In 1848, in Ioannina, David ben Elia married Simchu. They had 9 children, producing many illustrious Yanniotes, among them the poet Joseph Eliya and the author, Eftihia Nachmias Nachman. Many of David and Simchu’s children and grandchildren perished in the Holocaust. Others, fortunately, had found their way to New York in the early part of the 20th century, marrying (for the most part) into other Yanniote families.

The family tree of David Elia and Simchu branches out to include many of the Yanniote families. Too many of the leaves were torn and shredded in the Holocaust. It is our hope to give faces to many who were lost and, hopefully, reconnect distant branches to this important tree.

For those who chose to remain in Greece, their lives were centered around the small city of Ioannina. Entrenched in the life of their Greek-speaking world, instrumental in the local economy, practicing their ancient Romaniote liturgy, most arranging marriages with fellow Yanniotes, their lives differed little from that of preceding generations. For their relatives who had made the journey to either Israel or American, lives would take a different course, often close ties severed by the distance. All, of course, would change with the Holocaust, as the Greek branches of the tree were severed and destroyed.
The patriarch of the David family, Elia ben David, was born in 1820, dying in 1900. His wife, Simchu was born in 1830 and died in 1904. The legacy of their children continues to live on within the walls of Kehila Kedosha Janina.

In 1887 Eliezer ben David, the oldest son, married Joyia Dostis, the daughter of Jeuda Dostis and they had 7 children (Davijon, Haim, Leon, Anna, Ilias, Nissim and Simcho).
Anna David & Moise Nachmias

Nissim David and wife Julie Battino: 1940
Picture sent to brother Leon in America
Nissim, Julie and their 4 year old son Erikos perished in the Holocaust

Eftichia, Jacob & Eliezer Nachmias

Haim & Elizabeth David with daughter Joyia
All perished in the Holocaust

Ilias David: Asia Minor Conflict 1923

Jacob & Eftichia Nachmias
Photo taken on the occasion of the visit of her Leon David, who was living in New York. He left Ioannina at the beginning of the 20th century. Photo was taken in 1930. From left standing Leon David (the American), Ilias David died in 1935, Davitzon David, Haim David, Simho Cohen, Nissim David and Anna David Nahmias. Davitzon (Davijon), Haim, Simho and Nissim would perish at Auschwitz-Birkenau in April of 1944.

The second son, Elia David married Hanoula Negrin and their only child, a son, was Joseph Eliyia, the famous poet.
Refkoula, the oldest daughter, married Ezra Levy and had 7 children (Nissim, Avraam, Jeuda, Isaac, Jacob, Simcho and Mazalto). Refkoula’s descendants would Most of the descendants would marry into the Matsil, Lagari, Hadjopoulos, Sardas and Mordechai families. Hanoula married Joseph A. Koen (Cohen) and had 4 children (Avraam, Ezra, Davijon and Elia). Of those who remained in Greece, most would perish in the Holocaust. Only a fragment survived. Ezra came to the United States, married Bertha Cohen, and became one of the founders of Kehila Kedosha Janina.
Ezra, Bertha, Joseph, Morris & Solomon 1929

Ezra Cohen with family in Ioannina 1930’s

Joe & Deborah Cohen
Avraam (Abraham) David married Simcha Negrin and had 7 children (Louise, Morris, Molly, Stella, David, Louis and Edward). Their branch of the David Family tree would flourish in the United States, many marrying into other Yanniote families (Coffino, Davidson, Askinazi, DeCastro, Yomtov, Barouch and Menachem).
Selma Yomtov Schwartz
& Martin Holiday

For family gathering

Wedding of Selma Yomtov & Irving Schwartz

May Coffino Davis
Mazalto, the third daughter, would be married to David Matza, a man 11 years her senior and would be widowed at the age of 56. She lived to see her family taken to the gas chambers of Birkenau in March of 1944.

Malkoula, the fourth daughter was married into the Cohen family and her branch of the tree would survive, physically being in Albania during the deportations from Greece.

Joyia, also would be spared, living with her family, another branch of the Cohen family, in Constantinople during the Occupation of Greece.

Little is known about the youngest in the family, the 9th child, David David. Our research continues.