



December 2012 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Our wishes for a Happy and Healthy Hanukah to our Jewish friends and a Merry Christmas to our Christian friends. May the 2013 bring us peace and the ability to appreciate the things in life that are truly important.

Post WWII Salonika
Hanukah celebration for
children who survived the
Holocaust



This newsletter, our 59th 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.

Simchas

Our congratulations to Gershon Harris on the birth of two additional grandchildren since our last e-newsletter. This makes 13 grandchildren for Gershon and Rena Harris and, fortunately for us, has not impeded Gershon's ability to promptly send us his excellent column each month. A hearty Mazal Tov!

We congratulate Ilias Pessach on his recent marriage to Esther Taragon in Athens.



We mourn the passing of Moses ben Israel Bechoropoulos, a survivor of the Holocaust from Ioannina. Moses was predeceased by his wife Cecile. We were honored to include their wedding photo in a past exhibit at Kehila Kedosha Janina. Moses passed on Saturday, November 17th at the age of 93 in Israel. Our sincere condolences to the family.



Marriage of Moses Bechoropoulos to Cecile Chiprout in Ioannina (1949)

Past Museum Events

Our Museum was packed on November 11th for Rob Hollander's excellent presentation on the tenements of the Lower East Side. We are hoping to bring Rob back for a future presentation.



In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, visitors continued to flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina.

Farmingdale-Wantagh JC



We were especially grateful for a visit by Sam Gruber of ISJM (International Survey of Jewish Monuments).



Δikoi Mas, Los Muestros (Our Own) Come Home



Shari (Naftali) Goldberg with husband Herb



Esther Pardo-Holm

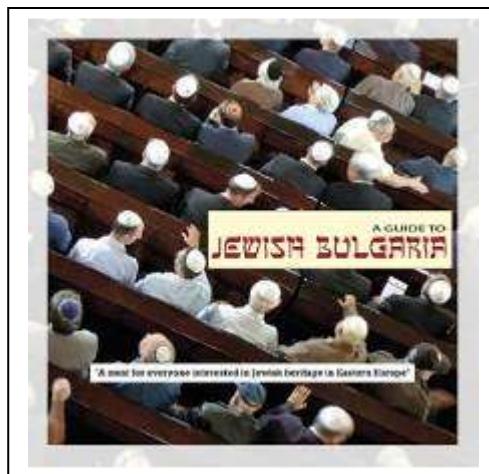
See photos acquired from these two visits in this newsletter.

New Museum Events

Jewish Bulgaria

Join us on December 30th for a special program and book presentation by Anthony Georgieff.

The author will be present to sign purchased books.



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

**When: December 30th at 2:00
Open to the public
Free Refreshments**

We were honored to host the special surprise birthday party of Eli Jenny on Sunday, December 2nd. This enabled us to add an additional exhibit to our present exhibit "Memories."



Eli and Shirley Jenny



**Eli and Morris
Jenny**

Upcoming Events on Lower East Side



Delancey to Doughnuts - A Chanukah Walking Tour

Sunday, December 9, 2012 10:45 AM

This walking tour of the historic downtown New York neighborhood explores four longtime Lower East Side institutions and the role they each played in shaping the area's Jewish culture.

Built in 1850, [Congregation Beth HaMedresh Hagadol](#) is a striking example of Gothic Revival architecture and the oldest Russian Orthodox congregation in the United States. The second stop on the tour is [Kehila Kedosha Janina](#), a synagogue which dates back to 1927. It is now the world's only remaining active Romaniote tradition synagogue and a museum dedicated to Greek-Jewish history.





The tour next visits the famous **Streit's Matzoh Factory**. Built in 1925, Streit's is the only family-owned and operated matzoh factory in the United States and currently training the 5th generation of Streit family matzoh-makers.

Delancey to Doughnuts wraps up with a coffee and soufganiot (old world-style

jelly doughnuts) at Congregation B'nai Jacob Anshe Brzezan. Also known as the Stanton Street Shul, the 80-year-old structure is one of the last remaining tenement synagogues in New York City.



Where:

LESJC Kling & Niman Family Visitor Center, 400 Grand Street
(between Clinton & Suffolk Streets)

Fees/Info:

Adults: \$20; seniors and students: \$18
(\$2 additional day of tour)

[Click here to register today!](#)

Tenement Museum



There's a new store at 97 Orchard Street, and you're invited to explore it! We're thrilled to announce the official launch of our "Shop Life" exhibit on Monday, December 3rd — our first new exhibit at 97 Orchard since 2008. ^L



When you visit "Shop Life," you'll trace the history of merchants who did business in our Tenement for more than a century. You'll be immersed in the re-created 1870's saloon of John and Caroline Schneider, then choose another chapter of history to explore using an interactive "sales counter". Through audio and images, this interactive technology--a first at the Museum--reveals the stories of turn-of-the-century kosher butchers Israel and Goldie Lustgarten, 1930s auctioneer Max Marcus, and 1970s undergarment discounters Frances & Sidney Meda. Finally, you'll hear from contemporary merchants doing business on the Lower East Side today.



"Shop Life" connects past and present as only the Tenement Museum can. Check out our web site [here](#) for tickets and more information. We hope you'll visit soon!

News From Jewish Greece

Thessaloniki

With the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Thessaloniki becoming part of Modern Greece there were a number of events highlighting the Greek-Jewish presence in the city.

In the words of the Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yiannis Boutaris: "The Jews are part of the soul of the city."

"One hundred years ago, Thessaloniki was incorporated into the fabric of the Greek state and the Jewish community numbered more than 60,000 people, or 40% of the total population of the city, the most dominant ethnic group. A few decades later, because of Nazi barbarity, the vast majority of the Jewish population was sent on a journey to their deaths as part of the hell that spread throughout the European continent.

Few survived, even fewer have returned but the memory is never "erased." To thunderous applause, Heinz Kounio, one of the few survivors of the Nazi barbarity, and Konstantinos Karamanlis, addressed the audience at events marking a presentation about the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki From the Balkan Wars to the Second World War.

Yesterday evening, at the Thessaloniki Concert Hall, tribute was paid to the Jews of Thessaloniki, or as Mayor Boutaris called them in his address, a piece of "soul of the city" that was lost in the

Holocaust. David Saltiel, president of the Central Jewish Council and president of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, especially stressed that Thessaloniki, as every city, must learn about the past in order to build the future.

The two keynote speakers were an associate professor at the University of Macedonia, Nick Marantzidis, an expert in Balkan history, and Angel Tsorapsief (Angel Chorapchiev) from Yad Vashem. The first reported on the politics of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki in the thirties and the second on the Holocaust the Jews of Thessaloniki.

Others who attended the ceremony, which included lighting of candles in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, were the Deputy Mayor for Economics, Chasdaï Capon, members of the Israeli Embassy in Athens, many government officials and members of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki.... "

From Agelioforos.gr

Thursday evening, November 29th

Israel

Recovery of Greek citizenship by Greek Jewish survivors of the Holocaust

In a climate of emotion and after waiting many years, today (November 27, 2012) at the Greek embassy in Tel Aviv, in the presence of the Greek ambassador Kyriacou Loukaki, began the first restoration of Greek citizenship to those of Jewish descent to those who had survived the Holocaust. These six Israelis were able to regain their Greek citizenship based on recent legislation.

The Greek ambassador, in a brief speech after taking the oath, welcomed the adoption and implementation of new legislation and highlighted the role of the community Greek Jews as a bridge between Greece and Israel.

Mr. Loukakis stressed how important it was that the current and previous Greek government have met the just demands of our Greeks of the Jewish faith and expressed the hope that these initial positive responses, almost one year after the enactment of the legislation will be followed satisfactorily with the requests of the remaining 160 awaiting acquisition of Greek citizenship.

On his part, the president of the Association of Greek Holocaust survivor Moshe HaAelion thanked the Greek government for the adoption and implementation of legislation, and members of the Greek embassy who worked hard and consistently to meet a longstanding request of the Greek-Jewish community in Israel.

http://www.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w_articles_kathremote_1_27/11/2012_471829

New Project on DNA testing of Yanniote Jews

We are happy to report that a number of Jews of Yanniote descent have responded to the request to take part in this DNA data base. Again, for those who are interested, contact Jonathan Alcantara at jba@dna.ie. Most important, we are looking to establish a fund to enable those who are not able to personally afford the test (around \$200) to be financed through the fund. If you are willing to contribute to this fund either contact Jonathan or us at Kehila Kedosha Janina (kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net).



Given KJ's Greek-Jewish heritage, Hanukka raises interesting issues regarding Jews' and Judaism's relationship with Greek language and culture. While the story of Hanukka is fairly well known regarding the Maccabees' struggle against the forced imposition of Greek culture and religion on Judaism, the historical record is much more complex, because Judaism and the Jews' experience with Greek language and culture goes much deeper, and in many ways can be called a true "love-hate" relationship. First of all, the Hanukka story started out as a civil war, with the Maccabees rebelling against the Greek influences and culture by attacking "Hellenized" Jews in Israel, which at the time were not only quite possibly the majority, but included a very large number of the Priestly families – the "Cohanim". This alone demonstrates how much Greek language and culture had made very serious inroads into Judaism and Jewish life, and why only an armed rebellion was seen as the way to fight further mass "Hellenization". The Bible itself notes in Genesis, Chap. 10, verse 2, that one of Noah's sons – Yefet – was the father of "Yavan"- Greece. In Jewish tradition, this son "Yefet", whose name comes from the Hebrew word "yafeh/yafah" – pretty, beautiful – is associated with symbols of "beauty" and worldly culture, which in time would be known as Greek and "Western" culture, as we know it today.

The Greek language was adopted by many peoples, including Jews living in Greek-speaking lands. In fact, many Talmudic and Midrashic terms come directly from Greek, and many Talmudic sages had very Greek names. On the other hand, the struggle against Greek culture and its emphasis on physical beauty and worship of the human body and of course, its gods and philosophy, was always a dominant feature of Jewish life and the source of major physical and spiritual conflicts since ancient times.

There is probably no better illustration of this conflict than the story in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate "Megillah", pages 9a-9b. The Greek emperor Ptolemy gathered together 72 Talmudic sages and placed them in separate houses with a command that each one separately translate the "Torah of your teacher Moses" into Greek. Besides the tremendous challenge of the translation itself, the Sages were concerned about creating such a seminal work that would basically "legitimize" Greek as a valid and 'approved' language for Jews and Judaism. The Talmud relates that a miracle occurred, and the separate 72 translations were all identical. This work is known as the "Septuagint", and was used extensively by both Jews and non-Jews in the ancient world. And controversy aside, the very fact that 72 of Judaism's greatest sages were able to translate the Torah into Greek shows how familiar they were with the language. The same Talmudic discussion ends with an opinion that if the Torah can be translated altogether, it should be to Greek, because of its association with Yefet and the "Yavan" of the Bible.

There is also evidence that as late as the end of the Byzantine period, the Book of Jonah read as the 'haftarah' on Yom Kippur afternoon was read in Greek in Candia (Crete), which according to some historians was originally written in the 12th century for the Jews of Corfu, and may be the oldest complete text in modern Greek. There is also a Greek translation of the Pentateuch, of which copies of the Eliezer Soncino Constantinople edition from 1547 are still extant. Finally, the "Lekah Tov" Midrash, compiled by the Romaniote Jewish scholar, Rabbi Tobias ben Eliezer of Kastoria, contains numerous Greek words and phrases. In many ways, the struggles between Judaism and certain aspects of Greek culture still continue today. However, the deep and almost inseparable connection between Jews and Judaism and Greek language and culture is obviously one of the oldest in the world. Happy Hanukka!

News of Interest To All

Spain to ease naturalization of Sephardic Jews

Change in policy to benefit descendants of Jews expelled 500 years ago; Jewish group urges legislating practice.

By JTA | Nov.24, 2012 | 11:23 AM



Spain has announced that it will ease the naturalization of Sephardic Jews whose ancestors were expelled 500 years ago.

Sephardic Jews already benefit from a preferential naturalization procedure that requires them to live in Spain for only two years before claiming citizenship. But the change, which was announced on Thursday, means that Jews will have to present only a certificate confirming their ancestry to claim a Spanish passport.

The Federation of the Jewish Communities of Spain, an umbrella body, congratulated the government for "recognition of a right which does not depend on any government decree." In its statement, the organization added that the announcement needs to "culminate in a legal text that will specify the conditions to be met to assume nationality."

The government did not say how many Jews it expected to apply for citizenship, but it noted that a large number of Sephardic Jews lived in Turkey and across Latin America.

While estimates differ, the number of Jews living in Spain - 25,000 to 45,000 people out of a total population of 47 million - is only a fraction of the number who lived in the country before 1492, when Jews were forced to convert to Christianity or go into exile.

Recently Acquired Photos and Enquiries

We are looking for a better copy (hopefully an original) of this picture of the Naphtali (Naftali) family taken in the USA around 1907.



Matathia and Anna Battino Naphtali (seated) with Sarah (David) Naphtali and Benny Barouch Naphtali.

This month we were made even more aware of how important our photo archives are as our own came home to us, often inspired by photos of their family they had seen on our website. Do share your precious photos with us. They open the doors to memories.

Sara and Barouch Naphtali



We thank the Battino-Pardo family for this precious photo. When Esther Pardo-Holm visited our synagogue/museum recently, she shared this photo of her mother's family (Battino) in Ioannina. Her mother, Matilde, survived the camps and returned to Greece, marrying Saadi Pardo who had survived as a POW in Italy. Saadi lost most of his family in the camps, including his first wife and three young children. Matilde lost most of her family in the camps. Her daughter, Esther, is hoping to connect with possible Battino relatives. It is our hope that this photo awakens memories.



Haim and Rozina Battino with 3 of their children, Uriel, Leon, and Samuel.

Websites of interest:

For an interesting website mentioning Greek Jewish presence in the Old City of Jerusalem:

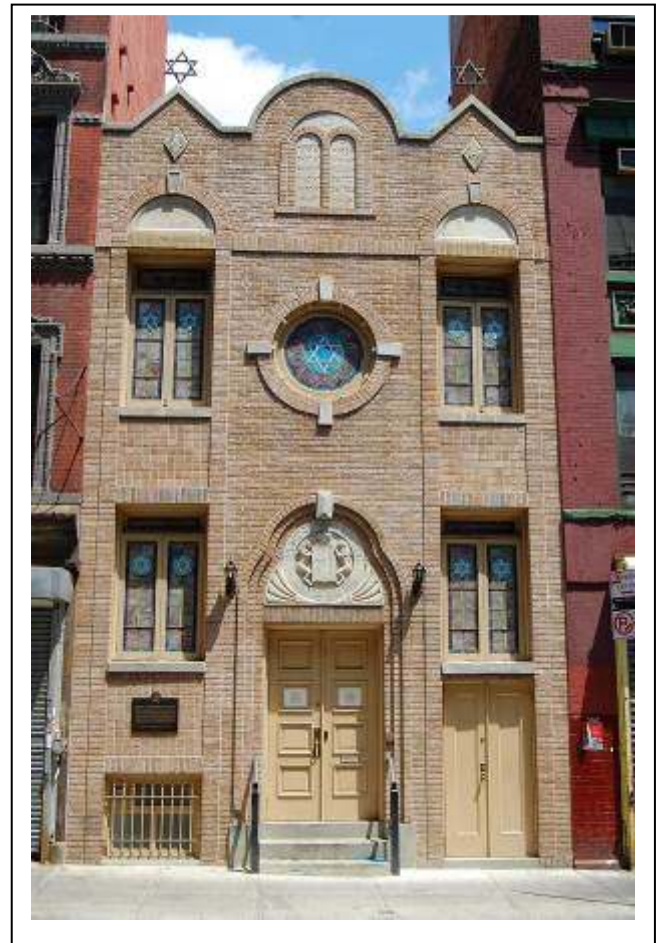
**http://ohr.edu/explore/israel_and_jerusalem/1014
Old Janina synagogue inside walls**

Check our website (www.kkjsm.org) under the link on the left (Holocaust in Greece) and you will find the list of Jewish victims from Salonika. This is from the work of heinz Kounio. We thank him for his over forty years of work to compile this list so that their names will be remembered for eternity. We changed the transliterated Greek spellings to make it easier to read for English speakers and alphabetized it according to the English alphabet. There is also a form included in case you have names to add (or possible corrections to make).

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) to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.

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



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