Biblical verses used in medieval texts of various genres often exhibit spellings different from those of the Masoretic text. The majority of these deviations are relatively minor and involve the plene spelling of vowels that are written defectively in the biblical text. Recently, I came across a curious text consisting of three biblical verses written with drastic deviations from the standard biblical spelling. The text, preserved in T-S K6.113, fol. 2v, contains a blessing for the reading of the haftarah. It is entitled ‘the blessing for the Prophets’ and made up of Hosea 12:11, Amos 3:7, Isaiah 59:21. The text is written in a careful hand that makes the impression of being not very experienced in writing Hebrew.
Below I present the text as it is found in the fragment, juxtaposing it with the same verses in the MT. Underlined text has a box drawn around it in the original fragment, deleting it.
ברכת אל[נפ]י

ודברתי על הנפשו בוקא
ה ENUM הרבחתי ופיון הנפשו
אתהמא כי לא יオススメ | אלהים
דרפר כי לא ימען כים

הבולו(?) סודע על货源י בניב
ואני גוז.Servlet נاحتم אמא
"י רוחי נשאר עלכד ודפראים
אשא[ר] י"ו מתני בפי לא יאמרו

mpzיכא ומפי זרע זים זאער
זרער זופי זאער זרע אנכי "י

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.3
.4
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A number of non-standard spelling features are conspicuous in the fragment:

1. Long qamaṣ, pataḥ, seghol and ̄šere are in most cases represented by the mater lectionis aleph: חֶזְקָּו וֹז for חֶזְקָו (l. 3), אֶשָּר for אֵשֶר (l. 2), עֲבָרָה for עֲבָרָה (l. 8), וּבְרוֹחַ for וּבְרוֹחַ (l. 3). Holam is also occasionally represented by aleph, e.g. סֻדוֹ for סֻדוֹ (l. 6) but it is more commonly represented by waw. Short vowels are not represented by matres lectionis.

2. Quiescent aleph is not represented: ל for לא (l. 4), ז for ג (l. 7).

3. Fricative bet is commonly represented by peh: הנְפִּים for הנְפִים (l. 2), דַּפְאָר for דַּפְאָר (l. 5). Fricative bet is once represented by waw: זוֹא for זּוֹא (l. 6). In the same word consonantal waw is represented by bet.

4. Sin is represented by samekh: יָעֲשָה for יָעֲשָה (l. 4), יָשָׁע for יָשָׁע (l. 9).
5. Plosive gimel is originally represented by kaph, which is crossed out and a gimel is added on top: אֶלִיוּ (l. 6)

6. Fricative dalet is once written with tav and heh: אַדִּיבָה לָהּ (l. 4), possibly to indicate aspiration.

Strange as it may appear upon first glance, this spelling is not random. In fact, features 1–5 are regularly attested in Karaite and Muslim transcriptions of Biblical Hebrew into Arabic script. In the 10th and 11th centuries Karaite scholars in Palestine transcribed biblical texts into Arabic script. The purpose of these transcriptions was to preserve the reading tradition of the Bible as opposed to its consonantal text. It appears that our fragment is a re-transcription of the blessing from the Arabic into the Hebrew script. It may have been penned by someone preparing to publicly read the haftarah.

That the text is copied from a Vorlage rather than from memory is shown by scribal errors of dittography: the passages marked for deletion in lines 5 and 11–12 are repetitions of text written on the previous line caused by the writer’s eye jumping up, e.g. from the second to the first ב ת in Amos 3:7.

The Karaite connection of the text is indicated by the rest of the bi-folio, although it is copied in a different, more skilled hand than ‘the blessing for the Prophets’. T-S K6.113, fols 1v–2r contain a florilegium of biblical verses on the themes of study, the Torah and the commandments, including Isaiah 50:4, Psalms 119:18, Deuteronomy 6:25 and Psalms 147:2, etc. This florilegium is contrasted in the fragment with the Rabbanite ‘blessing for the Torah’, בּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר בַּעֲשֹׁלָם אֶלְהִי עַל עֲשָׁר בְּנֵי יָעֹנֶה יְהוָה בּוֹרָה אָתֶה אֲשֶׁר בַּעֲשֹׁלָם אֶלְהִי עַל עֲשָׁר בְּנֵי יָעֹנֶה, suggesting that the florilegium itself is Karaite.

**Bibliography**


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