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**KARAITES IN THE ULUS JOCHI EPA
AND IN THE CRIMEAN KHANATE:
THE QUESTION OF THE ORIGIN OF KARAITE
COMMUNITIES ON THE CRIMEAN PENINSULA**

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Abstract. Research objectives: An analysis and generalization of materials on the history of the emergence of Karaite communities on the territory of the Crimean peninsula in the era of the Ulus of Jochi and the Crimean Khanate.

Research materials: As a result of comparing published materials on the history of the Crimean Karaites, data from archaeological and epigraphic studies, as well as in the process of studying the funds of the Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA, St. Petersburg) and the State Archive of the Republic of Crimea (SARC, Simferopol), information was analyzed related to the problem of the emergence of Karaite communities on the territory of Crimea in the era of Ulus Jochi and the Crimean Khanate.

Results and scientific novelty: Many episodes in the history of the Crimean Karaites still remain outside the field of view of researchers. There is also the problem of interpretation of sources. In particular, this concerns the controversy about the origin of the Crimean Karaites and the time of their appearance on the territory of the Crimean peninsula, a process that had been going on for more than 100 years with the discussion sometimes going beyond scientific argumentation.

The stages of the scientific study of the past of the Crimean Karaites are characterized by different levels of intensity, as well as large variety of methods and approaches used. Interest in this problem first arose among representatives of Russian academic circles in the first half of the 19th century. The Russian administration became interested in the history of the Karaites in part because the ideas of the European Enlightenment, which largely determined the policy of the Russian government in a number of key areas, implied the spread of Russian culture and education to the “Asian peoples.” In relation to the Karaites, Krymchaks, and Ashkenazi Jews, the Russian government adopted laws and regulations, in accordance with which the Karaites were able to legislatively strengthen their legal status. The Russian government, however, used restrictive measures by pursuing a discriminatory anti-Jewish policy against the Jewish population. The Karaites managed to get the authorities to recognize them as a community that differed from the Rabbanites while they received various legal and economic preferences. The same time period marked the onset of the large-scale activity of the famous collector of Jewish antiquities, Abraham Firkowicz, who initiated the

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creation of an extensive collection of manuscripts related to the history of Jewish communities, including in the Crimean peninsula.

Based on the materials presented, it was concluded that the Karaite community could have appeared in the Crimea not earlier than the second half of the 13th century. Active resettlement of Karaites to the Crimea from the territories of the Middle East, Byzantium, and subsequently from the Ottoman Empire had been taking place since the middle of the 14th century. These chronological periods are also supported by material evidence of the stay of the Karaites in this region (archaeological and epigraphic studies of medieval Solkhat, Mangup-Kale, and Chufut-Kale).

Keywords: Jewish communities, Karaites, Ulus Jochi, Crimean Khanate, Solkhat, Mangup-Kale, Chufut-Kale

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The founder of *Karaism* (*Karaite Judaism*) is considered to be Anan ben David – religious teacher, revered by the Karaites as the founder of this creed. It is known, that Anan ben David was an authoritative scholar of Jewish religious literature (although in some research Anan ben David is not considered the founder of Karaism anymore) [64, p. 19–29]. In 762–767 A.D. in Baghdad, he created a sect, which members were originally called “Ananites” based on the pre-Mishnaite traditions of the Sadducees. His followers did not believe the Rabbinic Jewish oral law (such as, the Mishnah) to be authoritative. The main work of Anan ben David “*Sefer ha-Mitzvot*” (“The Book of Precepts”) was published about 770. The fundamental characteristic of the movement is the veneration of the Old Testament as the only and direct source of religious truth. Such an appeal to the Tanah is expressed in the principle established by Anan ben David: “Study the law [Torah] thoroughly without relying on my opinion” [47, p. 88].

The term “*Karaites*” was first mentioned in works of the theologian of the 9th century Benjamin ben Moshe Nahavendi. The sacralization of the New Testament, the Talmud, and the Koran is not typical for the Karaites. Initially, the teaching manifested itself through a protest against the divinity of the Jewish Talmuds and the infallibility of religious authorities, but later Karaism took shape as an independent religious doctrine with its own dogmas and rituals. Karaism is recognized by Orthodox Jews as a non-Ashkenazi Jewish sect and by some modern national leaders of the Crimean Karaites as an independent syncretic religious movement based on the Old Testament. Karaism, in its version closer to the present one, emerged in the second half of the ninth century, almost 150 years after Anan ben David [61, p. 102].

The discussion about the time of the appearance of the Karaites in the Crimea has been ongoing for almost two centuries. It is generally accepted in the academic literature that the first Karaites had settled in the Crimea during the rise of the Ulus of Jochi, while their further immigration to the peninsula took place after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 [3, p. 24–32]. According to another version first put forward by Russian orientalists V. Smirnov and V. Grigoriev and, to which some scientists and local historians adhere to date, ethnically Karaites are descendants of the Khazars, Cumans, and other Turkic peoples [21, p. 11–49; 53,

p. 1–19]. However, this concept does not have enough supporting evidence. The position is aggravated by the situation associated with the activities of Abraham Firkowicz and his archaeographic heritage in connection with numerous facts of falsification of sources. At the same time, the fact should be pointed out that Firkowicz never wrote about the Karaites as the descendants of the Khazars, considering the former “the true and only descendants of the ancient Israelites” [28, p. 41].

There is another, “synthetic” version, in that its adherents tried to combine the individual postulates of the first two theories. The authors of a number of publications either limit themselves to the list of currently available versions of the ethnogenesis of the Karaites, or offer compromise theories about their origin and the relationship between the Turkic and Jewish substrates in their culture [9, p. 17–27].

Modern researchers have at their disposal a number of important evidences and material sources (archaeological and epigraphic) obtained in the course of fundamental research into the medieval settlements of the Crimea, such as, Chufut-Kale, Mangup-Kale, and Solkhat. With the help of these materials, it is possible to reasonably date the emergence of the Karaite communities in the Crimea and draw some conclusions regarding the versions of their ethnic and confessional affiliation.

Written evidence of the existence on the Crimean peninsula of communities presumably identified by some experts as Karaites should be assigned to the beginning of the 12th century. The traveler Rabbi Petahyah ben Jacob from Regensburg who visited the Northern Black Sea region at the beginning of the 12th century reported that among the nomadic Cumans he met sectarian Jews similar in customs to the Karaites: “There are no real Jews in the land of the Kedars, and only the Minim (Heretics) live there <...> On the eve of the Sabbath, they cut all the bread that they eat on the Sabbath, eat it in the dark and sit all day in one place” [48, p. 266–267]. By the term “Kedar” the author meant the biblical Kedar (or Kidar), the second (after Nebaiot) son of Ismail (Gen. 25:13; I Chron., 1:29). Apparently, Rabbi Petahyah called by the biblical name “Kedars” the Cumans or Kipchaks who in the 11th century roamed the Black Sea steppes. «And Rabbi Petahyah said to them, “Why do you not believe in the words of the sages?” And they said, “Because our fathers did not study them <...> And they have no prayers, except for psalms. And when Rabbi Petahyah of Regensburg told them our prayer and the blessing of food, they liked it. And they said, “We have never heard what the Talmud is” [62, p. 60–61].

According to P. Margolin who studied this source, the above fragment talks about the Jews who settled in this area who had no ties with Palestine and Babylonia and did not know about Talmudic Judaism; rather than Karaites [48, p. 266–267]. It's possible that Rabbi Petahyah could meet few remaining Khazars who continued to follow Judaism [56, p. 198]. Z. Ankori argued that these sectarians could have been the ancestors of modern Karaites, who then lived among the nomadic Cumans. In favor of this argument, in his opinion, is the knowledge of the Hebrew psalms by the sectarians, which they used in accordance with the Karaite liturgical practice [62, p. 61, 63, 64]. But the similarity of some customs still does not give reason to consider the interlocutors of Rabbi Petahyah the Karaites and can be attributed to mere ignorance of the Talmudic rules [5, p. 213–215]. Unfortunately, the brief report of medieval traveler from Regensburg does not give an unequivocal answer to the question of who the sectarian Jews met by Rabbi Petahyah were.

According to Z. Ankori who believed that three or four generations ought to pass after the foundation of the settlement and its development, the Karaite com-

munity on the Crimean peninsula could appear not earlier than the second half of the 12th century [62, p. 61]. However, such a conclusion is not confirmed by reliable sources; therefore, this chronological marker cannot be considered the starting point for the onset of the existence of the Karaite community in the Crimea.

The first reliable written mention of the stay of the Karaites on the peninsula dates from the second half of the 13th century. In 1278, a dispute arose between the communities of Karaites and Jewish Rabbanites of Solkhat regarding the dogmatic-calendar problem, according to the Byzantine Karaite jurist, philosopher, physician, and liturgical poet Aaron the Elder ben Joseph ha-Rofe (some sources indicate that he was born in Solkhat around 1260; the rest of the years he lived in Constantinople and died around 1320). In particular, the dispute was related to which day should be considered the beginning of the month “*Tishri*” (*Tishri* or *Tishrei* the seventh and, in the later tradition, the first month of the Jewish year corresponds usually to September–October). In his dogmatic work “*Sefer ha-Mivhar*” (“Book of Selected Works”, comments on the Pentateuch), Aaron the Elder ben Joseph ha-Rofe wrote: “It happened to me 14 years ago, that is, in the 39th year of the account [1278], and the Rabbanites saw the new moons of the month of Tishri, and we saw the old month about sunset and showed it to the Rabbanites who were there, in a place called Solkhat” [62, p. 60]. This evidence suggests that the Karaite community in Solkhat existed at least from the second half of the 13th century; it consisted of immigrants from Persia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia [51, p. 22].

In the 14th century some Abraham Kirimi (meaning “from the [city] of Crimea” (presumably a proselyte of the Rabbanite Jewish community as suggested by D. Shapira) lived in Solkhat [51, p. 21]. Abraham Kirimi is the author of the theological treatise “*Sefat ha-Emet*” (“Language of Truth”, 1358) written at the request of many notable Jews and especially of his Karaite pupil Hezekiah ben Elhanan ha-Nasi, whom he held in high esteem (as G. Akhiezer believes this conclusion is based on the Firkovich’s forgeries) [27, p. 124; 60, p. 332–356]. Kaleb Afendopulo, a Constantinopolitan Karaite, the author of many works of theological and liturgical content, wrote in 1495 that his brother Abraham Bali, when visiting the Crimea, informed him that he “found there significant communities of Karaites in Kaffa and Krikier” (that is, in Kaffa and Qırq Yer) [25, p. 314]. Of other things, mentions in Karaite oral traditions of the resettlement of Karaites in the Crimea can also indirectly indicate their emergence in the territory of the peninsula in the 13th century [25, p. 289–290; 1, p. 48–53].

In 1795, after the annexation of Crimea by Russia, in a petition addressed to the Governor-General of Ekaterinoslav and Taurida Count Platon Zubov, the Crimean Karaites reported the following about their origin: “Our ancient Jewish society under the name of Karaites settled in the Crimea about 450 years ago. According to legend, our ancestors never interfered with the affairs of the rulers, under whose protection we lived, faith according to the law they adopted and loyalty to sovereigns were and still remain immutable mirrors for us”. This thesis was repeated further, in the text body of the petition, “... we, the Karaites, having settled in the Crimea for about 450 years, live in the places of our stay constantly, practice different types of needlework diligently”¹.

¹ State Archive of the Republic of Crimea (SARC). F. 241. Inv. 1. C. 1. Sh. 12, 13.

In the 19th century due to the arising academic interest to the problem of the origin of the Karaites and their presence on the Crimean Peninsula [47, p. 56–62], the Russian authorities initiated the activities of the collector of Jewish antiquities of the Karaite hazzan Abraham Firkowicz who laid the foundation to the creation of an extensive collection of Karaite, Jewish, and Samaritan manuscripts. On September 17, 1839, the Karaite Haham Simhah ben Solomon Babovich reported to the Taurida civil governor Matvei Muromtsov about the start of the archaeographic expedition, in which Firkowicz was accompanied by a Karaite hazzan, teacher, and religious figure Solomon ben Abraham Beim [56, p. 111–112; 70, p. 65–68]. As a result of their research, 51 ancient manuscripts and fragments of the Tanakh were discovered; 58 copies were made from tombstones in the Karaite cemeteries in Chufut-Kale and Mangup-Kale. On November 2, 1839, Firkowicz compiled a report to the attention of M. Muromtsev on the finds he had discovered. The document was accompanied by a reference letter certified by the Sary Krym Town Hall, stating that “Firkowicz found in the Sary Krym when leaving it <...> five stones in cemeteries with inscriptions 4670, 4704, 4842, 4819 and 4864”, that is, 910, 944, 1059, 1089 and 1104 according to the Gregorian calendar, from which he also made copies [54, p. 88]. However, as Shapira reasonably believes that Firkowicz falsified these inscriptions, as well as many subscripts to the colophons on the discovered biblical manuscripts, including four colophons dedications of the Torah scrolls to the Khazar synagogue in Solkhat (929, 939, 965 and 1140); in fact, the earliest of them date back to as late as the 14th century (1360 and 1376) [50, p. 105–106, 115–117, 121, 124, 127; 51, p. 22; 56, p. 136]. It has also been established that a message from the Khazar Karaites of Solkhat in 965 allegedly discovered by Firkowicz in the Karasubazar synagogue is nothing more than a high-quality fake [50, p. 128].

Part of the material collected by Firkowicz was transferred to the museum of the Odessa Society of History and Antiquities (OSHA); the brief description was included in the first volume of the “Notes” of this organization [52, p. 640–649]. For a detailed study of the collected documents, members of the Society invited the director of the Odessa Jewish School, Bezalel Stern. In September–October 1842, he made a trip to the Crimea. As a result, Stern came to the conclusion that the copies collected and delivered by Firkowicz “from tombstones and other inscriptions and additions, although overall and largely, they proved to be essentially correct; but for all that, sometimes he limited himself to only a notation of the content and sometimes read it erroneously, e.g., the marking of years and proper names in two instances” [52, p. 647]. A report compiled by Stern for the Firkowicz’s collection had a positive vector overall; however, subsequently, many details of the findings prompted debates and raised doubts about their authenticity among researchers. In 1845, the material presented by Firkowicz and Stern was processed and its publication was funded by the Society by the Ephraim Pinner, German Hebraist, Doctor of Philosophy from Berlin [55, p. 147]. A brief extract from this edition placed in the second volume of the “Notes of the OSHA”, among other things, contains information about the fact that the Solkhat Khazars society had already existed at the end of the 9th century (one of the published scrolls was allegedly donated to the local community in 881; another scroll, also judging by the post-script made on it, “was bought by the Kozar society in Solkhat for the synagogue, and that this society brought a large cauldron as a gift to the synagogue, for coo-

king in it food on holidays”) [42, p. 50, 52], which cannot but raise doubts about their authenticity.

In 1841 based on his words Firkowicz discovered the grave of Isaac (Izkhak) Sangari who was a semi-legendary missionary and converted the Khazars to Judaism. The same year the vice-president of the Society Nikolay Murzakevich arriving to the Crimea advised that the hazzan “Mordechai Sultansky led me to a large stone slab, on which, in the lower part, I saw Hebrew letters freshly carved with a knife that read the name Sangari, according to Firkowicz. The freshly carved letters were rubbed out with local soil, which, at the touch of a hand, fell behind and exposed the fresh edges of the letters, not yellowed and not overgrown with moss, as was the case with other Jewish inscriptions” [22, p. 97].

Firkowicz and Beim dated the earliest tombstone discovered by them to 640 A.D., having indicated that “the most ancient of them is a monument to the venerable ribbi Izkhak-maskil, the son of Jacob, his soul in the garden of Eden, who died in 4400, i.e. in the 7th century of the Christian era”. Firkowicz referred as the “most recent” to the monument to the “highly venerated David, hazzan of the Mangup community who died in 4972, i.e. in the 13th century of the Christian era” [17, p. 15].

On subsequent trips to the Crimea, Turkey, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Lithuania, Firkowicz managed to collect unique handwritten collections on the history of the Jewish communities of the Crimea and the Caucasus. In 1856, he approached the directorate of the Imperial Public Library with a proposal to purchase this collection from him, and in 1857 and the Minister of Public Education with a proposal to create a committee to review and describe the manuscripts he had collected². In October 1862, following the recommendation of the Special Commission of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the collection of manuscripts was bought for 125,000 rubles by the “Highest Order”. It included 975 scrolls and manuscripts on leather and parchment, 703 documents (originals and copies), and 734 photographs and copies from gravestone inscriptions. The collection, which also included tombstones from the Chufut-Kale cemetery, according to contemporaries, “attracted the attention of the entire scientific world, not only in Russia, but also outside it” [56, p. 135–136, 166–167]. In 1872, the book named “Sefer Abne-Zikkaron: A Collection of Tombstone Jewish Inscriptions on the Crimean Peninsula Collected by the Learned Karaite Abraham Firkowicz” was published in Vilna. It included 769 epitaphs; specifically, 564 from Chufut-Kale the earliest is dated 6th A.D. by Firkowicz himself), 72 from Mangup (from 866), 28 from Kaffa (from 1078), 5 from Solkhat (from 910), and 100 from Eupatoria (from 1593) [16, p. 215]. Somewhat earlier in 1842 inspired by the work done by Firkowicz with the finds of the Karaite Haham, Simhah Babovich, reported in his next petition addressed to the Minister of the Imperial Court, Lands, and Real Estate Peter Volkonsky in particular that “the Karaites are ancient people and settled on the Crimean peninsula in remote times” [6, p. 110].

In his letter dated June 31, 1842 addressed to the Governor-General of Novorossiysk and Bessarabia Prince Mikhail Vorontsov, President of OSHA Dmitry Knyazhevich informed with regard to archeological finds uncovered by Firkowicz that “these discoveries may lead to resolution of rather important questions and clari-

² Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA). F. 821. Inv. 8. C. 565. Sh. 68, 68 (reverse).

fication of various data veiled in mystery due to doubt or ignorance of historical truth and that they are an exceptional asset to science destined to direct the gaze of the entire learned Europe, for interest in them is not only specific to *Novorossiysky krai*; it is of the European-wide, you might say, the worldwide interest”³.

“Such discoveries and painstaking for the purpose also truly deserve inviting the Monarchical attention”, continued Knyazhevich. “Russia is glorious and great at everything: only in this learning of research and discoveries, it could [had] as yet few companions. All the more these small efforts deserve the utmost approval, because albeit small, they are so much the more abundant in consequences. And how the success can be doubted with a mediation of such an educated nobleman as Your Illustrious Highness and magnanimity of the Monarch with his eagle eye to foresee something beneficial that far; while even the minor tokens of appreciation will give Firkowicz a new impetus and willingness to proceed with his discoveries”⁴.

“By uncovering these 109 monuments, Firkowicz evoked from silence of the graves and made to talk these many testifiers who had been largely residing in the Taurida Peninsula for a total of 1039 years. Even the first close look at these antiquities showed the possibility of recovering from them an essential benefit for the nation”, concluded Knyazhevich in his letter to Vorontsov⁵.

Information about the Karaite community of Solkhat in the late Middle Ages is very fragmentary and largely unreliable. Thus, contradictory data exists about the resettlement of 40 families of Karaites to Solkhat in 1270 by Khan Tokhtamysh. Even less plausible are the reports of some Karaite authors that in 4502, from the creation of the world (742 A.D.), the Karaite community of Solkhat was joined by Karaites who came along with the conquering Tatars, which ultimately increased the size of the Karaite community to 1500 “*baaley-batim*” (male heads of families) [26, p. 123–124]. The relocation of a part of the Karaite community from the Crimea was and still is a very popular version among a number of Karaite authors; specifically, to Galich by invitation of Daniil Galitsky in 1246 and Troky on the initiative of Grand Duke of Lithuania Vitold (Vytautas) in the 14th century. Some reports reveal that after a successful campaign in the Crimea in 1398 (according to other sources in 1388 or 1399) [29, p. 122], the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vitold, took with him a small horde of Tatars and several hundred families of Karaites; as stated by the Polish publicist and historian of the 18th century Tadeusz Czacki [11, p. 104], a total of 383 families moved who then settled in Troky. Subsequently, part of the Lithuanian Karaites came to Poland and Volhynia (Lutsk). Some Karaite historiographers of the 18th–19th centuries claimed that the Karaites were brought from the Crimea by Vitold, Grand Duke of Lithuania, in 1218 [1, p. 49; 61, p. 101–102].

Nevertheless, these facts have not yet been documented, and archival documents reflect only the ideas on this event that existed among the Karaites themselves. “In Crimea the Karaite settlements exist since time immemorial from before the Christian Era. <...> Lithuanian Karaites originate from the Crimean. In 1399, their ancestors were taken away from the Crimea along with many Tatars by the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vitold who settled them in various cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania,

³ Ibid. F. 733. Inv. 8. C. 204. Sh. 3, 3 (reverse).

⁴ Ibid. Sh. 4 (reverse).

⁵ Ibid. Sh. 5.

Troky, Grodno, Lutsk, Nowe Miasto, etc.”, reported in a letter from Abraham and Gabriel Firkowicz sent to the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire Sergei Lansky in April 1858⁶. Apparently, Karaite migrants after all made their way there from the Golden Horde (from the Volga, Central Asia, and the Crimea), as a result of having been engaged in commercial activities. The language of the Karaites of Lithuania, Galicia, and Volhynia differs from the language of the Crimean Karaites, in that the former spoke the Karaite ethnolect of the Kypchak (Cumans) language, also called the Karaite language, rather than the Tatar ethnolect [2, p. 292–293; 25, p. 342]. A number of researchers (G. Akhiezer, P. Golden, M. Kramarovsky, D. Shapira, etc.) believe that the ancestors of the Eastern European Karaites do not originate from the Crimea, but came from the territories occupied by the Mongols (Northern Iran and the Lower Volga), from Byzantium, migrated from the cities of the Catholic and Islamic Mediterranean, as well as from the Ottoman empire after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 [1, p. 48–53; 4, p. 83].

At the end of the 13th – middle of the 14th century, Solkhat was considered a large city with significant Jewish communities that existed there. However, after the Crimean Khanate had been formed, the capital was first moved to Qırq Yer and, next, to the newly built Bakhchisaray. Solkhat gradually lost its former importance as a political and commercial center in the region. During this period, the outflow of Karaites to Eski-Yurt, Karasubazar, and Qırq Yer began, which continued into the 17th and 18th centuries. Thus, in 1622, some Eliya from Solkhat copied “Sefer ha-Mivkhar” in Chufut-Kale; in 1755, Izhak ben Izhak from Lutsk reported in a letter to Abraham ben Samuel from Troky that “in the city of Solkhat near Kaffa, where there is a large community, and the synagogue in it [Solkhat] is larger than all other synagogues, and now it is only hazzan there who guards the synagogue and prays in it in the evening and in the morning” [51, p. 38]. In the second half of the 18th century the Karaite Moshe ben Joseph lived in Solkhat who wrote in Hebrew an edifying instruction to his son on the occasion of his wedding [27, p. 116].

In Solkhat (Stary Krym), Jewish (Karaite) quarters are confined to the southeastern sector of the city. In the first half of the 19th century, there were three Jewish cemeteries and synagogues, but later they were destroyed; the last surviving synagogue building was seen here in the 1860s [51, p. 22]. According to the traveler Minas Bzhyskyan (Minas Medizi) who visited Stary Krym around 1830 the local Karaite community emerged as early as in the time of the Genoese, as allegedly evidenced by “their memorabilia and graves”. It was claimed by Bzhyskyan that he had seen the grave of Aaron the Elder ben Joseph ha-Rofe [26, p. 123]. The analysis of the first instrumental plan of the hillfort (*gorodishche*) of the medieval Solkhat in 1783 demonstrates that in the 13th–15th centuries the Jews and Karaites lived in neighboring communities surrounded by buildings of the Islamic community of the city. By assumption of V. Lebedev and M. Kramarovsky, the core of the Jewish community was formed back in the pre-urban period (that is, several decades before the 1260s); while the language of ritual and epitaphs on *matzevot* for all members of the community was Hebrew; Turkic dialects was the language of everyday communication [38, p. 59; 35, p. 59–60; 31, p. 6–24]. The Jewish community was made up of local Karaites and Turkic-speaking Rabbanite Jews, as well as immigrants from the Middle East and Central Asia whose communities grew

⁶ Ibid. F. 821. Inv. 8. C. 565. Sh. 79 (reverse).

rapidly in numbers beginning the second half of the 13th century and were subsequently joined by immigrants from Constantinople community after 1453 [32, p. 59; 36, p. 407].

In 1892, in one of the issues of the “Notes of the Taurida Scientific Archival Commission” (TSAC), a communication was published by Arseniy Markevich, which drew the attention to the problem of preserving archaeological monuments, and, in particular, the remains of the synagogue building. Mayor of Stary Krym F. Rovitsky handed over to the Commission’s museum the discovered tombstone with inscriptions in Arabic (indicating the date of restoration of the local mosque, i.e., 1309) and in Hebrew (“Central Museum of Taurida”, KP-15558 A-20750; 83 x 44 x 8 cm). The Hebrew inscription dates to 1517 (and not to 1417, as Markevich incorrectly pointed out). The inscription in Arabic translated by a member of the Commission Ilya Kazas read, “Hadji-Beshit ordered to renew this clean and blessed mosque to Shems-edin, the son of Raman (Ramaz?), may God increase his charity, in 709” [40, p. 128]. It could not be ascertained, however, which mosque this renewal concerned.

The inscription on the plate, made in Hebrew, read, “The honored elder Mordehai, the son of Mordehai, is buried here. He died on the first day of the week of the 17th Tevet, 5277. May his soul be tied in the knot of life with the Lord his God” [40, p. 127]. Before the discovery of the plate, the earliest epigraphic monument of Muslim origin in the Stary Krym was the inscription on the portal of the Uzbek mosque (1314). It is important to emphasize that the secondary use of the foundation stone of the mosque by the Karaites may indicate the decline of the Muslim community of Solkhat at the beginning of the 16th century [26, p. 125]. This valuable artifact is now kept in the lapidary of the Central Museum of Taurida in Simferopol. (Figs. 1 and 2)

In recent years, the archaeological survey of the territory where the ruins of this object are located has continued. As a result, it was found that the total area of the building (located between two households on Spartak St., no. 8 and no. 10) was 0.03 hectares (the dimensions of the building are about 18.3 x 14.8 m), while the north-facing wall of the kenasa was dismantled almost to the level of the ground surface. The south- and west-facing walls adjoin the premises of house no. 10. The floor of the building is covered with modern layers, the study of which will allow forming a reasonable opinion on the purpose of the building. The structure is rectangular in plan, with long walls oriented along the north-south axis; masonry is made of lime mortar. There are traces of a niche in the middle part of the south-facing wall; the walls retained fragments of plaster and pottery vessels that played the role of acoustic resonators. Nearby there was a cemetery with tombstones, some of which were taken away by the Karaites who moved to other places of residence. Calculated the size of the congregation of this object, which belonged to the Karaite community, based on the area of the prayer hall, it is approx. 1070–1100 people [18, p. 148–150; 4, p. 84].

Today, the territory of the cemetery is occupied by housing construction, personal plots, and a roadway. The object is not registered with the state; it does not have a state registration number. There is no passport and no description of the zone of the archaeological cultural layer around the monument. The regulated development zone is limited to private household plots along Spartak Street [39, p. 382]. The final conclusions about the dating of the monument have yet to be made, although

the Russian researcher I. Tunkina, following E. Pinner and I. Mikhnevich, is inclined to believe that the synagogue in Solkhat was built in the 9th century [42, p. 52; 55, p. 147]. This statement, however, appears rather controversial, since no archaeological layers and materials, corresponding to this chronological period, have yet been found in Stary Krym. Only fragments of red-clay glazed ceramics of the 13th–14th centuries have been unearthed in the surrounding household plots, which may indirectly point to the time period of object's existence [18, p. 149].

In 1978, the Golden Horde (Starokrymskaya) expedition of the State Hermitage began its work together with the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR under the supervision of M. Kramarovsky. This moment unveils a new stage in the history of the study of the monuments of the Stary Krym [34, p. 245–250]. In 1979, members of the expedition rediscovered a fragment of stele with an inscription in Hebrew dated 5311 (1550/1551 A.D.), which was found in 1928 by the expedition by U. Bodaninsky and N. Ernst [43, p. 276]. The second version of the translation of the inscription was made by E. Meshcherskaya, but it is not entirely accurate, in particular, with regard to the final eulogy (in the overwhelming majority of cases, this is an abbreviation of “let his soul be tied in the knot of life”). The literal translation of the epitaph appears as follows: “Elder, venerable ribbi Joseph, son of ribbi Abraham, blessed is his memory. He died on the third day of the 23rd of the first Adar in 5311 from the creation of the world. May his soul be tied in the knot of life”. The Hebrew text of the inscription was published by D. Shapira [51, p. 22], while the translation used in this work was made by V. Elyashevich (for which the author expresses his gratitude to him). Also on the territory of the settlement, without reference to the archaeological context, a silver applied seal was found, presumably, from the 15th century, with a bilingual Arabic-Karaite inscription: “Moshe [Moses] ben [son of] the venerable rabbi Malkits[edek]” [30, p. 428; 4, p. 89].

Further study of this unique architectural monument will allow a substantiated scientific reconstruction of the history of the Karaite community of Solkhat/Stary Krym, since so far it has not been possible to state unequivocally that the remains of the synagogue building belonged to the Karaite community [33, p. 65–84]. M. Kramarovsky rightly notes that there is almost no information about the population of the Jewish Solkhat [36, p. 407]. In 2016–2017, he initiated a study of the Stary Krym synagogue of the 1270s 215 sq. m, the results of which should shed light on the history of the Karaite community of Solkhat [36, p. 407; 31, p. 6–24]. A large Karaite community existed in Kaffa in the Middle Ages. The German traveler Johann (Hans) Schiltberger who visited the city at the beginning of the 15th century reported that Jews of two kinds lived here, namely, Rabbanite Jews and Karaites: “Four cities located on the seashore depend on Kaffa, where there are two kinds of Jews with two synagogues in the city and four thousand houses in the suburbs” [7, p. 57]. At the same time, it is important to note that the number of houses on the outskirts of Kaffa cannot be associated with the Jewish communities in the city; otherwise, the number of Karaites and Jews would be more than 20 000 people, which, of course, could not correspond to reality. In 1421, the Kaffa teacher Alberto Alfieri mentioned the presence of a Jewish community in Kaffa, but there are no direct indications that the Karaites also lived in the city, although in some publications the communication of the medieval author is interpreted in favor of the Karaites [27, p. 181, 187, 188; 58, p. 4].



Fig. 1, 2. Gravestone with an inscription in Arabic and Hebrew (Stary Krym, 1892).
Marble, stone carving, incised relief (“Central Museum of Taurida”, KP-15558, A-20750).

The Karaite synagogue (kenasa) in Kaffa is known to have been built in 1292 [51, p. 23]. The head of the mission of the Dominican monks Emiddio Portelli d'Ascoli wrote that in this city, the Jews and Karaites had two synagogues, “two for each nationality”. The synagogue of the Jews was built after the establishment of the Kaffa trading post by the Genoese in the second half of the 13th century, but was destroyed by fire during the raids of the Tatars at the end of the 13th century or at the beginning of the 14th century and then restored as evidenced by the construction inscription of 1309 [12, p. 118]. Exterior and interior design of the Karaite kenasa in Feodosia are described in “Historical and Artistic Album of Taurida” (1853) compiled by curator of the Feodosia Museum of Antiquities Eugène de Villeneuve (Yevgenii Frantsevich Vil'nev) and published with lithographs from drawings by V.O. Russen; while a print in this album made by Russen is the only image of a unique building of one of the earliest Karaite kenasses of the Crimea.



Fig. 3. General view of the Karaite cemetery in the Josaphat Valley, 1920s.
(from the funds of the “Bakhchisaray Historical, Cultural and Archaeological
Museum-Reserve”, KP-4213/807).

The Kaffa community presumably consisted of both Turkic-speaking Karaite settlers from the Jochi Ulus and Greek-speaking Byzantine Karaites [14, p. 107–116]. At the end of the 15th – beginning of the 16th century the quarters of the already Ottoman Kaffa/Kafa/Kefe, where the Karaites lived, were mentioned in *defters*, the tax registers, which provided various fiscal information, as well as data on the population. For example, the *defters* of the *tudun* of Kaffa contain the names of settlements indicating their district center, the number of houses (hearths), a list

of heads of families with their professions, the total tax amount of each village, a detailed list of all types of taxes and taxes, etc. [37, p. 132]. Each city quarter of Kaffa was commonly called by the name of the centurion, or *papas* – the spiritual leader of the community. For example, in the 1520s there were quarters of the centurion (*yüzbāşı*) of Isaac and *papas* Abraham in the city with the Karaite *jamaat* (community) having been the dominant Jewish community in the Ottoman Kafa as early as in 1542 (there were 39 Muslim quarters in the city and 14 Armenian, Greek, and Jewish ones) [69, p. 52; 26, p. 126; 27, p. 116, 119; 65, p. 146; 68, p. 149; 71, p. 329–332; 72, p. 230]. So, in the TT 370 *defter* (according to various sources, it is dated 1520 or 1529) [37, p. 132], the community of the *papas* Isaac, which a number of authors identify as Karaite, consisted of 81 households; according to various estimates, the number of members of the community reached 450 people, of which 81 were heads of families, one was a bachelor, and nine were widows. In accordance with the data of the *defter* TT 214 (1542), there were 465 Karaites in the Kafa (81 households, 29 bachelors, and 15 widows) [72, p. 230; 68, p. 149, 159]. The Jewish community of Kafa in 1529 and 1542 had 326 inhabitants (58 heads of families, 4 bachelors, and 9 widows) and 270 inhabitants (42 heads of families, 4 bachelors, and 9 widows), respectively [68, p. 149, 159]. The Jews identified in the *defter* of 1529 as *ğemā'at-ı yahūdiyān-ı efrenc-i nefis-i Kefē* could belong to the Rabbanite community, which consisted of Sephardi Jews who arrived to Kafa from Spain [72, p. 230; 69, p. 45, 61].



Fig 4. Remains of the Mangup Karaite kenasa. View from the south after archaeological research (according to A. Herzen; 2013).



Fig. 5. Bilingual inscription (in Russian and Hebrew) at the entrance to the Cathedral Kenasa of Chufut-Kale, dedicated to the visit of Alexander III in 1886.

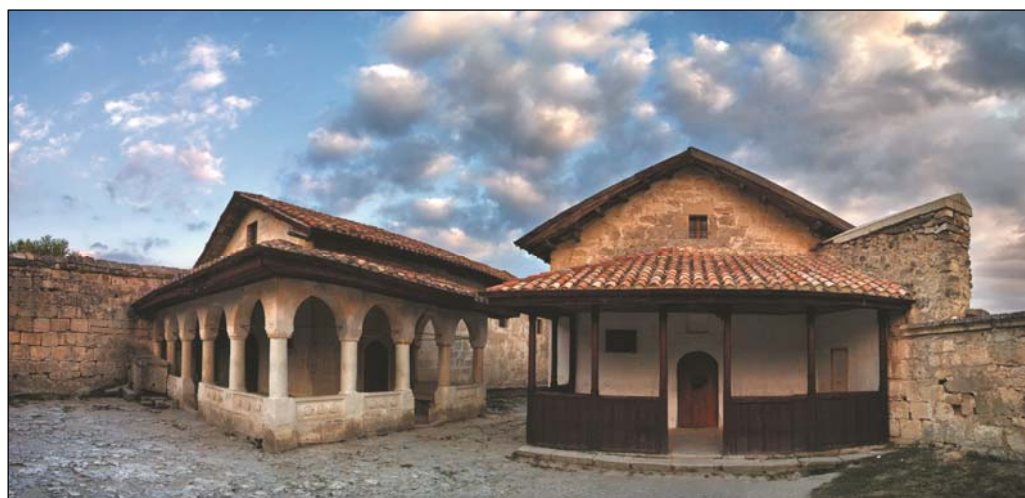


Fig. 6. Karaite kenasses of Chufut-Kale.

In 1542 *Defter* fixed the existence in the Kafa of two more Jewish communities, consisting of Rabbanite Jews who immigrated from outside the Ottoman Empire from the territory of Western Europe (indicated in documents as *ğemā'at-ı yahūdiyān-ı efrenc-i nef̄s-i Kef̄ē*; there were up to 55 people in total), as well as Jews who made up a small community (59 people) in Otuz who were immigrants from Circassia (*ğemā'at çerkesyan yahūdiyān-ı Otūzlār*) [68, p. 149]. A. Fisher believed that the total number of representatives of the Jewish community in Kafa in the first half of the 1540s was more than 800 inhabitants [68, p. 169]. In the middle of the 16th century, Jewish community of Kafa consisted of Turkic-speaking Jews (Karaites and Rabbanites), European immigrants-Rabbanites, and settlers from Circassia (Rabbanites) with the Ottoman administration having differentiated them by the geographical principle [27, p. 203–205].

By the beginning of the 17th century, according to travelers, e.g., J. Bordieu, the quarters of Kafa, in which Karaites and Rabbanite Jews lived, were acquiring an increasingly confined territorial character due to the policy pursued by the Ottoman administration in relation to *dhimmis*⁷, which allows a conclusion that the Kafinian Karaites lived in a strictly defined area of the city for almost 200 years, while only occasionally settling outside it [63, p. 102].

At the end of the 15th century people from the Kyiv community joined the Crimean Karaite community after the raid of the Tatars, who had plundered Kyiv in 1482; some of the inhabitants were brought to the Crimea as captives [69, p. 49–50]. In addition to the large trade and craft centers of the southeastern Crimea, such as, Kaffa/Kafa/Kefe and Solkhat (Eski-Kyrym after 1475), in the medieval Crimea, Karaite communities arose in Qırq Yer (Chufut-Kale; between 1342 and 1357), Karasubazar, Mangup-Kale (since the second half of the 15th century), Gezlev (Eupatoria at the end of the 17th – beginning of the 18th centuries), as well as in a number of other smaller settlements of the Crimean peninsula [59, p. 731; 26, p. 123–140].

In regard to a question of the time of the appearance of the Karaites in the Crimea, a particular importance in terms of the fundamental evidence is attached to a comprehensive study of tombstones (*matzevot*) in the Crimean necropolises (primarily in the Jewish cemeteries in the Josaphat Valley near Bakhchisaray and near Mangup-Kale), as well as their complete scientific cataloging and classification [15, p. 77–88; 16, p. 212–227; 66, p. 37–82; 67, p. 11–35]. In particular, in 2004–2009, according to the results of a study of the Jewish cemetery in the Josaphat Valley near Chufut-Kale, it was established that the total number of monuments at the site was about 7000, while almost 3400 of them had epitaphs. The earliest surviving inscriptions are dated 1364 (monument to Manush, daughter of Sabbatai) and 1387 (monument to Sarah, daughter of Moshe); inscriptions on other monuments of the late 14th century are unreadable due to their poor preservation. There are 25 epitaphs from the 15th century, and 63 from the 16th century. There are from 800 to 1000 epitaphs from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Furthermore, the dating of several hundred epitaphs is difficult due to their poor state of preservation. The last burials in the cemetery in the Josaphat Valley date back to the middle of the 20th century (there are also cenotaphs dating back to the 21st century) [16, p. 212–227; 47, p. 52–53]. The

⁷ *Dhimmis* (ahl aḍ-ḍimmah/dhimmah – “the people of the covenant”) is a historical term for non-Muslims living in an Islamic state with legal protection.

foregoing allows us to assert that the Jewish population in Qırq Yer appeared no earlier than five hundred years after the Khazars had left the Crimea (second half of the 9th century) [20, p. 240–250]. (Fig. 3)

In accordance with the oral Karaite tradition, it is generally accepted that the Mangup community was made up of people from Solkhat (Eski-Krym) and Tash Irgan (Tash Dzargan); occasionally, they were joined by Karaites who emigrated from the regions of the metropolis of the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the 15th century [25, p. 290; 3, p. 25]. In 1848, the famous Russian archaeologist Alexei Uvarov prepared a manuscript with an overview of the archaeological sites of the Crimean Mountains as a part of the project “Research on the Antiquities of Southern Russia and the Black Sea Coast”. In the section devoted to the “cave city” of Chufut-Kale, A. Uvarov included an essay on the history of the Crimean Karaites. When writing this story, he was mainly guided by the communications of S. Beim and A. Firkowicz, whom he met and talked to at Chufut-Kale. Uvarov was an opponent of the “Khazar” theory of the Karaites origin formulated earlier in the V. Grigoriev’s works. In particular, A. Uvarov wrote, “... according to the dates, to which the Karaite graves belonged in other areas of the Crimea, we can trace their gradual settlement across the Taurida Peninsula. First they settled in Mangup <...> then in Theodosia, where there was already a synagogue in 848 A.D. But in the Sary Krym they appeared as late as in the 10th century” [45, p. 237, 246–247]. Despite the inaccuracies in the presentation of the chronology of the emergence of the Karaite community in the Crimea, Uvarov considered Jewish element the dominant in ethnogenesis of the Crimean Karaites. In his opinion, the Karaites are the Jews of the Karaite sect, but often close to the Khazars. Many of the conclusions made by Beim and Firkowicz were subjected to valid criticism by A. Uvarov.

Arguing about the authenticity of the finds made by Firkowicz, A. Uvarov drew attention to the fact that he “found in the Derbent region in the synagogue of the village of Mengelis, an inscription determining the time of the Karaites’ resettlement in the Crimea <...> an inscription of a completely new production, because it seems to have been written in 957, but mentions Kafa, which was founded three centuries later”. And further A. Uvarov summed up, “In general, one should be careful when accepting the Karaite documents, which for the most part are all forged” [44, p. 134]. The Majalis document is the name accepted in science for a small manuscript of historical content written in Hebrew. Its central plot is the message about the resettlement of Jews from the Middle East to the Crimea during the reign of the Persian king Cambyses in the 6th century B.C. After the publication of the document in 1845, a lively debate arose among Semitic scholars as to its authenticity. So, for example, D. Chwolson and S. Pinsker considered it to be the original, in contrast to A. Harkavy who called the source a fake, after which the document, which received a dubious reputation, was never introduced into scientific circulation [41, p. 93]. However, V. Vikhnovich and V. Lebedev established that some dates of postscripts in the manuscripts had been corrected by scribes long before their acquisition by Firkowicz. At the same time, according to researchers, it is not that all texts were falsified by the Karaite collector [57, p. 138–139]. Discussion about the authenticity of Firkowicz finds continues to this day.

As a result of modern studies of the Jewish necropolis in Tabana-dera on Mangup-Kale, 1008 tombstones were discovered and recorded with 228 tombstones provided with texts [23, p. 557]. The study of epitaphs made it possible to

determine the general chronology of the burial ground and the period of stay of the Jewish community on Mangup as from the 1440s to 1770s. At the same time, according to N. Kashovskaya who studied this monument for many years, the core of the Mangup community was made up of four or five families of Romaniot Jews, whose resettlement took place in the 1430–1440s from Byzantine Constantinople to the capital of the Principality of Theodoro. According to the expert, the Mangup community had active contacts inside the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate, which is recorded in the epitaphs of the gravestones of the cemetery. These connections can also be traced through a variety of architectural forms and types of tombstones [24, p. 255].

On Mangup-Kale, the Karaite community could appear after 1453, or shortly before that, and consisted of Greek-speaking Karaites-Romaniots, immigrants from Adrianople who had fled from the Byzantine Empire captured by the Ottoman Turks and fled from the policy of the *sürgün* pursued by Sultan Mohammed II the Conqueror, specifically, forced relocation of the population to the deserted Constantinople (Istanbul) after its capture in 1453 [27, p. 206]. According to A. Herzen, a small Jewish community arose here in the middle of the 15th century; its significant growth fell on the next century. In the second half of the 17th century the predominantly Karaite population remains in the city [19, p. 69–79]. According to the data of the defter of 1634 found in one of the Turkish archives (Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivi) and analyzed by A. Efimov, the lists of the Mangup *Kadylyk* indicated 76 Jewish families living in the Mangup fortress, while the Ottoman register of land holdings of the Southern Crimea of the 1680s kept in the National Library named after Saints Cyril and Methodius (Sofia, Bulgaria) (storage code D 737) lists the inhabitants of the Jewish community of the Mangup *Kadylyk Liva Kefe* [13, p. 144; 46, p. 85, 90, 92, 94, 98, 143]. (Fig. 4)

Chufut-Kale is a medieval “cave town”-fortress located in Bakhchisaray district 2.5 km to the east of Bakhchisaray. The plateau where the town is situated rises up to 540 m above sea level; total area of the monument is 38 ha. On three sides, the plateau is limited by rocky precipices. The hillfort can be divided into three parts that reflect various periods of its existence; specifically, Burunchak (Crimean Tatar for “nose” and “little cape”), *Staryi gorod* (Old Town), and *Novyi gorod* (New Town). The earliest sites of the hillfort date back to the 6th century; apparently, emergence of the fortress itself belongs to the same period. The town was first mentioned in literature sources in the end of the 13th century. A system of fortifications, such as, lines of defensive wall and towers and architectural monuments are among the most imposing fortification objects on the plateau. The latter include mausoleum (durbe) of the Khan Tokhtamysh daughter Nenekedzhan (Djanike Khanum) (14th century), Firkowicz estate, ruined remains of a mosque (14th century), baths, “Houses of Karaite Communities” (1897), houses of prayer for the Karaites (kenasses), and a complex of caves for dwelling and other needs and activities. The Josaphat Valley with the ancient Karaite cemetery is located in close proximity to Chufut-Kale.

In the 17th–18th centuries, the Karaites referred to their main settlement in Crimea as Kale (“town” or “fortress”) or used the long-standing name of the fortress Qırq Yer (the translation repeatedly appears in different sources as “Place of

Forty”)⁸. Firkowicz referred to the “cave town” as *Sela Yuhudim* (“Rock of the Jews”), whereas his followers named the fortress *Sela ha-Karaim* (“Rock of the Karaites” – this is exactly what the fortress is called in the Hebrew inscription on a marble slab dedicated to the visit of the city by Emperor Alexander III, now located at the entrance to the Big Kenasa of Chufut-Kale) (Fig. 5). (It is interesting that the toponym *Sela Yuhudim* was subsequently used in the preparation of some Karaite Marriage Contracts, *Shetarot*)⁹. In a number of both the pre-revolutionary and modern works of the Karaite authors, the fortress is called “Chufut Kale” or “Juft Kale” (“Double” or “Paired fortress”). Without further delving into the origin of this name, it should be noted that the majority of researchers regard this term as pseudohistorical and its usage as an attempt to elude the Jewish context.

The Karaite community of Qırq Yer (Chufut-Kale) was the largest in the Crimean Khanate. From the 13th century the fortress is known from the sources as Qırq Yer (Qırq Yer, Qırq Or, Kyrk-Or, Kerkri, Kirkir); both the origin and interpretation of this toponym are debatable. In the middle of the 14th century (between 1342 and 1357), after the capture of the city by the Tatars, the sources mention several ethno-confessional groups living on its territory, including the Muslim, Christian, Armenian, and Jewish communities. Due to transfer of the khan’s administration to the new capital Bakhchisaray, Qırq Yer largely lost its administrative significance during the 16th century, and particularly beginning the first half of the 17th century. The Karaites became the dominant group in the city in the late Middle Ages (in the 17th century); a significant influx of the Karaite population who arrived from Istanbul also belongs to the same period [51, p. 29]. A certain number of Crimean Rabbanite Jews who later became known as Krymchaks also lived in Chufut-Kale, as well as on Mangup-Kale [3, p. 35; 51, p. 29].

From the *yarliq* of Khan Selâmet I Girey (1608), it becomes known that persons from among the Muslims were appointed as the heads of the Chufut-Kale fortress and judges (*qadi*)¹⁰ [10, p. 66]. However, by the time of Evliya Çelebi’s trip (1666), there were no more Muslims left in the fortress. Its chief was appointed from among the Karaites, whom the Turkish traveler called Jews: “In the fortress, there are only one thousand five hundred and thirty comfortable Jewish houses tiled with masonry. And there are no Muslims. Even the head of the fortress, and the guards, and the sentinels, and the gatekeepers are all Jews” (at the same time, the number of houses on the Chufut-Kale plateau, that is, 1530, is clearly exaggerated by Çelebi) [8, p. 82].

The entire activity of representatives of the Chufut Kale Karaite community (primarily the trade) concentrated in Bakhchisaray. According to data available in the sources, for the Karaites, staying in the city overnight was prohibited by the khan’s administration; therefore, merchants and tradesmen walked down the “cave-town” plateau early in the morning to have time to sell their goods and return before onset of dusk. Thus, Çelebi reported that “all Jews-shopkeepers and wealthy Jewish merchants in Bakhchisaray of the Crimean country live in <...> Chufut-Kale and in the Mangup fortress. Every morning they walk down from this fortress; it takes them one hour to reach their shops in Bakhchisaray <...> all Jews inhabit

⁸ SARC. F. 241. Inv. 1. C. 501. Sh. 5–6 (reverse).

⁹ SARC. F. 241. Inv. 1. C. 269. Sh. 26.

¹⁰ RSHA. F. 853. Inv. 2. C. 104. Sh. 1, 2.

the upper fortress Chufut-Kale where all synagogues are also located <...> this fortress entirely lacks market, bazaar, shops, *postoyalni dvor* (inn), baths, gardens or vineyards, as well as water” [8, p. 82, 83, 113].

According to various data, erection of the Chufut-Kale kenasses is dated to the 14th–17th centuries (The Great *Sobornaya* (Cathedral) Kenasa) and the end of the 18th century (Small Kenasa) [20, p. 238]. Construction of the Great or Big Chufut-Kale Kenasa is dated to the end of the 14th century, while it is assumed to have been rebuilt by 1633. This thesis, however, is of arguable character. A number of researchers believe that the Big Kenasa has distinctive features of architecture of the later period. It appears to have been erected in the 17th century on the site of the earlier building [20, p. 239]. It has been suggested that the Chufut-Kale Small Kenasa (*Kodesh Evi*) likewise was built on the site of the remains of even the more ancient place of worship, while the time it was last rebuilt dates back to 1796. When about 1792 the Karaites abandoned Mangup and merged with the Karaite community of Chufut-Kale, they dismantled a building of the Mangup kenasa and erected a new house of prayer in Chufut-Kale using these building materials [47, p. 291]. The Small Kenasa appears unpretentious and less elaborate; besides, it is inferior to it in size and interior design.

A site occupied by a complex of the Karaite kenasses resembles a trapezoid with its north side continuing in the alignment with a street, which principal entrances to the kenasa are facing. In terms of architectural features of the complex pointed out by E. Krikun, V. Danilenko, A. Gertsen, Yu. Mogarichev, etc., the Big Kenasa of Chufut-Kale was erected using traditions of Byzantine architecture, including the arches, basilica (hall-type) style of prayer room with a saddleback roof, and round short columns with the simplified capitals lacking the Byzantine sumptuousness. Walls of the Big Kenasa are course-laid using worked stone and lime mortar; the north facade is covered with stucco. Lower section of the interior walls is paneled with wood. Kenasa design is based on a plan in rectangular form. Small windows of the south and west facades (three on each) are raised high above the floor level nearly reaching to the cornice of the building. In front of the principal entrance to the building near the easternmost arch, the remains of *mikvah* can be seen; it is a reservoir of carved stone with a drain hole, which was filled with water and served for ritual immersion of the parishioners. The Small Kenasa of Chufut-Kale follows in plan the shape of the Big Kenasa and appears as an extended V-roofed rectangle. Architectural solution of the building involves the same technique as in the Big Kenasa; that is, window apertures nearly identical in height and width, three on each façade. (Fig. 6)

By the end of the mid-19th century, majority of the residents left the Chufut-Kale causing its gradual decline. Premises of the Small Kenasa were subsequently used by Firkowicz to preserve his gathered collection of ancient manuscripts. Importantly, precise dating of construction of the kenasses is extremely difficult, since they have never been archeologically investigated.

Thus, the currently available written sources, as well as materials from the latest archaeological and epigraphic studies, allow us to assert that the appearance of the Karaites on the Crimean Peninsula dates back to the second half of the 13th century, when part of the representatives of the Karaite community, mainly from the Byzantine Empire, moved to this region. It is to this period that the first reliable evidence of the existence of Karaite communities on the Crimean peninsula be-

longs. And although some authors attribute the presence of certain groups of Karaites in the Crimea to the second half of the 12th century and even by the 9th century, these arguments are not supported by serious evidence. In the course of the settlement of the Karaites in the territory of Western Europe, the Crimean and Lithuanian-Polish Karaites soon turned into special ethnolinguistic groups.

After analyzing the presented set of sources, we can conclude that the Semitic (Jewish) version of the ethno-confessional affiliation of the Karaites is the most well-founded today, although this problem requires further study. The “Khazar” theory of their origin first put forward in 1846 by the Russian orientalist V. Grigoriev does not have enough supporting grounds and evidences and contradicts the available facts in many respects. The reaction of traditionally minded Karaite circles to the Turkicization of Karaite society in the 19th century was ambiguous. Some of them continued to defend the theory of the Jewish origin of the Karaites, others tried to combine the “Semitic” version and the “Khazarian”. It is characteristic that the “Khazar” theory was criticized even by the recognized Karaite scientists of the 19th century; although no tradition, linking the Karaites to the Khazars, existed before the emergence of this version.

Until the beginning of the 19th century the Karaites had been considered a part of the Jewish people, but subsequently a new ethnic identity was constructed by the Karaite secular and spiritual leaders, excluding the Jewish ethnic and religious components. The process of de-Judaization was initiated by the proponents of this theory in the late 19th – early 20th centuries among the Karaite intellectuals and the ideological elite to strengthen this thesis, which eventually led to the loss of Jewish-Karaite traditions and self-identification, to the replacement of the strict monotheism of Karaite Judaism with various pagan cults (for example, the cult of “sacred oaks”, the Turkic deity *Tengri*, etc.). Currently, individual national Karaite circles are conducting a persistent “re-turkicization” aimed at overcoming any, even minimal remnants of “Semitism” and Judaism in the modern, so-called “Karai” literary tradition. For these purposes, an artificially created term “Karai-Turks” is used. Any attempts to point to or explore elements of the Jewish heritage in the culture of the Karaites are considered by the “Karai” intellectuals as an insulting manifestation of deep ignorance, a relic of the Middle Ages, imperial times, and the Soviet past.

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КАРАИМЫ В ЭПОХУ УЛУСА ДЖУЧИ И В КРЫМСКОМ ХАНСТВЕ: К ВОПРОСУ О ВОЗНИКНОВЕНИИ КАРАИМСКИХ ОБЩИН НА КРЫМСКОМ ПОЛУОСТРОВЕ

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Резюме. Цель исследования: анализ и обобщение материалов по истории возникновения караимских общин на территории Крымского полуострова в эпоху существования Улуса Джучи и Крымского ханства.

Материалы исследования: в результате сопоставления опубликованных материалов по истории крымских караимов, данных археологических и эпиграфических исследований, а также в процессе изучения фондов Российского государственного исторического архива (РГИА, г. Санкт-Петербург) и Государственного архива Республики Крым (ГАРК, г. Симферополь) были проанализированы сведения, относящиеся к проблеме возникновения караимских общин на территории Крыма в эпоху Улуса Джучи и Крымского ханства.

Результаты и научная новизна: Многие эпизоды истории крымских караимов до сих пор остаются вне поля зрения исследователей. Существует и проблема интерпретации источников: в частности, это касается полемики о происхождении крымских караимов и о времени их появления на территории Крымского полуострова, которая длится уже более 100 лет, при этом довольно часто эта дискуссия выходит за рамки научной аргументации.

Этапы научного изучения прошлого крымских караимов характеризуются различной интенсивностью, отличаются применявшимися методиками и подходами. Впервые интерес к этой проблеме возник у представителей российских академических кругов в первой половине XIX в. Историей караимов российская администрация заинтересовалась еще и потому, что идеи европейского Просвещения, во многом определявшие политику российского правительства по ряду ключевых направлений, подразумевали распространение русской культуры и образованности среди «азиатских народов». По отношению к караимам, крымчакам и евреям-ашкеназам российское правительство принимало законы и постановления, в соответствии с которыми караимы смогли законодательно укрепить свой юридический статус. Им удалось добиться от властей признания их общностью, отличающейся от раббанитов, при этом они получили различные правовые и экономические преференции. К еврейскому населению российское правительство применяло ограничительные меры, проводя дискриминационную антиеврейскую политику. Тогда же началась широкомасштабная деятельность известного собирателя иудейских древностей А.С. Фирковича, положившего начало

созданию обширной коллекции рукописей, связанных с историей иудейских общин, в том числе, и Крымского полуострова.

На основании представленных материалов сделан вывод о том, что караимская община могла появиться в Крыму не ранее второй половины XIII в. Активное переселение караимов в Крым с территорий Ближнего Востока, Византии, а затем из Османской империи происходит, начиная с середины XIV в. К этим хронологическим периодам относятся и материальные свидетельства пребывания караимов в данном регионе (археологические и эпиграфические исследования средневекового Солхата, Мангуп-Кале и Чуфут-Кале).

Ключевые слова: иудейские общины, караимы, Улус Джучи, Крымское ханство, Солхат, Мангуп-Кале, Чуфут-Кале

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