

The Medieval Grammarians' Influence on the Ashkenazic Prayer Books

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During the second half of the second millennium, the Ashkenazic prayer book underwent repeated revisions that focused primarily on correcting and refining its language. Most of the revisions adopted the perspective that biblical grammar was the only acceptable form for the Hebrew language. The principle agent in this endeavor was Shabbetai Sofer, who was followed by Azriel and Alijah of Wilna, Solomon Zalman Hanau, Jacob Emden, Isaac Satanow, Wolf Heidenheim and Zeligman Baer. These grammarians relied on the efforts of their medieval predecessors, Abraham Ibn Ezra, Josef Qimhi and especially on David Qimhi in his Mikhlol. It appears, however, that these medieval grammarians whose main interest was in description of biblical Hebrew grammar, inserted incidental comments regarding language forms in the liturgy that they held to be incorrect, and despite their prevalent use required correction. For example, Abraham Ibn Ezra in his Sefer Zahot protested the expression **וְתַעַרְבַּ לְפָנָיִךְ** in the festival Musaf prayer and the form **יָצוּר** in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy, and in his commentary to the Torah he objected to the word **פְּרוּכִים** which appears not infrequently in the piyyutim.

This lecture will focus on the of the medieval grammarians' objections to the expression **מִקְיִץ רְדוּמִים**, both in terms of the use of **מִקְיִץ** as a transitive verb and the Qal conjunction of the word **רְדוּמִים**. This matter was previously dealt with in Stephan Reif's study on Shabbethai Sofer's prayer book. We will provide additional details from parallel sources and from similar expressions.