

tional passage in the second system after the second ending of the refrain. While the song may have accrued a new phrase in its middle section during the course of the century, it is also possible either that Idelsohn's informant sang the song differently or that the scholar omitted a phrase in his transcription. Another interpretation also presents itself: the Idelsohn transcription may in fact have been made directly from the Arab tune in circulation, not from the pizmon derived from it. The fact that "Attah El Kabbir" is not included among the "Aleppo-tunes" (pp. 254–474) transcribed and collected in volume 4 of Idelsohn's multi-volume collection, where a revision of the 1913 maqām article also appears,<sup>4</sup> gives this possibility greater weight. The difference in the form of the song represented in Idelsohn's transcription and the versions sung internationally in the late twentieth century could therefore suggest that the melody of the original Arab song may have been intentionally altered when it was set as a pizmon.

Whatever the source of Idelsohn's transcription, it supports the conclusion that the pizmon "Attah El Kabbir" was already circulating in Jerusalem by the first decade of this century (see figure 2.1). In most instances, pizmonim were composed using the melodies of popular (and familiar) Arab songs of their own period; thus if the Arab tune was widely known at that time, likely the pizmon was as well. The "Great Synagogue Aides of Aleppo Jews," founded in 1901, provided an obvious venue for the introduction and performance of popular pizmonim transmitted orally to Jerusalem by members of the Aleppo community who migrated there shortly before or during the time of Idelsohn's sojourn in that city. Certainly we have ample evidence that "Attah El Kabbir" was well established in Jerusalem throughout the rest of the century: this is confirmed by men who migrated from Aleppo to Jerusalem in the 1930s and 1940s.

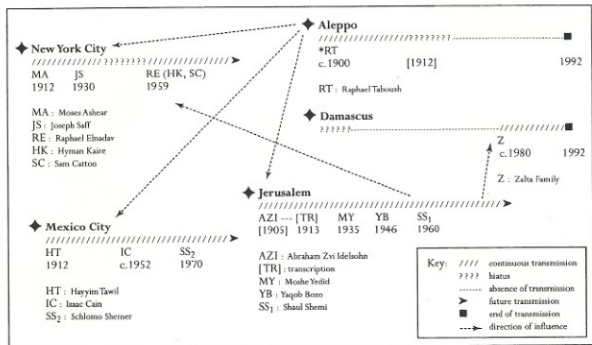


FIGURE 2.1. The transnational path of pizmon "Attah El Kabbir," c. 1900–1992.