



# Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

## April 2023 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Wishing all our Jewish friends a joyous celebration of Pesah. For our Greek Orthodox Christian friends who read our monthly E-Newsletter, Καλό Πάσχα!

Join us at KKJ as we celebrate Pesah in the Romaniote tradition. At the same location on the Lower East Side for the past 96 years, KKJ is the last remaining Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere conducting services in the Judeo-Greek Romaniote Minhag (tradition). View our full schedule [Here](#). Please RSVP to [Amarcus@kkjasm.org](mailto:Amarcus@kkjasm.org)



Pesah in Ioannina 1933  
The Bechoropoulos and Attas Families

This newsletter, our 169<sup>th</sup> 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.kkjasm.org](http://www.kkjasm.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@kkjasm.org](mailto:museum@kkjasm.org)

We are open for Shabbat every Saturday morning starting at 9:30am. Please email [amarcus@kkjasm.org](mailto:amarcus@kkjasm.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@kkjasm.org](mailto:museum@kkjasm.org).

## Simchas

In February, Esther Kaplan Colchamiro celebrated her 104<sup>th</sup> birthday. Her cousins Susan Tregerman, Stephen Colchamiro, and daughter Rachel Colchamiro Rosen, contributed to the following tribute to Esther. The article originally appeared in Tufts' Magazine. It is our hope that others find this article worthy of publication. If so, contact us at [museum@kkjasm.org](mailto:museum@kkjasm.org) so we can pass this on to Susan, Stephen, and Rachel for copyright release.

### **At Tufts Dental, She Stood Alone. She Went on to Become Outstanding** full article [Here](#)

In a six-decade career, Esther Kaplan Colchamiro cared for those who needed it most

In the late 1930s, most graduate and professional schools had little interest in educating women. An ambitious young woman from the Bronx sent off a raft of applications anyway. Tufts dental school offered her a chance.

At 104, Esther Kaplan Colchamiro, D42, can't readily recall the details. But in the fall of 1938 she found herself arriving in Boston to enroll at what was then known as Tufts Dental College, located in a red brick building at 416 Huntington Ave. She instantly stood out: a class photo shows a petite figure with a wide smile in an almost schoolgirlish white blouse and dark skirt, with dozens of male classmates towering above her. It would be about 30 years before women began attending dental school in significant numbers.



Nevertheless, she went on to graduate second in her class and establish herself as a giant in the field of public health dentistry. Over her 60-plus year career, she provided care for thousands of New York City's neediest children; kept watch over the city's dental Medicaid and other public health programs; and taught scores of dental students at New York University.

"She spent 60 years striving to make this a better world for all dental patients, but for children in particular," said David Rosenstein, a fellow member of the American Public Health Association, who spoke at a ceremony honoring Colchamiro in 2002, when she received the John W. Knutson Distinguished Service Award, one of the highest honors in the field, and just one of a lengthy list of awards and recognitions Colchamiro collected throughout her career. "Esther has been a beacon of light in our field since the day she entered it."



At the beginning of Colchamiro's career, about 3% of dentists in the U.S. were women, and that proportion stayed fairly consistent until about 1970, according to the Journal of the American Dental Association. Today, nearly 35% of practicing dentists are women, and with women dental graduates outpacing men, they are expected to account for 50% by 2040. At Tufts, where Colchamiro once stood alone, women students have outnumbered their male classmates most years since 2008.

### Persistence and Grace

"If there is a set of characteristics we need in this field, it is endurance, persistence, and the ability to be creative and adaptive over the long haul. She has done all of this with grace," said another colleague, John P. Brown, at the 2002 Knutson award ceremony. Remarks from the event were published in the Journal of Public Health Dentistry.

Persistence, grace, humility: those are the words that surface again and again from colleagues and especially from Colchamiro's large family. "She is my hero," says Susan Tregerman, her first cousin once removed. "She's a compassionate, kind person who just seemed to be excited about the world." A generation younger than Colchamiro, Tregerman and her brother, Stephen Colchamiro, refer to her as their Aunt Esther.

Stephen Colchamiro became a public health dentist, too, and is in his 50th year of teaching at Harvard School of Dental Medicine. "She was always quietly supportive of everything I did. She did not brag about her accomplishments at all," he says. So much so, that early in his career, he was unaware of her standing. But, he adds, he constantly runs into other dentists who have worked or trained with her, or who instantly know the Colchamiro name.

Today, Esther Colchamiro lives with her daughter and one of her 29 great-grandchildren, in the same Queens co-op apartment she and her husband, Ralph, bought in 1951. The Colchamiro family comes from the community of Greek Jews known as Romaniote, who follow a unique set of customs, belonging neither to the Sephardi nor Ashkenazi traditions.



Having grown up in the Bronx, she attended Hunter College, the women's college of New York City's then-free university system. She had an interest in what made people tick, and considered going into psychology or psychiatry, her relatives say. She applied to over a dozen graduate programs and dental schools and was accepted at one: Tufts Dental.

In the late '30s, Tufts was one of the few dental schools that had a long history of enrolling women; its first female graduate was in the class of 1890. In fact, many dental schools, such as neighboring Harvard, were still not accepting women when Colchamiro arrived at Tufts. But even at Tufts, women dental students were few; from 1941 to 1945, the school—now Tufts University School of Dental Medicine—counts only six other women graduates.

From the stories she told her children, Colchamiro looked back fondly on her dental school experience. She'd talk about how her male classmates good-naturedly teased her. "In anatomy class, they would put bones in her pocket!" her daughter, Rachel Rosen, reports.

#### The Cookies—and More

Colchamiro started her career at the Guggenheim pediatric dental clinic in Manhattan, which became the largest dental public health program in the country. Busloads of public-school kids would arrive daily for the dental care they almost certainly would not have received otherwise. Colchamiro's instinct for connecting with people, particularly children, served her well.

"She was able to work on very difficult children," Rosen says. "Whenever they were having trouble with a patient, they would call my mother in, and she was able to get the work done."

After the Guggenheim clinic closed in 1967, Colchamiro earned a master's degree in public health from Columbia University. She then worked for the New York City Department of Health, where, among other positions, she was director of dental Medicaid. She served on the boards of numerous professional organizations.

She closed out a six-decade career as a clinical professor of pediatric dentistry at NYU; while there, she established a dental sealant program for homeless children.

Sometimes, harsh realities could not be avoided. At the Guggenheim, "after 25 years, when she should have been named chairperson, she was passed over because she was a woman. She was, however, offered an apology," said Rosenstein, in 2002. "She suffered enormously, but in silence as she pursued her career with diligence and a grace most of us will never know."

Whatever professional slights or difficulties Colchamiro encountered, she did not let them define her or her career, Rosen says. "My mother brought me up saying there's nothing you can't do if you want to do it. She didn't let anything stop her."

In the world of Colchamiro's youth, her cousin Stephen Colchamiro says, women were supposed to marry another Greek Jew, cook, and raise a family. "Well, she did all that," he says. In Esther's case, she simply combined it with an outstanding career.

Perhaps nothing illustrates this better than her famous home-baked cookies. She was known for bringing those cookies to all occasions—not just family gatherings or parties, but professional meetings and conference sessions, too. "It was not just about the cookies," Tregerman says. "She left something of herself with you."

## Passings

In March we lost two beautiful women from our Romaniote community in the United States: Lillian Cohen Binder and Audrey Marks Solomon.

Lillian Binder passed away on Sunday, March 5, 2023 at the age of 92. She was born in Downtown, NY on May 28, 1930. The last surviving child of Max and Anna Cohen (both of blessed memory), both whom emigrated from Janina in the early 1900's. She was raised in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and was a frequent visitor to the KKKJ growing up. She was predeceased by her husband Nathan, sister Sarah and brothers Abe & Nat. She is survived by her sons Paul and David, daughter-in-laws Paula and Debbie and grandson Scott.



From her son, David Binder: Lillian was the daughter of Max Cohen and Annetta Nahoum, the granddaughter of Abraham Cohen and Sara Nahoum and the great-granddaughter of Mordechai and Sarah Cohen (all of Blessed memory and all of whom were born in Ioannina). Like many Yanniotte families, Lillian was related to a plethora of other Yanniotte families and will be mourned by many.

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We mourn the passing of Audrey Solomon, widow of Jerome Solomon. Audrey passed on 3/23/2023 at the age of 91. Although not born into the Yanniotte world, she loved the culture and passed on the customs and traditions to her children. She will be mourned by all who knew her and loved her, especially her children, Howard (Marion) and Susan and her grandchildren, James (Teresa) and Daniel (Alexa). Audrey had requested that donations in her memory be sent to Kehila Kedosha Janina.



### Raphael Mechoulam, 'Father of Cannabis Research,' Dies at 92

Full NY Times article [Here](#)

His work helped break down the chemical structures of THC, the psychoactive compound in marijuana, to figure out how cannabis makes users high.

Raphael Mechoulam, a pioneering Israeli chemist who is credited with opening the field of cannabis science after identifying the structure and function of the key compounds of cannabis, died on March 9 at his home in Jerusalem. He was 92. His death was confirmed by the American Friends of the Hebrew University. Professor Mechoulam had been on the university's faculty since 1966.



Professor Mechoulam's groundbreaking work with cannabis began in the early 1960s, just before the use of marijuana and other drugs exploded in countries around the world, bringing seismic changes to popular culture while also kicking off decades-long battles about health effects and enforcement. His research earned him the unofficial title "the father of cannabis research."

In the beginning, Professor Mechoulam's fascination with marijuana was not cultural but scientific, driven by a fascination with the chemical structures of plants and other natural products.

At the time, he found the science of cannabis to be sorely lacking. "Morphine had been isolated from opium in the 19th century, early 19th century," Professor Mechoulam said in a 2014 interview with Dr. Sanjay Gupta, the chief

medical correspondent for CNN. "Cocaine had been isolated from coca leaves mid-19th century. And here we were, mid-20th century, and yet the chemistry of cannabis was not known. So it looked like an interesting project."

As a result, Professor Mechoulam and his team at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, just south of Tel Aviv, began to break down the chemical structures of THC, the psychoactive compound in marijuana, to assess how it did what it did — namely, make users high. He continued this research for decades at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

He and his team were also able to illuminate the structure and effects of other cannabinoids, including cannabidiol, or CBD, a non-psychoactive component of the plant that has fueled a marketing craze in recent years because of its purported effectiveness in treating a variety of ailments, including anxiety, insomnia and chronic pain.

In his research at the Hebrew University, Professor Mechoulam synthesized many cannabinoid compounds that helped other scientists discover cannabinoid receptors in the brain, Yossi Tam, a professor at the Hebrew University and a longtime colleague, said in a phone interview.

Professor Mechoulam also did groundbreaking research on the body's natural endocannabinoid system — including the discovery of anandamide, one of the main endocannabinoids. Endocannabinoids, chemicals similar to those found in marijuana, help regulate a wide range of bodily functions, including learning and memory, sleep, immune responses and appetite.

"Most of the human and scientific knowledge about cannabis was accumulated thanks to Professor Mechoulam," Asher Cohen, the president of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said in a statement. "He paved the way for groundbreaking studies and initiated scientific cooperation between researchers around the world. Mechoulam was a sharp-minded and charismatic pioneer."

This is not to say that there was much institutional hunger for such research in those pre-hippie days. "When we started work many years ago, there was essentially no interest in cannabinoids," Professor Mechoulam said in a 2019 video interview. When he applied for a grant from the National Institutes of Health in the United States in the 1960s, he said, the agency responded: "When you have something more relevant to the U.S., contact us. Cannabis is not of interest. It's used sometimes in Mexico, but not in the U.S." (The N.I.H. would ultimately support his research for more than 40 years.) "Well," he added, "that changed quite fast."

Raphael Mechoulam was born on Nov. 5, 1930, into a Sephardic Jewish family in Sofia, Bulgaria. His father was a prominent Austrian-born physician, and his mother had studied in Berlin and encouraged a broad education in many languages.

After Bulgaria's pro-German government passed a number of extreme antisemitic laws during World War II, "my parents believed that our family would be safer in small villages in the Balkans that badly needed physicians," Professor Mechoulam wrote in a retrospective of his life and work published in the *Annual Review of Pharmacology and Toxicology* in January. "I recall my daily trips to the common village pump to bring home pails of water for our needs. And I read the few available books by sitting close to a candle in the evenings."

His father was sent to a concentration camp in 1944 but survived. In 1949, the family emigrated to Israel, where Professor Mechoulam studied at the Hebrew University, earning a master's degree in biochemistry. He was conscripted in 1953 and spent about two years working in an Israeli Army medical research unit.

After taking an academic post at the Weizmann Institute in the early 1960s, he began to read about the pharmacology of cannabis. "I was surprised to note that an active compound had apparently never been isolated in pure form, and that its structure was only partially known," he wrote. "Even the structure of a major crystalline component, cannabidiol (CBD), which had been isolated more than two decades previously, was not fully elucidated."



Because marijuana was illegal in Israel, Professor Mechoulam had to develop contacts within law enforcement to procure a supply for his studies. "I didn't have a car at the time," he told CNN. "I was in the bus carrying five kilos of hashish. People were just saying, 'It's kind of a strange smell.' We tested that on a few volunteers, including ourselves."

Back in the lab, he and a colleague, Yehiel Gaoni, "extracted the hashish and, by repeated column chromatography, were able to isolate about 10 compounds — most of them unknown — and elucidate their structures," Professor Mechoulam wrote in the Annual Review.

Over the course of Professor Mechoulam's career, Professor Tam said, he was a champion of research into the potential medical benefits of cannabis. In 1980, he conducted clinical research in Brazil, using CBD to treat people with epilepsy. After a few months, Professor Tam said, none of the people in the study reported seizures.

When Dr. Gupta of CNN referred to Professor Mechoulam, then in his 80s, as "the grandfather of marijuana," Professor Mechoulam smiled and said, "Well, I am a grandfather, OK, I have seven grandchildren." In addition to them, he is survived by his wife, Dalia (Borowitz) Mechoulam; his son, Roy Meshulam; and his daughters, Dafna Golan and Hadas Mechoulam.

In the 2019 video interview, Professor Mechoulam expressed his satisfaction with his contributions to science by quoting a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke, titled "Widening Circles":

I live my life in widening circles  
that reach out across the world.  
I may not complete this last one  
but I give myself to it.

"Well," Professor Mechoulam said, "it is as if in some way he is describing what is going on with the cannabinoids. It started with a small circle, and expanded, and the expansion is going on and on and on."

Upcoming Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina



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KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA  
SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM  
WISHES YOU A

**HAPPY PESAH**  
מועדים לישמחה  
Χρόνια Πολλά  
PESAH ALEGRE

YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR SERVICES ON  
THURSDAY APRIL 6 SHAHARIT 9:30AM  
FRIDAY APRIL 7 SHAHARIT 9:30AM

“THIS IS THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION WHICH OUR  
ANCESTORS ATE IN THE LAND OF EGYPT...”  
הָא לַחֲמַת עֲנִיָּא דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהַתָּנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA 280 BROOME ST NYC  
FULL SCHEDULE AT [KKJSM.ORG](http://KKJSM.ORG)  
PLEASE RSVP FOR SERVICES TO [AMARCUS@KKJSM.ORG](mailto:AMARCUS@KKJSM.ORG)

Join us at Kehila Kedosha Janina for Passover Services, conducted in the Romaniote tradition of the Jews from Ioannina, Greece. Our seats are free and our hearts are open.

Thursday April 6 - Pesah 1st Day Shaharit 9:30 AM

Friday April 7 - Pesah 2nd Day Shaharit 9:30 AM

Saturday April 8 - Shabbat Hol HaMoed 9:30 AM

Wednesday April 12 - Pesah 7th Day Shaharit 9:30 AM

Thursday April 13 - Pesah 8th Day Shaharit 9:30 AM (Last Day) Yizkor

Please RSVP to [Amarcus@kkjasm.org](mailto:Amarcus@kkjasm.org)

View our full holiday schedule [Here](#)

**Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance Day  
Sunday April 23 at 1pm**

**KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM  
INVITES YOU TO OUR ANNUAL**

**YOM HASHOAH  
HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY  
CEREMONY**

**WITH A SPECIAL SCREENING OF THE FILM  
"A BOOKSTORE IN SIX CHAPTERS"**

**SUNDAY APRIL 23 AT 1:00PM  
KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA  
280 BROOME STREET NYC**

**WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US TO REMEMBER ALL WHO PERISHED IN THE HOLOCAUST, ESPECIALLY THOSE WE LOST ON THE 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPORTATION OF JEWS FROM MONASTIR, THESSALONIKI, VEROIA AND COMMUNITIES IN THE BULGARIAN ZONE OF OCCUPATION IN GREECE.**

**FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY THERE WILL BE A SCREENING OF THE ACCLAIMED FILM "A BOOKSTORE IN SIX CHAPTERS," WHICH TELLS THE STORY OF RENEE SALTIEL AND SOLON MOLHO WHO GREW UP IN THESSALONIKI AND MANAGED TO SURVIVE THANKS TO A SPANISH DIPLOMAT AND SOME VERY BRAVE GREEK FAMILIES.**

**REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED  
PLEASE RSVP TO [MUSEUM@KKJSM.ORG](mailto:MUSEUM@KKJSM.ORG)**



**Greek Jewish Festival – Sunday May 21 from 12pm-6pm**

Join the Greek Jewish Festival on Sunday May 21 as we celebrate the unique Romaniote and Sephardic heritage of the Jews of Greece! Experience a feast for the senses including authentic kosher Greek foods and homemade Greek pastries, traditional Greek dancing and live Greek and Sephardic music, an outdoor marketplace full of vendors, arts and educational activities for kids, Sephardic cooking demonstrations, and much more! Learn more at [www.GreekJewishFestival.com](http://www.GreekJewishFestival.com) and on our Facebook Event Page [Here](#)

**Volunteers needed!** If you can help volunteer on May 21 we would love to have your assistance! Please email [Amarcus@kkjsm.org](mailto:Amarcus@kkjsm.org) to sign up now.



**KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA**  
SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM



ב"ה

PRESENTS THE  
EIGHTH ANNUAL

**FREE  
ADMISSION**

# GREEK JEWISH FESTIVAL

**SUNDAY MAY 21, 2023**  
**12PM-6PM**

280 BROOME ST BETWEEN ALLEN ST & ELDRIDGE ST  
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**SYNAGOGUE TOURS    DANCING    VENDORS & GIFTS**

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## Visitors to Visit Kehila Kedosha Janina

March was an exciting month for visitors. We had two lovely groups, one from a synagogue in Queens and the second from a synagogue in New Jersey organized by Alan Solomon, who has his roots in Rhodes.



## Dikoi Mas/Los Muestrros

Our standing room only events in March brought out many of "Our Own."



Arlene Attas Schulman  
& Lew Attas



Achilles Rakinias



A special visit by a member of the Billel Family when we found a family tree made years ago



Antony  
Papadamianos

## Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

**Dr. Anna Kohen** presented her new book "Flower of Vlora: Growing up Jewish in Communist Albania." We had standing room only, and among the guests were dignitaries from Albania and Kosovo. Watch the full presentation on YouTube [Here](#). Email [Museum@kkjms.org](mailto:Museum@kkjms.org) to order a copy of the book.



## Purim Celebration

Thanks to the efforts of our President, Marvin Marcus, and his sons Andrew and Ethan, Kehila Kedosha Janina celebrated Purim with a joyous crowd of participants.



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## Concert in Memory of the Jewish Community of Monastir

Our Memorial Concert on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deportation of the Jewish Community of Monastir was also standing room only, including dignitaries from North Macedonia and Israel. We were treated to an unbelievable concert by The Elias Ladino Ensemble, including Danny Elias, Maurice Sedaka, Casey Bond and Marco Brehm. Watch the full concert [Here](#).



Below is a copy of the speech given by concert organizer Zack Youcha:

### Nissim's Guitar

During a family trip to North Macedonia last summer, we stopped outside of Bitola at a small museum dedicated to the region's history. In the upstairs of the museum is the Jewish room. Resting in the corner, sits a guitar.



Hidden inside the body was a note from its previous owner. Translated from Macedonian to English, it reads:  
This guitar is from Nissim, the Jew from Bitola. He was a carpenter (window and door maker).  
He worked for Tacha together with my father.  
After 1943 it stayed in the cellar of Tacha. I took it after many years and I mended it and I used it.  
Kole Tasevski Bitola

My dad and I, both luthiers, jumped into action. We had no choice but to measure it and build a replica. It was a way to honor Nissim and all the Monastirli music he likely played on the guitar.

Earlier in our trip to North Macedonia, we stopped at a wonderful lumberyard outside of Ohrid. The yard foreman, excited to have two American woodworkers, descended from Macedonia, in his shop, gave us some beautiful hard cherry and chestnut wood – a rarity because so many of the trees in North Macedonia have shrapnel in them from the wars. Now we knew how to use it.

When we got to Skopje that evening, we sought out "Nissim's" identity in a digitized copy of a Yizkor book for the Jews of Bitola, privately translated into English. A quick search found only one person named Nissim who worked at a carpenter. The entry reads:

Nissim, brother of Mois Kreskis David, born in 1920 in Bitola. He was a carpenter. The German occupiers deported him, with help from the Bulgarian fascist police and military, on 11 March 1943 to a camp for criminal mass destruction.

REBEKA, wife of Nissim David Kreskis, born in 1924 in Bitola. She was a house- wife. The Germans and Bulgarians deported her on 11 March 1943 to a camp for mass destruction. The family of Kreskis David Mois and his brother lived at Mitzko Krstikj st., no. 1.

Now, with Nissim's name, we found a photo of Nissim and his wife, Rebeka in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's photo archive.

Nissim was only 23 when he was murdered, Rebeka, only 19. As fellow Jewish woodworkers descended from his town, my dad and I feel building this guitar is the least we can do. It is truly an honor to have Maurice Sedacca play it tonight.



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## Remembering Joe Elias

We are including the obituary of Joe Elias from 2010 so that many of our readers who do not know the origins of the Elias Ladino Ensemble will fully understand their foundation and importance.

On April 10, 2010, Joseph Elias passed away. Born into a Sephardic family, the youngest of seven children, Joe learned his songs at his mother's knee. As a school teacher in the 1960's, he would collect songs from the grand parents of his Sephardic students. He went on to collect songs at the Sephardic Home of the Aged in Coney Island and beyond.



In 1976 he was invited to perform at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife.

He was one of the first performers of this Ladino music in this country in the current epoch. He continued performing and teaching these songs for over 30 years. The Elias Ladino Ensemble was formed with his son Danny Elias, together they performed at museums, folk festivals, synagogues and concert halls all over the world.

Joe was always insistent that this music not be played as "early music". Having grown up in the center of the vibrant Sephardic communities of the Lower East Side and Coney Island (his father David Elias was the Rabbi of the Sephardic Congregation of Coney Island), Joe knew this music to be the music of a people who had moved to the Ottoman Empire after their expulsion from Spain. Although they continued to speak Ladino, the

Spanish of the Sephardic Jews, the music and foods that they enjoyed were infused with the flavor of the Middle East.

That could be readily seen when we performed at the Sephardic Home for the Aged. The residents, many of whom were wheeled into the performance, would come to life with the sound of the oud and drum, belly dancing long before Shakira was born.

For many years Joe led a class in Ladino songs at the Hebrew Arts School. His students often sang with him at street fairs and some went on to recording careers of their own.

His greatest musical goal was to see the survival of these songs. No where in the world are people born into a Ladino speaking household. This language - rich in folklore, phrases and music- is dying. It was always his hope that these beautiful songs survive and continue to be performed.

One of his last performances was at a recital given by his grandson Benyamin - where, though just out of the hospital with pneumonia he sang with Benyamin accompanying him on piano and Daniel on clarinet.

He is a featured artist in the collection of the Florida Atlantic University Judaica project. He recordings can be heard on their website [Here](#)

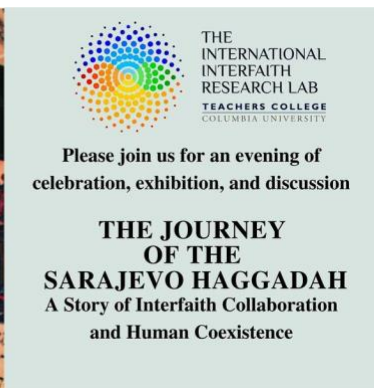
We have attached a sampling of clippings and articles about him and some of the concerts he gave. He was an educator always. Working for the NYC Board of Education he worked his way from being a classroom teacher to being the Superintendent of School district #3 (Manhattan's Westside) - I would say he spent the longest stretch of his career as the director of the Office of Zoning and Integration for the Board of Education - city of New York. He headed that office 1975 through 1990. One of his greatest accomplishments was to enact a controlled rate of change program, that acted to allow integration within the school system but on a gradual basis. This was important because when a school's racial make up changed drastically in a short time, it led to white flight from the school system. His program stabilized entire neighborhoods at a time when white flight was growing.

At the end of his education career, at a time when he could have retired on full pension, he left his director's office to accept the position of deputy superintendent of District 12 in the Bronx. That district was one of the poorest performing school districts in the city - He accepted this challenge and hoped his input and experience would have an effect. He was forced to retire after he suffered a heart attack in 1991. He died of a heart attack after a long period of health decline. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Judith Elias, his children Laura and Daniel Elias and Grandchildren Benyamin and Max Elias.

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### Sarajevo Haggadah

On March 20<sup>th</sup> KKJ President Marvin Marcus attended a special event on the Sarajevo Haggadah.



Photos with Jacob Finci, President of the Jewish Community of Bosnia & Herzegovina, with Isaac Choua

## The Journey of the Sarajevo Haggadah

The Sarajevo Haggadah is an illuminated manuscript that contains the illustrated traditional text of the Passover Haggadah which accompanies the Passover Seder. It is one of the oldest Sephardic Haggadahs in the world, originating in Barcelona around 1350. The Haggadah is owned by the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. Its monetary value is undetermined, but a museum in Spain required that it be insured for \$7 million before it could be transported to an exhibition there in 1992.



The Sarajevo Haggadah is handwritten on bleached calfskin and illuminated in copper and gold. It opens with 34 pages of illustrations of key scenes in the Bible from creation through the death of Moses. Its pages are stained with wine, evidence that it was used at many Passover Seders.

The Sarajevo Haggadah was submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina for inclusion in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register and was included in 2017.

The Sarajevo Haggadah has survived many close calls with destruction. Historians believe that it was taken out of the Iberian Peninsula by Jews who were expelled by the Alhambra Decree in 1492. Notes in the margins of the Haggadah indicate that it surfaced in Italy in the 16th century. It was sold to the National Museum in Sarajevo in 1894 by a man named Joseph Kohen.

During World War II, the manuscript was hidden from the Nazis and Ustashe by the Museum's chief librarian, Derviš Korkut, who risked his life to smuggle the Haggadah out of Sarajevo. Korkut gave it to a Muslim cleric in a village on a mountain of Bjelasnica, where it was hidden in a mosque. In 1957, a facsimile of the Haggadah was published by Sándor Scheiber, director of the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest. In 1992 during the Bosnian War, the Haggadah manuscript survived a museum break-in and it was discovered on the floor during the police investigation by a local Inspector, Fahrudin Čebo, with many other items thieves believed were not valuable. It survived in an underground bank vault during the Siege of Sarajevo by Serb forces. To quell rumors that the government had sold the Haggadah in order to buy weapons, the president of Bosnia presented the manuscript at a community Seder in 1995.



In 2001, concerned with the possible continuing deterioration of the Sarajevo Haggadah which was stored in a city bank vault under less than ideal conditions, Dr. Jakob Finci, the head of Sarajevo's Jewish Community, appealed to Jacques Paul Klein, the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Coordinator of United Nations Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his assistance in ensuring the preservation and restoration of this priceless historical treasure.

Klein quickly agreed and developed a plan to secure the required funding, identify an internationally recognized expert to undertake the restoration and make space available in the United Nations Headquarters building where the restoration efforts could begin.

When the project became public knowledge, Klein was surprised at reticence of some local Bosnian officials to support the project. Only after informing President Izetbegovic of their obstructionism and letting him know that the International Community would take a dim view of their total lack of cooperation in the restoration efforts did President Izetbegovic clear the way for the restoration project to begin.

Klein initiated an international campaign to raise the required funding. Contributions came from individuals, institutions and governments from around the world. With funding in hand and with Dr. Pataki, from Stuttgart's Akademie Der Bildenden Künste, ready to begin the restoration project a climate-controlled room

was refurbished in Sarajevo's National Museum to house the Haggadah as the centerpiece, surrounded by documents of the Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim faiths. Additionally, as a *beau geste* to the City of Sarajevo, a second climate-controlled vault was funded to house the national archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 2 December 2002, the vault room was dedicated by the Special Representative of the Secretary General in the presence of senior Bosnian government officials, the diplomatic community and international media as well as the public. The Sarajevo Haggadah and other sacred and historical religious documents had, at last, found a worthy home.

In 1985 a reproduction was printed in Ljubljana, with 5,000 copies made. The National Museum subsequently authorized the publication of a limited number of reproductions of the Haggadah, each of which has become a collector's item. In May 2006, the Sarajevo publishing house Rabic Ltd., announced the forthcoming publication of 613 copies of the Haggadah on handmade parchment that attempts to recreate the original appearance of the 14th century original, alluding to the 613 Mitzvot.

There is a brief mention of the manuscript in the motion picture *Welcome to Sarajevo*. The novel *People of the Book*, by Geraldine Brooks (2008), crafts a fictionalized history of the Haggadah from its origins in Spain to the museum in Sarajevo. The Winter, 2002, issue of the literary journal Brick published Ramona Koval's account of the disputes surrounding the proposed UNESCO-funded display of the original codex in the context of the post-Dayton Agreement UN-supervised 1995 peace settlement.

The history of Derviš Korkut, who saved the book from the Nazis, was told in an article by Geraldine Brooks in *The New Yorker* magazine. The article also sets out the story of the young Jewish girl, Mira Papo, whom Korkut and his wife hid from the Nazis as they were acting to save the Haggadah. In a twist of fate, as an elderly woman in Israel, Mira Papo secured the safety of Korkut's daughter during the Bosnian war in the 1990s.

A copy of the Sarajevo Haggadah was given to former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair by the Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina Mustafa Cerić during the awards ceremony for the Tony Blair Faith Foundation's Faith Shorts competition in December 2011. The Grand Mufti presented it as a symbol of interfaith cooperation and respect, while recounting the protection of the Jewish book by Muslims on two occasions in history. Another copy was given by the Grand Mufti Mustafa Cerić to a representative of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel during the interreligious meeting "*Living Together is the Future*" organized in Sarajevo by the Community of Sant'Egidio.

In October 2012, the Haggadah's future exhibition was left in limbo following a drought in funding for the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which shuttered its doors after going bankrupt and not paying its employees for almost a year. In 2013 the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art attempted to arrange for a loan of the Haggadah, but due to internal political battles within Bosnia and Herzegovina, the loan was eventually refused by Bosnia's National Monuments Preservation Commission.

However, the Haggadah was again on display as of September 2015, following the National Museum's re-opening.

NOTE: In 2018, the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry sponsored a tour to the Balkans which included Sarajevo. We were able to be there for Shabbat and join the small Jewish community for services and an elaborate traditional Sephardic Kiddush. In addition, the group was given a private viewing of the Sarajevo Haggadah and was able to purchase a copy of the famous Haggadah (copied so meticulously that it even included food stains on the pages). The copy is now available for viewing in our library.

## News from Jewish Greece

### Long ignored, Greek Holocaust survivors finally tell their story [Full article Here](#)

Naki Bega, one of less than a dozen survivors remaining in south European country, survived Auschwitz and 22-day death march; Greece marks 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of first deportation



Athens, Greece (AFP) — The pain wells up inside Naki Bega as she remembers being herded onto a train to Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Nazis' most notorious extermination camp.

They "threw us into [cattle] wagons with a very small window, no water, no food. About 13 days later we arrived in Birkenau," said the 95-year-old, one of Greece's last Holocaust survivors.

The country marks the 80th anniversary of the first deportations of thousands of Greek Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau on Wednesday, a traumatic event that devastated a once-flourishing community whose roots go back to antiquity. Fewer than a dozen Holocaust survivors are still alive in Greece, and their story is not widely known in a country that until recently glossed over the fate of its Jews, who once dominated its second city, Thessaloniki. The first convoy of Jewish deportees left the northern port — once known as the "Jerusalem of the Balkans" — for Auschwitz-Birkenau on March 15, 1943.

#### Few who lived

Less than one in 20 of Thessaloniki's 50,000 Jews survived the Holocaust, according to historian Mark Mazower, author of the acclaimed "Salonica, City of Ghosts."

Born Esther Matathias, Bega was deported at the age of 16 to the Nazi extermination camp in present-day Poland. She was arrested on March 24, 1944, with her mother and two sisters near their hometown of Trikala in central Greece. On the selection ramp at Auschwitz, the teenager and her two older sisters were separated from their mother. They never saw her again.

"We were taken to the shower, our hair was shaved, we were tattooed with a number," said Bega, rolling up the sleeve of her jacket.

The ink has faded, but her camp number is still visible: 77092. Bega was sent to another part of the camp for forced labor.

"I would cut pieces of old cloth into strips" for the Nazis to clean their weapons, she said, sitting next to her daughter Myriam in her Athens apartment. The guards regularly "ordered us to raise our arms in the air," she said, miming the gesture. "They wanted to check our bone structure. Those who were too thin were taken away" to their deaths in the gas chambers.

#### Sky 'turned red.'

The camp's chimneys spewed out black smoke that she could see from her barracks.

"At night the sky turned red," she added. "In time we understood what was happening," said Bega, clutching a tissue to wipe back tears.

The decades have not dulled the pain. She paused, haunted by mental images only she could see. Her daughter Myriam tried to bring her back to the present: "Mama, mama," she said tenderly.

Both of Bega's sisters died in the camp. One succumbed to pleurisy. The other was struck on the head by a soldier after being caught rummaging through potato peelings behind the camp kitchens for something to eat. She later died of the injury. The Nazis sent Bega to another concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen in Germany



shortly before Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by the advancing Red Army in January 1945. But with British forces approaching that camp in the spring of 1945, she was put on a 22-day "death march." She was eventually freed in May 1945 with the final surrender of the Third Reich. Bega made her way back to Greece in August 1945. Her father, who had escaped deportation, was still alive but died shortly afterward. She rebuilt her life in the city of Larissa, not far from the village of her childhood, marrying and having three children.

#### Persistent antisemitism

In the aftermath of the war, few in Greece showed interest in the tragic fate of the country's Jews, most of whom decided to emigrate to Israel. For decades, many mistook the number on her arm for a common tattoo. A few years ago, Bega decided to return to her place of torment, accompanied by her daughter. She also gave lectures in Larissa schools on the Holocaust. Greece has gradually begun honoring its Jewish community after formalizing relations with Israel in 1990. In Thessaloniki, steps were taken a decade ago under the then-reforming mayor Yiannis Boutaris to highlight the city's rich Jewish past. But antisemitism remains rife, with Jewish cemeteries and Holocaust memorials regularly vandalized. Of over 77,000 Jews living in Greece before World War II, more than 86 percent perished during the four-year occupation by Nazi Germany. Today, the community numbers around five thousand, according to the Jewish Museum in Athens.

The Austrian-born SS officer who oversaw much of the deportation of Greek Jews, Anton Burger, managed to escape justice despite being sentenced to death in absentia. He lived in Essen, Germany, until his death in 1991, his true identity undiscovered during his lifetime.

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#### **80 Years since the First Train of Death** by Léon Saltiel

On March 15, 1943, the first train carrying 2,400 Jews of the city to Auschwitz-Birkenau departed from Thessaloniki. By August 10, another 17 convoys had departed, carrying a total of about 43,000 souls.

Today marks 80 years since the departure of the first train carrying 2,400 Thessalonian Jews to the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau on March 15, 1943, where the vast majority will tragically die in the gas chambers.



The Jews of Thessaloniki are a community intertwined with the history of the city, which marked it in every way. The Jewish presence in Thessaloniki begins in antiquity. Already, when the Apostle Paul visited the city, he finds a community with its own synagogue and preaches there for three Saturdays. The arrival of Spanish-speaking Sephardic Jews from Iberia after the Edict of Alhambra in 1492 brings with it new techniques and professions from the West as well as commercial networks. Thessaloniki then experienced a rapid development and soon took on the characteristics of a cosmopolitan city, a crossroads economic, intellectual and social.

In 1912, when the city was incorporated into the Greek state, Jews constituted more than half of the population. However, the First World War, the fire of 1917, the crash of 1929 and other negative developments during the interwar period, led a significant part of the community to emigrate to other countries. Nevertheless, the Jewish community in the city remains strong and active, and on the eve of the Second World War counts 50,000 souls.

With the beginning of the war, Greek Jews participated en masse in the war against Italy, with the same patriotism and self-sacrifice as their Christian fellow citizens. The first mass anti-Jewish measures were the gathering of the city's Jews, aged 18-45, in Eleftherias Square on July 11, 1942. There they are subjected to public humiliation and are recorded for forced labor, an ordeal that ends towards the end of 1942, with the payment of a large sum of money as ransom and the destruction of the city's Jewish cemetery, which began on December 6, 1942 and after the war occupied the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

## Life in the ghetto

Since February 1943, when the SS organs arrived in the city to implement the "Final Solution", the lives of the Jews have changed radically. They are forced to move to specific areas – ghettos, where many families live together in an apartment. Jewish shops pass into escrow control, and many of the fortunes and labors of generations evaporate in a matter of days. Measures such as the yellow star and a curfew and exit from the ghetto are also imposed.



Life in the ghetto is tragic. The world is losing its sanity and is deeply depressed. People are looking for escape routes and young people get married in groups to get a partner during these difficult times. They are also preparing for the long "relocation" trip to Poland. The efforts of the Community leaders to intervene and mobilize the Government, the municipal and ecclesiastical authorities, the trade associations and chambers as well as the Red Cross to stop the deportations are not crowned with success.

From March 15, and every 2-3 days another train leaves the city carrying 2,500 souls in inhumane conditions to industrialized death. Inside closed animal wagons were 80 people, old, pregnant, babies, sick. They had little water and food for the ride and only a bucket for their needs. By August 10, in 18 convoys, the vast majority of Thessaloniki's Jews were deported to the Auschwitz death camp. Of these, few came back alive.

## End of an era

The violent and abrupt uprooting of the Jewish population of Thessaloniki radically changed the physiognomy of the city. Jewish shops now had new privately owned shops with the signs changed. People's furniture and property have evaporated. Of the dozens of Jewish synagogues, few will survive the war, in a miserable state. The ancient and vast Jewish cemetery had been unraveled.

The bodies had become food for the dogs and the tombstones were building material for all uses. After the war, only 2,000 Jews would be in the city, and many would prefer to emigrate from their hometown for a fresh start. Thessaloniki had lost the important presence of the Jewish element that for centuries had given it this unique look and dynamic.

Leon Saltiel holds a PhD in Modern Greek History from the University of Macedonia, focusing on the Holocaust of the Jews of Thessaloniki. His book "The Holocaust in Thessaloniki: Reactions to the Anti – Jewish Persecution, 1942-1943" won the International Book Award for Holocaust Research for 2021 by the Yad Vashem Foundation of Israel

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## Thessaloniki

**Greece marks 80th anniversary of first deportation of Greek Jews to Auschwitz** Full article [Here](#)  
Hundreds march to Thessaloniki's old train station, where expulsion began; approximately 46,000 were taken to death camp in 1943, just 1,950 survived.

Thessaloniki, Greece — Greece on Sunday commemorated the 80th anniversary of the first deportations of Greek Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau in Thessaloniki, the northern metropolis that lost almost its entire flourishing Jewish community. Holding white balloons captioned 'Never Again,' around a thousand people of all ages marched to the old railway station of Thessaloniki, where the deportations began on March 15, 1943. Many people left flowers on the train tracks.



The deportations were carried out in cattle wagons, each holding around 80 people forcefully crammed in, ceremony officials told AFP. Some 46,000 Thessaloniki Jews were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau between March and August 1943, said the president of the Jewish community in Thessaloniki David Saltiel.

"The community lost 97 percent of its members, around 50,000 people," Saltiel said, noting that Jews made up a fifth of Thessaloniki's population at the time.

Greek President Katerina Sakellaropoulou, European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, and Thessaloniki Mayor Konstantinos Zervas were among the officials at the ceremony. The American ambassador to Greece, George Tsunis, and Israeli Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology Ofir Akunis also attended.

Thessaloniki mayor Zervas said work has begun on a Holocaust museum to honor the memory of those who died in the Nazi camps. Greece has gradually begun honoring its Jewish community after formalizing relations with Israel in 1990. In Thessaloniki, steps were taken a decade ago under the reforming mayor Yiannis Boutaris to highlight its rich Jewish past.

But antisemitism persists, with Jewish cemeteries and Holocaust memorials regularly vandalized.

"Antisemitism and racism remain a threat," Saltiel said.

Among over 77,000 Jews living in Greece before World War II, more than 86 percent perished during the four-year occupation by Nazi Germany. Today, the community numbers around 5,000, according to the Jewish Museum in Athens.



## Thessaloniki Film Festival Honors the Victims of the Holocaust on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Deportations [Full article Here](#)

80 years on, Greek film festival will pay tribute to deported Jews.

Thessaloniki's documentary movie event to recall once-thriving large community sent to Auschwitz with several screenings about Holocaust, panel discussions.

On March 15, 1943, the first train bound for Auschwitz departed from the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki, once home to one of the largest Sephardic Jewish communities in the world.

Eighty years later, the city's documentary film festival is paying tribute to Jews killed during the Holocaust and to the Jewish community's enduring importance to the city.

The Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival, which runs March 2-12, will feature several documentaries about the Holocaust and the Jewish experience in Greece, along with panel discussions and other screening events — in-person and online — on the subject. The full tribute is called "Adio Kerida," the name of a traditional Sephardic love song in Ladino, the Judeo-Spanish language once commonly heard throughout the city's streets.

"Legend has it that the members of the Jewish community sang it just before getting on the trains that would take them to the Nazi concentration camps, saying goodbye to their own people and their beloved Thessaloniki," said Orestis Andreadakis, the festival's director.



The documentaries to be shown include "By-standing and Standing-by" (2012), which traces the history of Thessaloniki's Jewish population and the lesser-known community in nearby Katerini; "Salonique, ville du silence" (2006), in which Thessaloniki-born director Maurice Amaraggi brings together modern images of the city with testimonies from Holocaust survivors; "Kisses to the Children" (2011), which follows the stories of five Jews who were taken in by Christian families during Germany's occupation of Greece; and "Heroes of Salonika" (2021), which highlights the brutal experiences of six Holocaust survivors from the city.

Other highlights include a full screening of Claude Lanzmann's 9-plus hour "Shoah," and a screening of "The Golem," one of the earliest horror movies from the silent film era. The latter is set in 16th-century Prague, where a rabbi creates a golem — a giant clay creature brought to life in order to protect the city's Jewish community. The film will be accompanied by an original score by renowned Greek filmmaker and composer Yannis Veslemes, played live during the screening.

Before World War II, the city was nicknamed "La madre de Israel" ("The mother of Israel"), with a Jewish population over 50,000. The present-day community, which now numbers just over 1,000, played a key role in putting the festival tribute together.

"[This tribute] is extremely important," said Andreadakis. "The Jewish community has defined the history of the city." The festival is holding online and in-person screenings.

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## Arta

**Arta remembers and honors the memory of the Jewish martyrs** Full article in Greek [Here](#)

The memorial service and wreath-laying took place last month at the Holocaust Memorial in Jewish Martyrs' Square in Arta. The march to Kilkis Square followed in the footsteps of the 324 Jews who were arrested by the Germans on March 24, 1944 and then sent to the horror camps. The Jewish Community of Arta is one of the oldest in Greece. Their settlement in the area dates back to the Hellenistic years, i.e. the 3rd century BC, a time when Jewish communities spread throughout Greece. Integrated into the Greek city, linguistically and culturally, they were called "Romaniotes" and constituted the overwhelming majority of the Jewish element until the end of the 15th century when the Sephardic Jews arrived from the Iberian peninsula, after the persecutions of Spain and Portugal. Although in most cases the Romaniotes were assimilated by the Sephardic element, in Epirus (Ioannina, Arta, Nikopolis (later Preveza)) the Romaniote, ancient communities were in the majority until World War II. The Jews of Arta were pious, deeply religious, law-abiding and coexisted peacefully with their Christian fellow citizens. They lived in three separate districts that developed in the center of the city, "Ochto", "Cimenta" and "Roloj".



Before World War II the Jewish population of the city was about 500 people, but during the German occupation only 352 were left in the city, who were deported to the extermination camps. On the night of March 24, 1944, most of the Jews of Arta were arrested by the Nazis and deported to Hitler's death camps. Few were able to escape. The fate of a Jewish family hiding in the village of Kommemo in Arta was also tragic. They were massacred by the Germans together with the 317 inhabitants of the village. At the end of the war, 30 people returned from the camps and another 28 Jews who managed to escape to the surrounding villages. The two days of commemorative events began on Saturday morning with an event in the hall of the "Skoufas" M/F Association where, among other things, the donation of musical instruments to the Arta Music School by Iosif and Anna Mizan was announced. A special mention was also made to the late Mayor of Ioannina, Moises Elisaf, who recently passed away. The events concluded with the walk in the city of Arta with Mr. Theoharis Vadivoulis, historical researcher of the Jewish Community of Arta.

## Kavala

### Events in Kavala Commemorating the Holocaust of Jews from Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

Under the general title, "The Extermination of the Jews of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace-80 years since the exterminating of Jews in Treblinka," the Municipality of Kavala organized a remarkable and rich program of events of memory and honor, from February 28th-March 5th, with the participation of many of the citizens of Kavala and representatives of organizations from Greece and abroad.

Elias Cambellis represented the city of Larissa. At the major central event on Saturday, March 4, the mayors of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace signed a Protocol to create a network of Cities against Anti-Semitism. "We decided as a municipality, that our memorial service will be the organization of actions and events that will drive away the clouds covering the dark sides of history and remove the obstacles of deliberate oblivion," emphasized the Mayor of Kavala, Thodoros Mouiadis, and went on to say during his speech, "We honor our dead, creating a Network of Cities against Anti-Semitism, against racism, against fascism, against the unbelievable nostalgia of Nazism."



Following was the screening of Joseph Mevorach's documentary, "The Jewish Communities of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace," which tells the story of all Jewish Communities in the area, from the beginning of their existence to the Holocaust. On Sunday, March 5th, a memorial service was held in memory of the 1,484 Jews from Kavala, by the Rabbi of Thessaloniki, with the participation of the Thessaloniki Jewish Choir, and the laying of wreaths at the memorial created inside the Jewish cemetery of Kavala.



Then everyone marched with the banner reading NEVER AGAIN in the Memory Walk, from the Old Jewish School (now the Greek High School) to the monument erected by the municipality in 2015. The event culminated with speeches at the Grand Club and a choral performance of hymns dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust, but also of the recent train accident in Tempe.



### Student film from Kavala

A student film from Kavala swept in the panhellenic competition on the Holocaust of Greek Jews. Among the five best student films of the year is "N'Ordinary Teen" by Loukia Jacovides of the Music School of Kavala - "Protagonist" an unknown young Kavaliotis of 1943, whose story was recorded in a book by Joseph Mevorah

The Music School of Kavala participated in the Student Short Film Creation Competition on "The Holocaust and the Greek Jews" organized by the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the Jewish Museum of Greece.

The Kavalian participation that was awarded in the Competition was the short film "signed" by the team of Loukia Iakovidis, Nikolas Mantalos and Pantelis Giagoudakis entitled "N'Ordinary Teen" [A non-ordinary teenager] and deals with the history of the Holocaust of the Jews of Kavala.



Specifically, the director and screenwriter Loukia retrieved the story of the teenager Kavaliotis Stefanos Karagiozakis, son of a baker on Arist Street. Stani, who in 1943, risked his life to give two loaves of bread to the hungry Jews that the city authorities had "stacked" in an adjacent tobacco warehouse shortly before they left for the extermination camps of Treblinka.

Karagiozakis, immediately after his act, was noticed by the Bulgarian officers and brutally beaten!

The above events were narrated by Karagiozakis himself to his children and, many years later, were recorded by Joseph Mevorah in his book "The Jews in the Mecca of Tobacco". In fact, Loukia Jacovides' film features, among others, his daughter and grandson!



More than 70 entries from all over Greece were submitted to the panhellenic student film competition, with that of the Music School of Kavala being among the five that receive the Prize, which is accompanied by the following prize: The capitals will participate in a special educational program of the Jewish Museum of Greece, which includes, among other things, an educational visit to the "Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum" in Poland!

It is worth noting that the Music School of Kavala "sent" to the Competition a total of three films! In addition to the "N'Ordinary Teen" award, the film Never Again received an honorary commendation, while the runner-up for honorary praise is the film The Human Chessboard.

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## Athens

**With Aid of Mossad, Greece Arrests Two on Suspicion of Planning Attack on Jewish Site** [Link Here](#)  
Police said the suspects had chosen a target of 'high symbolism' and were making final preparations for the attack.

A week before Passover, Greek police said Tuesday they have arrested two people who had been allegedly planning terrorist attacks in the country, including at least one against a Jewish and Israeli target, aimed at causing mass casualties.

The suspects, who were allegedly part of an overseas terrorism network, are being held at police headquarters in central Athens, authorities said. According to reports on Tuesday, the detainees are two men aged 27 and 29, who planned to recruit more people to carry out attacks, including at a Jewish restaurant frequented by Israelis in Athens' Psiri neighborhood. The Kathimerini newspaper reported from sources that the target was a synagogue in the center of Athens, while another media outlet stated that it was a synagogue that also serves as a restaurant – possibly referring to a Chabad house.

Israel's Prime Minister's Office released a statement saying that the Mossad assisted Greece in gathering intelligence on the suspects and their connection to Iran. "This is another attempt by Iran to promote terrorism against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad... As part of the investigation, it was revealed that the infrastructure that operated in Greece is part of a wide Iranian network that operates from Iran out in many countries," the statement added.



Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that the arrest was "further proof of the superiority of Israeli intelligence and the importance of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and its perpetrators." He added that "The Mossad and Israel's intelligence agencies will continue to ensure that wherever Iran seeks to act against our citizens, it will be met with an effective response. Greece's anti-terrorism police division and National Intelligence Service were involved in the arrests, according to a police statement, and were assisted by a foreign intelligence service that has not been named. Police said the suspects had chosen a target of "high symbolism" and were making final preparations for the attack.

"Their aim was not only to cause the loss of life of innocent citizens, but also to undermine the sense of security in the country, while hurting public institutions and threatening (Greece's) international relations," the police statement said.

"Authorities have uncovered members of a terrorist organization involving foreign nationals, who have been taken to the public prosecutor," Public Order Minister Takis Theodorikakos said in a tweet.

"The operation demonstrates that the country's security authorities maintain a high state of readiness for all Greeks and all visitors to our country."

According to the Greek media, the network was exposed following the arrest of Pakistani citizens in Cyprus in 2021, who planned to harm Israelis, and also following the foiling of an attempted attack against Israelis in Turkey last year.

## Athens Exhibit Draws Attention to Greek Holocaust Losses

An outdoor double exhibition commemorating the victims of the Holocaust through art work and family photographs opened on central Vasilissis Olgas Avenue in Athens.

Display cases lining the pedestrian section of the street show on the one side photographs from the daily life of Greek Jews before and during World War II from the Jewish Museum of Greece, and on the other photographs of tapestries by artist Artemis Alcalay that express the sense of home and family, and their loss.

Jewish Museum President Makis Matsas said that public initiatives like the exhibition contribute to ensuring that Nazi atrocities never happen again.



"Our greatest enemy is ignorance, which is also the greatest obstacle to our joint journey for building tolerant and inclusive communities," Athens Mayor Kostas Bakoyannis said. "Greece lost more than 80% of its pre-war Jewish population. The works of Artemis Alcalay place us in the microcosm of the Greek Jews' home and refuge during the (Nazi) Occupation."

Titled "The Holocaust of Greek Jews, 1941-1944" and "Artemis Alcalay: Trauma as Memory and Life," the exhibition will remain on Vasilissis Olgas avenue throughout February.

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## Bulgaria

**Why Bulgarian Jews skipped an official ceremony marking their rescue from the Nazis** Article [Here](#)  
Officials marked 80 years since Tsar Boris III stopped the deportation of the country's 48,000 Jews; they didn't mention the 11,000 whose murder by Nazis his government facilitated.

JTA — Bulgaria's president was on hand on March 10 for a ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the country's dramatic decision to save its 48,000 Jews from the Nazis. So were representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox church whose predecessors instigated the rescue, as well as a prominent Bulgarian-born Israeli historian and politician, Michael Bar Zohar, who published an early history of the episode, which was barely known until after the fall of communism. Together they marched from Bulgaria's national library — where an exhibition about Bulgaria's World War II-era king, Tsar Boris III, is being held — to Sofia's oldest church, where they lay flowers on a memorial to Boris and his wife, Tsarina Joanna.

But conspicuously absent from the ceremony with President Rumen Radev were any representatives of Bulgaria's contemporary Jewish community. Community leaders were invited only at the last possible minute, on Thursday afternoon, according to Alexander Oscar, president of Shalom The Organization of Bulgarian Jews. His group had

already planned its own observance of March 10, known by Bulgarian Jews as the "Day of Salvation." But Oscar said he would not have attended even if he'd been invited earlier — and he thought no one else from the local Jewish community would have either.

"Nobody from the community would have taken part in an event honoring the imaginary role of King Boris in rescuing the Bulgarian Jews and presenting a distorted history of the Holocaust," Oscar told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Oscar's comments point to a longstanding and increasingly potent dispute over how Tsar Boris III should factor into Bulgaria's Holocaust memory. Though Boris did sign off on the order to halt the deportation of the country's Jews, he was also the leader of a fascist government that allied with Nazi Germany, imposed oppressive racial laws on its Jews and facilitated the murder of more than 11,000 Jews in territory it occupied. Boris died under mysterious circumstances shortly after returning from Germany where he met with Hitler in 1943.

Bulgarian troops deported more than 11,000 Jews living in Western Thrace, Vardar, Macedonia and the town of Pirot in today's Serbia to Nazi death camps, where almost all were murdered. St. Sophia Church, where the president's ceremony took place, is home to plaques honoring Tsar Boris III and his wife that briefly stood in Jerusalem's Bulgarian Forest. The plaques were removed in 2000 after protests by Bulgarian Jews and their descendants who were uncomfortable with lionizing someone who oversaw the murder of Jews during the Holocaust. Past "Day of Salvation" commemorations have not specifically exalted Boris. But the wartime leader is a favorite of Bulgaria's far right and those who admire the country's pre-communist governments, and his profile has only risen in recent years as Bulgaria, like many other countries, has experienced a strengthening of its right wing.

"What we choose to remember and what we choose to omit when telling our own story is a mark of wisdom, courage and dignity," wrote Bulgarian Jewish journalist Emmy Barouh in an open letter to Radev before the commemoration event.

"There is no morality to be found in the sinister arithmetic that the lives of 50,000 were 'paid for' by the lives of 11,343," Barouh wrote. "Skipping half of this sad 'equation' turns '80th anniversary of the rescue' into another episode of political use of Bulgarian Jews."

Immediately after the war, the Jewish population of Bulgaria was still about 50,000, its prewar level, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. But unlike in most communist countries, the government allowed Jews to emigrate in large numbers and in fact encouraged them to do so; the vast majority departed for Israel in the late 1940s. Today, the World Jewish Congress estimates the country's Jewish population at between 2,000 and 6,000; the country recently saw the creation of a Jewish school in Sofia and a cultural center in the remains of a crumbling synagogue in the coastal city of Vidin.

Local Jewish leaders marked the anniversary in other ways. Earlier in the week, some traveled to Kavala, Greece, for a ceremony at the site where Bulgarian soldiers deported thousands of Jews to Treblinka in 1943. On Friday, they also held their own ceremony at a different monument in Sofia commemorating both the rescue and the murder of the Jews in Bulgarian-occupied regions. They were joined by public figures including Sofia's mayor and Bulgaria's foreign minister, Nikolay Milkov, and its prosecutor general.



King Boris of Bulgaria, wearing civilian dress, left, with Adolf Hitler and Joachim Von Ribbentrop, right, when he paid a visit on May 14, 1941, at Hitler's Rolling headquarters.



The president of Bulgaria, Rumen Radev (left) and Igal Unna, head of Israel's National Cyber Directorate, on a visit to Israel's National CERT on March 21, 2018



Some Bulgarians had openly called for their country to pay greater homage to Tsar Boris III at this year's March 10 commemorations. Daniela Gortcheva, a Dutch-Bulgarian right-wing media figure, circulated a petition calling for him to be recognized. The petition asserted that leaving Boris out of the commemoration would be akin to what happened in the Macedonian city of Ohrid last year, when a Bulgarian cultural club named after Boris drew protests from those who noted that Boris's government was responsible for the murder of thousands of Macedonian Jews.

That incident, the latest in a long-running conflict between the two Balkan nations over World War II history, rocketed Tsar Boris back into the national spotlight in Bulgaria and made his rehabilitation a focus of Bulgarian nationalists. After Jewish groups rebuffed the petition, Gortcheva attacked her critics on Facebook as ungrateful "heirs of Communists," "a fifth column of Moscow" and traitors — claims that Jewish leaders say echo antisemitic smears made against Jews in the past. Shalom, Bulgarian Jewry's leading organization, has filed a complaint against Gortcheva with Bulgaria's prosecutor general — the same official who last month ruled that Bulgaria could bar a neo-Nazi march honoring a Nazi collaborator.

"Gortcheva — a great supporter of the Lukov march — has been persistently involved in the spread of Holocaust denial and distortion," World Jewish Congress Executive Vice President Maram Stern said in a letter to Milkov. "She combines such statements with slanderous claims that the Organization of the Jews in Bulgaria SHALOM and the Organization of the Bulgarian Jews in Israel are disloyal to Bulgaria." Following last week's ceremonies, a group of Bulgarian scholars have circulated their own appeal this week, calling on Bulgarian leaders to acknowledge the deportations of Jews under the country's rule during the Holocaust.

"Our state never tried to find the appropriate language to mark two inseparable and yet antipodal historical facts: the preserved life of the Jews from the prewar territories of Bulgaria and the deportation to Treblinka (4-29 March 1943) of those from the lands occupied in April 1941," the appeal reads. "The Bulgarian state should acknowledge publicly, sincerely and unconditionally its responsibility by apologizing for the persecutions and deportations of Jews during World War II."

"It is a matter of basic decency and tactfulness that emphasizing the salvation should be done by those who were saved and not by the savior," the petition added. "Here, exactly the opposite occurs: Bulgarians are engaging in self-glorification and inviting the Jewish community to pay them eternal gratitude."

**Note:** See article in this issue on events in Kavala where Bulgarians protested their country's distortion of Holocaust history



Far-right activists march with torches during a march to commemorate pro-Nazi Bulgarian general Hristo Lukov in Sofia on February 17, 2018

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## Cyprus

**'New chapter' in Athens-Nicosia relations as president visits Greece** Full article [Here](#)

President Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriacos Mitsotakis announced on Monday that their governments will institutionalize a coordination body, as a new chapter in Athens and Nicosia relations.

"This organized inter-governmental dialogue should have perhaps already been set up but here we are now announcing it officially," Mitsotakis said.

It was Christodoulides' first trip to Greece as president. It was explained that the mechanism will allow for the cabinets of the two governments to meet and brief each other on issues of common interest and concern, with both leaders attending, too. Aside from the supreme intergovernmental cooperation council, Mitsotakis said that he supports Christodoulides' proposition to have the EU more involved in solving the Cyprus issue.

Mitsotakis said that Christodoulides assumed his duties at a very difficult period of geopolitical volatility with overt revisionism.

“The mobilization of Greece and Cyprus is necessary more than ever before. We stand together in the upcoming European Council,” Mitsotakis said, underlining his country’s readiness to continue the fight for the common vision of resolving the Cyprus issue based on the decisions of the UN and the bizonal bicomunal federation.



As for relations with Turkey, the Greek PM said that after a long period of unacceptable provocations and a hostile attitude there have been improvements and a more positive stance. Mitsotakis expressed his hope that these developments can have a positive impact on the Cyprus problem. He further emphasized that international legitimacy cannot tolerate in the 21st century either an occupying army in Cyprus or outdated systems of guarantees and the right of third parties to intervene.

Christodoulides underlined that his visit to Athens goes beyond its symbolic dimension as it takes place at a time when the two countries have to face common challenges both in the region and in their European family.

“I informed Mitsotakis about the need for more active involvement of the EU in the efforts to resolve the Cyprus issue. We know very well that the facts are not easy, but we strongly believe that the current situation cannot be the solution to the problem,” Christodoulides said.

The two leaders had a private meeting followed by extended talks by the delegations of the two sides. Earlier, Christodoulides began his meetings in Greece with Greek President Katerina Sakellaropoulou, with whom he discussed the Cyprus problem, bilateral relations and regional issues. Christodoulides informed Sakellaropoulou about his upcoming meetings with UN Assistant Secretary-General Rose Marie DiCarlo, who will be visiting Cyprus this week. The two also discussed strengthening Cyprus-Greece relations, and how to upgrade their roles in the trilateral cooperations they have with other countries in the region. Regarding the migration issue, the two said that as frontline countries there needs to be a better way of managing the issue. The Cyprus issue is a constant concern and top national priority of Greek foreign policy, Sakellaropoulou told Christodoulides.

Christodoulides said that his visit to Greece is both symbolic and essential and stressed that the current situation in Cyprus cannot be the future of Cyprus and Nicosia cannot continue to be the last divided capital of Europe. Sakellaropoulou also referred to the deadly train accident in Greece a few weeks ago that claimed the lives of many young people, including Cypriot students, and expressed her sincere condolences. Christodoulides also expressed his condolences to Greece over the train accident.

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## Crete

### **Minoan Ancient Palaces of Crete in Bid for UNESCO Approval** Full article [Here](#)

Greek authorities are finalizing the candidacy file for the inclusion of Crete’s Minoan-era ancient palaces in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The file will be submitted by the Ministry of Culture in September and includes the palaces of Zakros, Knossos, Phaistos, Malia, Zominthos and Kydonia. The application will be evaluated and commented upon by the competent UNESCO committee and the nomination will be officially submitted in January 2024.

The 6 ancient Minoan palaces of Crete

The Palace of Knossos, located about five kilometers (three miles) south of Heraklion, was the largest of all the Minoan palaces in Crete. It was also at the core of the highly sophisticated Minoan civilization that flourished on the island over 3,500 years ago. The discovery and subsequent excavation of the palace dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Before then, Knossos had only been a place mentioned in Greek mythology.



Knossos

The palace of Malia, dating from the Middle Bronze Age, was destroyed by an earthquake during the Late Bronze Age; Knossos and other sites were also destroyed at that time. The palace was later rebuilt toward the end of the Late Bronze Age. Most of the ruins visible today date from this second period of construction. The palace features a giant central courtyard, 48m x 23m in size. On the south side are two sets of steps leading upwards and a maze of tiny rooms. Also here is a strange carved stone called a kernos stone, which looks like a millstone with a cup attached to the side of it. On the north side of the courtyard were storage rooms with giant earthenware pithos jars, up to two meters tall. These were used for holding grain, olive oil and other liquids; the floor of these rooms has a complex drainage system for carrying away spilled liquids.



Zakros is a site on the east coast of Crete containing ruins from the Minoan civilization. The site is often known to archaeologists as Zakro or Kato Zakro. It is believed to have been one of the four main administrative centers of the Minoans, and its protected harbor and strategic location made it an important commercial hub for trade to the east. The town was dominated by the Palace of Zakro, originally built around 1900 BC, rebuilt around 1600 BC, and destroyed around 1450 BC along with the other major centers of Minoan civilization. Extensive ruins of the palace remain and are a popular tourist destination.



Zakro

The magnificent archaeological site of Phaistos, where an imposing palace stood overlooking the Mediterranean for thousands of years, is perhaps not as well-known as the palace of Knossos, but it was a focal point in the long and illustrious history of Crete. It is the second-largest Cretan palace founded by the legendary King Minos of Knossos. It does not face the Peloponnese mainland like Kydonia does, but rather southward and outward, toward the Mediterranean. The palatial fortress, located in a seismically active zone, was rebuilt twice after it was first constructed in the Late Bronze Age.



Phaistos

Zominthos, with its elegant summer palace once belonging to the Minoan aristocracy on Crete, was first discovered in 1982. Recent excavations disclosed to archaeologists that the use of the building actually extended back as far as 2,000 BC — and possibly further. Researchers believe that the palace of Zominthos served political, economic and religious functions throughout its existence. It is very near the religious center of Ideo Andros, whose influence spread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, the New East and even Egypt.



Zominthos

The modern-day city of Chania in Crete is built on the site of the ancient city state of Kydonia or Cydonia, on the northwest coast of the island. In legend, Cydonia was founded by King Cydon (Κύδων), a son of Hermes or Apollo and of Akakallis, the daughter of King Minos. At Kastelli hill, the citadel of Chania's harbor, archaeological excavations have discovered ceramic sherds which date back to the Neolithic era. Rare finds such as walls and ground floors confirm that the systematic habitation of the hill began during the Early Minoan period. A Minoan House with a characteristic hall was also unearthed.

## US Returns 29 Smuggled Antiquities to Greece Full article [Here](#)

The US returned 29 antiquities to Greece during a repatriation ceremony at the Greek Consulate of New York.

Key pieces returned include a bronze calyx krater dating to 350 BC that was seized in January; the Eid Mar coin, minted in 42 BCE to commemorate the assassination of Julius Caesar; and the Neolithic Family Group which dates to 5000-3500 BC and is valued at \$3 million. The antiquities were smuggled out of Macedonia, Epirus, Central Greece, the Cyclades, and Crete, and ended up in the US. Among other antiquities returned to Greece, which cover a wide chronological spectrum from prehistoric to Roman times, are marble and bronze figurines of people and animals, marble, silver, bronze and earthenware vessels, gold and bronze jewelry, and part of a fresco. All were seized pursuant to multiple criminal investigations into high-profile traffickers and smugglers. Investigations were supervised by Matthew Bogdanos, head of the Manhattan district attorney's Antiquities Trafficking Unit.



Antiquities trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar business

The repatriation ceremony was attended by Greek Culture Minister Lina Mendoni, Consul General Konstantinos Konstantinou, and Ivan J. Arvelo, special agent in charge for Homeland Security Investigations in New York.



"Antiquities trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar business with looters and smugglers turning a profit at the expense of cultural heritage, and Greece – long acknowledged as the cradle of Western Civilization – is especially susceptible to this type of criminal enterprise," Arvelo said.

"These treasured artifacts date from as far back as 5000 BCE and were a valued part of life in the ancient world. We are honored to join our partners today in the repatriation of this priceless cultural heritage to the people of Greece," he said.

The Minister of Culture and Sports Lina Mendoni praised the work of the Manhattan Prosecutor's Office by noting that its work in recent years "led to the repatriation of hundreds of illegally trafficked antiquities to their countries of origin, among them and Greece." Stressing that Greece has suffered from the illegal trade in antiquities she added that the Manhattan officials "succeeded in hitting the illegal international criminal networks, whose action alters the identity of the peoples, as it cuts the archaeological findings from their contexts and turns them from the evidence of the history of the peoples, into simple works of art," Mendoni added. As Evangelos Kyriakidis a Professor of Prehistory of the Aegean at the University of Kent noted recently the looting of artifacts has always been a sign of military might or economic power. To combat this illicit traffic in antiquities it is necessary to have a comprehensive international strategy, which allows once and for all to stop this cultural crime.

## History in the Rubble: Documenting the damage of last month's earthquakes in Turkey [Link Here](#)

New York Times journalists visited an ancient city in Turkey to document the historic landmarks lost in last month's earthquakes.

### A vanished city

Times graphics reporters Anjali Singhvi and Bedel Saget recently traveled to Antakya, a Turkish city badly damaged by February's earthquakes. Based on their reporting, they published an article this week that walks through the damage in Antakya's Old City, a commercial and religious hub. The initial quakes were several weeks ago, but the damage continues to dominate life in much of Turkey and Syria. I spoke with Anjali and Bedel about what they saw in Antakya.



Ashley: What surprised you about Antakya's destruction?

Bedel: I had in my mind what the destruction would look like, but when you're driving around and seeing residential building after residential building flattened, it stops you in your tracks. We saw a building split in half — half had collapsed and half was still standing — and we could see an entire dining room set still present on the third floor, as though it were a dollhouse.



Anjali: We also saw so many photographs of missing people placed right outside the damaged buildings. I had assumed they were part of residents' belongings in that building, but a local journalist told me that families left photos of their loved ones around the site of the rubble so that if someone clears debris or continues the search, those photos might help identify bodies.

Times graphics reporters often use satellite imagery to reconstruct disaster sites. Why was actually being in Antakya important for this project?

Anjali: Before the trip, I had identified some areas from drone imagery of Antakya that seemed most damaged, and speculated that those areas could be good to cover. But when I was reporting on the ground, all the locals talked about an area I hadn't considered: Old City, a historic part of Antakya.

Old City was home to so many different kinds of buildings — churches, mosques, a synagogue, restored boutique hotels, jewelry shops, silk stores, a local favorite hummus shop, just real gems. Amid the rubble, we saw government officials putting up signs on various buildings in Old City, labeling them as important cultural assets and warning people not to tamper anymore with the debris. From being there, I saw how Antakya had history in its soil, its buildings and its people. And it was Old City that really brought the community together.

Did you get the sense that residents wanted to stay as Antakya rebuilds?

Bedel: Quite a number of people left if they had the means to: Either they had family in other parts of Turkey or if they had homes elsewhere. But among those who stayed, everyone we spoke to talked about the commitment to rebuild, no matter what.

The things that made Old City a gathering spot — the atmosphere, the aura, the embrace of different cultures — I could feel that's what they longed for most. I spoke to a young woman, who recently graduated from medical school, who said, "It was good before, but we didn't understand before we lost our city, how important it was to us."



**Gershon Harris**  
**Hatzor Haglilit, Israel**



The custom of having a special "Cup for Eliyahu Hanavi" [Elijah the Prophet] at the Pesah seder is relatively well-known. The usual practice is to pour a special wine goblet and open the front door to invite Eliyahu Hanavi into our homes. The full goblet is left covered overnight, and the wine is either used for kiddush Pesah morning or returned to its bottle. And though this custom goes back a long way, how did it develop, and is it universally practiced in all Jewish communities?

As we all know, drinking four cups of wine is a basic halachic requirement of the seder. The four cups correspond to G-d's four promises to the enslaved Israelites that they will be freed from Egyptian bondage, found in Exodus, chapter 6, verses 6-7: "*I will free you...*", "*...I will deliver you...*", "*...I will redeem you*", and "*...I will take you to be My people and I will be your G-d, and you will know that I am the Lord G-d who freed you from the suffering in Egypt.*" These four expressions are called "the four expressions of redemption", since they describe the four steps G-d will take to physical redeem and release us from slavery. However, a fifth promise/expression appears in verse 8: "*I will bring you into the Land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...*", which became the subject of an argument in the Talmud as to whether or not this fifth promise is intrinsically connected to the previous four. The practical implication of this dispute was how many obligatory cups of wine must we drink at the seder, 4 or 5? Those who included the fifth promise with all the others said that 5 cups of wine were obligatory, while the second opinion insisted that there are only 4 obligatory cups of wine, but if one wishes, he or she may have a fifth cup corresponding to the fifth promise, but only as an option, not a requirement. This was the position of the Rambam [Maimonides], as well as other halachic authorities at the time, both Sephardic and Ashkenazi.

This connection of the optional 5<sup>th</sup> cup with G-d's promise to bring Israel to its homeland led to a direct association with Eliyahu Hanavi, since he is the prophet appointed by G-d to herald the final redemption and Messianic era, as stated in the Book of Malachi (our last prophet), chapter 3, verse 23: "*I [G-d] will send Hanavi Eliyahu to you before the awesome fearful day of G-d.*" However, this association with Eliyahu was not formalized into any custom or practice until much later in Jewish history. We first hear of a formal Ashkenazi practice of having a special "Cup for Eliyahu" in rabbinical literature from the seventeenth century. One of the earliest sources describing the custom appears in 1696, in a book on the laws of Passover by a Rabbi named Yakov Reischer from Austria. We also know that a prominent Sephardic Sage, Rabbi Haim Benveniste from Turkey, wrote in 1692 that he observed Ashkenazi Jews who left an empty glass in the middle of the table for the leftovers of each cup of wine and called it "*Kos shel Eliyahu*" – the Cup of Eliyahu. He liked the custom and began practicing it himself, and certainly influenced other Sephardic Jews to do the same. By and large, however, Sephardic halachic authorities continued to describe the "Cup of Eliyahu" as being an Ashkenazi" custom, but the fact that it does appear in various Sephardic Haggadot proves that the custom was not totally foreign to Sephardim, and in fact may have originated in the optional 5<sup>th</sup> cup of wine from Talmudic times. And even though it seems that the majority of Sephardic communities did not adopt the "Cup of Eliyahu", they had no less a tradition of Eliyahu Hanavi entering Jewish homes on Pesah night. For example, in many Moroccan communities, a special empty chair with special cushions and ornaments was set up to welcome Eliyahu's arrival, and it is likely that other Sephardic communities followed suit. It might be interesting for KKJ families to investigate what their family custom was regarding the "Cup of Eliyahu", since in many spheres, Romaniote Jewish customs predate both Sephardic and Ashkenazi practice.

Today in Israel, as well as throughout the Diaspora, the interaction and marriage of Jews from distinct ethnic communities has led to a wonderful mosaic and crossover of so many Jewish rituals and customs, including

the custom of the “Cup of Eliyahu”, which has become very common at Sephardi seders as well. Some may see this in a negative light, since it can infringe on one’s time-honored customs and ceremonies as practiced by generations of ancestors. However, the positive side of this unstoppable trend would seem to outweigh the negative, since Jewish unity is only further enhanced and strengthened. Let us hope and pray that when we invite Eliyahu into our homes this Pesach, whether with a special cup of wine or a special chair, he will inform us that the time for the final redemption has come right then and there! A happy, healthy, and peaceful Pesah to one and all!



**Rabbi Marc D. Angel**  
**Seeing What Seems Not to Be There: Thoughts for Pessah**  
[JewishIdeas.org](http://JewishIdeas.org)

I recently read of a phenomenon known as “inattention blindness.” When people are focused on a particular thing, they tend not to see anything that interferes with their concentration. For example, psychologists asked a group of people to watch a film of a basketball game and to count how many times team members passed the ball to each other. While the people were engaged in viewing the basketball game and concentrating on their assignment, the tape showed a person walking right through the center of the picture in a way that would obviously be noticed. Yet, when the viewers were later asked about the screening, about 75% of them had no recollection of having seen a person walk through the basketball court. They were “blind” to this interruption in their concentration. They did not see someone who was right in front of their eyes.

Sometimes we miss the most obvious things because we are paying attention to something else. We tend not to see or hear anything that disturbs our concentration.

“Inattention blindness” is a good thing when it helps us stay focused on what is really important to us. It is problematic, though, when it leads us to miss important things that are in clear sight.

I think that “inattention blindness” may serve another purpose. By blanking certain things out, it prevents us from seeing these things for the moment; but when we later realize what we’ve missed, we actually pay more attention in the future.

Pessah focuses our attention on the redemption of Israelites from Egypt. But it also omits certain things from our focus, things that we might tend to miss unless our attention is awakened. These omissions, when we realize their absence from our attention, actually become more important to us than if they had been there in the first place. Their absence makes us think about them more carefully.

Leaven: On Pessah we see and eat matzot. Matzot lack leavening. We might overlook the importance of leavening due to “inattention blindness.” But if we think about it, we may derive important lessons. Rabbi Yehoshua Abraham Crespín of 19th century Izmir, in his volume “Abraham baMahazeh,” draws on a rabbinic teaching that leaven is a symbol of egotism and arrogance. Leavening represents the puffing up of one’s self-importance. The redemption from Egypt was accompanied by the obligation to rid oneself of leavening i.e. eliminating haughtiness and selfishness. Even as we focus on matzot during the festival of Pessah, we also need to remember the absence of leaven.

Moses: The Haggadah is devoted to the story of the redemption of the Israelites from Egypt. Yet, the name of Moses appears only once, and that only in passing. We focus on the miracles that God performed for the

Israelites. Yet, how can we possibly relate the exodus story accurately without having Moses in the foreground? Moses' very absence from the text makes him all the more "present" to us. We wonder why his name is missing. A lesson may be derived from the near absence of Moses' name in the Haggadah. The greatest human beings are also the most humble. They perform wonderful deeds and seek no credit. They are not interested in self-adulation or p.r. opportunities. They do what is right...because it is right. They neither seek nor expect applause. If Moses himself had written the Haggadah, he would very likely have showered praise on the Almighty and kept his own name out of the story. And that is the genuine greatness of Moses. The very absence of his name reminds us of the virtue of true humility.

Contemporary Reality and Elijah: The Haggadah focuses on the marvelous redemption of the Israelites in antiquity. It omits reference to our contemporary condition, except to remind us that wicked people in every generation arise against us. As we sit at a festive Seder table, we seemingly put out of mind all the problems we face today: anti-Semitism, anti-Israel propaganda, injustice, poverty, societal anomie etc. Yet, how can we forget that we are not yet fully redeemed, that our world is still very far from perfection? At some point, probably during the Middle Ages, a custom arose to welcome Elijah the Prophet to our Seder i.e. to introduce a messianic theme to the Haggadah. Elijah, the harbinger of our ultimate redemption, is absent from the Haggadah text...but still very much present in our consciousness. A lesson: redemption may come slowly, only after many generations. Elijah's name is absent from the text as a reminder that the process of redemption is not readily visible. Ultimate redemption unfolds at its own pace and in its own mysterious way. But our faith is strong: Elijah appears at our Seder and will one day announce the real redemption that we and all humanity eagerly await.

As we focus on the observances and texts of Pessah, we also need to think about those themes that we might have missed due to "inattention blindness." When we see what seems to be absent, we may find that our spiritual vision increases!  
Moadim leSimha.



**From Division to Dialogue: Lessons from Passover**  
**Rabbi Isaac Choua**

It is our honor to include Rabbi Isaac Choua in our "spiritual" section of our monthly newsletter

We shall gather "all who are in need come and join us for the Pesah."

In an era marked by division and uncertainty within the Jewish community, Passover assumes a pivotal role in uniting people across the diaspora and Israel. It is an invitation for us to set aside our differences and rejoice in our collective history, customs, and ideals.

Passover embodies the birth of the Jewish nation, commemorating their emancipation from Egyptian servitude and their path towards nationhood. It is a powerful reminder that, despite our disparities, we are all members of the same community with a shared past and future.

The Midrash cautions us that only one-fifth of the Jewish people followed Moses out of Egypt, while the remainder were left behind due to their unwillingness to abandon their lives of slavery (Mekhiltha deRibbi Shim'on Bar Yoḥai 13:17). This narrative alerts us to the danger of being left behind in our own divisions and conflicts if we fail to learn from our ancestors.



Throughout our history, internal discord has plagued the Jewish people. From the rivalry between the tribes of Judah and Israel to the schisms between the Pharisees and the Sadducees during the Second Temple period, we have often struggled with finding common ground. While there may be more instances to consider, I acknowledge that some Jewish readers may already be dissatisfied with the exclusion of any given example. This reinforces my argument that we must acknowledge and address the extensive history of this behavior.

The Mishna promotes *makhloket leShem shamayim* (argumentation for the sake of heaven) [Pirque Aboth (Ethics of our Father) 5:17] and encourages respectful debates amongst Jews, regardless of divergent opinions. By engaging in patient and respectful dialogue, we can deepen our understanding of differing perspectives, strengthen our connections, and work towards a more just and compassionate world.

Returning to our roots and traditions serves as a powerful unifying force. Passover is an opportunity to reconnect with the values and traditions that have nourished us for thousands of years. The Passover meal, or Haggadah, is a time when family and friends come together to recount the journey of the Jewish people from bondage to liberty.

The Haggadah instructs us that *"bekhol dor va'dor, hayyaq adam lehar'oth eth 'asmo ke'illu hu yasa miMishrayim,"* (in every generation, a person must show themselves as though they personally had gone out of Egypt.) The phrase *"lehar'oth eth 'asmo"* (to show themselves) is commonly found, while there are alternative manuscripts that use the phrase *"lir'oth eth 'asmo"* (to see themselves). This is more than just seeing; it is a call to reenact the Exodus, allowing Jews to profoundly experience the story and connect with their ancestors. Jews worldwide participate in unique customs that emphasize the importance of retelling the Exodus story.

In the Levant, participants engage in dialogue in Hebrew and Arabic, asking *"min weyn jaye?"* (Where are you coming from?) and *"weyn raykh/a?"* (Where are you going?) while holding the afikomen over their shoulder, mimicking a border crossing. Persian Jews humorously hit each other with scallions to imitate the whippings of the Egyptians, while Moroccans hold the Plate and sing *"bibhilou yasanou miMishrayim"* (in a rush we left Egypt). Tunisians and Algerians sing the Aramaic verse *"etmol hayinu 'abadim"* (yesterday we were slaves) while holding the Plate.

These traditions, along with symbolic actions such as dipping greens, eating *maṣṣa*, consuming *ḥarroseth* and bitter herbs, reclining while drinking, and savoring a *korekh* (vegetarian *maṣṣa* wrap), allow us to deeply connect with the Exodus story. *Maṣṣa* signifies the haste with which the Jewish people left Egypt, while bitter herbs dipped in salt water and *ḥarroseth* evoke memories of hardships and tears during slavery. Reclining symbolizes freedom, and the *korekh* wrap recalls the traditional *qorban Pesah* (Passover sacrifice Lamb). Through these practices, we experience the Exodus firsthand and strengthen our ties to our shared heritage.

As we gather for Passover, let us reflect on the importance of retelling and reenacting the Exodus story, which serves as a reminder of our shared history and traditions. This holiday season, we must work towards healing our community after 2000 years of exile and dispersion by uniting as one people, celebrating our common heritage and values, and engaging in constructive conversations and discussions. By embracing our diversity and working together in harmony, we can establish a resilient and thriving Jewish community that endures for generations to come.

We must maintain unity by dining together and reevaluating outdated food customs that hinder our national cohesion to eat together. Embracing our shared heritage during Passover is vital, as is setting aside practices that no longer benefit our collective well-being. This creates an environment for all Jews to unite and strengthen our national bond. The *"ha laḥma 'anya"* passage invites all to join in the *Pesah* celebration, emphasizing the need for unity in all aspects of our lives, including shared meals. By doing so, we contribute to nation-building and help repair the bridges connecting our diverse community.

Let Passover remind us that it is not only a celebration of the Jewish people becoming a nation but also an affirmation of our shared destiny as one community. As we return to our traditions and values and engage in respectful dialogue and debate, we can work towards repairing our community and building a stronger and more united Jewish people. This Passover, let us come together to reflect on our nationhood and work collectively to mend our community after 2000 years of exile.

About the Author: Rabbi Isaac Choua serves as a National Central Council Member for the Sephardic Brotherhood of America and is part of the Religious Affairs Committee. He is also an associate museum curator at the Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum in New York. As the founder and editor-in-chief of haSepharadi.com, Rabbi Choua is devoted to exploring and celebrating the diverse traditions within the pan-Sephardic community. He holds a master's degree in Medieval Jewish History with a focus on pan-Sephardic Studies from Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School, as well as a BA in Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Abrahamic Religions from the CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary

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### Recipe for Passover

**Pastel de Karne** from Faye Cohen Smaldone

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs chop meat (beef)
- 2 large Spanish Onions
- 2 bunches of Italian parsley
- Salt/Pepper
- 1 Egg and 1 tbs oil (for brushing top of pastel)



Saute onions til light brown - add the meat browning and combining with onions ...

Set the heat to medium adding a little water to the mixture

Cover and cook for 1 hour - Add a little more water in between if it seems dry...

Allow to cool

Add 2 eggs and most of the parsley leaves (a few stems are okay)

Combine and mix well...the consistency should not be watery - if it is add a little matza meal...

Now for the layering process...

Wet 2 matzas til soft but not falling apart - Lay them on an oiled baking pan...if your matza doesn't reach the end of the pan use small pieces to fill in -

Add the whole mixture spreading it evenly -

Take 2 more wet matzas and cover the meat

Brush the top with egg and oil mixture to keep it from drying

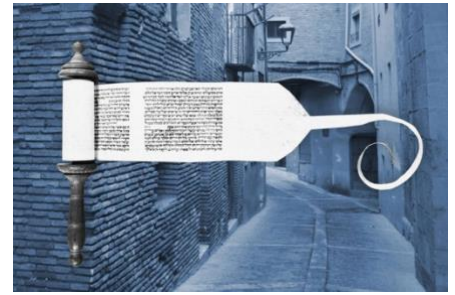
Cover tightly and bake at 350 for approx 40 minutes - the last few minutes bake uncovered

Recipe by Rachel Cohen - Kastoria, Greece

This recipe was a staple at our Passover Seder - It was served with huevos haminados on the same plate with the meat pie.....Kids love it too!!!

## A Second Purim Story: Megillat Saragossa tells a tale that parallels the Book of Esther [Link Here](#)

It happened in my undergraduate days that I first saw Megillat Saragossa in Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library. A small, yellowed scroll mounted on a simple wooden handle, the old parchment unfurled to tell the story of a diasporic Jewish community on the verge of destruction. However, the Jews in this tale were not living in ancient Persia under the reign of King Ahasuerus while evil Haman plotted a genocide that Queen Esther and Mordecai managed to thwart. Instead, Megillat Saragossa relates the plight of medieval Jews narrowly avoiding the wrath of their gentile ruler (and a malicious tattletale) with the help of Elijah the Prophet and a pious beadle. The Jews of Saragossa recorded the story to celebrate their narrow escape centuries ago, and their descendants annually return to the scroll to commemorate a Second Purim.



I, too, returned to see the scroll. The concept of a Second Purim—invoked quite commonly among medieval Jewish congregations throughout Europe and North Africa—baffled me. I could not understand how a single city felt confident enough to inaugurate its own local Jewish holiday. To form a consensus of this kind, people must be strongly united. It's hard to imagine any Jewish community today mustering up the pluck to pen a 21st-century Purim tale.

Holding the 17th-century megillah in my hands, I felt the tension between the sturdy parchment and the umbilicus; the scroll was unused to being unrolled. The scribe—likely a descendant of the original Jewish community of Saragossa—had pricked and ruled 17 neat lines onto which he had written the Hebrew text. The handwriting was square Spanish script, without taggin, the crowns that are a scribal feature on holy Jewish texts, and the black letters gleamed as though the ink had not yet dried. Beyond the physical beauty of the artifact, Megillat Saragossa is proof that the medieval Jews felt so connected to their heritage that they not only viewed their contemporary event as worthy of remembrance, but considered their circumstances significant enough to narrate their story in the style evocative of the original Megillat Esther.

While certain clues about the historical tale can be found in the text, debate surrounds the exact date and location of the Purim of Saragossa. For instance, scholars argue whether the miraculous salvation occurred in 1380, under the reign of Peter IV of Aragon, or 1420, when Alfonso V of Aragon ruled. (The king's personal name is never mentioned in Megillat Saragossa.) The place is referred to in the text only as Saragossa; some maintain this refers to the city of Saragossa in Spain, also known today as Zaragoza, while others say the story took place in Syracuse in Sicily, in part due to its phonetic similarity. Despite the doubt surrounding the details, the acceptance of the story is certain: As the progeny of the Saragossa Purim traveled, their celebration was adopted by many communities along the Mediterranean.

Invoking the same style, structure, and archetypal figures of the Book of Esther, Megillat Saragossa sounds strikingly similar to the first Purim story. Opening with the line, "It happened in the days of King Saragossanos," Megillat Saragossa alludes to its predecessor's renowned introduction. Both scrolls richly describe the affluent settings of their stories: The garden of King Ahasuerus' court was filled with marble pillars draped with the finest blue, purple, and white linens, and the Jewish community of Saragossa similarly boasted ornate architecture, including "hewn stone and marble pillars, studded with beryl." The most prized possessions of the Jews in Saragossa were their Torah scrolls, which were wrapped with embroidered cloth and encased in "silver and golden coffers" adorned with showpiece apples and pomegranates.

Custom dictated that when the King of Saragossa visited the Jewish marketplace, the community would bring out the Torah scrolls in their beautiful cases and bestow blessings on the monarch. Eventually, the sages became concerned that presenting their holy Torah scrolls to a gentile king was sacrilegious. Secretly, the scrolls were removed from their cases. When the king visited, the Jews displayed the empty Torah cases and blessed him just the same.

But danger loomed. In the same manner that the wicked adviser Haman climbed the ranks and convinced King Ahasuerus to seal the fate of the Jewish people, a man named Hayyim Sami—who converted away from Judaism and assumed the name of Marcus—was promoted by King Saragossanos within the royal court. Marcus informed the king that the Torah cases were kept empty, insinuating that disrespect and disloyalty were rampant among the king's Jewish subjects. A fury not unlike the murderous rage that preceded Vashti's removal burned within the King of Saragossa, who handed over his signet ring and a death sentence for the Jews if Marcus' claim turned out to be true.

That night, it was the beadle Ephraim Baruch who simply could not sleep. Elijah the Prophet appeared to Ephraim Baruch, urging him to replace the Torah scrolls in their cases. The following day, on the 17th of Shevat, the king entered the

Jewish marketplace with 300 armed men, eagerly gripping their swords, and demanded that the coffers be opened. The Jews waited with bated breath. Every case was opened, and the Torah scrolls were—thankfully, miraculously—inside.

Not only were the Torah scrolls present, but each was opened to the verse in Leviticus 26:44: “But despite all this, while they are in the land of their enemies, I will not despise them nor will I reject them to annihilate them, thereby breaking My covenant that is with them, for I am the Lord their God.” Referencing this Torah portion, the message the composer of Megillat Saragossa made is clear: God does not forsake the Jewish people, even when they are exiled in the land of Saragossa.

Marcus ended up hanging from a tree on the command of the king—precisely like his evil forerunner, Haman. To rejoice in their salvation, the Jews celebrated with feasting, gave gifts to friends and charity to the poor, and recited Megillat Saragossa, newly composed in commemoration of the miracle.

Today, there are roughly a dozen cataloged Megillat Saragossa scrolls, all written ex post facto, located within various institutions in the United States, Israel, France, and Turkey. Columbia University holds two scrolls, gifted at the turn of the 20th century by Richard Gottheil, professor of rabbinic literature and Semitic languages. Michelle Margolis, the Norman E. Alexander librarian for Jewish studies, showed me both: the 17th-century parchment scroll—which I held in my hands—and the 18th-century scroll, which was written on paper and has since faded and crumbled, now too delicate to unravel.

The impulse to record our stories in a style imitative of the Jewish canon has largely disappeared. After all, writing ourselves into history is no easy feat. A community cannot blandly recite that they are a link in the long chain from Mount Sinai; they must believe it. While this may feel unnatural for contemporary congregations, the psychology of medieval Jewry was wired for this connection. As Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi writes in *Zakhor*:

[M]edieval Jewish chronicles tend to assimilate events to old and established conceptual frameworks ... [T]here is a pronounced tendency to subsume even major new events to familiar archetypes, for even the most terrible events are somehow less terrifying, when viewed within old patterns rather than in their bewildering specificity. Thus the latest oppressor is Haman, and the court-Jew who tries to avoid disaster is Mordecai.

The application of age-old archetypes hasn't disappeared: Many people consider Hitler to have been of an Amalekite strain. But even if we draw metaphorical language from the canon, we are not imagining ourselves within it the way medieval Jewry did.

When Haman slandered the Jewish people to King Ahasuerus, he described them as “a certain people scattered and separate among the nations.” Medieval Jewry may have been geographically scattered and forcibly separated from interacting with the gentile world due to antisemitic laws, but within their own locales, they were not separated from one another. Today, we are more universalized than ever before—constantly updated on every news event happening halfway across the globe—but we are mentally scattered, emotionally removed, superficially scrolling. While human instinct demands that we bond briefly over tragedies, our Jewish community requires much deeper coalitions to celebrate averted ones.

The original Purim story famously makes no mention of God, which many interpret as a sign that diasporic Jews must pull themselves up by their bootstraps to find the divine in the darkness. In Megillat Saragossa, however, God's name appears multiple times. The text insists that the Jews of Saragossa are God-fearing and God-following. More importantly, these mentions of a divine presence assure its audience—Jews of Saragossa and their descendants—that God has not abandoned them.

The two Purims don't coincide on the Hebrew calendar: The Saragossa Purim falls on the 17th of Shevat, almost a month before Purim, which falls on the 14th of Adar. But all the mitzvot of the original Purim are fulfilled on the Second Purim as well: megillah reading, feasting, gifting mishloach manot, and giving charity. Some people even fast the day before. Scholars report that the Purim of Saragossa was celebrated in several Balkan communities into the 20th century and lasted for the longest time in Jerusalem. Most recently, in 2016, Albert Haim Samuel bequeathed the Megillat Saragossa he had received from his devout Izmirian grandmother Deborah—which is written on buckskin leather—to the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul. While the Samuel family had privately celebrated the holiday for years, Chief Rabbi Ishak Haleva declared that “as a [Turkish] community we would very much like to celebrate Purim Saragossa every year.”

This year, on the 17th of Shevat (the eve of Feb. 7, 2023), cantor Isaac Gantwerk Mayer performed a livestreamed reading of Megillat Saragossa on YouTube. Hearing the words chanted in the familiar cantillation of Megillat Esther brought the text to life in a way I had not anticipated. It was like hearing past generations tell their own story through the same song: Transcending time and space, the original Purim and the Purim of Saragossa rhymed and overlapped, adding layers of nuance to an already rich Jewish narrative.

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## **Donation of Megillat Esther to US Holocaust Memorial Museum by Besca Family**

**'Reminds us of the horror of the Holocaust': Boynton Beach man donates family heirloom to preserve its place in history.** Full article [Here](#)

A Boynton Beach man recently donated an heirloom with a special meaning to this holiday and to his family to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"This is something that was very precious from many, many years, maybe decades ago, but still reminds us of the horror of the Holocaust," Joe Besca said.

That precious item is a 14-inch silver Purim megillah case.

It contains the Scroll of Esther, an account of what happened during the Purim holiday. As per tradition, it was passed down to the oldest son of each generation of the Besca family for years until March 1944.



"That is when the Germans rounded up all the Jews in my hometown, where I was born in Ioannina, Greece," Besca said. "My grandparents took all the jewelry they had and the megillah and buried it outside of their house."

Besca's grandparents, their children, including his father Samuel, and other family members were deported to Auschwitz concentration camp. All were killed except Samuel, who returned to their home in Greece after the camp was liberated and retrieved the buried megillah.

"When my dad passed away in 1996, here in Sunrise, unfortunately, he left the megillah to me, to the eldest son, but I share it with my brother," Besca said.

Besca said they decided to donate the megillah to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. "It was bittersweet to let it go. But I know deep in my heart, and my brother does too, that's probably what my dad would have wanted, that's what my grandparents would have wanted. For them — for it to be shown," Besca said. Robert Tanen, the director of the museum's southeast region, said while the museum holds 24,000 physical objects related to the Holocaust, megillahs are extremely rare. Those kinds of artifacts from survivors are essential to preserve that history.

"When the eyewitness generation is no longer here to stand up and tell their stories and say, 'Yes, it happened to me,' these items like this megillah that Joe and his family have donated are going to be the last living witnesses of the Holocaust," Tanen said.

The Besca family's megillah has been at the museum for six months now, and this will be the first Purim where other visitors can see it on display. Besca has not yet gone to see it, but he hopes others view it and walk away with a renewed sense of purpose.

"Unfortunately, during the Holocaust, many backs were turned. There was quite a bit of denial. People didn't believe that it was happening. And even today, some people don't believe it ever happened. And I think one of the mantras of a Holocaust survivor and especially in Jewish religion, and also in the Christian religion, is to never forget," Besca said.

## Looking for Our Help

Arlene Schulman is producing and directing a documentary film about Kehila Kedosha Janina and the Romaniote community. If you have any photographs, video, or 16mm film that includes the synagogue, the Lower East Side, the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx, the synagogue on Eames place, family portraits, family life inside and outside of apartments, and businesses, please contact Arlene at [arlenetheauthor@gmail.com](mailto:arlenetheauthor@gmail.com). Many thanks!

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Sara Honan Crocker is looking for help in identifying people in these three pictures. She believes that they were taken at different Sisterhood events. Her grandmother, Sarah Cantos Honan is in all three pictures. Contact us at [museum@kkjism.org](mailto:museum@kkjism.org) with any information.

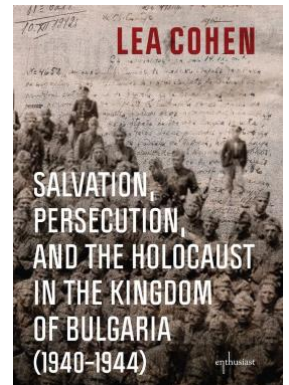


## Books for Sale – Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum

In commemoration of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deportations of Jews from Greece and the Bulgarian Zones of Occupation during WWII, we have stocked our shelves on books related to these communities and Holocaust Memoirs of survivors. If you are interested in any of these books, email us at [museum@kkjism.org](mailto:museum@kkjism.org).

Just published:

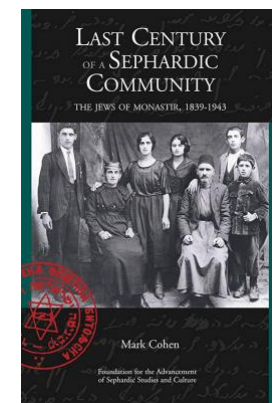
In "**Salvation, Persecution and Holocaust in Royal Bulgaria (1940-1944)**", Lea Cohen talks about the events, personalities and ideas of a dark era that continues to excite Bulgarian society today. The topic of the Holocaust, and above all salvation, is undoubtedly very exciting to Bulgarian society and remains to this day one of the most discussed historical subjects. The events between 1940 and 1944, when under the influence of Nazi ideology, Jews were persecuted, are a test for both Bulgarian Judaism and the whole people. The historical essays in this book are about this dramatic episode of Bulgarian history, equally painfully experienced by both Jews and Bulgarians.  
\$25 plus \$5 P&H within continental USA



### **Last Century of a Sephardic Community: The Jews of Monastir 1839-1943**

By Marc Cohen

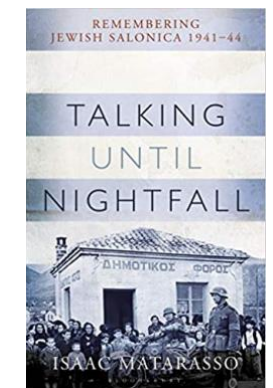
An excellently written portrait of a traditional Sephardic community in transformation, caught up in the political upheavals of the time and, finally, destroyed in the Holocaust. A list of all those from Monastir who perished is in an appendix at the end of the book.  
\$30 plus \$5 P&H within continental USA. Hardcover



### **Talking Until Nightfall**

When Nazi occupiers arrived in Greece in 1941, it was the beginning of a horror that would reverberate through generations. In the city of Salonica (Thessaloniki), almost 50,000 Jews were sent to Nazi concentration camps during the war, and only 2,000 returned. A Jewish doctor named Isaac Matarasso and his son escaped imprisonment and torture at the hands of the Nazis and joined the resistance. After the city's liberation they returned to rebuild Salonica and, along with the other survivors, to grapple with the near-total destruction of their community.

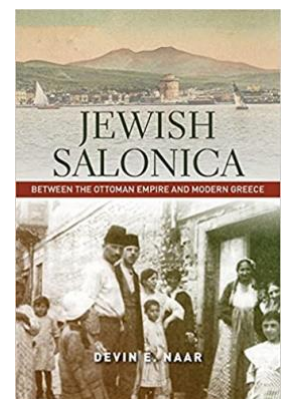
\$25 plus \$5 P&H within continental USA. Hardcover



### **Jewish Salonica**

Touted as the "Jerusalem of the Balkans," the Mediterranean port city of Salonica (Thessaloniki) was once home to the largest Sephardic Jewish community in the world. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the city's incorporation into Greece in 1912 provoked a major upheaval that compelled Salonica's Jews to reimagine their community and status as citizens of a nation-state. *Jewish Salonica* is the first book to tell the story of this tumultuous transition through the voices and perspectives of Salonican Jews as they forged a new place for themselves in Greek society.

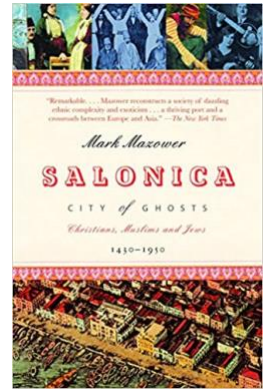
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## Salonica: City of Ghosts

Salonica, located in northern Greece, was long a fascinating crossroads metropolis of different religions and ethnicities, where Egyptian merchants, Spanish Jews, Orthodox Greeks, Sufi dervishes, and Albanian brigands all rubbed shoulders. Tensions sometimes flared, but tolerance largely prevailed until the twentieth century when the Greek army marched in, Muslims were forced out, and the Nazis deported and killed the Jews. As the acclaimed historian Mark Mazower follows the city's inhabitants through plague, invasion, famine, and the disastrous twentieth century, he resurrects a fascinating and vanished world.

\$25 plus \$5 P&H within continental USA

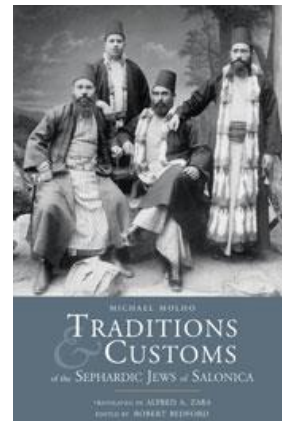


## Traditions & Customs of the Sephardic Jews of Salonica

By Rabbi Michael Molho

A beautifully published adaptation of Rabbi Michael Molho's extensive description of the special customs and traditions of the Saloniklis. Written just preceding the destruction of the community in the Holocaust, this is the definitive work on the specific customs and traditions of the Jews of "La Madre de Israel."

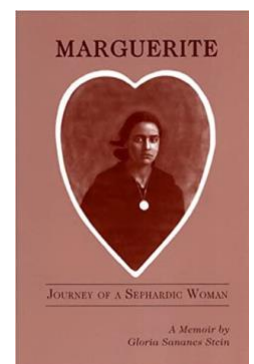
\$30 plus \$5 P&H within continental USA. Hardcover



## Marguerite by Gloria Sananes Stein

Tenderly written story of an immigrant family from Salonika, vividly portraying their life in Salonika, their leaving after the Fire of 1917 and their arrival in the New World. Originally published in 1997. Recently made available again. A treasure.

\$10 plus \$5 P&H within continental USA





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

If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) 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. **We need donations more than ever now. You can do this on line on our website: [www.kkjsm.org](http://www.kkjsm.org) accessing the donation link in the upper left hand corner.**

When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street.



**Kehila Kedosha Janina E-Newsletter – Number 169**

**April 2023**

**Kehila Kedosha Janina**

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