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IN SEARCH OF JEWISH MUSICAL ANTIQUITY IN THE
18TH-CENTURY VENETIAN GHETTO:
RECONSIDERING THE HEBREW MELODIES IN
BENEDETTO MARCELLO'S *ESTRO POETICO-ARMONICO*

EDWIN SEROUSSI, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

ABSTRACT

Ten of the fifty Psalm settings comprising the Estro poetico-armonico by Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739), employ as melodic inspiration eleven melodies adopted by the composer from the liturgical repertoires of the synagogues of the Venetian Ghetto. Musical transcriptions of the original Hebrew melodies (printed from right to left) appear at the top of the piece in which they are quoted. These Hebrew melodies comprise one of the earliest, tangible documents of traditional synagogue music and as such they stimulated the interest of scholars of Jewish music and Jewish studies, as well as of Western music historians.

This study treats the origin, meaning and reception in the scholarly literature of Marcello's Hebrew melodies. It stresses the fascinating ethnomusicological side of the work carried by Marcello in Venice, as well as the impact of interfaith relations in 18th-century Venice on this work, the identification of Marcello's Jewish sources and the intellectual roots of his fascination with the Jewish religious music of his time.

After a survey of how the Hebrew melodies by Marcello became emblematic specimens of "Hebrew" music to many generations of scholars, the historical and methodological aspects of Marcello's fieldwork are discussed. The introductory texts that Marcello wrote for his Estro are read in the context of the Arcadia movement in Venice and its renewed consciousness of the classic Hebrew and Hellenic contributions to Christianity. Finally, the melodies are analyzed in the light of the surviving oral traditions as a source for historical study of Italian Jewish music traditions.

In Venice, between 1724 and 1727, Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739) published the *Estro poetico-armonico: Parafrasi sopra li salmi*, a collection of fifty Italian paraphrases of Psalms in eight volumes by Girolamo Asciano Giustiniani for one to four voices (mostly for two) with continuo accompaniment.¹ Throughout the late 18th

¹ This study was carried out over the last twelve years. Early findings were presented in a lecture entitled "On the Characteristics of Sephardi Synagogue Music in

and 19th centuries the impact of this work was remarkable, as Selfridge-Field notes:

Marcello's legacy was greatest for those who lived between 1750 and 1875, when recognition of his *Salmi* led to their translation into many other languages (French, German, Swedish, English, Russian) and their performance, as liturgically generic sacred works, in a host of different liturgical contexts. . . . In the 19th century the *Salmi* were sometimes divided into short "motets" or "songs," or stripped of their texts and offered as instrumental works, or retexted and offered as "new" works. Such varieties of psalm progeny seem to number well beyond 10,000 (arrangers included Paer, Mayr, Rossini and Bizet; Verdi was a great enthusiast).²

This study is concerned with a particular aspect of the *Estro*. Ten out of the fifty settings by Marcello employ as *cantus firmus* or as melodic inspiration eleven melodies adopted by the composer from the liturgical repertoires of the synagogues of the Venetian Ghetto. Mensural transcriptions of the original Hebrew melodies appear at the top of the piece in which they are quoted. The musical notation runs from right to left, following the direction of the Hebrew text printed below the music. These synagogue melodies are among the earliest tangible documents of Jewish musical lore. Their origin, meaning, study and reception in the scholarly literature are the subject of this article.³

Italy in the 18th and 19th centuries," presented at the International Conference on the Oriental and Sephardi Jewry organized by Misgav Yerushalayim in Jerusalem, 1992. In the course of the last decade, some of my teachers and colleagues contributed, directly or indirectly, to this study. I would like to thank the late Bathja Bayer and Hanoah Avenary (who showed me the melodies for the first time) and, may they live long, Israel Adler, Meir Benayahu, Tova Beeri, Benjamin Ravid, Francesco Spagnolo, and especially David Malkiel who read the final version of this paper and contributed important observations on key historical issues. I am indebted to Laura Minervini and Alexandra Nocke for their translations from Italian and German respectively. This study was done in the framework of the Jewish Music Research Center of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and was partially funded by a grant from the Basic Research Foundation of the Israel National Academy of Sciences, 1992–1994.

² Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Marcello, Benedetto Giacomo," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, revised edition, eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London, 2001), 15:809–812.

³ Scholarly interest in Marcello's involvement with Hebrew music appears to be gaining ground faster than anticipated. Independently of the present study, an esteemed colleague and former teacher of mine, Don Harrán, completed an article on

4 *Intonazione degli Ebrei Tedeschi sopra*
 מעוז צור ישועתי וגו'


Ma'oz tzur yeshu'ati—Original version in Marcello's
Estro poetico-armonico, vol. III.

These Hebrew melodies stimulated the keen interest of scholars of Jewish music and Jewish studies generally, as well as that of music historians who studied Marcello's work. The documentation of synagogue music in musical notation from such an early period led to various studies in Jewish musical history and the cultural context of this unique work by a distinguished Catholic composer from the early 18th century.

In spite of this interest and of the array of publications about these Hebrew melodies that have appeared since the late 19th century, the full implications of this musical source remain to be explored. As Hanoch Avenary stated in 1971: "Marcello's unsophisticated and casual collection of melodies was long looked upon as a mere oddity. Its historic importance is only gradually coming to be realized."⁴ Recently Eleanor Selfridge-Field added that even after

Marcello's psalms. Neither of us knew of each other's research until its completion; to guarantee mutual independence we agreed not to exchange ideas before publication, yet to refer to each other's writings, which I do here with pleasure. Don Harrán, "The Hebrew Exemplum as a Force of Renewal in 18th-Century Musical Thought: The Case of Benedetto Marcello and His Collection of Psalms," in *Music in the Mirror: Reflections on the History of Music Theory and Literature for the 21st Century*, eds. Andreas Geiger and Thomas J. Mathiesen (London, 2002), pp. 143–194.

⁴ Hanoch Avenary, *Hebrew Hymn Tunes: The Rise and Development of a Musical Tradition* (Tel-Aviv, 1971), p. 31. Interest in Jewish music in Italy is most confined to

Marcello started to fall from grace among important composers from the past:

The influence of his *Salmi* was regenerated in ethnomusicology: the materials Marcello quoted from Judaic and Hellenic traditions in the 1720s are frequently requoted (often without attribution) in studies of ancient and oriental music. He undoubtedly would have been amused by the reflexive nature of the esteem that accrued to his work after his death.⁵

To fully grasp the implications of the Hebrew melodies in Marcello's work there is a need to fuse modern Jewish music studies with the most recent scholarship on Marcello and on the cultural life of the Venetian ghetto. Only an approach that considers the complex intercultural context of early 18th-century Venice and the essentially oral nature of Jewish musical traditions can achieve a more detailed and proper reading of this rare Judeo-Christian musical encounter.

My study aims to expand on issues raised by previous authors and to make further inquiries into this subject. I shall refer to yet unexplored sources, such as Marcello's introductory essays to some volumes of the *Estro*, recent historical studies about the Venetian ghetto in the 18th century, and, above all, studies of orality in Jewish music traditions. The Hebrew melodies in the *Estro* stem from oral sources, as already noticed by several authors, and therefore there is a fascinating ethnomusicological side to the work transmitted by Marcello which has been overlooked. Inter-faith relations in Venice, the identification of Marcello's sources, and the intellectual roots of his fascination with the music of the Jews are other issues to be explored. In this context, it is important to consider Marcello's writings about "Hebrew" music in relation to the wide interest among European humanists on this subject, which can be traced

the 16th and 17th centuries. For a study of music in the Venetian ghetto before Marcello, see Israel Adler, "La pénétration de la musique savante dans les synagogues italiennes au XVII^e siècle: le cas particulier de Venise," in *Gli ebrei a Venezia, secoli XIV–XVIII*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi (Milan, 1987), pp. 527–535; Dan Harrán, "'Dum Recordaremur Sion': Music in the Life and Thought of the Venetian Rabbi Leon Modena (1571–1648)," *AJS Review* 23 (1998) 17–61; idem, "Jewish Musical Culture: Leon Modena," in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, eds. Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid (Baltimore, 2001), pp. 211–230.

⁵ Selfridge-Field, "Marcello, Benedetto Giacomo," p. 811.

back to Gioseffo Zarlino in the 16th century, as was masterfully shown by Harrán in his detailed study of this issue.⁶

The present study begins with the end of the story, the reception of Marcello's work in several intellectual circles: Jewish music studies, Italian Jewish cultural history and European musicology. I then move to a contextual analysis of the texts by Marcello concerning Hebrew music, found at the opening of volumes 1 and 2 of the *Estro*. I next look at the historical and methodological aspects of Marcello's fieldwork. Finally, I examine the Hebrew melodies collected by Marcello as a source for an historical study of Italian Jewish music traditions.

PREVIOUS STUDIES OF THE HEBREW MELODIES IN MARCELLO'S *ESTRO*

a. The reception of Marcello's Hebrew melodies in 18th and 19th-century music historiography

Barely three decades after their publication in the *Estro poetico-armonico*, the Hebrew melodies transcribed by Marcello appear as specimens of Jewish music in one of the most important early works of modern music historiography, Giovanni Battista Martini's *Storia della musica*. In the first volume of his work, Martini assembled the few specimens of Hebrew music in musical notation circulating among European scholars since the early 16th century,⁷ especially the musical motives of the masoretic accents transcribed by humanists and Hebraists such as Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522), Sebastian Münster (1489–1552), Ercole Bottrigari (1531–1612), Marinne Mersenne (1588–1648), Athanasius Kircher (1602–80) and Giulio Bartolucci (1613–87).⁸ To these earlier sources, Martini added Marcello's transcriptions which appeared as a major new repository of information about Jewish musical traditions.

⁶ See Don Harrán, *In Search of Harmony: Hebrew and Humanist Elements in Sixteenth-Century Musical Thought* (Stuttgart, 1988).

⁷ Giovanni Battista Martini, *Storia della musica* (Bologna, 1757–1781), vol. 1, plate vi.

⁸ For these sources of Hebrew music, see Israel Adler, *Hebrew Notated Manuscript Sources Up to Circa 1840: A Descriptive Catalogue with a Checklist of Printed Sources*. 2 vols. (Munich, 1989).

The precedent set by Martini influenced other music historians of the 18th century. Charles Burney reprinted six of the eleven Hebrew melodies transcribed by Marcello in his influential book, *A General History of Music*. Burney doubted the ancient pedigree of what he calls “modern Jewish music” and states that the only reason for reproducing the melodies by Marcello is “curiosity”:

But as no two Jewish congregations sing these chants alike, if tradition has been faithful in handing them down from the ancient Hebrew to any one synagogue, who shall determine to which such permanence can be attributed? . . . I shall, however, select a few of them to gratify the curiosity of my readers, without a hope of their being either edified or delighted by such music.⁹

Moreover, Burney was much less enthusiastic about Marcello’s *Estro* than other music critics of his time:

I have consciously examined the whole eight volumes of the Italian edition, and find, though there is considerable merit in the work, that the author has been *over-praised*: as the subject of many of his fugues and airs are not only common and old-fashioned at present, but were far from new at the time these psalms were composed.¹⁰

Following in the footsteps of Martini and Burney, Johann Nikolaus Forkel included the eleven transcriptions by Marcello (probably copied from Martini) with a partial text printed underneath in German in his influential *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*.¹¹ Forkel erroneously thought, as already surmised by Eduard Birnbaum (see n. 16 below), that their Hebrew texts were taken from the Book of Psalms, and that the Hanukkah hymn *Ma^coz tzur* was identical with Psalm 16.

In opposition to Burney and other critics of Marcello, François Joseph Fétis praised Marcello’s work and his innovative use of Jewish melodies in his psalms:

Marcello borrowed some themes of his psalms from the intonations of the same psalms by Jews from the Orient, Spain and Germany . . . the manner in which he has handled these motives is not one of the lesser

⁹ Charles Burney, *A General History of Music* (London, 1776–1789), 1:252. The Hebrew melodies, copied from Martini, appear at vol. 1, plate ix.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4:543.

¹¹ Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (Leipzig, 1788–1801), 1:162–165.

testimonies of the height of his talent. Some faults of style, some dissonances unresolved, are not more than light stains in such a beautiful work, and it is with good reason that this work enjoys, after one century, a reputation as one of the most beautiful creations of modern music.¹²

No less a figure than Goethe praised the psalms of Marcello and their Hebrew melodies after hearing them sung at the Scuola Romana of the Sistine Chapel. In his *Italienische Reise* he reports:

We have now in the house a collection of psalms translated into Italian verse and set to music by the Venetian nobleman, Benedetto Marcello, at the beginning of this century. For many of them he has taken the chants of German and Spanish Jews for the main tune . . . They are composed for a solo voice, or for two voices or for chorus, and are extraordinarily original, though one has to acquire a taste for them.¹³

We can conclude that the Hebrew melodies which served as the inspiration for some of Marcello's psalms were widespread in 18th- and 19th-century Europe. Detached from the original compositions for which they served as source of inspiration, the Hebrew melodies recorded in writing by Marcello developed a life on their own as specimens of "ancient Hebrew music" in early Western music historiography. Undoubtedly, this reception of the melodies influenced subsequent approaches to this source by Jewish music scholars since the late 19th century.

b. The reception of Marcello's Hebrew melodies by Jewish music scholars

Marcello's transcriptions of the Hebrew melodies are already treated in the writings of pioneer scholars of Jewish music in the second half of the 19th century, such as Eduard Birnbaum and Joseph Singer. Birnbaum probably became acquainted with these

¹² François Joseph Fetis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Paris, 1863), 5:441. According to Eduard Birnbaum (see n. 16 below) his teacher A. G. Ritter included the melody of *Ma'oz tzur* recorded by Marcello as an example of *canto ebraico* in his treatise *Armonia*.

¹³ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italienische Reise. Herausgegeben und kommentiert von Herbert von Einem* (Munich, 1978), pp. 524–525, a letter from Rome dated March 1, 1788. Translation: *Italian Journey*, translated by W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (New York, 1968), p. 477.

melodies via the 18th- and early 19th-century histories of music discussed above or through a study by Joseph Sall.¹⁴ Sall found a copy of Marcello's work while searching the musical items in the archives of the poet Carl Gottfried Nadler. Interestingly, Sall refers to Marcello's transcriptions in connection with the "quite beautiful" melodies of the Portuguese Jews for psalms and hymns of the Simḥat Torah festival that are based on the melodies of "Arabic and Spanish *romances*." He writes in the apologetic vein characteristic of some references to traditional synagogue music by German Jewish intellectuals:

The famous master of church music, Benedetto Marcello, transcribed many of these [Jewish] chants and used them as themes for his psalms. The interest that this great master devoted to our old melodies proves sufficiently that synagogue music is not as barbaric and ridiculous as some knowledgeable writers believe.¹⁵

Eduard Birnbaum (1855–1920), the dean of Jewish music research in Germany, carefully studied the melodies by Marcello, laying the ground for further research. Birnbaum intended "to write a monograph on these melodies," a promise which he never fulfilled. However, he identified the Hebrew texts of the pieces by Marcello, discussed stylistic aspects and pointed out some correspondences between the Ashkenazi tunes and related variants published in 19th-century Jewish music publications.¹⁶

¹⁴ Joseph Sall, "Über hebräische Musik (Semiroth Israel)," *Echo Berliner Musik-Zeitung* 7 (15 February 1871) 65–69 and 8 (22 February 1871) 77–82. Sall's essay is also in the Eduard Birnbaum collection, Arch IVa, 2, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁵ Sall, "Über hebräische Musik," p. 80.

¹⁶ Many documents concerning these melodies are found in the Birnbaum Collection, which shows the importance that Birnbaum attached to this early testimony of Jewish music. He transcribed the melodies by Marcello into modern notation (Birnbaum Collection, Mus. 40; and various other copies), arranged them for keyboard or other ensembles (see Birnbaum Collection Bl. H. 155, 156, 158, 736) and published some of these arrangements, e.g., *Ma'oz tzur* (Birnbaum Collection, Bl. H. 131 and 151, published as *Beilage zur Israelitischen Wochenschrift* 51 [1878]). He also published an article on the melodies, focusing especially on their origin, under the misleading title "Briefe aus Koenigsberg," *Jüdische Kantor* 43 (1883) 348–349. Birnbaum later presented his findings in an unpublished lecture, "Die hebräischen Melodien des Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739)," in *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur: Mitteilungen aus dem Verband der Vereine für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur in Deutschland* 2 (1899) 290.

Joseph Singer (1841–1911) was the first Jewish scholar to actually publish all of the Hebrew melodies of Marcello in modern transcriptions with most of their Hebrew texts transliterated in Latin characters (in Ashkenazi pronunciation). Echoing the apologetic appreciation by Sall mentioned above, Singer's study of Marcello's melodies demonstrates his fascination with the idea of a prominent Christian composer inspired by Jewish melodies.¹⁷ Singer, who was probably aware of Birnbaum's work, had no doubt of the authenticity of Marcello's transcriptions:

Here, with Marcello's transcriptions, the advocates of synagogue music are confronted with an authentic document of old synagogue music, because this acknowledged and sincere musician was only interested to search for the most common of the then customary synagogue melodies and he had no motive to forge or change them according to his own interests.

Abraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882–1938) incorporated the findings of his predecessors concerning Marcello's Hebrew melodies in his influential book *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*. His discussion is remarkable for its brevity, when one considers the very early date of these transcriptions of Jewish music.

Benedetto Marcello took about a dozen traditional tunes from the Sephardic and Ashkenazic synagogues in Venice and used them as themes in his fifty psalms that he published in 1724–27. The synagogue must have had a reputation among the Christian musicians in Venice. However, with the exception of *Shofet kol hooretz*, the tunes chosen by Marcello have no bearing on Jewish tradition, but seem to be ADOPTED [capitals in the original] tunes, even the above-named exception being of German origin.¹⁸

In his discussion of the assumed Christian origins of the melody of *Shofet*, Idelsohn adds:

This [tune] is of special interest inasmuch as it was known at the beginning of the eighteenth century as traditional even in the *Ashkenazic* congregation in Venice, and is one of the twelve [sic] Jewish tunes

¹⁷ Josef Singer, "Marcello Benedetto ein christlicher Psalmencomponist des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Kalendaren für Israeliten für das Jahr 5661* (Vienna, 1900), pp. 508–516.

¹⁸ Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York, 1929), p. 202; see also pp. 167, 171.

chosen by Marcello as themes for his psalms. . . . This tune is also found in the German Protestant song in two forms.¹⁹

Later on, Idelsohn published the six Ashkenazi melodies of Marcello with the text printed underneath in Latin characters in Ashkenazi pronunciation (as Singer had) in volume 6 of his *Thesaurus*.²⁰ His doubt of the "Jewish authenticity" of the melodies collected by Marcello dwindled when he became acquainted with the surviving *Tedesco* (Italian Ashkenazi) tradition. He learned about this branch of southern German Jewry through Giuseppe Bassani, a lawyer from Ferrara who sent Idelsohn data about and transcriptions of melodies of the *Tedeschi* Jews.²¹ Idelsohn found that variants of four out of the six Ashkenazi melodies published by Marcello were still extant in oral tradition in the 1930s:

The four tunes . . . are, as proven from the fact that they were known and used by B. Marcello in 1724, old tradition in the Synagogue Song of the Italian-Ashkenasim. They may also serve, by comparison to their form retained from 1724 with the present-day form, as a clue to the process of changes tunes undergo in the course of centuries.²²

Thus, Idelsohn's skeptical evaluation of Marcello's transcriptions became a well-rounded case for the study of change in oral tradition. At the outset he judged Marcello's Hebrew melodies in light of a very general notion of Jewish tradition, a surprising approach by a scholar who had the widest knowledge about Jewish music available at his time. Later on, as evidence from the surviving *Tedesco* Jewish tradition in Italy became more transparent to him, he respected Marcello as a valuable source.

In the footsteps of Birnbaum, Singer, and Idelsohn followed other Jewish music scholars from Germany, such as Aron Friedmann.²³ It

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 170–171.

²⁰ Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Der Synagogengesang der deutschen Juden in 18. Jahrhundert* (*Hebräisch-Orientalischer Melodienschatz*, vol. 6) (Berlin, 1932), pp. 231–232. Idelsohn's transcriptions of the melodies by Marcello in this volume contain several errors.

²¹ Giuseppe Bassani to Abraham Z. Idelsohn, 2 September 1934, Idelsohn Archive, Mus. 7, no. 42, Jewish National and University Library.

²² Abraham Z. Idelsohn, "Traditional Songs of the German (Tedesco) Jews in Italy," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 11 (1936) 569–591.

²³ Aron Friedmann, "Benedetto Marcello und die jüdischen Melodien," *Die jüdische Kantor* 4, no. 4 (1 August 1931) 4.

was Erich Werner, however, who provided the most comprehensive study of Marcello's Hebrew melodies. Published barely a year after Idelsohn's essay on the *Tedesco* tradition, his article bears the influence of previous monographs on this topic.²⁴ He transcribed the eleven melodies by Marcello without the underlying text, translated the text into German and discussed selected passages from the introductory essays by Marcello to the *Estro*. Werner attempted, following his predecessors, to approach these melodies as a document of oral tradition, analyzing their stylistic features in terms of co-territorial music, such as Venetian dance music or medieval southern German folk music. Noting that the Ashkenazi melodies, such as *Ma^coz tzur*, remained alive in oral tradition, he presented arguments as to the possible circumstances of adoption of these melodies. Werner's discussion of the Sephardi melodies is also innovative, for he suggested that their modality should be discussed in terms of Arabic *maqams*, rather than European scales or "church modes" (as he does with the Ashkenazi melodies). However, he was unable to relate the Sephardi melodies to surviving oral traditions.

Another Jewish musicologist to consider Marcello's contribution was Leo Levi, the pioneer researcher of Italian Jewish musical traditions. Although Levi only briefly mentions Marcello in one of his studies, we can gather that he fully appreciated the composer's transcriptions as an important source for the historical study of Italian Jewish oral tradition.²⁵

Alfred Sendrey was the first Jewish music scholar to treat the relation between Marcello and his Jewish sources in a more detailed manner:

It was "Inspiration" in the proper sense of the word, an inspiration caused by ancient Hebrew chants, which he may have heard by attending services in the Venetian synagogues. As a matter of fact, he had actually notated some of the synagogue melodies that he found particularly attractive and characteristic. It was presumed that he had

²⁴Erich Werner, "Die hebräischen Intonationen in B. Marcellos *Estro poetico-armonico*," *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 81 (1937) 393–416. Werner was certainly indebted to Eduard Birnbaum's groundwork on the subject, although he never mentions Birnbaum's work or that of his predecessors. Werner included the main findings of his study on Marcello in *A Voice Still Heard: The Sacred Songs of the Ashkenazic Jews* (University Park, 1976), pp. 119–121.

²⁵Leo Levi, "Canti tradizionali e tradizioni liturgiche giudeo-italiane," *La Rassegna Mensile di Israele* 23/9–10 (1957) 403–411, 435–445.

written them down from memory. This, however, appears rather doubtful in view of the fact that he indicated with every melody not only the exact title in Hebrew letters (without vowels), but indicated precisely the ritual in which these songs were sung. Furthermore, he indicated those melodies which belonged to the Sephardic and which to the Ashkenazic tradition. Apparently he received advice in each instance from the rabbi or the cantor of the synagogue, or both. This does not in the least lessen the importance of his work. On the contrary, it proves that the melodies are authentic, even though slightly adapted according to the taste of his time, in order to serve as the *canti firmi* for his elaborate polyphonic design.²⁶

One should correct Sendrey by crediting Birnbaum, Idelsohn and Werner, rather than Marcello, for indicating "precisely" the rituals in which the Hebrew songs were performed. Moreover, one wonders why Sendrey assumed that the advice of a rabbi or a cantor would "lessen the importance of [Marcello's] work." Yet, his conjectures that Marcello had actually attended services at the Venetian synagogues and that he may have enjoyed the cooperation of Jewish authorities are probably correct. Indeed, the Jewish composer Lazare Saminski preceded Sendrey with the idea that Marcello actually visited Venetian synagogues:

One notes with surprise that one of the greatest composers of the Italian Renaissance [!], Benedetto Marcello, visited the Sephardi synagogue of his native Venice to look for musical material and a style to which to conform his great choral psalms.²⁷

Other authors held the same opinion. Maryla Friedlander quotes an unidentified "autobiography" of Marcello in which he mentions that he frequently visited the synagogues. She assumes that "as the chanting of the Psalms was most outstanding in the synagogues, the composer thought it superfluous to create his own motives, and adopted the melodies current in the synagogues."²⁸ Avenary too

²⁶ Alfred Sendrey, *The Music of the Jews in the Diaspora (up to 1800): A Contribution to the Social and Cultural History of the Jews* (New York, 1970), pp. 336–337. See also pp. 329–335 (on music in the ghetto of Venice) and pp. 335–339 (on Marcello, including a reproduction of Werner's transcription of the Hebrew melodies).

²⁷ Lazare Saminsky, *Music of the Ghetto and the Bible* (New York, 1934), pp. 165–166.

²⁸ Maryla Friedlander, "Benedetto Marcello: The Immortal Singer of the Psalms of David," *Jewish Music Journal* 2/1 (May-June 1935) 11–12. She mentions Birnbaum only in passing but actually relies heavily on his article (see n. 16 above).

shared without hesitation the view that Marcello “wrote these tunes down after visiting the Sefardic and Ashkenazic synagogues of Venice.”²⁹ He was the first Jewish music scholar to make an in-depth use of Marcello’s melodies in his study of the Ashkenazi liturgical poem *Shofet kol ha-aretz*. Departing from Marcello’s version of this tune, Avenary traces its distribution and evolution in the Italian and southwestern Ashkenazi diaspora.³⁰

To summarize the approaches of Jewish musicologists, one clearly sees a deep and ever-growing interest in Marcello’s Hebrew melodies spanning more than a century. This fascination started from an apologetic standpoint that characterized the approach of German Jewish musicologists of the late 19th century and continued into the 20th century. That a major non-Jewish composer could have found inspiration in traditional Jewish melodies for one of his major works generated confidence in the intrinsic artistic value of Jewish music. Later in the 20th century Jewish musicologists stressed two opposed viewpoints. The first was that the survival of variants of Marcello’s Hebrew melodies in oral tradition provided irrefutable proof of the authenticity of the synagogue music tradition. The second was that the style of these melodies pointed towards the adoption of non-Jewish tunes as a major feature of the Jewish liturgy.

c. The Hebrew melodies of Marcello in the writings of historians and modern musicologists

Interest in Marcello’s Hebrew melodies in Jewish scholarship was not confined to musicologists. The historian Cecil Roth, who dedicated an entire chapter to music and dance among Italian Jews in the Renaissance in one of his most important books, presents the melodies collected by Marcello in terms akin to his “harmonicist” perception of Jewish cultural integration in Italy.³¹ He describes the melodies as “a precious store-house of ancient synagogue melodies which shows little if any contemporaneous influence from the

²⁹ Avenary, *Hebrew Hymn Tunes*, p. 31.

³⁰ Hanoch Avenary, “The Aspects of Time and Environment in Jewish Traditional Music,” *Israel Studies in Musicology* 4 (1987) 93–124. Avenary published short essays on this melody and on *Lekha dodi* in *Hebrew Hymn Tunes* (see above, n. 4).

³¹ Hava Tirosh-Rothschild, “Jewish Culture in Renaissance Italy,” *Italia* 9 (1990) 63–96, esp. 70–71.

outside world," exactly the opposite of Idelsohn's and Werner's views.³² This indiscriminate description perpetuates Marcello's own perception of the antiquity of the Hebrew melodies he collected. Some historians of the Jewish people uncritically followed Roth's dictum.³³ Others saw in Marcello a vivid example of contacts between Jews and non-Jews in Venice.³⁴

On the other hand, musicologists who have studied Marcello have rarely pondered the meaning of the Hebrew melodies and have been satisfied by reporting the curious fact of their existence. The author of a dissertation on Marcello's *Estro* states that "we must admit to doubtful authenticity in the [original Hebrew] melodies themselves" and that "there is some question about the authenticity of the Jewish and Greek themes cited by Marcello. It would seem that Marcello was not the one in error, but rather his sources for the melodies have been proven doubtful."³⁵

Only lately have musicologists treated the presence of the Hebrew melodies in Marcello's work in a more insightful manner. The analysis of the ideological background of the *Estro* advanced by Selfridge-Field helps illuminate Marcello's encounter with Jewish musical culture.³⁶ She interprets the composer's interest on Hebrew

³² Cecil Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance* (1959, repr., New York, 1965), pp. 298–299.

³³ See, for example, Maria Steinbach, *Juden in Venedig 1516–1797: Zwischen Isolation und Integration* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), especially pp. 198–204.

³⁴ M. G. Sandri and Paolo Alazraki, *Arte e vita ebraica a Venezia 1516–1797* (Florence, 1971), p. 203, n. 72.

³⁵ Michael Dominic Cordovana, *An Analytical Survey and Evaluation of the Estro poetico-armonico of Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739)* (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University, 1967), pp. 51 and 67 respectively. One may wonder to what "doubtful sources" Cordovana refers, since Marcello does not specify by whom, and under which circumstances, were the Hebrew melodies transmitted to him.

³⁶ See her monumental catalogue of the composer's works: Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *The Music of Benedetto and Alessandro Marcello. A Thematic Catalogue with Commentary on the Composers, Repertory and Sources* (Oxford, 1990), particularly pp. 8–9 and pp. 22–27. The fifty psalms of the *Estro poetico-armonico* are listed in this catalogue as B601–651. See also Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Marcello's music: Repertory vs reputation," in *Benedetto Marcello, la sua opera e il suo tempo. Atti del convegno internazionale*, eds. Claudio Madricardo and Franco Rossi (Florence, 1988), pp. 205–222, particularly 208–210, 210–214 (on the reception of the *Estro*), where some of the ideas appearing in the catalogue were presented for the first time. For other studies about the reception of the *Estro*, see Luca Zoppelli, "Le Pindare, le Phidias, le Michel-Ange des musiciens: Notte sulla fortuna critica dei <Salmi> nel

liturgical melodies in the framework of his pioneering search for a classical style of music:

Marcello's call to restore the classical virtue of "noble simplicity" in music, found in the preface to his *Salmi*, anticipates the analogous invitation of the German archaeologist Winkelmann (who spoke of sculpture) by 30 years. Although little noted today, Marcello's role in formulating the values of classicism and promoting their musical implementation was his most significant contribution to cultural history. His influence was enormously, if subtly, pervasive.³⁷

The virtue of simplicity in art was held by intellectual circles of the 18th-century Venetian academies, and particularly by the Arcadia movement.

It was in response to the message of Arcadia that Benedetto . . . attempted to recapture the music of antiquity by transcribing hymns and intonations in use in Venetian synagogues.³⁸

Torre Franca expressed similar ideas concerning Marcello's aesthetic premises.³⁹ Discussing the perceptions of Hebrew music by non-Jewish Italian thinkers, he argues that:

The case of Benedetto Marcello . . . demonstrates a genuine artistic and aesthetic interest for a musical treatment of the texts under question—the psalms—oriented towards a "simple" sonorous amplification of the

"700," in Madricardo and Rossi, pp. 403–414; Giovanni da Pozzo, "Un episodio di integrazione arcadica: Le edizione dei <Salmi> di Benedetto Marcello," in Madricardo and Rossi, pp. 373–402; Marco Bizzarrini, "Le esecuzioni dei Salmi di Benedetto Marcello nell'Europa del Settecento," *Rassegna veneta di studi musicali* 7–8 (1991–92) 167–186. The information provided by Selfridge-Field concerning some of the Hebrew melodies in her catalogue is meager and sometimes incorrect (e.g., the hypothesis that some Hebrew melodies are "corrupted"). She also overestimates the impact of Marcello's transcriptions of Jewish melodies on later sources. For example, Francois-Auguste Gevaert, *Traité d'Harmonie* (1905, 1907), p. 8, quotes a Sephardi melody from "Consoli" (sic), which Selfridge-Field attributes to Marcello (see Selfridge-Field, "Marcello's music," p. 214). Actually, the source is a much later one: Federico Consolo, *Libro dei Canti d'Israele. Antichi canti liturgici del rito degli Ebrei Spagnoli* (Florence, 1892).

³⁷ Selfridge-Field, "Marcello, Benedetto Giacomo" (n. 2, above), p. 811.

³⁸ Selfridge-Field, *The Music of Benedetto and Alessandro Marcello*, p. 8.

³⁹ Massimo Acanfora Torre Franca, "Sulle musiche degli ebrei in Italia," *Storia d'Italia* 11: *Gli ebrei in Italia*, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin, 1996), 1:478–493.

word, and therefore according to an ideal of sober, austere beauty oriented toward ethnic values.⁴⁰

The historian Ioly-Zorattini went so far as to present the Hebrew melodies used by Marcello as one of the most tangible Jewish contributions to Venetian art:

Benedetto Marcello reproduces the melodies of twelve liturgical chants of the Sephardi and Ashkenazi rites in [the work] considered as his major opus, the *Estro poetico-armonico*. The great composer heard them in the actual synagogues of the ghetto that the [non-Jewish] Venetians used to frequent not only for business and he transferred them into music destined for those churches that hurt [the Jews] so much.⁴¹

Summarizing the opinions and premises of historians and musicologists concerning Marcello's Hebrew melodies, we can see two different viewpoints. One attributes to Marcello the great merit of being the first to record for posterity authentic Jewish music; the second poses serious doubts to the authenticity of these melodies, presenting them as corrupted. Only a few authors, such as Sendrey and Ioly-Zorattini, seriously address the issue of inter-faith and inter-cultural relations reflected in Marcello's contacts with the Venetian Jews and their traditional culture. Yet the most important issue emerging from historical criticism, stressed by Selfridge-Field, is Marcello's search for inspiration in the noble forms of musical antiquity. He found vestiges of these "pure" forms of music in the synagogues of his fellow Venetian Jewish citizens. I shall therefore now discuss the ideological motivations that unleashed what I consider to be one of the earliest ethnomusicological projects in music history.

ON MUSICAL ANTIQUITY: MARCELLO'S INTRODUCTIONS TO VOLUMES 1 AND 2 OF THE *ESTRO*

The most interesting and direct sources for the ideological background of Marcello's *Estro* are his introductory essays to some of the volumes of this work. Of particular relevance to my study are the introductions to volumes 1 and 2 (see the Appendix to this arti-

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 488.

⁴¹ Pier Cesare Ioly-Zorattini, "Gli ebrei nel Veneto durante il settecento," *Storia della cultura veneta* 5/II (Vicenza, 1986), p. 486.

cle). These two texts differ greatly in their content. The introduction to volume 1 is an elaborated scholarly essay on ancient music in general, and on ancient Hebrew music in particular, including many references to a vast array of previous sources. In this introduction Marcello develops the ideological rationale for the eight volumes of the *Estro*, particularly his hypotheses concerning the effects and techniques of music in biblical and classical antiquity. The introduction to volume 2, the first of the three volumes that contains settings based on Hebrew melodies, is largely dedicated to Marcello's perceptions of Hebrew music, based exclusively on Hebrew sources.

To describe the qualities of ancient music, and of ancient Hebrew music in particular, Marcello assembled in his introductory essay to volume 1 an impressive selection of writings by authorities from different fields and very diverse historical periods. These include classics of Latin literature (Seneca, Euclid, and Martianus Capellae), modern Christian commentators of the Bible (Jean de Lorini and Augustin Calmet), humanists from the Renaissance (the philosopher Marsilio Ficino, the scientist Claude Perrault and the music and drama theoreticians Gioseffo Zarlino and Vincenzo Galilei) and, finally, contemporary French historians of music (Pierre Bonnet and Sébastien de Brossard).

I will briefly summarize Marcello's arguments related to the description of music in antiquity and to Hebrew music in biblical times which appear in the introduction to volume 1 in their order of appearance. The music of ancient nations had more power to arouse the emotions than modern music.⁴² Ancient music was monodic (for one voice only) and the *armonia* associated (in Marcello's time) with the superimposition of many voices was achieved in the past by the simple, linear progression of intervals.⁴³ Recitative or solo singing was characteristic of ancient Hebrew song in biblical times.⁴⁴ Zarlino also maintained that the ancients sang only in unison:

⁴² Pierre Bonnet (1644–1724) and Pierre Bourdelot, *Histoire de la Musique et des ses effets* (Paris, 1715). Reprinted as *Die grossen Darstellungen der Musikgeschichte in Barock und Aufklärung*, ed. Othman Wesseley, Band 2 (Graz, 1966).

⁴³ Marcello refers to Claude Perrault (1613–88), "De la musique anciens," in *Essais de physique, ou Recueil de plusieurs traitéz touchant les choses naturelles*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1680–88; repr. Leiden, 1721).

⁴⁴ Marcello probably quotes Jean de Lorini (1559–1643), also known as Ioannis Lorini. *Commentariorvm in librvm Psalmsvrm*.

The musicians of those times did not play music with so many varied sorts of instruments . . . neither were their songs composed of so many parts . . . but they performed it in a manner such that . . . the musician accompanied his voice with the sound of only one instrument . . . When there were then two who sang, they did not sing together, as it is done today, but one after the other.⁴⁵

If instruments accompanied the voice, these played in unison with the voice⁴⁶ and the same happened if several voices sang together.⁴⁷ The ancient nations preferred altos instead of sopranos.⁴⁸

An important issue in Marcello's introduction to volume 1 is the instrumental music of biblical times. According to Marcello, "a shadow of the musical instruments mentioned in the Bible remains in modern times." This idea was entertained in many speculative writings concerning the music of the Temple in Jerusalem.⁴⁹ The biblical instruments were organized in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem in an impressive orchestra.⁵⁰

The focus of Marcello's discussion differs substantially from previous historiographical writings about Hebrew music and commen-

⁴⁵ Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche* (Venice, 1558; reprint: New York, 1965), 2nd part, cap. 4, p. 62.

⁴⁶ Vincenzo Galilei, *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna* (Florence, 1581; reprint: New York, 1967), p. 105.

⁴⁷ Sébastien de Brossard (d. 1730), *Dictionnaire de musique* (Amsterdam, ca. 1708; reprint: Geneva, 1992), pp. 74, 258.

⁴⁸ Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), *Compend. Tim. Plat.*, in his *Theologia platonica*.

⁴⁹ Marcello refers to a work by Augustin Calmet (1672–1757), *Dissertation sur les instruments de Musique des Hebreux*. This is probably Augustin Calmet, *Trésor d'antiquitez sacrées et profanes, tirées des Commentaires du R. P. D. Augustin Calmet . . . sur l'Ecriture Sainte*, second edition (Amsterdam, 1723), which has the additional title page: *Dissertations sur la poesie et la musique des anciens en général et des Hebreux en particulier avec des instruments de musique*. Marcello probably saw the first edition of this work (Augustin Calmet, *Dissertation qui peuvent servir de prolégomènes de l'Ecriture Sainte* [Paris, 1720]). It is not improbable that before he wrote the introduction to volume 2, Marcello had also access to Augustin Calmet, *Dictionnaire historique, critique, chronologique, géographique, et literal de la Bible* (Paris, 1722–28). Latin translation: Augustin Calmet, 2d ed., *Dictionarium historicum, criticum, chronologicum, geographicum, et literale Sacrae Scripturae*, trans. Joanne Dominicus Mansi (Venice, 1734), in which s.v. "Musica." For illustrations of the musical instruments mentioned in the Bible, see the plate between 2:90–91; for the extensive bibliography on Hebrew music and on biblical instruments available to Calmet, see *ibid.*, 1:144.

⁵⁰ *Paraliponema Ieremiae* 6. 33. 34. 32.

taries on biblical passages about music. While on the surface his arguments are similar to previous arguments, Marcello presents a new thesis, that elements of ancient Hebrew music of biblical times survived in the oral traditions of the contemporary synagogues. For example, he argues that the characteristic choral singing in unison of antiquity is similar to the singing of "the Jews today."

Towards the end of the introduction to volume 1 Marcello comes to the practical conclusions deriving from his historical analysis:

We did not find it inconvenient to introduce more ancient and characteristic songs (*canti*) or melodies (*intuonazioni*) of the Jews (sometimes in association with some artful counterpoint), since they used to sing, and still do, Psalms in their own particular manner, as will be seen in the second volume, and more fully in the third and fourth volumes [of the *Estro*].

The differentiation between the concepts of *canti* and *intuonazioni* is relevant to Marcello's distinction of the melodies of "songs," namely of *piyyutim* (postbiblical Hebrew liturgical poetry), and the "intonations" or melodic formulae of Hebrew psalmody. In the Italian titles to the Hebrew pieces in the *Estro*, Marcello (or his assistant, Jewish, editors) differentiates, though not systematically, between the different types of Hebrew texts whose melodies he employs: "Intonazione . . . Sopra il Salmo" ("intonation . . . based on the psalm") for the "real" Hebrew psalms, "Intonazione . . . sopra l'Inno" ("intonation . . . based on the hymn") for the *piyyut* (post-biblical strophic poem), *Aḥar nognim* and "Intonazione sopra . . . l'Orazione" ("intonation . . . based on the prayer") for the *piyyut Shofet kol ha-aretz*. The term *intonazione* is probably related to the flexible rhythm apparent in the transcription of this melody, which gives it the character of a prayer in prose, rather than that of a strophic hymn.

The introduction to volume 2 differs in nature from the introduction to the first volume. Marcello's access to some Jewish sources (symbolically represented by the insertion of Hebrew characters in the text) emerges with more clarity from this text, which is entirely dedicated to issues pertaining to the Hebrew musical tradition. He does not cite here any Greek or Latin authority, as he frequently does in the introduction to volume 1, but some of the literary ideas he employs in this text might have originated in Jewish sources. Unlike the precise references to literary sources appearing in the

introduction to volume 1, the Jewish sources used in the introduction to volume 2 remain anonymous. Why Marcello would conceal the use of rabbinic literature is a question that remains open. Perhaps the official policy of anti-Jewish segregation of the Republic that was still enforced during his time and his high social position in the Venetian society played some role in this strategy.

In the opening of this text, Marcello makes an even more specific distinction between the different textual strata in the Jewish liturgy than in the introduction to volume 1:

Here starts the ninth psalm with the intonation of the Spanish Jews לְדוֹד בָּרוּךְ וְנִי, which, according to them, is very ancient and widespread. But we do not find written music among them, and they sing hymns, songs, and psalms only according to the melodies transmitted traditionally to posterity.

These remarks concerning the antiquity of the melody of Psalm 144 (*Le-david barukh*), one of the five Sephardi melodies that Marcello transcribed, are fascinating. As Birnbaum noted, a very similar observation about this melody is found, slightly more than a century after Marcello, in the writings of Rabbi Israel Moshe Hazzan (1807–1863). Among other posts, Rabbi Hazzan served as chief rabbi in Rome for a brief period in the late 1840s, and he therefore also knew the Italian synagogue musical traditions firsthand:

It is said that nothing was left to us [from the music of the Temple in Jerusalem] but the melody *Le-David barukh Adonay tzuri*. [This melody survived] for three particular reasons: one, it is a fast tune and it is really overpowering as a tune for songs of war. Secondly, it is a marvel that all [the children of] Israel, everywhere, in all their Asian, African, and European settlements, use the same melody for this psalm, a wondrous thing [considering] that the melodies of prayers and rituals are not identical because in the countries of Islam all the melodies of prayers are Islamic melodies, and in the Christian countries the melodies are Christian. But in the singing of this psalm they are all identical. I, who toured almost all the places mentioned above, in most of the countries where I investigated this, saw it was true, and everything proves that this tune was left to us as an inheritance from our fathers.⁵¹

⁵¹ Israel Moshe Hazzan, *Kerāḥ shel Romi* (Livorno, 1876), fol. 4b. On his works, see Edwin Seroussi, "Rabbi Israel Moshe Hazzan on Music," *Haham Gaon Memorial Volume*, ed. Marc D. Angel (New York, 1997), pp. 183–195.

Marcello could have learned of the antiquity of this melody only from direct contacts with Jewish cantors in Venice. Our study of his transcription of the tune of this psalm supports the claim that, at least within the Sephardi traditions, most variants of this melody are related.

Marcello's following remarks on the Jewish musical traditions in the introduction to volume 2 are a further proof of his familiarity with the synagogue and its music. One passage concerns the idea that the Jewish people were passionate for music before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. A second idea concerns the three different uses of the "trombe" (*shofar*) commanded by Moses.⁵²

Marcello concludes the introduction to volume 2 by stressing the idea that aspects of contemporary oral traditions of synagogue music are possibly remnants of ancient Hebrew music:

It is therefore not unlikely (as many of them indeed say) that some of the melodies introduced in the present work remained in the memory of those first dispersed, and were transmitted by tradition, as was said before, to posterity. We collected these melodies as best as possible from their own voices, and we will write them down in their simplicity like a text using the notation of our ecclesiastical *canto fermo*. And since Jews write in the opposite direction, so in the melodies written above their characters will have to be read in the opposite direction too. In order to adapt these melodies to our verses and meters, we lengthened them from time to time with some repetitions, but we never altered their intonation, although we used some precise vocal manners or *portamenti* of the same Jews, who, according to their belonging originally to the Spanish or German nation, have different varieties of melodies and intonations for the same songs and psalms.

This final statement concerning the musical diversity of the Jewish traditions, that the same text may be performed in synagogues of different rites with diverse tunes, could be advanced only by someone who had investigated the issue in some depth. For this reason I contend that Marcello carried out a proto-ethnomusicological study in order to understand the Jewish musical traditions of his time and

⁵² Marcello may have been acquainted with Italian Jewish writings concerning Hebrew music, especially music of biblical antiquity. A probable source could have been Abraham David Portaleone, *Shiltei ha-gibborim* (Mantua, 1611/12). This source widely circulated in Europe through the paraphrases included in A. Kircher, *Musurgia universalis* (1650). See Israel Adler, *Hebrew Writings Concerning Music in Manuscripts and Printed Books from Geonic Times up to 1800* (Munich, 1975), no. 570.

to learn which materials from these traditions could best suit his goals in the *Estro*.

MARCELLO THE ETHNOMUSICOLOGIST

On the basis of the remarks and observations related to the introductory essay to volume 2, it is clear that Marcello had more than a casual familiarity with the music of the Venetian synagogues. It appears that he was involved through personal contacts with Jewish rabbis and cantors and it is almost certain that he actually attended Jewish services.

Werner was the first scholar to suggest that the Hebrew melodies should be analyzed with the tools of "vergleichende Musikwissenschaft."⁵³ He pointed out the dilemmas that the notation of oral tradition might have posed to Marcello. Furthermore, Werner also noticed that not all the items selected by Marcello corresponded to melodies of Hebrew psalms. He hypothesized that the composer selected melodies that were sung by the congregation and had a fixed beat and meter, and were therefore relatively easy to transcribe. While all these assumptions are plausible, at least one melody, *Shā'ar asher nisgar*, appears to be a solo melody in flexible rhythm.

In this connection, there is also a methodological aspect to be considered. In order to make his transcriptions, which attained a remarkable degree of fidelity (as will be shown below), Marcello needed much more than a glimpse of the sounds of the synagogue through the windows of adjacent houses, as Selfridge-Field assumes. He, or at least a (Jewish?) collaborator had to sit down with at least two synagogue cantors, and to listen to repeated performances of each melody in order to write them down. This was a true situation of ethnomusicological fieldwork, in which Marcello recorded the Hebrew melodies in western musical notation to an extent and precision without precedent. Moreover, he probably selected the tunes that suited his compositional purposes by sorting them out from many melodies that were made available to him by the same informants.

This is a remarkable methodological accomplishment. Rather than to speculate on the music of the Hebrews on the basis of biblical

⁵³ Werner, "Die hebräischen Intonationen in B. Marcellos *Estro poetico-armonico*," pp. 403–404.

passages on music, as his 16th- and 17th-century predecessors did, this patrician composer from Venice was the first non-Jewish western musician to become truly involved with the actual Jewish musical traditions of his time. Moreover, his innovation resided in the belief that extant oral traditions was an authentic source for the study of musical antiquity.⁵⁴

MARCELLO'S JEWISH SOURCES

To carry out his "field work" Marcello needed to spend substantial time among Jews and have direct contacts with reliable informants. This was not a simple task. By the beginning of the 18th century, Venice and its Jewish community was in decline. The war against the Turks (1714–18) weakened the Republic, and forced economic sacrifices. Loans on behalf of the war effort were demanded from the impoverished Jews.⁵⁵ At the same time, the segregation of the Jews by the authorities was enforced even more than in previous periods.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, contacts between Jews and Christians living in close physical proximity continued, to the dismay of the authorities. Following the festival of Purim in 1723, a complaint was filed with the Cattaver Bartolo Giacomelli on April 14:

In the evening of Palm Sunday [lit. "Sunday of the Olive"] that corresponds to the past March 21, a dancing party took place in an empty house that was previously inhabited by Menachem Genese in

⁵⁴ For an appreciation of the scope and place of Marcello's melodies within the framework of notated sources of Jewish music, see Adler, *Hebrew Notated Manuscript Sources*, 2:881–882.

⁵⁵ Riccardo Calimani, *The Ghetto of Venice*, trans. by Katherine Silberblatt Wolfthal (New York, 1987), pp. 222 ff.

⁵⁶ In the 17th century, interfaith contacts in Venice were frequent. Christians attended prayers at synagogues out of curiosity during colorful festivals such as Simḥat Torah and Purim (the Jewish carnival). The reminiscences of the convert Giulio Morosini in his *Via de la Fede* contain accounts of such events. See Julie-Marthe Cohen, *Il ghetto di Venezia nella rivisitazione polemica e nostalgica di Gulio Morosoni già Samuel Nahmias (1612–1687)*, M.A. thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1989, pp. 132–133. For evidence of the frequent visits of Christians to the synagogues of the Venetian ghetto, see Benjamin Ravid, "Christian Travelers in the Ghetto of Venice," in *Between History and Literature: Studies in Honor of Isaac Barzilay*, ed. S. Nash (Tel Aviv, 1997), pp. 111–150.

which two Christians played, and other Christians participated in the dancing.⁵⁷

Most historians of Italian Jewry today agree that the Jews of the Venetian ghetto had close physical, institutional and cultural connections with the external world from the 16th century onward.⁵⁸ It is, then, not far-fetched to argue for direct contact between Marcello and the Jews, which was necessary to him to learn about the Jewish liturgy and its music. It is worthwhile to note that Marcello owned property very close to the Ghetto.⁵⁹

The music of the Venetian synagogues at the time of Marcello was mostly traditional. This means that there were few formal choirs and no instrumental music. The music was performed by the cantor accompanied by, or in alternation with, either the congregation or a choir (if there was one) in unison. Apparently the most musical among the synagogues of the ghetto was the Levantine. The Dutch Jewish traveler Abraham Levy (ca. 1701/2–85) praised the music at this synagogue during his journey of Italy, which he started in 1719. This occurred around the time when Marcello was working on his project. He mentions that in Venice: “Man tragt heiss erst os di shul aros. Mit ein levitindis troyrig gesang.”⁶⁰

Who were Marcello's informants? One can assume, following Sendrey, that he had direct contacts with Jewish cantors. As we have already noticed, during his lifetime the connections between Jews and non-Jews in Venice continued as before in spite of efforts by the authorities to impose the rules of segregation. Even a contemporary authority from the Venetian Ashkenazi community, Rabbi Simone Calimani (1699–784), taught non-Jewish youngsters and aristocrats

⁵⁷ Quoted from the archives of the Cattaver by Giacomo Carletto, *Il ghetto veneziano nel 1700 attraverso I catastici* (Rome, 1981), p. 38. Carletto provides additional examples of joint musical performances and dances between Jews and Christians.

⁵⁸ See Stephanie Siegmund, “La vita nei ghetti,” *Storia d'Italia*, 11: *Gli ebrei in Italia*, ed. Corrado Vivanti, 1:846–892; Benjamin Ravid, “Curfew Time in the Ghetto of Venice,” in *Medieval and Renaissance Venice*, eds. Ellen E. Kittel and Thomas F. Madden (Urbana, 2000), pp. 237–275.

⁵⁹ Selfridge-Field, *The Music of Benedetto and Alessandro Marcello*, p. 9.

⁶⁰ M. Roest, “Het verhaal van een reis door een groot gedeelte van Europa in het eerste vierde der 183 eeuw, door een Israëliet,” *Israelitiesche Letterbode* 10 (Amsterdam, 1884–85) 187.

outside the ghetto.⁶¹ It is possible, then, that an individual like Calimani, who was also a poet versed in music, could have been in his youth one of Marcello's informants for the *Tedesco* tradition, although we do not have a specific testimony to that effect.

The identity of his Sephardi informant is easier to determine. The cantor of the Levantine synagogue during the period when Marcello collected his Hebrew melodies was Rabbi Moshe be-Rabbi Mikhael Hacohen, born in Saloniki in 1644. After a stay in Sofia, he was in Belgrade in 1688. From Belgrade he moved to Venice (in 1696 at the latest), where he eventually became cantor of the Levantine synagogue. Hacohen died in Venice in 1730.⁶² His important collection of liturgical poems, called *Ne'im zemirot*, is preserved in manuscript in the British Library.⁶³ This manuscript is an important source for the study of the liturgical and non-liturgical poetry and music of the eastern Sephardi Jews in the 18th century. As I shall try to demonstrate later on in this study, Marcello gathered his "Spanish" melodies from either this cantor or from one of his peers at the Levantine synagogue. On the basis of a comparison between the names of liturgical melodies mentioned in the manuscript *Ne'im zemirot* to those transcribed by Marcello, it is highly probable that Hacohen was Marcello's informant for what he calls in the *Estro* the "Spagnuoli" tradition.

One can assume, then, that Marcello had direct contacts with some key informants from the Venetian Jewish community who directly transmitted to him traditional Jewish melodies.

THE LITURGICAL CONTEXT AND CONTENT OF THE HEBREW MELODIES RECORDED BY MARCELLO

After establishing the sources of Marcello's ideology concerning ancient biblical music, and clarifying his direct access to the contemporary musical traditions of the Venetian Ghetto, I can now substantiate more strongly my claim concerning the authenticity of the Hebrew melodies. The transcriptions of the melodies by Marcello

⁶¹ Calimani, *Storia del Ghetto di Venezia*, p. 394.

⁶² For a thorough review of his life and works see Meir Benayahu, "Rabbi Moshe be-Rabbi Mikhael Hakohen ve-sifro 'Et la-sofer: maqor nekhbad le-qorot shvuyei Belgrad," *Asufot* 8 (1994) 297–342.

⁶³ *Ne'im zemirot*, BL, Add. 26967 (Catalogue Margoliouth, no. 938).

are neither an invention or corruption nor an absolutely true Jewish musical tradition miraculously frozen in musical notation, but rather models of traditional melodies based on actual performances heard at the Venetian synagogues in Marcello's time. Realizations of some of these models persisted in oral tradition until our days, as Idelsohn showed in regard to the melodies from the *Tedesco* tradition. Some of the melodies were lost in the course of time, replaced by others, as has occurred in all synagogue repertoires throughout the ages. The lost melodies may give us some clues about changes in the Venetian synagogue repertoires, which probably occurred after 1798, when French troops tore down the walls of the ghetto, altering the old social fabric and culture of the Venetian Jews.

The following list includes the data concerning the eleven Hebrew melodies recorded by Marcello. The call numbers refer to the thematic catalogue by Selfridge-Field. I have provided the source of each Hebrew text and its function within the Jewish liturgy.

Vol. 2

1. B609 *Le-david barukh*. Psalm 144 for *minḥah* (afternoon services) of Shabbat. Sephardi tradition.
2. B610 *Be-tzet Yisrael mi-mitzrayim*. Psalm 114 included in the *Hallel* service included in the liturgy of the Three Festivals, Hanukah, Purim and the New Moon. Ashkenazi tradition.
3. B614 *Odekha ki ʿanitani*. Psalm 118:21. Included in the *Hallel* service. Sephardi tradition.

Vol. 3.

4. B615 *Maʿoz tzur yeshuʿati*. *Piyyut* by a poet named Mordekhai, for the festival of Hanukah. Italian Ashkenazi tradition.
5. B616 *Shiru la-Adonay shir ḥaddash*. Psalm 96 from the *Qabbalat shabbat* (Reception of the Sabbath) service. Sephardi tradition.
6. B617 *Aḥar nognim ashir shirah*. Sephardi tradition. *Piyyut* by Shelomoh Mazal Tov (16th century) generally sung on Simḥat Torah (Rejoicing of the Torah). Sephardi tradition.
7. B617 *Ha-mavdil bein qodesh le-ḥol*. *Piyyut* for the ritual of Havdalah (the separation of the Sabbath from the regular weekday). Ashkenazi tradition.

8. B618 *Sha'ar asher nisgar. Piyyut* by Salomon ibn Gabirol. For the festival of Simḥat Torah. Sephardi tradition.

Vol. 4.

9. B619 *Lekha dodi. Piyyut* by Rabbi Shelomoh Alkabetz (16th century) incorporated into *Qabbalat shabbat*, instituted by the kabbalists of Safed in the late 16th century and subsequently adopted by all Jewish communities. Ashkenazi tradition.
10. B621 *Shofet kol ha-arets. Piyyut* for the morning prayer of Rosh Hashanah by an unidentified medieval poet from Spain called Shelomoh. Sung in most Sephardi communities and only in few Ashkenazi communities in southern Germany as well as among the Italian *Tedesco* Jews Ashkenazi tradition.
11. B622 *Yitgadal ve-yitqdash. Qaddish*, a prayer in praise of God's name. Appears several times in all daily and holiday services. Ashkenazi tradition.

THE TRANSCRIPTIONS BY MARCELLO AND
THEIR INTERPRETATION

The Hebrew melodies appear at the head of the composition of the *Estro poetico-armonico* in which they are quoted. The music is set from right to left with the text printed below in Hebrew characters. The typesetting differs from the only previous example of Hebrew text printed beneath musical notation, *Ha-shirim asher li-shelomoh* by Salamone Rossi, which was conceived and printed in Venice a century before the *Estro*. Marcello's unique decision to set the music from right to left solved the problem of setting the Hebrew text to the music, an issue that was raised in Rossi's work.⁶⁴

Eduard Birnbaum prepared the first modern transcriptions of the Hebrew melodies by Marcello, but he did not publish them, except for arrangements based on these melodies.⁶⁵ Joseph Singer (who published all the melodies with the text printed underneath in Latin characters following the Ashkenazi pronunciation of Hebrew), Abraham Idelsohn (who published only the *Tedesco* melodies), Eric

⁶⁴ On this issue see Don Harrán, *Salamone Rossi: a Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua* (London, 1999), p. 210.

⁶⁵ See n. 16 above.

Werner (who published all the melodies without their texts) and Hanoch Avenary (who published only two melodies) followed him. These modern transcriptions contain many inaccuracies, particularly in the setting of the text. Some shortcomings of the modern transcriptions derive from a lack of consideration for the oral sources of Marcello's transcriptions. For example, Singer and Werner lacked the knowledge about the performance practice of the Sephardi musical tradition that would have guided them in their transcriptions of the *Spagnuoli* melodies.

The Hebrew text printed in the first edition of the *Estro poetico-armonico* is remarkably accurate, despite some mistakes in spelling. It underscores the possible collaboration between Marcello and an individual who was proficient in both Hebrew and music in the preparation of the melodies for publication. In my transcriptions which follow, I have carefully transliterated the Hebrew text as set by Marcello with very few exceptions. In these transcriptions, I tried to reflect the oral essence of this music, that is, the fact that they are realizations of "models." The paradigmatic layout makes the structure of these melodies visible and permits a comparison with surviving musical traditions whenever such relations could be identified.

THE ASHKENAZI MELODIES

Be-tzet Yisrael mi-mitzrayim. Psalm 114 included in the Hallel service for the festivals and Rosh Hodesh (the celebration of the New Moon), as well as in the Passover Haggadah. According to Birnbaum this is a "simple melody [*niggun*]." Werner perceived it as a "German melody in the common AA'A'B form." However, the melody rather shows an ABA'C form and has a characteristic quasi-isorhythmic structure, whereas all four phrases share almost the same rhythmic pattern. This is probably an adaptation of a foreign folk melody to the opening verses of Psalm 114, as hinted by the frequent clashes between musical meter and the natural accentuation of the text (for example, the second word, "Yisrael," where the second, unaccented syllable falls on the accented beat). Metric melodies of this type are found in the western Ashkenazi musical repertoire in association with other poetical texts appearing in the last section of the Passover Haggadah.

Example 1a: Be-tzet yisrael mi-mitzrayim

Be-tzet yis-ra - el mi-mitz - ra - yim, beit ya-a-kov — me-'am — lo-'ez

hay-tah — ye - hu - dahleqod - sho, yis - ra-el mam - she - lo-tav.

Leo Levi recorded survivals of this melody in oral tradition, the most striking of which is the variant performed by himself in an interview with Avigdor Herzog at the National Sound Archives in Jerusalem.⁶⁶ According to Levi's testimony this is the "theme" melody of the liturgy for Passover among Italian Ashkenazi Jews and is adapted to other liturgical texts, such as *Barekhu*.⁶⁷

Example 1b: Comparison between [1] Marcello's version of Be-tzet yisrael mi-mitzrayim with [2] the oral version by Leo Levi.

1 Be-tzet yis-ra - el mi-mitz - ra - yim, beit ya-a-kov — me-'am — lo-'ez

2 Be-zet Is-ra-e - el mi-mitz - ra-yim bet ya-a-kov — me-am lo - 'ez

hay-tah — ye - hu - dah le-qod - sho, yis - ra-el mam - she - lo-tav.

Ha - ye - ta ye-hu-da le-kod-sho — Is - ra - el mam - she - lo - tav.

⁶⁶ Avigdor Herzog, interview with Leo Levi, National Sound Archives, Jerusalem, NSA Y 1993.

⁶⁷ Levi published two variants of this melody (and pointed out their relation to Marcello's version) as sung by members of the Bolaffio family from Gorizia, residents of Tel Aviv, in Leo Levi, "Canti tradizionali e tradizioni liturgiche giudeo-italiane," *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 23/9 (1957) 408b, and idem, "La Haggadà e la sua musica," *Haggadà di Pesah*, ed. Roberto Bonfil (Milano, 1962) (no page numbers).

Ma'oz tzur yeshu'ati. A melody belonging to the popular hymn for the festival of Hanukah, written by a poet called Mordekhai (apparently a contemporary of the Third Crusade, late 12th century) and sung originally in the Ashkenazi rite after kindling the Hanukah lights. This melody is found only among the *Tedesco* Jews in Italy where it survived until the present (e.g., the recordings sung by Leone Leoni from Ferrara and Mario Volterra from Verona).⁶⁸ It was arranged and published for the first time by Eduard Birnbaum and became the best known among Marcello's Hebrew melodies. Many versions and arrangements of this melody appeared in Israel and the United States in the 20th century.⁶⁹ However, it never superseded the famous melody of *Ma'oz tzur* commonly chanted throughout the Jewish world today.⁷⁰ According to Birnbaum, the melody published by Marcello was the original tune of *Ma'oz tzur* in the Ashkenazi tradition while the melody currently popular was originally the tune of another *piyyut* for Hanukah, *Shnei zeytim*.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Leone Leoni, "Ma'oz tzur yeshu'ati," NSA Y 141 [12]; Mario Volterra, "Ma'oz tzur yeshu'ati," NSA Y 156 [3].

⁶⁹ In many publications the second note is erroneously transcribed as G sharp, probably in order to create the more modern feeling of the harmonic minor mode. One of the first arrangements after Birnbaum's is by Joachim Stuchewski, *Manginah haddashah le-Ma'oz Tzur*, Tel Aviv, 1942.

⁷⁰ This melody was the subject of continuous research. Birnbaum was the first one to observe the resemblance of its opening to the chorale by Luther *Nun freut Euch Ihr lieben Christen* (see Birnbaum's introduction to his arrangement of *Ma'oz tzur*, Koenigsberg, 1889). Idelsohn pointed out that the original melody of the chorale is the German folk melody *Blumlein auf preyer Heyde* which opens "So weiss ich eins was mich erfreut, das Blumlein auf preyer Heyde" (Franz M. Boehme, *Alte deutsches Liederbuch*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1913, no. 635; see Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*, pp. 171–174 and idem, "Traditional Songs of the German (Tedesco) Jews in Italy," p. 576). Levi relied on Idelsohn, "Le-gilgulo shel 'Ma'oz Tzur,'" *Sefer ha-mo'adim*, ed. Yom Tov Levinsky (Tel-Aviv, 1954), 5:182–185. In his article Levi added information about the fate of this melody among the Ashkenazi Jews in Italy. These hypotheses were refuted by Avenary, who located much earlier sources for the *Ma'oz tzur* melody in the 15th-century religious song repertoire from Bohemia. See Hanoach Avenary, "The Ma'oz Zur Tune: New Facts about its History" (in Hebrew), *Tazlil* 7 (1967) 125–128. See also *EJ* 11:910–912, s.v. "Ma'oz Zur, Musical Rendition" (Bathja Bayer).

⁷¹ See Birnbaum, *Briefe auf Koenigsberg* (see n. 16 above). According to Levi, the Italian melody collected by Marcello derives from the widespread German tune and was reworked according to the "modal style of the Italian Church . . . that became typical of most of the Jewish prayers [in Venice]." This hypothesis is extremely unconvincing; the two melodies are of a different breed. See Levi, "Le-gilgulo shel 'Ma'oz Tzur,'" 5:185.

Example 2: Ma^coz tzur

Ma - oz tzur ye - shu - 'a - ti — le - kha — na - eh — le - sha - be - ah,

ti - kon beit te - fi - la - ti — ve - sham — to - dah ne - za - be - ah.

Le - 'et ta - khin mat - be - ah mi - tzor — ha - me - na - be - ah,

az — eg - mor be - shir — miz - mor ha - nu - kat hamiz - be - ah.

Ha-mavdil bein qodesh le-hol. Another march-like melody in major, similar in style and form to the melody of *Be-tzet Yisrael mi-mitzrayim*. According to Birnbaum, this melody for the *Havdalah* ceremony at the conclusion of the Sabbath may be originally a *niggun* for *zemirot* (Sabbath table song). Motifs of this melody also appear in the tune of Psalm 144 (*Le-david barukh*) according to the Ashkenazi tradition. Werner quotes Robert Eitner who stated that Marcello “had composed the psalm itself in exactly the same happy-go-lucky manner as was the *habitus* of its *cantus firmus* [the Hebrew tune].”⁷²

Example 3a: Ha-mavdil bein qodesh le-hol

Ha - mav - dil bein qo - desh le - hol — ha - to - te - nu yim - hol zar -

'ei - nu ve - khas - pei - nu yar - beh — ka - hol ve - ke - ko - kha - vim — ba - lay - la.

A remarkable variant of this melody (as well as its adaptation to the *qaddish* for the conclusion of the Sabbath) was recorded by Leo Levi from Leone Leoni in Ferrara in 1954.⁷³

⁷² Robert Eitner, “Benedetto Marcello,” *Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte* 23 (1891) 187, 197. [Werner’s faulty quotation was corrected here.]

Example 3b: Comparison between [1] Marcello's version of *Ha-mavdil bein qodesh le-hol* with [2] the oral version by Leo Levy.

1 Ha - mav - dil bein qo-desh le - hol — ha - to - te - nu yim - hol -

2 Ha-mav - dil bein qo-desh le - hol — ha - to - te - nu yim - hol

zar - 'e - nu ve-khas-pei - nu yar-beh - ka-hol ve-ka-ko-kha-vim — ba - lay - la.

zar - 'e - nu yar-be ka-hol — ve-ka-ko-kha-vim ba - lay - la.

Lekha dodi. This poem by Rabbi Solomon Alkabetz became the hallmark of the ceremony of the welcoming of the Sabbath, which was instituted by the Kabbalists of Safed in the late 16th century and was subsequently adopted by all Jewish communities. Marcello's transcription includes music for the two opening verses of the song, which also functions as the refrain. The verses consist of eight syllables each, following the quantitative meter of Arab origin called *merubeh* (u--- u--- u--- u---). Werner's suggestions, first, that the beginning of Marcello's melody bears some relation to the *Lekha dodi* melody for the Three Weeks published by Abraham Baer (as Birnbaum also pointed out) or second, that its origins are in a Polish folksong, are extremely unlikely.⁷⁴

This melody was perpetuated by oral tradition among the Tedesco Jews in Italy. Idelsohn published a version sung in Ferrara in the 1930s as transmitted to him by his Italian collaborator Giuseppe Bassini.⁷⁵ The Leo Levi collection of Italian Jewish music includes a version that is even closer to Marcello's.⁷⁶

⁷³ NSA Y 141 [18].

⁷⁴ Werner. For the *Lekha dodi* melody, see Abraham Baer, *Baal T'fillah* (Leipzig?, 1877 [preface dated Gothenburg, 1883]), no. 328.

⁷⁵ Idelsohn, "Traditional Songs of the German (Tedesco) Jews in Italy," p. 589.

⁷⁶ NSA Y 141 [8].

Example 4: Lekha dodi

Le - kha do - di li - qrat ka - lah

pe - ne sha - bbat ne - qa - be-lah,

le - kha do - di li - qrat ka - lah

pe - ne sha - bbat ne - qa - be-lah.

Werner found that this melody is “asymmetrical.”⁷⁷ However, the overall rhythmic and “asymmetrical” scheme follows quite precisely the sequence of short and long syllables of the quantitative poetical meter and points to a possible Sephardi influence on this melody. This is also the opinion of Avenary, who stated that this melody with “its garland-style, winding coloraturas, sounds not only non-European but downright Sefardic-Oriental. Although periodic in structure, it is asymmetric (having 11 bars), and evidences the ceaseless forward urge typical of many Eastern melodies.”⁷⁸ Another extraordinary feature of this setting of *Lekha dodi* is the repetition of the opening verses with a variant of the melody rendering the form ABA'C. This feature is rare and can be found for example in the *Lekha dodi* melody from the Sephardi community of Ragusa (Dubrovnik).⁷⁹

Yitgadal ve-yitqdash. The *Qaddish* (sanctification of God's name) is a prose text which appears several times in each daily and holiday service. In general the cantor recites this text in a simple manner with responses from the congregation. However, on holidays and other festive occasions, the *Qaddish* is sung to metric melodies adopted from other sections of the liturgy. This appears to be the

⁷⁷ Werner, *A Voice Still Heard*, p. 121.

⁷⁸ Avenary, *Hebrew Hymn Tunes*, p. 33.

⁷⁹ Isaac Levy, *Antología de la liturgia judeo-española* (Jerusalem, 1964–73), vol. 1, no. 15.

case in this piece in ABCB form. Marcello also indicated the tempo of this piece as *presto* and therefore its merry character is evident. Birnbaum identified the melody as belonging to the full *Qaddish* that ends the services, a view shared by Idelsohn and Werner. Werner leaned towards the merry *Schluss-Qaddish* for the festival of Simḥat Torah.⁸⁰ However an oral survival of a variant of the melody by Marcello sung in Ferrara in the 1930s and published by Idelsohn has a different function: this is a *Qaddish* after the *seliḥot* services on Rosh Hashanah.⁸¹ Another oral survival recorded by Leo Levi in Ferrara in 1954⁸² relates this melody more generically to the High Holidays.

Example 5: Yitgadal ve-yitqadash

Presto

Yit - ga - dal ve - yit - qa - dash

she - me [ra - ba, she - me - ra - ba]

Shofet kol ha-aretz. *Piyyut* for the morning service of Rosh Hashanah by an unidentified medieval Spanish poet called Shlomoh (not Shlomoh Ibn Gabirol, as sometimes assumed). This *piyyut* is included in the prayer book of the Sephardi communities alone and was adopted by the Tedesco Jews exclusively, probably in Venice, due to the close contacts between both communities. For unfounded

⁸⁰ This is an unlikely assumption since this *Qaddish* is specifically characterized by being a potpourri of liturgical melodies from several holidays. See *Der Frankfurter Kantor. Sammlung der traditionellen Frankfurter synagogalen Gesänge* von Fabian Ougutsch, ed. J. B. Levy (Frankfurt am Main, 1930), nos. 200–201 (for Rosh Hashanah), nos. 125–130 (for Passover).

⁸¹ Idelsohn, "Traditional Songs of the German (Tedesco) Jews in Italy," p. 589.

⁸² NSA Y 141 [16].

reasons, Selfridge-Field perceived this melody as a “corrupted derivation.”⁸³

Example 6: Shofet kol ha'aretz



As already mentioned, this is the only melody transcribed by Marcello that has been the subject of an intensive study. Hanoch Avenary examined its possible origins and diffusion. He concluded that:

The oldest documented *Shofet* melodies [Marcello's] cannot be regarded as ancestors of the common-Ashkenazi tune, but rather as “granduncles” from a collateral line. . . . Current *Shofet* melodies were affected by “the spirit of the age” in its tendency toward major-minor tonality. However, Jewish musical tradition in the homelands of the Ashkenazi rite did not go far on Europe’s “road to major.” A more decided acculturation took place among the uprooted *Tedesco* Jews within the sphere of Italian music.⁸⁴

THE CHARACTER AND ORAL SURVIVAL OF THE ASHKENAZI MELODIES

Werner has pointed out the “military marching” character of most of the Ashkenazi melodies transcribed by Marcello, by which he meant that they are metric and based in sharply-defined, simple

⁸³ Selfridge-Field, *The Music of Benedetto and Alessandro Marcello*, B 621.

⁸⁴ Avenary, “Aspects of Time and Environment,” pp. 104, 106.

rhythmic patterns.⁸⁵ The widespread use of such type of metric melodies is deeply rooted in the western Ashkenazi tradition of southern Germany and northern Italy. This synagogue tradition perpetuated many *contrafacta* of German folk songs and dance tunes that were lost in the eastern Ashkenazi tradition. Traces of these *contrafacta* are found in the written documentation, such as the Prague broadsides mentioned by Werner, in which the titles of German songs are mentioned as music for the singing of Hebrew texts.⁸⁶ Another feature uncovered by Marcello's documentation of the German Jews is the apparent Sephardi musical influence on the small Ashkenazi community of Venice.

What is striking about these Ashkenazi melodies from northern Italy is the survival of most of them until the 20th century in the oral tradition of the Jewish community of Ferrara. This survival was so complete that initially I suspected that transcriptions of the melodies by Marcello were perhaps circulating among the cantors of Ferrara. However, on the basis of comparative analyses of Marcello's transcriptions to their oral survivals, it appears that both Idelsohn (through the services of Bassani) and Levi⁸⁷ documented genuine variants of Marcello's melodies transmitted by oral tradition for over a period of more than two hundred years.

THE SEPHARDI MELODIES

Le-david barukh. Psalm 144 for *minḥah* of Shabbat. We have already established that this melody of the Sephardi tradition, with its characteristic martial rhythm, expressing the content of the text: "Blessed is the Lord, my Rock, who trains my hands for battle, my fingers for warfare," was already considered old in Marcello's time. Marcello's version includes only the first, long verse of this psalm, whose first part functions as its "title": "Of David, blessed is the Lord, my Rock." Although the musical information provided by this transcription is too meager to appreciate the piece in its entirety, it

⁸⁵ Werner, *A Voice Still Heard*, p. 121.

⁸⁶ Werner mentions Moritz Steinschneider, *Catalogue Bodleian*, no. 3625ss. See for example the 18th-century *zemirot* melodies from Bohemia published in Israel Adler and Edwin Seroussi, "Musical Notations of *Zemirot* (Sabbath Table Songs) in an Eighteenth-Century Manuscript at the Prague National Library," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 20 (1998) 5–24.

⁸⁷ Leo Levi, recording of Leone Leoni, NSA Y 141.

nevertheless offers important information about its basic structure and is clearly linked to surviving oral traditions.

The melody consists of short motives, some of them repeated, related to the system of biblical accents. Three strong disjunctive accents in this verse, *ravia*^c, *etnahtah* and *sof pasuq* correspond to three musical motives appearing in the following order: *abca* (see Example 7a). Thus, the ending of the “title” of the psalm (marked by the disjunctive *revia*^c) and the ending of the verse (*sof pasuq*) share the same musical motif. The melody is syllabic and its rhythm is intrinsically related to the syntax of the text. All these features are characteristics of Hebrew liturgical psalmody in the Sephardi and Oriental Jewish traditions.⁸⁸

Example 7a: Le-david barukh

Le - da - vid ba - rukh A - do - nai tzu - ri

ha - me - la - med ya - dai - la - qrav

et - z - be - 'o - tai

la - mil - ha - mah

Most surviving musical traditions of Psalm 144 in Sephardi communities from Morocco in the West to Syria in the East bear a family resemblance. A version that resembles Marcello’s transcription is the one by Consolo, based on the oral tradition of the Sephardi community of Livorno at the end of the 19th century.⁸⁹ Considering the strong ties between the Sephardi communities of Venice and

⁸⁸ See Reinhard Flender, *Hebrew Psalmody: A Structural Investigation* (Jerusalem, 1993).

⁸⁹ Consolo, *Libro dei Canti d’Israele*, no. 72.

Livorno, this musical relation appears even more plausible (see example 7b). The similarity of the opening phrase is striking. While the melodic direction of the two most important musical motifs, corresponding to the masoretic accents *etnahtah* and *sof pasuq* vary (G-A-B-G-A and G-A-B-C in Marcello, E-D-C-B-A and G-F-E-D-C in Consolo), the interval between their ending pitches (minor third; A and C respectively) is identical in both versions.

Example 7b: Comparison between [1] Marcello's version of *Le-david barukh* with [2] Consolo, *Libro dei Canti d'Israele*, no. 72

1 

Le - da - vid ba - rukh A - do - nai tzu - ri

2 

Le - da - vid ba - rukh A - do - na - i tzu - ri

b 

ha - me - la - med ya - dai la - grav

a - m - la - med ja - da - i la - crab

c 

etz - be - 'o - tai

et - z - be - gno - tai

a 

la - mil - ha - mah

a1 

la - mi - l - ha - ma

Odekha ki ʿantinani. Psalm 118:21–22, from the Hallel service for festivals and Rosh Hodesh. This melody has four phrases of almost equal length in the pattern ABCD, whereas phrase A consists of the repetition of the same motif. Most phrases share the same rhythmic pattern.

It appears that this melody corresponds to one of the surviving melodies of the Judeo-Spanish *romance* “La vuelta del marido,” whose famous first line is “Arboleda, arboleda, arboleda tan gentil.” The Sephardi custom of singing verses from the Hallel Psalms with melodies of Judeo-Spanish folksongs, including those of this *romance*, is widely documented.⁹⁰ One of the melodies of this *romance* was certainly known to the cantors of the Levantine synagogue in Venice and adopted to the singing of Hebrew prayers during Marcello’s time for this *contrafactum* is mentioned in the manuscript of the Venetian cantor Moshe Hacohen.⁹¹

Variants of the melody of this *romance* that are related to the tune recorded by Marcello have survived in the Sephardi traditions from Bulgaria and Sarajevo (see one variant in Example 8).⁹² In spite of differences in mode (the *romance* melody employs the b flat) and rhythm, both melodies share the typical *romance* form (ABCD),⁹³ the repetition of the motif in phrase A and, what is more crucial, the intervallic relation between the ending pitches of the four phrases is almost identical (c, e, a, c in the psalm, C, E, G′, C in the *romance*). As was shown in comparative studies of melodies of Judeo-Spanish and Iberian *romances*, patterns of form, directionality of phrases and intervallic relations between ending pitches of phrases are the most stable features in this oral tradition, linking versions of melodies

⁹⁰ See Levy, *Antología de la liturgia judeo-española*, vol. 1, nos. 152, 153, 157; vol. 5, nos. 265, 266, 267, 268, 271. See also Avner Bahat, “Les contrafacta hebreux des romanzas judéo-espagnoles,” *Revista de Musicología* 9 (1986) 141–168, where the adaptation of the melody of “La vuelta del marido” to Hebrew poems is also discussed. On this *romance* as Hebrew *contrafact*, see Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman, “El antiguo cancionero sefardi; Citas de romances en himnarios hebreos (siglos XVI–XIX),” *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 30 (1981) 453–512, esp. 467–468.

⁹¹ Moshe Hacohen, *Neʿim zemirot* (n. 63 above), fols. 107b, 108a.

⁹² For versions of this Judeo-Spanish melody, see *Zer shel shirei ʿam mi-pi yehudei sʿfarad*, collected and transcribed by Susana Weich-Shahak, ed. Edwin Seroussi (Jerusalem, 1992), no. 8 and Leon Algazi, *Chants sephardies* (Paris, 1958), no. 65.

⁹³ Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak, “The Music of the Judeo-Spanish Romancero: Stylistic Features,” *Anuario Musical* 43 (1988) 221–250.

Example 8: [1] *Odekha ki ^canitani* by Marcello and comparison with [2] a version of the Judeo-Spanish romance "La vuelta del marido."⁹⁴

A ^a
O - de - kha - ki 'a - ni - ta - ni

B
va - ti - hi li li - shu - 'a,

C
O - de - kha ki 'a - ni - ta - ni

D
va - ti - hi li li - shu - 'a

A ^a
Ar - bo - le - das, ar - bo - le - das,

B
ar - bo - le - das tan gen - til,

C
la - ra - iz tie - ne - de o - ro

D
la ci - mien - te de mar - fil.

recorded in a span of several hundreds of years.⁹⁵ If my assumption is correct and the melody for this Hallel psalm recorded by Marcello

⁹⁴ *Zer shel shirei ^cam mi-pi yehudei sfarad*, no. 8.

⁹⁵ Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak, "The Spanish and the Sephardic Romances, Musical Links," *Ethnomusicology* 32, no. 2 (1988) 1-37; idem, "The Spanish Romances Viejos and the Sephardic Romances, Musical Links across Five Centuries," *Atti del XIV Congresso della Società Internazionale di Musicologia, Bologna 1987*, vol. 3 (1990) 7-16.

is indeed a variant of the melody of the romance “La vuelta del marido,” we witness here the earliest musical transcription of the melody of a Judeo-Spanish folksong.

Shiru la-Adonay shir ḥaddash. Psalm 96 from the Sabbath evening liturgy.⁹⁶ The melody covers only the opening verse of the psalm and is extremely melismatic. It consists of four phrases in the form AABA¹. The first two phrases are seven bars long, divided into 4+3, while the last two are eight bars long, the B phrase being characterized by its sequential development. Phrase A¹ shares its ending motif with phrase A while its opening is linked to phrase B. It may be possible that phrase A was chanted in a responsorial manner by the cantor (the first four bars) and the congregation (the remaining

Example 9: *Shiru la-Adonay shir ḥaddash*

A

Shi - ru _____ l'A - do - nai _____

A

shir _____ ḥa - dash _____

B

Shi - ru _____ l'A - do - nai _____

A¹

kol _____

ha - ha - retz _____

⁹⁶ There is a remote possibility that this incipit refers to a *piyyut* by a poet called Shmuel for the first of Passover that opens *Shiru la-Adonay shir ḥaddash ki niflaʿot ʿasah*. This poem was still sung in the Sephardi community of Sarajevo in the 20th century. See the oral performance by Sadiq Danon, National Sound Archives, Jerusalem, recording Yc 68 [8].

three bars). The unexpected minor inflection of the third degree in the ending phrase may reflect an oral rendition preserved by Marcello in his transcription. This melody is not in the Sephardi style of Hebrew psalmody, as in *Le-David barukh*. It rather appears to be a *contrafactum*, perhaps based on the tune of yet another Judeo-Spanish folksong as in the case of *Odekha ki ^canitani*.

Aḥar nognim ashir shirah. Already identified by Birnbaum as a *piyyut* for the festival of Simhat Torah by Shelomoh Mazal Tov, a 16th-century Sephardi poet, probably of Italian origin.⁹⁷ The poem was published for the first time in the collection of poems by Mazal Tov titled *Shirim u-zemirot ve-tushbahot*, printed in Constantinople in 1545 at the Soncino press.⁹⁸ It also appears in a 16th-century manuscript owned by the poet Shlomoh Mevorakh.⁹⁹ In both these sources this *piyyut* has in its title the same reference to the pre-existing melody to which it should be sung: "to an Ismaelite melody" (*le-niggun yishma^celi*). However, the dance-like tune transcribed by Marcello is far removed from that original "Ismaelite" melody that the poet had in mind two centuries before Marcello collected the present tune. The melody is in triple meter, in the ABCD (stanza) ED (refrain, certainly performed by the congregation) form, and has symmetric phrases of four bars each. These stylistic characteristics certainly link it to Venetian dance tunes from the instrumental repertoire, perhaps a 17th-century galliard.

According to a communication by the chief Rabbi Ottolenghi of Venice to Eric Werner, this *piyyut* was no longer sung by the 1930s.¹⁰⁰ However, it was still performed in the 20th century, to a different melody than Marcello's, in the Sephardi community of Sarajevo.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Israel Davidson, *Orzar ha-shirah veba-piyyut* (New York, 1970), Aleph, 2569.

⁹⁸ Shelomoh Mazal Tov, *Shirim u-zemirot ve-tushbahot* (Constantinople, 1545), no. 233.

⁹⁹ MS Jerusalem 8° 421. On this manuscript, see Hanoch Avenary, "Ha-leḥanim be-qovetz shirim mi-yavan mi-yessodo shel Shelomo Mevorakh, MS Jerusalem 8° 421," *Sefunot* 13 (1978) 97–213.

¹⁰⁰ Werner, "Die hebräischen Intonationen in B. Marcellos *Estro poetico-armonico*," p. 404.

¹⁰¹ Levy, *Antología de la liturgia judeo-española*, vol. 7, no. 40. In 1973, Amnon Shiloah recorded an oral version of this traditional melody in Sarajevo, performed by the chief rabbi of Yugoslavia at that time, Sadik Danon. See the recording at the National Sound Archives in Jerusalem, Yc 678 [10].

Example 10: Aḥar nognim ashir shirah

A - ḥar nog - nim a - shir shi - rah

'al ya'a - lat ḥen gam a - 'i - rah

sha - ḥar la-me - na - - - tze - aḥ om - rah

qum do - di ha - - - ne - vel 'o - rah

Sha - ḥar lam - na - - - tze - aḥ om - rah

qum do - di ha - - - ne - vel 'o - rah.

Sha'ar asher nisgar. Piyyut by Salomon ibn Gabirol. Chanted in Sephardi synagogues on the festival of Simḥat Torah. The text is included, for example, in the collection of poems for Simḥat Torah entitled *Todah ve-qol zimrah* (Mantua, 1755). Unlike *Aḥar nognim*, this poem was still changed in Italy in the 20th century during the Simḥat Torah celebrations.¹⁰²

The melody transcribed by Marcello is apparently in flexible rhythm, and unlike all the other Sephardi melodies quoted in the *Estro*, it may be performed by a soloist, not by the congregation. The transcription of Marcello covers only the opening two lines of the poem. The melody is repeated, with variants, for each of the two poetic lines, rendering the form ABC DB¹C. The differences between the repetitions of phrase B may preserve traces of the improvisation allowed to the performers of this type of *piyyut* melody.

Variants of this melody were recorded in oral tradition in Italy. Elio Piatelli's transcription of this *piyyut* is very close to Marcello's, with only few rhythmic variants. Piatelli adds that "Sia la melodia

¹⁰² Werner, "Die hebräischen Intonationen in B. Marcellos *Estro poetico-armonico*," p. 407.

che la musica appartengono al rito spagnolo di Venezia e di altre città italiane.”¹⁰³ Another version, collected by Leo Levi from Leone Leoni from Ferrara appears to be a distant variant of the melody recorded by Marcello.¹⁰⁴ Another Sephardi version of this *piyyut* from Florence, also published by Piatelli, is similar to Marcello’s, but only in its rhythmic approach.¹⁰⁵

Example 11: Sha^car asher nisgar

A
Sha - 'ar a - sher - nis - gar -

B
qu - mah

C
[p]e - ta - he - hu

D
u - tzvi a - sher [b]a - rah

E
e - lay

F
sha - le - he - [hu]

¹⁰³ Elio Piatelli, "Tradizione musicale ebraica: Musiche liturgiche ebraiche," in *La Musica e la Bibbia*, ed. Pasquale Trola (Roma, 1992), p. 369. I could not locate the source of Piatelli's transcription.

¹⁰⁴ Leo Levi Collection, no. 225 (NSA Y 1302 [3]).

¹⁰⁵ Elio Piatelli, *Canti liturgici di rito spagnolo del Tempio Israelitico di Firenze* (Florence, 1992), p. 210.

THE SEPHARDI MELODIES OF MARCELLO IN
18TH-CENTURY HEBREW SOURCES

To what extent can we find evidence of the melodies transcribed by Marcello in Jewish practice of his time? A partial answer to this question can be found for the Sephardi melodies. The melodies of the "Spanish" Jewish rite that Marcello collected are mentioned as *laḥan* indications in the manuscript of the cantor of the Levantine community, Rabbi Moshe Hacoen, a contemporary of Marcello whom I mentioned above as a possible informant of the composer. The *laḥan* indications direct the singer of a Hebrew sacred poem to use an existing melody for the singing of another text.

Hacoen mentions in his manuscript three of the melodies transcribed by Marcello. In the appendix to his collection Hacoen "catalogued" the melodies (as *laḥan* indications) to be applied to different texts of the normative liturgy in various holidays. This liturgy was arranged according to the Turkish *makams* (modes). These *laḥan* indications prove that the catalogued texts had a distinguishable melody.¹⁰⁶

The evidence from the Hacoen manuscript reinforces my hypothesis that by "Ebrei Spagnoli" Marcello referred to "Sephardi" Jews in a wide sense and not necessarily to those whose roots were directly associated with Spain, that is, to the members of the Ponentini community in Venice. By the beginning of the 18th century, the term "Spagnoli" (in the sense of "Sephardi") could apply to the members of the Levantine synagogue as well. These Jews commanded both the Judeo-Spanish language and the musical traditions of the Eastern Sephardi Diaspora, as the manuscript by Hacoen shows.

CONCLUSION: ORAL TRADITION AS A SOURCE OF
HEBREW MUSICAL ANTIQUITY

The complex social and cultural setting of 18th-century Venetian society coupled with the frequent contacts between the Christian

¹⁰⁶ Moshe Hacoen, *Ne'im zemirot*. The melody of *Sha'ar asher nisgar* is mentioned in fol. 131v for the poem *Sha'ar 'ala eli* for weddings; *Aḥar nogrim ashir shirah* is mentioned in fol. 161a for the singing of *Odekha* in the morning service of the first day of Passover; and *Shiru la-Adonay shir ḥaddash* in fol. 162v for the singing of *Barekhu* in the second day of Passover (in the Turkish *makam saba*).

majority and the Jews of the ghetto and the intellectual interest in the reconstruction of musical antiquity led to the fascinating case of Marcello's use of Hebrew melodies. Indeed only in the specificity of the Venetian case "artists were able to join in a common and especially rich dialogue about the significance of Venice itself."¹⁰⁷

Marcello's interest in Jewish musical traditions is another link in a chain of similar concerns shown by Christian Hebraists and music historiographers from the early 16th century. For a variety of reasons—the study of Biblical Hebrew grammar or Hebrew poetry, the reconstruction of the music in the Temple of Jerusalem—they transcribed in musical notation samples of biblical readings by contemporary Jews. Specimens from the Italian Jewish traditions of biblical cantillation appear in Ercole Bottrigari's *Trimerone de' Fondamenti Armonici* (ca. 1599), Athanasius Kircher's *Musurgia Universalis* (1650) and Giulio Bartolucci's *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica de scriptoribus et scriptis hebraicis* (1693).

However, Marcello's enterprise was based on his belief in the authenticity of the surviving oral repertoire of the synagogue, not just of the biblical cantillations. A distant echo of the glorious musical past of ancient Israel, this music had worth as an inspiration for modern settings of the psalms. Marcello's ethnographic work on Hebrew music therefore had no precedent in its breath and quality, or in its influence on the subsequent historiography of Jewish music.

The result of this enterprise was one of the earliest substantial documents of Jewish music. Of course, the random selection of eleven tunes belonging to two (or perhaps three) different Jewish traditions is a meager corpus of data on which to base any appreciation of these musical traditions. However, the melodies offer us some insight into the processes of change and continuity in Italian Jewish musical traditions and to contacts between these traditions and surrounding non-Jewish musical culture.

The continuity of the psalm singing tradition among Sephardi Jews is one of the remarkable facts revealed by Marcello's materials. We are witnesses to the persistence of this traditional genre in the Jewish liturgical repertoire. Despite substantial changes, the mel-

¹⁰⁷ John Martin and Dennis Romano, "Reconsidering Venice," in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City State 1297–1797*, eds. John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore, 2000), p. 26.

ody of *Le-david barukh* included in the *Estro* is clearly related to the Sephardi oral variants in general, and to the Italian Sephardi variants in particular. On the other hand, *Shiru la-Adonay shir had-dash* and *Odekha ki 'anitani* reveal the variety of secular musical sources used for singing psalms in the Sephardi tradition. This openness to the adoption of melodies from non-Jewish sources is especially relevant in the singing of liturgical poetry. The possible adaptation of Italian instrumental music is exemplified by the Sephardi melody of *Aḥar nognim*.

The *Tedesco* repertoire also reveals a wide stylistic variety. Some melodies reflect older Ashkenazi practices whose origins are lost in time. This is the case with *Ma'oz tzur* and *Shofet kol ha-aretz*. Other melodies, such as *Betzet Yisrael* and *Hamavdil*, reveal the well-documented influence of German folk songs on the western Ashkenazi tradition. The *Qaddish*, on the other hand, appears to reflect a local Italian source of inspiration. Possible musical exchanges between Sephardi (i.e., the Eastern or Levantini and the Western or Ponentini), Ashkenazi and Italiani Jews in the small, overcrowded ghetto of Venice cannot be ruled out, in spite of the separation observed between them. Not only did they share community institutions but also religious personnel, such as rabbis, preachers, and cantors, who could transmit the lore of one community to another.¹⁰⁸ The melody for *Lekha dodi* may be an instance of this phenomenon. The survival of melodies from the Sephardi repertoire, as well as the Portuguese pronunciation of Hebrew in the nominally *Tedesco* community in contemporary Ferrara recorded by Leo Levi, is another possible remnant of such intra-Jewish musical exchanges.

A final observation: one cannot rule out the possibility that Marcello was aware of the only major work of Jewish liturgical music in western notation that appeared precisely in Venice, exactly a century before the *Estro poetico-armonico*. I refer, of course, to *Hashirim asher li-shelomoh* (Songs of Solomon) by Salamone Rossi, a collection of original polyphonic settings of Hebrew liturgical music. Born from the particular socio-cultural situation of the Jews in early 17th-century Mantua, the work by Rossi was a new and unique attempt to revitalize the musical tradition of the synagogue

¹⁰⁸ A mid-17th century example of such a religious functionary in Venice is Itzhak Min-Halevyim, the grandson of Rabbi Leone de Modena. See his memoirs: Itzhak Min-Halevyim, *Medabber tanpuchoth*, ed. Daniel Carpi (Tel Aviv, 1985).

in order to restore the imagined music performed in the Temple of Jerusalem. The irony is that while the Jewish composer Rossi and his rabbinical mentor Leone de Modena sought to revive the full splendor of the ritual music of ancient Israel through polyphony, a hallmark of church music, the Christian composer Marcello perceived the unison singing of the contemporary synagogue as the authentic remnant of the noble music of Hebrew antiquity.¹⁰⁹

APPENDIX: INTRODUCTORY TEXTS TO THE *ESTRO POETICO-ARMONICO* (SELECTIONS)

Following are excerpts from the introduction to volume 1 and the entire introduction to volume 2.

Volume 1

Preface

[Page 2] As far as music is concerned, it is above substance, since it requires first of all the expression of words and feelings: so that it is usually composed by only two voices in order to fulfill its intention more effectively. Nevertheless, for this purpose, and to awaken passions and emotions in a better manner, it was used in unison by the ancient nations that played music, and particularly by Jews, by Phoenicians and by Greeks (since, whatever was sung by more and various voices, the air was always only one and this was until the time of Guido Aretino, around the 11th century, with the accompaniment of one or another instrument that similarly played the same air or song, diversifying from time to time the sound to a higher or lower ambitus; and of these instruments we still have some hazy images on sheets of paper in our possession: and harmony, that among

¹⁰⁹ For an analysis of the work by Rossi and the related rabbinic texts by Leone de Modena and other contemporaries, see: Don Harrán, "Salomone Rossi: Jewish Musician in Renaissance Italy," *Acta Musicologica* 59, no. 1 (1987) 46–64; idem, "Salomone Rossi as a Jewish Composer of Theater Music," *Studi musicali* 16 (1987) 95–131; idem, "Cultural Fusions in Jewish Musical Thought of the Later Renaissance," in *In Cantu et in Sermone: For Nino Pirrotta on his 80th Birthday* (Florence, 1989), pp. 141–154; "Tradition and Innovation in Jewish Music of the Later Renaissance," *Journal of Musicology* 7 (1989) 107–130. See especially Harrán's *Salomone Rossi: Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua* (Oxford, 1999).

us means the various mixing of voices and sounds, in ancient times as nothing but a varied progress of simple or compound intervals, that was [Page 3] the *melopeia*), however, since our ears today are accustomed to the concert of more voices (and therefore it would be both difficult and dangerous to try to approach that ancient and happily simple melody) we did not consider it inconvenient to compose for two and sometimes, as it will be seen in the second, third and fourth volumes, even for three and four parts.

[Page 6] And although (as we said before, and for which reasons) these psalms are composed mostly of only two voices, they will be sung sometimes with the reinforcement of other voices, as it will be noticed in the course of the work, for the reasons that we will add here below, that give an idea of the order followed, particularly by Jews, in singing their songs and psalms.

It is said in the sacred Scriptures, that Moses, not alone but with the children of Israel, sang the song that he had composed after the departure from Egypt and the marvelous crossing of the Red Sea, while Mary, his sister, leading the women with *timpano*, i.e. a hand tambourine used at that time, sang the same song: that David then introduced the custom to sing with more choirs in the Tabernacle, and for this purpose he composed songs and psalms to be sung before the Lord and in other religious ceremonies; and the children of Asaph, of Heman and of Yidutun (who directed the music in the Temple during the kingdoms of David and Solomon) led twenty-four choirs of musicians, differentiated and separated by the various instruments—kept in the Temple in an almost uncountable number—that they played, and by the various places that they occupied in the Temple. Then the children of Yidutun played the *kinor*, i.e. the lyre, [Page 7] those of Asaph the *nabal* [sic] of psaltery, and those of Heman the *mezilothaim* [sic], that was a kind of bell or rattle.

Therefore, to mirror such a quantity of people singing divine praises, it will be reasonable to multiply (but with proportionate distribution) the voices. First of all, to have as large a choir as possible, exalting the divine greatness, and then because this music—though mostly composed for two [voices], would not produce the best effect sung only by two, nor would it be always easy and ready, or, even when easy and ready, might be less pleasant for being heard continuously—could produce it by doubling the parts which is required

sometimes to make it more solemn or loud, wherever feelings and words—that among Jews, as today, were pronounced not by one person or two, but by a great part of the people—should be expressed more effectively. In some places, in addition to some psalms composed only for one or two simple voices, recitatives have been introduced, and some airs to be sung alone, or simply by two voices (which was in use in ancient times, and was sung in alternation), in order to give some varied and convenient pleasures to the listeners through various and modern concerts, and to get closer somehow here also to the method found in the Holy Scriptures for the instructors of the Jewish people. Altos were used rather more than sopranos, while the latter, having too delicate and penetrating voices, did not have any place among them, nor among any other ancient people.

[Page 8] We did not find it inconvenient to introduce more ancient and characteristic songs or intonations of the Jews, sometimes in association with some artful counterpoint, since they used to sing, and still do, psalms in their own particular manner, as will be seen in the second, and more fully in the third and fourth volumes.

Volume 2

To the readers

Here starts the ninth psalm with the intonation of the Spanish Jews, *לדוד ברוך וגו'* which according to them, is very ancient and widespread. But we do not find written music among them, and they sing hymns, songs, and psalms only according to the melodies transmitted traditionally to posterity. However this nation was not, in ancient time, less fond of music than any other, as may be seen in Exod 15:1, 20:1, 32:6. Moses, at the end of his wandering through the desert, established [the use of] three trumpets with three different purposes: the first, for solemn sacrifices, and for religious feasts; the second, to announce the beginning of the Jubilee year, of the Sabbatical year, and of New Moons; the third, for battle, in order to strengthen the soldiers and recall the presence of the Lord and the full help that He promised to them. Then David, beloved Prince of Music and expert musician, introduced it to the Tabernacle, thinking that this could contribute very much to the sumptuousness and

majesty of the divine cult. Therefore he composed songs and psalms, and ordered the construction of several instruments that he put in the hands of the Levites, so that they could sing everything accompanied by them. After the building of the Temple, music was performed in a more orderly fashion and with more dignity; its usage was reestablished after the Babylonian captivity, and then lasted up to the dispersion of the Jews under Roman rule. It is therefore not unlikely (as many of them indeed say) that some of the melodies introduced in the present work remained in the memory of those first dispersed, and were transmitted by tradition, as was said before, to posterity.

We collected these melodies as best as possible from their own voices, and we will write them down in their simplicity like a text using the notation of our ecclesiastical *canto fermo*. And since Jews write in the opposite direction, so in the melodies written above their characters will have to be read in the opposite direction too. In order to adapt these melodies to our verses and meters, we lengthened them from time to time with some repetitions, but we never altered their intonation, although we used some precise vocal manners or *portamenti* of the same Jews, who, according to their belonging originally to the Spanish or German nation, have different varieties of melodies and intonations for the same songs and psalms.

We introduced and ordered them in one voice or in another, where the arrangement is for many voices, in order to properly introduce some counterpoints with discretion. Therefore this music should be executed naturally and simply throughout this work, so that its effect will appear at its best—very different (for its gravity and naturalness) from our common [manner of executing music] and unique.