

## LEWISH COMMUNITY OF MANGUP ACCORDING TO ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA

Until the creation of external fortification belt in Genoese Kafa (Feodosia) at the end of XIV century Mangoup was the largest in area (about 1 km<sup>2</sup>) fortified settlement in Crimea. It was situated on the top of the plateau at the height of about 600 m above sea level. Inaccessible steep slopes (height up to 70 m) form the most part of its contour. Natural defence and water sources existence attract people here since ancient times. Building of fortification constructions started at the early Medieval time. Prime of the settlement was in XIV-XV centuries, when it became the capital of Feodoro Principality, which occupied the most part of the South-western Crimea and had boundaries with the Genoueses and Tatars. Government of the Principality probably consisted of members of provincial aristocratic dynasty, which had ties of relationship with Paleologues, what confirmed by portrayal of double head eagles on the four of known epigraphic monuments (20<sup>th</sup> -50<sup>th</sup>, XV cent.). In 1475 the Principality was occupied by Turks-Osmans, the capital was captured after six month siege.

Following history of Mangoup (XVI-XVIII centuries) is bound up with Jewish community, inhabited this territory. In literature, usually, this community is determined as Karaites one.

Written sources on the Karaites community of Mangoup could be symbolically divided into two groups: the first one consists of travellers notes and juridical documents, dated to XVI-XVIII centuries; the second - chronographic additions on the margins of hand-written books, which are basically included into collection of A.S. Firkovich (stored at the State Public Library of Russia in Saint-Petersburg) and epigraphic monuments of Jewish cemetery at the Tabana-dere Canyon at Mangoup.

Selection of these two groups is explained by considerable contrast in texts chronology and its content.

Written sources of the first group give a view on development of community in XVI-XVIII centuries. The author of the first description of Crimea – Polish ambassador Martin Bronevskiy, who visited Mangoup in 1578, says about population of the town: “only one Greek and some Jews and Turks live there; everything else is in terrible oblivion”.

According to data of Turkish Defters (published by Jule Wainshtein), Jewish Community amounted 48 families in 1520, what was 28% of all population (approximately 670 persons, Christian and Muslim Communities); in 1542 - 35 families - 36% of all population (about 500 persons). In 1638 (according to A. Fisher) there were 76 houses of Jews, 41 Greek houses, and in 1649 - 68 Jewish houses and no Greek ones.

In the middle of XVII century, G. Boplan wrote about 60 Jewish houses.

It is specially underlined in comprehensive description of Mangoup, composed by Turkish traveller Evlia Chellebi (1666), that Jews here are of Karaites religion, not familiar with koshrut and Jewish language, speak Tatar. Other Jews don't like them. It is interesting, that he don't say about Karaites in relation to Chufut-Kale Jews. The basic occupation of Mangoup community was currying (skin processing), beginning from Evlia Chellebi all further travellers inform that. Probably remaining of stone tuns at the upper part of Tabana-dere canyon is connected with that manufacture. Soon after including Crimea into Russia, Jews left Mangoup,

settling down at Chufut-Kale, Bakhchisaray and Evpatoria. At the end of XVIII century settlers built the second synagogue at Chufut Kale, which decoration, according to the legend, was exported from Mangoup.

Before publication of preliminary results of A.S. Firkovich and D.A. Hvolson researches, there were opinions in scientific sphere and Crimean Karaites themselves that they appeared in the Crimea approximately at the same time that Tatars, came here from Persia and other oriental countries. Publication of epigraphic finds at Mangoup and Chufut Kale by Firkovich (Avne Zikkaron. Vilno, 1872), statements of D.A. Hvolson were targeted the considerable shift back of Karaites stay in Crimea, what caused stormy discussion, which have not finished yet.

Dealing with Mangoup, the following scheme appears according to Firkovich materials. In 805 khazars captured fortress Don (later Mangoup) from Goths, who oppressed local Jews.

About 840, khazars founded Mangoup, where khazars themselves and Jews from Tamatarka (Tmutarakan) settled down.

There are 72 epitaphs since 866 till 1777 shown in "Avne Zikkaron". Special report by Natalia Kashovskaya is dedicated to this group of monuments.

The beginning of the direct study of Jewish monuments of Mangoup is usually connected with the name of Peter Keppen, who inspected the cemetery in 1833 and examined gravestone with date 5034 (1274 A. D.). It is important to mention, that Keppen in footnote 43 (page 29), says that information was provided by Karaites gaham Mordehay Sultanskiy, who specially came to see monuments at Mangoup.

During the full swing of polemics between supporters and antagonists of A.S. Firkovich, F.A. Brown specialist in Scandinavian Studies started excavations at Mangoup, looking for the Goths traces. In 1890 he met here teachers from Feodosia Karaites School, excavating the Tabana-dere cemetery by order of Tauric and Odessa gaham Nangulov. By request of Nangulov, Brown examined some inscriptions by magnifier and witnessed that he didn't see a sign of falsification. He made paper prints from 7 inscriptions dated since 875 to 983 A. D., but he didn't guarantee their authenticity. That material were transferred to Asian Museum in Saint-Petersburg, and unfortunately not found till present.

Specialist in Byzantine studies Roman Leper held excavations at Mangoup in 1912-1914. He excavated some burials at the Jewish necropolis and found skeletons with deformed skulls and coins of V century. Unfortunately we are unable to determine the location of those excavations. By the way, Leper himself connected those burials not with Jews but with Goths or Alans. Characterising necropolis in general he mentioned that inscriptions on the gravestones "mostly of XV-XVII centuries, number of more older are low".

In that period stormy discussion on belonging the cemetery to Karaites or Rabbimates developed in press. Leper took part of Rabbimates. One of his arguments was result of synagogue excavations at the upper parts of canyon. Here Leper found a stone gutter, which he connected with the existence of Mikva. Unfortunately, excavations of synagogue were not finished because of the broken World War.

Archaeological excavations of Jewish monuments started again only in 1985 by expedition of Simferopol State University. At that time marking-out of necropolis territory for the future topographical survey was carried out. Since 1990 excavations were held systematically. Group from Jewish studies institute from Saint-Petersburg under leadership of N. Kashovskaya took part in it, they held epigraphic surveys. Archaeological excavations at its territory were held in 1985-86, and than resumed in 1991 with participation of O. Belyi, scien-

tist from Bakhchisaray museum. This work continues at present time. Now we can make only some preliminary conclusions.

It is necessary to describe periodic history of Mangoup first of all, based on the many years of excavations and written sources.

1. Prefortress period: (middle III - middle VI centuries), upper parts of canyons were mostly explored. Population - mostly Goths and Alans, among whom Christianity was spreading.
2. Early-Byzantine fortress period (VI - VIII centuries). Creation of powerful defensive system, building of big Basilica.
3. Khazar period (end of VIII - first half of IX century) Short capture of the fortress by khazars, which didn't reflect much material culture of population.
4. Thema period (middle IX - X centuries). Fortress was back under Byzantine power.
5. Desolation period (XI-XIII centuries).
6. Earlier Feodoro period (XIV century). City buildings appeared on the plateau, citadel was built on Teshkli-burun cape; at the end of the century city is devastated by Tamerlan's (Timur) army.
7. Later Feodoro period (1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of XV century). Renaissance of the Feodoro Principality capital, construction of the palace and the second defensive line, reconstruction of Basilica and citadel.
8. Turkish period, (end XV - 70<sup>th</sup> years of XVIII century). After the capture by Turks, the city gradually falls into neglect and fully left by residents at the beginning of the 90<sup>th</sup> years of XVIII century.

I mentioned in my report at the previous XI<sup>th</sup> congress, that according to results of excavations by Ural archaeologists, Jewish blocks, occupied territory around the ruins of Big Basilica, functioned in XVI - XVIII centuries. As to necropolis, the mostly earlier gravestones, not arising doubts on authenticity of their dates, dated back to the end of XIV - middle XV centuries (gravestone of Evfrosinya) near the defensive wall, built across the canyon in Turkish period in 1503.

Archaeological profile of the western slope in the central part of the canyon is examined by the excavations of 80-90<sup>th</sup>. Near the excavation site there were gravestones with dates 1026, with the name Mordehy son of Jacob, 1008, 998, 1632, the last is missing in "Avne Zikkaron" (reading of the inscriptions and date determination by Alexander Hasroev, scientist from Leningrad Department of Oriental Studies Institute). The low edge of site reached thalweg, soil here is much swamped because of the spring, which begins at the upper part of the canyon. Long stone rows among which ran-wild fruit-trees grow are easily noticeable.

The upper layer - humus of black colour, formed from the alluvium of the spring after the cemetery was neglected.

The second layer - dark-grey loam, width 0,2-0,4-m. From its surface level cemetery graves were dug. Stone ruins of terrace, traced at all the area of excavations, are connected with this layer. Material of XIV-XV centuries, i.e. Feodoro Principality period, dominates in this layer.

The third layer with width 0,2-0,9 m - loam of yellow colour. Cemetery graves are located in this layer, inculcated the lower part of terrace ruins. Material in the layer is similar to the previous. Up to 3 local layers (layers 5-6) traced at separate sections of excavations site, containing very fragmented material dated to IX-X centuries and earlier period.

At the examined burials corpse lay on back, arms usually lay on a pelvis bone or under it. Legs are stretched, sometimes brought together in shins and feet. Deceased were buried in a

wooden coffin, what is shown by finding of forged iron nails.

Funeral inventory connected with the clothes, deceased were buried in, and also with the jewellery used when alive. These are: golden threads from belt embroidery, bronze finger-rings, coloured glass beads, bone-made buttons. The inventory in general is rather poor.

Situation at the excavation site could be interpreted the next way. On the slopes of the canyon, probably, already in IX-X centuries works on terrace building started. In XIV-XV centuries new terrace horizon was created, using stones from the constructions of earlier periods. Most likely, territory of gardens of principality capital residents was organised with that terrace. There is indication on that in low used source - description of Mangoup in lyrics, created by monk Matthew about 1395. It says about beautiful gardens within the city boundaries, which irrigated by the water running downwards. This picture is mostly correspondent to the situation traced by the excavations in Tabana-dere.

Only after terrace functioning termination and beginning of their destruction process, burials appeared here, its graves were mostly made taking in account, artificially formed landscape, i.e. using the ground sections limited by stone ruins and in the ruins themselves. Thus, period of functioning of cemetery section containing gravestone with-epitaphs from X till XVII centuries is determined as the end of XV - XVIII centuries according to the archaeological data.

The second archaeological topic, connected with the history of Jewish community of Mangoup is the issue on Mikva near the synagogue.

Excavations of current 1997 year recovered sections excavated by Leper and stone gutter found mentioned in his notes. However, its purpose was rainwater collection from the synagogue yard.

We have much more foundation to identify as Mikva artificial cave construction 25 m South-west from synagogue, which presents, chamber in rock with a basin in the bottom, with an trap-entrance (a corner view in plan) and stairs. There is no analogue for this construction among big number of monuments of rock architecture in Crimea.

But niche in front of the entrance with steppes in the corner is similar, to the one I saw in Sefhoris. And in general, there is analogue to Mangoup complex in Wormse (Germany) - Mikva, but deeper one, near synagogue of XI century.

Preliminary results of study, held in July of this year give foundation to guess, that synagogue has at least two function periods: XIV-XV centuries, i.e. Feodoro Principality period and later - XVI-XVIII centuries. Probably, appearance of Mikva could be synchronised with the first period.

Of course, our study is now only in beginning phase. We cannot exclude probability of detection of earlier traces of synagogue construction remaining and corresponding burials at necropolis, which total square reaches 4 hectors. Issue on confession differentiation of Mangoup Jewish community is still opened. However, solution of this and other issues is hardly possible only by archaeological means. Only co-ordinated forces of scientists of different specialities will solve the problem, which historian S. Dubnov in the title of his article, dedicated to the monuments of Mangoup, published in 1914 in magazine "Jewish Antiquity", determined as "Historical Mystery of Crimea".