

Reconstructed melody

There has been an attempted reconstruction of the original melody by Suzanne Haïk-Vantoura, on the basis of the shapes and positions of the marks and without any reference to existing melodies, as described in her book *La musique de la Bible révélée* and her records. That reconstruction assumes the signs represent the degrees of various musical scales, that is individual notes, which puts it at odds with all existing traditions where the signs invariably represent melodic motives; it also takes no account of the existence of older systems of notation, such as the Babylonian and Palestinian systems. Musicologists have rejected her results as dubious and her methodology as flawed.^[9] A similar reconstructive proposal was developed by American composer and pianist Jeffrey Burns and posthumously published in 2011.^[10]

Traditional melodies

Ashkenazic melodies

In the Ashkenazic musical tradition for cantillation, each of the local geographical customs includes a total of six major and numerous minor separate melodies for cantillation:

- Torah and Haftaret (3 melodies)

- 1. Torah (general melody for the whole year) 🎧 Example
- 2. Torah – special melody for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. One may hear the reading at [3] (<http://www.torahplace.com/free-torah-audio-downloads-cantillation/yom-kippur-reading-cantillation/>). This tune is also employed on Simhat Torah in various degrees (depending on the specific community). Echoes of it can also be heard for certain verses in the Torah reading for fast days in some communities.
 - There are a number of variants employed for special sections, such as those for the Aseret haDibrot (Ten Commandments), Az Yashir (Song of the Sea), and the list of Masa'ot.
 - In all Torah modes, there is a "coda" motif that is used for the last few words of each reading.
 - There is a special coda used at the end of each of the five books of the Torah that leads to the traditional exclamation of "Hazak Hazak V'Nithazek!" (Be strong, be strong so we are strengthened!).

- 3. Haftaret 🎧 Example

- In the haftarah mode, there is also a "coda" motif. In the Western Ashkenazic mode, this is applied to the end of every verse. A different coda is used at the end of the haftarah among both Eastern and Western Ashkenazim, modulating from minor to major to introduce the following blessing.
- This is also the tune that is applied when reading the non-haftarah portions of the books of the Prophets and the latter Writings (Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles), although this usage is largely theoretical, as these are not subject to public reading as the other sections and books are.

- The Five Megillot (3 melodies are employed for these five scrolls)

- 4. Esther – a mostly light and joyous tune with elements of drama and foreboding used for the Megillat Esther on Purim. The coda at the end of each pasuk (verse) modulates from major to minor to produce a more serious effect. Certain short passages pertaining to the destruction of the temple are customarily read in the tune of Lamentations. There are also additional musical customs, such as saying the word סוס (horse) with a neighing sound, not indicated by the cantillation.
- 5. Lamentations – a mournful tune. Echoes of it can also be heard for certain verses in Esther and in the Torah reading preceding the Ninth of Av. The Haftaret preceding and during the Ninth of Av also use this melody, when read in non-Hasidic shuls. 🎧 Example
- 6. The three remaining scrolls are publicly read within Ashkenazic communities during the three pilgrimage festivals. All are read in the same melody, which may be considered the "general" melody for the megillot: the Song of Songs on Passover; Ruth on Shavuot; Ecclesiastes on Sukkot.

The Ashkenazic tradition preserves no melody for the special cantillation notes of Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, which were not publicly read in the synagogue by European Jews. However, the Ashkenazic yeshiva known as Aderet Eliyahu, or (more informally) *Zilberman's*, in the Old City of Jerusalem, uses an adaptation of the Syrian cantillation-melody for these books, and this is becoming more popular among other Ashkenazim as well.

Sephardic and Eastern melodies

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was a single Ottoman-Sephardic tradition (no doubt with local variations) covering Turkey, Syria, Palestine and Egypt.^[11] Today the Jerusalem-Sephardic, Syrian, Egyptian and Baghdadi melodies recognisably belong to a single family. For example, in these traditions the Torah reading is always or almost always in Maqam Sigah. There are some variations, among individual readers as well as among communities: for example the Egyptian melody is related to the more elaborate and cantorial form of the Syrian melody and was transitioning toward Maqam Huzzam before the mass expulsion in 1950. The Karaite tradition, being based on the Egyptian, also forms part of this group.^[12]

Another recognisable family consists of the Iraqi (Mosul and Iraqi diaspora), Spanish-Moroccan and Spanish and Portuguese melodies. The probable reason for the occurrence of similar melodies at opposite ends of the Arab world is that they represent the remains of an old Arab-Jewish tradition not overlaid by the later Ottoman-Sephardic tradition that spread to the countries in between. There may also have been some convergence between the London Spanish and Portuguese and Iraqi melodies during British rule in India and the British Mandate of Mesopotamia.

The Jews of North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and Yemen all had local musical traditions for cantillation. When these Jewish communities emigrated (mostly to Israel) during the twentieth century, they brought their musical traditions with them. But as the immigrants themselves grew older, many particular national melodies began to be forgotten, or to become assimilated into the "Jerusalem Sephardic" melting-pot.

As with the Ashkenazim, there is one tune for Torah readings and a different tune for haftarot. Spanish and Portuguese Jews have a special tune for the Ten Commandments when read according to the *ta'am elyon*, known as "High Na'um", which is also used for some other words and passages which it is desired to emphasize.^[13] Other communities, such as the Syrian Jews, observe the differences between the two sets of cantillation marks for the Ten Commandments but have no special melody for *ta'am 'elyon*.^[14] There is no special tune for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in any Sephardic tradition. As with Ashkenazim, the normal musical value of cantillation signs is replaced by a "coda" motif at the end of each Torah reading and of each haftarah verse (though there is no special coda for the end of the haftarah), suggesting a common origin for the Sephardi and Ashkenazi chants.

Eastern Jewish communities have no liturgical tradition of reading Ecclesiastes, and there is no public liturgical reading of Song of Songs on Passover, though brief extracts may be read after the morning service during the first half of Nisan. (Individuals may read it after the Passover Seder, and many communities recite it every Friday night.) There are specialized tunes for Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther and Lamentations. The prose passages at the beginning and end of the book of Job may be read either to the tune of Song of Songs or to that of Ruth, depending on the community. The Ruth tune is generally the "default" tune for any book of the Ketuvim (Hagiographa) that does not have a tune of its own.

Unlike the Ashkenazic tradition, the eastern traditions, in particular that of the Syrian Jews, include melodies for the special cantillation of Psalms, Proverbs and the poetic parts of Job. In many eastern communities, Proverbs is read on the six Sabbaths between Passover and Shavuot, Job on the Ninth of Av, and Psalms are read on a great many occasions. The cantillation melody for Psalms can also vary depending on the occasion. The Spanish and Portuguese Jews have no tradition for the rendering of the Psalms according to the cantillation marks, but the melody used for several psalms in the evening service is noticeably similar to that of Syrian psalm cantillation, and may represent the remnants of such a tradition.

Yemenite melodies