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ОБЗОРЫ

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “THE CRIMEA — CROSSROADS OF CIVILIZATIONS: HISTORY, LITERATURE AND CULTURAL INTERACTION OF CRIMEAN PEOPLES”

МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ «КРЫМ — ПЕРЕКРЕСТОК ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИЙ: ИСТОРИЯ, ЛИТЕРАТУРА И ВЗАИМОВЛИЯНИЕ КУЛЬТУР КРЫМСКИХ НАРОДОВ»

On 14th–16th June 2016, St Petersburg State University and the State Hermitage held an International conference entitled “The Crimea — Crossroads of Civilizations: History, Literature and Cultural Interaction of the Crimean Peoples”. The organizers of this scholarly symposium were the Department of the Jewish Culture at the Institute of Philosophy, St Petersburg State University, and Ariel University, Israel Heritage Department (Israel) under the auspices of the Department of Classical Antiquity and the Oriental Department, State Hermitage.

In the heat of the first summer month, scholars from scientific centres of Russia, Israel, Hungary, the USA and Uzbekistan gathered in the Northern capital to discuss the issues related to the culture of the Crimean Peninsula, the interaction and mutual influence of the Crimean peoples in various historical periods from the ancient times to this day. The working languages were Russian and English.

The Conference brought together scholars from research institutes, universities, museums, and foundations. *Sergej I. Dudnik*, Director of the Institute of Philosophy of St Petersburg State University, in his welcoming address to the audience noted the topicality of the subject-matter to be discussed at the symposium, emphasized the significance of holding meetings that are capable of bringing scholars together to confer about the complicated matters at the confluence of different disciplines: history, ethnology, cultural studies, sociology, literature studies and others. Professor S. I. Dudnik expressed his hope that such research will enable scholars to speak about the philosophy of Crimea. *Igor R. Tantlevskij*, Head of the Department of Jewish Culture of St Petersburg State University, spoke about the conception, subject and tasks of the Conference. He presented the Department of Jewish Culture to the participants of the



Opening ceremony at the plenary Session of the Conference; right to left: S. I. Dudnik, I. R. Tantlevskij, A. Bligh. Institute of Philosophy of St Petersburg State University (14 June 2016)

Conference, spoke about the collections of Jewish manuscripts and books held in the libraries and archives of St Petersburg, about the studies of the Jewish heritage conducted by St Petersburg scholars, including the research into the history of the Crimean Jewish communities. In his report “The Crimean Jewish Manuscripts from St Petersburg’s manuscript holdings”, I. R. Tantlevskij largely concentrated on the Crimean manuscripts from A. S. Firkovich’s collection. At the end of the plenary meeting, *Alexander Bligh*, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Ariel University, Israel, addressed the audience with a complimentary speech. Professor A. Bligh, who represented the co-organizer of the event, expressed his gratitude to the hosting university for their hospitality offered to the guests, participants of the Conference, and wished them every success in their work at the symposium on Crimea studies.

The first Session of the Conference entitled “The Peoples of the Crimea in Modern Times”, moderated by Mikhail B. Kizilov, was devoted to the topical issues of the Crimea. Four reports were made: “The Crimea as a focal point of radical Islam Movements Operating from Central Asia and the Middle East” by *Alexander Bligh* (Ariel, Israel); “Current State of the Jewish Communities of the Crimea (based on the results of the expedition of the Foundation for Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education and Science (NGO)” by *Mikhail I. Chernov* (Moscow, Russia); “From ‘Disfranchised Exploiters’ to Farmers with the Assistance of the Agro-Joint” by *Michael Beizer* (Jerusalem, Israel) and “The Letters of the Crimean Jews and Karaites in 1941–1944” by *Leonid A. Terushkin* (Moscow, Russia).

The second Session entitled “The Life, Cultural and Social Relations between Jewish Communities of Crimea” (chair — Zsuzsanna Olach) presented three

reports made by the Israeli colleagues. The sitting was opened by *Reuven Enoch* (Ariel), who made a report “The Traces of Crimea in Scholarly Works Produced in Gagra”. *Arie Yariv* contributed to the discussion with a report “The Karaites in Lithuania and their relations with the Karaites in Crimea”. The final report was made by *Shalem Yahalom* (Ariel) on the topic entitled “The Early evidence for Jews that are not committed to the Babylonian Talmud in Crimea and in Eastern Europe”.

On the second day of the Conference, 15th June, the sittings were held in the Council Hall at the State Hermitage. The two morning sittings — Sessions 3 and 4 — were united under a single title “At the Junction of Eastern and Western Cultures: The Ancient Crimea” (parts I and II). Session 3 (chair — *Yury A. Vinogradov*) presented three reports: *Aleksandr M. Butyagin* (St Petersburg, Russia) made a report entitled “The Bosphorus from the Sixth to the First Centuries BCE as a Contact Area: Cross-Cultural Communication”, in which he demonstrated that the interaction between the Greeks and peoples of the Crimea and the Kuban had been different in different spheres and varied in their intensity in the course of time. The next two reports were devoted to the history of contacts between Ancient Greek poleis and Northern Black Sea Region in the Antiquity, and the “topography” of the Crimea on the mental map the Hellenes had formed: “*TA KAIMATA*, or ‘The Rejected Paradise’: The Southern Coast of the Crimea and the Ancient Greek Colonization” by *Igor E. Surikov* (Moscow, Russia) and “The Crimea as the Limit of Civilization: Ancient Legends about Tauris as the Hereafter” by *Aleksander A. Sinitsyn* (St Petersburg, Russia).

Session 4 entitled “At the Junction of Eastern and Western Cultures: The Ancient Crimea—II”, moderated by *Aleksandr M. Butyagin*, presented four and reports about matters of archeology and art. The first two reports were devoted to ancient crypts in the territory of the Eastern Crimea. *Yury A. Vinogradov*, an archeologist from St Petersburg, made a report entitled “The Sorak Chamber Grave in Kerch: On the Understanding of the Semantics of Frescoes”. *Vladimir A. Khshanovsky* (St Petersburg, Russia) made a report under the title of “The Elite Chamber Grave in the Necropoli of the Small Bosphoran Towns (on the materials of the Excavations of Ilurat and Kiteus)”, where he summed up many years of his archeological experience gained during the expeditions in the eastern Crimea. *Natalia V. Kashovskaya* (St Petersburg, Russia) presented a paper on “Jewish Tombs and the Inscriptions of the Archeological Monuments of Vyshesteblievskaya-11”. Another report was given by *Evgeniya G. Zastrozhnova (Pankratova)* (St Petersburg, Russia): “Jewish Gravestones from the Archeological Excavations of the Towns of the Cimmerian Bosphorus in the 19th Century”. Each of the reports made at this Session was richly illustrated.

Session 5 under the title “The Study of the Crimean Jewish Communities: New Materials” (chair — *Alfred Hershi Eidlisz*) discussed the recent discoveries of the history of Jews in the Crimea during the Middle Ages and the early Modern times. Three reports were made: “Museum Collections as a Source of Information on the History and Ethnography of Crimean Jewry” by *Mikhail B. Kizilov* (Simferopol/Moscow, Russia); “The Jewish Solkhat (Crimea): Archeo-



Session *At the Junction of Eastern and Western Cultures: The Ancient Crimea*;
left to right: Yu. A. Vinogradov, G. Akhiezer, M. G. Kramarovsky,
Council Hall at the State Hermitage (15 June 2016)

logical Materials” by *Mark G. Kramarovsky* (St Petersburg, Russia) and the report made by *Golda Akhiezer* (Ariel/Jerusalem, Israel) “The Jewish Solkhat: the Manuscripts from the Golden Horde Period and until the Russian Annexation of the Crimea”.

The meeting of Session 6 “Jewish Texts, Responses and Religious Law in the Crimea” (chair — Helena Rimon) completed the work of the second day of the Conference. This Session presented three reports within the same religious and historical topics: “The Chufut Kale and Yevpatoria Siddurim (Prayer Books). Compared to the Venice 1528 Siddur and later Siddurim” by *Alfred Hershi Eidlisz* (New York, USA); “Life and Society of the Crimean Jewry as Recorded in Rabbi Hayim Hizkiyah Medini’s *Halakhic* Books” by *Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky* (Ariel, Israel); and “Turkic Bible Translations in the Crimea” by *Zsuzsanna Olach* (Szeged, Hungary).

Following the end of the evening Session on the second day of the Conference at the Hermitage, the participants went on an escorted tour “The Crimean City from the Thirteenth to the Fourteenth Centuries”, conducted by Mark G. Kramarovsky, a leading senior researcher in the Oriental Department of the Hermitage. During the two hours’ tour he showed the participants of the Conference numerous artifacts from the Medieval Crimea which testified that this peninsula had enjoyed a high level of culture; he told them about the results of the recent archeological research in the Eastern Crimea. All the participants showed a genuine interest in the subject.

On 16th June, the Conference continued with the meeting at the Institute of Philosophy at St Petersburg State University on Mendeleevsky Line. At Session 7 devoted to the “The Crimea in Literature and Art” (chair — Reuven Enoch)



The meeting of Session *The Study of the Crimean Jewish Communities: New Materials*, Council Hall at the State Hermitage (15 June 2016)

the three reports were united under one topic, that of the subjects in contemporary literature and fragments of biographies of writers related to the Crimea: “The Return Forward: Orientalism and Intertextuality in the ‘Crimean Sonnets’ by Shaul Tchernichovsky”, by *Helena Rimon* (Ariel, Israel); “Eupatoria Pages in the Biography of the American writer Ayn Rand — Alice Rosenbaum (Based on the Documents from the State archives of the Republic of the Crimea and St Petersburg)” by *Ludmila L. Nikiforova* (Simferopol, Russia); “The Crimean Theme in Uzbek Literature” by *Gulnoz Yu. Sattorova* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan).

Session 8 entitled “New Archival Materials and Collections” (chair — Golda Akhiezer) presented three reports: “The little-known Materials on the History of the Crimean Karaite Communities (Survey of the Collections of the State Archives of the Crimea)” by *Dmitri A. Prokhorov* (Simferopol, Russia); “In Quest of the Lost Collection: Squeezed Copies of the Medieval Jewish Tomb Inscriptions from Mangup (the Crimea) Cemetery Made by Abram Gidalevich (the Collections of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of Russian Academy of Sciences)” by *Natalia V. Kashovskaya* (St Petersburg, Russia), and “The Collection of Marriage Contracts (*shetarot*) in the State and Private Crimean Museums” by Vyacheslav A. Elyashevich (Simferopol/Moscow, Russia).

The final Session 9 of the conference entitled “Traditions, Self-identification and Interethnic Relations”, monitored by Aleksandr A. Sinitsyn, was devoted to the historical past and the topical present of the interethnic relations in the Crimea. Three reports were made: “On the Experience of Regulation of Ethno-Confessional Relations in Medieval Kaffa (14th–15th Centuries)” by *Lusine Gushchian* (St Petersburg, Russia); she also made another report on “The Tradition of Coffee-drinking of the Crimean Peoples (the 19th–20th Centuries)”, an outgrowth of the exhibi-

tion devoted to the peoples of the Crimea at the Russian Ethnographic Museum of St Petersburg, one of whose authors was Lusine Gushchian. The report made by *Yury M. Plyusnin* (Moscow, Russia) “The Karaite of the Crimea: preliminary field studies of self-identification” closed the work of the final meeting.

The finale in the work of the Conference in the evening of the 16th June was another tour that invited all the participants of the Conference to the Department of Rare Books at the Russian National Library.

Closing the Conference, Professor Igor R. Tantlevskij noted that the “Crimean Issue” had become a highly sensitive matter, hyper-topical in terms of politics, yet the organizers of that symposium had initially proceeded from the fact that the Crimea was topical in terms of academic research: ethnological and ecological, historical and archeological, philological and cultural. Golda Akhiezer, Aleksandr Sinitsyn and other participants also made final speeches. Summing up the work of the conference, the participants acknowledged the quality of academic performance and the high level of organization of the event; the fruitfulness of all Session meetings was self-evident since all the reports were followed by long and heated discussions. Many participants noted that the Conference had been very useful for the development of contacts between the researchers from different countries and different fields of academic leaning, for all those who are concerned about the past and present of the Crimea.

The working atmosphere of the Conference was enhanced by the creative, lively, spirit of the Black Sea Region, of the Crimea, which reigned supreme throughout the three days in the Hall at the Institute of Philosophy and in the Council Hall of the Hermitage. The design of the program brochures and the badges for the participants also contributed to this — they bore the image of quiet maritime, Crimean subjects from I. K. Aivazovsky’s canvases.

The event demonstrated yet another time that the Crimea has always been and still remains an intersection of historical paths of many cultures, an intersection of different traditions and meanings. The Crimean peninsula as a quintessence of cultural capacity and cultural memory is the Russian Crimea, the eternal Crimea, which was and will remain common for many peoples, which has become a common topic for all the participants of our Conference: The Crimea of historians and archeologists (both antiquity researchers and medievalists), philologists and art historians, ethnographers and museum researchers. In this sense, we have succeeded in feeling and demonstrating that the Crimea is ours, it is common, forever alluring and forever enigmatic, setting new problems which such symposiums enable us to discuss, and after thinking them over together, we are likely to find solutions.

The organizers of the Conference are grateful to the Administrations of St. Petersburg State University, the State Hermitage and Ariel University for the support and active cooperation in the holding of our scholarly event¹.

Aleksandr A. Sinitsyn, *St. Petersburg State University;*
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¹ All photographs annexed to this report belong to A. A. Sinitsyn’s archives.

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כתב עת מדעי
ה תשע"ו



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