

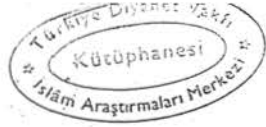
# SUFISM MUSIC AND SOCIETY

## IN TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST



Edited by Anders Hammarlund, Torod Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga  
SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ISTANBUL 2001





D.2049

# SUFISM, MUSIC AND SOCIETY IN TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Papers Read at a Conference Held  
at the Swedish Research Institute  
in Istanbul, November 27-29, 1997

Edited by Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga



SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ISTANBUL  
TRANSACTIONS VOL. 10

# From the Court and Tarikat to the Synagogue: Ottoman Art Music and Hebrew Sacred Songs

EDWIN SEROUSSI

The involvement of Jews in Ottoman art music, whether in the secular forms of the court or in the religious traditions of the Sufi orders, emerges nowadays as a major issue in the research of Jewish culture in the Ottoman Empire. Until recently, this phenomenon was given only sporadic attention, mainly by Jewish intellectuals who were active in the performance of this music or who knew about the role of Jews in it. This is the case of the poet and journalist, Isaac Eliyahu Navon (Edime, 1859 - Tel Aviv, 1952),<sup>1</sup> the historians Abraham Galante<sup>2</sup> and Salomon Rozanes,<sup>3</sup> the synagogue cantors Isaac Algazi<sup>4</sup> and Moshe Vital,<sup>5</sup> both originally from Izmir, a Jewish reporter from Bosnia<sup>6</sup> and others.<sup>7</sup> To these sources we may add the contribution by Abraham Zvi Idelsohn<sup>8</sup> to the study of music among Oriental Sephardi Jews and the impact of the concept of the Arabic *maqam* on this tradition. However, Idelsohn had only a superficial knowledge of Ottoman art music. His main sources for the study of the *maqam* were Arab and Syrian Jewish musicians residing in Palestine, where Idelsohn worked between 1908 and 1921. These musicians were proficient in the Arabic musical styles that by that time had become clearly different from the Ottoman style.

In recent years, we were able to expand dramatically our extant knowledge about Jewish music and musicians in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>9</sup> The search for primary sources

1 Isaac Eliyahu Navon, "Music among the Near Eastern Jews", *Hallel*, 3 (1930), 55-57 (in Hebrew); M. Geshuri, "The Road Pavers (On the Luminaries in the Song of the Sephardi Jews)", *Hallel*, 2 (1930), 39-41 (in Hebrew); Edwin Seroussi, "The Peşrev as a Vocal Genre in Ottoman Hebrew Sources", *Turkish Music Quarterly*, 4/3 (1991), 1-9.

2 Abraham Galante, "Les juifs dans la musique turque", *Historie des juifs de Turquie*, vol. 7, (Istanbul: 1985), pp. 66-73.

3 Salomon Rozanes, "The Poet R. Israel Najara", *The History of the Jews in Turkey and the Levante*, vol. 3, (Sofia: 1936-1938), pp. 405-414 (in Hebrew).

4 Edwin Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem, The Life and Music of R. Isaac Algazi from Turkey*, (Jerusalem: Renanot - Institute for Jewish Music, 1989).

5 Moshe Vital, "Lecture at the first convention of ḥazzanim and conductors in Palestine, Jerusalem", *Die Shul und die Chasanim Welt* (June 1938), p. 3 (in Hebrew).

6 Theodor Fuchs, "Prilog Muzici Sefardskih Zidova u Turskoj", *Oumanuth*, 1 (1936/7), 157-164 (Zagreb).

7 Shabetay Dinar, "Shemtov Chiquiar, maestro compositor de música oriental", *Voz Seferadí*, 2 (1967), 40-42 (Mexico City).

8 A. Z. Idelsohn, "Die makamen in der hebräischen Poesie der orientalischen Juden", *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 57 (1913), 314-325; idem., *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz*, vol. 4 (*Gesänge der orientalischen Sefardim*), (Jerusalem, Berlin, Wien: 1923).

9 Pamela Sezgin Dorn, "Hakhamim, Dervishes, and Court Singers: The Relationship of Ottoman Jewish Music to Classical Turkish Music", *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. with an introduction by Avigdor Levy, (Princeton, New Jersey: 1994), pp. 585-632; Edwin Seroussi, "The Turkish *Makam* in the Musical Culture of the Ottoman Jews: Sources and Examples", *Israel Studies in Musicology*, 5 (1990), 43-68

led us to the study of unknown written documents and of the oral traditions still extant in Turkey, Israel and the Americas.

Evidence of the proficiency and deep involvement of Jewish musicians in Ottoman art music can be now dated back to the mid-sixteenth century, i.e. from the period when the identity of this music was emerging out of its previous forms of Persian origin. The geographical span of Jewish musical activities in the Ottoman Empire which centered at the beginning of our research on two cities, Edirne and Istanbul, can now be extended to Izmir, Saloniki,<sup>10</sup> Aleppo, Jerusalem<sup>11</sup> and even to Egypt. New evidence further confirms that the close relations between Jewish Ottoman musicians and their Muslim and Christian colleagues in both the court and the *tarikah* continued throughout the Ottoman era. To summarize, the documentation available now reveals that the historical study of the relation between Ottoman Jews and Ottoman art music has been scarcely given its full scope.

At the outset, we shall point out that the Turkish *makam* system has permeated to all contexts of religious musical performance among the Ottoman Jews. We must distinguish, however, between music of the normative liturgy and all other types of religious rituals such as midnight devotions or events related to the life cycle. The music of the Jewish liturgy in Ottoman lands deserves a special treatment which is beyond the scope of this presentation. Therefore I shall focus here only on non-liturgical contexts, which are closer in their form and content to Ottoman art music.

A main source for a comprehensive historical study of this topic are manuscripts and printed collections of Hebrew sacred songs (*piyyutim* and *pizmonim*) which contain indications pertaining to their musical performance, such as the names of *makams*, *usuls* and musical genres, and/or a reference to the opening line of songs in Turkish or Persian, all provided in Hebrew characters. These manuscript compilations containing Hebrew sacred songs, classified according to the Turkish *makams* dating from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries, can be truly called *mecmuas*, as their Turkish counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

These manuscripts were overlooked by scholars of both Ottoman Jewish culture and sacred Hebrew poetry. Scholars from these fields were incapable of evaluating these documents because they ignored their crucial musical background. The growing influence of music was detrimental in terms of the literary quality of sacred Hebrew poetry in the Ottoman Empire after the early seventeenth century. As a result of the submission of the poem to musical composition, the *piyyutim* very often have awkward forms, e.g. stanzas with a different number of lines, lines of a different number of syllables within the same stanza, different rhymes in one stanza and many stanzas of nonsense syllables or sentences (*terrenim*). This awkwardness can be now explained by an interdisciplinary approach which considers the musical context of these Hebrew compositions.<sup>13</sup>

The context for the performance of most of these religious songs in Hebrew are

---

10 David A. Recanati, "Sacred Poetry and its Singing in Saloniki", *Zikhron Saloniki: Grandeza i Destruccion de Yerushalaim del Balkan*, ed. David A. Recanati, vol. 2, (Tel Aviv: 1986), pp. 337-347 (in Hebrew); Edwin Seroussi, "Ottoman Classic Music among the Jews of Saloniki" in Judith Dishon and Shmuel Refael eds., *Ladinar: Mehkarim ba-sifrut, ba-musika ube-historia shel dovrei ladino*, (Tel Aviv: 1998), pp. 79-92 (in Hebrew).

11 Edwin Seroussi, "On the Beginnings of the Singing of Bakkashot in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jerusalem", *Pe'amim*, 56 (1993), 106-124 (in Hebrew).

12 Owen Wright, *Words without Song: A Musicological Study of an Early Ottoman Anthology and its Precursors*, (London: 1992).

13 Tova Beeri, "Hidushe tavnit ba-shirah ha-ivrit ba-mizrah ba-me'ot ha-shesh-esre ve-ha-sheva-esre", *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Division C, Volume 3, (Jerusalem: 1994), pp. 29-35. (Structural innovations in the Oriental Hebrew poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.)

special religious gatherings held in the synagogue or at private homes, usually in the early morning hours of the Sabbath. These gatherings, first developed in kabbalistic circles in Upper Galilee, had a mystical background. They indeed bear some common characteristics with the Sufi *sema*<sup>14</sup> with two important differences: first, the Jewish tradition is purely vocal, and includes solo and choral singing, even in the performance of instrumental genres; and second, there is no dancing or any other type of body movement as an integral part of the performance. The mystic rationale of these gatherings has eroded since their heyday in the late sixteenth century. Singers who carry on this tradition in the contemporary period usually deny any mystical intentions in their performances. What fuels continuity is the deed of preserving a venerable religious tradition (*minhag*), and the aesthetic pleasure provided by the music to performers and listeners as well.

The thousands of Hebrew poems composed to be performed to Ottoman music remained unpublished until the early twentieth century. Moreover, only a very small fraction of these songs composed throughout the centuries remained alive in oral tradition. The living repertoire is reflected in the most important, and practically only, printed Hebrew *mecmua* called *Shirei Israel be-Eretz ha-Qedem* (Istanbul, 1921). This collection reflects the repertory of the choral society called "Maftirim" from Edirne. This prominent Jewish institution of Ottoman art music was probably established as early as the first half of the seventeenth century and continued its activities without interruption until World War I, when many of its members moved to Istanbul after 1918. The Ottoman Hebrew songs performed until the present by Turkish Jews in Istanbul and Israel derive from the specific repertoire of "Maftirim" with some additional pieces composed by contemporary musicians from Istanbul and Izmir.<sup>15</sup>

The earlier records of Hebrew sacred poems sung to Turkish music are found among Romaniote (Byzantine) Hebrew poets such as Shlomo Mazal Tov<sup>16</sup>, who were influenced by the Spanish style of Hebrew poetry in the early sixteenth century. In his collection *Shirim ve-zemirot u-tushbahot* (Constantinople, 1545), Mazal Tov assigns to several of his poems a "laḥan turki" (a "Turkish melody"), without any further specification. This practice reflects an early involvement of Ottoman Jews with Turkish music.

Following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497, and their resettlement in Ottoman lands in impressive numbers, there is an influx of Andalusian Jews, who had mastered the Western style of Arabic music. A pertinent anecdote related to this issue appears in *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* by Rabbi Eliyahu b. Elkanah Capsali (1483-1555).<sup>17</sup> This story tells about a Jewish musician from Spain who is discovered by the Sultan during one of the monarch's clandestine visits to his Jewish subjects. Eventually this Andalusian Jew becomes the chief musician of the court (see appendix to this article). Even if apocryphal, this story is symptomatic of the early involvement of Spanish Jews in the music of the Ottoman court.

The real initiator of the Jewish tradition of Ottoman music is Rabbi Israel Najara (ca. 1555-1625). Considered by scholars today as the most outstanding poet of Sephardi Jewry in the Eastern Mediterranean in the late-sixteenth and early-seven-

---

14 Paul Fenton, "Les *baqqašot* d'orient et d'occident", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 134 (1975), 101-121; Amnon Shiloah, "The Symbolism of Music in the Kabbalistic Tradition", *The World of Music*, 20/3 (1978), 56-69.

15 The literary repertoire of a similar choral association from Saloniki was published in 1879. See, Seroussi, "Ottoman Classic Music", *ibid.* (note 10).

16 Tova Beeri, "Shelomo Mazal Tov", *Pe'amim*, 59 (1994), pp. 65-76 (in Hebrew).

17 *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, by Rabbi Eliyahu b. Elkanah Capsali (1483-1555). *The History of the Ottomans and Venice and Chronicle of Israel in the Turkish Kingdom, Spain and Venice*. Published for the first time from four manuscript versions, Jerusalem: the Ben Zvi Institute and The Institute for the Diaspora Research, (Jerusalem: 1976), vol. 1, p. 91ff.

teenth centuries,<sup>18</sup> Najara's novelty consisted of adopting the then new Ottoman makam system to Hebrew poetry.<sup>19</sup>

A close examination of the two compendia of religious poems written by Najara, *Zemirot Yisrael* (published in three different editions: Safed 1587, Saloniki 1599/1600 and Venice 1600) and *She'erit Yisrael* shows his progressive involvement with Ottoman music.<sup>20</sup> This tradition was in its formative stages during Najara's lifetime.<sup>21</sup> It is still a matter of conjecture how he managed to be so "updated" on this music while he carried on his activities in the Damascus-Safed axis.

Najara achieved the following accomplishments:

a) He established a tradition of Ottoman Hebrew music. This tradition is reflected in the compilation of his Hebrew sacred poems following the Turkish pattern, i.e. according to the *makams*. During the first stages of his work, his models were Turkish songs from two sources: the coffee houses, particularly those of the Janissaries with whom the Jews had close ties in Syria, and, in some cases, from the Sufi sects, as testified by the mention of songs by poets such as Pir Sultan Abdal of the Bektasi order in Najara's *mecmua*.<sup>22</sup> Later writings by Najara show his awareness of more modern musical forms. In *She'erit Yisrael*, his last, and mostly unpublished, collection of religious poems, he mentions, in addition to the *makams*, a few *usuls* (cyclic rhythms) and instrumental musical genres (particularly the *pesrev*) which compose the compound form of Ottoman court music, the *fasıl*. *She'erit Yisrael* can thus be considered as the first truly Hebrew *mecmua*, and as a model and inspiration for Jewish composers and poets throughout the Ottoman Empire.

b) He assigned specific religious contexts for the performance of this Ottoman Hebrew vocal music, such as the early Sabbath morning vigils.

c) He had disciples who continued to compose Hebrew sacred poetry set to Ottoman art music and even refined the musical aspect of this tradition according to the latest developments in the Ottoman court. This musical refinement was usually at the expense of the level of the poetry which had been in constant decline since the peak achieved by Najara.

Three important facts should be pointed out in the development of the singing of *piyyutim* according to Ottoman art music after Najara:

1) Constantinople and Adrianople became the centers of Hebrew music creativity after the seventeenth century;

2) Since the second half of the seventeenth century Jewish poets and composers became closer to Muslim and Christian musicians serving at the seraglio and at the Mevlevi *tarikah*;

---

18 W. Bacher, "Les poesies inedites d'Israel Najara", *Revue des Études Juives*, 58 (1909), 241-269-59 (1910), 96-105; 60 (1910), 221-234; Meir Benayahu, "Rabbi Israel Najara", *Asufot*, 4 (1990), 203-284 (in Hebrew); Moshe Gaon, "R. Israel Najara and his songs", *Mizrah uma'arav*, 5 (1930-1932), 145-163 (in Hebrew); A. Z. Idelsohn, "Israel Najara and his Poetry", *Hashiloah*, 37 (1921), 25-36, 122-135 (in Hebrew); Salomon Rozanes, "The Poet Israel Najara", 1936-38; Joseph Yahalom, "R. Israel Najarah and the Revival of Hebrew Poetry in the East after the Expulsion from Spain", *Pe'amim*, 13 (1982), 96-124 (in Hebrew).

19 See my lecture "The singing of the *piyyut* in the Ottoman Empire after Israel Najara", delivered at the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 1997 which will be published in the proceedings of this conference.

20 Published in a very partial version under the title *Pizmonim* by M. H. Friedlander, Vienna 1858; mostly still in manuscript.

21 Walter Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court: Makam, Composition and the Early Ottoman Instrumental Repertoire*, (Berlin: 1996), (Intercultural Music Studies 10).

22 Andreas Tietze and Joseph Yahalom, *Ottoman Melodies, Hebrew Hymns, A 16th Century Cross-Cultural Adventure*, (Budapest: 1995).

3) Jewish musicians served the Jewish community and at the same time appeared before non-Jewish audiences.

Najara's closest disciple was Avtaliyon ben Mordecai Avtaliyon. The precise dating of Avtaliyon's life span is still problematic. In the colophon of one of the most important manuscript copies of *She'erit Yisrael* by Najara, which was in the possession of the Jewish community of Sarajevo, Avtaliyon refers to Najara as "my master". This colophon was copied and published by the historian Salomon Rozanes but regretfully this manuscript was lost. While Avtaliyon appears to have been a few years younger than Najara (in one source the year 1577 is mentioned for his birth), the musical terminology used by him reflects the state of Ottoman court music in the second half of the seventeenth century. We have located so far three copies of Avtaliyon's impressive *mecmua* which is titled *Hadashim la-bqarim*.<sup>23</sup> The most complete version of this collection is Ms. Sassoon, no. 1031, the only copy that contains the introduction by the poet.<sup>24</sup> We assume this manuscript to be an autograph.<sup>25</sup>

Even a superficial examination of Avtaliyon's work shows that his involvement with the courtly tradition is far deeper and more advanced than that of his master Najara. He uses a larger number of *makams* (including compound ones), his compositions usually bear in their title their correspondent *usul* and the musical forms employed by him are the standard ones at the Ottoman court. While Najara composed only vocal *peşrevs* and very few *semais*, Avtalyion's collection includes, in addition to many *peşrevs* and *semais*, pieces from genres such as the *beste*, *kâr*, *naks*, *yürük semai* and the *peşrev semai*, a form mentioned only in Jewish sources since the late seventeenth century. Moreover, his pieces were apparently intended to be performed in cycles, like the courtly *fasıl*, based on one *makam*.

In the footsteps of Najara and Avtaliyon, a school of Ottoman Jewish musicians developed in Constantinople and Adrianople. Some of these musicians attained fame in non-Jewish circles and are mentioned in Turkish sources of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>26</sup> Among them are instrumentalists such as *miskali* Yahudi Yako and *tamburi* Yahudi Kara Kaş and composers such as Çelebiko (a teacher of Cantemir), Moshe Faro (known also as Musi or *tamburi hakham* Muse, d. 1776) a leading musician in the court of Sultan Mahmud I, Aharon Hamon (known as Yahudi Harun, who died after 1721)<sup>27</sup> and Isaac Fresco Romano (Tanburi Izak or Işhak, 1745-1814), a musician at the court of Sultan Selim III. The Hebrew *mecmuas* show that almost all these Jewish masters composed *piyyutim* too.

Other prolific composers appearing in the Hebrew *mecmuas* of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who are not mentioned at all in Turkish sources are Isaac Alidi, Aharon Alidi, Moshe Shani, Yaakov Amron, Eliyah Walid, Moshe Yuda Abbas, Shelomo Rav Huna, Eliyahu Falcon and many others. Almost no biographical details about these musicians are extant. We may attribute their absence from Turkish sources to the fact that they only composed Hebrew pieces.

In the nineteenth century we witness the development of two other important Jewish centers of musical activities in the Ottoman Empire: Izmir, following the leadership of the composer Rabbi Abraham Ariyas (late eighteenth century) and

23 "[They are] new every morning", after Threni 3:23, a reference to the fact that the poet wrote a new poem for every Sabbath.

24 David Salomon Sassoon, "Ohel David", *Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the Sassoon Library*, vol. 2, (London: 1932), p. 818.

25 For Avtalyon see now: Tove Beeri, "Avtalyon ben Mordechai: An Hebrew poet from early-seventeenth century Turkey", Lecture delivered at the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, August 1997, to be published in the proceedings of this conference.

26 Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court*, pp. 48-50.

27 Jefim Hayyim Schirmann, "Hamon, Aaron Ben Isaac", *Encyclopedia Judacia*, 7 (1972), col. 1249.

Saloniki, founded by Aharon Barzilay (second half of the nineteenth century). In the late nineteenth century Jewish Ottoman composers split into two groups: those who wrote songs in Turkish and instrumental compositions, such as Missirli Ibrahim (Abraham Levy Hayyat) and Isaac Varon, and those who wrote Hebrew pieces, such as Moshe Cordova in Istanbul. This split reflects a break between secular and religious Jews in the sphere of music. Only in Izmir did Jewish musicians compose both secular instrumental music and Hebrew sacred songs. The most outstanding among the Jewish musicians from Izmir was Shem Tov Shikiar (Santo Şikiar, 1840-1920).

The close relationship between Jewish musicians and the music of the Ottoman court and *tarikāt*, even by those whose activities were limited to the synagogue, is testified by the mention of contemporary musical works by composers from the court in Hebrew manuscripts from the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth centuries. We uncovered several Hebrew manuscripts in which Ottoman musicians are mentioned. Two of them, Ms. no. 1214 of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York and Ms. Heb. no. 3395 of the Strassbourg municipal library, are a particular rich source of information on this matter. Ottoman compositions mentioned in them can be identified with precision in the manuscript collections of Ali Ufqı and Prince Cantemir.<sup>28</sup> Ottoman composers whose compositions mentioned in Hebrew sources we can not yet identify are Mehmed Kasim (d. ca. 1730), Osman Dede (1652-1730), Baba Zeytun, Aga Mumin, *mişkālī* Solakzade (d. 1658) and the Greek *tamburi* Angelos. There are other musicians mentioned in Hebrew sources whom we have not yet been able to identify in Ottoman sources: Selim-zade Aga, Aga Reza and Husni Hoca.

I would like to examine an Ottoman Hebrew piece that is still extant in oral tradition. This is the *peşrev semai* set to the poem *Avo el mizbeaḥ elohim simḥat gili* (I shall come to the altar of God, my joy) by a composer named Aharon, probably Aharon Hamon or Aharon Alidi. The transcription is based on a notation by *kanuni* David Behar from Istanbul (who resides now in Tel Aviv) and on a performance by the Reverend Samuel Benaroya (born in 1910), a native of Edirne, who has lived in the United States since 1951. This composition was recorded by Benaroya in Seattle in 1990.<sup>29</sup>

The piece consists of five *hane* corresponding to the five stanzas of the poem. Each stanza has a different rhyme, but all the stanzas close with a line ending on the same word: *elohenu*. The *hane* have irregular forms, consisting of four to seven musical phrases. Each phrase covers two cycles of the *usul semai*, except for four of them which cover only one cycle. The last two musical phrases of the opening *hane* (x+y) serve as a musical ritornello at the end of each of the other *hane* (except for *hane* IV, whose end resembles phrase y only vaguely). Phrase y corresponds to the literary refrain (*elohenu*). The piece ends with a “coda” (phrase z) based on the refrain (phrase y) but leading to the ending note (*karar*) of the *makam*.

The table on page 91 summarizes the formal structure of this piece.

<sup>28</sup> Examples of Ottoman compositions mentioned in these two Hebrew manuscripts are: *Nevah laḥan peşrev Şerif usul zarbufet* (Strassbourg 3395, fol. 44a, corresponding to the *Peşrev Şerif neva - muhammes*, cf. Cantemir 1992, no. 66); *Hüseyni peşref Şah Murad degeşmeş ve-yeş lo ḥamişah usules genber düyek fehte [mereşan] semai* by Aharon Alidi (JTS 1214, p. 10, corresponding to *Peşrev Şah Murad hüseyini degişme*, cf. Cantemir 1992, no. 73); *Besteni giyar peşref Kantemir mereşan* by Aharon Hamon (JTS 1214, p. 170, corresponding to *Kantemiroglu besteniğar - bereşan peşref*, cf. Cantemir 1992, no. 281); *Sultani irak peşref Kantemir devr-i kebir* by Aharon Alidi (JTS 1214, p. 335, corresponding to *Kantemiroglu sultani irak - devr-i kebir*, cf. Cantemir 1992, no. 290). Theoretically one can try now to reconstruct some of these old Hebrew compositions by adapting the text to the music of those pieces which have been identified in notated Ottoman sources or were preserved in oral tradition.

<sup>29</sup> See the CD *Ottoman Hebrew Sacred Songs Performed by Samuel Benaroya*, Anthology of Music Traditions in Israel no. 12 (AMTI 9803), (Jerusalem, 1998).

Hüseyini peşrev semai by Aharon

חוסיאני פישריף סמהי סימן אהרן

I

אבוא אל מזבח אלהים שמחת גילי  
שמה חנון אערוך לך צורי וגואלי  
את שיר מהללי, הרימה קולי  
כפאולי שיר חדש תהלה לאלהנו.

II

הט אזניך לאמרתי, שמע תפילתי  
האזינה שעותי, אלהי ישועתי  
השיבה את שבותי כי אותך קויתי  
וגם לדברך דודי חי הוחלתי  
תחיש גאולתי, פדני מגלותי  
כי גדול ומי צור זולתי אלהינו.

III

רחם בחסדיך כרחם אב על בנים  
האל הגדול אדון האדונים  
וזכור עדתך קנית קדם הזרועים  
בתוך גוים עניים ואביונים  
וחדש ששונים בגילות ורננים  
ויודו כל המונים להי אלהינו.

IV

נר לרגלי דברך ואור לנתיבתי  
ואתהלכה ברחבה תוך נותי  
עיר ציון במדינות שרתי  
ואשתעשע אז ואגיל  
בבית ה' בחצרות אלהינו.

V

לבי ובשרי ירננו אל חי  
ולשוני תהגה את שיר רנני  
פי ושפתי הללו הודו להי  
וגם כליותי הבו גודל לאהלינו.

Peşrev semai - Aharon - Hüseyini

I a

A - vo el miz - bah e - lo - im sim - hat gi - li

sha - ma ha - nun e - e roh le - kha tzu - ri go - a - li

et shir ma - la - li a - ri - ma ko - li

ke - fa - o - li shir ha - dash te - hi - la l' e - lo - e - nu

II a

hat oz - nakh le - im - ra - ti she - ma te - fi - la - ti

a - ha - zi - na sha - va - ti e - lo - he ye - shu - a - ti a -

shi - va et she - vu - ti ki ot - kha ki - vi - ti

ve - gam lid - va - re - kha do - di hay ho - hal - ti

ta - hish ge - u - la - ti pe - de - ni mi - ga - lu - ti

ki mi ga - dol u - mi tzur zu - la - ti e - lo - he - nu

Transcription of *Peşrev Semai* in *makam* Hüseyini by Aharon according to Samuel Benaroya. Roman numbers designate the *hanat*; letters designate musical phrases. Notes (parts III to V) continue on pp. 89-90.

III a

ra - hem be - has-de-kha ke - ra - hem av al ba - nim

a+b

ha - el ha - ga - dol a - don a - do - nim

c

u'z- khor a - dat - kha ka - ni - ta ke - dem

II b1+b

haz - ru - im be tokh go - im a - ni - im ve - e - vyo-nim ve

d

ha - desh sa - so - nim

I b+x

be - gil - ut ur - na-nim ya - fri - hu ke-sho - sha - nim

y

ve - yo - du kol ha - mo-nim la - do - nay e - lo-he - nu

IV a

Ner le- rag - li de - va - re - kha ve - or lin - ti - va - ti

a+b

ve - et - ha - le - kha bir - ha - vah tokh ne - va - ti

c

ir tzi - yon ha - me - di - not sa - ra - ti

d

v'esh - ta-she-a az ve a gil be - veit a - do - nay be - hatz-

rot e - lo - he - nu

V a  
 li - bi uv - sa - ri ye - ra - na - nu el hay  
 b  
 u'l - sho - ni te - he - ge  
 x  
 et shir re - na - nai fi u's - fa - tay ha - le - lu  
 c  
 o - du l'a - do - nay  
 y  
 ve - gam khil - yo - tay a - vu go - del l'e - e - lo - he - nu  
 z  
 ve - gam khil - yo - tay a - vu go - del l'e - lo - he - nu.

hane	phrase	stanza	line (rhyme)
I	a	1	a (li)
	b		a (li)
	x		a (li)
	y		x (elohenu)
II	a	2	b (ti)
	b		b (ti)
	a1		b (ti)
	b1		b (ti)
	lb + x		b (ti)
	y		x (elohenu)
III	a	3	c (nim)
	a+b		c (nim)
	c		c (dem)
	lb1 + lb		c (dem)
	d (1 usul)		c (dem)
	lb + x		c (dem)
	y		x (elohenu)
IV	a	4	d (ti)
	a+b		d (ti)
	c		d (ti)
	d		d (gil)
	y? (1 usul)		x (elohenu)
V	a	5	e (hay)
	b (1 usul)		e (hay)
	x		e (nai)
	c (1 usul)		e (nay)
	y		e (tay) x (elohenu)
	z ["coda"]		e (tay) x (elohenu)

## Conclusion

We may state that research into the Hebrew branch of Ottoman art music is still in its infancy. The importance of this tradition is becoming clearer as historical facts revealed by Hebrew *mecmuas* continue to expand our views on this subject. The relations of the Hebrew Ottoman tradition to those of the Ottoman court and the Mevlevi *tarikats* appear to be closer than was thought until now. For example, we find Hebrew compositions based on music by Mevlevi composers, such as Ismail Dede Effendi. Contemporary testimonies show that the bond between Jews and Sufis continued well into the twentieth century. A personal communication by Reverend Samuel Benaroya concerns the mutual visits of Jewish singers to the Mevlevi *tekke* in Edirne and of Mevlevi singers to the synagogue (interview held in Seattle, 23/10/1992).

To expand the research on the Hebrew Ottoman tradition, we have to engage in further efforts to retrieve old commercial and archival recordings in order to gather a comprehensive corpus for stylistic analysis. Despite the erosion of the oral tradition, one can still find singers like Isaac Maçorro in Istanbul, whose performances may help us to understand better the Ottoman Jewish music tradition.

Three main issues await future research in this field: 1) the use of the *makam* and other aspects of Ottoman art music in the Jewish liturgy and in other types of Jewish music in the Ottoman Empire, such as the songs in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish); 2) the study of the historical Hebrew sources in light of the contemporary practice revealed by commercial, archival and field recordings; and 3) the comparison between the

Jewish and non-Jewish Ottoman traditions in terms of performance practice, style and genres. This last issue is related to a larger question: to what extent is the Jewish identity within the Ottoman social fabric reflected in music.

## Appendix

Translation from *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* by Rabbi Eliyahu b. Elkanah Capsali (1483-1555): *The History of the Ottomans and Venice and Chronicle of Israel in the Turkish Kingdom, Spain and Venice*. Published for the first time from four manuscript versions, Jerusalem: the Ben Zvi Institute and The Institute for the Diaspora Research, Jerusalem, 1976. Volume 1, p. 91ff.

And the King [Sultan Bayazid II, 1481-1511] went from neighborhood to neighborhood... And it so happened that the King passed by the people and there was one of the Spanish Jews who came to live in this land after the expulsion from Spain and his name [was] Abraham Shondor [chantor? or perhaps *sündir*, player of a folk lute, cf. Feldman, p. 171], and he was called like this after his art, because he was the only one of his generation in his art, one "who is skilled in music, a stalwart fellow and a warrior, sensible in speech and handsome in appearance" [Samuel I 17:18]... His listeners would say that he was "the ancestor of all those who play the lyre and the pipe" [Genesis 4:21]. And on that day the man was performing his art at his home playing "the drum and the lute and revelling to the tune of the pipe" [Job 21:12]. And the King passed by and he heard the tune and he liked it, and he descended from his chariot and entered the house of that Jew and asked the Jew: "May I sit for a while in your home and listen to the voice of male and female singers as well as the luxuries of commoners - coffers and coffers of them." [Ecclesiastes 2:8] And Abraham replied to the King and said: "Sit as long as you wish." Then Abraham ran to the lyres [paraphrase of Genesis 18:7, *nevalim* meaning the herd] and he took "the melodious lute and the lyre" [Psalms 81:3] and started to play again and again "as the musician played" [Kings II 3:15] and the king was pleased...

And the King arose in order to leave, and the Jew held him and played for him another tune on instruments of different kinds...

And the Jew did not know that the [man was the] King, [he] only thought that he was one of the ministers because he paid "no attention to his appearance or his stature" [Samuel I 16:7] and from his face it was obvious that he was a minister and an official, but no one could imagine that he was the King.

And the day after, the King was seated eating... and the musicians stood up each one with his instrument on his hand, "the horn, lyre, psaltery, bagpipe and all other types of instruments" [Daniel 3:5], and they played as customary. And the King said: "spare me the sound of your hymns, and let me not hear the music of your lutes" [Amos 5:23] because from the day I heard the tune of the Jew I have not tasted the flavor of a beautiful tune, there is not one like it in the country. And the King said to the clerk upon whom he was leaning: Hasten to me the Jew who plays and he will play for me and I will be pleased.

And the couriers left hastily and arrived and took the Jew and placed him in front of the King and the Jew prostrated himself on the ground. And the King said to the Jew: "I have heard that you are a player and a singer; now play before me, sing to us from your songs, play to us with your hands, rejoice us with your art, take in your hands the sweet lyre and the lute because I have heard about you"... [Gittin 88:1]. At

that moment the Jew tried to play as always and he had no power, and he tried "to do his work, strange is his work, and to perform his task, astounding is his task" [Isaiah 28:21]... And the King was surprised by what happened and said: "...one night he was a supreme artist but "he perished overnight" (Jonah 4:10) and he became [like] an apprentice of all apprentices. Who ever heard the like? "Who ever witnessed such events?" (Isaiah 66:8)

And the King thought he was drunk. And the King said to him: Until when are you going to get drunk?... And Abraham prostrated himself before the King and said: "No, my Lord, I am sober and I have drunk no wine or other strong drink, but I have been pouring my heart out to the Lord" (Samuel I, 1:15), to rejoice him with my actions... but I saw you my Lord, my King, as if I were seeing an angel of God, and a great anxiety fell upon me and I was too anguished to play and too frightened to sing" [Isaiah 21:3]... "Look away from me, that I may recover" [Psalms 39:14].

And the King spoke to him softly and said: "Why are you afraid, what I have done to you? Go and play, and go and sing..". And the Jew replied to the King and said: "Why my Lord, my King, should I not be frightened by your presence, why should I not tremble when confronting you? I had heard [about] you with my ears but now I see you with my eyes" [Job 42:5] When I was in Andalusia "I learned of your renown; I was awed, O Lord, by your deeds" [Habakkuk 3:2], we were scared and frightened... And when we heard about your strength and might "we lost heart, and no man had any more spirit left because of you" [Joshua 2:11] so mighty was your arm as perceived by the inhabitants of Spain... And why should I not now be afraid, "when my eyes look forward, my gaze be straight ahead" [Proverbs 4:25] "fear and trembling invade me; I am clothed with terror" [Psalms 55:6].

And the King heard these words and he was pleased; his heart was happy and his honor rejoiced when he heard that from one edge of the world to the other people trembled at his presence and were in awe. And he comforted the heart of the Jew, and the Jew started to strengthen gradually and then he played a little, "murmur upon murmur" [Isaiah 28:10], on that day. And on the next day the King permitted the Jew to leave and to come back before him. And so the Jew did and Abraham woke up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood [the day before] and he played with his hands and so he did, day after day...

And Abraham attained great honor, and the King put his chair on a high level, overlooking the rest of the singers and players that played with him, and he performed his melodies in honor of the King for the rest of his days... And the King ordered, and so it was written in the book of chronicles, that this Jew should receive an award of thirty coins each and every day. "His prison garments were removed and... a regular allotment of food was given him at the instance of the king - an allotment for each day - all the days of his life" [II Kings 25:28-30].