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## MUSICAL NOTATION

REF. Nulman, Macy *CONCISE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF JEWISH MUSIC* McGraw-Hill (1975)

MUSICAL NOTATION is the writing and printing of visual symbols that make possible the reproduction of musical sounds.

The oldest form of notation is the **TE'AMIM \***  
First used during the period from C.E. 500 – 800.

**\*TE'AMIM:** Oldest term for biblical accentuation, also called *ta'ame mikra* (accents of Biblical verse) or *ta'ame hanegginot* (melodic accents). *Neginot* are also called *te'amim*. Although different systems of notation had existed, the Palestinian or Tiberian symbols, devised by AARON BEN ASHER and made up of hooks, dots and dashes placed above and sometimes below the consonants, became the standard code for melodizing in all Jewish communities. Prior to AARON BEN ASHER, **BEN NAPHTALI of BABYLONIA** had devised a system of notation by placing letters above the consonants; for example, the letter *zayin* denoted the *zakef* ("raising") and the letter *yud* stood for *yetiv* ("staying").

In general, the *te'amim* indicate a rough form of melodic contour and are only an aid to the memory of 'groups' of notes out of which all Biblical cantillation is composed.

Notations of synagogal chant were discovered in the Cairo Genizah about 1920, by Elkan Nathan Adler. The manuscript was written in neumatic notation ('neumes') & contained three liturgical chants:

*Mi'al har horev* – a eulogy to Moses;

*Va e'da'mah* – of which only a portion has been preserved; and

*Barukh ha-gever*.

In the University Library, Cambridge, England, there is a fragment containing 5 verses from the Bible and a portion of 'piyyut' with notation in neumes, by Obadiah the Norman proselyte. This would date +/- the year 1100.

The Hebrew Union College Library (U.S.A.) has got a manuscript of the "te'amim" of the Pentateuch written according to Johannes Boschenstein (a Catholic priest and Hebrew scholar). He lived from 1432 – 1536.

I would refer you to Macy Nulman's Concise Encyclopaedia of Jewish Music for further information of early printed music which has been found.

### First printed example of synagogue song:

The first printed example of synagogue song appeared in Venice in 1623, written by Solomon ROSSI and is called HASHIRIM ASHER LISHLOMO ( *Cantiques de Solomon Rossi* ). There is also an important collection of early synagogue melodies dating from 1744 - **The Hanoverian Compendium** - containing 302 melodies without text.

Although synagogue song has an ancient oral tradition, the move towards providing a modern PRINTED repertoire did not begin until about the year 1840. It was only in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that cantor-composers showed signs of musical knowledge and capabilities of notating compositions, and among the pioneers who compiled, arranged, composed, and printed works on a large scale, were Salomon SULZER in Vienna, Louis LEWANDOWSKI in Berlin, Samuel NAUMBOURG in Paris, Hirsch WEINTRAUB in Konigsberg, Moritz DEUTSCH in Breslau, and Israel Lazarus MOMBACH in London. Printing of music was undertaken mostly by synagogue composers of Central and Western Europe. The reason may have been their cultural environment and high standards of musicianship, as well as the fact that in these localities they were able to bear the costly process of music printing because of the munificence of a wealthy patron.

The oldest printed collection of Jewish folksong – dating back to 1727, was published in Furth and entitled *Simhat Hanefesh (Delight of the Soul)*. It was not until 1908 that Jewish music printing was begun on a large scale, under the auspices of the SOCIETY FOR JEWISH FOLK MUSIC. The Society for Jewish Folk Music was founded in St. Petersburg (Russia) in 1908 with the express purpose of amassing, arranging and performing Jewish folk music.