A typological coincidence: Word order properties in Trakai Karaim biblical translations

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Uzun künlärdän tojdururmin ani

'With long life will I satisfy him'

The Trakai Karaim language

The Karaim variety spoken in Lithuania is called Trakai (Polish: Troki) Karaim. Trakai is a town in the vicinity of the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, where Karaims have lived for more than six hundred years. The area has been dominated by Slavic and Baltic languages, first by Polish and Russian, and more recently by Lithuanian. This has had a significant impact on the spoken language, which is today highly endangered because of the unfavourable situation of the religious minorities in the Soviet times. The Karaim variety spoken in Lithuania is considerably different from the language of the Karaim communities in Galicia (Western Ukraine), e.g., in Halich.

The Turkic speaking Karaim scholars, educated in Biblical Hebrew, translated Bible texts into their Kipchak Turkic vernacular. A few translations were printed, but the majority is preserved in handwritten copies. The oldest known translation in Halich Karaim is from the 16th century and the oldest one in Trakai Karaim is from the 18th century. In the Karaim literature these Bible translations are called pešatlar. The term pešat stands as a term for literal exegesis that pursued the 'plain sense' of the Bible. A pešat is a word-by-word translation of the Hebrew original. In order to mirror the original structure of the biblical text, the translators copied various linguistic features of the Hebrew original. The resulting texts are, as I will illustrate below, characterized by many non-Turkic syntactic features.

In this paper, I will first illustrate some of these non-Turkic typological attributes of Karaim biblical texts as they are manifested in the Karaim translation of Psalm 91 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty. Then I

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1 The Hebrew text and its translation are cited in this paper according to the Transliterated BHS Hebrew Old Testament 2001. BHT database by Matthew Anstey.
will discuss the validity of the allegation that these features, which also characterize the spoken language, penetrated into the spoken language through the biblical translations.

The influence of Hebrew on Karaim

Every serious study of the Karaim biblical translations points out that the translations bear evidence of 'slavish adherence' to the Hebrew origin (Kowalski 1929; Pritsak 1959; Musaev 1964 and 2004). A matter of controversy is, however, how much the Karaim language, and in particular the spoken language, has been influenced by biblical Hebrew.

Two positions can be distinguished. One is represented by Turcologists such as Kowalski, Pritsak and Musaev, who acknowledged the obvious influence of Hebrew on the language of the Bible translations, but did not ascribe the non-Turkic properties of Karaim solely to copying from Hebrew. Kowalski emphasized that both the language of the translations and the influence of Slavic languages induced typological changes in Karaim:


2 “Under the long-lasting influence of Hebrew and Slavic languages, the syntax has been—if I may say so—fully deturkified. This is most conspicuous with respect to the order of the genitive. The genitive noun, differently from all other Turkic languages, does not precede but follows the governing word. Consequently, one says ałgyšy tenřińiń ‘the blessing of God’ […]. The most important reason for this dismantlement of the Turkic syntactic setup was the habit to translate Biblical texts into Karaim word by word in a slavish way. For the sake of the Hebrew word order, the enclitic postpositive particle da was placed before the word in question so that it should mirror the ordering of the Hebrew particle wa. Similarly, the demonstrative pronoun oł was turned to a definite article, which is completely alien to the nature of Turkic, in order to translate the Hebrew definite article ha in a systematic way. Not even the spoken language could avoid the influence of the Biblical translations. This was accompanied by the influence of the Slavic languages as, for instance, Polish, Russian, White Russian or Ruthenian which were commonly known by the Karaim depending on the geographical location of the given speech community and the educational level of the given speaker. The Slavic influence is strongest in the colloquial language and manifests itself in a large number of loanwords and idiomatic expressions
Kowalski also notes that Armeno-Kipchak and the language of the *Codex Cumanicus* exhibit the same non-Turkic genitive order. Thus, this word order property is not an exclusively Karaim speciality.

Pritsak is also of the opinion that both the language of the biblical translations and the Slavic contact languages influenced the Karaim syntax. He mentions the same properties as Kowalski but also adds the Slavic equivalents, such as the Karaim conjunction *da* used as the Hebrew *wa* and the Russian *i*, *ta* (1959:338). Moreover, he adds a number of other syntactic features copied from Slavic languages.

Musaev, in his Karaim grammar, makes critical remarks against the view of M. Altbauer who claimed, in an article written in Hebrew in 1957, that Hebrew played a decisive role in the formation of the Karaim language (Musaev 1964:32).

In spite of the significant Slavic impact on Karaim, some authors still advocate that typological properties of Karaim, e.g. the word order, changed under the influence of Hebrew, and they do not even mention the role of the spoken contact languages of the area.

Some quotations from Moskovich and Tukan (1985) and Shapira (2003) illustrate this position here.

“The Karaites language was developing under a strong and continuous influence of Hebrew, the sacred language of the Karaites. [...] The influence of Hebrew has been extremely strong in the area of the Karaita syntax. The tradition of the literal translation of religious texts from Hebrew caused far-reaching changes in the Karaita word order. The position of the names in the Genitive case changed from the place before the governing word (as in all other Turkic languages) to the place after it: H. *dostu ivnin* (instead *ivnin dostu*) ‘friend of the house’, H. *basy atnyn* (instead *atnyn basy*) ‘the head of the horse’, [...] T. *alnynda adonainyn* (instead *adonainyn alnynda*) ‘before the Lord God’, T. *ortasynda azbarnyn* (instead *azbarnyn ortasynda*) ‘in the middle of the yard’, etc. In contrast to other Turkic languages where the conjunction *-da* ‘and’ stands in postposition in Karaita it stands (as the Hebrew *wa*) before the corresponding word. The demonstrative pronoun *ol* as the closest Karaita analogue of the Hebrew definite article *ha* acquired the functions of a definite article” (Moskovich and Tukan 1985:96).

Shapira (2003) repeats these views:

“This language [i.e. the Karaim of the Bible translations, É. Cs.] was unnatural, copying Hebrew modes and syntax, but enjoyed a high status. Among the Karaites, the translation of the Bible became tantamount to biblical exegesis, and the translators (mostly *melammedim*) enjoyed the high status conferred upon the Rabbanite commentators [...]'. Several grammatical features of Hebrew, such as a calque of the Hebrew genitive form (as in *beito shel adam*, a man’s house), the accusative pronoun *et*, and the definite article—all of them totally foreign to Turkic—became characteristic marks of this learned ‘language of translation,’ which we can designate as Old Literary Karaita Turkic. In the due course of time, and especially in the learned but linguistically isolated northern communities many of these features, especially the Hebrew way of forming the genitive, penetrated even the spoken language” (Shapira 2003:667-668).

3 Karaite is a Latinized form of Karaim. The ethnonym in Karaim is *karay*.
4 H. stand for Halich Karaim and T. for Trakai Karaim.
5 Hebrew *melammed* ‘schoolmaster’.
Both Moskovich and Tukan and Shapira mention exactly the same features as Kowalski (1929), however, without any reference to Slavic languages.

In the following, I argue that word order properties of Karaim developed under the influence of the non-Turkic contact languages of the area. Karaim syntax has been adapted to the dominating syntactic type and acquired properties typical of Middle/Eastern European languages. Gagauz, another Turkic language in this linguistic area, which has not been exposed to any influence of biblical Hebrew, has acquired the same typological features. The discussion here will be restricted to word order properties.

For illustrating the language of the Bible translations, I present below the Trakai Karaim text of Psalm 91 concerning the assurance of God’s protection.

Psalm 91 in Hebrew and Trakai Karaim

The Hebrew original with interlinear English glosses and translation is given here. See Appendix 1 for the original Hebrew version as printed in a Karaim prayer. A transliteration of the Karaim translation is aligned with the Hebrew text. The Karaim text was originally written in Hebrew script. This version is printed at the end of this article; see Appendix 2. The aim of this presentation is to demonstrate the phrase-by-phrase translation method of the Karaim scholars.

91:1 Hebrew

yōēleh basēṭer ‘ēlyôn baṣēl šadday yīṭlōnān
who dwells in shelter of Most High one in shadow of Almighty who abides
‘He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty.’

91:1 Trakai Karaim

olturuṣču sijinč-da jogar-gy tenri-nin
dweller shelter-POSS3SG-LOC above-DER god-GEN
kölila-sin-dā kūčči tenri-nin sijin-adir
shadow-POSS-LOC mighty god-GEN take shelter-PRES.3SG3SG
‘The one who lives in the shelter of God who is above, takes shelter in the shadow of the mighty God.’

91:2 Hebrew

ˀ mar lyhwh(la)‘dōnāy) maḥśi ūmēṣǔḏāy ˀĕlōhāy ˀĕṯṭāh -bô
I shall to Yahweh refuge of and fortress of God of I am in
say me me trusting him
‘will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.”’

91:2 Trakai Karaim

ajt-(ha)-ga išānč-im da beklig-im;
say-PRES-1SG God-DAT trust-POSS1SG and strength-POSS1SG
Tenri-m išān-a-min anar
god-POSS1SG trust-PRES-1SG s/he-DAT
‘I say to God, my trust and strength; my God, I trust her/him.’

6 Psalm 91 is an important prayer for Karaims in the service on Saturday evenings. The text published here is included in a manuscript preserved in the the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences under the catalogue number F305-14, folio page numbers 4r-4v.

7 This is a literal translation of the Karaim text.
91:3 Hebrew

ki hú yassîlêkâ mippâh yâqôtâ middêbâr hawwôt
that he will deliver you from snare of fowler from pestilence of destruction
‘For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.’

91:3 Trakai Karaim

ki ol qutchar-ir seni tuzach-tan ilin-âdogon
that s/he rescue-AOR3SG you-ACC trap-ABL. be caught by-CONV
olît-tân da qawSaRîch-tan : plague-ABL. and destruction-ABL.
‘For s/he will rescue you from the trap when being caught, from the plague and destruction;’

91:4 Hebrew

BÔcrê tô yâseêk lâk wâtêhæt-kânîdpôyw
in pinion of him he will cover to you and under wings of him
Telhê sinâ mênhêhêhêh ‘âmîtô
you will find refuge shield and buckler faithfulness of him
‘he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.’

91:4 Trakai Karaim

ha gacha-si bila qalqânla-si tuzach-si tûbünä-si tübünä
supervision- POSS3SG with. protection-AOR3SG you-ACC
‘S/he will protect you with his supervision and you will take refuge under his glory; his truth is the shield and armour.’

91:5 Hebrew

lô ê-tirê mippâhâd liyûtî mênhê yâ’dûp yômâm
not you will fear from terror of night from arrow he is flying by day
‘You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day;’

91:5 Trakai Karaim

qorch-hu-Îen qorch-khu-Îen keçâ-nin och-tan uê-adogon këndûz
fear-NEG-AOR-2SG fear-ABL. night-GEN arrow-ABL. ë-CONV daytime
‘You will not be afraid of the fear of night, from the arrow when it is flying by day;’

91:6 Hebrew

middêbêr bô’épêl yahâlôk miqqueteb yâ’dûd sôhûrâyîn:
from pestilence in darkness he stalks from destruction he is wasting noons
‘nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.’

91:6 Trakai Karaim

ölît-tân tuman-da ërrû-âdogon kësmäk-tân tale-âdogon tüš vâcht-Îar-Îa
death-ABL. darkness-LOC walk-CONV killing-ABL. rob-CONV noon time-PL-LOC
‘From death when walking in the darkness; from killing when robbing (takes place) at noontime.’

91:7 Hebrew

yáppûl miṣiddâkâ ‘êlep
he may fall from side of you thousand
urâbêhêhî mâmînêkâ ‘êlepê lô yiggâs
and ten thousand from right hand of you to you not he will come near
‘A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come near you.’

91:7 Trakai Karaim

tûs-sâ son jan-ij-dan min
fall-COND3SG right side-POSS2SG-ABL. thousand
da tümän on jan-ij-dan saja jaman jubu-mast and ten thousand left side-poss abl you-dat evil come near-NEG.aor.3sg
‘When a thousand fall from your right side and ten thousand from your left side, evil will not come near you.’

91:8 Hebrew
raq ba’ēneḵā tabbiṯ waššilāmuṯ rašā’im tirēh
only with eyes of you you-will-look and recompense of wicked ones you will see
‘You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.’

91:8 Trakai Karaim
ančech kōz-lir-ij bila bah-ar-sin
only eye-pl-poss2sg with. look-aor.2sg
da tōläw-i-n raša’-lar-nin kōr-ār-sin
and payment-poss3-acc wicked-pl-gen see-aor.2sg
‘You will only look with your eyes and will see the payment of the wicked ones.’

91:9 Hebrew
kī –attā yhwh(ʾḏ n y) māṣelyôn māt
that you Lord refuge of me Most High you placed habitation of you
‘Because you have made the LORD your refuge, the Most High your habitation;’

91:9 Trakai Karaim
ki sen ha umsunč-um jogar-gy Tenri-gā qoj-du-j om-uj-nu
because you God hope-poss1sg above-der god-dat set-olpast-2sg place-poss2sg-acc
‘Because you, God, my hope; you have set your place to God who is above;’

91:10 Hebrew
lō’ –ṭp’enneh ‘eleḵā rašō wamuḏa lō’ –yqrāḇ boḥoḵēḵā
tag she shall to you evil and scourge not he shall come in tent of you
befall near
‘Evil will not happen to you and illness will not approach your tent.’

91:11 Hebrew
ˁal kapp yim yi nкт pen tiggab en ra l k
on hands they will bear up you lest you dash in stone foot of you
‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’
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91:12 Trakai Karaim
qijasa9 uvuč-lar üstüna ełt-ür-lar seni
like palm (of hand)-PL on.POSTP bear-AOR-3PL you-ACC
magat9 sürnür taş-cha ajaq-ij
lest stumble-AOR-SG stone-DAT foot-POS1SG
‘They will bear you upon their hands, lest your foot stumble against a stone.’

91:13 Hebrew
ˁal- al w p t en tirm r k tirm s wp t ann n
lion and adder you will tread you will trample down young lion and serpent
“You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and serpent you will trample under.’

91:13 Karaim
qart arislan üstüna da azdaga üstüna ur-ür-sün
old lion on.POSTP and dragon on.POSTP walk-AOR-2SG
bas-ar-sin igit arislan-ni da azdaga-ni
tread on-AOR-2SG young lion-ACC and dragon-ACC
‘You will walk upon the old lion and dragon: You will tread on the young lion and dragon.’

91:14 Hebrew
k b aq waˁăp all h
because in me he cleaves in love and I will deliver him
‘Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name.’

91:14 Karaim
kim meni sübsä da qutcharirmin ani
who love-COND s/he
‘Whoever loves me I will rescue her/him: and whoever knows my name I will strengthen her/him.’

91:15 Hebrew
yiqr ˁ n w ˁimmô
he will call me with·him I
‘When he calls me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honor him.’

8 qijasa < Arabic ‘by comparison, by analogy with’.
91:15 Karaim
čagir-sa maja da karub-ir-min anar birgäsinä
call-COND3SG I-DAT and answer-AOR-1SG s/he-DAT together with her/him
men bol-ur-min tarlich-ta kutchar-ir-min ani da sijla-r-min ani
I be-aOR-1SG need-LOC rescue-AOR-1SG s/he-ACC and honor-AOR-1SG s/he-ACC
‘And when s/he calls me, I will answer her/him: I will be together with her/him in need, I will rescue her/him
and I will honor her/him.’

91:16 Hebrew
ˀ rek y m m ˀa b   h ˀarˀ h b    ˁ t
long days I will satisfy him
and I will show him
in salvation of me
‘With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.’

91:16 Karaim
uzun kün-lär-dän tojdur-ur-min ani da körgüz-ür-min ani
long day-PL-ABL satisfy-AOR-1SG s/he-ACC and show-AOR-1SG s/he-ACC mercy-POSS1SG-ACC
‘I will satisfy her/him with long life and will show her/him my mercy.’
Additional line
Jarliga-ij-a senin i an-a-min ej Tenri.
mercy-POSS2SG-DAT you-GEN believe-INTRA-1SG oh God
‘Oh God I believe in your mercy!’

Some comments on the transliteration

The Karaim text given above is a transliteration of the original Hebrew script. Consequently, it is not a transcription representing the actual pronunciation. The Karaim Hebrew script applied in this manuscript is fully vocalized. Eight vowels are distinguished: i, ü, e, ö, ä, u, o and a. Whereas e designates a closed front vowel that occurs as a rule only in first syllables, ä denotes a more open front vowel. No distinction is made in the Hebrew orthography between a front i and a back ī. As a matter of fact, several writing systems adopted for Turkic varieties refrain from marking the difference between i and ī. In spoken language and in the Latin script, the front i is distinguished from the back ī.

Modern Trakai Karaim has the following consonant inventory: b, ch [χ], c [ts], č, d, dž, f, g, h [γ], j [y], k, l, m, n, p, r, s, š, t, v, z, ž. The affricate c occurs only in Russian loans. All consonants have both palatalized and non-palatalized variants. The Hebrew script does not distinguish systematically between all consonants and their palatalized and non-palatalized variants. A version of this text in the present Lithuanian orthography is given in Appendix 3.

The subject-verb-object order

Subjects are often lacking both in Hebrew and in Karaim because the verbs may carry morphology representing the subject. When a (pro)nominal subject is included in the sentence, the Karaim translation copies the Hebrew order. ¹⁰ For instance, in the Hebrew

¹⁰ Biblical Hebrew is a VSO-language but information structure has also influence on the word order. Consequently, non-canonical word orders occur; see, for instance, Bandstra 1998.
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text, the subject yōšēb 'who dwells' introduces the sentence (91:1). The Karaim translation mirrors this order, thus, olturuštču 'dweller' is also in sentence initial position. The same order can be observed in (91:3): ol qutcharir 's/he will rescue'; in (91:10): chastalich jubumast 'illness will not approach'; in (91:15): men bolarmin 'I will be'. When the subject follows the verb in Hebrew, the Karaim translation observes the same order as, for instance, in (91:10): siltav etilmäst saja jamanlic 'evil will not happen to you'.

The ordering of the predicate and its complements in Karaim systematically mirrors the Hebrew original, as well. When the complement follows the verb in Hebrew, Karaim has the same order. See, for instance, the position of the accusative object in (91:9): gojduj ormuju 'you have set your place', and in (91:13): basarsin igit arislanni 'you will tread on the young lion'. The dative complement follows the verb in (91:2): ajtamin (ha)gā 'I will say to God'; in (91:10): jubumast čatirija ‘will not approach your tent’, and in (91:2): ışanamin anar 'I trust her/him'. The locative complement follows the verb in (91:1): olturuštču sijinčinda jogargy tenrinin 'the one who lives in the shelter of God who is above' just like the ablative complement in (9:5): korchmassyn korchubdan 'you will not be afraid of the fear'. In other cases, when the complement precedes the verb, Karaim has again the same ordering. For instance, in (91:1): kōlägäsindä küčlü tenrinin sijinadir 'takes shelter in the shadow of the mighty God'; in (91:4): hašgachasi bila qalqanlar 's/he will protect with his supervision'; in (91:4): skinasi tūbīne sijinirsin 'you will take refuge under his/her glory'; in (91:6): tumanda urnamebogon 'when walking in the darkness'; in (91:8): tōläwin raša lawmakers 'will see the payment of the wicked ones' and in (9:13): qart arislan üstüna da azdaga üstüna ürürsin 'you will walk upon the old lion and dragon'.

The result of this slavish copying of the order of the main sentence constituents does, however, not result in a syntax that is alien to the syntax of the spoken language, which has adopted the dominating typological features of the area, i.e. a free SVO (subject-verb-object)-type (Csató 2000a and 2000b). According to Map 81 in the World atlas of language structures (WALS) (Haspelmath et al. 2005) the Balto-Slavic languages share this word order property. As I have illustrated in several articles, spoken Karaim also displays a relatively free SVO word order (see Csató 2000a, 2000b and 2006). Menz (2006:141) observes the same word order properties for Gagauz: “Although the word order in declarative sentences is relatively free, there is a clear tendency to SVO word order in Gagauz; i.e. sentences with the predicate in final position are scarce in comparison to Turkish and Turkic languages in general.” (see also Johanson 2002)

The genitive-noun order

The Hebrew original manifests N + Genitive order, i.e. the possessor follows the head noun (possessee); see, for instance, (91:1): Basēlēter elyōn ‘in the shelter of the Most High’. The Karaim translation exhibits the same ordering, for instance, in (91:1): sijinčinda jogargy tenrinin ‘in the shelter of God who is above’ the genitive noun tenrinin ‘of God’ follows the head noun. The same order can be observed also when the possessor is a pronoun, as, for instance, senin ‘of you’ in jarligešija senin ‘in your mercy’ in the last additional line.

The N + Genitive order is today one of the possible orders also in spoken Karaim. This is, however, an areal typological feature, as mentioned above. Two different features meet
in the Baltic area, where the Slavic languages Polish, Belarusian and Russian display a N + Genitive order, whereas Lithuanian, Latvian and Finnish have a Genitive + N order. The role of Polish as a contact language is historically and culturally prominent. Earlier, when Polish was the dominating language of the area, Trakai Karaim also employed primarily postposed genitives. Today, when Trakai is a part of Lithuania, the official language, Lithuanian, has become the most dominant language. The ordering of Genitive and N is free in the spoken language today. Both Genitive + N and N + Genitive occur but in formal style the N + Genitive order dominates. This stylistic preference is probably due to the prestige of the biblical texts and the previous high status of Polish. Observe, however, that both Karaim and Gagauz display postposed genitives, although normally the N + Genitive order is observed only in postpredicate position in Turkic languages that have not been exposed to contact influence in this respect (Csató 2006). See the following Gagauz examples.

Gagauz

Köpe-dí-i onum ol-adža-m, anna-dí-n mi?

dog-DIM-POSS3SG he-GEN become-FUT-1SG understand-PST.2SG Q

‘I will be his dog (i.e. his servant), you know?’ (Menz 2006:140)

The same word order in Turkish is not acceptable: *Köpeciği onun olacağım, anladın mı? Thus, we can conclude that the non-Turkic N + Genitive order in Karaim is most probably not due exclusively to the influence of Biblical Hebrew in Karaim but rather an areal phenomena. The fact that this word order was possible in Karaim facilitated the application of this order in the translations. An indirect evidence in favour of this claim is Haki’s Turkish Bible translation of the Hebrew original from 1659. Neudecker (1994:358) observes: ‘Haki renders the Hebrew construct state construction, in which a direct relation between two nouns is expressed by juxtaposition (the modified element preceding the modifier, e.g. šm hšnyt = ‘name’ + ‘the second’, i.e. ‘the name of the second one’), with a Turkish construction in which the modifier precedes.’ Neudecker gives the following examples:

The genitive-possessive construction:

hakk ta'álá-‘nη ęvneș

the-Lord may-He-be-exalted-GEN house-POSS3SG-CASE

as against Hebrew:

bbyt YHWH

in-the-house-of the-Lord

The possessive construction:

yroham q demás

Yeroham his son-POSS3SG

as against Hebrew:

bu yrhm

son-of Yeroham”

It can be assumed that the translation does not copy the Hebrew order because the N + Genitive order is not acceptable in Ottoman Turkish.
Adpositions

The two basic types of adpositions are postpositions and prepositions. Turkic languages are typically postpositional, just as two other non-Indoeuropean languages of the Circum-Baltic area, Estonian and Finnish. Slavic languages and Standard European languages are dominantly prepositional. Karaim has maintained this Turkic property and employs postpositions albeit it has copied some prepositions from Slavic. It seems that this typological property is relatively conservative and less influenced by contact (Csató 2000b). It has to be added here that the position of secondary postpositions may follow the N + Genitive order.

Biblical Hebrew is a prepositional language employing several different types of prepositions, e.g. independent and inseparable ones. Hebrew prepositions are rendered in Karaim either by case suffixes, as, for instance, in (91:1): ḫašēl ‘in shadow-of’ is translated as kōlägäsindā [shadow-3POSS-LOC], or by postpositions, as, for instance, in (91:12): ʾal-kappāyim ‘on hands’ is translated as uvučlar üstünä [palm (of hand)-PL-POSTP].

The order of adjective and noun

The order of adjective and noun is N + Adjective in Biblical Hebrew. Languages spoken in the Circum-Baltic area observe usually the order Adjective + N. This is also the normal Turkic word order. Karaim Adjective + N order exhibits this typical areal and also Turkic feature. Some examples from the Karaim translation illustrate this word order property: in (91:1): küčlü tenrinin ‘of the mighty God’, in (91:13): ʾigit arislanni ‘the young lion’, in (91:16): uzun künlärđän ‘through long days’. Observe, however, that the translated Hebrew expressions are not any N + Adjective phrases.

Conclusion

Karaim biblical translations show peculiarities which can be explained as a result of the one-to-one mapping of the structure of the Hebrew original. However, the word order properties of the spoken language cannot be traced back solely to the influence of the Bible translations. They are results of changes induced by contact with the non-Turkic languages of the area, where the Karaim speakers live. It is accidentally the case that several of the typological features, which have been acquired through intensive copying from non-Turkic languages, are also characteristic of the Hebrew biblical texts. Such features are the basic VO-order, the N + Genitive order, and the use of relative clauses introduced by a relativizer. The other Turkic language of this linguistic area, Gagauz, has acquired the same features. On the other hand, there is no evidence that spoken Karaim acquired any feature of the translations that are obvious copies of Hebrew features and are found only in Bible translations, e.g. the use of ol ‘s/he, it’ as a definite article.

It is obvious that this typological coincidence between areal features and certain properties of biblical Hebrew reinforced each other. The fact that Gagauz has undergone
the same syntactic changes makes it plausible to regard the influence of the contact languages as decisive. Further analyses of the biblical translations are necessary in order to get a better insight into this question (Zajączkowski 1981). I refer to a forthcoming edition of a Halich Karaim bible translation; see Olach (forthcoming).

Abbreviations

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<td>Singular</td>
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<td>T.</td>
<td>Karaim in Trakai</td>
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References


Appendices

Appendix 1. The Hebrew text in Siddur 1892:70.

[Image of the Hebrew text]
Appendix 2. The Trakai Karaim translation of Psalm 91. Manuscript. (Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, catalogue number F305-14, folio page numbers 4r-4v)
Appendix 3. The Trakai Karaim translation of Psalm 91 in the present Lithuanian orthography

This psalm was published by Firkovičius (1998:25) in a slightly different translation.

91:1 Olturuvču syjynčynda Joharhy Tieńriniń; kioiliagiasńdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:2 Ajtamyn Tieńrigia išanęcm da biekligim; Tieńrim išanamyn Anar.
91:3 Ki Ol kutcharyr sieni; tuzachtan iliniadohon; oliattiań da kavšarlychtan.
91:4 Hašgachasy byla kalkanlar sieni da škinsy tiubiuńia syjynrysyn; kalkan da kuńeria kiertiğgi Anyn.
91:5 Korchmassyn korchuvdan kiečianıń oktan učadohon kiuńdiuź.
91:6 Olturuvču synčynch Kiuńriniń; kioliagiasińdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:7 Antecnıń Ki iñgjy kiuńjardiań; kioliagiasińdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:8 Korchmassyn korchuvdan kiečianıń oktan učadohon kiuńdiuź.
91:9 Olturuvču syjynčynda Joharhy Tieńriniń; kioiliagiasńdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:10 Korchmassyn korchuvdan kiečianıń oktan učadohon kiuńdiuź.
91:11 Kiečianıń Ki iñgjy kiuńjardiań; kioliagiasińdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:12 Kiečianıń Ki iñgjy kiuńjardiań; kioliagiasińdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:13 Kiečianıń Ki iñgjy kiuńjardiań; kioliagiasińdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:14 Kiečianıń Ki iñgjy kiuńjardiań; kioliagiasińdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:15 Kiečianıń Ki iñgjy kiuńjardiań; kioliagiasińdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.
91:16 Kiečianıń Ki iñgjy kiuńjardiań; kioliagiasińdia Kiučliu Tieńriniń syjynadyr.

Appendix 4. Psalm 91 in Turkish

91:1 Yüceler Yücesi’nin barınağında oturan, Her Şeye Gücü Yeten’in gölgesinde barınır.
91:2 “O benim sığmağım, kalemdir” derim RAB için, “Tanrı’ndır, O’na güvenirim.”
91:3 Çünkü O seni avcı tuzağından, Ölümcül hastalıktan kurtarır.
91:4 Seni kanatlarınızın altında altır, Onların altında sığınır. O’nun sadakati senin kalkamanı, siperin olur.
91:5 Ne gecenin dehşetinden korkarsın, Ne gündüz ucan oktan
91:6 Ne karalıktı dolaşan hastalıktan, Ne de öğlenin yok eden kırıldan.
91:7 Yanında bin kişi. Sağında on bin kişi kırılsa bile, Sana dokunmaz.
91:8 Sen yalnız kendi gözlerinle seyredecek, Kötülerin cezasını göreceksin.
91:9 Sen RAB’bi kendine sığınak, Yüceler Yücesi’ni konut edindiğin için,
91:10 Başına kötülüük gelmeyecek, Çadrına felaket yaklaşmayacak.
91:11 Çünkü Tanrı meleklerine buyurulverecek, Gideceğin her yerde seni korunurlar diye.
91:12 O bende talep etmektedir, O bende talep etmektedir.
91:13 Aslanın, kobranın üzerine basıp geçecek, Genç aslanı, yılanı çığneyeceksin.

“Beni sevdiği için Onu kurtارacağım” diyor RAB, “Beni iyi tanıdığı için Ona kale olacağım.
Bana seslenince onu yanıtlayacağım, Şikintıda onun yanında olacağım, Kurtarıp yücelteceğim onu.
Onu uzun ömürle doyuracak, Ona kurtarışı göstereceğim.”