

Orthoepic features in the Tiberian reading tradition of the Hebrew Bible as reflected by medieval Karaite sources

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The Tiberian reading tradition of the Hebrew Bible contained a variety of ‘orthoepic’ features that ensured that the text was read correctly. Some of these are identifiable in medieval Karaite transcriptions of the Hebrew Bible into Arabic script. One such feature is the careful reading of the inflected forms of the verbs הִקְרָה and הִקְרָה to ensure that they are not confused. The paper directs particular attention to the lengthening of the vowels of the prefix conjugation (imperfect) of these verbs, which can be reconstructed from the medieval Karaite transcriptions. It is argued through comparison with the Babylonian tradition of Biblical Hebrew that this lengthening is an orthoepic feature that has its roots in the Second Temple Period.