

ISLAMKUNDLICHE UNTERSUCHUNGEN · BAND 56

Mark Alan Epstein

**The Ottoman Jewish Communities
and their Role in the Fifteenth
and Sixteenth Centuries**

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KLAUS SCHWARZ VERLAG · FREIBURG · 1980

Dedicated to the memory of my grandfather,

Isidor Epstein

April 14, 1882-June 12, 1977

Mark Alan Epstein · The Ottoman Jewish Communities

ISLAMKUNDLICHE UNTERSUCHUNGEN BAND 56

herausgegeben von
Klaus Schwarz

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Note on Spelling and Transliteration

Ottoman Turkish words and phrases in the text, including borrowings from Arabic and Persian, have been spelled in accordance with Modern Turkish practice, though some familiar forms (e.g., Mehmed not Mehmet) have been employed. Whenever possible, geographic names are given in their Turkish form, generally based on D. E. Pitcher, An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire (Leiden, 1972), except for common English usage (Jerusalem, not Kūdūs). Transliterations follow the practice of the International Journal of Middle East Studies.

Turkish adaptation of the Latin alphabet includes the following variants:

Turkish c is sounded like English j.
" ç " " " " " ch.
" ş " " " " " sh.

Abbreviations

AE	Ali Emiri Tasnifi-Başvekalet Arşivi
BSOAS	University of London <u>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</u>
East and Maghreb	<u>East and Maghreb: A Volume of Researches</u> Texts and Studies in the History and Culture of the Jews in the Orient, vol. 1.
EI ²	<u>The Encyclopaedia of Islam</u> , 2nd edition
EJ	<u>Encyclopedia Judaica</u>
Fekete	Fekete Tasnifi-Başvekalet Arşivi
Ik. Fak. Mec.	İstanbul Üniversitesi. <u>İktisad Fakültesi Mecmuası</u>
KK	Kamil Kepeci Tasnifi-Başvekalet Arşivi
MM	Maliye (Maliyeden Müdevver) Defterleri-Başvekalet Arşivi
REJ	Revue des Études Juives
Tapu	Tapu ve Tahrir Defterleri-Başvekalet Arşivi
TTKY	Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları
TK	Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü (Arşiv)
TKS	Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi (Arşiv)

Abbreviations--The Islamic Months

M	Muharrem
S	Safer
Ra	Rebiülevvel
R	Rebiülahir
Ca	Cemaziel'evvel
C	Cemaziyel'ahir
B	Receb
Ş	Şa'ban
N	Ramazan
L	Şevval
Za	Zilkade
Z	Zilhicce

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Preface

Our study is concerned with the history and role of the Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Implicit within this definition are questions regarding the relations between Muslims and Jews and questions about the economic activities of Jews in Medieval and early modern society.

Previous scholarship dealing with the Ottoman Jews has, with few exceptions, followed patterns delineated by the beginning of this century. The admirable multi-volume work of S. A. Rozanes and the numerous volumes by A. Galante, which have been our chief guides, make little attempt to assess critically the role of the Jews as an element in a larger Ottoman Muslim society, though, of course, the history of the Ottoman Turks was not entirely ignored in their works. The opening of the Ottoman archives for scholarly research in the second quarter of this century thoroughly revolutionized the study of Ottoman history, and, in fact, some documents in those collections and related to Jewish history were made available to non-Turkish readers through French translations. However, the path for future scholarship was delineated by Bernard Lewis and Uriel Heyd, pioneers in the use of Ottoman documents for exploring the history of the Jews, in addition to their well known contributions to Islamic and Middle Eastern history in general. In addition to the debt owed to their work, the present study has drawn on the work of others who have begun to examine anew or

reexamine more systematically than earlier works the wealth of Rabbinic Hebrew primary material which constitutes an important part of the literary remains of the Ottoman Jewish community.

It is, of course, impossible to present in so brief a study a comprehensive history of a large and varied Jewish community, especially as, despite the quality of recent scholarship in the area, we lack the basic monographic studies which would form the underpinnings of such a study. Our much more limited goal has been to treat a number of areas which reflect fundamental elements in the relations between the Ottoman Jews and the society around them and which we are able to understand more fully in light of Ottoman documents heretofore unutilized in the study of these problems.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries comprise a period of great interest and importance in the history of the Ottoman Empire and in the history of the Jews. During those centuries the nature of the Ottoman Empire and the changing fortunes of the Jews combined to create a situation unique in the history of Muslim-Jewish relations. Because of the physical proximity of the nascent Ottoman state to the Byzantine Empire, the Ottomans emerged from among the various Turkish frontier states to become the greatest power in the Middle East; because of their geographic position, Jewish communities in Anatolia, the Balkans, and Constantinople became subject to Ottoman rule and were profoundly affected by their life in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the

situation of Jews in an increasingly hostile Christian Europe, which culminated in the expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal and inquisitorial regimes in Catholic countries, caused the flight of many Jews to the East. Perhaps nowhere else in the history of the Muslim-Jewish relationship can we point to a comparable situation, one in which events involving the Jews, and the Muslims and Christians among whom they lived, were of such magnitude and import that their impact was felt throughout East and West, and in which so many dramatic events occurred in the space of little more than one century.

The focus of the study is on those activities of the Jews which were of concern to the Ottoman authorities and those events which were made the objects of Ottoman actions. One hesitates to use the term policy in describing Ottoman responses to the Jews, as there were varied responses to particular events and problems. Three major questions raised by the study are: How did the Jews and the Ottomans view each other? What did the Jews and the Ottomans do for one another? How were these things done?

The information in the archival sources offers a basis for revising much of our knowledge regarding Ottoman Jewish history in the period at hand. We learn, first of all, that the Jews were extremely important in the life and commerce of Istanbul in the years 1453-1492, a fact which has escaped notice in previous scholarship and which leads us to reassess entirely the motives and policies of Sultan Bayezid II when

welcoming large numbers of Spanish Jews to the Ottoman Empire at the end of the fifteenth century. The same material leads us to a better understanding of the role of Jews in Ottoman economic life in the sixteenth century and in broadening our perspective in two ways. First, we are able to comprehend the operation of important investment consortia, whose existence was long suspected, and to see the manner in which Jewish merchants and tax farmers were able to play an important role in Ottoman commercial life. Secondly, we are able to seek the roots of Ottoman Jewish economic success in the sixteenth century, roots which extend back to the early years after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, in 1453. In addition, the Ottoman sources enhance our knowledge of the role of Rabbinic leaders in the Ottoman Jewish community. Not surprisingly, we are able to tie the changes in the role and status of Chief Rabbis to changes in the outlook of the Ottoman authorities and ruling circles, as well as to political developments within the Jewish community. Finally, the findings regarding the economic role of the Jews and our greater knowledge of the role of communal leaders enable us to begin to alter somewhat the perspective from which the well known Jewish physicians and politicians are viewed. They take on a new shape and fit into the framework of our general conception of Ottoman Jewish life in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

I am indebted to many individuals for their help in preparing this study. Professor Peter F. Sugar skillfully guided me through the

perilous course of preparing a doctoral dissertation. Professors Walter G. Andrews, Jere L. Bacharach, and Deborah E. Lipstadt have borne patiently the burden I placed upon them. My colleagues Calvin H. Allen, Robert M. Croskey, and Eric R. Weissman have read portions of the manuscript and offered valuable criticism. At other institutions, Professors Halil İnalçık, Jacob Landau, Bernard Lewis, and Ellis Rivkin have encouraged me and taken interest in my work. Professor A. Tietze has kindly answered inquiries about Ottoman Turkish. Drs. Benjamin Braude and Joseph Hacker have generously shared with me the results of their own research on Ottoman Jewry. Professors Enver Ziya Karal and M. Tayyib Gökbilgin were courteous hosts and helped introduce me to the world of archival research in Turkey.

Thanks are due to the Turkish government for permission to carry out research in Istanbul and Ankara. Mr. Turgut Işıksal and the staff of the Başvekalet Arşivi were unfailingly courteous and frequently made available their considerable expertise in deciphering difficult passages in the documents. Likewise, the staffs of the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, the Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü and the Istanbul Belediye Kütüphanesi were consistently pleasant and helpful. In the United States, the staff of the Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati graciously assisted me in the use of their collection.

Funds for the study were made available through the following programs and institutions, and I am grateful to all of them for their

support: Fulbright Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad program; Foreign Language and Area Studies Program; Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture; National Foundation for Jewish Culture; and the University of Washington Graduate School Research Fund.

In addition, special thanks are due my father, Lester Epstein, for reading and criticizing portions of the manuscript, my sister, Janet Epstein, and Sherry Laing for typing, and my wife Noemi, who bore with good grace the demands which the preparation of the study made on her and the intrusions which such work always makes into one's private life. Margaret Thomas kindly and skillfully prepared the map.

The author alone is responsible for the numerous shortcomings of the study and is solely responsible for any and all errors of fact or interpretation.

Note to the Published Edition

It is with some trepidation that one offers an unrevised doctoral dissertation for publication. Numerous changes and improvements could be made in light of subsequent research by the author and others. Still, the considerable interest in this subject mitigated in favor of making the materials widely available as soon as possible.

Chapter I: Introduction

At the height of its influence and in the period of its greatest physical extent, the Realm of the House of Osman, known to the western world as the Ottoman Empire, was the greatest power in the Mediterranean and the nemesis of Christian Europe. It was the foremost Islamic state of its age, though among its subjects were many Christians and Jews. The Ottoman heritage partook of Islamic ways and of the Turanian ways of central Asia whence the Turks burst upon the Muslim world. Before endeavoring to understand the manner in which Jews contributed to the prosperity and success of the Ottoman Turks and their state, we must briefly explore the history of the Ottomans through the sixteenth century in order to provide the background against which to view the history of the Ottoman Jew.

The nomadic group which followed Osman (>Ottoman) was one of many which were attracted to Anatolia in the first centuries after the Christian millenium. In the territory between Byzantine towns in western Anatolia and the lands ruled by the Seljuks of Rum, a Turkish dynasty with its capital at Konya (Iconium), Muslims and Christians conducted unceasing frontier warfare. Defenders of the two faiths campaigned against one another along ill defined boundaries, supporting themselves with the spoils which accompanied success and both sides profited at the expense of the sedentary population. Among the Muslims there emerged numerous emirates and gazi (warrior) states which were

engaged in the struggle against the Christian enemy.

In the upheaval which characterized Anatolia of the march warriors there were brotherhoods and guilds which adopted codes of conduct governing the behavior of their members. Although broad distinctions on the frontier were along Christian-Muslim lines, an all-pervasive heritage of folk beliefs and local traditions was, in fact, shared by both sides, as were many local shrines and saints. Mystic beliefs, too, had their place in the popular faith of the various fraternities. Alongside the folkways and folk organizations, there were orthodox Muslims, trained and educated people who, just as the march warriors, were attracted by the opportunities which the gazi states offered. Hence there were two parallel traditions of belief which were present on the frontier and which, in the case of the Ottomans, were later to form the historical heritage on which their beliefs and values were based.

Osman's gazi state, in the vicinity of Eskişehir (Dorylaeum), was the closest to the Byzantine military outposts in Anatolia and was, therefore, thrust into the forefront of warrior life. Thus it attracted frontier fighters singly and in groups. By about 1300 the Ottoman emirate was the foremost of the gazi states, and at the time of Osman's death his son Orhan captured Bursa and established his capital there. From then on, through the fourteenth century, the Ottomans rode the crest of success and expanded their realm at the expense of Byzantium and the Christian states in the Balkans. By 1365 the Ottomans were

firmly entrenched on the European side of the Bosphoros, and Orhan's son, Murad, who had succeeded to the leadership in the previous year, moved the capital to Edirne.

In 1389, at the Battle of Kossovo, Sultan Murad broke the power of the important Balkan rulers, though he himself was assassinated after the conflict had ended. The stage was set for his son and successor Bayezid to consolidate Ottoman rule in the Balkans. Despite opposition from some of the Anatolian Turkish emirs, Bayezid conducted an aggressive military program, but his plans were thwarted. In 1402 he was defeated by the Mongol Timur (Tamerlane) at the Battle of Ankara and was carried off to die shortly thereafter in captivity. The Ottoman domains were reduced in size and divided among Bayezid's four sons. There followed a decade long struggle among the sons which ended only in 1413, when Sultan Mehmed I emerged victorious from the civil war and set about healing the fissures which had developed as the various political, commercial, military, and religious factions in Ottoman society had supported one or another candidate in the struggle for the throne.

Even before the defeat at Mongol hands and the civil war, the Ottomans had developed a pragmatic system of conquest and pacification well suited to the conditions they encountered, particularly in the Balkans. They capitalized on the disunity of Balkan Christians and on the rivalries in the area by entering into agreements which allowed local leaders to retain their positions in exchange for tribute and

retained the local nobility on its lands in exchange for which they were required to provide the Ottomans with troops for campaigns. Alliances through marriage with women from Byzantine and Slavic royal families were an additional tool in consolidating power. Only later were the local lords removed and vassalage replaced by direct Ottoman rule in most places.

In addition to the two stage policy of pacification by which the local nobility was eventually coopted and the local dynasties eliminated, the Ottomans also employed a policy of forced migration (*sürgün*), by which they established an ethnic Turkish presence in newly conquered areas and which was sometimes utilized to remove unreliable elements from sensitive areas.

After the civil war the Ottomans returned to their previous policies in an attempt to reassert their position. During the brief reign of Mehmed I (1413-21) and that of Murad II (1421-51) the Ottoman Empire was reestablished and set again on the course of expansion which characterized it throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Campaigning at various times against the Venetians in the Morea, against the Serbs and their Hungarian allies, it seemed to the Ottomans that by 1444, when the Treaty of Edirne was signed, Sultan Murad II had firmly reestablished Ottoman rule in the Balkans and pacified Anatolian rivals. Hence Murad abdicated in favor of his son Mehmed II, who acceded to the throne at the age of twelve. The situation was less stable than Murad believed, and pressure from foreign enemies, coupled with struggles for

influence within Ottoman ruling circles, forced Murad to abandon his voluntary retirement. In 1444 he led the Ottoman forces in vanquishing Christian forces at Varna, and in 1446 he was forced by a Janissary rebellion to return permanently to the throne until his death in 1451.

When Mehmed II mounted the throne a second time, in 1451, the cloud of his unsuccessful first reign still hung over him. Uppermost in his mind was the intention to enhance dramatically his stature in order to eliminate the legacy of his abortive attempt to rule five years previously and to purge those who had been his opponents and had militated successfully for his removal from the throne. The latter aim could not be effected without the former, and hence he embarked on an energetic campaign to conquer Constantinople. Mehmed's tutor and advisor, Zaganos Paşa, was in favor of the campaign, and the Grand Vezir Çenderli Halil Paşa, leader of the old Turkish aristocracy and the man most responsible for Mehmed's failure during the stillborn first reign, led the anti-war faction.

After the conquest of the city in May 1453, Sultan Mehmed, having secured for himself a victory which shook Europe and the East, removed the Grand Vezir Halil Paşa and set about consolidating political power and reconstructing the new capital known to the Turks as Istanbul. He succeeded in both undertakings and was able to expand and solidify the frontiers of the Empire too. By the end of Mehmed's reign the Ottomans justifiably felt themselves to be masters of the greatest Islamic state in the world and heirs to the legacy of Rome. However, Mehmed's policies

of allowing monopolies for important commodities and of currency devaluation, both of which were intended to bolster the imperial treasury, caused resentment, as did his confiscation of property established as pious trusts (vakıf). To support the soldiery and enrich the treasury he pursued policies bound to alienate many influential and wealthy Ottomans and much of the population.

When Sultan Bayezid II acceded to the throne in 1481, after the death of Mehmed the Conqueror, it was he who confronted the wrath of the Janissaries and the populace, whose pent up tensions were released in riots during the period of transition. Bayezid's reign witnessed a retreat from the aggressive fiscal policies of Mehmed, and a less belligerent foreign policy, due in great measure to fear that the Sultan's brother, Cem, who had fled when Bayezid successfully took the throne, might rally the Christian and Muslim enemies of the Ottomans. Only after Cem's death was Bayezid fully at ease.

It was Sultan Selim I (1512-20) who returned the Empire to the way of territorial expansion. He vigorously prosecuted a campaign against the heterodox Safavid dynasty in Iran and suppressed their supporters in the frontier areas of eastern Anatolia. In the course of his campaigns in the East he turned southward and in 1516-17 defeated the Mamluk rulers of Syria and Egypt, thus adding those lands to the Ottoman state and acquiring control of the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and thereby enhancing even further the status of the Ottomans in the world of Islam.

Under Süleyman I (1520-66), known in the west as The Magnificent, the Empire reached its greatest power and influence. Süleyman, too, grasped the sword of conquest and repeatedly led Ottoman campaigns in Europe and Asia. Early in his reign Belgrad, Rhodes, and Buda were conquered and Ottoman forces threatened Vienna. Naval power extended Ottoman suzerainty to much of North Africa, and, in the East, Iraq and parts of Iran were acquired.

The thrust for expansion continued under Selim II (1566-74) and Mehmed III (1574-95) as well, but already the Ottomans had passed the zenith of their military and political power, though it is only through hindsight that the actual state of affairs is rendered clear.

Despite the Turkish origins of the House of Osman and the Islamic faith and heritage which the Turks adopted, the Ottoman Empire was not exclusively Turkish or Muslim, and the areas which were added to Osman's emirate over the course of three centuries of expansion included non-Turkish Muslims and large numbers of non-Muslims as well. As the frontier state developed into a great power it grew increasingly sophisticated and the administrative apparatus of government and the social demands of court life changed concomitantly. It was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that Ottoman society and its governing institutions developed into the forms which we must consider here, and the chronological limits of the study spare us the less pleasant task of describing the prolonged decay and putrefication of the system which, by force of inertia, persisted, albeit greatly changed, into recent times.

The Ottoman Sultan, as head of the House of Osman and foremost ruler in the struggle of Islam against non-believers, stood at the pinnacle of the Ottoman administration. His council of ministers, the divan, included the highest officers in the civil-military bureaucracy, and the heads of the religious establishment. Important matters of state were dealt with by the Sultans and the divan, though with the passage of time the Sultans came to be less active in the actual deliberations.

Manpower for the extensive palace service and the bureaucracy was provided mostly by the devşirme, the gathering and impressment of youths from the Christian population of the Balkans. After being converted to Islam they were educated and trained, and by a strict system of merit were selected for service in either the military or the bureaucracy. Through the sixteenth century a large percentage of the important palace functionaries, including Grand Vezirs, were drawn from this group.

Although the Ottoman infantry troops consisted of Janissaries, devşirme recruits, as well as various irregular forces, most of the cavalry was drawn from a military hierarchy. Mounted troops for the Ottoman war machine were granted benefices in the provinces. During the period of expansion in the Balkans Muslims from the cavalry came, in most places, to replace the local lords and were assigned nonheritable holdings to support them in exchange for their service during campaigns. The largest of the benefices were assigned to

provincial governors and members of the central government.

The judicial system of the empire also reflected the dual sources of the Ottoman heritage. The Ottomans, like other Muslim dynasties before them, accepted the strictures of Islamic law, Şariat. In addition, however, the diversity of conditions in newly conquered areas, desire for smooth integration of recently acquired territory, Turkish tradition, and practical necessity, dictated the need for retaining customary practices (ürf, adet), and the promulgation of statutes (kanun), to deal with situations not adequately handled by Islamic law. The canonical rules established by the Ottomans were systemized in the reign of Sultan Süleyman, hence his sobriquet in Turkish is the Lawgiver, rather than The Magnificent. While all Ottoman subjects were liable to obey the Sultanic statutes, the dual system allowed non-Muslims to retain authority over matters of personal status in their respective communities.

Subjects of the Muslim-Ottoman state were organized into various corporate bodies, each with its role, prerogatives, and perquisites, and defined with considerable precision. There were multiple bureaucracies and organizations, and hence a multiplicity of social definitions. In the broadest sense, Ottoman subjects were divided into those who were in the service of the state and those who were not. Those serving the state included members of the bureaucracy, the military, and various religious establishments. In theory, only Muslims were able to play a role, though supposedly there were no limits on the

mobility of converts to Islam who could aspire to the highest positions in the state. Considerable numbers of Christians were impressed into service and in that way entered the mainstream of Ottoman life.

In addition to the differentiation between servants of the state and the rest of the population, Muslim subjects, those born into the faith and converts alike, were distinguished from non-Muslims. In accordance with traditional Islamic practice the "people of the book," Jews and Christians, were allowed to live in Muslim society and to retain their beliefs in exchange for which they tacitly acknowledged the superiority of Islam and paid special taxes to the authorities. But, as we have noted, conversion enabled them to escape the various restrictions. Within the non-Muslim communities most affairs were left in the hands of the religious authorities allowing communities to administer themselves, a benefit from the point of view of rulers and subjects alike.

Matters of commerce, like the internal affairs of the minority communities, were left in the hands of those actually involved in them daily, and the government's concern was that the treasury be sufficiently supplied with revenue. Hence, just as benefices were employed to support the cavalry without expense to the treasury, customs houses, docks, and other revenue producing enterprises, even those normally considered the appurtenances of government, were let to tax farmers. Income producing enterprises were sold at auction and leased to the successful bidder for a set period of time, assuring the

government's income before the lessor even undertook administration of the concession. Members of government, merchants, tradesmen, Muslims and non-Muslims, all competed at various times for such leases.

By virtue of its favorable location and superb leadership the march warrior emirate of Osman was able to best its neighbors and its Christian enemies and developed into a great and sophisticated empire. In the period of its energetic expansion and through the time of its greatest glory the Ottoman Empire was able to assimilate rapidly large amounts of territory. It was, in its military and religious administration, highly centralized, but because of the numerous corporate bodies in Ottoman society, each with its bureaucracy and administrative system, great regional differences were acknowledged and allowed. These continued to exist without the central government enforcing complete uniformity. Pragmatic policies of pacification and a tendency to lease all revenue producing privileges to individuals who were only nominally in state service created conditions which made the Empire prosperous. The military might and the territorial expansion of the Empire enabled it to acquire additional sources of wealth to support itself.

The decline of the Ottoman Empire, a longer and slower process than its remarkable emergence on the world scene of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, has been ascribed to numerous causes, singly and in combination. The excellent quality of the leadership exercised by the first ten Sultans has been contrasted with the general decay of the

dynasty and incompetence of most of the later rulers, whose shortcomings led to a continual crisis of leadership. The territorial expansion which fueled the military machine and supported it slowed after the late sixteenth century, leaving an unemployed soldiery and leading to discontent. It has also been argued that the administrative system, which worked well before the sixteenth century, was overextended and overburdened by the acquisition of the Arab provinces and North Africa early in the sixteenth century. Rampant inflation, a Mediterranean-wide phenomenon in the sixteenth century, the crisis surrounding the influx of New World silver, as well as the effects of the newly opened Cape Route, have been cited as well. In the realm of faith and ideas, some argue that the rising influence of conservative Arab Islam induced a reaction against the Turkish component in Ottoman traditions and against the influence of devşirme recruits, and that these phenomena were instrumental in undermining the liberal spirit which, until the sixteenth century, had enabled the Ottomans to accept talent from all the subject peoples of the Empire. The defeat of Ottoman naval forces at the Battle of Lepanto, in 1571, has been indicated as sounding the death knell for Ottoman sea power, with the important ramifications of such a development for Ottoman military and commercial strength. It is, of course, impossible to point to any single factor as "the cause" which precipitated the decline and heralded the disintegration of Ottoman power. It is clear, however, that it was in the sixteenth century that, simultaneously with the apogee of their power and influence, the Ottomans embarked on the path to degeneration.

Our study concerns some aspects of the history of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but we must briefly take note of the various Jewish communities which the Ottomans encountered during the period of their expansion, and which comprised the majority of the Ottoman Jewish community until the end of the fifteenth century.

The Jewish communities of Byzantine Constantinople, Anatolia and the Balkans consisted mostly of long term residents of those places, though a few Jews from Italy and other parts of Europe lived among them too. Unfortunately the history of the Byzantine Jews and other Jewish communities in the vicinity remains, if not unstudied, imperfectly known.

For information of the size and location of the communities which later formed part of the Ottoman Jewish community, scholars have relied on the account of the twelfth century Spanish-Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tudela, who visited and described many of these communities. From his time until the Ottoman period there is little reliable information. The most recent research dealing with the period of the Fourth Crusade, for example, has pointed to the lists of Istanbul congregations in the seventeenth century as the most satisfactory guide in this respect.¹ In fact, a more reliable guide to the names and places of origin of the Jewish congregations of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries exists in the form of mid-sixteenth century Ottoman records, and they show that many changes occurred between the time they

were prepared and the preparation of the seventeenth century lists which have been our guide since their publication by Uriel Heyd twenty-five years ago.² However, when we consider that in the twelfth century Benjamin reported some 8,500 Jewish households in Greece, the Byzantine capital, and some of the nearby islands and the sixteenth century lists show less than 2,000 households, it is apparent that considerable difficulty confronts the student attempting to assess the reliability of the figures and the effects of plague, crusades, migrations, and so forth, not to mention the general demographic changes which may have affected Jews and non-Jews alike in the intervening centuries.

It is unnecessary to describe here the vicissitudes of the Byzantine Jews in the thousand year history of the Second Rome on the Bosphoros. The latter years of Byzantine rule, however, reflect directly on the history of the Jews in the Ottoman period.

Shortly after the visit of Benjamin in the twelfth century, the Eastern Empire was thrown into disarray and never fully recovered. The Latin Crusade of 1204, which had as its purpose the rescue of Palestine and the holy places from Muslim rule, fell short of its goal and found in Constantinople a suitable object for the attentions of the Western Christians who occupied and sacked the city. Although Benjamin had seen Jewish communities which he described as living under the yoke of oppression,³ the Latins brought the vicious anti-Semitic violence which had been the mark of the crusades and their spirit. The Byzantine Empire never regained its strength after the half century of Latin rule. During

the last centuries of its existence the political system and the integrity of the Empire were under frequent attack, and provinces which supplied and lent strength to the capital were slipping out of Byzantine control. Although it has been pointed out that the political insecurity of Michael VIII (1259-82) led to a certain moderation of Paleologue policy toward the Jews,⁴ the fact remains that for the Jews there was little attraction in Byzantine life.

In the Byzantine provincial towns relations between Jews and Christians were not entirely unsatisfactory, and the Jews were often comfortable and prosperous, though periods of good relations alternated with especially difficult times. The changes and contradictions which exemplify conditions in the provinces and in the capital, in which there was continual conflict between reiterated legal privileges and reiterated legal restrictions, and a basic hostility of Christians toward Jews contrasted with "joint Christian-Jewish struggle against the authorities," and even instances of Christian inclination toward Jewish practices,⁵ a situation generally better than in Western Europe.

The ambiguity and lack of information regarding Byzantine Jewish policies is reflected in the problem of taxation. It is simply unclear how the Jews were taxed and what the significance of the various Jewish taxes was. The few references scattered through the literature and records dealing with centuries of Byzantine history are insufficient to clarify the situation, and admit of no solution to the problem. We have no clear idea of the nature of what seems to be a capitation tax

and cannot tell whether the Jews, in exchange for paying such an assessment, received some measure of communal independence.

To further exacerbate the situation, the history of the Byzantine Jews after the Fourth Crusade has received even less attention than earlier periods, and there is no monographic study of the Jews in the latter years of the Eastern Rome.⁶

We do know that the relationship between the Byzantine Jews and their government, at least in Constantinople, was maintained through a Rabbi who headed the community, known to the Jews as "The Rabbi"; a similar leader at Thebes as called "The Great Rabbi."⁷ We have indications, also, that the Karaite Jews had their own leaders, and in their case it has been suggested that, at least in liturgical matters, the jurisdiction of the Karaite leadership seems to embrace a far-flung network of Karaite communal units centered around their houses of worship.⁸ We are confronted with the difficulty that the evidence is not from the period immediately prior to 1453, but we do know that the Rabbi of Istanbul who served under the Byzantines just before the conquest continued in office after 1453, and Ottoman documents of the late fifteenth century suggest that as late as the 1480's the Karaites' own representatives dealt directly with the Ottoman central authorities, rather than through the Rabbi of the Rabbinate Jews.⁹ It is therefore logical that we look to Byzantine institutions in seeking explanations for some aspects of Ottoman Jewish history, but we must regret the lack of information to guide us better.

In addition to the few hints about Rabbis, we have information regarding the existence of Jewish communal institutions similar to those found elsewhere in the Muslim and Christian worlds. However, the work of community councils and committees, and the role of elders selected by the communities to deal with the internal affairs of the Jews,¹⁰ are universal in medieval and early modern Jewish life, making it problematic to judge whether specifically Byzantine-Jewish practices existed and were held over into the Ottoman period, or after 1453 new practices took their place, and whether there were periods of inactivity while the situation was in flux. Our meager knowledge of Jewish history in Byzantium, in Anatolia and the Balkans during the period of Ottoman expansion denies us a basis on which to seek any possible elements of continuity and to explain what elements of Jewish policy, if any, were carried over and formed part of Ottoman reactions to and treatment of the Jews.

Notes

¹ Steven B. Bowman, "The Jews in Byzantium, 1361-1453," Diss. The Ohio State University. 1974, pp. 220-22; cites Uriel Heyd, "The Jewish Communities of Istanbul in the Seventeenth Century," Oriens, VI (1953), 299-314.

² Heyd-Istanbul. A modified and expanded version of Heyd's lists is presented in Appendix 2, and the sixteenth century lists are contained in Appendix 1.

³ Andrew Sharf, Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade (New York, 1971), p. 136.

⁴ Bowman, pp. 58-60.

⁵ Sharf, p. 163.

⁶ Bowman, p. ii.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 141-43.

⁸ Zvi Ankori, Karaites in Byzantium (New York, 1959), pp. 51-54.

⁹ KK 2411, p. 20 (misnumbered as p. 6).

¹⁰ A. Ovadiah, "Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi," (Hebrew), Sinai, III (1939), p. 401.

Chapter II: Muslim-Jewish relations in the
Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

Images revered in Christian Churches bar the doors against both Turk and Jew; who count us worse than cannibals for eating our God as they say we do in the Eucharist: a scandal we owe to the Court of Rome.

Francis Osborn, 1673

In the preceding chapter we took note of the fact that there were Jewish communities in the Balkans and in Constantinople before and during the rise of the Ottomans, and that among them were Rabbinite and Karaite Jews. In addition, there were Jews from Italy who lived in Galata under the protection of the Italian merchant community there, as well as some Ashkenazi Jews. After 1492 Iberian and other Jews settled in the Ottoman Empire as well. During the period of our study these communities, and others, became Ottoman subjects. The primary task here is to describe Ottoman attitudes toward the Jews and Jewish attitudes toward the Ottomans, showing how the changes in the composition of the Jewish communities in the area affected the relations between the Jews and the Ottomans and the application of traditional Islamic strictures on non-Muslims to the Jewish communities under Ottoman rule.

During the fifteenth century, when the Ottomans were struggling to reestablish themselves in the Balkans, there was considerable turmoil among the Jewish communities in Central and Western Europe. Even if the difficulties of the darker centuries immediately preceding the

fourteenth are minimized, it is easy to understand the attraction which Ottoman life, particularly when compared to life in Europe, held for the Jews. There is no way to tell how many Jews left Christendom for the realm of the rising Muslim Ottomans, but with each account of persecution in or expulsion from Christian countries it is recorded that some Jews fled to Ottoman territory. The regularity of these reports suggests that the Ottomans were considered reasonably tolerant protectors and that there was a regular trickle of Jewish families moving southward and eastward from Western and Central Europe.

There are a number of reports of Jews migrating to Ottoman territory in the latter years of the fourteenth century. Within a year of their expulsion in 1376, Jews from Hungary were living under Ottoman rule.¹ Expulsion from France in September 1394 sent Jews fleeing to Edirne.² Some of these, or others fleeing shortly thereafter, settled in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) soon to become an Ottoman vassal.³ From the first quarter of the fifteenth century there are accounts of Jews expelled from Sicily settling in Ragusa and in Ottoman territory.⁴ We also have reports of Jews arriving in Chios, under Genoese rule, in the 1390's.⁵ There is even a claim that Jews fleeing German ghettos settled among the Grecophone Jews in Salonika and soon had them speaking German-Yiddish.⁶ We know, too, that the flow of Jews from the Iberian peninsula to the eastern Mediterranean did not begin in the early 1490's, but rather in the 1390's and continued throughout the fifteenth century.⁷ Some of the cases mentioned here were instances of Jews migrating to areas not yet

Ottoman territory but within the Ottoman sphere of influence. It is evident that the effects of plague, late crusades,⁸ and the general intolerance and persecution of Jews in Christian Europe resulted in the redirection of the whole focus of Jewish life which, for more than two centuries, was to be oriented toward the Muslim East.

The attention of Jews already in the East was also drawn to the Ottomans. In the middle of the thirteenth century, Karaite Jews fleeing the oppression of Byzantine provincial towns fled either to Constantinople, where conditions were somewhat better, or to the Crimea, a center of Karaite life. Early in the fourteenth century, when the Ottomans had established their European capital at Edirne, many Jews, including Karaites, migrated there.⁹ In the 1420's Jews from Salonika, which had been purchased by the Venetians, probably fled to Edirne.¹⁰ Thus Jews in the East were moving to Ottoman territory as well, and it was the capital, Edirne, which drew many of them.

In the second quarter of the sixteenth century the foremost official in the Edirne Jewish community was Rabbi Yitzhak Şarfati, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of the city. He was the most important Rabbi in the city and the author of an important letter which tells us something of the situation of Edirne Jewry in the fifteenth century. Şarfati himself was from Christian Europe and supposedly wrote his letter at the behest of two recent arrivals from there, who, upon seeing the prosperity and freedom of the Ottoman Jews, prevailed upon him to write their European coreligionists apprising them of the

situation and urging them to migrate. This remarkable letter advised its recipients not only of the pleasant conditions in the Ottoman domains, but described as well the ease of travel to Palestine and the holy places, an attraction to those who would make a pilgrimage or choose to be buried there. This appeal was apparently sent in the 1430's.¹¹

It is unlikely that such a letter could be sent without the explicit or implicit approval of the Ottoman authorities. Not only was Şarfati the preeminent Rabbi of the capital, but, like other members of the community, he must have had some notion of Ottoman attitudes. In light of the manner in which the Ottomans settled and welcomed Jews in Edirne, the author of this appeal must have been secure in the knowledge that the authorities would be pleased at such a call for Jewish immigrants and would welcome all newcomers. We can presume, then, that in the second quarter of the fifteenth century the Jews of Edirne were a community whose contribution to the city and the Empire was valued by the authorities, and felt confident enough in their situation to invite others to join them.

After the conquest of Istanbul, in 1453, the center of Ottoman life shifted to the new capital, and Jewish immigrants often headed there, just as Edirne had attracted them when it was imperial residence. In addition to the continuing migration of Iberian Jews eastward there were also refugees who were the victims of expulsion from Bavaria under Ludwig X in 1470, and who settled both in Italy and in the Ottoman

Empire.¹² Two Jewish tax farmers, who purchased a concession for taxes on candle production in Istanbul in 877/1472, are noted as being from Europe and many have belonged to this group.¹³ In addition, we know that Karaites from the Crimea and southern Poland were heading for Ottoman territory about this time.¹⁴

At the end of the fifteenth century the Ottoman Empire accepted large numbers of Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian Jews fleeing persecution and the regime of Inquisition which the authorities in those Catholic countries had revived. The refugees from Spain were the largest group, and some of them fled to Portugal and Italy, later making a second move which brought them to Ottoman territory. Jews fled in all directions from Iberia, mostly to the Muslim East, though some went elsewhere in Christian Europe too.

Many Jews arriving in Ottoman ports settled within a few years throughout the Balkans and in some Anatolian towns as well. Within a generation or two there were congregations from these communities in nearly every town of consequence.¹⁵ By the early years of the sixteenth century they had become numerically superior to the older communities almost everywhere in the Empire, and since that time the history of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire has been viewed largely as the history of the Iberian Jews who fled to the East, and the history of the other communities, even before 1492, has been mostly eclipsed by that of the new arrivals.

The shape and composition of the Ottoman Jewish community continued to change after the impact of these waves of immigration.

In the 1520's Ottoman conquests in Hungary resulted in the migration of Jews from Buda to Balkan towns and to Istanbul.¹⁶ After Apulia fell under Papal control, in 1537, Jews from there fled to Ottoman territory,¹⁷ and throughout the 1540's and 50's Jews continued to leave Catholic Europe bound for Ottoman territory. As late as the 1550's the Venetians were still debating whether to expel Jews.¹⁸ In fact, there were expulsions from Italy as late as the end of the sixteenth century,¹⁹ and other Jews, who were not compelled to move, but who chose, for whatever reasons, to test their fate in the Muslim East also settled in the Ottoman Empire.²⁰

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, then, the shape and composition of the Jewish communities under Ottoman rule were continually changing. Along with those changes came corresponding effects on the relationship between the Jews and their Ottoman hosts.

Relations between the Ottoman Jews and the Muslim community in whose midst they lived must be considered in light of the conditions under which protected persons (Zimmi) were allowed to live in Muslim society.²¹ Islam permitted them relative freedom to practice their religion and participate in the life of the society, albeit with restrictions designed to distinguish them as adherents of religions inferior to Islam. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the degree to which these restrictions were enforced changed a number of times.

The paucity of Ottoman documents which illuminate social conditions until the mid-sixteenth century complicates the task of comparing those

years to others in assessing Ottoman attitudes toward Jews.²² It appears, though, that four distinct periods can be identified. The first corresponds roughly to the reign of Sultan Mehmed II, 1451-81, the second to the reign of his son and successor Bayezid II, 1481-1512; the third begins with the accession of Selim I and continues through the reigns of Süleyman and Selim II (d. 1574). The fourth period begins in the last years of Selim II and encompasses changes which continued well into the seventeenth century, beyond the chronological limits of this study.

Throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire it was probably attractive for economic and personal reasons for Jews to convert to Islam, and, indeed, Muslims believed that eventually all Jews and Christians would or should realize the truth of the Islamic revelation and become Muslims. However, conditions in Ottoman society were such that being a Jew was generally not intolerable, if perhaps somewhat inconvenient at times. Still, the changing times and conditions created greater or lesser pressure, and the response to the appeal of Islam varied.

At the outset, a distinction must be made between the attitudes toward and treatment of Jews in Ottoman society and that accorded to Christians. The terminology used in the Ottoman documents guides us in this regard, though at times it is the source of some confusion, a reflection of the contradictions between the theoretical status of non-Muslims and the actual treatment of the Jews in the fifteenth and

and much of the sixteenth century.

In documents from the period of Mehmed the Conqueror, when Jews were brought to Istanbul in order to help in the rebuilding of the capital, there are contradictions in the terminology employed in Jewish matters. In some instances, Greek terminology was applied to Jewish institutions in spite of its being inappropriate from the standpoint of the Jews. In collecting the dues from the Jewish community for the privilege of having an independent Chief Rabbi selected by the community itself, the term *rav*, taken from Hebrew, is used to describe the functionary whose status and duties paralleled those of the Patriarch in the Greek community.²³ However, in referring to a secondary functionary, apparently similar to a Greek Bishop, the Greek term Metropolitan was borrowed,²⁴ and in another document from the same period the word *kenise*, denoting either a church or a synagogue, occurs.²⁵ In contrast, some administrative documents reflect careful distinctions made among various groups. We encounter such phrases as "some of the Infidels of Istanbul and Galata along with the Jews,"²⁶ and "infidels of Istanbul along with the Armenians and Franks of Kefe,"²⁷ which did not include Jews. Similarly the title of a register "Account of the households of Muslims and Christians and Jews and Armenians and others,"²⁸ suggests that the use of the term *infidel*, *gebr*, was to denote Greeks, or those subject to the Greek Patriarch.

In early cadastral surveys, also, there is a distinction between Jews and other non-Muslims. In a survey dating from the period of the

conquest there is a distinction between küfre, infidels, and Jews.²⁹ This distinction persisted well into the next century. In the sixteenth century, in fact, the situation became even more interesting from this standpoint. At some point it was not only standard practice to distinguish infidels, küfre, from Jews, but it was common to refer to Jews and Christians as "Yahudi ve zimmi."³⁰ The normal generic term for protected persons, zimmi, was used to designate Christians, and until very late in the sixteenth century it was rarely applied to Jews. There is confirmation that this was a real distinction. After the 970's/1560's and 980's/1570's, when there was a return to stricter enforcement of restrictions on Jews, the phraseology of orders regarding this change leaves little doubt that uniformity in restrictions on non-Muslims was not previously the case. This is emphasized with such phrases as "Jews and other infidels . . . ,"³¹ "in accordance with my order infidels, whether they be Jews or others . . . ,"³² and several other ones.

The distinction which was made between Jews and Orthodox Christians, who were referred to as zimmi, was a reflection of reality. While the theological opposition of Islam to Judaism in the Ottoman Empire may always have been strong, Jews were allowed considerably more freedom than Christians. Since there is no theological explanation for this differentiation, the answer probably lies in the fact that the Orthodox, as previous masters of Istanbul and formerly the masters of independent states in the Balkans, supporters of Christian Europe in the struggle against the Ottomans, posed a considerably greater threat to the

Ottomans than did the Jews. In any case, it is clear that Jews and Christians were treated differently. Recent research shows that, beginning with the conquest of Istanbul, the Ottomans pursued an active policy of closing and suppressing churches and of steadily undermining the fabric of Christian neighborhoods and communal life.³³ In other words, the theory of zimmi status, by which protected peoples were merely tolerated at best, was strictly applied to the Orthodox population of Istanbul. In the case of the Jews there was a considerable divergence between theory and practice.

A few synagogues survived from the Byzantine period and were serving the Greek Rabbinate, Ashkenazi, Italian, and Karaite communities of the city at the time of the conquest.³⁴ However, they were insufficient to serve the needs of the new arrivals from the provinces whom the Ottomans sent to Istanbul to participate in the rebuilding of the capital after 1453. Jewish sources report that each of the groups, arriving under programs of forced migration or voluntarily, established its own synagogue.³⁵ While it may be that these were often small houses or rooms used for group prayer, even that practice was a violation of the *Shari'at*. Perhaps such facilities were considered less offensive than churches to the majority of Muslims because they did not represent the regime or the beliefs of the longtime enemy. Nor, one might suppose, were the Jews associated particularly with the old regime in the same way as were the remaining Greeks. Therefore, some suitable compromise was reached by which the Jews were able to fulfill their spiritual needs

without provoking the wrath of the authorities or the Muslim population. The compromise seems to have been that, in the interests of the state, the Şeriat was simply ignored.

By the close of the fifteenth century the Jews of Istanbul were well established and important to the life of the city. The latter fact accounts, in great measure, for the welcome accorded the Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal who arrived in the 1490's. However, it appears that after the accession of Sultan Bayezid II, in 886/1481, the Jews were under considerably greater pressure to convert than they had been during the reign of the Conqueror. The chronicler Eliyahu Capsali reports that Bayezid closed synagogues which had been built after 1453 because they were illegal according to Şeriat, and that Jews were under pressure to convert to Islam.³⁶ There is circumstantial evidence which suggests that the chronicle may be correct in these respects. It is difficult to find evidence which reflects the reality of the brief period between 1492, when large numbers of refugees arrived from Spain, and 1512, when Sultan Selim I ascended the throne and, according to Capsali's chronicle, reopened the synagogue which had been closed. One report from Salonika, dating from the late 1490's, says that it was prohibited to build permanent synagogues, that the Jews had to content themselves with low buildings, and that it was dangerous to allow their voices to be heard outside lest they attract the enmity of the populace.³⁷ This is not inconsistent with what we know of restrictions on non-Muslims in general and of Ottoman practice

in many periods. However, two generations later Rabbinic sources refer to permanent synagogues in Salonika built in the first half of the sixteenth century.³⁸ Certainly in Salonika, in Istanbul, as well as in other towns, there were buildings constructed for use as synagogues. Documents from the seventeenth century concerning a conflict over a building constructed by the Karaite community of Istanbul as a synagogue show that it was finally conceded in court that certain claims could not be made by the Jews because even they admitted that the building was no more than 120-130 years old, i.e., dated from the mid-sixteenth century.³⁹ There is, then, evidence to show that synagogues were built before and after Bayezid's reign despite the statement that in the latter years of the fifteenth century permanent facilities were prohibited to the Salonika Jews. While the evidence is not conclusive, it strongly suggests that the chronicler was correct in his account, and that there was indeed a period in which, under Sultan Bayezid II, synagogues were closed by the government.

There is further evidence to support the contention that there were increased demands on the Jews in regard to religion. The conversion of the Jewish physician Hekim Yakub, who had served Mehmed the Conqueror, occurred within two years of Bayezid's accession,⁴⁰ and it may be that it was necessary for him to convert in order to maintain his position at court or his rank. It is also reported that the Jewish physician Joseph Hamon was under pressure to become a Muslim.⁴¹ In addition, a document from Bayezid's reign shows that an important Jewish

tax farmer, who had been in prison for nearly a decade because of past debts due the government, converted to Islam and was freed.⁴² There do not seem to be other such instances in the documents, either before or after the period of Bayezid II, which show that conversion to Islam sufficed to obtain one's freedom from such obligations though there are numerous examples of imprisoned tax farmers. We do not know if such an offer, conversion in exchange for freedom, was put forth in other periods, but it is difficult to believe that, if made, such a proposal would have been universally declined.

After the reign of Sultan Bayezid there was a period of considerable leniency in regard to restrictions on Jews. The clearest reflection of this is the evidence of return to stricter enforcement, later in the century, of Şeriat restrictions regarding the repair of synagogues and similar problems, such as the expansion of cemeteries. In discussing the fines for violating the rules regarding the repair or restoration of damaged or destroyed churches according to the Kanunname of Sultan Süleyman, Heyd pointed out that in the case of even a single brick being added or the building being expanded even the slightest a large fine was to be levied and the building razed.⁴³ This strictness, and the actual enforcement of such a stern policy, is one of the factors which Binswanger cites as an integral part of the Ottoman policy of suppressing Istanbul Christians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴⁴ In mentioning this rule, Heyd adds Jews and synagogues only parenthetically, suggesting that this addition may not be justified

by the text but only by analogy.⁴⁵ If that is indeed the case, it may constitute one more piece of evidence illustrating the lenient treatment accorded to the Jews in certain periods when compared with the strict enforcement of the law to which the Christians were subjected.

Some other aspects of the restrictions applied to protected persons in Ottoman society have been particularly well known because they attracted the attention of European travellers in the Ottoman Empire and also because documents dealing with them were among the earliest from the Ottoman archives to be published. Restrictions on the clothing which non-Muslims wore are quite well known. In accordance with the dress code of the Empire, Jews were assigned certain colors and styles of clothing and footwear, and, like Christians, were enjoined from wearing finery, silks, jewels, and so forth, though the frequent orders prohibiting such practices testify eloquently to the considerable abuse and laxity of enforcement. Not that the finery and jewels of the Jews passed unnoticed in the early and mid sixteenth century, but until the latter part of the century they were tolerated. It is even reported that Jewish traders abroad wore white turbans, reserved at home for Muslims, and this was interpreted as a symbol of their being respected subjects of the Sultan and that they fully expected to be treated as such when trading in Christian countries.⁴⁶

Closely associated with the clothing restrictions were those on slave holding, in particular the prohibitions on Muslim slaves being owned by non-Muslim masters. Jews and Christians were active in the

slave trade and they also paid extra taxes for the privilege of keeping slaves.⁴⁷ Violations were common in this area as well. The spate of late sixteenth century orders regarding clothing is accompanied by a similarly large number dealing with violations in regard to slaves. These orders probably resulted from the rising influence of religious conservatives along with envy of the wealth displayed by members of the Jewish community. The orders from the 970's/1560's-990's/1580's published by Refik⁴⁸ and Galante,⁴⁹ as well as similar unpublished ones, reflect the changes in standards of enforcement and the fact that it was necessary to issue decrees every few years to reenforce the terms of previous edicts testifies to the resistance of the community to these measures and their ineffectual enforcement. The habits of a century and more were well entrenched, and, apparently, the Jews must have argued that such practices were long permitted. In fact, one government decree goes so far as to say that, even though in the time of Süleyman it was permitted for Jews to keep slaves, it was not legal and would no longer be tolerated. As usual, it was ordered that Jewish owned slaves were to be sold, and that those who refused to divest themselves of their human property were to be imprisoned.⁵⁰ It was unusual for the Ottoman authorities to admit under any circumstances that previous practice had been bad, though in this case they perhaps pointed to the period of Sultan Süleyman as an aberration during which the good practice of previous times had been temporarily set aside, now to be reestablished. The mention in some regulations of Jews only may suggest, once again,

that they were the main culprits or, perhaps, the most visible. In any case, once more the impression is confirmed that through the earlier years of the sixteenth century Jews were able to flaunt openly many of the theoretical strictures within which they supposedly were to live, and that they had considerable freedom in their daily lives and habit.

Other kinds of restrictions than those on dress and slave holding were ignored as well. A letter from Vidin, dating from the 1530's, is filled with bitter complaints about the uncle of the author who had been outfitted at the writer's expense with a horse and a sword and sent on a mission for the unhappy correspondent who found the results quite unsatisfactory.⁵¹ Neither horses nor swords were permitted to Jews, but it is unlikely that this instance was unique. Especially in the countryside, where distances were greater than in the city and roads insecure, such violations were probably common.

In all, the impression left by the surviving accounts from the period is that from the earliest Ottoman contacts with the Jews until the latter part of the sixteenth century it was not particularly onerous to live as a Jew under the Muslim Ottomans. The restrictions which Islam demanded were, with the exception of a period at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, ignored in part or entirely. This liberal attitude toward Jews stands in marked contrast to the treatment accorded Christians who, for reasons of politics, probably more than of Islamic theology, were under a considerably stricter regime.

In spite of the relatively liberal treatment accorded the Jews, the temptation to convert to Islam must have been strong. While Jews were not subject to impressment for Janissary and other forms of service, as were most Christians, there was still conversion.

One of the earliest accounts of a Jew converting to Islam in the Ottoman period is the claim that Torlak Kemal, a disciple of the rebel Şeyh Bedreddin around the beginning of the fifteenth century, was a converted Jew from Manisa named Samuel.⁵² While this may not be verifiable there is considerable evidence from the latter half of the fifteenth century of Jews converting to Islam, having found the prospect of conversion too attractive to ignore. In the late 1470's, for example, the records show a Jew from the Salonika congregation of Istanbul and a recent convert jointly farming certain salt taxes in the Salonika area.⁵³ While it is mildly surprising that a convert to Islam would be on such good terms with his former coreligionists, it is more likely than finding a former Christian in partnership with a Jew.⁵⁴ In other cases the evidence is even clearer. Records of the Aya Sofya mosque show a section of properties described as pious trusts established by Jews, and the names of recent converts appear there as well.⁵⁵ There are frequent occurrences of the names of converts in the fiscal records of the late fifteenth century, but it is not always possible to tell former Christians from former Jews. In some instances it is reasonably clear from the names of their partners and associates, or from the previous records, whether they are Jewish converts, but it is impossible

to say with certitude what portion of the new converts to Islam came from the Jewish community. Examples such as the Sultan's physician Hekim Yakub, whose career is documented in various sources, are rare, and his conversion is said to have caused considerable consternation among the Jews.

Lists of the important functionaries in the administration during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries include numerous converts from Christianity, voluntary converts, renegades, and those impressed by the *devşirme*, but the absence of Jews in such lists is notable. The *defterdar* Abdüsselam Çelebi, who served for about one year in the 1520's, is said by some to have been a Jewish convert.⁵⁶ Even if he was, we are hard pressed to find other examples. This is an indication of the easier lot which befell the Jews in the Empire during these two centuries, and that there were sufficient opportunities available for Jews that conversion was not the only means of gaining a chance to earn a good living or participate in the life of the society.

Rabbinic sources from the sixteenth century do complain about the conversion of Jews to Islam and of the low motives of the converts. Often, they say, it was for reasons of personal ambition or to escape the rule of certain Jewish legal institutions, most often in cases of marriage and divorce. Conversion was threatened also in instances where individuals hoped to influence the Rabbis and judges to decide in their favor.⁵⁷

In some instances conversion may have been a device to avoid unpleasant treatment at the hands of the government rather than a measure

to evade the Jewish authorities. A Jewish convert who was forcibly resettled (sürgün) in Tunis petitioned the government to allow his return home and claimed he was exempt from such deportation, but his request was denied.⁵⁸ It may be that his conversion was a ploy to avoid deportation in the first place.

From the middle of the sixteenth century there is evidence in the Ottoman documents regarding conversion which not only confirms the situation described by the Rabbis, but also shows that the Ottoman authorities were not at all passive or indifferent, though contrary to Muslim doctrine they seem to have differentiated between converts and Muslims by birth. A fiscal register from 960/1552-53 records a tax payment by "recent converts from the Greek (Rum) community who have taken the name Mehmed."⁵⁹ Ten years later, a list of individuals in prison shows one Mehmed b. Abdullah, a typical name for a convert; the register notes that he was a converted Jew caught one night stealing and was therefore sent to the galleys,⁶⁰ the same punishment accorded a Muslim who had killed a Jew!⁶¹

Cases of insincerity and of interference with conversion to Islam were considered serious enough to be handled in the capital, even if they occurred in the provinces. In one instance the Kadi of Üsküp was ordered to send to Istanbul on Yahya and six of his friends in order to allow the Şeyhülislam to deal with them personally. They were described as people knowledgeable in Jewish affairs who had converted to Islam and subsequently were accused of backsliding.⁶² Similarly, the Rabbi of

Erbil and other members of the Jewish community were ordered sent to Istanbul for having persuaded a woman who had converted to return to Judaism.⁶³ The religious prerogatives of Islam were, it appears, carefully defended by the authorities.

Under certain circumstances the rights of the Jews and Judaism were also protected by the authorities in the capital. In instances where Christians, apparently under the influence of European teachings, made accusations of blood libel against the Jews, the accusers were sent to Istanbul and made to repeat the slander before the divan, where they were dealt with harshly, a practice which was followed in all the cases which have come to light thus far.⁶⁴

Despite the desire to expose the Jews to the correctness of Islam, late in the sixteenth century, when restrictions on protected persons were being more rigorously enforced than before, it was ordered that all copies of the Koran or Muslim religious tracts in the possession of Jews be seized. The edict stated that Jews in Istanbul, using the excuse that their children might want to look at them, were in possession of Muslim holy texts. A house to house search in order to confiscate all partial or complete manuscripts was ordered, and those possessing them were to be arrested. The need for secrecy, to insure that the searches would be a complete surprise, was stressed.⁶⁵

In the market place of religious ideas, then, some people were attracted to Islam and converted. Apparently some were motivated by ambition based on the logical belief that as Muslims in a Muslim society

they might follow paths otherwise closed to them. As often as not, it seems that people converted in order to escape the wrath of the Jewish courts or the strictures of Jewish law. While conversion certainly did occur, it does not appear that there were apostates deserting the Jewish community by the thousands. In the multi-communal Ottoman society one could easily escape the grasp of one's own community by conversion to Islam, and the Ottoman authorities certainly encouraged conversion, but, despite the search of 988/1580 and the greater enforcement of restrictions which occurred toward the end of the century, it does not appear that pressure to adopt Islam was so great that it threatened the integrity of the Jewish community or its institutions.

The relationship between the Ottoman authorities and the Jewish community in regard to religious affairs is only one aspect of the Muslim-Jewish relationship. In the realm of day to day relations it is difficult to know what the social atmosphere of Ottoman towns was. This is due to the nature of the sources and to the fact that the events which were recorded by Jews or others were the exceptional rather than the typical. Satisfactory social intercourse and commercial activities did not attract the attention of contemporary writers. In addition, it must always be borne in mind that in Ottoman society social life was centered within each community, so that contacts outside the context of commerce were probably limited. It has recently been pointed out that the court records of Istanbul show surprisingly few cases of dealing with Christians. This is a testimony to the efficacy of the Greek

church in keeping control of communal affairs.⁶⁶ The same probably holds true for the Jews.

The social isolation of groups from one another is confirmed by the general absence of references to Jews in Ottoman historical sources. Plunder of Jewish, as well as other, homes and shops is occasionally noted, as during the Janissary riots after the death of Sultan Mehmed II, but such events were so important that they attracted the attention of the Jewish and Greek sources as well. In the same vein, Jewish sources mention the exactions of corrupt officials and governors, which probably became increasingly frequent as the sixteenth century progressed, but they do not give the impression that life was intolerable or that the Jews were the exclusive victims of such practices.

The Ottoman documents do give the impression that something of a double standard existed in the availability of legal protection, especially away from the capital. In one instance a group of unruly sipahis had been harassing and robbing Jews in Edirne to the point of seizing their women and children, presumably for ransom. Despite two complaints by the Jews, it was not until the offenders were accused of frequenting the quarters of the wives of military officers that firm orders were issued sending some to the galleys and turning others over to their officers for punishment which, we may surmise, was executed with considerably more zeal than that received by their fellows at the hands of anonymous masters in the galleys.⁶⁷ We have other reports of attacks on Jews, but the incidents which are recorded are those in which

punishment was meted out to the offenders.⁶⁸ There are even records of officers from Istanbul being sent to the provinces to ensure that local administrators complied with orders regarding the protection of Jews or the recovery of stolen property, leaving the impression that the status of Jews in the capital and in the eyes of the central authorities was considerably higher than that accorded them in the provinces, and that provincial communities relied on the central government for protection when the local administrators did not perform their duty.⁶⁹

In keeping with the double standard of the Şeriat, Jews in the wrong were dealt with severely in cases where they infringed on the social limits and directly violated the prerogatives of Muslims. A man caught after a tryst with the wife of a sipahi and who, according to the document, had a history of such activity, was ordered hanged; the woman was thrown into the sea.⁷⁰ In other cases, the impression is created that the Şeriat was used in order to find some pretext for personal revenge through the vehicle of the courts.⁷¹ Charges of false testimony and corruption of judges in the Muslim courts are found in the Rabbinic literature and in narrative sources as well.⁷²

The occasions of abuse and harassment of Jews seem relatively small in number, leaving the impression that these aberrations were not very frequent and not oppressive enough to overwhelm the community or to cause disenchantment on the part of the Jews. On the contrary, the impression gained from the Hebrew sources is that the Jews were firmly aware of the community of interests which existed between them

and the Ottomans, especially in comparison to relations with the Christians of Europe.

Confirmation of the commonality of interests between Muslims and Jews is also indicated by the fact that European Christians perceived the Jews as allies of Islam and were well aware of Muslim-Jewish cooperation. Certainly the activity of important Jewish financiers and politicians representing the Ottoman government abroad did not pass unnoticed. European sources are the basis for much of our knowledge of their careers. In addition, it appears that Christian pirates plundered "Turks and Jews,"⁷³ their sworn enemies, and that Europeans considered the Jews to be agents who regularly reported to the Ottomans.⁷⁴

There are well known examples of overt Jewish support for the Ottomans in the struggle against the European powers. The two best known instances of Jewish support for the campaigning Ottomans are the frequently cited instances of the Jewish contributions to the conquests of Buda, in the early sixteenth century, and of Rhodes. We also have reports of sympathy for the Ottomans during the siege of Chios. An unpublished Ottoman document shows dramatically the mutual interests which existed in some Greek towns. In the late 1570's it had apparently been proposed to resettle (sürgün) Jews from İnebahtı (Lepanto) elsewhere. The order was rescinded, however, because of extensive Jewish mukataa holdings in the area, commercial and trade activities of the Jewish community, and the attempt of the Jews to

increase the revenue derived from dock and customs fees. In support of the Jews testimony was obtained from the commander of the fortress (dizdar), infantry commander (azab ağası), commander of the artillery (topçu başı) and other military commanders to the effect that the Jews had played an important role in the "naval battle" (presumably of 1571) and had helped in the provisioning of the fortress and its defenders.⁷⁵ It is clear that throughout the sixteenth century it was a generally accepted fact that the interests of Jews and Muslims coincided frequently, and all the parties involved, Jews, Muslims, and Christians, were aware of the situation.

There is also linguistic evidence which alone might not be sufficient to prove Muslim-Jewish harmony, but taken along with the other indications buttresses the conclusions already reached. The use of the term uncircumcized, *ḥr*, to describe Christians certainly pointed to a bond, at least in the mind of Jewish writers who saw themselves as allies of Islam against Europe.⁷⁶ The fifteenth century letter of Rabbi Yitzhak Şarfati, inviting European Jews to Ottoman territory clearly exploited this theme in describing the lands of Europe as oppressive and contending that the world of Islam was a desirable home for the Jews.⁷⁷ Sixteenth century responsa reflect this understanding too, for Jews coming from Europe are described as leaving the lands of the Gentiles to seek refuge under the protection of the Ottoman Sultan,⁷⁸ and while the Sultan was not a Jew, neither was he referred to as a Gentile. This distinction seems like reciprocity for the Ottoman

differentiation between Jews and other non-Muslims when official terminology reflected the view that Jews were not within the general category of zimmi.

In contrast to the situation prevailing between Jews and Muslims, the relationship between Jews and the Christian subjects of the Empire was less satisfactory. As most of the information on this question relates to Istanbul and the Greek provinces, it is possible to speak only of Jews and Greeks, though the occasional references to relations with other Balkan peoples do not reflect a significantly better situation. Whatever evidence is available must be considered in light of the fact that, as in the case of Muslim-Jewish relations, the exceptional and the acrimonious were the events most likely to attract attention and find their way into written sources.

One of the bases for Greek-Jewish animosity must have been the theologically-based tension between them. While Muslims may have felt that the Jews were, at best, unwilling to accept the truth of the Muslim revelation and, at worst, corrupters of textual traditions and thus contemptible, this was a far cry from the charge of deicide, a source of Christian enmity towards Jews by the Eastern and Western churches. The treatment of Jews under the Byzantines was not particularly lenient or understanding, and there is no reason to believe that the events of 1453 and later in any way moderated Greek attitudes toward the Jews. When the seed of blood libel accusations was planted in the sixteenth century, probably by European Christians,

it was in the Greek community that it took hold.⁷⁹

After the conquest in 1453, the Jews were encouraged by the Ottomans to play an active role in the life of the city, and were even sent from the provinces to help in the process of reconstruction. This must have been unpopular in the Greek community, but was probably a minor irritation compared to the loss of the city itself. The establishment of a Chief Rabbinate equal in stature to the Patriarchate of the Orthodox must have constituted an insult to the Greek community whether the Ottomans intended it or not. The claim that the Chief Rabbi took precedence over the Patriarchate on ceremonial occasions cannot be verified, but it certainly suggests conflict between the two groups.

There is evidence of considerable commercial rivalry, beginning as early as the 1470's, when Greek and Jewish investment groups were often in competition for government tax farms. The success of the Ottoman Jews in the latter years of the fifteenth century probably did little to endear them to their Greek competitors. Further indication of this hostility is that while instances of Muslim-Jewish commercial partnerships are quite common, similar arrangements between Jews and Greeks are quite rare, and the few known instances were often the basis of contention and bitter court battles.⁸⁰ The theme of Greeks perceiving an economic threat from the Jewish community does occur in the Jewish literature,⁸¹ and there are occasional reports of Greeks attacking Jews, a situation which, at one point in the sixteenth century,

grew so bothersome that the Salonika Jewish community petitioned Istanbul for relief. There are occasional reports of similar attacks elsewhere.⁸²

From what little we know of the situation it seems that the relations between Greeks and Jews were not particularly cordial. The two groups had little in common, few common interests, and perceived no common philosophical or religious tradition which could serve as the basis for cooperation, rather than enmity. If there was any identifiable bond of good will which existed between religious communities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was that between Muslims and Jews, neither of whom had much in common with the Orthodox.

In the early years after the conquest the Ottomans were greatly concerned with establishing in their new capital a pro-Ottoman population. In light of their previous experience with the Jews and the recent wars with the Greeks, it is little surprise that the Jews were accorded better treatment. Jews from Ottoman towns were a natural choice for resettlement in the new capital as they were more reliable and devoted to the Ottomans than Orthodox Christians were, and the Jews saw in the Ottomans protectors against the intolerance of Christianity in the East and in the West.

The general impression of Muslim-Jewish relations in the Ottoman context during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is one of community of interests. From the earliest times the Ottomans seem

to have welcomed Jews to their territory and to have found in the communities already existing in places which they conquered a cooperative element. The Jewish response to this tolerance was a steady flow of Jews from Christian countries to Ottoman domains.

During the period of Sultan Bayezid II the situation was in flux for some years because he attempted to enforce more strictly the restrictions on the Jewish community which Islam demanded, though he did not allow this to affect the policy of welcoming Jews from Europe. The reenforcement of discriminatory measures according to the *Şeriat* did not, though, acerbate Muslim-Jewish relations permanently.

After the accession of Selim I, in 1512, and for half a century or more thereafter, Jews were once again allowed to live nearly unfettered by the measures normally applied to non-Muslim subjects of the Sultans. In these years, the period of their greatest prosperity, Jews were allies working within Ottoman society and behaved accordingly. Toward the end of the century, due perhaps to the increasing influence of conservative Muslim religious leaders and perhaps to the wealth or arrogance of the Jewish community, the enforcement of restrictions was stepped up. The increasingly tight fetters imposed on Jewish life and the activities of the Jews necessitated the changing of habits which had persisted for a number of generations. It may have taken as many subsequent generations, leading us well beyond the chronological limits of this work, before it was possible to enforce effectively in the Jewish community strictures to which, in theory, the Jews had been subject all along.

Notes

¹ S. A. Rozanes, History of the Jews in Turkey, 2nd ed. (Sofia, 1930-38), I, 8-9, 9 n. 15.

² Ibid., pp. 11, 128.

³ Bariša Krekič, Dubrovnik in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (Norman, Oklahoma, 1972), p. 30.

⁴ Ibid., p. 30, and Morris S. Goodblatt, Jewish Life in Turkey in the Sixteenth Century (New York, 5712/1952), p. 10.

⁵ Philip P. Argenti, The Religious Minorities of Chiös (Cambridge, 1970), p. 8, n. 5, cites Paula Villa, "Documenti sugli Ebrei a Chio nel 1394" in Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria n.s.v. (LXXXIX), fasc. 1 (Genoa, 1965), pp. 127-29, No. 4, pp. 373-77.

⁶ Michael Molho with Abraham Mevorah, Histoire des Israélites de Castoria (Thessaloniki, 1938), p. 21.

⁷ Ovadiah-1939, p. 406.

⁸ S. Spitzer, "The Ashkenazim in the Ottoman Empire from the Middle of the Fifteenth Century until the Middle of the Sixteenth Century," (Hebrew), in East and Maghreb, pp. 59-79.

⁹ Abraham Danon, "The Karaites in European Turkey," Jewish Quarterly Review, n.s., XV (1924-25), 296.

¹⁰ Bowman, p. 86, after I. S. Emmanuel, Histoire de l'Industrie des Tissus de Salonique (Lausanne and Paris, 1935), p. 50, and Joseph Nehama, Histoire des Israélites de Salonique, 3 vols. (Paris and Salonika, 1936), pp. 109-110.

¹¹ General histories of the Jews such as H. Graetz, History of the Jews, 5 vols. (Philadelphia, 1895) and S. M. Dubnow, History of the Jews, translated by M. Spiegel, 10 volumes in 5 (New York, 1973) have dated the letter variously at the period after the arrival of the Spanish Jews ca. 1492 or the period immediately after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453. Rozanes, I, 16 n. 29 suggests 1427-30 and Nehama, I, 117, on the basis of textual evidence suggests 1430-40. In any case it will be reasonably clear from the discussion below of events after 1453 (Chapter 3) that there is little likelihood of such a letter being sent by Sarfati after that date. We would at least expect a reference to the conquest of 1453, or that the Rabbis of Istanbul would have sent the appeal.

- 12 Rozanes, I, 36.
- 13 MM 176, p. 44b, "c an Frengistân."
- 14 Danon, op. cit., p. 304.
- 15 See Appendix 1.
- 16 S. Marcus, "Adrianople," EJ, II, 31?. Spitzer, op. cit., p. 65 n. 17 cites 1791/1112. Tapu 494, p. 89. TK 54, p. 36b. Tapu 416, p. 65.
- 17 Molho-Castoria, p. 24.
- 18 Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, 2 vols. (New York, 1966), p. 819 n. 346; Marciana 7991 C VII 4 fol. 110vo.-111 and Museo Correr Donà Della Rosa fol. 155 8 VII 1550.
- 19 Braudel, p. 415.
- 20 Ibid., p. 800
- 21 In some Islamic contexts groups other than Jews and Christians were considered, or treated like, protected persons, but in the Ottoman Empire the question concerns Christians and Jews.
- 22 These are primarily the Mühimme defterleri. See Uriel Heyd, Ottoman Documents on Palestine, 1552-1615 (Oxford, 1960).
- 23 KK 2411, p. 20 (misnumbered as p. 6).
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 MM 19, pp. 29a-b.
- 26 MM 16155, p. 33.
- 27 Ö. L. Barkan, "Fatih Çâmi ve İmareti Tesislerinin 1489-90 Yıllarına âit Muhasebe Bilançoları," İk. Fak. Mec., XXIII (1962-63), 307.
- 28 TKS D 9524.
- 29 Tapu 1/1 M, p. 259, regarding Tire in 855/1451-857/1453.
- 30 MM 21960, p. 122; MM 19322, p. 12; Tapu 370, pp. 4-5; Müh. 35 p. 346 No. 878, 8 N 986.

- 31 Müh. 34, p. 132, No. 284, 12 S 986.
- 32 Müh. 43, p. 34, No. 71, 14 R 988.
- 33 Karl Binswanger, Untersuchungen zum Status der Nichtmuslime im Osmanischen Reich des 16. Jahrhunderts, mit einer Neudefinition des Begriffes "Dimma," Beiträge zur Kenntnis Südosteuropas und des Nahen Orients, Band 23 (München, 1977), 64-127, 147-207.
- 34 Rozanes, I, 25.
- 35 Ibid., I, 22.
- 36 Eliyahu Capsali, Seder Eliyahu Zuta by Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali (Hebrew), vol. 1, edited by Aryeh Shmuelevitz (Jerusalem, 1975), p. 272 f.
- 37 Rozanes, I, 132 n. 76 cites *בני יושבי ארץ ישראל*.
- 38 Ibid., I, 132 n. 77 cites *בני אבותינו* who refers to synagogues "built by our fathers," *בני אבותינו*, meaning the previous few generations.
- 39 Danon, XV, 325 n. 183 and XVII, 252-53.
- 40 TKS E 7851.
- 41 H. H. Ben-Sasson, "The Generation of the Spanish Exiles on its Fate" (Hebrew), Zion, XXVI, p. 28 cites Yos. b. Meir Gerson, MS, Br. Mus. Or. 10726 fol. 219v 16-27.
- 42 L. Fekete, Die Siyaqat-Schrift in der Türkischen Finanzverwaltung, (Budapest, 1955), I, 130-31; II, plate 5=TKS D 7198.
- 43 Uriel Heyd, Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law, edited by V. L. Menage (Oxford, 1973), 284 n. 9.
- 44 Binswanger, 64-127.
- 45 Heyd-Law, p. 284.
- 46 Paul Grunebaum, "Les Juifs d'Orient d'après les géographes et les voyageurs," REJ, XXVII, 131 after Belon iii: chapter XII. Braudel, p. 806 n. 256 cites Belon, p. 181.
- 47 MM 17892, p. 47.

48 A. Refik, Onuncu asr-i hicrede İstanbul hayatı, Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Külliyyatı, no. 6 (İstanbul, 1333/1914-15), pp. 62ff., 72ff.

49 The bibliography lists various documentary collections edited by Galante. Most of the documents from the Ottoman archives were provided by Refik and other scholars, and Galante published French translations. Not all of his documents, however, were published in Turkish editions.

50 Müh. 31, p. 90, No. 222, 12 Ca 985.

51 David Ginsberg, "Jewish Personal Letters from the Year 1533" (Yiddish), Yivo Bleter, XIII (1938), 338.

52 Rozanes, I, 9.

53 MM 176, p. 265a.

54 See below pp. 40, 44.

55 MM 19, p. 5b.

56 Abraham Galante, Türkler ve Yahudiler, 2nd ed. (İstanbul, 1947), p. 128 after Evilya Çelebi I; 345, perhaps based on Gelibolulu Ali, cf. Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmani (İstanbul, 1890-93), III, 337, while İ.H. Danişmend, İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi (İstanbul, 1971), II, 443, says he was either an Arab or a Jew.

57 Goodblatt, 104 n. 30, cites Sefer II, 152, 204; III, 10, 55, 81, 82, 168, 170; IV, 52, 88, 128, 130, 200, 331, 359 and I. M. Goldman, The Life and Times of Rabbi David Ibn Abi Zimra (New York, 5731/1970), p. 130 n.183 cites Sefer I, 69, 175, 180, 351; II, 459, 460; IV, 12, 91.

58 Müh. 28, p. 241, No. 582 25 B 984.

59 KK 1766, p. 49.

60 KK 677, p. 71.

61 Ibid., p. 30.

62 Müh. 12, p. 332, No. 154.

63 Müh. 19, p. 207, No. 427 7 Ra 980.

64 Uriel Heyd, "Ritual Murder Accusations in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Turkey" (Hebrew), Sefunot, V (1961), 135-49.

- 65 Müh. 39, p. 215, No. 437 12 M 988.
- 66 Binswanger, p. 156.
- 67 Müh. 55, p. 89, No. 155 15 Z 992; p. 177, No. 320 8 S 993;
No. 378 11 Ra 993.
- 68 Müh. 21, p. 267 No. 641 16 Z 980.
- 69 Müh. 43, p. 195, No. 354 7 B 988.
- 70 Müh. 22, p. 11, No. 27 21 M 981.
- 71 Müh. 34, p. 219, No. 462 10 Ra 986.
- 72 Samuel Usque, Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel, translated by Martin A. Cohen (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 211-12.
- 73 Nicholas H. Biegan, The Turco-Ragusan Relationship (The Hague and Paris, 1967), p. 151.
- 74 Ibid., p. 40 n. 51.
- 75 Müh. 35, p. 135, No. 343 9 C 986.
- 76 Jacob Leveen, "An Eyewitness Account of the Expedition of the Florentines against Chios," BSOAS, XII (1948), 547-48, 551-53.
- 77 Franz Kobler, A Treasury of Jewish Letters (Philadelphia, 1953), I, 284.
- 78 A. Namdar, "On the Interpretation of Community Ordinances by R. Samuel de Medina," in East and Maghreb, pp. 316-17, 317 n. 90.
- 79 Uriel Heyd, "Ritual Murder Accusations in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Turkey" (Hebrew), Sefunot, V (1961), 135-49, and Abraham Galante, Histoire des Juifs de Rhodes, Chio, Cos, etc. (Istanbul, 1927), p. 89.
- 80 Müh. 35, p. 346, No. 878 8 N 986; p. 409, No. 1048 24 L 986; p. 410, No. 1049 25 L 986; p. 410, No. 1050 24 L 986; Fekete No. 315.
- 81 Y. R. Molho, "Rabbi Moshe Almosnino, Procurer of Independence for the Salonika Community in the Sixteenth Century" (Hebrew), Sinai, IV (1941), 248.
- 82 Ibid.

Chapter III: The Leadership of the Ottoman Jews

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were two types of leadership in the Ottoman Jewish community, traditional leadership as exercised by Rabbis of the community and accidental leadership by laymen who were influential in politics and economic affairs. The first type can be divided into two kinds, the leadership of the Chief Rabbi at Istanbul and the leadership of local Rabbis in other communities. This chapter will deal with these three forms of leadership, the central rabbinate, local rabbinates and that of influential laymen, will explain how they emerged, developed, and changed during the period of the study.

The idea of communal independence for religious minorities did not originate with the Ottomans, or even with Islam, though what came to be known in literature and popular usage as the "millet system" was one of the largest and most highly developed forms of sectarian self rule. Such a system was not new for the Jews; they had controlled their internal affairs previously in Christian Europe and in the Islamic world as well. The theoretical bases for rule by Rabbis in authority derived from communal consent are to be found in the Talmud.¹

Earlier we noted the existence of Jewish communities in the Anatolian states during the period of the expanding Ottoman frontier emirate as well as in the Byzantine Balkans and in the Slavic states. As late as the twelfth century Jewish communities were led by Rabbis who were recognized as leaders of their congregations by the authorities

in the capital and in smaller towns. It appears that the Ottomans adopted similar policies, at least in their capital cities. The Jews in Bursa had a quarter of their own, implying a certain measure of autonomy in day to day affairs, and they were allowed access to health and other facilities provided by the Muslim community.² With the transfer of most court life to Edirne, a second foundation stone of Ottoman Jewish policy was laid. Presumably as a result of satisfaction in court circles with the role played by Jews in Ottoman life, Jews from Bursa were transferred to the new capital where they were probably assigned a part in the development of the new administrative center. In addition, Jews from non-Ottoman territories in the Balkans, attracted by the intellectual life and economic opportunity in the Ottoman capital, migrated there and joined the existing community, which included both the previous Rabbinite and Karaite congregations and the more recent arrivals from Bursa.

Already at Edirne the various factions within the Jewish community had Rabbis of their own who served as both spiritual and political heads of their congregations. While there is little direct evidence regarding the exact nature of the relationship between these functionaries and the government, it is evident that serving the Rabbis was a cadre of officials who acted as administrators for the Jewish community. In a sense these office holders, as well as the Rabbis, represented the government because they relieved government officials of responsibility for Jewish affairs. The Jewish officials

performed functions which in the Muslim community were fulfilled by the government and religious bureaucracies, including the assessment and collection of taxes and the provision of police and court systems to serve their communities. It is in this period that we first encounter Jews with names such as Subaşı (Captain) and Başyazıcı (Head Scribe), as well as such names as Beği (Bey) and Çelebi.

The conquest of Byzantium by the Ottomans in 1453 is a watershed not only in Ottoman history but, as we have seen, in the history of the Ottoman Jews as well. We recall that as part of the campaign to repopulate the city and guide it to greatness as a Muslim capital Jews from more than forty Balkan and Anatolian towns,³ including the majority of the Jews of Edirne, were sent to Istanbul. The decision to concentrate large numbers of Jewish merchants and artisans in the capital at the expense of the provinces necessitated the creation of some system of administration for them, a community the majority of which consisted of newcomers.

Drawing, apparently, on their own previous experience at Edirne and the practice of the Byzantines before them, the Ottomans continued to allow the Jews considerable internal autonomy, and Rabbi Moshe Capsali, who had been head of the Jews in Byzantine Constantinople, emerged as the political and spiritual head of the community. There has been considerable scholarly debate regarding how much power he actually had, what communities fell under his jurisdiction, and what was his relationship with the Ottoman authorities.

In the period of Capsali's Rabbinate a special tax was levied on the Jews as a payment for the privilege of having an independent administration with a Rabbi at its head. During Capsali's tenure, or at least late in that period, the tax was recorded as the *cizye-i rav*, and Capsali himself, rather than some lesser functionary concerned solely with fiscal affairs, was responsible for making the payment. The actual transmission of the money was carried out by a regular governmental messenger-paymaster (*havale*).⁴

At the time of his appointment, according to the traditional account, Capsali was called into the presence of Sultan Mehmed, and the Sultan addressed him as *hoca* and presented him with clothes of gold and silver.⁵ This is entirely in keeping with the practice of honoring dignitaries, including non-Muslims and non-subjects, with robes of honor (*hilat*). It is also reported that judicial matters dealing with Jews were sometimes referred to the Chief Rabbi.⁶ On the other hand, the exaggerated claims regarding his power, his role, and the assertion that he occupied a place in the *divan* and even had precedence over the *Şeyhülislam* must be viewed with extreme caution, and probably rejected. What does emerge, however, is a picture of a respected functionary who, in the course of nearly forty years in office, must have been called more than once into the presence of the Sultan and on at least one occasion was honored by him, and who, like many other dignitaries, appeared at court on certain ceremonial occasions.

Controversy has surrounded the question of which communities fell under Capsali's jurisdiction. Within Istanbul, the Karaites were, insofar as the Ottoman authorities were concerned, granted fiscal independence and, apparently, were able to deal with the authorities through their own functionaries. In the same place where the *cizye-i rav* of Capsali was recorded there is an entry for a payment by the *kethüda* (steward, warden) of the Karaites.⁷

The prominence of the Karaite community of Edirne before 1453 and their settlement in Istanbul in a quarter named for them suggest that this independence was a carryover from privileges enjoyed at Edirne. In Istanbul, however, they constituted a small part of the Jewish population, and Capsali's power and influence, for this if no other reason, probably outweighed that of the Karaite leadership.

Besides the question of the Karaites, the issue of whether Capsali was Chief Rabbi of Istanbul only or of the entire Ottoman Empire has been the subject of discussion. It is generally held that the office of Chief Rabbi, as it was known under Capsali and his immediate successor, ceased to exist after the early sixteenth century and that the various local Rabbinic authorities outside Istanbul, who sometimes referred legal questions to the Rabbis of Istanbul, were not bound to obey them. However, in light of the evidence that nearly all the Jews in Ottoman territory were settled in Istanbul after 1453 and keeping in mind the Ottoman drive to create a nucleus for the Empire in the new capital, no other Rabbi in the community could compare in

influence or power with the Rabbi of Istanbul in the period of the Conqueror. In addition, there is a text in an Ottoman account book which reads:

Paid by Moses b. Elijah for the tax on the Rabbi and Metropolitan of the Jews of Istanbul on the 25th of Rebiülahir 885 (=4. VII 1480).⁸

The text raises the question of what Metropolitan means in the Jewish context. Because there is no hierarchy in Judaism, the term had to be borrowed from Greek usage, though it could have been applied by the Byzantines to the Rabbi before 1453. It seems unlikely that the Byzantine authorities, either secular or religious, would consent to honoring a Jew with a title equal to that of a high member of their own clergy. It is more likely that this title demonstrated the status of the Jewish leader in post-1453 Ottoman society. It is unclear whether the phrase "Rabbi and Metropolitan" refers to one person or two. What is clear, however, is that the Rabbi of Istanbul was recognized by the Ottoman government as the unqualified leader of the Ottoman Jewish community.

Under Capsali, the office of Chief Rabbi reached the pinnacle of its power. As chief legal officer of the community he was granted a bodyguard or small police force which he apparently used to reinforce his own position as well as to administer the affairs of the community. In the exercise of these powers he became involved in controversies both within the Jewish community of Istanbul and with communities elsewhere. The limits of his power must have been reasonably

clearly defined. For example, a story in the Seder Eliyahu Zuta suggests that when Capsali intended to punish some individuals for homosexual activity in which Janissaries were implicated, he could proceed only with the permission of the Sultan. In spite of this sanction he is said to have earned the enmity of the Janissaries for his decision and, the same source reports, in part because of this, an attempt was made on Capsali's life during the Janissary uprising after the death of Mehmed II.⁹

Another factor which contributed to the remarkable position of the office of Chief Rabbi in the late fifteenth century was the extremely long tenure of its first occupant. Presuming that Capsali was, as the traditional sources say, appointed shortly after the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul, he occupied the position for nearly forty years, well into the reign of Bayezid II. Thus Capsali represents the first type of leadership in Istanbul as outlined at the beginning of the chapter. He was the Chief Rabbi of the capital and led with the consent of the community and the recognition of the authorities. Toward the end of his tenure, however, the whole structure of the Ottoman Jewish community changed and with it the Chief Rabbinate.

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain at the end of the Catholic reconquista in 1492 is a benchmark in Jewish history and, as we have already seen, had a profound effect on the Ottoman Empire. When many of the exiles from Spain reached Ottoman territory they were allowed to settle on favorable terms. There is no indication whether Capsali

played any role in persuading Bayezid to allow Jewish settlement, and probably Bayezid needed no persuasion. A famous passage in the Seder Eliyahu Zuta states that the King of Spain was considered in Istanbul court circles to be a great fool for having enriched an enemy with productive citizens at the expense of his own kingdom.¹⁰ While the statement is often attributed incorrectly to Bayezid himself, it is probably an accurate reflection of the views then current in the Ottoman capital. In the forty years since the conquest of Istanbul the Jews had played an important role in the development of the city, especially of its commerce, and we have noted already that they not only occupied and ran various shops in and around the major markets, but also that they settled in many quarters near docks and other entrances to the city and played a considerable role in the processing and assessment of goods passing through the customs houses. In addition they were involved in minting and other important matters of fiscal administration. It must have been clear that, whatever his conservative feelings may have prompted Bayezid to believe about the Jews in general, the Jews of Istanbul had been so important and useful that the arrival of equal their number and more from Spain, either directly or after stops elsewhere, must have seemed a considerable bounty.

Capsali personally was active in the absorption of the new arrivals. While some arrived with funds, others did not. The problems of providing food and shelter, no matter what funds were available, were imposed on his office. During these, for the Jews at least, tumultuous years of

the early 1490's Capsali died and was succeeded in office by Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi who had at times assisted Capsali despite their occasional disputes.

Although at the time of his accession to office Mizrahi apparently was appointed with terms similar to those under which Capsali had served, the actual functions of the Chief Rabbi changed. Within a year or two of his selection, or perhaps even at the time of the actual decision, Mizrahi agreed that he would not play an active role in the fiscal affairs of the community and that he would not carry out the duties related to taxation. By his own account, Mizrahi agreed to refrain from participating in these activities because others had greater prestige at court and could, therefore, act more effectively. In addition, Mizrahi is described as a less forceful personality than his predecessor, and his life was made difficult by personal and financial problems.¹¹ We recall, also, that this was the first selection by the community of a Chief Rabbi since 1453, and the drastic changes in the structure of the community and the myriad changes in its status and position must have made clear the need to cater to the wishes of new elements in the community and, perhaps, to limit the extent of the power vested in any individual.

It is unclear exactly when Mizrahi first agreed to refrain from involvement in the fiscal affairs of the community, but despite his feeling that they were not always handled well, he honored the agreement.¹² Perhaps his inability to deal with the absorption of new

immigrants as rapidly or as effectively as the government desired¹³ made it easier for supporters and allies of other factions in the community to obtain government support for strengthening the position of an independent fiscal administrator for the Jews. It may also be that the government was indifferent to power struggles within the community, but in any case a structure emerged by which a kethūda was administrative head of the community, and a spiritual leader was retained as nominal head of the group, a structure which has parallels in guild and other organizations in Ottoman society.¹⁴

The bifurcation of the secular and religious administrative functions transformed entirely the nature of the office of Rabbi of Istanbul. While the spiritual leadership was in the hands of Mizrahi, the fiscal and administrative leadership fell to one Rabbi Shealtiel, in Ottoman documents Salto (Salti in popular Spanish pronunciation), a member of the Sephardic community. He kept the records of Jewish fiscal affairs and submitted them to the government. They included not only accounts of funds paid by the community for the right to maintain an independent Rabbinate and for the cizye, but also reports on the status of incomes and payments of important Jewish tax farmers in government service.¹⁵ Clearly, then, the kethūda became a primary contact between the central government and the Jewish community as a whole. Due to his position and connections, the kethūda became one of the most powerful individuals in the community. The whole Ottoman-Jewish administrative relationship revolved around him, and from Shealtiel's

time on the power of the Chief Rabbi of the city was far less important in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities.

Shealtiel's tenure was not without its difficulties. While traditional sources suggest that he was appointed to relieve the Rabbi of some of the burdens of office and to protect members of the community in their dealings with the government and with other groups in Ottoman society, in fact the kethüda's own interests and those of his associates often came first. Whether or not he was selected for the job because of his good relations with the government, it was the government which received his primary loyalty. Next came his loyalty to his own welfare, which seems to have been a hallmark of the man's career. A petition to the Sultan has survived in which at least one individual complains of irregularities in the disposition of an inheritance, and apparently the kethüda had a role to play in such affairs as well. The claimant stressed that the whole community was aware of Shealtiel's imperiousness but that all were afraid to complain or testify against him.¹⁶ Toward the end of Selim I's reign the situation must have become unbearable as the community, under the leadership of Chief Rabbi Mizrahi, excommunicated Shealtiel and prohibited either him or his sons from carrying out functions having to do with the leadership of the community. He was, however, reinstated at the insistence of the government with the stipulation that in the future he consult the leaders of the community more fully.¹⁷

The suggestion has been made that those opposed to the reinstatement of Shealtiel were people particularly anxious to ingratiate themselves

with the non-Jews around them.¹⁸ If there were such people among his opponents, we may certainly suspect political and economic ambitions. as the source of their enmity. The other bases for opposition must have stemmed from his highhandedness and his role in weakening the traditional authorities. Unfortunately, there still seems to be no clue to the identity of the minister or ministers whom Mizrahi had in mind when he pointed out that the Turcophone Shealtiel was "like family" to some of them, and what individual Mizrahi had in mind when he mentioned a government minister responsible for dealing with the Jews.¹⁹

There are other questions regarding the reasons the kethüda Shealtiel rose to prominence. The apparent weakness of Mizrahi was probably a factor, but if it was necessary for the Jews to have more effective representation at the central government, it still remains to assess this phenomenon in light of a more general scheme.

Most writers have agreed that Shealtiel was selected because he was well known and liked in government circles and that his duty was to represent the Jews there. He also had to inform the Jewish community regarding government orders and plans.²⁰ Among his responsibilities was the defense of the Jews against the depredations of officials and from other communities in Ottoman society. The explanation that the establishment of the kethüdalık was merely a logical division of powers has been challenged,²¹ but the challenge comes in the form of a suggestion that the writers who dealt with the question did not

understand that the office of kethüda was common in Ottoman society and used by many groups.²² In fact, Rozanes came closest to the truth when he made the point that the Jews of Istanbul and elsewhere felt the need for some official intermediary because, if the government indeed allowed the Jews to settle throughout the country and participate in all sorts of trade and commerce, the "old residents," in particular Greeks, would be hostile, and that the Jews could also be subject to harassment and over-taxation by greedy officials.²³ Therefore, the government established the kethüdalık.²⁴ In addition, he suggested that the wealthy and powerful Jews who were prominent at the court, physicians and others, were too involved in their own affairs to lend sufficient help to the community and that Shealtiel was appointed around 1505, and not ten or fifteen years later, as others believed.²⁵

In fact, Shealtiel was active as early as 1503, and he had broad responsibilities for the affairs of the Jewish community, which, indeed, were tied to taxation. He kept on behalf of the Jewish community records which were turned over to the government officials to audit and accept after comparing them to the records kept in the treasury. An extant document shows that his register included information regarding the accounts of extremely important tax farms which were in the hands of Jews, including the Istanbul customs, docks and salt warehouses of the Danubian ports, and income from Anatolian tax concessions.²⁶ The first two were the backbone of Jewish economic success in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In addition,

we recall that the various taxes on the community, for the Rabbinate, the cizye due to the foundation of Mehmed the Conqueror, and similar taxes, were also his responsibility. Thus he occupied a pivotal position in regard to the financial relations between the government and the Jews.

It is even more noteworthy that this change in communal affairs occurred during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II, who was better known for his religious conservatism than his predecessor or immediate successor. Elsewhere it was pointed out that, in spite of his less than tolerant views with regard to the Jews, Bayezid encouraged the immigration of more Jews to the Empire during and after 1492 and even allowed tax exemptions in order to encourage their economic success. It is only against this background that the position of Rabbi Shealtiel can be fully understood. Rozanes was correct in associating Shealtiel's career with the drive for Jewish economic expansion in the Balkans and elsewhere, though the reference to the hostility of the Greeks resembles also the earlier years after 1453 in Istanbul. No doubt there were elements hostile to the settlement of Jews in provincial towns after 1492. The fact that Shealtiel's register concerned Jewish tax farmers whose accounts were overdue suggests a major role in the tax farming structure, at least insofar as Jewish-held concessions were concerned. When we remember that the post-1492 communities were often exempt from all taxes except cizye, which some of them paid through Istanbul rather than locally, it is clear that Jewish fiscal affairs in this time were

predominantly in the hands of the kethüda despite the establishment of provincial communities whose personal lives were the province of local leaders.

The movement to establish or expand the duties of the kethüda of the Jewish community, and the choice of Shealtiel, were in keeping with, and perhaps an integral part of, Ottoman policy toward the Jews in the period of Sultan Bayezid. While the weakness of Mizrahi's personality may have played some part, the real roots of the policy must lie elsewhere. In light of Bayezid's suppression of Jewish religious institutions but simultaneous encouragement of Jewish economic activity it appears that Shealtiel was considered a secular replacement for the Chief Rabbi as official representative of the community. His Sephardic origins may serve as an additional piece of evidence for the view that the settlement of Jews in the provinces and their integration into the local economies was one of his primary responsibilities.

It must have been clear to all by the early 1500's that real political power did not rest in the hands of the Rabbi of Istanbul and the elected leaders of the congregations. Thus Mizrahi's successors inherited from him a position with considerably less power and status than he had inherited from Capsali. When Mizrahi died, in 1526, there was a serious debate over the choice of a successor. According to the standard sources, the old congregations and the Iberian Jews, the latter by now an extremely influential force in the community, could not agree on a candidate to succeed Mizrahi. The government grew impatient and

declared that the position would simply remain vacant, though, it has been pointed out, the assessment of the Rabbi's tax continued.²⁷

Another explanation seems more likely. The power of the Chief Rabbi, as judge and judicial administrator, was derived from the consent of the community. Therefore a candidate opposed by any substantial segment of the population would have difficulties in performing the duties of office. At the same time, the weakening of the office meant that, in light of the growing power of the Sephardic community, the position of Chief Rabbi was one of the last trappings of power remaining to the old communities, but of far less significance to the newcomers. In view of what we know of Shealtiel's career, and so far no information has come to light confirming the date he vacated office, we can understand that it was of little concern to the government who performed these legal functions so long as the work was done. The title or honors allotted to the spiritual head of the Jews were of no importance if the taxes were paid and the administrative needs of the community fulfilled. This interpretation is supported by an account book listing the payment for the Rabbi's tax late in the sixteenth century where, unlike the entry for the fifteenth century (p. 58 above) we now read:

(received) toward the account of the Metropolitan for
the Rabbinate of the Jews of Istanbul . . .²⁶

This confirms, first of all, that apparently a century before, but certainly at this time, there was in the Jewish community a functionary known to the Ottoman authorities as Metropolitan, i.e., spiritual head for the city, a position equal to that of a Greek bishop, but a rank

not equal to that of Patriarch, the prime Greek cleric for the whole Empire. It also stands witness to the death of the institution of Chief Rabbinate which was, indeed, the function of the Rabbi of Istanbul in the second half of the fifteenth century, thus laying to rest a fiction regarding the power and status of the second Chief Rabbi. While Rabbis continued to be appointed as spiritual leaders of Istanbul, albeit with lower rank than Capsali enjoyed, the change in the 1520's marked the de jure death of the Chief Rabbinate of the Empire and acknowledgement of the realities of the situation since the beginning of Mizrahi's tenure. In Istanbul, lay leaders had emerged as the prime movers in the community.

However, there seems little doubt that the Ottoman Jewish community was indeed divided along Sephardic-non-Sephardic lines in the debate over a successor for Mizrahi.²⁹ Government impatience over this squabble has been cited as the cause for allowing the position to lapse. Because the authorities were unwilling to wait indefinitely for a compromise, the government simply declared that the seat would remain vacant, though we have shown above that indeed a functionary was eventually recognized by the Ottomans as leader of this Jewish community. While all this seems a reasonable enough explanation, and probably reflects reality, it does not really tell us what was going on within the community to cause such a rift and allow the community to sacrifice whatever prestige might have remained to their spiritual leaders. This turn of events, coupled with what we have seen of the changes which took place between the 1490's

and the 1520's, leads us to seek yet another factor in the rise of the kethüda Shealtiel and the other Jews at court. In light of the evidence regarding the Rabbi's tax, it may be that during Capsali's tenure it was Mizrahi who had the position known to the Ottoman authorities as Metropolitan. Thus he probably succeeded almost automatically at the death of Capsali, and though among the Jews his title was like that of Capsali, Rabbi of Rabbis, or The Great Rabbi, to the Ottomans it may have remained Metropolitan, a figure of less standing than his predecessor, known to the Ottomans as Rav, Rabbi. This would correspond to our knowledge of Bayezid's attitudes and also fit in with what we have observed about the shift of power to people in the community with considerable fiscal power and in whose hands the pecuniary affairs of the community were placed. The brief hiatus at the death of Mizrahi may certainly have reflected a theological and philosophical split in the Jewish community as well as conflict over the prestige of the position of Rabbi of Istanbul, despite its already diminished status. It also demonstrates the rapidity with which the Sephardic community came to be influential. The fact that after the 1520's there was no decline in the influence of Jews at court is further evidence supporting the contention that the situation had changed long before, and what took place at the death of Mizrahi was merely an adjustment within the community by which new forces demonstrated their greater power and eroded the prestige of the older communities. As far as the Ottoman authorities were concerned, the actual administrative situation had

changed more than a decade before, and they were indifferent to the internal struggle for an honorary position of little political^{or} or fiscal consequence.

The decline of the Istanbul Rabbinate coincided with the arrival of Iberian Jews and with the reestablishment of important Jewish communities in the provinces. As a consequence, leadership systems developed in the outlying communities as well. The Iberian immigrants, though some had been stripped of their wealth, not only brought their abilities but also a knowledge of Europe and its ways, a knowledge which formed the underpinnings of their cultural life and values well beyond the early years after their arrival. Many were nominal Catholics, and while a large number returned openly to Judaism under the protection of the Islamic state, they brought a way of life which made them a source of difficulty to the Jewish religious authorities. Many of the leaders of the Spanish community were contemptuous of their own spiritual leaders.³⁰ In light of these facts we must consider the quarter century during which the Iberian Jews established themselves in the Ottoman Empire.

The roots of Bayezid's policy regarding Jewish immigration lay in the realm of economic life and Jewish participation in the commerce of the Empire. Many of the new arrivals were given official orders which specified the terms under which they might settle in various places.³¹ From the few orders which survive, as well as from appeals in which the communities cited the terms of these privileges as the basis

for their petitions to the central government, we are able to gain some idea of the conditions under which they settled. They were, depending on the circumstances and the place of settlement, exempted from various taxes, though *cizye* was always charged, whether assessed individually or on the community as a group (*maktu*). In many places a tax like the *cizye-i rav* of Istanbul was also charged, though its name was often different: in Salonika *akçe-i rav*³² and later *flori-i rav*;³³ at Siroz *rüsum-i rav*³⁴ and also *adet-i rav*.³⁵ In each town of consequence some political system parallel to that in Istanbul was established by which the Jews, governing themselves as an independent community, paid for the privilege of having their own leaders.

The most remarkable system of Jewish self rule in the provinces was established at Salonika. The Jewish community of that city, which by the early years of Kanuni Süleyman's reign was more than half Jewish, rivaled the Istanbul community in its importance. There, due to the large number of Jews and to the assent of the Ottoman authorities, arose a system of self rule which even included an element of extraterritoriality. The Spanish and Portuguese Jews, along with smaller groups of Italian and Ashkenazi Jews, forged for themselves a highly developed system in which the congregations, numbering between twenty and twenty-six, were each represented in a municipal Jewish council. Salonika Jews, under the leadership of the council, were granted various tax and customs exemptions and reductions in exchange for payment of tribute similar to the practice of Ragusa and certain European powers.

This is described in the kanunname of Salonika:

. . . and for those who reside in the city of Salonika with the mass of the congregations and pay an additional amount. . . .³⁶

Rabbi Moshe Almosnino, who was chosen to lead a delegation to Istanbul in the 1560's in order to obtain confirmation of these privileges, reflects the link of the Iberian Jews with European thought and statecraft when he explains his mission in the following terms:

. . . and that is the reason for my coming to be selected by the Republic . . .³⁷

The choice of language suggests not only the representative nature of the Jewish communal leadership, but also a high level of political sophistication recognized and respected by the community.

The council and the Jewish courts were jealous of their power and had the cooperation of the authorities in protecting their position. One prominent businessman, whose activities included the collective payment of taxes in kind on behalf of the community, incurred the enmity of the council by complaining about it to the Muslim courts. Noting that he had "cut his relations in that administration," i.e., that he was or was about to be excommunicated by the Jewish authorities, the government ordered that he be forcibly resettled in Cyprus.³⁸

The theme of conflict between the religious authorities and some lay and fiscal leaders of the community seems to have continued throughout the sixteenth century. The avenues to relief from the exactions and abuses of kethūdas and other functionaries apparently led to the divan, either through the Ottoman legal system or through Jewish

contacts in the capital.

The case of the Istanbul kethüda, Shealtiel, has already been described, though his fate differed from some others', as he managed to retain his position. The notorious instance of Baruh, the kethüda of Salonika in the mid-sixteenth century, has attracted the attention of historians dealing with the Jews of Salonika.³⁹ His rapacity and use of murder and intimidation endeared him to few, and he was eventually exiled to Cyprus. The yayabaşı of the Sofia community was also accused of perfidy, and a government order commanded that the local judge investigate the charge and if found to be true he also was to be sent to Cyprus.⁴⁰ From the same period there is information about the kethüda at Erbil. The assistant to the local judge reported that the kethüda of the Jews was oppressive, entered Jewish homes at night and made a shambles of them, and extorted gold from the community. It is important to note that he was accused of violating both kanun and Şeriat.⁴¹ The implication is that he could be prosecuted for oppression as well as theft, suggesting acknowledgment by the Muslim courts that he was acting in an official capacity and on behalf of the government and was therefore required to behave correctly in accordance with Şeriat requirements.

These isolated instances of abuse by Jewish authorities are too few to enable us to make reliable generalizations about the activities of such administrators in the course of a century and more. It does appear, though, that communities with access to the divan were able to

apply directly for relief through the use of contacts at court and obtain orders and judgments according to customary or statute usage (ürf or kanun). In other instances, access to justice was through the regular Muslim court system, and we have seen that punishment might be meted out according to Islamic law as well.

Clearly the exceptional nature of the Salonika Jewish community was the primary factor in shaping its administrative system. In other towns where local institutions were developed, however, Jews were a minority of the population and their influence on the towns was correspondingly less important than in Salonika. Certainly the local congregation or mahalle was not comparable in magnificence to the highly sophisticated community of Salonika. The principle, though, was similar. In the Ottoman cadastral surveys the head of the community or its chief administrative officer is often noted. In addition to Rabbis and teachers we encounter entries for kethüda,⁴² naib (deputy),⁴³ yayabaşı,⁴⁴ yüz başı (captain, borrowed from military usage),⁴⁵ and in some cases simply ser-i mezkurin (head of the above mentioned).⁴⁶ Some of the terms are found in Ottoman guilds in addition to use in the military. In some communities no officer is indicated, but the large number of legal questions forwarded to Salonika and Istanbul by Rabbis from smaller towns suggests that, in so far as they had the knowledge and expertise, local Rabbis made most of the decisions, and that members of the congregations were active in governing the affairs of the communities.

In the course of the sixteenth century, then, we are witnessing the rise of new, mostly immigrant, communities established in towns which were, between the 1450's and the end of the century, virtually devoid of Jews. In some places, such as the Morea, which were not Ottoman territory in 1453, the old communities survived, but in the period of Iberian migration were soon outnumbered by the newcomers. In those places local Rabbis or teachers led the Jewish communities operating in accordance with agreements drawn up by the communities themselves (haskamot) and turning to Jewish religious authorities in the largest communities when they needed guidance on particularly difficult problems. For the most part, local affairs were the realm of local leaders.

From these few examples we have seen that there were two distinctly different kinds of community leadership in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which can be termed Rabbinic or religious leadership. In the fifteenth century rabbis at the capital, first at Edirne and then at Istanbul, guided the community with the approval and encouragement of the Ottoman authorities. The changes in the Istanbul community during the course of that century and the drive of newcomers to play a more influential role in the community leadership, as well as the contrasting personalities of Rabbis Capsali and Mizrahi, led to a weakening of the power of the Rabbinate of Istanbul. In the wake of this and the simultaneous rise of new communities in the Balkans, local systems of leadership outside Istanbul emerged. There each community

governed itself, and where questions of Jewish law were in dispute, advice was solicited from Jewish legal authorities in other places. In Istanbul, a Rabbinate continued to exist and deal with internal Jewish affairs, while prominent lay leaders, whose role we will examine next, undertook the burdens of liaison with the central authorities, serving Istanbul and other communities in this regard. Each type of leadership had its role and each developed in response to changes in the status and composition of the Ottoman Jewish communities and their changing needs.

For the Ottomans a single concern was paramount. They cared only that the communities saw to their own affairs, administered themselves effectively, and paid to the government their various taxes and assessments. In exchange for relieving the government of the duties of administration, the Jews were allowed considerable freedom of action in their personal and economic lives. What makes the case of the Jews special is that, unlike the Christian subjects of the Empire, the Jews had no traditional centers or established hierarchy on which they could rely as a basis for countering and resisting the Ottoman regime. Though Rabbis had led the communities in the past, the Ottoman Jewish communities were moved, resettled, and later swelled by immigration. With each of these changes came a change in the Rabbinic leadership of the community.

The Ottoman Jewish Politicians

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were always

some individuals in the Jewish community who by force of personality and politico-economic power attained for themselves a place in the inner circle around the Sultans and because of their notability their names and some details of their lives and careers have been recorded and remembered. In the mind's eye of the Jews, as well as of non-Jews, they have generally been associated with actions by which they brought their influence to bear on behalf of the Jewish community and it is, therefore, no surprise that that they have been remembered and praised in Jewish literature. In the realm of Muslim-Christian rivalry, it did not pass unnoticed in Christian Europe that there were such Jews in Ottoman service. For us, the questions surrounding their careers are twofold. First, what were the means by which such individuals rose to their influential positions, and second, once established, in what manner did they represent the community as a whole, that is to say, how did the Ottomans and the Jews view these people and understand their role as leaders of the Jewish community?

Little is known about the importance of Jews at the court of Sultan Murad II while the Ottoman capital was still at Edirne. There is mention of a Jew, Isaac, who reportedly served as Chief Physician and whose family supposedly was granted exemption from taxation.⁴⁷ One Elisha, about whom we know virtually nothing, was said to be influential at court and apparently he was responsible for introducing the Greek Plethon to the intellectual life which surrounded the Ottoman court. A Greek letter from the middle of the fifteenth century mentions

him in this regard as: "Elisaes, the apparent Jew, but in reality a polytheist who at the time wielded great influence at the court of the barbarians. . . ."48

It was also in the period of Murad II that the physician Jacopo of Gaeta, known as Hekim Yakub, entered into Ottoman government service. He too served as chief physician and acquired other ranks as well. Yakub was probably a man of particularly great ambition, and perceived the Ottoman court as a forum in which he could rise to a position of influence. His decision, at a young age, to migrate to Edirne must have been based on a measure of self confidence and also on knowledge that Ottoman society needed trained people and therefore welcomed Jews. His confidence was not misplaced, and his career is our foremost example of Jewish mobility in fifteenth century Ottoman society.

At the accession of Sultan Mehmed II Yakub was already well thought of at court, and the new Sultan granted exemption from taxation to him and his descendents.⁴⁹ He may have been a supporter of the plans to attack Constantinople; he survived the political purges which took place after the successful campaign of 1453 and went on to serve at the Palace even after the death of Sultan Mehmed, some thirty years later. The report that, in 1457, the Venetians presented him with thirty crimson robes as a means of obtaining his help in arranging an audience with the Sultan lends weight to the contention that, even early in his career, he was a man of considerable influence.⁵⁰

Yakub's European education, knowledge of languages and of European ways, placed him among the Sultan's closest advisors and simultaneously

drew him into various plots against the life of the Sultan, whose health was, literally, in Yakub's hands.⁵¹ Questions regarding his loyalty to the Ottomans were raised by Babinger, but others have suggested that the Ottomans were fully apprised by him of the Venetian plots against the Sultan in which Yakub's participation was desired, and that the physician merely toyed with the Italians in order to keep informed of their intent.⁵²

Yakub's career was extremely successful, and it is remarkable that, as a Jew, he was able to serve as physician to the Sultan and to become an influential member of the court. The few accounts in Ottoman sources assert that he became defterdar and was raised later to the rank of Vezir.⁵³ His notoriety is verified by the fact that, in his lifetime and for some years thereafter, a quarter in Istanbul was known as Hekim Yakub Mahallesi.⁵⁴

Late in his career Yakub converted to Islam, though Jewish historians have sometimes been reluctant to accept the fact of his conversion.⁵⁵ The Ottoman texts which have been cited in this regard do not necessarily say that he converted, and recent scholarship has relied on documents which mention descendants of Hekim Yakub, with distinctly Muslim names.⁵⁶ His conversion, however, is verified by an extant vakfiye in which his holdings in the Silivri area were established as a pious trust for the benefit of his children.⁵⁷

The land and villages had probably been given him as a benefice and then transformed into a gift, perhaps as an inducement to convert

or as a conversion gift, by Sultan Bayezid. By this time, Muharram 888/February 1483, he was a Muslim, and it seems likely that this was indeed the occasion of his conversion. The impressive list of witnesses, former and future Grand Vezirs Mesih Paşa and Ishak Paşa, the Kazasker, and so forth, suggests a major occasion, not just the establishment of a vakıf which the competent judicial authorities could have effected without such distinguished company.

What, however, of his role as an Ottoman Jew before the conversion? The contemporary historian Aşık, in referring to him, points out that it was Yakub's intervention which led to the increasing influence of Jews at court, while previously, he claims, they had been considered unreliable. He also says that until Yakub's time tax farmers were not hanged!⁵⁸ Lewis rightly pointed out that this must refer to a specific incident in 872/1472, the hanging of a Jewish amil, also named Yakub.⁵⁹ Although Aşık may not have been fond of or favorable toward Jews, and Hekim Yakub's Jewish faith may have caused resentment in some circles, this reference still suggests that Hekim Yakub was associated in the popular mind with the rise of Jewish influence in the second half of the fifteenth century. Perhaps this can be tied to Yakub's service as defterdar. He would have been in an excellent position to assist aspiring Jewish tax farmers. The reaction which Aşık reflects was part of the current of conservative backlash after the accession of Sultan Bayezid, the time when Aşık's chronicle was completed and presented to the court. This fits well with the view that the vakfiye of 888/1482 indeed dates

from the occasion of his conversion. If so, then for most of his active life and career he was a member of the Jewish community. The date of his death is variously set at 888/1483-899/1484.⁶⁰ The report by Babinger that he was killed along with Karamani Mehmed Paşa in the Janissary riots after the death of Mehmed II is disproved by the date of the vakfiye, though perhaps he played a less important role after Mehmed's death.

It is impossible to know the real motives for Yakub's conversion to Islam. He may have been pressured by Sultan Bayezid, whose harsh attitudes toward the Jews are well known to us. Also, Yakub may have been motivated by a desire to assure that the wealth he had accumulated would be passed on to his family and thus used conversion as a means of persuading the Sultan to give him title to the lands of his benifice holdings. It is also, of course, possible that for reasons of faith and conscience he wished to be, or perhaps to die, a Muslim.

The motives for Hekim Yakub's conversion are not as important as the impact of his career on the Jewish community and on the attitudes in Ottoman ruling circles toward the Jews. Even if we minimize the active intercession by Yakub in the administrative system of the Jewish community in that period and discount his role in helping and working with Jewish tax farmers, an unmistakable fact remains. Hekim Yakub exemplified a very special kind of Ottoman success story. He was a foreign Jew who came to Ottoman territory to seek his fortune and in the course of half a century of service rose to a position in the

highest councils of government and was deeply involved in the life at the court. Late in his career he adopted Islam, and that did not pass unnoticed. He was a story book figure whose life and success proved the value of the liberal Ottoman policies toward Jews and confirmed the belief that right-minded non-Muslims, exposed to Islam, would eventually perceive the correctness of the Muslim revelation.

We cannot say positively that the remarkable career of this Jewish physician had a lasting effect on the Sultan and the court and contributed to the decision in the 1490's to receive Jews from abroad and help in their resettlement in Ottoman territory; the general success of the Jewish community was probably sufficient inducement. But the success of Yakub's service to the court was probably an important precedent in establishing a tradition of and a place for Jewish physicians at court and firmly implanted the idea of allowing Jews to serve as court advisors in addition to their duties as medical practitioners.

We are also unsure of the nature of the relationship between Hekim Yakub, before and after his conversion, and the Chief Rabbi Moshe Capsali. Although we have evidence of Capsali's involvement in theological disputes, little is known of his political activities. Perhaps both Yakub and Capsali were identified with a single faction at court, as there are reports that both their lives were threatened in the Janissary riots of 1481 after the death of Sultan Mehmed II. It is also possible that Yakub was an important intermediary between the Jews and the government and that his conversion created a vacuum in

the community leadership, but this is only speculation.

Under Bayezid the push for orthodoxy, which took place in the early years of his reign, must have had some effect on the prestige of Jews at court, and we have just speculated that Yakub's conversion may also have weakened the ability of the community to obtain favor of the Sultan. While there were other Jewish physicians at court and in the palace service, we have no reports that during Yakub's lifetime any of the others had the stature and influence of Yakub. Thus we are left with the impression that, in the period from the ascension of Bayezid in the 1480's, until 1492, Jews may have been increasingly isolated from the court, though it is difficult to say what impact this had because the hiatus was brief.

The immigration of 1492 and afterward brought to the Ottoman Empire more physicians who had been trained in the best medical schools of Europe and who, in Spain and elsewhere, had often been associated with high government circles and were heritors of a tradition of influence in court circles which exceeded their duties as medical practitioners. Many such physicians also entered into the Ottoman service, even in the period of Bayezid. Joseph Hamon, the best known example, was serving the Ottomans by the last years of Bayezid's reign, but we know too little to tell what went on in those years. He was active in the years between the death of Capsali and the rise of the kethüda Shealtiel to prominence, but we do not know whether he filled in part the political vacuum which existed.

The emergence of Shealtiel is another reflection of the void which existed after the death of Capsali and the conversion of Yakub in which the Jews were probably left without effective representation at court. Rozanes explains that there were, indeed, influential Jews at court in those years, but that they were too concerned with their own affairs to adequately represent the Jewish community. Perhaps they were not influential enough, or their positions were too precarious to risk disfavor by intervening too vigorously on behalf of the Jews. Maybe they were among the supporters of Shealtiel.

With the accession of Selim I the situation changed. It appears that both Joseph Hamon and Shealtiel were able to retain their positions through the transition to the new reign. The scholarly but ineffectual Rabbi Mizrahi, as we know, was not particularly involved in court politics, and the impression is that, along with the two court figures, the physician and the kethüda, other influential members of the Sephardic community were viewed by the government as the most important representatives of the Jewish community.

We are able to identify various Jewish physicians in the palace service throughout the middle years of the sixteenth century and later. No doubt their success was the result of their training, competence, and the service rendered by the Jewish physicians who preceded them. Although with few exceptions little is known of the details of their careers, a revealing incident occurred in the late sixteenth century, when the Jews were confronted with a rising tide of conservative Muslim

opinion. When a Jewish court physician at Edirne died, the chief physician pressed successfully for the appointment of a Muslim to fill the vacant post, pointing to the large number of Jews and small number of Muslims in such positions.⁶¹

While not all physicians wielded great influence at court, Moshe Hamon, Sultan Süleyman's physician, had great power and prestige. In his case we know something of the ways in which his position enabled him, or perhaps forced him, to become one of the most important personages in representing the Jewish community and in protecting its position in the Empire.

Moshe Hamon appears to have inherited from his father, Joseph, a twofold role in Ottoman life. First, of course, was the position as physician to the Sultan. There is no need to elaborate on the advantages of such a post for gaining access to the innermost activities of the court. Similarly, their prestige made the Hamons central figures in the attempt of the Jewish community to ensure its security and influence. Joseph Hamon had played a part in communal affairs at least to the extent that an example is known of his assisting to bring a dispute in a provincial community to the attention, and eventually jurisdiction, of Rabbi Mizrahi.⁶² Apparently two traditions, medical service and active involvement in community affairs, were passed on to Moshe Hamon.

In the mid-sixteenth century, when the Salonika Jewish authorities were at a loss to control the activities of the unscrupulous Baruh,

who was among the most important tax farmers in Salonika, it was through the intervention of Hamon that the matter was settled and the unpopular Baruh was exiled by order of the Divan.⁶³ We have noted, also, Hamon's role in protecting the Jews from the slanderous blood libel, and Heyd has observed already that his leadership in the community must have assumed a special role after the decline of the Rabbinate in the early sixteenth century.⁶⁴ In addition, he was a patron of learning and supported study and scholarship within the Jewish community.⁶⁵

The dual role of professional service to the state and the Sultan combined with support of scholarly and community activities is similar to the pattern of Muslims of high rank. In keeping with the secondary status of non-Muslims, though, despite what we have noted about the relatively liberal treatment of Jews, we cannot point to great monuments established by Hamon. Muslims with power and influence have left important mosques, public baths, schools, and other public institutions which bear their names. However, despite the inability to establish magnificent public monuments, Hamon was not immune to or removed from the various political intrigues at the court. In fact, Heyd has suggested that Hamon's fall from influence a few years before his death was probably related to the dismissal of the Grand Vezir Rüstem Paşa with whose faction he seems to have been allied, and whose fall came in the wake of Janissary disenchantment at the execution of Prince Mustafa, said to have been hostile to the Jews.⁶⁶ If this explanation is correct,

it serves to emphasize the importance of a leader such as Hamon, who was the primary source of Jewish access to the government. It is also a telling comment with regard to the Ottoman Jewish community and its economic influence that favor or hostility to the Jews was among the factors mentioned in describing the political outlook and philosophy of Ottoman Sultans, Princes, and politicians.

Toward the end of his career Hamon apparently intervened with the Sultan in order to assist a family of Iberian Jewish bankers, to whom he was related, to leave Venice and come to Ottoman territory. Hamon's intervention on behalf of the Mendes-Nasi family, which resulted in demands to the Doge that no obstacle to departing Venice be put in their way,⁶⁷ was a step in establishing the position of Don Joseph Nasi; in the years after Hamon's death he became the most influential Jew in the Empire and inherited the role of chief advocate for Jewish interests at court.

The lives and careers of Doña Gracia Mendes and her nephew and son-in-law Don Joseph Nasi were mentioned in the writings of their contemporaries and have drawn the attention of modern biographers as well. Their financial interests in Europe, including activities as bankers to the Spanish and French courts, were extensive, and long before their arrival in Ottoman lands they had considerable standing in the financial world of their day. It is, however, their success in the Ottoman Empire which interests us.

After their arrival in the Ottoman Empire, in the 1550's, the

Nasis returned openly to Judaism, and, being wealthy members of the Jewish community, played a role as patrons of learning. They financed synagogues and schools, and, like the Hamons, came to play a considerable role in the life of the community and were considered as representatives of the community in the eyes of Jews and non-Jews alike. The most interesting question in regard to their careers is the problem of what means they employed in order to achieve their financial and political success.

In the first year or two after their arrival, under the leadership of Doña Gracia, the family became involved in tax farming. The earliest Ottoman records regarding the Nasis uncovered thus far help to explain the ways in which the Nasi enterprises in the Ottoman Empire were established. They obtained, shortly after their arrival in Istanbul, tax concessions for the supply of lumber for casks and barrels to the capital. The earliest payment dates from November, 1556, indicating that their involvement in this activity must have begun almost immediately after their arrival.⁶⁸ The privilege which Doña Gracia purchased, along with her "agent and partner" Salamon and Yasef, respectively, also involved the taxes on wine and other alcoholic spirits brought into Istanbul. Within a year of their second term as concessionaires, which began in 967/1559, they renegotiated their agreement with the government because an order had been issued prohibiting the importation of alcohol into Istanbul. The total cost of their mukataa was halved in consideration of the change in policy.⁶⁹

In the initial agreement the Nasis had obtained good terms in exchange for a large initial payment. They paid half the amount due for the three year concession in advance and in exchange were offered a monopoly on all barrel lumber entering the city, including even materials shipped directly to the imperial dockyards. Thus they ensured that no goods would escape assessment and the imperial docks would not become a conduit for goods to be brought into the city without the appropriate dues being paid to the tax farmers. The prohibition on wine imports was apparently of short duration as there are subsequent records of this tax being collected. In fact, Don Joseph Nasi himself had the mukataa for a number of years.

The Nasis, in addition to their tax farming, established relations with the Jews of Salonika in the realm of cultural affairs and in commerce as well. It is noteworthy that in 967/1559 some portion of the amount on the Nasi tax concessions was paid in wool cloth rather than in cash.⁷⁰ Perhaps the government preferred this form of payment, as it accepted the payment of the Jewish cizye from Salonika in the same form. It may also be that the Nasis suggested payment in kind and were able to negotiate a favorable price with the Jewish weavers and cloth merchants. Very quickly they had established relations with that stronghold of Jewish merchants, weavers, and dyers, an important element in Ottoman Jewry.

The tax concessions which Don Joseph had to manage were not easy to administer and the complaints of his successors, also Jews, give us

some idea of the problems. In particular, Christian subjects were smuggling wine into Istanbul in order to evade taxation, and foreign ships in the harbor were surreptitiously unloading wine with the same intent. Owners of vineyards were having their grapes pressed elsewhere, depriving the city of sufficient supplies, and the treasury, and of course the unfortunate tax farmers, of revenue.⁷¹ The system for collecting these dues required, as did other major tax farms, a bureaucracy with an investigative mechanism in order to control traffic, just as do government agencies in our own time.

Beginning with the first concessions which they held and apparently adding to them rapidly, the Nasis developed a large network of agents and functionaries. In addition, Don Joseph, through instinct or because of good advice, chose the winning side in the conflict for succession between the sons of Süleyman, Selim and Bayezid, and when Selim II became Sultan, Nasi's position at court was assured. He became a close advisor to the Sultan and, though he lived usually at his palace, Belvedere, on the Bosphoros, was appointed Duke of Naxos and the Cyclades, with the rank of sancak beyi,⁷² in addition to the Italian title of Duke. He continued to maintain his tax concession on the alcohol destined for Istanbul,⁷³ and of course received the income from the Cyclades on a similar basis.

In light of his immense political influence, it is not surprising that the Jewish community turned to Joseph Nasi as their patron and political representative though he was not the only Jew active in court

affairs at the time. There were physicians and others too who had considerable influence. His role was so great, however, and so unique, that he overshadows his Jewish contemporaries in the world of finance and politics. His success appears to have stemmed from a number of sources. To begin with, the Nasis were under the patronage of Moshe Hamon when they arrived and it may have been through his influence that they were able to obtain such important tax farms as the one on barrels and alcohol, which had previously been the domain of translators of the imperial court.⁷⁴ The experienced financier Doña Gracia, who had inherited the family interests after the death of her husband, and who is the only woman whose name has so far been found in the records of active tax farmers (we must exclude here harem women, wives of Sultans, and others who were often granted income from such concessions), lent considerable expertise in banking to her aspiring nephew. Don Joseph himself, by force of personality, must have made himself a trusted and desired companion of Sultan Selim II and practiced a considerable measure of ruthlessness to obtain his ends.

There is another aspect of the career of Joseph Nasi which makes him unique. We will examine later the careers of important tax farmers and sarrafs who were allied with important members of the bureaucracy.⁷⁵ We will also describe the symbiotic relationship between government officials, unable to manage their benefices and tax farms, and sarrafs who provided organizations and experience in exchange for which they were not only paid a salary or percentage, but were privy

to a great deal of political and commercial intelligence. No other figure in Ottoman history combined all these roles so effectively as did Joseph Nasi. He united in himself the attributes we associate with the Jews and their success in the Ottoman Empire with the power of the Ottoman class. He was himself a major tax farmer with numerous agents and employees serving as the actual, not merely nominal, head of a tax farming network. He was a banker and financier, and his network of agents in Europe and the Ottoman Empire provided him, and sometimes, the Ottomans, with important intelligence information. With the exception of physicians, he was probably the only Jew to be granted a regular rank within the Ottoman system along with the benefice which accompanied it. We might speculate that, had he converted to Islam, he may well have been a candidate for the position of Grand Vezir, though perhaps had he accepted such a proposal he would not have died of natural causes with his fortune intact, as was indeed the case. It was this remarkable power and influence which made Don Joseph the natural representative of Jewish interests at court.

In the years after the death of Nasi there were other Jews who wielded considerable influence in government circles; physicians and financiers served as advisors and in some cases represented Ottoman interests abroad. David Passi⁷⁶ and the physician b. Yaish,⁷⁷ who also achieved considerable political influence, come immediately to mind. Further research may enlighten us about their careers. The decline of the position of Jews in Ottoman society and the generally strict

approach taken to religious restrictions in the latter half of the sixteenth century took a toll. Even though Jews continued to be involved in court intrigues and in palace politics, the heyday of the Jews, like that of the Empire, had passed. The activities of Jewish politicians after Nasi are part of the story of the beginnings of Ottoman decline, which continues beyond the chronological scope of this study.

The involvement of Jews in the intimate life of the Sultans from the second half of the fifteenth century until late in the sixteenth was remarkable. Like the rest of the Jewish community, these individuals fulfilled an important need and were thus able to carve a particular niche out for themselves. A number of elements seem to characterize their careers. The three most remarkable examples, Yakub, Hamon, and Nasi were immigrants or, in the case of Hamon, were raised by immigrant parents. They were linked with the outside, with the world of Christian Europe, and thus served to interpret the West for the Sultans whom they advised. All three are associated in the Jewish and non-Jewish literature with the Jewish community despite the fact that Yakub, late in life, became a Muslim and Nasi and his family returned to Judaism only after arriving in the Ottoman Empire. Remarkably, these individuals are among the few in this period who had satisfactory relationships with Sultans over a long period of time and survived relatively well the numerous political upheavals and the factional warfare at the court. While it is easier to understand the ability of

the physicians to persist, Nasi developed a close relationship with Selim II without the same advantage. Surely in all three cases a measure of personal trust existed which was fundamental to the success all three enjoyed.

These Jewish politicians typify the rise and decline of the Ottoman Jewish community. Yakub, emerging in the period of reconstruction when the Jews were influential in the commerce of the Empire and before the community, under the impact of the Iberian immigration, turned outward from Istanbul. Hamon, under the tutelage of his father, emerged as the sixteenth century successor to Yakub and stood at the head of the powerful Sephardic-dominated Jewry of the reign of Süleyman. It is intriguing to note that the reenforcement of religious restrictions on the Jews, which was the result of changes which had been underway for some years, gained momentum in the years after Hamon's service. He, it seems, more than Nasi, was willing or able to protect the interests of the Jews effectively. It is, perhaps, just coincidence that Nasi, a relative of Hamon, succeeded him as the most prominent Jew in the Empire. There is no evidence to suggest that Hamon viewed the Nasis as potential successors to his own position. Indeed, Hamon's son continued in the palace medical services and was important in his own right but never achieved the stature of his illustrious father or grandfather. It may have been impossible to maintain for more than one generation the characteristics which made these immigrant Jews valuable to their rulers. By the time Joseph Nasi

was the dominant figure in Ottoman Jewish life, the status of the Jews had begun to change, and the political currents in the Empire probably dictated that no Jew could repeat his success again.

Another factor which attracts our attention is that Hamon and Nasi served to fill the void left when the leadership of the Rabbinate had declined so drastically that only religious functions remained the province of the spiritual leaders of the community. Nasi and Hamon, and the other Jewish politicians who had influence with the government, inherited the burden of representing all Jewish interests before the authorities.

The notable success of three important politicians, servants of the Ottomans, is a reflection of the liberality of Ottoman society in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They were welcomed because of their remarkable abilities, and their success was a reflection of the general success of the Jewish community.

Notes

- 1 H. J. Zimmels, Ashkenazim and Sephardim (Farnborough, England, 1969), p. 104ff.
- 2 H. İnalçık, "Bursa," EI², I 1334 cites J. Schiltberger, Bondage and Travels, edited by J. B. Telfer (London, 1879), p. 40, in regard to health facilities.
- 3 See Appendix I.
- 4 KK 2411, p. 20, misnumbered as p. 6.
- 5 Capsali, p. 82; Pakalın, I, 845, refers to Kazım Bey, Büyük Türk Lügati as giving meanings which include ihtiyar: aged, elder, chief; hakim: governor, judge; alim: learned, wise, etc., terms which might well have been applied to a man in Capsali's position.
- 6 Capsali, p. 82.
- 7 KK 2411, p. 20, misnumbered as p. 6.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Capsali, pp. 128-30, Rozanes, I, 43-44.
- 10 Capsali, p. 240.
- 11 L. Bornstein, "The Structure of the Rabbinate in the Ottoman Empire," (Hebrew), East and Maghreb, p. 223, n. 64 and Ovadiah 1939-40, p. 233, n. 289 both cite Mizrahi's responsa, No. 14.
- 12 Ovadiah, 1939-40, p. 239, n. 289 cites Mizrahi, No. 82.
- 13 Ovadiah, 1939-4), p. 235, n. 266 cites Mizrahi, Responsa, No. 66.
- 14 H. İnalçık, "Harir," EI², III, p. 217.
- 15 TKS D 5708.
- 16 TKS E 12314.
- 17 Rozanes, I, 95.
- 18 Ovadiah 1940, p. 375.
- 19 Rozanes, I, 73 cites Mizrahi, Responsa, No. 16.

- 20 Rozanes, I, 73ff., Ovadiah 1940, p. 375f., Molho-Almosnino, p. 253.
- 21 I. Robinson, "The Chief Rabbinate of Constantinople, 1453-1536," unpublished paper, Harvard University, p. 19 cites Rozanes, I, 83 and Ovadiah.
- 22 Robinson, op. cit.
- 23 Rozanes, I, 73.
- 24 Ibid., I, 93.
- 25 Ibid., I, 72.
- 26 TKS D 5708.
- 27 Bornstein, p. 235, n. 72 is the most recent work citing the Responsum of Rashdam, dealt with in Lewis-Yakub.
- 28 KK 2287, pp. 15, 33.
- 29 Rozanes, I, 74; 77-79; Abraham Galante, Histoire des Juifs d'Istanbul (Istanbul, 1941), I, 118; Bornstein, p. 235, n. 79 after Rozanes, I, 126 and H. Z. Hirschberg, "The Oriental Jewish Communities," in Religion in the Middle East, edited by A. J. Arberry (Cambridge, 1969), I, 187.
- 30 Abraham A. Neuman, "The Shebet Yehudah and Sixteenth Century Historiography," in Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume--English Section (New York, 1945), 268, n. 30, 271-2.
- 31 Tapu 29, p. 139; Beldiceanu, p. 136; Tapu 607, p. 124.
- 32 MM 15666, p. 1.
- 33 TK 186, p. 46a.
- 34 MM 89, pp. 41b, 57b, ff.
- 35 Ibid., p. 123a.
- 36 Tapu 403, p. 533. ". . . ve nefis-i Selânik'te ki dâhî güzâr ola ve cumhûr-i cemâ'atîle içinde sâkinîn olsa . . ." In addition to the physical enclave suggested by cumhûr, we may also note that it can be understood as meaning nation or commonwealth, and that it is the modern (19th century) term for republic. Also, cf. Bernard Lewis, Notes and Documents from the Turkish Archives: A Contribution to the History of

the Jews in the Ottoman Empire, *Oriental Notes and Studies*, No. 3 (Jerusalem, 1952), p. 28.

37 "...y esta es la causa de mi venida por eleccion de la Republica..."
M. Almosnino, Extremos y Grandezas de Constantinopla, translated by Jacob Cansino (Madrid, 1638), p. 90. The work was completed around 1566.

38 Müh. 35, p. 374, No. 951 17 N 986.

39 Emmanuel, 152-54; Nehama, III, 125ff.; Rozanes II, 56-9.

40 Müh. 18, p. 59, No. 120 25 N 979.

41 Müh. 15, p. 49, No. 420 19 S 979; p. 67, No. 574 4 Ra 979.

42 Tapu 416, pp. 53-64, regarding Niğbolu.

43 Tapu 433, p. 480 for Kesterye.

44 Müh. 18, p. 59, No. 120 25 N 979 at Sofya.

45 Tapu 370, p. 493 for Kefe.

46 Tapu 494, pp. 84-90 in Edirne.

47 Moise Franco, Essai sur l'histoire des Israélites de l'Empire Ottoman (Paris, 1897), p. 30.

48 Bowman, p. 384, document 119.

49 Lewis-Privilege, p. 550; Birnbaum, p. 235.

50 Franz Babinger, Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit (München, 1959), p. 310.

51 Franz Babinger, "Ja^cqub Pasha, ein Leibarzt Mehmed's II," Revisti degli Studi Orientali, XXVI (1951), reprinted in Aufsätze und Abhandlungen, II, 240-62.

52 Lewis-Privilege, p. 563, citing the view of P. Wittek.

53 Birnbaum, p. 239, n. 34 cites Mustafa Ali, Kühn ül-ahbar, TKS Hasan Fehmi Paşa No. 354, fol. 1806 ff.

54 MM 19, 19b; H. İnalçık, "İstanbul," EI², IV, 226.

55 Birnbaum, p. 224 makes this point with regard to Rozanes, I, 16, n. 30.

- 56 Birnbaum, p. 243, regarding the texts of ^cAşik and Neşri, and citing documents published by Gökbiçgin, op. cit., p. 305.
- 57 TKS E 7851.
- 58 ^cÂşiqpashazâdeh, Âşiqpashazâdeh Ta'rikhi, edited by ^cÂli Bey (İstanbul, 1332/1914), p. 192.
- 59 Lewis-Privilege, p. 562, n. 5.
- 60 Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmâni (İstanbul, 1308/1889-1311/1892), IV, 246-47, 721. Cf. Birnbaum, p. 223, n. 86.
- 61 Müh. 25 p. 83, No. 927 20 S 981; p. 108, No. 1204 19 Za 981; p. 116 No. 1273 26 Z 981.
- 62 Ovađiah 1939-40, p. 241, n. 303 to Mizrahi, Responsa, N. 24.
- 63 Rozanes, II, 63ff.
- 64 Uriel Heyd, "Moses Hamon, Chief Jewish Physician to Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent," Oriens, XVI (1963), 160.
- 65 Goodblatt, p. 16.
- 66 Heyd-Hamon, p. 165.
- 67 Heyd-Hamon, p. 159.
- 68 MM 255, p. 186.
- 69 Ibid., pp. 186-7.
- 70 MM 492, p. 26.
- 71 Müh. 41, p. 391, No. 838 5 Z 987.
- 72 KK 5482, p. 14.
- 73 MM 3802, p. 13.
- 74 MM 255, pp. 44-86.
- 75 See below, pp. 133-40.
- 76 S. Faroqi, "Ein Günstling des osmanischen Sultans Murad III: David Passi," Der Islam, XLVII (1971), 290-97.
- 77 Abraham Galante, Don Salomon Aben Yaeche, Duc de Mételin (İstanbul, 1936).

Chapter IV: The Role of Jews in the Empire

The Lion is King = *ליון מלך*

5211 = 5(000) = ה, 10 = י, 200 = כ, 1 = א

5211 = 1451 Date of the Accession of Sultan Mehmed II

The Ottoman Jews were one of the most important elements in the economic life of the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Through their activities at the customs houses, docks, mints, and markets, they comprised a formidable network of officials and merchants, assessing, taxing, expediting and distributing goods and services. So extensive were their concessions and holdings that at times it seemed as if all important commerce was in their hands. While assuredly this was not the case, their impact was great.

Not enough information survives from the period before 1453 to enable us to understand fully the economic activities of the Jews in those years, but we are able to chart their phenomenal rise to wealth and power beginning in the period after the conquest of Istanbul. Jews were brought from the Ottoman provinces to the new capital with the hope that they would be active participants in the life of the city, and the Ottomans were not disappointed. Within twenty years the Jews of Istanbul were wealthy and dominated the commerce of the city.

In 1492, when refugees from Spain who had been expelled by King Ferdinand began arriving in the Ottoman Empire, most Ottoman Jews were living in the capital. The newcomers arrived in various ports, in the

provinces and at the capital, and many stayed in the towns where they first landed. Others, with the encouragement of the authorities, spread into the provinces, settling in the inland ports and in provincial market centers. There they participated in the same kinds of tax farming and trading activities as the Romaniote and other Ottoman Jews had pursued since the 1450's. In addition to tax farming, shop keeping, and trade in foodstuffs, they introduced cloth weaving after the pattern of the Spanish wool industry, and brought with them munitions making and other technological skills from the West. This combination of occupations practiced by the older Ottoman Jewish communities and new skills brought by the Iberian immigrants, along with the drive of the energetic new arrivals, formed the foundations of Ottoman Jewish economic success in the sixteenth century. The fortunes of the Jews, in fact, paralleled those of the Ottoman Empire, for both rose simultaneously in the period of Mehmed II, reached dizzying heights of power and influence in the mid-sixteenth century, and then began slowly to decline in the latter years of that century when signs of weakness in the fabric of Ottoman society were beginning to appear.

The Istanbul Jews, 1453-1492

In the years between the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 and the arrival in Turkey of the Jewish refugees fleeing in the wake of the expulsion of 1492 from Spain, the Ottoman Jews emerged as one of the most powerful forces in the economic life of the empire. In this period when the new capital was being reconstructed and economic

relations with the provinces were being developed, Jews served the state well and in so doing grew wealthy. Some were merchants and maintained large and small shops, while others were artisans. Still others purchased at auction government tax farms which involved them in the assessment and taxation of goods produced in the city or entering from the provinces and abroad.

After the conquest of Istanbul Sultan Mehmed set about the reconstruction of the former Byzantine capital with the intention of making of it the foremost Muslim capital in the world. Having proved himself a capable military leader by the successful campaign against the city, he set about solidifying his control of the various political factions in the Empire and the task of rebuilding.

First, it was necessary to repopulate the city, many of whose residents had fled before and during the final Ottoman campaign. Utilizing the practice which the Ottomans had employed in order to establish a Turkish ethnic presence in newly conquered areas, Mehmed resorted to forced migrations. Various groups from throughout the Empire were transferred to Istanbul and installed in vacant houses. Among these groups were Jews. When the Ottoman capital was moved from Bursa to Edirne many Bursa Jews were taken along, and when the Ottomans established their court and administration in Istanbul the Jews were moved again. Both Rabbinate and Karaite Jews from Edirne were transferred, but this time the practice was extended. The Ottomans were not only pleased with the contribution of the Edirne Jews to life

in the former capital, but also had experienced a century and more of good relations with the Jews of smaller towns.¹ Thus, it was decided to use, in addition to the Jews of Edirne, most of the Jews from other parts of the Empire in the rebuilding of the new capital.

There were at least two major waves of Jewish immigration, and reaction within the communities varied. For some groups, perhaps those with skills and trades but little capital, the expenses of the journey were provided by the government.² However, the substantial opportunities presented by the opportunity to participate in the rebuilding of a great city were insufficient to attract one of the elements necessary for the project. While the poor and some craftsmen were willing to move, the wealthy, including the all-important merchants, resisted. Orders were then sent to local judges commanding that a certain portion of the wealthier merchants of each town be sent with or without their consent and cooperation.³ The details of these orders are generally lost to us, making it impossible to establish the exact composition of the groups from each place, and to know whether the judges had any discretion in selecting candidates for deportation.⁴ We do know, however, the towns from which Jews were sent to Istanbul (see Appendix I), and a comparison of the lists of these towns with later cadastral surveys of the towns and provinces from which they came suggests that an extremely large portion of the Jewish community was moved. Jews reappear in the provincial records only after the close of the fifteenth century. The explanation for the transplantation of so large a portion of the Jews

is probably that they formed a disproportionately large percentage of the merchants and artisans in those towns, and were, therefore, prime candidates for the sürgün. We are aware also that in most areas the Jews were considered by the Ottomans to be more loyal and reliable than Christians, who were often sympathetic to the enemies of the Ottomans.

The displeasure of some Jews with these forced migrations has led to speculation that a measure of persecution may have been involved.⁵ In fact, such measures were applied to Muslims and Christians as well as to Jews, and it is clear that the intent was to establish a reliable and productive population in the capital. Rather than being the objects of persecution, these people were encouraged to participate in the life of the new capital.

In addition to these migrations immediately after 1453, smaller groups of Jews were settled later from places which were not part of Ottoman territory in 1453, such as Mezistre, which was conquered only in 1460. Others, such as the Jews of Albania, who are said to have gone to Istanbul in the wake of the Skanderbeğ uprising,⁶ apparently migrated in order to escape the unstable conditions in the countryside.

Along with the policy of forced migrations from the provinces, the Ottomans also encouraged Jews from Christian Europe to establish themselves in their territories.⁷ We are able to verify at least some success in this regard from the presence in tax farm records from the early 1470's of Jews noted as efrenc, European,⁸ and some noted as coming from Europe.⁹

The Jews who were brought from the Ottoman provinces to Istanbul were settled in various quarters of the city, generally near the waterfront or the gates of the city's land walls.¹⁰ Congregations, based mostly on towns of origin, served as the focus for communal life, as did mosques and churches in other quarters. Quickly the new arrivals began to play an active part in the commercial life of the city.

Immediately after the conquest, Sultan Mehmed had taken steps to encourage commerce in the new capital, including construction of a new central market on the site of the Covered Bazaar, which still serves the same purpose. Much of the property in the area around the market was taken over by the government, and the income derived from rents was assigned to charitable foundations from whose records it is possible to determine where some of the Jewish shops were located and what goods they handled. Records from the close of the century reflect the presence of Jewish shops in the area around the market in all four directions. They included goldsmiths, silversmiths, money changers, purveyors of turbans and headwear, dealers in wool, silk, and linen cloths, bookbinders, as well as many shops for which the trade of the owner or the goods available in that particular street were not specifically designated in the records. Along the waterfront there were Jewish shops which, like the others around them, were described by their locations, either by street name or, more likely, by the major monument, mosque, bath, and so forth, near which they were located.

Not all of Istanbul's Jews were shopkeepers and craftsmen. Finance and tax farming were areas in which Jews were deeply involved along with activities as agents and brokers in all kinds of goods. While the records for tax farming and brokerage privileges purchased from the government are not complete and it is impossible to determine with exactitude every holding in the hands of Jews during each year in this period, it is possible to determine reliably the kinds of activity in which they participated and have some idea of the extent of their involvement. The fifteenth century records are richest for the years 873/1468-69 - 896/1490-91, thus enabling us to form an idea of what was happening from shortly after the process of migration from the Ottoman provinces to Istanbul was mostly completed up to the arrival of the Sephardic refugees from Spain.

Among the most lucrative and highly sought after tax farms were those for customs duties collected at the Istanbul docks, and the records reflect intense competition among various groups of investors trying to outbid one another for the concessions which included not only Istanbul, Galata, and Gallipoli, but also the Marmara coast and docks as distant as Foça, on the Anatolian coast. No single individual could raise sufficient capital to purchase the tax farms, and a large organization was necessary to administer the various customs houses. When rights for these docks were sold in 881-2 (the mid-1470's) bitter financial rivalry led to the privilege changing hands six times in the course of a one-year bidding war before it finally remained in the

possession of a group consisting of two Jews and a European which successfully outbid a group of Muslims who dropped out of the competition early, and a group of Christians who were considerably more tenacious.¹¹ The Christian consortium, in fact, included some investors who had held a similar concession in the three years immediately prior,¹² indicating that the same people had probably been involved in this kind of activity for some time. Even to participate in the attempt to obtain such a tax farm required substantial funds. Not only did the value of the tax farm increase in cost from 9,400,000 akçe to 20,400,000 in the course of one year, but at each change in concessionaires there were considerable fees (resm-i berat) paid for recording the papers and approving the franchise, amounting in almost every instance to more than 500,000 akçe, and sometimes to more than 1,000,000 akçe.¹³ A similar mukataa was sold for goods entering the Istanbul docks along with the Eastern side of the Marmara, and the situation was similar. The groups competing for the franchise overlapped with those mentioned above, though in this case there was no Muslim group in contention.¹⁴ Again, the Jews were successful in the competition.

Concessions for the collection of dock and wharfage fees at Istanbul, again including Galata and Gallipoli, were sold in a similar fashion. Like the customs inspectors, the concessionaires who purchased such a privilege gained more than just the income derived from collecting the fees. They were able to determine with great accuracy exactly what goods were available, of what quality, and were, therefore, in possession

of a great deal of commercial intelligence. Most likely their interests extended to commerce as well, or they had friends and relatives to whom this knowledge must have been of considerable value. Thus we can understand that the rivalry for these holdings was due both to the large incomes which they produced and to their importance in helping the tax farmers and their associates and friends to maintain an advantage over their competitors.

The composition of the various investment groups is also of considerable interest. For example, the Istanbul dock fees iltizam in 887-89/1482-84 was in the hands of a group of eleven investors, some of whom were related to one another. Three of the members are identified as being from the Badra congregation and two from Borlu. The remaining members are not identified except by name,¹⁵ and it is therefore probable that they were individuals well known to the bureaucrats or the kadi who registered their participation. Most likely they had held other tax farms in the past and were, because of that, familiar figures. A group which had in its hands the customs houses of Istanbul and Galata consisted of six partners, half of whom were from the Edirne congregation, the others not being identified by affiliation. They provided the government twelve guarantors (kefil) for their obligation, four from the Niğbolu congregation, two from Tırhala, two from Trnovo, and one each from Avlonya, Felibe, Badra, and Üsküp.¹⁶ While congregations may have been the centers of communal life, it was evidently the practice to look beyond the ranks of one's own congregation for business

associates. The makeup of these groups and the importance of the positions which they acquired dramatically show the success with which the relocated Jews integrated themselves into the economic life of Istanbul, which was exactly what the Ottomans expected of them. In addition, it also suggests to us that there was relatively little strife in the community. The large number of congregations from which the participants were drawn is immediately striking, but it must also be noted that the Edirne congregation consisted of Karaites. As the 1480's witnessed a certain amount of theological difficulty between Karaite and Rabbinite Jews, their cooperation in such undertakings seems to reflect a dichotomy between relations in religious matters and those in business affairs.¹⁷

The involvement of Istanbul Jews in dock affairs was not limited to the capital itself nor those docks sold along with the Istanbul concession. In addition to the concessions already mentioned, the docks for the fortress of Gallipoli and other small docks in the area, sold as a separate tax farm, were in the hands of two Jewish partners and thirty-nine of their associates in the early 880's (mid-1470's).¹⁸ In addition, there is evidence of other activity in the areas around Istanbul, Silivri, Ereğli, and so forth, by Istanbul Jews.¹⁹

Records beginning about 877/1472 show that Jews who were sent to Istanbul nearly twenty years before had retained or reestablished economic ties in the Balkans. As an example, two different groups of partners obtained the right to collect income from has and ziamet lands

respectively, in the Siroz area. Of the six partners who held the concession, four were from the Salona congregation in Istanbul, one from Salonika congregation, and one from Niğbolu. Of the four guarantors, one of whom may have been a non-Jew, three are identified as being from Siroz itself.²⁰ Similarly, the privilege for ziamet lands shows that, while the congregations of the two partners were listed, the guarantors lived in the quarter of the Edirne Jews, and one was noted as being of European origin.²¹ In the same year, the customs house of Edirne was also farmed by Istanbul Jews, one from the Niğbolu congregation and one from that of Edirne (?). The guarantors were from the Tırhala congregation and the Edirne Jews' quarter.²² Finally, an example from three years earlier shows that Jews from various Istanbul congregations were entrusted with the collection of the Christian poll tax (cizye) and other taxes in Enoz²³ and that a Jew from Salonika congregation in Istanbul, along with a recent convert to Islam, farmed the salt taxes for Salonika a few years later.²⁴ It seems clear, then, that the Jews had considerable interest in the economic affairs of the Balkan provinces, but Istanbul remained their base and center.

Although we have seen that Jews from congregations with origins in the Balkans pursued activities there even after being relocated, there are also a few examples showing their involvement in Anatolia as well. In one case, the public scales at the market in Bursa, where goods were officially weighed and certified, were, in 875-77/1471-74 in the hands of Istanbul Jews from Trnovo and Černova originally. In this instance,

where there does not seem to be a strong relationship between the investors' place of origin and the location of the mukataa, the success of the tax farmers was limited, though we cannot say for sure that this was an important factor. We do know that the tax farmers were still paying off their obligation to the government as late as 833/1478, well after the privilege had expired.²⁵

Another kind of activity which was accessible through government concessions was the minting of coins, and Jews participated in these enterprises in pre-1492 Istanbul and in the provinces. Not until the early 880's (ca. 1480-85), however, do the documents reflect a period in which a large number of mints throughout the country was being run by Jews at the same time. In the period 886-89 (the early 1480's) the situation was similar to that on the docks with the mints of Istanbul, Gallipoli, Novo Brdo, Üsküp and Siroz all in Jewish hands (see Table 1). There was a large number of Jewish functionaries who were involved in mints throughout the second half of the century. In some instances a Muslim would be nazır while a Jew was emin.²⁶

In addition to the actual minting of coins, Jews also played an extremely important role in the distribution and recall system for minted coins. No matter how many mints may have been in Jewish hands in this period, Jews dominated the distribution and exchange system. Money changers (sarraf), the equivalent of bankers in some ways, appear frequently in the mint records, making payments for money changers' license fees (sarrafiyye),²⁷ for example in Siroz, Silistre, Niğbolu

and Trnovo.²⁸ Of nine sarrafs making payments to the Istanbul mint in 886/1476-77, seven were Jews.²⁹ The Jewish sarrafs of Gallipoli paid the license fee as a group, and in this case the payment was made to a Jewish mintmaster as well.³⁰

Involvement in the production and distribution of coinage, even more than work in the customs and wharfage concessions, demonstrates that Jews were actively involved in matters of great importance to the government, indeed, providing services which, in many states, were the province of government. In addition, it must not escape our notice that in these areas as well partnerships, groups, and the natural affinity of coreligionists were among the elements which led to success. An individual without reliable help or contacts could not expect to prosper in such enterprises.

It is likely that tax farmers and money changers who were officially residents of Istanbul spent much of the year in the places where their interests led them, leaving their families in the capital and returning when possible. This would explain the seeming contradiction that we have no evidence of a Jewish population recorded officially in the provincial towns during the second half of the fifteenth century despite what we know of Jewish economic involvement there. A lag in the recording process might account for some immigrants from Europe arriving in the 1470's and 80's not being recorded until later, but their numbers were minimal. Certainly in the early sixteenth century it was common for Istanbul Jews to live in the

provinces for business purposes, as shown by the frequent legal disputes over what constituted legal residence for purposes of taxation. By that time the government recognized the problem as well, and there are various early sixteenth century cadastral registers in which some Jews are listed separately from the rest of the Jewish community and it is noted that they reside in a place for purpose of commerce, but are officially registered and pay taxes in Istanbul.³¹ The numerous fifteenth century references to Jews of Istanbul with tax concessions in the provinces which we have noted must be a reflection of the same situation.

Our view of the great prosperity and economic power of such important tax farmers must be tempered with what we know of the difficulties faced by these semi-official government functionaries. The names of the guarantors of the Edirne customs house privilege (pp. 110-11 above) are followed by the notation "released" (from prison), and money changers and mint functionaries were arrested at times as well.³² The records of the Siroz ziamet tax farm (pp. 110-11 above) show us that the responsibility for ensuring the government's income rested, in the final analysis, with the congregations and with the community as a whole. While the previous amil for this concession had been hanged because of his performance in office,³³ or lack thereof, in this case the course was different. It is recorded that the guarantors went bankrupt, presumably having overextended themselves or, perhaps, due to insufficient funds being collected as taxes. In any

case, the "influential leaders" (siyaset ümera) of the Jewish community were called together and funds were collected toward meeting the obligations of the guarantors. At this point the Sultan ordered their release from prison (19 S 882/23 XII 1477). As the tax farm itself had been sold for a period of three years beginning in October 1472, they must have been arrested some time between late 1475 and late 1477.

What is of even greater interest is that the community apparently was able to secure their release without paying the full amount due. In November 1479, the tax authorities attempted to collect another payment in the same amount that had been paid two years previously. However, certificates obtained at the time of the 1477 payment were produced stating that the payment made then satisfied the debt in its entirety, and the matter was dropped.³⁴

There are three likely explanations for the ability of the community to obtain the release of the guarantors with a payment of less than the full amount outstanding. First, the amount may have been relatively small in relation to the total cost of the iltizam, but the text is ambiguous. The initial cost was 515,000 akçe and 6,100 akçe in fees, and when the payment was made:

The influential leaders of the Jews were gathered together and for the above mentioned (guarantors) 5000 akçe each was collected . . .

(Siyaset ümera yahudiler cem^c edüp mezkurler için beşer bin akçe cem^c edüp . . .)

This may mean that 5000 akçe was collected for each of the guarantors, or that each of the persons gathered to deal with the matter contributed 5000 akçe.

A second possibility is that the government was conscientiously observing Hanifi Muslim law, the dominant rite in the Ottoman Empire. According to Hanifi law a guarantor is liable for only one third of the total debt which he guarantees. We have no way of knowing whether or not the first payment represented a third of the amount outstanding.

Finally, it may be possible that this matter was dealt with entirely according to the terms of administrative practice. The order relieving the guarantors and the community of further obligation was issued by the Sultan at the recommendation of a number of the most important members of the divan, Mehmed Paşa, either Grand Vezir or Nişancı at the time, Mesih Paşa, who became Grand Vezir some years later, and two defterdars. Either through gifts or influence or both, the leaders of the community may have been able to negotiate a satisfactory settlement. Mesih Paşa, for example, was a witness at the conversion to Islam of the Sultan's Jewish physician Hekim Yakub in 888/1483,³⁵ and perhaps their relationship could have played some part in the arrangement. The fifteenth century historian Aşık associates Hekim Yakub with the rise of Jewish tax farmers, and the incident in which the previous amil for this concession was hanged. Whichever was the case, the community and the guarantors were able to resist the attempt of treasury officials to obtain a second payment. Either the law or some political agreement

was honored in this matter, or, perhaps, if gifts to officials had influenced the process the first time, further gifts may have been made on this occasion as well. However we explain this incident, the impression is unmistakable that both the government and the Jews took these activities very seriously, and it also confirms that the government looked upon the Jewish community as a corporate body, and likewise the Jews undertook to assist coreligionists whose performance might adversely affect the fortunes of the community as a whole.

The economic activities of the Istanbul Jews were not limited to the examples which have been presented so far, docks, mints, and benifice lands, though certainly those were among the most important areas of Jewish enterprise and represented a source of substantial incomes and considerable influence. In addition, Jews were involved in collecting fees and taxes on goods entering through the gates in the land walls of the city, on candles and candle wax, and the port taxes collected on wine imported for the use of non-Muslims, for which an additional duty was levied. The latter was a Jewish-held concession throughout most of the late fifteenth century. The brokerage positions which Jews sometimes held entitled them to negotiate the commercial exchanges between foreign traders and local merchants and collect a fee from both parties on every transaction. Furthermore, it must always be borne in mind that there were large numbers of Jewish merchants and shopkeepers who, while they were active participants in the commerce of the city, were not involved in tax farming and, thus, were not generally

mentioned in government registers which remain regarding economic administration. They were far greater in number than the important sarrafs and investors whose names are known to us from the records of government concessions. Perhaps many of the names of guarantors for large concessions are those of important merchants who hoped for income and for commercial advantages and, therefore, invested in such enterprises. The important tax farmers were probably the wealthiest, and in that respect, the most successful of the Ottoman Jews, a small segment of the community which contributed to the general success of the Jews, but which must have also relied on the rest of the community to bolster its own position.

The records of the various concessions are not complete, but even so the extent of Jewish controlled tax farms is impressive enough to warrant certain generalizations. (Some concessions which are verified as being in Jewish hands are listed in Table 1.) The extremely long period during which Jews played a major role in the collection of customs and dock fees, as well as the extent of their activity in mints, is impressive. Even more remarkable, however, is the fact that for a period in the late 1470's and early 1480's almost all the major tax farms in the Istanbul area were controlled by Jews. Even leaving aside the activities of lesser lights than the largest tax farmers and consortia, we reach the unmistakable conclusion that the role of the Jews in Ottoman economic life before 1492 was immense, a fact which has been overshadowed by the continued success in the sixteenth century.

It appears that in the twenty years after the conquest the Jews succeeded, with the help and encouragement of the authorities, in capturing an enormous share of the major trade activity previously the province of Greeks and Europeans. This should not leave the impression that Greeks and Europeans were eliminated from commerce or that there was no commercial enterprise in Muslim hands either, but the fact remains that the Jews achieved success far out of proportion to their numbers in the population.

It was with the purpose of encouraging commerce that the Ottomans forced the Jews to migrate to Istanbul after 1453, and Jewish activity there ranged from the keeping of shops, which provided common goods and luxury wares, all the way to the important activities in the world of finance which were vital to the government not only for the income they produced, but also because the bureaucracy was ill-equipped to perform many of those tasks. It is not entirely clear whether their involvement in the provinces continued throughout the second half of the fifteenth century or really began anew after the early 1470's, when their position in Istanbul was very secure and the government may have been more willing to allow either temporary or permanent residence in the provinces. It does appear that there was some movement outward, binding interests in the provinces more closely to the economic heart.

In light of this economic influence and success, and the long-standing Ottoman policy of encouraging the participation of Jews in the life of Ottoman capital cities, it is no surprise that Sultan

Bayezid II welcomed Jewish refugees fleeing the inquisitory regime and the expulsion from Spain. On the basis of the phenomenal success of the Ottoman and former Byzantine Jews in Istanbul between 1453 and 1492, he could expect great benefits from the influx of thousands of Spanish Jews. While it is pointed out, and rightly so, that the sixteenth century witnessed the "triumph of Jewish merchants" with their trade and tax farming activities,³⁶ the impression has always been that this was a post-1492 phenomenon, and the activities of the Byzantine-Ottoman Jews before 1492 have been mostly ignored or unknown. It has been observed also that the remarkable career of the Duke of Naxos, Joseph Nasi (see Chapter III), would have been impossible were it not for the general success of the Ottoman Jewish merchants.³² It is equally true that were it not for a century and more of Jewish success in the Ottoman Empire, and especially in the half century before 1492, the success of the sixteenth century Ottoman Jewish community would not have been possible.

The Years after 1492

The arrival in the East of large numbers of Spanish Jews after their expulsion in 1492 resulted in a change in Ottoman policy toward Jews. We have already suggested that there may have been some movement of Jews away from Istanbul, or at least the expansion of Jewish commercial interests outside the capital as early as the 1470's and 1480's, but the events of 1492 show that the policy of gathering

Jews in the capital was now entirely reversed. Sultan Bayezid must have hoped to repeat in the provinces what had been so successful in Istanbul, and with that in mind Jews were encouraged and helped to settle in rural trading centers, especially in coastal and inland ports.³⁸ The clear intent to encourage Jewish commercial activity is reflected in the terms under which Jews were settled in various places throughout the Empire. Among the terms for settlement at Tirhala were stipulations that they not displace agriculturalists, a measure which was intended to prevent conflict with the peasants in the area and simultaneously forced the Jews to practice other professions. In addition, the Jews were exempted from a number of taxes and forced labor brigades as well as from having their sons taken for service in the Janissary corps. Their freedom of movement for purposes of trade was assured, though it was stipulated that the community must guarantee the payment of poll tax (cizye) for merchants away from the town.³⁹ Likewise, in Salonika and Balya Badra and the fortress of Alexandria in the Morea Jews were exempted from most extraordinary taxes,⁴⁰ again with the purpose to encourage trades and professions which served the needs of the government and society. When, in the late sixteenth century, an attempt was made to remove Jews from shops in the market at Bursa, they were able to produce orders proving that the government had guaranteed them the right to occupy those shops without interference and even to pass them on to their children.⁴⁰ This privilege was probably issued in the early part of the century to encourage Jews to settle and stay in Bursa.

With such encouragement the Sephardic Jews spread throughout the Empire, especially in the Balkan provinces, and quickly came to dominate trade between those places and Istanbul. In a very special instance, Salonika, they were soon a majority of the population. It appears, then, that the arrival of the Sephardic Jews probably coincided with changed attitudes in government interested in encouraging economic growth in the countryside, now that the capital was a thriving city.

In that brief transition period at the end of the fifteenth century one of the most important and lucrative provincial tax farms was in Jewish hands. The mukataa for the docks and salt trade of the Danubian ports was in the hands of one Mordehai b. Sason of Istanbul. It seems that the venture was not entirely successful as Mordehai and his partners were hard pressed for funds. The privilege was sold for three years, beginning in 901/1496, for just over five million akçe.⁴² In 909/1503 the government was still pressuring Mordehai and the guarantors for funds, though they were already in prison for non-payment. Whatever goods the treasury could locate were sold to satisfy this debt. Some cash belonging to Mordehai's father was located and seized, and the other guarantors suffered the same fate. A house belonging to Mordehai himself was sold, as were what the records merely describe as "goods."⁴³ In 914/1509, we are told, the debt outstanding had been reduced to 900,000 akçe. Mordehai appeared before the imperial divan, became a Muslim, and thus, after eight and a half years in prison, was freed, as were the guarantors.⁴⁴

We might speculate regarding why Mordehai was not ransomed by the community as were the two guarantors in a similar situation twenty years before. Perhaps in this period the political influence of the community was in temporary decline, and with the conservative and religious Bayezid it was impossible to strike a suitable bargain. Or perhaps Mordehai was at odds with the community and nobody was willing to make the necessary effort to secure his release, and, apparently, the government did not hold the whole community responsible. Finally, it may be that in these first decades after the arrival of the Spanish refugees funds were not available for such a purpose, too much having been spent on the absorption of newcomers. The truth may be that all three elements were involved, but if we are to believe the chronicler Eliyahu Capsali that Sultan Bayezid closed synagogues built after 1453 in violation of the Şariat and that Jews were pressured into converting to Islam, it may be that the Sultan's personal outlook on matters of religion had much to do with the decision.

There is another interesting problem related to the question of why Mordehai and the others were allowed to languish for so long in the Istanbul prison. What was the organization he represented and how did it operate? To collect fees at the docks along the Danube and oversee the supply of salt to the capital from the mines in the area was no small task, even with the help of a few associates, especially as at least one member of the group, probably Mordehai, needed to stay in Istanbul to handle that part of the operation, and there were more than

five places along the Danube where there were docks and salt warehouses. With Mordehai and his partners we see the first evidence of a regional tax farming system for the Danubian ports which, as often as not, were in the hands of Jews. Despite Mordehai's limited success, as eighty percent payment was insufficient to satisfy the authorities, others pursued this concession and made a success of it. Over the course of the next half century the system of partnerships to operate so large a tax farm, or portions of it, grew increasingly sophisticated and refined.

There was a strong connection between the ports on the Danube and the capital throughout the sixteenth century. An entry for 922/1516 mentions a group of Jews who went from Istanbul to Niğbolu for purposes of trade but continued to be registered as residents of Istanbul.⁴⁵ We might expect that, in keeping with the practice of the Jews and the Ottoman authorities, they would be registered as part of the local community after a period of years, but in fact subsequent registers still list them separately.⁴⁶ The reason is clear because the earliest reference says that they were Istanbul Jews who came to Niğbolu for purposes of commerce and "with permission" (icazet ile), i.e., with government encouragement, and were taxed accordingly. The same was true of the five Jewish households of Rahova. All of them were entered as paying poll tax in Istanbul and being exempt from other taxes.⁴⁷

The docks of Vidin, Niğbolu and Rahova, which were among the most important Danubian ports for purposes of trade and as observation points

for intelligence regarding vassal Wallachia,⁴⁸ were sold as a single concession along with some smaller ports along the river. They were related, in another way also, to the Danube defense line. Frequently incomes from the tax farms of these docks were sent directly to pay military salaries, often in arrears. There are records from mid-century and again from late in the century of payments by the tax farmers to various military units and also to imams and other religious functionaries serving the garrisons, from Semendire all the way to Akkirman and Kile in the northeast.

The procedure which was followed in order to transfer these funds leaves no doubt that the Jewish tax farmers knew for what purpose the funds were being used, and, therefore, had direct knowledge regarding at least some aspects of Ottoman defenses and the troops serving them. When funds were required, a messenger was sent from Istanbul with an order to the kadi, who kept the tax farm records in his register, commanding that the tax farmer appear in court and turn over to the messenger the appropriate amount. The amount was duly recorded in the register, and the tax farmer was given a certified copy of the order. On the reverse the kadi wrote the amount of the payment and its purpose and attested that the payment had been made. This copy was retained by the tax farmer until the triennial audit, at which time it was returned by the tax farmer as evidence that some portion of the tax obligation had already been met. Some of these receipts survive, and on the reverse side they invariably have notations in Hebrew or

Judeo-Spanish in Hebrew script; these were the tax farmers' own notations regarding the amount paid and the purpose to which it was put.⁴⁹ Thus we see that tax farmers active on the Danube docks, in addition to their commercial affairs, had some knowledge of the military situation in the area.

There is evidence that the government was acutely aware of the scope and sensitivity of the tax farmers' knowledge of military strength and security affairs. On 29 Receb 958/2 VIII 1551 an order was sent to the kadis in the Danubian districts instructing that "Jews and infidels" be removed from tax farms in the area (Yahudi ve küfera taifesi mukataa'dan ref^c olunmak . . .).⁵⁰ On the sixth of Receb, some three weeks before, Soköllu Mehmed Paşa, who had recently been appointed Beylerbeyi of Rumeli, arrived in Belgrad on campaign against the Habsburgs.⁵¹ The relationship between these two events leaves little doubt that there was considerable concern that too much information might be available to the enemy, especially as the soldiers in Soköllu's army were quartered in many of the places to which tax farmers in the area sent funds for salaries. This was, though, a temporary security measure, as later documents show that Jews were once again involved in managing those same tax farms. In fact, although Muslims took over the concessions during the brief campaign period, some Jews were still employed on the docks.

The network of Jewish tax farmers involved in the Danubian ports is remarkable not only because of the sensitivity and importance of the work,

but also because of the composition of the investment groups. Just as the Istanbul Jews had formed consortia in the fifteenth century to acquire and administer tax farms such as those at the Istanbul docks, now there were large consortia in the sixteenth century involved with the Danubian ports. These, as we shall see, drew their members from various locations throughout the Empire.

A group of tax farmers controlled trade on the docks of Vidin, Niğbolu, and Rahova and some secondary ports in 954/1547. In addition, many of the emins, scribes, and warehouse officials were Jews. However, not all were members of the local communities. The scribe for the Vidin port was a merchant from Salonika, and when the docks of Belgrad and Semendire were added to the initial tax farm twelve fiscal guarantors were registered. The composition of the group is revealing. Of the twelve, some were themselves employed on the docks and in the warehouses, including the emin of the Semendire dock, who was a wool dealer (çukacı); two of the others were from Edirne, one of whom was a merchant of some standing (tacir); the remaining seven were from Salonika, of whom three were wool dealers.⁵² We should also note that they acquired the concession only after agreeing to the stipulation that all the incomes and losses from the various docks would be pooled so that losses from one might be made up by profits from another. For the next three years, the Vidin docks were in the hands of another group of investors. Two of these lived in Edirne, one serving as emin at Vidin and the other at Semendire. The scribes came from Istanbul and Semendire.⁵³

We also know the composition of the groups which held the Belgrad and Semendire concession for 957-60/1550-53, though they were removed in mid-tenure due to the campaign against the Habsburgs. In this case there were five investors who had successfully outbid a group of Muslims who had hoped to purchase the privilege. Typically, the five agreed to purchase the tax farm and shoulder the responsibility of administering the business of the docks personally, serving as emins and kâtibs, and providing their own appointees to fill the remaining positions. Thirteen salaried Jewish functionaries were listed. The guarantors were also listed, and four of these were from Salonika, but although their congregations were mentioned, the quarter in which they resided was not. The remaining two were from Istanbul and one of them was a sarraf. Below their names follows a note by the kadi of Vidin certifying that they were all active in trade at Vidin and explaining why no quarter of residence in Salonika or elsewhere was entered for them. After that notation follow the names of additional guarantors who had already furnished a cash deposit on behalf of the group. Two of these were from Edirne and two from Istanbul. Although the deposit was recorded by the kadi of Vidin, the quarters in Edirne and Istanbul in which these guarantors resided were noted, suggesting that these four continued to live there and not along the river.⁵⁴

This group, then, consisted of nearly twenty people, overseers, scribes, local guarantors, and out of town guarantors, local residents and those residing in the capital or the Summer capital, Edirne, cloth

merchants, and a money changer. The implications are unmistakable. It was a large and sophisticated group of businessmen able to operate a major bureaucratic concern over a large geographic area with long term financial goals in mind. In this respect they were similar to the pre-1492 tax farmers. Likewise, this group included residents of the larger cities who came to the provinces for business purposes. What is clear for the first time is that these tax farmers had professional interests beyond their tax farming activities. The importance of a sarraf is obvious. Either in Istanbul or through his connections there he had to be aware, by the very nature of his business, of the political and economic conditions throughout the country and the effect they might have on the value of precious metals and other commodities. Living in the provinces and active in dock affairs, he would be privy to information on the quality and quantity of goods bound for the cities and, therefore, a source of information to his associates living in cities not on the river. This explains, as well, the involvement of the Salonika cloth merchants in such activities. The internal and international trade of the Ottoman Empire was sophisticated, and competition was keen. Access to information was probably as valuable as the goods themselves, and close proximity to the sources of raw materials was also an advantage. This view is supported by the complaints of Muslim merchants in Istanbul that they were being undercut by the Jews (in this case at the Istanbul docks) who managed to select prime materials before they reached the general distribution network and thus cornered the market on

high quality material.⁵⁵ A further proof that information was a commodity worth purchasing is the very willingness of the consortia to absorb losses at some ports in order not only to derive profits from the other ports, but also to ensure that they would obtain the privilege in the first place and control the trade along the whole of the river, if possible. Thus they were often willing to make good the debts of previous tax farmers, and frequently agreed, when purchasing their three-year concessions, that no matter what the level of profits and whether or not there were others competing for the concession, they would increase the amount of the payment to the government by 100,000 akçe each year.⁵⁶ This demonstrates not only that the tax farmers had confidence in their ability to operate the mukataa successfully and make it profitable, but also that they would go to considerable lengths to ensure that it would remain in their hands for the full three-year term.

It is unclear when the transition took place from the Istanbul centered system of Mordehai, who held the concession at the turn of the century, to the Balkan centered groups with some connection to Istanbul, Salonika, and Edirne. It is clear, though, that the system of the 940's-50's/1530's-40's remained stable for a number of generations. Similar groups were active in the 980's/1570's, the 990's/1580's,⁵⁸ in the early years after the Muslim millenium,⁵⁹ and even thirty years after that.⁶⁰ No doubt there was not constant Jewish control of the dock activities, as for example in 978/1570, when two Muslim partners purchased the Vidin privilege for a second three-year term.⁶¹ However,

the consistent return of Jews to this activity suggests that they were always involved at one level or another. When the smaller docks in the Niğbolu district were in the hands of a Muslim group, fifteen of the thirty-three guarantors were Jews, and twelve of these fifteen lived in the vicinity of the docks in Niğbolu.⁶² Even after the order to remove Jews and Christians from the tax farms at the time of Sokollu Mehmed's campaign, Jews continued to be active on a secondary level in dock activities.⁶³ For a period of perhaps one hundred and fifty years, then, Jews were closely tied to and involved in the activity of the Danubian ports. This formed one of the important elements in the general commercial success of the community, and, despite occasional setbacks, was a factor in the faith of the government in the Jews. We cannot underestimate the importance of these docks in Ottoman commerce and in military affairs. The river was the backbone of the transportation system for the whole region, and the flow of goods to the capital and for export was tied to river transport. The very existence of various corps of military boatmen with small patrol boats and the presence of major fortresses in the river towns points out the importance of these places in the transportation network and as outposts along the frontier with vassal or enemy states. The control of dock affairs by Jews had made them a dominant force in commercial life and gave them an advantage over Ragusan and other competitors. The Jewish trade network served the commercial needs of the Empire and decreased the burden of fiscal administration, assuring the government

of tax income, and freeing the authorities of the vexation of collecting the dues.

In addition to the dock functionaries and merchants, the Jewish money changers were deeply involved in this activity and formed another important element in the economic life of Istanbul and the countryside. Mention has already been made of the fact that sarrafs appear in the records as participants in tax farming concessions, and we must explore more deeply the means by which they contributed to these undertakings and were, in some cases, indispensable, playing a role beyond just supplying capital for the investment groups.

It has already been pointed out that sarrafs were the Ottoman equivalent of exchange banks. They paid a fee for the privilege of serving as money changers and were the government's agents for distributing and recalling coinage. In addition, they dealt in precious metals in general and, as any bank today, made efforts to keep abreast of economic conditions in order to invest and deal wisely. In doing so they were often at the mints and at government offices, especially those which dealt with finances and taxation.

In the course of their many activities money changers came to serve as the agents for tax farmers and tax farming consortia, in some of which they themselves participated. In other cases, they probably collected a fee or percentage for their services. In either case, they clearly represented a broad variety of interests, and when government accounts were due, many sarrafs were to be seen at the treasury paying

the obligations of their various clients. As they became familiar to the various scribes and officials, they probably developed a cadre of cooperative civil servants with whom they dealt regularly and whom they probably treated to gifts in excess of the standard recording fees.

Surviving tax farm records show us that important sarrafs were tied to prominent individuals in government, and that sarrafs facilitated the participation of government officials in tax farming. An example is the case of one Musa Sarraf who was the official money changer for the Istanbul customs. The tax farm for this concession was in the hands of one Ayas Bey, at the time a *çauş* at the court,⁶⁴ who may have had a financial interest in the tax farm but neither the time nor the inclination to sit on the docks and collect the duty. Most likely he employed Musa who, in turn, had working for him an organization of experienced Jewish customs officials who, in exchange for Ayas Bey's influence at court and in the bureaucracy, were able administer the privilege even if they themselves did not own it. Musa Sarraf was the agent who appeared at the treasury to make the payments and, probably, was the contact between Ayas Bey and the tax collecting bureaucracy of which he was the nominal leader.

Another example of an important sarraf was one Kemal who was the official sarraf for the Galata customs at the same time as Musa served in Istanbul.⁶⁵ No doubt, much time and energy were devoted by him to his duties there, but he was active in other important and lucrative concessions as well. It was Kemal who made the payment for the *cizye*

collected from Christians in Edirne,⁶⁶ and for the brokerage concession (dellaliye) of Istanbul and Galata.⁶⁷ He and another sarraf, Avraham, were partners with Muslims in the Salonika customs concession, one of the larger tax farms in the Empire. The Muslim partners in these ventures were of such high stature that Kemal must have been one of the most important financiers in Istanbul, serving, directly or indirectly, important members of the ruling elite. His partners in the Salonika customs were one Ferhad, çauş of the defterdar Abdullah Çelebi Efendi,⁶⁸ Mustafa, çauş of the defterdar Ishak Çelebi Efendi, and one Ahmed Hersek of the Berber troops.⁶⁹ In addition to cooperating in this venture, Kemal Sarraf and Ferhad Çauş were jointly farming the cizye of the Christians of Galata,⁷⁰ and Ferhad and Ahmed Hersek were also involved in the Galata customs where Kemal's name first appeared.⁷¹ Ferhad's interests extended to the cizye of Istanbul Christians as well, though in this case he was allied with one Musa,⁷² probably the sarraf of the Istanbul customs. They together farmed some ziamet taxes as well.⁷³ As ziamet taxes were often set aside as salaries for çauşes,⁷⁴ it may be that these relationships first began in the context of collecting ziamet dues and later broadened. Kemal was making payments for the avarız taxes from the Drama area, too,⁷⁵ and probably profited greatly from his relationship with Ferhad, who was raised to the rank of bey about this time, though he continued to serve as çauş of the defterdar.⁷⁶

A remarkable interdependence was the hallmark of the relationships between sarrafs and çauşes and other government officials. It is a

revealing portrait of these bankers and brokers who were often dependent on the good will of court officials for tax concessions or employment in such positions, but the officials were dependent on the sarrafs as well. In order to make good on the perquisites of office, the çauş, or other official, needed agents to collect their incomes. When the official accumulated some capital and was able to become involved in larger tax farms through purchase or influence the relationship with a particular sarraf or group of sarrafs seems to have continued, thus creating, over time, a community of interests and some degree of trust derived from jointly profiting from a broad spectrum of investments and ventures. The influence of the çauş of the defterdar was, no doubt, a factor in facilitating the success of his sarraf in other tax farms, and the çauş needed the experienced professional to serve him. These contacts may also have been an important source of information about government economic policies and decisions of great importance to the sarrafs in conducting their business. What seems to have emerged was a symbiotic system; as court officials came to replace Jews as the titular concessionaires for many tax farms, Jewish sarrafs and professional customs and dock employees retained their grip on day to day affairs, and neither group could be successful without the other.

In addition to alliances with court officials who held substantial tax farms, sarrafs also represented the interests of less distinguished tax farmers. One Isak Sarraf in the 970's/1560's, for example, was making payments to the government on behalf of a Jew who held most of

the tax farms on Bozcaada (Tenedos),⁷⁷ for another Jew with the privilege of collecting taxes on vinegar, olives, and so forth in Galata,⁷⁸ and for one Hüseyin, the mültezim for the Istanbul docks.⁷⁹ Nothing tells us whether Isak had some further interest in the concessions, i.e., was a partner or guarantor. It was possible, as we see here, to be involved in a host of commercial activities directly or indirectly without oneself being a tax farmer.

The broad spectrum of tax farming concessions in which Jewish sarrafs were involved, and the importance of many of the clients they served, demonstrates their versatility and the importance of a sarraf in the large tax farming consortia. Similarly, we cannot underestimate their importance to the influential government officials who employed them and, thus, to the government. The successful operation of mukataas was necessary to assure the treasury of its income and as a source of funds to support the important officials whose salaries were derived from benefices and tax farm concessions. This breadth of interests and network of alliances also shows the manner in which sarrafs kept abreast of political and economic developments within government and throughout the Empire.

All this tax farming activity and the various financial alliances were in addition to the activities from which the sarrafs derived their title, money changing and minting. The mints and coinage distribution system were also sold as iltizams and in some ways were similar to the various customs, dock fee, and other concessions, and

were another sphere in which Jews, and others from outside government, served in operating government facilities. These concessions also required the expertise, skill, and ability needed to operate large enterprises which were sensitive and demanding.

Already in the second half of the fifteenth century Jews were involved in the minting and distribution of Ottoman coinage. The records demonstrate that Jews were active as emins and amils, and participated in the very production of the coins, as well as serving as agents for distribution and, when old coins were recalled, collection of coins.

At Istanbul and Edirne in particular, Jews dominated the money distribution network. In the years from the mid-920's (ca. 1520) to the mid-940's (ca. 1540), Jews controlled, without interruption, the mint for gold coinage at Istanbul and in some years had the mint for silver coinage as well.⁸⁰ In the 950's (late 1540's) and later, Jewish emins recur in the documents, which suggests that throughout the century Jews were always involved in the work of the mints, whether they held the concessions or not. At Edirne a similar situation existed. For the twelve-year period from 946/1539-40 to 959/1552, Jews controlled the gold and silver mints. It was not unheard of for all the mints of the Empire to be sold as a single concession in the fifteenth century,⁸¹ though the practice does not seem as common in the sixteenth. In some instances the same group of investors controlled the mints of Istanbul and Edirne simultaneously and was allied with other people, including

Muslims, who were involved in the provision of ore to the mint on one hand and the distribution of silver in the markets on the other.⁸² Similarly, Jews held the monopoly on the collection of gold ore mined in the valleys around Salonika and providing it to the mints.⁸³

We learn something of the stress and strain of operating Ottoman mints from the records of the Kratova mint, which was, as it happens, in the hands of Muslims at this time. Of the seven concessionaires who operated the mint between 927/1520-21 and 951/1544-45, four were imprisoned, two died in office, and the fate of the seventh eludes us because the record book which survives was drawn up during his tenure and the audit had not yet been completed.⁸⁴ Such, apparently, were the rigors of a mintmaster's life. We do not know, in this case, whether the lack of success was due to ineptitude, insufficient revenue under any circumstances to make a profitable venture of that particular mint, and perhaps there was pressure by the government forcing individuals to work an unprofitable mint against their wishes and better judgement.

Indeed, the government was extremely concerned with the matter of debased currency and with attempts by private individuals to pursue themselves the policy used by the authorities in times of financial need. There are numerous examples, especially late in the sixteenth century, where Jewish and other mintmasters and money changers were investigated on charges of clipping coins or trading at other than the official rates.⁸⁵

As with other forms of tax farming, we are struck by the involvement of Jews at every stage of the process. As agents of the mines, in the mints themselves, in the distribution of coinage, Jews were active throughout the system. As on the docks, knowledge of current exchange rates and commodity values was an important factor in successful pursuit of these vocations, and the knowledge gained from participating in this sensitive governmental function was of use in other commercial ventures as well. Thus the mints were another avenue through which Ottoman Jews, sarrafs, mintmasters, and others, involved themselves in tax farms with the intention of earning the profit which concessions might yield and of remaining abreast of commercial and political developments which would affect the marketplace.

The large and important mukataas for the Danubian dock fees and Istanbul customs, for large mints and for the distribution of coinage, areas of great interest to the government, were important factors in the general success of the Ottoman Jews and a source of considerable influence. They were the high points standing above a broad plain of important but less dramatic Jewish-held concessions. Smaller groups and individuals alone were involved in numerous tax farms throughout the Empire and must not be overlooked or left in the shadow of more impressive holdings.

At ports other than those in the Istanbul area or along the Danube, Jews were on the docks. At Balya Badra, in the Morea, we have records of Jewish emins and amils early in the century and also at later dates,⁸⁶

and the military commanders of Lepanto testified to the importance of Jews in commerce there.⁸⁷ In mid-century, when Jewish control of the Danubian ports was nearly complete, Istanbul Jews had control of certain Adriatic ports, Nona, Tran, Sebenico, as well as the customs house at the gates to Dubrovnik (Ragusa). However, they were soon outbid by a group of non-Jewish investors and lost the concession.⁸⁸ In the same area, Jews from Salonika and Istanbul held the salt monopoly and fisheries in Avlonya, Durres, Iskenderiyye, Niş, and other nearby towns, to which the fees for market inspection (ihtisab) and the candle wax monopoly were later added.⁸⁹ It is worth noting that, in order to obtain these holdings, the investors agreed to make good amounts due on the account of one Baruh, the emin of the Salonika customs, who apparently farmed these taxes previously.⁹⁰ At Corinth, Jews from Istanbul controlled the production of alum.⁹¹

Provincial markets also attracted the Jews. Istanbul Jews, early in the sixteenth century, held privileges for the market dues at İstip along with taxes on sheep and slaves at Edirne.⁹² Again, the broad variety of interests of these merchants are reflected in the documents, as are traditional ties to the area. One guarantor was himself from the İstip congregation in Istanbul, and three years later he became involved in other similar activities, serving as guarantor for a group involved in the salt trade at Salonika and Çitroz.⁹³

These few examples serve to show that, just as Istanbul Jews of the fifteenth century seemed to have had a hand in every major

commercial venture in the city at one time or another, so the Jews in the Balkan provinces in the sixteenth century had broad interests and allied with the Istanbulites to pursue them. The scope of their activity and involvement formed one of the bases for their economic success, and we have seen that they did not restrict their ambitions to the few large towns, but, rather, were active and important tax farmers in most towns of consequence.

To understand Jewish economic activity in this period we must again bear in mind that the tax farmers of the sixteenth century, as in the fifteenth century, represented a small percentage of the Jewish population whose affairs were of extreme importance to the government. We must constantly recall that large numbers of shopkeepers, agents, peddlers and hawkers, not to mention artisans, were the pool of manpower from which the most prominent were drawn, and that it was not only the transportation and taxation of goods which were important to the government, but also their distribution throughout the society. The general vitality of the Jewish community and its farflung activities and interests must account for much of the economic success of the Ottoman Jews.

It is evident from the examples which have been examined here that the Ottoman Jews were an important element in fifteenth and sixteenth century Ottoman economic life. They participated in important and sensitive tax farming activities and by doing so relieved the government of the burden of their administration, gained the good

will and support of the authorities, and achieved considerable prosperity. The rise to economic importance may have begun even while the Ottoman capital was still at Edirne, but it was the conquest of Istanbul and the subsequent transfer there in the 1450's of large numbers of Jews which gave impetus to the quest for economic influence. In their role as participants in the rebuilding of the new capital and their position as a counterforce to the Greek community of Istanbul the Jews managed, within twenty years, to become a formidable power in the life of the city and to displace many Greek and European merchants and tax farmers. Once the task of reconstruction had been completed, it seems that the attention of the Jews and the Ottomans was turned once again to the provinces. A major upheaval, the expulsion of Jews from Spain and the arrival of many of them in the Ottoman Empire, served to propel the Jews to a position of even greater influence. The catalyst for the development in the provinces lies probably in the years before 1492, but the arrival of large numbers of Jews coincided perfectly with the needs of the society. Thus, after that date, the Jews expanded their economic role and were influential at the capital and in the provinces. Through various networks and partnerships they were able to administer large concessions which covered vast geographic areas and were able to maintain contact with the major cities and, therefore, made well-informed business decisions. The importance and large number of their major tax farm concessions attest to their acumen and the efficacy with which they conducted their affairs.

To a great extent the Jews were used in the attempt by the Ottomans to establish themselves in Istanbul and to displace or replace many of the important Greek and European merchants. Their loyalty to the Ottomans was well appreciated and, thus, the natural community of interests between Ottomans and Ottoman Jews was recognized by both, and enabled the Jews of the Ottoman Empire to become the wealthiest and foremost Jewish community in the sixteenth century world.

Notes

- 1 Molho-Castoria, p. 20.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid., and O. L. Barkan, "The Problems of the Construction and Settlement of Istanbul after the Conquest," unpublished paper, n.d., pp. 24-25.
- 4 Ibid., p. 25.
- 5 Jacob Mann, Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature (New York, 1972), II, 292 n. 15.
- 6 Rozanes, I, 34.
- 7 Haili İnalçık, "The Ottoman Economic Mind and Aspects of the Ottoman Economy," in Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East, edited by M. A. Cook (London, 1970), p. 207.
- 8 KK 4988, p. 351.
- 9 MM 176, p. 44b.
- 10 Heyd-Istanbul, p. 312 ff. MM 19, 5b, 25b ff.
- 11 MM 7387, p. 136.
- 12 Robert Anhegger and Halil İnalçık, Kânûnnâme-i Sultânî ber müceb-i Cörf-i Cösmânî (Ankara, 1956), p. 73 ff.
- 13 MM 7387, p. 136.
- 14 Ibid., p. 137.
- 15 KK 2411, p. 1.
- 16 Ibid., p. 3.
- 17 Danon (1924-25), p. 337 and Mark A. Epstein, "A Brief Note on the Istanbul Karaites" to appear in 1979.
- 18 Fekete No. 13.
- 19 MM 7387, p. 32.

- ²⁰ KK 2411, p. 60, misnumbered as p. 46.
- ²¹ KK 4988, p. 351.
- ²² KK 2411, p. 27, misnumbered as p. 13.
- ²³ MM 176, p. 126.
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 25a.
- ²⁵ MM 7387, p. 167.
- ²⁶ H. Sahillioğlu, "Bir Mültezim zimem Defterine göre XV. yüzyıl sonunda Osmanlı Darphane Mukataaları," İk. Fak. Mec., XXIII (1962-63), 199 cites TKS E 9225, and cf. MM 17892, which he cites p. 165.
- ²⁷ See M. Z. Pakalin, Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü (İstanbul, 1971), III, 131.
- ²⁸ MM 17892, p. 14.
- ²⁹ Ibid., = Sahillioğlu, op. cit., p. 184.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ MM 11, pp. 66a-b, regarding Niğbolu, Tapu 75, p. 37, for Vidin and Rahova.
- ³² MM 7892, p. 14.
- ³³ M. T. Gökbilgin, XV-XVI Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası (İstanbul, 1952), p. 305, and discussed by Bernard Lewis, "The Privilege Granted by Mehmed II to His Physician," BSOAS, XIV (1952), p. 562, who associates this event with the passage in the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade (see p. 81 above).
- ³⁴ KK 4988, p. 351.
- ³⁵ TKS E 7851.
- ³⁶ Braudel, p. 816.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ İnalçık-Cook, p. 207.

- 39 Tapu 36, p. 139, published by N. Beldicenu, "Un Acte sur le Statut de la Communauté Juive de Trikala," Revue des Études Islamiques, XL (1972), 136, order dated 902/1497.
- 40 Tapu 367, p. 313.
- 41 Müh. 24, p. 10, No. 24 16 Za 981.
- 42 Fekete-Siyâqat, I, 130-31; II, Plate 6 = TKS D 7198.
- 43 TKS D 5708.
- 44 Fekete-Siyâqat, op. cit.
- 45 MM 11, pp. 66a-b.
- 46 Tapu 370, p. 507, Tapu 416, pp. 63-65.
- 47 Tapu 370, p. 511.
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- 49 AE Murad III: 177, 178, 179, 180, 398, 400, 403, 405, 406, 407; Mehmed III: 204, 221.
- 50 MM 166, p. 84a, 106a.
- 51 I. H. Danişmend, İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi (Istanbul, 1971), II, 263.
- 52 MM 166, pp. 102a-103b.
- 53 Ibid., p. 106a.
- 54 MM 141, p. 15a.
- 55 Müh. 52, p. 338, No. 899 4 R 992.
- 56 MM. 141, p. 15a.
- 57 MM 4969, p. 31.
- 58 MM 1838, p. 8.
- 59 AE Murad II, 176, 177, 178, 178, 398, 400, 403, 407.

- 60 MM 3787, p. 14.
- 61 MM 7198, p. 89, item 21.
- 62 KK 4998, pp. 2-3.
- 63 MM 166, pp. 108a-b.
- 64 MM 445, p. 118.
- 65 Ibid., p. 120.
- 66 Ibid., p. 121.
- 67 Ibid., pp. 126-27.
- 68 Danişmend, III, 251. Çivizade Abdullah/Abdi Çelebi.
- 69 MM 445, p. 124.
- 70 Ibid., p. 127.
- 71 Ibid., pp. 120, 128.
- 72 Ibid., p. 132.
- 73 Ibid., p. 133.
- 74 R. Mantran, "Çâ'ûsh," EI², II, 116.
- 75 MM 445, p. 156.
- 76 Ibid., pp. 158, 161, 163.
- 77 MM 3862, p. 10.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 MM 3802, p. 16.
- 80 MM 656, pp. 4-8, 49.
- 81 H. İnalçık, "Dâr al Darb," EI², II, 118 and Anhegger and İnalçık, No. 15, p. 23.
- 82 MM 21960, p. 72.

- 83 MM 21959, pp. 88-9.
- 84 MM 656, pp. 92-3.
- 85 Müh. 12, p. 610, No. 1167 7 Z 979; Müh. 28, p. 31, No. 76 25 B 984; Müh. 42, p. 329, No. 1011 22 L 988; Müh. 43, p. 242, No. 449 9 Ş 988; Müh. 48, p. 36, No. 94 23 B 990.
- 86 MM 19322, p. 12; from 934/1528; Müh. 25, p. 231, No. 2156, 14 R 982.
- 87 Above, pp. 41-42 above.
- 88 MM 21960, p. 84.
- 89 AE Süleyman Kanuni, 353.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 TKS D 3049.
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- 93 Ibid.

Chapter V: Conclusion

The careers of the great politicians have probably received more attention from historians than any other aspect of the political and economic history of the Ottoman Jews. Despite the importance and unique character of their lives, they were the rare exceptions, though, indeed, they epitomize the remarkable success of their community. The account presented here suggests a somewhat broader perspective regarding the history of the Ottoman Jews in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in spite of the fact that it too discussed only certain groups in the community and a limited number of individuals who were active in the course of a century and more. These provide the examples from which the story has been reconstructed. The careers of the great politicians are of interest here, but were considered in light of the broader scheme presented in the study.

The work has centered around two basic questions. The first question is how the Ottomans and the Jews related to one another, and why such a relationship developed. The answer lay primarily in the realm of economic needs and expectations coupled with the historical coincidences of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The second question, a corollary of the first, concerned the extent to which those Ottoman and Jewish economic expectations were fulfilled, and what the mechanisms were by which the Ottomans and the Jews conducted their relations in order to attain their respective goals. The answers which

emerged are, essentially, that for more than a century, despite occasional difficulty, the Ottoman-Jewish relationship was highly satisfactory. While the chief figures who were chosen because they represented the Jews before the government were drawn over the years, from various elements in the community, suitable arrangements always emerged.

The Ottomans recognized the need for the skills and economic power which the Jews possessed, and the Jews relied on the good will of their Ottoman rulers to provide them with economic opportunities and to mitigate, to a considerable extent, the restrictive measures imposed on non-Muslims in a Muslim society. Accompanying this basic understanding was an undercurrent of loyalty, and perhaps even affection, rooted in the knowledge that Ottoman Muslims and Ottoman Jews were closer to each other than to Christians in the East or the West.

From the period before 1453 we have only a few indications that the Ottoman-Jewish relationship was well on the course of amity which would characterize it for years afterward, but the liberality of the Ottomans, in contrast to the intolerance of the Byzantines, and the protection and security which the Ottomans offered, in comparison to conditions elsewhere, leave little doubt that even then both the Ottomans and the Jews recognized their mutual interests. Although our understanding of pre-1453 events is limited, there is no doubt that the Ottomans had a clear idea of what they expected from the Jews when they forced many of them to resettle in the new capital.

It was a matter of *raison d'état* that the Ottomans allowed the Jews considerable freedom from religious restrictions. They understood that, having sent large numbers of Jews to Istanbul, they had to allow them religious facilities in the city if they expected industry and loyalty on their part. By establishing a Rabbinate with considerable influence and prestige, the Ottomans affirmed their patronage of the Jewish community, and also demonstrated their belief that the Jews would be full partners in the life of the city and of the Empire. Like many other decisions, the policy regarding the Rabbinate seems to have been an Ottoman modification of Byzantine practice, turning previous usage to their own advantage and using it as a tool in achieving Ottoman goals. Before 1453 a Rabbi had headed the Jewish community, but the Ottomans raised him to a status equal to that of the Greek Patriarch. Certainly the Byzantines had never granted Jewish Rabbis such high stature nor, we may suppose, had they contemplated the situation of a Greek Patriarch serving a Muslim Sultan in the New Rome. Thus the Jews were made equal to the Greeks in matters of faith, but in fact were set against them and became, for more than a hundred years, superior to them in matters of commerce.

The phenomenal rise of the Jews to economic prominence, previously unknown to us, marks the real turning point in the Ottoman-Jewish relationship. The commercial role which the Ottomans had in mind for the Jews placed the community in the forefront, the cutting edge, of a policy to reestablish the commerce of the city, both foreign and

domestic. They utilized the Jews as a counterforce to the remaining Christians, Greek and European, who, until then, controlled the economy of the city. The rapid success of the Jews in achieving significant economic influence, the extent of which was not previously understood, was remarkable. By the 1470's, their position was sufficiently secure and important that the Ottomans must have been nearly overwhelmed by the scale of commerce in Istanbul and the rapidity with which their reconstruction goals were realized.

Throughout this early period the influence of such an important figure as Hekim Yakub, who served the Ottomans for half a century, must be taken into account as well. Though we have noted the difficulty in determining how active he was on behalf of the Jews, it is clear he was associated with the community in their own view and in that of Muslim-Ottoman society.

The accession of Sultan Bayezid II in 1481 brought a temporary end to the liberal treatment of Jews. Privileges were assailed, recently constructed synagogues were closed, and pressure was exerted on Jewish physicians and tax farmers, important figures in the life and commerce of the Empire, to adopt Islam and, indeed, some did. Despite this setback the extraordinary success of the Ottoman Jews must have greatly impressed the Ottomans, and when, in 1492, large numbers of Jews fled the cruelty of Catholic Spain, they received a ready welcome on the part of the Ottomans. Most of them were encouraged to settle in the provinces, probably for reasons of economic policy,

though it may be that Bayezid II was unwilling to allow too large a Jewish population in his capital. It was under him that the Ottomans, with a strong consciousness that they had achieved during the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror the goal which he had set for them, the establishment of a great Muslim empire as successor to the Roman tradition, began to write their own history. Perhaps there was, at that moment, less of a place for Jews in the capital of that Empire. Such considerations were not allowed to stand in the way of economic interest, however, and Jews settling in provincial towns were welcomed and given economic assistance and privileges. In Istanbul, also, many newcomers settled and created a place for themselves.

The 1490's witnessed considerable upheaval for the Ottoman Jews. Hekim Yakub, who had converted in the '80's, was gone, and shortly after 1492, Moshe Capsali, who had been Chief Rabbi since the conquest, also died. The community had changed, and the policy of the Ottoman authorities was also different; changes were demanded in the leadership of the community. The Rabbinate of the Jews continued, but the power and leadership were in the hands of the kethüda of the community, who represented the interests of the new communities and of financiers. He had the ear of government and could make known the needs of the Jews without troubling the government with the task of having to deal with the religious leaders of a faith inferior to Islam. Jews continued to serve in Ottoman economic life and also to be welcome as physicians to the court, but the spirit of liberality prevalent during the Conqueror's reign had passed.

After the death of Bayezid II and the accession of Selim I to the throne, the situation changed for the better. Synagogues were reopened and Jews at court regained greater influence. The provincial communities had already made considerable impact in the economy, and the Jews were useful allies for the new Sultan in consolidating power. Selim's brief reign marks a change, the return to policies of tolerance. Led by the Sephardic newcomers, the Ottoman Jews embarked once more on the road to political and economic success. Due to the presence of large communities throughout the provinces, they were able to dominate the commerce of the Empire. In the latter half of the fifteenth century there had been networks of Jewish investors involved in major tax farms, but now they were much more firmly rooted in the provinces and were able to combine economic expertise with important contacts in the central government and to establish an unmatched hegemony.

Simultaneously, the influence of religious leaders in the community declined. With the increasing prominence of merchants and physicians who had the ear of the government, it was not necessary for the authorities to maintain Rabbinic leadership as a tool of government policy. In addition, the importance of Salonika, a Sephardic stronghold, as a center of trade and of learning, and the existence of various other communities of note in the provinces, contributed to weakening further the Istanbul Rabbinate which in the early years of Sultan Süleyman was allowed to lapse temporarily and then reemerged with a status far inferior to that which it had enjoyed under Mehmed the Conqueror.

The community prospered in the middle years of the sixteenth century, and its political and commercial leaders, who had effectively replaced the Rabbis as the prime representatives to the government, assumed the burden of community leadership to an even greater extent than before. When the age of powerful Jewish leaders began to wane, increasingly rapidly in the late sixteenth century, the crisis in Ottoman society and the change in its outlook marked the beginning of a process by which Jewish power declined.

The ultimate demise of the Ottoman Jewish community occurred over the course of some generations after the disappearance of the people whose lives have been considered. The seeds of decline, insofar as we are able to understand what caused the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, were sown during the period of our study. Various theories have been put forth as partial or complete explanations for the decay of the Empire. Among them are hypotheses regarding the diminution of the quality of dynastic leadership after a remarkable series of ten exceptionally able Sultans, the inability of the Empire to govern such a large territory after the early sixteenth century conquests in the Arab lands, monetary difficulties related to the influx of New World silver to the Middle East, the opening of the Cape Route to the Indies, the decline of the "Turkish" element in the Ottoman state and the emergence of Arab-Islamic thought and religious leaders, and several others. All these facts point to the sixteenth century as the apogee of Ottoman power and the period in which decline began. For us, it is

of particular interest to note that, whatever factors may be accepted as contributing to the decay of the Empire, the degeneration of the Jewish community, though much more rapid than that of the Empire, paralleled that of the Ottoman state, just as the Jews had risen rapidly along with it.

In looking back on the course of Ottoman Jewish history in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it is clear that, as in other times and places, great opportunities were available to the Jews when their host society, in this case Ottoman Turkish society, was young and vigorous, expanding rapidly, and welcoming the necessary partners from among Jews and other groups. The fundamental symbiosis between the Jews and their Ottoman hosts tied the success of one to the other. Ironically, in the years after the apogee of Jewish power in the Ottoman Empire the place of the Jews was taken by other minorities whose skills and abilities were similar to those of the Jews but whose loyalties lay elsewhere than with the Ottomans. This is not to cast a moral judgment on what could or should have been, but merely to point out that by virtue of historical accident and then because of common interests it was the Jewish community which was best able to serve the Ottoman state in the building of the Istanbul-centered Empire and serve it well through the period of its greatest glory and power.

The apostasy, in 1666, of the false messiah Shabbatai Zvi, whose impact was felt throughout Europe and the Middle East, is often considered the final blow which effectively destroyed the Ottoman Jewish

community. Perhaps it was as much a symptom as a cause of the decline of the Jews and of the Empire, the result of an economic and spiritual crisis long in the making. Even Izmir, the city in which the false messiah was born, was a child of the European trade with the Ottoman Empire, a city in which there were no Jews until about 1590 when Salonika wool merchants and workers migrated there to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Levant traders and because the Jewish wool trade at Salonika was weakened by the economic decline which had already begun.

The cultural and spiritual history of the Ottoman Jews is beyond the scope of this study, but we cannot ignore entirely the correlation between cultural and religious developments and the political and economic history of these communities. While the generation of exiles after 1492 found refuge in the Ottoman Empire, a messianic expectation was accompanying them.¹ Though it did not fulfil its early promise and by the 1530's was discredited, we see among the children and grandchildren of the exiles masters of mystic and kabbalistic philosophy who abandoned the Balkan and Anatolian Ottoman cities in spirit or in body and centered their lives and views on the holy cities in Palestine. The attempt of Don Joseph Nasi to establish Jewish settlements in the area near Tiberius demonstrates the interplay between the spiritual upheaval in the community and its political and economic history. We are confronted with the question, still to be answered by future research, whether the decline of the Ottoman Jews

should be attributed in great measure to the events of the middle seventeenth century, or whether the earthshaking events surrounding the career of the false messiah were the result of a decline that had begun a century earlier, and not only weakened Ottoman society but also exacted a great price from the Ottoman Jews.

We are, for the moment, unable to provide a satisfactory answer to the question of what were the real causes of Ottoman Jewish decline. We are, however, in a position to reassess and explain the rise of the Ottoman Jews. We have seen that the rise of this remarkable community, the richest and most powerful Jewish community of its age, was not just the result of the migration of the talented Spanish Jews to the East after 1492 or of what we previously believed to be liberal attitudes on the part of Sultan Bayezid II who recognized their value to his society and the folly of King Ferdinand. The Ottoman-Jewish relationship has almost untraceable roots in the years before 1453, but in the second half of the fifteenth century it flowered. The success of the Balkan and Byzantine Jewish communities under the Ottomans reaffirmed the faith which the Ottomans had placed in the Jews by bringing them to Istanbul. The activities of the Jews, from modest merchants to the most influential politicians, created for the Jews a role in Ottoman society. Even the conservative Sultan Bayezid recognized this fact when he put aside religious prejudice to welcome large numbers of Jews fleeing the realm of his enemy. The astounding success of the Ottoman Jews in the sixteenth century, encouraged by

the return to more generous attitudes toward them which followed the death of Bayezid, was built upon the solid foundation laid before 1492 and the skills and talents which the new arrivals brought after that time.

The migration from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497 was of great importance to the Jews and coincided with a change in outlook on the part of the Ottomans which had begun some years earlier. In the last two decades of the fifteenth century an important transition took place in Ottoman Jewish life. These years mark the gradual end of the process of reconstruction of the capital which had corresponded to a period of rising Jewish influence temporarily halted by Bayezid. Related to this constraint, or perhaps in response to it, the old patterns of Jewish leadership rooted in the pre-1453 history of the Jews and in Ottoman policies which developed in response to Byzantium and the post-1453 Greek community, came to an end. As the Ottomans became increasingly secure and confident in their role as rulers of Eastern Rome and their Empire, their needs changed. In response to this change the role of religious leaders in the community diminished and was deemphasized in response to growing conservative Muslim opinion and the powerful commercial interests making their influence felt in the Jewish community itself.

The impact of the Sephardic Jews and their resettlement in the provinces of the Empire and in Istanbul as well marked the beginning of a new commercial thrust. After the accession of Selim I it was

accompanied by a renewed aggressive foreign policy and territorial expansion. Great opportunities were once again made available to the Jews.

It is impossible to say how fundamental the Jews were in the success of the Ottomans in rebuilding Istanbul or in Ottoman mercantile success in the sixteenth century. That they played an important role in both cannot be doubted. It is also unclear whether they were important enough to say that the Ottomans would not have experienced their great success without the Jews and that no other group could have been found to serve the Ottomans as well as did the Jews. It is, however, unmistakably clear that there are few parallels in world history to this remarkable partnership between Jews and the non-Jewish society in which they lived. We must conclude that the Ottomans could probably not have achieved their success without a group performing certain tasks for them as well as the Jews did. Certainly for the Jews of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Ottoman Empire was a most remarkable and salubrious home.

Notes

¹ Gershom Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah
Bollingen Series XCII (Princeton, 1973), pp. 1-102.

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The bibliography and notes reveal the debt which this study owes to scholars who have explored the history of the Ottoman Jews. Despite methodological shortcomings, the multivolume history by Rozanes remains the most comprehensive study of the Ottoman Jews. Other monographs by Franco, Galante, Emmanuel, and Nehama contain much information, and the numerous articles by Danon are excellent. The more recent articles by the late Uriel Heyd and by Bernard Lewis represent the pioneer efforts in the use of Ottoman documents for the study of the Jews in the Empire and reflect the highest standard of scholarly excellence. Their influence is evident throughout the present study. The debt of all Ottomanists to the work of Ö. L. Barkan and Halil İnalcık is manifest in all recent work on Ottoman history, and the study at hand is no exception. İnalcık's articles in the Encyclopaedia of Islam and its Turkish equivalent represent the best and most recent research in the field.

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Appendix 1: The Old Congregations of Istanbul

The following list includes the names of congregations whose cizye payments were assigned to the Imaret of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. It includes the congregations present in Istanbul at the time of the conquest and those which were brought there after 1453 to participate in the reconstruction of the city. The lists themselves date from the middle of the sixteenth century. The figures, therefore, represent the relative sizes of the congregations at that time. These lists are our best guide to the size and composition of the Istanbul Jewish community in the fifteenth century though, no doubt, there were changes between the fifteenth century and the time the registers were prepared.

The lists are contained in Tapu 210, pp. 45-72, dating from 947/1540, and Tapu 240, pp. 11-39, dating from 952/1545.

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>	
	<u>Tapu 210</u>	<u>Tapu 240</u>
Istanbul	114	116
Galata	22	19
Gelibolu (Gallipoli)	4	3
İnoz (Enos)	9	11
Dimetoka	27	27
Üsküp (Skopje)	5	4
Ustrumca (Strumica)	4	5

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>	
	<u>Tapu 210</u>	<u>Tapu 240</u>
Ohri (Ohrid, Ohrida)	16	17
Furnuz	25	26
Eğriboz (Negroponte)	55	64
İstifa (Thebes)	12	12
Livadiya	6	6
İzdin (Lamia, Zeitouni)	100	96
Selânîk (Salonika)	92	91
Tire (Thyraea)	54	57
Siroz (Seroz, Serres)	50	45
Sinop (Sinope)	24	24
Belgrad	16	8
Mezistre (Mistra)	33	31
Sofia	3	2
Yanya (Ioannina, Yanina)	25	26
Pirlepe (Prilep)	5	4
Kesterye (Kesriye, Kastoria)	70(!) (76)	69
Balyabadra (Patras)	16	14
Yeni Badra (Badra, Badracik)	2	---
Narda (Arta)	24	23
Fener (Phanari)	31(!) (32)	36
Tirhala (Trikkala)	10	6
Karaferya (Beroia)	54	55

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>	
	<u>Tapu 210</u>	<u>Tapu 240</u>
Edirne (Adrianople)-Karaites	116(!) (117)	106
Kastamonu (Kastamone)-Karaites	2	1
Pravadi (Provadia)-Karaites	11	12
Çirnova (Černov)	32	30
Trnovo	18	15
Niğbôlû (Nikopolis)	83	81
Lofça	26	24
Vidin	7	9
Filibe (Philippopolis, Plovdiv)	38	35
Avlonya (Valona)	11	8
İştib (Štip)	32	31
Salona (Amphissa)	21	21
Ayasoluk (Altoluogo)	4	3
Eğridir (Akrotiri)	7	8
Borlu	25	26
Antalya (Adalia)	18	17
Çrete	7	7
Yanbolu	12	7
Istanbul (Smaller?)	115	121
Silivri (Selymbria) from 1st. cong.	4	4
Istanbul-Alman (Ashkenazi)	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>
	1522(!) (1530)	1490(!) (1489)

Appendix 2: Jewish Congregations of Istanbul in the
Early Seventeenth Century

The following is a modified and somewhat extended version of the list of Istanbul congregations published by Uriel Heyd in his article on the Jewish community of Istanbul in the seventeenth century.¹ It is based on MM 286, the earliest of two complete registers cited by Heyd, dating from 1032/1623. For purposes of comparison two other registers were utilized: MM 2060 from 1011/1603 lists the later, or *kendi gelen* congregations, and was also utilized by Heyd; MM 20198, dating from 1017/1608, lists the older and *sürgün* congregations, breaking off after the first few entries for newer congregations. The last mentioned register was not studied by Heyd. Both of the partial registers are closer in time to the period of this study and were, therefore, chosen to supplement MM 286. In addition, information regarding the size of each congregation, which Professor Heyd did not publish, has been included. Tax exempt groups have also been listed. They were not included in Heyd's list presumably because, in a technical sense, they were not congregations, though the defter uses the term *cemaat* to describe them.

The entry *۷۷۷*, which puzzled both Heyd and Danon,² remains a problem and is even somewhat more complicated by the information which the registers reveal. In MM 286 it is noted after this entry that the group in question was "*can reaya-i Fatih*," i.e., from the subjects of

Mehmed the Conqueror, virtually eliminating the possibility that the entry refers to the Hamon family or to a congregation founded by them. Lewis already pointed to the problem of their being listed with the old congregations.³ It is equally puzzling that they should be listed with the newcomers, whoever they were, and then noted as imaret subjects. The seventeenth century scribes must also have had difficulties with the name and used diacriticals to indicate the pronunciation, but alas they differ from each other. In MM 2060, the entry appears to be **هاتون** (hâtûn), and in MM 14932 p. 5, a register not utilized by Heyd, it appears as **هانان**, or perhaps hânân, Danon's suggestion. These readings do not clearly identify the congregation for us, but the note regarding their tax status and pointing of the name serve to undermine the reading Hamon, as does the existence of a separate group noted as itiba-i Hamon, which Heyd correctly indicates as exempt from taxation. The only possible way to read the unidentified entry as Hamon would be to presume that the pointing was slightly misplaced and that it was written Hâmân or Hâmôn. This seems unlikely in light of the fact that to the ear of the contemporary traveller de Nicolay, it sounded like Amon.⁴ This is probably accurate in light of the Sephardic tendency to ignore the guttural value and aspiration of H and H, and a similar tendency in Turkish (though not necessarily Ottoman) speech.

An entry in MM 2060 which says merely "the congregation in the large quarter," **جماعت يادو که در محله بزرگه ممکن کردند**, may correspond to the congregation **حالا**⁵ which is noted in MM 286 as being in Balat.

The incomplete defter MM 20198 dating from 1017/1608 lists only a few figures for newer congregations and they are not included in the table. They do, however, correspond closely to the figures in MM 286 dating from 1032/1623. This is also true of the figures for old congregations, which are presented in the table. Defter MM 2060, dating from 1011/1603, differs considerably from the other two registers. It seems likely that MM 2060 presents information which describes the situation at some date around the end of the sixteenth century and that the other two registers represent the results of an early seventeenth century survey which continued to serve as the basis for Jewish taxation. Once again, the relative unreliability of these registers is demonstrated by the fact that some groups which are missing from MM 286 reappear in later registers, suggesting either that the scribe preparing the register made some important errors, or that there were two or more sets of records from which registers were copied and that they contained different information.

Tax Exempt Groups

Jews who were among the important functionaries at the court and palace and those who made special contributions to Ottoman life were often granted exemption from taxation for themselves and their descendents. This tradition dates back at least to the mid-fifteenth century, and there are examples of it continuing throughout the period of this study and beyond.

The privilege granted to Hekim Yakub, the first such exemption known to us and verified by documents, has already been the subject of a special study.⁶ Similarly, one Joseph b. Shlomo Ashkenazi of Buda was granted an exemption for his service during the Ottoman siege of that city in 1526, and his family was able to maintain the exemption well into the nineteenth century, when westernizing reforms radically altered the whole Ottoman tax structure.⁷ A group known as the Descendants of Musa has been associated with the Hamon family⁸ though so far the hoped-for confirmation of this identification has not surfaced in the documents. Heyd also pointed out the existence of an entry for the Physicians Hamon (MM 2060) which shows no cizye amount listed, suggesting that they were an exempt group and that the Descendants of Musa does not represent the Hamons but another group. In addition, it was pointed out that while the other exempt groups are listed with the older congregations, the Hamon physicians are listed with the post-1492 arrivals.⁹ The other groups may represent physicians who are unknown to us, or perhaps Jewish descendants of Hekim Yakub, the possibility of whose existence was pointed out by Lewis.¹⁰ Another exempt group represented by one member of the Little Selanik congregation was the Descendants of Ilya, one of whose members seems to have survived until the seventeenth century and paid cizye at the lowest rate, perhaps a recipient of a partial exemption or from increases in cizye (MM 286 pp. 11-12). Danon has pointed out that

within the Jewish community physicians were exempt from taxation and from making donations for the freeing of Jews in captivity or enslaved,¹¹ and perhaps this is a part of the explanation for partial exemptions. The Descendants of Kurt, the family of Esther Kira,¹² maintained their exemption and are also recorded among the groups of Istanbul Jews. Another exempt group, apparently a family of physicians, is noted as Descendants of David. There is no indication so far who the scion of the family, to whom the exemption must first have been given, may have been.

With regard to tax exemptions in general, it has been pointed out that usually non-Muslims who were granted such privileges, the mu^caf ve müsellem re^caya, were not exempted from cizye because it was a ser^ci tax, and not ^curfi (customary).¹³ In the case of these few Jewish groups there seems to be a variation. Many were exempted from cizye too. The berat describing the exemption of Kira's family¹⁴ as well as various defter entries list cizye and increase in cizye among the various items from which these people were exempt (MM 286, p. 21, 24-26; MM 20191, p. 18).

A comparison of the list of congregations paying cizye to the foundation of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror in the middle of the fifteenth century to the corresponding seventeenth century lists indicates the following changes:

Congregations which have disappeared: Galata, Gelibolu, İnoz, Üsküp, Ustrumca, Furnuz, İstifa, Livadya, Belgrad, Mezistre, Sofia,

Yanya, Pirlepe, Balyabadra, Yeni Badra, Narda, Fener, Kastamonu, Pravadi, Çernova, Trnovo, Lofça, Vidin, Filibe, Avlonya, Salona, Ayasoluk, Eğridir, Crete, Silivri. The Alman-Aşkenaz congregation, if it consisted in the seventeenth century of the descendents of its sixteenth century members, was somehow included in the list of later congregations rather than with the older congregations, where it was listed previously.

New congregations: Kuruçeşme, İpsomadya (Somatya). Both were named after the quarter of residence in Istanbul.

Congregations which split but retained the same name for both elements: Selanik.

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>MM 20198 pp. 2-18</u>	<u>MM 286 pp. 4-42</u>
	<u>1017/1608</u>	<u>1032/1623</u>
Great Istanbul	101	100
Little Istanbul	46	40
Evlâd-ı Binyâmîn	6	6
İzdin	97	97
Eğriboz	70	70
Dimetoka	53	53
Great Selanik	109	109
Little Selanik	81	74
Tire	60	59
Seroz	48	47

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>MM 20198 pp. 2-18</u>	<u>MM 286 pp. 4-42</u>
	<u>1017/1608</u>	<u>1032/1623</u>
Sinop	45	42
Borlu	33	34
Kuruçeşme	56	56
Antalya	37	37
Niğbolu	69	69
İpsomadya	22	24
Yanbolu	51	53
Edirne (Karaites)	70	70
Evlâd-i Dâvîd	2	2
Karaferiye	34	34
Ohri	24	26
Kesterye	73	70
İştîp	20	21
Evlâd-i Mûsâ	11	20
Evlâd-i Kurd	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
	1222	1217
	<u>MM 2060 pp. 4-24</u>	
	<u>1011/1603</u>	
Portakal	105	143
Catalan	52	79
حاتون ، جانان ، جمان	80	60

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>MM 2060 pp. 4-24</u>	<u>MM 286 pp. 4-42</u>
	<u>1011/1603</u>	<u>1032/1623</u>
Aşkenaz-Alman	67	62
dependency of Alman	10	--
Geruş	125	115
Great Çiçiliyan	67	86
Little Çiçiliyan	19	29
Şalom-Aragon	93	97
İlyânôs dependency of Aragon	15	--
Cordova	59	71
Calabria	48	99
Sefiora	73	88
Itaba-i Hamon	17	--
congregation in the large quarter	9	--
66 in Balat	--	33
Mesine	75	4
Zeyrek	--	4
Macar-Budun	<u>59</u>	<u>--</u>
	973	970
Total	2195	2187

Notes

- ¹ Heyd-Istanbul, pp. 300-03.
- ² Ibid., pp. 301-02, and Danon.
- ³ Lewis-Privilege, p. 561.
- ⁴ Heyd-Hamon, p. 159, n. 1.
- ⁵ Heyd-Istanbul, p. 302 f.
- ⁶ Lewis-Privilege.
- ⁷ M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Un Privilège accordé par Suleyman Ier après l'occupation de Bude (1526)," Revue des Études sud est europeens, IV (1966); Abraham Galante, Türkler ve Yahudiler (Istanbul, 1947), p. 36 ff.
- ⁸ Lewis-Privilege, pp. 560-61.
- ⁹ Heyd-Istanbul, p. 303.
- ¹⁰ Lewis-Privilege, p. 562.
- ¹¹ Danon-Impots, p. 59, n. 13 to Moshe Melech, I, 8.
- ¹² J. H. Mordtmann, "Die Jüdische Kira im Serai der Sultane," Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen, XXXII (1929), 4-6.
- ¹³ H. İnalçık, "Osmanlılar'da Raiyyet Rûsûmu," Belleten, XXIII (1959), 598.
- ¹⁴ Mordtmann, op. cit.

Appendix 3: Jewish Population Series

The population figures listed here are based primarily on the icmal (summary) and mufassal (detailed survey) records from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries housed in the Başvekâlet Arşivi and the Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü. Some of the figures have been published before, but most have not. The series does not include every town in the Empire. In particular, smaller towns in Palestine, information for which has been published elsewhere,¹ are excluded. In addition, it was not practical to examine every one of the more than 1000 large registers, and no doubt evidence of Jewish communities elsewhere in the Empire will emerge in the course of future research. There may also have been entries which were overlooked in the course of examining the many defters which were utilized and as individual registers are carefully edited and published additional information may be found.

The problems and dangers associated with using the figures in the mufassal and icmal registers have been pointed out by Barkan and students since have tried to examine them following the lines which he first indicated.² Despite the research which has been done, we still lack definitive answers to many questions about the purpose of the records, the definitions of household and bachelor for purposes of taxation, and, significantly, a figure for the average size of a household. Barkan's suggestion of five persons per household has been

challenged, but the arguments thus far have not succeeded in presenting a superior case for other estimates.

In addition to the problems of our incomplete knowledge about the records, there are discrepancies resulting from scribal error. Sometimes arithmetic errors occur, and there are also problems relating to whole quarters being misplaced in the records of a town, or of registers being misbound, either originally or during the process of rebinding at a later date. At times it is clear that the scribes had information at their disposal which they used in drawing up the registers but did not include in their copies, and thus we are at their mercy when, for example, a large number of bachelors occurs in the section of totals but few if any of the individuals whose names are listed in the corresponding section of the register are listed as such.

In spite of all these difficulties, the icmal and mufassal defters, along with occasional cizye and ispence records which have survived, provide a unique source for assessing the approximate size of Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire and occasionally provide us with other information as well.

The defter MM 14604 bears the title "Ispence of the Jews in the Livas of İnebahti, Eğriboz, Mora, and Mezistre," but in fact contains entries for towns in other districts as well. In addition, p. 23 contains a summary of the contents, including figures for towns for which there is no corresponding detailed section in the main body of the register, suggesting that the defter is incomplete. Furthermore,

the figures in the summary do not always correspond to information in the main entries, a problem which occurs in many Ottoman records.

To complicate our task further, the number of households listed for the communities included in MM 14604 is often quite at variance with the figures in various mufassal and icmal registers of the period. Both the Jewish ispence register and the other kinds of documents list members of the communities by name. Thus, even though there may be some figures in various registers which represent hypothetical households in order to make up the correct number of "maktu" households, this is not always the case. In the instance of Balya Badra, MM 14604 not only lists the members of the congregations, but even has physical descriptions, short, tall, or medium stature, and red, white, grey, black, or scruffy (köse) bearded (pp. 6-11)!

The entries in MM 14604 for Yenigehir, Üsküp, Manastir and Kesterye, all of which occur only in the summary on p. 23, are particularly out of line with figures from other records. It may be that certain exempt individuals were listed in some registers and not in others. Despite the increasing corruption of the bureaucracy, or perhaps because of it, the records of 1005/1597 were drawn up more stringently and carefully than previous ones and were not in the hands of the Jewish communities but were prepared by the government itself. Perhaps, for this reason, the Jews were less successful in their attempt to keep the number of officially registered tax payers as low as possible.³ A related cause may be the loss of various tax

exemptions which the government had given early in the century but refused toward the 980's/1570's and 990's/1580's to honor.

Discrepancies in all of these registers are not uncommon. The correspondences between certain registers also show that sometimes figures from one survey were used for a number of years without revision, especially toward the end of the sixteenth century. At the same time, we can point to the example of TK 54 and Tapu 494, only two years apart, but whose figures for Edirne are radically different. The same is true of Tapu 363 and 366, both of which date from the year 974/1566, when Süleyman died and Selim II acceded to the throne, and differ in their figures. Therefore, we must consider changes in taxation policy, holdovers from previous surveys, and human error as factors which must be taken into account in judging the accuracy of these fiscal records as reflections of population size.

The exemptions, errors, and the multiplicity of records have combined to add further difficulty to the task of determining population size. The gap in time means, in some instances, that the records tend to contradict what we know from other Ottoman and Jewish sources. For example, we know that Jews began settling in İzmir in the years around 1590, but even late registers do not reflect this. Population movements in the latter part of the sixteenth century may explain, in part, the inflated figures for some towns which are listed in MM 14604 and the shrinkage of the Jewish community of Avlonya may be related. Most likely the phenomenon of new arrivals staying for a few years in

the ports of their arrival and then migrating elsewhere is the explanation. The proximity of Avlonya to Italy made it a natural absorption point for immigrants. The continued shrinkage late in the sixteenth century must be due to other reasons, perhaps the growth of other towns which attracted even the established residents of Avlonya and not just newcomers.

It is unfortunate that MM 14604 has no information for Salonika. TK 186 and Tapu 723 are closely related even though they are nearly twenty-five years apart. As all three registers show figures for Sidrekapsi, near Salonika, and the ispenca defter differs markedly from the others, the need for caution with the figures is underscored.

In dealing with the Jewish communities, the Ottomans used various terms to describe the corporate body opposed to the designation of individuals as Yahudi and as members of a certain congregation. Where a generic term is used at all, taife (class, sect, body of men) is the most common and its use was not restricted to Jews in particular.

When the Jewish community of a town or city is identified, it is generally with the term cemaat (congregation, group). This term, too, is applied both to Jews and non-Jews, including those gathered for worship as well as for military and other groups serving the government. In instances where a congregation has split, the splinter group is usually listed after the original group and is often designated as a mahalle (quarter) and noted as a dependency of the

main group (tabi^c-i mezkûr).⁴

The provincial town registers are not quite as consistent as those of major cities like Salonika and Edirne, and there seem to be preferences according to geographic location. In some instances no term is used at all. At Edirne, for example, the lists often begin simply with the heading "Jews of the City" (Yahûdiyân-i nefsi-şehir Tapu 77 p. 39). Perhaps this is a reflection of practice in Edirne before 1453 which was carried over into later registers. In such cases, and if there is more than one congregation, each of them is listed as mahalle and the leader or former leader's name is used to distinguish them. This practice was common in the Balkans (e.g., Tapu 105 p. 20 İnebahti; p. 361 Yenışehir). In eastern Anatolia and the Arab provinces some headings make no mention of cemaat and merely list mahalle-i yahudiyân, though occasionally cemaat is found as well. (Tapu 998 p. 6 Mardin; p. 64 Sercar; p. 72 Mosul; p. 265 Hisnikeyf, do not use cemaat, but cf. p. 244 of the same register, Raḥba, where cemaat is found.) Those residing temporarily in a place, usually for purposes of commerce, seem to have been designated as der kira (Tapu 236 pp. 25-26 Sofya), a term which was also applied to Muslims in some instances (MM 519 p. 29 Filibe).

In the late sixteenth and seventeenth century cizye records the term yave or yâve is employed. Clearly this is not the use of the term which denotes a tax on stray cattle. Fekete⁵ notes a usage which is applied to cizye paid by those with no permanent residence, but its

occurrence in phrases such as "tabi^c-i yave-i mîrî" suggests that something else may be intended. It is difficult to imagine that half the Istanbul Jews, the newcomers after 1492, as well as some older elements in the community were considered as having no permanent homes. The elusive explanation may have something to do with a tax status which bound all Jews, not only the Imaret subjects of Sultan Mehmet, to the Sultan and the Sultan's treasury. This, however, is merely speculation.

One additional usage should be mentioned, demonstrating the overlapping meanings of administrative and taxation terms. In some early seventeenth century documents we encounter the usage "kazâ-i yahûdîyân" (MM 15666 p. 1) or a variant, kazâ-i tâife-i yahûdîyân."

It seems clear that the various terms used in these records are administrative descriptions which varied from place to place and changed with time. It is also evident that they were used as a means of identifying the various corporate bodies with which the Ottoman authorities dealt. Considerable further research is necessary before it will be possible to state definitively what significance, if any, can be assigned to the various terms utilized and what conclusions, if any, can be reached on the basis of such linguistic evidence.

Despite the difficulties and the problems due both to human error and to a lack of knowledge about the real meaning of terms encountered in the various registers, the evidence they contain is of great value.

We are able, at the very least, to verify the presence of Jews in certain places, and to have some general idea of the sizes of the various communities.

The entries listed below follow the categories presented in the various registers; Hane (Household) indicated as "H," Múcerred (Bachelor) noted as "M," and Bive (Widow), "B." In addition to these three basic tax categories, some records indicate only the total from all three categories, described as "souls" (Nefran).

Akkirman (Biograd, Cetetea Alba, Moncastro)

	<u>H.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>B.</u>
Tapu 483 p. 64 977/1569-70	21	14	
TK 83 pp. 7a-b 1006/1597-98	24	19	

Aluștra (Crimea)

	<u>H.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>B.</u>
Tapu 370 p. 485 ca. 935/1528-29	20		2
Tapu 214 p. 127 949/1542-43	18	3	

Amasya (Amaseia)

	<u>H.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>B.</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 387 ⁶ ca. 929/1583				73
TK 26 ⁶ 984/1576				63

201

^cAna

H

M

E

55⁷

Tapu 998 p. 231
932/1525-26

Anadolu (Nauplia, Napoli, Nauplion)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 446 p. 171 Süleyman	25	5		
Tapu 605 p. 327 991/1583-84				30
MM 14604 p. 21 1005/1597	17			

Ankara (Ancyra)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 438 p. 329 Stil.	28	5	

Antalya (Adalia)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 166 p. 575 937/1530-31	18	2	

Avlonya (Valona)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 34 p. 3 912/1506-07	97			
Tapu 99 pp. 11-14 926/1519-20	528(!)	66	16	520
TK 62 pp. 13a-14a 991/1583-84				212
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				50

°Ayn Sifna (Mosul district)

H

M

B

Nefran

Tapu 308 p. 11
965/1558

23

Badra (Badracık, Yeni Badra, Neopatras)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 105 pp. 723-24 927/1520-21	10		4
Tapu 367 p. 24 Sül.	10		4
Tapu 1060 p. 72 n.d.	14	4	
TK 50 p. 58a 971/1563-64	14	4	
MM 14604 p. 19 1005/1597	29	7	

Balaglar (Crimea)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 370 p. 467 ca. 935/1528-29	15		1
Tapu 214 p. 160 949/1542-43	11		

Balıkesir (Balıkesri)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 166 p. 249 937/1530-31	14		

Balyabadra (Patras)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 80 p. 715 Selim I	167(!) 168	18	19	
Tapu 367 pp. 118-19 Sül.	252	26	22	
Tapu 390 p. 5 Sül.	252	26	22	
Tapu 607 pp. 24-26 991/1583	150(!)	49?	--	199(!) 219
MM 14604 p. 11 1005/1597				265

Belgrad (Serbia)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 316 p. 369 967/1559-60	5	2	
TK 184 p. 196a late 16 c.	22		

Belgrad (Berat)

	<u>H.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>B.</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 34 ⁸ 912/1506-07	11			
Tapu 99 p. 29 926/1519-20	25			
TK 62 p. 254a 991/1583	11			
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				28

Budin (Buden, Buda, Ofen)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 410 pp. 14-15 Sül.	102		
Tapu 388 pp. 14-15 Sül.	102		
Tapu 400 ⁹ 953/1546	101		
Tapu 343 pp. 11-12 970/1562-63	122		

Bursa (Prousa, Brusa)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 23 892/1486-87	---		
Tapu 166 937/1530-31	---		
MM 6898 p. 219 945/1538-39-947/1540-41	166		
MM 161 pp. 4b-12b 953/1546-47	250		
KK 3523 p. 61 958/1551	265		
MM 90 p. 117a 958/1551-962/1554-45	265		
MM 6874 p. 61 979/1571-72	683		
MM 5338 p. 222 988/1580-81-994/1585-86	404 ¹⁰		

Candia (Crete, Girid)

Nefran

Tapu 980 p. 157
Mehmet IV

26

Damascus

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 263 pp. 168-74 955/1548-49	503	13		516

Diyarbakir

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 64 p. 27 924/1518-19	28	3	

Edirne. (Adrianople, Edrene)

<u>Congregation</u>	Tapu 77 pp. 39-40 925/1519		Tapu 370 p. 4 Sül.		TK 54 pp. 34a-36b 976/1968-69		Tapu 494 pp. 89-90 978/1570-71	
	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>
Catalan	29	3	32	2	40	7	39(!) 40	31(!) 30
Portuğal	45		36	2	118	1	52	28
Alaman	8		7		35	3	18	2
Espanya	42		34	2	44	6	45(!) 43	19(!) 21
Polia Mahallesi ¹¹	33		25		63	5	36(!) 39	27(!) 25
Geruz	40		27		61	3	50(!) 56	20(!) 16
Toledo	10		13 ¹²		28	1	15	1
Aragon	24		27		35	8	27	13
Çiçilya					43	1	15(!) 14	0(!) 1
Antalya					25		11	
Budun-sürgün					21		11	
tetüme-i Portakal					14	1	8	
	<u>231</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>201</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>553</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>336(!)</u> 341	<u>146(!)</u> 145

Eğriboz (Ağriboz Chalcis, Egripos, Negroponte)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 367 p. 62 Süleyman	30	4		
Tapu 431 pp. 124-25 Süleyman	34			
Tapu 484 pp. 92-93 977/1569-70	34	6		
TK 157 pp. 63b-64a Selim II	34	6		
MM 14676 p. 16 1005/1597	40	13		

Filibe (Philippopolis, Plovdiv)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 77 p. 559 925/1519	32			
MM 519 p. 33 937/1530	32	1		
Tapu 370 p. 86 Süleuman	33	1		
TK 65 p. 55b 976/1568-69				54
Tapu 494 p. 531 978/1570-71	41(!) ¹³	5(?)		

Gelibolu (Gallipoli, Kallipolis)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 75 p. 37 925/1519	15	2		3 ¹⁴
Tapu 434 p. 26a Süleyman	23			
Tapu 702 p. 24 Mehmet III				30
TK 141 p. 12b 1009/1600-01				30

Gümülçine (Komotene)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 370 p. 23 925/1519	19	5	
TK 187 p. 111b Selim II (?)	19	4	
MM 14604 p. 14 1005/1597	25		

Hisn-i Keyf, Hisn Kayfā

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 998 p. 250 932/1525-26	20	4	

Hit (Diyarbakir district)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Néfran</u>
Tapu 998 p. 238 932/1525-26				24

Holumiç (Halomiç, Chlomontsi)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 80 pp. 78-79 Selim I	38	5	
Tapu 367 p. 153 Süleuman	38	5	
Tapu 607 pp. 124-25 991/1583	--	-	
MM 146?4 p. 21 1005/1597	2		

Īnebahti (Aynabahti, Lepanto, Naupactus)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 105 pp. 20-21 927/1521	84	10	7
TK 50 pp. 21a-22a 979/1571-72	120	55	
Tapu 1060 pp. 9-11 late 16-early 17c.	119(!) 120	56	
MM 14604 pp. 1-4 1005/1597	188	67	

İstifa (Thebes)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 367 pp. 81-82 Süleuman	126		6
Tapu 431 pp. 271-72 Süleyman	100		
Tapu 484 pp. 585-86 977/1569-70	60	29	
TK 157 p. 313a-b Selim II	60	29	
MM 14604 pp. 16-18 1005/1597	93	16	

İstib (Ştip)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 167 p. 266 937/1530-31				38
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				43

İzdin (Lamia, Zeitouni)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 367 p. 47, 95-96 Süleyman	16		4	
TK 183 p. 207b Selim II	--	--	--	
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				48

Jerusalem (Küidus)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 1015 pp. 181-83 Süleyman	224	19	
Tapu 289 pp. 43-47 961/	324	13	1

Kalavrita (Kalavryta)

H

M

B

Nefran

MM 14604 p. 23
1005/1597

18

Karahisar-i Sahib (Afyon karahisar)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 438 p. 156			
Stileyman	15		

Karaferiye (Beroia)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 433 p. 762 Süleyman				11
TK 191 998/1589-90	7	2		
MM 14604 p. 15 1005/1597	143	22		

Karitena (Karytaina)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 80 p. 398 Selim I	6		
Tapu 367 p. 155 Sileyman	6		
MM 14604 p. 20 1005/1597	19		

235

Kavala

H

M

B

MM 14604 p. 15
1005/1596-97

22

8

Kefe (Kaffa)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 370 p. 483 Süleyman	81	1		11 ¹⁵
Tapu 214 pp. 88-90 949/1542-43	81	29	15	
	3 ¹⁶			
	8 ¹⁷	6 ¹⁷		

Kesterye (Kesriye, Kastoria)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 167 p. 161 937/1530-31	8	9		
Tapu 424 pp. 666-67 Süleyman	6	9		
Tapu 433 pp. 479-80 Süleyman	10 ¹⁸	11		
Tapu 479 p. 25 977/1569-70	9	6		
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				47

Koron

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 80 p. 19 Selim I	36(!) 37	15	2
Tapu 390 p. 7 Süleyman	36	15	2
Tapu 367 p. 136 Süleyman	37	15	6
Tapu 603 p. 22 991/1583	10		

Kördüs (Ködüs, Korintos, Corinth)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
MM 14604 pp. 19-20 1005/1597	9	1	

Kratova (Kratovo)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Néfran</u>
MM 17) pp. 4a-b 925/1519	10			
Tapu 167 p. 245 937/1530-31	11			
Tapu 267 p. 472 957/1550-51	28			
	2 ¹⁹			
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				33

Kučayna (Kočani)

H

M

B

Nefran

Tapu 316 p. 110
967/1559-60

10²⁰

Kütahya (Kotaion)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 438 p. 16 Süleyman	12			
TK 47 p. 16 978/1570-71				6 ²¹

Livadiya

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>E</u>
Tapu 367 p. 86 Süleyman	36		
Tapu 431 p. 451 Süleyman	32		
Tapu 484 pp. 766-67 977/1569-70	32		
TK 183 pp. 22b, 23a Selim II	32		
MM 14604 pp. 18-19 1005/1597	45		

Manastir (Monastir, Bitola)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 370 p. 156 Süleyman	43	6	5	
Tapu 149 p. 363 935/1529	48 ²²	6		
Tapu 232 pp. 408-09 951/1544	60(!) 59	27		
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				250

Manisa (Magnesia)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 166 p. 302 937/1530-31	88	33	

246

Mardin

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 64 pp. 227-28 924/1518-19	92	20 ²³	
Tapu 998 p. 6 932/1525-26	131 20 ²⁴	103	
Tapu 200 pp. 510-11 947/1540-41	121(!) 118	59(!) 62	

Menkup (Theodoros)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 370 p. 486 ca. 935/1528-29	48		3
Tapu 214 p. 131 949/1542-43	35	3	

Mezistre (Mistra)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 80 pp. 115-16 Selim I	72	15	4	
Tapu 367 p. 165 Süleyman	99	25	4	
Tapu 603 p. 68 991/1583				199

Mosul

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 998 p. 72 932/1525-26	31	4		
Tapu 195 p. 28 946/1540				82 ²⁵
Tapu 308 pp. 31-32 965/1558	105			

Moton (Modon, Methone)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 80 p. 15 Selim I	21	5		
Tapu 367 p. 127 Süleyman	21	5		
Tapu 390 p. 5 Süleyman	21	5		
Tapu 607 p. 586 991/1583				41
MM 146)4 p. 20 1005/1597	24			

Narda (Arta)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 350 pp. 29-31 972/1564				213(!) 214

Niğbölü (Nicopolis)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
MM 11 pp. 66a-b 922/1516				80 ²⁶ 18 ²⁷
Tapu 370 p. 507 Süleyman				98 ²⁸
Tapu 416 pp. 63-65 Süleyman	58(!) 66	32(!) 30		
	13 ²⁷	10 ²⁷	2 ²⁷	
	20 ²⁹	2 ²⁹		
TK 58 pp. 34b-35b, 37b 987/1579-80	177(!) 186	87		

Novabirda (Novo Brdo)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 234 p. 17 951/1544	6		

Plevna (Pleven)

H

M

B

Tapu 370 p. 521
Sileyman

Pravadi (Provincia)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
TK 86 pp. 106a-b 1006/1597-98	28	9	

256

Rahba

H

M

B

Tapu 998 p. 244
932/1525-26

41

257

Rahova

H

M

B

Nefran

Tapu 370 p. 511
ca. 935/1528-29

5

Rhodes (Rodos)

H

M

B

Tapu 367 p. 205
Stileyman

144

259

Rudnik

H

M

B

Nefran

Tapu 1007 p. 50
922/1516

2

260

Safed

H

M

B

Tapu 300 pp. 26-36
963/1555-56

713

63

Tapu 686 pp. 26-40
1005/1596-97

977(!)
976

Sakız (Chios)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 363 pp. 21-22 974/1566	42	9	
Tapu 366 p. 14 974/1566	12(!) 11		

Salona (Amphissa)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 367 p. 89 Süleyman	8		
Tapu 431 p. 559 Süleyman	4		
TK 183 p. 134b Selim II	--		
Tapu 481 977/1569-70	--		

Salonika (Sélanik)

<u>Congregation</u>	Tapu 403 pp. 623-647 Süleyman		Tapu 167 pp. 84-85 937/1530-31		TK 186 pp. 23b-45b 998/1589-90		Tapu 723 pp. 28-72 1022/1613-14	
	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>
Espanya	83		83		101	70	94	70
Çiçiliyan	148(!) 149		148		126	240	126	240
Magreb	25		25		32	21	33	21
Lizbona	213		213		231	49	231	49
Talyan	72		72		?	69	49	49
Otrino ?	51		51		144		144	
Otranto ? (Mah.)					42	44	49	44
Etz Hayim	117		117		140	124	140	124
Catalan (Old)	216		216		70	70	70	62
Aragon	315		315		251	153	231	153
Çiçiliyan (Old)	136		220		91	92	91	92
Catalan	220				91	87	90	87
Şalom	118		118		85	178	105	178
Midraş	124		124		92	153	92	153
Polia	193		173		159	193	159	193
Provençal	47		47		43	21	43	21
Castiliyan	128		128		172	89	172	89
Evora-Portakal	96		96		231	149	231	149
Alman	97		97		239		239	
Geruş-Calavraş	220		220		126	81	126	81

Salonika (Sekanik), cont.:

	Tapu 403 pp. Süleyman		Tapu 167 pp. 84- 937/153		TK 186 pp. 23b-45b 998/1589-90		Tapu 723 pp. 28- 1022/1613-14	
<u>Congregation</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>
Mahalle-i Kana					92	48	92	48
Mahalle-i Motalto					40	16	40	16
Estruka ?					32		32	
Cedid-i Portakal					59	206	59	206
Kühine-i Calavroş					182	118	182	118
Saragoza-Aragon	42		42					
Korfos	4		4		12		12	

Semendire (Smedrovo)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 1007 p. 15 299/1516	--			
Tapu 187 p. 121 943/1536-37	17			
Tapu 316 p. 173 967/1559-60	7(!) 6	3(!) 4		10
TK 184 pp. 91b-92a Selim II				14

Serfiçe (Servia)

H

M

B

Tapu 479 p. 190
977/1569-70

14

Sidrekapsi

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
TK 186 pp. 86b-87a 998/1589-90	42	18	
MM 14604 p. 15 1005/1597	70	8	
Tapu 823 pp. 158-59 1022/1613-14	42	18	

Sinjâr

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 64 pp. 328-29 924/1518-19	50	7	
Tapu 998 p. 64 932/1525-26	84		

Siroz (Serrai, Serres)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 70 ³⁰ 925/1519	54		
Tapu 403 p. 356 Süleyman	66	5	

Shehrizor (Şehrizol)

H

M

B

Tapu 1002 p. 3
964/1556-57

28

Silistre (Silistria)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
TK 83 p. 97a 1006/1597-98	15	5		21 ³¹

Silivri (Selymbria)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 210 p. 72 947/1542	4		
Tapu 240 p. 37 952/1545	4		
Tapu 541 p. 342 Selim II	5		

Sofya (Sofia)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 236 pp. 25-26 951/1544	21			(21) 31 ³²
Tapu 539 pp. 11-12 Selim II				126
TK 61 p. 7a n.d.				116

Sudak (Soldaia)

Tapu 370 p. 485
ca. 925/1528-29

H

M

B

6

Tire (Thyraea)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 87 pp. 121-22 ca. 918/1512-13	41	1		
Tapu 148 p. 286 935/1528-29	64 18	18		104? ³³
Tapu 166 p. 372 937/1530-31	64	18		

Tırhala (Trikkala)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 36 p. 139 912/1506-07	19			
Tapu 105 pp. 382-84 927/1521	181	9	34	
Tapu 367 p. 231 Süleyman	181	9	34	
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				96
Tapu 695 pp. 160, 172-73 1010/1601-02	111	18	33	

Tokat (Docea)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
TK 14 p. 148a ³⁴ 982/1574-75	29	27	

Trepoliçe (Tripolis)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 605 p. 209 991/1583-84				11
MM 14604 p. 14 1005/1597	8	2		

Ūskŭp (Skopje)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Nefran</u>
Tapu 370 p. 123 ca. 935/1528-29	12	5		
Tapu 149 p. 16 935/1529	12	5		
Tapu 232 p. 27 951/1544	32	6		
TK 190 p. 19b Selim II				53
MM 14604 p. 23 1005/1597				228

Vidin

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 370 p. 567 ça. 935/1528-29	7		
TK 57 p. 30b 994/1585-86	31	17	

Yanbolu

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
TK 86 p. 176b 1002/1593-94	3	3	

Vardar Yenicesi (Yenice-i Vardar, Pella)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 70 p. 145 925/1519	24		

Yenişehir (Larisa)

	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>B</u>
Tapu 36 p. 179 912/1506-07	8		1
Tapu 105 p. 361 927/1521	42	4	17
MM 14604 p. 15 1005/1597	212	78	
Tapu 695 p. 654 1010/1601-02	17		11(!) 12

Notes

- 1 Lewis-Notes.
- 2 M. A. Cook, Population Pressure in Rural Anatolia, 1450-1600 (London, 1972); Ronald C. Jennings, "Urban Population in Anatolia in the Sixteenth Century: A Study of Kayseri, Karaman, Amasya, Trabzon, and Erzerum," International Journal of Middle East Studies, VII (1976), 21-57.
- 3 Eliezer Bashan, "The Freedom of Trade and the Imposition of Taxes and Customs Duties on Foreign Jewish Traders in the Ottoman Empire," East and Maghreb, p. 119.
- 4 Heyd-Istanbul, p. 303, speculated about this.
- 5 Fekete-Siyâqat, I, 18, n. 16.
- 6 Jennings, p. 51.
- 7 Of the fifty-five households, fifty-four are listed as paying cizye directly to the Sultan's treasury. The kethüda of the community was exempt. All fifty-five, however, paid certain other taxes to the governor of the district.
- 8 Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Kanunî Süleyman Devri Başlarında Rumeli Eyaleti, Livaları, Şehir ve Kasabaları," Bulleten, XX (1956), p. 274, n. 108.
- 9 Kaldy-Nagy, pp. 10-11, 14-15.
- 10 Forty-five are new listings.
- 11 In Tapu 370 it is entered as Polia Halan (!) **پولیا هالان** and in TK 54 and Tapu 494 as a cemaat and not as a mahalle; it broke away from Catalan congregation but in Tapu 77 they still paid cizye together as one congregation.
- 12 Households and widows (Hane ma^c bive).
- 13 There are fifty entries. Five are tax exempt because they are officially registered in other towns. Only one of the fifty is marked as a bachelor.
- 14 From Istanbul and residing in Gallipoli for purposes of trade.
- 15 European Jews **فرنگی** listed separately and not included in the eighty-one regular households.

- 16 Circassian Jews **موسیٰ** not included in the regular households. Professor Alan W. Fisher kindly deciphered the notation as Circassian.
- 17 European Jews listed separately from the regular community.
- 18 One of the ten households is marked as "bachelor" (M).
- 19 Exempt from taxation and not included in the total of twenty-eight households.
- 20 One of the entries is marked "M," bachelor.
- 21 Courtesy of Dr. Suraiya Faroqhi.
- 22 The 43H-5M in Tapu 370 may be combined here.
- 23 Only twelve entries are actually marked "M."
- 24 Noted as old, blind, poor, etc., and not on the tax rolls.
- 25 Three entires are marked "M," bachelor, but the scribe left blank the spaces where separate totals were to be entered.
- 26 Of these twenty-five are marked "M," bachelor.
- 27 From Istanbul and paying taxes there.
- 28 Including eighteen from Istanbul.
- 29 Budin (Buda) congregation, established since the previous survey.
- 30 Gökbilgin, Bulletin, XX (1956), p. 266, n. 49.
- 31 One of the twenty-one entries is unmarked. All the others are marked either "H," household, or "M," bachelor. This may indicate the Rabbi or kethüdâ was exempted from taxation.
- 32 The thirty-one additional households or individuals are denoted as coming from Istanbul, Salonika, and Edirne, and presumably paid taxes there. Tapu 130, 932/1525-26 and Tapu 370, Süleyman, ca. 935, and predating Tapu 236, show no entries for Jews.
- 33 There are 104 separate entries divided as follows: hane 68, Mücerred 18, cemaat-ı mutasaddika (mutasarrifa) 18. If the reading is mutasaddika, they may be receiving alms, and thus not liable to taxation. Of the 68 hane, one is marked hekim, doctor, one kethüdâ, two from Manisa and one from Antalya. Presuming the doctor pays taxes, the

kethüdâ is exempt, and the four from other towns pay elsewhere, we may be able to explain the scribe's total of sixty-four "avariz hane," households paying avariz taxes. These figures must have been used for the preparation of Tapu 166, slightly later in date.

³⁴ Courtesy of Dr. Suraiya Faroqhi.

Part of a Page from a Register Recording Payments by Shealtiel

بموی ساتونار اولیده بوسعیل ایلم و نوک دوقه فزون با عامه دوقه لایم
تطیق اولونوب. عیب دوقه دتعه صیح بولونوب لصال ایلم که ذکر اولونور

در خصوص
همه نامی عامه عیب اولونور

نه کون همه نامی عامه
درت یوز لایق فلوری بولونوب
لایم

ولنا سرناج بیهیه تنون بیلونور
باکیم بیکر لایق بولونوب لایم
لایم

و فلوری عامه
بولونوب لایم
صالحی

کی ارب عامه
روجه دوقه

کی ارب عامه
عانی

کی ارب عامه
بهره دوقه

و فلوری عامه بیهیه یوز لایم
فلوری بولونوب لایم

و تبعاً نام بیهیه بیهیه یوز لایم
لایق بولونوب لایم

کی ارب عامه
بهره دوقه

و عامه فلوری بیهیه یوز لایم
بولونوب صالحی

کی ارب عامه
روجه دوقه

بهره دوقه
بهره دوقه

Petition to the Sultan regarding Shealtiel

مسافرانکه با یک پانصد عرض شدن که بولر که با بام فوت اولدنی با بامده میرلش
 بن قعلکه که بیدر لچه قالدنی مندر که که بیکه لچه بنوده صالتونام سنوریک ویر
 بز قذیکه وار در فقیهین بولر لچه سمعلیه ویر لم حاصل اولدنی اولدنی چپاز
 این ورت بیدر بولر جلده بن فقیر بولر که بیکه لچه تسلیم اتم صکر قونم فوت اولدنی
 ایلا ولس که بیکه لچه طلب اتم انکار اتم بن بونده صکر قونم بوند اتم
 بر مقدار کغه لچه سی و لردنی قدر کشم کغه فوت اولدنی قدر اتم خاتونی
 حمیل اولدنی جلده بوند اولن اتم لچه بولر صالتونام بولر که
 بولر لچه بند اتم ورسره ذکر و غلی و وخر سر سکا شننه بوقدر که بولر
 ووخ سن او غولر بینه کتر سن و بیدر اولدنی و لچه سن بولر لردنی
 خبر کلدن کغده بر او غلی و وشتو فوت اولدنی کغده و اتم جمده بنده اسبانی
 ایلم بوند کلدم صالتونام بولر لچه سن طلب ایلم انکه راندنی کونم
 جمه قانی بجه لند و این تلبیس شد لند ناچار قالدیم صکر لند
 سلطانم سلطانم سلم یکم خذ او نیکه رکلدن ایلم در کجه حرم سنونی
 کتور مقوب نغبتش اولدند مذکور کغه لچه سن عثمانی ورت بیکه لچه صانتی
 بن حبه کوسه مری بنانی و و نالو صاندیم اولدنی بر حرم بولر جمه لند
 بولر اولدنی و لچه لند ما ورت اتم خور اولدنی بر لند اتم خور لند سنه
 نه نمای نویند او کیم با فی خواجه سلطانمکه

Final lines of the Vakfiye of Hekim Yakub

حايًا السرابطه وصار الوقف المذكور وقفاً ذمياً مستغفراً عليه لا ياتي عليه من اشخاص احد من بيت
 ولا اولاد الزم لا يغير قواعد ولا يبدل مواعده ومضى في ابطاله وتبديله وشرطه وشرطه قد
 يتوجه وقصد الحامد وتولى سلطان اوزون بركان او امير تغلidak يمتحن قبل الخريف والخلق
 من نبله بعد ما سبعة فاما ائمة على الذين يدينون ذوات الله سمع عليهم واجروا وقف على الجاني
 الكدير الذي لا يضيع اجر احسن عمله ويجزي بكل حسنة عشر ابداء وعلى جميع ما ذكره في الوقف
 والتعريف في اول محرم شهر ربيع سنة ثمان وثمانين وثمانين الهجرة النبوية الهولوية

شهر محرم هذا السفر المزمع
 المبارك المرمي الحاضر

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| شهر ما فيه
انصار العلماء
على انما بهار الله والدين
زينة وفضله | شهر ما فيه
خيرا الدولة العظمى
والسنة الباهرة حجة
داود باشا
دام طوله | شهر ما فيه
تاج الدولة سراج
الملحة من صرح
ما بين
زينة وفضله | شهر ما فيه
نون عيسى السلام والصلوة
انظار الى امر الكرام
من فضله على ما لنا
زينة وفضله |
| شهر ما فيه
منخر العلماء بخباري
لبر سليمان زينة
وفضله | شهر ما فيه
افضى القضاء لانا
العاصمي زينة
وفضله | شهر ما فيه
منخر العلماء الكرام
منخر الملحة والدين
زينة وفضله | شهر ما فيه
عن اعيان الدولة
الغزاة اسنان حجة
النبشاني زينة وفضله |

شهر ما فيه
 انظر الورى عاره والدين
 كاتب اسامي النبوة
 على عنة

Glossary

- ahl al-Dhimma: q.v. zimmi.
- akçe: Asper, Ottoman silver coin.
- amil: Tax collector or farmer.
- Ashkenazi: German Jew, sometimes used to designate Western and Central European Jews in general, or Yiddish-speaking Jews.
- avariz: Incidental or extraordinary Ottoman taxes, often paid in kind.
- cizye: Poll tax (capitation tax) charged on non-Muslims in Muslim society.
- defterdar: Imperial Ottoman treasurer.
- Dhimmi: q.v. zimmi.
- Divan: Council of Ottoman government ministers.
- Emir: Commander, princeling, leader of an Anatolian frontier state.
- Grand Vezir: Prime Minister, head of the Ottoman government.
- Gregos: Greek-speaking Jews. A term applied by Sephardic (q.v.) Jews.
- Hanifi: One of four accepted schools of Orthodox Muslim law, and predominant in the Ottoman Empire.
- Haraç: Originally a tax on land owned by non-Muslims and later used to designate cizye (q.v.).
- Has: Benefice with an annual income over 100,000 akçe (q.v.).
- Haskamah: Jewish communal agreement or charter governing life in the Jewish community of a town or province.
- Hekimbaşı: Head physician to the Sultan.

İltizam: Tax farm.

İmam: Muslim prayer leader.

İmaret: Pious foundation, sometimes used to designate a public soup kitchen in particular; vakıf (q.v.).

Janissary: Infantry comprised mostly of men levied from Balkan Christian subjects during childhood and converted to Islam.

Kadi: Muslim judge.

Kanun: Canon law. Law promulgated by the ruler, in contrast to Şeriat (q.v.).

Kanunname: Statutes of Kanun (q.v.) law.

Karaite: Jewish sect which accepts a literal interpretation of the Bible and rejects the Rabbinic interpretive literature.

Katib: Scribe.

Kazasker (Kadiülasker): Chief Military Judge.

Kefil: Guarantor for the amount due on a tax farm (kefil bi'l mal) or guarantor for the appearance of a tax farmer in court if legal proceedings are instituted regarding the tax farm (kefil bi nefis).

Kendi gelen: "who came of their own volition"; Jews who settled in Istanbul voluntarily, in contrast to the sürgün (q.v.) communities.

Kethüda (Kahya): Steward, warden, fiscal administrator of an organization or community.

Mahalle: Quarter, district, street.

Mühimme defterleri: Registers containing copies of administrative orders issued by the divan (q.v.).

Mukataa: Tax farm.

Mültezim: Tax farmer, administrator of an iltizam (q.v.).

Nazir: Overseer.

Nişancı: Scribe encharged with inscribing the Sultan's seal.

Rabbinite: Jews who accept the body of interpretive literature explaining the Bible, in contrast to Karaites (q.v.).

Responsa (sing. Responsum): Body of literature recording the answers of Rabbis to legal questions.

Romaniotes: q.v. Gregos.

Sancak beyi: Governor of a province.

Sarrafa: Money changer.

Sephardim: Spanish and Portuguese Jews and their descendants.

Sipahi: Member of the Ottoman feudal cavalry.

Sürgün: Forced migration or resettlement.

Şeriat: Muslim law.

Şeyülislam: Chief religious functionary in the Ottoman Empire and head of the religious bureaucracy.

Tahrir defterleri: Cadastral survey registers.

Vakfiye: Document recording the establishment of a vakıf (q.v.).

Vakıf: A tax exempt foundation or trust established to fulfil a public (pious) function, e.g., support of a school, mosque, public fountain, bath, etc.

Vezir: Minister of government.

Ziamet: A large benefice.

Zimmi: A non-Muslim subject of a Muslim state whose status is theoretically defined as a contractual relationship which permits freedom of religion in exchange for payment of extraordinary taxes.

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