bilig ukuş erdemin asığın ayur tilekim söz erdi ay bilge bügü ukuşuğ biligig özüm sözlegü ukuş ol yula teg karañku tüni bilig ol yarukluk yaruttı séni ukuşun ağar ol biligin bedür bu iki bile er ağırlık körür muñar bütmese kör bu nûşîn revân ukuş közi birle yaruttı cihân törü tüz yorıttı bayudı bodun atın edgü kıldı ol edgü üdün mañar tegdi mundağ biliglig sözi tamudın yırar tép tamuğluk özi kiçig oğlanığ kör

AKİF

Cilt / Volume: 51
Sayı / Issue: 1
Yaz / Summer
2021

Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Ahmet Keleşoğlu İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi

ukuşka ulam yaşı yetmegınçe yorımaz kılâm ukuşluğ kişi kör karısa munar ukuş kitti tép hem kalem me tınar kalı télve ursa kör ölse kişi ölüm yok añar hem birilmez şişi negülük tése sen ukuşsuz-turur ukuşsuz kişiler ülügsüz-turur ukuşka-turur bu ağırlık itig ukuşsuz kişi bir awuççа tetig körü barsa yakşı ayur bu sözüg ukuşsuz biligsiz bedütmez özüg körü barsa barça urur bu kedük ukuşluğ biliglig kör aslı ked ök ukuş bolsa aslı bolur bolsa er bilig bolsa beglik kılur kılsa er kimiñde ukuş bolsa aslı bolur kayuda bilig bolsa beglik bulur yağız yér öze yalñuk oğlı elig kötürdi kamuğka yetürdi bilig ukuş birle aslı atanur kişi bilig birle begler iter él işi tümen miñ tü erdem üküş ögdiler ukuş birle kılmış üçün ögdiler ukuş azın azlanma asğı üküş bilig azın azlanma erke küsüş bu tört neñ azın azka tutma negü bügü sözlemiş söz eşitgü ögü bu törtte biri ot birisi yağı üçünçi ig ol kör tiriglik ağı basası bilig ol bularda biri bu tört neñ uçuz tutma yüksek töri bu tegme biri asğı yası telim kayusı bérim teg kayusı alım bilig kîmyâ teg ol neñ irklü-turur ukuş ordusı ol neñ üglü-turur yıparlı biligli teñi bir yañı tutup kizlese bolmaz özde öñi yıpar kizlese sen yıdı belgürer bilig kizlese sen tilig ülgüler bilig baylık ol bir çığay bolğusuz tegip oğrı tevlig anı alğusuz kişen ol kişike bilig hem ukuş kişenlig yarağsızka barmaz üküş sewügrek atın er kişenlig tutar kereklig atın kör küdezlig tutar kişenlig küremez kerekçe yorır tuşağlığ yıramaz tilekçe barır ukuş ol saña edgü andlığ adaş bilig ol saña ked bağırsak kadaş biligsizke bilgi kılınçı yağı adın bolmasa tap bu iki çoğı muñar meñzetü keldi türkçe mesel okığıl munı sen köñül ögke al ukuşluğ kişi,ke iş,i tap ukuş biligsiz kişi,ke atı tap söküş biligligke bilgi tükel ton aş ol biligsiz kılınçı yawuz koldaş ol ukuşluğ ked er öwke özdin yırat biliglig beg er buşma edgü kıl at bu iki bile işke yakma iwe kalı yaksa kıldıñ tiriglik yawa ökünçlüg bolur tutşı öwke işi yazukluğ bolur işte buşsa kişi amulluk kerek erke kılkı oñay örüglük kerek begke tuğsa kün ay tüzünlük kerek hem siliglik kerek ukuşluğ kerek hem biliglig kerek ukuşluğ kerek ked üdürse kişig biliglig kerek ked bütürse işig yarağlığ yarağsızını titrü körüp kerek-

Metin: Kutadgu Bilig, Yûsuf Has Hâcib.

NEÜ PRESS

cilt / volume: 51 • sayı / issue: 1 • yaz / summer 2021
e-ISSN: 2149-0015

Araştırma Makelesi / Research Article

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Yahudiler Hakkındaki Mit ve Karşıt Mitler

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Makale Bilgileri

Makale Geçmişi
Geliş: 03.05.2021
Kabul: 20.06.2021
Yayın: 30.06.2021

Anahtar Kelimeler:
Osmanlı İmparatorluğu,
Yahudiler,
Millet Sistemi,
Safardlar,
Balkanlar.

Öz

Bu makale, Ekim 1819'da Müslümanların Bosna'da Osmanlı'nın yozlaşmış valisi Rüşdi Paşa'nın zulmünden Yahudi komşularını kurtardığında meydana gelen "Sarajevo Purim" adlı olayın yıldönümünde yazılmıştır. Makale İslam halifeliklerinde ve özellikle Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Yahudilerin durumu ile ilgilidir. Yahudi cemaatleri Osmanlılar döneminde gelişmişdir. Makale, Yahudi cemaatinin "Türk boyunduruğu" altında olduğu görüşünü ortadan kaldırmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, Yahudilerin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na entegre olmanın öğretmenler, bankacılar, doktorlar, tüccarlar olarak farklı yollarını buldukları millet sistemini ele alıyor. Bu bağlamda makale, Yahudilerin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki ticaretteki rolüne işaret ediyor. Son olarak makale, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun, Yahudi cemaatlerinin sosyal ve kültürel yaşamındaki olumlu rolünü zikreden Yahudi yazarların sayısına vurgu yapmaktadır.

Myths and Countermyths About the Jews in the Ottoman Empire

Article Info

Article History
Received: 03.05.2021
Accepted: 20.06.2021
Published: 30.06.2021

Keywords:
The Ottoman Empire,
The Jews,
The Millet System,
Safards,
Balkans.

Abstract

This academic essay was written upon the anniversary of the event called "Sarajevo Purim" which happened in October 1819, when Muslim saved their Jewish neighbours from the oppression of Rushdi-pasha, the corrupted Ottoman governor in Bosnia. It deals with the status of Jews in Islamic caliphates, and especially in the Ottoman Empire. Jewish communities have flourished under the Ottomans. The essay dispels the notion that the Jewish community was under a '"Turkish yoke". It also treats the millet system, through which the Jews found different ways to integrate into the Ottoman Empire as teachers, bankers, doctors, traders. In this regard, the essay points to the role of Jews in trade in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, the essay concludes with emphasis on the number of Jewish authors who themselves asserted the positive role of the Ottoman Empire in the social and cultural life of Jewish communities.

Atıf/Citation: Karic, Enes. "Myths and Countermyths About the Jews in the Ottoman Empire". *akif* 51/1 (2021), 59-65.
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.51121/akif.2021.15

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GİRİŞ

From the symbolic point of view, the history of Jews, Christians and Muslims was not that different from history of their sacred books. For a long time the Old Testament was *the only one*, then there was the New Testament as well, and then, after a long time, along with these ancient sacred books, there was also the book of Qur'an ("the Newest Testament" for Muslims), which was seeking and assuming its place. All three of the books influenced both the history of the three faiths: of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the very geography of the places where their followers lived.

Whenever we talk about the links between Jews, Christians and Muslims, it is necessary to keep in mind that ever since the emergence of Islam the geography of this important triangle – Jerusalem, Mecca and Medina – has been confirmed, spread, and proved as the historic reality in many places on the planet.

For instance, after the emergence of Islam at the beginning of seventh century according to Isa al Masih (Jesus Christ), in the year 638, Jerusalem fell under the rule of caliphate from Medina and, along with its already existing synagogues and churches it has gained its first mosques.

In 661, according to Isa al Masih (Jesus Christ), Damascus became a replica of Jerusalem in a way, having gained its mosques in addition to its already existing synagogues and churches. Later on the same or similar kind of "sacred replication of Jerusalem" has taken place in Cairo, Isfahan, Cordoba, Fes, Baghdad... As the centuries passed by, Jerusalem multiplied geographically and historically, for example after 1453, Constantinople gained it mosques, along with its already existing synagogues and churches, etc. Sarajevo was no exception in this regard either, just like many other cities in Balkans.

Of course, to start the story about Sarajevo Purim in this way means to opt for an idealized and, generally speaking, dreamy perception of relations between the Jews, Christians and Muslims, as well as of the relations between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. At times history confirms this idealized perception, but it also very often disapproves of it. In fact, it often denounces it. Thus, while analyzing this long fabric of different periods of history, and of the history itself, it is necessary to shine light on many myths and countermyths.

1. Ancient History and Jewish Slavery

From historic point of view, Jews, as people, but also as ancient religious community, have gained their subjectivity long before the emergence of Christianity, and, if that can be said, even longer before the emergence of Islam. If we were to focus on the pages of the Bible and Quran, we would see that while spreading the monotheism revealed and conceptualized in a Semitic way, and the glory of Jehovah, even back in the so-called ancient history, Jews and Judaism were tragically encountered with at least three large pagan empires: Ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Roman Empire. The luck of the Jews did change in the pagan Persian Empire, but in Ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Roman Empire Jews were enslaved, oftentimes in the very homeland of Jews, the land of

Israel and in Palestine – Jerusalem, Judea, Galilee…Historically speaking, these three instances of enslavement of Jews have largely contributed to Jews gaining their diaspora. The Ancient Rome displaced Jews by force as well, and the Rhine Valley, for example, became one of the homelands of the forcefully displaced Jews almost two thousand years ago. This hardship in the very motherland, where three sequential, cruel enslavements took place, has greatly contributed to the emergence of a very important new religious sprout – Christianity.

In fact, a great number of Jews strongly relied on Messiah, on metaphysical salvation, on direct divine intervention. Messiah, the savior, was sent, and he came, but several decades or less than one century since his arrival, everything was confirmed as a new religion, and everything has turned into the arrival of Christianity. Of course, history does confirm one paradox – although the Roman Empire ruled over Jews (many of whom converted to Christianity), Christianity took over the Rome in some three centuries! The old Judaism remained in the Roman Empire – that is in the West and in the East – as diaspora, important and influential, but persecuted and small in number.

Then in the seventh century according to Isa al Masih onto the world stage steps Islam. As a certain kind of political and state expression of teachings of Islam onto the stage of history came caliphates. It is useful to remember here that ever since their beginning all three religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam have ascribed originality and authenticity to themselves. Metaphysically speaking, that is true and correct. Historically speaking, these three faiths are sister-like, at times fighting and at times reconciled. For example, in the former lands of the Roman Empire Christianity became a real ruling power, ruling not just over Jews and Judaism but also over other religious communities, mostly pagan ones. Here it is useful to remember Constantine the Great in the year 313 according to Isa al Masih, and Constantine's *Edict of Milan*. Christianity was increasingly proving itself as a ruler of Judaism.

If we were now to address Islam during its first four centuries (from seventh until eleventh century) Muslims were a relative minority across vastness of the Middle East, but a ruling minority nonetheless. We would say that Muslims have remained the ruling elite throughout their caliphates (in the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus and Cordoba, and in the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad). According to Adam Metz, Christians and Jews have found in (or under the rule of) caliphates a system for coexistence, although they were, naturally, politically subjected and considered as *dhimmi* ("protected"). It is useful to remember this "dhimmi status" whenever the myths of complete equality of Jews, Christians and Muslims in the large caliphates are being spread. But, on the other hand, dhimmi status guaranteed a lot: life, faith, property, sense of belonging etc, and that is something that should never be forgotten. Moreover, it was possible to advance from dhimmi status to a better status whenever there was will for such a thing on part of caliphate. There is no doubt that dhimmi status was an improvement for Jews by comparison with what they had in Ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Roman Empire. The bitter irony is that had Jews had the dhimmi status in the twentieth century, in the lands where fascism and Nazism took over, the Holocaust never would have happened.

It is important to have in mind that, in the period between seventh and nineteenth century, Jewish and Christian communities in Middle East did not have to culturally adjust themselves while living under the rule of caliphates. The Christians and Jews living there have actually shared with Muslims a lot of common pre-Semitic and Semitic cultural and traditional customs. This state of cultural similarity between Jews and Muslims has mostly been preserved even later, for instance in Rumelia (European part of the Ottoman Empire). Very similar instance of cultural compatibility was that of many denominations in the Eastern Orthodox Church in the East, up until the modern times. That was mostly not the case with the Western Christians (predominantly with Catholics), other than the important exception of the Muslim Iberia (711-1492). For instance, unlike Jews and Orthodox Christians, Catholics in the Balkans had a lot more difficulty integrating into the Ottoman Empire.

The equal degree of integration of all Christians into the Ottoman Empire is one of the myths about this state. We have proof of this in the chronicles of our Bosnian Franciscans.

Culturally, Western Catholic communities were dealing with Ottoman rule with greater difficulty. On the other hand, clergy of Eastern Orthodox Church was an important economical and political reliance of the Ottoman sultans. This is evident in many books, like *Legal status and characteristics of Serbian Church under the Turkish rule* (Pravni položaj i karakter srpske crkve pod turskom vlašću) by Mirko Mirković and *Vidovdan and Honorable Cross* (Vidovdan i časni krst) by Miodrag Popović.

2. Ottoman Empire And The Limited Autonomy Of Millet

Ever since its emergence in 1299, Ottoman Empire has had the outline of caliphates which, either long time ago or immediately, preceded it. The subjects or the population was divided, especially during the later periods of the Ottoman Empire, into millets with religion as the fundamental basis for identification. The Ottoman Empire handled the difference between the people in this way. Religious, judicial, church … autonomy of non-Muslims was, of course, guaranteed, but it was implemented under the strict control of the state and, in a way, in the name of the state. In principle, ruling posts were reserved for Muslims only, and that was greatly by means of Islam and its ideological and normative reduction to Sharia. Of course, not all Muslims were among the ruling class, it was only those Muslims that were chosen by dynastic elite to be by their side and those who were particularly educated for that purpose. One of the myths about the Ottoman Empire is that millets had, in a way, a status of *citizens* or even of *nations* in the modern and contemporary sense. While that is something that we could talk about, the idea of citizenship cannot be confirmed. The idea of citizenship is a secular invention of Europe that came later. As a consequence, it is absurd to say that Muslim people in the Ottoman Empire had status of citizens. Majority of the common Muslim peasant class, as well as the Muslim craftsmen and artisans, belonged to the millet of commoners similar to other millets of Jews, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians etc.

However, according to Jewish historians, such as Bernard Lewis, Werner Keller, Adam Metz and many others, caliphates that preceded the emergence of the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor in 1299, were structured in a greatly multi-religious way. Middle East was the region with large cosmopolitan cities. Various autochthonous Christian communities lived there in millions, just as hundred thousands of Jews did.

According to these Jewish historians, the consequence of the arrival of caliphate and Muslim conquest onto the European soil was predominantly not extermination of the people living in the conquered territories; instead, those people were primarily incorporated into the orbit of caliphate. In doing so, authorities of caliphate have of course, above anything else, had in mind taxes and economic benefits of the existence of that population. For example, in Spain which was ruled by Muslims, Christian population was for a long period of time a majority. It is a myth that back then the cities of Spain were without large number of Jews and Christians who were themselves contributing to the city life, culture and infrastructure. Sicily is also an important proof of the medieval concept of living together or *conviventia* of Jews, Christians and Muslims. In this regard it is good to remember the works in Jewish and Christian theology which were written in territories of great Muslim caliphates. An important example is a philosopher Maimonides. There is also Gershom Sholem who asserted many times that the final version of the *Kabbalah*, as we know it today, was shaped in Muslim caliphates under direct influence of Sufi teachings.

One of the myths that has to be brought to light is that the relationship between Muslims and Christians was always that of the constant war, and of a cyclical shifts between *jihad*, on one hand, and *crusades*, on the other. This black-and-white optics does not serve to explain, but to further mythologize things. Of course, it is entirely true that almost two-hundred-year-long period of Crusades (1095-1291) decimated Jewish presence in Europe, since Jews were then subject to persecution and pogroms. But, Christian populations of Constantinople, as well as the adherents of the Eastern Church from Constantinople to the Holy Land, were equally as great victims of Crusades. Just as Muslims communities were as well. Still, even during the Crusades, there were long periods of peace. The myth about continuous *jihad* on one hand and *crusade* on the other is neglecting long periods of peace and cultural exchange in the fields of science, art, literature, as well as exchange in business, and trade of goods between both sides of the Mediterranean.

If we go back to the question of the life of Jewish people in the Ottoman Empire, or under its rule, almost everyone agrees that in the Ottoman Empire Jews experienced their multiform national and religious revival. Having in mind what they have survived before, in Ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Roman Empire, the myth about prosperity of Jews in Ottoman Empire appears to be true. In a way, prosperity of Jews of Spain or Sephardi Jews continued on in the Ottoman Empire.

Jewish historians, unanimously and mostly uncritically, praise the Ottoman Empire as a place of salvation for Jews, as safe refuge since the beginning of fourteenth

century until the end of the nineteenth century. Certainly, concise form of the myth that often appears here is: the treatment of Jews by the Ottomans was good, respectable and tolerant because of their love and care for the Jews! Of course, this myth should be unmasked with an assertion that empires are not ruling over their subjects with love, but mostly with some interest in mind. In fact, although *humane reasons* for accepting the exiled European Jews should not be denied, the following should be pointed out as well: before and after Spanish cataclysm of Muslim and Jews in 1492, the Ottoman Empire opened its borders to Sephardi Jews because it wanted to mitigate the horrible crisis that emerged at north-west side of Mediterranean, the crisis which was reflected in the halt of trade and communications. Secondly, the Ottoman Empire was also aware that by accepting Sephardi Jews and Spanish Muslims they were gaining large number of qualified artisans, craftsmen, bankers, teachers and, generally speaking, enterprising people. Already in the first decades of sixteenth century, as well as in the decades after that, there was an increase in the number of recorded Jewish names in defters or registers of taxpayers in the Ottoman Empire. Back then the economy of the cities: Thessaloniki, Constantinople, Bursa, Izmir, Skopje, Sofia, Sarajevo, Belgrade… was greatly improved owing, among other things, to the important contributions of Sephardi Jews. In the book *History of the Jews*, Werner Keller talks about how the Ottomans seized French ships in Mediterranean and in return asked for confiscated money and goods of high value to be returned to Sephardi Jews, goods that were taken away from them on their way to the Ottoman territories.

3. How to perceive Sarajevo Purim from 1819?

If we consider that what was previously said, and the cultural similarities and resemblance between Muslim and Sephardi population, the question arises: What could have possibly led to the horrible events in Sarajevo, in October 1819?

It is precisly this unlawful imprisonment of Jews, with Rav Moshe Danon at the head, that proves that even in the Ottoman Empire „observing those who are supposed to be protecting order and law“ was a constant task and a challange. Tyrant Rushdi Pasha is a typical example of the corrupt part of the Ottoman Empire. Corruption was a constant threat not only to non-Muslim communities, but also to Muslims from peasant, and economically speaking, lower classes.

When it comes to Jews, the book *Sephardis in Bosnia* by Moritz Levy is a good source for studying the position of Jews in the Ottoman Empire. A large number of pages of Levy's book are dealing with the amount of bribes that Jews were paying to Ottoman government officials. For the sake of comparison with the Christians, it is good to check many chronicles of Bosnian Franciscans in this regard.

In spite all of this, Sarajevo Purim and the events from 1819 indicate that in many parts of the Ottoman Empire there was large and, we could also say, natural solidarity between different worshippers, in this case between Jews and Muslims. In October of 1819, Muslim people stood up for Jewish people. In addition to that, Muslim people stood against the official representatives of the Ottoman Empire and refused to identify

with them. We see this as a proof of centuries-long existence of horizontal social relations and links between different worshippers in the Balkans during the rule of Ottoman Empire. Likewise, the politics of Ottoman sultans, which was coming from the center of the empire, was also a prevalent incentive for respecting the millet status of Jews and Christians.

In her thorough study of "cultural and social background" of *Ljetopis* (Chronicles) by Mula Mustafa Bašeskija, written, in most part, during eighteenth century, Prof Dr Kerima Filan has in her book *Sarajevo u Bašeskijino doba* (Sarajevo in Bašeskija's time) described, in a good and realistic way, the extend of cooperation between Muslims, Christians and Jews in Sarajevo during this time period. For example, the members of guilds were very often of different faiths.

At the end of this essay let us say that the myths (and countermyths) about Ottoman Empire were spread by everyone – Jews, Christians and Muslims. The awful persecution that Jews survived in twentieth century in Europe, especially the horrible cataclysm in the Holocaust during the World War Two, have led the Jewish authors to write about the Ottoman Empire as some kind of Paradise Lost. This is particularly evident in the eminent work *History of the Jews* by Werner Keller. In the case of Jews, as well as of many other people in Europe during the World War Two, it was shown that the idea of citizenship and the status of a citizen did not represent any hindrance to Nazi persecution and extermination.

Sarajevo Purim is a good reminder that the joint and honorable life of the followers of the Old Testament, New Testament and the Qur'an, as well as the honorable life of all people, always has to be cherished and protected. It is good when our neighbors of different worldviews or different beliefs protect us and save our lives. For, authoritative systems can oftentimes get rotten. Sometimes the rot comes from the head, and other times from the tail.

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