

A Fusion of Traditions – Liturgical Music in the Copenhagen Synagogue
by Jane Minke Rossen and Uri Shavit.
University Press of Southern Denmark 2006.

This is a delightful book of sure scholarship that will be of interest to all students of Jewish music, and anyone fascinated by the history of European Jewish communities. A Fusion of Traditions takes as its subject the music of the Orthodox community in Denmark, known colloquially as MT (Det Mosaiske Troessamfund), which has existed on its Krystalgade site since 1833.

The first half of the book is devoted to the history of the community in general and its musical influences in particular, as well as to the rabbis and cantors who have played such an influential role in both. Jane Minke Rossen writes engagingly and with just enough detail to fascinate rather than overwhelm the casual reader. The second half, by Uri Shavit, analyses in detail the musical traditions of the community through, inter alia, congregational, choir and cantorial singing, biblical cantillation and the blowing of the shofar. Many of the liturgical pieces that are considered are accompanied by their score and musical transcriptions are given of all the pieces on the accompanying CD, recorded in 1967, of the choir under Cantor Leo Grabowski.

This is a valuable contribution to the history of European Jewish music and great credit is owed to the authors for fulfilling their brief so well.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh