



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002

October 2011 e-mail newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

May you all be inscribed in the Book of Life for the upcoming year.



The Torahs of Kehila Kedosha Janina

This newsletter, our 45th 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 5000 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.

Celebrations

Marriages



We celebrate the marriage of Ariel Weintraub and Louis Brucker on September 4, 2011. Ariel is the daughter of Elyna Pardo and Robert Weintraub, the granddaughter of Rebecca (Betty) Mione (a Yanniotte) and Isaac (Izzy) Pardo (a Monastirli) and the great-granddaughter of Abraham Mione and Rachel Mazza (both born in Ioannina).

Births

We congratulate Allegra Matza of Ioannina on the birth of her first grandchild, a boy!

Appeal For Repair of Ioannina Tikkim

In September we issued an appeal for funds to help in the repair of the five tikkim severely damaged by moisture in Ioannina. The total amount needed to repair all five tikkim is \$25,000 and Kehila Kedosha Janina pledged to match up to \$5000. Due to an unprecedented response where readers of our e-newsletter throughout the United States opened their hearts and sent in checks totalling over \$12,000, Kehila Kedosha Janina will be able to send over \$17,000 to the Jewish Community of Ioannina. We send our heartfelt gratitude to all of you who contributed.

Aikoi Mas, Los Muestros come home



**Bruce Sklak, Brian Sklak and Elaine Lust,
decendants of Bertha (Chrysoula) Eskenazi**

**Ira and Linda Matsas Berger (Linda is the daughter of Dr. Michael
and Eleanor Matsas.**

Past Museum Events

Book Signing by June Hersh of September 18, 2011





5th Annual New York City Greek Film Festival Debuts 10/16

by BWW News Desk



THE 5TH ANNUAL
NEW YORK CITY
GREEK FILM FESTIVAL

The fifth annual New York City Greek Film Festival debuts with a screening of *My Sweet Canary* and a live concert at the Center for Jewish History on Sunday, October 16. Over a period of twelve evenings, nine films will be shown at venues around New York City, including the Rubin Museum, the Museum of Moving Image, Auditorium on Broadway, the SVA Theater in Chelsea, and the [Frank Sinatra](#) School of the Arts.

The Greek Film Festival offers New Yorkers the opportunity to discover some of Greece's best emerging filmmakers at a time when the Greek film industry is experiencing a renaissance. Last year's provocative family drama, *Dogtooth* earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Film.

This year's Film Festival includes, among others: *Attenberg*, which is the first Greek film to play at the Sundance Festival and Greece's entry for Academy Award consideration for Best Foreign Film this year; *Knifer*, a gritty film noir which won seven Hellenic Film Academy Awards, including Best Picture; *My Sweet Canary*, a film that explores the music of Rosa Eskenazy, a singer who rose to fame in the 1920s; *The Promise of Tomorrow*, a documentary narrated by [Olympia Dukakis](#) that examines the experiences of first and second generation Greek Americans and *Strella*, a favorite at festivals all over the world.

For full descriptions of all the films and show times, please visit nycgreekfilmfestival.com, where you can also purchase tickets.

This year, the Film Festival's principal benefactor continues to be the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, one of the world's leading international philanthropic organizations, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and medicine, and social welfare. For more information on the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, please visit www.SNF.org.

An Evening of Film & Live Music (Roza Eskenazy)



< On screen
MY SWEET CANARY
 A documentary on the
 life and music of
Roza Eskenazy
 Directed by
 Roy Sher

On Stage in concert >
MAVROTHI T. KONTANIS
 and
THE MAEANDROS
ENSEMBLE



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 7 pm

AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION

An Evening of FILM and Live MUSIC



Sunday, October 16, 2011 7pm

New York, NY (September 22, 2011) - The *American Sephardi Federation* will join with the *New York City Greek Film Festival 2011* to launch the festival's fifth year with a special program of film and music on **Sunday, October 16, 2011, 7:00p.m., at the *Center for Jewish History*, 15 West 16th Street, New York City.**

The evening will begin with the New York premiere of "**My Sweet Canary**," an exuberant song-filled documentary on the life of the Sephardic Jewish singer **Roza Eskenazy**. The screening will be followed by a live concert of Eskenazy's music performed by **Mavrothi T. Kontanis and the Maeandros Ensemble**.

Born in Ottoman Istanbul, Turkey in the last years of the 19th century, Eskenazy rose to fame in the 1920s, becoming the most popular and most recorded singer of Greek "rebetika." Her rousing renditions became the standard for her contemporaries to emulate, helped usher this music's acceptance into popular culture, and carried her career well into the late 1970s.

In "**My Sweet Canary**," directed by Roy Sher, three young musicians—an Israeli, a Turk, and a British-born Greek Cypriot—embark on a mission from Istanbul to Thessaloniki to Athens, to tell the story of Eskenazy's life and to explore her music. Many of her songs (sung originally in Greek, Turkish, Armenian and Ladino) are reprised in the film.

The musicians of the Maeandros Ensemble, under the leadership of oud player and vocalist Mavrothi T. Kontanis, are noted for their authentic and virtuosic renditions of the traditional music of the Aegean Sea region. The group has a devoted following among lovers of the music of the Near East, including Asia Minor. Scheduled to perform with Mr. Kontanis are Megan Gould (violin), Umut Yasmut (lap zither), Lefteris Bournias (clarinet), and Timothy Quigley (percussion).

General admission: tickets to the film and concert are \$18, \$15 for seniors and students. Seating is limited. Advance sale tickets may be ordered now by mail. Make check payable to the *NYC Greek Film Festival* and send to: *Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce, 370 Lexington Ave. (27th floor), New York, NY 10017*. Mail orders will be accepted until October 7, subject to ticket availability. Tickets will be mailed. Remaining tickets, if any, will be available at the box office on the evening of the performance. For full information on other festival screenings and events, go to www.nycgreekfilmfestival.com.

This event will be held at the *Center for Jewish History* 15 West 16th St. NYC.



Founded in 1973, the [American Sephardi Federation](#) is a founding partner of the [Center for Jewish History](#) and is the largest American organization dedicated to preserving and supporting the rich cultural traditions, spirit and history of all Sephardic communities as an integral part of Jewish experience and heritage.

Upcoming Museum Events of Interest elsewhere in the world

Opening of the exhibition "Jews in Thessaloniki. Indelible marks in space "in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, 17.09.2011



Saturday, September 17, 2011 at 18.30, an important exhibit opened at the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, located at Manolis Andronikos 6. The exhibition is called "Jews in Thessaloniki" and highlights "archaeological finds of the Jewish presence in the city, interspersed with special maps, museum objects and background visuals.

The exhibition was organized by the Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, which has great exhibition experience and expertise. In preparing the exhibit the Archeological Museum was helped by the Jewish Museum of

Thessaloniki. The exhibit will run for a year.

This is the first time that a major museum in Greece (other than the three Jewish Museums located in Thessaloniki, Athens and Rhodes) has made such an initiative.

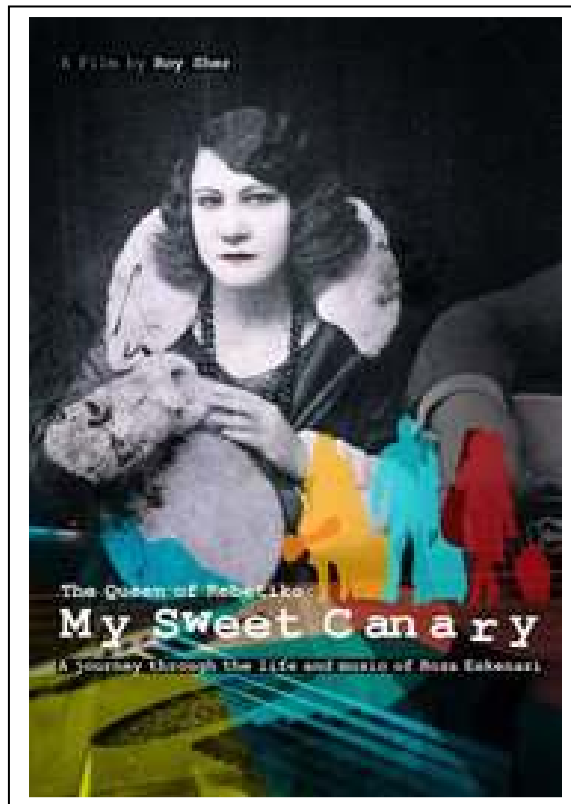
We also note that the Archaeological Museum has more visitors than all other museums in Thessaloniki combined.

**Jewish Community of Thessaloniki
The President of the Community Council
David Saltiel
(translated and edited by Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos)**

Cultural Events in Greece (see article on concert and film in New York City)

Dear Friends,

This October, prior to the Greek release of the film " My Sweet Canary," tribute concerts for Roza Eskenazi- 'My Sweet Canary' will be launched with 2 special concerts in Greece, followed by a concert in Jerusalem in November.



Martha Frintzila (Greece), Mehtap Demir (Turkey) and Yasmin Levy (Israel) will perform the best of the repertoire of Roza Eskenazi in Greek, Turkish and Ladino, with a Greek-Turkish ensemble of 11 musicians, based on the musicians that were featured in the film, and special guests that took part in it's making.

October 17th, 'The Stage', Thessaloniki

October 18th, The Badminton Theatre, Athens

November 12th, TheJerusalem Theatre, Jerusalem

<http://mysweetcanary.com>

Email us at: mysweetcanaryfilm@gmail.com

News from Jewish Greece

Citizenship reinstated for Jews who left Greece during or after World War II

06 September 2011

Jews who had to leave Greece during World War II can now have their citizenship reinstated. The Greek government passed an amendment to a new foreign resident law that will automatically reinstate Greek citizenship for all Jews that born in or before 1945. The number of Greek Jews affected by the amendment is likely no more than 300 to 350, according to reports. Their descendants, although eligible, will not receive citizenship automatically. They must apply and meet the proper criteria to receive their Greek passports and citizenship. The change comes after 65 years of appeals, applications and advocacy efforts by the Greek Jewish community. An estimated 90 percent of Greece's pre-war Jewish population of 70,000 was wiped out in the Holocaust, when the country was occupied by German troops. During World War II, a number of Jews were able to escape to Turkey, where the Greek consular officer tried to persuade them to

join the Greek army in Egypt. Those who refused and wanted to reach Palestine were stripped of their citizenship. Another group of Greek Jews fought with the Communist partisans' organization against the Nazis. After the war, and during the civil war in Greece from 1946 to 1951, members of the group were hunted down as Communists and executed, imprisoned or exiled in concentration camps. In order to avoid that fate, many Jews accepted the government's offer to go to Palestine and be stripped of their citizenship.

During the debate in the Judicial Committee of the Greek Parliament, Justice Minister Harry Kastanidis said: "It is an honor to Greece [to have these people requesting their citizenship back], an honor that Greece would be obligated to reinstate their citizenship no questions asked." Both the far-right and the anti-Semitic LAOS Party and the Communist Party opposed the amendment, with the Communists accusing the Greek government of forming close ties with Israel in order to further the "imperialistic plans regarding the natural gas reserves" [in the Mediterranean].

In recent months, Greece and Israel have strengthened their ties. Earlier this week, both countries signed a security cooperation agreement. Greek Defense Minister Panos Beglitis and his Israeli counterpart Ehud Barak signed a cooperation memorandum on security in Jerusalem. It was the first-ever official visit of a Greek defense minister to Israel.

Israel's ambassador to Greece, Arie Mekel, noted the "unprecedented number of high-level visits" between Israel and Greece this year. He said the visit by Beglitis highlighted the "dramatic upgrade of the relations between Greece and Israel for the benefit of both countries."

News of Interest

Turkey to return confiscated property

August 31, 2011

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) Turkey's government is returning hundreds of properties confiscated from the country's Christian and Jewish minorities over the past 75 years in a gesture to religious groups who complain of discrimination that is also likely to thwart possible court rulings against the country.

A government decree published Saturday returns assets that once belonged to Greek, Armenian or Jewish trusts and makes provisions for the government to pay compensation for any confiscated property that has since been sold on.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was scheduled to announce the decision formally later Sunday when he hosts religious leaders and the heads of about 160 minority trusts, at a fast-breaking dinner for the holy Muslim month of Ramadan, officials said.

The properties include former hospital, orphanage or school buildings and cemeteries. Their return is a key European Union demand and a series of court cases has also been filed against primarily Muslim Turkey at the European Court of Human Rights. Last year, the court ordered Turkey to return an orphanage to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

Some properties were seized when they fell into disuse over the years. Others were confiscated after 1974 when Turkey ruled that non-Muslim trusts could not own new property in addition to those that were already registered in their names in 1936. The 1974 decision came around the

time of a Turkish invasion of Cyprus that followed a coup attempt by supporters of union with Greece and relations with that country were at an all time low.

Erdogan's Islamic-rooted government seeking to promote religious freedoms has pledged to address the problems of the religious minorities. In the past few years, it amended laws to allow for the return of some of the properties, but restrictions remained and the issue on how to resolve properties that were sold on to third parties was left unsolved.

The decree overcomes those restrictions and helps scupper further court rulings.

"There was huge pressure from the European Court of Human Rights which has already ruled against Turkey," said Orhan Kemal Cengiz a human rights activist and lawyer who specializes in minority issues.

"It is nevertheless a very important development," he said. "With the return of properties and the compensations, the minority communities will be able to strengthen economically and their lives will be made easier."

The country's population of 74 million, mostly Muslim, includes an estimated 65,000 Armenian Orthodox Christians, 23,000 Jews and fewer than 2,500 Greek Orthodox Christians. Religious minorities have often complained of discrimination in Turkey, which had a history of conflict with Greece and with Armenians who accuse Turkish authorities of trying to exterminate them early in the last century. Turkey says the mass killings at that time were the result of the chaos of war, rather than a systematic campaign of genocide. Few minority members have been able to hold top positions in politics, the military or the public service.

Turkey is also under intense pressure to reopen a seminary that trained generations of Greek Orthodox patriarchs. The Halki Theological School on Heybeliada Island, near Istanbul, was closed to new students in 1971 under a law that put religious and military training under state control. The school closed its doors in 1985, when the last five students graduated.

Thanks to Dora Georgeady

MELISMA ARTS presents a New Vocal Class for those living in NY metropolitan area

**Greek SMYRNEÏKA, POLITIKA, and REBETIKA
of the 1920's, '30's, and '40's
Songs of the Urban Greek Café Aman**

...

Songs and Vocal Stylings of legendary singers Roza Eskenazi, Rita Abatzi, Adonis Diamandidhis (Dalgas), and other heroines and heroes of the extraordinary musical genre.

This class will teach students to sing the magnificent vocal repertoire of early 20th Century Asia Minor Greek artists with authenticity and ease. By learning how to carefully listen to excellent recordings and how to then access one's memory of these songs, and by learning simple tricks to make singing them effortless, students will easily learn to sing an involved repertoire with comfort, clarity, and control. Students will learn to sing intricate ornamentation, complex rhythms, and microtonal scales in a process that is fluid and fun. Students will also learn how to seamlessly switch between vocal placements without detection, will learn how to produce optimal tone, and will learn how to phrase songs so as to provide for maximum depth of expression, artistry, and musicality.

The songs, which follow the complex system of microtonal scales known as makam in Turkish or dhromi (roads) in Greek, have simply gorgeous melodies, and are lush with embellishment. The

1920s -1930s texts leave no stone unturned, and deal with scorching love, unbearable pain, cocaine, hashish, and heroine, lesbianism, monkey serum fountain of youth injections, harem girls, Hawaiian guitar music, and anything else you may fancy.

Though the repertoire is challenging and instruction is detailed and specific, the class is taught in a comfortable and relaxed setting, and is always fun.

Depending on the wishes of the individual participants, we may also learn the same or similar songs in Judeo-Espanol and Turkish, and may also cover some other forms of traditional Greek music.

Beginners are absolutely welcome!

Time to be announced.

Contact at tsipra@gmail.com

By the way, if there are any advanced singers of this repertoire, there is also a long established ongoing class that meets on Thursday nights.

Shalom to one and all!

**Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel**



"Kapparot"- A Controversial Custom

One of Judaism's most interesting – and yet controversial – pre-Yom Kippur customs and ceremonies is that of "Kapparot": the atonement/expiation from our sins by symbolically transferring our transgressions to the body of a chicken or rooster, and then slaughtering the fowl as a substitution for ourselves.

No doubt, many readers are well-aware of this rather ancient custom. But if it does sound strange, and perhaps even a little barbaric, to some of you, don't worry: You are in fact in good company, together with some of Judaism's greatest Sages!

The custom itself is based on the well-known Yom Kippur ritual in the Temple: sending a goat chosen by lottery (the famous "scapegoat") over a cliff, after the High Priest held his hands on its head and symbolically transferred onto the animal all of the Jewish People's transgressions. Though not mentioned in the Talmud or in Maimonides writings (10th century), Kapparot is discussed with varying degrees of approval and disapproval from the 11th century onward. Interestingly, the great commentator Rashi cites a custom of making small palm leaf baskets-one for each male and female in the family- filling them some 2-3 weeks before Rosh Hashanah with dirt and fertilizer and planting either an Egyptian bean or some other legume. On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, everyone took his or her young plant, swung it overhead seven times, proclaimed, "this is instead of me, this is my replacement, this is my exchange", and then threw it into a river. One generation later, Rabbeinu Asher, one of Ashkenazi Jewry's most famous Sages (13th-14th centuries), mentions that it was more common to use a chicken than a plant -based on a Talmudic reference to a chicken being a more fitting sacrificial substitute for a person-and that the ceremony was performed on the eve of Yom Kippur, and not before Rosh Hashanah. Other Sages also cited Kabbalistic sources for the custom.

Nonetheless, two of Sephardic Jewry's most important Sages, the Ramban (Nachmanides) in 12th century northern Spain, and his student, the Rashba (Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Aderet) in 13th century Barcelona, strongly objected to the custom. They considered its origins as very problematic, referring to the custom as resembling "Darkei Emori" –foreign, non-Jewish practices with possible idol-worshipping origins, and dismissed any Kabbalistic factors.

Following the Rashba and Ramban's lead, the Sephardic Beit Yosef (Yosef Karo) in the Shulhan Aruch, says unequivocally that the practice of Kapparot should be prevented, while Ashkenazi Moshe Isserles, in his glosses on Karo, completely approves of this time-honored and holy custom, dismissing any attempts to cease or even denigrate its practice.

As for Sephardim, despite the Shulhan Aruch's strong wording against the custom, his objections did not override the influence of Jewish mysticism, and it is quite clear that in the vast majority of "Eastern" Sephardic communities (Middle East and parts of North Africa) Kapparot was practiced just as enthusiastically as in Ashkenazi lands. This is also true today for the majority of Sephardim in Israel, though more and more Jews today do use money instead of a live chicken for various reasons, whether humane in nature, because of how the chicken is held and swung overhead, or a preference for using money that can be more easily donated to a charity of one's

choice, or the simple fact that with so many people rushing to perform the ritual in the few short days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, proper supervision of the entire ritual slaughtering and inspection process cannot be ensured.

Gershon Harris
POB 361
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel

Requests

Search for Negrin Relative

"Rachel (Mary) Negrin was born in Ioannina to Haim and Joyia Negrin. She was the oldest of eight, possibly nine, children, and as far as we know, the only to survive the war. She, along with her Negrin first cousins, Efthimia and Rachel (daughters of Barouch), were sent to Auschwitz and miraculously made it through. Though she returned to Ioannina briefly after the war in the hopes of reconnecting with any of her family members, she was confronted with the stark reality that no one else had survived. She moved to Athens, then Thessaloniki where she married Isaac Nachmias, who was the sole survivor of his family, as well. They had their first child Sara, in Greece, before moving to the United States in 1950. Once in the U.S., they had five more children, Zoe, Esther, Gentile, Betty and lastly, a son named Albert...."

"While we were in Ioannina, we had the pleasure of speaking with a few of the older members of the community who knew and remembered my grandmother. Though they were not totally sure, they thought that my grandmother had a brother who had survived the war and who had moved to Israel. Though my grandmother went through every channel she could to seek out family after the war, we know times were different then and communication proved much more difficult. Compounding the problem is that, as with most survivors, it was emotionally painful for my grandmother to speak with us about her family so none of us are sure as to exactly how many siblings she had (we know it was eight or nine) or what all their names were. Thus, we were wondering if it would be possible to publish a blurb in the Kehila Kedosha newsletter, on the off chance that ANYONE knows of anybody else who survived in her family."

Note: We know that Mary had at least 6 siblings who were deported with her
Anna, age 21
Fortouni, age 18
Esther, age 17
Ilias, age 14
Israel, age 9
Mosis, age 1

If anyone knows of a Negrin from Ioannina who might be from this family and had gone to Israel after the war, please contact us and we will pass the information on to the family.

We have information for Rakefet Bar Sadeh, the director of the Feher Jewish music center at Beit Hatfuzot in Israel on the Cohen family she is looking for. Please have her contact us.

We are overjoyed to report that contact has been made with Haim Levy from Salonika who made aliyah to Israel 1976/78 (see our e-newsletter of September 2011). The wonders of the internet!

We are still researching the following and repeat it in this newsletter: "Could you tell me who sent the picture Page 19 of the newsletter (Jewish students... family Nikokiris) showing Greek-Jewish students in Egypt.

My younger sister is on the picture. We have almost all names of the pupils and the teacher. I remember Jessie Nikokiris as my sister's mate.

At least four pupils are of Greek descent (Jessie, my sister Claudine and the twins Acco).

Best regards
Joseph Jesua
Paris"



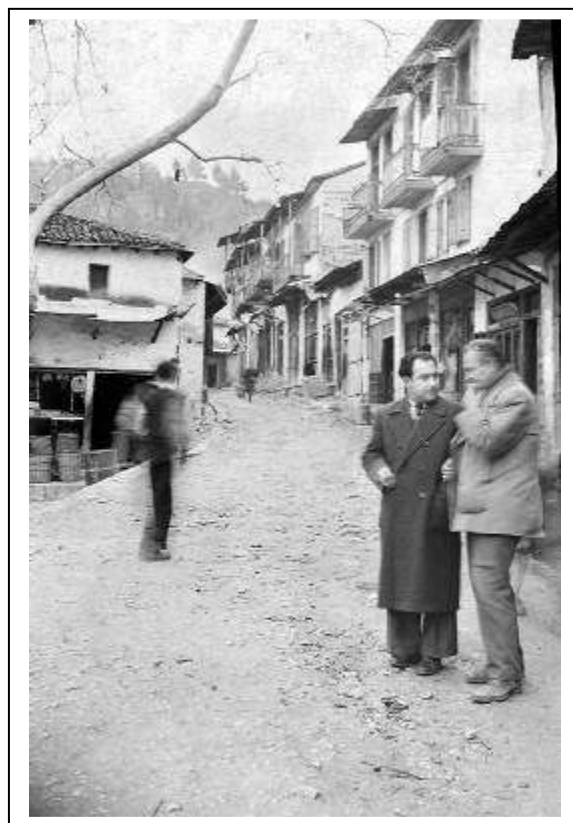
Additional information on Abraham Matza

We are still searching for information on the family of Abraham Matza. Abraham died in the Battle of the Bulge in WWII and was buried in Belgium. He came from a family of Yanniotos. According to the 1920 census, his family was living on Ludlow in the Lower East Side but appear in the 1930 census living at 62 S. 10th Street in Brooklyn. He came from a family of at least 8 children. His known siblings were Annie, Ida, Esther, Morris, Louis, Meyer and Isaac. We would appreciate help in locating a relative.

Finally, for those of you who have followed our e-newsletter, you are aware of the fact that we have been working with Jean Papadopoulos of Belgium, in his quest to document the history of Paramythia (a city not far from Ioannina, Preveza and Arta) including the Jewish presence. We publish, with gratitude, photos sent to us by Mr. Papadopoulos. The photos are credited to Mr. Nicolas Brestas.



The brazier of Elia Koen



The Jewish quarter (the EVRAIKA) in Paramythia.

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos is honored to be one of the presenters at the Modern Greek Studies Association's Symposium on Friday, October 14th from 3:00-5:00

This Symposium is part of a series that will be held from at New York University from October 13-15.

Panel 5

Identity in Diasporic Communities

Chair: Gregory Jusdanis[■] Ohio State University

Angelyn Balodimas-Bartolomei[■] North Park University[■] "The Hellenic Influence in Southern Italy: Examining the Griko Identity"

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos[■] Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum[■] "The Greeks of New York City: Contemporary Trends and Historical Contexts"

Theodora Dragostinova[■] Ohio State University[■] "To Stay or To Go: The Bulgarian Greeks Between Home and Homeland in the Interwar Years"

For additional information, access the website at:

[Modern Greek Studies Association](http://www.humanities.uci.edu/classics/MGSA/)

www.humanities.uci.edu/classics/MGSA/

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.

**Kehila Kedosha Janina e-newsletter: number 45:
October 2011**

**Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002
kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net**

