

THE MEANINGS OF THE NAMES OF THE TROPE (CANTILLATION) SYMBOLS

- Azla: "Going away", because it is often the end of the phrase 'Kadma ve'Azla'.
- Darga: "Trill" from its sound, or "step" from its shape.
- Etnachta: "Pause, rest" because it is the pause in the middle of a verse.
- Geresh: "Expulsion, driving out". Reason not clear.
- Gershayim: Double Geresh, from its appearance.
- Kadma: "To progress, advance." It always occurs at the beginning of a phrase (often before other conjunctives) and its shape is leaning forward. In particular it is the first member of the Kadma ve-Azla pair.
- Karne Farah: "Horns of a cow" (from its shape), sometimes called pazer gadol. (Appears only in Numbers 35:5, Parashat Ma'asei)
- Mahpach: "Turning round". In old manuscripts, it was written like a U on its side, hence like someone doing a U turn. In printed books, it has a V shape, possibly because that was easier for the early printers to make. In Eastern communities it is called shofar mehuppach, "reversed horn", because it faces the other way from shofar holech (munach)
- Mercha: "Lengthener", because it prolongs the melody of the word that follows. In modern usage it sometimes means "comma", but this usage is taken from the cantillation sign.
- Mercha-kefulah: Kefulah means "double", because it looks like two merchas together. There are only five in the whole Torah: Gen. 27:25, Ex. 5:15, Lev. 10:1, Num. 14:3, Num. 32:42.
- Munach: "Resting", because the shape is a horn lying on its side. (In Eastern communities it is called shofar holech, horn going forward.) Munach legarmeh (munach on its own) is a disjunctive, used mainly before rev'i, but occasionally before a pazer. It may be distinguished from ordinary munach by the dividing line (pesiq) following the word.
- Pashta: "Stretching out", because its shape is leaning forward (or in reference to a hand signal).
- Pazer: "Lavish" or "strew", because it has so many notes.
- Revi'i: "A quarter", either because it has four short notes as well as the main one, or because it splits the half verse from the start to etnachta (or etnachta to the end) into quarters (as it ranks below zakef, the main division within the half verse). The square or diamond shape of the symbol is coincidence: in most manuscripts, it is simply a point. Another possibility is that it was regarded as occupying the fourth level in the hierarchy.[8]
- Segol: "Bunch of grapes" (from its shape, which looks like a bunch of grapes).

- Shalsholet: "Chain", either from its appearance or because it is a long chain of notes. There are only four in the whole Torah: Gen. 19:16, 24:12, 39:8; Lev. 8:23.
- Sof Pasuk: "End of verse": it is the last note of every verse. It is sometimes called silluq (taking leave).
- Telisha K'tanah/Gedolah: "Detached" because they are never linked to the following note as one musical phrase; K'tanah = small (short); Gedolah = big (long).
- Tevir: "Broken", because it represents a break in reading (in some traditions there is a big jump down in pitch between the first and second notes).
- Tipcha: "Diagonal", or "hand-breadth". In old manuscripts, it was written as a straight diagonal line. In printed books, it is curved, apparently to make it a mirror image of Mercha, with which it is usually paired (the two together could be regarded as forming a slur). The name "tipcha" may be an allusion to a hand signal.
- Yerach ben Yomo: "Moon one day old" (because it looks like a crescent moon), sometimes called galgal (circle). (Appears only in Numbers 35:5, Parashat Ma'asei)
- Yetiv: "Resting" or "sitting", because it may be followed by a short pause, or more probably because the shape is like a horn sitting up. (In the Italian tradition, it is called shofar yetiv, sitting horn.)
- Zakef Katon/Gadol: "Upright" (from their shape, or in allusion to a hand signal); Katon = small (short); Gadol = big (long).
- Zarka: "Scatterer", because it is like a scattering of notes.