Facing the Sea:

The Jews of Salonika in the Ottoman Era (1430–1912)

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1. Origins, Settlement and Heyday, 1430–1595

Jews resided in Salonika many centuries before the Turkic tribes first made their appearance on the borders of Western civilization, at the Islamic world's frontier. In fact, Salonika was one of the cities in whose synagogue the apostle Paul had preached Jesus' teachings. Like many other Jewish communities is this part of the Roman (and later the Byzantine) Empire, this had been a Greek-speaking community leading its life in much the same way as the Greek pagans, and later, the Christian city dwellers around them. The Ottoman conquest of Salonika in 1430 did little to change their lifestyle. A major upheaval did take place, however, with the Ottoman takeover of Constantinople in 1453. The Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II, the Conqueror (Fatih in Turkish), aimed to turn the former Byzantine capital into the hub of his Empire, a world power in its own right on a par with such earlier grand empires as the Roman and the Persian. To that effect, he ordered the transfer of entire populations—Muslims, Greeks, and Jews—from other parts of his empire to the new capital in order to rebuild and repopulate it. Among these groups was the entire Jewish community of Salonika. From that moment onwards, the members of this community constituted the congregation (*cema'at* in Turkish) of Selanik in Istanbul, and any of them who tried to return to Salonika were sent for and duly brought back to the capital escorted by a sultanic guard.[1] Salonika itself had meanwhile been populated by Christians who returned to the city after its conquest, voluntary Muslim settlers, and other Muslims who were forced to move to the city in 1478. This method of forced transfer of entire populations according to the needs

[1] Responsum of R. Yosef ben Shelomoh Taitatzaq (d. 1539) issued ca. 1520, in M. Benayahu, "Haskamot 'Hezqat ha-hatzerot, ha-Batim ve-ha-Hanuyot' be-Saloniqi, u-Pisqeihem shel R. Yosef Taitatzaq ve- Hakhmei Doro" (Accords Regarding the Ownership of Courts, Houses and Shops in Salonika, and the Rulings of R. Yosef Taitatzaq and His Contemporaries), *Michael* 9 (Tel Aviv: The Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1985), pp. 109–111; R. Levi Ibn Haviv (ca. 1480–ca.1541), *Responsa* (Lvov, 1865) , sec. 136.

of the Ottoman state, is referred to in Turkish as *sürgün*; the people subjected to it were tied to their new places of residence as were their descendants.

It is very likely that in the period between 1453 and 1492 there were no Jews in Salonika at all. At least, they do not appear as taxpayers in the Ottoman records (*tahrir defterleri*) of 1478. They reappear in 1492 with the settlement of the Jewish expellees from Spain and its territories in Southern Italy. From a township of 10,414 residents in 1478, Salonika had become a town of 29,200 residents by 1519. The greater part of these new residents were the Jewish expellees. [2] Salonika had become a favored destination for these expellees for two reasons: (a) it was the first major port in the Ottoman Empire where the ships transporting them laid anchor; (b) more than 14.5 percent of the Muslim population of the city prior to the expulsion from Spain were engaged in the textile industry, with a further 16 percent in the leather industry.[3] These were popular occupations among the Iberian Jews as well. It seems that information regarding the favorable conditions for such industries in Salonika had spread very quickly among the expellees, who kept pouring into the city. Presumably, this was especially true for refugees whose first port of arrival was not Salonika. While the Ottoman *tahrir* of ca. 1500 counted 822 Jewish households and 15 unmarried Jews, in the 1519 register we find 3,143 such households and 930 unmarrieds; in 1530, 2,645 households and no unmarrieds; in 1567, 2,883 households and 2,271 unmarrieds; and in 1613, 2,933 households and 2,270 unmarrieds.[4] The Ottoman data, however, should not be taken at face value. The shifting total of unmarrieds implies that the numbers are not necessarily authentic but the result of negotiations between the community and the authorities.[5] Moreover, we have definite evidence that

[2] Lowry, H.W. "From Lesser Wars to the Mightiest War: The Ottoman Conquest and Transformation of Byzance Urban Centers in the Fifteenth Century," in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*, ed. A. Bryer and H. Lowry (Birmingham and Washington: University of Birmingham and Dumbarton Oaks, 1986), pp. 323–338; idem, "When did the Sephardim Arrive in Salonika? The Testimony of the Ottoman Tax Registers, 1478–1613," in *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Avigdor Levy (Princeton NJ: The Darwin Press, 1994), pp. 206–207.
[3] Idem, "From Lesser Wars to the Mightiest War," pp. 328–329.
[4] Idem, "When did the Sephardim Arrive in Salonika?" p. 211.
[5] Ibid., p. 208.

the numbers from 1530 were partly the product of a dialogue with the Ottoman authorities, and those of 1567 were definitely the result of even lengthier negotiations between the community and the central administration in Istanbul—a process that lasted two full years, in the course of which special envoys from the Salonika community resided in Istanbul to conduct these talks.[6] Further census numbers were always the product of discussions between the two parties regarding the tax rates, and do not reflect reality.[7]

Salonika was not the final port for all who arrived there, and many of them stayed for a certain length of time before continuing elsewhere.[8] Migration patterns depended on the refugees' ability to make a living in the city. Many of them were successful, while others moved on to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The story of Jewish settlement in the city is an incredible saga of human endurance and the power of survival. The first arrivals were destitute. Many of them had lost all or part of their family during the voyage from Spain. Especially difficult was the emotional situation of the many who had lost children and were unable to beget others. Hanging over their heads was the knowledge that many family members and friends were forced to stay against their will in what was referred to in Hebrew as *ha-shemad*, a term meaning at the same time both "conversion" and "extermination."[9] Even more dispiriting was the effort to make sense out of the horrible ordeals they had suffered, and the death of innocent children.[10] In spite of the trauma they held onto life, established new families, and prospered.

R. Shemuel de Medina (1506–1589), one of the prominent rabbinical authorities of Salonika, wrote in the second half of the sixteenth century that "the children of Israel who were coming from the lands of the Gentiles to take refuge under the wings of the great king of Togarma [the Ottoman Empire–*MR*], may his glory be exalted, came as wanderers, strangers and destitute. No one imagined that they would buy courtyards…but later…the

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[6] See note 65 below.
[7] See below , pp.10-13.
[8] Medina, *Responsa, Even ha-'Ezer*, sec. 15.
[9] M. Benayahu, "Derushav shel R. Yosef ben Meir Garson," ("The Sermons of R. Yosef ben Meir Garson"), in *Michael* 7 (Tel Aviv: The Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1982), Salonika Sermons, March 1500, pp. 134–135.
[10] Ibid., Salonika Sermons, Sermon for Shavu'ot (Pentecost), 14 May 1500, p. 143.

children of Israel succeeded in acquiring immovable assets with God's help."[11] In the introduction to the work *Lev Avot*, a commentary on the tractate Avot by Shelomoh ben Yitzhaq le-Veit Halevi published in Salonika in 1565, it was written: "printed in Salonika, Mother City [in Hebrew, *'ir moledet*], grand city, city of a great king, under the reign of our master the king, Sultan Süleyman, may his glory be exalted." In addition to the meaning of "metropolis," the use of the term *'ir moledet* with reference to Salonika just seventy-three years after settling there testifies to a strong sense of emotional affinity with the city. Such an expression as Mother City was previously unheard of in the Jewish Diaspora. The available sources suggest that by the beginning of the eighteenth century, Salonika's population had risen to 65,000: almost half its inhabitants (30,000) were Jews, along with 10,000 Greeks and 25,000 Muslims.[12] Given the fact that the early years of the eighteenth century were a time of plague and general deterioration in the city, it would not be unreasonable to estimate the Jewish population of the city in its heyday (i.e., the mid-sixteenth century) as having ranged between 35,000 and 40,000 people.

[11] R. Shemuel de Medina, *Responsa* (Lvov, 1868), *Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 228. See also ibid., sec. 296.
[12] Felix de Beaujour, *Tableau du commerce de la Grèce* (Paris, 1800), p. 48.


ספר לב אבות

Lev Avot, a commentary on the tractate Avot by Shelomoh ben Yitzhaq le-Veit Halevi published in Salonika in 1565

From the earliest Ottoman documents containing statistical data on the community, it is clear that around 1500 there were at least three distinct Jewish groups in the city: The oldest layer were Ashkenazim, Jews who hailed from various principalities in Germany, from which they had been expelled over the course of the second half of the fifteenth century.[13] This group numbered 68 households around the year 1500, a number that mounted to 97 households by 1530–31.[14] Immediately after the expulsion, the Spanish expellees all belonged to the same communal framework, the Holy Congregation Gerush Sepharad (Spanish Expulsion), but within several years this congregation had split into separate groups according to

[13] Medina, *Responsa, Even ha-ʿEzer*, sec. 15; ibid., *Yoreh Deʿah*, sec. 40, 42.
[14] Lowry, "When did the Sephardim Arrive in Salonika?" p. 207.

the expellees' places of origin. Aside from the Gerush congregation, there are references in 1500 to congregations from Calabria[15] and Catalan.[16] In 1503, a congregation from Aragon is mentioned,[17] as are the Portuguese congregations of Lisbon and Evora.[18]

But not all the expellees were Sephardim. The Ottoman records of 1530–1531 refer to 127 families from Southern Italy, who comprised 4.98 percent of the community.[19] Although they are not mentioned in the records of ca. 1500 or 1519, they were undoubtedly present in Salonika at least from 1497, the year in which the Jews of Calabria were expelled. In 1500, R. Yosef ben Meir Garson gave a sermon in their synagogue,[20] and tombstones of Jews from Southern Italy dating from prior to 1530 were recorded in the Salonika Jewish cemetery before its destruction during World War II.[21] The impetus for the split among the congregations was not only the natural desire of immigrants to find themselves in the company of people who shared their rituals and customs,[22] their memories, and sometimes even their dialect;[23] some of the congregations simply became too big for one house of worship, which led them to found separate synagogues.

It did not take long for them to start quarrelling over questions of tax assessment and honors. Such conflicts often ended with further splits in the congregations. In 1503, the congregation of Evora broke away from that of Lisbon.[24] The Sicilian congregation likewise split into "Old" and "New."[25] The same thing happened in the old Gerush congregation.[26] By 1525, there

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[15] Benayahu, "Sermons of R. Yosef ben Meir Garson," p. 142.
[16] Ibid., p. 143.
[17] Ibid., p. 149.
[18] Ibid., p. 150.
[19] Lowry, "When did the Sephardim Arrive in Salonika?" p. 208.
[20] Benayahu, "Sermons of R. Yosef ben Meir Garson," p. 242.
[21] I.S. Emmanuel, *Matzvot Saloniqi* (Precious Stones of the Jews of Salonika) (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1968), vol. 1, #4, p. 28; #12, 13, p.30; #16, p.32.
[22] Medina, *Responsa, ha-'Ezer*, sec. 134; D. Goldschmidt, "Mahazorim ke-Minhag Qehilot Yavan" (Prayer Books according to the Custom of the Greek Communities), *Sefunot* 13 (*Sefer Yavan* [The Book of Greek Jewry] III) (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1978), pp. 103–190.
[23] Medina, *Responsa, Orah Hayyim*, sec. 36.
[24] Benayahu, "Sermons of R. Yosef ben Meir Garson," p. 150.
[25] B. Lewis, *Notes and Documents from the Turkish Archives* (Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1952), p. 25.
[26] Medina, *Responsa, Orah Hayyim*, sec. 36.

were seven Sephardi congregations in the city.[27] To these should be added the Ashkenazi congregation and at least three congregations from Southern Italy (Calabria, Apulia and Sicilia). In the detailed Ottoman records from the time of Süleyman the Magnificent, twenty-one congregations are documented, nine of Sephardi origin, which would date this list after 1525.[28] By 1613, their number had multiplied to twenty-five.[29] The actual number was even higher, since the splits were not always recorded by the authorities. In the sixteenth century, each congregation had its own synagogue, secular leaders, *hakham*, court of law, and certain social services.

This proliferation of congregations, which characterized all the major and medium-sized Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire, could not have taken place unless the Ottoman authorities enabled it and the economic situation permitted this kind of multiple organizational framework.[30] Despite the tendency toward divisiveness, however, almost immediately after their arrival the expellees convened to create several supracongregational tools that were meant to bolster their ability to survive in their new home. The first one was the accord agreed upon by all the expellees that no Jew would be able to rent a house, a courtyard or a shop from a gentile for three years after another Jew had vacated it.[31] The purpose of this pact was to block the fierce competition among the new immigrants over places of residence and business. The accord, concluded in 1493 at the latest, was upheld zealously throughout the history of the community.[32] In 1512, in fact, the agreement was expanded to include the purchase of such properties, for "since the expulsion of the Jews from the lands of the gentiles, most of them have come to reside in this city permanently."[33]

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[27] R. Yitzhaq Adarbi (1520–1584), *Responsa, Divrei Rivot* (Venice, 1582), sec. 56 and 59.
[28] Lewis, *Notes and Documents*, p. 25.
[29] Ibid., pp. 25–27.
[30] M. Rozen, "Individual and Community in the Jewish Society of the Ottoman Empire: Salonika in the Sixteenth Century," in *Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 215–274.
[31] Benayahu, "Accords," pp. 83–85.
[32] Rozen, "Individual and Community," p. 242.
[33] Benayahu, "Accords," pp. 88–94.

The patriarchal family system that was a foundation of Sephardi society led to the promulgation of another supracongregational accord, prohibiting the act of betrothal unless performed in the presence of the bride's closest relatives, ten males over the age of eighteen, and a *hakham* (rabbinic authority).34 Such accords and others like them demanded not only a supracongregational organization but also a central court of law.[35] The first documentation in our possession that indicates the existence of permanent supracongregational institutions is a note regarding the three *hakhamim* appointed in 1514 to engage in "holy work" in Salonika: R. Ya'aqov Ibn Haviv[36] and R. Shelomoh Taitatzaq, both from Castilia,[37] and R. Eli'ezer ha-Shim'oni of Frankfurt.[38] Some thirty years after the expellees settled in Salonika, the city's sages appointed an individual to be "in charge of all books." The first person known by name to hold this post was Avraham Hassan, a Spanish expellee who had crossed the border to Portugal in 1492. He appeared in Salonika around 1513,[39] and ten years later was appointed "by the Rabbis of Salonika and the leaders of the congregations" to proofread all the Torah scrolls brought by the refugees from their various places of origin, and make sure that they contained no mistakes .[40] To the dismay of his employers, he did his work so meticulously that almost no book passed his scrutiny.[41]

One of the most important and least obeyed communal accords enacted by the supracongregational leadership, both lay and religious, was made years before 1525. Its original date of composition is unknown, but can be estimated at around 1513 to 1515, the years when the community first started to deliver its cloth production to the Ottoman government as part of its taxes, and when the supracongregational leadership enacted

[34] Medina, Responsa, *Even ha-'Ezer*, secs. 12, 21 and Rozen, "Individual and Community," p. 249.
[35] Rozen, ibid., pp. 241–262.
[36] See regarding him: A. Rozanes, *Divrei Yemei Yisrael be-Togarmah* (History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire), vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1930), pp. 101–105.
[37] Ibid., pp. p.138.
[38] Ibid., pp.138–140; *Responsa Zer'a Anashim*, David Frankel edition (Munkatch, 1902), *Even ha-'Ezer*, sec. 23.
[39] M. Benayahu, "Igeret ha-Sofer Rabbi Avraham Hassan mi-Saloniqi," (Letter of the Scribe Rabbi Abraham Hassan of Saloniki) in *Sefunot* 11 (*The Book of Greek Jewry* I) (Jerusalem, Ben Zvi Institute, 1978), p.190.
[40] Ibid., p. 207.
[41] Ibid., pp. 190–191, 207–229.

several new accords common to all the congregations. This particular accord banned the founding of new congregations and the shifting of taxpayers from one congregation to another. In 1525 this accord was renewed, and a clause was added that in effect forbade emigration from Salonika in order to ensure that the number pf taxpayers would not diminish. The purpose of all of the above was to ensure that the tax burden was balanced fairly among the various congregations and the community at large.[42]

The most important common endeavor of the expellees was the institution known as the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol (Great House of Study). The exact date of its foundation is not recorded; but despite the fact that all dated documentation in which it is mentioned is from 1550 onwards, it seems that in 1525 it was already standing, as the central institution of the community.[43] The reason for the absence of definitive documentation is the great fire of 1545, which destroyed the entire community archive.[44] The Talmud Torah was founded in the form of an Ottoman *imaret*, a complex that housed a combination of religious, educational, welfare, industrial, and commercial activities. From at least 1560, it included a workshop for woolen textiles[45] and a silver crucible,[46] with the revenues from both supporting a major educational institution that included classes

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[42] Adarbi, *Responsa, Divrei Rivot*, sec. 59.

[43] R. Eliyahu Mizrahi (d. 1525), the leading rabbi of the Romaniots in Istanbul, makes reference to an accord made in Salonika which nullified betrothals made without the presence of ten males over eighteen years of age and a *hakham* (*Responsa*, Jerusalem 1959, sec. 17). R. Shemuel de Medina describes the promulgation of the same accord, concluded amid great ceremony on Sabbath Hanukkah in the courtyard of the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol *many years before his time* (Medina, Responsa, *Even ha-'Ezer*, sec. 21). All of the above would therefore suggest that the founding of the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol predates the year 1525.

[44] I.S. Emmanuel, "Toledot Yehudei Saloniqi" (History of the Jews of Salonika) in *Zikhron Saloniqi* (Salonika Memoir) (Tel Aviv: The Committee for Publication of Salonika Memoirs, 1972), pp. 9–10; M. Benayahu, *Ha-Yehasim she-Bein Yehudei Yavan li-Yehudei Italia me-Gerush Sefarad 'ad Tom ha-Republiqah ha-Venetziyanit* (Relations between Greek and Italian Jewry from the Expulsion from Spain until the End of the Venetian Republic) (Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1980), pp. 82–83.

[45] Medina, *Responsa, Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 312.

[46] The exact date of its construction is unknown (A. S. Amarillio, "Hevrat Talmud Torah ha-Gadol be-Saloniqi" [Society for the Great House of Study in Salonika], *Sefunot* 13 [The Book of Greek Jewry III] [Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1978], p. 280). Many of the facts featured in this important paper lack proper references and dates, since the original documents on which this study was based were lost in the 1890 and 1917 fires and during the Holocaust (ibid., p. 275).

for boys from primary school (four years old) through higher rabbinical learning. Students from needy families were supported by the community for three years. Beginning in 1595, students who went on to higher studies "in the famous houses of study of our city," even those other than the Talmud Torah itself, were supported for another two years.[47] In addition, the *imaret* included a soup kitchen, a hospital, and a mental asylum, all of them dating from before 1560.[48] Once a year, on the Saturday of Hanukah, a ceremonial exhibit of the city's textile products was held there, and the proceeds were used to buy garments for the needy students of the institution.[49] During the eighteenth century in particular, the Talmud Torah supported the printing of Gemara tractates for the use of the students. These were kept in the library, and taking them outside its confines was strictly forbidden.[50]

Major gatherings of community members were held in the courtyard of the complex, where important accords were promulgated. This was also the place where the community's supracongregational court, as well as the congregational leaders, convened.[51] The *meydan* (Turkish=open space, square) at the front of the courtyard was used for a labor market where unskilled laborers could offer themselves for work.[52] The Talmud Torah complex was consumed by fire at least four times before the Great Fire of 1917: in 1545,[53] 1620,[54] 1734,[55] and 1797.[56] Each time, it was rebuilt,

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[47] Y.R. Molkho and A. Amarillio, "Yalqut Haskamot Saloniqi be-Ladino" (A Collection of Salonika Accords in Ladino), *Sefunot* 2 (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1958), pp. 40–41.

[48] Ibid., p. 33–34, 40, 43.

[49] Amarillio, "Great House of Study," p. 279 (1541), and see the caveat in n. 46, above; Molkho and Amarillio, "Collection," pp.32 (1555), 56–57 (1676).

[50] Amarillio, "Great House of Study," pp. 279–280; I. Mehlman, "Peraqim be-Toledot ha-Defus be-Saloniqi" (Chapters in the History of Printing in Salonika), *Sefunot* 13 (*The Book of Greek Jewry* III) (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1971–1978), pp. 217, 230, 232–239.

[51] Medina, Responsa, *Even ha-'Ezer*, sec. 21; R. Hayyim Shabbetai (ca. 1555–1647), *Responsa, Torat Hayyim* (Jerusalem: Zikhron Aharon, 2004), part 3, sec 34; Amarillio, "Great House of Study," p. 276.

[52] Amarillio, "Great House of Study," p. 276. See caveat in n.46, above.

[53] R. Benyamin ben Meir HaLevi Ashkenazi, "Lament on the Fire of 1545" in *Mahazor Ashkenaz* (Prayer Book according to the Ashkenazi rite) (Salonika, 1549), p. 186b.

[54] R. David Conforti, *Qore ha-Dorot* (Berlin, 1846), p. 45a; Benayahu, *Relations*, pp.84, 300.

[55] R. Hayyim Avraham Gategnu (ca. 1660–1730), *Tirat Kesef*, Salonika, 1736, introduction of the author's son. Amarillio, "Great House of Study," p.295. See more in E. Bashan, "Ilit Kalkalit Yehudit be-Saloniqi ba-Me'ah ha-Shemoneh-'Esreh: Te'udot Hadashot 'al Benei Burla, 1763–1793" (A Jewish Economic Elite in 18-Century

The tombstone of Sol, wife of the physician Mosheh Israel , who died at the age of 22, on 23 November 1645, one of the few remaining stones from the desecrated and annihilated cemetery

renovated, and expanded.[57] In 1608, a special warehouse was built inside the compound where all the supplies needed for textile production were stored along with the finished product, which was then sold to the government's representatives. A special safe was set up in the warehouse for safeguarding the money and valuables of the institute's trust. Members of the community and even Jews from other parts of the Ottoman Empire donated considerable sums for its upkeep,[58] and its needs took priority over those of all other congregational or communal institutions and associations.[59] Thus in the 1560s, Jewish Salonika already boasted

Salonika: New Documents on the Burla Family [1763–1793]) in *Yemei ha-Sahar: Peraqim be-Toledot ha-Yehudim ba-Imperiyah ha-' Otmanit* (Days of the Crescent: Chapters in the History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire), ed. Minna Rozen (Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1996), p. 194, note 2; Benayahu, *Relations*, pp.307–308.

[56] Ibid., p.292; C.S. Sonnini, *Reise nach Griechenland und der Türkei auf befehl Ludwigs XVI*, (translated from French) (Berlin, 1801), p. 379–380.

[57] Amarillio, "Great House of Study," pp. 281, 292.

[58] Ibid., pp. 286–292. See also Medina, *Responsa, Yoreh De'ah*, sec. 158, 175; R. Yosef Ibn Lev (1505–1580), *Responsa*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam 1726), sec. 19; Adarbi, *Responsa, Divrei Rivot*, sec. 223; Molkho and Amarillio, "Collection," pp. 45–47.

[59] Molkho and Amarillio, "Collection," pp. 32, 34–39.

communal free education and health services.[60] Over the centuries, the Talmud Torah amassed a substantial amount of assets and money, and its fame spread far and wide.[61] In view of the fierce struggles that took place between the various congregations over their autonomy and the right to attract members of other congregations to their ranks, these achievements were surprising expressions of social cohesiveness.[62]

Financial obligations towards the Ottomans, and tax payment in general—subjects that were a natural source of internal conflicts[63]—were also a strong catalyst for closing ranks. The Ottomans, though they recognized the existence of different organizations within the community, never negotiated the tax assessment on an individual or a congregational basis. This policy forced the entire community to present a unified façade in this matter vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities. Moreover, at least from 1511, the Ottomans demanded that the Jewish textile industry in the city serve as a source of supply of wool for army uniforms. This duty was called by the Jews "The King's cloth". The price of the textiles was deducted from the main regular tax imposed on the Jews of Salonika, the poll tax (*harac*). The tax, mandated by classical Islam as a sign of submission of the monotheistic yet non-Muslim population within the Muslim state, was levied following a census of all self-supporting adult males. Every congregation was counted, the taxable males assessed as poor (*edna*), middle class (*evsat*) or rich (*evla*), and the overall sum of taxes due from all the Jewish taxpayers was presented to the representatives of the Jewish community. They in turn would renegotiate the sum with the official sent to perform this duty, the *nazır*,[64] after which they would bring the results to the congregational leaders who would then arrange the assessment of their congregation's taxpayers. This process

[60] Molkho and Amarillio, "Collection," pp. 26–60; Amarillio, "Great House of Study," pp. 275–308.
[61] Medina, *Responsa, Yoreh De'ah*, sec. 158; Adarbi, *Responsa, Divrei Rivot*, sec. 223; Hayyim Shabbetai, *Responsa, Torat Hayyim*, vol. 1, sec. 95.
[62] R. Yosef Ibn Lev, *Responsa*, vol. 2, Istanbul 1561, sec. 72; Rozen, "Individual and Community," pp. 216–224.

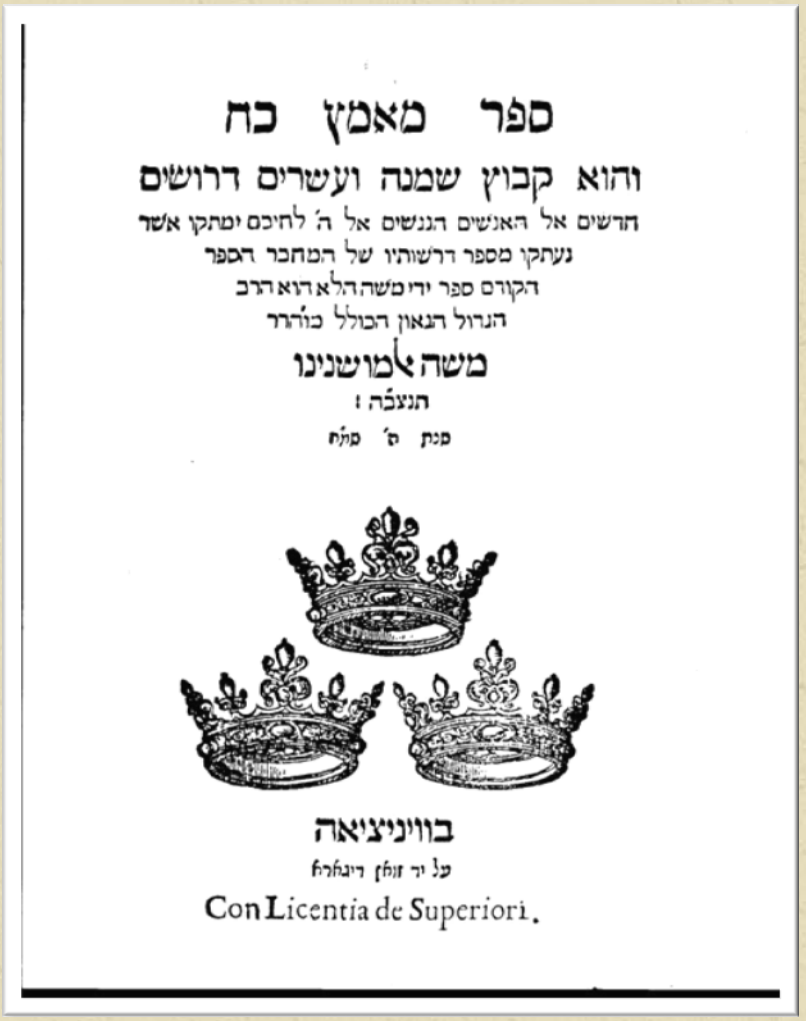
[63] Ibid., pp. 224–230.
[64] Lewis, *Notes and Documents*, p. 28.

demanded a great deal of cooperation among the congregations, and within each of them.

From 1511, the number of irregular taxes (in particular the corvées) demanded from the community rose each year. Two obligations that were especially problematic were the operation of the silver mines in nearby Siderokapısı (*saraflık*), and the responsibility for the city's meat supply, which entailed purchasing sheep flocks in Macedonia and Anatolia, transporting them to Salonika, and selling them at prices set by the Ottoman authorities (*celep keşan*). These corvées were almost a surefire recipe for bankruptcy for the wealthy businessmen whom the Ottoman authorities had chosen to perform these duties. The community as a whole was not interested in such an outcome, since these people were its biggest taxpayers and their contribution was lost to the Jewish community when they were drafted for these corvées, ending up instead in Ottoman coffers. On the other hand, the fact that rich Jews found ways to bribe Ottoman officials in order to avoid the corvées was also unacceptable from the public's point of view, since other Jews were drafted in their place. Consequently, already in 1537 the community arranged that the supplying of textiles would release the Jews of Salonika from the *saraflık* and the *celep keşan.* In the 1545 fire, the writ confirming these tax arrangements was destroyed, and the community had to start negotiating these arrangements all over again.

The tension between the public interest, which called for a global arrangement with the Ottomans, and the private interests of the richest businessmen, who preferred to rely on their individual arrangements with Ottoman officials, escalated when the communal leadership decided to send a legation to Istanbul to negotiate a global agreement in 1565. The representatives were appointed by the supracongregational leadership over the opposition of the richest taxpayers, and were confronted with threats and violence on their part in Salonika itself and in Istanbul. In spite of hardships from within and without, the central figure in this saga, R. Mosheh Almosnino, was able to return to Salonika after his two-year mission to Istanbul with a *muafname* (writ of freedom) that set forth the key aspects of the Jewish community's monetary obligations toward the

Ottoman authorities. This feat was accomplished with the active assistance of Jewish courtiers in the Ottoman imperial palace, such as Don Yosef Nasi, Don Yehudah de Segura and others.[65] Since the financial commitment to the Ottomans was now officially imposed on the community as a whole, the leadership was now able to force the wealthy


ספר מאמץ כח

והוא קבוץ שמנה ועשרים דרושים

חדשים אל האנשים הנשים אל ה׳ לחיכם יתתקו אשר

נעתקו מספר דרשותיו של המחבר הספר

הקודם ספר ידי משה הלא הוא הרב

הגדול הנאון הכולל כו׳הרר

משה אלמושנינו

הנצבה ז׳

פנת ה׳ פתח

בווניציאה

ע״י יר זנתן דיגחרח

Con Licentia de Superiori.

R. Mosheh Almosnino's book of Sermons *Me 'ametz Ko 'ah*, printed in Venice 1588 in the printing press of Giovanni di Gara. The first Sermon was dedicated to Almosnino's mission to Istanbul (1565-1567).

and powerful to take upon themselves the greater part of the difference between the price paid by the Ottoman government for the woolens, and the poll tax owed by the community.

[65] R. Mosheh Almosnino (1518–1581), *Sermons, Me'ametz Ko'ah* (Salonika, 1586), p. 7a; M. Rozen, *The Jewish Community of Istanbul: The Formative Years, 1543–1566* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 211.

Like the establishment of the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol, this diplomatic achievement demonstrated the power of Jewish Diaspora society to function in the interest of the common good against all odds, and especially against the natural inclinations of its individual members, who, like most human beings, favored their own private interests over those of the community.[66] However, these same inclinations continued to create social conflicts within the community. The manner in which the cloth was sold to the government representative (*mubaşır*) from the warehouse at the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol created a situation in which the output of the powerful manufacturers was sold first, while the cloth produced by the smaller ones was not sold at all. Moreover, this meant that the congregations to which the successful manufacturers belonged were able to accumulate the money needed to pay their poll tax, while others failed to do so. In order to avoid this, it was decided that the entire output of the Jewish manufacturers would be considered a common repository from which the cloth would be sold, regardless of who manufactured it; the product of each manufacturer was estimated as yielding the same price, commensurate with the amount of merchandise delivered by him. The money generated from the sale to the *mubaşır* was to be distributed among the various congregations, each according to its proportion of the poll tax.[67] In order to avoid mishandling of the money, four rotations of communal leaders were appointed, each serving three months; one of them had to always be present alongside the treasurer, and each group had to keep strict books that were handed from one rotation to the next.[68] But by then (1614), the Salonika wool industry had passed its peak, and the good intentions and cohesiveness displayed by the leadership could not turn the tide.

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[66] M. Rozen, "'Ol Haf'alat ha-Mikhrot be-Siderokapısı ve-Hashpa'ato 'al ha-Hevrah ha-Yehudit be-Saloniqi ba-Meah ha-Shesh-'Esreh" (The Corvée of Operating the Mines in Siderokapısı and Its Impact on Salonikan Jewish Society in the Sixteenth Century), in *Days of the Crescent*, pp. 13–38; G. Weinstein, "Arigei Saloniqi Agav 'Iyun Nosaf be-Sifro shel Nehamah" (The Textiles of Salonika: A Reassessment of Nehamah's Views") in ibid., pp. 39–48.

[67] Molkho and Amarillio, "Collection," pp. 45–46.

[68] Ibid., p. 47.

The heyday of the community lasted from the 1550s through the 1580s, during which time the supracongregational institutions reached their zenith. The community even maintained its own jail in which debtors who failed to pay their debts were incarcerated.[69] An impressive number of rabbinical authorities led the various congregations and presided over the community's highest court, of which R. Shemuel de Medina (1506–1589) was considered to be the head. Though his reputation and authority were recognized far and wide, this did not prevent other rabbinical authorities in the city, such as R. Yitzhaq Adarbi, from disputing his decisions, even at the cost of tensions within the community.[70] Internal conflicts in the congregations were not rare either, and were often characterized by violence between members,[71] and even against the religious and lay leaders.[72] The Salonikans were by no means a docile lot, either at this point in their history or subsequently.[73]

The cultural and social ferment was magnified as a result of several key factors. The first was the simple fact that among those who had chosen to leave the Iberian peninsula in order to lead Jewish lives were the community's spiritual leaders, who brought with them not diamonds or rubies but manuscripts and incunabula containing what they saw as the major pillars of Jewish culture and of culture in general.[74] They were also committed to putting into writing everything they remembered from books and manuscripts lost during their wanderings.[75] The preservation of Jewish scholarship became for them a symbolic form of insurance that the nation

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[69] Medina, *Responsa, Even ha-ʿEzer*, addendum to sec. 27 inserted after sec. 38.
[70] Rozen, "Individual and Community," pp. 226–230; Medina, *Responsa, Even ha-ʿEzer*, sec. 27, 38; Adarbi, *Responsa, Divrei Rivot*, sec. 226.
[71] Medina, *Responsa, Yoreh Deʿah*, sec. 109; 190; 192; 212; Adarbi, *Responsa, Divrei Rivot*, sec. 117, 167.
[72] Medina, *Responsa, Yoreh Deʿah*, sec. 152.
[73] See note 112, below.
[74] See for example M. Benayahu, "Maqor ʿal Megorashei Sefarad be-Portugal ve-Tzetam Aharei Gezeirat 5266 le-Saloniqi"(A New Source on the Spanish Expellees in Portugal and their Immigration to Salonika after the 1506 Pogrom), Sefunot 11 (The Book of Greek Jewry 1)(Jerusalem:Ben Tzevi Institute, 1971-1978),pp. 231-266; Y. Tishbi, *Meshihiyut be-Dor Gerushei Sefarad u-Portugal* (Messianism in the Time of the Expulsion from Spain and Portugal) (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1985), pp. 46–50. Cf. Rozen, *Jewish Community of Istanbul*, pp.250–254.
[75] Abraham Dannon, "La communauté juive de Salonique au XVI siècle," *Revue des Études Juives* 40 (1900), p. 229; Benayahu, "Sermons of R. Yosef ben Meir Garson", p. 172. See also ibid., Salonika *Sermons*, Shavuʿot 5260 (1500), p. 143.

would survive.[76] The same decade that saw the emergence of a stable supracongregational organization also witnessed the founding of the first printing press in Salonika, thus beginning a long history of Jewish publishing in the city that lasted until the community's extermination. The first Hebrew printer in Salonika was Don Yehudah Gedaliah, who brought the cast-metal type pieces with him from Lisbon. The earliest book I have been able to find that was printed by him (in Salonika, in 1515) is a volume of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Daniel with Rashi's commentary.[77] The press, which was overseen (and censored) by the community's spiritual leaders from 1526 onward,[78] became an important vehicle for the strengthening of Jewish identity in the city.

The second factor (not in order of importance) adding to the social and cultural excitement in Salonika was the economic efflorescence that the community enjoyed during this period. This was due mainly, but not exclusively, to the flow of spoils generated by the Ottoman victories against their neighbors on the battlefield.

Unlike the governments of Christian Europe, the Ottoman regime did not exclude Jews from any profession, except the army and the judicial system, since both implied superiority over Muslims, an unlikely status under the laws of Islam. Consequently, Jews participated in all aspects of economic life and in every craft and trade, from the lowest rung of production to wholesale commerce, international trade, and business transactions with the state itself. During the sixteenth century, the trades they worked in were mainly those that had attracted the Muslims who settled in the city before them: the leather industry and the manufacturing

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[76] Ibid., pp. 134–141.

[77] Various theories exist regarding the year this printing press began to operate: Rozanes, *History*, vol. 1, p. 319; Dannon, "La Communauté," 229; and a handwritten catalogue of ancient printed books in Hebrew in the possession of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, compiled by Avraham Yaʿari . There is no basis for Yaʿari's statement that R. Meir Ibn 'Aramah's commentary to the book of Job, *Meir Iyyov*, was printed in 1512. In fact the book was printed in 1517.The title page says that the printing of the book was completed on Sunday "be-siman ZakhoR golaH." The phrase ZakhoR golaH (remember the exile) is a chronogram referring most probably to Shabbat Zakhor (just before Purim) on which the "Zakhor portion" of the Torah is read (Deuteronomy 25:17). Since three letters (*zayin*, *resh*, and *heh*) are emphasized in ZakhoR golaH, the only logical way to decipher this coded year is by adding up the numerical value of all the characters including the *heh*, which Yaʿari and others omitted, leading them to conclude that this was the first printed book in Salonika.

[78] Dannon, "La Communauté," 228–229.

and sale of woolens.[79] Coarse hides were bought by Salonikan tanners in Monastir in Macedonia, and were processed and refined in Salonika, to be sold in other parts of the empire and exported to the Italian principalities.[80] Other products manufactured by Salonikan Jews throughout the Ottoman period were those related to observance of the dietary laws. Manufacturers of cheese made the rounds of the villages, bought milk, and processed it to be sold in Salonika.[81] Wine manufacturers bought grapes from the gentiles in the countryside and the islands, and then processed them in their wine presses.[82] Others traveled to the islands and villages with their Jewish workers, where they bought the grapes, supervised the labor (done of course by Jewish workers), and brought their merchandise home to the city. Butchers and bakers also numbered among the city's Jewish tradesmen. Itinerant peddlers from Salonika traveled as far as Larisa (1543),[83] and silver and goldsmiths were plentiful as well.[84]

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[79] See above, note 3.
[80] Medina, *Responsa, Yoreh De'ah*, sec. 122; ibid., *Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 303
[81] Medina, *Responsa, Yoreh De'ah*, sec. 53; R. Aharon Sasson (ca. 1550–1626), *Responsa, Torat Emet*, Venice 1626, sec. 116; R. Hayyim Shabbetai (ca. 1555–1647), *Responsa, Torat Hayyim*, part 4, sec 23 (1620).
[82] Medina, *Responsa, Even ha-'Ezer*, sec. 54.
[83] Medina, *Responsa. Even ha-'Ezer*, sec. 53.
[84] Medina, *Responsa,Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 459; ibid., *Even ha-'Ezer*, sec. 210; Sasson, *Responsa, Torat Emet*, sec. 71.

A stamp issued by the Israel National Fund honoring the Jewish fishermen of Salonika (1943)

Jewish fishermen in Salonika unloading their catch; a postcard from the beginning of the twentieth century

Salonikan Jews had a long tradition of involvement in trades connected with the sea. The number of fishermen in the community was large enough that they maintained a synagogue of their own and constituted a separate

congregation that supported its own house of study and religious scholars. When their synagogue burned down in 1759, they obtained permission from the Old Sicilia congregation to use their synagogue, which was referred to from then on as the *Kal de los pescadores* (Fishermen's Congregation).[85]

Salonikan fishermen returning to port at sunset; a postcard from the beginning of the twentieth century

From the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, the most important trade in the city, particularly in the Jewish community, was the wool industry, with which many Jews were already familiar from the Iberian peninsula. The wool trade flourished in Salonika thanks to a rare combination of factors: running water, neighboring alum quarries, an agricultural hinterland that provided raw sheeps' wool, and last but not least, a land and sea connection with Istanbul, the Balkans, Italy and the Middle East. It is estimated that at its peak (mid-sixteenth century), the industry produced 30,000–40,000 units of broadcloth (a densely textured woolen fabric with a lustrous finish) annually. But grand as this may seem, the Salonikan trade was dwarfed by the English textile industry. During the same period, London alone exported 100,000 units of broadcloth per

[85] R. Yitzhaq Molkho (1721–1781), *Orhot Yosher* (Jerusalem: Shuvi Nafshi, 1999), introduction, pp. 74–79.

year. The disparity between the Salonikan and European industries (particularly that of England), combined with Europe's economic expansion towards the East, soon resulted in the Ottoman Empire being flooded with immense quantities of wool imported from England that was cheaper than Salonika's and of higher quality—a fact that eventually led to the downfall of this thriving industry in Salonika. Nonetheless, the city served as an important center of the wool industry until at least the late 1620s.

The Salonikan wool industry operated under a system known as distributed manufacture. This meant that an entrepreneur would buy the raw wool from the sheep breeders and then pass it from one artisan to another, each of them doing his part of the work in his own house or workshop with the same entrepreneur paying his wages. The trail would start with washing the raw wool, beating it, and creating rough balls. These would then be distributed among many households, where women and girls (for the most part) would engage in spinning the wool into thread. From the spinners, the wool would pass to the weavers, after which the cloth would go to the dyers followed by the curers, who would put it through several stages of refinement.[86] Refining the cloth necessitated the use of complicated mechanical devices, which were constructed by Jewish entrepreneurs, but the installations themselves usually belonged to the Sultan and were leased to the entrepreneurs, who operated them.[87] In other cases, these installations were set up as part of a trust whose revenues were dedicated to houses of study and to the upkeep of scholars and students.[88] From the end of the fifteenth century until at least the 1630s, the wool industry of Salonika offered work opportunities for almost every Jewish household—man, woman and child. And in spite of the gap between the socioeconomic classes within the industry, it generated enough wealth to facilitate the social and cultural institutions described above.[89]

A huge trade also developed around the wool industry at all levels.

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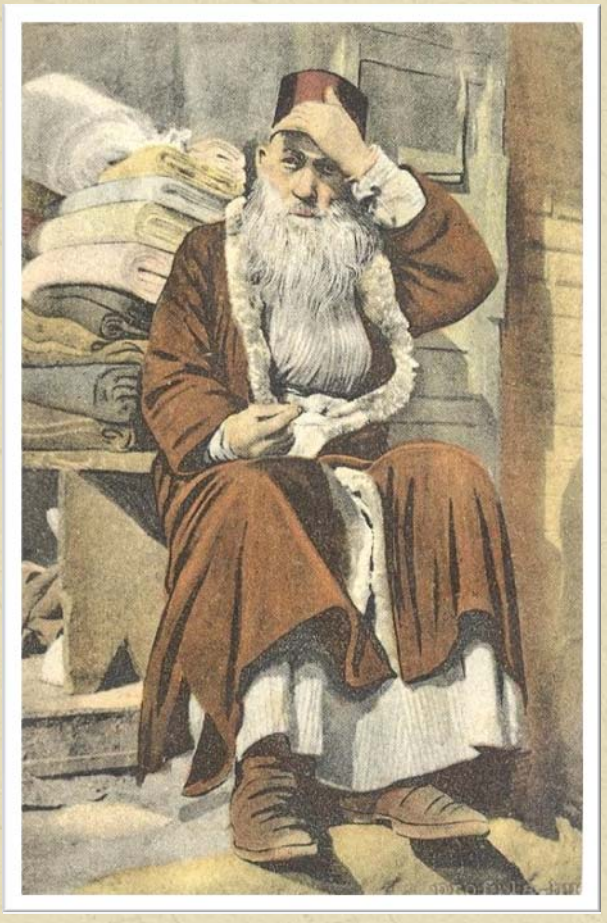
[86] Medina, *Responsa, Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 45.
[87] R. Mosheh Hayyim Shabbetai, *Responsa, Torat Mosheh*, *Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 23.
[88] R. Aharon ben Hayyim Avraham Perahiyah HaKohen (1627–1697), *Responsa, Parah Mateh Aharon*, Part II (Amsterdam, 1703), sec. 62.
[89] See for example Medina, *Responsa,Even ha-'Ezer*, sec. 19; ibid., *Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 267.



An itinerant Jewish textile merchant in Salonika, a postcard from the end of nineteenth century

The buying and trading of raw wool was controlled by a monopoly whose members guaranteed the Ottomans a supply of the final cloth.[90] This trade involved traveling to the seasonal country fairs in the Balkan towns of Doglia, Alasonya and Istrouga.[91] Another branch of the trade revolved around the various materials used for dyeing the wool (and for the related industry of silk-dyeing):[92] indigo, brought from the Far East through Egypt and Syria, was used to produce a deep blue color;[93] light blue was produced from the isatis herb, found throughout the Middle East;[94] and red

[90] Medina, *Responsa, Yoreh De´ah*, sec. 117.
[91] M. Rozen, "La vie économique des Juifs du bassin méditerranéen de l'expulsion d'Espagne (1492) à la fin du XVIIIe siècle," in *La société Juive à travers l'histoire*, ed. S. Trigano, vol. 3 (Paris: Fayard, 1993), pp. 328–329, and nn. 498–500 on pp. 550–551.
[92] R. Yitzhaq ben Shelomoh le-Veit Halevi (d. 1620), *Responsa, Salonika*, 1652, sec. 4.
[93] Sasson, *Responsa, Torat Emet*, sec. 131.
[94] Medina, *Responsa, Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 417.

dye was generally obtained from the body of the kermes insect brought from the Middle East. The substance used to fix the dye was alum quarried not far from Salonika by Jewish entrepreneurs who leased the quarries from the sultan. The trade in these dye-stuffs was also based on strict monopolies held by Salonikan Jewish guilds.[95]

Besides the buying and selling of raw materials needed for the wool industry, the wool trade itself generated tremendous economic activity. Salonikan merchants traded their woolens in Skopje, Sofia,[96] Vidin, and on the shores of the Danube,[97] bartering Salonika woolens for European wool, silk,[98] brocade, and luxury items and other products from Venice.[99] Through the Venetian connection, Salonikan Jews were able to keep up economic and family ties with Spain.[100] Ships sailed from Salonika to Istanbul, Egypt,[101] Tripoli, Rhodes,[102] and Cyprus in the East, bringing back coffee, silk, textile dyes, and other merchandise. And Salonikan Jewish merchants and their networks dealt in marine insurance, and employed sophisticated methods of financing.[103]

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Adarbi, *Responsa, Divrei Rivot*, sec. 307.
[97] Medina, *Responsa, Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 147.
[98] R. Shelomoh ben Avraham HaKohen (Maharshakh) (1520–1601), *Responsa,* vol. 1, Jerusalem, 1961, sec.15.
[99] Medina, *Responsa, Yoreh De´ah*, sec. 102.
[100] Yitzhaq le-Veit HaLevi, *Responsa*, sec. 5.
[101] Sasson, *Responsa, Torat Emet*, sec. 131.
[102] Medina, *Responsa, Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 100.
[103] M. Rozen, "Ha-Fattoria: Pereq be-Toledot ha-Mishar ha-Yam Tikhoni ba-Meot ha-Tet- Zayin–Yod-Zayin"(The Fattoria: a Chapter in the History of Mediterranean Commerce in the 16th and 17th Centuries) in *Mi-Qedem u-mi-Yam: Mehqarim be-Yahadut Artzot ha-Islam* (From East and West: Studies in the Jewry of Islamic Countries) (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1981), pp.105,107; B. Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venitians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 95–168, and especially pp. 160–161.

2. The World Monetary Crisis, the Decline of the Wool Industry, and Their Impact on the Salonikan Community

By the end of the sixteenth century, it seemed that the Empire had exhausted its capacity to expand. The waning of Ottoman conquests now resulted in a cessation of the flow of precious metals that had been the spoils of war. Combined with the influx of such metals from the New World via Christian Europe, the result was a huge strain on the Ottoman treasury, which necessarily affected the pockets of the Empire's subjects. As the seventeenth century dawned, the signs of economic pressure on the Salonikan Jewish community were very clear. The *muafname* writ granted to the community in 1568 was not upheld to the letter, and the wealthy were once again forced to operate the silver mines. The burden on the richest taxpayers grew accordingly.[104] The unified organizations of the community continued to function,[105] but each year it became harder and harder to make ends meet. To make matters worse, during the seventeenth century the quantity of cloth demanded from the community rose sharply. The reason was twofold: the quality of the cloth did not meet army demands, and cheaper and better textiles from Europe rendered Salonika's output superfluous. While the community had always found ways to deal with the local authorities, when Sultan Murat IV executed the official sent to collect the cloth for mishandling his duty toward his master, the community was ordered to bring it to Istanbul, where it was sold at auction, generating a very low price. In 1637, the community sent a delegation headed by R. Yehudah Covo to appeal the Sultan's demand that further sums be added to the amount earned from the auction. Sultan Murat was not impressed, and executed him as well.[106]

Over the next few years, the changes in the wool market continued to undermine relations with the Ottoman authorities. Between 1637 and 1651, the community leadership agreed to hand over the finished wool to the government for less than what it considered a fair market price. Though the reason for this is not specified, it seems that the disparity

[104] R. Yosef Ibn ʿEzra, *Masa Melekh*, Jerusalem: Yad Harav Nissim, 1989, pp. 91–92, 100, 108, 131 (first printed in Salonika 1601, during the author's lifetime).
[105] Ibid., 156.
[106] Shabbetai, *Responsa, Torat Hayyim*, vol. 1, sec. 94; R. Yosef Mitrani (1568–1639), *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Hadashot* (New Responsa) (Jerusalem: Or ha-Mizrah, 1978), sec. 27 (1569–1639).

emanated from the fact that the cloth was not deemed to be of good quality; thus the community was required to supply a greater quantity of the product in exchange for less money. This was in fact done, with the hope that further negotiations would result in payment of the missing sums. However, the quality of the product did not change, meaning that only part of the cloth was actually supplied (the rest was deemed unacceptable), and the community had to pay the value of the remainder in money, with the total rising every year.

The consequence was stepped-up migration from the city to smaller locales such as Larisa, Kastoria, Skopje, and especially Izmir, which became a flourishing port from the end of the sixteenth century. A similar flight from Salonika had taken place in 1525, when taxes there had begun to rise in comparison with the provinces.[107] But in the seventeenth century, it posed an acute problem, necessitating legislative intervention by the community leadership already in 1628.[108] The leadership tried to enforce the continued taxation of emigrants from Salonika in their new places of residence, claiming that the taxes levied on the Salonikan community were imposed globally because of their connection with the mandatory supply of wool, whether in cloth or in money (unlike other communities, which paid their taxes—at least ostensibly—according to the rules of classical Islam, that is, based on an individual census).[109] In addition, the community leadership tried to fight the crisis by taxing Torah scholars, who did not work for a living, thus breaching the longstanding custom of exempting them from taxation.[110] Taxes were also demanded from Jews who held sultanic exemptions from all kind of taxes.[111] Further, envoys were sent to Istanbul to try to lower the quantity of the cloth demanded.

Ultimately, these efforts proved largely ineffectual, and the level of taxation in Salonika remained very high in comparison to other places in

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[107] Adarbi, *Responsa, Divrei Rivot*, sec. 59.
[108] Shabbetai, *Responsa, Torat Hayyim*, vol. 1, sec. 64.
[109] Ibid., sec. 64, 95; R. Hayyim Benvenisti (1603–1673), *Responsa, Ba'ey Hayyai,* vol. 1, Salonika, 1791, sec. 106.
[110] Dannon, «Communauté», p. 116 (1562); R. Benyamin, Asael (d. 1690), *Responsa, Sam Hayei* (Salonika, 1746), sec.73; R. Mosheh Amarillio (1696–1748), *Responsa, Devar Mosheh*, vol. 2, *Hoshen Mishpat*, Salonika, 1742, sec. 50; R. Aharon Amarillio (d. 1772), *Responsa, Penei Aharo*n (Salonika, 1796), sec. 24.
[111] Shabbetai, *Responsa, Torat Hayyim*, vol. 3, sec. 102.

the Ottoman Empire. Internal strife erupted between central persons in the communal leadership, such as Yitzhaq Asseo, and the members of the weavers' guild, who suspected that his close ties with the Janissaries had enabled him to embezzle from the community coffers, and consequently threatened to kill him.[112] In fact, the masses had no option but to place themselves at the mercy of the rich, and hope that the latter would not use their connections to prosper at their expense. The wealthy, for their part, chose between emigration[113] and making the best of their ties with the Ottomans and the mandate they held to manage communal affairs. In addition to the methods of tax evasion described above, between 1683 and 1687 the heads of several hundred wealthy families converted to Islam. At first glance, this was done out of allegiance to Shabbetai Tzevi, but in fact the social profile of the converts points to more mundane reasons, namely, the wish to escape the high taxes demanded from the richest families in the Jewish community.[114]

Coming onto the scene at about this time was another important actor, later to play a key role in the modernization of Salonika—the Jews of Portuguese origin, who had been living in Livorno under the aegis of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany since the end of the sixteenth century and whose scions settled in Salonika at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Their choice of Salonika was related to their early identification of the Macedonia region as a possible source of agricultural produce that was in demand in Europe. Upon their arrival, the Portuguese Jews (referred to "Francos" by the other Jews)[115] enjoyed no particular economic clout; but their Tuscan citizenship and French consular protection (which exempted them from the usual taxes imposed on non-Muslim subjects of the Empire)

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[112] Ibid., sec. 34.
[113] Amarillio, *Responsa, Penei Aharon, Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 18.
[114] M. Benayau, "Ha-Hamarah ha-Gedolah be-Saloniqi, Ha-Tenu'ah ha-Shabbetait be-Yavan"(The Great Conversion in Salonika: The Sabbatean Movement in Greece), *Sefunot* 14 (*The Book of Greek Jewry* IV) (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1971–1978), pp. 79–109, esp. p. 13; M. Rozen, *Jewish Identity and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck], 1992), pp. 86–87, and nn. 104–105.
[115] Minna Rozen, "Contest and Rivalry in Mediterranean Maritime Commerce in the First Half of the 18th Century: The Jews of Salonika and the European Presence," *Revue des Études Juives*, CXLVII (1988), pp. 309–352; idem, "Strangers in a Strange Land—The Extraterritorial Status of Jews in Italy and the Ottoman Empire in the 16th to 18th Centuries," in *Ottoman and Turkish Jewry: Community and Leadership*, ed. A. Rodrigue (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 123–166.

combined with their ties to Livorno, Marseilles, London, and even South America, and their connections with the local Jewish community, quickly transformed them into a very wealthy group that actually controlled all the trade between Salonika and Italy. Although the local community managed to oblige them to share its financial burden by way of contributions to charity, the gap between the two groups was never bridged. Two hundred years of life in the world of Christendom gaped between them, and their privileges as foreign citizens were too great an incentive to keep themselves apart from their brethren, the offspring of the Expulsion generation.[116] The "Francos" never contributed to the community in a manner commensurate with their wealth, and when pressed to do so, did their utmost to avoid it.[117] Since the foreign consulates in Salonika financed their activities largely through the taxes they collected from their protégés, they very willingly extended their protection to wealthy local Jews as well. The latter in turn displayed their *berat* (Turkish=document attesting to their function in a foreign consulate)
whenever the community tried to compel them to pay their share of the communal taxes owed to the Ottomans.[118]

Exact numbers concerning the demographic changes in the Salonika Jewish community during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are hard to come by. The last known census (*tahrir*, in Turkish) conducted in Salonika before 1830–1831 was probably the one of 1721–1722, the results of which are highly doubtful for two reasons: firstly, because the taxpayers did their best to avoid being counted, and secondly, because the taxes were still levied globally, which automatically meant that the number was a product of negotiation and not of actual counting. However, the numbers (emanating mainly from consular reports), though in themselves

[116] R. Yosef ben 'Immanuel Ergas (1700–1740), *Responsa, Divrei Yosef* (Livorno, 1742), sec. 36; Emmanuel, *History*, pp. 68, 109; M. Rozen, "Contest and Rivalry in Mediterranean Maritime Commerce in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: The Jews of Salonika and the European Presence," *Revue des Études Juives* CXLVII (1988), pp. 309–352.
[117] Ibid., and R. Benveniste Mercado Gategnu (d. 1770), *Responsa, Matzref la-Kesef* (Salonika, 1867), sec. 38, 39; R. Aharon ben Shelomoh Amarillio (d. 1772), *Responsa, Penei Aharon, Hoshen Mishpat* (Salonika, 1796), sec.14, 15.
[118] Amarillio, *Responsa, Penei Aharon, Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 14; R. Yitzhaq de Pas (d. 1760), *Responsa, Berekh Yitzhaq, Hoshen Mishpat* (Salonika, 1803), sec. 14.

most probably inaccurate, show a steady decline in Salonika's Jewish population that persists until the 1830–1831 Ottoman census.[119]

Population of Salonika 1714-1800

Year	1714	1721-1722	1741	1768	1777	1788	1800
Source	Paul Lucas[120]	Ottoman census [121]	Venetian consul	French consul	French consul	French traveler	Felix de Beaujour
Overall population			80,000	65,000 - 70,000	70,000	80,000	
Muslims						57,000	30,000
Christians		1,667 x 5 = 8,335		8,000		20,000	16,000
Jews	30,000	833 x 5 = 4,165	26,000 - 27,000		25,000	23,000	12,000

The demographic shift during this period is an apt reflection of the Jewish community's economic profile as it emerges from the *sicil*s, the protocols of the Shari'a Court in Salonika, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The registers of 1802–1807 show the Muslim population as having the greatest volume of economic activity, followed by the Christians, and finally, the Jews.

During the eighteenth century Jews continued to produce coarse-quality woolens for the Janissary corps.[122] This occupation still appears in the records until the beginning of the nineteenth century.[123] The wool-dyeing trade, which was dependent on wool production, also managed to survive. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, a partnership is recorded between a Jewish *nil* (indigo) merchant and Greek textile dyers for the purpose of setting up a dyeing factory in Salonika.[124] Guilds of Jewish wool dyers are recorded in the *sicil*s of 1802–1807, as are silk

[119] The data in this table, excluding the numbers from Paul Lucas, were taken from N.K. Moutsopoulos, *Thessaloniki 1900–1917*, Salonika, 1981, pp. 54–55.
[120] *Voyage du Sieur Paul Lucas dans la Turqie*, vol.1, Rouen 1719, pp.50–51.
[121] E. Ginio, Yehudim ve-Notzrim be-Veit ha-Din ha-Shar'i shel Saloniqi bi-Tehilat ha-Me'ah ha-Yod-Tet (Jews and Christians in the Salonika Shari'a Court at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century) (MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1994), p. 10.
[122] Molkho, *Orhot Yosher*, p. 88.
[123] Ginio, Jews, p. 5–6.
[124] R. Yosef Shemuel Modigliano (pronounced by Salonikan Jews as Modiano) (1704–1781), *Responsa, Rosh Mashbir*, vol. 1, *Hoshen Mishpat* (Salonika, 1820), sec. 17.

producers, silk dyers,[125] tailors,[126] and money changers.[127] In view of the relative absence of references to Jews in general in the Salonika *sicil*s, it is safe to assume that those who were mentioned there in the context of monetary dealings were financially prominent individuals.[128] Jews referred to in the *sicil*s as *pazarhan* should be considered great merchants or money changers of high socioeconomic standing;[129] the same can be said of those local Jews who were accused of buying foreign protection,[130] which they did to safeguard their assets from both the Ottoman authorities and the Jewish community.[131]

An undated document, which seems to emanate from the end of the lost eighteenth-century registers of the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol, attests to the existence of a wide range of occupations apart from those cited above: cotton dealers, glassmakers, shoemakers, oil sellers, bean sellers, vegetable gardeners, vineyard owners, fruit garden owners, halva makers, sellers of sunflower seeds for human consumption (called by Sephardi Jews *passatempo*), tobacco cutters, shed owners, marina middleman, fishermen, boat rowers, mascara makers, producers of salted fish, musicians (males and females separately), lemon sellers, silk button producers, wood carvers, doctors, pharmacists, grocers, wine sellers, cheese sellers, candle makers, ordinary middlemen (as opposed to the marina jobbers), antique dealers, soap makers, confectioners, daily workers, jewelers, rope makers, and a more detailed list of workers in the wool industry: producers of cloth for the Janissaries' uniforms, manufacturers of other kinds of woolens, wool curers, and wool dyers.[132] Close scrutiny of this list reveals that the majority of the community were humble artisans and shopkeepers, and the general profile is that of an economically polarized society.

The demographic and economic decline of the Jewish community led to changes in other facets of communal life as well. The wealthy families that stayed in Salonika continued to hold the reins of power in the

[125] Ginio, Jews, p.29.
[126] Ibid., p. 30
[127] Ibid., p. 37–39.
[128] Ginio, Jews, pp. 80,–82, 92, 94.
[129] Ibid., p. 13. His doubts regarding the meaning are unnecessary, cf. p. 92.
[130] Ibid., pp. 109–113.
[131] Rozen, "Contest and Rivalry," pp. 338-339.
[132] Amarillio, "Great House of Study," pp. 292–293.

community, but theirs was no longer an agreed-upon, supracongregational leadership; instead it was merely a group of people rich enough to vouch for the payment of taxes to the Ottomans. The money owed was a fixed sum, which was paid according to the assessment of their assets and businesses. These were direct taxes, referred to as *petcha* in Salonikan Judeo-Spanish.[133] Since the money generated through textile production within the community was no longer sufficient to meet Ottoman demands, the wealthy were looking for ways to deal with the deficit while minimizing their share of the burden as much as possible. To begin with, they gradually reduced the ceiling for taxable assets.[134] The second phase involved minimizing the direct taxes and augmenting the indirect ones.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, all community revenues that were not intended for paying taxes to the Ottoman authorities but instead used for the upkeep of internal community services were called *gabela*. These included rentals of apartments and shops, monopolies on certain trades, and taxes levied on foodstuffs that needed rabbinic authorization due to dietary laws. By the end of the seventeenth century only the revenues from such foodstuffs were referred to as *gabela*. In fact, this latter designation was more appropriate, deriving from the medieval commodities tax (in Latin, *gabullum*=tax), and used in this sense in most Sephardi Jewish communities. However, the shift in the Salonikan meaning of the word is very telling. Following the regulation of state taxes, every Jewish taxpayer began adding to the sum imposed on him a proportionate amount to be used for community expenses. This way, the internal expenses were budgeted by direct taxation, in the same way as the state taxes. However, at a certain point (most probably with the limitation of taxable assets), the word *gabela* came to mean only indirect taxes imposed on foodstuffs. In this way, much of the tax burden was shifted from the rich onto the backs of the middle class and the poor, since the members of these classes spent most of their income on food, thus they paid taxes from almost each *kuruş* they earned, while the rich paid these

[133] I would submit that this term, whose etymological origins have never before been studied, derives from the Spanish *ficha* (*pitqah* in Hebrew), meaning "a piece of paper," namely, the piece of paper attesting to the fact that one has paid his taxes.
[134] Amarillio, *Responsa, Penei Aharon, Hoshen Mishpat*, sec. 18; Pas, *Responsa, Berekh Yitzhaq, Hoshen Mishpat,* sec. 15.

taxes only on part of their income and assets. Moreover, these wealthy merchants, who maintained a monopoly over the purchase of raw wool from the sheep breeders, were the same people who were in charge of paying the "king's cloth tax." If in the sixteenth century they had had to fight among themselves to preserve the monopoly on the raw wool, as time went by it became their official right, and by the eighteenth century they were in a position to buy the wool at a cheap price dictated by the state and sell it at market price to European merchants.[135] This was done in spite of the fact that the government prohibited it, and over the repeated objections of the European merchants before the Ottoman authorities.[136]

The entire taxation system generated immense opportunities for the rich to get richer. Since the *gabela* on foodstuffs came into the community coffers over the course of the fiscal year, whereas the expenses (at least in part) were demanded immediately, the wealthy would pay these costs out of their own pockets in exchange for the right to collect the *gabela*. (This practice, dating back to Roman times, in which collection rights were "farmed out" to a company or group of individuals, was known as "tax farming," and in Turkish *iltizam*) In practice, the *gabela* was levied by the butchers, in the same way that VAT (value added tax) is imposed in certain countries today. However, there was no auditing mechanism to check the revenues of the *gabela* collectors, and in fact this operation generated a great deal of money for them. This way the wealthy benefited, while the only people who actually knew why the price of meat was sky-high were the butchers, who tried every now and then to rebel against these arrangements.[137]

After the slaughter of the Janissary corps in 1826, the entire taxation system apparently collapsed. The King's Cloth Tax lost its raison d'être, and the Ottomans were unable to obtain from the community an updated list of taxable members in order to reassess its taxes. It seems that the custom by which the community paid its taxes en bloc rather than based on

[135] M. Rozen, "Contest and Rivalry," pp. 318–319.
[136] Ibid., and Ginio, Jews, p. 5.
[137] See for example Molkho, *Orhot Yosher*, p. 104; R.Refael Hayyim Avraham Covo, *Responsa, Sefer Hayei Avraham*, Salonika, 1802, sec. 5. Immanuel, *History*, p. 77; cf. M. Rozen, "A Pound of Flesh: Meat Trade and Social Conflict among the Jews of Istanbul, 1700–1923" in *Crafts and Craftsmen in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Surayia Faroqhi and Rendi Deguilhem (London: Tauris, 2005), pp. 195–234.

an actual census was used by the leaders as a pretext for not handing over such a list,[138] despite the fact that the Janissaries were no longer alive. But this leaves us with the question of why the Ottomans did nothing about this until the second half of the nineteenth century. The answer might be their reluctance to alter time-honored practices so long as these did not clash too conspicuously with their interests. In addition, the eradication of the Janissary corps coincided approximately with the Greek war of independence (1821–1830). The Jews of Salonika sided with the Ottomans in this war and assisted them actively, to the dismay of the Christian population, which never forgot this "betrayal."[139] Many Salonikan Greeks were casualties of the conflict, and others left the city during and after the war. In the 1831 Ottoman census, the Jews already comprised 44 percent of the Salonikan population (with 5,667 adult males), while the Muslims made up 33.8 percent (4,294 adult males), and the Christians, 21.6 percent (2,753 adult males).[140] The fact that the Jews now constituted the largest group in Salonika gave them considerable political clout, which prevented the Ottomans from clashing with the one cooperative element in the city (as opposed to the Greeks and Slavs, who by the end of the eighteenth century had become increasingly restive). In the meantime, the small Jewish leadership, which bequeathed its positions from one generation to the next, was able to accumulate a vast fortune even as the lower classes became increasingly downtrodden.

The demographic shift caused by the Greek war of independence could not, however, halt the major social changes that had their roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The status of the congregations deteriorated in favor of the supracongregational institution, with the individual congregations no longer able to retain many of their exclusive services, such as their separate rabbinical authorities, religious courts, and houses of study. The congregational synagogue became strictly a place of prayer and of voluntary after-hours study. Congregations that continued to

[138] R. Yaʿaqov Menasheh, Responsa, *Be'er ha-Mayim* (ca. 1745~1750–1832), Salonika, 1836, sec. 40.
[139] J.C. Vasdravellis, *The Greek Struggle for Independence: The Macedonians in the Revolution of 1821* (Salonika:The Institute for Balkan Studies, 1968), pp. 79–80, 84, 89, 93, 100, 119, 123, 130, 136.
[140] Ginio, Jews, p. 11.

maintain a proper house of study of their own, and to support its students, became exceedingly rare. The most consistent in this regard was the Holy Congregation of Calabria.[141]

The Talmud Torah ha-Gadol had deteriorated in every respect. The *gabela* that was supposed to finance its upkeep had diminished over the years: in 1751, it received 20 percent of the *gabela* on meat, while by 1878, only 15 percent of these revenues were turned over to it. Since the income from its assets was not enough to maintain the level of activity of the glorious days of the sixteenth century, the leadership instituted a progressive tax of all Jewish members of professional guilds in the city. These were not big merchants, but smalltime artisans and shopkeepers.[142] Manuscripts and books were sold to rich Jews outside Salonika, as attested to by the inscription in one such manuscript bought by the Finzi family from Sofia "to glorify the learning of the Torah in our town of Sofia." The curriculum of the Talmud Torah became gradually poorer in volume and in content; by the beginning of the nineteenth century, it consisted mainly of reading and writing Hebrew characters to the extent needed to recite the prayers, reading and writing Judeo-Spanish, and basic mathematics to be able to keep simple accounts. Torah was taught to all males, usually with the Rashi commentary, but otherwise, rabbinic studies were offered only to those students who showed special talent, many of whom went on to become teachers and rabbinical judges themselves.

3. The Age of Ottoman Reforms (Tanzimat) : 1856–1912

a. The industrial revolution

The final phase of Ottoman-Jewish life in Salonika was marked by many changes in crucial aspects of the community's political, economic, and cultural character. At the same time, no less important facets remained largely as they had been through the 350 years since the Jews' expulsion from Spain and their settlement in this Balkan city under Ottoman rule.

The changes in all respects were especially conspicuous during the 1860s, triggered not only by the reforms but by factors on the world

[141] Amarillio, "Great House of Study," pp. 295–296.
[142] Ibid., 292–293.

economic stage. The American Civil War (1861–1865) led to a global shortage of cotton and tobacco, which shifted the major volume of trade to the Macedonian and Anatolian markets. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Salonika became a hub of industrial development, greatly boosting its commercial importance.[143] The "Franco" families such as Morpurgo, Fernandez-Diaz, and Shaki, who had continued their commercial activities since the eighteenth century, had been joined by other foreign nationals like Allatini, Mosseri, Torres, and Altarass, who diverted some of their activities from trade with Europe to industry and banking. Along with them were the scions of the few local moneyed families that had managed to protect their assets by acquiring foreign citizenship, including Nahmias, Mizrahi, Modiano, Benveniste, Molkho, and Shaltiel.[144]

Between 1878 and 1883, thirty factories were opened in Salonika and its environs.[145] Two of the three spinning mills founded in the city were owned by Jews, including one that had been established by the Saias family in partnership with the Ripote family in 1873. This was a modern plant with 300 hp steam-driven machines and spinning machines with 12,000 spindles. It employed 470 workers, of which 370 were young Jewish women aged 14–18. The spinning mill was later sold to the Sides family and their associates.[146] The other spinning mill was built by the partnership of Torres and Mizrahi, which used machinery imported from

[143] On the industrialization of Salonika in the overall Ottoman context, see: D. Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[144] Rozen, "Contest and Rivalry," pp. 331–332, 335–337; Ginio, Jews, pp. 109–111. Cf. D. Carpi, *Italian Diplomatic Documents on the History of the Holocaust in Greece (1941–1943)* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1999), pp.261–269.
[145] On the role of the Jews in the industrialization of Salonika, see: D. Quataert, "Ma'amad Po'alei ha-Ta'asiyah be-Saloniqi, 1850–1912" (Industrial Working Class of Salonika, 1850–1912), in *Days of the Crescent*, pp. 314–323; idem, "Premières fumées d'usines," in *Salonique 1850–1918*, ed. G. Veinstein, (Paris: Éditions Autrement, 1992), pp. 179–190; Orly C. Meron, "Jewish Entrepreneurship in Salonica during the Last Decades of the Ottoman Regime in Macedonia (1881–1912)," (hereafter: Meron, "Jewish Entrepreneurship, 1881") in *Frontier of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, ed. Colin Imber, vol.1 (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers), pp. 265–286; idem, "Jewish Entrepreneurship in Salonica (1912–1921): An Overview," (http://www.econ.uoa.gr/UA/files/1493138541..pdf) (hereafter: Meron, "Jewish Entrepreneurship, 1912").
[146] Y. Megas, *Souvenir - Images of the Jewish Community, 1897–1917* (Athens: Kapon Editions, 1993), p. 87.

Britain; from its founding in 1886, it grew to become a publicly traded company by 1905. Both these spinning mills had tenacious Greek competitors in rural Macedonia.

The Saias family spinning mille, view from the quay, a postcard from the beginning of the twentieth century, cancelled around 1913.

The Allatinis were by far the most important family in Salonikan commerce at the end of the Ottoman era. Though they arrived from Livorno at the end of the eighteenth century, they were probably an ancient Italian family, Allatini meaning "the Latin" in Hebrew, i.e., coming from the Lazio region. The founding member of the dynasty was the physician Lazaro Allatini (1776–1834).[147] Like other great merchants, the family started in the wholesale grain, tobacco, and cotton trade. From the tobacco trade, they moved on to tobacco processing and cigarette manufacturing. In 1854, they became partners in a flour mill together with a French firm, taking over sole ownership in 1882. Following the fire of 1898, the mill was rebuilt in 1900 based on the designs of the Allatinis' house architect, Vitaliano Poselli, becoming a city landmark. The logical next step was, of course a bakery. The family's involvement in flour production also led them to invest in a jute sack and rope factory owned by

[147] I.S. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1963), vol.2, sec. 1698, pp. 799–800.

the Torres family, and in the spinning mill owned by the Torres and Mizrahi families. The Allatinis also invested in quarries around the city, eventually starting a brick factory and a tile factory. In order to expand their activities, the family founded the Bank of Salonika in 1888. In 1908, its new building—once again designed by Vitaliano Poselli—was opened near the Ottoman Bank in the European quarter.[148]

The Allatini flour mill, 1900, designed by Vitaliano Poselli

A ceremony for the end of the Allatini flour mill renovation in 1912; postcard publisher: David Assael

[148] See below, n. 162. On Salonika's banking industry, see: E. Hekimoglou, *Τράπεζες και Θεσσαλονίκη 1900–1936: όψεις λειτουργίας και προβλήματα χωροθέτησης* (Banks and Salonika, 1900–1936: Aspects of their Operation and Problems of Space) (Salonika , 1987.

The Allatinis also owned another bank called Adelphi Allatini, with branches in London and Marseilles.

The Modiano and Fernandez-Diaz families founded the Olympus brewery in 1906. Like the spinning mills, the brewery faced a Greek competitor whose stated goal was to draw away Greek clientele from the "Jewish beer" for national reasons. The Modianos, like the Allatinis, headed an entire banking and real estate empire. Ya'aqov Modiano and his son Shemuel owned a bank named after their father Shaul (Saul). Their brother Levi owned another bank, Bank Levi, with a branch in Paris. The Modianos were also the owners of a silk factory, three more industrial plants in various parts of the city, and a large number of warehouses and shops, apart from their 96 businesses in the Cité Saul ; the Han Rogoti and the Han Boşnak; two imposing mansions; two flower nurseries, a café and a bakery on Sabrı Paşa Avenue; and two enormous plots of land referred to as Saul Zadeleri (Turkish for Shaul Brothers). The estimated value of their real estate holdings in 1906 was 700,000 Turkish liras.[149] In 1912, Salonikan Jews controlled 85.3 percent of the grain and flour industry, 84.5 percent of the silk trade, 100 percent of the wood and coal industry, 87.5 percent of the leather industry, 80 percent of the rope and jute sack industry, and 71 percent of the wool yarn and fabrics trade. They also owned approximately 84.6 percent of the banking firms, 89.5 percent of the luxury trade, 80.9 percent of the colonial trade, and 94.5 percent of glass, crockery, and metal products.[150] The extraordinary financial success of the great Jewish banking tycoons was based on the large-scale export of agricultural crops and the import of finished products. The volume of trade sparked population growth, which in turn pushed up real-estate prices, thus enabling local banks to obtain more credit abroad to expand their businesses.[151]

[149] E.A. Hekimoglou, Υπόθεση Μοδιανο-Τραπεζίκο Κραχ στη Θεσσαλονίκη το 1911 (The Modiano Affair: The 1911 Financial Crisis in Salonika) (Salonika: Thanasi Altinji, 1991), pp. 33–36.
[150] Meron, "Jewish Entrepreneurship, 1881", fig. 2; Meron, "Jewish Entrepreneurship, 1912," p. 22.
[151] Hekimoglou, *The Modiano Affair*, pp. 15–16.

In a list of members of the Salonika Chamber of Commerce from 1912 to 1936, well into the Greek period, 48 out of the 167 names are still Jewish;[152] of these, 11 families appear either on the lists of people claiming (unjustly, according to the Ottomans) foreign citizenship in the *sicil*s of 1802–1807[153] or in French consular correspondence as foreign citizens,[154] while all 48 of them appear on the lists of Italian nationals and protégés in correspondence between the Italian consulate in Salonika and the Italian Foreign Ministry in Rome in 1943.[155]

In sum, the bulk of all industry, commerce, and banking in Salonika from the beginning of the *tanzimat* period (1839) through the end of Ottoman rule (1912) was in Jewish hands, and much of this activity was controlled by foreign nationals. This picture should not deceive the reader, however. Such affluence was the lot of a relatively small number of families. Most of Salonika's Jews of this period were daily or seasonal workers, whose shoulders bore the weight of the merchandise unloaded at port; women workers and children, whose small hands sorted the tobacco leaves and operated the spindles; and fishermen, smalltime artisans, and shopkeepers.[156]

The interest in Macedonia's agricultural products prompted a revolution in transportation between Salonika and the rest of Europe as well as Asia. In 1869, Baron Maurice de Hirsch received a franchise to lay 1,500 miles of railroad track throughout Macedonia. Service on the Thessaloniki–Priștina line began in July 1872; by December 1874, the line extended to Mitrovica and Skopje. In 1888, a line was inaugurated to Niș and Belgrade, and in 1896, to Monastir and Istanbul. Since the railway network was extended from Istanbul to Vienna in 1888, and the Paris–Istanbul line started to operate the following year, Salonika was now connected to the Orient Express, both through the Salonika–Istanbul line,

[152] My thanks to Paris Papamichos Chronakis of the University of Crete, who provided me with this list.
[153] Ginio, Jews, pp. 109–114.
[154] Rozen, "Contest and Rivalry," pp. 331–333, 335.
[155] Carpi, *Italian Diplomatic Documents*, pp. 261–269.
[156] P. Dumont, "The Social Structure of the Jewish Community of Salonica at the End of the Nineteenth Century," *Southeastern Europe* 5:2 (1978), pp. 33–72.

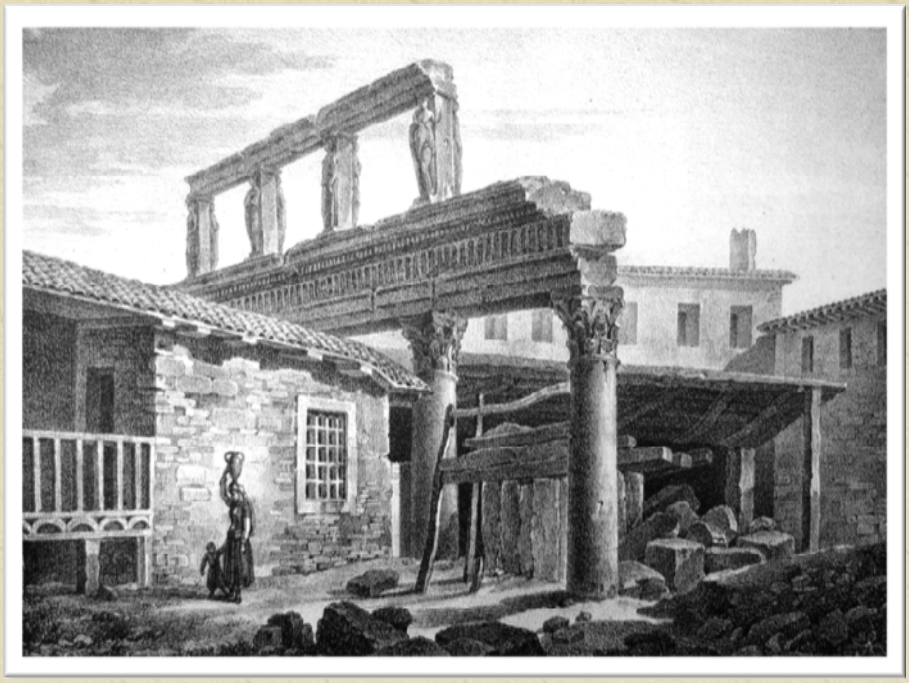
and the Skopje–Niș lines.[157] With the coming of the railways and the factories, new winds blew in the Balkan city, some of them refreshing, others chilling.

b. The city changes its face

One of the major aspects of the *tanzimat* involved the perception of the so-called infidels—hitherto perceived as barbarous and unworthy of appreciation—as a possible source of innovations useful to the Ottoman Empire. Salonika, situated at the crossroads between the Eastern Mediterranean, Asia Minor, the Balkans, and Western Europe, was an ideal pipeline through which such influences could infiltrate the Ottoman world.

Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the rhythm of the city and its spatial composition retained their overall characteristics. Salonika was divided into quarters (Turkish=*mahalle*s), each one centered around its primary house of worship, whether mosque, church or synagogue. Physically, these quarters might overlap each other, but administratively they were considered by the Ottomans as separate. Although there were no legal restrictions on mixed residence, the various religious groups were concentrated in distinct areas. The Muslims lived in the upper part of the city, from Vardar Road (Via Egnatia) to the Kastra. In the nineteenth century, the various Muslim quarters together covered an area more or less equal to that of all the other ethnic groups combined, though they numbered roughly 34 percent of the population.[158] Their spacious residences were surrounded by gardens and enjoyed better air than the rest of the city, whereas most of the non-Muslims lived in small wooden houses in crowded winding alleys. The Christians lived in quarters near the city gates in the east and west. Several Greek quarters existed as enclaves of sorts within the Jewish and Muslim areas. Areas of mixed residence could be seen mainly on the outskirts of the distinctive religious centers—in the Frenk Mahallesi (=European quarter), and of course along Vardar

[157] B.C. Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia, 1870–1912: Socio-Economic Change and the Railway Factor* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 39–51; M. Anastassiadou, *Salonique, 1830–1912: Une ville ottomane à l'âge des Réformes* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 171–179.
[158] Anastassiadou, *Salonique*, pp. 59–71.



Las Incantadas as drawn by E. Cousinéry, *Voyage dans la Macédoine : contenant des recherches sur l'histoire, la géographie, les antiquités de ce pays*. Paris, 1831

Road, where all the problems of the Balkans were solved daily amid a hubbub of colporteurs, shopkeepers, shady coffee houses, hammams, bazaars of stolen goods, and little hotels that rented rooms by the hour. The Jews were concentrated around their synagogues, more than thirty of which dotted the area between the sea and Vardar Road. At the eastern side of Vardar Road stood the Galerius Arch of Triumph dating from the early fourth century. The area around the Galerius Arch was referred to by the Jews as *Las incantadas* (the bewitched, in Judeo-Spanish) because of the marble statues of women that decorated it.[159] The hub of the main Jewish area was the Plaza Judea, a vibrant commercial center that had been given over as a trust by various families—plot by plot through the generations—to the governors of the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol, and was managed by the communal leadership. The Plaza was a dense tapestry of shops, artisans' ateliers, an oil press, coffee houses, restaurants, and several synagogues. It was situated near what is nowadays the intersection

[159] W.M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert-Publisher, 1967) (Reprint of the edition of J. Rodwell, 1835), vol. 3, pp. 245–246.

of Vasileos Hirakleiou (Βασιλέυς Ηιράκλειου) and Komeninon (Κομενίνον) streets. The buildings of the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol were adjacent to it, on the site of today's Vlali (Βλαλί=covered) market, encircled by Ermou (Ερμού), Komeninon, Aristotelou (Αριστοτέλου), and Hirakleiou streets. The entire city was surrounded by a wall that crowded in on its 300 hectares (roughly 750 acres) of space.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the main commercial centers of the city were the Sivi quarter (today Ladadika, Λαδάδικα) which, contrary to its name (*sivi* in Turkish = fluid), served as a wholesale center for sugar, coffee beans, pepper, dry fruits, olives, salted fish, cheese, etc.,[160] and the Iștira quarter,[161] which served as the center of the wholesale grain trade. The Iștira, bounded today by Egnatia, Ionos (Ιόνος), Dragoumi (Δραγόυμι), Tzimiski (Τζιμισκή), and Komeninon streets, was the heart of the city's economic world. Membership in the Iștira merchants' guild, which could only be acquired through birthright, attested to a person's prominent socioeconomic standing.[162] Both centers were crowded with banks, lawyers' offices, chambers of commerce, stores for every manner of nautical equipment and sailors' gear, coffee houses, taverns, and inns. The area teemed with groups of Jewish porters (*hamal*s in Turkish), who carried the merchandise from the port to the warehouses on their shoulders, each group specializing in a different kind of merchandise.[163] Until 1912, all port operations were in Jewish hands. Loading and unloading stopped on the Sabbath day and Jewish holidays, and the rabbis of the city had to intervene to permit it during military emergencies.[164]

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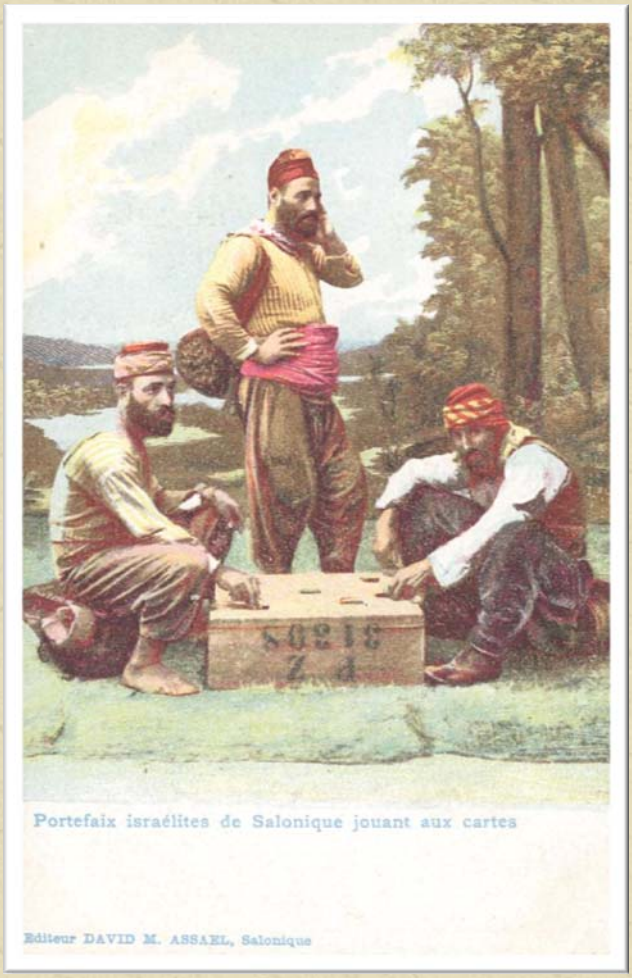
[160] See Megas, *Souvenir*, p. 94.

[161] In Turkish *iștira etmek* = to buy. However, one must also consider the Greek *Istira*, a silver coin, but also a tax imposed on Ottoman Salonika in grain supply: the twelfth part of all grain that passes through the port (J. Emerson, *The History of Modern Greece, from Its Conquest by the Romans B.C. 146 to the Present Time* (London, 1840), vol. 1, p. 294).

[162] L. Sciaky, *Farewell to Salonika: Portrait of an Era* (London: E.H. Allen Ltd., 1946), p. 39.

[163] Megas, *Souvenir*,128; G. Hadar, "Hebetim be-Hayyei ha-Mishpahah ha-Yehudit be-Saloniqi 1900–1943" (Aspects of Jewish Family Life in Salonika 1900–1943) (Ph.D. diss., University of Haifa, 2003), pp. 27–28, 31–36.

[164] R. Refael Shemuel Arditti (1812–1887), *Responsa, Divrei Shemuel, Orah Hayyim* (Salonika, 1891), sec. 14 (1882); F. Moore, *The Balkan Trail* (New York, Macmillan Co., 1906) (reprinted 1971), pp.82–104; W. Miller, *Travel and Politics in the Near East* (New York: Arno Press, 1971) (first published in London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), p. 365; D. Walshe, *With the Serbs in Macedonia* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1920), p. 30.



Jewish porters playing cards; publisher D.M. Assael

Jewish Stevedores, beginning of the twentieth century

Scene on the Quay at Salonika; In Search of Miss Stone,[165] 1902 drawn by Maud, W. T. Victoria and Albert Museum SD.638. Inscribed on the back of the drawing: "The population of Salonika is over 120,000, of whom at least 80,000 are Jews. The porterage along the quai lies in their hands. They are the noisiest workmen in the world. They do not talk to each other but shout. [...] the extravagance of gesture which accompanies their words is simply wonderful, it is impossible to caricature it. A very favourite gesture of theirs is to tap the forehead with the first finger & thumb pinched together –"

[165] W.T. Maud was a war-artist and correspondent for the illustrated magazine The Graphic. The words `In search of Miss Stone' in the inscription on the back of the drawing refer to a sensational event in September 1901. Miss Ellen Stone, an American missionary, was kidnapped near the village of Bansko and held to ransom by a band of twenty armed men affiliated with the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), led by Yane Sandansky and Hristo Chernopeev. Eventually the ransom was paid, and Miss Stone and her companion Mrs. Katarina Stefanova Tsilka were released unharmed.

A street at the Iştira, a postcard from the beginning of the twentieth century

The transportation revolution was only one aspect of the changes experienced by Salonika during this period. The same year that Baron de Hirsch acquired the concession for the railway (1869), a new governor was appointed in Salonika, Sabrı Paşa. On his orders, the city's western wall and seawall were destroyed, the remnants used for drying plots of land and building new quays.[166] The dried land, designated in part for public and government buildings, was sold to private entrepreneurs, 47 percent of them foreign nationals; many of these were Jews of Italian nationality, descendants of the Portuguese-Tuscan community who had settled in Salonika in the eighteenth century, and those who followed, such as the Allatini and Fernandez-Diaz families, or others, who joined this circle on one pretext or another, like the Modianos.[167] 100 meter-wide plots of land were dried, extending from the White Tower (built by the Ottomans in

[166] A. Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations in the Balkans (1820–1920): Aspects of Balkan Town Planning and the Remaking of Thessaloniki* (Salonika: University Studio Press, 1996), pp. 62–67.

[167] Anastassiadou, *Salonique*, pp. 140–142; Hadar, "Aspects," p.37. The first Modiano recorded in Salonika was Yitzhaq Shemuel Modigliano (d. 1634), whose name attests to his origin in the town of Modigliano near Firenze. The family is first recorded as claiming foreign protection only in 1800, when one Shemuel Yitzhaq "Moliano" was mentioned in the list prepared by the Ottoman authorities of all Salonikans falsely claiming foreign protection. Said individual, who was a banker in Salonika, claimed to be the interpreter of the Prussian consul in Alexandria, Egypt (cf. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, vol.2, sec. 601, pp. 263–264 and Ginio, *Jews*, 109).

1430)[168]to the shoreline. Two piers were constructed, and the Jewish architect Eli Modiano designed a new customs house of 5,000 square meters.

The customs house designed by Eli Modiano , built in 1910

The idea was to open the city to the sea, create a modern port, and connect it with the railroad network that by now had spread throughout Europe.
The value of exports passing through the port of Salonika in 1900 was more than seven times that of 1838, and between 1900 and 1911 one seventh of the exports of the entire Ottoman Empire were transported by way of Salonika, as well as 60 percent of Greece's exports, 67 percent of Bulgaria's, and the entire exports of Serbia.[169] The dried area was planned in a star-like shape, typical of other European cities of the period, with the 1.5- kilometer Sabrı Paşa Avenue (today Venizelou, Βενιζέλου)

168 J. D Tracy, *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 303-307; M. Kiel, "A Note on the Exact Date of Construction of the White Tower of Thessaloniki" *Balkan Studies* 14(1973): 325–357.

169 Hadar, "Aspects," p. 27

Sabri Paşa street; postcard publıshers : Matarasso,Saragoussi & Rousso

connecting the seafront with the new Government Building (*konak* in Turkish, meaning the stone house, to differentiate it from ordinary houses, generally built from wood or bricks).

Along the seafront, a plaza was built that later earned the name "Freedom Square" (Turkish=Özgürlük meydanı; Greek=πλατεία ελευθερίας) during the Young Turk revolution of 1908. This became the new business center of the city, containing the Cité Saul building, owned by the Modiano family; the Han Allatini, which housed the Tiring department store (founded in 1910); the Stein family department store (1908); and the Orosdi-Back emporium. All three department stores were part of chains belonging to Jewish families from Austro-Hungary, and their appearance in the newly built quarter symbolized not only the tightening of ties with European interests but the existence of a social stratum of European-style luxury consumers.[170]

[170] *Annales de la propriété industrielle, artistique et littéraire*, Paris: Association des ingénieurs-conseils en matière de propriété industrielle (France), Compagnie des ingénieurs-conseils en propriété industrielle. Au bureau des Annales t. 441898, p. 9; Anastassiadou, *Salonique*, pp.192–195;U. M. Kupferschmidt, *European Department*

Liberty Square, a postcard from the beginning of the twentieth century; publishers: Matarasso, Saragoussi & Rousso

Cité Saul (Saul Arcade), originally designed by Vitaliano Poselli (ca. 1881)], partly destroyed by the 1917 Fire and reconstructed in 1929 by Eli Modiano

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Stores and Middle Eastern Consumers: The Orosdi-Back Saga (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Center, 2007). Also of interest: *Histoire de la captivité du capitaine L. Salmon évadé en 14–18* (http://papymac.free.fr/).

Bank de Salonique, designed by Vitaliano Poselli (1906). The bank belonged to the Allatini family.
http://www.flickr.com/photos/gichristof/3153092981/

The Stein family department store, 1906, designed by Ernst Levi.
http://www.flickr.com/photos/gichristof/

The Frankish Quarter also boasted a number of huge commercial and financial complexes such as the Han Sajas and Passaj Ben Roubi, as well as the buildings of the Ottoman Bank, the Bank of Mitilini owned by a Belgian-Greek partnership, several French and German banks, and a number of Jewish banks: Amar, Mousseri, and Bank Benvenisti. In the early 1880ies, the Allatini family built a town house which still stands at what is now the intersection of Singrou (Συγγρού) and Vlauritou (Βλαωρίτου) streets. On the same plot, they built the Banque de Salonique in 1906–1908.[171] Both buildings were designed by Poselli. Villa Allatini was purchased in 1909 by the Ottoman government to house the deposed Sultan Abdülhamid II.

The Allatini Villa, 1896,designed by the Vitaliano Posseli. The villa was bought by the Ottoman government in 1909 to house the deposed Sultan Abdulhamid II (in the picture at the right side of the postcard). The villa houses now the offices of the Salonika perfecture

In 1889, the eastern part of the wall stretching from the White Tower to Midhat Paşa Avenue (now Agiou Dimitrou=Αγίου Δημήτriou) was demolished. Along part of the former wall line, Hamidiye Avenue (now Ethniki Amini =Εθνική Αμίνη) was built. On the southern edge of Hamidiye Avenue, a broad plaza was created in the midst of which stood

[171] O.C. Meron, "Sub-Ethnicity and Elites: Jewish Italian Professionals and Entrepreneurs in Salonica (1882–1912)," in *Rabbini e maestri nell'ebraismo italiano*, ed. D. Malkiel (Firenze: Editrice La Giuntina, 2005), pp.188–189.

an obelisk and a town clock—a gift from the selfsame Abdulhamid II, who would spend his final days in the city.[172]

Following the 1890 fire, the devastated shorefront was rebuilt in European style, with a quay adjacent to modern hotels, coffee houses, and cinemas; the entire area was state of the art, with proper sewage, gas lights, and a tramway.[173] Many of the new businesses along the quay were owned by Jewish families, among them the Olympia (Segura family), Palace (Allaluf), and Pathée (Natan & partners) movie theaters, the Crystal beerhouse on the ground floor of the Hotel Grand Bretagne (Pesah family), and more. The demolition of the sea wall enabled the city to expand to the southeast, where beautiful villas were built along the seashore on Hamidiye Avenue, known to the Jews as Las Campagnas and now called Vasilissis Olgas (Βασιλίσσης Όλγας).

Las Campagnas, a postcard , the end of the nineteenth century

[172] Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, pp. 68–70; Anastassiadou, *Salonique*, pp.155–156.
[173] Hadar, "Aspects," pp. 47–49.

Hotel Grand Bretagne, owned by the Pesah family, a pastcard from the beginning of the twentieth century

The wealthiest Muslims, Christians and Jews built their mansions there, some of which are still standing: the Villa Allatini (1888) (198 Vassilissis Olgas, now Salonika's prefecture); Villa Fernandez, known also as Casa Bianca (1910) (corner of V. Olgas and Sofouli Theater [θέατρο Σοφούλη]); Villa Mordukh, originally built in 1905 for an Ottoman general; and Villa Modiano (1906), now the Museum Macedonian of Folk Art. Villa Benroubi (1911); Villa Ida (1890), named after Levi Modiano's wife, and the Benusigilio Villa (1902) have since been demolished.[174]

Villa Bianca , named after Bianca Fernandez –Diaz ,1910 , designed by Pierro Arigoni.
http://www.flickr.com/photos/gichristof/2480443951/

[174] Megas, *Souvenir*, pp. 101–118.

Villa Modiano designed by Eli Modiano, 1906, houses today the Macedonian Folk Art & Ethnology Museum

http://www.flickr.com/photos/gichristof/2480453077/in/set-72157604907476328/

The dire circumstances of the survivors of the 1890 fire, coupled with the immigration of Jewish refugees from Corfu and from Eastern Europe, drove the Jewish lower classes westwards to an area known in Turkish as Çayır (=meadow). Here the lowest of the low congregated in mostly self-made huts and shacks, grouped together in neighborhoods whose names were self-explanatory: La Bara (Judeo-Spanish=the swamp), Kabristan (Turkish=the cemetery), Las Kulivas (a distortion of the Greek word for shacks).[175] All of these destitute areas became hives of prostitution and crime.[176]

With the financial help of the Baron and Baroness de Hirsch, the community built two neighborhoods to settle the survivors of the fire: one was Kalamaria, on the southeast side of the city; and the other, Baron de Hirsch, on the west side. While the latter was uncomfortably close to the Vardar swamps, it was also near the Regie tobacco company, which was in need of cheap labor. Both areas, designed originally as spacious green suburban neighborhoods, deteriorated quite rapidly. Baron de Hirsch in particular was stricken by disease due to its proximity to the

[175] Hadar, "Aspects," pp.41–42.
[176] B. Pappenheim, *Sisyphus-Arbeit : Reisebriefe aus den Jahren 1911–1912 von Bertha Pappenheim* (Leipzig: P.E. Linder, 1924), pp.40-48.

swamplands.[177] The Commercial Guide of Macedonia and Thrace, written by Georgios Hatzikiriakos in 1910, offers a succinct description of these neighborhoods: The Vardar neighborhood consisted of three hundred houses, each containing two rooms, a kitchen and a small yard. It had two schools for boys and girls, a synagogue, and a clinic, built in 1898 by Baron de Hirsch. Between fifty and sixty people per day received treatment at the clinic, with 140 patients hospitalized each year. A volunteer committee distributed 200 pairs of woolen underwear per year, 3,000 liters of milk, 200 kg of meat, and 1,500 kg of bread. Help was given without regard to religious affiliation. The Jewish community supported the poor of Kalamaria and those of Agia Triada, where the very poor lived one on top of one another, most of them junk collectors and port workers.[178]

Baron Hirsch Neigborhood, a postcard sent by a French soldier to his family in 1916

c. Looking westward : money, politics, and education

In 1856, two basic demands were presented by the reformers of the Ottoman Empire to their non-Muslim subjects: the first was a transparent

[177] Hadar, "Aspects," 41–43.

[178] Γ. Χατζηκυριακού, *Οδηγός της Ελλάδος, τμήμα Β', 1910–11, Μακεδονία μετά του παρακείμενου τμήματος της Θράκης* (Αθήναι : έκδοση Νικ. Γ. Ιγγλέση, 1911), p. 33; R. Molho, "Working-Class Neigborhoods Established in Salonika Following the 1890 and 1917 Fires," in *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans 1808–1945*, ed. M. Rozen (Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University, 2002), pp.173–194.

leadership that would represent them before the Ottoman state; and the second, the modernization of the educational system. Both were highly problematic from the standpoint of these communities, whether Jews, Greeks or Armenians. The transparency was one issue that was revolutionary. For hundreds of years, these communities had taken it for granted that whatever they did among themselves was of no interest to the Ottomans as long as they paid their taxes and did not cause trouble. Now their sultan wanted to know how they chose their leadership, what regulations governed their communal affairs, and exactly how they managed the financial affairs of their community. This was altogether too much to swallow, and all of the communities, without exception, were in no hurry to implement this demand.

Ostensibly, Salonika already had institutions in place in 1856 that were similar to those mandated by the reform: a community council that apparently paralleled the *meclis umumi* (=General Council in Turkish) and included the major taxpayers, or more precisely, those assumed to be capable of paying the maximum levy or donating large sums to charity; and a *meclis cismanı* (Turkish for Lay Council) made up of the "city notables" and appointed at the discretion of the chief rabbi, who was entitled to consult with anyone in this regard. In reality, however, the community's wealthy members, who saw to the election of the rabbi and paid his wages, were the consulting body that determined who these "notables" would be. Once every three years, a committee was appointed to assess the debtors and impose direct taxes. In 1856, however, the committee refrained from imposing this tax so as not to engage in disputes with certain individuals, while the butchers, for their part, refused to collect the *gabela*. Full transparency would have placed the leadership in an awkward position, exposing their unwillingness to pay the taxes owed to the state, which by now had accumulated, as well as their efforts to shift the burden of financing communal activities onto the poor via the *gabela*. The consequence was the material and moral bankruptcy of the community.

Mother and Daughter: Two Centuries Meet, a postcard from the beginning of the twentieth century

At this point, a group of prominent descendants of the "Francos," including Moïse (Mosheh) Allatini, Shelomoh Fernandez, and Moïse Morpurgo, decided to embark on a new approach and to plunge into community affairs. (Until then, they had refrained from involving themselves in such matters, both to avoid paying taxes and so that they would not be tainted by the inferior image and low status accorded to subjects of the sultan.) Their sudden interest in community affairs may be attributable to similar trends taking place at the time in Istanbul: since they had ties with Christian Europe, and most of them had even received a European education, they were accustomed to seeing themselves as equal

to non-Jews; being identified now as Jews who were Ottoman subjects, the group image became a matter of prime importance to them.[179]

Moïse Allatini 1809-1882

Moïse Allatini was a close friend of Avraham Camondo, and even sent his children's tutor, Emmanuel Veneziani of Livorno, to Camondo's home.[180] There is no doubt that Allatini was influenced by Camondo's activities in Istanbul and certainly by the Rothschild family's efforts to push for the reform of the Empire's Jewish communities. In 1856, Allatini, the central figure in the group known in Italian as the "Illuminati" (or "les Eclairs," in French), initiated various key reforms, which received the approval of a group of fifty notables convened by Rabbi Asher Covo (1849–1874). To finance those reforms that seemed the most urgent—improvement of medical services and the educational system—Allatini spearheaded the establishment of a foundation known as Hesed Olam, which carried out these reforms and provided assistance to the unemployed. In reality, the foundation was an indirect method of restoring the traditional state of affairs whereby the well-to-do were responsible for the public. The organization's expenses were financed by a tax of ten *para*

[179] This explanation emerges from R. Molho's work (*Les juifs*, vol. 1, pp. 154–162).
[180] S. Marcus, "Reshit ha-Haskalah ve-Shidud Ma'arakhot ba-Ḥinukh be-Saloniqi" (The Beginning of Enlightenment and Reforms in the Educational System of Salonika), in *Saloniqi: 'Ir va-Em be-Yisrael* (Salonika: a Jewish Metropolis) (Tel Aviv, 1967) (hereafter: *Salonika, A Jewish Metropolis*), p. 69.

levied on every parcel exported or imported by the merchants who were members of the foundation.

One of Hesed Olam's earliest activities was an attempt to found a modern school in Salonika. A major catalyst for reforming the Jewish educational system was the founding of schools by the French Catholic mission, Les Filles de la Charité de St. Paul, and the Protestant mission, the Jewish Mission of the Established Church of England (apparently affiliated with the American mission). These schools, founded in or around 1851, were certainly a viable option, particularly for the children of the poor, and they forced Salonika's rabbis to address the true state of education in their city.[181] In conjunction with the chief rabbi, Asher Covo, and the community rabbi (later, chief rabbi), Avraham Gatigno, reforms were instituted in the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol and a modern school was opened in which French and Turkish were taught. The position of principal at both the new school and the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol was filled by Yosef Lipmann of Strasbourg, who was sent to Salonika by the Paris Consistory at the request of Allatini.

It is our contention that the urge on the part of the "Francos" to intervene in community affairs was not driven by their need to raise the community's status nor by their embarrassment at seeing Jewish children in missionary schools. Rather, they needed a new type of educated work force for their economic enterprises that only modern schools could provide, and even basic manpower for their factories could be obtained on a steady basis only if socioeconomic stability were achieved.

But matters were not so simple. The "Francos"' approach had always posed a genuine threat to the traditional lifestyle, as perceived by the rabbis of Salonika, and the latter feared the loss of their power and prestige. It did not take long for an opposition to the educational reforms to coalesce. The rabbis and teachers represented only one aspect of this opposition, however. The reforms required vast sums of money. All of the "Francos," as well as the wealthy members of the community who were Ottoman subjects, were compelled to mobilize for this purpose, even

[181] Immanuel, "History," p. 131; L. Bornstein-Makovetsky, "Activities of the American Mission," in *Days of the Crescent*, pp. 296–297.

though they could easily have obtained private tutors from Europe for their own children at less cost to themselves. At the same time, in honor of Sultan Abdülmecid's visit to Salonika in 1859, major renovations were initiated by Allatini on the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol building, which had fallen into grave disrepair[182] (though these were only cosmetic in nature). Lipmann was forced to leave his post and the "modern" school founded by Allatini was closed in 1861 in the face of opposition from the community rabbis. Subsequently, Allatini resigned his post on the community council.[183]

But a vacuum cannot be tolerated for long. Three years after the closure of Allatini and Lipmann's school, Shelomoh Fernandez, the honorary Italian consul, opened an Italian school for the children of the wealthy, supported by the Italian government. Immediately afterwards, a Salonika *maskil* by the name of Yehudah Nehamah, who had married into another "Franco" family, the Modianos, founded his own school, the Colegio de Padre de Familia. And one of his students, Hayim Asher Shalem, later started a school that was in effect a continuation of Nehamah's.[184] All of these schools were available only to the children of the well-to-do, and consequently, the problems of education in Salonika remained unsolved.

The launching of these activities by the Illuminati did not immediately give rise to a new era for the community. This was true in terms of the educational system, and even more so with regard to Salonika's communal organization as a whole. It was not until 1872 that an Alliance school was founded, and it was only in 1877 that any reforms of substance began to be implemented in the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol, thanks to Morpurgo, Allatini, Modiano, and Fernandez—all of them "Francos" with ties to the Alliance—acting in conjunction with Yehudah Nehamah.[185]

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[182] Y. Neḥamah, *Histoire des*, vol. 7 (Salonika: Communauté israélites de Salonique, 1978), pp. 640–641.
[183] See M. Allatini, *A Sketch of the State of Primary Education among the Jews of the East and Especially among the Jews of Salonika*, translated from the Italian by J. Picciotto (London, 1875). Compare with Marcus, "The Beginning of the Enlightenment," pp. 69–70.
[184] Immanuel, "History," pp. 130–132.
[185] Nehamah, *Histoire des israélites*, vol. 7, pp. 640–648.

A perusal of the various sources related to the struggle over the character of the Salonika community during the years 1855 to 1880 reveals that, at least in the eyes of the onlookers (i.e., the masses of Salonika), the conflict was between two groups of wealthy notables—one representing the rabbinic establishment and prominent local figures, and the other representing the Illuminati circles, who may have been "enlightened" but were also enormously wealthy and were distinguished from the first group by virtue of their foreign citizenship and French, Italian, or Austrian orientation. The struggle was over the question of who would finance the expenses of the community as an organization that provided services to its members.

January 1874 saw the death of Rabbi Asher Covo, who had fought long and hard to preserve the power of his office; he was succeeded by his deputy, Avraham Gatigno, who was considered to be progressive. But the superficial categorizations of "progressive" and "traditional" do not present an accurate portrait, and it cannot be said that Gatigno's appointment launched a "new era."[186] Late in the tenure of Rabbi Covo, steps had already been taken to establish an Alliance school in Salonika. Although both Covo, and Gatigno after him, supported this move, local financial resources were a necessary prerequisite—at the very least, in order to erect a building.[187]

Even before his election, Gatigno had accused the new, "enlightened" leadership of the community of taking over all the communal institutions and their assets. Furthermore, the bulk of the community's expenditures were being paid for by the *gabela*, while these new leaders refused to submit a report on their activities.[188] In practical terms, this meant that funding for the school would have to be drawn from the sale of community assets and the taxation of the poor. Ironically enough, it was actually the fact that a major donor was found for the school building that rocked the communal boat. In 1875, Baron de Hirsch visited Salonika and promised that he would match any sum donated by the city's notables towards the establishment of the school. The lion's share of the donations came from

[186] As stated by R. Molho, *Les juifs*, vol. 1, p. 159.
[187] Immanuel, "History," pp. 132–135.
[188] *El Nacional*, August 7, 1873; Avner Levi, "Changes in the Leadership," p. 255.

Allatini, Shaul Modiano, the family of Rabbi Covo, Avraham Camondo of Istanbul, and two prominent gentlemen from London, Frederick David Mocatta and Reuben Sassoon. In the end, two schools were built in Salonika (one for boys and one for girls), but now they had to be financed, and for this as well, the community's participation was needed. The Council tried again to increase the *gabela*, seeking to raise through an indirect tax on basic commodities what could not be collected from the poor in the form of tuition. Rabbi Avraham Gatigno was vehemently opposed to this move. In light of the fact that the Rabbi had at least the nominal authority to decide who would serve alongside him in the community leadership, and they in turn needed his authority to turn their decisions into binding regulations, the result was a virtual impasse that hindered the functioning of the community. Rabbi Avraham Gatigno was forced to resign, and Rabbi Shemuel Arditti took his place.[189]

In 1873,[190] a social club for the financial elite, known by the French name Le Cercle des Intimes (the Inner Circle), was founded in the city.[191] Its name offers some indication of the cultural orientation of its members, who were well-to-do merchants and alumni of foreign-oriented schools. In 1880, the club began to push for the actual implementation of the constitution governing the running of all Jewish communities in the Empire (Estatuto organico), as referred to in the imperial edict (*irade*) of 1867. The Cercle's members sought the introduction of amendments whose primary goal was to weaken the status of the chief rabbi and, as always, to raise the rate of indirect taxation. Rabbi Shemuel Arditti, like Rabbi Avraham Gatigno before him, was forced to step down. His supporters among the Ottoman subjects managed to restore him to power, but the community was ultimately obliged to have the Ottoman governor, Galip Paşa, serve as an intermediary between the warring sides. The results of the strife regarding the rabbinate ended up having no real effect

[189] Immanuel, "History," pp. 147–148; Register no. 4 (1871–1894), sec. 6, p. 66 (4 Tammuz 5637 [1877]).
[190] Both R. Molho (*Les juifs*, vol. 1, p. 158) and Y. ʿUziel ("Social Movements," in *Salonika, a Jewish Metropolis*, p. 127) mention this date, though neither of them cites a source. Sam Levy mentions 1874 as the date of its foundation («Mes mémoires, Salonique à la fin du XIX siècle, » *Tesoro de los Judios Sefaradies : Estudios sobre la historia de los judíos sefardíes y su cultura* 3(1961),pp. v-xxvi.
[191] This club is not the same as the one founded in 1908 (see below note 217).

on the way the community operated. The new General Council founded as a result of the *tanzimat* reforms comprised only 100 members elected by subjects of the sultan who paid direct taxes, meaning that the wealthy continued to determine how much tax would be collected, and from whom.[192]

During the tenure of Rabbi Shemuel Arditti (1877–1887), the activities of the Jewish community's foreign subjects were institutionalized through the establishment of an advisory council consisting of six of their number, appointed by the *meclis cismanı* and operating in conjunction with it.[193] Thus, concurrent with the constant tension over the question of who would bear the public burden, a pattern of true cooperation emerged, at least among the city's notables, with the aim of resolving the community's problems as they perceived them. This cooperation was an outgrowth of the rapid changes in the economic dynamics of the city, which had a direct effect on the businesses of these wealthy individuals—Ottoman subjects as well as foreigners—residing as they did in a city where the majority of the workforce consisted of Jews. Their willingness to contribute to the needs of the community was not motivated by altruism alone. Through their formal and charitable contributions, they were also cultivating the industrial and social tranquility needed for the growth of the revenues from their new investments in Salonika's industries.

This significant shift in approach on the part of the leadership was also a result of outside factors beyond the changes in the city's economic circumstances. As stated, the community was burdened by an enormous debt to the Ottomans. The arrangements that had existed for hundreds of years, which had enabled the community's leadership (already well-to-do) to become even richer, were no longer viable; no one, except for these same wealthy individuals, could shoulder the financial burden—and they had no intention of doing so. But by the time they realized the ramifications of their traditional tax policy for society at large, and more importantly for their own businesses, the debt had grown too large to

[192] R. Molho, *Les juifs*, vol. 1, pp. 159–160.
[193] Ibid., p. 161.

handle. Any major contribution to the community taxes made in the last decades of the nineteenth century was swallowed up by this debt, without eliminating it. The Ottomans, who were interested in collecting the taxes themselves, on a direct basis, agreed to accept repayment in installments in exchange for the list of taxpayers, which was finally supplied to them. The transfer to the Ottomans of responsibility for the collection of the external taxes constituted a major revolution. Contributing to the public coffers was no long equivalent to casting money into a bottomless pit. Moreover, this led to a redistribution of tax payments. The primary burden of the taxes levied on the poor (which had generally been shouldered by the upper middle class) was now removed, leaving them to pay extremely low taxes or none at all.

The new community administration managed to work together with the chief rabbi appointed in 1887, Rabbi Ya'aqov Covo. He knew Turkish, supported modern education, and was a significant bridge between the local and Ottoman establishments, and the Illuminati circles of the city.[194] The new leadership implemented successful reforms, including one dealing with the collection of the indirect taxes, the *gabela*.[195]

The "Francos" of Salonika had now succeeded in actualizing their true economic and political power within the community—a fact that was of major importance in the evolution of that city's society and its Jewish community. The combination of cooperation with a charismatic rabbi and acceptance of responsibility by the various classes of the elite allowed the community, as an institution, to emerge from debt, to the point where it was able to purchase many properties in the city and reestablish itself financially. This financial stability enabled it to install, in 1880, a new principal in the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol, Mosheh Ya'aqov Ottolenghi, who was brought in from Livorno. He was followed by Dr. Yitzhaq Epstein from Eretz Yisrael (appointed principal following the Young Turks rebellion of 1908), who succeeded in turning the institution into a real Hebrew school.[196] Additional *talmud torah*s were also built in the

[194] Immanuel, "History," vol. 1, p. 132.
[195] R. Molho, *Les juifs*, vol. 1, pp. 165–167.
[196] See Israel Klausner's impressions from his visit at the school in 1912 (*Nation and Land Reborn*, pp. 31–32).

impoverished neighborhoods of Kalamaria and Baron de Hirsch.[197] The community was able to provide aid for the victims of the great fire of 1890[198] and the epidemics, and to tend to the refugees, who streamed to Salonika from Russia and the Balkans.[199] Thanks to the generosity of the Baroness Clara de Hirsch the community could also boast a modern hospital, which it now had to operate and maintain.[200] But these achievements did not alter the socioeconomic balance of power in the community, and on the eve of the Greek takeover of the city, 90 percent of the community was still ineligible to vote.[201]

Clara de Hirsch Hospital,1907

In conclusion, it may be stated that, due to the economic interests of its notables, Salonika's leaders were obliged to secure a reasonable degree

[197] Y. ʿUziel, "Mosdot ha-Ḥinukh be-Qehilat Saloniqi" (Educational institutions in the Salonikan community), in *Salonika, A Jewish Metropolis*, pp. 74–75; R. Molho, "Education in the Jewish Community of Salonica at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," in idem, Salonica and Istanbul: Social, Political and Cultural Aspects of Jewish Life (Istanbul:Isis Press, 2005), pp. 127–137.
[198] See R. Molho, "Jewish Working-Class Neighborhoods Established in Salonika Following the 1890 and 1917 Fires," in volume 2 of the present work, pp. 173–194.
[199] Immanuel, "History," pp. 161–164.
[200] Ibid., pp. 177–178.
[201] On the socioeconomic stratification on the eve of the Greek period, see P. Dumont, "The Social Structure of the Jewish Community of Salonica at the End of the Nineteenth Century," *Southeastern Europe* 5, part 2 (1978), pp. 33–72. On the connection between economic status and political rights, see R. Molho, *Les juifs*, pp. 160–168; Neḥama, *Histoire des israélites*, vol. 8, pp. 732–733. Compare with the set of reforms dealing with the administration of the community, published in *El Avenir*, year 15, no. 7, January 17, 1912.

of social harmony. This they achieved this by severing the external taxes from the community's tax collection system; making more meaningful contributions to the public coffers; introducing sound economic management of the community's income, thereby enabling the continued operation of its institutions; and investing in the reform of the school system, so that it provided a reasonable level of education for the children of the lower and middle classes, at least in the short term.

d. Nationalism, socialism and unionism: The Young Turk revolution and its repercussions

According to Greek figures, Salonika's population in 1913 consisted of 61,439 Jews, 36,956 Greeks, 45,867 Muslims, 6,263 Bulgarians, and 4,364 assorted foreigners. This is, of course, the lowest estimate of the Jewish populace for that year; the Jews themselves placed their numbers at 90,000.[202] The Jews may have believed that Salonika was their metropolis/mother city, their Jerusalem of the Balkans, but all around them the storm had already erupted. The Macedonian Slavs had their own plans, and the Greeks had others. The blood libel against Sam Ben Ruby in 1886, the arrival of refugees from the Corfu pogrom in 1891, and the war between Greece and the Ottoman Empire in 1897 provided the Jews of Salonika with—at the very least—ample food for thought. And there were additional facts to consider. Out of concern for the future of Salonika and its demographic balance, the Greeks had founded Greek banks and companies there to consolidate the Greek economic presence in the city vis-à-vis the Jewish one. This activity, which had already begun in the late nineteenth century, was part and parcel of the overall flowering of the city during this period. At the same time, it was intended to advance the *megali idea* (Η Μεγάλη Ιδέα), the notion of a "greater Greece."[203] Based on their reactions to these efforts, it is obvious that the Jews of Salonika had a clear understanding of what this "great idea" would mean for them. Their chief response, on the practical level, tended towards support for the

[202] For a discussion of the demographics of Salonika at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, see R. Molho, *Les juifs*, vol. 1, pp. 57–90.
[203] On the banks, major firms, and industries at the turn of the century, categorized by nationality/ethnic group of their owners, see Anastassiadou, *Salonique*, pp. 185–187, 192–200; Hekimoglou, *Banks*.

continuation of the Ottoman order, which would, of course, undergo reform in the spirit of the times.

The primary expressions of this response took place on two social levels. In 1873, the community's socioeconomic elite, together with Salonikans of other ethnic groups, founded the Cercle de Salonique (Salonika Circle). More than any other fixture of Salonika society in the period under discussion, this club expressed the multinational character of the city, as well as a faith in the more positive aspects of humanity. In 1887, it had 63 Jewish members, 19 Greeks, 3 Armenians, 11 Muslims, and 40 foreigners of assorted nationalities. Among them were a count, a baron, two *paşa*s, four members of the nobility, and two who held the title of *bey*. Its official language was French, and its aim was to create a gathering place that would offer its members the opportunity to strengthen social or other contacts among the various groups that made up Salonikan society. The club viewed as one of its objectives the resolution of problems common to the various ethnic groups, and indeed worked toward this goal.[204]

Another example of an activity that, somewhat absurdly, suited the "Ottoman order" actually originated with the poverty-stricken masses. The industrialization of Salonika, and Macedonia as a whole, was gaining momentum precisely during the years that the Cercle de Salonique was flourishing, i.e., from 1870 onward. Silk, cotton, and tobacco production constituted the area's major industries.[205] The rapid commercial expansion, coupled with emigration from Macedonia, led to a shortage of manpower, particularly in the tobacco industry. The workers, aware of their power, began to organize into mutual-aid societies. In 1902, the first labor union in Salonika was established, its founding meeting attended by 400 workers.[206] Laborers in sought-after occupations began to demand

[204] R. Molho, "Le 'Cercle de Salonique' (1873–1958), club des saloniciens," in idem, *Salonica and Istanbul*, pp. 151–164.
[205] D. Quataert, "The Workers of Salonika, 1850–1912," in *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic 1839–1950,* ed. D. Quataert and E.J. Zürcher (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1995), pp. 59–69.
[206] See "La obra chia mos manca mas mucho" (The action most needed by us), *El Avenir* no. 10, February 5, 1902; "Un suflo manca" (Only a breath is missing), ibid., no. 12, February 14, 1902; "Oficios y obradores" (Trades and workers), ibid., no. 13, February 14, 1902; "La hermandad, sujeta de ayudo mutual de los obradores

improvements in their working conditions and wages, and they went on strike to get what they wanted. In 1904, a strike broke out at the Regie Tobacco Company,[207] followed by similar work stoppages in other sectors.[208]

An important turning point proved to be the emergence of two new factors: the revolt of the Young Turks and the arrival in Salonika of Avraham Ben-Aroya. The Young Turks rebellion, which broke out in Salonika in 1908 under the slogan of "freedom and equality for all," created a climate of self-expression for all nations and social equality among all classes. Liberalism and supranational sentiments conquered all. The press and the world of *belles lettres*, which had not reached the Empire earlier due to censorship, now circulated vast amounts of knowledge, including ideas that had previously been beyond the ken of most individuals.[209] It was against this backdrop of unrest among factory laborers, coupled with a new political climate, that Avraham Ben-Aroya arrived on the scene.

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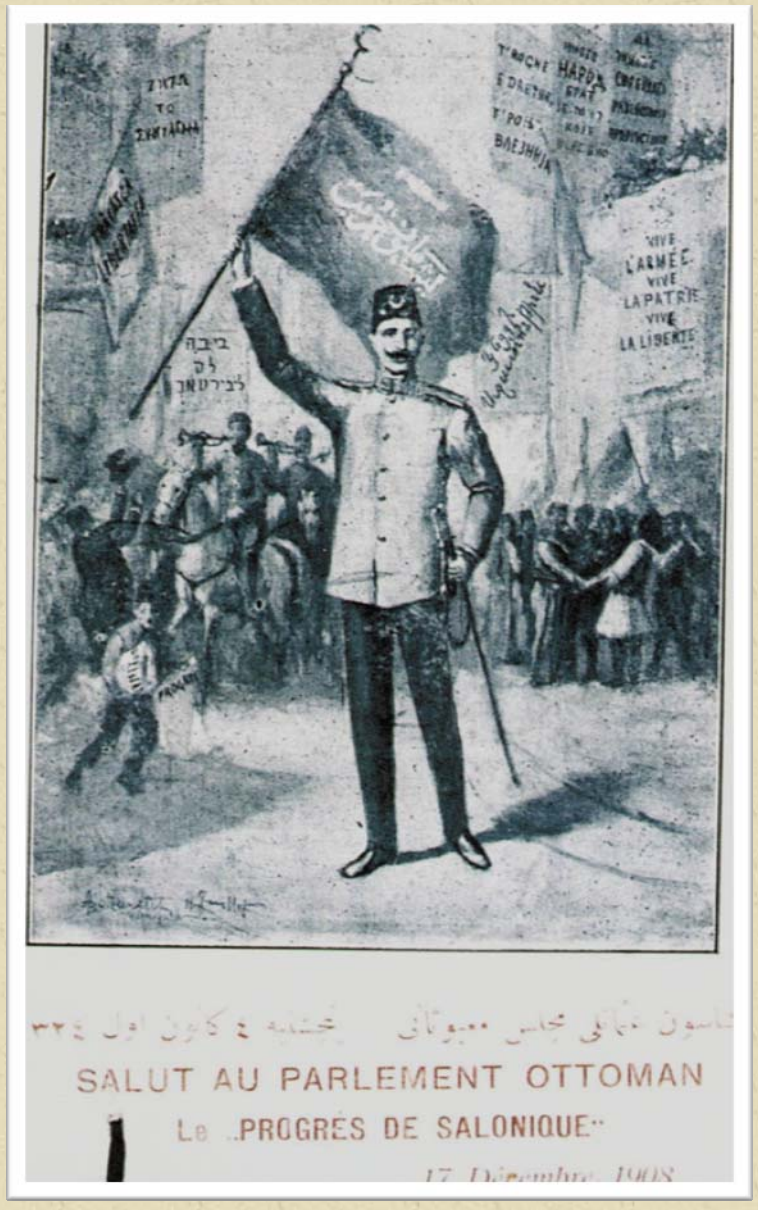
israelitas" (The fraternity: the society of mutual assistance for Jewish workers), ibid., no. 16, February 27, 1902.

[207] Official name: Regie Cointeressée des tabacs de l'empire ottoman. On May 28, 1883, this French-based firm received an imperial *ferman* granting it a monopoly over the tobacco trade throughout the Empire. All tobacco crops in the Empire were to be stored, processed, and exported by this conglomerate. See C. Clay, *Gold for the Sultan: Western Bankers and Ottoman Finance, 1856–1881* (London and New York:I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), pp. 171–173, 184, 189–190, 193, 366, 487–488, 492–502, 508, 512–513, 541–547; Anastassiadou, *Salonique*, p. 198.

[208] Quataert, "The Industrial Working Class," p. 327; idem, "The Workers of Salonika," p. 72; P. Dumont, "Une organization socialiste ottomane: la fédération ouvrière de Salonique (1908–1912)," *Etudes Balkaniques* 11, no. 1 (Sofia, 1975), p. 78.

[209] D. Farhi, "Yehudei Saloniqi be-Mahapekhat ha-Turqim ha-Ẓe'irim" (The Jews of Salonika and the Young Turks Revolution), in *Sefunot* 15 (1971–1981), ed. M. Benayahu, pp. 147–148.



A commemorative postcard published by the French-language Jewish newspaper, *Le Progrès de Salonique*, to mark the inauguration of the Ottoman Parliament (December 17, 1908). In the foreground is Enver Bey, one of leaders of the revolution, with a flag bearing the Turkish inscription "Long live the Ottoman Parliament." Around him are members of Salonika's various nationalities holding flags inscribed in their diverse languages: French ("Long Live the Army, Long Live the Fatherland, Long Live Freedom"), Ladino ("Long Live Freedom"), Greek, Bulgarian, and Armenian. (Reproduced from I. Megas, *Souvenir: Images of the Jewish Community, Salonika 1897-1917* [Athens, 1993], p.167.)

To the workers of Salonika, Ben-Aroya was the stranger who comes bearing a new "gospel." He had completed the Hebrew gymnasium in

Vidin, Bulgaria, in 1906, immediately thereafter becoming a teacher in the Jewish school in Plovdiv. Already during his student years, he had written and disseminated socialist propaganda, and parted ways in Vidin with his instructor in the Bulgarian language, Bekhor Azariyah, who preached Zionism. Upon arriving in Salonika, he launched a highly organized campaign to promote the ideas of communism and socialism, quickly moving from preaching in coffee houses to founding the Workers' Club in 1909. While the Club's membership encompassed representatives of all the unions, the vast majority belonged to the tobacco workers' union.[210] Despite the fact that the Club's founders were primarily Jews, it was intended for workers of all nationalities. In practice, however, apart from the Jewish workers its members included only a few Bulgarians, two or three Greek tobacco workers, and two Muslim teachers, one of them a *dönmeh* (descendants of the Sabbatean Jews, who converted to Islam in 1683–87, following in the footsteps of false Messiah Shabbetai Tzevi). The Club produced a newspaper, *El Journal del Laborador* (Judeo-Spanish for "worker's journal"), which appeared for a total of two-and-a-half months in four languages: Ladino, Turkish, Bulgarian, and Greek. The Club then became a socialist federation,[211] whose newspaper advocated organizing the workers' unions along European lines, founding clubs aimed at educating the workers, establishing cooperative stores, and protesting various instances of exploitation of male and female workers.[212]

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[210] On the tobacco workers and their role in the socialist movement during this period (1908–1922), see G. Hadar, "Karmen be-Saloniqi" (Carmen in Salonika) (forthcoming); E. Avdela, "Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in Post-Ottoman Thessaloniki: The Great Tobacco Strike of 1914," in *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870–1930*, ed. B. Melman (New York:Routledge, 1998), pp. 421–438.

[211] An interesting insight into Ben Aroya's career and his role in the Greek socialist movement in later years has been gleaned by Spyros Marchetos from Ben Aroya's writings in Greek and from archival material. S. Marchetos, "Remember Salonika" (lecture delivered at the First International Conference of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, Salonika, June 25–28, 1998). (My thanks to Prof. Marchetos for permitting me to quote from his manuscript.) For an overview of Ben Aroya's role in the emergence of Greek socialism in the years 1909–1914, see A. Liakos, *Η Σοσιαλιστική και Εργατική Ομοσπονδία Θεσσαλονίκης (Φεντερασιόν) και η Σοσιαλιστική Νεολαία,* (The Socialist Workers Federation in Salonika and the socialist youth movement) (Salonika, 1985), pp. 14, 27–29, 32, 87, 89, 108, 110–114, 117–148.

[212] *Journal del Laborador*, year 1, August 28, 1909; September 4, 1909; September 11, 1909; September 16, 1909; September 18, 1909; September 23, 1909. Dumont, "Une organization socialiste ottomane," pp. 76–88. On the struggle of female workers

As early as 1909, the newspaper leveled criticism at the Young Turks rebellion and noted that the "new Turkey" was not so kind and just to the workers. "At first we cried: *Yaşasın hürriyet*! [long live freedom], but freedom was granted to the wealthy and the property holders, and not to us workers."[213]

This awakening among the seekers of social justice was not unique. The self-proclaimed supranational basis of the Workers Club and the Salonika Workers Federation was quickly swept aside by the tremendous surge of nationalist sentiment,[214] igniting a blaze in Salonika that was to rage throughout the Balkans for the next fifteen years. The Bulgarians in Salonika were striving for either the annexation of Macedonia (including Salonika) to Bulgaria, or the establishment of an independent Macedonia.[215] But strongest of all was Greek nationalist fervor.[216] Clashes between Jews and Greeks in Salonika increased as a result of rising economic competition. The Young Turks regime intervened in an attempt to bring peace to the warring sides, but to no avail. The economic rivalry intensified, and Greek newspapers accused the Jews of Salonika of ritual murder and of seeking to tear apart the Empire.[217]

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for their rights, see Hadar, "Carmen in Salonika"; Avdela, "Class, Ethnicity, and Gender," pp. 425–429.

[213] *Journal del Laborador*, year 1, September 28, 1909.

[214] See, for example, *Raporto annuel de la union de los laboradores del tutun de Saloniqo (14 Tishrei 5668–Av 5669; September 21, 1907–July 1909* (Annual Report of the Union of Tobacco Workers in Salonika for 1909 [14 Tishrei 5668–Av 5669; September 21, 1907–July 1909]). See also J.I. Aktsoglu, "The Emergence/Development of Social and Working Class Movements in the City of Thessaloniki (Trade Associations and Labor Unions)" *Balkan Studies* 18 (1997), pp. 285–306.

[215] See Refael Mosheh Qamḥi's memoirs, *Bulgarian State Archives, Archives of the Jewish Scientific Institute*, f. 1568, op. 1, file 8806 (TAU DP, Bulgaria Archives, doc. 912); D. Dakin, *Greek Struggle in Macedonia* , 1897-1913 (Salonika:Museum of the Macedonian Struggle ,1993).

[216] A. Matkovski, *A History of the Jews in Macedonia* (Skopje: Macedonian Review Editions, 1982), pp. 70–75; A. Ben-Aroya, "Reshit ha-Tenu'ah ha-Sotzialistit bein Yehudei Saloniqi" (The beginning of the socialist movement among the Jews of Salonika), *Salonika Memoir*, vol. 1, pp. 309–320.

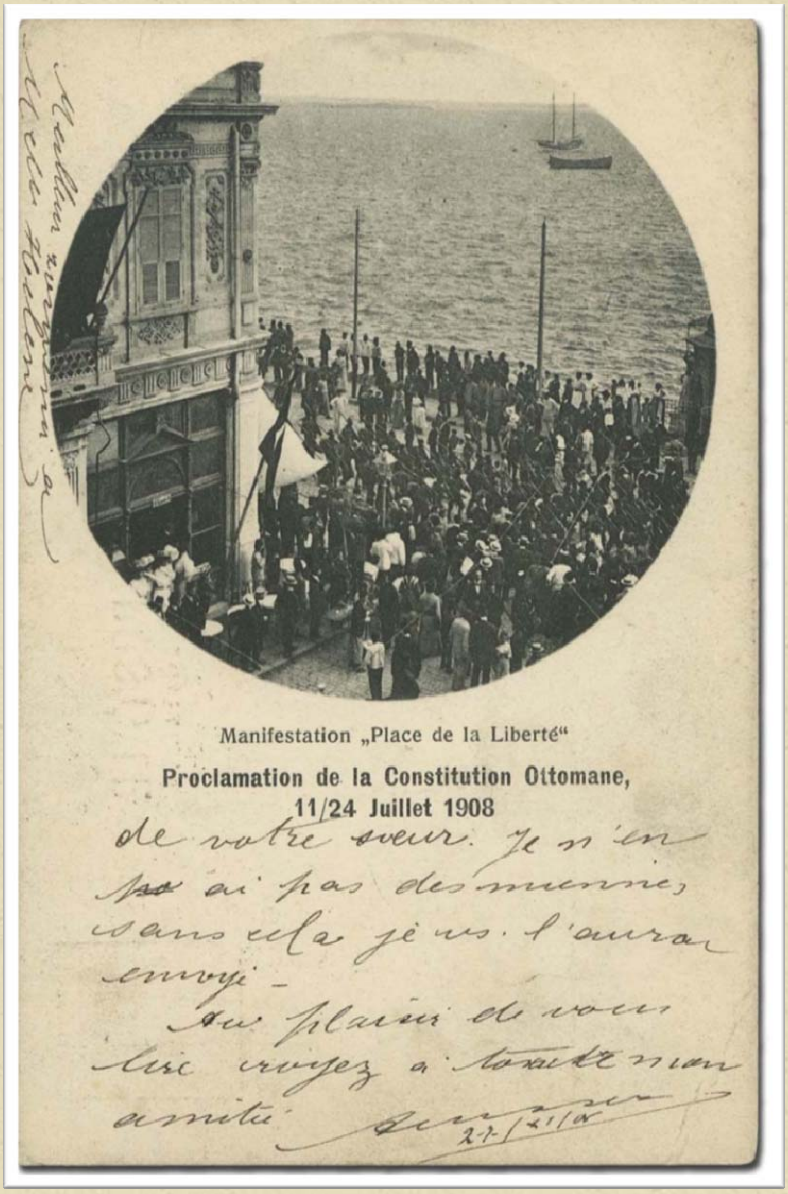
[217] "This Week: Our Correspondent in Salonika Writes," *Ha-Mevaser*, year 1, no. 12, 11 Adar Bet 5670 (March 22, 1910), p. 190; "This Week: Our Correspondent in Salonika Writes," *Ha-Mevaser*, year 1, no. 13, 18 Adar Bet, 5670 (March 29, 1910), p. 208.

The quay on the day of the proclamation of the 1908 constitution

In 1908, another "club" was founded in Salonika—the Cercle des Intimes, whose members consisted of Jewish tradesmen.[218] The Cercle united members of various occupations, such as wagon drivers, boat owners, stevedores, clerks, petty merchants, and artisans. The club organized the Jewish laborers of Salonika into guilds that fought for their rights against the Greeks.A further outgrowth of the club was the notion of founding a Jewish bank to compete with the Greek banks. In effect, this organization brought together a large portion of the Jewish breadwinners of Salonika, ultimately encompassing a membership of 28,000.[219] The club and its activities were, in a certain sense, the antithesis of the concept of the Cercle de Salonique and symbolized the transition from faith in "Ottoman-ness" to faith in sectarianism. But it was sectarianism of a limited nature. It sought to strengthen the standing of the Jews in comparison with that of other peoples within the Empire, but did not call

[218] The earlier club by that name existed for only eleven years. See 'Uziel, "Social Movements," p. 128.
[219] Emmanuel, "History," p. 198.

for the creation of a separate sovereign framework.[220] On the contrary, the early days of the revolt proved to be a honeymoon period for the Jews of Salonika and the new administration. Emmanuel Carasso, who was one of the rebels, was elected to the Ottoman parliament—not because of his position in the Jewish community, nor the status of the community in the city, but because of his standing in the Committee for Union and Progress



A postcard commemorating the proclamation of the 1908 constitution in the "Liberty Square" in Salonika; postcard publisher:A. Barzilay

[220] Compare with Anastassiadou, *Salonique*, pp. 371–372.

(the official name of the Young Turks). For the Jews, Carasso's election represented a breach in the wall of political isolation that had surrounded them throughout the Ottoman period and truly symbolized a new era.[221]

As stated, however, the atmosphere of cooperation, freedom, and multiethnic coexistence that had characterized the revolution of 1908 quickly gave way to a bolstering of nationalist sentiment within each ethnic group individually—Greek, Turkish, Macedonian, and Bulgarian. These winds of change also swept through the Jewish community—not in

Emmanuel Carasso (1862-1934), a lawyer and a "distinguished teacher" of the freemasons lodge "Macedonia Risorta" (the clandestine meeting place of the "Young Turks"), a member of the Committee of Union and Progress, elected as its representative to the Parliament three times (1908, 1912, 1914). Carasso, who enjoyed wealth and power due to his involvement in Ottoman politics, moved to Trieste in 1919, where he passed away.

[221] Farhi, "Jews of Salonika," pp. 144–145.

response to anything that the Young Turks administration had done but precisely because of the new freedom that it offered.[222] The "old order," in the sense of a multinational state, collapsed in the face of nationalism's enormous power.

Between 1899 and 1900, two cultural societies were founded in Salonika, each of them pursuing different objectives. The first, Qadimah (1899), occupied itself with spreading knowledge of the Hebrew language and Jewish history, the two instruments of nationalism. The second, the Club of Alliance Graduates, sought to expand the educational system in order to improve the status of the Jews of Salonika, and was not acting out of nationalist motives.[223] In fact, both these clubs, founded by wealthy individuals who came from the elite of the community, were also symbolic of the directions in which the community was evolving: the first represented a turn towards modern Jewish nationalism, and the second, a move towards assimilation.

Until 1908, virtually no efforts had been made to organize a Zionist movement in Salonika. The founding of the Qadimah society marked an early stage in the growth of Jewish nationalism in Salonika, but it could not progress beyond this point for several reasons, chief of which was the power of the myth of Salonika as a "Jewish" city, the "Jerusalem of the Balkans." This myth remained alive and well so long as the Ottoman order endured. Until the rebellion of 1908, and for a short while thereafter, the majority of Salonika's Jews deluded themselves into believing that the old order still existed.[224]

The events of 1908–9 opened up new avenues of activity and made nationalism quasi-legitimate. And when the Young Turks made it clear that it was not legitimate after all, once again the Jews had little time to express their opposition, since the city was severed from the Empire in 1912. Hence, it is no coincidence that in Salonika, socialism and Zionism burst on the scene simultaneously. Moreover, just as the Young Turks' rebellion had opened the door to both Jewish nationalism and socialism, so

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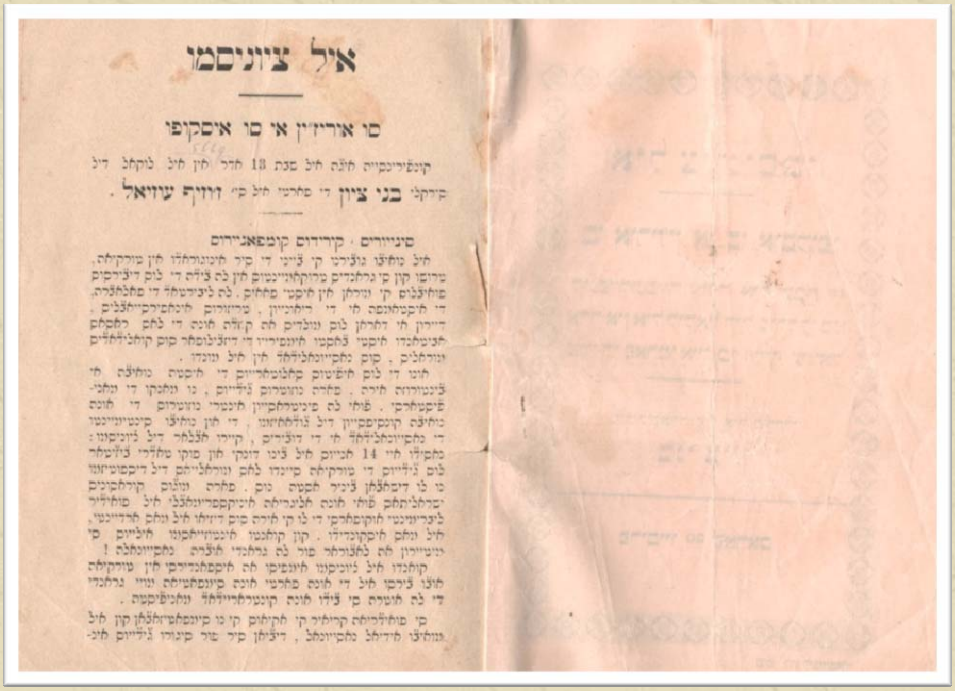
[222] Ibid., pp. 148–152.
[223] Ibid., p. 372 and the accompanying notes.
[224] Regarding the humble status of Qadimah, see "In the Jewish Communities, by our Correspondent in Salonika," *Ha-Mevaser*, year 1, no. 4, 15 Shevat 5670 (January 25, 1910), pp. 63–64.



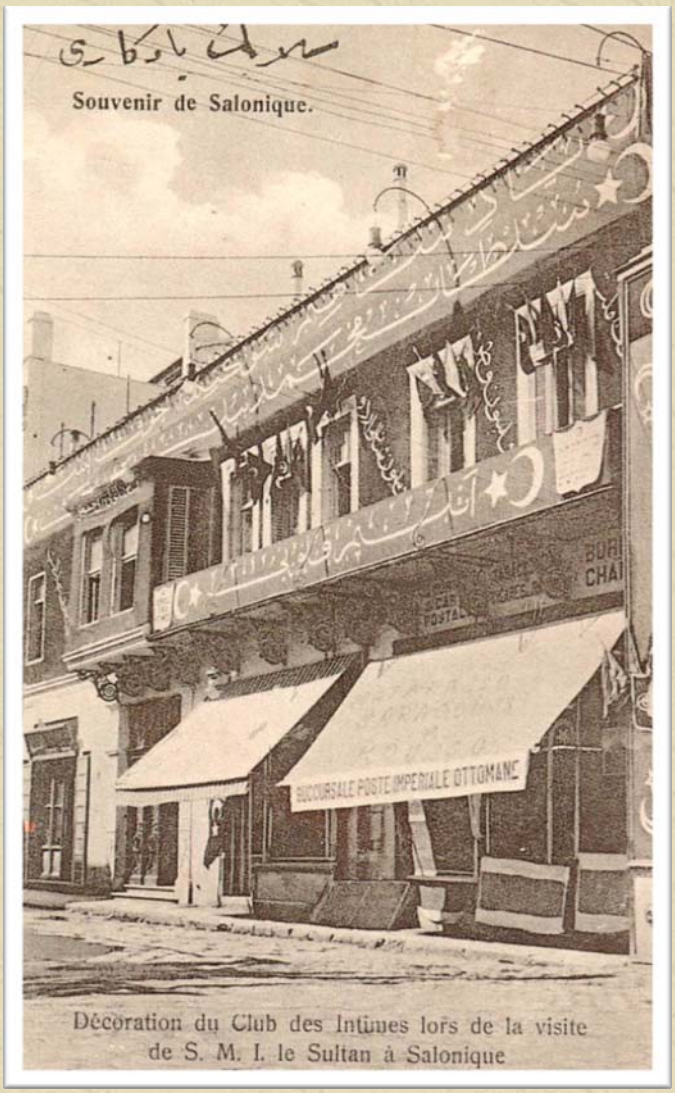
אל ציונסמו

סו אוריין אי סו איסקופי

A lecture at Benei Zion organization, 1909

too did it pave the way for ethnic antagonism in general, which in turn proved the strongest catalyst for Zionism, here as in other locales.

The Jews of Salonika had by then become more fully exposed to the Jewish Zionist press and literature of Eastern Europe. Three weeks after the establishment of the Young Turks regime, in the summer of 1908, the openly Zionist Benei Tzion organization was founded in Salonika. During the Sukkot holiday (in the autumn of that year), Ze'ev Jabotinsky visited Salonika and gave a speech at the Cercle des Intimes. His remarks did not fall under the realm of actual Zionist preaching; instead he called upon the Jews to organize themselves as a recognized national minority. During his visit, he also met with the founders of Benei Tzion and advised them in the methods of the Zionist associations outside the Empire. Soon after, supporters of the Zionists began to be subjected to intense pressure on the part of various groups connected with the Cercle des Intimes. They argued that Zionist activity would threaten the interests of the community and endanger its relations with the Young Turks regime.



The "Cercle des Intimes" club, founded in 1908, decorated for the visit of Sultan Mehmed Reşad in 1911. The club was situated on the corner of Sabri Paşa street (now Venizelou Street) and Liberty Square. (Postcard reproduced from I. Megas, *Souvenir: Images of the Jewish Community, Salonika 1897-1917* [Athens, 1993], p. 139.)

Within the Cercle itself, confrontations and differences of opinion began to emerge over the Zionist question, which was closely tied to the matter of relations with the Young Turks administration. A split soon occurred in the Cercle des Intimes, which led to the founding of a group with nationalist leanings, the Nouveau Club (or, as it was known in Judeo-Spanish, Nuevo Club).[225] In the wake of these groups, other societies

[225] Farhi, "Jews of Salonika," pp. 149–150; Y. ʿUziel, "Ha-Tenuʿah ha-Tzionit ve-Irguneyhah" (The Zionist movement and its organizations), in *Salonika, A Jewish Metropolis*, pp. 109–111.

formed, broke apart, and took on new names and other, secondary interests, but they all preached a Zionist nationalist awakening. Though they numbered only several hundred members, these societies regularly

The Zionist orientated "Nuevo Club" was located on the first floor of the corner building of the Promenade and Nikolaou street (today Karolou Diehl Street). The cinema "Pathé Frères," owned by the Cohen Brothers, opened on the ground floor in 1910. (Postcard reproduced from I. Megas, *Souvenir: Images of the Jewish Community, Salonika 1897-1917* [Athens, 1993], p. 138.)

and intensively disseminated propaganda in synagogues, and organized lectures, sports and musical activities. In short, they displayed an ongoing

presence. In a situation fraught with interethnic tension, Zionism represented an option.[226]

The socioeconomic rift quickly became a hallmark of Zionist propaganda. The Zionists, who comprehended the political potential inherent in the community's lower classes, demanded universal enfranchisement. The conservatives, on the other hand, called for retaining the status quo—and their view won out.[227] When the Zionists finally won the leadership of the community, they were not so eager to pursue this cause anymore.

[226] R. Molho, "The Zionist Movement up to the First Pan-Hellenic Zionist Congress," in idem, *Istanbul and Salonica*, pp. 165–179.
[227] R. Molho, *Les juifs*, vol. 3, pp. 453–485. Compare with *El Avenir*, year 15, no. 24, February 26, 1912; no. 29, March 11, 1912; no. 32, March 18, 1912; no. 35, March 25, 1912.

אל אבניר

EL AVENIR

The Zionist journal "El Avenir" , 27, February 1902

Two years after the revolution, disillusionment with the Young Turks regime was already quite widespread in Salonika, the city that had spawned the revolt. In the by-elections for the Salonika municipality, held in 1910, the Jews were (once again) less than unanimous in their support for the government of the Young Turks. They joined forces with the *dönmeh*, defeating the candidates of the Committee for Union and Progress. The Committee exerted severe pressure on both groups, and the acting vice-mayor—attorney Yosef Na'ar—was forced to resign.[228]

[228] *Ha-Mevaser*, year 1, no. 12, 11 Adar Bet 5670 (March 22, 1910), p. 189; ibid., no. 13, 18 Adar Bet 5670 (March 29, 1910), p. 208.

During the next elections, in 1912, the Committee saw to it that its representatives would not be beaten by the alliance of the Jews and the *dönmeh*.[229] At the same time, it was clear that the candidacy of Emmanuel Carasso was no longer acceptable to the city's overall Jewish population; in fact, the opposite was true.[230] The socialists' frustration was further reinforced when Avraham Ben-Aroya was arrested as a result of his work with the city's laborers.[231] There is no question that support for the Young Turks' administration had diminished greatly in Salonika, but this is not to say that anyone in the community imagined a government other than that of the Ottoman regime.

The existing social situation would also have remained intact, had it not been for the outbreak of the Balkan Wars. This was true not because the Workers Federation had assuaged the discontent of the embittered masses,[232] but because the Ottoman world represented, for the community's elite, the best of all possible worlds. They were well aware that they stood to lose a great deal with the Empire's disintegration: wide-ranging economic opportunities, a congenial cosmopolitan atmosphere, and a sense of security under the broad mantle of the Ottoman dynasty. As long as the Ottomans ruled the city, the elite of Salonika managed to preserve the social balance with far greater political perspicacity than that demonstrated by the Jewish leadership of Istanbul. Moreover, it seems that there was a consensus among the other classes in the community as well that theirs was a near-perfect world—and with a few minor adjustments it could almost be ideal.

Even in 1910, the true litmus test of the social, political, and ideological balance was still education. Until the Young Turks rebellion, the Alliance had provided roughly half the funding for the seven schools that it sponsored in Salonika, the bulk of that city's Jewish educational institutions. The community supplied the other half of the funds and financed the Talmud Torah ha-Gadol on its own. Despite the fact that the taxpayers' portion of the budget for the Alliance schools was no less than

[229] Farhi, "Jews of Salonika," pp. 150–151.
[230] *El Avenir*, year 15, no. 32, March 18, 1912.
[231] Ibid., year 15, no. 24, February 26, 1912; Dumont, "Une organisation socialiste ottomane," pp. 83–87.
[232] See Benbassa and R. Molho, note 3, above.

that of the organization itself, the Alliance leadership and the members of its local council succeeded in imposing their will in all matters related to curriculum. In 1910, when it became known that the Alliance was paying only ten percent of the schools' budget, there was a huge outcry over the financial crisis now confronting the educational system. The community took upon itself a portion of the deficit, but at this point, educational content became an issue. It seems that the French orientation of the Alliance was only considered desirable by a small group—the community's financial elite, whose family businesses were entrenched in Europe.

The bulk of the community did not connect progress and educational advancement with Western culture but rather with a stronger Jewish education, in the form of Hebrew language and Jewish history, and the study of Turkish. Negotiations with the Alliance took place against the backdrop of a proposal by the Ashkenazi *Hilfsverein* to establish a major school of its own, an idea backed by Rabbi Ya'aqov Meir.

Rabbi Ya'aqov Meir as Chief Rabbi of Salonika (1907-1919)

In effect, acceptance of this proposal would mean a fundamental change in curriculum based on "popular" demand, namely, more Jewish as well as more Turkish content. This trend demonstrated the emotional connection

of the Jews to the Ottoman world and their loyalty to its ruler, and was enthusiastically supported by the Zionists of Salonika.[233] In Salonika, Zionism was still considered a concept best realized under the auspices of the Ottoman Empire.[234]

But the winds of change raging through the outside world overturned this longstanding social order. And the results were not positive for the community as a whole, and its notables in particular.

The future did not appear to offer a good substitute for their traditional relationship with the Ottomans, nor a way to sustain the current economic boom, which was based largely on their connections with the very regions from which the city was about to be cut off.

The grim harbingers of what would be the end of the Pax Ottomanica had already started to materialize with the war that predated the Balkan Wars, the so-called Libyan War between the Ottomans and Italy over the Dodecanese islands and Libya. Following the beginning of hostilities on September 29, 1911, word spread in Salonika that the Ottoman government would be taking steps against Italian nationals. People hurried frantically to the Banks of Allatini and Modiano to withdraw their money. Both bankers left the city, Allatini to Italy, and Modiano to Budapest. Their banks could not continue to live up to their commitments to their clients, and a series of bankruptcies of smaller businesses ensued. Real estate values dropped sharply, dragging the whole city down.[235] The glorious days of the Modianos and Allatinis had come to an end.

In December 1911, in the midst of the Libyan War and just before the First Balkan War (October 1912), Rabbi Ya'aqov Meir convened the members of the community and preached to them:

> First of all, we must pray daily to the Almighty that He bring peace and tranquility to our kingdom. It is also our duty to participate as much as possible in the necessary costs of the

[233] *Ha-Mevaser*, year 1, no. 6, 29 Shevat 5670 (February 8, 1910), p. 93; ibid., no. 7, 6 Adar Alef 5670 (February 15, 1910), pp. 110–111. For Jewish education in Salonika in those years, see ibid., no. 10, 27 Adar Alef 5670 (April 7, 1910), pp. 155–158; ibid., no. 11, 4 Adar Bet 5670 (March 15, 1910), pp. 170–172.

[234] *El Avenir*, year 15, no. 19. The second issue (dated July 22, 1910) of the journal *La Tribuna Libera,* founded in 1910 by the Zionist-oriented Nuevo Club (New Club), included a strong recommendation to study the Turkish language, backed by an offer of stipends for those who excelled in their studies.

[235] Hekimoglou, *The Modiano Affair*, in toto.

> present war, both by sending our contributions to the Aid Committee and by extending our gifts to the Navy Committee. The truth is that there was no need for me to make mention of this obligation, because you were well aware of it and are fulfilling it graciously. But in light of the confusion of the current crisis, there are those who are somewhat forgetful of their duty. Thus I have come to remind you that, despite the difficulties of life at this time, we must remember our government and strive with all our might to prove our devotion to it.[236]

The wish to preserve the status quo was expressed not only by the community's establishment but also by the Socialist Federation. In spite of its antagonism toward the Young Turks regime, the fact that the majority of its members were Jews shaped their views on external politics in keeping with the traditional Jewish pattern, meaning that they too supported the Ottoman cause during the Balkan wars.[237]

The Jews of Salonika understood clearly that they belonged to, and were identified with, the losing side in the First Balkan War.[238] And one can also assume that they made no secret of their concern as to what lay ahead. On the very day that the Greek army was deployed near Salonika (October 12, 1912), a virulently anti-Jewish article entitled "Our Jews" appeared in the Greek newspaper *Embros*. Additional articles spread rumors to the effect that the members of the Cercle des Intimes had appealed to the captain of the British ship *H.M.S. Hampshire* to block the entry of the Greek army into Salonika.[239] While this might have been explained as malicious speculation on the part of an antisemitic press, there was one kernel of truth that could not be obscured: the Jews of Salonika did find it exceedingly difficult to rejoice at the misfortune of the defeated Ottoman soldiers and the victory of the Greek army of "liberation."[240] Whether they knew it or not, Salonika was no longer their "Mother City"; in thirty years' time they themselves, and their offspring, would be wiped off the face of the earth. Just as one foreign power had

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[236] *Ha-Mevaser*, year 2, no. 41, 12 Kislev 5672 (December 3, 1911), pp. 493–494.
[237] P. Dumont, "La fédération socialiste ouvrière de Salonique à l'époque des guerres balkaniques," *East European Quarterly* 14:4 (1980), pp. 384–385.
[238] *Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle,* Greece*,* I/C, 49. Letter from Jacques Cohen, director of the Alliance's Moïse Alatini Boys School, November 12, 1912, cited in R. Molho, *Les juifs*, vol. 2, p. 490.
[239] "The Anti-Semitic Poison," *El Avenir*, year 15, no. 132, November 10, 1912. See also special issue of *L'Acción* commemorating the liberation of Salonika, p. 19.
[240] *El Avenir*, year 15, no. 151, December 2, 1912.

driven them from their ancient habitats on the western Mediterranean, and another had let them take refuge in Salonika, yet another would soon be carrying them off to a strange, unknown, frigid land where they were destined to meet a horrible death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.