With One Voice: Elements of Acclamation in Early Jewish Liturgical Poetry[*]

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> The Arians . . . previously assembled by night in the public porticoes,
> and were divided into bands, so that they sang antiphonally,
> for they had composed certain refrains which reflected their own dogma. . . .
> John [Chrysostom] was fearful lest any of his own church people
> should be led astray by witnessing these exhibitions, and therefore
> commanded them to sing hymns in the same manner. . . .
> Having commenced the custom of singing hymns in the manner and from
> the cause above stated, the members of the Catholic Church
> did not discontinue the practice, but have retained it to the present day.
>
> ~Sozomen[1]

◼ Abstract

In this essay, the Rosh Hashanah Shofar service poems by the Jewish poet Yose ben Yose (fourth or fifth century CE, Land of Israel) are read through the lens of the Late Antique practice of acclamation. Yose's surviving body of works is limited, but he was influential within the Jewish tradition, and his poems have long been noted for their use of formal features such as fixed-word repetitions and refrains—features which align not only with poetic norms from the biblical period to Late Antiquity but also with the practice of acclamation. Jews attended (and performed in) the theater and games; they were familiar with rhetorical and oratorical training and related literary norms; and they were integrated socially, commercially, and politically into diverse and varied communities. The affinity of Jewish liturgical

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[1] Salaminius Hermias Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.8 (PG 67:1536–1537).

poetry from antiquity for other forms of poetic composition reflects Jews' general embeddedness in Late Ancient culture. Reading Yose's poetry as shaped by the conventions of acclamation highlights how Yose and his congregants were not only distinctly Jewish but also thoroughly Roman.

◼ Introduction

In his evocative analysis of Christian congregational activism in fifth-century Hippo, Brent Shaw observes how fluidly practices of communal chanting—conveying approval, rejection, or mockery—moved among religious, theatrical, and civic venues. Popular acclamation and protest could be both spontaneous and elaborate because it reflected a pervasive norm of civic behavior in antiquity.

> Public chanting functioned so well precisely because it was a performance that was understood by the great and the small, and that linked them. . . . [T]he chants were not invented on occasions such as these. The people were well educated in their own culture. Like the combatants of Caesarea, they already knew what to do. Some of the chants had been transferred to the church from municipal elections, others from the arena and the theater.[2]

As Shaw also observes, "The bishop as preacher was one voice of the divine, but the powerful collective enunciations of the people counted in the same way."[3] Communal chant was commonplace throughout late ancient society; it constituted a potent cultural mechanism enabling the people to speak, loudly, to the powerful, in almost any setting. Collective, communal voices colored every public assembly, whether political, theatrical, athletic, religious, or mixed.

The composition, performance, social setting, significance, and recording of acclamatory chanting in antiquity has received significant scholarly attention in recent years. In addition to Shaw's important work on the communal dynamics of chant creation and performance, Charlotte Roueché has written on the importance of writing (stenography as well as epigraphy) both for preserving the texts of acclamations and indicating their significance as something worthy of preservation.[4] Gregory Aldrete's *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome* provides a comprehensive overview of how verbal and nonverbal communications interpenetrated diverse social settings, while Garrett Fagan and others include acclamation in their work on the pervasive appeal of spectacle.[5] Finally, Michael

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[2] Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 449, 455. Chapter 10 of this volume, "Sing a New Song," deals extensively with acclamations in the African church of the late-4th and early-5th centuries (pp. 441–89).

[3] Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, 452.

[4] See Charlotte Roueché, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and Late Roman Periods* (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1993); also, eadem, "Acclamations in the Later Roman Empire: New Evidence from Aphrodisias," *Journal of Roman Studies* 74 (1984): 181–99.

[5] Garrett G. Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman*

Stuart Williams' analysis of the hymns of Ambrose of Milan as acclamation offers a case-study of a specific, significant episode which, significantly for the present study, introduces a liturgical component to the subject.[6]

Williams approaches Ambrose's hymns as performed compositions. He suggests mechanisms by which congregational participation in the performance of liturgical poetry may have been facilitated while underscoring concrete constructive consequences of congregational engagement in the performance of hymns. His work suggests new ways of appreciating other episodes, such as Chrysostom's choral duels with the Arians, and helps elucidate more generally both how and why hymnography seems to appear in multiple religious communities in Late Antiquity simultaneously.[7] Williams and Shaw draw attention to a particular moment when acclamation and liturgy seem to converge in both the East and West: the late-fourth and early-fifth centuries CE. Ambrose and Chrysostom provide evidence of Christian and Arian practices in Hippo and Constantinople (and perhaps Antioch, whence came Chrysostom).

This essay will argue that similar patterns can be discerned in Jewish poetry from this same period. The works examined below are by Yose ben Yose (ca. fourth/fifth century CE, Land of Israel). Reading Yose's compositions through the lens of acclamation promises to illuminate the issue of "congregational participation" in synagogue liturgy — and other liturgical practices, by extension — because such an approach helps establish the broader, conventional dynamics among the performer (here, the cantor), the figure of authority (the deity), and the audience (the worshippers).

Given how little we can know with certainty about liturgical performance in the synagogues of antiquity, scholars have increasingly come to value insights that can be gleaned from comparative studies, extrapolated from contextual sources, and mined from the texts sources themselves. While some scholars have speculated that communal response was restricted in the synagogue, as in the Temple, others now

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Games (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); *Popular Culture in the Ancient World* (ed. Lucy Grig; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and, with reference to Jewish contexts, see Zeev Weiss, *Public Spectacles in Roman and Late Antique Palestine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), and Loren R. Spielman, "Sitting with Scorners: Jewish Attitudes toward Roman Spectacle Entertainment from the Herodian Period through the Muslim Conquest" (Ph.D. diss., Jewish Theological Seminary, 2010).

[6] Gregory S. Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamation in Ancient Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1976); and Michael Stuart Williams, "Hymns as Acclamations: The Case of Ambrose of Milan," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6 (2013): 108–34.

[7] On Chrysostom, see Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.8 (PG 67:1536–1537); and Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.8 (PG 67:687–692). Speaking to the earlier period, Peter Jeffrey thoroughly explores "Philo's Impact on Christian Psalmody," in *Psalms in Community: Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical, and Artistic Traditions* (ed. Harold Attridge and Margot Fassler; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 147–88.

argue that the "democratizing" process of the liturgy extended to popular recitation of psalms and prayers once restricted to priests and Levites.[8] Furthermore, Jews and Christians alike were attuned to theater, politics, and a range of performances, civic and religious; their writings reveal awareness of and curiosity about each other's rituals. Jews and Christians alike read themselves into their liturgies not only through emotional sympathy with what they heard, but through active participation by means of speaking.[9]

While current studies often assume robust congregational engagement, the larger cultural context which created expectations for popular participation in liturgical

[8] See, for example, Ezra Fleischer, "The Influence of Choral Elements on the Formation and Development of Piyyut Genres," *Yuval* 3 (1974): 18–48 [Hebrew]. Relying largely on internal Jewish sources, he asserts that Jewish congregations were largely passive until the 6th century, when professional choirs were possibly added to assist the cantor in liturgical transitions. While Fleischer credits Andalusian poets with the innovative desire fully to involve the congregation in piyyuṭ, scholarship since the 1970s has taken a more contextual approach to the study of early hymnography, and these contextual sources argue strongly in favor of some form of participation. Note the discussion in Amnon Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992) 111–29. As these studies delineate, professional choirs, lay choirs, and full congregational participation were all known models available in this period, and in addition to aesthetics, factors such as finances and population size likely influenced norms of liturgical performance in every setting. However, the urban-rural divide remains significantly understudied. For an innovative initial analysis of this basic element of synagogue worship, see Chad Spigel, *Ancient Synagogue Seating Capacities: Methodology, Analysis and Limits* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012). Even scholars who minimize congregational activity recognize that the Holy Days—Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and the month of Elul that precedes these holy days—differed in terms of inviting more community involvement. The penitential litanies of the *seliḥot* prayers, for example, obviously invite congregational participation through their highly repetitive formulations. See Laura S. Lieber, "Confessing from A–Z: Penitential Forms in Early Synagogue Poetry," in *Penitential Prayer: Origins, Development, and Impact* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney Werline; 3 vols.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008) 3:99–125. The texts I examined in that article are often litanies rather than poetry, but could easily serve as examples of (non-poetic) acclamations. It is significant that the poetry of Yose examined here was composed for this particularly participatory liturgical season.

[9] Within the Jewish context, where the idea of "congregational refrain" has become more commonly accepted, see Michael Tzvi Novick, "The Poetics of Yannai's Sixth: Between Scripture, God, and Congregation," in *Giving a Diamond: Essays in Honor of Joseph Yahalom on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Wout van Bekkum and Naoya Katsumata; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 69–81; Laura S. Lieber, "The Rhetoric of Participation: The Experiential Elements of Early Hebrew Liturgical Poetry," *Journal of Religion* 90 (2010): 119–47; and Eliyahu Schleifer, "Jewish Liturgical Music from the Bible to Hasidism," in *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience* (ed. Lawrence Hoffman and Janet Walton; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992) 13–58. In regard to refrains in Greek and Syriac hymnography, see Thomas Arentzen's recent study of refrains in Romanos, "Voices Interwoven: Refrains and Vocal Participation in the Kontakia," in *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 66 (2016): 1–11; and Margot Fassler and Peter Jeffrey, "Christian Liturgical Music from the Bible to the Renaissance," in *Sacred Sound and Social Change*, 84–123. On the general context of Hellenistic and later antiquity, see William D. Furley and Jan Maarten Bremer, *Greek Hymns: Selected Cult Songs from the Archaic to the Hellenistic Period* (Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity 9–10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), esp. 1:20–34; and Margaret Alexiou, *After Antiquity: Greek Language, Myth and Metaphor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), esp. 52–65. Among the Syriac terms Alexiou regards as relevant to the study of the early Greek *kontakia* is *ma'mitha* (refrain).

performance remains unexamined—despite the fact that we see the rise of this practice in the fourth century CE, in the East and West, in Christianity, Samaritanism, and Judaism. In this study, rhetorical structures found in (but far from unique to) Jewish poetry from Late Antiquity strengthen emerging understandings concerning the role of the congregation in worship generally. Poetic repetitions are not "merely" rhetorical or aesthetic; they reflect the widespread popularity of acclamation as a mechanism enabling plebian dialogue with the powers that be.

Yose's surviving body of works is limited, but he was influential within the Jewish tradition, and his poems have long been noted for their use of formal features such as fixed-word repetitions and refrains—features which align not only with poetic norms from the biblical period to Late Antiquity but also with the practice of acclamation. Jews attended (and performed in) the theater and games; they were familiar with rhetorical and oratorical training and related literary norms; and they were integrated socially, commercially, and politically into diverse and varied communities.[10] The affinity of Jewish liturgical poetry from antiquity for other forms of poetic composition reflects Jews' general embeddedness in the culture of Late Antiquity.[11] Reading Yose's poetry as shaped by the conventions of acclamation highlights how Yose and his congregants were not only distinctly Jewish but also thoroughly Roman.

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[10] The bibliography on Jews as members and active participants in the culture of Late Antiquity has increased significantly in recent years, and a number of such works are cited below. In addition to works cited elsewhere in this essay, notable volumes include Alexei Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Adiel Schremer, *Brothers Estranged: Heresy, Christianity and Jewish Identity in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Seth Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society? Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (2nd ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Steven Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World: Towards a New Jewish Archaeology* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and the anthology edited by Fine, *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue* (London: Routledge, 1999). Material culture and physical space are increasingly recognized as an important source for understanding the Romanness of Jewry in Late Antiquity; see, for example, Gil Klein, "Torah in *triclinia*: The Rabbinic Banquet and the Significance of Architecture," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 102 (2012): 325–370, and Charlotte Fonrobert, "Neighborhood as Ritual Space: The Case of the Rabbinic *Eruv*," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 10 (2008): 239–58.

[11] See Joseph Yahalom, *Poetry and Society in the Galilee in Late Antiquity* (Tel Aviv: Kibbutz Hame'uchad, 1999). Through Yahalom's work, the work of Michael Roberts (*The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989]) has become a touchstone. It is increasingly common to see hymnography studied comparatively; see Ophir Münz-Manor, "Liturgical Poetry in the Late Antique Near East: A Comparative Approach," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 1 (2010): 336–61; and Laura S. Lieber, "Theater of the Holy: Jewish Piyyut, Christian Hymnography, and the Rhetoric of the Late Ancient Stage," *Harvard Theological Review* 108 (2015): 327–55. Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan poetry should be approached as distinctive instantiations of a common practice.

◼ The Social Setting of Acclamation

The term "acclamation" derives from the Latin *acclamo*, "to shout" (with a secondary meaning, "to protest," and a tertiary meaning of "to approve, applaud").[12] In practice, "acclamation" translates a variety of Greek and Latin terms which differ considerably in connotation but which have content, form, and performance in common: *conclamatio, vox, adclamatio* in Latin; *phōnē, ekboēsis,* and *euphēmia* in Greek—among others. As Charlotte Roueché notes, "For this reason [the diversity of terminology], the occasions on which acclamations are used have not always been recognized or understood: it is only by the identification of some of the characteristic terminology, and by the discriminating analysis of a wide variety of texts that our understanding of the phenomenon has gradually been advanced."[13] In general, the practice of responsive shouting—in public, in unison, by a crowd, directed at a specific figure who was perceived as possessing concrete powers— was widespread. It was associated with weddings (where guests would exclaim "Io Hymen!" and "Talassio!"), with military triumphs (at which the public would assemble and shout "Io, Triumphe!"), and with religious ritual (e.g., famously in Acts 19:24–31, where the Ephesian silversmiths rally against Paul using the pagan cultic cry [*ekrazon*], "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"). Acclamations could honor or critique powerful individuals of various ranks and stations, from the Emperor to local magistrates, in a range of public venues, including theaters and circuses. As J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz notes, acclamations "formed a continuous accompaniment of public life."[14] These chants occurred, spontaneously but not haphazardly, in settings where crowds gathered and where a powerful figure was in attendance (e.g., the emperor attending the games). Conversely, the rhetorical force of acclamation, fueled by the presence of an authority, could also help gather a crowd. These chants offered both a demonstration of and a means for creating public unity, expressing favor or disfavor, rallying support or opposition. It was a way of meeting and greeting the powerful with a display of parallel power.

Reflecting the diversity of terminology and use in the original sources, scholars employ the term "acclamation" in varied ways: Aldrete hews faithfully to the essential idea of acclamation as "any shouted comment"[15]; Roueché offers a more elaborate definition: "the expression, in unison, of wish, opinion or belief, by a large

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[12] The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* offers the following definition of *acclamatio*: "1. Shouting, bawling. 2. A shout of comment (spec.) b. of disapproval. c. of approval."

[13] Roueché, "Acclamation in the Later Roman Empire," 181.

[14] J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Late Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 209. Also note Jaclyn Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and His Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. 42–64; and Peter N. Bell, *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian: Its Nature, Management, and Mediation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), who uses the term "acclamation culture" to describe Late Antiquity.

[15] Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*, 101.

gathering of people, often employing conventional rhythms and turns of phrase";[16] Williams, by contrast, considers acclamations and popular songs together as "a means by which a crowd could express support, opinions, and political demands, or merely its natural exuberance."[17] The sheer diversity of terminology reflects the ubiquity of the practice.[18] In general, the key elements distinguishing acclamation from other modes of speech are: (1) its public performance—whether at a theater, civic gathering, or religious ritual; (2) its emphasis on verbalized unity, a crowd of people speaking with one voice, at volume; and (3) its orientation towards a specific, powerful audience (whether a magistrate, bishop, emperor, or deity). Acclamations transform brief vocalizations that would otherwise be monologues—whether phrases from a theatrical performance, a political declamation, or even the "speech" of a person or group's presence—into a very specific variety of implicit dialogue.

The creation and deployment of such expressions reflects a widespread and sophisticated cultural literacy, as these shouts could be rehearsed or spontaneously deployed—but even when "spontaneous," we can infer skill, experience, and craftsmanship among participants. Indeed, as with the shout of "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians," transferred from religious ritual to civic protest in Acts 19, or the hymns of Ambrose translated from the church to the public square, a single cry or anthology of shouts could be adapted to a variety of circumstances. Context, form, and performance, not themes or content *per se*, defined an utterance as an acclamation.[19]

■ The Composition of Acclamations: Anticipation of Refrains

As performed (often spontaneous) speech, acclamations possess two particularly notable features: they are formulaic (often with specific words repeated), and they are rhythmic. These two features encourage large-scale participation. As Aldrete notes, "Verbal formulas allowed large numbers of people to communicate directly with a minimum of planning . . . acclamations could serve as powerful vehicles of spontaneous expressions because, within the basic structures of acclamations, words could easily be altered to convey a variety of messages."[20] The rhythmic nature

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[16] Roueché, "Acclamation in the Later Roman Empire," 181.

[17] Williams, "Hymns as Acclamations," 109.

[18] Acclamations survive from an array of periods and locations, from Rome proper to Constantinople to the provinces; see Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*, 101–27; Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 262–70; and Williams, "Hymns as Acclamations," 116.

[19] For example, Derek Krueger explains how acclamations could be translated into the congregational context in his analysis of a poem by the great hymnographer of 6th-century Constantinople, Romanos the Melodist. He writes, "When the congregation joins in the refrain, they too yearn to participate appropriately in praising God, to take the acclamation of the innocent children [of the stanza's refrain] occurring in a conflated past and present—as their cue for celebration" (*Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014] 88). Also see Arentzen's recent study of refrains in Romanos, "Voices Interwoven: Refrains and Vocal Participation in the Kontakia."

[20] Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*, 129–30.

of the chants, which often verged upon verse, further assisted mass participation, enabling people to join spontaneous acclamations quickly and forcefully.[21] Crowds, alert to the potential of acclamations—like audiences at modern rallies, revivals, protests, and sporting events—were evidently quick to join chants (and associated practices such as rhythmic clapping), which sometimes arose spontaneously and in other cases may have been orchestrated by partisan *claques*, whose leaders functioned as literal cheerleaders.[22] A dynamic still evident in ecclesial contexts, the unrehearsed and spontaneous give-and-take between speaker and congregation ("call and response"), offers perhaps the closest analogy to ancient acclamations, including the religious context and overtones which would have colored ancient spectacles including plays, gladiatorial games, and civic installations.[23] Experienced audiences came anticipating and prepared to participate in the sermon, while novice listeners, unfamiliar with the customs of the dialogical performance, might have found themselves adrift.[24] The rich sensory experience of participating in group speech—speaking in unison with others speaking, and at volume—achieves a powerful effect, orchestrating not only a group experience but a shared identity among those who combined their voices into a collective.

While acclamations could be very short and simple—a word or phrase—they could become quite elaborate.[25] Indeed, in Late Antiquity, complex acclamations become common, and were often recorded. The senatorial reception of the Theodosian Code, the epigraphic acclamations of Aphrodisias, the inscribed Palestinian milestones from the reign of Julian, and the recorded chants of the

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[21] On "speech at volume," see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Patristic Worlds," in *Patristic Studies in the Twenty-First Century: Proceedings of an International Conference to Mark the 50ᵗʰ Anniversary of the International Association for Patristic Studies* (ed. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, et al.; Belgium: Brepols, 2015) 25–53.

[22] See Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire, AD 284–430* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) 176; Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 157–229; and Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena*, 121–54.

[23] On call-and-response singing and chanting, see Ted Gioia, *Work Songs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Robin Sylvan, *Traces of the Spirit: The Religious Dimensions of Popular Song* (New York: NYU Press, 2002); Noriko Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Evans E. Crawford and Thomas H. Troeger, *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).

[24] Tacitus describes a group of rural Italians compelled at sword-point to attend, and appreciate, a theatrical performance by Nero; these rustics, unlike the Roman plebs, were unfamiliar with the norms of urban acclamation ("not competent to their degrading task [*labori inhonesto*]") and failed to participate in the complex acclamations of the customary audience. As Tacitus describes them, "They flagged with inexperienced hands; they deranged the experts" (*Ann*. 16:5 [trans. John Jackson; Loeb Classical Library 322; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937], 342–45). The inexperience of these rustics stands in contrast to the skill of the urban plebs who, as Aldrete notes, "became particularly adept at learning and using complex rhythmic formulas, both those that were verbal and those that involved clapping" (146).

[25] Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, 441–89, offers the texts of a number of representative acclamations. See also Roueché, *Performers and Partisans*, for examples of epigraphic acclamatory texts from Aphrodisias.

Blue and Green factions all indicate how acclamation turned into a civic and imperial ceremonial.[26] The anti-Arian hymn performances by Ambrose and John Chrysostom—contemporaries of the hymnographer Ephrem the Syrian—illustrate Christian adaptations of commonplace practices.[27]

Certainly, complexity did not inhibit participation. As Williams notes, "To participate even in a complex acclamation required no great expertise or any substantial preparation. . . . Such rhythms and formulas were already familiar to virtually everyone in the empire, whether from theater songs or the popular songs that derived from them, or from participation in previous acclamations."[28] In a variety of contexts, from entertainment venues to religious worship to civic and political occasions, people expected to make their voices heard and, as Roueché notes, by the fifth century CE, they could expect their voices to be recorded, transmitted, and heard again.[29] Religion was lived out in the public square alongside other civic activities. "It is important for scholars to remember," Susan Ashbrook Harvey writes, "how much religious activity took place outdoors, in public, widely accessible spaces: as processions through city streets, or in marketplaces or other civic areas."[30]

Within this culture of acclamation—a society highly attuned to rhythmic, communal vocalization at volume as an enactment of unity and a collective response to power—liturgical poetry, including Jewish hymnography, emerged and flourished. By the sixth century CE—the period of the classical Jewish poets such

[26] See Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 202; Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 219–40; Roueché, "Acclamations in the Later Roman Empire," 184–87; and Williams, "Hymns as Acclamations," 116. As these sources explain, during the Roman Republic, there were four racing factions: Reds, Whites, Blues, and Greens. By the 6th century, only two factions (Blues and Greens) remained, but they constituted powerful social forces in the Eastern Empire. Their activities at races often precipitated riots, including the Nika riots against Justinian in 532 CE. In the course of the Nika riots, nearly half of Constantinople was burned or destroyed and 30,000 people were killed. The cry of "victory, victory!" (*nika, nika*) was conventionally shouted at the racing charioteers; here it was shouted at the Emperor Justinian, transforming the cheer into an acclamation of sorts. Jews were regarded as supporters of the Greens in contrast to the "Orthodox" supporters of the Blues (see Theophanes, 1:181:35–182:25, in *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813* [ed. and trans. C. Mango and R. Scott; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997] 276–77). While Blues and Greens were once regarded as nascent political parties, Cameron's *Circus Factions* argued that such assumptions overstate the importance of politics and underestimate that of sports and entertainment in antiquity (see esp. pp. 149–52 and 318–33). In addition to Cameron's pivotal study, see Geoffrey Greatrex, "The Nika Revolt: A Reappraisal," in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997): 60–86; and Pieter van der Horst, "Jews and Blues in Late Antiquity," *Jews and Christians in the Graeco-Roman Context* (ed. Geoffrey Greatrex; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 53–58.

[27] The Chrysostom passage appears above as the epigraph; see J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom: Clerics Between Desert and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 232–33.

[28] Williams, "Hymns as Acclamations," 118.

[29] Roueché, "Acclamations in the Later Roman Empire," 186–87.

[30] Harvey, "Patristic Worlds," 42. This applies to the examples of both Ambrose and Chrysostom, as well.

as Yannai and the great Byzantine hymnographer of Constantinople, Romanos the Melodist—intricate poetic forms such as the Hebrew *qedušta'* and Greek *kontakion* had developed, and these works make sophisticated use of techniques that strongly resemble acclamation.[31] But the influence of acclamation can be traced back several centuries prior to Yannai and Romanos, to the time of Ambrose in the West and the first flowering of hymnography in the East.

■ Jewish Acclamation: Artifacts, Analogues, and Antecedents

Jewish sources indicate that Jews were active participants in the broad culture of Late Antiquity. We have abundant evidence of civic infrastructure, including bathhouses, theaters, and amphitheaters, and epigraphic evidence of Jewish presence in these venues.[32] We find the casual use of acclamatory language in funerary inscriptions, such as the brief exclamation "*shalom*" common in such markers as well as in sources such as the epitaph from Thessalonica, which includes a fresco depicting a menorah and the acclamation, "The Lord is with us (Κύριος μεθ' ἡμῶν)!" (LXX Ps 45:8 and 12).[33] These monumental and literary sources reveal an acculturated, organically-participatory Jewish population in the Land of Israel and beyond, which left behind literary evidence of their participation in acclamatory culture, as well. Their epitaphs speak, as it were, through voices whose acclamations are inscribed on stone.

Within the biblical text, we find examples of short acclamations even in early texts, such as 1 Sam 10:24 and 1 Kgs 1:39[34]—notably both occurring in the

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[31] For overviews of Jewish and Christian liturgical poetry in Late Antiquity from a comparative perspective, see Münz-Manor, "Liturgical Poetry in the Late Antique Near East: A Comparative Approach" and Laura S. Lieber, "Theater of the Holy: Jewish Piyyut, Christian Hymnography, and the Rhetoric of the Late Ancient Stage." For a concise introduction to the poetry of Ephrem (who was Yose's contemporary), see Kathleen McVey's translation of selected works, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989) as well as Sebastian P. Brock, "Poetry and Hymnography (3): Syriac" in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 657–71.

[32] A survey of this material can be found in Weiss, *Public Spectacles in Roman and Late Antique Palestine*; see also Spielman, "Sitting with Scorners," and Mark A. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. 100–21.

[33] Alexander Panayotov, "Jews and Jewish Communities in the Balkans and Aegean," in *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire* (ed. James K. Aitken and James Carleton Paget; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 61. Clayton M. Lehmann and Kenneth G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima* (Boston: ASOR, 2000) 65-67, catalogues four literary acclamations in Greek from the mid-4th to 7th centuries CE, but none are identifiably Jewish. More generally, see Pieter Willem van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs: An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy, 300 BCE–700 CE* (Kampen: Pharos, 1991).

[34] 1 Sam 10:24: "And Samuel said to the people, 'Do you see the one whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the people!' And all the people shouted (ויריעו), saying, 'Long live the king!'"; 1 Kgs 1:39: "The priest Zadok took the horn of oil from the Tent and anointed Solomon. They sounded the shofar and all the people shouted, 'Long live King Solomon!'" (Translations are the author's.)

context of enthronement and the king's relationship with his people. Most directly, however, liturgical poetry can be seen as a synergistic development located at the intersection of biblical poetic traditions and Roman aesthetics. And yet, the Jewish liturgical poetry of Late Antiquity was recognized as something innovative: the very term *piyyuṭ*, a Hebraicizing of the Greek *poēsis*, indicates this poetry's novelty.[35] Indeed, it is striking that the fourth century CE witnessed a sudden flourishing of new forms of liturgical poetry not only in Judaism (as in the piyyutim of Yose ben Yose, examined below) but also in Christianity (the *memrē* and *madrashē* of Ephrem), and among the Samaritans (the poetry of Amram Dara and Marqah).[36] In all of these traditions, we find evidence of choruses and refrains, which raises the question of whether in some fashion the dialogical, call-and-response practice of acclamation influenced liturgical poetic practice.

While acclamation reflects Roman practice, it resonates with the prayer practices of Jews, Christians, and Samaritans, as well. In all three communities, familiar—that is, scriptural—texts were deployed in new contexts, as part of constructing a dialogue between ruler and subjects. The familiarity of the source material facilitated participation even as the setting implied one kind of audience dynamic (prayer leader-congregation) and constructed or asserted another (God-people). A brief examination of the use of biblical texts in the liturgy of the synagogue can suggest ways in which acclamation, as a concept and a familiar practice, could have colored congregational chant and amplified the implicit dialogue of the liturgy in general. Any text—a biblical verse, a psalm, a poem—held the potential to become an acclamation if recited repeatedly in unison before a figure of power. Within the Hebrew Bible, we find texts that seem to anticipate the power of the communal setting through their presumed use in Temple worship, while the acclamatory potential of other texts was only activated in the context of the synagogue liturgy. The dynamic performance of liturgical poetry in Late Antiquity may be understood, in part, as an amplification of a minor feature of biblical poetry under the influence of new societal fashions. Within its venerable, sacred corpus, the Bible offered what could be understood as acclamations, and authentic modes of expression found new significance and vibrancy in the right cultural moment.[37] These models legitimated what was already popular.

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[35] On the innovative elements of piyyuṭ compared to biblical poetry and biblicizing genres such as the *Hodayot* of Qumran, see Laura S. Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis: An Invitation to Piyyut* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 2010) 7–12.

[36] For an analysis of Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan poetry written in Aramaic, see A. S. Rodrigues Pereira, *Studies in Aramaic Poetry (c. 100 B.C.E.–c. 600 C.E.): Selected Jewish, Christian and Samaritan Poems* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Augustine recounts the importance of hymn-singing among Manicheans in his youth (*Contra Faust.* 13.18 and 15.5–6).

[37] For an analysis of how other structural features of biblical poetry—acrostics and rhythm—become central in poetry in the time of Yose ben Yose, see Ophir Münz-Manor, "Figurative Language in Pre-Classical Piyyut: Between Biblical Models and Poetic Innovations," *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* 24 (2011): 1–22 [Hebrew].

Psalms 118 and 136, for example, probably reflect Jerusalem Temple liturgy. They share the refrain "for His loyalty endures forever" (כי לעולם חסדו) and display a structure that suggests antiphonal performance.[38] Other biblical poems, such as Psalm 145 (an acrostic) and the Song at the Sea (Exodus 15), lack refrains and offer no sense of an original life-setting, but their strong cadences and parallelism nonetheless lend themselves to a call-and-response liturgical use, not only in theory but in practice.[39] The two-voiced, rhythmic, and participatory nature of these liturgical performances would certainly have resonated with those immersed in a culture of acclamation, and it may be that the popularity of acclamation led to modes of performing these texts. Non-poetic biblical texts that entered liturgical use, such as Isa 6:3 (known in Hebrew as the *Qeduššah*, in Greek as the *Trisagion*, and in Latin as the *Sanctus*) and Deut 6:4–5 (the *Shemaʻ*) likewise can be seen as having an affinity for acclamation. The biblical words are familiar, recitation highlights their aural cadence, and in the congregational context they enact a deep concept of unity: the *Qeduššah* unites the human congregation at worship with the heavenly hosts who are likewise at prayer, while the *Shemaʻ* expressly articulates divine singularity even as it constitutes congregational unity.[40] The dialogical dynamic of liturgy, with its evocative scriptural words addressed by the community in a common voice to a remote yet present deity, resonates with the theatrical and civic settings and practices of acclamation.

While biblical texts could be translated into acclamation, liturgical poetry directly engages acclamatory aesthetics, practices, and efficaciousness. Yose's poetry is not unique in this regard, but it represents the formative period of the genre. By the late-sixth century, elaborate poetic forms such as the *qedushtah*, which included elements of refrain as well as other modes of congregational participation, emerged.[41] The poetry written in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA) more closely parallels Yose ben Yose's poetry. JPA poetry, while difficult to date precisely, originated in the same

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[38] On the practice of responsorial psalmody in Late Antiquity, see Georgia Frank, "Sensing Ascension in Early Byzantium," in *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (ed. Claire Nesbitt and Mark P. C. Jackson; Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing, 2013) 293 –309.

[39] See the *Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael* on Exod. 15:1, as well as t. *Pesachim* 10:7 and t. *Sotah* 6:2–3. As Stefan Reif notes in regards to the tradition in the *Mekhilta*: "Three teachers from the tannaitic period compared its declamation [*viz.*, that of the Hallel psalms] to that of the Song at the Sea (Exodus 15), namely, antiphonally by a prayer-leader and community, but each had a different concept of the precise form taken by such an exchange" (*Problems with Prayers: Studies in the Textual History of Early Rabbinic Liturgy* [Berlin: DeGruyter, 2006] 85). The fluidity of performance noted by the *Mekhilta* accords with the dynamic nature of acclamation.

[40] On biblical texts in Jewish liturgy, see Ruth Langer, "Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers: Their History and Function," in *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship: New Insights into its History and Interaction* (ed. Albert Gerhards and Clemens Leonhard; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 63–90; Judith H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 1999); and *Prayers that Cite Scripture* (ed. James Kugel; Cambridge: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2006).

[41] See Novick, "The Poetics of Yannai's Sixth," and Lieber, "The Rhetoric of Participation."

period as Yose (ca. fourth century CE), and its works make use of many of the same formal features that will be noted below: they are almost always structured by alphabetical acrostics but otherwise generally simple in form; and they often have terse (but sometimes antiphonal) refrains.[42] The JPA poems are a larger body of work than Yose's, however, and considerably more diverse. Formally, the JPA poems resemble the simplicity of Yose ben Yose and the later poets, and they could easily be analyzed as acclamations.[43]

As this brief survey indicates, Yose's use of refrains does not stand out as innovative, for there are ample biblical, liturgical, and poetic analogues to his writing. And all of these works, in the context of synagogue liturgy, may well merit examination as a form of acclamation. Acclamation, understood as a dynamic dialogue with divine authority, offers God both gratitude and critique, and undergirds other liturgical practices of the early synagogue—and, by extension, other forms of worship in antiquity. The poetry of Yose ben Yose provides one case study.

■ Piyyuṭ and Acclamation: The Example of Yose ben Yose

Yose ben Yose was among the great Jewish poets (*payyeṭanim*) of Late Antiquity. He wrote almost exclusively for the Jewish High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), and he is best known for his *Avodah* poems, which narrate the history of the world from Creation to the moment of the High Priest's offering in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, and his series of poems for the Shofar service, which remain part of the Ashkenazi liturgy.[44] Yose, whom the tenth-century rabbinic sage Saadia Gaon ranked among the "fathers of poetry," almost certainly lived in the Land of Israel in the fourth century CE, and he remains the earliest Jewish liturgical poet whom we know by name.[45]

[42] The complete body of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic poetry was published by Joseph Yahalom and Michael Sokoloff, *Shirat Bene Ma'arava: Jewish Palestinian Poetry from Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1999).

[43] See, for example, Poem #8 (for Passover) which has a fourfold refrain: "The Lord reigns . . . the Lord has reigned . . . the Lord will reign. . . . In His great house He will reign over us forever and ever!" (Yahalom and Sokoloff, *Shirat Bene Ma'arava*, 98–101). Similarly, several laments for the Ninth of Av are written as "braided chains," with fixed word incipits and refrains; for example, Poem #19 has a structure in which every unit begins "Oh how . . ." and ends with "until the Lord will look down and see from heaven" (Yahalom and Sokoloff, *Shirat Bene Ma'arava*, 152–55). JPA hymns cannot be precisely dated, however. Therefore we do not know if these works predate Yose, are contemporary with him, or post-date him; nor do we know how they functioned in the synagogue.

[44] A bilingual edition of early *Avodah* poetry by Yose ben Yose and others is Michael D. Swartz and Joseph Yahalom, *Avodah: Ancient Poems for Yom Kippur* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2005). Yose's shofar service poems remain in the liturgy of Ashkenazi Jews as part of the traditional second day of Rosh Hashanah; see *Maḥzor for the Days of Awe: According to Ashkenazi Custom*, (ed. Daniel Goldshmidt; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Koren, 1970) 238–42 (*malkhiyyot*), 251–56 (*zikhronot*), and 265–70 (*šopharot*) [Hebrew].

[45] The best synopsis of the convoluted history of Yose's dating remains the introduction to the critical edition of his works by Aharon Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse: Poems* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Bialik, 1991) 12–16 [Hebrew].

Yose was roughly contemporary not only with Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine, but also with Ephrem the Syrian, the father of Syriac Christian poetry, and Amram Dara and Marqah, the early great Samaritan poets. All these writers inhabited a moment when hymnography was transforming liturgy and where acclamation in a variety of public (civic, theatrical, and athletic) settings was commonplace. Viewing Yose's poetry through the lens of acclamation helps to shed light on how liturgical poems were composed, performed, and popularized within the synagogue but also beyond.[46] Furthermore, the poems examined here were composed for the penitential season of the month of Elul, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur, a period when communal participation was particularly high.

Among Yose's collected works, five compositions contain refrains. Each of the three poems for his Shofar service on Rosh Hashanah includes a single word repeated at the end of every line (known in Hebrew as מילת קבע, "fixed word"): "kingship" (מלוכה) concludes each line of the first poem, on the theme of divine sovereignty (*malkiyyot*); "memory" (זכרון) concludes each line of the second poem, on the theme of divine remembrance (*zikronot*); and "voice" (קול) completes each line of the third poem upon the blast of the shofar, one of the ritual elements most associated with the holiday of Rosh Hashanah (*shopharot*).[47] Yose's hymn, "Once You Set Us at the Head" (אז לראש תתנו) repeats a single word, "we sinned" (חטאנו), at the end of every two-line unit.[48] The fifth composition, "Truly Our Sins" (אמנם אשמינו), reflects a more elaborate aesthetic: it includes two alternating refrains, each of which

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[46] It is most likely that Yose's refrains were performed communally. Jewish choirs are not definitively attested until the 10th century in Babylonia, in the ceremony celebrating the installation of the Exilarch recorded by Nathan ha-Bavli (full text in: N. Stillman, *The Jews in Arab Lands* [Philadelphia: JPS, 1979] 171–75), although Fleischer ("The Influence of Choral Elements on the Formation and Development of Piyyut Genres") hypothesizes their existence as early as the 6th century, in response to the elaborate compositions by Qallir. The popularity of choirs in church services suggests their presence in some synagogues, but at present the discussion remains speculative. Furthermore, it is plausible that performance varied by community or congregation, influenced by multiple factors (population density, communal wealth, etc.).

[47] For the texts of these three poems, see Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse*, 93–117. It is important to note that the precise connotation of the repeated word varies throughout the poem; for example, "kingship" can refer to God's divine majesty or the false power of earthly rulers. In this, Yose's fixed-word refrains resemble those of other poets, such as Romanos, whose artistry involves placing the same key word into the mouths of various speakers (see Arentzen, "Voices Interwoven: Refrains and Vocal Participation in the Kontakia"). This multivocality of the fixed-words does not undercut their acclamatory element, as it is still entirely possible and plausible to envision communal participation in the performance of these hymns; at the same time, the element of fluidity of meaning suggests that the fixed words also serve to draw the audience into the dramatic elements of the poems, and serve to remind us that while acclamation may have shaped elements of these hymns and their performance, these works cannot be reduced to acclamations in and of themselves.

[48] For the text of this poem, of which only the initial 16 lines are extant, see Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse*, 219–21. It is possible that the word "we sinned" is a cue indicating a longer refrain, e.g., "we have sinned, we have transgressed, we have been wicked" (from 1 Kgs 8:47 and its parallel in 2 Chr 6:37), a common litany in the late biblical period (see Ps 106:6 and Dan 9:5).

consists of four stichs.[49] Refrains and related poetic structures, when articulated in the context of the liturgy, constitute a variety of acclamation; read in silence or recited in solitude, they might augment an emotional experience of penitence or awe, but they would acclaim nothing. When realized in the context of a liturgical performance, however, these formal elements facilitated composition, enlivened group experience, augmented rhetorical force, and assisted memorization.[50] Furthermore, the repetition and volume of acclamation would have enhanced the simple comprehensibility of the communal elements of the poetry. To some extent, many religious rituals took place in spacious venues, where acoustics might have posed a challenge; but, as Susan Ashbrook Harvey reminds us, "There was also an aesthetic sensibility that understood loud sound as an appropriate adornment of religious ritual; and further, that encouraged participation in those terms in order to express willing and active presence on the part of the congregation."[51] Repetition and reiteration not only increased participation, it increased volume, and with increased volume came amplified physical sensation and experience.

In terms of form, Yose's works reflect variations on a common composition. They are unrhymed but rhythmic and employ acrostics as structural devices. Lines are composed of two or four stichs, each of which contains two main stresses; thus each line contains four or eight stressed "beats." These formal elements of acrostic, rhythm, fixed words, and refrains facilitated composition, in that they provided a scaffolding within which the poet could demonstrate his creativity. At the same time, recurring, repetitive structures of the different poems also facilitated congregational participation, just as the repetitions of acclamations transformed a simple shout into a rallying cry.[52] Cadence induces a certain kind of actively engaged listening and sympathetic body motion; acrostics generate a sense of forward motion and an implicit narrative arc; and repeated words invite verbal participation—precisely the kind of audibly-voiced, even physically-sensed expression of communal identity in the presence of power that constitutes acclamation.

The three Shofar service poems share a common form: each line contains four stichs (and thus eight stressed syllables); every line concludes with the theme-word

[49] For the text, see Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse*, 118–26.

[50] On rhetorical-structural elements of memorization in antiquity, see Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. 135–70.

[51] Harvey, "Patristic Worlds," 43. Even now, it is common for public speakers, seeking to engage an audience, to ask listeners to say something collectively and then have them repeat it, with a rhetorically-scripted encouragement, e.g., "I can't hear you!"

[52] In addition to literary sources, epigraphic evidence indicates the repetitive nature of acclamation; see Michael Balance and Charlotte Roueché, "Appendix 2: Three Inscriptions from Ovacik," in Martin Harrison, *Mountain and Plain: From the Lycian Coast to the Phrygian Plateau in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Period* (ed. Wendy Young; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 87–112. (Ovacik is in modern Turkey.) This acclamatory text (dated to the 3rd century CE and in praise of Hermaios, who is untitled but lauded as a "brigand chaser") reproduces the repetitions expected of performed acclamation and has not apparently been edited or abbreviated for inscribing.

of that poem, which bears a stress; and each pair of lines shares an acrostic letter (that is, lines 1–2 begin with *aleph*; lines 3–4 begin with *bet*; lines 5–6 with *gimmel*; and so forth).[53] The first pair of lines states in full:

אֲהַלְלָה אֱלֹהַי / אָשִׁירָה עֻזּוֹ / אֲסַפְּרָה כְבוֹדוֹ / אֲאַפְּדֶנּוּ **מְלוּכָה**
אֲשַׂגֵּב לְפוֹעֵל / אֲשֶׁר שָׂח וּפָעַל / אֲאַנְוֵיהוּ כִּי לוֹ / יָאֲתָה **מְלוּכָה**

Let me praise my God / let me sing of His might / let me recount His honor / let me bedeck Him with **kingship**
I will exalt the Creator / who spoke and created / I will glorify Him because to Him / is **kingship** befitting (ll. 1–2)

The narrator speaks here, as in each of the three Shofar service poems, in the singular first-person ("I"). The performer's individual voice represents the collective speech of Israel. But with communal recitation of each line's final word ("kingship," "memory," and "voice," respectively) the poem does, in fact, speak in the congregation's unified voice. As the poem progresses, the chant of "kingship"— asserting God's ultimate sovereignty—becomes an acclamation.[54] The forcefulness of the congregation's speech enacts the reality and implicitly establishes an authority counter to the power structures of the imperial world. Within the synagogue walls, it is God who is acclaimed as emperor.[55] The intense repetition of this poem resonates with other attributions of divine rule throughout the synagogue liturgy, including the standard benedictory formulate "Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of world…" (ברוך אתה . . . ה' אלהינו מלך העולם). The isolated, even if repeated, uses of the royal title in the prose prayers acquire new forcefulness and intensity in the forty-six repetitions of the title in this poem.

The subsequent poems of the Shofar service assert other divine qualities. In the second poem, "I am afraid on account of my deeds" (אפחד במעשי), the poet speaks in the first person, for himself and for the congregation he represents, but he collapses time such that the listeners stand among their ancestors in the presence of the High Priest. The poem elaborates upon the atonement rituals for Yom Kippur as depicted in Exodus and Leviticus, but rather than narrate the laws and rites from a distance, Yose takes his listeners into the experience, as direct witnesses to events long defunct in practice. He makes them privy to thoughts such as, "I delighted when he [i.e., the high priest] put on the ephod" (l. 7); internal monologues, such as: "Look, O God, as I stand before You" (l. 9) and "Oh Yah, I trust in You" (l. 20); all of these speak for the individual at prayer, but also for the poet and, by extension,

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[53] In the latter part of each of the three Shofar service poems, quotations of biblical texts are interspersed in a specific pattern; for a translation of a complete composition and an analysis of the role of the biblical intertexts, see Laura S. Lieber, "Let Me Flee to My Helper: A Rosh Hashanah Love Poem": http://thetorah.com/let-me-flee-to-my-helper-a-rosh-hashanah-love-poem/.

[54] The primary biblical subtext for this poem is Exod 15, which both asserts God's sovereignty and lends itself to responsive performance in the synagogue, as noted above.

[55] Acclamation of Roman emperors often consisted simply of titles, e.g., *imperator* and *augustus*; see Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*, 131–33.

every individual who ever participated in these rites.[56] The word "memory" (זכרון) concludes every line, and it stands in variously for God's power of judgment ("the day of memory" in line two) and divine love (which God is to "remember" in line 49), and it also represents the power of liturgy to inculcate a sense of continuity with the remote past. The repeated assertions of "memory," which the people say to themselves as well as to God, not only effect atonement but create memories among the people for rites they have never witnessed.

In the final poem of the cycle, "I would flee to my Helper" (אנוסה לעזרה), the poet continues to speak in a singular voice.[57] Where the first poem, on God's sovereignty, wove itself around Exodus 15, and the second, on the role of memory in atonement, focused on Priestly sources, here, in a poem that reflexively and self-consciously draws attention to the dialogue of the God-Israel relationship, the most prominent intertext in the final poem is the Song of Songs.[58] The fixed-word of this poem, which can be understood as a kind of analogue to an acclamation, is simply the word "voice" (קול—a word that can also be translated as "sound"). The idea of voice is given physical voice; people not only listen but also generate and immerse themselves in collective sound.[59] The refrain of the poem is speech that desires to be heard and that makes itself audible even as it is a shout that assumes a listener.

The three Shofar service poems share a single style; together, they constitute an elaborate theological but also ritual experience, moving the congregation from an acclamation of sovereignty ("kingship!") to relationship ("memory!") to faithful bond ("voice!"). The other two examples from Yose's corpus are briefer but more elaborate. The penitential poem, "Once You Set Us at the Head" (אז לראש תתנו), has a similar structure to that of the Shofar service poems: units of paired lines, with each line containing four two-beat stichs (yielding eight stressed syllables per line). In this poem, however, the refrain (חטאנו, "we have sinned"), while still a single word, occurs only at the end of each pair of lines; and unlike the theme-words of the Shofar poems, this fixed-word stands outside the stanza's rhythmic structure. This poem has a fixed-word element, but the phrase עד לא ("before") punctuates the midpoint of every line rather than the end.[60] The first two-line unit, here quoted in full, provides a useful illustration of this poem's structural elements:

אָז לְרֹאשׁ תַּתָּנוּ / וְנָמְנוּ: נִתְּנָה רֹאשׁ / **עַד לֹא** נָכוֹן בְּרֹאשׁ / רָוִינוּ מִי רֹאשׁ

בָּנוּ טַעְתָּה אֹזֶן / וּבַל אֹזֶן הִטִּינוּ / **עַד לֹא** שְׁמוּעָה / הִצְלִינוּ אָזְנֵינוּ

חָטָאנוּ . . .

[56] See Lieber, "Rhetoric of Participation."

[57] The "Helper" of the opening phrase refers to God (as in Ps 46:2), but the phrase could well have been heard, more colloquially, as meaning, "I will run for help."

[58] E.g., "He passed by and fled from me / like a stag upon the mountains of spice" (line 6, evoking Song 2:17); and, "This One turned from me; I will go about and seek Him" (line 13, evoking Song 5:6).

[59] This echoes the common Latin acclamation: *Exaudi* (Listen!); see Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, 452–55.

[60] As this example makes clear, each line also elaborates on a part of the body (head, ear, etc.). See the analysis of this poem in contrast to midrashic parallels in Lieber, "Confessing from A–Z."

Once You set us at the <u>head</u> (*roʾš*)[61] / but we said: Let us appoint a leader (*roʾš*)[62] / **before** aught was founded upon the <u>summit</u> (*roʾš*)[63] / we drank the <u>bitter</u> (*roʾš*) waters[64]

You planted the <u>ear</u> within us / but no <u>ear</u> did we incline (to listen) / **before** there was any

hearing / our <u>ears</u> were ringing
We have sinned . . . (ll. 1–2)

This poem speaks explicitly in the communal voice ("we, our") even as it collapses the entire sacred history of Israel into a kind of collective memory, as the speaker "remembers" events from the distant past.[65] The internal refrain (or acclamation), "before," anticipates the concluding refrain, "We have sinned." The fixed word at the caesura would have been repeated twenty-two times, while the refrain would have occurred eleven times—frequencies which certainly could have enabled congregational participation. As performed, with congregational involvement through unified vocals, the congregation articulates a penitential juxtaposition between past (then) and present (now), as the community collectively abases itself before its ruler and seeks to inspire the deity to forgive a pattern of transgression that has corrupted Israel from, quite literally, top to bottom. The acclamation makes manifest a collective desire for pardon. It is simultaneously a confession and petition for forgiveness. Ritual effectiveness accrues through the power of the combined voices of the people.

Finally, the poem, "Truly Our Sins" (אמנם אשמינו) offers a third model for how an unrhymed acrostic composed of two-beat stichs can be constructed: each line of this poem contains only two stichs (and thus four stressed syllables per line); each line begins with the relevant letter of the alphabetical acrostic; and each unit contains four rather than two lines. The refrain is also far more elaborate. It consists of alternating units of two lines. The first complete unit—a four-line "stanza" and two-line refrain—exemplifies this structure. It states:

אָמְנָם אֲשָׁמֵינוּ / עָצְמוּ מִסַּפֵּר
אֲנָחוֹת דּוֹרֵינוּ / רַבּוּ מִלְּדַבֵּר
אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִקְשַׁבְנוּ / גָּעֲרָה כְּמֵבִין
אֲפָפוּנוּ מַכּוֹת / כַּכְסִיל הַזְדֹּנוּ
דַּרְכְּךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ / לְהַאֲרִיךְ אַפֶּךָ
לָרָעִים וּלְטוֹבִים / וְהִיא תְהִלָּתֶיךָ

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[61] The phrasing alludes to Deut 28:13.

[62] That is, return to Egypt; see Num 14:4 ("Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt").

[63] That is, before the Temple was built atop Mount Zion (see Mic 4:1, Isa 2:2).

[64] This line is a dense and clever reworking of a number of biblical passages: Deut 28:13, Num 14:4, Mic 4:1, Isa 2:2, and Jer 8:14. In Jer 8:14, the word "bitter" (also translated as "gall" and "poison") is a homonym for "head."

[65] See Lieber, "Rhetoric of Participation."

Truly our sins / are more than can be reckoned
The groans of our generation / are more than can be told
For we did not heed / rebuke like an intelligent person
Blows envelop us / like a flood, we acted insolently
    It is Your way, O our God / to defer anger
    For the benefit of the wicked and the good / and this is Your praise!

Following the second four-line unit (which embellishes the second letter of the alphabet, "*bet*") we find the second refrain. The refrain states:

לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ / עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ
רְאֵה עֲמִידָתֵנוּ / דַּלִּים וְרֵקִים

For Your sake, O our God / act, and not for ours
See how we stand before You / poor and emptied.

These refrains alternate, with each occurring eleven times in the course of the twenty-two units of the poem; we can envision communal participation in the alternation or in an antiphonal-choral mode of performance. Either way, these entreaties wed petitionary assertiveness with the language of acclamation. There are, furthermore, traces here of a kind of proto-rhyme, a natural consequence of the repetitions of the pronominal suffixes "our" (-*nu*) and "Your" (-*ka*). These suffixes are aesthetically pleasing, insofar as they appeal to the ear; they also repeatedly enact the relationship between congregation and deity that drives the dialogue of acclamation: we speak to You, that You may act on our behalf. The cadence and rhythm facilitate participation not just in an emotional register—imaginative sympathy for the picture being painted by the poet—but at the practical, performative level.

As these examples illustrate, Yose's poetry plays with a specific, recurring form: structural elements that include acrostics, fixed words, refrains, and marked rhythms. Within each poem, once the pattern is discerned, the format becomes quite regular and predictable, and congregational participation begins to seem natural. The affinity of these structures for acclamations, once noticed, becomes self-evident; for a community accustomed to participating in acclamations in other venues, the idea of joining in to single-word or even more elaborate congregational refrains would be organic. In the Shofar service poems, the fixed-word refrains are repeated forty-six times, while in the penitential hymn, "Once You Set Us at the Head," the refrain "we have sinned" would have occurred at least eleven times (if the poem were complete); the more elaborate alternating refrains in "Truly Our Sins" are still less elaborate than many attested acclamations, and each occurs eleven times. The audience would have had ample opportunity to discern the structures and understand their role; the consistent overall rhythm would have provided a common baseline for formal comprehension, while the variations in acrostics, line breaks, and fixed words would have added variety to keep listeners engaged.

It is not simply the ease with which congregations may have participated in simple refrains that aligns them with acclamations, however. There is, first of all, the sense of communal identity these texts cultivate, particularly through refrains such as "we have sinned" and references to "us" and "ours."[66] The use of the first-person plural strongly underscores the group identity of the speakers and, when spoken in the refrains, it translates idea into action. Furthermore, just as acclamations addressed the powerful—whether the emperor or a lesser magistrate—these poems explicitly address God directly, as "You." Even the more complicated refrains of "Truly Our Sins" could be quickly learned, as they rework familiar phrases (with rich biblical resonances) that appear elsewhere in the liturgy. For example, the phrase "to defer anger" from the first refrain echoes Exod 34:6, the Thirteen Attributes of God, and its biblical reworking in Isa 48:9; and the first line of the second refrain ("For Your sake, O our God, act, and not for us") recalls Psa 115:1 ("not for us, O Lord, not for us, but for Your Name . . ."). The refrain is constructed out of language that is not only familiar but also highly evocative, and the charge of its message amplified through the articulation of many voices in unison. The act of speaking the highly repetitive fixed-word "voice" yields an experience that is not only heard but felt: individually, in the sensation of one's mouth forming the word, and communally, in the tangible encounter with other speaking bodies and the vibrations of their speech.

In concrete ways, these poems translate and even subvert non-Jewish sources of authority even as they employ the rhetorical techniques which were commonly used to affirm it. For example, Pliny the Younger records how he and his fellow senators hailed Trajan: "One and all and all alike we acclaim his good fortune, and with it our own, and beg him to "do thus" or again "hear thus," as if forming our requests in the sure knowledge that he will grant these."[67]

Pliny and his colleagues here praise the emperor because he has the power to hear and to do: Trajan could receive their petitions, delivered via unified acclamation, and make them reality. Such a dynamic—even the language of hearing and doing—translates seamlessly to the language and understanding of synagogue prayer. Trajan was merely an emperor (and Pliny takes pains to make clear that the emperor is *dominus* but not *deus*), a pale shadow in the rabbinic mind of the God who created the world. Furthermore, acclamation could occur whenever a critical mass gathered but seems to have been especially likely on occasions when the ruling authority was present, fostering a sense (or illusion) of

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[66] Viewed within a liturgical setting, communal unity constitutes something positive, but in other contexts may well be perceived as a mob. See Georgia Frank, "Crowds and Collective Affect in Romanos's Biblical Retellings" (forthcoming).

[67] Enimvero quam commune quam ex aequo, quod felices nos felicem illum praedicamus, alternisque votis "Haec faciat, haec audiat" quasi non dicturi nisi fecerit comprecamur. From Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus* 2.8; translation adapted from Pliny the Younger, *Letters, Volume II: Books 8–10 and Panegyricus* (trans. Betty Radice; Loeb Classical Library 59; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) 326–27.

intimacy even as it offered a very real opportunity to make voices heard, such as the games and specific holidays and festivals. These occasions were regarded as proper and propitious times for popular petition, complaint, and thanksgiving. The parallels with liturgical prayer, and especially the High Holy Day liturgy, are easy to draw: the people assemble to address God at a moment when God is not only present but primed to act beneficently and expecting to hear. The unified voice of his subjects in acclamation carried greater weight with an emperor or magistrate than many individual voices, and so, too, did the voice of God's people possess greater power when assembled together and underscoring the prayer-leader's voice than many voices in personal petition. As Williams notes, "A crowd that acted together, and in the process showed its strength, was not to be argued with, and it represented much that mattered in Roman politics and religion: unity, common identity, consensus, and ultimately, authority and legitimacy."[68] A congregation participating in a performance of Yose's poetry was not striving to coerce God as a plebian crowd might attempt to intimidate a magistrate or, in Williams' case, a bishop; but the desire to appear before God as a unified community, possessing legitimacy and dignity, might certainly have appealed instinctively as constituting a kind of persuasive power.

On a conceptual level, Jewish prayer not only asserts and embodies unity, it creates it. In terms of body language, the congregation's physical orientation towards Jerusalem fosters a sense of common Jewish identity not only within but across communities. Individual Jews direct themselves physically and mentally, knowing that they are part of a vast, diffuse diaspora that does so, as well. As Uri Ehrlich writes, "Prayer toward a single center strengthens national-religious identity, creating unity in the context of religious activity."[69] Liturgical language and rhetoric reinforce the sense of commonality and shared identity through their routine preference for the first-person common plurals "we," "us," and "our," as God is addressed both indirectly ("He") and directly ("You"). Yose's poetry overlays acclamatory participation onto this already complex set of conceptual and performative dynamics: the dialogue between prayer-leader and congregation mimics to some extent the performance of acclamation from other venues, but the deity is the recipient of acclaim, not the prayer-leader. If anything, the prayer-leader functions more as a *claque*, or a liturgical version of the actor, dancer, or gladiator whose performance provides the pretext for the dialogue between ruler and subjects. The prayer-leader orchestrates the venue and creates the setting in which the people's voices are heard.

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[68] Williams, "Hymns as Acclamations," 120.

[69] Uri Ehrlich, *The Nonverbal Language of Prayer: A New Approach to Jewish Liturgy* (trans. Dena Ordan; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 87. Note the implications for physicality in prayer as addressed in the materially- and spatially-attuned writings of Gil Klein, "Torah in the *Triclinium*," and Rachel Neis, "Religious Lives of Image-Things, Avodah Zarah, and Rabbis in Late Antique Palestine," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 17 (2014): 91–122.

◼ Conclusions

It is hardly a poetic accident that the third poem of Yose's Shofar service, on the sound of the shofar itself, has "voice" (קול) as its theme word. In discussions of acclaim, the idea of "one voice" (*una voce*) had particular significance. In his discussion of the performance of Psalms in the liturgy, Ambrose wrote:

> A psalm joins those with differences, unites those at odds, and reconciles those who have suffered offense, for who will not concede to him with whom he sings to God with a single voice (*cum quo unam ad deum vocem emiserit*)? Certainly it is a great bond of unity for the whole body of the people to come together in one chorus. The strings of the cithara are all different, but they bring about harmony.[70]

Such holds true for the communal performance of a hymn, or the refrain of a hymn, as much as for a psalm. But whereas it was Ambrose's ecclesial authority and legitimacy that were founded on popular acclaim—support manifested in the performance of Ambrose's hymns as a kind of acclamation—in a liturgical setting, it is God's authority that is called forth, praised, and petitioned.[71] If public acclamation enabled the people to speak to those who possessed near totalitarian power, the liturgy and its poetry enabled the congregation to speak to the One who held ultimate and total power. In Yose's hymns, we find a poetic device (the fixed word) that has long been recognized as a kind of refrain. By analyzing refrains within the context of the practice of acclamation, new elements of their performative significance become audible: the voice of the people joins with the voice of the shofar to provide an irresistible, unmistakable call to the all-knowing, but also all-hearing, divine. But where public acclaim—whether civically or religiously motivated—could foster discord and instigate riots, liturgical unison yielded a distinctive and fully-audible harmony.[72]

    In writing about the performance of liturgical song in Milan, Augustine describes the innovative singing of hymns and psalms "in the eastern style" (*Confessions* 7.15).[73] Paulinus' biography of Ambrose indicates that what Augustine understands as the "eastern mode" refers to the singing of antiphons, hymns, and vigils—precisely the kind of acclamatory poetry that was emerging in the Eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia in the fourth century, as dramatically recorded

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[70] Ambrose, *Exp. Psalm.* XII 1.9.

[71] And, in some cases, questioned; see Laura S. Lieber, "There is None like You among the Mute: The Theology of *Ein Kamokha Ba-Illemim* in Context, with a New Edition and Translation," *Crusades* 6 (2007): 15–35.

[72] The dueling processions of the Arians and Chrysostom represent this manifestation of religious unity in the context of public conflict.

[73] The passage continues, "This [singing of hymns and psalms in the Eastern mode] became established, a custom maintained from then until now among many—indeed almost all—of your congregations, and those who followed their example throughout the world" (From Augustine, *Confessions, Volume II: Books 9–13* [ed. and trans. Carolyn J.B. Hammond; Loeb Classical Library 27 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016) 29–32].

by Sozomen and Socrates Scholasticus in their accounts of Chrysostom versus the Arians.[74] On the one hand, this Levantine style of liturgical performance seems to be bound up with the influence of acclamation on hymnography, and the transformation of liturgical poetry into a distinctive variety of acclaim. On the other hand, it also represents a new emphasis on preexisting (biblical) structures which became fruitful precisely because they suited the new aesthetic style. In short, it represents an adaptation of something very "Eastern" (biblical, Jewish) to a "Roman" (and eventually Christian) style of public experience, but also something very "Roman" to an "Eastern" liturgical sphere: a translation from East to West to East and back again.

Yose ben Yose's poems are not conventional acclamations, neither in their structure nor their use. The liturgy embellished by these compositions celebrate the deity whose presence is assumed but not manifest, and their purpose is more existential than tangible. There is not, as would be the case with an emperor, even

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[74] Paulinus of Milan, *Vita Ambrosii* 13.3: Hoc in tempore primum antiphonae hymni ac vigiliae in ecclesia Mediolanensi celebrari coeperunt. On the performance and power of vigils in early Byzantine Christianity, and the role liturgical poetry played in the ritual, see Georgia Frank, "Romanos and the Night Vigil in the Sixth Century," in *A People's History of Christianity, vol. 3; Byzantine Christianity* (ed. Derek Krueger; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2006) 59–78. As Shaw notes, hymn singing was also central to Manichaen devotions, important for both Augustine and Ephrem (*Sacred Violence*, 444–45). It is worth highlighting the Late Antique poem with the greatest density of explicit acclamation-like material, known as the Akathist hymn (5th or 6th century; see Alexiou, *After Antiquity*, 55–56). A critical edition of the Greek can be found in *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* (ed. C.A. Trypanis; Vienna: Hermann Böhlaus, 1968), 17–39. The finest translation of this kontakion is by Ephrem Lash, published only online: https://web.archive. org/web/20160405104129/http://www.anastasis.org.uk/akath.htm. It opens:

> A prince of the angels
> was sent from heaven,
> to say to the Mother of God, 'Hail!' [Three times]
> And as, at his bodiless voice,
> he saw you, Lord, embodied,
> he was astounded and stood still,
> crying out to her like this:
> *Hail*, you through whom — joy — will shine out,
> *Hail*, you through whom — the curse — will cease.
> *Hail*, recalling — of fallen Adam,
> *Hail*, redemption — of the tears of Eve.
> *Hail*, height hard to climb —for human thoughts,
> *Hail*, depth hard to scan — even for angels' eyes.
> *Hail*, for you are — a throne for the King,
> *Hail*, for you carry — the One who carries all.
> *Hail*, star — that makes visible the Sun,
> *Hail*, womb — of divine incarnation.
> *Hail*, you through whom — creation — is renewed.
> *Hail*, you through whom — the Creator — becomes a babe.
> *Hail*, Bride without bridegroom.

The term translated by Lash as "Hail!" (Χαῖρε) is a greeting roughly equivalent to the Latin "*Ave*" and the Hebrew "*Shalom*!"

a pretext of egalitarianism or populist power, but there is a sense of access and audibility. We have no evidence that these poems ever migrated out of the synagogue liturgy and into the world, reversing as it were the journey of acclamations from the world of theater and politics as Ambrose's hymns, so influential in ecclesial politics, did. And yet Jewish liturgical poetry such as Yose's, with its strong rhythms and cadences, unifying theme-words and refrains, and dynamic (if religiously imagined) dialogical engagement with a singular figure of significant power, strongly resembles acclamation in key ways. Reading hymns as shaped by the larger culture of acclamation helps us to understand how liturgical poetry emerged within the performative world of Late Antiquity spectacle and why it appeared simultaneously across multiple religious communities, but in distinctive ways.

At the same time, this acclamatory lens helps modern readers recognize that Jews were fully a part of the broader society of Late Antiquity. Yose's poems are, without a doubt, distinctly and explicitly Jewish; they would never be mistaken for a plebian acclamation at the races, for an Ambrosian hymn, or for a component of an anti-Arian hymnic duel. Their language (Hebrew), their performative context (the synagogue), and their frame of reference (Jewish history, texts, and traditions) single them out as uniquely Jewish works. But just as biblical Psalms resonate with ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian poetry and modern day liturgical music is colored by the 1960s folk revival, liturgical poetry in Late Antiquity drew upon the aesthetics of the surrounding culture for its sense of what was pleasing, what was effective, and what seemed (intuitively) "right." In the case of Yose ben Yose—and other poets of his age and era, including Ephrem and Marqah, and Ambrose and Chrysostom, as well as later poets such as Narsai, Yannai, Eleazar ha-Qallir, and Romanos the Melodist[75]—that context consisted, in part, of the culture of acclamation.

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[75] The custom of public acclamation in synagogues continued well beyond Late Antiquity; see Menahem Ben-Sasson, "Appeal to the Congregation in Islamic Countries in the Early Middle Ages," in *Knesset Ezra: Literature and Life in the Synagogue: Studies Presented to Ezra Fleischer* (ed. S. Elizur, M.D. Herr and A. Shinan; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and the Ben-Zvi Institute, 1994) 327–50 [Hebrew].