The Archive as Counterhistory: The Reception of Christian Sources in the Eduard Birnbaum Collection

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Introduction

Intellectual histories of Jewish music research often link the field's modern emergence to scholars' adoption of empirical research methods and to the systematic collection of liturgical and secular repertoires—a project that took shape in the work of nineteenth-century cantor-scholars such as Eduard Birnbaum (1855–1920). Birnbaum, the protagonist of this article, assembled a monumental archive that helped transform how Jewish musical heritage was documented, studied, and narrated.[1] The collecting efforts of Birnbaum and his contemporaries thus laid crucial groundwork for a field defined by empirical rigor and objectivity. As Philip V. Bohlman observes,

> [C]ollecting and the metaphysical revolution it brought about roughly from the 1870s onward [were] crucial to the formation of Jewish music history. Jewish music and Jewish music history assumed a reified, objective status during the age of Jewish music collecting.[2]

Yet if we look closely at Birnbaum's archive, it becomes clear that his intervention in the emerging field of Jewish music research cannot be reduced to the collection of music itself, captured through transcriptions of oral traditions and the copying of manuscripts. Birnbaum also expended

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The Eduard Birnbaum Collection is housed in the Klau Library at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio.

[2] Philip V. Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 106.

considerable effort in collecting, evaluating, and organizing a wide range of writings that dealt with the history and theory of Jewish music. Indeed, Israel Adler has observed that the Birnbaum Collection consists of two parts: the "music itself" and the "archival and research material."[3] While contemporary descriptions of the collection tend to focus on the wealth of rare notated music contained therein,[4] less concentrated attention has been devoted to the rich array of archival and research material that Birnbaum left behind and what such materials might tell us about his research process and conception of Jewish music history.

In this article, I foreground this textual facet of the Eduard Birnbaum Collection by focusing on his engagement with early-modern and nineteenth-century Christian-authored treatises on what was commonly termed "Hebrew music."[5] It should be noted that his engagement with Christian authors did not constitute an unprecedented break with previous scholarship: already in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jewish scholars and cantors such as Joel Bril, Joseph Levin Saalschütz, David Aharon de Sola, and Samuel Naumbourg had referenced and engaged with Christian scholarship on Hebrew music to varying degrees in their writings.[6] What distinguishes Birnbaum's

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[3] Israel Adler, *Hebrew Notated Manuscript Sources up to circa 1840: A Descriptive and Thematic Catalogue with a Checklist of Printed Sources* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1989), lxiv.

[4] Eric Werner has argued, for instance, that among the collection's vast holdings "Birnbaum's own handwritten thematic catalogue of melodies, tunes, cantillations, recitatives, etc., alphabetically arranged according to the Hebrew texts . . . [are] first in importance" (see Eric Werner, "The Eduard Birnbaum Collection of Jewish Music," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 18 (1943–44): 397–428, at 406), and Alfred Sendrey has called Birnbaum's collection a "complete thesaurus of the liturgical music of the European synagogue over a period of three centuries": see Alfred Sendrey, *Bibliography of Jewish Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), xxxvii. Because Jewish musical traditions were primarily passed down via oral tradition until the nineteenth century, Birnbaum's archive is indeed remarkable and extremely valuable, especially for scholars studying pre-nineteenth-century Jewish music.

[5] The concept of "Jewish music" emerged and solidified only during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (for a discussion of this history, see Philip V. Bohlman, "Inventing Jewish Music," in *Studies in Honour of Israel Adler*, *Yuval* 7, ed. Eliyahu Schleifer and Edwin Seroussi [Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002], 33–68). The term "Hebrew music" (or sometimes "biblical music" or "Israelite music") was commonly used by Christian writers because they were typically concerned with documenting and analyzing references to music in the Hebrew Bible (and sometimes New Testament) and were less interested in post-biblical Jewish musical practice (although many discussed the cantillation practices of their contemporaries, as discussed in more detail below). They tended to conceptualize the "Hebrews" as a *Kulturnation* (a nation that is defined by shared culture and history as opposed to political or geographic boundaries) alongside other ancient *Kulturnationen* such as the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans.

[6] See for instance, Joel Bril, *Book of the Songs of Israel: Three Introductions on Poetry, Translation, and Music by Joel Bril (Berlin, 1791). A Bilingual Edition,* ed. and trans. Yael Sela (Leiden: Brill, 2024); Joseph Levin Saalschütz, *Geschichte und Würdigung der Musik bei den Hebräern* (Berlin: G. Fincke, 1829); Samuel Naumbourg, *Agudat Shirim: Recueil de chants religieux et populaires des Israélites des temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Editeurs de Musique, 1875); David Aharon de Sola, *The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews Harmonized by Emanuel Aguilar Preceded by an Historical*

project is less the fact of such engagement than its scale, systematization, and the bibliographical forms through which he organized it.

In examining this body of material, I argue that Birnbaum's collection functions not only as a repository for literature on Jewish music and its history, but also as a site in which an intellectual history of the field is implicitly staged. His collecting, copying, annotating, and cross-referencing of Christian as well as Jewish writings is noteworthy because it makes visible the entangled intellectual genealogy that underpins modern Jewish music research. Rather than challenge the now well-established view that the field's modern emergence is rooted in the disciplines of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (science of Judaism) and *Musikwissenschaft* (musicology),[7] my aim is to refine that narrative by examining the specific archival practices through which Birnbaum re-inscribed Christian-authored writings on Hebrew music from the tradition of *Musikwissenschaft* into a new, Jewish-centered history of Jewish music—a topic that has been comparatively underexplored, as I discuss in more detail in the following section.

To capture this dimension of Birnbaum's work, I draw on and adapt the concept of "counterhistory." In *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (1998), Susannah Heschel has used this term to describe "a form of polemic in which the sources of the adversary are exploited and turned 'gegen den Strich [against the grain],' in Walter Benjamin's phrase."[8] As Philip V. Bohlman demonstrates in *Jewish Music and Modernity* (2008), counterhistory is not always directly confrontational, as Heschel characterizes it. Rather, it can also be understood as

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Essay on the Poets, Poetry and Melodies of the Sephardic Liturgy (London: Wessel and Co., 1857).

[7] The scholarly milieu in which Birnbaum worked—late nineteenth-century *Musikwissenschaft*—was, like the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, characterized by an emphatically historicist and philological orientation. Emerging in the German-speaking lands in the last third of the century, it privileged the accumulation and critical editing of primary sources—manuscripts, early prints, and archival records—as the basis for constructing long-range narratives of musical development. Guido Adler's programmatic essay "Umfang, Methode und Ziel der Musikwissenschaft" (1885) famously defined the discipline's scope in terms of such document-centered historical and systematic research, a vision later historicized and consolidated in the writings of Carl Dahlhaus and others. Central to this culture were practices of cataloging and classification, the establishment of repertorial canons through thematic catalogs and source-critical editions, and a belief that painstaking documentary work could yield objective knowledge about the past. It is within this milieu that Birnbaum's archival labors with textual sources must be understood. I use the phrase "the *Musikwissenschaft* tradition" in this article in a deliberately broad sense, to include not only the discipline as constituted in the late nineteenth century but also the earlier music-historical writings of Martini, Burney, Forkel, Gerber, and others that the discipline claimed as its prehistory and absorbed into its lexicons and bibliographies. It was largely through this apparatus that Birnbaum encountered the Christian literature on Hebrew music.

[8] Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 14. Heschel adapts the term "counterhistory" from David Biale's conception of the term in David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counterhistory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979) and Amos Funkenstein's conception in *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 36–37.

the expression of an alternative history that exists in parallel with other historical accounts. Bohlman, for instance, reveals an alternative account of Jewish modernity in his analysis of the ways broadsides helped transform Jewish folk music into Jewish popular music.[9] Building on these formulations, I use the term "archival counterhistory" to denote a specifically archival mode of such work: a critical posture and historiographical intervention that proceeds not primarily through published argument, but through acts of collecting, excerpting, and juxtaposing sources in ways that unsettle received narratives and reconfigure relations of authority among them.

In what follows, I use the notion of "archival counterhistory" not to claim that Birnbaum explicitly theorized his work in these terms, nor to suggest that he treated Christian authors as straightforward "adversaries." Rather, I employ it as a heuristic to describe a mode of scholarly practice visible in the archive: the mobilization of archival work—collecting, excerpting, contextualizing, and ordering sources—as a way of reframing and relativizing inherited narratives.[10]

In the case of the Eduard Birnbaum Collection, this practice is especially evident in his treatment of Christian-authored writings on Hebrew and Jewish music. By gathering these texts alongside Jewish sources, marking them up with comments, and integrating them into bibliographical projects such as his planned "Literaturgeschichte der hebräischen und synagogalen Musik," Birnbaum effectively moved Christian accounts of "Hebrew music" from the position of external authorities into that of historically situated, critically examinable sources. He mined these works for information, especially when they contained rare early musical notation of Hebrew texts, yet also re-located them within a longer, multi-vocal history of writing about Jewish music—one in which Jewish scholars and practitioners increasingly claimed interpretive authority.

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[9] Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity,* 165–76.

[10] Both Ann Laura Stoler and Carolyn Steedman have contributed to contemporary critical theory of the archive by emphasizing its constructed, contested, and often political nature. Stoler foregrounds the archive as a site of state power, affect, and epistemic uncertainty, where what is preserved and what is silenced reveal the dynamics of authority and historical production. See Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 17–54. Steedman, similarly, interrogates the fantasy of the "complete" archive, highlighting instead its gaps, absences, and the subjective desires of researchers attempting to impose narrative coherence. See Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 68–88. Both perspectives align with my argument that the Birnbaum Collection—far from being a neutral or passive repository—functions as an active, ambiguous site of historical contestation, negotiation, and imaginative intervention. Yet the Birnbaum Collection poses a problem structurally inverse to the one this literature usually addresses. Its architect is not an effaced subject awaiting recovery through critical reading but a cantor-scholar from within a minority tradition who has himself assumed the role of archivist. The materials that receive his most sustained attention are not the medium through which his community was silenced but the Christian discourse that had long presumed to describe it from without. The interpretive task this archive poses is therefore less the recuperation of a suppressed voice than the historicization of an inherited one.

Seen from this perspective, Birnbaum's engagement with Christian sources participates fully in the positivist, empirically oriented scholarly ethos of his time, even as it contributes to a gradual reconfiguration of authority and perspective in writing about Jewish music. Indeed, Birnbaum's positivist, source-critical methods did not simply reproduce the epistemic hierarchies of *Musikwissenschaft*; they also provided the very tools with which he could relativize and historicize Christian accounts from a Jewish perspective. By following the traces of this engagement through the Eduard Birnbaum Collection, we can better understand how the legacy of Christian-authored historical and theoretical writings from the *Musikwissenschaft* tradition shaped the early intellectual culture of Jewish music research.

Refining the Historiography of Jewish Music Research

The Christian-authored treatises collected and curated by Birnbaum allow us to refine prevailing accounts of nineteenth-century Jewish music research in two related ways. First, they complicate the notion that cantor-scholars of his generation were primarily oriented toward the empirical documentation of contemporary musical practice and had little sustained interest in the older discourse on ancient Hebrew music. Second, they invite us to investigate the specific ways in which discourse about Hebrew music from the *Musikwissenschaft* tradition mediated and influenced nineteenth-century Jewish music scholarship.

During the nineteenth century, many Jewish cantors and scholars were increasingly trying to move away from research that focused exclusively on ancient Hebrew music and toward studies of the oral tradition of Jewish liturgical music. Abraham Baer's widely influential *Baal T'fillah oder Der practische Vorbeter* (first published in 1877) famously articulates this reorientation. Indeed, Baer criticizes earlier scholars for having "occupied themselves exclusively with lost Temple music instead of giving attention to the songs, which not only have been preserved through oral tradition, but also are sung daily in the lively breeze of the synagogue and thus still resound today."[11]

[11] Abraham Baer, *Baal t'fillah oder Der practische Vorbeter: Vollständige Sammlung der gottesdienstlichen Gesänge und Recitative der Israeliten nach polnischen, deutschen (aschk'nasischen) und portugiesischen (sephardischen) Weisen nebst allen den Gottesdienst betreffenden rituellen Vorschriften und Gebräuchen. Dritte vermehrte und verbesserte Auflage* (Gothenburg and Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1883), V: "Ihre Entstehung und ihre Entwicklungsgeschichte sind noch in tiefes Dunkel gehüllt, und den Bemühungen der Gelehrten, dasselbe zu erhellen, konnte dies schon desshalb nicht gelingen, weil diese, statt ihre Aufmerksamkeit diesen Gesängen zu widmen, die nicht nur Jahrhunderte hindurch durch mündliche Ueberlieferungen sich erhalten, sondern auch in lebendiger Frische in allen Synagogen täglich angestimmt wurden und noch jetzt erklingen, sich ausschliesslich mit der verschollenen Tempelmusik beschäftigten." All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

Many cantors, including Birnbaum, followed Baer's call by transcribing the repertoires of their communities. Yet, as I demonstrate, Birnbaum's bibliographical work shows that the topic of "Hebrew music," and more broadly the early intellectual history of writing about Jewish music, nevertheless remained important to him.[12] His careful compilation and excerpting of Christian treatises—ranging from early-modern Hebraists to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music historians—indicates that he regarded these texts as integral to understanding how the very idea of "Hebrew music" had been constructed over time.

In creating a comprehensive bibliography and archive of literature on Hebrew music, Birnbaum thus forged a link between modern approaches to Jewish music research and the early-modern Christian tradition of discourse. While standard syntheses of the field's emergence have acknowledged the entangled legacies of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement and the new academic field of *Musikwissenschaft* in the research methods of scholars like Birnbaum,[13] the specific ways in which nineteenth-century Jewish scholars engaged with histories of Hebrew music from the *Musikwissenschaft* tradition merit closer attention than they have so far received.[14] The treatises of scholars such as Johannes Reuchlin, Athanasius Kircher, Giambattista Martini, Johann Nikolaus Forkel, and Johann Gottfried Herder are rarely mentioned as precursors to modern scholarship of Jewish music in historiographies of the field,[15] yet they feature prominently in Birnbaum's notes and bibliographies and were already integrated into the discussions of earlier Jewish authors, including Joel Bril, Joseph Levin Saalschütz, Samuel Naumbourg, and David Aharon de Sola.

The relative marginalization of early-modern Christian sources in modern genealogies of Jewish music research reflects skepticism about their

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[12]It should be noted that Birnbaum was not alone in this interest. Some nineteenth-century cantor-scholars, such as Hermann Ehrlich (1815–79), maintained an active interest in the topic of Hebrew music. Indeed, Ehrlich used his journal, *Liturgische Zeitschrift zur Veredelung des Synagogengesangs mit Berücksichtigung des ganzen Synagogenwesens* (Liturgical journal for the ennoblement of synagogue song with consideration of the entire synagogue system), to, as Bohlman observes, "establish the nature of the music in the biblical past . . . [in order to] empower cantors to fill in the historical gaps between the past and the present." Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity*, 76.

[13] Edwin Seroussi, "Music: The 'Jew' of Jewish Studies," *Jewish Studies: Journal of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 46 (2009): 3–84, at 13.

[14] One scholar who has discussed at length the Jewish reception of a Christian work is Edwin Seroussi, who specifically examines Birnbaum's and other nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish scholars' reception of Benedetto Marcello's transcriptions of melodies from the Venetian synagogue. See Edwin Seroussi, "In Search of Jewish Musical Antiquity in the 18th-Century Venetian Ghetto: Reconsidering the Hebrew Melodies in Benedetto Marcello's *Estro Poetico-Armonico*," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 93, no. 1/2 (2002): 149–99, at 155–61, https://doi.org/10.2307/1455487.

[15] Philip V. Bohlman, "Music," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman, Jeremy Cohen, and David Sorkin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 852–69, at 853.

methodological reliability and ethical tenor. As Ruth HaCohen has shown in *The Music Libel against the Jews* (2011), early-modern Christian descriptions of synagogue music often display pronounced anti-Jewish bias and contribute to a longstanding "music libel" that depicts Jewish sound as noise disrupting a harmoniously ordered Christian universe. Edwin Seroussi likewise questions how far early-modern Christian interest in the "music of the Hebrews" can be regarded as a genuine prehistory of later Jewish music discourses, emphasizing the asymmetrical power relations and the "precarious and intermittent" nature of contacts between Jews and Christians.[16]

From this perspective, it is understandable that Christian discourse has occupied only a peripheral place in historiographies that have sought, quite deliberately, to center the work and agency of Jewish scholars and musicians. While I share these methodological and ethical concerns, the very presence of Christian sources in Birnbaum's archive—and their integration into the work of earlier Jewish authors such as Saalschütz and Naumbourg—requires us to reconsider their role in the genealogy of Jewish music research. My aim is not to recast early-modern Christian writings as straightforward "forerunners" of modern Jewish scholarship, but to treat them as problematic resources that Jewish scholars actively critiqued, appropriated, and recontextualized in the process of building new foundations for their subfield. In this respect, Birnbaum's archive does not reveal an intellectual genealogy wholly different from that traced by existing historiography, but it does make more visible its entangled character: the field emerges at the intersection of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and a pre-existing Christian scholarly tradition on Hebrew music.

The afterlife of this mode of entangled engagement becomes especially clear in Israel Adler's *Hebrew Notated Manuscript Sources* (1989). Adler's two-volume project incorporates many of the Christian-authored witnesses that concerned Birnbaum into a consolidated corpus of pre-1840 materials relevant to Jewish music, listing them alongside Jewish manuscripts and prints.[17] His bibliographical apparatus thus extends the path Birnbaum had opened by treating Christian testimonies as legitimate, if carefully handled, evidence for the early history of Jewish music. That these sources could be fully integrated into Adler's bibliography demonstrates how deeply entrenched document-based, *musikwissenschaftlich* practices of source criticism—and their attendant reliance on Christian historical literature—remained within Jewish music research well into the late twentieth century.

From this vantage point, the Eduard Birnbaum Collection helps refine how we narrate the intellectual history of Jewish music research. It highlights the extent to which the field took shape through the sustained, if often ambivalent,

[16] Seroussi, "Music: The 'Jew' of Jewish Studies," 42.
[17] See, for instance, Appendix B in Adler, *Hebrew Notated Manuscript Sources*, 1:554–63, and the "Checklist of Printed Sources," 2:875–90.

use of Christian writings on "Hebrew music," and shows how those writings were continually reworked within Jewish scholarly projects rather than simply ignored or straightforwardly inherited. In Birnbaum's hands, Christian sources become both objects of critical scrutiny and building blocks for a new, self-consciously Jewish discourse on music, making visible the entangled, dialogic character of the field's early development.

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My discussion of Birnbaum's collection of music literature will proceed as follows. First, I analyze Birnbaum's drafts of an unfinished bibliographical project entitled "Literaturgeschichte der hebräischen und synagogalen Musik" (History of literature on Hebrew and synagogue music) and situate it in the context of other bibliographical projects carried out by leaders of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement, such as Leopold Zunz and Moritz Steinschneider. I argue that Birnbaum's juxtaposition of Christian and Jewish sources, along with his critical commentary in the annotated bibliography, decenters the dominance of Christian narratives by objectifying them into historical artifacts. The detailed network of cross-references that he builds in each bibliography entry demonstrates that Birnbaum found ways to engage productively and critically with Christian scholarship.

Whereas the "Literaturgeschichte" case centers on Birnbaum's bibliographical collation and critique of discursive texts, the next two case studies will turn to his work with musical examples originating not from oral tradition or cantors' manuscripts, but from textual sources, and trace how he extracted, transcribed, and recontextualized notated settings from treatises on Hebrew music and Hebrew grammar.

In the second case study, I examine materials found in the Mus. 77 subcollection of the Birnbaum Collection, which include translations and transcriptions of Jewish- and Christian-authored manuscripts and published treatises that treat the *te'amim* (Hebrew accents),[18] poetry, and music. These materials suggest that Birnbaum sought to build the foundations for a comprehensive, historically grounded account of discourse on the te'amim and poetry during the early-modern period and beyond. He included not only excerpts from treatises that included musical notations of the te'amim themselves, but also various Christian attempts at setting Hebrew texts to music. By transcribing examples of Christian-composed settings of Hebrew texts, Birnbaum transformed these examples, as he did with the Christian-authored

[18] The notation of biblical cantillation was codified in the Masoretic text (seventh to tenth centuries CE), which is the authoritative edition of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) complete with the vocalization and accentuation marks. In the Masoretic text, the te'amim (also known as cantillation marks, accents, or *trop*) serve three functions to aid the reader: first, they mark syntactical divisions of the text; second, they indicate stressed syllables; and third, they indicate the melodic contours of the text.

texts in his bibliography, into historical artifacts that could be scrutinized and distinguished from Jewish musical practice. In doing so, Birnbaum signaled that he was interested in capturing the full range of the history of musical engagement with the Hebrew language, no matter whether it was indigenous to Jewish musical practice or not.

In the third case study, I discuss Birnbaum's reception of Johannes Reuchlin's *De accentibus, et orthographia, linguae hebraicae* (On the accents and orthography of the Hebrew language, 1518) in his "Literaturgeschichte" and related archival materials. I argue that Birnbaum's reception of Reuchlin is significant because he was the first contemporary scholar to identify Reuchlin as the source of the four-part settings of cantillation motifs that appear unattributed in numerous early-modern treatises on Hebrew grammar and music, including Pierre Guarin's *Grammatica hebraica et chaldaica* (Hebrew and Chaldean grammar, 1726) and Johann Nikolaus Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (General history of music, vol. 1, 1788). Moreover, Birnbaum's engagement with Reuchlin demonstrates that his collection of Christian sources was not only crucial for his development of an intellectual history of discourse on the te'amim but also coincided with his goal of collecting early examples of Jewish musical practice. While early-modern Christian writers saw the musical settings of the te'amim in Reuchlin's treatise as evidence of the limited achievements of Ashkenazi musical practice, Birnbaum read Reuchlin's cantillation notations against the grain to demonstrate that they were in fact valuable historical witnesses of Ashkenazi musical practice.

Collecting and Critiquing Christian Narratives of Hebrew Music: Birnbaum's Drafts for a "History of Literature of Hebrew and Synagogue Music"

Eduard Birnbaum was the foremost nineteenth-century Jewish music collector and Chief Cantor of the Königsberg Jewish community in Prussia from 1879 to 1920. As cantor Moritz Deutsch's student at the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, Birnbaum was exposed to the scholarly ideals of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement, which he embraced in his own research on Jewish music and its history.[19] The Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau promoted what Christian Wiese has described as a "positive-historical" approach to Jewish scholarship in which there was a "synthesis between firm belief in the Torah, as the positive foundation of Judaism, and modern scientific and historical thinking."[20] Indeed, the seminary's first director, Zacharias Frankel, aimed to reignite the vitality of the Jewish religious tradition through scientific

[19] Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity*, 117.
[20] Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, trans. Barbara Harshav and Christian Wiese (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 84.

research, writing: "Judaism and science will have to nourish one another; and what proves the strength of Judaism is that its truths appear especially bright in the light of science."[21] Students at the seminary were thus religiously observant, but also committed to the ideals of scientific scholarship.

Birnbaum followed in this mold of religiously observant scholar as a professional cantor who was also dedicated to furthering the aims of Jewish music research as a modern discipline. He recognized that the development of a scientific approach to the study of Jewish music would require, as Edwin Seroussi puts it, "the creation of a data bank of music from Jewish contexts."[22] To build such an archive of Jewish music, Birnbaum consulted and copied manuscripts in Salomon Sulzer's library, corresponded with other cantors and researchers to systematically collect manuscript and printed scores of Jewish music from various periods and traditions, and transcribed his knowledge of the cantorial tradition.[23] His thorough collecting efforts also brought him to libraries and private collections to look for both notated music and music literature by both Jewish and Christian authors.

Birnbaum's attentiveness to the Christian tradition of writings on Jewish music, in addition to the Jewish tradition, was also likely a product of the scholarly sensibilities promoted at the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau. Indeed, the medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides's dictum that one should "learn the truth from whoever speaks it" animated the intellectual culture of the seminary, as it was one of the key principles of the new, enlightened approach to Jewish education that emerged during the Haskalah and continued to inform the educational goals of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[24] Students at the seminary and other institutions associated with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* were expected to be knowledgeable in secular subjects, such as geometry, arithmetic, physics, foreign languages, history, and literature.[25]

Through their secular studies, students became acquainted with Christian sources and perspectives. However, this did not mean that Christian sources escaped critical scrutiny in the environment of the seminary. For instance, in 1851, the seminary's first director, Frankel, established the *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Monthly journal for the history and science of Judaism), a journal dedicated to Jewish research, that also, as Wiese points out, "became increasingly relevant in the debate about distorted

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[21] Zacharias Frankel, as quoted in ibid., 85.
[22] Seroussi, "Music: The 'Jew' of Jewish Studies," 15.
[23] Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity*, 117.
[24] Ephraim Chamiel, *The Middle Way: The Emergence of Modern-Religious Trends in Nineteenth-Century Judaism Responses to Modernity in the Philosophy of Z. H. Chajes, S. R. Hirsch and S. D. Luzzatto*, vol. 1 (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2014), 359.
[25] Esther Seidel, "The Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau (1854–1938)," *European Judaism* 38, no. 1 (2005): 133–44, at 137–38. An undergraduate department prepared Breslau students for advanced seminary training by combining Jewish studies with secular subjects that were part of the typical German Gymnasium curriculum.

representations of Judaism by contemporary Christian scholars."[26] The journal thus provided a forum for combatting falsehoods and inaccuracies about Judaism found in Christian texts. Birnbaum's familiarity with such periodicals likely shaped his own approach toward Christian sources, which he not only collected and studied, but approached with a critical eye.

In the summer of 1884, Birnbaum prepared the foundations for an unfinished "Literaturgeschichte" of Hebrew and synagogue music as evidenced by two notebooks (labeled volume 1 and volume 2) and a supplementary notebook (labeled "Nachtrag zu den Notizen" [Addendum to the notes]) in the Birnbaum Collection.[27] Collectively, these notebooks are entitled "Alphabetisch geordnete Notizen zu einer Literaturgeschichte der hebr[äischen] u[nd] synagog[alen] Musik" (Alphabetically ordered notes for a history of literature of Hebrew and synagogue music).[28] While Birnbaum uses the term "Literaturgeschichte" in his title, which might be loosely translated as "history of literature," his goal was not to provide a single narrative of the history of Hebrew and synagogue music. Rather, he uses "Literaturgeschichte" in the early-modern sense in which the term was used to refer to lexicographical and bibliographical projects. Indeed, Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte" took the form of an annotated bibliography of sources that discussed ancient Hebrew music and Jewish music history from the early-modern period to the present day (see Figure 1).

[26] Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse*, 86.

[27] Eduard Birnbaum, "Alphabetisch geordnete Notizen zu einer Literaturgeschichte der hebr[äischen] u[nd] synagog[alen] Musik," manuscript, 1884, Cincinnati, OH, Hebrew Union College, Klau Library Special Collections, Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II B 1(a–c).

[28] Ibid., vol. a. "Alphabetisch geordnete Notizen zu einer Literaturgeschichte der hebr[äischen] u[nd] synagog[alen] Musik."

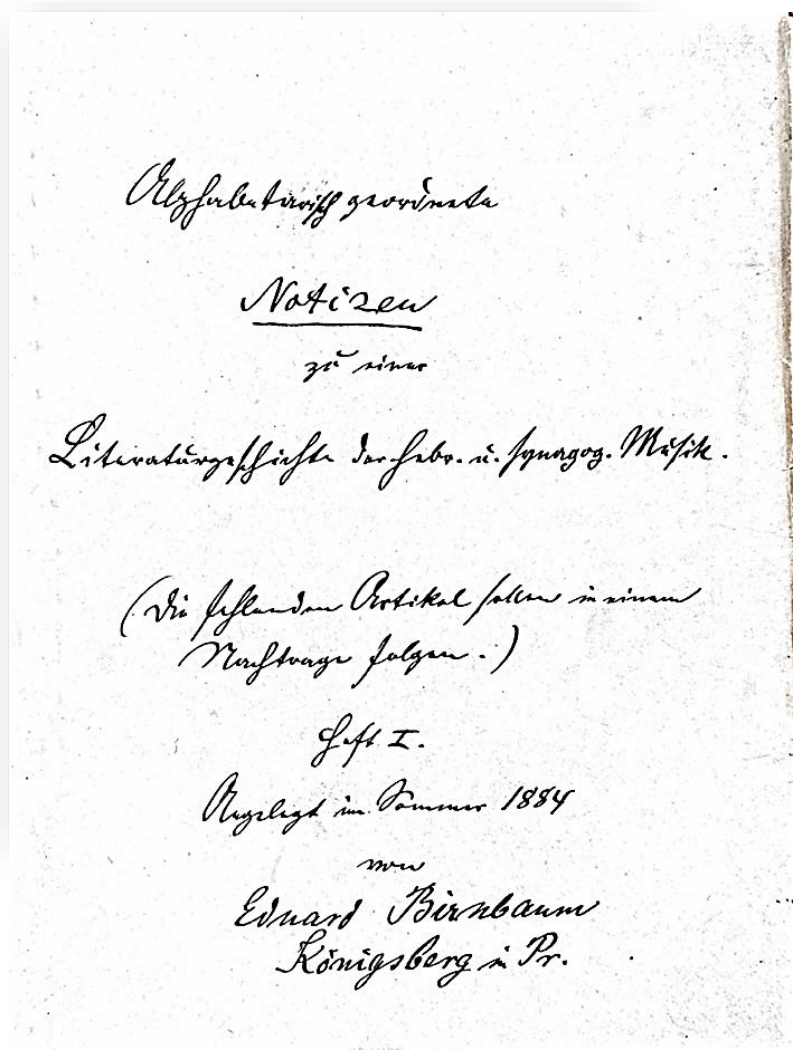
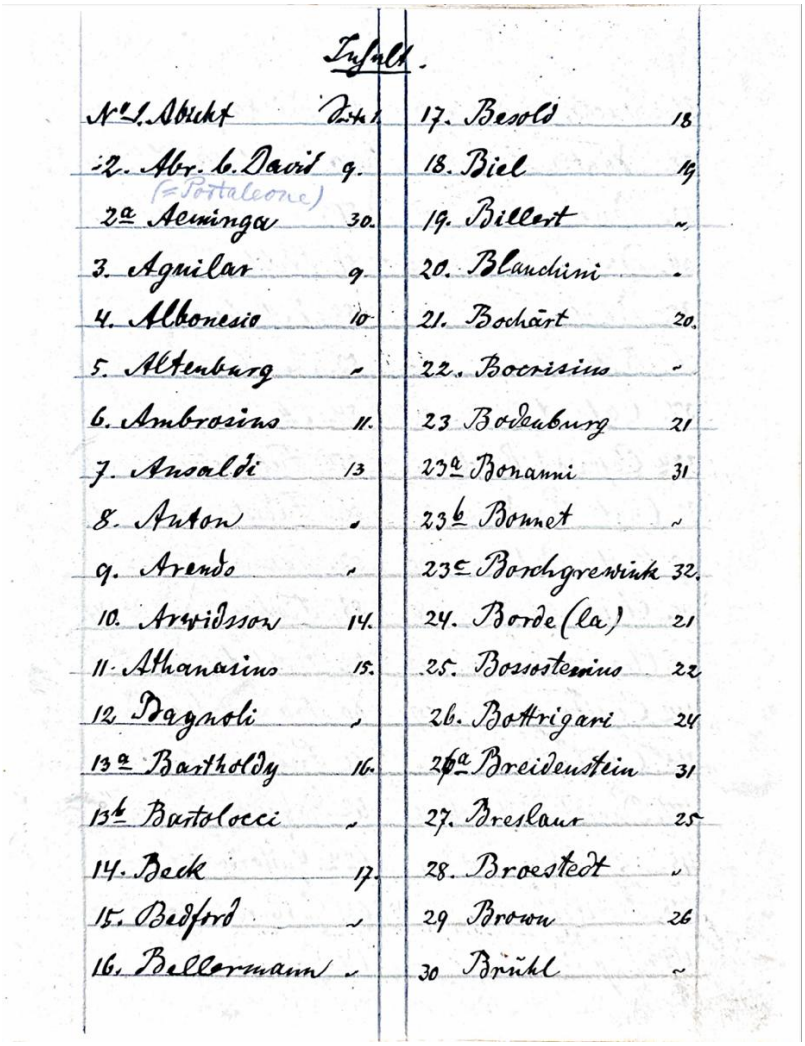


Figure 1. Title page of volume a of Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte," Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II B 1(a). Courtesy of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

In the first notebook of the "Literaturgeschichte," Birnbaum provides bibliographic and biographical information for 171 Hebraists, grammarians, theologians, music historians, composers, and others who had written about ancient Hebrew or synagogue music. The second notebook contains entries for 19 additional authors. The supplement contains a list of 650 authors (including a repetition of authors listed in volumes 1 and 2). Both Jewish and Christian authors from the early Christian era to the nineteenth century are included in Birnbaum's drafts, and most of the authors listed in volumes 1 and 2 are in fact Christian (see Figure 2).



Inhalt.

Nº 1. Abicht	2+1	17. Besold	18
2. Abr. b. David	9.	18. Biel	19
(=Portaleone)			
2ª Acuinga	30.	19. Billert	"
3. Aguilar	9.	20. Blanchini	"
4. Albonesio	10	21. Bochart	20.
5. Altenburg	"	22. Bocrisius	"
6. Ambrosius	11.	23 Bodenburg	21
7. Ansaldi	13	23ª Bonanni	31
8. Anton	"	23b Bonnet	"
9. Arendo	"	23c Borchgrevink	32.
10. Arvidsson	14.	24. Borde (la)	21
11. Athanasius	15.	25. Bossostensis	22
12 Bagnoli	"	26. Bottrigari	24
13ª Bartholdy	16.	26ª Breidenstein	31
13b Bartolocci	"	27. Breslaur	25
14. Beck	17.	28. Broestedt	"
15. Bedford	"	29 Brown	26
16. Bellermann	"	30 Brühl	"

Figure 2. First page of the index of volume a of Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte," Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II B 1(a). Courtesy of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte" reveals in detail the processes by which he collected information about Jewish music literature. For instance, each entry in the "Literaturgeschichte" contains cross-references to relevant entries in a variety of music lexicons and histories, including Martin Gerbert's *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra* (Ecclesiastical writers on sacred music, 1784), Johann Nikolaus Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (vol. 1, 1788), Ernst Ludwig Gerber's *Historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* (Historical-biographical lexicon of musicians, 1791), Hermann Mendel's *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon* (Musical conversation lexicon, 1870–80), and Hugo Riemann's *Musiklexicon* (Music lexicon, 1882). Figure 3 shows the top of Birnbaum's entry on the Christian Hebraist Johann Georg Abicht (1672–1740) with cross-references to entries on Abicht in Gerber's *Lexicon* ("Gerber v. I. 6."), Forkel's history ("Fork I. 181."), and Mendel's lexicon ("Mendel I. 8.") among others. Birnbaum's personal annotated copies of these

texts by Forkel, Gerber, Mendel, and Riemann are still extant.[29] Figure 4 shows that Birnbaum penciled in the names of the te'amim to the four-part settings of the te'amim reproduced in Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte*.

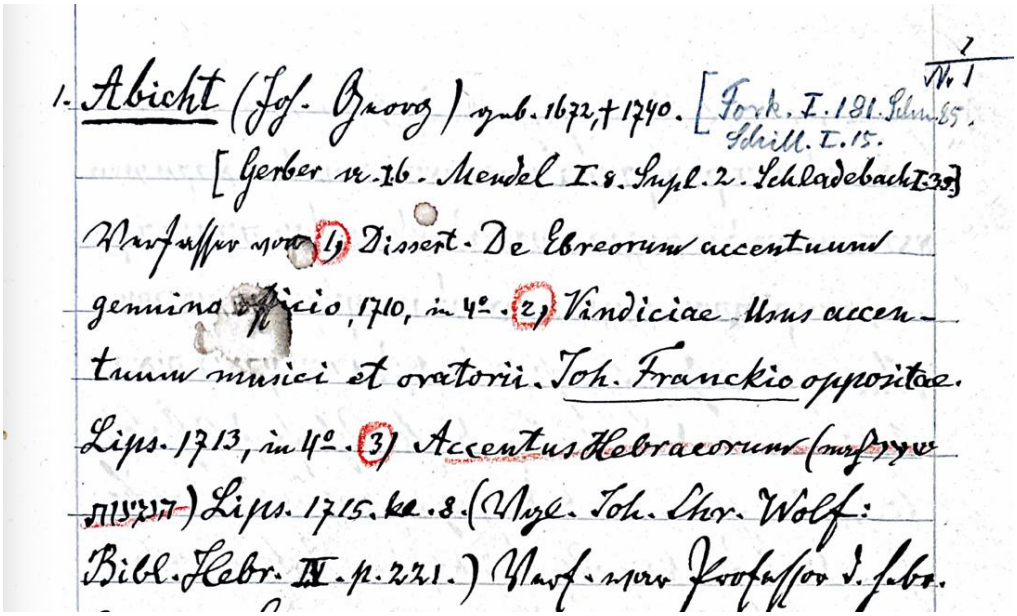


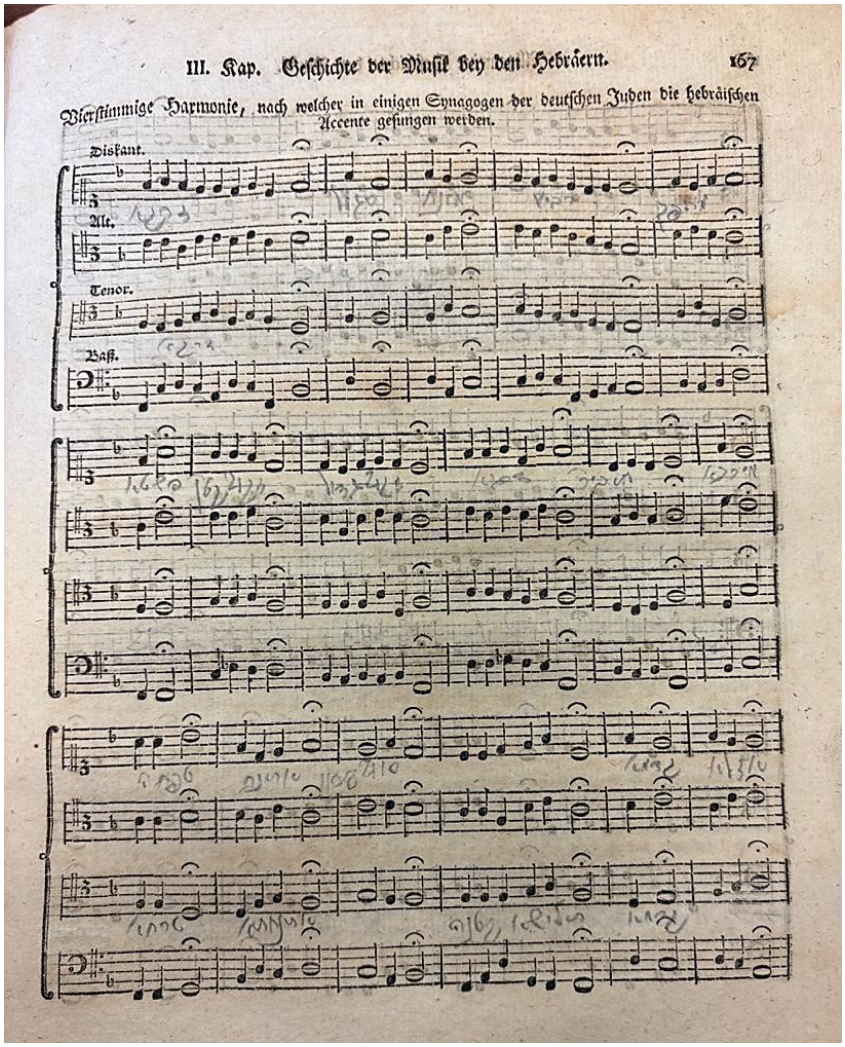
Figure 3. Entry on Johann Georg Abicht in Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte," Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II B 1(a). Courtesy of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

Birnbaum's cross-references and annotations demonstrate that his collecting involved not only the gathering of music itself, but also a thorough examination of existing lexicons and bibliographies for music literature related to Hebrew music. Birnbaum did not rely upon a single bibliography as the basis for his "Literaturgeschichte," such as Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte* (vol. 1, 1788) and *Allgemeine Litteratur* (General literature, 1792), which contained the most comprehensive bibliographies on the topic until well into the nineteenth century.[30] Rather, he sought to support his entries with cross-references to a variety of authoritative lexicons and histories. In doing so, he demonstrates his commitment to a scientific approach to source collection that engaged thoroughly with existing scholarship.

Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte" also provides evidence of the importance of archival research to his collecting process. For instance, in an entry for the Christian Hebraist August Pfeiffer (1640–98), Birnbaum notes that "the city of Königsberg purchased his library and the catalog of it (printed in Lübeck) is preserved in the city library."[31] He also indicates that he has personally consulted these materials, writing, "I saw [the catalog] myself and also noticed

[29] These books are searchable by title and author in the Klau Library's online catalog: https://huc.on.worldcat.org/discovery.
[30] Sendrey, *Bibliography of Jewish Music*, xxxv.
[31] Birnbaum, "Literaturgeschichte," vol. a: "Seine hebr. Bibliothek kaufte die Stadt Königsb. an, wo der Catal. Derselben (gedr. in Lübeck) auf der Stadtbiblioth. aufbewahrt wird."

his coat of arms on most of the Hebrew books in it. The catalog has remained unknown to Jewish bibliographers."[32] Birnbaum's entry demonstrates that he did not merely compile lists of authors and their works from existing lexicons and bibliographies but also attempted to find more information about these authors' own libraries, which could lead him to new, unknown sources that might treat Hebrew music or other topics of interest to Jewish bibliographers. The extensive collection of letters in the Birnbaum Collection reveals that Birnbaum frequently corresponded with other Jewish scholars engaged in bibliographical projects and often shared archival finds such as these with his colleagues.


III. Kap. Geschichte der Musik bey den Hebräern. 167

Vierstimmige Harmonie, nach welcher in einigen Synagogen der deutschen Juden die hebräischen Accente gesungen werden.

Diskant.

Alt.

Tenor.

Baß.

Figure 4. Birnbaum's annotations of the names of the te'amim in his copy of Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, Eduard Birnbaum Collection. Courtesy of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

[32] Ibid.: "Ich habe ihn selbst gesehen und bemerkte auch auf den meisten hebr. Büchern derselben sein Wappen. Der Cat. ist den jüd. Bibliographen unbekannt geblieben."

It is important to note that Birnbaum's bibliographical project had precedent in the works of other Jewish scholars associated with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement. For instance, Leopold Zunz's *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (History of literature of synagogue poetry, 1865) was the culmination of over a decade of research during which he identified the names of nearly 1,000 *paytanim* (liturgical poets), described their lives and works, and attempted to link them to 5,964 *piyyutim* (liturgical poems).[33] As Ismar Schorsch explains,

> The *Literaturgeschichte* was the third volume of a trilogy of studies by Zunz on the history of Jewish liturgy. Each bore the resonant noun "poetry" in its title (*Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters* of 1855 and *Die Ritus des synagogalen Gottesdienstes* of 1859, which on the page facing the title page read *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters, zweite Abteilung* [part 2]), signaling their intimate connectedness and the claim that they were part and parcel of the universal genre of poetry. Together they realized a scholarly agenda that Zunz had first enunciated in 1818 in the essay that launched his epistemological revolution: "A history of the [liturgical] rite of the synagogue that would be at this juncture in particular a desirable, if difficult undertaking."[34]

Zunz's entries on various paytanim varied in length from short paragraphs to several pages when discussing particularly prolific and well-documented poets, such as Saadia Gaon. His entry on Isaac Halevi b. Elasar offers an example of a relatively concise entry. Zunz writes,

> Isaac Halevi b. Elasar in Worms, Rashi's teacher, who also as a youth knew R. Leontin HaCohen, and corresponded with Rashi, Natan b. Machir, Schalom b. Jehuda, Isaac b. Isaac, and others and enjoyed his high esteem; his listeners called him "our holy teacher." He died between 1070 and 1096. The tombstones of some of his relatives still exist.[35]

Accompanying this biographical sketch of Halevi, Zunz includes a family tree and a description of the four piyyutim that Halevi composed for wedding sabbaths that take up an additional page and a half.

Like the entries in Zunz's *Literaturgeschichte*, the entries in Birnbaum's drafts contain biographical information about each author as well as a listing and description of their relevant works. Since Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte" was only a draft of the project, however, his entries tend to be much less detailed than those found generally in Zunz's work, and more similar to Zunz's brief

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[33] Ismar Schorsch, *Leopold Zunz: Creativity in Adversity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 196.
[34] Ibid., 196.
[35] Leopold Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (Berlin: Louis Gerschel Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1865), 155–56: "Isaac Halevi b. Elasar in Worms, Raschi's Lehrer, hat als Jüngling noch R. Leontin hacohen gekannt, stand in brieflicher Verbindung mit Raschi, Natan b. Machir, Schalom b. Jehuda, Isaac b. Isaac und anderen und genos sein hohes Ansehen; seine Zuhörer nannten ihn 'unsern heiligen Lehrer.' Er starb zwischen 1070 und 1096. Von Einigen seiner Angehörigen sind die Leichensteine noch vorhanden."

entry on Halevi cited above. Given the similarities in title and general structure, and Birnbaum's own notes on Zunz's *Literaturgeschichte* preserved in the collection, Zunz's work clearly served as a model for Birnbaum's project.[36]

Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte" project also likely took inspiration from the bibliographic work of Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907), who edited the journal *Hebräische Bibliographie* (Hebrew bibliography, 1858–82) and produced important catalogs of Hebrew books and manuscripts in Oxford, Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, and Leiden.[37] In fact, Birnbaum regularly corresponded with Steinschneider and was a close reader of the *Hebräische Bibliographie* as evidenced by his letters and notes on the journal in the Birnbaum Collection.[38]

We will now take a closer look at a selection of entries on Christian authors from Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte." By doing so, we will see how the "Literaturgeschichte" functioned as a site of reception. It should be acknowledged, however, that most entries are quite brief and factual, offering little evidence of Birnbaum's opinion. Birnbaum's entry on Charles Burney illustrates his concise approach:

> A famous historian. In his . . . work: *A General History of Music*, Vol I . . . he discusses "the History of Hebrew Music." The introduction [of his history] was translated into German by Eschenburg under the title: "On the Music of the Ancients."[39]

Although many entries are concise and factual like this one, there are also several entries in which Birnbaum's opinion of a writer shines through. For instance, his entry on Johann Gottfried Herder reveals his admiration:

> The famous poet and aesthete treats the music of the Psalms in his work "On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry" and in his investigations of their origin and divisions, he arrives at the most natural results, which have also had decisive influence on his successors in the field.[40]

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[36] Birnbaum's notes on Zunz's *Literaturgeschichte* can be found in the Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II N 93–95.

[37] See chapter 1 of Ismar Schorsch, *Better a Scholar than a Prophet* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021) for more information on Steinschneider's bibliographic activities.

[38] "Contents notes (pertaining to accents) of (a) *Hebräische Bibliographie*, ed. M. Steinschneider, vol. I–XXI (1858–1881/2), (b) *Jüdische Zeitschrift* . . . ed. A. Geiger, vol. I–XI (1862–1875)," Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II 4oH 63, 5.

[39] Birnbaum, "Literaturgeschichte," vol. a: "Berühmter Geschichtschreiber. In seinem [illegible] Werke: "A General History of Music, Vol. I. (London 1776 s. 217–252) behandelt er 'the History of Hebrew Music.' Die Einleitung hat Eschenburg unter dem Titel 'Ueber die Musik der Alten' nur deutsch übersetzt."

[40] Birnbaum, "Literaturgeschichte," vol. a: "Der berühmte Dichter u. Aesthiker behandelt in seinem Werke: 'Vom Geist der ebraischen Poesie' (Dessau 1782–83) auch die Musik der Psalmen (Bd. II. 374–78), und bei seinem Untersuchungen üb. Ursprung Eintheilung derselb [illegible], kommt er zu den natürlichsten Resultaten, sie auch auf seine Nachfolger auf diesem Gebiete bestimmend einwirkten."

Birnbaum's reference to "the most natural results" of Herder's scholarship likely refers to Herder's recognition of the aesthetic merits of Hebrew poetry and the historical role that music and poetry played in the creation of the Hebrew national identity. Indeed, Herder's treatise on Hebrew poetry, *Vom Geist der ebräischen Poesie* (On the spirit of Hebrew poetry, 1782) and his general interest in postbiblical rabbinic literature and medieval Jewish poetry inspired many Jewish scholars in the *Wissenschaft* circle, such as Zunz and Birnbaum, to study this literary corpus with new enthusiasm.[41]

Birnbaum also could be critical of authors, however. For example, in his entry on eighteenth-century Christian Hebraist Johann Christoph Speidel, he concurred with Johann Nikolaus Forkel's negative assessment of Speidel's attempt to uncover the sound of ancient Hebrew music from the te'amim. Indeed, Birnbaum writes that in Speidel's treatise "one is only dealing with the [mere] theorizing [of the author]. Ancient Hebrew music cannot be decoded from the accents because these are of a much more recent date than the original text."[42] Birnbaum also quoted in agreement Ernst Ludwig Gerber's critical comment on Speidel's work from the *Historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*: "I fear the author has found too much in Hebrew music. The reader can learn better from Herder [on this topic]."[43]

Another object of Birnbaum's criticism in the "Literaturgeschichte" was a contemporary of his, the Christian composer and music historian Emil Naumann (1827–88). Naumann was the *Hofkirchen-Musikdirektor* (court church music director) in Berlin and later lectured on music history at the conservatory in Dresden.[44] He authored several works on music history, including *Illustrirte Musikgeschichte* (Illustrated music history; first published 1880), which includes a chapter dedicated to Hebrew music.[45] Naumann takes a generally positive view of what he terms "Israelite music" in comparison to scholars like Forkel, who claimed that Hebrew music was no more than "mere cantillation."[46] For instance, Naumann writes that "this aptitude of the Jews for music, to which the most ancient records bear witness, has been maintained to the present day."[47] Birnbaum recognizes Naumann's sympathetic stance toward his subject, but nevertheless criticizes him, writing, "Although he treats [this

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[41] Schorsch, *Leopold Zunz*, 207.

[42] Birnbaum, "Literaturgeschichte," vol. a: "im Wirklichkeit hat man es [illegible] bei ihm nur mit Theorismen zu thun. Die althebr. Musik läßt sich einmal nicht aus den Accenten herauslesen, weil diese viel jüngeren Datums sind als das Urtexten."

[43] Ibid.: "Ich fürchte der Verfasser hat zu viel in der hebr. Musik gefunden. Der Leser kann sich hiervon im Herder eines bessern belehren."

[44] Dieter Härtwig, "Naumann, Emil," in *Grove Music Online* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), doi.org/10.1093/omo/9781561592630.013.90000380329.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Schwickert, 1788), pp. XXVII, 173, "bloße Cantillation."

[47] Emil Naumann, *The History of Music*, trans. F. Praeger (London: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1886), 59.

subject] kindly, I am unable to describe his research in the field of Hebrew music as successful. On the contrary, he started from many false assumptions."[48] Birnbaum also disputes Naumann's claim that he had become "well informed on modern synagogue music"[49] through discussion with Dresden's Chief Rabbi, the congregation's Christian organist, and the cantors Janssen and Löffler.

One issue that Birnbaum identifies is Naumann's claim that several of the example melodies given in his chapter, which were composed by contemporary cantors, were in fact ancient melodies.[50] For instance, to support his claim that the Israelites adopted the use of the tetrachord from the Egyptians, Naumann writes, "I need but refer to ancient melodies of the Temple still extant in the synagogues, and especially to those which are believed to be of the greatest antiquity."[51] He then offers the following example and notes that it "is within the limits of the tetrachord . . . [and] forms a part of almost every sacred service" (see Figure 5).[52] However, as Birnbaum observed in his entry, this example is not an ancient melody, but an adaptation of Salomon Sulzer's melodic setting of "Shema Israel."[53]



Figure 5. "Höre Israel" ("Shema Israel") from Naumann, *Illustrirte Musikgeschichte* (1885), 69.

Birnbaum also takes issue with Naumann's description of a contemporary setting of "Shema Israel" sung in Dresden (see Figure 6) as "characteristic and ancient."[54] Attentive to the historiographic distortions Naumann introduces by conflating modern synagogue melodies with ancient ones, Birnbaum felt

[48] Birnbaum, "Literaturgeschichte," vol. a: "Sosehr freundlich er dieselben behandelt, bin ich doch nicht in der Lage, seine Forschungen auf d. Gebiete d. hebr. Musik als glückliche hinzustellen. Im Gegentheil, ist er von vielen falschen Voraussetzungen ausgegangen."
[49] Ibid.: "[über] modernen Synagogen-Musik gar gut unterrichtet zu sein."
[50] Ibid.: "Die anderen eben angeführten Nr. (?) 52, 62 u. 63 sind ganz modern von Sulzer u. anderen erfundenen Melodien, wie überhaupt die Abfügung dieses Verses (Schema) beim Ausheben der heil. Schrift aus der ehil. Lade d. Synag. Gar nicht alt ist u. im alte deutschen Ritus ein (?) eingeführt ist."
[51] Naumann, *The History of Music*, 73–74.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Naumann inexplicably reverses the order of the clauses in the prayer, placing "der Herr ist einzig" (the Lord is one) before "der Herr nur ist Gott" (the Lord alone is God). This reversal casts further doubt on Naumann's claim to be well informed about synagogue music.
[54] Emil Naumann, *Illustrirte Musikgeschichte: Die Entwicklung der Tonkunst aus frühesten Anfängen bis auf die Gegenwart*, vol. 1 (Berlin and Stuttgart: B. Spemann, 1880), 77: "charakteristisch und alterthümlich." The musical Nusach of the Dresden community likely sounded "other" or "oriental" to Naumann's ears, and he views the tune's "otherness" as evidence of the tune's ancient pedigree.

compelled to intervene, particularly given Naumann's authority as a widely read historian:

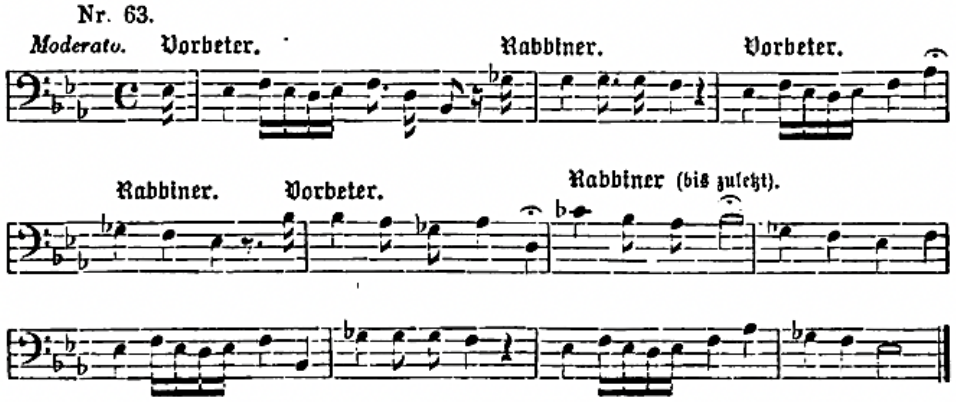


Figure 6. "Shema Israel" as sung in the Dresden synagogue from Naumann, *Illustrirte Musikgeschichte* (1885), 77.

> As long as these "characteristic and ancient" melodies were only performed in the Dresden synagogue, they posed no further danger to the public. However, after they were sanctioned by a "historian," it could very soon happen that, given the way the history of Hebrew music is treated, that they would be considered accepted and regarded as having been introduced throughout Israel.[55]

Lastly, Birnbaum criticizes Naumann's decision to include a harmonization of Christian scholar Leopold Alexander Friedrich Arends's (1817–82) reconstruction of the ancient Hebrew melody of Psalm 137, published in the treatise *Ueber den Sprachgesang der Vorzeit und die Herstellbarkeit der althebräischen Vocalmusik* (On the speech-song of ancient times and the producibility of ancient Hebrew vocal music, 1867). Naumann claims that Arends's melodic setting of Psalm 137 (see Figure 7):

> . . . fulfills all of the conditions that I believed I must presuppose the ancient Israelite melodies to have. Furthermore, a melody so wonderfully foreign and at the same time so musically significant and filled with sorrow, as the one that follows, which Arends sets to the three opening verses of Psalm 137 sung by the Israelites in Babylonian captivity, has never before been brought to light by a scholar through an arbitrarily devised explanation of a symbolic script.[56]

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[55] Birnbaum, "Literaturgeschichte," vol. a: "Solange diese 'charakteristischen u. alterthümlichen' Melodien nur im Dresdner Synagoge zu Gehör gebracht werden, hatten sie weiter nichts Gemeingefährliches. Nachdem sie aber von einem 'Geschichtsschreiber' sanctionirt wurden, könnten es sich, bei der Art, wie mit der Gsch. Der hebr. Musik verfahren wird, gar bald ereigen, daß man sie als in ganz Israel eingeführt betrachten u. veranneigen (?) wollte."

[56] Naumann, *Illustrirte Musikgeschichte*, 73: "so würde ich die von Arends gegebene für die wahrscheinlichste halten, da sie alle die Bedingungen erfüllt, die ich hinsichtlich der altisraelitischen Melodien voraussetzen zu müssen glaubte. Auch hat eine so wunderbar fremdartige und zugleich musikalisch so bedeutende und von Schmerz erfüllte Melodie, wie die

Birnbaum questions Naumann's belief that this reconstructed melody is a good representative of the characteristics of ancient Israelite melody, arguing that it is not "worth harmonizing" and is included only "in order to present something that other music histories lack."[57]



Figure 7. First page of Naumann's harmonization of Arends's melodic setting of Psalm 137, *Illustrirte Musikgeschichte* (1885), 74.

While Naumann attempted to project scholarly authority by claiming that his knowledge of ancient Hebrew music had been corroborated by rabbis and cantors, Birnbaum, with his encyclopedic knowledge of Jewish liturgical music,

umstehend folgende, welche Arends den drei Eingangsversen des von den Israeliten in der babylonischen Gefangenschaft gesungenen 137. Psalms unterlegt, noch niemals ein Gelehrter durch Erklärung einer Zeichenschrift nach einem, von ihm willkürlich ausgeklügelten Schema zu Tage gefördert."

[57] Birnbaum, "Literaturgeschichte," vol. a: "Weder ist d. Notenbeilg (?) N. 52 (wo übrigens das letzte a ein Drückfehler für C sein muß) [Schema) 62 u. 63 traditionell (?), noch ist No. 60, der 137 Psalm nach Arends (vgl. Des. S. 79), der Harmonisierung werth . . . "um etwas zu bringen, was andere Musikgeschichten nicht haben."

was able to read Naumann's history with a critical eye. Instead of taking Naumann's claims at face value, Birnbaum read against the grain to identify the true sources of his musical examples, many of which were modern instead of ancient, or particular to a certain Jewish community, or were the inventions of Christian scholars seeking to reconstruct Hebrew music rather than representative of the musical practices of Jewish communities around the world. In doing so, he highlighted the problematic assumptions underlying Naumann's assertions.

By using the "Literaturgeschichte" as a space in which he could critically evaluate widely circulated narratives of Hebrew music, such as Naumann's, Birnbaum sought to minimize their power as master narratives. As Dieter Härtwig notes, Naumann's *Illustrirte Musikgeschichte* was "translated into several languages and went through many editions . . . [and was Naumann's] most widely known book."[58] Recognizing the wide circulation of Naumann's work, Birnbaum likely felt it was all the more urgent to highlight the shortcomings and inaccuracies of Naumann's history, lest readers believe that the melodies included in Naumann's chapter were ancient tunes sung by all Jewish congregations. In doing so, Birnbaum also resisted Naumann's orientalist assumption that contemporary European synagogue music had not progressed beyond the musical achievements of the ancient Hebrews and therefore preserved a stagnant tradition of singing.

While Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte" was never published, his draft entries indicate that his bibliographical project sought not only to collect sources but also to assist readers in properly assessing the quality of the historical narratives presented in those sources. In this way, Birnbaum's project functioned as an archival counterhistory: he gathered narratives of Hebrew and synagogue music, including those authored by Christians who might be considered dominant authorities, and in doing so, positioned them as narrative objects in the history of discourse on Jewish music. In the context of Birnbaum's bibliography, then, these narratives no longer existed as an unquestioned and authoritative body of scholarship written by Christian writers for largely Christian audiences but were subject to critical assessment and historical contextualization from a Jewish perspective. Furthermore, by setting entries by Christian authors alongside Jewish ones, such as Abraham Portaleone, Birnbaum created a record of the intellectual history of writings on Jewish music that demonstrated that both Christians and Jews were involved in documenting and claiming this history.

[58] Härtwig, "Naumann, Emil."

The Mus. 77 Subcollection: Constructing a Musical History of the Te'amim and Hebrew Poetry from Christian and Jewish Perspectives

I now turn from bibliographical projects to the realm of manuscript and archival materials, focusing specifically on the Mus. 77 subcollection of the Birnbaum Collection, which offers a rich trove for further exploration. Here, Birnbaum's commitment to comprehensive documentation is evident in his collection of translations and transcriptions spanning both Jewish and Christian-authored treatises on te'amim, poetry, and music. This subcollection reveals how Birnbaum expanded his counterhistorical approach from texts to more pointed engagement with musical examples themselves, transforming even Christian musical settings of Hebrew texts into objects for critical analysis.

Among the diverse materials in the Mus. 77 subcollection are a partial list of Jewish and Christian treatises and other manuscript sources that discuss the te'amim or include musically notated examples of the te'amim (Mus. 77); Birnbaum's transcription of a Hebrew text set to a melody composed using Athanasius Kircher's combinatorial method from *Musurgia universalis* (vol. 2, 1650) (Mus. 77.2); a transcription of a musical setting of Psalm 1 accompanied by a translation of an untitled treatise on the te'amim (Mus. 77.4); transcriptions of the tables of te'amim found in Johannes Reuchlin's *De accentibus* (1518, discussed in further detail in the following section), and a quotation from the text (Mus. 77.5a); a German translation of a discussion of the te'amim from Daniel Ernst Jablonski's *Biblia hebraica* (Hebrew Bible, 1699) (Mus. 77.5b); an autograph of Louis Lewandowski's transcription of the te'amim according to the German-Jewish tradition (Mus. 77.9); and a transcription of A. Meyerowitz's musical settings of the te'amim of Song of Songs, Ruth, and Ecclesiastes in the Lithuanian tradition (Mus. 77.11). Collectively, these items seem to have functioned as preparatory materials for a never-finished history of the te'amim and musical settings of Hebrew poetry that Birnbaum was planning.[59] Indeed, in a draft of an unpublished essay entitled "Die hebräischen Accentuationssysteme und die Neumenforschung" (The system of Hebrew accents and neume research), Birnbaum called for a study of the musical significance of the te'amim and argued that such a study might also contribute to the understanding of research on neumes.[60]

Of the items listed, Kircher's combinatorial setting of a Hebrew text and the musical setting of Psalm 1 stand out. Unlike most of the other materials, they are neither notations of the te'amim nor compositions by Jews, and they

[59] Additional materials related to the te'amim and related topics can be found in the Eduard Birnbaum Collection in subcollections Arch. II Lb 1–28; Arch. II B 6–12; Arch. II 4oH 62; Arch. II 4oH 63; Arch. II. N 228.

[60] Eduard Birnbaum, "Die hebräischen Accentuationssysteme und die Neumenforschung," manuscript n.d., Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II B 6 (10).

were not necessarily intended for use in Jewish communities. What relevance might these items have had for Birnbaum's archive of Jewish music then? Let us examine each example.



Figure 8. Combinatorially generated melody of a Hebrew text from Kircher, *Musurgia universalis*, vol. 2 (1650), 128.

In volume 2 of *Musurgia universalis*, Athanasius Kircher presented a combinatorial method of composition that would allow Jesuit missionaries to compose hymns in a wide variety of languages.[61] To give readers a sense of the versatility of his system, he demonstrates that it is compatible with languages such as Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Samaritan, Ge'ez, Armenian, Greek, Italian, Spanish, French, and German.[62] The Hebrew text that Kircher sets to his combinatorially composed melody was sourced from the Renaissance Hebraist and grammarian Elia Levita's (1469–1549) *Sefer ha-Tishbi* of 1541 (see Figure 8).[63] Kircher's musical setting of this text was meant to be a theoretical demonstration of his combinatorial system of composition. Thus it was likely never sung in a missionary context or otherwise. Birnbaum likely recognized this fact but perhaps decided to add it to this subcollection since it represented a rare seventeenth-century attempt to treat Hebrew text musically (see Figure

[61] Eric Bianchi, "Prodigious Sounds: Music and Learning in the World of Athanasius Kircher," PhD diss., Yale University, 2011, 114.

[62] Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis*, vol. 2 (Rome: Francisci Corbelletti, 1650), 126–40. It is worth noting that Kircher knew Hebrew well and taught it at the university level.

[63] Levita adapts the text from Pirkei Avot 5:20. The original text of Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 5:20 reads: "יהודה בן תימא אומר: הוי עז כנמר, וקל כנשר, רץ כצבי, וגיבור כארי, לעשות רצון אביך שבשמים," which translates to "Judah ben Tema said: Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and courageous as a lion—to do the will of your Father in Heaven." There is also an allusion to Isaiah 50:7 in the phrase "אשום פני כחלמיש."

9). It served as an exemplar of an early notated musical setting of Hebrew that was not based on the te'amim—a notable fact since most musical settings of Hebrew text in Christian treatises until the eighteenth century were based either on the te'amim or on attempts to decode them. Thus he likely thought it would be of interest to readers seeking to understand the history of musical settings of Hebrew text based on interpretations of the te'amim and other methods.

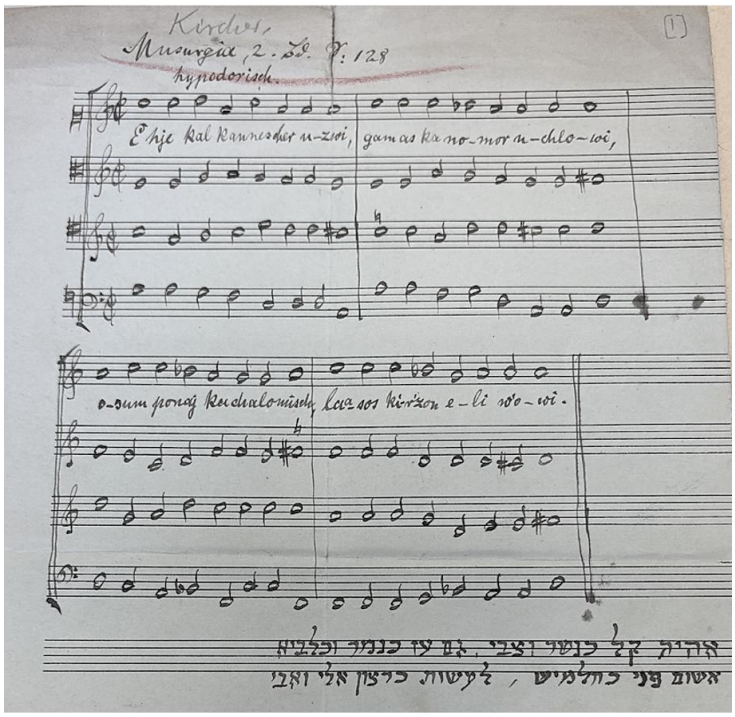


Figure 9. Birnbaum's transcription of Kircher's Hebrew melody, Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Mus. 77(2a). Courtesy of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

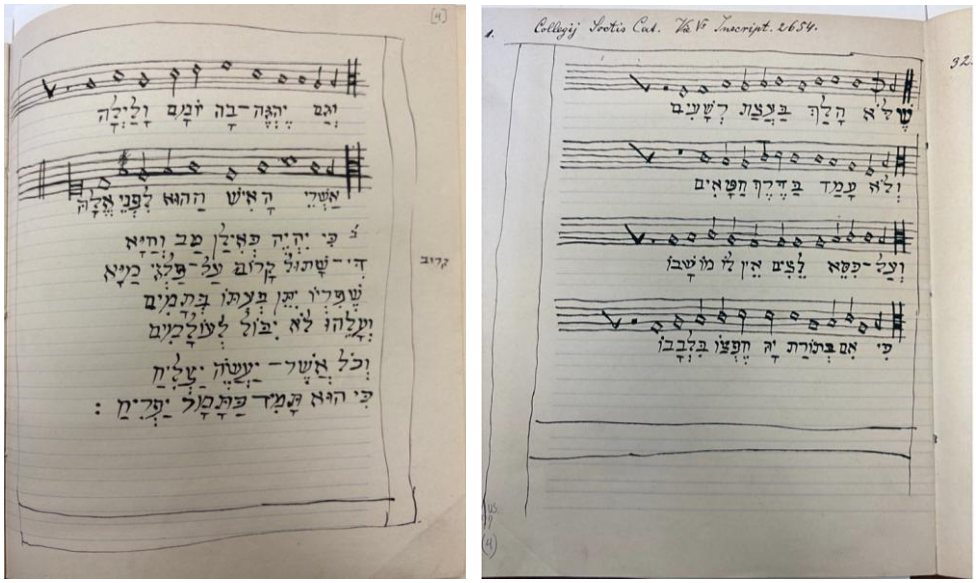
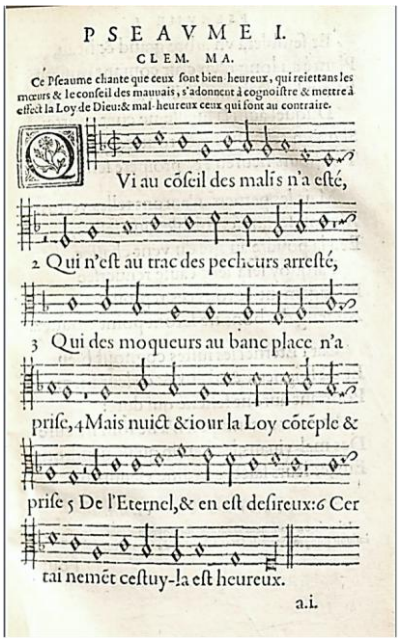


Figure 10. Birnbaum's transcription of a setting of Psalm 1 from a manuscript entitled "Cantus Hebraicus," Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Mus. 77(4). Courtesy of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.


PSEAVME I.

CLEM. MA.

Ce Pſeaume chante que ceux ſont bien heureux, qui reiettans les mœurs & le conſeil des mauuais, s'adonnent à cognoiſtre & mettre à effect la Loy de Dieu: & mal-heureux ceux qui font au contraire.

Vi au cõſeil des malis n'a eſté,

2 Qui n'eſt au trac des pecheurs arreſté,

3 Qui des moqueurs au banc place n'a

priſe, 4 Mais nuict & iour la Loy cõtẽple &

priſe 5 De l'Eternel, & en eſt deſireux: 6 Cer

tai nemẽt ceſtuy-la eſt heureux.

a.i.

Figure 11. Source melody for the setting of Psalm 1 in "Cantus Hebraicus" from Clement Marot and Theodore de Beze, eds., *Les pseavmes mis en rime francoise* (Jean Baptiste Pinereul, 1562) (Genevan Psalter).

Mus. 77.4, entitled "Cantus Hebraicus," contains a transcription of a musical setting of Psalm 1. The melody comes from the musical setting of Psalm 1 in the Genevan Psalter (first published 1539), and the accompanying Hebrew text underlay of the psalm has been modified to rhyme (see Figures 10 and 11). Birnbaum does not give any indication that he has edited this transcription in any manner, so I assume that the original musical notation was written from right to left, and that the text of Psalm 1 was already modified to rhyme (the current location of the original manuscript from which Birnbaum made a copy is unknown).[64] Birnbaum reports that he found this manuscript in the Königsberg Royal and University Library and believed that it was from the hand of Johannes Clajus (1535–92), a German grammarian and theologian.[65]

[64] Without further evidence it is not possible to verify Birnbaum's attribution to Clajus, and it may be difficult to do so since it is unclear whether the "Cantus Hebraicus" manuscript survived the destruction of the Königsberg Royal and University Library during World War II. According to Manfred Komorowski, most of the music collection of the Gotthold estate (of which the manuscript was a part) was transferred to the Sanditten Castle in 1945 and was likely taken into Russian possession after the war. So far, I have not found any record of the manuscript in various Russian libraries, including the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University's library in Kaliningrad, but there is a chance that the record for it has not been put online. This is an area of my ongoing research. For more information about the Königsberg State and University Library and the history of the Gotthold estate's music collections, see Manfred Komorowski, "Das Schicksal der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Königsberg," *Bibliothek* 4, no. 2 (1980): 139–54.

[65] Manuscript of transcription from "Cantus Hebraicus" by Eduard Birnbaum, n.d., Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Mus. 77.4: "'Cantus Hebraicus,' Copie der 1. Psalms (nach den [illegible]-Psalmen mit metr. hebr. [illegible] auf die Königl. Bibliotheken zu Kbg. Befindl. Handschrift, welche wahrscheinlich von Joh. Clajus herrührt. (vgl. Müllers Katal.)." Clajus is

According to Joseph Mueller's catalog, the "Cantus Hebraicus" manuscript was part of the music collection of the estate of Friedrich August Gotthold in the Königsberg State and University Library, and it contained settings of Psalms 1–9, 23, 62, 88, and 130 and other Christian hymns with Hebrew and German texts. Mueller describes the Hebrew psalm settings as having a "Christian tinge"[66] and notes that "this collection constitutes a peculiar attempt to treat the Psalms in Hebrew in such a poetic way that they can be sung to familiar melodies."[67] These psalm settings and hymns were thus likely not aimed at a Jewish audience (although it is possible they could have been used in missions to the Jews), but may have been used for pedagogical purposes for Christians learning Hebrew.[68] This assumption is strengthened by the fact that the musical setting of Psalm 1 in Mus. 77.4 is also accompanied by what appear to be excerpts from an untitled treatise that explains the function of the te'amim. Birnbaum seems to have translated these excerpts from Latin into German, since the excerpt features Latin section headings and German text.[69] If the setting of

best known today for writing one of the first German grammar textbooks, but he also authored an elementary Hebrew grammar and a text that discussed Latin, Greek, and Hebrew poetry. While Clajus obviously had knowledge of Hebrew, there is no strong evidence to support Birnbaum's claim that the manuscript was Clajus's. Indeed, Joseph Mueller's catalog entry on "Cantus Hebraicus" from 1870 (which Birnbaum also cites in his note on the transcription) does not mention Clajus's name but only notes that a certain Johan Pastor edited the Hebrew and German texts of the Psalms. It is possible that Birnbaum had seen other manuscripts in Clajus's hand, which led to his identification of "Cantus Hebraicus" as Clajus's.

[66] Joseph Mueller, *Die musikalischen Schaetze der Koeniglichen- und Universitaets-Bibliothek zu Koenigsberg in Pr. aus dem Nachlasse Friedrich August Gotthold's* (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1870), 49: "christliche Färbung."

[67] Ibid.: "diese Sammlung bietet einen eigenthümlichen Versuch dar, die Psalmen in hebräischer Sprache so dichterisch zu behandeln, dass sie nach den bekannten Melodien gesungen werden können."

[68] John Romey's article "Polluted Soundscapes and Contrepoison in Sixteenth-Century France: The Sonic Warfare Leading to the First War of Religion," *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* 9, no. 1 (2023): 37–65, discusses how the Huguenots used psalm singing for polemical purposes and to inculcate followers with religious doctrine: "Huguenots memorized Psalms, yet Catholics heard psalmody as a sonic disturbance; both confessional groups repurposed the psalm melodies for more vehement polemics against their spiritual enemies. Psalm melodies therefore served as vehicles to memorize psalm verses, as pedagogical tools to teach religious doctrine, and as polemical weapons targeting perceived Protestant heresy and Catholic hypocrisy" (39). Like other Protestant sects, the Huguenots, including notably Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), maintained a strong interest in learning Hebrew for exegetical purposes. Since the tunes from the Genevan Psalter would have been familiar to them and were already used for pedagogical purposes, it is perhaps unsurprising that these tunes would have been used to help Christian Hebrew learners memorize versified versions of the Psalms in Hebrew. However, this would suggest that this manuscript that Birnbaum copied was of French origin, and thus it is highly unlikely that it would have been from the hand of Clajus, a German Lutheran (unless Clajus himself had made a copy from yet another unknown manuscript of French origin).

[69] The text does not correspond to any text on Hebrew grammar published by Clajus, nor is the text mentioned in Mueller's catalog entry. It is possible that Birnbaum's transcription of Psalm 1 was mistakenly cataloged together with this unknown excerpt from the untitled treatise (although this seems unlikely since the two items appear in the same notebook), or perhaps

Psalm 1 did in fact accompany the theoretical text, it would have had relevance to Birnbaum's research on the te'amim, and that simple reason would have explained why Birnbaum copied it.

What these two items share—and what accounts for their presence in this subcollection—is that each represents a distinct mode of Christian musical engagement with the Hebrew language that is not grounded in direct transmission from Jewish practitioners. Birnbaum likely recorded these settings for reasons similar to those that motivated his transcription of Reuchlin's four-part settings of the te'amim (discussed in the next section): he sought to record every example of Hebrew text set to music, whether it was composed by a Jew or a Christian or intended for a Jewish audience or Christian one. This would align with Birnbaum's proclivity to collect in a comprehensive, even universal manner. The history of Jewish music for him thus was not limited to the musical activities of Jews in the past and present but also encompassed the activities of Christians who engaged with the Hebrew language through musical means. Yet this very comprehensiveness is what gives the archive its counterhistorical force: the universalism of Birnbaum's gathering and the differentiating logic of his arrangement are two sides of a single archival practice, since only by collecting Christian and Jewish materials side by side could the distinctions among them be staged and made historically legible.

By transcribing and archiving these examples alongside authentic notations of the te'amim and records of Jewish cantillation practice, Birnbaum subjected them to the same documentary logic he applied to all his sources—but with an implicit classificatory effect. Within the Mus. 77 subcollection, their difference from the genuinely Jewish materials is not stated but enacted: they are placed in a context that makes their externality as pedagogical tools legible. This archival gesture points toward the broader purpose that the subcollection may have been designed to serve. Birnbaum's draft essay "Die hebräischen Accentuationssysteme und die Neumenforschung" called for a systematic study of the musical significance of the te'amim, one that could also illuminate the broader history of neume notation. Such a project would have required not only a catalog of authentic Jewish cantillation evidence, but also a critical account of the Christian sources that might erroneously be taken as evidence of Jewish musical practice. The case of Naumann demonstrates just how high the historiographical stakes of this misrepresentation were: Christian music historians had drawn on such settings to make sweeping claims about ancient Hebrew music and the stagnation of Jewish musical culture. To write against that tradition, Birnbaum first needed to map it—and that mapping required him to collect its artifacts.

Mueller's catalog simply omitted any mention of a theoretical text attached to the psalm settings in "Cantus Hebraicus."

In this light, the Kircher transcription and the Psalm 1 setting are not incidental curiosities but constitutive elements of a counterhistorical archive. By gathering Christian musical settings of Hebrew texts alongside Jewish cantillation notations, Birnbaum created a collection in which the two could be compared, distinguished, and historicized. The Christian settings became evidence not of Jewish musical practice but of a particular early-modern mode of Christian engagement with Hebrew that needed to be understood on its own terms. This was the same operation he performed at the bibliographical level in the "Literaturgeschichte," where he transformed Christian narratives of Hebrew music from normative authorities into historically situated testimonies subject to scrutiny. In the Mus. 77 subcollection, the same logic extends from texts to musical examples: the archive itself does the work of differentiation, positioning Christian-authored settings as historical objects rather than ethnographic evidence and, in doing so, clarifying the evidentiary ground on which a genuinely Jewish history of the te'amim could be built.

Reading Reuchlin against the Grain

Birnbaum's entry on sixteenth-century Christian Hebraist Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522) in the "Literaturgeschichte" and his transcriptions and translations of materials from Reuchlin's *De accentibus* (1518) exemplify how his interest in documenting Jewish music's intellectual history could coincide with his motivation to collect rare examples of Jewish music. He owned a copy of Reuchlin's *De accentibus* and likely used it as the exemplar for his transcription of the four-part settings of the te'amim (see Figure 12), as well as a German translation of the chapters of the treatise on music from book 3 (see Figure 13).[70] In the context of Birnbaum's "Literaturgeschichte" and archive more broadly, Reuchlin's work was objectified not only as an exemplar of sixteenth-century writings on the te'amim that had significant influence on subsequent early-modern accounts of the topic, but also as a source of information on sixteenth-century Ashkenazi cantillation practices.

[70] See Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II 4oH. 63(1).

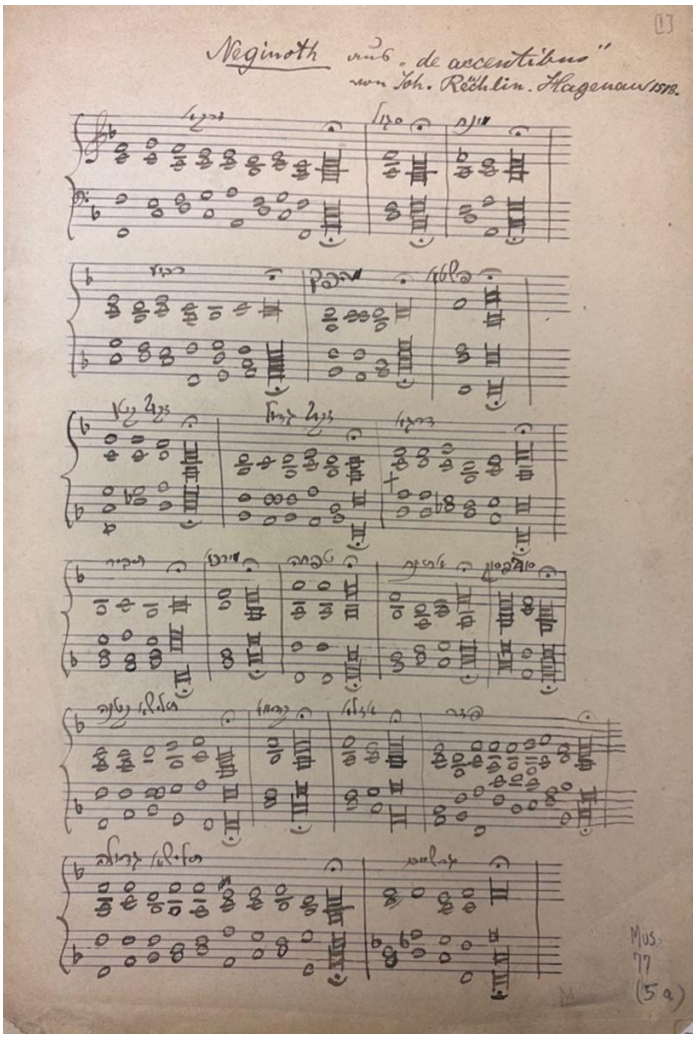


Figure 12. Birnbaum's transcription of the four-part settings of the te'amim from Reuchlin's *De accentibus*, Eduard Birnbaum Collection, Mus. 77(5a). Courtesy of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

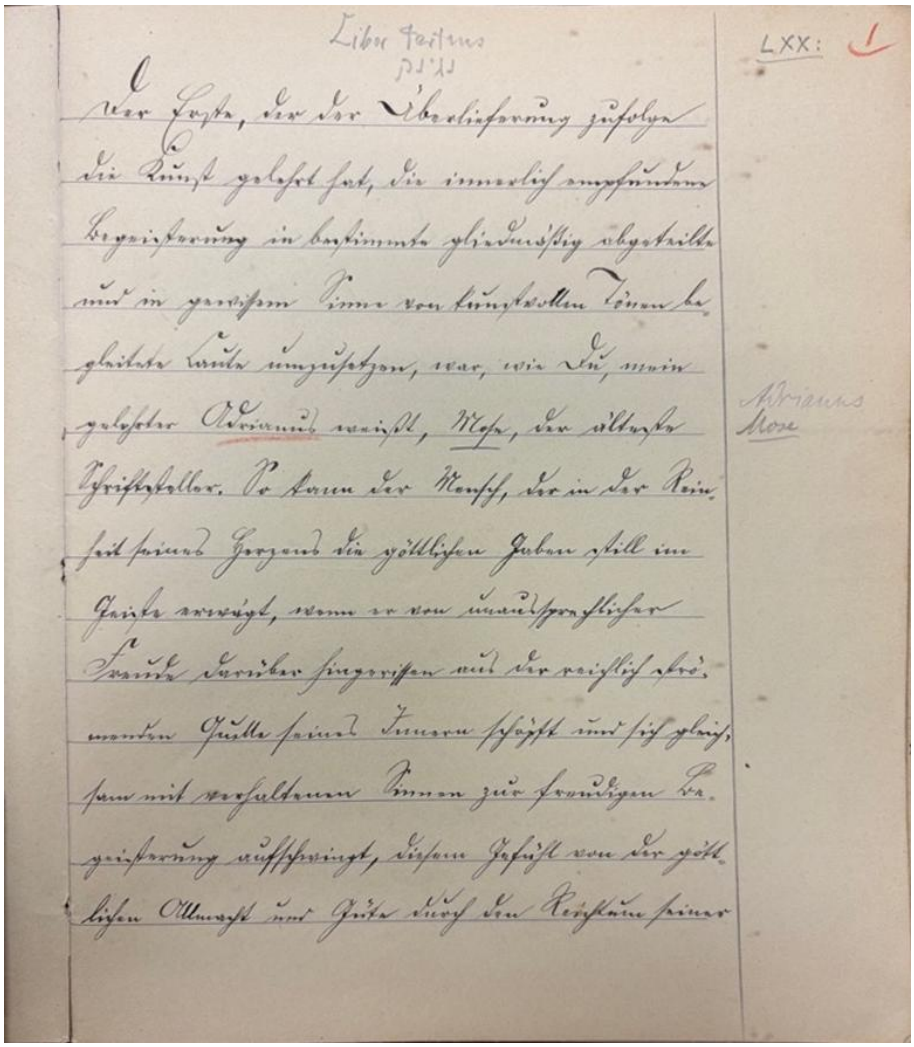


Figure 13. Birnbaum's German translation of book 3 of Reuchlin's *De accentibus*, Birnbaum Collection, Arch. II 4oH. 63(1). Courtesy of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

In this case, Birnbaum's engagement with Reuchlin was not counterhistorical in the sense that he aimed to critique Reuchlin, as he did Naumann. Rather, Birnbaum read Reuchlin "against the grain" in the sense that he recognized these notations of the te'amim provided insight not only into the role of music in the Hebrew pedagogy of Christian Hebraists, but also into sixteenth-century Jewish musical practice.[71] In doing so, Birnbaum was the first to anticipate the efforts of later scholars such as A. Z. Idelsohn, Hanoch Avenary, and Alexander Knapp (to name just a few), who also used Reuchlin

[71] In a similar vein, Birnbaum also recognized the value of Benedetto Marcello's transcriptions of melodies from the Venetian synagogue as early witnesses to Ashkenazi melodies and transcribed them in his archive. See Seroussi, "In Search of Jewish Musical Antiquity," 155–56, for more information.

as a historical source to analyze the sound and style of early-modern Western Ashkenazi cantillation.[72]

The humanist Johannes Reuchlin is best remembered today for his polemics against the efforts of Johann Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans of Cologne to destroy Hebrew books during the sixteenth century. Reuchlin, however, was also the author of two important grammatical treatises: *De rudimentis Hebraicis* (1506) and *De accentibus, et orthographia, linguae hebraicae* (1518). By authoring these treatises, Reuchlin participated in the growing wave of Christian Hebraist scholarship during the early-modern period,[73] which had prompted a new demand for Hebrew grammar textbooks in Latin and Hebrew-Latin dictionaries.[74] It was in these grammatical treatises that certain aspects of Jewish musical traditions were first discussed among Christian writers. Indeed, Reuchlin's *De accentibus* has been of special interest to Jewish music scholars because it contains the first printed examples of the te'amim notated in Western musical notation. Remarkably, the treatise also harmonizes the cantillation motifs in four parts (see Figure 14).

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[72] See for instance, Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929); Hanoch Avenary, *The Ashkenazi Tradition of Biblical Chant between 1500–1900: Documentation and Musical Analysis* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1978); and Alexander Knapp, "Ashkenazi Pentateuchal Chant: A Sixteenth-Century German-Christian Interpretation," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 6, no. 1 (2012): 23–69.

[73] During the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Christian humanists across Europe began to study the Hebrew language and Jewish scholarship in increasing numbers. The flourishing of Christian interest in Hebrew represents a lesser-known strand of the broader humanist interest in the revitalization of classical learning and the study of ancient cultures during the Renaissance. Christian Hebraist scholarship never reached the same levels of cultural influence as the revival of Greek and Latin literature. However, by the end of the seventeenth century, the Cistercian Carlo Giuseppe Imbonati was able to compile a list of an impressive 1,300 Christian authors who had written Latin treatises on the Hebrew language and Judaism or translated works from Hebrew to Latin in his *Bibliotheca latino-hebraica* (1694). The Protestant Reformation played a leading role in generating continued Christian interest in Hebrew. Martin Luther's doctrine of *sola scriptura* reoriented theological scholarship toward biblical exegesis and translation. Protestants used their Hebrew knowledge not only to read scripture in its original language and to support their exegeses, but also to engage in polemics with Catholic Hebraists and Jews. See Frank E. Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992) for a comprehensive account of Christian Hebraism.

[74] Most of these grammatical treatises were authored by Christians who had studied Hebrew with Jewish teachers or Jews who had converted to Christianity. These Hebrew instructors often utilized the treatises of the medieval grammarians and biblical commentators Moses Kimhi (d. 1190?) and David Kimhi (1160?–1235?) in their teaching. In turn, the Kimhis' grammars provided important models for Christians who adapted them for a Latin-reading audience.



Figure 14. Transcriptions and harmonization of te'amim in Johannes Reuchlin's *De accentibus, et orthographia, linguae Hebraicae* (Haguenau: in aedibus Thomae Anshelmi Badensis, 1518).

Reuchlin reports that these four-part settings were not of his own invention, but that "the priest Bossosthenius [Boeschenstein] has brought us this diatonic melody. [And] Christoph Schilling of Lucerne has made the harmony."[75] Victor Tunkel explains the process by which Christian Hebraists, such as Boeschenstein, may have recorded the cantillation motifs:

> It seems that [the Christian Hebraists] must have asked their Jewish informants to sing the music of each sign with its name. They staff-notated what they heard, later ordering the signs according to a *zarqa*-table which must have been shown to them; a process susceptible to distortion in informing, hearing and recording. We may assume this to have been the method, because had anyone gone into a synagogue service and notated what he heard, it would have appeared quite differently.[76]

In Jewish tradition, single readers cantillate the Bible, so Schilling's harmonization of the te'amim does not represent an indigenous musical practice of sixteenth-century German Jews,[77] but was more likely a pedagogical tool for Christians learning the te'amim. Indeed, Hanoch Avenary observes that

> Reuchlin is the only one to append the music notes for pedagogical-methodological reasons, charging the student with learning the tunes of the accents by rote, and then

[75] Reuchlin, as quoted in Knapp, "Ashkenazi Pentateuchal Chant," 32.
[76] Victor Tunkel, *The Music of the Hebrew Bible: The Western Ashkenazic Tradition* (London: Victor Tunkel, 2004), 18.
[77] As Hanoch Avenary notes, ". . . neither Reuchlin nor any other reliable source has ever claimed that part-singing of Biblical chant was found in real synagogue practice." Hanoch Avenary, "The Earliest Notation of Ashkenazi Bible Chant (Amman-Mss, ab. 1511)," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 26 (1975): 132–50, at 149.

> singing the appended exemplar verses to these tunes. These exercises were intended to train pupils to chant freely according to the accents.[78]

Knapp too speculates that the harmonization of the cantillation motifs was intended to "make the didactic process more enjoyable" for Christian students accustomed to singing from part-books.[79]

Many early-modern authors did not realize the pedagogical intent of these musical settings, however. In fact, these four-part settings of the te'amim were often cited or copied without attribution to Reuchlin as evidence of actual Jewish musical practice in grammar and music treatises throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Charles Burney, for instance, claims in his *General History* that

> the only Jews now on the globe, who have a regular musical establishment in their synagogue, are the Germans, who sing in parts; and these preserve some old melodies, or species of chants, which are thought to be very ancient.[80]

The French Hebraist Pierre Guarin and Johann Nikolaus Forkel (who sourced the four-part notations from Guarin)[81] both printed adaptations of the four-part settings from Reuchlin in their respective treatises *Grammatica hebraica et chaldaica* and *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (see Figures 15 and 16).[82] Following Burney, Forkel also claimed that the "German Jews are the only ones in whose synagogue polyphonic singing is still occasionally performed and can be performed."[83] However, Guarin's and Forkel's adaptations, like most early-modern adaptations from Reuchlin, appeared without attribution, and so the original source of the music became obscured.[84]

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[78] Hanoch Avenary, *The Ashkenazi Tradition of Biblical Chant between 1500–1900: Documentation and Musical Analysis* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1978), 15.
[79] Knapp, "Ashkenazi Pentateuchal Chant," 66–67.
[80] Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period, to Which is Prefixed, a Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients*, vol. 1 (London, 1776), 251.
[81] Notes and transcriptions from Guarin's *Grammatica* by Johann Nikolaus Forkel, n.d., Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Nachlass Johann Nikolaus Forkel, Mus. Ms. Autogr. Theor. J. N. Forkel 3, vol. 3, fols. 137–42.
[82] Athanasius Kircher, Padre Martini, and Charles Burney among others reproduce non-harmonized tables of the te'amim adapted from Reuchlin in their treatises *Musurgia universalis*, *Storia della musica*, and *A General History of Music,* respectively.
[83] Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, 1:166: "Daher sind die deutschen Juden die einzigen, in deren Synagogen noch bisweilen vielstimmig gesungen wird, und gesungen werden kann."
[84] Padre Martini is an exception to this because he does cite Reuchlin as a source (although he reproduces only the tenor line of the te'amim notations instead of the harmonized versions); see Giambattista Martini, *Storia della musica*, vol. 1 (Bologna: Lelio dalla Volpe, 1757), tavola VI, 424.



Figure 15. Excerpt of four-part settings of the te'amim in Guarin's *Grammatica hebraica et chaldaica* (Paris: Jacobi Collombat, 1726), 330–31 (from right to left).



Figure 16. Four-part setting of the te'amim in Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, vol. 1 (1788), 167.

Reuchlin's treatise was also omitted from early bibliographies of Hebrew music, such as those compiled by Forkel in 1788 and 1792, which further

concealed the source of the four-part settings.[85] Indeed, in his entry on Reuchlin in the "Literaturgeschichte," Birnbaum writes that "no music bibliographer has yet mentioned his work on Hebrew grammar, *De accentibus*, in which Reuchlin shared the musical notation of the te'amim based on Boeschenstein's model, which are also found in Kircher and other Hebraists who later treated this topic."[86] Remarkably, Birnbaum appears to have been the first modern scholar to recognize Reuchlin as the source of these harmonized settings.

Birnbaum's engagement with Reuchlin thus signals a significant shift in the way in which Jewish musical evidence from Christian sources was interpreted. For early-modern Christian writers who failed to recognize the pedagogical character of these four-part settings, they served as evidence that Ashkenazi Jews, unlike other Jewish communities, sang in parts. Sometimes the settings were also used to prove that harmony had not reached a very high level of development among modern Jews. For instance, Forkel remarked that "the beauty and purity of this harmony (as the reader can easily see himself) is so limited that the singing of the German Jews is no more edifying than it might have been without it."[87] If modern Jews sang only in imperfect harmony, as some authors like Forkel argued, it was unlikely that the ancient Hebrews made any significant achievements in harmony as other authors had claimed.

While Christian writers employed the four-part settings to make a point about the alleged shortcomings of modern and ancient Hebrew music, Birnbaum saw them differently. For Birnbaum, the significance of the settings of the te'amim from Reuchlin lay in their historical value as a witness to

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[85] Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (vol. 1, 1788) and *Allgemeine Litteratur der Musik: oder, Anleitung zur Kenntniß musikalischer Bücher, welche von den ältesten bis auf die neusten Zeiten bey den Griechen, Römern und den meisten neuern europäischen Nationen sind geschrieben worden* (Leipzig: Schwickert, 1792).

[86] Birnbaum, "Literaturgeschichte," vol. a: "Von keinem mus. Bibliographen ist bisher sein hebr. -grammatik. Werk "De Accentibus" (Hagenau 1518) erwähnt worden, in welchem R. die mus. Noten für die hebr. Acc. Nach Böschensteins Vorlage (s.d. - N. 25 S. 22) mitheilt, wie sie nachher bei Kircher u. anderen hebr. Grammatikern, die diesen Gegenstand behandeln, zu finden sind." This claim should be distinguished from one Birnbaum had already made in print. In the first of his "Briefe aus Königsberg," published in *Der Jüdische Kantor* in November 1883, he singled out the final music pages of *De accentibus* as the "key" to the oldest stratum of synagogue music, reading the tenor of Reuchlin's four-part settings as a witness to Ashkenazi cantillation. The letter does not, however, trace the harmonized settings reprinted by Guarin, Forkel, and others back to Reuchlin. When Birnbaum lists the authors who had printed tables of the accents—Kircher, Guarin, Forkel, Saalschütz, Delitzsch, and Jablonski among them—he cites the single-line table that Forkel had taken from Kircher (*Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, 1:154), not the four-part setting Forkel reprinted from Guarin (*Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, 1:167). See Eduard Birnbaum, "Briefe aus Königsberg," *Der Jüdische Kantor* 1883, no. 41 (16 November 1883): 333. The evidentiary reading of Reuchlin thus entered the cantorial press in 1883, but the attribution argument survives only in the "Literaturgeschichte" of the following year.

[87] Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, 1:166: "Uebrigens ist an Schönheit und Reinigkeit dieser Harmonie (wie der Leser Leicht selbst bemerken kann), so wenig zu denken, daß dadurch der Gesang der deutschen Juden um nichts erbaulicher wird, als er ohne dieselbe vielleicht seyn würde."

sixteenth-century Ashkenazi cantillation practice, which could be deduced from the tenor lines of the four-part settings.[88] Birnbaum was likely less interested in the question of what the settings could tell us about the aesthetic merit of Ashkenazi Jewish music than in the fact that they provided a historical record of Ashkenazi cantillation that could be linked to a specific time and place. Indeed, as discussed above, the Birnbaum Collection contains many sets of notes and transcriptions related to the te'amim, which suggests that Birnbaum was working on a project to document the history of notated examples of the te'amim as well as literature that dealt with them.[89]

By identifying Reuchlin as the source of the four-part settings so often copied without attribution in early-modern grammar and music treatises, Birnbaum filled in an important gap in the intellectual history of writings on the te'amim by linking the treatises of Kircher, Forkel, and others to the intellectual world of Reuchlin's sixteenth-century Christian Hebraism. Furthermore, by tracing a line from Forkel and Kircher back to Reuchlin, Birnbaum was among the first to demonstrate that Christian sources, although biased and often unreliable, could be read against the grain to recover knowledge of Jewish musical traditions—in this case, examples of sixteenth-century Ashkenazi cantillation.

Conclusion

The Eduard Birnbaum Collection has long been recognized as a major repository for the study of Jewish music, yet its significance for the intellectual history of the field has only begun to be explored. By foregrounding Birnbaum's engagement with Christian-authored writings on "Hebrew music," this article has sought to show that the collection is not only a storehouse of musical sources but also a site in which an emerging scholarly culture takes shape—one deeply marked by the sources, methods, and assumptions of both the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and late nineteenth-century *Musikwissenschaft*.

Examining Birnbaum's engagement with figures such as Emil Naumann, Athanasius Kircher, and Johannes Reuchlin, among others, reveals that he did not treat Christian authors as adversaries to be refuted from a distance. Instead, he approached their writings as historically situated testimonies that could be

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[88] Avenary, *The Ashkenazi Tradition of Biblical Chant*, 12.

[89] This was a project that A. Z. Idelsohn (1882–1938) would take up during the early twentieth century in his *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz* (10 vols.), in which he documented the cantillation traditions from Europe, Egypt, and Asia Minor, as Don Harrán notes in *In Search of Harmony: Hebrew and Humanist Elements in Sixteenth-Century Musical Thought* (Stuttgart: Hänssler-Verlag and American Institute of Musicology, 1988), 41. Idelsohn also included Reuchlin's notations (sourced from Birnbaum's copy) in a table entitled "Comparative table of accent motives for the intoning of the Pentateuch," in *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (New York: Schocken, 1967; first published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1929), 44–46.

excerpted, compared, and integrated into a broader narrative about Hebrew and Jewish music. His practice of copying, annotating, and cross-referencing these texts, and of embedding them within larger bibliographical projects such as the projected "Literaturgeschichte der hebräischen und synagogalen Musik," reflects the *musikwissenschaftlich* ethos of his time: a commitment to exhaustive documentation, critical philology, and the construction of long-range historical narratives from heterogeneous sources.

At the same time, the way Birnbaum reorganized these Christian materials within his archive points to a subtle but important shift in interpretive authority. By placing Christian treatises alongside Jewish writings, marking them with evaluative comments, and situating them within a chronology of scholarship on Hebrew and Jewish music, he repositioned them from normative external authorities to one set of voices among others in a multi-vocal history. It is in this sense that I have proposed the notion of "archival counterhistory": not as a programmatic stance explicitly articulated by Birnbaum, nor as an oppositional attack on Christian predecessors, but as a descriptive term for the way his archival and bibliographical labors quietly reframed the inherited discourse. Through the very acts of collecting, ordering, and contextualizing, he contributed to a gradual reconfiguration of who could speak authoritatively about Jewish music and on what evidentiary basis.

By tracing these processes in Birnbaum's archive, we gain a clearer sense of how Christian and Jewish, early-modern and modern, speculative and empirical strands were woven together in the formative decades of Jewish music research. Attending to this entanglement does not diminish the agency of Jewish scholars; on the contrary, it highlights their active role in transforming an existing constellation of sources and ideas into a new, more self-consciously Jewish scholarly discourse. Furthermore, the notion of archival counterhistory helps illuminate how this weaving took place at the level of the archive itself. In this respect, the Eduard Birnbaum Collection is not only a key resource for reconstructing the history of Jewish music; it is also an indispensable witness to the ways in which that history has been—and continues to be—imagined, contested, and rewritten.