

**THE JEWS OF DUBLIN:
A MUSICAL HISTORY OF MIGRATION**

KERITH SPENCER-SHAPIO

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Master of Sacred Music De**

**Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Re
School of Sacred Music
New York, New York**

January, 2003:

Advisor: Cantor Israel Goldstein

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following people, without whose help the completion of this project would not have been possible:

Hilary Abrahamson for your generosity with your time and for sending materials overseas when I was in need of them.

Dr. Rabbi Martin Cohen for lending an historical perspective.

Iris Crivon for information pertaining to the Blue Book.

Professor Hasia Diner for conversation over lunch and your support in this project.

Joan and John Finkel for your unparalleled hospitality, your time and care for me and my family while we were in Dublin, and for all the information.

Nigel Finkel, who in taking after his parents was most hospitable in showing me and my family around Dublin, including a visit to Bewley's.

Jonathan Freilich for information regarding his late father, Cantor Nandor Freilich.

Theo Garb for information regarding his late father, Cantor Wolf Garb.

Harry Gluck for information regarding *Adelaide Road* and his father, Cantor Gluck.

Cantor Israel Goldstien for your time and patience.

The IrishJIG listserv for great reading and much information relating to the Irish Jewish Community.

Professor Mick Moloney for the use of his home in Fanore, and for his support in writing this thesis.

Cantor Alwyn Shulman for your time and support in this project.

Raphael Siev, curator of the Irish-Jewish Museum for access to the archives of the museum and for your help while I was there.

Doris and David Silverman for photo of mixed choir with Philip Model.

Jacqueline Solomon for spending hours talking with me in Dublin and then going on to play and sing through most of the *Progressive Synagogues* repertoire.

Scott Spencer, my husband, for sparking my interest in the subject and taking me to Ireland for the summer.

GLOSSARY

Ashkenaz, Ashkenazi. Originally a name applied by medieval Rabbis to mean Germany. Later, Ashkenazi came to be used as an identifier for those Jews whose ancestors settled in the area around the Rhine River.

Baal t'fillah. Literally 'master of prayer', a *ba'al t'fillah* is the often untrained prayer-leader in the synagogue, while the *Chazzan* or Cantor is the trained leader of prayer.

Bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah. Literally, son or daughter of the commandments, this term was originally applied only to boys on completing their thirteenth year, indicating that they had thus reached the age of religious duty and responsibility. In modern times, among progressive Jewish communities, the term *bat mitzvah* has been introduced for girls. The occasion is marked by a service in which the child participates to a lesser or greater degree, depending upon the custom of the synagogue.

Bimah. Literally, high place or stage, the platform from which the prayers are recited and the Torah is chanted by the precentor, the *bimah* is located in the synagogue in front of the ark containing the Torah scroll or scrolls. In some congregations, the *bimah* is placed in the middle of the congregation, but still faces the ark.

Chazzan. The trained prayer leader of the synagogue, the *Chazzan* or Cantor leads the prayer in chant and in song. Originally, the melodies were improvised. In modern times, this art has mainly been forgone and written music has been instituted in its place.

Chazzanut. The art of cantorial singing or chanting.

Conversos. *Crypto*-Jews of the Iberian Peninsula. The name was applied to the Spanish Jews who were forcibly converted to Christianity consequent to persecutions in 1391. Called *conversos* (converts), in Spain, *Christãos Novos* (Neo-Christians) in Portugal, *Chuetas* in the Balearic Isles, or *Anusim* (constrained) in Hebrew, the group numbered more than 100,000. They were expelled from Spain during the Inquisition.

Daven. To recite a set form of devotions. The word is sometimes specifically used to imply the creative and religious elements in the melodic recitation of the prayers according to the traditional Jewish manner.

Kashrut. Jewish dietary laws regarding which foods Jews may or may not eat and how those foods must be prepared and eaten.

Kiddush. The blessing said over wine on the Sabbath. The blessing is often recited communally after the service in a place where wine and a small meal or finger foods will be served. The gathering itself is sometimes referred to as the *Kiddush*.

Kol Nidre. Literally, all vows. This prayer is recited in the synagogue at the beginning of the evening service on the Day of Atonement; the name is taken from the opening words. The word is sometimes used to refer to the entire evening service itself.

K'vetch. Literally a cry. In music, a little catch in the voice, employed to evoke pathos.

Mohel. Person who performs circumcision.

Mechitzah. Separation between men's and women's sections in the Orthodox synagogue. The *mechitzah* can take the form of a curtain or even shutters. In Progressive Synagogues, men and women may sit together.

Minyan. A quorum of ten needed to say certain prayers in the synagogue. In Orthodox synagogue, the ten must be men, whereas in Progressive synagogues, women are counted.

Musaph. Additional offering or prayer. Originally, the *Musaph* service was not obligatory, but became so and thus gained the same importance as the regular morning service.

Nusach. The term was originally applied to differing liturgical rites, with the meaning of "version" (i.e. *nusach ashkenaz*, *nusach sepharad*). It was later applied to the basic collection of traditional, melodic motives used to intone Jewish prayers. The patterns used for a prayer depend on both the holiday on which it is to be sung, and on the type of service (i.e. morning or evening service). For the purposes of this thesis, the term will only be used in its musical sense.

Rosh Hashanah. The Jewish New Year, observed on the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishri. The most solemn day next to Yom Kippur

Schmaltz. Literally chicken fat. In common usage it connotes something very rich or extravagant.

Sephardic, Sephardi. Descendants of the Jews who were expelled from Spain and Portugal and who settled in southern France, Italy, North Africa, Turkey, Asia Minor, Holland, England, North and South America, Germany, Denmark, Austria, and Hungary.

Shochet. Ritual slaughterer responsible for following laws of *kashrut* to ensure that animals are fit to be eaten in Jewish households.

Shul. Synagogue, house of prayer.

Solfeggio. System of singing in which syllables (i.e. do, re, mi) are assigned to specific tones.

Torah. The five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The word itself means doctrine. The study of *Torah* is one of the fundamental elements of Judaism.

Yom Kippur. Day of Atonement, which completes a ten day period of repentance, beginning with *Rosh Hashanah*.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Goals of the Study

The purpose of my study will be to show how the unique conditions of migration to and from Ireland shaped the Jewish consciousness, especially in Dublin, and how this led to particular selections of repertoire by the cantors who served in synagogues there. The Jews who have made Dublin their home throughout the centuries have immigrated for varied reasons. For the most part, their stay in Ireland has been limited, not allowing each subsequent community of Jews to establish a feeling of rootedness or permanence there. My thesis suggests that because of the nature of the community in Dublin, musical selections were often made with the purpose of maintaining an authentic Jewish musical presence in the synagogue. In many cases this effort led to a preservation of music from different homelands and a preference for familiar rather than innovative music. As such, there can be no synagogal music termed *Nusach Dublin* because virtually all synagogal music in Dublin hails from other lands.

In this thesis, I will show how the historical experiences of Jews in Dublin led to their choice of synagogue repertoire. Moreover, the current musical landscape offered in the synagogue is a product of previous influences. To do so, beginning with Chapter two, I will first give an historical overview of Jews in Ireland and significant migration patterns, setting a framework for the reader. In the third chapter, I will focus on the first significant Jewish immigrant group; that of the immigrants of the 17th century. Chapter

four will focus on the Ashkenazi Jews who followed in the mid-1700's to mid-1800's. Chapter five will be a brief detour from historical information to focus on a musical manuscript from this period that was made available to me by Raphael Siev, the curator of the Irish Jewish Museum in Dublin. In the chapter devoted to this manuscript, I will discuss the synagogal music in Dublin at the time it was created, as can be gleaned from the manuscript's pages. The sixth chapter will be devoted to a new influx of Jews from central Europe and Russia who made their way to Dublin after the May Laws of 1882 were passed in Tsarist Russia. Chapter seven will focus on contemporary Jewish Dublin, from the mid-1900's, which has witnessed the split of the traditional community and the development of a progressive movement within Dublin's Jewry. In this chapter I will present a few portraits of the many faces of Jewish music in Dublin. The purpose of the seventh chapter is to show the diversity that exists even within a small community and to demonstrate that individual agency is a source of change. Finally, in the concluding chapter I will discuss the environment that led to the musical choices for key figures, including Cantors and lay leaders, within the synagogues of Dublin.

PART I

CHAPTER 2

A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF JEWS IN IRELAND FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT

The connection between Jews and Ireland is a longstanding one, which even found its way into the myths of the Irish people. There is more than one Irish myth linking the Bible and Jews with Ireland. Perhaps the most interesting links the Irish people to Noah through the claim that the Irish themselves descended from a certain Banba, a relative of Noah's who escaped the flood on the mountain peak of Tul Tuinde and who was older than Noah.¹ Another myth relates that The 'God Tribes' or *Tuath-de Danaan* were turned into fairies or *Shée* residing in castles and caves. This group called the 'God Tribes' was thought to be members of the tribe of Dan.²

In fact, Jews came to Ireland most probably for the first time in the year 1079, and were not welcomed. This is recorded in the *Annals of Innisfallen*, reporting that: "Five Jews came over sea with gifts to Tairdelbach and they were sent back again oversea."³ The *Annals* do not specify where these Jews came from, or to where they were returning. During the medieval period, a few Jews made their way to Ireland and probably lived in Dublin. They shared the fate of fellow Jews in England, who were expelled therefrom in 1290. Between 1492 and mid-1600s there were a few refugees from Spain and their descendants, but open profession of Judaism was not allowed in Ireland. Jews began to

¹ Louis Hyman, *The Jews of Ireland: from Earliest Times to the Year 1910* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England and Israel University Press, 1972), 1.

² Herbert J. Silverman, "Jewish, Irish Roots Mingle Over Centuries," *The Irish American Post*. 2:9 (February 2002): 2.

return to England in 1656, opening a line of travel to Ireland a few years later, which others followed. Until the mid-1700's, the small community of Irish Jews consisted of Sephardim, mostly merchants who made their way to Dublin from Holland. They were most likely New Christians originally from Portugal. This group was substantial enough to found Ireland's first synagogue in 1660 or 1661.

The early to mid-1800's witnessed a migration of German Jews to Ireland.⁴ Later, fueled by Russia's passage of the May Laws in 1882, there was an influx of Eastern European Jews to Ireland, especially Dublin.⁵ From this time to the present, there has been a cross-migration to and from England. The Jewish population in Ireland peaked at 5,400 in 1946 and has been in sharp decline since then.⁶ These demographics played a large role in the musical life of Jews in Dublin, and will be discussed in later chapters.

Jewish immigration to Ireland is no longer a great factor in shaping the Jewish community there. Currently, Jews tend to leave Ireland, rather than settle there. Many of the emigrants find homes in other English-speaking lands, such as England, South Africa and America. Others go to Israel. The main reason cited for leaving Ireland by younger Irish Jews is that of finding a Jewish spouse.

According to the Irish-Jewish community's website, the community is still quite active despite the significant decline in population:

There are approximately 500 Jewish families in Ireland, the majority of whom are based in Dublin. There are a handful of people living in Cork, Limerick and Waterford, but these communities have little if any amenities. The community in Dublin boasts 4 Orthodox and 1 Progressive Synagogue, Mikveh, Jewish school, Talmud Torah, Museum,

³ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 3.

⁴ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 93

⁵ *Ibid.*, 51

⁶ Larry Tye, *Home Lands: Portraits of the New Jewish Diaspora*. (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2001), 196.

Kosher butcher and Deli, Chevra Kedisha, Board of Guardians, 20 Voluntary Communal organizations, Macabbi, Golf Club, Home for the Retired, and Israel Embassy. The second largest community is based in Belfast, Northern Ireland.⁷

The currently active congregations in Dublin are *Terenure Hebrew Congregation*, which was founded in the mid 1900's, which is an Orthodox Community based in southern suburbs of Dublin; *Machzikei Hadass*, which was founded in the late 1800's and is an Orthodox Community, also in the southern suburbs of Dublin; and *Congregation Orech Chayim – Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation*, which was founded in 1946 as a member of ULPS (The Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues), and is also located in the southern suburbs of Dublin. A *minyan* also meets in the *shul* of the Jewish Retirement Home, which was founded in 1950, and is located in the southern suburbs of Dublin. The fourth Orthodox synagogue that the website refers to is most likely *Adelaide Road*, which closed its doors in 1999.

⁷ *Official Web Pages of the Irish Jewish Community*. [website]; available from <http://www.iol.ie/~irishcom/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 8 March, 2002. It should be noted that since the website was created, the kosher butcher and the Macabbi no longer exist. (email correspondence, Joan Finkel, January, 2003)

CHAPTER 3

THE SEPHARDIC PERIOD: LATE 1600'S

Very little is known about the first sizable group of Jews to settle in Dublin. This group consisted mainly of merchants from Holland. Since the group was from Holland and of Portuguese descent, it is likely that their forebears were New Christians.⁸ After settling in Dublin, they founded a synagogue on Crane Lane in 1660 or 1661.⁹ Though the membership of the synagogue was initially composed of Jews of Portuguese descent from Holland, the Jewish population shifted in the 1700's to an Ashkenazi community through continued immigration.¹⁰ Under this Ashkenazi influence, the community procured the services of Rabbi Aaron Sopher, who served as Rabbi, Reader and *Shochet* from 1700-1705.¹¹

The rite used in the synagogue can only be speculated upon, as there are no extant musical or liturgical documents relating to this period from Ireland. This, in a sense is not very surprising, since, as Edwin Seroussi writes, "Generally speaking, it was not until the last two decades of the nineteenth century that Sephardi Jewry at large recognized the possibilities offered by musical notation."¹² In place of a tradition of notated music, the

⁸ Martin Cohen, "The Sephardic Phenomenon: A Reappraisal". *American Jewish Archives: A Journal Devoted to the Preservation and Study of the American Jewish Experience* XLIV (Spring/Summer, 1992): 9-79.

⁹ Bernard Shillman, *A Short History of the Jews in Ireland* (Dublin: Parkgate Printing Works, 1945), 13; 22

¹⁰ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 25-6.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Edwin Seroussi, *Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue Music in Nineteenth-Century Reform Sources from Hamburg: Ancient Tradition in the Dawn of Modernity* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1996), 21.

community relied upon an oral tradition. There was, however, one group of Sephardi Jews who did notably use standard western musical notation; that is, in Seroussi's words, the "Western-Sephardi or Spanish-Portuguese Jews, whose main centers in Amsterdam and London have bequeathed us an extensive corpus of notated documentation."¹³ Again, it should be noted that the group consisted of *conversos* who made "the often traumatic transition from new-Christians to new-Jews."¹⁴ In this transition, there were cultural overlaps, leading to such phenomena as the introduction of standard Western notation for synagogal music, synagogal music written in the "art music style of Gentile society,"¹⁵ and the introduction of musical accompaniment.

The Birnbaum Collection, housed at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, holds a vast collection of cantorial manuscripts, including manuscripts from Holland dated to the mid-1700's. Perhaps these may provide a glimpse of what the musical rite in Holland was, though these manuscripts reflect Dutch-Jewish music of a much later date. It can be seen that other groups of Jewish immigrants to Ireland brought the liturgical music of their homelands with them. It is highly probable that the Jewish immigrants from Holland did the same. The Birnbaum manuscripts, although dated 100 years later, are one slim hope of discerning what the music of this period might have been like.

One manuscript, attributed to a certain Jekuthiel, consists of music that looks very much like a score for solo violin. There are a few words in Hebrew below the musical notation, to assist the *Chazzan*. Otherwise, the music, with its elaborate note changes and without text underlay would appear to be instrumental. The text, "*aseh l'ma'an*" is from the opening to the *Kedushah* for the High Holidays, a central prayer. Further text (found

¹³ Ibid., 22.

¹⁴ Ibid.

above the seventh stanza) "*ochez b'yad*" leads to the conclusion that the music was meant for *musaph* services for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. The music, beautifully notated, shows evidence of being written by the hand of one well-trained in Western musical notation. The melodic style is quite baroque. The composer uses Italianate phrases common for musical direction, such as "*Tempo di Menuetto*", "*Dal segno*", "*Adagio*", and "*Fin*".¹⁶

Information relating to this early group of Sephardi Jews in Dublin is indeed scant. Their liturgical rites and the musical aspects of them are only to be speculated upon unless further evidence comes to the fore. What can be said is that they were most likely *conversos*, that their synagogue rite was similar to that used in Amsterdam, their port of origin, and that their synagogue music was most likely connected to the Amsterdam tradition.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Appendix A for a copy of this manuscript from the Birnbaum Collection.

CHAPTER 4

THE EARLY ASHKENAZIM: MID-1700'S TO MID-1800'S

In the mid 1700's, Ashkenazi Jews from Germany made their way to Ireland. Bernard Shillman and Louis Hyman, two historians who wrote extensively on Jews in Ireland, are in disagreement as to whether a Jewish presence was maintained in Ireland during the shift from a dominantly Sephardi to a dominantly Ashkenazi community. Shillman posits that the *Crane Lane Synagogue*, after coming under Ashkenazi influence, moved in 1746 to a new location at Marlborough Street. According to Shillman, the synagogue at Marlborough Street was in operation from 1746 until 1792.¹⁷ Hyman believed that the *Marlborough Street Synagogue* was an entity entirely unto itself. According to Hyman, the Jewish presence in Ireland disappeared temporarily, with the departure of the Dutch-Jewish immigrants from Ireland. The early Ashkenazi immigrants, he believed, reestablished the community. Hyman dates the opening of the new synagogue to 1762 and its closing to 1790.¹⁸ Obviously these two reports are in conflict, the former suggesting that there was a continued Jewish presence in Ireland, while the latter offers the view that there was a period where Jews did not dwell on Irish soil. Because of the lack of documents from this period and the conflict between historians, it is difficult to ascertain what actually happened. In any case, a new synagogue with Ashkenazi rite was established at Marlborough Street.

¹⁷ Shillman, *A Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 63-68.

¹⁸ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 52.

During this period, there was a very well known Jewish singer in Dublin. Myer Leoni (or Lyon) was a renowned operatic tenor who spent a number of years during the 1780's in Dublin. While in Dublin he directed an opera house, which operated out of the New Theatre on Capel Street.¹⁹ He was also known to the Irish community to have been the assistant Cantor of the Great Synagogue (also referred to as the *Duke's Palace Synagogue*) in London. In London, he assisted Rev. Isaac Polack, the Chief Reader of the Great Synagogue as a *Meshorner*.²⁰ *Meshornerim* were responsible for assisting the cantor in creating a multi-leveled musical experience. Music was written for 3 parts: *Chazzan*, the main vocal part; *Zingerl*, an accompanying tenor part and bass.²¹

Leoni was already an accomplished singer when he first sang in the synagogue in 1767, having already graced the stages of theaters of Drury Lane in London. He was so well-loved that one author was moved to write, "The sweetness of his voice created a veritable furor."²² His reputation was such that

Non-Jews as well as Jews came to hear him. In 1770 Charles Wesley was among the audience one Friday night, and recorded the fact in his journal. 'I was desirous to hear Mr. Leoni sing at the Jewish synagogue,' he writes.... With him, Wesley took the Methodist minister, Thomas Olivers, who was so deeply impressed at the singing of *Yigdal* that he adapted the melody for his hymn, *The God of Abraham Praise*.²³

¹⁹ Artur Holde, *Jews in Music* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1974), 230.

²⁰ Cecil Roth, *The History of the Great Synagogue*, London. [out of print book on-line]; available from <http://www.eclipse.co.uk/exeshul/roth/index.html>; Internet; accessed 3 March, 2002, p. 3.

²¹ For detailed references of the *meshornerim* tradition, see the following: Idelsohn, Abraham Z. *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*, Ch. 11, pp. 204-220; Idelsohn, Abraham Z. "Song and Singers of the Synagogue in the Eighteenth Century: With Special Reference to the Birnbaum Collection of the Hebrew Union College Library," *Hebrew Union College Jubilee*. Volume 1875-1925, 1925, pp. 392-424; Avenary, Hanoch. "The Cantorial Fantasia of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *YUVAL*. 1 (1968), pp. 65-85.

²² Roth, *History of the Great Synagogue*, 3.

²³ Ibid.

This melody is in fact the *Yigdal* that is still being sung in so many synagogues today.²⁴

Leoni eventually left the Great Synagogue in London amidst controversy. "The day came when a report reached the ears of the Synagogue that their much-esteemed officiant had sung in a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. This proved the last straw."²⁵ Leoni eventually made his way in 1787 to Kingston, Jamaica, where he served as Cantor until his death in 1800.²⁶ In between his endeavors in London and his move to Jamaica, Leoni was for a time in Dublin.

While in Dublin, Leoni performed in various venues, singing opera and parlor music. He was best known for his rendition of Eileen Aroon,²⁷ a piece out of the Irish tenor's repertoire. Leoni, however, with his opera background, saw fit to sing it in Italian.²⁸ Hyman speculates that while Leoni was in Dublin he served as the cantor at the *Marlborough Street Synagogue*.²⁹

Another synagogue was established at Stafford Street in 1822 or 1823. Although the synagogue served the community for a brief period, from 1822 or 1823-1835, there are records of three officials connected with the institution. Rabbi Myer Nerwich hailed from Posen, Germany and served as Rabbi, Cantor, and *Mohel*.³⁰ Isaac Davidson, originally from Posen, came to Dublin via England and served as Minister at *Stafford Street Synagogue* from 1829-1843.³¹ Alexander Lazarus Benmohel,³² from Berlin,

²⁴ See appendix B for the transcription of this popular melody.

²⁵ Roth, *History of the Great Synagogue*, 4-5.

²⁶ Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York: Schocken Books, 1956), 221.

²⁷ See example 1 on accompanying compact disc for a recording of Eileen Aroon.

²⁸ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 85.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 53; 85.

³⁰ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 72.

³¹ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 124.

³² Benmohel's name is derived from Ben Morenu Harav Lazi. He was not the son of a *mohel*, as might be inferred from his name.

served as Reader.³³ Although there are no particular dates associated with any of the three leaders, it is likely that Benmohel served the synagogue as it closed its doors. (Benmohel became the leader of the synagogue at Mary's Abbey when it opened in 1836.³⁴)

Our interest in Benmohel extends to his family. His wife was Rosa Benmohel, née Hyam. Rosa Benmohel's sister was married to Julius Lazar Mombach, (1813-1880) the composer and choirmaster for the *Duke's Palace Synagogue* in London.³⁵

Mombach began his involvement at the Duke's Palace Synagogue in London in 1832 as a *Meshorner*, assisting Cantor Simon Ascher. The style of singing with a *Meshorner* was discontinued in the *Duke's Palace Synagogue* in 1841. At this time Mombach was taken on by the congregation as choirmaster. He went on to become an incredibly talented and prolific composer of synagogue music, continuing as choirmaster until his death in 1880. Roth wrote,

As a composer of synagogue music Mombach was equalled only by Solomon Sulzer, of Vienna, and a large proportion of the now-famous Anglo-Jewish choral melodies were first familiarised [*sic*] by him and his collaborators.³⁶

Mombach's choral music is a staple of Irish synagogal music even today. It is also highly represented in a manuscript (ca. late 1800's, early 1900's) found in the Irish-Jewish Museum in Dublin, which I will discuss thoroughly in the following chapter.³⁷ Perhaps, due to their relationship as brothers-in-law, Mombach's compositions came to Ireland via Benmohel.

³³ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 79-80.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 81.

³⁶ Roth, *The History of the Great Synagogue*, Ch. 16, p. 7

³⁷ See appendix C for examples of the manuscript.

When the *Stafford Street Synagogue* closed its doors in 1835, a new synagogue opened on Mary's Abbey. Benmohel became the leader at this new synagogue at Mary's Abbey. This congregation took on the name *Dublin Hebrew Congregation*. Rev. Julius Sandheim served as *Chazzan* and *Shochet* for the community for a lengthy tenure from 1839-1880. During part of this time, from 1863-1880, Rev. Dr. Philip (Phineas) Bender served as Preacher. In 1880, after the loss of two great leaders, the synagogue was lucky to gain the services of Rev. Israel Leventon. Leventon was the reader in the *Shul*, a teacher, the *Shochet* for the community, the Minister and the secretary of the congregation. He hailed from Swansea in South Wales and was known to have been a very learned man. Besides performing all of his duties masterfully, he is known to have created a Torah scroll in his free time. He did this completely by himself, from tanning the parchment to inscribing each letter. The scroll is now housed in the *Terenure Hebrew Congregation*. Leventon served at *Mary's Abbey, Dublin Hebrew Congregation* until 1892, when it shut down and moved to a different location.³⁸

During the mid-1700's to mid 1800's, there are also reports of the involvement of Jews in secular music in Ireland. An early example of this is the appearance of an announcement in *Reilly's Dublin NewsLetter*, December 30, 1738. The advertisement purported;

The Jews Musick is to be had at the Sign of the Fiddle and Dulcimer in Copper Alley, by Archibald Williamson, whom gentlemen are pleased to call the Irish Jew. Said Williamson provides Bands of Musick for private balls, etc.³⁹

³⁸ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 199-200.

³⁹ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 42.

The ad makes much of Williamson's Jewishness, but its presentation in a general (rather than specifically Jewish) publication appears to appeal to the general public.

From the Dublin Chronicle, May 5, 1791 an obituary announced the death of "Isaac Isaacs, a German Jew, well-known to the pleasurable as one of the first dulcimer players in Europe."⁴⁰

Also of note was John Abraham or Braham (1774-1856) as a student of Leoni. The popular press noted that he briefly attained the public's eye, commenting that "On 16 June 1823, he...appeared in Dublin, in *The Devil's Bridge*, of his own composition, and as Rodolph in *Der Freischeutz*."⁴¹ "Little Miss Romanzini" (1769-1838) was another popular vocalist during this time. In 1785, she delighted crowds in the Crow Street Theatre in Dublin as the *Genius of Ireland* in Messink's Pantomime Masque *The Island of Saints, or the Institution of Shamrock*. She, however, unlike Braham and Leoni, went to great lengths to hide her Jewishness.⁴² Jacob De Castro (1758-1824), son of the headmaster of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' school in London was known to be a talented "burletta" singer who resided in Dublin and frequently appeared in the Dublin amphitheater.⁴³

Another such instance of Jews involved in secular music in Ireland is the appearance of Henry Russel (1812-1900) in 1845-6, during the catastrophic Potato Famine.

... the well-known Jewish songwriter, gave charitable performances in Ireland which brought in £7,000 for the Famine Relief Fund, and set

⁴⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁴¹ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 86.

⁴² Ibid., 86-97.

⁴³ Ibid., 88.

aside a fund of his own to lend money to poor families wishing to emigrate.⁴⁴

Russel's charitable acts toward those harmed by the famine echo an American-Jewish concern. American Jews also raised money within their home congregations to help famine victims in Ireland.⁴⁵ Russel's activity also suggests that Jews were well-integrated into society in Ireland at this time. Russel's performances were for Irish audiences (not just Irish-Jewish audiences) and the funds collected went to famine victims who were most likely non-Jews.⁴⁶ This suggests a relatively open society in which members of different religious groups intermingled and were concerned with one another's welfare.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁵ Displays at the Irish-Jewish Museum, Dublin

⁴⁶ The potato famine was a rural phenomenon. Jews living in the city of Dublin were not directly effected by the famine even though its impact on Ireland was indeed severe. [email correspondence with Dr. Hasia Diner, author of *Erin's daughters in America : Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).]

CHAPTER 5

INTERLUDE: A FOUND MANUSCRIPT

During my visit to Dublin in the summer of 2002, I was lucky to have had access to the archives of the Irish Jewish Museum. Raphael Siev, the curator of The Irish Jewish Museum of Dublin, was able to provide me with a manuscript from the collection. Mr. Siev believes that the manuscript (ca. late 1800's early 1900's) came from *Mary's Abbey Synagogue*. The manuscript itself has a number of unidentifiable names inscribed in the frontispiece. I believe that the names belong to subsequent owners of the manuscript. (The names inscribed are N. or A. Bremer, Brewer or Brier, Alfred A. Morris, Harry Alberts, S. Lefferts or Leffert and B. Troyansky or Tugansky.⁴⁷) The pages that follow contain music for the "New Year and (Day of) Atonement."⁴⁸

The music is transcribed in a novel way, utilizing *solfeggio*. This method is used throughout the United Kingdom for choral music. The method was most probably familiar to choir members through the introduction and widespread use of *Kol Rinah v'Todah, The Voice of Prayer and Praise*. This was a book of choral music for the synagogue published in London by the United Synagogue in 1899. In both *Kol Rinah v'Todah* and the Irish-Jewish Museum Manuscript, there are four vocal parts (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) represented with letters designating the note to be sung. The music contained within the manuscript is all composed choral music. In the distinctive system

⁴⁷ See appendix D for the manuscript's frontispiece.

of notation, d=do, r=re, m=mi, and so on. The key is designated in the beginning of each piece, indicating that the system used was a moveable 'do' system. The text underlays the music and there are bar lines indicated. A composer is sometimes cited, but just as often is not cited. In the case where a composer is not cited, there are two possibilities for the derivation: in one scenario the melody was considered a 'traditional' one, not ascribed to any composer and possibly arranged by the compiler, or in another, the compiler of the manuscript was also the composer. As for the pieces which do reference a composer, the following composers are cited: Sulzer⁴⁹ (four pieces), Mombach⁵⁰ (thirteen pieces), Moss (one piece), Wasserzug⁵¹ (four pieces), Lewandowsky⁵² (two pieces), Hast⁵³ (five pieces), Novokowsky⁵⁴ (one piece), Metz⁵⁵ (one piece) and Blumenthal⁵⁶ (one piece).

⁴⁸ Unnamed anonymous manuscript ca. Late 1800's-Early 1900's from the Irish Jewish Museum, Dublin, Ireland, I.

⁴⁹ Salomon Sulzer, known as the father of modern synagogue song, was born in Hohenems, Tyrol in 1804. He served as Cantor in Hohenems from 1820-1825, and in Vienna from 1826-1881. His published works include *Schir Zion, I*, Vienna, 1838-1840; *Schir Zion, II*, 1866; and *Dudaim, Kleines liturgisches Gesangbuch für Schulen, kleinere Gemeinden und die häusliche Andacht.*, I and II, Vienna, 1860. (Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 287-288.)

⁵⁰ Julius Lazar Mombach served as Choirmaster in Duke's Palace Synagogue in London from 1841-1880. Cecil Roth wrote of Mombach; "To him is due in large measure that dignified, simple tradition of sacred music which, spreading from the Great Synagogue, has become characteristic of the Anglo-Jewish synagogal tradition everywhere to our own day." (Roth, *History of the Great Synagogue*, Ch. 16, p. 8.)

⁵¹ Chaim Wasserzug was born in Schiradz, Poland, in 1822. He served as Cantor in Konin in 1840, in Novy Dvor from 1841-1854, in Lomza from 1854-1859, in Vilna from 1859-1867 and finally in London from 1868 until his death in 1882. Wasserzug published *Sefer Schire Mikdash*, London, 1878. (Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 289.)

⁵² Louis (Eliezer) Lewandowsky was born in Wreschen in 1821. He was a Choir leader and teacher in Berlin from 1840 until his death in 1894. He is best known for his contributions to Jewish music as a composer. His published works included *Kol Rinah Urefillah*, Berlin, 1871; *Todah Wesimrah I*, Berlin, 1876; and *Todah Wesimrah II*, Berlin, 1882. (Holde, *Jews in Music*, 21-32)

⁵³ Marcus Hast (1840-1911) Born in Warsaw, Hast served as Cantor and composer in London. "In 1864 he went to Germany to study music, and on his arrival at Breslau was appointed cantor at the chief Orthodox synagogue... In 1871 he was chosen to succeed Simon Ascher as chief cantor of the Great Synagogue, London."

Hast published many transcriptions of traditional Jewish melodies, as well as many original compositions. (Jewish Encyclopedia [online encyclopedia] available at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/enc.jsp>)

⁵⁴ David Novokowsky (1848-1921) was a Russian choirmaster, cantor and prolific composer of synagogal music. He wrote extensively for male choir employing *nusach* but introducing a Western classical approach through the use of the choir and his harmonic settings. (Encyclopedia Judaica)

The collection of materials in the manuscript is in part a duplication of materials from *Kol Rinah v'Todah* itself. For instance, *Hashkiveinu* by Hast is listed in *Kol Rinah v'Todah* as No. 190, *Hashkiveinu: Ushemor. Zochreinu Lachayim* by Wasserzug is in *Kol Rinah v'Todah* as No. 197. *Mehlech Elyoun* by Mombach is in *Kol Rinah v'Todah* as No. 234, *Al Hakkoul I* by Moss is in *Kol Rinah v'Todah* as No. 168 A.⁵⁷ Hast, Wasserzug and Mombach were all from England, where the book was published. I was unable to find any information, including his country of origin, relating to Moss. The manuscript also contains compositions that are not in *Kol Rinah v'Todah*, including *Un'taneh Tokef* of Metz, *V'al Hamdinous* by Novokowsky, *Hashivenu* by Blumenthal, and *Adoun Olom* by Sulzer. Of these composers, only Metz was from England and he did in fact sing at the Great Synagogue. Sulzer was from Vienna, Novokowsky from Russia and Blumenthal from Odessa.

It is of note that Mombach's music is very much predominant within the manuscript, suggesting that his compositions were well-used at the time this manuscript was being utilized. The style of notation inadvertently records a connection with England. The notation style is used widely for choral music throughout England, but is not seen frequently outside of England. The compiler's commitment to this music is evident in that he must have spent numerous hours writing out the parts in his own hand.

⁵⁵ Myer Metz was from Offenbach and was hired by the Great Synagogue of London in 1814 along with Nathan Solomon, of Gröningen as *Chazzan Sheni*. (It was thus that the custom of having two *Chazanim* at the Great Synagogue began.) (Roth, *History of the Great Synagogue*, Ch. 16, p. 5.)

⁵⁶ Nissim Blumenthal lived from 1805-1903. He founded a choral school in Odessa, where men and boys sang four-part choral music. He introduced German classical compositions with Hebrew texts. Blumenthal tried to simplify *chazzanut*. He met great support in the *Brody Synagogue* of Odessa. (Holde, *Jews in Music*, 30.)

⁵⁷ Rabbi Francis L. Cohen and David M. Davis, eds., *Kol Rinah v'Todah, The Voice of Prayer and Praise* (London: The United Synagogue, 1933).

Also of note are the pieces that originate from outside of the realm of the English synagogue composer. The inclusion of composers such as Novokowsky and Blumenthal illustrates that compositions of Eastern European Jews were represented in the manuscript. The composers, however, do adopt a typical Western style, writing for choir.

This manuscript obviously shows a significant tie with England. Most probably, the compiler had his attentions turned toward England and its synagogal repertoire or the manuscript itself was carried from England and introduced to the Jews of Ireland.

Regardless of its origin, this manuscript shows that during the period in which it was written the English choral synagogue tradition was incorporated into the Irish-Jewish synagogal repertoire through both the inclusion of compositions by English composers and the use of the system of notation.

CHAPTER 6

RUSSIAN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN JEWS: 1882 – MID-1900'S

On May 3, 1882, the infamous May Laws were passed in Russia under Alexander III. The May Laws had a disastrous effect on the Russian Jewish community. According to the legislation, Jews who lived in cities could not move to the rural areas, and Jews who lived in the country were often legally expelled by the Russian inhabitants of the villages. Many who left their homes for a few days came back to find that they were reclassified as new visitors and not allowed to return to their homes. Thus, "Jews by the hundreds of thousands began to pour from the countryside into the congestion of the cities. Ultimately, the rural Jewish community was all but obliterated."⁵⁸

Jews were also denied access to education through quotas. They were banned from certain professions, including medicine and law, while Jewish artisans were removed from rural areas. Finally, the Jewish community of Moscow, consisting of 20,000 men, women and children, was expelled on Passover of 1891. The synagogue was closed by force and its use prohibited. The Jewish communities in Kharkov and St. Petersburg met the same fate shortly afterwards.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Howard M. Sachar, *The Course on Modern Jewish History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 282-3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 283-4.

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⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 283-4.

During this period of intense persecution in Russia, many Jews chose to emigrate. It is also immediately after the May Laws were passed that there was an influx of Russian and Eastern European Jews to Ireland.

In 1883, the year following the passage of the May Laws in Russia, *St. Kevin's Parade Synagogue* was founded in Dublin. This congregation consisted of South-Eastern European immigrants.⁶⁰ *St. Kevin's* eventually moved in the late-1940's or early-1950's and became *Machzikei Hadass*, which is one of the remaining orthodox synagogues in Dublin today.⁶¹

The late 1800's witnessed the first period in history in which more than one congregation existed simultaneously in Dublin. This can most probably be explained through the influx of Eastern European Jews. Primarily, there were enough immigrants to start their own synagogue. Secondly, the Eastern European Jews seem to have settled in a different area than the previous resident Jews and the Sabbath restrictions regarding work impeded their travel. Third, the Western Europeans were most probably happy to let the new arrivals found their own synagogue, since this would allow them to continue in their mode of prayer without any outside influence or objection. Fourth, apart from aesthetic differences, there might have been substantial differences in the two groups' ritual and music. Finally, there were enough Western European Jews who stayed that they could maintain their community and synagogue.

Shortly afterwards, additional communities founded synagogues in Dublin. In 1885 *Oakfield Place Synagogue* opened.⁶² This was also an Eastern European

⁶⁰ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 97.

⁶¹ Raphael Siev, Interview by author, handwritten notes, Dublin, Ireland, August, 2002.

⁶² Irish-Jewish Museum display.

community,⁶³ presumably with differing customs than the congregation at *St. Kevin's*. This congregation was in existence until approximately 1925.⁶⁴ In 1887, the *Lennox Street Synagogue* opened.⁶⁵ In later years, the congregation was led by Rabbi Yosselson and Rev. Bernard Hollander.⁶⁶ Hollander was born in Austria, and studied music in England prior to his arrival to Dublin in 1937.⁶⁷ 1891 saw the advent of the *Heytesbury Street Synagogue*,⁶⁸ which was in existence until about 1925.⁶⁹ The *Camden Street Congregation* opened in 1892,⁷⁰ and closed in about 1925.⁷¹ *Chevra Tehillim* on Lombard Street West opened in 1893.⁷² The community was served in its latter days by Rabbi Gavron.⁷³ Although there is scant information relating to *Chevra Tehillim*, it remained open until 1968. When the congregation became defunct, many of its members joined the *Greenville Hall Synagogue*.⁷⁴ *Walworth Road Synagogue* was a small synagogue, which opened in 1918 and closed in 1975.⁷⁵ The synagogue, although now defunct, at present houses the Irish-Jewish Museum. Mr. Abraham Cohen established a synagogue at Lower Ormand Quay sometime in the 1900's.⁷⁶ This house of prayer served the many Jews who worked in the area.⁷⁷

⁶³ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 97. (See Ch. 6 for a discussion of this congregation's musical heritage.)

⁶⁴ Raphael Siev, Interview by author, handwritten notes, Dublin, Ireland, August, 2002.

⁶⁵ Irish-Jewish Museum display.

⁶⁶ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 122-123.

⁶⁷ Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1998), 123.

⁶⁸ Irish-Jewish Museum Display

⁶⁹ Siev, Raphael. Interview by author, handwritten notes, Dublin, Ireland, August, 2002.

⁷⁰ Irish-Jewish Museum Display

⁷¹ Siev, Raphael. Interview by author, handwritten notes, Dublin, Ireland, August, 2002.

⁷² Irish-Jewish Museum Display

⁷³ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 123.

⁷⁴ Nick Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem* (Dublin: A. & A. Farman, 2002), 116.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 117-118.

⁷⁶ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 122.

⁷⁷ Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 121.

The established community in Dublin was able to maintain itself, but did become quite smaller during this period of time. This is attested to by an extract from a circular dated March 25, 1890, addressed "to our English co-religionists";

The Jews of Dublin are divided into two classes, namely: (a) the representatives of those who founded the Congregation who may be said to be English or Irish Jews; (b) a large body of foreign Jews, who, for the past eight years have made Dublin their residence, and who largely outnumber the English-speaking Jews; in fact there are of the original Congregation only twelve or thirteen families, while the number of foreign Jews amounts to between 600 and 700 souls.

Principally owing to the distance of *Mary's Abbey Synagogue* to their places of residence, our foreign brethren have separated themselves from the *Dublin Hebrew Congregation* and have two places of worship close to each other, in the upper parts of houses unsuitable and unhealthy.⁷⁸

The two places of worship referred to would be *St. Kevin's Parade Synagogue* and *Oakfield Place Synagogue*. It is plain to see from this circular that the two communities were quite distinct. They differed in many ways, including language, places of residence and places of worship. It seems evident from the tone of the letter that the "English" or "Irish" Jews felt some discomfort upon their "foreign brethren's" arrival.

This can be attested to by an interesting musical/liturgical connection. In the year 1854, one Abraham Cohen, a successful pencil maker,

. . . directed his executors to set apart and invest such sum as shall produce by the dividends thereof 'the sum of one hundred pounds per annum' to be paid to the *Dublin Hebrew Congregation* (i.e. *Mary's Abbey*) provided that the said Congregation or Synagogue 'shall be entitled to the said income of the said trust pounds during so long as they shall conform to the form of service and prayers observed in the *Great Synagogue, Duke's Palace, London*.'⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Shillman, *Short History of Jews in Ireland*, 97.

Shillman believed that the object of the provision was to prevent the *Dublin Hebrew Congregation* from affiliating with the *Portuguese Synagogue* in London.⁸⁰ This is in all probability correct, as the *Dublin Hebrew Congregation* attempted to make such a liaison in 1842. However, it is most likely that the provision was later used by the congregation to bar Central European customs and rites from ever infiltrating the *Dublin Hebrew Congregation*. The connection to *Duke's Palace Synagogue* is possibly a longstanding one, dating to the days of Benmohel. This connection may also be due to the influence of Julius Lazar Mombach's music. Although certainly not specifically mentioned in the will of Abraham Cohen, Mombach's music was used during this period and is still used to this day in *Terenure Hebrew Congregation* (Orthodox) and *Congregation Orech Chayim* (Progressive). The choral arrangements of Mombach are noticeably absent from the service at *Machzikei Hadass*, the one current congregation with Eastern European roots.

The synagogue at Mary's Abbey eventually closed and was immediately replaced by a synagogue on Adelaide Road in 1892, the continuation of the *Dublin Hebrew Congregation*. Rev. Israel Leventon continued as the congregation's leader until his death in 1899. This left the congregation without clergy for a short period, until Leventon was replaced in 1900 by Rev. L. Mendelson B.A. from England. Mendelsohn did not stay for long and was replaced by Rev. M. Gavronsky who served an interim appointment and was replaced in 1901 by Rev. Abraham Gudansky, originally from Lithuania and educated in Vilna and in Germany. Gudansky served as *Chazzan* and

⁷⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

sometime Preacher until 1938. Rev. Morris Roith served as Second Reader and also as *Mohel*. A choir gallery was erected when the building was renovated in 1925.⁸¹

The *Dublin Hebrew Congregation* of Adelaide Road was and still is known as '*The Englishe Shul*'. The rite was directly connected to the English rite at London's *Duke's Palace Synagogue*. But there was also an aesthetic reaching beyond the music. The aesthetic was one of restraint and decorum. *Davening* loudly and swaying while *davening* was not to be seen or heard.⁸² Important personages took their seats in the Warden's Box and wore top hats. Evening dress was customarily worn on *Kol Nidre* evening. The architecture was beautiful, the building being the first in the country built specifically as a synagogue. A former choir member recalls, "I loved singing in the Adelaide Road Synagogue which, to me, had the appearance of a cathedral."⁸³ The Laws and Regulations of the congregation specified that the synagogue would require the services of a Minister, a *Chazzan* and a First Reader. Lay members were not invited to officiate at any part of the service until the late 1950's.⁸⁴

In the period after 1938, the congregation employed Rabbi Theodore Lewis as minister, Nandor Freilich as *Chazzan*, Reverend Roith as first reader and Phillip Model as choirmaster. A pamphlet produced for the de-consecration of the synagogue records that, "To those of us fortunate enough to remember this period, it was to say the least, the Golden Age of Adelaide Road."⁸⁵ Many remember Cantor Freilich as a tremendously talented and kind man.⁸⁶ Music was obviously a priority at the *Adelaide*

⁸¹ Ibid., 99-119.

⁸² Joan and John Finkel, interview by author, mini-disc recording, Dublin, Ireland, July, 2002.

⁸³ Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 111.

⁸⁴ John D. White, *The Dublin Hebrew Congregation, Adelaide Road Synagogue*. (A pamphlet produced by the Synagogue for the de-consecration of the synagogue building in 1999), 14.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Correspondence, IrishJIG (Jewish Interest Group) online discussion group.

Road Synagogue. In addition to building a choir loft, the congregation hired a professor of music from Wesley College to train the choir.⁸⁷

At about the same time that *Adelaide Road* added its choir loft in 1925, the *Greenville Hall Synagogue, Dublin United Hebrew Congregation at Dolphin's Barn* was founded. This congregation was served by Rabbi D. Freilich as second reader from 1925 until 1948 when he left for England,⁸⁸ Rev. M.L. Rosenfeld, Cantor from 1925 until 1930; Reverend Jaffe served as reader in 1925;⁸⁹ and Mr. Leo Bryll as choirmaster from 1925 until 1928. The choir was dispensed with in 1928 due to lack of funds. Cantor Wolf Garb served this congregation from March 1931 until he resigned in 1947. Cantor Garb also *davened* in other *shuls* in Dublin. (For instance, he was at the *Lombard Street Synagogue* for High Holidays.)⁹⁰ His repertoire consisted of cantorial classics including liturgical compositions written by Lewandowsky. When Cantor Garb began at the *Greenville Hall Synagogue* he directed a choir, which was eventually dissolved because the congregation could no longer afford it.

Cantor Garb was originally from Warsaw. When he was 10 years old, he was the chief choirboy to Gershon Sirota in the *Tlomotski Synagogue* in Warsaw, where he learned *Chazzanut*. He later (circa 1918) served in the Polish army where he directed concerts. The Polish government was so impressed with his musicality that they paid for him to study at the Warsaw Conservatory. Following his music studies, Garb became the Cantor in Antwerp, Belgium; London, and then Manchester, England. Eventually he

⁸⁷ White, *Dublin Hebrew Congregation*, 15.

⁸⁸ correspondence, IrishJIG (Jewish Interest Group) online discussion group.

⁸⁹ Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 114.

⁹⁰ See example 2 on the accompanying compact disc for an example of Cantor Garb's singing.

came to Dublin.⁹¹ Nick Harris, in his memoir recalling a lifetime in Dublin, recalls a distinction between *Greenville Hall* (which was his family's synagogue of choice) and *Adelaide Road Synagogue* (where Harris eventually sang in the choir under Nandor Freilich and Philip Model). Harris writes;

From what I can remember, there was a certain amount of rivalry between the two synagogues. The *Adelaide Road* synagogue was always referred to as the *Englishe shul* by *Greenville Hall* members. It may be that the latter thought they were more orthodox than the former.⁹²

Mr. Theo Garb, Cantor Garb's son, reports that during Cantor Garb's term at *Greenville Hall Synagogue*, "There was tremendous congregational singing in the synagogue."⁹³

Cantor Segal followed cantor Garb who was in turn followed by Rev. Abraham Gittelson who served as cantor for much of the congregation's existence. Gittelson also was the *Shochet* and *Mohel* for the community⁹⁴.

⁹¹ Theo Garb, interview by author, telephone conversation, New York, New York, January 10, 2003.

⁹² Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 114-115.

⁹³ Garb, Theo, interview by author, telephone conversation, New York, New York, January 10, 2003.

⁹⁴ Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 11.

CHAPTER 7

RECENT TIMES: MID-1900'S TO THE PRESENT

Progressive Judaism in Dublin

The year 1946 beheld a major change in the Jewish community in Dublin. Due to the perseverance of Larry Elyan, the *Progressive Synagogue* was established in this year. Larry Elyan was a civil servant from Cork who was working in Dublin. Joan Finkel, whose father worked alongside Elyan in founding the synagogue, reported;

He got fed up with the way that things were happening in the Orthodox community. The chief Rabbi was very autocratic – it was a much bigger community in those days - there were probably around three thousand or possibly more.⁹⁵

The founding of the synagogue and the events leading up to it met with strong opposition from certain members of the orthodox community. Rabbi Brasch was installed as minister at the opening of the synagogue.⁹⁶ A mixed choir was organized almost immediately. Many of the members of the *Progressive Synagogue* were formerly affiliated with *Adelaide Road Synagogue*, so much of the music used derives from there.

The reasons for change are summed up by Mrs. Jacqueline Solomon. Mrs. Solomon, although she was raised in an orthodox household and married at *Adelaide Road Synagogue*, joined the *Dublin Jewish Progressive Synagogue* after she was married, shortly after the synagogue was founded. Mrs. Solomon wrote;

⁹⁵ Joan and John Finkel, interview by author, mini-disc recording, Dublin, Ireland, July, 2002.

⁹⁶ Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 121.

I felt a need for a Judaism relevant to the times in which I was living, for a synagogue where men and women were treated equally, and in which the congregation prayed together.⁹⁷

Mrs. Solomon now plays the organ at the *Progressive Synagogue*. She also served a three year term as President of the congregation.

The largest obstacle that the congregation faced was put forth by members of the Orthodox community: members of the *Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation* would be barred from normal burial in the Jewish cemetery upon their death. Rather, their bodies would be buried against the far wall where people who had committed suicide were buried. This obstacle was finally overcome when the congregation purchased its own land for its own cemetery.⁹⁸

Some of the significant history relating to music and events of note has been recorded in a publication released by the congregation on its fiftieth anniversary. The first High Holidays services in 1946, which were held in the Friends' Meeting House were led by Mr. Friedman of London who then served as a visiting Cantor. *Kol Nidre* was played on the cello by a certain Harry Blaskoff on this occasion as well. It is significant that during the first High Holidays of the congregation's existence, instruments were immediately brought into the synagogue. During the same year, an organ was purchased and the congregation considered hiring a choirmaster, "but his fee of £2.10s (was) considered to high!"⁹⁹ Rabbi Dr. Rudi Brasch served as rabbi until Rabbi Kokotek was inducted as permanent Rabbi in 1947. Moe and Violet Spain served as volunteer choir leader and organist respectively. Members of the

⁹⁷ Joan Finkel and Natalie Wynn, *Menorah: Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation Golden Jubilee, 1946-1996*, (1996.), 11.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

congregation were involved in broadcasting *Jubal's Lyre*, a series of Jewish music, through *Radio Eireann*. In 1951 Rev. Herbert Richer was hired to conduct High Holiday services and a recording was made of the choral arrangements for the High Holidays. In 1953 a synagogue building was consecrated and the congregation moved to the building after having held services in members' homes. The congregation was presented with a new organ in 1960. The congregation hosted a choir from Dallas, Texas for a choral concert in 1994. A new prayerbook, *Siddur Lev Chadash* was adopted by the synagogue in 1995 upon its publication by the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues with Rabbi Dr. Andrew Goldstein as chairman of the committee who produced it.¹⁰⁰

Today, services at the *Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation* are conducted by Lay Leaders, including Joan and John Finkel and Hilary Abrahamson. There is a volunteer choir that sings for holidays and for special occasions such as *bar* and *bat mitzvah* services. The choir, although strictly volunteer, sings music that would be considered difficult by volunteer choir standards in the United States. For instance, at a *bat mitzvah* service in June, 2002, the choir opened the service with Lewandowsky's setting of *Mah Tov*. The choir sang in 3 parts (they have no tenor section). The choir faces the congregation, but is situated off of the *bimah*, within the congregation. The congregation joined in singing and most congregants sang the melody, while the adventurous few sang other parts. A female soloist sang the cantor's part. Although the music would be described as formal or majestic, the feeling of the service is congenial because the congregation is familiar with all of the music and often sings along.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 11-14.

Terenure Hebrew Congregation

The *Terenure Hebrew Congregation* was founded in 1953¹⁰¹ mainly because of a shift in demographics. Beginning in the 1930's, many Jews moved to Rathmines and later to Terenure, in the southern suburbs of Dublin¹⁰² and it was much more convenient for them to attend services at a synagogue located in the neighborhood in which they lived. Even those who had strong ties with *Adelaide Road* often saw themselves attending services at *Terenure Hebrew Congregation* to be with their children and grandchildren.¹⁰³ Prior to the opening of the *Terenure Hebrew Congregation*, there existed a group called the *Rathmines Hebrew Congregation*, which had a synagogue on Grosvenor Road. The *Terenure Hebrew Congregation* grew from this group.¹⁰⁴ The *Terenure Hebrew Congregation* enjoyed the services of Rev. Solly Bernstein as minister. Reverend Bernstein was born in Dublin.¹⁰⁵

Today services are conducted by Cantor Alwyn Shulman. Shulman, who is originally from South Africa, studied *Chazzanut* in Haifa under Yitzchak Heilman. Cantor Shulman also chants Torah and trains *bar mitzvah* students. I attended services at *Terenure Hebrew Congregation* in June and July, 2002. Cantor Shulman leads the service, *davening* using Eastern European *nusach* and occasional congregational melodies. Some of the congregational melodies were taught to Cantor Shulman upon his arrival and others are melodies that Shulman introduced. There is no choir at *Terenure Hebrew Congregation*.

¹⁰¹ Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 115.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

Greenville Hall Synagogue

After *Terenure Hebrew Congregation* opened, the *Greenville Hall Synagogue* suffered a dearth of attendance. There was often a struggle to reach a *minyan*.¹⁰⁶ *Greenville Hall Synagogue* was deconsecrated without a service in 1981 due to a diminishing community.¹⁰⁷ The synagogue building is now used as a business center.¹⁰⁸

Adelaide Road Synagogue

The community at *Adelaide Road* suffered a blow when the much-loved Cantor Freilich died at a very young age in 1949. Cantor Freilich was followed by Reverend Gluck¹⁰⁹, who eventually left to sing at the main synagogue in Sydney, Australia. During his tenure at *Adelaide Road*, he introduced *Erev Shabbat* Services at the synagogue itself. (The services had previously been held in *Minyan* rooms on Bloomfield Avenue) Also, during his tenure, lay members began to officiate at services. Reverend Gluck was followed by Reverend Halpert, and later by Reverend Radomsky, Reverend Yehud and finally Cantor Alwyn Shulman. These last three men served the congregation during a time when the population was in sharp decline¹¹⁰.

Cantor Shulman served both the *Adelaide Road Synagogue* and the *Terenure Hebrew Congregation*. Although *Adelaide Road Synagogue* was de-consecrated, Cantor Shulman remains a fixture in the community and conducts services at *Terenure Hebrew*

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 123.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 115.

¹⁰⁷ Keogh, *Jews in 20th C. Ireland*, 82.

¹⁰⁸ Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 116.

¹⁰⁹ See example 3 on accompanying compact disc recording for an example of Cantor Gluck's singing.

¹¹⁰ White, *Dublin Hebrew Congregation*, 15.

Congregation.¹¹¹ Eventually, *Adelaide Road Synagogue* succumbed and merged with *Terenure*.

Machzikei Hadass

Machzikei Hadass derived from an earlier synagogue, which was housed at *St. Kevin's Parade*. The congregation eventually moved in the late-1940's or early-1950's (presumably due to the migration of Dublin's Jews to the southern suburbs) and became *Machzikei Hadass*. There is scant information available on the history of this congregation. The background of the congregation is Southern European. The mood of the congregation during services is very relaxed. The *shul* is quite small, being housed in one room, with a *mechitzah* demarcating the women's section. When I attended services there in July, 2002, I was one of three women and there was just over a *minyan* in the men's section. The service lacks what many Jews in Dublin would term 'decorum' and maintains instead a feeling of fellowship. The men often stopped *davening* to chat with one another and had to be "shushed". The *baal tefillah* was a congregant who was originally from New York and learned the Eastern European *nusach* that he used in *Yeshiva* back in the United States. After the Saturday morning service, there was a jovial and informal *Kiddush* held right in the sanctuary, as tables were brought in.

The Jewish Retirement Home

The Jewish Retirement Home was founded in 1950. Within the home is a very beautiful, small chapel where services are held. The ark is from the synagogue at Lower

¹¹¹ See the following chapter for a portrait of Cantor Shulman and his work in the community.

Ormond Quay, which presumably closed near the time that the Home was founded. I attended services at the Home on a Friday night in July, 2002. Although there are many women who reside in the Home, I was the only one in attendance for the service. The *minyan* was made up of men who lived in the Home and a few men who regularly attend services at the nearby *Machzikei Haddass*. The service was a standard orthodox service and was led by a volunteer lay reader. The *davening* consisted of Friday night *nusach* and the occasional congregational melody. The melodies used were similar to those found at *Terenure*. The women were all present at the *kiddush* held afterwards.

PART II

CHAPTER 8

PORTRAITS

During my stay in Ireland, I had the opportunity to interview a few members of the Jewish community there who are very involved in the musical lives of their respective congregations. Using the interviews, I will provide portraits of these people, showing their commitment to Jewish music within their community. The interviews further establish the thesis that there is no *Nusach Dublin*. In interviewing the Finkels, Cantor Shulman, and Hilary Abrahamson and Jacqueline Solomon, they confirmed that the synagogal music today hearkens to other places and other times.

Joan and John Finkel
Lay Leaders
Congregation Orech Chayim, Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation
Dublin, IRELAND
July, 2002

Joan and John Finkel are pillars of the congregation. It truly would not stand without them. They attend nearly every service held there, sing in the choir and are lay leaders. Joan is responsible for all of the congregation's correspondence via email. There tends to be a lot because the congregation is often host to Jewish tourists visiting Dublin. Joan served a three year term as the first woman president of the congregation. John is currently the congregation's treasurer. John and Joan spoke to me about their relationship to the congregation and their involvement in the musical life of the

congregation. They learned the music as children; Joan at *Adelaide Road Synagogue* and John at *Grosvenor Road Synagogue*, and when their parents helped to found the *Progressive Synagogue* they joined the choir. Joan recalls singing for Cantor Friedman of England who came as a visiting cantor, so that he could transcribe the music for them. They both acknowledge that the music they sing in synagogue is traditional, mentioning the composer Lewandowsky and also a publication entitled *The Voice of Prayer and Praise*, or *Kol Rinah v'Todah*, but known throughout the United Kingdom as "the Blue Book", the first edition of which was published in 1899. Newer members of the choir picked up the music from hearing it during services prior to joining the choir.

The Finkels have considered bringing new music to the choir, including music by Debbie Friedman, who John mentions by name. Joan considers her *Kaddish* to be "appalling", but says that she likes some of her music including her *Shir Hama'alot*.

Both Joan and John Finkel have been leading services since they were in their teens in 1947. In the beginning, they led children's services. Joan tells a story about her entrance into leading adult services:

One Friday night my father, who was English, and a stickler for things being on time came to me and said, "They're not here in time to take the service, you take it." I said, "Me?" "Yes, you." And that was the first time I took a Friday night service and I've been taking various services frequently ever since.¹¹²

When I mention that having only lay leaders speaks to a high level of education among the congregants, Joan and John both protest. Joan mentions that "adult education" is a dirty word and John concurs, saying, "I think that those who take [lead] services

¹¹² Joan and John Finkel, interview by author, mini-disc recording, Dublin, Ireland, July, 2002.

learned [to do so] elsewhere – outside of the synagogue.”¹¹³ Joan and John both learned Hebrew as children through tutoring and through what Joan calls “osmosis” by going to *Shul* every week with their parents. Joan says that she feels doubly privileged with both her ability and the congregation’s permission to lead services.

Since I last saw Joan and John Finkel in Dublin, the congregation has hired Rabbi Dr. Charles Middleburgh, former Executive Director of the Union of Liberal & Progressive Congregations in London. The Rabbi visits the congregation approximately twice a month, conducting Friday night and Saturday morning services, leading Torah breakfasts, running a conversion course, and supervising the Religion Classes. The Rabbi has also lectured at both the Irish School of Ecumenics at Trinity College, Dublin and the Irish Council for Christians and Jews.¹¹⁴

Jacqueline Solomon and Hilary Abrahamson
Mother and daughter, organist and Lay Leader
Congregation Orech Chayim, Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation
Dublin, IRELAND
August, 2002

Jacqueline Solomon has been a member of the synagogue for many years. She joined the congregation soon after she was married. Jacqueline now plays the organ at synagogue. Hilary, Jacqueline’s daughter, grew up in the congregation. She is a choir member and a lay leader. Jacqueline served as the congregation’s president from 1996-1999 and Hilary currently serves on the Synagogue Council and is the Chairman of Rites and Practices.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ email correspondence, Joan Finkel, January, 2003.

When Jacqueline determined to join the *Progressive Synagogue*, she said that the increased role of women in the progressive movement was a key factor in that decision. Jacqueline recalls that when the congregation was young, people's homes were used as a meeting place. Her involvement in the musical life of the synagogue began then, as her home was one used for meeting. When this occurred, she would sing and play piano in her home during the service.

Hilary is very much a child of the congregation. She noted proudly in an interview, "I was born in '46, the same year that the synagogue was founded."¹¹⁵ When I asked when she started leading services she told the following story from her childhood;

Well, I think I was about 4! Well, not leading services, but I remember Joe Cristol, taking me by the hand. I don't have very many childhood memories, but I remember going up and singing the *Sh'ma*. I was about 4. It would have been at one of the children's services, but I remember him when we were in the old house taking me by the hand and bringing me up to sing the *Sh'ma*. So, from then I've been participating.¹¹⁶

Hilary was 15 when she started singing with the choir. Currently, she also trains the *bar and bat mitzvah* students. She teaches the trope used in England, as opposed to Eastern European trope. The Eastern European trope system is currently used at *Terenure Hebrew Congregation*. The English trope system was used at *Adelaide Road*. Hilary was taught trope by Moe Spain, an early member of the *Progressive Synagogue*.

When I ask about where the music for the choir came from Jacqueline remembers Joe Cristol, who was a member in the early days. Joe had been a member of the *Adelaide Road Synagogue* choir. Jacqueline recalls that Joe taught much of the music to the rest of the choir, but that nothing was ever written down. Hilary notes that Joan Finkel also

¹¹⁵ Jacqueline Solomon and Hilary Abrahamson, interview by author, mini-disc recording, Dublin, Ireland, August, 2002.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

attended *Adelaide Road Synagogue* before the *Progressive Synagogue* was founded and that they knew much of the music too.¹¹⁷

Jacqueline mentions that the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (ULPS) in London sent new music to the congregation whenever a new prayer book was produced. The following is an excerpt from our interview regarding Jacqueline and Hilary's take on the musical selections for the choir:

Jacqueline: We picked out what we liked and we left what we didn't like. A lot of it did not suit our ear. A lot of it was by Warrender and others and it was too modern.

Jacqueline: I like something with a bit of oomph!

Hilary: And a little *kvetch*.

Jacqueline: And a little *schmaltz*. [laughing] You should be able to feel something when you sing it.¹¹⁸

Jacqueline and Hilary both acknowledge that there is a change going on in the world of synagogue music and they note that perhaps some of the younger members of the choir would appreciate more modern music. Jacqueline and Hilary, however, are happy to continue singing Lewandowsky and Mombach. Jacqueline notes that the music must touch the heart.

When new music is brought in, it comes from ULPS or from a choir member who has visited another synagogue and heard something that they liked. Jacqueline teaches the music by rote. But new music is rarely introduced because choir members do not want to learn new music.

¹¹⁷ John actually attended services at *Grosvenor Road Synagogue* prior to joining the *Progressive Synagogue*.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

**Alwyn Shulman
Cantor
Terenure Hebrew Congregation
Dublin, IRELAND
August, 2002**

Cantor Alwyn Shulman began his adult life thinking he would go into accounting. He decided that was not the right path and began studying in Israel. Cantor Shulman sang in the *Shul* choir in South Africa where he grew up. His models in the *Shul* were a *Chazzan* from Riga, and another from Poland. He says, however that "The best person to learn from is the *baal t'fillah*. Even more so than a *Chazzan* because the *baal t'fillah* comes from the heart."¹⁹

He has always had a great love of music and that is what drew him toward becoming a cantor. He studied in Haifa under Yitzchak Heilman, who is originally from Poland. Having a good musical background, including 12 years of piano lessons, he studied for one and a half years under Heilman and then returned to South Africa. Back home in South Africa, Cantor Shulman served for eleven years at a congregation where Simcha Koussevitsky was *Chazzan* before him.

The year 2003 marks the eleventh year that Cantor Shulman has served the Dublin community. His duties have included *davening*, chanting *Torah*, conducting funerals, unveiling tombstones, conducting weddings, and *bar mitzvah* training. Cantor Shulman is also involved in ensuring *kashrut* at factories in Ireland. At *Terenure Hebrew Congregation*, girls have a separate *bat mitzvah* service on Sundays just for women. For years prior to Cantor Shulman's arrival in Dublin, the cantors had been part-time.

When the *Adelaide Road Synagogue* was still in existence there was a choir. Cantor Shulman would love to have a choir, but he noted, "Nobody's interested; the kids

aren't interested. They don't want to know. I miss it. It made my life easier, for sure."¹²⁰

When I inquired about introducing new music, Cantor Shulman said;

They don't want to change the music. They want to sing the same thing week in and week out, and it's so boring. If you're an artist you want to do something different. As for the communal singing, what they know I don't necessarily like.¹²¹

When introducing something, he sings it for a few months. Cantor Shulman is solely responsible for the music that one hears at *Terenure*. Besides his being without a choir, the Rabbi does not give input regarding the music. He notes that the presidents of the *Shul* sometimes try to direct his choices, but that he feels that it is up to him to make the musical decisions.

Cantor Shulman compares *davening* and masterful musicianship, saying that one might be an outstanding musician, but that does not necessarily translate into being a good *Chazzan*. His love of the role comes through as he explains

A lot of *Chazzanim* might be good musicians, outstanding musicians. They can pick up any piece of music and read it as written and do a very good concert, but the real test is when you get on the *bimah*. You've got to be able to handle yourself and not necessarily time-wise, what's written on the music. You watch the time on the watches, what you're feeling inside. When I get up there, I feel like I'm king of the castle. Some people might not think so (laughter). You do feel it. I love it; I wouldn't swap the job for anything else in the world.¹²²

Shulman brought with him his training from Haifa, and his background from South Africa. He makes repertoire choices based on his experience and introduces new

¹¹⁹ Cantor Alwyn Shulman, interview by author, mini-disc recording, Dublin, Ireland, August, 2002.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

music when possible. In his role as Cantor of the synagogue, Shulman has certainly influenced the musical life of the congregation.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

The current state of liturgical music in Dublin is a product of Jewish immigration to Dublin and the history of Dublin's Jewish populations. Each era brought a new wave of immigrants who carried with them their own customs, rites and music as they arrived on Ireland's shores. The immigrant groups generally did not mingle with one another and tended to pray at separate synagogues, founding new synagogues if their needs were not sufficiently met by the existing ones. It is especially significant that most of Dublin's Cantors were immigrants themselves.

The influence of England, and in particular the *Duke's Palace Synagogue* in London, must be stressed. An early example of this influence was the arrival of both Myer Leoni and John Braham to Dublin. Prior to singing in Dublin, both men served as *Meshorrim* at the *Duke's Palace Synagogue*. Further, Mr. Abraham Cohen made a sincere effort to ensure through his will to forever link the *Dublin Hebrew Congregation* with *Duke's Palace Synagogue* by stipulating that money left in trust would only come to the *Dublin Hebrew Congregation* should they continue to observe the rite practiced at *Duke's Palace Synagogue*. Moreover, the choirmaster and composer, Julius Lazar Mombach's contribution to English synagogue music was and is felt as strongly in Ireland as it is in England. This could possibly be accounted for through a familial connection (Mombach was brother-in-law to Alexander Lazarus Benmohel, who served as Reader at the *Stafford Street Synagogue*.) The fact that Mombach's compositions are

still heard today in Dublin's synagogues is a living testament to the influence of his music. The predominance of Mombach's music within Dublin's Jewish population is evidenced in the manuscript found in the Irish Jewish Museum of Dublin, in which Mombach's compositions then, as now, are overwhelmingly prevalent. The manuscript also documents the influence of England in its use of a particular style of notation that was developed and used throughout England. In addition, the importance of the music contained within the manuscript is highlighted by the fact that the compiler took the time to transcribe each page by hand.

Dublin served as a repository for music from other lands. As Cantors and other prayer leaders immigrated they brought their music with them. This music, which often hearkened back to a different time and place, was valued by its messengers who saw an authenticity in the music of their homelands. From this, it can be concluded that there is indeed no innate *Nusach Dublin*, rather Dublin's synagogal music is like a kaleidoscope, reflecting a specific history of European Jewish migration, in which each color exemplifies different immigrant traditions.

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RH + XR
musol

opening to Kadusha
only 200

2/

Allegro

Tempo di Cadenza 2. 2. 2. 2. 2.

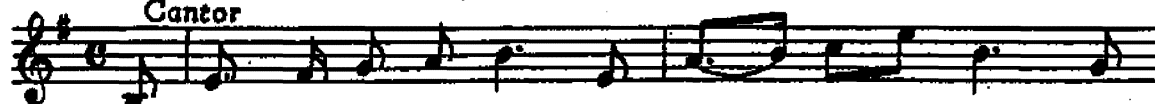
Handwritten musical score on five staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and clefs. The score is written in a historical style, possibly from the 18th or 19th century. The first staff begins with the word "Adagio" written vertically. The second staff has the word "Delicatamente" written above it. The third staff has the word "Allegretto" written above it. The fourth staff has the word "Allegretto" written above it. The fifth staff has the word "Allegretto" written above it. The score is written in a historical style, possibly from the 18th or 19th century.

APPENDIX B

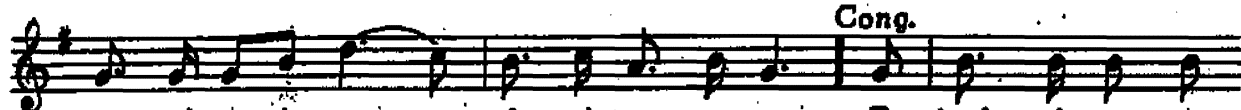
Yigdal No 7

Moderato
Cantor

Traditional



Yig - dal E - lo - him hai v' - yish - ta - bah nim -
En lo d' - mus ha - guf v' - e - no - guf lo



Cong.

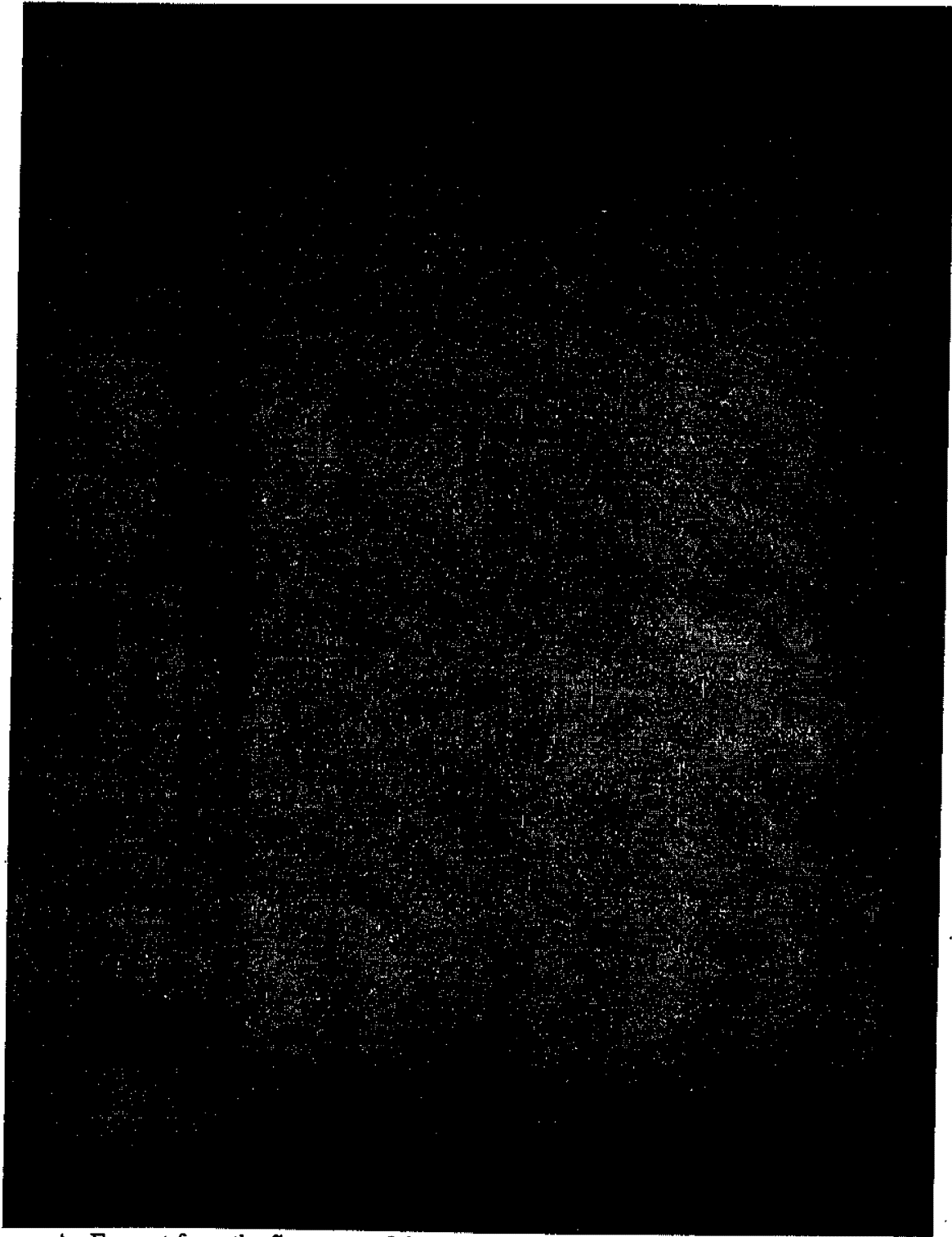
- tzo v' - ein eis — el m' - tzi - u - so. E - had v' - ein yo -
na a - roh e - lav — k' du - sho - so. Kad - mon l' - hol do -



D.C. etc

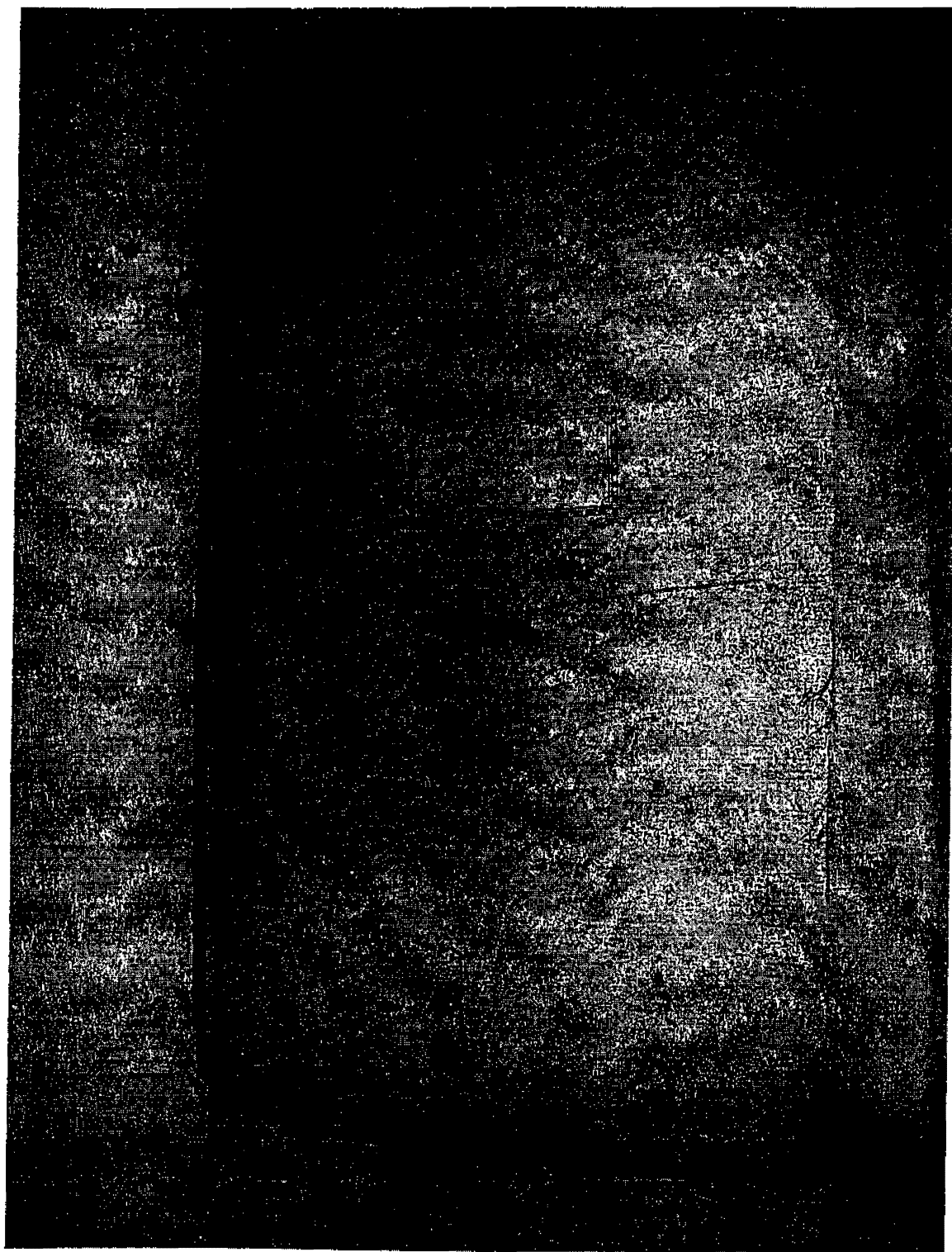
- hid k' - yi - hu - do — ne - lom v' - gam ein sof — l' - sh - du - so.
- vor a - sher niv - ro ri - shon v' - en re - shis — l' - re - shi - so.

APPENDIX C



An Excerpt from the first page of the Dublin Irish Jewish Museum Manuscript.

APPENDIX D



Frontispiece to Dublin Irish Jewish Museum Manuscript.