# VOCAL FOLK-POLYPHONIES OF THE WESTERN ORIENT IN JEWISH TRADITION

EDITH GERSON-KIWI, *Jerusalem*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. *Towards a Definition*

Looking for a plain definition of what is generally called "polyphony" and leaving aside all technicalities, we encounter the fateful question if this kind of music-making is at all in the nature of man, and therefore given to produce natural laws, or at least some regularities that can be relied upon in the recognition of any deviation. Former generations would probably have denied the validity of such a sophisticated argument: Man is born with his voice alone and is therefore, by nature, a monophonic "organon". For this very reason, many primitive civilizations, and even more developed ones outside Europe had remained, apparently, in this original state of monophony while part-singing and group-playing were considered an art product and a late result of cultural processes.

Recently, however, ethnomusicology has reversed much of this conventional thought. Man is gifted not only with his voice, but also with some strong bodily motor impulses — like clapping, stepping, snapping — which may assume, at a chosen moment, the suggestive force of sound instruments and may join the singing in some sort of sound combination. The singer may also accompany himself on some kind of stringed instrument by plucking or bowing, as do the bards wherever they are still to be found, or he may counterpoise his singing by beating the drums or an array of percussion instruments as does the bandman, again producing some *simultaneous sounds of different pitch and tone colour* — and that is all that is needed to arrive at a plain definition of polyphony, in accordance with present-day standards of music research.

However, that very little makes a considerable difference when compared with the previous approach. It means that we have grown new ears and gained a more refined apprehension for the potential importance of the smallest detail. We have learned to pay respect to the concomitants of a musical performance once regarded as negligeable and discarded. There are many instances where a recording has been made of a congregational song performed by a single singer, thus eliminating — possibly — heterophonic progression of the melody. Or our singer had to "act" as the precentor and his chorus, in a re-

sponsorial chant — he did his best, but this substitute presentation probably deprived us of a precious experience, for instance, a vocal drone or some organal progressions during the choral response. The same goes for the attack on single tones, their diminution or ornamentation, the appearance and disappearance of pedal points which, previously, we simply did not hear because we did not value them in the right light.

We have passed through a time of under-valuation and are now in danger of a certain over-valuation of the proto-polyphonies. Today, with our ears resharpened for the almost unnoticeable beginnings, we are more than inclined to place any haphazard assembly of noises on record as an instance of early polyphony.[1] We may imagine hearing voices whose existence the singers or players themselves would flatly deny.[2] Do they or do they not exist, in a scientific sense? Here, a constant observation and analysis of our own listening attitudes will be indispensable, and only patient work and the gradual elimination of the improbable will help us to decide between chance and purpose.

One of the guiding principles towards a definition of proto-polyphony is indeed the golden measure between chance or purpose in certain sound clashes. In order to establish the path of a folk tradition, we shall have to concentrate on the purpose: only if there is a conscious act of self-expression behind the combination of simultaneous voices, and a certain consequence of their selection, can we speak of the formation of a polyphonic style. The most workable means of testing a possibly polyphonic tradition, and distinguishing between *res facta* and a chance deformation, is to observe the repetitions wherever they occur. If they experience an inner striving for something of their own, the musicians will always aim at the same or similar pattern of polyphonic setting of a given melody. Repetition is also one of many tools of artistic endeavour which should always be present, even in the most modest of forms, in any live tradition. Repetition as a means of artistic perfection will in the course of the development display some forms of repetitive variation, diminution, or ornamentation of the basic material and thus provide a more precise point of departure for the polyphonic texture under question. For it can be safely stated that there are no folk polyphonies that would not employ the above techniques in their many guises in the building-up of their voice-combinations.

## 2. *Folk and Art Polyphonies*

The study of folk polyphonies undoubtedly is one of the most fascinating subjects of ethnomusicology as it allows for many interesting cross-relations between the intercontinental areas of folk polyphonies on the one hand, and on

[1] F. Hoerburger, "Haphazard Assembly as a Pre-musical Form of Polyphony...", in *JIFMC*, 16 (1964): 50.

[2] J. Chailley, "Comment entendre la musique populaire?", *ibid.*, p. 47.

the other between these and the historically developed forms of early European part-writing, and, finally, between all these manifestations and the written sources of musical theory as have been preserved from Babylonian, Egyptian-Pharaonic and Greek antiquity, and from mediaeval Christian, Islamic and Jewish sources.

Furthermore, a new aspect presents itself of the integration of former folk polyphonies into the learned part-writing of the late mediaeval and early Renaissance forms such as the organum, motet, conductus, fauxbourdon, or canzona. It may upset much of our conventional knowledge of the age and origin, style and actual performance of the rigidly written scores. It seems that these and other forms were not as such the very beginnings of polyphonic thought in the West, but were late products of an adaption of the folksong through stylization by sifting the more casual (improvisatorial) moments and by uplifting of the vulgar and vernacular ones. Fateful in this process was the development of a rational musical notation, during the Middle Ages, which, while being meticulously faithful to the essentials, had necessarily to cut down on the accidental parts of the music.

If our assumptions are not entirely mistaken, we could here establish a point of mutual contact between historical and folklore forms leading to a better knowledge of both, provided that there still exist some living remnants of mediaeval folksong within the compass of the same cultural region — like the English fiddler tunes from the lake district of Canada with bourdon effects and the rhythmical ostinato of the stamping foot which obviously were source materials for the historical Gigue; similarly the rural Bourée-dances of France for the Baroque Suite or the Troubadour ensembles of Corsica for the *ars nova* Ballads. However, comparison should not be taken, as has often been done, from culturally unrelated and far-away areas like the Caucasus or Polynesia.

Nevertheless, there remains a basic difference between folk- and art-polyphonies: any art music has been laid down as a *res facta* through notation — a composition with an unchangeable texture — whereas the folk polyphonies owe their comparative immortality to the continuous changes of their melodic organism and to the elasticity of their melodic outlines thanks to the tradition of collective improvisation. This fluctuating permanence is the more astonishing when it occurs in a polyphonic interplay of voices. The improvised counterpoint of oral tradition kept its place even within the learned forms of historical counterpoint. Johannes Tinctoris (ca. 1435–1511) in his *Liber de arte contrapuncti* (*CS*, IV, 129), was apparently the first to stress the difference between the improvised *contrapunctus absolutus* and the one fully written down called *res facta*. The improvised form which Tinctoris also described as the art of *super librum cantare* found its continuation as the *contrappunto alla mente*, in the partly improvised popular Italian canzonas of the Cinquecento, composed in the

*falso-bordone* style. Since then and until today this form of oral counterpoint is deeply rooted in the musical folklore of Italy — kept completely apart from the *res facta* schools of art music. Folk choirs from Genova, Sardinia or Sicily still perform their multi-pitch choruses as they may have done centuries ago, a remarkable instance of spiritual isolation which produced and preserved the continuity of an ancient folk tradition of part-singing.

### 3. *Morphology and Classification of the Vocal Folk Polyphonies*

The subject of our present investigation is limited to the vocal folk polyphonies of the Western Orient, in the Jewish tradition, and is based on recordings made by the author in Israel during the past twenty years of Jewish immigrants originating from Oriental and Mediterranean countries. The recorded source materials which will be analysed in the following discussion represent a small selection from the areas where such polyphonic devices were to be found as an integral part of a community tradition, as far as purely vocal liturgical music is concerned. In the case of instrumental music and music of a mainly secular character, the collected materials, though recorded with Jewish and Samaritan musicians exclusively, represent a much wider radius of tradition, reflecting to a good measure the general musical culture of their former host countries.

It should be stressed from the beginning that the categories of vocal liturgical part-singing on the one hand, and of instrumental ensemble playing on the other, necessitate a different approach. It is only natural that for the liturgical music only three areas presenting examples of part-singing have so far been detected, while in instrumental music, the distribution of practices is rather more general.

Accordingly, the morphology of musical forms and their terms is different for each kind of music. The vocal forms, being limited to the one instrument of the human voice, have by their very nature a small span of form types. They need a more specific definition of form and functions and an even more acute observation of the slightest detail: the timbre of voice, the attack of certain tones, the degree of precision or of deviation during the intonation period of a sound, its repetition or diminution — any one of such particulars could point to the class in itself.[3]

The varieties of vocal types of polyphony could roughly be classified into four categories: (1) organal, with or without a drone, (2) heterophonic, (3) descant and (4) canonic-imitative techniques. The varieties of instrumental types of polyphony add some techniques of their own and could be classified into the following four categories: (1) Bourdon, (2) Ostinato, (3) harmonic chord progressions, and (4) counterpointal techniques.

All of these categories are, in a sense, variants of the all-embracing "hetero-

[3] E. Emsheimer, "Some Remarks on European Folk Polyphony", *ibid.*, p. 43.

phony", — a word which was not entirely defined by the Greek writers themselves and which — according to C. Sachs[4] — could "comprise anything between an inaccurate unison and a strict double fugue". There is, however, one important source for its meaning, given in Plato's *Leges* (VII, 812D-E)[5] where he describes the combination of short and wide intervals, high and low notes, consonant and dissonant sounds, plain and ornate melodies, — in short: Plato apparently stresses the play of contrasts, a concept not at all in conformity with the sober statements of modern musicology which usually defines heterophony as "two slightly divergent versions of the same melody"[6] sounded simultaneously. While the original word indeed suggests a diversity of sound, we are so accustomed to the modern assumptions as related above that we have to look for a new clarification.

Our attempt to separate vocal from instrumental techniques and to provide each one with an adequate classification of polyphonic types, may help to prepare the way for a new orientation in this vast field of folk polyphonies. The leading principle behind the four vocal forms as given above is the *sameness of melody* which manifests itself in the other voice(s) in some variant form, i.e. the four vocal categories are of an *automelic* texture. In contrast, the four instrumental categories are often of a *heteromelic texture* in view of their melodic material which is not homogeneous but composed of two or more divergent fabrics. We are here in the realm of counterpoint and harmony proper, though produced in an absolutely spontaneous form of expression, and it is self-evident that the musical grammar should be different from that of the automelic (vocal) types, even if treated in the same cultural environment. In the twenties R. Lachmann already based his analysis of Asia's music styles upon this double structure of two tone systems within the same culture, the vocal and the instrumental,[7] and more recently J. Kunst,[8] P. Collaer[9] and B. Nettl[10] have arrived at the concept of dividing the "multi-pitch" styles according to their melodic material and its elaboration.

Herewith, a new point of departure has been reached which will soon super-

[4] C. Sachs, "Heterophonie...", in *MGG*, 6 (1957), cols. 327 ff. Cf. also G. Adler, "Über Heterophonie...", in *Jahrbuch... Peters*, 15 (1909): 17.

[5] Cf. C. Sachs, *The Wellsprings of Music* (The Hague, 1962), p. 289.

[6] C.V. Palisca, "*Kontrapunkt...*", in *MGG*, 7 (1958), col. 1523.

[7] *Musik des Orients* (Breslau, 1929), pp. 9 ff.; Idem "Zur aussereuropäischen Mehrstimmigkeit", in *Kongress-Bericht der Beethoven-Zentenarfeier* (Wien, 1937), p. 321.

[8] *Metre, Rhythm, Multi-Part Music* (Leiden, 1950), pp. 34 ff.

[9] "Polyphonies de tradition populaire en Europe méditerranéenne...", in *AMl*, 32 (1960): 51.

[10] "Notes on the Concept and Classification of Polyphony...", in *Festschrift F. Blume* (Kassel, 1963), pp. 247–251; Idem, "Polyphony in North-American Indian Music...", in *MQ*, 47 (1921): 354.

sede the older attempts of classification of folk polyphonies according to some exclusive ethnic properties, which in the light of the most recent investigations may prove to be obsolete and unrealistic.

In the following, a small selection of musical examples may illustrate the methodical approach here proposed and some new methods of stratification of polyphonic areas.[10*]

### 4. *The Stratification of Polyphonic Areas*

With this title in mind we enter a "terra incognita". Over some decades of Oriental studies in music, the territories of Islamic civilizations were declared a geographical area of purest monophony, and with an increasing interest in the Maqam systems of the Arab countries research topics concentrated more in the analysis of melody and melodic processes than on its actual performance and artistic manifestation. Even the presence of the traditional chamber ensembles of Arab musicians in every town and hamlet, almost in every home between Bagdad and Morocco was not able to change the picture once it was established, nor did the many drone instruments or choir combinations raise the question of their actual sound. To question the validity of the monophonic sound ideal of Oriental music in general would have meant moving a mountain of eternal truth.[11] The more realistic auditive experience offered by listening to Arab, also Persian and Turkish recordings, or even commercial records, proved to be of no great help, because the preconceived ideologies were stronger than the reality of sound. Besides, very little reliable *verbatim* transcription of Arab-Persian chamber music has yet been published, or if at all, only the main voice was transcribed

10* The present study is only concerned with the *vocal* folk polyphonies customary in some Hebrew liturgies of the Eastern Mediterranean regions. A second part dealing with the instrumental practices and group playing is in preparation.

11 Remarkable exceptions to this trend may be found in the following studies on Oriental or early European polyphonies: M. Bukofzer, "Popular Polyphony in the Middle Ages...", in *MQ*, 26 (1940): 31; H.G. Farmer, *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence* (London, 1930), pp. 346, 348; C. Sachs, "Zweiklänge im Altertum...", in *Festschrift Johannes Wolf* (Berlin, 1929), p. 168; B. Staeblein, "Zur archaischen ambrosianischen (Mailänder) Mehrstimmigkeit...," in *Festschrift E. Desderi* (Bologna, 1963), pp. 169–174; P. Wagner, "Über die Anfänge des mehrstimmigen Gesanges. . .", in *ZfMW*, 9 (1926/27): 2; W. Wiora, "Idee und Methode vergleichender Musikforschung. . .", in *IMS* (Congress, Salzburg, 1964) Report, Vol. I (Kassel, 1964), p. 8. Wiora strongly recommends a close cooperation between historical and ethnological musicology, and also suggests a central research institute for Jewish, Christian and Oriental liturgies; H. Anglès, "Die Instrumentalmusik bis zum 16. Jahrhundert in Spanien. . .", in *Natalicia Musicologica Knud Jeppesen Septuagenario* (Hafniae, 1962), pp. 143–164; H. Besseler, "Spielfiguren in der Instrumentalmusik. . .", in *Deutsches Jahrbuch der Musikwissenschaft*, 1 (1956): 12–37; H. Hickmann, "La musique polyphonique dans l'Egypte ancienne", in *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte*, 34 (1952): 229–244; H. Sanden, *Antike Polyphonie. . .* (Heidelberg, 1957).

as a kind of "monody".[12] These idealized "monodies" were as unreal as was, for instance, in the historical field, the "a cappella" concept of Renaissance choral music, as cultivated by the Neo-Nazarenes of the romantic era, despite all more truthful information provided by pictorial evidence, organ masses, instrumental carmina, etc.

It seems that also in the case of vocal polyphony we have for a long time been slaves of our own prejudices. One of the main obstacles has been that from the beginning of modern research in folk polyphonies this subject was, curiously enough, coupled with racial theories. The main proponent of this line of thought, Marius Schneider, has, since the publication of his first comprehensive work in 1934/35,[13] tried to reinforce his theories on the stratification of non-European polyphonies with the help of some ethno-geographical doctrines which led him to basic misconceptions. According to the latest version of his theory,[14] folk polyphony is a racial property and limited to closed areas in only two of which (in a former version: three) it reached any significance:

(1a) Pacific Ocean (Polynesia, Melanesia, Indonesia and Philippines)

(1b) Southern Caucasus to Europe

(2) Central and South Africa

The rest of his polyphonic map, as given in his rather controversial article of 1951,[15] remains blank.

These blank spaces caught our curiosity. They cover not only the Sino-Japanese civilizations, indeed the Mongolian world in its entirety, but also Central India, Persia and the whole of the Semitic civilizations, both Arab and Jewish, denying all of them any notable contribution to polyphonic forms.

The picture is further blurred through quotations of musical examples originating from a variety of places in order to establish stylistic dependencies of an intercontinental and intercultural range; particularly between the Megalithic culture of the Pacific, the Caucasus and the mediaeval motet of the "Europidic race". No distinction is made between low and high (historical) civilizations of the East, the latter of which could have absorbed and developed earlier forms of the same culture context. No link is established between the indivual form types and their ritual or social function within their own society, which certainly helped form their present type.

For more than thirty years this scheme of stratification went unchallenged. M. Schneider has been acknowledged as an authority and has often been quot-

[12] For a notable exception see R. Lachmann, *Musik des Orients* (Breslau, 1929), p. 121.

[13] *Geschichte der Mehrstimmigkeit*, Berlin 1934–1935.

[14] See his "Origins of Western Polyphony", in *IMS* (Congress, New York, 1961), Papers, Vol. I (Kassel, 1961), pp. 161–178; *ibid.*, Reports, Vol. II (Kassel, 1962), pp. 107–111.

[15] "Ist die vokale Mehrstimmigkeit eine Schöpfung der Altrassen?", in *AMI*, 23 (1951): 40–50.

ed, but the time has come to try and correct some of his statements. The past decades have produced thousands of new recordings from those "blank" areas and some fine specialized studies upon them (see the references quoted in this paper) which bear witness of the true measure of their contribution to polyphony.[15*]

The drawing of global lines of descent and dependence can and should only be attempted after the single cultural units have been thoroughly analysed.

We have to start again from within each single culture, especially our own or the ones we know best, and investigate the smallest and most unconspicuous circumstances of sound-combination in order to reach solid ground for the comparison of the comparable.

There are new possibilities of stratification. They can no longer be drawn along geographical lines alone. With more and better source materials at hand, it would appear that there exists almost no civilization without some kind of proto-polyphony. If there are delimitations, they run on different lines: evidently many of the polyphonic textures are bound to certain categories of music within a given civilization. Thus it may happen that the religious lyrical forms are polyphonic while the readings of the Holy Script remain monophonic, etc. As a rule, it is not so much the musical form itself that is the determining factor, but its actual performance and the social or functional context which prompted it. A comparative analysis of such polyphonic types may lead to a revised map of stratifications.

## II. AN ANALYSIS OF THREE REGIONAL STYLES

Spontaneous part-singing is one of the most ancient layers of this strange phenomenon of polyphony. Even if we grant the term the greatest liberty of interpretation, the earliest manifestations of vocal sound-combinations are not always easy to detect as polyphony. As already remarked, the Islamic world, together with its Jewish communities, was generally considered a total loss in this field. As our newer recorded materials indicate, this was a premature misjudgment, which has now to be corrected step by step.

We are here concerned, for the first time, with the Jewish contribution to folk polyphonies. So far, we were able to detect such practices in three obviously unconnected traditions: (1) Yemen Jews, (2) the Samaritans, (3) Corfu Jews. We venture to give a first account of this small sector of our findings. With all due allow-

15* Schneider in the above mentioned article, *AMl*, 23 (1951), p. 47: "Unter den europiden Rassen treten insbesondere die polynesiden, armeniden, dinarischen, alpinen, osteuropäischen und nordischen Völker als Träger der Mehrstimmigkeit hervor, während die Mediterranen, die Turaniden und die Indiden nur einen geringen Anteil haben." Schneider refers himself to E.F. von Eickstedt, *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit*, Stuttgart, 1934.

ance made for their ethnic and stylistic difference, there is a unifying factor, their limitation to the field of liturgical music. This being the realm of purely vocal music, we may expect to find here some samples of part-singing conceived without the slightest copying of instrumental techniques, a fact which would guarantee, right from the start, a considerably great age. Yet it is not always possible to keep the automelic and heteromelic techniques separated according to singing and playing conditions. Quite often, a device of an instrumental source, like the Bourdon, is also performed in singing — a practice which does not, however, change its origin.

### 1. *Yemenite Jews*

Yemenite Jews practise some rudimentary forms of polyphony in their liturgical music, rudimentary to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to prove their existence as a fully intentional form of expression.[16] What speaks for their acceptance as such are the following facts: (1) the variety of their techniques, (2) their regular appearance and re-appearance in a given liturgical situation and (3) "organal" singing as long as it is not the outcome of an initial vacillation of intonation but a means of emotional build-up, especially with the successive repetition in a series of stanzas.

The few kinds of Yemenite part-singing are so decidedly connected with certain liturgical forms that one could even speak of a Psalm-polyphony or a prayer-polyphony.

The following five types of part-singing could be established in the Yemenite tradition.

(*a*) *Vocal Bourdon style. Prayer* (*Seliḥah*). *Example 1* (*E. G.-K. 1139*)

Our first example is one of the penitential prayers sung in responsorial performance by the Ḥazzan and the congregation. The melody is litany-like and moves in a narrow trichordic frame (*La–Do'*) with an additional subtonium *Sol*. The tonic is *La* though most of the cadential melismas end on the subtonium *Sol* thus enabling a smooth junction with the following initium. The "Tuba"-tone of recitation is interchangeable between the high- and middle-tone in accordance with the responsorial scheme: while the Ḥazzan employs the high tone *Do* as the Tuba, this is lowered to the middle-tone *Si* for the chorus response. This gives us, by the way, an important clue for the possible origin of the widespread use of the *tonus peregrinus* with the higher Tuba in the first, and the lower one in the second half of the melodic line: it is the responsorial performance of the trichordic litany scheme where the high note had been reserved for

[16] Indeed, A.Z. Idelsohn, in the first volume of his *Thesaurus*, does not mention any forms of folk polyphony practised by the Yemenite Jews. Nevertheless, this volume (*Gesänge der Jemenischen Juden* = *HOM*, I, Leipzig, 1914) is until now the only scientific approach to this musical liturgy.

the soloist while the middle note acted as chorus-Tuba. In the narrow frame of a three-tone-melody, each of these tones has to have a well-defined designation as there are not substitutes for them as in a wider melodic ambitus. Their functions cannot be exchanged, only deepened.

Here the tonic enters: in contrast to the to-and-fro-motion of the two dynamic Tubas, the tonic has to resist motion. To reinforce its immobility, it may be supported by an appoggiatura-note, i.e. the subtonium, or by a pedal note, the Bourdon, or drone. Here, then, the basis is given for the splitting of one tune into two: while one group of singers continues with its melody, another group (or a single singer) remains inert on the tonic and continues to recite the text by breaking the drone rhythmically. The result is a contrapuntal oblique-motion which is historically known as the "occursus", — one of the oldest professional terms of the art of counterpoint described in Guido d'Arezzo's *Micrologus* (1025–1033), Chapter 19.[17] It is, as indicated above, the splitting and reuniting of two voices over the intervals of a Second and Third, with the acoustical effect of a (vocal) bourdon. The main point is that this drone effect should be intentional and not accidental.

In our Example 1, such an effect is indeed quite steadily developed. The response of the first stanza is completely monophonic, without the least tonal vacillation at the entrance of the choral voices. During the second choral refrain (response) the voices depart from the initial unison and continue their reciting at an interval of a major Second, one voice retaining the tonic *La*, the others continuing their melodic formula. As the diapason is so narrow, the main interval is the Second, but the sharp dissonant clusters do not in the least irritate the singers: their auditive perception can only follow the horizontal path, and in this selective hearing the chords simply do not exist.

But they do exist for the unbiased observer and they have to be registered as a definite style of part-singing. What has been achieved in this Bourdon type is the clear notion of a tonal centre, obstinately retaining its pitch, and helping to preserve the discipline of the alternating groups of singers.

There is also evidence to the contrary. In cases where the principle of a drone is missing, as in the more emotional (and often mystical) lyrics of the *Šîrôṯ* or *Našwād*, we often observe a slow climbing up of the initial pitch for more than a minor Third, over the course of several stanzas. This is done in a fluent, quite unobtrusive way, recognizable only through the growing intensity of recitation. As against this loose, emotional singing, the earthbound singing of the nocturnal *Selîḥôṯ*, half-murmured in low voices, requires by its very nature the quasi-forceful fixation of the original "harmoneia". This is the place of the vocal drone.

[17] Ed. J. Smits van Waesberghe (Rome, 1955), p. 212.

(*b*) *Choral Polyphony of Acclamations in Organum Technique. Ašmôrôṯ. Example 2 (E. G.-K. 2446)*

Here we are confronted with one of the most astonishing forms of non-European folk-polyphony — connected, like the preceding form, with the liturgical order of the nocturnal penitential prayers, the *Ašmôrôṯ*. Though belonging to responsorial poetry, the response is here not the full second half of a stanza, but a short acclamation, or choral refrain, performed not by a few singers, but by the entire congregation of hundreds, including children of every age. This is the classical example of a multi-pitch "organum", so often cited as *the* primal origin of polyphony. The result is a many-voiced parallel organum, but, in defiance of the historical strict organum of Fifths, it is filled with a variety of parallel intervals producing a sequence of the most fascinating Mixture stop chords, including any kind of irrational or microtonal sound combinations. As an aesthetic impression, these passing multi-pitch chords conjure up in the fancy the impressionistic tone clusters of Debussy or Scriabin. Strangely enough, they do not undergo variations but return as they are, with every refrain, led by the strong "cantus-firmus" voice of the Ḥazzan.

This is a practice which has to be experienced during a live performance. On paper, these progressions of enigmatic sound columns can only be sketched approximately. Again, they are a musical phenomenon which is not consciously audible to the singers themselves: they would say they sing as one man. Nevertheless, it exists and has to be acknowledged not only for the sake of scientific accuracy but as an aesthetic experience of a high order. We have still to detect a parallel tradition in Islamic sacred music, but we know this style on East African soil, in Eritrea, Somaliland, and Ethiopia, just opposite Yemen across the narrow passage between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, the Bab el Mandeb.

The African component in Yemenite and Yemenite-Jewish music has not yet been taken into consideration. But there are too many points of comparison to be overlooked. The mass choruses all along the East African coast, responding to the dominating voice of a leader-singer, carry with them the same kind of sound columns filled with natural harmonies that can be heard in a Yemenite synagogue.

It is more than probable that this is how we should imagine the actual sound of a mediaeval organum. The purified version of a "strict" organum in parallels of Fourths, Fifths and Octaves had already been suspected by H. Riemann as being a "Theoretikerprodukt"[18] or, in any case, to be a final result of abstraction from reality, prepared for didactic purposes.

[18] *Geschichte der Musiktheorie* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 30; Idem, *Hdb. Mg.* I, 2 (Leipzig, 1920), p. 137.

(*c*) *Vocal Ostinato Technique. Psalm Readings. Example 3* (*E. G.-K. 1134*)
A short ostinato-motive accompanying the cantillation may be considered another trend originating from the basic drone form, as illustrated in Example 1.

Our third example is a transcription of a Yemenite Psalm reading (Ps 102, 1, 2, 5, 6) sung by three singers. While two of them recite the traditional Psalm tune, the third starts after the others with a kind of canonic *initium* and immediately develops his own ostinato-bourdon, that is to say: a small repetitive motive around the tonic *Re* which keeps perfectly apart from the Psalm tune, even with a certain measure of playfulness. In nearly each of the succeeding verses his ostinato-motive gets a new variant (see Example 3).

Here it should be added that the Psalm tune itself has not got a definite shape from the start but develops its recitation scheme slowly in the course of five verses through the already mentioned climbing technique. During these ascensions, the Tuba-tone gets exchanged three times: from the tonal base *Re* through *Fa* to *Sol* where it settles solidly, together with the corresponding ostinato-motive — as can be seen from the final phrase of Example 3. Here, the task of the drone motive — securing the flight of the melody to its final tonality, can be felt even more eloquently than in the previous two examples. The rendering of this Psalm tune — taking into consideration its tonal and ornamental limitation — is a little piece of artistry: the double development which takes place (*a*) in the sequence of the three Tuba-planes, and (*b*) in that of the corresponding drone motives, until the tetrachordal frame is finally established, deserves our admiration in its unerring feeling for the potentialities of form, within the limits of such a micro-organism of music.

(*d*) *Heterophonic Part-singing. Religious Hymn. Example 4* (*E. G.-K. 1110*)
In the morning hymn *Adon 'olam*, we have one of the ancient Hebrew lyrics in Arab metre rendered in a clear metrical declamation. We are here at the opposite of a free recitative (as in the previous example) with its rhapsodic rhythm. Lyrical metre very often invites simultaneous declamation, as in our Example 4. But the start is in the fashion of a strict organum which very soon softens down to a heterophonic singing in the narrowest possible space of a Second. The sequence of dissonances thus produced seems to be so congenial to the Yemenite singers that there can be no question of haphazard intonation.

(*e*) *The Style of Parallel Organum. Ceremonial Song. Example 5* (*E. G.-K. 2515*)
If we are still in doubt of the true intention to sing in the style of a strict organum in Fourths, here, then, is an example of a Yemenite wedding song where the Incipit is rendered by the leading singer, according to the ancient responsorial tradition. He is immediately joined by the chorus which adds the lower Fourth to the principal melody and maintains this organal technique until the end.

There is no question that this is done consciously and in accordance with an old-established folk tradition.

Of these five examples of Yemenite-Jewish part-singing, four belong, in various ways, to the type of automelic texture — their voices all develop from the same basic melody of their song and without the addition of an independent counter-melody. There was the technique of a drone-organum (Example 1), that of organal chord progressions (Example 2), heterophonic singing in Seconds (Example 4), and strict organum in Fourths (Example 5). Only Example 3, where the pedal voice developed an ostinato motive distinct from the main tune, could be compared to the heteromelic textures to which most of the instrumental polyphonies of the East belong. There is no doubt that this Yemenite form, too, is of entirely vocal conception.

## 2. *Samaritans*

Another remarkable centre of vocal polyphonies can be found in the musical liturgy of the Samaritans. Their existence is all the more astonishing as we are dealing here with a people living for many centuries in nearly complete social and cultural isolation. The question of possible origins or dependencies is therefore infinitely more difficult, if not impossible, to solve. Any premature solution will only add in amassing guesswork around the strange phenomenon of a traditional system of part-singing consisting of several divergent types of polyphony, in the midst of an environment of Islamic liturgy and song which could hardly have provided the inspiration for the growth of that extraordinary culture of sound combinations which is theirs and probably theirs alone.

There seems to be only one way towards a deeper understanding of the formation of the Samaritan polyphonies: to collect new evidence for the spiritual background of their musical liturgy and to analyse the melodic source materials as perceived and performed in their original environment.

Here we have chosen for transcription and analysis three different form types, recorded with the kind assistance of the families of Abraham and Ratson Tsedaqa (Holon, Israel): (1) *The Canonic Diaphony*, and (2) *The Organal Homophony*, both in its pure as well as bourdonized form (No. 3).

This is meant to be a first selection out of a greater variety of forms.

### (*a*) *Canonic Diaphony. Prayer "Ela rab". Example 6 (E. G.-K. 5713)*

Nowhere else is polyphony so intimately connected with the primitive roots of liturgy as in Samaria. Here, some surviving remnants of the Temple ritual have been preserved until this day. Among them, we find a last survival of the burnt-offerings, the Pessah offering, and connected herewith, the ancestral tradition of Temple doxologies forming the liturgical frame around the central sacrificial act, as a theocratic expression of the priestly caste. The burnt-offering

was connected with a whole sequence of rituals whose detailed acts of devotion and magic provided the background for spiritual transcendence. In Jewish rite the role of music was confined to the accompanying doxologies. After the fall of the Temple, they split into two different categories of benedictions, according to the findings of Eric Werner, on the origins of the doxology.[19]

In the Jewish tradition of the Diaspora synagogue, the Temple doxologies lost their function and were discontinued in favour of the brief congregational acclamations. On the other hand, the former sacrificial benedictions of the Temple — one of the prerogatives of the Sadducees — found a refuge in the Samaritan liturgy which, in general, inherited some of the Sadducean principles. These benedictions are annexed to most readings and prayers as openings or conclusions and often provide the key-note for intonation. Here is one of the sources of music, as an autonomous part of liturgy, which entered a new phase after the gradual conversion and final supplanting of the actual offering by the form of prayer.

Here, the small sect of the Samaritans passed through a historical moment which signified spiritual survival, exactly as did Judaism at the beginning of the common era when it was driven from Temple to synagogue, from sacrificial rituals to devotional prayer. In this process of spiritualization, not all the bridges with the ancient cult were broken (the Samaritans still preserve the Pessah offering): The vestiges of ancient tradition were sanctified and gradually transformed into a purely symbolistic act of offering. Furthermore, the collective memory became a time-symbol: The actual duration of prayers had to correspond exactly to the duration of the former offerings (a pair of lambs — two hours). From here stems the institution of the "officium", the canonical hours of the day, and with it the nucleus of a new and independent form of liturgy making its start equally in Judaism, early church and Samaritan cult.

In Samaritan tradition, the timing of the prayer-hours according to the memory of the former offerings developed into a divine duty and into an absolute measure of devotion — slowly encompassing the small doings of everyday life, by giving a time-value also to short benedictions before and after meals or for the washing of the hands. Thus, life in its entirety became, and still is for the Samaritan community, the transfiguration of one great and uninterrupted sacred service graduated into a hierarchy of mystic time-values.

With concentration on prayers and meditation, a new and rich literature of religious lyrics sprang up which reached its first peak in the third or fourth century with the activity of the great Samaritan poet Marqah. It seems that the products of the Marqah school grew to such dimensions that they outran

[19] E. Werner, *The Sacred Bridge* (London-New York, 1959), p. 296.

the limits of liturgy. In due course it became necessary to adapt the lyrics to the requirements of the liturgical rules.

Strangely enough, it is here that polyphony steps in, as a kind of time-regulator. The solution was the simultaneous singing of the different stanzas of the long prayer hymns, in the form of a two-part canon.

These stanzas are interwoven according to a highly elaborate procedure, while the praying congregation is divided into two parts. If we take our Example 6 as a typical case, the inner organization is as follows: *Group A* sings the 4-line-stanza until the penultimate word. At this point, *Group B* starts on the second stanza while *Group A* concludes the first one and adds the first Refrain of three lines. After finishing this first unit of stanza and refrain, *A* pauses for a short while to let *B* finish the second stanza. While *B* is engaged with the Refrain of the second stanza, *A* starts with the third stanza. In the middle of the third, *B* skips over to the fourth, and so on (see Example 6).

The musical result of this interlacing technique is a kind of two-part Canon, strict in its intention, but variative-heterophon (or diaphonic) in its acutal performance. The sound combinations thus created are entirely haphazard and filled with tone-clashes of harsh dissonances. These, however, are not perceived as such by the singers whose inner ear can only follow the path of melody, but this with great accuracy of rhythm and intonation. The total time of the song is indeed reduced to half — which is the *raison d'être* of this form-type.

One could even venture to say that we have here an early example of atonality, though the canonic sections are thematically connected with each other and follow the same modality. But in this interchained fabric where one section overcrosses the other, these orders are no longer effectual, and the auditive impression is that of a complete disruption of tonality.

One could also find some interesting parallels with the technique of the motet of the ars antiqua: let us take, for instance, the section where *A* starts stanza III, 1 and *B* the second refrain (R II, 1): Here, we get (*a*) a different text in each voice; (*b*) a bi-tonal course of melody; (*c*) an exchange of melodic sections ("Stimmtausch"); (*d*) the isorhythmic-isomelic period which (in our example) repeats itself four times; (*e*) the disregard of consonances and/or the freedom of combining any dissonant passages, except (occasionally) for the beginning and conclusion.

Here, then, is a form of spontaneous polyphony governed by an extreme view of "linear counterpoint". There is no point in looking for harmonic rules if they were not intended from the first. In their place, there is, above all, the principle of TIME acting to prevent the canonic sections from falling into anarchy. For this reason, the presence of a kind of isorhythmic period is of special interest. The single parts of the stanza-period are strictly measured throughout according to the *chronos protos*-system of basic syllables, and are

preserved through all following repetitions. This gives the clue for the correct entry of the canonic sections and the measuring of the solistic interludes, which is necessary for the adjustment of the uneven stanzas (of 4, 5 or 6 lines).

The system of counting the strong and weak syllables, and the strong and weak accents is part of the Samaritans' exquisite sense of time and rhythm. With its help they manage to hold together the loose tissue of these hymnodical canons, which in themselves have their assigned place in one of the many sacred services, a place fixed through timing in accordance with the importance or magnitude of their liturgical position.

Therefore it was necessary to develop a system of singing which would be flexible enough to shorten or lengthen the prayers according to requirements of timing. A means for accelerating the time of performance without omitting any of the holy text, was the simultaneous reciting of two different verses as described above.

Polyphony created in this way is not a musical form in the narrow sense. It has its roots outside the musical sound and beyond the purely aesthetic judgements. These canonic diaphonies are a liturgical phenomenon, not so much a musical one, and serve as regulators of a ritual time period, in mystic relation to the ancient sacrificial cult.

*The Structure of the Hymnodic Melody "Ela rab"*. There remains still something to be said on the melody itself as base of the polyphonic treatment. The first impression gained on listening to it is that of a litany. Looking at it in transcription, it at first seems anarchic, but after analysis it reveals a wealth of ingenious composition and combinatory craft.

There is a melodic pattern for the stanzas and a special one for the refrain.

*The Stanza-Melody*. The melodic nucleus is built on the major Trichord *Do-Re-Mi* thus participating in the wide-spread melodic model of the "Reading-Tune" with its three functional notes.[20] For better understanding, we have reduced the rich flow of the melody to its *Root-Motives* (Example 6a) and to its main structural melodic lines.

According to the Table of Root-Motives (Example 6a), the four verses of the stanza are built in complete conformity—which would be rather difficult to realize during an actual performance in its strongly melodized and ornamented form. Each one of the four stanzas comprises four sections which are in themselves fine examples of an almost logistic composition. An average stanza shows the following melodic outlines and cadential notes:

[20] See above, the beginning of paragraph II, A, 1 (Example 1); cf. E. Gerson-Kiwi, "Religious Chant — a Pan-Asiatic Conception of Music . . .", in *JIFMC*, 13 (1961): 64; Idem, "Jüdische Musik — II: Volksmusik. . .", in *MGG*, 7 (1958), cols. 269–270.

Within the narrow limits of the Trichord *Do-Re-Mi*, the middle tone *Re* represents the "Ison" or central tone (tonic). Each of the four sections has its own partial cadence: The first section has its cadence on the subtonium *Do*; the second section on the low tone *La* (— this is the only occasion on which the trichord of recitation has been widened toward the lower region forming a Pentachord —); the third section on the Ison *Re* reached from below; and the fourth section again on the final tone *Re*, this time reached from above. This is a cadential cycle of great logic and beauty; its cadential turns may be summarized in the formula as given in Example 6b.

*The Refrains.* Reduced to their Root-Motives, the four refrains show their own and independent character (see Table B, Example 6a). In contrast to the stanzas, the average refrain has three lines instead of four (to six). Each line of the verse is built on eight syllables which are divided into even groups of four. All four refrains contained in our example show a great conformity between their melodic outlines and their partial cadences. An interesting difference between stanza and refrain is the shifting of the final tone from *Re* to *Do* which becomes the common Ison for all sections of all the four refrains. The refrain-melody is obviously built in a more uniform and song-like way, and its tonic *Do* has the double task of an intermediate tonic and of a "Volta"-passage leading back smoothly into the stanza melody.

As the half-cadences of the refrain are all on *Re*, nearly all the melodic accents and directions have been reversed as between stanza and refrain — a little masterpiece of melodic conduct and of over-all planning in the narrow space of three tones.

This prayer hymn represents the polyphonic type of many dozens of Samaritan songs built on similar lines.

### (*b*) *Organal Homophony. "The Song of the Sea" (Exodus 15), Verse 1. Example 7 (E. G.-K. 5715)*

Traditionally, "The Song of the Sea" is to be recited by the whole congregation. The musical result is a multi-pitch intonation and the type of a Parallel Organum of classical diction. The remarkable thing is the clear-cut selection of the consonant chord of Bass, its Fifth and Octave, as described in the *Musica enchiriadis* (ninth century),[21] without the admixture of additional, mostly dissonant pitches, as is characteristic of the Yemenite type of congregational Organa (Example2). Another peculiarity is the strong rhythmical recitation of the "tuba"-tone, in full choir. Our transcription reproduces the first verse of Ex 15 which is — melodically at least —subdivided into two half-sentences of which

[21] *GS*, I, pp. 152 ff.; cf. J. Handschin, "Zur Geschichte der Lehre vom Organum. . .", in *ZfMW*, 8 (1926): 321.

the first is chanted on *Sol*, the second on *La* — each one ending with a final (and semi-final) melisma, the latter consisting of a peculiar chromatic glissando of all three voices ascending, with an intense crescendo. The final melisma at the end of the verse is of the more conventional "gruppetto"-type, but even so very stirring through the full choral rendering, and the exactness of the rhythmical unison.

(*c*) *Vocal Drone Organum. Another Version of "The Song of the Sea" (Exodus 15), Verses 1–2. Example 8 (E. G.-K. 5716)*

This is another version of the beginning of "The Song of the Sea", performed in a very festive and almost ritualistic mood, as chanted during the holy procession on Mt. Gerizim. This is one of the most exotic and interesting types of early simultaneous polyphony.

Here, the text is not entirely recited in chord progressions, but the first verse is treated as a solistic Incipit recited by the Ḥazzan while the congregation responds with the second verse thus uniting both in one responsorial unit. At the moment of the choral entrance, the Ḥazzan develops a drone, or pedal voice, which progresses in a plain-chant-like drawn-out measure, on the Ison *Re*. Meanwhile the choir, in classical organum style, develops a chant which turns out to be an imitation of the soloist's Incipit. The solid sound columns moving over the drone with perfect ease and brilliant tone colour, provide one of the most advanced forms of a spontaneous polyphony.

It is difficult to accept these refined polyphonic textures as an outcome of theoretical thought. On the contrary: they seem to antedate attempts at theoretical analysis, classification and law-making.

The question is still open whether a connection can be established with the great Caucasian centre of folk polyphonies *via* Syria, where we also have some folkloristic sources for the present practice of organum singing in the Christian-Syrian churches.[22]

Another path may possibly lead from Samaria *via* Asia Minor to the centres of Byzantine liturgy where the practice of the paraphonists, i.e. the professional organum chorists, has been mentioned by a good number of early Christian writers and in other testimonies — some of them pre-Carolingian.[23]

[22] H. Husmann, "The Practice of Organum in the Liturgical Singing of the Syrian Churches of the Near and Middle East", in J. La Rue, ed., *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music, A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese* (New York, 1966), pp. 435–439. His statement that the "organum in parallel fourths is of Syrian origin" (p. 439) should be tested against the broader background of Judaeo-Christian practices in that region; Idem, "Das Organum vor und ausserhalb der Notre-Dame-Schule", in *IMS* (Congress, Salzburg, 1964), Report, Vol. I (Kassel, 1964), p. 31.

[23] P. Wagner, cf. n. 11.

As an alternative, the possibility remains that Samaritan part-singing is an autonomous form and expression intimately connected with ancient ritual. We can only present the problem for further investigation.

### 3. *The Jews of the Isle of Corfu (Greece)*

With Corfu we are on European soil, more specifically: on the boundaries of the Balkanese countries. The island of Corfu, situated in the vicinity of Northwestern Greece, Albania, Yugoslavia and Italy, can be expected to reflect in its music something of the general Mediterranean style. Obvious similarities and probably mutual dependencies can be observed regarding the modalities of melody and the general inclination to perform the folk songs in choral groups, producing a definite style of harmonic progressions. These are filled with parallels of Thirds and often built on a drone bass or even having a rudimentary harmonic bass: "rudimentary" because the bass is still so immobile that its function could be defined more as that of a pedal point or bourdon than a harmonic bass in the classical sense.

(*a*) *Bourdonized Third Parallels. Sabbath Song. Example 9 (E. G.-K. 1671)*
This song (recorded with the kind assistance of the Shabtai Eliyahu family in Tel Aviv), is a fine example of an ancient hymn in the Hypodorian modality. There is the classical Dorian melodic start with an emphatic rise from the tonic to the Fifth and to the Seventh, in two big leaps, which is answered by a stepwise return down to the tonic. Another artistic contrast shown here is the swiftness of the two leaps responded to by a pronounced slowness of the stepwise descent. The melody is in principle divided into two equal parts of six measures each, but the first part is extended through the addition of a seventh measure before the cadential note. This unevenness divides the melody into a portal-like first part and a shorter refrain.

When we come to consider the polyphonic style, we find ourselves in the traditional environment where folk melodies are harmonized by parallels of Thirds and tonally stabilized through a drone-bass which here and there but particularly in the cadences may move into the Dominant and thus assume the task of an harmonic bass. The interesting peculiarity of this bourdonized Third-singing is that it is part of an old congregational tradition (not one of the singers of this big and important family of Corfu Jews knew how to read or write music, though they all grew up in Europe). Their sense for natural harmonies and their inclination to work with them is so strong and sure that they would treat nearly all forms of liturgy (including also Biblical cantillation) to this harmonic elaboration. Sometimes, they would harmonize complete pieces as in our first example (No. 9), sometimes only the responsorial choir refrain, but the ability to sing out in solid polyphonic choirs is general.

Regarding the added voice producing the parallels of Thirds, it is interesting

to note that this always remains a kind of organ mixture-stop sound, i.e. super-voice which, at the cadences, leaps sharply down into the final tone, — the well-known fall of the Fourth in Slavonic music.

Another interesting point is the relation between the text and melody. Though the general impression of the melody is that of a song-like hymn, its origin is a melismatic one, as can be seen from our example, i.e. there is in general only one syllable for one measure and the single words are so drawn-out that the melody has to be repeated no less than three times in order to fill one regular stanza.

(*b*) *"Tenor-Motet" Style. Penitential Prayer. Example 10* (*E. G.-K. 1676*)
Our tenth example offers quite different aspects from the previous one. It is one of the *selîḥôṯ* hymns performed in the responsorial manner with the Ḥazzan carrying the bulk of the melody and the chorus concluding with a short refrain. It is this choral conclusion in particular which aroused our interest. The family choir here divides into three voices, reciting the refrain in interchanging progressions of organal parallels of Fifths, Thirds and even Seconds. But the main impression on listening is that of two quintal chords, the first on *Re* and the second, final one, on *Mi.* The organum-like sound is further reinforced through the slightly ornamental "Duplum" and Triplum"" of the last two measures. There remains the question as to where we could find the origins of this part singing, which strongly reminds us of scores of the late ars antiqua. It seems that we might come closer to the solution if we consider the geographical and cultural position of the isle of Corfu, with its Jewish community living there for centuries.

There are at least three main points of contact and of cultural exchange: (1) Southern Albania, with the Çam people along the coast of the Ionian and Adriatic Sea; (2) North-West Greece, especially the province of the Epirus, and (3) Southern Italy, especially the provinces of Puglia and Calabria. As these place-names suggest, there should be a triple influence from Albanian, Greek and Southern Italian sources which is, however, not evenly balanced, as far as the few sources at our disposal allow us to determine. Concentrating on vocal polyphonies only, there are interesting parallels between the Albanian bourdonized part-singing and that of the Jews of Corfu; an isolated example of a Terzetto originating from one of the "Albanian" villages of Southern Italy, Spezzano Albanese in Calabria, reveals a corresponding disposition of the three harmonizing voices: From an initial tone in a loud unison, two voices divide into parallel Thirds while the third singer paraphrases the upper voice with small variants — as in the last measures of Example 10 from Corfu.

(*c*) *Harmonized Singing in Albanese Calabria, Italy. Love Song. Examples 11 a-b (Ethnic Folkways Library No. FE 4520, Side 4, 3/4)*

This kind of paraphrasing may be done on the upper Third or by adding another Third-parallel, the Fifth. In both cases, the tune proper remains in the middle or lower voice, like a mediaeval cantus firmus, and the upper voices never lose their character as additional super-voices, in the sense of the ancient Duplum or Triplum. This structure accounts for the fact that even in the heart of modern Europe, the popular harmonizations of folk songs do not at all conform with the basic rules of classical harmony. This has been observed not only in the harmonized folksongs of Spain, Italy and the Balkan countries but even in Austrian songs. R. Geutebrueck, in an article on the polyphony in Austrian folksong[24] rightly states that the concept of homophony in folksong has remained at variance with the historically accepted rules, that a certain linear movement of the voices is still recognizable. The accompanying voices are arranged in a linear pattern and there are no filling-in voices. Even these Austrian country-songs are still of that "organal" kind with the main voice in the middle, covered by the super-voice(s), but easily recognized by its diatonical course towards the tonic.

The "linear" setting of voices changes the moment the Bass separates from the others and assures a broader measure (mensura), in the form of a tenor or a bourdon. In this case, the main voice settles in the upper voice, as can be observed in the bulk of South-Albanian polyphonic songs.[25] There can be no doubt that this song type had influenced the performance of Jewish religious music on the neighbouring isle of Corfu.

(*d*) *Harmonized Singing in Greek Epirus. "O Litissa". Example 12 (after S. Peristeris, see note 26)*

Another source for the formation of the Corfu part-singing must have been the polyphonic folklore of its other neighbour, the Greek province of Epirus, on the southern frontiers of Albania. This is the legendary land of the Souliots, the Klephtic bards and their great tradition of historic ballads. Their polyphonic kind of folksongs is less known, yet it is this category which may finally reveal to us the invisible script of the unwritten folk art of part-singing. Even if the Epirus-songs could not be confronted in all their particulars with the small selection of Corfu songs so far recorded, it is worthwhile dwelling a

[24] "Über die Mehrstimmigkeit im österreichischen Volksgesang. . .", in *Kongress-Bericht der Beethoven-Zentenarfeier* (Wien, 1927), p. 326.

[25] D. Stockmann, "Zur Vokalmusik der südalbanischen Çamen...", in *JIFMC*, 15 (1963): 38–44; N. Kaufmann, "Part-singing in Bulgarian Folk Music", *ibid.*, p. 48; R. Katzarova, "Phénomènes polyphoniques dans la musique populaire bulgare", in *Studia Musicologica*, 3 (1962): 1–4; E. Ferand, "The Howling in Seconds of the Lombards", in *MQ*, 25 (1939): 313; G. Graner, "Some Song Style Clusters. . .", in *Ethnomusicology*, 9 (1965): 271.

moment on this source, as the information it gives will probably extend its validity to most sister-countries of the former Ottoman Empire as the then partners of a cultural unit.

In a paper read at the 16th Conference of the International Folk Music Council S. Peristeris described in greater detail the inner organization of some of these polyphonic songs from the Epirus.[26]

According to his findings, choral singing is the almost universal form of music-making in that country (apart from special kinds like the epic songs, women's songs etc.). This group-singing is not simply congregational, but organized to the last detail with the help of specialized singers. These are:

1. The soloist singer, or "Partis"
2. The second soloist for the counter-melody, or "Ghyristis"
3. A substitute singer instead of No. 2, or "Klostis"
4. A substitute singer to relieve the leader No. 1, called "Riktis"
5. The chorus of the Ison (drone-) singers, or "Issokrates"

In order to illustrate the functions of each of these singers, we reproduce in Example 12a a passage of one of the transcriptions: "*O Litissa*" (two singers and drone-chorus).

The general style is that of a richly figured three-part Fauxbourdon, with the tonic on *Si*. The main singer, "Partis", performing the song, is not the upper voice, but a middle register, like the ancient Tenor. The melody spreads from the "Dominant" *Fa* downwards to the tonic *Si*, on a pentatonic pattern. The upper voice, circulating around the higher octave *Si*, is performed by the "Ghyristis", a kind of counter-tenor, i.e. he produces a sort of Duplum or Organum-voice consisting of a two-note motive, and a special cadential motive; in good organum fashion, he is chanting without text, except for an exclamation at the start. The choir of the drone-singers (Issokrates) has here got a more complex task: the drone has been developed into a drone motive, but seems at last to settle down on the tonic *Si*.

Where the counter-tenor is replaced by a Klostis man, this singer dwells on the higher octave with a Yodel-like ostinato motive, which is his speciality (and also well-known from Georgian part-singing. Two piers on one bridge?) In a de-ornamented form, the skeleton of a Fauxbourdon will clearly reveal itself, as shown in Example 12b. Rhythmically, the song is built on an "isorhythmic" period of five (2+3) beats.

In this little song, a great deal of complexity is involved which can only be covered by adopting some historical language — for want of a specific one for the popular forms. In these circumstances, it is particularly gratifying that we have here detected a terminology indicating the tasks of the musicians and,

26 "Chansons polyphoniques de l'Epire du Nord. . .", in *JIFMC*, 16 (1964): 51.

at the same time, something of the singing style they are expected to produce. It presents a scheme of musical performance which is not an artificial product of learned theoreticians, but the direct outcome of a generally accepted usage. This is one of the not too frequent cases where we are given the principles of a system of improvisation which grew up in its own social environment of folk musicians and which may therefore reflect something of the true mentality of its builders. It is certainly not the only one of its kind, and once the question has been opened, one may find similar examples of terms for polyphonic settings, as this song type expanded in a wide radius from Istria, Dalmatia, Macedonia and Bosnia, to the Caucasus, Georgia and Armenia.[27]

In Italy as well, we have corresponding schemes for folk polyphonies of which one, originating from Sardinia, may be reproduced here.

(*e*) *Harmonized Singing in Sardinia (five voices). "Bona Notte", Benediction at the End of the Old year. Example 13 (after G. Nataletti, Centro Nazionale di Studi di Musica Popolare, Roma. Raccolta No. 31, doc. 19)*

In the order given here, the main singer(s) of the melody are called the "Sa (b)oghe" while the four accompanying singers are called: (1) Sa meza (b)oghe, (2) Sa contra, (3) Su bassu, (4) Su bassu. The designations of the various performers, as given here, confirm once more the existence of specialized folk singers trained for quite particular tasks which are known by their own musical terminology.

In the history of Jewish Cantorial music, especially in the tradition of the Ashkenazi Ḥazzanîm, we have a rich collection of musical terms concerning the respective professional trends of the musicians and their cooperation in the performance of Ḥazzanût. This "musical vocabulary" has been brought to the knowledge of musicologists thanks to Hanoch Avenary[28] who has also given us a first dictionary of musical terms as preserved in a number of Hebrew treatises of the Middle Ages.[29] In view of the fact that many of the Ḥazzanîm were of the class of the wandering musicians — roaming between East and West, Central and Southern Europe, with important centres of Ḥazzanût in the Balkan countries, we have to take the term "ashkenazic" in the largest possible sense. Under these conditions it is only natural that the Ḥazzanîm were highly receptive to the adoption of foreign styles and that they felt free to adapt them for their own needs. Hence the comparative wealth of terms taken over

[27] Cf. V. Belaiev, "The Folk Music of Georgia", in *MQ*, 19 (1933): 417–433; L. Picken, "Instrumental Polyphonic Folk Music in Asia Minor...", in *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 80 (1953–54): 73–86.

[28] H. Avenary, "The Musical Vocabulary of Ashkenazic Hazanim", in *Studies in Biblical and Jewish Folklore* (Bloomington, 1960), pp. 187–198.

[29] Idem (H. Loewenstein), "Munneḥê ham-mûsîqah...", in *Lešônenû*, 13 (1944): 140–149.

from Western art – and instrumental music which had to change their means when used for the purely vocal style of Synagogal music.

Among the terms suggesting the spontaneous collaboration of the Ḥazzan and his helpers, there are, among others, the "Mešôrer", or singer. There were usually two of them, a soprano-singer, and a bass (sometimes more). These choristers, standing near the Ḥazzan, had either "to accompany his tunes *with hummed harmonies* or . . . intermingled their voices with the melody itself and executed a kind of concerted antiphony similar to the symphonic play of instruments. The performers went so far in their simple-minded copying as to imitate the characteristic passages of certain instruments. There was not only an assistant with a high voice (the 'singer') and one with a low range (the 'Bass'), but also a 'Fletel'-singer or 'Fistel'-singer, who endeavoured to perform the runs of the flute or clarinet by falsetto, a 'Fagott-bass', who copied the rough staccati of this instrument, a 'Sayt-bass' [etc.]".[30] This latter was a bass singer who had to mark the sound of the deep string instruments (cello, contra-bass).

Besides, there are also a few terms referring directly to some form of improvised polyphonies, as the term "Unterhalter" which probably meant the "bass" adding a counter-voice below that of the Ḥazzan. Perhaps the most interesting of these technical terms is that of "zuhalten". It meant, in the musical language of Jewish musicians, ". . . an harmonious accompaniment which had to be invented by the choristers from their own inspiration".[31]

Here, then, we have reached a point of comparison which leads us close to the Greek community of Corfu with its strong tradition of harmonized Ḥazzanût.[32] It may well be that we are here confronting a whole network of such

[30] A. Marksohn and W. Wolf, "Auswahl alter hebräischer Synagogalmelodien. . .", in *Dem Andenken E. Birnbaums* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 183–184.

[31] I. Adler, "Musique juive. . .", in *Enc. Mus. Fasquelle*, II. On p. 647, several quotations of group performances of Ḥazzanût in Oriental communities are related, e.g. by the Jewish convert Samaw'al ibn Yaḥya al-Magribi (twelfth century; cf. I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst...*, p. 283), or by the chronicler Natan hab-bavli (tenth century; cf. E. Werner, in *HUCA*, 19 [1945/46], p. 306).

[32] There remains the question to what degree this harmonized Ḥazzanût may have grown out of contact with certain historical art styles. Here, central and northern Italy should be envisaged as the main source. Undoubtedly, Italian influence on the liturgical music of Corfu's Jewish community was not limited to the folk traditions of the South, especially that of the Calabrian and the Apulian provinces. We also have to take into consideration the main art centres of Italian music from Venice down to Naples. The weight of their catholic choral music on cantoral melody made itself felt more vividly after the immigration of the Jewish refugees from Naples into the Ionian island (in 1540/41). Together with a number of refugees from Spain they founded their own synagogue "of Apulia and Spain" with their traditional rite, to be distinguished from that of the Greek community of Corfu. Cf. I. Adler, *La pratique musicale savante dans quelques communautés juives en Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris–La Haye, 1966), pp. 116–119. The separation of the Corfu Jews into a Greek and an Italian section dates from this period. The harmonized Ḥazzanût clearly derives from the

Jewish religious folk traditions transmitting into our modern world some late remnants of period styles, blended with Eastern traditions. Seen in this light it will be profitable to investigate these and other instances of folk terms as they may help us to define the expertness of these folk musicians in a certain singing style, and also in order to evaluate anew the historical sources relating to early forms of polyphony.

Polyphony is an unusual form in Hebrew liturgies. So far we have tried to analyse three traditional types of such vocal part-singing in Cantorial music.

For this purpose we have selected three single traditions — the Yemenite, Samaritan and Greek-Sephardic — which have existed for centuries without any known interrelation between them. On the other hand, each one of the three was exposed to contacts with neighbouring civilizations, which undoubtedly left their mark upon them, but which were again counteracted by the strict seclusion in which these ancient communities used to live.

Polyphony in itself has always been defined as a means of human communication. Obviously, it is not by chance that the few forms of communal part-singing are to be found in the music of the Synagogue, the "House of Assembly". Only here was it at all possible that the most intimate prayer chants could burst into congregational symphonies of a multicoloured sound, united by but the one holy word.

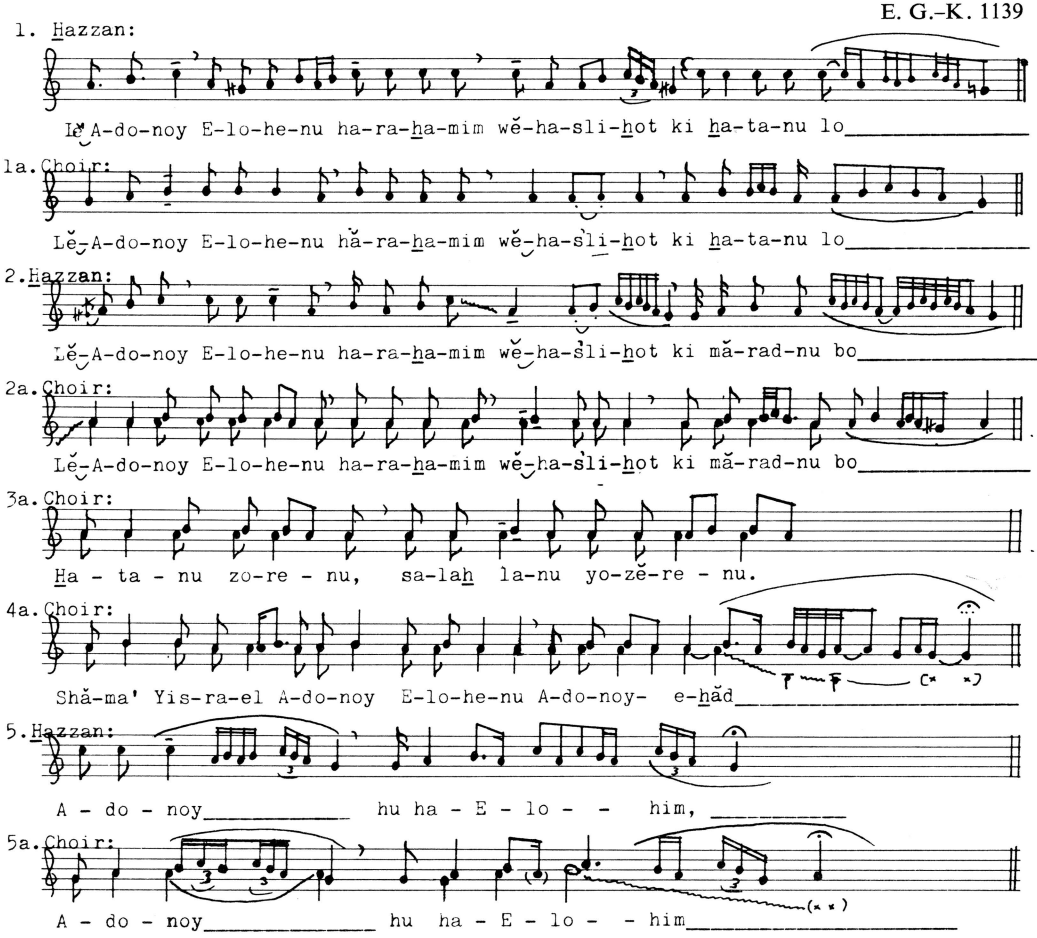
This is the fascination of our subject, which habitually has been hidden so much behind the tradition of the Law that we have still to uncover, for future research, its modest co-existence.

Italianized group of Jews who in matters concerning their liturgy mainly depended on the Rabbinical court of Venice. I. Adler, *ibid.*, p. 116, mentions an interesting historical document confirming (indirectly) the practice of polyphonic music in the Italianizing Corfu synagogue, which has been preserved in an eighteenth century publication, the *Šefer qeriaṭ šema'*, Saloniki, 1754/55, written by R. Benveniste ben Abraham Gatigno and R. Eliezer de Mordo. This is a dispute between the Rabbis of both sides upon the merits of the chorale singing of the *Šema'* (Deut. 6, 4) "with a mixture of several voices as sung by the chorists (*ḥevraṭ mešôrerîm*)" — which style of performance the Italian Rabbis defend against their Greek opponents "as a very old tradition". This harmonized part-singing is described as being built on solid rules (cf. fol. 21a), according to which the cantor acts as the reader, and the chorists accompany him, first in a low voice; then they finish by raising their voices together and "chanting harmoniously, as the essence of this science is the proportion and the consonance between the voices. If one of the members of the group would not be attentive to the rhythm of his friends, in order to join him in the one and same simultaneous articulation, everything would collapse, there would be confusion and the chant abolished. . ."

Edith Gerson-Kiwi

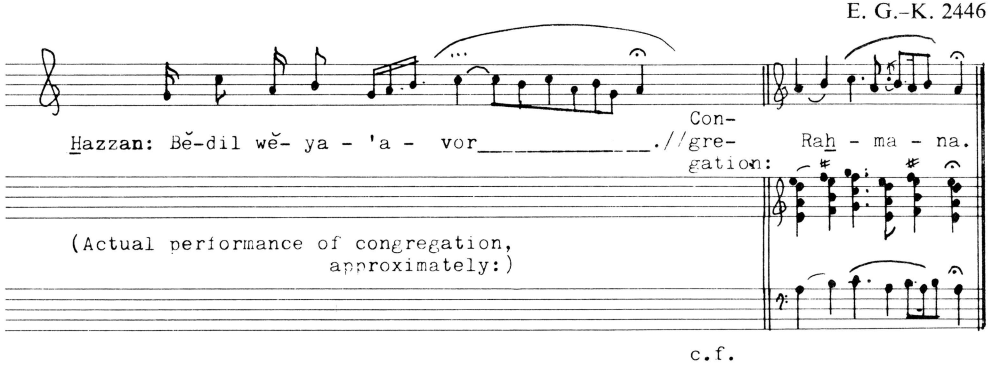
# VOCAL FOLK-POLYPHONIES OF THE WESTERN ORIENT IN JEWISH TRADITION

## 1. Vocal Bourdon Style. Yemen, San'a. Prayer (*Seliḥah*)



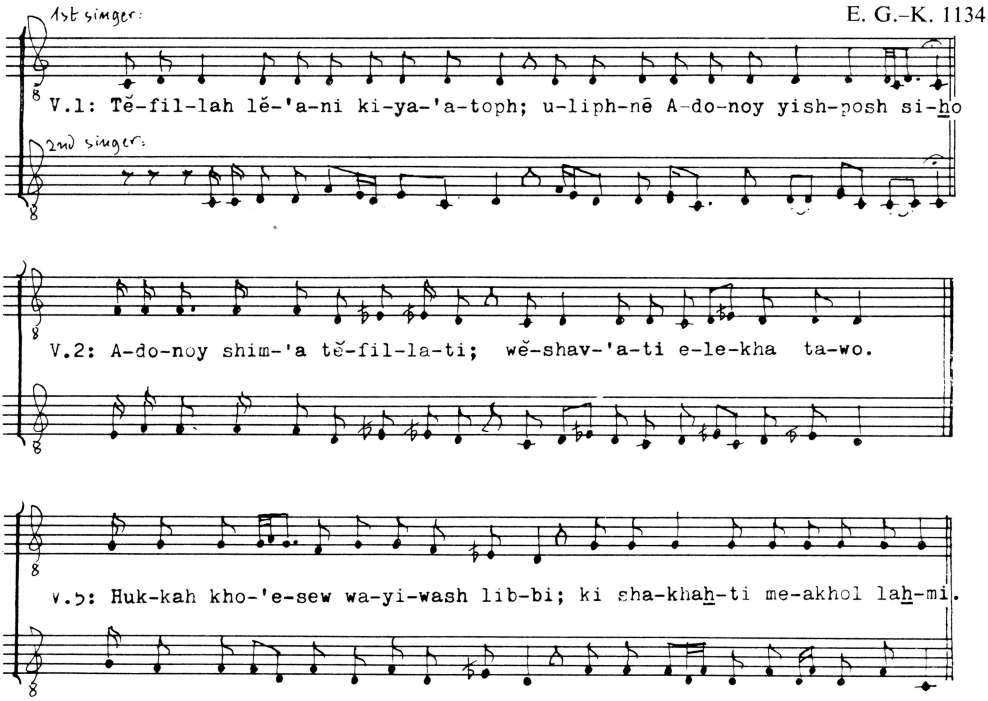
2. Choral Polyphony of Acclamations in Organum Technique. Yemen, San'a. Prayer (*Ašmôrôṯ*)

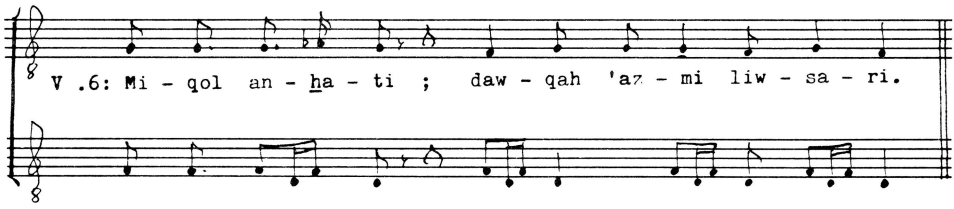
E. G.-K. 2446




3. Vocal Ostinato Technique. Yemen, San'a. Psalm Readings (Ps 102, 1.2.5.6)

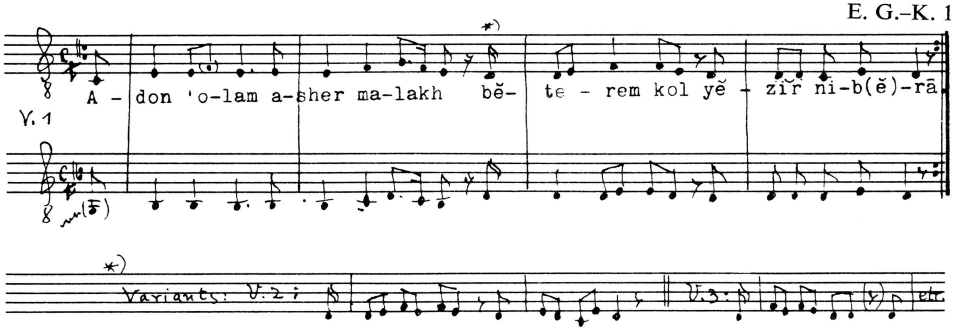
E. G.-K. 1134





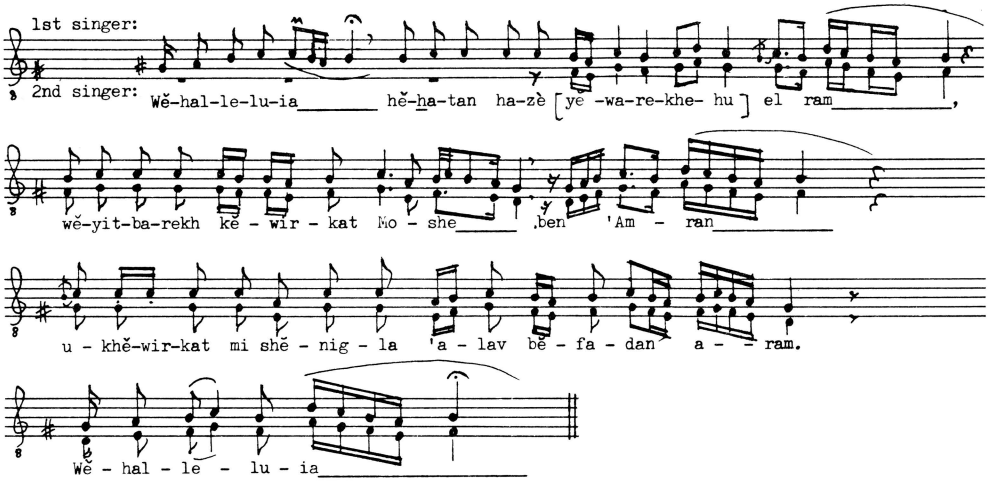

4. Heterophonic Part-Singing. Yemen, San'a. Religious Hymn (*Adôn 'ôlam*)

E. G.-K. 1110




5. The Style of Parallel Organum. Yemen, San'a. Wedding Song (*Hallelôṭ*)

E. G.-K. 2515

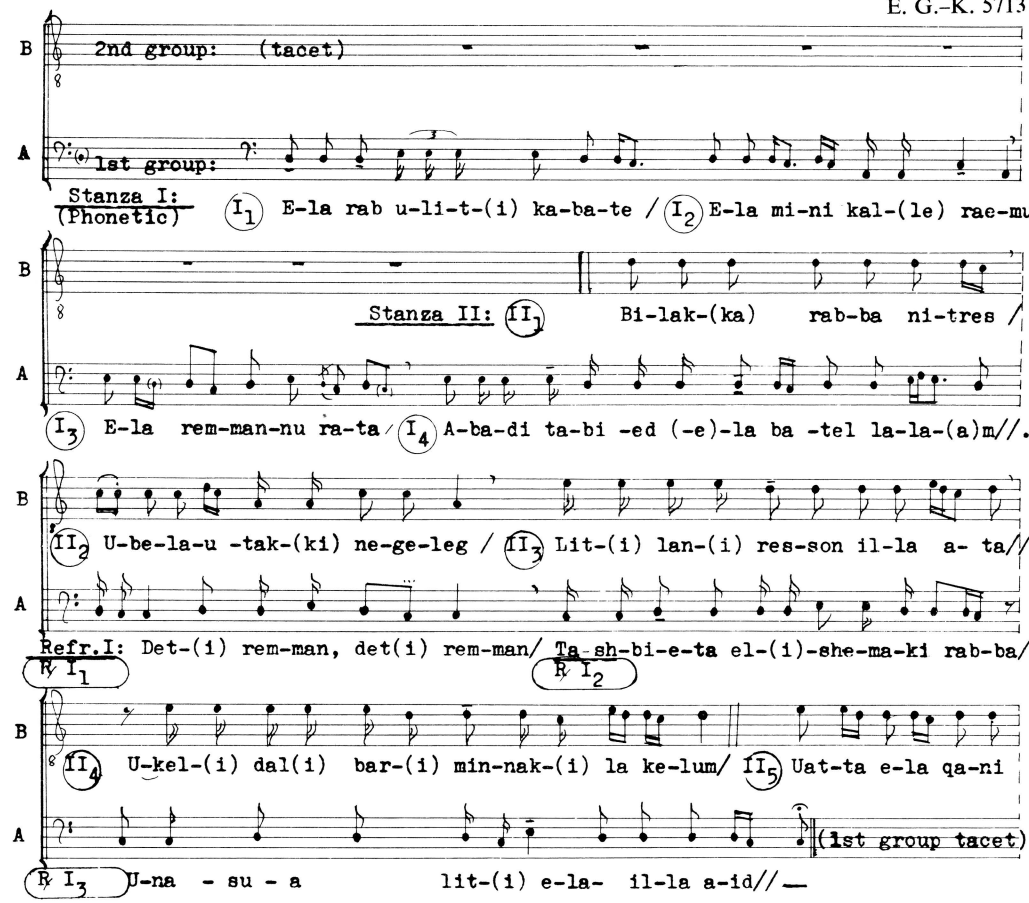


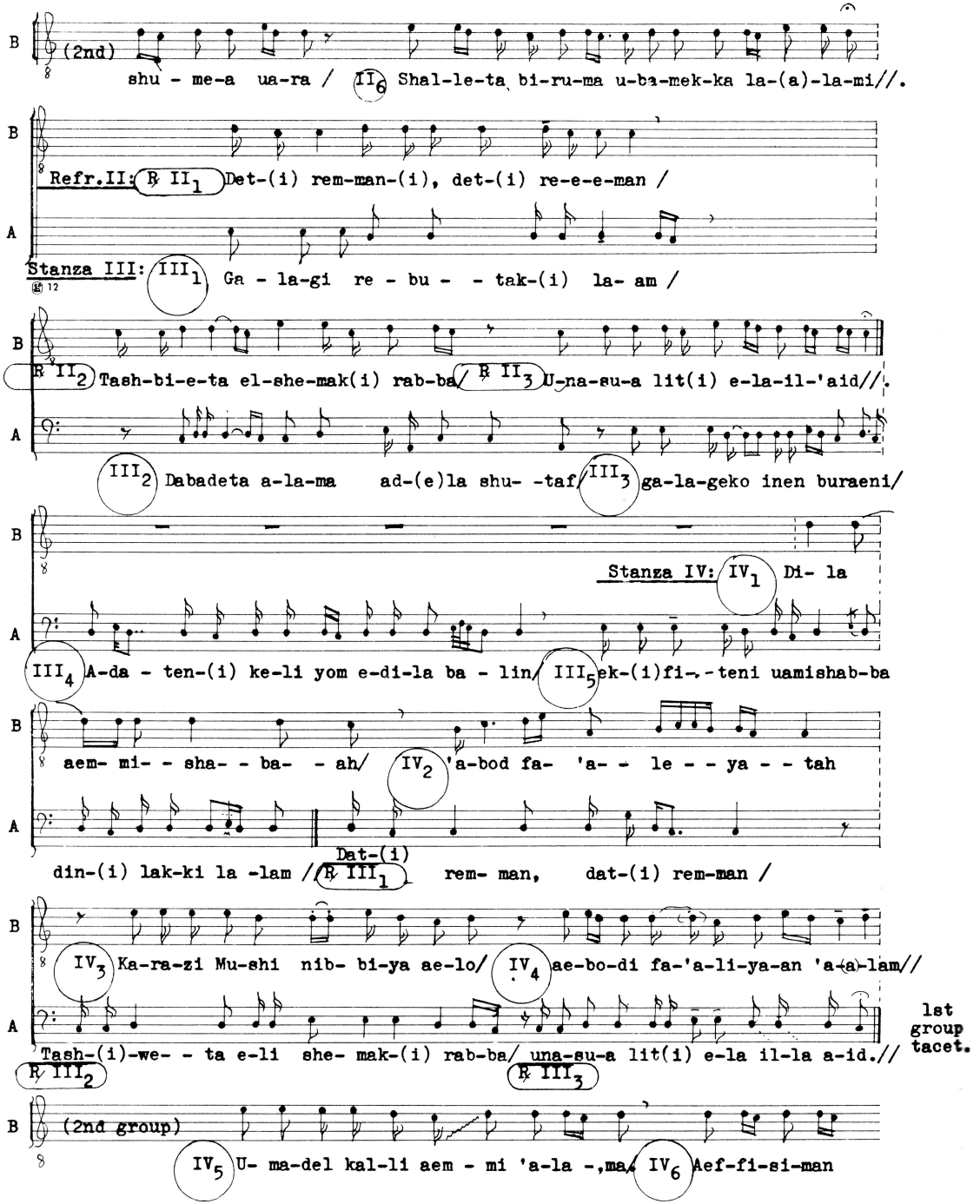
## 6. Canonic Diaphony. Samaritans. Prayer *Ela rab*

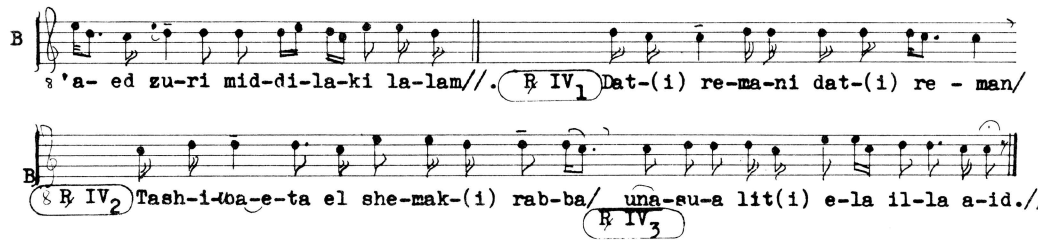
אלה רב ולית כוֹתה · אלה מעיני[7] כל רחמיו · אלה רחמן ורתאה · עבד טב
דלא בטֵל (לעלם:)
דאת רחמן (דאת רחמן) | תשבחתה לשמך רבה ונצחוה (לית אלה
אלא אחד:)
בחילך רבה נתרחין · (באלהותך נגלג ·) דלית לן רחצון אלא אתה · כל דלבר
מנך לא כלום · ואתה אלה קנה שומיה וארעה · שליט ברומה ובמכה מרי[8]:

[1]דאת רחמן וגו׳׳
גלני רבותך לעלם · לעבדה עלמה דלא שוחף · גלנין[2] אנון[3] בוראיך · חדתין
כל יום דלא בלין · כפיתין ומשעבדין לך (לעלם:)
דחילה משבחה · עבוד פליאתה · כרז משה נביה עליו · ׳עבוד פליאן לעלם ·
ומדחל כל אמי עלמה · בסימן אחד זעור מדילך (לעלם:)

E. G.–K. 5713



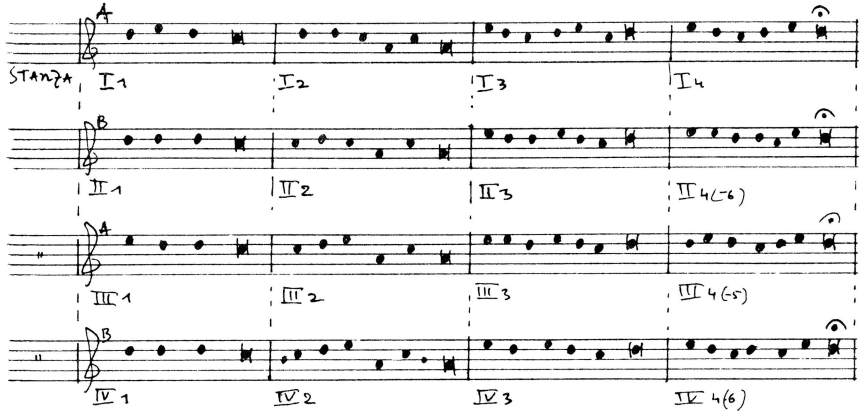

(2nd) shu - me-a ua-ra / II6 Shal-le-ta bi-ru-ma u-ba-mek-ka la-(a)-la-mi//.
Refr.II: R II1 Det-(i) rem-man-(i), det-(i) re-e-e-man /
Stanza III: III1 Ga - la-gi re - bu - - tak-(i) la- am /
R II2 Tash-bi-e-ta el-she-mak(i) rab-ba/ R II3 U-na-su-a lit(i) e-la-il-'aid//.
III2 Dabadeta a-la-ma ad-(e)la shu- -taf/ III3 ga-la-geko inen buraeni/
Stanza IV: IV1 Di- la
III4 A-da - ten-(i) ke-li yom e-di-la ba - lin/ III5 ek-(i)fi- - teni uamishab-ba
aem- mi- - sha- - ba- - ah/ IV2 'a-bod fa- 'a- - le - - ya - - tah
din-(i) lak-ki la -lam / R III1 Dat-(i) rem- man, dat-(i) rem-man /
IV3 Ka-ra-zi Mu-shi nib- bi-ya ae-lo/ IV4 ae-bo-di fa-'a-li-ya-an 'a-(a)-lam//
Tash-(i)-we- - ta e-li she- mak-(i) rab-ba/ una-su-a lit(i) e-la il-la a-id.//
R III2
R III3
lst group tacet.
(2nd group)
IV5 U- ma-del kal-li aem - mi 'a-la -,ma/ IV6 Aef-fi-si-man



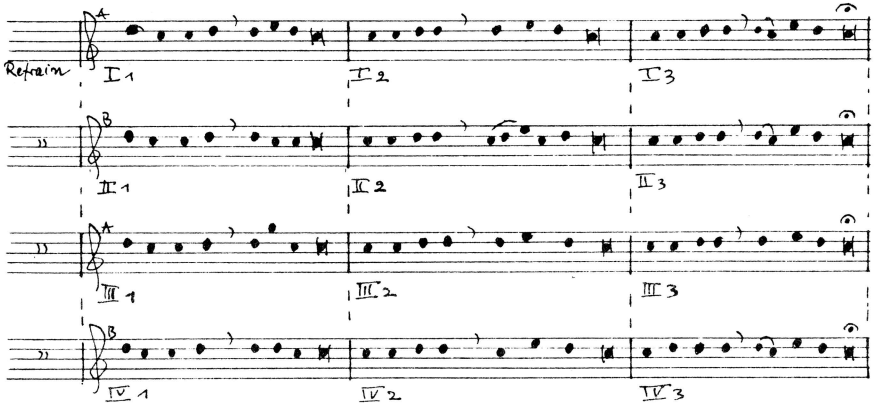

**Performance: Mr.Abraham Tsedaqa and his family; Holon, Israel, 1966 .**

6a. Samaritans. Prayer *Ela rab*. Tables of Root Motives

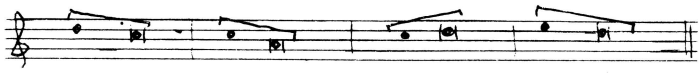
A. Stanzas




B. Refrains

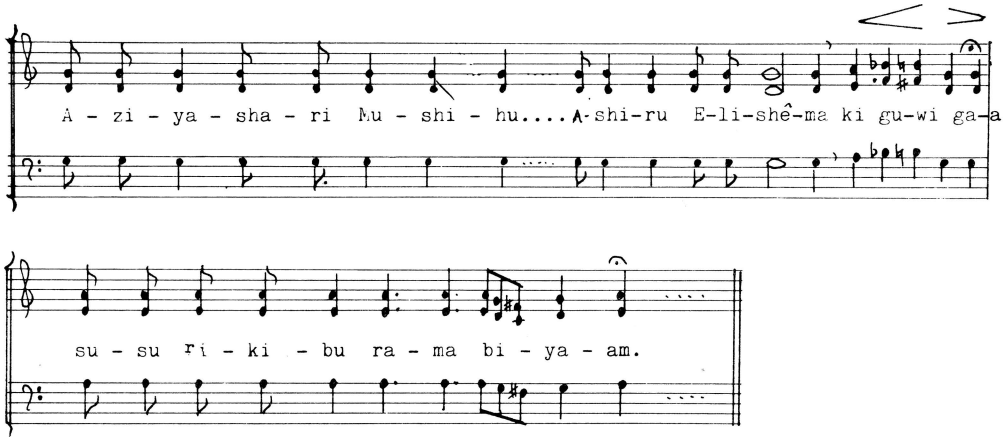


6b. Cadenzas of Ex. 6a.



7. Organal Homophony. Samaritans. *The Song of the Sea* (Ex 15), verse 1

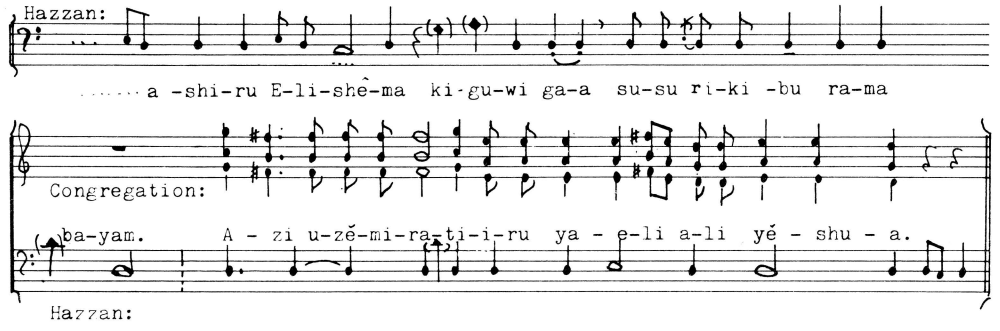
E. G.–K. 5715




8. Vocal Drone Organum. Samaritans. *The Song of the Sea* (Ex 15), verses 1–2.

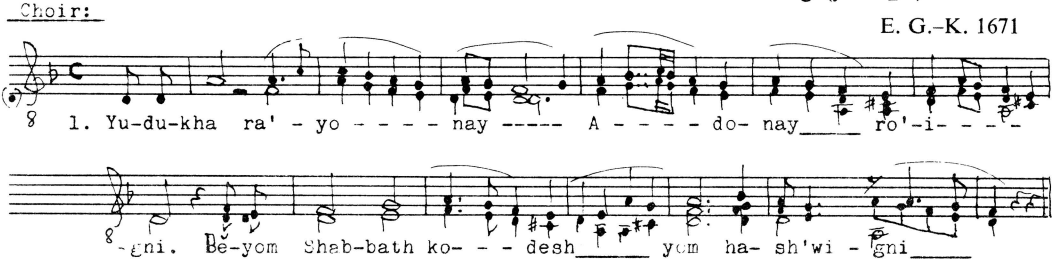
Another version

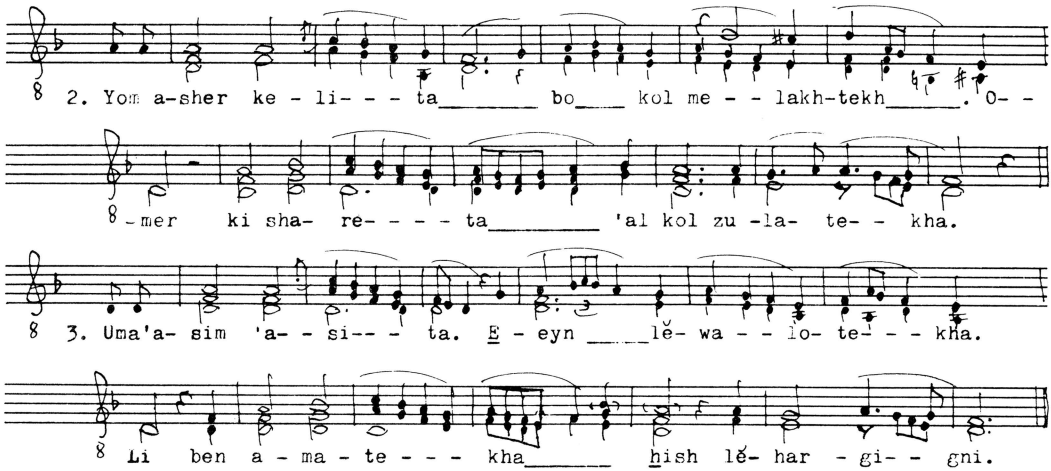
E. G.–K. 5716




9. Bourdonized Third Parallels. Corfu. Sabbath Song (*yôdûḳa*)

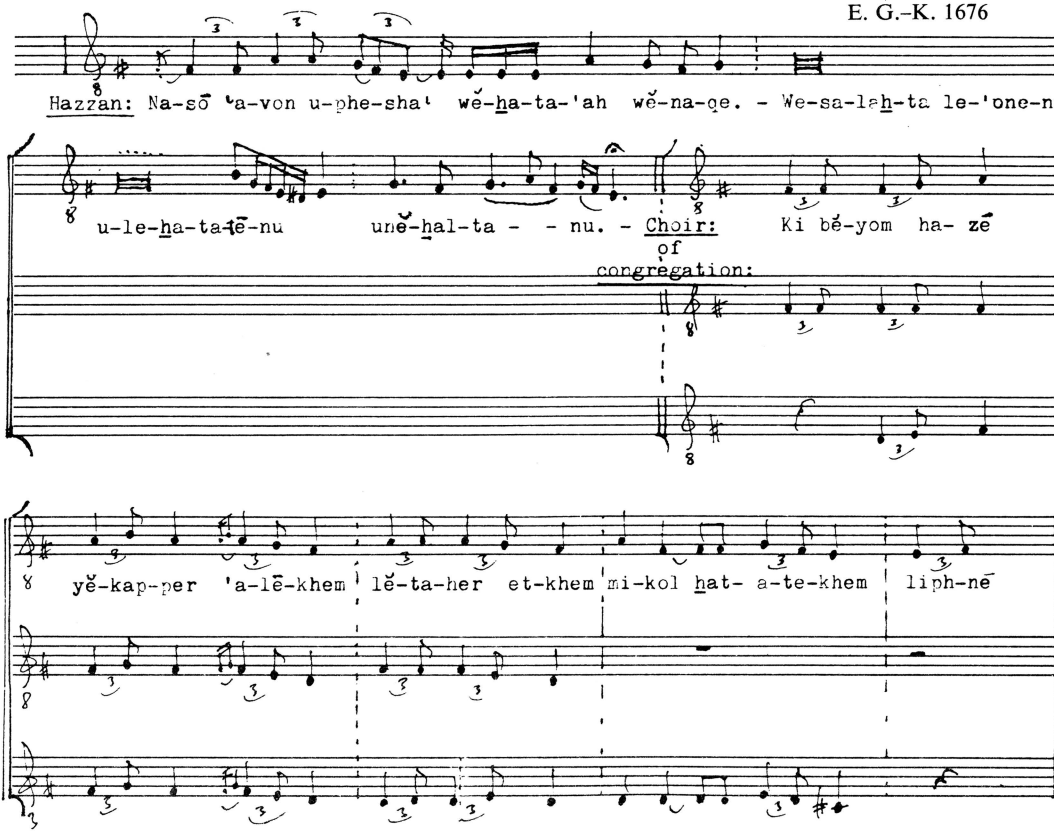
E. G.–K. 1671

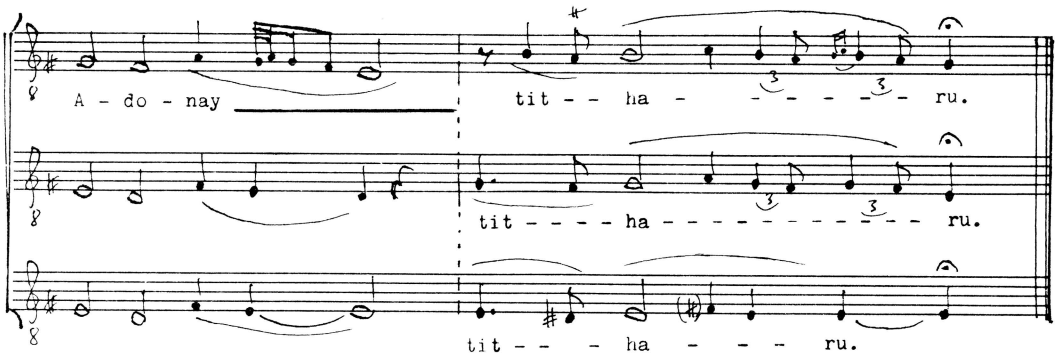





10. "Tenor-Motet" Style. Corfu. Penitential Prayer (*El Melek*, concluding part)

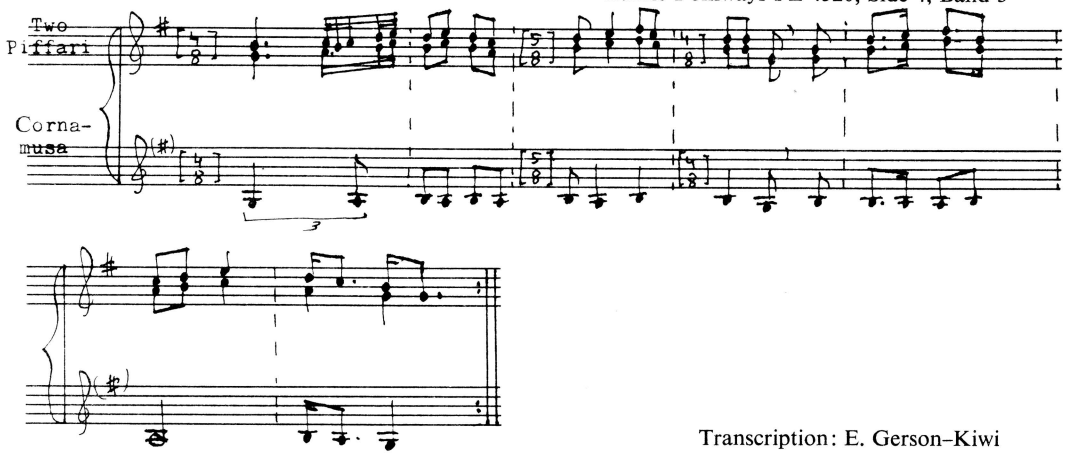
E. G.-K. 1676





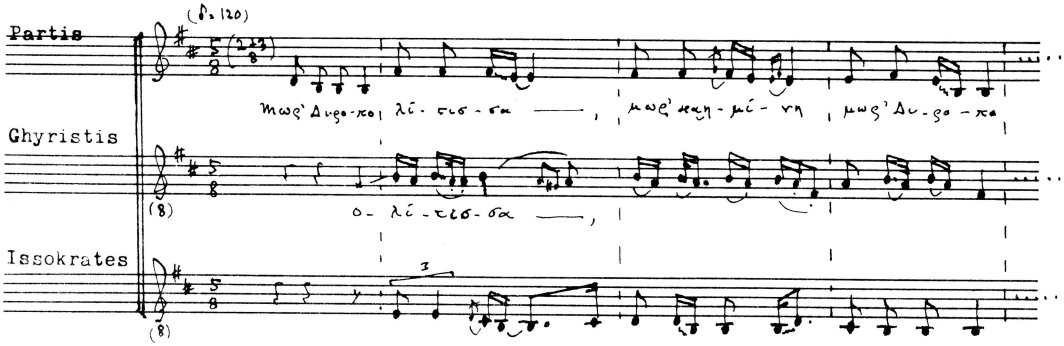

11. Harmonized Singing in Albanese Calabria, Italy. Love Song (*Adorata*)

Ethnic Folkways FE 4520, Side 4, Band 3



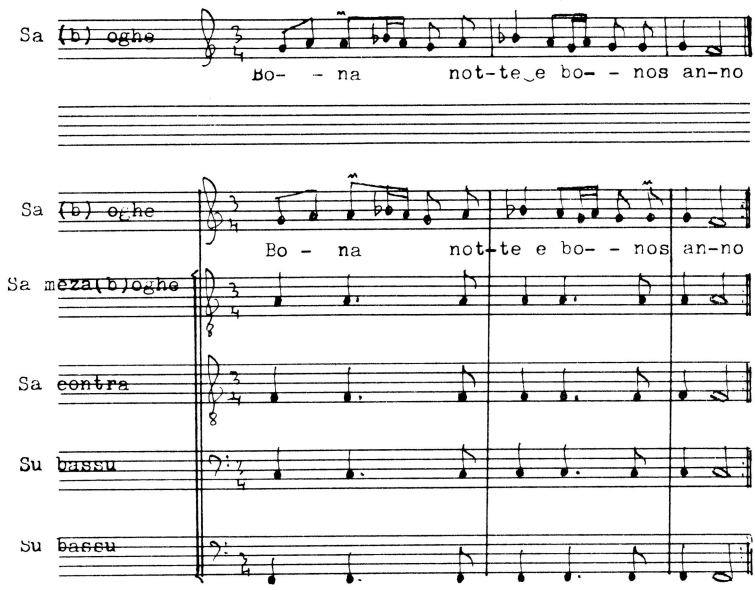

Transcription: E. Gerson-Kiwi

12. Harmonized Singing in Greek Epirus. *O Litissa*




Transcription: S. Peristeris, in *JIFMC*, 16 (1964): 52

13. Harmonized Singing in Sardinia
*Bona Notte* (benediction at the end of the old year)




Transcription: G. Nataletti, Centro Nazionale Studi di Musica Popolare, Roma. Raccolta No. 31. Doc. 19

# YUVAL

## STUDIES OF
## THE JEWISH MUSIC RESEARCH CENTRE

*Edited by*

ISRAËL ADLER

*in collaboration with*

HANOCH AVENARY AND BATHJA BAYER

JERUSALEM, 1968

AT THE MAGNES PRESS, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY

# ABBREVIATIONS

(N.B.: The special abbreviations and sigla used by N. Allony are listed at the end of his article.)

| | |
|---|---|
| *AHw* | W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden, 1959 → |
| *AL* | M. Steinschneider, *Die arabische Literatur der Juden*, Frankfurt a.M., 1902 |
| *AMl* | *Acta Musicologica* |
| *b* | Babylonian Talmud |
| *CAD* | *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Chicago, 1956 → |
| *CB* | M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus librorum Hebraeorum in bibliotheca Bodleiana*, Berlin, 1852–1860 |
| *CS* | E. de Coussemaker, ed., *Scriptores de musica medii aevi...*, Paris, 1864–1876 |
| *DTO* | *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich* |
| *Eissfeldt* | O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament — An Introduction* (tr. from the 3rd German edition by P. R. Ackroyd), Oxford, 1965 |
| *Enc. Mus. Fasquelle* | *Encyclopédie de la musique*, Paris, Fasquelle, 1958–1961 |
| *Erlanger* | R. d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, Paris, 1930–1949 |
| Farmer, *Gen. Fragm.* | H. G. Farmer, *The Oriental Musical Influence and Jewish Genizah Fragments on Music*, London, 1964; repr. of two art. from *Glasgow University Oriental Society, Transactions*, 19 (1963): 1–15 ("The Oriental Musical Influence" = pp. 7–21 of repr.); 52–62 ("Jewish Genizah Fragments on Music" = pp. 22–32 of repr.) |
| *GS* | M. Gerbert, ed., *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica...*, Sankt Blasien, 1784 |
| *HOM* | A. Z. Idelsohn, *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz*, Leipzig–Berlin–Jerusalem, 1914–1932 |
| *HU* | M. Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1893 |
| *HUCA* | *Hebrew Union College Annual* |
| *IMS* | International Musicological Society |
| *IQ* | *Islamic Quarterly* |
| *JA* | *Journal Asiatique* |
| *JAMS* | *Journal of the American Musicological Society* |
| *JIFMC* | *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* |
| *JMT* | *Journal of Musical Theory* |
| *JQR* | *Jewish Quarterly Review* |
| *KS* | *Kirjath Sepher* |
| *m* | Mishnah |

| | |
|---|---|
| *MD* | *Musica Disciplina* |
| *MGG* | *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Kassel, 1949 → |
| *MGWJ* | *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* |
| *MQ* | *Musical Quarterly* |
| *NOHM* | *New Oxford History of Music*, London, 1955 → |
| *PAAJR* | *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* |
| *PL* | *Patrologia Latina* (ed. Migne) |
| *1Q* | Dead Sea Scrolls, Qumran Cave 1 |
| *1QH* | "Thanksgiving Scroll" |
| *1QM* | "War Scroll" |
| *1QS* | "Manual of Discipline" |
| *REI* | *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* |
| *REJ* | *Revue des Etudes Juives* |
| Riemann, *Hbd. Mg.* | H. Riemann, *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1919–1922 |
| Riemann, *ML* | H. Riemann, *Musik-Lexikon* (quoted edition indicated by exponent) |
| *RM* | *Revue de Musicologie* |
| *RQ* | *Revue de Qumran* |
| *SIMG* | *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* |
| Steinschneider, *Cat. Berlin* | M. Steinschneider, *Verzeichnis der hebräischen Handschriften [der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin]*, Berlin, 1878–1897 |
| *VT* | *Vetus Testamentum* |
| *y* | Jerusalem Talmud |
| *ZAW* | *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* |
| *ZDMG* | *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* |
| *ZfMW* | *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* |
| *ZGJD* | *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* |