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ORCID: 0000-0003-2576-1204 **In memoriam Tapani Harviainen (1944–2024)**

Tapani Harviainen was an outstanding Finnish Orientalist. He was born on 1 February 1944 in Kuopio and died on 28 September 2024 in Helsinki at the age of eighty. I am writing these lines on 19–20 October to commemorate my dear friend when his wife Rea, his family and close friends are still waiting for the funeral. Therefore, this obituary cannot pretend to be a comprehensive overview of his immense scholarly output. It is a fresh posthumous tribute to his memory. A detailed biography and bibliography will be compiled by his friends in Finland.

Tapani Harviainen got his MA degree in the Semitic studies in 1970 with the thesis *Raamatun heprean elävistä ääntämistraditioista* ‘On the living tradition of the pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew’ at the University of Helsinki and defended his PhD thesis *On the vocalism of the closed unstressed syllables in Hebrew* in 1977. He started his professional career as a teacher of Hebrew after his MA and continued as professor of Semitic languages at the University of Helsinki from 1985 until 2009 when he retired. At the university, he worked at the Institute for Asian and African Studies which was the workplace of many eminent specialists in different fields of Oriental studies.

In the bibliography of Tapani Harviainen’s publications for the years 1970–2003, Harry Halén lists 265 items. This is a classified bibliography which illustrates well Tapani Harviainen’s basic areas of scholarly interest: Semitic studies in general, Hebrew, biblical studies, Jewish studies in general, Finnish Jewry as well as Karaim and Karaite studies. This last field was the one which brought us together. His contribution to this



domain includes forty-six publications between 1992–2003 as listed in the aforementioned bibliography to which I can add further ten publications for the years 2004–2016.

Although Tapani Harviainen's first paper on Karaims was written earlier and the Karaite studies in general attracted him before, the beginning of his interest in Karaite and Karaim studies is related to the activization of the Karaim community in Lithuania after its independence declared in 1990. Furthermore, disintegration of the Soviet Union enabled scholars from the East and West to meet and Tapani Harviainen started cooperation with Karaim activists, researchers and East European scholars who represented this field of study. He was a scholar who developed very good contacts with both the West and the East. He understood Central and Eastern Europe very well and always supported eastern scholars. He paid multiple visits to the Karaims in Lithuania, to St. Petersburg where he worked in the libraries on Karaite and Hebrew manuscripts, but also visited Poland several times. Having received traditional good education in Finland with a strong component of classic languages and biblical studies, he was competent in Swedish and was an ardent supporter of Swedish as an obligatory subject in schools, being of the opinion that the Finns must closely cooperate with the Scandinavian countries and Swedish should be a common language of communication in Scandinavia.

Tapani Harviainen participated in many conferences and symposia on Karaim studies in Lithuania, Poland and Hungary, e.g. in the 1991 Vilnius conference on Seraia Shapshal with the paper "The Bible and its Karaim reading tradition," in the 1997 Vilnius conference on the 600 Years of Tatars and Karaims in Lithuania with the paper "The Firkovich collections in St. Petersburg as a source for the history of East European Karaims," in the 2003 Warsaw conference *Karaj kiuŋliari* 'Karaim Days' in Warsaw with the paper "Abraham Firkovich – contradictory pictures of a bibliophile" (see Harviainen 2004), in the 2007 Vilnius conference on the 610th Anniversary of Settlement of Tatars and Karaims in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the paper "The catechism by Jacob Duvan (1980) as a document of the Karaim creed," in the 2012 Poznań conference "Cultures in Conversation: Hebrew and Karaite Literature in Poland and Eastern Europe" with the paper "The rise of Karaim cultural nationalism as a part of the European movement" (see Harviainen 2013b), in the 2014 Szeged Workshop on Karaim Studies with the paper "Views and targets of Karaite/Karaim studies" (see Harviainen 2015), and naturally in many conferences in the West and in Israel.

In 2000, Tapani Harviainen was the chief organizer of the 7th Scandinavian Congress of Jewish Studies in Järvenpää to which he invited a number of scholars from Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia, and at which he presented his paper "The Madjalis scroll and the colophon of the Derbent Torah found by Abraham Firkovich in 1840" (see Harviainen 2003b).

He gained funds from various Finnish institutions to support his Karaim colleagues and eastern researchers financially, inviting them to workshops and symposia. For instance, he assisted the senior hazzan of the Lithuanian Karaims, Mykolas Firkovičius, in compiling Karaim prayer books and gaining financial support from the Finnish Cultural Foundation for publishing them in 1998 and 1999.

Tapani Harviainen also published articles in the Polish journals *Karaite Archives* (2013–2016), see Harviainen 2013b, Harviainen 2016a and Harviainen 2016b, and *Folia Orientalia*, see Harviainen 1992a, in the Russian journal *Manuscripta Orientalia*, see Harviainen 1998a, and cooperated with the Lithuanian journal *Acta Orientalia Vilnensia* as a reviewer. He read lectures at the Karaim Summer Language School in Trakai, Lithuania.

His particular interest in Karaim and Karaite studies may be explained by three reasons. Firstly, he was aware of the great importance and value of Abraham Firkovich collections of Hebrew and Karaite Turkic manuscripts among the holdings of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg. As soon as the contacts were possible after the fall of the Soviet Union and the positive changes in Russia in the 1990s, he developed good ties with the Manuscript Department of this library, later also with the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, also in St. Petersburg. He studied the life and activities of Abraham Firkovich who acquired a bewildering amount of manuscripts and sold them to the Russian Academy of Sciences. Firkovich was a controversial man, accused of forgeries of manuscripts, scrolls and tombstone inscriptions. Therefore, Tapani Harviainen tried to explore the motifs of Firkovich's activity and verify the truth of accusations. He devoted a series of papers to Firkovich in which he delivered new evidence and discovered new facts. He used to cite Simon Szyszman's opinion about Firkovich who called him a scholar 'de type médiéval,' but refuted several accusations which led to controversy with some young researchers. Secondly, Tapani Harviainen studied the pronunciation of Hebrew biblical texts read by the Karaims which reflected the Tiberian school of reading. Thirdly, he supported the Karaims who tried to restore their religious traditions with his Hebraist's knowledge.

He was member of the editorial board of the Finnish journal *Studia Orientalia* and two other scholarly newspapers published in Sweden and France, and held the position of the chairman of Societas Orientalis Fennica. In 2008, the President of the Lithuanian Republic, Valdas Adamkus, awarded Tapani Harviainen the Order for Merits to Lithuania.

Twenty years ago in 2004, issue 99 of *Studia Orientalia*, edited by Hannu Juusola, Juha Laulainen and Heikki Palva, was dedicated to the sixtieth birthday of Tapani Harviainen. This thick Festschrift called *Verbum et calamus* contained thirty-four contributions by Tapani Harviainen's friends, collaborators and disciples, pertaining to a broad range of areas such as Hebrew (Biblical Hebrew, Mishna, Midrash, Qumran), history of Jews, Aramaic, Babylonian, Neo-Aramaic dialects, Syriac, Cushitic, Karaim/Karaite studies, which demonstrates broad interest of the jubilee in Semitic and related domains of study.

I have met Tapani Harviainen for the first time in 1991 in Vilnius at a conference dedicated to the memory of Seraia Shapshal, the spiritual leader of Karaims in the Crimea, then Poland and Lithuania. Tapani Harviainen read a paper on Karaim tradition of reading the Bible. This conference was organized by a number of institutions including the Cultural Society of Lithuanian Karaims. We established a common field of research, Karaite studies, Tapani Harviainen from Hebrew and myself from Turkological perspective. Our cooperation lasted for many years, until Tapani Harviainen was in good health

in 2022. It should be stressed that Tapani Harviainen was the only participant from the “Old Western Europe”, if we do not count two Karaims from Italy. This was my second visit to Lithuania after the first one in July when I participated in the ceremony of reopening the mosque of Lithuanian Tatars in Kaunas, closed by the Soviets in 1941 after the occupation of Lithuania. This was before the formal dissolution of the USSR which occurred on 26 December 1991, but after the declaration of the independence of Lithuania of 11 March 1990. I am still keeping my correspondence relating to this conference with an envelope on which it is written *Tautybių Departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės* ‘Department of Nationalities at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania’ with the national emblem of independent Lithuania and the postage stamps of the ex-USSR.

Thanks to the personal involvement of Tapani Harviainen, we initiated a few common projects. Among them there was ERASMUS student and staff exchange programme with Helsinki University, Finland, 1998–2001. Student exchange was in practice unilateral, from Poznań to Helsinki. A few of our students of Arabic that existed at the Department of Oriental Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University since 1991 were able to go to Helsinki for mobility grants. Among them was Ms Paulina Urbaniak whom Tapani Harviainen taught to read Karaite printings to compare Malecki’s Haggadah from 1900 with Firkovičius’s edition of 1999. She defended a MA thesis on the Arabic influence in Karaim, based on these texts. Another student who profited greatly from our colleagues at Helsinki University in his Polish-Lithuanian Tatar studies was Andrzej Drozd, now assistant professor at Warsaw University. With Tapani Harviainen’s help, he organized a small exhibition of Polish-Lithuanian Tatar manuscripts, art and tomb inscriptions at the University of Helsinki.

I also profited myself from our exchange programme when I went to Helsinki for lecturing in 1999 and 2000. We all could use rich holdings of the institute and main university library to read books which were inaccessible in our collections.

At the same time, we ran a joint research project between the University of Helsinki and Adam Mickiewicz University “Edition of Karaite Manuscripts of Abraham Firkovich’s Collection” between 1998–2000 which resulted in the visit to St. Petersburg and the publication of a few manuscripts.

In the last years Tapani Harviainen suffered from a serious illness. We kept in touch regularly till 2022, but for the last time we exchanged mails on 24 December 2023 on the occasion of Christmas. I know that Tapani Harviainen planned to publish his memoirs and I hope that they will soon appear in print.¹ He passed away on 28 September 2024 in a hospital at the age of eighty. His death is a great loss to the Oriental studies.

¹ Harry Halén has kindly informed me that this work is in the process of preparation for printing. My best thanks go to him for this and other pieces of information that I could use while writing this obituary as well as for reading it and sharing his comments with me.

A selected bibliography of Tapani Harviainen's contributions to Karaite/Karaim studies²

- 1991 *De Karaitis Lithuaniae*: Transcriptions of recited biblical texts, description of the pronunciation tradition, and peculiarities of Shewa. *Orientalia Suecana* 38–39: 36–44.
- 1992a Abraham Firkowitsh, Karaites in Hīt, and the provenance of Karaite transcriptions of Biblical Hebrew texts into Arabic script. *Folia Orientalia* 28: 179–191.
- 1992b The Karaites of Lithuania at the present time and the pronunciation tradition of Hebrew among them. A preliminary survey. In: Aron Dotan (ed.). *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies 1989*. (Masoretic Studies 7). Atlanta: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature. 53–69.
- 1993 A Karaite Bible transcription with indiscriminate use of Tiberian *pataḥ* and *segol* vowel signs. In: Riccardo Contini, Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti and Mauro Tosco (eds). *Semitica: Serta philologica Constantino Tsereteli dicata*. Torino: Silvio Zamorani Editore. 83–97.
- 1994a A Karaite Bible transcription with indiscriminate counterparts of Tiberian *qames* and *ḥolam* (Ms. Firkovitch II, Arab.-evr. 1). In: Aron Dotan (ed.). *Proceedings of the Eleventh Congress of the International Organization of Masoretic Studies (IOMS), Jerusalem, June 21–22, 1993*. Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies. 33–40.
- 1994b [with Haseeb Shehadeh] How did Abraham Firkovich acquire the great collection of Samaritan manuscripts in Nablus in 1864? *Studia Orientalia* 73: 167–192.
- 1996 The Cairo *Genizot* and other sources of the Second Firkovich Collection in St. Petersburg. In: E.J. Revell (ed.). *Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies* (Masoretic Studies 8). Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, USA Scholars Press. 25–36.
- 1997a Signs of new life in Karaim communities. In: M'hammed Sabour and Knut S. Vikør (eds). *Ethnic encounters and culture change. Papers from the Third Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies, Joensuu, 1995*. Bergen: Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies. 72–83.
- 1997b Three Hebrew primers, the pronunciation of Hebrew among the Karaims in the Crimea and *Shewa*. In: Elie Wardini (ed.). *Built on Solid Rock. Studies in honour of Professor Ebbe Egede Knudsen on the occasion of his 65th birthday. April 11th 1997*. Oslo: Novus. 102–114.

² For an extensive bibliography of Tapani Harviainen's publications between 1971–2004, see Harry Halén's classified "Bibliography of the publications of Tapani Harviainen" in *Studia Orientalia* 99, 2004, pp. xiii–xxvii. Tapani Harviainen also published and translated various works into Finnish, including the Bible, Mishna, Talmud, Ugaritic myths, and some of his articles appeared in such languages as Estonian, Lithuanian and Russian. The publications in less known languages and Russian are not included in the present list.

- 1997c [with Haseeb Shehadeh and Harry Halén] Samaritan and Karaim commitments to *minyán*, Abraham Firkovich, and the poor of Trakai. *Studia Orientalia* 82: 85–98.
- 1998a Abraham Firkovich and the Karaite community in Jerusalem in 1864. *Manuscripta Orientalia* 4, 2: 66–70.
- 1998b The Karaite community in Istanbul and their Hebrew. In: Ulf Haxen, Hanne Trautner-Kromann and Karen Lisa Goldschmidt Salamon (eds). *Jewish Studies in a New Europe: Proceedings of the Fifth Congress of Jewish Studies in Copenhagen 1994*. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel Det Kongelige Bibliotek. 349–356.
- 1999a Abraham Firkovich as collector of dispersed minorities and their manuscripts in the light of his personal archive in St. Petersburg. *Jewish Studies* 39: 97–106.
- 1999b Abraham Firkovich, the Aleppo codex, and its dedication. In: Judit Targarona Borrás and Angel Sáenz-Badillos (eds). *Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the 6th EAJIS Congress, Toledo, July 1998*. Vol. I. Leiden: Brill. 131–136.
- 2003a Abraham Firkovich. In: Meira Polliack (ed.). *Karaite Judaism: A guide to its history and literary sources*. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 875–892.
- 2003b The epigraph of the Derbent Torah and the Madjalis scroll discovered by Abraham Firkovich in 1840. *Studia Orientalia* 95: 55–77.
- 2003c The Karaites in contemporary Lithuania and the former USSR. In: Meira Polliack (ed.). *Karaite Judaism: A guide to its history and literary sources*. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 827–854.
- 2003d The Karaites in Eastern Europe and the Crimea: An overview. In: Meira Polliack (ed.). *Karaite Judaism: A guide to its history and literary sources*. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 633–655.
- 2004 Abraham Firkowicz – przeciwstawne portrety bibliofila/Abraham Firkovich – contradictory pictures of a bibliophile. In: Mariola Abkowicz and Henryk Jankowski, in co-operation with Irena Jaroszyńska (eds). 2004. *Karaj Kiuñlari. Dziedzictwo narodu karaimskiego we współczesnej Europie. Nasledie karaimov v sovremennoj Evrope. Heritage of Karaims in Present Europe*. Wrocław: Bitik. 21–27/170–176.
- 2007a Marriage contracts and items of dowry among the Karaims in Eastern Europe. *Studia Orientalia* 101: 61–83.
- 2007b The tombstone inscriptions uncovered by Abraham Firkovich in the Crimea in the 1830s–1840s in the light of their squeeze copies recently rediscovered in St. Petersburg. In: A. Maman, S.E. Fassberg and Y. Breuer (eds). *Sha 'arei lashon. Studies in Hebrew, Aramaic and Jewish languages presented to Moshe Bar-Asher*. Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute. 64–77.
- 2009 [with Harry Halén] An 1843 Karaim dowry list from the Crimea – Turkic in Hebrew appearance. *Studia Orientalia* 108: 267–282.
- 2010 Karaim studies in Finland. *Turkic Languages* 14, 2: 261–264.

- 2013a Karaite pronunciation traditions: Modern. In: Geoffrey Khan (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* Vol. 2 G–O. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 453–457.
- 2013b The rise of Karaim cultural nationalism as a part of the European movement. *Karaite Archives* 1: 45–57.
- 2015 Views and goals of Karaite-Karaim studies. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 68, 2: 167–173.
- 2016a Tiberian Hebrew and Sephardi Hebrew – two models of Hebrew. *Karaite Archives* 4: 11–26.
- 2016b [with Riikka Tuori] Karaite and Rabbanite education for Karaite students: A list of titles in the Firkovich Collection (F 946, No.12). *Karaite Archives* 4: 27–60.