



Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

June 2023 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

We are happy to celebrate the beginning of summer. The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry will be bringing their annual tour group to Greece in anticipation of the beautiful summer weather that awaits them. June is one of the best months to go, before the sweltering heat of July and August sets in. The word for summer in Greek is καλοκαίρι (kalokaíri) meaning "the good weather." There are no beaches in the world that compare with the beaches of Greece.



Corfu



Pelion

This newsletter, our 171st 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

We are open for Shabbat every Saturday morning starting at 9:30am. Please email amarcus@kkjsm.org if you would like to attend, and enjoy a traditional Greek kiddush lunch after services. Our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm. If you wish to sponsor a newsletter, contact us at museum@kkjsm.org.

Simchas

We wish our dear friend and community member Stella Levi a very happy birthday as she turned 100 in May! Stella was born on the island of Rhodes in 1923, survived the horrors of Auschwitz, and has spent her life sharing the story and traditions of the Jews of Rhodes. Χρόνια πολλά, Anyos Munchos i Buenos, to many more good years ahead!



We celebrate the birth of Holly Kaye's granddaughter, Gwen Hooly Kaye.

Upcoming Events

Celebrate Israel Parade – June 4

Email Amarcus@kkjism.org to sign up to march with us in the parade. Limited spots left!

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM
INVITES YOU TO JOIN US IN THE

CELEBRATE ISRAEL PARADE SUNDAY JUNE 4TH

JOIN THE GREEK JEWISH COMMUNITY AS WE MARCH TOGETHER WITH OUR OWN FLOAT IN THE CELEBRATE ISRAEL PARADE! FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER THE ROMANIOTE & SEPHARDIC COMMUNITY FROM GREECE, TURKEY, AND THE BALKANS WILL HAVE OUR OWN FLOAT IN THE PARADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUES. THE FLOAT WILL INCLUDE LIVE GREEK, ISRAELI, AND SEPHARDIC MUSIC TOO!

JOIN US ON MANHATTAN'S FIFTH AVENUE AS WE CELEBRATE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

FOR MORE INFO AND TO SIGN UP TO MARCH WITH OUR COMMUNITY FLOAT, PLEASE EMAIL ANDREW MARCUS AT AMARCUS@KKJISM.ORG

 **CELEBRATE ISRAEL PARADE** 

Sounds of Cyprus - Concert at Kehila Kedosha Janina
Save the Date - October 15, 2023 at 5pm

Tickets \$20 in advance [online here](#) or \$25 at the door

SUNDAY OCT 15 AT 5PM

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
280 BROOME ST NYC



SOUNDS OF CYPRUS

**A PRESENTATION OF
TRADITIONAL CYPRIOT MUSIC**

ELENA CHRIS: CREATIVE DIRECTION - VOICE
PETER DOUSKALIS: MUSIC DIRECTION - LAOUTO/LOUD/GUITAR
ALEX TASOPOULOS: VIOLA
ERIKOS VLESMAS: BASS
STAVROS PAPADOPOULOS: PITHKIAVLI/NEY
MARK KATSAOUNIS: PERCUSSION

TICKETS \$20 IN ADVANCE, \$25 AT THE DOOR

[SOUNDSOFCYPRUS.COM/TICKETS](https://soundsofcyprus.com/tickets)



UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE CONSULATE GENERAL
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS



Past Events – Greek Jewish Festival

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our eighth annual Greek Jewish Festival! We welcomed more than 10,000 people and it was truly an uplifting thrilling day! From the incredible musical performances, exciting dancers, delicious food, and so much more, everyone had a smile on their face and we really came together as a community in a beautiful way. It was our best festival ever. Special thank you to all our volunteers, sponsors, and community partners who made the festival possible. Among our honored guests were NYC Mayor Eric Adams, Consul General of Cyprus in NY Michalis Firillas, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, & NYC Council Member Chris Marte. More photos on Facebook [here](#).



Visitors to Kehila Kedosha Janina AIKOI MAS / Los Muestrros / Our Own

Our Greek Jewish Street Festival brought over 10,000 visitors to Kehila Kedosha Janina, among them members of our community who travelled from all over to celebrate the synagogue on the Lower East Side where so many of their ancestors have worshipped. Among them were Laura Aronson (great niece of Joe Josephs), the granddaughter of Jacob and Mollie Joseph, and daughter of Essie Joseph Aronson. Michael Albala honored us by holding the Torah with which so many of his relatives prayed.



Laura & Marcia



Michael Albala

Visit of Greek Ambassador and Greek Consul General to Kehila Kedosha Janina

Kehila Kedosha Janina was honored to welcome Ambassador of Greece to the United States Alexandra Papadopoulou and Consul General of Greece in New York Dinos Konstantinou for a private tour of our synagogue and museum in April. They spent more than an hour learning about our community's history in Ioannina and across Greece, our experience immigrating to the US, and our efforts to continue our Romaniote traditions. It was a very warm meeting, and both the Ambassador and Consul General demonstrated a deep appreciation for the rich history of Romaniote and Sephardic Jews in Greece.



Visit of Prime Minister of North Macedonia to Kehila Kedosha Janina

Kehila Kedosha Janina was honored to welcome Prime Minister Dimitar Kovačevski from the Republic of North Macedonia and Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan for a special tour of our synagogue and museum. On May 4, 2023, taking time from his hectic schedule, Prime Minister Kovačevski paid a visit to Kehila Kedosha Janina, after hearing that there were members of our community who descended from Bitola (Monastir). Members of our community whose families originated in Bitola (Monastir), including Calderon, Camhi, Elias, Kassorla, Mitrani, Negrin, Rousso, and Youcha were also present to welcome the Prime Minister, help share our Romaniote and Sephardic heritage with him, and celebrate our shared Balkan culture. Rabbi Isaac Choua of the World Jewish Congress offered a special prayer for the Prime Minister.



News from Jewish Greece

New Documentary on Greek Jews in America – Watch Online [Here](#)

The Greek Jews of America are featured in the 5th episode of the ERT documentary series "The Roads of the Greeks" about the Greek diaspora. The episode is dedicated to the memory of the late mayor of Ioannina and President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, Moses Eliasaf, who is mentioned in the last minutes of the episode. You can watch the full episode on ERTFLIX online [Here](#). KKJ Museum Director Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos is featured, as are many of our community members here in New York.



The Jews of Greece were among the tens of thousands of Greeks who immigrated to America in the 20th century. As history has shown, those who left as part of the great first through 1924 were fortunate, as they did not have to experience the unimaginable suffering of the Holocaust before starting a new life in America. The descendants of these Greek Jews are met by Maya Tsokli in New York.



The team, including the journalist Maya Tsokli and the director Chronis Pechlivanidis, trace the roads of the world following the paths of the Greek Diaspora. With tenderness and objectivity, they record modern Hellenism and meet representatives of the diaspora who, through their personal, family narrative, narrate essential chapters of modern Greek history.

The ambition of the series "On the Roads of the Greeks" and its contributors is for the viewer to have a clear picture of both the history and the great waves of mass immigration that led hundreds of thousands of Greeks to America, as well as the importance that the huge capital of the Diaspora constitutes today for Hellenism. In the Roads of the Greeks offers precious stories from a variety of people. Some represent the old world, making us move and smile, others instead open windows to the future, breaking timeless stereotypes. The historical advisor of the "Roads of the Greeks" is the prolific Alexander Kitroeff, an expert on the Greek Diaspora.

Athens

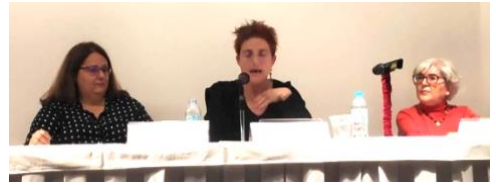
Jewish Museum of Greece: Participation in International Museum Day 2023

The Jewish Museum of Greece participated once again this year in the celebration of International Museum Day on May 18, 2023, offering free admission to the public and guided tours of the temporary exhibition "Stone Routes – Stories from Stone: Jewish Inscriptions in Greece" and subtitled "Art of Memory and Remembrance". Visitors who chose to celebrate with us the International Museum Day had the opportunity to "travel" in time and through the dialogue of ancient inscriptions with modern works of art to discover new aspects of an old world. May 18 is celebrated all over the world as "International Museum Day". Each year focuses on a specific theme related not only to museums but also to the protection of cultural heritage in general. For 2023, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has chosen the theme "Museums, Sustainability and Quality of Life".



Women's Voices from Auschwitz – Four Greek Jewish Women Narrate

On May 8, 2023, the presentation of the Jewish Museum of Greece "Women's voices from Auschwitz – Four Greek Jewish women narrate" took place at the Ionic Center. The presentation was introduced by the Director of the JMG, Zanet Battinou, while four renowned historians spoke about the testimonies of four Greek Jewish women from Auschwitz.



Odette Varon-Vassar, Historian, Associate of the JMG, opened the cycle of presentations by referring to the specific characteristics of women who survived and decided to write about the Holocaust, highlighting the aspects that the gender perspective opens up in the discussion of camp literature. He then talked about Nata Osmo-Gattenio and her book, "From Corfu to Birkenau and Jerusalem" (Gavrielides, 2005).

Garyfallia Micha, Director of the Balkan Countries, Greece and Cyprus Sector, Yad Vashem, through a video presentation by Yad Vashem, talked about Lisa Pinchas and her struggle, not only to survive in Auschwitz, as she depicted it in her book, "Confronting the Holocaust" (second ed. Jewish Museum of Greece, 2023), but also about her important work afterwards, in post-war Thessaloniki.

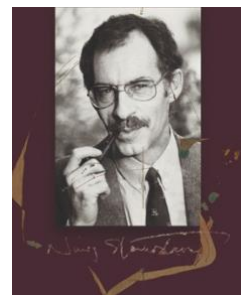
Eleni Kouki, Historian, Researcher, emphasized the narrative power of Berry Nahmia, as expressed both in her book, "Cry for tomorrow" (Alexandria, 2020), and in her public presence.

Vasiliki Giakoumaki (Social Anthropologist, University of Thessaly) referred to Erika Kounia Amarilio and how her book, "Fifty years later" (Paratiritis, 1996), reflects her inclusive vision that transcends the boundaries of her community, towards a horizon of universality. The event was held on the occasion of the second revised edition of the JMG, the book "Confronting the Holocaust: Lisa Pinchas narrates".

Jewish Museum of Greece: Digital Exhibit on Nikos Stavroulakis

View the [Exhibit Here](#)

Dedicated to the memory of Nikos Stavroulakis, the JMG exhibition is a first step towards promoting his overall image as an artist. It includes seven sections representing his work in the fields of folk art and ethnology, religious depictions, calligraphy, design, engraving and painting, while the last section entitled "Tireless Creator" includes several of his other works. Almost all works come from the collections of the JMG and the Etz Hayyim Synagogue, Chania.



Nikos Stavroulakis was not only an artist, but also a researcher. Thus, his artistic nature cannot be distinguished from his scientific research. He can be described as a historian who introduced artistic methods to represent Jewish life of the past along with the emotions and findings generated by his research. In his eyes, Jewish life in the past was portrayed as a unique and enduring historical reality, partly known and partly unknown, which he tried to reconstruct and present for many years. Research and representation fed each other.

The rich education he received allowed him to acquire a broad cognitive and artistic understanding of the Diaspora, to identify the diachronic and interlocal differences, which enrich the overall presence of the Jewish world. His ideological thesis was that "being Jewish is a matter of principles and will to preserve and disclose to the Diaspora the evidence of its strange history." View the exhibit on the Museum's website [Here](#)

Ioannina

Impressed by the natural beauties of Ioannina both in the valley and the mountains, but also by the hospitality, the services provided and the opportunity to find themselves in a historical place for Jewry, hundreds of Israeli visitors are in Ioannina these days.



It is not only the direct flight that premiered on May 17, 2023 that brings visitors from Israel, but it is a sequence of efforts that have been underway for at least a decade with the participation of local stakeholders in Tourism exhibitions in Israel and a series of other promotional actions.

The role played by the late mayor M. Eliasaf in this history and the investment of Ioannina in attracting tourists from Israel, is recognized by all, as well as interventions that preceded it, such as the twinning of the municipality of Ioannina with the city of Kiryat Ono in central Israel.

A group of visitors from this city, we had the opportunity to meet yesterday at noon (19.5.2023), during their tour and the pilgrimage they made to the Holy Synagogue of Ioannina, accompanied by Allegra Matsa, Secretary of the Jewish Community of Ioannina.

As the visitors from Israel explained to us, the twinning of their city with the city of Ioannina was the starting point for them to initially seek information about the city and on a second level to want to visit it, since not many people did not know the history of the Romaniote Community of Jews of Ioannina. "After the contacts in the framework of the town-twinning, we had the opportunity to learn about the common historical routes and origins, about the rich history of the local Jewish community, about the Synagogue, which is one of the oldest and most important, and of course why there is an interest in cultural exchanges," said one of the visitors from Kiryat Ono found in the Synagogue.

Matsa, for her part, stressed that the one aspect that interests visitors from Israel is that of religious tourism, a kind of pilgrimage to the Synagogue of Ioannina, but what also impresses them is the natural environment. "We have a natural environment that doesn't exist in Israel that attracts visitors, but so does hospitality. In Israel, a lot of people are involved with social media, and if someone says a good word about a destination, then thousands will follow. The same happens, of course, if someone says something bad about a destination, which in the case of Ioannina is not true because the impressions from the hospitality are excellent and in this we should give credit to tourism professionals and bodies that have an influential and educational role", said Ms. Matsa, among others.

Source: Epirus Online 5/20/2023 [link here](#)

Larissa

Yom HaShoah & Events Commemorating Israeli Lives Lost in Wars and Terrorism

Two very special events took place in the previous days at the Jewish Community of Larissa, with great and active participation. Our Cultural Center, the only space we have until the completion of our Synagogue, was quickly transformed from a Synagogue into a screening and event hall to accommodate and highlight them.

On April 18, we honored Yom HaShoah by commemorating the victims of the Holocaust with a memorial service by our Rabbi Mr. Elias Sabetai. Then, Mr. Joseph (Fikos) Mevorah from Kavala, talked to us about the effort made by the Municipality of Kavala to preserve the memory of the presence and annihilation of the Jews of the city, but also of all the Jewish communities of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace, in the context of which the

documentary "The Holocaust of the Greek Jews of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace" was created, which we watched immediately after, in an atmosphere of great emotion.

On April 25, we gathered again for to remember Israelis who fell during wars and those who were victims of terrorist attacks. The event began with a memorial service for soldiers who fell in the wars and victims of terrorism in Israel. Immediately afterwards, the flag of Israel was raised and the trumpet of the shofar sounded, marking the transition "From suffering to rebirth" as was the title of the event. Our voices joined in the beautiful festive chants and then we listened to a pithy and meaningful speech by our Rabbi on the significance of the anniversary. Then, Nina Tarampoulous and the Hebrew teacher Victor Moses, along with the school children dressed in blue and white, presented us with an original tribute, with short texts, music videos, theatrical performance and live songs, luring all of us to emotion, song and applause! The celebration for Israel's 75th birthday ended with the blowing out of the candles on its cake and with wishes that we all wrote on pieces of paper, to place in the ... our own "Kotel"!

Chania

Reception & Dedication of a New Sefer Torah in the Synagogue of Chania

Etz Hayyim Chania, in collaboration with KISE (Central Board of Jewish Organizations in Greece), organized a series of events in Chania from May 25 to May 28, 2023. The events coincide with the celebration of Shavuot, which took place in the Synagogue of Chania, as well as with the tragic anniversary of the deportation of the Jews of Crete (on May 20, 1944) and the sinking of the "Tanais" (June 9, 1944), which will be commemorated at the memorial service held at the Monument of the victims of "Tanais", on May 28, 2023, at the Port of Chania, in Koum Kapi. The highlight of the events will be the reception and installation ceremony of the new Sefer Torah at the Etz Hayyim Synagogue, in memory of the late Nikos Stavroulakis, which will take place on May 27, 2023.



Didimoticho

Recent events in Didimoticho focused on the life of the Jews of the city. In cooperation with the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden and the Folklore Museum of Didimoticho, we will chat with Mrs. Astro Taramboulos (the Astroula for Dimotians), born and raised in Didimoticho after the war between those who escaped persecution, those who survived the death camps, and fellow Christian citizens. We will unravel the thread of life and talk about Jewish life without community as it existed until the war. Central idea of the program's actions in ten European countries is the concept of "belonging". Held at the hospitable Folklore Museum of Didimoticho on May 7.

PAIDEIA MIFGASH
meeting point for Jewish thought and culture
is strengthened by the collaboration with
The National Library of Israel

ΔΗΜΟΣ ΔΙΔΥΜΟΤΕΙΧΟΥ

Didymoteicho Jews Journeys through Life after the Shoah

Testimony through the lenses of Estrea's (Astro's) Taraboulous story

Event Date: May 7, 2023
Time: 11:30 - 12:30
Location:
Folklore Museum of Didymoteicho



Serres

A Jew from Serres Saved Christians from the Bulgarians during the Second Balkan War

Menahem Simantov: A different story of rescuing 600 Christians from Serres

"Menahem Simantov, as consul of the Italian state in Serres, climbed in a Consulate window, begged soldiers to spare their lives for his fellow citizens and when his pleas fell into the void, he used his personal fortune in order to save the lives of his compatriots... "

By Victor Isaac Eliezer

It was a June morning when my phone rang and on the other line I heard a gentle voice of a lady:

- "I want to talk to you about the Jews of Serres and the history of my family," she tells me and somehow it surprises me because the truth is that I didn't believe there is a living Jew from Serres.

- "I didn't know," I answer her, "that you are from Serres, of course and I'm interested in your story."

And so on the afternoon of Friday, June 13, Mrs. Mimika Simantov-Samuilidou welcomes me to her apartment, exactly opposite the Acropolis. Dining room table, full of pictures, magazines and books. Her reason is accompanied by photographs of a distant past. Loved ones, houses and streets that no longer exist. Her voice trembles with emotion when she shows me the pictures.



"My grandfather, Abraham Simantov, was born in Serres in 1850 and was a student at the school of the Serres Jewish Community. He was engaged in trade and his activity reached Egypt. Married to Rachel Abravanel, they have nine children. "One of the nine children, Joseph Simantov married Daisy Campellis and they had two children, me and my brother Alberto."

Mrs Mimika, serves me coffee and looks forward to continuing the narrative.

- "I won't tire you too much, but I think the world needs to learn unknown aspects of history that teach that human solidarity can transcend social or religious differences to protect the value of life."

Menachem Simantov the savior of 600 Christians from Serres.

"My uncle, my father's brother, Menachem Simantov was a versatile cosmopolitan of the time, with wide education and acceptance in the local community. His successful activity in the tobacco, timber, cotton trade but also his involvement in the early steps of cinema have elevated Menachem Simantov to a personality of international prestige and Italy appoints him as its consul in the city of Serres. Mrs. Ida, you've met her, haven't you?" the Mrs asks me. Mimikas.

- "if you mean Mrs. Ida Kovo, of course I met her, and of course I knew her from her great charity work," I answer her.

- "Well, Mrs. Ida was the daughter of Menahem Simantov, born in Serres in 1904, married Isaac Kovo in 1924 and died in Athens in 1996

But why was Menachem Simantov so great? Mimika Samuilidou delivers me relevant publications.

According to historian Peter Penna, when the Bulgarians invaded Serres on June 28, 1913, six hundred Serraians sought refuge in the Simantov's paternal house where the Italian Consulate was housed, in order to escape a certain slaughter. The building was surrounded by the Bulgarian army. As journalist Charalampos Vouroutsidis writes in the Progress newspaper, according to historian Peter Penna: "Menahem Simantov, as the consul of the Italian state, posted in a window of the Consulate, begged soldiers to give up their lives for his fellow citizens and when his requests fell into the void, he used the atomic of his property in order to save the lives of his countrymen. He threw hundreds of gold pounds at the Bulgarians who were ready to set the siege on the Serraius building on fire, while the mansion's heavy carpets, wet, were spread on the roof of the building in order to absorb the risk of it being set on fire by the buildings on fire. "The entrance of the Greek army's defenses into the destroyed city in the early afternoon of June 28, marked the redemption of the

besieged at the Simantov Greek Building."

In 1916, following the second Bulgarian invasion of Serres, the Menachem Simantov family along with other Jewish families left the city and settled in Thessaloniki. Menachem Simantov died in 1929.

The building of the Simantov family was demolished in 1988 by the Greek Authorities, at the old location, at the intersection of Harzipantazi and Romanou streets there is nothing reminiscent of the historic building of the city of Serres, not even a commemorative plaque reminding the history of rescuing 600 Serranian Christians .

Only in 2001, as part of Holocaust remembrance events, the Municipality of Serres honored Menachem Simantov for saving his 600 fellow citizens.

"Of course I'm sad, not because his name is not mentioned anywhere, but mainly because there is not a single stone to teach young people that in this place there was a building owned by Menachem Simantov in which they found refuge and saved 600 of his fellow people," admits his niece, Mrs. Mimika Simantov Samouilidou who, along with the two great-grandchildren and four great-grandchildren of Menachem Simantov living in Athens, are the descendants of an emblematic personality of Greek Judaism.

The Jews of Serres

The last stop of the Jews of Serres was the terrible night of March 3, 1943, when the Bulgarians gathered the Jews in a smokehouse, just outside the city. In a few days, they set out for the journey of no return. Many drowned on the Danube when the trucks carrying them turned over. Those rescued in the river turned to ashes in Treblinka camp. About 600 Jews lived in Serres. Less than ten were rescued. It is worth noting the exemplary human attitude of the Serranians, since none of them came to buy at the auction the Bulgarians made with the Jewish belongings.

A single plaque reminds of their presence in the city that has been posted on the wall of the Jewish Elementary School currently used as a kindergarten by the Municipality of Serres. The Jewish School post-war has come under the ownership of the Central Israeli Council of Greece and today houses the 6th and 16th, Serres Elementary Schools. In 2000 the Municipality of Serres posted a column at the former Jewish School in memory of the city's exterminated Jews.

Thank you very much to Mrs. Mimika Simantov-Samouilidou for the information and valuable material she gave me about this unknown to many aspects of our modern history.

Source: "Alef", issue 66

Rhodes & Kos

Commemorative Events in Rhodes July 18-22 & Inauguration of Kos Synagogue July 23, 2023

A historic moment for Greek Jewry, the reopening of the renovated Synagogue of Kos, was combined with this year's events of Remembrance of the Jewish Community of Rhodes. A week (18 – 23.7.2023) rich in cultural events and religious services, combining devotion with history, art, literature, cinema and songs.

All actions aim to honor the memory of the Jews of Rhodes and Kos, who from 23 to 25 July 1944 were deported from their native land and perished in the Nazi death camp Auschwitz. At the same time, the program of events in Rhodes and Kos highlights and revives their long history and cultural heritage.



The events in Rhodes begin on Tuesday, July 18, 2023 and culminate on Saturday 22.7.2023, with the Remembrance ceremony at the Synagogue of Rhodes and the laying of wreaths at the Holocaust Memorial. See here the provisional program in Rhodes.

In Kos, the events will take place on Sunday, July 23, 2023 and will include a visit and memorial service at the Jewish cemetery, the inauguration ceremony of the renovated Kaal Shalom Synagogue of Kos, which will conclude with a concert, offering gifts (books) to visitors and a buffet.

The program will close on Sunday afternoon 23.7.23, with the presentation of the books of the architect Elias Messinas, who undertook the renovation project of the Synagogue of Kos. See here the program in KOS.

The events are organized by the Jewish Community of Rhodes, in collaboration with the Municipality of Rhodes. In Kos, the events are organized by KISE, the Municipality of Kos and the Hippocrates Urban Society.

Greece Update: The synagogue in Kos has a new ark and bimah. After decades of disuse will be rededicated as an active synagogue Full article [Here](#)

Following on from our post last year, we are informed that a new Ark and Bimah and other interior furnishings have been installed in the synagogue on the island of Kos, and — after decades out of its original use — the building will be rededicated in May as an active house of Jewish worship.



“Given that there was no evidence of the pre-WWII state of the synagogue, the design is based on historic examples in Italy and also on the reuse of older furniture in order to raise their sanctity and to address the principles of circular economy,” the architect Elias Messinas, who oversaw the project, told JHE in an email. (Kos was under Italian rule from 1912 to 1943, during which time the synagogue was built.).

Messinas is the leading expert on Greek synagogues and has been involved in the survey, study, and restoration of synagogues in Greece for decades.

“The furniture modification was assigned to MANOS-TSIAOUSHI in Serres, Greece, and the implementation was coordinated by Dimitris Geroukalis Director of Civil Company Ippokratis, who is responsible for the upkeep of the historic synagogue,” he said.

The Kos synagogue was built in the mid-1930s to replace an older synagogue that was destroyed in an earthquake in April 1933. It was abandoned after the near-total destruction of the circa 120 member Jewish community during the Holocaust, and then was purchased by the Municipality around 1984 and used as a local cultural centre.

Last year, as we noted in our original post, the local municipality and the Greek Central Board of Jewish Communities decided to bring the synagogue back to its original use, to serve the growing number of Israeli and other tourists.

Messinas said it will be used as a synagogue mainly in the summer months, but will also still serve as a local cultural center that will operate most of the year.

Volos

Exhibition on the Jews of Volos

Dedicated to the Jewish Community of the city that is constantly present in the history of Volos is the temporary exhibition "The Jews in Volos. Documents from their life and action", which starts on May 24, 2023 at 8 p.m. at the City Museum (Feron 17, Palia).

The exhibition is the result of close cooperation between the Directorate of Archives, Museums and Libraries of the Municipality of Volos and the Jewish Community of Volos. Through rare archival material, a large number of photographs, sacred vessels and books, objects of religious and domestic use and an informative chronology, the history of the Jews in the region of our fellow citizens, their coexistence with the locals and their contribution to the development and development of the city is presented, for the first time over time and in its entirety.



The first reports of the presence of Jewish residents in the area of Volos date back to 2nd century. This presence continues and is strengthened in population in the centuries that follow. During the Turkish occupation, historians and travelers describe the life of the Jews around the Turkish "Kastro" (Fortress) in the western district of the city, where they maintained a Synagogue and a "Bath" (Tevila). The Community at that time was considered Romaniote. Those first Greek-speaking Jews were joined by Spanish-speaking Sephardim, who had fled persecution in 1492.



In 1881 and the incorporation of Thessaly into Greece, there was a Jewish community in Volos with about 250 members. Their participation in the social, cultural and economic development of Volos was expressed through the creation of commercial and craft shops. They also took an active part in social and national struggles. For a century, the fewer but equally active Jews of Volos continue their rich social and cultural activity, mainly through events, collaborations with the educational community and publications.

This journey through the life and action of the members of the Jewish Community of Volos is presented in the thematically structured exhibition at the City Museum, the opening of which will take place on Wednesday, May 24, 2023 at 8 p.m.

The exhibition will run until November 19, remaining open to residents of the city, visitors of the summer season but also for members of the educational community and the new school year. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday 10.30 - 13.30 and afternoons Wednesday & Friday 18.00 - 21.00. Monday the Museum is closed.

Greece Celebrates 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of the State of Israel with Pomp in Athens

Historically it was a great anniversary. Israel celebrated 75 years since May 14, 1948, when Ben-Gurion solemnly read the birth proclamation of a state destined to stand the test of time. Generations of persecuted Jews have since found a home that made them feel they had somewhere to return. Just a few years after the revelation of the concentration camps in which six million people were killed, those who built the fledgling state did their best to start a new life.

All over the world this anniversary was celebrated with pomp. The same happened in Athens, which confirms the excellent relations between the two countries, but also the restoration of the historical role played by the centuries-old community of Greek Jews in our course.

Noam Katz, Israel's ambassador who was appointed to the post this autumn to succeed Yossi Amrani, and his wife, Einat, welcomed about 500 guests at Anassa City Events in Goudi Park. Special color was given to the event by the artistic program. Evanthia Reboutsika accompanied the singers Soli Iohanas and Kostas Triantafyllidis on violin, who performed well-known Greek and Israeli melodies in Greek and Hebrew. Besides, we must not forget that Greek music is extremely popular in Israel and many of our singers enjoy tremendous popularity.



The distinguished guests also enjoyed Mediterranean delicacies based on Israeli and Greek cuisine.

In his speech, the ambassador spoke about Israel's achievements over these 75 years, the country's vision, innovation in high technology, relations between Israel and its neighbors, as well as the recent signing of important peace agreements with even more Middle Eastern countries. Regarding Greek-Israeli relations, the ambassador said that they are stronger than ever and in the future generate great opportunities for cooperation in areas such as energy, technology, science and health, trade, tourism and culture.

National Defense Minister Nikos Panagiotopoulos, invited as a keynote speaker, stressed that Israel and Greece have forged a strategic partnership both in excellent defense cooperation and in other areas, focusing on the example of the Kalamata International Pilot Training Center.

The event was attended, among others, by the Deputy Prime Minister, Panagiotis Pikrammenos, the Chief of HNDGS General Konstantinos Floros, MPs, ambassadors, prominent businessmen, academics, journalists, people of culture and arts and friends of Israel.

Religious Freedom in Greece

The US State Department's report on religious freedom – what it says about Greece.

The State Department's report on religious freedom was released. It addresses Congress and describes the state of religious freedom around the world, containing a separate chapter for each country.

References for Greece

NGOs and advocacy groups reported no significant progress during the year in resolving Holocaust-era Jewish property claims, including foreign citizens. Several Holocaust-era property claims remained open until the end of the year.

On February 13, Health Minister Plevris apologized to the Jewish community for "offensive views" he had expressed while a member of the LAOS party. Plevris said he "categorically condemns anti-Semitism" and "Holocaust revisionism" and had distanced himself from his father, Konstantinos Plevris, who wrote a book referring to the Holocaust as a "fairy tale." The minister acknowledged that he "grew up in an environment with a strong anti-Semitic influence".

In May, an Athens court sentenced a deposed monk to a suspended one-year prison sentence for inciting violence against Jews. In February, an Athens court sentenced two human rights activists to a suspended 12-month prison sentence for falsely accusing a Greek Orthodox metropolitan of racist and anti-Semitic hate speech. In March, Republic President Katerina Sakellaropoulou and local officials participated in a march in Thessaloniki to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

On July 20, parliament passed a law designating the government-funded Athens Mosque in the Votanikos area as the religious center of Muslims in greater Athens (Attica Region). The law mandated the Athens Mosque Management Committee to advise the government on Islam. In August, parliament amended the procedure under which the government appoints muftis in Thrace. Read the full report on Greece [Here](#)

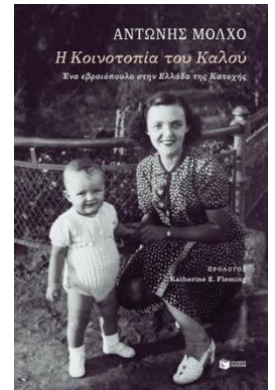
A Child Who Survived the Holocaust Thanks to the Kindness of Strangers

European history professor Antonis Molcho lived unimaginable adventures as a child during the Occupation period and survived because of the simple, good people who found his way.

Why did they help them? Was it the money they gave some of them? "Money doesn't explain anything. I have no convincing explanation. That I am saved is the exception, when 97% of the Jews were eliminated. Luck played a big role and then it's the decisions that people made to risk," he tells me. As the book writes, "more often than one can imagine an honorable man chooses to help not out of heroism, nor out of a desire to stand out, nor out of obeying a strong moral protection." It is a matter of dignity to do so, to the degree that he does not have to radically change his daily routine and habits. But when the help you offer may jeopardize the safety of your own people, then you think again, and most of the time you fall back and stay away from the one who needs help. There have been a lot of honorable people in Occupied Greece," he explains in his book "The Banality of Good".

A text that emerged from the very beautiful conversation with Antonis Molchos, one of the youngest Holocaust survivors. Everything we said didn't fit, and I didn't have time to ask everything I wanted. I hope we get a chance at the launch of his book.

Read more [Here](#) (in Greek)



Tunisia

Disquiet Among Tunisian Jews Over President's Response to Deadly Synagogue Attack [Article Here](#)

Despite an outward show of unity with the Tunisian authorities, there is significant disquiet within the North African country's Jewish community over the government's response to Tuesday's deadly gun attack upon worshipers at a historic synagogue on the island of Djerba, The Algemeiner has learned.



A member of the Tunisian Jewish community expressed serious concern regarding the remarks delivered by President Kais Saied to Tunisia's National Security Council on Wednesday, pointing to the absence of any condemnation of antisemitism or condolences specifically directed to the Jewish community.

"I heard his entire speech, and I realized that it is probably very difficult for him to mention the word 'Jews'," the Jewish community member — who spoke on condition of strict anonymity for fear of reprisals — told The Algemeiner during a telephone interview on Thursday.

"Without a doubt, [Saied] is not only a hater of Israel but also antisemitic," the person added emphatically.

Two worshipers — Benjamin Haddad, a French citizen, and his cousin Aviel Haddad, a joint French-Israeli citizen — were murdered alongside two police officers during the attack on the El Ghriba synagogue carried out by a naval officer who was serving on the island. Thousands of pilgrims visit the synagogue annually to celebrate the Jewish festival of Lag B'Omer. The authorities announced on Wednesday that a "preliminary criminal investigation" had been opened.

In his comments to the National Security Council, Saied stressed that Tunisia remained safe as a destination, "no matter how much these criminals try to destabilize it."

Adding that "Tunisia will always remain a land of tolerance and coexistence," he claimed that the purpose of the attack was to "sow the seeds of discord, damage the tourist season and damage the state."

However, Saied's silence on the as yet unnamed assailant's selection of a Jewish target, as well as the reluctance of the authorities to identify the attack as an act of terrorism, has not passed unnoticed among Tunisia's tiny Jewish community of approximately 1,500 people.

Jason Guberman — the executive director of the American Sephardi Federation (ASF), which works extensively with Jewish communities in North Africa — told The Algemeiner that Saied's speech to the National Security Council amounted to a strategic error for the president.

"While the investigation is ongoing, one would expect, especially given Al Qaeda's prior terrorist attack on the El Ghriba Synagogue, that the Tunisian government would do everything in its power to reassure the community and the world by condemning antisemitism, expressing condolences and committing additional security forces," Guberman said.

Saied had "signaled to Islamist extremists that Tunisia is not only a good source for recruits, but increasingly a target for conquest," Guberman said.

Saied has caused consternation among Tunisian Jews in the recent past, having been taken to task by Jewish organizations in 2021 after he delivered a speech in which he accused Jews of being responsible "for the instability in the country" — an assertion the Tunisian leader later denied making.

The community member noted that Saied had described the victims of the attack on the El Ghriba Synagogue as "martyrs," and that "he didn't mention either Jews or the police officers [who were killed]." The president's decision to avoid calling the attack a terrorist incident was "a problem, because if you don't give an accurate description [of what happened], you don't know what you are fighting against. But if you say that it's a terrorist, antisemitic attack, then you have to take action."

Saied's comments were echoed by other Tunisian political leaders. A statement from the heads of the Tunisian Labor Union (UGGT) condemned the "vile terrorist operation" in Djerba before denouncing "the instrumentalization by the media and foreign circles, by wrongly identifying this heinous terrorist crime with what is called 'antisemitism,' with a view to smearing Tunisia. "

The attack has bolstered fears that the Lag B'Omer pilgrimage to Djerba may not survive. The synagogue was the target of a terrorist attack on the same occasion in 2002, when an Al Qaeda terrorist drove a truck packed with explosives into the front of the synagogue, killing 14 German tourists along with three Tunisians and two French nationals.

Articles by Members of Our Extended Community

What's missing in the discussion about race sparked by Apu in 'The Simpsons' The history of Sephardic Jews challenges our ideas about race in America.

Full article by Devin E. Naar in the Washington Post [Here](#)

Devin E. Naar is an associate professor of Jewish studies and history and founder and chair of the Sephardic Studies Program at the University of Washington in Seattle. His first book, "Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece," won a National Jewish Book Award.



For the first time since Hari Kondabolu called out Hank Azaria, a White man, for his damaging work as the voice of the South Asian character Apu on the "The Simpsons," the two comedians recently spoke about reckoning with race and representation in American culture. Azaria accepted responsibility for propagating "dehumanizing" stereotypes and now seeks to make amends.

But the historic instability of racial categories in the United States adds additional layers of complexity, irony and erasure to the story.

A century ago, “race science” thinking momentarily resulted in the U.S. government recognizing South Asians as “white by law” while calling into question the whiteness of Sephardic Jews from the Ottoman Empire, those who share Azaria’s family’s background. This history reminds us that U.S. racial hierarchies did not develop based on perceptions of biology or appearance alone, but rather as cultural, political and legal constructs that have morphed over the generations, redrawing the lines between “White” and “not White” along the way. These processes explain how Azaria and Kondabolu — and their communities — have found themselves on different sides of the “color line” today. Even now, those positions may not be permanent.



The Naturalization Act of 1790 declared that only a “free white person” was eligible to become a U.S. citizen. After the Civil War, those “of African nativity” were added. This legal reality meant that until racial prerequisites ended altogether in 1952, courts continued to adjudicate the question of who counted as “White” for the purposes of naturalization for all others.

Kondabolu began his career in Seattle, coincidentally the same city where intellectual Bhagat Singh Thind arrived from Punjab, India, in 1913, which eventually led to a major naturalization test case. After serving in the U.S. military during World War I, Thind invoked the logic of race science to claim that, as a high caste Sikh descended from the original Aryans, he was “Caucasian” and thus White and eligible for naturalization. He echoed the Dillingham Commission’s “Dictionary of Races and Peoples,” which contributed to the restrictive immigration quotas imposed by Congress in 1924 by ranking people of the world from “most” to “least desirable.” It included South Asians — “Hindus” — among “Caucasians,” who were ranked higher (Whiter) than “Hebrews” or “Turks.” Despite the “scientific” ranking, the commission described East Indians as “the least desirable race of immigrants.”

A lower court accepted Thind’s “scientific” arguments and granted him citizenship, a major development for the 6,400 Asian Indians in the United States by 1920. But the Supreme Court overturned the ruling in 1923 as part of a series of landmark decisions that discarded “scientific evidence” for determining who was White and instead relied on “common knowledge.” Dozens of South Asians were denaturalized. In 1936, Thind belatedly became a U.S. citizen through a new law that naturalized U.S. Army veterans regardless of race.

Ironically, Azaria’s own family’s history shows how Sephardic Jews became ensnared by the same legal regimes as South Asians such as Thind. When Sephardic Jews arrived from the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) — when Azaria’s grandparents fled their native Salonika (Thessaloniki, in today’s Greece) — U.S. immigration authorities debated how to classify the newcomers, who numbered about 60,000 by 1924. In contrast, Ashkenazi Jews from Central or Eastern Europe didn’t face questions about their eligibility for naturalization. (Although they did become targets of immigration restriction, discrimination and claims that they weren’t White, in other domains.)

As descendants of Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, most Sephardic Jews spoke Ladino, a Spanish-based hybrid language written in Hebrew letters; some also spoke French, Greek or Arabic. None spoke Yiddish nor did they have names, customs or appearances associated with mainstream American Jews.

U.S. officials classified Azaria’s grandparents as “Hebrews” by race and “Turks” by nationality. But others were classified by race as Turks, Greeks, Mexicans or Syrians. Their varied appearances also made them difficult to categorize, as a social worker noted in 1937: “While many of these people have finely chiseled faces and creamy complexions, others are as dark-skinned as Negroes but do not have their broad features. Some resemble the Arabs while others look exactly like East Indians.”

Those from the Ottoman Empire — a liminal zone in the eastern Mediterranean that traversed the geographic borders between Europe, Asia and Africa — tested the precarious boundaries between “White” and “not White.” The Dillingham Commission in 1911 had classified “Turks” as “Asiatic” rather than White.

When “Turkish Jews,” such as the Azarias, entered New York’s garment industry, commentators decried an “invasion” from “Western Asiatic countries.” Obstacles notwithstanding, Azaria’s grandfather, Haim Azaria, became a dress manufacturer and a founder of the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America.

An Ottoman national, Haim Azaria applied for U.S. naturalization in 1922. In 1923, New York’s Ladino weekly announced his marriage to Sarina Corkidi, from Izmir. Shortly after the wedding, however, Haim’s naturalization petition was denied on the grounds that he was “not well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States.”

Naturalization officials deployed this justification at their whim to exclude bootleggers, communists, pacifists, “enemy aliens,” those who did not pay parking tickets and others, including some from Turkey, an alleged hotbed of “Oriental despotism” antithetical to American values and a country with which the United States did not have diplomatic relations (1917-1927).

After moving to the Bronx, he finally became naturalized in 1936 — the same year as Thind.

Many from the Ottoman Empire sought to secure their position in the United States by distancing themselves from Turks, the Orient and Islam. Armenians and Syrians claimed that their status as Christians rendered them legally White. Even Turkish-speaking Muslims posed as Armenians, whereas South Asians sometimes tried to pass as “Turks.” Sephardic Jews recast themselves not as “Turkish,” “Levantine” or “Oriental” but rather “Spanish” Jews, to plant themselves in Europe, to claim status as White and to make themselves seem legible in American society.

For the purposes of naturalization, racial classifications lost some legal weight after 1952 when racial prerequisites ended. Already by 1946, Indians and Chinese became eligible for naturalization as the United States sought to court allies against Japan. As the Cold War escalated, the United States tried to position itself as an “open” country in contrast to the Soviet Union, leading to the 1965 Immigration Act, which ended nationality quotas.

The new laws did not upend the distinction between “desirable” and “undesirable” immigrants, but rather changed the criteria by prioritizing visas for “qualified immigrants,” especially those in “the professions,” such as science and medicine. This change provided unprecedented opportunities for the well-educated from around the world — including from India — while barring “unskilled” laborers. Kondabolu’s parents, a botanist and a physician, probably benefited from the new system to enter the United States in 1978.

U.S. policies and culture continue to shape racial categories, which remain fluid and subject to change over time.

Both “Jewish” and “Hindu” have moved from racial to religious designations. Yet the character of Apu on “The Simpsons” represents just one of myriad ways in which the racialization of South Asians continues.

As a subgroup, Sephardic Jews have also remained somewhat racially unrecognized by American culture. The late-night television host Larry King expressed shock upon learning that Azaria was Jewish. During the Apu controversy, Jewish media commentary did not notice Azaria’s Sephardic background. And Indian American Mindy Kaling’s sitcom even featured a scene at a Jewish camp where Mindy is assumed to be “Sephardic.”

This ambiguity has also fed Sephardic actors’ ability to play “ethnic” roles. Azaria channeled his Sephardic grandmother to play a Guatemalan butler in “The Birdcage.” Shelley Morrison (nee Rachel Mitrani) played the Salvadoran maid on “Will and Grace.” And Brian George played the Pakistani restaurateur in “Seinfeld.” The audience has no idea of the actors’ backgrounds.

This context doesn’t justify Azaria doing “brown voice” for Apu, nor does it suggest that Azaria should not be considered White. He is White and there is more to the story — a story both about shifting racial categories and the performance of racial identities.

The vortex of American whiteness has absorbed many communities whose racial status was once questioned (even as antisemites and white nationalists would not accept White Jews, such as Azaria, as White).

Today it is difficult to imagine a time when some of those communities might not have been considered White and to anticipate which groups might be coaxed to join next. Was, to paraphrase James Baldwin, the “price of whiteness” for Sephardic Jews their own erasure? Could the reclamation of a consciousness as “other” inspire the creation of the first Sephardic American protagonist on the screen — and prevent the making of future Apus?

Articles of Interest for Everyone

How I Became a Judeo-Spanish Full article by Alain de Tolédo [Here](#)

When he was a child, Alain de Toledo thought that "Spanish" meant "Jewish". Then, he realized that the Spanish he spoke at home was not the same as the one he was taught at school... In his story for K., through the evocation of his family's destiny and the gradual awareness of the fate to which he belongs, he recounts what makes the singularity of a language and of the group of those who have carried it to the present day.

In my youth, there was an activity that young people today cannot know: our grandmothers, mothers and aunts used to knit. Very often, the ball of wool would get tangled and it would take a long time to find the beginning of the thread and untangle it. It took me years and years to untangle the ball of wool that was in my head.

A Particular Childhood

I was born after the war into a family that, in my eyes as a child, and even as a teenager, had a few peculiarities, not to say oddities. First peculiarity: there were two languages at home. The parents' and mine. The parents spoke Spanish with each other – at least that's what they called their language. But with me, they spoke French. I think they wanted me to become a "good little Frenchman." They had naturalized me at birth (I learned this much later) while they themselves had kept their Spanish nationality, which I would later find curious since the decree of expulsion of the Jews from Spain had not yet been abolished (it would be in 1967). It was also very curious that this desire to make me a good little Frenchman was accompanied by a "don't trust the French" when talking about the friends of my adolescence. I understood this injunction as a recommendation to hide the fact that I was Jewish: in their language, they distinguished between those who were "Spanish" – which meant Jewish – and those who were "French," which meant Catholic. My uncle, who had Turkish nationality, was also considered "Spanish"...



Mazalto and Abraham Saporta, my great-great grandparents, in traditional clothes

I felt this particularity of the language very concretely when we went to a restaurant. There were a lot of us, we spoke loudly and in "Spanish," which made us stand out. In addition, everyone ate from each other's dishes: an absolute shame. I wanted to hide under the table.

In a way, one can say that my parents' plan to make me a "good little Frenchman" was perfectly successful. Thus, when the television arrived at home and broadcast international matches, I stood at attention and sang the Marseillaise at the top of my voice. But this attitude had its limits. For example, when my classmates told me that they were going to their grandparents' house for the vacations, in such and such a region of France, and they asked me "And where are your grandparents from?," it was impossible for me to say that some of them came from Salonika and others from Edirne (Andrinople). So I was left in the dark, the kind of person who would answer that we had been Parisians for several generations.

I must mention another peculiarity. The Pesach Haggadah speaks of four children. I, among them, was the one who did not know how to ask questions. I remember my eighth grade class. I started learning Spanish in school thinking, "This is a subject where I'll have an advantage!" But as soon as I said my first words, the teacher looked at me as if I were a Martian. There were obviously two forms of Spanish: the one at home and the one at school. I didn't know how to ask the right questions. In my defense, there were a lot of things that were difficult for me to understand. For example, we were Jewish, obviously, and yet Christmas, with all its gifts, was one of the great holidays of the year, and my parents insisted on making me believe in Santa Claus. I had noticed their little game of hiding presents so that they would miraculously appear the next day and I quickly deduced that parents don't always tell the truth.

I was fortunate that during my school years I did not suffer from anti-Semitism – "de Toledo" was not identified as a Jewish name. I have, if I may say so, managed to slip through. All I witnessed was an incident that I have long remembered. In my senior year, a boy named Pellerin was making an anti-Semitic speech in front of me. Three other students were listening to him, and one of them commented, "They've had six million deaths, they should be left alone." That was the first time I heard about the six million dead!

When I say that I did not suffer from anti-Semitism, I must however report a traumatic event that I did not fully realize until 40 years later. When I entered the fourth grade – I was a year ahead of him and rather small in stature – Momo, a repeat student two years older than me and rather large in stature, came up to me: "You, I'll kick your ass every day and you know very well why! And if I forget, you'll come and ask. And if you don't, you'll get two kicks!" This little game went

on all year and, of course, I didn't tell anyone, not my teachers, not my parents. I spent years wondering what he meant by "You know very well why." One day, I remembered that Momo often walked around the playground shirtless, forming the shape of the cross with his body and screaming in imitation of Christ's Passion. It took me 40 years to make the connection between his sadism toward me and his Christian delirium.

Sephardic or Judeo-Spanish

Several events allowed me to start unraveling the ball. The first one, another oddity of my personal life, concerns a stay in the SKIF summer camp (Sotsyalistisher Kinder Farband), a youth movement affiliated to the Bund, at the castle of Corvol l'Orgueilleux. There I discovered that there were Jews who were not Spanish, that I was a Sephardic child and that terrible thing had happened during the war. They celebrate the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, but they do not talk too much about the deportation, and I begin to understand why my mother gets upset when she hears German. If I am discovering the Ashkenazi world, it is totally reciprocal for my little friends who enjoy all the oriental pastries sent by my mother. I have always been struck by this ignorance of the two worlds; just recently, one of my cousins was challenged by an American Jew: "What? You are Jewish and you don't speak Yiddish!"



My father and his mother in 1943 before their departure for Spain

In 1978, two decisive meetings took place. The first was with Haïm-Vidal Sephiha and his book "L'agonie des Judéo-Espagnols." There I understood the difference between our Spanish, which would henceforth be called Judeo-Spanish (and not Ladino) and Castilian – or "haliz" Spanish (that is, "real" in Turkish), as Professor Sephiha called it. I understand in retrospect the astonishment of my Spanish teacher when, in the middle of a sentence, a word of Turkish appeared. Above all, for the first time, I saw a number tattooed on the arm of a former deportee. The second meeting linked me to Serge Klarsfeld when his Memorial of the Deportation of the Jews of France was published. If I was the child who did not know how to ask questions, my parents did not know how to speak, caught in the great silence that followed the war years. Klarsfeld filled this silence to some extent.

In 1979, with Haïm-Vidal Sephiha, we created the Vidas Largas association for the preservation and promotion of Judeo-Spanish. For ten years, I was its treasurer. We organized many conferences, conversation workshops, courses, concerts... Over the years, I discovered that beyond my family and their friends, there was a Judeo-Spanish community, alive, diverse and happy to meet.

The expression "Judeo-Spanish" deserves some explanation. As we know, when it comes to Jews, nothing is simple. In the family, we considered ourselves Spanish, and eventually Sephardic. Haïm-Vidal Sephiha, on the other hand, abandoned the use of the word Sephardic, in order to avoid confusion with the Jews of North Africa who, apart from a minority in the north of Morocco, did not speak Judeo-Spanish, unlike the Jews who found refuge in the Ottoman Empire.

In order to understand this transition from the use of the term Sephardic to that of Judeo-Spanish, it is necessary to make a small historical detour. The expulsion decree of 1492 led tens of thousands of Jews to leave Spain. They left in all directions. Some went to Portugal, which was more tolerant, until its temporary unification with Spain. Others went to the north, southwestern France and especially the Netherlands. Many of the exiles ended up in North Africa, where, in general, they integrated with the local population and lost their Spanish traditions. Finally, some of them were welcomed in the Ottoman Empire, where they were able to keep the Spanish language, or rather the Spanish languages, if we want to be precise.

The confusion in France between Sephardic and Judeo-Spanish is due to the fact that from a religious point of view there are only two great rites, one Ashkenazi and the other Sephardic, and that the habit has developed of calling all those who are not Ashkenazi Sephardic. However, between the Jews of North Africa and those of the Ottoman Empire, the history, culture, cuisine, songs... are not the same. A little anecdote helps to understand this difference. When I would tell someone that I was Sephardic, I would get the reply: "So your mother used to make you couscous on Friday nights!" My dear mother, who was a very good cook, never made couscous on Friday nights or any other day of the week. The "national" dish was rather eggplant gratin, as Edgar Morin wrote in his book about his father. Not to mention the traditional borekas, the mere mention of which brings tears to the eyes of all Judeo-Spanish.

Saved By Their Spanish Nationality

I still had to understand why my mother, born in Greece, and my father, born in Turkey, had Spanish nationality. Here again, a historical detour is necessary to explain this curiosity. In 1920, a Spanish senator, Angel Pulido, who was traveling down the Danube, met Spanish-speaking Jews. Finding it admirable that the expelled Jews had remained faithful

to the Spanish language, Angel Pulido wrote a book *Españoles sin patria* and campaigned for the recognition of these Jews as Spanish subjects. Thus, a decree was signed by King Alfonso XIII under the government of Primo de Rivera allowing Sephardim who wished to do so to recover Spanish nationality. I don't know how many people benefited from this decree, but it is said that in France, before the Second World War, out of 35 to 40,000 Judeo-Spanish, 2,000 had a Spanish passport.

A new event deeply marked me. While putting away the papers of my father, who died in 1964, I discovered his *Ausweis*, a document that allowed him to leave the camp at Compiègne where he had been interned on December 12, 1941 during the so-called "roundup of notables," although he was far from being one. Two French policemen had come to get his brother Maurice, who was absent because he was at work. My father, who had just come out of the hospital where he had undergone an operation, was present, and the policemen took him away. But his Spanish nationality saved him. He was released on March 14, 1942, 13 days before the departure of the first transport to Auschwitz. I was intrigued by the fact that this German document was countersigned by the Spanish Consul in Paris, Bernardo Rolland. Later research led me to discover that this Consul had saved dozens of Jews. As soon as he was informed of the arrest of one of them, he went to great lengths to have him released, despite the opposite opinion of his pro-Nazi ambassador. Bernardo Rolland gave papers to people who did not have them and when a delegation of Spanish-Jews came to him to explain certain situations, he answered: "I don't have time to deal with this, take this office, prepare the files and I will sign them." Thanks to him, dozens of Jews were able to cross the Spanish border, including my parents, who met on the train to Spain. I undertook to put together a file at Yad Vashem to have Bernardo Rolland awarded the medal of Righteous Among the Nations. I learned that he had lost his position as consul in Paris due to pressure from the Gestapo, who said that he "was a friend of the Jews and that he was doing too much for the Jews." In spite of my efforts, 20 years after the submission of the file, this medal has still not been awarded to him.

This injustice has, in spite of everything, had a beneficial result. As I researched his case further, I tried to find out how many Judeo-Spanish had been deported. This research was the beginning of a great adventure that lasted ten years. It began with the creation of the *Muestros Desaparecidos (Our Disappeared)* association, which published the *Memorial of the Spanish Jews Deported from France**. Everyone knew how many deportees there were in their family, but there was no overview. Together with volunteers and historians, we were able to compile a list of the 5,300 Judeo-Spanish deported from France and we preceded this work with a historical section explaining where the Judeo-Spanish came from. It took us a long time to compile the list. We worked from Serge Klarsfeld's large *Memorial*, published in 2012, which is much more complete than the 1978 one and includes the addresses of the deportees. We also consulted the archives of the Shoah Memorial, the departmental archives and the archives of the Spanish Consulate. Above all, we conducted more than 80 interviews with former deportees or hidden children. The establishment of the list was particularly complicated: if there was not much doubt about designating the Toledos, Gattegnos or Frescos as Spanish, the work was much more difficult with the Cohens and Levys. Among the most frequently encountered names was that of Eskenazi, which shows that not all Judeo-Spanish come from Spain but have assimilated the Judeo-Spanish culture. The book was published in 2019 and led to a series of lectures where we were able to see the Ashkenazi ignorance regarding the deportation of Judeo-Spanish. How many times did we hear: "Oh, well, there were Sephardim in Auschwitz!" Ignorance also affected the Judeo-Spanish regarding their own history.



The Consul General of Spain in Paris, Bernardo Rolland

And Salonika

It is impossible to talk about the Judeo-Spanish without talking about Salonika. Although they were spread throughout the Ottoman Empire, especially in what is now Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia and part of Romania, Thessaloniki has a special place in their history. Before World War I, Thessaloniki was the only major city in the Ottoman Empire whose Jewish population accounted for more than 80% of the total population. So much so that the other communities, Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Albanian... spoke Judeo-Spanish which allowed them to trade with the Jews. Salonika was called the Jerusalem of the Balkans.

At the end of the 19th century, things changed. With the arrival of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, much of the education was done in French. The economic decline of the Ottoman Empire, the constant wars, the rise of nationalism pushed more and more Jews to emigrate to the West. In 1912, Thessaloniki was handed over to the Greeks. There was an exchange of populations: the Turks left for Turkey while Greeks, mainly from Anatolia, came to settle in Salonika where they were surprised to discover a city where Judeo-Spanish was spoken. Then came the First World War. The French Army of the East moved to Salonika to catch the Axis forces from the rear, and this time it was the French who were surprised to find a French-educated population. Unfortunately, in 1917, a terrible fire ravaged the city, the majority of which was built of wood, which pushed some of the population to leave.

But the great catastrophe was obviously the arrival of the German army in 1941. The community, comprising about 60,000 people, was 98% destroyed and the few survivors could only spectate the disaster. Among them was a great scholar, Joseph Nehama, former director of the Alliance Israélite Universelle school in Salonika. He was deported to Bergen Belsen, a concentration camp and not an extermination camp, because of his Spanish nationality and the protection of the Spanish Consul in Athens, Sebastian de Romero Radigales, who, like Consul Rolland in Paris, fought to protect the Jews who were Spanish subjects. Upon his return from deportation, Joseph Nehama devoted himself to saving what could be saved. He undertook a masterly *History of the Israelites of Salonika*, five volumes of which were published before the war and which he completed after the war with two new volumes, one titled *In Memoriam* on the deportation. Above all, he wrote a gigantic dictionary of Judeo-Spanish, a veritable encyclopedia in which one can find not only translations of Judeo-Spanish words but also numerous expressions, descriptions of holidays, proverbs... A small consolation, because in addition to murdering thousands of Judeo-Spanish, the Nazis wanted to erase all traces of the Jewish presence in Salonika. Thus they destroyed the cemetery and its tombs dating from the sixteenth century, where they installed a swimming pool, before the University of Salonika was built on the same site. A reported anecdote testifies to the success of this policy: a young Salonican taken by a friend to the Inalco in Paris (a prominent language learning institute in France) burst out laughing when he saw a poster with the words "Spanish as it was spoken in Thessaloniki." "What kind of joke is this, we never spoke Spanish in Thessaloniki!"; he was stupefied when he learned the truth.

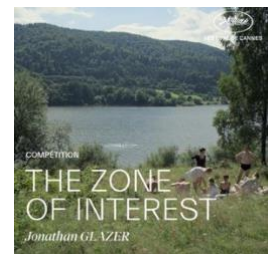
To fight against this form of cultural annihilation, the work of Joseph Nehama was essential. However, his dictionary, published in 1977, after his death in the same year, was lacking: there were only entries of Judeo-Spanish translated into French. For my generation, raised in French, it was useful to know the equivalent of a French word in Judeo-Spanish. So, with the help of my mother, Nora, née Saporta, and my aunt, Daisy Saporta, I turned Nehama's version upside down or *al reverso*, as Professor Sephiha used to say. In 2021, the association *Muestrros Dezaparesidos* published the *French/Jewish-Spanish Vocabulary*, el Nehama al reverso, which completes the great dictionary of Judeo-Spanish by Joseph Nehama. After this long journey, the ball of wool was untangled. I can say that I have become a Judeo-Spanish.

Alain de Toledo is President of the Muestrros Dezaparesidos Association

Cannes 2023: The Holocaust of Jews as We Never Saw It

British director Jonathan Glazer successfully attempted a completely different approach to the controversial issue of the Holocaust, which occasionally occupies cinema, with the film "The Zone of Interest", which was screened in the official competition section of the 76th edition, producing mostly positive comments.

What might a concentration camp of Jews like Auschwitz mean for the very Germans responsible for managing it? How did these people live, whose job it was to exterminate hundreds, if not thousands, of other people on a daily basis? A routine job. What was their personal life?



It is on these questions that the film centered on Rudolf Hoss (Christian Friedel), the commandant of the Auschwitz camp. We follow the daily life of a large family man, whose house is located on the outskirts. The wife feels joy in the comfort that this situation offers her. They have dogs, children, servants and face the daily small problems that every family can have regardless of the season. One of them is the possible transfer of the commander, which his wife does not want because it will lose the harmony that the current situation offers her.

In this context full of irony and cynicism, Glazer films everything from a distance: beautiful distant frames without close-ups emit the indescribable serenity of the region in stark contrast to the chaos inside it, where the unspeakable crimes that we never see took place. In fact, we don't see a single scene inside the concentration camp. We just hear from time to time. We hear cries of despair, gunshots or shouts of orders. It is the sound in this case that makes you feel the goosebumps permeating your whole being watching this wonderful film that creatively returns to a subject that will never cease to concern cinema. We have seen many films about the Holocaust of the Jews, from Gilo Pontecorvo's "Bonnet" to Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List" and Laszlo Nemetz's masterpiece "Son of Saul", which a few years ago at this very festival had caused a huge buzz and started a wonderful course towards the Oscars. However, no film we have seen so far has the originality of Glazer's approach to the subject and the aesthetics. Source: To Vima, 22.5.2023

Greek Consulate in Geneva Honors Spierer Family

"Spierer: An unknown chapter of Geneva philhellenism"

From the Facebook of the Consulate of Greece in Geneva: The Consulate General of Greece in Geneva organized, on Wednesday, May 3, 2023, an event to recognize the extraordinary humanitarian acts of the Jewish family Spierer from Geneva, who protected and saved thousands of Greeks in Eastern Macedonia and Izmir.



Entitled "The Spierers: An unknown chapter of Geneva philhellenism", the ceremony – held at Einard Palace, a symbolic place, as it was the residence of the most famous Swiss Philhellene – aimed to make this amazing story known in Geneva, the city of Spierer, but also the historical cradle of philhellenism, linked to Greece by close ties of friendship that have already lasted two centuries.

Professor Konstantinos Stamatopoulos described the historical context, while Mr. Emil Spierer spoke about the humanitarian action of Charles Spierer and his brothers during the Bulgarian occupation of Eastern Macedonia, from 1916 to 1918. Mr. Daniel Halperin then presented the humanitarian action of Leon Spierer and his brothers during the Smyrna Catastrophe in 1922. Charles Spierer expressed the family's thanks.

It is a necessary task to highlight this unknown story of the 4 brothers – Charles, Herman, Leon and Emil – who were tobacco manufacturers in Smyrna and who were actively present at crucial historical events that marked the collective consciousness of the Greeks.

In 1916, when the Bulgarians, allies of the Ottomans and the Germans, invaded Eastern Macedonia, Charles Spierer, taking advantage of his status as a Swiss citizen, with the consent and support of his brothers, took an admirable action to provide assistance to the Greek population. He organized supplies and soup kitchens; He negotiated the release of prisoners, paid for the release of hostages, and continued to pay the salaries of people deported, imprisoned or murdered in the form of pensions to their families.

Thousands of men, women and children, probably more than ten thousand, owe him their lives. Greece repeatedly honored Charles, but he never spoke about it and wrote nothing about this dramatic adventure.

The second humanitarian act honored was that of Leon and Hermann Spierer during the destruction of Smyrna in 1922.

When Turkish forces reached Smyrna in September 1922, the occupation of the city quickly turned to horror. The violence multiplied until, on September 13, the Armenian quarter was set on fire. The fire spread quickly and the city turned into a huge hell.

Leon was the only one of the brothers who was in Smyrna. On the same day, he managed to find a place for his pregnant wife and parents on the last steamship to depart from Izmir. He then decided to return to his warehouses in La Puent, which had escaped the flames, to take care of his company's employees. He welcomed them along with their families and took care of their survival.

To protect the people he hosted, he asked that sheets be painted in the colors of the Swiss flag and hung on the facades of buildings. No Turks entered the warehouse!

Ehrmann, who was suffering from tuberculosis, arrived in Izmir ten days later, on September 25. The brothers bought and secured a steamship carrying about 1,500 refugees to Kavala, where Charles welcomed and cared for them. Then the warehouse was filled with new refugees and many other ships were hired to take them to Volos, Thessaloniki and Kavala. Emil from Constantinople provided financial support to his brothers to support their action.

The Izmir disaster caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in two weeks. Leon and Ehrman rescued between 5,000 and 15,000 women, children and men from the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities. Charles welcomed them and took care of them until he and his brothers reorganized their factories in Macedonia to provide work for all. Meanwhile, they provided pensions to hundreds of orphans and widows.

Ehrmann died in 1927, aged 40, of tuberculosis. Leon, who had already experienced the fire in Thessaloniki in August 1917, was deeply affected by these events and until the end of his life never spoke about what he had experienced. The 4 brothers chose not to make these extraordinary acts public. The Swiss authorities and the family themselves were unaware of their history.

The Greek historian Mr. Dimitris Chatzidimitriou undertook the historical research on the actions of the family, in order to preserve and transmit their memory. For the first time in Geneva, in the presence of representatives of the authorities, Greece's permanent representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Papaioannou, the Greek and Jewish communities, and a host of philhellenes, this story was pulled from the past and brought to light.

A big thank you to the City of Geneva for its valuable support and for providing the Einard Palace for conducting the ceremony and especially to Mrs. Christina Kitsou, city councilor, for her presence and her speech at the ceremony as a representative of Geneva, this wonderful city that welcomes us with such warmth. Source: Facebook of the Consulate General of Greece in Geneva

New Exhibit in NYC: Maimonides Across Eight Centuries Featuring Highlights from the Hartman Family Collection of Manuscripts and Rare Books.

A Yeshiva University Museum exhibition, open May 9 - Dec. 31, 2023

Yeshiva University Museum's (YUM) forthcoming exhibition, *The Golden Path: Maimonides Across Eight Centuries*, opens in May 2023. This revolutionary project is geared towards general audiences, whether they have never heard of Maimonides or are experts in his work. Those familiar with him will find their understanding of the sage and his influence expanded and deepened, and those who are not will receive an in-depth introduction to the person—the scholar, philosopher, jurist, physician, scientist, and communal leader—and his impact.



The exhibition has sparked great enthusiasm and interest within and outside the University and scholarly communities. We expect robust turnout from visitors who are Jewish and who are not; who are merely curious or are experts; who are interested in multiculturalism, science, and philosophy; who are interested in the intersection of science and philosophy with religion; and who are ready to be inspired by a person who shaped, and continues to shape, generations of shared Jewish experience. We expect that all will leave with a deep appreciation for the ways in which the impact of this luminary continues to live and to inspire individuals and communities.

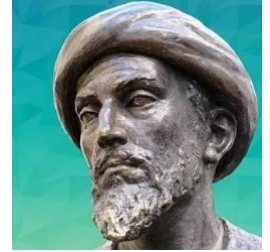
“The basis for our educational enterprise is epitomized by Maimonides’s religious leadership and intellectual quest for truth. Yeshiva University is honored to introduce the journey of Maimonides’s works to the broader community who through this exhibit can better develop their knowledge of Maimonides, Jewish history and the values on which to build their lives.” — Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, President of Yeshiva University

“There is not a single aspect of Jewish life and thought that is not shaped by Maimonides,”
— Dr. Ronnie Perelis, the Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Abraham and Jelena (Rachel) Alcalay Associate Professor of Sephardic Studies

“Arguably, no other individual has had a more pervasive or enduring effect on Jewish religious life over the last millennium than Maimonides,” — Dr. David Sclar, Exhibition Guest Curator

The Exhibition

The Golden Path tracks Maimonides and his thought through a study of materiality. It focuses on visual material, such as depictions of Maimonides, and on manuscripts and rare printed books from collections around the world, exploring specific items within their varied historical, cultural, and Maimonidean contexts. The exhibition is organized by guest curator David Sclar and will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue co-published by Liverpool University Press. It will explore Maimonides' authority and impact as well as the Mediterranean and Islamic contexts in which he lived. The catalogue will include essays by world-class scholars from institutions such as Princeton University, Bar-Ilan University, Ben Gurion University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Haifa, the University of Oxford, and Yeshiva University.



The exhibition will include items that have never before been displayed in public. Among the pieces that will be on loan to YUM are important and rare examples—such as 13th-century Yemenite manuscripts, early printed books from Italy and the Ottoman Empire, and texts produced by and for Christian audiences—from the Hartman Collection, the most significant private collection of Maimonides manuscripts and rare books; and spectacular manuscripts, some in Maimonides' own hand, borrowed from the Bodleian Libraries in Oxford, the British Library, the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the National Library of Israel, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Royal Library in Copenhagen, the Italian State Archives, and others.

Particularly exciting pieces include:

- A beautifully carved 11th century panel from a door to the Torah Ark in Cairo's Ben Ezra Synagogue, which was known to Maimonides himself. This panel is co-owned by YUM and by the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.
- A manuscript written by Isaac Newton, on loan from the National Library of Israel, in which he cites Maimonides' Laws of the New Moon in his proposal for reform of the Julian calendar.
- Fragments from the Cairo Genizah on loan from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, including one fragment with Maimonides' signature and others in his hand.
- A signed manuscript of the Mishneh Torah that was personally approved by Maimonides in a statement written in his own hand. This volume will be on loan from the Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford.
- A volume of Maimonides' commentary on the Mishnah. This volume, with notes by the sage himself, includes a well-known sketch of the Temple Menorah, which has in recent decades become the model for menorahs used in public Hanukkah celebrations across the world. This manuscript is also on loan from the Bodleian Libraries
- An illuminated manuscript of the monumental philosophical treatise *Moreh Nevukhim*, or *Guide of the Perplexed*, on loan from The Royal Library in Copenhagen. The manuscript was completed in Catalonia in 1348 and is considered one of the finest examples of the illumination traditions of that time and place.
- A magnificent, illuminated manuscript of *Moreh Nevukhim* on loan from the Italian State Archives. The manuscript was completed in 1349 and was in private hands for 500 years until it was acquired by the Italian government. This is the first major public viewing of this exquisite manuscript, which art historian Evelyn M. Cohen has described as "a masterpiece of medieval book art" and "a tour de force of calligraphic sophistication."
- The partnerships with international collections are unprecedented, and the exhibition stands to be one of the most impressive collections of Maimonides artifacts ever to be displayed together, and the first to focus as much on the man himself and his impact as on the items. It will also be the first of its kind designed for an American audience. We are excited by the potential of this exhibition to spark new research, inspire public learning and engagement, and bolster our ability to reach broad and diverse audiences. It gives YUM great pride to present this exhibition and bring these masterpieces together.

Exhibit Location: Center for Jewish History 15 W. 16th Street NY, NY 10011

Hours: Monday-Wednesday 10am-4pm, Thursday 10am-7:30pm, Friday & Saturday Closed, Sunday 11am-4pm

Other hours available by appointment. info@yum.cjh.org Learn more [Here](#)

In the History of the Artichoke, a History of Sephardic Jews Full article [Here](#)

The glorious vegetable made its way from the Iberian Peninsula during the Inquisition to Sicily and then to the Jewish Ghetto of Rome

There are plenty of ingredients that warrant the distinction of Iconic Jewish Ingredient — foods that show up throughout the Jewish Diaspora, often appearing across Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Mizrahi cuisines. These ingredients — sesame seeds, raisins, cabbages and eggs among them — help define the flavor and character of a wide array of Jewish dishes.



But what about an ingredient that's utterly essential to a specific Jewish community but has limited proliferation beyond the region? If, when you think of that locality, the first dish that pops to mind is a beloved specialty embraced throughout the area (and outside of it only to some extent), is its main ingredient worthy of "icon" status?

The locality I'm considering is Rome — in particular its Jewish Ghetto — and the dish is *carciofi alla Giudia*, Jewish-style fried artichokes.

"There is perhaps no greater love affair on earth than the flame that burns between Roman Jews and artichokes," Leah Koenig writes in her upcoming cookbook, *Portico: Cooking and Feasting in Rome's Jewish Kitchen*. "The ancient Mediterranean thistle ... serves as a totem of the community's identity." Well, if that's not a resounding vote for inclusion in the pantheon, I don't know what is.

Artichokes are members of the aster (*Asteraceae*) family (also known as *Compositae*), which also includes cardoons, various chicories and tarragon, along with sunflowers, chrysanthemums and chamomile. Originally grown along the Mediterranean and in North Africa, the plant is known to have been eaten by the ancient Romans. For centuries thereafter, though, the artichoke seemed to lose favor, until the Moors began growing and eating them in Spain and the Spanish-ruled island of Sicily during the Middle Ages.

The history of *carciofi alla Giudia* follows the path of Sephardic Jews who, when expelled from the Iberian peninsula during the Inquisition, made their way to Sicily, where they were introduced to the delicious-if-prickly edible thistle. Exiled once again in 1493 after the Inquisition reached the island, Jews made their way north, bringing artichokes with them. And it was when they got to Rome that the artichoke magic happened.

One wonders who first picked an artichoke and — while carefully avoiding the tiny thorns at the tips of all those tough, tightly packed leaves — thought, "This looks like something good to eat."

Not that the artichoke isn't a magnificent vegetable to behold, with its multiple layers of sage-green and sometimes purple-tinged triangular leaves forming a stately bud-like cone. It's just that it takes patience and determination — and in the case of the OG artichoke eater, imagination — to decide to whittle the thing down to a state of edible glory.

"It took a leap of culinary inspiration — or desperation — to say 'let's eat that,'" Koenig told me recently, when I turned to her for information about artichokes in Roman Jewish cuisine. (They're such a focus of the new book that she chose an artichoke graphic for the cover.) She added that non-Jews in the south of Italy shunned the artichoke, calling it "the Jewish vegetable." Lacking the financial resources to be choosy, Jews learned a thing or two from the tasty preparations coming out of Moorish kitchens.

So what happened in Rome to turn the artichoke into the undisputed star of Roman Jewish cuisine? The answer is simply this: hot oil.

Romans were experts at frying all manner of foods, and while there are certainly many wonderful ways to prepare artichokes, nothing results in a more pleasurable eating experience than deep-frying them whole.

Thus carciofi alla Giudia was born, becoming one of the most popular dishes not only within the Roman Jewish Ghetto but beyond it, in and around Rome.

Luckily, you don't have to venture to Italy in order to find them. Check the menus of your local Italian restaurants, especially in spring when artichokes are in season. I've enjoyed them at New York's Trattoria Dell'Arte many times, and recently noticed them on the menu at Noi Due Carne, a kosher Italian Mediterranean spot on the Upper West Side.

Speaking of kosher, artichokes are not without controversy. During Passover 2018, Israel's chief rabbinate declared that artichokes prepared whole — as they are in the Roman-Jewish specialty — could not be considered kosher since small bugs might hide within their leaves. Never mind that religious Roman Jews had been preparing and consuming them for over 500 years.

With its most popular dish threatened (along with the livelihood of Jewish restaurateurs throughout the area and the personal integrity of Roman-Jewish home cooks, who pride themselves on their ability to properly clean their carciofi), seemingly all of Rome went up in arms. Rome's chief rabbi, Riccardo Di Segni, not only rejected the decree but shot a video of himself cooking carciofi alla Giudia while offering holiday wishes to his constituents.

And while making them is no small task, you too can do it at home. In Portico, Koenig offers the traditional method, which involves trimming the artichokes and then double-frying them to achieve the perfect crisp-on-the-outside-tender-on-the-inside consistency. There's also a simplified recipe that calls for canned or jarred artichokes, which saves all the trimming time.

I can certainly see the benefits of that, but I've grown to enjoy the prep, which is not so much difficult as it is a process. There's a very good photographic how-to in Koenig's book, and I went ahead and shot a step-by-step video of myself trimming artichokes, which should demystify the whole experience for anyone who's carciofi curious.

How to Prep Artichokes

Once you know how to do it, there are any number of artichoke dishes to make, most of them quite simple. "Portico" includes a recipe for artichokes alla Romana, another classic, in which the vegetable is braised in water and wine rather than fried; and one for a salad in which raw artichoke hearts are sliced thinly and served with shaved Parmesan.

Deep into artichoke season and well into my research, I was drowning in trimmed artichokes and looking for easy ways to use them. I discovered a method that's more hands-off than frying and requires a lot less cleanup: Cut the trimmed vegetables in half or quarters, drizzle them with olive oil, salt and pepper (making sure to get between the leaves) and roast them in a 400-degree oven for about 10 minutes per side. To eat them, dip the burnished crispy leaves in aioli, Sriracha mayonnaise, or mayo mixed with a little Dijon, garlic and lemon juice before relishing the tender heart, which is perhaps more delicious for the labor it took to reach it.

Watch How to Prep Artichokes on YouTube [Here](#)



How Ernest Hemingway Witnessed the Greek Genocide Full article [Here](#)

As a young journalist, Ernest Hemingway witnessed first-hand the displacement of the Greek population from their ancestral homelands in Pontus, Thrace, and Asia Minor.

His restless spirit of adventure took him to many places, where he so often received the inspiration to write his timeless books. He went to Spain during their civil war, lived in Paris, and spent time in Cuba.



However, early on in his adult life, he spent two years in Constantinople and was introduced to Greek culture during a tragic time for Hellenism.

Little is known about the writer's beginnings as a journalist and his writings on the war between Greece and Turkey, which took place between 1920 to 1922. Hemingway was only 23 years of age when, on September 30, 1922, he arrived in Constantinople as a war correspondent to cover the Greco-Turkish War for the Toronto Star.

The story titled "Hemingway in Constantinople: Ernest Hemingway's writings on the Greco-Turkish War in 1922" in The Midwest Quarterly academic journal, written by Peter Lecouras is quite enlightening about the writer's first contact with Greek culture. The academic article was published on September 22, 2001.

The American legend wrote a total of twenty pieces during his time in Constantinople, beginning with the story "British Can Save Constantinople," dated September 30, 1922, to his last article, "Refugees from Thrace," which bore the dateline of November 14, 1922.

During those two years, Hemingway wrote about the war and its politics while at the same time honing the style that would make him a renowned writer. His experiences there inevitably made their way into his later works, as well. The Greco-Turkish war, for instance, is referenced memorably in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," written in 1936.

According to Lecouras, Hemingway sympathized with the half-million Thracians who were displaced in the Greco-Turkish War for the political and economic interests of the superpowers of the time— namely Britain, France, In his articles, Hemingway also blames the political decisions of the Greek leadership for the catastrophic results of the war. Following the line of the British foreign office and the American consulate in Ankara, he condemns the Greek cause and the decision of King Constantine to replace competent officers in the Greek army with his cronies.

Describing Greek exodus from eastern Thrace

In "Refugees from Thrace," Hemingway observes that Greeks leaving Eastern Thrace were fleeing the Turks. He describes with great sympathy the Greek peasants who marched without knowing where they were going, knowing only that they were to flee to save their lives.

The short story "On the Quay at Smyrna," also inspired by the time the writer spent in Constantinople, is a harrowing work about the dreadful events of 1922. Hemingway describes with painful realism how Smyrna was burned by marauding Turkish soldiers and civilians.

He goes on to tell the sickening story of the slaughtering of 125,000 Greeks there, and how those who survived the brutality of the Turks sought escape on the quay at Smyrna where British warships hovered close by.

Hemingway and the Greek restaurant in Chicago

A story about Hemingway appeared in the November 1979 Princeton Alumni Weekly journal called "Friends for Life: An Alum's Recollections of Hemingway," written by William Horne, Jr..

As all Hemingway aficionados know, Ernest Hemingway volunteered to serve his country as a driver in World War I. William Horne likewise felt that he needed to do something for the cause, and in New York, the two young men boarded the same ship that would take them to Bordeaux, France.

Hemingway and Horne met at the Austrian-Italian border, transporting wounded soldiers and running supply lines. This was the beginning of a very long friendship between the men.

Following the war, Horne moved to Chicago, where he worked selling axles in the automotive industry. He then told Hemingway that he would support him financially as a writer because he believed in his talent. Horne recalls in the "Friends for Life" story:

"We rented a fourth-floor room in a house at 1230 N. State Street. It was the kind with a washstand in the corner and a bath down the hall. Meals weren't included, so we usually ate at Kitso's, a Greek restaurant on Division Street."

He further writes that: "It was a quick lunch place with tables, a counter, and a hole in the wall for shouting orders into the kitchen. They served pretty good dinners for 65 or 70 cents, and I think Kitso's was the scene of Ernie's story, 'The Killers.'"

The Greek diner, one of the many businesses in the Windy City run by members of the sizable Greek community, was actually mentioned by Hemingway as the place in which he wrote "The Killers." The writer himself said he wrote the entire story in a burst of creativity on May 16, 1926, before he ate his lunch at a neighborhood restaurant.

The story is about two professional killers who go to a small town to kill a famous former boxer. It was initially published in March 1927 in Scribner's Magazine, and Hemingway received \$200 for it—a rather princely sum at the time for a struggling writer.

How to Make Jewish Student Organizations More Welcoming to Sephardic and Mizrahi Students Full article by Manashe Khaimov [Here](#)

The Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish community comprises approximately 35% of the overall Jewish population of North America, according to statistics from our organization, the Sephardic American Mizrahi Initiative (SAMi), a national nonprofit Jewish movement for college students and young professionals from North Africa, the Middle East, Iran, and Central Asia that I founded in 2020. And yet, there are only a handful of Sephardic and Mizrahi-identifying student clubs across the US, compared to 800 Hillel chapters or 360 Chabad locations, which historically have been Ashkenazi-leaning.



While Jewish organizations on campus have done more in recent years to engage this population, they're struggling to make it sustainable.

At the Hillel International General Assembly in December 2022, SAMi surveyed 67 Hillel professionals to find out why this is. While many reported that there is a significant Sephardic and Mizrahi constituency on campus (most are unaware of the exact figure), they face a challenge of engaging them with relevant and culturally considerate programming.

According to anecdotal data, many Sephardic and Mizrahi students stop attending Hillel events after the first couple of programs, and only seek support after an antisemitic event occurs. In particular, the gap between the Ashkenazi and Sephardic-Mizrahi cultures and the lack of understanding, experience, and resources, causes many campus professionals to come up short-handed when strategizing about successful engagement approaches. This gap was echoed by the Sephardic and Mizrahi students, who said they do not see themselves mirrored in their Hillel staff. The lack of representation has caused some of them to steer clear of Hillel because they feel it to be isolating and non-accommodating to their cultural needs.

This lack of representation is largely due to the lack of leadership exposure, education, and experience that Sephardic and Mizrahi students receive growing up, compared to many of their Ashkenazi counterparts. (Most Sephardic and Mizrahi students do not have access to youth groups, and thus arrive at college lacking the necessary leadership skills to fully participate or take lead in Jewish life on campus.) In fact, 95% of students joining the National SAMi Leadership program report that it is their first leadership training experience. This made us realize that the student-driven model that exists on campus does not work for the Sephardic and Mizrahi community.

So, how can we tear down this wall, and bring Sephardic and Mizrahi students into the fold? Here are six ways to make Jewish student organization more welcoming to Sephardic and Mizrahi students:

1. Hire a consultant and diverse staff to increase representation. People want to see themselves reflected in their leadership.
2. Establish a SAMi Hub. We assist in launching SAMi HUBs, a Sephardic and Mizrahi student club that can be a space for the SAMi constituency. Our organization also offers \$1,000 of programming seed funding to start the club, with the opportunity to apply and be connected to more resources.
3. Use different language, which can make Sephardic and Mizrahi students feel more welcome. Some examples include saying "Shabbat Shalom" and not only "Good Shabbos"; "Beit Midrash" and not only "Bais Midrash"; "Kippot" and not only "Yarmulkes"; "Join us in saying Birkat Hamazon" and not only "We're going to bench."
4. Order Sephardic books. Look into your Beit Midrash and see if you have Edot-Hamizrah or Sefaradi Siddurim? If you do, then where are they placed? Prominently like all the other seforim on your bookshelf, or hidden in the bottom corner somewhere? If the latter, then place them side by side so as to give the students a feeling of equality. In addition, if you do not have them, then SAMi can provide siddurim for your SAMi-identifying student constituency.
5. Diversify the food you serve. The food you serve during the holidays and at Shabbat dinner matters for students who want to feel at home. Many Sephardim didn't grow up eating kugel, tzimis, latkes, or gefilte fish. Many would appreciate rice dishes, Moroccan fish, or mezze. By changing the food options you serve, you will transform the atmosphere for your students and give them a feeling of home and belonging.
6. Visibility matters. Take a look at what art you display in your Hillel. What art can you use that highlights Sephardic and Mizrahi culture? Also, who are you quoting in your educational resources? Are they only Ashkenazi rabbis or can we make space for a Sephardic/Mizrahi rabbi's voice, like the Rambam, Hacham Ovadia Yosef, Hacham Rabbi Yosef Karo, Rabbi Uziel, or one of the many other Sephardic and Mizrahi sages?

In sum, we must be intentional when engaging with Sephardic and Mizrahi communities. Engaging the richly diverse Jewish populations on college campuses today is not a one-size-fits-all approach. We must consider the cultural nuances and norms, the diverse values and rituals, and the rich history and heritage of each student population we work with. Sephardic and Mizrahi students cannot be lumped into one group and must

be considered individually as we work toward integrating all diverse Jewish populations on campus with the larger Jewish populations of North America.

At SAMi, we believe that investing in Sephardic and Mizrahi communities today, ensures an inclusive and diverse leadership pipeline for the future of the American Jewish peoplehood tomorrow.

Manashe Khaimov, MSW, is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of SAMi, which focuses on the leadership development of under-served Jewish communities on college campuses and in their communities in North America. Manashe is a fourth-generation community organizer, serial entrepreneur, and social innovator who builds and consults organizations on Jewish diversity. Rozeeta Mavashev contributed to this article.

140th Anniversary of the Opening of the Brooklyn Bridge Full article [Here](#)

After 14 years, the Brooklyn Bridge over the East River opened on May 24, 1883, connecting the great cities of New York and Brooklyn for the first time in history. Thousands of residents of Brooklyn and Manhattan Island turned out to witness the dedication ceremony, which was presided over by President Chester A. Arthur and New York Governor Grover Cleveland. Designed by the late John A. Roebling, the Brooklyn Bridge was the largest suspension bridge ever built to that date.



John Roebling, born in Germany in 1806, was a great pioneer in the design of steel suspension bridges. He studied industrial engineering in Berlin and at the age of 25 immigrated to western Pennsylvania, where he attempted, unsuccessfully, to make his living as a farmer. He later moved to the state capital in Harrisburg, where he found work as a civil engineer. He promoted the use of wire cable and established a successful wire-cable factory.

Meanwhile, he earned a reputation as a designer of suspension bridges, which at the time were widely used but known to fail under strong winds or heavy loads. Roebling is credited with a major breakthrough in suspension-bridge technology: a web truss added to either side of the bridge roadway that greatly stabilized the structure. Using this model, Roebling successfully bridged the Niagara Gorge at Niagara Falls, New York, and the Ohio River at Cincinnati, Ohio. On the basis of these achievements, New York State accepted Roebling's design for a bridge connecting Brooklyn and Manhattan—with a span of 1,595 feet—and appointed him chief engineer. It was to be the world's first steel suspension bridge.

Just before construction began in 1869, Roebling was fatally injured while taking a few final compass readings across the East River. A boat smashed the toes on one of his feet, and three weeks later he died of tetanus. He was the first of more than two dozen people who would die building his bridge. His 32-year-old son, Washington A. Roebling, took over as chief engineer. Roebling had worked with his father on several bridges and had helped design the Brooklyn Bridge.

The two granite foundations of the Brooklyn Bridge were built in timber caissons, or watertight chambers, sunk to depths of 44 feet on the Brooklyn side and 78 feet on the New York side. Compressed air pressurized the caissons, allowing underwater construction. At that time, little was known of the risks of working under such conditions, and more than a hundred workers suffered from cases of compression sickness. Compression sickness, or the "bends," is caused by the appearance of nitrogen bubbles in the bloodstream that result from rapid decompression. Several died, and Washington Roebling himself became bedridden from the condition in 1872. Other workers died as a result of more conventional construction accidents, such as collapses and a fire.

Roebling continued to direct construction operations from his home, and his wife, Emily, carried his instructions to the workers. In 1877, Washington and Emily moved into a home with a view of the bridge. Roebling's health gradually improved, but he remained partially paralyzed for the rest of his life. On May 24, 1883, Emily Roebling was given the first ride over the completed bridge, with a rooster, a symbol of victory, in her lap. Within 24 hours, an estimated 250,000 people walked across the Brooklyn Bridge, using a broad promenade above the roadway that John Roebling designed solely for the enjoyment of pedestrians.

The Brooklyn Bridge, with its unprecedented length and two stately towers, was dubbed the "eighth wonder of the world." The connection it provided between the massive population centers of Brooklyn and Manhattan changed the course of New York City forever. In 1898, the city of Brooklyn formally merged with New York City, Staten Island, and a few farm towns, forming Greater New York.

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



One of the most, if not the most, memorable event in modern Jewish history was the 1967 "Six-Day War", between June 5th-10th. Israel's stunning victory over Egypt, Syria and Jordan is well documented, and includes the return of independent Jewish sovereignty over all of Jerusalem for the first time in close to 2,000 years.

The vast majority of Rabbinical leaders and laymen alike see this victory as miraculous, active, and even tangible Divine intervention to an extent that some even see as surpassing the miracle of Israel's victory in the 1948 War of Independence, since at that time, the Old City of Jerusalem and all of Jewry's most sacred sites remained in foreign hands, suffering terrible destruction and desecration for 19 years.

Happily, close to three generations now have known and grown up in a free, open, and thriving Jerusalem, with free access to the Kotel [Wester Wall] and every other Jewish holy site, many having been completely refurbished and renovated since 1967. The downside is that 56 years later, memories begin to fade, and miracles can become somewhat clouded. Add to that the fact that despite the clear miracles G-d performed, too much of the world, whether sworn enemies of Israel and Jews or more "enlightened" Western friends of Israel, still, at best, question the very legitimacy of Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem, and at worst, continue to spread vile, scandalous, seditious, and totally false allegations in international forums that Jews and Judaism have no historical or religious connection to Jerusalem. We must therefore be diligent in not taking these miracles for granted.

We can start with the dire mood and atmosphere that hung over Israel just before the Six Day War. When it was clear in May 1967 that Egypt and Syria, with the encouragement of almost all other Arab lands, were planning a war of annihilation of the State of Israel, Israel began taking measures to prepare the country for war, including the callup of IDF reserves, activation of the emergency civil defense system, digging trenches, distributing sandbags and gas masks to the general population. But Israel was so fearful of losing to the Arab military superiority in sheer numbers and arms, the government designated certain national parks as potential temporary graveyards, and even had 10,000 graves dug and ready for presumed victims, and some 14,000 emergency hospital beds were set up to handle mass casualty events. Despite Israel's resilience and know-how, it is clear that the strategy was built on worst case scenarios, even if Israel managed to survive the anticipated onslaught.

As such, Israel understood that it had to try and gain an upper hand immediately. It was therefore decided to take bold military action on June 5th, when a preemptive surprise attack on Egyptian airfields was launched, with the goal of weakening enemy air power as much as possible. But the success was far beyond anyone's belief or expectations. In less than a few hours, Israel's 188 fighters and bombers managed to decimate some 250 Egyptian fighters and bombers and other military aircraft while they were still on the runway and in hangars.

The miraculous nature of this first incident cannot be denied. Israel knew it had to act, but no one could truly predict how effective or tragic might be the results. But such a definitive and comprehensive neutralization of an entire enemy air force while still on the ground clearly demonstrated G-d's hand in action to protect His people and land.

Another miracle was the fact that, despite King Hussein of Jordan being expressly asked and warned not to join the fighting because Israel had no issues with Jordan, the King did decide to join in the fray, and Jordanian troops began shelling Western Jerusalem from the Old City and its environs. This forced Israel to counterattack, and by June 6th, except for the Old City itself, Israel had taken over most of East Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives and significant portions of Judea and Samaria. It is clear that had Hussein stayed out of the fray, these major conquests by Israel and the subsequent liberation of the Old City would never have occurred.

But the miracle did not stop there. Due to the dire security situation, just before the onset of war, a temporary national unity government was formed between the socialist and leftwing "Mapai" ("Workers' Party of the Land of Israel") governing coalition and the rightwing "Herut" ("Freedom") party opposition. This was a major achievement in and of itself, given the real and total animosity between these factions, but apparently G-d was not finished with His work.

Given their stunning defeats over only 2 days of fighting, Egypt and its allies were already demanding a cease fire at the UN. And even though Israeli troops had already taken all the areas surrounding the Old City, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol was still hesitant about taking the Old City itself, both because of the potential heavy Israeli casualties, as well as engaging the British highly trained and skilled Jordanian army in very close hand-to-hand combat. However, Menahem Begin, the leader of the opposition, feared that an agreement might be reached at the UN and a ceasefire declared while Israel hesitated in attacking the Old City. He understood that this would be an historic and one-time opportunity for Israel, so he approached Yigal Alon, a high-level minister in the Mapai-led coalition, who agreed with Begin completely. These diametrically opposed politicians, who under 'normal' circumstances could not see eye-to-eye on anything, approached Prime Minister Eshkol, explained the situation at the UN, and demanded that he order the IDF to enter and capture the Old City. He did so on June 7th, and the rest is history. The miraculous agreement between Begin and Alon was akin to the no less miraculous original partition vote in the UN in 1947 that created the State of Israel, when archenemies the USSR, and the US both voted in favor.

But the greatest miracle of all was the stunning effect Israel's victory had on world Jewry. The euphoria of a totally new reality, whereby the State of Israel now included the entire Biblical Land of Israel after some 2,000 years of exile, persecution, and the Holocaust, impacted Jews everywhere. Soviet Jewry underwent a sea-change in its Jewish pride and Jewish identity, showing a greater willingness to stand up to Soviet harassment and persecution, as well as making Aliyah to Israel starting from the early 1970s. Thousands of American and European Jews of all religious persuasions and movements, flocked to Israel after 1967 as either new immigrants or volunteers in many capacities, including the IDF. Jews stood proud and tall like never before, and Israel once again became Judaism's universal spiritual center, headquartered in a free and Jewish governed Jerusalem. There is no question that the entire Jewish world was transformed after the Six Day War, and despite further and never-ending attempts to destroy Israel, we see time and again how G-d stands at our side and continues to perform miracles to ensure the eternity of His covenant with His People Israel.



Rabbi Marc D. Angel

The Blessing of Wholeness: Thoughts for Parashat Naso

JewishIdeas.org

Many people feel the need to be noticed. They dye their hair neon green, or they wear immodest clothing, or they say things that are intended to shock. They will do anything to keep the limelight focused on themselves: they will tell a stream of jokes, they will speak without listening to others, they will take "selfies" and send them to anyone and everyone they can think of.

The message they convey is: NOTICE ME. Underlying this thirst for attention is the deep feeling of unworthiness, the fear of not being noticed. Also underlying this exhibitionism is the desire to stand above the crowd, to be distinguished in some way from the normal run of humanity.

Human beings are often (always?) frail and insecure. They need to be reassured that their lives mean something to others. They dread being ignored or forgotten. It is as though they evaluate the worthiness of their lives by how others respond to them. Their feelings of success or failure in life are determined by others. The ancient Chinese philosopher, Confucius, taught: "What the Noble Person seeks is in himself. What the petty person seeks is in others." The challenge is to be the Noble Person.

The Torah portion this week includes the Priestly Blessing. The Cohanim are commanded to bless the people, serving as the conduits for God's blessings. The third line of the blessing states: May God shine His countenance upon you and give you shalom. Shalom, usually translated as peace, has the connotation of wholeness. The blessing is recited in the singular (lekha, not lakhem), meaning that it is aimed at each particular person, not at the people at large. The blessing is for each individual to feel a sense of completeness within him/herself, to feel secure and unafraid. The blessing is to understand that the value of our lives is dependent on ourselves, not on the opinions of others. When God shines His countenance upon an individual, that person comes to understand that life is ultimately defined by the relationship of one's self with God. God's light eliminates the shadows and doubts.

The kabbalists and musar writers have long emphasized the virtue of "hitbodedut," being alone with oneself. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan translated "hitbodedut" as meditation. A person needs time to think deeply and alone, to separate inner reality from outer illusions, to receive God's light and move out of the shadows. "Hitbodedut" helps a person develop the inner wisdom and inner poise that lead to internal shalom. "Hitbodedut" is a means of seeking the self and, at the same time, transcending the self.

Albert Einstein wrote: "The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead, a snuffed out candle. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is something that our minds cannot grasp, whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly: this is religiousness...."

May God shine His countenance upon you and give you shalom.

Recipe for Shavuot

Bread of the Seven Heavens

By Ronit Treatman

When the Jews left Iberia after the enactment of the Alhambra Decree, they took their language, traditions and culture with them. The Seven Heavens Bread was a special type of symbolic challah baked for Tikkun Leil Shavuot, the all-night Shavuot study session. This tradition almost died out during the Holocaust, when 96% of Salonica's Sephardic Jewish population was killed. This year, preserve this tradition and the memory of that community by baking your own Siete Cielos Bread.



The first Sephardim arrived in Salonica, a city in the Ottoman Empire, in 1492 from Mallorca. They were "repentant" returnees to Judaism after a forced conversion to Catholicism. In the following years they were joined by Jews from Castile, Sicily, Aragon, Naples, Venice, Provence and Portugal. By 1613, Jews made up 68% of the population.

Thessaloniki is the only known example of a city of this size in the Jewish Diaspora that maintained a Jewish majority for centuries. This community influenced the Sephardic world both culturally and economically, and the city was nicknamed The Mother of Israel.

One of the traditions they brought from Iberia was a dairy challah baked especially for Shavuot. The Pan de Siete Cielos probably got its name from an old Spanish expression meaning: "I am so happy that I feel like I am floating on seven clouds". This festive bread was first baked in the early 8th century, a period known as "the coexistence".

Coexistence was a golden age for Spanish Jews, a time when Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived together in peace, making the Iberian Peninsula a hub for innovation and cultural exchange. Sephardic Jews were probably inspired by the Monas de Pascua of their Christian neighbors. They started baking the bread of the seven heavens for Shavuot, one of the few holidays where it is customary to eat dairy foods.

Some historians speculate that Monas de Pascua and Pan de Siete Cielos were reinvented in the New World as Pan de Muerto. When the conquistadors (many of them converts) arrived, they found a culture of human sacrifice. They were so horrified that they replaced this tradition with the baking of a type of challah: sweet, round, with carved symbols.

To bake the Pan de Siete Cielos, a rich and milky challah dough is prepared. Symbols of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai are carved into the challah. First, a round challah is formed to represent Mount Sinai. Seven pieces of dough are rolled out and pressed against the round challah, forming a ring around it. They represent the seven heavens or clouds. Symbols from the Shavuot story are then carved and pressed against the clouds. Each family has its own traditions, but some common symbols are the Torah, Jacob's ladder, Miriam's well, the Star of David, the Hamsa, and the tablets of the Ten Commandments. After the challah is baked, honey is spread over it and sprinkled with sesame seeds. They should serve this bread when they read the Ten Commandments. As one grandmother explained, "Torah is as sweet as manna to those who feed on it."

Bread of Seven Skies

Adapted from the Cookbook of the Jews of Greece by Nicholas Starvroulakis

Ingredients:

- 8 cups of flour
- 1/2 cup of milk
- 2 cups of warm water
- 5 eggs
- 2 teaspoons of active dry yeast
- 2 cups of sugar
- 3/8 cup of melted butter
- 1 teaspoon of anise extract or Arak
- Honey and toasted sesame seeds

Instructions:

1. Pour the warm water into a large container.
2. Add the sugar and yeast.
3. Mix well and wait until the mixture foams, about 10 minutes.
4. In a separate bowl, place 3 cups of flour.
5. Make a hole in the center of the flour.
6. Pour the yeast mixture into this hole.
7. Start mixing the flour until you have a light dough.
8. Cover the bowl with a clean kitchen towel and let the dough rest for about 45 minutes.
9. Uncover bowl and add eggs, milk, butter, and anise or Arak extract.
10. Knead more flour into the dough until it feels elastic. It can be less than 8 cups to achieve the desired texture.
11. Cover the bowl with a clean kitchen towel and let the dough rise until doubled in size, about 2 hours.
12. When the dough has risen, you can sculpt your Seven Heavens Bread.
13. First, cut off a piece of dough and roll it into a ball. This will be Mount Sinai and it will be baked in the center. Place it on a large baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
14. Cut 7 pieces of dough and roll them out with your hands to form ropes.
15. Wrap them around the ball of dough. These are your 7 clouds.
16. Then carve the Shavuot symbols of your choice and press them into the clouds. Make the symbols that have meaning for you.
17. Cover the bread with a clean, damp kitchen towel.
18. Let the dough double in size.
19. Remove the towel and brush your bread with beaten egg (beaten yolks with a little water).
20. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit (175 degrees Celsius).
21. Place the bread in the oven.
22. Bake for about 30 minutes, or until bread is golden brown and bottom of bread sounds hollow when tapped.

Sephardic Shavuot Customs

Salonican Shavuot Traditions Full article by Ty Alhadeff [Here](#)

Last week, Jews celebrated the festival of Shavuot. The ancient Hebrew words of the Book of Ruth were read out loud around the world. Among Sephardic Jews, there are many additional traditions that add to the wonder and joy of the holiday.

There is the custom of staying up all night to study selections from the Torah and the Zohar, which is called *velada*, from the Ladino word meaning to guard or watch. There is the festive dairy meal which often features *bourekas* and other favorites. In many Sephardic congregations, the reading of Ruth is preceded by reading or singing the famous *azharot*, a poetical enumeration of the 613 commandments (*mitzvot*). Ladino-speaking Jews also included translations of this liturgy and added a unique Ladino song known as *La Ketubah de la Ley*, the marriage contract of the law, or Torah.

These and many other Sephardic Shavuot customs connect us to the now vanished world of Salonica.

In a recently translated and published Ladino language memoir, the well-known 19th-century journalist, publisher and musician Sa'adi Besalel a-Levi describes the scene in Salonica during the last century of the Ottoman Empire:

"My father was an observant Jew.... One Shavu'oth eve, he went after dinner to attend a study session according to the custom of all the Jews when they all went to their synagogues and no one stayed home. That time of the year,



nights were shorter, dawn broke early around six thirty, some people would come back home to eat the enchusa, cheese pies, with some rice pudding, sotlach, then go to sleep until 1 or 2 p.m. Others went touring the parks, while lower-class people with wicker baskets filled with cheese pies, rice pudding, raki, and hard-boiled eggs went with their families to parks on the outskirts of the city to eat, get drunk, and fall asleep on the grass. Most of them returned home sick.”

Highlighting the customs in Salonica more than a half-century later, on the eve of World War II, poet Bouena Sarfatty (1916-1997) describes a similar scene of a Salonican Shavuot (Renée Levine Melammed, *An Ode to Salonika, The Ladino Verses of Bouena Sarfatty*, 43-44):

Beytsinar eze ouna vouerta grande.
Se kamina kilometros i nounka se ve entera.
Chevouotte debacho el arvole mos asentamos kon la mujer i las kriotouras.
Yivamos Sestos yenos de koumida,
Sin moz oulvidar el sotlatsi i raki Nahmias.
El golf komo Kristal; azemos bagno de mar.
Bevamos a la saloud de Daniel Amar.

Bes Tsinar is a large garden.
One can walk for miles and never see its eternity.
On Shavout we sit under the tree with the wife and the children.
We bring baskets filled with food
Without forgetting the rice pudding dessert and the Nahmias ouzo.
The Gulf [of Salonika] is (clear) like crystal; we take a dip in the sea.
Let us drink to the health of Daniel Amar.

The Salonican rabbi and historian Michael Molho describes the joyous atmosphere in his native city on Shavuot in his book, *Traditions and Customs of the Sephardic Jews of Salonica*:

“They would pray and spend the night of the festival in holy readings and songs of joy. They would then arrange to spend some time outside the city, in the middle of green fields under a blue sky. Very early, they would leave the city via one of the gates in the city walls, taking with them a basket full of provisions: cheese pies, hard-boiled eggs, mutton with peas, various salads and above all, the famous sotlach, prepared with goats milk and well-cooked so that the cream pudding takes on a light coffee color and the surface is full of wrinkles like the cheeks of an elderly lady...Naturally there was no shortage of raki.”

Though the customs of the Jews of Salonica tragically came to an end with the Nazi occupation and annihilation of the community, Ladino customs of the holiday live on. Inspired to preserve the memory of those communities destroyed by the Nazis not only in Salonica, but also in Rhodes, descendants of these communities have sought to preserve the spiritual and intellectual accomplishments of their forbearers.

Today, we can access the riches of Ladino Shavuot liturgy online and help keep these timeless traditions alive.

Happy Holiday!

A more extensive discussion of Sephardic liturgy for Shavuot can be found [here](#) on the UW Stroum Center for Jewish Studies blog.

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. **You can donate online on our website: www.kkjsm.org accessing the donation button in the upper left hand corner.**

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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