

The Weaker the Accent, the Longer the Motif: Gradation in Oranese (West Algerian) Cantillation

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Abstract: This article examines the Torah (Pentateuch) recitation in the communities of Oran and West Algeria and concentrates on the relationship between the Masoretic accents and their musical realizations. Our findings suggest that the length of the musical motifs expresses the pausal strength gradation of the accents. Possible borrowing from the Moroccan liturgy and shared features with other Sephardic traditions resulting from sociocultural factors are also discussed. The analysis is based upon old recordings (from sound archives in Paris and Jerusalem), transcriptions in ethnomusicological studies and this author's own experience.

Keywords: Jewish Liturgy, Biblical cantillation, Masoretic Accents, Musical Motifs, West Algeria, Oran, borrowings, comparison with different traditions, Moroccan tradition, Sephardic traditions

Introduction¹

This study examines the Torah (Pentateuch) reading tradition of Oran and Western Algeria. A particular aspect of the music-accent relation is examined: the relation between the hierarchical organization of the disjunctive accents and the length of the musical motifs. Musicologists have already pointed out that in most Jewish traditions of Biblical chant the musical motifs of stronger disjunctive accents (*sof pasuq*, *zaqef*, etc.) are generally brief whereas those of weaker disjunctive accents (*gerish*, *pazer*, etc.) tend to be performed with long and ornamented melodies. In the Oranese Torah cantillation, this correlation is much more than a trend: it is a systemic principle that expresses the grammatical gradation of the disjunctive accents on the musical level. From this point of view, the Oranese tradition resembles the tradition of Algiers but differs from the Constantinian tradition which is more distant geographically and stylistically.

In addition, comparison with Moroccan and other Sephardic traditions shows how some sociocultural factors (common cultural background, interaction between communities, emigration) left an imprint on the musical interpretation of the Masoretic

¹ I gladly express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Hervé Roten, Director of the European Institute for Jewish Music, Paris, who helped me in my research especially by allowing me to use written and audio materials and pointing out the existence of Jean-Claude Syllamy's works held in the institute's collections. I am grateful to Dr. Gila Flam, Director of the National Sound Archives at the Jewish National Library, Jerusalem, as well as her staff who helped me to find relevant recordings. They are, of course, not responsible for the views expressed in this article.

accents. Also, the apparent diffusion of a musical motif from Morocco and shared melodic formulas with Sephardic traditions reflect the geography and history of Oran Jewry, closely related to the Moroccan communities but also part of the broader Sephardic world.

The Study of the Liturgical Music of Algerian Jewry

The religious musical heritage of Algerian Jewry has been, and still is, one of the most neglected fields in the study of Jewish music, as reflected in the very small number of studies that have been written until now, viz. Levy (1964), Seroussi and Karsenti (2002), Newman (2011), Seroussi and Marks (2011).² In comparison with the numerous studies devoted to the related Moroccan and Tunisian cantillations (see, among others, Idelsohn, 1929a, Lachmann 1940, Herzog 1963, Tasat 1993, Flender 1993, Kligman 2008, Thomas 2013), only three studies have been dedicated to the Algerian styles of Biblical intonation: Tayar (1985, 1987) and Aïm (2018).³

In her pioneering study, Tayar (1985) compares the three main traditions of Algeria, viz. Oran, Algiers and Constantine, and demonstrates that the underlying structure of their motifs is identical despite obvious musical features specific to each regional style.⁴ Although her conclusions are basically accurate, it should be noted that Tayar does not investigate all the accents. In addition, each style has its own variants of certain accent-motifs, an issue that Tayar overlooks. Moreover, when considering the relationship between accents and motifs, these traditions differ. Whereas the Algiers style displays an obvious parallel between the gradation of the disjunctive accents and the length of the musical motifs (see Aïm 2018), this is not the case of the Constantine style (see Aïm, in prep.). These differences between traditions justify that each tradition be treated independently from the others. For all these reasons, I will study in this paper only the tradition of Oran.

The Oranese Tradition of Torah (Pentateuch) Recitation

During the last decades of French Algeria, the district of Oran was the area most populated by Jews. After Oran, the major centers of the Jewish population were Tlemcen, Sidi-Bel-Abbès, Mascara, Mostaganem and Tahert.⁵ Since the independence of Algeria in 1962, Oranese and other Algerian traditions are perpetuated mostly in France and Israel.

² Unfortunately I have not been able to consult the work of Levy.

³ For an overview of Jewish cantillation, see Idelsohn (1929b) and Shiloah (1992).

⁴ The three main traditions are named according to the capital of each French Algeria district (these cities were also the most populated by Jews). Other Algerian traditions exist, for instance Mozabite from the region of the northern Sahara desert. The liturgical musical tradition of each of these communities has received various musical influences (from Spain, Italy, France, etc.) resulting from its particular history (see Seroussi and Karsenti 2002).

⁵ The arrival in 1391 of Jews fleeing mainly Aragon, Catalonia and Majorca from persecutions, revived the Jewish life in Western Algeria, which was previously severely affected by the exactions of the Almohads.

As in other Jewish traditions, the Oranese recitation of the Bible is based on two systems: one written (the Tiberian Masoretic accents, or *te'amim*, accepted by all of Jewry) and the other oral (the musical interpretation of the *te'amim* which is particular to each Jewish tradition). To the very same *ta'am* may correspond different melodies depending on the nature of the text (Torah, Prophets, Lamentations, etc.), the office (e.g. Shabbat, High Holidays), or the traditional occasion (e.g. learning at the *heder*, private study).

In the Oranese tradition, the *te'amim* of the Torah (Pentateuch) have four specific tunes for:

- the Shabbat and week-day mornings; this tune is the subject of our study;
- the public recitation of the Decalogue (*ta'am 'elyon*);
- the Song of the Sea (*shirat hayam*) and some other parts like the benediction of Jacob, the first ascent of Moses on Mount Sinai and the end of the setting up of the Tabernacle;⁶
- the education of the children in the *heder*.

The Masoretic Accents

As it is well known, the *te'amim* have a threefold function: to mark the position of the stressed syllable(s) of the words, to provide a guide to the syntax of the verses and to indicate the musical cadences for chant.⁷ They are classified as (1) the disjunctive accents that separate words or phrases; and (2) the conjunctive accents that bind words or phrases together.

Generally, the disjunctive accents are ranked into four levels which indicate their relative delimiting pausal strength. This classification, presented in Table 1, ranks the accents from strongest (level I) to weakest (level IV).⁸ Sometimes, under certain circumstances, some regular accents are replaced by substitute accents.⁹ Table 1 presents the substitute accents alongside their respective regular accent (an accent may have several substitutes).

Among these migrants were famous Torah scholars such as Rabbi Ephraim Enkaoua, *the Rab*, (d. 1442) of Tlemcen and the revered *Hakhme Hasidra* of Mostaganem. A century later, in 1492 and the following years, new Iberian refugees consolidated the Jewish communities (Bel-Ange 1990, Chouraqui 1998, Marciano 2002).

⁶ From Ex 40:19 to 40:32 (that is, the verses preceding the end of the setting up of the Tabernacle), there is also another specific tune for the sentence 'as the Lord had commanded Moses'.

⁷ Rules for the Masoretic accents are to be found, among others, in Wickes (1970) and Price (1990). Hierarchical relations between disjunctive accents of the same level exist but are disregarded here as they are of no relevance for our study: this hierarchy is not reflected in the musical structure of the motifs.

⁸ This classification has been criticized by Wickes (1970: vol. I, 11), for the reason that, from the strict point of view of the syntax of the sentences, the delimiting strength of the disjunctives is relative. Yet, as Price (1990: 27, note 5) has pointed out, "as far as the syntax laws of the accents themselves are concerned, the hierarchy is absolute".

⁹ See Wickes (1970) and Price (1990) for a comprehensive description of the rules of substitution. Under particular circumstances, some disjunctive accent marks may also be replaced by conjunctive ones. For the sake of clarity, rare substitute accents are not set out in the table; they will be examined later in the paper.

Table 1. Disjunctive accents (Ashkenazic names of the accents are given in italics when they differ from Algerian Sephardic names)¹⁰

Level	Accent	Substitute
I	sof pasuq <i>siluq</i> atnah <i>etnahta</i>	sof aliya
II	tarḥa <i>tīpha</i> zaqef qaton	tarḥa before sof aliya <i>tīpha before sof aliya</i> zaqef gadol segolta
III	qadma <i>pashta</i> tevir ravi'a	tere qadmin <i>shene pashtin</i> zarqa yetiv
IV	(azla)-gerish (<i>azla</i>)- <i>qadma</i> talsa <i>telisha gedola</i> paseq <i>legarme</i>	shene gereshin <i>gershaym</i> gerish pazer gadol <i>pazer</i>

In almost all Jewish traditions, many discrepancies appear when comparing the accent marks with their respective melodic patterns.

On the one hand, an accent may be sung with more than one motif. In the Oranese Torah cantillation, specific cadences are used for *tarḥa* and *sof pasuq* (called in this case *sof aliya*) at the end of each *aliya* and for *gerish* when it is not preceded by *azla* (a conjunctive accent).

On the other hand, distinct accents may share the same motif. In the tradition of Oran, this is the case, for instance, of *telisha gedola* (a disjunctive accent) and *telisha qetana* (a conjunctive accent) which also share the same traditional name, viz. *talsa*, and almost the same graphic symbol.

Yet, beyond these discrepancies, a trend is found in most Jewish communities: strong level I and II disjunctive accents (*sof pasuq*, *zaqef*, etc.) tend to be sung with a few notes whereas weak level III and especially IV disjunctive accents (*ravi'a*, *gerish*, etc.) tend to be interpreted with long and embellished melodies (Herzog 1963: 5, Jacobson 2013: 279). The Oranese cantillation for the Shabbat and week-day mornings displays the same

¹⁰ Our transcription does not aim to represent the phonetics of Biblical Hebrew or the pronunciation of Hebrew by our informants. On the traditional pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew among Oranese Jews, see Bargès (1848) and Bar-Asher (1992).

trend. However, this trend is much more pronounced in the Oran tradition, to the point that it reveals an organized musical distinction between each of the four levels.¹¹

To demonstrate this point, I shall now proceed to examine the performances of representative readers of the Oranese tradition. Note that all these readers were born and educated in Algeria. Evidence is based upon audio documents (mostly recorded by musicologists) and the musical transcriptions of Tayar (1985, 1987). Further, these data are supported by this author's own long experience with the Oran style of Torah cantillation.¹²

Rabbi Meir Zini

The first recordings considered, viz. Zini (1966a, 1966b), are from the Israelite Consistory of Paris. I have no information on the circumstances in which they were realized. They are now included in the collections of the National Sound Archives from the Jewish National University Library in Jerusalem. They contain Biblical cantillations, a *zarqa*-table reading (the traditional order of the accents recited for learning purposes) and other liturgical pieces performed by Chief Rabbi Meir Zini (1921-2012).¹³ Rabbi Zini was the rabbi of Tahert¹⁴ and the rabbi to the Oran diaspora in Paris.¹⁵

The recordings of Rabbi Zini, like the other recordings examined below, present the main characteristics of the Sephardic and Oriental cantillations. Each musical motif is always recognizable. However, there is a great disparity between the performances (as well as between one reader and another). For almost each motif, variations in tempo, rhythm, pitch, tone and length (number of notes) occur continuously. Thus, in all the analytical tables that follow, the various numbers of notes that make up each motif are given after the name of the accent.¹⁶ For each level, the two extreme values of length are presented (but the exceptional motifs, in bold in the table, are not taken into account).

¹¹ Other aspects of the music-accent relation are examined in Weil (1995), Mashiah and Sharvit (2002), and Kleiner (2019). I plan to investigate the conjunctive accents in another study. Basically, the Oranese conjunctives have their own melodies or are embedded musically in the motif of the following (disjunctive or conjunctive) accent.

¹² This author has been educated in his youth according to the Oranese tradition by instructors born and educated in Algeria. He is also familiar with the Oran style of cantillation by his participation in synagogue services over the years.

¹³ Readings with the regular Shabbat tune are: Ex 10:1-3, Gen 1:1-5, 2:1-3 and a *zarqa*-table.

¹⁴ Tahert is the city where Rabbi Judah ibn Qoraish lived (tenth century). His famous letter, the '*Risalah*', warns the Jews of Fez not to neglect the study of the *targumim* and the Aramaic language; it is also the earliest statement of the genetic relationship between Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic.

¹⁵ Although of Moroccan origin, the Zini family includes many rabbis heavily involved in preserving the liturgy and traditions of Algerian Jewry. The brother of Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Shimon Zini (1923-2002) was the very last Chief Rabbi of Algeria after Algeria gained its independence, from 1962 to 1970 (Rabbi David Ashkenazi was the last Chief Rabbi of French Algeria, that is until 1962). The son of Rabbi Shimon, Rabbi Shelomo Zini, is the spiritual leader and rabbi to the Oran diaspora in Paris. His other son, Rabbi Rahamim Eliyahu Zini, is a noted Israeli cantor (see Zini & al. 2005).

¹⁶ When the first note of a motif is repeated on several unaccentuated syllables until the motif really begins on the accented syllable, I have not taken these repetitions into account in calculating the length of the patterns. Note that motifs are often abbreviated on short words and lengthened on long words or when the

A survey of the relationship between the level of disjunctive accents and the richness of their musical patterns according to Zini (1966a, 1966b) is given in Table 2. Alas, *zaqef gadol* and *gerish* not preceded by *azla* are not observed in the recordings.

Table 2. Length of the disjunctive-accentmotifs: Zini (1966a, 1966b)

Level	Accent		Substitute	
I: 1>5	sof pasuq atnaḥ	5 1/2/3	sof aliya	16/17/22
II: 1>6	tarḥa zaqef qaton	1/2/3/4/5 3/5/6	tarḥa b. sof aliya zaqef gadol segolta	3 - 4
III: 5>20	qadma tevir ravi'a	5/6/7/8 9/14/15/19 12/16/19	tere qadmin zarqa yetiv	12/14 18/20 2
IV: 15>45	(azla)-gerish talsa paseq	15/27 19/45 2	shene gereshin gerish pazer gadol	27/28 - 19

Table 2 demonstrates that, apart from accents typed in bold, motif length is more or less correlated with the hierarchical degree of the disjunctive accent. Certainly, the four categories overlap. Yet differences between level I and level II appear when considering the mean lengths (2,75 vs. 3,6 respectively) and differences between level III and level IV are also obvious (cf. the mean lengths, 12,3 vs. 25,7 respectively). Consequently, it is clear that the weaker the pausal level is, the longer the motif can be.

Exceptions are *sof aliya*, *yetiv* and *paseq* (Ashkenazic *legarme*). The length of *qadma* is borderline. In the light of what we will observe below with the other sources, *qadma* could also be considered as an exception: it is the least sung in its category whose other least sung accent, viz. *tevir*, starts with a formula of 9 notes. Before trying to understand the reasons for these irregularities, let us consider additional examples.

accent is penultimate. As in other traditions (Tasat 1993: 125-126, Thomas 2003: 153, Jacobson 2005: 15-17), phenomenons of adjustment (musical elision, assimilation and compensation) occur sometimes between two adjacent words. These phenomenons modify the length of the motifs but are secondary.

Musical example 1: Zini (1966a); most of the motifs are from Ex 10:1-3¹⁷

The musical score consists of nine staves of music, each with a label above it indicating the motif used. The lyrics are written below the notes. The motifs are: Ex 10:1, Ex 10:3, Ex 10:1, Ex 10:1, Ex 10:3, Ex 10:1, Ex 10:2, Ex 10:1, Ex 10:2, Ex 10:1, Ex 10:2, Ex 10:1, Ex 10:2, Ex 10:1, Ex 10:2, Ex 10:1.

be qirbo____ we ya 'a ve du____ ni el par 'o bo
sof pasuq sof aliya atnah tarha

'a____ mi____ el mo she____ el____ par 'o A do shem____
tarha before sof aliya zaqef qaton segolta qadma

hit ha la____ ti____ we a ha ron____
tereqadmin zarqa

ye tiv shi ti____
tevir

u ven bin kha____
ravi'a

bin kha____
(azla) gerish

ki a ni____
shenegreshin

te saper____
talsa

ul ma 'an____ pa seq____
pazer gadol

¹⁷ The use of Western staff notation for extra-European music is a well known problem (Arom 1982) and the relevance and limits of its codified parameters to write down Sephardic cantillations have already been highlighted (Lachmann 1940: passim, Tasat 1993: 104 ff., Flender 1993: 78-82). Since this study is concerned with the richness of the melodies, it is not relevant that a motif is freely sung, for instance, as A-B-C or A-B-#C. What is significant is the difference, for instance, between a three notes motif and a ten notes motif. Thus, our transcriptions ignore superfluous details: pitch and duration values are indicative and only prominent tremoli are noted.

The above third document is also a recording of Rabbi Meir Zini, viz. Zini (1987). It has been recorded by Avigdor Herzog and is included in the collections of the National Sound Archives in Jerusalem. It contains numerous liturgical pieces including Biblical cantillations as well as relevant discussions between the rabbi and the musicologist.¹⁸ For methodological reasons, it is preferable not to mix the 1966 and the 1987 recordings of Rabbi Zini: twenty-one years separate them and their recording conditions are a priori not the same.

The accent-motif relationship is presented below in Table 3. The numbers represent a summary of the main tendencies (recorded parts that are sung more rapidly than the regular tempo and where the execution of the motifs is obviously less painstaking, have not been taken into account).¹⁹

Table 3 shows that there is no significative difference between levels I and II (3,75 vs. 3,18 mean lengths respectively) whereas the difference between levels III and IV is obvious (10,7 vs. 19,3 mean lengths respectively).

The length of *qadma* is ambivalent, more than it is in the 1966 recordings; thus *qadma* is counted as an exception (in bold in the table). Other exceptions (in bold in the table) are mostly the same as in Zini (1966a, 1966b): *sof aliya* and *yetiv*. Unfortunately, *paseq* is not observed in the document.

Table 3. Length of the disjunctive-accent motifs: Zini (1987)

Level	Accent		Substitute	
I: 2>6	sof pasuq atnaḥ	4/6 2/3	sof aliya	9/18/19
II: 2>5	tarḥa zaqef qaton	2/3 3/4	tarḥa before sof aliya zaqef gadol segolta	2/3/4 3/4/5 2
III: 5>19	qadma tevir ravi'a	2/3/5/6 9/15/19 11/15	tere qadmin zarqa yetiv	5/8/15/19 13/16 2
IV: 10>36	(azla)-gerish talsa paseq	17/26 15/23 -	shene gereshin gerish pazer gadol	13/22/36 10/15 16

¹⁸ Readings with the regular Shabbat tune are: Ex 1:1-22, 40:17-20, 40:33 and then Gen 48:17-22 and from 49:22 to 50:21.

¹⁹ The Torah readings are relatively long and varied compared to the other sources used in our study.

Musical example 2: Zini (1987)

Motifs are from Gen 48, 50, Ex 10

ba hu et hay la dim mits ray ma
sof pasuq sof aliya sof aliya atnah

ha ba im wa te ha ye na yis ra el wa ya qu tsu
tarha tarhabe before sof aliya zaqef qaton zaqef gadol

le mor she mot be ho mer ha hu
segolta qadma tere qadmin zarqa

'am qol ne fesh way hi
yetiv tevir ravi'a

et ha ye hem
(azla) gerish

wa yi ben
gerish

we ha ya
shene gershin

we zot
talsa

a na
pazer gadol

Mr. Joseph Chétrit

Our fourth and fifth sources are musical transcriptions from Tayar (1985, 1987). The transcriptions consist of Torah and *zarqa*-table recitations performed by Mr. Joseph Chétrit. Mr. Chétrit is a native of Mascara²⁰ and was educated by his father.²¹ In Marseilles, France, he founded and presided over the religious association 'Michelet-Prado, Ets Haïm'.

Analysis of the performances of Mr. Chétrit is presented in Table 4. Overlaps between the four levels appear. Yet distinctions between each level are nevertheless very clear. Unfortunately, *gerish* not preceded by *azla* is not observed in the documents. As expected, exceptions (in bold in the table) are *sof aliya*, *qadma*, *yetiv* and *paseq*.²²

Table 4. Length of the disjunctive-accent motifs, Chétrit (Tayar 1985, 1987)

Level	Accent		Substitute	
I: 2>3	sof pasuq atnah	2/3 3	sof aliya	7
II: 2>10	tarḥa zaqef qaton	2/3 2/4/5	tarḥa before sof aliya zaqef gadol segolta	8 10 4
III: 5>15	qadma tevir ravi'a	2/3/4/5 7/12/13 8/9/15	tere qadmin zarqa yetiv	7/8/10 5 1/2
IV: 8>23	(azla)-gerish talsa paseq	11/16 11/23 2	shene gershin gerish pazer gadol	20/23 - 8

²⁰ Mascara is 105 kilometers southeast from Oran.

²¹ Readings with the regular Shabbat tune are: Gen 1:1, Gen 1:1-5, 22:1-5 and a *zarqa*-table.

²² Joseph Chétrit is the only informant that distinguishes between *talsa* (Ashkenazic *telisha gedola*) and *tarsa* (Ashkenazic *telisha qetana*) when reciting the *zarqa*-table. Yet, comparison brings out that they are two variants of a single melody, see Tayar (1985: 97, 1987: vol. III, 130, 132, 137).

Musical example 3: Chétrit (Tayar 1987)

Most of the motifs are from the *zarqa-table*²³

Ber 1:5
 sof pa suq e ḥad at nah tar ḥa
 sof aliya

Ber 1:5
 bo qer za qef qa ton za qef ga dol
 tarḥa before sof aliyah

3
 se gol ta qad ma te re qad min zar qa

^ ^ ^
 ye tiv te vir ra vi 'a

3
 (azla) ge rish

^
 she ne ge re shin tal sa

Ber 1:5
 3
 pazer ga dol E lo qim qar ne fa ra
 paseq

²³ I have conserved the tempo of Tayar’s transcriptions; this tempo is more rapid than the tempo used in my own transcriptions. When reciting the *zarqa-table*, Mr. Chétrit sings the *pazer gadol*-motif twice: once on the word ‘pazer’, and again on the word ‘gadol’. Thus, I have reproduced the motif once only, when it is sung with the word ‘gadol’.

The Ashkenazi Brothers

Ashkenazi (1955) is our sixth document. It is a record realized by Jean-Claude Sillamy and included in the collections of the National Sound Archives in Jerusalem. The document contains various liturgical pieces. The three singers are the sons of Rabbi David Ashkenazi (1897-1983), Chief Rabbi of Oran and then of Algeria. One of them, viz. Rabbi Yehuda Léon ‘Manitou’ (1922-1996), became a highly influential spiritual leader of the French Jewry. Concerning the cantillation of the Torah, which consists only of a *zarqa*-table, it is not specified which of the brothers is the reader and I have not been able to conclusively identify him.

This short performance brings out a clear gradation of the length of the motifs parallel to the grammatical hierarchy of the disjunctive accents. As often happens with *zarqa*-tables, some accents are not sung. This is the case here for *tarḥa* before *sof aliya*, *sof aliya*, *gerish* not preceded by *azla* and *paseq*. Exceptions are the same, *qadma* and *yetiv*, to which must be added a new one, viz. (*azla*)-*gerish* 2.

The realization of the same accent with various distinct musical motifs is common in many traditions (Herzog 1963: 11). The recording allows us to note that this phenomenon exists in the Oranese style as well. The short (*azla*)-*gerish* motif that appears is not a brief variant of the (*azla*)-*gerish* motif used by R. Zini and Mr. Chétrit but a particular motif and for this reason I term it (*azla*)-*gerish* 2. We will examine it below.

Table 5. Length of the disjunctive-accent motifs: Ashkenazi (1955)

Level	Accent		Substitute	
I: 3>6	sof pasuq	6	sof aliya	-
	atnaḥ	3		
II: 2>7	tarḥa	2	tarḥa before sof aliya	-
	zaqef qaton	6	zaqef gadol	7
			segolta	6
III: 10>14	qadma	3	tere qadmin	9
			zarqa	10
			yetiv	2
	tevir	14		
	ravi'a	12		
IV: 18>21	(azla)-gerish 2	3	shene gereshin	21
			gerish	-
	talsa	18	pazer gadol	10
	paseq	-		

Musical example 4: Ashkenazi (1955); motifs are from the *zarqa*-table

sof pa suq at nah tar ha za qef qa ton

za qef ga dol se gol ta qad ma

te re qad min zar qa ye tiv

te vir ra bi a

(azla) ge rish shene ge ri shin

tal sa

pa zer ga dol

Ashkenazi (1954) is another record of Jean-Claude Sillamy (held also in the National Archive of Jerusalem). It is performed by Rabbi Yehuda Léon Ashkenazi and his brother Rabbi Daniel and contains a brief Torah reading (Deut 32:1-7) whose reader is clearly not the same as that of Ashkenazi (1955). Some important disjunctive accents are not sung in this recitation. Nevertheless, the intonation follows exactly the same trend of Ashkenazi (1955), which is not surprising since the readers are brothers and share the same tradition. Also, it is worth noting that the same (*azla*)-*gerish 2* musical motif is used exclusively for the (*azla*)-*gerish* accent.

Anonymous reader from Nedroma

Our eighth document is an extract from another record of Jean-Claude Sillamy, viz. Anonyms (1957a), included in the collections of the European Institute of Jewish Music in Paris. The record includes readings of *zarqa*-tables and cantillations from *parashiyot* and *haftarot* in Algerian and Moroccan traditions. Although the identity of the informants was not written down on the vinyl, the document is of value since it has been realized by a noted expert. The extract consists of a *zarqa*-table, the verse Deut 23:1 and the very first words of Deut 23:2 read by an anonymous recitant from Nedroma.²⁴

This source reveals a musical distinction between the four disjunctive accent levels (see Table 6). The missing motifs *tarḥa* before *sof aliya*, *sof aliya*, *tere qadmin*, *yetiv* and *gerish* are not preceded by *azla*. Again, exceptions are mostly the same: *paseq*, *qadma* (which is on the borderline between level II and III) and (*azla*)-*gerish* 2.²⁵

Table 6. Length of the disjunctive-accent motifs, Nedroma (Anonyms 1957a)

Level	Accent		Substitute	
I: 1>7	sof pasuq	7	sof aliya	-
	atnaḥ	2/5		
II: 2>9	tarḥa	2	tarḥa before sof aliya	-
	zaqef qaton	3	zaqef gadol	9
			segolta	3
III: 5>13	qadma	3/5	tere qadmin	-
			zarqa	5
			yetiv	-
	tevir	8		
	ravi'a	11/12/13		
IV: 11>25	(azla)-gerish 2	5	shene gereshin	11/25
			gerish	-
	talsa	14	pazer gadol	13
	paseq	2		

²⁴ Nedroma is located not far from the Moroccan border.

²⁵ In the Bible, there are also three very rare substitute accents, viz. *shalsholet*, *tere ta'ame* (Ashkenazic *merkha kefula*) and *qarne fara* (Ashkenazic *pazer gadol*). They appear in the Torah 4 times, 5 times and once respectively. Only two of them appear in the documents: *qarne fara* (Mr. Chétrit and the anonymous reader from Nedroma) and *shalsholet* (the anonymous reader of Nedroma). *Shalsholet* has an expected short melody of 3 notes like the level II accent it replaces, *segolta* (itself a substitute of *zaqef qaton*). Likewise, *qarne fara* has an expected long formula (10 notes for Mr. Chétrit, 20 for the anonymous reader from Nedroma) shorter or longer than the level IV accent it replaces, *pazer gadol* (itself a substitute of *talsa*) but still included approximately inside the margins of the level IV (11>25). Finally, this author knows from its own experience that the motif of *tere ta'ame* is always identical to the motif of the accent that it replaces, viz. *tevir*.

Musical example 5: anonymous reader from Nedroma (Anonyms 1957a)

Motifs are from the *zarqa*-table

sof_ pa suq_____ at_____ nah tar ha za qef qa ton

za qef ga dol_____ se gol ta qad ma_____ zar qa_____

te vir_____ ra bi_____ 'a ge rish_____

shene ge re shin tal sa_____

pa zer ga dol_____ pa seq_ shal she let

qar ne fa ra_____

Exceptions to the musical gradation

Textual conditioning

There are several reasons which may explain exceptions found in the practice of musical gradations. For one, the special melodic formula of the final cadence *sof aliya* seems to originate from the will of the reader to herald the end of each reading by a distinctive embellished melody that projects a more solemn effect.

The case of the *qadma*-motif is more complex. Although sometimes not exceptional, the length of the motif of *qadma*, a level III accent, is generally as short as the motifs of the level I and II accents. It seems that the relevant category to analyze the *qadma*-

motif is not its grammatical accent level but the number of its occurrences in the text. Indeed, Table 7 reveals that level I and II regular accents are highly frequent, occurring from 5474 (*sof pasuq*) to 10907 (*tarḥa*) times. In contrast, level III (without *qadma*) and IV regular accents are far less frequent, occurring from 283 (*paseq*) to 2678 (*tevir*) times. The 4567 occurrences of *qadma* are not far from the 5474 occurrences of *sof pasuq*. In any case they are more distant from the 2678 occurrences of *tevir*. Thus, due to its very high frequency, we can assume that *qadma* is assimilated musically to the level I and II disjunctive accents.

Table 7. Numerical summary of the disjunctive accents²⁶

Highly frequent accents are in bold

Level	Accent		Substitute	
I	sof pasuq	5474	sof aliya	378
	atnaḥ	5483		
II	tarḥa	10907	tarḥa before <i>sof aliya</i>	378
	zaqef qaton	6992	zaqef gadol	524
			segolta	368
III	qadma	4567	tere qadmin	872
			zarqa	371
			yetiv	356
	tevir	2678		
	ravi'a	2430		
IV	(azla)-gerish	969	shene gershin	510
			gerish	143
	talsa	266	pazer gadol	154
	paseq	283		

Moreover, the musical motif of *qadma* is even more frequent than the 4567 occurrences of the *qadma*-accent (Table 7). Indeed, the conjunctive accent *azla*, which has the same graphic shape as the accent *qadma*, is sometimes sung as *qadma*. Under certain grammatical circumstances, the accent *azla* is used to mark the secondary stress of a word.²⁷ When *azla* appears on the same word that is marked with *zaqef* (which marks the primary stress), this *azla* + *zaqef* sequence looks graphically exactly like a *qadma* + *zaqef* sequence. Accordingly, the accent *azla* is sung on the tune of the musical motif of *qadma*.

²⁶ From Price (1990) and our own count (for *sof aliyah*, *tarḥa* before *sof aliyah*, and *tere qadmin*). The figures are indicative because variations exist between the different editions of the Biblical text and cantors use generally one of the many editions of the *tiqun qor'im*. The *maftir*, the three *aliyoth* of Shabbat afternoon and week-day morning readings are not taken into account. As a matter of fact, every reciter who reads any part of the Torah can finish his reading with the special melody of *tarḥa* + *sof aliya*.

²⁷ In this case, *azla* is also called *metiga*.

Azla + zaqef appears 111 times in the Torah which means that the total number of the musical occurrences of the *qadma* is 4668.

Borrowing

The unexpected shortness of (*azla*)-*gerish 2* contradicts our view on the accent-motif correlation. However, it is worth noting that (*azla*)-*gerish 2* is also observed in the tradition of Algiers beside (*azla*)-*gerish 1*.²⁸ It is also closely related to the (*azla*)-*gerish* motifs used in Moroccan traditions: Oujda (Algerian-Moroccan),²⁹ Tangier (Spanish Moroccan) and Casablanca (French Moroccan).³⁰ On the other hand, to the best of our knowledge, (*azla*)-*gerish 2* is not observed in the East Algerian tradition of Constantine³¹ and in the Tunisian traditions of Tunis³² and Djerba.³³ Instead, long formulas like (*azla*)-*gerish 1* are used exclusively.

Despite the fact that, since the early Middle Ages, North Africa has hosted many Jewish communities which differed in their individual historical development and their social context, it is indisputable that these communities share the same cultural (and musical) background. Accordingly, many parts of West and Central Algerian liturgy and cantillation are common with the Moroccan traditions. Regarding the cantillation in general, beyond numerous local sub-traditions, most of the tunes used for the recitation of the Prophets and Hagiographa recognisably stem from common patterns. Regarding the Torah cantillation in particular, the tune that was traditionally taught to children in the Oran district is closely related to the Moroccan Shabbat tunes used by adults.³⁴ Consequently, (*azla*)-*gerish 2* could be one example of this common musical background.

However, in contrast to the above, the Oran and Algiers Shabbat tunes used by adults differ very clearly from the Moroccan ones. Thus, the presence of (*azla*)-*gerish 2* most likely results from a phenomenon of diffusion of the motif from Morocco to the near Algerian regions of Oran and Algiers. In fact, Jewish migration from Morocco to Algeria is very ancient and well documented, and was intensified during the 19th century Hispano-Moroccan War (1859–60) and the French colonization of Algeria (1830–1962). The majority of Jews from Morocco settled in the district of Oran, between the Moroccan border and Algiers. It is worth a large number of migrant rabbis who continued to work as rabbis, cantors and educators. In addition, in the last decades of French Algeria, some Algerian Jews settled in Morocco (in some cities, as in Oujda and Casablanca for example, where they also had their own synagogues). Strong social interactions (work, community life, marriages) between Moroccans and Algerians and assimilation of Moroccan Jews

²⁸ Aim (2018).

²⁹ Tayar (1987: vol. III, 6).

³⁰ Tasat (1993: 126), Thomas (2013: 154-156).

³¹ Tayar (1985: 97, 1987: vol. III, 110-111, 114, 117-120).

³² Herzog (1963: 7); Tayar (1987: vol. II, 123).

³³ Lachmann (1940: 99-100).

³⁴ See the discussion between Rabbi Zini and Avigdor Herzog in Zini (1987).

within Algerian communities are well documented.³⁵ It would not be surprising that under these conditions, a musical motif could have made its way from the Moroccan communities to the communities of Oran and Algiers.

Pan-Sephardic features

In the Masoretic punctuation, the accent *paseq* is an auxiliary sign that marks a short pause but which is not part of the gradation of the disjunctive accents.³⁶ In the Oran tradition, *paseq* and *legarme* (the disjunctive accent that we have considered so far under the name of *paseq*) share the same traditional name, viz. *paseq*. In addition, they also share the same musical motif, which is often performed with a slight abrupt end followed by a brief pause (note that *paseq* means ‘cutting off’ in Hebrew). Furthermore, the graphic symbol of *legarme* ׀⋈ looks exactly like a *shofar holekh* ⋈ (Ashkenazic *munah*), a conjunctive accent, followed by a *paseq* ׀⋈.³⁷ This might be the reason why the two signs merge musically (and also in the nomenclature). As noted above, a similar process of musical conflation appears between *telisha gedola* and *telisha qetana* (both sung as *talsa*-motif) because they share very similar symbols. Moreover, it seems that the fusion of *paseq* and *legarme* is prevalent in Sephardic traditions.³⁸ Apparently, this issue is not specific to the tradition of Oran.

The very short pattern of *yetiv* (which consists of a maximum of 2 notes) differs strikingly with the generally longer patterns of the disjunctive accents of the same grade (*qadma*, *tere qadmin*, *zarqa*, *tevir* and *ravi’a*). In fact, as in the case of the *paseq*-motif, the shortness of the *yetiv*-motif is not a characteristic of the Oran style but rather a Pan-Sephardic feature, as it appears in many Sephardic traditions.³⁹ Thus, the special characteristic of *yetiv* and *paseq* extends well beyond the Oranese tradition.

The occurrence of shared motifs at opposite ends of the Sephardic world could suggest that they represent the remains of an older and common proto-Sephardic tradition. Also, another reasonable explanation could be the effect of interactions between different Jewish communities. As Amar (2009: 9) already pointed out, the diasporization of the Jewish communities and their incessant migratory movements had, and still have, a profound influence on the liturgical chant in general and the musical interpretation of the *te’amim* of the Torah in particular. Indeed, due to the proximity of communities of different

³⁵ See Bel Ange (1990), Chouraqui (1998), Marciano (2002).

³⁶ On *paseq*, see Wickes (1970: vol. II, 120-129), Price (1990: 119-123). *Paseq* appears approximately 89 times in the Torah.

³⁷ Cases where *shofar holekh* (*munah*) is followed by *paseq* are described in Jacobson (2017).

³⁸ See for instance the following traditions: (1) Western Sephardic: Portuguese (Tayar 1987: vol. III, 151) (2) North African: Tangier and Casablanca (Tasat 1993: 124), Oujda (Tayar 1987: vol. III, 12), Algiers (Aïm 2018: passim), Constantine and Bône (Aïm, in prep.), Djerba (Lachmann 1940: 98) (3) Eastern Sephardic: Levantine and Syrian/Aleppo (Idelsohn 1923: 225, 231).

³⁹ For instance: (1) Western Sephardic: Portuguese (Tayar 1987: vol. III, 166) (2) North African: Tangier and Casablanca (Tasat 1993: 123), Oujda (Tayar 1987: vol. III, 8), Algiers (Aïm 2018), Constantine and Bône (Aïm, in prep.), Djerba (Lachmann 1940: 98) (3) Eastern Sephardic: Levantine and Syrian/Aleppo (Idelsohn 1923: 225, 231).

origins, it was, and still is, extremely common for rabbis and cantors to be employed by communities of which they are not native. In addition to their own rite, they are therefore required to learn and master another rite (and sometimes even several). This multiplication of rites known by the cantors has the effect that melodic formulas from different traditions are sometimes mixed. (Mixtures of *te'amim* nomenclatures from different traditions occur as well). It should also be noted that in the particular cases of *paseq/legarme* and *yetiv*, the simplicity of their melody could possibly have facilitated their adoption and wide dissemination.

Variation in performances

As noted above, one of the particularities of the Sephardic and Oriental cantillations is their extreme variability (see Lachmann 1940, Flender 1990). Tempo, rhythm, duration, pitch and motivic-structure are not strictly determined. As a result, individual performances on the one hand and performances between reciters on the other hand often differ. For instance, each reader can decide to develop a motif to beautify a part of a verse or conversely shorten the very same motif to hurry its recitation or to exert less effort. In addition, other parameters like the will of the reader to rigorously preserve his tradition, his memory and level of knowledge, are also causes of variations in performances (Amar 2009) contribute to alternate renditions. .

Consequently, it is not surprising to find performances where distinction between the disjunctive accent levels is not always manifested by the length of the musical motifs. In the above case of Zini (1987), the relation between the accents' gradation and the length of the motifs is partial but still identifiable (three levels in place of the four expected; level I and II are not differentiated).

Another case, more extreme, is demonstrated by our last audio document: an extract from another record of Jean-Claude Sillamy, viz. Anonyms (1957b), included in the collections of the European Institute of Jewish Music in Paris. The record includes *zarqa*-tables and passages from *parashiyot* and *haftarot* sung according to Algerian, Moroccan and French Ashkenazic traditions. The extract consists of a *zarqa*-table sung by an anonymous reader from Tlemcen.⁴⁰ As shown in Table 8 and Musical Example 6, each motif appears in its simplest form without any kind of melisma. While we can visually grasp a slight distinction between each level, the motifs are so short, and the distinction between the length of the motifs is so tenuous (one or two notes) that it is obvious that we are dealing with an eroded system (and this feeling is more conspicuous on hearing the recording).

⁴⁰ Since the end of the Middle Ages, Tlemcen has been one of the most important center of Jewish tradition and learning in Algeria.

Table 8. Length of the disjunctive-accent motifs, Tlemcen (Anonyms 1957b)

Level	Accent		Substitute	
I: 2>4	sof pasuq	4	sof aliya	-
	atnah	2		
II: 2>6	tarha	2	tarha before sof aliya	-
	zaqef qaton	4	zaqef gadol	6
			segolta	4
III: 3>6	qadma	3	tere qadmin	6
			zarqa	4
	tevir	3	yetiv	-
	ravi'a	5		
IV: 5>6	(azla)-gerish	-	shene gereshin	6
			gerish	-
	talsa	5	pazer gadol	-
	paseq	2		

Musical example 6: anonymous reader from Tlemcen (Anonyms 1957b)

Motifs are from the *zarqa*-table

sof pa suq at nah tar ha za qef qa ton za qef ga dol

se gol ta qad ma te re qad min zar qa

te vir ra bi 'a she ne ge re shin tal sa

pa seq

The same situation can also be found during various synagogue services. For instance, whoever attends the Shabbat reading knows that the recitation of the last *aliyot* can be (regrettably) sloppy, especially when the *parasha* is very long or when additional *olim* have been received and the congregation begins to grow impatient.

However, these discrepancies are not significant. In fact, whomever the reciter is and whatever the rendition, there is no doubt that not all the motifs can be developed. This assertion stems not only from the observation of the collected musical material but also from the personal knowledge and practice of this author and his ascertainments during his participation in synagogue services over the years. Thus, a regular strong level I or II accent will never be executed with ornamentation. A weak level III accent-motif can be flourished but, in any case, only the *tevir*, *ravi'a* and *zarqa* motifs can at times be extended as is often found in level IV accent-motif interactions. Finally, weakest level IV accent-motifs and especially *talsa*, (*azla*)-*gerish*, *gerish* and *shene gereshin* are the ones that are regularly prolonged and embellished (for instance, up to 45 notes for *talsa* in Zini 1966a, see Musical Example 1). No level III accent, not even *tevir*, *ravi'a* and *zarqa* can be extended in this way, (as for example, beyond the 20 notes of the *zarqa*-motif realized in Zini 1966b).⁴¹

Conclusion

In this article, dedicated to the Oranese style of Torah recitation, we found that beyond multiple variations inherent to an orally transmitted tradition, the four disjunctive/pausal accent levels are organized in four parallel musical categories:

- (1) strongest level I disjunctive accents : very short musical motifs
- (2) strong level II disjunctive accents: motifs a little longer than those of level I
- (3) weak level III disjunctive accents: middling to long motifs
- (4) weakest level IV disjunctive accents: developed and melismatic motifs.

Certainly, some motifs seem to belie our claim. However, the analysis shows that they are mostly the product of various particular conditionings: specific textual conditionings (*sof aliya*, *qadma*), musical conflation due to the sharing of the same graphic symbol (*paseq* and *legarme*), Pan-Sephardic features (*paseq* again, *yetiv*) and possible borrowings from another tradition (*azla-gerish* 2).

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⁴¹ This is a relative generalization: for instance, the motifs of Zini (1966a, 1966b) are generally longer than the motifs of the anonymous reader from Nedroma (Anonyms 1957).

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