

## Western-Mediterranean Musicians as Cultural Intermediaries

This position paper would explore the activity of Muslim musicians residing under Christian rule who were employed by a range of Christian municipalities in the Crown of Aragon to support various governmental operations including Christian civic-religious ceremonies during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The fact that evidence regarding what and how these individuals performed is scarce and preserved almost exclusively within sources produced by Christians and Christian institutions for their own consumption makes this topic somewhat elusive. I would nevertheless like to try pursue various methodological techniques—such as by reconstructing scenarios by cobbling together various scraps of documentation and reading sources against the grain—to consider whether these individuals served as cultural intermediaries who were able to inject Islamic musical forms and instrumentalism into these sorts of Christian-dominated settings. Some of the questions I would like to consider are as follows: How tightly controlled were these service roles and what agency for self-determined cultural expression remained for these Muslim instrumentalists? Were the Christian orchestrators interested in preserving or even promoting the Islamic musical orientation of these musicians? Or, were they instead invested in involving these agents as a means to model Muslim submission and broadcast Christian hegemony? I feel that this topic could serve as a useful means to advance the second round-table conversation of this seminar meeting.