

Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to the memory of Ruby Daniel (1912-2002) and Scaria Zacharia (1947-2022), with appreciation for their immense contributions to the preservation and understanding of the Malayalam Jewish women's songs, and with gratitude for their friendship.

When Tzipporah (Venus) Lane and I began our collaboration to create *Splendid Singing Birds*, we were already well acquainted with each other, through the network of Ruby Daniel's relatives and by our mutual involvement with the *Oh, Lovely Parrot* CD and booklet (2004). Throughout many years of working together - in Israel, the U.S., Kerala, and on the internet - I have come to treasure her as one of my dearest friends. Thank you, Venus, beyond words.

We are both grateful to Edwin Seroussi, who initiated this book project twenty years ago, envisioning (in the *Oh, Lovely Parrot* foreword): "an encompassing volume of Malayalam Jewish songs... (with) English translations, musical transcriptions and scholarly analysis of music and text." And finally, here it is - advanced in this online form with the hope of eventual publication in print. Thank you, Edwin, for your commitment to the songs, for your confidence in us and for your support over the years.

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We also remember fondly the enthusiasm and generosity of Harriet Vicente (1921-2007), whose grants through the Vicente Foundation supported our early work and travel together between Israel and the U.S.

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Then in 1977 Shansi came through for me again with a small “Alumni Grant” in support of my first trip to Kerala to record the Jewish women’s songs there.

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Looking back at the history of this songs project,¹ primary thanks go to historian Shirley Berry Isenberg (1918-2000), who organized the early stages of song collection in the 1970s and who first met and introduced me to Ruby Daniel. It was Shirley who established our official contacts at the Hebrew University, ensuring that all the song notebooks and musical recordings would be deposited in the archives of the Jewish Music Research Centre (JMRC) and the Ben- Zvi Institute. Acknowledgments are due to Avigdor Herzog (1922-2022), Curator of the National Sound Archives associated with the JMRC, and to Michael Glatzer, long-term Academic Secretary of the Ben-Zvi Institute. Michael became an unofficial and treasured member of the project team, providing a home base in Jerusalem for everything to do with the Malayalam Jewish songs.

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With personal gratitude I remember the hospitality and encouragement I received from the small community of Jews who still lived in Kerala during my early visits there, including the

¹ See my Introduction to this book for more details.there

Cohen, Koder, Salem, Hallegua and Josephai families and Isaac Joshua. I was especially grateful to Sarah Cohen in Kochi for organizing the first group recording sessions of Malayalam songs, and to the women who donated their old song notebooks to be copied for the project.

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In the intervening years I have been fortunate to collaborate with other scholars of Indian Jewish history and culture, co-publishing with Orna Eliyahu-Oron and sharing conference panels with Anna Schultz, Joan Roland, M.G.S. Narayanan, Galia Hacco and Smita Jassal.

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