



June 2016 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Wishing all our Jewish readers a Happy Shavuoth. Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum will be closed on Shavuoth.



CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE: www.kkjsm.org and our new e-mails: info@kkjsm.org and museum@kkjsm.org.

This newsletter, our 88th will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website (www.kkjsm.org).

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE NO LONGER USE OUR PO BOX-ALL MAIL SHOULD GO TO 280 BROOME ST. New York, NY 10002.

We now reach over 8000 households worldwide, with our community of 'friends' continually growing with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up (papusoup@mindspring.com) so we are sure that our Kiddush (traditional Greek Jewish Kosher foods) is sufficient. If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush for a special occasion or an Adara, contact Sol.

Passings

May was a sad month for us as we mourn the passings of too many beloved individuals from our community. While some lived to a blessed old age, two were taken way too young. Our condolences to all of their families and loved ones.

~ We mourn the Passing of Esther Sameh Perl who was only 69 when she died suddenly on May 4th. She is survived by her, husband, two children, Shana Pollack and Menachem Perl, eight grandchildren and her brother Joseph Sameh. Esther was born in Athens. Her mother was a Hadjopoulo from Ioannina, her father's family was originally from Turkey. Esther came to the United States in 1956. She was a lovely, gentle, bright and active woman. May her memory be a blessing.

~ We mourn the passing of Joel Meyer, who was only 64 when he passed on May 4th. Joel was the son of Lucille Barouch Meyer and Alan Meyer. He was born in the Bronx and was a graduate of the University of Florida. He was living in Fort Lauderdale when he died. He used courage, humor, and integrity in the most trying of times. Joel was a loving husband, son, brother, devoted father and loyal friend. Joel is survived by his wife, Judy, daughter, Suzy (son-in-law Jared), son, Andrew (daughter-in-law, Ruth), sister, Anita Meinbach (brother-in-law, Jay), and sister-in-law Joni Leterman.



~ We mourn the passing of Sarah Matza, a long time Sisterhood member who was preceded in death by her husband, Hyman, in 1981. Sarah was 92 when she passed. She is survived by , sons, Michael and Marvin and cousins, Morris and Hyman Matza, grandchildren and many friends.

~ We mourn the passing of Estelle Yomtov, the only surviving child of Zacharia Yomtov and Mazalto Moise Yomtov. Zacharia was the first Yannote to arrive in New York. Estelle would have been 102 this coming July. Estelle was a bright, educated woman who worked with computers when they were so large that they took up a whole room. She never married but is survived by loving nieces and nephews.



~ We mourn the passing of Morris Yomtov, the son of Bension and Ida Yomtov (both of Blessed Memory). Morris was 96 when he passed and is survived by his wife, Esther, son, Ben, daughter-in-law, Harriet and grandsons, Brian and Todd. Morris was one of the founding members of Kehila Kedosha Janina; was a past President of the United Brotherhood/Good Hope Society, and was President of the Kehila Kedosha Janina of Mapleton until its closing. May his memory be a blessing.

~ We mourn the passing of Toula Lagaris in Ioannina. Toula was born in Corfu and was the widow of Elias Lagaris (the uncle of Moses Eliasaf). Toula is survived by her only child, Isaak Lagaris, who is a Professor in the Dept. of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Ioannina. Toula was 96 years old.

Toula with nieces, Stella Leontsini and Marcella Leontsini Mitilineous



~ We mourn the passing of Evelyn De Castro, mother of Marisa De Castro passed away at the age of 96. Evelyn was born in Volos into the Sakki family.

Evelyn and Albert De Castros

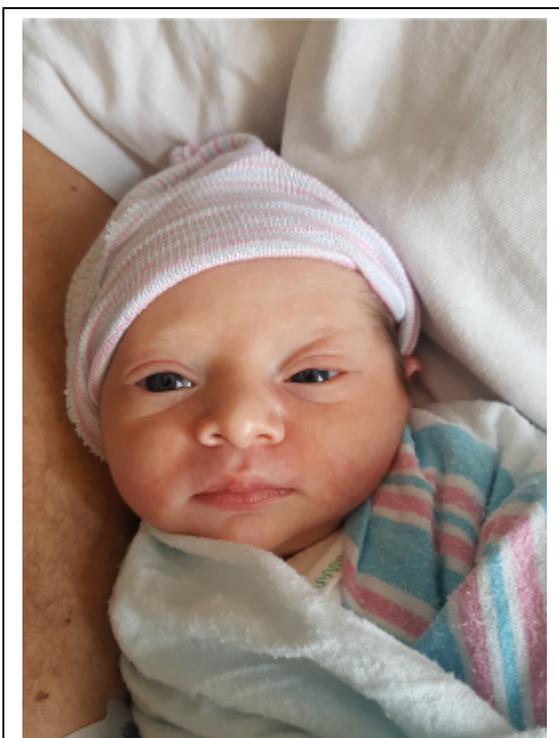


~ We mourn the passing of Sherri Cassuto, who passed away on April 29th at the age of 59. She is the daughter of Annette Honan Cassuto and Isidore Cassuto of Blessed Memory.

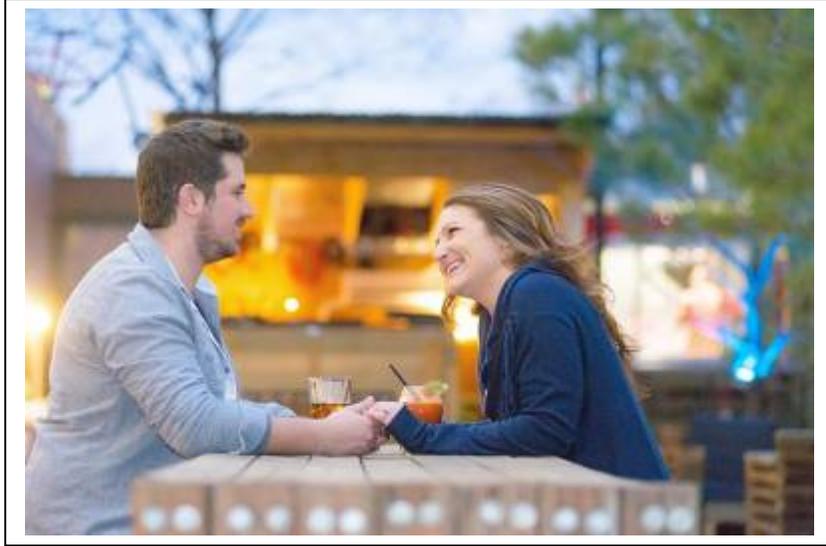
Simchas

We are always happy to share our simchas with you.

We celebrate the birth of the first grandchild of David Samuels, Aiden Kaminsky, son of David's daughter, Heather, and David Kaminsky on May 13, 2016.



Rob Serwetz is to marry Alison Padme Jones on June 25, 2016 at The Mansion, in Denton, Texas. Rob is the son of Laurie and Mark Serwetz and the grandson of Rose Capon Eskononts and Murray Eskononts of Blessed Memory.



We celebrate the upcoming 90th birthday of Martha Capon Drossman. Martha's Family will be gathering for a festive celebration on June 12th.



We belatedly celebrate the 95th birthday of Raye Yomtov, widow of Hy Yomtov of Blessed Memory.

We celebrate the 92nd birthday of Youla Kone Frances, mother of Anna Frances Matathias.



Toula Frances

**In Volos
with Anna**



We celebrate the 96th birthday of Isaac Cohen, father of Nathan Cohen.

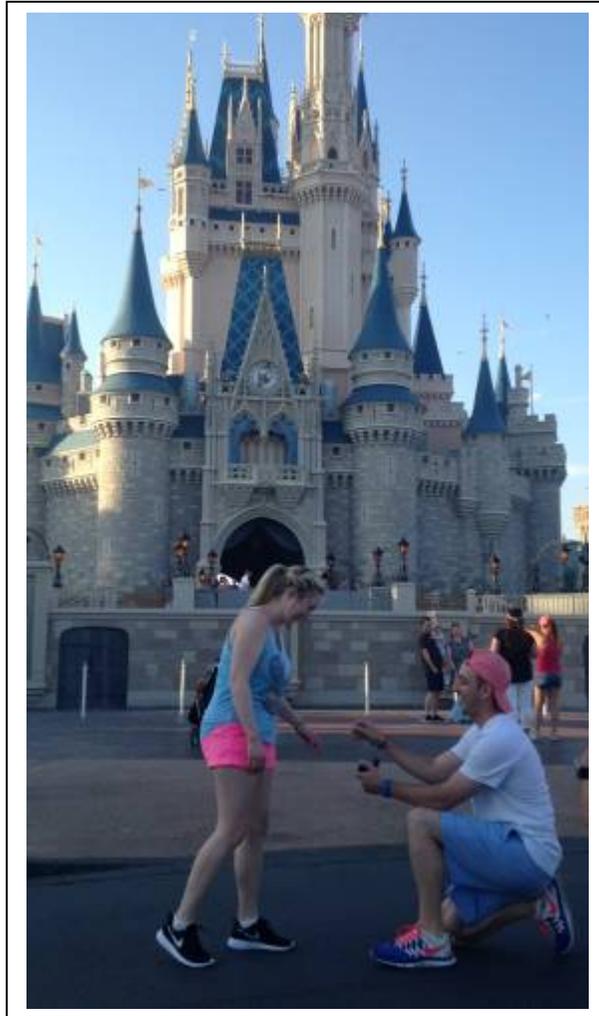


We celebrate the birth of Dr. Anna Kohen's first grandchild, Alex.



We celebrate the Bar Mitzvah of Jared Pardo, son of Scott and Sharon Pardo, grandson of Jerry and Linda Pardo, great-grandson of Isaac (Red) and Betty Mione Pardo, great-great grandson of Abraham and Rachel Mazza Mione, great grandson of Elia and Zoe Mione. The Mione family was from Ioannina and the Pardo family from Monastir. We were honored that our Board of Trustee member, Jerry Pardo, chose to have his grandson's Bar Mitzvah in the synagogue of his ancestors.

We celebrate the engagement of Maxx Kleiner and Kelly. Max is the son of Rhonda Paganetti and Ted Kleiner and the grandson of Shirlee Paganetti and Louie Levy, the great-grandson of Morris and Eva Eliezer Cabillis (Kabelli), and Isaac Levy and Esther Cohen Levy. Maxx had his Bar Mitzvah in Ioannina in 2000. It has been such a joy to see him grow into the young man he is today.



Δικοί Μας, Los Muestrros (our own) come home

So many of our own came to the Second Annual Greek Jewish Festival that we could fill a book with the photos. It was a joy to see them on Broome Street reminiscing about their life on the Lower East Side in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. See photos from the festival in this newsletter.

As always, visitors continued to flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

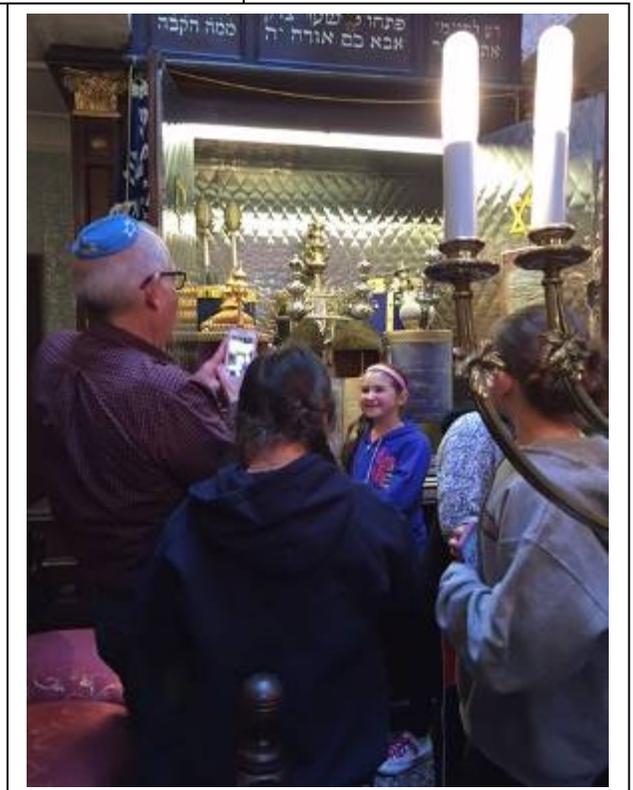


Temple Emmanuel Edison NJ



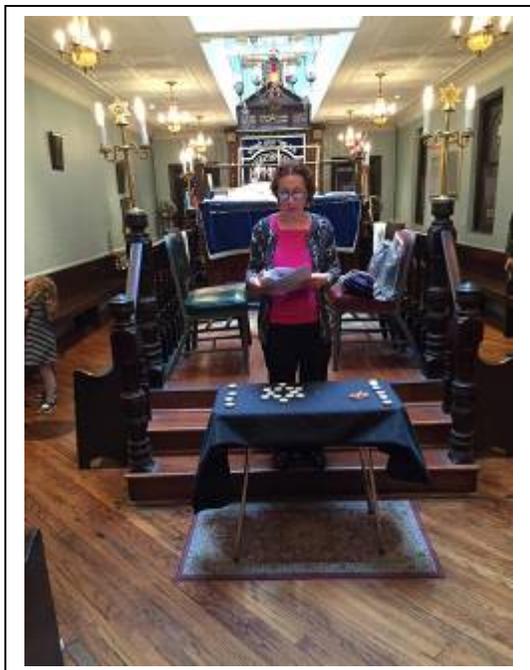
Fifth Ave Synagogue NYC

Special visit from Solomon Spector School of Long Island



Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

On May 1st, for Yom HaShoah, Kehila Kedosha Janina stopped and remembered those lost in the Holocaust with special mention of Greek Orthodox Christians who, through their moral courage, enabled families from our community to survive.



Regina Battino



Visitors for Yom HaShoah

We are enclosing the link for Rebecca Yomtov Hauser's testimony. Rebecca was deported from Ioannina on March 25, 1944 and arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau on April 14, 1944. She was one of the few survivors who returned to Ioannina. Her family brought her to the United States.

Photos of Rebecca's taken in Ioannina

Rebecca and her younger brother and her parents outside the family home



Our second annual Greek Jewish festival drew crowds of over 6000 to Broome between Allen and Eldridge on the Lower East Side. Congratulations to Andrew Marcus for organizing the festivals, both last year's and this year's. Special thanks to all the volunteers who made it possible.



Len, Jesse and Elliot Colchamiro



Salvador and Galit Tiano



Joel Negrin and Consul General of Greece in New York, Konstantinos Koutras



Todd and Jeff Mordos with Sol Matsil



Kehila Kedosha Janina Was Part of Sacred Sites from New York Landmarks Conservancy

On May 22nd, before the start of our Greek Jewish Festival, Kehila Kedosha Janina was, once again, part of Landmarks Preservation Conservancy's annual Sacred Sites, where we open our doors to allow visitors to appreciate the work of LPC. We are grateful for all the help LPC has given us in the past and are always honored to be part of the annual Sacred Sites Open House.

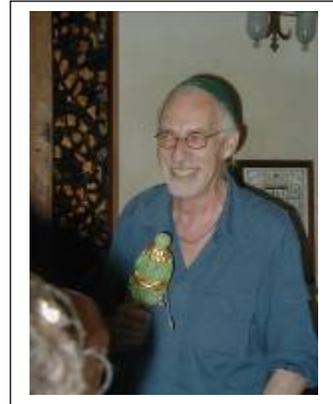


Upcoming Museum Event at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Showing of Trailer for Film About Etz Hayyim in Hania

Join us on Sunday, June 19th, for a special showing of
Etz Hayyim-The Art of Repair
The trailer will be shown by the film maker, Sandra Barty.

In 1944, after the deportation of the Jewish Community of Hania, Crete, the only remaining synagogue, Etz Hayyim, lay rotting, becoming a repository for trash and a sleeping place for local vagrants.



A special man, Nikos Stavroulakis, felt the rotting of Etz Hayyim as if it were an extension of his own body. He, almost singlehandedly, worked to raise funds for the restoration of Ertz Hayyim. Finally, after support from the World Monument Fund, which brought the plight of Etz Hayyim to the attention of the world, the project was completed.

Etz Hayyim-The Art of Repair is the story of Etz Hayyim and Nikos Stavroulakis' impassioned fight to restore the synagogue and, by doing so, restore the dignity of the small Jewish community of Hania. *Etz Hayyim-The Art of Repair* speaks to the repair of a physical structure and subsequent repair of the human spirit.

Etz Hayyim-The Art of Repair is still a work in process. Join us at Kehila Kedosha Janina to watch the trailer and meet the film makers.

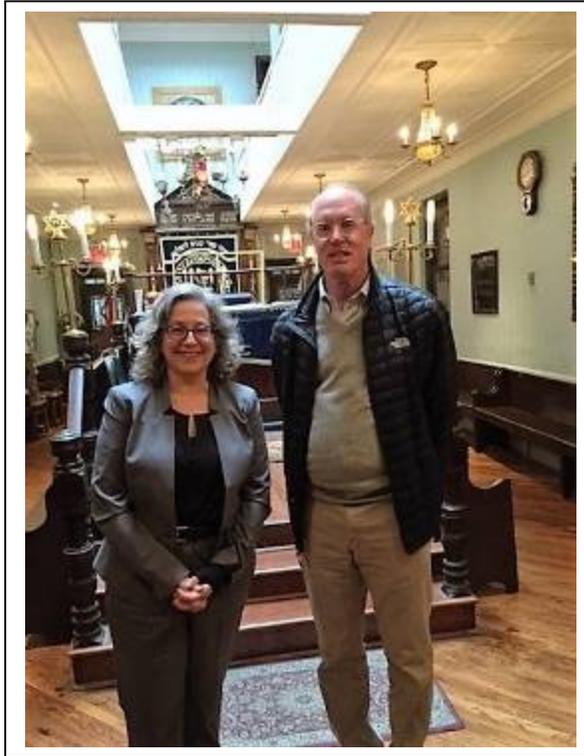
**Where: Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street
New York City, NY 10002**

**When June 19th at 2:00 pm Please RSVP at museum@kkjism.org
Open to the public
Refreshments will be served**

Interview for Wall Street Journal

Last month, we were also interviewed by the Wall Street Journal for an upcoming article.

Ralph Gardner from the Wall Street Journal and Ann Friedman from LPC



Past Events of Interest in New York City

Our own Stella Levi (born in Rhodes and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in July Of 1944) and our dear friend Natalia Indirme from Centro Primo Levi were present at the UN for Yom HaShoah on May 5th, which also happened to be Stella's birthday!



Upcoming Events of Interest in New York City

Kehila Kedosha Janina will be attending the awards ceremony in honor of Mayor Boutaris from Thessaloniki.



Under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in New York
The Jewish Museum of Greece and The American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece
Request the pleasure of your company in honoring the Mayor of the City of Thessaloniki, Greece

Honorable Yiannis S. Boutaris

Accepting

The Damaskinos Award

From His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America

Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America

Past Recipient of the Damaskinos Award

Dr. Mimis Cohen, Master of Ceremonies

Light reception following the event

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion
One West 4th Street, New York, NY 10012

Wednesday, June 1, 2016, 6:30 p.m.

Attendance is free. RSVP is required via email: info@afjmg.org or by calling 646-369-0927.
Valid government issued ID is required to enter the building.

HONORABLE YIANNIS S. BOUTARIS



Yiannis Boutaris was born in Thessaloniki in 1942 and obtained his degree in Chemistry in 1965 from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and his Diploma of Oenology from the Wine Institute of Athens in 1967. From 1969 through 1996, he served successively as Assistant Director, Technical Director, and Managing Director at the family wine industry J. BOUTARI & SON S.A. In 1998 he created KIR YIANNI winery, located at the privately-owned vineyards of Yiannakohori and Amyndeon, run today by his two sons. He retained his position in both posts until 2010.

Yiannis Boutaris served as a Municipal Councilor of Thessaloniki for two terms (2002-2006 and 2006-2010). He led "Protovoulia for Thessaloniki" at two successive municipal elections in 2006 and 2010 as candidate for Mayor and was elected Mayor of Thessaloniki in November 2010 (first term Jan 2011 – Aug 2014) and in May 2014 (present term Sept 2014 – Aug 2019).

He has served as President and member of the Board of Directors of many professional, cultural, and environmental organizations since 1980, such as the Assembly of European Wine Regions (AREV), the Academic Internationale du Vin, the Federation of Greek Wines and Spirits Industries, the Thessaloniki Film Festival, W.W.F. Greece, and the Thessaloniki Tourism Organization. He is also the founder of the Macedonian Museum of Modern Art (Thessaloniki) and Arcturos, a non-profit organization aiming at the protection and management of the environment and wildlife. He has received many national and international awards and distinctions.

News from Jewish Greece

Thessaloniki

Thessaloniki: A magnificent synagogue revealed from the past

Article by architect Elias Messinas for the Jerusalem Post, May 22, 2016

When members of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki entered the synagogue of Monastiriotes in Thessaloniki on Sunday, May 15, they encountered something different for the first time in over 70 years. The synagogue opened its doors for the community to celebrate two festive occasions: the 68th anniversary of independence of the State of Israel, and the completion of the complete restoration of this historic monument for the first time since it was built in 1927.

The synagogue was designed by Czech Jewish architect Eli Ernst Levi and funded by families that moved to Thessaloniki from Monastir, most prominent among which was the Aroesti family. After WWII, it is at this synagogue that the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust held their first meetings.

Pain and sorrow were mixed with the urgent task of rebuilding a community board and institutions, and reestablishing Jewish life in a city once counting more than 50,000 Jews among its population. Thessaloniki lost 96 percent of its Jews. The community lost people, but also its institutions, libraries, the ancient Jewish cemetery, nearly 60 synagogues and midrashim, and its central synagogue, Beth Shaul, which was destroyed by the Nazis following the deportation of the Jewish community in 1943.

Monastiriotes Synagogue was among the very few that survived WWII, thanks to the intervention of the Red Cross that used it as storehouse.



The building, due to its central location and prominent size, has served as the central synagogue of the city since then. Yet, the building was neglected. A severe earthquake in 1978 caused damage to the building and structural interventions caused further damage to its original decoration.

The marble 10 Commandments crowning the central arch of the synagogue façade were removed after they collapsed during the earthquake.

Services were added ad-hoc, from exposed electric wiring on the walls to a toilet structure in the courtyard, which for women, descending from the ezrat nashim [women's section], was both

difficult and often dangerous. Security considerations forced the community to protect the entrance foyer with wire mesh, affecting the original architectural character of the synagogue and its relationship to the street.

Until today. Under the leadership of David Saltiel, president of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, a team of architects comprised of the undersigned and the office of Kard Architects based in Thessaloniki, and under the supervision of Jewish community engineer David Frances, undertook to restore the building and bring back its historic character and beauty. Thanks to grants from the Federal Republic of Germany and the Herbert Simon Family Foundation, the undertaking encompassed every possible corner and detail of the synagogue: from hiding exposed wiring to revealing the original hidden decorative terrazzo floor tiles; from revealing original wall paintings to replacing and adding damaged decorative plaster decorations; from reconstructing the toilets to installing new stairs and an elevator to make the ezrat nashim accessible to persons with disabilities for the first time; from replacing existing heating, cooling and lighting systems to improve performance and to reduce energy costs and the environmental footprint of the building to erecting again – for the first time since 1978 – the 10 Commandments at the top of the synagogue façade.

BEING INVOLVED in this project could not be more emotionally loaded for me. I was born to the Athens Jewish community, with roots in the Romaniote communities in Jannina and Chalkis. Upon completion of my graduate studies in architecture I decided to devote my professional skills to the study, survey and dissemination of knowledge on Greek synagogues. In the past 20 years I have completed a PhD at the National Technical University of Athens on the subject and published in the US (The Synagogues of Greece, Bloch Publishing Co., New York) and Greece (The Synagogues of Salonika and Veroia, Gavrielides Editions, Athens). I disseminated my work in numerous articles, lectures and exhibitions including at Yad Vashem and the Goethe Institute in Thessaloniki.

But throughout this long journey, the urge to preserve the Jewish heritage of Greece was not only an academic pursuit but primarily a dedication to survival. Great amounts of energy were spent to publicize the sale or planned demolition of synagogues in the 1990s by the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, or to prevent the Athens Jewish community from destroying the historic Ianniotes synagogue in 2008. The leadership of the Greek Jewish communities preferred to muffle my voice rather than take my advice. And as a result, historic jewels such as synagogue Beth El in Komotini and the elaborate synagogue in Xanthi, although they survived the Holocaust and Nazi barbarism, were demolished and lost forever.

But two decades later something changed. President Saltiel, a true visionary with the sense of mission of a leader in an important, but dwindling community, took the initiative to preserve this monument, instead of following the destructive example of other cities. Thanks to president Saltiel's commitment to the history and preservation of the heritage of the ancient Jewish community of Thessaloniki, no efforts were spared toward a historic restoration that would bring pride and memory back to the community and the city of Thessaloniki. Thanks to president Saltiel's vision and Mayor Yiannis Boutaris' commitment to unveiling the historic layers of the city of Thessaloniki – primarily the Jewish one – despite the crisis throughout Greece, Jewish tourism in Thessaloniki is growing year-round, and the restored synagogue of Monastiriotes is already booked for tourist visits for the next several months.

The inauguration of the restored synagogue of Monastiriotes was a real celebration. A celebration of the city of Thessaloniki for having now a unique architectural and historic landmark. A celebration for the Jewish community over the pride and joy its central synagogue brought them again. A celebration for Israel for having one more point of reference on the map

of Sephardi Jewry in the Diaspora, in an ancient city once called "Mother of Israel," and a Jewish community from which David Ben-Gurion was inspired for the State of Israel. It was also a celebration for me personally: the closing of a circle of great loss for Greek Jewish heritage, and the start of a new paradigm of cooperation, dedication, love and pride in Jewish heritage, to be restored and preserved for present and future generations.

The author is an architect, environmental consultant and educator, expert in the architecture of Greek synagogues and author of *The Synagogues of Greece* (Bloch Publishing Co., New York) and *The Synagogues of Salonika and Veroia* (Gavrielides Editions, Athens).

**Ceremony on Yom HaShoah in Thessaloniki to Honor Lawyer who saved 400 Jewish Children
During the Occupation**

This year on Yom HaShoah in Thessaloniki, there was an emotional gathering in the Monastirion Synagogue to honor the memory of Angelos Koutsoumaris who saved 400 Jewish children from deportation to death camps by arranging to have them adopted by Christian families. The children survived but grew up never knowing their Jewish background.



It was just recently that this act of Moral Courage was revealed.

Athens

B'nai B'rith –Lodge "PHILON" Athens Greece, organized this year LADINO DAY on May 16th the Cultural Center of Athens.

The event was held with great success, and with a large audience.

Attended by the President of the Jewish Community of Athens Mr. Minos Moissis, the New Rabbi of Athens, Gabriel Negrin, the President of the European Jewish Committee Mr. Benjamin Albala, many foreign visitors, among them Br. Steen Cadan who addressed to the audience few words, while greeting messages sent by the former President B'nai B'rith Europe David Levy Bentolila, Rabbi Bent Melchior, and other members of Bnai Brith Greece.

Keynote speaker was Zelda Ovadia, with the topic: "The Evolution of the Ladino language" followed by a presentation of poems (always in Ladino) while at the music program the singer André Maia sang traditional Sephardic and Portuguese songs, with the accompaniment of Kostas Nikolaou, on guitar.

The event continued with a tasty feast of Sephardic dishes, offered by the ladies and the friends of our Lodge, and ended with the promise to celebrate next year once more time " The Ladino Day"



Solomon Errera

Athens

On May 15th, in Athens, in the first of what will be a series of presentations on the Jewish Communities of Greece, their history and their traditions, there was a presentation on Volos, one of the oldest Jewish communities in Greece. The presentation was attended by Moses Konstantinis, President of KIS (Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece), Benjamin Albala, President of the European Congress of Jewish Communities, Marsel Solomon, President of the Jewish Community of Volos and dignitaries from the Municipality of Volos. Ilias Frezis, Director of KIS, born in Volos, gave a presentation on the long history of the Jewish Community of Volos, its fate during WWII and the major earthquakes that caused many to leave.



Zakynthos

For Yom HaShoah, the Israeli Ambassador in Athens, Arit Ben Aba, visited the island of Zakynthos to lay a wreath on the memorial in the Jewish cemetery to those Jews from Zakynthos who were deported from Corfu and Hania, Crete. Present at the event were Moris Magrizos, Vice President of KIS, Mayor and Vice Mayor of Zakynthos and members of the local Greek Orthodox Church including the Metropolitan Bishop Dionysis. After visiting the cemetery, they stopped at the site of the former synagogue of Zakynthos, destroyed in an earthquake in 1953.



The Israeli Ambassador spoke about the fact that, in all of Greece, the island of Zakynthos had the distinction of saving all 275 Jews on the island. The Israeli Ambassador expressed the following, "On behalf of Jews throughout the world, we are eternally grateful." She then related that the first ship to arrive with aid for the stricken island in 1953 was from Israel.

Komotini

Heinz Kounio, one of the few remaining survivors from Salonika spoke on the Holocaust in Komotini, a community that was in the Bulgarian Zone of Occupation during WWII and where the Jewish Community was deported by the Bulgarians in March of 1943. Their final destination was Treblinka. Heinz was also deported in March of 1943, but by the Germans to Auschwitz-Birkenau.



Schools in Greece Address Refugee Question

Lauder School of the Jewish Community of Athens Wins Award

Following many initiatives taken by educational staff all over Greece to address the issue of refugees, Greek's Ministry of Education recognized and awarded the nation's best educational efforts.

The government body chose the Lauder School of the Jewish Community of Athens, among a select group of other schools, to receive a special award for its educational efforts.

The Lauder school was commended for its social activism, humanitarian concerns and pursuit of social justice. Highlights of the Lauder School's Refugee program include: 1st Grade students attended a program, "The Right to Be A Child," at the Children's Art Museum. The aim was to learn about a child's basic human rights, and at the same time, to learn about children who are deprived of these rights. The program ended with a painting competition. The selected paintings were made into badges that were sold at the bazaar.



2nd Grade students conducted the program, "The Story of a Refugee," which included United Nations Refugee Agency educational material. Students learned to recognize the difference between human beings' needs, in relation to their desires. Students came in contact with notions like diversity, exclusion and rejection. They were confronted with their emotions and asked to suggest solutions. The program ended with reading relevant literature at the school and baking biscuits (in shape of human figures) to sell at the bazaar.

- 4th Grade students dealt with the issue of refugee by creating full size models of themselves. Each model hid a true testimony of a refugee. Children dealt with aspects of a reality that they cannot fully contemplate, but have the ability to feel. At the bazaar, their classroom hosted an art exhibition titled "Shadows of People". An entrance ticket was charged while all the works were sold.
- 5th Graders participated in the Action Aid program "Xenios or Xenos?" where they were presented with the essential parameters of the refugee issue. They then formed poster creation groups. Their work was printed and sold at the bazaar.
- Grade 6 created a documentary on the issue. After reading various real life stories, children chose the story of Doaa al-Zamel, who survived a shipwreck off the coast of Crete. Inspired by her story, the students wrote a script and made a short film. At the bazaar,

their classroom was transformed into a movie theater. Tickets and copies of the documentary were sold.

Following these programs, the school invited parents and friends of the school at an afternoon bazaar entitled, "Children Support Refugees," where all actions were presented and items sold. With the revenue earned, the school bought and donated 55 tents, each one accommodating four people

Greek March of the Living at Auschwitz-Birkenau on May 5, 2016

A large delegation from Greece that included both Greek Jews and Greek Orthodox Christians took part in the March of the Living this year. Present was the President of the Jewish Community of Volos, Marsel Solomon, who carried the Greek flag. Mitropolit Ignatios lit the first candle in memory of those who perished and in honor of those who risked their lives to save Jews. One of the most moving moments of the ceremony was when a survivor mentioned that among the Israeli pilots who flew over Auschwitz in 2003, was his own grandson, and that the best answer to the horrors was the continuation of life.



Greece Commemorates the 68th Anniversary of the Creation of the Israeli State



Bnai Brith From Germany visits Athens



On May 26th, the Bnai Brith from Germany visited Athens.

Yad Vashem Honors Greek Righteous on May 31, 2016

On Tuesday, 23 Iyar, Yad Vashem will hold a ceremony posthumously honoring Apostolos and Maria Voliotis from Greece as Righteous Among the Nations. Irena Steinfeldt, Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department, will present Apostolos Voliotis, grandson of Apostolos and Maria, with the medal and certificate of honor on behalf of his grandparents. The event will take place in the presence of Ambassador of Greece to Israel H.E. Mr. Spyridon Lampridis.

A memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance will be held at 11:00AM followed by the awarding of the medal and certificate in the Auditorium at Yad Vashem. The events will be conducted in Hebrew and Greek.

The Rescue Story

The Hakim family lived in Volos, a coastal city in Thessaly, central Greece. Eliahu Hakim and his brother Leon were traveling salesmen, and became friendly with a non-Jewish grocer Voliotis

who lived in the village of Lechonia. With the occupation of the southern part of Greece by the Germans in September 1943, the situation for the Jews became dangerous and the Hakim family were forced to leave their home. On 30 September, the German commander of the Volos province approached Rabbi Moshe (Moissis) Pessah and demanded that he hand over a list with the names of all of the Jews of Volos. Rabbi Pessah turned to Archbishop Ioakim Alexopoulos (recognized as Righteous Among the Nations in October 1997) for assistance, and at the same time warned the community against the pending danger.



Rabbi Moshe Pessah of Volos

Eliahu Hakim found a horse and buggy, and together with his family – his wife Anna, children Yulia-Levana, Abraham, David and Moshe, and his brother Leon – managed to flee the town to the Pillion Mountains. When they arrived in Lechonia, the family immediately sought out their grocer friend Voliotis, who made contact with his brother Apostolos from the nearby village of Karabas. Apostolos Voliotis welcomed the Hakim family and arranged a hiding place in his packinghouse, which was located on the outskirts of the village. The Jewish refugees stayed there for more than a year, under the careful watch of Apostolos and his wife Maria. Conditions were difficult; they lived mainly off the fruits from a local orchard and leafy greens and fungi that Apostolos taught them to forage from the nearby forest. Once a week, Anna and Leon would go into the village to stock up on a few groceries and other necessities. Eliahu suffered from a stomach ulcer that caused him great pain, and was unable to leave the hideout. The Germans carried out regular searches of the area in an effort to catch partisans and Jews, among others, often together with the assistance of local Greek collaborators. During these searches, the Hakim family would hide in caves in the area. After the war, Levana Shalish recalled that during one of these raids they were spotted by the Germans; Apostolos Voliotis maintained his composure and claimed that they were his workers, and the Germans left them alone. When the Germans set up an outpost in the monastery overlooking Apostolos Voliotis's packinghouse, the Hakim family relocated to a small cabin concealed by trees. During that time, other relatives of the Hakim family moved into the first hiding place, but were caught a short time later. In light of the growing threat, the family decided to leave the village and go deeper into the mountains. They wandered from one village to another in search of shelter and food, somehow surviving until liberation. After the war, the family returned to their home in Volos. In 1946, they decided to leave Greece and came to Eretz Israel aboard the illegal immigrant ship Henrietta Szold. On 10

March 2015, Apostolos and Maria Voliotis were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations.

Tablet Magazine Article on Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Crete

During the Nazi occupation of Greece in 1944, the Gestapo rounded up the roughly 300 Jews living on the isle of Crete. They were herded onto a cargo ship headed for the Greek mainland with Auschwitz as their ultimate destination, but were spared the gas chambers in a cruel twist: The British torpedoed the ship. No one survived.

Etz Hayyim synagogue is the only remnant of the Ovraiki, or Jewish Quarter, in Chania, Crete's second-largest city, which was home to the island's Jewish community. The building stands in the same place it's been since the Middle Ages, crammed into the city's old town, a walled maze of alleys fanning out from a pretty harbor with a medieval lighthouse. The Ovraiki's Jewish community stretched back some 2,300 years, surviving all kinds of invaders: Romans, Byzantines, Venetians, Ottomans. Today, though, there are barely more than a dozen Jews left in Crete, and much of the quarter is home mostly to Starbucks and shops selling "I Love Crete" T-shirts.



For decades after Chania's Jewish community was destroyed, the synagogue stood dormant. It was desecrated. Used as a dump, a urinal, and kennel. Pounded by earthquakes. Filled with dead animals and broken glass, its mikveh oozing muck.

Then, after half a century, Nicholas Stavroulakis arrived and took on the synagogue as his mission, starting reconstruction in 1996. Today, Etz Hayyim holds weekly Shabbat services and hosts a research library with some 4,000 volumes—which began with Stavroulakis' personal collection. Next month, Etz Hayyim will honor both its past and its future: On June 14, it will host both its annual memorial service for the hundreds of Crete's Jews lost during WWII, as well as an exhibit marking the 20th anniversary of the reconstruction.

In a recent interview at his family home in Chania, Stavroulakis told me how Etz Hayyim came to be so important to him. "It called out to me," he said. "It had become a monument to the victory

of Hitler and the Nazis. Not only had the Jews all been killed but their very history was being erased. To my mind, it had to be saved at all costs.”

Growing up in Britain, the son of a Turkish Jewish mother and a Greek Orthodox father from Crete (the family name means little cross), Stavroulakis kicked around the world, getting an education that included Catholic boarding school in Wisconsin with “loving” nuns. He became something of a Renaissance man: He’s a historian, cookbook author, and an artist. He was co-founder and director of the Jewish Museum of Athens.

Stavroulakis first learned about Crete’s lost Jews when he was a young man, and his family ties prompted many visits to the island. “It was well-known that the Cretan community was lost, and when I first came to Chania I wanted to see where they had lived,” he told me. After Stavroulakis, now 85, retired, he returned to Crete in 1995 and set about restoring the synagogue.

The idea of investing time and money in a synagogue without a viable Jewish community wasn’t an easy sell. Still, benefactors from all over—including the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation and the World Monuments Fund—got onboard with the reconstruction. Etz Hayyim reopened in 1999.

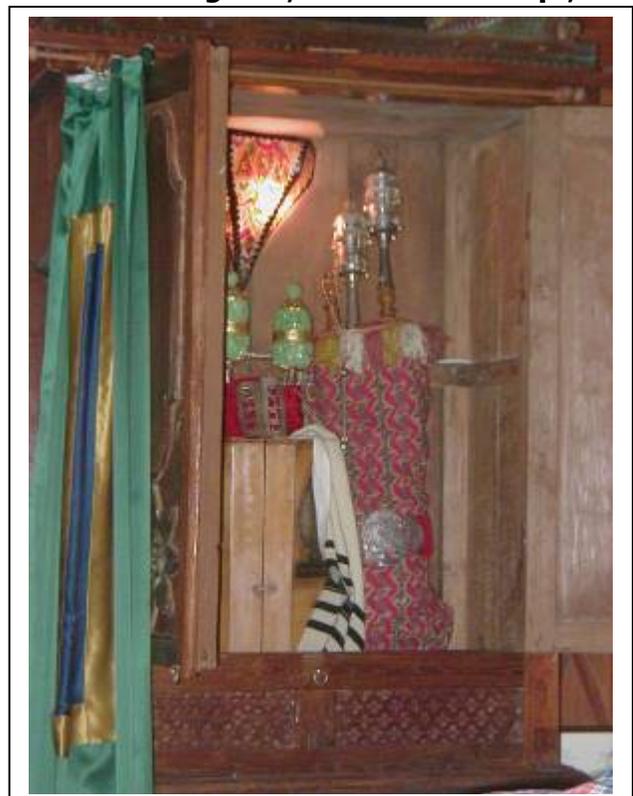
The synagogue’s layout is in the Romaniote, or Greek tradition. The ark faces the eastern wall; the *bimah*, the western one. The reborn mikveh is fed by a spring. The scattered remains from some rabbinical tombs were recovered and reburied. And in a hallway near the sanctuary is a simple shrine: plaques bearing the names of the Jews of Chania who drowned in 1944.

Services are conducted in Hebrew, Greek, and English. Stavroulakis, who is not a rabbi, leads the Sabbath services, which typically draw about 15 people. Others with long term ties to Etz Hayyim, some of them ordained rabbis, are brought in for the High Holidays.

Iossif Ventura, a prominent Greek-Jewish poet who was born in Chania and fled from the Nazis as a toddler with his family, remembers feeling “melancholy” but hopeful about the future when the synagogue reopened. He was so haunted by the Jews who perished at sea—especially the children—that he wrote celebrated poems about them, imagining their terror in the ship’s hold. “Tanais” is named for the cargo ship that became the Jews’ mass grave; here is an excerpt, translated by Elisabeth Arseniou:

at night the wind
scattered words
children’s cries
shifting broken branches
to the tick of clocks
they fled in darkness

and it was
the scout the ferryman
the river’s name
receptacle of pulses
with the sirens sounding the voyage
with the smells of brine grease and rust
and even more
the opaqueness of those
that were



Things were quiet at the synagogue for more than a decade. Then in 2010, Etz Hayyim was rocked by two arsons in one month. The library and office were hit hard. "The police were less than adequate," Stavroulakis recalled. The arsonists' motives appeared to be anti-Semitism (a bar of soap had apparently been thrown against a wall, a reference to a Greek anti-Semitic taunt, "I'll turn you into a bar of soap") and robbery. Stavroulakis says the culprits likely targeted the synagogue office because "the equation that most people have in mind is that Jews equal money."

The arsons got international play. Outrage and donations poured in; Etz Hayyim bounced back fairly quickly.

"The synagogue's character must not change," Stavroulakis declared on the synagogue's blog. "Its doors must remain open—or the congregation will have given in to the ignorance that fostered the destruction."

A synagogue in Athens, where most of Greece's 5,000 Jews live, lent spiritual support by declaring itself a sister synagogue. Rabbi Gabriel Negrin, the young rabbi of the Jewish Community of Athens, often comes from the Greek capital to help with the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services; more than 100 people, a mix of tourists and synagogue friends from elsewhere, not all of whom are Jewish, have attended.

Rabbi Negrin, who was mentored in part by Stavroulakis, says the long association has been transformative: "As a student in Crete, I got familiar with Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Chania and fell in love with the embracing atmosphere and the overwhelming spirituality," he said. "[Stavroulakis'] guidance, through my Jewish quests, was critical for me and contributed a lot to my rabbinical awakening."

But political uncertainty is circling all of Greece. Golden Dawn, the Greek neo-Nazi group, won almost 7 percent of the vote in the 2015 general election. "We are not afraid, but we are concerned," said Victor Eliezer, a spokesman for the Jewish Community of Athens. He says the hope is that democracy and increased education, particularly regarding the Holocaust, can make a difference: "The fight against the increase of neo-Nazi movements in Europe is not just a 'Jewish concern,' " he added. "It is, or should be, a 'European concern.' "

At Etz Hayyim, there is optimism. Ventura recalls, with a laugh, concern in the Chania newspapers when the synagogue first reopened in 1999. Rumor had it that the revived synagogue was part of a "vast Israeli conspiracy" to take over Crete. But Ventura, who has shared his poems about the destruction of Crete's Jews at readings there and around the world, says the audiences in more recent years have been positive.

On a recent spring morning when I visited Etz Hayyim, a cat lounged in the middle of the sanctuary as visitors started to filter in. There were mugs for sale in the closet-sized gift shop and a sign asking for donations to help with the old walls that constantly need patching because of the humidity from the Mediterranean Sea. Anja Zuckmantel, a German ex-pat who, in her role as administrator, takes care of all the day-to-day affairs at Etz Hayyim, says there is hope for a permanent Jewish community, "But in the foreseeable future that seems rather unlikely as there are simply not enough permanent resident Jewish families." For now, the synagogue continues to be solely funded by benefactors and donations from visitors.

Passover was coming, and the staff of one and a few volunteers would soon be very busy. Once tourist season reaches gale force, there would be many more paying visitors like the Americans

who walked in from half a world away, some of them planning weddings or **bar mitzvahs** in Crete. "People think it's romantic," said Zuckmantel with a smile.

In July, just a few weeks after the ceremony marking the Jewish community's tragic past, Etz Hayyim will host a more upbeat event: Ventura's grandsons Eitan and Benyo will come from New York and Israel to see where their 77-year-old grandfather was born, and they will have their bar mitzvahs at Crete's only remaining synagogue.

Gershon
Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



The holiday of Shavuot is celebrated this year on Sunday June 12th in Israel and the 12th and 13th in the Diaspora. The holiday commemorates two events: the ripening and harvesting of the "first fruits", and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, sealing God's covenant with Israel. But unlike all other festivals, no specific date for this holiday appears in the Torah, only the fact that it is to be celebrated some 7 weeks after Pesah, or more specifically, on the 50th day after the counting of the Omer for 49 days.

Yet this seemingly simple activity came to symbolize perhaps the greatest manifestation of a major battle that raged during Second Temple times between two specific groups of sages and spiritual leaders that centered around the very nature of Jewish law and the authority of the oral vs. the written "Torah" or tradition.

According to classic Jewish tradition, Moses was given both the 'written' and 'oral' Torah at Sinai. The former was the holy written 'guidebook' and foundation of God's eternal covenant with Israel and the Jewish faith, while the latter was the indispensable partner to the written Torah, without which it would be virtually impossible to properly observe the Torah. This oral tradition is embodied in the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash, all of which were in fact only written down to prevent the loss of the oral tradition due to constant expulsions, exiles and scattering of Jews over the centuries. Therefore, the oral law holds tremendous power and authority, and in fact, all streams of Judaism recognize its existence and necessity.

In Second Temple times especially, specific groups of priestly families – among them major spiritual leaders and members of the great Sanhedrin – opposed the very idea and authority of the oral tradition, and held that Jewish law must be based on a literal interpretation of Biblical verse only. The two leading groups were: The "*Tzadukim*", named after the High Priest "*Tzadok*" (often called Sadducees) and the "*Baitusim*" (from a specific priestly family named "*Baitus*"). The opposing "*Perushim*" (Pharisees), which can be loosely translated as "separatists", insisted on separating themselves from the *Tzadukim* in terms of insisting on strict observance of the oral law. But perhaps more important, the fact that *they* were the "separatists" shows that the *Tzadukim* and those against the oral law were actually the dominant stream at that time!

The battle between the factions – which was in essence a battle for the future direction of Judaism – culminated with the determination of when to start counting the Omer, and as a consequence, when Shavuot would actually fall. The basis for the commandment to count the days of the Omer comes from a section in the Torah describing the observance of Pesah, where a verse says to count the Omer from "*the morrow of the Shabbat*". The "*Tzadukim*" insisted that "*Shabbat*" was to be taken in its literal sense as the classical seventh-day Sabbath, so counting the Omer would always begin on the Saturday night ("*motzaí Shabbat*") of either the intermediate days of Pesah, or the first day itself if Pesah falls on Shabbat, like it did this year. In fierce opposition, the "*Perushim*" insisted that, based on the oral law, "*Shabbat*" in this context meant the first day of Pesah, because in other parts of the same section, "*Shabbat*" is used in the context as day we refrain from creative work, which in the context of the Torah section, would mean the first day of Pesah itself. The implications of the two arguments were very significant, since according to the *Tzadukim*, Shavuot would always fall on a Sunday, but on a different date in Sivan each year, while according to the *Perushim*, Shavuot would always fall on the 50th day after Pesah, i.e. the first day, as demanded by the Torah! But of course, without an oral tradition for the use of "*Shabbat*" in a non-literal manner, the *Perushim* would have no leg to stand on.

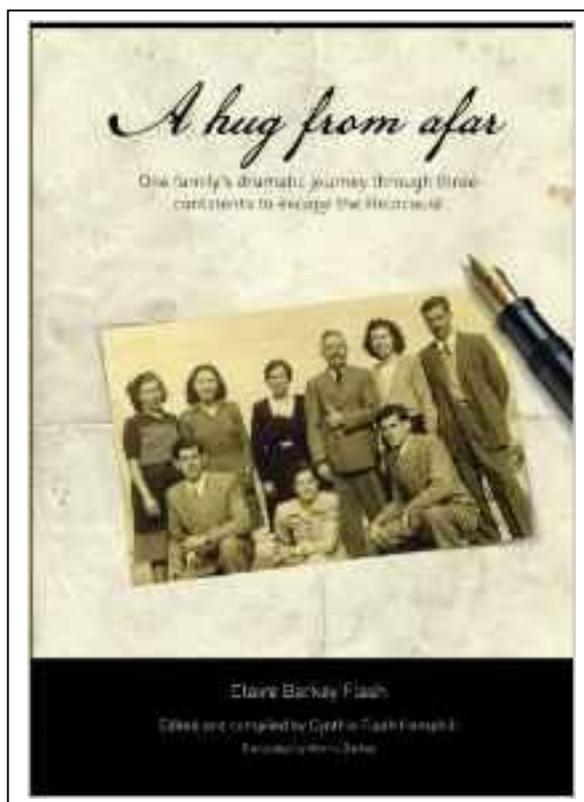
The arguments are described in the Talmud and at a certain time, given their apparently superior numbers, the *Tzadukim* almost won out. That later manifestation of those against the oral tradition were the "*Karaites*", of which some small communities still exist in Israel and parts of Russia. However, the defenders of oral tradition ultimately won out, and "*Rabbinical*" Judaism became the norm for all Jewish faith and mainstream movements of Judaism till this very day. Hag Sameah!

New Book For Sale

We are honored to offer a new book about the Jews of Rhodes for sale at Kehla Kedosha Janina.

A Hug From Afar: One family's dramatic journey through three continents to escape the Holocaust by Cynthia Flash Hemphill with forward by Professor Devin Naar

From the young age of 9 on the Aegean island of Rhodes, Clara Barki started writing to her uncle Ralph and aunty Rachel Capeluto in the far-away place known as Seattle, Wash. This smart and determined young woman, who was always at or near the top of her class, used the dying language of Judeo-Spanish, or Ladino, to report news of the relatives Ralph left behind on Rhodes and the happenings of her Sephardic Jewish community. But what started as friendly letters quickly turned to desperate pleas for help as life for the Jews of Rhodes deteriorated under the control of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, who allied with Adolph Hitler. Forgotten and never thought of again, Clara's letters turned up more than



Sarajevo

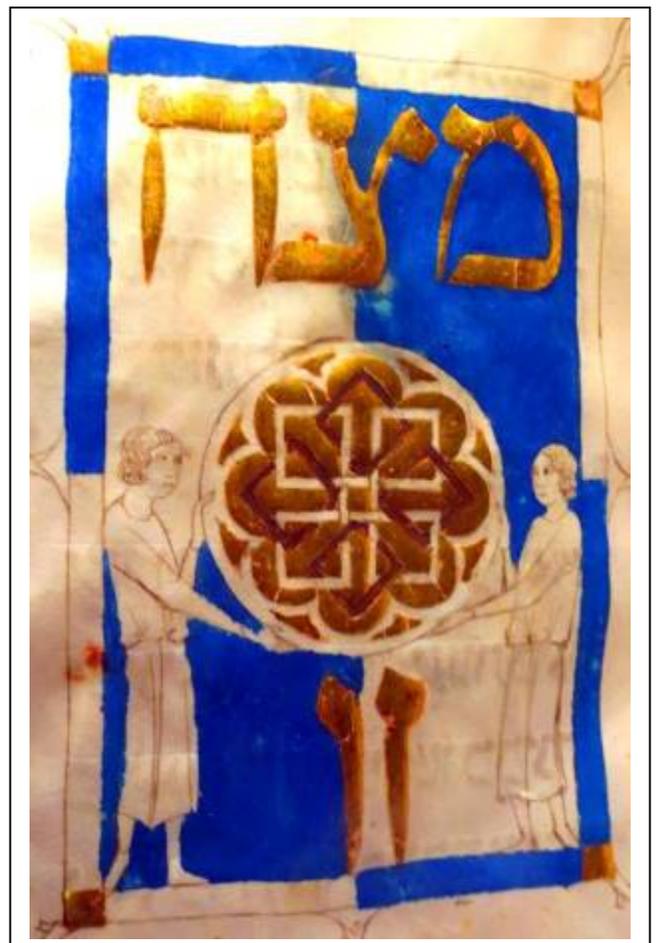
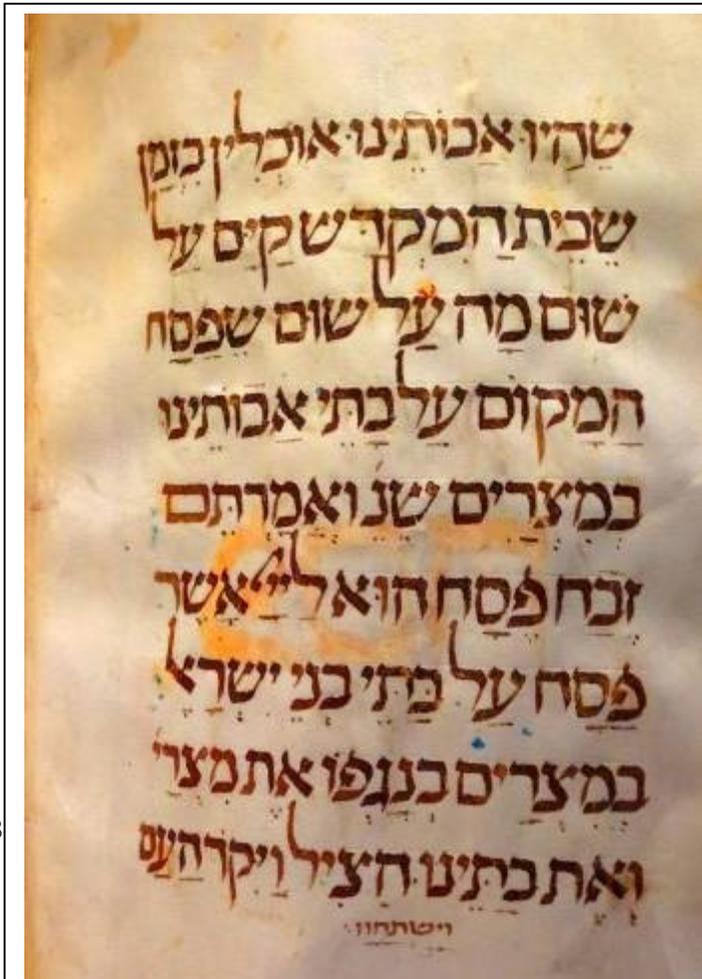
<https://www.facebook.com/eliezer.papo/posts/10208512755749147>

450 Years of Jewish Life in Sarajevo

**Azhk
Synagogue in
Sarajevo**



The Prato Haggadah, Tempera, gold and ink on parchment. Spanish, circa 1300. Currently on display at The Cloisters, in NYC.



Looking For Our Help

We are looking for someone who has heard of the custom of saying masiftani (sic) instead of dayenu during the recitation of dayenu. My mother's popoo Samuel Cohen led the large seders and that was the custom. My niece is trying to find out the reason- she is incorporating it into her wedding speech.

We are looking for information on Albalas from Monastir who arrived in New York in the early part of the 20th century.

We are searching for members of the Negrin (Negrini) family. We were contacted by the great grandson of a Benedict (Bento) Negrini from Brazil. Marcos is completely unaware of his possible Jewish background and wishes to find out more about the history of the Negrin Family, especially a branch that might have gone to Brazil.

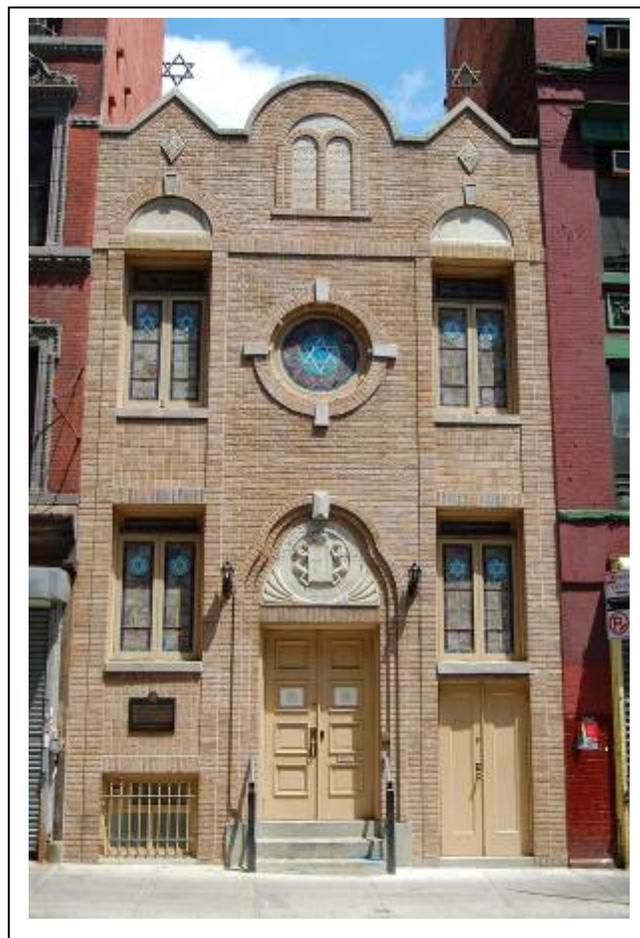
**Another inquiry about Negrins, in this case descendants of Haim Negrin who came to New York from Preveza in 1910. His great-grandson contacted us to find more information.
"My great grandfather Haim Negrin emigrated to NY in 1910 with his family from Preveza Turkey/Greece. He died on March 4, 1926 and is buried in Mount Carmel Cemetery in an area for the Brotherhood of Janina. I suspect he and or my grandfather, Nissim Nigrine may have been members of your congregation. Can you confirm this? Also, do you have any other information about Haim Negrin's other sons: Morris, Leo and Marcel. Thank you for your help."**

So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) made out to *Kehila Kedosha Janina*, to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.

When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street. We are open for services every Saturday and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11-4 and, by appointment during the week.

**PLEASE REMEMBER: WE DISCONTINUED OUR
POST OFFICE BOX
ALL MAIL SHOULD GO DIRECTLY TO
280 BROOME STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10002**



**Kehila Kedosha Janina e-newsletter: number 88:
June, 2016
Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, New York NY
10002
E-mail: kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net
Web Site: www.kkjsm.org**

