPTER FIVE

Later trends: Africa-China relations in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the rekindled relationship between Africa and China in the 20th and 21st centuries. It is divided into two main sections: the first provides a relatively recent historical background to this renewed relationship and the second addresses the cultural and musical interaction between Africa and China in contemporary times.

The first section will examine Africa-China relations generally, with an emphasis on South Africa and Nigeria. In examining this relationship, I look at how the relationship had been rekindled in reference to the earliest contact and historic relations between Africa and China, and the more recent, rejuvenated one — a phenomenon often referred to by scholars and historians as the dragon meeting the giraffe or as Paul Zeleza describes it, "a captivating dance between the elephant and the dragon" (2008, 171).

The second section, the cultural and musical aspect of this chapter, will examine the Chinese musical instruments in the Kirby collection housed at the South African College of Music, University of Cape Town. It will discuss the many instruments, looking at where they came from, how they got to South Africa, how Percival Kirby collected them and particularly how these instruments functioned in the local context. This will open a window into the cultural relations and understanding between South Africa and China. This section will also present the Nigerian singer, Hao Ge, who found stardom in China singing in mandarin. His life is examined in the context of forming a cultural bridge between China and Nigeria, and Africa by extension.

In establishing Africa-China relations in this chapter, I have tried to limit comparison between Africa-China relations with that of Africa-US/Africa-Europe relations, which usually dominates many Africa-China narrative and scholarly studies. I have also tried to keep this chapter focused on Africa-China and has only referred to Africa-Europe/Africa-US relations when necessary.

China and Africa in the 20th and 21st centuries

China's reopening of its borders and engaging with the world in the late 20th century was not entirely on China's turf. This time around, China was not functioning as a superpower or a regional hegemon in Asia, as it had in previous centuries, but as one of the underdogs of Western colonialism and imperialism. Many parts of China were annexed by European powers, namely Macau (Portugal) and Honk Kong (England). Their neighbour, Japan, also invaded and annexed part of China and colonised Korea, where China had exerted influence. Many Chinese were involuntarily taken to Africa, particularly South Africa, for cheap manual labour. Africa as a continent, and the individual countries that had previously dealt with China were also in a different state. Africa had been divided into different countries at the Berlin conference in 1884-5, suffering many setbacks from the colonisation project by Europe, and later imperialism from America. Zeleza explains that "during the first half of the 20th century, relations between semi-colonial China and colonial Africa were obviously limited, mediated as they were by the European colonial powers" (2008, 177). It is based on this shared experiences that China's history is comparable with Ethiopia as "both ancient civilisations, both political organisations undergoing a transformation from a feudal to a modern system, both suffered from capitalist invasion and decline of handicraft industries, and both were victims of imperialism" (Anshan 2005, 62). It is also these disruptions in their histories, cultures, lifestyles and freedoms that both Africa and China sought to restore, leading to mutual acknowledgement of their predicament but also on the necessity of cooperation to mitigate this setback. This tripartite understanding is based on solidarity, mutual economic destiny and anti-colonialism/anti-imperialism struggle.

The event that marks the beginning of the Sino-Africa relations in recent times is the Bandung conference of 1955 (see Bodomo 2009, 169). It was the convergence of leaders, heads of states and presidents of countries in Asia and Africa, post-independence. The major theme of this conference was economic and political cooperation but there was an underlying tone of resentment towards Western colonialism and its effect on both continents. This perhaps is one of the important sympathetic connection between Africa and China. Further along strengthening this tie, the forum for Africa-China Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Beijing in 2006, solidified these connections. With nearly 40 African heads of government, it sealed the Africa-China relationship as one that has come to stay.

These relations and ambitions, however, seem to be one-sided for the most part. China, with the ambition of becoming the world's largest economy and a global superpower, needs the resources in Africa to facilitate its technological advancement. In addition, China has positioned itself as a 'better'

alternative to Europe and the United States by providing a more inclusive, mutually beneficial interaction hinged on China's "long-lived principles of non-interference, mutuality, friendship, [and] non-conditional aid" says Strauss (2009, 777). She further states that "China's action in Africa, is a clear delineation from the West in its dealings with Africa, observing absolute respect for state sovereignty, a friendliness grounded in notions of equality rather than superiority, support for anti-colonial struggles, no-strings developmental assistance, and notions of supporting self-reliance " (782). China continues to stress that it is committed to a "'win-win' not a 'win-lose'" (Forge 2019, 3) relationship with Africa.

Despite these polite gestures, China's motives have been heavily criticized by Europe and America, whose interests are often not clear but who act as self-appointed custodians of Africa in a bid to ward off China. In relation to this, Zeleza (2008) posits that

> the language [of the West] is one of possessive paternalism, simultaneously disdainful and dismissive of both Africa and China, while bemoaning and dreading the loss of historic Euro-American hegemony over the continent. The message is loud and clear: China cannot be good for Africa, as the West has been. It is a discourse in which western benevolence and Chinese malevolence are assumed and compared, often unashamedly (175).

African leaders and scholars have also been equally vocal, albeit for different reasons, about the gradual expansion of Chinese firms and citizens in Africa, sounding alarms of neo-colonialism. At the forefront of this whistleblowing is the Kenyan lawyer and academic, Professor Patrick Lumumba, who constantly warns African leaders to ensure that Africa-China relations benefit Africa and that China's expansionism might later metamorphosize into neo-colonialism.

Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah, cautions that it is not only China who needs to be admonished but African leaders as well. He asserts that

> the challenge is not for us to moan about Chinese racism and lack of altruism in their dealings with Africans on the trade and economy front either on this continent or in China. It is for us to know that all nations particularly the "big ones" act in their own enlightened self-interest. There are no moral rules in this. The rules are all guided by selfishness. That is the principle and all players play according to understandings about this (Bodomo 2012, 13).

He explains that the sympathy-invoking appeal to wealthier nations doing business or dealing with Africa is not particularly a good strategic approach. He states that:

> We tend to act as if we expect the whole world to treat us as their suffering brother who needs moral and kindly attention. We do this even though we see and know that for hundreds of years other societies have used us as objects of exploitation. We are foolish to think that suddenly this will change. Of course it will not change. This is

> how all societies behave to each other. The political slogans that are bandied around are as hollow as they ring. It is for us to learn to act in our own self-interest. To do this properly we must work together as a unit so that we do not as puny statelets allow ourselves to be bought off one by one (Bodomo 2012, 13).

The Chinese are in Africa strategically to meet their challenges in the short, medium and long-term as every other nation that has been in Africa. Africans are increasing in numbers too in many Chinese cities, also indulging in activities of self-interest, mainly trading. Bodomo says that "Chinese reactions to the Africans in their midst are equally multifarious and mixed, ranging from tolerant and accommodative views to negative and sometimes xenophobic reactions" (2012, 279).

Despite these tensions, Africa-China relations continue to strengthen. In 1990, trade between Africa and China increased to $1.7 billion from $817 million in 1977. By 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2006, it had reached $3 billion, $10 billion, $39.7 billion and $55.5 billion respectively (see Zeleza 2008: 173). As at now, China is Africa's largest trading partner, surpassing Europe and America. According to Tiboris, "China-Africa trade eclipsed US-Africa trade in 2009 and by 2017, it was more than four times larger, at $204 billion. By 2025, China aims to invest more than $1 trillion in Africa" (Tiboris 2019, 2).

These continuous, momentous and voluminous trade relations between Africa and China have created anxiety among Western countries who fear they might lose their strategic influence in Africa. In a bid to retain their influence, Western countries have resorted to excessive and sometimes, unnecessary criticism of China. Zeleza captures this well when he describes Western scholars and policy makers as "somersaulting from dismissing Africa's importance to China (which is part of the age-old narrative of depicting Africa as marginal to the world at large) to exaggerating the dangers of Africa's colonization by China" (Zeleza 2008, 179).

In some cases, the criticism of China is not entirely out of place, but many people doubt the motive and intention, and believe the West is criticizing China for its own selfish interest and not because they are genuinely interested in the well-being of Africa.

The Tazara project

Perhaps one of the landmark projects that symbolizes, if not epitomizes, Africa-China relations in the 20th century is the Tazara railway. Spanning 1,860 km and linking the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Mposhi in Zambia, the Tazara railway cemented the Africa-China relations. Post-independent Zambia and Tanzania sought to circumvent Euro-American dominance of the road and rail network in the anticipation of a possible stifling of economic activities should they not comply with Euro-American interests. The Zambian leader, Kenneth Kaunda and the Tanzanian president,

Julius Nyerere, sought to build a railway connecting both countries. They approached the World Bank but was met with cold shoulders by the British and American's who dominated the institution and were uninterested calling it "a political fantasy" (Snow 1989, 152).

The West had also seen that to embark on such a project would weaken their influence on the continent and would be tantamount to shooting oneself in the foot. According to Snow, "while the West deliberated, the Chinese had resolved" (ibid). China had been looking for ways to gain relevance on the continent, assert itself as a major force on the continent, and also to reduce the Euro-American influence. They jumped at this opportunity and announced that they would be willing to help build this railway. In 1970, China gave Tanzania and Zambia an interest-free loan of $400 million. By 1975, the railway was completed. It was not only completed on time, but it was completed two years before the estimated completion date. That was quite a feat!

Government to government relations versus people to people relations

Although the Chinese government has managed to build a resilient relationship with many African countries, people to people relations continue to lag behind government to government relations. While the government of China continue to emphasize "win-win" trade relations and solidarity with Africa, it appears the Chinese government failed to carry the ordinary Chinese people along.

Keith Richburg, an African American and the director of the journalism and media studies centre of the University of Hong Kong, granted an interview to Al-Jazeera in April 2020. The discussion was on the discrimination of Africans in China during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. In the interview, he contrasts these relations saying that "the government to government relations does not translate to people to people relations in China. Africans are discriminated against and are often looked down on as inferior. For example, if an African American applies to teach English in China, they are likely to be turned down because speaking and teaching good English, 'can only be done by white people', in their opinion" (Al Jazeera 2020). Snow posits that "the evidence suggests that where dealings have been casual – where there hasn't been a script – the Chinese performance has fallen short of that of the Europeans. Ordinary Chinese have got on less easily with Africans, on an informal basis, than the Europeans have done" (Snow 1989, 186).

Perhaps, one major factor for this disparity between government to government relations and people to people relations is that while the Chinese government invests heavy sum of money in African countries in the form of investment, aid and charity, most Africans in China are economic migrants and do not have the luxury a government backing will bring. They have little financial capacity and are mainly engaged in small-scale trade and enterprise. Although, not all Chinese come to Africa as

part of a government entourage or workforce, a combination of the two (Chinese involvement on the continent and individual Chinese who have migrated without any tie to the Chinese government) give individual Chinese operating in Africa greater leverage in terms of respect on the continent.

Most Africans in China are mainly small-scale traders, an activity Xiaotao describe as "'low-end globalization, or globalization from below'. This description refers to the transnational flow of people and goods involving relatively small amounts of capital and informal, often semi-legal or illegal, transactions associated largely with the developing world but also taking place across the globe" (2018, 152). Many Africans in China begin as minor traders, selling clothing, footwear, food and other related essential products. As they grow and acquire capital, they transition into exporting manufactured products such as electronic devices, automobiles, jewelry and large-scale clothing back home for sale. Bodomo posits that "most Africans in Guangzhou are 'businessmen' and 'traders' with only about 5% belonging to such occupation as 'teachers', 'artists', 'footballers', 'basketball players', 'housewife' and so on (Bodomo 2012, 90).

According to Xiaotao,

> African businessmen have been classified into three groups by scholars: 'more established', the 'itinerants and semi-settled', and the 'newly-arrived'. The 'more established' category refers to relatively successful African businesspeople who have been doing business in China for more than 10 years and have substantial trading experience, stable trading networks, their own trading agencies or organizations. Some of the organizations have even transformed into national commercial representative offices. This category is likely to want to continue to live in China for the foreseeable future (2018, 153).

The second group, the 'itinerants and semi-settled', are Africans that come to China to buy goods which they send back home to sell. This is a very poplar trend among Africans. The third category, the 'newly arrived', according to Xiaotao, "have little experience and capital and are attracted to China by propaganda" (Ibid).

Guangzhou, were many Africans can be found, has been labelled "the 'chocolate city' or 'little Africa'" (Ibid, 154). Many of these communities find ways of organizing in order to protect their interests. They organize into large and small groups where the large group operates as a single bloc, Africa, seeking to protect the rights and further the interests of all Africans in China. The smaller groups represent individual countries and facilitates particular needs of their people. This includes groups such as the Nigerian community, the Ghanaian community and so on.

Complaints of racial discrimination cannot be omitted in this narrative. Although there is no institutional racism against Africans in China, there are spates of racial incidences that suggests that

all is not well. Xiaotao explains that according to many Africans in China, “although they believe an average Chinese person is not violent, and in most case, easy going, they have still experienced some form of discrimination based on race” (2018, 157). In addition, many Chinese have had little or no contact with a black person, so when they see one, they are curious and perplexed, which often leads to unusual and unwelcome stares, which is often very disturbing.

The lack of, or minimal, people to people relations between Africa and China, historically, and to some extent, presently, may perhaps explain why there is little cultural exchange. At this point, it may be helpful to ask if China’s interest in Africa is only trade related. If not, why are the people to people relations, which are likely to birth cultural exchange, seriously lagging behind? South Africa has been a potpourri of cultures including hosting the largest Chinese community in Africa. This, as will be shown below, has helped to bridge the gap in Africa-China relations which is often thought to be one-sided, favoring the Chinese.

The role of South Africa as a counterbalance in Africa-China relations

Africa-China relations are not entirely one-sided. Yazini (2014, 137) and Bodomo (2019, 169), argue that South Africa seems to be pulling its weight and is achieving a significant equilibrium in their relations with China. Currently, South Africa is China’s largest trading partner in Africa. As of 2012, over 130,000 Chinese travelled to South Africa (see Guijin 2014, 137). Although, exact figures regarding the number of South Africans living in China are not available, rough estimates suggest the number of Africans, including South Africans, were between 400,000 and 500,000 (Bodomo 2012, 287). South Africa’s investment in China, which is over $700 million, exceeds that of any other African country. China’s investment in South Africa too, exceeds that of any African country, amounting to over $25 billion (Wenjun 2018). South Africa’s presence is also visible in the formal establishments in China. For example, Guijin asserts that “South Africa, compared with other African countries, has the largest number of sister cities in China and the largest number of Confucius Institutes, and also attracts the largest number of Chinese tourists and Chinese overseas students” (2014, 137).

While China-Africa trade has been mostly asymmetric, South Africa-China trade has been quite balanced. In fact, South African companies seem to have done better in China than Chinese companies in South Africa. Bodomo reports that

> South African corporations have been extremely successful in penetrating the often challenging China market. A handful of firms have been "industry shapers" in the Chinese economy—after entering the market in 1994, SAB Miller became the largest brewer by volume in China last year, Naspers is a leading media player...; and Sasol

> could soon become the single largest investor in China if it goes ahead with two coal-to-liquid gas projects in China (2009, 175).

On the issue of asymmetric relations, Africa might have some advantage over China in the UN argues Bodomo. He states that "Africa-China relations are asymmetrical in favour of Africa on the political front because of Africa's massive voting clout in the UN and other international bodies such as the IOC and the WTO" (Bodomo 2009, 173). For example, Africa played a major role in China's admission, as opposed to Taiwan, into the UN. In October 1971, a pro-Beijing resolution was voted for. Out of 128 votes, 76 were for China, 35 against and 17 abstentions. Without Africa, China would not have won. African countries constitute over a third of the votes in favour of China. Countries such as "Algeria, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Congo-Brazzaville voted for China" (Taylor 2006, 40).

Music and culture

Musical connections abound between Africa and China in the 20th and 21st centuries — the second era of interaction. Although, cultural and musical interaction is still quite limited, it is more substantial and ongoing compared to the 15th century encounter. The following section focuses on two musical flows; from China to Africa and vice versa. In examining the inflow of Chinese musical instruments into Africa, I will examine the Kirby collections — a collection of musical instruments compiled by the British-South African musicologist, Percival Robson Kirby — housed at the South African College of Music (SACM), University of Cape Town. Following that I will discuss the Nigerian Pop star, based in China and who goes by the stage name Hao Ge, in order to examine his rise to stardom in China and how he combines his African roots with singing in Mandarin.

Chinese musical instruments in Africa – The Kirby collection

The Kirby collection is a collection of over 600 musical instruments used mainly by the indigenous people of Southern Africa but include several European and Asian instruments played in Southern Africa. Concerned about the rapid urbanization of the indigenous people around Southern Africa, and as a result, the extinction of these musical instruments and traditions, Kirby set out to collect, record and document these instruments. Most of these musical instruments were in use prior to 1934 and many of them are rare or no longer being made.

My aim here is to focus on the Chinese instruments found in this collection. Of over 600 instruments found in this collection, at least 11 of them are of Chinese origin and may have been played by early Chinese settlers in South Africa. They include the tai ping xiao, yehu, yangqin, yueqin, sheng, saxian, "possibly" (bangu), pang with two beaters, kuan, the huqin and the rkang-ling.

The information on the online catalogue of the collection on Chinese instruments and other instruments contain only basic information such as the general description, the origin, publisher and copyright related information. There is little to no detailed information on how Kirby came about the instruments. We do not know if he found, bought or was given the instruments etc. Just like the African musical instruments in this collection, the provenance of these instruments continues to pose an interesting challenge. Much of the information we have on this collection, aside from Kirby's

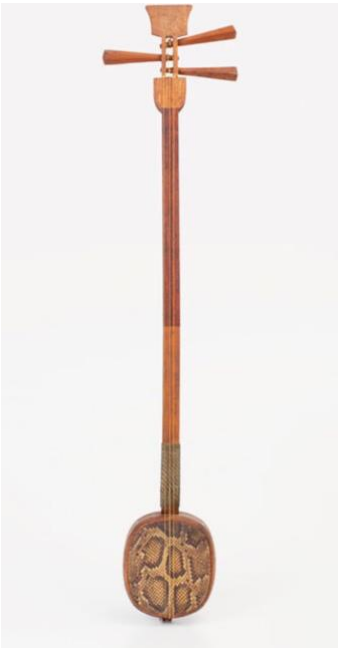

Figure 1. Saxian; a Chinese (spike) lute (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

information, has been researched and interpreted by Michael Nixon, the former curator of the Kirby collection. According to Nixon, "researching the provenance of all these objects is the most challenging and exciting part for me. I've mostly been working with Kirby's documents and trying to track clues, interpret his field notes and photographs to make sense of things" (Nixon 2015). He also asserts that he is "in contact with people all over the world trying to understand the history and provenance of certain objects. Sometimes things are obvious and look just like they do in the reference books, but sometimes there's no book and no accompanying note. You need the local knowledge " (ibid).

Among the Chinese instruments in the collection, one instrument, the saxian, is accompanied by notes which provide context to the instrument. According to Nixon, in the digital collections website of the University of Cape Town, "notes accompanying this very well-made instrument tells us this sanxian was bought in Johannesburg where it had been 'used in the time of Chinese labour on the Rand'" (Nixon 2015). The neck of this instrument was broken and later repaired. This process of repair transformed this instrument from an original Chinese instrument into one that now embodied

South African characteristics. The neck of this new instrument was replaced with new materials specifically, “fine woven brass and copper wire in a way that recalls contemporary Zulu baskets woven from brightly coloured telephone wire” (ibid). The saxian literally means ‘three strings’ and is the direct predecessor of the Japanese samishen. The original instrument was made with snakeskin all the way from the body, neck, to the strings. Nixon explains that “the wire weaving [which replaced the snakeskin] now forms a splint around the neck of this instrument” (ibid). The saxian is traditionally used by storytellers and in the 18th century Beijing opera performances. Nixon asserts that “there are three of such instruments from different parts of China collected in Johannesburg” (ibid).

The other (ten) instruments

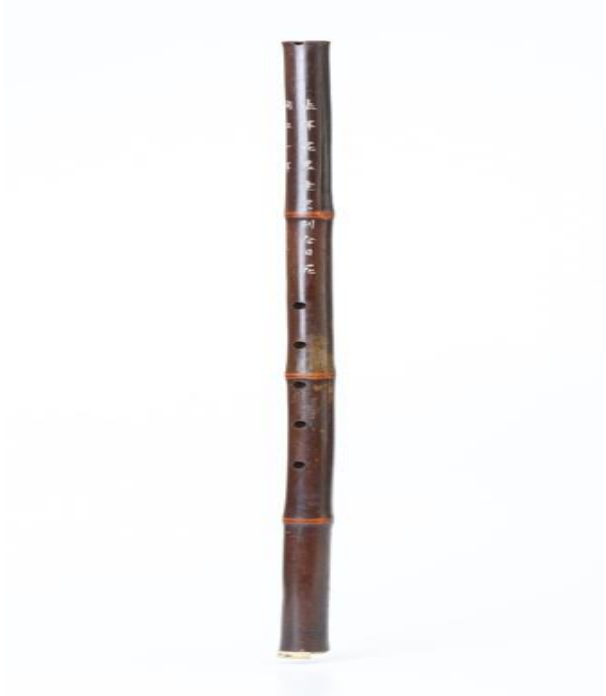

Figure 2. Tai ping xiao; a flute with internal duct and fingerholes. This instrument originates from China (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

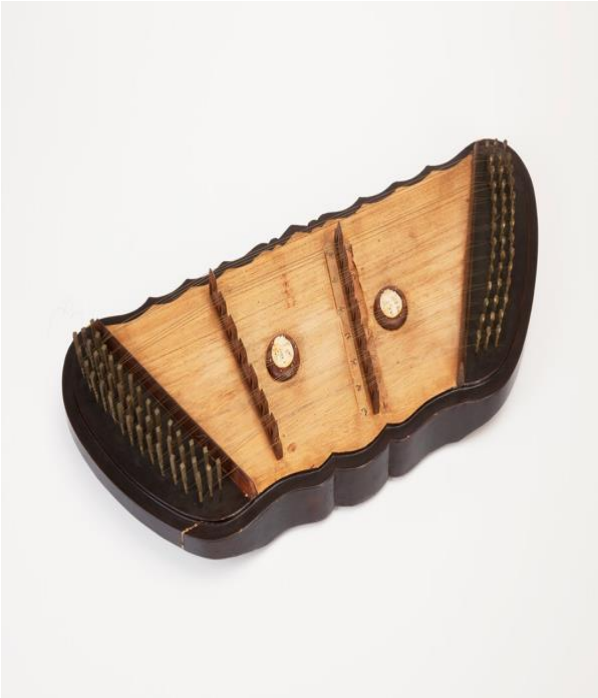

Figure 3. Yangqin; this instrument is a zither with with resonating box (box zither). Sounded by hammers or beaters. It originates from China (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

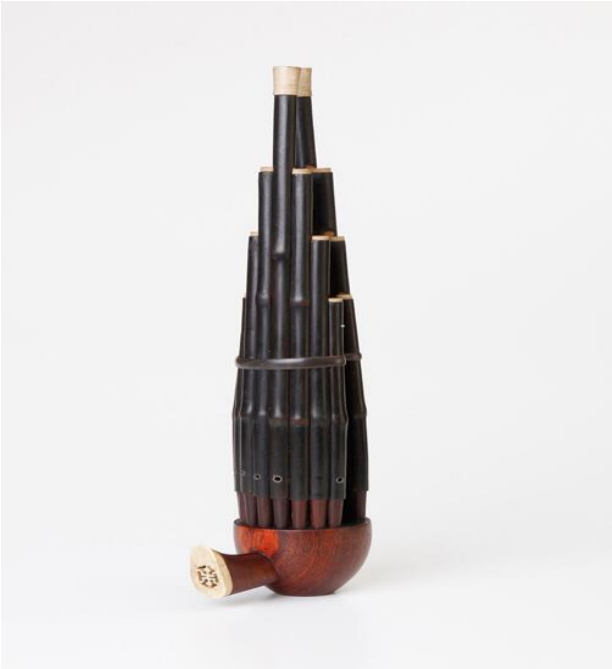

Figure 4. Sheng; a reed instrument with sets of free reeds. It originates from China (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

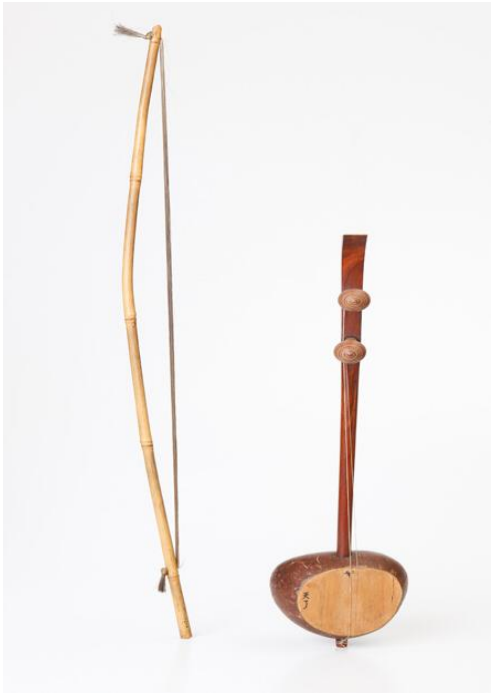

Figure 5. Yehu; a spike bowl lute which produces sound by bowing. It originates from China (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

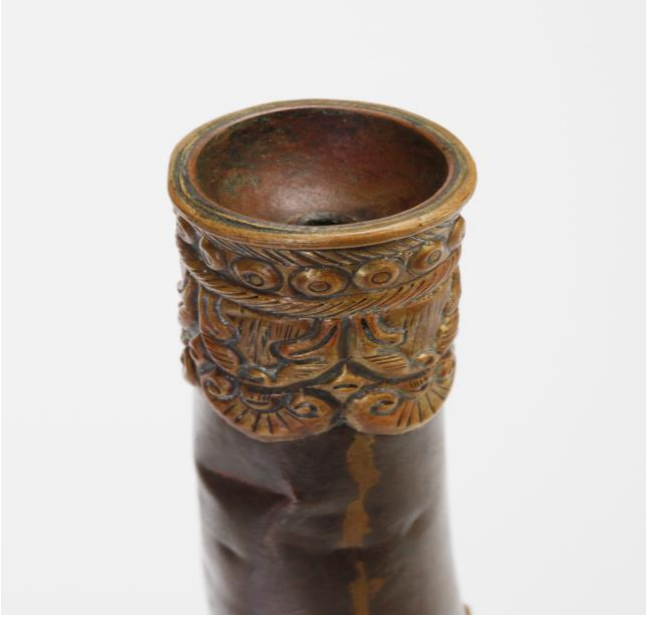

Figure 6. Rkang-ling (trumpet for Tibetan Buddhist music); This instrument is an end-blown straight labrosones, played with a mouthpiece. It originally comes from Tibet, China and it is used in the religious aspect of Buddhist music (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

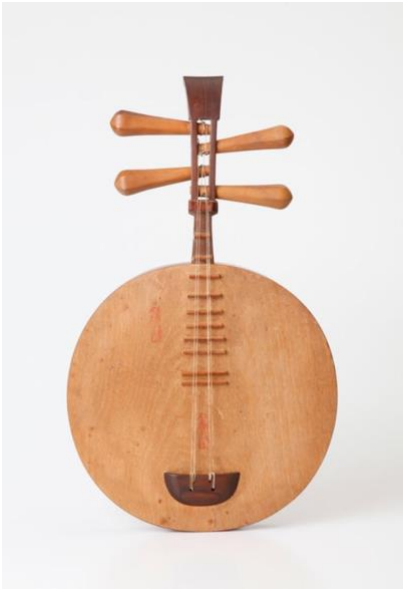

Figure 7. Yueqin; a necked box lute or necked guitar. It originates from China (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015)

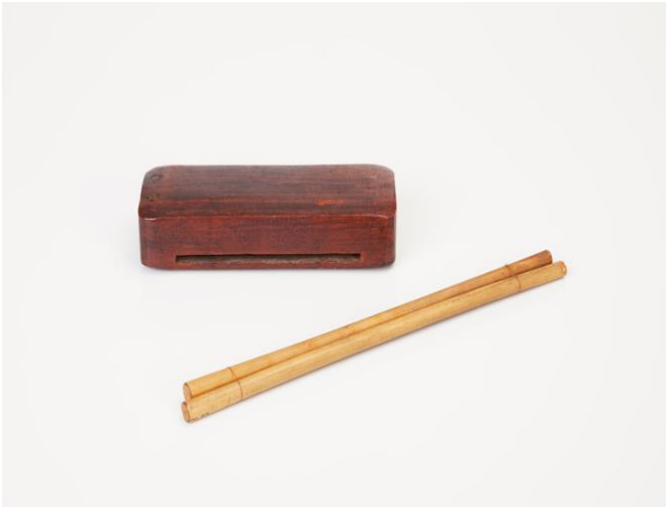

Figure 8. Pang with two beaters; this instrument is an idiophone and is struck with two sticks or beaters. It is a percussion instrument and also originated from China (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

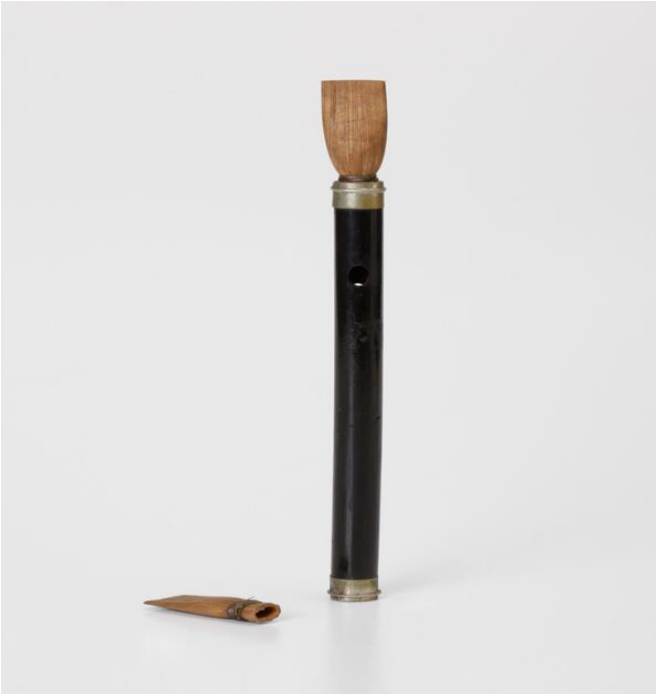

Figure 9. Kuan; this instrument is a reed instrument with double (or quadruple) reeds. It does not have finger holes. This instrument originates from China (University of Cape Town libraries, 2015).

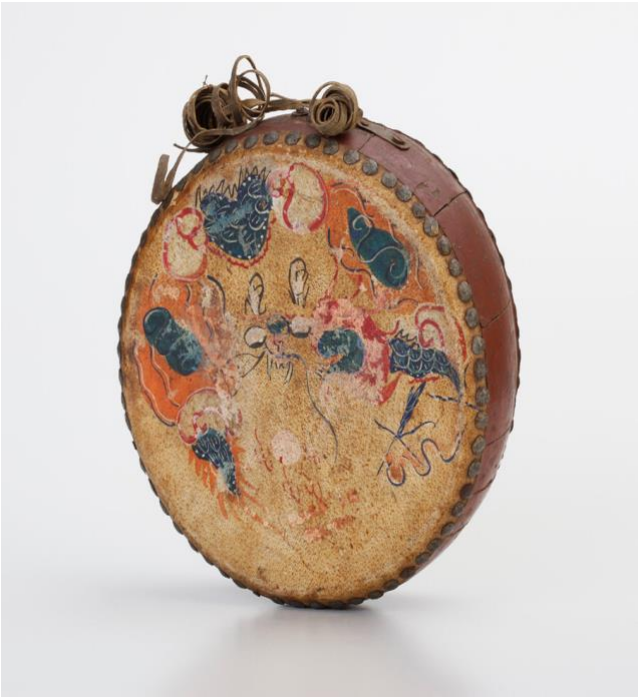

Figure 10. Possibly Bangu; this instrument is described in the digital collections as possibly bangu. It is a double-skin frame drum without any handle. It originates from China (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

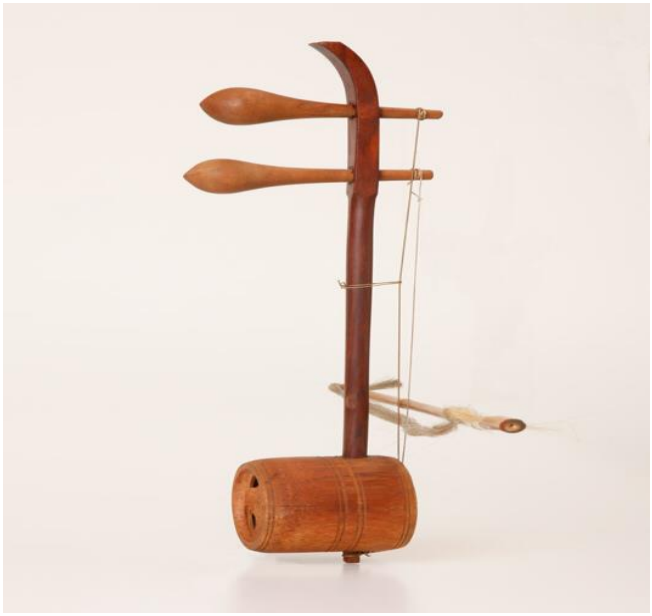

Figure 11. Huqin; This instrument is described as a spike tube lute, which is played with a bow. It originates from China (University of Cape Town digital collections, 2015).

These instruments are a reminder of the Chinese presence in South Africa in the early 20th century, forming a bridge between the two countries. Although these Chinese labourers were sent back in 1910 due to xenophobic tendencies of the newly formed Union of South Africa, their marks were already made, and these instruments represent a symbol of their presence. The existence of these instruments suggests, according to Nixon, "that there must have been Chinese music clubs active in early Johannesburg" (Nixon 2015). He further suggests that "Kirby might have acquired one or two more saxians when the Chinese opera company visited Johannesburg in the 1920s" (Ibid).

African music in China

Hao Ge: The Nigerian pop star in China

Perhaps one of the highlights of Africa-China musical interaction is the Nigerian singer, Emmanuel Uwechue, who goes by his Chinese stage name, Hao Ge. Born in Nigeria, Uwuchue started his musical journey as a church singer at House on the Rock, a church in Lagos, Nigeria. Uwuchue initially pursued his studies in engineering and practiced music on the side. After deciding to pursue a full-time career in music, he was temporarily disowned by his father. Hao Ge's father thought he was wasting his life by pursuing music (Wang 2011). Hao Ge started performing at night clubs and hotels in Hubei and Henan in 2002 when his Chinese friend, Li Yayu, who worked in Lagos at the time, invited him to perform at his hotel in China. His career took off when Liu Huan, a top music

producer in China, saw him singing at the *Big Easy* bar in Beijing. Under Lui Huna's guidance, Hao Ge studied Mandarin which later opened up new opportunities for him.

Hao Ge has been warmly accepted by the Chinese media (ibid). He gained widespread publicity among women and children who watch "Xin Guang Da Dao," a popular TV show equivalent to "American Idols", when he performed there a few years after his arrival in China. Hao Ge's big break came when he performed at the Lunar New Year Gala in 2007, an event which is seen by millions of viewers on television in China. This event according to Wang "is the Chinese equivalent of the Super Bowl and China's highest-rated broadcast event of the year" (ibid). Since then, Hao Ge has become a star in China and has performed with leading Chinese artists such as Sun Nan Ying and Han Hong, including performing at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Since then, Hao Ge's fame seems to have grown exponentially. He has featured in many magazines, articles and even television commercials. He is featured in an article on QQ.com, a social networking site and also featured in the articles on the state-run Xinhua news Sina entertainment, which is an online magazine. Hao Ge has also appeared on a bus ad. The ad read "'Good song comes from good wine'. The ad was for a Guan Gong Fang company that sells wine and signed him to represent their brand" (Wang 2011).

Hao Ge is not the first foreigner to achieve widespread popularity in China, but he is the first African to become popular on such a scale. Many people think he is generally a very good singer in addition to his ability to sing in Mandarin. Others think differently, such as Beijing-based producer Long Hu, who says this is more about the China-Africa connections than Hao Ge himself (ibid).

Bridge theory

Hao Ge is an example of how Bodomo's 'bridge theory' can be applied in Africa-China relations. Bodomo argues that 'bridge theory' adopts a "three-dimensional approach that recognizes the target community, its source community, and its host community" (2012, 47). Bodomo proposes that "the target community also serves as a link or a contact — indeed, as a bridge— connecting its place of origin (its source community) with its new place of domicile (its host community)" (Ibid). Hao Ge has integrated well into the Chinese society and serves as a bridge between Nigeria and China on the cultural front.

Hao Ge is not the only African or Nigerian to integrate into Chinese culture and society. Other lesser known Africans, many of them Nigerians, are bridging this gap. A YouTube documentary titled *Nigerians in China — a special documentary* (2013), documented the lives of many Nigerians in

Guangzhou, China. One of the interviewees, Elochukwu Jude Chikwedu, from Anambra state, Nigeria, is a businessman in Guangzhou, China. He is married to a Chinese woman and they both have three kids. He says that the reason many people (referring to Nigerians) face difficulties in China is because "they do go to school and they do not understand their host culture as well as understand the rules and regulations" (NTAnews24 2013). Another participant in the documentary and interview, Anthony Ifegbo, from Imo state, Nigeria, who identifies as a businessman in Guangzhou, China, has been married to his Chinese wife for over 10 years. A third participant, Nwankwo Arinze, a factory owner, whose company employs about 50 Chinese nationals, has been married for 6 years to his Chinese wife. Tunde Oladugbagbe, another participant, from Ondo state, Nigeria, has been in Guangzhou for over ten years and runs the biggest African restaurant in Guangzhou. The president of the Nigerian/African community in China, Ojukwu Emmanuel Osita, was also interviewed. He is married to a Chinese woman and they have three children. He has been working as an interlocutor between the Nigerians in China and the Chinese government. In another documentary titled *The Challenges Faced by African-Chinese Marriages,* featured on CGTN (2017), Ojukwu Emmanuel Osita, estimated the inter-marriages between Nigerians and Chinese women to be between 400-500 and have produced over 500 mixed-race children. This information, figures and factors, reflect the microcosm of what Africa-China relations, especially, people-to-people is gradually becoming. This relationship, although not perfect, is dynamic and multi-layered. Looking to the future, one thing is certain: this trend is on the rise.

Conclusion

From the information presented it is clear that a few things have remained fairly similar since the historic Africa-China encounter. For example, Africa-China relations have remained predominantly economic. Other aspects, such as the political and cultural relations, have improved significantly. Today, there are many Africans living in China and vice versa, sharing and participating in each other's culture, inter-marrying and raising children with mixed heritage.

We can also establish that Arabs and Persians (now Iranians) are no longer the interlocutors for Africa-China relations as they were in earlier centuries. Europeans and Americans replaced the Arabs and Persians in the 20th and 21st centuries and in present times, Africa and China has established relations on their own terms, without any third party.

While South African companies may have penetrated the Chinese market more than any other African country, it is the Nigerian culture that has penetrated the Chinese culture more than any other African country. Nigerians continue to comprise the majority of economic migrants in China. In the

process, they are settling into their newfound homes, marrying Chinese women and fathering mixed-race children. Igbo is the default African language in a place like Guangzhou. It will not be a surprise if these children grow up speaking Igbo and Mandarin. This marks the beginning of a new era in Chinese history and relations with Africa.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion: summary and concluding remarks

In this chapter, I revisit my hypothesis and questions posed in the beginning: that the Arabs and Persians could be the cultural brokers between Africa and China between 700-1500AD. This hypothesis was formed based on the fact that the Arabs and Persians were the trade brokers and by extension, they might have been cultural brokers. The aims and objectives of this research was to answer the following questions: (1) Are there any musical exchanges between Africa and China between 700 -1500AD? (2) If there are, what are these musical exchanges and how did they manifest? (3) Are these exchanges mutual? (4) If there are no musical exchanges during this period, why? (5) Are there any musical exchanges at any other time pre-700AD or post 1500AD? (6) What is the impact of such musical exchange if at all there is any?

There is no known written record (yet) or oral evidence that there is any direct musical exchange between Africa and China between 700-1500 AD or earlier. There is also (as of yet) no information demonstrating that the Arabs and Persians were facilitating musical or cultural exchange (material or immaterial) from Africa to China or vice versa. What is clear is that the Arabs and Persians were spreading their music, culture and religion to both Africa and China simultaneously. This, I believe, may account for the relative musical similarity that swept across Afro-Asia, as discussed in the chapters above, such as with the proliferation of the short-neck lutes, the *barbat* and the *ūd*. It is important to acknowledge the role of Arabs and Persians during the 7th to the 15th century AD. They were not only facilitating trade but were the source of numerous musical and cultural exchanges during this period. Several European, African and Chinese musical instruments were introduced by the Arabs and Persians during this period.

Although, Africa and China relations culminated in an eventual visit, by the Chinese eunuch, Cheng Ho, in the 15th century, it never translated into any demonstrable musical exchange (material or immaterial) and the only thing mentioned is the famous giraffe that was sent to Peking as a tribute. Africa-China relations seem to have been by and large, trade-centred. This can be attributed to the fact that the Chinese have had a history and philosophy of non-interference in the politics of other countries. They also do not have the history and culture of imposing Chinese political, economic and cultural systems on others. In contrast to this, the West have used political, economic and cultural interference, both overt and covert, as a form of soft power. This I believe accounts for much of the

reason the West have been involved in the internal affairs of others which in a way forms our basis for the Chinese comparison. The Chinese approach to dominance and supremacy was through tributary system which requires other less powerful countries to pay tribute to China, in turn, they are allowed access to China and to trade in and with China. There are no strings attached to this arrangement. China did not intervene in any domestic affair of its tributary states, militarily, politically, culturally or economically. This system was mainly a symbolic gesture. The famous giraffe sent from Bengal and Melinda (East Africa) were examples of tributes. This principle of non-interference may be the reason the Chinese did not interact beyond trade with Africa and were not able to engage culturally/musically with Africa. It is possible that they did not have any interest in African music or culture, at least at that time. It could also have been that they did not encounter music making during their visit as they documented and described various facets of life they encountered in Africa.

Africa-China relations since the 20th century to date is significantly different from the earlier one. It is definitely more sustained and more comprehensive. Africa-China relations can be categorized into four eras: the first era (before 15th century) was when the Arabs and Persians served as intermediaries between Africa and China; they informed the Chinese about Africa before the Chinese officially visited Africa. The second era was during the 15th century when the Chinese visited Africa officially and had a first-hand experience of Africa. The third era of Africa-China relations (early 20th century) was facilitated by Europeans and later, Americans. This came with some negative views of Africa as did the era of the Arabs and Persians. During the third era, discrimination against Africans by Chinese becomes more overt unlike previously. Snow attributes this to the Western prism through which China was reintroduced to Africa. The final era, beginning around 1955, marks the era when the Chinese directly engaged Africa again and on their own terms.

The lack of evidence indicating musical contact in the first and second era of Africa-China relations continue to be a puzzle. In a way, it is an aberration. One thing that is constant throughout the history of Africa and Africans in the diaspora, is their musical contribution wherever they find themselves. The story of Barbad, Ziryab and Hao Ge serve as examples of this. This position is consistent with the contributions of Africans during slavery and colonialism in many areas, particularly music. It will then continue to be an area to further investigate.

Ultimately, I find this research instructive and relevant in contributing to a de-colonial academic canon. The lives and musical contributions of Barbad and Ziryab cries for inclusion in history of music courses, especially due to their musical contributions towards the development of the *barbat*

and *ūd* as well as laying the foundation for many musical developments that succeeded them. Ziryab's immense contributions are especially remarkable considering that one of the first conservatory-like institutions was established by him, and he laid many methodological foundations for specialized training of singers. Interestingly, there is no debate about the authenticity of many of these information and contributions, yet, they are not taught in colleges and universities.

This aspect of history deserves to be taught not only because the musicians in question are people of colour and they deserve to be recognized for their contribution towards the development of music but because this is part of history and it will give us a holistic view of where have come from and where we are today. The absence of this information poses a fundamental challenge to the music discipline. Should the history of music taught at colleges and universities continue to teach the history and development of the guitar without referring to its early ancestors which are the *ūd* and *barbat*? Or should they continue to teach about the violin without mentioning that one of the earliest bowed instruments was the *rebab,* which was introduced to Europe by the Arabs and is the early ancestor of the violin? There is no doubt that we need to engage these questions and come up with a holistic and comprehensive approach to the study of music history.

Interestingly, as referenced in chapters 3 and 4, the movement of people, goods and ideas set the stage for the current globalization we know today. The circulation of the *barbat* throughout many parts of the world is also a sign of this early globalism. The adaptation and development of this instrument from the Arabs, *ūd,* the Chinese, *pipa,* the Japanese, *biwa,* Europe, lute/*guitar,* Africa, *kwitra* and many other parts of the world shows the interconnectedness of the world. With China's launch of the belt and road initiative (BRI), modeled after its prototype, the silk road, globalization is returning to its cradle. Africa-China relations is on the upswing. It will be the most engaging period of Africa-China relations in history and it will birth so many collaborations, from political to cultural. Research in this area is also on the rise. This will open opportunities for further investigations that is not covered in this dissertation.

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Glossary

Al-Andalusia — was the name given to the Iberian Peninsula (parts of Spain, Portugal and France) when the Arabs ruled over the region

Ambergris — Whale sperm

Arabia — "is a region encompassing south-eastern Iraq, Republic of, Kuwait, the Hasa province of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the southern coast of Iran" (Olsen and Wneger 2001).

Bata — means duck in Arabic

Ceylon — modern day Sri Lanka

Gandhara — An area historically located in the Indian subcontinent but now part of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Hormuz — is a strait between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

Kalcayan — is an ancient city which is situated in present day India

Ki'lin — is a mythical creature in Chinese legends which later became associated with the giraffe when they received one from Bengal and Malindi, in East Africa.

Lambri — was a place in Indonesia until the 16th century

Maghreb — is the Northern part of Africa that is part of the Arab world, they include: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Lybia, Mauritania and Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic

Malindi — is a town in present day Kenya

Monsoon — is a seasonal wind that moves from one part of the world to another, making maritime travel distance quicker.

North Bactarian — this was a region in Central Asia

Ordak — means duck in Farsi

Pre-colonial — A period before the Western colonial era

Rihla — is an Arabic word which refers to a purposeful journey and the written account there of.