On the Origins of the Expression 'Amen, amen, amen sela'

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An investigation of Jewish gravestones from the medieval period in Ashkenaz reveals that the frequent appearance of the phrase '*Amen, amen, amen sela*', in its various forms, begins in the early mid-13th century; later it is found on the vast majority of the gravestones in that area. The article suggests that the widespread usage of this phrase in Ashkenazi culture was related to the incorporation of the *Heikhalot* literature into various circles of *Hassidei Ashkenaz.* The expression '*Amen, amen, amen sela*' commonly appears in the *Heikhalot* literature as well as in other Hebrew magic literature at the final position in incantations. The incorporation of this phrase into the repertoire of inscriptions on gravestones indicates the shift in the perceived role of the gravestones, from a sign of identification to a talisman through which various paranormal forces are summoned to accompany the deceased upon their journey into the afterlife.