KOL NIDRE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

RICHARD C. STEINER*

In memory of my beloved aunt, Irene Horowitz, whose profound love for the synagogue service continues to inspire all who knew her

1. Introduction

*Kol Nidre*, so beloved today, was once a highly problematic text for many.¹ R. Zedekiah b. Abraham Anaw could find nothing positive to say about *Kol Nidre* in its traditional forms (אין בו שום תקנה רק רע).² R. Isaac b. Mordecai Qimhi declared that the recitation of *Kol Nidre* in any version was not a custom but an error (אינו מנהג אלא טעות).³ R. Nissim b. Reuben of Gerona (Ran) felt that it was improper to say it (איןzheimerילכתך),⁴ and his student, R. Isaac b. Sheshet Perfet (Rivash), encouraged a colleague to abolish it in his community, promising that all the rabbis would thank him if he did (אני יישר חילך ותבטלני).

* Bernard Revel Graduate School, Yeshiva University. I am very grateful to Professors David Berger, Simcha Emanuel, Shamma Friedman, S. Z. Leiman, Leib Moscovitz, Rabbi Menachem Jacobowitz and the anonymous JSIJ reviewers for helping me to improve this article. I would particularly like to thank Prof. B. Septimus for his painstaking reading and many corrections. None of these very generous colleagues bears any responsibility for the errors that remain.

¹ See Y. Goldhaber, והוצאת ספר תורה בליל יום הכיפורים 'כל נדרי'אמירת in קובץ בית אהרן וישראל 17/1 (2001), 93-99; Yitzchak Stessman, ספר כל נדרי (Jerusalem, 2008), 764 n. 10. I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for the latter reference.

² שבלי הלקט, Ms. Zurich Braginsky 250, p. 396 l. 1.


⁴ מסכת נדרים עץ פורים רי ותוספות יבזון ניסים הרחáb (Venice: Bomberg, 1523), 46 (Ned. 23b).

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
The opposition of these and many other authorities outside of Northern France and Germany had roots in the geonic period.

The Babylonian Geonim were uncomfortable with the entire practice of annulling vows. They asserted that “many ignoramuses go astray through this, believing that all vows and pledges incumbent upon them are void, and treating vows and pledges lightly (והגים ונקלות ראש בנדרים ובחרמות) and that, in any case, “we do not study Nedaram and we don’t know how to make binding or to release vows and oaths.” They did not permit the annulment of vows in their own circles, and they urged Jews throughout the Diaspora to abandon the practice. Pirquoi b. Baboi included a discussion of the practice of annulling vows in his polemic against Palestinian customs (ca. 812 C.E.). He reports that a group of people came to R. Yehudai Gaon (757-61 C.E.), requesting that he release them from their vows and

---


6. Benjamin M. Lewin, אוצר הגאונים (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1928-1962), 11:22 §60. The concern is expressed already in Ned. 23b. Cf. the promiscuous use of oaths described by Ibn Ezra in his long commentary to Exod 20:6: He is apparently referring to the rhetorical use of the Arabic oath particle wallāhi, used for emphasis to this day.

7. Lewin, אוצר הגאונים, 11:23 §63; cf. p. 20 §56. For the conjecture that the Geonim abandoned both the study of Nedaram and the practice of annulling vows (even the annulment by an expert of a single specified vow) as a reaction against the widespread use of vows and oaths in magic, see Moshe David Herr, ענייני הלכה בארסיאריאל בנברת השתיות והשמועיים: פסוקים ונסיכים (1979/80), 64-65; and Neil Danzig, מנה לסרף הלכות פסוקים עט טעמים לגלות (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), 426-27. Neither presentation of the conjecture explains why the Geonim would have expected their alleged reaction to reduce the use of vows and oaths in magic.

8. Shraga Abramson, שביעי תקנת ברכת התרת נדרים (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), 426-27. As corrected and completed in Maagarim (the online Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language), II. 30-33.
The Gaon refused to do so, telling them, “Go fulfill your oaths and pay your vows.” When asked his opinion of “those who release oaths and oaths on the eve of Rosh Hashanah and the eve of Yom Kippur,” presumably a reference to the recitation of Kol Nidre (or its Hebrew counterpart, Kol Nedarim), the Gaon replied that such people “utter falsehoods and make themselves a laughing-stock (משחיקו in the Academy (Sura), since no one in the world does that—не пренебрегает (עמעי הארץ).” R. Abraham b. Nathan ha-Yarḥi cites a geonic responsum that labeled the recitation of Kol Nidre/Nedarim a “foolish custom” (של מדיניות שטרים שדרו ממתיב ‘כל נדרי’ לומד).  

The geonic rejection of the practice of annulling vows at the beginning of the year was not restricted to any specific text or formula. It extended even to the brief declaration for annulling future vows recorded in the Mishnah (m.Ned. 3:1). According to the Talmud (Ned. 23b), this declaration was to be made at the beginning of the year:

והורהתי שלเא יתקיימו נדרים כל השנה יעמוד בראש השנה ויאמר כל

And he who wants the vows that he makes during the entire (coming) year not to be valid should stand at the beginning of the year and say, “every vow that I may make shall be void,” (and it shall be so)—provided that he remembers this at the time of the vow.

Despite the impeccable credentials of this text, it too was rejected by the Geonim. The most vehement rejection is found in a responsum attributed either to R. Hai b. Sherira Gaon or to R. Hai b. Nahshon Gaon (881-91 C.E.):

---

9 Abramson’s interpretation, “they pretend to be sages,” does not fit the context. For my interpretation, see רצה לו להשלך (יהלך לאלהים) rather than רצה לו לשלך (לְפַלְמֹק) appears to be original there, according to the manuscripts and editions in the Talmud Text Databank (JTSA). If so, Pirqa b. Babo’s spelling comes from the Bavli, as expected.

In the nations around us, there is a practice of saying *Kol Nidre* on Yom Kippur, reciting a verbal evasion for the coming year.

This reference is explained more fully in another source:

Rabbenu Hai answered those who say that the release of vows and oaths is (prescribed in the emended mishnah that states) that a person “should stand at the beginning of the year and say ‘every vow that I may make during the whole year is hereby void,’ (and it shall be so)—provided that he remembers this at the time of the vow, etc.” He said “Heaven forbid, for we should not behave in this way, not (even) according to the mishnah that they adduce as proof.... Heaven forbid, for He is not a God who desires wickedness, nor can evil abide with Him (cf. Ps 5:5). If people only knew the meaning of vows and the meaning of oaths, they would not practice evasion at all. And everyone who practices evasion is as if....

An earlier but less conspicuous rejection of the talmudic practice is found in a responsa of R. Natronai Gaon (857-65 C.E.):
And (concerning) that which you asked: Can the community release, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, all vows that they vow from this year to next year?\textsuperscript{14}

Reply: ... And it is not the practice in the Academy or anywhere else (in our land) to release vows—not on Rosh Hashanah and not on Yom Kippur. We have heard that in other lands they say \textit{Kol Nidre we-’Esare}, but we have not seen this (ourselves) or heard this from our Rabbis.

The question deals with the use of a prospective declaration—no doubt that of the Talmud. The reply is slightly evasive, avoiding an explicit rejection of amoraic practice: the annulment of vows is not practiced in Babylonia (in any form—prospective or retrospective), but retrospective \textit{Kol Nidre} is reportedly in use in other lands.

The banning of \textit{Kol Nidre} could not have been easy. Evidence of a psychological void on Yom Kippur can be seen in the following report:

\begin{quote}

ומימס שמטשו חכמים להפר נדרים ולהתיר שבועות התקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו לומדים להתקינו Lom
d

\end{quote}

And from the day that the sages stopped annulling vows and releasing oaths, they instituted (the practice of) saying in the laments in the Academies on Yom Kippur and the public fasts: \textquoteleft O Merciful One, it is evident to You that we have no one to annul vows and (that) there is no one who releases resolutions....\textquoteright

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. \textquoteleft next year\textquoteright (Gen 17:21).
\textsuperscript{15} Lewin, אוצר הגאונים, 11:8-9 and 20 §56.

\url{http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf}
The recitation of this lament was presumably a poor substitute for the recitation of *Kol Nidre* itself. At the end of the geonic period, R. Hai b. Sherira Gaon “seems to have yielded to popular pressure, that wanted to assure itself of a clear record on the Day of Atonement.”

He revised the text, converting it from a quasi-judicial declaration into a plea for forgiveness:

All vows, resolutions, promises, pledges, and oaths that we have vowed, sworn, pledged, and imposed upon ourselves from the last Yom Kippur fast to this Yom Kippur fast and violated through error or force majeure, we seek mercy from the Lord of Heaven that He may forgive us and absolve us—for incurring guilt, our resolutions not resolutions for incurring sin, and our oaths not oaths for incurring punishment, as it is written, “Forgiveness shall be granted, etc.” (Num 15:26).

This text, known from *Shibbole ha-Leqeṭ*, is the only complete Aramaic (more precisely: bilingual) version of *Kol Nidre* that is explicitly attributed to a Babylonian source. The passages that turn the declaration into a prayer are in bold print. If we change דלישרי לן דלישבוק לן to קיניהון שרן ושבי and take out the rest of those passages, we get a text that is close to the familiar Ashkenazic version, albeit a bit shorter:

---

16 Jacob Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1931-35), 2:52 n. 99. If there was popular pressure, it may have stemmed from the belief that “children die from the sin of (a parent not fulfilling) vows” (Shab. 32b, Ketub. 72a). I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for this insight.


18 This rendering and the ones that follow are only approximate.
It will be noted that this text is a retrospective declaration for annulling past vows and oaths. It appears to be a revision and (partial) translation of a longer Hebrew text, *Kol Nedarim*, known from geonic responsa and the Genizah. The latter text, composed in Palestine before 650 C.E., was also a retrospective declaration. 19

R. Hai Gaon was not the only authority who felt a need to revise the bilingual version of *Kol Nidre*. A far more influential revision stems from the family of Rashi. In *Sefer ha-Yashar*, Rabbenu Tam writes:

> כל נדרי ואסרי וקונמי וחרמי ושבועי דינדרנא ודאשתבענא ודאחרמנא ודאסרנא על נפשتنا מיום צום הכיפורים שעבר עד יום זה יהון שרן ושביקין נדרנא לא נדרי איסרנא לא צום הכיפורים ה. 'ונסלח וגו' איסרי ושביקתנא לא שבועי ככת.

> It will be noted that *this text is a retrospective declaration for annulling past vows and oaths*. It appears to be a revision and (partial) translation of a longer Hebrew text, *Kol Nedarim*, known from geonic responsa and the Genizah. The latter text, composed in Palestine before 650 C.E., was also a retrospective declaration. 19

> R. Hai Gaon was not the only authority who felt a need to revise the bilingual version of *Kol Nidre*. A far more influential revision stems from the family of Rashi. In *Sefer ha-Yashar*, Rabbenu Tam writes:


20 Note the absence of the word זה here, just as in *Tosafot*, Ned. 23b s.v. את (see below) and in two of the four early witnesses to this section of *Kol Nedarim* that are recorded in *Maagarim*. In the version of Rashi’s student, R. Joseph Kara (as quoted by R. Ephraim of Bonn), the word הזה appears here; see Wieder, *עבר ועתיד* , 190 = Wieder, *התגבשות נוסח התפילה*, 1:369. That word is not necessary, however, since, for halakhic reasons, *Kol Nidre* is recited before the holiday begins. Thus, סומך דברי זכר הם בהלכה Nicolaus May 1959; מנהיגו, 70 §100.

21

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
My lord father corrected *Kol Nidre*, which we say on Yom Kippur night, (to read): “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of them that we (shall have) regretted\(^{22}\) (shall be released),” and that is the true (version). He who says “from last Yom Kippur to (this) Yom Kippur coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of them we have regretted” is committing an error, because it is not possible to release *oneself* (from a vow) or (to release someone other than oneself from a vow) without *ab initio* regret\(^{23}\) and either an expert (judge) or three ordinary ones, and also because the halakhah is in accordance with (the view of) R. Papa, the final authority, who said in “The Sender of a Bill of Divorce” (= chapter 4 of *Giṭṭin*) that one must specify the vow (that he wishes to release)—and that is (indeed) our practice. Thus, “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us” is the true (version), and support for this (comes from) what they say in “Four Vows” (= chapter 3 of *Nedarim*): “He who wants the vows that he makes during the entire (coming) year not to be valid should stand at the beginning of the year and say, ‘all vows that I may make shall be void,’ (and it shall be so)—provided that he remembers this at the time of the vow.”

In this passage, Rabbenu Tam puts his seal of approval on the revision of *Kol Nidre* proposed by his father, R. Meir b. Samuel of Ramerupt. The latter, we are told, replaced the temporal phrase of the traditional version, מיום כפורים עבר עד יום כפורים הבא עלינו לטובה, with a phrase that made more halakhic sense, מיום כפורים זה עד יום כפורים הבא עלינו לטובה. This is a remarkably economical and elegant revision, affecting only a single word of the original: \(\text{שעבר}\).\(^{24}\) The latter is replaced by \(\text{זה}\), thereby automatically changing the referent of the phrase יומ כפורים הבא עלינו לטובה to the *following* Yom Kippur, the one that is a year away.\(^{25}\)

---

\(^{22}\) This is a translation of *דאהררטנא*, the reading of the standard edition. For a more likely reading, see section 3 below.

\(^{23}\) For a detailed discussion of *ab initio* regret, see *אנציקלופדיה החתר נדרים* in *המודעים*, 11:351-52.

\(^{24}\) See n. 20 above.

\(^{25}\) The other emendation noted in the passage is less relevant to this study: כלהון instead of כלהון כלהנה. For a more likely reading, see section 3 below.
Rabbenu Tam is not the only member of the family known to have accepted R. Meir’s revision. R. Ephraim of Bonn informs us that Rabbenu Tam’s brothers, Rashbam and R. Isaac, accepted it as well:

אбел אניUMP הטנ תורא בטיני בשני תחת הרוב יgetRowא
רמיה יכשא תרה בני ר.getRowי יהושע תועב ויהי יתיק
26
אחרי לחר מימים כשורים זה ויהי כשורים MACHINE עלון לולובה....

But I, in accordance with my meager intelligence, find proper the practice instituted by R. Meir of Ramerupt and adopted by his sons, Rabbenu Samuel, Rabbenu Jacob, and R. Isaac after him, viz., to say “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur coming (we pray) favorably upon us.”…

And one of Rashi’s disciples, cited in Lique ha-Pardes, reports that Rashi too lent his prestige to this version:

ומוש היהי יקוקו בי שמעון דמח: ברוך ושם הכימ באת לבית
הכון תאני כי דידי האסיאי חורריית וברועה ידריה
29
ורישעניא [כד]: ידריאתרמא יד אסטר במקנה
בשכון יימי כשורים זה ושם כשורים הבה עליון לvolución
איחרט [כד]: והו שNonNull בנסל בבלל ומובשתלאشرוי שלהם
30
אחות [כד]: ורש אסיאי אלו שNonNull אלו
כימיין. דריאי אלו דידי האסיאי אלו אסיאי. שNonNull [כד]: ל
שבוע. והכון לכלו נוסה. כו שNonNull פה קדוש [כד]: מאמ ובעור
לכל התבהו אלוウォ ימי כשורים郡בר דאו ימלל שיש
31
איחרטנא “all of them we have regretted.” This emendation appears to be based on the principle

Shea אפר זהש... אלו ורת ודקדיק אר. The emendation is

Apparently designed to stress that the feelings of remorse postdate the vow and

predate the recitation of Kol Nidre; see also after n. 102 below.

26 Wieder, Über die Mundteile, 190 = Wieder, " advocatus nosse habeatur.
30 So too in Ms. Jerusalem NLI and Venice edition of 1539.
33 The passage is transcribed from Ms. Frankfurt Oct 81 fol. 6r (dated 14th
34 cent.); I have added a few notes from Ms. Jerusalem NLI 6655=28 fol. 71r
35 (dated 1535) and the Venice edition: לקווס פרדס אוז רבר והר רדיאי רכין (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1539), [22-23]. Both of the manuscripts

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
In the name of R. Jacob b. Simeon, (the following) is found: On Yom Kippur eve, they (= the people) come to the synagogue and say: “All vows, resolutions, promises, pledges, and oaths that we have vowed, sworn, pledged, and imposed upon the self [sic!] by oath from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of them I shall regret [sic!]. (May they be) released, cancelled, rendered null and void, not in force, not valid—our vows not vows, our resolutions not resolutions, and the [sic!] oaths not oaths. ‘Forgiveness shall be granted to all, etc.’ (Num 15:26).” So I heard the holy mouth (of Rashi) say when he went (and stood) in front of the ark (to lead the service). He would say neither “from last Yom Kippur to ...” nor “may they be released” nor “as it is written, ‘Forgiveness shall be granted....’” And he would return to the beginning until (he had recited it) three times.

According to one source, the idea that Kol Nidre should be prospective goes back even further in the family, to Rashi’s father-in-law! But how is it possible to leave the tense of the verbs unchanged after changing the reference of their temporal adverbial from past to future? In the version cited in Liqquete ha-Pardes, most of the verbs seem to remain in the past tense, creating an internal contradiction. Moreover, “I shall regret” is a singular imperfect verb, appropriate to the prospective version but...
inconsistent in both number and tense with all the other verbs. The problem raised by the tense of those verbs is addressed briefly in Sefer ha-Yashar, but the passage in question, like much of the work, has come down to us in a corrupt form. After examining the later sources, I shall attempt to reconstruct the original form of both Rashi’s version and Rabbenu Tam’s comment.

It should be noted that the same internal contradiction is found in most Ashkenazic editions of the mahzor—from medieval manuscripts and early printed editions to the editions in use today. Some editors discuss the contradiction and offer solutions—

39 Not surprisingly, most Sephardic editions of the mahzor retain the old retrospective version of Kol Nidre/Nedarim; see Toviya Fraind, ספר מועדים לשמחה (Jerusalem: Otzar Haposkim, 1998), 1:304. I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for this reference.

40 מחזור לימים הנוראים (ed. Daniel Goldschmidt; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Koren, 1970), vol. 2, opposite p. 1. For a description of the manuscripts, see ibid., vol. 1, pp. 27–28. See also the Worms Mahzor, part II, from ca. 1280 C.E. (NLI website, f. 61a); the Esslingen Mahzor from 1290 C.E. (JTSA library website, f. 64a); and the Nuremberg Mahzor from 1331 C.E. (NLI website, f. 349a). All three of these manuscripts have דִּנְדַרְנָא ודאישתבענא ודאחרימנא וּדְאָסַרְנָא (three perfects followed by a participle) modified by ‘מיום כפורים זה וכו’. Only the participle has a temporal interpretation that does not clash with the adverbial modifier (see below).

41 See, for example, מחזור מכל השנה כמנהג קהלות קדש אשכנז, חלק שני (Venice, 1568), 131b and מחזורokemon ק”י (Venice, 1600), 144a. Both of these editions have דִּינְדַרְנָא ודאשתבענא ודאחרימנא וּדְאָסַרְנָא (three perfects followed by a participle) modified by ‘מיום כפורים זה וכו’. The modern מַחְזוֹר של ימי יומְּיָיו (Prague, 1613) is similar, but it has דִּינְדַרְנָא instead of דִּינְדַרְנָא (see n. 139 and at n. 137 below) and דֵאָסָרְנָא instead of דֵאָסָרְנָא with dagesh in samekh) instead of דֵאָסָרְנָא. By contrast, מחזור אשכנזים (Constantinople, 1530) is perfectly consistent: דִּינְדַרְנָא (four perfects) modified by ‘מיום כפורים זו הכה’ and דֵאָסָרְנָא instead of דֵאָסָרְנָא. The contradiction is found in its purest form in the High Holiday Prayer Book (ed. Philip Birnbaum; New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1951), 489. It has דִּינְדַרְנָא (four perfects; cf. the Constantinople mahzor in the preceding footnote) modified by ‘מיום כפורים זה וכו’. Other modern editions exhibit a hodgepodge of forms. For example, מחזור על ימי יומְּיָיו (Jerusalem: Eshkol, n.d.), 27, has דִּינְדַרְנָא instead of דִּינְדַרְנָא (three perfects followed by a participle) modified by ‘מיום כפורים זה וכו’. Almost the same version is found in מחזור על ימי יומְּיָיו (Brooklyn: Atereth, 1971), 39-40, and in מחזור על ימי יומְּיָיו (Jerusalem: Miller, n.d), 34; however, these two editions substitute דִּינְדַרְנָא instead of דִּינְדַרְנָא (pointed in different ways) for דִּינְדַרְנָא (cf. the Prague mahzor in the preceding footnote and see at n. 137 below).
but only in an introduction or an appendix. Thus, the editor of an Ashkenazic mahzor (Venice, 1717) adds a brief discussion of Kol Nidre at the very end of his edition:

However, as the years multiplied, the straight became (increasingly) crooked, and the text (of Kol Nidre) became (increasingly) corrupt, as stated clearly by the lips of R. Caro and the author of the Levushim, for the correct version (serves) to release vows that will be made “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) peaceably upon us,” whereas, and do not refer to the future.... And it occurred to us to correct that which had become corrupt in the (published) versions, but after considering this course we decided to retreat, because, inasmuch as all the (published) versions are corrupt, the reader will surely say that our eyesight is

same is true of מוחזר ירҭא וייאר ויז גר hypocrisy锚 in (Jerusalem: Moreshet, 1981), 40, and the Complete ArtScroll Machzor: Yom Kippur (ed. Nosson Scherman, et al.; New York: Mesorah Publications, 1986), 59 (Ashkenaz edition) = 67 (Sefard edition); however, the contradiction is less blatant in these more recent editions since they offer a compromise version that combines the prospective adverbial and the retrospective one: מימי המרומש ... מימי המרומש ... כופרמי זה ... כופרמי זה ... מימי המרומש ... מימי המרומש ... כופרמי זה ... כופרמי זה .... For the origin and spread of this compromise, see התרת נדרים in מפרי העט והעת, 11:392; Wieder, עבר ועתיד, 196-202 = Wieder, התגבשות הנוסח התפילה, 1:375-381; Fraind, ספר Моּדִיִּים לְשַפֵּחַ, 1:309-314. 43 Abraham Meir Habermann, מפורי הוטש והוטש ליכר ולפי limits锚 in הרץ ירҭא ייו ויקו锚 in (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1981), 184-85.

44 The expression from Lev 25:16 is given a new meaning here.

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
faulty and pin the blame on us. Nevertheless, having found here a blank page, we wish to present the correct version to discerning people. And as for those who wish to err, let them err. We have left them their old version, still standing in its place, so everyone can do what is right in his own eyes.

Similarly, Wolf Heidenheim does not dare to eliminate the contradiction in the mahzor of which he was both the editor and the printer, despite the fact that only a few pages earlier he prints a lengthy discussion of the grammatical aspects of Kol Nidre, concluding with a revised version.

The present article is the latest attempt to deal with the problem. I became involved with it some decades ago, when a distinguished rabbinic authority called me before Yom Kippur and asked me if it was possible to eliminate the tense contradiction in an inconspicuous way that would not provoke controversy. Clearly the verbs needed to be emended, but the obvious emendations—the ones that came first to mind—were not adequate to the task. Take, for example, some of the Aramaic expressions for “we shall vow” offered as emendations in past centuries. R. Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel, for example, writes:

This is the text of Kol Nidre: “All vows, pledges, resolutions, promises, affirmations, and oaths that we shall vow, resolve, and impose upon ourselves from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of them that we shall have regretted....”

45 The expression from Isa 28:7 is given a new meaning here.
46 מחזור לערבית ליום כפור (ed. W. Heidenheim; Roedelheim: Buchdruckerey von W. Heidenheim, 1832), 6b-8b, 10a.
47 Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel, ספר ארון אחיטימב (Florence: Stamperia di Isach di Moise di Pas, 1750), 105b §28 (הלאותיך ימי המקיר). Cf. the Hebrew version attributed to Rabbenu Tam by R. Isaiah b. Mali of Trani, ידות ננסות (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Yerid ha-Sefarim, 1995), 64: ראיתו לברק יתת קשרי (2 למֵי וַיִּרְדֵּי תְּבָלֶדְבִּים בליל יומא... וְגוֹ נָשִׁים שְׁוָאָוָהֶל אֶלֶת פְּרַדָּא לילֵי וַיִּרְדֵּי וַיִּרְדֵּי תְּבָלֶדְבִּים בליל יומא... וְגוֹ נָשִׁים שְׁוָאָוָהֶל אֶלֶת פְּרַדָּא לילֵי וַיִּרְדֵּי וַיִּרְדֵּי תְּבָלֶדְבִּים בליל יומא... וְגוֹ נָשִׁים שְׁוָאָוָהֶל אֶלֶת פְּרַדָּא לילֵי וַיִּרְדֵּי וַיִּרְדֵּי תְּבָלֶדְבִּים בליל יומא... וְגוֹ נָשִׁים שְׁוָאָוָהֶל אֶלֶת פְּרַדָּא לילֵי וַיִּרְדֵּי וַיִּרְדֵּי תְּבָלֶדְבִּים בליל יומא...
Ralbag and R. Jacob Emden have a different expression:

ואם יאמרו בלשון עתיד כלומ( כל נדרי)י שיאמרו "ואעפ

Even if they recite (Kol Nidre) in the future tense, saying

נדר " we shall vow," it does not have the benefit that one

might think would come from it.

אבל┅ "היתן להן למטר אתל כלוחמי א"ן ד"ך

But there is no doubt in the world that, according to the

opinion of Rabbenu Tam, we must necessarily change the

old text completely and we have to say

דננד " that we shall

vow" or דננד (with hireq, and dagesh in place of the

missing nun). And so all of them: דנשתבע "that we shall

swear" and דניסר על נפשא "that we shall impose upon

ourselves"—all with first person plural preformative nun.

R. Isaac b. Mordecai Qimhi has a third expression:

והגה במחזורים דאננו נדרני מים פורים זה עד ימים הפורים

And he corrected the mahzorim (to read) “that we shall

vow from this Yom Kippur to next Yom Kippur.”

All of these emendations of נדרה eliminate the contradiction, but they

are hardly inconspicuous.

After giving some thought to the rabbi’s request, I came to the

conclusion that the solution had to be based on six facts:

48 Charles Touati, “Le problème de Kol Nidrey et le responsum inédit de

Gersonide (Lévi ben Gershom),” REJ 154 (1995), 337.
49 R. Jacob Emden, שארית י numRows (Altona, 1738), 134a §145.
(1) The Aramaic active participle, the counterpart of Hebrew כותב (Biblical Aramaic) or קותב (Jewish Babylonian Aramaic).

(2) In Aramaic, resh lowers a preceding short tsere/ḥireq to pataḥ, as though it were a laryngeal. This rule is usually described as operating in word-final position, but it is attested in other positions as well, e.g., אָמַר (Dan 2:15, 3:19, etc.); סָפַר (Ezr 7:12, 21 = Hebrew ספר in Ezr 7:6, 11); אָסַר (Palestinian Targum to אֹסְרִי in Gen 49:11); גָּזַר (Targum Onqelos to כֹּרֵת in Exod 34:10 and Deut 29:11, 13); תָּבַר (Targum Jonathan to שֹׁבֵר in Jer 49:35 and Ezek 4:16), and פאטר (in the phrase פאטר ושאיבק; geonic responsum).

(3) The pronoun אנה sometimes follows a participle that serves as its predicate, e.g., יָדַע אֲנָה (Dan 2:8), אָמַר אֲנָה (Dan 4:4).

(4) The pronoun אנה has an enclitic form -נא attached to participles in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, e.g., יָדַעְנָא < יָדַע אֲנָה “I know” (Onqelos to Gen 12:11, 48:19, Exod 9:30, 18:11, Deut 3:19, 31:27, 29), וסִלְכָּנָא לְמַאת וְסִלְכָּנָא (Ezr 4:15), יְמַגַּר (Ezr 6:12), מְהַדַּר (Dan 4:34), מִשְׁתַּדַּר (Dan 6:15), בַּר (passim).


Cf. יָדַע (Ezr 4:15), יָדַע (Ezr 6:12), מְקָדַר (Dan 4:34), מְקָדַר (Dan 6:15), and דע (passim).


Bible in Aramaic, 1:17, 84, 104, 119, 295, 346 (bis).

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
until I come back” (B.Meṣ. 85b). The most relevant example is לא דרֵנָא “I do/shall not vow” (Ned. 9a).\(^{57}\)

(5) Enclitic נָּא does not normally reverse/block the lowering of the vowel in the preceding (previously final) syllable. In the Talmud (manuscripts as well as printed editions), we find אמרנא, אָסַרנָא, דָּרֵנָא, פָּרֵנָא, etc. regularly written without yod in the penultimate syllable.\(^{58}\) There a few exceptions, however, so we may be dealing with a “variable rule.”\(^{59}\)

(6) In Late Aramaic (including Jewish Babylonian Aramaic), the participle is regularly used for the indicative future in addition to the present,\(^{60}\) e.g., “tomorrow I shall sue him” (Git. 55b, B.Bat. 39a = אֲסַרְנָא אָסַרְנָא, הֵדרָנָא אָסַרְנָא, etc. regularly written without yod in the penultimate syllable.\(^{59}\) There a few exceptions, however, so we may be dealing with a “variable rule.”\(^{59}\)

Based on these six facts, I came up with what I thought was a clever new way of eliminating the contradiction that mars Kol Nidre in many \(\mathcal{M}\)ahzorim. I telephoned the rabbi and suggested that he change the vocalization of נְדַרְנָא “we have vowed” and אֲסַרְנָא “we have bound” to נָדַרְנָא “I shall vow” and אָסַרְנָא “I shall bind” (with qametz in the first syllable of each). For the other two verbs, אַחֲרִימְנָא and

---

\(^{57}\) With the creation of these and other contracted forms, the participle finally came to be inflected for person, much like the perfect and imperfect. This was the culmination of a long process through which the (originally nominal) participle gradually infiltrated the verbal system and eventually came to dominate it. For the inflection derived from the contracted forms in modern Aramaic, see Otto Jastrow, “The Neo-Aramaic Languages,” in The Semitic Languages (ed. Robert Hetzron; London: Routledge, 1997), 360, 362-63. For the corresponding Hebrew development, see M. H. Segal, A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 164 n. 1.

\(^{58}\) See the preceding paragraph and nn. 119 and 121 below.

\(^{59}\) The form פָּרֵנָא “I divorce” appears in two unpublished Aramaic magic bowls alongside בָּרֵנָא in five published ones; see n. 119 below.


\(^{61}\) See also at n. 72 below.

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
I recommended not revocalization but replacement of aleph with mem, yielding מַחֲרִימְנָא and מִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא. These four emendations, I told him, would change the tense of the four verbs from past to future by converting them to participles. It was not until years later that I learned that none of this was new. The form אִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא (rather than אֲסַרְנָא) is found in many Ashkenazic mahzorim from the Middle Ages down to the present day. And the evidence adduced below suggests that most of my emendations recapitulated changes made already by Rabbenu Tam or his father.

2. Rabbenu Tam’s Version of Kol Nidre: The First Four Verbs
The tense of the Aramaic verbs in Kol Nidre has received extensive treatment in halakhic literature. However, the quality of the treatment is uneven. The source of the problem is obvious. In the words of R. Mordecai Jaffe:

64 אלא שנתיים ממהלה בלשון תורגו שאני ארבעא יבחרו א…

… but it (= Kol Nidre) was composed originally in Aramaic, in which we are not well-versed.

The problem is particularly acute in sources from the 16th century onwards. The earlier sources exhibit a better command of Aramaic grammar, and many of the errors found in them are attributable to
copyists.\textsuperscript{65} Indeed, at times the medievals seem to compare favorably with modern scholars in their knowledge of Aramaic.

Let us begin with a modern study of this question by Charles Touati:

In place of nedarnâ, nâdarnâ—an Aramaic participle with future meaning followed by the agglutinating pronominal affix nâ— “the vows that we shall pronounce.”\textsuperscript{66}

In this description of the revised version of \textit{Kol Nidre}, the vocalization is correct but the translation, with “we” instead of “I,” is not. Touati compounds his error by adding:

Let us observe that in Aramaic the participle does not generally have, as in Biblical Hebrew, future meaning, and that the pronominal affix of the first person plural can only be nan and not nâ; in this case, it should have said nâdrînan (cf. J. N. Epstein, \textit{Diqduq aramit bablit} ... Jerusalem 1960 p. 41)\textsuperscript{67}.

Both of these observations are problematic. \textit{Kol Nidre} is composed at least partially in Late Aramaic, and one of the best-known features of Late Aramaic is the use of the participle with future (as well as present) reference.\textsuperscript{68} As for the second observation, it is true that Epstein’s grammar deals with forms like כָּתְבִינַן on p. 41, but there is no reason to limit our inquiry to that page. Surely forms like כָּתִיבְנָא on p. 40 (cf. p. 21) should also be considered in attempting to make sense of the prospective version of \textit{Kol Nidre}. The point, which Touati has missed, is that the unvocalized forms נדרנא and אסנרנא were homographs in Babylonian Aramaic. Moreover, in the pronunciation of Rashi’s family, אסנרנא was probably a homophone as well, since

\textsuperscript{65} I have used the earliest printed editions available to me. Unless otherwise mentioned, I used copies from HebrewBooks.org or (in a few cases) Otzar HaHochmah. Where necessary (or readily available online), I have used manuscripts as well.

\textsuperscript{66} Touati, “Le problème,” 331.

\textsuperscript{67} Touati, “Le problème,” 331.

\textsuperscript{68} See n. 60 above.
everything that we know about that pronunciation suggests that it did not
distinguish qametz (אָסַרְנָא) from pataḥ or hataf pataḥ (אֲסַרְנָא).69

The sensitivity of Franco-German scholars to the ambiguity of
is evident from several glosses in the commentary to Bavli Ta’anit
attributed to Rashi. At Ta’an. 21b, for example, we find: תני -_HERE
엔א, שוהי אנ ביירהנו וז. Here the author provides with a double
gloss to ensure that the reader takes it as a singular participle (תני
אָסַרְנָא) rather than a plural perfect (תני אֲסַרְנָא). Rabban Tam,
too, was intimately familiar with the singular אָסַרְנָא- appended to
participles. In his famous Aramaic reshit-poem for the turgeman,
יציב פתגמ, he uses the phrase “ככמיאמו וтверждаו...when I stand and
translate.”70

Many sources point to the homography of נדרנא as one of the
foundations of the revised, prospective version of Kol Nidre.
However, it is not clear who it was that first pointed out this
homography. According to most of the later sources (see below), it
was Rabban Tam who adjusted the tense of the first four verbs,
which could explain why he fails to mention them in Sefer ha-Yashar,
in discussing his father’s revision of Kol Nidre. However, the later
sources are contradicted by the report of Rabban Tam’s own disciple,
R. Eliezer b. Samuel of Metz, in Sefer Yere’im (betw. 1171 and 1179):

ולכלולו יוסה הפורה שמעתי בש ימי מאיר בר מאיר ייל אביי
ربي עקיב ייל שק יש למד וכלני גסור וייל כתבר
להבא משמיך דברתי (ייל שבורי) פוג שיאכל ואכלו

71

69 Henoch Yalon, תָּנֵי אֲנָא ובדורות שלאחריו: גיון ספרדית בצרפת הצפונית בדורו של רש
ענני לשון; קונטרסים לענני הלשון העברית (Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1963), section III, 16-31; Ilan Eldar (Adler),
موادי הקירות הקדמאיים: המתחה והistolות המ susceptv הממסונים הפור פס
(2 vols.; Jerusalem: Hebrew University Language Traditions Project, 1978), 1:57 (many examples of qametz replacing
hataf patah); Le Glossaire de Leipzig (ed. Menahem Banitt; 3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2005), 3:1477 (Dan 2:8
אָנַא = MT אֲנַא, = אֲנָא. 1483 (Dan 2:24 אָזַל = MT אֲזַל, אַזָל. 1501 (Dan 4:24 וַעֲוָיָתָךְ = MT וָעֲוָיָיתָךְ, וָעֲוָיָיתָך. 1529 (Ezr 4:11 עָבָר נַהְרָא = MT עֲבַר נַהֲרָא, עָבָר נַהְרָא, and other examples of qametz replacing
hataf patah.

70 מחזור שבועות (ed. Daniel Goldschmidt; Jerusalem: Koren, 2000), 572 l. 15;
מחזור פסח (ed. Daniel Goldschmidt; Jerusalem: Koren, 1993), 634 l. 15. Note,
however, that the second participle (ורידמה) is missing a prefixed mem.

71 Paris, BN 1309, f. 121r. I am indebted to Yisrael Dubitsky (Institute for
Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, National Library of Israel) for this

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSII/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
And on the night of Yom Kippur, I have heard in the name of Rabbenu Meir, the father of Rabbenu Jacob, that one should say as follows: “All vows and resolutions which נדרנא and אסרנא,” referring to the future, as they say in Shebu’ot chapter 3 (19b, cf. Ned. 16a) “(the Hebrew oath) шוֹבַע means (in Aramaic) אָכִלְנָא ‘(I swear) that I will eat.’”

In support of the idea that נדרנא and אסרנא can refer to the future, this source cites an excellent proof text: שֶׁאֹכַל means (in Aramaic) אָכִלְנָא ((I swear) an oath that I will eat)” (Sheb. 19b, Ned. 16a). In this proof text, we find Abaye glossing the Hebrew first person singular imperfect אֹכַל with the Aramaic participle (+ first person singular enclitic pronoun) אָכִלְנָא.

The choice of verbs in Sefer Yere’im may point in the same direction; it is possible that נדרנא and אסרנא are cited because they are the only two verbs in Kol Nidre that are always homographs when unvocalized. Although the only surviving manuscript of Sefer Yere’im (from around the 15th century) has no vocalization in these words, the original must have been vocalized as נָדַרְנָא and אָסַרְנָא or the like; otherwise, it would have been incomprehensible, since without vocalization the text attributed here to Rabbenu Meir is identical to the traditional text.

The changes to the verbs of vowing are reported in later sources with varying degrees of accuracy. The fullest and most accurate report is the one cited by R. Bezalel b. Abraham Ashkenazi:

The manuscript reading. As he points out, the apostrophes in מֶאֶשֶׁרן indicate that it is to be deleted—presumably together with the following ר’.

Alternatively, one could claim that the selection was influenced by Num 30:4, but this claim is undercut somewhat by the fact that Num 30:3 also has the verb אָסַרְנָא.
And for that reason Rabbennu Tam used to say: “I read all these expressions with a qametz—דִּי נָדַרְ אֶל וּדי חָרַמְנָא וּדי אָסַרְנָא וּדי מִשְתַבַעְנָא—since the reference of all these expressions is to the future. Those who read (them) with a shewa—דִּי נְדַרְנָא וּדי חְרַמנָא וּדי אְסַרְנָא—with reference to the past and with the intention of annulling what they have already vowed, pledged, resolved, and sworn are committing an error.’’

This passage purports to be a direct quote, in the first person, from Rabbennu Tam himself. It cleverly uses a form (קָרינא) that exemplifies the point of the statement. The number of imprecisions is remarkably small. Two of them concern the last example on the list, מִשְתַבַעְנָא, which is (1) incorrectly vocalized with pataḥ instead of shewa under the taw, and (2) correctly vocalized with no qametz in the stem, thereby contradicting the plain sense of the assertion that “I read all these expressions with a qametz.” In addition, we may note that חָרַמְנָא is misvocalized with pataḥ instead of hireq under the resh. This appears to be a careless mistake made by a copyist under the influence of נָדַרְנָא and אָסַרְנָא; there is no reason to believe that it goes back to Rabbennu Tam or his father. The apparent accuracy of the quotation and its first-person formulation seem to point to a reliable source close to Rabbennu Tam—someone like R. Eliezer b. Samuel of Metz. The latter is cited as the source of numerous passages in the Nedarim volume of R. Bezalel Ashkenazi’s compilation, and although our passage is cited in the name of י”רنب (R. Nathan b. Joseph, a disciple of Ramban), it has been demonstrated that there is much confusion in the attributions given in this volume.

---

75 His name appears twice on the preceding page, שיטת מקובצת על מסכת נדרים, 27a ll. 20 and 41, both times in connection with matters relevant to Rabbennu Tam’s discussion of Kol Nidre in Sefer ha-Yashar. One of the occurrences is at the end of a section, the other in the middle.
Many aspects of this report are confirmed by other sources, sources which in some instances became corrupted over time:

R. Moses b. Jacob of Coucy:

The general practice is to say in Kol Nidre “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us,” with regarding referring to the future, as we say in chapter 3 of Shebu’ot (19b, cf. Ned. 16a) “(the Hebrew oath) שֶׁאֹכַל means (in Aramaic) דְּאָכִילְנָא ‘(I swear) that I will eat.’”

R. Meir ha-Kohen:

It is true that Rabbenu Jacob wrote and instituted the practice of saying “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming upon us” intending to release the vows of the coming year.... (It is also true that) one should not raise an objection (to that practice) from the expression נדרנא, because that can also refer to the future, as we find in the chapter 3 of Shebu’ot (19b) “(the Hebrew oath) שֶׁאֹכַל means (in Aramaic) דְּאָכִילְנָא ‘(I swear) that I will eat.’”

R. Asher b. Jehiel (Rosh):

University doctoral dissertation; Jerusalem, 2002), 154-55. I am indebted to Simcha Emanuel for this reference.

77 R. Moses b. Jacob of Coucy, ספר מצות ההודל (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1547), 71d.

78 R. Meir ha-Kohen, הרמב”א, in משמיה תורה (Venice: Marco Antonio Justinian, 1550), 151a (following הלכות שביתת עשור).
Rabbenut Tam corrected the *mahzorim* (to read) “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming upon us” and not as had (previously) been written in the *mahzorim* “from last Yom Kippur to this Yom Kippur.”... And one should also say די נַדְרְנָא וּדי מָשְׁתַבְּעֲנָא, i.e., that which I shall vow and swear.

The vocalization of נַדְרְנָא is faulty but significant nevertheless, because מָשְׁתַבְּעֲנָא is left unvocalized. The contrast seems to reflect a recognition that מָשְׁתַבְּעֲנָא can only be a participle, while נַדְרְנָא can be a participle or perfect depending on its vocalization.

*Tosafot:*

Based on our talmudic discussion, Rabbenut Tam expunges that which is written in *Kol Nidre* in the *mahzorim*, i.e., “from last Yom Kippur to (this) Yom Kippur coming (we pray) favorably upon us” ... Accordingly, it seems proper to me to correct (it to read) “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us,” (according to which) it is the vows of the following year that we are releasing.... And as for the fact that one says נַדְרְנָא in *Kol Nidre* referring to the past, thereby implying

---

80 According to the edition (col. פס, n. 34), the vocalization is in the manuscript.
81 *משכתב כניים על פירוש רבי חסניא ותוספות רבני ניסי והראוי* (זאת).

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
that we are releasing (vows) in the past, it may be said that (the written form) נ噦נרא represents two (distinct) expressions ... it represents (one in) the future and (one in) the past.

R. Yom Tov b. Abraham Ishbili (Ritva):

דנדנא כולה התי לעתי חรามה נדנרא אסנרא בקמך קרסא לחו

Therefore, all these expressions— Assyra, דנדנא, חָרמנא—I read with a qametz, since the language refers to the future.

R. Jacob b. Asher:

ורחקשה לירית עת פון מועיל לאחיה על המ שיעבר בכר וה التجارة לומר מייחו זה עד ימי התבה עולם וגו התוהה לומר יד דנדנא ויד

Rabbenu Tam found it difficult (to understand) what use it is to release (vows) that have already been violated, and so he instituted the practice of saying “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming upon us,” and he also instituted the practice of saying “that I shall vow and that I shall swear.”

R. Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel:

וכן פסקו רבי האונין יזיל די תּדנרא בקמך וד חรามה וד אסנרא

Rabbi Jerry Schwarzbard, Librarian for Special Collections, JTSA, for providing a scan of the relevant page. Later editions, beginning with Mantua 1476 (see n. 117 below), have a nonsensical reading here.
And that is what most of the early authorities ruled: ד"רehr ודי חְרמנא ודי אָסרנא ודי מָשתבענא for the reference of these expressions is to the future. Those who read (them) with a **shewa**—דִּי נְדרנא, דִּי חְרמנא, etc.—their reference is to the past, and their intention is to annul what they have (already) vowed, resolved, and sworn. They are committing an error.

R. David b. Joseph Abudarham:

**וֹתוֹקָשָׁה לָבֵינָה יָם מֵמוֹלִל יְהוָֹיה עָלְּמָה שָׁעָר בַּכּוֹר הַיוֹנִית לָמֶר מַיָּם הַכְּפּוֹרִים חַלֶצֶּה יָם הַכְּפּוֹרִים הַנֶּא לְהוֹלָל.** וְגוֹ**ם ָ**

Rabbenu Tam found it difficult (to understand) what use it is to release (vows) that have already been violated, and so he instituted the practice of saying “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us” and he also instituted the practice of saying “that I shall vow and that I shall swear.”

R. Nissim b. Reuben of Gerona (Ran):

**אֶלְּאָלָא שֶׁרֵבִי מִכְּפּוֹרִים וְיִלֵּדַּה מַזְּקָךְ חַלֶּצֶּה יְהוָֹיה מְצֻּמַּת הַלָּבָּה לָמֶר כָּל דֶּרֶי וַיִּסְרֵי דִּי אָסְרְנָא וַדִּי חְרָמְנָא כָּלָּו קְפּוֹרִיָּא נְרָאָה לָבָּה.**

However, R. Jacob [Tam] used to correct the language to refer to the future: all vows and resolutions דִּי אָסְרְנָא וַדִּי

---

84 Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel, ספר ארחות חיים (Florence: Stamperia di Isach di Moise di Pas, 1750), 105b §28 (הלכות יום הכיפורים). I have reproduced the vocalization of the edition, including the faulty מָשתבענא.


86 מסכת נדרים עם פירוש רבי יהודה Krishutz ורבינו ניסים והראשה, 46 (Ned. 23b).
חָרֵמָא, each (verb) with qametz (instead of shewa, in the first syllable)\textsuperscript{87} so that it looks like the future.

It seems clear from these sources that Rabbenu Tam’s disciples reported that he read some of the verbs in Kol Nidre (the ones in the qal stem, possibly including \(\text{חרמה} \))\textsuperscript{88} with qametz (instead of shewa) in the first syllable. This revocalization converted qal perfects referring to the past into qal participles referring to the future. In some sources, the tradition became garbled, and the vocalization with qametz was incorrectly extended to all of the verbs in Kol Nidre, including \(\text{משכנתא} \).

The testimony of several of the above sources concerning the correcting of \(\text{mahzorim} \) is supported by the version of Kol Nidre found in 18th century manuscripts from the Jewish communities of Asti, Fossano and Moncalvo (Piedmont, Italy): \(\text{די נדירנא ודי מקדישנא ודי מקנימנא ודי מחרימנא ודי משתבענא ודי אסירה על נפשנא} \).\textsuperscript{89} None of the other \(\text{mahzorim} \) examined by Goldschmidt, including two manuscripts

---

\textsuperscript{87} The phrase \(\text{כולו קמוץ} \) is taken here as a Hebrew paraphrase of the Aramaic statement attributed to Rabbenu Tam: \(\text{כולהו הני לישני בקמץ קרינא להו} \). However, we cannot rule out the possibility that it means “with qametz in all syllables.” That is the meaning of the expression \(\text{כולו קמוץ} \) in Radaq’s commentaries to 2 Sam 19:7, Isa 5:24, 32:19, and Hos 6:1. This alternative interpretation is supported by the faulty vocalization of the Aramaic participles \(\text{יָדָע} \) (Dan 2:22 = MT \(\text{יָדַע} \)) and \(\text{פָּלָח} \) (Dan 6:17 = MT \(\text{פָּלַח} \)) in \textit{Le Glossaire de Leipzig}, 3:1481 §19130 and 1511 §19578. So too Rashi, in his commentary to Job 14:9 s.v. \(\text{נָטַע} \), shows that his text of Job had the faulty form \(\text{ענָטָ} \) when he writes \(\text{ננקד כולו קמץ} \).\textsuperscript{88} A number of authorities cited above have, in the qal stem: R. Bezalel b. Abraham Ashkenazi, R. Yom Tov b. Abraham Ishbili (Ritva), R. Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel, and R. Nissim b. Reuben of Gerona (Ran). For the use of this Aramaic verb in the qal participle (הירח “he bans” in a magic bowl), see Michael Sokoloff, \textit{A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods} (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002), 483b. Moreover, the Hebrew version, \textit{Kol Nedarim}, also has the qal form (חרמת) according to a half dozen early manuscripts (including Genizah fragments) recorded in \textit{Maagarim}. This is significant because, as mentioned above, there are good reasons to believe that the Hebrew version is older. For the qal form \(\text{חרמה} \) in \textit{Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer}, noted by Meir Wallenstein (על \(\text{חרמת} \) סינא 45 [1959], 307 note to line 27), see \textit{ספר הפרק יבר על אטרואו ... על ברו הרדה} (Warsaw, 1852), 90b §122.

\textsuperscript{89} None of the \(\text{mahzorim} \) appears to be a denominative created as a counterpart of \(\text{סוף} \) at the beginning of Kol Nidre.
from medieval France, have anything similar. Since the Jews of these communities came there in the 14th century from France and preserved the Northern French *piyyuṭim* of the high holiday liturgy until modern times, it seems likely that they preserved a Northern French version of *Kol Nidre* reflecting the influence of Rabbenu Tam.

### 3. The Fifth Verb in *Kol Nidre*

As noted above, the tense of one of the verbs in the revised version of *Kol Nidre* is mentioned briefly already in Rabbenu Tam’s *Sefer ha-Yashar*. The passage is corrupt, but it can be reconstructed with the help of the citations and paraphrases by the later authors given below:

**Rabbenu Tam:**

כְלֵי דְּמֵי דָּמֵי נְדָרִים בְּלֵי יֵשׁ הַפֶּרֶשִׁים הָנִיחַ אֱבוֹי מֶרֶי זֶכֶר נְדָרִים שֶׁדְּאָסָן בֶּלְיָלֵי יומִי הוֹקָרִים הָגִיה אֱבוֹי מֶרֶי שֶׁבְּלֵי יֵשׁ הַפֶּרֶשִׁים הָנִיחַ אֱבוֹי מֶרֶי שֶׁהָלְכָה מְשַׁמּוּט דְּמֵי דְּמֵי בְּבִרְכָּה (זֶכֶר לְנָדָרִים אָחֲרִים פָּרָשִׁים דְּמֵי דְּמֵי) וֲחָסָם שֶׁאֲשָׁר וְלָכָה מְשַׁמּוּט דְּמֵי דְּמֵי בְּבִרְכָּה (זֶכֶר לְנָדָרִים אָחֲרִים פָּרָשִׁים דְּמֵי דְּמֵי) וַלּוֹכָה מְשַׁמּוּט דְּמֵי דְּמֵי בְּבִרְכָּה (זֶכֶר לְנָדָרִים אָחֲרִים פָּרָשִׁים דְּמֵי דְּמֵי)

**Kol Nidre**, which we say on Yom Kippur night—my lord father corrected (it to read): “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of those, if I shall regret them (shall be released),” and that is the true (version).... The form refers to the future as we say in Berakhot (9b): “‘Let the words of my mouth be acceptable’ (Ps 19:15)—it means ‘what I said’ and it means ‘what I shall say.’” And as for the meaning of

---

90 For a description of the two manuscripts, one in Parma and the other in Geneva, see מחזור לימים הנוראים, I:ב, 1:ט, מחזור לימים הנוראים.

91 The point of this talmudic proof text is not entirely clear. It may be cited to show that a single phrase can refer either to the past or the future. Or it may cited to show that a first person singular participle such as אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִימָה אָמִי

92 R. Jacob b. Meir Tam, ספר חכם, 70-71 §100.
Richard C. Steiner

דאי־חריטנא, it tells us that, after (making) the vow, we should remember the condition (we announced) at the New Year, and we should regret (making the vow) so that it may be released.

R. Ephraim of Bonn:

אבול אניל לפל כרכ מרא בבדי נאש החול וחוזר ר. מאייר מ
רומר הבאר מגר ביה רה דניאל עבודה עケア והיה. רצון. לוהית דאי־חריטנא (בצילו: בהריתداف, צילו: בהריתداف, משמע
למי להבה כמ רבי אמיא עברי והיה (בצילו: הוביא) שבר함ו. רביי עקרב תביב אואיה מדרימין בכרת קות לזרן
אמיר פ组织领导 אמיאי משמע לדמית. מתי דאי־חריטנא (בצילו: בהריתداف, צילו: בהרית发展壮大) שĽתבכר בחיא של ראא השה
ל扎实推进 iht湖区 והיה מות.

But I, in accordance with my meager intelligence, find proper the practice instituted by R. Meir of Ramerupt and adopted by his sons—Rabbenu Samuel, Rabbenu Jacob, and R. Isaac—after him, viz., to say “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur coming (we pray) favorably upon us.”... The expression דאי־חריטנא also refers to the future like many (occurrences of) ייחדת, עיבורין, אמיאי, ייחדת in the Talmud. And Rabbenu Jacob adduced proof from what we say in Berakhot (9b): “‘Let the words of my mouth be acceptable’ (Ps 19:15)—it means ‘what I said’ and it means ‘what I shall say.’” And as for the meaning of דאי־חריטנא, it tells us that, after (making) the vow, we should remember the condition (we announced) at the New Year, and we should regret (making the vow) so that it may be released.

R. Eliezer b. Joel ha-Levi:

93 Shelomoh Y. Spitzer, in קולות הלכות וענני הכפורים לרבינו אפרים מבונא (ed. Y. Buxbaum; Jerusalem: Moriah, 2002), 288 (plate), 290.

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
There are some among the great rabbis who instituted the practice of saying “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) peaceably upon us—all of those, if I shall regret them, (shall be released).”...

R. Abraham b. Nathan ha-Yarḥi:

Rabbenu Jacob wrote concerning Kol Nidre which one says on Yom Kippur night: “My lord father corrected (it to read): ‘from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of those, if I shall regret them, (shall be released),’ and that is the true (version).”

R. Mordecai b. Hillel ha-Kohen:

There are some among the great rabbis who instituted the practice of saying “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of those, if I shall regret them, (shall be released).”...

Tosefot Yeshanim:

---

Based on this, Rabbenu Meir corrects *Kol Nidre* we-ʾEsare (to read) “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) peaceably upon us,” for they used to say “from last Yom Kippur to this Yom Kippur.”... And דאי־חריטנא “if I shall regret” refers correctly to the future, because the condition helps only if he regrets it (= the vow), and then the condition helps, annulling it retroactively.

R. David b. Joseph Abudarham:

לכלך רוצה לומר דעזרתא בהון כלום ואשים תורה ותורה מועטהเין מותרת עליה.  

Thus one must say דאי־חריטנא “that I regret,” i.e., if I forget and make vows, I regret them from this very moment.

R. Nethanel Weil:

ומזה נראת דלדידן דמתני להבא נכון לומר אי־חריטנא ואין שיבוש ספרים, אך המופיס חביר להכות אחות, ועייל שתי יכות.

And from this it appears that—according to our view, viz., that he is making a condition for the future—it is correct to say אי־חריטנא “if I shall regret,” and there is no textual error, but the printer combined them into one word whereas they should be two words.

As noted above, Rabbenu Tam, in his written presentation of the new version, chose to discuss only one of the five verbs in *Kol Nidre*:

---

99 R. Nethanel Weil, קרבן נתנאל (Karlsruhe: L. J. Held, 1755), 66b §28 s.v. זס.
His reading breaks up the word איחרטנא or (according to Abudarham) דיאיחרטנא into two words, one of which can be vocalized as a participle (חרטנא). Abudarham takes the latter as referring to the present, but Rabbenu Tam, R. Ephraim of Bonn, and *Tosefot Yeshanim* take it as referring to the future, on the theory that regret can only be retrospective. According to the latter reading, *Kol Nidre* can be translated as follows:

All vows, resolutions, promises, pledges, and oaths that I shall vow, swear, pledge, and impose upon the self from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of those, if I shall regret them, shall be released: the vows not vows, the resolutions not resolutions, and the oaths not oaths.

Finally, we should mention the treatment of איחרטנא attributed to Rabbenu Tam by the abridged version of *Shibbole ha-Leqeṭ*, prepared by an unknown successor of R. Zedekiah b. Abraham Anaw:

Further, I found in the name of Rabbenu Tam that he corrected (the *mahzorim*) and instituted the practice of

---

100 His ideas about the other four seem to have been handed down orally; see at n. 74 above.
101 This is derived from דיאיחרטנא through elision of *aleph*; see n. 148 below.
102 Does he take חרטנא to be a speech act rather than a feeling?
103 Or: “self-impose.” See at n. 35 above.
104 See at n. 37 above.
105 So in the Venice edition of 1546 (45a §102) and the Salonika edition of 1796 (90b §102), both of which represent the abridged version (as I learned from Simcha Emanuel). Ms. Zurich Braginsky 250 (396 l. 20) and the Vilna edition of 1887 (293 §317) by Buber (both representing the original unabridged version) have אתחרטנא. As for London BL Or 13705, formerly Sassoon 539 (dated 1260 C.E.), Yisrael Dubitsky kindly informs me that it “skips (i.e., is missing) probably about 3 leaves between ff 686-687, comprising simanim 312-322. I believe this is what Sassoon himself meant when he wrote in his catalogue (*Ohel David*, Oxford 1932, vol. 1, p. 160) that ‘the whole section No. 34 ... is missing from the MS.’”
saying “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming upon us—all of them I shall/hereby regret,” and (that) he wrote that that is the true (version), and (that) he who says “from last Yom Kippur” is committing an error....

Here, too, the word for “regret” is expressed by a participle, but in this case the stem of the participle is *tipa‘al* rather than *qal*.

In short, it seems that the prospective reading of *Kol Nidre* gave rise to three different emendations of אִיחָרַטְנָא/אִיתְחָרַטְנָא (attributed to Rashi), (2) טְנָא(י)דְּאִי־חָרִי (attributed to Rabbenu Meir), and (3) טְנָאמִיתְחָרַ (attributed to Rabbenu Tam, by analogy with his emendation of אִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא to מִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא).

4. Why Singular Participles?
The emendations attributed to Rabbenu Tam raise several questions. Why did he not emend the perfects (אִיחָרַט נְדַרְנָא אאִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא, etc.) to imperfects (נִנְדַּר, נִשְׁתְּבַע etc.)? And even if he had some reason to prefer participles, why did he decide to use singular participles (נָדַרְנָא “I shall vow,” מִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא “I shall swear,” etc.) instead of the expected plural participles (נָדְרִינַן “we shall vow,” מִשְׁתַּבְעִינַן “we shall swear,” etc.)? One obvious answer to both questions is phonetic. He may have wanted the emended verb forms to sound as much as possible like the traditional forms of *Kol Nidre*. The change from נְדַרְנָא וְדִי אִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא to נָדְרִינַן וְדִי מִשְׁתַּבְעִינַן involves only the first vowel or the first consonant of each verb and, hence, is far less acoustically salient than a change to נִנְדַּר וְנִשְׁתְּבַע would be. But why would Rabbenu Tam have wanted the emended forms to sound like the traditional ones? One possibility is that he felt that such a minimal change would be less likely to provoke controversy. Another possibility, perhaps more likely given what we know of Rabbenu Tam, is that he believed that the oral reading tradition of *Kol Nidre* had become corrupted before his time through auditory errors (Hörfehler); hence, in attempting to reconstruct the original verb forms, he was obligated to assume that they sounded like the corrupt forms current in his time.  

---

107 The participle מַתְחָרַטְנָא may refer either to future *ab initio* regret or, as B. Septimus suggests (oral communication), to a present declaration of regret (cf. Abudarham at n. 98 above).

108 I owe this second explanation to B. Septimus, who notes that Rabbenu Tam did not shy away from controversy.

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
A second possible reason for the change from plural to singular is halakhic. According to R. Mordecai Jaffe, *Kol Nidre* is not legally effective in the plural:

> וברא באמרו שאמים את כל ת obsłועות דברי ע"י מ"ע שאמיר
> בכלỔ השמועות של ברך אחר הואועשת כלם זאמי והאני שלו ע"יalu ע"י
> זכר ולא חותנה כלם לא החזיק או חקולי.  

And we have already said that a person cannot make a condition on behalf of his fellow, and if so, (a person) using plural expressions at the end (of *Kol Nidre*) does not accomplish anything—he has not even stated his own condition. He has made no condition at all, whether he is the cantor or a member of the congregation.

This claim has been disputed, but even if it is exaggerated, it may contain a kernel of truth. Rabbenu Tam himself tells us that his father’s revision of *Kol Nidre* was inspired in part by the talmudic formula in Ned. 23b cited above: "all vows that I may make shall be void." Since that formula is in the first person singular, it is possible that Rabbenu Tam believed that the original, uncorrupted version of *Kol Nidre* was also in the first person singular.

5. Dubious Grammatical Assumptions in Later Times

We have seen that Rabbenu Tam or his father changed the verbs of *Kol Nidre* from perfects to participles. Many later halakhists accepted this idea in principle but had their own ideas about how to put it into practice.

One dubious idea that eventually took root was that masculine singular Aramaic participles with enclitic -נא always have hireq preceding the last consonant of the root—even if that consonant is resh or ‘ayin. Already in printed editions of the 16th century, we find

---

109. לבוש החור, 178c §619.
110. See R. Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller, תוספות יומ טוב to m.Ned. 3:1: מסוי הותא ול:selected הותא פולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסו והותא בחרפ בולע יוטו וולשתלע....; מנסוと言いf יומ טוב. For an intermediate position, see R. Joseph Kosman, ספר נוהג כצאן יוסף (Tel-Aviv, 1969), 279-80.
111. It is cited here according to the version in Sefer ha-Yashar.
and even פְּרָן, instead of פְּרָא, and מֵשְׁתַּביעֵנָא. Prominent examples that appeared in print in that century (irrespective of their date of composition) include:

R. David b. Joseph Abudarham:

והוקשה לרבינו תם מה מועיל להתיר על מה העברו כבר והנהיג
לומר误导ה ההפורים זה עד误导ה ההפורים חובה עלינוلت görev ומשתבענא ומשתבענא, הנני לומר דנדירנא ומשתבענא.

It will be noted that this edition of Sefer Abudarham (Constantinople, 1513) contradicts the modern edition based on manuscripts cited above.114

R. Jeroham b. Meshullam:

ותכת רבינו תם והיה במחזורים מניין מה זה עד ימי ואמר והגיה במחזור
ל"צ) מה אני עתיד להדיר ו디 מִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא כלום מה שאני עתיד לנדיר (יעל
לודר) הלובש....

Rabbenu Tam wrote, correcting the mahzorim (to read) “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming upon us.” And one should also say ודי מִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא נָדַרְנָא, i.e., what I shall vow and swear....

R. Joseph Caro:

והוא שכתב ומשתבענא ומשתבענא כלום מה אני עתיד להדיר/csv מה אני
הזכרת מה טעמו שכתבÚ ימי והנני אומר והנני אומר והנני
לודר וכשהוא אומר ודמשתבענא בא

112 We have already encountered these two forms above in 18th century manuscripts of the mahzor from the Jewish communities of Asti, Fossano and Moncalvo; see at n. 89 above.
113 David b. Joseph Abudarham, ספר אבודרהם (Constantinople, 1513), 75b-c.
114 For the text and translation, see at n. 85 above.
115 R. Jeroham b. Meshullam, ספר תולדות אדם וחוה (Constantinople, 1516), 46b.
As for what he (= R. Jacob b. Asher) writes: “He (= Rabbenu Tam) also instituted the practice of saying דִּנְדָרְנָא וּדְמִישָׁתַבעָא—this (= דִּנְדָרְנָא וּדְמִישָׁתַבעָא) is the correct reading (in Ṭūr Oraḥ Hayyīm §619), and that is because when it says דִּנְדָרְנָא—one word, dalet with ḫireq, nun with shewa, dalet with qametz [sic!])—it means “that which I have already vowed,” but when it says דִּי נָדִירְנָא—two words, one of them דִּי, the other נָדִירְנָא, nun without shewa, dalet with ḫireq—it means “that which I shall vow.” Similarly, when it says וּדְמִישָׁתַבעָא—with medial aleph—it means “that which I have already sworn,” but when it has mem instead of aleph and it is vocalized with ḫireq (under the bet), it means “that which I shall swear.”

The form נָדִירְנָא would ordinarily be interpreted as a passive form. Passive participles take a yod, because, unlike active participles, they have a long ḫireq, and long ḫireq is not affected by final resh. Thus, the active participles אָסַרְנָא (אָסַרְנָא “I forbid” and פָּטַרְנָא פָּטַרְנָא “I exempt”) contrast with the passive participles אֲסִירְנָא אֲסִירְנָא (“I am forbidden” and פְּטִירְנָא פְּטִירְנָא “I am exempt(ed).”) In other words, the addition of yod to נָדִירְנָא normally converts it to the passive voice—a voice that makes no sense in our context. Nevertheless, it may be going too far to brand נָדִירְנָא as a misspelling when it is used in the active voice. It can be compared to the active form פְּטִירְנָא "I am excommunicated" (Ned. 7a) in printed editions of various halakhic works, a passive participle if it were genuine.

116 R. Joseph Caro, אוח תימי הוּא תמי הַחֲדָשׁ וּזְנוּיָא בְּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל (Venice, 1550), 398c §619. I am indebted to Dr. Bruce Nielsen, Center for Advanced Jewish Studies, University of Pennsylvania, for providing photographs of this passage.

117 Contrast the readings found in the two earliest editions of Ṭūr Oraḥ Hayyīm: דִּנְדָרְנָא וּדְמִישָׁתַבעָא (Pieve di Sacco 1475, §614); דִּי נָדִירְנָא וּדְמִישָׁתַבעָא (Mantua 1476, §603). I am indebted to Leah Adler and Rachel Berliner for providing a photograph of the latter. For the former, see n. 83 above.

118 Cf. also the fictitious form נָדִירְנָא cited instead of נָדִיָּא נָדִי יָא “I am excommunicated” (Ned. 7a) in printed editions of various halakhic works, a passive participle if it were genuine.
divorce,” attested in two unpublished Aramaic magic bowls. It can also be compared to the form רוְאַמְטֵ and he caused to rain” (Exod 9:23) found in a vocalized Genizah fragment of the Palestinian Targum. In these forms, a short hireq or tsere appears to have been preserved or restored (by analogy) before resh by native speakers. On the other hand, it must be noted that the form נזירנא itself is not attested in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic; the only form attested in the Talmud is נרנא “I do/shall vow” (Ned. 9a). The yod that represents short hireq in כתיבנא is not found in נזירנא, suggesting (although not proving conclusively) that the short hireq of the latter has been lowered to patah by the following resh. In short, the form נזירנא that appears in 16th-century printed versions of Kol Nidre was probably created on the analogy of regular forms such as אכתיבנ rather than handed down by tradition.

The rise of this non-standard form should not surprise us, since no treatises on Aramaic grammar were available to Jews at the time (and because similar forms are attested as passive participles). Even today, when such treatises are available, the rule is unknown to many Semitists. Thus, a standard handbook of Semitic linguistics has the following to say about the vocalization of the participle in one of the

119 I am indebted to an anonymous JSIJ reviewer for this information. Contrast פטרנא פאטור “I shall divorce” in Qid. 64b. For the latter, according to the Talmud Text Databank (JTSA), פאטור פטרנא is the spelling in all witnesses: Oxford Opp. 248 (367), Munich 95, Vatican 111, JTS Rab. 2394, Spanish Print (ca. 1480), and Venice Print (1520), not to mention the Vilna edition. Shamma Friedman informs me that פטרנא is the standard spelling in the magic bowls as well, occurring five times in the synoptic chart of five magic bowls published by Avigail Bamberger, הערות התלמוד והשוואות לכתב מחזור תלמוד (Hebrew University master’s thesis; Jerusalem, 2012), 30. Three of Bamberger’s five attestations appear in the synoptic chart of four magic bowls published by Dan Levene, A Corpus of Magic Bowls: Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity (London: Kegan Paul, 2003), 37.

120 Steven E. Fassberg, A Grammar of the Palestinian Targum Fragments from the Cairo Genizah (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 190. This form contrasts with many forms that have patah before resh, such as דַּבַּר and וֹמְשַׁקַר. For other, more ancient examples of short e/i before final resh, etc. in Aramaic, see Beyer, Die aramäischen Texte, 1:108. According to Beyer, his examples are not exceptions; they simply predate the vowel shift that created the rule.

121 According to the Talmud Text Databank (JTSA), this is the spelling in the Venice edition of 1522 and the only extant manuscript (Vatican 487.1), not to mention the Vilna edition.

122 So in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, not tsere.

123 See at n. 118 above.
Late Aramaic dialects: “Syriac has \textit{qāber}...”\textsuperscript{124} In his review of the book, E. Y. Kutscher points out the error: “This is a faulty form. As is well known, Syriac (and other Aramaic dialects) turn an \textit{e} before \textit{r} into an \textit{a}. Therefore, the root ‘qbr’ for the paradigms turns out to be ill-chosen.”\textsuperscript{125}

The reading \textit{נדירנא} is probably not original in \textit{Sefer Abudarham}, but it is original in \textit{Bet Yosef}, as is clear from the discussion there. R. Joseph Caro may have taken that reading from the printed edition of \textit{Sefer Abudarham} and/or the printed edition of \textit{Toledot Adam we-Hawwah}, both of which were published decades before the completion of \textit{Bet Yosef} (1542).\textsuperscript{126} The reading \textit{נדירנא} is probably best viewed as a hypercorrection—an overreaction to the nonsensical past-tense reading, \textit{וגם הנהיג לומר דנדרנא ודאישתבענא}, that was current at the time. R. Abraham Abele Gombiner attributes the form \textit{נדירנא} to R. Jeroham b. Meshullam (\textit{Toledot Adam we-Hawwah}), rejecting it in favor of the form \textit{נדירנא} used earlier by R. Meir ha-Kohen (\textit{Haggahot Maimuniyyot}).\textsuperscript{127}

In the passage quoted above, R. Joseph Caro also introduces a new distinction into the discussion: \textit{די} vs. \textit{-ד}. As noted by a few authorities, this distinction is totally irrelevant,\textsuperscript{128} a blatant red herring:

R. Abraham b. Mordecai ha-Levi:

\begin{quote}
ופיشت תיבות מורה על העבר (짜יqa מותדי) ומעים נוספים

מורים על העבר (짜יqa המבר?) ואין דברי אל כנויים טעויות מגורים
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{124} Sabatino Moscati, et al., \textit{An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages} (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964), 146.


\textsuperscript{126} Both of those works are cited in \textit{Bet Yosef}, but I am unable to say whether they were cited from the printed editions or from manuscripts.

\textsuperscript{127} R. Abraham Abele Gombiner, \textit{מגן אברהם}, in \textit{ספרי מגני ארץ} (Dyrenfurth: Shabbetai Meshorer Bass, 1692), 306a §619. For the forms in \textit{Toledot Adam we-Hawwah} and \textit{Haggahot Maimuniyyot}, see at nn. 78 and 115 above.


http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
And he explained that (the version with) two words refers to the past (sic, for future?), whereas when they are one word it refers to the future (sic, for past?), but this statement is not correct and it is completely erroneous, because it is the same whether they are one word or two words, and either way they refer to the past.... And he who examines the language of the Targum carefully will find that there is no difference at all between one and the other.... And those who rely on this language of the Ṭur stumble in (the laws of) vows.

R. Jacob Emden:

Bet Yosef: “디 נדרנא one word, etc. די דנדרא two words.”

With all due respect, all of this is a distortion, and there is no substance in this explanation, and this is not the way that the past (tense) is distinguished from the future in Aramaic. Furthermore, there is no difference at all between saying دبي נדרנא as one word and dividing it into two.

We turn now to R. Wolf Heidenheim. He agrees that Rabbenu Tam’s version of Kol Nidre was based on participles, but the participles that he reconstructs are different from those of his predecessors:

130 I.e.,迪 נדרנא.
131 I.e.,디 נדרנא.
Pursuant to all of these valid considerations, I committed myself to the version די נדרינא ודמשתבעינא ודמחרминא ודאסרינא, because all of these expressions are the plural of the present tense ... and according to this version, the entire text will be on a solid foundation and not difficult at all, and this is the true version of Rabbenu Tam in my opinion....

This reconstruction is intended as a solution to a problem inherent in the standard reconstruction of Rabbenu Tam’s version of Kol Nidre. In that reconstruction, the enclitic subject pronouns attached to participles are singular but the possessive pronouns attached to nouns are plural. This inconsistency, pointed out by R. Mordecai Jaffe, is most blatant in the phrase נא(ת)אָסַרְנָא על נפש “I shall impose upon ourselves.” Heidenheim tried to fix the problem by making the participles plural, instead of making the suffixed pronouns singular as R. Jaffe had done.

Here again, however, we have a suggestion that attributes faulty Aramaic grammar to Rabbenu Tam. In Babylonian Aramaic, first person plural participles take the plural enclitic pronoun י- derived from אננה “we,” not א- derived from אנא “I.” Thus, the plural of אָסְרִינַן is אָסְרִינָא, not אָסְרִינָא. The latter form appears to exhibit an internal inconsistency that is, if anything, even more blatant than the one in נא(ת)אָסַרְנָא על נפש, and there is no good reason to assume that Rabbenu Tam was unaware of this.

Most of the authorities quoted above believe that Rabbenu Tam changed the verbs of Kol Nidre from perfects to participles; however, this is not the only possible way of making them refer to the future. A number of alternatives have been proposed, some of which we have already noted. Ralbag and R. Jacob Emden claimed that the

133 מגודר ידuerdo, 8b.
134 לובס החיה, 178c §619.
135 J. N. Epstein, דקדוק ארמית בבלית, 41. Forms ending in א- do occur in our printed editions, but, according to Epstein (ibid., 40), they are singular and textually dubious.
prospective reading of Kol Nidre presupposed the replacement of perfects (ךְֶנִּי, we have vowed,” etc.) with imperfects (ךְֶרargar, “we shall vow,” etc.). R. Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel emended to a compromise between the traditional version and Ned. 23b.

R. Mordecai Jaffe felt that these emendations—and indeed all of the emendations discussed above—were unnecessary. In Levush ha-Hur, he makes the startling claim that most of the verbs in the traditional version of Kol Nidre were already in the imperfect without any need for change:

וכי דאשעבטא פמי شראיב אניכי בכיזא הרמא פורוש שארינו
אני כי רדורנמא פמי שראיב איני ... ון יחאראך באזאראך
בחק פמי אתרחרי אניכי פעכשוי והרי חולש קולו חיזי המדבר
...בעדו...

And similarly דאשעבטא means “that I shall swear,” and similarly דאשעבטא means “that I shall pledge,” and similarly רדורנמא means “that I shall impose,” ... and similarly the expression אתרחרי later on means “I shall regret from this very moment,” and all of them are first person singular....

He then goes on to explain that the ס- ending of these verbs “is in place of ס whose meaning is ‘I’ except that the first aleph is missing.” In his eyes, the only obstacle to this solution is the form רדרמה, which, lacking an initial aleph, cannot be reinterpreted as an imperfect plus the ending ס. As a result he is forced to emend it:

לפתח כייל שראיב להוית בכיזא דאמדרמא באזאך ההוא וניה

Therefore, it seems to me that it would be proper to have here (the form) דאמדרמא with prefixed aleph and with the meaning “that I shall vow.”

The problem with this solution, of course, is that enclitic ס is used in Babylonian Aramaic only with participles, not with...
imperfects. It follows that the verb אינדרנא, found in many modern editions of the mahzor, is a fictitious form, created as an ad hoc solution to the problems of Kol Nidre. It is difficult to disagree with the assessment of R. Jacob Emden:

... all of the efforts made by these rabbis (= R. Mordecai Jaffe and R. David ha-Levi Segal) and the other latter-day authorities to explain Rabbenu Tam’s version of Kol Nidre were, with all due respect, an error and a distortion of the language. (There was) not (a single) one among them that was fully knowledgeable in, and acquainted with, Aramaic.

R. Jaffe’s ideas about Aramaic morphology were implicitly rejected even by the editor of an Ashkenazic mahzor (Venice, 1717) who claimed to be following in his path. At the very end of his edition, he adds a brief discussion of Kol Nidre based on the views of R. Joseph Caro and R. Mordecai Jaffe—including the view of the latter that “a man can (petition the court to) annul only his own vows” (אין אדם יכול לבטל כי אם נדרי עצמו.

He concludes with a revised version of Kol Nidre “according to the opinion of the aforementioned geonim”:

138 Cf. Heidenheim, מhait לערבית ליום כפור, 8a, מhait לערבית ליום כפור, 8a, המhait לערבית ליום כפור, 8a, המhait לערבית ליום כפור, 8a, המhait לערבית ליום כפור, 8a.

According to the Bar-Ilan Judaic Library and the Talmud Text Databank (JTSA), it is completely unknown in ancient Rabbinic literature. The form אינדרנא appears only as a noun. The earliest occurrence I have found is in המhait ליום נוראים (Prague, 1613), 56a. R. Jaffe died in 1612, around a year before the printing of this mahzor.

140 R. Jacob Emden, רשאין עלי, 133b §145.

See at n. 43 above.

142 Habermann, הרמות לכל דורי, 184.

143 Habermann, הרמות לכל דורי, 185.

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
This consistently singular version clearly reflects the influence of R. Jaffe, especially in the forms "myself," "my vows," and "my oaths," but it ignores his views concerning the distribution of enclitics.

Having said all that, it must be admitted that R. Jaffe’s solution is remarkably ingenious. Indeed, it is so clever that many have failed to grasp the point. Take, for example, the following note from the ArtScroll maḥzor for Yom Kippur:

The literal translation of דְּאִנְדַּרְנָא is we have vowed in the past tense. Since most communities have adopted Rabbeinu Tam’s version that Kol Nidrei refers to future vows, many authorities have changed דְּאִנְדַּרְנָא to the future tense [דִּי נַדִּירְנָא], but this change has not gained common acceptance. Our translation in the future tense, therefore, is not literal....

In this note, the editors adopt the verb form created by R. Jaffe, and they even vocalize its middle radical with dagesh (אִנְדַּרְנָא), with ת, like imperfect אִנְדַּר and unlike perfect נְדַרְנָא), but they fail to realize that he intended it as a future form. They wind up subverting his ingenious solution, claiming that they are ignoring the literal meaning of his (fictitious!) form when they translate it in the future.

6. Rashi’s Version of Kol Nidre
The suggestion put forth in Levush ha-Hur may help us to reconstruct Rashi’s version of Kol Nidre, which seems to have been somewhat different from that of Rabbeinu Tam. We recall that, according to Likquṭe ha-Pardes (at least in its present form), Rashi was heard to say מיום כיפורים זה עד יום כיפורים הבא עלינו לטובה “from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us,” while leaving דנדרנא ודישתבענא ודיאחרמנא ודי אסרנא “that we have vowed, sworn, pledged, and imposed” in the perfect. According to the same report, however, he was also heard to say איחרט “I shall..."

145 I assume here that the aforementioned homography of two of the verbal forms is resolved by the other two verbal forms.
regret” instead of “we have regretted.” This emendation, if that is what it is, is reminiscent of Rabbenu Tam’s emendations; it results in a singular verb that refers to the future. However, it makes no sense in isolation, contradicting the number and tense of the other verbs. The same might be said of two other deviations from the traditional text found in the oldest surviving manuscript of the work (14th century): “we have imposed upon the self, we have self-imposed” instead of “we have imposed upon ourselves”; and “and the oaths” instead of “and our oaths” (as expected from “our vows” and “our resolutions”). Another noteworthy form in the manuscript is דישתבענא<דאישתבענא*, exhibiting elision of aleph (see below). This is a legitimate colloquial spelling for a native speaker of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic in late antiquity, but its appearance in medieval France is far from routine.

In sum, the text of Kol Nidre in Liqquṭe ha-Pardes (according to the oldest extant manuscript) contains several anomalies. It is tempting to dismiss them as scribal errors, but it must be kept in mind that not every anomalous form in a text is the product of miscopying, mishearing, or the like. Sometimes forms that seem anomalous in a text were originally unproblematic, and became anomalous not because they were altered, but because they were not altered when the forms around them were changed. In other words, authentic forms can give the appearance of being corrupt when incomplete scribal alteration leaves them isolated—when copyists of the text eliminate (“correct”) all forms with a given characteristic except for one. Such survivals from an earlier textual stage may be called “vestigial readings.”

Can the anomalous forms cited above from (the oldest extant manuscript of) Liqquṭe ha-Pardes be considered “vestigial readings,” relics of a prospective version of Kol Nidre used by Rashi before the

---

146 So in both manuscripts consulted and in the Venice edition of 1539. The form could also mean “he has regretted,” but that does not fit the context.

147 Did the original version of Liqquṭe ha-Pardes have similar emendations for איסרנא and נדרנא, viz., איסריא and נדריא?


149 Vestigial readings must be distinguished from linguistic relic forms, which are vestiges of an earlier form of a *language* rather than a *text*.

http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Steiner.pdf
time of Rabbenu Tam? What would such a text look like? The following is a very speculative suggestion:

All vows, resolutions, promises, pledges, and oaths that I shall vow, swear, pledge, and impose on the self by oath from this Yom Kippur to (next) Yom Kippur, coming (we pray) favorably upon us—all of them I shall regret. (May they be) released, cancelled, rendered null and void, not in force, not valid—the vows not vows, the resolutions not resolutions, and the oaths not oaths.

This highly conjectural reconstruction is based on the assumption that Rashi changed the tense of the four verbs by deleting the final נא from each of them—just as he did with איחרטנא—and making some additional minor adjustments. Take, for example, the perfect form ששתבענדידי < דאישתבעא* or דאישתשבעא דאישתשבעא "that we have sworn" found in the manuscript. This can be converted to an imperfect meaning “that I shall swear” by deleting the suffix, yielding יאישתשבעא* דאישתשבעא or יאישתשבעא דאישתשבעא. The same goes for דינדרנא, which, when changed to דינדר, can be understood as an elided form of יאישתשבעא דאישתשבעא* יאישתשבעא* יאישתשבעא דאישתשבעא "that I shall vow." It is worth noting that very little revocalization is required by this solution. In my view, it is a solution worthy of Rashi. It is easy to see how an early copyist of Liqquṭe ha-Pardes could have failed to grasp the idea and felt the need to add a geresh after each of the verbs (דינדר* ודי אסר* ודי' ודישתבע... אisersי השבעתא לא שבועו).
was about which version of *Kol Nidre* to recite—not about whether to recite it at all.

The halakhic problems inherent in *Kol Nidre* led R. Meir b. Samuel of Ramerupt, the father of Rabbeni Tam, to revise the text so that it referred to the vows of the coming year instead of the vows of the past year. The revision (inspired by the Talmud and possibly one or two geonic responsa as well) was accomplished through the substitution of a single word, replacing "שעבר ("from last Yom Kippur to the one that is coming") with "זה ("from this Yom Kippur to the one that is coming"). This change, however, created a linguistic problem that survives in many editions of the *mahzor* down to the present day. The emended temporal phrase refers to the future, but it modifies verbs in the past tense (דנדרנא ודאשתבענא ודאחרמנא ודאסרנא)—a blatant internal contradiction.

According to many reports, Rabbeni Tam (if not his father) solved the problem in a remarkably elegant and inconspicuous manner. In the revised version, the subtle replacement of "שעבר with "זה was accompanied by an even more subtle replacement of *shewa* and *ḥataf pataḥ* (אָסַרְנָא "we have bound") with *qametz* (נָדַרְנָא "I shall bind") in two of the verbs. The treatment of the other two verbs was equally subtle: אַחֲרִימְנָא/חֲরַמְנָא ("we have pledged") and אִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא ("we have sworn") appear to have been replaced with מַחֲרִימְנָא/חָרִימְנָא "I shall pledge" and מִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא "I shall swear," respectively. In all four cases, the perfect is replaced not with the expected imperfect but with the participle (which often refers to the future in Late Aramaic) plus enclitic נא < אנא "I."

For the fifth verb in *Kol Nidre*, אִיחָרַטְנָא/אִתְחָרַטְנָא "we have regretted,” three different emendations are recorded in our sources: (1) אִיחָרַט (attributed to Rashī), (2) טְנָא(י)דְּאִי־חָרִ ("if I shall regret") (attributed to Rabbeni Meir), and (3) מִתְחָרַטְנָא ("I shall/hereby regret") (attributed to Rabbeni Tam, based on the analogy of his emendation of אִשְׁתְּבַעְנָא). The form אִיחָרַט, preserved in the earliest extant manuscript of Liqquṭe ha-Pardes, is of great interest. It raises the possibility that Rashī had his own prospective version of *Kol Nidre* that was lost to posterity, supplanted by the version of his son-in-law and grandson. Although copyists have tended to obliterate revisions of *Kol Nidre*, a few clues remain in the manuscript—enough to allow for a conjectural reconstruction.

---

150 For אָסַרְנָא and מַחֲרִימְנָא, the *qal* perfect and participle respectively, see n. 88 above.
All of the emendations of the verbs change both their tense (past to future) and their number (plural to singular). The change of number has the effect of minimizing the acoustic salience of the emendations. It appears that the idea was to make the new forms sound as much as possible like the traditional ones, based on (1) the desire to avoid provoking controversy and/or (2) the assumption that the oral reading tradition of *Kol Nidre* had become corrupted through auditory errors (*Hörfehler*). The change of number may have had a halakhic basis as well. It may have been intended to eliminate a legal objection later to be raised by R. Mordecai Jaffe, and/or to make *Kol Nidre* agree with the legal formula cited by Rabbenu Tam from the Talmud (Ned. 23b) as the basis of his father’s revision.

These emendations exhibit remarkable mastery of the grammar of Biblical and Talmudic Aramaic. Indeed, beginning in the 16th century, even leading halakhic authorities did not grasp all of the linguistic subtleties of the emendations, and some of them felt compelled to make “improvements.” The level of sophistication is so high that it would be almost unimaginable outside of Rashi’s family—a family that produced commentaries on the Bible (Rashi, Rashbam, and Rabbenu Tam), commentaries and *tosafot* on the Talmud (Rashi, Rashbam, and Rabbenu Tam), Aramaic poetry (Rabbenu Tam), halakhic responsa (Rashi and Rabbenu Tam), and a treatise on Hebrew grammar (Rashbam).