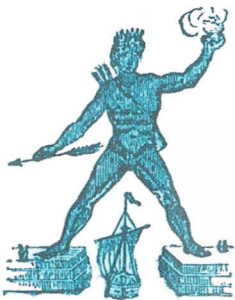


חברה שלום והולכי קדימה



מוסיידאד פאס אי פרונריסו

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation

10850 Wilshire Boulevard #750
Los Angeles, California 90024
Telephone (310) 475-4779
Fax (310) 475-8144

Web Site: www.RhodesJewishMuseum.Org

Aron Hasson, Founder and President

Simon Soriano, Treasurer

"KE HABER ?"

**Newsletter for the Year 2000 Describing "What is New" Regarding the Preservation of Rhodesli History
By Aron Hasson**

This is the second annual publication of *The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation*. 1999 was a year of extraordinary expansion of the efforts being undertaken to preserve the special history and heritage of the Jews of Rhodes. This *Newsletter* serves as a link between "La Juderia" of Rhodes and interested people around the world.

The Jewish Museum of Rhodes

I was inspired to visit the Island of Rhodes in 1975 by stories told to me by my grandparents. Its special charm and history fascinated me. Several years later, I went back to Rhodes to advance the public awareness and appreciation of its unique history unfortunately devastated by the Holocaust.

I came up with the idea of gathering historical photos to document life in Rhodes before the War. Many families supported my idea by sharing their photos of Rhodes. This collection of photos helped me to establish *The Jewish Museum of Rhodes*.

The Museum was established on October 1, 1997 and is adjacent to the *Kahal Shalom* synagogue on the Island of Rhodes. It is located in the rooms formerly used as the women's prayer rooms of the synagogue. Since it's opening, over 50,000 people from around the world who are visiting Rhodes on holiday have viewed it. The creation of the Museum is the first phase of continuous efforts to preserve the Jewish history of Rhodes for future generations.



Photo of Aron Hasson, the Founder of *The Jewish Museum of Rhodes* at its opening on October 1, 1997.

IN THIS ISSUE :

Museum Expansion	2
Honorary Member Awarded	3
"Memories of the <i>Kahal Shalom</i> " by Stella Levi	4
Photos of 1999 High Holidays	5
Cemetery Becomes "Open Air Museum" ..	6
Study of Jewish Tombstones	7
Translation of 1935 issue of <i>El Boletin</i> ...	8
Tombstones Desecrated in 1938 Newly Discovered	10
E-mail from Website Visitors	11
News Updates	12

Museum Expansion

The Jewish Museum of Rhodes has been expanding its collection of materials of life in "La Juderia".

Sound System:

This past summer the Museum has added a tape player sound system. It contains religious songs as well as Sephardic folk songs. All of the audio clips are original recordings of Jews who were born in Rhodes and left the Island prior to the Holocaust. The following is a list of the sounds:

1.) Religious song for the *Nehila* service, sung in Hebrew and "Ladino" (Judeo-Spanish) by Heskia and Vida Franco in 1966. 2.) Auctioning of the mitzvot of the religious services in "Ladino" by Marco Cohen in 1973. 3.) Hebrew prayer as introduction of the blowing of the shofar by Morris Mizrahi in 1973. 4.) Hebrew prayer sung during the *Kol Nidre* service, by Morris Mizrahi in 1973. 5.) Song in "Ladino" sung by Fortune Benoun in 1999. 6.) Sephardic folk song by Eleanor (Mizrahi) Halfon in 1973.

Interactive Wall:

Many visitors to the Museum of Rhodesli background have been bringing photos to Rhodes wishing for their family photos to be displayed at the Museum. Therefore, this coming spring, there will be an "Interactive Wall". This will allow people to share their photos on one of the walls of *The Jewish Museum of Rhodes*.

Rhodesli Artifacts:

This past year *The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* has begun collecting artifacts for future displays. The *Foundation* has recently acquired special Rhodesli items from the families of Miru Alcana,

Stella Levi as well as Selma (Franco) and John Jaffe. They include textiles of intricately woven and embroidered materials.

Families wishing to donate their own Rhodesli memorabilia, such as books, embroideries, ketubbas or menorahs, may do so by contacting this *Foundation*. Please keep in mind that these types of donations are also tax deductible.



This embroidery from Rhodes has the scene of the Sacrifice of Isaac. It was donated by the family of Selma (Franco) Jaffe.

Future Expansion:

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation is currently working with the *Jewish Community of Rhodes* to expand the current Museum into the vacant additional rooms adjacent to it. The expansion into these rooms would allow the Museum to increase its size by more than double.

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation would be interested in acquiring additional documentation for its archives. Please feel free to contact this *Foundation* if you have any photos or artifacts that you would like to share with future generations.

Special Thanks

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation wishes to thank all Rhodesli families who have shared their photos and personal treasures and gave their generous support to preserve the history of the Jews of Rhodes. The accomplishments of this *Foundation* would have been impossible without the support of the *Maurice Amado Foundation*. Special thanks also to Hillel Franco and his *Jewish Community of Rhodes Heritage Foundation* for the inspiration and support towards our common goals.

I would also like to convey my gratitude to Yitzhak Dekel for his Hebrew translations and to Don Hasson for his assistance with the web site. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my parents and grandparents for handing down the traditions of my family heritage.

Special Award Given by the Jewish Community of Rhodes

At the Friday night service on May 28, 1999, the *Jewish Community of Rhodes* awarded Aron Hasson with a beautiful gold plaque as an "Honorary Member" of the Rhodes Jewish Community.

Jacob Sakkis, the Secretary General, gave the special presentation initially in the Greek language. Carmen Cohen, the Administrative Assistant, then translated his speech into English. The following is an excerpt of the speech:

"Dear Brothers and Sisters who are visiting us from different communities. We welcome you to our Island and to our community. Your presence here at the historic *Kahal Shalom* synagogue is an honour for our little community...

I have the honour to present to you Mr. Aron Hasson. The Rhodesis of the West Coast of the United States must wonder how such a young American put forward his idea to promote and carry the goals of the Jewish Community of Rhodes. Aron is really a visionary. He is the Founder of *The Jewish Museum of Rhodes*, which was created out of nothing. He has also supported the restoration of our historic cemetery. He is the one who established *The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation*, collecting money to support us. He was the one who printed the pamphlets for our synagogue and who opened the page for us on the Internet. As a result the international Jewish community is able to find out what is going on in this small part of the world.

For all these, the Administrative Committee of the

Jewish Community of Rhodes has decided unanimously to nominate him as an honorary member of our Community in appreciation of his work and dedication to the goals of our Community...

We ask you dear Brothers and Sisters when you go back to your Communities to send the message that the Community of Rhodes is alive! "

Then to complete the special recognition, a warm and meaningful speech was given in Ladino by the President, Maurice Soriano.



The above photo shows Aron Hasson accepting the award from Jacob Sakkis (middle) and Maurice Soriano (right) at the *Kahal Shalom* synagogue.

Early 18th Century Floral Designed Tapestry Made in Rhodes



This image is of a floral designed tapestry utilizing gold threads that was hand made in Rhodes in the early 18th century.

This was donated by the family of Miru Alcana of Los Angeles.

Memories of the *Kahal Shalom* in Rhodes

By Stella Levi

This year *Kahal Shalom* Synagogue in Rhodes has been listed by the World Monument Fund, as one of the "100 Most Endangered Sites in the World". For me, having been born and raised on the Island, it is much more than that. I, along with most of the other Jews then living on the Island, was forced to share the fate of millions of other Jews throughout Europe, as we were deported to the death camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau in August of 1944. For me, *Kahal Shalom* is not just a "monument in danger of collapse", but also a sacred place, a place alive with sweet memories.

I remember as a little girl going with my "nona", (my grandmother) to the old "azara", the women's section of the synagogue, the rooms that now house *The Jewish Museum of Rhodes*. The women would sit on benches or chairs and look through the latticework, and curtain, into the main part of the synagogue where the services were taking place. In the 1930's, when the balcony was built for the "new women's section", many of the old ladies would still continue to sit in the "azara", their heads covered by long shawls. Only when the Sefer Torahs were brought out would they gently move aside the curtains to view the proceed-

ings. It all seemed so mysterious to me.

The synagogue would radiate with a light, emanating from the spirituality of its worshippers. The men would work hard all week long, but on Friday they would all hurry home, to wash away the cares of the week. Rich and poor would put on their best attire, and enter the Synagogue, their freshly shaved faces glowing, ready to receive the Shabbat. How elegant the women looked to me! How noble the men appeared! *Kahal Shalom* was more than just our spiritual center. It was a refuge, our special sanctuary from the mundane rituals of daily life. It was the center of our community. There were other synagogues, but none as important as *Kahal Shalom*.

Ours was a traditional Sephardic community. The religiosity radiated from the heart. Our orthodoxy was not a restrictive one, but one that stemmed from heartfelt spirituality. Families were close-knit and our religion was the thread that bound us together. We lost our Haham in 1939, when close to half of the community was forced to leave due to Fascist restrictions. Yaakov Shalem Franco, the President of the Community served as our Haham during the years of the Occupation, and many of the other Kehilas ceased



Photo of Stella Levi in front of the "tevah" of the *Kahal Shalom* synaogque on Rosh Hashana, September 1999.

to function, but *Kahal Shalom* still resounded with the singing of the "Nehilah".

I vividly remember how my cousin Nissim Cohen, would drape himself in talleth, along with all the other Cohens, as they prayed and called out "Adoniah". A chill would go up my spine, and I felt that I could actually see the presence of the Divine God. As I entered the Synagogue now, their voices still

resound off the pebbled floors.

The first time I visited *Kahal Shalom* after the war, in 1972, Lucia Sulam, who had been deported to Auschwitz along with me, was there. I looked around to see the faces of all those that I had known: the men, young and old, with their heads covered by talleth, the women in their elegant attires. They were no longer there...there were only the ghosts of the former resi-

dents of the *Juderia*. *Kahal Shalom*—Synagogue of Peace—It has such a beautiful sound. It was so alive! I must say that I am encouraged by how many of the descendants of the Rhodeslis return each summer and during the High Holy Days, to worship in the synagogue of their ancestors. I was overjoyed this past summer, when I was there and saw Josef Alhadeff on the tevah, acting as an assistant to the young rabbi from Israel, and Isaac Sakkis, the young nephew of the Secretary General of the Community, as he prayed with the spirituality of old. May this be a sign that the younger generation is returning and that *Kahal*

Shalom will resound once more with the voices of the living.

Kahal Shalom is more than just a monument to me. It is the repository of cherished memories. It is the testimony to the religion and spirituality of my people—the Rhodeslis of Rhodes. It must be preserved, not as a memorial, but as a living, vital, functioning synagogue, a marvelous gem that has been passed down from the Sephardim of the 16th century, to the Jews of the 21st, a witness to our endurance as a people.

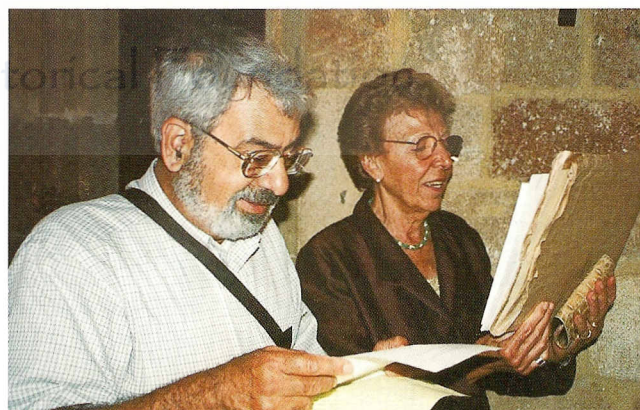
1999 Rosh Hashana Photos in Rhodes



Joseph Alhadeff leading the opening prayers at the *Kahal Shalom* on Erev Rosh Hashana



Four Rhodesli survivors of the Holocaust reuniting in the *cortiju* of the *Kahal Shalom*. (Lt to rt:) Stella Levi, Eliezer Surmani, Sam Modiano, Stella DeLeon



Arthur Benveniste and Stella Levi

The Jewish Cemetery Becomes an "Open-Air Museum"

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation has achieved significant accomplishments in its efforts to transform the Jewish cemetery in Rhodes into an "Open-Air Museum". The centerpiece of this project involves the recent recovery and restoration of hundreds of "ancient" Jewish tombstones. This project has propelled the Jewish cemetery of Rhodes to be one of the most historically significant cemeteries in Europe.

Three years ago over 300 of these "ancient" Jewish tombstones were uncovered at the new cemetery in Rhodes. While I was in Rhodes developing *The Jewish Museum of Rhodes*, I was also able to research into these newly recovered tombstones. After photographing and translating these burial stones, I discovered that they were very old and represented a unique link to the ancient past of the Jewish history of Rhodes.

In 1998, *The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation*, with the generous support of the *Maurice Amado Foundation*, initiated the next stages of the restoration process. The memorial stones were set up in rows on top of raised wooden platforms. I then began the task of identifying and indexing these tombstones. The inscription of the stones show hundreds

as appreciation of their historical value. Spaces along the walkway have been allocated in order to contain trees to give shade to the visitors.

During my last trip to Rhodes during the High Holidays, I began placing labels to identify each tombstone by the person's name and year of death. The most common names among the burial stones were: Alhadeff, Benveniste, Capelouto, Cohen, Hasson and Levi.



Viewing the ancient Jewish tombstones with Joseph Alhadeff

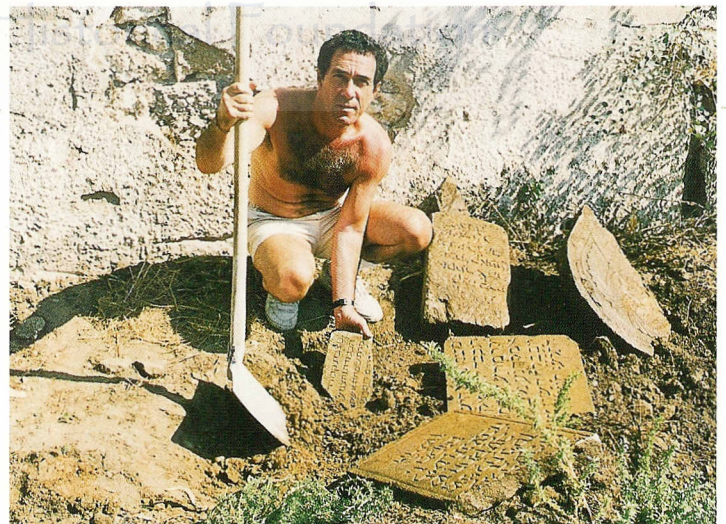


First row of ancient tombstones newly erected

of tombstones dating from the 1500's to the 1700's. Prior to this, the oldest grave in the cemetery was from the 1840's.

This past summer a special stage of the restoration has begun: the tombstones are now being erected upright against concrete walls in rows with a walkway between the rows for the convenience of visitors. It provides proper dignity to the departed as well

On that same trip, I suggested to the Jewish Community that there might be additional tombstones still buried. I took the initiative and dug out 5 tombstones from the area of the cemetery where I believed them to be. This new discovery encouraged them to dig for more tombstones that will continue through the year 2000.



September 1999: 5 old tombstones newly excavated

The Study of Rhodesli Jewish History Through Analysis of the Recently Discovered Burial Stones of the Ancient Jewish Cemetery

I have previously written an article describing the epitaphs inscribed on the newly found tombstones of the Jewish cemetery. The article was entitled "Poetic Passages From the Ancient Jewish Cemetery of Rhodes" which described the romantic stories inscribed on the tombstones of the deceased.

The following information continues the revelation of the Jewish history of Rhodes—this time with an emphasis on the sculptural designs of the burial stones. It helps in learning of the life in Rhodes as well as helping researchers to understand the interaction of the Jewish community of Rhodes with their gentile neighbors.

The Moorish and Islamic designs are evident in tombstones of subsequent years. They have a design that frames the text. The following two photos show burial stones from 1768 of Yaacov Codron and 1784 of Yedidiah Tarika.



Several of the tombstones have designs of tools inscribed which represents the type of occupations held by the deceased.

There is much more information to be learned from the newest discovery of hundreds of tombstones located this past year. When these stones are dug out, indexed and translated into English, we will inform you of its historical information.

For background: In 1938 the anti-Semitic Italian governor, forced the Jewish community to move their cemetery from a location adjacent to the Old City to an area at the edge of the new city. Exhaustive efforts were undertaken at that time by the Jewish families to move over 1,000 tombstones along with the bodies of their beloved to the new location. However, hundreds of graves that were many years older were not identifiable by the Jewish families and therefore were not moved. In 1939, the *Jewish Community of Rhodes* then transferred the tombstones of these remaining graves without the bodies and placed them in a vacant area of the new cemetery. It is these older tombstones that are the subject of this new discovery and restoration project.



The tombstones above show two of the oldest tombstones newly uncovered at the Jewish cemetery. The two illustrates the Greek cultural influence upon the design of the Jewish burial stones. The one on the left is from 1593, of a Moshe Sidi, and the one on the right is from 1665, of a Sol Jilimir. They have the same Greek design motif of the triangular shaped pediment at the top of each tombstone. The burial stone from 1593 even has a short inscription in the Greek language at the bottom of the burial stone.

The family names on these two tombstones, Sidi and Jilimir, are apparently "Romaniot" (the Jews who lived in Rhodes prior to the Sephardic immigration from the Spanish Inquisition). The first name Moshe is clearly Hebrew, while the other burial stone has the first name Sol that is a Sephardic name for a woman.

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation

The following is an English translation of excerpts from the Jewish newspaper in Rhodes, called *El Boletin* from June and September 1935. The editor was Hizkia Franco:

NEWS FROM OUR COMUNIDAD

A beautiful example

In our edition before last, we gave public recognition to our eminent coreligionist Isacco Alhadeff's fine gesture towards our *Comunidad*. His generosity did not stop there. We can now announce that he has donated the first floor of one of his two apartments located in building number one.

With this new donation, he enables economically disadvantaged students in our school to continue with their studies. He probably wished to put into practice the shining principle that our wise teachers once stated: "If there is no bread, there is no law, and if there is no law, there is no bread".

We can only welcome the donor's latest generous gesture and we hope that his actions and example are emulated by other people.

Arrivals

His Eminence Rebe Bension Uziel, Grand Rabbi from Tel Aviv visited our city and our *Comunidad* last year. He joined us again this year along with his spouse to take the Calitea water, since his experience last year was so satisfying.

A delegation from our *Comunidad* welcomed him. He arrived, a gracious figure, with a smile on his face.

Shabat August 24. At our *Comunidad's* request, His Eminence gave a speech in *Temple Kahal Gadol*. The numerous listeners in the auditorium followed his speech with great interest and respect.

Shabat August 31 and September 7. He attended the divine office in the auditorium of the Rabbinical school. He was extremely satisfied with the response of the students of this grand institution who received his mission with love. They felt great spiritual fulfillment that touched their souls.

His Excellency the new Governor greeted His Eminence in a private hearing and extended him the warmest welcome.

His Eminence returned to Palestine on the 9th of this month. Our best wishes went with him.

We were very pleased to receive the visit of Comm. Giuseppe Alhadeff and his spouse. Mr. And Ms. Alhadeff were received by S. Angelo and greeted by numerous relatives and friends. We give them our warmest welcome.

Among the many vacationers who came from Egypt this year, we had the pleasure of seeing our good friend, the well-known Maestro Hemsí who was to spend the warm season with us as he had in the previous years. He left us and went back to his duties in Alexandria.

Marriages

It is a great pleasure to announce the marriage in London of Com. Giuseppe's youngest son, our dearest friend Cav. Vittorio Alhadeff to the gracious Miss Renata Cohen, Mr. Cohen's daughter. Mr. Cohen is an eminent businessman from Lodz in Poland. Our best wishes to the newlyweds and their families.

Upon his arrival in our city and to celebrate this happy event, Comm. Giuseppe favored several charities in our *Comunidad* with his generous donations:

To the Rabbinical School	Lit. 2000
To the Charity of Bread	Lit. 1000
To the Bicolor-Holim Society	Lit. 600
To the Ozer-Dalim Society	Lit. 600
To the School's Patronage	Lit. 600
To the Women's Society	Lit. 600
To the School Refectory	Lit. 600

The voices of all the fortunate people who have received the donations rise to heaven, blessing the generous donor and all the members of his noble family.

We announce with equal pleasure the marriage of our friend Mr. Haim Capeluto's son, Mr. Elie Capeluto, to the gracious Miss Vida Menasche, daughter of the late Celibon Menasche. The wedding ceremony took place on Tuesday night of this month in *Temple Kahal Shalom* where relatives and friends of the families gathered to celebrate the happy union. Our best wishes to the newlyweds and their beloved family.

The wedding of the late Musani Mizrahi's son, Mr. Isaac Mizrahi, who currently lives in Rhodesia, to the lovely Miss Matilde Pizante, daughter of our friend Mr. Haim Pizante, occurred on Friday the 13th of this month. The wedding ceremony took place in *Temple Kahal Gadol* in front of a large audience. Our best wishes.

We announce the marriage of late Benjamin Almeleh's son, the young Mr. Salomon Almeleh from Rhodesia, to the lovely Miss Rachel Almeleh, Mr. Rafael Almeleh's daughter. Our best wishes.

The wedding in Rhodesia of our friend Jacques Surmani's daughter, the gracious Rica Surmani, to the young Alberto Capuia, son of our friend Mr. Nissim Capuia, has been announced. We wish the newlyweds and their families the best of luck.

The Jewish musical band

Our *Comunidad's* band, so tirelessly directed by Maestro Bernardi, was judged worthy of performing in the Italic Forum below the dome of the Podesteria. The public applauded their two performances with joy and enthusiasm.

We would like to encourage this fine young band, and wish them a great future. Our congratulations and best wishes to Maestro Bernardi and the fine youngsters in the band.

Support for this Bulletin

We are sincerely touched by all the support provided by the *Comunidad* to this modest publication. This support clearly shows we are fulfilling a need in our *Comunidad*. In fact, our "bulletin" is welcomed by our compatriots abroad. For them, the "bulletin" brings them nostalgic memories. As a matter of fact, our distinguished compatriot Mr. Mois Chami from Buenos Aires has donated five hundred liras as a sign of encouragement. Along with the donation, there was a very touching letter. We were deeply touched by this generous gesture from our fine compatriot, to whom we would like to give public recognition.

Mr. Behor Leon, president of the Rhodesia colony in Rhodesia also contributed as a sign of encouragement one pound sterling.

We have also received as an encouragement the following contributions:

- * 1 pound sterling from Mr. Maurice Franco de Hizkia (Rhodesia).
- * 1/2 pound sterling from Mr. Alberto Amato de Isaac (Rhodesia).
- * 1/2 pound sterling from Mr. Jacques Perera de Moshon (Rhodesia).
- * 1/2 pound sterling from Mr. Solly Menasche de Celebon (Rhodesia).
- * 30 liras from Mr. Cohen Menasche and Co. from Buenos Aires.
- * 50 liras from Mr. Masliah Cohen from Buenos Aires.
- * 30 liras from Mr. Nissim Benveniste from Atlanta (U.S.A.).
- * 50 liras from Comm. Giuseppe Alhadeff from Milan.
- * 50 liras from Comm. Ascher Alhadeff from Milan.
- * 60 liras from Mr. Moise Soriano from Usumbura (Belgian Congo).
- * 30 liras from Mr. Abner Soriano from Elizabethville.
- * 20 liras from Mr. Juda Levi from Cos.
- * 20 liras from Celebi Menasche from Cos.

To all these fine compatriots who do not forget their *Comunidad*, we would like to express our gratitude.

IN OUR SCHOOLS

It is our pleasure to recognize the names of students who have an outstanding achievement in the Final Exams which have just finalized:

NAME	PARENT	CLASS PRIZE
Clara Barki	Abraham	3" Teenica 1"
Sara Benatar	Nissim	>> >> 2"
Rica Capuia	Isacco	>> >> 2"
Sara Hasson	Bohor	>> >> 3"
Sami Hanan	Hanoh	2" >> 1"
Fortune Capuia	Isacco	>> >> 2"
Giacomo Levi	Bension	>> >> 3"
Rosa Israel	Mair	1" >> 1"
Clara Gabriel	Mose	>> >> 2"
Rachele Hugnu	Isacco	>> >> 3"
Elsa Pacifici	Renato	5" Elemt. Girls 1"
Virginia Alhadeff	Mose	>> >> 2"
Estella Cohen	Rahamin	>> >> 2"
Estella Sumany	Giacomo	>> >> 3"

Anna Cohen	Giuseppe	>> >>	3"
Elisa Franco	Hizkia	4" >>	1"
Dolly Menasche	Isacco	>> >>	1"
Estella Sigura	Isacco	>> >>	2"
Graziella	Begas	>> >>	3"
Giudilla Vital	Mose	2" >>	1"
Estella Amato	Rahamin	>> >>	2"
Matilde Levi	Giacomo	>> >>	2"
Isacco Alhadeff	Giacobbe	5" Elem. Boys	1"
Davide Menasche	Giuseppe	>> >>	2"
Leon Menasche	Abraham	>> >>	3"
Enrico Hanan	Isacco	4" >>	1"
Bension Menasche	Giuseppe	>> >>	2"
Giuseppe Turiel	Michele	>> >>	3"
Roberto Hasson	Abramo	3" >>	1"
Salvo Alcana	Celebi	>> >>	2"
Giuseppe Vital	Mose	2" >>	1"
Isacco Cordoval	Giuseppe	>> >>	1"
Rabina Franco	Isacco	>> >>	2"
Scemaia Israel	Boaz	1" >>	1"
Vittorio Habib	Bohor	>> >>	1"
Mercada Ferera	Samuele	>> >>	1"
Sara Israel	Benjamin	>> >>	1"
Matilde Rahamin	Haim	>> >>	1"
Marco Algranti	Giuseppe	>> >>	2"
Mordehai Levi	Nissim	>> >>	2"
Lucia Capelluto	Nissim	>> >>	3"
Isacco Levi	Isidor	>> >>	3"

Special Awards go to the students Scemaia Israel de Boaz of the Primary, Giuseppe Vital of the 2nd Primary, and Isacco Alhadeff of the 5th Primary.

In the Italian Institute:

Final Exams were taken the passed few days at the Italian Institute of our city. We had the pleasure of confirming that the Jewish students whom attend these institutes have excelled in demonstrating their intelligence through their studies. Here is the list of names of the outstanding achievers:

NAME	PARENT	CLASS	MEDAL
Mose Amato	Sadic	4" Inst. Super.	Oro
Daniele Capelluto	Giuseppe	>> >> >>	Plata
Michele Levi	Mose	3" Liceo	Oro
Giacomo Capuia	Juda	>> >>	Bronzo
David Benatar	Mussa	2" Inst. Super.	Plata
Giacomo Franco	Hizkia	>> >> >>	Plata
Nissim Alhadeff	Isacco	2" Liceo	Oro
Mose Buenavida	Hizkia	1" Inst. Super.	Plata
Giuseppe Notrica	Masliah	4" Gimasiale	Plata
Maurizio Galante	Elia	>> >>	Bronzo
Maurizio Turiel	Michele	>> >>	Bronzo
Giuseppe Hazan	Boaz	3" >>	Oro
Giuseppe Hasson	Nathan	2" >>	Oro
Rodolfo Habib	Salomone	1" >>	Oro
Salvatore Hasson	Bohor	>> >>	Plata
Boaz Alhadeff	Isacco	>> >>	Bronzo

Our congratulations

Jewish Tombstones Desecrated in 1938 Newly Discovered

Last year I discovered remnants of Jewish tombstones that were confiscated by the anti-Semitic Governor of Rhodes in 1938. This opens a new chapter in documenting the Jewish history of "La Juderia".

In 1938, the arch-fascist Italian Governor overseeing Rhodes, De Vecchi di Val Cismon, implemented various "Anti-Jewish Laws", which included among several other measures: the closing of the Rabbinical College, not allowing Jews to attend public schools, dismissing Jewish civil servants, forcing Jews to keep their businesses open on the Sabbath, etc. During the same year, De Vecchi forcibly used Jewish tombstones as building material to build his Palace, at that time called "Il Castillo", located at the top of the famous "Street of the Knights".

Hizkia M. Franco, who was a former President of the Jewish Community of Rhodes, wrote an account of the action. In his book called *The Jewish Martyrs of Rhodes and Cos*, he states: "Another particularly sad event occurred during the removal of the remains of our dead from the old to the new Jewish cemetery. De Vecchi ordered the President of our Community to deliver to him about a hundred headstones still bearing the names of our beloved dead, for use as building materials in his infamous castle. Our unfortunate President had to carry out this order, his heart full of bitterness. One can easily imagine the feelings of the whole population. It was in this way that De Vecchi

intended to insult the religious conscience of this population, which was left to the mercy of his whims."

It was through my recent search for the Jewish presence in Rhodes that I stumbled across several large stones with Hebrew inscriptions that were located in a repository in another section of the city that was a distance from the Jewish Quarter. I learned that since World War II the Greek authorities had acquired jurisdiction over this repository that held these materials of the Italian and German regimes. Last year, with the cooperation of the Greek authorities, I was able to translate the Hebrew inscriptions and discovered that they were the left over Jewish tombstones taken by De Vecchi in 1938.

The two marble burial stones shown in the photos below are among those that were confiscated in 1938. These photos were taken in the summer of 1999 and they clearly show that they were carved and shaped to be used as building material. The burial stone at the left is from 1750 of the Sourmani Family. The burial stone on the right is broken beyond identification.

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation will continue to explore and unveil additional information related to this subject.



Welcome to The Jewish Museum of Rhodes "Interactive" Internet Website Page

During the past year, thousands of people "on-line" have visited the Internet website of The Jewish Museum of Rhodes. A new feature of the website is the "Interactive" Page which encourages its visitors from around the world to post comments as well as sharing their ideas and appreciation in the preservation of the Jewish history of Rhodes. Here are some samples of these comments:

Marc Notrica 19/May/1999 I grew up taunted and teased about my unusual surname. Never having had the chance to really know my grandfather, Louis Notrica, I grew up in ignorance of my family heritage and historical lineage. My great-aunt Rebecca (Notrica) Nahamias of Los Angeles told me some stories of Rhodes and my family's origin. Since then I have been unable to find out anything else, that is until now. This is wonderful! I hope to visit Rhodes someday soon and walk in the paths of my ancestors.

Abraham Angel 21/June/1999 My name is Abraham Angel. My family came from Rhodes. I saw your web this Friday 18 of June 1999. I saw a picture of the Angel family. I will like to know more about that family. I live in Panama, central America. and let me tell you I never can find nobody of my family beside the family that I have here in America. Congratulations for your web is very emocionante! We say in Ladino.

Melinda Hawkes/Surmani 14/July/1999 What a wonderful site. My father (Eliezer Surmani) is finally coming to Rhodes in September 99. There are a lot of unanswered questions he has. I hope this trip will answer them and put his mind at peace. He is currently 71 years old.

Eleanor Benveniste M 24/July/1999 What a great site this is. I love the recipes. I'm looking for Ted Hasson's recipe for Mazipan so I can make it for my daughter's wedding. Or is there someone who can do it and I can pay them?

Marilyn Benbenisty G 18/Sep/1999 This is a wonderful website. My grandfather, Moreno Benveniste, immigrated to the U.S. from Rhodes and settled in Atlanta, GA. His name was misspelled at the time of immigration and we have gone by the spelling Benbenisty ever since. We have a very large Sephardic community here at Congregation Or VeShalom. I am interested in learning more about the Benvenistes and my mother's side, the Habibs.

Howard Franco 21/Sep/1999 My thanks to Aaron Hasson for being such a visionary, and having the ability to preserve a heritage that so many of us are now just appreciating.

Robert Davis/Arlene 26/Sep/1999 We're leaving for our trip to Rhodes tomorrow, Sept.27th. The first thing we packed were numerous pages of information and photos from your web site. Thank you so much for increasing our interest and curiosity! We plan to learn as much as possible about my mother's Capelouto family history. Thanks again

Peggy Scapa 04/Dec/1999 I enjoyed your website. I just got a computer and it's one site I was looking forward to.

Jack Cadranel 13/Dec/1999 This site is such a pleasure to visit! Many thanks to all who have worked hard to make it.

Sharon Gonzalez 03/Jan/2000 This is a wonderful website that you've put considerable time, effort and love into. I thank you for all the pictures and information. My ancestors are from Rhodes, being that they only spoke Ladino, I never understood them, and could never ask about their lives growing up in Rhodes. Thank you for this insight.

Pat Alhadeff Schneider 31/Jan/2000 Estelle Avzaradel Small and I visited the site of Rhodes with my sister Rose Marie Avzaradel Angel and we found a picture of our father Isaac as a young man of about 19 years of age. We enjoyed the tour and the photographs, etc. very very much. Thank you having this for all to share.

Joe & Estelle Fiss 01/Feb/2000 Our granddaughter Brittany found your wonderful website and can't thank you enough. We are so thrilled and proud to be SEPHARDIC!!! God Bless!

Pearl Pizante Rothman 12/Feb/2000 My mother was Fortune Abouaf. My father was Raphael Pizante. Both were born in Rhodes.

Nesim Behar 22/Feb/2000 I spent a week in Rhodes Island. I am from Istanbul. Nothing knew much about the past of the Jewish community there. After spending most of my time in this little, beautiful synagogue and the streets of the Jewish houses and around the community sites that I realized fully the tragic story of their community. I will come to Kahal Shalom synagogue again or maybe to marry there one day... I can still feel the great atmosphere of the synagogue while I am signing this book. Special thanks to Mr. Aron Hasson.

Samy Angel 27/Feb/2000 Esto muy emocionado de ver esta tanta hermosa presentacion de muestra historia de Rhodes. A todos los que se ocuparon de esta organizacion vos complimento i felicito de este grande lavoro, ke gwadra muestra tradition di tantas hermosas de historias i rekwerdos. Sammy Angel, Republique Democratique du Congo, Kinshasa.

News Updates

Historical Pamphlets Published in Hebrew and Greek *The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* has published historical pamphlets that describes the history of the *Kahal Shalom* synagogue and "La Juderia". Originally the pamphlets were printed in English, French and Spanish for the many visitors of the synagogue. Based on popular request this past summer, the pamphlets have now also been printed in Hebrew and Greek.

Excavations Around the Kahal Grande Synagogue

The *Kahal Grande* was the largest synagogue in Rhodes and it was destroyed during World War II. The Greek Archaeological Department in Rhodes is continuing excavations in the vicinity of where the *Kahal Grande* synagogue existed. In September I was pleased to meet with the Director of the Greek Archaeological Department and learned that they are very interested in discovering Jewish remnants such as the *Kahal Grande* synagogue as well as the previous synagogue that was destroyed in the 1490's. The Archaeological Department has begun collaborating with *The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* by exchanging information regarding ancient Jewish objects discovered by their Department. The *Kahal Grande* was also known as the *Kahal Gadol*, which is the Hebrew equivalent of the Ladino language.

Jewish Memorial in "La Juderia" In July, the Mayor and City Council of Rhodes unanimously accepted the idea of creating a monument in the "Square of the Martyred Jews" (in the park area at the end of "La

Calle Ancha"). It is planned to be built in recognition to the Jewish Community that lived and flourished there until World War II. This would be a respectful monument giving the proper recognition and dignity to a community that had an important influence well beyond its relatively small population.

New Materials on the Internet Website I have added an interesting new page called "Interactive" which is based upon the desire of the viewers to obtain more information regarding the Jews of Rhodes. The new page allows viewers to enjoy and exchange information and ideas over the Internet. You can post a new message or reply to an existing message. Examples of subjects might be "Benveniste family tree", "Hotels on Rhodes", "Rhodesli folk remedies", or "Getting to Rhodes from Israel". In addition, there is now a "Giftshop" page that offers items relating to Rhodesli history and culture and are great gift ideas. New audio recordings have also been added to the enormous photographic and document exhibition, just click on: www.RhodesJewishMuseum.org.

New Administration of the Rhodes Jewish Community During 1999 there has been a change of the officers representing the *Rhodes Jewish Community*. Maurice Soriano, who has served as President for decades, was proclaimed the "Honorary President for Life" in recognition of his devotion and work to the Community. The new President is Albert Covo, and the Vice President is Jacob Arones. The Secretary General remains the same: Jacob Sakkis.

1852 Ketubah Artwork From Rhodes

The image to the right is a close up portion of a marriage contract ("ketubah"). It was hand painted in Rhodes in 1852 for the marriage of Yedidiah Yosef Israel and his wife, Reina. Decorative marriage contracts are a distinctive Sephardic tradition that was continued even after the Jews fled Spain and Portugal. In this portion of the "ketubah" you will notice a building that contains the "mano" (the hamsah), as a symbol for protection against the "oju" (the evil eye). This is from the family of Menache Israel of Seattle.

