

חברה שלום והולכי קדימה



מוסיידאד פאם אי פרוגריסו

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"KE HABER?"

Newsletter for the Year 2011 Describing "What Is New" Regarding Rhodes Jewish History

By Aron Hasson

Welcome to the seventh publication of the "Ke Haber?" newsletter by the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation*. The *Foundation* continues 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.

Sephardic Presence in Rhodes Discovered Before the Spanish Expulsion of 1492

Recent historical resources I have come across reveal definitive evidence of an early Sephardic Jewish presence in Rhodes. This confirms the previous general knowledge that the Sephardic Jews were established in Rhodes long before the Spanish Expulsion of 1492.

Let's start with some background history which existed in Spain. During the Jewish presence in the Iberian Peninsula there were several serious waves of persecution against the Jews during the 1200s, 1300s and 1400s which resulted in Jews leaving for other more hospitable lands.

In particular, about a hundred years before the well known Expulsion of 1492 there was an earlier tragic period in Spain known as the Great Riots of 1391. These anti-Jewish riots included the destruction of synagogues, the killing of Jews, the conversion of Jews to Christianity and expulsion. The worst hit cities included Toledo, Seville and Barcelona.

One of the most prominent families in the northeast region of Spain at that time was the Gracian family. I have pieced together rare historical sources to conclude that this Sephardic family became one of the most important Jewish families in Rhodes during the 1400s.

1. Researching 14th and 15th Century Spanish Manuscripts

Located in a Court Order #276 in Saragossa, Spain on January 16, 1391 by King Juan I, is a noteworthy penal sentence regarding a decree of safe conduct issued to **Yitzhak Gracian**. It states, "King Juan I, concedes to Yitzhak Gracian, Jew of Barcelona, a safe conduct for one year... during this safe conduct... you together with all your goods may be able to go safely, equally and securely..."¹

Another document located in the "Archives of the Cathedral of Barcelona" contains a record of financial transactions. Two intriguing documents soon after 1400 relate to the previous ownership of properties. They state the income amounts received for two properties adjacent to each other, and also indicates the names of the former owners of the properties as a **Yitzhak Gracian** and the other property next door was owned by a **Moshe Gracian**.² Thus, we could assume that these two people were related and they sold their properties after the Great Riots of 1391. These same two names are found together regarding the authorship of the famous Siddur of Rhodes written in 1426.

2. Reviewing the Ancient Siddur of Rhodes of 1426

The cover story of the 2009 "Ke Haber?" newsletter featured the "Ancient Siddur of Rhodes", the oldest known Hebrew document of Rhodes. A section of the Siddur (shown below) states: "With the help of G-d, here in the city of Rhodes, by my hand ... **Moshe**, son of **Yitzhak Gracian**, the 24th day of Tevet, the year 5186 (1426)".³



Siddur section stating it was written by Gracian in Rhodes in 1426.

I believe that the author of the Siddur is from the same prominent Gracian family from Spain. (continued next page...)

¹ Shaltiel-Gracian, Moshe, *The Shaltiel Manuscripts, Catalunya 1061-1481*. iUniverse, Inc., New York, 2004.

² Ibid. Relating to transactions between 1400 and 1405.

³ "Ke Haber?" newsletter published by the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation*, Los Angeles, California; 2009 issue.

Sephardic Presence in Rhodes Discovered Before the Spanish Expulsion of 1492 (continued)

I provided a copy of the Siddur of Rhodes to Sephardic Rabbi Yossi Azose who reviewed it and he remarked: "I find it very interesting that the starting point of this Siddur, the very first line, is a reference to a 9th century "teshuvah" written by Rav Natronai Gaon to the community in Spain about the requirement to say 100 berakhot per day".¹

At first I thought it surprising that this Gracian family fleeing Christian Spain would settle in Rhodes, an island occupied by the Crusaders. Then I began imagining where additional nexuses could be found, recognizing that this family was well educated and therefore was likely well connected with other Jews in the aristocracy.

With additional research I learned of an influential Jewish family in Aragon, Spain during the 1360s to 1390s, which consisted of Don Vidal and Benvenist de la Cavalleria, who were prominent in the financial affairs of the government. This family involved itself with the moneys related to arming the cavalry on behalf of the king and was appointed deputy as the head of the Order of St. John in Rhodes.² The Crusaders of Rhodes had a military unit (called a "tongue") from Aragon. Therefore, a link is imagined of Jewish families, possibly including the Gracians, of receiving special treatment to travel with the cavalry to Rhodes as a specific place of refuge.

3. Researching the Hospitaller Knights of Rhodes

The scholar and author, Anthony Luttrell, has compiled considerable writings about the Crusader hospital on Rhodes, including details of how the hospital treated war casualties. It mentions that: in 1427 the Jewish doctor **Vitale Gratiano** received a papal license to practice for the Hospital on Christian patients.³

Secondly, it is described that in 1445, following the Mamluk attacks on Rhodes, "the Master, somewhat exceptionally, conferred a medical degree, following a lengthy examination, allowing a Jewish doctor, **Jacuda Gratiano**, *fiscus et professor artis medicine* who was the son of another Jewish doctor, to practise in the hospital after taking an oath on the Jewish holy scriptures".

This spelling of "Gratiano" is very similar to "Gracian" and is likely related to the family mentioned in this article. The extended family also spelled their name as Graciani, and are also known as having settled in Rome, Venice, Sicily, Candia (Crete), Salonica and Alexandria.

4. Discovering Archives of the Kahal Grande

In May 2010 I located another piece of this puzzle in Jerusalem which relates to a rare document which reveals an ancient inscription on a plaque of the Kahal Grande synagogue in Rhodes. It is a Hebrew inscription likely from the 1480s regarding the donation of monies to rebuild the damaged synagogue.⁴ The Hebrew plaque states that "Sarah, widow of Rabbi **Yitzhak Gracian**, made this donation...".⁵

The inscription also states that the donation is to "atone for redemption of their souls" ("kapat nefashot"). This phrase was used when a Jew renounced his ancestral faith and then returned to Judaism, which would likely have occurred during the Gracian family's persecution in Spain.



May 2010: Researching ancient books at the Ben Zvi Institute in Jerusalem. The library has many books that were taken to Jerusalem from Rhodes for safe keeping both before and after the Holocaust.

Additional Thoughts About This Article

This newly discovered evidence is significant because previously there was no specific evidence of Sephardic presence in Rhodes until after the 1520s. Another thought I have about this new historical information: is it possible that this same prominent Gracian family carried with them to Rhodes the famous "800 Year Old Torah" that we exhibited in numerous communities several years ago?

My research is still ongoing and will be reported upon in the next issue of "Ke Haber?"

¹ Rabbi Yossi Azose of New York; January 29, 2009 email.

² Baer, Yitzhak, "A History of the Jews in Christian Spain", Volume 2. The Jewish Publication Society of America. 1966.

³ Luttrell, Anthony, The Hospitaller State on Rhodes and its Western Provinces, 1306-1462. The article is called: The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition: 1291-1530.

⁴ In 1480 and 1481 Rhodes suffered both a devastating earthquake and the unsuccessful Ottoman Siege. As a result, the synagogue needed restoration.

⁵ Sonne, Isaia, "Relazione sul materiale archivistico e bibliografico della Comunità Israelitica di Rodi," typewritten text dated October 12, 1929, Ben Zvi Institute, Jerusalem.

Ancient Archives of the Menashe Yeshiva of Rhodes Located in Jerusalem

Rhodes maintained a Yeshiva (seminary) which was a place for religious dialogue and learning. The only surviving yeshiva existing up to World War II was the Menashe Yeshiva and was located next to the Kahal Shalom synagogue.

Since the end of World War II the whereabouts of the Menashe Yeshiva library were a mystery which has now been solved. In October 2009 the *Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation* was informed of a 1945 newspaper article (shown on the right) which referred to the collection of the Menashe Yeshiva.

The article was sent to me by a Rhodesli descendant, Leon Taranto, of Washington, D.C. The article reports that during the 1945 British occupation of Rhodes, Jewish soldiers collected 80 cases of books and transported them to the library of the Hebrew University at Mount Scopus.

I arranged a trip to Jerusalem during May 2010 to view, analyze and create an inventory of these books as well as obtain copies of some of the unique documents. I created a three person committee of Isaac Menashe, Rabbi Shelton Donnell and myself for this purpose.

The library contacts were made by Isaac Menashe, a descendant of the founder of the Yeshiva. Isaac discovered that the yeshiva books were transferred to the Manuscripts Department of the National Library of Israel, located at the Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University. When we arrived at the library, the three of us were met by four representatives of the library who gave us a 30 minute explanation of the contents of the Menashe Yeshiva collection.

Rabbi Shelton Donnell, who is also a Rhodesli descendant of the Notrica and BarDavid families was our religious specialist. He was able to analyze the importance of the books, many of which were in Rashi script, to help recognize the most precious items of the library. One of the unique manuscripts that the Rabbi recognized was a notebook in Solitreo (Ladino handwriting) consisting of a record of the "mitzvot" and "alioi" written in the 1870's apparently by the "gabbai" of the Kahal Shalom.

The books also included religious manuscripts and prayer books which are centuries old, for example: commentaries on the Talmud, weekly sermons and "responsa" (question and answers relating to religious practices).

Article from the September 23, 1945 issue of the Palestine Post:

RHODES LIBRARY FOR MOUNT SCOPUS

Eighty cases of books, forming the bulk of the local library of the Jewish Theological Seminary at Rhodes, whose community of 3,000 souls was massacred almost to the last man, have arrived at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem.

The books were discovered by Palestinian Jewish soldiers when the British forces entered Rhodes and at their request the military authorities presented the 2,500 books to the Hebrew University, arranging for the transportation.

The Rhodes Collection, first to have been received by the University Library since the war, consists mainly of rabbinical literature, such as commentaries on the Bible and the Talmud, Responsa, and sermons.

Most of the books, accumulated over several centuries, were printed in Salonica, Istanbul, Izmir (Smyrna), and Leuborn, and include some dating back to the first half of the 16th century. A Jewish community is known to have existed in Rhodes as early as 110 B.C. and was for centuries famed as a seat of learning.



May 2010: Isaac Menashe, Rabbi Shelton Donnell and Aron Hasson reviewing the Menashe Yeshiva books located in the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem.

Other significant books from Rhodes were tracked down by Isaac Menashe at another library in Jerusalem, the Ben-Zvi Institute. Records and notebooks from Rhodes from the 1700's to the 1930's have also been archived at this location. Some of the more remarkable documents consist of the Jewish community's tax ledgers, school records and cemetery relocation information.

These discoveries offer a valuable resource for people interested in Rhodesli history, culture and genealogy.

Jews of Rhodes Living in Israel During the Early 1800s

The following is a partial list of Rhodesli Jews who were living in Israel during the early 1800s. The list is extracted from the informative "1839 Montefiore Census". The census recorded country of origin, occupation and included personal and family particulars. This is an interesting type of evidence showing the important link between Rhodes and the Holy Land, as well as providing a genealogical source of information.



Sample of the census page

Sir Moses Montefiore was a famous British Sephardic Jew who donated large sums of money to promote industry, education and health amongst the Jewish community in Palestine, also known as "Eretz Israel". In addition, he conducted a registration of Jews living in the land of Israel. The list was initially handwritten in various scripts and in 2008 translated into Hebrew and English by the Israel Genealogical Society under the auspices of the Montefiore Endowment and is now accessible on the Internet.¹



Sir Moses Montefiore

Clearly, there were more Jews from Rhodes who moved to Israel, making "aliyah"², but if the record did not distinctly state that the person was born in Rhodes, then I did not include the person in the list below.

The motives to leave Rhodes included religious studies, employment and the religious desire to die in the Holy Land.

City	Family Name	First Name	Parents Name	Age	Sex	Aliyah Year	Marital Status	Occupation	Status	Children
Tiberias	Alhadeff	Avraham		39	M		married		average	David, Ester, Shmuel
Nablus	Alhadeff	Avraham	Yosef	15	M	1836		prepares tobacco		
Nablus	Alhadeff	Dina		20	F	1836	married		poor	
Nablus	Alhadeff	Moshe	Yosef	20	M	1836	single	prepares tobacco	poor	
Nablus	Alhadeff	Shmuel	Avraham		M					
Nablus	Alhadeff	Yosef		60	M	1836	married	prepares tobacco	poor	Moshe
Safed	Alhadeff	Shemtov		35	M		married	caretaker	poor	
Jerusalem	Berro	Aslan		70	M	1829	married	student	poor	
Jerusalem	Berro	Yosef		70	M	1836	married		average	
Jerusalem	Capeluto	Yaakov		28	M	1809	married	student	poor	Rahamim, Nissim
Jerusalem	Capeluto	Yitzhak		70	M	1832	married	student	average	Nissim, Barukh
Jerusalem	Codron	Bulisa	Aharon	8	F	1836	orphan	servant	poor	
Jerusalem	Codron	Dulsa		45	F		widow		poor	
Safed	Cohen	Abraham		40	M	1822	married	donkey driver	poor	
Jerusalem	Cohen	Lea		40	F	1829	widow		poor	
Jerusalem	Cohen	Veneziana		55	F	1827	widow		average	
Jerusalem	Franco	Rafael	Eliezer	40	M	1834	married		poor	Nissim, Moshe, Aron, Miriam, Rahel
Jerusalem	Hanan	Shmuel		35	M	1836	married	baker's helper	very poor	
Jerusalem	Hanan	Sol		58	F	1827	widow		poor	
Jerusalem	Hanan	Natan		55	M	1833	married		poor	
Jerusalem	Israel	Mordehai		25	M	1824	married	student	poor	Aron, Moshe
Jerusalem	Menashe	Jamila		60	F	1817	widow	milling	average	
Safed	Nahmias	Eliezer		20	M	1810	widower	donkey driver	poor	Rahel
Jerusalem	Shemaria	Behor		35	M	1829	married	servant	average	
Jerusalem	Shemaria	Matiahuh		16	M	1832	orphan	student		
Jerusalem	Shulem	Michael		50	M	1809	married	student	poor	
Jerusalem	Shulem				F		married			
Jerusalem	Tarica	Behor		60	M	1829	married	student	average	
Jerusalem	Tarica	Estreya		55	F		widow		poor	
Jerusalem	Tarica	Yosef		70	M		married		poor	

¹ <http://www.montefioreendowment.org.uk/census/>

² "Aliyah" relates to the Judaic religious tenet and right of returning to the land of Israel.

The Rothschild Family Supplied Critical Help with the Blood Libel of 1840 & Building Schools in Rhodes

The Rhodes blood libel was an infamous 1840 event against Jews, in which the Greek Orthodox community accused Jews on the island of Rhodes of the ritual murder of a Christian boy who disappeared in February of that year. The government arrested several Jewish subjects, some of whom were tortured and made false confessions. It blockaded the entire Jewish quarter for twelve days. The Jewish community of Rhodes appealed for help from other Jewish communities.

Salomon Mayer von Rothschild was the head of the famous banking family in Vienna. Having a close relation with the Austrian chancellor due to his role in raising financing for the Austrian Empire, Rothschild exerted his influence to send delegations to argue the case on behalf of the Jewish community with the authorities in charge. The chancellor instructed his delegation "to tip the wink to the Turkish regime, so that they instruct the Pasha of Rhodes accordingly and that you let [our] vice-consul in Rhodes know that in such cases he should work in the spirit of sensible mediation." After a few difficult months, the evidence of the case was presented and the government sent orders to release the Jewish prisoners.



Salomon Mayer von Rothschild (1774-1855)

Sir Moses Montefiore also personally assisted the Jewish community of Rhodes regarding this blood libel after the results of the decision.¹ Montefiore made arrangements to meet with the Sultan in Constantinople, Pasha Reshid, and through that meeting a *firman*² was issued denouncing the blood libel. Montefiore's meeting with the sultan took place at the palace where he read aloud a formal address in which he thanked the sultan for his stand in the Rhodes case. In turn, the sultan assured his guests that their request would be granted. The *firman* was delivered on November 7, 1840, and a copy was subsequently provided to the Haham Bashi.³

Building the "Bet Yakov" Talmud Torah in 1864



This plaque is currently located inside a building situated in the Alhadeff park.

In 1864 a new "talmud torah" school was built with monies donated by **Baron James (Jacob) de Mayer Rothschild**, the French financier. It was called "Bet Yakov" (the House of Jacob), named after its donor. Its purpose was to develop an educational institution for boys that would assist the Jewish community in bringing its youth to the academic standards of Western Europe. Forty years later, his son, Baron Edmond Rothschild visited Rhodes and established the "*Alliance Israelite Universelle*" school (see below).



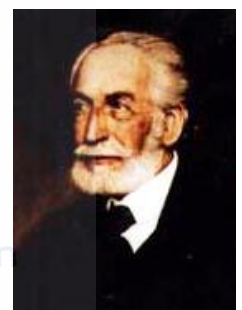
James Rothschild (1792-1868)

Building the Alliance Israelite Universelle School in 1904



The dedication plaque is located at the top of the memorial.

During an August 1903 visit to Rhodes, **Baron Edmond de Rothschild** donated 15,000 francs to build the school, which was completed at the end of 1904. Initially the school taught French, although later during the Italian occupation, the school changed its name to "*Scuole Israelitiche Italiani*" and Italian was taught. Different from previous schools in Rhodes, the school was attended not only by boys, but girls as well. The large two story building was damaged during the bombings of World War II and eventually came down during the 1960's. It is located along Kisthinou Street which used to be called Calle de la Eskola.



Edmond Rothschild (1845-1934)

¹ In 1812, Montefiore married Judith Cohen, the daughter of Levi Barent Cohen. Her sister, Henriette (Hannah), married **Nathan Mayer Rothschild** (1777-1836), for whom Montefiore's firm acted as stockbrokers.

² A *firman* is a decree issued by a sovereign in certain historical Islamic states.

³ Diaries of Sir Moses Montefiore. Belford-Clarke Co., Chicago. 1890.

"Ke Pekado"

"Un Historiku" of two brothers: Behor Boaz and Moshe Turiel

Behor Boaz was a successful merchant working in his family's business. He worked with his father importing merchandise to Rhodes from the Turkish mainland where his father had a business in Megre (Fethiye).

His brother, Moshe excelled academically in "La Juderia" and earned the extraordinary achievement of being sent to study medicine in the United States at Columbia University in New York city at the beginning of the 1900's. He returned to Rhodes where he practiced medicine and was highly revered. The community was very proud of him having earned an American education from one of the most prestigious medical schools in the world and returning to serve the Jewish community.



The two Turiel brothers (l to r): Behor Boaz and Moshe

Their mother, Jamila, had died in the childbirth of Moshe in 1886. Because of that experience Moshe specialized in obstetrics. In 1911, the two sons commissioned a memorial on the east wall of the Kahal Shalom synagogue. It is located between the two arks for the Torahs, above the doorway and is inscribed in gold paint on white marble.



Turiel Family Plaque at the Kahal Shalom

A portion of the memorial is inscribed in Ladino:

"En memoria de sus defunta madre muerta en la flor de su mansevez. De sus hijos: Behor Boaz Turiel y Doctor Moshe Turiel"

The remainder of the plaque, which is inscribed alternately in Hebrew and in "Ladino" words, translates as follows:

"These arks were consecrated for the elevation of the soul of their mother, who died in the prime of her life. With God's help, a memorial gift. Jamila, daughter of Rahel, wife of Mister Eliakim Turiel. To the Kahal Kadosh Shalom, Rhodes, 28 Iyar 5671 (1911). In memory of their deceased mother, who died in the flower of her youth. From her sons: Behor Boaz Turiel and Doctor Moshe Turiel. "Hayiah" (may they live a long life)."

In 1914, Dr. Moshe Turiel was assisting a patient who had a contagious and deadly disease and unfortunately the doctor also contracted the disease from the patient. While Moshe was bedridden, his brother Boaz visited Moshe to comfort him and tragically he also caught the disease. Shortly thereafter both brothers died, Moshe on the 20th of Av 5674 (1914) and Boaz one week later on the 27th of Av 5674 (1914).

The two brothers are buried next to each other in row 4 of the Jewish cemetery in Rhodes.



The translation from Hebrew of Moshe's tombstone states: "Mourning Moshe. Bitter eulogy about you my son. Blossoming ... how did you get plucked so quickly? ... you were ... learned in Judaism and you were a professional doctor and generous ... I am the father, Eliakim, writing with a tear on the death of a son, the well known doctor, always sought after, Dr. Moshe Turiel, son of Jamila. 20th of Av, 5674 (1914). May his soul be bound in the bond of life."

The story and photographs were obtained from interviews during April 2010 of the descendants: Bernard Turiel of New Jersey and Bernard Fresco of Toronto, Canada.

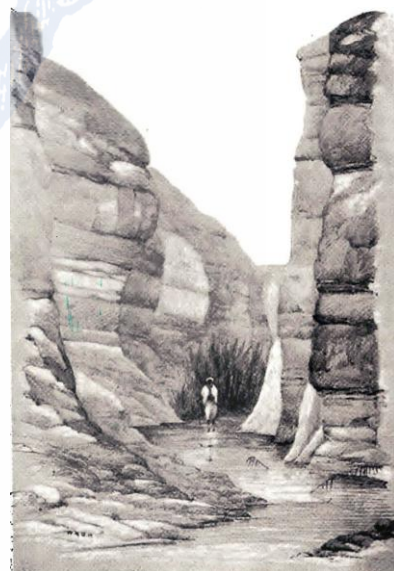
Who's Buried at St. Paul's Cathedral in London? "Ken Sabe"?

St. Paul's Cathedral was designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the 17th century. Important services are held there and the church contains many tombs of prominent people including Horatio Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington and a memorial for Lawrence of Arabia. Another person buried there is "Behor Hasson of Rhodes".... A Dio!



Here's the story: In 1882 there was a British expedition to the Sinai Desert led by Captain William Gill, Lieutenant Harold Charrington and Professor Edward Palmer. The purpose of the expedition was to secure the newly completed Suez Canal by enlisting the support of local Sheikhs against rebellious Arab tribes. The delegation hired two assistants on the trip, a Syrian named Khalil Atik and Behor Hasson. Hasson's family moved from the island of Rhodes to Jaffa at the beginning of the 19th century. Hasson was living in Jaffa (Israel) at the time and was hired by the British expedition as a cook.

On August 11, 1882, the expedition had advanced about 30 miles east of Suez to a ravine called Wadi Sadr. A gang of about 25 Bedouin tribesmen ambushed the group, captured them and disarmed them, including Hasson, the cook. They were lined up in front of a gully and behind each man a Bedouin with a gun was positioned. The executions were intended to be simultaneous, with the bodies falling into the gully, but before the signal to fire was given, one of the Bedouins shot Palmer. In the confusion that followed the other four prisoners made a break for it, but they were all captured, shot and finished off by sword. At the right is a sketch of the Wadi Sadr from the 1894 book "Man-Hunting in the Desert"¹.



Since there was no communication for a while, a search party was sent out led by Colonel Charles Warren. As Warren stated: *"The bones were much scattered over the bed of the gully, there were traces of blood, showing that one or more of the party must have been killed or wounded."* The remains of the victims were transported back to London for a ceremonial burial.



At the left is the copper plaque² at St. Paul's Cathedral which is inscribed with the following to honor the three British men: *"Who when traveling on public duty into the Sinai desert were treacherously and cruelly slain in the Wadi Sadr, August 11th, 1882. Their remains after the lapse of many weeks, having been partially recovered and brought to England, were deposited here with Christian rites, April 6th 1883. This tablet has been erected by the country in whose service they perished, to commemorate their names, their worth and their fate. That tragic fate was shared by two faithful attendants, the Syrian Khalil Atik and the Hebrew Behor Hasson, whose remains lie with theirs."*

The British government paid to the Hasson family in Jaffa, his wife Hannah and 4 children (Vida, Mercada, Rachel and Haya) the sum of 300 pound sterling compensation. The public archives in London contain the correspondence between the Hasson family and the British government regarding the compensation³.

At the right is a portrait of Behor Hasson. The portrait was provided by Yacov Gershon, the great-grandson of Behor Hasson, who now lives in Israel.



¹ "Man-Hunting in the Desert" (1882, 1883) by Alfred E. Haynes. Horace Cox, Windsor House, 1894.

² The image of the copper plaque is courtesy of the Public Relations Department of St. Paul's Cathedral.

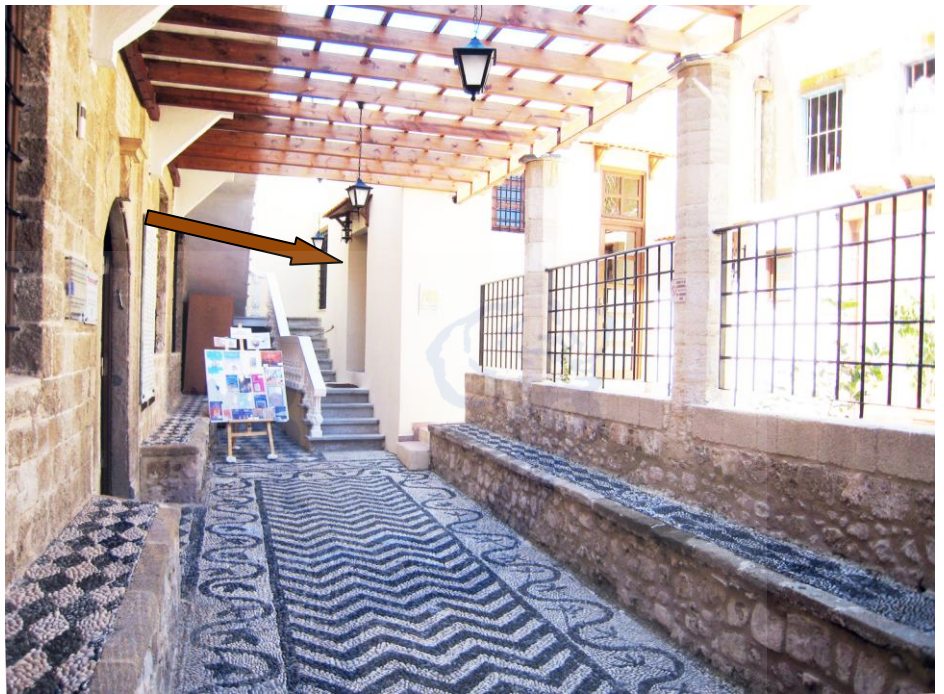
³ Jerusalem Post, December 14, 1956; Jerusalem Israel.

New Location for the Administrative Offices of the Jewish Community of Rhodes

During 2010, the Jewish Community of Rhodes moved its administrative offices to a building located next to the Kahal Shalom synagogue, museum and library. This valuable improvement was undertaken by the President of the Jewish Community of Rhodes, Bella Angel Restis, who provided extraordinary efforts. This is another special achievement which she has accomplished.

For decades the office was a 5 minute walk away from the synagogue which made it difficult to coordinate affairs. This creates a more efficient layout for coordinating the activities of the synagogue, museum, library and offices.

The new street mailing address is:
Jewish Community of Rhodes
Dossiadou and Simiou Streets (Old City)
Rhodes, Dodecanese, GREECE 85100



The entry courtyard ("cortijo") to the Kahal Shalom synagogue. The arrow indicates the entry to the new administrative offices.

The New Office Reveals a New Historical Fact

Upon the restoration of the room, an ancient plaque was uncovered. It is a plaque recognizing the donation of the Moshe Menashe Yeshiva, stating that it was built in 1838.

Before Restoration the plaque was painted over:

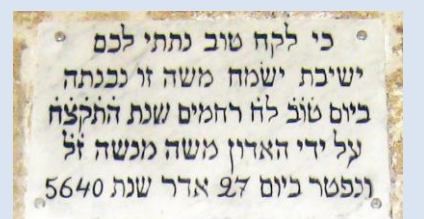


After Restoration the plaque is revealed:



The Menashe Yeshiva plaque revealed above and shown at the right, dated 1838:

Translation from Hebrew into English: "For I have given you a good lesson. This Yeshiva (called) "Yismach Moshe" (Moshe Rejoices) was built on the 17th day of the month of mercy (Elul), the year 5598 (1838) by Mr. Moshe Menashe, of blessed memory who passed away on the 27th of Adar, the year 5640 (1880).



Unveiling of Holocaust Victim Names

On July 23, 2009 at the Kahal Shalom synagogue in Rhodes a ceremony was conducted unveiling a list of the individual names of the Holocaust victims of Rhodes and Cos. The idea of this project is from Stella Levi, whose family was among the approximate 1600 victims. The ceremony and accompanying events were arranged by the President of the Jewish Community of Rhodes, Bella Angel Restis, who also spoke at the unveiling. Stella Levi was introduced by Carmen Cohen, the Director and then prior to the unveiling, Stella gave a sentimental explanation of the importance of the individualization of each victim, adding significance for each soul.

At the right are Stella Levi and Sami Modiano displaying the newly unveiled listing of names of the Holocaust victims of Rhodes and Cos.



The Administration of the Jewish Community of Rhodes

The new Administration consists of Bella Angel Restis (President), Benjamin Albalas (Vice-President), Dino Benroubi (Secretary General) and Andrew Mordoh as the Advisory Consultant. Carmen Cohen continues as Director. Due to the unfortunate passing of Aaron Fornis, the Committee has substituted him with Mr. Dino Benroubi as Secretary General.

Lucia Modiano Sulam served as the caretaker ("shamash") of the Kahal Shalom synagogue for over 20 years. She passed away in April 2010. Her contribution to the Jewish community is well recognized and will be remembered.



The Most Common Names in Rhodes

Around 1920 the administration of the Jewish Community of Rhodes was compiling a family registration of the Jewish population. A house to house registration of the Juderia was made containing over 1,100 families. The most common names based on the names of the head of households were: **Hasson** (89 families), **Israel** (84 families), **Alhadeff** (69 families), **Menashe** (60 families), **Capelouto** (52 families) and **Franco** (45 families). Below is a list of almost all of the families registered, listed alphabetically by name, then with the number of families listed in the registration:

Alaluff 1	Beraha 2	Codron 16	Franco 45	Levi 39	Pilosof 5	Shemaria 15
Algranati 1	Berro 10	Cohen 38	Gabriel 3	Mallel 1	Pizanti 11	Sidis 7
Alhadeff 69	BenVeniste 23	Cordova 10	Galante 13	Mayo 5	Rahamim 3	Sonsol 1
Alkana 9	BenAtar 26	Cori 3	Habib 9	Menashe 60	Revah 3	Soriano 21
Almeleh 9	BenNun 18	Coston 2	Haim 1	Merjian 1	Rosio 5	Sulam 2
Arughetti 4	Bitton 3	DaFano 1	Halfon 9	Mizrahi 14	Rozanes 1	Surmani 8
Angel 17	Buciuck 1	Danon 2	Hanan 37	Modiano 1	Russo 5	Taranto 5
Amato 28	Cabuli 1	DeLeon 14	Hasson 89	Mussafir 10	Sadis 6	Tarica 26
Avzaradel 7	Capuya 11	Ergas 1	Hazan 11	Nahmias 1	Saul 3	Treves 2
BarDavid 6	Capeluto 52	Eshkenasi 2	Hugnu 20	Notrica 24	Sciotti 1	Turiel 23
Barki 1	Capuano 2	Ferera 4	Israel 84	Palombo 1	Schami 2	Varon 2
Behar 1	Caraso 2	Fis 14	Jerusalmi 4	Pihas 24	Sharhon 22	Vital 1

“De Aki ... y ... De Aya”

Rhodesli Diaspora News

Seattle, Washington:

Congregation Ezra Bessaroth in Seattle celebrated its 100th Anniversary in August 2010 with a series of special events. The evening ceremony included a formal dinner banquet with Ladino music. The week prior included lectures by Rabbi Marc Angel as well as Dr. Aron Rodrigue. One of the special ceremonies included the proud unveiling in the congregation's courtyard of a replica of the Holocaust memorial which exists in the Square of the Martyred Jews on the island of Rhodes.



The 100th Anniversary commemorated the founding of the Rhodesli Jewish community of Seattle during the 1909 Sukot holiday. **Background:** Moved by the leadership of Haim DeLeon, a group of Rhodeslis formed the "Koupa Ozer Dalim Anshe Rhodes" (the fund for the aid of the poor people of Rhodes), with Solomon Alhadeff as president, Nessim Alhadeff as treasurer and Harry Franco as secretary. Funds were raised from the new Rhodesli immigrants in Seattle and were sent to the needy Jewish community of Rhodes.

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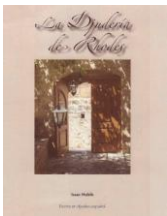
Vancouver, Canada:

On January 23, 2010 in **Vancouver** there was a “Ladino Night” celebration at the Sephardic synagogue, “Congregation Beth Hamidrash”. Hazan Isaac Azose (of Seattle) sang Ladino canticas to the appreciative audience which was followed by delicious Sephardic cuisine. The event was sponsored by Rosa, Nora and Lisette Ferera and families in honor of Elie Ferera. A slideshow of Rhodes and an update of what is new relating to the Jewish history of Rhodes was presented by Aron Hasson. At the right is Hazan Azose during his performance.



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Cape Town, South Africa:



On November 3, 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa there was a book launch of "La Djudería de Rhodes" by Isaac Habib. Isaac was inspired by the story of his mother, Lucia, to write this anthology of poems. The book is written in "Ladino" and eloquently describes life in Rhodes with literal translations into French and English and includes evocative photographs of the period. Photo courtesy of Jo Mallel.



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Jerusalem, Israel:

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation



On August 4, 2010, there was a memorial service for the Holocaust victims of Rhodes and Kos. The ceremony was held at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and was coordinated by Mario Soriano and Maggie Cohen of the Heritage of the Jews of Rhodes organization in Israel. Samuel Modiano, a survivor who promotes awareness of the Shoa, was a participant in this event along with others. Photos courtesy of Avraham Dudaie (of the Berro family).



“De Aki ... y ... De Aya”

Rhodesli Diaspora News

Lubumbashi, Congo:

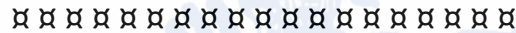


"The last service was done over 18 years ago... Never too late ..."

Purim 2010: Happy to show you that there was a "minyan" at the synagogue of Lubumbashi for reading the Megila and Minha.

Lecture of the "Megila" by Ronen Azulay, Minha recited by Ronen and Daniel Rosenblum (Levy). Also present: Yossi Hasson, Eddy, Phillip Rubbin, Abraham Pinhas, Benny, Eran Rosenblum (brother of Daniel), Yehudi Levy and Meir Levy.

(Thanks to Meir Levy and Jo Mallel for sharing this news item.)



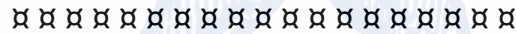
Buenos Aires, Argentina:



August 5, 2010: Daniel Gazit, Ambassador of Israel speaking about the Holocaust at the Rhodesli "Chalom Temple".



JULY 22, 2010: Marcelo Benveniste delivering a lecture about the "Ladino" language of Rhodes at the "International Congress of Dynamic Languages and Identities" in Resistencia, north of Buenos Aires.



Los Angeles, California:

Rhodesli Luncheon. Sunday, January 30, 2011 at the Del Rey Yacht Club in the Marina del Rey. The group gets together every couple months at a different venue around the area to accommodate the spread out community.



The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation

Special Thanks

The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation would like to thank the communities who have shared their events with us as well as 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

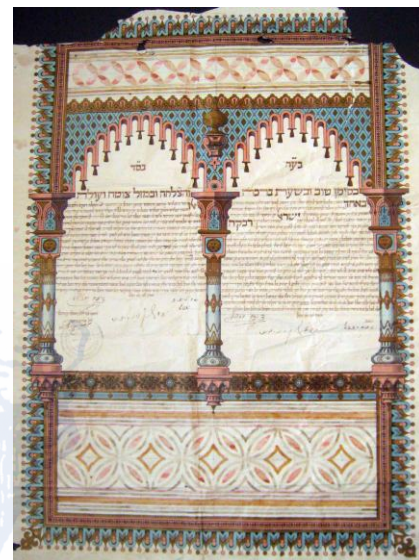
"The Wedding Stairway"

By Jeanette Benveniste



Since I was a small child, there were three things I loved to look at in my parents' house: a picture of my parents' (Harry and Rebecca Benveniste) wedding, an invitation written in French and a large "ketuba" (marriage agreement) written in Hebrew that my father's parents bought for him. In the picture, my parents are standing on a stairway surrounded by family and friends. It was the only place I had seen my paternal grandmother and my maternal grandfather.

My maternal grandmother immigrated to the United States in 1941, but she looked very different by then. The picture was taken in 1927 on the stairway to my father's family home in Rhodes.



Above is the wedding "ketuba" and below is their wedding invitation.

My dad told us that the house had been in the family for hundreds of years. His family lived in the upper part of the building while his cousin Behora's family lived downstairs. Behora and her husband Louis were the parents of my cousin, Shirlee Peha. I loved stories about the house and the wedding.

In 1974, I had the rare opportunity to go to Rhodes with my parents for two weeks. It was a dream come true. Many of their friends came from all over the world and, best of all, my uncle Marco Russo, my mother's brother, was there with his family from Paris. We went to all the places they knew as children. We also went to my mother's house near the Kal de Shalom.



Jeanette on stairway in 1974.

I stood on what was left of the stairway I had seen all my life in the wedding photo. My dad's house was near "La Puerta de la Mar" and had been bombed during World War II. During the same bombing, my grandmother, Rahel Benveniste was killed coming home from the Kal de Shalom on Passover.

We climbed what was left of the stairway. My dad told me that his mother would go down the stairway every morning to feed the animals. They had a stable in the back where the family trained donkeys and mules to be domesticated beasts of burden. How much that stairway had experienced during its time! Now it was in ruins. But I loved the way, even in the ruins, people planted flowers in cans all over the stairway. I was able to put a place to the address that was in the wedding invitation and I saw where they signed the "ketuba".

At the end of our stay in Rhodes, my father told me he and I had to go to the harbor where the "molinos" stood to see the whole town of Rhodes. He said to me, "abolta la cara" which means "turn your head and look back". This was what he always said as we left a place to insure that we would return. Because he had been suffering from a bad back, he also said to me, "I can no longer travel to see my island. So now you will have to be my eyes. You will have to come back to visit my island." And I did go back to his island!

Photo at the right: Harry and Rebecca Benveniste on their 50th wedding anniversary in Los Angeles with the "ketuba" that they had signed on their wedding day.

