

MUSICAL TRADITION AND ITS TRANSMITTERS BETWEEN SYNAGOGUE AND CHURCH

Eric Werner, *New York*

According to the dictionary, a tradition is handed down by a *traditor*, a word which has the meaning of a traitor as well as a transmitter. Indeed this meaning, ambiguous as it appears, is justified when the role of transmitter of tradition between Church and Synagogue is examined: in handing over the customs of one institution he was, in fact, surrendering them to the other — he was both proselyte and apostate. This feeling of guilt may hardly have been consciously felt by the first generation of Christians, but there can be no doubt that it existed, however disguised and rationalized by such concepts as that of the “New Jerusalem”, “The Old Law and the New”, even by constant reference to the significance of Christ’s sacrifice as but the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies¹. A hardly veiled sense of guilt is evident also in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (of the late second century). It admonished Christians to mourn, even to fast, over the loss of Jerusalem and its Temple:

... for their sake (of the Jews) we ought to fast and mourn, that we may be glad to take our place in the world to come ... so we ought to take pity on them ... and to fast and to pray for them ...²

The following inquiries will concern themselves with two tasks: (1) To examine the concept of “national folksong” and its applicability in the instance of the musical tradition of the old Synagogue; (2) the attitude of Western music historians to the question of Jewish influence on early Church music. As will be seen, we are convinced that a purely musical examination of the problem will not yield any truly cogent arguments or proofs. Unlike theology or philosophy, whose ideas may be “in the air” of a period forming part of the *Zeitgeist* and its forces, the melodies, rhythms and forms that correspond to such intangible ideas are *not* “in the air”; if anything, they are perhaps “in the earth”, — but that is another matter. They constitute part of the various established

¹ The ambivalence is felt most clearly in the writings of St. Paul; see J. Klausner, *Between Jesus and Paul* (New York 1943), especially Book VII, Ch. 2 and 5. Reading between the lines of Eusebius’ *History of the Church*, one seems to sense traces of guilt feelings of these Judaeo-Christians, who, in the year 66, fled to Pella, thus evading the siege of Jerusalem. See Eusebius, *Eccl. hist.* X, 4, 23, where Constantine is called “The New Aaron”!

² *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ed. Gibson, in *Horae Semiticae* II, 21 (London 1903) p. 96.

traditions of a group and were invented, performed and handed down by individuals known or unknown — by persons, not by the written word or notated sound; for the period with which we are concerned did not possess any musical notation. It will be our task to trace, and if possible to identify the persons or groups of persons who acted as carriers of the liturgico-musical tradition between the institutions of Judaism and Christianity.

Judaism of the second century had lost its heritage of art music, for the Temple, the only establishment where professional musicians rehearsed and performed regularly and conscientiously, was no more, its musical splendor destroyed, the authority of priests and Levites abrogated. The Synagogue, on the other hand, a logocratic and democratic institution, turned to lay-performers and to folk music, accessible to the worshippers. The question of a continuity of tradition between the Temple and the Synagogue has often been raised (treated also in my *Sacred Bridge*, Vol. I, pp. 23 ff).

What were the folk tunes used by the ancient Synagogue? First, the various cantillations of Scripture, of which no common *Urtradition* can be proved. Apart from the cantillation we must rely on rabbinic sources which deplore the usage of *leḥanîm* pertaining to love songs, working songs or women's songs. So late an author as Profiat Duran (fourteenth-fifteenth cent.)³ distinguishes between *leḥanîm* and *mizmorîm*. The former term perhaps indicates the (secular) tunes, the latter their application to prayer texts or *piyyuṭîm*. Yet in such modern evaluations of older reports lies a source of error: the failure to differentiate between folklore in a high and autonomous culture and that of a nation on foreign soil resisting the many temptations of acculturation. J. G. Herder's ingenious empathy with the "Spirit of the Hebrew Language" will not be helpful in such cases. For his concept of the "common people", who create the *Volkslied* and represent the quintessence of a nation — the *Grundsuppe einer Nation* — was far-reaching indeed, but must not be applied without modification to our problem.

Three main theories emerged in the studies of folksong during the nineteenth century when the subject was most eagerly pursued by German and English romanticists: (1) All folksong is the residue of decayed or decaying art, which has "sunk down" to the level of popular imitation (*absinkendes Kulturgut*); (2) Most art music has its roots in folk music; the "folkish" elements rise along many channels until they are sublimated by a good composer, knowingly or unknowingly (*aufsteigendes Kulturgut*)⁴. Between the two, a third category of "modification of values" seeks to erase certain contradictions in either

³ *Ma'ase Ephod*. Introduction, pp. 20-21, in the Kohn-Friedländer edition (Vienna 1865).

⁴ For a more extensive discussion see W. Wiora, *Europäische Volksmusik und abendländische Tonkunst* (Kassel 1957); for the Anglo-American orbit see K. D. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (New Brunswick 1959).

theory. This concept of quasi-simultaneously ascending and declining values was most eloquently championed by R. Wagner who, in his polemical essay *Oper und Drama* castigated the exploitation of the *manna* of genuine popular song and, at the same time, expressed his contempt for *ekelhafte Opernmelodien* which nonetheless gained wide popularity. All folksong was precious to him, yet he was unable to distinguish between the genuine article and the dubious popular ditty. His folkloristic convictions are embodied in the libretto of his *Meistersinger*; in its music they are all but contradicted... We shall now give a concrete example of such an alternately descending and ascending process of a structural concept in music, science and folklore, that is relevant to our subject matter.

The Octoechos as a Descending and Rising Concept.

The long history of the eight *echoi* or of the corresponding Psalm-tones scheme has been outlined in some of my earlier studies and in the *Sacred Bridge*, Vol. I. There the hypothesis of the originally calendaric connection between Octoechos and the Pentecontad calendar was suggested and elucidated⁵. To my satisfaction many scholars are inclined to accept this interpretation⁶. Meanwhile the Dead Sea Scrolls have increasingly confirmed the hypothesis, and now it appears that the origins of a modal system recede farther and farther into antiquity, as the beginnings of the Pentecontad calendar are traced early in the second pre-Christian millennium. It is certain that Babylonian priests and astronomers were familiar with it, indeed, the modal system may even have antedated them. It was the closely guarded secret of esoteric scholars and priests. Yet in the biblical period not only priests were privy to it, and in the psalms the transition to more or less familiar patterns of folklore was completed⁷. This "descending" process will be sketched here, a development from priestly arcanum down to popular concepts that were well known

⁵ Cf. *The Sacred Bridge*, Vol. I., Part II, Ch. 2, pp. 373 ff. The author of the article "Octoechos" in *MGG*, Maria Stoehr, failed to clarify the significance of the term as a collective name of the eight Psalm-tones, also to mention the calendaric meaning, which it has retained until now. L. Richter, in his "Antike Überlieferung in der byzantinischen Musiktheorie" in *Jahrbuch Peters VI* (Leipzig 1962), pp. 75 ff. utilizes some of my findings anonymously. Neither he, nor Miss Stoehr, nor O. Strunk are aware of the Semitic origin of the syllables Neannoë in the Octoechos, although no other etymology has been offered. Cf. E. Werner, "The Psalmic Formula Neannoë and its Origin", in *MO XXVIII* (1942), pp. 93 ff.

⁶ An exception is J. Handschin, who preferred to remark that I, in tracing the Octoechos, have "followed uncritically" Professor Quasten; he does not explain where and when, nor does he quote any sources. (*NOHM II*, p. 160). For the reader's information my source is quoted in *The Sacred Bridge*, Vol I, p. 408, n. 66, 67.

⁷ See e.g. the Hymns of Thanksgiving of the Dead Sea Scrolls; and S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (New York 1962), Vol. II, p. 211.

to Christian monks of the fourth century, and which later, though in a simplistic theoretical formulation of the actual practice, swept all Church music as the "system of eight modes".

The earliest references to eight modes seem to occur in one or two Hittite cuneiform tablets⁸. Certain psalms bear a heading which was interpreted by Saadya Gaon (tenth century C.E.) and his earlier sources as "on the eighth mode"; all these veiled allusions may be considered the last remnants of an old priestly *musica ficta* or *reservata*. Yet when the rabbis explained and divulged such ideas to the people, the "descent" had begun, the more so as the explanations were given in the vernacular Arabic or Aramaic⁹. This system of eight "tones" was implemented in practice by the Jews of Baghdad as we learn from the travelogue of R. Petachya¹⁰. Even today it may be possible to "isolate" the modal elements of the Oriental Jewish tradition, as the system must have been known not only to their rabbis; it was a part of folklore. A similar process took place, though with some modifications, in the entire Near East, both Christian and Moslem. Notwithstanding other scholars' work, it will remain A. Baumstark's lasting merit to have pointed out the evasive and multifarious nature of the term *Octoechos* in its full scope during the Middle Ages. The Arabs no less than the Persians accepted the *Octoechos* in principle and even tried to integrate that Greek term in their languages¹¹.

In Near Eastern Christianity the idea of the "holy Eight" originated in heretic circles and we can trace these elements back to the gnostic Valentinians. The wild Hebrew-Greek-Christian syncretism of this literature is replete with references to the *Ogdoas* (the great Eight) who was identified with *Achamot* (Hebr. *Hokmah/Hokmôt* (wisdom), Greek *sophia*, as in Prov. ix: 1), the mother of *Hebdomas* (The divine Seven)¹².

Tertullian's description of the Valentinian gnosis does not shed much light upon this syncretistic maze; yet it contains the calendaric term *Sabbatum* for the hebdomadal nature of the demiurge's abode and the *Ogdoad*, the demiurge's mother, is still identified with *Achamot*¹³.

This is a set of metaphysical phantasmata, to be sure, yet when it "descends" to the popular level it assumes quite concrete aspects and a supposedly practical value: the vulgar counterpart of these cosmological phantasies are not so much the magic papyri, but a step lower, the magic amulets as the practical

⁸ E. Werner, "The Eight Modes of Music (Octoechos)", in *HUCA* XXI (1948), p. 217

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 220; see also *The Sacred Bridge*, Vol. I, p. 379, and p. 407, n. 37.

¹⁰ Text in *The Sacred Bridge*, Vol. I, p. 307.

¹¹ E. Werner, "The Eight Modes of Music" (see above, no. 8), p. 238.

¹² Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* in *Antenicean Fathers* V, Book VI Chs. 26, 27.

¹³ Tertullian, in *Antenicean Fathers* III, p. 514.

application of the syncretistic ideas¹⁴. The magic amulets and other superstitious fancies grew out of this gnosticism as popular traditions emancipated from their theological framework.

We notice, on the other hand, the phenomenon of *ascending tradition* when a great book of hymns assumed the title of *Octoechos* and, even more so, when composers of Western art music intentionally made use of the intonations characteristic of the various Psalm-Tones.

Numerous similar instances are known. The great scholar Moses Gaster has collected a number of such "descending" or "ascending" motifs; and the motifs common to Buddhism, Byzantine culture, Slavonic literature, Judaism, and Christianity are much less rare or farfetched than one would expect¹⁵.

In our search for the intermediaries of tradition between Judaism and Christianity the views of past generations of thinkers and scholars should not be disregarded; they reflect the philosophies of earlier centuries. Hence we shall offer here a brief survey of the most representative views of the problem¹⁶. Two contradictory answers have been given to the main question: Has the Primitive Christian Church borrowed originally Jewish tunes? If so, from whom? We shall first consider some of the negative answers and their authors. The original question had to be modified, of course. In view of the mounting evidence of similar melodies, identical Psalm-tones, resemblances of archetypes, the suggestion of a common "Mediterranean style" has been offered, championed mainly by J. Handschin. Of that style, Greeks, Hellenized Asiatics, and Hellenized Jews were said to have partaken in equal measure. Yet there is hardly any evidence of such a style; the Oxyrhynchus hymn, which is said to best represent it, contains many more Hebrew than Hellenistic elements, especially the punctuating melismata¹⁷. Yet another evasive solution was suggested: if the entire Mediterranean music was diatonic and tetrachordal, occasional resemblances would occur for reasons of mathematical probability. Obviously the scholars who suggested this way out of the dilemma did not know enough about probability. They simply thought: there are only eight tones in a diatonic octave, hence the chance of a complete identity of two rows of tones is not too poor; in fact, it amounts to more than $1/10^{18}$. Yet

¹⁴ E. Werner, *The Sacred Bridge*, Vol. I, pp. 396 ff.

¹⁵ M. Gaster, *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, etc.* (London 1925-1928). Excellent example are Nos. 11, 12, 16, 17 of Vol. I and 34 of Vol. II. Through an ingenious sense of combination and detection Gaster came close to discovering the Dead Sea Scrolls by sheer historical and philological reasoning.

¹⁶ In order to avoid a dull chronological description, we shall group the answers according to the respective reasoning and motivation that underlie them.

¹⁷ *The Sacred Bridge*, Vol. I, pp. 355 f.

¹⁸ As the equation $Y_x = \frac{r!}{x!(r-x)!} q^{r-x} p^x$ seems to be valid for the diatonic octave, where

they completely forgot that in our case we are not concerned with a simple but with a compound and iterated probability, complicated by tunes with ranges above and below an octave. We do not deny however that identic rows of 4-6 tones are bound to occur. What does this fact mean? It would be easy to "detect" similar 4-6 tone identities in the music of Bach, Lehar and Schoenberg. What would be the resulting conclusion?

Among the authors who chose a clearly negative answer to our question, we find many fine and critical scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. No longer willing to accept uncritically the authority of the Church fathers, they could not believe that the chants which they heard in the assimilated Western Synagogues of their times were of the same substance as those which had inspired early Christianity many centuries before. They looked for other models and were inclined to believe that ancient Greek music provided the best solution in view of the considerable remnant of Greek terminology among the early European music theorists. Among them we encounter poly-histors like A. Gevaert, an outstanding expert in the field of ancient Greek music, or teutonic perfectionists such as J. N. Forkel, who summarized his conclusions in these resonant phrases:

In short, even under immediate instruction by divinity (Christ) the culture of that nation (the Jews) remained so backward, that it is not to be counted among the number of cultured nations¹⁹.

Later on, he does not entirely negate the possibility of a direct transfer of the modes of psalmody.

An enlightened Austrian, the prudent and cautious R. G. Kiesewetter, found another solution which became rather popular for a time and was borrowed by S. Schilling and other writers:

But that Grecian, or, as some authors have supposed, Hebrew melodies should have found their way into the assemblies of Christians, seems altogether impossible. ... They (the Christians) evinced an equal anxiety also to separate themselves from the Jews; and their object was, in fact, more especially to found a peculiar art of song distinct from that of any other religion ...²⁰

r approaches infinity, the result cannot differ too much from $\frac{1}{x!} q^{r-x} p^x$, whereby p represents the positive, q the negative probability of the event. How complicated the problem is in reality, can be seen in R. von Mises' extensive discussion of the similar problem posed by K. Marbe, in von Mises, *Wahrscheinlichkeitsrechnung*, (Vienna 1938 - New York 1945), p. 101.

¹⁹ J. N. Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (Leipzig 1788, 1801) Vol. I p. 90, n. 134, whereby the author quotes as his expert Millot's *Elements d'histoire générale*.

²⁰ R. G. Kiesewetter, *Geschichte der abendländisch-europäischen Musik*², tr. into English by Müller (London 1848), p. 3.

His forerunner, K. H. F. Krause, advanced the strange hypothesis of a *creatio ex nihilo*, by distorting a quotation from Eusebius' *History of the Church*:

Only in 260 was chant admitted (*aufgenommen*) into the Oriental Church. The bishop Nepos composed melodies for the psalms, but instrumental music still remained prohibited. The Christians were obliged to start the art of music *de novo* and had to find a radically new way which would separate the Christian music from the pagan one ...²¹

J. Handschin favoured ancient authors whom he sometimes quoted, sometimes not. He found an original answer to our question; it might have been uttered by G. A. Bontempi of the seventeenth century²².

If St. Paul often recommends to the faithful the singing of "psalms, hymns and spiritual hymns", we must not assume that he meant to impose upon them (in Antioch) some tunes which might have been as strange to them as missionary chorales to Africans ...²³

It is only natural that a great scholar such as A. Gevaert does not mention the possible influence of ancient Jewish chant upon Christian liturgy, for which he in his time (1828–1908) could not have had any evidence²⁴. But the obstinacy with which Handschin wilfully ignored any evidence he may have come across that could have counteracted his prejudices is hard to comprehend from a strictly scientific point of view.

The affirmative answer has at least four variants. The older historians who considered biblical and patristic statements as tantamount to historical evidence reinforced these notions by theological arguments. By far the most original author among them in this respect was Michael Praetorius (1571–1621). Being a fine humanist, he was familiar with the rudiments of the Hebrew language and grammar. According to him, it was the Holy Ghost who served as link between the sacred tradition of the Jews and the customs, prayers and chants of the nascent Church. In the dedicatory epistle of his *Syntagma Musicum*

²¹ K. C. F. Krause, *Darstellungen aus der Geschichte der Musik* (Göttingen 1827), pp. 96, 100.

²² G. A. Bontempi, *Historia musica ... secondo la dottrina de' Greci, i quali inventata prima da Iubal avanti il Diluvio...* (Perugia 1695), p. 173: "... estimandosi superfluo pe'l canto de' Salmi, delle Antifoni, degli Hinni, e dell' altere cose da cantarsi nel Coro l'uso di tanti Modi antichi, da Noi nella Seconda Parte... ne furono da' Musici Greci Ecclesiastici oletti solamente quattro..." etc.

²³ J. Handschin, "Geschichte der Musik", in *Musica Aeterna* (Zurich, 1948), pp. 41 f. In his interpretation the hymns of Paul's exhortation are "newly composed songs". It is well known among New Testament scholars that the hymns mentioned by Paul refer to Old Testament canticles.

²⁴ And yet Gevaert wrote: "We shall have to observe the influence of the Syrian — half Greek, half Semitic — Church upon Roman Plain-chant even in later epochs" (*Der Ursprung des römischen Kirchengesanges*, tr. H. Riemann, Leipzig 1891, p. 13).

he views the Old Testament oracles, the enigmatic *Urim and Tummim*, as instruments directed by the Holy Ghost. In his opinion there was a perfect continuity between the Temple and the New Church. He also refers to Jewish converts who had given him valuable information on these and other questions. Quite erroneously he deduces the word "mass" from the Hebrew²⁵.

To the same category of learned humanists belongs W. C. Printz who emphasized that the "hymn-singing" mentioned in Matt. 26: 30, refers to the great *Hallel* of the Jewish Passover²⁶.

The scholars of the century of enlightenment appear more critical; even a devout Catholic priest, G. B. Martini, examined the question rather independently and rationally, as suited the spirit of his times²⁷. He too assumed continuity from the Synagogue to the Church and he believed that the Apostles themselves, and certainly the first faithful Christians, served as the bearers of tradition from Judaism to Christianity. This conception, well elucidated, was rationalistic as well as loyal to the tenets of the Church, and full of profound humanistic learning. Padre Martini was rather tolerant toward certain "progressive" views of his time, as compared with his contemporary and correspondent, the abbot Gerbert.

Gerbert, no less a polyhistor and *peritissimus* than Martini, and a pioneer historian of mediaeval writers on music, eludes any general categorization: First, he was not a man of "progress". Quite on the contrary, he believed that sacred music had reached its highest point at the time of Palestrina and had since declined. Secondly, being closer to ancient sources than his contemporaries such as Ch. Burney, he remained a strict traditionalist, opposed in principle to instrumental music in the church. He even championed the return to severe and monophonic Gregorian chant. He too assumed an organic continuity from the Synagogue to the Church, which is the synagogue's heir *de jure* as well as *de facto*. He even quoted a layman such as Hugo Grotius to the effect that ancient Jewish psalmody "which St. Paul had so strongly recommended, remained for a long time the custom of the ancient Church"²⁸.

²⁵ Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum* I (Wittenberg 1615), *Epistola dedicatoria*.

²⁶ W. C. Printz, *Historische Beschreibung der edelen Sing- und Kling-kunst* (Dresden 1690), pp. 86 f. He probably found this (correct) interpretation in Ps. Dionysius *Areopagita*.

²⁷ G. B. Martini, *Storia della Musica* (Bologna 1757), Vol. I, p. 355: "Fortunatissime Cantilene, che dalla vostra nascita a' tempi di Davidde fino agli Apostoli, come dal fin qui detto sembra più che probabile, immutate perveniste, e dalla riprovata Sinagoga alla Chiesa nascente pallaste!"; *ibid.*, p. 358: "Ed in vero, che dagli Apostoli, i quali e coll'eseempio, e col consiglio, e con replicate esortazioni, come abbiam detto, al Canto degl'Inni, e de' Salmi, i primi Fedeli sollecitavano, anzi stimolavano, le Cantilene medesimi del Tempio di Gerosolima, e non già altre diverse da essi nuovamente inventate, nella nascente Chiesa introdotte fossero, pare assai verisimile".

²⁸ M. Gerbert, *De cantu et musica sacra...* (St. Blasien 1774), Vol. I, cap. 8: "Nec dubito...

A similar but much stronger position was held by Arthur Bedford, two generations before Gerbert. He shows a surprisingly high degree of solid knowledge of Hebrew language and literature. His book *Temple Musick*²⁹ has long been forgotten; yet, if his methods were often dubious and his conclusions absurd, he had a better and deeper insight into the problem than many of his successors. As his book is rare and unavailable, I shall quote a few pertinent observations from it.

I shall lay down this Hypothesis: that the Musick of the Temple did very much resemble that part of our Cathedral Service which we call the Chanting of the Psalms, esp. where Men and Boys sang the same Part without a Bass; not excluding the other Variety of Responses, which we find in our Litany, and also in our Morning and Evening Prayer (p. 61).

This was the Method used by the Primitive Christians in the most Early Ages of the Gospel and this they borrowed from the Jews. When the Apostles were sent to convert the lost Sheep of the House of Israel, they took a particular care not to separate from them in any thing which was lawful, lest by this means they might frustrate their great Design. (p. 62)

Thus he considered the Judaeo-Christians as the main bearers of liturgico-musical tradition, a surprisingly modern theory, favored by most archeological and paleographic evidence. Bedford reasons along these lines:

There are some, who take an Occasion to express their Dislike of our Method in Singing at the Cathedrals, because it resembles the Practice of the Jews, in the Time of the Old Law, and therefore they think it must be abolished at the Coming of Christ. This Argument hath been sufficiently confuted by Mr. Dodwell, as it related to Instrumental Musick, and his Reasons are as strong in Relation to Vocal. St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to speak to themselves in psalms and hymns, and in spiritual songs ... And St. James (5: 13) commands us that "any man is merry, he should sing psalms". ... This without Doubt, they sang according to the Direction of the Apostles, and according to the Practice in Singing used among the Jews, unless we will suppose that they invented a New Method; which, I think, will be very hard to prove (p. 236). ... When the Apostles exhorted us to sing Psalms, they could certainly have forewarned us at the same time of the Manner of their Singing, if it had been unlawful: but

quin et hoc canendi genus, vel praecipue commendat Paulus (Ephes. v: 19) mansit diu is mos Ecclesiae veteris" (H. Grotius).

²⁹ Arthur Bedford, *Temple Musick, Or an Essay Concerning the Method of Singing the Psalms of David in the Temple: Wherein the music of our cathedrals is vindicated as conformable not only to that of primitive Christianity, but also to the practice of the Church in all preceding* (London 1706). Bedford was a strict Puritan and he does not hesitate to quote John Calvin (*Comm. in I. Cor. xiv*): "I doubt not but from the beginning they followed the Jewish Usage in singing of Psalms". See also the sharply worded essay by P. Scholes, *The Puritans and Music in England and New England* (Oxford 1934), where this fine historian convincingly disproves the legend of the Puritan antimusical attitude. Bedford, by the way, was quite a learned author, having published treatises on astronomy, mathematics and Semitic languages besides books on music. See English National Biography.

since in this, they made no Alteration from the Jews, we have no Reason to make Alteration from them ... Now the Singing under the Law was a *Type*, not of the Gospel, but of the Saints in Heaven; and accordingly St. John alludes to this, when he tells us (Rev. 15: 3) that they sang the Song of Moses, the Servant of God and of the Lamb ... And as She [the Church] hath always paid a due Regard to the Customs of her Forefathers: and as She hath in Her Divine Musick adhered to the Custom both of the Jews and of the Church of Rome: so we may hope ...

The purpose of Bedford's book was to justify and to defend the traditional plain-chant psalmody in the English Cathedrals, which was then under attack from both the non-Puritan gentry and from the simple folk, who preferred the few metric hymns of their song-books or the English metric psalms to Merbecke's *Booke of Common Praier Noted* (1550). Bedford fought valiantly against all dilution of psalmody but in vain, at least in his time. The tide of fashion ran against him. Only at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the 20th century did the old plainsong regain some if not all of its former ground in the Church of England³⁰.

The "two musical friends" of Dr. Johnson, Hawkins and Burney, were personal antagonists and held opposite views on the question of the musical legacy of the Synagogue to the incipient Church. One could hardly expect a profound understanding from a man like Burney:

The value of Gregorian Chant corresponds to the low level of barbarians, i.e. the First Christians. They had no sense for the fine poetry of the Greeks, for they used for their melodies the prose-texts of Scripture — in so doing rhythm and meter went lost. Indeed, these chants bear nearly the same proportions to a marked and elegant melody as a discourse drawn from Swift's Lalaputian Mill would do with one written by a Locke or a Johnson³¹.

He thought little of Hebrew music for he actually believed that the Hebrew language "contained no vowels, and therefore was very unfavourable to music" (in antiquity its vowels were not written)³². Certainly, for Burney, "a marked and elegant melody" was preferable at any time to ancient psalmody. Had he not defined music as "an innocent luxury, unnecessary, indeed, to our existence, but a great improvement, and gratification to our sense of hearing..."? Thus his final conclusion concerning our quest reads like a stifled yawn:

³⁰ This conflict, so interesting for the music sociologist, still demands detailed examination. W. Douglas' serious book, *Church Music in History and Practice* (New York 1937, 1952), has been superseded by the various encyclopaedic articles in *Grove*⁵; see also E. Routley, *Hymns and Human Life* (New York 1953), and John Westrup's article, "England", in *MGG* III.

³¹ Ch. Burney, *A General History of Music* (1776–1789), Vol. I, p. 212, Vol. II, p. 41. On the conception of history in Burney and Hawkins see E. Hegar, *Die Anfänge der neueren Musikgeschichtsschreibung* (Leipzig–Strasbourg 1932).

³² C. M. Burney, Vol. I, p. 413.

That some part of the sacred music of the Apostles and their immediate successors, in Palestine and the adjacent countries, may have been such as was used by the Hebrews, particularly in chanting the psalms, is probable; but it is no less probable that the music of the hymns which were first received in the Church ... resembled that which had been many ages used in the Temple-worship of the Greeks and Romans ...³³

The distinction between psalmody and hymnody is well made, but Burney was really interested in neither. For his conception of music history implied a firm belief in infinite progress, and it was unthinkable for him that at the beginnings of recorded history, or rather history of culture, nations as uncouth as the Jews should have left valuable music³⁴.

His rival and contemporary John Hawkins judges quite differently. He also believed in progress but thought that "a change in the public taste, whenever it takes place, can hardly fail to be for the better." In his *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* he is convinced that: "it (music) was intended by the Almighty for the delight of His rational principles and a deduction of the progress of the science..." which sees in music more than an "innocent luxury"; thus Hawkins intends to demonstrate that music "was always supposed to serve higher aims than those of the excitement of mirth"³⁵. This appears to suit modern conceptions of music and musical forms much better than Burney's "elegant melodies". If Hawkins was less of a musician than Burney, he was more of a scholar and a scientist; his mathematical-acoustical ideas are more lucid than those of Burney. Nor did he hedge on the question of the interrelation between the chant of the Synagogue and Church but took a rather firm, slightly dogmatic point of view; he claimed Jewish influence on the basic ecclesiastical melodies for the first centuries and even for later times, though without citing any evidence. In his manuscripts in the British Museum are found a number of additional "footnotes" of which those on Church music and psalmody are quite original and interesting³⁶. The axiom of progress so dear to the 18th century was strengthened by the theory of evolution dominating the 19th century. As biblical composers, excepting perhaps King David, were anonymous, the danger of an historical approach with the emphasis upon Great Men never permeated the discussion of biblical music. Even the naive

³³ Although a fine musician and a well-read man of the world, it is doubtful if Burney knew any genuine Greek Temple hymns.

³⁴ Voltaire and Montesquieu would have expressed similar opinions: the enlightened rationalists were not too self-critical when it came to their own knowledge of ancient cultures, unless these were Latin or Greek.

³⁵ Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*² (London 1853), Preface.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, Ch. 22.

rationalistic approach had to yield to evolutionist ideas, and music history is indebted to them for some glorious and inspired chapters.

In 1859 Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species* applying the postulate of progress to biology. The consequences of this work were, as is well known, immense; nor did music history remain untouched.

The three great music historians of the nineteenth century were, without exception, adherents of the theory of evolution: F. J. Fétis, A. W. Ambros, and H. Parry; next to them stand two solid but non-philosophic authors, A. von Dommer and Franz X. Haberl. Of these scholars it was Fétis who occupied himself most eagerly with oriental music; indeed one may consider him the father of ethnomusicology. Consequently, he was successful in applying the morphological-analytical and the historical method to our problem. He recognized Psalmody as the oldest common ground between Hebrew and Christian chant and "especially ornate Psalmody, which came from the ancient Hebrews"³⁷.

Stressing the similarity of Byzantine and Oriental Hebrew Psalmody, he tentatively identified the proselyte Judaeo-Christians as the transmitters of synagogal chant to the Church; he was the first scholar to recognize the *structural* importance of the Octoechos³⁸. His familiarity with the chant of the Near East is no less admirable than his power of intuition which anticipated some findings of scholars of our time, especially those of C. Sachs and of R. Lachmann.

Compared with Fétis' prophetic insight and specialist knowledge of the Near East and its music, his two younger contemporaries Ambros and Sir H. Parry are not of the same stature. Ambros mentions the two contradictory attitudes vis-à-vis our main problem, but refutes some of his uncle Kiesewetter's arguments against Jewish influence. He concludes with the concession

... that the Apostles ... intoned the psalms in the melodies with which they were familiar, and that the first Christian community in Jerusalem certainly must have used the old and accustomed tunes for their chant of the psalms.

He ends with the suggestion of a Jewish chant in *Palestine* transformed for the hellenized Diaspora into Greek-Jewish *popular* chant³⁹.

In contrast to Fétis we hear a great deal about Arabic music in the writings of Parry, but it appears that his knowledge of that branch of Near Eastern folklore does not stand up to serious examination. He speaks of "the old Arabic system, which was not pentatonic — whereas the seven-note systems are mostly characteristic of the Caucasian races, and the five-note scales of the somewhat mixed but probably kindred races of Eastern Asia". Here the

³⁷ J. F. Fétis, *Histoire générale de la Musique* (Paris 1874), Vol. IV, pp. 8-12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

³⁹ A. W. Ambros, *Geschichte der Musik* (Breslau 1864), Vol. II, pp. 7, 8.

reader encounters such a mixture of truths, half-truths, hypotheses, and sheer nonsense, that he must resign himself to silence. In his provocatively titled *Evolution of the Art of Music*, Parry is quite sure (he is often "quite sure" in his rhetoric emissions) that after having practised Hebrew Psalm singing "the early Christians adopted the principles and some of the melodic formulas of the ancient Greek system..."⁴⁰.

At this point we may stop and wonder if perhaps Jewish scholars, to whom after all the problem was not alien, contributed to its solution. It was only after the Emancipation at the beginning of the nineteenth century that Jews obtained access to regular university training and, what is more, to the free use of the great libraries. Therefore we can name, for the nineteenth century, only three scholars of respectable attainments who concerned themselves with our problem: S. Naumbourg (1815–1888), A. Ackermann (1867–1912), J. Singer (1841–1911).

Each of them tried to analyse the problem of a musical tradition common to Jews and early Christians during the first centuries of our era. S. Naumbourg, chief cantor of Paris and friend of Vincent d'Indy, relied not upon historical sources, but upon the morphological similarity between ecclesiastical and synagogal chant⁴¹. He was the first to construct or reconstruct certain modes (not scales) which can be found in church and synagogue alike. This was also J. Singer's method⁴². In his book *The Modes (Tonarten) of Traditional Synagogue Chants* he showed some interesting parallels with Gregorian chants, but failed to reach any conclusions. A. Ackermann,⁴³ a philologist and historian rather than musician, was thoroughly familiar with the Jewish aspect of the problem and relied for his conclusions on the results and theories of Ambros and Fétis, which he strove to harmonize with his own studies of Hebrew sources.

The next generation of Jewish scholars, however, actually collaborated with the best contemporary musicologists in the discussion of the problem. They had studied at universities, they had established personal contact with the best scholars in the field, and they all stressed the importance of primary historical sources and spade work in Near Eastern folklore. Their best representatives were: E. Birnbaum (1855–1920), a profound researcher whose correspondence with H. Rieman and Romain Rolland touched upon our subject. In his publications he concerned himself mainly with the High Middle Ages

⁴⁰ Sir Hubert Parry, *Evolution of the Art of Music* (London 1893), pp. 53 f.

⁴¹ S. Naumbourg, *Recueil de chants religieux; Etude historique* (Paris 1874).

⁴² J. Singer, *Die Tonarten des traditionellen Synagogengesanges* (Vienna 1886).

⁴³ A. Ackermann, *Der synagogale Gesang in seiner historischen Entwicklung*, in J. Winter-A. Wuensche, *Die jüdische Literatur seit Abschluss des Kanons* (Trier-Berlin 1896), Vol. III.

and the Renaissance⁴⁴. A. Z. Idelsohn (1882–1938) cultivated both the historic and ethnographic aspects of Jewish music; his studies on the system of the Arabic *maqāmāt* introduced a new concept and a new terminology to the examination of Near Eastern music⁴⁵. In his monumental *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies* (1912–1932) he collected in ten volumes a veritable treasury of Jewish and Judaeo-Arabic folklore and tradition. P. Wagner, the great explorer of Gregorian chant, soon discovered obvious similarities and drew the attention of scholars to them. In contact with H. Kretzschmar, C. Sachs, and G. Adler, Idelsohn set the pace for subsequent generations of musicologists as far as comparison and morphological analysis alone could establish any evidence. His historical training, however, left a good deal to be desired, and he lacked any historical perspective; perhaps Idelsohn was not really interested in history⁴⁶. A. Nadel (1872–1943?), collector rather than scholar, musical essayist rather than researcher, was particularly interested in the Jewish folklore of Eastern Europe; hence there was no reason for him to express his opinions on the origins of Christian chant. All the outstanding musical scholars of the twentieth century were involved in this controversy and their positive answer to the basic problem supported by musical, historical, liturgical and anthropological arguments appeared strong indeed — yet this conclusion was resisted for almost an entire generation of Nazi racists and their doctrinaires, including not a few musicologists.

H. Riemann considered the problem almost solved, and felt sure that the entire Christian psalmody originated in the chant of psalms in the Temple⁴⁷. He hardly argued the case, but simply referred to his extensive bibliography. In G. Adler's *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* (second edition, Berlin 1930), the chapter on early Christian music and Gregorian chant was written by Peter Wagner, whose authority appeared both in his historical reasoning and in his analytical comparisons⁴⁸. For him the Jewish origin of psalmody and of

⁴⁴ A bibliography of this eminent scholar is found in my article "Manuscripts of Jewish Music in the Eduard Birnbaum Collection", *HUCA* XVIII (1944), pp. 397–428.

⁴⁵ Professor C. Palisca, of Yale University, has omitted the name of A. Z. Idelsohn in his "authoritative" survey *Musicology in the U.S.A.* (Princeton 1964). Idelsohn was an American citizen, had lived in the U.S. for 13 or 14 years, and had created new concepts in modern musicology.

⁴⁶ Idelsohn's *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York 1929) was a very popular book, but contains quite a few inaccuracies and shows the wear and tear of time.

⁴⁷ H. Riemann, *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*³ (Leipzig 1923), Vol. I, Part 2, pp. 33, 56, 82.

⁴⁸ In his contribution to Adler's *Handbuch*, P. Wagner again offered his conjecture of Jewish proselytes as the bearers of Jewish tradition into the Church. He had done so first in his *Gregorianische Melodien*, Vol. I, p. 17, published in 1911; meanwhile C. M. Kaufmann had drawn attention to some early Judaeo-Christian cantors, in his *Handbuch der Christlichen Archäologie* (Paderborn 1922). See also *The Sacred Bridge*, Vol. I, pp. 54 ff.

melismatic chant was assured beyond any doubt. W. O. E. Oesterly wrote similarly in the *Oxford History of Music*, Volume VII (Oxford 1929):

But if Jewish music was influenced by Greek music, it is on the other hand in the highest degree probable that the music of the synagogue influenced that of the early church. "The forms of liturgical chant", says Hadow, "on which our church music was largely founded probably came, in the first instances, from Jewish sources"⁴⁹.

This statement was made without any documentation either historical or analytical. A. Einstein⁵⁰ wrote in the same general vein, while R. Lachmann's and C. Sachs' judgments were founded on minute and detailed comparisons⁵¹. Even H. Besseler could not argue against obvious evidence⁵² and when an entire group of French specialists on Gregorian tradition, A. Gastoué, D. Pothier, A. Dechevrens, S. J. Combarieu, Dom A. Mocquereau, and others emphatically stressed the Jewish roots of plain song, the case was clear, and the first question answered. Yet the second one — concerning the bearers of the tradition — was not even examined. Or so it seemed. For there remained, or re-emerged, new skeptics who stressed, like J. Handschin, a "common Mediterranean tradition of melodic contour" or, like G. Wille, disregarded any possible Jewish element in favor of Roman chant; he quoted St. Arnobius (of the late fourth century!) as his first and foremost authority⁵³.

With the exception of P. Wagner, none of these authors offered a tenable or positive answer as to the identity of the transmitters of the tradition to the Church. This was mainly left to the new generation of Jewish scholars in or outside of Israel who emerged after the second World War, and of whom we shall mention here only H. Avenary, I. Adler, B. Bayer, E. Gerson-Kiwi, P. Gradenwitz, A. Shiloah, and the author of this study. Dr. Gerson-Kiwi comes from ethnomusicology and treats our question through morphological

⁴⁹ *OHM*, ed. P. C. Buck and Sir W. H. Hadow, Introductory volume (VII), pp. 88 f.

⁵⁰ A. Einstein, in the third edition of H. Riemann's *Musiklexikon* (Berlin 1929), s.v. "Jüdische Musik".

⁵¹ C. Sachs, *Our Musical Heritage* (New York 1948); "Musik der Antike", in Bücken's *Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft* (Potsdam 1932); *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World* (New York 1943).

⁵² H. Besseler, "Musik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance", in Bücken's *Handbuch*. Although racist principles were taken for granted in the book, the author still took some pains to shed new light on the problem under consideration.

⁵³ G. Wille, *Musica Romana* (Amsterdam 1967), p. 400. The author of this massive book attempts to save the musical reputation of the Romans, yet did not escape some serious mistakes; was he not aware of the complex etymology (Hebrew-Latin) of *jubilaeum*? Why does he cite St. Arnobius as a prototype of allegoristic exegesis: had he never heard of Philo of Alexandria and his school?

comparisons alone; the others use the customary tools of archaeological, historical and liturgical evidence⁵⁴.

Henceforth the interrelation between "specialists" and "general historians of music" has bore ample fruit. G. Reese made full use of the specialist's work in his books on the Middle Ages and on the Renaissance; E. Wellesz, who had always maintained a keen interest in, and had a profound knowledge of the musical history of the Near East in Antiquity and during the Middle Ages, utilized the specialist's findings for his monumental works on Byzantine chant; and the late Msgr. Anglès, being deeply interested in the musical traditions of Babylonia and Spain, returned most generously the contributions by Jewish scholars in his comprehensive books on Spanish music during the Middle Ages; and the very same give-and-take relationship prevails between K. G. Fellerer and B. Staeblein, the outstanding experts on Catholic church music in general, and their counterparts in synagogal music⁵⁵. These great efforts and accomplishments, among which, in this subject, the various books and studies of my lamented and admired friend Anglès stand in the forefront, all take a positive stand on the question of the interrelation between the Synagogue and the early strata of Gregorian chant. W. Apel, in his monumental work *Gregorian Chant*, has epitomized the basic problem and its aspects.

In comparison with these results of research by "specialists" the popular textbooks on music history do not, of course, appear as well informed as the expert literature or even appreciative of the teamwork between the two groups of scholars mentioned above; distortions, ignorance, indifference and inaccuracy are rampant. By far the best representation, however brief, occurs in P. H. Lang's *Music in Western Civilization*, although at the time of its publication (1941) most of the decisive evidence, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls or the great archeological findings, had not yet come to light⁵⁶. D. Grout's massive textbook⁵⁷ could just as well have been published fifty years ago as far as our matter is concerned: neither the Dead Sea Scrolls, nor Idelsohn, nor any other later scholar is mentioned, and he contents himself with the concept of the "Judaean heritage", where we learn that the Hebrew word for *maqām* is *mode*, that the Oxyrhynchos hymn was discovered in 1896; in particular, the

⁵⁴ A fair bibliography on the subject may be found in *MGG*, s.v. "*Jüdische Musik*", and "*Psalm*".

⁵⁵ H. Anglès, *La Musica de las Cantigas de Santa Maria del Rey Alfonso el Sabio* (Barcelona 1957-1964), Vols. I-III (with complete bibliography); E. Wellesz, "Early Christian Music", in *NOHM*, Vol. II (Oxford 1954); *Eastern Elements in Western Chant* (Oxford-New York 1947); *A History of Byzantine Music*² (Oxford 1961); bibliographies of K. G. Fellerer and of B. Staeblein in their respective *Festschriften*, 1962 and 1967.

⁵⁶ P. H. Lang, *Music in Western Civilization* (New York 1941), pp. 42 ff.

⁵⁷ D. Grout, *A History of Western Music* (New York 1960), esp. pp. 20/21.

pertinent terminology leaves a good deal of precision to be desired⁵⁸.

As we have already emphasized, the cardinal weakness of all such texts lies in their lack of a coordinated examination of the ecclesiological, theological and particularly liturgical-historical aspects of the question. In the following pages such a method will be demonstrated.

Before entering into it, an argumentum *e contrario* might not be amiss. If we make the attempt of reconstructing music history while excluding all references to the Bible or Judaism, an enormous hiatus would open up, destroying all historic continuity: from Egypt and Babylonia, from Greek and Roman testimonies we would have to leap to Christianity and its documents about music, to statements, quotations from, allusions to, and discussions of musical topics, always referring to strange and unknown sources; thus the entire beginnings of Western music would become incomprehensible⁵⁹. In music's road from East to West the civilization of Jewish Palestine can simply not be ignored.

The apostolic and post-apostolic teachers of the early Church, such as Clement of Rome, Epiphanius of Byzantium, even the heretic Symmachus, Paul of Samosata, not to mention the unjustly anathemized Nestorius, were all familiar with Jewish doctrine and lore, in spite of their enmity sometimes very close to it, as for instance Melito of Sardes, who appears as the first poet of deicide, as I have demonstrated elsewhere⁶⁰. How far these new Christians in Palestine and Syria identified themselves with Judaism may be seen in a brief excerpt from Eusebius' *Martyrs of Palestine* which we quote from its Syriac version: (Febr. 16, 310):

Having harassed the spokesman of them all with these trials, he (the Roman judge) first asked him who he was; then, when he had heard, instead of the man's proper name, that of some prophet — for this was what they all did: in place of the names which their fathers had given them (names, perhaps, belonging to idols) they called themselves by others; for instance, you might have heard them assuming names such as Elijah and Jeremiah and Isaiah and Samuel and Daniel, and thus manifesting, not only by deeds but by the literal sense of the words they used, "*The Jew which is one inwardly*" (Rom. 2: 29) and the genuine and pure "*Israel of God*" (Gal. 6: 16)... The judge (he cannot have been very learned) asked the martyrs where they had come from; and they all said "from Jerusalem", a place of which he had never heard (at that time the Romans

⁵⁸ A few rectifications are better than a list of *errata*: Tersanctus and Trisagion are not identical and should not be confused with each other; the songs of the Temple in Jerusalem were not the common ground between the Jewish and Christian chant; the Oxyrhynchus hymn was not discovered in 1896, but in 1922, etc.

⁵⁹ Professor O. Strunk evidently does not share this point of view; for in his *Source Readings in Music History* the Bible is conspicuously absent. Does he not consider the Bible a source, or not relevant to Music history? Apparently to him the collection of erudite after-dinner gossip — the *Deipnosophists* — has more historical value than, say, the Book of Chronicles.

⁶⁰ *HUCA* XXXVII (1966).

called Jerusalem Aelia Capitolina), yet the martyrs again quoted St. Paul who had said "*The Jerusalem that is free, which is our mother*" (Gal. 4: 26), this they cited as their home-town — to the great perplexion of the judge⁶¹.

The first and necessary condition of the transition of customs and ideas is fulfilled: only where primitive Christians and Jews lived in proximity, or where the existence of proselytes *en masse* is well established; yet it is not sufficient. For quite frequently both the Jewish and the Christian traditions were lost in the turmoil of those centuries. Such a case is Armenia, whose close relation with the ideas of ancient Judaism I have discussed elsewhere⁶². In order to detect the actual transmitters of Jewish practices to the Church we must look for communities which survived the storm of mass migrations, which maintained their literary, liturgical and linguistic identity more or less unbroken, until a new tradition, based upon the old one, had been firmly established. There were five centers in antiquity, where these conditions were fulfilled: Jerusalem, Antioch, Byzantium, Alexandria and Rome. Their cases, especially their record in the history of Judaism, will be examined for possible transmitters who stood between Synagogue and Church.

(To be concluded in the next volume).

⁶¹ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, and *Martyrs of Palestine*, ed. Lawlor-Culton (London 1927) our quotation is from *The Martyrs*, pp. 384/385. Also Eusebius, *op. cit.*, III, 27, 1-6; IV, 22, 5-9; VI, 16. In VI, 16, 3 Eusebius quotes Origen as saying to have found an ancient text of psalms in a jar near Jericho(!).

⁶² Eusebius, *ibid.*, IV, 6.

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