



Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

September 2019 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

As we approach the High Holidays, we at Kehila Kedosha Janina, the only Romaniote Synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, prepare to celebrate in our historic synagogue and invite all to join us. With our 126th E-Newsletter, we are reminded of how important and special we are. This past summer, as we travelled to Italy and Greece, we were warmly greeted by Jewish communities who now know who we are and applaud our accomplishments. Do join us for the High Holidays. Our full schedule is available [here](#).

2019 5780

**KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM
WISHES YOU A**

**HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND SWEET
NEW YEAR**

**תזכו לשנים רבות
Χρόνια Πολλά
ANYOS MUNCHOS I BUENOS**

YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR SERVICES
KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
280 BROOME ST NYC
OUR SEATS ARE FREE AND OUR HEARTS ARE ALWAYS OPEN

**ROSH HASHANAH - SEPTEMBER 30 AND OCTOBER 1
YOM KIPPUR - OCTOBER 9
MORE INFO AT KKJSM.ORG**

An apology: Where we usually like to print entire articles, there were a number in this newsletter that were exceedingly long. Therefore, we were forced to take highlights from the articles and direct our readers to the websites where they can find the articles in their entirety. If you have a problem, contact us at museum@kkjsm.org and we will email you the entire article.

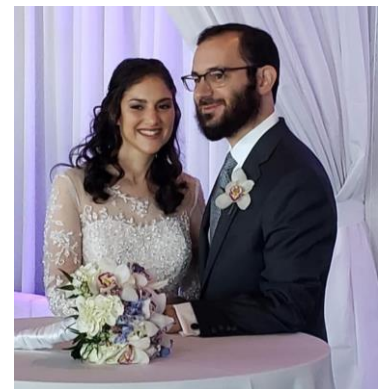
This newsletter, our 126th will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website www.kkjsm.org.

We now reach over 10,000 households worldwide. What an accomplishment for a little synagogue on the Lower East Side of New York City. Our community of 'friends' continually grow 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.

Simchas

We love to share our joys. In August, Andrea Bennet (from the Mitrani family of Turkey) married Samuel Werner, a Family Medicine Doctor who will be practicing in Pennsylvania. Andrea is an Occupational Therapist.



It is our joy to welcome another member of the extended Negrin family into the world. Dylan Alexander Chamow, the son of Noah and Danielle Chamow was born on August 9, 2019. Dylan is the grandson of Steven and Judith Chamow, the great-grandson of Annette Negrin Levy and Daniel Chamow, the great great-grandson of Louise Negrin Levy and Sol Levy. The great great great-grandson of Joseph Moses Negrin and Serena Ganis Negrin, and great great great great-grandson of Moses Negrin and Leah (Lula) Cohen and, finally (!) the great great great great great-grandson of Eliyia Negrin and Hanoula Cohen. Joseph Negrin, Dylan's great great great-grandfather, was one of the founding members of the Yanniote Jewish community in the USA in 1912 and his wife Serena was the daughter of Samuel Ganis who, although he never came to the USA, having died in 1879, fathered one of the most important branches of the NY Yanniote world.

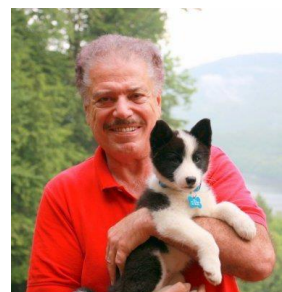


Another Greek princess with deep Yaniote roots was welcomed into the world on August 22nd. Emma Natalie Gaffan is the second daughter of Susan Cohen Gaffan and Steven Mathew Gaffan. Her big sister is Ava Rose Gaffan. She is the granddaughter of Anita Yomtov Gaffan and Stuart Gaffan, the great granddaughter of Stella Mathios Yomtov and Meyer Yomtov and the great great granddaughter of Leah Negrin Mathios and Abraham Mathios, and Annie Abraham Yomtov and Nissim Yomtov.



Passings

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Jack Varsano, a man who was always proud of this Salonika roots. We extend our sincere condolences to his two sons, Adam and Marc.

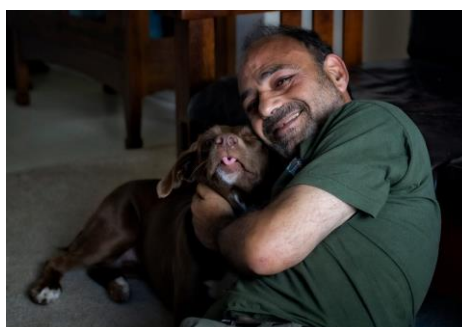


It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Jay Holiday (from the Yomtov family). We remember with joy when Jay and his wife Susan, along with his son, Jeremy, came to Greece with us in 2007.

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Daniel Lebenstein after a long a courageous battle with cancer. Daniel was 64 when he passed. He was a proud Yanniot, the son of Mary Attas and Alexander Lebenstein, the grandson of Nissim Attas and Esther Bilel Attas. Nissim and Esther lived on the Lower East Side and were members of Kehila Kedosha Janina. Danny is survived by his brother David, his ex-wife Denise, who lovingly cared for him at the end, and a loving group of friends.



Mary Attas



KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL
KAL NIDRE – EREV YOM KIPPUR SERVICE ON
OCTOBER 8 AT 5:45PM WHEN WE WILL RECITE

HASHKAVOTH MEMORIAL PRAYERS

On Yom Kippur it is traditional to recite memorial prayers for the dearly departed. In many synagogues this ritual is observed by conducting a Yizkor service. At Kehila Kedosha Janina we follow the centuries-old Romaniote custom of our people by reciting Hashkavoth (memorial prayers) and the individual names of our dearly departed during the Kal Nidre Yom Kippur Eve service. If you wish to honor the memory of your family members or friends in this very special way, please email their names as soon as possible to Museum@kkjism.org. It is customary to include a voluntary donation of your choosing. The names and donation may also be submitted via PayPal on our website www.kkjism.org.

WISHING YOU GOOD HEALTH AND HAPPINESS
AS WE APPROACH THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

תזכו לשנים רבות

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
280 BROOME STREET NEW YORK, NY 10002
MUSEUM@KKJSM.ORG

Upcoming Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Save the Dates!

We are very excited about our Fall calendar. Please remember to RSVP to museum@kkjsm.org or 516-456-9336.

September 8: Rabbi Marc Angel will be honoring us with his presence as he presents his latest book: "A New Word: An American Sephardic Memoir"

September 15: Stewart Nachmias Art Demonstration and Exhibit

October 13: Karen Batshaw will present her latest book "Light and Shadows"

In addition to events at Kehila Kedosha Janina, our synagogue/museum will be represented in two events: the first at the Greek Consulate in New York, and the second at the Greek Embassy in Washington DC.

September 19-October 3 at the Greek Consulate in New York: "Romaniote Memories – A Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan" Photographs by Vincent Giordano. There will be a special Panel Discussion that includes our Museum Director on September 25. The exhibit will subsequently move to the Greek Embassy in Washington DC in November (dates to be announced).

Full event details follow below.

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA IS HONORED TO WELCOME
RABBI MARC D. ANGEL
FOR A SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON HIS LATEST BOOK
**A NEW WORLD: AN AMERICAN
SEPHARDIC MEMOIR**



SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 8TH AT 2:00PM
KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
280 BROOME STREET NYC

"This memoir of growing up in a close-knit Sephardic immigrant community is poignant and a pleasure to read. It's also sharp and provocative. It pushes us to figure out how, in our vexed, complicated world today, we can provide our children with a natural sense of belonging and joy." - Jane Mushabac

Rabbi Marc D. Angel is Founder and Director of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. He is Rabbi Emeritus of the historic Congregation Shearith Israel where he served since 1969. Born into Seattle's Sephardic community, his ancestors are from Turkey and Rhodes. He received his B.A., M.S., Ph.D., Th.D. honoris causa, and his Semikhah (Rabbinical ordination) from Yeshiva University and also has an M.A. in English literature from the City College of New York. He is a recipient of the Bernard Revel Award in Religion and Religious Education. Author and editor of 36 books, he has written and lectured extensively on various aspects of Jewish law, history and culture. Rabbi Angel will be available to sign purchased books.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED. RSVP TO MUSEUM@KKJSM.ORG



KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM

By popular demand, the special art exhibit by Stewart Nachmias at Kehila Kedosha Janina will be available for viewing through the end of September 2019. On Sundays, the exhibit is available for viewing. During the week by appointment only.
Items for sale have been specially priced.



As part of this requested extension,
Stewart will be giving a special demonstration
of his fascinating craft.

Where:

**Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street
between Allen and Eldridge**

When:

Sunday, September 15th from 12-2:30 PM

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA IS PROUD TO WELCOME BACK

KAREN BATSHAW

TO PRESENT HER NEW BOOK

LIGHT AND SHADOWS



SUNDAY OCTOBER 13TH AT 2:00PM

**KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
280 BROOME STREET NYC**

It is rare that one reads historical fiction and is so enraptured, both on the historical end and on the fictional end. Thus is the case with Karen Batshaw's latest book, "Light and Shadows." Karen has a knack for picking themes that many do not know about, as in her first book, "Hidden in Plain Sight," covering the Holocaust of Jews in Salonika, Greece.

"Light and Shadows" takes on two rarely mentioned, but extremely painful historical events in the 20th century, the extermination of Jews from the Bulgarian Zone of Occupation in Greece (in March 1943) and the Population Exchange of Asia Minor Greeks (in 1923). Karen uses her protagonists, a Sephardic Jewish woman from Kavala, Greece, and a Greek-Orthodox Christian man from Asia Minor Turkey, to tell the stories. Karen is a rare author who has both the talents of a fiction writer, creating story lines and characters that are unforgettable, and the intense research necessary to present the historical events in an accurate way. Karen will be available to sign purchased books. Copies of her first book "Hidden in Plain Sight" will also be available.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED. RSVP TO MUSEUM@KKJSM.ORG



INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF JEWISH MONUMENTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2019

"ROMANIOTE MEMORIES - A JEWISH JOURNEY FROM IOANNINA, GREECE TO MANHATTAN: PHOTOGRAPHS BY VINCENT GIORDANO

"Romaniote Memories - a Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan: Photographs by Vincent Giordano" will open on Thursday, September 19th, 2019 at the Consulate of Greece in New York and will continue through October 3rd, 2019. A lecture and panel discussion about Romaniote Jews will take place at the Consulate on Wednesday, September 25th.

The photographs are part of a multi-media archive, created by Giordano, who died in 2010, which was sponsored by International Survey of Jewish Monuments (ISJM) and since June 2019 has found a new home at the Hellenic American Project and Special Collections at the Library of Queens College, New York under the direction of Dr. Nicholas Alexiou.

The Vincent Giordano multi-media archive is comprised of an assortment of written material, photographic negatives, prints and slides, audio cassettes and other tapes, video mini-cassettes and other recordings, and miscellaneous material related to Giordano's more than decade-long documentation of the Greek-Jewish community of Kehila Kedosha Janina in New York and the synagogue and community in Ioannina, Greece. Mr. Giordano received a grant from the Fulbright Foundation in 2009 with the Jewish Museum of Greece acting as the host institution.

In 1999, photographer Vincent Giordano made an unplanned visit to the small Kehila Kedosha Janina (KKJ) synagogue on New York's Lower East Side. He knew little about Judaism or synagogues, and even less about the Romaniote Jewish tradition of which KKJ, built in 1927, is the lone North American representative. In this he was not alone. Romaniotes are among the least known of Jewish communities. Since the Holocaust, when 85% of all Jews in Greece perished and the historic Romaniote communities in Greece largely destroyed, KKJ has struggled to maintain its' millennia-old traditions.

EXHIBITION IS ON VIEW MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY FROM 9:00 AM THROUGH 2:30 PM AT THE CONSULATE OF GREECE, 69 EAST 79TH STREET, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10075 2129885500

For additional information and jpg photos for publication please contact:
Renee Pappas, reneedpappas@gmail.com +13127099338

ISJM gratefully acknowledges the support of Ted and Lea Pedas and Jim and Wanda Pedas in making this exhibition possible.



Consulate General of Greece
New York



Kehila Kedosha Janina
Synagogue and Museum

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QUEENS
COLLEGE

Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to support the 13th annual NYC Greek Film Festival International in New York. This year, there is a special documentary film on Romaniote Jews.



Save the Dates – October 17-23, 2019

The New York City Greek Film Festival welcomes the congregants of Kehila Kedosha Janina and the readers of its newsletter to a weeklong celebration of Greek culture and arts at Florence Gould Hall (55 East 59th Street) from October 17 to 23, 2019.

It is worth noting that for this upcoming 13th year, apart from the Greek features, documentaries and shorts, the festival launches a new section with international productions of Greek interest, meaning films with Greek elements no matter the country of their origin. Furthermore, a purely international section of short films from all over the world will be introduced, solely at the online edition of NYCGRFF. One documentary of particular interest is Agnes Sklavou and Stelios Tatakis' film entitled **Romaniotes: The Greek Jews of Ioannina** (Documentary, 67', 2019). This documentary chronicles how the Romaniotes were an integral part of the cultural mosaic of the city of Ioannina since the Byzantine era and faced the danger of extinction in the harsh period of WWII. This creative duo has over 26 years of experience working in film, television, advertising, documentaries, and shorts, having won several national and international awards for their documentaries. Skavou studied film directing while Tatakis studied cinematography at Stavrakos Film School in Athens.

Attendees have the privilege of meeting such directors at industry parties as well as for Q&As following screenings. Everyone is encouraged to vote for their favorite films, and winners will be announced at a special ceremony.

Another unique feature of this year's festival is to honor the legacy of Alexander the Great through a collaboration with notable Greek archeologists and artists for two exhibitions. A digital exhibition previously showcased at the Greek Institute of Venice compiles a 14th century manuscript of Alexander recounting events to the Byzantine emperor of Trabzon, who commissioned this rendering for his private library.

Compiled by the era's most able copyists, the manuscript is also enriched with 250 miniatures narrating the entire life course of this magnificent warrior. A physical exhibition of Alexander the Great-themed engravings,

carved by important artists from Crete's "XOTARIS" Gallery, will also honor this ruler who spread the Greek spirit and culture throughout the then known world.

Attendees can also look forward to the other cultural offerings such as a tribute concert to award winning composer Maro Theodorakis, niece to renowned composer Mikis Theodorakis, with Greek female singers. This event spotlights this year's theme of appreciation to women, and to their abuse in modern society.

In short, the New York Greek Film Festival encourages everyone to attend this weeklong exploration of Greek culture through an array of international films, exhibits championing the legacy of Alexander the Great, and concerts. Become part of the process by voting for your favorite films and mingling with the cast and crew at special events. Look forward to the upcoming schedule in the October newsletter. Follow the festival on social media on Facebook and at <https://nycgreekfilmfestival.com>.

Looking forward to welcoming you all!

Maria Tzompanaki

Director of NYC Greek Film Festival
Ambassador of Crete's Culture
Actress

News from Jewish Greece

On August 13th a special exhibit opened on the island of Aegina. The exhibit was created to draw attention to the 4th century mosaic floor, the only evidence of a Jewish synagogue on the island.

Hidden for hundreds of years on the island of Aegina an hour ferry ride from Athens, a mosaic floor from a destroyed synagogue attests to Jewish life in the Aegean Sea in the fourth century CE.

"Last week, a temporary exhibition about the mosaic opened at the Archaeological Museum of Aegina as part of an EcoWeek program under the auspices of the Aegina Municipality and the Culture and Sport Ministry's Ephorate of Antiquities of West Attica, Piraeus and Islands. EcoWeek is an international NGO which raises awareness about environmental issues and climate change, and promotes social and environmental sustainability.

Among the dignitaries were Aegina deputy mayor Nikos Economou, representative of the Central Board for Jewish Communities of Greece Daniel Benardout, and Athens Chief Rabbi Gabriel Negrin.



In a press release, EcoWeek described the geometric mosaic floor as “the most rare and significant finding of Jewish archaeology discovered in Aegina Island in the 19th century. The mosaic is at a dangerous state of damage and neglect and requires urgent preservation and protection.”

Aegina, a naval power in the classical world, was home to a community of Romaniote Jews. Living in Greece for many centuries before Sephardi and Ashkenazi arrived, they spoke Judaeo-Greek, a Greek dialect incorporating Hebrew, Aramaic and Turkish words.

“The Jewish community, which was involved in purple-dyeing and tanning, was prosperous enough to establish a synagogue in 300-350 CE with a richly decorated mosaic floor with two inscriptions in Greek,” according to EcoWeek. “According to the inscriptions, Theodoros Archysynagogos built the synagogue from donations.”



The synagogue remained in use until the seventh century, when the Jewish community fled inland with the rest of the population because of raids from the sea.

“According to published sources, an inscription belonging to a medieval synagogue, was also found in Paleochora – the town where the island population settled,” according to EcoWeek.

The mosaic was discovered by the German archaeologist Ludwig Ross in 1829. In 1928, archaeologist Eleazar Sukenik traveled to Aegina from Mandate Palestine to study the mosaic. Four years later, American archaeologist Belle Mazur, together with Franz Gabriel Welter of the German Archaeological Institute of Athens, “continued the excavation and discovered the apse on the east wall, where according to tradition, the Torah scrolls were kept during service, as well as the place where the elders sat.”

The mosaic was removed from its original location during the 1960s because of construction in the area.

“Today, 60 years later, the mosaic has been damaged due to its proximity to the sea and its exposure to environmental conditions,” EcoWeek said. “Its preservation and protection are urgently needed.”

In a bid to protect and preserve it, architect Dr. Elias Messinas, who curated the exhibition, together with Yvette Nahmia-Messinas, have embarked on a two-year program under the guidance of the Culture and Sports Ministry to repair the damage. The restoration is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

Messinas and Nahmia-Messinas have been raising awareness about the Aegina mosaic preservation project through social media.

At the event last week, Messinas, who has published two books on the history and architecture of Greek synagogues, spoke about the mosaic “and its importance in the context of other Greek synagogues and their preservation.”

The architect, who recently oversaw the renovation of the two synagogues in Thessaloniki, explained “the mosaic of Aegina spans more than two millennia of Greek Jewish history, from ancient times to the present. It is fascinating how much history is hidden behind this mosaic.”

The exhibit will continue until August 24. Additional reporting on the effort to preserve the mosaic is [here](#).

News from Turkish Jewry

Jews expelled from Spain Mark 527 years in Turkey full article from the Daily Sabah [here](#)



Neve Shalom Synagogue, Istanbul

It has been 527 years since the expulsion of Sephardic Jews from Spain. Prominent figures of the community say the Ottomans gave them the right to live in peace and their ancestors introduced the empire to new benefits.

On July 30, 1492, the Spanish monarch ordered the expulsion of Jews from the country, paving the way for a harrowing chapter in Jewish history. Sephardic Jews, as they are known, named after Sefarad or Spain in Hebrew, found shelter at the other end of the continent: In Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. "Jews won their right to live under the Ottomans," Moris Levi, a prominent figure of Turkey's Jewish community said on the anniversary of the Spanish edict, which came exactly one century after waves of massacres targeting Jews and months after the conquest of Muslim-ruled Granada by Spain's Catholic monarchs.

Granada was host to a sizable Jewish population then and Levi says that Sephardic Jews brought their culture, traditions, Western views and economic values from Granada to the Ottoman Empire.

"The right to live was the most important gain for Jews. If they continued living in Spain in defiance of [the edict], they would be probably massacred. If they went to other parts of Christian world, in the medieval times, they would face numerous troubles as well," Levi, who represents religious minorities in Turkey's General Assembly of Foundations, told Anadolu Agency (AA).

In turn, Jews brought benefits to the Ottoman Empire, which was at the dawn of its "rising" period, 39 years after the conquest of Constantinople. Levi says that most important thing Jews introduced to the Ottoman Empire was the printing press though he laments that it did not flourish. "People earning a living from calligraphy lobbied for a ban on the printing press. If it was introduced by the end of the 15th century, the Renaissance would not be born in Europe but in the Ottoman Empire," he says. He says Jews also brought another gain for the Ottomans and this was a Westernized point of view. "The Ottomans were a global empire, a strong state and needed to be open to every view," he noted.

Levi says the Jewish community has also been a valuable asset in terms of the crafts and occupations they had. "Jews served as important people in diplomacy and medicine," he points out.

He says that Jews arrived in the Ottoman territories after escaping Spain because they believed that their lives, dignity and possessions would be protected. "They lived for centuries in [Granada] safely and Ottomans, like those in Granada, were Muslims. They knew they had a future there. Jews both earned for themselves and contributed to this country. In the end, the Ottoman Empire grew larger while Spain lagged behind other European countries," he said.

Turkey has around 18,000 Jews according to the Turkish Jewish community and their population is concentrated in Istanbul. Levi says cultural diversity the community brought was important for society. The community had a higher population but numbers dwindled in the 20th century as most migrated to Israel after its establishment while an unfortunate pogrom in the 1950s led some to leave Istanbul.

He said that his community prays for Turkey and its leaders, including President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on their special days. "This is an ancient rule for community, to abide by the rules and laws of the countries they live. Never in their history had Sephardic Jews who came to Ottoman Empire rebelled against the empire. They always observed the laws and were in harmony with those ruling, governing the country. This is because Jews have been a minority throughout history and that led them to be more diplomatic, to establish good relations with others," he says.

Award-winning veteran Jewish photographer İzzet Keribar said he owes his success to Turkey.

"I am saying with an open heart that I love my job, I love my friends, and above all, I love my country. I keep saying this at every opportunity. My priority is the country I live in. I owe a lot to this country," said Keribar, who won Turkey's Presidential Culture and Arts Prize in 2018.

His name was heard on the world stage as a prominent Turkish Jew, after he won prizes for his lifestyle photography, from National Geographic magazine, twice in 1991 and 2000.

"I am a member of Jewish community but I never encountered any discrimination," Keribar says, adding that he would not live in Turkey if he faced discrimination.

Once upon a time Jewish life in Istanbul, in Ladino ads full article by İzak Baron in Salom [here](#)

You can feel the rich and vivid Jewish life that used to exist in Istanbul once upon a time, through the Ladino ads that were published in various newspapers of the time. While the ads reflect the colorful Jewish life of that time, they also make us ponder giving us the chance to compare today with the past and the glimpse of a time soon to be forgotten.



Kristal SARAY
M. Kohen
A la okazion de ROŞ HAŞANA nos azemos el agra davle plazer de suhetar a nuestros Korelijonarios una aniada alegre i prospera.
Rogamos dunke a la honorada klientela de kerer bien azer sus empleos sobre los artikolos de vidreria komo Alüminyon, Pirones, Kuçiyos, Kuçaras Emaye Porselen i magnifikos regalos ke se venderan bien baratos.
Fasilidades en los pagamientos
A presios de PIŞIN por akeos ke kereran tomar fiado.
ATANSION al adereso :
BALAT Otübüs cad. No 158 (Selaniko Sinagoğu Karşı sirasında)

Profesor diplomado de Paris da lecciones de francez, contabilidad matematique hebreo, y ingles a los debutantes.
Stenografia almanda y francesa
Se adresen a S GERON,
Recep Paşa Cad. No. 21
Gülen apt. No. 4
IAKSİM

LOS RENOMADOS KARNESEROS de PERA
Jak Dalva i Izak Beruhel
Vienen de avrir una nueva fabrika de Şarkuteriya (karnes yeladas) komo Sosis, Salami, alguenga-fume i pasturma soto la nominasyon

Es a remarkar ke la fabrikasyon de estas karnes es kontrolada por el Beth Din Hatsedek i kada pedaso tiene el siyo KASER a fin de kontentar la kiantela cudiya i de mas los presyos son baratos, a solo fin ke sea a la porte de todas las bolsas.
Pasturma Kaşer
Beyoğlu, Aluncidare karşısında No 160. Telefon 40316
Büyükdada, Balıkcılar cad. No 8 Telefon BA. 9-4

Empesando de OY CUGUEVEZ en las MATINES en el
Sinema SARAY
El mas grande manadero de plazer de la sezon
Un mabul de rizas
Los trez amigos çavuşes en persigida de espiones
(EN LINGUA TURKA)
Los pasajes de los trez amigos çavuşes en Kazablanca

The Challenge

This essay both describes and addresses the concern over the future of the historic language known as Judeo-Spanish and, popularly, as Ladino. The latter originally referred to the liturgical Hebrew texts translated into Spanish, word for word, and is now used for the spoken language as well. Despite my preference for the term Judeo-Spanish, I shall use the term Ladino throughout the text, mainly for convenience.

I approach the subject as a native Ladino speaker from Istanbul (where growing up I spoke also Turkish, French, and some Hebrew and Greek). Emigrating from Turkey to the United States in 1960, I have separated from Judeo-Spanish culture and Ladino speaking communities for decades. Nonetheless, my Sephardic heritage and relationship to Ladino continue to define me, as it does so many among the far-flung Sephardic diaspora of the late 20th century. My investment in the future health and well-being of the language runs deep, as it signifies the survival of a complex heritage of which I am a part, albeit small. My awareness of the challenges to that future is also profound, given the trend lines I have tried to face with bracing honesty.



In 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) classified Ladino as a “severely endangered language” in its *Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger of Disappearing*. The Atlas, then in its 3d edition, was part of a project launched in 1993 for the purpose of raising awareness about languages deemed endangered and the need to safeguard the world’s linguistic diversity. “Severely endangered” was defined as “spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parents’ generation may understand it, they do not speak it to their children or among themselves.” The definition describes Ladino’s current state well. In comparison, Yiddish was classified as merely “endangered.”¹ UNESCO’s listing of Ladino as a severely endangered language does not come as a surprise or a shock to those familiar with this historic language or Sephardic history. Ladino has been losing its distinctive character, traditional vocabulary and usage, and speakership for nearly two centuries for a variety of reasons: *demographic* (higher death rate than birth rate of Ladino speakers), *social* (intermarriage, dispersion, assimilation), *cultural* (infusion of foreign words and lifestyle), *contextual* (pressure to adopt the national language of the country of residence, including Israel), and *dispositional* (lack of interest). A contributing factor has been the heavy introduction since the mid-19th century of the French language by the schools of the Alliance Israelite among the educated classes of certain Ladino communities (reflected in my own biography).

The biggest impact on the use of Ladino in recent memory, however, was the Second World War. On the eve of the war, the city of Salonica (or Salonika) in northern Greece had a Jewish population of about 56,000, the overwhelming majority of who were Ladino-speaking Sephardim. About 48,000 of them were deported to Auschwitz in 1945; fewer than 2,000 returned, resulting in a loss of 96 percent.² The Sephardic populations of other, smaller cities in northern Greece, such as Kavala and Didimotikon, and of the Aegean islands of Kos and Rhodes, were also nearly annihilated, as were those of the major Sephardic centers of Sarajevo and Belgrade in the former Yugoslavia.

The total loss of Ladino-speaking Sephardim attributable to the war is not known. It may have been twice as large as the loss of Salonica's Sephardim, that is, in the range of 80,000-100,000. Regardless of its size, the loss represented a big qualitative—not just quantitative—loss for Ladino. Historically, Salonica had been a big Sephardic center culturally and intellectually, rivaling, if not surpassing, Istanbul. Salonica boasted the largest number of Ladino periodicals and other publications. It had had, moreover, a population which identified strongly with its Sephardic heritage—a heritage which the Holocaust victims would have passed on to their descendants. Sadly, no city or area took over the role that Salonica had played for the Sephardic people until the war, except for Israel, whose Sephardi population has surpassed that of Salonica as a result of immigration.

There are no reliable statistics about how many people speak Ladino today. Nor is the number of Sephardim known with any degree of certainty. This is due to serious problems of definition, timing and enumeration. To illustrate the complications that these factors present, there is general agreement that Sephardim are descendants of Jews expelled from Iberia (Spain plus Portugal) in 1492 and 1497, respectively. Some of these went north (to England, Holland and northern Germany), assimilated quickly, preserved a version of Judeo-Portuguese, and never used Ladino. A few headed west, to the Caribbean and South America. Others went to Morocco. Yet not all of Morocco's Jews are strictly speaking Sephardic. Some are of Arab-Berber culture and never laid a foot in Spain. The Sephardim of Morocco speak a distinctive language, called *Haketia*, which is derived from Spanish but differs from Ladino. The plurality of the Iberian Jews ended up in Ottoman lands and developed their Spanish-rooted language in almost total isolation from Spain. Not surprisingly, Sephardim and especially Ladino became closely identified with the Jews of former Ottoman territories. Thus, for analytical purposes, one can think of two categories of Sephardim: a broad one encompassing descendants of all Iberian Jews, no matter where they settled after the Inquisition and the languages they spoke, and a narrower one limited to Ladino speakers, corresponding roughly, as noted, to Ottoman Jews. The latter is my focus.

There has been a tendency to exaggerate the numbers of both the Sephardim and the Ladino speakers in the world for at least three reasons. First, in the absence of a census, which has never been attempted, the available estimates are based on deduction drawn from place of origin, namely, that since their ancestors came from Spain, all Turkinos (Turkish Jews) in Israel speak Ladino, which is not true, as do all Jews of Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, etc., which does not hold either. Second, since the long-term trend in the number of Sephardim and Ladino-speakers among them has been dramatically downward, the latest number always overstates, or lags behind, the reality. In a world of chronic erosion of Sephardim and Ladino, a period as short as twenty years in the date of estimation can make a great difference. Third, and most important, is the problem of what one is measuring, that is, the degree of proficiency in Ladino. Those who speak Ladino well are a fraction of those who claim they do. Speaking well, for the purpose of this essay, means being able to carry out a conversation on daily life but also current events, to relate an experience, tell a story, and contribute an item to a Ladino periodical such as *El Amaneser* or *Aki Yerushalayim*, which I shall introduce later.

For the complete article, access the following, go to Sephardic Horizons [here](#)

"Hidden Manuscripts, Come out!": Seattle Sephardic Legacies highlights Ladino literature full article by Makena Mezistrano at the University of Washington [here](#)

"There are ever so many manuscripts, books and documents, lying hidden among people's possessions, or buried in the communities' archives...Let them call to the hidden manuscripts: come out! And to our ancient Ottoman histories: reveal yourselves!" *Abraham Danon, 1888.*

In his bi-monthly Ottoman Jewish journal *El Progreso/Yosef Da'at* (Edirne, 1888), Abraham Danon called on his readers to unearth their scattered caches of archival texts. As a rabbi and educator, Danon advocated that his community gain access to their history as told through their manuscripts. From his desk in 19th century Edirne, Danon could not have foreseen that more than a century later, his summons would be answered in Seattle.

On June 2nd, 2019, the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies' Sephardic Studies Program at the University of Washington hosted a public program entitled, "Seattle Sephardic Legacies." Sponsored by a National Endowment for the Humanities Common Heritage Grant, the event featured a multimedia lecture by Sephardic Studies Program Chair Devin Naar that highlighted the results of the past five years building the world's largest repository of digitized Ladino texts; an open-house scanning opportunity for people to share and digitize family artifacts; an exhibition featuring the artifacts and stories of a dozen Seattle Sephardic families; and a kosher reception of Sephardic cuisine. The event brought to fruition a 21st century digital manifestation of Danon's call more 130 years ago for those hidden Sephardic manuscripts to finally see the light of day.

Welcoming the nearly 250 attendees—students and faculty from many departments, members of the Seattle Sephardic community, and the general public—to the HUB Lyceum on UW's Seattle campus, Reşat Kasaba, Director of the Jackson School of International Studies, highlighted the centrality of the Sephardic Studies Program and the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies to the work of the Jackson School. He also reflected on his personal interest in the work of the Sephardic Studies program given his own roots in Turkey and his scholarship on the Ottoman Empire.

Naar's multimedia lecture then traced the past and future plans of the Sephardic Studies Digital Collection (SSDC), a cornerstone of the Sephardic Studies Program that has transformed the University of Washington into a world leader in the field. Naar explained that the seeds for the SSDC were planted at the initiative of members of Seattle's Sephardic community. Back in 2011, during one of his first visits to the Capeluto family's Seattle Curtain Manufacturing Company in the Central District to attend a meeting of the **Ladineros**—a Ladino conversation group that now meets at a local retirement home—Naar was approached by one of the participants, Menache Israel, with a mysterious document and a request to decipher it.

A long-time secretary of Seattle's Congregation Ezra Bessaroth, Israel understood Ladino fluently but could not read soletreo, the now defunct Sephardic Hebrew cursive script in which the document was written. As Naar had mastered soletreo to decipher his own family documents and for his dissertation research, he identified the document as an ethical will written in Ladino by Israel's own grandfather, Nissim Israel. Naar began to read the text for Israel who became emotional upon hearing the words of his grandfather transmitted to him seventy years later.

The exchange prompted Naar to inquire with the city's Sephardic institutions about what other kinds of documents—printed or handwritten—were waiting to be discovered. Soon Albert Maimon and Lilly DeJaen, members of Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation, led Naar



to what became known as “the Safeway archives,” a collection of rare books stored in Safeway shopping bags in the synagogue storage room. Among the items were the notebooks of the well-known journalist and teacher **Albert Levy** as well as one of the oldest texts yet to be uncovered: *Sefer Shevet Musar*, a book of Jewish ethics in Ladino (Istanbul, 1741). Naar soon connected with Richard Adatto, son of **Albert Adatto**, a pioneer in the field of Sephardic Studies, who shared his father’s meticulously preserved collection of hundreds of Ladino books with accompanying notes penned by Albert Adatto himself.

These private collections, plus many smaller collections or single items from other individuals shared by over eighty community members, formed the basis for the first 800 items in the collection. Since then, thanks to support from the Sephardic Studies Founders Circle, and under the supervision of Sephardic Studies Research Coordinator **Ty Alhadeff**, the program has cataloged nearly 2,050 items and has digitized over 400 printed titles that now comprise the **Sephardic Studies Digital Collection** (SSDC). Thanks to the collaboration of the University of Washington Libraries, a subset of these texts are now available via the UW Libraries Digital Collections portal.

Using data visualizations created by Benjamin Lee, a PhD candidate in computer science and engineering at the UW, Naar presented a statistical overview of the digitized texts in the SSDC. He pointed out some perhaps unsuspecting features of the collection: For one, most of the digitized texts—which include prayer books, bibles, and novels, among other categories—were published in the historic centers of Sephardic culture like **Izmir**, **Istanbul**, and **Salonica**. Yet surprisingly, **Vienna** produced the next highest volume of published Ladino books collected in Seattle despite the city being known as a center of Ashkenazi Jews and never having been part of the Ottoman Empire. Naar’s presentation also showed how items in the SSDC challenge long-standing assumptions and prejudices about Ladino literature. Naar pointed to Heinrich Graetz, one of the most famous Jewish historians of the 19th century, who claimed that Jews who settled in the Ottoman Empire after the expulsion from Spain “did not produce a single great genius who originated ideas to stimulate future ages, nor mark out a new thought for men of average intelligence.” Similarly dismissive assertions have continued into the 21st century; can anyone today name a famous Ladino novelist?

Naar argued that Sephardic Jews did indeed produce a wide range of literature in Ladino over the past centuries. The problem is not that it does not exist; rather, the problem is that no one ever tried to look for it and study it systematically. In order for such studies to be possible and for perceptions of Ladino culture to change, Ladino literature has to be made accessible—which is precisely the goal of the SSDC.

As an example, Naar highlighted the writings of Elia Karmona, one of the most prolific Ladino novelists of the 20th century with more than 40 novels to his credit. That the SSDC houses more than a dozen of Karmona’s works is a testament to the fact that the books were apparently so treasured and enjoyed by Karmona’s readers that they brought them all the way to Seattle!

“Instead of burying the Ladino culture...Sephardic Jews [spurred by Naar’s call] dug through their belongings for something bigger than them, something that will outlive all of them and hopefully inform future generations that hopefully will not be lost,” said Nazreth Abraham, one of Naar’s undergraduate students who attended the event.

The program has completed a series of successful digitization projects, and Naar indicated that next steps will include deeper research and translation of Ladino materials as well as greater dissemination of the findings, all toward the goal of making Ladino texts and their translations more accessible to scholars, students, and the general public.

Attendees at the Seattle Sephardic Legacies event got an initial taste of SSDC’s contents and the stories these artifacts tell about



Ladino language, culture, and community. Using scans of photos, books, stamps, passports, and other documents contributed to the collection, Ty Alhadeff and I prepared thirteen exhibition panels profiling Seattle Sephardic families and their artifacts. Each panels highlighted a noteworthy family with roots in the Ottoman Empire who came to Seattle in the early- to mid-twentieth century. Those profiled included: Albert Adatto and Emma Adatto Schlesinger; David and Kaden Alhadeff; Leo and Liza Azose; Jack and Louise Azose; Reverend David J. Behar; Reverend Samuel and Aliza Benaroya; Henry and Samhoula Benezra; Joseph and Rachel Benoliel; Bension "Sam" and Lucy Maimon; Rabbi Solomon Maimon; Professor David Romey; Reverend Morris and Esther Scharhon; and Rachel Shemarya. Many attendees were direct descendants of those highlighted on the panels. As guests moved through the exhibition, they stopped to take photos next to their family posters. Many were related to multiple families profiled. Some were quite close generationally, like Al Maimon and his sister Esther Normand who are children of Sam and Lucy Maimon. Others were great-grandchildren, like Miri Azose Tilson, who came with her grandfather Mo Azose and posed next to the panel of Mo's parents, **Leo and Liza**. Tilson is also related to Reverend Morris and Esther Scharhon, also profiled in the exhibition, who were her paternal grandmother's parents.

For the many who have missed Rabbi Gershon Harris' monthly religious commentary, we apologize. He has been ill but is recovering well and should be able to write an article for our October issue. Our prayers are with Rabbi Harris.

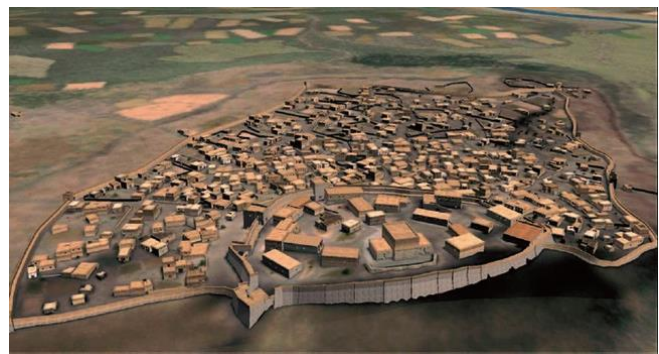
News of Interest

New Discoveries at Troy

Ancient City of Troy may have been founded 600 years earlier than thought, new archaeological findings show. Daily Sabah (Istanbul) 8/21/2019

New discoveries from excavations at the ancient city Troy in Turkey's northwestern Çanakkale province suggest the area may have been used as a settlement more than six centuries earlier than previously known, according to archeologists.

Rüstem Aslan from the Archeology Department of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (ÇOMU) said that the ancient city of Troy was destroyed and re-established many times due to war, fires, and earthquakes. Within the scope of the excavation works carried out in the city in the south of the Dardanelles over 156 years, a total of 10 layers of settlements were discovered, with each layer named and numbered from Troy I to Troy XI. Aslan said this year they came across a new layer which they decided to call Troy 0.



"We found traces of burns, pottery and wooden beams in the Troy 0 layer," Aslan said, adding that these remnants were of great importance for the founding history of Troy.

"This shows that the settlement's history dates back to some 5,500 years before our day," Aslan said. Troy was most likely founded around the year 3,500 B.C., the new findings in the Troy 0 layer show, he added.

He said the previously unearthed layers of the settlements belonged to a period between 3000 B.C. and 1300 A.D., from ancient Greek to Byzantine times.

Turkey's government declared 2018 the "Year of Troy" in honor of the 20th anniversary of the ancient city's recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hundreds of thousands of guests, including celebrities, have visited the site this year to see the newly-opened Troy Museum and take part in cultural and historical activities.

Located on the mounds of Hisarlık and overlooking the Turkish Aegean coastal plain, the 4,000-year-old ancient city of Troy is one of the most famous archeological sites in the world. First excavations at the ancient city were undertaken in 1870 by German businessman Heinrich Schliemann, who is now regarded among the pioneers of archeology.

The historic setting of the Greek Trojan War in which Spartan and Achaean warriors from Greece besieged the city in 13th century B.C. was immortalized by the Greek poet Homer in his epic poem The Illiad.

Cuba

Meet the Jews of Havana: The Small but Thriving Cuban Community You Didn't Know Existed

Full article by Harry D. Wall in Haaretz [here](#)

A tightly-knit Jewish community whose members escaped the Spanish Inquisition and survived Castro's revolution is there to stay, despite the challenges and uncertain future on the island

HAVANA — Some 1,200 people living in the capital of Cuba identify as Jewish. Much like the city itself, this small but tight-knit community is characterized by many contrasts: Rich in spirit, it is bereft of basic services like quality health care and household goods.

A walk through the city feels like a journey back in time. The roads are filled with vintage American cars that speed by magnificent colonial buildings, situated in dilapidated neighborhoods. But while Havana may appear caught in a time warp, its Jewish community is experiencing an awakening after a long and uncertain period.

The Jews of Cuba "struggled to survive after the revolution," says Mayra Levy, the president of Havana's Hebrew Sephardic Center. About 95 percent of Cuba's Jews — some 15,000 people — left the island in 1959, following Fidel Castro's revolution against dictator Fulgencio Batista. The Jewish exodus was fueled by Castro's attacks on capitalism, in which Jews, mostly merchants and businessmen, were visibly entrenched.

Levy explains that in the years following the regime change, the community lacked leadership. Eventually it started to take shape again. "Small as we are, we grew and are today vibrant, maintaining our traditions and activities," she says.



One community member whose family remained in Cuba is Fidel Babani Leon. Born in 1959 and named after the revolution's famous leader, Leon became a bodyguard for Castro. An expert on Cuba's Jewish history, he takes Haaretz on a tour of its former and current Jewish landmarks.

(Note: see additional article on Jewish Cemetery)

During a drive to the Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of town, Leon explains that the original Jews arrived on the Caribbean island in the 15th century. They were conversos: individuals who converted to Roman Catholicism in their flight from the Spanish Inquisition.

Leon says the first Jew to set foot on the island was Luis de Torres (born Yosef ben Levy Ha-Ivri). An explorer and translator, Torres is said to have sailed with Italian explorer Christopher Columbus on his iconic Santa Maria ship, arriving in Cuba on November 2, 1492.

In his wake came more Jews in three major streams of immigration that account for the present-day population: First were American Jews, who settled in Cuba after the Spanish-American War of 1898. In the early 20th century, Sephardim arrived from Turkey, escaping the Balkan Wars. Leon, whose family was among those who left Ottoman Turkey for Cuba in 1910, explains that Sephardic Jews' assimilation was easier because they spoke Ladino (a Judaeo-Spanish language deriving from Old Spanish).

Last to arrive, beginning in the 1920s, were Eastern European Jews. Many of them were trying to escape the Nazis and hoped to be admitted to the United States.

For the most part, most modern Jews in Cuba are the offspring of intermarriage couples. However, most strongly identify as Jews, with many active in religious and cultural life. According to Leon, they rarely experience anti-Semitism. "Jews were very lucky to find in Cuba a welcoming place to live," he says. Despite banning religion on the island and aligning with the Soviet Union against Israel, Castro allowed the practice of Judaism. He claimed to be a descent of conversos himself, which may have influenced his policy. Eventually, in 1992, he allowed the community to rebuild its religious institutions following the relaxation of restrictions.

Leon takes us to the Patronato, the focus of Jewish life in Havana. It is a modern and spacious building, with a facade dominated by a large white arch. Located in the upscale Veldado neighborhood, the Patronato houses Havana's main synagogue and Jewish community center, where religious services and holiday events take place. It is also home to a Sunday school where 60 children learn, and offers cultural programs such as Israeli folk dancing — a popular attraction for the young.

"I started coming when I was 10 years old, mainly because of the Israeli folk dancing," says Suzanna Santana Sadi, 17, who leads the Jewish youth movement in Cuba. "It's amazing how it draws us together, and with Jews all over the world."

Suzanna Santa Sadi, 17, the leader of the Jewish Youth Movement in Cuba. Harry D. Wall

Leon takes us through Old Havana to the historic Jewish Quarter, located close to the city's port. Once teeming with Jewish-owned shops, kosher restaurants, synagogues and Jewish schools, it was a popular destination for cruise ships that would dock nearby.

The neighborhood is run-down today, with few establishments still operating. The former kosher bakery La Flor de Berlin is now a government-owned store, meagerly stocked with bread and other baked goods that are provided with ration cards. Next to it stands the Adath Israel Synagogue, the only Orthodox synagogue that remained after the revolution. There is also a Holocaust memorial — a large six-branch candalabra sculpture, surrounded by an iron gate.

The neighborhood is home to two other buildings that draw the attention of Jewish travelers. One is the former Hotel Luz, where Jewish immigrants stayed when they arrived on the island until they could find permanent housing. The other is a newish hotel called Raquel, in a renovated Art Nouveau building. It was once a government

office and was converted into a hotel with the purpose of attracting a Jewish clientele. The interior is decorated with Jewish symbols, the restaurant serves Jewish food and a Judaica shop operates on the premises, where each of the 25 rooms is named after an ancient Jewish hero. Hotel Raquel has been off-limits to American citizens since 2017 because the United States placed it on its list of restricted properties tied to the Cuban government.

The U.S. embargo against Cuba, tightened since President Donald Trump assumed office, has impacted the island's Jewry as much as the general Cuban population. Poverty, lack of basic commodities and rationing prevail. However, there is a steady influx of Jewish tourism. North American visitors are attracted by the proximity of the island, as well as its old-fashioned and exotic character. Many U.S. Jews travel to the island on the "people to people" exemption that allows for religious and educational trips. They often bring religious objects, medicine and humanitarian support that has helped sustain the community. However, the Trump administration is also looking to tighten that particular loophole.

Havana's Jews receive support from the nonprofit American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and other American and Canadian Jewish organizations that provide medications, kosher and other foods, assistance to the elderly and the well-attended Shabbat dinner at the Patronato that is free for all members of the community. Because there is no full-time clergy, the JDC arranges visits of rabbis who arrive — usually from Chile or Argentina — to conduct holiday services and life-cycle events. On a typical Shabbat, it is the youth who lead services.

So what does the future hold for Cuba's Jews? Mayra Levy says she is concerned about the community's prospects. "We have a very fragile equilibrium," she says. Leon, however, is much more optimistic. "There will always be Jews here," he states. "The flame of Judaism in Cuba will never go out."

Jewish Cemetery of Cuba

City of Havana restoring oldest Jewish cemetery in Cuba
Full article by Marcy Oster in JTA [here](#)

The oldest Jewish cemetery in Cuba is undergoing rehabilitation. The Havana burial ground is being restored as part of an initiative by the city historian's office ahead of the 500th anniversary of the Cuban capital's founding, which will be marked in November, The Associated Press reported.

In addition to the cemetery, located in the Guanabacoa neighborhood on Havana's east side, the city is repaving streets, cleaning monuments and restoring historic sites.

The cemetery has deteriorated over many years, as the Jewish community was unable to raise the \$200,000 needed to refurbish the entire ground. Jews in the United States have contributed to the upkeep of some burial plots, according to the report, citing David Prinstein, vice president of the Hebrew Board of Cuba. There are about 1,100 grave sites in the cemetery, according to the report. Fifty have been repaired and 150 more are scheduled for repairs before the end of the year. The room used for tahara, the ritual washing of the body according to Jewish burial rites, also has been refurbished.

The historian's office did not tell AP the total amount that will be spent on the restoration.

Majorca

The New Yorker Reviving Jewish Life on a Holiday Island

Full article by Miriam Annenberg in BBC News [here](#)

An American who landed in Majorca five years ago soon found himself working to revive the Mediterranean island's Jewish community - with the help of families forced to convert from Judaism to Christianity 500 years ago.

When Dani Rotstein arrived in Palma in 2014, he was planning only a short break from the crowds and chaos of New York City. But when he fell in love with a Catalan woman he decided to stay; the pair got married in May 2017. Dani was very happy, but something was missing. If Majorca was to become his permanent home, he needed to find a Jewish community - and Majorca's Jews had been burned, exiled or forcibly converted during the Spanish Inquisition.



"I literally came to Majorca thinking I would never find anyone Jewish or anything Jewish," Dani says. By the time he got married, he already knew there was Jewish life on Majorca. There was a synagogue, anyway, though it came to life only for Friday-evening prayers, and even then struggled to attract the necessary 10 men. Jewish families on the island rarely came together for Shabbat dinners or other Jewish holidays. It was hard for Dani to imagine raising his family under conditions so different from those of his own New Jersey childhood. So he began searching for solutions.

Around the same time, Toni Pinya found himself on a journey of a different kind. Unlike Dani, a lifelong Jew new to Majorca, Toni was a lifelong Majorcan new to Judaism.

Toni is a Chueta, one of roughly 20,000 descendants of the Jews forcibly converted during the Inquisition. Like most Chuetas, Toni grew up Christian, but although his family had been Catholic for generations, Majorcans still treated him differently - his Chueta surname set him apart. His classmates bullied him and made fun of his heritage. "If a girl were to date a Chueta, her parents would say, 'He's the one who killed Jesus Christ,'" he says.

At the age of 12, Toni gave up on religion altogether. But in middle age he grew interested in exploring his Jewish roots.

As Dani settled into life in Majorca, he began learning about its hidden Jewish history. He'd never heard of the Chuetas, even though his mother taught Jewish education. "I take it personally," he says. "I'm like, 'How has this incredible story not made it out of the island, or to Spain for that matter?'"

The first attack on Palma's Jewish quarter, in 1391, killed between 100 and 300 Jews. Later, as the Inquisition gathered momentum, the majority of Jewish Majorcans converted under duress, though many continued practising Judaism in secret.

Hundreds of these converts were tortured and killed throughout the 1400s and 1500s. When 37 Jews tried to escape by boat in 1688, they were captured. After three years of torture, Inquisitors killed them in 1691, burning three alive at the stake. They hung a list of their surnames in the Santo Domingo Convent for all to see (which stayed up until 1820). Their descendants became known as the Chuetas - from the Catalan word meaning bacon.

In addition to learning about the Chuetas, Dani discovered that the existing Jewish community in Majorca was fractured. Over the years, control of the synagogue had changed hands. British expats had given way to

Orthodox Jews, and then to Sephardic Jews, each with their own style of prayer. Among the worshippers were Sephardim and Ashkenazi, Orthodox and Reform, with their various different traditions. There was no consensus about which prayers to include, the participation of women, or the role of the synagogue in organizing social events - and no rabbi to resolve tensions. People attended weekly services, but that was it. Dani also learned that not long previously Palma had held a half-day Limud - a Jewish learning conference open to all, encompassing religion, culture and tradition. He thought more of this could be what Majorca needed. He contacted organizer Karen Kochmann with a proposition: how did she feel about putting on a full, weekend-long event with him in 2018, in order to bring everyone together, Chuetas included? "I said, 'We're going to do Limud,'" Dani says. "We just did it - somehow, somehow."

So Majorca's diverse Jewish community came together for a weekend. And a number of Chuetas told their stories, including Toni, who talked about his own unusual journey to Judaism.

As a professional chef, Toni enjoys learning the history behind the things he cooks. He can trace the origins of popular Majorcan dishes back to the eras of Roman and Muslim rule on the island. Since there is evidence of Jews on Majorca as early as the Fourth Century, he knew Jewish food must have existed, too. But when he went looking for these recipes, he failed. "There was nothing there," he says. "Everything was erased."

His quest to understand Jewish cuisine led him to the Torah, and he was surprised to find that some of his grandmother's cooking habits - the distinctive way she killed animals, her avoidance of pork or pork fat, and the words she uttered over certain foods before eating - all were echoed in the traditional rules of cooking found in the Torah and other religious texts. He believes his family had kept these traditions alive for generations without remembering where they came from.



This wasn't the case in all Chueta families. Some not only cooked pork, but cooked it outside, so that everyone could see. It was one of many ways they worked hard to prove their devotion to Christianity, even centuries after their families had converted. Some also opened their windows wide as they performed housework on Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath. In Catalan, the phrase "to work on Saturday" is an idiomatic way of referring to housework, which some suspect has its origins in this practice. Toni's own family showed its commitment by rarely missing a church service. "As I grew up, I got so tired of it," he says, "tired of having to prove myself." As Spain evolved after the death in 1975 of the dictator, Gen Francisco Franco, foreign tourists began flocking to Majorca. In time, German and British Jews put down roots, raised money and opened a synagogue - watched carefully by some Chuetas. "It sparked their curiosity," Toni says.

Continue reading the full article [here](#)

Praising the Mediterranean Greek Diet

According to a statement issued by the Academy of Athens on Thursday, scientists have now successfully decoded the DNA of the famous Greek Feta cheese.

Scientists from the Biomedical Research Foundation of the Academy of Athens studied a wide variety of feta cheese produced all across the nation of Greece in an effort to quantify the nutritional specifics of the popular Greek cheese.



According to the findings, feta has 489 different types of protein, making it one of the most protein-rich cheese varieties in the entire world.

Feta cheese is a white cheese made in Greece from sheep's milk, but it can also be made from a mixture of sheep and goat's milk.

According to the European Union's law regarding products' "protected designation of origin", feta must be produced by using exclusively whole sheep's milk, or a blend of sheep's and goat's milk. The goat's milk can never be more than 30 percent of the total.

Greece won a long legal battle with Denmark in 2002 over the brand name "Feta". Since then, every package of cheese sold inside the European Union that bears the name "feta" must meet specific standards and be produced exclusively in Greece.

Herbs in Greek Cooking

The Everlasting Traditions of Herbal Medicine in Ancient Greece – Part I

Full article by Maria Christodoulou in the National Herald [here](#)

The practice of herbal medicine in antiquity was not separate from everyday living; it was an integral part of every custom, celebration, and recipe throughout the ancient world. In ancient Greek mythology, there are countless associations between ancient gods and medicinal plants, many of which have names related to their Greek origin.

Sacred ceremonies involved the use of both culinary and medicinal herbs for secret recipes while ancient scholars wrote extensively on their uses for both serious and acute illnesses. Ancient kings sought to extend their empires not only to have unlimited access to gold and other highly coveted minerals, but also to the valuable treasures of the plant world – herbs, spices, perfumes, and incense – to ensure the health of their civilization, and thus, a long-lasting legacy.

The ancient Greeks are most notably known for their contributions to modern medicine through the teachings of Hippocrates (460-370 BCE) known as the father of modern medicine and whose Hippocratic Oath continues to bind modern-day physicians to "first do no harm."



To explain how the body became sick, he applied the theory of the four bodily humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. When these were balanced, good health was enjoyed; whereas disease and illness resulted from an imbalance of one or more of these bodily substances. His infamous quote, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food," truly reflected the integral role of plants and their healing powers in maintaining a thriving ancient civilization.

Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE), who wrote extensively on the diversity of plants and animals, expanded the theory of the four humors to correspond to the four elements of fire, air, water, and earth. Each of these elements have qualities of hot or cold and wet or dry, and corresponded accordingly: fire is hot and dry, air is hot and wet, water is cold and wet, and earth is cold and dry.

These qualities were then related to the four humors of the body: blood as air, phlegm as water, yellow bile as fire, and black bile as earth. Ancient physicians sought to identify the imbalances in the body according to the qualities exhibited by the patient, and herbal medicine was administered to help restore the body to its natural balanced state. Take, for example, the qualities of oregano (hot and dry) and imagine how critical it could be to heal someone suffering from a cold and congested state. (If you've ever taken oil of oregano to stave off a cold, you'll more easily understand this concept.)

Another theory employed during ancient times and which could possibly explain the origins of how people first understood the medicinal properties of plants was the Doctrine of Signatures. This theory, which continues to be referenced in present day, states that plants resembling parts of the human body or resembling their action on the body hold curative properties for that body part. Examine the shape of a walnut and notice its similarity to the shape of the human brain.

Or look at the bright yellow flowers of St. John's Wort and imagine how it brings light to the soul, dispelling depression and anxiety. Ancient civilizations did not separate the divine world from the natural world, and therefore, the design of medicinal plants was the result of mystical and sacred intentions. Intertwining theology and natural sciences, a practice that would continue well into the Middle Ages, was a central aspect of medical thought and an important component for healing.

While these ancient theories are no longer used in modern medicine, they continue to remain a critical resource to understanding how people once understood the natural world and how they sought to learn about the human body without the modern techniques we now have. Two notable ancient Greek writers, Theophrastus of Lesbos (372-286 BCE) and Dioscorides of Asia Minor (40-90 AD), propelled the study of natural history and herbal medicine through the wide distribution of their surviving texts, *Enquiry into Plants* and *De Materia Medica*, respectively.

As a student of both Plato and Aristotle, Theophrastus was heavily influenced by his teachers and wrote his nine-volume book, *Enquiry into Plants*, to provide detailed descriptions of the natural environment, including the classification and identification of varieties of trees, shrubs, and plants. Today he is considered the father of botany.

Dioscorides, the ancient scholar most celebrated for his contribution to the study of herbal medicine, was a medical botanist and Greek physician in the Roman army who achieved world-renown fame with the publication of *De Materia Medica*. His five-volume series, Latin for "On Medical Material" or in ancient Greek as *Περὶ ὕλης ἱατρικῆς*, describes approximately 600 plants for more than 1,000 traditional medicines and would become the basis of European and Western pharmacopeia for centuries after.

It was subsequently translated into Latin, Arabic, Italian, German, Spanish, French, and finally into English in the 1600s. For the first time in known history, herbal medicine was documented and distributed across the ancient world and the publication would be extensively referenced for the following 1,500 years.

These records provide an exciting and comprehensive resource not only for herbalists interested in the traditional and folk use of plants, but also for botanists, environmentalists, archaeologists, and historians, as well as for those whose Greek ancestors wove these practices into their family customs.

Maria Christodoulou is a Clinical Herbalist based in Brooklyn, NY. She is available for private consultations to discuss herbal remedies for a variety of symptoms and ailments. This article is part of her research for a book on herbal remedies in the ancient Mediterranean. She can be contacted directly at maria@blisswithoutbother.com.

We are so proud of Debby Segura, a participant on the 2019 Tour to Jewish Italy and Greece hosted by the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry. Debby is hosting a Rosh Hashana cooking class in Los Angeles.



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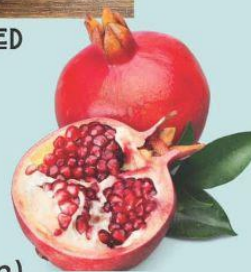
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So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

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.

Some of our major donations have been generous bequests, which have enabled us to complete major work in our synagogue/museum. Do remember us in your will. Your legacy will be present in our legacy.

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.



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Kehila Kedosha Janina

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