



March 2015 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

We wish all our Jewish readers a Happy Purim. We invite you to join us for Erev Purim on Wednesday, March 4th for the traditional Romaniote reading of the Megillah Esther.

See attachment for Purim and Pessah schedule.

**From the collection of
Kehila Kedosha Janina
Donated by Henry
Watkin from the Ganis
family**



This issue is dedicated to the Zagha and Sabba families. This is part of our new chapter with our e-newsletters, highlighting a prominent family in our community. The Zagha and the Sabba families have played a prominent role in the Romaniote community in New York and all Zaghas and Sabbas are invited to a special Shabbat on March 28th.



**Beatrice and Eli Zagha in Central Park
April 26, 1942**

Look for the story of these families at the end of our newsletter. If you want to sponsor your family in an upcoming Shabbat, contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

This newsletter, our 73rd 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 6000 households worldwide, with our community of 'friends' continually growing with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

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

Passings

~This month we send our condolences to Miriam Levine on the passing of her son, Zadik (Dick) Levine at the age of 51. Zadik was the brother of Ivy Scher and Mark Levine, grandson of Betty Confino and Morris (Willie) Askinazi, great grandson of Anna Mazza and Zadick (Charlie) Askinazi, and great-great grandson of Meyer and Esther Mazza.

~We send our condolences to the family of Beverly Askinazi Griffenberg who passed away on February 23, 2015 at the age of 68. Beverly was born in NYC on April 24, 1947, the daughter of Ioanniotes Edward and Sarah Attas Askinazi (Sarah is the sister of Nissim Attas). Beverly was the maternal granddaughter of Chaim and Stamoula Attas, and paternal granddaughter of Max and Rifkoula (Beckie) Askinazi (whom Beverly was named for). Beverly spent her early years living at 283 Broome Street, across diagonally from her Synagogue the Kehila Kedosha Janina. Beverly leaves behind her Mom Sarah Attas-Askinazi, her brother Norman Askinazi, her husband Larry Griffenberg, children Neil Griffenberg and Stacey Griffenberg-Munoz and their spouses. As a Nona Beverly has five grandchildren whom she adored. Beverly was a most devoted old school family girl. She was blessed with good looks, a good family, and artistic talents, the ultimate KOUKLA. She will be missed by all she leaves behind. (Note: this obituary was written with love by her cousin, Rose Attas Ferrari.)



Beverly Askinazi Griffenberg and Larry Griffenberg

~Last month we lost Oriel Jacobs, a Holocaust survivor and one of the sweetest men you could ever meet. He would have turned 100 on March 15th. His family and friends would like you to know that those who wish to make a donation in his memory can do so by donating to Kehila Kedosha Janina and sending their check to 280 Broome Street, NY, NY 10002 (request from Estelle Acerno, Oriel Jacob's grand-niece).

Simcha

~ We welcome the newest addition to the Yanniote world, another Colchamiro descendant is born: the daughter of Lisa Barlow, granddaughter of Audrey and Mark Schilt, great granddaughter of Jean Colchamiro Saltzman (who will soon be celebrating her 102nd birthday!), great-great granddaughter of Elias and Nancy Colchamiro (both of blessed memory) and the great-great-great granddaughter of Jessoula and Rachel Colchamiro (both of blessed memory).

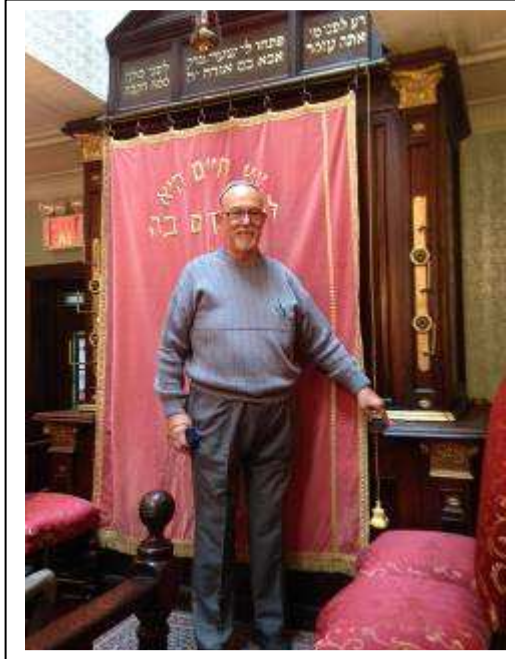


~We congratulate Hy and Betty Myones on their 69th wedding anniversary.



Aikoi Mas, Los Muestros (our own) come home

~ In February, we were honored with visitors, Aikoi Mas, Los Muestros (our own). Willie Osmo, from Australia. Willie's family came from Corfu and he joined us in Greece in 2002 for the unveiling of a memorial plaque in the synagogue in Corfu, along with Corfiotes from around the world. Willie will be coming to Greece with us again this year. We are overjoyed.



~ We were overjoyed to see Len Neuhaus (Vice President of the Kehila Kedosha Janina Board of Trustees) and his wife, Beth, visiting in February. They, too, will be with us in Greece this year.



Visitors continue to flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

~Not even the coldest February in recent history kept visitors away from Kehila Kedosha Janina.



Kjell Jarmlinger and his daughter Jeanette. Kjell was visiting his daughter, coming from Norway. He made a special visit to KKJ because his mother-in-law, now deceased, was a survivor of the Holocaust from Ioannina. His mother-in-law was born Esther Skinios. Her whole family perished in the Holocaust and they are trying to find about more about the Skinios family. Anyone who has any information should contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.



Joshua Cohen



NYC Urban Fellows
Our Trustee, Andrew Marcus, is an Urban Fellow

Upcoming Museum Events

On March 29th Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored to welcome Dominick Porto who will do a presentation on the Jews of Calabria and the renaissance of Jewish life in the region.



Sign in former Jewish neighborhood in Calabria



Sign with Hebrew letters in Gerace in Reggio Calabria

Date: March 29, 2015

Time 2:00

Where: Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, NYC

Admission: Free-Open to General Public Refreshments served

Annual Commemoration of Holocaust Remembrance Day in New York City

Reported by Andrew Marcus, member of the Board of Trustees of Kehila Kedosha Janina

Despite the frigid snow and ice, there was a very strong and warm community in attendance that evening, and this demonstrated so many people's dedication and commitment to this important commemoration. Consul General Georgios Iliopoulos delivered moving and important welcoming remarks and reminded the assembly that Greece has the tragic distinction of losing the greatest percentage of its Jewish community in the Holocaust than any other country in Europe. Afterwards, Rabbi Martin A. Cohen (Professor of Jewish History at Hebrew Union College) delivered passionate remarks about the importance of remembering this tragic part of Greek Jewish history and moving forward in life in honor of those who perished. Rabbi Cohen then introduced a Cantorial student from Hebrew Union College who recited the 23rd Psalm and a memorial prayer in very touching melodies. The main presentation of the evening was given by Dr. Katherine Fleming (Vice Chancellor and Deputy Provost of NYU, as well as the Alexander S. Onassis Professor of Hellenic Culture and Civilization in the Department of History, and she is also the Chairman of the Board of the University of Pireaus). Her presentation was entitled "Glykia mou Saloniki: Memories of Greece" and was truly touching. Dr. Fleming presented in great detail the fervent attachment that Greek Jews held to their homeland of Greece, and highlight this love of Greece with quotes from letters written by Greek Jews in Auschwitz during the war that incredibly describe their yearning to return to their beloved motherland. She also discussed how those Greek Jews who survived the war were forced to deal with their longing and nostalgia for the Greece and the communities they grew up with after utter devastation and destruction at the hands of the Nazis. Dr. Fleming argued that today Greek Jews continue to be fiercely proud of their Greek nationality and heritage (those who live in Greece as well as those

who live in NYC and Israel) and she closed her presentation with an incredibly stirring song by Yehuda Poliker (a famous musician in Israel who is the son of Greek Jewish Holocaust survivors from Salonika). In the song "Wait for Me, Salonika" he sings how the Greek Jews long to return to their home of Salonika and Greece. Finally, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios delivered closing remarks. As always, Archbishop Demetrios spoke so upliftingly and inspirationally about the importance of the evening, the intense similarities and connections between Greek and Jewish cultures and Orthodox/Jewish faith, and the need to continue to remember these horrific events so that we can lead forward to a more optimistic and respectful society.



**Joel Negrin, Consul General Georgios Iliopoulos
and Marvin Marcus, President of KKJ**



**Andrew Marcus, His Eminence Archbishop
Demetrios and Marvin Marcus**

Upcoming Events of Interest in New York City

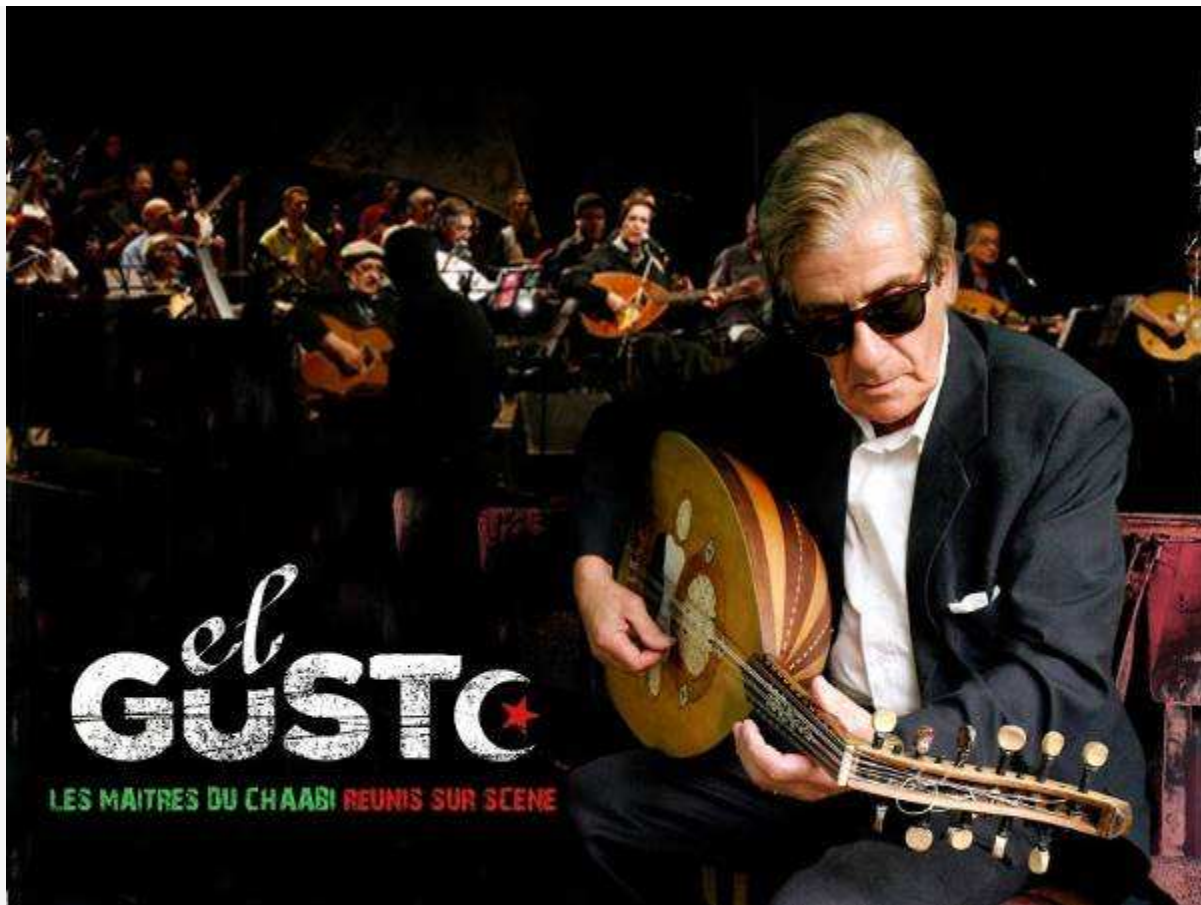
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MARCH 12-19, 2015

NEW YORK SEPHARDIC JEWISH 18TH ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL



**ASF's Film Festival (12-19 March) Celebrates
Sephardi Communities Around the World,
Investigates Anti-Semitism in France and
Argentina, includes Opening Night Performance
by International Recording Star Enrico Macias**



*The complete list of selected films with
dates, times, ticket, donor & sponsorship
information can be found
at www.NYSephardiFilmFestival.org*

News From Greece

WWII reparations – Greece's other dispute with Germany
From Ekathermirini



As Berlin and Athens lock horns over debt relief, Greece's claim that Germany has never compensated it for all the damage wrought by the Nazis during World War II is again straining ties.

Greece's new Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, whose radical left party swept to power last month promising to reverse spending cuts imposed under the indebted country's rescue package, has vowed to tackle the long-simmering dispute.

But he is likely to run up against a firm "no" from Europe's biggest economy, which argues that Berlin does not owe it a cent and that the historic issue has long been closed.

"Nearly 70 years after the end of World War

II, the question of reparations has lost legitimacy", a German finance ministry spokesman said recently.

The issue of wartime reparation claims over Germany's four-year occupation of Greece, which ruined the country financially and left thousands dead, has complicated relations between Athens and Berlin for decades.

Now, with Greece struggling under more than 300 billion euros (\$340 billion) of debt, calculations that Athens is still owed just over half that amount, or 162 billion euros left over from the war, is sure to touch a nerve.

Tsipras's SYRIZA party and its unlikely coalition partner, the nationalist Independent Greeks party led by Panos Kammenos, plan to re-open the claim, whose impact is highly symbolic in Germany for harking back to its darkest chapter.

Haunted by its Nazi past, Germany prides itself on its efforts to come to terms with its history.

Tsipras, a former Communist, lost no time after his election victory in laying flowers at a memorial near Athens where dozens of Greek leftists were executed by German occupation troops in 1944. His finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis, during a bruising first visit last week to Germany, stressed that it had not been "a sign towards Germany" but rather was targeted against Greece's neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party, now the country's third-biggest political force. During his election campaign, Tsipras said he would press the "unfulfilled right" to reparations for a "people who bled and paid heavily for the brutality of Nazism".

Greece's occupation by the Nazis from 1941 was one of the most bloody in Europe, with Hitler's forces rampaging, pillaging and shooting, and encountering a nation that fiercely resisted.

The Nazi regime ended up bleeding Greece dry. The Third Reich forced the Greek central bank to loan it 476 million Reichsmarks which has never been reimbursed.

A German Bundestag lower house of parliament report in 2012 put the value of the loan at \$8.25 billion. In Greece, its estimated value is higher, at 11 billion euros, according to a confidential report to the finance ministry and reported by the To Vima newspaper in January.

After Germany's capitulation and the end of the war, the United States' main concern was to halt any advance by the communists in Greece's civil war.

It asked the Greek government, keen for economic support under the Marshall Plan -- the US aid package to rebuild Europe after World War II -- to drop its reparation claims until the signing of a peace treaty.

Germany rebuilt itself and paid practically nothing to its former enemies "which obviously helped the German economic miracle hugely" in the post-war period, according to an analysis by Rabobank. Albrecht Ritschl, a professor of economic history, said in an interview with Germany's Spiegel news weekly in 2011 that "Germany has been the 20th century's worst payer of debts". Just before German reunification in 1990, the two former Germany's signed a treaty with the Allies, considered as the formal end of World War II. Although the document, which was approved by Greece among others, was not officially termed a peace treaty, for Berlin it effectively drew a line under possible future claims for war reparations.

Not so, though, for former resistance icon Manolis Glezos, who has been pressing for Germany to settle up for decades. The issue has a "political and moral dimension", says the nonagenarian who, at the age of 18, took down the Nazi flag from atop the Acropolis. And last year, Greek President Karolos Papoulias, another veteran of the Greek resistance, took the opportunity during a visit by his German counterpart Joachim Gauck to call for negotiations on the issue to be opened quickly.

**"You know that I can't give you any other response than to say that the legal path is closed," Gauck said, before solemnly asking Greece to forgive Germany for a heinous Nazi crime committed at the height of the war. [AFP]
From Ekathimerini February 25, 2014**

News from Jewish Greece

Ioannina

Update on the Jewish Cemetery in Ioannina. I am printing the following letter from the President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, Moses Eliasaf. We would like those who gave to know how important it was to the community, and to encourage those who have not yet given to do so. Only by our giving will the small community be able to repair the cemetery.

Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue will continue to spearhead a drive to raise money for repairs (estimated at over \$50,000). This is not the first time we have done this. For those of you living in the United States, send your checks to Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue, 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002. The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry will absorb the costs of bank transfers so that every dollar raised will go directly to the Jewish Community of Ioannina. For those of you outside the United States who wish to make bank transfers directly to the Jewish Community of Ioannina, contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net and we will send you the bank information for the community in Ioannina.

We sincerely thank those who have already given. A Facebook and e-mail campaign has raised over \$15,000 and we recently sent a bank transfer of \$10,000 to the Community, but we still need so much more. Please encourage your family and friends who have not yet given to do so.

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

JEWISH COMMUNITY OF IOANNINA

Joseph Eligia 18B
Phone number: +30-2651-0-25195
Fax number: +30-2651-0-25195
e-mail: eki1@otenet.gr

Ioannina, 16/2/2015
Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos
Museum Director
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street
NYC, NY 10002

Dear Marcia,

On behalf of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, I would like to thank you, the Kehila Kedosha Jannina, the Sisterhood of Ioannina and all brothers and sisters for your contribution of \$10.000. Your financial support, help us continue the restoration of cemetery.

We will use the money to cover the expenses of the already performed works:

Specifically:

Restoration of the electricity installation and of the lighting of the cemetery [2.200 EURO]

Restoration of the water supply of the cemetery and replacement of the taps [1.800 EURO]

Restoration of the small synagogue inside the cemetery used during the burial services [1.800 EURO]

Cutting of the towering trees and their transfer out of the cemetery [4.000 EURO] [it needs a special group with the necessary machines]

Then with your invaluable help we will repair the approximately 60 graves and tombs destroyed as well as the footpaths, inside the cemetery.

We should also inform you that the cost of the necessary works in the synagogue where there were also damages was 1.500 EURO.

The generous support makes it possible for our small community to exist and survive under difficult circumstances.

Thank you again for your support.

Looking forward to hearing from you.



Moses Elisaf
President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina



New York, February 2015

Dear Sirs,

We are pleased to address you on behalf of the **International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation** (IRWF), a global-reach NGO based in New York, with representative offices in Jerusalem, Buenos Aires and Berlin.

Amongst our Honorary Members are well over 300 heads of state (former and incumbent), Nobel prize laureates and distinguished personalities from all nationalities, religions and walks of life, including Pope Francis, who joined the IRWF when he was the Archbishop of Buenos Aires.

Our main mission is to research, preserve and divulge the courageous legacy of Raoul Wallenberg and his likes, women and men who reached-out to the victims of the Shoah.

In this context, we are striving to unveil hitherto unknown stories of rescue protagonized by Greek rescuers during the Holocaust.

As of January 1st, 2014, 321 Greek women and men have been officially recognized as Righteous among the Nations (as per enclosed list). We have indications that a great number of Greek rescuers have not been identified and recognized yet.

Therefore, should you have information on any Greek rescuer who is not in the attached list and awaits recognition, please do not hesitate and convey it to us. Our devoted team of researchers will evaluate those cases with the aim of recognizing the unsung heroes.

At the same time, if you have information about physical sites (such as covents, churches, monasteries, boarding schools or private residences) which served as refuge to victims of the Nazi persecution, please do let us know. We have recently launched a worldwide initiative named "Houses of Life", precisely designed to locate and mark those sites with a special commemorative plaque. So far, we have identified more than 200 Houses of Life in Italy, France, Poland and Hungary and the number are growing on a daily basis.

These two projects, which are closely related, are aimed to recognize the spirit of civic courage and solidarity of the rescuers and to instill their brave legacies in the hearts and minds of the young generations.

Thanking you in advance for your precious collaboration, we remain,

Sincerely yours,

Eduardo Eurnekian
Chairman

Baruj Tenenbaum
Founder



EUROPEAN ART CENTER

AND INSTITUTE FOR EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

RESEARCH STUDIES IN EUROPE

RECOGNISED CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC AND EDITORIAL ASSOCIATION OF GREEK AND
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www.euarce.com E-mail: artcentr@otenet.gr*

INTERNATIONAL POETRY COMPETITION

Supported by:

- The Russian and East European Studies Program of the University of Pittsburgh
 - The Jewish Studies Program of the University of Pittsburgh
 - The American-Hellenic Foundation of Western Pennsylvania

Classrooms Without Borders

Prolongation of Poetry Competition

The deadline date is the 15th of April, 2015

ANNOUNCEMENT/NOTICE:

Seventy years ago (1944-2014), Greece was liberated from the Nazi occupation. The European Art Center, in recognition and memory of the thousands of Greek Jews who were brutally added to the genocide that underpinned the Nazi "Final Solution", announces an International Poetry Competition whose theme revolves around the Greek Jews and the Holocaust.

A seven-member panel consisting of renowned personalities in arts and literature will offer three awards and twenty distinctions at a formal Soiree which will take place in June 2015 at the European Art Center in Paeania, Attika, Greece. The Soiree and Awards ceremony will be honoured by the presence of members of the internationally-acclaimed educational program Classrooms Without Borders, based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA who will be travelling to cities and towns in Greece that had a significant Jewish community, in remembrance of the Greek Jews and Greek Christians who saved Jewish families.

COMPETITION DETAILS:

The competition is open to anyone irrespective of age, creed, nationality. We will give particular emphasis to submissions from students at the secondary, and early post-secondary education level.

The submission must be in the Greek language.

Only one submission will be accepted from each participant.

The submission must not be more than two (2) pages in A4 format.

The submissions must be sent electronically to artcentr@otenet.gr or euarceart@gmail.com as Word .doc, .docx, or Adobe .pdf files, or they can be sent by post to: EUARCE – Anapaphseos 14A', 190 02, Paeania, Attiki,

Greece. Should a hard copy be submitted by post, the signed original and three signed copies must be concurrently sent.

Each submission (electronic or mailed) must be preceded by a cover page with the following information:

- Name
- Profession/Expertise
- Complete mailing address
- telephone number
- email address
- fax number (if available)

A submission fee of 15 euro must accompany all entries (mailed to the address above if submission is electronic) and this must be made on an international money order (bank or post) to the following:

AmaliaParaskevopoulou, Alpha Bank, Paiania branch (#0282), IBAN: GR30 0140 12201220 0210 1202 114, SWIFT code: CRBAGRAA

The money order must state the full name of the submitter.

The submission fee will be used to cover some of the expenses associated with the costs of the Competition.

The deadline date is the 15th of April, 2015.

All entries must be received by EUARCE by the deadline.

In total, the Competition will recognize and award 26 entries. These will be published in a Special Tome and disseminated to all major international poetic organizations as well as entities and museums that conduct research and programs in the Holocaust.

THE BOARD OF EUARCE

Shalom to one and all!

**Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel**



Purim this year is celebrated on March 5th, and is considered one of Judaism's most joyous holidays. In fact, Jewish tradition teaches that only two holidays will remain after the Messianic age and full redemption: Yom Kippur and Purim! The comparison of those two special days is too complex for the scope of this column, but suffice to say that Purim's significance and joy goes way beyond the specific story of the Jews' physical salvation described in Megilat Esther – the Scroll of Esther.

As vicious and frightening anti-Semitism has once again begun to rear its ugly head all over the world, Purim and its joy hold tremendous significance in every age, and especially today. In fact, Haman's attitude and actions regarding the Jews of the ancient Persian empire serve as archetype of Jew-hatred in its most virulent form. Beginning as a personal vendetta against Mordechai the Jew because of the latter's refusal to bow down to the newly appointed royal minister Haman, Haman rapidly turns his wrath onto Mordechai's entire people and immediately decides that all Jews in the entire Persian empire must perish simply because they are members of the hated Mordechai's nation.

After casting lots ("Purim" in Persian) to decide on the date of the annihilation of the Jews, Haman gains the king's blessing and approval for his plan (Chapter III, verses 8-9 of Megilat Esther) by using an ancient canard all too familiar to all of us: "Haman said to King Achashverosh, "There is one nation scattered and dispersed among the nations throughout the provinces of your kingdom, whose laws are unlike those of any other nation and who do not obey the laws of the King. It is not in the King's interest to tolerate them. If it please the King, let [an edict] be issued for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand silver talents to the functionaries, to be deposited in the King's treasuries." A tangible financial reward and an underlying paranoia and suspicion of this devious "fifth column" make it worth the king's while to get rid of this menace. Ahashverosh quickly agrees without questioning Haman's motives or even asking for any detailed explanation or justification for this plan of outright genocide. Yet until now, not only did Ahashverosh show no animosity toward Jews, he in fact considered them a positive member nation of his large empire. How frightening similar this phenomenon is to so much of our history, where neighbors, colleagues, officials and even entire governments suddenly turned on their Jewish populations at the slightest provocation or incentive of this or that Jew-hating instigator, as they almost apathetically accept the idea of ridding society of this conniving and even dangerous population...

However, despite this repeated pattern of Jew-hatred and the incalculable and indeed incomprehensible numbers of Jews murdered over the centuries, the message of the Purim story resounds in every generation: No matter who the perpetrators or scope of the destruction, they are the ones relegated to history while the Jewish people lives on. This uncanny survival has frustrated more than one historian, since by any measure of logic and historical patterns, the Jewish people should no longer exist. And in fact, that is what Purim teaches us: Our survival is miraculous and Divinely decreed and guarded. From Pharaoh through Haman and culminating in Hitler and so many others, just when it seemed that all was indeed lost and our destruction was inevitable and imminent, Divine intervention, though often "hidden" like it was in the Purim story, ensures the eternity of the Jewish people. That is the source of Purim's great joy: Knowing that no matter what happens to me as an individual Jew, the Jewish people will not only remain, but continue to live, develop and thrive.

Perhaps nothing could better encapsulate the mystery of Jewish survival than the eloquent words of none other than American author and humorist, Mark Twain: "The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed; and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?" Need we say more? Happy Purim!

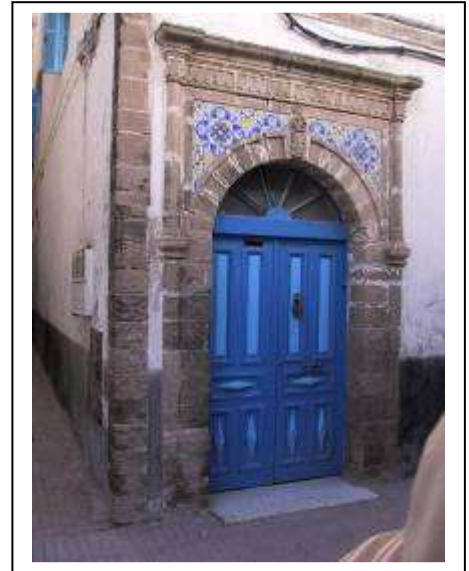
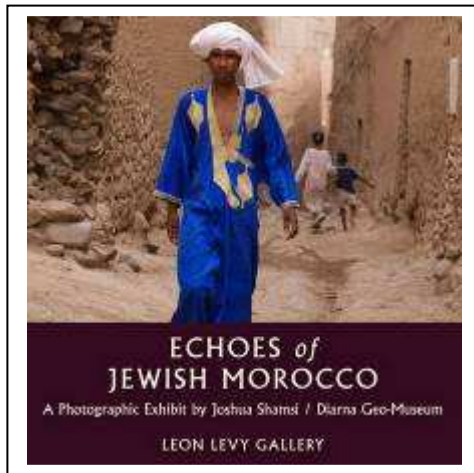
News of Interest To All

Articles of Interest

Echoes of Jewish Morocco: A Photographic Exhibit by Joshua Shamsi for the Diarna Geo-Museum

on view through March 20, 2015

Jewish life has been part of the Moroccan landscape for over two millennia. The sites that once comprised Jewish communities are found everywhere from metropolitan city centers to Atlas mountain towns and adobe villages at the edge of the Sahara. These disparate locations speak to the diversity of the Moroccan Jewish experience. While communities have disbanded, many of the landmarks remain and memories of their inhabitants linger. As time passes, however, the physical remnants of Jewish history are at risk of disappearing.



The Diarna Geo-Museum endeavors to virtually preserve and make accessible Jewish sites like these throughout North Africa and the Middle East. In addition to documenting physical traces, Diarna's mission is to preserve the bearers of memories connected to these places. To that end, included here are portraits of Jews still living in Morocco and the Muslim friends, former neighbors and current caretakers who enlighten our understanding of the people who once resided in these communities. Diarna has documented over 100 sites as part of its digital exhibit, *D'Fina: Jewish Treasures of Morocco* (www.JewishMorocco.org). The photographs in this exhibit are a small selection of the wide array of locales visited for Diarna.

Jewish Heritage in Barbados

News of archaeological finds shedding light on Jewish history invariably comes from Israel. It was especially surprising, therefore, when a significant Jewish historical discovery was made in, of all places, Barbados – a small speck of an island on the eastern edge of the Caribbean Sea. Michael Stoner, an American doctoral student in archaeology, was excavating on the grounds of the Nidhe Israel Synagogue in Bridgetown, Barbados' capital, a city recently added to the distinguished list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. As he surveyed what he believed to be a rabbi's house buried under the parking lot, two Israeli tourists appeared on the scene. "One of them said, 'mikvah,'" Stoner recalls. The non-Jewish archaeologist did not know what a mikvah was, but the Israeli was right: unexpectedly, Stoner had dug up a ritual bath that (like the neighboring house of worship) is the oldest in the Western Hemisphere – dating back to 1654, the year Sephardic Jews fled the Inquisition in the Portuguese colony of Brazil.

The 354-year-old mikvah is beautifully preserved: a two-flight staircase leads down to the rectangular bath, which was fed by a live spring that still exists. Arched alcoves for lamps line the stairwell and surround the bath.

With the addition of the impressive mikvah, the Nidhe Israel compound – comprising the meticulously restored synagogue, cemetery with ornate gravestones and brand-new museum – must now be considered the most comprehensive Jewish heritage destination in the Caribbean. Its closest rival would be Curacao’s Mikveh Israel Synagogue, which lays claim to being the oldest synagogue in continuous use in the Western Hemisphere.

The original 17th-century Nidhe Israel Synagogue (the name means Scattered of Israel) was destroyed by a hurricane in 1831 and was rebuilt, only to fall into disrepair as the community dwindled. It was sold for commercial purposes in 1929. In the 1930s, a new influx of Jews – Ashkenazim this time, fleeing Nazism – came to the island and established Congregation Shaare Tzedek on a different site.



Jewish cemetery in Barbados



Synagogue in Barbados

Nevertheless, the modern-day community sprang into action in 1983, when the ancient synagogue building was slated for destruction. Prominent local businessman Paul Altman petitioned the government to spare the building so that it could be restored to its former glory; Prime Minister Tom Adams agreed, provided the Jewish community would fund the reconstruction.

Altman spearheaded a worldwide fundraising drive, and with the help of the philanthropic Tabor family, the synagogue was painstakingly restored, inside and out. The exterior, replete with Gothic arches, is a shade of coral pink that is reminiscent of Jerusalem stone when the light is just right. The interior features an imposing ark and bima (pulpit, situated toward the rear of the sanctuary) of gleaming dark wood, as well as reproductions of antique chandeliers. Sabbath eve services are held in the historic building throughout the winter months (tourist season); a second, air-conditioned synagogue is used by the small community of 16 families during the summer.

Another source of justifiable pride for the community is the state-of-the-art interactive museum, dedicated in 2009. The museum’s exhibits, artifacts, videos and timeline tell the story of the island’s influential Jewish inhabitants, whose contribution to the country’s development and prosperity cannot be overstated. The Jews arriving from northern Brazil brought with them the technology for processing sugar that was to be the engine of the Barbadian economy for the subsequent three centuries.

Moreover, a significant chapter of Jewish settlement in the United States has its origins here: in 1658, Mordecai Campanal and Moses Pacheco arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, from Barbados, then encouraged 15 more Jewish families from the Dutch and British West Indies to join them. While their brethren in New Amsterdam/New York were still being denied permission to build a

synagogue, the Jews of Newport established Congregation Jeshuat Israel, now better known as the Touro Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in the colonial U.S.

Meanwhile, the Jewish merchants and bankers of Barbados were instrumental in transforming Bridgetown into one of the most important ports of the British Empire in the 18th century. And in the mid-1700's, a young Virginian named George Washington came to Barbados, on the only trip abroad he was ever to make (the home where he lodged is one of the island's tourist attractions). Washington's visit to the sophisticated metropolis of commerce was a life-changing event for the lad: he mingled with high society and returned home with a recommendation that would lead to his first military appointment. It is likely that the young American would have heard complimentary things about the island's wealthy Jewish citizenry; a map of the city from the period clearly identifies the grounds of the handsome two-storey synagogue with no less prominence than the leading church. Did Washington perhaps form a favorable impression of Jewish enterprise, based on the success he observed in Barbados?

Fast forward to 1790: President George Washington, in his celebrated letter "To the Hebrew Congregation in Newport," pledged that the new nation, committed to freedom of religion, would give "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

Did history come full circle when Washington, who had gained so much from his exposure to Barbadian society, later sent his historic missive to the American congregation whose roots can be traced to Barbados?

(TotallyJewishTravel.com)

Award-winning journalist Buzzy Gordon is the author of Frommer's Jerusalem Day by Day Guide. He has been reporting on remote Jewish communities around the world for nearly four decades

The following article has been prepared by our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos.

THE ZAGHA AND SABBA FAMILIES

The Zagha family came from Syria and married into the Yanniote community in New York. We do not know the derivation of the surname and would appreciate any help you can give us on this. On the other hand, Sabba is a traditional Romaniote surname found in Ioannina, Arta and Preveza. The name first appears in the Ioannina Municipal archives with the registration of the birth of Ovadia ben Elias Saba in 1870 and, then, with the birth of Elias' second son, Iakov. In both instances the "Saba" is spelled with one "b." On the other hand, those entries in the Municipal Archives of Arta, of which there are many starting in 1847, are always spelled with a double "b". In Preveza, the name appears three times and is spelled Sabas. The name comes from the Hebrew name "Sabetai," and was a secularization of the name. Sabetai had many such secularizations throughout Greece. In Corfu, it was often "Renato," and in a number of communities it was "Besso." Both Sabba (Saba/Sabbas) and Besso often became surnames, initially, as with so many Romaniote surnames, starting out as a male Hebrew first name. Because the "b" in Greek make a "v" sound, many have the Greek name of Sava and we can see from the municipal archives that the Saba surname was written with the two consonants ΜΠ to make the B sound.



Joseph Sabba



Eli Zagha

As always, we continually look for additional information. If you are from any branch of the either the Zagha or Sabba families and you wish to add info to the family trees or other information such as the date of arrival, where your family lived in New York or other pertinent information relating to these families, please send it to us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

Join us on March 28 at Kehila Kedosha Janina for the Shabbat service honoring the Zagha and Sabba families. Our services start at 9:15. We are located at 280 Broome Street (between Allen and Eldridge). Please RSVP if you are coming so we have sufficient food.

Answers Found

From Dave Corito)

As always I am happy to read the KKJ Newsletter and always amazed of the work you do. Through your newsletter I keep up of the news of today and the past. About two months ago I sent you photo of the Negrin Family that married into the Corito Family. You printed the picture but for some reason the names were missing and you sent out a feeler for the names. I am re-submitting the picture and the names are listed below:

Back Row: Anna, Sarah Corito-Negrin, Harry Negrin

Front Row: Benny, Irene, Maurice (Moshe)

All of blessed memory.

Harry Negrin had two brothers Jules and Irving. Both lived on the Lower East Side near KKJ long after their brother Harry moved to Harlem.



Our continual search for pictures has turned up a treasure and the IDS are thanks to Rose Capon Eskononts. Thank you Rose! Molly Battino, Tehru Eskononts, Mrs. Levy, Calefina Askinazi and the little boy, Bobby Levy.



Request for help

We are asking your request for help. We are looking for memoirs, photos, oral histories having to do with immigration of the Romaniote community to New York. Go through your closets. Find those boxes with old photos. They are treasures of information. Share them with us.

Websites of interest

<http://youtu.be/eVBxzG6NY68>

Artemis Miron testimony. This video was taken in Cyprus and is the testimony of Artemis Batis Miron who was deported from Ioannina and survived. It was given to us by Antonis Antoniou of Cyprus (who I was fortunate enough to meet at conference at Yad Vashem in July 2014) who incorporates Holocaust education into his teaching.

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10153051883204805&pnref=story>

Website by Speilberg

Auschwitz documentary by Steven Spielberg made at Auschwitz for the 70th anniversary of the Liberation

Tunisian Jewish Enclave Weathers Revolt, Terror; Can It Survive Girls' Education?



Tunisian Jewish Enclave Weathers Revolt, Terror; Can It ...

Isolated on an island in Tunisia, a small Jewish community rejects modernity, and thrives.

[View on www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)

Preview by Yahoo

This short video (an ad for a documentary) holds the key to Israel's survival as a nation back in May 1948. The Arab nations were within 10 miles of Tel Aviv, with a 10,000 man force, ready to totally destroy the new country of Israel. All that stood in the way were four Messerschmitt BF-109's left behind by the Nazis in the Czech Republic, hurriedly assembled in hangers and never test flown, and piloted by volunteer American (Jewish) pilots. I can't wait to see the documentary.

I hope you enjoy this short video.

<http://vimeo.com/54400569>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6QQ50_hOLM

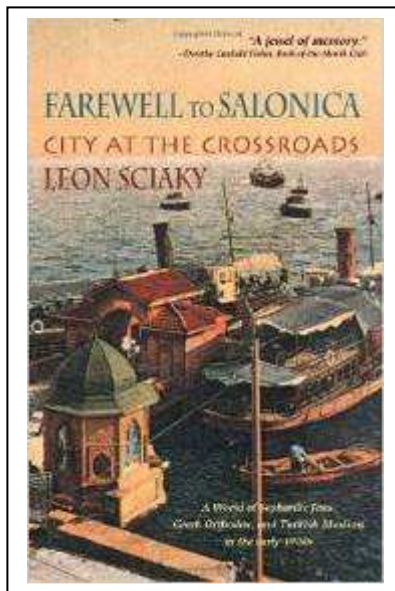
Taken in Ioannina. A delightful video about an Israeli women's visit to the home of her ancestors.

We often highlight new books in our e-newsletters but let's not forget the standards that we carry in our bookshop. Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to say that we have the largest collection of books on the Jews of Greece (in English) of any place in the world. Many of these books are not found anywhere else in the United States. Two of our best sellers are "The Jews of Ioannina" by Rae Dalven and the "Cookbook of the Jewsof Greece" by Nikos Stavroulakis. Access our website at www.kkjsm.org to see our full book list.

A new addition to our monthly e-newsletter will be the highlighting of a classic book and a special discount for purchase. This month we are highlighting "Farewell To Salonica" by Leon Sciaky.

At the crossroads of East and West, Salonica (now Thessaloniki) was an oasis in a swirl of conflicting powers and interests, a vibrant world of varied peoples, where Leon Sciaky grew up at the turn of the twentieth century. This Paul Dry Books rediscovered classic includes many photos courtesy of Leon Sciaky's son Peter, who has also written a short biographical sketch of his father's life in America.

"Farewell to Salonica is a fresh and charming book that throws a kindly light on a sector of human life unknown to most Americans."—New York Times

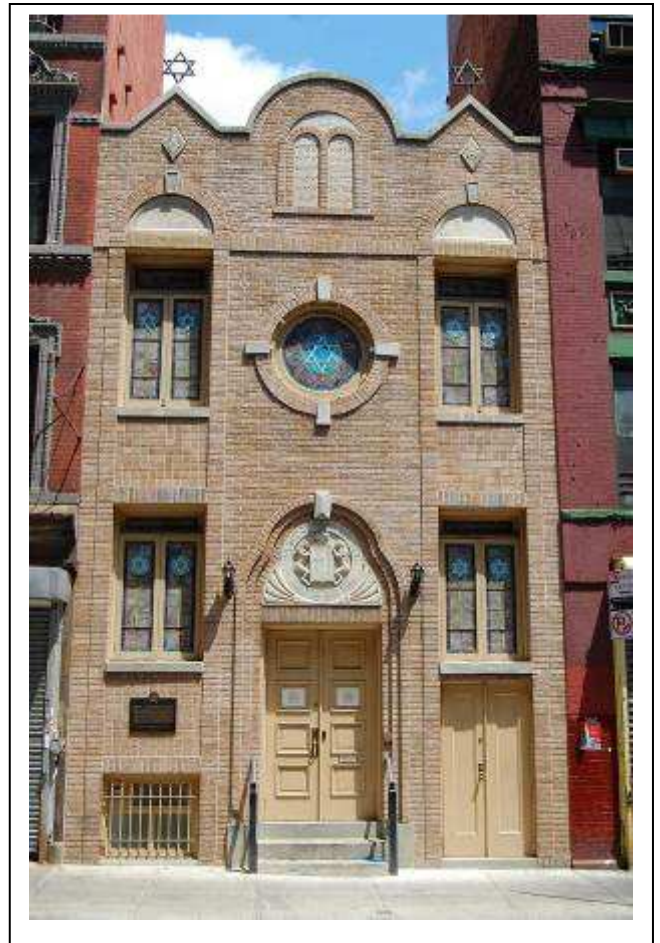


Take advantage of our March 2015 special. "Farewell To Salonica" will sell during the month of March for only \$15 (including P&H). Mail your check to Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, NYC, NY 10002. We will include free of charge a copy of Marguerite: Journey of a Sephardic Woman by Gloria Sananes Stein (Of Blessed Memory). This offer is available only within the Continental USA.

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.



**Kehila Kedosha Janina e-newsletter: number 73: March 2015
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