Maronite Music: History, Transmission, and Performance Practice

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In memory of Reverend Louis Hage

This essay discusses the music of the Maronite Church, a Christian church based in Lebanon. It provides an overview of the chants used in religious services and examines their transmission and performance practice. The Maronites have always faced challenges to maintain their identity and preserve their heritage while adapting to their cultural milieu. Their religious music reflects the dichotomy between safeguarding tradition and accepting contemporary trends. Since the late nineteenth century, Maronites looking for better opportunities and political freedom have increasingly immigrated to the New World, where they face new challenges to preserving their religious identity while assimilating to the culture of their new homeland. Therefore, this essay reaches beyond the traditional geographic boundaries of the Maronite Church in Lebanon to examine issues in the transmission of Maronite music in the diaspora.

Overview of the Maronite Church

The Maronite Church is a branch of the Syro-Antiochean Church and one of the earliest distinct eastern churches. The term *"Maronite"* derives from the monastery of Bayt Marūn (House of Maron) built in the fifth century

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in the valley of the Orontes, near Apameus, in northern Syria. Maronites believe that this monastery was built in honor of Saint Maron (d. 410), an anchorite[1] who lived on a mountain near Apameus; his austerity and miracles made him a celebrity.[2] His followers took part in the doctrinal discussions of the period, which led to their persecution by other Christian sects. In 517, three hundred fifty monks from the monastery of Saint Maron were massacred on their way to a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Simeon Stylites in the Syrian desert. Later persecutions at the hands of their religious adversaries, and Persian and Arab invaders of Syria in 611 and 634 respectively, forced them to migrate for refuge to the inaccessible Lebanese mountains. The great majority settled in Lebanon and developed as an independent religious community, in which secular and clerical powers were combined; some fled to Cyprus. Their final exodus into Mount Lebanon occurred during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Originally, the monastery of Bayt Marūn was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Antioch, one of the five great early patriarchates, the others being Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Rome. At the beginning of the seventh century, Anstasius II, the Patriarch of Antioch, was murdered. Persian and Arab invasions of Syria and further divisions in the Antiochean Church made the election of a new patriarch impossible. A century later, the Maronites chose to have their own patriarch, and elected Maronite bishop John Maron as their ecclesiastical leader. It was then, in effect, that the Maronite Church was born. The foundation of the Maronite patriarchate in the monastery of Saint Maron left a substantial imprint on the Maronite Church, which came to be identified by monastic spirituality and a monastic way of living (Ruhana 2003:8).

Currently, the Maronite Church has approximately four million members, about half of whom have emigrated, or descend from those who emigrated, to the Americas and Australia since the 1880s. The Maronite Church in Lebanon remains the mother church of Maronites worldwide, who, in return, attempt to preserve their religious heritage while adapting to the cultures of their new homelands. The Maronite Church is in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, is still presided over by a patriarch, and has about thirty bishops in Lebanon and the diaspora.

Music in the Maronite Church

Music plays an important role in the Maronite liturgy. Maronite chants and hymns constitute the bulk of the different services and rituals and contain the essence of Maronite theology and spirituality. The music in the Maronite

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Church is diverse, reflecting a long history and a continuous attempt to preserve and adapt. Louis Hage (1938-2010), a Maronite monk and musicologist, classifies the chants used in the Maronite liturgy into five different groups, "distinct in origin, nature, and significance": Syro-Maronite Chant, Syro-Maronite-Arabic Chant, Improvised Melodies, Personal or Original Melodies, and Foreign Melodies (2002: 209).

Syro-Maronite chants are believed to be as old as the Maronite Church. Their texts are in Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus and his disciples, and most of the tunes are "believed to be ancient, dating back to the first centuries of Christianity." I discuss this group in detail below. The second group, Syro-Maronite-Arabic Chant, consists of Arabic texts adapted to a "Syro-Maronite or originally Syro-Maronite melody" (Hage 2002: 213). The adaptation of Arabic texts to existing Syro-Maronite tunes started as early as the eighteenth century.[3] In the third group, Improvised Melodies, a cantor improvises and performs the melodies at specific places during a service. Improvisations are based on pre-composed tunes, which serve as a guideline to the cantor, who adds his own interpretation; or they are newly composed, giving the cantor the freedom to choose his own melodic development, rhythm, and style. However, even then, there may be some "unconscious association with some of the musical formulas that the cantor has memorized" (Hage 2002:215). This category shares similarities with other secular and sacred music cultures from the Middle East, where improvisation plays an important role. Personal or Original Melodies, the fourth category of chants in Hage's classification, consist of newly composed hymns based on liturgical or biblical texts, and written in different musical styles reflecting the composer's musical background and influences, whether Western, Arabic, Syriac, or a combination of any of these. This category and examples from different composition styles are discussed below. Finally, Foreign Melodies are melodies of Western or Arab origin adapted to liturgical texts in Arabic. Examples of adaptations of hymns of Western origin include "Ave Maria" by Franz Schubert and "Adeste Fideles" (known in the English-speaking world as "O Come All Ye Faithful.") Adaptations of melodies of Arab origin include the two songs "Marmar Zamānī" and "Yā Loru Ḥubbuki."

In this essay, I examine in detail the first and fourth groups of chants, Syro-Maronite Chant and Personal or Original Melodies, which I call "old repertoire" and "new repertoire" respectively, as well as issues related to their transmission and performance in Lebanon and North America.

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The "Old Repertoire" of Chant: Syro-Maronite Chant

Syro-Maronite chants are the oldest in the Maronite Church. They have a great affinity with the ancient sacred chants of the Syro-Antiochean churches (Syro-Catholic, Syro-Orthodox, Chaldean, Assyrian) and the traditional secular music of some Middle Eastern countries (Hage 1995:156). They constitute the essence of Maronite hymnody and are found in different offices, including the daily, festival, Holy Week, and funeral offices, and in the ritual (*Book of Benedictions*), sacramentary, pontifical, and mass.

The texts of the chants are ancient; some can be traced back to Saint Ephrem, in the fourth century (Hage 2004:59). Until the second half of the twentieth century they were exclusively in Syriac. After the Arab conquest of Syria, in the year 634, Arabic gradually replaced it as the common tongue in Syria and Lebanon, but it remained the official language of the Maronite liturgy until the second half of the twentieth century. The transition from Syriac to Arabic took place over a long period of time, during which Arabic was introduced into the liturgy. The early Arabic texts, written in *karshūni* (Arabic written with Syriac characters), were an exact translation of the original Syriac ones. It is difficult to determine when these texts were introduced; however, manuscripts from the fifteenth century contain readings in which *karshūni* readings parallel the Syriac readings. These translations dealt with texts in prose, such as prayers and readings, whereas the chants that constitute the bulk of the Maronite rituals and divine office[4] remained in Syriac only. From the eighteenth century on, chants written in Arabic and adapted to existing or newly composed Syriac tunes were introduced, but did not replace the Syro-Maronite chants, which remained in Syriac. Language barriers and the oral transmission of the chants resulted in the loss of much of the traditional repertoire. Currently, according to Hage, about 150 melodies have survived and are still in use.

The first attempt to transcribe a Syro-Maronite chant in Western notation was made in 1899 by Dom Jean Parisot, a French Benedictine musicologist. A few more transcriptions followed.[5] These were aimed not at replacing the oral transmission, but at preserving hymns that were fading from memory or becoming lost. In the 1970s, Hage proposed a transcription in Western notation based on a comparative study of all previous transcriptions, including one he had completed himself, in which he used recordings from different Maronite communities in Lebanon. In his transcription, he considered the regional variations and dialects in the interpretation of the chants, as well as the oral history, and developed a model that represented this type of music. Figure 1, an example of his comparative study, shows

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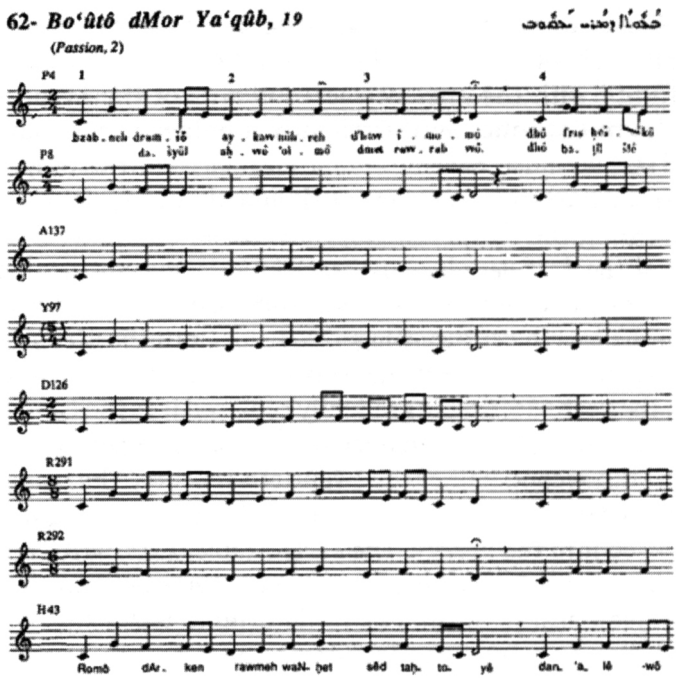


Figure 1. Example of Louis Hage's comparative study. *Monuments du chant maronite* 1990:82.

eight transcriptions of one verse: the first two done by Parisot (P stands for Parisot), and the last one by Hage.[6]

During the 1970s, following Vatican Council II (1962–1965) and the beginning of the civil war in Lebanon (1975–1990), Maronite monks and scholars from the University of Saint Esprit, Kaslik, including Hage himself, took the initiative of reforming the Maronite liturgy and chant. As a result, the chants were translated into Arabic according to the Syriac poetic meter and adapted to the same Syriac tunes. This process resulted in a revival of the chants, which became more accessible to congregations. Similar attempts at translating the Syriac texts into English are being undertaken in the United States and Australia. Hage's transcriptions were introduced during the Kaslik Reform.[7] Later, the Patriarchal Commission for Liturgical Affairs, a committee appointed by the Maronite Patriarchate, adopted these transcriptions in its liturgical reform.

Syro-Maronite chant is strophic. It follows a melody-type system, in which the same tune or melody can be adapted to other strophes having an identical or similar poetic meter. The model strophe, according to which the melodic meter and strophe must be regulated, is called *rīsh qolo* (*rīsh=rīsho*,

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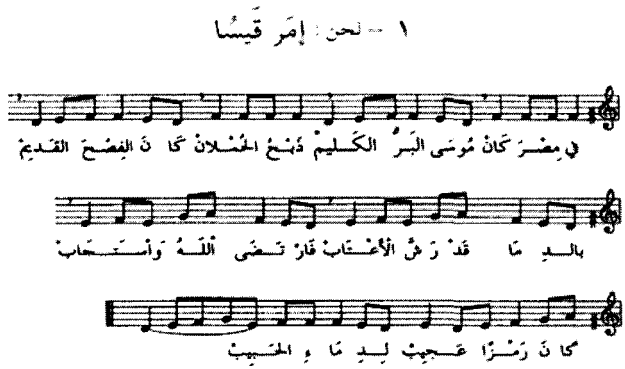


Figure 2. Example of Syro-Maronite chant. Kitāb al-Tarātīl al-Mārūniyyah, 2008:29. In this form of notation, the music and the text are written right to left.

'head' and *qolo* means 'voice, word, poem'). This term refers to the head of a poem, the model strophe, as with the Greek *(he)irmos*. The strophes are usually performed in alternation between the two groups or choirs of the congregation, but some chants have only one strophe (rarely two). The music[8] is made of short formulas juxtaposed with each other; the text is syllabic. Melodies move mainly stepwise generally within a range of a fourth or a fifth. The titles of the hymns can be classified into two groups: hymns are named either after the incipit of the *rīsh qolo* (e.g., *Bṣafro ṣalīDoniyēl*), or according to one of the following categories: the poetic meter on which the chant is based (e.g., *Bo'ūto dMori Ya'qūb*);[9] a liturgical function (*M'īrono* 'that awakens'); a didactic purpose (*Madrosho* 'lesson, education');[10] or a way of performance (*Lhūdoyo*, for example, solo, alternated). In addition, the title sometimes includes the place of the chant in the divine office; for instance, the title *lFīrmo* refers to a hymn that accompanies the rite of the incense (Hage 1999:76–77).

The "New Repertoire" of Chant: Original and Personal Compositions

During the twentieth century, a new repertoire of Maronite chant emerged and developed alongside the old. It consists of newly composed hymns. The texts are taken from the Bible or the Maronite liturgy. The commonest language in this new repertoire is Arabic, but some hymns are in Syriac. The musical style of these hymns varies and depends mainly on the composer's musical background and influences, whether Arabic, Western classical, Syriac, or even a combination of these styles. The hymns composed in Arabic musical style include microtones and Arab maqams. Figure 3 is an example

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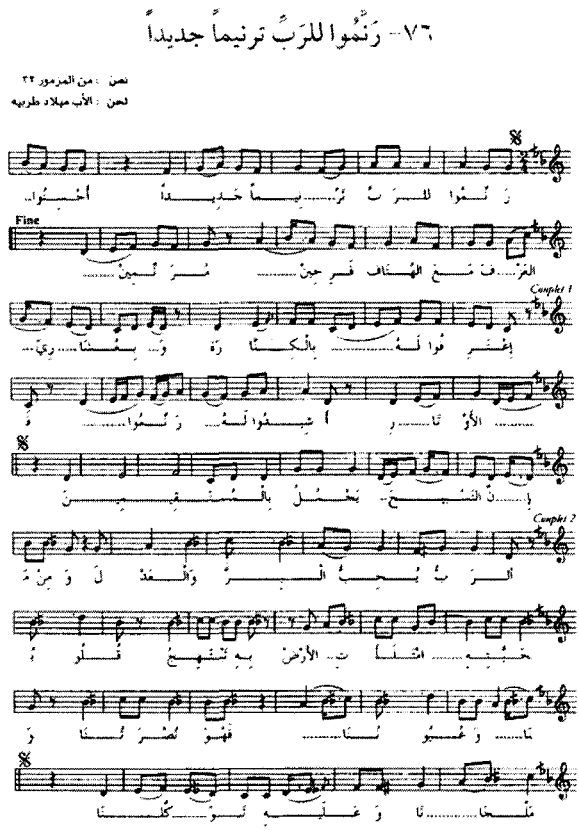


Figure 3. Rannimū lir-Rabbi "Sing to God." Example of Maronite chant in Arabic musical style. *Kitāb al-Tarātīl al-Mārūniyyah*, 2008:92.

of a hymn in Arabic musical style. It was composed by Fr. Milad Tarabay, a Maronite monk and composer. It is entitled *Rannimū lir-Rabbi* "Sing to God"[11] The text is based on Psalm 32.[12]

The hymns composed in Western classical music style include major and minor scales, modulation, cadences, and sometimes even harmonization. Figure 4 is an example of a Maronite hymn with Western classical music influence. The composer is Boulos al-Ashqar. A four-part harmony of the refrain was added by Fr. Albert Sherfane, a Maronite monk and composer. The text in Figure 4 is from Psalm 61[13] *Ila-Lahi Taskunu Nafsī* "My Soul Rests in God Alone."[14]

A third category in the new repertoire consists of hymns composed in the musical style of the old repertoire, including the use of short formulas,

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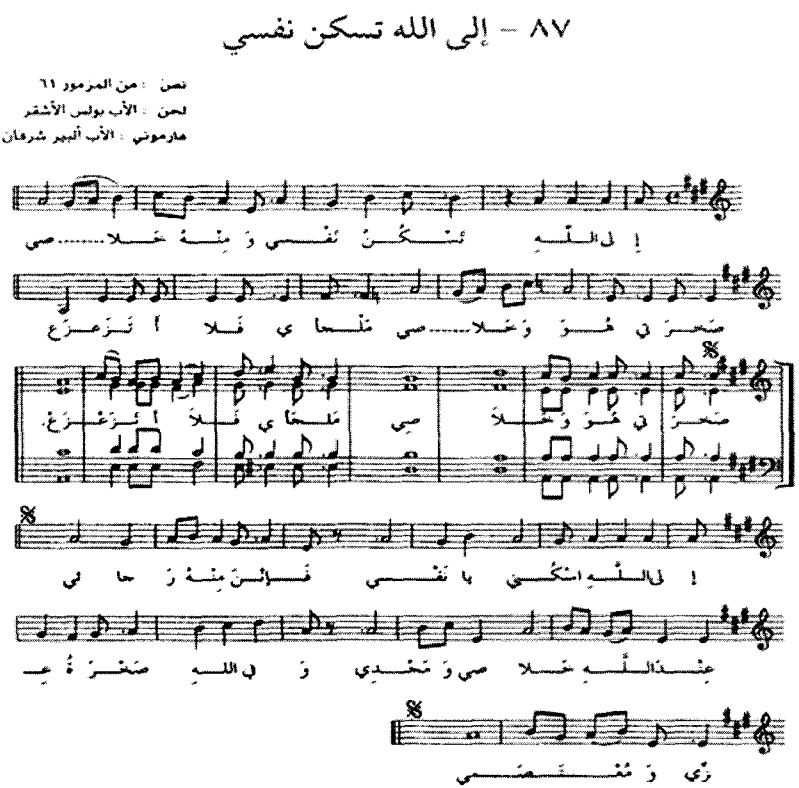


Figure 4. Ila-LahiTaskunu Nafsī "My Soul Rests in God alone." Example of Maronite chant in Western classical musical style. *Kitāb al-Tarātīl al-Mārūniyyah*, 2008:105.

narrow ranges, and conjoint movements. In Figure 5, the hymn *Thūqū Wanthurū* "Taste and See," composed by Fr. Louis Hage, shows Syriac music influence. The text is based on Psalms 33, 110, and 144.

The musical styles in the new repertoire reflect the Maronite Church's continuous attempts to adapt to its Arab cultural milieu while keeping its tradition alive and reaching out to the Western world. Proponents of Syro-Maronite chant and traditional Syriac music style argue that this repertoire embodies the identity of the Maronite Church and should be preserved. The supporters of the Arabic music style believe that the Maronites are part of the Arab world and that their music should reflect an Arab identity. Finally, advocates of the Western classical-music style argue that the Maronite Church is a branch of the Roman Catholic Church and therefore it should reach out to the Western world.

The new repertoire of Maronite hymns can be found in the mass and in paraliturgical events such as recitals of religious music, and in the media.

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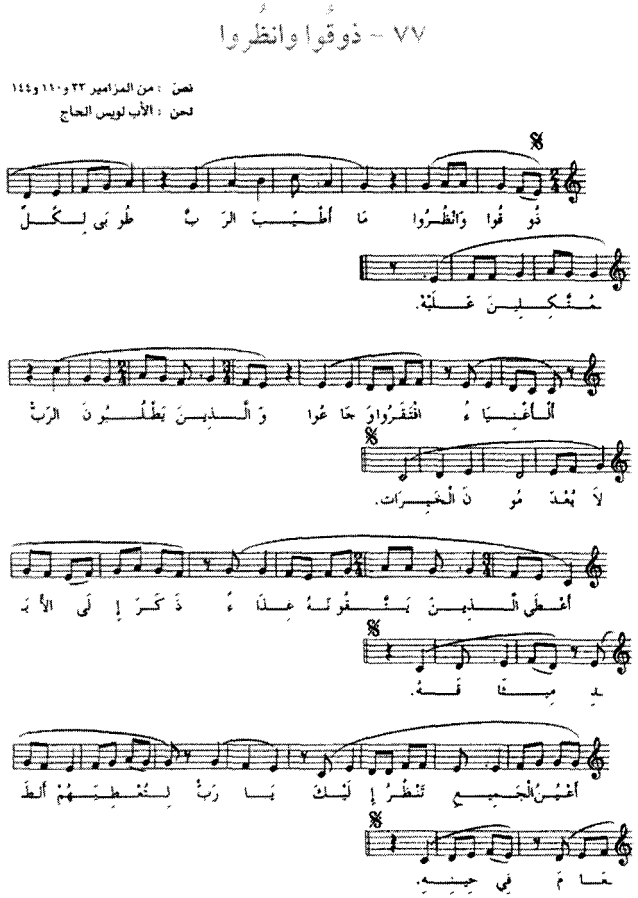


Figure 4. Figure 5. *Thūqū Wanthurū* "Taste and See." Example of Maronite chant in traditional Syro-Maronite musical style. *Kitāb al-Tarātīl al-Mārūniyyah*, 2008:93.

It did not, however, replace Syro-Maronite chant used in parts of the mass and in the different offices and rituals.

Since about the 1970s, the number of new hymns has increased sharply. Famous Lebanese composers have contributed to the repertoire. Mansour Rahbani (1925–2009), one of the two Rahbani Brothers and brother in-law of the Lebanese diva Fayruz, composed and adapted, in the year 2000, a mass according to the Maronite rite called *Al-Quddās al-Ilāhī*, "The Holy Mass." Ziad Rahbani (b. 1956), the nephew of Mansour and son of Fairuz, has composed new hymns and re-arranged older hymns including a hymn entitled *Ya Maryam l-bikru fuqti*, "O Mary, You Surpassed" for the Virgin Mary. Some of Ziad's religious compositions are performed often in the mass. Other

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composers who have written and performed Maronite hymns include Wadi' al-Ṣafi (b. 1921), Toufic Succar (b. 1922), and Zaki Nassif (1916–2004).

In 1984, the Maronite Lebanese Missionaries launched Ṣawt al-Maḥabba, "The Voice of Charity," the first Christian radio station in Lebanon and the Middle East, and in 1991, a group of lay people founded "Télé Lumière," the first and only indigenous Christian television channel in Lebanon and the Middle East. This was followed in 2003 and 2004, by the launching of a satellite station "Noursat" which now covers Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, North and South America, Canada, and Australia. The radio station can be accessed on the internet at www.radiocharity.org. The burgeoning of these media has resulted in a greater need for hymns and religious songs that will help convey the message of the church.[15] Lately, many hymns are being produced in video clips, thus showing another strategy the TV station is employing in reaching out to the viewers.

Maronite Music in North America

Maronite emigration from Lebanon and Syria started during the second half of the nineteenth century, in particular during the 1880s and 1890s. Emigrants sought opportunities in the United States, South America, Australia, and parts of the African continent. Before then, Maronite emigration had flowed to Egypt because of its proximity and the commonality of language (Labaki 1993:50). Emigration increased after about 1990. Between 1890 and 1920, more than one-third of the peasants of Mount Lebanon left their villages and moved to the Americas (Khater 2001:53–70). Lebanese emigration to the United States dropped after 1921 because of tighter immigration laws, but increased again after World War II because of lack of employment opportunities in Lebanon, and after 1975 because of the civil war (Labaki 1993:59–61).

The early Maronite immigrants worked as peddlers in villages and mining camps. Because of the nature of their work, they were scattered all over the United States. Their highest concentration was in industrial areas, especially in New England and the Middle Atlantic states (Labaki 1993:61). In their new home country, they have sought to preserve their religious traditions while adapting to their new lifestyles and customs. Their first places of worship were the local Latin churches. Whenever they could obtain a priest, they established their own parishes. Until 1966, these parishes were under the jurisdiction of the Latin ordinaries. Maronite Chorbishop Seely Beggiani notes that by the beginning of World War I, at least twenty-two permanent Maronite parishes had been established in the United States (Beggiani 2003: 79).

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Syriac Version	Arabic Version	English Version
'Aniḥ, Moryo, nafshē d 'abdokh 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	'Ariḥ, yā rabbi, 'abdaka 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Refresh, O Lord, your servant's soul 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
'am qadishē dashfār qudmaykh. 1 2 34 5 6 7 8	bayna l'abrāri ṣ-ṣāliḥīn 1 2 3 456 78	with all the saints who please your will. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Bhoy malkūtō malyāt tūbē 1 2 34 5 6 78	'Afsiḥ lahu fī mulkika 1 2 34 56 78	May they rejoice with your elect 1 2 34 5 6 78
Nerwāz tamōn 'am naṣīḥē. 1 2 34 5 678	Farriḥhu bayna th-thāfirīn. 1 2 3 4 5 6 78	at that great feast you set for them. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Figure 6. A comparison of the metric structure of Syriac, Arabic, and English versions of a Syro-Maronite chant from the funeral liturgy.

The Maronite Church in the United States has played a major role in uniting Maronite immigrants and helping them retain their traditions. Maronites in the United States express through their church not only their religious identity, but also their social and national identities. Early communities consisted mainly of immigrants from the same village in Lebanon. They often settled in the same neighborhood, where they formed close-knit communities and tended to re-invent their village. These communities consist today of third-and fourth-generation immigrants, with only a few newcomers from Lebanon. Since around the second half of the twentieth century, new communities have been formed by new waves of immigrants where first-and-second generation immigrants are mainly found. As shown below, the makeup of each community influences, to some extent, the choice made in liturgical practices, including the use of language (Arabic, Syriac, English), the importation of new hymns from Lebanon, and the borrowing of hymns from other churches.

The Maronite Church in the United States follows the liturgical recommendations of the mother church in Lebanon and uses the liturgical books endorsed by the Maronite Patriarchate. In old parishes, English is used predominantly, whereas in parishes with a constant flow of new immigrants, both languages are used selectively, with the Arabic language predominant. The main challenge is in the hymns. Third-and-fourth generation immigrants and non-Arab descendants cannot fully participate in hymns in Arabic and

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Syriac. A few attempts have been employed to translate the texts into English according to the Syriac poetic meters and tunes, using the liturgical reform of Kaslik as a model. The first attempt was made in the 1980s at the University of Notre Dame, in Indiana, by Joseph Amar, a Maronite priest and expert in Syriac and English languages and in Maronite liturgy and theology. His translations, however, did not catch church leaders' attention. Later attempts were made by Geoffrey Abdallah, a Maronite priest and composer in Australia. Currently, a commission appointed by the two dioceses in the United States and known as the Maronite Inter-Eparchial Music Commission, is adapting the old repertoire of chants from Arabic to English. The work is still in its preliminary stages and under experimentation. Figure 6 shows a Syro-Maronite chant translated into Arabic and English according to the Syriac poetic meter and the original Syriac tune. The English adaptation was done by Amar.

In addition to the old repertoire, hymns from the new repertoire are being imported from Lebanon. These hymns are being used mainly in new parishes; older communities feel a need for hymns in English. Currently, the main source for Maronite hymns in English is a hymnal called *Cedars of Lebanon*, composed and adapted by Msgr. Mansour Labaki, a Maronite clergyman and composer. He composed the hymns in Arabic, and then he translated them into English. Some are based on Syro-Maronite tunes; others are his original compositions. The texts are based on psalms, biblical texts, and Labaki's own writings. In the introduction to the hymnal, Labaki divides the hymns into three categories: traditional Maronite hymns, spiritual songs composed originally in Arabic and French, and "a popular music of the psalms." His book may have filled a gap in the chant repertoire, but there remains a need for more hymns in English. In old parishes,[16] hymns in English are sometimes borrowed from the Roman Catholic Church to fill the need in the mass (Nahal 2010).

Transmission

Until the second half of the twentieth century, Maronite chant was transmitted orally, passed down to new generations through practice. In the monasteries, older monks and priests transmitted the repertoire as faithfully as possible to the younger ones, entrusting them to keep it as authentic as possible. The old liturgical books and manuscripts did not contain any music notation; instead, they listed the names of the tunes. The simplicity of the chants made them easy to memorize. The early transcriptions of the old repertoire in Western notation were aimed not at replacing the oral transmission, but at keeping the chants from being lost or forgotten because

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of language barriers. Historically, the Maronite community was active in the liturgical and paraliturgical activities in the church and in the level of participation in the prayers. Jerome Dandini, during his apostolic mission in 1596, had noted the Maronite laity's participation in prayers: he wrote that clergy and lay people gathered at midnight to pray and sing (Dandini 1675:105). Similarly, Jean de la Roque, who visited Lebanon in 1688, witnessed the almost unanimous participation of the faithful in the recitation of the divine office:

> They do not content themselves with saying long communal prayers at night. They go back to church at midnight because the next day is a Sunday, and they sing the Office in Syriac for two hours. At dawn, they go back to church to continue the Office.[17] (De La Roque 1722: 205)

The level of participation diminished when the continuous use of Syriac in the liturgy prevented the Arabic-speaking congregation from taking an active part in the liturgy. Lately, the community's attendance at the services has further decreased, reflecting changes in lifestyles and occupations among the faithful.

The new liturgical books that were published following the Kaslik Reform, and all the recent publications by the Patriarchal Commission for Liturgical Affairs, contain music notation of the chants, the notation devised by Fr. Hage. However, most learning and transmission of chants old and new still occurs orally. In 2008, the liturgical commission published the hymnal *Kitāb al-Tarātīl al-Mārūnīyyah biḥasab Ṭaqs al-Kanissah al-Inṭakiyyah al-Suryaniyyah al-Mārūnīyyah* (The Book of the Maronite Hymns According to the Rite of the Antiochean Syro-Maronite Church). It consists of four sections: Syro-Maronite chants, a selection of psalms, varied Maronite hymns, and hymns dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Sections two through four consist of hymns composed in the musical styles mentioned above and by a great number of composers, thus giving the choir directors and the priests a generous selection of hymns.

The same oral transmission of Maronite music is prevalent among the Maronite diaspora. Young people and new parishioners learn the repertoire through listening and participating. Choirs are established in each parish, but the congregation's participation is always expected and encouraged. The Arabic and Syriac texts are often written in English phonetics to allow non-Arabic readers to take an active part in the service. Figure 7 is an example of the English transliteration of a Syro-Maronite hymn and its literal translation in English.[18]

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Tune: LMaryam Yoldāt Āloho

Syriac Version	Arabic Version	English Translation
Halelūyā	**Halleluya**	**Alleluia**
LMaryam yoldāt Āloho nhē Dūkhrono	Li-wālidati l-Lahi l-'Ummi l-'Athrā'	To Mary, Mother of God, may remembrance be done,
Wlanbīyē shlīḥē wsohdē wkīnē wkohnē	l-'Anbīyyā' i wa r-rusli wa shshshuhadā	the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, the just, and the priests,
Walkhūlhūn yaldeh d'idto men dor ldor	wal-khuddām-il-kahana jawq-il-'abrār	and of all the children of the church, from one generation to another
Wa'damo l'olam 'olmīn āmīn wamīn.	kulli 'awlād-il-bī'a nuḥyī t-tathkār.	and until the eternity amen and amen.

Figure 7. An English phonetic transliteration and translation of Syriac and Arabic texts.

Performance Practice

The oral transmission of Maronite chant has caused changes in its performance practice. Hage's comparative study reveals regional variations (Hage 1990). It may be argued that his transcriptions resulted in some kind of "crystallization" of the tradition, but the transcriptions contributed to the safeguarding and preservation of the Maronite heritage.

Traditionally, Maronite chant was performed *a cappella*, with the exception of percussion instruments used during processions on solemn occasions, such as Christmas and Easter. These instruments are the *nāqūs*,[19] double cymbals, large cymbal, and *marwahah* (pl., *marāwih*).[20] Following the Kaslik reform in the 1970s, melodic musical instruments were introduced into the mass. These varied between Western-derived instruments, such as the keyboard and the organ, and Arabic instruments, including the *nay*,[21] the *qānūn*,[22] the *'ūd*,[23] and the *kamanjah*.[24] The use of musical instruments has become common in the Maronite Church, especially during the mass.

The introduction of musical instruments into the liturgical service had two purposes: "the traditional melodies, due to their long oral transmission, had become monotone and sounded harsh. We introduced the musical instruments to help the faithful appreciate the music and to support the human voice" (Hage 2007). Nevertheless, the use of musical instruments in the church does not always fulfill its original role: instruments have sometime become tools to display musicians' virtuosity. Hage expressed his

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dismay at later developments: "When we introduced the musical instruments into the service, we had control over their use. Things changed later on, and now I regret having done that because the service has become secularized and has lost its piety and sacredness" (Hage 2007).

The use of the musical instruments in the mass has eased the learning of the new repertoire and enhanced the music performance, especially considering the sacredness of the music; however, it has altered the performance of the old repertoire. When accompanied by a tempered instrument, such as the organ or the harmonium, the chants are being performed according to the diatonic scale. Instrumentalists and vocalists tend to add harmony, which further alters the chants. In contrast, when Arabic instruments are performing, some notes, especially the "E" and the "B" are played as neutrals. Hage defends the use of different intonations in the performance of the chants, and maintains that Syro-Maronite chant is "hybrid" and can be performed in either scale (Hage 2004).

Conclusion

Music in the Maronite Church reflects longstanding efforts to adapt to social and cultural realities while preserving a respected heritage. Adaptation of the liturgy to the spoken languages of the faithful has helped revive the old chants and assured their continued use, even in diasporic communities. Similarly, the introduction of new hymns from the new repertoire to the mass has helped create a contemporary image of the church, and has drawn young people to participate more in the mass and to pray in a musical style they can relate to. In 2005, the liturgical commission published a reformed version of the mass with a decree issued by the Maronite Patriarch ordering the new version to be used by all Maronite parishes in Lebanon and the diaspora. In the reformed version, the first half of the service (Liturgy of the Word, Prayer of the Incense, Scripture readings) consists of hymns from the old repertoire, and the second half (Breaking of the Bread, Communion, After Communion, Dismissal) gives choir directors and priests in each parish the freedom to choose hymns from the new repertoire, reflecting the liturgical cycle and the religious occasion. The mass in its reformed version shows ambivalence of the church in attempting to preserve its past while adapting to the present.

The Maronite Church in Lebanon has largely succeeded in maintaining its liturgical identity through the revival of the old repertoire of chants, but in the diaspora it is struggling to maintain this identity. In communities consisting mainly of new immigrants, the mass is celebrated in Arabic, with some prayers and readings in English. The Scripture readings and the

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Gospel are always read in Arabic, followed by their English translations; in older communities, where the mass is celebrated only in English,[25] Maronite hymns in English are scarce. To fill the need, hymns from the Roman Catholic Church are being borrowed. Even in the new communities, tension arises between newcomers and young American-born Maronites, who rarely get the opportunity to learn Arabic and therefore have difficulties praying in a language they do not understand. Church leaders, aware of this inconvenience, are trying to impose the use of English in the mass. The main issue remains the absence of a suitable repertoire of hymns in English. Individual efforts that have been employed during the past few decades have not been entirely successful.

Current liturgical practice among the Maronite communities in the United States shows the importance of the old repertoire of chants in maintaining liturgical and cultural identity. Discussing the different theoretical approaches to the notion of "tradition," scholar Catherine Bell notes that tradition exists "because it is constantly produced and reproduced, pruned for a clear profile, and softened to absorb revitalizing elements" (Bell 1992:123). It is this constant production and reproduction of Maronite tradition that has assured its continuity.

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End Notes

[1]An anchorite is a person who lives in seclusion, usually for religious reasons.

[2]For more information about Saint Maron and the origins of the Maronites, see De Ghantuz Cubbe (2001), Dib 1971, Khalifé-Hachem 2001, Naaman 1987, Ruhana 2003, Tayah 1987. For more information on the history of the Maronite Church, see Moufarrej 2009.

[3]For more information on this group, see Hage 2002:213-214.

[4]The divine office is the canonical hours of daily prayer (outside the mass).

[5]For a complete description and analysis of the transcriptions of Maronite chant in Western notation, see Hage 1972, vol. 1; 1990, vols. 3A and 4A; 1991, vols. 3B and 4B, including one notation by Hage himself.

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[6]Letter A in the example refers to the music transcription provided by Father Boulos al-Ashqar, a Maronite monk and music scholar (Ashqar 1939); letter Y refers to the transcription of Father Ya'qūb Fayyad (Fayyad 1947); letter D refers to Father Marie-Andre Chaptini (Chaptini 1924); and letter R refers to Father Yussef al-Khoury, a Maronite monk and music scholar (Khoury 1992).

[7]For more information on the reform of the divine office in the Maronite Church, see Moufarrej 1999 and Moufarrej 2008.

[8]See Figure 2.

[9]The term *bo'ūto* refers to a poetic genre. It can be translated as 'prayer, supplication.' It is performed by two choirs in alternation. The term *dMori Ya'qūb* 'of Saint Jacob' indicates a poetic verse attributed to Jacob of Saroug having four syllables in each foot.

[10]A hymn attributed to St. Ephrem. The word *madrosho* (pl. *madroshe*) translates as 'lesson' or 'instruction'.

[11]This is the literal translation of the title and not the title of the psalm.

[12]In different versions of the Bible in English, including the *New American Bible*, this example is listed as Psalm 33 and not Psalm 32 as is the case in the Maronite hymnal book.

[13]Psalm 62 in the *New American Bible*.

[14]This is a literal translation of the title in Arabic and not the title of the psalm.

[15]*The goal of the newly founded Christian media is to reach out to all Christians* and non-Christians in the Middle East and in the diaspora; therefore it features religious programs and music from different Christian rites including, in addition to the Maronite rite, the Chaldean, Coptic, Melkite, Greek Orthodox, Syriac, and Latin rites.

[16]One example is Saint George Maronite Church in San Antonio, Texas.

[17]This is my own translation of the French version.

[18]The English translation and the English phonetics of the Syriac and Arabic versions are mine. Please note that the translation conforms more to the Syriac version than it does to the Arabic version.

[19]The *nāqūs* consists of two metallic hemispheres connected to a stem that serves as a handle: it is played with a metallic hemisphere. Its sound is reminiscent of that of the triangle.

[20]The *marwaha* consists of a metallic disk with small pieces of metal suspended from its rim: the disk is fixed to a wooden handle. Performance consists of gently agitating the handle, slowly raising and lowering it–which produces a light, rustling sound.

[21]The *nay* is an open-ended reed instrument. It is extremely expressive and capable of producing dynamic and tonal inflections.

[22]The *qānūn* is a flat, trapezoidal zither with twenty-six triple courses of strings.

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Its bridge rests on fish-skin segments that cover small square spaces on the wood top. The performer plucks the strings with short horn plectra, placed between the tip of each finger and a small metal ring.

[23]The *'ūd* is a type of lute, a pear-shaped, short-necked, fretless version, prevalent in Egypt and the Levant.

[24]The *kamanjah* is the Arabic name for the violin, which was adopted into Arab music during the second half of the nineteenth century, replacing the indigenous two-stringed fiddle, which had been prevalent in Egypt and was also called *kamanjah*.

[25]The prayers and the readings in the Maronite churches in the diaspora are all an exact translation of the Arabic texts used in Lebanon.

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