From Rebuke to Consolation

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Eleazar Kallir’s *Kedushtot* for the Sabbaths of Consolation

In the past several years, liturgical poetry has emerged as an important source of evidence for the study of Judaism in late antiquity. The piyyutim are among the few surviving Jewish texts of late antique Palestine that were not authored by rabbinic sages.¹ As a result, they provide rare testimony to the theology and thought-world of Jews other than the sages themselves. At the same time, the theological overlaps between the classical piyyutim and rabbinic literature, as well as the many cases of payyetanic (*a payyetan* is a liturgical poet) allusion to rabbinic traditions, attest to the significant influence of the rabbinic movement on Palestinian synagogue culture from as early as the fifth century CE. Eleazar Kallir’s *kedushtot* for the Sabbaths of consolation, which were composed during the late sixth or early seventh century CE, provide examples of this mediating role.² As I will demonstrate, these poems echo the rabbinic material in their emphasis on the redemptive nature of God’s romantic love for Israel and in their interest in, and expansion of, the dialogue between God and Israel. At the same time, the piyyutim diverge from the lectionary and the midrashim in PRK in their expressions of desire for the imminent restoration of the temple and the ingathering of the exiles.

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¹ See chapter 1, n. 22 (p. 8).
² For Seth Schwartz, who has articulated one of the most minimalist evaluations of the influence of the rabbinic movement, the piyyutim provide the first major evidence of rabbinic influence in the synagogue (Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 263).
Sitz im Leben

The piyyutim were composed as substitutions for, or insertions into, the statutory prayers of the sabbath and festival liturgies. The relationship of the poems to the liturgy is clear from the poetic texts themselves. Each type of piyyut corresponds to a particular form and section of the liturgy. For example, the piyyutim of the yotzer genre were appended to, or replaced, the first blessing before the shema. The kedushta genre was appended to, or replaced, the first three blessings of the amidah on occasions when the kedushah prayer was recited. In both manuscript and printed versions, the piyyutim often end with the closing lines of the prayers to which they correspond, thus identifying clearly their place within the service. While the texts of the piyyutim themselves identify their place in the liturgy, the actual manner of recitation is more difficult to discern. According to general synagogue practice, each individual recited the seven benedictions of the sabbath and festival amidah silently and then the prayer leader repeated them. Ezra Fleischer suggests that prayer leaders began to recite piyyutim instead of repeating the fixed texts of the statutory prayers. Thus, the practice of piyyut developed in order to avoid the boredom of repetition and to integrate thematic material from the lectionary or from the life of the congregation into the amidah.

While Fleischer’s hypothesis explains when the piyyutim were recited and gives a pragmatic reason for their recitation, few scholars have investigated the liturgical function of the piyyutim. What religious or communal need did they address? What liturgical function did they fulfill? While these questions lie outside the scope of my project, I will address them insofar as they relate to my analysis of the piyyutim and to the history of


scholarship thus far. The myths of origin of the practice of piyyut give some clues to later authorities’ views regarding the function of piyyut. Pirqei b. Baboi (eighth century) states that “they [the rulers of Palestine] decreed that the Jews could not recite the shema or pray [the amidah], but they did allow them to enter on sabbath morning to speak and to sing ma’amadot.”6 This view is echoed by Sama’al ibn Yahyâ al-Maghribi, a twelfth-century Jewish convert to Islam, in his polemical Ifhâm al-Yahûd (The Silencing of the Jews): “When the Jews saw that the Persians persisted in obstructing their prayer, they invented invocations into which they admixed passages from their prayers, and they called these hizana.”7 While Sama’al ibn Yahyâ al-Maghribi’s version identifies the Persians as the persecutors, the substance of these two accounts is the same: piyyutim originated as substitutes for prohibited prayers. By suggesting that the piyyutim were composed as substitutions for statutory prayers, the myths imply that they perform the same function as these prayers.

R. Judah b. Barzilai of Barcelona (twelfth century) offers a different version of the myth of origin in his Sefer ha’itim. He states that piyyut was only introduced at a time of persecution because they were not able to speak of the words of the Torah, for the enemy decreed that Israel might not study the Torah. Therefore the sages among them introduced as part of the prayer service the practice of reciting and teaching to the ignorant the laws of each festival in its time and the laws of the holy days and the Sabbaths and the details of the commandments in the form of songs of praise and thanksgiving and rhymes and piyyut.8

According to Judah b. Barzilai, piyyut replaces prohibited Torah study, not prohibited prayer. Consequently, this text suggests that piyyut’s function is primarily pedagogical, not liturgical. The discrepancy among the sources accurately reflects the multifaceted nature of piyyut. As substitutes for the statutory prayers, piyyutim are certainly prayer. As meditations or commentaries on the lectionary texts of the day, they are

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6. Louis Ginzberg, Ginze Shekhter (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1929), vol. 2, 551–52. This myth of origin resembles the myth of origin of the haftarah cited by Abudarham (fourteenth century). He states that the haftarah came into being during the period of Syrian persecution, when the Jews were prohibited from reading Torah. Both myths of origin communicate discomfort with perceived liturgical innovation. Piyyut and haftarah are justified as responses to outside pressures which made innovations necessary rather than as manifestations of internal desires for change.
7. Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, 223.
8. Ibid., 222.
also works of biblical interpretation. At the same time, they are also poetry and participate in the functions of poetic language.9

The multifaceted nature of piyyut has important repercussions for Jewish worship. While there was certainly overlap between biblical and liturgical texts, the mishnaic and talmudic sources treat prayer and the ritual recitation of the Bible as distinct activities which are governed by distinct sets of rules and assumptions.10 The recitation of piyyutim which dealt with the themes of the lectionary served to blur the boundary between prayer and Torah. Through the recitation of the piyyutim, the themes of the lectionary texts became, in effect, themes of the day. The issues of the lectionary texts, as they were translated into the language of prayer and poetry by the liturgical poets, came to permeate the entirety of the worship service, not just the ritual recitation of the biblical texts. This function is particularly relevant to the Tisha b’Av season. As I mentioned above, with the exception of the penitential rituals of the three weeks and the ninth of Av itself, the season is not marked by any particular practices. Through the piyyutim, the liturgical poets transformed the statutory prayers into a season-specific ritual. In so doing, they contributed to the differentiation of the ten weeks surrounding Tisha b’Av as a discrete season with its own theological meaning.

In the case studies that follow, I will focus on the way piyyut functions as a nexus of prayer, poetry and exegesis. In particular, I will focus on the ways in which rhyme and allusion function both as poetic devices and as strategies for the interpretation of the lectionary texts.

## Piyyut as Prayer

In many ways, the piyyutim which I analyze below bear little relationship to the statutory prayers to which they correspond. Unlike the first blessings of the amidah, the bodies of the piyyutim are not devoted to praise of God, rehearsal of God’s saving deeds, or supplication. The first poem consists of God’s consolatory words to Zion. The second consists of Zion’s

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9. The medieval debates over piyyut further reinforce the genre’s location at the intersection of prayer, Torah study and poetry. See, for example, the critique of R. Natronai (ninth century) cited in Lawrence Hoffman, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 68, and Abraham Ibn Ezra’s comment in his commentary on Eccl 5:1.

10. The rules governing the Torah reading ritual appear in m. Meg and the talmudic commentaries on it as well as in the post-talmudic tractate Soferim. The subject of prayer is discussed primarily in m. Ber and the commentaries on it.
complaint against God, and the third consists of more divine consolation. Despite these differences, the piyyutim do manifest prayer-like attributes:

1. The final verses of each of the poems are verses of supplication which correspond to the themes of the statutory prayers. These verses represent the most straightforward accommodation of the piyyutim to the genre of statutory prayer.

2. The stance of the poet is that of a prayer leader. He speaks in the voice of the community, not in his own individual voice.

3. Unlike the recitation of scripture or midrash, the piyyutim are not didactic. Rather, they are lyrical, emotional texts which seem more concerned with the emotional tenor invoked by a theological idea or liturgical moment than with the content of the idea itself. This lyricism and emotional expression echo the psalms, which probably originated as liturgical compositions and were eventually introduced into the standard liturgy.

4. As I will discuss below, the themes and concerns of the prayers which the piyyutim parallel are present in the piyyutim, albeit in more indirect forms.

5. As Raymond Scheindlin has noted, the litanies of biblical verses which appear between the third and fourth stanzas of the first three poems of the piyyutim of the kedushta genre resemble the malkhuyot, zikhronot, and shofarot liturgies. These liturgies, which are recited during the amidah of Rosh Hashanah, are comprised of strings of biblical verses which make reference to the themes of divine kingship, divine remembrance or attention, and the blowing of ram’s horns. Scheindlin also suggests that the liturgies for fast days described in m. Taan 2:1–4 are related as well. There, the zikhronot and shofarot, as well as a series of Psalms, are identified as blessings. From the evidence of the mishnaic text and the Rosh Hashanah liturgy, Scheindlin hypothesizes that one form of early Jewish prayer consisted of the recitation of biblical verses which were linked by a word or

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11. Aaron Mirsky (Reshit ha-piyut, 59) identifies divine address as one of the central features of piyyut. While the piyyutim do often address God, these poems demonstrate that the generalization is not absolute.

12. Ibid., 60.
theme. He suggests that the litanies of verses which appear in the piyyutim might be examples of this genre of prayer which became incorporated into the piyyut genres.\textsuperscript{13}

**Piyyut as Poetry**

While the midrashim discussed in chapter 3 and the poems discussed below correspond to the same set of lectionary texts and are designated for the same lectionary season, their roles in the Tisha b’Av complex are quite distinct. The midrashim are didactic texts whose *raison d’être* is the interpretation of the biblical text and the articulation of rabbinic theology and ideology. They argue for a particular understanding of a prooftext or assert a particular notion about God, Israel, or the relationship between them. In contrast, the piyyutim are essentially poetic texts. They are not primarily concerned with making an argument.\textsuperscript{14} Rather, the poems are dominated by the emotive, conative (vocative), and poetic functions of language.\textsuperscript{15} The poems articulate the emotions of the speaker, supplicate and exhort the listener, and use the features of the poetic composition itself to evoke moods and images. While the midrashim are interpretations of the biblical texts, the piyyutim are meditations on them; they are poems which articulate the emotions and moods of the lectionary text and the lectionary moment.

**Kedushtot for the Sabbaths of Consolation**

by Eleazar Kallir

Kallir worked in Palestine during the late sixth to early seventh century. He wrote poems for all of the festivals, special sabbaths, festive weekdays,

\textsuperscript{13} Raymond Scheindlin in conversation, August 1998.

\textsuperscript{14} Some piyyutim did serve a didactic function. L. Weinberger (*Jewish Hymnography*, 7) notes that both Yannai and Pinhas Hacohen (seventh century) incorporated laws regarding festivals in their piyyutim.

\textsuperscript{15} The terminology is used by Roman Jakobson in “Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Style in Language* (ed. T. A. Sebeok; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967), 350–77. Jakobson argues that while most instances of language are dominated by the referential function of language, poetry is dominated by the poetic function—a focus on the nature of the message itself. He describes the poetic function as a “set toward the message as such, focus on the message for its own sake” (“Linguistics,” 356). In poetry, as in prose, various functions of language operate simultaneously. However, the poetic function becomes dominant while the referential function recedes.
and fasts. His work was disseminated widely, and the structure and style of his poems became the definitive model for generations of poets. Poem cycles by Kallir are extant for six of the sabbaths of consolation.16

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The kedushta is one of the most elaborate piyyut forms. Kedushtot were composed for the morning liturgies of sabbaths and festivals during which the kedushah prayer is recited. While there are differences among the extant kedushtot, the general structure is as follows:

1. The first three poems of the kedushta form a discrete unit. The poems are connected to one another through their symmetrical structures, use of acrostics, biblical litanies, and explicit connection to the first three blessings of the amidah and the first three lines of the lectionary text.

2. The fourth and fifth poems also comprise a discrete unit. According to Ezra Fleischer, this part of the kedushta structure is mysterious. It is not clearly liturgically linked nor does it seem to be motivated by particular structural conventions.17 In the kedushtot that I analyze here, this unit serves to further expand on the themes articulated more precisely in the first three poems.

3. Fleischer describes the final unit of the kedushta as the “pericopes of expansion.” This unit consists of two or more poems and ends with a transition to the kedushah itself.18

A comprehensive analysis of the entire corpus of Kallir’s kedushtot for the sabbaths of consolation is beyond the scope of this chapter. I have chosen to analyze three poems from two kedushtot: the first poem (magen) for the first sabbath of consolation, and the first and second poems (magen and mehayeh) for the second sabbath of consolation. I have limited my study to poems from the first sections of the kedushtot because these are the poems which are most explicitly linked to the lectionary texts both through their opening lines and through the inclusion of the lectionary verses in the litanies of biblical verses. I chose these three poems because

16. The kedushtot have been edited, annotated and published by Shulamit Elizur in Kedushah ve-shir: kedushta’ot le-shabtot ha-neḥamah le-Rabbi El’azar bi-Rabi Kilir (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988). The cycle for the final sabbath is missing. In addition, the cycle for the sixth sabbath is quite fragmentary.
18. Ibid., 147–51.
they contain interesting treatments of the theme of the romantic love between God and Israel, and because they represent rich examples of the use of rhyme and allusion.

Rhyme

Rhyme is one of the salient features of the kedushtot. It serves as a structuring device for individual stanzas and serves to distinguish stanzas from one other. In addition, rhyme is one of the strategies through which poets communicate meaning.

In “One Relation of Rhyme to Reason,” W. K. Wimsatt writes:

The words of a rhyme, with their curious harmony of sound and distinction of sense, are an amalgam of the sensory and the logical, or an arrest and precipitation of the logical in sensory form; they are the icon on which the idea is caught.19

Rhyme is based on the similarity of sound between words that are distinct in meaning. Even though two words mean different things and are separated spatially/temporally and grammatically within a poem, rhyme brings them together in the mind/ear of the reader.20 Rhyme then leads the reader to give “logical” sense to a “sensory” similarity or relationship between the rhymed words. In other words, in the case of a rhyme, your ear tells you the words belong together and then your brain has to figure out the meaning of the conjunction. The meaning generated by the rhyme stands in a particular relationship to the meanings generated by the non-poetic functions of the text or utterance. Wimsatt suggests that verse and rhyme “impose upon the logical pattern of expressed argument a kind of fixative counterpattern of alogical implication.”21 While his language of “logic” and “alogic” has become outmoded in literary studies, Wimsatt’s description of rhyme as a counterpattern of implication which exists alongside the “logical” meaning or “content” of a poem is quite apt.22

20. While the relationship between words on the page is a spatial one, the reader often experiences the distance between words in temporal terms. Similarly, in the case of poetry, a reader will often experience the text aurally by hearing the words in his/her head.
22. For lack of a better term, I will use the phrase “content meaning” to connote the meaning communicated by the plain grammatical and syntactic arrangement of the words. I differentiate “content” meanings from the meanings and messages
In some cases, the relationship between the rhymed words proves to be exclusively one of sound. In these cases, attention to the poetic counterpattern articulated by the rhyme does not enhance the meaning of the poem. In other cases, however, the rhyme pattern articulates a message independent of that of the “content” message of the poem. In the analyses which follow, I will describe the rhyme patterns of the three poems and will analyze the ways in which they contribute to the meanings of the texts.

Allusion

Like rhyme, allusion is a central feature of classical piyyut in general, and Kallir’s kedushtot in particular. In the kedushtot, Kallir employs a wide range of intertextual references. The litanies of biblical verses which separate the penultimate and final stanzas are verbatim quotations of complete verses. In the poems themselves, Kallir will, at times, quote fragments of biblical verses. At other times he will opt for a paraphrase which is a near-quotations of a biblical phrase. In still other cases, Kallir will not use biblical language at all but will evoke a common biblical image or trope.23 These allusions serve as a powerful strategy for enhancing and nuancing the “referential” or “content” meaning of the poem.

While rhyme works by activating relationships among separate words in a poem, allusion functions by activating a connection between a feature of the alluding text and a feature of a separate, prior text. Ziva Ben-Porat describes a four step process of allusion: The reader

1. recognizes the marker as a feature from another text;

2. identifies the evoked texts;

3. brings certain features of the evoked text to bear in his/her reading of the alluding text. In this stage, the recognition of the role of the marker in the alluded text affects the reader’s understanding of the alluding text;

which are generated by strategies such as rhyme, meter, sound patterns and allusion.

4. not only reads the alluding marker in light of the alluded text but makes broader connections between the alluding text and the alluded text.\textsuperscript{24}

John Hollander describes this final, most comprehensive form of allusion as metalepsis. He describes metalepsis as follows: “When a literary echo links the text in which it occurs to an earlier text, the figurative effect of the echo can lie in the unstated or suppressed (transumed) points of resonance between the two texts . . .”\textsuperscript{25} Or, as Richard Hays describes it,

Allusive echo functions to suggest to the reader that text B should be understood in light of a broad interplay with text A, encompassing aspects of A beyond those explicitly echoed . . . Metalepsis . . . places the reader within a field of whispered or unstated correspondences.\textsuperscript{26}

According to Ben-Porat, Hollander, and Hays, allusion—in its most powerful form—enables the invocation of the entire range of meaning and significance of the invoked text. Whether or not this potential is actualized depends on the power of the connection and the ear of the reader. In some cases, the reader will not recognize the marker as an allusion at all or will recognize the marker as an allusion but not know its source. In other cases, the recognition and identification of the alluded text might not change the reader’s interpretation of the alluding text significantly. Even in cases where the full activation of the alluded text does not occur, however, allusion still serves several functions: it bolsters the authority of the author; it keeps older words alive and relevant; it creates a link between the author and the audience on the basis of shared knowledge; it shows the erudition of the author and locates him/her within a tradition; it is fun; and in some cases it makes up for the linguistic poverty of the alluding text.\textsuperscript{27}

In the case of piyyut, metalepsis, or the fullest activation of the alluded text, invokes the alluded texts in both their biblical and midrashic contexts. Often, a particular epithet or allusion will make sense only if the reader is aware of the underlying midrashic tradition.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, it is legitimate and even necessary to be sensitive to the midrashic resonances of

\textsuperscript{25} Hollander, \textit{Figure}, 115.
\textsuperscript{26} Hays, \textit{Echoes}, 20.
\textsuperscript{27} Sommer, \textit{Prophet}, 18–20.
\textsuperscript{28} For the use of midrashic traditions in the piyyutim, see Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, \textit{Halakhah ve-agadah be-fiyute Yanai: mekorot ha-payetan, le-shono u-tekufato} (Tel Aviv: Keren Alexander Kahut, 1965); Joseph Yahalom, \textit{Poetry and Society in Jewish Galilee of Late Antiquity} (Tel Aviv: ha-Kibbutz ha-meuhad, 1999) (Heb.).
biblical allusions invoked within the poems. At the same time, not all midrashic valences enhance the meaning of the allusion. In the case studies that follow, I will analyze the various levels of allusion that occur within the poems. In the footnotes, I will indicate intertextual echoes which seem to be low-level allusions. These references perform the rhetorical functions of allusion in general but do not significantly enhance the meaning of the poem. In my analyses, I will focus on those cases in which the activation of the alluded text within both its biblical and rabbinic contexts enhances the meaning of the poem. To a certain degree, my judgment as to the power of an allusion and the relevance of midrashic context is subjective. As a rule, I focus on those midrashic traditions which are articulated in the midrashim relating to the Tisha b’Av season. These allusions are more likely to be relevant because they appear elsewhere in the same lectionary context that generates the piyyutim. In addition, multiple iterations of, or allusions to, particular midrashic traditions within the larger corpus of Tisha b’Av season literature might suggest that these traditions were part of the public discourse of the season.

Case Study 1

Magen for Kedushta to Shabbat Naḥamu


30. I have reproduced the Hebrew texts of this and the next case study from Elizur, Kedushah, 13–14, 32–34. The English translations are mine. I have translated the poems as literally as possible but have not preserved the rhyme or meter of the Hebrew.
With me from Lebanon you will not be ashamed.
Don in glory your garments of strength,
You will trample and you will tread nations with your feet,
I will adorn your banners with silk and fine linen.

Shake yourself free from dust, daughter Zion,
And rise. Wrap [yourself in] a garment of beauty,

31. Lebanon is an epithet for Israel which derives from Song 4:8.
32. The exact phrase in the f.s. impf. appears in Isa 54:4 and Zeph 3:11. Isa 54:4 is part of the fifth haftarah of consolation.
33. Vocabulary from the prophecy of restoration and redemption in Mic 4:13 (“Arise and trample, daughter Zion, for I will make your horns iron and your hoofs bronze”) appears throughout the first two stanzas. Kallir may have alluded to this verse both because of its theme and because of the use of the epithet, “daughter Zion.”
34. Banners are often an epithet for the tribes in piyyut.
35. This verse alludes heavily to the lectionary texts of the Tisha b’Av cycle. Isa 52:2 states, “Shake yourself free from dust! Rise! Sit! Jerusalem.” The epithet “daughter Zion” appears eight times in the Tisha b’Av lectionary cycle: Isa 52:2; Lam 2:1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 18; 4:22. The piyyut verse is a direct reversal of Lam 2:10 (“Sit on the ground and be silent, elders of Daughter Zion. Raise dust upon your heads . . .”).
Your last crown will be more beautiful than your first. 
Your sin will be finished and atoned for like a cloud.\textsuperscript{36}

Your towers that were darkened in my anger,\textsuperscript{37}
They burned in anger and were utterly destroyed in fury.
They will wrap (themselves) in glory and will be comforted 
from my mouth. 
To them announce: Comfort! Comfort!

As it is written (Isa 40:1): Comfort, comfort my people, says your 
God.

And it is said (Ps 94:19): When my inner cares are many, your conso-
lations soothe my soul.

And it is said (Job 6:10): And this [sic]\textsuperscript{38} will be my consolation as I 
writhe in pain that will not be soothed; I did not deny the words of 
the Holy One.

And it is said (Isa 66:10): Be glad over Jerusalem and rejoice in her, 
all who love her! Rejoice in her joy, all who mourn over her!
And it is said (Isa 66:11): That you may suck and be satisfied from the 
breast of her consolations, so that you may suck and take pleasure 
from the breast/abundance of her glory.

Her glory will rise up over all, 
And you will reveal your glory in her as before. 
You will fill our days like the days of old, 
And in strength and in glory your shield will be raised up. 

Blessed . . . shield of Abraham. 

Within the liturgical setting, this poem would have served as the ini-
tial marker of the seven-week period of consolation. Since the \textit{amidah} pre-
cedes the Torah service in the order of the liturgy, the recitation of this 
poem would have preceded the recitation of the haftarah itself and, conse-
quently, would have been the first season-specific text of the consolatory 
period. The poem serves as an introduction to the period by providing a 
preview of the consolations which will be proffered during the seven

\textsuperscript{36} This verse is a paraphrase of Isa 44:22 (“I have erased your transgressions 
like a cloud and your sins like a cloud”), which appears in the literature of the 
Tisha b’Av season in Lam R. 1:1. There, the verse is a prooftext for the assertion 
that Isaiah responded to all of Jeremiah’s words of doom with words of conso-
lation.

\textsuperscript{37} In a poem by R. Judah b. Rabbi Benjamin (a Babylonian poet of the tenth cen-
tury), “towers” is an epithet for the temple (Shulamit Elizur, \textit{Piyute R. Yehudah bi-
Rabi Binyamin} [Jerusalem: Nirdamim Press, 1988], 218). This association makes 
sense here as well.

\textsuperscript{38} The biblical verse reads “also” instead of “this.”
sabbaths of consolation. At the “content” level, the poem consists of a catalogue of consolatory tropes common to rabbinic literature that are, for the most part, recurrent themes in the haftarot of consolation. In the poem, Kallir focuses on tropes of consolation which are reversals of Lamentations’ tropes of destruction. In so doing, Kallir underscores the dialogic and “antidote” relationship between Lamentations and the haftarot of consolation. By using tropes of consolation which remind the audience of Lamentations’ tropes of despair, Kallir asserts that Tisha b’Av and the weeks of consolation are integral parts of a single spiritual journey from despair to consolation.

The first stanza announces four images of consolation: Israel will come with God from “Lebanon” (line 1). She will don garments of strength in glory (line 2). She will trample her enemies (line 3). God will adorn her banners/tribes (line 4). The first three images occur repeatedly in the haftarah cycle and are among the “measure-for-measure” reversals of Lamentations’ woes. The first image collapses two of the central consolatory tropes of the Tisha b’Av cycle. God will bring Israel back from exile (Isa 40:10–11; 49:16–20, 22; 52:11–12; 60:4; 62:11) and God is with Israel and has not abandoned her (Isa 49:15; 50:1; 54:5–10; 51:12). This image serves as a reversal of Lamentations’ lament over Zion’s isolation (Lam 1:1, 2, 9, 16, 17, 21).

The second image echoes the images of dressing in the lectionary texts. In the haftarot, Zion will don the exiles like an ornament (Isa 49:18); she is told to put on strength and to don garments of glory (Isa 52:1). In the final haftarah, the speaker states that God has clothed him with garments of salvation and has wrapped him in a cloak of righteousness just as a groom puts on a turban and a bride adorns herself with jewelry (Isa 61:10). In addition, the image of donning garments of strength reverses the tropes of soiled clothing and sackcloth and ashes which appears in Lam 1:9 and 2:10. The image of trampling one’s enemies both echoes the tropes of vengeance and reverses the tropes of oppression and subjugation within the cycle. The final image is the least allusive. God does not adorn

39. It is important to note that the level of explicit content is not necessarily the most accessible to piyyut audiences. Because much of the language and syntax of the poems is obscure, and because the piyyutim were sung, the audience may not have followed the “plot” of the poems easily. The message conveyed by rhyme patterns and melody might have been more accessible. See Elizur, “Congregation.”

40. This image also parallels the return of God and the exiles to Zion in Isa 40:3–4.
41. Isa 51:23, 63:3; Lam 1:15.
the tribes anywhere in the haftarot but he does adorn the personified city (Isa 54:11–12).

The next stanzas add to the consolatory catalogue. In the second stanza, Zion is commanded to shake herself free from the dust (line 5), to arise and to don redemptive garments (line 6). She is also told that her sins will be forgiven (line 8). These themes are present in the haftarot of consolation where they function as reversals of Lamentations’ tropes of destruction and despair. The first verse of the second stanza is a paraphrase of Isa 52:2: “Shake yourself free from the dust! Rise! Sit! Jerusalem.” Within the Tisha b’Av lectionary cycle, this verse serves as an antidote to Lam 2:1 and 10, in which Zion and her inhabitants sit on the ground in despair. The second and third verses expand on the redemptive clothing theme while the third verse articulates the idea that the second “crown” or redemption will be more beautiful than the first. This assertion conflates two tropes from the haftarot of consolation. Throughout Second Isaiah, the prophet asserts that the return from Babylon will be a second exodus which will be more glorious than the first (Isa 52:12; 55:12).42 In addition, the prophet uses dressing as a trope for restoration and redemption. Here the assertion that the second redemption will supersede the first is translated into the language of dressing and crowning. The final verse of the stanza asserts the complete forgiveness of Israel’s sins. This theme, which occurs in Isa 40:2, 51:22, and 54:4 and 7, counters the descriptions of ongoing divine fury in Lamentations.

The third stanza introduces the themes of the rebuilding of the city itself. God acknowledges that he himself destroyed the city in his anger, and promises to restore it in mercy. These verses echo Isa 54:11–12, in which God promises to rebuild the ruins of the city. In addition, these verses serve as a “measure-for-measure” response to Lam 2:1–9, in which God reduces the city to ruins.

The litany of verses consists of five verses which contain the root נוח (comfort). The first is the opening verse of the haftarah and the last forms a bridge to the last stanza of the poem. The repetition of the root נוח serves to underscore the central theme and mode of the poem.

The final stanza continues the preview of consolation. The first two verses refer to the rising and revelation of God’s glory. They echo the opening lines of the sixth haftarah of consolation: “Arise and shine! For your light is coming and the glory of God shines on you . . . and God will shine on you and his glory will appear over you” (Isa 60:1). The third line of the stanza is one of the poem’s most obvious responses to Lamenta-

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42. See chapter 2, n. 86 (p. 65).
tions: “Fill our days as the days of old.” 43 In the context of the lectionary season, this line echoes the penultimate line of Lamentations: “Return us to you, YHWH, so that we may return. Renew our days as of old.” While the “content” of the poem serves as an introduction to the themes of the seven weeks of consolation, the rhyme patterns and allusions of the poem elaborate on the emotional tenor of the target verse, Isa 40:1. Within the lectionary cycle, this verse introduces the trope of God as comforter and asserts that Zion’s sins have been forgiven. Through the poetic devices of rhyme and allusion, Kallir elaborates on these tropes. The poetic features of the poem depict the dynamics of relation that ensue when God is portrayed as divine comforter; Zion is portrayed as personified mourner; and Zion’s misfortune is understood as divine punishment.

**Rhyme Patterns**

The rhyme patterns of the poem articulate both the dynamics of the comforter/mourner relationship and the journey from sin to forgiveness. Through the repetition of certain grammatical forms, Kallir communicates information about the dynamics of power and connection which are imbedded in the assertion that God comforts Israel. Through sequences of rhymed words, Kallir reproduces the journey from sin to atonement.

The rhyme pattern of the first stanza asserts both the femininity of Zion and God’s power over her. The first stanza is structured around the rhyme ရ (shi). With the exception of the last verse, each of the rhyming words is a verb in the feminine imperative or imperfect: န (teivoshi/you will [not] be ashamed—livshi/don—vetadushi/you will tread). The repeated occurrence of these verbal forms serves several functions. The repetition of the feminine forms reinforces the female personification of Zion/Israel. At the same time, the rhyme pattern succinctly communicates the power differential that exists between the divine speaker and the addressee. Through the series of imperatives and imperfects, Kallir asserts that God has the authority to command Zion and the power to predict her future.44

The second stanza is built on the rhyme ရ (par/far). Unlike the ending ရ (shi) which has a distinct grammatical meaning, ရ is grammatically insignificant. The phoneme itself does not communicate information. How-

43. According to the conventions of the kedushta form, the last line of the fourth stanza forms a bridge to the poem’s corresponding blessing. In the kedushtot for the sabbaths of consolation, these verses rarely relate specifically to the themes of the rest of the poems. Consequently, the third line of the final stanza is, in effect, the last line of the poem.

44. In Hebrew, the imperative and the imperfect have overlapping valences.
ever, the movement from the first rhymed word, רפנ פמ (me’afar/from dust) to the last rhymed word, רפנ יוק (yekhupar/will be atoned) expresses, in shorthand, the spiritual transformation which begins at Tisha b’Av and ends on Yom Kippur. The movement also testifies to a journey from ashes, which are a sign of mourning and repentance, to complete forgiveness and atonement. Although the words are separated syntactically within the poem, the rhyme brings them together in the ear of the audience. Consequently, the sequence which extends from “dust” to “atonement” coexists alongside the syntactic sequence of words which continues to express the catalogue of consolation.

While the second stanza describes Israel’s transformation, the rhyme pattern of the third stanza encapsulates the divine experience which is articulated during the Tisha b’Av cycle. It also reinforces the power relationship between God and Israel. Here, the structuring rhyme is more extensive than in the first two stanzas. Each word ends with the syllable פמ (amu): הצעה וקבר הבファン (hu’amu/were darkened—huzamu/were angrily destroyed—yeruḥamu/will be comforted—nahamu/comfort). In addition, the first three rhyme words are either pual or hophal forms. Consequently, the vowel patterns of their final three syllables is identical: פמ. This rhyme pattern, like the one in the first stanza, is grammatically significant; it is the sign of the passive voice. The insistent repetition of the passive forms communicates the utter passivity of Zion/Israel. The people and their fate are at the mercy of God and are utterly subject to divine action.

The progression of rhymed verbs also recounts God’s journey from anger to compassion, which is narrated by the Tisha b’Av cycle as a whole and underscored by the midrash. The first two verbs describe destruction and fury. The final two verbs describe compassion and consolation. Just as the second stanza narrates Israel’s journey from lament and repentance to forgiveness, so too does the third stanza testify to God’s journey from fury to compassion.

The rhyme scheme of the fourth verse is based on the syllables, ה-ל-ל. While this phoneme is not grammatically significant, the roots of the rhymed words, וקבע וקבע וקבע וקבע (vitateleh/will rise—tegalleh/you will reveal—temalle/you will fill—nitalleh/it will be raised up), are all common components of the consolatory lexicon. Ascension, redemptive

45. The movement imbedded in the rhymed words also resonates with Isa 40:1b which states that Zion’s time of service is over and her sin has been forgiven.
revelation and fullness are all ingredients of Second Isaiah’s vision of the
time of redemption.46

The counterpatterns articulated by the rhyme schemes of the poem
complement the “content” meaning of the poem in two ways. First, while
the “content” of the poem describes what the consolation will be, the
rhyme patterns describe how the consolation will be. The rhyme patterns
place the poem’s consolatory tropes and events within the context of the
God-Israel relationship. God is the sole agent of both Zion’s past punish-
ment and her future redemption. The consolations take place alongside
the simultaneous transformations that God and Israel undergo during the
course of the Tisha b’Av cycle. As Israel travels from grief and repentance
to atonement, God travels from fury to compassion. Both of these journeys
are fitting narratives for the period between Tisha b’Av and Rosh Ha-
shanah. They both describe the necessary changes that must occur before
Israel and God are ready for reconciliation and renewal. The “content”
meaning of the poem and its poetic meaning also complement each other
liturgically. The explicit content of the poem seems to function more as an
introduction to the weeks of consolation as a whole than as a meditation
on Isa 40:1. The rhyme patterns, however, seem to relate more closely to
the content of the verse.

Allusion

Like the rhyme patterns, the allusions deepen and nuance the “content” of
the poem. Allusions within the piyyutim function like petihtot within the
midrashim. They serve as vehicles for the importation of texts, images and
themes into the body of the text. An effective allusion activates the alluded
text in the mind of the reader. That text, along with its attendant associa-
tions, then becomes part of the reader’s understanding of the alluding
text. Within the kedushtot, there are many degrees of allusion. Certain allu-
sions within the poems activate specific prior texts while the most power-
ful allusions activate entire constellations of images and ideas. In the dis-
cussion which follows, I will focus on a few potent allusions within the
first poem.

Kallir opens the poem with a particularly powerful allusion: “With
me from Lebanon” alludes to Song 4:8. For a hearer who recognizes the
words as a quotation from Song of Songs, the phrase immediately situates
the poem within the context of the romantic relationship between God
and Israel.47 The evocation of the love relationship between God and Israel

47. Gerson Cohen suggests that Song of Songs was understood as a text about
the relationship between God and Israel even before it was included in the biblical
is particularly powerful at this point in the Tisha b’Av season. As I noted above, this kedushta is situated liturgically between Lamentations and the first haftarah of consolation. By opening the season of consolation with an allusion to Song of Songs, Kallir indicates a radical sea change in the description of the relationship between God and Israel. God was last described on Tisha b’Av as Zion’s furious adversary. Suddenly, God speaks as her lover. Thus, the allusion to Song of Songs is simultaneously a strong rebuttal to Israel’s accusations of divine abandonment and a signal to the synagogue audience that they have entered a new stage in the relationship with God.

For the hearer who not only recognizes the source of the allusion but can also fill in the rest of the verse, “With me from Lebanon, bride; come with me from Lebanon,” the first line of the piyyut, which appears to be a grammatical fragment, now makes grammatical sense. Instead of reading, “With me from Lebanon, do not be ashamed,” the verse reads, “[Come] with me from Lebanon, do not be ashamed.” The rest of the alluded verse also reinforces the romantic trope. Not only does God summon Israel, he addresses her as his bride.

The allusion is most potent, however, if we read the verse with its midrashic valences. From as early as the tannaitic period, Song 4:8 was used as a prooftext to support the idea that God went into exile with Israel and would return with them. In the Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, *Pisha* 14, the midrashist reads Exod 12:41 (“On that very day all the hosts of YHWH went out of the land of Egypt”) as evidence that God went to Egypt with Israel and also accompanied the people out. As part of the commentary on this verse, the midrash states:

Thus you find that in every place that Israel was exiled, the shekhinah, as it were, was exiled with them. . . . And it says: With me from Lebanon, bride. Was she coming from Lebanon? Was she not going up to Lebanon? What does scripture mean by With me from Lebanon? Rather, this: I and you, as it were, were exiled from Lebanon, and I and you will go up to Lebanon.

This reading is generated by the preposition, “from” (נָפַל). In rabbinic literature, Lebanon is a frequent epithet for the temple. Thus, the Song of Songs verse seems to mean, “Come with me from the temple, my bride.”

The midrash asks why God is calling Israel from the temple. Shouldn’t God be calling Israel to the temple? The midrash concludes that Song 4:8

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48. See Song Z. 4:8 for an explanation of the epithet.
signifies that God and Israel were exiled from the temple and would also return together to the temple. In Beshallah 7, the author of the Mekhilta interprets the verse as a reference to the future return from exile:

And so you find that in the future, the exiles will only be gathered in as a reward for faith. As it is written: With me from Lebanon, my bride; Look down from the top of Amana.49

In the amoraic midrashim, Song 4:8 is interpreted in several ways. Most of these readings are compiled in Song R., where the verse is interpreted as follows:

With me from Lebanon, bride; Come with me from Lebanon. The Holy One Blessed be He said: Come with me from Lebanon. There it teaches: They give a maiden twelve months from when her husband claims her to prepare herself. But I did not do this. Rather, when you were still busy with mortar and bricks, I leapt and redeemed you . . . The Holy One Blessed be He said to them, “When I exiled you to Babylon, I was with you.” As it is written: For your sake I will send to Babylon (Isa 43:14). When you return to the chosen house in the future, I will be with you. As it is written: With me from Lebanon, bride. R. Levi said: Didn’t scripture mean to say instead, “With me to Lebanon, my bride?” But you say from Lebanon! Rather, at first he will arise from the temple and afterwards he will vanquish the nations of the world. R. Berechia said: Within three hours, the Holy One Blessed be He will vanquish the evil Esau and his captains. What is the proof? Now I will arise, says God. Now I will rise up, now I will lift up (Isa 33:10).50 Every time that Israel is oppressed in the dust, as if it could be said, he is also. And this is what Isaiah said: Shake yourself free from dust, arise! Sit! Jerusalem (Isa 52:2). At the same hour: Be silent, all flesh, before YHWH (Zech 2:17). Why? For he rouses him from his holy dwelling (ibid.).51 R. Aha said: Like a rooster which shakes its wings free from the ashes.

The first reading is generated by a pun between Lebanon (Lebanon) and levenim (bricks). The midrash read Song 4:8 as “Come with me from the bricks, my bride.” It explains this (new) verse by saying that unlike a human king who gives his bride a year to prepare herself for marriage, God took Israel to be his bride directly from the brickworks of slavery.52 The implications of this reading are twofold. First, the midrash asserts that

49. vbnt (Amana) is being read as vbunt (faith). A parallel text appears in Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai 14:31.
50. Each occurrence of the word “now” is read as a reference to an hour.
51. The reading is based on the use of the root rgb (to shake) in Isa 52:2 and Zech 2:17.
52. A parallel text appears in Exod R. 23:5.
Espousal is the appropriate metaphor for the Exodus—romance is an appropriate trope for redemption. Second, the text asserts that God is so gracious and loves Israel so much that he married her even though she was still a slave.

The next reading of the verse is generated by the same “problem” which generated the reading in the Mekhilta. Here, the midrash explains the use of the preposition “from” by saying that after God returns to the temple, he will go out from the sanctuary and punish Israel’s enemies. Song 4:8 refers to this mission of vengeance when it says “With me from Lebanon.” This comment expands the midrashic valence of the verse to embrace the notion of divine vengeance on Israel’s enemies. Thus far, Song R. has read Song 4:8 to be a prooftext for God’s presence in exile, God’s gracious romantic love for Israel which is manifest in his intervention on her behalf, and God’s vengeance on Israel’s enemies.53

The last unit of Song R. 4:8 brings together Song 4:8 and Isa 52:2, the verse which is alluded to in line 5 of the poem. According to the midrash, these two verses are synonymous—they both serve as prooftexts for the idea that God’s experience parallels that of Israel. When Israel is in exile and wallowing in the dust, God too wallows in exile. When God rises up, Israel too arises in redemption.54

Song 4:8 also appears in the final pericope of PRK 22. There, the verse serves as one of the prooftexts for the assertion that Israel is called “bride” ten times. As I discussed in the previous chapter, this pericope asserts that God’s romantic love for Israel is intimately linked to God’s redemptive acts of intervention in history.55

The midrashic valences of Song 4:8 seem quite relevant to the poem. First, the verse is invoked in the Tisha b’Av midrashic complex in PRK 22. Second, the theme of God’s presence in exile and God’s loving devotion to Israel are central to the lectionary cycle and the midrashim which comment on it. By opening the cycle of kedushtot with a citation of Song 4:8, Kallir brings the theological notions which are associated with the biblical verse to bear on the poem itself. “With me from Lebanon” is not merely a divine summons to return from exile, it is also an avowal of the intensity of God’s love for Israel and testimony to God’s ongoing presence with Israel in exile. In addition, when read with the valence ascribed to it in PRK, the phrase “with me from Lebanon, my bride” invokes the idea that God’s

53. Song 4:8 is also used as a prooftext for the idea that God accompanies Israel into exile, in Num R. 7:10, Exod R. 23:5, and Song Z. 4:8.
54. This reading of Isa 52:2 also appears in Gen R. 65:1.
55. See pp. 105–7 for an extended analysis of this pericope.
love for Israel is not only ongoing and intense, it is also ultimately re-
demptive.

This analysis demonstrates how an allusion to a “potent” biblical verse can serve as a means to introduce a range of themes into the meaning of the poem. When read as an allusion to Song 4:8 in its midrashic context, “With me from Lebanon” is no longer just an erudite epithet for Israel; it is a compact code which imports into the poem radical notions of divine sympathy, love and presence vis-à-vis Israel. While the plain sense content of the poem consists of rather prosaic tropes of consolation, the allusion activates the romantic consolation which, I have argued, undergirds the cycle.56

Litany of Biblical Verses

The litanies of verses which appear after the third stanzas in the first two poems of the kedushtot provide an interesting case study for the exploration of allusion in the piyyutim. In some cases, attention to the biblical and midrashic contexts of the verses enhances the meaning of the poem. However, in many cases the verses do not seem relevant to the surrounding poem. Their selection and inclusion seem to be based entirely on the presence of the theme word of the litany. These verses still fulfill certain literary functions. Within the poem, they serve to underscore the theme word. In addition, they fulfill the functions of all low-level allusions: they invoke the authority of the biblical text and place the poem and its poet within the biblical tradition. In the magen of the first kedushta, the verses of the litany all contain a form of the root ḥnl (comfort/console). The first verse is Isa 40:1, the opening verse of the haftarah. The second and third verses seem

56. The degree to which understanding of this allusion enhances the meaning of the poem raises the question of the original audience of the poem. Did Kallir expect that the majority of his audience would understand the midrashic allusions, or did he compose the poem to speak on two levels—an explicit level directed at the congregation as a whole, and an encoded level directed at the knowledgeable members? Ezra Fleischer suggests the latter. He argues that the poems operate on many levels simultaneously and that each poem contains enough accessible material to hold the attention of a lay audience (Fleischer, Hebrew Liturgical Poetry, 273–75). Shulamit Elizur has elaborated on this argument by suggesting that the kedushot, including those of Kallir, move from more difficult poems to easier poems. She argues that the terse midrashic allusions that pepper the first and second poems of the kedushot are often spelled out in later poems—most frequently in the fifth poems of the cycle (“Congregation,” 184–89). While the kedusha for the first sabbath of consolation does conform linguistically and stylistically to the “hard to easy” pattern, the allusions in the first poems are not spelled out more explicitly later in the cycle.
to be relevant only because they include the root סנה. The fourth and fifth verses are consecutive (Isa 66:10–11), and the root only appears in the second verse. However, the plain sense of both verses is relevant to both the themes of the piyyut and of the lectionary moment:

Be glad over Jerusalem and rejoice in her, all who love her!
Rejoice in her joy, all who mourn over her!
That you may suck and be satisfied from the breast of her consolations,
So that you may suck and take pleasure from the breast/abundance of her glory. (Isa 66:10–11)

These verses underscore the feminized and sexualized portrait of Zion which has been central to the lectionary cycle, the midrash, and the piyyut. Here, Zion is portrayed as a nursing mother and the addressees are her suckling children. The verses also underscore the shift from the grief of Tisha b’Av to the joy which will come at the end of the seven weeks of consolation. In the lectionary cycle, the exhortation to rejoice first occurs in the fifth week. The inclusion of these verses during the first week of consolation both foreshadows and hastens that exhortation.

The midrashic valences of Isa 66:10–11 are also relevant to the piyyut and to the lectionary cycle. In Song R. 1:4, Isa 66:10 appears with Isa 61:10 and 54:1 as an example of one of the ten expressions for joy used with regard to Israel.

In Lam Z. 1:28, the verse is used to redefine Tisha b’Av as a day of future rejoicing. In addition, the midrash identifies lamenting over Jerusalem as a precondition for participation in the messianic age:

God will turn the ninth of Av into [a day of] joy, as it is said: Thus says YHWH of hosts, the fast of the fourth and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth will become joy and gladness and good festivals for the house of Judah (Zech 8:19). And he himself will build Jerusalem and gather the exiles within it, as it is said: YHWH builds Jerusalem, he will gather the scattered of Israel (Ps 147:2). R. Yohanan said: All who mourn over Jerusalem are worthy and will see her in joy, as it is written: Be glad over Jerusalem and rejoice in her, all who love her! Rejoice in her joy, all who mourn over her! (Isa 66:10). Everyone who does not mourn over her will not see her in her joy.

This midrash applies the trope of reversal, which undergirds the relationship between Lamentations and the haftarot of consolation, to Tisha

57. Ps 92:19 only appears twice in the midrashic literature: Mid Pss 92:6 and 119:38. In these cases, “consolations” is read as a reference to the sabbath (92:6) and to Torah (119:38). Neither comment is relevant to the themes of the piyyut. The third verse, Job 6:10, does not appear in the midrashic literature.
b’Av itself. Just as Lamentations’ complaints are reversed in the haftarot of consolation, so too will Tisha b’Av itself be “reversed” in the messianic redemption. The day of mourning will be turned into a day of joy. In addition, the midrash identifies mourning over Jerusalem as a salvific religious act. Those who mourn for Jerusalem will participate in her messianic restoration. Those who don’t, won’t. This assertion represents a new attitude toward the value of exhortation and petition. Whereas the lectionary cycle itself, as well as PRK 22, asserts that lament and supplication can influence divine action and hasten redemption, this text asserts that participation in the lament will benefit the lamentor. Although this message is absent from the rest of the poem, it is certainly relevant to the themes of the Tisha b’Av season. The invocation of Isa 66:10–11 in the litany of verses not only serves to reinforce the message of consolation, it also serves to underscore the importance of participation in the liturgical season itself.

**Relationship to the Kedushta as a Whole**

While the first part of the *kedushta* resonates with the lectionary cycle and the interpretations of it in PRK, the rest of the poem cycle diverges from these other texts in two significant ways. Unlike PRK, Kallir identifies Jerusalem and the temple cult as central foci of his consolatory discourse. The fourth poem uses the mention of Jerusalem in Isa 40:1 as the trigger for a vision of the imminent restoration of Jerusalem as the seat of the temple, the site of pilgrimage and the dwelling place of God. Several of the other poems invoke the defunct sacrifices with great nostalgia and eagerly proclaim their restoration. For example, the final poem uses the language of Song of Songs to articulate a vision of God’s return to the temple and the restoration of the cult. “When you return in mercy to the hills of spices to restore the altar of the incense spices, there you will comfort the mournful children.” In addition, in the rest of the *kedushta* the disjunction between reconciliation and redemption, which characterized both the lectionary sequence and its midrashic treatment, is absent. These poems announce acts of salvation and restoration in dynamic and immediate language. For example, in the fourth poem, God announces that he has returned to Jerusalem in mercy to rebuild and re-establish its walls, etc. In the sixth poem, God announces that he will quickly return the exiles.

**Summary**

The first poem of the *kedushta* for the first sabbath of consolation underscores many of the central ideas and motifs of the haftarot of consolation in general and the first haftarah in particular. The “content” of the poem
Case Study 2

*Magen* and *Meḥayeh* to Shabbat Vatomar Tzion

My second case study consists of the first two poems of the *kedushta* for the second sabbath of consolation. In liturgical terms, the poems correspond to the first two benedictions of the *amidah* and the first two verses (Isa 49:14–15) of the second haftarah of consolation. On the content level, these poems are treatments of the plain sense meanings of the biblical verses. The first poem elaborates on the trope of lamenting Zion and expands on her lament. The second poem elaborates on God’s consoling response. The poetic features of the poems articulate a second layer of meaning which echoes the theology of the lectionary as a whole and the midrashim of PRK. The rhyme patterns and allusions of the first poem emphasize the pathos of Zion’s condition. The poetic features of the second poem assert that God and Israel are partners in an intense romantic relationship which is essentially redemptive and consolatory.

*Poem 1 (Magen)*

[Hebrew text]
The mother of children moans like a dove,\textsuperscript{58}
In her heart she mourns and in her mouth she is troubled.
She wails in weeping and in bitterness she speaks,
Tears flow and she is silent and struck dumb.

My husband cast me out and turned away from me;
He did not remember the love of my bridehood,\textsuperscript{59}
He scattered me and dispersed me from my borders;
He causes all those who mock me to rejoice over me.

He cast me out like a menstruant and he pushed me away from
before him,\textsuperscript{60}
He trapped me heavily and did not give me rest.

\textsuperscript{58} “Mother of children” (אשה נקביה) is a quotation of Ps 113:9.

\textsuperscript{59} This verse is an ironic reversal of Jer 2:1, the penultimate line of the first haf-tarah of rebuke (“I have remembered on your account the lovingkindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days”).

\textsuperscript{60} Or, “He ravaged me like an unclean thing.” The reference to Zion as a menstruant resonates with Lam 1:8: “Jerusalem sinned a sin, therefore she has become like a menstruant.” In both the biblical text and the poem, the figure of the menstruant represents Zion, who is abused by God or her enemies.
My eyes overflow with rebuke; he has disputed against me.\(^61\) Why forever has he abandoned me, forgotten me?

As it is written (Isa 49:14): And Zion said, “YHWH has forsaken me, and YHWH has forgotten me.”

And it is said (Lam 5:20): Why have you forgotten us forever, abandoned us for all time?

And it is said (Ps 31:13): I have been forgotten like one who is dead, I have become like a broken vessel.

And it is said (Ps 79:4): We have become a disgrace to our neighbors, a laughingstock and a mockery to those that surround us.

And it is said (Lam 5:22): Rather, you have utterly rejected us, raged against us exceedingly.

Do not despise us exceedingly,
And from before your eyes do not repel us.
You are [our] creator and we are [your] material,
With the strength of your right hand protect us!

Poem 2 (Meḥayeh)

Poem 2 (Meḥayeh)

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\(^61\) “My eyes overflow” echoes Lam 2:11 (“My eyes overflow with tears”).
Why do you lament about me, my dove,\(^\text{62}\) 
The precious planting of the bed of my garden?\(^\text{63}\) 
The petition of your prayer I have already answered, 
I have encamped around you as before.

I turned to you in my great compassion, 
Striding in the gate of Bat-rabbim.\(^\text{64}\) 
The enemies who multiplied against you 
I have punished. They are extinguished like smoke.

My black one, forever I will not reject you,\(^\text{65}\) 
Again, I reach out my hand and I take you, 
Complete and finished are the words of your dispute,

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63. The reference to Israel as “precious planting” echoes the many uses of garden language in Song of Songs. In Song 4:12–16, 5:1, and 6:2, the garden is the site of, and metaphor for, the lovers’ erotic encounters. The word “bed” appears in Song 5:13, which compares the male lover’s cheeks to a bed of spices, and in Song 6:2, which uses the word as part of an extended sexual metaphor. The image of God as a gardener and Israel as a plant (vine, specifically) also appears in Isa 5 and Ezek 17. In Isa 5, God prepares the vineyard lovingly, but the grapes grow bad. In Ezek 17, the image of planting and re-planting is used to describe Israel’s exile and return. Within the context of the Tisha b’Av cycle, the reference to God’s garden resonates with Lam 2:6 in which God destroys his tabernacle “like a garden.” Here, God’s assertion that Zion is the precious planting of the furrow of his garden serves as a reversal of the scene of destruction in Lamentations.

64. Bat-rabbim is an epithet for Jerusalem that is based on Song 7:5 (“Your neck is like an ivory tower; your eyes are like the pools of Heshbon at the gate of Bat-rabbim”).

65. The endearment, “my black one” is derived from Song 1:5, where the female lover describes herself saying, “I am black and comely.”
My perfect one, I will not abandon you and I will not forget you.66

As it is written (Isa 49:15): Can a woman forget her suckling child, not have compassion on the child of her womb? These may forget, but I will not forget you.

And it is said (Ps 137:5): If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget.67

And it is said (Isa 54:7): For a brief moment, I forsook you; but with great compassion, I will gather you.

And it is said (1 Sam 12:22): For YHWH will not cast away his people for his great name’s sake; for God has determined to make you his people.

For a people and for a possession, for a name and for praise, Doing as you did before in lovesickness,68

You are a shoot in your lovely garden.
The dew of life will flow for you.
Blessed . . . who gives life to the dead.

These poems echo the themes of complaint and consolation which recur throughout the texts of the Tisha b’Av season. The magen is an elaboration of the trope of lamenting Zion which appears in Isa 49:14. The first stanza of the poem describes the figure of Zion lamenting. The second and third stanzas relate her lament: God has abandoned her, cast her out, and caused her to suffer. The litany verses relate to the themes of forgetfulness and rejection. The final stanza of the poem implores God not to abandon the people, but to protect them with his right hand.

The mehayeh consists of God’s response to Israel’s accusation of abandonment.69 In the first stanza, God assures Israel that she need not complain because he has already answered her prayers. In the second stanza he vows to protect her and avenge her. In the third stanza, God addresses the issue of abandonment and assures Israel that her time of trial is over. He has taken her back and will never abandon or forget her. The litany of

66. The endearment “my perfect one” is an allusion to Song 5:2 and 6:9, where it is used by the male lover to address the female lover.

67. The plain sense of the Hebrew here is difficult. The Septuagint understands the Hebrew as a niphal (ךֶלֶל). Other commentators emend the text to שַׁחַר, meaning “wither.”

68. “In lovesickness” is an allusion to Song 2:5 and 5:8, where the female lover describes herself as “lovesick.”

69. The thematic relationship between the two poems mirrors the thematic relationship between the first and second verses of the haftarah. Isa 49:14 is Zion’s complaint; Isa 49:15 is God’s response.
verse asserts God’s faithfulness to Israel; the final stanza heralds a nostal-
gic return to an idyllic state of relationship between God and Israel.

In these poems, Kallir uses a wide range of semantic fields to describe
the God-Israel relationship. He uses master/husband (מְרֶא ה) language (line
5), language of exile (8), hunting (9–10), forensics (11), and creation (15).
He also invokes the mythic language of God’s right hand (16). In the sec-
ond poem, he uses language of the garden (2, 15), prayer (3), the military
and forensic realms (6–8, 11), compassion and forgiveness (4, 9–10,
11), and romantic love (14). While there are scattered uses of romantic,
erotic language, this language does not dominate the “content” of the
poem. Rather, the poems reflect the range of divine imagery which is
familiar from the haftarot of consolation.70 However, the rhyme schemes
and po-tent biblical allusions underscore the intimate, romantic
aspects of the God-Israel relationship and emphasize the redemptive
potential of that romantic intimacy.

Rhyme Patterns

The rhyme scheme of the first poem underscores the portrait of Zion as a
female victim. In the first stanza, the last word of each line ends in the syl-
lables א-ן (emet): מְרֶא ה/מourns—מְרֶא ה/is troubled—מְרֶא ה/speaks—מְרֶא ה/is struck dumb. The rhyme is
echoed in the second and fourth lines of the stanza by the words
מְרֶא ה (mit’onenet/wails) and מְרֶא ה (vedomemet/is silent). This rhyme scheme,
which is based on the feminine singular form of the participle, serves to
underscore the female identity of Zion.71 In addition, the repetition of the
rhyming syllable within related words of lament and distress (moans, is
troubled, speaks [in bitterness], struck dumb) emphasizes Zion’s despair.
The rhymed words of lament stand out from the rest of the words of the
poem, causing the reader/hearer to hear a litany of verbs of complaint
and distress. The echoing of the rhyme in the words mit’onenet (mourns)
and domemet (is silent) saturates the stanza with words of lament.

In the second stanza, the rhyme pattern again reinforces the personi-
fication of Zion and articulates her distress. The rhyme is based on the
syllable ו (ay; first person possessive suffix): מְרֶא ה/from me—מְרֶא ה/my bridehood—מְרֶא ה/my borders—מְרֶא ה/
those who mock me). This rhyme is echoed within the stanza in the word הָלָי (alay/me) in line 8. The repetition of the first person possessive suffix reinforces the personal, personified nature of the speaking Zion. In addition, the repeated ay-sound of the rhyme mimics the sound of wailing and creates a counter-current of keening within the stanza.

In the third stanza, the rhyme pattern emphasizes Zion’s victimization by God. The rhyme is based on the syllables, הַני (hani): הַני (hani) (hiddihani/pushed me away—heinihani/gave me rest—vikkehani/disputed against me—shekhehani/forgotten me). The rhyme is echoed in the first, second and fourth lines by the words: הַני (hani) (terafani/cast me out), הַני (hani) (yekashani/trapped me) and הַני (hani) (azavani/abandoned me). The persistent repetition of the first person object suffix (רי) reinforces Zion’s description of her victimization throughout the stanza; she is the powerless object of another’s (God’s) actions. In the first three lines, she laments that God has rejected, entrapped, argued against, and forsaken her. The rhyme pattern culminates with the accusation of divine forgetfulness, “Why forever has he abandoned me, forgotten me (shekhehani),” which is articulated by the opening verse of the haftarah (Isa 49:14).

The rhyme scheme of the final stanza marks a shift in speaker from Zion to the supplicating community. The rhyme schemes of the first three stanzas underscored the solitude of the speaker. The grammatical forms of the rhymed syllables in these stanzas assert that the words are being spoken by a single individual. In the context of the lament, this grammatical marker of singleness is significant because it underscores Zion’s isolation. In contrast to these verses, the rhyme scheme of the final stanza is based on the first person plural ending, רְעָנַי (nu): רְעָנַי (nu) (tiznahenu/despise us—taddihenu/repel us—anañmi/we—gone—nenu/protection us). This rhyme scheme articulates a transition from isolation to communal expression, thereby indicating an end to Zion’s isolation.

The rhyme scheme of the me Hayward foregrounds the conscientious, dialogic nature of God’s response to Zion. This foregrounding mirrors the theology of the lectionary cycle itself, where God’s meticulous response to Zion functions as a sign of God’s devotion and reconciliation. In this

72. The shift to the first person plural in the final stanzas of the magen and me Hayward occurs frequently in the Kallir’s kedushtot. In the present case, the shift to the first person plural is emphasized through the rhyme pattern.

73. Zion’s isolation is a central trope in Lamentations. See pp. 47–48.

74. This pattern also has echoes in Lamentations, in which chapters 1–4 are uttered by single speakers while the final chapter is articulated in the first person plural.
poem, Kallir uses rhyme patterns and echoes of Zion’s complaint in the *magen* to assert that God is responding attentively to Zion’s concerns. In the *magen*, the rhyme schemes of the first three stanzas underscore Zion’s isolation. In the *mehayeh*, the rhyme schemes of stanzas 1 and 2 counter this message by underscoring the ongoing relationship between God and Israel. The rhyme scheme of the first stanza is based on the syllables יְרֵא (yatiti) and יְרֵאת (antiti). The repetition of the first person possessive ending in the first two verses—“my dove” (הָעַט), “my garden” (הָעַט)—which is echoed in the first person singular verbal endings of the third and fourth verses—“I have already answered” (יָנַה), “I have encamped” (יָנַה)—asserts that a relationship of possession exists between God and Israel. God considers Israel to be his dove and a planting in his garden. While Zion’s speech in the first poem articulates her sense of abandonment, the repeated assertion of the possessive relationship in the second poem counters her concern.

The rhyme scheme of the third stanza, which is based on the syllable יְנֶקֶח (hekha), also serves as a response to the first poem. There, the rhyme scheme of the third stanza underscores Zion’s victimization. Here, the repetition of the second person object suffix, יְנֶקֶח, also asserts that God is acting on Zion, but God’s actions are redemptive, not destructive. In the first poem, Zion lamented that God rejected, opposed, abandoned and forgot her. Here God vows that he will not abandon or forget her (lines 9, 12). He promises that their argument is over (11) and that he will gather her back (10). The precise echoes between the third stanzas of the two poems reinforce the point. In the first poem Zion complains, “My eyes overflow with rebuke; he has disputed against me / Why forever has he abandoned me, forgotten me?” The second poem responds, “Complete and finished are the words of your dispute / My perfect one, I will not abandon you and I will not forget you.” At the “content” level, God counters Zion’s lament by telling her that the argument between them is over and that he will neither abandon nor forget her. On the poetic level, the reuse of the words “abandon,” “dispute,” and “forget” in the second poem reinforces the sense that God promises a precise reversal of Zion’s complaints. In addition, the dialogic structure of the two poems resonates strongly within the lectionary cycle, where dialogue is a central trope of reconciliation and ongoing presence.

**Allusion**

The potent biblical allusions within these poems both underscore Zion’s lament and introduce the theme of the redemptive, romantic love existing between God and Israel. The first poem opens with the phrase “the mother of children,” which is an allusion to Ps 113:9: “He causes the bar-
ren woman to dwell in a house, the happy mother of children.”75 This allu-
sion simultaneously underscores the horror of Zion’s situation and evokes
hope for her restoration and renewal. When read as an echo of Ps 113:9,
the poem’s reference to Zion as “the mother of children [who] moans like
a dove” is deeply poignant because it not only paints a moving portrait of
lamenting Zion, but also contrasts sharply with the joyful biblical text to
which it alludes.

The allusion resonates more strongly if we read the verse with its mid-
rashic valences as well. In the midrashic literature, Ps 113:9 is invoked as a
prooftext in discussions of the miraculous onset or renewal of fertility. In
Gen R. 53:5 and Pes R. 43 (180) it refers to Sarah. In Exod R. 1:23 it refers to
Jochebed.

The verse is invoked twice within the Tisha b’Av complex. In Lam R.
1:16, the verse is invoked ironically and elegiacally in a martyrlogical
narrative about a mother of seven sons who sees her children murdered
by the Romans. The end of the unit states, “They say that after a while this
woman went mad and went up to the roof and threw herself off and died
and they cried over her, the joyful mother of children.”76 In Lam R. 1, as in the
poem, the exultant biblical verse is transformed into a lament for the
mourning mother.

Psalm 113:9 is also invoked within the Tisha b’Av complex as a
prooftext for Zion’s restored fertility. In PRK 20:1 the verse launches a
petihta to Isa 54:1:

He causes the barren woman to dwell in a house, the happy mother of children.
There are seven barren women: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, the
wife of Manoah, Hannah and Zion.

Psalm 113:9 is then read as a reference to each of these barren women and
their transformations into mothers of children. The pericope ends:

Another interpretation: He causes the barren woman to dwell in a house (Ps
113:9). This is Zion: Rejoice, barren one who has not given birth (Isa 54:1). The

75. The form רֹאֶהָאֵת ("barren woman") is unusual and makes translation of the
verse difficult. Other possible translations include: “He gives the barren woman a
home” (RSV); “He sets the childless woman among her household” (JPS); “He
founds a family for the sterile” (Mitchell Dahood, Psalms 101–150 [AB 17a; Garden
City: Doubleday, 1964], 130). The translation of the second stich depends on the
degree of parallelism which is assumed. The RSV carries over the verbal aspect
from the first stich into the second stich and translates, “Making her the barren
mother of children.” JPS preserves the verbless character of the stich and trans-
lates, “as a happy mother of children.”

76. A parallel version of this text appears in Lam Z. 1:21.
happy mother of children. [This corresponds to] and you will say in your heart, “who caused me to bear these?” (Isa 49:21).

Here Ps 113:9 is read as a reference to Zion’s restoration as it is portrayed in reproductive terms. It is interesting to note that the midrash does not cite the end of Isa 54:1 (“for the children of her destruction will outnumber the children of her espousal”) as a prooftext for Zion’s renewed fertility. Instead, it cites Isa 49:21, a verse which subtly implies that God is the father of Zion’s children. By citing Isa 49:21 instead of Isa 54:1b the midrash suggests that Ps 113:9 refers not only to Zion’s renewed fertility but also to her romantic/sexual reunion with God. If we read the phrase “the mother of children,” in the poem, as an allusion to Ps 113:9 as it is colored by this midrashic valence, then the reference injects a note of hope into the portrait of grieving Zion. At the moment of her lament she is the bereft mother, but her future re-espousal to God and her consequent fertility are already imbedded in the figure of despair.77

The uses of the word “dove” also function as powerful allusions. The first poem states, “The mother of children moans like a dove.” The second poem opens, “Why do you lament about me, my dove?” Within the kedusha, this repetition is quite powerful. In the first poem, “dove” is a figure of isolation. In the second poem, it is a term of endearment. The transformation of the mourning dove in the first poem into God’s dove in the second signals the transformation of Zion’s isolation into her intimate relatedness to God. When read as allusions, the references to Zion as “dove” also signal God’s ongoing presence and the redemptive natures of both prayer and divine love.

Unlike the phrase “the mother of children,” the word “dove” in the magen is not an allusion to any particular biblical verse. However, since piyyut is so firmly situated within a tradition of biblical language and allusion, it is valid to read the term in light of its biblical meanings and uses. In the Bible, doves appear primarily in five rhetorical contexts. In Leviticus, they are designated as sacrificial animals (Lev 1:14; 12:6; 14:30). In the prophetic books, doves appear as figures of lament (Isa 38:14; 59:11; Ezek 7:16; Nah 2:8). Doves also appear as figures of fleeing or hiding (Ps 55:7; Jer 48:28) and as figures for the returning exiles (Hos 11:11; Isa 60:8). Finally, in Song of Songs the word “dove” is used as an epithet for the female lover (2:14; 5:2; 6:9) and as a simile for eyes (1:15; 4:1; 5:12). The plain sense of the poem resonates with the biblical uses of the dove as a figure of lament. When these prophetic texts are “activated” by the poetic allusion, Zion’s lament in the poem becomes situated within an age-old tradition of

77. This mirrors the haftarot of rebuke, which foreshadow Zion’s restoration as they prophesy her doom. See pp. 43–44.
mourning and despair. Zion, like generations of Israelites before her, mourns like a dove. While this resonance is the most straightforward, the other rhetorical contexts nuance the poem in more interesting and ironic ways. The references to doves as sacrificial animals in the priestly texts evoke a disturbing image of the lamenting Zion as a perversive sacrifice of atonement for the people’s sins. The dove as a trope of the returning exiles is also darkly ironic. Hosea 11:11 states, “They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, like doves from the land of Assyria / And I will return them to their houses, says YHWH.” Isaiah 60:8 states, “Who are these who fly like a cloud and like doves to their dovecotes?” In the magen, this trope of return is inverted and used to portray Zion mourning over Israel’s ongoing exile. Similarly, the use of the word “dove” as a term of endearment in Song of Songs makes the comparison of lamenting Zion to a dove all the more poignant. She, who was once the beloved dove of God, is now the lamenting, bereaved mother who suffers the consequences of divine anger. Thus, the invocation of the image of the dove serves a dual purpose. It situates Zion’s lament in a tradition of dove-like lament and underscores the tragic distance between Zion’s plight in the poem and that of the “doves” in Song of Songs, Hos 11:11 and Isa 60:8.

The ambiguous term, “dove”, in the magen is followed by the univocally positive allusion “my dove” in the mehayeh. “My dove” is a verbatim quotation of Song 2:14, 5:2 and 6:9. By alluding to one of the signature terms of endearment in Song of Songs, Kallir identifies God’s response to Israel as that of a lover to his beloved. Kallir reinforces this point by using two other endearments which allude to the Song of Songs: “my black one” (line 9) and “my perfect one” (line 12). Kallir is certainly not the first to identify Song of Songs with the relationship between God and Israel. However, by alluding to Song of Songs in the context of the sabbaths of consolation, Kallir, like the authors of PRK, asserts that the romantic relationship between God and Israel is germane to the consolatory agenda of the weeks following Tisha b’Av.

At the level of biblical allusion, the uses of the terms “my dove,” “my black one,” and “my perfect one” serve to identify the God-Israel relationship as a romantic, erotic one. At the level of midrashic allusion, the terms “my dove” and “my perfect one” invoke the themes of God’s redemptive love for Israel, Israel’s singular status, and the redemptive power of

78. The trope of sacrifice is invoked in dark and disturbing ways in the context of the Tisha b’Av cycle in PRK 15:7.
79. This verse is part of the sixth haftarah of consolation.
80. While the precise term “my black one” (рошון) never appears in Song of Songs, the female lover refers to herself as “black” (anishon) in Song 1:5. The endearment יָרְשִׁי occurs in Song 5:2 and 6:9.
prayer. Within the midrashic literature, Song 2:14 is a proof text for the redemptive power of prayer and obedience. In Mek Beshallah 2, Mek Bahodesh 3, and Gen R. 45:4, the first part of the verse, “My dove, who is in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff,” is read as a reference to a perilous moment in Israel’s history. In Mek Beshallah 2, the verse is identified with the Israelites at the shores of the sea, fleeing before the Egyptians. In Mek Bahodesh 3 it describes the Israelites standing under Mt. Sinai, which has been uprooted from the earth. In Gen R. 45:4 the verse describes the barrenness of the matriarchs. In each of these cases, the second part of the verse, “let me see your face; let me hear your voice,” is parsed as a reference to the prayer and obedience to Torah that is motivated by the experience of danger. Genesis Rabbah 45:4 states the connection most explicitly:

Why were the matriarchs barren? R. Levi said in R. Shila’s name and R. Helbo in R. Yohanan’s name: Because the Holy One Blessed be He yearns for their prayers and supplications. Thus it is written: My dove who is in the clefts of the rocks (Song 2:14). Why did I make you barren? In order that [it would cause you to say] let me see your face; let me hear your voice (ibid.).

In these midrashic texts, Song 2:14 becomes a proof text for the notion that danger and tribulation compel Israel to pray to God and obey the Torah. These acts in turn lead to Israel’s redemption. Thus, the term “my dove” is associated with the idea that suffering leads to prayer which in turn leads to repentance.

The midrashic interpretations of Song 6:9 focus on the singularity of Israel and her unique relationship to God. The verse states, “She is one, my dove, my perfect one; she is one to her mother . . .” In Gen R. 90:1, 94:1, and Song R. 6:9, the verse is read as a reference to Abraham, Jacob and the tribal ancestors. In Num R. 4:2, 9:14, 14:10, and Song R. 6:9 the verse is read with reference to Israel. According to these texts, Song 6:8 (“There are sixty queens and eighty concubines and maidens without number”) refers to the nations of the world while the singular “dove” of 6:9 refers to Israel and her special relationship with God. Song Rabbah 6:9 also uses the verse to assert the singularity and unity of Torah. Song Rabbah 5:2 reads Song 5:2 similarly. There the verse (“Open for me my sister, my beloved, my bride, my perfect one”) is interpreted as a reference to Israel, which is distinguished from the other nations by its precepts, virtues, and good deeds.

81. See also Song Z. 1:1, 2:14.
82. In an isolated case in Exod R. 21:5, the verse is cited as a proof text for Israel’s docility and devotion before God.
If we read the references to “my dove” and “my perfect one” in the mehayeh with their midrashic valences, then the terms serve to invoke several themes which are relevant to the theology of consolation which is articulated in the lectionary cycle and the midrashic commentaries on it: misfortune is an impetus to prayer, which then leads to divine attention and redemption. Israel has a unique and favored status in the eyes of God. Within the context of the poems, which reiterate Zion’s lament over ongoing divine rejection, this midrashic valence serves as a powerful counter-argumen. God has not rejected Israel; by calling her “my dove,” he affirms that Israel is uniquely chosen and favored among all the nations.

Litany of Biblical Verses

The litanies of biblical verses manifest a concern with the status of Zion’s complaint and God’s response. The first three verses in the litany of the magen are linked by the root נשת (to forget). The final two verses, Ps 31:3 and Lam 5:22, do not contain this root, but they are linked to the other verses thematically by their descriptions of rejection. Of the four verses which follow the opening verse of the haftarah, only Lam 5:20 and 5:22 appear elsewhere in the literature of the Tisha b’Av season. In Lam R. 5:20, Lam 5:20 is invoked in a pericope which comments on Jeremiah’s accusations of abandonment, forgetting, rejection, and fury and closes with a reference to Isa 49:14:

Abandonment and forgetting: Why have you forgotten us forever, abandoned us for all time? (Lam 5:20). Rejection and fury: Rather, you have utterly rejected us, raged against us exceedingly (Lam 5:22). Rejection was already replied to in his days. As it is said: Thus says YHWH, If heaven above can be measured and if the foundations of the earth below can be searched, then I too can reject the seed of Israel (Jer 31:37). Fury was already replied to in the days of Isaiah. As it is said: For I will not contest forever and will not be angry eternally (Isa 57:16). But abandonment and forgetting have not been responded to. Therefore Zion complains and says: And Zion says, YHWH has abandoned me, my Lord has forgotten me (Isa 49:14).

A more elaborate version of this text appears in Pes R. 31:3 (chapter for the second sabbath of consolation). Here the distinction between anger and rejection on the one hand and forgetting and abandoning on the other is explored in a parable. God’s treatment of Israel is compared to a king’s punishment of his disobedient wife. When a member of the queen’s family sees her being expelled from the palace, he says to the king:

My master, the king, tell me something. Do you intend to return to her or not? If you do intend to return, a man has sovereignty over his wife [and
can treat her as he pleases. If you do not intend to return to her, divorce her so that she may go and marry someone else.

Just as the king’s abuse of his wife is a sign that he intends to take her back, so too is God’s abuse of Israel a sign that he has not rejected her. The pericope ends by stating that although God has countered Israel’s claim of rejection and fury, he has not countered her claim of abandonment and forgetting. Isaiah 49:14 serves as a prooftext for this assertion.

Thus, in both Lam R. and Pes R. 31, Lam 5:20 is linked to Isa 49:14. The conjunction of verses is used to assert that while God has countered the claims that he has rejected Israel and is terminally angry with her, he has not countered the claims that he has forgotten and abandoned her. At the level of biblical allusion, the invocation of Lam 5:20 in the litany of verses highlights the correspondences between the laments of Lamentations and those of Zion. At the level of midrashic valence, the invocation serves to underscore the ongoing validity of Zion’s accusation and to highlight the need for a divine response.

Lamentations 5:22 serves two functions within the complex of texts relating to the Tisha b’Av season. It is cited in Lam R. 5:20 as a prooftext for Jeremiah’s accusations of anger and rejection. There, the midrash asserts that this rejection has already been countered by God. In Lam R. 5:22 a note of hope is injected into the verse. “Resh Lakish said: If it is rejection, there is no hope. But if it is anger, there is hope. For one who is angry may eventually be appeased.” By ending the litany with Lam 5:22, Kallir not only underscores the anxiety expressed in the verse but also capitalizes on its ambiguity. Because the verse, both in its biblical context and in its midrashic interpretation, expresses some doubt over the inevitability of divine rejection, it remains possible for the community to beg God not to reject it.

The verses of the litany of the mehayeh are also bound by words related to the themes of forgetting and rejection. However, whereas the verses in the first poem resonated with Zion’s sense of abandonment, the verses in this poem counter her complaints. Like the opening verse (Isa 49:15), which is the second verse of the haftarah, the second and third verses (Ps 137:5 and Isa 54:7) are present elsewhere in the Tisha b’Av season literature. Isaiah 54:7 is a pivotal verse in the fifth haftarah of consola-

83. Lam 5:20 also appears in Mid Pss 119:30, but the comment is not relevant to the present context.
84. The comment also appears in Lam R. 1:1 and PRK 17:2.
85. The fourth verse, 1 Sam 12:22, is cited in Ruth R. 2:12 (6), Est R. 7:12, and Mid Pss 94:3 as a prooftext for the assertion that God can never abandon Israel. While this notion is thematically relevant to the sabbaths of consolation, the verse is not invoked as part of the literature of the Tisha b’Av season.
R. Abbahu in the name of Resh Lakish: At the moment when the nations entered the palace [temple] they were capturing the young men and tying their hands behind their backs. The Holy One Blessed be He said, “I have already promised to my children, I am with him in trouble (Ps 91:15). It is by right that I should be with them in trouble.” Thus it is written: He put his hand behind.

And he said, If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget (Ps 137:5).

This midrash serves several functions. It explains the troubling verse in Lam 2:4: God put his hand behind his back, not out of malice or weakness, but out of solidarity with Israel. Psalm 137:5 is read as a divine utterance which explains the divine action in Lam 2:4. The midrash asserts not only that God acts in solidarity with Israel but also that God’s fate is tied to Israel’s. The version in Lam R. 2:3 states:

He put his hand behind in the presence of the enemy (Lam 2:4): R. Azariah and R. Abbahu in the name of Resh Lakish: At the moment when the nations entered the palace [temple] they were capturing the young men and tying their hands behind their backs. The Holy One Blessed be He said, “I have already promised to my children, I am with him in trouble (Ps 91:15). It is by right that I should be with them in trouble.” Thus it is written: He put his hand behind. And he said, If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget (Ps 137:5).

And all the days that Israel is held in pawn in this world, so too is the right hand of the Holy One Blessed be He held in pawn with them. David said before the Holy One Blessed be He, “Master of the Universe: What do you think?—That there is no urgency for you to bring the endtime? Even if there is no urgency for us, do it for your right hand. How long will your right hand be held in pawn?” In order that your beloved would be delivered. Save your right hand and answer me (Ps 60:7). Thus when Zion says, “God has abandoned me and forgotten me,” the Holy One Blessed be He says, “How could I forget you? My right hand is held in pawn for your sake—am I going to forget you? If I forget you, I forget my right hand.” If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget (Ps 137:5).88

86. See pp. 65–66.


88. Here, the word יִשְׁנָה is being interpreted as a passive form. See n. 67. The beginning of Pes R. 31:5 also uses Ps 137:5 as a prooftext for the interdependency of God and Israel. Pes R. 31:6–7 is comprised of additional readings which join Isa
In this text, Ps 137:5 is invoked as a response to Isa 49:15, the target verse of the chapter. God responds to Israel’s accusation of forgetfulness by reminding her that his fate is tied to hers. If he were to forget Zion, his right hand would remain bound forever. In the biblical text, God responds to Zion’s accusation with the powerful assertion, “Can a woman forget her suckling child, not have compassion on the child of her womb? / These may forget, but I will not forget you / Behold I have engraved you on my palms, your walls are always before me” (Isa 49:15–16). The midrash, however, trumps the biblical response. God is not only deeply aware of and invested in Israel’s well-being, his own fate and power are also tied to hers. By including Ps 137:5 in the litany of verses, Kallir imports this radical notion of divine sympathy and voluntary dependence into the framework of the second haftarah. While the rest of the poem underscores the romantic nature of the God-Israel relationship, the presence of Ps 137:5 in the litany introduces the even more radical notion of divine bondage and dependence. While the two notions are quite different, there are affinities between them. They are both ways of asserting a deep intimacy between God and Israel. In addition, both the “love affair” between God and Israel and God’s participation in Israel’s subjugation provide motivation for God to hasten the redemption. He should either make redemption come for the sake of his beloved Israel or for the sake of his own right hand.

**Relationship to the Kedushta as a Whole**

In the first case study, the rest of the *kedushta* did not develop some of the lectionary themes that were alluded to in the first poem. In contrast, the rest of the *kedushta* for the second sabbath of consolation expands upon and reiterates the themes that are activated by the rhyme schemes and allusions of the first poems. Unlike the *kedushta* for the first sabbath of consolation, this *kedushta* conforms to the pattern of allusion and explanation that Shulamit Elizur identified. The rest of the *kedushta* continues the dialogic pattern of complaint and consolation, and reiterates the consolatory themes of the first poems. The fifth poem in particular offers a poetic version of the midrashic traditions alluded to in the first poem. God addresses Israel by quoting Song 2:14 (“My dove, who is in the clefts of the rock”) and promises that he has returned to take her out of her suffering, restore her land, and insure the fertile increase of her offspring.

49:14 to Ps 137:5. However, the readings seem to be independent traditions about the future redemption which are inserted into this framework.

89. See n. 56.
Summary

The first two poems of the kedushta for the second sabbath of consolation explore the nature of Zion’s complaint in Isa 49:14 and God’s response in Isa 49:15. Like the lectionary cycle itself, the poems give full voice to Zion’s voice of lament. At the same time, the poems respond to Zion’s accusations by asserting that God has not forgotten Israel. Instead, he responds meticulously to her complaints. Both the assertion of ongoing relationship between God and Israel and the “measure-for-measure” nature of the divine response are articulated through the poetic features of the poems. The litanies of biblical verses also manifest Kallir’s concern for the nature of Israel’s complaint and God’s response. Elsewhere in the Tisha b’Av midrashic complex, Lam 5:20, 22 and Ps 137:5 are linked to Zion’s complaint in Isa 49:14. Lamentations 5:20 is invoked in texts that assert that God has not yet responded to Israel’s accusation of abandonment. In contrast, Ps 137:5 is invoked to prove that God has not abandoned Israel. To the contrary, he has bound his fate to hers. While the rhyme scheme, word choice and biblical litanies address the call and response dynamic established in the biblical text, the multiple allusions to Song of Songs in the second poem address the nature of the God-Israel relationship. Through these allusions, Kallir identifies the relationship between God and Israel as a romantic one—Israel is God’s only beloved.

Poetry, Prayer, and the Synagogue Context

While I have focused here on poems that further develop the consolatory strategies that I identified in the lectionary cycle and the midrashim of PRK, the entire set of kedushtot for the season also articulates a nostalgic yearning for the temple and a fervent desire for its restitution in the messianic age. These concerns resonate with other artifacts from the late antique synagogue, and with the liturgy itself. As I mentioned earlier, the iconography of Palestinian synagogues from the fifth to sixth centuries testifies to the ongoing importance of the temple or temple symbolism for the worshiping community. It is not surprising that the poetry that was composed for these synagogues also articulates a nostalgia for the temple and sacrificial cult. However, piyyut’s concern with the temple and the messianic redemption should not solely be ascribed to its synagogal status or its non-rabbinic origins. Piyyut is a form of prayer which is grounded in the rabbinic liturgical system. The piyyutim are structured around the rabbinic liturgy and invoke the language and themes of the rabbinically

90. See p. 136.
prescribed prayers. The restoration of the temple and the redemption of Israel are central themes of the rabbinic liturgy. In addition, rabbinic prayer acclaims God’s power to redeem Israel and rectify her misfortunes, and includes petitions for the restoration of Jerusalem, the return of the exiles, and the defeat of Israel’s enemy. As prayer, piyyut participates in more urgent expressions of desire for redemption than are articulated in the lectionary sequence or the rabbinic commentaries on it. Thus, the contrast between the piyyutim’s concern with the temple and the near absence of this concern in the lectionary cycle and the midrashim may be a consequence of generic, as well as authorial difference.