

Seven Tatar translations of the Lord's Prayer (1803-2015) [Part 1]

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The Bible is the world's most translated book. Throughout history it has been translated into a great many languages, and these translations have in recent years begun to attract wider attention. This article investigates a selection of historical translations of the Lord's Prayer from the Gospel of Matthew in a language called Tatar, and one contemporary translation, Volga Tatar. The timespan of the translations encompasses over two hundred years: from 1803 to 2015. The translations are compared on a variety of linguistic levels, with special attention given to the lexicon. Orthography presents a noteworthy challenge, since most of the historical translations are in the Arabic script, not reflecting the nuances of the vowels. Features common to the translations are described, and those distinctive to each text are analysed. I discovered that many of the translations adhere to strict norms of the literary language, clearly differing from spoken variants. Up to the 20th century many Turkic literary languages were “transregional”, that is, similar established literary norms extended over many Turkic peoples, whose spoken languages displayed a far greater variety. Interacting with the biblical text gives us a valuable glimpse of the multiple voices represented by the translations, and the circumstances in which they were created.

Keywords: Bible translation, Tatar, Volga Tatar, the Lord's Prayer, comparative analysis, lexicon, literary language

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Семь переводов молитвы «Отче наш» на татарский язык с 1803 г. по 2015 г. [Часть 1-я]

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Библия — самая переводимая книга в мире. На протяжении всей истории ее переводили на множество языков, и в последние годы эти переводы начали вызывать широкий интерес. В данной статье исследуется подборка исторических переводов молитвы «Отче наш» из Евангелия от Матфея на татарский язык и один современный перевод — волжско-татарский. Промежуток времени с самого раннего перевода до последнего охватывает более двухсот лет: с 1803 по 2015 г. Переводы сравниваются на разных лингвистических уровнях, особое внимание уделяется лексике. Орфография представляет собой особую проблему, поскольку большинство из переводов написано арабским шрифтом, не отражающим оттенки гласных. Описываются общие для переводов черты и анализируются отличительные особенности каждого текста. Было обнаружено, что многие переводы придерживаются строгих норм литературного языка и явно отличаются от устных вариантов. Вплоть до XX в. многие тюркские литературные языки были «трансрегиональными», т. е. сходные установленные литературные нормы распространялись на многие тюркские народы, чьи разговорные языки демонстрировали гораздо больше разнообразия. Взаимодействие с библейским текстом дает нам ценное представление о множестве голосов, представленных в переводах и об обстоятельствах их создания.

Ключевые слова: перевод Библии, татарский язык, волжско-татарский язык, молитва «Отче Наш», сопоставительный анализ, лексика, литературный язык

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The article is divided into two parts: Part I discusses the background to the analysis and the history of the Volga (Kazan) Tatar literary language, and gives an outline of the Bible translation situation in the area as well as an overview of the seven translations of the Lord's Prayer. Part II (to be published in a future issue of this journal) offers an investigation into the pertinent features of each translation, followed by a summary table of the key distinguishing features of the texts, and concluding remarks.

PART I

1. Introduction

This article investigates a selection of historical translations of the Lord's Prayer from the Gospel of Matthew in a language called Tatar, and one contemporary translation, Volga Tatar. A number of language variants have in the course of history been called Tatar, and the starting point of this paper is that they have to a greater or lesser extent some connection with the contemporary language, Volga Tatar. My aim is to compare the translations on different linguistic levels: phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic and pragmatic. A number of common features, as well as features peculiar to each text, are described and analysed. An area needing special comment is orthography, as it reflects the developments of the writing systems of the Tatar¹ literary language.

Of the seven translations, the earliest text originates from 1803, and the most recent one from 2015. The six historical texts themselves are divergent, and my overall impression is that they are not linked in their production: that is, none of the later

¹ I use the plain term Tatar both in reference to the Volga (Kazan) Tatar language and also as the ethnonym for the people themselves.

translations is based on an earlier one. I have been able to view some of the translations in their original wider context, for example, in an electronic copy of a printed book of the Gospel of Matthew, or even of the whole New Testament. However, many, in particular the early 19th century publications, do not contain any metadata, such as an introduction, besides the printer's information. That said, I endeavour to comment on the situational background where possible.

Particular attention is given to the lexicon², as this is likely to correlate with the chosen style and literary tradition of the time of translation and may also show something about the intended audience. In the study of vocabulary, the basic division is into "(common) Turkic"³ and loan words, mainly from Arabic and Persian. Phonology, morphology and syntax help in gauging possible links, as well as in distinguishing the translation from other Kypchak Turkic variants.

When studying pre-20th century Tatar translations, a key challenge presents itself: when a given translation was labelled "Tatar", what was meant by this? "Tatar" was used widely as a cover term of different (Turkic) ethnic groups, and it was also used for languages, with or without an explicating epithet (for example, "Astrakhan Tatar"). Its varied use both as an ethnic and linguistic label during the previous centuries makes it impossible (in the confines of this paper) to definitively establish a text as belonging to a particular language variant. However, I do draw attention to some pertinent features and tendencies which may point towards a certain language or variant for the earlier texts.

An overall challenge for the study of translations of the Bible of the first half of the 19th century (three of the samples dis-

² The main sources for lexicon in my study are: [Gazizov et al. 1993], [Nadelyaev et al. 1969] and [Tëtimol 2015].

³ Shcherbak [1994: 110–115] gives the following criterion for "common Turkic" lexical items: "it is not necessary for it to be present in all Turkic languages; it is sufficient that there is evidence of its existence in some of them, as long as there has not been recent direct or indirect contact between them". He also provides a list of common Turkic words grouped thematically.

cussed) is the fact that, in general, distinct literary languages of different spoken Turkic languages were formed quite late. For example, while the formation of the Volga Tatar literary language is seen as having begun during the era of the Golden Horde, this process continued until the turn of the 20th century. Due to the transregional nature of Turkic literary languages in use before the late 19th century, translations resemble each other fairly closely. This similarity is emphasised by the relatively consistent use of loan words of Arabic and Persian origin.

The texts under discussion came to my attention from different sources⁴. In the course of my research, I became aware of the wealth of texts available for further study⁵. A major area of study would be to investigate and establish relationships between the different variants represented in the Turkic translations of the early 19th century.

The translation of a biblical text is of itself a complex task where translation science, biblical studies, theology, linguistics, literature studies and other disciplines come together. To compare Bible translations from different centuries is a rewarding but also a daunting task, as the researcher needs to address questions relating to a wide range of disciplines, such as

⁴ Most of the translations I received from Dr Marianne Beerle-Moor for the purpose of this study. I would like to express my grateful thanks to Zufar Khamadrakhimov for kindly providing the 1825 text, as well as additional information about the source in question. As for the 1820 and 1882/1884 translations, Dr Borislav Arapović [unpublished manuscript] mentions in his study of translations of the Bible the 1820 New Testament as the first New Testament in Tatar (the Gospel of Matthew was published two years previously), and the 1882/1884 translation of the Gospel of Matthew is also in his list. Copies of these publications are housed in the Bible Society collection at Cambridge University Library. An electronic copy was kindly made available for my research by Dr Onesimus Ngundu, and I would also like to thank Dr Simon Crisp for making the connection for me.

⁵ For example, two translations mentioned in Halén [1977: 193], and catalogued as “(742) Turc-755” and “(743) Turc-756”. They are housed in the National Library of Finland.

historical linguistics⁶, history and culture, the development of the literary language(s)⁷, and genres, but has to limit herself to a manageable range. Unlike contemporary Bible translations, little can be said about the intended audience and the purpose of the translation in question. This article offers a glimpse into the fascinating investigation of historical Bible translations.

The texts are presented in chronological order, and the available historical (and geographical) information is noted. Special emphasis is given to distinctive linguistic features, both in the area of phonology and morphology, and in syntax and lexicon. However, the discussion does not cover the same aspects for all texts, as this would make the study unwieldy; I have chosen to comment on aspects which I regard as pertinent and of special interest. Choices made in the different translations are also compared. In addition, I comment on issues of interpretation.

1.1 Background information to the analysis

1.1.1 Influence of genre in the source text(s)

The genre of a literary composition imposes its own requirements on the use of language, purpose, textual structure, level of formality, etc., that can be identified in the text [Crystal 2003 (2007): 201]. When analysing the genre of a text, we examine its form, content and function [Hayes & Holladay 1988 (2007): 83]. The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is itself embedded in narrative genre. Functionally, it operates on two levels: firstly, on the level of the situation described by the narrative, that is, Jesus addressing people in a certain setting, and, secondly, on the level of the actual content of the prayer, which is an address to God. The first function shows Jesus' communicative intent to encourage his listeners to a particular conduct and action. It can therefore be categorised as representing behavioural genre [see Dooley & Levinsohn 2001], specifically of the hortatory type. The second function, an address to God, reveals several subgenres within

⁶ For comparative linguistic study of Turkic languages see, for example, [Shcherbak 1994] and [Tenishev & Dybo 2006].

⁷ See [Johanson 1998b: 84–87] for a discussion of the development of Turkic literary languages.

the general genre of prayer, the main ones being praise, exhortation and petition.

In general terms, the translations investigated follow the form and content evident in the primary source texts known to us nowadays (for example, for the 2015 translation, this was *Novum Testamentum Graece (Nestle-Aland)* [Izge Jazma 2015: 7]). As to the function and communicative intent of the translations of the prayer, additional study into religious and spiritual texts of the time would be needed to shed further light on this aspect.

1.1.2 Source texts

The source texts used for translation are known for the 1820 text and the 2015 version. All except the contemporary version contain the doxology and “Amen” at the end of the text. This is likely due to the tradition followed, also reflecting the source text the translators had access to or chose to use.

1.2 Representation of the phonological system of Tatar through Arabic letters; Principles of transcription

In this paper the system of transcription is streamlined for ease of comparison. The principles are outlined below. The Arabic script used in written Turkic languages had limitations especially in the area of vowel representation. Arabic had only *alif*⁸, *ya* and *waw* to represent vowel sounds, so the same Arabic letters had to be used for several sounds. The basic principles shown below of how the phonological system of Tatar is represented by means of the Arabic script are from Bashirova et al. [2015: 362–389] – a major study of the Tatar literary language from the 13th to the early 20th centuries. The principles reflect the situation before the earliest translation of our study, that is, the 17th and 18th centuries.

1. Word-initially the Arabic *ā*, (*alif* with *maddah*), and *alif* ^ʾ represent the sound [a] and [ä]; *alif* together with *ya* ^ϣ represent [i] and [e].

⁸ In Table 1 I show the fuller names for the Arabic letters, but in the discussion I use only the basic Latin-script letters without diacritics.

2. Word-medially and word-finally *alif* ا and *ha* ه represent the sounds [a] and [ä].
3. Word-initially the digraph *alif* ا and *waw* و represent the sounds [u], [ü], [o] and [ö], and word-medially the letter *waw* و is used for these sounds.
4. There is fluctuation observed between the word-initial [b] and [w], and between the [b] and [m] sounds (and their respective letters).
5. The gradual change of [ä] into [i] in word-medial positions is observable in closed syllables.
6. Labial harmony can be frequently observed.

Table 1. Basic system of transcription used in this paper [cf. Bashirova et al. 2015: 388; Khisamova 1990: 17; Safiullina & Zakiev 1994].

Transcription	Arabic letter, isolated form (Arabic name ⁹)	Transcription	Arabic letter, isolated form (Arabic name)
b (p)	ب (bā')	q	ق (qāf)
p	پ	k (g)	ك (kāf)
t	ت (tā')	g	گ, ك
s	س (sīn)	l	ل (lām)
š	ش (shīn)	m	م (mīm)
ž	ج (jīm)	n	ن (nūn)
č	چ (če ¹⁰)	ŋ, ng	ن + ك, نڭ
x	ح (ḥā)	a, ä; h (word-initially)	ه (hā')

⁹ The names are as presented in Wikipedia: Romanization of Arabic; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Arabic, accessed 22 November 2023.

¹⁰ From the Persian alphabet.

d	ﺩ (dāl)	w; u, ü, o, ö	ﻭ (wāw)
z	ﺯ (zayn)	(v)	ﺯ
r	ﺭ (rā')	j; i, y; ji, jy	ﺭ (yā')
ɣ	غ, ع (ghayn, 'ayn)	a, ä, (e, y)	ا (alif)
f	ﻑ (fā)	a, ä	آ (alif maddah)

In addition to the principles outlined above, in the Synopsis (section 4.2) for ease of comparison I follow the (current) Tatar sound system in cases where the Arabic letter is ambiguous (for example, as is the case with *waw* and *ya*), as I am able to detect it. Although vowel harmony is not reflected in the Arabic-script text consistently, I follow the attested claim [see Róna-Tas 1998: 73–75; Johanson 1998b: 108] of Turkic vowel harmony.

This article is organized as follows: Part I consists of sections 1–4, and Part II of sections 5–6. Section 2 presents a basic outline of the development of the Tatar literary language, where points relevant to the current discussion are highlighted. This section also contains an introduction to some pertinent linguistic features of the Tatar language. Section 3 offers an overview of Scripture translation in the geographical area relevant to our study. In Section 4 the translated texts are first introduced in Table 2 with the available background information concerning them (historical, geographical, authorship, year of printing, publisher). I then present in Table 3 the seven translations of the Lord's Prayer in the format of a synopsis¹¹ to enable the texts to be viewed together. Section 5 is devoted to the investigation of each of the seven translations: their linguistic characteristics, distinctive lexical and syntactic features, and orthography issues. The final section 6 offers conclusions with suggestions for further research.

¹¹ This idea I owe to Julian Rentzsch [2015].

2. History of Kazan/Volga Tatar: literary language, scripts and printing

In this article we explore translations which are regarded as connected with the language nowadays defined as Kazan, or Volga, Tatar. Volga Tatar is a Kypchak Turkic¹² language, with five million speakers mainly in the Russian Federation, the Republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan being the major centres of speakers. Therefore it is appropriate to offer an overview of the main stages of development, as well as a description of the features characteristic of the Volga Tatar literary language. This enables us to look at the seven translations in the context of a particular form of the language. At the same time it is important to keep in mind that the literary languages before the emergence of the distinct contemporary Turkic languages were “transregional”, where literary languages like Chaghatay functioned as the prestigious written medium over a wide area, including the Tatar homeland and Central Asia. There was not usually a direct relationship between the written and spoken variants. Nevertheless, Johanson [1998: 87] points out that even though authors intended to follow certain literary norms, some features originating from their linguistic environment are detectable. This is visible, for example, in Old Tatar, or Volga Turki, which displayed clear Kypchak features.

2.1 Development of the literary language

Written Tatar has its roots in the origins common to all Turkic languages. The early written Old Turkic documents, the most prominent of them being the Orkhon runiform inscriptions, originate from the 6th–8th centuries. These represent Common Turkic. Closer to the current Tatar homeland, written in-

¹² See [Tenishev et al. 2002: 216 ff.], a comparative-historical grammar of Turkic languages, for an in-depth portrayal of the Kypchak languages through a comparison of its two states: Proto Kypchak and the current Kypchak languages, one of them being (Volga) Tatar, which is classified as belonging to the Uralic subgroup together with Bashkir and the language of the Baraba Tatars [Tenishev et al. 2002: 219].

scriptions were found on tombstones in Bolghar, originating from the 13th–14th centuries. While these inscriptions open a linguistic window to the area, in his study of the Volga Bolghar epitaphs, Khakimzhanov [1978: 3, 99] points out that it is likely that the Arabic-script texts do not reflect the spoken language of Volga Bolghars, but represents a “functional language” specifically used for this purpose, which is visible in the standardised phraseology and constructions employed.

The 11th century literary monument of all Turkic peoples is the *Compendium of the languages of the Turks* by the philologist Maḥmūd al-Kāšyarī, which contains a dictionary of Turkic languages, as well as language and folklore samples from many Turkic tribes. The over 50 tribes which al-Kāšyarī's lists as Turkic include, amongst many others, ethnonyms familiar in current Turkology: Bolghar, Kyfchak (Kypchak), and Tatar, which are listed as separate groups¹³. The ethnonym Tatar does not in this case have any direct relation with the current (Volga) Tatars¹⁴.

Bolghars, who are regarded by a number of scholars as the ancestors of Kazan Tatars, arrived at the shores of the Volga and Kama rivers in the 7th century. The land of the Bolghars, Volga Bolgharia, became established as a state in the late 10th century after the fall of the Khazar Khanate. Before this, in the 920s, the Bolghar rulers had adopted Islam, which became a major unifying force, both politically and culturally [see Urazmanova & Cheshko 2001: 55–56]. Islam brought with it the adoption of the Arabic script as the medium of writing, when the Khan of the Golden Horde officially declared Islam the only religion of the territory [Nurieva 2016: 114]. Thus the written language of the Tatar homeland, Old Tatar, or Volga Turki, was written in Arabic script, which continued to be in use in the subsequent written variants until the early 20th century. In records written in this language, Arabic and Persian loans strictly retained the source-language form, whereas Turkic-Tatar words followed the system

¹³ See [Zakiev 2008: 25] for the full list.

¹⁴ See [Zakiev 2008: 11] for the eleven different meanings of the ethnonym “Tatar” since ancient times.

of the so-called *iske imla* (“old orthography”) [Bashirova et al. 2015: 32].

When the Mongol invasion engulfed the Turkic world in the early 13th century, Old Turkic gave way to Middle Turkic. According to Erdal [2004: 5–6], four different Turkic written variants can be attested from this time: Eastern Turkic, Kypchak, Bolghar and Oghuz, each representing distinct dialect groups¹⁵. A short time before Volga Bolgharia fell to the Mongol invaders and the Golden Horde (the Ulus of Jochi) was established in the area, a major literary work saw light in Volga Bolgharia. This is Qol Gali’s epic poem *Qyjssa Josif*¹⁶ (or *Qyssa-i Jusuf*; “Story about Joseph”) originating from 1233.

Some Tatar scholars regard Qol Gali’s epic poem as the beginning of their national literature [Bashirova et al. 2015: 12; Khaliullin 2021] and others emphasise its significant influence on the literary language and folklore heritage of Volga Tatar [Tenishev & Zäkiev 1983]. Qol Gali (ca. 1183–1240) travelled extensively in the cultural centres of the Islamic East. During this time, Arabic, Persian and Turkic were used as the languages for scientific and literary works, which is also reflected in the use of Arabic and Persian vocabulary in the poem. However, there are far fewer Arabic and Persian loans than in other Turkic literary works of the same era written in the Chaghatay (Old Uzbek) and Osman-Turkish languages. *Qyjssa Josif* is characterized as representing both cultivated classic Turkic, and simultaneously displaying a clear influence of the regional Turkic variant of Volga Bolgharia. In the epic poem, especially in the area of vocabulary and phraseology “neutral Turkic-Kypchak elements” are prevalent [Tenishev & Zakiev 1983: 15–16]. In morphology, a clearly Kypchak feature is the genitive formed with *-niŋ* and the accusative formed with *-ni* [Nurieva et al. 2019: 748]. Both features have carried over to contemporary Volga Tatar.

¹⁵ Of the current Turkic languages, the vowel sound [a] has a special labialised pronunciation [a^o] in the first syllable only in Kazan Tatar. Tenishev et al. [2002: 221] regard this as the substrate influence of the (now extinct) Bolghar language.

¹⁶ A beautiful Tatar-Russian edition of *Qyjssa Josif* was published in Kazan in 1983 [see Tenishev & Zakiev 1983].

In addition to the Turkic variant reflected in *Qyjssa Josif*, the old Tatar literary language of the 13th–17th centuries displayed at least three other variants, one of which retained a Khorezim-Turkic basis, itself being derived from older Karakhanid-Uyghur, while another one continued the Volga-Kypchak (Bolghar-Kypchak) tradition, and a later variant in the 16th–17th centuries reflected Chaghatay traditions.¹⁷

The literary language during the era of the Golden Horde is seen in general as having a Kypchak basis, and structurally differing from the earlier Karakhanid-Uyghur language and Chaghatay. A distinguishing feature in the system of nominal declension observed between this literary language and Chaghatay is the use of *-n-*: in the former this infix is present, whereas in the latter it is absent, cf *uyly-na* vs. *uylyj-ya* ‘to his/her son’ [Khisamova 1990: 19]. The use of the infix *-n-* remains a feature of contemporary Tatar.

The literary work *Codex Cumanicus* from the early 14th century reflects a Kypchak variant, a koine [Bashirova et al. 2015: 40], spoken in the west of the Turkic world. Some parts of the *Codex* find reflection also in the development of the Tatar literary language. The Kypchak language was spoken by Cumans who lived on the Black Sea. The *Codex* consists of two parts, a Latin-Persian-Cuman lexicon and religious texts including Bible portions. Amongst the latter is also a version of the Lord's Prayer. The translations appear very literal, retaining the word order of the source text, or reflecting the syntax of European languages, more specifically German(ic), which is presumably an indication of the German Franciscan compilers' influence on the text. [See Golden (n. d.); Berta 1998: 158–159.] As for the value of *Codex Cumanicus* for Turkology, Nurieva [2017: 510] commends it as “a major written source of the Kipchak colloquial language of

¹⁷ Khisamova [1990: 18] adds to this list one special strand – the object of her own study – the language of official correspondence, beginning with official edicts and formal diplomas, *yarlyks*, of the era of the Golden Horde, and later of the Kazan and Crimean Khanates. They differ from other written texts of their time in that they reflect to some degree the spoken language of the people, even some features of the dialects.

the Golden Horde” for the study of the development of the Kypchak languages. The Tatar linguist and poet Mostafa Nogman [1969: 9–10] writes, “After comparing the Cuman sound system with sounds in other Turkic languages, [the eminent 19th century Turkologist] Radloff proves that in the area of consonant sounds it is close to the Volga Tatar language, and particularly to its Western, Mishar dialect.” Nurieva [2017a: 701–702] outlines some of the Kypchak features evident in the dictionary: in phonology, voicing of the [q] sound intervocalically into [y] and evident labial harmony followed in the genitive case affixes; in morphology, the accusative formed with *-nY* and the ablative with *-Dan*; in verbal forms, the *-yp tur* forms occur frequently. These features, except for the last one, are the norm in contemporary Tatar.

The dominion of the Golden Horde began to decline and it disintegrated in the early 15th century. Soon on its edges new state-like formations started appearing: the Siberian, Kazan, and Crimean Khanates, the Noghay Orda, and sometime later the Astrakhan, Kazakh and Uzbek Khanates. The Kazan Khanate became established in the area of the earlier Volga Bolgharia, and during its existence a unified Tatar ethnos started forming. On the basis of the merging of the Bolghar and Kypchak dialects a Tatar common spoken language began to emerge. When the Kazan Khanate fell in 1552 the Russian rule brought along a new socio-political situation, and without the support of a unified city culture the development of the literary language slowed down and the language became “mixed” [Khisamova 1990: 19–20].

Nurieva [2017b: 513] summarises the origins of the Old Tatar literary language as combining two different elements which interacted with one another. On the one hand, there is the continuous Turkic literary tradition dating back to the Turkic and Uyghur Khanates. On the other hand, an important role was played by the regional Kypchak koine used widely in the area of the Golden Horde. These two elements contributed “to the formation of an early, regional literary language” [Nurieva 2017b: 513]. Being by its fundamental system Kypchak, the cultural, his-

torical, and linguistic conditions were such in the Kazan, As-trakhan, and Siberian Khanates that the literary language was able to preserve its traditional archaic features more than, for example, in the Crimea, where Ottoman Turkish influenced the literary language.

In the area of linguistic development, the transition of nominal declension to a Kypchak type took place in the 14th century [Nurieva et al. 2019: 748]. With verbs, while the standard past continued to be formed with the suffix *-DY*, the regional koine was instrumental in the appearance of the new Kypchak verb form with *-GAn* into the repertoire of perfect forms. The verb form with *-mYş* remained as the indicator of prestigious literary tradition, and *-Yp tur* was a colloquial dialectal form [Nurieva et al. 2019: 748]. For verbal nouns and infinitives, the Chaghatay-influenced *-mAQ* still held sway, but the new infinitive form *-rGA*, characteristic to the Volga region, started to appear in some literature of this era [Nurieva 2017a: 704].

In the 15th–16th centuries a new verbal morphological formant *-a/-ä* appeared alongside the existing present-future affix *-yr/-er*, *-ur/-ür*. During the era of the Kazan Khanate, the verbal noun formed with the Oghuz (Chaghatay) *-mAQ* was challenged by the regional form *-u/-ü* [Nurieva et al. 2019: 750], which is also in use in contemporary Tatar. For the infinitive, *-rGA* started occurring frequently in the records. For participle, three forms with the suffixes *-GAn*, *-mYş* and *-DYQ* were used.

The mid-16th century brought a major upheaval in the area. Kazan, the capital of the Kazan Khanate, was conquered by Ivan IV (the Terrible) of Russia in 1552. Many Tatars were expelled from their living areas. Fleeing from the threat of Christianisation they founded new villages where people representing different Tatar dialects and other Turkic variants lived together. A spoken village koine was formed [Bashirova et al. 2015: 46], folklore developed, and various epics depicting battles against the Russian Tsar were created.

As the Russian government needed translators, scribes, and ambassadors for communicating with Turkic-speaking peoples, the Old Tatar written language came to be used for well over 200

years as the main means of communication with the Eastern lands. Its basic system was close to the spoken Tatar of its day, but gradually Russia's increasing diplomatic connections with Turkey and Iran brought about a stronger Oghuz influence on the language. As Central Asian classical literature and opportunities for education in its madrasas were becoming more available, the prestigious Chaghatay literary tradition started exerting more influence from the mid-1700s. A clear sign of this change were the increasing Arabic and Persian loans in the written records. In general, secular literature adopted innovations more readily, religious and didactic literature remained more stable and traditional [Nurieva et al. 2019: 748, 750].

In the 16th–19th centuries, two dialects of the area, Kazan Tatar and Mishar, were used for spoken communication. An inter-dialectal spoken literary language was in use for administrative and legal, as well as religious purposes. Characteristic for this style was strong stability and conservatism. In religious ceremonies the spoken language was mixed with Arabic, for a more elevated style [Khisamova 1990: 26–28]. In her study on the literary language from 1990, Khisamova advocated for extensive research in the area of religious language. This article attempts to respond to this need in the context of the Tatar historical translations of the Lord's Prayer, a piece of religious literature which in its original form is an act of communication combining praise, exhortation and poetry.

Poetry of this time retains some of the traditional features deriving from the Kypchak of the Golden Horde era, but the language “by its lexical stock and basic system of grammatical forms is already in considerable amount Tatar” [Khisamova 1990: 29]. Also, poetry contained figurative expressions close to Tatar spoken language, a clear example of this being the use of the Tatar first-person plural affix *-bYz* instead of the traditional *-mYz*. The earlier translations to be discussed in section 5 originate from a century after the era researched by Khisamova, but, as we will see, there is still fluctuation in the use of this affix.

According to Bashirova et al. [2015: 56–71], the written language of the 17th–18th centuries reflected the earlier traditions of

the Bolghar and the Golden Horde eras, and during the Kazan Khanate it started mixing with the spoken forms of the language of the area, at this time being called “Bolghar-Kazan Turki”. Arabic and Persian loans became more rare, and Turkic vocabulary — closer also to the spoken language — came to the fore. Gradually, the language called “Turki” was replaced by the term “Tatar” in published literature, for example, dictionaries. At the turn of the 19th century, the first study books for Russians to learn Tatar started appearing. At this time Islam became recognised in Russia as an official religion.

In the first half of the 19th century different influential views about what was appropriate for language in literary and religious contexts started challenging one another. Some advocated that mullahs should show their special status by using “higher” language with Arabic and Persian loan words. The demand for the use of “classical, authoritative Turki” filled with Arabic and Persian loans resulted in two types of literature occurring side by side: some followed the “Turki” style, while others made use of the Old Tatar literary language, more in tune with the spoken language of the people. Works using classical Turki become more dominant, and the literary language became hard to understand [Bashirova et al. 2015: 74–75].

In the middle of the 19th century in conjunction with the formation of the Tatar nation, a national literary language started emerging. With the increase of domains needing the written language, the Old Tatar literary language was no longer satisfactory, because it was not understandable to common people. This triggered the process of bringing the language closer to spoken language. This was also the time of Nikolai Ilminsky's initiative to use spoken language as the foundation for translating the Bible and other Christian texts, and to utilise the Cyrillic script for greater representation of the Tatar sound system and wider understandability. The change of linguistic standards and style towards a commonly accessible language took its time, and it was at the beginning of the 20th century when “all the styles of Tatar national literary language were by and large brought into the norm” [Safiullina & Zakiev 1994: 19]. During the Soviet era the

development of literary standards continued, and different literary varieties and styles became established.

2.2 Scripts and the beginning of printed publications

In the course of its history the path leading from Turkic to the Volga Tatar written language has proceeded through five different scripts: runiform, Uyghur, Arabic, Latin, and Cyrillic. The earliest Turkic words and phrases originate from the 6th century [Erdal 2004: 4], but the written Turkic period starts in earnest with the Orkhon valley inscriptions dated to ca. 720 AD. Being in a runiform script, they represent the so-called Common Turkic, that is, Turkic from which the Oghur language had already broken away, but the split into Oghuz, Kypchak and Uyghur had not yet taken place [Johanson 1998b: 85].

After the state of Volga Bolgharia was formed in the late 10th century, it soon established political, trade, religious, cultural and scientific connections with eastern countries. With the adoption of Islam in 922, the Arabic script began to be used. The Arabic script continued to be in use amongst the Tatars for one thousand years. It did not allow for full representation of the Tatar vowel sounds, as it had only three letters for vowels and semivowels, whereas Tatar has eight vowels and two semivowels. In essence the writing system did not undergo major changes until the latter half of the 19th century, when *iske imla* “old orthography” was replaced by *jana imla* “new orthography” and *urta imla* “middle orthography”. Tatar started marking six additional vowels, which system continued until the Arabic script was replaced in the early 20th century [Safiullina & Zakiyev 1994: 207].

The first printed publication in Tatar was a manifest of Tsar Peter I from 1722 printed in his military typography in connection with the Russo-Persian war. The publication came out almost simultaneously with the Russian version, which is an indication of the important role the Tatar literary language played in society. Sometime later, at the request of representatives of the Tatar educational bodies Tsar Paul I gave permission in 1800 to open a typography at Kazan University, and printing of Tatar books began a year later [Khaliullin 2021].

In the early 20th century the Arabic script was regarded as a symbol of Islam. In 1926 all Turkic peoples within the Soviet Union started using the Latin script. The new Tatar script based on the Latin script was called *jaŋalif* “new alphabet”. However, in the 1930s due to Russification efforts the Cyrillic alphabet was introduced and it became functional in 1938, with the introduction of six new characters to represent Tatar sounds not available in the standard Cyrillic script [see Safiullina & Zakiev 1994: 208].

2.3 Contemporary Tatar literary language

The norms of the current Tatar literary language are essentially a combination of features from different Tatar dialects. The phonetic system and the lexical stock are mainly from the middle dialect, whereas the western Mishar dialect played a major role in the formulation of morphology and grammatical structure. For syntax, the norms derive from old literary Tatar, finding its roots in the Middle Turkic literary language. [See Urazmanova & Cheshko 2001: 26; Safiullina & Zakiev 1994: 18.]

3. An overview of Bible translation in the areas around the Tatar homeland in the 1800s

In this section I take a look at Bible translation activities in the territories close to where Volga Tatars resided when most of the texts studied were created. We will note the activities of the Karass Mission, and how Professors Kazembek and Ilminsky, who were members of the Scripture Translation Committee, regarded the task of Bible translation. I would like to highlight the following Tatar scholars who mention Bible translation in their writings: Fanuza Nurieva who with her colleagues has written in detail about Ilminsky's work [see Nurieva et al. 2016]; Nogman [1969] who briefly discusses *Codex Cumanicus* and its connection with contemporary Tatar dialects, and Iskander Abdullin [1974] who touches on the topic of biblical translations in his study of connections between Tatar dialects and the language of “Armenian-Kypchak” manuscripts originating from the 16th and 17th

centuries. The book of the Bible that Abdullin [1974: 170] mentions is Psalms in a Kypchak variant written in Armenian script.

3.1 Scripture translation of Turkic variants in Karass, Astrakhan and Orenburg

The late 1700s and the 1800s were a time of increasing activity in Christian missions, and many Protestant societies were founded to promote the Christian faith, and to accomplish other humanitarian goals inspired by their Christian faith, including the abolition of slavery. An interest also grew in Bible translation, to provide the Scriptures to peoples and languages in new areas. The Scottish Missionary Society, founded in 1796 (initially under the name *The Edinburgh Missionary Society*) became a major contributor to Bible translation work in the area where many Turkic peoples lived, including the many different groups who were called “Tatar” but represented different language variants and dialects. The early 1800s also saw the beginning of several Bible Societies, the British and Foreign Bible Society being founded in 1804, and the Scottish Bible Society in 1809 [see Flynn 2017: 235, 238].

The Scottish Missionary Society established a mission centre in Karass in the North Caucasus in 1802 in an area which had been taken over by Russia just some fifteen years previously during the reign of Catherine II. The area was now being referred to as “Russian Tartary” [Flynn 2017: 229]. The Karass team, headed by Henry Brunton, started translating the Scriptures as a key part of their work. The Turkic variant spoken in the village was called “Tatar-Turkish”, or “Noghay”. The Noghays lived adjacent to the Kabardians [Flynn 2017: 283] who spoke a very different language belonging to the north-west Caucasian language family. The Karass centre started printing the translated Scriptures and other religious literature in this “leading vernacular of the Karass region” [Flynn 2017: 276]. The translation of the New Testament into Tatar-Turkish/Noghay was headed by Brunton, who had acquired an excellent spoken and written knowledge of the language. However, he died just before the work was completed, so Charles Fraser led the work to conclusion, and the Noghay New Testament was published in 1813 [Flynn 2017: 304].

According to Flynn [2017: 309], the Karass Scripture translations did not strictly represent one single dialect but were an “eclectic lingua franca version”, or a “union version” created in the Tatar-Turkish/Noghay lingua franca of the area. Brunton's New Testament translation was based to some extent on William Seaman's Noghay-Turkish version of 1666.

The Russian Bible Society was founded 1812, and together with the British and Foreign Bible Society it supported the production of the Scriptures until the mid-1820s [Flynn 2017: 321]. During this time the New Testament and some Old Testament books were translated into Russian, and several schools were established for the poor. In 1815 the Karass community moved to Astrakhan, a cosmopolitan city strategically located on the Volga, with a mixed population. Scriptures were produced and printed in Turkic varieties, now including a variant called the “Orenburg Tatar dialect”. Instead of “Tatar-Turkish”, which was the name of the variant spoken in Karass, Flynn [2017: 326] comments, “in this region, [the variant is] more correctly called Volga-Tatar”. Being a commercial centre, in addition to other types of goods the merchants also carried the printed Scriptures to various areas, including Georgia, the Crimea, Persia and Kazan.

In addition to Astrakhan, a new mission station was opened in another key location, Orenburg, in 1815. Orenburg was situated at the crossroads of European and Asiatic Russia on the River Ural, and was seen as a door to Siberia [Flynn 2017: 394]. Beyond the city in the steppe lived a nomadic people called “Kirgizian Tatars”, and they were amongst the peoples whom the Scottish mission aimed to reach. After ten productive years, the censorship ruling of 1824 in Russia caused difficulties for the work, and the Russian Bible Society was closed down during the reign of Nicholas I [Flynn 2017: 324–326].

3.2 Scriptures reaching the region of Kazan

As mentioned, merchants were instrumental in taking printed Scriptures from Astrakhan to various key areas, including Kazan. It appears that some of the original Tatar-Turkish New Testaments of the Karass mission ended up in Kazan in response to the government of Kazan's request for them [Flynn 2017: 384].

The mission workers themselves also travelled long distances from Orenburg, and some of them reached the Kazan region in 1821. The Scriptures they brought along were in “Tatar-Turkish”, including the New Testament, Genesis and Psalms [Flynn 2017: 390–396]. It is not clear whether “Tatar-Turkish” was in this case used for the Noghay “lingua franca” variant, or perhaps some other variant(s), for convenience called with the general title “Tatar-Turkish”.

3.2.1 Mirza Alexander Kazembek

Mirza Alexander Kazembek was influential in Scripture translation in Kazan in the 1840s–1850s. Kazembek was ethnically Persian and from the leading families of Derbent in southern Daghestan, where his father served as a Muslim judge. The father was convicted of treason and sent to Astrakhan for exile, and his son followed him there. Kazembek became interested in the Christian faith through the Scottish mission.

After his conversion in 1823, he visited Kazan and its university. The University of Kazan had been founded in 1804, and it was the only university in the Russian Empire located in a predominantly Muslim area. Kazembek became one of the founders of the Oriental Studies department at the university, and served there as a professor [Flynn 2017: 442–448].

Tsar Nicholas I established a Scripture Translation Committee, and Kazembek served as its chairman in the 1840s–1850s. Kazembek’s approach to Bible translation was “ultra-Muslim”: he was in favour of retaining high style with Arabic and Persian literary elements, and of using the Arabic alphabet. It is impossible in the constraints of this paper to investigate whether Kazembek’s approach might have been influential in some of the translations studied¹⁸.

¹⁸ Kazembek’s special interest in the “Turkish-Tatar” language is shown by the fact that he wrote a grammar of it in Russian, which was soon afterwards translated into German. See [Kasem-Beg 1981] (which is a reprint of the German translation, originally published in 1848–1849).

3.2.2 Nikolai Ilminsky

It was due to Kazembek's influence that another key player in the history of Bible translation amongst the indigenous peoples of the area, Nikolai Ilminsky, became involved in Scripture work. Ilminsky received his education in Turkic studies and joined the Translation Committee, also serving as professor of Turkic languages at the University of Kazan. Initially Ilminsky followed the translation principles outlined by Kazembek and the Committee, but when he came to test the translation in Tatar villages to find out how it was understood, he discovered that the text was unintelligible to the people. As a result, Ilminsky developed his own method of translating, where the translations were aimed at more clearly defined "multiple narrow dialects", and instead of the Arabic alphabet, a modified Cyrillic script was used [Flynn 2017: 448–449]. We look at Ilminsky's principles more closely in section 5.6, when discussing the 1893 translation.

3.3 Comments on translation method

Research into translation methods and principles of those involved in Scripture translation in the 19th century would present a wide area of investigation, which is outside the scope of this article. I do nevertheless offer some observations on this crucial topic.

Kazembek and Ilminsky appear to represent two extremes on the spectrum of Bible translation methods. Kazembek favoured traditional, established ways of presenting a religious text to the speakers, while Ilminsky, through his initial bitter experience when testing an unintelligible translation, came to radically modify his approach, involving mother-tongue speakers in a major way and taking into account the results of comprehension testing.

When it comes to the earlier translation work by the Scottish mission community, originating in Karass, Flynn [2017: 456–457], while regretting how little acknowledgement the mother-tongue language informants received in their day, commends the method used by the Scottish worker William Glen, who worked on the Persian translation of the Old Testament:

...it was the *munshīs* who in reality did most of the real translation work for Glen. He actually followed the now approved practice of overseeing the translation made firstly by the *munshi* ('language informant'). It was then revised against the original and other versions for accuracy and internal consistency by biblical experts.

It is not clear whether mother-tongue speakers were involved in a major way in the early translations into Turkic languages and dialects, but some of the translations investigated in this study do show signs of aiming for what would in contemporary translation studies be called a natural translation. That said, the text we are currently studying, the Lord's Prayer, is not in the most straightforward genre for studying naturalness, which can more easily be distinguished in narrative texts.

4. An overview of the texts

4.1 Metadata on the texts:

sources, year, background to creation

In Table 2 I present the basic background to the seven texts studied: place of printing, year, script, publisher and other relevant information.

Table 2. Texts, year of printing, script and other information

	Text	Year	Script	Comments
1	<i>Tatar Catechism</i> , reprinted in [Adelung 1817], Volume IV: page 174	1803	Original Arabic transcribed into Latin script	The language is called in German "Tatarisch", 'Tatar'.

	Text	Year	Script	Comments
2	<i>Inzhil (New Testament)</i> . Astrakhan. Copy used from Cambridge University Library, from the collections of the Bible Society's Library.	1820	Arabic	Printed in Astrakhan by Juxana Mitžil. Darlow and Moule [1911: 1630] classify this under "Turkish-Kirghiz" and link it with "Orenburg Tatar". The translation was prepared by Charles Fraser on the basis of Henry Brunton's version of the Noghay New Testament of 1813.
3	<i>Inzhil (New Testament)</i> . Astrakhan. Copy used from Lobachevsky Scientific Library at Kazan State University.	1825	Arabic	Copy used originates from the collection of Barudi (1857–1920), Mufti of Kazan.
4	Published in [Dalton 1870] and provided by Academician Velyaminov [Dalton 1870: 14]. No information on source, year or place of printing.	1870	Arabic	Dalton's description presents this as "Siberian Tatar".
5	<i>Matthew's Gospel</i> . BSFS: Kazan. Copy used from Cambridge University Library, from the collections of the Bible Society's Library.	1882/ 1884	Arabic	Darlow and Moule [1911: 1629] discuss under "Turkish-Kazan" and call the language "Kazan Tatar". Translated by C. Salemann, a professor at the University of St Petersburg. "Revised for press by J. M. E. Gottwald, a professor at Kazan University, and head of the University Printing Office and Library."

	Text	Year	Script	Comments
6	<i>Four Gospels.</i> The copy used is a 1908 reprint of the 3rd edition of the Four Gospels of 1893. Kazan: Printing House of the Imperial University. (This was reprinted in 1973 together with Psalms of 1914. Stockholm: IBT.)	1893 (1908)	Cyrillic	Translated under the leadership of N. Bobrodnikov, Nikolai Ilminsky's successor. The title page has the following in Russian: "Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Tatar language". 3 rd edition of the Orthodox Missionary Society.
7	<i>Izge Jazma (The Bible)</i> IBT: Moscow.	2015	Cyrillic	Full title: <i>Izge jazma. Täurat. Zäbür. Inžil.</i> In addition, the title page contains the following: "Institution of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Linguistics of RAS".

Key to abbreviations:

BFBS = British and Foreign Bible Society

IBT = Institute for Bible Translation

PMO = Orthodox Missionary Society

(Pravoslavnoe missionerskoe obshchestvo)

RAS = Russian Academy of Sciences

4.2 Synopsis of the seven versions of the Lord's Prayer

The transcriptions of the seven versions are presented below in table format as a synopsis, which facilitates easier comparison. In the discussion of each translation in section 5 I present a direct transcription of the Arabic-script text, which is basically consonantal. The transcription in the synopsis below contains my interpretation of the approximate pronunciation of the vowels, and I have explicitly indicated the front and back vowels where possible.

Table 3. Synopsis of the seven versions of the Lord's Prayer.

Year	Matthew 6:9a	Matthew 6:9b	Matthew 6:9c
1803	bezüm ¹⁹ atamezdur our father-our-is	sän küklär- däki sän you in-skies- the-one-being you (are)	rušanlansun sänünj isümünj may-be-glorified your name-your
1820	asmanda bulyan atamyz in-sky being father-our		isemeñ möqadas bulsun name-your holy may-be
1825	küklärä ulan atamyz in-skies being father-our		adyñ möqaddas ulsun name-your holy may-be-
1870	i kükläräki atamyz O in-skies-the-one- being father-our		sneñ isemeñ möqadas bulsun your name-your holy may-be
1882/ 1884	i küklärägi atamyz O in-skies-the-one- being father-our		isemeñ möqadas bulsun name-your holy may-be
1893	ej küktäge Atabyz, O in-sky Father-our		danny bulyb torson isemeñ Sineñ, glorious may-be. continuously name- your Your.
2015	Küktäge Atabyz! In-sky-the-one- being Father-our!		Isemeñ izge dip iqrar itelsen, Name-your holy as may-be-declared,

¹⁹ The 1803 text in the synopsis is my interpretation of the Latin-script transcription of the source, which itself was made in a context influenced by German.

Year	Matthew 6:10a	Matthew 6:10b	Matthew 6:10c
1803	kalsun sänüŋ šagluguŋ may-remain your kingdom-your	ulsun ixtiar säniki kükdä gäm erdä may-be will yours in-sky and on-earth	
1820	mämläkäten jitešsün government- your may-arrive	10c iradäten zämindä bulsun will-your on- earth may-be	10b asmanda däxi bulduyy kebi sky-in also its- being like
1825	badšahlyyyŋ kilsün kingdom-your may-come	kükdä moradyŋ ničä isä in-sky purpose- your as would-be	jirdä däxi bu ilä ulsun on-earth also this with may-be
1870	sneŋ mölkteŋ kilsün your dominion- your may-come	sneŋ aradaŋ kükdä bulyan tik your will-your in- sky being as	jirdä däxi bulsun on-earth also may-be
1882/ 1884	mölküteŋ kilsün dominion-your may-come	moradyŋ kükdä ničuk isä purpose-your in- sky as would-be	jirdädä šulaj bulsun on-earth thus may-be
1893	Kilsen padšalyyyŋ Sineŋ; May-come kingdom- your Your;	žirdä dä küktägečä on-earth also as- (being)-in-sky	bulsyn irkeŋ Sineŋ. may-be will- your Your.
2015	Sineŋ Patšalyyyŋ kilsen. Your Kingdom- your may-come.	Küktäge kebek, žirdä dä In-sky(-being) like, on-earth also	Sineŋ ixtyjaryŋ yamälgä ašsyn. Your will-your may-become- realised.

Year	Matthew 6:11a	Matthew 6:11b
1803	bezüm gärküngi nafakamezne our every-daily food-our-ACC	bu jümdä birgil wezgä this in-day give-IMP to-us
1820	här künki nanymyzny every daily bread-our-ACC	bu kün bezkä bir this day we-DAT give
1825	här künki etmäkemezi every daily bread-our-ACC	bezä bu kün wir we-DAT this day give
1870	bezneñ rizyq ikmäkemezni our food bread-our-ACC	bükün bezkä birkil today we-DAT give-IMP
1882/ 1884	här küngi ikmägemezni every daily bread-our-ACC	bügün bezgä birkil today we-DAT give-IMP
1893	Bögön könnök ikmägebezne Today daily bread-our-ACC	bir bezgä. give we-DAT.
2015	Köndälek ikmägebezne Daily bread-our-ACC	bezgä bügen bir. we-DAT today give.

Year	Matthew 6:12a	Matthew 6:12b	Matthew 6:12c
1803	gäm kitşgül bezüm gunaglaremezni and forgive-IMP our sins-our-ACC	niçükdür wä bez kitşämez as-is also we forgive-we	magijublakmüš ²⁰ kemsanalarni ?-doing anyone- PL-ACC
1820	wä buručlary- myzny bezkä bayyşla and debts-our-ACC we-DAT forgive	bezim дәxi buručlylarymyza our also indebted- being-our-DAT	bayyşladuyymyz kebi forgiving-our like
1825	wä bezä buryčlarymyzy bayyşla and we-DAT debts- our-ACC forgive	ničä kä bez дәxi bezä buryčly ulanlara as we also we-DAT those-indebted-DAT	bayyşlaryz forgive-we

²⁰ A query remaining for future research.

1870	wä bezneŋ buryč-larymyzny baŋyš-layyl bezlärkä and our debts-our forgive-IMP we-PL-DAT	antak kim bezläŋ buryčlularymyzŋa such as we-PL those-indebted-our-DAT	baŋyšlajmyz forgive-we
1882/ 1884	häm bezgä buručlarymyzny kičür and we-DAT debts-our-ACC forgive	antak kim bez dä üzemezgä buručly bulŋanlarŋa such as we also ourselves-DAT indebted those-being-DAT	Kičürämez forgive-we
1893	Buryčlarybyzny kičer, Debts-our-ACC forgive,	bez dä bezgä buryčly bulŋannarŋa we also we-DAT indebted those-being-DAT	kičergän kük. have-forgiven like.
2015	Bez dä üzebezgä jawyzlyq qylučylarny We also ourselves-DAT evil doers-ACC	kičergändäj, as-have-forgiven,	bezneŋ jawyz ešlarne Sin kičer. Our evil deeds-ACC You forgive.

Year	Matthew 6:13a	Matthew 6:13b
1803	gäm džasuwe ²¹ itmägil fasad eškä and ? do-not-IMP corrupt deed-DAT	emma kutkar bezni rialukdan but save we-ACC hypocritical.one-from
1820	wä bezni mxll ²² imtixanŋa ketürmä and we-ACC position testing-DAT bring-in-not	läkin šärdän bezni näžat qyl but evil-from we-ACC salvation do

²¹ A query remaining for future research.

²² I am grateful to Dr Rachel Décor for deciphering the Arabic-script word and suggesting a meaning for it.

1825	häm bezi imtixana salma and we-ACC testing-DAT put-not	ämmä bezi jaramazdan qurtar but we-DAT (the) worthless-from save
1870	wä bezläрни imtxanya mbtla ²³ qylmayyl and we-PL-ACC testing-DAT one_exposed make-not-IMP	bälkä bezläрни šäriрдän qotqaryyl but we-PL-ACC evil- from save-IMP
1882/ 1884	häm bezni imtixanya tüšürmä and we-ACC testing- DAT put-down-not	läkin jamandan bezni qutqar but evil-from we-ACC save
1893	Bezne aldanyrya irek žibärmä; We-ACC be-deceived allow-not;	žamannan qotqar bezne. evil-from save we-ACC.
2015	Bezne synauya dučar itmä, We-ACC testing-DAT subject do-not,	ä jawyzdan saqla. but evil-from protect.

Year	(Matthew 6:13c)	(Matthew 6:13d)	(Matthew 6:13e)
1803	zira sänüñ šagluguñ gäm kuwatuñ for your kingdom-your and strength-your	gäm danuñ abadidur and glory-your eternal-is	amin amen
1820	ziräkä mämläkät wä qodrät for government and power	wä žälal sineñki der daim and greatness yours is eternally	amin amen
1825	zirä badšahlyq wä qodrät for kingdom and power	wä žälal abda sneñder and greatness eternally yours-is	amin amen

²³ I am grateful to Dr Rachel Décor for pointing me to the right direction with the interpretation of the Arabic-script word. The meaning 'exposed (to affliction)' is confirmed by Gazizov et al. [1993: 353], where the word مَبْتَلَا is transcribed into Tatar as *мөбтәлә* (*möbtälja*) and given the meaning '(someone) exposed (to misfortune)'.

1870	anyñčun kim sneñder mölkt wä quut therefore as your-is dominion and strength	wä žälal äbädkäčä and greatness until-eternity	amin amen
1882/ 1884	čünki sneñder mölküt wä qodrät for your-is dominion and power	wä oloylyq mänküčä and greatness until-eternity	amin amen
1893	Pađšalyq, qyuat, Kingdom, strength,	ololoq yumergä Sineke šul. greatness eternally Yours indeed (is).	Amin'. Amen.
2015	-	-	-

4.3 General observations, common to all the texts

The main observations and comparisons of the texts are conducted through investigation of their lexicon and certain linguistic features pertaining to phonology, morphology, syntax, as well as discourse-pragmatic features.

In the area of **lexicon**, what stands out at a first glance is the number of loan words, mainly from Arabic. This is especially true of nouns and abstract concepts, whereas verbs are more commonly of Turkic origin, and reflect everyday use.

In the area of **phonology**, sound harmony is a fundamental, indigenous feature of Turkic, which has been retained in contemporary languages. Turkic sound harmony affects both vowels and consonants, and also has impact at the morphological level [Tenishev et al. 2002: 284]. The existence of front vs. back sound harmony is already postulated for Ancient Turkic [Róna-Tas 1998: 73–75]. In the translations studied, albeit not consistently marked, the existence of uvular consonants [q] and [ɣ] in the Arabic script is an indication that the language differentiates front- and back-vowel environments. The front- or back-vowel value of the Arabic-script vowels and semivowels “a”, “i/ji”, and “w/u” can only be interpreted through such consonants.

Most texts also exhibit more extended vowel harmony than contemporary Tatar; this is evident for example from the word *bulsun/ulsun* ‘may be’ of the first five texts, where the jussive suffix *-sYn* is in harmony with the first vowel of the verb *bul* ‘be’. The 1893 translation displays weaker vowel harmony with the form *bulsyn*; this type of vowel harmony also occurs in contemporary Tatar.

Morphology is an area where many interesting distinctions can be observed. Suffixes are a key feature of Turkic morphology attested since ancient times. Róna-Tas [1998: 73] postulates the following possessive suffixes for Ancient Turkic: in singular: first person: **-m*; second person: **-ŋ*; third person **(s)i*, whereas the plural in first and second persons was formed with *-z*. Personal pronouns in singular were *bi* for first person, and *si* for second person, and they could be pluralised with the suffix *-z*: resulting in *biz* ‘we’ and *siz* ‘you.PL’, respectively. Third-person pronouns developed later from demonstrative pronouns.

In the texts we are studying, the following cases occur: nominative (which is unmarked), accusative, dative, genitive, locative and ablative. Especially noteworthy among these is the development of the dative form. Already in Ancient Turkic the dative is said to have been formed with *-ka* [Róna-Tas 1998: 73], and this form occurs also in our texts, alternating with a later variant *-a*.

For verbs, even in Ancient Turkic “the second-person singular simple imperative was identical with the verb stem” [Róna-Tas 1998: 73–75]. An example of this is *kör* ‘see!’, which is both the stem and also functions as an imperative. As for tense markers, the past marker was *-dI*. Markers indicating person on the verb developed from personal pronouns. The development from a personal pronoun to a verbal suffix was the following:

1st-person singular: *ben* > *-men*²⁴ > *-m*;

2nd-person singular: *sen* > *-n*; also *-ŋ*;

²⁴ Johanson [1998b: 106] suggests that an initial *m*- did not exist in Proto-Turkic. The development of the initial consonant of the first-person singular pronoun *ben* to *men*, which is visible in many Turkic languages, including Tatar, would therefore be due to assimilation to the following nasal.

3rd-person singular: **i* > \emptyset ;

1st-person plural: *biz* > *-biz/-miz*; also *-k*;

2nd-person plural: *siz* > *-siz*.

As we will see, most of these features are reflected in the texts of our study many centuries later.

For other verb forms, participles were formed with the suffix *-miš*, and one of the major verbal forms common to Turkic languages, converbs, were already evident in the oldest Turkic texts. We will be observing some participle forms in the texts of the Lord's Prayer, but since the prayer is not a narrative text, no converbs are used. For tenses, only the present tense is used in our texts. Aspectual forms, very common in Turkic languages, have one occurrence in this prayer: in 9c of the 1893 text. As is to be expected in a prayer, imperative and jussive forms occur frequently.

With regard to **syntax**, subordination is not expressed through the use of conjunctions as it is in many European languages, but with the help of non-finite verb forms: the subordinate clause containing the non-finite verb form (converb) precedes the main clause containing a full verb. For co-ordination, simple juxtaposing of clauses is typical. These features are reflected to varying degrees in our texts.

Table 4 in section 6 of Part II presents an overview of the features observed in the translations, with emphasis on features where more variation is observed.

4.4 Illustrative observations from Table 3

4.4.1 Phonology: vowel shift

The Turkic language translations of the time of our study pose a special challenge: they all use the Arabic script, and it is difficult to distinguish between the different language variants. In the Arabic script translations, word-internal vowels are often left unmarked, or under-distinguished. It is from these sounds that different languages can be distinguished, as languages have gone through different sound changes. An example of the importance of distinguishing between vowel sounds

is the systematic vowel shifts²⁵, in particular, the raising of the vowel [e] to [i], which took place in Tatar and Bashkir, and then spread to other vowels as well, resulting in [o] becoming [u], and [ö] becoming [ü]. For example, for the meaning 'come (IMP)' Turkish has *gel*, whereas for Tatar the form is *kil* [Johanson 1998b: 92].

Despite the underrepresentation of the vowel sounds, some evidence of a sound shift can be detected in the translations in the form of the singular pronoun 'you'. The vowel in this word is word-internal, and the word being a pronoun, it has been in use from ancient times. Róna-Tas [1998: 73] postulates that the second-person pronoun for Ancient Turkic was in the form of *si*.

In the 1803 translation 'you' is represented by *sàn/săn* (1803: 9b), which retains the Ancient Turkic initial consonant, but the vowel is the low vowel [a/ă] as opposed to the high vowel [i]. The 1820 translation has one pronoun 'you', and it contains an explicit vowel "i": *sin* (1820: 13d). Interestingly, the 1825 translation, printed only five years later, represents a different tradition or language variant, as the vowel is left unscripted, which would suggest that the sound is not [i], but [a/ă], since there appears to be a general tendency to write word-internal [i] sounds more often than word-internal [a] sounds. It is therefore likely that the 'you' pronoun in the 1825 version was in the form of *săn* (1825: 13d), as in 1803. The 1870 (13c) and 1882/1884 (13c) pronouns follow this pattern, with an unscripted middle vowel, and it is only in the 1893 Cyrillic-script translation that we again meet the form *sin* (9c), which is the norm in contemporary Tatar, as seen in the 2015 translation of Matthew 6:10a.

This is not a clear-cut development of a sound shift, since the forms do not indicate a consistent change which is retained, but fluctuation between different pronunciations. The reason for such fluctuation may be different language variants, localised variation and script conventions, to name but a few.

²⁵ See [Tenishev et al. 2002: 253–256] for a discussion on the development of the vowel system in Kypchak languages, including Kazan Tatar.

4.4.2 Morphology: a possessive suffix

In the table in 9a the key word is ‘our Father’. In all the translations the word for ‘father’ is consistently the same: *ata*, but a difference can be observed in the first-person plural possessive suffix. The form is *-mYz* in five versions. The 1893 translation is the first one to display the form *-bYz*, which is normative in contemporary Tatar.

4.4.3 Word order

The syntactic structure of Turkic languages is typically Subject-Object-Verb [see Johanson 1998a: 49]. The Lord’s Prayer is not the most standard text for determining word order, as it is of a particular genre with its own characteristics, rather than (unmarked) narrative with regular tenses. However, even in clauses with imperative forms the translations follow the verb-final word order, except in the oldest text of 1803, where most clauses have the subject following the verb; see, for example, 10a: *kalsun sänün şagluguñ* ‘may-remain your kingdom’. The 1893 version, which gives the overall impression of a translation aiming to use more everyday language, displays an interesting feature seemingly contradicting this aim: the noun phrase containing a noun and an attribute modifying it has the word order reversed from the standard Attribute-Noun. This is visible in 9c, which has *isemeñ Sineñ* ‘name Your’ instead of the standard *Sineñ isemeñ* ‘Your name’. This reversed order possibly reflects the original Greek word order, or the order of the Russian Synodal translation, which may have been used as a model for the translation.

Grammatical abbreviations used

- ACC = accusative
- DAT = dative
- IMP = imperative
- PL = plural

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