

IN SEARCH OF A JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE EARLY  
MODERN OTTOMAN EMPIRE:  
THE CASE OF EDİRNE JEWS (c. 1686- 1750)

A Master's Thesis

By

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Ankara  
September 2011



*To my brothers, Özer and Bener*

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Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

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SEPTEMBER 2011

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

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ABSTRACT

IN SEARCH OF A JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE EARLY MODERN  
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Karagedikli, Gürer

Department of History

Supervisor: Dr. Eugenia Kermeli

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This thesis examines the demographic development, geographic distribution, and communal organization of the Edirne Jewish Community from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century by mainly benefitting from Ottoman archival sources and Muslim court records of Edirne. Except some big cities such as Istanbul, Jerusalem, Salonica and Izmir, monographic studies on Ottoman Jews have been rare in Ottoman historiography. These works have either focused on the early periods (Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries) or on the nineteenth century. Ottoman Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, are shortly mentioned within the “decline” paradigm. A monographic study on the Edirne Jewish Community in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has not yet been done. Did the Edirne Jewish Community decline in the eighteenth century? How was its demographic situation and spatial organization in the centuries

concerned? How did they sustain and develop their relations within the community, and with other groups and the state? The archival materials are the ones drawn upon most heavily in this research. For the demographic situation and the spatial organization of the Edirne Jews, *avâriz* registers, one *cizye* register, and the census conducted in 1703 have been used. Furthermore, in order to see the neighborhoods where they lived and to analyze their relations with the broader society, court records of Edirne between 1686-1750 concerning Jews were used. Bearing in mind the limits and problems of the sources, I attempted to scrutinize the demographic, spatial, and organizational structure of the Edirne Jewish Community during the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries.

**Key Words:** Edirne, Jews, Congregations, Edirne Court Records, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

ÖZET  
ERKEN MODERN DÖNEM OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NDA BİR YAHUDİ  
CEMAATİNİN İZİNDE: EDİRNE YAHUDİLERİ ÖRNEĞİ (c.1686-1750)

Karagedikli, Gürer

Tarih Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Eugenia Kermeli

Eylül 2011

Bu çalışma, arşiv kaynakları ve şer'iyeye sicilleri temel alınarak, Edirne'de meskûn Yahudi Cemaati'nin XVII. yüzyıl sonundan XVIII. yüzyıl ortalarına kadar olan dönemdeki demografik, mekânsal ve cemaat yapısını incelemektedir. Osmanlı Yahudilerinin şehir bazlı monografik çalışmaları İstanbul, Kudüs, Selânik ve İzmir gibi kimi büyük şehirler dışında pek yapılmamıştır. Bu çalışmalar ise, dönem itibarı ile ya erken dönemlere (XV. ve XVI. yüzyıllar) veyahud XIX. yüzyıla ağırlık vermişlerdir. Yahudilerin XVII. ve XVIII. yüzyıldaki durumları ise daha ziyade 'gerileme' paradigması bağlamında ele alınmıştır. Edirne Yahudi Cemaati'nin XVII. ve XVIII. yüzyıllardaki durumunu anlamaya yönelik müstakil bir çalışma ise mevcut değildir. Edirne Yahudi Cemaati gerçekten XVIII. yüzyılda bir gerilemeye mi maruz kalmıştır? Nüfus şekillenmesi, şehirdeki mekânsal vaziyetleri, kendi iç ilişkileri, diğer gruplar ve devletle olan münasebetleri nasıl bir dönüşüme uğramıştır? Çalışmanın kaynaklarının temelini arşiv belgeleri oluşturmaktadır. Edirne Yahudi Cemaati'nin nüfus durumu ve şehir bünyesindeki yerleri için avâriz kayıtları, cizye defterleri ve



Edirne nûfus kayıtları kullanılmıştır. Ek olarak, şehirdeki yerlerini daha detaylı tahlil edebilmek, sosyal yaşamdaki yerlerini ve ilişkilerini anlayabilmek için Edirne şer'iyeye sicillerinden 1686-1750 arasındaki kayıtlardan Yahudilerle ilgili davalar kullanılmıştır. Kaynakların barındırdığı sorunları ve sınırları da bilerek, Edirne Yahudi Cemaati'nin XVII. yüzyıl sonu ve XVIII. yüzyılın ilk yarısındaki demografik ve mekânsal durumu ile cemaatin organizasyonel yapısı birincil kaynak ağırlıklı bir yöntemle incelenmeye çalışılmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Edirne, Yahudiler, cemaatler, şer'iyeye sicilleri, XVII. ve XVIII. yüzyıllar.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the demographic development, geographical distribution, and communal structure of a local Jewish *tâ'ife*<sup>1</sup> – the Edirne Jewish Community – between the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries by mainly using Ottoman archival sources and Muslim court records of Edirne. Besides some big cities such as Istanbul (Rozen, 2002; Karmi, 1996; Heyd, 1953; Galante, 1941), Jerusalem (Masters, 2004; Barnai, 1994; Barnai, 1992; Cohen, 1984), Salonica (Lewkowicz, 2006; Molho, 2005) and Izmir (Goffman, 1999; Barnai, 1994), and some other small-to-medium-sized communities in the Balkans and in Anatolia from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries (Keren, 2011; Kulu, 2005; Gradeva, 2004; Emecen, 1997), monographic studies on Ottoman Jews have been rare in Ottoman historiography. The existing works

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<sup>1</sup> In the article he wrote for the second edition of the Encyclopedia of Islam, Geoffroy (2000: 117) states that the usage of *tâ'ife* during medieval and modern times was for “a religious or sectarian group.” Official Ottoman authorities, however, did not use the term *tâ'ife* to delineate only religious and/or sectarian groups, since it was also used for other groups such as various guilds (Eunjeong, 2000: 1). Official Ottoman authorities identified the Edirne Jewish Community (*Edirne Yahudi tâ'ifesi*) in the centuries concerned through underlining the same locality, in which the members of the entire community resided as permanent residents. Transients, merchants, and others who visited the city for a certain length of time and/or had ties with other communities in other cities were clearly defined as such, not under the Edirne Jewish Community. I will therefore use the word “community” as an equivalent of the Arabic word *tâ'ife*.

have either focused on the early periods (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) or on the nineteenth century. Ottoman Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, are generally mentioned vis-à-vis the “decline” paradigm. A monographic study on the Edirne Jewish Community in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has not yet been done. The present thesis intends to fill this gap.

The literature (for some examples see, Braude and Lewis, 1982; Lewis, 1984; Shaw, 1991: 37-97; Hacker, 1992: 97-98; Baer, 2008), depicting the sixteenth century as the “Golden Age” for Ottoman Jews, has for a long time argued that Ottoman Jews in general and the Edirne Community in particular began to “decline” by the mid-seventeenth century in demographic terms. By benefiting from such Ottoman sources as fiscal registers (*tahrir defters*), household tax registers (*avârız defters*), poll-tax registers (*cizye defters*), and population records of the city of Edirne, this thesis will attempt to scrutinize whether the Jewish population in Edirne followed this pattern drawn by some students of Ottoman history. To clarify the territorial boundaries of the present work, since most Jews were organized in urban centres of cities in the Balkans – also the case for Edirne –, this thesis is based on the residential area of the *kazâ* centre of Edirne, located inside the bend of the Tunca river. This means, I will omit the four *nâhiyes* of Edirne – Çöke, Ada, Üsküdar, and Manastır. Parveva (2000) has studied the social structure of these *nâhiyes*.

As one of the *pâyitaht* centres, throughout its history Edirne remained as a significant city for the Ottomans due to its geographical position in the Balkans – centre in the Rumili Province and a staging point between Istanbul and Europe. This specific historic



and geographic position positively affected the demographic and economic conditions of Edirne, which, I will argue, helped to build the physical space of the Edirne Jewish Community. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Edirne enjoyed long sojourns of the royal family members including the Sultans. The religious composition of the city in this period remained intact, more than one tenth of the population being non-Muslim – Orthodox Christian, Armenian, and Jewish (Gökbilgin, 1994: 428). The Edirne Jewish Community witnessed considerable growth during this period with the help of these enduring royal visits and the existence of a significant number of *'askeris*. Thus it is considered one of the most important and richest Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire (Barnai, 1992b :59).

This thesis does not propose to draw a complete picture of the lives of the Edirne Jews. It does propose, though, to draw a picture of the Jewish demography and space in early-modern Ottoman Edirne. Through using Ottoman archival sources and Muslim court records of Edirne, this thesis shall try to answer the following questions: Did the Edirne Jewish Community decline in the eighteenth century demographically? What was its demographic concentration and geographic distribution like in Edirne in the centuries concerned? And why? How did they sustain and develop their relations within the community, and with the non-Jewish majority ambient society, and the state? What was its communal organization like in the period under question?

In Chapter II, I will first start with a background on the city of Edirne and its geographic and historical context. Furthermore, the administrative position and its development as a cultural centre and a border hub following its conquest shall be scrutinized. Secondly, I

will give a brief introduction on the historical background of the Edirne Jews, and why Edirne became an important spot for Jewish settlement by the early sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In Chapter III, how a small and rather heterogeneous Jewish community evolved in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in terms of its demographic and geographic structures shall be evaluated. Firstly, I will try to draw a demographic picture of the Edirne Jewish Community vis-à-vis the population of the city itself. Some students of the history of Ottoman Jews (for example, Gerber, 2008: 94; Ben-naeh, 2008: 92) have treated the Edirne Jewish community as one that lived its “golden age” in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Nevertheless, this view further argues, by the end of the seventeenth century and particularly after the Edirne Incident of 1703, which brought about the return of the Ottoman court from Edirne to Istanbul, the size of the community eroded dramatically. The point is that although Istanbul was the centre for the Ottoman court, Ottoman rulers still regularly used Edirne as a second base during the first half of the eighteenth century. So, this thesis intends to further research whether the city of Edirne and its Jewish community deteriorated following the Edirne Incident of 1703, or continued to sustain and/or developed afterwards. In relation to the demographic decline argument put forward by scholars, the failed messianic promulgation of Sabbatai Sevi has also been underlined. As this self-declared messiah was converted to Islam, literature maintains, many of his adherents in the Ottoman realm must have become new converts, hence the diminishing demographic position of Ottoman Jews (Hacker, 1992; Scholem, 1973; Şişman, 2004). Some (Baer, 2008;

Minkov, 2004; Zhelyazkova, 2002) have intended to read this period within the context of the Islamization in the Balkans.

Secondly, as it had various congregations from the very beginning, what the composition of these congregations was like and how these different congregations that had different languages and customs developed and sustained themselves will be analyzed. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire began homing a significant number of Jewish expelees from the Iberian Peninsula. These newly arrived Jews founded various congregations in the cities they settled according to their own customs and traditions. Edirne was no exception. A good number of Jewish congregations established in Edirne in the sixteenth century continued to exist until the very beginning of the twentieth century. Whether the developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had different impacts on this multi-congregational structure of the Edirne Jewish Community will be scrutinized here.

Finally, I will attempt to re-draw the Jewish space in Edirne; namely in which neighborhoods they lived, what religious compositions those neighborhoods had, and the like. Ottoman Jews had for a long time been described as a very autonomous and isolated religious group that had very limited physical contact with the rest of society. Furthermore, the Jews living in the Ottoman realm have been perceived as a unit of society that lived in neighbourhoods consisting mostly of Jews. The detailed household tax registers (*mufassal avâriz defterleri*) and Ottoman court records of Edirne (*Edirne kâdı sicilleri*) indicate the structures of the neighbourhoods in which the Jews were living. This means Jewish inhabitants lived with non-Jews in the same neighborhoods.

As far as the court records and tax registers allow us, however, we can more or less safely say that Jews lived with other non-Muslims (particularly with Armenians) in the same neighbourhoods more frequently. This may be due to the fact that most Jews lived within the citidal walls of Edirne and/or around the commercial centre of the city as many of the Armenians and Greeks did too. In terms of the Jewish space in Edirne in the late seventeenth century, five *mahalles* can be seen as quasi-Jewish neighborhoods, even though there are also Muslims and other Christian households recorded in these neighborhoods (KK. 2711, 1686: 19-20 and 23-26). This may explain why the great Ottoman traveler Evliyâ Çelebi claimed there were five Jewish neighborhoods within the city walls when he visited Edirne in the mid-seventeenth century (Evliyâ Çelebi, 1999: 250). Moreover, I will analyze if Edirne's status of being a city for the Ottoman Court (*pâyitaht*) was a significant determinant of this geographic distribution of Jews in the centuries concerned. In other words, whether the members of the Edirne Jewish Community chose where they lived in order to be in physical proximity to some groups with which they had close economic ties shall be researched. This will also include how isolated or integrated the Jews of Edirne were in terms of their everyday dealings.

In Chapter IV, I will try to look into the communal leadership in the Edirne Jewish Community by underlining its religious and administrative leaders. Their duties in communal and personal affairs vis-à-vis the state and other members of the society will be examined. In this respect, I will attempt to see whether the Edirne Jewish Community's leadership showed similarities with and/or differences from other important communities that have been analyzed by scholars of Ottoman Jews.

In short, the present thesis shall attempt to research the demographic developments of the Edirne Jewish community and its spatial organization, relations of Jews with the state and other groups, their degree of isolation from and integration with the ambient society, the changing role and well-being of the community, and its leadership in the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries.

### **1.1 Historiography**

Apart from general histories of Ottoman Jews (Levy, 1994; Shaw, 1991; Galante, 1985-6; Lewis, 1984; Braude and Lewis, 1982; Epstein, 1980), in the historiography of Ottoman Jews, studies dealing mainly – but not exclusively – with the inter-communal relations, leadership, and role of the Jews in the Ottoman economy have concentrated on particular cities such as Istanbul, Salonica, and Jerusalem. Moreover, many studies have focused either on the earlier or later periods of the Ottoman Empire, roughly covering the fifteenth-sixteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively. Few have dealt with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, generally portraying Ottoman Jews as a religious group that got affected significantly by “the disintegration of the central Ottoman government” (Barnai: 1994: 7). This view has also been adopted by some other scholars (Baer, 2004; Levy, 1994; Levy, 1992; Shaw, 1991; Ben-naeh, 2008). Generalizations about all Ottoman Jews have been based on particular studies dealing with such cities as Istanbul, Jerusalem, and Salonica.

As for the Edirne Jewish Community, the existing works are unsatisfactory. While general histories on Ottoman Jews mention the Edirne community as an integral part of

the larger “Ottoman Jewry”, neither the general histories on Ottoman Jews nor those specifically focusing on the Edirne Jewish community have concentrated on the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Edirne, like Istanbul and Salonica, had an important Jewish community in size and economic well-being. However, despite the city’s well-established Jewish community, Oral Onur’s book (2005) entitled *1492’den Günümüze Edirne Yahudi Cemaati* (The Edirne Jewish Community from 1492 to Present) remains the only monographic work on the community. Even though it provides a bulk of information, the lack of chronological coherence and primary sources, and its very broad coverage make this book weak.

Besides Onur’s book, though scholars mention the significance of the city for Jews, few works (Haker, 2006; Gerber, 2008: 93-104; Ben-nah, 2008: 92-3; Bali, 1998) concerning the Jews of Edirne materialized. Haker’s book entitled *Edirne, Its Jewish Community, And Alliance Schools, 1867-1937*, giving little information on the seventeenth century vis-à-vis the Sabbatai Sevi episode, rather focuses on the nineteenth century and influences of the French Alliance Schools on the Edirne Jews.

Haim Gerber (2008: 93-104), in his article based primarily on Ö. L. Barkan’s *Edirne Askeri Kassamına Ait Tereke Defterleri (1545- 1659)*, studied the Edirne Jews in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this article entitled “The Edirne Jews in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” first published in Hebrew in *Sefunot*, Gerber used estate inventory records of deceased ‘*askeris* (military-administrative officials) as well as Jewish responsa examples, and examined economic relations and “physical contact” of the Edirne Jews with the “surrounding Muslim society.” Also, Yaron Ben-naeh

(2008: 92-3), in his book *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans: Ottoman Jewish Society in the Seventeenth Century*, briefly examined the Edirne Jewish Community in the seventeenth century.

## 1.2 Sources

Social and economic historians (for example, Gökbilgin, 1952; Barkan, 1970; Epstein, 1980; Gökbilgin, 1991; Şakir-Taş, 2009) working on sixteenth century Edirne draw heavily on Ottoman fiscal registers (*tahrir defters*). However, as *tahrir* registers are almost non-existent in the following centuries, the historian relies more on some other sources such as *avâriz* and *cizye* registers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose limitations and problems have been underlined by scholars (Özel, 2001; Darling, 1986). The paucity of *tahrirs* is also the case for Edirne in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Therefore, besides their problems and limitations, I benefitted in the present thesis from *avâriz* and *cizye* registers providing important data for demographic and geographic history for the city of Edirne in general and for its Jewish inhabitants in particular.

In terms of the demographic development and geographical distribution of the Edirne Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, first concise data is gathered from two *defters* (KK.2711, 1097/1686; MAD. 4021, 1100/1690), both of which were documented in the late seventeenth century. The second mine for information comes from a census register of Edirne, undertaken two months before the Edirne Incident of 1703 as a result of a Sultanic order. This census, which consists of three parts, is

catalogued under different cataloguing numbers (KK.731, 1115/1703; DVN.802, 1115/1703; DVN.803, 1115/1703). All of these registers are available in the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archive in Istanbul. Nevertheless, although more registers may surface in the future, as cataloguing of the Ottoman archival materials is incomplete, researchers are only able to use what has been catalogued so far. Thus, in order to better understand how the demographic and geographic patterns of the Edirne Jewish community evolved in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these three official Ottoman registers ('*avârız* register, *cizye* register, and population record) were benefitted for the present thesis.

The KK.2711 *defter* documented in 1097/1686 that has not yet been analyzed by scholars is a detailed household tax register of the *kazâ* of Edirne (*Edirne kazâsı mufassal 'avârız defteri*). It recorded the entire *kazâ* center of Edirne (excluding its *nahiyes* and hence its villages) under neighborhoods (*mahalles*). Under each *mahalle*, the male head of each household was registered. On the corner of each page, moreover, widows were also recorded as heads of households. The Jews were also recorded in the same way. As they were registered personally under various neighborhoods, it can be inferred that they were sharing the *avarız* taxes of the neighborhood where they lived with their Muslim and other non-Muslim neighbors. Their share, however, is described on the last page of the register as a lump sum (*ber vech-i maktu*). It documented the entire Jewish Community under 13 different congregations, which are analyzed in Chapter III. Despite its limitations – it does not give any information on the geographic distribution of the Jewish Congregations –, the KK. 2711 register offers mass of



information on demographic position and geographic distribution of the Edirne Jews.

The MAD. 4021 *defter* is a detailed poll-tax register of the Edirne Jewish Community (*Defter-i Cizye-i Yahudiyân-ı Nefs-i Edirne*) dated 1100/1690. The only scholar mentioning this register is Uriel Heyd (1953: 302). He very briefly refers to it in the context of giving information on the Maior congregation established in various Ottoman cities. He provides no further information extracted from the register. Though it provides no spatial information on the Edirne Jews, it offers invaluable data for the sizes of the 13 congregations, and their ability to pay taxes as it records each tax-paying male's financial well-being. Furthermore, it allows us to confirm some information given by scholars (for example Ben-naeh, 2008: 93; Marcus/Ginio, 2007: 149) regarding the division of the community between two-three different rabbis as it records only three men as *hahams*. By crosschecking the information it gives with other sources, the MAD. 4021 *cizye* register helps us to complete the demographic pattern of the Edirne Jewish Community and its economic well-being in the late seventeenth century.

The first concise data from eighteenth century Edirne comes from the 1703 census register (KK.731; DVN.802 and DVN.803), which was not done for financial reasons. It was rather undertaken for the purpose of counting the residents and guild members of Edirne, and of confirming if each *mahalle* member and its *imâm* (or priest) accepted the responsibility of others in the same neighborhood. The first part of the census (KK. 731) was analyzed by Özer Ergenç (1989). This part of the register documented the neighborhoods located on both sides of the Tunca River excluding the neighborhoods

located within the city walls (*kaleiçi/intra muros*). In his very detailed analysis, Ergenç (1989: 1417-24) finds out that 65 *mahalles* were registered in the census. Furthermore, Ergenç analyzed each *mahalle* by focusing on various parameters such as guilds, gender, and the titles of the *'askeri* members in the city.

The neighborhoods in the *kaleiçi* are seen in the rest of the register (DVN. 802 and DVN. 803), whose existence was first mentioned by Feridun Emecen (1998: 61). He argues that there were 110 Muslim, 14 Christian, and 13 Jewish neighborhoods (*mahalles*) recorded in this register. However, after examining the completing DVN. 802 (1115/1703: 17-21) and DVN. 803 (1115/1703) registers, it is obvious that the Jews were not recorded under separate neighborhoods. Similar to the sixteenth century *tahrir* registers, they were recorded under 13 different congregations. Emecen also identifies some *intra muros* neighborhoods such as Darbhane and Kahtalu exclusively Muslim. Based upon the KK. 2711 register and court records of Edirne, it will be correct to say that these neighborhoods were in actual fact religiously mixed *mahalles*. In the 1703 register, however, we see few neighborhoods, where Jews were recorded as residents in the KK 2711 register of 1686.

In the 1703 census, similar to the *imâm* and the priest who in each *mahalle* accepted the responsibility for his Muslim and Christian coreligionists respectively, the lay leader (*cemâ'at başı*) of each Jewish congregation accepted the responsibility for the entire congregation. Though it does not explicitly offer any information on which neighborhoods the Jews were living in, it does provide a mass of data that enables us to draw a proper demographic picture of the Jewish Community in the early eighteenth

century.

The second type of Ottoman sources is the Muslim court records of Edirne (*kādi sicills*). For this thesis, various court records between 1690 and 1750 (E.Ş.S. 74, 77, 79, 83, 87, 91, 111, 113, 116, 124, 138, 139, 143, 152 and 153) have been utilized. The entire set of the Edirne Court Records is stored as microfilms in the National Library in Ankara. Reilly (2002: 15) asserts that Muslim court records have been regarded “as objective documentary sources from which researchers can extract reasonably reliable data in order to reconstruct historical structures and patterns.” This is definitely the case for the Edirne court records because they provide information that is difficult to find in other sources. Nonetheless, they “reveal only those social processes and transactions” (Reilly: 2002: 16) brought before the *kādi* because, as Göçek and Baer (1997: 54) state, those who probably “settled their affairs informally were not always recorded.” The problems that the court records of Edirne create for the historian get bigger; since not all “the processes and transactions” actually registered exist today.

Sahillioğlu (1995: 260) reports that cases were dealt with in different courts because Edirne was a fairly large city. So, some registers (such as numbers 136 and 178) belonged to the Great Court (*Mahkeme-i Kübrâ*), some (such as numbers 108, 137, 141, 149) belonged to the Little Court (*Mahkeme-i Suğrâ*), and some (such as numbers 138 and 139) belonged to the Haremeyn Endowment Court (*Haremeyn Evkâfi Müfettişliği Mahkemesi*). Some registers (such as numbers 140, 143, 147, and 153) only contain imperial edicts (*fermâns*). Probate inventories were normally recorded as parts of the registers called “*sicil-i mahfûz*”, in which all the correspondences with the state,

notaries, *fermâns*, testimonies, proceedings, and the like were recorded. For Bursa and Edirne, however, estate inventory registers (*tereke defters*), which contain very valuable data, were registered separately. Most of the registers examined for this thesis do not contain records related to daily disputes between people. The reason for this is their non-existence (Ergenç: 1989:1416; Sahillioğlu, 1995: 260). Despite their non-existence in the *sicills*, some such records can be found in other sources such as *münşe'at mecmuaları* (for one *mecmua* on Edirne see Sakaoğlu, 1998:167-183). Only E.Ş.S.138-139 and E.Ş.S.153 contain such cases that are related to various endowments and daily disputes respectively. To compare with the earlier records, I have benefitted from the work of Barkan (1966), entiteled *Edirne Askeri Kassamına Ait Tereke Defterleri (1545-1659)*.

Some students of Ottoman Jewish history (Landau, 1977: 205-212.; Heyd, 1967: 295-303; Shumuelevitz, 1999: 19-28) have underlined the importance of Jewish sources for the history of Ottoman Jews. Therefore, as very few of the above-mentioned sources provide clear information on intra-communal relations of the Edirne Jewish Community, some examples from the *responsa* literature in translation (Ben-naeh, 2008; Weisseberg, 1970; Cooper, 1963; Goodblatt, 1952) were used, as they are otherwise inaccessible to non-Hebrew speakers.

Some contemporary chronicles were also used in this thesis. Two impressive works of Silahdar Mehmed Ağa – *Silahdâr Târihi* and *Nusretnâme* – are of great importance for this thesis due to their vivid descriptions of the city of Edirne, and close observations of fires, earthquakes, and so on in the beginning of the eighteenth century (Silahdar

Mehmed, 1928; Topal, 2001).

Finally, to gain a sense of how travelers – both Ottoman and Western – observed the city of Edirne and its Jewish inhabitants, I first benefitted from the work of the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme* (1999). His observations of both the city of Edirne and the Jewish community are of great importance for this thesis. Furthermore, the travel notes of John Covel (1892), De La Motraye's travel notes (1723), and letters of Lady Mary Montagu (1784) are of significance to see how Westerners visiting Edirne perceived the city and its Jewish community in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries respectively.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: OTTOMAN EDIRNE AND ITS JEWS

#### 2.1 The Setting: The District (*Kazâ*) of Edirne

In order to better comprehend the Jewish Community of Edirne and to focus on its spatial distribution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is crucial to know Edirne's geographical and historical background. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Edirne remained one of the Ottoman cities whose contemporary situation was portrayed by travellers and historians (for example Evliyâ Çelebi, 1999; Beşir Çelebi, 1960; Hibri, 1999; Örfi, 1174). This interest in the city is not neglected by later researchers (Osman, 1919; Peremeci, 1940; Gökbilgin, 1952; İşli and Koz, 1998; Şakir-Taş, 2009). However, attempting to draw a new map of topography and historical events that occurred in Ottoman Edirne shall enhance our understanding of the Edirne Jews.

Lying on the meeting point of the Tunca, Arda, and Meriç rivers, Edirne's main significance comes from the fact that it is on the way from Asia Minor to the Balkan

peninsula, being the main staging point after Istanbul (Gökbilgin, 2007: 683). The conquest of the city materialized following the fall of Dimotika (1360-1) when the Ottomans were territorially expanding in the Thrace (Eyice, 1993: 61; İnalçık, 2009). According to Eyice (1993: 75), Byzantine Edirne had remained within the walls built during the Roman period. However, although the city would stay as the new capital for the Ottomans only until the conquest of Istanbul, new areas outside the walls developed with rich architectural edifices were built during the following centuries. Although after the conquest of Istanbul (1453) Edirne stayed in the shadow of the new capital administratively, it continued to be adorned through the pious endowments (*vakıfs*) founded by the Sultans, royal family members, the ruling elite, and ordinary people (Barkan and Ayverdi; 1970; Gökbilgin, 1952). By the end of the sixteenth century, Edirne had already gained its character as an important cultural center (Şakir-Taş, 2010: 67-124). Its population, increasing almost to 30,000 by the end of the sixteenth century (Barkan, 1970: 168), was inhabited in almost 150 neighborhoods in the *Kaleiçi* and *Kaledişi* parts of the town (Gökbilgin, 1952: 36), being inside the bend of the Tunca River.

The *Kaleiçi* part of Edirne was the one that the Ottomans acquired from the Byzantines when they took the city. Until the Ottomans established a new commercial and cultural stratum just outside the Citadel walls, the *kaleiçi* had remained as a crucial and densely populated area. Since the city was not taken forcefully, non-Muslim inhabitants were allowed to keep their churches and synagogues, even though one church was converted into a mosque (*Kilisa Câmi'*). By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the city

scattered towards the directions of the East, North and Northwest through the establishment of new neighborhoods around the commercial spot (Yıldırım, 1991: 126-130), which would be between the Ali Paşa Han, the Bezzâziztân, the İki Kapılı Han (not existent today), the Rüstem Paşa Han, and the neighborhood of Tahte'l-kal'a.

Edirne, during this era, was a district (*kazâ*) of the Paşa *Sancak* (*Liva*) under the Rumeli Province (*Vilayet* or *Beylərbeylik*). This *vilayet* had 24 *sancaks* by the beginning of the seventeenth century (Gökbilgin, 1952: 7). During the period when Edirne was the capital, Çirmen became the sancak center, which continued after the transfer of the capital to Istanbul from Edirne (Gökbilgin, 1952: 17). The administrative position of Çirmen over Edirne became stronger when the *mutasarrıf*s of Çirmen were appointed to protect the city by the second half of the eighteenth century. This continued until 1829 after which date some administrative officials were appointed to Edirne as the *mutasarrıf* or *vâli* (Sarıcaoğlu, 2001: 12). Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the *kazâ* of Edirne, had 4 *nahiyes* – Çöke, Ada, Manastır, and Üsküdar.

Due to its character of being a center for Ottoman court (*pâyitaht*) similar to Istanbul, Edirne had its own *bostancıbaşıs*. Until its abolition in 1826, in the *kaza* center of Edirne, the *bostancıbaşıs* possessed the administrative duties. In the eighteenth century, the notable (*a'yân*) was also given similar duties. Governors of Rumeli were not responsible for the security of the *kaza* center since it was the responsibility of the *bostancıbaşıs* (Uzunçarşılı, 1988: 486). Throughout the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, the number of this group increased, reaching its apex with a number of 954 in 1746, and decreasing gradually afterwards (Uzunçarşılı, 1988: 487).



By the beginning of the seventeenth century, according to Gökbilgin (1952: 62), there were 153 mahalles in Edirne. Evliya Çelebi (1999: 250) claims that the number of mahalles was 414 in the mid-seventeenth century, which seems fairly well-inflated. As an “unofficial” capital for the Ottomans, Edirne well benefitted from the long sojourns of Ottoman sultans, particularly those of Mehmed IV, and, later, Mustafa II. Moreover the *‘askeri* group – both in office and retired – reached significant numbers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The reason for the population increase in Edirne in the seventeenth century in general and for the Edirne Jewish Community in particular can be found in these enduring royal visits that must have attracted many Ottoman subjects due to their commercial ties with the court. In fact, close commercial and monetary ties between these *‘askeris* and the Edirne Jews are clearly seen in court records of Edirne.

Historiography on Ottoman Edirne underlines, in contrast to its popularity during most of the seventeenth century, its “decline” in the eighteenth century by using three events. According to this view (for example Uğur, 2009; Emecen, 1998; Gökbilgin, 1960) the Edirne Incident of 1703 is the first one being perceived a turning point after which date Edirne would be neglected by the Sultans and would lose its political importance thoroughly. Following the failure faced at the gates of Vienna in 1683, losses of many European provinces, the treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, and power-based conflicts among various groups in the palace would lead to the Edirne Incident of 1703, which would bring about the return of the Ottoman Court from Edirne to Istanbul, causing both the abdication of Mustafa II, and the brutal killing of the powerful Şeyhülislam, Feyzullah

Efendi (Abou-El-Haj, 1984; Meservey, 1966). After this event, the Ottomans still regularly used Edirne as a second administrative centre and a military base for campaigns throughout the eighteenth century.

Secondly there was a big fire in 1745, and finally an earthquake in 1751 (Gökbilgin, 1952; Gökbilgin, 1991; Emecen, 1998; Uğur, 2009). All these three events, scholars believe, affected the city economically and demographically. It is true that Edirne, with the return of the Court to Istanbul, possibly lost a good number of *askeris* who were in the Edirne Palace. Moreover, some merchants from Istanbul might have also followed the Court due to their business affairs with it. However, whether the city lost most of its population after this date requires further scrutiny.

As for the negative effects of the above-mentioned fire and earthquake, and the city's rather neglected position after the mid-eighteenth century, the contemporary historian (also a poet) Örfi Mahmud Ağa's *Edirne Tarihçesi* has been the main source for modern scholars (for example Gökbilgin, 1993: 164). However, Örfi Mahmud Ağa's perceptions of mid-eighteenth century Edirne ought to be evaluated carefully. Following the death of his father, who was the *bostancıbaşısı* of Edirne, Örfi expected that post, to which he was never appointed (Kütük, 2004: 184-5). His observations on Edirne, therefore, ought to rather be read with little skepticism. As shall be analyzed in detail in Chapter III, both imperial edicts sent to the *kādi* of Edirne and Örfi Mahmud Ağa's writings vividly explain the earthquake's effects. However, if we put faith in Örfi's writings, only 100 people died due to the earthquake, and all the damages caused by it were later repaired (Kütük, 2004: 201-2). Therefore, it would be an exaggeration to

claim that Edirne became completely neglected after that.

## **2.2 Emergence and Development of the Edirne Jewish Community**

Even though some (for example Galante 1995: 16-21; Marcus, 2007: 148; Haker, 2006: 23) believe there existed Jews in Adrianople during the Roman period, first information concerning the Edirne Jews is related to the Byzantine Empire (Marcus, 2007; Besalel, 1999; Bowman, 2001). So when the Ottomans conquered the city in 1361 (İnalçık, 1971), members of this autochthon community known as *Romaniotes* (Greek-speaking Jews) were the ones the Ottomans encountered. These Jews summoned their co-religionists from Bursa, which had been taken by the Ottomans a few decades earlier, to come to Edirne (Epstein, 1980: 54) and to teach them the new ruler's language (Bali, 1998: 206).

Epstein (1980: 21) informs us that a good number of Salonika Jews chose to settle in Edirne after the Venetians took the city in 1423. Edirne Jews reached a good number with the arrival of those coming from various European countries including Hungary, France and Bavaria throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Benbassa and Rodrigue, 1995: 4-5). So until the Ottomans took the city of Istanbul from Byzantium, Edirne had established a robust Jewish Community, most of whose members were Ashkenazim. Therefore, Epstein (1980: 54) believes, Edirne's chief rabbi (*hahambaşı*) had the opportunity to govern all the Jews lived in South-East Europe thanks to the growing number of Edirne Jews, consisting of Romaniote and Ashkenazic groups. The Karaite Jews of Edirne, some of the city's Greek-speaking Jews, would be transferred

to İstanbul following the conquest of the city in 1453 under an Ottoman resettlement policy called *sürgün* (Rozen, 2002: 56 and 80). By the time of the conquest of Istanbul by the Ottomans, Isaac Zarefati, the leading rabbi of Edirne's Ashkenazic community, sent a letter to Jews in Western Europe (Lewis, 1984: 136; Epstein, 1980: 21-22; Shaw, 1991: 31-32; Cohen/Ginio, 2007). In his letter presumably written in the first half of the fifteenth century, Zarefati would write the following (Lewis, 1984: 136):

...Brothers and teachers, friends and acquaintances! I, Isaac Zarfati, though I spring from a French stock, yet I was born in Germany, and sat there at the feet of my esteemed teachers. I proclaim to you that Turkey is a land wherein nothing is lacking, and where, if you will, all shall yet be well with you. The way to the Holy Land lies open to you through Turkey. Is it not better for you to live under Muslims than under Christians? Here every man may dwell at peace under his own vine and fig tree. Here you are allowed to wear the most precious garments ... and now, seeing all these things, O Israel, wherefore sleepest thou? Arise! And leave this accursed land forever...

It is unclear whether this letter was written with the encouragement of Ottoman authorities. However, it is clear that it was influential for many Jews coming from Western Europe. As was the case for Jews lived in any Ottoman city, the turning point was the big expulsion of Jews from Spain, Portugal, and Italy who settled in Salonika, Istanbul, Edirne, and some other Ottoman towns in the Balkans. During the sixteenth century, this influx of Iberian exiles to various Ottoman cities continued. Epstein (1980: 178-80) gives the names of forty Balkan and Anatolian cities where Jews got settled (including Edirne). The letter of Isaac Zarefati, it can be argued, might have been encouraging for at least some Jews settling in Edirne in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Though the Karaite Jews, after a resettlement policy of Mehmed II, were settled in İstanbul, the Jewish community of Edirne was to enlarge and became more

diverse with the arrival of the Iberian Jews, who had different geographical backgrounds and rituals, and Jews coming from newly-conquered territories in the Balkans (Marcus and Ginio, 2007).

Intrestingly, first data concerning Edirne Jews comes from an early sixteenth century tax register (TT 77, 1518-9). This register confirms the influx of the Iberian Jews settling in Edirne, since the majority of the congregations was of Sephardic origin. Another fiscal register (TT 494, 1570-1) penned almost half a century later deepens our knowledge about the diversified Jewish Community of Edirne whose Separdic members became the dominant group.

Although some Jewish communities showed signs of demographic decline such as Salonika and Safed (Barnai, 1994: 275), Edirne – like Izmir – had a rather fortunate Jewish community in the seventeenth century due to different reasons. While the number of Jews in Izmir increased with the help of the city’s increasing popularity among European traders (Frangakis-Syrett, 2007: 291-306), Edirne’s Jewish Community, along with the transients who resided in the city for commercial purposes, would rather enjoy the priviledges of the city because of its “de facto” capital status. Also, it was a city of great significance for its peculiar location, which remained as an important spot between the Balkans and Istanbul for the Ottomans. This *de facto* capital position of Edirne was the reason for the existence of many ‘*askeris* in the city, which was a significant determinant for the geographic distribution of Jews in Edirne, as well as for their economic well-being.

The following chapter shall focus on the Edirne Jewish Community's position from the end of the seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth. This deep look into the Community will be connected to its demographic development, congregational structure, and spatial distribution. Whether the administrative position of Edirne as a *payitaht* center encouraging many to settle there and the Jewish Community's position in the city were intertwined is to be examined in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MAKING OF THE EDIRNE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

#### 3.1 Demographic Data

Despite the early date of Edirne's conquest by the Ottomans in 1361 (İnalçık, 1971), there are no figures available from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The first complete data concerning Edirne comes from the early sixteenth century compiled during the first years of Süleyman the Magnificent's reign. Barkan (1970: 168) calculated a total number of 22,335 people in the city by examining this tax register recorded in 924/1518-9.

Furthermore, parallel to the general population increase in the empire, another tax register compiled almost fifty years later (980/1571-2) shows that the number of people in Edirne increased to 30,140 (Barkan, 1970: 168). With this number, it can be said that Edirne had a similar size to sixteenth century Ankara (Ergenç, 1995) and Bursa (Ergenç, 2006). Unlike Bursa and Ankara, though, Edirne's importance did not come from its character as a commercial and/or industrial hub. Its importance rather came from the

geographical and political-administrative position of the city. This continued throughout the following centuries stimulating the existence of a great number of *'askeris* and other groups.

During the entire seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries, the number of people lived in Edirne increased, reaching to roughly 80-100.000. The majority was still Muslim and non-Muslims made almost 12 percent of the entire population (Sarıcaoğlu, 2001: 18). Edirne witnessed serious political tensions in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The demographic structure of Edirne also witnessed ups and downs in this period. In 1806, during the “second” Edirne Incident, the local notables of Rumeli gathered together protesting the establishment of the new army, *Nizâm-ı Cedîd*. Within a couple of decades, Edirne faced the first serious foreign threat and was occupied by the Russian Army that caused many inhabitants moving to other cities (Gökbilgin, 1994: 428). During these years of chaos (1830-35), Edirne still homed roughly 85-100.000 residents. However, the religious composition of the city changed.

The first official Ottoman census of 1831, which counted only male residents of the city, registered a total of 1541 Jewish names (Karal, 1943: 36-37). This would make almost 600 households. The reason for this slight decrease might be justified by the Russian occupation of the city in 1829 that caused many Muslim and Jewish residents to move to other cities (Sarıcaoğlu, 2001: 18).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, though, the number of Jews in Edirne dramatically increased. The census undertaken prior to the Balkan Wars shows that the Jewish population reached its apogee with a number of 23,839 (Karpat, 2002: 158). The number of Jews dramatically declined within a couple of decades getting to a number of 6,098 in 1927 (Umumi Nüfus Tahriri, 1927:52).



The population of the Edirne Jews between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries resembles with the demographic situation of the city penned above. Added to the autochthon Greek-speaking Romaniotes and Ashkenazic Jews settled in the city in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Sephardic Jews arrived after their expulsion from Spain, Portugal and some parts of Italy and increased the number of the Jews in Edirne considerably. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, according to the same tax-register of 1518-9, there was a total number of 201 tax-paying Jewish households (*hânes*) and 6 unmarried males (*mücerred*) in Edirne (Epstein, 1980: 218). The second tax register dated 1571-2 assigns the community a total of 336 tax-paying Jewish households with a total number of 145 unmarried males (Epstein, 1980: 218).

As for the seventeenth century, Ottoman official figures come from one detailed household tax register (*mufassal 'avârız defteri*) and one poll tax register (*cizye tahrir defteri*), both of which were recoded in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. As for the first one (B.O.A. Kamil Kepeci 2711, 1686)<sup>3</sup>, under 151 town quarters (*mahalles*), 5243 tax-paying households (*hânes*), 1792 women (*havâtîn*) and almost 1000 *askerîs* were recorded. These *havâtîn* many of whom were recorded as *dul* (widow) should also be considered households. This would mean that the city homed roughly 40,000 inhabitants in the 1686s. Moreover, the register also documented the shops (*dekâkîn*) of various guilds, bachelor rooms (*bekâr odaları*), married rooms (*evli odaları*), Armenian rooms (*Ermeni odaları*), and rental rooms (*kirâcı odaları* and

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter, “KK” shall be used for the sources from the B.O.A. Kamil Kepeci Tasnifi. To make it clear, for the right and left hand pages letters “a” and “b” shall be used respectively.

*müste'cir odaları*). The number of people staying in these rooms, however, was not recorded as only the number of rooms were penned. Knowing the fact that some families, unmarried young men, transients, and many poor Muslim and non-Muslim families lived in these rooms, the number of people in Edirne must have been higher.

Almost 420 Jewish heads of household (both males and females) were documented in this register (KK. 2711, 1686: 13a-27a and 35a). While, in this register, Jews were recorded on the basis of the town quarters (*mahalles*) where they lived, no information about the congregations they belonged to is given. The names were given alongside with their patronym like *Avram veled-i Yako Yahûdi* (the Jew Avram son of Yako) or *Saltana bint-i Avram Yahûdiyye* (the Jewess Sultana daughter of Avram). Nevertheless, on the last page of the register, 13 congregation names under *Tâ'ife-i Yahûdiyân-ı Nefs-i Edirne* (the Jewish Community of the city of Edirne) are also separately recorded. Concerning the avariz taxes, a fixed sum (*ber vech-i maktu'*) of 200 is written for the Jewish Community of Edirne. This is not a real household number. In fact, each avarizhane represents a group of households varying between 5-7. Goffman (1982: 82) states that “the *maktu'* system was applied in order to insure a fixed amount of money or so a community could escape the abuses of *djizya* collectors.” In terms of their *cizye* payments, this system probably gave the community leaders (*kethüdâs* or *cemâ'atbaşıs*) flexibility to collect the amount from other members, reducing their own share. However, as İnalçık (1980: 563) rightly points out, this system might create unbearable burdens for people when the number of a group somehow decreased. This, probably, became the case for the Edirne Jewish Community by 1750, and the Jewish community

petitioned to the Ottoman administration to consider a new fixed number for them. I will further discuss this below.

The number of Jews in Edirne, however, was probably higher as some (as a group or individually) were exempted from imperial tax obligations entirely (*mu'afiyet-i tekâlif-i dîvâniyye*). For instance, Levi the Jew residing in Edirne worked in the Edirne Palace as an imperial physician. Subsequently, he was pardoned from taxation entirely in 1694 (Ahmet Refik, 1988: 16). Moreover, the German congregation (*Cemâ'at-i Alaman*) of the Edirne Jewish Community had been exempted from imperial taxation entirely through a *berât* issued by Süleyman the Magnificent, and this *berât* was recurrently renewed by his successors until the mid-nineteenth century (B.O.A. İ. MVL. 22326, 1868:1-5).<sup>4</sup> Thus, the members of the German congregation were probably not recorded in the detailed *avârızhâne* register of 1686. We do not see those Jews who stayed in the abovementioned *hâns* and rooms as renters in the KK 2711 register, because they were only recorded as “the rooms belonged to such person and/or such endowment.” Nor do we see any *yahûdihânes* (for the term *yahûdihâne* see Şişman, 2010) that homed many Jewish residents. Nor do we see Jewish renters (*müste'cir Yahudiler*) who were recorded both in court records (E.Ş.S. 74, 1693: 37/1) and in the 1703 register (KK. 731, 1703: 19) respectively. Therefore, this would enforce us to believe that the size of the Edirne Jewish community must have been bigger in the period concerned.

A few years later, a detailed poll tax register concerning the Jews in Edirne (*Defter-i Cizye-i Yahudiyân-ı nefis-i Edirne*) was recorded (B.O.A. MAD. 4021, 1689-90) during the tax reform of the end of the seventeenth century. The table below includes the distribution of *cizye* among the Jewish congregations.

Table 1: Distribution of *Cizyes* among Jewish Congregations in Edirne in 1689-90

Congregation	<i>A'lā</i>	<i>Evsāt</i>	<i>Ednā</i>	Total
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Portugal-ı Saġır	17	23	27	67
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Polya	16	55	28	99
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Budin	8	20	8	36
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> İtalya	11	31	14	56
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Alaman	30	30	7	67
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Portugal-ı Kebîr	23	31	15	69
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Geruz	12	40	4	56
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Romanya nâm-ı diġer İstanbul	15	31	6	52
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Mayor	13	26	3	42
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Aragon	19	24	1	44
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Katalan	28	26	6	60
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Toledo	15	22	15	52
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Sisilye	20	18	9	47
Perâkendegân-ı Yahudiyân 'an sakinân-ı nefis-i Edirne	-	-	-	85
<b>TOTAL</b>	227	377	228	832

The Ottoman authorities, during this tax reform, started to levy taxes on every non-Muslim of age rather than on each household (Parveva, 2000: 71). While the number of

<sup>4</sup> “Edirne’de mutavattın Alaman Yahûdilerinin tekâlîfden mu’afiyetleri hakkında berât-ı şerîfin cülûs-ı ... hazret-i padişâhîden dolayı tecdîdi husûsuna dâ’ir...” (İ.MVL. 493, H.1279-1280: 4).

cizye-paying Jews was 698 *nefers* before, as the result of this renewed poll tax record, 832 *cizye*-paying *nefers* were documented in 1690 under the 13 congregations listed in Table 1.<sup>5</sup> 12 people for one reason or another were exempted from *cizye*. These people, who probably had *berats* or *muafnâmes* due to their services to the State or their bad financial position, did not qualify for the payment of *cizye*. These *cizye*-exempted Jews should also be added to the total number. Although the register refers to an old *cizye defteri*, it is unclear when it was done. Yet, a significant increase is evident in the number of Jews (from 698 to 832 *nefers*).

So, if we follow Haim Gerber (1988: 9) and Oktay Özel (2001: 37) that the number should be multiplied by 3 (because *cizye* was paid only by non-Muslims who were male and above age of 15) in order to find the real number of households, we reach an approximate number of 506 Jewish households (through multiplying 832+12 by 3, and dividing it by 5). This number shows an increase in Jewish population by the end of the seventeenth century. It ought to be kept in mind that this number only gives an idea on the members of the Edirne Jewish Community, paying *cizye* to the State. However, as is well known, some endowments had the right to collect some portion of *cizye* paid by Jews (*Yahudiyân cizyesi*) and other non-Muslims (*Rumyân cizyesi* or *Ermeniyân cizyesi*). For instance, the Sultan Selim Han Endowment in Edirne collected the *cizye* paid by Jews (KK. 2559, H.1023: 5). Therefore, one may conceivably argue that not all

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<sup>5</sup> “Edirne’de müceddeden tahrîri fermân buyurulan Yahudi tâ’îfesi kadîmden altı yüz doksan sekiz nefer olub ... fazîletlü Edirne kâdısı efendi hazretleri ma’arifetiyle ve hazine muhasebecisi efendi kulları mübâşeretîyle müceddeden tahrîr olundukda sekiz yüz otuz iki nefer mevcûd bulunub kayd olunmuşdur” (MAD. 4021, H.1100:?). This page does not contain a number on it, however it comes after page 11. After this one-page explanation, the register continues with the page numbered 12 (For the original see appendix I).

cizye-paying Jews were registered in the MAD 4021 *cizye* register. Additionally, those who were somehow exempted from *cizye* did not appear on the register either.

In the same *cizye* register of 1689-90, 85 names were also documented (B.O.A. MAD. 4021, 1690: 15-6) under a separate group called *Perâkendegân-ı Yahudiyân ‘an sâkinân-ı nefs-i Edirne*. Unlike the members of the 13 congregations, they were not recorded in accordance with their ability to pay taxes as *a’lā*, *evsât* and *ednā*. However, they were added to the total number of *cizye*-paying adult males by being added to the total number of *ednā* level *cizye*-paying Jews (*ednā ma’ perâkendegân*). The registration of a separate group (*Perâkendegân-ı Yahudiyân ‘an sâkinân-ı nefs-i Edirne*) in the *cizye* register of 1690 can be interpreted in different ways. First reason might be that Jews from other cities residing in Edirne did refuse to accept affinity with any of the 13 congregations, as they were highly likely *cizye*-paying members of other Jewish congregations in other cities such as Istanbul and Sofia. Thus, they probably wanted the authorities to register them under a different group to avoid the double taxation. Ben-naeh states (2008: 93) “Istanbul Jews residing in Edirne behaved like outsiders” and did not “accept the authority of the local community’s leaders and rabbis.” Insofar as official Ottoman sources and court records permit us to say, most of the Jews from other cities, who resided in Edirne due to commercial and other reasons, stayed in rooms (*odas*) of various *hâns*. They wanted to be acknowledged through the membership of their home congregations.

Concerning the eighteenth century, an official census of both guilds and people conducted only one month before the Edirne Incident of 1703 (B.O.A. KK. 731; DVN.

802-803, 1703) that engendered the deposition of Sultan Mustafa II and killing of the powerful Şeyhülislam Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi (Abou-El-Haj, 1984), gives considerable information on the population of the city and, for the main purpose of this study, of the Jews. Kalaycı (1976) and Ergenç (1989) examined one part of the register (KK. 731, 1115/1703), which recorded 65 *mahalles*. The reason for this partial examination was that the other parts (DVN. 802-803) completing the register KK. 731 had not yet come to light by then. Kalaycı (1976: 16-17) believes that almost one fourth of the entire population of Edirne is not existent in this register. However, after examining *mahalle* names in the KK. 2711 register of 1686 and the *avarız* register of 1757 (E.Ş.S. 153), we can more or less safely say that almost 80 *mahalles* are missing in this part of the register (B.O.A. KK. 731, 1703).

The completing parts (DVN. 802, H.1115 and DVN. 803, H.1115) of the population record of 1703 show most of the missing *mahalles*. These parts show 56 more neighborhoods. This census (KK. 731, 1703 and DVN.d. 802-803, 1703) registered 121 *mahalles* in total. As Ergenç (1989: 1417-8) states, some town quarters might have been registered as one. Hence, the lower number of *mahalles* compared to the KK 2711 register, which recorded 153 mahalles. Some town quarters might not have been existent anymore as a result of fires and earthquakes. Table 2 below contains the number of Jews recorded in this census, which, without mentioning any neighborhoods where Jews were living, assigns a number of 568 Jewish names (households) in Edirne under those 13 congregations mentioned above.

Table 2: Number of Jewish Households in Edirne in 1703 (DVN.d. 802, 1115/1703)

Congregation	Household Number (Male)
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Portagal [Portugal]	41
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Alman [German/Ashkenaz]	76
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Katalan [Catalonia]	58
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Sisilye [Sicily]	37
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Toledo [Toledo]	50
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Aragon [Aragon]	31
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Mayor [Maior]	51
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Budin [Budin]	25
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Küçük Portagal [Little Portugal]	35
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> Polya [Apulia]	38
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> [I]talya [Italy]	44
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> [I]talya ( <i>sic</i> ) [Gerush]	47
<i>Cemâ'at-i</i> İstanbul [Istanbul]	35
<b>TOTAL</b>	568

This increase may not necessarily mean that 100 new households appeared in Edirne within few years. As the previous register (KK. 2711, 1686) was an *'avârızhâne* register, those (such as the Alman congregation, and those having *mu'afnâmes*) who were not regarded as subject to *'avârız* tax were probably not documented in the register. Moreover, Shmuelevitz (1984: 88) informs us through *responsa* that Jewish communities avoided to register every member to tax registers in order to lower the tax burden. Hence the lower number of Jewish households in KK 2711 register of 1686 compared with the 1703 census.



The 1703 census of Edirne (KK. 731, 1115/1703 and DVN.d. 802-803, 1115/1703), on the other hand, was not primarily undertaken for fiscal purposes. It was rather done to document if inhabitants of each *mahalle* and its *imâm* (or priest) became collectively responsible for each other. Guild members were also asked if they accepted responsibility for each other (*mükellefiyyet*). This is clearly stated in the register (KK. 731, 1703: 2).<sup>6</sup> The nature of this register allows us to assume that people would not necessarily have a need to hide. Similar to the *imâm* (or priest) of each *mahalle*, the leader of each Jewish congregation (*cemâ'atbaşı*) agreed on accepting the responsibility for the entire congregation.

In contrast to the KK 2711 register, which separately documented the number of widow females (*dul havâtin*) through a *derkenâr* on each page, the 1703 census mentions fewer women. This may be interpreted in a way that not all widow women were counted, or one of the male members of each family was penned as the head of the household. As for the Jewish community, while widow Jewish women were separately documented in the KK 2711 register of 1686, all the Jewish names recorded in the 1703 census are male. This is another reason that induces us to question the number of the Jewish households in this census of 1703, even though there is a slight increase in their number compared to the KK. 2711 register of 1686.

Another reason for this slight increase in the number of the Jewish community must have been that Edirne was an unofficial seat for the Ottoman court during most of the

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<sup>6</sup> “Mahmiyye-i Edirne’de vâki’ mahallât ahâlileri teftiş ve birbirine kefile virile deyü fermân-ı âli sâdır olmağın ... Efendi ve ... Ağa ma’rifeti ile teftiş ve tafahhus olunub birbirine kefil ve cümleye imamları

late seventeenth century, so that it must have attracted many, including Jews, throughout the Empire. This is evident in court records that many stayed in the city for business matters or as visitors (some examples are E.Ş.S. 74/10a-1; E.Ş.S. 74/37a-1; E.Ş.S. 74/37a-2; E.Ş.S. 77/94a-1; E.Ş.S. 77/94b-1; E.Ş.S. 83/26b-3; E.Ş.S. 83/57a-1; E.Ş.S. 83/81b-1; E.Ş.S. 83/81a-2; E.Ş.S. 83/81a-3; E.Ş.S. 87/16a-1).<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, through the Ottoman official documents, we see no decline in Edirne's Jewish population. Rather, sources indicate a clear growth in the size of the Edirne Jewish community until the very early years of the eighteenth century. However, as no document with sound official figures concerning the mid-eighteenth century have as yet come to light, determining the number of the Jews in Edirne after the Edirne Incident of 1703 is not as easy as it is for the earlier periods for researchers. Some scholars (for example Uğur, 2009; Ben-naeh, 2008: 92; Gerber, 2008: 94) argue that, as the Ottoman court returned from Edirne to İstanbul after 1703, the city did not receive the attention it had had before, and the city's population declined dramatically, along with that of Jews. However, contemporary observations do not describe the city as a neglected one. Motraye (1723: 280), for instance, would describe the city when he arrived there in 1707 "the handsomest of any in Turkey in Europe next to Constantinople" and "well peopled with Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews." Lady Montague (1763: 95-7) was drawing a similar picture in her letters written in Edirne in 1718. She was even comparing the beautiful and very well looked-after streets of the city to those of

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*kefîl olub esâmîleridir ki ber vech-i âtî zikrolunur*"

<sup>7</sup> For better citing the court records, numbers are used as follows: First is the number of the defter (i.e. E.Ş.S. 74). The second is the page number with "a" and "b" for the right and left sides of the page respectively. The last is the number of the document.

London. She mentions the strong positions of Jews in Edirne as merchants and “men” of some *ağas* and *paşas*.

As for after 1703, some conflicting figures of travellers who visited Edirne, a French consulate report from the mid-eighteenth century, and one summary household tax register (*icmal 'avâriz defteri*) must therefore be made use of in order to at least establish a sound demographic order. An anonymous French report presumably dated mid-eighteenth century (and possibly shortly after 1750 because the first correspondences concerning Edirne started to be sent to the French Embassy in İstanbul in 1752)<sup>8</sup> states that there were 15000 Turkish, 3000 Greek,<sup>9</sup> 1000 Armenian, and 1000 Jewish families in Edirne (Archives Nationales de France [Nantes] A.E. B<sup>III</sup> 239 n<sup>o</sup>2, 1750?: 1; Gökbilgin, 1968). This would mean that there were about 100,000 people. Furthermore, in the late eighteenth century, according to İnciciyan (İnciciyan and Andresyan, 1976: 173), Edirne consisting of 160 *mahalles* had 100,000 inhabitants. Though seems exaggerated, this report can be taken more seriously as the French Commercial Consular was established in Edirne in 1709 (six years after the Edirne Incident of 1703) and stayed there until the late nineteenth century (Koutzakiotis, 2009: 173).

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<sup>8</sup> *Ambassade de France a Constantinople Serie D (correspondence consulaire), Reportoire Numerique dela sous serie Andrinople 1752-1914.* (Nantes, 2005: 2). I am indebted to Dr. Georgos Koutzakiotis for providing me this original document.

<sup>9</sup> A church record (Sarafoglou, 1929: 73) dated 1760 states that there were 3275 Greek households in Edirne. It mentions the names of 9 Greek neighborhoods some of which are also found in Ottoman documents. The French report and the Greek Orthodox Church record give similar figures on the Greek inhabitants of the city.

Even if these accounts are read with certain cynicism, it can still be said that Edirne continued to grow during the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries because it remained as a significant spot between İstanbul and the Balkans. Also, as the Empire lost considerable portions of territories in Europe, many people (Muslims and Jews alike) would return to the hinterland in search of fortune in a secure city; and this is evident in many imperial edicts issued during the early decades of the eighteenth century (Halaçoğlu, 1997: 31,78, 92).

Table 3: Populations of Some Neighborhoods of Edirne in 1686 and 1750

Location	1686		1750	
	Real household number	Household ( <i>avarız</i> )	Household ( <i>avarız</i> )	Total household (x 5)
<i>Mahalle-i Hâce Siyâh</i>	53	11	9	45
<i>Mahalle-i Câmi'-i Kebir</i>	50	9	9	45
<i>Mahalle-i Darbhâne</i>	33	8,4 (?)	8	40
<i>Mahalle-i Hammâm-ı Yahşi Fakîh</i>	59	13	13	65
<i>Mahalle-i Çelebi Oğlu</i>	51 (?)	12,5	12	60
<i>Mahalle-i Hâce Bayezid</i>	55	14	14	70
<i>Mahalle-i Devlet İslâm</i>	69	11,4	11	55
<i>Mahalle-i el-Hâc Bedre'd-din</i>	115	27	27	135
<i>Mahalle-i Kahtalu</i>	68	16	10	50

By looking at the summary *avârızhâne* registers (E.Ş.S. 143, 1164: 25), in all the town quarters, most of whose inhabitants were penned in the KK 2711 register of 1686 as Jews, it can be said that some town quarters still continued to home same number of inhabitants, while some had smaller numbers. I used the method applied by Uğur (2001:

45-6) in order to reach a total population of the neighborhoods (using 5 as multiplier to reach an approximate real household number in each *mahalle*). The table above makes a comparison between the total households of some neighborhoods, most of whose inhabitants were Jewish in 1686.

The figures concerning the numbers of households in the neighborhoods largely inhabited by Jews do not show significant changes in the mid-eighteenth century compared to the previous century. As a matter of fact, we observe similar numbers (see Table 3). Thus, even though in many neighborhoods the number of households dramatically decreased, it may be argued that the number of households in those neighborhoods densely populated by Jews did not significantly change or one *avarızhane* represented a different number of real household.<sup>10</sup> In many neighborhoods in Edirne in the mid-eighteenth century, however, these numbers decreased.

Uğur (2001: 45) observes a similar decline in household numbers in some neighborhoods for mid-eighteenth century Mudanya. He thinks that this was “either from the definition of the size of the households or the great decline in the population of the district because of out migration and epidemic diseases or, finally, from the administrative shifts that occurred in the borders of villages of the district.” For Edirne, “administrative shifts” did not occur until the nineteenth century because it remained as a *kaza* with the same *nâhiyes* and so on. In the nineteenth century, Edirne became the center of the Edirne province, which also included the districts of Filibe, Tekfurdağı,

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<sup>10</sup> In another ‘*avârızhâne* register dated 1810, one ‘*avârızhâne* was defined as 8 or 10 real *hânes* (Sarıcaoğlu, 2001: 97)

and Gelibolu (Köksal, 2002: 134-9; Sarıcaoğlu, 2001: 14). The decrease in the numbers of households in some neighborhoods, though, might have been due to the fire and earthquake partially destructing some town quarters in the city in 1745 and 1751 respectively (Gökbilgin, 1980: 684; Uğur, 2009: 195-7;), which possibly also affected the Jews economically. The damage caused both by the great fire (*İhrâk-ı Kebîr*) of 1159/1745-6 and the big earthquake (*Zelzele-i 'azîm*) of 1166/1751 is vividly described in imperial edicts sent to the *kâdi* of Edirne. The *fermân* (E.Ş.S. 153, 1166/1751-2: 7-8) sent in 1751 for the immediate restoration of those places, which were damaged in the citadel walls (as well as the walls themselves) because of the earthquake, states that the area between the Top Kapı, Kafes Kapı, and the Keçeciler Kapı, as well as the area between the Debbâğhâne, the Manyas Kapı, and the Balık Pazarı had been almost entirely ruined.

Jews almost exclusively lived in these parts within the city walls, so that the earthquake must have affected many of them severely. However, as the edifices were continuously repaired, many inhabitants must have moved to other neighborhoods, while some probably preferred to move to other cities. Through these documents, though, it is hard to evaluate the level of outward population move.

As mentioned earlier, for taxation of the Edirne Jews, a fixed number (*maktu'*) of 200 for *avarız* and *nüzl* taxes had for a long time been used. Yet, by 1750-1 the Edirne Jews petitioned to İstanbul demanding that this fixed number be reconsidered. Probably after some negotiations between the community leaders and the central authorities, an imperial edict (*fermân*) was issued in 1752 lowering the number to 100 (for the *fermân*

see, Galante, 1985-6: 5:139-40). The same fixed number was also recorded in the 1757 (E.Ş.S. 153, 1757: 51 and 1810 (for the register see Sarıcaoğlu, 2001: 188) *avârızhâne* registers.

Does this mean that the number of Jews living in Edirne dropped by the half of what had been previously? Ben-naeh (2008: 60 and 92), interpreting this as a number of real households, thinks that it shows how “quickly dwindled” the population of the Edirne Jewish Community. However, since this was not a real household number, it would be misleading to argue its demographic erosion. As well explained by Shmuelevitz (1984: 87), getting a tax revision from Ottoman authorities in case of deterioration in economic situation and a fall in the number of taxpayers would generally be the instigation of Jewish communities. It is, however, obvious that the Jews were no longer able to pay the amount of tax assigned to them.

In the light of these accounts, it can be said, there seems no indication of demographic “decline.” We can more or less safely say that the population of the Edirne Jewish Community continued to grow and sustain until the 1750s. After the 1750s, although the Edirne Jewish Community probably lost some of its members who preferred to leave the city for other cities, further documents with sound data are needed to show a dramatic decline in the Jewish population of Edirne.

### 3.2 Jewish Congregations

A Jewish community of a city consisted - most of the time - of various congregations (pl. *kehalim* in Hebrew). Depending on the city's size, the number of Jewish congregations varied from one city to another having minimum 2-3 or maximum more than 20. Seventeenth century Salonica, for instance, had more than 25 congregations (Ben-naeh, 2008: 87-88). İzmir, though similar in size to Edirne, had 9 congregations in the late-seventeenth century (Barnai, 1994: 277).

The Edirne Jewish Community's congregations reached a good number with the arrival of those expelees from the Iberian Peninsula. As a fairly large city with 40-50.000 inhabitants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Edirne Jewish Community had 13 congregations until the very early years of the twentieth century, after which date it was organized around one single synagogue built in 1907 (Galante Vol.6, 1985-6: 19) following a great fire that destroyed the synagogues of the 13 congregations.<sup>11</sup>

Soyer (2007: 15-16) informs us that a sizeable number of congregations started to appear following Solomon Ibn Verga's settlement in the city of Edirne in 1507, which "boasted a sizeable community of Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in the sixteenth century." Parallel to this development occurred in the very beginning of the same century, the first data concerning the congregations of the Edirne Jewish community

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<sup>11</sup> As the great fire destroyed all the existing synagogues in Edirne, until the Grand Synagogue (*Havra-ı Kebir*) was built, the members of various congregations petitioned to the central authorities to use the house of Rabbi Salomon as though their worshipping place (B.O.A. ŞD.2719, H. 1320). The permission was granted (DH. MKT.910, H. 1322).



comes from the 1518 fiscal register (*tahrir defteri*) documenting eight congregations. They were established with the names of the places from which they had come. According to Ben-naeh (2008: 81), exiled Jews established different *kehalim* wherever they settled. The Jewish congregations of Edirne recorded in this early sixteenth century tax register were Alaman (German-Ashkenazic), Katalan (Catalonia), Portagal (Portugal), İspanya (Spain), Polya (Apulia), Aragon, Toledo and Gerush (meaning expulsion in Hebrew). Amongst these congregations, the Portugese, Spanish, and Gerush congregations were the biggest ones in size; and the German and Toledo congregations being the smallest ones (Epstein, 1980: 218).

The number of the congregations would rise to 14 by the last quarter of the same century. In addition to those congregations documented in the previous register, the new ones were as follows: Çiçilye (Sicily), Mayor (Maior), İtalya (Italy), *Tetimme-i Cemâ'at-i Portagal* (The Completing Portugal?), *Sürgünân-ı Yahûdiyân ki enderûn-ı Edirne end*, and *Ba'zı Yahûdiyân ki der Evkâf-ı Merhum Sultan Mehemed Han der Edirne end* (Şakir-Taş, 2009: 294). *Tetimme-i Cemâ'at-i Portagal* would be registered as the *Cemâ'at-i Portagal-ı Sagir* (The Little Portugal Congregation) in the following century (KK. 2711, 1680: 70).

Epstein (1980: 218) assumes the *Cemâ'at-i Sürgünân* as the Jews from Budun who were exiled from this city.<sup>13</sup> The Ottoman register, though, does not provide any detail about where these exiled (*Sürgünân*) Jews originally came from. The foundation of the

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<sup>13</sup> The same congregations can be seen in another register dated 976/1568-9. See TT. 54,1568-9:24 -27).

Budin Congregation has been analyzed through different hypotheses. For some (Marcus/Ginio, 2007: 148; Bali, 2008: 206; Taş, 2009: 125), this group of Jews, who were exiled from Hungary by Louis I in 1376, took refuge in Edirne and established a synagogue called Budin. Gerber (2008: 102) assumes that the Budin Congregation was established with the arrival of the entire community of Buda from which Ottomans withdrew in 1526. In other words, according to him, it was the product of the early sixteenth century. However, Ottoman documents clearly show that Jews from Budin were recognized as Alaman (Refik, 1988: 13). So, many Jews probably *did* come from Budin, and became members of the Alaman (German) Congregation because they were also Ashkenazic.

An early-seventeenth century rabbi, Ya'akov le-veit haLevi, believed that the existence of various congregations rather than one united community was “the outcome of a society marked by internal conflict” (Ben-naeh, 2008: 80). As Ben-naeh states (2008: 81), distinctive characteristics of Jewish communities gave way to the establishment of new congregations and the division of those existing ones. These two reasons put forward both by haLevi and Ben-naeh were highly likely applicable to the Edirne Jewish Community. Thus, it would not be wrong to assume that the Budin Congregation may have separated from the Alaman Congregation in the seventeenth century since it first appeared in this century's registers. Similarly, Lewis (1984: 127) claims that the Catalonia congregation of Edirne split at some point into two as “old Catalan” and “new Catalan.” According to the TT 77 register dated 1519, the Apulia congregation was separated from the Catalonia congregation (Nazmi-Taş, 2010: 272).

So, the division of the Catalonia congregation stated by Lewis might be the separation between the Apulia and the Catalonia congregations.

Both Ben-naeh (2008: 84-5) and Heyd (1953: 299-303) analyze the Jewish Communities of big cities (i.e. Istanbul and Salonica) under two groups namely the “*Sürgün*” congregations and “*Kendi gelen*” congregations. Moreover, Cooper (1963: 4-5) states that some Jewish sources such as the *Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer* of Rabbi Eliezer of Toledo printed in Salonica in 1853 also recorded the congregations of Istanbul under the two-abovementioned categories.<sup>14</sup> The Ottoman authorities did not explicitly use the definition of “*kendi gelen*” for those Iberian expellees and refugees settled in Edirne. They were rather registered under the names of places that they came from. As mentioned before, some Jews were categorized under one particular congregation called the *Cemâ‘at-i Sürgünân-ı Yahûdiyân* (TTD. 54, 1568-9: 27), making us believe that some Jews were forced to settle in Edirne.

In the sixteenth century, the majority of the congregations (most being of Sephardic origin and only the Alaman congregation being of Ashkenazic origin) belonged to the *kendi gelen*. Rozen (1998: 333) informs us that the majority of the Ashkenazim Jews who came and settled in Istanbul from Southern Germany in the 1470s would be registered as *sürgün*, which would change by the beginning of the seventeenth century under the classification of *kendi gelen*. Rozen (1998: 333) believes early Ashkenazic Jews were registered under the category of *sürgün* because “the concept of Jews as

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<sup>14</sup> In a sixteenth century *ferman* (Refik, 1988: 56), the Jewish Community of Istanbul is described under three groups, namely the *Sürgün*, *Kendü gelen*, and Edirne (possibly Karaite).

kendi gelen may not have evolved until the massive Iberian emigration.” In the case of the Edirne Jews, however, those *sürgün* Jews of Edirne were probably the ones who came from various Ottoman towns (including Budin) in order to populate the city throughout the sixteenth century. This division would not be the case in the seventeenth century as the *sürgünan* congregation would cease to exist by this century.

By the fifties of the seventeenth century, different Jewish names from 14 congregations would be recorded as borrowers in the estate inventory (*muhallefāt*) of an *askeri*, el-Hac Mehmed Beğ, whose estate inventory was recorded in Edirne’s court records (Barkan, 1966: 382-386). The names of these congregations are Gerush, Portugal, Aragon, Toledo, Apulia, Sicily, Maior, Istanbul, Catalonia, Budin, Küçük Portugal, Büyük Potugal, Küçük Alman, Büyük Alman, and Italy. For the mid-seventeenth century, Hacker (1992: 123), without giving any source, mentions 15 congregation names, three of which are Alman – Alman, Küçük Alman, and Büyük Alman. It may be assumed that the Küçük Alman congregation probably appeared after an internal dispute, and shortly after got re-united. Heyd (1953: 307) thinks, although a Jew was forbidden to leave her/his congregation “by common agreement,” some groups established their own smaller congregations due mainly to taxation matters. So, it is hard to determine if it was registered as such by the *kādi* (or by his *nâ’ib*) because of convenience or it was a scribal error, even though, one may argue, the *kādi* (or his *nâ’ib*) would not decide to register if these new congregations did not have some kind of state recognition. Hence, how come now that the Ottoman sources could register them differently might be explained by registration systems of the *ilmiyye* and *kalemiyye*. Since the two systems

were separate, one would assume different parts of the bureaucracy could issue an order than another department.

However, it ought to be underlined that the Küçük Alman congregation is only mentioned in the court records registering the abovementioned *askeri*'s estate inventory. In all other official registers – including the late seventeenth and eighteenth century Muslim court records examined for this thesis –, only the Alman cogregation is encountered. Therefore, it is highly likely that the Alman Congregation was divided into two at some point, then they got re-united.

As can be clearly seen, by the mid-seventeenth century, the congregations of *Sürgünân-ı Yahûdiyân* and *Ba'zı Yahûdiyân ki der Evkâf-ı Merhum Sultan Mehmed Han* did not exist anymore. The former, as a minor congregation in Edirne, was highly likely absorbed by the dominant Sephardim or the Ashkenazim German congregations. The latter, on the orther hand, recorded as *Cemâ'at-i ba'zı Yahudiyân ki der Evkâf-ı Merhum Sultân Mehmed Hân* (TT. 54, 1568: 27a) in the mid-sixteenth century, would be registered as the İstanbul congregation in the seventeenth century (Emecen, 1998: 62).

Therefore, one can assume that the Ottoman authorities had already recognized the İstanbul Congregation in the previous century under a different name. As is well known, the Karaite community of Edirne had already been transfered to İstanbul by Mehmet II's policy of repopulating the city after its conquest in 1453 (Heyd, 1953: 304). However, the remaining Romaniotes in Edirne and probably with some other Greek-speaking Jews coming to Edirne from other Balkan cities and becoming

members of this congregation formed a robust Romaniote community. The congregation started to be registered as the İstanbul one by the seventeenth century.

To some (Ben-naeh, 2008: 92; Gerber, 2008:103), the İstanbul congregation was the product of the seventeenth century. Ben-naeh (2008: 92) states that this congregation consisted of individuals who migrated from İstanbul to Edirne or lived there on an impermanent base because of business matters. Indeed, during most of the seventeenth century Edirne enjoyed the status of being an unofficial seat for the Ottoman court; so, many Greek-speaking Jews who preferred to come to and stay in the “*de facto*” capital probably preferred to call themselves members of the İstanbul Congregation, as they were neither Sephardic nor Ashkenazic. Ben-naeh (2008: 93) further argues “individuals from various congregations in the capital belonged to Edirne’s İstanbul Congregation.” However, the *cizye* register of 1690, along with the existing 13 congregations, records (MAD. d. 4021, 1690: 15-16) a separate group called the *Perâkendegân-ı Yahudiyân ‘an Sakinân-ı Nefs-i Edirne*, whose members were not affiliated to any of the abovementioned congregations in Edirne. They were probably members of different congregations in other cities, because none of the names penned under the *Perâkendegân-ı Yahudiyân* was registered according to their ability to pay taxes (i.e. *a’lā*, *evsat* and *ednā*). This compels us to believe that they were already *cizye*-paying people in other cities. Since these Jews were highly likely not permanent residents in Edirne, the Edirne Jewish Community might have wanted them to pay the lowest *cizye* rate to contribute to the communal expenses.

Heyd (1953: 308) believes that the Greek-speaking Romaniotes had incessant resistance to Sephardic dominance. This was probably the case for the Jews of Edirne as well. The Istanbul congregation was recorded as *Cemâ'at- i Romanya nâm-ı diğer İstanbul* in the poll tax register dated 1690, which means that the members of this congregation were Greek-speaking Romaniotes (MAD. 4021, 1689-90: 9-10), and they probably wanted to keep their distinctive character. The Istanbul Congregation in the late seventeenth century had almost thirty families. In one decade, the size of it would slightly increase to thirty-five households (DVN. 802, 1703: 21). In other seventeenth century registers and eighteenth century court records, we see this congregation as the İstanbul one, not the Romanya. Nor do we see it as the *Cemâ'at-i ba'zı Yahudiyân ki der Evkâf-ı Merhûm Sultân Mehmed Hân*.

In the late seventeenth century, we see the following 13 congregations documented in the *cizye* register dated 1690 (MAD. 4021, 1689-90: 2-16). These were Portagal-ı Sagîr (The Little Portugal), Polya (Apulia), Budin (Hungary), Italya (Italy), Alaman (German), Portagal-ı Kebîr (The Great Portugal), İstanbul (also Romanya), Mayor (Maior), Aragon, Katalan (Catalonia), Toledo, Geruz (Gerush), and Sisilye (Sicily). Ben-naeh (2008: 92), by profiting from Hebrew sources, mentions the existence of one more congregation named Shensolu/Shensulos in the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Galante (1985: 19) mentions the names of the Seville (Spanish) and Kephalonía (Greek) congregations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, neither the tax registers nor the court records examined for this thesis name these two congregations in Edirne mentioned by Ben-naeh and Galante.

The detailed *'avârizhâne* register undertaken a few years earlier also documented 13 congregations only with one difference. The Maior congregation does not appear on the list, and instead we see the Spanish (İspanya) congregation (K.K. 2711, 1680: 70). In the late seventeenth and eighteenth century court records. However, we see the name Mayor (and sometimes Maryor [E.Ş.S.116/60a-1], probably because of a scribal error) not İspanya.<sup>15</sup> Whether this congregation was recognized as Mayor by local judicial authorities, and as İspanya by the central authorities or the both names were concurrently used for different purposes is unclear. As explained before, this might be due to different registration systems of different units of the bureaucracy. Thus, while the name İspanya (Spain) might have been used by the *kalemiyye*, Mayor (Maior) might have been used by the *ilmiyye*.

Along with the Little Portugal Congregation, we also see the Portugal Congregation (*Cemâ'at-i Portagal*) in court records (E.Ş.S.87/74a-2; E.Ş.S.88/15a-1; E.Ş.S.116/57b-5). Does this mean that there was another congregation named only the Portugal? It is highly unlikely. Although this might be again a scribal error, or, as mentioned above, due to some financial disputes, some might have splitted into a smaller group for a certain period of time. None of the court records examined for this thesis mentions the Great Portugal congregation (i.e., *Büyük Portagal* or *Portagal-ı Kebîr*). However, it is probable, in the court records, that the Little Portugal Congregation (*Portakal-ı Sağîr* or

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<sup>15</sup> For example, “*Mahmiyye-i Edirne'de Mâyor cemâ'atinden işbu bâ'isü's-sifr Menâhim veled-i Avram nâm Yahûdi Meclis-i Şer'-i Şerîf-i enverde Mahmiyye-i Edirne'de Yahşi Fakîh mahallesinde sâkin iken bundan akdem maktûlen hâlik olan serpûşcu Adam veled-i Artin veled-i Kirkor nâm Ermeninin...*” (E.Ş.S. 111, 1122: 18-9/3); “*Mahmiyye-i Edirne'de Mâyor cemâ'atinden işbu bâ'isü's-sifr 'attar Aslan Daron nâm Yahûdi Meclis-i Şer'de mahmiyye-i mezbûre hisni dâhilinde El-hâc İslâm mahallesi sükkânından olub...*” (E.Ş.S. 113, 1124: 20/1)



*Küçük Portakal*) was used in the KK 2711 register and court records respectively (KK 2711, 1686: 70; E.Ş.S.116/58a-1), while *Portagal* used alone denoted the Great Portugal Congregation.

The 1703 population record (DVN. d. 802, 1703: 17- 21) done for the mere purpose of counting people and guild members also documents 13 congregations under the Jewish Community (*Tâ'ife-i Yahudiyân*). The division regarding the Portugal congregations is as though the Portugal Congregation (*Cemâ'at-i Portagal*) (DVN. d. 802, 1703: 17) and the Little Portugal congregation (*Cemâ'at-i Küçük Portagal*) (DVN. d. 802, 1703: 19). This division well resembles with the judicial records that also use these two names for the Portugal congregations. The only misleading thing in this register is that the Italian congregation (*Cema'at-i [İ]talya*) is recorded twice (DVN. d. 802, 1703: 20-21). As the Gerush congregation, which had been continually existent both in court records and fiscal registers, is the only missing one in this record, it is certain that one of these Italian congregations is meant to be the Gerush Congregation. If there had been a division among the Italian congregation, this would have been seen in the register through such words as *küçük*, *sagîr*, and the like. However, as the two congregations are recorded with the same name (i.e. *[İ]talya*), it can be assumed that it was a scribal error.

By the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Jewish community of Edirne consisted of three large groups - Sephardim, Ashkenazim, and Romaniot - under which 13 congregations were established. It was predominantly Sephardic, and the leading congregations were also Sephardic. Almost one eighth of the entire community was of

Ashkenazic (Alaman and Budin) origin, according to the cizye register of 1690. In contrast to their low level of representation in the entire community, the Alaman congregation had a very high percentage (89 %) of members paying high taxes - *a'la* and *evsat* (MAD. 4021, 1689: 6-7). Similar to the cizye records for İstanbul Jews in the beginning of the seventeenth century examined by Heyd (1953: 308), the Gerush and Mayor congregations had the highest rate (94 %) of members paying high taxes (MAD. 4021, 1689: 8-11). A good proportion (88 %) of the İstanbul congregation was also paying high taxes (MAD. 4021, H.1100/1689: 9-10). The names of those aforementioned 13 congregations have also been detected in various court records registered in the first half of the eighteenth century (see, Appendix E).

To sum up, the existence of these 13 congregations was cristilized by the end of the seventeenth century, and continued until the very early twentieth. These congregations had their own synagogues located in the *kaleiçi*. These synagogues also made the main area, around which many Jews resided. Below I will discuss the Jewish space, the relations between Jews, and their relations with the broader society.

### **3.3 Jewish Space in Edirne vis-à-vis the Ambient Society**

Before starting to trace the Jewish space, it will be helpful to comprehend the spatial organization of old Edirne. Scholars (Darkot, 1993; Yıldırım, 1991) have mostly drawn upon the late-nineteenth century illustration of Mehmed Selami, a teacher of drawing in the Military School of Edirne (for the plan drawn by Selami see Gökbilgin, 1991: 686). In his plan, he shows few main buildings and some neighborhoods without giving

significant details on them. Another plan of Edirne belongs to Rifat Osman (1336: 48-9), which is rather a late-period plan that shows certain government buildings and few non-Muslim worshiping edifices including the Grand Synagogue. The former does not give any information about the synagogues that were hitherto existent. The latter, on the other hand, does show the place of the Grand Synagogue built after a fire that decimated those 13 synagogues.

Therefore, as neither plan is useful for drawing the Jewish space in Edirne clearly, another plan of Edirne made a few decades earlier and included 200 buildings in a separate list, may be more useful. Many of these buildings can also be seen in Ottoman documents. Where those buildings are placed in the plan is important for the present thesis because 12 synagogues are clearly seen on this plan.<sup>16</sup> This thesis shall therefore benefit from this plan of Edirne made in 1854.

During the Crimean War (1854-56), at a time when the French army – as an ally of the Ottomans – had a good number of soldiers stationed in Edirne to be sent to Sevastopol against the Russian army, the French army officer Osmont prepared a detailed plan of Edirne. He divided the city into two as though the *Intra Muros* (Kale İçi) and the *Extra Muros* (Kale Dışı), and illustrated the entire city through an index of 200 buildings, most of which are mosques. Furthermore, he placed the synagogues of 13 congregations on the *intra muros* section of the plan, while it names various churches (Greek, Armenian and Catholic) on both the *intra muros* and *extra muros* sections of the plan

(for the original plan see, Appendix B). Knowing where the mosques (and also churches and synagogues) are makes it easier for us to place the neighborhoods on the city plan as *mahalles*, the smallest administrative units of urban structure of an Ottoman city, are mostly organized around these worshiping edifices (Ergenç, 1984: 73).

The Osmont Plan has been examined by Alexandra Yerolympos (1993; 1996). So, this section shall use the Osmont Plan through her works, and shall add on the top of that the findings of this thesis. The division that the Osmont Plan offers is important for the present study because, as shall be given below, most of the Jews lived in various town quarters within the walls, as well as in few other neighborhoods just outside the Citadel walls. However, Jews inhabited some *intra muros* neighborhoods in Edirne almost exclusively. This is evident both in the household tax registers and court records. What impelled Jews to reside in those neighborhoods they lived? Was it the intention to be close to their synagogues? Or was it also their intention to be around some groups with whom they had close economic-monetary ties, or both? This part shall therefore first examine what parts of Edirne the Jews resided, then, will try to find out the possible reasons behind it.

For some scholars, the *kahal* (congregation) was the basic administrative unit for Jews, unlike Muslims and Christians whose basic administrative unit was *mahalle* (Ben-naeh, 2008: 164). Rozen (1998: 337), for instance, describes this as follows:

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<sup>16</sup> According to I. Petrou (1949: 69), the Edirne Metropolitan records counted 12 synagogues in 1862. Darkot (1993: 10) says that Kamusü'l-alam figures documented in the end of the nineteenth century also mentions 12 synagogues in Edirne.

“... [t]he Ottomans regarded the mahalle as an administrative unit of citizens who belonged to a specific religion; it was defined by their religion, rather than by the physical proximity in which they lived. The Ottomans dealt with each religious group in an area as a separate neighborhood, ignoring the fact that geographically the neighborhoods overlapped. Thus, people of different religions who lived next door to each other belonged to different mahalles, while people of the same religion who did not live in relative proximity could belong to the same mahalle.”

So, the Jewish congregation, according to Rozen (1998: 337), was in actual fact the Ottoman *mahalle*. The above-written paragraph of Minna Rozen may be true for *tahrir* registers, since many of them documented Jews as a big community. Furthermore, under this Jewish Community, the names of its congregations were written, not under different *mahalles*. So, residential proximity was not the core factor in registering Jews in *tahrirs*.

The *mahalles* where the Jews were residing are placed on the plan given below through the building names that the Osmont Plan and Ottoman sources provide. The Jewish space within the citadel walls (See Map 1 below), was roughly between the Girme Kapı (no. 19) and the Tahte‘l-kal‘a quarter. Outside the citadel walls, it was between the Üç Şerefeli Câmi‘i (no. 23), the Bedestân (24), the İki Kapılı Hân (25), the Rüstem Paşa Hân (no. 26), and the Ali Paşa Hân (no. 22); as well as around the Dârü‘l-hadis (no. 27). The Osmont Plan of Edirne (Yerolympos, 1996: 76-77) places the 12 synagogues (Nos. 1-13) on the *intra muros* section of the plan. It leaves the name of one synagogue blank (no. 10), which probably belonged to the Little Portugal congregation. All these synagogues were between the neighborhood of Tahta‘l-kal‘a and the Kahtalu Mosque (no. 15).

Map 1. Some buildings and neighborhoods in Edirne



The Jews lived in Edirne can be analyzed under two divisions, namely those who were members of the thirteen congregations and resided in the city permanently, and others who were temporarily in Edirne as merchants and/or visitors. It can be inferred that while most members of the former making the majority of the Jewish population in Edirne were living around the synagogues within the walls in their own houses or in rental ones, the latter was rather accommodated in the rooms of various *hâns* owned by different endowments (*vakıfs*). Nonetheless, as is evident in official Ottoman documents, there were also Jews not living close to those synagogues, but in other town

quarters within the citadel, as well as outside the walls.

The 1686 *avârizhâne* register (K.K. 2711, 1686: 19-26 and 70) draws a clear map of Jewish space by giving the names of the neighborhoods Jews resided, without giving any details about their congregations. It documented almost 420 Jewish names (households) residing in 10 different *mahalles* within and outside the Citadel walls. The table below contains geographic distribution of Edirne Jews within various town quarters.

Table 4: Spatial Distribution of the Edirne Jews in 1686

<b>Location</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Mahalle-i Hâce Siyâh</i>	8	2	10
<i>Mahalle-i Câmi‘-i Kebîr</i>	14	-	14
<i>Mahalle-i Darbhâne</i>	12	-	12
<i>Mahalle-i Hammâm-ı Yahşi Fakih</i>	33	14	47
<i>Mahalle-i Çelebi Oğlu</i>	37	4	41
<i>Mahalle-i Hâce Bayezid</i>	43	6	49
<i>Mahalle-i Devlet İslam</i>	65	10	75
<i>Mahalle-i El-Hâc Bedre‘d-din</i>	97	7	104
<i>Mahalle-i Kahtalu</i>	49	-	49
<i>Mahalle-i Aya Yani Prodromos</i>	5	-	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>416</b>

These are the town quarters of Hâce Siyâh, Darbhâne, Hammâm-ı Yahşi Fakih, Çelebi Oğlu, Hâce Bayezid, Devlet İslâm, El-hâc Bedre‘d-din, Kahtalu, and Aya Yani Prodromos. Hevâce Siyâh (Gökbilgin, 1952: 53), Darbhâne (Gökbilgin, 1952: 51), Çelebi Oğlu (E.Ş.S. 87, 16a-1; Gökbilgin, 1993: 170), El-hâc Bedre‘d-din (E.Ş.S.138,

5a-3), Hammâm-ı Yahşi Fakih (Gökbilgin, 1993: 164-5), Kahtalu (E.Ş.S.77, 94b-1), and Aya Yani Prodromos (KK. 2711, 1680: 70) have been clearly identified as *intra muros* quarters through different sources. Only the town quarters of Hevâce Bayezid and Devlet İslâm have not been confirmed as such through *sicills*. However, while Badi Efendi listed the former as one in the Tahta'l-kal'a quarter, (Kazancıgil, 1999: 125), the latter is listed among the *intra muros* neighborhoods both in the KK 2711 *avârizhâne* register (KK. 2711, 1686: 17) and the DVN 802 register.

According to the KK 2711 *avârizhâne* register, the neighborhood of Câmî'-i Kebîr was also recorded among the aforementioned *mahalles* within the Citadel walls. However, Gökbilgin (1952: 43) believes that *Câmî'-i Kebîr* was also known as *Câmî'-i Cedîd* or *Üç Şerefeli Câmî'*. The *Câmî'-i Kebîr* neighborhood was recorded as the neighborhood of Kilisa Cami' in the 1703 census (DVN 802, 1703: 15-16). If these two registers are taken for granted, it might be said that Jews lived exclusively in the neighborhoods located within the citadel walls.

However, there were also Jews living in few neighborhoods located outside the walls. The population record (KK. 731, 1703: 19) of the city documented in 1703 mentions Jewish households in the town quarter of El-hac 'Attar Halil. It records three Jewish households/Jewish renters (*Yahudi müste'cirler*) as the tenants of Ali Çelebioğlu Hadım[?], Mustafa Çelebi, and İsmail Dede. It does not give any name or number of households lived in those houses. Gökbilgin (1952: 58 n.111) states that this neighborhood was around the Dârü'l-hadis Mosque (outside the Citadel walls by the Tunca river and close to the Manyas Kapı), and had various rental rooms belonged to



the *vakıfs* of Dârü'l-hadis and those of Çukacı Hacı.

Though no certain number is given for these Jewish renters, from the way the register documents them, it can be inferred that a few Jews were probably living in the same rooms. To stay in the same house was in fact very common among poor Jews. John Covell (1892: 190), when he visited the city in 1671, would see two-three families in the same house especially in some parts of Edirne densely populated by the Jews. Many of these places were called as *Yahudihânes* (Şişman, 2010; Rozen, 1998: 341-44), and Ottoman sources clearly define them as such (Barkan, 1966: 111; E.Ş.S. 138, 1147/1735: 76/137-8). However, as these Jewish renters were not registered under the Jewish Community (*Tâ'ife-i Yahudiyân*), it may be assumed that they were transients and/or had no ties with any of the 13 congregations. In fact, in the court records, transient Jews were clearly recorded as such with their congregational connection in their hometowns. For instance, the Jew Mayer veled-i Menahim, of the Delaruz[?] Congregation in Sofia, (E.Ş.S. 77, 1695-6: 94/3) and the Jew Avram veled-i Salomon, of the Linariko[?] Congregation in Istanbul, (E.Ş.S. 77, 1695-6: 94/2) were recorded as *misâfir* in court records.

In terms of the religious composition of each mahalle, as far as the KK 2711 register permits us to say, one third of the inhabitants of the town quarter of Câmi'-i Kebîr was Jewish, while one third was Muslim, and last third was Christian. Even though Armenians, akin to Jews, are openly described as *Ermeni*, the number of Christians without any distinction is given in total as *gebrân* (KK. 2711, 1686: 19-20). However, it ought to be stated that this town quarter had one of the smallest Jewish groups in

Edirne, as only 14 Jewish names were recorded under that. Apart from the town quarter of Câmî‘-i Kebîr, the town quarters of Kahtalu, El-hâc Bedre‘d-din, and Hâce Siyâh were also religiously mixed. 10 out of 66 households in the Kahtalu neighborhood (KK. 2711, 1686: 25-26) and 49 out of 70 inhabitants in the Hevâce Siyâh neighborhood were recorded as Jewish (KK. 2711, 1686: 19). In the town quarter of El-hâc Bedre‘d-din, however, the majority was Jewish with 96 out of 116 households. Only 8 Muslim and 12 Christian households (Armenian and Orthodox) were recorded in this *mahalle* (KK. 2711, 1686: 24-25). These neighborhoods, whose majority of residents was Jewish, must have had a number of *yahudihânes*, similar to Hasköy as Rozen (1998: 344) points it out when she meticulously draws the Jewish space for sixteenth and seventeenth century Istanbul.

The same register reveals that some *mahalles* where Jews were also living did not have Muslim inhabitants at all. In the town quarters of Hammâm-ı Yahşi Fakih, Çelebi Oğlu, Hâce Bayezid, Aya Yani Prodromos, and Devlet İslâm, for instance, only Orthodox and Jewish households were recorded. If this register is taken for granted by not crosschecking it through other sources, one might easily assume that these neighborhoods did not inhabit Muslims at all. However, 9 Muslim names are seen in the 1703 census (A.DVN. 802, 1703:16) as inhabitants of the neighborhood of Devlet İslâm. In the 1686 *avârizhâne* register, only Jewish, Armenian and Orthodox names were documented in the town quarter of Darbhâne (KK. 2711, 1686: 23-25). In all of these *mahalles*, however, the majority was Jewish. In terms of neighborhoods with almost exclusively non-Muslim residents, Rozen (1998: 341) and Göçek and Baer

(1997) provide similar findings for Hasköy in the sixteenth and seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries respectively.

The 1703 census (A.DVN. d. 802, 1703: 17-21) does not provide any spatial information for the Edirne Jewish Community as it recorded all the 13 congregations under the general definition of *Tâ'ife-i Yahudiyân*. However, by looking at the names of the neighborhoods written before and after the Jewish congregations, it is obvious that they were registered during the *Kaleiçi* part of the city was counted. It can be said that most members of the 13 Jewish congregations were inhabited within the citadel walls, even though, as Rozen rightly puts, Jews living in other neighborhoods would be registered under their congregations. Some neighborhoods, which are seen both in the 1686 *mufassal* and the 1750 *icmal avârizhâne* registers as well as in court records, are not existent in the 1703 census. The *mahalles* of Darbhâne, Çelebi oğlu, and Hevâce Bayezid where Jews were also living were not recorded in this census of 1703. Compared to 151 neighborhood names in the 1686 register, only 123 *mahalles* were recorded in the 1703 census. As Ergenç (1989: 1418) points out, some neighborhoods were probably recorded as one. This was especially the case for the *intra muros* quarters.

Unfortunately, the Edirne judicial registers do not contain very clear information about the *mahalles* where Jews resided, because they frequently mention the names of the congregations. In the period concerned, few cases clearly give the neighborhood of the Jew who appeared before the *kadı*. But this time the congregation name is not mentioned. So, when the wife of a deceased Jew, Habib veled-i Yako, came to the

*kadı*'s court for estate inventory distribution of the deceased, the court record openly indicated the neighborhood of Darbhâne as the neighborhood where the deceased had resided (E.Ş.S. 79, M 1108: 45/2). Or, when Abraham son of Moşe went to the Muslim court to claim his money from a deceased '*askeri*'s inventory, the neighborhood of Çelebi Oğlu was penned as the *mahalle* where he resided (E.Ş.S. 87, S 1114: 16/1).

Other examples can also be found in court records that mention the name of the neighborhood of the particular Jew(s) appearing before the *kadı*. However, few cases give details about the congregations. Most of the court records concerning the Jews from various congregations and their town quarters where they resided describe the neighborhoods by using the general description of "within the citadel walls of Edirne" (*Mahmiyye-i Edirne hısnı dâhilinde*) and the particular congregation name. So, when one court record mentions "such and such Jew/Jewess from such and such congregation residing within the Citadel walls," it was probably the case that most members of that congregation lived in a specific area that was probably close to or around the synagogue, and this fact was probably well known by the local authorities. This is somehow parallel to the information given by the 1686 register that documented some neighborhoods within the walls densely populated by Jews that I mentioned above. What were the reasons for this residential proximity between Jews? Was it merely due to the intention of the Jew to be close to her/his co-religionists? Were there other reasons that determined their residential choices?

Minna Rozen (Rozen, 2006: 261), in the article she penned for the third volume of the *Cambridge History of Turkey*, compared the two largest Jewish communities in the

Ottoman Empire – the Salonica and Istanbul Communities – in terms of everyday dealings and involvements of Jews with Gentile society, and wrote the following:

A Jewish inhabitant of Salonika, for example, considered himself a Salonikan par excellence, and members of other religious groups as expendable aliens. If he related to anyone from this alien culture, it was to members of the ruling Muslim Turcophone class only, with whom he had dealings, and whose protection he enjoyed. The Istanbul Jew, on the other hand, had a different attitude towards the ambient society. Since Jews formed a tiny minority of the capital's enormous population, and since the city's economy revolved to a large extent around the royal court, the Jewish community there was far more enmeshed with the ambient Muslim society than in any other place in the empire.

The Jewish Community in Edirne was similar to that of Istanbul. Even though they tried to keep some of its space as Jewish as possible, it was strongly connected with the broader society. It was almost inevitable not to be in physical and economic proximity with the ambient society since the city's economy was strongly attached to the existence of members of the *'askeri* class, as well as Muslim pious foundations, which Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire in general and in Edirne in particular made use of very often (Barkan and Ayverdi, 1970: 16, 56, 343, 403; Gerber, 1983). Below I will attempt to show the significance of the *'askeris* and pious foundations for the Edirne Jews in terms of their everyday dealings with the non-Jewish majority ambient society.

Following the conquest, Ottomans strengthened a city's structure through erecting some main buildings outside the walls such as a big mosque and a *bedestan*. The commercial centre of the city would be around these buildings (Koç, 2005: 168). Edirne was no exception. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, the *bedestân* was built as a replica

of the Bursa *bedestân*, and the Ali Paşa *arasta* and the Kavaflar *arasta*<sup>17</sup> along with a number of *hâns* were erected by the last quarter of the sixteenth century (Kuran, 1996: 120-21). So, in parallel to the outward development of the city and to the increasing number of Jews with the arrival of the exiles from the Iberian Peninsula, Jews probably began to scatter outside the walls as well, even though they had hitherto almost exclusively lived within the citadel walls. As the number of Jews in Edirne dramatically increased by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – particularly following the Balkan Wars – most of the Jewish population was inhabited in various neighborhoods outside the citadel (see, appendix 3). By the beginning of the twentieth century, out of 159 *mahalles* in Edirne, Osman Rifat (1920: 15-32) counted 24 neighborhoods where Jews were also existent. Most of these neighborhoods were outside of the walls. This was certainly something that developed parallel to the increasing Jewish population, which numbered 24.000 by the 1910s (Osman, 1920: 32).

This residential area of the Jewish community created propinquity to the commercial center of the city, which is evident in the sources. Moreover, as a *pâyitaht*, Edirne homed a great number of Ottoman officials, who lived in different neighborhoods. The commercial ties between Jews and Ottoman officials are also evident in court records. Thus, one may conceivably argue, Jews might have chosen their residential units that were close to the *askeris* with whom they had monetary-commercial ties. Both the KK 2711 *‘avârizhâne* register and the 1703 census record show that a good number of *‘askeris* lived in and around the neighborhoods where Jews resided. In the both registers

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<sup>17</sup> Ergenç (1995: 20) defines *arasta* as shoe-makers bazaar (*haffâflar çarşısı*).

we encounter such titles as *paşa*, *ağa*, *çâvuş*, *bey*, *efendi*, *beşe*, *çelebi*, and *hacı*. Many men with the titles of *pâşâ* and *ağa* resided around the Edirne Palace; while *şeyhs* and *hâces* lived around the Murâdiye and the *bedestân* respectively.

In the KK 2711 register, almost 1000 *askeri* names were recorded in Edirne under a separate group, *tâ'ife-i 'askeri*. We do not see the *bostancibâşıs* numbered, according to Uzunçarşılı (1988: 486), 751 by the end of the seventeenth century, since many of them lived in or around the Edirne Palace were not included to the *avarızhane* register. In the 1703 register, men with these titles were documented along with the Muslim inhabitants of each *mahalle*. As mentioned before, this register consists of three parts – KK 731, DVN 802, and DVN 803. Ergenç (1989: 1415- 24), who counted a total number of 2278 names with the above-mentioned titles in 65 mahalles, analyzed the KK 731 part in detail. The completing parts of the register (DVN 802 and DVN 803) including the neighborhoods in *kaleiçi* where most Jews resided also provide similar information regarding the density of *'askeri* population. These titles are important for us to see the intense contact between Jews and *'askeris*, which is also evident in court records.

The density of relations between Jews and Ottoman officials can be analyzed under two categories. First group includes smaller scale commercial contacts between members of the Edirne Jewish Community and *'askeris*. This contact was mostly established via various goods that Jews were selling and/or producing under different guild organizations such as *kazzâz*, *bezzâz*, and the like. Second group included rather large-scale money-lending/borrowing relations, as well as establishing business associations

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with *askeris*. The latter sometimes included foreign merchants as well (EŞS 87, Safer 1113: 16a/1). Edirne court records provide abundant number of cases concerning the business dealings between Jews and *'askeris*.

Haim Gerber (2008) states that most Edirne Jews registered in the estate inventories of deceased *askeri* class members appear as borrowers in Edirne in the sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries. Similarly, few Jews who went to the *kadi's* court for claiming money from the estate inventories of the deceased *askeris*, with whom they had business ties, appear as moneylender in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In one case recorded in 1701, for instance, we see the Jew İlya veled-i Yasef of the Portugal Congregation lending 500 of gold to El-hac Veli Ağa bin Osman bin Abdülkadir, a Janissary and the *muhassır ağa* in the Edirne Palace (EŞS 87, 10 Cemaziye'l-ahir 1113: 82b/1). In another case, we see a Janissary, Mustafa Ağa bin Abdullah, who died in 1701 without heirs. Because the deceased Janissary's estate would be transferred to the State Treasury (*beytü'l-mâl*), the Jew İlya veled-i Kemal claimed in the presence of Ali Ağa bin Mehmed, the official of the State Treasury (*beytü'l-mâl emini*) that the said Janissary had borrowed 228 *guruş* before his death. The Jew in this case is clearly defined as a broadcloth trader (*çukacı*). However, as the document reveals, we see that only 28 *guruş* of the actual amount emanated from the sale of 14 *zıra'* of broadcloth. The deceased Janissary borrowed 200 *guruş* from the said Jew (EŞS 88, Rebiü'l-evvel 1113: 73a/1).

However, in most cases brought to the *kadi's* court, Jews appear as creditors due to sales of goods (for a list of Jews to whom money was owed, see Appendix E). This



makes sense, because it seems that Jews in Edirne were well involved with various guild groups (see Appendix D). Jews might appear as borrowers in court records, yet this was probably so because they invested the money lending profits in the goods that they were trading and/or producing. This is quite visible for Jewish *çuka* makers/dealers who were selling the *çuka* for different prices. We see in the court records that the price for one *zira*’ of *çuka* varied from 2 *guruş* to 5 *guruş*. The Jew Isak veled-i Mosi of the Aragon Congregation (EŞS 111, Cemaziye’l-evvel 1124: 9a/4) and the Jew Menahim veled-i Avram of the Maior Congregation (EŞS 111, Cemaziyelevvel 1124: 9b/3) charged 2,6 *guruş* for one *zira*’ of broadcloth to the Armenian hat maker (*serpuşcu*) Adam veled-i Artin veled-i Kirkor. The Jew Ilya veled-i Yasef of the Portugal Congregation, when he sold 4 *zira*’ of broadcloth to a Janissary, El-hac Veli Ağa bin Osman, charged 5 *guruş* for one *zira*’ of broadcloth (EŞS 87, 20 Cemaziyelevvel 1113: 74a/2), while the broadcloth maker (*çukacı*) Konorta veled-i Salni[?] charged 4,4 *guruş* to the said Janissary (EŞS 87, 10 Cemaziyelahir 1113: 82b/1). So, even if Jews might appear as lenders in court records, this might be for buying various goods that they were trading. It seems that dealers, who were buying and selling goods as middlemen, were making more profits especially when the buyers were members of *askeri* class.

This also led some Jews and non-Jews to establish commercial cooperations in order to be able to buy larger quantities of goods from other cities. For instance, in 1723, the Jewish herb dealer (*attâr*) Aslan Daron of the Maior Congregation, ‘attar Ali Çelebi bin Mehmed bin Abdullah, and another Jewish herb dealer, Isak veled-i Kemal set up an ‘attâr cooperation by contributing 400, 320, and 100 *guruş* respectively. The Muslim

associate of the cooperation, Ali Çelebi, was responsible for going to Istanbul to buy 'attar goods with the entire amount (EŞS 113, Cemaziye'l-evvel 1135:10b/1 and EŞS 113, Cemaziye'l-evvel 1135: 10b/2). Buying bigger quantities would by all means lower the cost, hence increasing their profit.

Edirne Court records show that high rank Ottoman officials were in very close contact with Jews. For instance, the Jew Mosi veled-i Yasef, a silk producer/trader (*kazzaz*), sued the guardian (*vasî*) of a high official (*Divân-ı Hümâyun Ka'im-makamı Vezir-i mükerrem*), Abdullah Paşa who died in Edirne in 1694, demanding his money from the said *paşa*'s estate. The debt owed to the said Jew for silk goods (*kazzâz emti'aları*) and broadcloth (*çuka*) was 168.5 *guruş* (EŞS 77, Safer 1106: 83a/4).

In some cases, we see very large amounts owed to Jews by high officials due to sales of goods. For instance, when the former governor (*vâli*) of Diyarbekir, Mehmed Paşa bin İlyas, was killed in Edirne in 1701, the Jew Yahya veled-i Yako from the Istanbul Congregation, of the Edirne Jewish Community, sued Ali Efendi bin Bayezid, the deceased Paşa's *vasî*, claimed his money, which the Paşa owed to him because of sales of goods. It is not mentioned what the goods were; yet the amount of debt (17190 *guruş*) is striking (EŞS 87, 12 Rebiü'l-evvel 1113: 41a/3). In the same day, the Jew Abraham veled-i Yahya from the Alaman (German) Congregation, of the Edirne Jewish Community, appeared in the court claiming his money from the very same Paşa's *vasî*, Ali Efendi bin Bayezid. The amount owed to the said Jew because of sales of goods was 3860 *guruş* (EŞS 87, 12 Rebiü'l-evvel 1113: 41a/2). Both cases describe the goods that the abovementioned Jews sold to the said Paşa as various goods (*emti'a'-i*

*mütenevvi*’). These Jews were highly likely merchants dealing with different goods (such as broadcloth, silk, and the like) and doing long-distance business.

Though it is no longer believed there existed ghetto-like areas where Jews were residing in the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman cities had certain town quarters densely populated by Jewish inhabitants. As mentioned above, Edirne had few neighborhoods whose inhabitants were predominantly Jewish. The Jewish households in these quasi-Jewish town quarters wanted to keep their space as exclusive to them as possible by keeping properties in the community. According to Shmuelevitz (1984: 79), Jews wanted to keep their properties “within the community” for the benefit of the entire community. As for Edirne, this, to a large extent, might be the case when it came to some *intra muros* neighborhoods that were almost exclusively Jewish. In some neighborhoods densely populated by Muslims, on the other hand, in case of selling their properties, the Jewish owners of houses or rooms did not pay much attention to whether the new owner was Jewish or not (for example see EŞS 83, 1109: 57b/1). I will try to show the efforts of Jews to keep their space through the cases below.

The first case is from the early eighteenth century. A certain Jewess, Rahel bint-i İsak, had a two-room house from the Câfer Ağa endowment with an annual sum and a monthly rent (*icâre-i mu’accele ve mü’eccele ile*). The house was in the neighborhood of El-hac Bedre’ d-din in Edirne. As described in the *sicill*, it was between an Armenian Church, the house of a certain Jew Yasef veled-i Manhas, and the house of another Jew, Yeşoa. It was also close to an Armenian room and the room of another Jew, Simon veled-i Yasef. When the said Rahel died, her two daughters, Kadife and Ester, became

the new possessors. By agreeing with her sister Kadife, Ester went to the Muslim court in 1707 for the transfer of one room of the house to a certain Jew, İsak veled-i Yako. By way of the trustee of the *vakıf*, one room was given to the possession of the said İsak for 50 kuruş. The monthly rent (*icâre-i mü'eccele*) that the new owner would have to pay to the *vakıf* was 38 akçe (EŞS 138, 1119/1707: 8).

It is unclear why the sisters wanted to sell the half of their bequest. It is, however, clear Ester wanted to sell her share to another Jew. As mentioned before through the 1686 *avârizhâne* register, the neighborhood of El-hâc Bedre'd-din was predominantly Jewish. Only few Muslim and Armenian names were recorded in the register (KK 2711, 1686: 25a-b). This *sicill* confirms the demographic density of Jews, and the residential proximity between Jews and Armenians in this neighborhood.

Second case from the Edirne court records (EŞS 138, 1735: 89), though again the transaction of a *vakıf* property is more complicated. A certain Jew, Sabatay veled-i Benyamin, who owned a house that belonged to a pious endowment (*vakıf*) in the neighborhood of Çelebi Oğlu in Edirne, died in 1735 without any child. Ahmed Efendi bin Ramazan, the trustee of the pious endowment (*mütevelli-i vakıf*), claimed in the court that the name of the deceased was in actual fact David, and Sabatay was his nickname. However, Avram veled-i Benyamin, the deceased's brother, stated in the court that his brother's name was actually Sabatay, and the deceased had bought the house for another Jew, David veled-i Benyamin, who was the chief refiner of metals in the Imperial Mint (*Darbhâne-i Amire kalcıbâşısı*). Avram was appointed to the court as the legal representative (*vekîl*) of *kalcıbâşı* David veled-i Benyamin. The court

transferred the use-right of the property to the latter with the condition of paying the same annual rent of 120 kuruş to the *vakıf* (*icâre-i mu'accele kadîmesiyle*).

In this court record, it is clearly described where the house was located. It was in the neighborhood of Çelebi Oğlu – a neighborhood that was almost exclusively inhabited by Jews. In the KK 2711 *avârizhâne* register (KK 2711, 1686: 23b), only four non-Jewish names (all are Christian) out of fifty residents had been registered in this neighborhood. Also, three mill shops (*değirmen*) all of whose owners were Christians had been recorded. Therefore, in this almost exclusively Jewish neighborhood, the property owned by the pious foundation was next to a Christian miller (*değirmenci*) named Abram from one side, was next to a synagogue's garden from another side, and was neighbor to two other Jews from the other sides. "In case of an *icareteyn* contract," Akarlı (2004:182) asserts, the owner of the use-right "enjoyed a perpetual lease over the *vakıf* property." Only her/his immediate children would have the same right to rent the property.

The *sicill* reveals that the deceased Jew, Sabatay veled-i Benyamin, died with no immediate children. Therefore, by claiming that the deceased's name was Sabatay not David, the trustee insisted in the court that use-right of the property would have to be reverted to the *vakıf*. Akarlı (2004: 183) informs us that because of continuous financial problems, new *icareteyn* contracts were preferred, because a new contract "allowed the *vakıf* to collect a fee on each transaction and facilitated the reversion of the property to the *vakıf* when the contract-holder lacked heirs other than his immediate children." Thus, it might be the trustee's intention to find a new possessor (*mutasarrıf*) for the

property since it would bring a transaction fee to the vakıf and, probably, a higher annual rent. Nevertheless, being aware of this fact, it is more likely that the brother of the deceased found another Jew, whose name was the same as his brother, in order not to revert the use-right of the property to the *vakıf*.

This intention of Jews wanting to keep property within the Jewish Community is also seen through some conflicts between Jews, and between Jews and others occurred due to property transactions. The *ferman* of Ahmed III sent to the kadı of Edirne in 1727 concerning a Jew who wanted to prevent another Jew from selling a room (*mahzen*) in the Halil Paşa Han to a non-Jew, for instance, has the order for the resolution of the dispute in the Şeri'at court (Altındağ, 1985: 48). A few years earlier (in 1723), a similar case occurred in *kaleiçi* of Edirne, when the wife of a certain Jew Mosi who had sold his house to a certain *zimmi* Dimitraki for 688 *guruş*, tried to stop this transaction. In order to get his house that he legally owned with the completion of transaction by having the legal documents, Dimitraki sent an *arzuahâl* to Istanbul regarding this issue (C. Evk. 17011, 28 Zi'l-hicce 1135).

To sum up, through the *avârizhâne* registers, the cizye record, the population record of 1703, and judicial records, it can be said that the Jews of Edirne consisted of two major groups in terms of their spatial distribution. These were those who were permanent residents in Edirne and members of 13 different congregations in the Edirne Jewish Community, and those who lived in the city on temporary basis and were members of different congregations in other cities. While the former had an approximate number of 3000-4000 people by the mid-eighteenth century, the number of the latter varied from

time to time.

The geographical dispersion of the members of these 13 congregations in the city was between the neighborhood of Tahte'l-kal'a and the Manyas Kapı, though some were also inhabited in the neighborhoods of el-Hac 'Attar Halil, which was an *extra muros* neighborhood that had a good number of Jewish households. Through the Osmont Plan of 1854, we see that the 13 synagogues of the 13 congregations were also in this slender area in the citadel walls. Those, who were members of various congregations in other cities and were in Edirne for various purposes, rather stayed in various *hâns* built inside and outside the walls and in rental rooms (*odas*) or houses (*hanes*) that belonged to different *vakıfs*. Most of Jews resided around the 13 synagogues. Moreover, Edirne's administrative and political importance as a *pâyitaht* shaped the demographic, economic and spatial structure of the Edirne Jewish Community. Thus, the existence of a great number of *askeris* was also an important determinant for Jews in choosing the residential area they lived due to their close economic ties with *askeris*. As Haim Gerber (2008, 103-4) rightly puts, the Edirne Jewish Community "was strongly connected to the surrounding Muslim society ... there was a strong physical contact ... interaction and cooperation in the economy." In addition to what Gerber says, the Jews in Edirne lived in residential proximity with other non-Muslims, particularly with Armenians. Therefore, the community was in a close contact with the non-Jewish majority ambient society. The Edirne Jewish Community, since it became bigger and more diverse, had a more organized communal structure in the period concerned, being led by various laymen and religious authorities whose existence would be seen in many matters

concerning the Jews in Edirne. The following chapter, insofar as the sources available permit us to say, shall look into the internal organization of the Edirne Jewish Community.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **COMMUNAL ORGANIZATION OF THE EDIRNE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND ITS LEADERSHIP**

Scholars working on the leadership and administration in various Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire have pointed out that communal organization had two legs: a) Religious authority b) Lay leaders. Epstein (1980: 53) describes this as the “traditional leadership exercised by Rabbis of the community” and “the accidental leadership by laymen” in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Furthermore, he divides the former into two as the Chief Rabbi in Istanbul, who, within the so-called “millet system,” controlled the internal affairs of various local communities, and local rabbis. Nevertheless, Bornstein-Makovetsky (1992: 87) rightly points out that each community dealt with its communal affairs and with the local and central Ottoman official authorities separately due to the non-existence of an empire-wide “umbrella communal structure.” Moreover, even the chief rabbinate in each community was divided between two or more rabbis (Barnai, 1994: 282).

Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire were rather organized around “city-wide communal structures” (Rodrigue, 1992: xi). Each *kahal* of the local community was generally named after the place name of origin (i.e. Italy, Spain, Apulia, Istanbul, and the like). Thus common features of members in a *kahal* would be language and customs, which would be different from other *kehalim* (Ben-naeh, 2008: 168). These congregations, without giving up their own authority, inclined to unite by the end of the sixteenth century forming an upper body – namely the community – in order to work together in the city level particularly for taxation matters, charity, and welfare (Ben-naeh, 2008: 210-1; Rodrigue, 1992: xi). This would therefore bring about the establishment of more organized communities, having many rabbis and lay leaders. Below, I will attempt to analyze the internal organization of the Edirne Jewish Community through the two legs of its leadership.

#### **4.1 The Rabbis**

Rabbi is a term derived from *rav*, meaning a great man or a teacher. Instead of rabbi, though, the term *haham* was used in the Ottoman Empire (Levy, 1994: 47). He, as the religious leader, was to meet religious and spiritual needs of the members of his congregation. Morris Goodblatt (1952: 66) specifies the duties of a rabbi – known as the *haham* or the *dayyan* among the Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire –, which were “to teach the Torah to the members of his *Kahal*; to read with them books on moral conduct and piety; to annul vows; to preach on Sabbaths and holidays, and on special occasions.” Along with these duties, they were to give their legal opinion on the *halakhah* (Jewish Law) when questions arose (Ben-naeh, 2008: 222). According to

some (Ben-naeh, 2008: 236. Also, see Hacker, 1994), the rabbis were also the judges (*dayyanim*) in a religious court, though their judicial autonomy “was limited to purely halakhic matters.”

There were many rabbis in big communities, which, as a result, meant the establishment of a “supra-congregational” rabbinate (Ben-naeh, 2008: 210) that was divided among two or three rabbis (Barnai, 1994). This was something developed parallel to the size of the community. We see a similar development in Edirne in the eighteenth century, which will be discussed in detail below.<sup>18</sup>

Ben-naeh (2008: 93), informing us through a *responsum* sent to a rabbinic authority in the beginning of the eighteenth century, states that while twelve congregations were acquiescent to one rabbi, the Istanbul congregation accepted the authority of another. Bali (2008: 217) claims that nine and a half of the congregations accepted the authority of one rabbi, while four and a half congregations went under the authority of another. Furthermore, the Edirne article in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* written by Marcus/Ginio (2007: 149) confirms this division that the Edirne Jewish Community was divided into two major sectors following the death of Rabbi Abraham Zarefati (d.1722), who was the last rabbi of the famous Zarefati family that held the office until 1722. According to this article, following the death of R. Abraham Zarefati, the authority of the Edirne

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<sup>18</sup> Barnai (1994: 278) informs us about a case in Salonica in the seventeenth century that two rabbis shared the authority of six congregations between them. Following the death of rabbi Hayyim Benveniste, a well-known rabbinic authority in Salonica, rabbi Israel Benveniste, son of Rabbi Hayyim Benveniste, desired to be appointed to his father's place, the community reached a compromise assigning two rabbis to the post one of them being the son Benveniste (Barnai, 1994: 282).

rabbinate would be shared between Abraham Gheron, Abraham Zarefati's son-in-law, and Menahem b. Isaac Ashkenazi (Bekhemoharar). Both Ben-naeh and Marcus/Ginio state that the community got divided into two major factions by the first third of the eighteenth century.

The same dispute concerning the appointment of the Edirne Jewish Community's chief rabbis can also be seen in a petition (C. ADL. 158, H. 1134/1722) sent by members of ten congregations to Istanbul in 1134/1722, in the year Abraham Zarefati died. This case is very similar to the dispute surfaced in Salonica that Barnai (1994: 282) addressed, only with one difference that the community did not want a compromise, electing the rabbis they desired. In this petition, Jews complained to the Istanbul authorities that following the death of *Haham Avram* (Rabbi Abraham Zarefati), two certain Jews named Kemal veled-i Yasef and Avram veled-i Ostoruk[?] who were in the service of the deceased rabbi claimed the position. These two Jews also claimed, according to the petition, the deceased Rabbi had given them the authority of the rabbinate position. However, the elders (*zekanim*) of ten congregations (*on cema'at ihtiyârları*) "hired" other rabbis, because the two aforementioned Jews demanded the post "without the consent and will of the communal leaders of ten congregations" and "without having the capacity to lead [their] religious service."<sup>19</sup> The Jews employed were Rabbi Avram Karom[?] and Menahim İsak, and İlya Nahum[?]. The first two names were most probably the two rabbis, Abraham Gheron and Menahem b. Isaac.

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<sup>19</sup> "*on cemâ'at ihtiyârları izni ve rızâları yođ iken ve hahâmlıđa dahî istihkakları yođ iken âyinlerimizi icrâya nâ-kadir olmalarıyle*"

Their names are spelled differently in the petition, yet the answer sent to the *kadı* of Edirne from Istanbul spelled the name of Geron correctly. Their families would officiate for almost two hundred years in Edirne (Marcus/Ginio, 2007: 149; Ben-naeh, 2008: 294 n.2).

This petition induces us to question a few things. First, it mentions the election of the rabbis of ten congregations. It was highly likely, it may be argued, that the remaining three congregations did not accept the authority of Rabbi Abraham Zaferati (and the two elected later), hence when the Jews petitioned Istanbul they constantly repeated that the issue concerned only ten congregations. It is not easy to determine which ten congregations they were. Ben-naeh (2008: 93) describes this split in the Edirne Jewish Community as “a local version of a similar division in Istanbul between ‘Sephardim’ and Romaniots.” However, since it is a well-known fact that the Zaferati family was from the Alaman (German/ Ashkenazim) Congregation (Marcus and Ginio, 2007: 148), Ashkenazim rabbis must have been influential among Sephardim congregations too. The name of Rabbi Abraham Zarefati was also registered as the *haham* of the Alaman congregation in the poll-tax register documented in 1690 (MAD. 4021, 1690: 6).

Along with the name of Rabbi Abraham Zarefati of the Alaman Congregation, two more rabbis were also recorded in the same poll-tax register. First is *Haham* İlyā son of Simoil of the Little Portugal Congregation (MAD. 4021, 1690: 1), and second is *Haham* Menarto[?] veled-i İlyā of the Maior Congregation (MAD. 4021, 1690: 10). Even though 13 congregations having their own synagogues are clearly seen in the sources, why very few rabbis were documented in the poll-tax register of 1690 begs an answer.

Goodblatt (1952: 66) states that one rabbi was the spiritual leader of more than one congregation sometimes. This was also the case in Edirne.

If Abraham Zarefati had been the rabbi of ten congregations until his death in 1722, the remaining three congregations, it may be argued, must have accepted the authority of other rabbi(s). As mentioned earlier, the Edirne Jewish Community consisted of three large groups; namely Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and Romaniots. It is difficult to infer if the division among the *hahams* was related to their demoninations or supremacy in the *halakhah*. Alternatively, this division in Edirne might have been the result of the Sabbatean controversy, which broke out after the apostasy of the self-declared messiah, Sabbatai Sevi. Almost each Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire – in Western and Eastern Europe as well – had Sabbatean supporters in the late seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, including influential rabbis and community leaders (Barnai, 1996: 335). Sabbatai's supporters were also organized in Edirne under the leadership of Samuel Primo, rabbi of the Apulia Congregation, until his death in 1708 (Sholem, 2007: 527; Barnai, 1996: 335). It is clear, though, that ten of thirteen congregations accepted the religious authority of two rabbis, while the remaining three congregations possibly were under the authority of other rabbi(s').

Zvi Keren (2011: 64), in his book on the Jews of Rusçuk, states that Jewish Communities in Ottoman Europe “were subordinate to the rabbis of Edirne in halachic and administrative matters.” In 1801, the Rusçuk Community opted to accept the authority of Rabbi Menahem Mordekhai refusing the rule of the Gheron family. This impels us think that the reason for this division in Edirne might have been due to

administrative and/or halachic reasons.

As stated earlier, Ben-naeh (2008: 93) believes that this division was similar to that in Istanbul between Sephardim and Romaniots because “Istanbul Jews residing in Edirne behaved like outsiders, refusing to accept the authority of the local community’s leaders and rabbis.” The definition of Istanbul Jews made by Ben-naeh is rather problematic. He thinks the Istanbul Congregation’s membership comprised Jews migrated to Edirne from Istanbul or lived there temporarily because of their business affairs (Ben-naeh, 2008: 92-3). Ottoman sources – both fiscal and judicial records – define transient Jews who came to Edirne from Istanbul and other towns by using their congregational affiliations in their hometowns. If Ben-naeh means the transient Istanbulite Jews residing in Edirne, it may be meaningful to say that they probably *did* refuse the local leaders’ and rabbis’ authority in order to prevent the local community from imposing some taxes levied on them in Edirne in order to meet the expenses of the Edirne Jewish Community. Indeed, the Edirne Jewish Community attempted to levy a *gabella* tax (“a surcharge on the value of their merchandise”) on Istanbul Jews coming to Edirne from other towns as merchants (Ben-naeh, 2008: 62). The *ferman* issued in 1784 concerning this matter refers to another dispute occurred in 1692 (Galante (1986: 5:225-7). The transient Jews highly likely refused to accept the authority of local leaders and rabbis. Nevertheless, the petition sent to Istanbul in 1722 makes it clear that the division was in actual fact evident among the 13 well-established congregations.

Even though some scholars (for example Ben-naeh, 2008: 93; Marcus/Ginio, 2007) believe that this division began in the eighteenth century, one may conceivably argue

that it might have started before the eighteenth century. Epstein (1980: 54) believes that in Edirne in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, different groups in the Edirne community had their own Rabbis “who served as both spiritual and political heads of their congregations.” As pointed out in Chapter III, by the end of the sixteenth century and particularly after the mid-seventeenth, Edirne’s Jewish Community had established a robust set of congregations with 13 synagogues. Moreover, this century also witnessed a substantial population growth that would continue until the mid-eighteenth century. The Edirne Jewish Community probably needed a better organization of social and religious life as a result, which is akin to the Izmir Jewish Community in the seventeenth century analyzed by Barnai (1994: 276). In other words, as the community became larger and hence needed a more organized structure, the duties of rabbis might have been limited to religious matters. So, in order to deal with central and local authorities, more power might have been given to communal and congregational leaders who made the second leg of the communal organization and leadership.

#### **4.2 The Lay Leaders**

Bornstein-Makovetsky (1992: 89) states that *memunim* and *parnasim* (appointed ones), *zekanim* (elders), *roshim* (heads), and many other words are seen in many Hebrew sources as the lay leaders of the community. As the appointed people who were responsible for the utmost well being of the community, communal and congregational lay leaders had to collect taxes, and were responsible to pay with their own means in



case of any delay (Ben-naeh, 2008: 191).<sup>20</sup> Moreover, they made sure “the maximum obedience with their decisions,” had the authorization to fine people, and handled the transgressors to the Muslim court (Ben-naeh, 2008: 191). The *kahal* was autonomous to choose its officers whose appointments were usually confirmed by the *kadı* (Ben-naeh, 2008: 191), even though the government was asked to help them to enforce their authority when the communal leaders requested (Bornstein-Makovetsky, 1992: 87).

To define the lay leaders of the Edirne Jewish Community, the Edirne Jews, in case of petitioning Istanbul, sometimes used the Turkish word *cema'atbaşı* (congregational/communal chief). Elders (*ihdiyalarlar*) the equivalent of the Hebrew word *zekanim* was also used. Local and central official Ottoman authorities, however, used the Turkish word *cema'atbaşı* to identify congregational leaders. The latter is the one seen both in judicial records as well as in edicts sent from Istanbul. The names of all congregational lay leaders in Edirne were documented in 1703.

As mentioned in Chapter III, the DVN 802 register dated 1703 documented 13 congregations under the Jewish Community (*Ta'ife-i Yahudiyān*). In each mahalle, in the register, the *imam* agreed to be responsible for the entire neighborhood. For the Edirne Jewish Community, however, each congregation's lay leader (*cema'atbaşı*) agreed to be responsible for the concerning congregation entirely. Following are the congregational lay leaders penned in this register. These were Avraham veled-i Haim (Portugal Congregation), Salamon veled-i Şimoil (German Congregation), Mordehay

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<sup>20</sup> In Ottoman terms, they were becoming *kefil bi'n-nefs*. Petmezas (2006) makes similar observations on the duties of the *kocabaşıs* in Christian communities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

veled-i Ortorok[?] (Catalonia Congregation), Yasef veled-i Simoil (Sicily Congregation), Mosi veled-i Kemal (Toledo Congregation), Mordehay veled-i Ortorok[?] (Aragon Congregation), Haim veled-i Aron (Maior Congregation), İlya veled-i Şimoil (Budin Congregation), Yosef veled-i Avraham (Little Portugal Congregation), Avraham veled-i Mosi (Apulia Congregation), and Yosef veled-i Avraham (İstanbul Congregation). Only the lay leaders of the Italy and Gerush Congregations are not mentioned in the register (DVN 802, 1703: 17-21).<sup>21</sup>

The non-existence of the Italian and Gerush congregational lay leaders may be interpreted in different ways. First, they might not have had lay leaders. Second, it might be a scribal error. Third, which is the most probable explanation, is that the lay leader(s) of other congregations might have accepted the responsibility of these congregations. The latter is rather more probable. As can be seen, Mordehay v. Ortorok [?] was recorded as the lay leader of the Catalonia and Aragon Congregations, and Yosef v. Avraham was penned as the lay leader of the Istanbul and Little Portugal Congregations.

Concerning the Edirne Jewish Community, the lay leaders (*cemâ'atbaşıs*) of congregations played crucial roles in terms of the members' dealings with each other, and with local and central authorities for mostly taxation matters. By mainly benefitting from the Ottoman official sources, however, it is impossible to draw a thorough picture of what the lay leaders' functions were like in the Edirne Jewish Community. Similar to

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<sup>21</sup> Each lay leader's position in terms of accepting the responsibility of the entire congregation is given as follow: "*bâlâda zikr olunan Yahudilerin her biri aherin nefşine ve hin-i mutâlebede meclis-i şer'de*

other Jewish communities, lay leaders were responsible for administrative and financial issues, whose most important determinant was to organize communal income and its expenses. Taxes included fixed ones such as *cizye* and ‘*avârız*’ as well as other irregular taxes such as *gabela* levied on kosher goods like meat, cheese, wine, and the like (Benaeh, 2008: 180; Weiker, 1992: 158).

The biggest expense of the Edirne Jewish Community was the poll tax paid by individuals according to their economic power. In the Edirne Jewish poll tax register of 1690 (MAD 4021, 1690), for instance, it is stated that the number of *cizye* payers increased from 698 to 832. Also, the register reports that each member’s share was 676 *akçe* (approximately 5,6 *guruş*), which remained the same for the renewed register. The total poll tax amount to be paid to the state therefore increased from 471,848 *akçe* (approximately 3,932 *guruş*) to 562,432 *akçe* (approximately 4,687 *guruş*). Furthermore, a fixed amount of annual wine tax (*bedel-i hamriyye*) was 70,620 *akçe* (approximately 588 *guruş*). Even though the wine tax was calculated separately, the community was required to pay it with the poll tax every year. So, for the Edirne Jewish Community, the wine tax was also a fixed expense. The significance of the wine tax levied on the Edirne Jewish Community becomes more evident when one compares it with that paid by the Palestine Jewish Community that Barnai (1994: 27) analyzed through a community account book from the late eighteenth century. The wine tax levied on the Palestine Jewish Community was 74 *guruş* in 1776/7, and increased to 170 *guruş* in 1795/6. The amount paid by the Edirne community in the 1690s was

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*ihzârına kefil olub cümlesine cemâ’atbaşları ... kefil olmuştur.”*

almost five times more than that paid by the Jerusalem community in the 1770s.

The second kind of tax was *'avâriz*, which was by definition an extraordinary tax. In time, though, it became a regular tax to be paid every year. The contribution of Jews to this was an annual lump sum number (*maktu'*). In the seventeenth century, the state used the symbolic fixed number of 200 as the *'avârizhâne* for *'avâriz* tax (*bedel-i 'avâriz*) and *nüzl* tax (*bedel-i nüzl*) to be levied on the Edirne Jewish Community (KK 2711, 1686: 70; MAD 4021, 1690). From the 1740s onwards, however, this number was reduced to 100 (Galante, 1985: 139; EŞS 153, Muharrem 1168: 102; Cev. Mal. 29767, H.1182; Sarıcaoğlu, 2001: 188). The possible reasons behind this reduction were discussed in Chapter III.

Although the aforesaid taxes are the ones that can be traced in Ottoman documents, they were likely not the only duties to be met by the Edirne Jewish Community. Barnai (1994) describes different amounts paid to various people in Palestine. Without a community account book like the Palestine one, it is not easy to trace what other amounts the community paid as taxes or other expenses. However, along with the ones above, the local authorities attempted to levy other taxes on the Jewish community as well as on other Muslim and non-Muslim residents in Edirne. The lay leaders of the Greek, Armenian and Jewish Communities petitioned Istanbul in the seventies of the eighteenth century<sup>22</sup> to complain about a new tax that was “against the old rules applied

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<sup>22</sup> “... Mahmiyye-i Edirne’de sâkin Rum ve Ermeni ve Yahud tâ’ifelerinin kethüdâ ve cemâ’atbaşları meclis-i şer’e varub üzerlerine mukayyed olan hâne-i ‘avâriz ve nüzl ve sâ’ir evâmîr-i ‘alîyye ile vâride olan olan tekâlîfî kabzına me’mura eda eylediklerinden sonra tekâlîf-i şakkâ mütâlebesiyle rencide olundukları yoğiken mukaddema seksen iki senesinde sefer-i Hümâyün vuku’ takrîbî ile mahmiyye-i mezburede a’yan olanların ibrâm ve ilhâhlarile nevâhi ve kurâ ahâlilerine tarh ve tevzi’ olunagelen

to the said groups,” In this petition dated 1776, the lay leaders of the non-Muslim communities in Edirne made a complaint that the local notables tried to levy new taxes called *tekâlif-i şakka* (C. Mal. 29767, 1776) because of the Campaign that the Ottomans decided to undertake against Russians in 1768 after a very long period of peace that it enjoyed between 1740 and 1768 (Aksan, 2006: 111).

In terms of taxation matters against the local and central authorities, the lay leaders were not only obliged to ensure if each member of the community met her/his share. As the “guarantors for the entire congregation,” they were also responsible to pay “collective tax debt” through their own means in case of need (Ben-naeh, 2008: 194). So, especially during the enduring wars that the Ottomans embarked on against Austria and Russia from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, the Ottoman authorities imposed heavy and unanticipated taxes on its subjects including Jews. This was sometimes done by local authorities, which imposed “illegitimate” duties on the community and collected the amount through the lay leaders. In the final decade of the eighteenth century, a similar case surfaced in Edirne. The following extract is from the petition (Cev. Zaptiye 744, Eva’il-i Zi’l-hicce, 1792) sent to Istanbul by the community members:

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*mesârif-i vilâyet ve tekâlif-i şakkâdan li-ecli’l-i’ane imdâdiyye nâmı ile hilâf-ı kadîm tâ’ife-i merkumuna dahi hisse tarh ve tevzi ...”*

Der-i devlet-mekîne ‘arz-ı dâ’î-i kemîne oldur ki mahrûse-i Edirne’de mütemekkin Yahudi tâ’ifesi meclis-i şer’e gelüb tazallüm-i hâl ve ifâde ‘ani’l-merâm iderler ki bizler üzerlerimize edâsı lâzım gelüb evâmir-i ‘alîyye ile vâride olan tekâlifden tahammüllerimize göre hisselerimize isâbet ideni cem’ine me’mûra edâ idüb ve bizler yapağı bey ü şira’ ider tüccâr mâkulelerinden olmayub hilâf-ı şer’-i şerîf ve bilâ emr-i münîf ta’addî olunmalarımız iktizâ itmez iken mahrûse-i mezbûre bostancıbaşları mandıralardan hâsıl olan yapağıyı hilâf-ı şer’-i şerîf râyicinden ziyâde bahâ ile cemâ’atbaşlarımız üzerlerine birağub cebren ve kahren akçesini tahsîl ve ahz idüb...

The Edirne Jewish Community in this petition sent to Istanbul in 1792 complained that the commandors of the Imperial guards (*bostancıbaşıs*) of Edirne forcefully sold the wool (*yapağı*) produced in dairy farms with a price above the market value, even though the Jews forced were not wool traders. Moreover, the petition reveals that the *bostancıbaşıs* left the total amount to the lay leaders’ responsibility and forcefully acquired it from them. The petition does not divulge any information on how the lay leaders distributed the amount that they paid to the *bostancıbaşıs* between community members. However, it shows that the lay leaders behaved as though the guarantors of the community in case of the emergence of an unforeseen communal duty, and dealt with it through their own financial liability.

In all the abovementioned cases related to taxation, we see the lay leaders (*cema’atbaşıs*) of the Edirne Jewish Community at the center of dealing with the issue. However, the lay leaders did not only deal with taxation matters. The relations between community members, their dealings with other members of the society and the authorities also concerned them. The lay leaders had to inform the local authorities about the death of each community member (Bornstein-Makovetsky, 1992: 99). The estate of a deceased without any heir in the Ottoman Empire was normally transferred

to the public treasury (*beytü'l-mâl*). If the deceased had no heirs in the same city, official of the State Treasury (*beytü'l-mâl emini* or *beytü'l-mâlci*) would possess the property of the deceased and safeguard them until the heirs in other towns came and claimed it (Lewis, 1986: 1147). Shmuelevitz (1984: 77) points out that Jews “made every effort to prevent such properties being taken over by the *beytülmâl*, even by producing fictitious heirs.” This was also important for the benefits of orphans. Edirne Court Records provide abundant number of cases concerning the maintenance allowance (*nafaka*) for orphans. The Jewish lay and religious leaders also appeared before the *kadı* for such cases. Following examples include such cases.

According to Jewish laws, in inheritance cases, all the properties were to be given to the sons (Schuelevitz, 1984: 74), because in Judaism daughters “had no legal [right] to inherit” (Schuelevitz, 1984: 66). The decision of the Muslim court was sometimes used to force the Jewish religious leaders to compromise (Schuelevitz, 1984: 68-9). Rabbis sometimes made “limited concessions” in order to prevent Jews from resorting to the *kadı*'s court by agreeing to give ten percent of the inheritance to daughters who would get married and need a dowry (Schuelevitz, 1984: 69). In Islamic laws, on the other hand, daughters were to be given by the half of what sons received from the bequest. So, requesting an estate inventory from the gentile court was in actual fact common among Jews, especially if it involved girls. The following cases epitomize this.

In 1727, Hanolu bint-i Mordehay, wife of the deceased Jew Baruh veled-i Yako of the Apulia Congregation, went to the Muslim court for the distribution of the deceased's estate. In the court record, we see Rabbi Mosi veled-i Yasef of the Apulia Congregation

as the guardian (*vasi*) of the orphans. As a matter of fact, the estate distribution was done by the initiative of the said rabbi. The deceased Jew had three daughters and one son. The son received 179054 *akçe* (approximately 1492 *guruş*) from the inheritance, while each daughter received 89527 *akçe* (approximately 746 *guruş*). Hanolu bint-i Mordehay, the wife, received 78995 *akçe* (approximately 658 *guruş*) from the inheritance (EŞS 116, Rebiü'l-evvel 1727: 99b-3).

Another case involving the orphans was recorded in the Edirne Court records in 1735. When a certain Jew Bakim veled-i Avram of the Catalonia Congregation died in 1735, the Jewess Saltana bint-i Avram, the deceased's wife and the legal guardian of his children, went to the Muslim court in order to be allowed to sell the *kazzaz* shop that belonged to the *Cami'-i 'Atik* endowment. She stated in the court that since the inheritance of the deceased left nothing to her children, in order to provide a livelihood to the orphans who needed a maintenance allowance (*nafaka*), she needed to sell the shop. With the initiative of the lay leaders – Kemal veled-i Levi, Salamon veled-i Mosi, and Mosi veled-i Yako – that the children needed a *nafaka*, Saltana bint-i Avram was allowed to sell the shop to someone else (EŞS 138, 1735: 44a-3).

Sometimes, the lay leaders brought the religious leaders to the Muslim court to denounce them (Bornstein-Makovetsky, 1992: 98). In the case occurred in 1722, the lay leaders of the Edirne Jewish Community went to the *kadi's* court, and denounced the



rabbis of the community by way of the *kadı* (Cev. Adl. 158, 1134/1722).<sup>23</sup>

As mentioned before, the lay leaders were to guarantee the community's utmost benefits. They were also responsible for "the security of the individual members." Individual members of the local community could bring complaints before the authorities on their own. The lay leaders, too, brought "the complaints of the Jews before the local authorities" in case of any damage done to the community members by murderers, thieves, and the like. In other words, since criminal law was the Ottoman prerogative, in case of penal law the lay leaders were forced to produce the culprit to the Ottoman authorities. Sometimes the lay leaders did this with the religious leaders (Bornstein-Makovetsky, 1992: 96). The reason for the complaint was sometimes members of the community, which was not frequently seen in Ottoman documents, as the community wanted to settle "any interval controversy in the leadership management" (Bornstein-Makovetsky, 1992: 110). The following case from the final quarter of the eighteenth century is very self-explanatory of why internal issues of the local community were not often brought to the attention of the local authorities.

The Jewish Community sent a petition (C. ADL. 1533, 1200/1786) to Istanbul in 1786 to complain about some of its members who, according to the petition, were going to the Jewish households with no husbands to do illicit sex. These members of the Edirne Jewish Community are clearly defined as instrumentalists and tambourine players

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<sup>23</sup> "... ayinlerimizi icrya nakadir olmalarıyle on cema'at ihtiyarları ma'rifetiyle ma'rifet-i şer'le mesfurları def' istihkakı olub on cema'atin ihtiyarları olan Haham Avram..."

(*çalgıcı ve da'irezen*)<sup>24</sup> who claimed that they visited those houses for realizing their profession. Some other members of the community first informed the chief rabbi (*hahambaşı*) and the lay leaders (*cema'atbaşısı*) to warn the said instrumentalist Jews to abstain from such behavior. They were therefore forwarned. However, as the said instrumentalists continued to visit those households with no husbands, the lay leaders and rabbinate requested the Istanbul authorities to issue a *ferman* to be sent to the *bostancıbaşı* of Edirne to stop and punish the said Jewish musicians accordingly. Why we infrequently see the internal matters of the Jewish community in Ottoman documents is evident in this *arzuhal*. The Jewish Community did its best for not involving the authorities in internal communal affairs (Bornstein-Makovetsky, 1992: 96). As the petition reveals, the Jewish lay and religious leaders first wanted to deal with the matter within the community, and warned the said Jewish musicians. However, when the latter continued to visit those houses with no husbands, the leaders of the Edirne Jewish community demanded the intervention of the local authorities.

The lay leaders also dealt with those who took Jewish merchants as captives in order to acquire ransom money from Jewish communities. According to Ben-naeh (2008: 264), Jews had the reputation for concern to get back their brethren in order to prevent the capturers from selling them in slave markets. The Knights of Malta were a big threat for Jewish merchants in the Mediterranean. Molly Greene (2010) meticulously analyzes the activities of Maltese Pirates in the early modern Mediterranean. Jews were also the

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<sup>24</sup> Jewish musicians were well known in Edirne. At famous royal wedding and circumcision festivals organized in the Edirne Palace during the reign of Mehmed IV the Hunter, the Jewish musicians and players were well noticed by the contemporary writers and visitors (Nutku, 1987: 14-6, 18-9, 131-4)

targets of the pirates from Malta (Green, 2010:11). The lay leaders of the Edirne Jewish Community appeared before the Muslim court of Edirne for the release of the community members captured by a Maltese navy commandor (*Maltiz kapudani*), who, according to the *sicill*, later sold the captives to some Maltese merchants. The lay leaders of the Edirne Jewish Community paid 750 *guruş* to the said Maltese merchants for releasing the two Jewish captives (EŞS 153, 28 Zi'l-ka'de 1166: 40). The lay leaders highly likely wanted to register this in the court to be able to claim in case the deal was not kept.

In short, there were two legs for the leadership of the Edirne Jewish Community: Religious and Lay Leaders. The rabbis were responsible for religious and spiritual matters of Jews. The lay leaders of the Edirne Jewish Community dealt with financial and administrative matters. As Levy (1994: 47) rightly puts, in reality, though, “there existed a great measure of overlapping interests and authority” between the two, and this can be clearly seen through some of the examples given above. As very influential and powerful members, the lay leaders aimed to maximize the utmost benefit of the community by using their networks through the Ottoman authorities and the Diaspora.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

By mainly using official Ottoman sources, this thesis has attempted to explore the demographic development, geographical distribution, and communal structure of the Edirne Jewish Community between the late seventeenth and the mid-eighteenth centuries. Though there existed a small Jewish community in Edirne during the Byzantine period, the turning point was the expulsion of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. Throughout the sixteenth and the first decades of the seventeenth centuries – albeit in a diminishing enormity – the Iberian Jews continued to shape the local communities in the Empire. Edirne was no different. These newly arrived Jews established different Jewish congregations, most of whose names originated from the Iberan lands. Similar to many other local communities in the Ottoman realm, the Edirne community was also dominated by the Sephardim Jews.

The position of the Edirne Jewish Community went hand in hand with the demographic and cultural growth, and economic prosperity that the city of Edirne witnessed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during which long stays of the royal family spurred the development of the city. Moreover, these enduring royal stays encouraged

the existence of a great number of *askeris*, with whom Jews in Edirne had strong economic ties. It may conceivably be argued that this solid *askeri* being in Edirne was a significant determinant not only for the increase in the Jewish population, but also for its spatial distribution. The physical proximity between Jews and *askeri* class members – with such titles as *paşa*, *bey*, *ağa*, *efendi*, and the like –, which is clearly seen both in court records, and household tax registers and census register of Edirne, supports this argument.

Following the Edirne Incident of 1703, which engendered the return of the Ottoman Court from Edirne to Istanbul, a good number of *askeris* left Edirne for Istanbul along with the court, though Ottoman rulers and their entourage still spent considerable time in Edirne in the the eighteenth century, during which military campaigns undertaken towards Europe took start from Edirne. Therefore, Edirne still maintained its place for the Ottomans as a significant hub in the Balkans. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, Edirne was shaken by a few natural disasters.

Throughout the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries, the Edirne Jewish community cyrstalized its multi-congregational communal structure, and grew as a result of the city's very own peculiarities as an administrative and linking centre. Though not enough sources with sound data reveal a significant demographic decline, the Edirne Jewish Community probably lost some of its members in the second half of the eighteenth century due to the transfer of the court to Istanbul and some natural misfortunes. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the size of the community continued to grow, reaching its climax with a total number of 24,000 souls

in the first decade of the twentieth century. The main reason for this was that the Empire lost a good portion of its territories in Europe, so many Jews in those newly lost lands poured into more secure areas including Edirne.

The Edirne Jewish Community had a similar communal organization with other communities in the Empire. Even though 13 congregations existed until the very early years of the twentieth century, the Edirne Jewish Community evolved into a more organized communal entity by the mid-seventeenth century, being administered by different lay leaders and rabbis. While the former was responsible for all financial and administrative matters that the community faced with the local and central authorities, the latter was to take care of all religious and spiritual necessities. As the Edirne Jewish Community reached a considerable size by the mid-seventeenth century, it needed to be organized through “supra” institutions administered by more than one leader. This was the result of the growing size of the community that continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In short, in contrast to what the literature says, the Edirne Jewish Community sustained its size and developed until the early twentieth century.

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# APPENDIX C

Spatial distribution of people in Edirne in 1919 (Rıfat Osman, *Edirne Rehnümâsı*, 1336)



## APPENDIX D

## List of Jewish Occupations Registered in 1686 (KK.2711, 1686)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>
Avram Yahudi (?)	Derzi (Tailor)	Ali Kuşu
İsak Yahudi	Boyacı (Dyer)	Cami'-i Kebir
Aron (?) Yahudi	Sarrac (Saddle-maker)	Cami'-i Kebir
Arkera (?) Yahudi	Kassab (Butcher)	Cami'-i Kebir
Yahya Yahudi	Kassab (Butcher)	Darbhane
Yako Yahudi	Kuyumcu (Goldsmith/Jeweler)	Darbhane
Hayder Yahudi	Kazzaz (Silk manufacturer)	Darbhane
Yako v. Mosi Yahudi	Kazzaz (Silk manufacturer)	Hammam-ı Yahşi Fakih
Koyun(?) Yahudi	Kazzaz (Silk manufacturer)	Hammam-ı Yahşi Fakih
Mosi Yahudi	Kassab (Butcher)	Hevace Bayazid
Efraim Yahudi	Tavukçu (Chicken seller)	Hevace Bayazid
Arslan Yahudi	Çukacı (Broadcloth maker)	Hevace Bayazid
İsak Yahudi	Çukacı (Broadcloth maker)	Devlet İslam
Yako Yahudi	Peynirci (Cheese maker)	Devlet İslam
Yasef Yahudi	Sarraf (Money lender)	Devlet İslam
Yasef Yahudi	Kassab (Butcher)	Devlet İslam
David Yahudi	Çukacı (Broadcloth maker)	Devlet İslam
Nesim v. Avram Yahudi	Kazzaz (Silk manufacturer)	Devlet İslam
Alkim(?) v. Yasef Yahudi	Bezzaz (Cloth merchant)	Devlet İslam
Mosi Yahudi	Sarraf (Money lender)	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Danyel v. Abram Yahudi	Kazzaz (Silk manufacturer)	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Salomon Yahudi	Çarıklı (Shoe maker)	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Salomon Yahudi	Peynirci (Cheese seller)	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Kemhal Yahudi	Kalcı (Refiner of metals)	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Benyamin Yahudi	Bakkal (Grocers)	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Abram Yahudi	Eskici	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Sabetay Yahudi	Şabhaneci (?)	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Avram Yahudi	Boyacı (Dyer)	El-Hac Bedre'd-din
Avram v. Yasef Yahudi	Kazzaz (Silk manufacturer)	Kahtalu
Nesim Yahudi	Kazzaz (Silk manufacturer)	Kahtalu
Mosi v. Levi Yahudi	Hekim (Physician)	Aya Yani Prodromos



APPENDIX E

List of Jews to whom money was owed,  
according to the Edirne Court Records, 1690-1740

No .	Name and occupation/ Congregation of creditor	Name and occupation of debtor	Amount still owed (1)	Actual amount	Date	<i>Sicil</i> registration
1	Yako v. Avram (2), Senora Congregation of Istanbul	<i>Yağlıkcı</i> (?) Mustafa Beşe b. Abdullah	374,5	374,5	Safer 1105	EŞS 74, 37a/1
2	Mosi v. Yako, <i>Kazzaz</i>	Abdullah Paşa, ( <i>Dergah-ı Hümayun Ka'im- makamı Vezir-i Mükerrem</i> )	168,5	168,5	Safer 1106	EŞS 77, 83a/4
3	Avram v. Salamon, Linariko (?) Congregation of Istanbul	Konorta Mehmed Ağa b. Abdülkadir	83	83	10 Rebiü'l- evvel 1105	EŞS 77, 94a/2
4	Mayer v. Menahim, Delaroz (?) Congregation of Sofia	Konorta Mehmed Ağa b. Abdülkadir	70	261,5	14 Rebiü'l- evvel 1105	EŞS 77, 94b/1
5	Yasef v. Mosi Yahudi, <i>Çukacı</i>	Yani v. Angeli v. Yani <i>zimmi</i>	114,5	114,5	17 Muharrem 1109	EŞS 81, 31a/2
6	Mosi v. Yako, Catalonia Congregation	Hüseyn Çelebi b. Şaban b. Abdülkadir, ( <i>Rumeli Kadıaskeri muhtımlarından</i> )	79,5	79,5	29 Safer 1109	EŞS 83, 11b/1
7	Salomon v. Pirmon (?), Apulia Congregation	Elhac Mehmed b. Hızır, Debbâğ	55	55	23 Şaban 1109	EŞS 83, 26b/2
8	Karakaş Şamas(?) v.	Ali Paşa b.	234	484	14	EŞS 83,

	Kemal, <i>misafir</i>	Abdullah, previously the governor (vali) of Ankara and Çankırı			Muharrem 1110	81b/1
9	Avram v. İşbo(?) and English merchant Edvard v. Istanford	Hüseyin Paşa b. Mehmed b. Ali	386	2,0466	Safer 1113	EŞS 87, 16a/1
10	Abraham v. Yahya, Alaman Congregation	Elhac Ali Ağa b. Mehmed, <i>mehterba şı</i>	450	450	10 Rebiü'l- evvel 1113	EŞS 87, 31b/1
11	İlya v. Kemal, Alaman Congregation	Elhac Ali Ağa b. Mehmed, <i>mehterbaşı</i>	673	673	10 Rebiü'l- evvel 1113	EŞS 87, 32a/2
12	Abraham v. Yahya, Alaman Congregation	Mehmed Paşa b. İlyas, Previous governor of Diyarbakir	3,320	7,180	12 Rebiü'l- evvel 1113	EŞS 87, 41a/2
13	Yahya v. Yako, Istanbul Congregation	Mehmed Paşa b. İlyas, Previous governor of Diyarbakir	17,190	17,190	12 Rebiü'l- evvel 1113	EŞS 87, 41a/3
14	İlya v. Yasef, Portugal Congregation	Elhac Veli Ağa b. Osman b. Abdülkadir, ( <i>Dergah-ı Ali Yeniçerileri çorbacısı ve Divan- ı Hümayun'a muhasır ağa</i> )	500 altun and 20 guruş	500 altun and 20 guruş	20 Cemaze'l- evvel 1113	EŞS 87, 74a/2
15	Konorta v. Salni(?), <i>Çukacı</i>	Elhac Veli Ağa b. Osman b. Abdülkadir, ( <i>Dergah-ı 'Ali Yeniçerileri çorbacısı ve Divan- ı Hümayun'a muhasır ağa</i> )	186.5	186.5	10 Cemaze'l- ahir 1113	EŞS 87, 82b/1
16	David v. David, Portugal Congregation	Osman Ağa b. Mehmed b. Abdülkadir, previous <i>sergulam bakı</i> (?)	50	50	3 Şaban 1113	EŞS 88, 15a/1

17	İlya v. Kemal, <i>Çukacı</i>	Mustafa Ağa b. Abdullah, ( <i>Dergah-ı 'Ali Yeniçerileri çorbacısı</i> )	228	228	? Rebiü'l-evvel 1113	EŞS 88, 73a/1
18	İsak v. Mosi, Aragon Congregation	Adam v. Arutin v. Kirkor, <i>serpuşcu</i>	154	210	4 Cemaze'l-evvel 1116	EŞS 111, 9a/4
19	Menahim v. Avram, Maior Congregation	Adam v. Arutin v. Kirkor, <i>serpuşcu</i>	60	200	4 Cemaze'l-evvel 1116	EŞS 111, 9b/3
20	Manahim v. Avram, Apulia Congregation	'Attar Yako v. Yahya v. Avram, Sicily Congreg.	37.5	37.5	4 Cemaze'l-evvel 1135	EŞS113, 7a/1
21	İsak v. Kemal, 'attar, Maior Congregation	Ali Çelebi b. Mehmed b. Abdulla, 'attar	400	400	? Cemaze'l-evvel 1135	EŞS113, 10b/1
22	İsak v. Kemal, 'attar	Ali Çelebi b. Mehmed b. Abdulla, 'attar	100	100	? Cemaze'l-evvel 1135	EŞS113, 10b/2
23	Yoda v. Samariye	Ayan v. Murat v. Dimitri	693	693	14 Rebiü'l-ahir 1140	EŞS 138, 18/30
24	Salomon v. Haim, Sicily Congregation	Bosnevi Mehmed Çelebi b. Salih b. Abdullah	55	55	10 Ramazan 1147	EŞS 124, 26b/2
25	Salomon v. İsak, Apulia Congregation	Mehmed Çelebi b. Mustafa b. Abdullah	18	18	20 Receb 1148	EŞS124, 43a/2
26	Buda v. Samariye	Ayan v. Murat v. Dimitri	693	693	14 Rebiü'l-ahir 1140	EŞS 138, 18/30

1 All amounts are in *guruş*

2 *veled-i* (son of)