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THOUGHTS ON THE IMPORTANCE
AND RESPONSES OF THE INTERNATIONAL
KARAITE SYPOSIUM IN BILECIK



THE OPENING SPEECH AT THE SYMPOSIUM
AND THE VIEWS OF LIVING ELDERS OF KARAITES

The Symposium of International Karaite Studies, carried out between the 5th and 8th of April, 2010 with the sponsorship of the Bilecik University, was initially intended as an editorial book in the name of Abraham Firkovich and the Karaite Community, but taking into account the emerging great interest and participating it was transformed into a large-scale international symposium with the contribution and help of Prof. Dr. Azmi Özcan, Rector of the Bilecik University. The present paper consists of an overview of the proceedings of this symposium book¹.

The symposium, carried out in the campus of the Bilecik University with a perfect organisation and participation of national and religious leaders of the Karaite Community, distinguished representatives, scientific circles interested in the Karaite history, language, culture and civilisation, has taken place in the history as the greatest event related with the activities of Karaites. The wish to organize such events on a regular base was expressed as a common will in the final evaluation of the symposium. The organizers of this symposium, at present, at the University of Vilnius, have been realising this expectation expressed in the Bilecik symposium. In this regard, I have to celebrate them.

The origin of the Karaite community, its historical adventure, cultural heritage and current status were discussed at the symposium. In the present paper, I will analyze the papers in the symposium book classified into five chapters according to the subjects, each consisting of more than ten papers. Before I begin to overview the papers, I find it convenient to mention as an introduction the distinguished historian Prof. Dr. İlber Ortaylı who made the opening speech, and the views of two major living Karaite leaders. I will give place first to the views of Mihail Öorme, the head of the Istanbul Karaites, and secondly to the Reverend Markas Lavrinovichius, the head and grand hazan of the Lithuanian Karaites. Finally, I will analyze the proceedings in five sections.

¹ Proceedings of the Symposium were published by the Bilecik University. See Uluslararası Karay Çalışmaları Sempozyumu. International Symposium on the Karaite Studies. Editörler M. Alpargu, Y. Öztürk, B. Çelik. Bilecik, 2011.

Since even mentioning the names of around sixty papers would create a significant burden, my analysis will be concise.

The opening speech at the syposium was made by the distinguished historian Prof. Dr. İ. Ortaylı. With his broad knowledge of history, İ. Ortaylı summarized the main lines of the history, culture and civilization of the Karaites. İ. Ortaylı addressed the Karaites as a Turkish community embraced Torah, such as the Muslim Oguz tribes of Anatolia and the Christian Gagauzes of the Norhern Black Sea. İ. Ortaylı emphasized the consciousness of the Turkish Republic to lay claim to these communities as an important cultural understanding, albeit late².

The speech of M. Öorme, the leader of Turkish Karaites, was planned to be presented as a closing speech, but we failed to include it to the introduction of our book because of the shortage of time. M. Öorme makes a general assessment of the importance of the symposium; furthermore, he gives evaluations of the historical importance on the place of Turkish Karaites in the world. The assessment of dear M. Öorme is a basic reference about how the Karaite people identify and feel themselves. Here are some parts of M. Öorme's speech:

“I welcome all of you with love and respect such as in my first day's speech. On that day, I could not see that the subjects at the syposium will be discussed in such a way of sincerity and devotion, and I could meet such a kind of erudite and favorable academicians. Now, I have a difficulty in expressing my humble admiration. I do not know because I'm not a member of the University, but probably the most important issue of the closing phase is to conclude how much is reached of the objectives of the symposium. Every thing was excellent for me. Subjects, organisation, attendants... Everything was glorious. According to these criterias, the symposium has reached its main objectives...”

“However, taking refuge in your tolerance, I ought to mention a subject. The intents of some speakers to include all the Karaites over the world into the syposium made an impression on me that a concept confusion was tried to be made at the syposium which I believe has a mission to make a large range of scientific research on the Turkish Karaites and to identify its problems partly. To be sure, there are some highly populated ethnic groups that accepted the Karaim religion in Israel, the United States and elsewhere in the world. To me, their current position, their past and future are beyond the scope of this symposium. Please do not consider it as a divisive or, worse, a racist approach. They are, too, our brothers in religion, but are not of Turkish origin, and certainly do not feel in such a way themselves. Therefore, it was unnecessary for them to be the subject of this symposium. As a matter of fact, would our universities be interested in this subject

² Ibid., s. 7–12.

if the Karaites living still in Turkey, Lithuania, Poland and the Crimean Peninsula were not of Turkish origin?

Even if it is expressed somewhat late, i.e. in closing, it is necessary to be impartial and to agree, first, that the subject discussed here, the research made here are only culture, scientists, past and future of the Turkish-originated Karaites. If there are friends from abroad who do not think so and look at the event only from the religious point, I again request them to view the subject with a realistic eye only in terms of the scope of this symposium. As a result, in spite of differences of opinions and the electrified air from time to time, everything was very good. Finally, I want to say before I finish: I request my dear teachers to call me when they desire to reach me. I would have a honor and pleasure to keep in touch with them, to exchange ideas, and also would like them to know that every kind of documents in our possession are ready at their command to serve the intention of their research. It is one of our primary missions as a community. Thank you...Your respectful friend with the hope to meet you again..."³.

The speech of dear M. Örmecioğlu is enlightening for the Karaites of the world as well as the Turkish scientific circles. As is known, the Karaites are generally considered as part of the Jewish community. Let's confess that there is not any regular information on the topic within the Turkish scientific community, either.

As noted, another important guest of the symposium was Markas Lavrinovichius, the head of the Lithuanian Karaites. M. Lavrinovichius took place in the symposium with a special paper and spoke of his own findings and views on the structure of the Karaite language. This announcement took place in the proceedings book⁴. The issues we want to mention here are the views put forward by M. Lavrinovichius on every occasion during the symposium. This important person followed every announcement carefully and stated valuable opinions with the dynamism and enthusiasm more than younger generations. Unfortunately, we have learnt recently that he passed away.

It was very exciting for us, the Turkish academicians, to witness that the head of Lithuanian Karaites and the Turkish Karaites share the same thoughts. M. Lavrinovichius put forward those thoughts of him at the opening phase of his announcement:

"I came here to salute you by looking at your eyes and to bring you the favor word of our Karaite nation of Lithuania, the place of the Turkish nation in the furthest north of Europe.

It is a great honor for me to say a few words in the Karaite language in your presence. Thank you with all my soul for inviting me to this meeting.

Karaites settled in Lithuania by migrating from the Crimea more than 600 years ago. In addition, even though they lived in a foreign country since the times immemorial,

³ Ibid., s. 1–5.

⁴ See below.

they did not lose their religion, traditions and the native language. They protect and maintain them just like a flag. Our ancestors found a new home in Lithuania. Lithuania became a new homeland for Karaites; they became adhered to the law of the Lithuanian State. The Lithuanian Karaites took place among the most respected and honored dignitaries; this lasted up to date. There are still Karaites among the civil servants and ambassadors of the Lithuanian State.

We have a small number of Karaites in Lithuania, about several hundreds (but there are different numbers), but the number of all the Turkish nations is very high. However, we are all brothers of the same blood. Our religions are different, but it was the choice of our ancestors in ancient times, we inherited it, we know it as our value”⁵.

Now, we leave the M. Lavrinovichius’ announcement and go through to overview the papers in the proceedings book.

ANALYSIS OF THE PARTS OF THE PROCEEDINGS BOOK

PRESENTATIONS ON THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE KARAITES

There are presentations related to the origin of the Karaites in the first part of the book. N. V. Kachanov views the reasons for relocation of the first Khazar capital from the Caucasus to the shores of Volga in his presentation about the country and the religious center of the Khazars. N. V. Kachanov alleges that the transportation of the capital was based on the religious reasons. N. V. Kachanov acts based on the knowledge that the salt was sacred in the Khazar religion. He thinks that because the most efficient salt sources were in the valley of the Volga river, the place was sacred for the Khazars and became effected in the relocation of the capital there⁶. N. V. Kachanov in his second paper focuses on the geographical center of the Khazars. The boundaries of the first Khazarian capital, a highly controversial subject, are evaluated in the framework of the Khazarian sources⁷.

Another presentation of the origin and first cultural formations belongs to Osman Karatay and is about the history of the conversion of Khazars into Judaism. First of all, I would like to emphasize that O. Karatay is one of the limited number of academicians interested in the Khazarian history and the civilisation in Turkey. O. Karatay summarizes, first, the researches of O. Pritsak and P. B. Golden on the conversion of the Khazars into Judaism, which is a controversial subject, then he evaluates the claims of C. Zuckerman

⁵ Uluslararası Karay Çalışmaları Sempozyumu. International Symposium on the Karaites Studies. Editörler M. Alpargu, Y. Öztürk, B. Çelik. Bilecik, 2011, s. 627–638.

⁶ For the text of paper in question, see *ibid.*, s. 13–23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, s. 23–41.

who leaves marks upon the subject. O. Karatay makes a wide-scale literature analysis in this context⁸.

Another presentation that could be evaluated in the same category belongs to Mehmet Tütüncü. The subject of M. Tütüncü's presentation is the co-occurrence of Turks and Jews in the history. M. Tütüncü, who points out how the Jewish, Arab, Christian and Buddhist missionaries competed among themselves, states that the main masses of Turks generating the Khazars had experienced Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism before accepting Islam. M. Tütüncü emphasizes that the Karaites are the key factor in the conversion of Khazars into Judaism⁹.

Not included in the symposium, but considered to be beneficial in terms of the symposium, the article of Y. D. Kokizov on the short history of the Turkish Karaites was translated by Mustafa Işık into Turkish and put into the proceedings book in this form. Y. D. Kokizov gives important information about the national origin, culture, and civilization of the Karaites. It is among the most important findings that the Karaites were the oldest Turkish community reaching to the Crimean Peninsula¹⁰.

Another presentation on the cultural heritage belongs to Erdoğan Altınkaynak. E. Altınkaynak takes into account the wrongnesses of the term and concept used about the Crimean Karaites, and puts forward his own findings. He draws attention to the fact that the appellation of the Karaites under the name of Jewish Karaites is one of the most important mistakes. It should be remembered that this finding of E. Altınkaynak was pointed out as important by dear M. Örme and M. Lavrinovichius. E. Altınkaynak has stated the necessity to make a distinction between Jewishness and to believe in the religion of Moses. Another argument of E. Altınkaynak is that the Karaite belief is a synthesis of the main principles Moses determined as the ten commands and the ancient Turkish belief in the God of Sky¹¹.

One of the most important and valuable aspects of Orhan Türkdöğän, a doyen academician of Turkish sociology, is his examination of the historical events in the sociological aspect. O. Türkdöğän evaluated in his presentation the Karaman and Hazar Turks, especially the views of the prominent researchers such as Gyula Nemeth, L. N. Gumilev, M. I. Artamonov, D. M. Dunlop, P. B. Golden, K. A. Brook, C. Zuckerman, A. Zajaczkowski and Arthur Koestler in the socio-cultural perspective¹².

The last paper in this division is my own, which presents the current statement. In the paper, in the etymological approach is overviewed the historical course of the

⁸ Ibid., s. 59–93.

⁹ For the text of M. Tütüncü, see *ibid.*, s. 41–59.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, s. 869–882.

¹¹ For the text of E. Altınkaynak, see *ibid.*, s. 93–100.

¹² For the text of O. Türkdöğän, see *ibid.*, s. 101–110.

terms of the Tavrida, Crimea, and Karaim. It is emphasized that the Crimean Peninsula, known as Tavriya, Tourhiya in the ancient sources, is a place Turks lived since the Skytians; then, attention is called to the diffusion of the Crimean name after Khazars. By virtue of the absence of an alliance with the name of the Crimea, the thesis that the Karaims might have given their name to the peninsula is elaborated¹³.

*PROCEEDINGS ON THE LATE MIDDLE AGE AND THE EARLY MODERN AGE
OF THE KARAITES*

This is the part in which the presentations are closest to the concept of the current symposium, especially papers on the Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Crimea and Ottoman Karaites. I will overview these papers in brief.

Yuri Kochubey from Ukraine is among the academicians who are in the most active co-operation with the Turkish academicians. He always participates in the symposiums in Turkey and contributes to the activities of Turcology in Ukraine. Y. Kochubey deals with the question of when the Karaites reached Ukraine, and emphasizes that the Karaites of Haliych and Lutsk had common components of language, belief and culture since the fourteenth century¹⁴.

Mikhail Kizilov is one of the well-known researchers on the Karaites. Although he wanted to participate in the symposium, he could not take part in it but contributed with two valuable papers. In his paper on the physicians working in the service of the Kingdom of Poland, he deals with the high statute and role of the Karaite physicians Ezra Ben Nisan and Avraham Ben Yoshiyahu in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. M. Kizilov also interprets in a large context the both persons' studies on the history, culture, and thought, their impact on the development of Avraham Firkovich's idea of Karaites. In his second paper, M. Kizilov comments on the impacts of Karaism on the scientists of Eastern European Christianity in the Early Modern Age. In the paper in question, analyzed is the historical evolution of Karaism in Eastern Europe in relationship with Protestantism. M. Kizilov analyzes in a large perspective the affinity between Karaism and Protestantism unlike the opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism, and gives place to the mutual influences. The paper has also a qualification providing a significant contribution not only to the development of Karaism but also of Protestantism¹⁵.

Sabira Arık, one of the small number of young history researchers who knows Polish in Turkey, has taken place among the Eastern European-based historians. S. Arık, who

¹³ For the text of Y. Öztürk, see *ibid.*, s. 111–131.

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, s. 223–230.

¹⁵ For the text of M. Kizilov, see *ibid.*, s. 231–256; s. 257–284.

made her doctoral dissertation on the Turkish–Polish relations, in her paper about the Karaites living in Poland determines as the main point the historical course of Karaites in the Polish lands and analyzes their social status, consciousness of ethnical identities, their scientists and men of letters over these lands. Another presentation almost on the same subject is Arthur Konopacký's paper. A. Konopacký gives information about the history and cultural heritage of the Karaites living under the rule of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth since the fourteenth century¹⁶.

Oleksander Halenko, a fellow academician of Ukraine, has constantly been participating in the activities held in Turkey about the Eastern Europe and has been one of the bridges connecting Turkey to the World of North. O. Halenko is a researcher specialized in the Ottoman archival documents. He analyzes data on the Karaites, extracted from the tax registers of the Sancak of Caffa under the Ottoman rule in the sixteenth century¹⁷.

Vesile Tanınmış is a young researcher who made her graduate dissertation on the Ottoman Karaites and has been preparing her doctoral dissertation about the Ottoman Jews under my guidance. V. Tanınmış's long paper named "The Karaites Under Ottoman Rule" actually is an abstract of the data in her graduate dissertation, extracted from the Ottoman Archives. The paper of V. Tanınmış provides important information about the distribution of the Ottoman Karaites, their religious and cultural structure¹⁸.

Nuri Kavak is an important researcher of the Crimean history, who had his graduate and doctoral studies according to the Court Records of the Crimean Khanate, which are the primary source on the history and culture of the Crimean Khanate. N. Kavak emphasizes in his presentation that the population referred to as Jewish in the records is actually Karaite, and analyzes what role this population played in the social and economic structure of the Khanate according to the primary sources¹⁹.

Fehmi Yılmaz is also an academician who dedicated an important part of his studies to the investigation of the Crimean Court Records. In his paper named "The fortunes of the Crimean Karaits according to the inheritance records", F. Yılmaz deals with the fortunes of the Karaite-originated population observed in the Court Records, and analyzes the economic and social aspects of the theme²⁰.

Ahmet Turk, who focused his studies on the Crimean Khanate, is another Turkish academician specialised in the Court Records of the Khanate. In his paper related to

¹⁶ Ibid., s. 307–320.

¹⁷ Ibid., s. 32–336.

¹⁸ Ibid., s. 171–222.

¹⁹ Ibid., s. 337–350.

²⁰ Ibid., s. 351–376.

these records, A. Turk emphasizes that the population recorded in these records as Jews actually are Turkish Karaites. A. Turk claims that the Turkish names like Baba, Arslan, Sinan, Tohtar, Gökçe, and Canibek, besides the Jewish names, contain a sound evidence of the claim²¹.

Vyacheslav Baranov in his paper on the archeological excavations made in Chufut-Kale in 2003–2004 analyzes the data in question. V. Baranov emphasizes the conclusion that the Chufut-Kale, the oldest place of settlement of the Crimean Karaites, has not been studied enough yet²².

PROCEEDINGS ON THE KARAITE LEADERS MARKED IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Some of the papers presented at the symposium are related to the great leaders who had roles in making the Karaite identity. There are four papers in the part about Avraham Firkovich and Seraya Shapshal.

One of the important specialists of the Karaism of Turkey is Tülay Çulha. T. Çulha, in her paper “Avraham Ben Shemuel Firkovich (Acı Baba, Biliwli Uxuxan)”, analyzes the life story, religious concept, fight and scientific activities of A. Firkovich depending on the visual data²³.

Gerşom Qıprısçıs paper is about A. Firkovich's contribution to the investigations of the origin of the Eastern European Karaites. This paper is the most important presentation for me, containing the messages intended in the book. It is known that the documents invented by A. Firkovich have brought a new concept into the history of the Karaites. The thesis that the documents of Firkovich were produced artificially in an ethnical concern is a common argument, too. This argument that Albert Harkavy and his follower Dan Shapira strongly defend has been criticised and disproved in the paper in question. G. Qıprısçı claims that both persons accusing A. Firkovich of the forgery are depending on the ethno-religious prejudice. The research of G. Qıprısçı in favour of A. Firkovich is very important for us²⁴.

E. Altınkaynak's paper on Hacı Seraya Shapshal is the product of a biographical study. In this paper, the life story of A. Firkovich, the thought and literary features of his personage are analyzed. E. Altınkaynak observes that an adherence to the Turkish culture and civilisation reveals itself as a concept in all researches of S. Shapshal²⁵.

²¹ Ibid., s. 377–394.

²² Ibid., s. 143–171.

²³ Ibid., s. 395–406.

²⁴ Ibid., s. 407–422.

²⁵ For the text of E. Altınkaynak, see *ibid.*, s. 423–432.

Oleg Petrov Dubinski interprets in his paper the positive influences of S. Shapshal's travel on his carrier when he went to Iran for the purpose of teaching Russian to Muhammet Ali who was a heir to the throne of Iran. It is emphasized that the positive air S. Shapshal created over the Iranian political and scientific circles showed serious effects upon the rising of his carrier. S. Shapshal's Iran days, the places where he stayed, the circles he came into contact are given through visual materials²⁶.

*PROCEEDINGS ON THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES
OF THE KARAITES*

The papers in this part are about the political, cultural, commercial, economic, scientific, and artistic activities of the Karaites in the last two centuries. We will try to keep the paper abstracts at the shortest level.

The paper of Mikhail Semikin is about the institutional structure and activities of the Karaites of the Melitopol city; the paper of Natalia Katik focuses on the place of Karaites in the field of the tobacco industry²⁷.

The papers of Ali Ahmetbeyoğlu and Durmuş Arık are about the Istanbul Karaites. The first researcher, as we observed ourselves, conveys mostly the impressions of his interview with the leaders of the Istanbul Karaites. In this respect, he gives the newest information about the Istanbul Karaites. The second researcher interprets the historical adventures of the İstanbul Karaites and their situation in our times. The archival material has been used, too, in M. Tütüncü's paper²⁸.

Salih Yılmaz interprets the causes and consequences of the event of migration in his paper about the migration of Karaites to Israel. It is emphasized that the migration that had happened for the religious and economic reasons created the aftermath of the assimilation and conversion into Jewishness. Seyyar Suleymanov, a young researcher, shows in his paper the diffusion of Karaites in the contemporary world. He evaluates orderly the religious, cultural, social and demographic structures of the Karaite community living in Israel, Egypt, Istanbul, Azerbaijan, Russia, France, United States, Ukraine, Crimea, Poland, and Lithuania²⁹.

Valentin Kefeli, living in the United States, is an energetic academician who shoulders and gives every kind of support to the worldwide activities. V. Kefeli, who is of Crimean Karaites actually, interprets an institution of the Crimean Karaites. V. Kefeli emphasizes that the institution bearing the name of the International Institute of Crimean Karaites is the basic organisation carrying out every kind of activities on

²⁶ Ibid., s. 433–458.

²⁷ Ibid., s. 467–478.

²⁸ Ibid., s. 479–490; s. 419–510.

²⁹ Ibid., s. 131–143.

the Karaite community on the international arena since 2002. Y. Kochubey mentions the studies made in Ukraine on the Karaites. Taymaz Boris Semenovitch enterprets the Karaites living in Russia in the age of Soviet Russia and after according to their social circles through photographs and presents a lot of visual materials³⁰.

PROCEEDINGS ABOUT KARAITES LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, MUSIC, FOLKLORE, AND RELIGION

Twelve papers in this part are about the language, literature, music, folklore, and religion of the Karaites. Éva Á. Csató Johanson mentions the Karaite language courses held in Trakai in 2003–2010 according to the district, city and curriculums. Irina Driga, who is a Ukrainian Turcologist, presented a paper about the lyrics of Karaites. Semra Altukulaç gives information about the rise of Karaite literature, the literary genres, literary products, important Karaite authors in her paper on the Karaite literature. She analyzes the distinguished Lithuanian Karaite authors, poets, and thinkers such as S. Troki, M. Sultanski, M. Pilechki, J. Kaplanoski, Y. Malecki, S. Firkovich, S. Lopato, Z. Firkovich, M. Tinfovich³¹.

Timur Kocaoglu is among the most important academicians giving active support to the symposiums and studies related to the Eastern European Turkish culture and literature. The same active support was seen in the current symposium, too. T. Kocaoglu also presented a paper about the syntax, based on the works of Mykolas Firkovichius (1924–2000), the former grand Hazzan of Lithuanian Karaites. T. Kocaoglu focuses on the differences of M. Firkovichius' model of syntax from the other Karaite samples.

M. Lavrinovichius, the living spiritual leader of the Lithuanian Karaites, at the symposium also presented a paper. M. Lavrinovichius gave examples from the living structure of the Karaite language. The structural analyzes, selected and compared from the literary texts and poetry, will be a fine example of the living Karaite language.

Mustafa Şenel's paper is oriented to the analysis of social structure through language. M. Şenel, who analyzes the proverbs and idioms of Crimean Karaites from the view of nomadism, ascertains the basic characteristics of the nomadic culture in Karaites, which is one of the oldest Turkish communities³².

Fatih Şayhan in his paper on the transcription of the Turkish texts written with the Hebrew script enterprets the phonetic features of the Karaite Hebrew script and reveals his own proposals related to the transcriptions made with the new script. Ayşegül

³⁰ For the texts of V. Kefeli, Y. Kochubey and T. B. Semenovitch, see *ibid.*, s. 521–532; s. 533–538; s. 539–570.

³¹ For the papers of Éva Á. Csató Johanson, I. Driga and S. Altukulaç, see *ibid.*, s. 571–582; s. 583–602; s. 603–612.

³² For T. Kocaoglu, M. Lavrinovichius and M. Şenel, see *ibid.*, s. 613–666.

Aydın, in her paper about the Karaite tales, focuses on their formal structure. A. Aydın examines the formal structure through nine samples selected from the tales named “mecume”.

Iclal Köklü presented a paper on the traces of social life in the folk tales through an example of Karaite Aşık Garip. I. Köklü analyzes the manifestations of social life observed over the fields such as marriage, birth, death, and family life. She also searches for traces of the components of the material culture over the fields in question.

The paper of Natalya Budnik is also about the Karaite tales. N. Budnik interprets the introduction forms of the Crimean Karaite folk tales and finds that they contain very old mythological motifs. She accentuates these motifs as an overall theme³³.

The composer Avraham Kefeli presented a long paper about the relationship among music, composer, and folklore. Upon interpreting the main problems of contemporary music and folklore in general, he analyzes the contemporary Karaite music in its relation to folklore.

Oksana Tyshchenko-Monastyrskā's paper is also about the relationship between music and the environment. Indicating that there is a strong influence of Oguz on the Karaite music, O. Tyshchenko-Monastyrskā interprets the historical roots of the Karaite music.

Peter Cheremushkin in his paper analyzes the biography and art of Azary Kodzhak, a painter of the Karaite origin. A. Kodzhak is identified as an antagonist artist closer to the Mediterranean art than the Russian art tradition. It is emphasized that A. Kodzhak reflects the art of the natural and brilliant world.

Gerşom Qıprısçı (Tzıprıs) (we mentioned his paper above) presented another paper about the Karaite religion and civilisation in the historical course of development. G. Qıprısçı considers Karaism as a system of anti-Talmudic belief, a follower of the original texts belonging to the Qumran community. G. Qıprısçı defines Karaism as an original, genuine, uncorrupted form of the Moses religion. The same researcher in the third paper considers the relationship and interaction between Karaism and Islam. He denotes that more research is needed to establish similarities between them. Finally, he compares the distinguished thinkers of both sides in this respect.

Hayim Khan Malkhasy presented a paper on the Karaite ummah, moving from the concept of ummah in Islam. Pointing out that the term of ummah bears the meaning of congregation or community in the narrow sense but the meaning of a nation in the broad sense, he considers the concept of ummah in the thoughts of the prominent Karaite leaders³⁴.

³³ For the papers of F. Şayhan, A. Aydın, I. Köklü and N. Budnik, see *ibid.*, s. 667–676; s. 677–690; s. 691–698; s. 699–710.

³⁴ For A. Kefeli, O. Tyshchenko-Monastyrskā, P. Cheremushkin, G. Qıprısçı and H. K. Malkhasy, see *ibid.*, s. 711–777.

David Tiriyaqi, the grand hazzan of the Ukraine–Crimean Karaite community, participated in the symposium and presented three papers. D. Tiriyaqi views 27 marriage contracts he compiled in the Karaite Collection of Yevpatoria (Gözleve) City Museum. The value of the marriage contracts that have been started to be recorded since 1528 is unquestionable. These documents are of great importance in respect of the separation of the religious and historical components in the family structure of the Karaites. It is interesting that the marriage contracts are almost the same as in the Islamic practices. D. Tiriyaqi mentions in his paper the letter Andalusian Caliph Abdurrahman's vizier Hasday Ibn Şafrut wrote to the Khazarian khan Joseph and the response of the khan to the letter. He also points out that the name of Chufut Kale is known as the names of Kırk-Yer, Kır-Or, Gevher-Kerman, too. D. Tiriyaqi's third paper is about the Karaite Kenesa in Yevpatoria. He views firstly the data on the history of the Crimean Karaites and then introduces the temple in question. The location, architectural structure, parts and religious functions of the temple are interpreted in separate sections.

Olena Arabaci and Mihayilo Semikin analyze the historical development of the Karaite culture. It is evaluated as a theme that, while the Karaites were a religious community united around the Karaism in ancient times, they have shifted toward an ethno-national structure in modern times.

An article of Y. D. Kokizov was included in the book because of its importance. The article translated from Russian into Turkish by E. Altınkaynak deals with the Karaite calendar and the tomb stones. Y. D. Kokizov concludes that his investigation on 44 tomb stones contains important historical data.

There are also two papers in the book on the Karaite bibliographies. Muhammet Çetgez's paper is about the Collection of Karaite Turks in the Vilnius University Library. T. Çulha presented a general Karaite Bibliography³⁵.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, I would like to mention the common desire of the attenders in concluding speeches that such symposiums would be intermittently held in future. In fact, the present symposium held in Lithuania is an activity that has realised the wish of the organizers of the Bilecik Symposium. We would like to repeat the same wish that symposiums on the Karaite Community would be arranged periodically in different countries.

³⁵ For D. Tiriyaqi, O. Arabaci, M. Semikin, Y. D. Kokizov, M. Çetgez and T. Çulha see *ibid.*, s. 795–906.