

**The Hebrew of *Mishne Tora* according to Maimonides' Language and the
Copyists' Language: Analysis of a Medieval Text**
Doron Ya'akov

Maimonides' work *Mishneh Tora* spread to all Jewish communities, and became the most important book of Jewish Law in the Middle Ages. Many difficulties are encountered in the philological research of *Mishne Tora*, due to the diversity of its versions.

In this paper, I will present some principles for linguistic description of the background of Maimonides' Hebrew, and show how the linguistic test can contribute reconstructing the original text.

First, the Rabbinic Hebrew tradition of Maimonides is well attested in the autograph of his commentary of the Mishnah, mainly in the vocalized words included in it. *Mishne Tora* is basically written in Rabbinic Hebrew, and therefore a comparison with the autograph is essential to evaluate the work's manuscripts.

Furthermore, Maimonides' Arabic language influenced his Hebrew, especially in syntax and vocabulary. In order to exam the quality of the manuscripts, it seems that it is more reliable to compare the Hebrew of *Mishne Tora* to the Arabic treatises that were written by Maimonides himself.

The linguistic changes made by the copyists of *Mishne Tora* are partially intentional, and their purpose is to adjust Maimonides' Hebrew to their own Rabbinic Hebrew tradition on the one hand, and to exclude Arabic influence in order to bring it closer to classical Hebrew on the other hand.