Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

As we start the secular year of 2018, we marvel that this is our 106th E-newsletter, and that it has been almost 9 years of reaching out to a continuously growing audience of Greek Jews, Greek-Orthodox Christians and the many who have become interested in our special world. Our first newsletter in February of 2008 was a mere 6 pages long and reached about 1,000 households around the world. We now reach over 8,500 households and rarely is our newsletter less than 20 pages. We have told the news and made the news. Often, with the help of dear friends around the world we have told the news of the Greek-Jewish world in Greece, Israel, France, England, Brazil, and Italy, and the news of interest to all Jews and non-Jews from other far-reaching Jewish communities in Turkey, Iran, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus and Australia. In addition to telling the news, we have often made the news, especially when it came to stemming the tide of anti-Semitic acts on Greek soil, especially in Ioannina. To have a look at our past, do access our e-newsletters on our website: www.kkjsm.org. To be part of our future, join us, whether it be on trips to Jewish Greece, tours of our museum on Broome Street, services in our synagogue at Kehila Kedosha Janina or membership in our sister organizations (The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, The Sisterhood of Janina and Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network).
This newsletter, our 106th 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.

We now reach over 8,500 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 museum@kkjsm.org.

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up by emailing info@kkjsm.org 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.

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Simchas

Amy (Matsil Richer) and Rich Richer are thrilled to announce the engagement of Amy’s son, Matthew Seltzer to Alexis Allmaler.

Rick and Rachel Glaser, of Owings Mills MD, are proud to announce the birth of their first grand-daughter, and 7th grandchild, Meira Lyla Isenberg, daughter of Miriam Glaser and Dan Isenberg.

Meira is the great-granddaughter of the late Emmanuel and Emily Velelli, of Baltimore, and formerly of Patras, Greece.
Alivia Blake Marano was born November 2, 2017 to Alisha and Stephen Marano of Florida. Her Grandparents are Sydelle and Ed Pineiro from Florida. Her Great Grandparents were Beatrice (David) and Jerome Norris, Beatrice was the Daughter of Esther (DeCastro) and Morris David from Ioannina.

Fay Smaldone welcomed the birth of her grandson, Nathan, pictured here with his big sister, Amelia.

We congratulate Maurice and Barbara Zagha on the marriage of their daughter Tina to Jared Salwen. Tina’s grandmother Bea was born into the Sabba Family and then married into the Zagha family.
Our congratulations to Rose Askinazi (daughter of Kathy and Maurice Askinazi) on her engagement to Stefan Oberman (son of Helene Oberman) of Melbourne, Australia. The couple will be married in Australia in February. Rose is the granddaughter of Joseph and Rose Askinazi (OBM) and the great granddaughter of Morris Askinazi and Betty Coffino (both born in Ioannina) and the great great-granddaughter of Joseph and Esther Askinazi, also born in Ioannina.

We celebrate Annette Binder’s 90th birthday. Annette is the daughter of Joseph Politis and Esther Josephs (both OBM), granddaughter of Isaac Politis and Annie Hefetz (both OBM), great granddaughter of Joseph Politis and Hanoula Barouch (both OBM). Annette celebrated her 90th birthday surrounded by friends and relatives.
We congratulate Sophie Mevorach Morhaime on her 98th birthday.

Passings

In December we lost precious members of our community, both in Greece and in the United States.

We mourn the passing of Anna Mordochai at the age of 88. Anna was a Holocaust survivor from Ioannina, the wife of Solomon Mordechai and mother of Minos (OBM), Isaac and Elias. She is survived by many grandchildren and great grandchildren. In the picture below of the first babies born in Ioannina after the war, Anna is second from left, holding her son Minos. In the second picture she is with her sister-in-law, Esther Politis Mordochai, also a survivor.
We mourn the passing of Marvin Meyer Abraham just short of his 87th birthday. Marvin was living in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He passed away peacefully on November 30, 2017. Marvin was born in Harlem on December 8, 1930, to Esther (Matza) and Raymond Abraham, immigrants from Greece. He grew up in the Bronx with his two older brothers, Samuel and Albert, and attended City College of New York, graduating with a B.S. in physics in 1953. In 1958, he achieved a PhD in physics from the University of California/Berkeley. He married Reeva Swidler in Chicago and departed for two years in England where he had a Fulbright Scholarship at Oxford. In 1963, after a brief appointment in Bariloche, Argentina, Marvin accepted a job at ORNL in the Solid State Division. As a researcher at ORNL, Dr. Abraham investigated electron spins of transuranic elements using nuclear magnetic resonance. He greatly enjoyed his work and had great collaborators during his tenure at the lab until his retirement in 1994. Marvin originally thought his time in Tennessee would be brief but Oak Ridge grew to be his home. He enjoyed sports and outdoor activities in many forms, including handball, bowling, biking and hiking. Marvin enjoyed a long and happy retirement, travelling with Reeva all over the world, collecting books, making bagels, and watching sports (the NY and SF Giants as well as the Lady Vols).

His legacy lives on through his children and grandchildren and the many people he taught to make bagels. He is preceded in death by his parents, Esther and Raymond Abraham, and his brothers Samuel and Albert. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Reeva (Swidler) Abraham, his sons Seth (Regina) Abraham and David (Cat Wilt) Abraham, and his daughter Naomi (David) Moon, and grandchildren Rebecca and Jacob Abraham, Zoe Abraham, and Emma and Allison Moon.

We loved having Marvin with us when we visited Greece in 2012.

We mourn the passing of Edith Solomon, widow of Murray (son of Solomon and Eva Solomon). Edith passed away on Thursday, December 14th (26 Kislev 5778) at age 93 1/2. She was a long-time member of Sisterhood and is survived by her sons David and Terry.

We loved having Marvin with us when we visited Greece in 2012.
We mourn the passing of Victor Nachman at the age of 93. Victor was born in Brooklyn, NY February 4, 1924 and died December 16, 2017 in Santa Monica, CA. He was the son of Max Nachman and Rachel Dostis Nachman and was predeceased by his wife Lillie De Castro Nachman, brother William Nachman and son Donald Nachman. He attended Lincoln High School and Brooklyn College and was a decorated WWII Veteran with two battle stars. He scored first place out of 500 soldiers at the end of army basic training on the officers’ test with an I.Q. of 168. He served in the 3rd Army Tank Corps and crossed the Rhine River over the Remagen Bridge the first day. After the end of the war, he married Lillie and entered his father's business in NYC. Eventually with his brother William, they started La Mar Wash Frock, Garment Manufacturing. Eventually they prospered. He is survived by two sons Roy Nachman, MD and Mark Nachman, MD. He was a man of wisdom, character, most of all, integrity. He will be missed by all.

We mourn the passing of Irving L. Rousso, founding partner of Russ Togs, at the age of 92. Irving started Russ Togs with his brother, Eli, in 1946. Irving died from natural causes in Southampton. His family came from Monastir, a Sephardic community in former Yugoslavia, now called Bitola. Born and raised on New York’s Lower East Side, he left school after eighth grade and started working for relatives in their factory in New Jersey. He served in the U.S. Navy and survived the German V2 bombing of the Rex Theater in Antwerp, which left more than 560 killed. After being honorably discharged, he and his older brother, Eli, started Russ Togs, a sportswear manufacturer, in 1946. Over the years, Russ Togs, which went public in 1960, became a leading women’s sportswear manufacturer and produced apparel under such labels as Russ, Villager and Crazy Horse. He was featured prominently in the HBO documentary “Schmatta: From Rags to Riches to Rags,” about New York’s garment industry and was shown to be a rough and aggressive businessman. The 2009 movie tells the story of the vanishing garment center through the voices of the people who experienced its highs and lows. Ira Rousso, a son who previously worked in the business and is a financial executive, said of his father, “He was a very tough man. He was a very good businessman, a fair businessman and commanded respect from the people around him.” In building the Russ Togs business into a company generating sales of more than $235 million, Rousso became involved in all aspects of the business from merchandising to buying the piece goods to selling the collection.

Irving Rousso was the founder and president of The Sephardic Temple in Cedarhurst, N.Y., a founder of The Sephardic Home for the Aged in Brooklyn and raised money for Israel. In addition to his wife, Barbara, and
son Ira, Rousso is survived by two other sons, Louis and David; daughters-in-law June and Gabrielle; eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

A scene from “Schmatta”

We mourn the passing of Joseph Cohen at the age of 100. Joseph was the father of our dear friend, Beth Bahia Cohen, a talented musician who has honored us with her music at Kehila Kedosha Janina. In Beth’s words, “My dear father, Joseph A. Cohen, has left us after 100 1/2 years. We will all miss his loving and vibrant self - he has been a mentor and an inspiration, a teacher and artist, a person who has shown us how to be a life-long learner, a lover of life, and how to keep moving with grace no matter what life throws his way.” Joseph is pictured below with another of our dear friends, Vasilis Kostas.

We mourn the passing of David Jacob Benjamin, grandfather of our dear friend Jason Kaplan. David passed at the age of 103 and is survived by his wife, Nina, now 98 years old. David’s family came from Salonika and his wife’s family (Matza) from Ioannina. They had been married for 74 years. David is also survived by three daughters, Ethel (Barry) Shuken, Rochelle (David) Kaplan, and Jacqueline (Fred) Lieberberg; six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by another granddaughter. David was a successful restaurateur in New York and New Jersey and passed his culinary knowledge on to his grandson, Jason, who is now a chef.
Visitors

We love when groups visit us. We are a popular destination for synagogues, Hadassah groups, seniors, and students from near and far. In December, as always, we had a diversified group of visitors. In addition to school groups, friends and those reconnecting with their Ioannina roots, we had guests from Israel and Spain. It is never boring at Kehila Kedosha Janina!

Daniel Wein from Matza family

Akiva in the IDF visiting from Israel
Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

We enjoyed two informative book talks, one by Michael Weinstein, presenting his magnificent book (with pictures of Kehila Kedosha Janina) titled “Ten Times Chai.”

On sale at Kehila Kedosha Janina for $25 or $30 with P&H
On the 7th of December, we teamed with the Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy to present Paul Kaplan’s latest book, Jewish South Florida. We already sell his first book, Jewish New York. Both books are filled with interesting facts and priceless photos. Both sell for $20 each ($25 with P&H).

On November 30th we had a delightful visit to the Greek Embassy in Washington, D.C. to see Devin Naar’s presentation on Salonica, Greek Jews, and the Holocaust. Here is a picture that arrived too late for the November e-newsletter.

Marvin Marcus, President of Kehila Kedosha Janina with Haris Lalacos, the Ambassador of Greece to the USA
The Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network celebrated Hanukah at Kehila Kedosha Janina.

Glimpses of Hanukah in Greece and Turkey

Rabbi Gabriel Negrin lights the Hanukia in Athens

Public Hanukia lighting in Istanbul, Turkey

In Rome, Italy
And, finally, Moisis Mordos travels from Athens to Moscow to light the Hanukia

Before we leave Hanukah behind, do read Professor Devin Naar’s piece on the Paradox of Hanukah at Auschwitz. This highlighted the recent discovery of a letter found at Auschwitz, written by Marcel Nadjary.

Read The Paradox of Hanukkah in Greece—and in Auschwitz here.

Past Events of Interest

The Damaskinos Awards dinner, where the American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece honored Ambassador Ronald Lauder for his philanthropic support of Greek Jewry, was covered by the Greek National Herald. Kehila Kedosha Janina was honored to be there.

Read the full article “Amb. Ronald S. Lauder Honored with Damaskinos Award” here.
International Day of Commemoration of the Holocaust

International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an international memorial day on January 27 commemorating the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War. It commemorates the genocide that resulted in the death of an estimated 6 million Jewish people, 200,000 Romani people, 250,000 mentally and physically disabled people, and 9,000 homosexual men by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. It was designated by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/7 on 1 November 2005 during the 42nd plenary session. The resolution came after a special session was held earlier that year on 24 January 2005 during which the United Nations General Assembly marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps and the end of the Holocaust.

We will be joining the Consulate General of Greece in New York, along with the American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece and the Archdiocese of the Greek Orthodox Church for this annual commemoration on January 25th.

News from Jewish Greece

Athens

Unfortunately, we have to report on a recent desecration of the Holocaust Memorial in Athens. Fortunately, the City of Athens responded immediately, as did the Jewish Community of Athens.

The municipality of Athens responded immediately:

"The Holocaust Memorial in Athens received a serious blow from strangers in the night Friday 1st of December. The inscription with the text written specifically for the Monument was by Elie Wiesel, Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor. Two of the three metal plates were destroyed, those written in Greek and French. Elie Wiesel addressed the passing visitor and said: "Wait for a while, close your eyes and remember... Only remember. Because with our memory we honor their death and save them from dying again and passing into oblivion."

The monument was built with funding by the Jewish Community of Athens in 2010 and then offered as a donation to the municipality to be a monument of the city of Athens.
The President of the Community Mr. Minos Moses made the following statement: "We unequivocally condemn this act of vandalism that is a disrespect for the victims of the Holocaust and is a challenge to our Memorial but, also, to our culture. The Monument is open and accessible to all, and wants its guests to circulate among the marble blocks, to stand, to converse with history, to honor the victims and cause them to remember. And so it will remain no matter how many attacks you accept. Because it only serves the mission."

The City of Athens announced its condemnation stating that this incident is an act of intolerance and historical ignorance and the City announced that it is committed to contributing to the restoration of damage to the monument, noting that Athens is and will remain a city that respects freedom and history.

**Thessaloniki**

*Creation of Jewish Public School as Part of Holocaust Education Center in Thessaloniki*

The city of Thessaloniki is planning to build a Jewish school in the Baron Hirsch neighborhood, the city’s old Jewish quarter, city mayor Yiannis Boutaris said on Tuesday, during a meeting of the municipal council. “It will be a school, not just for Jewish kids, and it will be done in the Hirsch area,” he said. The municipality will provide the land and the city’s Jewish community will take over the construction of the building, he explained, adding that the project might be completed through a private partnership. Boutaris also announced that construction of Thessaloniki’s new Holocaust Museum, which will be funded jointly by Greece, the German state, and the Niarchos Foundation, will start in January 2018. The plot donated for the museum overlooks the railway station from which the Jews were deported in World War II. “It will be a project of international prestige,” he said.
“They’re selling it? Ah, this brings back memories…” Silence followed. “They are doing the right thing, given the state it is in. They had just left it to rot.” Drita Djomo, aged 96, had trouble hiding how moved she was. News that the Salem Mansion was being sold was bitter like poison, but she would rather see the building torn down than watch it slowly fall apart from her apartment across the street on Vasilissis Olgas Avenue in Thessaloniki. This three-floor architectural gem might not have belonged to her family, but the basement was the setting of some of the greatest stories of bravery and humanity during the German occupation of the northern port city, and Djomo herself played a role in those stories.

The Salem Mansion, where the Italian Consulate was located, became a “building of salvation” for many Jews in Thessaloniki. It was there that Djomo, under instructions from the Italian consul general at the time, Guelfo Zamboni, would create falsified documents for Greek Jews, claiming they were of Italian heritage and helping them avoid being sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Thanks to this operation, many lives were saved. Today Djomo is one of the few surviving witnesses of one of the brightest moments of humanity and resistance seen during the German occupation. Speaking to Kathimerini, she shared memories of the danger she put herself in with her actions. Our interview was prompted by a recent discussion in the Italian Parliament, where Democratic Party MP Alessio Tacconi suggested that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sell the historic building, due to its inability to maintain it.

At age 19, Djomo, a law student with an Italian mother and a Greek father, had been hired as an interpreter at the Italian Consulate, where Zamboni was her superior...

In this “hideout of hope” that Zamboni had created under the noses of the executioners of the Jews in Thessaloniki, Alois Brunner and Dieter Wisliceny, Djomo was an important cog in the machine. “Everything would happen in absolute secrecy. The consul would never talk about what we were doing. Each of us knew our job. The man with the connections to incarcerated Greek Jews in the ghetto was Lucillo Merci, an Italian officer who worked as a German-Italian interpreter. We would make documents claiming that they had an Italian grandmother or something like that. Merci would then take them by car to the town of Plati in Imathia where the last German control checkpoint was and enter the areas occupied by Italy…”

Asked whether the Germans had realized what the Italian consul was up to she said, “Yes, the Germans suspected it, but it was hard to prove that the documents were not authentic.” When the large-scale deportation of Jews to Auschwitz by train began in March of 1943, activities at the Salem Mansion intensified under the guidance of Giuseppe Castruccio, Zamboni’s replacement after he returned to Rome. As mentioned by professor of political science Andreas Bouroutis in his book “Holocaust and Trauma: The Jewish Students of Umberto Primo,” in early June 1943, while the trains left one after another for the German extermination
camps, Italian diplomats were able to organize transport to save 322 Jews, 92 of whom had been given Italian citizenship at the very last minute.

"One of the stories of Jews saved by Zamboni was that of Mary Beraha Rouben, her husband, Samuel, and her brother, Jacko Beraha. Jack Beraha (born Jaco Beraha) is the son of Eliahu and Estrea (Benozilo) Beraha. He was born February 16, 1916 in Salonika, where his father was a candy manufacturer. Jaco had a brother Yehuda (Leon, b. 1912) and a sister Miriam (Marie, b. 1914). Jaco’s mother died shortly after his birth. His father then married Benozilo’s sister, Sol, and together they had three more children: Baruch, Samuel and Yehoshua Salvador. During the 1930s Jaco was an active member of the Betar Zionist youth movement in Salonika. After the German invasion of Greece in April 1941, the Beraha family soon felt the impact of the economic persecution of the Jewish community. During the occupation Jaco’s sister Miriam married Samuel Rouben (October 1941), and his brother Yehuda married Victoria Sarfati (1943). On February 24, 1943 a ghetto was established in Salonika, and on March 15, the first of nineteen deportation transports was dispatched to Auschwitz. Before their scheduled transport Jaco, Miriam and her husband Samuel managed to escape from the Baron de Hirsch deportation assembly camp. After fleeing the camp, they found Samuel’s car and drove to the Italian consulate. There, they were given Italian papers and train tickets to Athens. Once they reached the capital they made contact with the underground and were given false identification papers. Through a friend of Samuel’s they met Dimoleon Lemone, a Greek Orthodox Christian who had lived in Turkey. As a former refugee, Lemone was sympathetic to their plight. He hid Jaco, Miriam and Samuel in his home in Piraeus for almost two years until the liberation. When the war was over, Jaco and Miriam found their half-brother Yeshua, the only other member of their family to have survived. The rest perished in Auschwitz."

The Italian train was supposed to depart on Wednesday, July 14, and after many delays and obstacles thrown up by the Germans over the course of 14 hours, departed on July 15, just after midnight. Two days later it arrived in Athens. The passengers found places to stay around the capital, with some already seeking ways to hide or flee abroad. At the same time, many began the grueling attempt to find out what had happened to
their relatives sent north. They begged the Italian Embassy in Athens and the Italian Consulate in Thessaloniki to mediate so that they could find out whether their loved ones were still alive.

The passengers of the Italian train were free only temporarily. In early September 1943 Italy signed an armistice and surrendered to the Allies. In a telegram to the Italian authorities the consul Castruccio summarized the Jewish tragedy in a few words. “On August 14 the last train with Jews left Thessaloniki headed for Germany. On the 15th the SS officers left via plane. The Jewish community that existed before the discovery of America does not exist anymore...”

What happened to the protagonists of this breathtaking story who traveled around the world after the end of the Second World War? Zamboni survived and continued to work as a diplomat. In 1992, he was awarded by the state of Israel for his services with the title of “Righteous among the Nations.” Djomo had another journey ahead of her. When the situation deteriorated further and the Germans began to kill indiscriminately, her father decided to take his family and secretly leave Thessaloniki. They chose to go to Albania. They couldn’t have known that escaping the Germans would mean living under Enver Hoxha’s regime. When communism collapsed in Albania a few years after Hoxha’s death, Djomo returned to Thessaloniki with her children. “Nothing, aside from the beach, reminded me of the city I once knew...”

**Hanukah in Thessaloniki by Elias Messinas**

Hanukka in Jewish Thessaloniki with Light and Miracles. Full Jerusalem Post article [here](#).

Although Jewish life in Thessaloniki flourished, the community was often faced with the threat of destruction throughout history, and survived. Hanukka at the historic center of Thessaloniki in Greece. The weather is cold but the sun is shining. The shops are festve and the streets buzzing, but with less shopping bags in evidence than in previous years. The economic crisis is taking a toll on the local economy, and young and old alike look for ways to emigrate to Europe, America or Australia, for job opportunities or to live with better-off relatives. It is certainly a strange mix of holiday atmosphere and hard reality, which confuses when one is used to the openhearted, outgoing Greek mentality. For a Jewish visitor, this strange mix is present at every corner of the city, but for different reasons. Thessaloniki, a city founded in antiquity, with a Romaniote (ancient) Jewish community, became a predominantly Jewish city in the Middle Ages due to the influx of Sephardi Jews from Spain and Europe in Ottoman times.

The Jews set the commercial vibe of the port city and established institutions of education, religion and culture, and numerous synagogues commemorating their place of origin: Aragon, Italia, Evora, Gerush Sefarad, Lisbon, Mograbis and Sicilia being the names of just a few. In my mind, Jewish life in Thessaloniki is associated with miracles. Because, although Jewish life in Thessaloniki flourished, the community was often faced with the threat of destruction throughout history, and survived. For example, in August 1917 a great fire devastated the city center, where the Jewish quarter was located. The fire devastated over a quarter of the city, destroying the market, businesses and homes, leaving more than 70,000 homeless – among them more than 50,000 Jews. The fire also destroyed 32 synagogues, 17 communal and 65 private midrashim (prayer houses), and the central synagogue, Talmud Torah. The city center of Thessaloniki was redesigned by French architect Ernest Hebrard, and soon new buildings, covered markets, houses, businesses and institutions were erected. Life and commerce flourished again, and Jewish life was re-established. The Sarfati synagogue, built in 1921 on Pittakou Street, and Monastirioton synagogue, built in 1927 on Syngrou Street, were among the new synagogues built after the fire by the flourishing Jewish community.

The Holocaust was another shock, devastating the Jews of Thessaloniki. Following the German occupation of Greece in 1941, the community was isolated and looted, its young men sent to perform forced labor, the ancient Jewish cemetery destroyed – on top of which the university extension was later built – and finally,
54,000 Jews were deported to death camps by July 1943. A small fraction of families and individuals with foreign papers were protected by foreign governments, or helped by Christians to flee or hide. Overall, more than 96% of the Jewish population of Thessaloniki perished. The survivors re-established Jewish life again after WWII. Out of more than 60 synagogues in the city, only Monastirioton was preserved, by the Red Cross as a storehouse. A smaller prayer hall, Burla synagogue, was also re-established for daily prayers near the city market, using the marble pulpit from a synagogue in the Baron Hirsch quarter, and the elaborate marble ark of Sarfati synagogue. In 1984, when a new office building was built on the Burla site, Yad Lezikaron synagogue was established on the ground floor, reusing the historic interior pieces from the Burla synagogue.

![Image of Monastirioton synagogue](image)

Thanks to miracles, Jewish life in Thessaloniki is flourishing again. Despite the general crisis, the community is on a path of renewal and reconstruction. For the past three years, through the leadership of its president, David Saltiel, the Jewish community has undertaken to renovate the city’s two synagogues, enlarge the Jewish museum and create a new Holocaust museum. The community has also initiated the restoration of other synagogues, such as the Romaniote synagogue in Trikala, to serve the local Jewish community and a growing influx of tourists. Monastirioton synagogue was re-inaugurated on May 15, 2016, after a meticulous historic restoration. Today, it is nominated for the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage. Yad Lezikaron synagogue, was re-inaugurated on December 13, 2017, after an overall refurbishment and restoration of the historic ark, which was cleansed of later additions and restored to its past glory. Both synagogue projects were undertaken by the author, in collaboration with local KARD Architects, under the supervision of David Frances, the engineer of the Jewish Community Technical Office. The candle lighting at the Yad Lezikaron synagogue re-inauguration was followed by a celebration with the Jewish school pupils at the Jewish club. The synagogue’s colorful stained glass windows, renovated interiors and restored ark were aglow. New marble plaques commemorated the names of the synagogues of Thessaloniki through the ages, reminding us of the miracle of resilience and continuity since antiquity. Jewish men and women filled the prayer hall with joy and love. Jewish children singing Hanukka songs filled our hearts.

This year in Jewish Thessaloniki, it was a special Hanukka celebration of miracles and light. The author is a Greek-Israeli architect, the founding chairman of NGO ECOWEEK, and the author of The Synagogues of Salonika and Veroia (Gavrielides Editions) and The Synagogues of Greece (Bloch Publishing Co.).
Leon Saltiel’s Article on the Destruction of the Jewish Cemetery in Thessaloniki

“Demonizing the Dead”

Dear friends,

Today [December 6th] marks the 75-year anniversary from the beginning of the destruction of Thessaloniki’s Jewish cemetery. On this occasion I published the following op-ed in Kathimerini in English, available also here. A Greek version was also published here.

For more information, you can read my article in Yad Vashem Studies, available here, or one in both English and Greek published by the Byzantine Museum of Thessaloniki, available here.

With many thanks,

Leon

News from Greece

Leaders of Turkey, Greece Air Grievances at Tense Conference. Full AP article here

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The leaders of Greece and Turkey publicly aired their grievances Thursday in a tense news conference as a two-day visit to Athens by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan got off to a rocky start. The Greek government had expressed hopes that the visit — the first to Greece by a Turkish president in 65 years — would help improve the often-frosty relations between the two neighbors. The NATO allies are divided by a series of decades-old issues, including territorial disputes in the Aegean Sea, and have come to the brink of war three times since the early 1970s. But from the outset, the discussions focused on disagreements. On the eve of his visit, Erdogan rattled his Greek hosts by telling Greece’s Skai television that the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne should be “updated.” The treaty delineated modern Turkey’s borders and outlines the status of the Muslim minority in Greece and the Greek minority in Turkey, among other issues.

In a visibly testy first meeting with Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos, the two engaged in a thinly-veiled verbal spat over the treaty and Greece’s Muslim minority, which Erdogan is to visit Friday. “This happened in Lausanne, that happened in Lausanne. I get that, but let’s now quickly do what is necessary,” Erdogan told Pavlopoulos. “Many things have changed in 94 years. If we review these, I believe that all the sides will agree that so many things have to (change.)"
The spat continued during Erdogan’s appearance at an unusually candid joint news conference with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. The two listed a series of grievances their countries have with each other, including religious and minority rights, the divided island of Cyprus and the case of ten Turkish servicemen who have applied for asylum in Greece following a Turkish government crackdown after a failed coup last year. “It is very important to strengthen our channels of communication, and this can only happen on the basis of mutual respect,” Tsipras said. The prime minister said the two also discussed tensions in the Aegean Sea, where Greece complains Turkish fighter jets frequently violate its airspace.

“The increasing violations of Greek airspace in the Aegean and particularly the simulated dogfights in the Aegean pose a threat to our relations, and particularly a threat to our pilots,” Tsipras said. For his part, Erdogan insisted once more that the Lausanne treaty needed to be reviewed, but stressed his country had no territorial claims on its smaller neighbor. On the topic of the Muslim minority in Greece — which the country recognizes only as a religious minority, while Turkey has long pressed for better rights — Tsipras said his government agreed that improvements must be made in their quality of life. “But issues that concern reforms involving Greek citizens are not an issue of negotiation between countries,” he said. Tsipras noted it was unclear exactly what Erdogan was seeking with his call to update the 1923 treaty.

“Who left the table? Southern Cyprus did ... we want the issue to reach a fair and lasting solution but that is not southern Cyprus’ concern,” Erdogan said.

**Tsipras retorted:** “My dear friend, Mr. President, we must not forget that this issue remains unresolved because 43 years ago there was an illegal invasion and occupation of the northern part of Cyprus.”

Erdogan also raised the issue of Athens having no official mosque, to which Tsipras responded by saying Greece had restored several mosques around the country, including a centuries-old mosque in Athens. The refugee crisis appeared to be the only issue the two sides did not disagree on, with both noting they had shared a significant burden of the migration flows into the European Union. More than a million people crossed from Turkey through Greece at the height of the crisis. Later Thursday, several hundred leftist, anarchist and
Kurdish protesters held a peaceful march through Athens against Erdogan’s visit. On Friday, Erdogan will visit the northeastern town of Komotini to meet with members of Greece’s Muslim minority.

Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, Derek Gatopoulos and Nicholas Paphitis in Athens contributed.

**Rebetiko**

Rebetiko Has Been Inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Full article from Keep Talking Greece [here](#)

Greek Rebetiko was inscribed on the UNESCO representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Rebetiko was included in the list during the 12th annual conference of the UNESCO Committee of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in South Korea December 4-6 2017. Greek Culture & Sport Ministry had submitted a file for the inscription.

According to UNESCO decision:

Rebetiko is a musical and cultural expression directly linked to song and dance that initially spread among urban working-class populations. Rebetiko songs are now a standardized repertoire in social occasions, containing invaluable references to the customs and traditions of a particular way of life. Rebetiko is transmitted orally, as well as by the media and in music schools, conservatories and universities, and musicians and enthusiasts continue to play a key role in keeping the practice alive.

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**Articles of Interest to All**

**Italy**

National Jewish Museum Opens in Italy. Full JTA article [here](#)

FERRARA, Italy (JTA) – Italy got a Hanukkah present – the opening of a national Jewish museum. The National Museum of Italian Judaism and the Shoah, or MEIS, opened Wednesday with an inaugural temporary exhibit called “Jews, an Italian Story: The First Thousand Years” that illustrates the history of Jewish presence in Italy from ancient Roman times until the Middle Ages.

The exhibit, which will run until Sept. 16, is the first step in a multi-year program of exhibits and events that will culminate in the final form of the museum and its permanent core exhibit, which is expected in late 2020. MEIS is located in a complex of buildings that once housed a prison in Ferrara, a historic town in northeast Italy between Venice and Bologna that has a Jewish history dating back to early medieval times.
President Sergio Mattarella and other dignitaries attended the formal inauguration ceremony on Wednesday. Culture Minister Dario Franceschini, who is from Ferrara and has been a longtime supporter of the project, was among those on hand.

“With this exhibition, a dream has been achieved and a great void filled,” Franceschini said. “A few years will be needed before MEIS sees its completion. However, today we have made an important step forward.”

The museum has been under development since 2003, when the Parliament passed a law mandating its establishment. Construction to date has been fully funded by the state, which has allocated about $55 million. Further funding is now being sought to cover operations.

Two buildings in the former prison complex have undergone reconstruction, and over the next three years modern structures inspired by the Torah and resembling giant, transparent books will be added to house the core exhibition, which is still in the early stages of development.

Portugal

Why Food Makers in Portugal are Going Kosher. Full JTA article [here](#)

Portugal’s tallest mountain range, the Serra da Estrela, is famous for its breathtaking waterfalls, turquoise lakes, terraced hillsides and challenging bike paths amid vast woods. In winter especially, tourists from all over northern Europe flock to the sunny Serra, a thinly populated plateau the size of Rhode Island, for its exquisite wines, world-renowned sheep cheeses and exotic regional dishes (think breaded sweet sardines and Juniper beef stew). In addition to these delicacies, Serra da Estrela in recent years has also emerged as Portugal’s undisputed powerhouse for kosher food – an unlikely development in a region with about 50 Jews.

Earlier this month, one of Serra da Estrela’s oldest producers of olive oil, Casa Agrícola Francisco Esteves, located in the town of Manteigas, launched a new kosher label in time for Hanukkah, the holiday when Jews celebrate a miracle connected to oil. In the nearby town of Covilha on the range’s southern tip is the Braz Queijos cheese factory, which in 2009 obtained a kosher certificate for most of its products, becoming the first to do so in Portugal in modern times. Five years earlier, a winery in the same town produced what was said to be Portugal’s first kosher-certified wine in centuries. And in 2010, the town of Belmonte began hosting an annual kosher market ahead of Rosh Hashanah.

This uptick in kosher food production is occurring amid Portugal’s growing awareness of its rich Jewish history. Perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews lived in Portugal before 1536, when Portugal’s church and royal house joined the Spanish campaign of expulsion, executions and forced conversions known as the Inquisition.

The kosher trend is a way to “reconnect with our past,” according to Jose Braz, the cheese maker, who is not Jewish. On a national level, Portugal and Spain have both undertaken extraordinary moves to atone for the Inquisition. In 2015, for example, both countries put into practice laws adopted two years earlier that have...
permitted some 5,000 descendants of Sephardic Jews to obtain Spanish and Portuguese nationalities. The measures were the world’s first Jewish laws of return since Israel passed its own in 1952. Coupled with government investments of millions of dollars in Jewish heritage sites, officials in Madrid and Lisbon describe the move as correcting historical wrongs. But some observers believe it is also motivated by a desire to revive the Portuguese and Spanish economies, where unemployment is double the U.S. rate and more than a quarter of adults under 25 are jobless.

“The Sephardic Diaspora can be viewed as a large pool with the potential to benefit Spain and Portugal’s economies, provided that pool can be drawn to visit, settle and invest,” said Michael Freund, founder and chairman of Shavei Israel, a Jerusalem-based nonprofit that runs outreach programs for the descendants of Sephardic Jews. Officials from both countries regularly cite tourism when spending public funds on restoring and highlighting Jewish heritage sites. For example, the recent $8.25 million investment in Portugal’s Rotas de Sefarad project — a statewide network of routes that highlight Sephardic heritage — “must contribute to strengthening tourism,” Celeste Amaro, a Portuguese Culture Ministry official, told the Journal do Centro newspaper last month.

But in the Serra da Estrela region, where many non-Jews have Jewish roots, gestures toward Judaism are more personal than those of Lisbon, according to Rabbi Elisha Salas, Shavei Israel’s Portugal envoy, who is based in the town of Belmonte. That municipality holds an annual kosher products market under the supervision of Salas, who ensures that the products brought there for sale by local farmers — including honey, olives and bread — meet the requirements of halachah, or rabbinic law.

“I don’t go over their financial reports, but I can’t see a huge demand for kosher products in Portugal that would make a certificate profitable,” he said. “What’s at work here in Belmonte is that you have firms and factories with owners who have Jewish roots, so they seek to get closer to Judaism at least through the products they make.” That may be true, but the operators of newly kosher ventures seem unwilling to elaborate on that connection. Patricia Duarte Madeira, the director of the Esteves oil factory, told JTA that she sought a kosher certificate only to serve the needs of customers in Belmonte, which she defined as “one of Portugal’s largest Jewish communities.” (While it’s true the city is home to one of Portugal’s three functioning synagogues, the Jewish population is about 50, according to Salas.) Madeira twice declined to answer when asked whether her family has Jewish roots. Bakers prepare kosher challah for the Jewish community of Belmonte, April 2012. (Courtesy of Shavei Israel)

Braz, the Serra da Estrela cheese maker, also appeared skittish about his connection to Judaism. Although he had told the Israeli media that he descended from Anusim (Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity) — and he also told JTA that at least one of his grandmothers was aware of her Jewish ancestry and had retained some Jewish customs — he downplayed the matter in the Portuguese media.
“I think all of us here have Jewish DNA, but it’s speculative,” he said in 2009 during an interview with the Publico newspaper about the Israeli media’s interest in his kosher cheese. Braz noted a 2008 study suggesting that 20 percent of Iberia’s population has Jewish genes.

“But I’m Catholic, I recently hosted the bishop of Guarda at the factory,” he said, adding that his “real interest is cheese,” not genealogy.

Yet many houses in Serra da Estrella require no research to demonstrate their Jewish provenance. In the town of Trancoso, near Covilha, for example, the stone walls of many homes feature well-preserved incisions made during and after the Portuguese Inquisition. Some marks read “horror” in Hebrew when read inversely; some ancient door frame panels include hollows that once would have held a mezuzah. Visible only in small towns with concentrations of forcefully converted Jews large enough to give them some safety in numbers, the markings were preserved by the former owners as a “way of showing, without saying, that they remember who they really are, where they come from,” said Shavei Israel’s Freund. The subterfuge extended to the kitchen: The country’s famed Alheira de Mirandela sausage, whose generous amount of garlic tends to overpower the taste of its other ingredients, was especially developed during the Inquisition for Jews who sought to eat kosher while appearing to be consuming pork like the general population.

Freund said such techniques are a testament to the brutality of centuries of persecution that extinguished one of the world’s most illustrious Jewish communities. “After centuries of silence and persecution, it’s almost inevitable that people with Jewish roots should be careful about advertising it,” he said. “But for people in the food industry, obtaining a kosher certificate is a way of doing so in a tangible way that doesn’t bring up too many personal questions.”

**Sephardic News**

*An article about one of our favorite people by another one of our favorite people!*

The Sephardic Immigrant Experience in Fiction. Full Article [here](#) by Sarah Aroeste


It is with both pride and curiosity that I spent my childhood years staring daily at a photograph of my grandfather as a boy, his uncle Max beside him dressed up in a fez and Balkan uniform. The photo was prominently displayed in the hallway of my family’s house in Princeton, New Jersey — not exactly a hotbed of Sephardic culture — where I grew up hearing the stories of my Sephardic family’s entry into the United States.

That grandfather, Julian Aresty, was born in 1907 in Monastir, what is known today as Bitola, Macedonia. Even after more than eighty years living in America, he always called himself a Turk. The Monastir of his childhood was part of the Ottoman Empire, which up until that point had been a welcoming haven for so many Sephardic Jews escaping the Spanish Inquisition four hundred years earlier.
In 1908, however, Turkish reforms meant that all citizens were subject to conscription in the Turkish army. That, and the economic deterioration of the region with the impending collapse of the empire, left many Jews seeking refuge elsewhere. When American Jews think of the impetus for Jewish immigration at the turn of the 20th century, Russian pogroms and poverty likely come to mind. The Balkan Wars and Turkish conscription are less familiar. My grandfather arrived at Ellis Island on the SS Italia in 1913, right between the 1912 and 1913 Balkan Wars. Waves of Sephardic Jews entered the United States around that time, and while their immigrant story is akin to that of many other ethnic groups — including the prejudice, poverty, and eventual assimilation — the Sephardic experience is also unique in the fabric of American Jewry. We brought our own distinctive flavors, tastes, and traditions to American shores.

This Sephardic mosaic is beautifully represented in Shalach Manot’s fine novel, His Hundred Years, A Tale. Shalach Manot is the pen name of Jane Mushabac, a writer and professor with a Turkish background of her own. The phrase shalach manot refers to the gifts friends and family send one another during Purim. For Mushabac, the phrase also represents the gifts that were passed down to her through family stories and songs.

These stories and songs are at the heart of her book. Not only is the book told through short linked tales, each titled with a year and place, but the characters inveterately tell stories and share expressions and songs across family dining tables, in cheap diners, on a plane with strangers, on the telephone, and more.

Reading the book, I continually felt my grandfather’s love of telling stories. Sephardic Jewry, uprooted by the Spanish Inquisition and then decimated by the Holocaust, has survived the last five hundred years precisely because of storytelling and song. Judeo-Spanish, also known to many as Ladino, the language spoken by Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire after their expulsion from Spain, lived as a mother tongue that served an oral tradition until the 20th century. This determined habit of communication is central to all things Sephardic, and is the guiding force in Manot’s novel. The book revolves around a Turkish Jew who peddles his way through the collapsing Ottoman Empire before, during, and after World War I. He sells matches, buttons, and headscarves, and in 1920, when he arrives in New York, he becomes the balloon man on 110th Street and Fifth Avenue. Like most of the characters in the book, he is given no name, but is a kind of everyman in a Turkish world of pleasures and woes, sometimes a child man, sometimes a grown man, the episodes going back and forth in time. It is exactly his ability to tell his own story and find connections to other’s stories that allows him to survive, first in Turkish villages threatened with wartime famine and even wolves, and later as a new immigrant in New York. He quickly becomes the most successful salesman in an insurance agency in America because his pleasure is talking to strangers and nurturing relationships. Communication, in various languages, is his key to sales success, and it also makes for a prose rich with expressions in Judeo-Spanish, Turkish, Hebrew, and French, deftly woven in with English cues as needed. The character’s pleasure in language is not just a key part of the novel, but representative of the Sephardic historical experience itself. As the scrappy salesman works his way up from selling buttons in Inecik, Turkey to the fanciest insurance policies his company in New York has to offer, an insurance magazine reporter writes about him to showcase his success:

The reporter mentioned [that] the agent spoke six languages plus English and always answers his prospects in their own languages. The article said not every agent could be a linguist but many with “foreign” territories might be wise to pick up a “smattering of phrases” to feel at home as the company’s representative in a city
packed with immigrants. The reporter did not understand that the agent did not deal with a smattering of phrases, but the poetry of hope. The agent had been sifting languages all his life with the carnival of peoples, his neighbors. The Jews were a tiny minority compared to other groups — Greeks, Armenians, Turks — and brokered their way through the day like boys darting through crowds on a holiday.

That passage reminded me of my grandfather’s arrival in America and, after settling in Rochester, New York, looking for ways to make some quick money. He and his cousins hitched a ride on the backs of wagons to sell currants, cucumbers, and melons to Bulgarian workers building a nearby canal. After all, Bulgarians were used to the same foods from the old country as Turks, and my grandfather started supplying them with what they loved from home. For Manot’s Turkish peddler and my grandfather, being able to relate to others — either in language or in affinity — was the formula for not only a successful sale but for survival and feeling at home in a foreign land. Not quite matching the peddler’s hundred-year lifespan, my grandfather lived to 92, and luckily my cousin had the foresight to video his memories of his immigration before he died. The stories he shares have had a long-lasting impact on how I view cultural transmission today. I imagine my grandfather would have related to a passage in Manot’s book in which we hear of the protagonist’s relief at his Sephardic bloodline being continued. When his four daughters are all married, he no longer had to carry Valium in his jacket pocket. He no longer had to worry “that having survived the Inquisition, and the Nazis, starvation and the wolves of Inecik, it would all stop there, in his line, with unmarried daughters, with nothing to show for all his determination and passionate desire to survive.”

I understand why so many Jews continue to reference surviving the Holocaust as further justification to be fruitful and multiply. But deep down for so many Sephardim, our historical trauma goes back further — to 1492. The fact that the insurance man includes the Inquisition in his list of remembrances is not surprising. Recent studies in Jewish epigenetics are exploring how expulsion from Spain actually has altered the DNA of Sephardic Jews. The historic and collective consciousness of Sephardic Jews, like that of all Jews, is profound, but with Sephardic Jews that consciousness draws dramatically from Iberian and Ottoman worlds little known to Ashkenazim. My grandfather’s pride in his Sephardic identity is a lasting legacy that he shares with Manot’s hero, who lives for twenty years in a port on the Dardanelles and in the Balkan countryside before he comes to New York and makes his way with almost no education, just seat-of-the-pants resilience. The Sephardic experience is foreign to so many, and the immigrant one all the more so. For a sense of the Sephardic experience in Turkey and in America, Manot’s book is a beautiful snapshot and a great read.

Sarah Aroeste is a singer/songwriter and author who has devoted her career to Ladino cultural preservation. Her English/Ladino holiday album, Together/Endjuntos, has just been released.

Sarah has become a regular at our annual Greek Jewish Festival and we are looking forward to hosting Jane Mushabac in the near future at Kehila Kedosha Janina for a book presentation.
One of the wonders of Torah study is how the weekly Torah portion can contain lessons and ideas so contemporary and relevant to our daily lives that they could have been written yesterday, let alone thousands of years ago. And a good example of this we find in the first portion of the Book of Exodus, read on the first Shabbat of 2018, this January 4th, which opens the saga of the Israelite sojourn, enslavement and liberation from Egypt. As we read our Torah portion, both with and without commentary, we cannot help but sense that this is no mere historical chronology, but a veritable prototype of what and how Jews subsequently suffered throughout history.

Following the listing of the names of Jacob and his 11 children and families who first came to Egypt voluntarily to escape famine, the Torah informs us: “And the people of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and became exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.” This basically describes the Jewish experience almost everywhere, as they settled in different lands, building impressive and important Jewish communities while also contributing significantly to both local and national economies.

But then we are told that "There arose a new king in Egypt who did not know Joseph", clearly indicating that attitudes toward Egypt's prosperous and growing Israelite population have changed, with the rise of a new ruler, who has no loyalty or nostalgia for the past, and specifically for the era of Joseph, and his brilliant economic actions that saved Egypt from starvation over 7 long years of debilitating famine. Yet our greatest Biblical commentator, Rashi, also suggests that perhaps the "new king" is really the same old Pharaoh from Joseph's day, but whose attitude toward Joseph and his descendants is "new", meaning a total change from respect and even fondness to distrust, fear and hate. Isn't this also something that all too many Jewish communities experienced later in history, as they watched local distrust and hate swell and fester among local populations who became envious of Jewish accomplishments and prosperity, and irrational fears of Jewish "takeovers" of the economy, the press, and even the world at large? "And he [Pharaoh] said to his people: Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it may come to pass, that, when there would be any war, they should join our enemies, and fight against us, and get them out of the land." Sound familiar? In plain English: The mighty and treacherous fifth-column amongst us must be nipped in the bud before it is too late. In short, we must solve our "Jewish problem".

The Torah then goes on to describe what is essentially the systematic development of genocide: first Pharaoh attempts to break Jewish bodies and spirit through forced labor and slavery: "Therefore, they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens...". When that doesn't work, he moves on to murdering Jewish male babies, but secretly: "And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, and the name of one was Shifra, and the name of the other Puah. And he said, when you perform the work of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see what is being born upon the stools; if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." But when the midwives stand up to Pharaoh and refuse to cooperate with the excuse that the Israelite women don't wait for them and give birth on their own, and very prolifically at that, his desperation reaches the breaking point, and the systematic slaughter of Israelite male babies begins, which is why Moses must be hidden from Pharaoh's officers. And yes, there are even "righteous gentiles" in our
story, led by Pharaoh's own daughter, as well as the Egyptian common people, who give generously to their Israelite slave neighbors, when the Exodus gets underway.

But of course, underlying all of these events is G-d's hand, who, while not letting the People of Israel off the hook, intervenes at every step to ensure that Pharaoh, and so many others in his wake, never succeed in destroying the Jewish people. True, the price we have paid has been unbelievably, and yes, perhaps unjustifiably high in terms of lost Jewish lives and communities over the centuries, and we cannot fathom G-d's ways, but the lessons and events of the first portion of the Book of Exodus leave no room for doubt: The Jewish people will not be eliminated, and as has been the case for thousands of years, will outlive every nation that has tried to do so. And in any case, whether for "simple" inspiration or to try and discover ways to better understand our own lives and experiences as Jews, the weekly Torah portion offers us a good place to start!

From England: A Fascinating Piece of Romaniote History

The First Jeudas in New York

This is the story of two Romaniote Jewish brothers, one, Jessula Michael Jeuda, born in Corfu in 1855/6, and the other, Nissim Michael Jeuda (my grandfather), born in Salonika in 1873, and their short stay in New York between 1893 and 1904. They were part of the large family of Michael Jeuda and Allegra Jessula who lived in Janina in the 1820s and had a large family of thirteen children; nothing is known about most of them. At some stage, shortly after the birth of Moise Michael (Jeuda) in Janina in 1851/2 they moved to Corfu where Jessula was born; by 1873, when Nissim was born, the family had moved to Salonika, where they put down roots, perhaps attracted by the increasing commercial opportunities there as its port and industries expanded. The questions posed by this article are whether they were not only the first Jeudas in New York, but also whether they were the first Greek Jews in New York as well. Any help in answering these two questions would be welcome.

In the early 1870s, Moise and Jessula made their way to Manchester, England, which was the centre of the Lancashire textile industry and where “Manchester Goods” were manufactured and exported round the world. Manchester had seen from the early part of the 19th century dozens of foreign merchants set up business there, and from the early 1850s more than a dozen Romaniote merchants established a presence there. These included Mordocheo Besso (from Arta), Jacob Abdela (from Arta), Elia Negrin (from Janina), Elia Levi (from Xante), Riso Levi (from Corfu), Sabbato Levy (from Corfu), Jessula Levy (from Janina), Gabriel Mattatia (from Corfu), David Politi (from Corfu), and Moses Raffael (from Janina) – all these had arrived in Manchester from the early 1850s onwards and had established a small Romaniote colony there, and before Jessula Jeuda arrived in 1870 and Moise Michael in 1873. They both became naturalized British citizens, in 1876 and 1879 respectively, and traded as merchants. Interestingly, the Romaniote community were unhappy with the Spanish & Portuguese minhag of the prevailing Sephardi Congregation and in 1882 broke away to establish the Besso Synagogue, which was run by Haim Besso until the early 1940s. Mordocheo Besso became a property developer locally and he built two rows of terraced housing, Mordocheo Terrace and Arta Place; the stone street name for the latter was rescued from the yard of a demolition merchant some five years ago, and now forms part of the collection of the Manchester Jewish Museum. Moise returned to Salonika by 1882, where his three children were born in the 1880s; he did not return to Manchester until 1910, following the political and social upheavals there and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. What happened to Jessula in the 1880s is most interesting. We know from the Minutes of the Manchester Congregation of Spanish & Portuguese Jews that he attended some of its Annual General Meetings and that he was a member of the Manchester Royal (Cotton) Exchange during this time. We also know that in 1887 he was under the protection of the British Consulate in Salonika; he had married by this time and had fathered five daughters and one son (Moses Jessula Jeuda) none of whom had been born in the United Kingdom. Throughout the 1880s it is clear that he had been commuting regularly between Manchester and Salonika.
Jessula Jeuda moved to New York on 25th July 1893, arriving on a boat from Antwerp, Belgium; in December 1896, he is recorded as living at 56 Eldridge Street along with Nissim Michael Jeuda who had arrived in New York from Cherbourg, France, on 16th October 1896. In 1897, the New York City Directory records Jessula trading in cigarettes at 230 Mulberry Street. The 1898 Directory records the brothers as trading in cigars at 161 Greenwich Street, and still living in Eldridge Street. In August 1899, living at 149 Eldridge Street, Jessula obtained his first naturalization papers; Solomon Emanuel (a cigar dealer) was a Witness, and Isaac Benyakar, (an oriental goods dealer), was a Supporter.

Mordechai Besso on horseback in Corfu

Given the importance of tobacco to the Salonika economy, it appears logical that Jessula would seek to establish a business importing tobacco products to New York, especially oriental tobacco which was growing in popularity, and that, as business prospered, he would be joined by his brother, Nissim. However, Jessula overreached himself in his trading practices in 1900, as is evidenced by a 1901 legal case, Kessel v. Jeuda, which was heard in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York, First Department. The facts were these: Kessel established himself as a manufacturer of cigarettes in New York in 1889, with a box or wrapper for cigarettes “Imperial Turkish Cigarettes”, and with boxes made by the Munson Company in New Haven, Connecticut. Jessula attempted to order from the same firm 100,000 boxes, to the same size and style with the word “Imperial”. Munson refused to carry out the order without consulting Kessel, and, when he objected, Munson declined the order. Jessula then proceeded to purchase the boxes elsewhere and, in November 1900, passed off the cigarettes as if they were made by Kessel. The Supreme Court then restrained Jessula from using the cigarette packages “which so closely resembles Kessel’s package”. Jessula lost his appeal against the restraint order and had to pay $10 in costs and disbursements. I am not aware of any other litigation in this matter; further information on this would be helpful.

Nissim Jeuda obtained his naturalization on 14th March 1902, describing his occupation as Cigar Maker, and he was living by then at 65 Cortland Street; his Witness was Solomon Emanuel. How far the legal case impacted on their business, then and for the future, I shall never know, but they both left the United States for England in 1904, Jessula arriving in Liverpool on 27th May, and Nissim, also arriving in Liverpool, on 24th October. On 7th September 1904, Jessula filed a USA passport application at the USA Embassy in Vienna – the application stated “Temporarily residing in Budapest, Hungary, and intended to return to the USA within one year.” The USA passport was needed as he was travelling to Turkey. Whether Jessula had family in Vienna or Budapest is not
known, but I suspect that there was some connection because there was possibly a Vienna link evidenced by the fact that, in 1923, his son Moses Jessula Jeuda left Salonika for Vienna where he had an offer of employment. Jessula never returned to the USA, and died in Manchester soon afterwards on 9th September 1907, being buried in the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish cemetery in a Manchester suburb. Moses lived in Vienna up to the War and it is likely that he died in the Holocaust; in 1964, his daughter Ernestine made a Nazi Persecution Claim under the Anglo-German Compensation Agreement of 1964. Nissim Jeuda, on his arrival in Manchester, established himself in business as a “grey cloth merchant”, something far removed from his New York cigar and cigarette business. In August 1905, he married Smyrna-born Judith Cohen who had arrived in Manchester in 1896 from Cairo, where her father had been a head teacher at a private school. (Judith, like myself, is a direct descendant of the Coen-Arias family, who were possibly *conversos* arriving in Amsterdam c1600, then to Livorno, Italy, c1670, before moving to Smyrna c1700. There David Coen-Arias, who had been born in Amsterdam in 1649, established a Rabbinic line that lasted four generations as well as founding, in 1707, the Portugal Synagogue; he was also a member of Smyrna’s Talmudic Court). Nissim became a naturalized British subject in 1924. His textile business prospered and he retired to the south of France in 1927; following the Great Crash of 1929, he lost nearly all his money. He returned to Manchester, dying there in December 1940, during the week of the German blitz (bombing) on the centre of Manchester.

Basil Jeuda has written many books and articles on Manchester’s Sephardi Jewish history. He is formerly Chair of the Manchester Jewish Museum; the Museum is housed in the building formerly occupied by the Manchester Congregation of Spanish & Portuguese Jews for more than 100 years, and where his great-grandfather Meyer Cohen had been for some years Synagogue Secretary and a member of its *Talmud Torah* Committee.

Basil, in the early 1990s, corresponded with Rachel Dalven and was scheduled to meet her in New York; she passed away a fortnight before the meeting. Basil Jeuda visited the Kehila Kedosha Janina in February 1996, and he gave a short talk on the Greek Jews of Manchester. He subsequently contacted Jack Jeuda in Florida and they agreed that they were not related.

**New Exhibits In Development at Kehila Kedosha Janina**

Our museum, in partnership with Rabbi Nissim Elnecave, is working on two new exhibits. One will feature the historical siddurim of KKJ. The other exhibit will display Shadayot, a unique Romaniote tradition. Shadayot are votive offerings made of silver as stars or tablets, and were a thankful gift to the Synagogue and often hung on the parochet (cloth wrapping) of the Torah Ark.
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 morning at 9:30am and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm and by appointment during the week.

Kehila Kedosha Janina E-Newsletter – Number 106
January 2018
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002
Website: www.kkjsm.org
Email: museum@kkjsm.org

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