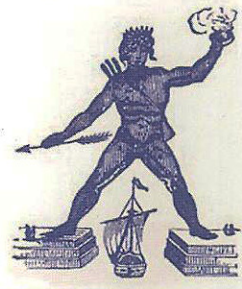


חברה שלום והולכי קדימה



מוסיידאד פאס אי פרוגריסו

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation

A non-profit organization established in 1997

10850 Wilshire Boulevard #750
Los Angeles, California 90024

Telephone (310) 475-4779 Fax (310) 475-8144

E-mail: info@rhodesjewishmuseum.org

Web Site: www.rhodesjewishmuseum.org

“KE HABER ?”

Newsletter for the Year 2009 Describing “What Is New” Regarding Rhodes Jewish History

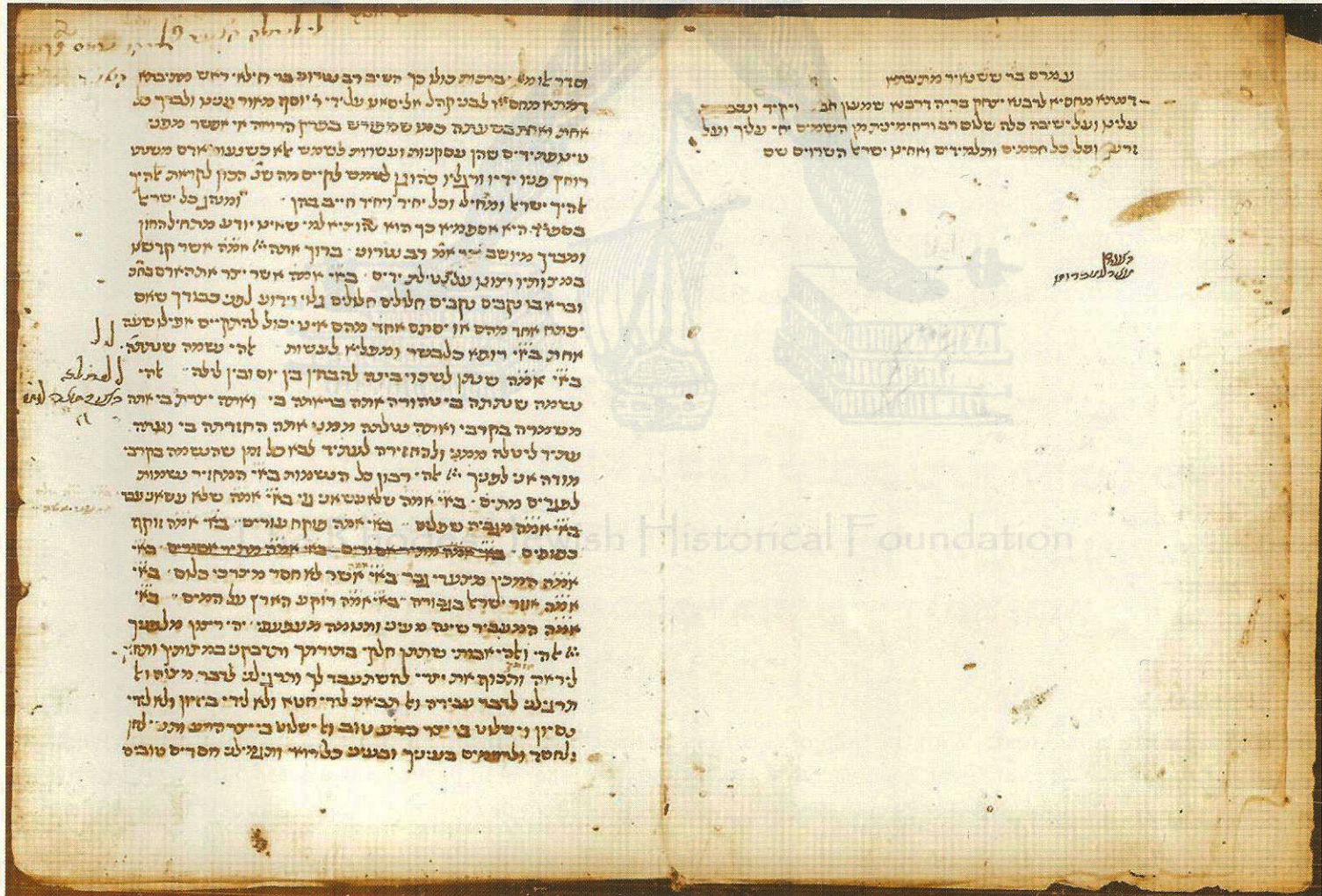
By Aron Hasson

Welcome to the sixth publication of the “Ke Haber?” newsletter by the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation*. The *Foundation* has continued its goal of preserving the unique cultural background of the Jews of this island in the Aegean Sea and serves as a link between the Jewish community of Rhodes and everyone who is interested around the world.

Rhodes Siddur Manuscript of 1426 Acquired for the Museum Archives

In October 2008 the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* acquired a copy of an ancient prayer book written in Rhodes in 1426. This is the oldest known Hebrew document from Rhodes and becomes a significant link to the island’s religious customs and heritage. The *Foundation* purchased over 200 pages of this manuscript from Oxford University in England after learning of its availability from their Archives Department of Ancient Hebrew Manuscripts.

The first page of the book (shown below) contains the morning blessings which are still said at the beginning of the Shacharit service. During the coming months an investigative study, conducted under the aegis of the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation*, will analyze and review its content and we will report its findings in our next publication.



Initial Background and Thoughts Regarding the Siddur of 1426

The "Rhodes Siddur" is a prayer book which contains the daily prayers. It was written in the Rashi (Aramaic) script and is believed to be based on the 9th century siddur written by Rav Amram Gaon of Babylon.

Having been written in 1426 verifies a significant Jewish presence in Rhodes during the Crusader's occupation, a time prior to the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. The Jewish community of Rhodes at that time consisted of Romaniote Jews who were Greek speaking and conducted their liturgical services in Hebrew and Greek.

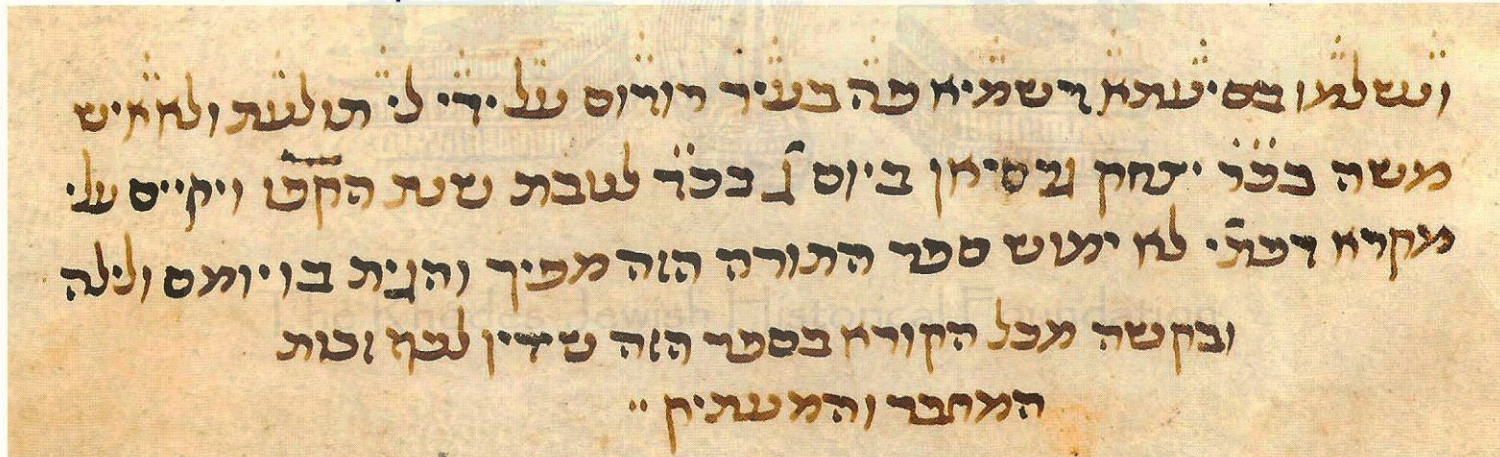
Historically we know that in the 12th century a detailed account of the Jewish community of Rhodes was recorded. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, Spain, on his way to Jerusalem wanting to record the many Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean, reported that there were 400 Jews on Rhodes under the authority of Rabbi Hannanel and Rabbi Eliah.

Two later references to the Jewish community during a period before and around the same time the "Rhodes Siddur" was written is described in the book by Rabbi Marc D. Angel, *The Jews of Rhodes*:

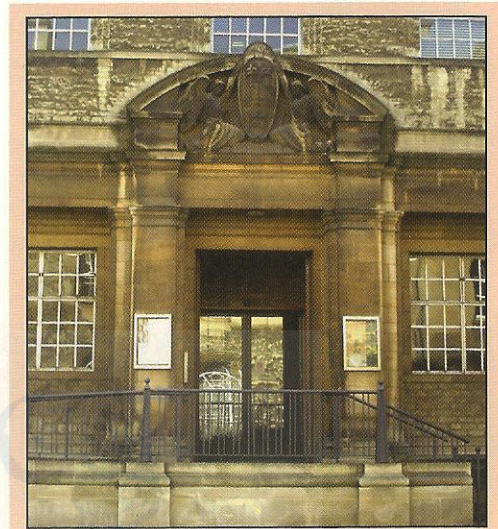
"There is evidence of a high level of Jewish scholarship in Rhodes. Rabbi Michael Balbo (born in 1411) of Candia, Crete was a scholar and poet. He wrote a poem in honor of Rabbi Ezra of Rhodes when the latter went to Venice. Balbo also engaged in philosophic debates with learned individuals and corresponded with Rabbi Yedidiah, son of Yosef Rak of Rhodes on the subject of the voices of the universe. Although we have no information about the lives and activities of these scholars of Rhodes, it is fair to assume that they exerted considerable influence on their small community.

Rhodes Jews of a later period believed that Sephardim as well as Romaniots may have been living on the island when the Knights took possession of it. The French colonel, Bernard Rottiers came to Rhodes in the early 19th century to study the island's historical monuments. He employed a Jew named Boghore (Bohor) as an assistant and even attended the circumcision ceremony of his son. At the ceremony, he heard a rabbi of the city lecture on the instability of human life and the vicissitudes of the Jews of Rhodes. The rabbi claimed that a number of Jews had fled Spanish persecutions in Tarragona and came to Rhodes in 1280."

Script from the "Rhodes Siddur" which describes the source:



Translation of the above text: With the help of G-d, here in the city of Rhodes... Moshe, son of the honored Rabbi Yitzhak Gracian, the 3rd day of Tevet, the year 5186 (1426) and may it come to pass as it is written, "the words of the Book of the Torah will not leave your mouth, and you shall speak of them day and night" and a request to all readers of this book to judge always favorably the author and the transcriber.



The front entry of the Bodleian Library, Oxford University in England which houses the Special Collections including the Rhodes Siddur.

Two Rooms Adjacent to the Kahal Shalom Courtyard Being Restored

The Jewish Community of Rhodes has contracted with the Greek Archaeology Department to utilize the two rooms adjacent to the courtyard of the Kahal Shalom synagogue. Bella Angel Restis, the President of the Jewish Community of Rhodes, is currently reviewing estimates of contractors to restore the rooms and to create a doorway access to the synagogue courtyard.

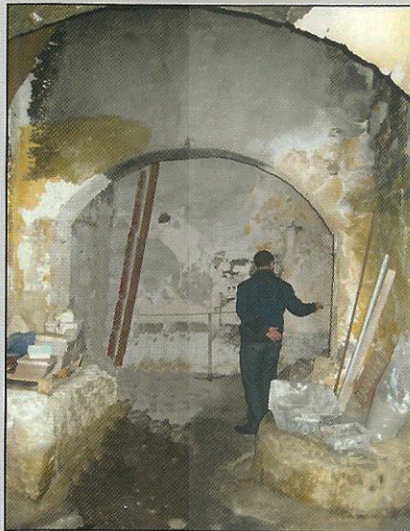


The photo at the left shows the courtyard with arrows pointing to the location of the two rooms (behind the white walls).

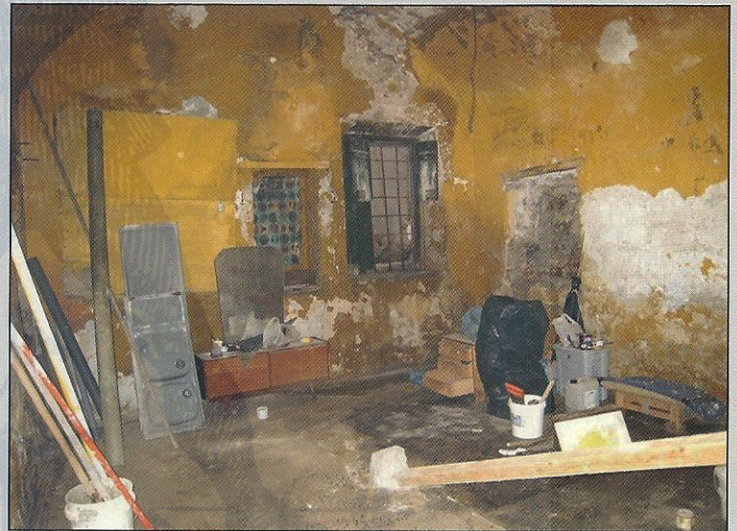
This will be a valuable addition thanks to the vigorous energies of Bella in her efforts to help enhance the property.

The rooms consist of over 200 square feet and are sufficient to be used as offices for the Jewish Community. This would allow for an improved oversight of the synagogue and museum complex.

A newly created doorway access between these rooms and the synagogue courtyard would facilitate its usefulness.



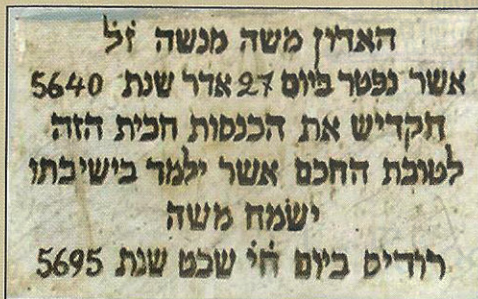
The two rooms require restoration which is hoped to be completed during the coming year. Prior to World War II the rooms were part of a Jewish family home.



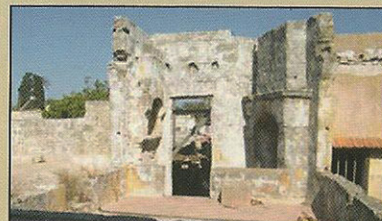
The Menashe Yeshiva

The rooms of the Menashe Yeshiva (religious school) were located directly above and adjacent to the Kahal Shalom courtyard. It was founded in 1840 by Moshe Menashe. Since 1938 the Yeshiva was not used and toward the end of World War II the rooms were damaged from bombings. The *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* suggests that this property also be looked into for the purpose of restoring the Yeshiva.

The plaque at the left is mounted in the Kahal Shalom synagogue and overlooks the area where the Yeshiva was located.



Translation of the plaque next to the Yeshiva: Mr. Moshe Menashe of blessed memory who passed away on the 27th day of the month of Adar, the year 5640 (1880), dedicated the income of this house (next door) to benefit the Haham that will teach in his Yeshiva: "Yismach Moshe". Rhodes, the 18th day of the month of Shivat, the year 5695 (1935).



July 2008 Events in Rhodes

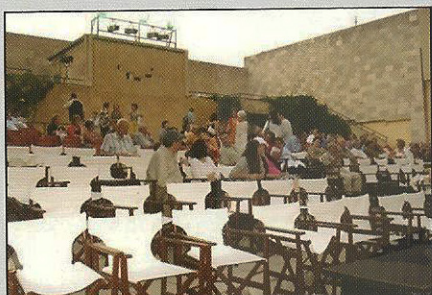
Several events were held in Rhodes this past summer from July 23 to July 27. The President of the *Jewish Community of Rhodes*, Bella Angel Restis, made special arrangements to provide a series of events to coincide with the annual memorial to remember the World War II victims of the Jewish community. The events were coordinated by Carmen Cohen, the Director of the *Jewish Community of Rhodes*.

The five days of events included a dinner event at the Kalithea spa resort followed by a concert of Sephardic music by "Los Pasharos Sefaradis" as well as another evening classical concert of music for violin and piano which was performed at the courtyard of the Palace of the Knights. These events were complimentary, paid for from the funds of the *Jewish Community of Rhodes*.

The *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* arranged and sponsored lectures at the Kahal Shalom synagogue as well as a walking tour of the Jewish Quarter.

These events are presented in summer and started in June 2002 when it began as a Reunion and Commemoration of the Holocaust Memorial Dedication. It has served as a good time for former residents of Rhodes and their descendants in the Diaspora to converge from several countries.

Documentary Film Evening



Early arrivals at the "Rodon" open cinema located in the New City.

The opening day of events included an outdoor theatre presentation of two films: "L'Isola delle Rose, la Tragedia di un Paradiso" and "Rhodes Nostalgie". Both films provided a background for understanding the July events.



Lectures at the Kahal Shalom by Rhodeslis

Stories of life in Rhodes were given by former residents of Rhodes in the sanctuary of the Kahal Shalom each describing their personal life experiences in the Jewish Quarter.



After listening to the stories, the audience asked questions of the former residents including religious customs, herbal remedy practices as well as school curriculum.



The three former residents now are dispersed as is most of the Rhodesli descendants—Samuel Modiano (Rome), David Galante (Buenos Aires) and Rebecca Habib Levy (Brussels).

July 2008: Walking Tour of the Jewish Quarter

One of the features of the July 2008 events included a walking tour of the Jewish Quarter. Stella Levi led a large group through "La Juderia" with colorful explanations of various landmarks and day to day life experiences--as Stella calls them "istoricas".



Special Prayer Event Held at the *Kehila Grande*



The walking tour included an historic service held on the cleared away floor of the *Kehila Grande* (*Kahal Gadol*) synagogue. This was the first prayer service held on the premises since World War II. These prayers were led by Rabbi Robert Rome and Rabbi Yossef Amoyal.

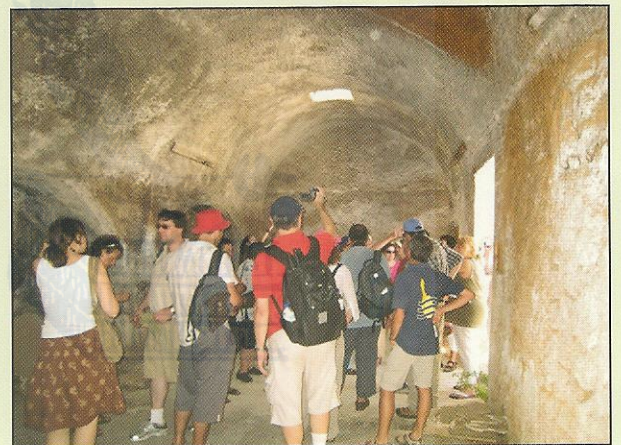
Although heavily damaged in 1944 during the bombings, two partial walls of the *Kehila Grande* remain standing as well as a short perimeter wall (3 feet high) of the other two sides.

The synagogue is believed to have been built after the Turkish siege of 1480. It actually replaced an existing Jewish synagogue that was built hundreds of years earlier but destroyed during the conflict of 1480.

Visiting the Women's Prayer Room

Visitors also received a tour of the women's prayer room of the *Kehila Grande* (which was called "la azara") and has been vacant since the War.

In 1997 the women's prayer room of the *Kehila Shalom* was transformed into what is now the Jewish Museum of Rhodes. What will become of this room? Because of its size, it could be utilized as a video room. Maybe a branch of the existing Museum? Maybe if the *Kehila Grande* is rebuilt, it could be a prayer room again? The *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* suggests that a plan be prepared to determine how the room could be utilized.



July 2008: Memorial Services



On July 23rd memorial services, led by Rabbi Robert Rome, were conducted at the Jewish cemetery at the Holocaust memorial (on the right).



Memorial services were also held at the Holocaust Memorial on July 27th. Left to right: Samuel Modiano, Stella Levi, Rosa Hanan Mallel and David Galante.

Special Memorial for the Bombing Victims of February and April 1944

During the World War II bombings of February 2nd and April 8th 1944 there were 34 members of the Jewish community who were killed. These victims were buried in the cemetery. A few months later in July 1944 the remainder of the Jewish community was deported to Auschwitz. Therefore, the victims of the bombings never received the appropriate memorial service and tombstone within the next year ("anyo").

A special memorial service is being planned for the summer of 2009 to give respect to those individuals.



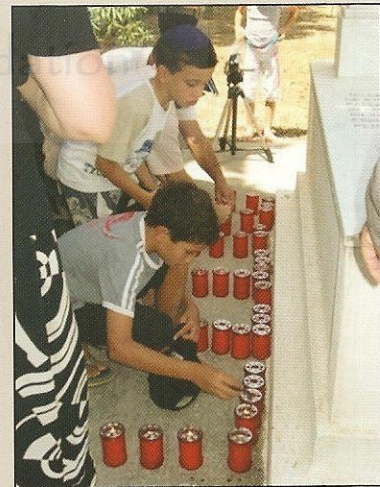
This photo shows burial plots, some with and some without tombstones which include the victims of the 1944 bombings.

Hizkia M. Franco, who was a former President of the Jewish Community of Rhodes, wrote an account of the story. In his book called *The Jewish Martyrs of Rhodes and Cos*, he states:

"... the air and naval bombardments became increasingly terrible, and the number of casualties was considerable. As our quarter was near the port and next to the Customs, we were in a very dangerous position. This was why the Jewish population suffered ceaselessly. Two of the bombardments were particularly disastrous for us. The first was on 2 February 1944, and caused the deaths of eight Jews and destruction of several houses. The second of these bombardments took place on the first day of Pesach, in 1944, and was a great deal more severe. There were many more victims, as the faithful were caught in the streets of the quarter just as they were leaving the synagogue after morning prayers."



On July 23, 2008, Rabbi Robert Rome led the memorial services at the Jewish cemetery in Rhodes which included the lighting of memorial candles for the bombing victims.



July 2008: The Former Turkish Consul General, Honored in Rhodes

Reported by AFP News Briefs:

Dozens of families from around the world gathered on July 24, 2008 on the Greek island of Rhodes to pay tribute to the man who in 1944 saved 42 Jews from being deported to Nazi concentration camps.

Selahattin Ulkumen, Turkish Consul General on the island in 1943, was remembered for his role in saving the Turkish Jews by persuading a German general to release them the day before they were due to be transported to Auschwitz.

Ulkumen persuaded the German general on the island to release the 42 Turkish Jews, by reminding him of Turkey's neutrality. Nearly 1,800 Jews from Rhodes and the nearby island of Kos were deported on July 23, 1944. All but 150 perished in the Nazi gas chambers or concentration camps.

Ulkumen's 64-year-old son, Mehmet, joined the commemoration and was presented with a plaque by the president of the Central Board of the Jewish Communities of Greece, Moses Constantinis.

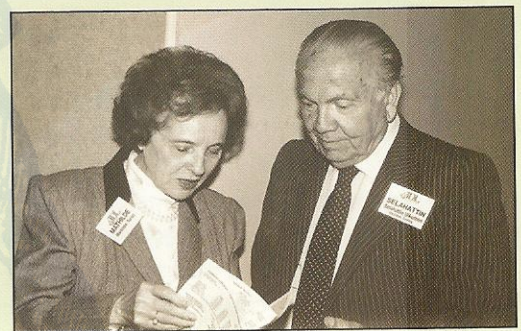
Concentration camp survivor Stella Levi said she makes the journey to her birthplace from her home in New York every year. This tribute "is a historic moment for the Jews of Rhodes," she said.



After receiving the award for his father, Selahattin, Mehmet Ulkumen stands between Moses Constantinis, President of the *Central Board of the Jewish Communities of Greece* and Bella Angel Restis, President of the *Jewish Community of Rhodes*.

After the dinner and award ceremony the group "Los Pasharos Sefaradis" performed a concert of folk songs in Judeo-Spanish ("Ladino").

Photograph of Mathilde Nahum Turiel with Selahattin Ulkumen in New York City on June 11, 1988 when he was awarded the "Courage to Care Award" by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith at the ADL's International Center for Holocaust Studies. The organization initiated this unique award in 1987 to honor rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust era.



A Special Note of Thanks From the Alhadeff Family:

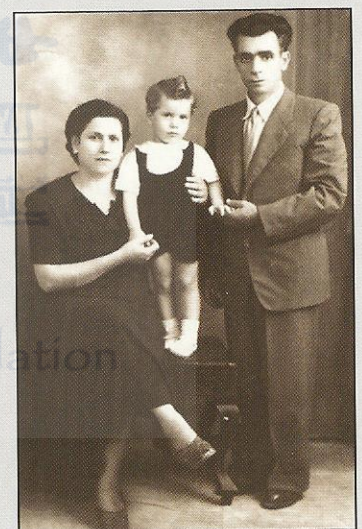
July 2008

"Dear Mr. Ulkumen:

My brother and his two children, myself and my two children and four grandchildren, all are alive today because of the courage and high morals of your father, Consul General Selahattin Ulkumen, of blessed memory. My parents, Joseph and Sarah Alhadeff, were among those saved from deportation by the Consul.

Such a debt can never be repaid and I am very sorry that I did not have the chance to meet him personally and express our gratitude. Consul Selahattin Ulkumen is and will be in our prayers forever, and his memory will never fade in our minds or our hearts. May you and all your family be blessed in his name.

Salvatore Alhadeff and family,
Weston, Florida"



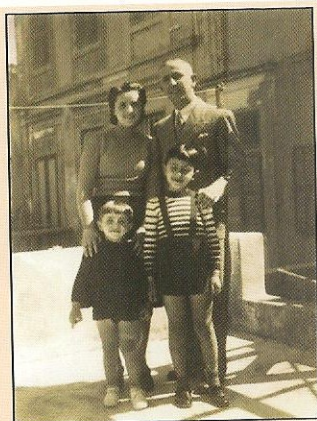
Joseph Alhadeff and Sarah Berro. This 1950 photo includes their son, Salvatore, born in Rhodes in 1947.

What I Remember

By Bernard Turiel

I was born on the Island of Rhodes in November, 1934. At that time Rhodes was an Italian possession. My immediate family consisted of my father, Daniel Turiel, mother, Mathilde Nahum Turiel, and younger brother, Elliot "Eliakim" Turiel, and we lived in Rhodes until January of 1945.

My mother was born in Izmir, Turkey and my father met my mother and had a courtship with her during his visits to Izmir. When she married my father in 1933, she came to live in Rhodes. At the time, Turkey had a law that if a Turkish citizen left Turkey to live somewhere else, he or she had to maintain the Turkish citizenship and the children of a Turkish citizen were also required to acquire and maintain Turkish citizenship in order to return for visits to Turkey.



1941 photo of the Turiel family in front of their home in the Jewish Quarter. Mathilde, Daniel, Bernard (Boaz) and Elliot (Eliakim). The entire family was one of the few that were spared the catastrophe of the deportation. In 1946, after the war they moved to the United States.

Since Italy's entry into the War was not well received by the Italian people, Mussolini tried to shore up his defenses and brought German forces into his country, as well as into Rhodes, which was a strategic island in the Aegean Sea.

Throughout the early part of the Second World War, there were periodic bombings of the Island by the Allies and they became much more severe in 1943 and 1944. In one instance (in February, 1944), a young cousin of mine, Isaac Turiel, happened to be standing near where the bomb hit, and afterwards he could not be found. His parents and family were frantic and everyone in the community was looking for him. A German army officer assisted in the search for my cousin and he became friendly with our family. My cousin was never found and we suppose that he was completely obliterated by the bomb.

On July 24, 1943 the Grand Fascist Council removed Mussolini from power and put him under arrest. By that time the Allies were advancing through the southern part of Italy. In very early September, 1943, an armistice was declared by Italy with the Allies. The German garrison in Rhodes, which had about 6,000 soldiers, was able to overwhelm the 30,000 Italian soldiers and they took over the Island within 48 hours. Immediately subsequent to the takeover of the Island by the Germans, the adult male Jews were asked to report and register periodically with the German authorities. The first time that the men were asked to register was of great concern and agitation. But after all the adult males had registered, they were released and they returned to their homes and

families. This process took place about once a month, and it became routine.

Whenever a German ship was in the harbor, which was near the Jewish quarter in Rhodes, the air raids by the Allies were certain to take place--often the bombs hit the Jewish section of town. On the first day of Passover in 1944, after we had come home from synagogue, a severe air raid took place. While we were sitting having our lunch at home, a bomb dropped down the street from us and we saw the home that was hit go up in flames. My father became greatly alarmed as to what was happening in the city. He decided that it was time for us to move out of our home in the city and move to a nearby village. Since at this time of the War there was a lack of transportation, my father was able to arrange for a horse and cart to transport us out of the city to our farm in the countryside along with some of the possessions that we had gathered. Our family had an old farm in a village outside the city, but it had no adequate living facilities. Abidin, a Turkish farmer who lived in the same village, was the caretaker of our farm and was a good friend of the family. Without announcement, we showed up at his doorstep after we left the city. He and his family welcomed us, and even though they had meager living facilities in their home, they emptied out one room in their home, laid out mattresses on the floor and we were welcomed to spend as much time as we needed with his family. That same day, the air raids continued in Rhodes, and many additional members of the Jewish community moved to the various adjoining villages and sought refuge from the bombings. We continued to live on the farm until July of 1944.

Living with this Turkish family was one of the happiest events of my life. Even though we did not live in comfort, we were welcomed into their home. I remember learning to ride horses on the farm, cultivate the fields, do the farming, pick fruits and nuts from the trees, and join the sons of Abidin in work and play. We had become part of his family and they had become part of ours.

In January of 1943 a young Turkish diplomat, Selahattin Ulkumen, was appointed as the Consul General to the Island of Rhodes.

On January 30, 1943 Churchill visited Turkey with its President, Ismet Inonu. His aim was to convince Turkey to join the Allies in the War. A similar meeting took place in Cairo, Egypt in December of 1943. Expecting a second front to be opened by way of the Dodecanese Islands, of which Rhodes was its largest, and as a means of intimidating Turkey, two German planes bombed the Turkish Consulate in Rhodes on February 18, 1944. Two Turkish employees were killed and Mr. Ulkumen's pregnant wife was injured. Also, prior to this bombing, the Turkish Consul had aided some Turkish fishermen, and allegedly some underground fighters, to leave the Island by boat, and he was severely criticized and threatened by the German authorities. Sometime after the bombing, after having given birth to her son, Mrs. Ulkumen died from the wounds that she had sustained. As we know, the Allies abandoned the proposed plan to open a separate

front in Europe through its "soft underbelly" in Greece, and proceeded with the Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944.

On July 19, 1944, after the arrival of a contingency of SS officers in Rhodes, a leader of the Jewish community was informed by a German officer that all Jewish males over the age of 16 years had to report to a designated spot the following day, July 20, 1944. This time, when the adult male Jews were gathered, they were immediately placed in a detention center by a group of SS officers that had come to the Island to gather the Jewish community. They talked about a temporary settlement to a different island. Wives and children of all the males who had been detained were ordered to report within 24 hours, and later that reporting time was extended to 48 hours, with all their money and jewelry and with a suitcase with their personal belongings necessary for travel. This created great concern on the part of the remaining Jewish community. My mother, recognizing the dangers, tried to contact the Turkish Consul, Mr. Ulkumen, in order to have him intervene on her behalf because she was a Turkish citizen. Since the Turkish Consul was in his residence outside the city, it was impossible to get transportation in order to see him. However, Mr. Ulkumen was aware of what was going on in Europe, just as we all were aware of the existence of the concentration camps, and he immediately went to confront the German Commander on the Island, General von Kleemann. Mr. Ulkumen demanded that all Turkish citizens and their families be protected since the Turkish Republic was a neutral country and not involved in the War. Mr. Ulkumen reminded the Germans that there was a "friendship pact" between Turkey and Germany that stated that no harm would come to Turkish citizens and that the Jews holding Turkish citizenship were entitled to the same protection as all other Turkish citizens. With his determination and energy, he got the German authorities to concede to the release of the Jews holding Turkish passports and their families. We can only suppose that this concession was motivated by the German need to avoid a diplomatic incident with neutral Turkey since Turkey maintained a strategic position and because Turkey had previously supplied chrome to Germany, which was needed in the manufacturing of tanks.

On the appointed date when we were supposed to present ourselves to the German authorities, my mother, my brother and I were standing in line by the detention center. Mr. Ulkumen appeared and told my mother that we should leave immediately and return to our home and that he would try to rescue our father as well. With his energetic and determined intervention on behalf of the Turkish Jews, he was also able to procure the release of my father and other heads of families from the detention center who were married to women who maintained their Turkish citizenship, even though there was no basis for this contention. He also made a valiant effort to seek the release of other Jews who had abandoned their Turkish citizenship. The German authorities asked Mr. Ulkumen to produce the documentation to prove that these additional persons had Turkish citizenship, but his lack of documentation frustrated his attempts to save many more Jews who were not legitimate Turkish citizens. Through his

efforts he was able to rescue 42 persons who were either Turkish citizens or married to Turkish citizens. Within days, the Jewish community of Rhodes was placed on three small cargo boats and shipped to the Greek port of Piraeus near Athens, and from Athens they were placed in box cars and transported to Auschwitz.

When our release was procured by Mr. Ulkumen from the German authorities, he was told that all Jews had to leave Rhodes for Turkey as soon as possible. However, because of the lack of available transportation, our departure for Turkey was delayed.

On August 2, 1944, Turkey ceased its diplomatic relations with Germany. Mr. Ulkumen soon thereafter had to leave Rhodes. This was a cause of great fear on our parts because we had lost the protection of the cherished and beloved Turkish Consul. There were great concerns on our part that our fate was sealed and that we would be deported as well. Adult Jewish males were again asked to make periodic appearances at the Gestapo offices. As it turns out, the Island was isolated from the mainland and there were no transports able to leave the Island since the Allies had taken control of the Aegean Sea. As a result, the German authorities were more concerned with saving their own necks than harming the remaining Jews on the Island. In October of 1944, we were told that we could leave for Turkey and we were placed on sailboats in order to make the trip to the mainland. After we had set out to sea, and because of unfavorable weather conditions, we were forced to return to Rhodes, much to our regret. However, upon our return we discovered that the boat that we were in had a leak and that if we had continued with the trip, the boat would have sunk and we would have perished. Ultimately, in January of 1945, we were given permission to leave Rhodes and 26 of us embarked on a sailboat for a prolonged trip that started at dawn, and we arrived at Marmaris, Turkey at about 11:00 p.m. It was a treacherous and hard trip, but we were all happy to land on the shores of Turkey. After a short stay in Marmaris, we were able to travel to Izmir, Turkey, where we lived with my mother's family until we left for the United States (New York City) in July of 1946.

In 1988, Abraham Foxman, the Executive Director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, read a story in the Jerusalem Post about Mr. Ulkumen's efforts to rescue the Jews in Rhodes in 1944 and was impressed with what Mr. Ulkumen had done. As a result, Mr. Ulkumen was brought to New York and was given the "Courage to Care" award of the Anti-Defamation League. At that time, we were reunited with Mr. Ulkumen and had the opportunity to spend some time with this courageous and compassionate human being.

Again in June, 1990, Mr. Ulkumen was honored at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and his name was placed in the Avenue of the "Righteous Gentiles" for his efforts in rescuing Jews from the deportation from the Island of Rhodes. My mother had the honor to be present at the ceremony. He will always be remembered in history as a kind, compassionate and righteous person.

Museum Organization Plans Submitted to the *Jewish Community of Rhodes*

In June 2008, recognizing the continued development of the Jewish Museum of Rhodes, the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* has submitted a detailed proposal to formalize the Museum's administration. The following was submitted:

Creation of a "Museum Committee" to oversee operations

In order for the Museum project to continue to grow and improve, an autonomous "Committee" should be established to oversee operations. The Committee would consist of a circle of consultants who have an interest in the short and long term goals of the Museum.

Initially, the Museum Committee should meet once or twice a year and consist of an odd number of people (for example 5) in order to facilitate decision making. The Committee shall include the President of the Jewish Community of Rhodes as one of its members. Committee subject matters would include archives, displays, staffing, security, research programs, etc.

Recognize a "Statement of Identity and Goals"

The purpose of the Jewish Museum of Rhodes is to preserve the Jewish history of Rhodes and to create exhibits for educational purposes. The Museum is to continue collecting artifacts, photos, as well as oral and audio histories.

The Museum exhibits and resources should reach out to a variety of audiences: the international visitors, the Jewish "Rhodesli" diaspora and the local Greek community. Continued efforts are to be taken to collect and to care for artifacts. The Museum should be a resource center, a place for research and study.

Utmost efforts are necessary to accurately portray the Jewish history of Rhodes. Consultants and experts will be utilized for their services to enable the Museum to meet this objective.

The Museum's identity includes its Sephardic and Romaniote Jewish heritage, its ties with the Ottoman Empire and its intriguing international "Rhodesli" network. The advice and opinion of Jews born in Rhodes, and those with familial connections, would be given special respect and value.

Hiring a "Museum Administrator" to oversee displays, archives, etc.

A "Museum Administrator" is needed to manage the museum displays and inventory of archives. Such an individual would provide for "docent" tours at the synagogue and museum. Additional duties would include overseeing a proper museum environment relating to security, lighting, and safety as well as organizing the library.

"Hiring an Engineering Consultant"

The Museum needs the expertise of a design engineer to evaluate the environment of the Museum rooms in relation to its humidity, lighting, structural integrity and display layouts.

My Visit to Rhodes

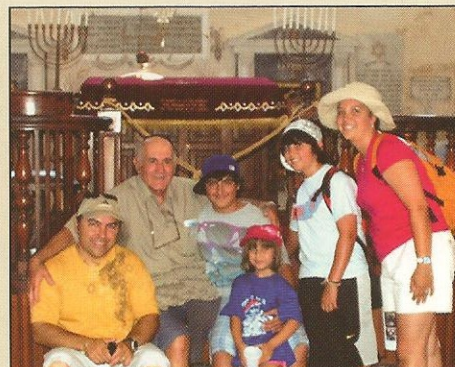
By Sammy Sheff, Los Angeles (14 years old)

This past summer I took a short charter flight from Israel where I was vacationing with my family to Rhodes. I was with my brother, sister and parents. On the plane, my dad was telling us about his visits to Rhodes when he was single and how beautiful it was. He also happened to mention the beaches and how we would enjoy them the most.

On Friday, we went to the Shalom synagogue and met Sami Modiano, who spends his summers in Rhodes acting as a tour guide. He was just a 13 year old boy when the Nazis took him from Rhodes. As he told my family his story in Ladino, which I understood, he had us all in tears. When we asked him if he ever had children, he told us: "Vozotros sosh mis ijos" (you are my children). "What my eyes have seen no human being should ever have to see...the Nazis squeezed us like lemons until we had no juice left, then they threw us away." I will always remember this man and his amazing story. We also visited the amazing museum next to the synagogue put together by Aron Hasson.

Friday night, when Shabbat started, we ate on our balcony overlooking the sea. On Shabbat morning, we walked from our hotel to the kehila. It was special to be in the synagogue where our ancestors had prayed for hundreds of years. Luckily there was an Israeli family on our flight that went to celebrate their son's bar mitzvah or else there wouldn't have been a minyan. The lack of Jews on the island was very sad. Going there, I expected a huge Jewish community but I just found one synagogue, one rabbi and sadly no community.

I really hope someday there will be a Jewish community as great as there once was in the old days of the Rodeslis.

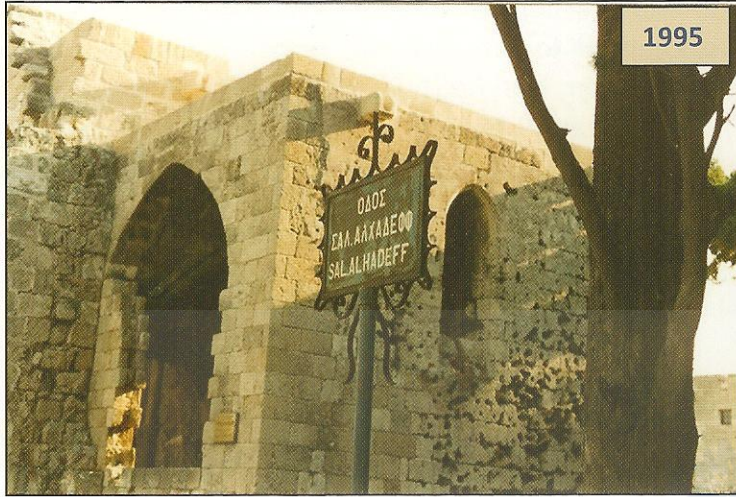


Proposal to Restore the Alhadeff Street Sign

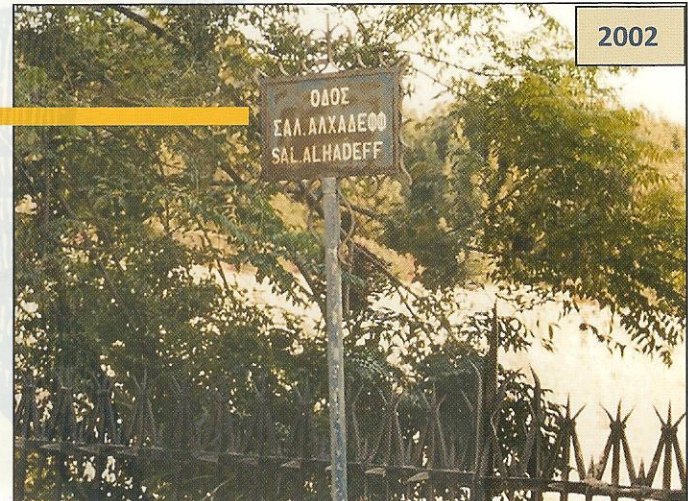
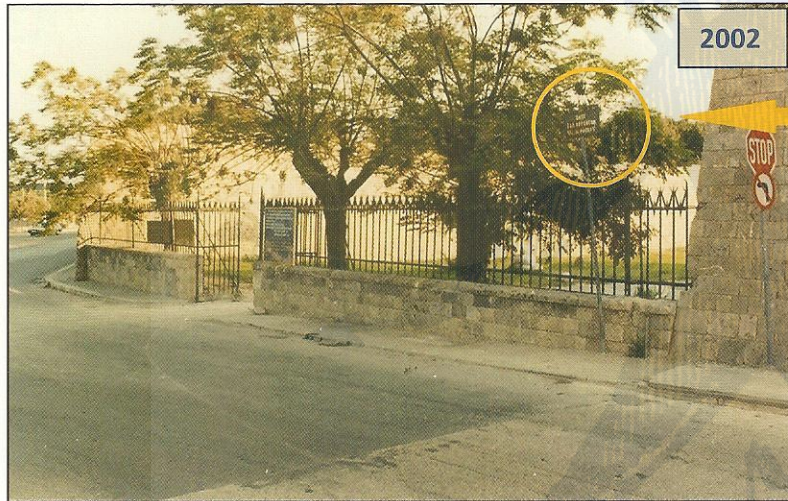
In June 2008 the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* has submitted the following proposal to the *Jewish Community of Rhodes*:

The Alhadeff Street is located in the center of the Alhadeff Park, a large property which was donated to the city of Rhodes by the Salomon Alhadeff family in 1933. In appreciation of this donation, the City of Rhodes, presided over by Alfred Billoti, named the avenue Alhadeff Street.

In 1995 I took the following two photos of the Salomon Alhadeff Street sign located in the Alhadeff Park close to the Hospice of St. Catherine:



In 2002 I noticed the sign was gone, but soon found it relocated at the other end of Alhadeff Street outside the Old City. Therefore, I took the following two photos showing where the Alhadeff sign was moved to:



This past year I took the photo at the left. Now the street sign is completely gone and it was not relocated anywhere else.

All of the streets in Rhodes have a street sign designating the name. The only street without a sign is Alhadeff Street and it should be restored.

In fact, it would also be a good gesture to erect an additional sign and/or monument for the Alhadeff Park.

1997: A Modest, Yet Consequential Beginning

Twelve years ago I personally donated the first \$3,000 to the *Jewish Community of Rhodes* in order to finance the establishment of the Jewish Museum of Rhodes. This meeting with the Secretary Director of the *Jewish Community of Rhodes*, Jacob Sakkis, was also attended by Joseph Alhadeff who immediately backed up my proposition with an additional \$2,000. These two contributions were the initial monies to get things rolling.

At that time I established a non-profit organization called the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* in order to facilitate the future endeavors of this project.

I am pleased to announce that from these modest beginnings, the Foundation has raised over \$420,000—99% of which has come from individuals from the United States. Over \$200,000 has been donated directly to the *Jewish Community of Rhodes*. The *Jewish Community of Rhodes* has utilized most of these funds towards enhancing the Jewish Museum of Rhodes and a smaller part has been used to preserve the Jewish cemetery. The Foundation has no budget for salaries or travel expenses and I have made over 20 trips to Rhodes out of my own expense to make this dream a reality.

Breakdown of the Foundation's Expenditures (1997 – 2008):

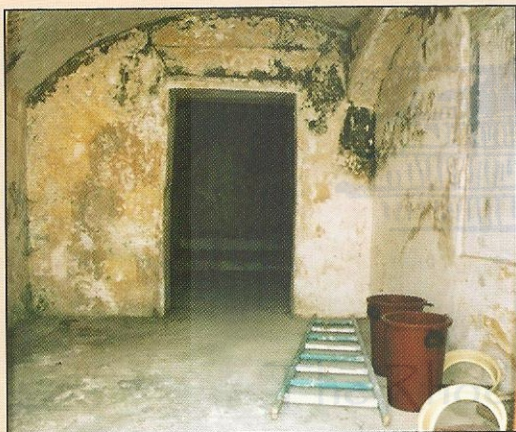
Donated to the Jewish Community of Rhodes = 47%
 Creating exhibit displays and archiving = 26%
 Purchasing archives and exhibition materials = 10%
 Lecturers and consultants = 7%
 Printing of "Ke Haber?" newsletters, etc. = 4%

Postage and delivery expenses = 2%
 Translation services = 1%
 Banking service charges = 1%
 Accounting services = 1%
 Other miscellaneous expenditures = 1%

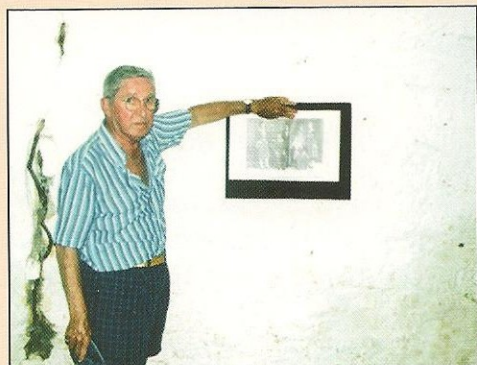
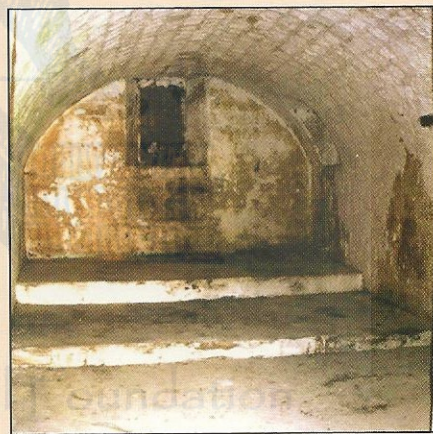
Breakdown of Donations Given Directly to the Jewish Community of Rhodes:

1997 = \$ 3,300	2000 = \$17,500	2003 = \$ 0	2006 = \$70,000
1998 = \$10,000	2001 = \$ 6,500	2004 = \$15,500	2007 = \$ 4,900
1999 = \$25,800	2002 = \$ 4,200	2005 = \$20,000	2008 = \$24,200

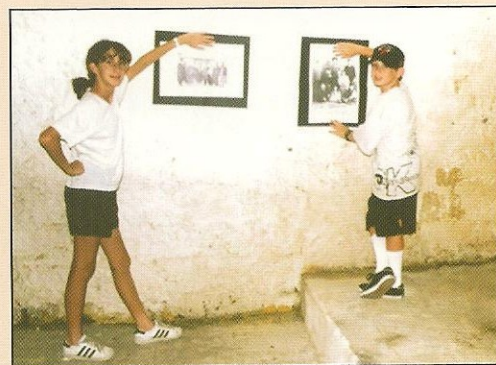
May 1997 Visions for a Museum:



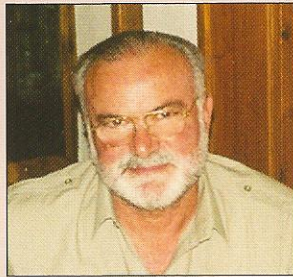
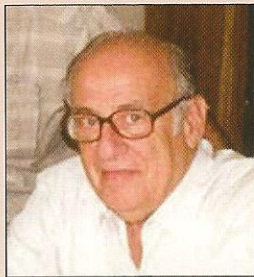
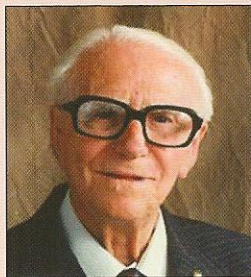
The first two vacant rooms easiest to restore planned for the museum. These rooms were previously used as the women's prayer rooms and had been vacant since the Holocaust.



Demonstrating how sample photos would be initially arranged for an envisioned museum. At the left is Albert Almeleh and at the right are Rachelle and Daniel Hasson.



1997: Establishing the *Jewish Museum of Rhodes*



June 1997: The administration of the *Jewish Community of Rhodes* agrees to the establishment of the museum: Maurice Soriano, Albert Covo and Jacob Sakkis.

Letter from the Jewish Community of Rhodes:

Dear Mr. Hasson,

We refer to the meeting of the Committee of the Jewish Community of Rhodes to which you took part. During this meeting you developed your ideas about the creation of a Museum of Jewish life in Rhodes, mainly based on photographs and to be located in the side rooms of the synagogue.

Further to the discussion on the subject, the Committee took the following decision, as per translated minutes of its session of June 24, 1997.

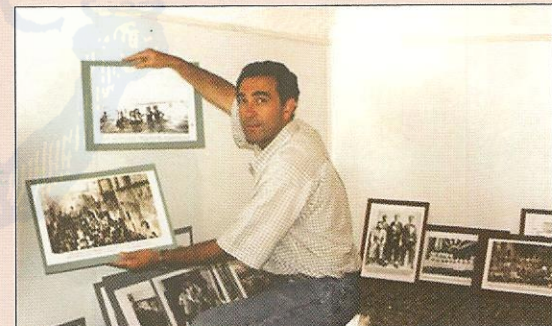
The Committee of the Jewish Community of Rhodes, composed of Mssrs. M. Soriano, A. Covo and J. Sakkis, having heard the proposition of Mr. Hasson from Los Angeles, on the creation of a Jewish Museum in the premises of the synagogue of Rhodes, finds it most interesting and historically indispensable and therefore decides:

a.) To entrust Mr. Hasson with the task of further gathering documents among the Jews of Rhodes in the Diaspora, in order to enrich his valuable collection. b.) We entrust Mr. Hasson to act on our behalf and promote these projects among our brothers in the Diaspora so that funds can be raised either from individuals or from institutions...

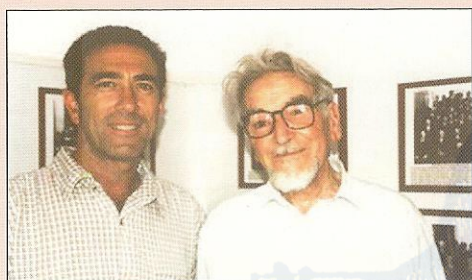
With sincere regards,
Albert Covo, Vice President



August 1997: the group planning the restoration included the architect, carpenter, electrician, painter and assistants.



September 1997: Setting up the first photos.



October 1997: Among the first visitors of the Museum (left photo): Rabbi Moise Levy, a graduate of the Rabbinical College of Rhodes. Right photo: Jo Mallel and Rina Soriano Hasson.

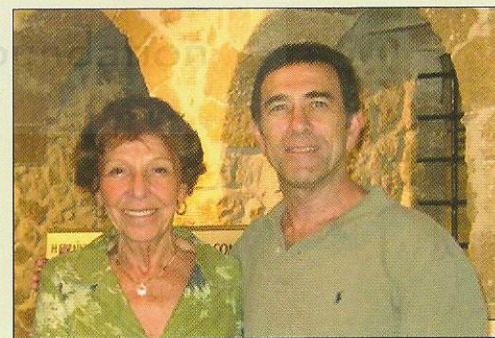


Archival Resources: Two Extraordinary People

There are two people who have inspired and generously assisted in the preservation of the history of our families, Stella Levi and Joseph David Alhadeff. They both shy away from the spotlight, but stand out as my "secret agents for information". They have described to me the stories relating to artifacts and who's who in old photos. They have been invaluable with the museum archiving of how celebrations and religious customs were followed by the Jews of Rhodes as well as pointing out where Jewish landmarks, homes and businesses were located.



A common thread of their concern which they have impressed upon me is the importance of accuracy in recording this heritage. Appreciation for their support cannot be adequately expressed in words.....let me just say "gracias por todo".



Codron Family Donates Significant Artifacts for the Jewish Museum of Rhodes

During the past year two separate (and related) Codron families have shared their precious heirlooms with the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation*. The family of Ray and Cheryl Codron of Johannesburg has donated the original Diploma from the Rabbinical College of Rhodes of Shemtov Codron. The family of Ray and Becky Codron of Los Angeles has donated two original passports. These original items are currently on display at the *Jewish Museum of Rhodes*.



1933 diploma of Shemtov, the son of Isaac Codron, from the Rabbinical College of Rhodes. It certifies that he graduated the class of Religion and the Hebrew Language. The diploma is written in the Italian and Hebrew languages.



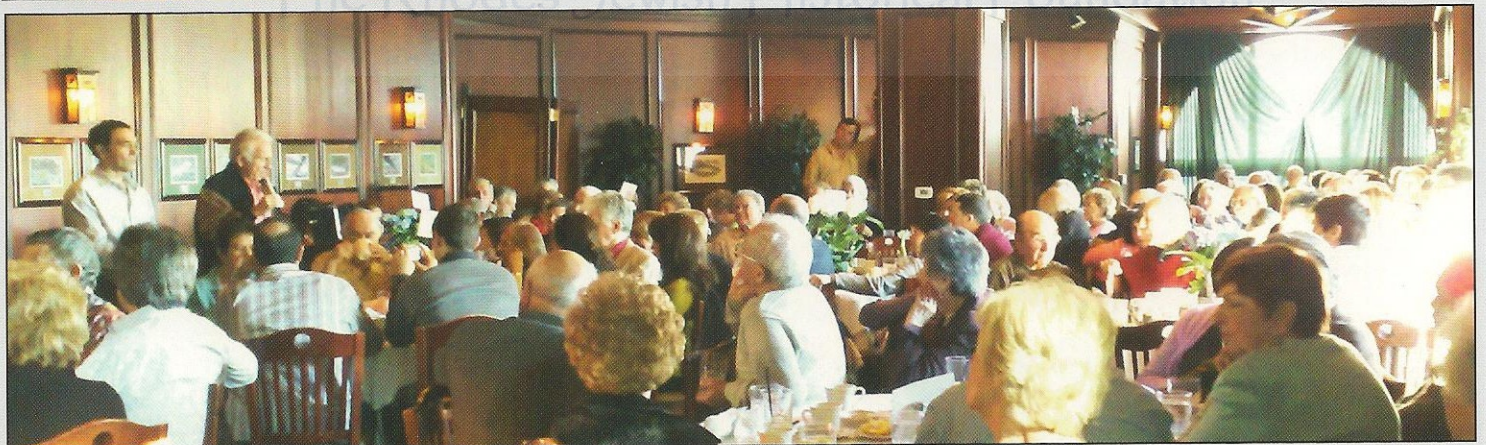
1919 passport of Rachel Capelluto Pisanti with daughters, Rebecca and Luisa. Luisa later married Haim (Victor) Codron.

2008 Award in Beverly Hills Honors the Preservation of Rhodes Jewish History



On January 13, 2008 at a luncheon in Beverly Hills, Aron Hasson was honored by the Rhodesli community of Los Angeles. The award presentation was in appreciation for the activities relating to his preservation of the Jewish history of Rhodes. The organizers of the luncheon were Shirlee Peha, Rae Cohen, Rose Benon, Sally Mann and Peggy Scapa.

Photo at the left is the presentation of the award by Clement Cohen and David Peha. In the foreground are the proud parents, Ted Hasson and Pearle Benon Hasson.



Interim Report: Jews of Rhodes DNA Project

By Robert Rubin Mayo, M.D., M.A.

November 7, 2008: The purpose of the Jews of Rhodes Project is to try to identify the original 50 families who were Iberian, Italian, and Romaniote Jews that existed in Rhodes in 1522. This will be done by studying the paternal lines (using Y DNA testing) and the maternal lines (using mitochondrial DNA testing) of Jews whose families had lived on the Island of Rhodes.

The Jews of Rhodes Project has had an incredible start. Over the past year, 46 people have enrolled. Thirty-one people have completed Y-DNA tests to ascertain more about their paternal lineages (father's father's father... etc.). Twenty-one people have performed the mitochondrial DNA tests to discern more about their maternal lineages (mother's mother's mother... etc.).

Of those people evaluated to date were several participants having the same surname: 2 Alhadeffs, 2 Benvenistes, 2 Hanans, 2 Hazans, 2 Israels, 4 De Mayo/Mayos, 3 Menashes, 2 Pizantes, and 3 Russos. Each group of people listed above, who have the same surname, were found to descend from a common male ancestor, that is, they were from the same family, generations ago.

There are 5 groups of people who have mitochondrial DNA matches. Each group descends from a distinct female ancestor along the maternal lines. One group was composed of 4 individuals. The oldest female ancestors along the maternal lines in that group were Reina Israel, Behora Miriam Nahmias (daughter of Behora Tamar), and Mazaltov Piha. Each of these women, who lived 150 to 250 years ago, are connected to a common female ancestor going back in time along the maternal branches of their families. The outcome of this group suggests that their common maternal ancestor likely lived in Rhodes before the year 1700.

Of the men tested, ancestors along the paternal lines of their families tended to have originated a few thousand years ago from Northern Africa and the Ottoman Empire. Along the maternal lines of the individuals (men and women), their ancestors originated from Europe, Western Asia, Northeastern Africa, and the Mediterranean area.

Surnames of Participants in the Y DNA Study: Alhadeff, Altabet, Benon/Benoun, Benveniste, Berro, Codron, Coen/Cohen, De Mayo, Franco, Hanan, Hasson, Hazan/Jazan, Israel, Levi/Levy, Mayo, Menashe, Notrica, Palombo, Pisante/Pizanti, Rousso/Russo, Surmani, Taranto, Treves.

Additional Surnames of Participants in the Mitochondrial DNA Study: Almeleh, Amato, Capelluto, Galante, Hagiez, Halfon, Mizrahi, Nahmias, Navarro, Piha, Rozanes, Tarica, Touriel/Turiel.

By means of this investigation, many people have discovered new cousins and have been able to trace their ancestors back many more generations. If you are not already a participant, you can become involved in this project by e-mailing me at bob_rubin@hotmail.com.

"De Aqui ... y ... De Alla"

A new publication has been launched by the *Sephardi Hebrew Congregation of Cape Town*. It is called "Kaminando y Avlando" ("walking and talking") and the first issue came out in October 2008. It includes information regarding community events as well as interesting insights into culture and religious tradition. Congratulations! For more information their email address is: sephardi@telkomsa.net

On August 27, 2008 the *Chalom Temple* in **Buenos Aires** sponsored a memorial service for the Holocaust victims of Rhodes, Cos, Salonica and other Sepharadim massacred during World War II. Speakers included Michael Christides (the Greek Ambassador to Argentina), Dr. Angel Schindel, David Galante, Pedro Malewicz, Judge Daniel Rafecas and Marcelo Benveniste.

On December 10, 2008 the *Congregation Ezra Bessaroth* in **Seattle** held a celebration called "Una Noche en Rhodes" in appreciation of Sephardic culture and heritage. The entire hall was magnificently transformed "to resemble Rhodes as our grandparents remembered" and the evening included Sephardic music and entertainment.

Special Thanks

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation would like to thank all of those families who have shared their photos and personal treasures with us for our archives, displays and exhibits.

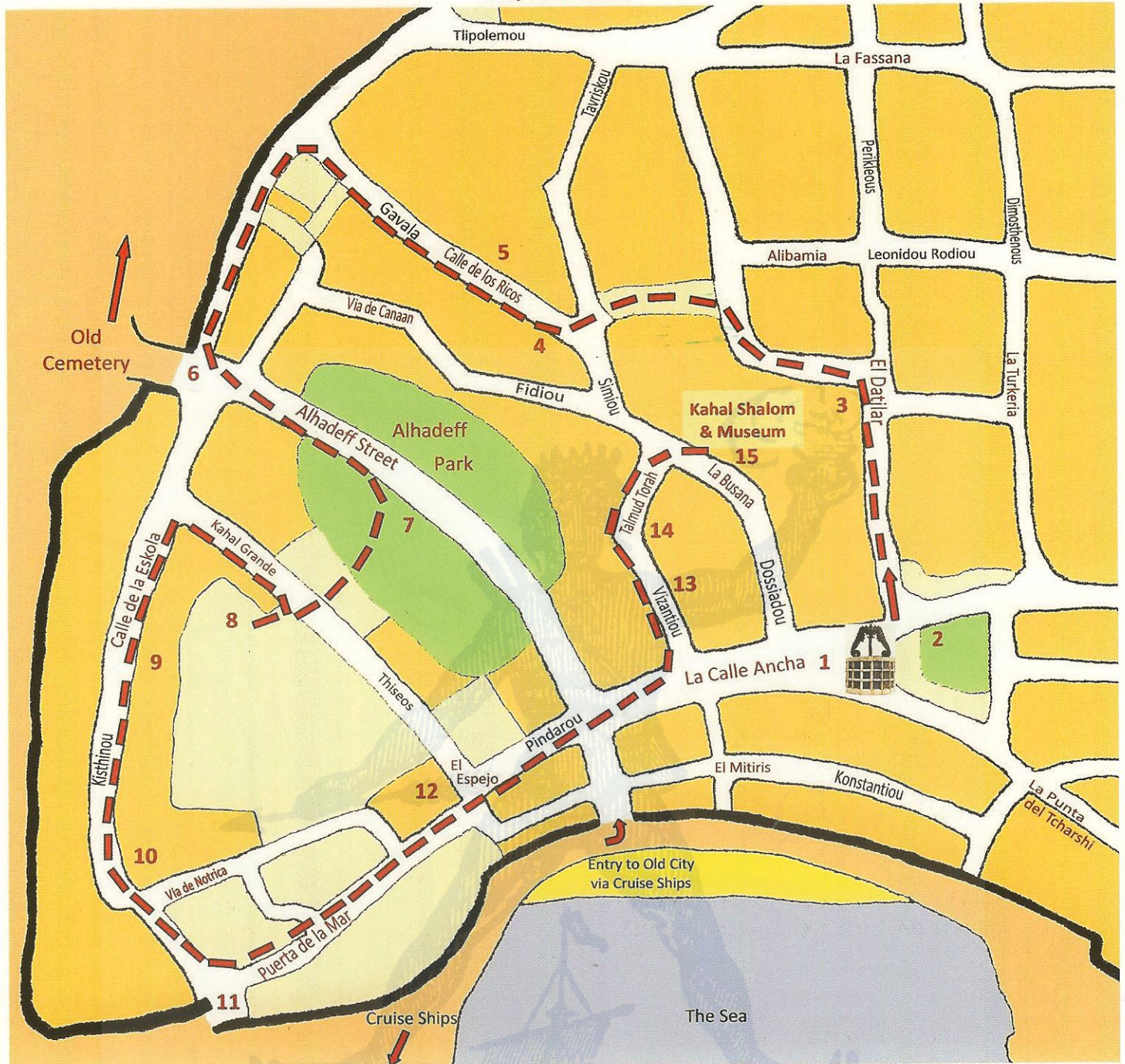
The *Foundation* is always interested in acquiring additional photos, documents, clothing and various artifacts from Rhodes for its archives, traveling exhibits and museum displays. Please contact us if you would like to share your personal treasures with future generations. Our email address is: info@rhodesjewishmuseum.org

Walking Tour Map of the Jewish Quarter Created

Most of the visitors to the Old City of Rhodes do not realize the Jewish presence that existed before the War. Many of the landmarks are gone making it difficult to appreciate what existed. Therefore, in order to help people learn of this history, I have prepared a map with the primary Jewish landmarks. The source of this information is from Joseph Alhadeff and Stella Levi. In June 2008 I submitted this tour map to the Jewish Community of Rhodes with notes of explanation to promote organized daily tours. It is also on the web site of the Jewish Museum of Rhodes located at www.rhodesjewishmuseum.org

Tour of the Jewish Quarter of Rhodes

© By Aron Hasson



Points of Interest:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>1. Calle Ancha</p> <p>2. Holocaust Memorial</p> <p>3. Notrica Plaques</p> <p>4. Alhadeff Ladino Plaque</p> <p>5. Kahal de los Ricos</p> | <p>6. Old Cemetery</p> <p>7. Alhadeff Park & Street</p> <p>8. Kahal Grande</p> <p>9. Alliance Israelite School</p> <p>10. Notrica Community Building</p> | <p>11. La Puerta de la Mar</p> <p>12. Rabbinical College</p> <p>13. Plaque of 1767</p> <p>14. Kahal Midrash</p> <p>15. Kahal Shalom & Museum</p> |
|--|--|--|

Street names in **red** are those used by the Jewish community before the War. Street names in **black** are the current Greek names.