

SALAMONE ROSSI AS A COMPOSER OF “HEBREW” MUSIC

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I searched in my heart for the one ruler
to whom I could turn, to place on his
altar the offering of this thanksgiving.¹

Two preliminary questions should be raised: why Salamone Rossi? why the quotation marks around the word ‘Hebrew’?

Published in 1622/23, Rossi’s collection of Hebrew “Songs,” viz., “The Songs of Solomon,”² marks a milestone in the history of sacred music as the first and, until the nineteenth century, practically only collection of religious works by a Jewish composer of art music. They were written for various combinations of three to eight voices and intended for use “on all sacred occasions.”³ We know about the composer, his intentions and the obstacles to their realization from the prefatory matter, or commentary, which, moreover, is unusually extensive: it includes two forewords; three laudatory poems; a rabbinical *responsum* to a query about the legitimacy of art music in the synagogue, followed by five statements of approbation by Venetian rabbis; and a notice of copyright.⁴ These together make the collection as much a literary, historical and socio-cultural document as a musical one.⁵

- 1 Salamone Rossi, from the foreword (i.e., dedication) to his collection of “Songs”: “הנה מדי: וואשא (the passage continues: וואשא) דברי בי תרתי כלבי למי מקצינים אפנה להקריב על מזבחו מנחת תודה זו” עיני וארא כי טוב תתי את דודי אליך נכבד וחשוב כישראל מתת אותם לאיש אחר” for editions, see below). All translations, throughout this study, are the author’s.
- 2 Modern edition: *Hashirim asher lish'lomo (The Songs of Solomon)*, ed. Fritz Rikko, 3 vols. (New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1967–73). The writer is preparing a new edition (see below). References to measure numbers are to the latter (differing in various places from Rikko’s).
- 3 “בכל דבר שבקדושה”: from the title to the collection; more specific references to their use (on the Sabbath and various feast days) can be found in the prefatory matter, on which more below.
- 4 For an annotated reading of the prefatory material (Hebrew only), see Adler, 1975, esp. pp. 212–221, 285–288.
- 5 See, for example, Harrán 1987, esp. 53–64; Harrán 1989a; and at length, Harrán 1999; as well as references, in all, to further bibliography.

Rossi is described in the commentary as the first full-fledged Jewish composer since the time of King David. The claim is not as exaggerated as it sounds. Rossi holds the distinction of being the only known composer of Hebrew sacred part music, in Italy,⁶ from the time of the First Temple to the mid-seventeenth century (there may have been others after 1600, but no names and, but for one, no sources have come down to us).⁷ His collection of Hebrew songs not only “continued” the psalmodic tradition practiced in the synagogue, but also, in its “unconventional,” i.e., polyphonic treatment of the words, “renewed” it. Indeed, the collection was plainly described, on the title page, as “something new in the land,” after Jeremiah 31, 22 (“for the Lord created a new thing in the land”).⁸

Another reason, more personal, for concentrating on Rossi has to do with the dedicatee of this study: in his writings, Israel Adler devoted special attention to Rossi’s Hebrew works, tracing their relationship to earlier attempts, from 1605 on, to introduce part music into the synagogue.⁹ He shared his enthusiasm with me, encouraging me in the later 1960s to undertake a critical edition of the composer’s works (the edition has occupied me for nearly two and a half decades and, after many vicissitudes, has just been published in twelve of its thirteen volumes).¹⁰ It is only fitting, then, that as a token of gratitude I return my own enthusiasm (“thus the voice came from you and from your hand I return it to you”¹¹).

6 To be distinguished from sacred monophony, of which three short examples were composed (or copied?) by Obadiah the Proselyte in the early twelfth century (shortly after his conversion to Judaism): cf. Werner 1947; and Adler 1965.

7 The source (Cincinnati, Ohio, Hebrew Union College, Ms. 101) consists of a *canto secondo* belonging to what originally was a set of pieces for eight voices; the composer has not been identified, though to judge from the style of his writing, quite different from Rossi’s, he probably prepared the manuscript around 1630. Cf. Werner 1943/44; Adler 1989: 395–401; and Harrán, Rabbi.

8 Jeremiah: כִּי־בְרָא יְהוָה חֲדָשָׁה בְּאֶרֶץ (of which the portion חֲדָשָׁה בְּאֶרֶץ was retained in the title to the “Songs”).

9 See his seminal study on the rise of art music in the Italian Ghetto (Adler 1967), esp. pp. 333–340.

10 Cf. *Salamone Rossi: Complete Works*, 13 vols. (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 100; Neuhausen, Hänssler-Verlag for the American Institute of Musicology, 1995). Of the thirteen volumes, the “Songs” occupy the last (forthcoming).

11 “... וְהָיָה כִּי־אִפְּהָ מִמֶּךָ הַקּוֹל וּמִיָּדְךָ נִתְחַי לְךָ... (Rossi’s dedication); note the double-entendre of קול (*qol*) as both “voice” (i.e., verbal command, or sound, *ergo* music) and, via the homonym כָּל (*kol*), “everything.” To emphasize the word play, the substantive was marked, in the print, with a diacritical sign.

As to the second preliminary question, it might be noted that the use of quotation marks does one of two things or both. First, it places the word “Hebrew” in the center of the discussion, as distinguished from, say, “Italian,” which would have been another way of dealing with the composer’s repertory. Second, and working at cross purposes with the first, it invests the word with an ironic sense, as if the notion of Hebrew is being challenged for its validity. The two proceed from different assumptions. In the first, Rossi is presupposed to have composed Hebrew works, in which case one wonders: what is Hebrew about them? In the second, these same works, as far as their form and content are concerned, are presupposed to be specifically Hebrew, in which case one wonders: can they really be considered Hebrew?

The questions lead to the brink of an immense epistemological quandary: what is Hebrew in general and in relation to music?¹² If Hebrew, in a musical sense, means the use of Hebrew texts as the basis of vocal works, then it is clear that, by this standard, Rossi was a composer of “Hebrew” music. Yet so were the Christians Carlo Grossi in composing a cantata in Hebrew,¹³ Benedetto Marcello in composing psalms with various quotations in Hebrew,¹⁴ Schubert in composing Psalm 92 in Hebrew, Stravinsky in composing a sacred ballad in Hebrew,¹⁵ and so on. In short: you do not have to be Jewish to fit the bill. But is composing music to Hebrew texts all it takes to write Hebrew music?

Searching for a deeper sense of Hebrew, one wonders whether these same composers of Hebrew works invested them with innately Hebrew qualities. Said otherwise, did they conceive them in relation to a Hebrew literary or musical tradition? Were they affected by the unique prosodic and syntactical constraints of the Hebrew language in fashioning their music? Did they intend them for use in the Hebrew liturgy? for paraliturgical prayer in the Jewish confraternities? for social or private events within the Jewish community, such as weddings or banquets or other festivities? Did they read the texts as reflecting the particular

12 The problem was addressed, from a literary-musical point of view, in conjunction with a particularly unusual work by Rossi’s contemporary, Allegro Porto: cf. Harrán 1993.

13 *Cantata ebraica in dialogo*, for four-voice chorus, baritone and continuo (Venice, 1681), for the celebration of *Hoša’na rabbah* in a Jewish confraternity (Modena).

14 Benedetto Marcello, *Estro poetico-armonico* (Venice, 1724–26), with settings of the first fifty psalms for one to four voices and continuo; ten of the settings incorporate melodies the composer heard in Venetian synagogues. See, at length, Harrán, *Exemplum*.

15 *Abraham and Isaac*, for baritone and chamber orchestra (1962–63).

historical and cultural heritage of the Jews, with its admixture of biblical and post-biblical elements, of Mosaic law and oral tradition, of statutory regulations and kabbalist doctrine, of literal and allegorical exegesis, of homily and symbol?

Clearly, the problem of what is Hebrew in music can be resolved only by exceeding the boundaries of music proper to conduct a far-flung inquiry into the definition of Hebrew in the different contexts where Hebraicism constituted a cultural and religious ferment in the life of the Jews. Thereby the smaller topic of music composed to Hebrew texts may be elucidated for its obviously broader implications. I say this both to sketch the overall framework in which our own modest study should rightly be situated and to indicate that if the framework has not been fully erected here, the reason is simply that the confines of a *Festschrift* article dictate a more realistic approach: discussing a part of what teleologically works out to form a larger thematic complex.

The smaller part to be emphasized is that relating to the particular Hebrew features of Rossi's Hebrew works. There are two ways in which they can be defined: through the music, through the texts. (Still a third way, not to be addressed here, is through the functions of the works in the liturgy and elsewhere, on which there is already a certain literature.)¹⁶ Musically, the question to be asked is: is there anything to indicate Rossi's adoption of specifically Hebrew melodies or melodic procedure as the source of his counterpoint? Textually, it is: to what extent did the peculiarities of Hebrew as language determine the composition?

Of the two questions, the first may be more easily answered. Musically, there is very little in the "Songs" to suggest a connection with tradition, that is, the music of the synagogue. The possibility of there being some kind of nexus has been explored since the beginnings of Rossi scholarship and, till now, the only concrete example to have emerged is a certain resemblance between the canto, or top voice, of "*Elohim hašivenu*,"¹⁷ no. 8 in the collection, and a traditional melody sung to this text in the rite of the *Italiani*, or Jews of Italian provenance (to be distinguished from the rites of the Italian Ashkenazic and Sephardic

16 See, for example, the commentary to Rikko's edition, vol. 3.

17 Psalm 80, verses 4, 8 and 20. On the liturgical usage of the three verses, see below.

Jews).¹⁸ Both tunes move within the ambitus of a fifth (from *g'* to *d''*), and though an older one similar to or even identical with that fashioned by Rossi in the canto could have been there in the back of his mind, as a stimulus or even a model, the resemblance is too casual, if not accidental, to allow one to draw conclusions about Rossi's working procedure. The fact is that apart from this possibly fortuitous connection there is practically nothing, in the thirty-three numbers of the set, to speak for Rossi's indebtedness to his own tradition except, perhaps, for the relative simplicity of his melodies, as if they were contrived as a form of musical recitation. In this, however, Rossi does not evidence any distinctly Hebrew tendency; rather, his music could be construed in relation to coeval developments in Christian music, namely, the new emphasis on directness of presentation, on verbal clarity and, consequently, on melodic transparency. Particularly relevant, in this context, is the practice of psalms in *falso bordone* style, that is, in simple chordal successions. The move toward greater simplicity seems to have been accomplished on parallel fronts, thus the impossibility of defining Rossi's melodic "reticence" as something "Hebrew."¹⁹

If anything, the prefatory matter to the collection suggests an attempt, on the part of the composer and those who supported him in his enterprise, among them the Mantuan banker Moses Sullam and the Venetian rabbi Leon Modena, to break with tradition, or at least that part of tradition connected with the synagogue. When they defined the "Songs" as new, they did so in conscious reaction to the type of song they knew from the synagogue: it was based in the main on modal formulae or, for the cantillation of Scriptures, on biblical accents (the set motives for parsing and intoning the texts). They saw the music of the synagogue as a pale reflection of what was once, in the ancient Temple, a glorious practice. The reason for its decline lies, to their mind, in the exile of the Jews and their peregrinations. "Indeed, the events of our foreign dwellings and of our restless runnings are spread over the lands and the vicissitudes of life abroad sufficed to make them forget all knowledge

18 The resemblance has been discussed by Joshua Jacobson 1987/8. The melody, as recorded by Leo Levi, may be found in the Levi collection in the Israel National Sound Archives (NSA Y 1301-LL 12-170).

19 These and other points have been developed in Harrán 1989a.

[דעה] and lose all intellect [שכל].”²⁰ Rossi is portrayed as a composer who, after centuries of artistic turpitude, restored music to its pristine splendor. “Let them praise the name of God, for in our times Salamone alone is exalted for this wisdom....When the glory of the nation faded, everything dimmed for days and years on end. Yet he restored the crown of music to its original condition as in the days of the Levites on their platforms.”²¹ Where synagogue music had been scorned for its vapidness, the new music of Rossi awakened wonder for its learning.²² What disturbed those for whom art music set a standard was that the music practiced in the synagogue was not only lacking in “art,” but also negligently performed. Singers should not “bray like asses,” lest they turn the Hebrews, formerly “the proprietors of music in our prayers and our praises, into a laughingstock to the nations, who will say that no longer do we possess wisdom.”²³

What Rossi and his advocates wished to do was connect the new music with an ancient practice that anteceded the synagogue. In principle, they eschewed the introduction of elements drawn from traditional song. It could be that Rossi did, in fact, allude to various melodic formulae used in readings of psalms or in reciting prayers. But he seems to have done so not in an outright attempt to imitate or preserve them, but rather in unconscious referral to a tradition on which he had been bred and from which he, therefore, could not wholly alienate himself, even if he tried.

In short, music of the synagogue was not Rossi’s model for shaping his “Songs.” If anything, his model was the art music of the Christians, who, in the Middle Ages, carried on, as we read in the commentary,

20 “אכן קורות בחינו הזרים והיטנו דרהיטנא מפורים בארצות וילדי הזמן נכרים הספיקו להשכיחם מכל דעה” Leon Modena’s foreword. The author draws on The Song of Songs 1, 17 (מפור ומפורד בין העמים) and Esther 3, 8 (קורות בחינו ארזים והיטנו ברוחם) and Isaiah 2, 6 (ובילדי נכרים יספיקו), playing on the double meaning of קורות (events / beams), רהיטנו (runnings / rafters) and יספיקו (sufficed / were content). On Modena and his musical activities, see, at length, Harrán 1998, and Harrán 2001.

21 “יהללו את שם ה' כי נשגב שלמה לברו בימינו בחכמה זו” from same (the author draws on Psalm 148, 13 (יהללו את שם ה' כי נשגב שמו לברו)); and “אחר פאר העם אשר הועם הכל ברוב ימים ורוב (הישוב עטרתה לישנותה כימי בני לוי בדוכנים” from third poem.

22 “לא עוד דבר מרי לעם עברי יתן בקול הכוזב גאיונים: יראו בכל בינה היות מנה גם לו כמו הם המזוינים” again from third poem.

23 “נוערים כחמורים ולא ינעמו קולם...ואנו אשר היינו בעלי המוסיקא בתפילותינו והודאותינו עתה נהיה” from the *responsum* (first published in 1605, i.e., sixteen years before Rossi’s collection, then incorporated for apologetic reasons into the collection itself).

where the Jews had left off. The Christians are said to have learned, or more bluntly “stolen,” music from the Hebrews;²⁴ and the Jews, to have eventually relearned from them what they had forgotten (“their ears picked up a trace of it afterwards from their neighbors, as a remnant of the city [Jerusalem] in our own generation as we near the end of time”).²⁵ After Rossi composed his secular works, he set about writing his sacred ones, according to what he described as the “conventions of music,” viz., the rules of polyphonic composition, whereby they might “have greater strength over the ears of whoever judges words.”²⁶ In confirmation of Rossi’s model, Rabbi Leon Modena said that Rossi “took from his profane works to add to his sacred ones in order to honor Him who favored him, using that with which he had been favored,”²⁷ namely, the gift of composition.

To summarize, there seems to be little of the music practiced in the synagogue in “The Songs of Solomon.” Rather, Rossi composed them, to all intents, after the example of his madrigals. Though not inexorably so: the main differences between his madrigals and sacred songs may be pinpointed to their idiomatic rhythms and textures. One cannot fail to notice that the sacred songs move in slower and more incisive rhythms and have their voices so coordinated as for the words to be delivered fairly simultaneously. The reason for this is that Rossi accommodated the writing to the accentual and syntactic demands of the Hebrew texts, and this to one end: to make the words immediately comprehensible.

- 24 After the fourteenth-century Emanuel the Roman, in his notebooks, 341: 6 מחברות, ed. Dov Yarden (Jerusalem, 1984), p. 120 “מה אומרת חכמת הנגון אל הנצרים? גנב גנבתי מארץ) “העברים” (Genesis 40, 15). On the general decline in musical learning among the Jews, and the surrogate practice of art music by the Christians, see, for the fifteenth century, the anonymous commentary to Proverbs: “היתה כולה נמצאת באמותנו ומשתדלים בלמודה היו יוסף והימן וירדותן ודוד ושלמה וכיוצא בהם מאנשי הנבואה והיום אין ממנו אתנו” from הפירוש למשלי (Naples, 1487; after Yarden’s edition, p. 120).
- 25 “ותקח אָזנם שמץ ממנה אחרי כן מזולתם שריד מעיר כדורות אלה באחרית הימים” (ואלי דבר יגונב ותקח אוני שמץ מנהו) from Leon Modena’s foreword; the author draws on Job 4, 12 (ויירד מיעקב והאָבִידי שריד מעיר) and, vaguely, 4, 30 (באחרית הימים).
- 26 “...כי תמיד הגדלתי והוספתי השתדלות להגדיל מומורי דוד מלך ישראל ולהאדירם עד אשר שמת חק גבול להרכבה מהם בדרכי המוסיקה לבעבור יהיה להם יתר שאת לאון אשר מלין תבחן” from Rossi’s foreword. The word *musiqah* is signed with a diacritical mark, to indicate its use in the sense of part music. Of the various biblical quotations in the statement, the most important, for our purposes, are those referring to the discriminating judgment of the listener, after Job 12, 11 (הלא־און מלין תבחן) and 34, 3 (כִּי־און מלין תבחן).
- 27 “זוה כחו לאלהיו פעל ועשה להוסיף מחול עד הקדש לכבוד חוננו ממה שחוננו” from Modena’s foreword.

Attention to prosody and sentence structure thus served the interest of semantics. It is to the words that one ought to turn, then, to pursue the search for Hebraic qualities in Rossi's music.

As has been stressed, one cannot infer from their having been written to Hebrew texts that Rossi's "Songs" take on the characteristics of their language. All depends on how attuned the composer was, in elaborating them, to the sound and structure of Hebrew, not to speak of the roles he intended them to play in the liturgy and elsewhere. The inquiry will focus on the texts from different points of view: the peculiarities of Rossi's Hebrew setting; word repeats or structural enlargement for the purpose of rhetorical emphasis; the use of musical repeats as another form of musico-textual reinforcement; and the simulation of verbal meanings through more illustrative musical devices, employed for "word painting." Since Rossi's works have already been described as an admixture of Hebrew texts and Italian compositional procedure, it is clear that the requirements of the Hebrew have been modified or mitigated to admit personal preferences: in dealing with texts that hitherto were handled monophonically, Rossi imposed his own partly Italianate solutions on their setting. My thesis is, therefore, that it is difficult via the texts to isolate explicitly Hebrew qualities in the "Songs," the more so since the composer seems to have been exposed to contrary or, sometimes, complementary tendencies in writing them. His music reflects the interplay, then, of its divergent linguistic and stylistic components. Thus Rossi's Hebraicism seems to have been shaded by his Italianism.

PECULIARITIES OF ROSSI'S VERBAL SETTING

Of the thirty-three "Songs," twenty are based on psalms; two on other portions of the Bible, viz., Leviticus, Isaiah; five on prayer texts; five on post-biblical religious poetry, or *piyyuṭim*; and one on the words of a wedding ode. Not all the prayer texts were composed in full. In those that were, the ends of verses are marked by a double bar (||) to indicate that there the congregation responds with one or more words (proof, if proof be needed, that the pieces were intended for liturgical usage). The responses may be culled from the full versions of the texts given in the prayer books of the Italian rite (except for the one-word response "amen," whose insertions may be ascertained from oral practice).²⁸ Thus

28 For the liturgical sources, see the four major *maḥzorim*, viz., prayer books according to the yearly cycle of holidays and festivals, of the Italian rite as practiced in the fifteenth to

in nos. 1 and 16, two different settings of the Full *Qaddiš*, the music consists of six sections corresponding to six “verses,” each to be followed by a congregational response. No. 3, the prayer “*Bareku*,” has two sections, in which the second one, with the response “*Baruk adonay hamevoraḳ le’olam wa’ed*” (“Blessed be the Lord who is blessed for ever and ever”), is first recited by the congregation, then sung by the choir (it would ordinarily have been entrusted to the cantor).²⁹ No. 7, *Qeduššah*, a setting of the Great *Qeduššah* (or “*Keter*”), has six sections, likewise with responses to be inserted between the “verses.” Lest it be thought, however, that all double bars mark the place for insertions, in no. 8 they serve another purpose: the text consists of three non-adjacent verses from Psalm 80, and by separating them by double bars the elliptical construction is highlighted.³⁰

Rossi’s treatment of the words is exemplary. Either his Hebrew was especially good or he received advice from Leon Modena or others on how to handle it. Whatever the case, it is amazing to see how carefully the words were followed in their proper Hebrew syllabification and accentuation. The only examples of lightly flawed, though by no means erroneous syllabification are confined either to Aramaic words (*u-va-’ute-hon* abbreviated to *u-va-’ut-hon*)³¹ or to others where by speech habit an *e* is inserted, for convenience of pronunciation, between two consonants (thus *ye-va-rek-ka* becomes *ye-va-re-ke-ka*,³² *yih-ye* becomes *yi-he-ye*³³ and *yih-yu* becomes *yi-he-yu*³⁴). Yet Hebrew, to start with,

early seventeenth centuries. They were variously printed in Casal Maggiore, 1485/86, 1486/87; Bologna, 1539/40; Mantua, 1556–57; and Venice, 1587/88, itself reprinted in 1606, 1615/16, 1625 and 1675/76. See also two *siddurim*, viz., daily prayer books, one from Mantua, 1563/64, the other from Venice, 1588/89; and two prayer books of the religious confraternity *Šomerim labboqer*, or “Watchers of the Morning”: *Ayyelet hašahar* [“The Dawn’s Deer”], Mantua, 1612; *Ašmoret habboqer* [“Morning Vigil”], Mantua, 1624.

- 29 In the *maḥzor* printed in Venice, 1606, one reads that after the verse “*Bareku et adonay hamevoraḳ*” the response is recited twice, first by the congregation, then by the cantor (“וְהַצְבוֹר עֲוִים יִבֵּר [...] וְגַם הַחֹזֵן יַחְזֹר זֶה אַחַר הַצְבוֹר”); fol. 25v).
- 30 The work has already been mentioned under possible musical evidence for Rossi’s borrowing from traditional song. Its three verses were recited on Sabbaths and feast days upon the removal of the second scroll. See, for example, the *siddur* from Venice (1588/89), where, under the first day of Passover, the text is preceded by the inscription “כְּשֶׁמִצְרַיִם סֵפֶר שְׁנֵי אֲוִמִּים” (fols. 122v–123).
- 31 In no. 1, “*Qaddiš*” (mm. 83–85); the word is fully syllabified in the second setting of the text (no. 16, mm. 85–88).
- 32 In the three settings of Psalm 128: nos. 2 (mm. 56–57), 12 (mm. 61–66), 20 (mm. 52–56).
- 33 In nos. 29 and 30, the first a setting of “*Adon ‘olam*” (mm. 30–31), the second of Psalm 112 (mm. 17–18).
- 34 In no. 32, a setting of Psalm 92 (mm. 135–137).

leaves a certain latitude in their treatment. Less satisfactory is the obviously Italianate pronunciation of *šeg-ga-malt* as the same three syllables plus a terminal *e* (a charming indiscretion, yet one with serious consequences for the rhythmic construction).³⁵

As to examples of incorrect accentuation, the only glaring ones are *kullékem* (for *kullekém*) and *halélu* (for *halelú*); they must have been an oversight, for Rossi generally treats syllables with mobile *šewa* as weak.³⁶ The problem of the mobile *šewa* comes up again in the word pair *móse-dey árez*. Instead of lengthening *mó*, as its accent suggests, and shortening *se*, because of its mobile *šewa*, the composer assigns *mó-se-dey*, in all voices, to three quarter notes, on beats 2-4 of the measure. He thus removes the accent from *mó* and, with *se* on the third beat, throws unwanted weight on the *šewa*.³⁷ Other lapses are *ba'agála* (for *ba'agalá*),³⁸ yet *ba'agála* seems to be the conventional Italian pronunciation for the Aramaic word;³⁹ *miqrá'ey* (for *miqra'éy*);⁴⁰ *tánhem* (for *tanhém*),⁴¹ and *po'áley* (for *po'aléy*).⁴²

Elsewhere the accentuation is altered not because the composer misread the words but because he responded to the metrical stresses of the hymns or *piyyuṭim*. Thus in the setting of “*Yigdal*” (no. 28) eight words are accentuated on the penultimate, though, normally, they would have been on the ultimate.⁴³ The same holds for three words in the setting of “*Adon 'olam*” (no. 29), as follows:⁴⁴

- 35 In no. 10, a setting of Psalm 137 (mm. 93–94). The terminal *e* turns a quiescent *šewa* into a mobile one. That Rossi so intended may be inferred from the two half notes provided for *mal-t[e]* in three of the voices (though not in the tenor, where the syllable *malt* falls correctly on a single note). Again the reading could be “emended” by extending *malt* over both halves.
- 36 The first in no. 4, a setting of Psalm 82 (mm. 60–62, top voice only); the second in no. 30, a setting of Psalm 112 (m. 1, tenor).
- 37 In no. 4, as above (yet now in mm. 51–52). The accentuation could be “emended,” to be sure, by assigning *mó* to the first two quarters and *sedey*, abbreviated *s'dey*, to the third; or, on the assumption that the first two quarters were incorrect, by rewriting the first as a dotted note and the second as an eighth.
- 38 In nos. 1 (mm. 30–32) and 16 (mm. 25–26), both of them settings of the Full *Qaddiš*.
- 39 It may be confirmed by modern practice. See Piattelli (1967: 9, 10).
- 40 In no. 6, a setting of Leviticus 23, 4, mm. 4–5.
- 41 In no. 9, a setting of Psalm 67, m. 48.
- 42 In no. 32, a setting of Psalm 92, mm. 73–74.
- 43 *Elóhim* (mm. 2–3); *we'éyno* (26); *netáno* (54–55); *móšeh* (65); *umábbiṭ* (67–68); *le'ámmo* (75–76); *mehákkey* (118–119); *yeháyyeh* (124–125).
- 44 Cf. no. 29, mm. 9–13, 40–45, 86–93.

“*Adon ‘olam*” (in iambic tetrameter)

Stressed syllables are italicized and bracketed words are shown in their usual (non-metric) accentuation

From second distich *Le-‘et na-‘a-sah be-ḥef-ẓo [be-ḥef-ẓo] kol*
From fifth distich *Le-ḥam-šil [Le-ham-šil] lo le-haḥ-bi-rah*⁴⁵
From tenth distich *A-do-nay [A-do-nay] li we-lo i-ra*

(and other alterations, in the *piyyuṭim* nos. 25 and 27 and in the wedding ode no. 33).

But, again, here, as elsewhere, there is nothing wrong with Rossi’s setting; rather, its irregularities of accentuation resided in the texts themselves. In treating words, Rossi read them in their prosodic context, which means, in short, that where certain ones seem incorrectly rhythmicized the reason is often to be found in the metrical schemes.⁴⁶ In this case, the meter outwardly scans as iambic tetrameter, yet in effect it follows the long-short pattern for the Arabic *Hazağ* (⏑ — — / ⏑ — —). The latter neutralizes the qualitatively stressed iambs (*Adon ‘olam* / *ašer malāk* becomes *Ādōn ‘olām* / *āšer mālāk*, etc.).⁴⁷

The position of the text in relation to the notes was very carefully indicated: Leon Modena saw to that in preparing the music for printing and in proofreading the copy.⁴⁸ Yet, there are difficulties in its reconstruction. Because of the Hebrew, which is read from right to left, the composer was faced with the notational problem of how to square the forward movement of the music with the backward one of the words. Various solutions were possible. One was to write the music from right to left (in accordance with the text), which the composer did not do, for were the singers forced to read it backwards, he realized, “they would

45 Here Rossi softens the iambic accentuation (*lehaḥbirah*) to accommodate the penultimate word stress.

46 Or in other textual peculiarities: for example, the use of hyphens between two or more words, thereby removing the accent from all but the last (*kol-afsei-ārez*, in Psalm 67, set as no. 9); or the rule of the recessive accent (*nasog aḥor*), where a dissyllable with an accent on the penult affects the previous word, setting back its accent from the final to the penult as well (*hamōne mā’lah* and *qevūtsey mātṭah*, in the Great *Qeḏuša*, no. 7).

47 As for “*Yigdal*,” it follows the scheme of a modified *Rağaz* (thus the comments about misplaced qualitative stresses in note 43 above should be rewritten to reflect quantitative considerations).

48 As we learn from his foreword: *ולא תבא על החבור לסדרו ולהדרו* “ואותי צנה לעמוד על כל צרה שלא תבא על החבור לסדרו ולהדרו” (Modena admits it was no easy task: “אנכי” “נצב על עין המלאכה ומודיע בשערי לרבים כי לא נקלה היא...”).

lose their minds.”⁴⁹ Another was to write the music as usual, accommodating the syllables of the text in the opposite order of their inscription. Thus the word *hašivenu* (השיבנו), written from right to left in Hebrew, would have its syllables turned around, from left to right (Example 1):

Example 1. The word hašivenu from “Elohim hašivenu” (no. 8, canto, mm. 8–14): (1) the Hebrew syllables placed in reversed order and (2) the same syllables transcribed as pronounced.

1) ה - שי - ב - נו
2) ha - ši - vé - nu

Neither did Rossi adopt this solution, though today it is the customary way of notating Hebrew vocal music; one only wishes he had, for each syllable would have been clearly assigned to its own note or notes.

A third solution, which Rossi did in fact adopt, was to reverse the order of Hebrew words, but not tamper with the order of their syllables (or letters). Each word was printed at the end of its respective group of notes, thus (Example 2):

Example 2. The words Elohim hašivenu, from the work so beginning (no. 8, alto, mm. 1–10): (1) Hebrew words in reversed order, as printed in the musical source, and (2) the same words in Latin characters, now with the letters reversed (as pronounced) and the syllables placed under their respective notes.

1) השיבנו - אלוהים
2) lo - him ha - ši - vé - nu

Printing words at the end of their notes poses no problem when the music is syllabic, i.e., with one note to each syllable. It does though when the music is melismatic, i.e., with three or more notes to a syllable, as the example illustrates. Then one knows no more than where the first syllable of the word begins (obviously the first note) and its last syllable

49 “פן תטרף דעתם” (Modena’s foreword). Retrograde notation is known from earlier examples, among them the hymns by Obadiah the Proselyte (see above) and the short four-part illustration of biblical accents that Johannes Reuchlin included in his *De accentibus, et orthographia, linguae hebraicae* (Haguenau, 1518), fol. lxxxiii.

ends (obviously the last note). But no indication is given for the start of the middle and last syllables. There are two possible solutions to the problem, one according to the dictates of Italian word placement, as observed by Rossi in his madrigals, the other according to those of Hebrew prosody.

Italian words are usually accented on the penultimate (and less often on the antepenultimate) and by convention the melisma, or vocalise of three or more notes, falls on the accented syllable and, as a result, the last note of the phrase on the last syllable (though exceptionally the last syllable suffers a terminal melisma).⁵⁰ Hebrew words, in contrast, are usually accented on the ultimate (and far less often on the penultimate), and the question is whether the accented ultimate receives a melisma, as one would expect it to. The conflict between Italian and Hebrew ways of treating the melisma may be illustrated by the opening of no. 3 (the word “*Barekú*,” accented, as marked here, on ‘*ku*,’ yet having a secondary accent on *Ba*; Example 3):

Example 3. The word “Barekú,” from the work so beginning (no. 3, canto, mm. 1–7): (1) placement in musical source, (2) Hebrew realization and (3) Italian realization (with re at the start of the dotted figure, according to one of the conventions of word placement).⁵¹

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of several notes, including a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, and a dotted half note. Below the staff, three different syllable placements are indicated:

- 1) Placement in musical source: The syllables 'Ba', 're', and 'kú' are aligned with the first, second, and fourth notes of the melody, respectively.
- 2) Hebrew realization: The syllables 'Ba', 're', and 'kú' are aligned with the first, second, and fourth notes of the melody, respectively. The Hebrew word 'ברכּוּ' is written above the staff.
- 3) Italian realization: The syllable 'Ba' is aligned with the first note. A long horizontal line spans from the first note to the fourth note, with 're' written below it, indicating a melisma on the 're' syllable.

- 50 For melisma on accented syllable and last syllable on last note, cf. Gioseffo Zarlino, *Istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice, n.p., 1558; facs. ed., New York, Broude Brothers, 1965): “...dopo l’havere accommodato tutte le sillabe, che si trovano in un Periodo, ovvero in una parte della oratione, alle figure cantabili; quando resterà solamente la penultima sillaba, et l’ultima; tale penultima potrà havere alquante delle figure minori sotto di se; come sono due, o tre, et altra quantità; pur che la detta penultima sillaba sia longa, et non breve...” and “...la sillaba ultima della oratione de terminare...nella figura ultima della cantilena” (p. 341). For terminal melisma on last syllable, cf. Gaspar Stoquerus, *De musica verballi libri duo* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Ms. 6486, c. 1570): “Ex his notandum est, ultimam notam, cui ultima debetur syllaba, non posse semper esse eam, quae ultimo loco ponitur: quid enim si illam plurimae Semiminimae praecedant, tunc enim illa Semiminimis annumeratur, syllabamque propriam non admittit: ultimaque, quae syllabae capax sit, prima Semiminima censenda est” (fol. 40). On these and other rules for text placement, see the appendix to Harrán, 1986: 360–460.
- 51 On the rule specifying that in a dotted figure separate syllables are not to be assigned to the smaller note or notes after the dotted one, nor to the larger value that follows, cf. Zarlino, *Istitutioni*: “...alle figure, che segueno immediatamente li Punti della semibreve, et

Either solution (Hebrew, Italian) is feasible, and without further information one cannot determine the composer's preference. In nos. 2 and 3 above *Ba* is treated as a secondary accent and *re* is minimized, though not for the same reasons: in the Italian transcript *re* is simply a weak syllable; in Hebrew it is no syllable at all, for it falls on a mobile *šewa*, which, morphologically, connects with *ku* (*Ba-rekú*, בַּ-רְכֵּךָ).

Similar ambivalence concerns *bemo'adám* in no. 6, except that now, like the Hebrew ordering of the syllables, the Italian one, too, results in a terminal melisma on *dám* (for it was not customary to place a syllable on a final note preceded by shorter values;⁵² Example 4):

Example 4. The word bemo'adám from "Elle mo'adei adonay" (no. 6, canto, mm. 10–15): (1) placement in musical source, (2) a Hebrew realization and (3) an Italian one. (The Hebrew and Italian agree in treating mo as a secondary accent, with the other portions unaccented; yet again Hebrew has its own logic: be and 'a are not officially syllables, the be being a mobile šewa [בֵּ] and the 'a a semivowel [אֵ], hence not suitable for emphasis.)

1) *be - mo - 'a - dám* _____ בְּמוֹאֲדָם

2) *be - mo* _____ *'a - dám* _____

3) *be - mo* _____ *'a - dám* _____

Altogether, about twenty-two problem cases can be spotted, mostly in the earlier, more melismatic part of the collection.⁵³ Their treatment may be determined in various ways. One is to save the melisma for the penultimate syllable when, in Hebrew, it is the accented syllable (as in

della minima,...non si costuma di accompagnarle alcuna sillaba; et così a quelle, che seguono immediatamente tali figure" (p. 341).

52 Cf. Stoquerus above on the terminal melisma, as well as another statement of his to the effect that in a series of semiminims or smaller values the syllable ought to be placed on the first note or on the larger one preceding it (*De musica verballi*): "...si Semiminimam inaequales minoris valoris notae sequuntur. Tunc enim...illi quidem, quae Semiminimam immediate sequitur, sua debetur syllaba: caeterae autem illi alligatae censentur, et non Semiminimae" (fol. 31v).

53 Nos. 3, mm. 1–6 (canto, also alto and tenor); 6, mm. 10–15 (canto, also alto and tenor); 7, mm. 8–10 (bass), 18–20 (canto), 63–64 (tenor), 81–83 (tenor); 8, mm. 1–7 (alto, also tenor), 8–14 (canto, also alto), 25–31 (canto, alto), 56–61 (canto, alto, tenor, bass); 10, mm. 24–26 (tenor); 11, mm. 15–17 (tenor); 12, mm. 15–18 (alto); 14, mm. 19–23 (canto); 16, mm. 22–24 (canto), 33–36 (alto, quinto, tenor); 17, mm. 4–7 (quinto); 19, mm. 16–18 (quinto, also tenor); 20, mm. 2–7 (bass), 75–77 (canto), 78–80 (alto); and 22, mm. 5–8 (quinto).

Example 1 above, with the melisma on *ve* of *hašivénu*). Penultimately accented Hebrew syllables would be handled in the same way, then, as those in Italian (and, in both languages, the final syllable would thereby fall on the final note).

Another solution is to consider the other voices for their placement of the words. In Example 5 the word *hallevanón* should, it would seem, be treated in the quinto, i.e., fifth voice, and the tenor according to the Hebrew and not the Italian manner, as suggested by its treatment in the canto and alto:

Example 5. The word *hallevanón* from "Yesusum midbar weziyya" (no. 19, quinto, tenor, canto, alto, mm. 16–18): (1) placement in musical source, (2) a Hebrew realization and (3) an Italian one.

1) *Quinto* *Tenor*

2) hal - le - va - nón *הלבנון* hal - le - va - nón *הלבנון*

3) hal - le - va - nón *הלבנון* hal - le - va - nón *הלבנון*

Canto *Alto*

hal - le - va - nón *הלבנון* hal - le - va - nón *הלבנון*

hal - le - va - nón *הלבנון* hal - le - va - nón *הלבנון*

(In the canto and alto, the accented syllable *nón* was prevented from falling on the final note by a terminal melisma and further, in the alto, by repeated notes on *c'*.)⁵⁴ Again the two languages have their own logic: *le*, in the Italian setting, marks a secondary accent, while *hal* and *va* are unstressed; in Hebrew, *le*, as a mobile *šewa*, is counted with *va* (*hal-leva-nón*, הַלְלֵנוּן, or as syllabified: הַלְלֵ-נוּן). Said otherwise, *hal* and *va* have greater weight in Hebrew than in Italian. Rossi, true, placed *le* on the downbeat *all'italiana*, yet respected the Hebrew enough, it would seem, to keep *le* free of a melodic extension.

A third solution is to apply the usual rules for Italian text placement (already illustrated in some of the examples above), whereby syllables are prevented from being sung on the first larger note after smaller ones or

54 For the rule concerning syllables on repeated notes, see, for example, Stoquerus, *De musica verbali*: "Pluribus notis in uno eodemque loco positus cuique sua debetur syllaba" (fol. 19).

on the smaller ones themselves.⁵⁵ Thus in Example 6, the proper Italian treatment might, on musical grounds, overrule the Hebrew deferment of the last syllable to the last note, as here:

Example 6. The word šovéynu from “Al naharot bavel” (no. 10, tenor, mm. 24–26): (1) placement in musical source, (2) a Hebrew realization (for accentual reasons) and (3) a realization after the conventions of Italian text placement. (As it so happens, the three other parts also place nu on the first beat of the same measure.)

1) šovéynu
2) šo - véy - nu
3) šo - véy - nu

שוֹבֵינוּ
נו

The burden of the evidence would seem to indicate that Rossi often favored the Italian (and practical musical) approach over the Hebrew one. There are various instances of parts so written that they adapt naturally to Italian procedure. The portion already cited in Example 2 is a case in point: the reason why, in the same example, the Italian placement of *Elohim*, as transcribed,⁵⁶ would seem to be preferable to a Hebrew one⁵⁷ is that in a later passage the word was so set as for the Italian placement to be more likely (Example 7 — with *lo* on the longer penultimate note of the phrase and *him* on its repeat):

Example 7. The word Elohim, from “Elohim, hašivenu” (no. 8, alto, mm. 56–61): (1) placement in musical source and (2) Italian realization (with syllables adapted to the last two notes on the same pitch).

1) Elohim
2) E - lo - him

אלהים
lo - him

Similarly, in a long melisma on *birnanáh*, the music is so written that the melisma is forced *all'italiana* onto the antepenultimate and the last

55 See Zarlino above, also Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica* (Brescia, Ludovico Britannico, 1533; facs. ed., Bologna, Arnaldo Forni, 1970): “Et la Semiminima principiante di necessità porta la sua sillaba, ma nè a quelle di mezzo, nè a l'ultime di consuetudine bona mai non si dà la sillaba: nè alla nota bianca, che dopo essa ultima Semiminima segue” (p. 69).

56 With the melisma on the antepenultimate *E* — in Hebrew a semivowel, hence a weak syllable — and the last two whole notes on *lo-him*.

57 Which, were we to add it to the example, would have *lo* on the second note and *him* possibly, though not necessarily, in the third measure.

two syllables (because of repeated notes) onto the last two notes (Example 8):

Example 8. The word *birnanáh* from “*Lamnazzeah*, ‘*al haggittit*’ (no. 14, canto, mm.19-23): (1) placement in musical source and (2) an Italian realization.

Yet the remarks above might be confronted with counterevidence. In Hebrew the word *birnanáh* cannot be taken as a model for *elohím*. True, both words have, in transliteration, three syllables and a stress on the last. But, in reality, only *birnanáh* has three, for *e* of *elohím* is a semivowel (א, hence *elo-hím*, אֱלֹהִים), which means that it should properly not be highlighted.⁵⁸ Thus in Examples 2 and 7 the setting is distinctly Italian, yet there is nothing in the music to prevent a Hebrew realization, indeed, in both examples the melisma could just as well have been assigned to *lo*, beginning on the second note. Obviously, the only way out of this dilemma is to check how Rossi treats the word *elohím* (“God”) and its similarly constructed cognate *adonáy* (“Lord”) elsewhere, namely in syllabic passages not obscured by the problem of the melisma.

In Italian, to repeat, *elohím* and *adonáy* would be considered trisyllabic, with a secondary accent on the initial portion (*é-lo-hím*, *á-do-náy*); in Hebrew, though, they begin with a semivowel, meaning they basically have only two syllables, with whatever secondary accent there is falling at the end of the first of them (*eló-hím*, *adó-náy*). Sometimes Rossi sets the two words *all’italiana*, that is, with *lo* or *do* on a weak beat or to a short note;⁵⁹ in other spots, he sets *adonáy* in the Hebrew manner, with *a* short and *do* slightly or even considerably longer; and in still other spots he has the same word declaimed one way or the other in different voices.⁶⁰ The upshot of the matter is that uncertainty prevails, in Rossi’s

58 The status of *bir* is uncertain, for it marks a “floating *šewa*” (שׁוּא מְרֻחָה), which means that it, too, is weaker than the following portion *na* (though not as weak, apparently, as a regular *šewa* or a semivowel).

59 *Elohim*: no. 4, mm. 4–13, 56–57, 72–73; no. 9, mm. 6–9, 30–31, 53–54, 67–70, 73–74; no. 13, mm. 67–68. *Adonáy*: no. 14, mm. 6–7, 13–14, 25–26; no. 31, mm. 5–6 (four of the eight voices), 15–17 (ottavo); no. 32, mm. 88–89.

60 No. 1, mm. 10–12 (canto, tenor); no. 2, mm. 53–58; no. 12, mm. 9–11, 59–61, 64–65; no. 20, mm. 11–13, 49–51, 56; no. 31, mm. 41–43.

handling of *elohim* and *adonáy*, on a syllabic level; it is no wonder that the same uncertainty carries over to the as it were higher level of the melismatic examples already discussed.

In solving the various problems of syllabic placement in melismas, the Italian approach, to summarize, was the one that Rossi tended to favor, yet was not rigorous in applying. There are places where the Hebrew treatment works better musically or the music itself pointed the way to a solution, in which case the composer appears to have proceeded *ad rem*. Thus in Example 9, the Hebrew one seems preferable for *yittenú* in the bass, as confirmed by the setting of the same word in the canto and tenor; and it seems preferable, again, for *kevúzey* in the canto, in order not to break the arched melody (even though having *zey* on the final note violates the rule of Italian text placement that stipulates that no syllable be sung to the longer note succeeding one or more short ones).⁶¹ Yet the Italian treatment seems preferable for *aní* in the tenor (not only does it implement the same rule, but it has the tenor correspond to the other parts in placing *ni* on a downbeat):

Example 9. Various words from "Keter yittenu lak" (no. 7, bass, mm. 8–10; canto, 18–20; tenor, 63–64): (1) placement in musical source, (2) an Italian realization and (3) a Hebrew one (the preferred placement, in each instance, is marked by an asterisk).

Bass	Canto	Tenor	
1)	יתנו	קבוֹצֵי	אני
2)	yit - te - nú	ke - vú - zey	*a - ní
3)	*yit - te - nú	*ke - vú - zey	a - ní

A word of admonition before closing the discussion: the whole matter of Hebrew versus Italian accentuation becomes an academic issue without considering the conventions of oral tradition. After having

61 Yet it observes still another Italian injunction against splitting syllables of the same word by leaps, as when Nicola Vicentino writes “se occorrerà rompere la dittione per mezzo, fra un salto della quinta, sarà manco male che fra il salto dell’ottava, et sel si può far di manco di pronuntiare la dittione sopra il salto di quinta, et di quarta sarà buono, et come occorrerà i salti in tali pronuntie, come saranno più corti, faranno manco offensione a gl’orecchi”: *L’antica musica ridotta alla moderna pratica* (Rome, Antonio Barre, 1555; facs. ed., Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1959), fol. P iii.

listened to a large number of prayers, psalms and *piyyuṭim*,⁶² I came to the conclusion that what grammar demands is one thing, but what happens in practice is another.⁶³ Here and there mobile *šewas* and semivowels receive tonic accents or short melismas and are either just as long as secondary accents or even longer. Judged from this standpoint, Rossi's setting of Hebrew text in his "Songs" is almost faultless; in fact, Rossi is considerably more meticulous in handling words than most *hazzanim*. Oral practice throws the question of what constitutes "proper" Hebrew pronunciation into an entirely different light; its accentual conventions as they apply to music deserve a detailed investigation.

WORD REPEATS AND OTHER FORMS OF RHETORICAL EMPHASIS

By tradition, word repeats were frowned upon in rabbinical writings as an example of gratuitous tampering with the sacred texts. Liturgically, the prohibition makes sense. But it cannot be rigorously upheld in music, which has, at times, to abide by its own logic. Thus Leon Modena, in a *responsum* on repeating words, especially those denoting the godhead (*keter, adonay*), recognized that word repeats occur in art music "for the sake of adorning the melody."⁶⁴ Torn between different tendencies, liturgical, rhetorical and musical, Rossi variously yielded to the second or third of them, yet never that openly as to violate a certain Hebraic decorum. Moderation was his watchword.

The general tendency in the majority of the "Songs" (at least twenty-four) is to emphasize their final portion by repeats of a whole verse or of its second hemistich or, if not the whole second hemistich, then one or two of its words. Thus in no. 11 (Psalm 146), after verses 7, 8 and 9, respectively 14, 14 and 15 measures, verse 10 runs to 29 measures; or in no. 19 (Isaiah 35), after two verses of 9 and 15 measures, the last verse runs to 35 measures; and in no. 28 (the hymn "Yigdal"), after four verses of 10 measures each, the last verse runs to 25 measures. The textual (and

62 Among the recorded materials of the *Italiani* held in the National Sound Archives, Jerusalem (I listened in particular to informants from Casale Monferrato, Torino and Ferrara).

63 That is exactly the tenor of the argument, to refer to a non-Hebraic subject, pursued by Jean Le Munerat in his theoretical tracts (see Harrán, 1989b; esp. pp. 53–77).

64 "...כמשפט המחברים במוסיקה שכופלים לפעמים המלה להמתיק הניגון": from the *quaestio* portion; Modena's collection of *responsa* entitled זקני יהודה (London, British Library, Ms. Add. 27,148), ed. Shlomo Simonsohn (Jerusalem, 1956), pp. 176–178.

varied musical) repeats are meant to make the ending that much more imposing and decisive. Sometimes the portion repeated is the word of exultation *haleluyah* (as in nos. 7 and 11, with exuberant melismas on it as well);⁶⁵ other times the reason for the repeat is the particularly joyful character of a verse (as in no. 17, “he will come back singing, holding his sheaves”; or in no. 9, “...with happiness everlasting over their heads; joy and happiness will they obtain, and sorrow and sighing will retreat”).⁶⁶

Other forms of structural emphasis are:

(1) To lengthen both the first and the last sections (as in no. 18, with an opening of 14 measures and a close of 15, while the six intermediate verses run from 6 to 9 measures; or in no. 21, with an opening of 18 measures and a close of 22, while the six intermediate verses run from 8 to 13 measures).⁶⁷ The reason for the longer first section need not be word repeats though, but simply more words to be set (as was the case in nos. 1 and 21).

(2) To reinforce the first, last and one middle verse as well, usually because the same middle verse (or section) has more words (as in no. 4, verse 5; or no. 31, verse 7).⁶⁸

(3) To stress the first section over all others, again because it has more words (as in no. 1, the Full *Qaddiṣ*, with an opening section of 40 measures, while the five that follow run from 16 to 20 measures).

No. 8 is special in having three identical verses with added words at the beginning. Thus “God, restore us...” in the first verse becomes “God of hosts, restore us...” in the second and “Lord God of hosts, restore us...” in the third. Rossi built on the idea of textual expansion, using the same music for the three verses, yet gradually amplifying it (thus 24, 28 and 33 measures). Nos. 22 and 23 are also special, for each of their four verses is repeated (according to liturgical custom)⁶⁹ and, moreover, the second statement of the fourth is musically expanded.

Because verbal repeats of portions of the last verse are the rule in most pieces, and this for rhetorical emphasis, other pieces stand out, in

65 No. 7, the Great *Qeduššah* (mm. 77–86); no. 11, Psalm 146 (mm. 119–140).

66 No. 17, Psalm 126 (mm. 72–90: *בא־יבוא ברנה נשא אלומותיו*; no. 19, Isaiah 35, 1–2, 5–6, 10 (mm. 66–91: *ושמחה עולם על־ראשם ששון ושמחה ישיגו ונסו יגון ואנחה*).

67 No. 18, Psalm 121; no. 21, Psalm 124.

68 No. 4, Psalm 82; no. 5, Psalm 111.

69 Nos. 22 and 23, verses 21–24 and 26–29 respectively of Psalm 118.

contrast, for their complete lack of repetition at the close. No. 10 has no more than a single statement of its last (or any other) verse, as befits the anti-musical and anti-jubilant character of its text (Psalm 137: “we sat and wept”; “on willows we hung our lyres”; “how shall we sing the song of the Lord in a foreign land?”). No. 29 (the hymn “*Adon ‘olam*”) is likewise straightforward in the setting of its text, with about the same length for each of the ten distichs (running from 8 to 12 measures). No. 33 (the wedding ode) has no expansion of the last verse, for the simple reason that it ends like all previous verses with an echo.

Beyond word repeats in the final section or its final verse, for emphasizing the close, there are relatively few elsewhere. The intention of the composer was to present the words in a single statement, as accorded with liturgical precedent. Thus the few examples of word repetition occurring before the close are, by all counts, exceptional. There are sixteen of them (in one or more voices), and never do they involve more than a single repetition. One occurs in a prayer (no. 15), another in a *piyyut* (no. 25) and the rest in five psalms.⁷⁰ Three categories may be discerned: repeats of words (usually no more than one) having to do with music or sound (“song,” “we will sing,” “to chant,” “on a lyre,” “the voice of the Lord”)⁷¹ or otherwise evocative (walking, dreaminess);⁷² repeats of words of a more neutral character, though having doctrinal weight (“with good advice”; “guard our going out”; “may He bless you”; “we blessed you”; “in His sanctuary”; “and You are on high”), the reason for the repeat being not so much the words as the need to fill in a structural break in one or more voices (as when the canto and tenor already completed “we blessed you,” which left them with nothing to do while the other voices were still singing it);⁷³ and finally the word *adonay* or “Lord,” whose repetition was proscribed by rabbinical edict, yet

70 No. 15, “*Haškivenu*”; no. 25, “*Eftah na sefatay*”; and, for the psalms, nos. 17, 20, 23–24, 32, respectively Psalms 126, 128, 118, 26–29, 29, 92.

71 Cf. (in the same order) nos. 17, mm. 1–4 (tenor; שיר); 25, mm. 147–151 (six of seven voices; ושיר); 32, mm. 13–16 (ottavo; וקזמר), 34–37 (quinto; בבקנור); and 24, mm. 85–88 (quinto; קול ה’).

72 Cf. nos. 20, mm. 14–16 (tenor; ההולך) and 17, mm. 13–20 (“we were like dreamers,” היינו כחולמים, with “we were” repeated in canto, quinto and bass and “like dreamers” repeated in alto).

73 Cf. (in order) nos. 15, mm. 22–26 (canto, tenor, bass; בעצה טובה), 55–59 (four of five voices; ושומר צאתנו); 20, mm. 52–56 (tenor, bass; יברכך); 23, mm. 15–18 (canto, tenor; בברכנום); 24, mm. 93–96 (two of six voices; ובהיכלו); and 32, mm. 79–83 (one of eight voices; ואתה מרום).

which Rossi repeated in a single example, again to fill in a blank in one of the voices (the quinto).⁷⁴

MUSICAL REPEATS

Till now, textual repeats were accompanied by varied or changing music. Yet a number of examples show literal or almost literal musical repeats for diverse reasons, some of them textual, others structural. Here Rossi interprets Hebrew as he would have done Italian. At least six kinds of musical repeats may be distinguished:

(1) *For identical portions of text.* Psalm 67 (set as no. 9) has identical words for verses 4 and 6, and the music is likewise repeated.⁷⁵ The same holds for the setting of Psalm 8, verses 2 and 10 (no. 13), and of “*Hašktivenu*,” verses 3 and 11 (no. 15): the music is repeated for as many of the words as are common to both verses.⁷⁶ The Full *Qaddiš* has the closing formula “and say ‘*amen*’” in five of its six musical sections, and (in its setting as no. 1) they are related by having the same cadence formula (the resemblance is especially clear at the end of the first and last sections).⁷⁷ In no. 11 (Psalm 146), the word *haleluyah* appears at the opening of the first and last verses, and musically the last verse begins as an embellished version of the opening.⁷⁸ Psalm 8 (already discussed) has three almost identical verses, each slightly longer, and musically the second and third are variations of the first.

(2) *For works with a textual refrain.* Nos. 25 and 27 (*piyyuṭim*) have an opening refrain and, between the stanzas, a half refrain.⁷⁹ In the first of

74 No. 20 (Psalm 128), mm. 54–56. In another example, the word *adonay* is repeated within a restatement of a longer portion: no. 24, mm. 49–61 (in the tenor: “And He broke—the Lord—the cedars of Lebanon; [*repeat*] the Lord, the cedars of Lebanon”; יִשְׁבֵר ה' אֶת אֲרָזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן (ה)לְבָנוֹן, ה' אֶת אֲרָזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן).

75 No. 9, mm. 26–35, 51–58 (“May You be praised by the peoples, God; may You be praised by all peoples”; יוֹדֵךְ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים יוֹדֵךְ עַמִּים כֻּלָּם (יודוך עמים אלהים יודוך עמים כלם)).

76 No. 13, mm. 9–19, 100–110 (“Lord, our Lord, how mighty is Your name throughout the earth”; ה' אֲדִינֶנּוּ מֵה אֲדִיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכֹל הָאָרֶץ). No. 15, mm. 12–17, 76–86, a varied repeat (“And spread over us the shelter of Your peace” / “who spread the shelter of peace over us”; וַיִּפְרֹס עָלֵינוּ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמְךָ, and in verse 11 וַיִּפְרֹס עָלֵינוּ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמְךָ); it might be noted that verse 3 is identical with verse 10, yet for the latter the composer chose not to make a repeat.

77 No. 1, mm. 35–40, 75–79, 92–95, 109–112, 125–132 (ואמר אמן).

78 Opening, mm. 1–3; beginning of last verse, mm. 119–123.

79 No. 25: refrain, “Let me open my lips / and respond in joyous song: / to living God will I sing / during the procession with the ark” (בְּנִסְעִי / לֵאלֹהֵי חַיִּים אֲשִׁיר / וְאֶעֱנֶה בְּרִירָן / לֵאלֹהֵי חַיִּים אֲשִׁיר / בְּנִסְעִי); half refrain, “To living God will I sing / during the procession with the ark” (לֵאלֹהֵי חַיִּים); No. 27: refrain, “I will break into a song on my lips / and the tongue of

the two, the opening refrain returns with varied music at the end; and in both, the half refrains (derived from the opening one) have their own identical music.

(3) *For strophic variation.* No. 16 is a strophic setting of the (non-strophic) Full *Qaddiṣ*: the first strophe consists of eight lines, composed as *ABabCDEF*; the second and third strophes, with six lines only, omit *ab*; the fourth, fifth and sixth strophes, reduced to five lines, omit *ab* and *E*. The fact that Rossi imposed the straight jacket of a strophic setting on a non-strophic text shows his having approached it not from a doctrinal, but from a musical standpoint. What results seems incongruent with the poetry, as if removing its sobriety. But our notions of the Full *Qaddiṣ* as a somber text are unfounded (they probably derive from the version recited at burial or in mourning). It is at root a joyous expression of praise to God, and Rossi's setting (no. 16) is precisely that.

(4) *For relating verses of doctrinal significance.* In “*Adon 'olam*” verse 4 states the essence of God (“And He was and He is and He shall be in glory”) and verse 7 His special relation to man as his redeemer (“And He is my God and my living redeemer, a rock for my suffering in a day of distress”).⁸⁰ Rossi associates the two verses thematically, moreover singles them out by changing the meter from duple to triple: the effect is a kind of ternary *ritornello* (such as one finds in works of the Venetian composers, among them Giovanni Gabrieli). Still other verses show thematic affinities, for example, verses 5, 6, 9 and 10, in all cases for two choruses.⁸¹ Owing to the text and the urge for compositional cohesion, such affinities can be found in further “Songs” (e.g., no. 31, between verses 4 and 10).⁸²

(5) *For emphasizing the concluding verse,* again for its doctrinal significance. The only work with an exact musical repeat of its last portion is “*Eyn keloheynu*”: after stanzas 1–4 speaking of God in the

my heart will sing in joy; / I will sing to God Almighty / upon the opening of His ark” (אפתח שיר בשפתי / ולשון לבי תרון / אשרי אֵל. אֵל. שֵׁרִי / עַת פּוֹתְחִים לוֹ אֲרוֹן); half refrain, “I will break into a song on my lips / and the tongue of my heart will sing in joy” (אפתח שיר בשפתי / ולשון לבי תרון).

80 Verse 4 (mm. 26–33): והוא יהיה בתפארה / והוא יהיה הוזה / והוא יהיה הוזה; verse 7 (mm. 55–62): והוא אלי חיי / גואלי / וצור חבלי ביום צרה.

81 Verses 5, mm. 34–39; 6, mm. 49–54; 9, mm. 77–82; and 10, mm. 87–93.

82 Mm. 32–43, 99–105.

third person or first person plural (“No one is like our God...,” “Who is like our God?...,” “We will thank our God...,” “Blessed be our God...”), stanza 5 addresses Him in the second person (“You are our God, You are our Lord, You are our king, You are our savior”). The effect is climactic, and Rossi reinforces it by repeating the whole stanza in full (the only example of sectional repetition in his “Songs”).⁸³

(6) *For echo repeats.* Each of the eleven stanzas in no. 33 (the wedding ode) ends with a textual (and musical) echo. Textually, the point is to demonstrate how the two or three syllables that are echoed can be construed in either Hebrew or Italian. Thus the last word of the first stanza is *be'alimah* (“with a maid”), of which the portion *'almah* is repeated: in Hebrew as *'al mah* (“what for?”), which in Italian reads as *alma* (“soul”); or the last word of the sixth stanza is *ne'elamah* (“she is silent”), of which the portion *lamah* is repeated: in Hebrew as *lammah* (“why?”), which in Italian reads as *l'ama* (“he loves her”); and so on with other word games that the author (still unidentified, though probably Leon Modena)⁸⁴ plays with obvious glee. It is as if the author were telling us that however deep the chasm between Hebrew and Italian it can be breached through their homonyms. Musically, the point is to demonstrate that different languages can be set to identical music without damaging their integrity. Rossi seems to be writing an epitaph to his own conception of Hebrew music as a blend of Italianism and Hebraicism, not to speak of his own life story as a reconciliation of the separate cultures in which he moved.

WORD PAINTING

The intrusion of Italian elements into the Hebrew “Songs” can be detected, further, in examples of word painting. Though Rossi set the texts with a minimum of madrigalisms, still he reacted to words, here and there, for their illustrative or emotive qualities. In this he obviously departs from the conventions of synagogue song, which, in cantillation, for example, usually concern the division of the text into its syntactical components.

Rossi's main device for highlighting words is the melisma. Longer or shorter melismas are used to suggest movement (expansion, elevation,

83 Mm. 59–80, 80–100.

84 Cf. Magid, 1934/35.

walking, proceeding, the flow of water),⁸⁵ music (song, to sing, psalm)⁸⁶ and rejoicing (halleluyah, happiness, joy, prosperity).⁸⁷ Elsewhere they are used to emphasize momentous words (fear, blessing and, especially, God).⁸⁸ Yet not always did the melisma fulfill a painterly function. Sometimes it adorned the end of a section or acted as a decorative feature within or at the end of phrases.⁸⁹

Other devices used to depict words, though rather infrequently, are a particular rhythmic pattern for stagnation or destruction or, at the other extreme, rejoicing; harmonic alterations for weeping or strangeness; scalar motion for *ma'alot* ("steps"); and repeats of words (*anadiplosis*) for greatness.⁹⁰

- 85 Cf. (in order) nos. 1, mm. 2-3 (*Yitgaddal*, "may [His great name] be magnified"); 33, mm. 107-110, 111-113 (*beito ramah*, "[over] his house will she be uplifted"); 2, mm. 14-19 (*haholek bidrakaw*, "he walks in His ways"); 4, mm. 45-48 (*yithallaku*, "[in darkness] will they walk"); 12, mm. 10-18 (*haholek bidrakaw*, "he walks in His ways"); 25, mm. 11-13, 152-155, 175-179 (*binso'a [ha'aron]*, "during the procession [with the ark]"); 27, mm. 171-175 (*binso'a [ha'aron]*: not only are the words the same as those in no. 25, but the melismas are similar); and 10, mm. 1-4 (*naharot*, "rivers").
- 86 Cf. (in order) nos. 2, mm. 1-2, 17, mm. 1-4, 18, mm. 1-3, and 20, mm. 1-7 (all but the last on the word *šir* or "song," with rising or falling scales to suggest the next word *hamma'alot* or "of degrees"; in the last example, the scales are in fact deferred to *hamma'alot*); 10, mm. 34-36 (*[leik] našir*, "[how] will we sing"); 5, mm. 6-8, and 9, mm. 4-6 (both on *mizmor*, "psalm," the second followed by the word *šir*, "song").
- 87 Cf. (in order) nos. 7, mm. 79-86 (*haleluyah*: extensive melismas plus word repeats); 19, mm. 77-80 (*wesimhah*, "and happiness"); 9, mm. 35-39 (*yismehu wirannenu*, "may they be happy and sing joyfully," with word repeats on *wirannenu*); 14, mm. 19-23 (*birannah*, "with joyful song"); 17, mm. 74-82 (*verinnah*, "in joyous song," plus an extended melisma in the quinto on *alumotaw*, "his sheaves," mm. 85-90, in accord with the joyful content); 32, mm. 44-48 (*aranen*, "I will rejoice"); 22, mm. 71-76, 79-83, 86-91 (*nagilah*, "let us rejoice"); and 11, mm. 70-72 (*betuv*).
- 88 Cf. (in order) nos. 2, mm. 9-11 (*yere*, "who fears," followed by *adonay*, "the Lord"); and 3, mm. 1-7 (*bareku*, "may you bless"), 15-21 (*hamevorak*, "who is blessed"). For melismas on God, see nos. 4, mm. 11-13 (*elohim*), 8 (florid melismas on *elohim hasivenu...weniwwaše'ah*, "God, restore us...and we shall be saved"; they gradually become more expansive from the first to the second and third verses); 7, mm. 63-68 (*adonay eloheykem*, "[I am] the Lord your God," also corresponding to the end of a section); 11, mm. 45-47 (*adonay*); and 7, mm. 1-7 (*keter*, "crown," in the kabbalistic sense of godhead).
- 89 For section endings, see nos. 1, mm. 92-95, and 6, mm. 10-17. For decorative purposes within phrases, see nos. 7, mm. 8-11, 15-21, and 23, mm. 6-11; and at their end, no. 33, mm. 28-32 (plus echo 33-35).
- 90 For rhythm, see nos. 10, mm. 6-8 ("there we sat," שם ישבנו; lengthening); 24, mm. 49-57 ("the Lord broke," וישבר ה'; short rhythmic motif tossed back and forth between the voices); 11, mm. 8-9, 12-15 ("I will praise the Lord...I will sing to my God...," אהללה לה...ה; quarter-note motion); and 17, mm. 73-75 ("will come back singing,"

To conclude, the most frequently utilized technique for illustrating or emphasizing words in the “Songs” is the melisma. Notably exuberant melismas occur in pieces for reduced ensembles (three or four voices). Of the words that are reinforced, the most salient category is those having to do with music and rejoicing, which are connected in the mind of the composer as the twin fundamentals of sacred devotion. He sees music as a form of rejoicing and rejoicing as appropriately and effectively conveyed through music (the words *rinah* and *renanah*, appearing often enough in the “Songs,” refer variously to joy, song and prayer). The equivalent to the emphasis Rossi put on music and rejoicing in his “Songs” is his use of melismas or faster figures in his madrigals on the words ‘canto,’ ‘cantar,’ ‘gioia,’ ‘lieto,’ ‘riso,’ ‘ridi,’ ‘amore,’ ‘dolce,’ etc.

Music is a form of rejoicing, and Rossi exploits the artifices of “erudite music” (harmony, counterpoint, rhythmic variety, melodic interest, etc.) to communicate the joy of prayer and praise. Rejoicing in fact is the basic tenor of the collection, for which one might refer, moreover, to ideas expressed in the prefatory matter. In mourning, by contrast, “music” in the sense of “art music” is rejected.⁹¹ The main way to express sorrow is through monophonic declamation, after its practice in the synagogue: the setting of Psalm 137 (no. 10) may serve as an example of “intoned speech,” as befits the mournful words (a lament over the destruction of the Temple; its keynote is the sadness of exile in foreign lands). Two principles are at work then: art music and its blandishments; and the would-be denial of art music through recitation. What is interesting is that toward the end of the collection Rossi seems to have achieved a compromise (in his eight-voice pieces, for example) between the two: the music is pared of all melodic excrescences, it becomes more homorhythmic, more declamatory; yet as music, paradoxically, it becomes more dramatic, with its split choruses set in a vibrant *stile concertato*.

כביו ברנה; fast figure in tenor). For harmony, see no. 10, mm. 9–11 (“we wept,” B-major chord, plus rhythmic lengthening), 40–43 (“in a foreign land,” B- and E-major chords). For scalar motion, see nos. 2, mm. 1–2, 17, mm. 1–4, 18, mm. 1–3, and 20, mm. 1–7 (on “of degrees”; למעלות or המעלות). For word repeats, see no. 32, mm. 47–53 (“how great are Your works,” מה גדלו מעשיך; stated first in four lower voices, then in four upper voices and, again, in the four lower voices, as if in a process of enlargement [great = big]).

91 On the dichotomy of rejoicing and mourning in Rossi’s Hebrew works, see Harrán, Psalms.

It should be clear that Rossi's works effected a rapprochement between the demands of Hebrew as a language and those of polyphony as practiced in part music of the *prima pratica*, i.e., the contrapuntal style of the later sixteenth century. This study has been uniquely concerned with the seeming Hebrew elements of his Hebrew songs, which elements, as it turns out, were modified by other tendencies (Italian, musical, rhetorical). But the question of how Hebrew Rossi's Hebrew works really are might be turned on its head, to spearhead an investigation into the parallel question, which hitherto has not been raised, of how Hebrew his Italian works are. To what extent did traces of Jewish synagogal tradition act as an agent in the formation of his madrigals or of his instrumental music? and to what extent did Rossi's experiences as a Jew in the employ of Christian patrons influence his decisions concerning the choice of Italian texts and their musical setting? It is known that Rossi had markedly personal tastes in literature; that he pioneered a new style of instrumental writing in his sonatas; and that he cultivated a somewhat conservative style in most of his madrigals while pursuing a far more individualistic tack in his instrumental works. Piecing together musical style from biographical fragments is a hazardous enterprise. Still, there are elements in Rossi's life story that did no doubt affect his decisions and thereby invite consideration.

The problem of establishing a nexus between the man and his music is not insoluble. It might be formulated in relevant questions: what were the constraints, biographically, socially, religiously, that might have shaped Rossi's music? to what extent do they correspond to those that shaped the works of coeval Jewish writers, historians and scholars, who, like Rossi, were open to influences from beyond the Jewish community and who dealt or consorted with Christians in the course of their activities? Rabbi Leon Modena comes to mind, as do countless others from northern Italian Jewish circles in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; they shared and confronted similar problems in their life and works. How Jewish they remained, and how responsive they were to outside influences that debilitated or modified their Jewishness, are the two extremities between which their life and works can be set. No matter how deeply entrenched they were in their own tradition, they had to compromise in one way or another. That is basically the story of Rossi and other Jews in the Italian Renaissance: they moved between different and competing worlds; they devised highly individual solutions to their reconciliation.

Defining the Hebraic in Rossi's or any other composer's works based on Hebrew texts is a matter of degree. Composers may be set on a scale of 1 to 10 in respect to their proximity to or alienation from Hebrew language and culture. By espousing Italianate compositional procedures, Rossi automatically removed himself from the upper echelons of Hebraicism. But if not at the top of the scale, he does rank higher than the various Christian composers who donned Hebrew garbs in occasional works, the difference being that, at heart, Rossi was steeped in Hebrew tradition. His point of departure was from within his own culture.⁹² The way he redefined himself in relation to this culture can be reconstructed from his conceptions of Hebrew music, as he and his supporters formulated them, and from their realization in the works themselves. Rossi's "Songs" are unique in their being both a Hebraic and an Italian statement, though one marked with his personal stamp.

92 This is basically what Curt Sachs had in mind when, in an unpublished address to the First International Congress on Jewish Music (Paris, 1957), he is reported to have said that "Jewish music is that music which is made by Jews, for Jews and as Jews" (see, for example, the entry on Jewish music in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* [Avenary 1971], esp. col. 555).

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