

Musical Characteristics of Spanish–Portuguese Biblical Cantillation

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Abstract: The article examines the musical characteristics of the Spanish-Portuguese biblical cantillation. The analysis is based on recordings and interviews of three prominent cantors of the Spanish-Portuguese liturgy. The study presented in the article found that the rhythmic patterns of the Spanish-Portuguese biblical cantillation resemble the Eastern and Moroccan Sephardic biblical cantillations, but the tonal base differs from that of the two other Sephardic groups and consists of distinctive characteristics.

Key words: Spanish-Portuguese liturgy, Biblical cantillation

Introduction

This article is part of a research project that examines the liturgical music of the Spanish–Portuguese Jews. The study was carried out under the auspices of the Jewish Music Research Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The research included all the liturgical music of the Spanish–Portuguese Jews¹. The focus of this article is the musical traits of the Spanish–Portuguese Biblical cantillation (*Tora and Haftara*). The musical analysis in the article is based on recordings and interviews with three Spanish–Portuguese cantors who represent three versions of Spanish–Portuguese biblical cantillation: the late Abraham Lopes-Cardoso (Amsterdam),² Ira Rohde (New York),³ and Daniel Halfon⁴ (London).

The reading of the Pentateuch and the Prophets is one of the most ancient liturgical institutions of the Jewish religion, and there is speculation that the reading of the

¹ The full study will be published in the book titled “*The Spanish-Portuguese Jewish Liturgy*” in collaboration with Edwin Seroussi.

² Abraham Lopes Cardozo was born in Amsterdam in 1914. In 1939, he was appointed by Queen Wilhelmina of Holland to be the Rabbi of the Spanish–Portuguese community in Surinam. He became the cantor at Shearith Israel synagogue in New York in 1946, and continued this appointment until 1986. I met Abraham Cardozo in 2001; he was 87 at that time. Rabbi Cardozo died in 2006. To this day, he is considered the most important twentieth-century transmitter of the Spanish–Portuguese liturgy.

³ Rabbi Cantor Ira L. Rohde is cantor of Congregation Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in New York, and he holds rabbinical ordination from Yeshiva University’s Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York City. He has made a special study of the Portuguese liturgical traditions, working closely with Rabbi Abraham Lopes Cardozo.

⁴ Daniel Halfon was born in 1962 in England to a Sephardic family not of Spanish–Portuguese origin. He grew up in London’s ancient Spanish–Portuguese community. He studied to be a cantor with three important transmitters of Spanish–Portuguese liturgy: the late Eliezer Abinun, the late Abraham Lopes-Cardozo, and Abraham Beniso. Daniel Halfon currently is considered a leading authority of the cantorial style of the Spanish–Portuguese liturgy.

Pentateuch motivated the first prayer gatherings in the Jewish communities in Israel (Elbogen 1913 [1988]: 117).

The Pentateuch is read four times a week in the synagogue: on Saturday, during the morning prayers and the afternoon service, and every Monday and Thursday in the morning prayers. It is also read during festivals and for the morning prayers of the intermediate days (of Passover and Tabernacles); on the first day of the month, fast days, Hanukah and Purim; on Saturdays and holidays; during the fast of the Ninth of Av; and during the afternoon prayers of fast days, when both the Pentateuch and the Prophets are read, while only the Pentateuch is read on other days. The Pentateuch is divided into fifty-four portions (*parashot*). Every Saturday, one or two portions are read according to their serial order. The reason for the occasional reading of more than one portion is due to the difference between a regular and a leap year—the former has only fifty-one Sabbath days. Thus, a certain portion may be linked to that adjacent to it, and both are recited on the designated Saturday. These linked portions are usually not long, such as *tazri'a umetzur'a* (with 167 verses), or *bahar uvehukotai* (with 135 verses). The exceptions are when the portion *matot* (Numbers 30: 2–32:42) is combined with the next portion, *mas'ei* (244 verses altogether), and when the portion *vayelech* (Deuteronomy 31: 1–30) is combined with the portion *nitzavim* (70 verses).

The central role of the ritual reading of biblical texts in the practice of the different Jewish liturgies aroused great interest among scholars and religious educators. From the beginning of the twentieth century, many scholars have discussed the different aspects of the accentuation system of the Pentateuch—among them Idelzohn (1914–32, 1929), Sharvit (1982), Weil (1995), Spector (1987), Levine (1982/3), Straus (2001), and Herzog (2007).

Ben-Zvi (2001) studied the cantillation of several biblical scrolls (Esther, Lamentations, Song of Songs, Ruth, and Ecclesiastes in the cantorial tradition of Istanbul. Flender (1992) made an in-depth study of the accentuation system and practice of the Book of Psalms. Neeman (2012) studied the Musical Basis of the biblical cantillation according to the Ashkenazi, Moroccan, and Jerusalem-Sephardic traditions.

History and Liturgy of the Spanish–Portuguese Tradition

The Spanish–Portuguese Diaspora in Western Europe developed from the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese Sephardic Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity two centuries earlier began to return to Judaism. With their return to Judaism, many of these former converts gradually immigrated to Western Europe. Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity in Spain and Portugal began to leave the Iberian Peninsula toward the end of the sixteenth century, and they established new communities called “Portuguese” or “Spanish–Portuguese” communities. These former converts settled in Venice, Amsterdam, and southwestern France (Bayonne, Bordeaux). Crypto-Portuguese later dispersed to other centers in Europe (Paris, London, Hamburg, Livorno, Gibraltar,

Vienna), the Americas (New York, Philadelphia, Rhode Island, Charleston, Savannah, and Curacao).⁵

The origin of the liturgical basis of these Western communities comes from the first community of Amsterdam. This repertoire relies on the liturgical traditions of the North African and Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire. The Portuguese community of Amsterdam brought their first cantors from these non-European communities. One of the first cantors in the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam was Rabbi Yosef Shalom Galyego from Salonika (in the years 1614–28), and another was R. Isaac Uziel Paz from Morocco (Seroussi, 2001).

Spanish-Portuguese Cantillation of the Pentateuch⁶

The cantillation of the Spanish–Portuguese tradition is based, like that of all Jewish communities, on diacritic symbols. In the Scriptures, punctuated according to tradition, the words are accompanied not only by vowels but also by other markers, accents that appear above or below the appropriate syllable of the word. The exceptions to this rule are *zarqa*, *segol*, *pashta*, and *telisha qetana*, which are always written above the last letter in the accent group (*teyva*). The *telisha gedola* accent is always written above the first letter in the accent group.

The accents are musical notations for the reading of the Scriptures, especially for reading in public (the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the scrolls). Each of the accents indicates a particular melodic pattern. These musical patterns vary both according to communities and in their purpose: there are specific melodic patterns for reading the Pentateuch, the Prophets, or the scrolls in public.

The rhythmic structure of the patterns stems from the relationship between the length of the sound of the accented syllables (long) and the unaccented (short) ones. The rhythm is a “flowing rhythm,”⁷ in accordance with the prosodic structure of the text. Typically, the relationship of syllable to sound is syllabic and neumatic, but certain accents can also be melismatic.

The accents are divided into disjunctive accents of varying degrees, and conjunctive accents. They mark the syntax, because they determine the locations of the pauses and the junctures in the text. The accents are also important for a correct interpretation and understanding of the text. Accent names sometimes differ from one tradition to the other, but, in this article, we will name them according to the Spanish–Portuguese tradition.⁸

⁵ For further elaboration on the history of the Spanish–Portuguese communities, see Kaplan 1982; Bodian 1997; Katz & Serels (Eds.) 2000; Kaplan 2003; Asis & Orfali (Eds.) 2009.

⁶ See Appendix 1 for the accentuations.

⁷ Free rhythm is a major performing style in the liturgical music of all Jewish communities, and it forms the basis of the bulk of prayer chanting in synagogues. Frigyesi (1993) claims that this kind of rhythm is not completely “free,” while not having a fixed measure, since patterns recur in the various performances. She therefore defines this as a “flowing rhythm.”

⁸ See Appendix 1 for names and graphic signs of the accents.

Following researchers of the accentuation system, the accents are divided here into groups and subgroups,⁹ each of which contains a number of accents, some conjunct and others disjunct. At the head of a “group” are the disjunctive accents of relatively great strength, and at the head of a “subgroup” the disjunction is comparatively weaker. There are also accents that do not belong to a group or a subgroup, but which appear on their own.

Musical analysis of the cantillation of the Spanish–Portuguese Pentateuch deals with the musical characteristics of the groups of the main disjunctive accents. These characteristics were determined after reviewing a large number of samples, and those cited here characterize the most representative patterns found following a broad overview. The majority of the examples are based on the singing of verses from the Pentateuch, but a lesser number are based on the cantillation of the accents themselves.

The *sof pasuq* Group

This group includes the *ma’arich-tarḥa* and *tarḥa-ma’arich* accent groups at the end of verses. The melodic progression proceeds in steps of major seconds, and the direction on the ending tone is always upward. The note preceding the ending tone is *D*, and the ending tone is on *E*. There is a difference between the Amsterdam–New York version and that of London. In the former, the development is two-toned, with an interval of a second major, sounding very much reduced; while, in the latter, the development is a trichord on *C*, creating an interval of a major third, and yielding a broader melody. In both versions, the ending tone is the same, on *E*.

Example 1 Exodus 12:23. London version (Daniel Halfon): *maarikh-tarḥa-sof pasuq*



Example 2 Genesis 12:3. Amsterdam-New York version (Ira Rohde): *tarḥa-maarikh-sof pasuq*



When the accent *tevir* is added to the *sof-pasuq* group, there an expansion of the sound, and the syllable–tone relationship becomes melismatic in both versions. The melodic progression is in the diapason of a major third with ascending and descending directions.

⁹ The division into groups and subgroups has been done here according to Yehuda Kadari’s book *Veshinanta Lebanekha* (1995).

Example 3 Exodus 12:26. London version (Daniel Halfon): *tevir-ma'arikh-tarḥa-sof pasuq*

ma _____ ha - a - vo - da _____ ha - zot la - khem

When the accents *kadma* and *darga* are added to this group, the diapason increases to include a minor sixth between the high note on the accent *kadma*, and the low notes of other accents in the group; the syllable–tone relationship is neumatic. There is an interval of a fourth between the final note of the accent *kadma* and the opening note of the accent *darga*. The tonal structure is a tetrachord *D* on *E* with a recitation on *E*, emphasizing this note as central to the melodic progression rather than being just an ending tone.

Example 4 Exodus 12:50. London version (Daniel Halfon): *kadma-darga-tevir-maarikh-tarḥa-sof pasuq*

ka-a-sheer tsi-va _____ A-do-nay _____ et mo-she-ve-et a-ha-ronken 'a-su

The *etnah* Group

This group contains the following accents: *maarikh-tarḥa-shofar-holekh-etnah*. The melodic progression proceeds in steps of major seconds, and the direction of the ending tone is always upward. The introductory note to the cadential tone is *D*, and the ending tone is *E*. The interval between the ending tone *etnah* and the ending tone at the end of a verse is *prima*. There is recitation on *D* and *E*.

The difference between the London and Amsterdam–New York versions is that the tonal structure in the former is based on the trichord *C*, creating an interval of a major third, while, in the latter, the melodic progression is between two notes only with an interval of a major second. A further difference is in the syllable–tone relationship, which in the former is mainly syllabic but in the latter is both syllabic and neumatic.

Example 5 Exodus 12:28. London version (Daniel Halfon): *maarikh-tarḥa-shofar-holekh-etnah*

va - yel - khu va - ya - 'a - su be - nei Is - ra - el

Example 6 Genesis 12:1. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *maarikh-tarḥa-shofar-holekh-etnah*

me - ar - tse-kha u - mi - mo - lad - te - kha _____ u - mi-beit a - vi - kha

When the accent *zaqef gadol* is added to an *etnah* group, the melodic progression and the diapason may reach a major sixth. In the London version (Figure 7), the tonal structure is based on the hexachord *C-A* (from the bottom-up) with the ending (or cadential) tone being *E*; and in the Amsterdam–New York version (Figure 8), the development is based on the hexachord *D-B*, when the melodic progression is actually within the framework of the pentachord *E-B*, with the lower note (sub-tonic) *D*. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic.

Example 7 Exodus 12:26. London version (Daniel Halfon): *zaqef gadol- maarikh-tarḥa- etnah*

ve - ha - ya _____ ki - yom - ru a - lei - khem bnei - khem

Example 8 Genesis 12:18. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *zaqef gadol-tarḥa-shofar-holekh-etnah*

va - yo - mer ma zot ____ ‘a - si - ta li

The *zaqef qaton* Group

The *zaqef qaton* accent is based on the two-tone development of a major second. The cadential tone is *E*, and the note prior to it is *D*, with the direction of the ending tone being an ascending major second. The interval between the ending tone of this group and that of the end of a verse and *etnah* is prima (unison). When there is tonal broadening in this group, the main characteristics are as follows: broadening of the diapason to a fifth; a tonal structure based on the pentachord *C* on *D*; a melodic progression that includes steps and leaps; and recitation on *E* and *D*. On occasion, the syllable–tone relationship may expand to become melismatic.

Example 9 Genesis 12:5. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *trei-qadmin-shofar-holekh- zaqef qaton*

la - le - khet ____ ar - tsa ke - na - ‘an

In the London version, when the accent *shofar-holekh* is found before the accent *zaqef qaton*, the musical structure shifts in most cases to become based on the *C* trichord.

Example 10 Exodus 12:30. London version (Daniel Halfon): *shofar-holekh- zaqef qaton*



The *revi'a* Group

The melodic progression of this accent includes leaps of minor thirds, both ascending and descending, as well as steps of a minor second. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic. The cadential tone is *E*, and the movement toward the ending tone is a descent with a leap of a minor third. The introductory tone to the cadential tone is *G*. The interval between the ending tones of the *revi'a* group and the ending tone of *etnah* and the verse ending is *prima*. In the London version, the melodics structure is trichord *D* on *E*, and the diapason is a minor third. In the Amsterdam–New York version, the tonal structure is the tetrachord *C* on *D* and the diapason is a fourth.

Example 11 Exodus 12:21. London version (Daniel Halfon): *revi'a*




Example 12 Genesis 12:12. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *revi'a*



Subgroup *tevir*

Here, the melodic progression is in steps of major seconds in a diapason of a major third. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic on the first word *ki*, and thereafter is in the form of syllabic and recitations (repetition of one single note). The tonal structure is based on the *C* trichord; the cadential tone is *E*, and the preparation for the ending tone is on *D*, with an ascent toward the end. The interval between the ending tones of the subgroup *tevir* and those of *etnah* is *prima*.

Example 13 Genesis 12:11. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *tevir-maarikh-tarḥa-sof-pasuq*.



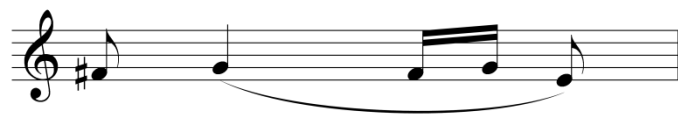
ki _____ i - sha ye - fat mar - e _____ at

The musical notation for Example 13 is a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a quarter note on G4, followed by a dotted quarter note on A4, and then a series of eighth notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The notes are grouped into two phrases: 'ki' (G4, A4) and 'i - sha ye - fat mar - e at' (G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3). The syllables are aligned with the notes: 'ki' under G4, 'i - sha' under F#4 and E4, 'ye - fat' under D4 and C4, 'mar - e' under B3 and A3, and 'at' under G3.

The *gerish* Subgroup

The melodic progression is in steps of a minor second and a leap on the descent of a minor third. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic. The tonal structure of this accent is based on the trichord of *D* on *E* (*E-F#-G*). The cadential tone is *E* and the tone leading to the ending tone is *G*. The direction leading to the ending tone is a descent, in a leap of a minor third. The interval between the ending tones and those of *etnah* and the end of the verse is *prima*.

Example 14 Genesis 12:8. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *gerish*



mi - sham _____

The musical notation for Example 14 is a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a quarter note on G4, followed by a dotted quarter note on A4, and then a series of eighth notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The notes are grouped into two phrases: 'mi - sham' (G4, A4) and '_____'. The syllables are aligned with the notes: 'mi - sham' under G4 and A4.

When the *gerish* accent is part of the *gerish* group (together with the *tarsa* and *azla* accents), the melodic progressions broadens to the pentachord *C* on *D*.

Example 15 Exodus 12:31. London version (Daniel Halfon): *tarsa-azla-gerish*



va - ik - ra _____ le - mo - she ul - a - ha - ron _____

The musical notation for Example 15 is a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a quarter note on G4, followed by a dotted quarter note on A4, and then a series of eighth notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The notes are grouped into two phrases: 'va - ik - ra' (G4, A4) and 'le - mo - she ul - a - ha - ron' (G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3). The syllables are aligned with the notes: 'va - ik - ra' under G4, A4, and B3; 'le - mo - she' under C4, D4, and E4; 'ul - a - ha - ron' under F#4, G4, and A4.

The *talsha* Group

The melodic progression proceeds in steps of major and minor seconds in a diapason of a minor third. The direction for the ending tone is a descent to a major second. The tonal organization is based on the trichord *E* on *C#* and the cadential tone is *D*. The interval between the ending tones of the sounds of *talsha* and the ending tones of *etnah* and the end of the verse is an ascending major second. In the London version, the syllable–tone relationship is syllabic and neumatic. The neumatic trait is on the stressed syllable of the word. In the Amsterdam–New York version, the syllable–tone relationship is syllabic and melismatic, and the melisma is on the accented syllable of the word.

Example 16 Genesis 14:7. London version (Daniel Halfon): *talsha*



Example 17 Genesis 14:7. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *talsha*



The *Pazer gadol* group

The melodic progression is in steps of major and minor seconds ascending and descending. The movement toward the ending tone *G* is ascending (a minor second). The tonal structure is based on trichord *C* on *D* (*D-E-F#-G*) and the diapason is a fourth. The syllable–tone relationship is syllabic and melismatic. The melisma is on the stressed syllable of the word. The interval between the ending tones of *pazer gadol* and those of *etnah* as well as the end of a verse is a minor third (descending).

Example 18 Exodus 12:27. London version (Daniel Halfon): *pazer gadol*



The *karnei para* Group (*yareah ben yomo—karnei para*)

The melodic progression is a descending major third with steps of major and minor seconds. The direction of the ending tone is descending (a major second). The syllable–tone relationship is syllabic and melismatic. The melisma is on the stressed syllable of the word. The interval between the ending tones of the *karnei para* group and those of *etnah* and the end of the verse is a third (descending). In the London version, the tonal structure is based on the hexachord *F* on *C* (*C-D-E F#-G-A*); the ending tone is *G* and the tone leading to the ending is *A*. The interval is a major sixth. In the Amsterdam–New York version, the tonal structure is the pentachord *C* on *D* (*D-E F#-G-A*); the ending tone is *G* and the tone leading to the ending is *A*. The interval is a fourth.

Example 19 Numbers 35: 5. London version (Daniel Halfon): *yeraḥ ben yomo-karnei para*

al - paim ba - a - ma _____

Example 20 Numbers 35:5. Amsterdam–New York version (Abraham Lopes-Cardozo): *yareaḥ ben yomo-karnei para*

al - pa - yim ba - a - ma _____

Pasek

Wherever it appears, this accent is performed in the same way in all the variations, i.e. a leap ascending from a defined note to an undefined one.

Example 21 Exodus 12:29. London version (Daniel Halfon) *pasek-shofar holekh-revi'a*

vai - hi - ba ha - tsi ha - lai - la _____

Example 22 Genesis 12:17. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *darga-pasek*

A - do - nay _____

Shalsholet

In the London version, this is a melismatic development of a minor second resembling a trill, ending with a leap to an undefined note.

Example 23 London version (Daniel Halfon): *shalsholet*

shal - she - - - - let _____

In the Amsterdam–New York version, the melodic progression is broader than in the London version. It spans the trichord *C* on *D* (*D-E-F#-G*) on an ascending note, and at the end there is a jump to an undefined sound as in the London version.

Example 24 Amsterdam–New York version (Abraham Lopes-Cardozo): *shalsholet*

shal - she - - - let _____

Special Readings

A special system of accents serves a specified set of texts in the Pentateuch: Genesis 1, The Song of the Sea, The Ten Commandments, and This is the Blessing. Here we will demonstrate the system using Figures from the Ten Commandments.

The *sof pasuq* Group

The first verse in these chapters is a kind of opening, which is slightly different from other verses in later chapters. In the *sof pasuq* group, the melodic progression in the first verse is through steps of major and minor seconds. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic, neumatic, and syllabic. Where there is melisma on syllables, this creates deviations from the prosodic rhythm of the text. It is possible to discern that the melisma is on stressed syllables. The tonal structure is based on the hexachord *C*. The ending tone is *E*, and the direction of the ending pattern is a descent from *G* on *C*, and an ascent to the ending tone *E*.

Example 25 Exodus 20:1. Amsterdam–New York version (Abraham Lopes-Cardozo): *maarikh-tarḥa-sof pasuq*

kol had-va-rim _____ ha-e _____ le le-mor _____

For the rest of the verses of the *sof pasuq* group, we can say that the combination of *E-F#-G* ascending or descending is the essence of the tonal structure of the group. In the London version, the tonal organization is based on the hexachord *F* on *C*; in the Amsterdam–New York version, it is based on the hexachord *G* on *D*. The ending tone is always *E*.

In the London version, the melodic progression of the ending pattern (the *sof pasuq* accent) is in steps of seconds, and there is always a half-tone interval ascending and descending between *G* and *F#*, followed by a descent in a small leap of a minor third. In the Amsterdam–New York version, the ending pattern contains descents of seconds; a leap (fourth, fourth); descending steps on *E* (a diapason of a minor third); or a leap of a

descending minor third. A descent in steps of a minor third interval ($G-F\#-E$) is the most typical but there are also instances of a leap with a descent of a minor third ($G-E$).

In syllables with melisma, there are deviations from the prosodic rhythm of the text with the melisma on stressed syllables.

Example 26 Exodus 20:2. London version (Daniel Halfon): *maarikh-tarha-maarikh-sof pasuq*

me - e - rets mits - ra - im mi - beit 'a - va - dim _____

Example 27 Exodus 20:2. Amsterdam–New York version (Abraham Lopes-Cardozo): *maarikh-tarha-maarikh-sof pasuq*

me - e - rets mits - ra - im mi - beit 'a - va - dim _____

***Etnah* Group**

The melodic progression in this group is descending and it contains a melismatic motif on the accent *maarikh*. The ending motif is similar to that of *sof pasuq*. In the London version, the motif is a descending and ascending half tone ($G-F\#-G$), with a jump of a minor third following. In the Amsterdam–New York version, there is a descent in seconds on the ending note E , with an addition of $G-F\#-E$. The melodic progression proceeds with a broad interval of a minor seventh or an octave. The syllable–tone relationship is syllabic, neumatic, and melismatic. In syllables with melisma, there are deviations from the prosodic rhythm of the text. The combination of $E-F\#-G$ ascending or descending is the essence of the tonal structure of the *etnah* group, and therefore the steps may be as follows. The pentachord F on C ; the hexachord C on D ; or the hexachord E on B . The ending tone is E and the recitation note is also E .

Example 28 Exodus 20:4. London version (Daniel Halfon) *maarikh-tarha-etnah*

va - a - sher _____ ba - a - rets mi - ta - hat

Example 29 Exodus 20:4. Amsterdam–New York version (Abraham Lopes-Cardozo) *maarikh-tarha-etnah*

va - a - sher _____ ba - a - rets mi - ta - hat

The *zaqef qaton* Group

The melodic progression of this group opens with a recitative on the note E (*shofar mehupakh*). Then there is a leap on an undefined note (*trei qadmin*), and finally a procession of steps (*E-F#-G*), which is the basic pattern of this group. The syllable–tone relationship is syllabic, neumatic, and melismatic. In syllables with melisma, there are deviations from the prosodic rhythm of the text. In the London version, the melisma is broad, and in the Amsterdam–New York version, it is more limited. In most cases, the direction of the ending tone of this group is an ascent of a minor third to the cadential tone G (*E-F#-G*). There are also cases of an ascent to E (*D-E* or *C-D-E*).

The progression of the notes *E-F#-G* (ascending and descending) is the essential organizing principle of the tones and, therefore, there are developments of the trichord C on E and the tetrachord C on D. The common ending tone is G, but occasionally E is also used as the ending tone. The recitation is on E.

Example 30 Exodus 20:4. London version (Daniel Halfon): *Shofar mahapakh-trei-qadmin-zaqef qaton*

a - sher ba-sha-ma - im _____ mi - ma _____ 'al _____

Example 31 Exodus 20:4. Amsterdam–New York version (Abraham Lopes-Cardozo): *Shofar mahapakh-trei-qadmin-zaqef qaton*

a - sher ba - sha-ma - im mi - ma 'al _____

The *revi'a* Group

The melodic progression is based on steps of ascending and descending seconds, and the direction leading to the cadential tone is descending. The syllable–tone relationship is syllabic and melismatic. In the London version, the melisma is less pronounced than in the Amsterdam–New York version. In syllables with melisma, there are deviations from the prosodic rhythm of the text with the melisma on stressed syllables. The tonal structure is based on the trichord E on B and the ending tone is C.

Example 32 Exodus 20:10. London version (Daniel Halfon): *Shofar-holekh-revi'a*

u - vin - kha u - vi - te - kha

Example 33 Exodus 20:10. Amsterdam–New York version (Abraham Lopes-Cardozo): *Shofar-holekh-revi'a*

u - vin - kha u - vi - te - kha

The *tevir* sub-group

The melodic progression is a series of major and minor seconds that generally ascend and descend in a diapason of a fourth toward the ending note. The direction toward the cadential note is generally a descent of a major second toward *C* (*D-C*). The common ending tone is *C*. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic and syllabic. In syllables with melisma, there are deviations from the prosodic rhythm of the text.

Example 34 Exodus 20:3. London version (Daniel Halfon): *maarikh-tevir*

lo ih - ye le - kha

Example 35 Exodus 20:3. Amsterdam–New York (Abraham Lopes-Cardozo): *maarikh-tevir*

lo i - hi - ye le - kha

Haftarah

The books of the prophets are read after the reading of the Pentateuch. This reading is known as the *haftarah* as in “ending,” because this part ends the prayer (Albogen [1913] 1988: 131). We do not know when the reading from the prophets was introduced into the service, but there are some hints for reading from the prophets in the Mishnah. Albogen assumes that the reading of the Prophets was introduced later than the reading of the Pentateuch, and he also believes that when the *haftarah* was being introduced, the canon of the prophets was not yet established (Albogen [1913] 1988: 132).

The principle on which *haftarot* were chosen was that there should be some degree of contiguity between the content of the *haftarah* and the portion of the week that preceded it. When two portions are read, then it is normal practice to read the *haftarah* that accompanied the second, although in earlier days and in some communities, the first portion would in fact be read, and occasionally the designated *haftarah* would be exchanged with some other one (Albogen [1913] 1988: 133).

Today, the *haftarah* is linked to the subject matter of the Pentateuch portion to be read in the synagogue, and occasionally it is linked to the period close to its scheduled reading. The *haftarot* were not taken equally from the various prophets: the number of *haftarot* taken from Isaiah and the Book of Kings is higher relative to those from other prophets.

In *haftarah* reading, the accents are different in that the musical patterns are not the same. Sources from the late Middle Ages (Ashkenazi and Sephardic) indicate that this practice was customary even during that period.

This chapter presents the main groups of disjunctive accents that create the musical development of *haftarah* cantillation. The musical analysis given here presents the most common characteristics. All the musical patterns of the *haftarah* accents in both versions (London and Amsterdam–New York) are presented in musical transcription at the end of the chapter.

As in the reading of the Pentateuch, the accents mark the syntax, in that they determine the locations of the stops and the connections in the text. Similarly, in *haftarah* reading, the rhythmic structure of the musical form stems from the relationship between the length of the sound of the accented syllables (long) and the non-accented (short). The rhythm is “flowing rhythm,” according to the prosodic rhythm of the text. Usually, the syllable–tone relationship is syllabic and neumatic, and sometimes melismatic for certain accents.

The *sof pasuq* Group

The melodic progression is composed of steps of seconds, and from ascending and descending leaps of a fourth and a minor third. The movement toward the ending tone is a descent in steps of seconds. The tonal structure is based on progressions on trichord *D* (the Amsterdam–New York version) or on pentachord *D* (London version). The ending tone is *D*.

Example 36 Isaiah 40:27. London version (Daniel Halfon): *tarḥa-maariḥ-sof-pasuq*

u - me - e - lo - hai mish-pa - ti ya - 'a - vor _____

Example 37 Isaiah 40:27. Amsterdam–New York Version (Ira Rohde): *tarḥa-maariḥ-sof-pasuq*

u - me - e - lo - hai mish-pa - ti ya - 'a - vor _____

The *etnah* Group

The melodic progression of this group is composed of the repetition of the tone *F* and of steps of ascending and descending seconds in an interval of a minor third. The tonal structure is based on the trichord *D*. The movement toward the ending tone is a descent in steps to the tone *D*.

Example 38 Isaiah 40:27. All the versions (Ira Rohde) – *tarkha-etnah*

ut - da - ber is _____ ra - el _____

The *revi'a* Group

The melodic progression for this accent is composed of ascending and descending seconds in an interval of a fourth (Amsterdam–New York) or fifth (London). The musical progression is based on the trichord *D* (Amsterdam–New York) or the pentachord *D* (London), and the movement toward to ending tone is a descent.

Example 39 Isaiah 40:28. London version (Daniel Halfon): *Shofar holekh-revi'a*

im - lo _____ sha - m'a - ta

Example 40 Isaiah 40:28. Amsterdam–New York Version (Ira Rohde): *Shofar holekh-revi'a*

im - lo _____ sha - ma' _____ ta

The *segolta* Group

Zarqa: The melodic progression for this accent is composed of seconds and leaps of a minor third and of a fourth in a diapason of a diminished fifth. The movement toward the ending tone is a descent in a leap of a fourth. The tonal structure is based on the pentachord *B* on *E*, and the ending tone is *E*. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic and neumatic, and the melisma creates a deviation from the prosodic rhythm of the text.

Segolta: The melodic progression here is composed of steps of ascending and descending seconds in a diapason of a minor third. The tonal structure is based on the trichord *D* and the ending tone is *D*. The direction is a descent to the cadential tone *D*.

Example 41 *Zarqa-segolta*. All the versions (Daniel Halfon)



The *zaqef qaton* Group

The melodic progression here is composed of steps of seconds. At the end of the accent *qadma*, there is a leap of a descending fourth, followed by steps of descending seconds to the cadential tone *D*. The tonal structure of the London version is based on the pentachord *D*, while the Amsterdam–New York version is based on the hexachord *A* on *D*. The syllable–tone relationship is syllabic and neumatic.

Example 42 Isaiah 40:27. London version (Daniel Halfon): *Shofar mehupakh-qadma-zaqef qaton*



Figure 43 Isaiah 40:27. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *Shofar mehupakh-qadma-zaqef qaton*.



The *pazer gadol* Subgroup

The melodic progression here is composed of repetition on one tone followed by ascending and descending steps of seconds. After the recitation in the London version, there is a leap of a fourth to the melisma. The tonal structure in the London version is based on the hexachord *C*, while in the Amsterdam–New York version, it is on the tetrachord *E*. The direction is towards a descent of a major second to the cadential tone *F*. The recitation in the London version is on *C*, while in the Amsterdam–New York version, (in the same place) it is on *F*. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic and syllabic (in the recitation).

Example 44 *Pazer gadol*. London version (Daniel Halfon)

pa - zer ga - dol _____

Example 45 *Pazer gadol*. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde)

pa - zer ga - dol _____

The Subgroup *talsha*

The melodic progression of this accent in the London version is based on descending and ascending steps of seconds, and the ending includes a descending leap of a third followed by an ascent of a major second to the cadential tone *G*. In the Amsterdam–New York version, the melodic progression opens with a descending leap of a fourth followed by two leaps, a fourth, and a major third, which are then followed by a series of steps in seconds; at the end, there is an ascent of a major second to the cadential tone *G*. The tonal structure in the London version is based on the tetrachord *E* and the cadential tone is *G*. In the Amsterdam–New York version, the tonal structure is based on the hexachord *G* on *C*, and the ending tone is *G*. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic.

Example 46 *Talsha*. London version (Daniel Halfon)

tal - sha _____

Example 47 *Talsha*. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde)

tal - sha _____

The *gerish* Subgroup

In this subgroup, the melodic progression in the London version consists of ascending and descending steps of seconds, and the direction on the cadential tone is a descent. In the Amsterdam–New York version, there is an ascent in steps on the *azla* accent followed by a leap of a minor third. On the *gerish* accent, there is a descent in steps to the cadential tone. The tonal structure is based on a pentachord (London) and a hexachord (Amsterdam–New York), and the cadential tone is *D*. The syllable–tone relationship is syllabic, neumatic, and extended neumatic.

Example 48 Isaiah 40:28. London version (Daniel Halfon): *azla-gerish*

ha - lo _____ ya - da - ta

Example 49 Isaiah 40:28. Amsterdam–New York version (Ira Rohde): *azla-gerish*

ha - lo _____ ya - da - ta

The *tevir* Subgroup

The melodic progression here is composed of ascending and descending steps of seconds, and the movement to the cadential tone is a descent of a major second. The tonal structure is based on the pentachord *B* and the cadential tone is *D*. The syllable–tone relationship is melismatic and syllabic.

Example 50 *Darga-tevir*. All the versions (Daniel Halfon)

dar - ga _____ te - bir _____

Paseq

As in all singing of the Sephardic–Portuguese Pentateuch, this accent is performed as a leap from a lower note to an upper, undefined note.

Example 51 Isaiah 40:28. All the versions (Daniel Halfon): *kadma-shofar-holekh-paseq*

E - lo - hei 'o - lam _____

Conclusion















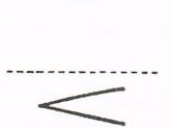




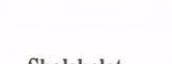
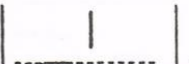


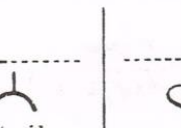
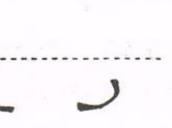
The melodic structure of Biblical cantillation in the Spanish–Portuguese liturgy, like other Sephardic traditions, reflects the succession of the accentuation signs, which is constructed according to the syntax of the text. The musical form derives from the form and content of the biblical text and the rhythmic structure of the cantillation is based on a clear sense of beat but without a fixed meter. Rhythmic patterns derive from the patterns of accented and unaccented syllables of the text. The text–music relations in cantillation are varied, most accents are rendered syllabically, some create a neumatic texture (two to three tones to a syllable), while a selected number of accents are performed in a very melismatic manner.

The analysis described above reveals that the rhythmic patterns in this genre resemble the Eastern and Moroccan Sephardic biblical cantillations, but the tonal base of Spanish–Portuguese cantillation differs from that of the two other Sephardic groups. In the Jerusalem–Sephardic cantillation, which is the principal style of liturgy among the Sephardic synagogues in Israel and around the world, the modality is based on the first tetrachord of the Arabic maqam “*Siga*,” with a characteristic microtone on the first note, which is nonexistent in the Spanish–Portuguese group. There is a fair amount of pentatonic progressions in Jewish Moroccan cantillation, which is not heard in the Sephardic–Portuguese liturgy. It may be said, in principle, that the melodic progressions have European sounding.

The slight differences between the three versions presented here may be explained as related to the development of “local” traditions of the three communities, in general we may notice a common musical practice of this genre in the Spanish–Portuguese liturgy.

In the genre of biblical cantillation of this tradition, the musical characteristic is ambiguous: on one hand, the pronunciation creates accentuation and rhythmic patterns similar to the two other Sephardic cantillations, but the melodic structure tends toward the European style. These ambiguous characteristics reflect the cultural identity of this community, which, because of its unique history, interlaces European, Near Eastern and Moroccan elements.

Appendix 1
Table of Pentateuch Accentuations—Sephardic Tradition (Cardozo 1991: 9)

5	4	3	2	1
				
Yare'ach Ben Yomo	Pazer Gadol	Segolta	Shofar Holech	Zarka
10	9	8	7	6
				
R'bi'a	Pasek	Azla G'rish	Talsha	Karne Para
15	14	13	12	11
				
Zakef Gadol	Zakef Katon	T're Kadmin	Kadma	Shofar M'hupach
20	19	18	17	16
				
Tebir	Darga	T're Ta'ame	Sh'ne Ger'shin	Shalsholet
25	24	23	22	21
				
Sof Pasuk	Tirtsa	Y'tib	Atnach	Ma'arich tarcha

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