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FROM ZERUBABEL TO NEHEMIAH
(Patterns of the Social Structure of the Jewish Community in
Eretz Israel in the Persian Period)

by J. M. Grintz (pp. 125-182)

Wars, the destruction of the Land, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile combined to disrupt the pre-Exilic social structure of Judea. The returnees integrated into the existing settlements of Benjamin, which was more fortunate in that much of its region was spared destruction. Judea had to reshape its entire social structure with the Return. This is seen in the onomasticon of the Judean families in Ezra II (a discernable part being Aramaic, Babylonian, Elamite and even Iranian). The new structure stood well until assimilationist trends on the one hand, and later the nationalistic response under Ezra and Nehemiah on the other hand, brought about a change with some names disappearing and others being added. A case in point was the secession (or exclusion) of the Arah family that became aligned with the Tobias and consequently did not sign the *Amana*—declaration. Only later, as we learn from a very early Mishnaic source (Ta'anit 4.5), was Arah readmitted and even given the primary place among the respected families of the "Wood offerers" causing thereby the re-arrangement of the complete pattern of the "wood offerers" lists.

A similar change of great importance occurred in the Priestly structure. In the first Return of the Exiles, four Priestly families (Jedaiah, Immer, Pashhur and Harim) came which—not unlike the Judean ones—were an assemblage of related "Father houses". As against the Levites who were scant in numbers, the Priests accounted for (due to an old historical process since the establishment of the Tribes) a high percentage of the newcomers. With the dedication of the new Temple, the four priestly families divided into 'courses' (Ez. 6, 18., Neh. 12.8), numbering according to Neh. 12 (1-6, 12-21) and 10 (2-9) 22. Yet, the number of 'courses' in the Temple service is always given as 24. Hence, we have to assume that two 'courses' were omitted in the genealogical lists; being the Hakoze and the Hovaia "houses" who failed to authenticate their family lineage and were excluded from service on the altar (though they functioned e.g. in the temple treasury).

Among the 'courses' the most important, no doubt, was given to the high priestly family (Jedaiah) (Ez. 2,36; 10,18 and Neh. 12,6 17). The omission of six listed members of this family and the signatures of six unlisted ones on the *Amana*—declaration can be explained (though critics failed to see this) by their exclusion by Nehemiah for intermarriage with alien women.

This revolutionary step taken by Nehemiah led a generation later to another comprehensive change of the 'courses'. A compromise has been attained between the two opposing factions: both conceded to give up the varied divisions obtaining since the structure of the Second Temple and to return to the pattern once established by the builders of the First Temples. In spite of what is maintained in 'critical' circles of the unhistoricity of the list of the courses in I Chron. 24, a close scrutiny of the names reveals, these must be essentially authentic. The author also deals with the role and lists of the 'Gate-Keepers' and other 'Levites' against the background of First Temple times. He views Ezra (as against former views) as a 'homo novus' coming most probably from

an assimilated family. His goal upon coming to Eretz Israel and his insisting on the strict observance of the Torah was for the nation to be "strong and enjoy the good things of the land and pass it to your children as an everlasting possession" (9.13). This explains his singling out the keeping of the Sabbath, Shemitta and the ban on inter-marriage with foreign people for inclusion in the *Amana*, since the observance of these commandments avoids transgression and exile from the Land.

On the other hand, though the realization of the *Amana* was a work of Nehemiah, as may be demonstrated by a detailed linguistic investigation, the *Amana* in its main features, was the work of Ezra.

The paper deals also with the problem of the Netinim and their probable assimilation into the Levites, and with the settlement of the returnees during this period.

OPPOSING ATTITUDES IN THE 15TH. CENTURY TO THE HEREM HAYISHUV

by A. Fuchs (pp. 183-196)

On the basis of an appended responsa of Israel Bruna edited by the author from Ms. (Los Angeles, no. 7), the author compares and analyzes the views of Bruna, Josef Haim and Josef Colon on the subject of "Herem Hayishuv".

He concludes that Colon's support of the "Herem Hayishuv" is determined not only by his interpretation of former juridical authorities but also, to a large degree, by the specific forms of Jewish life in Italy under the *condotta arrangements* as well as by the bitter attacks by the Franciscan preachers against the Jews.

On the other hand, Bruna's opposing views are determined by the changing and difficult conditions on Jewish settlements in Central Europe after the *Black-Death*; conditions that militated against a stabilizing and confining institution of settlement like the "Herem Hayishuv". The author also presents the legalistic views of Bruna that only this Herem, emanating from an enactment of the "great scholars" (*Gedolim*), e.g. Rabenu Gershom the Light of Exile, is binding, whereas a Herem enacted by a single community cannot be binding in matters of general import.

The edited responsum is copiously annotated.

AN EXPULSION OF JEWS IN THE YEMEN (1679-1680)

by Y. Ratzaby (pp. 197-215)

The expulsion of all the communities of the Kingdom of Yemen to Mauza in the south, was the most severe tribulation that Yemen Jewry experienced in its long history. They were driven by the order of the Imam al-Mahdi, to the Valley of Tihama, a region notorious for its hot climate and harmful water. About 75% of those expelled perished during the expulsion.

This traumatic event left deep impressions in Jewish Yemenite literature, both in poetry as well as in legend. Many dirges, written by those who suffered in the expulsion, reflect the conditions of the refugees. On the basis of the available evidence, the author has previously described the event (Sefunot, vol 5 (1961), pp. 339-395).

This description is now supplemented both through the publication and analysis of a contemporary chronicle, as well as by additional poetic material.

The chronicle is in the form of a letter sent by the Jews of Dhuran (in 1684, four years after the event) to the community of Hebron. The letter is an apology for the improper reception they accorded to a Hebron emissary, (unknown until now) Amram the Hasid. Included in the letter is a description of their suffering as well as detailing the causes of their deliverance.

KH'RBET SUSYA

by Z. Safrai (pp. 231-236)

New archeological finds in this locality have brought about a reconsideration of Second Temple times, geographical terms and personalities that are according to the author related to Kh'rbet Susya, southeast of Hebron. On the basis of ethymology he equates the names *Ris* and *Beit-Risa* with *Susya*.

Summarizing, he locates here an important Herodian fortress and since the third century a group of sages connected with the flourishing synagogue found there.

THE MORE JUDAICHO OATH OF PRESSBURG

by A. Scheiber (pp. 237-238)

The author deals with the specific demand made in 1371 (preserved in a document of 1376), that the Jew take his oath with his hand on a gate-ring ("auf dem runge"). Though rare, we find in several places (e.g. Krems) the demand that the Jew touch the "Schulryngk" (in this case of the synagogue-gate), while taking his oath. Another variation is found in late 17th. century Poland.

The author shows on the basis of a document from the late 9th. century that Christians used then to take their oath "*in armilla januae*". He proposes the explanation that this custom started in Christian circles out of the proximity of the gate-ring to awesome reliefs on church gates.

A SHABBETAI ZEVI LETTER IN SANTA CATHERINA

by A. Wasserstein (pp. 239-243)

Examines the relationship of a newly found Greek version of a Shabbetai Zevi letter to other versions and to the lost Hebrew original.