Review essay

Karnes, Kevin C., and Emilis Melngailis. 2014. *Jewish Folk Songs from the Baltics selections from the Melngailis collection.* Middleton WI: A-R editions.

Yosef Goldenberg

Jewish Folk Songs from the Baltics makes public a forgotten source from the collection of the Latvian musician Emilis Melngailis (1874–1954), a devoted collector and scholar of folk songs. In addition to the Latvian folk songs Melngailis published in thirteen volumes, he devoted attention to the collection of songs from minority communities which inhabited Latvia, namely, Jews, Roma, Russians, Germans, Lithuanians, Poles, Belarussians, Latgalians, Livornians, and Estonians (p. xiv). Kevin Karnes took upon himself the daunting task of editing the Jewish items found in two notebooks from Melngailis's collection (nos. 65 and 74). Melngailis started collecting Jewish songs in 1899 in Keidan (Lithuania), and continued this task in the 1920s and 1930s in Latvia after a long stay in Uzbekistan. (In 2015 The Archive of Latvian Folklore made the entire Melngailis collection available, including all of his 104 notebooks).

The Jewish items in Melngailis's collection, which were considered lost, were retrieved by Karnes (apparently only partially, as will be shown below) and are presented to the reader in a modern, annotated edition. A lengthy introduction provides ample historical and musical contexts. Karnes did not spare any effort in trying to locate parallel versions of, and information about, the songs Melngailis documented in extant publications of Jewish music, especially in anthologies of Yiddish songs, the most prominent language of this corpus. Originally, the publication was planned as a collaboration with the late Israeli musicologist of Latvian origin Joachim Braun (Bar Ilan University), whose passing Karnes mourns (p. vi); indeed, reading Karnes's commentaries to the songs, it seems that the absence of a scholar familiar with Hebrew and Yiddish folk songs was detrimental to this project.

Introduction to the volume

The extensive introduction to this volume contextualizes the collection from diverse perspectives, thereby making this a text of value by itself, regardless of Melngailis's collection. The introduction offers English readers a survey of Jewish culture in Latvia, where several languages (Latvian, Russian, Hebrew and Yiddish) usually impede access for the general readership.

The introduction features detailed documentation of the Melngailis project as a whole, disclosing Karnes's intimate familiarity with Melngailis's life work. The survey also includes a

brief general history of folk song ethnography in Eastern Europe, and of the cultural life of Jews in Latvia, with emphasis on their musical ecosystem.

According to Karnes, folk songs were collected in Eastern Europe since the 1850s, decades after this practice was well established in Germany, but almost half a century before the first collection of folk song texts in Yiddish appeared (Marek and Ginzburg 1901). "Yiddish was widely spoken by Jews throughout the Baltic provinces" and in Kurland (Courland, the part of Latvia where many Jews lived) "the language of culture and commerce had been German since the Middle Ages for Jews and non-Jews alike," while "in the early 1900s, Russian began gradually to overtake German" (p. xviii). Latvian Jews thus had limited command of the Latvian language, and their culture, subsequently, was part of the larger Eastern European Jewish space.

Karnes maintains that this volume "enables us to study, perform, and hear again some of the songs and dances performed by members of substantial, centuries-old Jewish communities whose vernacular musics have remained largely inaccessible to this day" (p. xiv). Despite these claims for the exceptionality of Melngailis's Jewish collection, however, most of the materials included in this volume belong to a well-documented Jewish music tradition. Moreover, Karnes's argument that "traces of the region's Jewish folk music surfaced in collections published elsewhere, but only, it seems, in forms that make its recovery all but impossible today" (pp. xxvi) seems therefore misleading.

Baltic Jewish culture is well documented in Levin (1988, 1996). Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, himself born and raised in Kurland, included in his publications many songs he knew through oral transmission from his childhood (Idelsohn 1932, p. x). Soviet Yiddish folk song collections, such as the one by Beregovskii and Fefer (1938) published in Kiev, share much of the repertoire Melngailis heard in the Baltic countries. It is also unlikely that, as Karnes implies, much of the transcribed material is indeed "centuries-old." The items sung to Melngailis by informants affiliated with Zionist circles were rather new by the time they were collected and transcribed, at least. In fact, Karnes himself and his assistants identified the sources of about half the collection (more on that below), and the same could have been done for most of the other half they did not identify.

Awareness of Baltic Jewish culture has not been altogether absent in Jewish folklore and music scholarship. In Lithuania (where Melngailis made his earliest transcriptions of Jewish songs in 1899), a complete Hebrew publication devoted to Lithuanian folk literature appeared (Yardeni-Zakheim 1928). This volume included the earliest published translations made in any language by Leah Goldberg, the renowned Hebrew poet. There are also a few Jewish songs of Lithuanian origin. Idelsohn found one song (1932, xxiii and no. 400, *davnen mir uns*") based on a Lithuanian source (*O iš kur tu*?). In Hebrew, the 1897 song *Be'eretz ha'tsvi* (In the land of Israel) by Arieh Leib Joffe (1897) is partially based on the Lithuanian national song *Kur bėga Šešupė* by the poet Maironis and composer Česlovas Sasnauskas. The Hebrew text is a free adaptation from the Lithuanian. The melodies are almost identical in the first section, while the second one

remains unidentified. About one generation later, the "Lithuanian Polka" melody became a folk dance among the pioneers in Palestine, usually without a text, although one informant perofrms it with a local text, *Hu dome letarnegol* ("He Looks like a Rooster").

Connections with Latvian culture, on the other hand, are less evident than the Lithuanian ones.[1] Idelsohn was aware of a collection of 100 (harmonized) Latvian folk songs (Vītols 1906; Idelsohn 1932, xviii, fn. 1), which he most likely researched for sources of Yiddish songs (but to no avail). Marc Lavry, a native of Riga, who composed his first works there and conducted its opera, in 1934 led five concerts of all-Jewish programs with the "Jewish minorities' orchestra." The events were advertised in both Yiddish and Latvian.[2]

There is no evidence of Jewish folk songs in Baltic languages. Two items in this publication are in Latvian (nos. 13–14), but the interlocutor recorded was apparently not Jewish. In addition, no. 12, a Yiddish song sung by a Latvian interlocutor, and no. 7, an instrumental "Jewish dance" by a Latvian performer, are probably instances of cross-over from Jewish music rather than towards it.[3] Thus, the Jewish items in Melngailis's collection that relate specifically to Baltic cultures are rather an exception.

Recruiting folk songs in the process of the Latvian nation-making is a theoretical concern in Karnes's introduction as much as it pertains to Zionism. Scholars of Israeli culture will find this discussion pertinent as it offers an alternative reading to the by now clichéd concept of "invented tradition," as deployed in relation to the Zionist project (Burstyn 2015/16). Indeed, scholars have claimed that modern Hebrew songs were intentionally composed in imagined manufactured "archaic" styles, so as to circumvent the period of exile and express the return to the ancestral land. Karnes's model proposes that songs transmitted orally by non-professional performers were collected prior to having been endowed with national signification.

Toward the end of the introduction, Karnes discusses Melngailis's views during the Nazi occupation of the Baltic States. He quotes Melngailis's mention of the linguist Sergei Bulich, according to whom the "originary [sic] home" of the Aryans is "not to be sought in the southerly reaches of the world" (p. xxvii). This idea is of course a critique of the theory of the proto-Indo-European roots of European cultures, a theory grounded on strong linguistic evidence. The critique was motivated by racist prejudices probably aimed at pleasing the ears of the occupiers. Latvians and Lithuanians, whose languages have the highest affinity to Sanskrit among all European languages, distanced themselves from such Eastern origins. Interestingly, this negative view of the Asian origins of European cultures contrasts with a predominant Zionist rhetoric that emphasized the Near Eastern foundations of "authentic" Jewish culture.

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[1] According to the *Guide to Jewish Materials Stored in Latvian State Historical Archives* (description of archival fund: 6998. 1929–1935), the "Central Jewish schools organization, Private evening gymnasium for adults (Daugavpils)" had between 1929 and 1935 "Latvian language studies in Jewish secondary schools", but this apparently means that by default Jews in Latvia did not know the Latvian language.

[2] I thank the Mark Lavry Heritage Society for that information.

[3] While Karnes's edition does not aim to include Latvian songs that record the histories of Jewish communities or individuals (p. xxxii), the Jewish dance in no. 7 might indicate the Latvian portrayal of Jews rather than an authentic Jewish work.

Indeed, Meir Shimon Geshuri argued that "Our music must remain Oriental in character, since we were an Oriental people in the Land of Israel" (Geshuri 1943).

A long section in the introduction to Karnes's volume calls attention to "encounters along the Baltic coast" between Jews and non-Jews. Despite "ample evidence" in support of the view that "Jews and Latvian hardly met at all" (pp. xviii-xix), Karnes finds that documents such as "published and unpublished vernacular songs, concert programs, and other documents that provide glimpses into public and private musical life . . . tell different stories" (p. xix). Yet as far as song lyrics about Jewish-Latvian encounters are concerned, I suggest they should not be seen as evidence at all, as text might depict unlikely imaginary encounters that are attractive precisely due to their unlikeliness. Analogous representations of unlikely crossover ethnic encounters are found elsewhere as well: There are Jewish-American songs about Jewish cowboys (Gottlieb 2004, 64). Also Yemenite-Ashkenazi intermarriages in Israel during the 1930s and through the 1950s were more common on stage than in reality.

The separate subhead entitled "about the edition" opens with a precise description of the editorial policy employed in handling the various aspects of Melngailis's manuscript. The only unfortunate editorial decision was that "text underlay has been adjusted to align texts and notes at the editor's discretion based on word accentuation, precedent and context. At least for items in Hebrew, it is not clear which system of accentuation served the interlocutors–the Ashkenazi system, where the accent most often falls on the penultimate syllable, or the Sephardi system, where it is the last syllable of the word that is usually accentuated. The latter system gradually took precedence in the Jewish settlement in British Palestine and in some Zionist circles in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the Ashkenazi pronunciation is apparent in the transcription of some titles (e.g., *Alpaim shona* [no. 38] rather than *shanah*; *Al mois Trumpeldor* [no. 37.] rather than "*mot*"), but the Ashkenazi prosody of the Hebrew poems is not observed.

The latter part of this subhead dealing with editorial criteria is actually an analytical glimpse into the tonal systems of Eastern European Jewish music. Karnes's detailed discussion on the Aeolian and altered Phrygian scales recalls the debate between two prominent Jewish musicians affiliated with the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music: Lazare Saminski, who praised the Aeolian scale and regarded the Phrygian scale as its corruption, and Joel Engel, who considered the altered Phrygian scale as legitimate. Saminski's position intersected with ideas propagated by musicians in the Jewish community of Palestine. Critic Menashe Ravina (1942, 13), for example, called for the avoidance of the augmented second, which in his view signified the despair of the diaspora. Yitzhak Edel ([1966] 1980), who was sympathetic to Jewish music of the diaspora, shared the same disdain towards the augmented second, which he regarded as a corruption stemming from foreign influence (Goldenberg 2004).

Karnes quotes Idelsohn on the importance of the lack of a leading tone in Jewish songs. These issues were apparently of concern for Latvians as well. Studying the previously mentioned Vītols collection of harmonized Latvian folk songs, Idelsohn (1932, xviii, fn. 1) found that around 40% are in minor keys. Yet, among these forty-two songs in minor, only four feature the leading

tone in their melody (nos. 9, 21, 26 and 98), while twenty-two have it in their harmonization. Among the remaining sixteen songs in minor, the harmonization of the final cadence often avoids the seventh scale step, either by employing incomplete chords or by using plagal cadences. This suggests a conscious choice that reflects an internal Latvian debate over the tonality of "authentic" folk songs.

While Karnes presents the "Altered Phrygian" simply as an Aeolian with a lowered second step and a raised third step, it is in fact identical to a plagal form of harmonic minor (e.g., altered Phrygian above A as D harmonic minor). Nathan Shahar (1989, 220), having encoded melodies of Hebrew songs by their scale degrees in relation to a central tone, defined the tetrachord featuring a minor second, an augmented second and a minor second, as the upper tetrachord of an harmonic minor. This raises the question whether a clear distinction between these two conceptualizations of the altered Phrygian mode is possible or even neccesary. A crucial criterion for interpreting a melody as being in Altered Phrygian or harmonic minor should be its final tone: ending on the fifth step alone of the would-be harmonic minor could support an altered Phrygian reading; but even then there is a strong case in hearing a harmonic minor that ends on the lower melodic scale fifth step (Tarsi 2002). Tarsi suggests further distinctions, according to which a finalis need not be the final tone, but can offer a tone of gravitation different than that of a tonic. At least for the folk song repertoire in the present volume, such distinctions are not required.[4] A strong case against reading plagal harmonic minor is found in those melodies that actually appear in two forms–Aeolian and altered Phrygian on the same note. A case in point is *Vos mir seinen*, which Idelsohn lists in both versions (1932, no. 517). Melngailis's commentary to the transcription of "*Was wir saien*" (no. 63) states that he transcribed the Aeolian form only and therefore he had no need for key signatures.

Melngailis's practice of notating melodies based on the harmonic minor/altered Phrygian is inconsistent; such inconsistency, accordingly, impedes our understanding of this phenomenon. Consider, for example, the famous song *Hava Nogilo* (no. 53). This melody has three parts. In terms of harmonic minor, two sections end on the dominant and the final one ends in a stable manner. Read as an altered Phrygian, the final tone of section 1 is relatively open (analogous to an imperfect authentic cadence), and that of section 2 is the lowest tone (with possible claim for centricity). Yet the end of section 3, then, clearly reverts to harmonic minor. Melngailis notates E as the stable tone (tonic of E harmonic minor, potentially B altered Phrygian) but his key signatures are more complicated than required: F sharp, D sharp alongside naturals on C and G, avoiding four sharps that would imply E major. But F sharp in the key signature and D sharp whenever needed in an E harmonic minor context would suffice. Contrarily, the song *Schabe mit Bern* (no. 25) appears to be in C harmonic minor, even though it ends with the descending tetrachord on this scale and starts with an arpeggio on the dominant of the harmonic minor, thereby reinforcing G as its center rather than C. This suggests a strong case for an "altered-Phrygian" preference.

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[4] On plagal harmonic minor in the Ashkenazi liturgy, see Levine 2001, 19.

Commentaries to the songs

The collection has sixty unaccompanied melodies, numbered 1–64 (four items appear twice: nos. 6/49, 8/19, 32/56, 47/48). Compared with other anthologies of Yiddish and Hebrew songs, such as Idelsohn (1932) and Beregovskii and Fefer (1938), this is a fairly modest collection. Only four items represent the earliest stratum of the collection (transcribed in 1899), while another thirteen may belong to this batch as well. The 1899 field work alone contained 120 songs performed by Jewish singers (p. xxiv), but most of them were not included in the edition under review. If indeed "the edition includes all songs and instrumental pieces in the Melngailis Collection identified as Jewish" (p. xxxii), the reader is left to assume that the rest of the 1899 materials are lost. While "the absolute loss of Melngailis's Jewish collection was discovered to have been a myth" (p. xi), it seems then that, at least in regard to the earliest layer, the loss is indeed almost total. Despite the exhaustive description of Melngailis's notebooks with Jewish materials (p. xxxiii), this information appears to be missing.

Karnes and his team located thirty-two items from the Melngailis Jewish corpus in other collections of Jewish folk songs. This means that about half of this Jewish corpus consists of known materials. The rich commentary on these songs are unprecedented in English, but one wonders about their usefulness to scholarship on Yiddish and Hebrew folk songs, given the sketchiness and even randomness of the Melngailis Jewish corpus.

To begin with, nowhere in the publication does Karnes distinguish between the sources of texts alone (Ginzburg and Marek 1901, Strauss 1920, Nadel 1923) and those that include musical transcriptions. Occasionally, the distinction between different melodies set to the same text and within the same collection is missing (see below on *Elijohu Honovi*). One song (*Schlof mein Kind*, no. 33) is shown in an arrangement of a different melody (although the melody Melngailis transcribed is very well-known). The commentary of another song (*Ani holachti bajaar*, no. 39) refers to two sources, even though the melody transcribed by Melngailis is different than the ones included in those anthologies and is moreover apparently unique.

Missed identifications

The Melngailis Jewish collection provides few novelties to the study of Yiddish and Hebrew folk songs. While Karnes argues that *Senderle mein Man* (no. 26), appears "in only one published collection from the early twentieth century" (Ginzburg and Marek 1901), this source includes only the text, making Melngailis's version probably the first and only musical transcription of this song. The first phrase of the melody resembles another widespread Yiddish song *Meirke mein Sohn*. Considering some similarities in the rhetoric of the text, a connection between both songs should be further studied. Especially interesting is the melody of the Hebrew song *Hazak vemac* (no. 51) which is not to be found in any other source.[5]

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[5] The volume includes hitherto unknown information on one Holocaust victim. "Melngailis heard [song no. 8] performed by one Abrams Locovs (b. 1907) in the eastern Latvian town of Ludza." This interlocutor's name, with the same year of birth, exists in the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names in Yad Vashem. No testimony about this person has survived, and his name is known only from a collection of

In spite of the keen efforts by Karnes to annotate the Jewish songs in the Melngailis collection, these notes are lacking information that could have been easily retrieved had the author consulted sources in Hebrew. The latter half of this review-essay therefore has my own notes on selected songs from the Melngailis collection, following which are some methodological suggestions concerning the study of Jewish folk songs.

Most of my notes refer to the Zemereshet website founded and maintained by a volunteer association of early Hebrew song enthusiasts. The website (in Hebrew only) provides recordings, texts, and original non-Hebrew songs (in the case of Hebrew covers) in addition to substantial notes. The following references are linked directly to the recordings in Zemereshet together with the ID numbers of the song pages**.**

No, 10, "Unidentified tune," is a version of the Yiddish song *Chezkele* (no. 38 in Kisselgof 1912; sometimes spelled *Chatzkele*). It is also known with a Hebrew text by Kadish Yehuda Silman, *Paz kula raz kula* ("It is all gold, it is all secret," Zemereshet #15). Measures 3–6 of the transcription (out of a total of eight) provide sufficient proof to claim a direct relationship.

No. 37, "*Al mois Trumpeldor*," whose Hebrew title is spelled in the Ashkenazi pronunciation means "On the death of Trumpeldor." This is the title given by Binder (1926, 42) to the Hebrew song *Mini Dan ve'ad Be'er Sheva*" which is also known as "Song of the Prisoners in Acre" (Zemereshet #305). The leader or the Revisionist party within the Zionist movement, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, wrote this song while imprisoned at a British facility in the fortress of Acre. It was set to music by the Galician Jewish musician Yosef Milet (1889-1947) who was one of the pioneer music teachers in the Yishuv. The melody transcribed by Melngailis hardly resembles Milet's, except for the first measure. However, it may be argued that the singer simply did not remember the melody well (as s/he did not remember the text either). Still, the song was transmitted in different variants, some of which carry more affinities to the melody transcribed by Melngailis, such as the opening verse in the recording by Rema Samsonov. Binder notates the melody in that manner, but avoids a first open ending. In other sources (e,g. the recording by Uzi Meiri), the first verse begins differently and only the second verse recalls Melngailis's transcription. Curiously, the two first measures of Melngailis tune match another famous Zionist song, *Se'u tsiona nes vadegel* ("Carry your pennants and flags to Zion"; Zemereshet #154). The performer apparently started singing Jabotinsky's song but confused it with "Se'u tziona" and lost track of the melody. Still, tight-knit phrases later in the melody transcribed by Melngailis give the impression of a different melody altogether, of which no other documentation is available.

No. 38, "*Alpaim Shona*": despite its obscure origin, this song appears in a variety of sources. The melody transcribed by Melngailis (Zemereshet #2625) was recorded with small changes by various interlocutors such as Shulamit Rosenfeld, born in Rosh Pina in 1907 and Papo Salem, who learned it in the "*Hacoaḥ*" Zionist youth movement in Thessaloniki. Eliyahu Hacohen

passports of Jews recorded at the Riga prefecture. If this is the same individual, we can now locate his place of dwelling (Ludza) alongside a melody transcribed according to his singing.

(personal communication) reports that he heard the song from various members of the first waves of Zionist immigration to Palestine. This text was also taught by an ultra-Orthodox instructor at the Beit Yaakov network of schools for girls in Israel in 1936 (Rotenberg [1999] 2003).[6] The text looks like it had been penned by a professional writer, yet the source of both the text and its melody remains unknown.[7] The full text of this song with English translation (but with a different melody) was published in an unidentified bi-lingual book found at the National Library of Israel (henceforth NLI; see ex. 1);[8] based on an unpublished mimeographed collection of Ephraim Abileah's songs I was able to identify him as the composer of this second melody.

No. 43, "*Dancis,*" is known from several contexts. Among the Chabad Hassidic community, it is sung with the text *Utsu etsa vetufar* ("Hatch a plot—it shall be foiled" [Isaiah 8:10]). *Chabadpedia* attributes the melody tentatively to Meir Shapira from Lublin and the Yiddish text to this melody, "*Lomir bigrasn,*" was recorded commercially by Cindy Paley. The melody is published in Rosowski (1929) as "Hora no. 16" and was sung by pioneers in Palestine as *Hora galilit* ("Galilee Hora," Zemereshet #1533). Other texts, ditties about public personalities in Hebrew (on Moshe Sne, a military leader and later the leader of the Communist Party) and Yiddish (on the author Nathan Bistritzky) are also known (Zemereshet #4371).

No. 46, "*Du fregst mir mein Freind*" is "apparently unique to Melngailis's collection," according to Karnes. Indeed, one would not find other references to this text, but that is only because the correct title should be "*Du fregst mich mein Freind*". This in fact is a famous song by Abraham Reisen; its melody, however, is not the usual one set to this text by Sidor Belarsky (Bugatch 1961, 129). I suspect this "tuneful if unremarkable" melody (in Karnes's words) might be related to the melody by which *Akara* (Barren) is sung (Zemereshet #3645; its text is by poetess Rachel Bluwstein). Example 2 compares both songs. The melodies share the opening motive, the cadences, the higher melodic area of mm. 3–4, the leap of a sixth to the higher third scale step at exactly the same place, and the descending arpeggio of a subdominant chord at the end of the third quarter. Without further evidence, the direct relation between these two melodies cannot be confirmed for the moment.[9]

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[6] The reference is on p. 72 in the original Hebrew edition. I was unable to verify page number in the English edition.

[7] For Shulamit Rosenfeld's performance (recorded in 1993 by Yaakov Mazor), listen at http://rosetta.nli.org.il/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE28576054 at 56:25; for Papo Salem's performance (recorded by Susana Weich-Shahak), listen at http://rosetta.nli.org.il/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE27216076, at 1:39:56. National Sound Archives, NLI, Y 06149, Y05977b.

[8] Four pages only of this book are found in the Meir Noy Archive of Hebrew Song at NLI, folders of separate songs, "Amami" (folk) item no. 14. I assume the book as a whole is not a songster, and Noy added only the pages with songs to his archive.

[9] The source of the melody of *Akara* according to information that Nahumi [Har-Zion] received from an interlocutor of his and delivered to Meir Noy, is a melody of the Russian poem by Semyon Nadson "Надсон, Семён Яковлевич" (the official title is "ДВА ГОРЯ", Two Disasters). I was able to find the Russian poem only with other melodies, but it is possible that it was indeed sung to that melody, and served as the source for the Yiddish melody as well. Information found in Meir Noy's card catalogue of his Archive of Hebrew songs at NLI, pp. 235–6 in digitized file no. 5 (out of 24 alphabetically ordered cards). Nahumi Har-Zion (personal communication, 2017) recalled giving this information, but did not have further details; he told me that his interlocutor on this no longer lives.

TWO THOUSAND YEARS / אַלְפַּיִם שָׁנָה

Two thousand years we've been wandering;
We've been driven from everywhere.
Our best have robbers taken,

And many sorrows have we suffered.
The Jew's lot is bitter,
But his faith he does not betray,
Always singing a song.

Jerusalem, land of our fathers;
There is our homeland,
Land of all our hope.

The hour has struck --
We must return.
Arise, O brothers,
We're returning.

אַלְפַּיִם שָׁנָה כְּבָר עָבְרוּ
מֵהָעֵת שֶׁאֲנַחְנוּ נוֹדְדִים
וּמִכָּל מָקוֹם גוֹרְשְׁנוּ כְּבָר

אֶת טוּבֵנוּ לָקְחוּ הַשּׁוֹדְדִים
גַּם צָרוֹת רַבּוֹת סָבַלְנוּ
גּוֹרָלוֹ שֶׁל יְהוּדִי הוּא מַר
וֶאֱמוּנָתוֹ בְּכָל זֹאת לֹא בָּגַד בָּהּ
שִׁירָתוֹ יְהוּדִי תָּמִיד הוּא עֵר

יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אֶרֶץ אָבוֹת
שָׁם הִיא מוֹלַדְתֵּנוּ
אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ
כָּל תִּקְוָתֵנוּ

הַפַּעֲמוֹן מְצַלְצֵל
לָנוּ לָשׁוּב
קוּמוּ אַחִים קוּמוּ
נָשׁוּב נָשׁוּב נָשׁוּב

Example 1. *"Alpaim Shona"*, full Hebrew text with English translation and a melody by Ephraim Abileah, from several pages of Shabbat songs, cut from an unidentified source, at the Meir Noy Archive of Hebrew Song, NLI, Noy.H, sefer B ('amami 14).

Example 2. "*Aqara*" compared with "*Du fregst mich mein Freind*"

No. 48, "*Džingale, džingale, džan*", is an Armenian melody (despite Karnes's claim that this song is unique). It was popularized during Israel's 1948 War as "*Hafinjan*" ("The Coffee Pot," Zemereshet #888) with a text written by Haim Hefer. The latter recalled this melody was sung by Jews in Palestine even earlier, but without text (Hefer 2004, 98). *Džingale, džingale, džan* is also listed in the widespread songster *Shirei Eretz-Israel* (Schönberg 1935, 110) under the title *Dschungali Dschungali Dschun*, a corruption of the original Armenian lyrics "Hingala" (see Assaf 2011). The melodic version in Schönberg is closer to the Hebrew song than the one transcribed by Melngailis. We do not know how this Armenian song migrated to the Jewish repertoire, yet the very fact it appears in "copybooks compiled in the 1930s and 1940s" might attest that Melngailis's interlocutors heard it when it was already disseminated in Europe through Schönberg's songster.

No. 62, "*Umatoi umanoim*": The title corrupts the Hebrew in Ashkenazi pronunciation, *Hine ma tov uma noim* (Psalm 133: 1). Karnes argues that "the tune Melngailis transcribed appears to be unique. Its similarity to the American spiritual 'Glory, Glory Hallelujah' (and the earlier songs to that melody) is striking but possibly coincidental." But even without further evidence, both songs are more than similar or "strikingly similar"; they are plain and simply identical, as the Hebrew verse is simply set to the melody of the American song. The setting of this Biblical Hebrew verse to this song was documented in the autobiographical songster of Netiva Ben Yehuda (1990, 112), and it is also sung by Mike Weintraub in a 1948 recording by Ben Stonehill in New York, in a collection of Yiddish and Hebrew songs sung by Holocaust survivors.

The setting of the popular American melody and Hebrew verse was therefore not a local tradition or a ditty, but a widespread item (Zemereshet, #2774). It also became a Hebrew chant in the sports arena with the lyrics *Hagavi'a hu shelanu* ("The cup is ours"). The daily newspaper Davar (27 May 1928) reports on the reception for the winning Hapo'el Tel Aviv soccer team with these lyrics; although the report does not indicate the melody, it is almost certainly the American one. My late father (b. 1930) recalled the song set to this tune from his childhood.

Additions to commentaries of songs

No. 6 and 49, "*Elijohu Honovi*" (Zemereshet #269), are transcriptions of a widespread song for the ending of the Sabbath; they appear in earlier sources (Kisselgof 1912)[10] and have been documents in three early recordings of Hebrew songs: by the male choir of Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, by the <u>actors of Habima theatre</u> (both from the 1920s) and by Josef Spindel (1934). Another recording by cantor Ephraim Di-Zahav (at 1:24) was broadcast for many years at the end of the Sabbath by Kol Israel (the former Israeli state radio), thereby contributing to the wide spread of the song. The sung text is only the beginning of a long piyyut of unknown source. The entire piyyut set to music (with the same opening melody) is found in a single source (Nadel 1937, 49).

Melngailis transcribed two non-identical versions of this song. In contrast to most extant versions, both of Melngailis's transcriptions lack the leading tone in m. 2: no. 6 has an Aeolian seventh scale step while no. 49 repeats the tonic tone. The lack of the leading tone may suggest another line of dissemination for this melody. Additionally, the first measure recurs in both transcriptions two more times: mm. 3–4 without change, then mm. 5–6 with a higher and open ending. This is how the melody is performed today. In both Kisselgof's transcription and in Idelsohn's recording, however, the opening two bars ascend already in the second statement (and there is no third statement). The final part of the melody appears once with a closed cadence, as opposed to the version circulating today in which it is repeated, first with half a cadence followed by a full one. This double ending may have been introduced in a relatively later stage.

No. 33, "*Shlof mein Kind,*" is a widespread Yiddish lullaby. It appears in Melngailis's collection in an arrangement for voice and piano. Taking his cue from Idelsohn, Karnes notes that this poem is sung to various melodies; some of these melodies were used for different Hebrew lullabies, some were translations of the Yiddish song, while others were original like *Shkhav heradem* by Aharon Liboschitzky and *Numa peraḥ* by Ephraim Dov Lifshitz. All the lullabies in this family of songs are in the catalectic trochaic heptameter. The tune Melngailis transcribed belongs to a family of related melodies that is similar to (and perhaps stem from) a Cossack lullaby.[11]

No. 39, "*Ani holachti bajaar*" (Zemereshet #4662 and #4663, with different melodies): The text of this song has a long history and many variants. For a detailed study, see Hazan and Seroussi 2005.

No. 45, "*Du forst awek,*" is often attributed to Solomon Shmulewitz (Small) who published the song in the United States as "*A brivele zu mamen*" ("A letter from mother") and recorded it in 1908.[12] The text was previously published by Ginzburg and Marek (1901), but Small's version

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[10] Karnes refers to both items 7 and 12 in Kisselgof 1912, but no. 12 is in another tune (Zemereshet #1163).

[11] See the notes at http://a-pesni.org/popular20/kazkolyb.htm. The Cossack lullaby has also a different melody by Gretchaninov, which has also been translated into Hebrew (Zemereshet #2508).

[12] Small's 1908 recording is available at https://rsa.fau.edu/track/5773

features a new section, most likely a chorus he added to a pre-existing song (Idelsohn 1932, no. 428). Could the song have arrived in Latvia from the United States, in either a printed version or a commercial recording? This hypothesis must be verified through cautious comparisons of all sources. A Hebrew version of this Yiddish song (Zemereshet #1065) is set to Small's melody for the chorus, while the verses are sung to a newly composed tune by Shmuel Freshko. Indeed, the Hebrew song takes from Small's melody only the portion that is missing from the version Melngailis transcribed.

No. 58, "*Onu Nihyeh haRishonim*" (Zemereshet #534): The Hebrew text was first published in the daily "*Hapo'el hatsa'ir*" on 24 December 1920 and not in Schönberg's *Shirei Eretz Israel* songster as maintained by Karnes. The latter correctly indicates that the Yiddish song *Blondzhe mer nit in der finster* (attributed to Leib Mal'ach) is set to the same well-known tune. The Yiddish song appeared slightly before the Hebrew one (in Glattstein 1919). Vinkovetzky, Kovner, and Leichter (1985, 11–12, a source cited by Karnes elsewhere) identify the composer as "Sheinin," but this identification is an error stemming from Helfman (1938, 42–45), where the Yiddish text is set to a different tune in a choral arrangement by E. Scheinin.

Karnes points out that there is one more melody for the Hebrew text (a Russian tune, see Zemereshet #1962). Actually, this song has been set to three additional melodies: a Russian tune (Zemereshet #1203), a melody by I[srael?] Glattstein (perhaps identical with the editor of the 1919 collection where the famous tune appeared with the Yiddish texts, <u>Zemereshet #4863</u>), and one more unidentified tune (<u>Zemereshet #3829</u>).[13]

Conclusion and Suggestions

This edition of the Melngailis Jewish collection deserves praise for the rich historical contextualization provided by its insightful introductory essay, but the partial or otherwise incorrect information included in the song commentaries is regrettable and could have been easily avoided with the aid of online databases. The publication could have benefited from a casual search at the NLI Hebrew and Yiddish song catalogs, as well as the richly informed (and constantly updated) Zemereshet website. While the editor had Hebrew-reading assistants (p. xii), he apparently did not instruct them to consult these crucial sources.

Looking at these gaps in a more positive vein, I would like to offer here a vision for future projects of this kind: it would be advantageous to separate publications of transcribed oral sources, along with their detailed commentaries, from the in-depth essays on such collections. Analyzing the social and institutional background of each collection, as well as the figures involved in these ethnographic enterprises, their ideological agendas and methodological assumptions, is a meaningful contribution to the expanding field of uncovering unattended archives. This is particularly relevant in cases such as the Latvian Jewish collection discussed in this review-essay, as access was, until now, limited by technical and language barriers.

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[13] NLI, <u>Sound Archive, Y 6610</u>, at 12:38.

But basic research on individual songs should be available in online databases, not in a book format; such a format could become an accumulative digital and searchable enterprise shared by the community of scholars. Each new instance of a given song could then be added to this shared project and be readily available to various scholarly communities as well as the public. Each Jewish song should have a single page. Special solutions will be required for texts with multiple melodies, melodies with multiple texts, or textless melodies. Each song will need to appear in Hebrew and Latin scripts (perhaps in more than one spelling in each script), and it should include existing translations or paraphrases in addition to new translations to English and possibly to other relevant languages, like Russian and German. Extant printed anthologies, not only ethnographic or commercial recordings, can be incorporated into such a project. Ideally, this should be a flexible format, one that can cater to the interest of scholars as well as educators and performing artists. Mutual links with other databases of non-Jewish folk songs should also be considered. Such a platform would benefit from the important work that Karnes has done with Melngailis's Jewish materials.

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