RETHINKING THE *YISHUV*: LATE-OTTOMAN PALESTINE'S JEWISH COMMUNITIES REVISITED

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This article argues for a significant revision in the understanding of Jews in late-Ottoman Palestine: from a model of a singular community (the *yishuv*) to a model of multiple communities, embedded within local, regional and global networks. The conceptualization of Palestine's Jewry is reappraised, from the Jerusalem School to recent literature. Despite acknowledging their ethnic and linguistic diversity, the historiography has long portrayed Palestine's Jews as sui-generis community, a Jewish microcosm united in its unique attachment to the *Eretz Israel*. It was studied as part of Jewish history, in isolation from its Middle Eastern context. In contrast, recent Relational Studies stressed Jewish connections to the Arab and Ottoman environment in Palestine. The article examines the self-perception of Jewish communities as plural and heterogeneous, through a survey of early Hebrew press. It traces the genealogy of the term *yishuv*, from an ideological project of revival and colonization in the 1860s, to an imagined pan-Jewish national community after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. This shift was boosted not only by Zionism and Jewish diaspora influence, but also by Ottomanism. Even then, Jewish communities in Palestine continued to operate separately in a highly fragmented manner well into the British Mandate.

The history of the Jews in Palestine has been studied more closely than that of any other Jewish community in the Middle East and North Africa. The number of publications on Palestine's Jewry dwarfs that of studies of the Jews in Iraq, Egypt, Turkey or any other country in the region.[1] Thanks to this rich body of scholarship, we know more about the history of Jews in Palestine than we know about all other Jewish communities in the entire region. Furthermore, as noted by Beshara Doumani, we know more about the history of Jews in Palestine than we know about any other part of society in Palestine (Doumani 1992).

This rich historiographic corpus developed in the twentieth century against the backdrop of Zionism and the establishment of Israel. The influential Jerusalem School, which emerged among Zionist scholars of Jewish Studies in the early twentieth century, put Palestine, or *Eretz Israel*, as the heart and centre of the Jewish people from the Roman period to the modern age. The "Jewish community" in Palestine was seen as sui generis, unlike any other community in the region or elsewhere, manifested in the unique term *yishuv*. The term – sometimes translated as "settlement" or "community", but usually left in the original Hebrew – is typically used for Jews in Palestine alone. The *yishuv* was understood as a singular community, sustaining a strong sense of unity (despite considerable internal divisions), maintaining an unbroken historical continuity and "constancy" of steadfast attachment to the Holy Land, and motivated by a sense of religious-national mission as the Jewish community residing in the ancestral land to which all Jews prayed to return. Palestine's Jewry was typically studied in relation to the Jewish diaspora worldwide, but not as a Middle Eastern Jewish community. Most studies of the Jews of Palestine examine them in isolation from their immediate Palestinian and Middle Eastern environment. Conversely, the literature on Jews of the Middle East has tended to exclude Palestine's Jews as an exceptional case; notice, for example, the absence of Palestine from the elegant 17 volume book series "Jewish Communities in the East in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," published recently by Yad Ben Zvi, the Hebrew University and the Israeli Ministry of Education.[2] Critical scholarship on Mizrahi and Arab Jews has similarly overlooked or downplayed the case of the Jews of Palestine.[3]

In recent years, the Jews of late-Ottoman Palestine have come back to the centre of academic enquiry, but from a different perspective: that of scholars of the Middle East, who study them in relation to their Arab and Ottoman environment. These studies have challenged perceptions regarding the separateness and segregation of these communities, and reopened

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the discussion on the role and position of local Jewish elites in regional processes as well as

vis-à-vis Zionism. Emphasizing Jewish relations with the majority Arab Muslim society, the

"Relational" approach rejects the notion of a proto-national Jewish society existing in

isolation from the Arab society, and instead emphazised the varying degrees of

embeddedness of Jews within the Palestinian social landscape. It argues that the creation of a

separatist Jewish society in Palestine was a twentieth-century outcome of Zionism, British

rule and the Zionist-Arab conflict, rather than an ancient historical reality. However,

Relational scholars have continued to rely on the terminology and conceptualization of the

yishuv developed by the Jerusalem School, and have not spelled out a conceptual challenge

and alternative to this terminology.

This article examines the existing model of the *yishuv* against recent literature on

Jews in late-Ottoman Palestine. It draws on a survey of the Hebrew press in Palestine to

revisit the question of communal definitions. Given the high level of divergence between

Jewish congregations, and given the strong interaction between some Jewish communities

and the Arab and Ottoman environment, what model would best describe Palestine's Jewry?

Should they be considered, in accordance to the dominant model, as a single, proto-national

community, internally diverse yet unified in its sense of identity and mission? Or should we

treat them as distinct ethno-religious communities?

Jerusalem School and the Jews of Palestine

As succinctly put by David Nathan Myers (2009), the Jerusalem School approach to Jewish

Studies, which took shape in the 1920s and 1930s, defined Jewish history as evolving around

Eretz Israel as its central axis, and with the Jewish nation as its chief causal agent. This

approach, informed by the ideological and institutional framework of the Zionist movement,

continued to shape Jewish Studies well until the end of the century if not until today.

The study of Jewish history in Palestine was the Archimedean point for the Jerusalem School. The Jewish community in Palestine, or as it is commonly referred to, the *yishuv*, was studied as a singular group: a national avant-garde that struggled to maintain and develop a Jewish presence in the national homeland through the long centuries of exile. While throughout most of this long period, Jewish communities in Palestine were neither the largest nor the most important in the Middle East, the Jerusalem School attributed a special national significance to their "continuous presence" in the country. The fundamental characteristics of the *yishuv* were its integrative unity, continuity, and uniqueness as a community like no others. All these aspects were understood as ideologically informed by the community's own sense of national mission. That is, the supposed unity of the community reflected not only its internal organization and cohesion, but also its national role as a representative community of the Jewish people worldwide, in all its diversity. The continuity of Jewish presence in Palestine was not a historical contingency but was the product of a conscious and deliberate effort to hold onto the ancient homeland. The uniqueness of the *yishuv* implied its singular and central role in the network of Jewish communities, and was reflected in the manner the *yishuv* perceived itself and was perceived by others. These historiographic assumptions were driven by an explicitly Zionist approach, which aimed to provide depth and justification for Jewish self-determination and settlement in Palestine.

Ya'akov Barnay, in his illuminating study of the historiography of the *yishuv* and *Eretz Israel* between 634 and 1881, explores the contradictions and inadequacies of these assumptions. In the early modern period, Palestine had a small, fragmented and relatively transitory Jewish population. As noted by Barnay, the makeup of the communities regularly shifted, and there was very little continuity in organizational and genealogical terms. Palestine's Jewish communities were relatively marginal in their importance to other Jewish communities. With the exception of sixteenth-century Safed, Ottoman Palestine was not an

important centre of Jewish learning and thought, and the small communities were dependent on Jews abroad in terms of material support and spiritual guidance (Barnay 1995, 94–128).

Around 1850, the number of in Palestine Jews is estimated at a little above 10,000; more than half resided in Jerusalem, and the remaining Jews lived in the three other holy cities, Safed, Tiberias and Hebron. Most were Sephardi Jews, while Ashkenazim constituted about a third (Eliav 1981; Schölch 1985). In the final decades of Ottoman rule, the Jewish population expanded dramatically, mainly due to Ashkenazi immigration, which intensified after 1881. As recently demonstrated by Gur Alroey (2014), this wave of migration was driven primarily by economic considerations, and not –

as has generally been assumed – by Zionist ideology. Studying Jewish immigration to Palestine between 1904 and 1914, Alroey has shown that migrants to Palestine were almost identical in profile to Jewish migrants to the USA of the same period: merchants, professionals, artisans, and peddlers, driven by hardship in the Pale of Settlement, and swept by the enormous wave of migration from the 1870s onwards. Families with children made up the majority of migrants. Only about 15% arrived in Palestine intending to settle in the colonies, while over 75% preferred Jaffa or Jerusalem. Of 35,000 immigrants, fewer than 2,000 were labourers, and ideological pioneers made up a narrow group of several hundreds.

There is considerable debate regarding the numbers of Jews in late Ottoman Palestine and their share of the population. Given that most Ashkenazi Jews held foreign nationalities and were not recorded in the Ottoman census, it is difficult to arrive at conclusive numbers. Nevertheless, it is clear that by the eve of the First World War, Palestine's Jewish population was among the largest in the Middle East and North Africa. Estimates for the overall number of Jews in 1914 vary between 65,000 (McCarthy 1990) and 85,000 (Schmelz 1990). Jerusalem accounted for more than half of Jews in Palestine. Jaffa had the second largest Jewish population, with 15 per cent of the total, while Safed, Tiberias and Hebron had

smaller populations numbering several hundreds or thousands. Fewer than 12,000 lived in the

Jewish agricultural colonies that had been established since than 1870s.

There are no hard figures for ethnic distribution of these communities, but it is clear

that by the end of the nineteenth century Ashkenazim constituted the majority. A 1916 census

of Jews in Jerusalem found, alongside the large Ashkenazi congregation and the smaller

number of Sephardim, six Mizrahi congregations numbering at least 500 people each

(originating from Yemen, Georgia, Bukhara, Iran, Morocco and Syria) as well as 14 smaller

communities of less than 300 people (Hayim 2000). Palestine had probably the world's most

diverse Jewish social landscape in ethnic, cultural, and linguistic terms. Different Jewish

ethnic communities retained their uniqueness, in terms of everyday language, clothes, food

and religious customs, as well as communal organization. Each community spoke its own

language, most notably Yiddish and Ladino, although Hebrew was commonly used for

writing and publishing. The communities kept separate synagogues, traditional schools,

hospitals, butchers, burial services, soup kitchens and old people's homes. The large

Ashkenazi Orthodox population, while sharing Yiddish as a language of speech and cultural

practices, was itself composed of several communities and was far from a single community.

The only site of prayer shared by all Jews in Jerusalem was the Western Wall. Some

charitable institutions were open to all Jews regardless of affiliation - marked by the adjective

klali, "general," but these were the exception, their pan-Jewish character often being the

result of explicit demands from diaspora donors. Even such "general" institutions were

sometimes in practice identified with one Jewish group.[4]

As Matthias Lehmann has pointed out in his study of Sephardim in Palestine,

differentiation on ethnic grounds was not only a matter of origin, rites, and cultural praxis; it

was also a product of social conflict over economic resources and legal status (Lehmann

2008). Migrant Jews often integrated into existing local communities, temporarily or

permanently, even if they came from different ethnic background and religious affiliation. However, as their numbers grew, they usually sought to establish separate structures. The Sephardi authorities were the official leadership of all Jews, in the eyes of the Ottoman Empire. In practice, However, by the late nineteenth century most Jewish communities had obtained considerable de-facto autonomy through various means. There were repeated calls from various Jewish circles to establish cross-communal Jewish leadership. But attempts to establish unified communal structures, on local or regional level, overwhelmingly failed.[5]

On the other hand, one can point to the emergence of a "Hebrew public sphere" in late nineteenth-century Jerusalem, in the form of a lively Jewish newspaper scene. This was a proto-national arena of interaction for literate Jewish communities in Palestine as well as with Jewish readerships abroad. Newspapers were affiliated with factional and ideological positions and differed considerably in readership in Palestine and beyond. The Orthodox Ashkenazi Perushi newspaper *Halevanon* (issued 1863-1881) stood against the Jewish *Haskalah* and was hostile to Jewish colonization in Palestine; while the Ashkenazi hassidic *Havatselet* (1863-1911) and the Ashkenazi-nationalist-secular *Hatzvi* (1884-1915) advocated for colonization and promoted modern notions of pan-Jewish national identity (Gilbo'a 1992) - as did some Jewish newspapers in Eastern Europe. However, the actual impact of such ideas was limited. This is not to deny the bonds of solidarity between Jewish communities, who believed that they shared a common ancestral origin, followed similar (but not identical) interpretations of Jewish religious law, and prayed for messianic deliverance in Jerusalem. But in most cases, instances of cross-ethnic Jewish solidarity remained exactly that: cooperation anchored in separate factional and congregational structures.

Contemporary Jewish commentators frequently stressed that communal differences were pronounced and substantial: "and in Jerusalem the city of our forefathers, the place where the unity of Israel should be blossoming, we find two congregations of Sephardim and

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Ashkenazim, their children do not marry each other and do not mix with each other"

(*Hamagid,* 7 July 1880*)*.

Historiography has, of course, recognised the high level of division among Palestine's Jewry. Israel Bartal long challenged the tendency of the Jerusalem School to see it as a unified community. Rather than a proto-national "avant-garde" of the Jewish people, Bartal views Jewish communities in Palestine as extensions of their diaspora Jewish societies. Jewish communities in Palestine "did not come together, they did not see the coming together of different groups as a guiding principle and in fact, did not wish to come together" (Bartal 1995, 17–18). But Bartal nonetheless considers heterogeneity and fragmentation as the internal characteristics of a single community. As in this recent description of the Jewish population of Jerusalem:

> [T]he Jewish community in Jerusalem was built during 400 years of Ottoman rule over Eretz Israel, through continuous immigration of individuals and groups that joined the fabric of the existing [Jewish] population in the city, but maintained over time the patterns of organization, ways of life, language and custom that they brought from their countries of origin. The *olim* kept close relationships with their mother communities, and were remote branches of sort of these communities … and created a kind of microcosm of Jewish diasporas in the city (Bartal and Goren 2010, xi).

Despite emphasizing difference and diversity, this paragraph strikingly maintains the view of the divergent social landscape as one fabric, both in terms of temporal continuity (400 years) and a single social framework (the Jewish community). It defines all these communities as *olim*, ignoring the sense of local identity among Sephardim (Lehmann 2008), implicitly binding them with a Zionist meta-narrative of immigration and settlement. At the same time, this description stresses the "diasporic" character of the communities that distinguished them

from future Zionist settlers. While the literature is certainly richer, more complex and subtler in its approach, in many ways it has not departed from the framework put by the historian Ben-Zion Dinur and his colleagues. Jerusalem's Jews are positioned on the axis of a *Jewish* history in Jerusalem, and studied as a *Jewish* microcosm, through their relations with "mother communities." The position of these communities within the immediate Palestinian locale, and their relations with Muslim and Christian communities and with the Ottoman authorities, are excluded from the discussion. According to Bartal, Jewish communities in Palestine cannot and should not be studied as integral part of "the history of the local society of the non-Jewish population" (Bartal 1995, 18) because of their unique character and forms of organization.

This tendency to downplay the local environment was, at least in part, a product of disciplinary divisions. Palestine's Jews have mostly been studied by scholars of Jewish Studies, who often privileged Jewish and European sources at the expense of Ottoman and Arabic ones; while historians studying Palestine in Middle Eastern Studies departments, and employing Ottoman and Arabic sources, have rarely studied these Jewish communities at all.[6] It is this disciplinary divide, and ideological omission that has been challenged in recent years by scholars of Middle Eastern Studies who examined Jewish communities in Palestine as part of the local social fabric.

Palestine's Jews and Relational History

The last two decades have seen the emergence of a new paradigm in studying Jews in Palestine before 1948. Following what Zachary Lockman (1993) termed as a relational historical approach, scholars have argued that the existence of two national societies in Palestine, Arab and Jewish, was not the starting point of the Zionist-Arab conflict but rather its outcome. Samira Haj (2002) warned against the simple projection of modern national

categorization of "Arab" and "Jew" onto the Ottoman social landscape of nineteenth century Jerusalem. The Relational literature sees Arab and Jewish group identities as formed in the twentieth century, not in isolation but rather in relation to each other, through engagement and conflict. This scholarship seeks to locate Jewish communities in their Palestinian and Middle Eastern context, rather than within a Zionist trajectory or a worldwide Jewish history. It pays careful attention to local Jewish communities, and specifically, the Sephardic and Mizrahi communities, which have been marginalized by the historiography in favour of the Zionist-Ashkenazi immigrants. The emerging picture is very different from the one we find in previous historiography of Palestine Jews. In what follows I will survey some of the main works relevant to the late Ottoman period.

Michelle Campos (2010) has examined the role of Ottoman citizenship and identity as a common denominator in Palestine after the 1908 Constitutional Revolution. Campos demonstrates that a sense of Ottomanism was shared widely among different constituencies, Muslims, Christians and Jews, and especially their elites. Ottoman nationalism implied a diverse, pluralistic and multi-confessional national community, although the contours of the Ottoman political project were contested. Campos and Julia Philips Cohen (2014) argued that Ottomanism as an ideology of civic identity was especially popular among the Sephardic communities, in Palestine and other parts of the Empire. Unlike Ashkenazi or North African congregations who saw themselves in relation to their communities of origin, Sephardim had a strong sense of local Ottoman identity (Lehmann 2008). The recent anthology of Sephardic modern sources, *Sephardi Lives,* illustrates how embedded Sephardim in Palestine were within a Mediterranean Ottoman network, in terms of education, commerce and politics (J. Cohen and Stein 2014). Sephardi supporters of Zionism saw support for Jewish national revival in Palestine as wholly compatible with Ottomanism.[7] Abigail Jacobson has studied the debate within the local Jewish communities on relations with Arab society and the Arabic

language, and highlighted integrationist forms of Ottoman Zionism among Sephardic intellectuals, that stood in contrast to the separatist and colonial visions promoted by Ashkenazi secular Zionists (Jacobson 2011).

The most rigorous and ambitious attempt to write a history of late Ottoman Palestine that is not subordinate to the retrospective chronology of the Zionist-Arab conflict, is Johann Büssow's *Hamidian Palestine* (Büssow 2011). A social history of the Ottoman district of Jerusalem under Sultan Abdulhamid II (1872-1908), this 600-page volume is based on a rich array of sources in Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, French, German, and English. Büssow's study presents Palestinian society as multi-confessional and multicultural, examining both inter-communal and intra-communal relations, through of variety of foci and scales, from the family to Imperial politics. Büssow is careful to note differences between Jewish communities, and rarely refers to them as a single body. He makes a telling comparison between the Sephardi and the Armenian communities, which both received preferable treatment from the Ottomans, as "local communities" unlike other churches and congregations. Such a comparison highlights the similarity between the array of Jewish communities, and their remarkable ethnic and religious differences, and the array of Christian communities in Palestine.

Defining Neighbors (Gribetz 2014) surveys a series of intellectual encounters between Jews and Arabs in late Ottoman Palestine and its surrounding environment. He demonstrates clearly that among the literate elite, one can discern an open conversation about the nature of Jewish identity and Zionism, encompassing not only Jewish authors in Jaffa, Jerusalem and Cairo – but also Arab Muslims and Christians in Palestine and Egypt. One can speak of a network of modern "public spaces" (in its Habermassian sense), operating across ethnic and religious difference, challenging any notion of impervious boundaries between communities.

The anthology of modern Jewish Middle Eastern intellectuals (Behar and Ben-Dor Benite 2013) brings together the original writing of Jewish intellectuals from the Mashriq (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Palestine/Israel), who had been marginalised or omitted from the historiography. Significantly, more than a third of these "forgotten voices" belong to intellectuals from Palestine's Jewish communities. Seven out of the nineteen writers were born in Palestine, and a further two immigrated to the country before 1948.[8] While most studies on Middle Eastern Jews have tended to exclude the Jews of Palestine as a separate category, this anthology positions the Jews of Palestine at the very centre of the modern Mizrahi intellectual world of the early twentieth century. Their centrality is a decidedly Middle Eastern one, not only in geographical sense, or in terms of connections to Jews in Syria and Egypt, but also in its approach to Arab culture and language.

Much of the new wave of scholarship focused on Sephardi and Mizrahi communities. This is understandable given their complete marginalization in the *yishuv* historiography. Furthermore, both the Orthodox and the Zionist Ashkenazim are perceived to have been far less integrated locally. According to this view, Ashkenazim formed separate ethnic enclaves that were cut off from the majority society, and made no attempt to adapt to the Middle Eastern lifestyle (Alroey 2014). Campos and Jacobson have argued that Ottomanism and Arab engagement was a Sephardic enterprise not shared by Ashkenazim. Yet this is contested by Yuval Ben Bassat, who found enthusiasm for Ottomanism in Ashkenazi political discourse after 1908 (Ben Bassat 2009b). The question of Ashkenazi integration in Arab society and culture is only beginning to be explored. As shown in Ben-Bassat's work on Jewish colonies (2009a), levels and intensity of interaction varied considerably between locales and social circles. While it is undeniable that Mizrahim and Sephardim had closer and stronger ties with the Ottomans and Arabs, it is also clear that Ashkenazim in Palestine underwent a process of acculturation and integration within the Arab environment (Wallach

2016a). Perhaps the best illustration for Ashkenazi-Arab acculturation is the profound impact of Arabic on local Yiddish. A 1930s survey of Yiddish as spoken in Safed and Jerusalem found that more than 800 words, idioms and expressions were borrowed from local Arabic (Kossover 1966). Interaction in Arabic was all but inevitable for business, dealing with the authorities, everyday trade, local politics, and neighbourly relations. There are many examples of Arab Muslims in close relationships with Ashkenazi communities. (Wallach 2016b). It should be remembered that Ashkenazim migrated not only to Palestine but also, in smaller numbers, to other Middle Eastern countries, including Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt, where they went through processes of acculturation (Krämer 1989, 18–22). It may be useful to compare the Ashkenazi experience in Palestine to these communities.

Hillel Cohen (2015) argues that the plural and fragmented nature of Palestine's Jewish communities, and their ties to Arab society persisted well into the British Mandate period. It was the violent escalation of the Arab-Zionist conflict in 1929 that led to the consolidation of a separate Jewish society in Palestine under Zionist leadership. Cohen looks in great detail at Jewish communities in Safed, Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron, differentiating between Ashkenazi Orthodox, Sephardim and Mizrahim, and secular Zionists. With the escalation of violence, Jewish communities who were ambivalent or even hostile towards Zionism, understood that they had no choice but to align themselves politically with it. The Zionist establishment was thus able to assert its leadership over all Jewish communities and forge a sense of a distinct Jewish society.

This survey of the literature does not pretend to be exhaustive, and there are many other relevant works (e.g. Tamari 2004; Bernstein 2000; Abbasi 2015; Weiss 2011; Yazbak and Weiss 2011; LeVine and Shafir 2012; Klein 2014). Whether explicitly or implicitly, this rich body of literature has challenged the premises of Zionist historiography and the

Jerusalem School. By thinking of Jewish communities as part of their late Ottoman Palestinian and Middle Eastern environment, and by emphasising the heterogeneity of Jewish congregations and the networks in which they operated, the Relational approach goes against the view of a sui generis proto-national Jewish society, defined in terms of integral unity, continuity and singular mission. Yet the conceptual implications of this challenge have not yet been theorised. Should we still speak of a Jewish community in Palestine, or should we, instead, think of them as communities in the plural? Scholars use both "community" and "communities", sometimes intermittently. Most importantly, the *yishuv* remains the primary category to describe Palestine's Jewry. Therefore, before thinking further about the diversity of late Ottoman Palestine's Jewish social landscape, let us examine the term *yishuv*, its meaning and history.

The Yishuv

Crucial to the conceptualisationization of Jewish communities in Palestine is their definition as the *yishuv*. This unique term designates Jews as a distinct segment within the people of Palestine. It is used only for the Jews of Palestine and not for Jews elsewhere. In the historiography, a Jewish community outside Palestine would rarely be described as "a *yishuv*". Certainly the unspecified form with definite article *the yishuv* is marked specifically for Palestine. The term is applied by historians as referring to Palestine's Jewish communities not only in the modern period, but also in the past, from the Roman period through the Middle Ages, up until the 1948 establishment of Israel. As defined by one of the founding scholars of the Jerusalem School, Ben Zion Dinur (quoted in Barnay 1995, 82):

> The unspecified term '*yishuv*' is used exclusively in reference to the Jewish population of the Land [of Israel] only[. I]t is an abbreviated form of the term '*yishuv Eretz Israel*' and designates the Jewish population in the Land in times when [the

people of] Israel are not ruling over it. [This population] regardless of its size, has a unique Jewish *Eretz* [*Israeli*] character.

And yet as a survey of Hebrew sources reveals, the Palestinocentric use of the term the *yishuv* is surprisingly modern, and dates back to the early twentieth century. Before that time, the term *yishuv* was not the preferred term to describe Palestine's Jews and certainly it was not specific to these communities.

As defined in the canonical Hebrew dictionaries of the first half of the twentieth century (Ben-Yehuda 1908; Even-Shoshan 1953), the term *yishuv* referred to population, a populated site, or the process of populating and settling. The term is ambiguous and denoted people or an inhabitation ranging between a few villagers or a hamlet, to a metropolitan or an entire society of a country. In nineteenth-century Hebrew sources *yishuv* is a versatile term for population or human inhabitation (often, but not only, of Jewish population), whose use says little about its cohesiveness, size, or self-perception. The general and open reference of the term *yishuv* made it useful to refer to diverse and unorganised populations. A report on the Jewish population of Kiev in 1880, referred to them as *yishuv* while stressing that despite the fact Jews numbered up to 30,000 people in that city, they could not be considered a congregation, as they lacked communal institutions, unity and leadership. "The Jewish population (*yishuv hayehudim*) here cannot be considered a community (*kahal*) or a congregation (*eda*) because the things which unite the people of Israel wherever they are into one community, are lacking here" (*Halevanon,* 26 November 1880).

The term *yishuv* appears in nineteenth-century sources discussing Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and other places in Palestine. As an ambiguous term, *yishuv* was very suitable to describe these communities, as it captured their diverse and fragmented nature. But the term had no Palestinian uniqueness, nor was it the preferred term to describe Jews in Palestine. It

certainly was not charged with the singular ideological value which it would acquire in the twentieth century. Eliezer Bergman, who immigrated to Palestine from Germany in the 1830s, used the term *yishuv* in his letters to describe the Jews in Beirut, and another time to refer to the Jewish population of the Holy Land (*Yishuv hayehudim shel Eretz hakodesh*) (Bergman 1968, 72). Far more frequent, however, in Bergman's letters, is the term "the four holy communities," "*hakehilot hakedoshot*" (Bergman 1968, 70–76) . In early Hebrew newspapers in Palestine we find references to "communities" (*kehilot*, or *makhelot, 'edot*), or "our brethren" (*aheynu*) and other terms, which express a plural and diverse social landscape that is not perceived as a cohesive society or a singular phenomenon distinct from diaspora Jewish communities. Why and how, then, did the term *yishuv* become a charged category referring to Palestine's Jews from a neutral and general term for human population or inhabitation?

I argue that in its unique reference to Palestine, *yishuv* was originally understood not as a social group, but rather as an ideology or a project: *ra`ayon hayishuv* (literally, "the idea of settlement"). It stemmed from the meaning of *yishuv* as a gerund (inhabiting, making inhabitable, settling), rather than as a noun (inhabitants, or inhabitation). The Jews of Palestine were called upon to think of themselves as participants in the "project of the *yishuv*" – a project that was defined through two competing, yet overlapping, frameworks: the revived religious obligation for Jews to reside in Eretz Israel (*Mitsvat yishuv Eretz Israel)*, and Jewish colonization.

The religious commandment for Jews to reside in the Holy Land is discussed in rabbinical sources, and is the subject of rich debate. Famously, Maimonides excluded "*yishuv Eretz Israel*" from the 613 commandments as discussed in his twelfthe-century *Mishne Tora*. The rabbinical consensus before the modern period was that the religious obligation to

immigrate and settle in the Holy Land did not apply after the destruction of the Temple, although there were contrary voices, such as that of the thirteenth- century Nahmanides (Ḥalamish and Ravitzky 1991). It was only in the 1860s that the term was revived by religious thinkers such as Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, who started to advocate openly for mass migration to Palestine as a religious duty (Kniel 2000, 215-216; Ravitzky 2004; Ravitzky 1998). In the 1870s the term *yishuv Erez Israel* was increasingly employed by the Ashkenazi Hebrew press in reference to the Jewish presence in Palestine. Front page reports in the newspaper *Halevanon* under the title *Yishuv Eretz hakodesh* or *Yishuv Eretz Israel* appeared frequently in the late 1870s and early 1880s, covering news from Palestine's Ashkenazi communities.[9] Some articles discussed the condition of these communities and their affairs, while others covered immigration and settlement efforts.

The revived interest in the duty of *yishuv Eretz Israel* arrived at the moment when the word *yishuv* acquired a new meaning, that of colonization (Kuzar, 2015). It was no longer a neutral noun describing the act of simply residing in a place. Rather, it now resonated with the discourse of colonialism and its moral undertones: the act of claiming and reclaiming land, taking ownership over it and developing it; the transformation of *terra nullius* into a realm of European civilization. "*Yishuv*" was a preferable translation for "colonization", as we see in the case of the German Jewish society, *Kolonasationsverein für Palästina* (est. 1863) linked to Rabbi Kalischer, named in Hebrew *Hahevra leyishuv Eretz Israel*; or Baron Hirsch's Jewish Colonization Society (JCA), *Hevrat yishuv hayehudim* (est. 1891) which promoted Jewish settlement in South America and in Palestine. Jewish colonisation initiatives in Angola, Mesopotamia and other parts of the world were similarly described as *yishuv*.[10]

These two concepts of *yishuv Ha'aretz* – the spiritual-religious mission of residing in the Holy Land, and the colonial mission of settling the ancient homeland – combined to define the Jewish population in Palestine, not simply as a social group, but rather as participants in an ideological enterprise of moral significance. The potency of this mission derived from its dual meaning, the mixture of religious and secular redemption. The deep resonance of the term *yishuv* relied crucially on the religious significance of the land; it gave it historical justification, as well as a sense of intimacy and familiarity that made the colonization of Palestine unlike Jewish colonization efforts elsewhere.

The tension between the two different interpretations to *yishuv Eretz-Israel* became apparent already in the 1880s. Orthodox Ashkenazi Jews in Palestine did not oppose – and sometimes actively supported – Jewish land purchase, immigration and colonization. Yet they believed that these aspects were secondary to the upkeep of a pious Jewish society in Palestine. For Ashkenazi proto-Zionists of *Hibbat Tziyon* and *BILU*, the enterprise was mainly about national Jewish rejuvenation through colonization. Supporters of these conflicting visions were referred to, as of the 1880s, as the "Old *yishuv*" vs. the "New *yishuv*". These terms, which captured a polemic among Ashkenazi elites in Palestine, were later used to portray a supposedly sharp division between the pre-1882 Jewish community and the post-1882 Zionist migrants. In Zionist writing and historiography, the "Old *yishuv*" was depicted as reactionary, zealously religious and reliant on charity, while the "New *yishuv*" stood for secular national revival, progress, productivity and self-reliance. This crude dichotomy was thoroughly discredited already in the 1970s, as scholars emphasized these categories' shortcomings (Kniel 2000; Bartal 1976; Herzog 1984; Friedman 2001). In reality, self-professed "New *yishuv*" advocates made up a small minority among Ashkenazi migrants after 1882. And while the end points of the ideological spectrum were very much at odds, there was much fluidity and continuity in between. The polemic appeared to be much about

the control of material resources (competition over diaspora philanthropy) as it was about ideology (Kniel 2000). The terminology referred exclusively to Ashkenazi communities, while omitting the Mizrahi and Sephardic communities, despite their significance among the Jewish bourgeoisie, intellectual circles and local Zionists. Sociologist Yehuda Shenhav perceptively suggested that the dichotomy should not be seen as an objective depiction of social groups, but rather as a "discursive mechanism" put forward by Zionist writers and then adopted by the historiography. The difference between Old and New carried clear normative dimensions, with Zionists polemically positioning themselves as the advocates of progress and modernity (Shenhav 2006, 90–91). What is remarkable is that despite wide scholarly agreement on the inadequacy and the polemical nature of this typology, the terms "Old *yishuv*" and "New *yishuv*" are still used. The reluctance to part with a framework that is so evidently anachronistic, ideological and inadequate says much about the persistence of the Zionist prism in the study of Palestine's Jews.

From a survey of Hebrew press published in late Ottoman Palestine it is clear that the term "*yishuv*" as a single all-encompassing Jewish community in Palestine appeared in earnest only after the 1908 Revolution. Terms such as "the Hebrew *yishuv* in Eretz Israel", "the Eretz-Israeli *yishuv*", or " the Jewish *yishuv* in Eretz Israel" appeared frequently in Hebrew newspapers after 1908, alongside increased use of references to a Jewish/Hebrew nation (*uma* or *le'om*). The sudden appearance of such terminology is linked not only to the influence of Zionism, but also to the dramatic political changes in the Ottoman Empire, as I shall discuss below.

External and internal perceptions

I have argued so far that given the high level of fragmentation and difference between Jewish communities, they cannot be considered as a single body. I have focused on the self-

perception of these communities and their social praxis, which made them into distinct congregations. In the last part of this article, however, I want to complicate my argument by examining instances in which Jewish communities were nonetheless perceived as a single community. Here I shall emphasize the link between external perceptions and internal praxis. The manner in which external actors viewed Jews in Palestine – either as a plurality of communities or as segments of a single community – contributed to the shaping of the political and social horizons for these communities. Colonial powers and their agents, Jewish diaspora organizations, and the Ottoman authorities were all pivotal in this regard. The picture is complex and contradictory, as some pressures from external actors contributed to the fragmentation of Jewish communities, while others encouraged consolidation and unity.

European missionary activities in Palestine clearly contributed to the development of a pan-Jewish identity. British missionaries who were interested in converting Jews to Christianity cared little about ethnic differences among Jews. The London Jews Society offered Jews in Palestine medical care free of charge, in hospitals and clinics which opened their doors to all Jews, regardless of their congregations, unlike Jewish hospitals that were affiliated with either Sephardic or Ashkenazi communities. Similarly, the vocational training programmes for Jews, set up by British consul James Finn, targeted Jews of all communities. For Jews entering such missionary spaces, specific ethnic identities became secondary and far less relevant. For Jewish elites the missionaries represented a challenge and a threat. Concerns about Jewish poor converting to Christianity provided an impetus to act in a concerted manner, and extend welfare provision to Jews across congregational divides.

However, European Imperial presence in Palestine generally had the opposite effect, encouraging the fragmentation of the Jewish social landscape. The consular protection afforded by European consulates, as part of the Capitulations, discouraged migrant Jews from becoming Ottoman citizens and gave them autonomy from the officially recognised local

Jewish Sephardic establishment. The opportunity to achieve exemption from local taxation and legal proceedings encouraged members of different communities to act separately and rely on their respective consular representatives, such as the Russian, Austrian, French or British consulates.

Relations with diaspora Jewish organizations played a crucial role in developing communal identities among Palestine's Jewry. While some commentators blamed e *haluka* (diaspora Jewish charity and patronage towards Palestine Jews) for entrenching the divide among communities (*Hatzvi*, 1 October 1890), other commentators claimed that *haluka* was the only thing that brought the communities together and forced them to act in a coordinated manner (*Hameliz,* 24 June 1894). In fact, both claims were correct. Some forms of Jewish philanthropy helped to consolidate divisions, while others encouraged unity.

 Matthias Lehmann (2015) has discussed the early modern emergence of a pan-Jewish global network of beneficence, dedicated to the support of Jews in Palestine. This network was centred between 1720s and the 1820s in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and was coordinated by the "Istanbul Committee of Officials for the Land of Israel". It was the first global enterprise to connect such a range of Jewish communities, from the Caribbean to India, from England to Yemen, cutting across geographic, linguistic and ethnic boundaries. These communities were invited to think of themselves as an intertwined global Jewish community by participating collectively in a shared philanthropic project of supporting Jewish life in Palestine. Unlike previous ethnic-based philanthropic initiatives, the Istanbul Committee supported all Jewish congregations in Palestine (Sephardim, Ashkenazim and Maghrebim), regardless of their ethnicity, prompting them to act in coordination.

However, as Jewish communities in Palestine expanded in the late nineteenth century, charity networks split and fragmented, mostly along ethnic lines. The Istanbul Committee, and its successor the Amsterdam Committee, lost their power and significance. With Jewish

immigration from Europe, North Africa and Central Asia, migrant communities preferred to maintain separate and independent channels of philanthropy, liaising directly with communities in their countries of origin. Through these channels, Jewish congregations in Jerusalem were able to establish separate burial, medical, and welfare services, and built their own synagogues and religious schools. Immigrant communities, organised to dozens of *kollelim* according to country and region of origin, sought to monopolize the flow of funds and donations from abroad. This system of region- and country-based patronage contributed to the further fragmentation of Jewish (mainly Ashkenazi) communities, and made any attempt to unite communities virtually impossible.

Yet in the second half of the nineteenth century there emerged new kinds of Jewish diaspora organizations,with a clear modernizing mission. Their vision was of Jewish peoplehood as a network of solidarity and philanthropy that transcended ethnic boundaries, and sought to improve Jewish conditions by providing education, healthcare, and relief. The French organization Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU) and the Austrian-German Ezra foundation, operated global networks of modern educational institutions, open to Jews of all origins. The AIU and Ezra schools promoted French and German culture and language (respectively), and advanced a modern Jewish cultural identity. The schools became a springboard for a new pan-ethnic Jewish middle class, and a new power base independent of the congregational framework. The AIU was by no means a Zionist organization. Its efforts in Palestine were part of a larger network in the Ottoman Empire, aiming to create a modernizing, French-oriented, Jewish Ottoman elite. And yet by cultivating a modern Jewish cultural identity these institutions were perfect ground for the development of a Jewish imagined community cutting across ethnic boundaries. The AIU and Ezra employed local Jewish intellectuals who used the schools to advance new ideas about the communities and Jewish identity among their students. Jews of different ethnic groups, educated together,

often in Hebrew, in the same classroom, , were far more likely to think of themselves as members of a common group in a material, rather than idealized, sense.

Finally, we should consider the place of Jews within the Ottoman framework. The Ottoman authorities categorized all Jews as members of a single *millet* - non-Muslim ethnoreligious corporate body. The *millet* system provided Jews and Christians with congregational autonomy, entrusting considerable power to a state-recognised leadership, which, in the Jewish case, was the Sephardic establishment. The Arab population, as well as Ottoman administrators, were well aware of differences between what they termed *Yahud* (Sephardic and Oriental Jews) and *Shiknaz* (Ashkenazim), but for official purposes all Jews were labelled as *Musevi* (Mosaic, that is, Jewish). One should not underestimate the power of such an official categorization to force members of different communities to act in a coordinated manner in representing communal interests. The *millet* was especially important when it came to liaising with Imperial authorities over taxation, conscription, and population registration. However, in practice, the authorities were happy to extend informal recognition to different Jewish communities, including separate representation for different Ashkenazi sub-groups, hassidim and Perushim. There were initiatives to institute a separate Ashkenazi *millet* in the same manner that various Christian churches received separate recognition (Sharabi 1989, 113–116). These suggestions did not materialize, perhaps because most Ashkenazim already enjoyed considerable autonomy as foreign citizens protected by European consulates. Had this not been the case, a separate Ashkenazi *millet* may well have been established, leading to more pronounced differentiation between communities. Officially, the Ottomans continued to see Jews as a single religious group, and at times the Ottoman understanding of the intricacies of Jewish communities was swept aside in favour of referring to "Jews" – Zionists and non-Zionist, Sephardim and Ashkenazim – as a single body.[11]

The 1908 Revolution opened new horizons for Jewish communities, and gave a considerable boost to the idea of a Jewish national community in Palestine. With the reinstatement of the parliamentary constitution, the Ottoman Empire was celebrated as a civic "family of nations", a fraternity of diverse religious, ethnic and linguistic groups (Campos 2010). The revolution inspired the hope among Armenians, Arabs, and Jews, that they would be able express their national identity within a democratic and pluralistic Ottoman nation (*Der Matossian* 2014). The Sephardic *millet* structures and its conservative leadership were much weakened, while a diverse Jewish middle class asserted greater political influence over communal politics. However, the confessional nature of the Ottoman political system persisted, as ethno-religious groups played a key role in the electoral process, in mobilization, negotiations and campaigning. The Ottoman age of mass politics and parliamentary elections gave Jews in Palestine a greater incentive to overcome their ethnic differences and act in an organized fashion in order to achieve greater influence.[12] The Hebrew press after 1908 demonstrated this development, as Jewish elites responded to the new political challenges and opportunities. New Hebrew newspapers were launched: the Ottomanist-Sephardic-Zionist *Haherut* (issued 1909-1917), the Ashkenazi Perushi nationalist *Moriya* (1910-1915) and the Socialist-Ashkenazi-Zionist *Hapo`el Hatza`ir* (1907-1922). While differing in many respects, all of these promoted modern Jewish nationhood as part of the Ottoman family of nations. As mentioned above, it is at this point that we find the term "Jewish/Hebrew *yishuv* in *Eretz Israel*" used regularly in these new newspapers as well as the older *Hatzvi* , and to a much lesser extent more conservative Ashkenazi Hassidic *Havatselet*.[13] Calls for pan-Jewish unity in Palestine intensified after 1908, and the Hebrew press featured a vigorous debate on appropriate forms of collective representation for the Jews of Palestine, to secure their rights in the reconstituted Ottoman Empire (Ben Bassat 2009b).

For Jewish nationalists, Ottoman loyalty and Zionist sentiments were not contradictory. On the contrary, they were mutually reinforcing. As Ben Bassat has shown, all Jewish factions in Palestine, regardless of their ethnic and ideological positions, stated their adherence to the Ottoman civic project and articulated their vision for Jewish society within this framework (Ben Bassat 2009b). Ottoman Zionism became vocal not only in Palestine but also in other parts of the Empire, such as Salonica (Cohen J. P. 2014). Ottoman Zionists advocated for Jewish cultural and educational autonomy within the Empire, recognition for Hebrew, and for some, also regional autonomy. Yet at the same time the impact and reach of national ideas should not be overstated. While intellectuals promoted the idea of Jews as a unified national group in Palestine, in practice Jewish communities remained fragmented and distinct. A collective leadership of all Jewish communities in Palestine was not established before the British Mandate period.

Conclusion

It is time to part with the ideological prism of the Jerusalem School, and with the anachronistic category of the *yishuv* as a trans-historical, proto-national, and sui generis Jewish community in Palestine. In the nineteenth century the Jewish social landscape in Palestine was diverse and fragmented, and far from being a singule community. The dynamic and heterogeneous nature of Palestine's Jewry during this period makes it difficult to capture it within a simple model. Demography, social organization and ideas of identity changed considerably within a few decades as a result of rapid immigration. We should be attentive to the temporal dimension and to factors of ethnicity, class and locale. Palestine's Jews operated within manifold networks, some parallel, some interlinked, some conflicting with each other. Their communal definition and self-perception varied according to the context and network.

In arguably most contexts Jewish congregations acted as separate communities. Given the significant differences in language, religious practice, and communal organization, I argue that the point of departure for historical enquiry should be to consider them as distinct communities, rather than to assume a proto-national unity.

Seen in this light, could we compare Jewish communities with Christian communities in Palestine? The Greek-Orthodox, Syriac, Catholic, Protestants and Armenian communities, shared many, if not most, aspects of religious belief but retained distinct social organization and identity. Were Sephardic, Ashkenazi, Yemenite and other communities similar to Christian congregations? And yet such an analogy would be simplistic and ultimately misleading. Unlike Christians, Jews shared a belief in a common ancestry and ethnic origin. Despite differences, Jewish religious practices were overall more aligned with each other than the rituals of different Christian churches; and all Jewish communities, regardless of their language of everyday speech, shared Hebrew as a sacred language. But beyond these aspects of creed, ritual and practice, there were significant aspects of social and political organization as well as structures of political economy which encouraged Jews, unlike Christians, to think of themselves and act as a single community. Vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities and pan-Jewish diaspora organizations such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle, local communities were perceived, and to a lesser degree acted, as a single community, or at the very least as a coordinated array of communities. Ideas of modern pan-Jewish nationalism circulated in the Hebrew press from the 1860s onwards, in modernist-religious, proto-Zionist and Zionist form. Yet these visions were not sufficient to actually make the Jews of Palestine – fragmented according to linguistic, ethnic, organizational and ideological lines – into something which could be described as a single community. The term *yishuv Eretz Israel*, which re-emerges in the late nineteenth century, referred to political and ideological visions for Jewish revival in Palestine, associated with (primarily Ashkenazi) migration. Elites

among the divergent Jewish communities increasingly defined themselves as participants in this project, but they understood it in very different terms: the Orthodox Ashkenazim emphasized the pious character of community, while Jewish nationalists championed colonization.

The 1908 Young Turk Revolution provided a significant impetus to pan-Jewish national identity in Palestine. Against the vision of the reconstituted Ottoman Empire as a civic family of nations, and the rise of Arab, Armenian and other national movements, the Hebrew press began to refer to the Jewish communities in Palestine through the all-encompassing term "the Hebrew *yishuv*", "the Jewish *yishuv* in Eretz *Israel*", or the "Eretz Israeli *yishuv*". With the emergence of a Hebrew speaking generation, educated in modern pan-Jewish institutions, and against the background of Zionism, a nucleus of national Jewish affiliation took shape, transcending ethnic differences. The development of a Jewish national identity cannot be disconnected from the transformation of the Ottoman Empire after 1908. It is an illustration to the fact that the Jewish communities in Palestine cannot be studied in isolation within their Middle Eastern environment.

At the same time, there was a considerable gap between the vision of a national "Hebrew *yishuv*" in late Ottoman Palestine and the reality of fragmentation of Jewish communities. The diversity and heterogeneity persisted well into the period of the British Mandate, as did Jewish integration and acculturation into the Arab environment. Only in the 1930s did the *yishuv* change from an ideological project to the social reality of a separate Hebrew-speaking Jewish society. With the escalation of the Zionist-Arab conflict, Palestine's Jewish communities acquired a consolidated and unified character from which the State of Israel later emerged. The plural and fragmented local Jewish communities accepted the authority of the Zionist leadership. Together with recent migrants, they coalesced into a self-conscious national society with political institutions and an (increasingly) distinct political

economy. These were neither ancient historical traits of Jewish communities in Palestine; nor was this a materialization of the post-1908 idea of a Jewish nation as an integrated member of the Ottoman family of nations. This 1930s Jewish *yishuv* was the product of Zionism, British mandatory policies, and the Zionist-Arab conflict.

Emphasizing Jewish plurality and diversity in Palestine within the Arab environment brings us back to the question of the Middle Eastern character of these communities. Palestine's Jews were undoubtedly different from other communities in the Middle East. Except for a small minority, they were relatively recent arrivals, and their roots in Palestine shallow compared to communities in Iraq or Yemen. Jewish ethnic heterogeneity in Palestine was far greater than anywhere else in the Middle East, with communities originating from Bukhara to the Maghreb, and from Lithuania to Yemen. The significant Ashkenazi presence was also unusual. But as Relational scholars have shown, these exceptional traits did not mean that these communities existed in isolation from their social environment. As I have argued in this article, even the development of a singular sense of purpose and a national imagined community among Palestine's Jews after 1908 was facilitated by, and intimately connected, to the Ottoman context in which they lived. Distinct and unusual as they might have been, the Jewish communities in late Ottoman Palestine should be thought of as Middle Eastern communities, inevitably implicated in their regional context; and as we study them, we can and should reopen and expand of our understanding of what being Middle Eastern means.

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[1] To give a concrete example: in the library of SOAS, University of London, one of the richest libraries on the Middle East in the UK ,–the number of books listed under the subject "Jews Palestine"

(811), surpasses the combined number of books catalogued under the subject of Jews in all other countries of the Middle East and North Africa, from Iran to Morocco (696). Checked on November 2015.

[2] The seventeen volumes include almost all countries in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Italy, Greece, Ethiopia, Georgia and Bukhara. See < https://www.ybz.org.il/?CategoryID=481 >, accessed 14 November 2015.

[3] Shalom Chetrit's history of Mizrahi struggle in Israel, for example, dedicates only a few pages to Yemenite and Sephardic Jews in pre-1948 Palestine (Chetrit 2010).

[4] In Jerusalem there were two "general" Jewish old people's homes, one affiliated with Ashkenazim and the other with the Sephardi community. See *Hatsfira, 31 July 1905, page 4.*

[5] The most successful of such unification attempts was in Jaffa, with the establishment of the "City Committee of Jaffa Jews" which included representatives of all local Jewish congregations. But the committee was active for only short periods and disintegrated frequently (Ram 1996). A Zionist-inspired "Eretz-Israel Assembly" (*Haknessiya Ha'eretz yisra'elit*), encompassing Sephardim, progressive Ashkenazi Orthodox, and Zionists, convened only once in 1903 (Kniel 2000, 254–255). In addition, Ashkenazi congregations failed to establish a consensual Orthodox Ashkenazi leadership and operated separately until the war (Eliav 1981; Friedman 2001).

[6] The work of Amnon Cohen (1984) is an exception in this regard.

[7] See for example David Florentin's 1909 essay "Our duties as Jews and as Ottomans" (J. Cohen and Stein 2014, 215–222).

[8] These seven writers are Avraham Elmaleh, Nissim Malul, Benzion Uziel, Hayim ben Kiki, David Avissar, Elie Eliachar, and David Sitton. Ester Moyal moved to Jaffa from Lebanon in 1894, and Avraham Abbas moved from Damascus in the 1930s.

[9] For examples, see front page articles on *Yishuv Eretz Hakedosha,* in *Halevanon* 27 March 1877, 11 April 1877, 18 April 1877, 25 April 1877; *Yishuv Eretz Yisrael* in *Halevanon* 2 May 1879, 9 May 1879, 16 May 1879.

[10] *Hashkafa* 27 December 1905; *Moriya*, 9 May 1911, 7 June 1912.

[11] See, for example, the correspondence of the Ottoman Governor of Jerusalem Ali Ekrem Bey (Kushner 2005)

[12] On Jewish mobilization in Jerusalem in the 1912 Ottoman Parliamentary elections, see *Der Matossian* 2014, 111-112.

[13] The Hebrew language activist and publisher of several Hebrew newspapers, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, used the term *yishuv* before 1908 in reference to the project of colonization, or as a general term for population. After 1908, however, he used it increasingly to refer to all Jews in Palestine (overwhelmingly urban and non-Zionist) as a single national-territorial group. As one example among many, see reference to the Hebrew yishuv (*Hayishuv ha`ivri*) in his article calling for a Jewish national federation in Palestine, *Hatzevi* 6 May 1909.

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