

LAMENTATIONS OF BENYAMIN TURŞU  
AND BERAĖA POYRAZ.  
TWO SONGS FROM A CRIMEAN *MEJUMA*

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The aim of this paper is to discuss two previously unknown literary works which depict events preceding the death of two Karaims, Benyamin Turşu and BeraĖa Poyraz. Although laments of this type can be found in critical editions of Crimean Karaim *mejumas*, their contents and language have not yet been thoroughly examined. The vast majority of *mejumas* do not consist of original Karaim literature, therefore each work which can be determined as of purely Crimean Karaim provenance should be considered a valuable source of linguistic material.

*Key words:* Crimean Karaim, *mejuma*, folk literature, Karaites, laments, Samuel Kohen.

## 1. Crimean Karaim Folk Literature

Recent academic research has enabled us to acquire a deeper understanding of Crimean Karaim folk literature.<sup>1</sup> It is well known that this type of literary endeavour is susceptible to disappearing, as it is primarily transmitted through an oral tradition. Moreover, it is in its very nature liable to changes in words and style. Despite inevitable alternations, its essence and basic qualities would, however, remain intact. The first step in maintaining their oral literary works was taken by the Karaims themselves, as they developed a tradition of writing everything down that was deemed noteworthy in manuscripts called *mejumas*. Kokenaj, in an article devoted to the matter in question, has expressed the unquestionable importance of handwritten books in which the

<sup>1</sup> For thorough information on the history of Crimean Karaim literature, see a recent article by Jankowski (2012). The publication, inter alia, discusses articles written on this subject, such as the works of Poznanski from 1910, 1913, 1916, 1918, publications by Shapshal (Şapşal 1918), Zaĵczkowski (1926), Shapira (2003), etc.

heritage of the Karaims has been preserved.<sup>2</sup> The scholar described *mejumas* in the following way: “*Ol kitablarda ornatylyredi har nerse, har ucur, kajsyn klerediler abrama unutmaktan. [...] Necik har dor kaldyryredi sifleri isne mežumanyn yzyn ez bolmahynyn, bulaj acheribe zamannyn mežuma berteredi da syjynmasedi bir kitabda*” Kokenaj (1933, p. 14).<sup>3</sup> Literary works copied into manuscripts were written mainly in verse and comprised information on various significant facts: the life of the whole community, such as births, weddings, but also illnesses and deaths.

Our knowledge of the contents of these books is based on editions and articles published over the span of the last one hundred years. The most voluminous collections of Crimean Karaim folk literature are to be found in the seventh volume of *Proben der Volksliteratur der nördlichen türkischen Stämme* (Radloff 1896) and in critical editions of *mejumas* published by Aqtay (2009) and Çulha (2010).<sup>4</sup> These works are especially valuable to us, because they comprise a wide range of source material both from the linguistic and the literary points of view. That being said, we should acknowledge that the considerable extent of these publications poses a serious challenge for researchers. The editions prepared by Aqtay (2009) and Çulha (2010) include linguistic analyses. However, due to the aforementioned reasons, an in-depth literary study and translation of the contents have yet to be performed.

Some articles which outline the folk literature of Crimean Karaim origin, examine materials considerably lesser in volume. A renowned scholar, Ananiasz Zajączkowski, published a collection of 105 short songs called *čiči*, which he attributed to Karaim-Tatar folklore. The study contains a translation of songs into Polish, comprehensive footnotes and a detailed analysis, from which we learn that the language of the *čiči* songs is of a mixed type. The northern phonological properties alternate with the southern ones and a certain Nogay influence is attested, too (Zajączkowski 1939, pp. 38–45). Jankowski, in his study dedicated to the Purim songs and a song of war found between pages of a *mejuma*, argued that the handwritten books cannot be treated as an undisputable source of knowledge on Crimean Karaim communities, due to the fact that their literary contexts are not unique and were, in a large part, adapted from Turkish folklore. Therefore, any poems which can be described as purely Crimean Karaim are highly valuable, as they shed light on the true life of this minority (Jankowski 2005, pp. 145–147).

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that *mejumas* did not consist of literary works of purely Karaim provenance. On their pages we find songs and tales, which were common to other Turkic minorities in the Crimea. The same applies to Krimchak *jönks*.

<sup>3</sup> “These books comprised everything, every event, which they [Karaims] wanted to save from oblivion. [...] Due to the fact that every generation left mark of its existence on the pages of *mejuma*, in the course of time the book grew bigger and [eventually] it did not fit into one volume.” Cf. the translation into Polish of the whole article by Sulimowicz (2007, pp. 3–5).

<sup>4</sup> I have not mentioned various publications which are not purely academic in nature. At the beginning of the 20th century some works written by the Crimean Karaims were published in Russia (i.e. two songs by Samuel Pigit occurred in *Караимская Жизнь*, R. S. Kefeli published 500 Crimean Karaim proverbs in the book *Atalar sözi*). For further reading, see e.g. Shapshal (Šapšal 1918) and Jankowski (2012).

## 2. Laments Written by Karaims

The aim of the present paper is to discuss two Karaim songs which heretofore have not been examined. They were copied into the *mejuma* of Samuel, son of Rabbi Kohen, No. VI-3/22, which is kept by the Karaim Congregation in Eupatoria. The aforementioned songs were written in the final part of the manuscript, on folios 102a to 103b and are unrelated to the remaining texts in the book.<sup>5</sup>

I can only estimate the approximate date when the poems were written down. On folio 103a there occurs the date *1875 mart 21 yom ġ* that is ‘21 March 1875, Tuesday’. Furthermore, at the end of the manuscript (f. 104b) there is an indication that the copy was completed on *Dekabr 30, 1879* that is on 30 December 1879. Therefore, we may assume that the songs have been copied into the *mejuma* somewhere between 1875 and 1879, but the first date seems to be more appropriate.

The songs are entitled *Benyamin Turşu’niñ türkisi* ‘The song of Benyamin Turşu’ (f. 102a–102b) and *Beraha Aqam Poyraz geçindiginde çıqqan türkü*<sup>6</sup> ‘Song written when my uncle Beraha Poyraz passed away’ (f. 103a–103b). At first sight, it appears that at least the first song was written by a Karaim, who was lying in his death-bed. In European culture, laments were performed to mourn and pay the mourner’s last respects to a deceased relative, and to express grief caused by the death. Analogically, the Hebrew *Qinnot* were recited by Jews in order to mourn the destruction of the Temples. It seems that the laments of this type were also popular among Karaims. The *mejuma* of *Eliyahu ben Yosef Qılcı*, which was critically edited and published by Aqtaı in 2009, contains laments such as *Emanuel ha-baħor Qalfa çıqqan türkü* ‘A song written for Emanuel junior Qalfa’ and *Hilel Beħer Yosef Magubige çıqqan türkü* ‘A song written for Hilel Beħer Yosef Magubi’ etc. (Aqtaı 2009, pp. 84–85, 89–91). A detailed comparison of the contents reveals many similarities between the songs preserved in the *mejuma* of *Eliyahu Qılcı* and the laments of *Benyamin Turşu* and *Beraha Poyraz*. We can conclude that the Crimean Karaims, while writing songs on the occasion of someone’s death, used a number of formulaic phrases and words which are to be expected in this genre of poetry. Below, I list the expressions that are frequent in the above-mentioned laments and make an attempt to describe the context, in which they were used:

- (1) *aġle anam aġle bir ġün duyarsın* (in *Hilel Beħer Yosef Magubige çıqqan türkü*) ‘cry my mother cry, one day you shall hear’, *aġle anam aġle unutma beni* (in *Benyamin Turşu’niñ türkisi*) ‘cry my mother cry, do not forget me’ are used to express the wish that the family of the deceased should mourn for him;
- (2) *eller çezip qareleri baġleyiñ* (in ‘*Emanuel ha-baħor Qalfa çıqqan türkü*’) ‘untie your hands, play a mournful tune’, and *qarelerim baġle* (in *Benyamin Turşu’niñ*

<sup>5</sup> For more on Samuel Kohen’s *mejuma*, see Smętek (2012). A complete list of songs is presented in section 3.2.3. *Türkü* songs. It is supplemented with a comparison of the text units in Kohen’s *mejuma* with those that occur in Radloff, Qılcı and Qatıq’s *mejumas*.

<sup>6</sup> This is the title provided on the first folio onto which the song was copied, namely folio 103a. The title provided on the second folio (103b) reads *Beraha Poyraz’niñ türkisi* ‘The song of Beraha Poyraz’.

*türkisi*) ‘play (me) a mournful tune’ occur when dying persons ask their family to write a lament on the occasion of their death;

- (3) *hekimler geldiler retsep verdiler* (in *Hilel Beher Yosef Magubige çıqqan türkü*) ‘doctors came and gave me a prescription’, and *hekimim geldi baqdı benim yüzüme* (in *Benyamin Turşu’nuñ türkisi*) ‘my doctor came and looked at my face’ mean that doctors have been consulted. Alas they couldn’t cure the fatal disease, cf. (*hekimler*) *yavaş ölürsin diye* (in *Hilel Beher Yosef Magubige çıqqan türkü*) ‘(the doctors) said that I shall die quietly’;
- (4) *dünyama toymadım* (in ‘*Emanuel ha-baħor Qalfa çıqqan türkü*) ‘I did not have enough of this world’, and *dünyeye doymaq olmaz* (in *Beraħa Aqam Poyraz geçindiginde çıqqan türkü*) ‘one cannot have enough of this world’ express the regret that life is too short and that it is hardly possible to enjoy life properly;
- (5) *eceli yerişti başıma* (in *Benyamin Turşu’nuñ türkisi*) ‘hour of death caught up with me’, and *Haqdan ‘ecelime yazılmış ferman* (in ‘*Emanuel ha-baħor Qalfa çıqqan türkü*) ‘God has given the command for me to die’ are used to state that the person’s days are numbered, and that they are going to die soon.

Interestingly, all songs in question (that is the ones copied into the *mejuma* of Samuel Kohen and the *mejuma* of *Eliyahu ben Yosef Qılcı*) seem to be written not by mourners, but by the person who was dying, as the first person singular has been employed in each text. It may be concluded that this form was used in order to vividly describe the last moments of the deceased. Nonetheless, it is clear that the songs were commissioned or authored by members of the family. Suffice to say that the title of the second work, ‘Song written when my uncle Beraħa Poyraz passed away’, points to the fact that it was composed either when Beraħa Poyraz was lying on his deathbed or post-mortem. Therefore, it is not possible that he wrote the song himself. The work should be perceived as being the last respects paid to the deceased.

### **2.1. Contents of Benyamin Turşu’nuñ türküsü and Beraħa Aqam Poyraz geçindiginde çıqqan türkü**

In *Benyamin Turşu’nuñ türküsü*, the narrator depicts his sorrow caused by the poor condition of his health. He acknowledges that the end of his life is approaching, yet he is struggling to come to terms with this inevitable fact. The only thing he requires from his relatives is to be properly mourned and that his memory should not be forgotten. In the first line of the first stanza the narrator informs the reader that he has fallen sick in the town of Kharkiv. The above-mentioned place of residence of Benyamin Turşu enabled me to determine the location of the second song’s narrator, that is Beraħa Poyraz. In a register written in 1869 in Kharkiv we find a record of a family bearing the surname Poyraz that was dwelling in Kharkiv. Three Karaims, who are mentioned in that census, are Japheth, Samuel and Obadiah, sons of Poyraz. In the second poem Beraħa Poyraz indicates that he has three sons, who bear the aforementioned names, which allows us to assume that the narrator lived in Kharkiv together with his family.

The tone of the second poem is far more optimistic, despite the fact that it depicts events preceding the death of BeraĦa Poyraz. When describing his illness, the narrator points out ironically that doctors became richer due to his condition and he suggests that they did not do their best while treating him. The subsequent stanzas may be perceived as a kind of last testament. Poyraz commands his first son Japheth to take care of his younger siblings, his second son Samuel inherits a book of blessings (*BeraĦot*), the third son Obadiah receives only good wishes, his daughter Rachel is instructed to find a wealthy husband and the wife (who is referred to as *yoldaş* ‘companion’) is advised to be patient and hopeful in prospect of a better future. In the last stanza BeraĦa Poyraz admits that he was not able to secure the members of his family financially and that he entrusts them to God.

Below, I provide the texts of the songs supplemented with a translation into English.

## 2.2. *Benyamin Turşu’nun türkisi*

- I    Ħarkova<sup>7</sup> şeĦerinde bën Ħasta yattım hey hey  
 imdat bulmay<sup>8</sup> | Qırım’a qayttım hey hey  
 imdat bulunmay canıma yuttım | hey hey  
           ağlê<sup>9</sup> anam ağlê qar(e)lerim bağlê<sup>10</sup> |
- II    sibba<sup>11</sup> olsa ben Qırım’a bakarım hey hey  
 gözlerimden | Ħaylı<sup>12</sup> yaşlar dökerim hey hey  
 eki qardaşımın<sup>13</sup> Ħasret- | ligin çekerim hey hey  
           ağlê anam ağlê unutma beni |

<sup>7</sup> ברכווא, misspelled. The transcription of this word was unclear due to the word-initial letter, which has been written as *bet*. The correct reading became possible after a comparison with the text in the aforementioned register from 1869, where the city of Kharkiv is spelled correctly, namely as כרכווא. In both manuscripts this word is written without a diacritic mark which would indicate that the word-initial letter should be read as *Ħ*. It is a frequent mistake in Crimean Karaim manuscripts.

<sup>8</sup> בוודיי, misspelled. The reading was established on the basis of an assumption that the first letter of the suffix has been written erroneously, because a verbal suffix *-DAy* does not exist, whereas the suffix *-MAy* is used to create the negative form of present tense. This form is attested for Crimean Tatar (Jankowski 2010, pp. 160–165).

<sup>9</sup> אגלי, here and in the following lines this word is written with *yod* instead of *alef*. The alternation *ağla-* ~ *ağlê-* is typical of the language of Crimean Karaim texts. Cf. the first line of the third stanza.

<sup>10</sup> The meaning of *qarelerim bağlê* has been established on the basis of Aqtaş (2009, p. 85) who stated that this phrase was uttered by the person lying on his/her deathbed who wanted to ask the relatives to compose an elegy on the occasion of his (or her) own death.

<sup>11</sup> From Heb. סבה ‘cause, reason’.

<sup>12</sup> קאלי, misspelled. From Per. خیلی ‘much, many’.

<sup>13</sup> This word has been mistakenly spelled as *qardaşımın*.

- III babam yoqdır ben ğaribi aĝlasın hey hey  
Mevlamsın | gör ğarip anam çirisin<sup>14</sup> hey hey  
acıyan dostlarım beni | aĝlèsin hey hey  
aĝlè anam aĝlè unutmama beni hey hey |
- IV arabam dèvirildi yerişèlmadım<sup>15</sup> hey hey  
ĝarip babam | ilen görüşèlmadım hey hey  
şu yalan dünyede sıyal- | madım hey hey  
aĝlè anam aĝlè unutmama beni hey hey |
- V yigirmide eceli yerişti başıma hey hey  
totam ilen | görüşèlmadım hey hey  
qardaşlarım yüzine doymadım<sup>16</sup> | hey hey  
aĝlè anam aĝlè unutmama beni hey hey |
- VI hekimim ĝeldi baqdı bènim yüzüme hey hey  
bizde düştüĝi | hekimlerni dos(t)una<sup>17</sup> hey hey  
Allah emanetim aldı ĝeri | ĝè(n)dine<sup>18</sup>  
aĝlè anam aĝlè unutmama beni hey hey |
- VII gidem amama<sup>19</sup> Mevlam bilir işini hey hey  
aqtırım eynim<sup>20</sup> | gözüm yaşını hey hey  
ecèl yaztıĝına qoydım ĝarip | başımı hey hey  
aĝlè anam aĝlè unutmama beni hey hey |
- VIII cümle aĝalarım ĝirdi içere hey hey  
ölüm Allah- | dan gelir ona nè çare hey hey  
dünyeye doymadı | Benyamin Turşu hey hey  
aĝl(è) anam aĝlè unutmama beni hey hey |

<sup>14</sup> ציריסין, a variant of the Turkic word *tiri* ‘alive’, which is not provided in Karaim dictionaries. That being said, there are attestations of an analogical process in words such as *çiş* ← *tış* ‘tooth’ (KRPS 629).

<sup>15</sup> The impossibility suffix *-almadı*, which is used to mark the impossibility of the action, is attached to three different stems in this stanza, that is, *yeriş-*, *görüş-* and *sıy-*. After the first two stems the initial vowel in the impossibility suffix, namely the back vowel ‘a’, is contracted to the front close-mid vowel ‘è’. Cf. Musaeu (2003, p. 282) who provided the following examples of the negative forms of possibility suffix for Karaim: *bolalmadı tapma anı* ‘he could not find it’, *tabalmadı orın camı* ‘his soul could not find a place’ etc.

<sup>16</sup> יריימאדים, reading tentative. The stem *yıy-* is not provided in Karaim dictionaries. Neither Clauson (1972, p. 780) provides the above-mentioned word. Therefore, it is plausible that it has been misspelled.

<sup>17</sup> KRPS provides the variant *dost* for Crimean Karaim (KRPS 180) from Per. دوست ‘friend’. The pronunciation *dos* is attested *inter alia* for Kazakh.

<sup>18</sup> גירי גידינא, misspelled. Reading is tentative.

<sup>19</sup> From Ar. حمام ‘bath’. The omission of the word-initial consonant *h* is a clear influence of Crimean Tatar in which the consonant *h* in Arabic and Persian loanwords displays a tendency to be omitted (Jankowski 2010, p. 77). KRS provides *amam* for CTat. (KRS 22), whereas KRPS attests the variant *hamam* for Crimean Karaim (KRPS 607).

<sup>20</sup> The copyist has crossed out the third letter of this word and written the correct letter above it. Unfortunately, this correction was done in a careless way. Therefore the reading of this word is tentative. The context suggests that the reading *eynim* (from Ar. عين ‘eye’) should be correct.

*Translation**The Song of Benjamin Turşu*

- I I got ill in the city of Kharkiv, hey hey; I could not find help, so I came back to the Crimea, hey hey; when I did not find any help I accepted it, hey hey; cry, my mother, cry, play (me) a mournful tune;
- II if I have a reason I shall look toward the Crimea, hey hey; I shall shed many tears, hey hey; I shall miss my two siblings, hey hey; cry, my mother, cry, do not forget me;
- III I have no father, cry after me miserable, hey hey; You are my Lord, look, my poor mother, you are alive, hey hey; may my grieving friends cry after me, hey hey; cry, my mother, cry, do not forget me, hey hey;
- IV my cart was overturned, I could not arrive, hey hey; I could not meet my poor father, hey hey; I could not fit into this deceitful world, hey hey; cry, my mother cry, do not forget me, hey hey;
- V the hour of death caught up with me in my twenties, hey hey; I could not meet my older sister, hey hey; I did not have enough of (looking at) the faces of my siblings, hey hey; cry, my mother cry, do not forget me, hey hey;
- VI my doctor came and looked at my face, hey hey; and we (looked) at the doctor which we had found, hey hey; God is my guardian, He took (me) back to Him; cry, my mother, cry, do not forget me, hey hey;
- VII I shall go to a bathhouse, the Lord knows what He is doing; my eyes shall shed tears, hey hey; I laid my poor head on my deathbed's pillow, hey hey; cry, my mother, cry, do not forget me, hey hey;
- VIII all my brothers came inside, hey hey; death comes from God, one cannot help it, hey hey; Benjamin Turşu did not have his share of life, hey hey; cry, my mother, cry, do not forget me, hey hey;

*2.3. Beraha Aqam Poyraz geçindiginde çıq(q)a(n)<sup>21</sup> türkü*

- I Beraha Poyraz derler bana  
 halımı harz edtüm saña  
 ben ağalar | birisi  
 hilaf iş edmem saña  
 ağlê ağlêyirüm ağlê |  
 evladlar ilen ağlê |

<sup>21</sup> The correction was made on the basis of the fact that in the titles of the other lament songs, such as *'Emanuel ha-bahor Qalfa çıqğan türkü, Hilel Beher Yosef Magubige çıqqan türkü* etc. (Aqtay 2009, pp. 84–85, 89–91), the form *çıqqan* ~ *çıqğan* is predominant.

- II hékümler<sup>22</sup> baña pent<sup>23</sup> êdtü  
malum milküm<sup>24</sup> pay êdtü |  
şükürler Yaradan pena<sup>25</sup>  
evladlarum bay êdtü  
yoldaş gël- | sin sözime  
al güllerin solamasun  
uyma raqıplar<sup>26</sup> | söziñe  
eki elim yakaña olsun  
kèzalik |  
kèzalik |
- III bu dünyeniñ séfası  
ne hoş êdü forması<sup>27</sup>  
qırqdan<sup>28</sup> | soñra céfasın  
çeküp gittüm Haq saña  
ağlayırım ağla |  
evladlar ilen ağla |
- IV Yafet oğlum yigitsin  
öksüzler ağlétmezsın  
barına | Haq bin olsun  
Allah saña yar olsun  
kèzalik |  
kèzalik |
- V Şemuel oğlum sabursın  
sonıñ<sup>29</sup> hayırlar olsun |  
Berahodum<sup>30</sup> seniñdir<sup>31</sup>  
cümleniz haznadar olsun |  
kèzalik |  
kèzalik |
- VI Ovadyam sen mezlümüm<sup>32</sup>  
sırımı èle vèrmezüm |

<sup>22</sup> From Ar. حكيم ‘doctor’.

<sup>23</sup> From Per. پند ‘advice’.

<sup>24</sup> From Ar. ملك ‘possession’.

<sup>25</sup> From Per. پناه ‘shelter’.

<sup>26</sup> From Ar. راقیپلر, misspelled. The reading of this line is tentative. It should probably be *Uyma raqıplarnıñ sözine*, but the number of mistakes makes it impossible to determine the correct reading.

<sup>27</sup> From Russ. форма ‘form, shape’.

<sup>28</sup> From Heb. קריקדן, misspelled.

<sup>29</sup> From Heb. פונין, misspelled. The correct reading was established on the basis of the fourth line of the seventh stanza, that is *sonıñ eyilikler [o]olsun* ‘may you have a good future’.

<sup>30</sup> From Heb. ברכות, PL ברכות ‘benedictions, blessings’.

<sup>31</sup> From Heb. סן גינדיך, reading is tentative. The alternative reading of this fragment is *sen göndir* ‘may you send’, if we assume that the copyist made a spelling mistake.

<sup>32</sup> From Ar. مظلوم. Cf. *mezlimlik* in Smętek (2012, p. 85) and *mazlum* in Çulha (2010, p. 121). In Tur. *mazlum* ‘1. wronged, oppressed, 2. quiet, compliant, inoffensive’ (TIRS 597).



- dünyeye doymaq olmaz  
sizlere sağlıq oğlum |  
kèzalik |
- VII Raḥel qızum ne hoşsın  
qısmatın acıq olsun |  
ağa begiñe ras gelsin<sup>33</sup>  
sonuñ eyilikler [o]olsun |  
kèzalik |
- VIII yoldaş sen ol saburlı  
evladlar olur samurlı |  
qısmatsız qul olmaz  
buniñ sonu ḥayırlı |  
kèzalik |
- IX evladl(ar)um qaldı pulsız  
qızlarum cümlesi yoqsuz<sup>34</sup> |  
Ḥaq<sup>35</sup> Te‘ala sen göndèr  
şu qızlarum bir pulsız |  
kèzalik |

### *Translation*

#### *Song Written When My Uncle Beraḥa Poyraz Passed Away*

- I they call me Beraḥa Poyraz; I presented myself to you; I am a man of importance; I would not lie to you; cry, I cry, I cry with my children;
- II doctors counselled me; they took a part of my possessions; thanks unto the Creator, (He is my) shelter; He made my children rich; may my wife<sup>36</sup> come to my calling; your red roses cannot wither; do not listen to the words of rivals; I shall haunt you; refrain;
- III the pleasure of this world; how fine was its form; it was painful after forty; (so) I left and came to You, God; I cry, cry with (my) children, cry;
- IV my son Japheth, you are a young man; you will not let the orphans cry; may God be plentiful to all (of you); may God be your beloved; refrain; refrain;
- V my son Samuel, you are patient; may you have a good future; my (book of) blessings is yours; you should all watch over it; refrain; refrain;
- VI my Obadiah, you are my compliant one; I shall not reveal my secret; one cannot have enough of this world; I wish you good health, my sons; refrain;

<sup>33</sup> Should be *ras gelin* ‘may you meet’.

<sup>34</sup> ירחה, misspelled. The correct spelling and meaning of this word is not quite clear. The reading *yoqsuz* ‘poor’ seems probable, basing on the context and rhyme of this stanza.

<sup>35</sup> יוק, misspelled. Cf. the fourth stanza in which the word is spelled correctly.

<sup>36</sup> *Literally* ‘companion’.

- VII my daughter Rachel, you are so fine; I wish you all the best; may you meet a noble man; may you have a good future; refrain;
- VIII (my) wife, be patient; (our) children will be rich (one day),<sup>37</sup> everyone has their fate; (let's hope) it will be good; refrain;
- IX my children are left with no money; all my daughters are poor; great God, give it (to them); my daughters have no money; refrain;

### 3. Commentary

The language of the poems transcribed above should be classified linguistically as south-west. The majority of language features are consistent with Crimean Turkish. We can observe distinctive characteristics that distinguish this language from standard Turkish, such as the verbal forms of present tense, which are formed with the suffix *-A* and with the suffix *-y* after stems with a word-final vowel. Examples of this tense are to be found only in the first song, namely: 1SG *gidem* 'I go', 3SG *bulunmay* 'it is not found'.<sup>38</sup> In the second song we have attestations of the aorist tense, such as 1SG *édmem* 'I will not' and, curiously enough, *éle vérmezüm* 'I shall not reveal', 2SG *ağlétmezsın* 'you will not let cry' etc. Possessive and case suffixes display a tendency to alternate between the south-western and north-western forms, e.g. *dünyege* 'to the world', *hekimlerni* 'the doctorsACC' versus *Qırım'a* 'to the Crimea', *yaşını* 'his ageACC' etc. However, the majority of suffixes is south-western. Furthermore, we can observe one of the characteristic features of the language of Crimean Karaim texts, namely the lack of rounding harmony in noun suffixes. As can be seen in the examples that follow, suffixes with rounded vowels are attached to stems with unrounded vowels, e.g. *mil küm* 'my possession', *qızum* 'my daughter' and the opposite process takes place after stems with rounded vowels, e.g. *sözime* 'to my word'.<sup>39</sup>

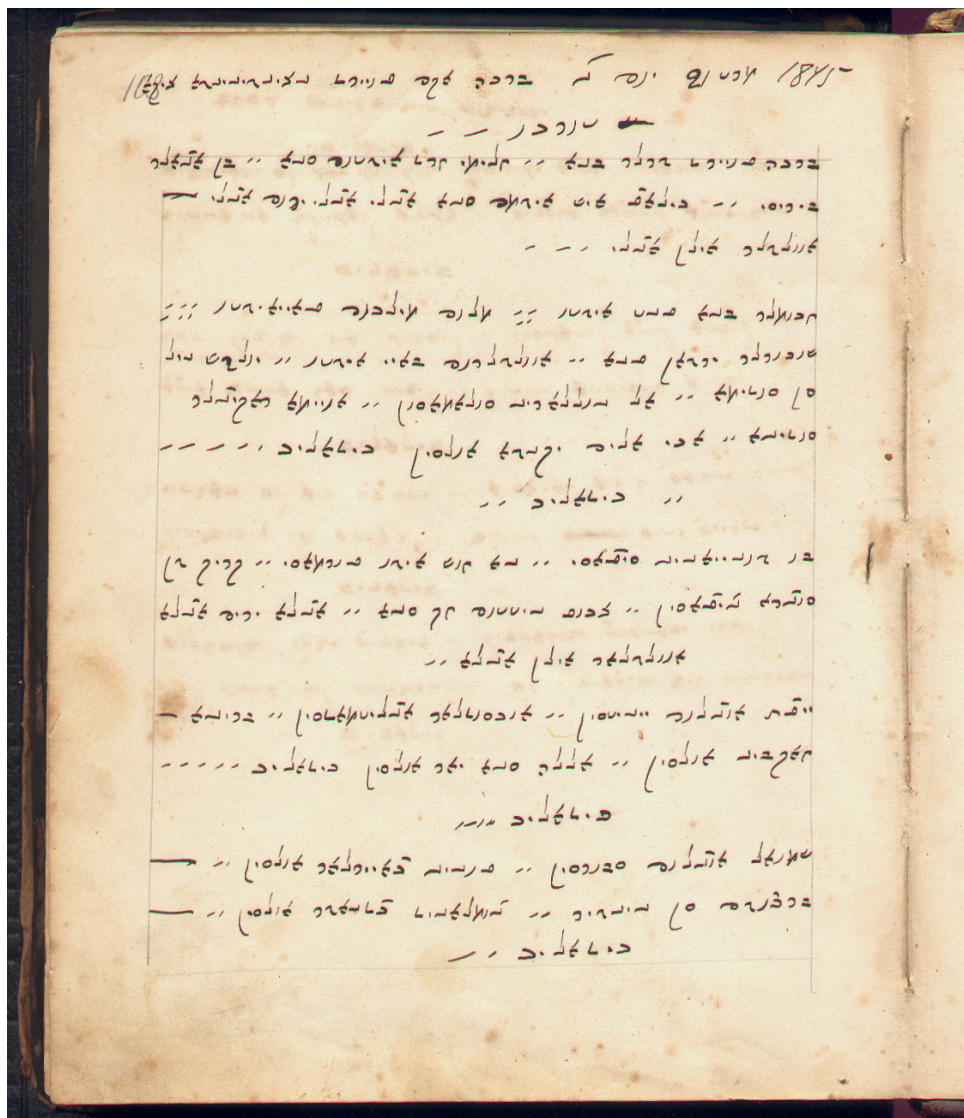
The lexicon, though mainly of the Oghuz type, is also diverse. Examples of Kipchak vocabulary are to be found in both poems, such as *qayt-* 'to return', *siy-* 'to fit into', *bay* 'rich', *barı* 'all'. There are also a few Karaim words, such as *yeriş-* 'to catch up' and *tota* 'an older sister' (the latter is also attested for Crimean Tatar). We encounter Arabic and Persian loanwords, which are adapted in a characteristic way that differentiate the language employed in *mejuma* from contemporary Turkish, e.g. *amama*<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Literally 'Our children will wear sable'.

<sup>38</sup> This paradigm occurs in other texts from the *mejuma* of Samuel Kohen, though its occurrence is rather rare. The other forms of the present tense called by Doerfer (1959, p. 278) *praesens durativum*, which are prevalent in the remaining part of the *mejuma* and have the following variants: *-AyIr*, *-AyUr*, *-AyUrIm*, *-AyUrUm*, are represented here only by two examples, namely by *ağlëyirüm* and *ağlayırım*.

<sup>39</sup> The same tendency can be observed in verbal suffixes. Stems with unrounded vowels are followed by rounded suffixes, e.g. *gittüm* 'I went', *çeküp* 'leaving', *solamasun* 'may it not wither'. Consequently, after stems with rounded vowels, there occur unrounded ones, e.g. *yoqdır* 'there is not', *yuttım* 'I swallowed'.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. footnote No. 19.



Samuel Kohen's *mejuma*, kept by the Karaim Congregation in Eupatoria, f. 103a

'to bath'. The only Hebraism used in the songs is the word *beraḥot* which is the plural form of the word בְּרָכָה 'blessing'.

Both texts contain a number of incorrectly spelled words. In some cases the spelling is of such poor quality that providing a correct and indubitable transcription is not possible. Thus, the reading of some words had to be based on the context and the rhyme of the given stanza. Even preparing a transcription of the repeating refrain in the second song, that is *Beraḥa Aqam Poyraz geçindiginde çıqqan türkü*, was prob-

lematic. The two available versions of the refrain, which appear after the first and the third stanza, are inconsistent. Thus, it is not possible to determine beyond any doubt which one is correct. Nonetheless, the rhyme suggests that the second version of refrain, that is *ağlayırım ağla evladlar ilen ağla*, is more likely.

### Abbreviations and Editorial Symbols

ACC	accusative	SG	singular
Ar.	Arabic	TKar.	Troki Karaim
CTat.	Crimean Tatar	Tur.	Turkish
Heb.	Hebrew	( )	letters or words added by the editor
HKar.	Halicz Karaim	[ ]	letters or words which were unnecessarily written by the copyist
Per.	Persian	[...]	omitted phrases
PL	plural		end of the line in the manuscript
Russ.	Russian		

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