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Karaim

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Introduction. Turkic languages in Europe

As the great majority of the approximately 130 million Turkic speakers live outside the geographic borders of Europe — in the Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Southern and Northern Siberia, Mongolia and China — Turkic is duly regarded as a typically non-European language family. The European Turkic languages are either associated with a standard language mostly spoken in a non-European geographic region, such as Turkish, or lack a political representation that could play an independent role in Europe, such as the republics of Chuvashia, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan, which constitute parts of the Russian Federation. The small Turkic peoples have, at most, minority rights. This should not, however, blur the fact that there are several million speakers of European Turkic languages and their varieties.

Which are the European Turkic languages? Where are they spoken? Starting from the eastern border of Europe, we find a chain of Turkic languages extending from the Ural mountains to Western and Northern Europe: Tatar and Bashkir between the Urals and the Volga river, Chuvash in the Volga region, Crimean Tatar, Gagauz on the northern and western shores of the Black Sea, Turkish in the European parts of Turkey and in the Balkans, Karaim in the Ukraine and Lithuania, and a small group of Tatars in Finland. The Northern Caucasian Turkic languages such as Karachay-Balkar, Noghay and Kumyk are situated on the border of Europe and Western Asia. Turkish has been more recently introduced as the language of immigrant groups in Northern and Western Europe, which today constitute large and dynamic linguistic communities in the European Union with well over two million speakers.

The largest European Turkic language is of course Turkish, the official language of the Republic of Turkey. Tatar follows with over 5 million speakers in the Russian Federation. It "has been one of the most firmly established Turkic languages. In the post-Soviet era, the language has consolidated its position further, acquiring more social

functions than it had before" (Johanson 2001a: 721). Bashkir and Chuvash have about a million speakers each. Most of the Crimean Tatar speakers were deported to non-European territories, i.e. to Uzbekistan, during World War II. Since 1989 they have been returning to the Crimea but their present number in Europe is very uncertain.

The small European Turkic languages are spoken by less than 250,000 persons. The number of Gagauz speakers is estimated to be about 250,000 (Menz 1999). Kumyk has approximately 130,000 speakers. The Karachay-Balkars were deported during World War II and allowed to return after 1956. Their number may presently be around 100,000.

The linguistic status of Krimchak is not quite clear. The Jewish Krimchaks (*qırım-čaq*) lived for centuries in the Crimea, mainly in Qarasubazar (Belogorsk) and Simferopol. Some groups lived in the Caucasus region. The ethnonym was used after the annexation of the Crimea by Russia in the 19th century to distinguish the group from other Jewish immigrant groups. The Krimchaks spoke a variety of Crimean Tatar that displayed certain features of the so-called steppe dialect. It has sometimes been called its Krimchak ethnolect. From the end of the 19th century on, many Krimchaks left the Crimea. Many emigrated to Turkey and the USA to escape the civil war and the subsequent famine. Simferopol became the centre of the group remaining in the Crimea. Many moved to the industrial city of Kerch in the 1930s. There were about 8,000 Krimchaks prior to World War II. More than 5,500 persons, about 70%, were killed during the German occupation of the Crimea. Today there are about 1,800 Krimchaks, nearly 1,200 in the Crimea. Some groups live in other regions of the Ukraine as well as in Russia, Israel and the USA. The number of speakers is uncertain. Krimchak also exhibits interesting non-Turkic typological properties (Erdal 2001).

The two Karaim dialects, which will be presented in this volume, represent the smallest European Turkic language with only a very few speakers. The Lithuanian dialect is highly endangered, while the Western Ukrainian dialect is moribund.

All the European Turkic languages have written, standard varieties. The official standard Turkish of Turkey is used in all diaspora communities. The predecessor of modern Turkish, Ottoman, was written in Arabic script. The present Latin-based Turkish orthography was introduced in 1928 as one of the most important innovations of the Turkish language reform, motivated and guided by a conscious political will to achieve more linguistic and cultural affinity with Europe. Ottoman was a literary standard written language used mainly in the Ottoman Empire. Chagatay, the other large trans-

regional Turkic literary standard was also replaced by new written standards of new national languages, Tatar and several others. The history of written Tatar is typical also for the other Turkic languages spoken on the territory of today's Russia: Bashkir, Chuvash, Karachay-Balkar and Gagauz. The Tatar language has been written since the middle of the nineteenth century, first in Arabic script until 1927, then in Latin script and later with Cyrillic alphabet. After the fall of the Soviet Union the introduction of a new Latin alphabet has been brought up for discussion.

The literary tradition of the Karaim language goes back to the 11th century when the first Bible translations were made into Karaim. These translations, called *pešatlar*, were passed on from generation to generation. Karaim was written in Hebrew script both in religious writings and in secular texts (e.g. private correspondences) up to the 20th century. This orthography was replaced by a Latin based alphabet adjusted to the dominating standard script of Polish. In the Soviet period, a Cyrillic alphabet replaced the Polish-based one. In the 1990s the Lithuanian community introduced a new writing system adjusted to the Lithuanian orthography.

The European Turkic linguistic communities have very different cultural affinities. The largest communities are predominantly Muslim, including the majority of the Turkish speakers, the Tatars, and the Bashkirs. Other large groups are Christian: the Gagauz, the Chuvash, part of the Tatars, and the Turkish-speaking Assyrians. The Krimchak are non-Ashkenazi rabbinic Jews. The Karaims are believers of the Old Testament. Their ethnonym (Karaim *karay*) is derived from the Hebrew verb *qarā* meaning 'read' or 'call, invite'. The plural form *qarāim* can be interpreted either as 'readers of the Holy Scripture of the Old Testament' or as 'callers (to the true faith)' from the alternate meaning (cf. Zajaczkowski 1990). The religious movement of the Karaims does not recognise the authority of the post-biblical tradition incorporated in the Talmud and the later rabbinic works. Their religious faith, also called the Karaite confession, is officially acknowledged in Israel. The Turkic Karaim religious practice and thinking are significantly different from those represented by the Karaites in Israel and bear traits of early Islamic and more recent Christian influence.

Most of the European Turkic languages belong to the so-called Common Turkic languages, i.e., the diachronically defined core group of the Turkic language family that split up into the Oghuz, the Kipchak and the Uyghur branches. Tatar, Bashkir, Karaim, Noghay, Kumyk, and Karachay-Balkar represent the Northwestern or Kipchak branch

of the Turkic language family, whereas Gagauz is a member of the Southwestern, i.e. Oghuz branch. Gagauz is genetically so close to (Ottoman) Turkish that it has been regarded as a Turkish dialect. The genetic status of the Turkic variety spoken by the Krimchaks is somewhat unclear. In any case, whether it is considered to be a Kipchak or an Oghuz variety, it is a descendant of Common Turkic. Chuvash differs considerably from the Common Turkic languages and constitutes a distinct branch of its own. The mutual intelligibility between the descendant languages of Common Turkic is even today relatively high. Chuvash, on the other hand, is not intelligible to speakers of the Common Turkic languages.

A further distinction divides the above-mentioned languages into central and peripheral groups. Tatar, Bashkir and Chuvash, Karachay-Balkar, Kumyk and Noghay are spoken in the central Turkic linguistic area or relatively close to it. The other languages and most transplanted varieties occupy peripheral positions on the Turkic linguistic map. Thus, Turkish and its varieties in the Balkans and Western Europe, Gagauz, Karaim and Tatar in Finland, Romania and Bulgaria are peripheral languages, which both have both archaic features and have undergone considerable contact-induced changes.

Being on the periphery does not necessarily mean being apart from the other Turkic languages. Turkish, for instance, is on the western border of the Turkic world, but still in close contact with other Turkic neighbours. Some of the small languages, on the other hand, are spoken in predominantly non-Turkic areas, far away from other Turkic cognates. For instance, the Karaim dialects are spoken in so-called linguistic islands.

Karaim is distinguished from the other European Turkic languages by being the smallest, most endangered European Turkic language, the only Turkic language spoken today in Western Ukraine and Lithuania, the code of a unique religious confession with a long tradition of employing a Hebrew-based script, and a Western Kipchak peripheral Turkic language spoken in two Turkic linguistic islands.

External Linguistics. The Turkic Karaims

Their communities

So far only two Karaim communities have been mentioned, the Lithuanian located mainly in Trakai, Vilnius and Panevežys, and the Western Ukrainian, located today

only in the historical town of Halich in Galicia. These two communities still have speakers with full competence in their dialects. There are, however, a number of other Karaim communities, which have played and still play important roles in the cultural, religious and social life of the Karaim people. The largest and oldest one is the Crimean Karaim community. It has today a vital community life inspired by their wish to practise the Karaim religion. The community is in possession of a rich Crimean Karaim historical heritage, e.g. the first Karaim settlement of Chufut Kale, the beautiful *kenesa* (Karaim temple) in Gözleve (Jevpatorija) and a relatively large collection of Karaim books which have partly been donated by the community in Halich. A great number of the Crimean Karaims living in Moscow participate in a well-organised community life.

The community in Poland has played a leading cultural and scientific role, especially in the post-war times, as several outstanding Karaim scholars such as Ananiasz Zajączkowski, Włodzimierz Zajączkowski, Alexander Dubiński and other Karaim academicians lived and worked there. The community still has a high status among the Karaims. Another centre of Karaim life has been Paris, where a group of Karaim emigrants gathered and where the famous scholar, Şimon Şişman, lived and worked until his death.

The generous support of well-to-do emigrant Karaims has contributed to the maintenance of the communities in the old world. The communities cultivate a common identity, both ethnically as Turks and religiously as believers of the Old Testament.

Their history

Little is known about the origins of the Karaims. It has been claimed, mostly by Karaim scholars, that they are descendants of Turkic tribes that lived in the tribal union of the Khazar Empire, which was established in the 6th century AD and had its greatest political power in the 8th century in the southeastern regions of today's European Russia. As the Karaim religion was founded by Anan ben David in the second half of the 8th century, and as it is a historic fact that the Khazar khagan and a great part of the ruling class adopted Judaism in about 740, Karaim scholars have endeavoured to prove that the religion of the Khazars was Karaism rather than rabbinic Judaism. Some Karaim scholars trace back the Karaims' origin to the Cumans, a Western branch of the Kipchak Turks. Their argumentation is based on the fact that the Jewish traveller Petahyah of Ratisbon, who at the end of the twelfth century travelled in the territory of the Cumans, in the so-

called Land of Qedar, reported about heretic Jewish groups whom he had met there. Some scholars have interpreted this as a reference to Karaim groups. Due to lack of strong evidence, there is no consensus about the Khazar or direct Cuman origin of the Karaim communities (Golden 1998). Nevertheless, these hypotheses deserve our interest, as they have played a formative role in the Karaims' identity and have been long-running topics in their literature. Moreover, the close linguistic affinity between the Karaim and the Western Kipchak languages is unquestionable.

The oldest known Turkic speaking Karaim communities were located in the Crimea. The Karaim diaspora in Galicia and Volhynia, i.e. in the present Western Ukraine, are considered to go back to the times of the Mongol invasion in the 13th century. By the end of the 17th century, there were about thirty Turkic Karaim communities. Their number was, however, drastically reduced as a result of epidemics and wars in the 18th century. The communities gained support from the administrative and political authorities of their respective countries. They were given privileges, and their independent status as a religious community was acknowledged (Dubiński 1991). The most important Karaim communities in Galicia and Volhynia before World War II were to be found in the old towns of Halich (Galich), on the upper Dniester and in the town of Lutsk on the Styr River. The Karaims were invited to enter Lithuania by the Great Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas, famous for his victory over the Teutonic Order in the Battle of Grunwald (1410). Karaim families from Crimea settled down in Trakai on the shore of the Lake Galve, where Vytautas had his castle. After about six hundred years this place is still the centre of Karaim life. Another significant settlement in Lithuania was in Panevežys.

The fate of the communities in Galicia, Volhynia and Lithuania have always been subject to the will of the great political powers in the region, Poland, Lithuania, the Austrian and Russian Empires, the long-reaching political ambitions of the Germans and later of the Soviet superstate. After World War I, Galicia was attached to Poland. At that time the Karaim communities in Trakai and Vilnius belonged to Poland. When the Soviet State annexed these territories during World War II, many Karaims left the old settlements and settled down in Poland. In Soviet times, the Crimean, Western Ukrainian and Lithuanian Karaim communities lived in the same state. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the small remnants of the Karaim communities in Lithuania and Western Ukraine became separated. The remaining two groups of speakers in Trakai and Vilnius, on the one hand, and the speakers in Halich, on the other hand, became

Lithuanian and Ukrainian citizens, respectively. Families are today split; communication beyond the borders of the national states is limited by economic and practical factors.

The Turkic varieties spoken by the communities on the Crimea, Galicia and Lithuania have been different in many respects, probably from the very beginning of their history. Three dialects used to be distinguished: the Crimean dialect, the Halich dialect, spoken in Western Ukraine, and the Trakai (earlier called Troki) dialect spoken in the territory of the present Lithuanian state. The standardisation processes that took place within the three communities and contact-induced changes deepened further the old differences. The languages influencing the Karaim dialects were both the local dialects and the standard varieties of the Polish, Russian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian languages. In the Crimea, contact with the Turkic languages, most importantly with Crimean Tatar and Ottoman, also played an important role. Different contact situations can explain certain dialectal differences. The community in Panevežys, for instance, belonged to Lithuania before World War II. Therefore, their variety was first of all influenced by Lithuanian, and not by Polish. Hebrew, the language of scholarship and religion, has also contributed some features, mostly lexical ones.

The Lithuanian Karaim community

The Lithuanian community consists of about 250 Karaims; about fifty of them have full or partial competence in the language. The Karaims are officially considered 'original inhabitants' of the country (cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 1992). The state supports the community in its effort to develop and practice the Karaim religion and culture. The Centre for Stateless Cultures, which was opened at Vilnius University in September 1999, offers courses in Karaim. The religious and administrative leader of the Karaim community is the so-called Ullu Hazzan, a title presently held by Juzef Firkovich. The Karaim Religious Society is the main administrative organ of the community and the legal owner of the community properties. The Lithuanian Karaim Cultural Society is responsible for taking care of the cultural heritage. The centres of community life are Trakai and Vilnius, where the two remaining *kenesas* are to be found.

The *kenesa* in Trakai was the only one not closed down and confiscated by the Soviet authorities. The *kenesa* in Vilnius was returned after 1991 and restored with the

generous help of the Lithuanian state. On religious holidays, members of the Lithuanian Karaim community and many Karaims from Poland gather in the two *kenesas*.

One of the factors stimulating community life is the attractiveness of the traditional Karaim settlement in Trakai, which is situated in the middle of a beautiful lake district. These settings play an important role in motivating the younger generation to maintain their Karaim identity. Karaims from other communities often come here for a holiday.

Many of the houses in the Karaim Street are still in the possession of Karaim families. This constitutes the setting in which it is still natural to speak Karaim. Even people who do not know Karaim greet each other in the language of this street. The *midrash*, the Karaim school, has been returned to the community and now serves as a community house. Many activities are organised here, religious classes and also cultural activities. An amateur theatre group met here regularly in 1997 in order to rehearse a new play written in Karaim, which was performed in the theatre. The Karaims have two cemeteries in Trakai and one in Vilnius. Several Karaims, who had lived in other countries, are buried here in their family graves. The museum, which is also located in the street, opened in 1997 with a new permanent exhibition on the Karaims' history and culture.

Karaim speakers of Lithuania are multilingual, also having command of the regional and transregional dominant languages Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian. Moreover, a few Karaims still have some fragmentary knowledge of the holy language, Hebrew. The functional domain of the Karaim language is restricted to everyday conversational situations in the family and to contacts with a few Karaim friends. Karaim also plays an important role in the religious practice, since hymns and prayers are mostly in Karaim. The speakers have been trained in writing and reading Karaim, but their access to written literature is limited today.

The Western Ukrainian community

The community in Halich is in a less fortunate situation. Only six Karaims living in Halich still speak the language. Three of them, all over seventy, use the language on a daily basis in their personal contact with each other. There are no younger Karaim speakers, so that the language is moribund. Five Karaims still live in the Karaim Street situated in the centre of the town. The fact that they still live in the old Karaim houses is very important for them in keeping their identity. The administrative head of the community is Janina Eszwowicz.

The beautiful *kenesa* in Halich was demolished in the 1980s. The decision was surely motivated by practical reasons, but the consequences are dramatic for the few old people who have remained there. The existence of the house of prayer was extremely important for this little group of old people, who have now no possibility to practice their religion. Earlier, when the *kenesa* was there, some learned Karaim would come from Poland or Lithuania, and they could get together with the Halich community to read the prayers in the *kenesa*. The children who are growing up now have never heard any Karaim prayer.

The revitalisation of the Karaim dialects

Thus, most Karaim speakers today speak the Lithuanian dialect. Two thirds of them are over 60 years old. The language is highly endangered, but thanks to recent efforts of revitalisation, it is not necessarily moribund. In spite of the modest number of speakers, the Karaim community has been very active in the last years. This has also been stimulated by the new political situation after the establishment of the independent Lithuanian state. The Karaims seek their own role and identity in the cultural and national renewal of their country.

The maintenance of their mother tongue is the most urgent task facing the Karaims today. The former Ullu Hazzan, Mykolas Firkovičius (1924-2000) published a textbook containing a grammar and texts for children. A project aiming at the documentation of the spoken language has been carried out at the Linguistics Institute of the University of Cologne with the financial help of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. A non-commercial multimedia CD has been published by the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies to help young Karaims to learn about their language (Csató & Nathan 2001).

Two important events serve as landmarks of the revival of the Karaim communities. In 1997 the Karaims and Tatars celebrated the six hundredth anniversary of their settlements in Lithuania. On the occasion of this celebration an international conference was convened to discuss the history and culture of the two Turkic minorities. The Karaims in Halich celebrated the 1000th anniversary of Halich, and an international conference in September 1998 was dedicated to subjects including the history and language of the Karaim community in Halich. Karaims coming from all over the world participated in great numbers at these events.

The most important task today is the transmission of the language to the youngest generation. The grandparents who still at least understand the language play an important role in this process. There are new publications helping the children to acquire the language, and some Karaims give the children lessons in Karaim.

The history of research on the Karaim language

The Karaims early attracted the attention of protestant scholars in Europe. A number of western scholars visited them in order to discuss questions of religion. The Swedish professor Gustaf Peringer Lillieblad, who in 1690 travelled to the Karaims in Lithuania and Poland at the order of the Swedish king Charles XI, put down the first Karaim words in Latin script. In his work *Epistola de karaitis Lithuaniae* he commented upon the Karaim language and quoted as a sample the first verses of Genesis in Karaim (cf. Şişman 1952 and Johanson in print). The Karaim language, however, was not studied in a scientific way until the 19th century, when Wilhelm von Radloff started to carry out linguistic research in the Karaim communities (Radloff 1888).

In the 20th century, the two Polish scholars Tadeusz Kowalski and Johann Grzegorzewski learned Karaim and studied literary and religious traditions in the Karaim communities. Scholars of Karaim origin such as Ananiasz Zajączkowski, Włodzimierz Zajączkowski and Aleksander Dubiński have played outstanding roles in the study of the Karaim language and culture. Omeljan Pritsak presented Karaim in the well-known standard handbook of Turcology *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*. Nikolaj A. Baskakov contributed several studies and also led the editorial board of a comprehensive Karaim dictionary. Kenesbaj Musaev is the author of a Karaim grammar and of many valuable articles on different aspects of the Karaim language. It is, of course, not possible to give due credit to all contributions in the field; those interested can find a bibliography compiled by Aleksander Dubiński published in the Karaim-Russian-Polish dictionary (Dubiński 1994).

Internal Linguistics

The typological features of the Lithuanian Karaim language

Karaim has undergone considerable changes induced by language contact. The adoption of new structural and lexical properties has led to significant convergence with the dominant linguistic type of the area. Both Karaim dialects share a number of typological properties with cognate Turkic languages and, at the same time, bear a strong impact of the non-Turkic, i.e. Slavic and Baltic, dominant languages.

In the following, I will contrast the Lithuanian Karaim dialect with the typical Turkic typological features as outlined by Johanson (see Johanson 1992 in German, 2001b in English). The Western Ukrainian and the Lithuanian dialects differ significantly. I cannot here describe these differences in detail but will briefly mention some of the most important ones. For the sake of better readability, I have not marked the places that contain direct quotations from Johanson (2001b), i.e. the names of the typical Turkic features and their short descriptions. The reader is referred to Johanson's book for more detail. Johanson's list contains the following 46 properties regarded as common features of the Turkic languages. The examples taken will be taken from the Lithuanian dialect.

1. Synthetic structure. Turkic languages have a highly synthetic structure employing numerous morphosyntactic categories with extremely generalised contents. Karaim differs from this Turkic type by being less synthetic. The verbal paradigm is considerably reduced. Several typical Turkic categories are missing; see more about this below. The nominal paradigm contains the six cases typical of Turkic: the nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, locative and ablative. A Karaim innovation is to employ the enclitic forms of the postposition *-ba* 'with' as a case category that renders the functions of the Slavic instrumental case in expressions such as *bolma karayba* [become /be-INFINITIVE Karaim-WITH] 'to become/be a Karaim', cf. Russian *stat' karaimom* [become-INFINITIVE Karaim-INSTRUMENTAL] 'to become a Karaim'. The postposition *-ba* 'with' can also be governed by a postposition or an adverb, e.g. *m'en'-im-b'e yanaša* [I-GENITIVE-WITH next to] 'next to me'; compare Russian *rjadom so mnoj* [next to with I-INSTRUMENTAL] 'next to me'. The use of some suffixes, e.g. the possessive suffixes, is optional in several constructions, which makes Karaim expressions statistically less synthetic, e.g. *b'iz'n'in' ata* or *b'iz'n'in' ata-miz* [we-GEN father (-IPL.POSSESSIVE)] 'our father'. The number of productive derivational suffixes is rather limited, but some

new ones have been copied from the contact languages, e.g. *-kolek* to derive indefinite pronouns, e.g. *n'á-d'á-kolek* 'anything', compare with Polish *-kolwiek*.

2. Suffixes. Bound units are postpositive in Turkic, i.e. they are suffixes, not prefixes, infixes or replacive units. Karaim is also a dominantly suffixing language, e.g. *karay-lar-ya* [Karaim-PLURAL-DATIVE] 'to the Karaims'. Some prefixes have, however, been copied from Polish: the superlative particle *nay-*, e.g. *nay-yaxši-rax* [SUPERLATIVE-good-COMPARATIVE] 'best', or the prefix *po-* in expressions such as *po-tanda* 'the day after tomorrow' and *po-t'ún'ág'ún'* 'the day before yesterday'. But prefixation is still the exception.

3. Juxtaposition. Morphemes are separated by distinct boundaries, i.e. having a low degree of fusion. The main strategy employed in the Karaim morphology is also juxtaposition, e.g. *öb'-uš'-m'á-d'i-l'ár* [kiss-RECIPROCAL-NEGATION-PAST-PLURAL] 'they did not kiss each other'. The degree of fusion is not greater than in typical Turkic languages and, thus, the segmentation of inflected forms is mostly mechanic.

4. Limited and predictable variation of morphemes. There is no difference between Karaim and other Turkic languages in this respect. For instance, negation is marked by *-ma* or *-m'á* according to the simple rule of frontness harmony. Thus, the suffix is [-front] after a [-front] stem: *Al-ma!* [take-NEGATION-IMPERATIVE.3SINGULAR] 'Don't take (it)!' but [+front] after a [+front] stem: *K'el'-m'á!* [come-NEGATION-IMPERATIVE.3-SINGULAR] 'Don't come!'

5. Syllabicity of the suffixes. The suffixes frequently — yet by no means always — encompass at least one syllable each. There is no significant difference between Karaim and other Turkic languages in this respect; see the examples above. There are some exceptions, e.g. the present tense marker *-a* and the third person marker *-t* in forms such as *bar-a-t* [go-PRESENT-3SINGULAR] 'goes'. The proportion between syllabic and non-syllabic suffixes is still typically Turkic.

6. Successive suffix modification. The suffixes are usually organised in such a way that each one semantically modifies the entire lexical segment preceding it. There is no difference between Karaim and other Turkic languages in this respect. Consider the example *ata-lar-imiž-ya* [father-PLURAL-1PLURAL.POSSESSIVE-DATIVE] 'to our fathers'. The plural modifies the nominal stem; this extended stem is further modified by the possessive suffix, and the whole expression is modified by the case suffix.

7. Loosely connected suffixes. In the Turkic type, some suffixes can modify an entire coordinative construction, even though they are merely attached to its final element, e.g. Turkish *sağ ve soldakiler* = (*sağ ve sol*)-*da-ki-ler* 'those on the right and those on the left side'. This phenomenon is not observed in modern spoken Karaim.

8. Enclitic particles. Turkic has enclitic particles, free grammatical units with a strongly generalising function, e.g. postpositions that have not yet evolved into suffixes or, although they have suffixed variants, display phonological peculiarities (unaccentability, partially developed sound harmony). This is also true for Karaim. Even the postposition *-ba*, which is used as a case suffix, has preserved the morphological and phonological properties of an enclitic particle. It is unaccentable, and it is attached to the genitive of pronominal categories, e.g. *m'en'im'-b'e* [I-GENITIVE-WITH] 'with me'.

9. Morphologically less distinct adjective categories. The category of adjective as a morphological word class is less explicit than in a number of contact languages. The native Karaim adjectives share this Turkic characteristic. However, adjectives are often copied with their non-Turkic adjective morphology, *hiyar karayski* [cucumber Karaim-ADJECTIVE.SUFFIX (< Polish adjective)] 'Karaim cucumber', *Alar povin' ed'l'ár bol-ma kačestvenni* [they obligation PROVERB-PAST-3PLURAL become/be-INFINITIVE qualitative-ADJECTIVE.SUFFIX (< Russian adjective)] 'They had to be qualitative'.

10. Suffixless indefinite case. In the nominal declension, the nominal stem is suffixless and acts as the indefinite case. This is also true for Karaim, e.g. nominative *ulan*, accusative *ulan-ni*, genitive *ulan-nin*, dative *ulan-ya*, locative *ulan-da*, ablative *ulan-dan*.

11. Comparison patterns. In Turkic, comparison in the sense of gradation is often constructed according to the following pattern: standard of comparison + ablative suffix + property compared (roughly: 'X-from big' = 'bigger than X'). The word for the property compared is in the basic form and, therefore, not a formal comparative. Karaim employs a comparative suffix *-rak*, e.g. *yaxši-rax* [good-COMPARATIVE] 'better'. The superlative is expressed by a particle and the comparative, e.g. *enk yaxši-rax* or *nay yaxši-rax* 'best'. The Turkic pattern of comparison is used, e.g. *m'en'-d'an' yaxši-rax* [I-ABLATIVE good-COMPARATIVE] 'better than I'. Moreover, new non-Turkic syntactic patterns employing a comparative junctor have been copied, e.g., *yaxši-rax n'eč'ik m'en'* [good-COMPARATIVE as I] 'better than I'.

12. Compound nouns. The prevailing type of compound nouns follows the following possessive pattern: noun + noun possessive suffix third person. This way of com-

pounding is employed in Karaim as well, e.g. *yaz-baš-ī* [summer-beginning-3POSSESSIVE] 'spring'. A further non-Turkic type is illustrated by the example *savuxturuvču t'iš'-l'ār'-n'in'* [doctor tooth-PLURAL-GENITIVE] 'dentist'. The construction deviates from corresponding Turkic ones with respect to the order of the constituents, the genitive marking of the second constituent and the use of the plural. A hypothetical Turkic construction would be *t'iš savuxturuvču-su* [tooth doctor-3SINGULAR.POSSESSIVE]. Juxtaposition is also used as a compounding strategy, e.g. *d'er's'k'iy sad ü'r'at'iv'č'ü* [nursery-school teacher] 'nursery-school teacher'.

13. Genitive construction. Genitive constructions (possessor + possessed entity) mostly adhere to the following combinational pattern: genitive attribute + head possessive suffix. This construction is also applied in Karaim, e.g. *T'en'r'i-n'in' ad-ī* [God-GENITIVE name-3.SINGULAR.POSSESSIVE]. Furthermore, a number of alternative patterns occur in Karaim. The genitive attribute may precede or follow the possessed, and the possessive suffix may be missing, e.g. *b'iz'-n'in' b'iylik* [we-GENITIVE country] or *b'iylik b'iz'-n'in'* or *b'iz'-n'in' b'iylik'im'iz'* [we-GENITIVE country-1.PLURAL.POSSESSIVE] or *b'iylik'im'iz' b'iz'n'in'*. The genitive attribute may be preceded by another attribute of the head noun, e.g. *uñlu b'iz'-n'in' b'iylik'im'iz'* [great we-GENITIVE country-1.PLURAL.POSSESSIVE] 'our great country'.

14. Absence of agreement marking on adjective attributes. As in other Turkic languages, there is normally no agreement marking on adjective attributes in Karaim. See also 30.

15. The singular after cardinal numbers. The limited agreement marking also implies that nouns are generally not plural-marked when their plurality is expressed by quantifiers such as cardinal numbers. This is true for Karaim as well, e.g. *ek'i alma* 'two apples'. However, the noun is in the plural, as a rule, after *k'öp* 'many', e.g. *k'öp yih-lar* [many year-PLURAL] 'many years', *k'öp sayış-lar* [many memory-PLURAL] 'many memories'. This also occurs in other Turkic languages.

16. Left-branching sentence syntax. Turkic languages are typically relatively rigid SOV languages. Karaim, on the other hand, observes a typically right-branching syntax. The basic word order is SVO with relatively free word order, e.g. *Ol al-ir e-d'i baxča-ni gañlax-lar-dan uçuz-rax* [he take-AORIST COPULA-PAST3SG garden-ACCUSATIVE priest-PLURAL-ABLATIVE cheap-COMPARATIVE] 'He was renting the garden cheaper from the Catholic priests'.

17. Successive modification of the constituents of the sentence. The arrangement of units in the Turkic sentence-syntactic chain also quite clearly reflects semantic relationships. A syntactically dependent constituent often also semantically modifies the head. In this head-oriented modification structure, the clausal constituents remain located within their domains, i.e. they are not separated from their modificates. The order of the constituents in Karaim does not observe this strict rule. Neither in nominal phrases, nor in verbal or clausal structures is the head obligatorily in final position. See the examples given above under points 13, 16.

18. Syntax of clause embedding. Turkic embedded clauses differ syntactically and morphologically from main clauses. They are based on infinite verb forms, and units of the infinite verbal morphology function as junctors. Karaim embedded clauses are similar to the European type. They are rightbranching structures introduced by a free junctor and based on finite verb forms. See the following examples. A nominal action clause: *K'l'e-y-m sa-ya ayt-ma k'i b'iz' s'öz'l'e-y-b'iz' karay-če* [want-PRESENT-1SINGULAR you-DATIVE say-INFINITIVE that we speak-PRESENT-1PLURAL Karaim-EQUATIVE] 'I want to tell you that we speak Karaim'. A relative clause: *Bar-t kolega, kaysi-nin t'er'k altmıš yıl-i bol-ur* [existent-COPULA.3SINGULAR friend which-GENITIVE sixty year-3POSSESSIVE become-AORIST] 'I have a friend, who will soon be sixty'. An adverbial clause: *n'eč'ik b'ir ulan tuv-a-t* [when a child is.born-PRESENT-3SINGULAR] 'when a child is born'.

19. Few free junctors. Turkic has few free subjunctors, i.e. subordinative particles or grammatical constituents that introduce or conclude embedded clauses. There is no genuine Turkic relative pronoun, and hardly any noncopied subordinative conjunctions exist. Karaim has a great number of free junctors, e.g. the ones cited under point 18: *k'i* 'that', introducing a subordinated nominal clause, *kaysi* 'which', a relative pronoun, and *n'eč'ik* 'when', an adverbial subjunctive.

20. Converbs of verbs of speech as quotation particles and purposive subjunctors. In the Turkic languages, converbs of verbs of speech *te-*, *de-*, etc. 'say', i.e. *dep*, *deyü*, *diye*, *tese*, etc. 'saying', act as postpositive quotation particles, marking embedded direct speech and "quoted thought". There is no quotation particle in modern spoken Karaim.

21. Postpositions. Turkic employs postpositions instead of prepositions. Karaim is also a dominantly postpositional language. The Karaim postpositions have, however, undergone certain syntactic changes. The tendency is that they gain more particle-like properties, i.e. they are used in a standardised form and are not inflected, whereas typi-

cal Turkic postpositions carry adverbial case suffixes and possessive suffixes; see Csató (in print a).

22. Genitive subject. In infinitisations employing verbal nouns, the subject can be in the genitive, e.g. Turkish *ev-in yan-ma-sı* [house-GENITIVE burn-INFINITIVE-3POSSESSIVE] 'the house's its burning'. Karaim employs nominalisations, which are morphologically similar to Turkic infinitisations but syntactically and semantically closer to the European type of nominalisations. The genitive attribute is not necessarily the first actant as in the Turkic construction. Consider the following example: *ališ-ma-sı kan-nın* [change-INFINITIVE-3POSSESSIVE blood-GENITIVE] 'the exchanging of blood'. In a corresponding Turkic construction the passive form of the verb must be used.

23. Cases cover wide functional area. The Turkic languages are characterised by simple, loose-knit, rather undifferentiated case systems that make use of few distinctions and signal rather general and nonspecific relations. Consequently, each Turkic case covers a broad functional area, e.g. the Turkish locative *-de* 'in, on, at, etc.' Necessary specifications are realised by other means, postpositions especially. The same is true for Karaim.

24. Predications indicating possession are formed in Turkic using constructions of the following type: (possessor + genitive) + possessed item + possessive suffix + 'existing', e.g. Turkish *para-m var* 'I have money' ('money-my exists'). Karaim has the typical Turkic construction, e.g. *Bar-t axča-m* [existing-COPULA3SINGULAR money-1SINGULAR.POSSESSIVE] 'I have money'. An alternative, and equally frequent construction with the same meaning is seen in: *M'en'-d'a bar-t axča* [I-LOCATIVE existing-COPULA3SINGULAR money].

25. Complex verbal systems. The Turkic languages have complex verbal systems containing a large number of grammatical categories. The Karaim verbal system is less complex. There is, for instance, no distinction between high-focal and non-focal intraterminals and postterminals; see Johanson 2000 for the definitions of these terms. Turkish, for instance, distinguishes between *gel-iyor-du-m* [come-HIGHFOCAL.INTRATERMINAL-PAST-1SG] 'I was coming' and *gel-ir-dim* [come-NONFOCAL.INTRATERMINAL-PAST-1SG] 'I used to come'. Karaim has only one intraterminal past form, *k'el'ir'd'in* [come-INTRATERMINAL-PAST-1SG] meaning both 'I was coming' and 'I used to come'. Passive is often expressed by an analytic construction, e.g. *bar-t yaz-yan* [exist-COPULA.DIR write-POSTTERMINAL.PARTICIPLE] 'is written' (Csató 2000). The morphological passive forms are often, but not exclusively, lexicalised items, e.g. *kil-in-* 'be

done'. The passive morphology is not frequently used in a productive way. Modality categories are denoted by new analytic expressions, e.g., *mog-em ayt-ma* [can-1SG say-INFINITIVE] 'I can say', but some old synthetic forms are still in use, e.g. *bar-al-am* 'I can go'.

26. Indirective forms. The typical Turkic verbal categories include evidential items of the indirective type, denoting that a narrated event is stated in an indirect way, by reference to its reception by a conscious subject, for instance, indirect postterminal forms such as Turkish *Ali gel-miş* [Ali come-INDIRECTIVE] 'Ali [apparently, obviously] has arrived'. Karaim does not have any indirective category.

27. Postverbs. A typical feature of many Turkic languages is the expression of actionality by means of actional postverbal constructions, i.e. combinations of verbal lexemes (mainly converbs) and certain verbs with generalising meanings, e.g. Turkish *Ali yaz-ıp dur-uyor* [Ali write-IP.CONVERB stand.POSTVERB-INTRATERMINAL.PRESENT] 'Ali is writing continuously'. The number of Karaim postverbs is reduced to the frequentative suffix, e.g., *k'et'-k'al'a-* 'travel / drive around' vs. *k'et'-* 'travel, drive' and the potential *bar-al-am* 'I can go' and *aša-yal-am* 'I can eat'. These remnants of the old system are today parts of the derivational and inflectional morphology. The potential suffix is often substituted for through an analytic expression based on the potential form of the verb *bol-* 'become, be', e.g. *bol-al-am bar-ma* [become-POTENTIAL-1SINGULAR GO-INFINITIVE] 'I can go'.

28. Restricted use of anaphora. Compared to some of its contact languages, Turkic shows relatively inexplicit pronominal reference, i.e. the use of anaphora for actants whose referents are recoverable from the immediate discourse, the context and/or the situation. This makes main clauses without an overt subject possible. In this respect Karaim does not differ from the Turkic type, e.g. *B'il'm'im* [know-NEGATION-PRESENT-1SINGULAR] '(I) don't know (it)'.

29. Interrogative suffix. In yes/no questions a special interrogative element (*mi* and the like) is suffixed to the constituent whose content is in question. Karaim employs the Turkic interrogative particle *me*, although less frequently than typical Turkic languages. The particle is often used in a non-Turkic way, i.e. it follows the first word of the clause even when it questions the whole clause. Consider the following example: *B'il'-m'-i-m m'en' m'e k'ib'it'-k'a bar-ı-m* [know-NEGATION-PRESENT-1SG I INTERROGATIVE.PARTICLE shop-DATIVE go-AORIST-1SG] 'I don't know whether I will go to the shop' (cf.

Csató 1999c). The Polish interrogative particle *czy* has been copied and is frequently used.

30. Absence of gender. Turkic has no classifiers of grammatical gender. Hence, gender does not play a role in grammatical agreement. In addition, with the exception of units copied from other languages, Turkic does not have the synthetic means of expressing feminine lexical forms. Karaim has copied some non-Turkic derivational suffixes such as *-ka* and employs them to mark feminine lexical forms, e.g. *karay* 'Karaim man', *karay-ka* 'Karaim woman', *yüb'iy* 'the master of the house', *yüb'iy-č'á* 'housewife' (see Pritsak 1959). Gender agreement is sometimes marked, namely when the adjective is a copied item with adjectival morphology, e.g. *Ol e-d'i inteligent-na* [she COPULA-PAST intelligent-FEMININE] 'She was intelligent'.

31. Absence of a definite article. No Turkic language has systematically developed a definite article. This is true also for spoken Karaim. In the Karaim translations of the Bible, however, the demonstrative pronoun *ol* 'that' is used as a translational equivalent of the Hebrew definite article. See the first lines of Genesis in Karaim: *Enk baš-tan yarat-ti T'ej'r'i ošol ol k'ók'-l'ár-n'i da ošol yer'-n'i* [SUPERLATIVE.PARTICLE beginning-ABL create-PAST God that the sky-PLURAL-ACCUSATIVE and that earth-ACCUSATIVE].

32. Specificity through accusative marking. In most Turkic languages, a direct object immediately preceding the predicate core can be marked with the accusative for specificity, e.g. Turkish *Ali, kız-ı gördü* 'Ali girl-ACCUSATIVE saw' = 'Ali saw the girl'; *Ali, bir kız-ı gördü* 'Ali a girl-ACCUSATIVE saw' = 'Ali saw a certain girl'. In Karaim, the accusative marking of the direct object may be missing in any position even if the object is definite, e.g. *ma-ya bu iš'l'á-d'-l'ár* [I-DATIVE this make-PAST-3PLURAL] 'they made this to me'; *a yal'e n'e koduy iš'l'á-y-s'* [and now what you do-PRESENT-2SINGULAR] 'And what do you do now?' Thus, the accusative does not mark the distinction between specific and non-specific reference. The tendency is, however, to assign the accusative to definite objects and leave indefinite objects unmarked. Consider the following example: *B'es'l'ár-t'-im ulan-lar-ni, turpuz-d-im b'iš'ir'-m'á aš* [feed-PAST-1SG child-PLURAL-ACCUSATIVE place-PAST-1SG cook-INFINITIVE soup] 'I fed the children and placed the soup (on the oven) to cook it'. The first object, 'the children', is definite and the second one, 'soup', is not. Only the first one is assigned the accusative. As there is no indefinite article in Karaim, definiteness cannot be formally distinguished

from specificity. The plural suffix is added to indefinite objects when the context requires a plural reading, e.g. *B'iz' iš'l'á-d'-ik kibin-lar* [we make-PAST-1PLURAL pirog-PLURAL] 'We baked pirogs'. In typical Turkic languages the object in this case would be in the singular, as the plural denotes a particular meaning.

33. Specificity through genitive marking. Similarly, in some Turkic languages, a genitive subject in constituent clauses can signal specificity. Karaim does not distinguish specific and non-specific subjects through genitive marking.

34. Use of the dative in causative syntax. In causatives based on transitive verbs, the first actant of the transitive verb is expressed by a dative complement, e.g. Turkish *mektub-u Ali-ye yaz-dır-d-ım* [letter-ACCUSATIVE Ali-DATIVE write-CAUSATIVE-DI-PAST-1SINGULAR] 'I had Ali write the letter'. I have not heard examples of corresponding constructions in Karaim. The meaning would most probably be rendered by a paraphrase.

35. Reduplicative compounds. Another feature typical of Turkic is reduplication, i.e. the repetition of a lexeme in a consonant-initial form (*m-*, *b-*, *p-*, etc.) to express 'and the like', e.g. Turkish *kitap mitap* 'books and the like' (*kitap* 'book'). This type of reduplication is not productive in Karaim.

36. Reduplicative intensive forms. Prepositive reduplication syllables produce intensive forms of adjectives, e.g. Turkish *kara* 'black', *kapkara* 'totally black'. The same types of intensive adjectives are used in Karaim, e.g. *ak* 'white' vs. *ap-ak* 'very white'. Musaev (1964) mentions two other Karaim strategies. The first is to reduplicate the adjective and optionally add a possessive suffix to the second one, e.g. *uylu uylusu* 'very big' or *k'ič'i k'ič'i* 'very little'. The second strategy is to employ the suffix *-yina*, e.g. *kuru* 'dry' vs. *kuru-yina* 'completely dry' (Musaev 1964: 183).

37. Typical vowels. *Ö* and *ü* are characteristic of Turkic but missing in most contact languages of Turkic. Some contact languages also lack the back vowel *ı*. Karaim has all these types of vowels. In non word-initial position, *ö* and *ü* are pronounced with a more central articulation. The retracted vowels are rendered in the transcription applied here by *o* and *u* instead of *ö* and *ü*, e.g. *ür'ár'uv'č'ü* 'teacher'.

38. Tendency towards monophthongs. A predilection for monophthongs, in other words, an aversion against diphthongs, is a typically Turkic trait. Karaim has no real diphthongs either.

39. Vowel length. Distinctive vowel length is atypical of most contemporary Turkic languages. Long vowels mostly occur as a result of contraction. The same is true of Karaim.

40. Atypical sounds. The Lithuanian dialect has copied the whole range of palatal consonants. Thus each consonant has a palatal and a non-palatal variant, such as *b* vs. *b'*, *m* vs. *m'*. The Halich dialect employs several atypical consonants, e.g. the affricates [ts] and [dz] and two palatal plosives. One of these is between *t* and *k*, the other between *d* and *g*. This causes problems in the orthography. A word such as the one for 'language' is sometimes written as *t'i l* and sometimes as *k'i l*. Many copied lexical items contain non-Turkic sounds.

41. Constraints in initial position. It is characteristic of Turkic words that they have no liquids and only a few fricatives in initial position. Some atypical initial sounds are *l*, *m*, *n*, *r* and *z*. The constraint is observed in the native Karaim lexical items, but relaxed in the copied ones. Thus, modern Karaim does not observe this constraint any more.

42. Front vs. nonfront distinction. The distinction front vs. back plays a significant role in Turkic phonology; for example, syllables are classified as being [+front] or [-front]. The classification of syllables as [±front] is very important and made systematically in both Karaim dialects. In the Lithuanian dialect, both the vowels and the consonants signal the quality of the syllable. The vowel system in the Lithuanian dialect contains five [+front] and four [-front] vowels: *i*, *e*, *á*, *ü*, *ö* vs. *a*, *ĩ*, *o*, *u*. All consonants have both [+front] and [-front] variants: *b* vs. *b'*, *č* vs. *č'*, *d* vs. *d'* etc. See the [+front] monosyllabic word *k'öz'* 'eye' vs. the [-front] word *koz* 'nut'. The distinctive feature, the syllabic frontness, is a suprasegmental feature (Csató & Johanson 1996, Csató 1999b). The Western Ukrainian dialect differs in several respects. For instance, it does not have *ö* and *ü*. Consonants do not have a systematic signal function, because only the vowel *i* triggers the palatalisation of a preceding consonant (see Pritsak 1959: 328-329).

43. Sound harmony. A pronounced tendency towards sound harmony manifested by the systematic suspension of phonological features in suffix syllables is typical of Turkic. In this context, vowels in a word harmonise with one another in terms of frontness vs. backness and in some cases roundedness vs. unroundedness. Karaim is in this respect a typical Turkic language. Some suffixes with low vowels have two variants: a front and a back one, e.g. the plural suffix *-LAR*: *yaziš-lar* 'writings' vs. *b'it'ik-l'ár* 'letters'. Others, containing high vowels, have four vowel variants characterised as

[±front] and [±rounded], e.g. the first person possessive suffix: *yaziš-im* 'my writing', *b'it'ig'-im* 'my letter', *k'öz'-um* 'my eye' and *koz-um* 'my nut'.

44. Aversion to consonant clusters. Restrictions apply to the structure of syllables, displayed by an extreme aversion to certain consonant clusters in particular positions. The constraint is fully relaxed in Karaim, because of the many lexical items copied from the contact languages. Thus the name *Troki* is pronounced without any inserted vocalic element in the initial consonant cluster, unlike the case in typical Turkic languages, in which the copy of this word would be expected to be adopted in forms such as [třroki] or [itřroki].

45. Consonant assimilation. All Turkic languages — some of them to a very high degree — feature the assimilation of neighbouring consonants. The same tendency — but not to a high degree — is observed in Karaim, e.g. *al-di* [take-PAST] vs. *at-ti* [throw-PAST].

46. Word-final voice reduction. Turkic languages generally display reduced voicing of lenis obstruents in word-final position. This is also observed in Karaim e.g. Turkish and Karaim *at* 'name' but *adim* [name-1SINGULAR.POSS] 'my name'.

Why study Karaim?

Many arguments can be raised advocating the study of small languages. In this presentation of Karaim, I have tried to underpin these arguments by describing the special case of this endangered language. For the following reasons I regard further documentation and study of this language as important.

Karaim is the code of a unique religious variety. It is the smallest European Turkic language. It exhibits characteristically Turkic typological properties while having developed a unique typological cut. Work on Karaim is still possible because there are still full-fledged speakers of it. The Karaim community endeavours to revitalise its language. To this end, it needs the help of the linguistic community.

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