# FRAGMENTS FROM AN EARLY KARAITE GRAMMATICAL TREATISE 

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Numerous texts have come down to us attesting to the grammatical activities of the Karaites in the Middle Ages. These are all concerned with the Hebrew language of the Bible, which occupied a central place in Karaite scholarship. In this paper I present an edition of some hitherto unpublished fragments of a Karaite grammatical treatise. It is great pleasure for me to devote it to Tapani Harviainen, who has made many important contributions to scholarship both in the field of Karaite studies and in that of Hebrew grammar.

The grammatical studies of the medieval Karaites is divided into two phases, which can be labelled 'the early tradition' and the 'the classical tradition'. The early tradition mainly appears in texts datable to the tenth century. The most extensive of these that has been preserved is the Diqduq of Yūsuf ibn Nūh, which is a grammatical commentary on the Bible. Fragments of various other texts that are very close in methodology to the Diqduq are extant. The classical tradition is represented by the grammatical works of the eleventh century scholar 'Abū al-Faraj Härūn ibn Faraj and a number of dependent treatises written by other scholars in the eleventh century. The works of 'Abū al-Faraj continue some elements of the earlier tradition, but mark a radical break from it in numerous features. ${ }^{1}$

The Diqduq of Ibn Nūh and other texts belonging to the early grammatical tradition are mainly concerned with the analysis and explanation of word structure. The pronunciation of the language and its syntactic structures are only of marginal concern in these works. Particular attention is given in the texts to problematic grammatical issues, which are generally referred to as masäàil (singular mas'ala

[^0]'question'). These usually emerge from a comparison of similar words and forms that differ from one another in small details, a feature of methodology that is reminiscent of that of the Masoretes in their annoations to the biblical text. This activity of concentrating on the fine details of the language of the Bible was referred to in the early texts by the term Diqduq, which did not yet have the sense of 'grammar' in the more inclusive sense that it acquired at a later period. The early grammarians discussed the masa $\overline{i l}$ at considerable length. They frequently cited various alternative explanations for a particular issue. Some of these may have reflected the differing opinions of scholars who were active in the Karaite grammatical circles in the tenth century. It is likely, however, that in many cases the proposal of such alternatives has a pedagogical purpose and the writer of the text is using them to invite the reader to explore a variety of possibilities. They are sometimes presented as responses to anonymous statements introduced by the formula 'If somebody were to say ...' ('in $q \bar{a} l a q a \bar{a} i l u n) .{ }^{2}$

The fragments published below, which come from an early Karaite grammatical treatise, are concerned with the structure and derivation of segholate nouns. The treatise resembles very closely, in structure and methodology, the fragmentary texts that I published in the volume Early Karaite Grammatical Texts (Atlanta, 2000) as Text 1 and Text 2 (henceforth referred to as EKGT1 and EKGT2). These two texts concern verbal conjugations and noun patterns respectively. In the aforementioned volume, I noted the similarity between them in format and methodology and suggested that they may have belonged originally to a single grammatical work. The passage presented below, which comes from a manuscript that I discovered in the Second Firkovitch collection (The National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, II Firkovitch Evr. Arab. I 2771) after EKGT1 and EKGT2 were published, appears to confirm this. It does not overlap with EKGT1 and EKGT2, but seems to belong together with them. It comes from the beginning of the section on nouns, which is missing in the published fragments. What is of particular interest is that in the extant manuscript the section on nouns is preceded by the end of a section on verbal conjugations. This provides the missing link between the two previously published texts and indicates that they indeed originally belonged to a single work.
2. For further details see the works cited in n. 1 and also G. Khan 'The Karaite tradition of Hebrew grammatical thought', in W. Horbury (ed.), Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda, 1999, Edinburgh, pp.186-206; 'The early Karaite grammatical tradition' in J. Targona Borrás and A. Sáenz-Badillos (eds.), Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century. Proceedings of the 6th EAJS Congress, Toledo, July, 1998. Volume I: Biblical, Rabbinical, and Medieval Studies, 1999, Leiden: Brill, pp.72-80.

The author of the work is referred to in EKGT1 as Sa'id. This is likely to be the scholar Sacīd Shīrān, a grammarian who was pupil of Yūsuf ibn Nüḥ. ${ }^{3}$ There are indeed many similarities in methodology between this work and the Diqduq of Ibn Nūh.. ${ }^{4}$ The arrangement of the material in the work, however, differs from the Diqduq. Whereas the Diqduq is presented as a biblical commentary, arranged according to the order of the biblical books, the work attributed to $\mathrm{Sa}^{c}$ id id arranged according to the morphological patterns of words. Verbal conjugations and nouns are categorized according to their pattern and presented in a series of chapters referred to as 'alphabets'. These contain an exhaustive, nor near exhaustive, inventory of verbs or nouns with the pattern in question together with sample paradigms of inflected forms and a discussion of problematic grammatical issues. It is the exposition of the problematic issues (masä̀il) that particularly preoccupies the author. Some chapters contain more discussion of masä̀il than others. In the fragments published below the author identifies various such issues and examines these with considerable prolixity. The fact that such attention is given to masä̉il indicates that the work was not intended as an elementary grammar of Hebrew. The exposition of these issues may reflect debates that took place among the circles of Karaite grammarians. They were also intended to stimulate the reader to be inquisitive and independent minded in the investigation of grammar.

One of the main theoretical concepts that is reflected by the passage below is the notion of morphological base. Inflected forms of nouns are derived from morphological bases. These are not abstractions, but real morphological forms. The Karaite grammarians did have a notion of an abstract root consisting of radical letters, but only used this to categorize words in the lexicon. The primitive base of any derivational morphology was a form with vowels and consonants which was used, or at least could potentially be used, as a real word in the language. The morphological base of a noun is generally the singular form with no pronominal suffixes. Inflected forms of the same morphological pattern would generally be expected to be derived from bases with the same pattern. In some cases this analogy leads to the positing of a noun base that is not attested in the Bible, even where another singular form is attested. The base of the plural form בְּהוֹנוֹנָה , which, for example, is said to be is not attested in the Bible, rather than the attested form , בְּשׂוֹרוֹת - בְּשוֹרָה , etc. (fol. 10 recto). Likewise, the forms (Prov.

3. See Khan, Early Karaite Grammatical Texts, p.17.
4. See Khan, Early Karaite Grammatical texts, pp. 13ff. and 175 ff . for further details.
analogy with כְּנְפַיִם, which is derived from כָנָּ (fol. 9 recto). ${ }^{5}$

The manuscript is paper, containing between 18 and 20 lines on each page. Various sigla are used to fill in spaces at the end of lines to justify the left margin. On a few occasions the final letter of the line is extended horizontally. The end of sense units, usually consisting of a series of clauses, are marked by the soph pasuq sign of biblical manuscripts (:). ${ }^{6}$ Most Hebrew words in the manuscript are fully vocalized. The vocalization is generally accurate, though the scribe from time to time vocalizes incorrectly, e.g. חחְְְחקי (for 8 recto), or at least in a way that deviates from
 נַחֲלֵי (fol. 8 recto).

Text
II Firkovitch Evr. Arab. I 2771

Fol. 1 verso

אלי הדא אלמוצ่ע הי אלאואמר ואלתצאריף: ואלדי מן בעדהא פהי אלאסמא ושרח אכתלאפאתהא ומוצע מסאילהא ואגובתהא:







5. For further details concerning this aspect of grammatical theory in the early Karaite tradition see G. Khan, The Early Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought, p.39ff.
6. This scribal practice, which is borrowed from Bible manuscripts, is found in several other manuscripts of Karaite grammatical texts; see G. Khan, The Early Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought, pp.152-153.

Fol. 3 recto
יקאל לה אדא קלנא אן כלמא הו בהָה אדא יציר מכרת לא יכון בקמץ מן מנענא מן הדא אלכלאם אן אלדי בוֹ איצֹא יכון כדלך בל אלדי בסתה וגדנא יכון אלמצֹאף ואלמכרת

 כי אתה עשית בַסְתַר בקמץ והדא יכאלף קולך: יקאל לה יחתמל אן יכון הוֹ הדא מתל נדר


 הרא אלוצף תגדהא אלא לֶָחם ויגי מנה לְחָם לֹך ועשית אתם לך לְלֶחָם: ומא וגדנא מנה


רֵחֶם: פהו

Fol. 3 verso







 אכר אלכלמה מן לגֹֹ לֹפֹת בדגש מתל צמבּי כרם רשפֵּ אשׁ ברכֵּי יוסף טרפֵּ צמחה:



Fol. 7 recto










 בכלאף הדה לגהה אלדי צאר פיה ג אחרף מן כגֹר כפֹֹ אלואחד בעד אלאכר: ואעלם אן קד וגדנא הדה אלכלם

Fol. 7 verso




 קאיל איש פאידה לנא פי אלמסאיל בלא גואבהא: יקאל לה אלוקוף עלי אלמוצע אנה פיה פיה וקי אלמסלה הו נצף אלעמל ומן לא יערף מוצ̇ע אלמסלה מא יחסן יסל חתי יתעלם פאדא וקר וֹת אלאנסאן עלי מוצ่ע אלמסלה פאנפתחת עינה ועלם אנהא מסלה: וארא וקף עלי אלגואב פקד אנפתחת עינה לשי אכר ועלם עלם אכר לאן אלעלם באלמסלה גיר אלעלם בגואבהאי

 ריש והמא בפתח ואן קאל קאיל מן גהה אלאלף אלדי עלי ראס אלכלמה

Fol. 8 recto

צאר בפתח יקאל לה אִמרוֹ אִשְׂתוֹ המא באלף וליס המא בפתח ואיצֹא וגדנא אלֹדי ליס עלי



 בכלאף: ואלכלמה אלתי עלי ראסהא החחע הודי נרי מכתלפה מתל הַבְלִי חַלְקִי עַזְרִי
 עִמְקֶך עִמְקם ואלכלם אלתי עלי ראסהא גיר הֹחע איצֹא וקעת מכתלפה בעצהא בג נקט
 רִשְֵַּׁי: ואיצֹא מסלה פי הרא אלבאב וגדנא אלכלם אלתי הי אסם אלרבים תעמל מתל

 ואמתאלהא הי מן מתל עֲנָדִים בְגָדִים חֲסָדִים ורַגְלֶיף אלתי הי רבים

Fol. 8 verso


 לא יעמל אכתר מן רגליה אלאן אן ידכר מעה אלעדר לֹ אשר לארבע רגליו: ולו קאל לחָמֵש רגליו או לששׁ רגליו או אכתר כאן גאיז לאן אדא בְכר מעה אלעדד הו מכאלף למא לא ידכר מעה אלעדד ודלך אנה אדא קאל אשר לארבע רגליו ליסת הי ארבעה אזואג



 ואדא נטֹרת פיה גייד לא תגד רַגְלִלים בַגְלִיו רִגְלֶיֹה אכתר מן ואחד בתה אלא ענד מא ידכר מעהמא אלעדר אלדֹי הו אכתר מן שתים: ומתלהא וקרני רְאֵם קִרָנָיו המא תנתיץ ולו כאנת

אכתר

Fol. 9 recto
מן תנחין לכאנת קְרָנָיו מעמא אן קִרִנְיו תעמל קרונה ותעמל איצֹא קרניה: וליס כל קִרִנָיו תעמל קרניה ודלך אן קרניו אלתי אצלהא קִרן ואלרבים מנהא תגי קִרִיִים ועוד אלאשארה תכון קרֶנָיו תעמל מן תנתיץ וצאעד: יקְרָניו אלתי הי מן קִרֵנַים לא תכון אכתר מן תנתין:
 המא אלזוג כקול אלכתאב ולו קרבֵינים והקרנים גבוהות והאחת גבוהה מן אלשנית והגבהה

[^1]







Fol. 9 verso

פאן קאל קאיל מא לנא דְדלדת ולא דָּרָך יקאל לה וגדנא כלם כתירה פי אלכתאב תקאל









 דְבָרִי ולא בְשָׁם אלדי הו מתל כְתָב ומתל יְקָר

Fol. 10 recto










 ולא יקע עלי אכתר מן אלאתנין

Fol. 10 verso
אָאְנִי אָנָנִּך אָּנְנִיו הי אסאמי אלזוג ואדא אראד ידכר אכתר מן אלזוג יכון אָּנָיו מתל



 אֹמֶּר אֹתָּל וארדת מעאודתה האהנא לאן מסאילהם תשבה בעצהא לבעץ חתי מן יבצר פיהא יתעלם בעצהא מן בעץ ואעלם אן הדא אלף ביף בית כל כלמה אלתי פי אכרהא הֵי זאיד ופי ראסהא אחד חרוף מן אֹהֹתע் יכון ראסהא בפתח מתל אֵרץ ענד מא זאד פי אכרה אלתֵֶי




## Translation

Fol. 1 verso

(The treatment) of imperatives and conjugations ends here. What follows concerns nouns, giving an explanation of their differences and identifying problematic issues relating to them and offering solutions for them.

 , Thake note that there are many nouns with this pattern in Scripture, some with five points (i.e. containing sere and seghol) and some with six points (i.e. containing two seghols), and everything that we say relating to the nouns that we mention here applies also to nouns that are not
mentioned in this chapter of the book or other chapters when they have a similar



(Fol. 3 recto) All words with five points do not have qames when they become disjoined and if anybody disputes this claim, the response to him would be that this applies also to words with six points, for, indeed, we find find words with six points that have the same form when conjoined and when disjoined, ${ }^{8}$ as in, for example, נָגָ
 disjoined. ${ }^{9}$ Nouns with six points, however, are also inflected in another way, as is the case with אֶֶָן, which also has the form אָכֶך . If somebody were to say 'We find all instances of with five points, but we find (2 Sam. 12:12) with qames and this contradicts your claim,' the response to him would be: Perhaps this is like נדר, which is attested in a form with five points and also in a form with six points, and בַּסָּר is derived from with six points and not from the form with five points.

Take note that all words of this type that have in medial position the letters $n, \pi$ or

 all such words have this form with the exception of לֶֶם, from which is derived לֶחָם,






Any word that has the letters $n$ or $y$ in final position is formed with patah, there being
8. The terms 'conjoined' (mudā̃f) and 'disjoined' (mukrat) are used in the early Karaite texts to refer to 'context' and 'pausal' forms respectively as well as to 'construct' and 'absolute' forms; see G. Khan, The Early Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought, p.112ff.
9. The syntax of the beginning of this sentence is rather difficult. It is not made any easier by assuming that a preceding leaf is missing from the manuscript, so I am assuming that it is continuous with the text in fol. 1. Fol. 2 of the manuscript is from a different chapter of the text.


 in medial position, when it has inflection, i.e. a pronominal suffix, there is patah at beginning of the word, for example: לַלְחמְך ,לְמוֹ, לַחְמִי. In some cases the patah is followed by a shewa that is vocalized with patah. Examples of forms that are not

 many similar cases. Examples of forms (that have a shewa) that is vocalized with





 of words end in bgdkpt with rapheh.
(Fol. 7. recto) The problematic issue in this chapter is the following. When a noun
 מַלְכּוֹ. It does not have forms such as מַלִלְכִי (with rapheh) as are the bgdkpt
 עַבְבדוֹ ,עַבְדִי ,רִכְבּוֹ ,רְכְבִּי ,חַסְדּוֹ ,חַסְדִּי All nouns of this category are inflected in this way. If you find (2 Sam. 22:37) with rapheh, the reason for this is that the 'ayin has the vowel patah. If it did not have patah, the form would be צֵעדִי, like מַלְכִּי חַסְדִּי , for a noun of this type that has patah (on the second letter) does not have dagesh. The problematic issue in this chapter is the form wha bgdkpt letters at the end of the word and does not have patah, but does not have a dagesh in contrast to other nouns of the same category. A possible explanation is that it has rapheh since it contains three of the bgdkpt letters. The other nouns do not contain three bgdkpt letters and it is possible that it is due to the presence in it of three $b g d k p t$ letters that it has rapheh in contrast to the other nouns. (This form of the word
 which have rapheh, in contrast to אִפָּר וְצִמְדֵּוּו (Jer. 51:23), which has dagesh, and


בּגְד . So (as remarked) it is possible that it has a form that contrasts with the others on account of the fact that it contains three bgdkpt letters, one after the other.

Take note that we find that (fol. 7 verso) when these words have pronominal suffixes, they have different forms. These fall into three categories. One category is where a single point (hireq) occurs under the first letter of the word, for example אִשְׁתוֹ, אִמְרוֹ, and many similar cases. The second category has
 The third category has forms with three points (seghol), for example אֶגְלי־טָּ (Job

 many similar cases. This requires an explanation. If somebody were to say 'What is the advantage of (identifying) problems without their solution?', the response would be: Becoming aware of the reason why there is a problem is half the labour. If somebody is not aware of the reason why there is a problem, he should not ask any questions until he learns why. When somebody becomes aware of the reason why there is a problem, his eyes are opened when he knows that it is a problem. If he discovers the solution, his eyes are opened to something else and he learns something in addition, for knowledge of the problem is not knowledge of its solution. Somebody who does not know the problem, however, is doubly ignorant. Now, if somebody were to say that the forms אַרָצוֹ, אַדְצִי have patah on account of the resh that occurs in
 38:3) with patah. They do not contain resh but nevertheless they have patah. If somebody were to say that it is on account of the 'aleph at the beginning of the word (fol. 8 recto) that it is formed with patah, the response would be: אִשְׁתוֹ have 'aleph but do not contain patah. We find, moreover, words without initial 'aleph that

 39:10). Take note that you do not find at all words in this category that have medial 'aleph. All words that have medial $i, \pi, y$ you find have short patah in initial position, for example יַעְרוֹ, נַנְחרוֹ, לַחְמוֹ, or have patah that is not short, for example

10. In the medieval Tiberian reading tradition a patah in an unstressed closed syllable was pronounced short whereas a patah in an unstressed open syllable, such as the patah in the first syllable of forms such as נָ נָחֵלִי, etc., was pronounced long; see G. Khan, 'Vowel length and syllable structure in the Tiberian tradition of Biblical Hebrew’ Journal of Semitic Studies XXXII/1

Words that have initial


 (Jer. 47:5). Words that do not have $\pi$, $\Pi$ or $\boldsymbol{\square}$ as initial letters are also attested in

 (Psa. 1:3) and some others differing from these, for example רִשְׁמֵי ,שִׁכְמוֹ ,רששׁׁתוֹ (Psa. 76:4).

Another problematic issue in this category (of noun) is as follows. We find the plural





 admissible to translate it 'your legs (pl.)'. The translation of רַגְלֶיֶ with yodh, on the other hand, is 'your two legs' and not 'your legs (pl.)'. This is because have the sense of 'your legs (pl.)' and also 'your two legs', but רַגְלֶיך does not denote more than 'your two legs'. Likewise רַגְלָליו does not denote more than 'his two legs'.

 be mentioned with it, it is different from a form that does not have a number



 have the sense of 'two' and can also have the sense of 'legs (pl.)', whereas רַגְלִיִים, רַגְלֶיך, רַגְלָיו when a number is not mentioned with them, cannot denote more than a
11. These words are vocalized with patah in the MS.
12. The scribe has vocalized the word with șere in the MS, which would be a plural construct form of חִזְי. It appears that the author intended the noun form חזְיקי 'my strength' (Psa. 18:2).
13. Vocalized רָגלִיִים in the MS.
pair, since they are derived from רִרְלִיִ, without a number mentioned with it, which denotes no more than two. If you look carefully, you will not find רַגְליך ,רַגְלְיו ,רְגְלִיִּ ever being used to denote (the legs of) more than one person, unless a number is
 33:17), which denotes 'two (horns)'. If they were more (fol. 9 recto) than two, the word would have the form קְרָנָיו, though קְרָנָיו may have the sense both of 'his horns (pl.)' and 'his two horns'. Not every instance of קרְנָיו has the sense of 'his two horns'. This is because קְרֶנָיו, which has the base קארָ and (is derived from) the plural of this, which is קְרנִים, the form with a referential pronoun being קְרָנִיו, has the sense of two and above. The form קרִנָיו, which is derived from קרִנִיָּם is no more than two. This is because קִרנגיִּי denotes 'two' and from it is derived קְרֶנָיו, which denotes 'a












(fol. 9 verso) If somebody were to say 'We do not have (in Scripture) the forms and the plural but we do not find the corresponding singular form in Scripture. Likewise, we find a singular form without finding its plural in Scripture. Take, for example,



 posit that $\begin{gathered}\text { בְשָׁמִּם is } \\ \text { in } \\ \text { is } \\ \text {, both the plural and the singular are attested, }\end{gathered}$ whereas if we posit that it is derived from בָּ Scripture. If you say that בָּשָׁ does not occur in Scipture and so its plural likewise








 רֹאשׁ (Exod. 30:23). We also find the form (Jud. 1:6) but we do not find its singular. The plural of the form which we find in Scripture, would be whּ

 do not find in Scripture .בּקרים. There are many cases similar to these. Likewise, when



 מֶתְתן but we do not find מָּנַים




 translation of אָזָנְיִם is only 'two ears'. The form is not used to denote more than two.





 issue regarding the opposition between עֲקָדָיךָ and there is likewise a

the problem in the foregoing explanation. I have, in fact, presented the same explanation in the alphabet of אֹאֹרֶל אֶּר, but I decided to repeat it here since the problematic issues of the two sections are similar, so that a reader can learn about both in each section.

Take note that every word in this alphabet (of the current section) that has an added final heh and has an initial $\mathcal{N}, ~ त, ~ \pi$ or $y$ has a patah at its beginning. For example,

 does not have any of the letters $\kappa, \pi, \pi$ or $v$ in initial or medial position has a form
 פֶּתְתָהּ - פֶּתַח


[^0]:    1. For the Diqduq of Yūsuf ibn Nūh see G. Khan, The Early Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought: Including a Critical Edition, Translation and Analysis of the Diqduq of ${ }^{\top} A b \bar{u} u a^{〔} q u \bar{b} b$ Yūsuf Ibn Nūh on the Hagiographa (Brill, Leiden, 2000). For 'Abū al-Faraj Hārūn see G. Khan, Maria Angeles Gallego and Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, The Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought in its Classical Form: A Critical Edition and English Translation of al-Kitāb al-Kāfî fī al-Luğa al-‘Tbrāniyya by ’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn ibn al-Faraj (Brill, Leiden, 2003) and the literature cited there.
[^1]:    7. The MS has ויעמל after this word, which appears to be an erroneous copy of what appears in the next line.
