

Pe'amim

Studies in Oriental Jewry

116

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**Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish
Communities in the East**

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In This Issue

In this issue there are articles on various subjects.

The opening article in this issue, by Orly Meron, concerns the demography of the Jewish population of Northern Greece in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The article is based on an analysis of the official data from Ottoman and Greek censuses, presenting the development of the Jewish population of Northern Greece. This population was defined by one administrative unit that provided a degree of continuity in the recording of data from the Ottoman period into the Greek period. Nevertheless the article seeks to bridge the gap that does exist between the Ottoman data and the Greek data in order to reflect continuous demographic development from the late Ottoman period until the radical demographic upheaval in the population of Greece, the consequences of which appear in the census of 1928. The landmarks in the development of the Jewish population are the Greek annexation of the area (1912), the great fire in Salonika (1917), and the immigration of Greek refugees from Asia Minor to Greece in the population exchange forced on Greece (the 1923 "Transfer"). These turning points are examined with attention paid to migration movement, and their potential to make a demographic change on the Jewish population is measured, between the demographic height of this group during the period under

discussion (1909) and its diminishing size relative to the general population

Dr. Orly C. Meron is lecturer in the Jewish History Department and in the Interdisciplinary Department of Social Sciences, Bar Ilan University.

Nechama Grunhaus discusses the *gabella*, an internal sales tax that was imposed by Jewish communities, usually on certain types of kosher food products. The income of this tax was used to defray the salaries of public officers and to cover charitable efforts. It was customary to farm out the *gabella* tax. The successful bidders were committed to turn over a certain sum to the community and their hope was to profit by collecting a higher sum. No exemptions or discounts were given and the tax was collected upon purchase. Reviewing the procedure and its Halakhic basis contribute to a better understanding of the collecting of this regressive tax.

Dr. Nechama Grunhaus teaches in the Lander Institute in Jerusalem and is engaged in research on the history of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire.

The article by Dror Ehrlich offers a systematic and comprehensive analysis of R. Joseph Albo's discussion on evil. It deals specifically with the following questions: the essence of evil, the problem that evil arises and its solutions. The present study aims to show that Albo's

discussions on evil are of a dualistic character. This internal dualism, it is argued, reflects the esoteric method of writing used by Albo in his *Book of Principles*. In addition, it is suggested that the historical circumstances, in which Albo's theoretical activity took place, give a basis for an understanding of the possible reasons that led him to use this literary style in this case.

Dr. Dror Ehrlich teaches in the department of philosophy at Bar Ilan University.

In the review section Itzhak Bezael reviews the book by Ruth Kark and Joseph Glass on the Valero family and its economic initiatives in Eretz Israel in the nineteenth century. Dr. Guy Miron discusses Reuven Snir's book on Arabness, Jewishness and Zionism among the Jews of Iraq. Dr. Avraham David describes Eliezer Bashan's contribution to the study of the Jews of the Maghreb.

In the section on activities *Qadmata*, the Israel Center for Research on Oriental and Sefardi Jewry, is described.