

MARRIAGE CONTRACTS AND ITEMS OF DOWRY AMONG THE KARAIMS IN EASTERN EUROPE*

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The Jewish marriage contract, the *ketubba*, represents a very ancient type of document; early forms of *ketubbot* have been found among the discoveries from Elephantine and Wadi Murabba'at.¹ Although *ketubba* is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, it nevertheless constituted a part of the marriage ceremony and awarded marital status, as it did among the Karaites from the mediaeval period on; the discoveries of the Cairo Geniza include a high number of Karaites *ketubbot*.²

However, the *ketubbot* of Rabbanites and Karaites reveal remarkably distinctive features; the Rabbanite marriage contracts are usually written in Aramaic in semi-cursive script, while the Karaites employed Hebrew, written in square characters. The formulae contained in them have biblical associations; the *mohar* (marriage payment) is divided into advance and delayed portions, and both the groom and the bride declare their commitment to the Karaite tradition.³

* This article, dedicated to the memory of my colleague and dear friend, Professor Karl-Johan Illman (Åbo Akademi, Finland), was to appear in the memorial volume *Ancient Israel, Judaism, and Christianity. Essays in Memory of Karl-Johan Illman*, edited by Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, Antti Laato, Risto Nurmela, and Karl-Gustav Sandelin (University Press of America, Lanham, 2006). However, due to technical problems with computer programs beyond my control, the article was unable to be published in that volume.

¹ For *ketubbot* in general, see Schereschewky & Davidovitch 1996; Ketubboth Collections of JTS (Jewish Theological Seminary) / Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary (available at: <http://www.jtsa.edu/library/digitalcollections.shtml>); Jewish National and University Library (JNUL) – The David and Fela Shapell Family Digitalization Project – Ketubbot Collection (available at: <http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/ketubbot/html>).

² Olszowy-Schlager 1998: 15–27. In the same book Olszowy-Schlager published 59 Karaite *ketubbot* and other marriage documents found in the Cairo Geniza (pp. 275–481); the vast majority of them were written in the eleventh century (the oldest one dates back to 984 and the most recent is from 1201). In the conclusions (pp. 263–271) she states that the Karaite marriage formula is a result of “a gradual transformation and adaptation of the model widely used among Babylonian Jews” (p. 270).

³ Mann 1931: 156–166; in detail, see Olszowy-Schlager 1998: 87–261.

Jacob Mann has published parts of seven Eastern European Karaim⁴ marriage contracts, kept in the Firkovich Collection in Leningrad / St. Petersburg, as material relating to the history of the Karaim communities and their marriage customs; these contracts date back to 1400–1804.⁵ However, Mann concentrated on the dates and persons mentioned in the initial paragraph written in square characters, and the final lists of signatures of elders (*zeqenim*), bestmen (*shoshbinim*) and “young men” (*bahurim*), and omitted the lists of dowry (*nedunyoṭ*) written in cursive Hebrew in the central section of the contracts. Three of these lists are dealt with in this paper.

So far I have been able to find only one short article in which the Karaim *nedunyoṭ* from the eighteenth century have also been treated. In the first volume of the bulletin *Izvestija Tavricheskogo Obshchestva Istorii, Arheologii i Etnografii* published in Simferopol’ in the Crimea in 1927, P. Ja. Chepurina and B. S. El’jashevich described and translated into Russian two Karaim *ketubbot*, the first written in Ponevezh (Poniewież / Panevėžys) in Lithuania in 1730 (*erbi Yişhaq* b. Abraham⁶ *cum* Raḥel b. Mordekhai) and the second in Gözleve / Eupatoria in the Crimea in 1764; the article “Karaimskie brachnye dogovory “shtary”” (‘Karaim marriage contracts “*shetars*”’) omits the texts in Hebrew. F.A. (Pinachas Feliks) Malecki, a well-known Lithuanian Karaim scholar (1854–1928), contributed to the Russian translation of the Lithuanian *ketubba* and comments on it.⁷

In this paper, dedicated to the memory of my colleague and dear friend, Professor Karl-Johan Illman (1936–2002), I wish to draw attention to the contents of these *nedunyoṭ*, a forgotten source of the Karaim material culture. They reflect the general multi-ethnic and multi-cultural atmosphere of the (former) Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as well as the adaptation of Western and Central European influences to both the Karaim tradition and the Hebrew language used by Karaims as their vehicle of literary expression.⁸ First, however, the documentary context of these lists is deserving of some description.

⁴ By the term “Karaims” I refer to the traditionally Turkic-speaking Karaites in Eastern Europe; on them, see Harviainen 2003a and 2003b, and notes in these articles.

⁵ Mann 1931: 1121–1126.

⁶ An identification with the spiritual leader of that time, called Isaac b. Abraham from Nowomiasto (died in 1754) by Mann (1931: 621, 744–745), is not out of the question.

⁷ The article was recently (*sine anno*) reprinted with 150 copies by the Karaim community of Eupatoria in the printing house of “KPT” in Simferopol’. I quote the article according to this offprint (consisting of 27 pages), which I was able to acquire in the Karaim *kenesa* in Eupatoria in June 2004.

⁸ I am very grateful to the Manuscript Department of the National Library of Russia, its staff, the Finnish Cultural Foundation and numerous persons whom I have troubled with my questions concerning clothes and textiles and who have helped me in solving riddles included in these texts. My thanks also go to Michael Cox for the formulation of my Finnish translations of the Hebrew *ketubba* and *nedunyoṭ* in English and Keijo Hopeavuori for the translation of the Karaim marriage document (*toj jazyšy*) into Finnish.

KETUBBA

The ancient Karaite *ketubbot* studied by Judith Olszowy-Schlager (1998) indicate that the main topics of the Karaite marriage contracts and their formulae were established to a considerable degree before the eleventh century. Very similar formulations can also be seen in the *ketubbot* extracted by Mann (see above and below) and in their original shape from the fifteenth century on. The *ketubba* text established by the Karaims in Eastern Europe – traditionally ascribed to Elijah Bashyachi – can be read, for example, in the fourth volume of the Karaim prayer-book *Siddur hat-tefillot ke-minhag haq-qara'im* (prepared and edited by Pinachas Feliks Malecki, the aforementioned Karaim scholar and hazzan), published at the expense of Jacob b. Joseph and Sons Szyszman (Shishman) in Vilna 1890 (pp. 54–55).⁹ Since the liturgical texts of the Karaims are not always readily obtainable, it may not be out of place to reprint this *ketubba* version in this article:

Then the bridegroom and bride stand before the Holy Ark, the bride to the left of the bridegroom, and one of the “young men” reads aloud the following contract:

ביום פלני לְשׁבוע בְּכֹה לְחֹדֶשׁ פְּלָנִי בְּשָׁנַת פֶּה לְבְרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם : כְּפִי הַמְּנִי וְהַסְּפָר שְׁאֵנְחָנוּ מְנִים
 וְסִפְרִים בּוֹ פֶה בְּקֹהֶל הַקְּרָאִים : בְּתַחֲמוֹם פְּלָנִי בְּמִמְשַׁלַּת הָאָדוֹן פְּלָנִי יְחִי לְעַד : בְּיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּא פְּלָנִי
 בֶּן פְּלָנִי לְפָנַי הַזְּקֵנִים עֲדַת הַקְּרָאִים : וַיֹּאמֶר עֲלֵיהֶם הָיוּ עָלַי עֲדִים וְקִנּוּ מִמֶּנִּי בְּכָל לְשׁוֹן זְכוֹת :
 וְכַתְּבוּ וְחַתְּמוּ בְּמֵה שְׁאֵנִי אִמְר לְפָנֶיכֶם : וְאֲנִי לֹא אֲנוֹס וְשִׁגְהָ וְתוֹעָה וּמְכָרָח כִּי אִם בְּתָם לְבָבִי וְגִמְר
 דְּעַתִּי וְרִצּוֹנִי וְצַבִּיוֹנִי אֲנִי מוֹדֶה בְּפָנֶיכֶם וּמַעֲיִד אֶתְכֶם עַל נַפְשִׁי : כִּי נִשְׁאַתִּי וְקִדְשְׁתִּי אֶת מֶרֶת פְּלָנִית
 בַּת רַבִּי פְּלָנִי הַנְּעֵרָה הַבְּתוּלָה הַיּוֹת לִי לְאִשָּׁה עַל טְהָרָה וְקִדְשָׁה בְּמַהֵר בְּכַתֵּב וּבְבִאָה כְּתוּרַת מִשָּׁה
 אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וְכַדַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל הַטְּהָרִים וְהַקְּדוּשִׁים : וְאֲנִי אֲלִבִּישׁ וְאֲכַסֶּה וְאֹקִיר וְאֶפְרָסֵם וְאֲכַלְכֵּל אֶתְּה
 וְאֶעֱבֹד לָהּ בְּכָל צָרְכֶיהָ וְחִפְצֶיהָ הָרְאוּיִים לָהּ כְּדִי פְחִי וְכִהְשִׁגְתִּי יָדַי : וְלֹא אֶעֱשֶׂק וְלֹא אֲבָזֶה אֶתְּה וְאֶף
 לֹא אֲבַגְד בָּהּ וְלֹא אֲגָרֵעַ שְׂאֲכָה כְּסֻתָּהּ וְעוֹנֵתָהּ כְּפֹתוֹב בְּתוֹרָה : וְאֶתְּנֶהג עִמָּה בְּאֶמֶת וְחִסָּה וְרַחֲמִים
 וְאֶהְיֶה לָּהּ כְּפָנַי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמְּכַלְפָּלִים וּמְכַבְּדִים וּמוֹקִירִים וּמְלַבִּישִׁים אֶת נְשֵׁיהֶם הַכְּשֻׁרוֹת וְעֹשִׂים לָהֶן
 כָּל הָרְאוּי בְּאֵמוּנָה וּבִישׁוּר : וְהַמְּהֵר שְׁהִתְנִיתִי וְקִצְבִיתִי וְקִמְמִיתִי לָהּ עַל נַפְשִׁי מַהֵר בְּתוּלִיָּה הָאֲמוּר
 בְּתוֹרָה כְּרְאוּי לָהּ אֶתְּנוּ : וְתִשְׁמַע מֶרֶת פְּלָנִית¹⁰ זֹאת הַכֹּלָה אֶת דְּבָרַי רַבִּי פְּלָנִי זֶה הַחֲתוּן וְתִרְצֶה בְּתָם
 לְכַב לְהִיּוֹת אִשְׁתּוֹ וְחִבְרָתוֹ וְאִשְׁתּוֹ בְּרִיתוֹ לְשִׁמוּעַ בְּקוּלוֹ וּלְהוֹקִירוֹ וּלְכַבְּדוֹ וּלְעֹשׂוֹת בְּבֵיתוֹ כָּל
 שְׁבִנּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹשׂוֹת בְּבֵיתִי בְּעֲלִיָּהוּ וּלְהִיּוֹת תַּחַת מִמְשַׁלְתּוֹ וְאֵלָיו תִּשְׁתַּקְּתָה : וְעוֹד רְצוֹ וְהַתְּנוּ
 שְׁנֵיהֶם בְּמִבְחָר לָבָם בְּבְרִית הַר סִינַי וּבְחֻקֵּי הַר חֶרֶב לְשִׁמּוֹר אֶת מוֹעֲדֵי יְיָ הַמְּקַדְּשִׁים בְּרִיאַת הַיָּרֵחַ

⁹ סדור התפילות כמנהג הקראים. חלק רביעי כולל סדר הברכות לכל ימי חול שבתות השנה חגים ומועדים
 ולכל קרות העתים. ובהוצאה זו הוספנו שירים וזמירות חבורי חכמינו וז"ל אשר היו בכ"י ויצאו לאור פ"א.
 הסדורים האלו נדפסו על הוצאתי יעקב בכ"ר (יוסף הגבאי הזקן ז"ל) ובניו שישמן יצ"ו. ווילנא בדפוס ר' יהודה
 ליב נ"י, בהמוחקק מהור"ר אליעזר ליפמאן מ"ץ ז"ל, שנת ה'ת"ר"ן לפ"ג.

ובמציאת האביב¹¹ בארץ ישראל הקדשה אם ידם משגת במציאתו : ותקרת ברית מאת רבי פלני זה החתן אל מרת פלונית זאת הפלה בכל מה שכתוב ומפרש לעיל : וחמר שטר תנאי זה יהא כחמר כל שטרי ישראל הברורין ומחזקין ונהגים ובדקים מיום זה עד לעולם : ואשר היה בפנינו נשמע ונראה כתבנו ונחתם נגמנו בידי זאת הפלה היות בידה לראיה ולזכות בכל בית דין ישראל שיצא¹² אמת ויציב נכון שריר ובריר וקיים ויבנו ויצליחו אמן :

TRANSLATION

On such-and-such a day of the week, on such-and-such a day of such-and-such a month, on such-and-such a year from the creation of the world by the calendar by which we calculate time in this Karaim congregation, in such-and-such a district in the realm of such-and-such a ruler – may he live for ever.

On such-and-such a day, so-and-so, son of so-and-so, came before the elders of the Karaim community and said to them, “Be my witnesses and obtain justice for me in every language. Write down and sign what I say before you.

“I am not coerced nor am I mistaken or in error, and not forced, but absolutely with all my heart and all my mind, will and desire I confess to you and testify to you for my part that I married and betrothed such-and-such a woman, daughter of *Ribbi* so-and-so, a young virgin, so that she will be my wife in purity and holiness, by *mohar* (dowry), by writ and by sexual intercourse, in accordance with the Torah of Moses, the man of God, and the custom of Israel, the pure and holy ones.

“I shall dress, clothe, esteem, support and maintain her and, as far as it lies in my power and ability, meet all her needs and desires such as are necessary for her. I shall not treat her badly and shamefully, nor shall I betray her, I shall not diminish her food, clothes and sexual intercourse from what is written in the Torah. I shall behave towards her with truth, compassion and love and I shall be towards her like those Israelites who faithfully and honestly maintain, respect, esteem and clothe their pure wives and do all they owe them.

“The *mohar* which I stipulated, allocated and designated for her for my part, the *mohar* of her virginity mentioned in the Torah, that very thing I shall give her properly.”

And when she, so-and-so, the bride, heard the words of *Ribbi* so-and-so, the bridegroom, she agreed with a full heart to become his wife, companion and wife by covenant¹³ so that she might obey, esteem and respect him and do in his house everything that the daughters of Israel do in their husbands' houses, and so that she might be subject to his authority and so that she might feel

¹¹ Sic!

¹² In numerous Karaim *ketubbot* this spelling is replaced by שיצא.

¹³ Cf. Mal. 2:14.

desire for him.

And the two of them then announced as the decision of their hearts that they desired and stipulated in accordance with the covenant of Mount Sinai and the commandments of Mount Horeb to observe the holy festivals of the Lord according to the sighting of the Moon and the finding of the 'abib (i.e. the state of ripening of barley) in the holy land of Israel, as well as they are able to find it.

And *Ribbi* so-and-so, the bridegroom, entered into an alliance with her, so-and-so, the bride, according to all that is written and specified above. The force of this document shall be the same as the force of all clear and validated documents of Israel which are to be complied with and observed from this day forward in perpetuity.

And that which took place before us, we listened to and observed, we wrote and signed and gave [this marriage contract] into the bride's keeping to be for her proof and right in any court of Israel, so that perfect justice might be true, sure, clear and enduring. And may they build and prosper.¹⁴ Amen!

In comparison with the most ancient Karaite marriage contracts, we can see that the text is arranged in subjective style¹⁵ in the form of a dialogue between the witnesses, i.e. the elders of a Karaim congregation, and the groom. No introductory formulae precede the dating, which takes place according to the local custom. In the groom's declaration the *qinyan* (symbolic act of acquisition) appears in a short form and it is not repeated, either at the end of the contract or in the clause of contracting the marriage (*naša'ti we-qiddashti 'et marat ...*, in the past tense). The division of *mohar betuleha* into advance (מֹהָר מוֹקֵדִים) and delayed portions (מֹהָר מוֹאֲחֵר)¹⁶ does not appear in this formulation; nevertheless, it is referred to in numerous *nedunyt* parts of contracts. The passage concerning the *mohar* is followed by the bride's acceptance as an independent clause (*wat-tishma' marat ... wat-tirse ...*).¹⁷ No agent of the bride (*paqid*) appears in this version. Questions of dowry (its return, provisions etc.) are not dealt with, either. In contrast, the Karaite calendar stipulations (New Moon, the beginning of Nisan and the date of Passover according to 'abib, i.e. the ripening of barley in Palestine) have retained their importance in the contract. Finally, as in the Cairene ketubbot, the signed marriage contract is given to the bride

¹⁴ II Chron. 14:6.

¹⁵ Olszowy-Schlager (1998: 129–131) divides her contracts into objective, subjective and mixed styles.

¹⁶ This is the normal spelling (*pro* מֹהָר) in Karaim *ketubbot* seen by me. For *mohar* and its division, see Olszowy-Schlager 1998: 193–204.

¹⁷ As in the first type of formulae dealing with the bride's acceptance and obligations in the Cairene Karaim *ketubbot*, see Olszowy-Schlager 1998: 205–206.

to remain in her possession as proof and right (*li-r' aya we-li-zkhut*).¹⁸

As may be seen from this very condensed presentation, the history of the Karaite *ketubba* formulae and their ramifications could offer material for a special study. Although such an attempt remains beyond the scope of this paper, I wish to enclose here, for future use, a copy of the most recent material on this subject, which may also be hard to obtain. In 1999 Mykolas Firkovičius, the senior hazzan (*Ullu Hazzan*) of the Karaims in Lithuania (1924–2000), published the second volume of *Karaj diñliliarniñ jalbarmach jergialiari* ('Karaim Liturgical Prayer Book') compiled and arranged by him in the Karaim language; according to Firkovičius, the aforementioned fourth volume of *Siddur hat-tefillot ke-minhag haq-qara'im* by Malecki and Szyszman served as his main source (see Epilogue in *Karaj diñliliarniñ ...*).¹⁹ On pages 66–68, with a reference to the *ketubba* in the *Siddur* by Malecki and Szyszman, there is the following version of the marriage contract, *toj jazyšy*, in Karaim:

(*Jėñgiadiañ toj jazyšyn alyp, avazba ochuhun*):

Toj jazyšy

.....kiuniuñdia aftanyñ,kiuniuñdia ajnyñ, jylda bir miñ tohuz juž (-da, -dia) ol sanha kioria, ki biž, Karajlar, sanejbyž da chasiepliejbiž any bunda Lietuvada Troch šaharnyn Karaj Džymatynda, tiri bolhej dunjaha diejiñ!

Ušpu kiunďia kiel'di ol abajly bojdach uvlu ol syjly da abajly (uzach tiri bolhej, sahynčy anyñ alhyšcha bolhej) alnyna kartlarynyn Karaj Džymatynyn da ajtty alarha: "Bolujuz mienim ũčiuñ tanychlar da alyjyz mieñdiañ bar til'byla aruvluchnu. Da jazyjyz da mohorlajyz, nie ki mieñ ajtamyn alnyjyzda. Da mieñ tiuviul'kystav byla da janhylyšlych byla, da azašmach byla, tiek ančach tiugial' ũriagim byla da ullu kliagim byla ajtynamyn alnyjyzda da tanych ětiamiñ sižni ũziun ũčiuñ.

¹⁸ The book by Olszowy-Schlager (1998) offers excellent material for a detailed comparison with both the ancient Karaite and Rabbanite *ketubbot*.

¹⁹ *Karaj diñliliarniñ jalbarmach jergialiari*. 2 bitik ('Book 2'). Ochumach ũčiuñ adiet' vahdalarynda ('Rituals of the Community') – *Karaimų liturginis maldynas*. 2 knyga. Apeigu maldos ir giesmės. Sudarė ir spaudai Mykolas Firkovičius. Baltos lankos, Vilnius 1999.

This publication is sponsored by the Lithuanian government, the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Finnish Cultural Foundation (Suomen Kulttuurirahasto). It is a strange outburst of the old Rabbanite-Karaite controversies that Dan Shapira attempts to blacken the name of the Finnish Cultural Foundation by a reference to "a Finnish foundation with missionary affiliations" (Shapira 2003: 681, 692, note 106). In fact the Finnish Cultural Foundation is the largest private and independent cultural foundation in Finland, without any political, religious or other ideological affiliations.

Ki sajladym da ajrychsy éttim ol boj kyzny, kyzyn ol syjly da abajly (uzach tiri bolhej, sahynčy anyn alhyšča bolhej) bolma maja katynlychka aruvluch byla, siuviarlik byla, kalyn byla, toj jazyšy byla éški adietinia kioria Karajlamyn, ol aruv da tiugial’.

Da mień kijińdirirmiń, biešliarmiń, siuviarmini da abajlamyn any da kylarmyn bar kieriakliariń da kliakliariń anyn ol ušarlar kiučiumia kioria da jet’kiliginia kioria kolumnun. Da kiečiniirmiń birgiasinia kiertilik byla da chajyfsunmach byla, da bolurmyn anar bar Karaj ulanlary kibik ol kyluvčular óž katynlaryna kolajly ušarlychny inamlych byla da tiužliuk byla. Da ol kalyn, ki kioviulliańdim da biel’giliadam anar öziun üčiuń kalynyn bojluchalarnyn ušarha kioria anar bierirmiń’.

Da éšitti, bu ol kielin, siožliariń bu ol kijovniuń, da kliadi tiugial’uriagińdiań bolma anar katynlychka da šiert’ kieškiar joldašy, tynlama sioziunia, abajlama any da syjlama any, da kiečimnia üviuńdia alej, niečik bar Karaj kyzlary kiečiniadiriari üvliarińdia érliariniń da bolma érkliamniagi tiubiunia da siuviarligi anyn.

Da kiesil’di šiert’, bu ol kijovdiań,, bu ol kielingia baryna kioria nie jazylhan da biel’girtil’gian johary.

Da kipligi bu toj jazyšynyn bolhej kipligi kibik bar toj jazyšlarnyn Karajlychta ol aruv da tiugial’ ušpu kiuńdian da dunjaha diejiń.

Da nie ki boldu alnymyzda, éšittik da kiordiuk, jazdych da mohorladych, da bieriabiž koluna bu kielinniń, bolmach üčiuń anar biel’gisinia kiertilikniń ortasynda ulusumuznun, ki čychkej tiužliuk da turuch kolajly, pak da aruv, da tiugial’, – da kondarylhejar, da onarhejar! **Amień!**

Kielin.....	Kijov
Tioravčiuliari.....	Tioravčiuliari.....
Ataman.....	Tanychlar.....
Bolušovčusu.....

Igit’éliań.....

TRANSLATION

(The marriage document is taken out and read aloud):

Marriage document

On the ... day of the week, on the ... day of the month, in the year 19... by the calendar by which we calculate time here in Lithuania, in the Karaim congregation of Trakai – may it live for ever.

On that day, the respectful young man, son of the honourable and respectful

... (may he live long / may his memory be blessed), came before the elders of the Karaim community and said to them, "Be my witnesses and obtain my sincere speech. Write down and sign what I say before you. I am not coerced nor am I mistaken or in error, but with all my heart and all my desire I speak to you and take you as my witnesses

"– that I married and betrothed this maiden ..., daughter of the honourable and respectful ... (may he live long / may his memory be blessed), so that she will be my wife in purity, love, by dowry, by marriage document in accordance with the pure and perfect custom of Karaims.

"I shall dress, support, love and esteem her and, as far as it lies in my power and ability, meet all her needs and desires. I shall behave towards her with truth and compassion and I shall be towards her like the Karaim young men who faithfully and honestly treat their wives. And the dowry which I stipulated and designated for her for my part as the dowry of her virginity, that very thing I shall give her properly."

And ..., this bride, heard the words of this bridegroom, and she agreed with a full heart to become his wife and companion, to obey his words, to esteem and to respect him and to do in the house as all Karaim young women do in their husbands' houses and to be subject to his authority and love.

And ..., the bridegroom, entered into an alliance with ..., the bride, according to all that is written and specified above. The force of this marriage document shall be the same as the force of all the marriage documents which are complied with in the holy and perfect Karaim community from this day forward in perpetuity.

And that which took place before us, we listened to and observed, we wrote and signed, and we give [this marriage contract] into the bride's keeping to be for her proof of the right [which prevails] among our people, so that justice and stability might be true with ease, clear and holy and complete. And may they be built up and prosper. **Amen!**

Bride	Bridegroom
Judges	Judges
<i>Ataman</i> ("Espouser")	Witnesses
His assistant	
Young people ²⁰	

20

As concerns the present-day wedding ceremony among the Karaims in Lithuania, see Kobeckaitė 1997: 94–98.

NEDUNYOT- DOWRIES

As a rule, Karaite marriage contracts contain first the formal text of the *ketubba* and at the end the signatures of the elders (*zeqenim*), bestmen (*shoshbinim*) and “young men” (*baḥurim*). The list of dowry or trousseau, written in cursive script, is located between these paragraphs. The dowry remained nominally in the possession of the wife, although the husband might use and enjoy it as his own property; nevertheless, the husband was responsible for the use of the dowry. Unfortunately, the lists have aroused very limited interest. An exception is made by the marriage contracts found in the Cairo Geniza, of which Olszowy-Schlager and her predecessors (Ashtor, Friedman, Goitein, Stillman, etc.) have published translations and dealt with the various types of items (jewellery, clothing, house furniture and kitchenware, bedding, houses, total amount) enumerated in Arabic in Hebrew characters.²¹ As for the eighteenth century in Poland-Lithuania, the aforementioned article by Chepurina, El’jashevich & Malecki (1927) is the only counterpart to the following lists of dowry known to me.

Although the dowry lists of the Eastern European Karaim *ketubbot* published below offer surprisingly numerous similarities with their Cairene counterparts of seven hundred years earlier, the items enumerated in them reveal another material reality, with the typical features of the fashion of the day.

Text I, I Firk. Dok. II No. 5

This *ketubba* testifies that in Nowomiasto (mod. Naujamiestis) in modern northern Lithuania, the head of the congregation, Šar-Šalom b. Šimḥa, married Ḥanna b. Abraham on 20th of Ab 5538 in the Jewish/Karaite calendar, which corresponds to August 1773. The contract written on parchment measures 42.5 x 53 cm. The frames are decorated with multi-coloured animal topics located in medallions. Šar-Šalom is known for his poems composed in honour of the Sabbath, cf. Jacob Mann 1931: 1125, e). Mann offers the beginning of the *ketubba* in the following form:

²¹ See esp. Olszowy-Schlager (1998: 219–237, 387–388) and her publications and translations of the contracts.

ביום שישי לשבוע עשרים לחודש אב בשנת חמשת אלפים וחמש מאות ושלושים²² ושמונה לבריאת²³ העולם: כפי המני והספר שאנחנו מונים וסופרים [בן]²⁴ פה בקהל קדש עיר [חדשה] בתחום ליטא בממשלת האדון אגוסטוס רביעי יחי לעד. ביום הזה בא כה"ר שר שלום החתן בכמהר²⁵ר שמחה זצ"ל לפני העדים²⁶ עדת הקראים ויאמר אליהם²⁷ היו עלי עדים ... כי נשאתי וקדשתי את מרת חנה בת כ"מ אברהם יצ"ו ...
(The signatures are very faint and hardly legible.)²⁸

Below I give a transliteration of the *nedunyot*, the list of the items of dowry enumerated in this *ketubba*; it is written in Hebrew cursive script in the central part of the *ketubba* before the signatures. A colon slanting to the right occurs on top of a great number of foreign loanwords; for typographic reasons these signs are not indicated in the transliteration.

ואלה הנדוניות שהביאה הכלה מבית אביה אל בית בעלה

(1) בראש וראשון מעות מזומנים מאתים זהובים פולניש. קרקע חלק ששית בצומחי היער הנקרא בלשון המוני סְטוּכִי שויונו ששים זהובים. צמיד אחד ...²⁹ שויונו עשרה זהובים. וצמיד שני מכסף ושתים טבעות מכסף שויון כלם שלשה זהובים. שרשרת מכסף עשרה לוט משקלו ושויונו עשרים זהובים. (2) גביע מכסף משקלו ארבע לוט שויונו שנים עשר זהובים. אלמוגים חמשה חוטים עם כפתורי כסף תשעה שויונם מאה זהובים ועם אפסטי מכסף ו... מנחושת משקלו שמונה מנים במשקל דבערלין בשנים וחצי זהוב שויון כל מנה סך עולה עשרים זהובים. קערה אחת מבדיל אנגילסכי ושנים שטחים (3) שויונם שמונה זהובים. פרת חולבת עשרים וארבע זהובים. פאר המצח תפור ומרוקם בחוטי זהב שויונו שבעה עשר זהובים. פאר המצח שני מפתיגיל זהב שויונו ארבע זהובים. פתיגיל זהב לקשוט הראש ששה זהובים. שמונה חליפות בגדים. בגד ראשון גרוברין אדום עם פאסאמנו אוכסמיט (4) ועם בת הנפש מורא תכלת. בגד שני קולומעייקא אדום עם בת הנפש כיטאייקא אדום. בגד שלישי ממסכת קרנווי בגוון גראנאטווי עם בת הנפש ממסכת קארמזין. בגד רביעי מצבע קרוליעוויצקי עם בת הנפש קאמליוט. בגד חמישי בגד ע.ג.פל קאטאנקא ממסכת קארנווי עם כל צרכיו (5) בגד ששי גם כן קאטאנקא ממסכת קארנווי. בגד שביעי פליצה חדשה. והבגד השמיני מוהר מוקדם מהחתן אל

²² *Waw* does not appear in the *ketubba* manuscript.

²³ '*Aleph* does not appear in the *ketubba* manuscript.

²⁴ The word is lacking in Mann 1931; it is added on top of the line.

²⁵ An error *pro* בכמהור²⁵ in the *ketubba* manuscript.

²⁶ An error *pro* הזקנים.

²⁷ An error *pro* אלהם.

²⁸ In note 130 Mann (1931) adds: Sar Shalom was Ḥazzān of the Karaites of Nowomiasto (above, Nos. 38, 41, and infra, Nos. 158, 160). He was a disciple of Abraham b. Mordecai of Poniewież. For a Piyyūt of his, see תהלות ישראל, p. 25, No. 39:

לשבת ויום המילה. חבור החכם כמה"ר שר שלום חזן ע"ח זצ"ל כה"ר שמחה יעמ"ש שטינפיל.

²⁹ A few letters are concealed by the crease, probably M-ZHB 'of gold'.

הכלה מוחאיאר תוגרמי אדום וחלוקות חמש עשרה . אחת מהן רומבעק וארבע מהן שוואפסקי . שש מהן טקצכי . וארבע בייתיות . מטפחות שבע עשרה האחת באווילניצנא ושתיים רומבקווי טוב ושתי קדריו' (6) ושש מהן שוואפסקי ושש טקאצכי . חגורות ששה . אחת מהן טאבינקווי ירוק והשנית תפורה עם שני תולעת ואחת מהן שוואפסקי ושתיים טקאצכי ואחת מהן ד.צעק . שפות שלוש עם קורונכי והאחת תפורה עם משי וחוטי זהב . מפות גדולות שבע האחת מעשה פולין ושש ביתיות . מפות קטנות שתיים עשרה . סודרים (7) שלשה ושנים מהן מעשה פולין והשלישי בייתי . כסתות שלשה והשלישית קטנה עם כסוייהם שלשה . האחד מפתן שוואפסקי ועם קורונכי והשני צויליח והשלישי בייתי . מצע עליונה ומצע תחתונה וגם שתיים כסויים האחד צויליח והשני בייתי . סדינים שלשה האחד טקצכי עם קורונכי והשני בלי קורונכי והשלישי בייתי . (8) מרווחה אחת . ארגז עם כל צרכיו . שויון הנדוניות ר"ל מעות מזומנים עם כל חפצים סה ארבע מאות ושמונים זהובים פולניש . וסבלנות מהחתן אל הכלה ששה עשר זהובים מקבים סך עולה ארבע מאות תשעים וששה זהו' עם חתיכה א' זכוכית מתוקנת בכסף טהור חמש מאות זהו' פו' והמוהר מוקדם מהחתן אל הכלה כפי כבודה חמשים שטחים קשים

TRANSLATION

And this is the dowry that the bride brought from her father's house to her husband's house: (1) First and foremost 200 Polish zlotys in cash. Land comprising one-sixth of a growing forest, which in the vernacular is called Stubi, worth 600 zlotys. One [gold?] bracelet worth ten zlotys. Another silver bracelet and two silver rings worth three zlotys in total. A silver chain ten *tuts* in weight, worth twenty zlotys. (2) A silver chalice four *tuts* in weight, worth twelve zlotys. Five coral necklaces with nine silver buttons worth 100 zlotys, and with a silver perfume box and [a faded word in the crease] of bronze weighing 8 *minas* according to Berlin weight, each *mina* 2.5 zlotys, the total amounts to 20 zlotys. A bowl made of English tin and two *shetahs* (3) worth 8 zlotys. A dairy cow 24 zlotys. A forehead decoration sewn and braided from gold thread, worth 17 zlotys. Another forehead decoration of gold ribbon worth 4 zlotys. A gold ribbon to decorate the head, 6 zlotys. Eight changes of clothes: The first garment of red *grubrin* with velvet edging (4) and with a sky blue mohair *dushegreika* jacket. Another garment of red *kolomaika* with a *dushegreika* jacket of red *kitaika*. The third garment of crown fabric in navy blue with a *dushegreika* jacket of crimson woollen material. The fourth garment of royal colour with a camelot *dushegreika* jacket. The fifth garment a [a faded word] *katanka* garment of crown fabric with all the accessories. (5) The sixth garment also a *katanka* jacket of crown fabric. The seventh garment a new pleated dress. And the eighth garment is the bridegroom's advance *mohar* to the bride, of red Turkish mohair. And fifteen shirts, one of them RWMBEQ and four of them German, six of them

made by a weaver and four homemade. Seventeen cloths, one of cotton, two of good RWMBQ and two of *kadryll*, (6) six of them German and six made by a weaver. Six belts, one of them of green tabinet and another sewn with scarlet cochineal (thread), one of them German, two made by a weaver and one of them D..TSEK. Three frills with lace and one sewn with silk and gold thread. Seven large tablecloths, one of Polish manufacture and six homemade. Twelve small tablecloths. Three (7) scarves, two of them of Polish manufacture and the third homemade. Three pillows, and the third is small, with their three pillowcases, one German linen and with lace, the second two-ply linen and the third homemade. The upper mattress and the lower mattress and also two covers, one two-ply linen and the other homemade. Three sheets, one made by a weaver with lace, the second without lace, and the third homemade. (8) One curtain. A chest with all the accessories. The value of the dowry, i.e. cash with all the goods, 480 Polish *złotys* in total. And the gifts from the bridegroom to the bride sixteen perforated (?) *złotys*. The total amounts to 496 *złotys*, and with a piece of glass mounted with pure silver, five-hundred Pol(ish) *złotys*. And the advance *mohar* from the bridegroom to the bride in accordance with her honour, fifty hard *shetaḥs*.

NOTES

Numerous mistakes in plural forms and in the gender forms of adjectives and numerals referring to nouns constitute a peculiar feature of the Hebrew of these lists of *nedunyoṭ*. Most probably these errors reflect the Turkic / Karaim vernacular of the scribes, which does not indicate any difference between genders and has only one plural ending.

A great number of similar items and terms referring to them occur in the Lithuanian Karaim *ketubba* translated by Chepurina, El'jashevich & Malecki (1927: 10–16).

Explanations of Polish, Russian, French, Turkic and Persian words found in standard dictionaries are left without reference in these notes. As for the abbreviations used in references below, see the list at the end of this paper.

Line 1

ZHWB, Hebrew *zahub*, 'golden' = Polish monetary unit *złoty*, 'golden'.

LWṬ = Polish *łut*, 'half an ounce'.

Line 2

'PṬKY, cf. Polish *apteka*, *apteczka*, 'medicine-chest'. The word also occurs in the *ketubba* I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (year 1775), line 1, in the phrase "three (coral) necklaces with silver 'PṬKY".

Hebrew / Aramaic (MNH) D-B'RLYN 'minah of Berlin', of bronze, worth 2.5 zlotys, is naturally a unit of weight that I have been unable to identify.

ŠṬHYM occurs a second time at the end of this text (*hamiššim ŠṬHYM qašim*) as well as in the *ketubba* I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 9, and in No. 6, line 5 (*šēloša ŠṬHYM qašim*, see below, Text II). In addition, at the end of the *nedunyot* in I Firk. Dok. II 6 (see below, Text II), there is a phrase "*hamiššim ZHW qašim*" '50 hard zlotys', which implies that even in our text we have a case of monetary units; 50 dirhems was a usual amount of the basic *mohar* in the Near East and Egypt (see Mann 1972 / 1931: 156–158, and Olszowy-Schlager 1998: 194, 204). ŠṬH, with a reference to spreading and stretching out in Hebrew, may refer to the large square or rounded copper plate coins (called *plat* or *plita* 'plate', in Russian) which were introduced in Russia in the eighteenth century (square coins in 1726–1727, large rounded coins in 1770–1771, see Uzdenikov 1985: 291–313, and Spasski 1983: 136–139).

Line 3

GRWBRYN also occurs in the *ketubba* I Firk. Dok. II No. 6, line 2 (see below, Text II), and in the Lithuanian *ketubba* translated by Chepurina, El'jashevich & Malecki (1927: 12) in the phrase "of Turkish cherry *grobarin*"; in note 13 on p. 24 the authors surmise that the word may be connected with French *gros*. In fact, French *brin* can refer to 'linen' but the combination of **gros brin* 'coarse linen' is unknown to me. In *Slovar' drevnjago aktovago jazyka severo-zapadnago kraja i carstva pol'skago* by Gorbachevskij (1874: 147), the Polish term *grubrin* is explained to indicate a Turkish fabric.

P'S'MNW = Italian *passamano*, Polish *pasamon*, 'trimming, edge' (SJP VI: 157; Kopaliński: 381).

'WKSAMYṬ = Karaim *oksamit*, Polish and Russian *aksamit*, 'velvet' (Baskakov, Zajonchkovski & Shapshal 1974: 426; Orlinśka-Mianowska 2003: 214). The word also occurs in this form in Chepurina, El'jashevich & Malecki (1927: 12, and 24, note 16).

In place of the *status constructus* PRT HṬLBT the normal Hebrew *status absolutus* form occurs in the *ketubbot* I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 2, and No. 6, line 2 (see below, Text II).

Line 4

The Hebrew term BT H-NPŠ, *bat han-nefeš*, ‘daughter of the soul’, most probably refers to a woman’s sleeveless jacket (usually wadded or fur-lined inside) called *dushegrejka* (‘heater of the soul’) in Russian, cf. *Seelenwärmer* in German (see Vasmer 1953: 384). The identification occurs in Chepurina, El’jashevich & Malecki (1927: 12). In my publication of the *nedunya* agreement drawn up for the parents of Abraham Firkovich in 1787 (Harviainen 2003c) I interpreted the term to mean a perfume bag.

MWR’ = Polish *mora*, ‘moire, mohair’ (Kopaliński: 339), cf. Russian *muare* (Kirsanova 1989: 149–151).

QWLWM‘YYQ’ = Polish *kolomajka*, ‘woolen fabric with coloured strips’ (Gorbachevski 1874: 183); cf. Russian *kolomjanka*, ‘home-spun multicoloured woollen material’ (Belovinskij 1999: 208; Kirsanova 1989: 127–128).

KYṬ(‘)YYQ’, cf. Polish *kitaika*, ‘soft cotton or silk material’ (SJP III, 1961: 693; Kopaliński: 262), and Russian *kitaika*, ‘thick woollen material, usually blue; used for men’s shirts and women’s *sarafan* dresses’ (Belovinskij 1999: 197; Kirsanova 1989: 117–118).

QRNWWY and Q’RNWWY = Polish *koronowy*, adj. ‘of crown, with added crowns’ (SJP III, 1961: 1021).

GR’NṬWWY = Polish *granatowy*, ‘navy blue’.

Q’RMZYN = Polish and Russian *karmazyn*, ‘crimson woollen material of high quality’ (Kirsanova 1989: 102–103).

QRWLY(‘)WWYŠKY = Polish *królewski*, *królewicowski*, ‘royal’ (SJP III, 1961: 1166); however, cf. the *ketubba* I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 4, with the phrase “homemade, i.e. QRWLYWW‘ŠKY”, and *royal* in Kirsanova 1989: 199.

Q’MLYWṬ = Polish *kamlot*, ‘camelot, camlet, cloth of wool and goat’s hair’ (Kopaliński: 249; Kirsanova 1989: 97–98).

Q’Ṭ’NQ’ = Polish and Russian *katanka*, from Hungarian *katona* ‘mercenary soldier’; a short jacket (SJP III, 1961: 614; Kopaliński: 257).

‘N..PL is a faded word, the reading and meaning of which remains unclear.

Line 5

PLYŠH, cf. Polish *pli(ca)*, ‘fold, wrinkle’ (Lam 1939: 1621); obviously PLYŠH is a pleated dress or skirt. Polish *plisia*, ‘a textile resembling velvet’ (Gorbachevski 1874: 259), is not suitable with *sade* pronounced as [ts] by the Lithuanian Karaims (and [tš] in the Crimea), and Russian *plis*, ‘long-piled woollen velvet’ (Kirsanova

1989: 182), and *plus*, 'pile fabric', (Belovinskij 1999: 336) imply similar difficulties. PLYŠH also occurs in numerous other Lithuanian *ketubbot*.

MWH'YY'R TWGRMY, cf. Polish *moher*, *mohair*, *muchair*, and Russian *mukojar*, 'moire', 'a Turkish or Venetian textile', derived from Turkic/Arabic *mukhayyar* (Lam 1939: 1298; Gorbachevski 1874: 223; Kirsanova 1989: 153–154); TWGRMY refers to 'Turkish' in Hebrew.

RWMB'Q and RWMBQWWY have several counterparts in other Lithuanian *ketubbot*: RWMBQWWY and RWMBQBY on lines 4 and 5 in I Firk. Dok. II No. 3 (year 1704); I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), lines 6 and 8; I Firk. Dok. II No. 6, line 3 (see below, Text II); Chepurina, El'jashevich & Malecki (1927). Chepurina, El'jashevich & Malecki (1927: 24, note 21) maintain that the term is derived from Rumbeco, the name of a Spanish city. However, there is no such city in Spain. In contrast, Rumbek, a city with a textile industry in Flanders, may be mentioned as a candidate to explain this tantalizingly enigmatic name of textile.

ŠWPSKY = Polish *szwabski*, 'German' (originally 'Swabian'; SJP VIII, 1966: 1206). In a number of other *ketubbot* the term is spelt with *beth*: ŠW(')BSKY in I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 5, and I Firk. Dok. II No. 6, line 3 (see below, Text II).

TQ(')ŠKY = Polish *tkacki*, 'adj. of weaver's'; in Text II, line 3 (see below) the word is spelt with *kaph*.

B'WWYLNYSN' and B'WWYLNYSKY in I Firk. Dok. II No. 7, line 3 (see below, Text III), cf. Polish *bawełniczka*, 'cotton yarn', *bawełniany*, 'adj. cotton-', *bawełna*, 'cotton plant', *bawełnianka*, 'cotton fabric made in Turkey and Germany' (Gorbachevski 1874: 38).

QDRYW added with a *gereš* sign of abbreviation may refer to Polish *kadryll*, 'light silk fabric' (Gorbachevski 1874: 178).

Line 6

T'BYNQWWY, an adjective derived from Polish *tabin*, 'tabinet, tobine', a sort of cloth of silk and golden moire (SJP IX, 1967: 3), cf. TBYN in the *nedunya* agreement drawn up for the parents of Abraham Firkovich in 1787 (Harviainen 2003c: 274–275).

ŠNY TWL'T, Hebrew *šēni tola'at*, 'scarlet cochineal colour'.

D.Š'Q is a faded word, the reading and meaning of which remains unclear.

ŠPWT, Hebrew *śafot*, cf. *śafah* in Exodus 26,4 etc. 'edge', Exodus 28,32 and 39,23 '(woven) binding (around the opening for the head)'. Chepurina, El'jashevich & Malecki (1927: 24, note 22) translate *sefatot*, the exceptional plural form of *śafah*, as 'frills'; שפתות also occurs on line 5 in I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775).

QWRWNKY = Polish *koronka*, 'lace', *koronkowy*, 'adj. lace'.

ŞWYLYH = German *Zwillich*, 'two-ply linen or cotton material' (*Deutsches Wörterbuch* von Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm. Sechzehnter Band. Bearbeitet von Gustav Rosenhagen. Leipzig 1954, c. 1200–1202). In I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 8, the word is spelt with a final *kaph*.

Line 8

MRWWH also occurs in I Firk. Dok. II No. 7, line 4 (see below, Text III) in the phrase *měruwwaḥot 'arba' yěri'ot ploşenqowi* where the word *yěri'ot (ploşenqowi)* '(linen) curtains' obviously explains the Hebrew participle *měruwwaḥot* 'extended', also used with a reference to 'curtains'. Cf. Chepurina, El'jashevich & Malecki (1927: 24, note 25) who state that the meaning of the word is unclear; however, they consider that it refers to a large bedspread or a bath towel.

Although written *defective*, MQBYM may refer to Hebrew *muqqabim*, 'pierced, perforated (coins)', which are intended to be used as pendants, parts of a necklace etc.

HṬYKH '' ZKWKYT, Hebrew *ḥatikha 'aḥat zēkhukhit*, 'a piece of glass'; cf. I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 1, where similarly "glass MTWQN B-KSP B-TWKM" is found among 'PṬKYs (see above, line 1) in coral necklaces. The pieces of glass mounted in silver were used as jewelry.

ŞṬHYM, see above (line 2) for square copper coins.

Text II, I Firk. Dok. II No. 6

Text II contains the *nedunyoṭ* of Ruḥama b. Dani'el who married Abraham b. Moše in 'Ir Ḥadaš (i.e. Nowomiesto / Naujamiestis) in the district of Upita (Upyté) in the Kingdom of August IV on 29th of Tishri 5542 (October 1781). The signatures are attested to by Śar-Śalom b. Śimḥa, the Ḥazzān of Nowomiesto mentioned in the previous Text I. Parchment, 44 x 56 cm. Multi-coloured ornaments in frames and in the initial word ביום. As for the initial text, see Mann (1931: 1125 f), Ketubbah No. 6. The list of dowry is dated the 28th of Ethanim (Tishri), i.e. one day earlier than the *ketubba*.

ואלה הגדוניות שהביאה הכלה מבית אביה אל בית בעלה

(1) בראש וראשון מעות מזומנים מאה זהובים . טבעות מכסף שנים .. צמיד אחת מכסף . אלמוגים אדומיים חמשה חוטים וכפתורים שבעה . פאירי המצה שנים מחוטי זהב טהורים פתיגיל מחוטי זהב . ששה חליפות בגדים . בגד ראשון מלבוש מסכת סאיא עם בת הנפש קארמאזין . בגד שני מלבוש מסכת (2) גונו תכלת עם בת הנפש קאמליוט גונו ירק . בגד שלישי מלבוש

ממסכת קרולוויץ עם בת הנפש גרוברין . בגד רביעי בייתי . בגד חמישי בגד עלוי גונו גראנאטווי .. בגד ששי פליצה חדשה . פרה חולבת . בגד שביעי מוהר מוקדם מהחתן אל הכלה בגד עלוי עם כל צרכיה האליונדיש .. חלוקות (3) שמונה עשר . שלושה מהן שוובסכי וארבע מהן אטכצכי ואחד עשר בייתי . צעיפות שמונה עשר שנים שוובסכי ושנים מהן רומבק וארבע עשר מהן טכצכי . סדינים שנים . סודרים שנים . מפות גדולות חמשה . מפות קטנות עשרים . מצע עליונה עם שנים כסויים . כסתות שלושה עם שנים כסויים (4) ארגז עם כל צרכיה והסבלנות גביע מכסף והמוהר מואחר עם שוינו החפצים וטבעות עושה סך ארבע מאות זהובים . חגורות תשעה . כל זה נעשה ברצוי תרי הצדדים בת'כ' ובפועל ממש בלא להשנייא פה ב'ק'ק עיר [חד]שה היום יום רביעי לשבוע כ"ח לרח' איתנים בשנת חמשת אלפים וחמש מאות שנים (5) וארבעים לבריאת העולם שויון הגביע מכסף שלושה שטחים קשים והמוהר מואחר כפי מנהג הקראונים חמשים זה' קשים

TRANSLATION

And this is the dowry that the bride brought from her father's house to her husband's house: (1) First and foremost 100 zlotys in cash. Two silver rings. One silver bracelet. Five necklaces of red corals and seven buttons. Two forehead decorations of pure gold thread, a ribbon of gold thread. Six changes of clothes: The first garment a dress of *saia* fabric with a *dushegreika* jacket of crimson woollen material. Another garment a dress (2) of sky blue fabric with a camelot *dushegreika* in green. The third garment a dress of crown fabric with a *dushegreika* of *grubrin* fabric. The fourth garment homemade. The fifth garment a superior garment in navy blue. The sixth garment a new pleated dress. A dairy cow. The seventh garment is the bridegroom's advance *mohar* to the bride, a superior garment with all the accessories, Dutch. Eighteen (3) shirts, three of them German, four of them made by a weaver and eleven homemade. Eighteen shawls, two of them German, two of them RWMBQ and fourteen of them made by a weaver. Two sheets. Two scarves. Five large tablecloths. Ten small tablecloths. The upper mattress with two covers. Three pillows with two pillowcases. (4) A chest with all accessories. And the gifts, a silver chalice and the delayed *mohar* with its value, the goods and rings work out at 400 zlotys in total. Nine belts. All this is made by consent of the two parties according to the Torah of *ketubba* and the substantial reality so that it cannot be changed, here in the holy congregation of the New City [= Nowomiesto] today, on Wednesday, the 28th of the new moon of Ethanim 5542 of the era of Creation. The value of the silver chalice is three hard *šetahs* and the delayed *mohar*, according to the custom of the Qara'ons (Karaims) fifty hard zlotys.

NOTES OF TEXT II

Line 1

S'YY', Polish *saja*, is according to Gorbachevskij (1874: 321) 'a thin and light Italian fabric'.

Q'RM'ZYN, see above, Text I, line 4, 'crimson woollen material of high quality'.

Line 2

QRWLWWYŠ, cf. QRWLY(')WWYŠKY = Polish *królewski*, *królewicowski*, 'royal' in Text I, line 5, and Polish *królewicz*, 'Royal Prince'.

Q'MLYWŦ, GRWBRYN, GR'N'TWY, PLYŠH, see above, Text I, lines 3–5.

H'LYWNDYŠ, cf. Polish *holenderski* and German *holländisch*, 'adj. Dutch'. The word also occurs in the *nedunyot* of I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 4: "a garment of Dutch fabric of sky blue colour".

Line 3

ŠWWBSKY, RWMBQ, ŦKŠKY, see above, Text I, line 5; the variant 'ŦKŠKY, Polish *tkacki*, 'adj. of weaver's', reveals a prothetic vowel which loosens the initial cluster of two consonants.

Line 5

ŠLWŠH ŠŦHYM QŠYM and HŦŠYM ZH' QŠYM, '3 hard *šetahs*' and '50 hard *zlotys*', see above, Text I, line 2.

H-QR'WNYM, Hebrew *haq-qara'onim*, a variant of the Hebrew self-designation of the Karaims, who in their Turkic vernacular call themselves *karaj*, in the plural *karajlar*.

Text III, I Firk. Dok. II No. 7

The third *nedunyot* dealt with in this article is the central section of the *ketubba* I Firk. Dok. II No. 7, written in Hebrew cursive script. It testifies to the marriage of Yiśra'el b. Šemu'el to Raḥel b. Abraham in Troki (Trakai) in Lithuania on 5th of Shebaṭ 5564 [1804]. The contract written on parchment measures 37.5 x 50.5 cm. Mann (1972 / 1931: 1126, g) offers the basic text with his notes in the following form:

ביום חמישי לשבוע שבעה ועשרים לחדש שבט בשנת חמשת אלפים וחמש מאות וששים וארבע לבריאת העולם כפי המני וכפי הספר שאנחנו מונים וסופרים בו פה קהל קדש טרוק בממשלת האדון אלכסנדר פאוולוויץ יחי לעד . ביום הזה בא כבוי ישראל בן כבוי שמואל הזקן זצ"ל לפני הזקנים עדת הקראים ויאמר אליהם ... כי נשאתי וקדשתי את מרת רחל בת כב"ר אברהם ז"ל ... ואלה הזקנים:
 נאם שמואל השופט בלא"א כמהר"ר אברהם השופט והזקן זצ"ל יעמ"ש.

(Follow 5 more signatures and at the bottom there is the testatum of the local Hazzān:

נאם המצווה על הפעולה מאשר ומקיים כל החתומות שמואל ש"ן בלא"א כמהר"ר מתתיה החזן והזקן זצ"ל יעמ"ש).
 ואלה השושבינים:

ובראשם שר הצבא ועטרת ראשם היקר כמ"ע אברהם בעל השרביט יצ"ו בכ"מ יצחק זצ"ל ובנו הבחור יצחק יצ"ו. והבחור אברהם בן הנעלה כמ"ע שמואל השופט והזקן נר"ו וכ"ו

(There follow several names. Between the columns of the names of the elders and of the bestmen the bridegroom Israel b. Samuel has later on jotted down in due course the names and the dates of two girls born from the union recorded in our Ketubah. Also the death of a little boy is listed.)

With the following dowry Raḥel bat Abraham departed for her new home; as in the previous texts the *nedunyot* paragraph is written in Hebrew cursive script in the central section of the *ketubba* before the signatures:

ואלה הנידוניות³⁰ שהביאה הכלה מבית אביה אל בית בעלה
 (1) בראש וראשון אלמוגים אדומים תשעה חוטים אמצעיים טבעות מכסף שלושה צמיד מכסף אחת פאירי המצח שתיים האחת עֵם מַרְגְּלֹתָ עִם מַרְגְּלֵי עִם מִיכִירֵי שְׁתֵּימֵי מִכְסֵּף מוֹזֶהָב וְהַשְּׁנִיִּית עִם אֲלֻמוּגִים אֲדוּמִים קִטְנִים פְּתִיגִיל אַחַת מְחוּטֵי זָהָב לֹלְאוֹת שֶׁשָּׁה זֹגוֹת מִכְסֵּף (2) שְׂרִשְׁרַת אַחַת מִכְסֵּף עֵז אַחַת חוֹלְבַת בְּגַד רֵאשׁוֹן קִטְנָקָא פּוֹנְסוּוֵי עִם כָּל צִרְכֵי בְּגַד שְׁנֵי קִרְמִזִּין עִם טְסִמֵי עִם בַּת הַנֶּפֶשׁ שְׁטוֹף בְּגַד שְׁלִישֵׁי גְרָאדִּיטוֹר עִם בַּת הַנֶּפֶשׁ גְּרָאדִּיטוֹר בְּגַד רִבְעֵי מִמְסַכַּת קְרוֹלוּוִיצְכֵי עִם בַּת הַנֶּפֶשׁ קְמֻלוֹט בְּגַד חֲמִישֵׁי פְּלִיצָה מְעוּרוֹת כְּבָשִׁים חֲלֻקוֹת (3) עֶשְׂרִים שְׁתֵּימֵי מֵהֵן שְׁלוֹנְסְכֵי שְׁלוֹשָׁה עֶשֶׂר טְכָצְכֵי חֲמִשָּׁה מֵהֵן מְעֵשָׁה בֵּיתֵי מְפֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת שְׁלוֹשָׁה מְעֵשָׁה בֵּיתֵי סוּדָר אַחַת בֵּיתֵי חֲגוּרוֹת אַרְבַּעָה אַחַת מֵהֵן שׁוּפְסְכֵי עִם קוֹרוֹנְכֵי וְאַחַת מֵהֵן טְכָצְכֵי אַחַת מֵהֵן קְרִטוֹנוּוֵי אַחַת מֵהֵן בֵּיתֵי צַעִיפּוֹת שְׁתֵּימֵי בּוּיִלְנִיצְכֵי מִטְפָּחוֹת שֶׁשָּׁה בֵּיתֵי (4) מְרוּחוֹת אַרְבַּע יִרְיעוֹת פְּלוּצִינְקוּוֵי כְּסָתוֹת שְׁלוֹשָׁה עִם כָּל כִּסּוּיּוֹ צוּוִילִיחַ מִצַּע עֲלִיוֹנָה עִם כָּל כְּסוּיּוֹ מְעֵשָׁה בֵּיתֵי סְדִינִים שְׁתֵּימֵי הָאֶחָת טְכָצְכֵי וְהָאֶחָת בֵּיתֵי אֲרָגוֹ גְּדוֹל עִם כָּל צִרְכֵי

³⁰ Here the word is spelt with an additional *yod*, which may reflect a pronunciation like *niddulonyot*; the same spelling also occurs in the *ketubba* I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 written in Poniewiez in Lithuania in 1775.

TRANSLATION

And this is the dowry that the bride brought from her father's house to her husband's house: (1) First and foremost red corals nine average necklaces, three silver rings, one silver bracelet, two forehead decorations: one with pearls and two gilded silver emblems, and another with small red corals. One gold-thread ribbon, six pairs of silver loops, (2) one silver chain. A dairy goat. The first garment a poppy red *katanka* jacket with all the accessories, the second a crimson woollen garment with ribbons (and) with a fulled *dushegreika* jacket. The third garment a *gros de Tours* garment with a *dushegreika* jacket of *gros de Tours*. The fourth garment of royal fabric with a camelot *dushegreika* jacket. The fifth garment a pleated dress of sheep's fleeces. Twenty (3) shirts, two of them Silesian, thirteen made by a weaver, five of them of homemade manufacture. Three large tablecloths of homemade manufacture, one homemade scarf. Four belts, one of them German with lace and one of them made by a weaver, one of them calico, one of them homemade. Two cotton scarves, six homemade towels, (4) four *murawwahās*, (i.e.) linen curtains, three pillows, all with their two-ply linen pillowcases. Upper mattress with all its cover of homemade manufacture. Two sheets, one made by a weaver and one homemade. Large trunk with all the accessories.

NOTES OF TEXT III

Line 1

'M MRGLWT, the lines on top of these words indicate the deletion of a spelling error, i.e. *mrġlwt* without *yod*.

MYKYRY = Turkic *mühür* and Persian *mohr*, 'seal, stamp, sceptre, emblem'.

LWL'WT, plural of Hebrew *lula'a*, 'loop, link, coupling', used as counterparts to buttons. The word also occurs in the *ketubbot* I Firk. Dok. II No. 3, line 3 (1704), and No. 4, lines 1 and 3 (1775), in which the loops constitute a part of a *bat han-nefeš* – *dushegreika* jacket.

Line 2

PWNSWWY = French *ponce*, *ponceau*, 'poppy colour (adj.)'. The word also occurs in *nedunyt* of I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 4, in the form PWNS.

QRMZYN, see above, Text I, line 4, and Text II, line 1, 'crimson woollen material of high quality'.

TSMY = plural of Polish *taśma*, 'ribbon, band, tape'.

ŠṬWP, Hebrew *šaṭuf*, 'rinsed', here obviously = 'fulled, milled'. A fulled (*šaṭuf*) *dushegreika* jacket also occurs in the *ketubba* I Firk. Dok. II No. 4 (1775), line 3.

GR'DYṬWR = French *gros de Tours* and Polish *grodetur*, 'a thick double-ribbed silk fabric, originally produced in Tours in France' (Orlinńska-Mianowska 2003: 215), and Russian *grodetur*, see Kirsanova 1989: 73–74.

QRWLWWYŠKY, see above, Text I, line 4, and QRWLWWYŠ in Text II, line 2, 'royal'.

QMLṬ, see Q'MLYWṬ, above, Text I, line 4, and Text II, line 2, 'camelot, camlot'.

PLYŠH, see above, Text I, line 5, 'pleated dress'.

Line 3

ŠLWNSKY = Polish *śląski*, 'Silesian'.

ŠWWPSKY, see above, Text I, line 5, and ŠWWBSKY in Text II, line 3, 'German'.

QRṬWNWWY = Polish *kartunowy*, 'adj. calico, cotton cloth' (SJP III, 1961: 592). Less probably '(made) of cardboard', cf. Polish *kartonowy* 'adj. cardboard' (SJP 3, 1961: 591)!

BWWYLNYSKY, see above, Text I, line 5, 'adj. cotton'.

Line 4

MRWWḤWT, cf. above, Text I, line 8, 'curtain'.

PLWŠYNQWWY = Polish *plocienny*, 'adj. linen', *plocienco*, 'calico'.

ŠWWLYYḤ, see ŠWLYḤ, above, Text I, line 6, 'two-ply linen or cotton material'.

FINALLY

In these lists of dowry we have learnt peculiar words which do not appear in any Hebrew dictionary. Are they Hebrew? Probably not. But on the other hand, *bleyzer*, *bikini*, *muslin*, *jaket*, *banana*, *atlas*, *sveder*, *naylon*, *kaftiya* and *štrayml* ARE Hebrew words. In a closely parallel way the strange-looking loanwords of the Karaim *nedunyot* reflect the ever-repeated attempts to extend and enrich the Hebrew language. Thus they constitute a part of the history of Hebrew that deserves to be collected and recorded.

On the basis of the *nedunyot* translated by Chepurina, El'jashevich and Malecki in 1927, these authors concluded (p. 5) that, while the Near East and Egypt formed the centre of commercial and cultural influences on the Crimean Karaims, the Karaims

in Poland were directed towards Spain, whence at least some of their forefathers had come. At present we may state that this view was based on a number of erroneous and exaggerated interpretations of place-names in the *nedunyot* (Rumbeco, Palencia, etc.).

Nevertheless, a similar conclusion may be reached following this investigation. It is more than obvious that a great majority of the items mentioned in the *nedunyot* represent connections with the Central and Western European textile industry and fashion. For this reason the Hebrew of the lists of dowry abunds in Polish, French and German cultural loans and foreign words, and in consequence the *nedunyot* have acquired a very non-Hebrew appearance. In contrast, only a few Turkic/Oriental words appear in the texts, while Oriental jewellery and textiles are very common in the Crimean Karaim *nedunyot*. Genuine Russian words without a Polish, French or German counterpart are not found in them; in a symptomatic manner, *dushegreika* (*bat han-nefeš*) is the sole item occurring in our *nedunyot* with an entry in the section dealing with traditional Russian clothes in the recent encyclopaedic dictionary *Russkij traditsionnyj byt* ('The traditional Russian mode of life') by I. I. Shangina (2003: 495–644).

Thus it is evident that the Lithuanian Karaims, especially their women, faced West, although not particularly towards Spain, in their fashion trends and material culture at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this sense the connections with the Karaims in the Crimea were no longer of importance, and Russia did not offer trends which the Lithuanian Karaims considered fashionable and worthy of imitation.

A comparative study of European dowry lists from various periods would most probably indicate convincingly that in the past, too, religious or ethnic boundaries played a very minor role when compared with the trends of high fashion in that particular period.

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Plate 1. Text I Firk. Dok. II No. 5 (1773). Courtesy of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.



Plate 2. Text I Firk, Dok. II No. 5 (1773). A part of the *neduyot* in detail.
Courtesy of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.



Plate 3. Text II, I Firk. Dok. II No. 6 (1781). Courtesy of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.

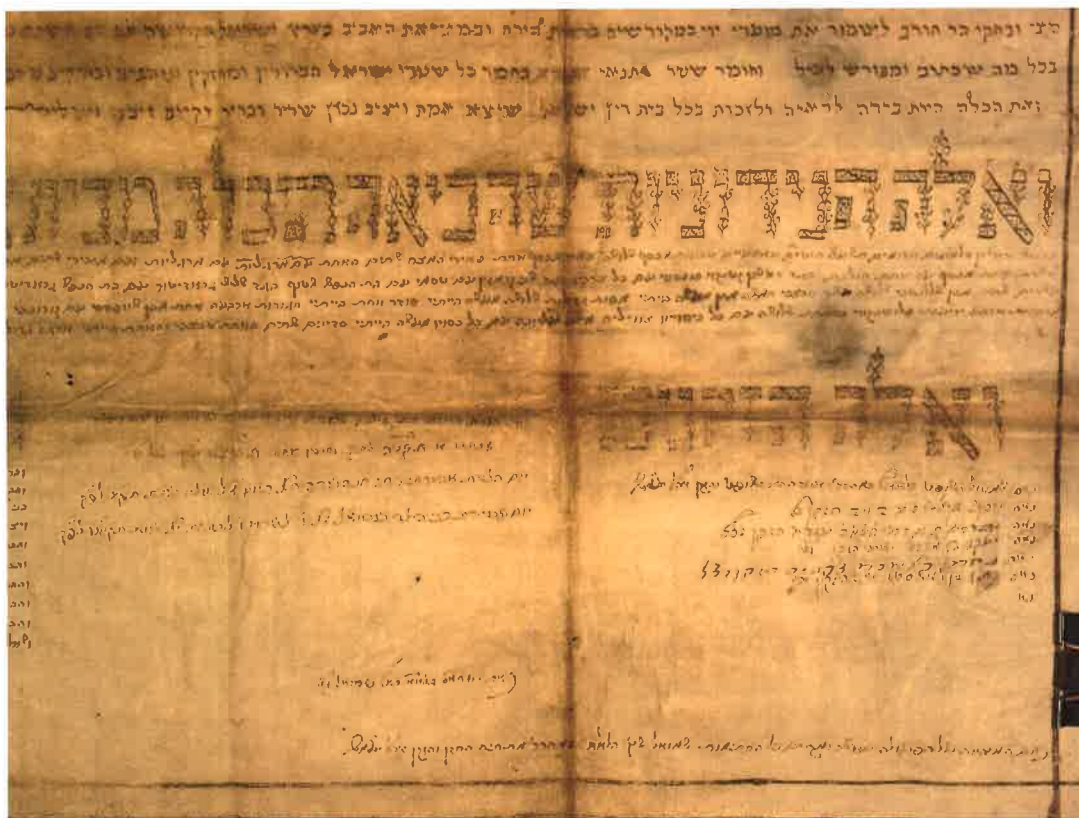


Plate 4. Text III, I Firk. Dok. II No. 7 (1804). A part of the *nedunyc*t in detail.
Courtesy of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.