

# ROBERT LACHMANN: HIS ACHIEVEMENT AND HIS LEGACY

Edith Gerson-Kiwi, *Jerusalem*

## I. Life and Work

Two memorable anniversaries in the history of Ethnomusicology occurred in 1972: the ninetieth return of the birth of Abraham Zwi Idelsohn (14.7.1882-14.8.1938), and the eightieth of Robert Lachmann (28.11.1892-8.5.1939). Though by different ways and means, both scholars became the founders of Comparative Musicology in Israel—for both the Jewish and the Arab cultures. The following lines are dedicated to the scientific contribution of the younger of the two, Robert Lachmann.

He was born in Berlin of Jewish parents, as the son of a gymnasium teacher, Dr. Georg Lachmann. His mother, née Handler, had been born in England. After graduating from a humanistic gymnasium, Robert Lachmann studied English and French at the universities of Berlin and London; at Berlin he also studied Arab linguistics with Prof. Eugen Mittwoch. At the outbreak of World War I he enlisted in the army, but was sent back from the front because of illness. In 1916 he was called to serve as an interpreter in a prisoner-of-war camp at Wünsdorf (Brandenburg), which contained North African and Indian soldiers from the French and British armies. It was there that he made his first acquaintance with non-European music, and more specifically, with the Arab music of North Africa which later turned out to be the central field of his research. A vivid description of the way of life in this camp is given in his autobiographical sketch published in 1929 (see no. B/8 in the bibliography, below). Being also a fine musician and violinist, Lachmann was drawn towards the spontaneous musical milieu of the camp, and seized the opportunity to listen to the prisoners' songs and to note them down to the best of his ability. At the same time and in the same way, Lachmann's contemporary, the Viennese musicologist Robert Lach, was collecting the "Gesänge russischer Kriegsgefangener" in Austria, comprising a microcosmos of Central Asian peoples (published in three volumes, Vienna 1926-52, with two preliminary reports, *ibid.*, 1917, 1918).

The encouragement Lachmann received from his teachers and friends (among them Johannes Wolf, Curt Sachs, Erich M. von Hornbostel and Georg Schünemann) on account of these transcriptions of Arabic and Indian music

was decisive for his turning towards the research of Arabic music and culture. After the war, he intensified his studies of non-European Comparative Musicology at the University of Berlin, and in 1922 obtained his doctorate there with a thesis on urban Tunisian music (Bibliography, B/1). This thesis was already the outcome of field recordings which he had made during an expedition to Tunisia in 1920. Subsequently, Lachmann made several extended recording expeditions to North Africa, visiting—among others—Tripoli (1925), Tunisia (1926/7), Kabylia (1927), Tunisia again (1929), as well as the Isle of Djerba and Morocco.

In 1929, while spending some weeks at Djerba, Lachmann made a series of recordings of the local Jewish community which claims to date its presence there—as well as its musical tradition—from the early days of Christianity. This was Lachmann's first contact with the liturgical music of Oriental Jewry. A decade later, these early recordings provided the source materials for his last work, written in Jerusalem, *Jewish Cantillation and song in the Isle of Djerba* which remained unfinished in its English edition but was nevertheless published posthumously in 1940, and is today regarded as a major contribution to Jewish musicology (Bibliography, A/4). In 1929 he also published his major work on the music of Asia, *Musik des Orients* (Bibliography, A/1). Here, the "comparative" method of research, the network of analyses of common factors—cutting through all nationalities—has been pursued to its consummation. While this study is devoted to the learned music traditions and musical theories of the ancient civilizations of Asia, his collections of field recordings in North Africa were mostly intended to represent the contemporary state of Arab traditional music, especially the still living forms of medieval court and town music, but also the tribal music of the rural and Bedouin societies. Here, Lachmann discovered a surprising relic of musical structure relatable to Greek antiquity: a piece of "programme music", a fight with a lion played on a small Bedouin flute, which apparently has its ancestors in the programmatic aulos pieces of Greece dramatically depicting Apollo's fight with the Pythian dragon (Bibliography, B/7). This article, too, is a masterpiece of comparative analysis, as is another essay exploring the vocal style and notation of the Japanese Noh drama (Bibliography, B/2). In 1929 there also appeared his fine contribution to the Bücken Handbook, on the music of the non-European low and high civilizations (Bibliography, A/2).

From 1927 to 1933, Lachmann was employed as a librarian at the music department of the Berlin State Library. During this time, he worked—inter alia—on the translation of medieval treatises of Arab music. One of these, al-Kindi's *On the composition of melodies*, was published jointly by Lachmann and Mahmud al-Hefni in 1931 (Bibliography, A/3).

In 1932, at the first International Congress of Arabic Music in Cairo,

Lachmann was appointed head of the "Phonogramme Commission", and it was under its auspices that he recorded a series of outstanding performances by artists from many Arabic countries and music centres which had been invited to appear at the Congress.

About the same time (1930), the Berlin circle of ethnomusicologists—under the guidance of Johannes Wolf, Curt Sachs, Georg Schünemann, Erich M. von Hornbostel, and Lachmann himself—initiated the foundation of a "Society for the Research of Oriental Music" (Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der Musik des Orients). Their chief aims were: the publication of a series of studies of which the above-mentioned al-Kindi treatise was the first to be issued; and the publication of an international annual, the *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*, of which Robert Lachmann was appointed editor. The first volume appeared in 1933 and, under mounting difficulties, Lachmann managed to produce two more issues for the years 1934 and 1935. In retrospect, the torso of these three volumes remains an unrivalled monument of the ways of thought and research during the entire first period of that European brand of "Comparative Musicology" as best represented in the Berlin and Vienna schools with their Phonogramme Archives.

In 1935 Lachmann was dismissed from his post at the library by the Nazi regime, and was invited by J. L. Magnes, at that time president of the Hebrew University, to come to Jerusalem in order to found an Archive of Oriental Music at the University. Lachmann's activities during his last four years in Jerusalem (1935–39), as head of the Archive, marked the beginning of modern ethnomusicology in Israel. Dr. Magnes took a personal interest in his researches, especially on the possibility of a common fundament of both Oriental-Jewish and Arab song. At his request, Lachmann brought along with him his earlier collections as well as his most up-to-date recording equipment. In this way, Lachmann was able to salvage some 500 items of his own recordings, and in addition some fifty cylinder recordings of Jewish music which A. Z. Idelsohn had made during his stay in Jerusalem (1906–1921), under the patronage of the Berlin and Vienna Phonogramme Archives.

The Jerusalem Archive, staffed by Lachmann and a sound engineer, operated under the utmost difficulties caused by permanent lack of financial means, by political unrest, and by Lachmann's own serious illness (which brought about his untimely death, at 46, in 1939). In spite of all these hindrances, Lachmann was able during these few years to record about a thousand new items—now mainly centered around the subject of oriental liturgies: Jewish (of many communities), Samaritan, Islamic, and Eastern Christian ones. For its kind, this is still the most comprehensive collection around a central subject. It was not his fault that these recordings are of a very poor quality by present standards and can today be used for analysis only after a lengthy

re-recording process: owing to the lack of the most elementary means and materials, the recordings had to be cut on cheap tin or aluminium plates. But these technical shortcomings do not in the least diminish the eminent historical value of this collection, especially with regard to problems of authenticity and acculturation—which have accumulated and multiplied from the earliest recordings by Idelsohn until the latest ones of the present.

Most of the musical questions which Lachmann tried to explore, have not yet been investigated properly even today. One of them is the relation between the Jewish cantorial tradition and Arab art song, which forms a nucleus of Lachmann's research work. From being a recognized expert on Arab music and musical thought, Lachmann worked his way slowly toward Jewish music. But then it revealed itself to him in a new light. His study of Jewish music in the isle of Djerba demonstrates quite new possibilities through the analysis of traditional song within the boundaries of one small community. Thus the almost limitless space in which Idelsohn moved is, in Lachmann's treatment, reduced to a small and controllable unit, that of one selected recording which now undergoes a deciphering of extreme minuteness. With the help of further comparative analysis, the single phonogram begins to reveal a deeper, richer life and many hidden points of contact with neighbouring or parallel civilizations. Lachmann's vision was to set the picture of Jewish music against the larger background of the Near Eastern civilizations, thus integrating the ethnic-oral traditions with the historically defined schools of learned medieval song, indeed with the entire heritage of the Asiatic peoples, as members of one great family of music.

## II. Inventory of the Lachmann archive

For more than twenty years, roughly between 1940–1960, the Lachmann archive was virtually inaccessible. After his death in 1939, it remained on the premises of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in East Jerusalem, which became a deserted enclave in 1948 and remained so until 1967. During this time it was possible, however, to bring down occasionally some of the the material which had had to be left on Scopus (by the bi-weekly convoy). In 1964, the Lachmann archive was also retrieved and transferred to the new campus of the Hebrew University at Givat Ram in West Jerusalem. There it was incorporated into the newly established National Sound Archives in the music department of the Jewish National and University Library. The cataloguing of the archive was one of the first projects of the Hebrew University's Jewish Music Research Centre which had been established at the same time. The following is a summary of this catalogue, which was prepared by the present writer.

The material is divided into seven categories:

- A. Research documents;
- B. Personal documents;
- C. Pre-1935 recordings (cylinders);
- D. Jerusalem recordings, 1935–1939;
- E. Metal disc copies of older recordings;
- F. Early commercial records of Arabic music;
- G. Photographs from Lachmann's expeditions in North Africa.

#### A. *Research Documents*

##### (a) Recording diaries

Though they do not yield a full documentation, these diaries form a running commentary paralleling nearly all his recording activities.

1) 1919—North Africa (general)	33 items
2) 1923—Turkey	45 "
3) 1924/5—Japan	37 "
4) 1925—Japan (Noh drama)	10 "
5) 1925—Tripoli	15 "
6) 1927—Tunisia (Beduin)	45 "
7) 1927—Kabylia	48 "
8) 1929—Tunisia	183 "
(Nefta-29; Gabes-19; Medenin-14; Tatawin-2; Zerzis-14; Djerba-34; Muknin-40; Testour-21; Baga-10)	
9) 1930—Tunisia and Morocco	12 "
10) 1932—Egypt	99 "
(Delta: Tanta, Sanadid, Difra; Luxor; Kharga oasis; Fadgun; Sinai)	

The reckoning comes to some 527 recordings of his own until the year 1933.

In addition, there is a diary which refers to some 246 recorded items, apparently not made by Lachmann himself but copies from other cylinder recordings (partly from the Berlin Phonogramme Archives) re-recorded on metal discs. These include 49 numbers of Idelsohn recordings made in Jerusalem.

For the subsequent period, we have the diaries of his new recordings, totalling 959 items, made during the last years in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the first diary with the numbers 1–289 has not been found until now. But there remain various note books containing the texts of the items in their original languages, thus making good, at least partly, the lack of any other documentation.

Besides recording diaries and text notes, there is a considerable number of notations made from the recordings and transcribed most meticulously.

## (b) Unpublished writings

Another precious part of Lachmann's musical estate are the still unpublished articles and unfinished book manuscripts. These include: *The musical systems among the present-day Arabs, Bedouins and peasants*; six lectures on *The musical civilizations of the Near East*; *Oriental music and antiquity: music in the folk life of Africa*; an English draft translation of the eighth chapter of *Ma'aseh Efod*, by Profiat Duran; an article on *The historical value of present-day musical practice in the Western Orient*; four lectures on *Eastern Music* and an article on *National and international elements in Oriental music*. There is also an unfinished manuscript on *The music of the Kabyl tribes*, and an enlarged manuscript of *The Music of the Jews of Djerba*, including further musical examples and also the original German text of the book. Finally, there is an unfinished manuscript on an Arab medieval treatise\*.

## B. Personal Documents

Fortunately, there is a series of travel letters written by Lachmann to his family and reporting on his daily experiences during his recording expeditions in Tripoli, Tunisia and Egypt (during the years 1925–1932). Moreover, there is a collection of professional correspondence between Lachmann and other musicologists containing, among others, some 90 letters written by E.M. von Hornbostel to his friend Robert Lachmann. So far, the corresponding letters written by Lachmann to Hornbostel could not be traced.

## C. Pre-1935 Recordings (cylinders)

This comprises 301 cylinders, mainly recorded during the twenties. These form the sound-documentation corresponding to the above mentioned diaries from Japan, Turkey and some 20 North African localities including the recordings of Djerba. After having been stored away for more than 40 years their condition is very bad; but it seems that, fortunately, most of them were transferred by Lachmann himself onto metal discs (see E, below).

## D. Jerusalem Recordings, 1935–1939

This is the bulk of the original recordings made by Lachmann as head of the Jerusalem Phonogramme Archives. They are nearly all recorded on metal discs by means of one of the then current disc-engraving machines. Generally, the quality of these metal records is very poor because of the high background

\*It bears the name of al-Kindi, though the source-situation has turned out to be more complicated; see: A. Shiloah, "Un ancien traité sur le 'Ud d'Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī", to appear in *Israel Oriental Studies*, 1974 [Ed.]

noise, but as documentary materials they are still usable, if properly filtered. Concerning their contents, it seems that a considerable number of these recordings were made with the intention to build up a maximally complete collection of Samaritan chant. The recordings begin with the catalogue number 83 and proceed, though intermittently, to no. 251. A special text notebook written by the Samaritan priests and singers themselves is our main source of information. It seems that Lachmann returned to the subject of Samaritan chant at a later date. The sum total of the Samaritan recordings amounts to 215 items.

Another subject which apparently was of great interest to him, was the Arab *maqām* system, of which he made no less than 75 recordings (not all of them preserved). There are smaller though equally interesting groups of recordings, among others Arab Fellaheen music, Kor'ān readings, Armenian music, and some larger collections of Oriental-Jewish Bible cantillations from Yemenite, Baghdadian and Kurdish cantors. These were in fact the first recordings of Oriental Jewry after those made by Idelsohn 20–25 years earlier. As we have already remarked, the Lachmann recordings thus represent an intermediate stage between those early documents and the more recent ones from the sixties and seventies, and are of great importance for the study of musical change and acculturation processes.

#### *E. Metal Disc Copies of Older Recordings*

These are the already mentioned re-recordings, i.e. copies of the early cylinders which Lachmann brought to Jerusalem in 1935 by the special request of Dr. Magnes, which also had the purpose of preserving some of the early Idelsohn recordings in Jerusalem.

#### *F. Early Commercial Records of Arabic Music*

Most of these records date from the twenties and were produced in the Near East. They number 173 items. The bulk is Arabic art music from different locations but they also include Turkish, Persian, Indian and Indonesian material. These records, now nearly 50 years old, have already gained the status of historical documents, especially since at that time the recorded performances were still made in an unsophisticated, near-authentic way.

#### *G. Photographs from Lachmann's Expedition in North Africa*

These include musicians, musical scenes and landscapes photographed during Lachmann's field trips.

The musical estate of Robert Lachmann, as left to us, represents today one of the main phases in the exploration of Arab and Oriental-Jewish music. Through his life's work both of these were freed from narrow introspective self-defence and self-analysis, while being set into the larger framework of Asian cultures, with their lively exchange of musical styles and ideas. This was always the tenor of his teachings, and it will also be the proper point of departure for a revival of his scientific legacy.

### III. Bibliography of Robert Lachmann's published writings

#### A. Books

1. *Musik des Orients*, Breslau, 1929 (Reprint Oosterhout, 1965).
- 1a., *La Musica del Oriente*, Barcelona, 1931 (translation of above).
2. *Die Musik der aussereuropäischen Natur- und Kulturvölker*, Potsdam, 1929 (in E. Bücken, ed., *Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft*).
3. Ed., in association with Mahmud el-Hefni, *Ja'qūb Ibn Ishāq al-Kindī: Risāla fi hubr tā'lif al-alhān—Ueber die Komposition der Melodien*, Leipzig, 1931.
4. *Jewish Cantillation and Song in the Isle of Djerba*, Jerusalem, 1940.
5. Ed. of *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*, 1933–1935.

#### B. Articles

1. "Die Musik in den tunesischen Städten", in *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 5 (1923): 136–171 (= Ph.D. Thesis, Berlin, 1922).
2. "Musik und Tonschrift des No", in *Bericht über den musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress der Deutschen Musikgesellschaft in Leipzig, 1925*: 80–93.
3. "Muhammedan Music", in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1927<sup>3</sup>).
4. "Zur aussereuropäischen Mehrstimmigkeit", in *Beethoven-Zentenarfeier, Wien, 1927: Internationaler musikhistorischer Kongress* (Wien, 1927): 321–325.
5. [Transcription of 4 melodies recorded in Kucha, Eastern Turkestan, by A. von Le Coq], in A. von Le Coq, *Von Land und Leuten in Ostturkistan* (Leipzig, 1927<sup>1</sup>, 1928<sup>3</sup>), p. 97–99.
6. "Die Schubertautographen der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin", in *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 11 (1928/9): 109–119.
7. "Die Weise vom Löwen und der pythische Nomos", in *Festschrift für Johannes Wolf* (Berlin, 1929): 97–106.
8. [Autobiography], in *Hirts Literaturbericht*, no. 66/67 (Breslau-Leipzig, 1929): 941–942 ("Briefe unserer Autoren über ihre Werke").
9. "Musikalische Forschungsaufgaben im vorderen Orient", in *Bericht über die 1. Sitzung der Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der Musik des Orients* (Berlin, 1930).
10. "Von der Kunstmusik des vorderen Orients", in *Kultur und Schallplatte* (Mitteilungen der C. Lindström Kulturabteilung), II (Berlin, 1931): 164–166.
11. "Die Haydn-Autographen der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin", in *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 14 (1931/2): 289–298.
12. "Asiatische Parallelen zur Berbermusik" (with Erich M. von Hornbostel), in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*, 1 (1933): 4–11.
13. "Das indische Tonysystem bei Bharata und sein Ursprung", *ibid.* : 73–91.

14. "Diskussionen: Die Vina und das indische Tonsystem bei Bharata (R. Lachmann - A.K. Coomaraswamy), *ibid.*, 2 (1934): 57-60, 83-84.
15. "Musiksysteme und Musikauffassung", *ibid.*, 3 (1935): 1-23.
16. "Mustaqbil al-mūsiqā l-'arabiyya" (= The future of Arabic music), in *Alkulliyya l-'arabiyya*, 16 (1935): 17-24.

### C. Reviews

1. A. H. Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindostan* (Oxford, 1914), in *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 6 (1924): 484-490.
2. A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish music in its historical development* (New York, 1929<sup>1</sup>), in *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 15 (1932/3): 84-91.
3. H. G. Farmer, *An Old Moorish Lute Tutor* (Glasgow, 1933), in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*, 1 (1933): 62-63.
4. A. Chottin, *Corpus de musique marocaine. Fasc. 1: Nouba de Ochchak* (Paris, 1931), *ibid.*: 18-19.
5. R. d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, t. 1 (Tours, 1930), *ibid.*: 18-19.
6. "Grammophonplatten", *ibid.*: 66-67.
7. C. Sachs, *Eine Weltgeschichte des Tanzes* (Berlin, 1933), *ibid.*: 93-5.
8. A. H. Fox Strangways and M. Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp* (London, 1933), *ibid.*, 2 (1934): 64-66.
9. M. Schneider, *Geschichte der Mehrstimmigkeit. Teil I: Die Naturvölker* (Berlin, 1934), *ibid.*, 3 (1935): 38-40.
10. M. Rida, M. el-Hefni, *Dirasāt al-Qānūn*, t. 1 (Cairo, 1934), *ibid.*, 3 (1935): 43-45.
11. W. Wunsch, *Die Geigentechnik der südslavischen Goslaren* (Brünn, 1934), *ibid.*, 3 (1935): 45-46.

# YUVAL

STUDIES OF  
THE JEWISH MUSIC RESEARCH CENTRE

*Edited by*  
ISRAEL ADLER and BATHJA BAYER

VOLUME III

JERUSALEM, 1974

THE MAGNES PRESS, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CB</i>	M. Steinschneider, <i>Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in bibliotheca Bodleiana</i> , Berlin, 1852–1860
<i>CS</i>	E. de Coussemaker, ed., <i>Scriptores de musica medii aevi . . .</i> , Paris, 1864–1876
<i>EJ<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> , Jerusalem, 1972
d'Erlanger	R. d'Erlanger, <i>La musique arabe</i> , Paris, 1930–1949
<i>GS</i>	M. Gerbert, ed., <i>Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica . . .</i> , Sankt Blasien, 1784
El Hefny	M. El Hefny, <i>Ibn Sina's Musiklehre</i> , Berlin, 1930 (Diss.)
<i>HU</i>	M. Steinschneider, <i>Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters</i> , Berlin, 1893
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
Husmann	H. Husmann, <i>Grundlagen der antiken Musikkultur</i> , Berlin, 1961
Idelsohn, <i>JM</i>	A. Z. Idelsohn, <i>Jewish Music in its Historical Development</i> , New York, 1929
<i>JE</i>	<i>Jewish Encyclopedia</i> , New York–London, 1901–1905
<i>m</i>	<i>Mishnah</i>
<i>MPL</i>	J. P. Migne, ed., <i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina</i> , Paris, 1844–1855
Neubauer	E. Neubauer, "Die Theorie vom Īqa' I. Übersetzung des Kitāb al-īqa'āt von Abu Naṣr al-Fārābī", <i>Oriens</i> , 21–22 (1968/69): 196–232
<i>PAAJR</i>	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i>
Reinach	Th. Reinach, <i>La musique grecque</i> , Paris, 1926
<i>RISM</i>	<i>Répertoire International des Sources Musicales</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>