

The Verb Structures in Megillat Ahimaaz

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The language of Megillat Ahimaaz, written in the Southern Italy in 1054 is important, as it may be one of the last great representatives of Medieval Hebrew not greatly influenced by Arabic directly or via Arabic-unfluenced Hebrew. Its language seems to be a sort of purified Mishnaic Hebrew, which is influenced by the Italian vernacular, but which remains clear and highly understandable. As it is a rhymed prose, there are some phenomena characteristic of piyyut language, but they are minor and do not affect the principal structure of the *binyanim* system. So also the typically Biblical forms, such as "inverted" tenses or cohortative, are used as rhetoric decorative means, and not as an organic part of the verb paradigms, contributing to the creation of a fine and elaborate literary language, typical to Italy.