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von Heinz Gaube und Wolfgang Röllig

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Alex Carmel - Peter Schäfer - Yossi Ben-Artzi (Editors)

The Jewish Settlement in Palestine

634–1881

WIESBADEN 1990
DR. LUDWIG REICHERT VERLAG

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Preface

As the only editor of this volume, who has accompanied the history of the map of the "Jews in Palestine" from its commencement, I am taking the liberty of making some personal comments in the Preface.

More than a dozen years have passed since my colleagues at Tübingen, Dr. Frowald G. Hüttenmeister and Professor Wolfgang Röllig, the co-ordinator of the TAVO, originally asked me to take upon myself the responsibility of preparing a map of Jewish Settlement in Palestine from the Arab Conquest in 634 up to the large-scale Jewish immigration of 1882. Since I am not a geographer, and as my field of historical research is limited to Palestine during the late Turkish period (actually specializing in *Christian* activity), I, at first hesitated to take upon myself such a complex task as this.

For that reason, I sought another possible candidate. The large number of Hebrew sources and their location induced me to look for a candidate in Israel - but to my astonishment, I soon discovered that no serious attempt to use clear scientific methods had ever been made to examine the Jewish Settlement over the course of this 1250 year period. I did not find any other scholar and it became clear to us that no *single* researcher could cover so wide-ranging a field in a responsible way. I, therefore, took it upon myself to mobilize a team capable of carrying out a task of this nature and difficulty.

For comparison, it is perhaps worthwhile to mention a similar project in which I am participating. Over the past 15 years, the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities has been employing no less than 30 scholars to conduct research on the Jewish Settlement in Palestine *since* 1882 - a work which is as yet uncomplete. From this it can be understood that the 1250 years preceding 1882 are in fact extremely difficult to research from any point of view!

Hence, we should by no means see the volume of articles before us as a definite summing up of all the existing knowledge to be found in sources on the Jewish Settlement. The object of this volume is simply, as its name - "Beiheft" - suggests, an attempt to clarify the map which it accompanies and to describe the main processes which shaped the distribution of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine over the course of the 1250 years studied and which are expressed visually on the map.

During the time we worked on this volume (1980–1984), hundreds of researches dealing with Palestine during the period in question have been published. This fact testifies to the remarkable increase of interest in that field. The reader can find references to some of the new research that was undertaken in this field in the current book. At the same time, the third volume (1099–1516) of the comprehensive "Book of the Yishuv" was, and still is, in the course of preparation in Jerusalem. Moreover, two other new major researches have already been published in Hebrew and a special note should be made of them. The first is the comprehensive work of Moshe Gil, "Palestine during the First Muslim Period (634–1099)," Tel Aviv University, 3 volumes, 1983, the publication of which greatly helped us. With the kind permission of the author, we were able to use many of his findings and to turn our efforts to other periods. The appearance of the series "The History of Eretz Israel," (Keter Books and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 10 volumes, Jerusalem 1981–1985) represents the first serious attempt to describe, in a single continuous publication, the history of Palestine – and not only Jewish Settlement – from ancient days up to the establishment of the State of Israel; this series, too, helped us in no small way. However, this pioneering effort, could only partly overcome existing gaps in research. Thus, for example, only a single volume was dedicated to the years 1260–1804, which are a central part of our discussion.

Finally, I wish to thank all those who actively participated in the compilation of the material, in the writing as well as advising. First and foremost, my thanks are due to Dr. Yossi Ben-Artzi, who served as co-ordinator among the contributors to the project, and who, in addition, did most of the complicated work in editing the volume, as well as to our hard-working and devoted assistant, Ms. Tami Lavyel. Thanks are also due to the cartographers of the TAVO who helped to produce the map; to Dr. Shuqri ʿArāf, Dr. Jacob Barnai, Mr. Shalom Ginat, Dr. Yaʿaqov Goldstein, Prof. David Kushner, Dr. Pinchas Ofer, Dr. Sylvia Schein and Mr. David Tamar of the University of Haifa, to Prof. Amnon Cohen, Dr. Avraham David, Dr. ʿAmiqam El ʿad, Prof. Benjamin Z. Kedar and Dr. ʿĀdel Mannāʿ of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

I also wish to thank several German scholars, mainly Mr. Peter Lenhardt, Berlin, now Jerusalem, and Mr. Christian Weinhag, Cologne, now Berlin, who aided us mainly by locating and interpreting sources that we were unable to reach in Israel. In the last phase, Mrs. Anne Birkenhauer was extremely helpful in editing the final draft. Special thanks are due to Professor Peter Schäfer, Cologne, and today Head of the Institute of Jewish Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, who shared with me the responsibility for the research. He never at any time let me feel that the responsibility

for administering the funds for this project, which also fell mostly on his shoulders and took a considerable amount of his time, was anything but an occupation to which he felt particularly attracted ... Therefore, I was, and still am, particularly grateful to him. I also thank most cordially Dr. Frowald G. Hüttenmeister of Tübingen who during the past dozen years has done everything in his power to bring this project to a successful conclusion.

Last, but not least, I would like to express thanks and appreciation to my dear old friend Dr. Dr. h.c. Wolfgang Treue, Bonn, who was at the time, among other duties, in charge of the entire TAVO project on behalf of the German Research Authority (D.F.G.) which supported it financially. By his serious scientific approach and with his pleasant manner, Dr. Treue contributed more than any other person to the materialization of our project, just as he had assisted generally in promoting and rehabilitating research in the Federal Republic of Germany and in restoring its image following the gloomy years of decline under the "Third Reich".

Haifa, December 1988 *Alex Carmel*

Introduction

The study of Jewish Settlement in Palestine and the regions which it inhabited over a 1250 year period is a complex and problematic task in many aspects, but mainly because of the vast number of wide-ranging sources that are in need of critical examination. Along with this difficulty, the study of Palestine suffers from wide gaps over long periods of time. During the research, it became clear, time and again, how difficult it is to follow the movements of any one element of the population in any systematic way – in this particular case, that of the Jewish population – when we lack continuous and documented information about the history of the country in general. This is similar to a situation in which one, wishing to level a single, narrow, and safe pathway for himself in a place where the land under his feet is destroyed along almost every step. Perhaps it is sufficient to mention the huge amount of Palestine travellers-literature as one example. As long as there is no accurate survey of the thousands of books, by subject, it will be impossible to utilize these source materials in a truly responsible way. It is common knowledge that this basic research has never been carried out.

Another difficulty encountered, is something which was well defined by Norbert Schwake in the preface to his comprehensive research on hospitals in 19th century Jerusalem:

> "... the lack of interest by one community in the other: a Jewish historian writes about the Christians and Muslims of Jerusalem essentially only in connection with the history of the Jews whereas the Christian historian does the opposite ... Amongst those interested in the topic there will be few who have command of both Hebrew and Arabic, and who, in addition to this can unravel old Gothic manuscripts ..."[1]

We attempted to overcome this problem by involving in our project a larger number of scholars, each a specialist on a given period, and/or in a specific type of source and relevant language.

This approach was crystallized in the chronological-period method of research adopted. The long period of time with which we had to deal was divided into subperiods, in accordance with which the research was carried out, the map drawn and the present volume edited.

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[1] Norbert Schwake, Die Entwicklung des Krankenhauswesens der Stadt Jerusalem vom Ende des 18. bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts, vol. 1, (Herzogenrath, 1983), p. 8.

The six time periods that we determined for this purpose can be best understood as also being the main periods in the history of Palestine - trying to return to its mandatary boundaries - from the Muslim conquest. These are:

I. The Early Muslim Period (634-1099);
II. The Crusader Period (1099-1291);
III. The Mameluke Period (1291-1516);
IV. The Early Ottoman Period (1517-1599);
V. The 17th and 18th Centuries;
VI. The 19th Century (1800-1881).

The end of the period of research was thus determined as the eve of the "First 'Aliya," the beginning of modern large-scale Jewish Settlement in Palestine which began in 1882 and opened a new chapter in the character of Jewish Settlement, and in the history of Palestine in general.

The Ottoman Period was divided into three subperiods even though the sovereign authority of the country, with the exception of the years 1831-1840, did not change. The reason for this is the fact that in each subperiod there was some aspect which was unique to it. At the beginning of the Turkish rule, when the Ottoman Empire was still at the height of its power, the country in general and, as a consequence, the Jewish population too, enjoyed a period of development and prosperity. In contrast, there was a considerable decline in the status of the Turks in the 17th and 18th centuries, resulting also in a decline of the status of the Jewish population, during this lengthy period.

On the other hand, Napoleon's short campaign of 1799 and, in particular, the Egyptian conquest in the 1830s, among other factors, opened Palestine to western influence and activities. This critical turning point in the fate of Palestine in the 19th century also had a great effect on the Jewish population.

The information that our scholars were requested to supply was concerned, first and foremost, with the Jewish settlements and their characteristics: location, size of the settlement, its character, its composition, occupations, etc. The compilation of this material was carried out for each of the periods using a uniform method on two types of file. The first was a "settlement file" in which all the particualars requested about every individual settlement in which there were Jewish residents were noted. The second was a "source file" through which we were able to check on the sources used during the course of the work.

By this method, we were able to achieve a satisfactory degree of uniformity and control which helped us in the long run to channel the

results into the map and the accompanying volume. It also precluded the possibility that we might be side-tracked in the direction of historical research and kept us focused on the principal target that we set ourselves: the preparation of the map.

The Map (TAVO, B IX 18)

The hundreds of "settlement files" that were filled out in the course of the work provided the main basis for editing the map. Here, too, we were precluded from presenting so much general and all-encompassing information on a single large and general map since it is difficult, if not impossible, to perceive all the information at a glance. We preferred to use six small maps, one for each of the periods for which information had been collected. In this way, not only was the danger of "comprehending everything" avoided but, in the event, also that of "comprehending nothing" was obviated, and we were also able to present the difference and the uniqueness of each of the subperiods in an understandable and clear manner.

For different reasons, and mainly in order to make it easier for the observer to become familiar with the map, we used different criteria for each of the small maps to mark the settlements. In any case, and this is perhaps especially important to stress, only those settlements about which the scholars were in no doubt as to the existence of a Jewish population were placed on the maps. In places where the evidence was less certain – and here we depended on sources that we were able to reach – we preferred not to list the settlement at all. At this stage we felt that we should use caution, but the development expected in the study of Palestine will undoubtedly correct and supplement the picture that we have drawn.

In registering the names of the settlements, we requested that each name be listed in two ways: the name used in the sources during the period in question and the current name. In this way, the city of Acre, for instance, is referred to as St. Jean d'Acre during the Crusader Period whereas in the Mameluke Period which followed, the name used is ʿAkka. The name in current use (in Hebrew) in this case is written ʿAkko, and this is in brackets. We considered the writing of the current name also in respect of the present-day population. A settlement in which the majority of the population is Arab is given with its Arabic name with the Hebrew name written alongside it – and vice-versa. As many settlements are known by different names in different languages, we often had to decide in an arbitrary manner, in favour of a certain name *which was, in the author's opinion,* the most

common found in the sources *of each period* we used. The names were transliterated according to rules used in the TAVO.

The criterion of size was also used in marking the settlements on the maps according to a key that was determined for each period. It should be noted that there is a total absence of statistical data and there are furthermore severe chronological gaps in the sources, some of which speak in terms of persons, some in terms of heads of households or families, or some which do not relate at all to the number of Jews. Therefore, the statistics reported should be seen only as an attempt to convey to the observer some conception of the *relative size* of the settlement and to permit him to follow the changes which took place in its status over the different periods. On occasion, mainly in the longer subperiods, substantial changes also took place *within* the period itself. In such cases, we felt that this fact should be mentioned in the comments at the head of the sheet. In the maps the maximal size that came out of the sources was marked.

In Map 6, which describes the Jewish population in the 19th century until 1881, we decided to integrate the findings of "The Survey of Western Palestine." This survey, the first of its kind, was carried out by the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) on the eve of the "First ʿAliya." It makes the observer aware of the centres of Jewish Settlement at the end of the period studied on the background of the settlement map of Palestine in general, and in real, perspective.

The Accompanying Text ("Beiheft")

The volume of articles that accompany the map contains six different types of chapter. There are two abstracts which are merely additional notes to the maps, two summary articles which also relate mainly to the map, and two more substantial pieces of research which attempt to summarize the characteristics of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine in general, and in the periods dealt with, in particular.

The abstracts relate to the opening and closing periods of the map, as both of these periods have already been covered by other research. Map 1 has now been covered thoroughly by the above mentioned research work of Moshe Gil. Map 6 deals with the 19th century which has enjoyed unprecedented attention in the form of both specific and general research projects quite unlike any of the other periods with which we dealt. As a result, we were unable to add almost anything new to these two periods.

The articles by Sylvia Schein (The Crusader Period, Map 2) and Jacob Barnai (the mid-Ottoman Period, Map 5) focus on clarifying the details of

the map. The authors chose to give the chapters the character of a summary.

To plough deeply – principally in Hebrew sources – was the demand made upon Avraham David, who collected the information on Jewish Settlement during the Mameluke Period (Map 3) and, with David Tamar, the Early Ottoman Period (Map 4). As he managed to make use of primary sources, including Hebrew manuscripts that had not been used before, we asked Avraham David to broaden his scope and to utilize this forum to bring to the attention of the reader new information not only on the distribution of the Jewish population in Palestine but also on its social composition, its spiritual life, its institutions, and so forth. As our knowledge of both these periods up till now has come principally from Christian and Arab sources (which were brought together for us by Shuqri ʿArāf, ʿAmiqam El ʿad and ʿĀdel Mannāʿ), we saw fit to include this substantial new and innovative contribution on the Jews of Palestine within the framework of this volume.

Research Conclusions

1. What stands out is the presence of continuous permanent Jewish Settlement in Palestine in general, and in the areas of Jerusalem and Upper Galilee, in particular. Some 30–50 per cent of the Jewish population in Palestine was to be found permanently in the mountainous Galilee, where there were always over half of the settlements where Jews lived.
2. In the Early Muslim Period (Map 1) one can observe a certain degree of continuity with the distribution of the Jewish population in the Byzantine Period which preceded it. In the coastal plain, the Jews concentrated around the towns of the rulers, Ramla and Lydda. There is also a certain hierarchy among central settlements, such as Haifa, Tiberias, Jerusalem, Ramla and Ashqelon and between the rural settlements which were mostly located in Galilee.
3. During the Crusader Period (Map 2), a clear concentration of villages where Jews lived can be seen in the mountains around Safed (15 settlements). In contrast to this, there was a scattered and sparse pattern along the Coastal Plain and in the Jerusalem region. We can distinguish between three size levels among the settlements. There were rural settlements in which there were few Jews; rural settlements or small towns in which there were tens of Jewish families; and there were central towns such as Tyre, Acre, Ramla and Ashqelon in which there were hundreds and even more than a thousand Jews.

4. In the Mameluke Period (Map 3), changes took place in both the size of the settlements and their distribution. In Galilee, Safed begins to stand out as a focus for the surrounding villages, and a Jewish settlement appears in Nablus, the only one in Samaria. Despite the decline of security in the Coastal Plain, Jews were to be found in the towns of Jaffa, Lydda, Ramla and Gaza. From the aspect of size, Jerusalem stands out as the most important centre for the Jewish population, most of which was dispersed in small villages.
5. In the Early Ottoman Period (Map 4), substantial changes took place in the geographical distribution. The vast majority of Jews were concentrated in the Upper Galilee. To the south of Nazareth, there were only three or four small Jewish settlements, with the exception of Jerusalem which maintained its centrality. In this period, Safed blossomed and with it the surrounding villages, while in the Coastal Plain, Jews are mentioned almost solely in Gaza.
6. In the 17th and 18th centuries (Map 5) the centrality of Safed and of Galilee begins to decline. A phenomenon in which a thinning of the Jewish population, both in the number of settlements and in the size of the communities, is identified. In Galilee, the population apparently began to migrate from the villages to the town of Safed, and the population too, declined to just a few hundred. At the same time, there is a growth in the population of Tiberias, and to a certain extent also of Acre, which became regional centres. The communities in the centre of the country - Ramla, Lydda and Jaffa - remained small but stable.
7. In the beginning of the 19th century (Map 6), the processes which had begun in the previous centuries continued. But as time went by, certain changes took place. First and foremost, the status of Jerusalem, comprising more than half the total Jewish population of Palestine, stands out. At the same time, the rise in the importance of the towns of the Coastal Plain can be noted. Similarly, there is renewal and growth of the Jewish communities in the port towns of Jaffa and Haifa. The old communities of Hebron, Safed and Tiberias remained stable. The number of Jews living in rural settlements diminished thinning out almost completely, and there are only a minute number of villages in Galilee in which Jews lived. Toward the end of the period and research, one could already notice a significant increase in the number of Jews coming to Palestine.

A Note on Spelling and Transliteration

On page 9 above we mentioned the system that was used in naming the *places* which appeared on maps. Since the main purpose of the "Beiheft" is to elucidate the map, it was decided to impose the same rule – without any changes (excluding the introduction) – on the "Beiheft" itself. We are aware of the fact that this decision has at times caused some discord (like "The Geon-Ya'aqov Yeshiva in al-Quds"), but we preferred such discord to a deviation from scientific standards. We could not afford to be more flexible on this matter, for the obvious reason of stating the limits of such flexibility. We felt this when trying at first to use the common accepted names, at least for the well-known places, during all six periods (like "Jerusalem" for example). We soon discovered that even such a simplification of the matter would sooner or later lead to controversy regarding the question of accord (for instance: Akko, Akka, Acre). Therefore we concluded that the only possible solution (within the boundaries of Palestine) was an attempted rigid and purely scientific approach. Although at times it looks strange – it is, at least, not misleading.

Another problem arose when dealing with the names of persons. Considering the specific subject of the "Beiheft," we have deviated here from the transliteration used in the TAVO when dealing with names of the places, and used for persons the following system which is generally used when dealing with transliteration of Hebrew names into English:

'	א	l	ל
b	ב	m	מ
v	ב	n	נ
g	ג	s	ס
d	ד	'	ע
h	ה	p	פ
w	ו	f	פ
z	ז	ṣ	צ
ḥ	ח	q	ק
ṭ	ט	r	ר
y	י	ś	שׂ
k	כ	sh	שׁ
kh	כ	t	ת

Due to the fact that many Jewish names have an accepted form of writing, we were often forced to deviate from the above rules of transliteration of names in order to facilitate the identity of a person (for example, we used

the name "Maimonides" and not the correct form of "Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon" or "Rambam"). In establishing the conventional form of the name we mostly used the Encyclopaedia Judaica. It is obvious that, scientifically speaking, we have compromised on the matter, in addition to which we found that the Encyclopaedia Judaica was not itself always consistent. However, the pure scientific alternative would have led us to such an extreme outcome, that we have permitted ourselves to use our common sense - for better or worse. In a similar way we tried to deal with already accepted Arabic names and terms.

On the other hand we were very careful in relating to the sources. Every Hebrew work with an English titlepage was reflected in the same manner, although sometimes the name of the writer is written differently in his other works. This is why the name Ben-Zvi, for example, appears also as Ben-Zevi, or Ben-Tzvi, or Ben-Şevi - according to the particular source or edition used in the study. At that point we were guided by the idea of enabling the reader, especially the non-Hebrew one, to find - if needed - the same *edition* of the source that was cited in the study. If someone is, for example, interested in finding the book by Braslvsky, J., L'Heqer Artzenu - 'Avar Us'ridim, Tel-Aviv, 1954, he will have to look under Braslvsky and not under one of the many other forms of the name he used.

In sources which did not have an English titlepage we have used the rules of transliteration mentioned above.

Summary

Considerable information has already been published and many maps have been drawn based on serious research, first and foremost the *Atlas of Israel*. Nevertheless, we can attest to the fact that until now, to the best of our knowledge, no authoritative attempt has been made to relate to the *overall extent* of the phenomenon, that is, to examine the distribution of the Jewish population in Palestine during the long period of time between the conquest of the country by the Muslims and the beginning of the Zionist Settlement at the end of the 19th century. Thus, the map and the book which accompanies it fill a not unimportant gap in the history of Palestine and its Jewish Settlement.

The Editors:

Alex Carmel
Peter Schäfer
Yossi Ben-Artzi

Chapter I. The Jewish Settlement in Palestine in the early Muslim Period (634–1099)

by
Yossi Ben-Artzi[1]

Since a monumental work which deals with this theme has recently been published in Hebrew, this article will be just a brief survey of the material which appears in the relevant map (No. 1). That work was conducted by Prof. Moshe Gil, and it includes 3 volumes, titled as: Palestine during the First Muslim Period (634–1099), Tel-Aviv University, 1983. An abstract of his work was published by the same author in his article: "Palestine under Moslem Rule (634–1099)", in: Prawer, J. (ed.), The History of Eretz Israel, vol. 6, Jerusalem, 1981, pp. 15–160 (Hebrew).

In his work, Prof. Gil covered in a most fundamental way the characteristics of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine during that period, so that another article would have been a mere duplicate. Since our map is based with his friendly consent, mainly on this work, we accompany it with a short background and explanations.

The Jews in Palestine accepted the Muslim conquest of the land as a certain disburdenment, because previously they had suffered from the oppressive and the cruel regime of Byzantium. The Jews tended to help the Moslem invaders, and welcomed them while conquering the country.

Our information regarding the development of the Jewish Settlement under the Moslems is quite scanty particularly with regard to the first half of the period, i.e. the 7th to the 10th centuries. The Moslems, however, cancelled the Roman and later the Byzantian prohibition which banned the Jews to settle in al-Quds, and this caused the renewal of a Jewish community in the Holy City, contributing to a communal and spiritual awakening there. Under the Moslem regime, the Jews in Palestine maintained previous attachments to the Jewish centers outside Palestine, i.e. in Egypt and Babylon. As long as the Moslem center was in Damascus and later on in Baghdad, the Babylonic center was stronger. This was changed only after the shift in the Moslem world, while the Fatimide regime in Egypt became the most powerful center. Yet, strengthening of Jewish Settlement in Palestine itself, caused the emergence of a new spiritual center – the Geon-

[1] The research itself had been done by 'Amiqam El'ad, and the map was also drawn according to his findings.

Ya'aqov Yeshiva in al-Quds. This Yeshiva expressed the aspiration to material and spiritual independence of the Jews in Palestine, based on Palestine as an autonomic geographical space.

According to Islamic laws the attitude of the Moslem regime toward the Jews was on the whole tolerant during the majority of its period. The discrimination in everyday customs, such as clothing, riding horses, building etc., was the same as for Christians, since both the Jews and the Christians were 'Ahl-ad-Dhimma (Protected Minorities). Only during the 10th century were additional restrictions placed on minorities, due to security problems in the country. Persecutions, edicts, Beduine raids and above all -the struggle between the 'Abbasid Kaliphate and the Fatimides, caused damages to the Jewish Settlement, and reduced the number of villages and urban communities. Toward the end of the period, the Jewish Settlement became smaller and its main centers in al-Quds and ar-Ramla disappeared. The Geon-Ya'aqov Yeshiva moved to Şūr and later to Damascus. With the appearance of the Crusaders, only a few Jewish Settlements existed in Palestine.

Most of the sources used by scholars to locate the geographical distribution of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine in that period are manuscripts and documents from the Geniza in Cairo. These sources are letters, questions, gifts, reports, etc., which had been sent to the Yeshiva in Cairo, and were kept in the old Jewish synagogue there. Other sources to be used are Moslem chronics and Christian sources of the period.

The details which resulted from our research project came from various sources and this information enabled us to draw the map of the Jewish Settlement's distribution. Yet, it was not sufficient to reconstruct other required aspects of the Jewish Settlement at that time. The most difficult challenge was the demographic aspect: size and hierarchy of settlements. This difficulty is a result of the fact that most of the documents in the Geniza deal with everyday questions, sometimes denoting family names and place-names, but they do not provide us with full information about *all* of the settlements. It is more than reasonable that many settlements were not mentioned in the available documents, so we may assume that our map is only a partial picture of the historical situation. This is the reason why we do not grade the settlements in map No. 1. The only possibility was to differ between major or minor settlement, as it was interpreted by the researcher.

Palestine was divided in the Muslim Period into three administrative regions, based on the previous Byzantic division. The regions were named Ğund. The word Ğund, in Arabic, means army division so as to emphasize the military significance of the government.

The Coastal Plain regions, Judean Mountains and Southern Samaria, i.e., from Rafaḥ to Megiddo (al-Lāǧūn), and from the coast to the Jordan river, were one united Ǧund, named Ǧund Filastīn (Palestine), with its capital at ar-Ramla. The Galilee, the Northern valleys and some regions across the Jordan were gathered in the second Ǧund - Ǧund 'Urdunn (Jordan river) with its capital at Ṭabarīya. Southern Palestine was divided between Ǧund Filastīn and Ǧund Dimašq (Damascus).

This adiministrative division was reflected in the geographical distribution of the Jewish Settlement, which was concentrated mainly in two regions: Upper Galilee (around the city of Ṣafad) and Westernlower Galilee - in *Ǧund 'Urdunn*; the Coastal Plain towns from Yāfā to Rafaḥ - in *Ǧund Filastīn*. Al-Quds was the focal settlement of the central mountain ridge, but lacked a rural hinterland.

ǦUND 'URDUNN: This district and its capital Ṭabarīya contained most of the Jewish Settlements (about 20) - most of which were small villages and communities. The settlements which are mentioned in the Geniza manuscripts are referred to by its citizens' names. (For example: Yosef al-Dallāti, which means: Yosef, from the village named Dallātā.)

Ṭabarīya was the main town, and served also as a spiritual creative center, in which writers, poets and linguists were active.

Ṣūr (Tyre) was Ǧund 'Urdunn's main port, actually the most important harbour of Palestine and Syria. A large Jewish Settlement existed there, which included many Ḥakhamim.

'Akkā (Acre) was used also as a port, but its importance increased only during the 10th century, when also a Jewish community flourished there.

Ḥaifā became important in the 11th century. During this time a castle, (Qaṣr Ḥaifā) was built and settled by Jews. The Jewish community became famous when Jews and Moslems resisted the Crusader siege for a whole month.

Among the rural villages, Qadas and Bāniyās were prominent, as they included large Jewish communities.

ǦUND FILASTĪN: This district with its capital ar-Ramla contained some urban Jewish centers. Ar-Ramla was a new town, which had been built by the Moslems in order to replace Ludd, its neighbour. In ar-Ramla three communities existed: Yerushalmit, Bavlit and Karait, each of which had its own synagogue. Gil estimated that in the middle of the 11th century 1000 families lived in ar-Ramla - i.e., about 4000-5000 Jews (!), 20% of them were Kara'im.

Al-Ḫalīl (Ḥevron) included small numbers of Jewish families, who made their living mainly by providing services to pilgrims visiting the Holy Graves.

Along the coast, Jews settled in Qaisārīya, Yāfā and ʿAsqalān. The latter was an important station on the road to Egypt, and an active community was developed there. It became a city of refuge to those who wandered between Palestine and Egypt.

Ġazza absorbed many Jewish villagers who left their homes in the Southern Coastal Plain.

Al-Quds kept its traditional importance, in spite of its subjection to ar-Ramla. The city, being a holy place for the three religions, maintained its spiritual power. The Jewish Quarter was probably located in the southern section of the town with the main entrance at Zion Gate.

In some settlements of Ǧund Filastīn which indeed were beyond the British Mandate borders (which defined our research limits) we also find Jewish communities, mentioned in the Geniza. Those which had strong links to Palestine like Ṣūr, were indicated on the map.

On the whole, some 30 settlements, in which Jewish communities existed during the Muslim Period, appear in map No. 1, but we may assume that, in fact, there were several more. In the Crusader's chronics we find more than 900 (!) settlements in the Jerusalem Kingdom, most of which were just a continuation from the previous period. Yet the small number of our sources and their content does not enable us to point clearly at additional Jewish Settlements.

Chapter II. The Jewish Settlement in Palestine in the Crusader Period (1099–1291)

by
Sylvia Schein

1. The Sources

Following the Crusader conquest of Palestine the character of the sources for the history of Palestinian Jewry changed. To the Jewish and Arabic now added European sources referring to the Latin kingdom as well as Crusader sources, namely those emanating from the kingdom itself, like the chronicles of Fulcher of Chartres and of William of Tyre, or various juridical treatises composed in the kingdom. Valuable information is to be found in European chronicles to begin with the chronicles of the First Crusade, through those of the Third Crusade and up to the fall of St. Jean d'Acre in 1291. Also various collections of legal documents belonging i.e. to the Genoese and Venetian communes in the Latin kingdom or the military orders (especially the Order of St. John and the Order of St. Mary of the Teutons) contain valuable information regarding the Jews in the Crusader kingdom. An important genre of sources emanating from the Latin kingdom itself are treatises on Crusader jurisprudence and law like the *Livre des Assises des Bourgeois*; those are our main sources regarding the legal position of the Jews in the kingdom.

The so-to-say Jewish sources of the Crusader Period are characterized by the decline in the so called 'Geniza Sources'. Though the period is still represented in Cairo's Geniza, in comparison to the previous period, the documents referring to Palestine Jewry are on the whole fewer. On the other hand during the Crusader Period two new categories of sources developed. First of all, in the twelfth century a new and very important type of source appeared, namely, the 'Itineraries' of Jewish travellers, i.e., descriptions of their journey in the Holy Land (e.g., the treatises of Benjamin of Tudela and Petaḥya of Regensburg). The second new category of sources is the Responsa literature, emanating mainly from the rabbinical authorities of the period, the so called Tosafists. To those should be added contemporary letters, commentaries on the Bible (as e.g. Naḥmanides' commentary on Exodus and Leviticus) and theological treatises.[1]

[1] For a survey of sources see: Prawer, Crusaders, 549; Goitein, S.D., "Geniza Sources for

2. The Conquest

The Crusader conquest had, on the whole, but little impact on the Jewish communities of Palestine. Yet, it caused changes in the structure of the settlement i.e. number of communities and their size.

Even before the actual conquest Yāfā and ar-Ramla were abandoned by their inhabitants.[2] The policy of conquest of the Crusaders, that of extermination of the native non-Christian population, both Moslem and Jewish, put the lid temporarily over the existence of communities in the cities conquered by the Crusaders during the first ten years of conquest (1099–1110),[3] namely in al-Quds (1099) and Ḥaifā (1100),[4] Qaisārīya (1101), ʿAkkā (1104) and Beirut (1110).[5] There is evidence that in fact not all of the Jewish inhabitants of those cities were slaughtered and some (in a case of one unnamed coastal city, Ḥaifā or Qaisārīya, as many as two hundred people)[6] were taken as prisoners of war and then ransomed by fellow Jews from communities like ʿAsqalān.[7] Yet the communities in those places ceased to exist either for a short period of time as it was the case with ʿAkkā and Beirut or for a longer one as it was the case with al-Quds and Ḥaifā.

The Crusader conquest caused thus a transformation in the structure of the settlement. Jerusalem was left, for the first time since the seventh century, without a Jewish community. Ar-Ramla, one of the most important of the communities in the previous Muslim Period, was abandoned by its Jewish inhabitants and so were Ḥaifā, Qaisārīya, ʿAkkā and Beirut. Following the first ten years of Crusader conquest, Tyre and Ascalon, two cities which were still under Moslem rule, became the biggest communities in Palestine.

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the Crusader Period – A Survey", Kedar, B. Z. et al. (eds.), Outremer-Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 1982, 306–322; Schein, Eretz-Israel, 363–367. I was not able to use for this study the recently published book by J. Prawer, The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, Oxford 1988.

[2] For Rames and for Japhet see Prawer, Jews, 39–41.

[3] Prawer, Crusaders, 239–276.

[4] RHC. HOcc, V, 794–798; Prawer, Jews, 41–46; for Ḥaifā see: Albertus Aquensis, RHC. HOcc, IV, 521–524; Prawer, Jews, 54.

[5] Prawer, Crusaders, 168–169, 277 and n. 64; Goitein, New Information, 294–296.

[6] Kedar, Notes, 405–411.

[7] For captives taken in Jerusalem: RHC. HOcc, IV, 103 n. 7; Kedar, Notes, 405–408; Goitein, New Sources, 231–258; Goitein, New Information, 283–294; Kedar, Notes, 405–410.

3. The Communities in the Twelfth Century

Around 1110 the policy of conquest of the Crusaders changed. Instead of exterminating the Moslems and the Jews they were now allowed either to immigrate or to stay on in their cities. This was the case in Sidon conquered in 1110 as well as Tyre (1124) and Ascalon (1153).[8] The change in the policy of conquest, the so to say tolerant attitude to the Crusader rulers to the Jewish population in the framework of their attitude of the native population of the country as a whole, as well as the absence of discrimination laws and pogroms explain the relatively rapid settlement of Jews in the Crusader kingdom.

By 1174 - the time when Benjamin of Tudela the Spanish traveller, whose treatise is our main source of information regarding the communities and their size in the twelfth century stayed in the country - there were communities in the coastal cities of Beirut,[9] Sidon,[10] Tyre,[11] St. Jean d'Acre,[12] Cesaire[13] and Ascalon.[14] In the mainland there were urban communities in Ṭabarīya,[15] Saphet,[16] Belinas[17] and Gil'ād (as-Sālṭ).[18] In Galilee except for the two urban communities of Ṭabarīya and Saphet,[19] Jews lived in villages: Guš-Ḥálav,[20] 'Almā,[21] Kafr Birīm,[22] 'Ammuqa,[23] Kafr-'Inān,[24] Mairūn,[25] Nabartain,[26] 'Ain-az-Zaitūn,[27] al-'Alawīya,[28] Bīriya[29]

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[8] Prawer, Jews, 55-57; Prawer, Crusaders, 271.

[9] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 19.

[10] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 19-20.

[11] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 20.

[12] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 21.

[13] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 21.

[14] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 28-29.

[15] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 29.

[16] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 30 and n. 1.

[17] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 30; Prawer, J., "The Autobiography of Obadyah the Norman, a Convert to Judaism at the Time of the First Crusade", Twersky, I. (ed.), Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature, vol. 1, Cambridge, Mass. - London, 1979, 110-134.

[18] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 31.

[19] See below, n. 46.

[20] Ashtor, Yedi'ot, 495.

[21] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 30.

[22] Ya'ari, Igrot, 80-82.

[23] Ya'ari, Igrot, 80.

[24] Ya'ari, Igrot, 80; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 75-85; Ashtor, Yedi'ot, 496-497.

[25] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 29-30; Ya'ari, Igrot, 81.

[26] Ya'ari, Igrot, 80.

[27] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 62, 71.

[28] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 66.

and Dallātā.[30] Individual Jews, often one or two families of Jewish dyers lived in Japhe,[31] St. George de Lidde, and Rames,[32] Bethleem,[33] Bethnoble,[34] Zarin[35] and Bethgibelin.[36]

What was the size of the Jewish population? The main source of information in regard to this question is Benjamin of Tudela, who stayed in the country in ca. 1174 and who notes the size of the communities visited by him. However, though Benjamin of Tudela gives numbers, he does not state what those numbers represent. According to some historians he refers only to adult males subjected to poll-tax and thus to about 30%–45% of the entire Jewish population.[37] If it is indeed so, the entire Jewish population of Palestine was about 4000 in ca. 1174. However, if Benjamin of Tudela was referring in his numbers to the entire population of the communities he mentions and not only the adult males subjected to the payment of the poll-tax, the size of the population was much smaller, about 1300 Jews in the whole country.[38]

The largest according to the evidence of Benjamin of Tudela was Tyre, where he found 400 Jews[39] – in Beirut were 50,[40] in Sidon 20[41] and in St. Jean d'Acre were about 200 Jews.[42] Ḥaifā, an important community during the previous Muslim Period, had no Jewish community at all.[43] In Cesaire the Spanish traveller found 200 Jews[44] and the same number of Samaritans.[45] The communities that Benjamin of Tudela found in the towns of the hinterland were much smaller than those of the coast: in each Ṭabarīya and ʿAlmā were fifty Jews.[46] Other settlements (Bethleem,[47] Bethgibe-

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[30] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 67.
[31] Ashtor, Yediʿot, 495–496.
[32] Ashtor, Yediʿot, 28.
[33] Ashtor, Yediʿot, 21–22, 28; On Rames see also Prawer, Jews, 40–41.
[34] Ashtor, Yediʿot, 26.
[35] Ashtor, Yediʿot, 28.
[36] Ashtor, Yediʿot, 29.
[37] Ashtor, Yediʿot, 27.
[38] Strauss-Ashtor, 31–39.
[39] Bahat, D., Kedar, B.Z., Vilnai, Z., Reṣifut ha-Yishuv ha-Yehudi be-Eretz-Israel [The Continuation of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine], Tel-Aviv, 1974, 58–60 (Hebrew).
[40] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 20.
[41] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 19.
[42] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 20.
[43] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 21.
[44] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 21.
[45] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 21.
[46] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 29.
[47] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 29–30.
[48] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 26, two Jews.

lin,[48] Bethnoble,[49] Zarin[50] and Japhe[51]) had just one, two or at most three Jewish dyers probably with their families.

It follows from Benjamin of Tudela's data that the Jewish population of Palestine suffered a certain decline in comparison to the previous Muslim Period, but then this decline began already during the previous century and especially following the Seljuq conquest. In the third quarter of the twelfth century its size was about 1300–4000 souls and three quarters of this population lived in the coastal cities. On the whole, the Crusader conquest caused but a temporary set-back as far as most of the communities were concerned.

One of the exceptions was Jerusalem. As already said, the Crusader conquest of the city (15 July 1099) had closed the lid, for the first time since the seventh century, on the Jewish and Karaite communities in the Holy City. Following the conquest, Jews like all non-Christians, were forbidden to dwell in the city. According to the prominent Crusader statesman and historian, William of Tyre, the Crusader lords of the city felt it is sacrilegious for non-Christians to dwell in the Holy City.[52] This law, promulgated probably almost immediately after the conquest, was relaxed by King Baldwin II who allowed (ca. 1120) Moslems to bring food into the city.[53] In the year 1129 Rabbi Avraham bar Ḥiya wrote that in those days there is no single Jew in the city.[54] Benjamin of Tudela found in Jerusalem about four dyers' families who lived since the time of King Baldwin II (1118–1131) opposite the 'Tower of David'.[55] Rabbi Petaḥya of Regensburg, who came to the city on pilgrimage in ca. 1170–1180 found there just one such family.[56] One can thus assume that since Jewish dyers were needed in the capital, King Baldwin II granted a special permit to a few of them to stay there and such permits continued to be granted by kings of Jerusalem until the fall of the city to Saladin in 1187.

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[48] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 27, three Jews.

[49] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 28, two Jews.

[50] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 29, one Jew.

[51] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 28, one Jew.

[52] RHC. HOcc, I, l. XI, cap. XXVII, 502.

[53] Prawer, Jews, 46 and n. 43.

[54] Poznanski, A. (ed.), Sefer Megillat ha-Megalle, Von Abraham bar Chija, Berlin, 1924, 99–100 (Hebrew).

[55] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 23.

[56] Ya'ari, Massa'ot, 53.

4. Legal Status and Economic Conditions

The impact of the Crusader conquest on the legal status of the Jews of Palestine is far easier to follow than the demographical one, though the Crusader law does not refer to Jews in particular. In Crusader legislation Jews appear in the framework of the large class of the non-Franks, i.e. non-Catholics, Moslems and Oriental Christians. Therefore, they were not discriminated but treated as all the other various groups of the conquered native population, as a sort of Dhimmi citizens of second rank in comparison to the members of the ruling class, the Franks.[57]

Like all the non-Franks, following the Crusader conquest, the Jews became tenants of local feudal lords, either of the king as landowner, the holders of lordships or autonomous bodies like the military orders or the maritime communes. Like all the non-Franks the Jews had to pay poll-tax (capitatio)[58] and were judged in the 'Court of Burgesses' in criminal cases like murder and robbery and in the 'Court of the Market' in all the other minor cases. Both the courts dealt with mixed trials, namely trials in which the defendant and the plaintiff were from a different religious community.[59] There is no doubt that when both the defendant and the plaintiff were Jewish the case was dealt with within the community as the communal Jewish courts survived and operated also during the Crusader Period.[60]

The judicial procedures attempted to maintain the equality of the various sections of the class of the non-Franks. In the courts, namely the 'Court of the Burgesses' and the 'Court of the Market' - which existed in all the Crusader settlements all over the kingdom - the plaintiffs were to present witnesses from the community of the defendant. According to the *Livre des Assises des Bourgeois,* a manual for the judicial procedures in the 'Court of Burgesses' composed ca. 1240–1244: "If a Greek claims against a Jew and the latter denies, the law stipulates that the Greek should bring Jewish witnesses and those witnesses should take oath according to their law." If there are no such witnesses the defendant goes free. The Jews took an oath on the Old Testament, the Samaritans on the Pentateuch, the Greek-Orthodox on the Bible, the Moslem on the Qurān, etc.[61]

Though on the whole, the Crusader law was tolerant to the Jews, whose

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[57] On the attitude of the Crusaders to the conquered population: Prawer, Serfs, 201–214; on the legal status of the Jews: Prawer, Jews, 64–70; Prawer, Crusaders, 271–276.

[58] Tafel, G.L.Fr., Thomas, G.M., Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig, vol.2, Vienna 1856–1857, 358–359.

[59] Kausler, Livre des Assises des Bourgeois, cap.236, 270–273.

[60] Prawer, Jews, 69.

[61] Kausler, Livre des Assises des Bourgeois, cap.63, 91–92; cap.236, 270–273.

legal status was like that of the whole class of the non-Franks in the kingdom, that of Dhimmi, of second-rate subjects, they were subjected to various restrictions and prohibitions. First of all, Jewish males over fifteen had, like all the non-Franks, to pay the poll-tax.[62] This payment was not high but still it was the outward sign of their inferior legal status. Though the inhabitants of the cities enjoyed freedom of movement, those who lived in the villages were probably to all practical purposes serfs and did not enjoy, typically to their status, the freedom of movement, and were not allowed to leave their villages without the permission of their lords.[63] There were also, as attested by Crusader legal sources, Jewish slaves; those were mainly the inhabitants of the conquered cities but also people who were sold as slaves due to their debts. It is again in connection to slavery that the non-Franks were discriminated as the Franks could not be subjected to the status of a slave. Moreover, according to the Crusader law, if a slave converted to the Catholic faith, he was automatically liberated from slavery; if, e.g., a fugitive slave returned from the Moslem lands and converted, his former lord had no power over him. On the other hand, Jews could theoretically own slaves unless the latter were Christian.[64]

Prohibitions were placed on property and restrictions on dwelling places. Jews like all non-Franks were forbidden by law to hold land property in the kingdom either fiefs or 'burgage tenure,' namely property held by the burgesses, the non-aristocratic Franks.[65] Jews and Moslems alike, as non-Christians, were banned from living in Jerusalem,[66] and often forced by law to live in separate quarters. In St. Jean d'Acre, after the Third Crusade (ca. 1198) all the non-Franks were barred from living in the old city and thus relegated to the new suburb of Mont Musard.[67] Again, in that city, the government of Venice decreed in 1271 that the Jewish subjects of the commune should live in the city only in the Venetian quarter.[68]

Regarding the economic conditions of the Jews in the Crusader kingdom, one can postulate that the conquest caused a decline and that in the twelfth century the economic situation of the communities was worse than

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[62] See n. 58 above.

[63] Prawer, Serfs, 205–211.

[64] Kausler, Livre des Assises des Bourgeois, cap. 269, 299; Prawer, Serfs, 208–211; Prawer, Jews, 73 n. 64.

[65] Abrégé du Livre des Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois, RHC. Lois, 2, I, cap. XXIV, 254–255; Prawer, Jews, 69.

[66] See n. 52 above.

[67] Kausler, Livre des Assises des Bourgeois, cap. 238, 282.

[68] Cessi, R. (ed.), Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio di Venezia, vol. 2, Bologna 1931, 402; Jacoby, L'expansion, 248.

during the previous Muslim Period. First of all, property was damaged during the period of the conquest.[69] Additionally, even those communities which were not directly affected like, e.g. Ascalon, had to spend large sums of money on ransom of captives and their rehabilitation.[70] Geniza documents show that even as late as the 1180s there were among the Jews of Palestine people who had to leave the country and to move to Egypt so to be able to repay debts owed to their lords. Others immigrated to other neighbouring Moslem states and even as far as India in order to make a profit to enable them to return and resettle in Palestine.[71]

Notwithstanding the economic decline, the Jews of Palestine continued to work in their, so-to-say 'traditional' professions. One such profession was that of dyeing and Benjamin of Tudela mentions Jewish dyers with their families scattered all over the kingdom often living in all-Christian or all-Moslem communities.[72] Other typical Jewish profession were medicine and pharmacy. Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe ben-Maimon) who visited Palestine in May 1165 and stayed a few months, was offered the job of court physician to King Amalrich[73] and about twenty years later William of Tyr wrote that: "Our oriental princes [the Crusaders] disgrace, together with their wives, the wisdom of medicine of the Latins and give their hopes only in Jews, Samaritans, Syrians and Saracens and surrender themselves uncautiously to their treatment".[74] The popularity of Jewish physicians among the Franks is also attested by a law promulgated by the Council of Japhe in 1253 which forbade the Franks to use Jewish and Moslem physicians as well as pharmacists.[75]

The inhabitants of the cities worked also in typical urban professions, like peddling, commerce and banking.[76] In Tyre, some made their living

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[69] Prawer, Jews, 70-75.

[70] Goitein, New Sources, 254-256; Goitein, New Information, 283-296; Goitein, S.D., "Ransom of a captive woman held in Nablus and giving a boy a collateral in Ascalon (1153-1187)," Hacker, Palestinian Jewry, 306-311.

[71] Goitein, S.D. "Letters from Palestine during the Crusader Period," Hacker, Palestinian Jewry, 259-267.

[72] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 19-30; Prawer, Jews, 71.

[73] Prawer, Jews, 72 n.50; for Maimonides visit: Dinur, B., Israel in the Diaspora, vol.II (4), Jerusalem, 1969, 18-19 and n.12-13 (Hebrew).

[74] RHC.HOcc, l.18, cap.34, 879.

[75] Mansi, J.D. (ed.), Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collection, vol.26, Florence 1784, col.328-329; Kedar, B.Z., "Jews and Samaritans in the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem," Tarbiz, 53, 1984, 404-405 (Hebrew); For Jewish physicians: Ya'ari, Massa'ot, 51, who mentions Rabbi Nahorai of Tiberias as a physician and pharmacist; Les Gestes des Chiprios, RHC.HArm., 2, 790 (refers to a Jewish physician in Tyre in 1283).

[76] Prawer, Jews, 72-73.

from a profession less typical of Jews - shipping and glass industry. As it is attested by Benjamin of Tudela: "There are in Tyre ships of Jews at sea."[77] A traditional Jewish profession that declined in the Crusader kingdom was money-lending. This became in the Crusader kingdom the monopoly of the maritime communes and less so of the Knights Templars. Nevertheless, we hear of Jewish money-lenders in late thirteenth century's St. Jean d'Acre.[78] It seems that as the economic situation of the Crusader nobility deteriorated due to the constant state of war and territorial losses, more sources of credit were needed.

In the rural settlement, and during the Crusader period there were still about twelve Jewish villages in the Galilee: ʿAmmuqa, Guš-Ḥálàv, ʿAlmā, Kafr Birīm, Kafr-ʿInān, Mairūn, ʿAin az-Zaitūn, al-ʿAlawīya, Bīriya, Dallātā and Belinas.[79] Jews worked not only in agriculture, but also in dyeing.[80]

5. Saladin's Conquests and the Third Crusade

The conquest of the Crusader kingdom by Saladin in the course of 1187 and the Third Crusade (1189–1192) had a tremendous impact on the fate of the Jewish communities. During the year 1187 almost all the major communities, except for Tyre, passed to the hands of the Ajub Sulṭān. The attempts of reconquest of the kingdom by the forces of the Third Crusade were not wholly successful and when a new kingdom was established in 1192 many communities remained under the Ajub rule.[81]

One of the most important results of Saladin's conquest was the re-establishment of the Jewish community in Jerusalem.[82] Another was the disappearance of the community of Ascalon; in 1191, on Saladin's order the city was razed to the ground and the Jews, who were forced to abandon the city, as did all its inhabitants, moved and some of them settled in Jerusalem.[83] Moreover, the political events had a tremendous impact on the community of St. Jean d'Acre. As the capital of the new kingdom and

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[77] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 36–37.

[78] Röhricht, R. (ed.), Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani, Innsbruck, 1893, no. 1399, 1435; Prawer, Jews, 73.

[79] See n. 20–30 above.

[80] Prawer, Jews, 73.

[81] Prawer, Crusaders, 292–294.

[82] See n. 85–89 below.

[83] Prawer, Crusaders, 297–299; on the immigration from Ascalon to Bilbeis: Prawer, Crusaders, 298, n. 132; Goitein, New Information, 220, n. 6, 298–302.

its main gateway, it became during the thirteenth century the most important of Palestine's communities.[84]

6. The Community of Jerusalem in the Thirteenth Century

Following Saladin's conquest of the city, the Crusader ban on Jewish Settlement in Jerusalem was abolished and a community re-established. The new community was heterogenous. It included the Ascalonites namely the Jews of Ascalon who came to Jerusalem after their city was destroyed in 1191; Jews from the Maghreb who came in 1198 as well as a group of Jews who arrived in 1209–1211, part of the big migration wave from France and England, of the so-called 'Migration of 300 Rabbis.' The latter founded in the city, according to Shelomo ibn Verga, synagogues and Yeshivot. As a result, during the years 1191–1211 three communities emerged: that of Ascalon, that of Maghreb and that of the immigrants from France and England. The Spanish-Jewish poet, Yehuda al-Ḥarizi, who came to Jerusalem in 1216, found in the city three communities: that of the Ascalonites, that of the French and that of the 'Westerns' namely the Jews from the Maghreb. The three communities led a quarrelsome existence till the destruction of the city's walls in 1219 and 1220 by its Ajub lord, Sulṭān al-Maleq al-Mu'azzam. Most of the population left the now unfortified city and so did the Jews; some went to Damascus and Egypt, others to St. Jean d'Acre.[85]

There is, however, evidence that the city was not altogether abandoned and although it was not refortified some of the Jewish inhabitants remained in Jerusalem during the years 1221–1229. It is known that e.g. R. Yeḥiel b. Isaac Ṣarfati stayed in the city during the years 1221–1229.[86]

In 1229 Jerusalem was handed over by Sulṭān al-Maleq al-Kamal to the Emperor king of Jerusalem, Friedrich II. Upon taking over, the Crusaders renewed almost automatically their previous ban on non-Christians in Jerusalem. The new ban was even more severe than the previous one as it included the prohibition of pilgrimage. The ban was a heavy blow and attempts made to have it abolished were partly successful when in 1236 an

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[84] See n. 90–104 below.

[85] Goitein, S. D., "A restoration of Jewish Jerusalem after the exodus of the Crusaders in 1187", Hacker, Palestinian Jewry, 321–335; Goitein, S. D., "A new source for the immigration of French rabbis and their fellow travellers in 1212", Hacker, Palestinian Jewry, 338–343; Prawer, Crusaders, 294–308; Prawer, J., "Notes on the History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem", Shalem, 2, 1976, 105–112 (Hebrew); For al-Ḥarizi: Kaminka, A. (ed.), Taḥkemoni, Warsaw, 1899, 353 (Hebrew).

[86] Prawer, Crusaders, 308–311.

anonymous merchant from Bilbeis was granted the permission for one dyer's family to settle in Jerusalem. Thus in 1236 the situation reversed to what it was during the visit of Rabbi Petaḥya of Regensburg in ca. 1170–1180. A community was not established but after the city's return into the hands of the Sulṭāns of Egypt (1244).[87]

The Jerusalem communitiy was hardly a flourishing one and particularly so in comparison to St. Jean d'Acre. This can be ascribed chiefly to the political upheavals the city suffered from. In the years 1244–1247 it was attacked and captured by the savage Khwazismians. When the latter were expelled from the city by the Egyptians, it was captured by the Lord of Kerak and the Sulṭān of Egypt did not regain it until a year later (1247/1248). Three years later Jerusalem was conquered by another Moslem invader; this time it was the Lord of Homs. The city returned into the hands of its legal lord, the Sulṭān of Egypt in 1253–1254 just to fall a year later to the forces of the ruler of Damascus who held it up to the time of the Mongol invasion of Palestine in 1260. At that time the Jerusalem community still existed. Upon the news of the Mongol invasion, however, its members flew, to St. Jean d'Acre or Egypt.[88]

After the Mongol invasion the conditions for re-establishing a community in Jerusalem continued to be unfavourable. The attacks of the Mameluke Sulṭān Baibars on Crusaders' territories endangered severely the traffic from the hinterland to the coastal cities. Therefore the various attempts made during the second half of the century to re-establish a proper community in the city, failed. The most famous of those attempts was that of Naḥmanides (Rabbi Moshe ben Naḥman) who immigrated from Spain to Jerusalem in 1267. Upon his arrival in Jerusalem he found there two Jewish dyers in whose house prayers were said. From his letter of 1267 it follows that in the city were about ten Jewish men and some of them lived there already before the Mongol invasion of 1260. Naḥmanides took upon himself the restoration of a house in the Jewish Quarter, which became the spiritual centre for the numerous Jewish pilgrims who frequented the city. Writing in ca. 1267–1270 to his son, Naḥmanides referred to the numerous pilgrims from the neighbouring countries including Egypt and Damascus. However, Naḥmanides himself stayed in Jerusalem a few weeks only and then moved to St. Jean D'Acre, the biggest of Palestine's communities. His attempt to re-establish Jerusalem's community was too short to have any real impact. A proper community did not develop in Jer-

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[87] Prawer, Crusaders, 311–312; Kedar, Jewish Community, 82–87; Goitein, New Information, 300–302.

[88] Prawer, Crusaders, 312–317 and n. 170.

usalem but when following the fall of the last Crusader strongholds in 1291, political conditions improved; then, following the destruction of the flourishing communities of the coastal cities, the importance of the hinterland increased.[89]

7. The Community of St. Jean d'Acre

Most of the immigrants from Europe who arrived in order to settle in Jerusalem finished up, like Naḥmanides, by moving and settling in Crusader St. Jean d'Acre. One of the major Jewish communities in Palestine, already in the twelfth century, St. Jean d'Acre became after its conquest by the armies of the Third Crusade (12 July 1191) the biggest one. As the capital of Crusader kingdom and its main gateway, it became also one of the most important trade centres in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as one of the most important transit markets for the Moslem hinterland. These factors, as well as the security its inhabitants enjoyed inside the city's massive lines of fortifications, explain the emergence of St. Jean d'Acre as one of the main Jewish centres in the Middle East in the period 1191–1291.

It seems that the capture of the town by Saladin (1187) hardly influenced the fate of the already then sizeable Jewish community. This is to be gathered from the fact that a community appears in the city almost immediately following its conquest by the armies of the Third Crusade. As early as 1206 a document dealing with the property of the Teutonic Order in the city refers to a 'house of Jews' (*domus Judaeorum*) as well as a 'street of Jews' (*rua Judaeorum*) possibly in the old city of St. Jean d'Acre, where the Jews lived before Saladin's conquest.[90] This, however, seems to contradict the Crusader ordinance of ca. 1198, which decreed that non-Franks would not be allowed to live in the old city thus relegating them to the new quarter of Mont Musard.[91] Moreover, as the Teutonic Order had property both in the old as well as in the new part of the city, it is possible that the Jewish Quarter was indeed located in Mont Musard.[92]

During the thirteenth century the community of St. Jean d'Acre steadily grew. There was the immigration from Europe, from the neigbouring countries and particularly from Egypt, as well as an influx of refugees

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[89] Kedar, Jewish Communitiy, 82–94; Kedar, B.Z., "The Jews of Jerusalem, 1184–1267 and the role of Naḥmanides in the re-establishment of their Community", Kedar, B.Z. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, Jerusalem 1979, 122–136 (Hebrew).

[90] Strehlke, E., Tabulae ordinis theutonici, Berlin, 1869 (repr. Toronto 1975), no.41, 33; Jacoby, L'expansion, 247–248.

[91] See n.67 above.

[92] Jacoby, L'expansion, 248 and n.107 versus: Prawer, Crusaders, 322–323.

from various settlements in Palestine itself, including Jerusalem. First of all, the majority of the immigrants who arrived with the immigration wave of 1209–1211, settled in it. In ca. 1233–1234 Rabbi Yosef son of Rabbi Gershom moved from Egypt to St. Jean d'Acre. Around that time Rabbi Shimshon of Sens, one of the most important 'Tosafists' of his age established a Yeshiva in the city.[93] In about 1285 David, the grandson of Maimonides settled in St. Jean d'Acre but on the eve of the city's fall in 1290 went back to Egypt.[94]

As a result St. Jean d'Acre became one of the most important centers of Jewish studies in the Middle East. The ordinances (Taqqanot) of its rabbinical court were often accepted by all the communities in the Holy Land and even those of Egypt and Syria. According to Rabbi Shelomo ben Rabbi Adret, i.e. Rashba, who wrote in 1280: "It is a custom among the sages of the Holy Land and of Babylon, that if a question should be asked nobody answers but they say: 'Let us be guided by the Sages of Acre.'"[95] The most important of the Talmudic schools (Yeshiva or Beit-Midrash) in the 1280's was that of the French Rabbi, Shelomo le Petit. It was this Rabbi who proclaimed the prohibition of the use and study of Maimonides' writings. As a reaction the leaders of the communities of Damascus, Mosul and Baghdad officially anathematized (1286–1288) Rabbi Shelomo and his supporters. The controversy over the writings of Maimonides caused in St. Jean d'Acre a bitter controversy that split the community up to the capture of the city by the Mamelukes in May 1291.[96]

During the entire century, the city was also flooded by refugees from all over the country, including Jerusalem. In 1260, e.g. there were refugees seeking refuge in view of a Mongol invasion of the country.[97] However, the most famous of the Jerusalem refugees was no less than Naḥmanides, who arrived in the city about ten years later, in ca. 1270.[98] As a result of

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[93] Prawer, The History (see n. 1 above), 264–276.

[94] Prawer, Crusaders, 323–329; Kedar, B.Z., "R. Yeḥiel of Paris and Palestine", Shalem, 2, 1976, 349–354 (Hebrew); Ta-Shema, I., "A New Chronography on the 13th Century Tosaphists", Shalem, 3, 1981, 319–324, (Hebrew); Idel, M., "Eretz-Israel and Prophetic Kabbalah", Shalem, 3, 1981, 119–126 (Hebrew); I owe the information about David the grandson of Maimonides to Dr. Elḥanan Reiner of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem; also: Strauss-Ashtor, Vol. 1, 130ff. (Hebrew); Mann, J., Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature, vol. 1, Cincinnati, 1931, 441.

[95] Responsa of Shelomo ben Adret, part 6, par. 890, Venice, n.d.; Prawer, Latin Kingdom, 240–242.

[96] Strauss-Ashtor, vol. 1, 130–142 (Hebrew); Prawer, Latin Kingdom, 242.

[97] Kedar, Notes, 411–412; Kedar, Jewish Community, 88–91.

[98] Prawer, Crusaders, 325; for Naḥmanides in St. Jean d'Acre also: Shachar, I., "The Seal

the migrations from both outside the country and from other places in Palestine, the community of St. Jean d'Acre acquired Spanish-Provencal and Franco-German populations on the one hand and Oriental on the other. The continuous and strong influx of immigrants from the West strengthened during the century the European Western character of the community. This transformation was typical. If, previously, the character of the urban settlement of Palestine was Oriental, it changed in the thirteenth century. The Oriental element persisted but what became now more felt was the growth of the Franco-German population. One of the outcomes of this change was in fact that the Jewish sources referring to Palestine were now written less in Arabic and more in Hebrew.[99]

It is known that during the century the population of St. Jean d'Acre doubled. The estimations of its size vary between 40 000–60 000.[100] What was the percentage of Jews in this population is impossible to say; it seems probable that the community whose size was in the 1170s, according to Benjamin of Tudela, 200,[101] doubled or even tripled. The community was not just big but prosperous as well. Already as early as 1212 a Christian pilgrim who visited there declared that the inhabitants of the city – Franks, Latins, Greeks and Syrians – are numerous and very rich.[102] The Jewish inhabitants of St. Jean d'Acre went back in the thirteenth century, it seems, after a century's intermission, into maritime international trade.[103] Moreover, as already pointed out above, they were now increasingly employed in banking. Their money-lending business must have been considerable as Jacques of Vitry the Bishop of St. Jean d'Acre in the years 1216–1228 complained that "they ruined the Latins by their inhuman interest."[104]

8. Other Thirteenth Century Communities

The second major community was Tyre, the only Crusader city never conquered by the Moslems. The thirteenth century community was thus a direct continuation of one of those already flourishing in the previous

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of Naḥmanides," Kedar, B. Z., Baras, Z. (eds.), Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, Jerusalem, 1979, 137–147 (Hebrew).

[99] Prawer, Crusaders, 319.

[100] Prawer, Crusaders, 318.

[101] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 21.

[102] Laurent, J. C. M. (ed.), "Wilbrandi de Oldenborg Peregrinatio," Peregrinatores Medii Aevi Quatuor, Leipzig, 1864, 163.

[103] On the Jews in international trade: Prawer, Jews, 72–73; Jacoby, L'expansion, 248–249.

[104] See n. 78 above; Jacobus de Vitriaco, "Historia Orientalis," Bongars, J. (ed.), gesta Dei per Francos, Hanau 1611, cap. LXXXI., (81).

century. Similarly as St. Jean d'Acre, the community of Tyre grew during the century due to immigration movement from the West. If Tyre's population was estimated in the 1170's by Benjamin of Tudela as 500,[105] it probably increased now. According to a Venetian report of 1243, in the Venetian quarter alone lived about 35–40 Jews.[106] Like other coastal communities, Tyre prospered. According to a Hebrew itinerary the community of Tyre had "a synagogue, a most beautiful and handsome building."[107]

Other communities in the coastal cities were Beirut in the north[108] and Gaza in the south.[109] Japhe's, Cesaire's and Sidon's communities it seems, disappeared. As to Beirut, the importance of this city increased following its conquest by Saladin as he transferred to it the population of cities he destroyed, namely Japhe, Arsuf, Cesaire, Sidon and Gebail. It seems, therefore, that in the thirteenth century its Jewish community grew.[110]

In the hinterland the rural communities of Galilee continued to exist, little affected by the political upheavals. A thirteenth century Geniza document refers to communities in Bīriya, ʿAin az-Zaitūn, ʿAlmā, al-ʿAlawīya, Guš-Ḥalàv,[111] and there is also evidence regarding Dallātā,[112] ʿAmmuqa, Kafr-Birīm and Nabartain.[113] It is, however, impossible to state if other twelfth century communities like Mairūn, Kafr ʿInān and outside of Galilee - Bethleem, Bethnoble and Zarin - continued to exist.[114]

Two main communities of Galilee were, as during the previous century, Saphet and Ṭabarīya. Saphet's community survived, it seems, Saladin's conquest (1187). In ca. 1209–1210 a Jewish pilgrim, Rabbi Shemu'el ben Rabbi Shimshon, found in this city a community which was relatively large and had, it seems, its own Yeshiva.[115] Its fate during the Crusader rule of the city in the years 1240–1266 is unknown. A Latin description of the construction of the castle of Saphet in 1240 mentions a synagogue in the

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[105] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 36.

[106] See n. 58 above; Prawer, Crusaders, 318–329.

[107] Eileh ha-Mass'ot, ed. L. Grünhut, Jerusalem 1903, 158; Prawer, Crusaders, 321 and n. 188.

[108] Goitein, New Information, 294–295.

[109] Goitein, S.D., A Mediterranean Society, vol. 2, Berkeley - Los Angeles - London, 1971, 308; for Gaza: also Neubauer, A., Catalog Library, Bodleian, no. 1658[4].

[110] See n. 108 above.

[111] Ashtor, Yedi'ot, 500; Ish-Shalom, 261.

[112] Ashtor, Yedi'ot, 496.

[113] Ya'ari, Igrot, 80; For Kafr 'Inān: Goitein, S.D., The Yemenites. History, Communal Organization, Spiritual Life. Selected Studies, Jerusalem, 1983, 132 and n. 26 (Hebrew).

[114] A Geniza document (Cambridge T.S. 13, J.7, fol. 18 a–b) dated now as of 13th century, seems to refer however, to a community in Bethgibelin: Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 92–99.

[115] Ya'ari, Igrot, 80–81; Ish-Shalom, 259–261.

city, as well as a mosque,[116] but this does not prove the existence of a community. Possibly the community was not re-established, but following the Mameluke conquest of Saphet in 1266 as there is a reference to such a community in ca. 1286, taking part in the controversy over the writings Maimonides.[117]

Ṭabarīya, the second main community of Galilee was described by Benjamin of Tudela (ca. 1174) as consisting of about 50 Jews.[118] It is impossible to state what was its size in the thirteenth century as the documentation is meager. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the existence of a community is attested by Rabbi Shemu'el ben Rabbi Shimshon.[119] Ṭabarīya, which from the third century was the traditional burial ground for Jews from the Diaspora, became in 1205 that of Maimonides.[120] The town was during the Crusader Period also an important site of pilgrimage for Jewish pilgrims as the burial place of Yoḥanan ben-Zakkai, Yehuda Halewy etc.[121]

A new community was founded during the thirtheenth century in St. Abraham V. Ebron.[122] It was abandoned following its conquest by the Crusaders in 1099, but the Jewish Settlement there was re-established after the conquest of the town by Saladin in 1187. In 1211 Rabbi Shemu'el ben Rabbi Shimshon found one dyer in the town[123] and by the end of the century Rabbi Tanḥum ha-Yerushalmi, wrote a poem to a friend there.[124] As to Nablus, the evidence of a Jewish community there before 1291 does not seem solid.[125]

9. Conclusion

The sources reflect that during the thirteenth century the number of Palestine's communities further declined. This, however, does not prove that this was the reality. One has to take into account that what declined in the

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[116] Huygens, R. B. C. (ed.), De constructione castri Saphet. Construction et fonctions d'un château fort en Terre Sancte, Amsterdam - Oxford - New York, 1981, 38.

[117] Prawer, Crusaders, 279-280.

[118] Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 29.

[119] Ya'ari, Igrot, 79-80.

[120] Ish-Shalom, M., Holy Tombs, Jerusalem 1948, 192-194 (Hebrew).

[121] Gafni, Y., "Bringing Deceased from abroad for Burial in Eretz Israel - On the Origin of the Custom and its Development," Cathedra, 4, 1977, 113-120 (Hebrew); Adler, Benjamin of Tudela, 29.

[122] Prawer, Crusaders, 280-281.

[123] Ya'ari, Igrot, 78-79.

[124] Ish-Shalom, 286.

[125] Ish-Shalom, 283.

thirteenth century, and almost disappeared, were the Geniza sources. Moreover, there were no such demographical data for this century as those provided in the previous one by pilgrims like Benjamin of Tudela and Petaḥya of Regensburg. Therefore, the fact that certain settlements are not mentioned by the sources does not necessarily prove that their communities disappeared. On the whole, it seems that during the thirteenth century the communities in the Crusader coastal cities steadily grew, mainly through the influx of immigrants from the West. On the other hand, the communities in Judea and Samaria obviously suffered from political upheavals and constant warfare. The rural communities of Galilee, however, were little affected and the period is marked by the emergence of what will turn into one of the most important communities during the next Mameluke Period – the community of Saphet.

List of Abbreviations

Adler, Benjamin of Tudela – Adler, M.N., The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, London, 1907 (Hebrew).

Ashtor, Yedi'ot – Ashtor, E., "Yedi'ot 'al ha-Yehudim bi-Şefon Eretz-Israel ba-Mea ha-Aḥat-'Esre ...", Zer Li'-Gevurot – The Zalman Shazar Jubilee Volume, Jerusalem, 1973, 489–509 (Hebrew).

Braslvsky, L'Heqer – Braslvsky, J., L'Heqer Artzenu – 'Avar Us'ridim, Tel-Aviv, 1954 (Hebrew).

Goitein, New Information – Goitein, S.D., "New Information about Palestine in Crusader Period," Hacker, Palestinian Jewry, 283–305.

Goitein, New Sources – Goitein, S.D., "New Sources on the Fate of the Jews at the Conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders", Hacker, Palestinian Jewry, 231–258.

Hacker, Palestinian Jewry – Hacker, J. (ed.), Palestinian Jewry in Early Islamic and Crusader Times, Jerusalem, 1980 (Hebrew).

Ish-Shalom – Ish-Shalom, M., In the Shadow of Alien Rule. History of the Jews in the Land of Israel, Tel-Aviv, 1975 (Hebrew).

Jacoby, L'expansion – Jacoby, D., "L'expansion occidentale dans le Levant: les Vénitiens à Acre dans la second moitié du treizième siècle", Journal of Medieval History, 3, 1977, 225–264.

Kausler, Livre des Assises des Bourgeois – Kausler, H. (ed.), Les Livres des Assises et des usages du reaume de Jerusalem, Stuttgart, 1839.

Kedar, Jewish Community – Kedar, B.Z., "The Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Thirteenth Century", Tarbiz, 41, 1971/2, 82–94 (Hebrew).

Kedar, Notes – Kedar, B.Z., "Notes on the History of the Jews of Palestine in the Middle Ages", Tarbiz, 42, 1973, 401–418 (Hebrew).

Prawer, Crusaders – Prawer, J., The Crusaders. A Colonial Society, Jerusalem, 1975.

Prawer, Jews — Prawer, J., "The Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem", Zion, 11, 1946, 38-82 (Hebrew).

Prawer, Latin Kingdom — Prawer, J., The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. European Colonialism in the Middle Ages, London, 1972.

Prawer, Serfs — Prawer, J., "Serfs, Slaves and Bedouin", Prawer, J., Crusader Institutions, Oxford, 1980, 201-214.

RHC. HArm — Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens Arméniens, Paris, 1869-1906.

RHC. HOcc — Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens Occidentaux, Paris 1872.

RHC. Lois — Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Lois, Paris, 1841-1843.

Schein, Eretz-Israel — Schein, S., "Eretz-Israel under the Crusader Rule", Prawer, J. (ed.), The History of Eretz-Israel under Moslem and Crusader Rule (634-1291), vol. 6, Jerusalem, 1981, 179-351 (Hebrew).

Strauss-Ashtor — Strauss, E., The History of the Jews in Egypt and Syria under the Mamelūks Rule, vol. 1, Jerusalem, 1944 (Hebrew).

Ya'ari, Igrot — "Iggeret Rabbi Shemu'el ben Rabbi Shimshon (1211)", Ya'ari, A. (ed.), Igrot Eretz-Israel, Tel-Aviv, 1943 (Hebrew).

Ya'ari, Massa'ot — "Massa'ot Rabbi Petaḥya mi-Regensburg", Ya'ari, A. (ed.), Massa'ot Eretz-Israel, Ramat-Gan, 1976, 48-55, (Hebrew).

Chapter III. The Jewish Settlement in Palestine in the Mameluke Period (1260–1516)

by
Avraham David

1. Introduction

The Mameluke Empire, the center of which was in Cairo, ruled in Palestine from 1260 till the end of 1516. The Empire was divided into several provinces. Syria and Palestine as one political unit were divided into six or seven provinces which were called 'Kingdom': Aleppo, Hama, Tripoli, Damascus, Safed, Kerak (in Trans-Jordan). Sometimes Gazza too constituted a separate province. Each province was headed by a military governor who was called Nā'ib (Viceroy-Commissioner), and the regions of the province were ruled by appointed governors of a lower rank who were called Wālī. The largest province was the Damascus province, which included the largest part of Syria and Palestine, from al-ʿArīš in the south to the banks of the Euphrates. This province included various regions in Palestine such as: al-Quds, Ludd, Qāqūn (in the Sharon), Nābulus and others. From 1376 onward al-Quds and its vicinity became a region governed not by a Wālī, but by a Nā'ib, namely a military governor whose status was similar to that of the other province governors and who was directly under the Sulṭān's court in Cairo.

Those governors were Mameluke ʿEmīrs and their ranks within the military hierarchy was not uniform. The governors were frequently changed and served in their position only short periods of time. The local population has obviously suffered a lot from the frequent changing of commissioners. Every new governor increased the tax burden imposed on his subjects in order to justify the appointment and to gain more favour from the Sulṭān and his officials. In al-Quds, unlike other places, there was, apart from the Nā'ib, an additional administrative position, the holder of which was called Nāṣer al Ḫārmīn. He was the administrator of the sacred places in al-Quds and al-Ḫalīl and was in charge of the Waqf. The Mameluke Sulṭāns treated Palestine as a godforsaken province, to part of which-mainly the cities of al-Quds and al-Ḫalīl-they attached religious importance only. They had neither reason nor interest to develop the country. They paid no attention to its economic potential, but at the same

time oppressed the population. They were not interested to do anything to develop the economy of the country, either by encouragement and incentives to improve commerce, industry and agriculture which were in a state of neglect, or by reducing the burden of taxes which greatly distressed the local population.

The Mameluke authorities and some of their predecessors believed in a policy of destruction and ruin, mainly of the coast cities, because of their constant fear lest the European powers renew their attempts to drive them away from Palestine and Syria. Nor did the central government succeed greatly in imposing its authority on the Beduin tribes and on gangs of highwaymen who terrorized both the local populace and the travellers. That same policy left in the country a small and reduced population which had sunk into almost total degeneration, because of hard living conditions which were the result of a degenerated economy as well as dangerous roads.[1] The status of the Jews in Palestine was sevenfold graver than that of the Moslems, because they were discriminated in various areas, just as their brothers were discriminated in the other Moslem countries. The discriminating attitude towards the Jews was rooted in the ancient Muslim constitution. In this constitution there were discriminating laws against those who did not believe in the Islam religion, Ahl ad-Dhimma and which had been given shape for the first time in the famous 'Omar Covenant. Non-believers were compelled to pay a special tax - a tax per capita, Jizya; they were not permitted to wear clothes in the Moslem fashion, nor were they allowed to keep Moslem slaves, to sell wine, to add synagogues or churches to those already in existence, etc. In the course of years this covenant was reaffirmed many times, and additional limitations and decrees have even been added to it. In the Mameluke Period there was some aggravation of the discriminating decrees. In 1301 the subjects were not permitted to build taller houses than those of their Moslem neighbours. Also, in 1354 they were forbidden to acquire lands. It seems, however, that this prohibition did not last, because in later periods we hear about land ownership of Jews. In the same year the decree of inheritances was issued, ordering that the inheritances of the non-Moslems be handled by government offices and treated according to the Moslem law: heirs would receive their share according to the Moslem religious law, and the

[1] This problem has been discussed in various places: Le-Strange, G., Palestine under the Moslems, Boston - New York, 1890; a summary of this subject: Ashtor, Jerusalem, 90-94; Sharon, M., "Processes of Destruction and Nomadisation in Palestine under Islamic Rule (633-1517)", Sharon, M. (ed.), Notes and Studies on the History of the Holy Land Under Islamic Rule, Jerusalem, 1976, 9-32 (Hebrew); Friedman, Eretz-Israel, 7-38.

rest would pass to the State Treasury. Furthermore, the entire property and money of an heirless person would pass, upon his passing away, to the Sulṭān's treasury. In the social field too there was, since the beginning of the 14th century, an aggravation in the discriminating laws, like prohibition of riding a horse within a town as an actual symbol of shame and humiliation, or the imposing of the headgear law in 1301. To each denomination a specific headgear colour was assigned, as a means of identification of the wearers. The color of the Jews was usually yellow, that of the Christians blue and that of the Moslems white.[2]

On account of these and other causes, immigration to Palestine became a rare occurrence. Only little is known about group immigration to Palestine during this period; on the other hand we know of the emigration of many, including the elite of the community.[3]

2. The Sources

This article is based on Jewish sources, Christian pilgrimage itineraries and Franciscan chronicles, and only a little bit on Arabic sources. The majority of the Jewish historiographical matter is from the last decades of the Mameluke Period, namely the second half of the 15th century. The most important source for the Jewish communal life in Jerusalem are the three letters from the end of the 80's and the beginning of the 90's in the 15th century, which were written by Ovadya of Bertinoro who was the dominant figure in the Jewish community in Jerusalem at that time.

3. Jewish Settlements

There are few facts about the places of settlement of the Jews in Palestine during the Mameluke Period and earlier, and those scattered, random facts do not enable us to draw the map of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine in its entirety during this period. We can assume that information

[2] Meir, A.L., "The Status of the Jews under the Mamluks", Magnes Anniversary Book, Jerusalem, 1938, 161-167 (Hebrew); Meir, A.L., "The Jewish Apparel under the Mamelukes", (-), Studies in Memory of A.Gulak and S.Klein, Jerusalem, 1942, 115-118 (Hebrew); for summaries on this subject: Strauss-Ashtor, 204-236, 259-292; Strauss, E., "The social isolation of Ahl ad-Dhimma", Komlos, O (ed.), Études Orientales à la Memoire de P.Hirschler, Budapest, 1950, 73-94.

[3] Compare for example Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro's account of the fleeing of "The Rabbis and the Sages who have lived in Jerusalem" because of the evil doings of the Elders: Ya'-ari, Igrot, 122-123.

about Jewish settlements at an earlier or later period reflects to some degree the condition of the Jewish settlement during this period.

Al-Ḫalīl - the City of the Patriarchs was holy to both Moslems and Jews, because of the 'Cave of the Makhpela.' Isolated facts have come down to us about a Jewish Settlement in the 14th century[4] and earlier.[5] In the Cairo Geniza a letter of condolence was found, sent "by Ya'aqov al-Ḫalīli' ... son of Rabbi Yiṣḥaq son of Rabbi David Ma'aravi" to the Nagid (the Head of the Jews) in Egypt - Rabbi Yehoshu'a ha-Nagid[6] (one of Maimonides' descendants, who died in 1355). It seems that in al-Ḫalīl was a small Jewish community,[7] whose members probably served Jewish pilgrims who visited the 'Cave of the Makhpela.' We have additional facts about Jews in al-Ḫalīl also in the 15th century.[8] Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra on his visit to al-Ḫalīl in 1481 pointed out that in the city "no more than some 20 Jewish landlords are living".[9] Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, who visited there seven years later, in 1488, also counts

> "About twenty landlords, all of them Rabbanites[10] and half of them descendents of the Marranoes, who had just come to seek refuge under the wings of the Shekhina (The Divine Presence)."[11]

Rabbi Ovadya of Bertionoro lived in al-Ḫalīl for a brief period of several years, as he relates in his third letter sent in 1492.[12] It is possible that Rabbi Ovadya hints at the struggle between him and the Zekenim (Elders) of al-Quds[13] about the manner of managing the affairs of the community there. He had lost this struggle, and was compelled to move to al-Ḫalīl, where he

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[4] Ish-Shalom, M., "The Jews in Hebron in Christian Sources", Sefunot, 9, 1964, 337-342 (Hebrew); Ish-Shalom, 300-301.

[5] Report about the existence of a Jewish Settlement in al-Ḫalīl as early as the 13th century: Ish-Shalom, 286; according to additional information which has not been mentioned by the above, one of the disciples of the famous Sefardic Kabbalist Rabbi Avraham Abūl'afiya has lived in al-Ḫalīl, and has written his Kabbalistic book 'Sha'arei Ṣedeq,' at the end of the 13th century: Scholem, G., Kabbalistic Manuscripts at the National University Library in Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 1930, 33-34 (Hebrew); Idel, M., "Eretz-Israel and Prophetic Kabbalah", Shalem, 3, 1981, 120 (Hebrew).

[6] Published by Mann, J., The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fatimid Caliphs, vol. 2, Oxford, 1922, 329-330; mentioned by Ish-Shalom, 301.

[7] Following see the accounts of Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra and Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro.

[8] Beit Arié, 269-270.

[9] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 69.

[10] Meaning, not Karaites.

[11] His first letter of that year, Ya'ari, Igrot, 126-127.

[12] Published by Ya'ari, Igrot, 142-143.

[13] About the problem of the Elders see following.

stayed no later than 1495, when he is mentioned by his unknown disciple as heading the Jewish community in al-Quds.[14] Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ha-Kohen Shulāl, who functioned as the Nagid in Egypt in the years 1502–1516, stayed in al-Ḫalīl on his business.[15]

Ġazza – an important town in the Medieval Era, and the capital of a region in the administrative division of the country in the Mameluke Period. The convoys of passengers from Egypt to Palestine passed through it. The earliest information of a Jewish Settlement in Ġazza in the Mameluke Period can be found in the words of the Christian-Italian pilgrim Giorgio Gucci, who visited the town in 1384.[16] From Hebrew and Christian sources of the second half of the 15th century we learn of an important and respectable Jewish community in Ġazza.[17] Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra and Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro speak in the 80's of the 15th century of about 50–70 Jewish landlords,[18] and alongside it of a small Samaritan community which had existed since ancient times.[19] Rabbi Meshulam further stresses that the Jews of Ġazza excelled in vineyard crops and wine industry.

> „And there are good bread and wine, although only Jews make the wine ... and they have got ... and vineyards and fields and houses, and have already started to make the new wine."[20]

There are testimonies that the Ġazza Jews were engaged in additional agricultural branches as well as in artisanship and trade.[21] We know of Rabbi Moshe of Prague who had been one of the Rabbis of al-Quds and had fled to Ġazza, where he was one of its scholars.[22] Rabbi Ovadya stayed in his house during his visit in the town in 1488.[23]

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[14] David, Elders, 136.

[15] Assaf, S., Texts and Studies in Jewish History, Jerusalem, 1946, 195 (Hebrew).

[16] Ish-Shalom, 306; Ish-Shalom, Travels, 236.

[17] Kena'ani, J., "The Jewish Population at Gaza in the Middle Ages", Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 5, 1937, 33–35 (Hebrew); Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 308–309; Ish-Shalom, Travels, 107–108, 255–258, 266; Ish-Shalom, 333–335.

[18] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 64, 68; Ya'ari, Igrot, 125; there is a Geniza fragment on morality at the Cambridge University Library, T-S, K, 6.46- copied in Ġazza in 1481.

[19] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 64, mentioned "four Samaritan households," and Rabbi Ovadya mentions "two Samaritan households;" about the Samaritan settlement in Ġazza: Ben-Zvi, I., The Book of the Samaritans, Jerusalem, 1970, 112–116 (Hebrew); in the above book of Ben-Zvi, second edition, which was published after his death, the French pilgrim Seigneur d'Angluse's testimony of 1395 or 1396 about the existence of "heretics called Samaritans," was not included; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 135–136; Ish-Shalom, Travels, 237; Ish-Shalom, 306.

[20] The Italian pilgrim Giorgio Gucci: Ish-Shalom, 306.

[21] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 68; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 135, 162.

[22] Asaf, S., "On Various Manuscripts", Kirjath Sepher, 11, 1934, 397–398.

[23] Ya'ari, Igrot, 125; David, Elders, 225, Note 15.

Ar-Ramla – isolated data have been preserved only regarding a community in this town in the 14th century.[24]

a. Samaria and the Valley Region

Nābulus – there was a small Jewish community in this city in the 16th century,[25] and it seems that it had existed earlier.[26]

Bet-Šəa'ān – Eshtori Haparḥi, the first of the Jewish explorers of Palestine, settled in it a short time after his immigration in 1313.[27] In Bet-Šəa'ān he met a French scholar by the name of Rabbi Matitya from whom he took lessons in Halakha (the traditional Jewish laws).[28] It is quite possible that the Jewish community in Bet-Šəa'ān had been established just prior to Rabbi Eshtori's arrival, and its establishment was probably connected with the development of the place, following the construction of the Khan al-'Aḥmar in the western outskirts of Bet-Šəa'ān in 1308.[29]

b. Trans-Jordan

From what the above Rabbi Eshtori Haparḥi wrote in his book 'Caftor va-pherach' ('Knop and Flower') we can conclude that in his days there were several communities in Trans-Jordan. About the Jews in 'Ağlūn he knew enough to tell that "their holidays are only one day"[30] as was the custom in Palestine, and in the neighbouring 'Ḥavrām'.[31] About a Jewish settlement in 'Ağlūn we know also from sources later than the 16th cen-

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[24] Ish-Shalom, M., "Contribution to the History of the Jewish Community of Ramle", Yerushalayim (Review), 2/5, 1955, 195–196; Ish-Shalom, 304.

[25] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 52; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 156; Ben-Zwi, Jewish, 324–325.

[26] Rabbi Moshe Bassola pointed out in 1521 that he had found in Nāblus "twelve Murisk households," namely Musta'rabs. Since it was written about a local Musta'riba community, it is reasonable to assume that those families had already been living in the city many years previously, especially when it seems that in the 13th century, at the time of Ramban, there was in Nābulus a core of a Jewish community, Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 223–224; Ish-Shalom, 282–283.

[27] He speaks in the introduction to his book about the settlement in this town: Luncz, A. M. (ed.), Jerusalem, 1899, 4 (Hebrew); further in this matter: Klein, Toledot, 137–158; Ish-Shalom, 296–297.

[28] Caftor va-pherach, 46, 142 and 227. About the identity of Rabbi Mattatias: Ish-Shalom, 297, Note 4.

[29] Drori, Jerusalem, 153, Note 16; Braslavy, J., "Beth-Shean as the Focus of the Researches of R. Eshtori Haparḥi", The Beth Shean Valley, The 17th Archaeological Convention, Jerusalem, 1962, 80–95 (Hebrew).

[30] Caftor va-pherach, 683; Klein, Ever ha-Yarden, 63–64; Ish-Shalom 298–299.

[31] Caftor va-pherach, 683.

tury.[32] Rabbi Eshtori Haparḥi mentioned also the towns Salḥā and Edrei ... "and nowadays there are communities there."[33]

c. Northern Region of Palestine

From ancient times the main part of the Jewish Settlement had concentrated there, but only little is known of the existence of Jews in the following places:

ʿAkkā - upon the defeat of the Crusaders in ʿAkkā in 1291 the Jewish community in it was also annihilated.[34] It seems however that later a few Jews returned to settle in it, since we learn from a Christian source of the first half of the 14th century that "Jews who pour wine" lived in it.[35] It seems that the war refugees who had fled from the town have settled in the neighbouring villages, and maybe this is what is intimated by the report of 1388 about Jewish Settlement "in the town of Ğūlīs which is on well waters near ʿAkkā,"[36] and which today is near Kafr Yāsīf. Rabbi Eshtori Haparḥi points out that Jews lived in Ğiš in his times.[37] In Kafr ʿInān Jews lived as early as the second half of the 15th century, and maybe even earlier.[38]

Buqaiʿa - there are many traditions about the antiquity of a Jewish settlement in this place, but the authentic data about Jews living there are not earlier than the beginning of the second quarter of the 16th century.[39]

Bīriya - a village in which Jews lived during that period.[40] ʿAin az-Zaitūn, also a village near Ṣafad in which Jews lived during that period.[41] Kafr ʿAlmā - a village north of Ṣafad, some information has been preserved

[32] Braslvsky, thinks that it is not unlikely that the Jewish Settlement in ʿAğlūn was renewed in the 16th century, and was not a direct continuation of the settlement which had existed in the 4th century: Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 170-171.

[33] Klein, Ever ha-Yarden, 61-63; Klein, Toledot, 158; Caftor va-pherach, 141.

[34] Prawer, J., Histoire du Royaume Latin de Jérusalem, vol. 2, Paris, 1969, 555-557.

[35] Ish-Shalom, 305.

[36] Klein, S., Note, Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 3, 1935, 66 (Hebrew); Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 267.

[37] Caftor va-pherach, 141; Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 98-104.

[38] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 216-222; Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 123-131.

[39] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 17-42, and Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 168-169, 172-175, and his article: "On the Nature of the Continuous Jewish Settlement in Galilee", (-), Western Galilee and the Coast of Galilee, Jerusalem, 1965, 137-152 (Hebrew).

[40] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 69-71.

[41] The village ʿAin az-Zaitūn was probably an important place, maybe even more than Ṣafad, because in the Kolophone Oxford Bodleian Library Manuscript 598 (Hunt 519) (at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Hebrew University No. 20188), the copyist says that he had copied the manuscript "in the town of Ṣafad which is in Upper Galilee near ʿAin az-Zaitūn." And maybe there was in it at that time a more important Jewish community; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 168-169; Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 73-75.

about Jews who had been living in it.[42] Information about Jews living in South-Lebanon has been preserved from the 14th century.[43]

Kafr Kannā - in the Lower Galilee near an-Nāṣirah: about 70-80 Jewish landlords,[44] most of them poor[45] lived in this place in the 70's and 80's of the 15th century.

Ṭabarīya - although it was a deserted town in the Mameluke Period, it is not unlikely that there was in it a small Jewish community, and it is possible to find a hint about it in the words of Rabbi Shem Ṭov ben Avraham ibn Ga'on, in the introduction to his mystical treatise Badei ha-Aron u-Migdal Ḥanan'el (The Staves of the Ark and the Tower of Ḥanan'el), which he completed in Ṣafad in 1325,[46] in Sidon - information about a Jewish community over there exists from the end of the 15th century.[47]

Ṣafad - the capital of a region in the administrative division of Syria, which included Palestine in the Mameluke Period. From the 14th century only little information has been preserved about a Jewish community in this town.[48] In 1325 the Spanish Kabbalist Rabbi Shem Ṭov ben Avraham ibn Ga'on settled in it, and there he completed his above mentioned book.[49] Rabbi Eshtori Haparḥi pointed out that he had found in Ṣafad "A large congregation."[50] Of the size of the Jewish Settlement in the town at the beginning of the 80's of the 15th century we learn from the words of Rabbi Yosef de Montagna, who wrote:

> "Ṣafad is a nice community, with 300 landlords including the villages around them, which are within the boundaries."[51]

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[42] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 83-85; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 169.

[43] Ilan, Z., "Jewish Settlement in Lebanon in the Modern Period", Qardom, 26-27, 1983, 135 (Hebrew).

[44] Unknown traveller of Candia who toured Palestine in 1473 or earlier, writes in his short diary: "In Kafr Kini there are eighty Hebrew households," Ya'ari A., Massa'ot Eretz-Israel, Tel-Aviv 1946, 112 (Hebrew); Yosef de Montagna wrote in his letter of 1481: "there are some 70 distinguished households," Ya'ari, Igrot, 92; Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 347, does not mention the first source.

[45] Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro writes about it in his second letter of 1489, Ya'ari, Igrot, 140; Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 169-171.

[46] Levinger, Shem-Tov, 12; Ish-Shalom, who refers to this source, points out for some unclear reason that he has lived in Ṭabarīya for two years, Ish-Shalom, 341.

[47] Letter of the unknown disciple of Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro of 1495, Ya'ari, Igrot, 149; Ish-Shalom, 340.

[48] The sporadic data about a Jewish community in Ṣafad in the 14th century have been collected by Ish-Shalom, 305-306; Tamar D., "Ṣefat Erev Bo'o shel Maran", Raphael, Y. (ed.), Rabbi Yosef Qaro, Jerusalem, 1969, 7-8 (Hebrew).

[49] Levinger, Shem-Tov, 12.

[50] Caftor va-pherach, 284.

[51] Ya'ari, Igrot, 91; Ish-Shalom, 338, Note 224.

The above Rabbi Yosef further reported that the people of Ṣafad had tried in vain to persuade him to settle in their town, and not to continue on his way to al-Quds.[52] From the words of Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro it seems that the Jews of Ṣafad lived in poverty.[53] It seems that following the expulsion from Spain and the Portuguesian edicts at the end of the 15th century, many Jews found their way from the Iberian Peninsula to Ṣafad.

Al-Quds - there was an almost continuous Jewish settlement since the conquest of the country by the Arabs, except for several scores of years, at the beginning of the Crusaders' regime in Palestine in the 12th century. The fragmented information about the Jewish community in al-Quds becomes more abundant in the second half of the 15th century.[54]

When the Mameluke Empire was established in Palestine the Jews left the city because of their strong fear of what to expect from the invasion of the Mongols, who indeed entered the city in 1260. A few years later, in 1267, one of the great Jewish scholars in Spain - Rabbi Moshe ben-Naḥman (Naḥmanides) - arrived in al-Quds and stayed in the ruined city for a period of two or three years, when he moved to Crusaders' ʿAkkā. It seems that at that time he was the moving spirit in regenerating the Jewish Settlement in al-Quds.[55]

There are no data about the size of the Jewish community in al-Quds in the 14th century. We can presume that the Jewish population at that time did not exceed several scores of families. It seems that in the second half of the 15th century the community expanded, although not largely, following the immigration waves of singles and groups from both east and west.[56] However, in the second half of the 15th century one of the immigrants who had settled in the city relates that there are "some 150 and more landlords" in al-Quds.[57] At the beginning of the 80's of the 15th century, in 1481, Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra speaks of "some 250 Jewish landlords."[58] However, seven years later, at the time of the immigration of Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro to al-Quds, the Jewish population in the city

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[52] Yaʿari, Igrot, 93.

[53] Yaʿari, Igrot, 140.

[54] For summarizing literature on this subject: Beit-Arié, 244-249, 254-278; David, Elders, 221-243.

[55] Kedar, B.Z., "The Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Thirteenth Century", Tarbiz, 41, 1971/2, 82-94 (Hebrew); Kedar, B.Z., "The Jews of Jerusalem 1187-1267 and the Role of Naḥmanides in the Re-Establishment of their Community", Kedar, B.Z. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, Jerusalem, 1979, 122-136 (Hebrew).

[56] Hacker, Spanish, 128-130.

[57] Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Ben Meʾir Laṭif: Yaʿari, Igrot, 97.

[58] Yaʿari, Meshulam, 71.

did not exceed "seventy landlords,"[59] but that period of decline of the Jewish population in the city was passing, and several years later, at the end of 1495, there were already "some two hundred Jewish landlords."[60] From various Hebrew and Christian sources it appears that the location of the Jewish Quarter in al-Quds since the middle of the 13th century was on Mount Zion. As early as the 12th century there prevailed a tradition according to which the burial place of the house of David was on Mount Zion. From two Hebrew sources, one of the end of the 13th century, and the other of the beginning of the 14th century, it appears that Jews were holding another building on Mount Zion, known by its name 'Hękhal David' (the Temple of David), to which they attached special sanctity, and in regard to which Rabbi Eshtori Haparḥi wrote:

> "And in front of it and to its northwest there is a street; it is no doubt from Zion, and this is very close to the synagogue which exists there today, and to the Quarter."[61]

It seems that that synagogue, which is mentioned in this paragraph, is the one which had been built several scores of years earlier by the above Naḥmanides.

When the Monks of the Franciscan Brotherhood settled down on Mount Zion, after having obtained in 1333 a license from the Mameluke authorities to establish the "Custodia Terrae Sanctae" - designated to guard and supervise the places which were holy to Christianity in al-Quds and the vicinity - the Jews living on Mount Zion were disturbed. Those monks sought to remove by every means available to them the Jews, whom they considered as the true enemies of Christianity, from the places sancti-

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[59] Ya'ari, Igrot, 127. The stories of Christian pilgrims, who stayed in al-Quds two years after Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra's visit, mention that there were at that time five hundred Jews. Compare with Ish-Shalom, Travels, 254, 259; Schur, N., "The Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the 16th-18th Centuries According to Christian Chronicles and Travel Descriptions", Cohen, A. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Early Ottoman Period, Jerusalem, 1979, 345, (Hebrew); Ish-Shalom was not familiar with the latter. From what they have said it can be decluded that the number of families at that time did not exceed 120 families, if we assume that each family consisted of at least four or five people. If we indeed rely on their testimony, which probably sprung from a common source or from verified information, then we must conclude that the drastic decline in the status of Jewish Settlement in al-Quds occurred a short time after the visit of Rabbi Meshulam who had counted 250 families (housedholds). The decrease was due to several causes. It is possible that the draught mentioned by Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, Ya'ari, Igrot, 131-132, followed by famine, was a contributory cause to the decline. But it seems that the dominant factor was the Elders' behaviour: David, Elders, 228-229.

[60] Ya'ari, Igrot, 157; David, Elders, 221. For demographic data concerning this period see also Friedman, Eretz-Israel, 25-26.

[61] Caftor va-pherach, 559.

fied by both religions in the city, and even more than that – to reduce as far as possible the number of the Jews living in the city. It seems that they succeeded to a great extent, because at the end of the 14th century or at the beginning of the 15th century the Jews were deprived of their dwellings on Mount Zion and moved to another place – the area of the present Jewish Quarter.[62] From Hebrew and Arab sources of the 15th and 16th centuries we can rather definitely determine the location and size of the Jewish Quarter. To the south the quarter stretched outside the wall of Suleiman up to about Bęt Kayafa[63] in the vicinity of Mount Zion, and included the area of the 'al-Maslaḥ' quarter. To the north it reached the market entrance to the east it included the area of the 'Šaraf' quarter; and to the west it included the area of 'ar-Rīša' quarter, and bordered the Armenian quarter.[64]

The Jewish Quarter was called by the Jews and Arabs Ṣiyon, Ṣahayūn, because of its vicinity to Mount Zion,[65] and it was even called 'Ḥarat al

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[62] For the location of the Jewish Quarter on Mount Zion: Reiner, E., History of Eretz-Israel under the Mamluk (sic!) and Ottoman Rule, Jerusalem, 1981, 79–81 (Hebrew); David, A., "New Sources on the History of the Jews during the Middle Ages", Zev Vilnay's Jubilee Volume, Jerusalem, 1984, 289–291 (Hebrew).

[63] The pilgrim Ya'aqov of Verona wrote in 1335: "When you descend from Mount Zion at about two stones' throw in the way to the tomb, in the region or place where Jews now live, there is the House of Kayafa," Ish-Shalom, Travels, 228; to this day the House of the High Priest Kayafa is identified with the Armenian building near the Zion Gate: Ish-Shalom, 301, Note 38.

[64] Several Jewish and Christian sources of the 14th–16th centuries indicate that the location of the Jewish Quarter was in the vicinity of Mount Zion, but without drawing its borders. The Christian pilgrim Stephan von Gumpenberg wrote in 1449: "And from here a street crosses to the right opposite Mount Zion, and here the Jews are living": Ish-Shalom, Travels, 241; Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro wrote in 1488: "The Street of the Jews and their Quarter are very large and they live in Zion": Ya'ari, Igrot, 130; Rabbi Moshe Basola wrote in 1522: "Mount Zion is outside Jerusalem to the south, and the Nagid has told me that also in Jerusalem the location of the Jewish Quarter is from Mount Zion to the vicinity of the Temple": Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 55; more accurate data: Lewis, Cities, 117–120; we find the description of quarters in the late Mameluke Period in the work of Arab writer Mūğīr ad-Dīn, who lived in the years 1456–1522. His work in Hebrew: Yellin D., Kitvei David Yellin, vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1973, 204–205 (Hebrew); brief summary about Mūğīr ad-Dīn: Drori Y., "The Mameluke Historiography and its Contributions to the History of Eretz Israel", Cathedra, 1, 1976, 133–135 (Hebrew); Press has prepared a map of al-Quds with its quarters on the basis of Mūğīr ad-Dīn's work. The map was included in: Lewis, Cities, 120; Drori, Y., "A Map of Mamluk Jerusalem", Kedar, B. Z. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, Jerusalem, 1979, 178–184 (Hebrew); Drori, Jerusalem, 175, mentions the Jewish Quarter, but indicates only the dwelling area of the Jews "in the southern part of the street leading from Šəḳem (Nābulus) Gate to the Zion Gate," and he does not refer to the above data; also Ashtor, Jerusalem, 78.

[65] Radbaz in his Responsa writes among other things: "And it is possible in this matter to

Yahūd,' namely the Jewish Quarter. The Zion Gate to the south, and the gateway to the market to the north of the Jewish Quarter, were called by the Arabs 'Bāb Ḥarat al Yahūd.'[66] From a Christian source of the years 1344/5 it appears that Jews lived in an additional quarter in Yehoshafat Valley[67] but this information is not supported by any other source. From various sources it appears that Jews dwelt in the 14th–16th centuries north to al-Quds in a place called Miṣpà or Ràmà, which was identified, according to the Jewish and Muslim traditions, as the burial place of Samuel the Prophet, hence the name an-Nabī Ṣamwīl. According to an ancient custom which was practiced at that time, the Jews used to visit the grave on the anniversary of the Prophet's passing away, namely on the 28th day of the Hebrew month of 'Iyyār. From the sources it appears that Jews used to live all year round at this place, and even kept a synagogue which was confiscated by the Moslems not before the middle of the 60's of the 16th century.[68] The tiny community which lived at this place was connected by an umbilical cord to the navel of the al-Quds community.[69]

4. The Character of the Jewish Population in Palestine

The Jewish population in Palestine was complex and varied. Except for the 'Musta'riba,' who had been the inhabitants of the country for generations, and whose language and life style were similar to those of their neigh-

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rely on the gentiles (Moslems) tradition that the entire Quarter of the Jews is called Zion" (No.633); "And the gentiles call the Jewish Quarter Ṣahayūn" (No.731). It should be further mentioned, that Radbaz in his responses does not identify the Jewish Quarter in his time (the 16th century) with the historical boundaries of the City of Jerusalem enclosed within the walls. "Because it is not clear whether the Jewish Quarter is part of Jerusalem" (No.731); and: "Since the Quarter of Israel is outside Jerusalem" (No.633).

[66] Ashtor, Jerusalem, 78.

[67] Dinur, B., Israel in the Diaspora, vol.2, Jerusalem, 1965, 517 (Hebrew); Ish-Shalom, 302.

[68] Many discussions and studies have been devoted to this subject. We will mention some of them: Shochet, A., "The Synagogue on the Tomb of Samuel", Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 6, 1939, 81–86 (Hebrew); Ben-Zvi, I., "A Jewish Settlement near the Tomb of the Prophet Samuel", Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 10, 1943, 12–18, 28 (Hebrew); Kedar, B.Z., "Notes on the History of the Jews of Palestine in the Middle Ages", Tarbiz, 42, 1973, 415–416 (Hebrew); Cohen, A., Ottoman Documents on the Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century, Jerusalem, 1976, 26, 48 (Hebrew).

[69] This appears from two sources of the second half of the 15th century. In a letter of the Dayyanim of Jerusalem which has been published by: Neubauer, Collections, 49; Ya'ari, Igrot, 139.

bours,[70] there were immigrants from various parts of the Diaspora who had arrived in the course of generations in group or single immigrations. We find among them: Ashkenazic Jews (from Germany, France and Bohemia), side by side with Italian Jews and Sefardic Jews, including Marranoes who had shed the mask of Christianity; 'Ma'araviyyim' (Westerners from North Africa), Yemenites, Sicilians and Romaniotes.[71] It seems that the urban Jewish population in Palestine was composed of people of various origins, the major part of the inhabitants still being Arabicized. The rural population was mostly Arabicized.[72] It therefore seems that the immigrants who arrived in the country were more attracted to the towns than to the villages, because in their countries of origin they had usually lived in urban neighbourhoods.[73]

Tension was between the Arabicized Jews and the newly arrived immigrants regarding authority and customs, of which only little information has been preserved.[74] The Arabicized community in the Mameluke Period was spiritually deteriorated. In this period in all the countries of the Middle East the intellectual level of the local Jews was rather low, and only little is known about scholars and their works.[75] The Arabicized Jews could not tolerate the arrival of immigrants of a different mentality and manners alien to them. Many of the immigrants were of a higher potential for organizing the spiritual and social spheres of life. It was only natural that in such a situation the latter succeeded to take over in a relatively

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[70] About the Musta'ariba in Palestine: Ben-Zvi, Y., "Musta'arabs in Palestine", Sinai, 5, 1939-1940, 379-386 (Hebrew); Ben-Zvi, Y., "Must'arabs - The earliest Stratum of the Jewish Settlement", The World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, 1952, 417-421 (Hebrew); Ben-Zvi, I., Studies and Documents, Jerusalem, 1966, 15-20 (Hebrew); Rozen, Position, 73-101.

[71] The immigration to the country during this period should be discussed separately.

[72] About the rural settlement in Palestine in the 16th century: Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 154-175; we can learn much about the rural Jewish population in Palestine in the 14th and 15th centuries from information preserved from the 16th century.

[73] Rozen, Position, 90, based on Basola who emphasizes that the population in most of the villages is mainly Musta'riba.

[74] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 40: "Şidon has been large and now it is small ... there are in it some 500 houses, and about twenty households, most of them Jewish Must'ariba, and they are good hearted and hospitable, unlike all the other places which I have passed;" Rozen, Position, 91.

[75] The spiritual deterioration of the Musta'riba community in al-Quds can be shown by the fact, that of the Hebrew manuscipts copied in al-Quds in the 14th and 15th centuries, not even one was copied by a Musta'rab scribe. The copyists were of various origins: Beit-Arie, 244-278; on the other hand, in Şafad at the end of 1336 and at the end of 1345 two manuscripts were copied by Musta'rab copyists.

short time the various communal institutions. From the little known about the Jewish community in both al-Quds and Ṣafad it seems that gradually the non-Arabicized population became more powerful, with the increase of the immigration influx to Palestine, particularly in the second half of the 15th century,[76] and even more at the beginning of the 16th century, and overshadowed to a great extent the Arabicized population. From the contents of a letter of the Dayyanim (Judges of the Jewish communities) of al-Quds of 1455,[77] something can be learned about the communal organization in it,[78] where the status of the Arabicized community was still strong to a large extent. It was signed by four Dayyanim, three surely Arabicized, and one 'Avraham son of the Honourable Rabbi Yiṣḥaq of Bęt El,' who was most likely Italian. It seems that the change in the status of the Arabicized community started as early as the sixties of the 15th century, when the domination of the Jewish community of al-Quds probably passed to the Spanish Jews, because we have found in a letter sent out of 'The Court of Jerusalem' in the years of 1467–1468, signatures of four scholars, two of whom were surely Sefardic, among them the 'President of the Court Rabbi Yosef, son of the Honourable Rabbi Gedalya ibn 'Immanu'el ... the Spanish (Sefardic).'[79] Furthermore, the emissary of the al-Quds community to Candia (Creta) and Italy in 1473 was Rabbi Yosef ha-Dayyan who was Sefardic, and it could possibly point to the strengthening status of the Spanish community in al-Quds, that the appointment of the emissary was given to a Sefardic scholar.[80] From the Hebrew sources of the 80's of the 15th century it appears that the domination over both spiritual and social life of the al-Quds community passed to the Ashkenazic Jews.[81] It is not clear what caused the decline of the Sefardic community, which is hardly mentioned in the sources of the 80's. Perhaps the reason was the decrease of the number of people of Spanish origin,[82] or a rise in the status of the Ashkenazic Jews who may not have been the majority in number but were more constructive. It seems that at the beginning of the 16th century the power of those who had been expelled from

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[76] We are not discussing this matter here.

[77] Neubauer, Collections, 45–50.

[78] Praver, J., "On the Text of the 'Jerusalem Letters' in the 15th and 16th Centuries", Jerusalem, 1, 1948, 139–148 (Hebrew); Hacker, Spanish, 148; Tamar, D., "On the Letter of the Sages of Jerusalem Dated 1456", Sinai, 86, 1979, 55–61 (Hebrew).

[79] Hacker, Spanish, 128–129, 147–156.

[80] Hacker, Spanish, 129.

[81] David, Ashkenazim, 331–333.

[82] Hacker, Spanish, 130.

Spain and Portugal gradually increased in al-Quds and in Şafad and maybe also in other places.[83]

The status of the other communities is not clear – have they retained their uniqueness as separate communities, or have they been swallowed up by the dominant communities, and what have been the relations between them.[84] Presumably there were conflicts about the hegemony of the al-Quds community between the Sefardic and Ashkenazic Jews, and we find this kind of tension mentioned later in the 16th century.[85] However, we know about a conflict between the 'Westerners,' those of North African origin, and the Ashkenazic Jews in al-Quds, from one of the Resolutions of Rabbi Yisra'el Isserlein[86] of the first half of the 15th century.

5. The Attitude of the Moslem Authorities to the Jews

It seems that in regular days the Jews of Palestine, like the rest of the Jews of the Orient, knew how to live in the shadow of the Crescent, and how to adapt themselves to the administrative and legal conditions imposed on them. The oriental Jews had for a long time been used to discrimination in various areas together with the rest of the non-believers. Many times the local government system (the rulers of the provinces and regions and their staff of clerks) treated their Jewish citizens as well as the rest of the non-believers with excessive tyranny and depredation. Sometimes it was in accordance with the initiative or encouragement of the central government, but sometimes also in contradiction to its policy. In the Jewish and Christian sources there is a strong reverberation of phenomena which were not at all rare. It should be remembered that the province governors in Palestine were changed frequently. Every governor at the beginning of his rule was eager to show his toughness by imposing additional taxes and by other acts of tyranny. Al-Quds, as a county town far from the center of political, economic and social life in the Empire, served as a place of exile for fired ministers, who were regarded as dangerous by the rulers, or for those for whom no better appointment could be found. These people were not interested in the welfare of the city and its development, and showed

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[83] Benayahu, M., "First Generation of the Spanish Jews in Safed", Gutman, Y. et al. (eds.), Sefer Assaf, Jerusalem, 1953, 109–125 (Hebrew).

[84] David, Ashkenazim, 335–338.

[85] As opposed to the opinion of Rozen, Position, 75, who assumes without any reasonable grounds that the Ma'araviyyim are Must'ariba; David, A., "Relations between North African Jewry and Eretz Israel in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", Pe'amim, 24, 1985, 74–76 (Hebrew).

[86] Verdicts and Writings, No. 88.

therefore very little concern for the welfare of the inhabitants.[87] The contemporary Jewish and Christian sources reflect the attitude of the authorities to the non-Moslems. Some praise the Moslems' attitude to them, and most describe the grievances caused them in various areas, in a loud cry of anguish.[88]

It should be pointed out that the use of wine by the non-Moslems was a particularly sensitive subject. In cases of natural catastrophes and other disasters, the Moslems used to put the blame on the non-believers, because of their use of wine. Therefore - wine was consumed mainly for religious purposes and not for marketing.[89] In order to limit the wine market, a special tax was fixed which was imposed on the non-Moslems for this use.[90] Sometimes wine was completely prohibited, and an interesting testimony has remained about this:

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[87] Ashtor, Jerusalem, 97, 111-114; Drori, Jerusalem, 152-156.

[88] Rabbi Yisra'el Isserlein in Verdicts and Writings, No. 88, writes about the obligation to emigrate to Palestine in his days; he points out the many hardships in Palestine in general, and in al-Quds in particular, and writes among other things: "Except for the immensity of the evilness of the Yishma'elites there;" Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro writes against the Yishma'elites in his style: "And were it not for their fear of God it would not be possible to live amongst them, because of the weakness of the political leadership, the inferior arrangements, and the fact that they do not fear the authorities at all. Nor have they got honest courts, and they bend justice to suit their purposes. Once here in Jerusalem a Yishma'elite has slaughtered his own mother as one slaughters a lamb in anger; and when they brought him before the judges he said that he had done it while intoxicated, upon which the judges discussed it and said immediately that his sin had been caused by the Jews and the Christians, because only they produced wine; so the Jews were fined six Flowers of gold, and the Christians twelve and the Yishma'elite went free. Many such things happen here which cannot be put in writing," Ya'ari, Igrot, 131; on the other hand he writes in two other places: "And indeed the Yishma'elites do not turn it into an exile for the Jews here at all; I have crossed the country wide and long, and no one minded. Also, they take pity on strangers, and in particular on those who do speak the language; and when they see many Jews gathered, they do not behave at all fanatically," Ya'ari, Igrot, 128; also: "And from what one hears the Jews in Ṣafad and in Kafr Kannā and in all those places in Galilee, live in security and peace, and the Yishma'elites do not treat them in an evil way," Ya'ari Igrot, 140; similar things were reported also by Rabbi Ovadya's unknown disciple in 1495, Ya'ari, Igrot, 158-159; see also the hard words against them as reported by the Christian pilgrim of Bohemia Martin Kabatnik, in the years 1491-1492 who was deeply shocked by the harsh treatment of the unbelievers, Ish-Shalom, Travels, 265; David, Elders, 222-224, tried to distinguish between the approaches of the two persons.

[89] Martin Kabatnik wrote among other things: "and when there is a long cessation of rain, the gentiles gather and walk among the Jews and Christians and break to pieces the vessels in which the wine is kept, as well as all the other vessels which they find; and they accuse them that it is their fault that the Lord holds back the rains, because they are non-believers and drink wine," Ish-Shalom, Travels, 265.

[90] See following paragraph on the burden of taxes.

> "When the Nā'ib in al-Quds decreed about the wine some of the sages used to say that there was no necessity to fast for it, because it is not written that it is required to fast for it, and according to one of the Rabbis it is required because it is a public misfortune."[91]

Two main events are known which severely affected the Jewish community in al-Quds in the second half of the 15th century. The letter of the Dayyanim of al-Quds at the beginning of 1456 about the mission of Rabbi Avraham Halewi,[92] told of a severe event which agitated the Jews in al-Quds in particular, and in the Mameluke Empire in general, namely the edits of the Sulṭān Yaqmaq who ascended the throne in 1453 and decreed the conversion of his Jewish people, or, alternatively, their expulsion from the Empire. All this was done under the impact of political affairs in the region. At that time the heavy campaign between the Christians and the Moslems on the rule of Ethiopia reached its climax and the Jews in Ethiopia (the Falashas) were being suspected of loyalty to the Christians. Because of fear lest in his Empire too Jewish loyalty would be extended to the enemy - the Ottoman government which frightened its Mameluke enemies - particularly after the conquest of Constantinople in that year, the Sulṭān Yaqmaq issued his edicts against the Jews. The decree about conversion was revoked after much lobbying, and after compensating the Sulṭān with heavy sums of money, which completely impoverished the treasury of the Jewish community in al-Quds.[93]

The other event which agitated the Jews of al-Quds was the destruction of the synagogue. At the end of 1473 Jews and Moslems collided about the legitimacy of the synagogue in al-Quds. The Moslems claimed that this house had not been legally built, against the laws of discrimination prohibiting the erection of synagogues. The Jews brought a certificate confirming their rights to this place, which was their legitimate asset, and claimed that their forefathers had bought it seventy or eighty years earlier, and that the Bill of Sales was in the hands of the Elders in Egypt. At the end of 1474 the synagogue was destroyed in contradiction to the position of the Sulṭān Qā'id Bei (ruled in the years 1468–1496), who treated the religious minorities very tolerantly and did not permit to deprive them of their rights. That Sulṭān, when he heard about the destroying of the synagogue, was very furious and ordered to punish those responsible for the deed, and at the same time to issue a permit for its re-construction. This decision caused seething and aroused violence between Jews and Moslems

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[91] Musafiya H., Ḥayyim wa-Ḥessed, vol. 1 (10), Livorno, 1844, Appendix of verdicts (Hebrew).

[92] Neubauer, Collections, 45–50.

[93] Neubauer, Collections, 47–48.

in al-Quds. The fanatical Moslem rabble could not agree peacefully to the Sulṭān's decision to restore the synagogue, and they continued to provoke and disturb their Jewish neighbours in various ways.[94] The Jews were compelled to send an emissary to the Diaspora to collect money for the reconstruction of the synagogue.[95]

6. Tax Burden

Apart from the regular taxes which were collected from the entire populace – such as the land tax – the Ḫarağ,[96] or the tax imposed on all those dealing in the various branches of trade, industry and artisanship,[97] the Jews, like the other non-Moslems, paid special fixed taxes, which oppressed them greatly.

- Tax per capita, or, as it was also called, Jizya, the most famous of all the special sort of taxes, had already been fixed by the 'Omar Covenant. This tax was designated as an annual payment of compensation or as payment for the favour the Moslems bestowed on non-believing subjects, as they were punishable by death if they did not convert to Islam. This tax was imposed on every male from the age of 14, except for the insane and the infirm. The rates of the per capita tax varied from period to period. In any case, there were three tax rates which were collected – in compliance with the Islam constitution – according to classes: the rich, the middle classes – half the amount, and the poor – a quarter of the amount.[98]

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[94] The background of this case is mentioned by Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro: "And in the courtyard, very close to the synagogue, the Yishma'elites have a platform and a mosque because that house has first belonged to a Jew, and because of a quarrel and a controversy with the Jews he has become an Yishma'elite, and when his mother saw that her son had become a convert, because of all the anger which the Jews had caused him, she dedicated her house, which was in the courtyard of the synagogue, to the Yishma'el, to build a mosque in it, to take vengeance of the Jews. And it was this that brought about the entire evil which caused the destruction of the synagogue and the loss of money by Israel, and the memory of Israel would almost have vanquished from Jerusalem, were it not for the mercy of the Lord who caused the King then to pity them, and against the wish of all his ministers and slaves and the entire people of his country, ordered them to rebuild the house as it had been before and to make it more magnificent than the first," Ya'ari, Igrot, 129; this affair is known also from Arab sources: Goitein, S.D., "Ibn 'Ubayya's Book Concerning the Destruction of the Synagogue of Jerusalem in 1474", Zion, 13-14, 1948-1949, 18-32 (Hebrew); Strauss-Ashtor, 401-416; Ashtor, Jerusalem, 112-113; Ish-Shalom, 312-315.

[95] Documents about his mission: Freimann, Emissaries, 188-192, 198-202.

[96] Strauss-Ashtor, 259-260.

[97] Strauss-Ashtor, 262-263.

[98] Strauss-Ashtor, 263-268; about this tax we find letters written by Rabbi Yosef de Mon-

- Road tax – the Khafari (Khafar – protection money). Along the main roads there were special customs stations in which the payments were collected for the tax designated to grant safety to the convoys escorted by armed soldiers. A small amount was collected from the Moslems and a much larger amount was collected from the Christians and Jews.[99]
- Wine tax – a special tax imposed on the non-Moslems for wine consumption, production and marketing. With the purpose of cutting down as much as possible its use amongst the non-Moslem communities, a special tax was imposed on wine in the second decade of the 15th century.[100]

At the time of Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro the rate of the wine tax was fixed in advance, and everyone of the community, without distinction of status, paid the same amount. Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, in his efforts to improve the living conditions of the Jewish community, fixed three tax rates according to classes. His unknown disciple wrote in his letter of 1495:

> "He [meaning Rabbi Ovadya] showed his wonderful grace to me, and saved a poor man from a powerful one. And this because every year fifty Ducats are paid so that wine can be produced, because it is an abhorrence to Yishma'elites. There are three rates for the collection of money. The rich pay twenty [coins of] silver and the poor twelve [coins of] silver and even the receivers of charity."[101]

A special tax, a kind of present (Qādūm) given to one of the Heads of the Administration when he entered his office.[102]

- Inheritance tax – one of the discrimination laws of Islam against the non-believers was the inheritance law of 1354, which determined that the estates of the non-Moslems should be handled by government ministries and would be treated according to the Moslem law, namely, the heirs would receive the part due to them according to the religious law of the Islam, and the rest would pass to the State Treasury (Bait al-Māl).

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tagna, in 1481, Ya'ari, Igrot, 93; Ya'ari, Igrot, 136 and 142 and by the unknown disciple, at the end of 1495, 158; not one of the writers mentioned the division of payment according to classes.

[99] Strauss-Ashtor, 311; Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro writes about this tax in his letter from al-Quds dated 1488: "And a Jew coming through Egypt to Jerusalem must pay upon arriving in the city, only some ten coins of Bologna of silver. But whoever comes through Yāfā pays one golden Ducate," Ya'ari, Igrot, 136.

[100] Strauss-Ashtor, 311–312.

[101] Ya'ari, Igrot, 156.

[102] Strauss-Ashtor, 312; a hint at this tax can be found in the letter of Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro's unknown disciple, who had written: "Sometimes we indeed suffer under such a heavy yoke that we cannot bear it any more, and this happens when there is a change of Nā'ibs in the country," Ya'ari, Igrot, 168.

Furthermore, if a deceased has not left heirs, all his property and money would go to the State Treasury. The Jews who lived under the Mameluke rule did not take kindly to this decree, and tried by various ruses to circumvent the inheritance tax. One of the solutions was provided by the Muslim constitution itself, which permits the believers to make dedications (Waqf) to whatever purpose is desirable by them in accordance with their religious views. The Jews in al-Quds took advantage of this right and resolved that a person who had no heirs in Palestine should will his assets for charity in due time through the Jewish legal machinery, and his dedication would become effective only upon his death. Reverberations of this regulation have been preserved in the words of Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro:

> "And the money of the lonelies who have no heirs, and their property, go to the Waqf."[103]

Except for the fixed taxation system determined by the Islam constitution, there was also a non-fixed money-absorbing system. In times of emergency and crisis the various rulers would, contrary to the Islam constitution, collect from the non-believers special one-time taxes which were sometimes defined as fines.[104]

a. The Manner of Tax Collecting

We must distinguish between two kinds of collection. The road tax, the wine tax and the Qādūm tax were designated for the solution of local fiscal problems, and therefore their collection was under the charge of the regional governors and was carried out by those under them. The tax per capita and the inheritance tax, which were transferred directly to the Royal Treasury, were collected in conformity with the Moslem law. Accordingly, every non-Moslem was compelled to pay a tax per capita directly to the Central Government Collection Administration headed by an official titled 'Nāṣer al-Ğū'ali,' meaning the director of the administration of the tax per capita. However, more than once we find agreements made with small and large communities about a concentrated collection. In such cases the head of the community undertook before the authorities to raise a certain amount fixed in advance, without regard to the number

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[103] Childless people are meant, or those whose relatives lived abroad.

[104] Ya'ari, Igrot, 128; this regulation served the Rabbis of al-Quds and Ṣafad as grounds for inheritance verdicts of the 16th century; Rivlin, Y., "Estate Regulations in Jerusalem", Azkara, 5, Jerusalem, 1937, 559–619 (Hebrew); Strauss-Ashtor, 221–234; Rivlin did not know that the Moslem inheritance law of 1354 was the background of that regulation, and this Strauss widely emphasized; also, David, Elders, 226–228, 232.

of people in that community. Therefore, if the Jewish population of that community increased, the rate of the tax per individual decreased, while a decrease of the population increased the tax rate.[105] It seems that this was also the method of collection of the Jewish community in al-Quds at least in the 15th century. In this city, however, this system worked against the Jews, because, following various disasters, the Jewish population decreased, and accordingly the rate of the tax per capita increased. When the impoverished Jewish population could not endure the burden of the heavy tax, the Elders – the tax leasers – did not hesitate to take any step which occurred to them in order to collect the money. Among these steps Rabbi Ovadya mentions the selling of Tora books and other religious articles out of the synagogue in al-Quds or the spoiling of the dedications of the community. The pillage by the Elders of the members of their community caused a further decrease of the Jewish population in al-Quds, and so oppression and poverty kept increasing.[106]

Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, who tried very hard to improve and strengthen the Jewish population in the city, presumably acted to change the situation. In the second year of his living there a considerable improvement took place in the collection of the tax per capita which had previously been collected by the elders in a rather distorted manner. In his second letter of 1489 Rabbi Ovadya wrote that this distortion had just been amended through the intervention of the Sulṭān al-Ašraf Qā'id Bei, who had abolished the collective collection of the tax per capita[107] which had been based on an estimate made many years earlier.[108] And these are his words:

> "For the King has sent a letter and decreed forever that any Jew residing in Jerusalem shall pay only the tax imposed on him, because at the beginning it was the King's will to receive from the Jews four Ducat a year, be its residents many or few, and they were responsible for each other, because all of them were enslaved by this tax. And now that the Lord had mercy and has turned the King's thoughts so that everyone will now give the tax for himself, it was a great improvement in Jerusalem the equal of which has not occurred in Jerusalem for the past fifty years."[109]

According to Rabbi Ovadya this amendment caused a considerable increase of the Jewish population in al-Quds:

> "And many who have wandered away, are turning back to settle in the country again."[110]

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[105] Strauss-Ashtor, 312–313.

[106] Strauss-Ashtor, 293–296.

[107] David, Elders, 221–229, 233–234.

[108] David, Elders, 235–236.

[109] Ya'ari, Igrot, 142.

[110] Ya'ari, Igrot, 142.

7. Economic Life in Palestine

We have already mentioned above the difficult condition of the population in Palestine in the Mameluke Period due to an intentional policy of the Mameluke authorities - guided by strategic motives - to prevent economic growth,[111] as opposed to the concept of their predecessors - the Crusaders, and their successors - the Ottomans. The economic condition in the country at that time was unbearable; the purchasing power was small, elementary consumer commodities, which were indeed relatively cheap, were beyond the means of great numbers of the population, because the sources of livelihood in the country in general, and in al-Quds in particular, were exhausted.[112] Travellers and newly come immigrants admired the abundance of fruit in the markets of al-Quds and their low price, comparing them to the prices in their countries of origin.[113] Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro emphasized this fact:

> "And the food in Jerusalem is very cheap. The meat and the wine and the oil - olive oil and sesame oil ... And the land is still good and wide and fat, but no profit is to be made of it. And a person cannot hope or expect to earn by any skill or trade, were he not a shoemaker or a weaver or a goldsmith. These would earn their subsistence, but barely."[114]

His unknown disciple, in his letter of the end of 1495, even tried to compare the situation in al-Quds to that prevailing at the same time in Syria and in Egypt.

> "The profit is scant here in Jerusalem the Holy City more than in all these countries, and whoever knows a trade, like a goldsmith, or a blacksmith, or a weaver of cotton, or a tailor, will earn his subsistence, but barely. But in Damascus and in Egypt, in Alexandria and in Aleppo, in all these places they make profits as much as they want.[115]

Only few details can be obtained from the few sources which have remained about the role of the Jews in the economic life in Palestine.

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[111] Assaf, History, 167–171.

[112] Ashtor, Jerusalem, 94–95.

[113] Rabbi Eliya of La-Massa wrote in 1438 that in al-Quds "The food is more abundant by the blessing of the lord than in all Western countries where I have lived," Hacker, J. R., "R. Elija of Massa Lombarda in Jerusalem", Zion, 50, 1985, 259 (Hebrew); Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra wrote in 1481 that "it is in ruin and desolation and that everything in it is cheap and its fruits are very good and very pretty," Ya'ari, Meshulam, 75; similar was said by Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Laṭif in his letter of the second half of the 15th century: Ya'ari, Igrot, 95.

[114] In his first letter from 1488: Ya'ari, Igrot, 132.

[115] Ya'ari, Igrot, 157.

a. Small Trade and Artisanship

The various Hebrew sources point at economic branches based on small trade and artisanship. It is true that they do not specifically emphasize that the Jews dealt in these branches, but there is no reason to doubt that the Jews indeed participated in those economic branches.

Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro tells in his first letter about the markets of al-Quds and writes among other things:

> "Jerusalem with all its wrecks and ruins has four long and very beautiful markets. I have never seen the likes of them, and they are at the end of Zion,[116] and are all covered, made dome upon dome. There are windows upon windows in those domes, through which the light shines and shops are open on both sides, with various kinds of goods, and they are divided into separate markets: the tradesmen market and a market where scents are sold, and a vegetable market, and a market where various kinds of cooked food and bread are sold."[117]

From a Christian source contemporary to Rabbi Ovadya it appears that

> "the tradesmen in Jerusalem are mostly non-Jews [Moslems], and the Jews and the Christians hold the worst trades."[118]

From a later source it appears that the market in which "scents are sold" belonged "to the Jews."[119] It is not unlikely that that same market was in the ownership of Jews also at the time of Rabbi Ovadya and maybe earlier.[120]

In Ṣafad at the end of the 15th century Jews dealt in various trades, as the unknown disciple of Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro relates at the end of 1495:

> "And most of the Jews keep shops of scents and cheese and oil and various kinds of beans and fruit."[121]

From these and other sources[122] it appears that the small trade was based on consumer products: food, clothing, haberdashery and luxuries (per-

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[116] Meaning of the Jewish Quarter called Zion.

[117] Ya'ari, Igrot, 131-132; the markets in Jerusalem as described by Rabbi Ovadya are mentioned also by Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Laṭif: Ya'ari, Igrot, 95.

[118] Quotation of the Bohemian pilgrim Martin Kabatnik in Hebrew translation: Ish-Shalom, Travels, 266.

[119] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 58-59.

[120] What Martin Kabatnik said about the Jews, has proven unreliable in various details: Ish-Shalom, Travels, 264-266; David, Elders, 223-224; one cannot therefore accept literally pilgrim's testimony in this matter.

[121] Ya'ari, Igrot, 151; Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 43.

[122] Ya'ari, Igrot, 75, 137, 158; from the famous Responsa of Rabbi Eliya Mizraḥi (Re'em), No. 45, we learn about "a holy congregation in Jerusalem amongst which there are a few clothes and pepper traders and some who are pepper traders only".

fume). It was probably mainly of local production, although there is no doubt that certain goods, such as perfumes, the production process of which was cheaper and more developed in other countries, were imported from overseas[123] by Jewish and non-Jewish pilgrims or by tradesmen who imported them from Egypt and Syria.[124] Jews lived on manual work in various trades. The Jewish sources stress various kinds of artisans in al-Quds: slaughterers, butchers, weavers, shoemakers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, tailors and carpenters.[125] From a Christian source it appears that Jews worked also in pottery[126] and as iron smiths.[127] The clothes dying trade, over which the Jews in al-Quds and in other places in Palestine had a monopoly in the 12th century,[128] and even later in the 13th century, is not mentioned in the sources of the 14th and 15th centuries.

b. Farming

In the Mameluke Period the Jewish population in Palestine was scattered in several cities and various villages – mainly in the north of Palestine. The rural, and partly the urban population, derived its livelihood from various agricultural branches. It seems that Jews who lived in that period in rural regions also lived on agriculture,[129] and this notwithstanding the fact that the Islam constitution forbade in 1354 the acquisition of lands in Mameluke-ruled regions, by non-Moslem denominations. Several decades later, and also at a later period, Jews resumed the acquisition of lands,[130] although not freely, as testified by one of the great scholars of Egypt in the 16th century:

> "And the Jews were not used to buy fields or vineyards in this Kingdom and did not try to do it, and properly so for various reasons. And it has become so well known

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[123] Friedman, Eret-Israel, 31-33; Ashtor, E., "Europäischer Handel im spätmittelalterlichen Palästina", Das Heilige Land im Mittelalter, 22, 1982, 107-126.

[124] Strauss-Ashtor, 161-162, 168-169.

[125] Ya'ari, Igrot, 95, 132, 157, 181.

[126] Unknown English pilgrim, Ish-Shalom, Travels, 234, Kedar, Genoese, 201-202.

[127] Kedar, Genoese, 201.

[128] Adler, M.N. (ed.), The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, London, 1907, 23, 29, (Hebrew), who has written: "And there is (in Jerusalem) a house of dyeing which the Jews lease every year from the King so that no one dyes in Jerusalem, except for the Jews." Also in Ludd, "one Jew who is a dyer."

[129] Ramban's letter to his son, in 1267: Kedar, Genoese, 135, in which he has written that he had found "two brothers, dyers who lease the dyeing concession from the Governor."

[130] Caftor va-pherach, 53-54, there is rich material about Palestinian agriculture in those days (the first half of the 14th century), Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 163-171; Ta-Shema, 85-86.

among the non-Jews [Moslems], that the fools among them say that if the Jews sow nothing will grow."[131]

Anyway, Jews worked in Palestine in one form or another in agriculture. An interesting testimony in this matter was presented by Rabbi Shim'on ben Ṣemaḥ Duran (Rashbaz), who was one of the greatest scholars in Algiers at the end of the 14th century and in the first half of the 15th century.[132] He wrote in one of his Responsa: "And Release [agricultural Sabbatical year] is in effect now in Palestine."[133] His words refer to the year of 1427.[134] This piece of information is indicative of the existence of Jewish farmers in Palestine at that time.

Palestine was a mountainous agricultural country, where the grain crops were non-irrigated and have not always supplied the domestic demand, because the fertility of the soil was low due to periodic noncultivation of the soil.[135] On the other hand fruits and vegetables were more developed.[136]

From the Hebrew and Christian sources of the period, and from the words of the Arab writer al-Qalqašandī in 1387[137] we learn of a variety of agricultural crops which were grown in Palestine. Grains: wheat and barley,[138] oats and rice.[139] Tree fruits: among others - vines, which were abundant in the Ġazza[140] and al-Halīl districts, and in the vicinity of al-Quds and Bait-Laḥm,[141] and of which, apart from wine,[142] also grape-honey was produced,[143] olives - which were abundant in Galilee and in the Judea[144]

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[131] Polliack, A.N., "The Jews of the Middle East at the End of the Middle Ages", Zion, 2, 1937, 263, Note 26; Strauss-Ashtor, 221.

[132] Responsa of the Radbaz, No.1208; David, A., "The Economic Status of Egyptian Jewry in the 16th Century according to the Responsa of the Radbaz", Miqqedem Umiyyam, Haifa, 1981, 95 (Hebrew).

[133] Zimmels, Responsen, 63; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 60; Ta-Shema, 85-88.

[134] Zimmels, Responsen, 63; Ta-Shema, 85.

[135] Pollack, S.N., History of the Land Relationships in Egypt, Syria and Palestine, Jerusalem, 1940, 15; Friedman, Eretz-Israel, 35.

[136] Ta-Shema, 86-87.

[137] Assaf, History, 167.

[138] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 75.

[139] Assaf, History, 167-168.

[140] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 64.

[141] Ya'ari, Igrot, 126; his third letter, Ya'ari, Igrot, 143.

[142] Ya'ari, Igrot, 127, 132.

[143] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 75; Ya'ari, Igrot, 120, 132. The grape honey industry was developed in the Islam countries, as wine drinking was prohibited, and grape honey served as a substitute. For generations the sages debated whether the honey should be regarded as wine: Kook, S.H., Studies and Researches, vol.2, Jerusalem, 1963, 55-63 (Hebrew).

[144] Ya'ari, Igrot, 126-127.

and Nābulus Districts, of which oil[145] and soap[146] were manufactured. Pomegranates,[147] carobs, which grew in abundance, and of which carob-honey was produced,[148] figs[149] bananas[150] and citrus which grew in the Jordan Valley region.[151] Vegetables: among others - turnips,[152] sesame - of which oil was produced,[153] beans,[154] sugar cane[155] and others.[156] From these sources one cannot necessarily conclude that Jews grew the various crops, although it is reasonable to assume that the Jews who lived in the villages subsisted on the various agricultural branches mentioned above. The wine industry in Ġazza was exclusively in the hands of Jews.[157] In al-Quds only Jews and Christians produced wine.[158] Jews were also beekeepers in the vicinity of Şafad, and maybe also in other places.[159]

c. Travels and Pilgrims

A considerable number of Jews lived on tourism in the various cities. These were mostly Jews of European origin who knew very well the lan-

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[145] Ya'ari, Igrot, 132; Meshulam, 75; the oil extracted of the Nābulus olives was exported to the entire Mameluke Empire: Friedman, Eretz-Israel, 33, 37.

[146] In Palestine and in Syria the olive oil was used to a great extent for soap production, although we have no information about this industry before the 16th century: Lewis, B., "Eretz-Israel in the First Fifty Years of Ottoman Rule According to the Registers of Ottoman Cadaster", Eretz-Israel, 4, 1956, 182 (Hebrew); it seems that this industry had already been existing in the country in an earlier period: Assaf, History, 166.

[147] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 75.

[148] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 75; Ya'ari, Igrot, 131-132.

[149] Rabbi Yisra'el of Perugia's letter of 1522, Ya'ari, Igrot, 172, mentions figs in al-Quds.

[150] Rabbi Ovadya describes the bananas in al-Quds without naming them: "There is a sort of tree with leaves longer and larger than a man's height, and they produce fruit only once before they dry, and from its roots grows another like it which produces the fruit in the following year": Ya'ari, Igrot, 152.

[151] Assaf, History, 167-168.

[152] Ya'ari, Igrot, 132.

[153] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 75; Ya'ari, Igrot, 132.

[154] Ya'ari, Igrot, 126, 151.

[155] Ashtor, E., "Levantine Sugar Industry in the Middle Ages", Proceedings of the Conference of Economic History of the Near East, Princeton, 1974, 92-93.

[156] Schur, N., "The Fruit Trees and the Field Crops in Palestine in the Mameluke and Ottomanic Period According to the Writings of Western Christian Pilgrims", Nofim, 11-12, 1979, 138-160 (Hebrew).

[157] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 64.

[158] Ya'ari, Igrot, 131.

[159] In one of the Geniza documents of the early 16th century we learn about Rabbi Moshe ha-Dayyan of Şafad "who goes to the villages to deliver his bee honey," Gottheil, R., Worrell, W.H. (eds.), Fragments from the Cairo Genizah in the Freer Collection, New York, 1927, 256; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 160.

guages of most of the Christian pilgrims who came from Western Europe. Those Jews served them as guides and innkeepers. The monk Jacob of Verona, who toured the country in 1335, recommended the use of Jewish guides, and this is what he wrote:

> "A pilgrim who wants to tour ancient cities and forts in the Holy Land cannot find them without the assistance of a good guide who knows the country well, or of a Jew who lives in those places, since the Jews know the places well enough to explain all the ancient sites, for they are very erudite in their Holy Scriptures and in the locations mentioned in the tales of their forefathers and sages. Therefore when I came to tour places overseas, I very often requested and obtained from the Jews living there a good guide."[160]

And indeed many pilgrims were assisted by Jews in their visits to the country,[161] and sometimes they also complained that they had been cheated or exploited by the Jews.[162] The pilgrim Felix Fabri, in the eighties of the 15th century, wrote that the pilgrims also used to buy wine from the Jews of al-Quds.[163]

d. Officials in the Government Administration

Almost nothing is known about Jews holding state positions in Palestine, except for one meaningless report brought by a Moslem source, about a Jew in Şafad called Yūsūf ben Abi al-Biyan, nicknamed 'al 'Isra'īlī' who was a government official at the Finance Administration of Şafad in the years 1340–1341.[164]

8. The Assistance of the Diaspora Jews to the Jewish Settlement

Economic stress, religious and social discrimination were the lot of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine in the Middle Ages.[165] From various reports

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[160] Ish-Shalom, Travels, 228; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 129–131; Strauss-Ashtor, 348.

[161] Strauss-Ashtor, 398; Ish-Shalom, Travels, 251, 262–264, 267, 272.

[162] Felix Fabri wrote about this subject in the years 1480–1483: "The pilgrim should beware particularly the German Jews, and be watchful, because their entire purpose in life is to cheat us and steal our money from us": Ish-Shalom, Travels, 245.

[163] Schein, Custodia, 54.

[164] Strauss-Ashtor, 289–290.

[165] Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro wrote: "And from the Jews there have remained this day hardly seventy households of the poorer classes, who have no means of support, and hardly anyone has remained who is not short of food; and if he finds subsistence for one year, a man is called rich at this place and time": Ya'ari, Igrot, 127; the unknown disciple describes a

of the second half of the 14th century onwards it seems that those few – the survivors of the settlement who have clung to the country, sons of old as well as of new families which had just arrived – would not have been able to manage their affairs in the country without the material assistance of the Jewish Diaspora.[166] Their attachment to Palestine was expressed in various ways, either by immigration of singles or groups,[167] or by visits of tourists who wanted to tour the country and see it.[168] Many other Jews of the Diaspora were satisfied by donating money for the strengthening and stabilization of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine. The donations arrived by the initiative of the donators who had vowed while still living, or left their estates after their death for the Jewish Settlement in the country, or because they were requested to do so by the heads of the communities in Palestine through emissaries.[169]

The vower and the person who left in his will his estate to the poor of Palestine, meant, by donating, to help his soul reach heaven and obtain absolution thanks to being aware of the merit of Palestine, so that everyone assisting the Jewish settlement there is well compensated in the hereafter. Only little concrete information has remained in Responsa literature[170] and in other sources[171] about contributions of this kind at the end of the Middle Ages. From those sources it appears that the contributions initiated by the contributors arrived in the 14th and 15th centuries from North Africa, the Balkan peninsula,[172] Italy,[173] Germany,[174] and Bohemia,[175] and apparently centers were even then established in the capi-

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similar situation about eight years later: "And there are many poor in this city, and most of the community live on charity": Ya'ari, Igrot, 157.

[166] The head of the Franciscan Order in Palestine in the late 15th and early 16th century – Francesco Suriano – wrote in the eighties of the 15th century in his book Itinerario de Hierusalem about the Jews of Jerusalem: "had they not received support from the Jews of the Christian world, they would have died like dogs," Schur (see note 59 above), 347.

[167] This matter is not studied here.

[168] Eisenstein, J. D., Ozar Massaoth, Tel-Aviv, 1969 (Hebrew).

[169] See following.

[170] Kahana, Inheritance, 14; Tamar, D., "A New Responsum of Rabbi Joseph Kolon Concerning Palestine", Zion, 18, 1953, 127–135 (Hebrew).

[171] See following.

[172] Kahana, Inheritance, 15.

[173] From the responsum of the above Rabbi Yosef Colon of 1466, or a short time later, it seems that the Parnasim in Ferrara and Mantova as well as private individuals of these communities, used to dispatch their vows through the treasurers "annually or every two years."

[174] An important list of donations for the poor of al-Quds which had been contributed by Jews of Nürnberg in the years 1375–1392: Yuval, Alms, 182–197.

[175] A transfer of money by Rabbi Natan Eger of Prague obtained for selling his house in Prague: Ta-Shema, 89–92; Yuval, Alms, 193.

tals for collection of money for the Jewish Settlement in Palestine,[176] and it is not unlikely that the important center for money collection for Palestine in Venice, known and famous as early as the first quarter of the 16th century, had been active previously,[177] because Venice served at that time as an important transit station for West European commerce to the East.

Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, who in his country of origin (Italy) had been a banker,[178] relates in his second letter from al-Quds dated 1489,[179] that he had deposited in the hands of his friend the banker Rabbi 'Immanu'el Ḥai of Camerino (Florence)[180] sums of money, and had requested the above to send him "dividends on the deposit" to al-Quds "Year by year" on the money left in his hand "to calculate ten to the hundred," namely 10% interest on the money; and further points[181] that

> "... 'Immanu'el ... continued to send presents ... five and twenty Venetian Ducates some for lighting oil and some for the poor."

Obviously the various contributions from the Diaspora, of which it is not known whether they reached their destination uninterruptedly and regularly, have not been sufficient to fill the great daily needs of the people living in al-Quds, who had indeed learned to live on very little.

The leaders of the community had therefore been compelled to dispatch from time to time emissaries to the various parts of the Diaspora to open the hearts and pockets of philanthropes over there, so that they should increase and multiply their contributions. Generally the emissaries were sent on special, not infrequent, emergencies on account of difficult decrees by the rulers, because of various handmade or heavensent disasters etc.[182] We have only scant information about the Palestinian emissaries, who have been dispatched by their community.[183] At the time of Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ben-Sheshet Perfet (Rybash) - before 1371,[184] an emissary had been sent,

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[176] It appears that in the cities of Padua and Mestre were in the 15th century special funds for money transferred to Palestine, and also in Nürnberg: Yuval, Alms, 191.

[177] Yuval, Alms, 191-192.

[178] Toaff, A., Gli ebrei a Città di Castello dal XIV-XVI secolo, Bollettino della deputazione di Storia patria per l'Umbria, 52, 1975, 13, 18-19, 36, 61.

[179] Ya'ari, Igrot, 141.

[180] About him: Cassuto, M.D., The Jews in Firenze during the Renaissance, Jerusalem, 1967, 202-207 (Hebrew).

[181] Ya'ari, Igrot, 141.

[182] This is the situation which was depicted for generations. Ya'ari, Emissaries, and later publications in this matter.

[183] See following.

[184] Responsa of Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ben Sheshet Perfet (Rybash), Lemberg, 1805, No. 508, who has written: "Before Passover a Jew arrived here from Jerusalem carrying a Deed of Mission,

and: "went from town to town in France and Germany," and after one year and four months arrived also in Barcelona in Spain.[185] It is not unlikely that he has been sent by Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Halewi Bilstein – 'Asir ha-Tiqwa.'[186]

At the end of 1455 the emissary Avraham Halewi was dispatched by the heads of the al-Quds community and he probably made the rounds of the Aegean Islands and perhaps travelled to additional places (in Italy). The man carried with him copies of a 'Letter of Mission' which he had been given by the 'Jerusalem Congregation.'

In the Letter of Mission,[187] the Dayyanim of al-Quds specified[188] the distress of the community following the edicts of the Sulṭān Yaqmaq which have indeed been revoked, but only after the al-Quds community had become absolutely impoverished.[189] Later on Rabbi Yosef ha-Sefardi was dispatched from al-Quds and made the rounds in Italy probably in the middle of the sixties of the 15th century.[190] Another mission at the end of 1472 is mentioned in the writings of Rabbi Mikha'el Balbo, who was one of the most important scholars in Crete at the time,[191] and who wrote about the emissary Yosef ha-Dayyan whom, it seems, we should identify with the above Yosef ha-Sefardi whose mission became known through the Responsa of Rabbi Yosef Colon.[192] Rabbi Mikha'el Balbo, who wished to support the emissary on his mission, enclosed warm recommendation letters to the Letter of Mission which the former had been given by the

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and according to him he had left there two years and four months ago and had been going from town to town in France and Germany, and a year ago I saw him in Barcelona as if gathering sheaves." Rybash left Barcelona and arrived in Saragosa in 1372/3: Hershman, A.M., Rabbi Isaac bar Sheshet Perfet and His Times, New York, 1943, 18; Baer, Y., A History of the Jews in Christian Spain, vol. 2, Philadelphia, 1966, 66; Ya'ari, who erroneously assumed that the Ribash had stayed in Barcelona till 1391 Edicts, mentioned that the emissary was there around the year 1390: Ya'ari, Emissaries, 211.

[185] Ya'ari, emissaries, 211.

[186] About Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Bilstein's Yeshiva in al-Quds see followings.

[187] Neubauer, Collections, 45–50; Ya'ari, Emissaries, 211–212.

[188] Hacker, Spanish, 148.

[189] For the historical background of this mission, see the paragraph: The Attitude of the Moslem Authorities to the Jews.

[190] Hacker, Spanish, 129, Note 89.

[191] Writing concerning his mission: Freimann, Emissaries, 185–186; Ravitzky, A., "A Philosophical Treatise Attributed to R. Michael ben Shabbetai Balbo (Vatican Ms. 105), Identification and Literary Parallels", Kiryat Sefer, 56, 1981, 153–163, and bibliography therein.

[192] Freimann, Emissaries, 187–188, mentions without any grounds that he was Ashkenazic. Tamar assumed that it was not unlikely that he was the same Rabbi Yosef Sefardi, especially as we know from Balbo that the same Yosef ha-Dayyan ha Yerushalmi had been acting on a previous mission; more in this matter: Hacker, Spanish, 129.

Sages of al-Quds.[193] Among other things Mikha'el Balbo wrote a recommendation to Rabbi Shemu'el Qosdino in Korone[194] (Greece). In another letter of recommendation he wrote him that

> "He has been appointed emissary to all the communities in the year 1472, new moon of the Hebrew month Ṭevet, in addition to the previous mission."[195]

From Rabbi Mikha'el Balbo's letters of recommendation it is hard to learn the background of the mission. The Letter of Mission of the community leaders,[196] which was written in a flowery language, might shed some light on what was happening at that time in al-Quds. It is very likely that the coffers of the community had been completely emtied upon the ascendancy to the throne of the Sulṭān Qa'id Bei at the beginning of February 1468, because his own treasury had been depleted by the war effort to enlarge his army in order to fortify his Empire against his Turkish and Persian enemies.[197] He therefore imposed heavy fines on the rich, and severely smote also the lower strata of society. The Jews were among the first victims,[198] although he did not persecute them for their religion.[199] It is possible that this was the situation hinted at in the Letter of Mission:

> "We and our sons are enslaved to pay money, to all the evils and the troubles which befell us.[200] And now Kings have warred and have taken our money and our gold and our toil, and for the past few years Jerusalem, the joy of the whole world, sits like a widowed woman ... Our money is spoiled and plundered."[201]

That severe tension and the aroused violence which characterized the attitude of the Moslems to the Jews of al-Quds in 1474–1475 in the affair of the demolishing of the synagogue, might have budded some time earlier, as the above Letter of Mission hints:

> "Foxes and evildoers ruled over us.[202] Different attitudes of different religions. Slanderers who speak evil and blasphemy of the Lord. They say in their hearts: It is by our

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[193] Freimann, Emissaries, 194, 196–197.

[194] Freimann, Emissaries, 197.

[195] Freimann, Emissaries, 194.

[196] Freimann, Emissaries, 194–196; Freimann, Emissaries, 187, does not regard this text as a Letter of Mission but as an additional letter of Balbo, and Ya'ari has already pointed out that: "It is just a copy of the Letter of Mission from Jerusalem copied by Balbo in his notebook as a souvenir," and it seems that the latter is right, Ya'ari, Emissaries, 213.

[197] Ashtor, E., "Ḳā'it Bāy", Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV, Leiden, 1974, 462–463.

[198] Strauss-Ashtor, 414.

[199] This appears from the case of the demolishing of the synagogue at the end of 1474.

[200] Freimann, Emissaries, 195.

[201] Freimann, Emissaries, 187, 196.

[202] Freimann, Emissaries, 194.

force that we took the Holy Land, and its holiness is for us, to eat its fruit and blessings."[203]

Another emissary who went abroad one year later, presumably because of these as well as other events, was Rabbi Moshe 'Esrim we-Arba',[204] who has also reached Crete in the course of his mission and was also the protegé of Rabbi Mikha'el Balbo for several months.[205] The latter even furnished him - as he did his predecessor - with letters of recommendation for the continuation of his mission. While the emissary was in Crete he was told of the destruction of the synagogue in al-Quds in November 1474,[206] so that the rest of his mission was actually colored by an additional event, for which he was also furnished with a letter of recommendation by Rabbi Mikha'el Balbo.[207] From other sources it seems that he continued on his mission to Turkey and in Constantinople he became entangled in a tough dispute with Rabbi Moshe Capsali - the Chief Rabbi of the Jews of Constantinople - who wanted to prevent the emissary from taking money out of Turkey to Palestine, which was under the rule of the Mamelukes,[208] since the two Moslem empires of the Mediterranean shores being at that time in a state of war.[209] Rabbi Moshe Esrim we- Arba' joined the opposition to Rabbi Moshe Capsali in Constantinople, and even recruited to it Rabbi Yosef Colon, one of the most important scholars in Italy at the time, with whom he also met after.leaving Constantinople.[210]

In Italy he continued his mission with an additional emissary, and it can

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[203] Freimann, Emissaries, 195; in the case of demolishing the synagogue we have found that the background of the tension was informing and false accusations against the Jews, who had argued about the ownership of the land on which the synagogue had been built, and of the adjacent land.

[204] Freimann, Emissaries, 188-191, 198-202; Ya'ari, Emissaries, 214-218; it must be pointed out that Freimann was wrong when he believed 'Bona Fide,' followed by Ya'ari, Emissaries, 216, that: "Rabbi Moshe 'Esrim we-Arba' was Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi" with whom he debated the Gilgul (Reincarnation); Gottlieb, E., "The Metempsychosis Controversy in Candia", Sefunot, 11, 1971-1978, 45, note 1 (Hebrew).

[205] Letters of recommendation which he received from Rabbi Mikha'el Balbo: Freimann, Emissaries, 198-199.

[206] Freimann, Emissaries, 199, Document No. 8.

[207] Freimann, Emissaries, 199.

[208] As the relative of Rabbi Moshe Capsali - Rabbi Eliya Capsali - testifies in his letter to Rabbi Yosef Taitazak it has been included in various fragments from his book: Lates, M. (ed.), Debei Eliyahu, Padova, 1869, 13-17 (Hebrew); Graetz, H., Geschichte der Juden, VIII, Leipzig, 1890, 443-446.

[209] See note 197.

[210] Rabinowicz, H., "Joseph Colon and Joseph Capsali", Jewish Quarterly Review, 47, 1956/7, 336-8, which deals with this problem very superficially, without referring at all to what Freimann had said, and therefore he did not know when the conflict had broken out.

be assumed that this was Rabbi Yosef ha-Dayyan of al-Quds who had left on his mission a year earlier, as related by Rabbi Yosef Colon.[211] The treasurers who had already collected money for the poor upon the appeal of the first emissary, were now called upon to collect money for the rebuilding of the synagogue in al-Quds, and they had a dilemma as to whether they were allowed to designate the money, which had already been collected for the poor, to the building of the synagogue. Rabbi Yosef Colon decreed that they were permitted "to change these coins," namely, to use the money for rebuilding the synagogue.

9. Relationship with other Minorities

a. Jewish-Christian Relations

The Jews and the Christians shared the same fate in Palestine as ethnical minorities under the shadow of the Islam. Both were persecuted, humiliated and discriminated by the Moslems in accordance with the Islam constitution.[212] Notwithstanding the sharing of fates, the local and the visiting Christians could not overcome the strong hatred of the Jews, who were regarded by them everywhere as the enemies of Christianity. This hatred was expressed in western Christian sources, mainly in the works of Franciscan monks and pilgrims,[213] although it has not prevented bilateral contacts; some of them spoke about how they had cultivated mainly business relations with the Jews of Germany and others, with whom they found a common language, because those pilgrims did not understand the local language - Arabic. Those Jews were very helpful to them as translators, and assisted them in their various affairs, mainly in accommodation matters and other travel services.[214] Sometimes they also conducted theological debates with them.[215]

The tension between Jews and Christian necessitated more than once the intervention of the authorities. The Italian pilgrim Pietro Casola wrote in his Book of Travel of 1494:

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[211] Responsa of Yosef Colon (Mahariq), No. 5, and also the edition of Pines, E. D., Jerusalem, 1970, No. 227, 312-313; Ya'ari, Emissaries, 217-218.

[212] The pilgrim Martin Kabatnik wrote: "The Christians and the Jews in Jerusalem are helpless and are greatly distressed ... and the Moslems oppress them intentionally in various ways," Ish-Shalom, Travels, 265; on the status of the Christian settlement in Palestine: Assaf, History, 188 ff.; Friedman, Eretz-Israel, 29-30.

[213] Ish-Shalom, Travels, 243, 245, 253, 255, 257, 259, 271; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 146-150; Schein, Custodia, 47-54.

[214] Ish-Shalom, Travels, 251-253, 262-264, 272-275; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 146-150.

[215] Ish-Shalom, Travels, 266, 272.

> "A Jew who lived in Jerusalem, a physician ... accused the Christians before the said Governor. He said that a few of the pilgrims avoided going to the Jordan River, in order to explore and spy in Jerusalem, and that he had heard several pilgrims say that within two years the Christians would be the masters of Jerusalem. This accusation caused these wretched people to be arrested and fettered."[216]

It seems that the severest tension between Jews and Christians in al-Quds in the 15th century was about the ownership of King David's burial place on Mount Zion. In the twenties of the 15th century an Ashkenazic Jew wanted to purchase this burial place, which, according to popular tradition, was located on Mount Zion, and the tomb was underneath the Coenaculum Church - the place of Jesus' last feast, according to the Christian tradition. That church was held by the Franciscans. The Jews asked the Muslim authorities to give them the burial place for a financial consideration. When the Franciscans started to take steps to prevent the transferring of the tomb to Jewish ownership, the Moslems said that they had designated in 1428 the burial place for a Moslem mosque, and did not hesitate to demolish the church above it.[217] As a result thereof the Franciscans tried to arouse Europe to a new Crusade against the Jews, headed by Pope Martin the 5th. The Franciscan anti-Jewish propaganda brought about the decree by the Venice authorities prohibiting captains to carry Jews to Palestine, and another order on behalf of the Queen of Naples - Juana the 2nd - imposing on the Jews of South Italy a financial fine in order to redeem the Franciscan monks on Mount Zion. Later the church was rebuilt and redestroyed in 1467/8; in the second demolishing the Jews were blamed again.[218] As a result of the tension between the Jews and the Christians in al-Quds, which probably rose after the above mentioned events, an order was issued by the Mameluke Sulṭān Qā'id Bei prohibiting the Jews to pass close to either the gate of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or cross the territory of the Franciscan monastery on Mount Zion. The same order was renewed during the Ottoman regime by the Moslem court in al-Quds in 1534.[219]

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[216] Ish-Shalom, Travels, 269.

[217] Ya'ari, Igrot, 137.

[218] Prawer, J., "The Friars of Mount Zion and the Jews of Jerusalem in the Fifteenth's Century", Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 14, 1948, 15-24 (Hebrew); Hirschberg, J. W., "The Tombs of David and Solomon in Moslem Tradition", Eretz-Israel, 3, 1954, 217-219 (Hebrew); Ta-Shema, 85; Schein, Custodia, 52-53.

[219] Arce, A., "Restricciones Impuestas a Los Judios en Jerusalem (1534)", Sefarad, 17, 1957, 49-72.

b. Karaites

Only little is known by us about the Karaites in Palestine in the Middle Ages following the Crusader Period. It seems that the Karaite settlement in Palestine, which had disappeared in the Crusader Period, was re-established at the end of the 13th century:

> "And today you will find with us in the Glorious Land many Şedukim (meaning Karaites), writers, and many nice books were written by them about Pentateuch, Prophets and Hagiographa."[220]

From that time onwards we know only little about Karaites who lived in al-Quds and in Şafad.[221] In al-Quds we know of a Karaites family - Bnei ha-Şeḥani - several members of which worked in copying manuscripts as early as 1373.[222] Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, who showed much interest in the Karaites and in their customs, while still in Egypt,[223] pointed out when referring to the Ġazza community, that "And I have not seen Karaites there,"[224] and also when he spoke about the al-Ḫalīl community he said that it had "about twenty landlords, all of them Rabbanites."[225] In al-Quds, on the other hand, he found Karaites, and was also familiar with their customs.[226]

10. The internal Organization of the Jewish Community

About the leadership of the Jewish community in al-Quds and about its composition we have rather important information from Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra. In his travel-book to Palestine in 1481 he specified the names of 'The Jewish Dignitaries' of the city:

> "The Jewish dignitaries are the following: Rabbi Yosef de Montagna Ashkenazi, who is the 'Parnas' (Administrative Head) of the community; Rabbi Ya'aqov son of Rabbi Moshe Vizio (Vice) Nagid. Rabbi 'Amram Şidqiya, Rabbi Ovadya Shemu'el, Rabbi Mardukhi (!) Ḥalfatan, Rabbi Ya'aqov Yosef son of Ovadya Avraham, Rabbi Natan son of Yosef, Rabbi Ovadya son of Rabbi Shemu'el. These are the Dayyanim and the Elders of Jerusalem. And the most erudite of them are: Rabbi Shalon (!) Ashkenazi, who is a rabbi, Rabbi Natan, who is also a rabbi, and three or four other rabbis whose

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[220] Caftor va-pherach, 1, 61.

[221] Mann, J., Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature, vol. 2, Cincinnati, 1935, 120–125; Roth, B. (C.), "A Letter from Cairo to a Karaite Family in Jerusalem", Yerushalayim (Review), 1953, 138–140 (Hebrew).

[222] Beit-Arié, 248, 254–255, 260–261, 268, 275–277.

[223] Ya'ari, Igrot, 119–121.

[224] Ya'ari, Igrot, 125.

[225] Ya'ari, Igrot, 126.

[226] Ya'ari, Igrot, 119.

names I do not know. And the Judges are the following: Shaykh Moshe, Shaykh Shemu'el, Shaykh Ḥalfa, Shaykh Savliano, Shaykh Nissim."[227]

Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra specifies, then, the important functionaries of the Jewish community in al-Quds in both public and spiritual spheres.

The Parnas – Rabbi Yosef de Montagna.[228] He was probably the head of the congregation, or one of the central functionaries among the leaders of the community.

Vizio Nagid – Vice Nagid.[229] We know of two people in al-Quds in the 15th century who were called Nagid (leader): Rabbi Shabbetai Capsali[230] and Rabbi Moshe Delmedigo.[231]

It seems that the key for understanding the status of those personages called Nagid or Vizio Nagid, can be found in the political and social situation at that time. The fact that the Governor of the al-Quds Region (the Nā'ib) had been directly under the authority of the central Mameluke government in Egypt since 1376, added to the direct involvement of the Nagid in Egypt with occurrences in al-Quds in particular and in Palestine in general, shows without any doubt that there was a connection between the Egyptian Nagid and the leadership of the community in al-Quds. Those persons should therefore not be regarded as independent Negidim (leaders), but as deputies of the leaders of the overall organizational structure of the Egyptian Jews. There is also some foundation to the assumption that the leadership of the community in al-Quds resembled that of the communities in the towns in Egypt which were under the supervision of the Nagid, because in the various communities there was – apart from the head of the congregation – called 'Muqādam', who supervised the congregational affairs, and who was the local representation of the Nagid, and his function was recognized by the authorities.[232]

Dayyanim – the members of the court. The institution of the court was

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[227] About that Parnas: Ya'ari, Igrot, 89–90, 91–93; it seems that a short time after his arrival to al-Quds he was appointed administrator of the community, as Rabbi Meshulam pointed out. For more in this matter: Kook, S. H., "Rabbi Yosef de Montagna Ashkenazi, Parnas in Yerushalayim", Zion, 1, 1936, 255–256 (Hebrew).

[228] David, Elders, 231.

[229] Vice = Vitzo (Ital.).

[230] Porgès, N., "Elie Capsali et sa Chronique de Venise", Revue des Études Juives, 79, 1924, 38; Seder Eliyahu Zuta, 2, Jerusalem, 1977, 252 (Hebrew); David, Zion, 327–328.

[231] David, Zion, 328.

[232] David, Zion, 328–331; about the Mūqādam and his status in the Egyptian community: Ashtor, E., "Some Features of the Jewish Communities in Medieval Egypt", Zion, 30, 1965, 138–141 (Hebrew).

composed of four Dayyanim.[233] Three of them were a regular quorom of the court, and one a stand-in.

Rabbis – the sages and scholars, issuers of legal resolutions, preachers or teachers at the synagogue.[234]

Judges – it is not known what was the duty of the judges mentioned by Rabbi Meshulam. What is clear, though, is that he did not mean the juridical intro-community authority, because the Dayyanim are mentioned by him separately. It is very likely that Meshulam regarded as judges those five persons in charge of the dedications of the community mentioned in the famous Letter of Mission of 1455 as "six in charge of Dedication matters." And perhaps those judges called by Meshulam 'Shaykh' are these same Elders mentioned disreputably by Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, who in his harsh words against them described the grievances caused by them in the field of dedications, over which they had demanded for themselves a monopoly,[235] apart from their having lease the taxes of the community.[236] However, it is reasonable to assume that if those Elders are to be identified with the same 'Shaykh' mentioned in Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra's list of dignitaries, then the Elders are at the bottom of the list, and it is possible that this list just depicts a hierarchical order in the community, with the Administrative Head appearing as the first one.

The most outstanding of the leaders of the Jewish community in the 15th century was Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, the famous interpreter of the Mishna (Jewish Oral Laws), who arrived in al-Quds in 1488.[237] He found in it a small Jewish community which numbered no more than 70 landlords and which was suffering from the heavy burden of taxes. Its people were extremely poor, no strangers to hunger and disease,[238] and groaning under the heavy hand of the Elders, who did not consider any means as unbefitting to rob the people and drive them to poverty. When Rabbi Ovadya arrived, he started to take upon himself important public duties in both social and spiritual spheres of life, in order to improve as far as possi-

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[233] In two letters which were issued by the Court in al-Quds in the 50's and 60's of the 15th century we find the signature of four Dayyanim: Neubauer, Collections, 45–50; a second letter, dated 1467/8, was published by Hacker, Spanish, 151–156.

[234] At the time of Rabbi Meshulam's visit, 'Yeshivat Yerushalayim', which we know from the late 14th century, did probably not exist, and the entire spiritual activity was centered around the synagogue: David, Academies, 141.

[235] David, Elders, 221–233.

[236] David, Elders, 233–234.

[237] Ya'ari, Igrot, 127.

[238] Ya'ari, Igrot, 127.

ble the hard living conditions of the people of the community.[239] He tried to introduce some order into the matter of burials after he saw

> "that one cannot find in it coffin bearers and those who go in the wake of the hearse."[240]

He also wrote that he had used

> "to preach to the congregation here twice a month at the synagogue in the holy language (Hebrew),"[241]

and that he taught Tora.[242] He also established on his own initiative many charities using donations which arrived from his friend.[243] He was behind important amendments in the field of taxation - the tax per capita,[244] and the wine tax.[245] It can be assumed that his activities for the community in al-Quds were made with the knowledge of the Nagid sitting in Egypt, Yonatan Shulāl, with whom he had become acquainted when he stayed in Egypt, and had also been appointed to supervise the latter's house in al-Quds.[246] At the beginning of his steps he enjoyed the favor of the Elders,[247] and in the first year was even exempted by them from tax payments, including "the tax allocated per capita, of which no one is exempt."[248]

A short time after his arrival, the attitude of the Elders to the community underwent a change, their treatment of the people improving.[249] It is not unlikely that the change in the attitude of the Elders was a result of their weakness or of an intended weakening of their status, a change probably connected with the dynamic and active personality of Rabbi Ovadya.[250] It seems that the conflict of interests between the Elders and Rabbi Ovadya was well reflected in frictions and collisions between them, the nature of which is not clear. Eventually Rabbi Ovadya had to flee from them to al-Ḫalīl, as he writes in his letter of 1492:

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[239] David, Elders, 221.

[240] Ya'ari, Igrot, 128.

[241] Ya'ari, Igrot, 141.

[242] Responsa of Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav, No. 55.

[243] Ya'ari, Igrot, 141.

[244] Rabbi Ovadya points out that upon his arrival drastic change occurred in the collection of the tax per capita: Ya'ari, Igrot, 142.

[245] This has been explicitly written by his unknown disciple: Ya'ari, Igrot, 156.

[246] Ya'ari, Igrot, 141, and see David, Elders, 235.

[247] Ya'ari, Igrot, 128.

[248] Ya'ari, Igrot, 141.

[249] Ya'ari, Igrot, 128.

[250] David, Elders, 235.

> "Because I went to Hebron and lived in it for many days ... as the Jews there are few and benevolent and are not as evil as the people of Jerusalem."[251]

But several years later he again found his deserved place in al-Quds as pointed out by his unknown disciple at the end of 1495:

> "And the man is very great, and according to him the country acts, and without him no man lifts his hand and from all over the country people come to him for advice, and do not deviate from it."[252]

One of the greatest Rabbis called him: "Head of all the Rabbis of Jerusalem,"[253] and added that

> "all the sages of France, Spain and Germany living in Jerusalem, used to sit before him and be guided by him."

It seems that his efforts to rehabilitate and strengthen the Jewish Settlement in al-Quds bore fruit, because eight years later the Jewish Settlement numbered "some two hundred Jewish landlords."[254]

11. Spiritual Life

From the vague data about spiritual life in al-Quds following the Crusader Period it seems that spiritual activity became somewhat more extensive in the last quarter of the 14th century. One of the indications thereof is the date we have about the relative multiplication of Hebrew manuscripts, mainly in al-Quds, or in the Diaspora by people who had come from there in 1373. Although their being preserved is just a coincidence, they reflect undoubtedly a spiritual reality which existed in al-Quds at that time. From those data it furthermore appears that most manuscripts have been copied by copiers of Spanish origin, and the minority of them by the people of Byzantium and Germany. From those data it further seems that the Jews were very interested not only in the Halakha but also in Kabbala, in Bible interpretation, in philosophy and in liturgy.

The first reports about Tora institutions in al-Quds pertain to the end of the 14th century. A Yeshiva was established by Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Halewi Bilstein who had immigrated from Germany with his disciples after the Black Plague Edicts, namely before 1359. About his Yeshiva we learn from the consent of the scholars of al-Quds to the excommunication of Rabbi

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[251] Ya'ari, Igrot, 142-143.

[252] Ya'ari, Igrot, 155.

[253] Responsa of the Radbaz, Warsaw Edition, 1882, No. 1180.

[254] Ya'ari, Igrot, 157.

David ben Hodaya the ha-Nasi in favour of Rabbi Shemu'el Schlettstadt, whih was issued after 1381, and signed by

> "The young surviving members of the congregation of our teacher and Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Halewi Asir ha-Tiqwa ... who study at his Yeshiva."[255]

In 1434 arrived in al-Quds an Italian scholar, Rabbi Eliya of La Massa and in his letter of 1438 to his sons he wrote among other things that "the dignitaries of the congregation" implored him to serve as teacher and preacher at the synagogue and the Yeshiva.

> "And the dignitaries of the congregation came to me and asked me to interpret for them at the synagogue the chapter of Maimonides as was their custom, and since then they had their eyes on me and put on my shoulders a heavy load of saying thrice a day the chapter at the synagogue, and Halakha with Supplements at the Beit-Midrash and Halakha with the Interpretation of Rashi at the synagogue in the evening."[256]

Rabbi Eliya of La Massa was one of the scholars of the city who occupied a central place as a teacher. Then there existed in the city at that time two centers of Tora in which studies were conducted separately and on a different level. The synagogue served mainly as a place of prayer and of occasional gatherings; its studying facilities were suitable for the entire Jewish community - both scholars and landlords who continued to study for some time after their daily prayers. The Yeshiva, on the other hand, was designated for those scholars whose vocation was the studying of Tora; they devoted their entire time to these studies, and their studying was more intensive and deeper.

Additional information about the existence of these two institutions of the al-Quds community in the middle of the 15th century has come down to us in a letter of the Dayyanim, written in October, 1455, with regard to the mission of Rabbi Avraham Halewi as follows:[257]

> "And in the Jerusalem synagogue and in the house of 'Yeshivat ha-Tora' which is established forever in Jerusalem, because it wants no wine, ... And now a short time ago great old scholars came with their disciples, and you will see in another letter what the Rabbis did with their aid, which this venerable Rabbi Avraham Halewi has brought ... And they added to the Yeshiva and expanded the studying of the Tora."[258]

From this excerpt several matters appear connected with the framework of studying:

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[255] Beit-Arié, 244-277; Klein, Toledot, 160-169; Reiner, E., "Between Ashkenaz and Jerusalem", Shalem, 4, 1984, 27-62 (Hebrew).

[256] Hacker, Spanish, 259.

[257] Neubauer, Collections, 45-50.

[258] Neubauer, Collections, 49.

- Separation between two schools – 'The Synagogue' and the house of 'Yeshivat ha-Tora'.
- The duration of the Yeshiva "which is established forever in Jerusalem".
- The fact of the arrival of "scholars ... with their disciples." Those scholars, whose country of origin is unknown, added importance to the development and promotion of the Yeshiva both qualitatively and quantitatively.[259]

From a Letter of Mission which the emissary Yosef ha-Dayyan has carried with him at the end of 1472, it appears that the community was greatly agitated. The background of this is not sufficiently clear. Its financial condition was very bad on account of the robbing and pillaging by the authorities,[260] and because of that same reason the voice of the Tora was silenced, and its result was the closing down of the Yeshiva.[261] Indeed, in the later sources there is no mention of the Jerusalem Yeshiva. Rabbi Meshulam of Volterra when describing the community, does not hint at the existence of the Yeshiva.[262]

Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro does not mention in his letter any involvement with studying at the Yeshiva, only at the synagogue.

> „Today I sit in the house of our master the Nagid,[263] because he has put me in charge of his house here in Jerusalem,[264] and I preach to the congregation here twice a month at the synagogue in the holy language, because most of them understand the holy language ... and praise and acclaim my sermons. And they listen to my words ... and we gather every evening and morning to study Halakha, and two Sefardic pupils study with me regularly. And we have here with us two Ashkenazic rabbis."[265]

Since in the abovementioned sources, as well as in sources of a later period,[266] a clear distinction is made between 'The Synagogue' and the 'Yeshiva' or 'Beit-Midrash', one should attach the same significance to the synagogue in Rabbi Ovadya's words as was attached to it above, namely, that it was a place of prayer and a framework of studying for landlords (maybe also for scholars), who were allocating only little of their time to

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[259] It seems that the majority of the Jewish sages in al-Quds and other places in Palestine at that time were from Spain as well as Western and Central Europe: Hacker, J.R., "Links between Spanish Jewry and Palestine 1391–1492", Cohen, R. (ed.), Vision and Conflict in the Holy Land, Jerusalem, 1985, 111–139; Ta-Shema, 85–88.

[260] Freimann, Emissaries, 194–196.

[261] David, Academics, 141.

[262] Ya'ari, Meshulam, 71–77.

[263] Meaning Natan (Yonatan) Shulāl who served as Nagid in Egypt in the years 1484–1502. About him see a concluding discussion in Strauss-Ashtor, 448–454.

[264] Strauss-Ashtor, 450–451; David, Elders, 239.

[265] Ya'ari, Igrot, 141–142.

[266] Ya'ari, Igrot, 171, 173; Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 63.

studies and reading. And in this place Rabbi Ovadya used to preach frequently.[267] The fact that he does not mention another, more intensive, studying framework,[268] proves that probably during the period of decline in which the Jews found themselves mainly in the last quarter of the 15th century[269] the Yeshiva in al-Quds ceased to exist.[270]

Rabbi Ovadya emphasizes that he used to preach at the synagogue 'in the holy language,' as Hebrew was the common language to all the communities which lived in al-Quds at that time: Arabicized, Ashkenazic, French, Spanish, Italian and others.[271]

It seems that upon the gradual recovery of the Jewish populace in the city at the beginning of the 16th century, when the immigration waves to it increased following the Spanish expulsion (1492) and the Portuguese Edicts (1497), the Yeshiva reopened its gates. There is no doubt that the restoration of the Yeshiva in al-Quds was related to the intensive activity of the Nagid Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ha-Kohen Shulāl who had become Nagid in Egypt in 1502, and did his very best to cultivate spiritual life in al-Quds. His initiative in this direction was expressed on two levels: in founding two Yeshivot, and financing their upkeep, on one hand, and in enacting a series of social regulations on the other hand. The most famous among them was the regulation concerning tax exemption for scholars, which was issued by the Nagid's court in Egypt in 1509.

The Nagid's main objective in these and other of his activities was, then, the establishing of a spiritual center in al-Quds to which scholars and pupils from all over the Jewish Diaspora would come.[272] Spiritual activity in Ṣafad is known from the beginning of the 16th century, when the Sefardic scholars there, who already constituted the majority, received financial support from the above Nagid, as opposed to the Arabicized scholars who did not receive it. Furthermore, at that time there already were mutual contacts and an exchange of opinions on subjects of Halakha and customs

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[267] Ya'ari, Igrot, 157.

[268] Even his unknown disciple does not hint in this direction.

[269] See our discussion in the introduction.

[270] David, Academies, 149-150.

[271] We find additional evidence about Hebrew being spoken in al-Quds at that time in the writings of Christian pilgrims, like the German pilgrim Arnold von Harff: Von Groote, E., Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff, Köln, 1860, 187-189; Hebrew translation of this excerpt: Ish-Shalom, Travels, 272; in this matter: Klausner, Y., "The Hebrew Language in Palestine in the Fifteenth Century," Eretz-Israel Yearbook, 1, 1923, 114-117 (Hebrew); Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 150-151; Ish-Shalom, Travels, 261.

[272] David, Academies, 142.

between the scholars of al-Quds and those of Şafad, causing tension between them over the spiritual hegemony in Palestine.[273]

At that time there was in Şafad a Yeshiva headed by Rabbi Moshe ha-Dayyan whose personality was not depicted in a favourable light.[274]

Concerning the studying of Kabbala in Palestine in the second half of the 13th century, important information has been preserved. The famous Kabbalist Rabbi Avraham Abūl'afiya arrived in 'Akkā in 1260, but left the country in the same year, because of the war in Palestine between the Tartars and Mamelukes during that year. He left his personal imprint on the country through his disciples, the most famous of whom was Rabbi Yiṣḥaq of Acre. They were considerably affected by his mystical method, and it seems that one of them lived in al-Ḫalīl at the end of the century. The disciples of Rabbi Avraham Abūl'afiya combined in their mystical meditations also Şufic-Moslem elements. His Kabbalistic method left its imprint also on later Kabbalists who lived in the country, such as Rabbi Shem-Ṭov ben Avraham ibn Ga'on – the famous Spanish scholar who lived in Şafad in the year 1325. His Kabbalistic method enjoyed an unprecedented development in the Meditations of the Kabbalists of al-Quds and Şafad in the 16th century.[275]

About other Kabbalists in the 15th century we will hear reverberations in the words of the historian Rabbi Eliya Capsali, who tells us about one of his 'forebears':

Rabbi Shabbetai Capsali, who was Nagid in al-Quds whose books and interpretations about the Kabbala were "in Jerusalem in the hands of Kabbalists."[276]

At the beginning of the 16th century there lived in al-Quds "newly arrived Kabbalists"[277] who impregnated the city with a Kabbalistic mystical and apocalyptic atmosphere to a considerable degree. The most outstanding and important among them was the famous Kabbalist Rabbi Avraham Halewi of the expelled from Spain, who had arrived in al-Quds

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[273] Benayahu, M., "The First Generation of Spanish Jews in Safed", Gutman, Y. et al. (eds.), Sefer Assaf, Jerusalem, 1953, 109–125 (Hebrew).

[274] We learn about this from a document in the Cairo Geniza of the end of the first decade of the 16th century, published by Gottheil, R., and Worrell, W.H. (eds.), Fragments from the Cairo Geniza in the Freer Collection, New York, 1927, 256–257.

[275] This subject in its entirety has been discussed by Idel, M., "Prophetic Kabbala and the Land of Israel", Cohen, R. (ed.), Vision and Conflict in the Holy Land, Jerusalem, 1985, 102–110.

[276] Capsali, E., Seder Eliyahu Zuta, vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1977, 252–253 (Hebrew).

[277] As testified by Rabbi Avraham Halewi: Polack, G., Kerem Chemed, 9, 1856, 141–148 (Hebrew).

several years prior to the Ottoman conquest, and whose image was well interwoven with the expectations for redemption which were awakened in al-Quds in the second and third decades of the 16th century.[278]

Philosophical activity took place in al-Quds at the end of the 14th century and at the beginning of the 15th,[279] but it seems that the interest in philosophy at the end of the Mameluke Period was insignificant, and on this one can conclude from the words of Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro, who wrote in his first letter, in 1488[280]

> "Not a Jew will be found here not an Yishma'elite whose heart turns from the Lord to heresy or evil faiths, and there is not one in all these places who engages in philosophy and is attracted by the opinions of Aristotle and his friends, may the names of the evil rot, and to Egypt there has come one from the western country (Maghrab) and has started to be the fertile root of poison, and to talk philosophy, and the Nagid rejected him entirely."[281]

List of Abbreviations*

Ashtor, Jerusalem	= Ashtor, E., "Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages", Yerushalayim (Review), 2/5, 1955, 71-116 (Hebrew).
Assaf, History	= Assaf, M., History of the Arabs in Palestine, vol. 2, Tel-Aviv, 1941 (Hebrew).
Beit-Arié	= Beit-Arié, M., "Hebrew Manuscripts copied in Jerusalem before the Ottoman Conquest", Kedar, B.Z. (ed.) Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, Jerusalem, 1979, 244-278 (Hebrew).
Ben-Zvi, Bassola	= Ben-Zvi, I. (ed.), A Pilgrimage to Palestine by Rabbi Moshe Bassola of Ancona, Jerusalem, 1938 (Hebrew).
Ben-Zvi, Jewish	= Ben-Zvi, I., Remnants of Ancient Jewish Communities in the Land of Israel, Jerusalem, 1967, (2nd edition), (Hebrew).
Braslvsky, L'Heqer	= Braslvsky, J., L'Heqer Artzenu-'Avar Us'ridim, Tel-Aviv, 1954 (Hebrew).
Caftor va-pherach	= Estori ha-Parchi, Caftor va-pherach, Luncz, A.M., (ed.), Jerusalem, 1899 (Hebrew).
David, Academies	= David, A., "The History of the Jerusalem Academies in the 15th and 16th Centuries", Studies in Education, 34, 1982, 139-164 (Hebrew).

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[278] Scholem, G. and Beit-Arié, M. (eds.), Introduction to a photographed edition of the book: Ma'amar Meshare Qitrin, by Abraham Ha Levi, Jerusalem, 1978 (Hebrew); David, Academies, 157, Note 54.

[279] From a list of manuscripts copied in al-Quds or for Jews in it, it seems that interest in philosophy and Kabbala was at its highest at the end of the 14th century and at the beginning of the 15th: Beit-Arié, 244-247.

[280] Ya'ari, Igrot, 130.

[281] It seems that Nagid-Natan (Yonatan) Shulāl-is meant here.

* Reference of Responsa literature is to be found under each of the authors' names.

David, Ashkenazim = David, A., "The Ashkenazic Community in Jerusalem in the XVIth Century", Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies, 2, Jerusalem, 1975, 331-341 (Hebrew).

David, Elders = David, A., "The Historial Significance of the 'Elders' Mentioned in the Letters of R. Obadia of Bertinoro", Kedar, B.Z. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Middle-Ages, Jerusalem, 1979, 221-243 (Hebrew).

David, Zion = David, A., "The 'Vitzo Nagid' of Jerusalem in the 15th and early 16th Century", Zion, 45, 1980, 327-331 (Hebrew).

Drori, Jerusalem = Drori, Y., "Jerusalem in the Mamluk (sic!) Period", Kedar, B.Z., (ed.), Jerusalem in the Middle-Ages, Jerusalem, 1979, 178-184 (Hebrew).

Freimann, Emissaries = Freimann, A., "Emissaries and Immigrants", Zion, 1, 1936, 185-207 (Hebrew).

Friedman, Eretz-Israel = Friedman, Y., "Eretz-Yisrael and Jerusalem on the Eve of the Ottoman Period", Cohen, A. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Early Ottoman Period, Jerusalem, 1979, 7-38 (Hebrew).

Hacker, Spanish = Hacker, J., "The Connections of Spanish Jewry with Eretz-Israel between 1391 and 1492", Shalem, 1, 1974, 105-156 (Hebrew).

Ish-Shalom = Ish-Shalom, M., In the Shadow of Alien Rule, History of the Jews in the Land of Israel, Tel-Aviv, 1975 (Hebrew).

Ish-Shalom, Travels = Ish-Shalom, M., Christian Travels in the Holy-Land, Tel-Aviv, 1965 (Hebrew).

Kahana, Inheritance = Kahana, Y.Z., "Inheritance for Eretz-Israel in the Responsa Literature", Sinai, 31, 1952, 14-47 (Hebrew).

Kedar, Genoese = Kedar, B.Z., "Jerusalemite Jews in Genoese Famagusta, 1388", Kedar, B.Z. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Middle-Ages, Jerusalem, 1979, 197-205 (Hebrew).

Klein, Ever ha-yarden = Klein, S., Ever ha-Yarden ha-Yehudi, Wien, 1926 (Hebrew).

Klein, Toledot = Klein, S., Toledot ha-Yishuv ha-Yehudi be-Eretz-Israel, Tel-Aviv, 1935 (Hebrew).

Levinger, Shem-Tov = Levinger, D.S., "Rabbi Shem-Tob Abraham Ben Ga'on", Sefunot, 7, 1963, 7-39 (Hebrew).

Lewis, Cities = Lewis, B., "Cities in Ereṣ-Israel in the XVIth Century according to Documents from Ottoman Archives", Yerushalayim (Review) 2/5, 1955, 117-127 (Hebrew).

Neubauer, Collections = Neubauer, A., "Collections on the Ten Tribes and Bnei-Moshe", Kobez Al Jad, 4, 1888, 9-74 (Hebrew).

Rozen, Position = Rozen, M., "The Position of the Musta'arabs and the Inter-Community Relationships in Eretz-Israel from the End of the 15th Century to the End of the 17th Century", Cathedra, 17, 1980, 73-101 (Hebrew).

Schein, Custodia = Schein, S., "The 'Custodia Terrae Sanctae', and the Image of the Jews of Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages", Cathedra, 19, 1981, 47-54 (Hebrew).

Strauss-Ashtor = Strauss, E., History of the Jews in Egypt and Syria under the Rule of the Mamlūks, vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1951 (Hebrew).

Ta-Shema = Ta-Shema, I., "Eretz-Israel Studies", Shalem, 1, 1974, 81-95 (Hebrew).

Verdicts and Writings = Isserlein, Y. (ed.), Verdicts and Writings, Warsaw, 1882.

Ya'ari, Emissaries = Ya'ari, A. (ed.), Sheluḥei Eretz-Israel, Jerusalem, 1951 (Hebrew).
Ya'ari, Igrot = Ya'ari, A. (ed.), Igrot Eretz-Israel, Tel-Aviv, 1943 (Hebrew).
Ya'ari, Meshulam = Ya'ari, A. (ed.), Massa Meshulam mi-Volterra, Jerusalem, 1948 (Hebrew).
Yuval, Alms = Yuval, I., "Alms from Nuremberg to Jerusalem (1375–1392)", Zion, 46, 1981, 182–197 (Hebrew).
Zimmels, Responsen = Zimmels, I.J., "Eretz Israel in der Responsenliteratur des späteren Mittelalters", Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums, 74, 1930, 44–64.

Chapter IV. The Jewish Settlement in Palestine at the Beginning of the Ottoman Empire (1517–1599)

by
Avraham David

1. Introduction

The Ottoman Turks tribe settled as Seljuk vassals in West Anatolia as early as the beginning of the 14th century. Within two hundred years their empire extended from the borders of India to the Atlantic Ocean in Africa and to the gates of Vienna in Central Europe. The Turks' apperance in the Mediterranean arena constituted a severe threat on one hand to the Byzantine Empire, whose capital was Constantinople, and on the other hand to the Mameluke Empire whose centre was in Egypt, and that apart from the threat to the intactness of the Persian Empire in the east. Within a short time the Turkish armies reaped impressive successes on the battlefield, including the countries of the Near East.[1]

The great confrontation between the Mamelukes and the Ottomans was at the Marǧ Dābik battle, near Aleppo in Syria, on August 24, 1516. The legions of the Mameluke Sulṭān suffered a severe defeat by the Ottomans who were led by the Sulṭān Selīm the First, whose army was greatly superior in both quality and quantity. The Mameluke Sulṭān was killed in this battle. This was the beginning of the war for the conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt by the Ottomans. From this point on the war was conducted in an orderly way, generally not accompanied by persecution and pillage of the local population. It ended in the decisive battle near the gates of Cairo - the Raidaniyya Battle - north of Cairo, in January 1517.[2]

Since then Palestine was included in the Ottoman Empire for about 400

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[1] For general summary about the history of those campaigns: Cook, M.A. (ed.), A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730, Cambridge, 1976, 1-78.

[2] For the progress of the conquest and of the campaigns: Von-Hammer Purgstall, J., Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman (traduit J.J. Hallest), vol. 4, Paris, 1836, 261 ff. English translation of quotation of the historian Ibn Iyas about the conquest: Salmon, W.H., An Account of the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt in the Year A.H. 922 (1516), London, 1921; Important reports about the conquest: Shmuelevitz, A., Simonsohn, S. and Benayahu, M. (eds.), Seder Eliyahu Zuta, Jerusalem, 1975, 312-365 (Hebrew); Ayalon, D., "The Mamluk Army after the Ottoman Conquest", Tarbiz 23, 1952, 221-226 (Hebrew); Holt, P.M., Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, London, 1966, 33-41.

years, (1516-1917/18). Within the administrative division of the Ottoman Empire at its beginning, Palestine was under the authority of the governor of the Damascus district (Iyalet aš-Šām) whose title was Wālī. His rule extended also over Southern Syria and Palestine.

In the beginning of the period, Palestine itself was divided into four districts - a Sanjak in Turkish, and Liwā in Arabic. The districts in Palestine were: al-Quds, Ġazza, Nābulus, Ṣafad. Each one was divided into sub-districts (Naḥiya in Turkish). Each sub-district was headed by a special governor. The above cities were the respective seats of the governors of the Sanjaks - whose title in Turkish was Sanjak Bek, and in Arabic Mīr al-Liwā. Later on, another district was created - Sanjak Lāǧūn, in Lower Galilee.

The Ottoman conquest opened an era, and a new period of prosperity started in the history of Palestine. On one hand the oppressing Mameluke regime had been defeated, and on the other hand Palestine was included in a large, stable and regulated empire, which enhanced security, and increased opportunities for success.

The statistical data regarding taxpayers in the first decades of the Ottoman regime, found in the Turkish archives, incidate in the most obvious way a considerable increase of the population. The cities grew rapidly, the villages expanded and spread, causing industry, commerce and agriculture to develop.[3] In Bernard Lewis' estimate, the population in Palestine amounted in the second half of the 16th century to about three hundred thousand people, out of them about ten thousand Jews,[4] but this estimate is not necessarily realistic.[5]

About twenty to twenty-five percent of the entire population lived in the cities, and the rest in the villages.[6] It seems that the Ottoman authorities, through the local rulers, wished to encourage development and prosperity; they therefore attempted to attract people from other countries to Palestine, so that they might settle in it, and this applied also to the Jewish Settlement.[7] The period of Sulṭān Suleiman the 'Magnificent' is justifiably regarded as the Golden Age of the Ottoman Empire. In his days (1520-1566) the Empire expanded; he fortified the eastern borders up to Persia, as well as those in the north - in Eastern Europe - up to the gates of

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[3] Bernard Lewis devoted several studies to this subject: Lewis, Notes, 5-22; Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 170-187.

[4] Lewis, Notes, 10; Lewis, B., "The Population and Tax Revenue of Eretz-Israel in the sixteenth Century", Yerushalayim (Review), 1953, 136 (Hebrew).

[5] Cohen, Demography, 104-107; Cohen, Jewish, 104-107; Hacker, Payment, 90-98.

[6] Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 180.

[7] Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 170-187.

Vienna.[8] In Palestine his period was marked by various construction enterprises, and by economic rehabilitation of the country. He and his representatives took various steps to curb the penetration of Bedouins and to impose on them the control of the central government. One of his most important actions was to fortify the large and major cities and to surround them with large and strong walls.

The present wall of Jerusalem was built by Suleiman in the years 1537–1540.[9] From a Jewish source of the 17th century it appears that Avraham di Qastro – a respectable Jew who immigrated from Egypt to al-Quds participated in this construction work.[10] In 1549 the wall around the town of Ṣafad was built.[11] In 1557 the fort called Ḥān al-Baša was built in Ṣafad, and Jews lived in it.[12] Suleiman wished to restore the ruins of Ṭabarīya in the fifties and sixties of the 16th century, and for this purpose he wanted help of two of his assistants in Constantinople, Don Yosef Nassi and his mother-in-law, Dona Gracia.[13]

In al-Quds Suleiman developed and extended engineerial enterprises to improve the infrastructure of water reservoirs and the ducts carrying the water to the city. At the same time Breikhot Shelomo (Reservoirs of Solomon) were repaired (south of Bęt Leḥem) and their water carried to al-Quds. Suleiman repaired the large reservoir Birkat as-Sulṭān (Sultan's Pool) and built on it a trough of streaming water for the benefit of travellers. Also, additional water ducts were built in the streets for carrying water to various steaming-water troughs scattered in the city.

At the same time accelerated development works started in the fields of industry and commerce in Palestine. Oil presses were built, soap industry also expanded; mills were built as well as flax gathering enterprises, and even an enterprise for arms manufacturing was erected.[14] Commerce in

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[8] A great deal has already been written about him: Merriman, R.B., Suleiman the Magnificent, Cambridge (Mass.), 1944.

[9] This appears from the various legends on the Wall Gates: Vilnay, Z., Yerushalayim (The Old City), Jerusalem, 1970, 176 ff. (Hebrew).

[10] Neubauer, Chronicles, 141; David, A., "The Termination of the Office of Nagid in Egypt and biographical Data Concerning the Life of Avraham di Qastro", Tarbiz, 41, 1972, 334 (Hebrew); Cohen, A. expresses his doubts as to the veracity of this report: "Were the Walls of Jerusalem Built by Abraham Castro?", Zion, 47, 1982, 407–418 (Hebrew); David, A., "New Data about Avraham Qastro in Some Cairo Geniza Documents", Michael, 9, 1985, 149–150 (Hebrew).

[11] Responsa of Radbaz. No. 125.

[12] Ben-Zvi, I., "The Jewish Fortress of the XVIth Century and the Qaisariya in Safad", Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 10, 1944, 113–116 (Hebrew).

[13] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 180–215; Heyd, Tiberias, 193–210.

[14] Cohen, A., "Development Projects in Jerusalem under Early Ottoman Rule", Cathedra, 8, 1978, 179–187 (Hebrew).

al-Quds also started to expand under the encouragement of the authorities. The markets which had been preserved from the time of the Mamelukes were enlarged.

The trend of economic development in Palestine, initiated by the Sulṭān Suleiman, was more significant in Ṣafad. For this place Sulṭān Suleiman decided upon a more accelerated and comprehensive development of the industrial infrastructure, because of the better geo-political conditions of Ṣafad. This town, which served as district capital, controlled a main junction abundant with water, and had an agricultural hinterland. A large textile industry was erected there, for the production and improvement of wool and silk fabrics. This enterprise became famous all over the world. A large part of its products was marketed abroad. The Jews (as we shall see later) occupied an important place in this industry.[15]

The Golden Age of the Ottoman Empire, with its territorial expansion and economic prosperity, did not continue for long. It lasted till the end of Suleiman's rule (1566), and several years afterwards. In the seventies of that century, and particularly during Sulṭān Murād the Third's rule (1574-1595), the Ottoman Empire underwent a severe economic and political crisis, which brought about its deterioration in the following decades. The crisis was expressed in fiscal and social instability, which of course greatly affected also the population in Palestine, causing it to diminish.[16]

With the change of regimes in Palestine the gates of the country opened wide. A short time after the conquest many immigrants from all over the Jewish Diaspora started to come to Palestine.

The increase of the Jewish population in Palestine following the Ottoman conquest left its mark also on the demographic data which can be gathered from the partial lists of taxpayers of the census which the Ottoman authorities conducted every several years. The trend of population increase continued more or less till the beginning of the second half of the 16th century. From the sixties onwards a trend of decrease is recognized, which was in direct ratio to the severity of the economic crisis all over the Empire.

The majority of the immigrants belonged to the Jews expelled from

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[15] Various sources have been preserved on this subject: Cohen-Lewis, 42 ff., as well as various Jewish sources which will be discussed later.

[16] Lewis, B., The Emergence of Modern Turkey, London, 1968, Second Chapter; Barkan, O.L., "The Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century. A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Near East", International Journal of Middle East Studies, 6, 1975, 3-28; Bashan, A., "The Political and Economic Crisis in the Ottoman Empire from the End of the XVIth Century, as Reflected in the Responsa Literature", Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies, 2, Jerusalem, 1975, 107-115 (Hebrew).

Spain, many of whom turned eastward right after their expulsion, and waited anxiously in various places in the Mediterranean countries for the right moment to immigrate to Palestine. In the previous Mameluke period the conditions had been very hard, and only few had made Palestine their destination. The exiles of Spain constituted within a short time the majority of the communities in al-Quds and Ṣafad. From both Hebrew and Moslem sources it appears that the dominancy of the Spanish Jews in the communities had become a 'Fait-accompli' several years after the conquest.[17] It seems that the immigrants were usually concentrated in the cities, while in the villages the main Jewish population was Musta'riba.[18]

This becomes apparent also from the actual socio-economic status of the immigrants. Those who had come from Europe and from the Mediterranean countries were used to urban life and not to agriculture, and the minute the conditions were ripe for convenient settling in the cities, they made their way to urban centers.

The immigrants' main destination was Ṣafad, and only a minority of them settled in al-Quds and this due to the advantages of Ṣafad over al-Quds, because of the greater suitability of its location for economic development. Al-Quds, during the entire period of the Moslem rule, was a provincial city within a large empire with its center in either Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, or Constantinople. For generations al-Quds had an inferior status even compared to other towns in Palestine, because it was far from the political and economic centers of the Empire. It lacked strategic importance, it was not located on a highway connecting important cities within the Empire, nor did it serve as a transit station for goods transported from east to west and vice versa. In comparison Ṣafad was a politically, strategically and economically important city, being the capital of a province in the Mameluke and Ottoman Periods, and the seat of the Governor.[19] It controlled the highway from Damascus to 'Akkā, it was surrounded by a rich agricultural hinterland, and from the beginning of the Ottoman regime various industrial branches had been developed in it, mainly the textile industry.[20]

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[17] We will discuss this subject later.

[18] Rozen, Position, 90.

[19] Heyd, U., "Jerusalem under the Mamluks and the Turks", Aviram, Y. (ed.), Jerusalem through the Ages, Jerusalem, 1968, 194-196 (Hebrew); Sharon, M., "Processes of Destruction and Nomadisation in Palestine under Islamic Rule (633-1517)", Sharon, M. (ed.), Notes and Studies on the History or the Holy Land under Islamic Rule, Jerusalem, 1976, 9-32 (Hebrew).

[20] Ben-Zvi, I., Eretz-Israel under the Ottoman Rule, Jerusalem, 1962, 169-173 (Hebrew); Avitsur, Safed, 41-69; Tamar, Leqaḥ, 8-10.

In addition Ṣafad had in those days a mystical importance, because the contemporaries believed that the Messiah was destined to rise in Galilee and its inhabitants would be saved from the agony preceding Messiah's advent;[21] therefore the movement of immigration to Palestine was apparently northbound – to Ṣafad, more than southbound to al-Quds.

a. Distribution of Jewish Settlement

From previous Jewish sources, from Turkish documents and from diaries of Christian pilgrims, a picture – though incomplete – is depicted of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine. From the partial lists of taxpayers which have been found in the Turkish archives in Constantinople, we have an idea about the size of the Jewish communities in various places, either in the various towns, or in the villages in the north of the country.

Except for al-Quds and Ṣafad, which will be discussed later, Jews lived in other cities and in various villages, mainly in the north of the country. In the Sanjak of al-Quds we find a tiny Jewish Settlement in al-Ḫalīl. Jewish population there amounted, according to data in our pessession, in the course of the 16th century to 8–20 families only,[22] who lived in the courtyard near the synagogue.[23] In the second half of the 16th century there was in al-Ḫalīl a Yeshiva, which continued to exist despite financial hardships.[24] Rabbi Yosef Trani, the famous sage of Ṣafad, visited this Yeshiva in 1589.[25] We know of several sages of Ṣafad and al-Quds who moved to al-Ḫalīl in the second half of the 16th century.[26]

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[21] Tamar, Leqaḥ, 10–13.

[22] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 58, pointed out that "there are in it some eight or ten households"; from the taxpayers census lists it appears that in 1538/9 this community amounted to 20 households; in 1553/4 it amounted to 8, and in 1562 and 1596/7 it numbered 11 families; Cohen-Lewis, 108–111.

[23] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 58; the Jewish Quarter was located in the north near the Qazzazīn Quarter: Cohen-Lewis, 108.

[24] Rabbi Shemu'el de Medina has written in one of his Reponsa Yore De'a, No. 167:

> "The Holy Community of Sidhinokastron (Greece), the Lord be with them, have collected for studying Tora through the society of Hebron, may it be rebuilt and reestablished soon in our days. And now it seems that this Society has been liquidated, and if so, then the Yeshiva of its members in Hebron will be closed down".

[25] Bentov, Diary, 219:

> "In the year 1589 I came to the Holy City of Jerusalem, on my way to Hebron for 'Ḥag ha-Shavu'ot' (Pentecost), and at the Yeshiva we studied the 'Massekhet Ḥulin' (Tractate of Profane)."

[26] Among them Rabbi Eliya di Vidas – one of ha-Ari's disciples in Ṣafad who arrived in al-Ḫalīl in the 70's of the 16th century, and Rabbi Shelomo Adani, who interpreted the Mishna in his work 'Melekhet Shelomo,' who lived in the cities of Ṣafad and al-Quds. Information about this was gathered by Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 221–222.

Ġazza as the capital of the southern Sanjak of Palestine, served as an important town in Palestine, but more than that it served as the southern gate of Palestine, through which the convoys of passengers and merchants passed from Egypt to Palestine and vice versa. It thus served also as the center of inland commerce between the two countries. In this town, many of the Jews were merchants.[27] Some were goldsmiths at the 'Saga' (Goldsmiths market),[28] and some worked in agriculture.[29] Statistics about the size of the Jewish population in Ġazza which can be obtained from the taxpagers lists in this city, point to an increase of the population till the middle of the 16th century: in 1525/6-95 landlords, in 1538/9-98 landlords, and in 1548/9-115 landlords. In the second half of the 16th century the population decreased: in 1556/7-81 landlords and in 1596/7-73 landlords.[30] In the first list of 1525/6 there is reference to demographic data of various communities,[31] amongst which were listed 31 families of Ma'araviyyim (North Africans), 7 French families, namely Provençal Jews and 2 Shāmaites, meaning Syrians.[32] From the total number of the Jews of Ġazza it is evident that there were in this community also Jews from other countries. No doubt there were among them also Musta'riba Jews and Spanish Jews. The latter constituted at that time the majority of the al-Quds and Şafad communities[33]and it is not likely that the situation was different in Ġazza. It is likely that there were also German Jews. A sage of this community is known and famous from the late 15th century.[34] There is no doubt that the Jews lived in their own special neighbourhood within one of the city's quarters, as we have already found out from a source regarding the early eighties of the 15th century.[35]

In ar-Ramla, which was included in the Ġazza Sanjak, existed apparently a tiny Jewish community; a hint in this direction is found in a Jewish source which indicates that Jews were living in "a village of gentiles which is near Ramla."[36] Also the German pilgrim Salomon Schweiger mentioned it explicitly in 1581.[37]

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[27] Kena'ani, Gaza, 120; Cohen-Lewis, 120.

[28] Kena'ani, Gaza, 36–37.

[29] Kena'ani, Gaza, 35; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 162.

[30] Specifications about it can be found in Cohen-Lewis, 128.

[31] Cohen-Lewis, 120, Note 15.

[32] David, Cuneo, 432.

[33] We will discuss it later on.

[34] David, Elders, 225.

[35] Ya'ari, A. (ed.), Massa Meshulam mi-Volterra, Jerusalem, 1948, 64: "Some 60 Jewish households ... and heading the Judaica is the House of Delila" (Hebrew).

[36] Responsa of the Radbaz, No.657.

[37] Ish-Shalom, Travels, 304.

In Nābulus, which was a capital of a Sanjak, Rabbi Moshe Basola found, five years after the Ottoman conquest, "12 Murisk (Musta'riba) landlords."[38] From the statistics of the census lists of taxpayers it appears that the Jews of Nābulus dwelled in 3 separate neighbourhoods which were not even adjacent: Qalyūn (Dabbūra) and Ḥabala, in which mostly Must'ariba lived, to whom Rabbi Moshe Basola referred in his above words, and 'Aqaba, in which a few families lived. In these lists we find that in 1538/39–71 heads of families lived in all three neighbourhoods, side-by-side with the Must'ariba. In the above mentioned second neighbourhood there lived few families who had come from other countries. One family had come from Kurdistan, 3 families from North Africa and 5 from France (= Provençales). In 1548/9 the Jewish population decreased to about one half (36 heads of families) in all three neighbourhoods, and in 1596/7 the number was further reduced to 15 families only.[39]

A Portuguese-Christian traveller, Pantaleao de Aveiro, mentioned in 1564 the hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans in Nābulus.[40]

The largest Jewish population was in the Sanjak of Ṣafad, to which the northern districts of Ṣafad, Tibnin, Ṣor, Šaqif, 'Akkā and Ṭabarīya belonged.

In 'Akkā the Jewish Settlement was apparently renewed only after the Ottoman conquest. It is not mentioned in the taxpayers lists, but isolated data about the presence of Jews 'Akkā as of the middle of the 16th century appears from Jewish-Rabbanite sources, from which we learn that the local Jews were involved in business affairs conducted at the port of 'Akkā through which goods entered and exited, coming from Aram-Ṣova (Aleppo), Sidon,[41] and Egypt,[42] and surely also from Ṣafad, although there is no clear information about this.

As for a rural Jewish population, we find it mainly in the north of Palestine, in the Sanjak of Ṣafad: in Upper Galilee, in Lower Galilee, in Western Galilee and in the Valleys. In 'Akkā district we find the following settlements: Buqai'a: although a later tradition attributes to its antiquity and continuity since the period of the Second Temple, authentic information about Jews in this place do not precede the beginning of the second

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[38] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 52; about the antiquity of the Jewish settlement in this city: Ya'ari, A., "The Jewish Settlement in Nābulus", Sinai, 36, 1955, 166–170 (Hebrew).

[39] Cohen-Lewis, 145–149.

[40] Quotation from the Hebrew translation: Ish-Shalom, Travels, 295–296.

[41] The sources on this subject have been collected by Kena'ani, Acre, 29–31.

[42] New Responsa by Rabbi Yom-Ṭov Ṣahalon (Mahariṣ), Jerusalem, 1980–1981, No. 223 (Hebrew).

decade of the 16th century.[43] In the taxpayers' lists there were counted at this place in 1525/6 - 32 families; in 1533/4 - 54 families and in 1555/6 and 1572/3 - 45 families.[44] One of the most important sages of Şafad, Rabbi Yosef Trani, stayed and acted on various occasions at this place in the late 16th century and early 17th century.[45] Not far from this place is 'Ain aṭ-Ṭiria where Jews lived too.[46] Ğūlīs: according to the taxpayers' lists, there lived 9 families in the years 1555/6 and 1572/3.[47] Kafr Yāsīf: the first testimony about a Jewish Settlement there, is found in the first decade of the 16th century.[48] In the taxpayers' lists there were counted in 1533/4 - 10 families; in 1555/6 - 29 families, and in 1572/3 - 18 families.[49] In Kābūl there was a tiny Jewish Settlement: in 1533 five Jewish families were counted in it; in 1555/6 and in 1572/3 15 Jewish families were counted there.[50] Also in Šafa-'Amr lived a very small group of Jews. In 1525/6, three Jewish families were counted there and in 1533 10 Jewish families were counted.[51]

In the Şafad District Jews lived in several villages around the city of Şafad. These places served as protection for the Jews of Şafad in times of disasters, such as natural catastrophes, epidemics and pogroms.

'Ain az-Zaitūn: apparently a continuous Jewish Settlement at this place since antiquity. In 1522 there was at this place a synagogue in which there were 26 Tora Scrolls.[52] In the second half of the 16th century a Yeshiva was built at this place, headed by Rabbi Moshe Ben Makhir. In 1601 this Yeshiva was forced to move its quarters to Şafad because of robberies and pillage by Moslem bandits,[53] and that signified the end of the Jewish Settlement at this place. It seems that it was within the framework of the efforts

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[43] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 41-42; Kena'ani, Safed, 217; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 172-179.

[44] Lewis, Notes, 9; Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 177.

[45] Bentov, Diary, 204, 221-222.

[46] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 171.

[47] Lewis, Notes, 9; Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 177.

[48] In one of the Geniza documents: Gottheil, R., Worrell, W.H. (eds.), Fragments from the Cairo Geniza in the Freer Collection, New York, 1927, 262.

[49] Lewis, Notes, 9.

[50] Lewis, Notes, 9.

[51] Lewis, Notes, 9.

[52] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 45.

[53] About a Jewish Settlement at this place at the beginning of the Ottoman rule: Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 73-75; Kena'ani, Safed, 210-213; about the Yeshiva at this place and the assistance extended to it by the diaspora: Sonne, I., "Documents about Several Emissaries in Italy", Kobez al Jad, 15, 1950, 214-217 (Hebrew); Ya'ari, Emissaries, 844-845; Tamar, D., "Letter from Rabbi Yehuda Arie of Modena for the Yeshiva of 'Ain az-Zeitūn", Oṣar Yehudei Sefarad, 5, 1962, 109-111 (Hebrew); Tamar, D., "Letter by Rabbi Moshe Ibn Makhir for the Yeshiva of 'Ain az-Zeitūn", Tamar, D. (ed.), The Jews in Eretz-Israel and in the Orient, Jerusalem, 1981, 194-196 (Hebrew); Bentov, Diary, 205, 218.

of the Druze Governor Fakhr ad-Dīn the Second to impose, in the early 17th century, his authority all over Southern Lebanon and large parts of Palestine.[54] In 1522 Rabbi Moshe Basola counted "some forty landlords, all of them Murisk."[55] From the taxpayers' lists it appears that in 1525/6 42 Jewish families were counted in ʿAin az-Zeitūn, and in 1555/6 52 families.[56]

Bīriya: There was in it a Jewish community at a very early period. It seems that in the early 17th century the Jewish community at this place ceases to exist for the same reasons that caused the destruction of other settlements in the area.[57]

In the taxpayers' list 19 Jewish families were counted in 1525/6 and 16 in 1555/6.[58]

Kafr ʿInān, or as it was called Kəfar-Ḥănanyà, also near Ṣafad: Jews lived there since a very early period.[59] In 1522 Rabbi Moshe Basola counted in this village "a congregation of Musta'riba, consisting of some thirty landlords, most of them Kohanim (Priests)."[60] In the taxpayers' list of 1525/6 14 families were counted, and in 1555/6–17 families.[61]

Kafr ʿAlmā: there was a Jewish Settlement in ancient times.[62] In 1522 Rabbi Moshe Basola counted at this place "a congregation of some 15 Jewish landlords."[63] In the taxpayers' list in 1555/6 8 families were counted, and in 1572/3 only 3 families were counted.[64]

In Meiron there was an ancient Jewish Settlement,[65] and according to an ancient Jewish tradition, the famous 'Tanna' Rabbi Shim'on Bar-Yoḥai was buried there, and his tomb has become a very holy place of pilgri-

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[54] In this letter, Rabbi Shelomo Shlumil of Ṣafad wrote in 1607: "And the villages of Ein Zeitim and Meiron have many synagogues which are in ruins and are empty of people", Ya'ari, Igrot, 199; about the period of Faḫr ad-Dīn the Second; Rozen, M., "Jews in the Service of Faḫr ed-Din II of Lebanon", Pe'amim, 14, 1982, 32ff. (Hebrew), and the bibliography mentioned there.

[55] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 45.

[56] Lewis, Notes, 9.

[57] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 69–73; Kena'ani, Safed, 213–214; Peles, H.Y., "Ancient Birya", Morasha 2, 1972, 41–43 (Hebrew).

[58] Lewis, Notes, 9.

[59] Kena'ani, Safed, 215–216; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 271–273; Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 123–125.

[60] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 69.

[61] Lewis, Notes, 9.

[62] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 83–89; Kena'ani, Safed, 214–215.

[63] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 48.

[64] Lewis, Notes, 9.

[65] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 63–69.

mage.[66] According to a later tradition one of the most important sages of Ṣafad in the second half of the 16th century – Rabbi Avraham Galante – built a structure and a court around the tomb.[67] From the Jewish sources there is no certainty that Jews lived at this place permanently. Rabbi Moshe Basola emphasized in 1522 that „Jews do not live there."[68] It seems that in the 16th century there was a Jewish settlement also in ʿAmmūqa and in Kafr Firʿim – near Roš-Pinnà.[69] At this place the sage of Ṣafad, Rabbi Yom Ṭov Ṣahalon, lived some time in the late 16th century.[70] In the Šaqīf district, today in South Lebanon, was a Jewish community in the town of Ḥaṣbaya dating back to even older times, as well as at a later period.[71] From one of the responses of Rabbi Yom Ṭov Ṣahalon it seems that at this place there was in the late 16th century a rather large Jewish community.[72]

In Ṭabarīya district, was an additional concentration of Jews, which surely did not reach in size the concentration of Jews in Ṣafad district. No Jewish Settlement is known of in the town itself till close to the middle of the 16th century. It appears that the immigrants who arrived in Palestine, did not go to Ṭabarīya, as they did to al-Quds and Ṣafad and other places where they settled, and this is because of the ruins and wreckage in Ṭabarīya, as told by Rabbi Moshe Basola in 1522:

> "Tiberias was a large town ... and now it is ruined and deserted ... and no man can go there because of the danger of the Arabs, unless one goes with a convoy."[73]

From Christian sources from the forties of the 16th century we learn that a tiny Jewish Settlement existed in Ṭabarīya and its vicinity – in the villages of Kəfar Nàḥum, Bęt Ṣędà and Korazin – north of the Kinneret.[74] In the sixties of the 16th century vague rumours were spread around that a com-

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[66] About the festivity around the tomb of Rashbi (Rabbi Shimʿon Bar-Yoḥai): Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 342–352; Yaʿari, A., "History of the Pilgrimage to Męron", Tarbiz, 31, 1962, 72–101 (Hebrew); Benayahu, M., "Devotion Practices of the Kabbalists of Safad in Meron", Sefunot, 6, 1962, 9–40 (Hebrew).

[67] Galante, Avraham (ed.), "Azulai, Ḥayim Yosef David (Ḥida)", Shem ha-Gedolim, Maʿarekhet Gedolim, Tel-Aviv, 1960 (Hebrew).

[68] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 46.

[69] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 343–345.

[70] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 94.

[71] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 453–455; Strauss-Ashtor, 123; Vilnay, Z., South Lebanon, Tel-Aviv, 1982, 48–52 (Hebrew).

[72] The New Responsa of Rabbi Yom-Ṭov Ṣahalon, Jerusalem 1981, No. 176, 131–132. This Responsa had been published previously by Nissim, I., "Responsa of R. Yom-Tob Sahalon on Questions of Farming in Hasbeyah and Galilee", Sefunot 9, 1964, 7–16 (Hebrew).

[73] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 73.

[74] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 191–198.

prehensive program for the restoration of the town of Ṭabarīya, to include the expansion of the Jewish Settlement there by the members of the family of Don Yosef Nassi in Constantinople with the assistance of Sulṭān Suleiman the Magnificent.[75]

The Jewish-Italian historian, Rabbi Yosef ha-Kohen,[76] and the French delegate in Constantinople,[77] mentioned the central role played by Yosef Nassi in the renewed erection of the town of Ṭabarīya and of the wall surrounding it (about 1500 cubits) in the years 1563–1564, together with his representative, Yosef Ben Aderet,[78] who conducted the work. From reports of the Christian contemporary pilgrims as well as of later ones,[79] and also from Ottoman documents,[80] it appears that the moving spirit in the construction, developing and fortification of Ṭabarīya as well as in expanding its Jewish community, was Dona Gracia, who was also very influential in the court of Sulṭān Suleiman. This Sulṭān leased in 1560, for a fixed annual charge, Ṭabarīya and the vicinity, and this included his granting a license to enlarge and expand the Jewish Settlement at this place. He dedicated the entire income from this area to a poorhouse in Damascus.[81] It seems that in this enterprise of building and developing the town of Ṭabarīya and of strengthening the Jewish Settlement in it, Don Yosef Nassi played a central part as middleman and coordinator of the required operations, as hinted by Yosef ha-Kohen and the French delegate in Constantinople. The far-reaching program of Don Yosef Nassi and Dona Gracia to establish a massive Jewish Settlement in Ṭabarīya, and to turn it into a Jewish center, made a great impression in Italy, and many were interested in this program. At least, this is what seems apparent from the letter of the Cori community their immigration to Palestine, in order to settle in Ṭabarīya.[82] It is not clear whether indeed the Jews of that city or some of them arrived in it.

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[75] Braslavski, J., "Don Yosef Nasi's Work in Palestine", Yerushalayim, Dedicated to the memory of A. M. Luncz, Jerusalem, 1928, 67–77 (Hebrew); Braslawsky, J., "Jewish Settlement in Tiberias from Don Yosef Nasi to Ibn Yaish", Zion, 5, 1940, 45–72 (Hebrew).

[76] 'Emeq ha-Bakha, 93–94.

[77] Charrière, E., Négociations de la France, dans le Levant, vol. 3, Paris, 1850, 736.

[78] 'Emeq ha-Bakha, 93; 'Ḥakim Da'ûd,' or 'David the Physician,' is mentioned in Turkish firmans as being in charge of the Ṭabarīya Wall construction: Heyd, Tiberias, 199–200, 204–206.

[79] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 184, 190, 196–201; Ish-Shalom, Travels, 309.

[80] Heyd, Tiberias, 193–210.

[81] Heyd, Tiberias, 196–202.

[82] This letter has been published by Kaufmann, D., "Don Joseph Nassi, Founder of Colonies in the Holy Land, and the Community of Cori in the Campagna", Jewish Quarterly Review, 2, 1890, 291–310; as for the date of the letter: Sonne, I., From Paulo the Fourth to Pius the Fifth, Jerusalem, 1954, 175 (Hebrew).

The Jews, like the rest of the inhabitants of the place, lived on commerce[83] and on various agricultural occupations,[84] including growing of oranges[85] and fishing, in Kəfar Nāḥum and in Bęt Ṣędà, and perhaps in other places near the Kinneret as well.[86] The Jews of Ṭabarīya also worked in beekeeping.[87] Don Yosef Nassi wanted to lay the foundation for a textile industry in it, possibly similar to that in Ṣafad, by growing mulberry threes for the silk industry. He also wanted to import wool from Spain.[88] It is not clear whether or not he indeed succeeded in realizing the development of this industry in the town. Ten years later the Jewish Settlement in Ṭabarīya underwent a crisis which weakened the community. It was in the lifetime of Don Yosef (who died in 1579) that many of the community members left, mainly people of means, and only the poor remained in Ṭabarīya.[89] There was a Yeshiva, headed by Rabbi Eli'ezer ben-Yoḥai. It is not clear when it had been founded; it seems that Dona Gracia maintained it, however for years.[90] After she died in 1569 this Yeshiva continued to exist at least until the early 17th century thanks to the aid of the Diaspora Jews.[91]

The synagogue in Ṭabarīya was adjacent to the wall which touched the Kinneret shore;[92]perhaps this information helps to mark the location of the Jewish Quarter, pointing to the eastern part of the town. A later tradition has it that Jews in Ṭabarīya lived also outside the walls, and furthermore, that they had an additional Yeshiva which had been built outside the walls.[93] Several years after the death of Don Yosef, the town seems to have been given by the Sulṭān to an important Jewish political person who had come to power in his court, namely the former Marrano Alvaro

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[83] Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, 3, No. 220; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 188–189.

[84] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 187–188.

[85] The Portuguese pilgrim Pantaleo di Aveiro testified to this effect: Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 196–197.

[86] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 192–193.

[87] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 160, 188.

[88] 'Emeq ha-Bakha, 94; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 213; a plan to grow mulberry trees for silk production in Ṭabarīya had already been mentioned several years earlier in a Turkish Firman of 1560: Heyd, Tiberias, 195–196, 202–203.

[89] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 188–189, 213–214; the above even assumed that Yosef Nassi has had a share in the failure of the program several years later, but this assumption is unsupported.

[90] Sefer ha-Mussar, 277–278; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 207–209.

[91] Several reports have come down to us about this in the Responsa literature and other sources: Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 210–213; Ya'ari, Emissaries, 256–260.

[92] Sefer ha-Mussar, 261; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 208–209.

[93] Braslavi, J., "The Land of Israel in the Hebrew Translation of Basnage's 'Histoire des Juifs'", Eretz-Israel, 6, 1960, 172 (Hebrew).

Mendes of Portugal, whose name in Hebrew was Shelomo ibn Ya'ish. In 1585, while living in Turkey, he reverted to his forefathers' religion. He died in 1603. This man was given by the Sulṭān the dukedom of the Island of Mytilene (Lesbos) in the Aegean. He also leased Ṭabarīya and its vicinity, and put over it his son Ya'aqov of whom it was said that he had built in Ṭabarīya "many mansions looking like pretty palaces and he is very beloved by the Arabs."[94]

In this region Jews lived even in places distant from the town. Kafr Kannā was a relatively large Jewish Settlement dating back from the Mameluke Period. The Jewish community at this place hardly left its imprint on the Jewish sources of the 16th century. In 1522 Rabbi Moshe Basola counted at this place "some forty landlords;"[95] in the taxpayers lists of 1525/6 50 families were counted; in 1533-5 52 families, in 1555/6 65 families and in 1572/3 77 families were counted.[96] From the testimony of a Christian pilgrim in the middle sixties of the 16th century, we learn that at this place was a large number of Spanish Jews.[97] One of the outstanding sage of Ṣafad, Rabbi Yosef Trani, stayed a short while at this place in 1602.[98] Not far from Kafr Kannā there was Ḥān at-Tuğār, which served as a checkpost, between the Ṣafad and Nābulus districts, and because of the nature of the place, an important commercial center has developed there. According to a source of the first half of the 17th century, Jewish merchants were marketing in this Khan.[99]

It seems that also in the town Ğinīn, in Lāğūn district, was a tiny Jewish community, yet only little information about the existence of a Jewish Settlement at this place has been preserved.[100]

There are reports of the 14th and 15th centuries about a Jewish Settlement in the town of 'Ağlūn, the capital of Sanjak 'Ağlūn in Transjordan. It is reasonable to assume that the Jewish community in 'Ağlūn in the 16th

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[94] Summary of the reports on Shelomo ibn Ya'ish and his son Ya'aqov is brought by Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 213-215; Baron, S.W., „Solomon Ibn Ya'ish and Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent", Joshua Finkel Festschrift, New York, 1974, 29-36.

[95] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 50-51.

[96] Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 177.

[97] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 345-346; Kena'ani, Safed, 216-217.

[98] Bentov, Diary, 205, 222-223.

[99] Ben-Zvi, Jewish, 345-347.

[100] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 171-172, brings two testimonies - one Jewish and one Christian - quoting the Polish pilgrim Nicolai Christopher Radzivill, who made his tour in the years 1583-1584; but Ish-Shalom, Travels, 305, Note 4, does not accept Braslavsky's opinion that the town meant is Ğinīn, and the latter is not clear about it. However, we have important additional evidence of Jews living at this place, as Rabbi Yosef Trani stayed there at the end of 1595 and during the year 1602 and also studied there Tora: Bentov, Diary, 205, 221-223.

century was a new one, and not a continuation of that of the 14th century.[101]

2. Economic Life in Palestine

A considerable economic growth started in Palestine at the beginning of the Ottoman regime. The Jews enjoyed freedom in their economic affairs. They were not limited in choosing a trade, and worked in any economic field which appealed to them. So it will not be erroneous to consider the prevalent fields of economy in Palestine in the 16th century – after the Ottoman conquest – as potential occupations for the Jews.[102]

a. Agriculture

Most of the agricultural branches were concentrated in the villages in which about 75 percent of the Palestinian population lived.[103] The main edible crops were: wheat, barley, beans, fruit and vegetables. Also in and around the towns there were vineyards, orchards and vegetable gardens. The main industrial crops were the sesame and olive of which oil and soap were manufactured. Cotton, of which threads were spun for weaving, mulberry trees for growing 'morus alba' (in Ṣafad and in Ṭabarīya) and vines for wine manufacturing (only for the non-Moslem minorities). In several villages bees were kept for honey production. There were important fishing centers in the settlements around the Kinneret and in the Ḥulà Valley, as well as the shore towns of Ṣor, ʿAkkā and Yāfā.[104]

In theory, in accordance with the Moslem constitution, which discriminates the non-believers, the Jews were not allowed to own land, and we can quote Rabbi David ibn Avi Zimra (Radbaz) in this matter:

> "And the Jews did not buy fields or vineyards in this Kingdom, nor did they try to do so, and it is well that they did not do so for various reasons. And it has become well-known – so much so that the fools among the gentiles (Moslems) say that when a Jew sows, nothing grows."[105]

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[101] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 170–171.

[102] Important information on this subject is brought by the lists of tax payers and their income, gathered by the censi conducted once every few years by the Ottomanic authorities. These data have been found and published by Lewis, Notes, 14–22; Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 180–187; Schur, N., "The Fruit Trees and the Field Crops in Palestine in the Mameluke and Ottomanic Period According to the Writings of Western Christian Pilgrims", Nofim, 11–12, 1979, 138–160 (Hebrew).

[103] Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 180.

[104] Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 180–182; Cohen-Lewis, 64–68.

[105] Responsa of Radbaz, No. 1208.

In practice, however, this prohibition was not effective everywhere. We know from various Jewish sources, mainly from the Halakha that the Jews tilled the land as owners or tenants, mainly in the villages in the north of Palestine, and they part and parcel of almost all agricultural branches, including beekeeping and fishing.[106]

b. Industry and Trade

The most important industry in Palestine in the 16th century was the textile industry, which was concentrated in Ṣafad and its vicinity,[107] and possibly also in Ṭabarīya for a brief period in the sixties and seventies of that century,[108] and in Nābulus.[109] The fabrics were manufactured from local raw materials, such as cotton and silk, which was produced from 'morus alba' which grew on the mulberry trees specially planted in Ṣafad and its vicinity and in Ṭabarīya.[110] It seems, however, that the woolen fabrics were the main branch of the textile industry in those days; they were imported from Turkey, from the Balkans and from Spain.[111] The wool depot was in Adrianople, and from there the wool was shipped to the port towns of Sidon and ʿAkkā.[112] The land conditions and the abundancy of water were the determining factors on the textile industry. An important auxiliary industry in this field was also the dyeing of fabrics, with its center in Ṣafad and also in the cities of Nābulus, Ġazza and al-Quds.[113]

The Jews played an important role in this industry. The Spanish exiles, who came in multitudes to Ṣafad and to other towns, found it convenient to get settled in the wool and weaving industry; this was due to their being familiar with it, since about one third of the Castilian population made its living from the wool industry, and among the trades of the Jews in Spain weaving occupied the first place.[114] Rabbi David de Rossi described this situation in his letter written from Ṣafad in 1535:

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[106] Kena'ani, Safed, 208-217; Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 224-225.

[107] Kena'ani, Safed, 195-201; Avitsur, Safed, 41-69; Cohen-Lewis, 59-62.

[108] 'Emeq ha-Bakha, 93-94, describes briefly Don Yosef Nassi and his plan to restore and develop Ṭabarīya and to turn it into an important Jewish center:

> "And upon Don Yosef's order many mulberry (morus alba) trees were planted, to feed the Bombyx mori, and he also ordered to import wool from Spain in order to manufacture clothes like the Venice."

[109] Cohen-Lewis, 61-62.

[110] Braslvsky, L'Heqer, 160.

[111] 'Emeq ha-Bakha, 94.

[112] Avitsur, Safed,58-61.

[113] Cohen-Lewis, 62.

[114] Avitsur, Safed, 43-45.

> "And whoever saw Ṣafad for the past ten years and sees it now, is full of wonderment, because Jews keep arriving all the time; the clothes industry expands from day to day, and it is said that more than 15 thousand Karziye[115] were made in Safed, apart from expensive clothes; some do them very well, like those who have come from Venice, and every man and woman who works in wool, or in another branch of this industry, makes a good living."[116]

The decline of Ṣafad in the last quarter of the 16th century was partly caused by an economic bankruptcy. The world markets were overflown and full of better and cheaper fabrics, which were imported from various countries in the west, chiefly England;[117] all the wool centers in the Mediterranean Basin suffered great losses; whereupon the rich merchants left Ṣafad and the artisans remained without work or subsistence.[118]

An additional branch prevalent at that time in Palestine was the soap industry. In the districts of Ṣafad, Nābulus and al-Quds the growing of olive trees was common, and their oil served to produce soap. We know of the existence of enterprises for soap manufacturing in al-Quds and al-Ḫalīl.[119] From Moslem sources we learn about the role of the Jews of al-Quds in the soap industry since the soap was exported – mainly to Egypt – and they were also among the exporters.[120]

The Jews in Palestine played an important role also in food production from agricultural products, and this of course for religious reasons. These included meat products, cheese, grape honey, bee honey, bread, and of course wine.[121] It seems that the Jews were not limited in choosing a trade and worked in almost all prevalent professions; apart from weaving and tailoring, they also worked in jewelery, carpentry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, shoe-repairing, tannery, medicine and construction.[122]

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[115] Cohen-Lewis, 60, Note 45; Ashtor, E., "Die Verbreitung des englischen Wolltuches in den Mittelmeerländern im Spätmittelalter", Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, 71, 1984, 23–25.

[116] Ya'ari, Igrot, 184.

[117] Avitsur, Safed, 67–69; Braude, B., "International Competition and Domestic Cloth in the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1650: A Study in Undevelopment", Review 2, 1979, 437–451.

[118] Avitsur, Safed, 67–69.

[119] Lewis, Eretz-Israel, 182; Cohen-Lewis, 62–63.

[120] Cohen, Jewish, 204–206; we learn of the common use of soap in al-Quds from a letter of Rabbi Yisra'el of Perugia, sent from al-Quds in 1522/3, in which he says: "And there are many shops which sell oil and soap": Ya'ari, Igrot, 170.

[121] Cohen, Jewish, 188–204, brings important information on this from Moslem documents in his book.

[122] A relatively great deal of information has been preserved about it: Ya'ari, Igrot, 170, 181; Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 44; Cohen, Jewish, 174–183; Kena'ani, Gaza, 205–207.

c. Commerce

Just as the Jews in Palestine were not limited in their occupations, so they were not limited in the various stages of commerce.[123] A rather extensive quantity of information has been preserved about the share of the Jews of Palestine in local commerce,[124] as they kept shops in markets and outside them. In al-Quds, in the market whose structure still exists, one of the four quarters belonged to Jews who sold "Merceria" (haberdashery) and perfumes.[125]

From Moslem sources it appears that the Jews of al-Quds kept about 35 shops, which were about one quarter of the shops in the city.[126] It seems that also in Ṣafad Jews kept many shops, and also sold fruits, vegetables and other edibles at the market,[127] evidently they dealt also in other fields of commerce, mainly in the clothes branch.[128] In Ġazza, which was the center of commerce with Egypt, Jews also kept shops in the jewellers market.[129] We can assume that also in other towns, and maybe also in some villages where Jews lived, part of the local commerce was in their hands. Part of the local commerce was conducted by Jewish peddlars who made the rounds in the towns and in the various villages surrounding them.[130]

This peddling in al-Quds and in al-Ḫalīl was not well accepted by the Jewish shopkeepers, because the former transgressed into the territory of the latter, thus depriving them of their livelihood. Therefore, in the first quarter of the 16th century a special regulation was issued in these towns, "that no merchant is allowed ... to peddle within the city."[131]

Local commerce, in which the Jews participated, and which took place inside and outside the towns, was based mainly on various consumer commodities, such as food, haberdashery and clothing, and also luxuries such as spices, perfumes and jewels. In Palestine there was a rather developed international commerce,mainly with the neighbouring countries Egypt and Syria, but also with countries overseas.[132]

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[123] Cohen-Lewis, 46–54.

[124] Kena'ani, Gaza, 181–204; Kena'ani, Acre, 29–31; Cohen, Jewish 204–211.

[125] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 59.

[126] Cohen, Jewish, 210.

[127] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 43–44; Kena'ani, Safed, 184–195.

[128] Kena'ani, Gaza, 195–204.

[129] Kena'ani, Gaza, 36–37.

[130] Ya'ari, Igrot, 170; Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 43.

[131] Responsa of Rabbi Eliyahu Mizraḥi (Re'em), No. 45. This regulation is indirectly mentioned in 'Qoveṣ Taqqanot' in the 16th century in Paragraph 14: "Agreement to buy coals or wood, only from the farmers or from the stores": Freimann, Taqqanot, 209.

[132] Cohen-Lewis, 55–59.

Jews in Palestine played an important role in this international commerce, both as importers and exporters. To a large extent this was because of the prosperity in the textile industry in Şafad. From various sources we learn about the share of Jews in importing wool to Şafad,[133] especially from Turkish cities - Constantinople and Adrianople,[134] and also from Rhodes.[135] From there it was shipped to the ports of Tripoli, Sidon,[136] and possibly ʿAkkā.[137] The Jewis of Şafad played an important role also in exporting the finished textile products, and sometimes also hatcheled or raw cotton. Following is a quotation from Rabbi David de Rossi's letter to Italy in 1535:

> "All kinds of merchandize can be found in these countries; and from Safed a great quantity of woven and unwoven cotton is exported ... and a little silk. And the Jews bring many products from abroad - silk from Armenia and clothes from Cordoba."[138]

In other sources we find that the merchants of Şafad exported clothes to Damascus[139] and to Egypt,[140] and "cotton wool" to Venice.[141] Merchants of Şafad exported oil and grain to Damascus and to other places,[142] and imported from there fruits which could not be found in Palestine.[143] They also exported to unknown places luxury commodities, such as Scammony,[144] various perfumes and spices.[145] These products or part of them were sold in the second half of the 16th century by Jewish merchants to

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[133] Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, Part 1, No. 32, 171, Part 3, No. 103, 107; Responsa of Rabbi Eliya ibn Ḥayim, No. 77; Responsa of Rabbi Yaʿaqov Beirav, No. 22.

[134] Avitsur, Safed, 55.

[135] Responsa of Rabbi Yaʿaqov Beirav, No. 22.

[136] Avitsur, Safad, 55.

[137] There is no explicit information about it in the Jewish sources: Kenaʿani, Acre, 29-31; Cohen, Lewis, 30, where is mentioned that the ports of ʿAkkā and Sidon served the Şafad wool industry.

[138] Yaʿari, Igrot, 187.

[139] Responsa of Mabit, Part 1, No. 207.

[140] Responsa of Radbaz, No. 638, Warsaw 1882; Responsa 'Avqat Rokhel' by Rabbi Yosef Caro, No. 140.

[141] Responsa of Mabit, Part 3, No. 200.

[142] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 43.

[143] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 43.

[144] A medicinal herb called Scammony, which grew in the regions of Syria and South Turkey, and was very much in demand in Europe: Heyd, W., Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Âge, 2, Leipzig, 1936, 669-670; this herb had already been mentioned in the medical works of Maimonides: Muntner, S. (ed.), (Medical) Aphorisms of Moses, Jerusalem, 1959 (Hebrew), 130, 182, 184, 229 and 261; Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 43, mentions this herb among the commodities found in Şafad and obtainable for a cheap price in its season.

[145] Letter of Rabbi David de Rossi of 1535: Yaʿari, Igrot, 187.

Venice through Egypt.[146] The Jews of al-Quds also dealt in international commerce. The most developed industry in this city was soap manufacturing.[147] The soap was exported by Jewish merchants to Syria and Egypt.[148] The local Jews also imported spices and fabrics from Syria and rice from Egypt,[149] which was its main supplier.[150]

In the cities of Ġazza and ʿAkkā, Jews dealt, among other things, in importing and exporting of goods with foreign countries.[151] It appears that Jewish merchants in Palestine, just as in other countries of the Orient and Europe, conducted business affairs in the 'Fattoria' method, namely - big and rich merchants employed 'Fattors' - agents - in commercial centers, and the latter conducted the former's business affairs.[152]

d. Financial Activity

At the beginning of the Ottoman Period, when the Jews in the Empire were treated fairly by the central Ottoman authorities, the freedom which they enjoyed all over the Empire was expressed among other things in their massive sharing in the financial activities with both the central government and the provincial rulers.[153] This activity included also the Jews of Palestine; financial activity centered on two main subjects; leasing, money exchange and lending.

Leasing: from the various documents of the Shari'a court of al-Quds, a great deal of relatively important data have been preserved, about the activity of Jews in the town outside it in the field of leasing of the different kinds of taxes. From the same source it appears that the involvement of Jews in the machinery of tax collection, called "Amal' or 'Multāzim' was

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[146] In a document of the Cairo Geniza, in the Taylor Schechter Collection in Cambridge University there is a letter mailed by a Jewish merchant of Egypt to an unknown merchant living in Ṣafad in the second half of the 16th century, in which he asked him to conduct for him commercial negotiations for shipping to Egypt a certain quantity of "Askemonia" which was probably grown also in Ṣafad, in order to ship it later to Venice. He also expressed his wish to acquire "silk from Safed" and probably also "perfumes." David, Integration, 23-28.

[147] See above our discussion: Industry and Trade.

[148] Cohen, Jewish, 204-207; Cohen, Documents, 98-99.

[149] Cohen, Documents, 98.

[150] Cohen, Jewish, 207; from one of the Responsa of Rabbi Yom-Ṭov Ṣahalon we learn that imported rice, which was supposed to arrive to Ṣidon by boat, has arrived to the Port of ʿAkkā and was sold there.

[151] Kena'ani, Acre, 29.

[152] Rozen, M., "The Fattoria - A Chapter in the History of Mediterranean Commerce in the 16th and 17th Centuries", Miqqedem Umiyyam, Haifa, 1981, 109-110, 118-119 (Hebrew).

[153] Summary of this subject: Gerber, H., Economic and Social Life of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th and 17th Centuries, Jerusalem, 1982, 49-77 (Hebrew).

massive in the years 1538–1557. After this period we know nothing of such officials in al-Quds, though we know by name various tax leasers.[154] In Ṣafad the Jews occupied an important place in revenue leasing, and one of the locals can be quoted as writing in 1535:

> "Here there is no exile like in our country, and the Turks honour the distinguished Jews. And here and in Alexandria in Egypt, those in charge of the King's taxes and revenues are Jews."[155]

Those Jews probably belonged to the rich layer of Jewish society. Part of them were wealthy merchants who seeked an additional way to increase their capital. The great among them were granted the title of nobility al-Mu'allim.[156]

Money Exchange and Lending: an additional Jewish activity connected with finances was money exchanging and lending. The title of the money exchangers was 'Ṣarāf' or 'Ṣirfi.' Some were officially appointed by the Kadi to check the quality of the coins in the turnover for faults. Some of them worked as treasurers for certain officials and institutions, such as the Waqf. In the documents of the Shari'a court in al-Quds, ten Jewish money-exchangers are named, among them two Karaites.[157] Most likely, some people of the Jewish community who owned capital, in both al-Quds and Ṣafad, found a way to make profits by supplying credit against interest to Moslem and Christian public institutions, when the latter faced severe difficulties. From Jewish[158] and Moslem[159] sources we learn that the district governors as well as private people needed more than once to raise capital which was given them by Jewish lenders; it happened sometimes, that donations for church institutions have not arrived in time at their destination.[160] The rate of interest in the late 16th century amounted to 10 per-

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[154] Cohen, Jewish, 153–158.

[155] Letter of Rabbi David de Rossi: Ya'ari, Igrot, 186–187; also see Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, Part 3, No. 207–208.

[156] Cohen, Jewish, 157–158.

[157] Cohen, Jewish, 158–160; regarding money exchanger in Ṣafad: Heyd, Documents, 164–166.

[158] Responsa of Rabbi Eliyahu Mizraḥi, No. 45; letter of Rabbi David de Rossi from Ṣafad in 1535: Ya'ari, Igrot, 187; Responsa of Rabbi Yosef ben-Moshe Trani, Part 2, Yore Dea', No. 39.

[159] Cohen, Jewish, 229; Cohen, Documents, 99–100.

[160] Responsum of Rabbi Me'ir Gavizon, in: Frankel, D. (ed.), Zera' Anashim', Husiatyn, 1902, Yore dea', No. 24 (Hebrew); on this problem in general: Benayahu, M., "Money Lending with Interest to the Jerusalem Monasteries", Jerusalem, 1, 1948, 86–88, 221 (Hebrew); Bashan, E., "A Document Dated 5384 (1624) Concerning a Dispute on Lending Money to Christians in Jerusalem", Friedman, M., Yehoshua, B. Z., Tobi, Y. (eds.), Chapters in the History of the Jewish Community in Jerusalem, Jerusalem, vol. 2, 1976, 77–96, (Hebrew).

cent,[161], and this financial support of church institutions aroused a debate among the sages of al-Quds. In the late 16th century, one raised the question whether Jews in Palestine were allowed to strengthen and solidify the position of the Christians in the city in particular and in the country in general. Therefore a regulation was issued, forbidding to lend money to gentiles, However, the public could not abide by this decree, because there were Jews for whom lending against interest was the only source of income, and it was the only way that enabled them to continue living in the city; so there were those among them who contested the validity of that prohibition. Eventually the regulation was revoked and lending against interest to church institutions was recognized as a legitimate source of income, and it was destined to continue for many generations.[162]

e. The Assistance of the Diaspora Jews to the Communities in Palestine

In spite of the massive economic activity which is depicted by the various sources, it seems that already in the first decades after the establishment of the Ottoman regime in Palestine, many of the Jews, mainly in al-Quds struggled with the difficulties of everyday life. Some information demonstrates the difficult economic condition of a considerable number of Jews living in the town who found themselves burdened by a heavy load of taxes. Some of them clearly indicate the great poverty in al-Quds although they do not generalize.[163] For example, Rabbi Lewi ben Ḥabib (Ralbaḥ) - the Rabbi of the community in the twenties and thirties of the 16th century, described the situation very dramatically:

> "And the food of the people of Jerusalem is not sweet, but bitter and [saturated with] sadness, and whoever succeeds in obtaining money to buy the head or the inner parts of a sheep, or even of a goat, for Saturdays or holidays, sees himself as if liberated from slavery and as though sitting on a ruler's throne."[164]

From the Jewish sources it further appears that the Jews in al-Quds would not have been able to got on living in the city, without the financial aid they were receiving from the Diaspora Jews.[165] Contributions reached Palestine in various forms. Some were sent as vows and charity by the dona-

[161] According to the explicit decision of the Sulṭān Suleiman the Magnificent, that the rate of interest should not exceed ten percent: Cohen, Jewish, 77; this was also explicitly suggested in the Responsum of Rabbi Meir Gavizon; Schur, Jewish, 382.

[162] Benayahu and Bashan, Note 160 above.

[163] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 61-62; David, Jerusalem, 56-59; Ya'ari, Igrot, 172; Responsa of Rabbi Lewi ben-Ḥabib, No. 103; Ish-Shalom, Travels, 280-281, 290.

[164] Semikha Booklet which was published at the end of his collection of Responsa.

[165] Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, part 3, No. 228; Samuel di Useda, 'Leḥem Dima", Venice, 1600, 3a (Hebrew).

tors on their own initiative, either as thanks to the Lord, for being saved from some disaster; or it would be money and property bequeathed by someone for the poor of Palestine, in their will, in order to atone for their own deeds and get absolution for their souls.[166] Some agreed to donate money after a specific appeal of the community through emissaries who used to travel all over the Diaspora. Reports have come down from the 16th century about emissaries who left on behalf of the communities of al-Quds, Ṣafad and Ṭabarīya. The emissaries were furnished with Letters of Mission by the heads of the communities. From the contents of those letters a rather sad picture is depicted, sometimes exaggerated, about the prevailing conditions. The emissaries were usually sent in emergencies or at times of economic depressions, or on account of various edicts which involved great expenses.

From various sources we know of emissaries sent from al-Quds as early as the beginning of the Ottoman regime.[167] Of emissaries from Ṣafad and Ṭabarīya we know mainly in the last quarter of the 16th century when indeed the situation in Palestine in general and in Ṣafad in particular deteriorated.[168]

From the various sources it appears that Italian Jewry carried the main burden of support of those communities, the center of money collection for Palestine being in Venice.[169] We know also about the share of other communities in the Middle East, in Turkey, Syria, and mainly in Egypt, where the capitalists supported the Jews of the above two cities to a great extent. Jews in Egypt, particularly of the wealthy class, abundantly supported individuals and Tora institutions in Palestine.[170] Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ha-Kohen Shulāl, the last of the Negidim in Egypt, who served as Nagid in the years 1502–1516, tried to help out as far as he could. He opened the gates of the Yeshiva in al-Quds which had been closed several decades earlier and also established an additional Yeshiva and financed the upkeep of both, as well as of one in Ṣafad.[171] Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Shulāl ha-Kohen, who

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[166] Kahana, I.Z., Studies in the Responsa Literature, Jerusalem, 1973, 206 (Hebrew); David, Letters, 326, Note 3.

[167] Ya'ari, Emissaries, 221–230; Tamar, D., "Bio-bibliographical Notes on a Few Rabbis, Shabbatians and Kabbalists", Kirjath Sepher, 47, 1972, 325 (Hebrew); Carpi, Paduan, 24–26; David, Letters, 325–331.

[168] Ya'ari, Emissaries, 233–261; regarding Ṣafad: David, Cuneo, 429–444; David, Sources, 291–292.

[169] Ya'ari, Emissaries, 65; Carpi, Venice, 17–52; David, Letters, 326.

[170] David, A., "New Information on Some Personalities in Jerusalem in the 16th Century", Shalem, 5, 1987, 222–249 (Hebrew).

[171] David, Academies, 148–149.

immigrated to al-Quds immediately after the Ottoman conquest, continued in his efforts to aid with material presents, although he could not afford the maintenance of the Yeshivot, as he had used to do previously, when he had been Nagid in Egypt.[172] From the documents of the Cairo Geniza and from other sources, we can learn something about the philantropic activity of three important persons in Egypt: Rabbi Avraham Qastro, Avraham ibn Sanği and Solomon al-Ashkar,[173] of whom it was said that: "He was keeping the Yeshivot in Palestine."[174]

3. The Attitude of the Authorities to the Jews

It has already been emphasized that the Ottoman authorities treated the non-Moslem subjects in a different manner than their Mameluke predecessors. At the same time the discrimination laws based on the Islam constitution,[175] served as a guide to the Ottoman rulers, who insisted upon exercising them, and even demanded of those subjects to heed their inferior status, and to act accordingly.[176] Yet their attitude to these subjects was more tolerant than that of the Mameluke rulers who had treated Dhimmi harshly and even cruelly.[177] This attitude was described by Rabbi Yisra'el of Perugia - one of the sages of al-Quds in the twenties of the 16th century, who wrote in his letter of 1522/3:

> "Whoever accepted the discipline of exile and humility, [consenting] not to lift a hand or a foot on the Yishma'eli [Arabs], even when attacked by them from behind, and not to talk in a haughty way, even to the meanest [among them], and to be like a deaf-man who does not hear, and like a mute man who does not open his mouth, and to speak softly and to pacify them [the Arabs], [he who does all this] stays well, because when the Yishma'eli sees the humility and the submission, he is pacified, and even when asking for money he is content with little ... And if a person lowers himself, he can go anywhere on business, and open a shop in the market like a Yishma'eli, and nobody objects, and he can wear the green turban anywhere, even on the roads, if he wishes to, and he is respected by anyone, and the only exception is his paying a large amount for customs."[178]

From this we see that a Jew or apparently a person of any non-Moslem minority in Palestine, who followed the accepted rules of conduct, was not

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[172] David, Academies, 148-149.

[173] See note 170 above.

[174] Neubauer, Chronicles, 161; David, Academies, 149.

[175] Strauss, E., "The Social Isolation of Ahl Adh-Dhimma", Komlos, O. (ed.), Études Orientalies à la Mémoire de Paul Hirschler, Budapest, 1950; Strauss-Ashtor, 204-236.

[176] Cohen-Lewis, 70-72; Cohen, Jewish, 150-152.

[177] Cohen, Documents, 28-31.

[178] Ya'ari, Igrot, 174.

molested. He had absolute freedom of movement, and could work for his living in anything he liked.

The Jews, like the rest of the non-Moslems, were obligated to bear a special burden of taxes, the tax per capita, Jizya, and the road tax, Khafar.[179] In a place where drastic demographic changes have occurred, such as Ṣafad in its period of prosperity, the machinery of tax collection could not efficiently cope with the rate of expansion of the population, and the Sulṭān referred to it in special royal decrees.[180] It is possible, although we have no proof, that various kinds of taxes, which had been imposed on non-Moslems in the Mameluke Period, were revoked by the Ottoman authorities. It is likely that the wine tax, which was in effect at the end of the Mameluke Period,[181] did not exist in the Ottoman Period; at least we have no record of it. It is also likely that the Qādūm tax - the special present to a ruler of a governor upon his being appointed, was revoked by the Ottomans.[182]

From various Jewish sources, mainly of the second half of the 16th century, and in contrast to what appears 'prima facie' from the documents of the Shari'a court, the tax burden oppressed more heavily the Jewish population, on which, apart from the regular taxes, additional taxes were imposed from time to time, either legally or not. Rabbi Me'ir Gabizon (or Gabison), one of the most important sages of Egypt at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, has written about it:

> "The burden imposed by the gentiles on those who live there is heavy and oppressive. They always have to pacify their rulers with money. Apart from what they need for the livelihood of their families they have to pay fines every day ... and they always have to bribe the judges and the ministers - regularly and irregularly - but it is famous and well-known that living in Jerusalem is torture."[183]

The local authorities were very stern about the yellow color of the turban, which had been fixed for the Jews in the Mameluke Period.[184] This is men-

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[179] About these two sorts of taxes in the Mameluke Period: Strauss-Ashtor, 259-309; in the Ottoman Period: Cohen-Lewis, 70-72; Cohen, Jewish, 25-29, 118-120. We learn also about these taxes from various Jewish sources: Letter of Rabbi Yisra'el of Perugia, Ya'ari, Igrot, 174; Responsa of Radbaz, No. 1137, and also Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, Part 1, No. 123; Responsa of Rabbi Yosef Trani, No. 60.

[180] Goffman, D. G., "The Maqṭū' System and the Jewish Community of Sixteenth-Century Safed", The Journal of Ottoman Studies, 3, 1983, 81-90; Hacker, Payment, 90-98.

[181] Strauss-Ashtor, 311-312.

[182] Strauss-Ashtor, 312.

[183] Responsa of Rabbi Meir Gavizon; Responsa 'Zera' Anashim'; Responsa 'Yore Dea'', No. 24.

[184] Strauss-Ashtor, 210-214; 216-217.

tioned by Jewish, Moslem and Christian sources.[185] Jews in al-Quds were ordered not to enter a public bath without wearing a small bell around their neck, so that the Moslems might be warned of the approaching Jew, and could cover their nakedness in time.[186]

One of the laws of discrimination against Jews was the prohibition on rebuilding the synagogue in al-Quds. The existence of the synagogue, which has been erroneously connected with Naḥmanides, was like a bitter pill to fanatic Moslems, because of its adjacency to the mosque of al-ʿAmri.[187]

At the end of 1474 that synagogue was destroyed by fanatic Moslems, who claimed that it had been illegally built, in contradiction to the Moslem constitution, which prohibits the building of new synagogues near old ones. Several years later it was rebuilt upon the order of the Sulṭān Qāid Bei, because the legality of the construction was proven by certain documents.[188] During the Ottoman period - in the thirties of the 16th century - attempts were made to reduce the holding of this building by the Jews, and even to deprive them of it completely, after rumors had been spread that the Jews had repaired it without obtaining a license from the authorities; it was even claimed that they had rebuilt it. The plotting against the Jews for having illegally built their synagogue continued till close to the late eighties of that century.[189] At the end of 1587 the synagogue was confiscated upon the order of the Governor Abu Seifin, but the intervention of the Sulṭān prevented it; not for long, though, as several months later, in April 1588, the Kadi of al-Quds issued a specific instruction forbidding the Jews to use this structure.[190] The Jews were allowed, by the local authorities, to conduct prayers in private homes,[191] and only several dec-

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[185] Letter of Rabbi Yisraʾel of Perugia dated 1522/3: Yaʿari, Igrot, 174; Ish-Shalom, Travels, 280, 310; Schur, Jewish, 357-370; also at the Shariʿa Court reports have been preserved on this subject: Cohen, Jewish 151; Cohen, Documents, 22, 47; the Jews were accused of wearing a Ṭallit (Prayer Shawl) at the synagogue. This accusation was based on the fact that they were covering their heads in a headgear of white colour, which was forbidden to the Jews. This event was also seemingly hinted at in a Jewish source: Responsa of Radbaz No. 1315.

[186] Cohen, Documents, 22; Cohen, Jewish, 151-152.

[187] A mosque which exists till this day, close to the restored synagogue.

[188] About this event: Goitein, S.D., "Ibn ʿUbayya's Book Concerning the Destruction of the Synagogue of Jerusalem in 1474", Zion, 13-14, 1948-1949, 18-32 (Hebrew); Strauss-Ashtor, 401-416; Ashtor, E., "Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages", Yerushalayim, (Review), 2/5, 1955, 112-113 (Hebrew).

[189] Cohen, Jewish, 85-95; Cohen, Documents, 19-20.

[190] Cohen, Documents, 63-64; Cohen, Jewish, 92-93.

[191] Private or semi-private praying houses were not considered official synagogues, and

ades later they were allowed to pray in another synagogue-named after Rabban Yoḥanan Ben-Zakkai.

The central Ottoman authorities objected to infringements upon the Jews' rights, namely, the imposing upon the Jews additional limitations beyond what had been fixed by the 'Qanūn' or by the 'Shari'a.' Sulṭānic orders were issued from the 'Sublime Porte' (the Sulṭān's palace in Constantinople) to the governors of al-Quds, Ṣafad and Damascus, or to the Kadis in those places,[192] concerning the requirement of taking care not to infringe upon the rights of the Jews beyond what had been determined by the Moslem constitution. From these documents it appears that the Jewish community in those places could and was allowed to complain before the 'Sublime Porte' about any grievance caused to them, and if the complaint was justified, the Sulṭān did not hesitate to reproach and scold the Kadis or the governors, and more than once ordered them to amend the grievance; and if money was collected from the Jews beyond what they were required to pay within the framework of their special taxation - according to the constitution - the rulers were forced to return that money, as well as to punish those who had tried to molest the Jews and infringe upon their rights. Sometimes the Sulṭān did not take a stand, but ordered the Kadi or the Governor or both to investigate the Jews' complain.

The interesting point about those documents is the fact that the Jews did not hesitate to use their right to complain about the officials' conduct if and when they thought that some injustices had been caused to them. This indicates on one hand a high level of toleration by the central authorities, and on the other hand clear and not few deviations by the officials' in their conduct towards the Jews.

The Jews, under the rule of the Ottomanic Sulṭāns, enjoyed freedom of religion, and even enjoyed their own administrative autonomy, which enabled them to conduct their life as they saw it, without any limitations. In al-Quds it is customary for the appointment of heads of the community, namely the Elders and the Dayyanim, to obtain the official approval of the Kadi.[193]In every Jewish community great efforts were made to prevent infringement upon the administrative and organizational autonomy

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were therefore not prohibited. Cohen, Documents, 20-21; Cohen, Jewish, 93-95; it seems from a Christian source of 1599 that the Jews had a small synagogue in the city: Schur, Jewish, 370-371, and most likely one of the informal praying houses is referred to.

[192] 25 Sulṭānic edicts in the years 1517-1591 concerning the Jews in Jerusalem have been published in Hebrew translation by Cohen, Documents; four Sulṭānic edicts concerning the Jews in Ṣafad in the years 1576-1584, and one concerning the Jews in al-Quds in 1589, were published in English translation by Heyd, Documents, 163-171.

[193] Cohen, Jewish, 43, 49.

by preventing any intervention whatever in matters of the community by the authorities. Therefore the Jews were forbidden by their leaders to appeal to the 'Courts of the Gentiles,' because the Jewish leadership considered it, and justifiably so, as an infringement upon the basis of the Jewish society and its institutions. The repeated warnings not to appeal in any matter to the courts of the Moslems, issued in al-Quds at that time, were not groundless.[194] From the documents of the Shari'a court we see clearly that sometimes Jews went to the Kadi in order to obtain his verdict in various matters. Sometimes these were just confirmations of the verdicts of the Jewish court, because the means of punishment by the Jewish court were limited, and effective punishment was needed beyond the proclamation of bans and ostracism, which were the most drastic means of punishment at the disposal of the Jewish court.[195] There were surely additional reasons for a special appeal to the courts of the gentiles, perhaps against attested delinquents of the community, who did not obey the Dayyanim and the heads of the community.[196] Even the regulations of the commu nity of al-Quds permitted an appeal to the Moslem courts in such cases.[197] Jews appealed from time to time also to the gentile courts in suits between a Jew and a Moslem or a Christian; from the documents of the Shari'a court it appears that more than once the court defended the claims of the Jew against the Moslem,[198] although it can be assumed that in some instance there was a tendency to favour the Moslem's claim, even if he was not justified. Sometimes Jews were summoned as witnesses by the Shari'a court, usually in a discussion of a case of a Dhimmi against another Dhimmi or of a Moslem against a Christian.

The testimony of the Jews was therefore accepted by the Moslem court as evidence against Jews and against Christians, and as supporting evi-

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[194] Ya'ari, Igrot, 170; this matter was referred to in two versions of the regulations of the Jewish community in al-Quds: one version was found on a panel in the synagogue according to: Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 83, and the other in: Freimann, Taqqanot, 206–207.

[195] Cohen, Jewish, 127–131, 139.

[196] Cohen, Jewish, 131.

[197] In the above versions of "Taqqanot Yerushalayim" (Note 194) we find:
"No one can file a suit against another unless he has warned him three times and the other has not complied," or, "No Jew shall expose another Jew to the gentile authorities unless he has warned him twice or thrice before seven of the most distinguished [Jews] of the city";
Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, Part 1, No. 22; Part 3, Nos. 207–208.

[198] Cohen, Jewish, 124–127; Rabbi Moshe Trani's Responsa, Part 1, No. 141 on a controversy between a Jew and an Arab about immovables, which was brought before the Kadi, who issued a verdict in favour of the Jew.

dence and additional to the testimony of a Moslem. But a single testimony of a Jew against a Moslem was not accepted by the court.[199]

4. Jerusalem

a. Community Characteristics

The Jewish Quarter

The location where the Jews of al-Quds dwelled was the area of the present Jewish Quarter. They had probably settled at this place as early as the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries.[200] This quarter was called Ṣiyon[201] or, in the Arabic language, Ṣahayūn,[202] either because this quarter bordered with Mount Zion,[203] or because formerly the Jews of al-Quds had lived on Mount Zion.[204] This quarter was also called by the Arabs 'Ḥart al-Yahūd,' namely, the quarter of the Jews. Partial descriptions of the location of the Jewish Quarter can be found in several Jewish sources.[205] From Arab and Turkish sources of the end of the Mameluke Period and also of the beginning of the Ottoman Period, it appears that the area of this quarter was a territorial continuity within three quarters: Šarāf, ar-Rīša and al-Maslaḥ.[206] Šaraf quarter is near Mount Zion – in the west, near the Ḥaram (the walled area of Moslem sanctuaries), and borders in the north with David Road. In this quarter passed 'Ṭarīq al-Maslaḥ' – the road of the Jews. Ar-Rīša borders on the road of the Jews in the west, between the road of the Jews and the Jacobean quarter (the Armenian quarter). Al-Maslaḥ is located near Zion Gate, between the southern lot and the Armenian quarter, in the direction of 'Sha'ar ha-Ashpot.'[207]

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[199] Cohen, Jewish, 131–135.

[200] David, Sources, 289–291.

[201] Ya'ari, Igrot, 130; Responsa of Radbaz, No. 633, 731.

[202] Responsa of Radbaz, No. 731; description of al-Quds by the Moslem writer Muğīr ad-Dīn al-Ḥanbali, which had been translated into Hebrew: Yellin, D., Kitvei David Yellin, vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1973, 205 (Hebrew).

[203] As we shall see later.

[204] David, Sources, 289–291.

[205] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 55.

[206] Tax payers lists in al-Quds, where there were found separate lists of inhabitants of each quarter, including the Jews in the three quarters of Šaraf, al-Maslaḥ, and ar-Rīša; Lewis, Cities, 117–120; Cohen-Lewis, 83–94; Lewis, Notes, 7–8.

[207] Lewis, Cities, 120 (including a map of the quarters in al-Quds); Cohen, Jewish, 22–25.

Demographic Changes

It has already been mentioned that the Jewish population in al-Quds just as in other places in Palestine, constantly expanded since the beginning of the Ottoman Regime in the country. In the taxpayers census lists which have been found in Ottoman archives, there are partial demographical data regarding several years between the third and the seventh decades of the 16th century, which apparently point to the size of the population in al-Quds including the Jewish one.[208] The data submitted in connection with the Jewish community in 1525/6 (the first census) about 199 Jewish landlords, contradict a demographic datum in our possession, namely a quotation of Rabbi Moshe Basola, who visited al-Quds as a tourist from Italy in 1522, three years before the first census, where he mentioned "some three hundred landlords."[209] This demographic datum seems more realistic, because at the end of 1495 Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro's unknown disciple mentioned, when speaking of the Jewish population in al-Quds, "some two hundred landlords."[210]

It can be assumed that in the course of years, particularly following the Ottoman conquest, the Jewish population grew, so that in the intervening 27 years this rate of 50 percent was an increase above natural multiplication, and might even indicate some immigration to the town due to a slight improvement of the living conditions there, as we have already pointed out.

Also on the basis of additional evidence, demographical lists which are based on the taxpayers census, do not reflect the situation precisely;[211] even a calculation of the coefficient of those who evaded the payment of taxes will not be of use to us, since we have no information about it.[212] It seems, therefore, that the great importance of the data is not in estimating the size of the population, but in indicating the trends of the demographic change, to either an increase or a decrease, as it appears from the following figures: (year and estimation of Jewish landlords)

1525/6	1538/9	1553/4	1562/3
199	224	324	237

In the second census (1538/9) and in the third one (1553/4), a slight increase is marked in the size of the Jewish population, and in the fourth

[208] Cohen-Lewis, 81-94.

[209] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 61.

[210] Cohen, Demography, 104-107; Cohen, Jewish, 32-42.

[211] As we shall see later.

[212] Cohen, Jewish, 42, is of the opinion that at least 20% should be added to these figures.

census (1562/3) a trend of decrease is marked. The same trend is marked in the Moslem and Christian population, although the trend of increase in the second as well as the third census is more abrupt in the non-Jewish population, and on the other hand the trend of decrease in the fourth census is slighter amongst that population.[213] From the fifth census (1596/7) no demographic data whatsoever have been preserved about the Jewish population, unlike those regarding the Moslem and Christian population. Indeed, investigation of these data points to the continuation of the trend of population decrease. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the same trend existed also amongst the Jews. From documents of the Shari'a court it appears that at least three local censi were conducted in the years 1567/8, 1584 and 1587, and in these we notice a considerable decrease in the size of the Jewish population.[214] It appears that the trend of decrease in the population of al-Quds which could already be noticed in the early 60's and perhaps a short time previously, points to a crisis which overcame the town[215] and it must be assumed that the severe economic crisis which befell the Ottoman Empire in the last quarter of the 16th century, including Palestine, had budded in al-Quds even earlier; we have, however, no clear information about it.

It seems that Ṣafad was the destination of at least part of the Jews who left al-Quds. One of the people who joined the emigration wave was the Grand Rabbi of the city, Radbaz, who most likely left for Ṣafad after 1563.[216] Anyway, it seems that the exodus of the Jews from al-Quds in the direction of Ṣafad ceased in the last quarter of the 16th century, because at that time Ṣafad itself suffered a heavy economic crisis.[217]

As already mentioned above, the Jews of al-Quds actually lived in three Moslem quarters.[218] From the two censi of 1538/9 and 1553/4 it appears that the largest Jewish concentration was in ar-Rīša quarter,[219] but later, as appears from the 1562/3 census, the largest concentration was in Šarāf quarter, in which the Jewish population grew, while in the other two it

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[213] Cohen-Lewis, 94; Cohen, Demography, 97.

[214] Cohen, Demography, 100–104; Cohen, Jewish, 26–32, 41–42.

[215] David, Letters, 325–331.

[216] Scheiber, A., Benayahu, M., "Communication of Rabbis of Egypt to 'Radbaz'", Sefunot, 6, 1962, 134 (Hebrew).

[217] This appears from the description of Rabbi Shimshon Beck one of the scholars of Ṣafad, who has moved to al-Quds and who wrote from there in 1584:

„And since I have left Safed, because of our many sins, they are in great distress ... because there is neither bread nor water, nor vegetables ... and here thank God everything is cheap except for wheat," Ya'ari, Igrot, 188–189.

[218] See above paragraph: The Jewish Quarter.

[219] Cohen-Lewis, 94; Cohen, Demography, 99; Cohen, Jewish, 22–25.

went down in numbers. From this we may infer that Jews moved from ar-Rīša quarter to the Šaraf quarter in the fifties or early sixties of the 16th century.[220]

Relations between Communities

During the Mameluke Period the Mustʿariba[221] constituted the core of the Jewish community in al-Quds but later, following the immigration of Jews from various countries, the Mustʿariba began to lose their seniority in the community, and the domnination over the Jews of al-Quds once passed to the hands of the Spanish Jews in the third quarter of the 15th century, and later, in the last quarter of that century, to the hands of west European Jews (Ashkenazim).[222] Following the growing influx of immigrants who were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, since the late 15th century, the considerable and dominant influence of the expelled from Spain started to be felt in the community of al-Quds. From Jewish[223] and Moslem[224] sources of the beginning of the Ottoman regime in Palestine, it appears that the Spanish Jews became, within a period of a few years, the dominant factor within the Jewish community in al-Quds; in the early twenties of the 16th century they were the majority in this community and left their imprint to a great extent on the life style and on the culture of the other communities excluding the Ashkenazim;[225] while the other communities - the Mustʿariba, the Maʿaraviyyim (North Africans),[226] the Italians and the others were absorbed by the large Spanish community,[227] the Ashkenazim succeeded in preserving their uniqueness and conducted their life as a separate minority within the community according to the Ashkenazic patterns of tradition and culture.

The special status of the Ashkenazim, which was different than that of the other communities, did not please the heads of the Spanish community, who did not easily resign to this reality, although they had to respect it. In various sources, mainly of the late 16th century and early 17th, we find an echo of prolonged conflicts between these two communities over reve-

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[220] Cohen, Demography, 98; Cohen, Jewish, 23-24.

[221] Ben-Zvi, Y., "Musta'riba - the Ancient Inhabitants of Palestine", Ben-Zvi, Y., Studies and Documents, Jerusalem, 1967, 15-20 (Hebrew); Rozen, Position, 73-101.

[222] David, Ashkenazim, 331-333.

[223] Yaʿari, Igrot, 169.

[224] Cohen, Jewish, Index.

[225] Yaʿari, Igrot, 169; Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 61, 87.

[226] David, Connections, 74-77.

[227] In various Jewish sources there are reports about Jews of these communities, but not about communal frameworks such as we find in Ṣafad.

nues and distribution of donations.[228] A Jewish source of the early twenties of the 16th century tells about a Jewish Falasha community, which consisted of "forty families."[229] Few reports have been preserved about a tiny Karaite community as early as the late 15th century; this community continued to exist in al-Quds also in the 16th and 17th centuries.[230] Close on the Ottoman conquest this community demanded a hold and an ownership of the synagogue at an-Nabī Ṣamwīl - the burial place of Samuel the Prophet according to the Jewish and Moslem traditions; thus the Karaite community wanted to oust the Rabbanite community which had a holding on the place for generations.[231] The Karaite community institutions were separate from those of the Rabbanites, although in certain instances - such as collecting the tax per capita and other taxes - they were under the authority of the Rabbanites, and therefore in the lists of the taxpayers censi they were not mentioned separately.[232]

Community Organization

At the head of the Jewish community were two central figures which acted side-by-side: The first one was the 'Elder of the Jews' - Shaykh al-Yahūd - who was in charge of the community affairs in the social and fiscal areas (tax collection, handling of dedications, etc.), and was the official representative of the Jewish community before the authorities, both local and central.[233] Under him there were a few officials who were called 'Ziqenei ha-Yehudim' (the Elders of the Jews), 'Nikhbadim' (Dignitaries), 'Rashim' (Heads) etc. The other central figure was the Dayyan, who was in charge of the entire system of the community spiritual and religious life, and also

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[228] David, Ashkenazim, 333-341; David, A., "On the Ashkenazic Community in Jerusalem in the 16th Century", Hirschberg, H.Z. (ed.), Vatiqin, Ramat-Gan, 1975, 25-33 (Hebrew); Among the Ashkenazic community in al-Quds were also Central European Jews - Bohemians and Hungarians, as well as Eastern Europeans: Assaf, Texts, 230-237; Turniansky, Ch., "A Correspondence in Yiddish from Jerusalem, Dating from the 1560s", Shalem, 4, 1984, 149-210 (Hebrew).

[229] Ya'ari, Igrot, 175.

[230] Sirat, C. et Beit Arié, M., Manuscripts Médievaux en Caractères Hébraïques, vol. 1, Jerusalem, 1972, 173 I (Hebrew); Cohen, Jewish, Index; about Karaites in al-Quds in the 17th century; Wilensky, M., "Rabbi Eliyah Afeda Baghi and the Karaite Community of Jerusalem", Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, 40, 1972, 109-146.

[231] Cohen, Documents, 48.

[232] Cohen, Jewish, 11-12, 36 and others.

[233] Cohen, Jewish, 43-48, 55-56. We learn from Jewish sources about Jews holding the title 'Shaykh' during this period: Responsa of Rabbi Lewi ben Ḥabib, No. 25, and also Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, part 3, No. 188; about this title in Jewish society at an earlier and later period: David, Elders, 221.

the Halakha legal decisions through the court which was under his authority. He also served as teacher, probably at one of the Yeshivot in the city.[234] At the beginning of the Ottoman Period, the function of Dayyan was transferred by rotation from person to person, each serving in this position one year only.[235]

From many documents of the Shari'a court in al-Quds, we learn a lot about these positions. Among other things, we learn that these appointments[236] required the approval of the Kadi of al-Quds.[237] We also learn the identity of some of them. Among the outstanding Dayyanim mentioned in the Moslem documents was Ralbaḥ, one of the greatest sages in the twenties and thirties of the 16th century,[238] who filled this position in the years 1533–1536,[239] and Radbaz,[240] one of the greatest among those expelled from Spain, who had immigrated to al-Quds in 1553, after serving as Dayyan for 40 years in Egypt; he stayed in al-Quds for several years.[241] Among the Elders were several members of the Nagid Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ha-Kohen Shulāl's family.[242] It is unknown whether Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ha-Kohen Shulāl, who in his later years (he died at the end of 1524) lived in al-Quds occupied a central place in the Jewish society himself.[243]

It seems that the organization of the Jewish community in al-Quds at the beginning of the Ottoman regime was already based on solid administrative procedures, with permanent and defined officials, and this is reflected in a long series of regulations, which have been preserved, and which concern the social and religious spheres of life. The first regulations appear as early as the beginning of the century – at the end of the Mameluke Period, and the moving spirit behind them was the Nagid Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ha-Kohen Shulāl, who as Nagid of the Jews of Egypt (in the years 1502–1517) had the authority to intervene directly in the administration of

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[234] About the authority of the Dayyan and his status in the community: Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, part 3, No. 188, 228; Cohen, Jewish, 49–55.

[235] Responsa of Radbaz, No. 1085: "And the sages of Jerusalem acted as if they accepted it, because each serves one year and then they rotate;" Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 63.

[236] Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, part 3, No. 188.

[237] Cohen, Jewish, 43, 45, 49–50.

[238] Cohen, Jewish, 49, 51.

[239] Cohen, Jewish, 50.

[240] Cohen, Jewish, 51.

[241] Cohen, Jewish, 46–47.

[242] Cohen, Jewish, 46–47, 59–60.

[243] About his life in al-Quds: Ben-Zvi, I., "The Place of Decease of ha-Nagid R. Y. Shullal", Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 10, 1942, 28 (Hebrew), Robinson, Messianic, 37–38.

the Jewish community in al-Quds.[244] Several regulations were found inscribed on a panel in the synagogue, according to the traveller Rabbi Moshe Basola,[245] and several regulations are known from other sources.[246]

b. Spiritual Life in Jerusalem

Yeshivot and Halakha Scholars

A Yeshiva had been founded in al-Quds already in the last quarter of the 14th century.[247] That Yeshiva was most surely closed down in the sixties or in the early seventies of the 15th century, because of the difficult conditions in al-Quds at that time.[248] It opened its gates on the initiative of the Nagid Rabbi Yiṣḥaq ha-Kohen Shulāl in the early 16th century. This Nagid did his best to cultivate spiritual life in al-Quds; his initiative in this direction was expressed in two ways: in founding two Yeshivot and financing their upkeep,[249] and in issuing a list of social regulations.[250]

His most famous regulation was that about the exemption of scholars from taxes, which was issued by his court in Egypt in 1509.[251] It seems that the Nagid's main purpose in these measures and in others was to establish a spiritual center in al-Quds, to which scholars and pupils would come from all over the Jewish Diaspora. That regulation was therefore meant to create a real incentive for scholars whose studying was their vocation, by having their share of the taxes borne by the landlords in al-Quds. This regulation created more than once social strain, and angered the Jewish

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[244] David, Elders, 240-243; David, Zion, 329-331.

[245] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 83-85.

[246] Collection of 20 Taqqanot on social and religious matters, were issued in the course of the 16th century; they are to a great extent similar to those written on a panel in the synagogue in al-Quds: Freimann, Taqqanot, 206-214; isolated Taqqanot are known from various sources: Responsa of Rabbi Eliyahu Mizraḥi, No. 45; Responsa of Radbaz, No. 623, 644, 1085; Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Trani, Part 3, No. 1; Luncz, A. M. (ed.), Jerusalem, 2, 1887, 147-148; Rivlin, A., "Estate Regulations in Jerusalem", Azkara, 5, Jerusalem, 1937, 1799-1809 (Hebrew); Benayahu, M., "History of the Regulation Forbidding to Take Books Out of Jerusalem", Present to Yehuda Leib Zlotnik, Jerusalem, 1950, 226-234 (Hebrew).

[247] David, Academies, 139-164.

[248] David, Academies, 141.

[249] David, Academies, 142-143.

[250] David, Elders, 240-243.

[251] About this regulation, which was renewed from time to time: Samuel di Avila, Keter Tora, Amsterdam, 1725 (Hebrew); Avraham Anakawa, Kerem Ḥemer, 1, Livorno, 1871, No. 128 (Hebrew); David, Elders, 243; David, Academies, 142, 156, Note 39; Hacker, Payment, 63-117.

landlords in al-Quds,[252] in Ṣafad[253] and in other places, because they did not agree to pay the scholars' share, especially as some of the latter had money and were still unwilling to pay their share.

From Jewish sources of 1522 it appears that the two Yeshivot in al-Quds were divided according to a community index, namely - a Yeshiva headed by Sefardim and a Yeshiva headed by Ashkenazim.[254] This division seems to reflect the delicate balance between the two communities - the Sefardic and the Ashkenazic, because the Ashkenazim, unlike the other communities that had been absorbed by the dominant Spanish community, preserved their uniqueness and conducted their life as a separate minority, according to the Ashkenazic patterns of tradition and culture.

It seems that in due course the Yeshivot and the scholars grew in number in direct ratio to the growing of the Jewish population in the city, when there was an increase of immigration of those expelled from Spain and from other places of exile. From the sources at our disposal it appears that the scholars at the Yeshivot were grown up men, many of whom were men of position in the field of Halakha, who had also issued verdicts, and who have gathered from all over the Jewish Diaspora. Many of them, mentioned by name, are known as renowned scholars and issuers of verdicts.[255] Some of the scholars were among the greatest of their generation:

- Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav - who had been head of a Yeshiva in al-Quds shortly after the conquest, and maybe even a short time earlier, and had abandoned the city with his disciples to go to Egypt because of the unbearable difficult economic situation.[256] Later he headed the Ṣafad community, and of course the Yeshiva there. Among those who used to attend his lessons was also Rabbi Yosef Caro, the author of the "Shulḥan 'Arukh" (the famous code of Jewish laws).[257]

- Ralbaḥ (R. Levi ibn Ḥaviv) - who had served as Rabbi and Dayyan in al-Quds in the twenties and thirties of the 16th century.[258]

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[252] Responsa of Radbaz, No.792; Responsa of Rabbi Yosef ibn Ṣayyaḥ; Assaf, Texts, 200-201.

[253] Benayahu, Tax, 103-117; Ta-Shema Y., "About the Exemption of Scholars from Taxes in the Middle Ages", Studies in Rabbinic Literature Bible and Jewish History, dedicated to Ezra Zion Melamed, Ramat Gan, 1982, 320-322 (Hebrew); Hacker, Payment, 63-117.

[254] David, Academies, 143-144.

[255] Frumkin, A.L., Rivlin, E., History of the Scholars of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, vol. 1, 1928, 9-162 (Hebrew); David, Academies, 144-147.

[256] David, Academies, 142-143.

[257] Dimitrovsky, Beirav, 41-102.

[258] Till now no proper light has been shed on the personality of Ralbaḥ, only Frumkin-

- Radbaz (R. David ibn Avi Zimra) - the third among the greatest scholars, who was one of the greatest verdict issuers in his days. He had lived in Egypt for about 40 years.[259] These three sages were among those expelled from Spain.

- Rabbi Beṣal'el Ashkenazi - another scholar, who has left his imprint on his generation and on the next ones. He was not among those expelled from Spain nor one of their descendants. He immigrated to al-Quds from Egypt in the late eighties of the 16th century,[260] and was the central figure in the spiritual life of the city until he died in the early nineties of that century. He was very famous for his important book of Talmud interpretation - 'Shittà Mequbeṣṣet'.[261]

Kabbala and Apocalypse

In the first three decades of the 16th century there was in al-Quds a group of Kabbalists, who engaged in Kabbala (Jewish mysticism) together with their Halakha studies. Most of them had been expelled from Spain and Portugal.[262] Out of them we will mention Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Mor-Ḥayim,[263] Rabbi Yehuda Albutini,[264] Rabbi Yosef ibn Ṣayaḥ;[265] the outstanding among them was Rabbi Avraham ben Eli'ezer Halewi ha-Sefardi, whose

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Rivlin have written about him; Molcho, I. R., "Rabbi Lewi Ben-Ḥaviv 'Ish Yerushalayim'", Ḥemdat Yisra'el, Jerusalem, 1946, 33-42 (Hebrew).

[259] About him: Zimmels, H. J., Rabbi David ibn abi Simra, Bericht des Jüdisch-Theologischen Seminars (Fraenckelsche Stiftung) für das Jahr 1932, Breslau, 1933; Strauss-Ashtor, 458-479; Goldman, I., The Life and Times of Rabbi David Ibn Abi Zimra, New York, 1970.

[260] David, A., "The Economic Status of Egyptian Jewry in the 16th Century According to the Responsa of 'Radbaz'", Miqqedem Umiyyam, 1, Haifa, 1981, 86, Note 2 (Hebrew).

[261] He was one of the Radbaz's disciples in Egypt. No comprehensive study has yet been made about him and his extensive literary work: David, A., "Ashkenazi Bezal'el", Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. 3, 1971, 723-725; Schochetman, A., "'Binyan-Shlomo lehokhmat-Bezalel' by R. Shlomo Adani", Alei Sefer, 3, 1976, 63-93 (Hebrew); Schochetman, A., "Kelalei Hatalmud of R. Bezalel Ashkenazi", Shenaton Ha-Mishpat Halvri (Yearbook of Hebrew Law), 8, 1981, 247-308 (Hebrew).

[262] Rabbi Avraham Halewi has written in a letter sent from al-Quds before the Ottoman conquest, to the Nagid Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Shulāl in Egypt: "There are new Kabbalists who have just newly arrived."

[263] David, A., "Immigration of the Spanish Jews to Eretz-Israel after the Expulsion and Their Influence on the Jewish Community in Jerusalem", Dan, J. (ed.), Culture and History, Jerusalem, 1987, 147-170 (Hebrew).

[264] Benayahu, M., "Rabbi Jehuda Ben Rabbi Moshe Albutini and His Book 'Yesod Mishne Tora'", Sinai, 36, 1955, 240-274 (Hebrew).

[265] Scholem, G., "Kabbalistic Manuscripts at the National and University Library in Jerusalem", Jerusalem, 1930, 89-91 (Hebrew); Assaf, Texts, 200-201; Hacker, Payment, 63.

figure was well intertwined with the yearning for redemption which awoke with renewed force in al-Quds and in the Jewish Diaspora in the 16th century.[266] His Kabbalistic and apocalyptical writings, most of which are still in the form of manuscripts,[267] reveal the depth of Messianic tension which was developing in al-Quds in those days. He arrived there before the Ottoman conquest, after having wandered out of the Iberian Peninsula where he had been born and grown up. He had stayed in Italy, Greece, Turkey and Egypt. In al-Quds he studied at one of the two Yeshivot, and at a later period headed the Sefardic Yeshiva together with the Spanish physician, Rabbi David ibn Shushan. Then he devoted much time to apocalyptical subjects and calculations.

It seems that the foundation of his messianic view had been lain while still living in Italy, and maybe earlier, in Spain, because in the late 15th century a wide apocalyptical literature started to develop in Italy and in Spain, in an atmosphere saturated with messianic tension, and apocalyptical prophets and heralds of redemption started to appear one after another. At that time there were many reports and rumours about the history of the Ten Tribes who were also destined to be redeemed. The messianic awakening in the 16th century was accompanied by the conquest of Palestine by the Ottomans, which enhanced the messianic expectations, and created a more relaxed atmosphere.[268]

Against this background, then, must we understand the task that the Kabbalist Rabbi Avraham Halewi undertook, wishing to be some kind of herald announcing the nearing redemption. He sent many letters to the Diaspora – concerning the redemption which was drawing near, especially to Italy,[269] where his words were listened to with particular attention, arousing people to Teshuva (repentance). Rabbi Avraham Halewi anticipated and believed that redemption would come in stages on several dates: in 1520, in 1524 and in 1529; then in the years 1530–1531 the Messiah would appear in Şafad in Upper Galilee;[270] against this background grew the messianic ideas which found their expression in the appearance

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[266] See following.

[267] Avraham Halewi, 36–40.

[268] Shulvas, M.A., Rome and Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 1944, 41–88 (Hebrew); Tamar, D., "The Messianic Expectations in Italy for the Year 1575", Sefunot, 2, 1958, 61–88 (Hebrew); Ben-Sasson, H.H., "The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes", Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 4, 1971, 62–116; Hacker, J., "A New Letter on the Messianic Fervour in Eretz-Israel and the Diaspora in the Early 16th Century", Shalem, 2, 1976, 355–360 (Hebrew); David, Jerusalem, 39–60; Robinson, Messianic, 32–42.

[269] Avraham Halewi, 36–40.

[270] Scholem, Kabbalist, 106; Avraham Halewi, 14, 26, 40.

of Shelomo Molkho and David Re'uveni.[271] The latter turned al-Quds into his center of activity, distributing the ideas of redemption at the beginning of his career, in 1522/3.[272]

Competition over Spiritual Hegemony

In the early 16th century the relations between the communities of al-Quds and Ṣafad were already strained due to competition over spiritual prestige. Each demanded for itself the Tora Hegemony, namely the supreme authority for teaching and issuing decisions. We find repercussions of that tension in the letter of the scholars of Ṣafad to the sages of al-Quds regarding the fixing of the Shemiṭa in 1504,[273] and they wrote among other things:

> "If there is no wisdom here, there is old age and experience ... We in the towns of Galilee are also to be reckoned with."[274]

We find a more substantial expression of that conflict in the famous controversy over the Semikha of scholars in 1538, in which the scholars of both communities - Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav of Ṣafad and Ralbaḥ of al-Quds - took part.[275] Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav, who had formerly been head of the Yeshiva of al-Quds decided while living in Ṣafad to renew in 1538 an ancient custom of the Semikha of scholars, his main purpose being to reinstate the glory of Israel by establishing a Sanhedrin like the Supreme Council which had existed in the Second Temple Period and which had been composed of ordained sages.[276] In addition to his main intention to create a spiritual center in Ṣafad the influence of which would be felt in

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[271] Scholem, Kabbalist, 149.

[272] Cassuto, M.D., "Who Was David Reubeni?", Tarbiz, 32, 1963, 339-358 (Hebrew); and from a somewhat different angle: Shoḥat, A., "Notes on the David Reubeni Affair", Zion, 35, 1970, 96-102 (Hebrew).

[273] Benayahu, Safed, 109-125, regards this controversy as an open conflict between the two communities; also Tamar, who is of the opinion that this letter reflects only mutual contacts and an exchange of views between Ṣafad and al-Quds on subjects of law and custom, nevertheless believes that between the lines some strain can be detected: Tamar, D., "Ṣefat Erev Bo'o shel Maran", Raphael, Y. (ed.), Rabbi Yosef Qaro, Jerusalem, 1969, 10-12 (Hebrew).

[274] Benayahu, Safed, 122-123.

[275] The main source of this affair is the Semikha Pamphlet which includes part of the exchange of verdicts and discussions between the two sages. This pamphlet was printed at the end of the Responsa of Ralbaḥ: Katz, Halakhah, 213-231; Dimitrovsky, H.Z., "New Documents Regarding the Semicha Controversy in Safed", Sefunot, 10, 1966, 113-192 (Hebrew).

[276] About the Semikha of scholars by Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav and by his disciples and by their disciples in their turn: Benayahu, Ordination, 248-269.

the Diaspora, he wanted to solve in this manner the problem of many Marranoes of Spain and Portugal, who had come to Palestine, and many of whom had settled in Ṣafad;[277] many of them wanted to atone for their past deeds by being flogged, an act which could be performed only through a Sanhedrin.[278] At the same time we cannot ignore the messianic feelings which took hold in those days of many of the sages of Ṣafad and al-Quds; these feelings caused Rabbi Yaʿaqov Beirav to wish to materialize the idea of the Semikha.[279] He asked therefore the Rabbis of al-Quds to support his unconventional act, basing it on one of Maimonides' verdicts in this matter, which said that upon the agreement of all the sages of Palestine scholars could be ordained. His interpretation of Maimonides' meaning, was that there was no need of the agreement of all the sages of Palestine, but of most of them.[280] The head of the Rabbis of al-Quds, Ralbaḥ, objected categorically to the Semikha, basing his objection on Halakha grounds. But his objection to the Semikha was not free of fear lest the spiritual hegemony of al-Quds become undermined and shift to Ṣafad.[281]

Indeed, it seems that this revolutionary idea, thought up by Rabbi Yaʿaqov Beirav, was not materialized because of the objection of his adversary, the above Rabbi of the al-Quds community. However, the process of shifting of the spiritual hegemony to Ṣafad, which Ralbaḥ had so feared, started being materialized in the second half of the 16th century and in the early 17th century. The heads of the Ṣafad community saw fit to intervene even in the internal affairs of the al-Quds community in public matters. Rabbi Yosef Caro, one of the sages of Ṣafad in the third quarter of the 16th century, intervened in a realistic way by materially assisting the community of al-Quds.[282] Ṣafad of course overshadowed al-Quds in the sphere of spiritual life in a gradually increasing manner. At that time there were gathered in Ṣafad sages of renown in the field of Halakha, of ethics and of homiletics, and later, from the late sixties onwards, the Ṣafad Kabbala started to develop, and reached its climax in the spreading of the theories of 'ha-Ari' (Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Luria Ashkenazi) which, as is well-known, his disciples and their disciples in turn for generations distributed, and which became the dominant mystical current in Judaism for many years. It

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[277] See our following discussion on the various congregations in Ṣafad.

[278] Katz, Halakhah, 230-232.

[279] Katz, Halakhah, 226-229.

[280] Mishne-Tora, Hilkhot Sanhedrin, Chapter 4:1 and also his commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin, Chapter 1:C.

[281] Katz, Halakhah, 225.

[282] David, Letters, 325-331.

was not within the power of the above Rabbi Beşal'el Ashkenazi, who was one of the greatest and most important sages of al-Quds in the late 16th century, to divert the scales in favour of al-Quds even to a small extent.

The Presency at an-Nabī Şamwīl

Around the tomb of 'Samuel the Prophet,' which according to the Jewish and Moslem traditions was near al-Quds to the north, a tiny Jewish Settlement had been built, which remained there for centuries – though not continuously – from the Crusader Period till the early 18th century. This place served for public gatherings, mainly on the traditional anniversary of Samuel the Prophet's death. This gathering included several interesting ceremonies; special prayers in commemoration of the prophet, dedications and donations in the name of Samuel, etc.[283]

In the course of years unceasing attempts were made by Moslems to oust the Jews from this place, because they too considered the place holy. From various sources of the 16th century it appears that the Jews continued to hold this place and even kept there a synagogue and a Beit-Midrash.[284] It seems that in the years 1565–1573 this place was confiscated from them by the Moslems.[285] Several years later, however, the place was again in Jewish ownership, probably in the late 16th century.[286] The Karaite community demanded also ownership of the synagogue at this place,[287] and the controversy between it and the Rabbanite community was brought to the attention of the Sulţān.[288]

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[283] Several scholars have already considered the various sources which connect Jews with this place. Shochet, A., "The Synagogue on the tomb of Samuel", Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 6, 1939, 81–86 (Hebrew); Ben-Zvi, I., "A Jewish Settlement near the Tomb of the Prophet Samuel", Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 10, 1943, 12–18 (Hebrew); Werblowsky, R.J.Z., "Prayers at the Tomb of the Prophet Samuel", Sefunot, 8, 1964, 237–253 (Hebrew).

[284] Yellin, D., "Jewish Jerusalem Three Hundred Years Ago", Yerushalayim, Dedicated to the memory of A.M. Luncz, Jerusalem, 1928, 94–96 (Hebrew).

[285] Responsa of Radbaz, No. 608. The testimony of Radbaz in this matter has already been discussed by the above scholars.

[286] The Christian traveller from England John Sanderson, who toured al-Quds in 1601, mentioned that at that time Jews continued to call on this place according to a ritualistic tradition known from earlier periods: Ish-Shalom, Travels, 314.

[287] Cohen, Documents, 48.

[288] Cohen, Documents, 48.

5. The Jewish Community in Ṣafad

a. Community Characteristics

The Jewish Quarter

From various sources it appears that the location of the Jewish quarter in Ṣafad at the beginning of the Ottoman Period was on the southwestern slopes of 'ha-Pisga' (the Summit) – 'ha-Har' (the Mountain) – al-Qal'a (the Fort),[289] all are synonyms names for this site. Rabbi Moshe Basola, during his visit to Ṣafad in 1522, described this quarter:

> „Safed is the Upper Galilee part of the Estate of Naftali; the city is [in a] strong position on top of the mountain, and the mountain is surrounded by four mountains – two of them entirely Yishm'aelite [Arab] and the slopes of two of them are entirely housed by Jews."[290]

Near this Jewish quarter a special castle was built by the Pasha, most likely in the middle of the 16th century; this was a Khān in which Jews lived and it was named after the Pasha, Ḥān al-Pasha. This place was fortified, and gave the Jews maximum security against thieves and robbers. The Jews were not satisfied with the wall that surrounded the city and which had been built in 1549; they needed a special fort, the gates of which they locked every evening.

In the lower story of that fort were the warehouses, and in the upper (probably three) ones were the living quarters.[291] The size of the Jewish community that lived in this structure is not clearly known; nor is it clear whether most of them or only part of them lived there. The Jews of Ṣafad probably paid for using this Khān four hundred Florins a year as rent.[292]

The existence of this structure in Ṣafad is known till at least the middle of the 17th century. The Turkish traveller Eveliya Tsheleby, who visited the country in 1649, described its structure:

> "This is a big caravanserai with iron gates, like the gates of a fort, and it is being built in a square shape. Its circumference is six hundred paces and its height is four stories.

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[289] Cohen-Lewis, 154, 156.

[290] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 43; a similar description is given also by the Christian pilgrim William Biddulph, in his book of travel written in 1600, quotation in Hebrew: Ish-Shalom, Travels, 309–310.

[291] Ben-Zvi, I. (See note 12 above); Heyd, Tiberias, 130–131; about building the wall of Ṣafad in 1549: Responsa of Radbaz, No. 25; it seems that its wall did not endure for long and in the late 16th or in the early 17th century there were in it many breaches: Responsa of Rabbi Yom Ṭov Ṣahalon, No. 251.

[292] This appears from a Sulṭānic document of 1578: Heyd, Tiberias, 130–131; Heyd, Documents, 167–168; Responsa of Rabbi Yosef Caro, No. 125.

Formerly twelve thousand Israelites lived in it, but now there are only two thousand."[293]

Demographic Changes in the Jewish Community

Few demographic data have been preserved about the Jewish community in Ṣafad at the end of the Mameluke Period. As Rabbi Ovadya of Bertinoro's unknown disciple wrote in 1495, there were in Ṣafad at that time "some three hundred landlords."[294] Reports about this community are more abundant for the 16th century. It seems that a short time after the Ottoman conquest there was a drastic decrease in the size of the Ṣafad community. This was due to violent and bloody brawls at the beginning of 1517, between Mameluke loyalists and representatives of the Ottoman authorities, which were started by false rumours spread in Palestine about the Sulṭān having been defeated at the gates of Cairo. These riots did not leave the Jewish community in this town unscathed. From contemporary Jewish sources we learn that the rioters killed many Jews, robbed them and left them penniless; those who were not physically hurt found shelter in the neighbouring villages.[295]

These events undoubtedly reduced the Jewish Palestine population considerably. Five years later this community seems to have recovered its size of the late 15th century, since Rabbi Moshe Basola mentioned that he had found in it "more than three hundred landlords," and this indicates the restoration of the community.[296] It can therefore be assumed that many of those who had fled to the neighbouring villages have returned to the city; furthermore, most of the immigrants to Palestine after the Ottoman conquest have chosen Ṣafad as their destination.

Like the non-Jewish population in Ṣafad, the Jewish one considerably increased in the course of several decades, till the seventies of the 16th century. About the size of the Jewish population in Palestine in general, and in Ṣafad in particular, there are different estimates in several sources, which confuses the various researchers a great deal.[297] The demographic data arising from the taxpayers lists (Taḥrīr) which the Ottoman authorities frequently prepared, do not reflect the demographical reality. They do

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[293] Location of the Khan in unknown. It could have been destroyed in the earthquake in 1837.

[294] Ya'ari, Igrot, 151.

[295] David, Further, 191–194; Benayahu, M., "The Sermons of R. Yosef b. Meir Garson", Michael, 7, 1981, 130, 188–190 (Hebrew); David, Demographic, 83.

[296] David, Further Data, 193–194.

[297] David, Demographic, 83ff.

point however to the trends and orders of magnitude, including the size of the Jewish population compared to the Moslem one.[298] In the 1525/6 census the Jews were half the number of the Moslem population. In the second census - in 1555/6 - the gap was closing, and in the third census the 1567/8 the number of the Jews in Şafad was equal to that of the Moslems. From this we can infer that the tendency of the Jewish population was in the direction of a massive increase even compared to the Moslem population.

In the middle of the seventies of the 16th century there were changes in the Jewish Settlement in Şafad as a result of economic and social crisis which befell the Ottoman Empire. At that time also the Jewish community in Şafad, which had been sharing considerably in the textile industry and in the marketing of textiles was shattered.

The decline of the Şafad Jewish community was therefore remarkable in the last quarter of that century. One of the signs of that decline was the attitude of the central authorities to the Jews of Şafad at that time. From several Ottoman documents it appears that in 1576 a decree was issued by the Sulṭān Murād III to send to Cyprus 1000 of the rich Jews of Şafad and its vicinity with their families, in order to assist the Governor of the island to stabilize its economy. After less than a year another decree was issued, which was later revoked, about sending another 500 rich Jews.[299] There are *no* clear evidences that these two decrees had been ever materialized.

In fact the decline could already be noticed in the middle sixties when there was a drastic decrease in the size of the Jewish population and accordingly there were increased appeals through emissaries to the Diaspora for financial aid, in order to enable the remaining Jewish Settlement to exist in proper conditions.[300] In an epistle "Ḥazut Qasha," written in 1591 by Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh, one of the dignitaries and Kabbalists of Şafad in the late 16th century, we read about the hard economic situation in the city and about the dwindling of the Jewish community; in this epistle he mentioned among other things:

> "Because from the day they had left till the day we left town, most of the city and most of the community were separated from it. There were such evil happenings, that of the five thousand people who had lived in town only about four hundred people have remained."[301]

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[298] Hacker, Payment, 90-98.

[299] Lewis, Notes, 28-34; Heyd, Tiberias, 128-132; Heyd, Documents, 163-168.

[300] Hacker, Payment, 98-104.

[301] Pachter, M., "'Ḥazut Kasha' of Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh", Shalem, 1, 1974, 184 (Hebrew).

It is reasonable to assume that the data brought here refer to people and not to families.[302] As this letter deals with a period of three years from 1588 to 1591, we can infer from it that the drastic decrease in the size of the Jewish population in Ṣafad occured in the late eighties and the early nineties of the 16th century, when several factors combined to bring about the difficult situation described in that letter, and we will see further that from the mid-seventies till the late eighties there was indeed a decrease of the Jewish population in Ṣafad, although not so fast and drastic.

The Various Congregations

Before the Ottoman conquest the Jewish population in Ṣafad was based mainly on the Musta'riba community. From various sources it appears that Jews expelled from Spain arrived in Ṣafad as early as the late 15th or the early 16th century, and at that time already formed for themselves a congregational framework,[303] and maybe there were also other congregations in the city at that time.[304]

After the conquest the gates of Palestine were opened wide, and many immigrants from all over the Jewish Diaspora came to Ṣafad; from that time on there are increasingly more reports about various congregations in this city, mainly from contemporary Halakha literature and from lists of the Taḫrīr, as it appears from the following table (p. 131).

As opposed to al-Quds and to other places in Palestine, the Jewish community in Ṣafad was split into various congregations, usually according to their country of origin. It seems that the Sefardic community was composed of Jews expelled from Spain, who had arrived from various places all over the Spanish Diaspora after the expulsion: from Turkey, from the Balkan countries, from North Africa, from Egypt and from other places, and this community was already the dominant one in Ṣafad several years after the Ottoman conquest. In 1522 the following synagogues in Ṣafad are mentioned:

"One of the Sefardim and one of the Murisks and one of the Ma'araviyyim."[305]

This sentence may possibly point to the main congregations in Ṣafad at that time, and it is even possible that the order in which they are men-

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[302] Pachter has doubts about it, argues that it regards families and singles together.

[303] Benayahu, Safed, 109-128.

[304] No information has been preserved about them in this regard except that at the end of 1495 there stayed in Ṣafad "The Ga'on Our Teacher Pereṣ Qolombo ... who is the head in that city" (= Ṣafad), who was an Italian Jew of French origin: Ya'ari, Igrot, 151-152.

[305] Ben-Zvi, Bassola, 43.

Table No. 1

The Jewish Congregations in Şafad according to Ottomanic Documents[1]

Year (Muslim/Christian Calendar)	932/1525-6				964/1555-6				ca. 975/1567-8			
	h	b	r	d	h	b	r	d	h	b	r	d
Musta'riba	131				98	10			70			
Frankish (Infanjiye)	48											
Portuguese (Pūrtukāl)	21				143	18			200			
Maghribis (Maghāriba)	33				38	7			52	3		
Cordova (Kurtuba)					35	7			53	2		
Castile (Kastilia)					181	12			200			
Aragon with Catalan (Araghūn ma'a Katalān)					51	3			72			
Hungarian (Macār)					12				15			
Apulia (Pūlya)					21	1			25			
Calabria (Kalāwriya)					24				20			
Seville (Sabiliya)					67	4			160			
Italian (Tāliyān)					29				35			
German (Alāmān)					20	1			43	7		
Total	233				719	63			945	12		

h = households; r = religious;
b = bachelors; d = disabled

[1] Source: Cohen-Lewis, 161.

tioned is indicative of the degree of their prominence, and from this we have the first evidence about the status of the Sefardim in Şafad.[306] Other evidence about the large number of Sefardim over the other congregations is given by Rabbi Moshe Trani (Mabit) in one of his responses in 1574, which refers to 1525:

> "And because the Sefardim who were expelled from Spain are considerably more (in number) than the other languages, they needed two synagogues called 'Qahal Gadol' (Large Congregation) and 'Qehal Beit-Ya'aqov.'"[307]

Mabit continues and says that at the beginning all the Sefardim were united in one congregation, and the people of various cities in Spain had a

[306] This is the order in which these congregations are referred to in one of Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav's verdicts in 1533. It is brought in the Responsa of Ralbaḥ, No. 26, as well as the congregation of the Ma'araviyyim: Cohen-Lewis, 156, 158, 160–161; David, Connections, 78–81.

[307] Responsa of Mabit, Part 3, No. 48. For some reason, the Sefardic community is not mentioned at all in the Taḥrīr lists of 1525/6, and this is one of the points proving the deficiency of the Taḥrīr lists published by Lewis.

joint treasury; but on account of quarrels and controversies later separate frameworks were formed for people of different cities in Spain:

> "And at the beginning they all had one 'wallet' (treasury) for charity and taxes and municipal taxes, because they all speak the same language; and afterwards, because of quarrels, they separated, so that each had one 'wallet' only for the poor of their congregation, and for all other things."[308]

And indeed from the Taḫrīr lists of the years 1555/6 and 1567/8 we learn about four Sefardic congregations:[309] the Cordova Congregation, the Castilia Congregation, the Aragon and Catalonia Congregation and the Sevilya Congregation, the largest of them being the Castilian. In 1555/6 the Sefardic community comprised about 46 percent of the entire Jewish population in town, and in 1567/8 it increased to 51 percent.

The Portuguese community in Şafad was apparently composed of Marranoes of Portugal and their descendants after the mass conversion in 1497. This community increased considerably in Şafad after the mass escape from Portugal upon establishing the State Inquisition there in the early thirties of the 16th century.[310] This process too was reflected in the Taḫrīr lists.[311]

Other congregations of Jews of other countries in Europe are also known in Şafad. In the second half of the 16th century the Italians were divided into three congregations of people from different regions, two of the south, from the Apulia Region and Calabria, and an additional one composed of Jews of Central and North Italy.[312]

The Provençales are mentioned in the Taḫrīr of 1525/6 as a French congregation.[313] Important reports about this congregation have been preserved in several sources of the last quarter of the 16th[314] and of the early 17th century.[315]

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[308] Ibid.

[309] Cohen-Lewis, 158–161.

[310] David, A., "Safed, Foywer De Retour Au Judaïsme De 'Conversos' Au XVI[e] Siècle", Revue des études juives, 146, 1987, 63–83.

[311] Cohen-Lewis, 156, 158, 160–161.

[312] Cohen-Lewis, 158, 160, 161; about "Qahal Italiani" (Italian Congregation) in Şafad in the last quarter of the 16th century: Carpi, Venice, Bibliography list; Assaf, Letters, 131; Rozen, Position, 96–97.

[313] Cohen-Lewis, 156, 161; the community referred to is the Provençale community of Southern France, because the Jews of Central and Northern France had been expelled from their country in 1395, and it is not likely that 130 years later that community framework would be mentioned by their descendants.

[314] David, Cuneo, 429–444.

[315] The Provençale congregation in Şafad is mentioned in a letter sent in 1610 by "The Rabbis and Ge'onim of the Holy Italian Congregation" in Şafad to Rabbi Aharon Brakha

Also the Ashkenazim of Western and Central Europe are mentioned only after the middle of the 16th century within a separate community framework.[316] Additional congregations in this city were: the Hungarian Congregation[317] and the Congregation of Romania, namely the 'Romaniotes' – who had preserved the tradition of the Byzantine communities prior to the Turkish conquest.[318] There are reports about Jews of Kurdistan but they apparently did not have a separate congregation.[319]

The Musta'riba congregation, unlike the others in Ṣafad, had been dwindling considerably for years.[320] It had apparently been gradually absorbed by one of the large communities, most likely the Spanish. The Musta'riba did not easily resign to the loss of their uniqueness and of their customs, and indeed the words of several of the Ṣafad scholars bring to us reverberations of this tension which continued uninterrupted till the late 16th century.[321] On the other hand the Ashkenazim enjoyed an independent status in spite of their small number. Within the entire Jewish community in Ṣafad the Ashkenazim preserved their uniqueness and no one could impose on them customs and conduct against their will; we have already mentioned the same for al-Quds. Undoubtedly various conflicts might have occured also between the other congregations. From the sources it appears that even inter-congregational marriages in Ṣafad were infrequent.[322]

Community Organization

Each congregation in Ṣafad had its own organization, through which the heads of the congregation managed all public and spiritual affairs.[323]

(Brekhia) of Modena: Almaliyaḥ, A., "Treasures of the Past", Mizraḥ u-Ma'arav, 3, 1929, 320 (Hebrew).

[316] Cohen-Lewis, 158, 160–161; Responsa of Mabit, Part 3, No. 96; Responsa 'Beit Yosef', by Rabbi Yosef Caro, "Laws of Yibum and Ḥaliṣa", No. 2; New Responsa of Rabbi Yom-Ṭov Ṣahalon, Part 1, No. 24; Naftali ben Yosef ha-Cohen, Imrei Shefer, Venice, 1701, 16, 2–17 (Hebrew).

[317] Yissakhar ibn Sussan, 'Ibbur Shanim, Constantinople, 1564, Introduction (Hebrew).

[318] Responsa of Rabbi Yom-Ṭov Ṣahalon, No. 259, of 1605.

[319] Responsa of Mabit, Part 1, No. 81–82.

[320] Cohen-Lewis, 156, 158, 160, 161.

[321] Rozen, Position, 90–96; Responsa of Radbaz, No. 1165; Responsa of Rabbi Yosef Caro, 'Dinei Ketubot', No. 2.

[322] Rabbi Yosef Caro himself, as a Sefardi, married the daughter of an Ashkenazic Rabbi: Werblowski, Karo, 93–94.

[323] Regulations of an "Ashkenazic Congregation" in Ṣafad dated 1565, which serve only to prove their existence, without any details and also the text of 'Ten Regulations' of 1576: Responsa of Mabit, Part 3, No. 96.

Under the authority of the heads of the congregation, or, as they were called, 'Memunim' (Officials), were the following spheres of life: issuing various regulations which were actually binding only on their own congregation[324] and also collecting both the congregational and state taxes, such as the tax per capita.[325] It seems that the taxes were assessed by the congregations every three years.[326]

The congregations (perhaps not all of them) had the standard institutions, such as a synagogue, Yeshiva, had.[327] Some congregations and more than one synagogue or Yeshiva, and the most important ones even had their own courts.[328]

The Şafad community had a collective leadership which was based on representatives sent by various congregations.[329] That roof-organization was called 'Kolel.'[330] At this Kolel they usually discussed the matters of common interest, and they were the ones who sent emissaries to the Diaspora. This forum was authorized to fix the rates of the community tax payments, to negotiate with the authorities, etc.

Beside the Kolel there was the Council of Sages, the members of which were the representatives of the congregational courts, and its seat was called 'Beit ha-Wa'ad' (House of the Committee).[331] This council consisted of ten to twenty sages. In this forum there were various combinations of the Supreme Court of Şafad which included also the Dayyanim who had been ordained by Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav as well as by his disciples, and by their own disciples; complicated juridical problems were

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[324] About money collection in the Diaspora on behalf of the congregation: Ya'ari, Emissaries, 233–255; Carpi, Paduan, 24, 46.

[325] Benayahu, Tax, 103–117; Hacker, Payment, 63–117.

[326] Responsa of Rabbai Moshe Alsheikh, No. 56.

[327] From a Turkish document of November 1584, it appears that there were in Şafad 32 synagogues: Heyd, Tiberias, 134–135; Heyd, Documents, 169; according to a Jewish source of 1603 there were in Şafad at that time "21 synagogues": Ya'ari, Igrot, 197; The Sefardic community in Şafad had two synagogues in 1525: Responsa of Mabit, Part 3, No. 48. Later on they had more synagogues.

[328] The Ashkenazic community had its own court: 'Beit Yosef', Responsa of Rabbi Yosef Caro, No. 2, a verdict of 1565 is quoted, which was signed by four Ashkenazic sages.

[329] Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh, No. 96; Responsa of Rabbi Yosef ibn Şayyaḥ: Hacker, Payment, 105.

[330] For this meaning of the word: Kupfer, E., "The Jewish Community of Safed and the Activity of R. Menahem Azariah of Fano on Behalf of the Yishuv in Eretz-Israel", Shalem, 2, 1976, 361–364 (Hebrew).

[331] Responsa of Mabit, Part 2, No. 115; Responsa of Rabbi Yom-Ţov Şahalon, No. 33.

brought to them for decision. The various combinations of the Supreme Court were composed of four Dayyanin and later of five.[332]

The authority and resolutions of the community institutions were binding on all the congregations in Şafad with the exception of the Ashkenazic one which enjoyed absolute independence, like that of al-Quds. As mentioned above, the Ashkenazic community preserved its own uniqueness in every way, a fact which can be learned from one of the regulations which joint to the al-Quds and Şafad communities, and which was renewed in 1623, as follows:

> "As there is a previous agreement (Regulation) signed by the learned Rabbis of Safed ... to the effect that a single person or several persons shall not cause friction within the Holy Community in either Tora matters or treasury affairs, except for the Ashkenazic Congregation, and shall not accuse either the Kolel or the Parnasim in charge of the needs of the city ..."[333]

b. Spiritual Life in Şafad

Since the thirties of the 16th century much spiritual activity took place in Şafad and it had a great impact both in Palestine and abroad. Because of the advantages of Şafad a spiritual center was established in it which attracted scholars from all over the Jewish Diaspora. In the 16th century various theoretical schools of the Halakha and Kabbala were established there.

Tora Studying Center

The study of Tora was greatly enlivened by the arrival of Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav in Şafad in the middle of the twenties of the 16th century, and he remained the dominant spiritual figure there until his death in the early forties of that century.[334] He enjoyed great reputation because of an idea he had in 1538 to renew the Semikha of scholars and to establish in Şafad a Supreme Council like the Sanhedrin, an idea which did not materialize because of the strong opposition of the scholars in al-Quds, headed by Ralbaḥ.[335] However, Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav did ordain four of his most prominent disciples, among whom were Rabbi Yosef Caro and Rabbi Moshe Trani.[336]

Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav headed the Yeshiva in Şafad which was greatly

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[332] Benayahu, Ordination, 253-256.

[333] Published by Luncz, A.M., Yerushalayim, 2, 1887, 147-148 (Hebrew).

[334] Dimitrovsky, Beirav, 43-50.

[335] On the Semikha controversy see above our discussion on the subject of the Jerusalem community.

[336] Benayahu, Ordination, 253-256.

renowned even in distant places. The method of studying at this Yeshiva drew upon traditions and contents which had been customary in Spain just before the expulsion, and in the same manner that he himself had studied in Spain.[337] His followers became famous and great scholars in their own right at that time. The former, Rabbi Yosef Caro, arrived in Şafad in the thirties of the 16th century and lived there until his death in 1575. He was called 'Maran' (Our Teacher), or 'Beit Yosef' (The House of Joseph) after his work 'Beit Yosef,' a comprehensive interpretation of 'Arba'a Ṭurim' (Four Columns) by Rabbi Ya'aqov Ben-Asher. Caro's greatest reputation, however, was due to his great work 'Shulḥan 'Arukh,' which to this day is the supreme and most important Jewish Halakha code (codex of traditional law), and serves as the basis for every verdict in Jewish law. This Codex was completed in 1565.[338]

Rabbi Ya'aqov Beirav's other disciple was Rabbi Moshe Trani, whose greatness in the Tora is proven by hundreds of responses that he has given, as well as by his other works.[339] Another sage of outstanding spiritual status was Radbaz (R. David ibn Avi Zimra) who most likely was the greatest verdict issuer among the expelled from Spain. He lived a few years in Şafad, where he arrived after staying for about ten years in al-Quds.[340]

The influence of these scholars, as well as that of their disciples-followers, on the communities all over the Jewish Diaspora, was great. More than once they were asked to intervene and their opinion was requested in various matters. From various Jewish sources of the second half of the 16th century and the early 17th, we obtain a picture of widespread and extensive spiritual activity,[341] which was also expressed in the existence of 18 and more Yeshivot which belonged to the various congregations.[342]

This reality does not necessarily contradict the known facts about the emigration of Jews from Şafad as early as the seventies of the 16th century, on account of economic and perhaps social crises, which Şafad underwent. It might be explained by the increased external support extended to the Yeshivot as a result of the enhanced prestige of Şafad in the eyes of the

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[337] Dimitrovsky, Beirav, 50-102.

[338] About him: Werblowsky, Karo; Elon, M., Jewish Law, 2, Jerusalem, 1978, 1087-1118 (Hebrew).

[339] No comprehensive study has yet been written about this sage: Dimitrovsky, H.Z., "A Dispute between Rabbi J.Caro and Rabbi M.Trani", Sefunot, 6, 1962, 71-123 (Hebrew).

[340] Radbaz left Jerusalem after 1564: Dimitrovsky, Beirav, 90, 134.

[341] Rabbi Yosef Caro, Responsa 'Avqat Rokhel', No. 1; Sefer ha-Mussar, 116-117; Assaf, letters, 120-133; David, Cuneo, 429.

[342] Sefer ha-Mussar, 116; Ya'ari, Igrot, 197.

Jewish communities in the Diaspora. The entire administration of money-raising in the Diaspora and of despatching of emissaries for this purpose had become efficient and established.[343]

The economic crisis brought more people - who had previously belonged to the production and commerce circles of society - to the Yeshivot in the hope of sharing the economic support extended to them.[344]

Center of Kabbala Studies

Spiritual life in Şafad also touched on another area which has had a great impact on those generations and on the following ones, and that is the sphere of mysticism. In Şafad of the 16th century studying Kabbala was considered very important. Kabbalists from all over the Jewish Diaspora were attracted to this town, and their motivation was mainly messianic. Jews believed that after the terrible catastrophe which befell the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula in the late 15th century, redemption would not be late in coming, and preparations should be made for the arrival of the Messiah, who would first appear in Upper Galilee. The Kabbalists also believed that intensive studying of mysticism would draw exile to its end. In other words, the generation after the expulsion from Spain was full of messianic yearnings and hopes for redemption. And indeed the Kabbalists who arrived in Şafad in the first half of the 16th century were either the expelled or their descendants.[345] The most outstanding among them were Rabbi Shelomo Alkabez,[346] his disciple Rabbi Moshe Cordovero and Rabbi Yosef Caro, who also studied Kabbala intensively.[347]

But the most prominent Kabbalist in Şafad in the 16th century was 'ha-Ari.' Legend attributed to him many deeds, but known facts about his life are scant.[348] 'Ha-Ari' was born in al-Quds in 1534. When he was about eight years old he emigrated with his mother to Egypt, and over there he was one of the pupils of Radbaz and of Rabbi Beşal'el Ashkenazi.[349] In 1570 he immigrated to Şafad, where he gathered around him a group of

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[343] David, Cuneo, 430.

[344] David, Cuneo, 432-433.

[345] Idel, M., "R. Yehudah Ḥallewa and his 'Zafenat Pa'aneaḥ'", Shalem, 4, 1984, 119-148 (Hebrew).

[346] Sack, B., The Mystical Theology of Solomon Alkabez, Ph. D. Thesis, Brandeis University, 1978 (Hebrew).

[347] Ben-Shlomo, J., The Mystical Theology of Moses Cordovero, Jerusalem, 1965 (Hebrew); Werblowsky, Karo.

[348] Benayahu, M., The Toledoth Ha-Ari, Jerusalem, 1967 (Hebrew).

[349] Tamar, D., "The Early Activity of R. Issac Luria (Ha-Ari)", Ettinger, S., et al. (eds.), Yitzhak F. Baer, Memorial Volume, Jerusalem, 1980, 229-240 (Hebrew).

disciples who studied with him mysticism. These disciples were called 'Gurei ha-Ari' (The Lion's Cubs), or 'ha-Ḥaverim' (The Friends). 'Ha-Ari' died two and a half years later, in the Hebrew month of Av (July 15, 1572).

During his brief sojourn in Ṣafad he influenced enormously the Kabbala, its contents and its character, because he paved a new way and brought modern ideas to make possible the understanding of basic terms in the Kabbala. The most important of his disciples, who assembled his Kabbalistic theories, was Rabbi Ḥayim Vital, who summarized his teacher's theories in his own work 'Eṣ-Ḥayim' (Tree of Life). Additional elaborations on the same Lurianic Kabbala were made by other disciples and by their own disciples, who have distributed it throughout the communities abroad, in both east and west. This was a drastic turning point in the currents of Jewish thought and it had a far-reaching influence on the spiritual processes and changes in later years.[350]

One of the signs of spiritual intensification in Ṣafad was the founding of a Hebrew printing press in 1577, when the Jewish community was already in a state of decline. This printing press existed only ten years, and during this period only six Hebrew books were printed in it.

List of Abbreviations*

Assaf, Letters	= Assaf, S., "Letters from Safad", Kobez al Jad, 3 (13), 1939, 115-142 (Hebrew).
Assaf, Texts	= Assaf, S., Texts and Studies in Jewish History, Jerusalem, 1946, (Hebrew).
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[350] For a brief survey of Lurianic Kabbala: Scholem, G., Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, Jerusalem, 1941, 240-282, 401-408; Scholem, G., Kabbalah, Jerusalem, 1974, 67-69, 128-144.

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Chapter V. The Jewish Settlement in Palestine in the 17th and 18th Centuries

by
Jacob Barnai

1. Introduction

While the first century of the Ottoman occupation of Palestine – the 16th, and the last century of this rule – the 19th, were marked by the prospering and growing in all fields of life of the Jewish Settlement, the two middle centuries – the 17th and the 18th (particularly the 17th) – were mainly characterized by the reduced status of the population in most areas (the 17th century) and by a somewhat slowed down growth (in the 18th century). Nevertheless, in these two centuries the Jewish population in Palestine underwent several changes – in the fields of settlement, society, economy and culture.

In this summarizing article, an attempt is made to examine some of the outstanding and typical features of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine in the 17th and 18th centuries, particularly the demographic, economic and social aspects.

This period was characterized by the relative scarcity of Jewish historical bibliography which could provide us with information about the everyday life of the Jews in Palestine. The Jewish sources at our disposal give us only little elementary information concerning the number of Jews in the country, their occupations and places of residence and their public organizations. On the other hand our sources include much more information about the social and spiritual life and about the relations between the Jews in Palestine and those in the Diaspora.

2. Demographic Outline

a. The 17th Century

At the beginning of the 17th century the community of Şafad, which had been the largest Jewish community in Palestine in the 16th century, was already reduced. The town lost the firm economic status which it had

enjoyed in the 16th century. In the economy, and mainly in the textile industry, the Jews of Ṣafad had occupied an important place. Many of them had been leaving the town from the end of the 16th century onwards. The economic crisis was accompanied by famine and natural disasters as well as by a pressing tax burden, which caused many to emigrate from the town.[1]

Part of the Jewish inhabitants of Ṣafad, among them some of the scholars, have moved to Jerusalem,[2] and others moved to towns and villages in the Galilee. But many of the Ṣafad Jews emigrated from Palestine, some to the neighbouring countries Syria and Egypt, others to Turkey and the Balkan countries.[3] Out of a community which in the 16th century had numbered thousands of Jews,[4] only a few hundreds remained in Ṣafad at the beginning of the 17th century.[5] This emigration continued also in the 17th century.[6]

In Galilee existed in the 16th century some additional small Jewish communities in towns and villages. In Tiberias, a tiny town, an attempt was made by Dona Gracia Mendes and Don Yosef Nassi in the middle of the 16th century to develop both the town and its Jewish community. This attempt failed.[7] In the middle of the 17th century, when the town was ruined by the economic deterioration of the region and by the wars between local rulers, Tiberias was abandoned by its inhabitants, among them also the Jews.[8] The latter moved to Ṣafad, to al-Ḫalīl and to other places.

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[1] Pachter, M., "'Ḥazut Kasha' of Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh", Shalem, 1, 1974, 157-193 (Hebrew).

[2] Jewish Seminary, No.74.

[3] Rozen, Relationship, 152-159.

[4] The Ottoman documents point to about 7000 Jews in Ṣafad in the middle of the 16th century: Lewis, B., Notes and Documents from the Turkish Archives, Jerusalem, 1952, 5-7; Jewish documents point at a much greater number, and one of them mentions 14000 Jews: Ya'ari, Massa'ot, 200.

[5] For example: a letter from Ṣafad dated 1603 says that in Ṣafad only 1200 Jews had remained and that the number had been gradually decreasing: Assaf, S., "Letters of the Ṣafad Community Leaders in the Years 1604-1605", Kobez Al Jad (new series), 3, (13), 1939, 136-138 (Hebrew).

[6] Rozen, Relationship, 158.

[7] Roth, C., The House of Nasi, The Duke of Naxos, Philadelphia, 1948; Harozen, Y., Don Yosef Nassi, Ramat Gan, 1960 (Hebrew); Braslvsky, J., L'Heqer, Artzenu - 'Avar Us'ridim, Studies in Our Country - Its Past and Remains, Tel Aviv, 1954, 180-215 (Hebrew); Heyd, U., "Turkish Documents on the Rebuilding of Tiberias in the Sixteenth Century", Sefunot, 10, 1966, 193-210 (Hebrew).

[8] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 213; Heyd, U., Palestine during the Ottoman Rule. Lectures of Prof. Uriel Heyd, edited by Dr. M. Ma'oz, Jerusalem, 1969, 18-34 (Hebrew); Barnai, Tiberias, 36-38.

In some of the Galilee villages, where the Musta'riba had lived in the 16th century, Jews went on living also in the 17th century, but the dates of the only evidentiary sources are from the 18th century. These villages were: Kafr-Yāsīf, 'Ain az-Zaitūn, Kafr-'Inān, Kafr-Kannā, Buqai'a, (Peqi'in) and Šafā 'Amr. It is therefore not clear whether Jews lived in these villages and in other small towns in Galilee, such as Acre, in the 17th century. In Ḥaifā only few Jews settled at the beginning of the 17th century.[9]

To summarize, we can point at a gradual decrease of the number of Jews in the Galilee as of the 17th century.

As a result of this process the Jerusalem community developed to some extent in the 17th century. The number of the Jews in Jerusalem at the end of the 16th century was, according to Ottoman lists of taxpayers, about 1000.[10] In the 17th century the various sources which are partly contradictory and not sufficiently reliable point to some increase or constancy in the number of Jews in the city. This, however, varies, and in certain periods of the 17th century many of the Jews left the city and returned to it several years later, or were replaced by other Jews who came to live there. The turnover of the population was indeed a cornerstone in the life of the Jewish community in Jerusalem (as well as in the other communities in Palestine). Thus for instance during the rule of Muḫammad ibn Farūḫ – in the 20's of the 17th century – many Jews left Jerusalem and only upon his removal the number of the Jews in the city somewhat increased. To complete the picture we should refer to the Ottoman sources of the end of the 17th century, mentioning about 900 Jews in the city, similar to the situation at the end of the 16th century.[11]

South of Jerusalem there were two small communities in the 17th century. A small community existed during the entire Ottoman period in al-Ḫalīl. The Jews in al-Ḫalīl whose number had never exceeded a few hundred (about 100–400), lived for generations in the same courtyard.[12] We have no clear data as to how many Jews lived there during the entire 17th century, but in one source dated 1642 a Karaite who had visited the town mentioned that he found in it thirty families of poor Jews who were learning Tora.[13] Also in Ġazza there was a small Jewish community in the 17th century. In 1626, for example, about 20 people are supposed to have

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[9] Rozen, M., "The History of Eretz-Israel under the Mameluke and Ottoman Rule (1260–1804)", Cohen, A. (ed.), The History of Eretz-Israel, vol. 7, Jerusalem, 1981, 210–217 (Hebrew).

[10] Cohen, Jewish, 42.

[11] Heyd, Jews, 177.

[12] Ya'ari, Emissaries, 462–463.

[13] Ya'ari, Massa'ot, 248.

escaped from Jerusalem to Ġazza. The community there grew a little during these years because Jews left Jerusalem during ibn Farūḫ's rule.[14] A small community in Ġazza is also mentioned in the 60's of the 17th century. At that time several scholars settled in Ġazza, one of whom was Natan the Prophet, the heralder of the Shabbatean movement, who was later also named after the town: 'Natan of Gaza.'[15]

North of Jerusalem the sources mentioned three small Jewish communities in the 17th century: ar-Ramla, Ludd and Nābulus. In ar-Ramla and Ludd only few Jews lived,[16] but in Nābulus their number exceeded 100 people,[17] amongst whom there were also a few scores of Karaites.[18]

To summarize the 17th–18th century: we saw one central community – Jerusalem – in which there were about 1000 Jews; in the Ṣafad community, whose status had deteriorated since the 16th century, there remained in the 17th century only several hundred Jews. We also found small communities in small towns and in villages in the Galilee as well as in the center of the country.

b. The 18th Century

Jerusalem

At the end of the 17th century, as a result of the outbreak of the messianic-Shabbatean movement, various factors within the Jewish people were aroused; they continued to believe in Shabbetai Zevi's messianism and in his expected reappearance, and they immigrated to Palestine. At the turn of the 18th century the Jewish community in Jerusalem grew mainly as a result of this factor, as several hundred new immigrants had joined the community. This trend in immigration reached its peak in the immigration of a few hundred Shabbateans 'Mequbbalim' and scholars led by Rabbi Yehuda Ḥasid.[19] They had come from Eastern and Central Europe and settled in Jerusalem in October 1700. Shortly afterwards there arrived in Jerusalem additional groups of Jewish immigrants, with a similar back-

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[14] Rozen, Jerusalem, 122.

[15] Scholem, G., Sabbatai Ṣevi, The Mystical Messiah 1626–1676, Princeton, 1973, 199ff.

[16] Rozen, Jerusalem, 101; Benayahu, M., "Letters of Rabbi Sh'muēl Abuhav, Rabbi Moshe (Zaccuto) and their Circle Concerning Eres-Israel", Yerushalayim, (Review) 2/5, 1955, 170 (Hebrew).

[17] Heyd, Jews, in which are mentioned 34 payers of tax per capita to the Ottoman authorities.

[18] Ya'ari, Emissaries, 251.

[19] Benayahu, Brotherhood, 133–182.

ground, from Italy and other places.[20] Within a brief period of time the number of Jews in Jerusalem increased by several hundred people (an increase of about 25%!) and this considerably affected the life of the community demographically, economically and socially. A letter from Jerusalem, dated 1704, says: "There are Thank God over four hundred Ashkenazim among the 'Israelites.'"[21]

While in the 16th century many of the Palestinian Jews made their living from their work, and were integrated in the economy of the country,[22] as a result of the deterioration of economic conditions in Palestine at the end of the 16th century, and a result of the age composition of the Jewish population changes have occurred in the life patterns of the Palestinian Jews. Gradually most of them started to live on financial contributions given by the Jews of the Diaspora, and on public and private donations. This was true also of those large groups of immigrants that settled in Jerusalem in the first years of the 18th century. The latter, with the aid of Jewish philantropists in Europe, had founded funds prior to their immigration, the returns of which were to provide them, their households and the organizations they would establish in Jerusalem with their livelihood. Especially large funds had been founded in Vienna, the capital of the Austrian Empire. Unfortunately, however, the planned finances have not reached the many immigrants who had settled in Jerusalem. This was mainly due to the economic merchantilistic system which had been introduced in the Austrian Empire in those generations and which prohibited the transfer of a large amount of money to an enemy country (the Ottoman Empire).[23]

As a result thereof the immigrants and the community of Jerusalem were forced to borrow money from local Arab moneylenders against high interest. The Ashkenazic Jews thus became entangled in heavy unrepaid debts. This pushed the dominant Sefardic communitiy, which was consid-

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[20] Barnai, Jews, 31-32.

[21] Rivkind, Y., "A Collection of Manuscripts about the History of the Jews in Palestine", Reshumot, 4, 1926, 319 (Hebrew); the number of immigrants in the group of Rabbi Yehuda Ḥasid is controversial: the larger number of about 1000 immigrants is undoubtedly exaggerated. Other evidence points to about 150-400 immigrants, which seems much more realistic: Dinur, B.Z., Historical Writings, vol. 1, Jerusalem, 1955, 26 (Hebrew); Benayahu, Brotherhood, 156; Benayahu, Community, 128-129; Shoḥat, A., "Three Eighteenth Century Letters on Eretz-Israel", Shalem, 1, 1974, 237 (Hebrew); Rozen, Jerusalem, 122.

[22] Avitsur, Safed, 153-236.

[23] Barnai, Jews, 132, 164-169; Brilling, B., "The Embargo on the Collection of Palestine Moneys in Austria in 1723", Zion, 12, 1947/48, 89-96 (Hebrew, the documents are in German); Brilling, B., "Die Tätigkeit der jerusalemer Sendboten Petachja Ben Jehuda Wahl Katzenellenbogen in Westeuropa (1735-1750)", Roth, E., Bloch, F. (eds.), Festschrift I.E. Lichtigfeld, Frankfurt/M., 1964, 20-49.

ered responsible for the fate of the debts, also into the debt crisis. Heavy pressure was exerted by the creditors and by the authorities on the Jewish community to repay the debts, and hundreds of people started to emigrate from Jerusalem abroad (part of them to Ṣafad), in the first two decades of the 18th century. In addition, the first years of the 18th century were years of remarkable peace in Jerusalem, because the local Pasha had rebelled against the Ottoman government and his heavy burden was felt by the entire population.[24]

In those years feverish efforts were made in Europe and in Turkey to transfer the finances which had been collected to the Jews in Jerusalem, so that they could repay their debts. These efforts failed and in 1720 the Arab creditors broke into the Ashkenazic synagogue in Jerusalem and burned it. It should be pointed out that a similar fate befell at the same time also the Armenian Monastery in Jerusalem, which had also incurred large debts.

As a result of that event, the leaders of the Jewish community of Jerusalem were arrested and many other Jews continued to leave the city. A letter which was sent from Jerusalem to the Diaspora Jews in 1719 described appropriately the difficult condition of the community and the abandoning of the city:

> "Because Jerusalem ... like a burned ship ... The traitors commit treason and the marauders rob and the oppressor will be cursed, and they didn't spare nurslings and infants ... And furthermore, the Pasha - the adversary ruling the country - descends upon us in anger and wrath to plunder ... Because the troubles have doubled and all the inhabitants of the country have perished and are finished because the money is ended ... I fear that if the evil men continue in their evil ways ... Jerusalem will be empty of Jews and our language has no words for this lamentation ..."[25]

This then was the fate of the Jerusalem communitiy between the years 1700 and 1720. In the other communities in Palestine hardly any changes occurred in the same period. Tiberias was still ruined and no Jews were living in it, except few perhaps.[26] In each of the towns of Ṣafad and al-Ḫalīl a few hundred Jews lived. Nor have any changes occurred in the small towns and in the villages mentioned above.

The crisis which befell the largest of the Palestinian communities - Jerusalem - was therefore disastrous. The Constantinople community increased its efforts to save the Jerusalem community. In 1726 these

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[24] Rozen, M., "The Nakib el Ashraf Mutiny in Jerusalem (1702-1706) and its Impact on the Dhimmis", Cathedra, 22, 1982, 75-90 (Hebrew).

[25] Barnai, Jews, 168.

[26] Ish-Shalom, Christian Travels in the Holy Land, Tel-Aviv, 1965, 393 (Hebrew).

efforts bore fruit. That year a special committee was established in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, with the purpose of saving and rehabilitating the Jerusalem community. The name of the committee was: "The Committee of the Jerusalem Officials in Constantinople", (hence: 'Constantinople Officials') and it was very active in supporting and leading the Jewish population in Palestine for the entire 18th century.[27]

Immediately upon its being established, the new committee succeeded in obtaining from the central Ottoman government in Constantinople a partial consolidation of the debts of the Sefardic community in Jerusalem. The agreement said that the interest on the debt, which amounted to 60 000 Piasters, would be waived, and the capital would be repaid in installments for ten years.[28] Attempts were also made to solve the problem of the debts of the Ashkenazic Jews, which had been the cause of the disaster, but these efforts failed. As a result, most of the Ashkenazic Jews left Jerusalem, and during the entire 18th century they were afraid to settle in the city openly and to establish in it a regular community and a synagogue of their own. Only few Ashkenazic Jews, usually less than a hundred, lived in Jerusalem later in the 18th century, and those attempted as far as possible to conceal their residences in the city for fear of the creditors or of their descendants.[29]

The 'Constantinople Officials' have organized emergency collections all over the Jewish Diaspora, and arranged for closer supervision over the transfers of money to the Palestinian Jews through representatives of the committee to the communities in Palestine and abroad.

As a result of all this, occurred a significant change in the demographic process of the Jerusalem as well as other communities in Palestine. Instead of leaving the city and depleting it of Jews, the community started, in the 30's of the 18th century, to grow again. The bibliography indicates a considerable increase in the number of Jews in Jerusalem in those years, and in the 40's various sources state that about 3000 Jews lived in the city. This number was thrice that of the 17th century and much greater than that of 1720, when only few hundred remained in the city. This number - 3000 - remained constant till the end of the 18th century, excluding the last decade of the century, when there was again a considerable decrease in the number of Jews in the city as a result of economic and political difficulties.

We would like to illustrate the increase in the number of Jews in Jerusa-

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[27] Barnai, Jes, 95-160.

[28] Benayahu, Community, 158; Shohat, Jews, 16; Book of Regulations, A/25.

[29] Barnai, Community, 193-230.

lem at that period by means of several sources. A letter of the 'Constantinople Officials' dated 1744 said:

> "Because never have a hundred landlords gathered there at the same time while today there are six or seven hundred landlords. Because it is known and famous today that the landlords in Jerusalem have multiplied tenfold from that ancient time."[30]

And a private letter dated 1748 sent by a Jew of al-Ḫalīl who had visited Jerusalem, said: "Because the city is large and in it there are about a thousand landlords."[31]

And in the same year (1748) the 'Constantinople Officials' wrote of "mortal danger to the three thousand people who live in Jerusalem today."[32]

Even if these figures are not entirely accurate, they point clearly to the trend of growth in Jerusalem at that time.

Most of the Jewish immigrants who arrived in Jerusalem in the 18th century were Sefardic Jews from Turkey and the Balkan countries, namely from the Ottoman Empire, who were aware of the economic changes and of the stability of leadership of the Jerusalem community owing to the dedicated work of the 'Constantinople Officials.' There were, however, also immigrants from North Africa and Italy and a few from other European countries.

As a result of the astonishing increase in the number of Jews in Jerusalem, the 'Constantinople Officials' were compelled to enact regulations which made immigration possible only to those who had the financial means to live on in Palestine, namely those who have deposited in the hands of the 'Constantinople Officials' capital on the fruits of which they could live in Jerusalem. They also took several organizational steps to limit to some extent the number of immigrants, fearing an explosing of the Jewish population in Jerusalem and an additional crisis which would follow the increased number of Jews.[33] Difficult residential conditions were created in the middle of the 18th century following the increased number of Jews.[34] The constancy of this number was maintained not a little by the limiting regulations mentioned above as well as by the epidemics which have broken out in the city very often and by the pressure of local rulers who wanted to collect heavy taxes because of the increased number of the Jewish population in the city.

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[30] Jewish Seminary, No.0515 (= Microfilm, Ben-Zvi Institute, Jerusalem, No. 1857), 61 (Hebrew and Ladino).

[31] Barnai, Letters, 38.

[32] Jewish Seminary, No.65.

[33] Barnai, Regulations, 305-308.

[34] Barnai, Regulations, A/39.

Thus, for instance, in the epidemic which broke out in the city in 1747, more than two hundred Jews die in the span of about two months (about 7% of the Jews in the city!).[35] In 1764, for example, several hundred Jews escaped from Jerusalem because of the tyranny of the local Pasha.[36]

The number of Jews in Jerusalem remained constant for most of the 18th century, notwithstanding these troublesome problems, because of the unceasing immigration to it of Jews who replaced those who had died in the epidemics or had left it for various reasons. But this trend of stability in the number of Jews in Jerusalem changed at the end of the 18th century.

The Russian-Turkish War (1768–1774) on one hand, and the war of Abu-Ḍahab against Ḍāhir al-'Umar in Palestine (in the 70's) on the other hand, were among the main factors causing the negative change in Jerusalem in those years. There was a drastic decrease in the donations from Constantinople as well as in the number of immigrants from the Ottoman Empire to Jerusalem. The conquering of Palestine for a short time by Napoleon (1799) also contributed to this trend. The number of Jews in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 19th century is estimated at about 2000.[37]

The 'Constantinople Officials', which has succeeded in its acitivity for the Jews of Jerusalem, established within a short time – in the 30's and 40's of the 18th century – similar committees to deal with the other three 'Holy Cities': al-Ḫalīl, Ṣafad and Tiberias.[38]

Galilee

In the middle of the 18th century a significant change occurred in northern Palestine, which in turn brought about important changes in the demographic distribution of the Jewish population. The core of the change was the renewal in 1740 of the Jewish Settlement in Galilee, which triggered an accelerated Jewish settling in Galilee in the second half of the 18th century.

We stressed above the fact that the depletion of the Jewish population from the Galilee in the 17th century was related to a broader process of economic deterioration and ruin of towns in Galilee during that period. This process was the outcome of the rising of local leaders in the Ottomanic provinces, and the weakness of the central government. In the 18th century the same factor of rulership continued to exist to even a greater extent, but now they acted conversely in the Galilee. The local rulers

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[35] Barnai, Letters, 38.

[36] Benayahu, M. (ed.), Sefer ha-H.Y.D.A., Jerusalem, 1959, 304 (Hebrew).

[37] Ya'ari, Emissaries, 535–568.

[38] Barnai, Jews, 137.

developed the area which they had conquered instead of destroying it as their predecessors had done in the 17th century.

The most outstanding example in this respect was Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar. He had started as the leaser of the Ottoman taxes in several villages in the Galilee at the beginning of the 18th century. Later he became an almost entirely autonomous ruler (except for paying taxes to the central government for several decades) in the center and north of Palestine. In 1775, when he was old, he was killed in battle near ʿAkkā.[39]

In the times of Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar the towns and villages in the north of the country, along the shore and in the center, were built and restored. Security on the roads increased, and local and foreign trade developed. The Jews also took part in this process and it was reflected in the growing and expanding of the Jewish population in Galilee in the 18th century.

In the 30's Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar rebuilt Tiberias and turned it into his capital, his residence, and the center of his activity. As usual, Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar wanted to populate the new-old town, and he repopulated it with as many and as loyal people as possible. For this purpose he appealed also to the Jews within his territories, namely those of Ṣafad to settle in Tiberias. And indeed, a few of the Jews of Ṣafad, part of whom were descendants of the Jews of Tiberias in the 17th century, returned to the town following this appeal.

But the climax of the Jewish settling in Tiberias was the immigration of Rabbi Ḥayim Abūlʿafiya of Smyrna in 1740; accompanied by several scores of family members and disciples, Rabbi Ḥayim came and renewed the Jewish Settlement in the restored town of Tiberias.[40]

Following this immigration came additional Jewish immigration waves to the Galilee in the second half of the 18th century. Part of them settled in Tiberias and others went to Ṣafad, to ʿAkkā and to some of the villages in the Galilee, such as Kafr-Yāsīf. The Jewish Settlement in Galilee developed and expanded during that period by immigrants, most of whom had come from Eastern Europe and others from North Africa, Turkey and the Balkan.

We will now examine the nature of these immigrations to the Galilee in the second half of the 18th century, from several aspects: the relations formed between the powerful ruler of the Galilee and the Jewish Rabbi in

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[39] Heyd, Ḍāhir; Cohen, Palestine.

[40] The most important source describing this immigration, which includes also important historical material about Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar and his activities, is the book Zimrat-ha-ʾAreṣ by Rabbi Yaʿaqov Beirav, Mantova, 1745 (Hebrew). Rabbi Yaʿaqov Beirav was among the immigrants to Tiberias in 1740.

Turkey explain the realistic and political aspect of the immigration. However, the event contained also a Jewish ideological side. The year 1739-1740 was, according to the Jewish calendar, the beginning of a century - 5500 after the Creation of the World, according to the Jewish tradition. Usually at the beginning of such centuries the calculations of the Latter-Day and the expectations for redemption are increased. There is evidence that the immigration of Rabbi Ḥayim Abūl'afiya to Tiberias was also connected with messianic expectations. In the 30's of the 18th century Mequbbalim and the surviving Shabbateans immigrated to Palestine hoping that redemption would occur in the year 5500 (1740).

There was an additional aspect to this immigration: Abūl'afiya himself had been born in Palestine, in al-Ḫalīl, into a family whose forebears had arrived in Palestine after the expulsion from Spain (1492) and had settled in Ṣafad and in Tiberias. When Tiberias was destroyed in the 17th century, the family was forced to leave the town, whereupon it settled in al-Ḫalīl. This explains Rabbi Ḥayim and his associates' strong bond to the town. Generally it should be mentioned that he had a strong bond to Palestine, as he had already lived in all three holy cities except Tiberias: he had been born in al-Ḫalīl, grew up in Jerusalem and became a Rabbi in Ṣafad.[41] Afterwards he left in 1720 to go abroad, a phenomenon characteristic to many of the Palestinian Jews in those years of crisis. He was appointed Rabbi of Smyrna and in his old age, when he was eighty years old, he wanted to return to Palestine. In this too he set an example to many rabbis who had to leave the country when they had been young on account of conditions at the time and place, and strongly yearned to return in order to die and be buried in the Holy Land, which a few of them actually did at that period.

In the 40's, the 50's and the 60's, groups of Jewish immigrants arrived from Eastern Europe and settled in Galilee. Each group consisted of several scores of people. One group, for example, came from the town of Satanow in Poland in the 50's and settled in Ṣafad.[42] The most famous group in those years was that of about 30 immigrants from Eastern Europe, amongst whom there were a few friends of the 'Ba'al-ShemṬov' (Rabbi Yisra'el Ba'al-Shem-Ṭov), the founder of the Ḥasidic movement, who immigrated and settled in Ṣafad and in Tiberias in 1764.[43]

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[41] According to his letter: Klar, B., Rabbi Ḥayim ibn 'Aṭṭār, Jerusalem, 1951, 66 (Hebrew).

[42] Scholem, G., "Two Letters from Palestine 1760-1764", Tarbiz, 25, 1956, 429-440 (Hebrew).

[43] Halpern, Immigration, 13-16; Barnai, Letters, 24, 52-56; Barnai, Community; a lively

Also in ʿAkkā and in Galilee villages, the Jewish population gradually expanded in the days of Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar. An Italian Jew, who immigrated to the country in 1741 with a group of several scores headed by Rabbi Ḥayim ben-ʿAṭṭar of Morocco, described this expansion in a letter sent from ʿAkkā in the year of his arrival, writing as follows:

> "And it is a very old town, and a very big one, and there are in it more than one hundred Jewish landlords and most (residents) of the town are Greek and the rest are Turks and there is in it a large synagogue ..."[44]

In the 40's Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar transferred his residence and his capital from Tiberias to ʿAkkā and developed the latter, which attracted also Jews to it.[45]

About Kafr-Yāsīf the same Italian Jew mentioned above has written:

> "And we found there something like ten landlords and they live well and in great freedom and their work is sowing and harvesting ... and they suffer of no exile, just as we used to be in ancient times in great liberty and peace ... and living is cheap ..."[46]

This trend of growth of the Jewish population in Galilee continued also when Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar left the arena (1775). In his place the Ottomans nominated Jazzār Aḥmed Pasha.[47] Jazzār, renowned for his hardness and tyranny, continued to develop the Galilee. Although the had not been born in Palestine and had been nominated by the central Ottoman government to counterbalance Ḍāhir al-ʿUmar – the independent local ruler – he showed much independence during his rule (1775–1804).

In his days additional groups of Jews from Eastern Europe and North Africa immigrated to the Galilee. The largest and most famous of all groups was that of the Ḥasidim who arrived and settled in Galilee in 1777. A few hundred Ḥasidim settled in Ṣafad and Tiberias and even received aid from Jazzār in the first years of their settling in the country.[48] This trend became even more marked at the beginning of the 19th century.

To conclude the subject of Galilee demography we should mention some inner changes in the spread of its population during the period under discussion, and which concerned mainly the town of Ṣafad. Twice in the second half of the 18th century Ṣafad was abandoned by most of its Jews, and was repopulated by them. The first time was in 1759. In that

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description of this immigration can be found in the book of one of the immigrants: Rabbi Yehoshuʿa Ben-Simḥa of Zaloszhtsy, Drishat Zion, Grodno, 1790 (Hebrew).

[44] Yaʿari, Letters, 255–266.

[45] Heyd, Ḍāhir, 27–29; Cohen, Palestine, 128–136.

[46] Yaʿari, Letters, 256.

[47] Cohen, Palestine, 19–29.

[48] Halpern, Immigration, 20–37; Barnai, Community, 24–29.

year a strong earthquake destroyed large parts of the town, thousands of its inhabitants were killed, and among them were about 150 Jews.[49] The community broke apart completely and its people dispersed, some to Tiberias and some to the villages in the vicinity. Only about two years later the 'Constantinople Officials' rehabilitated the community and thanks to them it was possible to settle in Ṣafad Jews from various parts of the Diaspora. The second time was in the 60's, immediately after the town and the community had been restored. In 1763, the son of Ḍāhir al-'Umar who ruled in Ṣafad, rebelled against his father, the Shaykh, and many Jews fled from Ṣafad to the neighbouring villages to await the end of the battles.[50]

To summarize: towards the end of the 18th century the number of Jews in Galilee was gradually increasing. In Tiberias there were almost 1000 Jews, in Ṣafad over 500 and another few hundred in the villages of Buqai'a, Kafr Yāsīf, and in 'Akkā.

The entire demographic chapter can be summed up by several main landmarks:

- In the 17th–18th centuries there was a marked rulership instability in Palestine. Local rulers in each location were important factors in the demographic changes which occurred in the Jewish population during these two centuries, for better or for worse.
- The growing of the Jewish population was evidently affected by these rulership changes. Thus, for instance, in the 17th century Galilee was abandoned by its inhabitants and Jerusalem somewhat developed. But in Jerusalem too there was instability during that century. In the 18th century there was a marked development of Galilee as a result of the taking over by stronger rulers.
- The expansion of the Jewish population in Palestine in the 18th century can be understood also on the basis of internal Jewish factors. The 'Constantinople Officials' were the central factor in this area, mainly in Jerusalem. Even ideological factors, such as messianic expectations and the traditional wish to pray, to learn Tora, to die and be buried in the Holy Land could not be materialized without the economic assistance of the 'Constantinople Officials.'
- In spite of the immigration influx and the continuous pilgrimage of Jews to Palestine, the population did not grow in the same proportion during the period under discussion. There were various causes: there was considerable mortality due to epidemics and the country suffered

[49] Ya'ari, Letters, 288–306; Ṣafad is famous for the earthquakes which befell it from time to time, of which the most famous in modern times is that of 1837.

[50] Ya'ari, Emissaries, 453–455.

from severe natural disasters. There was also unceasing emigration of Jews from the country simultaneously with the immigration to it, caused by the difficult objective conditions which many immigrants and inhabitants could not endure.

- Last but not least, attention should be paid to the age composition of the Jewish population. Much evidence points to the fact that many immigrants who came to Palestine in those generations were of old age, and had come without their children. Within a short time many of them died without heirs in Palestine.[51] This explains to some extent the lack of a serious increase in the number of Jews in the country during this period. This also had a bearing on the organizational and economic aspects, because the age composition and the constant turnover of the Jewish population of Palestine did not make possible the organizing of a regular community life and as a result thereof many of the Jews in the country could not work, and lived only on money sent from abroad.

3. Community Structure

At the time of the Ottoman conquest (1516), there lived in Palestine an ancient community of Jews called Musta'riba.[52] These were Jews who had lived in Palestine for many generations, part of them going as far back - traditionally - as the days of the Second Temple. This community constituted in the Mameluke Period the main component of the Jewish population. Side by side with the Arabicized Jews we find during the Ottoman occupation groups of Sefardic Jews in Şafad and Jerusalem. The Sefardic Jews started to immigrate to Palestine partly before the Spanish expulsion (1492) in the course of the 15th century, and mainly after the expulsion.[53] There were also at this time in Palestine Ashkenazic, Italian and some

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[51] This appears clearly from the many "Estate Regulations" which the Jewish community in Jerusalem issued during the Ottoman Period. In accordance with the Ottoman law (originating in a Moslem Mameluke law), the authorities, namely the State Treasury, inherited the estates of deceased who had left no heirs in the city where they had lived. Then Jews have reached an agreement with the Ottoman authorities which entitled them - against a prefixed amount - to collect those estates. It seems that those heirless estates were a very important source of revenue for the Jewish community, which indicates a large number of old people among the Jews in Palestine: Rivlin, A., "Estate Regulations in Jerusalem", Azkara, 5, Jerusalem, 1937, 559-619 (Hebrew); Barnai, Regulations, 292-298, 313-316.

[52] Rozen, Position, 73-101; Ben-Zvi, Studies, 15-20.

[53] Dinur, B.Z., "The Emigration from Spain to Eretz-Israel after the Disorders of 1391", Zion, 32, 1967, 161-174 (Hebrew); Hacker, J., "The Connections of Spanish Jewry with Eretz-Israel between 1391 and 1492", Shalem, 1, 1974, 105-156 (Hebrew).

North-African Jews. Gradually the Sefardic Jews became the majority of the Jewish population in the 16th century.[54]

In the 17th century we find in Palestine a process which was happening in most important Jewish communities all over the Ottoman Empire to which the expelled Jews from Spain had arrived. The expelled Jews from Spain and their descendants became dominant in most communities and the autochthonous element was gradually being absorbed by them. This happened mainly in Turkey and in the Balkan countries, where the local Jews were called 'Romaniotes' (derived from Eastern Rome, namely the Byzantine Empire).[55] Out of Syria, Palestine and Egypt - where there had been an Arabicized population - Palestine was the only one where the process occurred, whereby the old population was absorbed by the Spanish Jews, because only a relatively small number of expelled Jews from Spain went to live in Egypt and Syria, while a relatively large number went to Palestine.[56]

In the towns of Palestine the Musta'riba have therefore been absorbed by the Spanish Jews in the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, and in the 18th century they were almost extinct in the towns. In the villages of the Galilee, on the other hand, scores of Musta'riba families continued to live also in the 17th and the 18th centuries, preserving their uniqueness and their traditional life pattern, as well as their ancient names.[57]

The Sefardic Jews were, as said, the major part of the Jewish population in the 17th and 18th centuries. They were only in part the descendants of those expelled from Spain, who had arrived in Palestine in the 15th and 16th centuries; because, following the great changes in the country at the end of the 16th century, many of the Palestinian Jews left the country and were replaced in the 17th and 18th centuries by other Sefardic Jews from Turkey and the Balkan countries. Many of these immigrants did not endure long the conditions of the country at that time and left, while many others died in Palestine without leaving heirs. It can therefore be argued that there was no family continuity in the Jewish population in Palestine in the 16th

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[54] Reiner, E., "The Mamluk and Ottman Regimes", Cohen, A. (ed.), The History of Eretz-Israel, 7, Jerusalem, 1981, 75-90 (Hebrew).

[55] Hacker, J., The Jewish Community of Salonika in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, Ph.D. Thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1979 (Hebrew); Barnai, J., "The Jews in the Ottoman Empire", Ettinger, S. (ed.), History of the Jews in the Islamic Countries. Modern Times - until the Middle of the Nineteenth Century, Jerusalem, 1981, 77-81 (Hebrew).

[56] Lietman, M., Egyptian Jewry in the 16th and 17th Centuries, Ph.D. Thesis, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, 1978 (Hebrew); Cohen-Tawil, A., "The Expelled from Spain in the Aram-Şova (Aleppo) Community in the Sixteenth Century", Ben-'Ami, I. (ed.), The Sepharadi and Oriental Jewish Heritage, Jerusalem, 1982, 97-108 (Hebrew).

[57] Ben-Zvi, Studies, 15-20.

and 17th centuries. This matter has been investigated by us in part by perusing the family names of the Palestinian Jews in the said period but it still needs additional investigation. Yet, from preliminary deductions it appears that many more families have remained in Palestine since the second half of the 18th century, and we find them in the country in the 19th century and 20th century. It is different regarding the Sefardic families which had lived in the country in previous generations, most of which had left the country and are not to be found here at a later period.[58]

The leadership of the Jewish population was entrusted to the leaders of the Sefardic communities in the four 'Holy Cities' (Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias), as these leaders represented most of the Jewish population (the Sefardic Jews were the majority at that time), and because they were Ottoman citizens, and so were the official representatives of the Palestinian Jews to the authorities.[59]

Side by side with the dominant Sefardic communities, we find in Palestine in the 17th and 18th centuries also small communities of Ashkenazic Jews. They were about 5%–10% of the Jewish population. They usually had their own synagogue and Rabbis and they used to send their own Rabbinical emissaries to the Diaspora to collect donations from the Jews over there.[60]

In Jerusalem, at the end of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th century, the number of the Ashkenazic Jews increased for a while, but as described above the community was completely eliminated in 1720 and only several scores remained of it in the 18th century.

In Jerusalem and Nābulus there were in the 17th and 18th centuries, although not continuously, also small communities of Karaites, who consisted of a few scores each. They had their own synagogue in Jerusalem, which still exists. Most of them immigrated to Palestine from Turkey and Syria and were supported by their Karaite brothers in Turkey and in the Crimea.[61]

The relations between the various communities, mainly between the Sefardic and Ashkenazic Jews, were mostly strained. The quarrels have usually broken out because of the distribution of donation money from abroad, and because of the heavy burden of debts and taxes which troubled the Jews in Palestine at that time.[62]

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[58] From my written study which has not yet been published.

[59] Barnai, Jews, 170–219.

[60] Barnai, Jews, 222–226.

[61] Barnai, Jews, 226–229.

[62] Rozen, Relationship, 73–101; Barnai, Jews, 226–229.

4. Public Institutions and Quarters

With the gradual abandoning of Şafad and the remaining in it of a very small community in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Jewish quarters, which had contained thousands of Jews in the 16th century, have of course shrunk. Also the many synagogues and Yeshivot which still existed in town, although physically extant even in the 17th century, were very neglected. Two letters sent from Şafad, one in 1607 and the other in 1623, bear testimony to the rapid deterioration in this field.

Rabbi Shelomo Shlumil Meinstril arrived in Şafad in 1603 from Moravia and he described the structures upon his arrival in town:

> „And I found a holy community here in Safed ... nearly three hundred great Rabbis ... and eighteen Yeshivot ... and twenty-one synagogues and Beit-Midrash, a large Jewish school ... and in it close on four hundred boys and youths."[63]

Whereas Rabbi Yisha'ya Horowitz, who stayed in Şafad in 1623, already depicts a less optimistic picture of the town:

> "As Jerusalem, although in ruins, is now the joy of the entire land with peace and quiet and good food ... and it is cheaper in Jerusalem than in Safed ... In Safed ... much robbery because they sit in a field which is open on all sides ..."[64]

So here we already have a picture of ruin, and the translation to Jerusalem is marked very sharply in this letter.

Although, as mentioned, the Jewish structures remained physically intact, most of them were abandoned in the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1759, during the strong earthquake which shook Şafad, also most of the Jewish public structures in town were destroyed.

Rabbi Yosef Sofer described the condition of the town in the 60's, after the earthquake. He spoke about there being in it six synagogues and one Beit-Midrash, all of which had been destroyed, and now (at the time of his visit) two synagogues were being restored.[65]

Rabbi Simḥa of Zalozhtsy, who arrived in Şafad in 1764, related similar tales, with more detail. According to him, the earthquake destroyed two hundred courtyards, each including several houses. The synagogues of 'ha-Ari' (Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Luria Ashkenazi) and of Rabbi Yosef Caro had been destroyed by the earthquake and were now being restored. The synagogue of Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Avraham had also been destroyed. The only synagogues which had remained intact were the 'Great Synagogue' and the

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[63] Ya'ari, Letters, 197.

[64] Ya'ari, Letters, 216.

[65] Ya'ari, Letters, 289-301.

synagogue of the Greek Jews. According to Rabbi Simḥa these were the only remaining synagogues in town out of seventeen.[66]

In Tiberias, which had been destroyed as said in the middle of the 17th century, a new Jewish community was established in 1740. According to the Hebrew chronicle 'Zimrat ha-'Areṣ,' Ḍāhir al-'Umar built for the Jews:

> Houses and courtyards ... and he built a pretty and elegant synagogue the likes of which is not to be found in all Palestine, and he built a nice public bath and shops for the market day and a press house for sesame oil ..."[67]

In this construction wave we find also synagogues and Beit-Midrash in some villages and small towns in Galilee and along the shore.[68]

In al-Ḫalīl there was no change in the Jewish residences in the 17th and 18th centuries. They lived in the same quarter - a courtyard in which they had been living for many generations. In al-Ḫalīl several Yeshivot were built in the 17th and 18th centuries.[69]

The Jewish courtyard in al-Ḫalīl was described in a letter written by Rabbi Gershon of Kutow in 1748 to his brother-in-law, the 'Ba'al-Shem-Ṭov':

> "In this Holy City there is mainly one courtyard with Jews. On Sabbaths and Holidays it is closed, with no one either going out or coming in ..."[70]

In Jerusalem several changes occurred in the said period as far as public institutions were concerned, which we will try to describe: Most of the Jews had lived in the Jewish Quarter from the 16th century on. When their number increased, mainly in the 18th century, they left the Jewish Quarter, bought houses and rented apartments also in the quarters adjoining the Jewish one.[71]

In Jerusalem were in the 17th century several Yeshivot, although we have insufficient knowledge about them. In particular the Yeshiva of 'Beit Ya'aqov Wega' was outstanding in the second half of the 17th century. This was a large Yeshiva, which had been built with the money of the Wega family of Italy and scores of scholars studied in it, whose learning was their trade, and another few scores of younger lads as well. As a result of the discontinuation of the flow of money, the Yeshiva was closed down at the end of the 17th century.[72]

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[66] Ya'ari, Massa'ot, 399-402.

[67] Ya'ari, A., Zikhronot Eretz-Israel, vol. 1, Ramat Gan, 1974, 75 (Hebrew).

[68] Ya'ari, Letters, 199, 272-277.

[69] Barnai, Jews, 250-251.

[70] Barnai, Letters, 39.

[71] Cohen, Jewish, 22, 24, 54-55, etc.; Book of Regulations, from 39 onwards.

[72] Havlin, S.Z., "Jerusalem Yeshivot and Sages in the Late 17th Century", Shalem, 2, 1976, 113-192 (Hebrew).

There were also in the 17th century two Sefardic synagogues in Jerusalem (which might most likely have been built at that time): 'The Great Synagogue,' which later would be called the 'Synagogue of Rabbi Yoḥanan Ben-Zakkai,' and the adjacent 'Talmud Tora Congregation,' which was also called 'The Prophet Eliyahu Synagogue.'[73] Besides these two Sefardic synagogues there was also an Ashkenazic one in the 17th century. In 1692 it was destroyed or crumbled down, and the Ottoman government permitted to restore it. In 1700 it was rebuilt and restored, but, as mentioned above, it was burned down in 1720 by the Moslem creditors.[74]

In the 18th century, as the Jewish population in Jerusalem greatly expanded, the number of public institutions increased too. Together with the two Sefardic synagogues, two additional synagogues were erected. One was called 'Qehal 'Azara' (Assistance Congregation), or 'The Middle Synagogue,' and the fourth was called 'The Istanbuli Synagogue.' They were erected in the second half of the 18th century, adjacent to the two old synagogues. Together they formed a connected complex of four synagogues (which were reconstructed after 1967) from each of which it was possible to pass to any other.[75]

Moshe Ḥayim Kapsuto, a Jewish Italian traveller who visited Jerusalem in 1734, described well the habitats of the Jews as well as the age and the economic structure of the population in that year:

> "The Jews do not have a Ghetto and they can live wherever they desire. Their number is about 2000 people; the women are relatively many and are mostly widows who have come to Jerusalem from all parts of the globe to spend in it the rest of their days in piety, all their needs being taken care of by their families [in the Diaspora]. Also many men live in it a Ḥasidic life, and it can be said that apart from very few, the large majority [of the Jews living in Jerusalem] are foreigners, and it must be said that since most of them have their subsistence from their families [abroad], they do not have many shops or much trade, but there is a number of shops [belonging to Jews] of edibles, of fabric and Indian cloth, of tobacco, of second-hand clothes, of goldsmiths and also wine merchants and some ale distillers; and some work as ass- and mule-drivers."[76]

During this period of expansion in the 18th century also many Yeshivot were built to replace the few which had existed in the 17th century. We know by name 12 Yeshivot of the middle of the 18th century, and later several more were built. Those Yeshivot occupied one room each, and in each ten to twenty scholars used to study, all of them living on money

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[73] Cassuto, Italian, 51; Rozen, Jewish, 186–196.

[74] Rozen, Jewish, 182–190; Banayahu, Community, 130.

[75] Cassuto, Italian, 51.

[76] Cassuto, Italian, 45.

which was coming in regularly from the Jews of the Diaspora, with the assistance of the 'Constantinople Officials.'[77]

5. The Economic Life

Like the other fields with which we dealt above, there is a considerable difference also in the nature of the economic life of the Palestinian Jews in the 17th and 18th centuries as compared with the 16th century. In the 16th century most Jews in Palestine made their living on many and varied productive works and on trade in all branches and only a small part of them, the scholars, lived on donations. In the 17th and 18th centuries the trend was in the opposite direction: only a minority lived on any work whatever whereas the majority lived on Ḥaluqa (donations from abroad distributed among the people).

The textile industry in Ṣafad which had prospered in the 16th century was practically liquidated in the 17th century and no other trade replaced it as a source of living for the Galilee Jews.[78] The Jews of Jerusalem, who found their livelihood in various occupations, and who were well integrated in the economic life of the city, as revealed by a modern research based on the archive of the Shari'a Religious Court of the city, also suffered from a similar fate.[79] Most of them lived on Ḥaluqa in the 17th and 18th centuries.

There were two main causes to this entire process: the first were the changes in Palestine in the 17th and 18th centuries. Whereas in the 16th century the country was built by the Ottoman government (especially at the time of the Sulṭān Suleiman the Magnificent, (1520–1566), in the 17th century the local rulers destroyed it. In the 18th century the lack of economic development in Jerusalem continued as a result of the deterioration of the local authorities. On the other hand in Galilee occurred changes also in the economic field and Jews participated in the economy, though on a small scale.

The second factor, although related to the first, had its own dynamics. The Jews in the Diaspora, who took upon themselves a great deal of responsibility as far as caring for the Jews in Palestine was concerned, came to the assistance of the latter when they found it difficult to make

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[77] The list of the Yeshivot and the names of the sages as well as the amounts they received in 1758 have been preserved fully and have been published in the book: 'Ha-Ma'alot li-Shelomo', by Rabbi Shelomo Ḥazan, No-Amon (Alexandria), 1899, B/102–B/103 (Hebrew); Barnai, Jews, 230–252.

[78] Avitsur, Safed, 41–70.

[79] Cohen, Jewish, 153–236.

their living from the end of the 16th century onwards. In the course of the 17th and 18th centuries the entire support system was developed, and money transfers from Jews abroad to the Jews in Palestine took on the character of a self-supporting economic system. That was probably the reason why, in the second half of the 18th century, when Galilee was developing, only a few Jews participated in its economy while most of them continued to live on the Ḥaluqa. Furthermore, at the end of the 18th century, when the Ḥasidim of Eastern Europe immigrated and settled in Galilee, they greatly improved the technique of the Ḥaluqa and in the 19th century – when it became possible again to work for a living – it was very difficult to get rid of the Ḥaluqa system.

Of course one should not ignore the fact that many of the Palestinian Jews in the 17th and 18th centuries were, as we stressed above, old men and women who were not capable of doing any work whatever. Also the Ashkenazic Jews who have immigrated to the country had difficulties in finding work, because they did not know the language of the local inhabitants – Arabic or Turkish – and not even the language of the Sefardic Jews (Ladino, or Jewish-Spanish).

Rabbi Gedalya of Siemiatycze, a Jew who immigrated to Jerusalem in 1700 from Eastern Europe, wrote about it:

> "And all this on account of lack of money, because there are no negotiations [trade] for the Ashkenazic people who are there, because of the language, because the Jews over there speak the language of the Spanish, and the Arabs speak the Aramite language [Arabic] and the Yishma'elites [Turks] the language of the Yishma'elites [Turkish] and all of them do not know the language of Ashkenaz [German or Yiddish]."[80]

Nevertheless we find in the sources that both in the 17th and 18th centuries were Jews who worked for their living, and we will bring a few examples of these trades and occupations as revealed by our researches. It should be pointed out that notwithstanding the long list which will be brought hereunder, it appears from both Ottoman and Jewish sources that only few Jews worked in each trade, and the size of the list must not mislead us.

The 17th Century[81]

Moneylenders to monasteries, convents and churches.
Wine merchants.
Several traders with Turkey and Egypt;
Finance and commerce brokers.

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[80] Ya'ari, Massa'ot, 333; and similar things written in a letter by the Ashkenazim in Jerusalem in 1757; Barnai, letters, 48–49.

[81] This list is based on finds collected by: Heyd, Jews, 178–180; Rozen, Jewish, 225–238.

Milk and dairy merchants
Candy vendors
Perfume vendors
Coal merchants
Oil vendors
Scrap vendors
Butchers
Silk vendors
Second-hand article vendors
Sulphur vendors
Grocers
Silk refuse vendors
Vendors of medical preparations
Millers and bakers
Button makers
Goldsmiths
Textile dyers
Silk weavers
Pharmacists
Potters
Water carriers and vendors
Soap manufacturers and vendors
Carpenters
Comb manufacturers
Torch manufacturers
Several farmers
Physicians
Musicians

The 18th Century[82]

Farmers
Goldsmiths
Cobblers
Porters
Bakers
Wine vendors
Dairy product Vendors
Greengrocers
Grain and meal vendors
Haberdashers
Gem merchants
Raisin importers
Honey vendors
Clothes vendors
Chesse exporters
Tombstone makers
Cotton brokers
Tax leasers
Moneylenders

List of Abbreviations*

Avitsur, Safed — Avitsur, S., "Safed - Center of the Manufacture of Woven Woollens in the Fifteenth Century", Sefunot, 6, 1962, 41-69 (Hebrew).

Barnai, Community — Barnai, Y., "The Ashkenazi Community in Eretz-Israel, 1720-1777", Shalem, 2, 1976, 193-230 (Hebrew).

Barnai, Jews — Barnai, Y., The Jews in Eretz-Israel in the Eighteenth Century, Jerusalem, 1982 (Hebrew).

Barnai, Letters — Barnai, J., Ḥassidic Letters from Palestine, Jerusalem, 1980 (Hebrew).

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[82] This list is based on finds collected by Shohat, Jews, 34-35; Barnai, Jews, 290-293.

* Reference of Responsa literature is to be found under each of the authors' names mentioned.

Barnai, Regulations = Barnai, Y., "The Regulations (Taqanot) of Jerusalem in the Eighteenth Century as a Source on the Society, Economy and Daily Activities of the Jewish Community", Cohen A. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Early Ottoman Period, Jerusalem, 1979, 271–316 (Hebrew).

Barnai, Tiberias = Barnay, J., "The Revival of the Jewish Community of Tiberias in 1740 and its Historic Significance", Shevet Va'Am 3(8), 1978, 35–62 (Hebrew).

Benayahu, Brotherhood = Benayahu, M., "The 'Holy Brotherhood' of Rabbi Yehuda Ḥasid and Their Settling in Jerusalem", Sefunot, 3/4, 1960, 131–182 (Hebrew).

Benayahu, Community = Benayahu, M., "The Ashkenazi Community of Jerusalem 1687–1747", Sefunot, 2, 1958, 128–189 (Hebrew).

Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel = Ben-Zvi, I., Eretz-Israel under the Ottoman Rule, Jerusalem, 1962 (Hebrew).

Ben-Zvi, Studies = Ben-Zvi, I., Studies and Documents, Jerusalem, 1966 (Hebrew).

Book of Regulations = Sefer ha-Taqqanot, Jerusalem, 1883 (Hebrew).

Cassuto, Italian = Cassuto, D., "An 18th century Italian-Jewish Traveller on the Structures of the Sephardic Synagogues in Old Jerusalem", Cathedra, 24, 1982, 41–50 (Hebrew).

Cohen, Jewish = Cohen, A., The Jewish Community in Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century, Jerusalem, 1982 (Hebrew).

Cohen, Palestine = Cohen, A., Palestine in the Eighteenth Century, Jerusalem, 1973.

Halpern, Immigration = Halpern, I., The Ḥasidic Immigration to Palestine during the Eighteenth Century, Jerusalem, 1946 (Hebrew).

Heyd, Ḍahir = Heyd, U., Ḍahir al-'Umar, Jerusalem, 1942 (Hebrew).

Heyd, Jews = Heyd, U., "The Jews of Eretz-Israel in the late seventeenth Century", Yerushalayim (Review), 1953, 173–184 (Hebrew).

Jewish Seminary = Manuscripts in the Jewish Theological Seminary, Adler Collection, New York.

Rozen, Jerusalem = Rozen, M., The Ruins of Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, 1981 (Hebrew).

Rozen, Jewish = Rozen, M., The Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Seventeenth Century, Tel-Aviv, 1984 (Hebrew).

Rozen, Position = Rozen, M., "The Position of the Musta'rabs in the Inter-Community Relationships in Eretz Israel from the End of the 15th Century to the End of the 17th Century", Cathedra, 17, 1980, 72–101 (Hebrew).

Rozen, Relationship = Rozen, M., "On the Relationship between the Jewish Communities in Jerusalem and Safed in the Seventeenth Century", Cohen, A. (ed.), Jerusalem in the Early Ottoman Period, Jerusalem, 1979, 152–195 (Hebrew).

Shohat, Jews = Shohat, A., "The Jews in Jerusalem in the Eighteenth Century", Cathedra, 13, 1979, 3–46 (Hebrew).

Ya'ari, Emissaries = Ya'ari, A. (ed.), Sheluḥei Eretz-Israel, Jerusalem, 1951 (Hebrew).

Ya'ari, Letters = Ya'ari, A., Letters from the land of Israel, Ramat-Gan, 1971 (Hebrew). In the previous articles in the volume, this item appears as: Ya'ari, A., Igrot Eretz-Israel, Tel-Aviv, 1943.

Ya'ari, Massa'ot = Ya'ari, A., Massa'ot Eretz-Israel, Ramat-Gan, 1976 (Hebrew).

Chapter VI. The Jewish Settlement in Palestine in the 19th Century*

by
Shalom Ginat

1. General Survey

In the early 19th century the majority of the Jewish population in Palestine consisted of the Sefardic community.[1] The Musta'riba, the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine even before the Ottoman conquest, also belonged to this community after the hegemony had passed from their hands to the Sefardim at the beginning of the Ottoman rule.[2] The main difference, in addition to that of general as well as prayer customs, was their mother tongues - Ladino as against Arabic.

The Sefardic community was headed by the 'Rishon le-Ṣiyon' (the First of Zion), who was elected by the sages of the community. As most of the Sefardim were subjects of the Sulṭān, the 'Rishon le-Ṣiyon,' or, according to his title, 'Ḥakham Bāshi Kaimakām' (Deputy of the First Sage), was accorded the recognition of the Ottoman government. By force of his position he usually represented all the Jewish communities during almost the entire period surveyed by this work. He himself was under the authority of the Ḥakham Bāshi in Constantinople, who was in charge of the Sefardic sages and their communities all over the Empire.[3]

Generally, the Sefardic community was well organized. The 'Rishon le-Ṣiyon' was assisted by a council and court of sages. He and his establishment imposed total obedience on those under their authority.[4]

We can distinguish immigration waves which enlarged the Sefardic community, in addition to the immigration of individuals; we know of the immigration in 1810 of Jews from Kurdistan who settled in Ṭəveryà.

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* Due to the plenty of works already existing on this century, this article is only a brief survey and an attempt to estimate the size of the population in the settlements which are marked on the map (No. 6).

[1] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 362.

[2] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 114.

[3] Gat, Jewish, 23.

[4] Gat, Jewish, 23.

Organization-wise they belonged to the Sefardic community.[5] In the 20's, the years when the Greeks fought for their independence, there was an increased immigration of 'Ma'araviyyim' (Jews of Western North-Africa, Morocco). In spite of their origin in the region of influence of the Arabic culture, including language, apparel and customs, they belonged to the Sefardic community and at the beginning were under the authority of its leaders and institutions. In part these immigrants constituted the core of the renewed Jewish settlement in Yáfo, and later also in Ḥefá.[6]

In 1872 the Ma'arivic community in Yərušálayim amounted to about 1,000 people, and this following the increased immigration since 1854. At this stage the Ma'aravic community cut itself loose from the authority of the Sefardic community, and established its own community organization, a Kolel. Later it maintained formal connections with the Sefardic community.

In 1881 the Ma'araviyyim in Yərušálayim amounted to about 1,300 people. Unlike the Sefardim, the people of the Ma'arivic community were, according to the capitulation policy, under the authority of the French Consul in Yərušálayim.[7]

The small community of immigrants from Georgia and the Caucasus, which was concentrated entirely in Yərušálayim amounted, right after their immigration in 1875, to about 200 people.[8] According to the census of Montefiore in 1839 the Sefardim constituted three quarters of the entire Jewish population, namely, 9,000 people out of 12,000.[9]

Unlike the Sefardic community, which knew how to enforce obedience on those under its authority, and which maintained the utmost unity and uniformity, the Ashkenazic community was characterized by its division and by its internal strifes. Single Ashkenazic Jews had always lived in Palestine,[10] but groups of immigrants - immigration waves of considerable numbers - were to arrive only in the late 18th and early 19th century.

The East European immigration groups were organized and divided in two - the Ḥasidic Jews and the 'Mitnagedim' ('Perushim'). The first Ḥasidic groups began to immigrate in 1777, to a great extent because of the 1768 pogroms in Russia and Poland.[11] The first groups of Perushim

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[5] Eliav, Yishuv, 94.
[6] Eliav, Yishuv, 94-95; Gat, Jewish, 22.
[7] Gat, Jewish, 24-25; Eliav, Yishuv, 95.
[8] Gat, Jewish, 25.
[9] Loewe, Montefiore, different chapters.
[10] Ish-Shalom, Travels, 338, 350, 354, 385; Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 299.
[11] Mahler, History, 353; Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 305.

arrived in 1809, most likely because of the expulsion from the villages in Russia.[12]

There were indeed extreme factors in Europe which caused the immigration to Palestine, but the choice of destination - Palestine - was entirely due to religious ideological motives.[13]

Şəfat was the Metropolitan of Ashkenazi Jews till the earthquake (1836–1837). We must remember that Ashkenazic Jews were not allowed to either enter Yərušálayim or live in it since the end of 1720.[14] In 1816 a group of 10 families of Perushim succeeded in resettling in Yərušálayim. The settling of the Ashkenazim was facilitated by obtaining a moratorium on debts to Moslem lenders in 1820 and by its being re-confirmed in 1824.[15]

The internal contentions among the Ḥasidim caused the settling of Ḥasidim of the 'Ḥabad' (Ḥokhma, Bina, Da'at) group in Ḥevron. About 15 families left Galilee and established there an Ashkenazic settlement which was to grow continuously in the course of the 19th century.[16] In 1831 additional scores of Ḥasidic families arrived in Şəfat.[17] The great reversal in the scattering of the Ashkenazim started in 1837. It was caused by the disaster in Şəfat and by the attack of the Druzes on the Jewish settlement in this city. This was the period of the Egyptian rule. The pressure on the Jews weakened and unlimited residence in Yərušálayim was allowed also to the Ashkenazim.[18]

During the Egyptian rule an additional small group of Ashkenazim, of German and Dutch origin, started to settle in Yərušálayim.[19] In 1839 a severe epidemic broke out in Palestine, and Yərušalayim was quarantined for a long period of time. Therefore the Ashkenazic Jews could not enter the city. Several of them had no choice but to remain in Yáfo, in which they settled permanently.[20]

During the above period, the settlement, excluding Galilee villages and some exceptions (Šəḳem) was concentrated in the Four Holy Lands or Holy Cities of Yərušálayim, Şəfat, Ṭəveryá and Ḥevron:

The sanctity of Yərušálayim to the Jews needs no telling. Ḥevron is the

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[12] Ettinger, History, 87; Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 303.
[13] For additional motives: Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 304.
[14] Schwarz, Tebuoth, 271
[15] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 360.
[16] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 369.
[17] Eliav, Yishuv, 84.
[18] Compare statistical data of the year 1839 (n. 37).
[19] Eliav, Hod, 215–232.
[20] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 379.

city of the Patriarchs where there are the tombs of the Fathers of the Nation. Şəfat is the city of the Kabbalists and is geographically close to the legendary author of the 'Zohar Book,' Rabbi Shim'on Bar-Yoḥai. In Ṭəveryà there are many tombs of holy persons. During the Ottoman rule in Palestine, Şəfat was the most important and populated city.[21] In Ṭəveryà the Jewish settlement was renewed only after the Ottoman conquest.[22] A small Jewish settlement has stayed in Ḥevron since the Mameluke Period.[23]

The Jews of Palestine considered themselves as preservers of the eternal connection between the people of Israel and its land, like pioneers leading the entire camp, and this out of a deep knowledge that the people will follow them, even if the time has not yet come. As emmisaries of the people they considered themselves entitled to the support of the Diaspora, who, in their opinion, was required to supply their subsistence.

Without the aid of the Diaspora, the poor Jewish settlement in Palestine would not have been able to hold on. The various riots, the onslaughts and the disasters which befell the entire country and its populace, hurt the Jewish minority most. Epidemics followed years of famine (caused by droughts or by rats), and years of abandonment of land because of riots or wars. Moreover, the Jews, for objective reasons, had no connection to the villages and to the fruit of the land.[24]

The aid was organized through the institution of the Ḥaluqa. This institution has been organized abroad with the purpose of concentrating in an efficient manner all the money collected in various places and in various forms and transferring them to the Jews in Palestine. After arriving in Palestine, the money was distributed according to an index which was updated from time to time. The two main communities distributed the money among their members according to various principles.[25]

The Sefardic community distributed its income according to the following index: one third of the Ḥaluqa money was designated for the public functionaries: sages and scholars, because of the assumption that it should be made possible for those who toil for the public or in the Tora shrines to fulfil their mission free of economic cares. Another third was designated for the general expenses of the community, such as repayment of debts, maintenance and repair of structures, and payment of taxes and

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[21] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 144.
[22] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 196.
[23] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 164.
[24] Gat, Jewish, 93-94.
[25] Eliav, Hod, 15.

bribes. The third part was designated for social cases (widows, orphans, old people and chronic invalids).

It seems that not all the people of the Sefardic community enjoyed the Ḥaluqa money. There were those who made their livelihood – be it as scanty as it may – by their own work.[26]

The class differentiation within the community was very clear cut. Most of the community had been in the country for a long time; they knew the law of the land and mastered its language. All this made it easier for them to find means of subsistence. Among the Sefardim there was a small class of rich merchants who leased flour mills, dealt in grain and in import and export, and as modernisation set in they also worked in the banking branch. On the other hand the majority worked in any available trade: there were vendors who travelled in the villages and returned to their homes towards Saturday, there were small shop-keepers in whose shops there was a small selection of goods, and there were porters and skilled as well as unskilled laborers.[27]

Not so the Ashkenazic community. Right from the start the people of this community were inferior in status to that of the Sefardim. The Ashkenazim were not familiar with the conditions of the country nor with its language. In those cases where they brought with them professions and trades, those did not suit the new conditions.

(An outstanding event was the immigration of a printer to Ṣəfat in 1832, following which Ṣəfat and later Yərušälayim became a center of printing of Hebrew books.)[28]

The people of the Ashkenazic community believed in "Ḥaluqa money for everyone." It was with them a matter of principle and they insisted on everyone of the community members getting his share in it.[29] Any delay in the Ḥaluqa – usually caused by political conditions (wars) – endangered the actual survival of the Ashkenazic population.[30]

During this period, and as the Ashkenazic population in Palestine became more established, more of the community members lived not only on the Ḥaluqa, and some did not even need it at all. But the principle that each of the Ashkenazic community members was entitled to this money still prevailed.[31]

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[26] Eliav, Hod, 14; Gat, Jewish, 101, 103.
[27] Gat, Jewish, 37, 41, 43–44; Ben-Arieh, Old, 430.
[28] Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel, 449.
[29] Eliav, Hod, 16.
[30] Finn, Records, 120.
[31] Gat, Jewish, 108, Note 118.

In addition to the division between Ḥasidim and Perushim, another process of divison was gathering momentum. Kolelim were formed according to geographical origin or to affinity to a 'Rabbi's Court.' These Kolelim were financially supported by congregations of the same country – or city – of origin. In this way some of the Kolelim were rich while others were constantly poor.[32]

Not all the people, either Sefardic or Ashkenazic, accepted the social and economic system. Some attempts were made to productivize the economy and to shift to new branches of work, mainly from the 30's on. These attempts found support among Jewish philanthropists. The latter, or their deputies, visited the country and tried to contribute to this new process. The buds of this productivisation soon faded, before having reached the stage of fruit bearing.

We mentioned above the first attempt, towards the end of this period of agricultural work in the settlement Moṣà (1863). We can also mention, as the first of the changes, the fact that the Jews started to live outside the wall of Yərušàlayim and to build houses there from 1867/8 on. These first quarters were built by local entrepreneurs and with their own means.[33] In the city of Ṣəfat a group of people living on Ḥaluqa money left the city and established an agricultural settlement in Ğa'ūni, (later: Roš-Pinnà). Another group left Yərušàlayim for the same purpose and established Petaḥ-Tiqwa (1878).[34]

These two settlements, which were established towards the end of the period under discussion, indicate the beginning of a new era in the history of the Jewish Settlement. This was a period of growth of spreading over additional areas in Palestine, a period of change of values. But a few more years were to pass, till after World War I, before the settlement would change its socio-economic structure and turn from a supported society to a self-supporting one.

During that period the Jewish Settlement consisted entirely, with no exception to the rule, of religious Jews, who preserved the laws of the Tora; therefore there were everywhere synagogues and Yeshivot for all the communities. As the population grew, the number of these institutions also grew. The great division into different Kolelim necessitated the erection of structures for each of the groups; this explains the larger number of Ashkenazic gathering places compared to that of the Sefardim.[35]

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[32] Gat, Jewish, 108.

[33] Ben-Arieh, New, 145, 150.

[34] Eliav, Yishuv, 180, 190.

[35] Gat, Jewish, 193.

In addition there were schools for the boys, usually not in the structures built for this purpose. The boys learned from a very young age (mostly from the age of three) in Talmud-Tora institutions, and their studies were holy studies only.

Other attempts made in the above period to modernize education, to build schools which would resemble, even a little, the European schools - were undermined by the Orthodox population. Only at the end of the above period would new schools be established. These would engulf, at least till the end of World War I, only a negligible minority of school children.

2. Quantitative Estimate

The quantitative estimate is an attempt to reconstruct from travellers' books, consular and other reports as well as researches in German and English. The data appearing in the summary was collected from over 100 sources, out of which 56 have been quoted.[36] The number of locations mentioned is 28, 192 statistical facts have been registered about these places. To these should be added 7 statistical data about the Karaite Jews in Yərušálayim and 18 about the Samaritans in Nābulus. Since few settlement are outside the map boundaries, one can find only 21 of which in Map No. 6.

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The year of 1799 awakened the awareness of Palestine in Western Europe. Much of this awareness can be attributed to Bonaparte's invasion to Egypt and Palestine, with all the ramifications it held for the European powers. But soon the importance of the Napoleonic events gravitated to Europe itself. The continuous state of war encouraged neither tourism to the east, nor pilgrimage to the holy places in the Holy Land.

The continuous Greek War of Independence - supported by the European powers - which occurred after Napoleon's downfall, increased the hate for foreigners all over the Ottoman Empire and in Palestine and made it acute.

This situation was not conductive to the research of the country, nor to tourism and pilgrimage. To this should be added subjective difficulties such as dangerous roads and the lack of suitable inns. For all these reasons

[36] These sources are not quoted here, due to the short range of this survey. They are kept in the archives of the project.

very few Europeans visited the country. The few who dared to tour it did *not* usually consider Palestine – let alone the Jewish Settlement – the focus of interest of their tour.

Except for Jews of European origin, hardly any Europeans lived in Palestine in the early 19th century. The few who immigrated to Palestine were mostly Greek or Catholic monks, and their number did not exceed several scores. Their involvement with the local population was minimal and they surely did not have any relations with the Jews. On the other hand, the few Protestant missionaries who arrived in the 20's were interested in the Jewish population, but their stay in the country, or, more precisely, in Yərušálayim, usually lasted only several days.

From this we must conclude that the description of the Jewish Settlement, in the first third of the 19th century and according to the few publications in our possession, is rather doubtful and the statistics are even less reliable.

Only when Egypt conquered the region and established itself in it (1832–1840), this situation changed. The Egyptians understood the degree of their dependence on the European powers, and they therefore made efforts to gain the latters' support. One of the means to this end was the opening of the country to pilgrims, tourists and missionaries, especially from Western Europe. The Egyptian authorities made possible free travelling in Palestine and also promised protection to those touring it for research. Part of the writers and reporters referred also to the Jewish Settlement when describing their trip in Palestine.

In the early 19th century several of the European countries were actually represented in two or three coastal cities and by consular agents only (see Map B IX 24 of this atlas). Their duty was to protect the commerical interests of merchants and shipping companies. The late period of the Egyptian rule was the beginning of the period in which European consulates were established in several of the inlands cities in the country, above all in Yərušálayim. This opening of consulates continued to gather momentum when the Egyptians left Syria, Lebanon and Palestine and the Ottoman rule returned and re-established itself. By the late 50's practically all the European powers (and the United States) were represented in Yərušálayim by consuls. Consulates were opened also in other cities.

There were various reasons and causes to the opening of the consulates. Within the framework of this work it is important to point out that one of the consul's duties was to report to his superiors the condition of the various religious and ethnical groups. It is well known that these communities served many times as pawns in the powers' struggles and in conflicts with the Ottoman authorities. The stocks of the consul and his importance to

his superiors was measured also by the number of citizens under his authority; therefore we should treat with some degree of reservation (certain) data reported by consuls, because we must suspect that they adjusted the data in their reports (and by this we mean mainly figures concerning Jews) for their personal needs.

From the late 30's onwards the immigration of Jews from (non-Ottoman) Europe to Palestine gradually increased. Those were the Ashkenazic Jews. They retained their original citizenships as a means of protection from the Ottoman authorities and their pressure. As foreign citizens they were under the authority and protection of the consul. The importance of the consul in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities increased in a direct ratio to the number of his citizens. All this was at a time when the capitulations regime constantly strengthened the status of the powers and their representatives. Hence the care taken by most of the consuls to register precisely *all* their citizens in Palestine. Most of the foreign citizens in Palestine were Jews of European origin.

Therefore the lists of Jewish citizens registered in the reports of the consulates are very valuable. Among those reporting about the Jewish population the Protestant missionaries had an important role. There were among them those who turned their entire attention to the Jews. They knew the Jewish population and its problems well; therefore their reports are of special value, although they were written from the missionary standpoint. Furthermore, those missionaries searched for the Jews. They indeed found some Jews in the smallest and remotest places.

But even the reports of the missionaries should be checked and examined for accuracy, because they too might have been intended to impress the readers of the lists and the donators to the funds of the missionaries for the Jews. The figures of the various lists differ in their many reports, especially those of the English missionaries, they described the Jewish Settlement, its character, its position and its problems as they understood them. They stressed each missionary success, but generally avoided giving absolute figures, for their own reasons.

Most of the Western European travellers, in the two middle quarters of the 19th century, arrived in the Holy Land, mainly due to Christian-religious motives. Many of them were wealthy people and upon returning to their countries they recorded their memoirs and impressions in writing, and even published them in the form of books.

The interest of these tourists – who were pilgrims – was not centered on the Jewish Settlement. Upon arriving in Yərušálayim, which none of them skipped, they could not avoid meeting the Jews, but the Christian pilgrims lacked elementary knowledge of Jews and Judaism; hence the superficial

and unreliable description by many of them. The same is true of their statistical data.

The tours and lines of travel of these pilgrims passed along the usual course of Christian pilgrimages; therefore they did not meet many Jews in other places than Yərušálayim.

Since the period of the Egyptian rule the study of Palestine advanced considerably, but among the researchers only few paid attention to the Jewish settlement. The statistical data of those who did, should be treated as reliable, because they, conducted by the scientific resarch criteria of those days.

Jewish pilgrims visited Palestine and its holy sites in all ages and periods. In the above period there were among them also Jews from Western Europe, who wrote their books in German and English. Their main interest was the condition of the holy places. They also described the 'Wall-Keepers,' those Jews who lived close to the holy places or who guarded them. These tourists were not statistically inclined, and in those cases where they recorded figures, those were secondary to other matters, particularly in view of the fact that the course of those tourists' travels was generally coincidental and unpredictable. It was determined by the port of arrival (the weather conditions in the various seasons determined the place of landing) or by the safety of the roads. From this it is obvious that the statistics recorded by these travellers should not be regarded as very reliable, particularly in view of the fact that they did not usually pass through all the Jewish Settlements.

We should pay special attention to the data submitted by individuals, by deputies of organizations and by delegations which arrived in Palestine with only one view in mind - to investigate the condition of the Jewish Settlement. This was usually done in order to try, after checking and investigating, to change the wretched and miserable position in which the Jewish Settlement was at that time. In order to change the conditions, individuals, deputies or organizations required accurate data. They later recorded them, in the form of written reports, books or even diaries.

It seems that the data gathered and published by the latter is the most accurate and reliable.

Comprehensive statistics which encompass at the same time the entire Jewish population in Palestine, and which make it possible to estimate its size and its spreading over the country in the period under discussion, are in our possession only for the years of 1839, 1856 and 1872.

In 1839[37] the Jewish population amounted to about 12,000 people. (This

[37] According to the Census of Montifiore, who travelled in Palestine at this year.

figure includes about 450 Jews of Ṣor and Sidon.) This year was outstanding in the great increase of the number of Jewish residents in Yərušálayim. Their number reached the figure of 6,500 as against 2,500 in 1831, which means an increase of 2.6 fold or 54% of the entire Jewish population.

Compared to this the drastic decrease in the number of Jews of Ṣəfat stands out. In 1839 there were about 1,750 in the city compared to 7,000 in 1836. In the earthquake (31.12.1836–1.1.1837) about 4,000 Jews were killed in Ṣəfat. Following this event as well as the onslaught of the Druzes (1838), the number of the Jews of Ṣəfat decreased considerably. Many of the survivors moved to Yəerušálayim. This was the date when Yərušálayim once again became the center of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine.

If we add to the 4,000 victims of the earthquake in Ṣəfat also the victims of Ṭəveryà (the earthquake befell also there), it appears that the Jewish population in 1836 amounted to about 16,500 people. The decrease, compared to 1839, was therefore 37.5%.

In 1856[38] the Jewish population was less than in 1839, a total of about 10,839 people. (This data includes the residents of South Lebanon's Jewish communities.) The statistical decrease amounted to 3%. The decrease in the number of Jews of Yərušálayim was bigger, about 12.5%, and amounted to 5,700 people. The lack of growth should be attributed to two factors; one: the Crimea War (1853–1856). In these years immigration to Palestine was prevented. The second factor: the heavy famine which prevailed in Palestine immediately after the war started, and which accounted for the death of many people. This disaster took a special toll of the elderly Jewish population in Yərušálayim.

As a first sign of the changing of the settlement map, with all its significance, such as the spread of population, the variety of sources of livelihood and also the changing of schooling methods, we can point out the attempt to leaving the walls of Yərušálayim and the trial of shifting to agricultural work in the village Moṣà, in 1863.

In 1872 the Jewish population amounted to about 13,300. An important fact was the growth of the Jewish population within an eight year span, from 1872 till 1880, by 90%, from 13,300 people to 26,000 people.

Most of the Jews were concentrated, in the period under discussion (1800–1882), in the 'Four Holy Cities.' A small minority lived in several of the villages in Galilee, including two villages in south of Lebanon: Ḥaṣbāya and Deir al-Qamar. Two towns which were not among the 'Holy Cities'–Yàfo and Ḥefà–began to be inhabited by increasing numbers of Jews. At the beginning of the period (1839) there were about 150 Jews in

[38] Frankl, L.A., Nach Jerusalem!, Leipzig, 1858–1860, 500–501.

Ḥefá, and at its end (1870), about 400. In Yáfo there were 60 at the beginning as compared to 700 Jews at the end. Sources (not quoted here) fix the number of Jews in Yəerušálayim in 1880, at 17,000.

List of Abbreviations

Ben-Arieh, Old	= Ben-Arieh, Y., A City Reflected in its Times. Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century, The Old City, Jerusalem, 1977 (Hebrew).
Ben-Arieh, New	= Ben-Arieh, Y., A City Reflected in Its Times. New Jerusalem - The Beginnings, Jerusalem, 1979 (Hebrew).
Ben-Zvi, Eretz-Israel	= Ben-Zvi, I., Eretz-Israel under the Ottoman Rule, Jerusalem, 1962 (Hebrew).
Eliav, Hod	= Eliav, M., Love of Zion and Men of Hod (German Jewry and the Settlement of Eretz-Israel in the 19th Century), Tel-Aviv, 1970 (Hebrew).
Eliav, Yishuv	= Eliav, M., Eretz Israel and its Yishuv in the 19th Century, 1777-1917, Jerusalem, 1978 (Hebrew).
Ettinger, History	= Ettinger, S., History of the People of Israel from Absolutism to the Establishment of the State of Israel, Jerusalem, 1968 (Hebrew).
Finn, Records	= Finn, J., Stirring Times. Records from Jerusalem Consular Chronicles, 1853-1856, London, 1878 (2 vols.).
Gat, Jewish	= Gat, B.Z., The Jewish Settlement in Eretz-Israel - 1840-1881, Jerusalem, 1974 (Hebrew).
Ish-Shalom, Travels	= Ish-Shalom, M., Christian Travels in the Holy Land. Descriptions and Sources of the History of the Jews in Palestine, Tel-Aviv, 1979 (Hebrew).
Loewe, Montefiore	= Loewe, E. (ed.), Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore, 1812-1883, Chicago, 1980.
Mahler, History	= Mahler, R., History of Jews in Poland, Merchavia, 1946 (in Hebrew and Yiddish).
Schwarz, Tebuoth	= Schwarz, J., Tebuoth Ha-Arez, vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1845 (Fourth edition, based on photographed edition of A. M. Luncz, Jerusalem, 1900 (Hebrew).

היישוב היהודי בארץ־ישראל למן הביבוש המוסלמי ועד לעלייה הראשונה (634 - 1881)

לפני כחמש עשרה שנה פנו אלי בעת ובעונה אחת מערכת "האטלס של סיבינגן למזרח הקרוב" (Tübinger Atlas -TAVO des Vorderen Orients) והאקדמיה הלאומית הישראלית למדעים בירושלים בבקשה לשתף פעולה בשני פרוייקטים, אשר ברוך מקרה השלימו זה את זה: מערכת האטלס, שהחלה אז בהכנתן של כשלוש מאות מפות מפורטות שאמורות היו להקיף מכלול של היבטים במזרח התיכון, בקשה ממני להבין מפה שתתאר את תפרוסת היישוב היהודי בארץ־ישראל למן הביבוש המוסלמי ועד לעלייה הראשונה (ב-1250 שנה) ואילו האקדמיה, שניגשה לביצוע מחקר שיסתי (בארבעה כרכים) של תולדות היישוב היהודי בארץ־ישראל למן העלייה הראשונה ועד להקמתה של מדינת ישראל (ב-70 שנה), ביקשה שאבין את הקטע הכללי הנוגע למעורבותו של העולם הנוצרי בארץ-ישראל מקונגרס ברלין (1878) ועד למלחמת העולם הראשונה.

הואיל ואני עוסק שנים רבות בחקר פעילות המעצמות והעולם הנוצרי בארץ־ישראל בשלהי השלטון העות׳מאני, נעניתי בחפץ לב לפנייתה של האקדמיה. לעומת זאת, כמי שהתמחה דווקא בתולדות המתיישבים הנוצרים בארץ, הססתי להיענות לבקשתה של המערכת בסיבינגן. רק אחר שהתברר לי, כי איש מחוקרי היישוב היהודי בארץ-ישראל איננו עוסק בתקופה הערבית, הצלבנית, הממלוכית והעות׳מאנית גם יחד וכי עיקר המשימה המוטלת עלי יהיה לרכז צוות שאנשיו יחקרו, איש בתחומו ובתקופת

התמחותו. את תפרוסת היישוב היהודי לאורך החקופה האמורה - וגם משום העניין הכללי בנושא - נטלתי על עצמי גם משימה זו.

בעוברה, כי הפרוייקט של האקרמיה (אף על פי שהוא עוסק בחקופה מאוחרת וקצרה יחסית ומעטיק חוקרים פי שלושה למניין) סרם הסחיים יש אולי ברי להעיר על הקושי לאין שיעור שהיה כרוך בפרוייקט של סיבינגן. זאת בראש וראשונה מחמת מהות המקורות העומדים בפני החוקרים את תולדות הארץ בחקופת השלטון המוסלמי והמאמץ המועט שהושקע עד כה - למעט אפיזודות אחדות - בחקר הארץ בכלל לאורך 1250 השנים האמורות. על הקושי ה"כרוני" הזה לא הצלחנו - וכמובן אף לא נסינו - להתגבר. לפיכך ריכזנו את המאמץ באיסוף מידע על גורל היישוב היהודי ומיקומו - שני האלמנטים להכנת המפה (בניגוד לאקרמיה שריכזה את המאמץ, בפרוייקט שלה, בהכנת מחקר כולל). בחוך ארבע שנים (1980-1984) השלמנו את המלאכה. ב-1985 הגשנו למערכת כסיבינגן סיומה של שש מפות חקופתיות שהוכנו על סמך ממצאי עבורחנו ומקץ שנחיים, ביוני 1987, הופיעו הללו במפה הכוללת (שסימונה באטלס B IX 18) "Juden in Palästina, 634-1881".

ה-Beiheft המונח לפנינו כשמו כן הוא: כרך שבא ללוות את המפה. במקביל לשש המפות מחחלק אף הוא לששה פרקים: החקופה המוסלמית המוקרמת (634-1099), חקופת מסעי-הצלב (1099-1291), החקופה הממלוכית (1291-1516), ראשית החקופה העות'מאנית (1516-1599), חקופת הביניים העות'מאנית (1599-1798) ושלהי החקופה העות'מאנית (1799-1881). שני טעמים היו לחלוקה זו ולהחלטה להציג את ממצאינו בשש מפות קטנות במקום במפה כוללת גרולה אחת: השוני. לעחים שוני ניכר, בגורל היישוב היהודי בחוצאה מן השינויים בשלטון (או באופיו) והרצון להקל על הבוחן את המפה באבחונם של השינויים הללו.

המירע, הסטאטיסטי בעיקרו, שנאסף במהלך העבורה לצורך הכנת המפה, שמור עמנו בחיפה על גבי כרטיסיות ובא בכרך הגלווה לביטוי באורח מסכם בלבר. מידע זה נאסף על ידי עוברי הפרוייקט - חוקרים מגרמניה ומישראל, ובראשם אנשי אוניברסיטת היפח. חלקם של הגרמנים היה רב, במיוחר באיתור אותם מקורות (ובעיקר ספרי-מסעות מוקרמים נרירים) שלא הצלחנו למצוא אותם בישראל. את המירע שליקטנו ריכזנו בחיפה על-גבי מאות כרטיסיות "מקור" ו"ישוב" שאמורות היו להשיב

בעיקר על השאלה: "מי אמר מה ומתי?" בכל הנוגע למיקומן של קהילות יהודיות בארץ־ישראל (שבגבולות המנדאטוריים של Palestine) ולמניינם של בני הקהילה. את עיבור הממצאים שזרמו במשך ארבע שנים לחיפה ואת מיונם לצורך הבנת הכרסיסיות והמפה ריכז יוסי בן־ארצי, שאף הביא לדפוס את הכרך שלפנינו - כל זאת בעזרתה של תמי לביאל, אשר ליוותה עמנו את הפרוייקט מראשיתו ועד אחריתו.

את ששת פרקיו של הספר ניתן לחלק לשלושה צמדים. הפרק הפותח והפרק המסיים הם כבחינת תמצית שבאה להציג את תוצאות המחקר שנעשה בינתיים על ידי אחרים בשתי התקופות הרלוואנטיות: לנבי התקופה המוסלמית הקרומה על־ידי משה גיל בעיקר (שאף הואיל להעמיד לרשותנו את תוצאות מחקרו עוד בטרם ראה אור) ולגבי שלהי התקופה העות'מאנית על ידי מספר רב של חוקרים שעסקו בנושא זה או אחר בתולדות הארץ במאה ה-19 ובעיקר בתולדות היישוב היהודי - ובכך הקלו על מלאכתנו.

בצמד השני - תקופת מסעי הצלב ותקופת הביניים העות'מאנית - סקרו סילביה שיין ויעקב ברנאי, כל אחד בתקופת התמחותו, הן את המירע שכבר נאסף על תפרוסת היישוב היהודי והיקפו והן את פרי מחקרם הם.

באשר לצמד הפרקים האחרון והמכריע בספר - התקופה הממלוכית וראשית התקופה העות'מאנית, הנה בקשנו מאברהם דור להרחיב את היריעה אל מעבר לצרכיה של המפה ולחשוף בפני הקוראים גם היבטים נוספים שגילה במחקריו לראשונה בכל הנוגע ליישוב היהודי בארץ־ישראל בשתי התקופות הללו (ובאשר לראשית התקופה העות'מאנית - יחד עם דוד תמר). התרומה המקורית המשמעותית ביותר של הברך שלפנינו היא, לפיכך, אולי דווקא בשני הפרקים החריגים הללו - מעין תוצר לוואי של הבנת המפה שמסעמים מובנים לא רצינו לוותר עליו. אין בכך, כמובן, כדי להמעיט בערכם של הפרקים האחרים שמחבריהם טרחו לעמוד במשימה שהטלנו עליהם ולהסתפק בהארת המפה.

אין אנו מתיימרים באמירת המלה הראשונה או האחרונה בכל הנוגע לתפרוסת היישוב היהודי בארץ־ישראל ב-1250 השנים שנכחנו. החירוש הוא אולי בנסיון להסחיש נושא זה בצורה גראפית ולאורך ששה פרקי זמן המהווים חקופה רצופה ארוכה (ומן הפחות ידועות) בתולדות הארץ - תוך ניצול ביקורתי של

מגוון ניכר של מקורות. יש לקוות, כי נסיון זה יזרבן חוקרים נוספים לחקן ולהשלים את המלאכה, מה עוד שמחמת הזהירות נהגנו על פי הכלל, שבמקרים של ספק מוסב לא להזכיר יהודים שאולי ישבו באורח ארעי ביישוב זה או אחר מאשר כן להזכיר יהודים שאולי לא ישבו שם דרך קבע.

ובאשר לתוצאות הפדוויקס: על פי הממצאים שלקטנו לא הביא הכיבוש המוסלמי במאה ה-7 לשינוי משמעותי בתפרוסת היישוב היהודי בארץ־ישראל, שהמשיך להתקיים כמרכזי השלטון שבאזור החוף (רמלה ולוד), בחיפה, טבריה, ירושלים ואשקלון וכן ביישובים כפריים שונים, דוכם בגליל. כמו בשאר התקופות הגירונות, אין הנתונים הקיימים מאפשרים אומדן מניין כולל של הנפשות.

לעומת זאת הועתק מרכז הכובד של היישוב היהודי בארץ־ישראל למן הכיבוש הצלבני אל הגליל בעור אשר מחוז ירושלים ומישור החוף (להוציא את עכו, רמלה ואשקלון, שמניין התושבים היהודים של כל אחת מהן הגיע עדיין לכדי אלף נפש בקרוב) נדלדלו במידה רבה מאוכלוסייתם היהודית.

בתקופה הממלוכית הופכת ירושלים למרכז הגדול ביותר של האוכלוסייה היהודית בארץ־ישראל ואילו בצפון כובשת צפת מקום במוקד הקהילות היהודיות בכפרי הגליל. התערערות המצב הבסחוני בתקופה זו לא מנעה את קיומן של קהילות יהודיות בערי החוף יפו, לוד, רמלה ועזה ואף בשכם מתהווה אז קהילה יהודית מקומית קטנה.

הכיבוש העות׳מאני בראשית המאה ה-16 הביא עמו שינוי משמעותי בתפרוסת האוכלוסייה היהודית. למעט עזה וירושלים, שקהילתה היהודית הצליחה לקיים את מעמדה, במעט שנתרוקנה הארץ מתושביה היהודים. יוצאים מכלל זה הס במובן הכפרים באזור הגליל - מחוז שהפך במרוצת המאה ה-16 למקום מושב למידב ולמיסב האוכלוסייה היהודית בארץ בכלל. בעיקר שגשגה אז קהילתה היהודית של צפת, בירת המחוז, שאף הדימה תרומה משמעותית לפריחתו הכלכלית של חבל ארץ זה.

במקביל לירידת כוחו של הממשל העות׳מאני המרכזי ואחיזתו בארץ־ישראל חל במאות ה-17 וה-18 דלדול רומה באוכלוסייה היהודית בארץ. מניין הריכוזים היהודיים הכפריים בגליל הצטמצם ואובלוסייתם היהודית הצטמקה. גם הקהילה של

צפת קטנה וירדה מגדולתה אך לעומת זאת התפתח הישוב היהודי בטבריה, שנבנתה אז מחדש על ידי השלים המקומי הברווי ראהר אל-עמר. בערי מישור החוף - רמלה, לוד, יפו ובמידת מה גם בעכו - נותר מיעוט יהודי קטן, אך יציב.

את המפנה המבריע בתולדות הארץ ובכלל זה בתולדות הישוב היהודי חולל הביבוש המצרי של שנות ה-30 של המאה ה-19. בהשפעת העולם הנוצרי והמעצמות הגדולות נפתחה ארץ-ישראל בלפי המערב וגם אחר שסולקו המצרים ובארץ-ישראל שבו לשלום התורכים לא יכלו הללו לשוב ולסגור אותה. במחצית המאה ה-19 - מניין היהודים בארץ בבר הגיע אז לברי 10,000 נפש - נע מרבז הכובד מעכו לירושלים, אשר בה התרבזה עתה במחצית מכלל אובלוסייתה היהודית של ארץ-ישראל. בערי החוף והנגב, יפו וחיפה, חלה תנופת התפתחות ניברת שלא פסחה גם על קהילותיהן היהודיות. הישוב ב"ערי הקודש" חברון, צפת וטבריה נשאר יציב ואילו הישוב היהודי הבפרי, בולל בגליל, נעלם במעט לחלוטין. למן שנות ה-70, ועוד ערב העלייה הראשונה המסיימת את התקופה שנידונה באן, ניבר גירול משמעותי מאד במניין היהודים שעלו לארץ-ישראל ונהגו - ותרמו באחת לשגשוג שהארץ ידעה עתה.

לאורך כל 1250 השנים שנסקרו במפה ובספר חיו, בסיבום הדבר, אלפים אחדים של יהודים בארץ, בעיקר בגליל ובידושלים בשהם מעדיפים, בדרך כלל, ובווראי מטעמי בטחון, את הערים על פני הישובים הכפריים.

• יוסי בן-ארצי, שהבין את סיומה המפה, פירסם בינתיים העתק סכמטי של שתה מרכיביה במאמרו:

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