

# NEWSLETTER 2018

## Starting from January.....

### Documentary on the three monotheistic religions on the island of Rhodes.

The students of a local High School , with the guidance of their teacher Mrs Ioanna Kliari, filmed a short a documentary based on the three monotheistic

religions on the island of Rhodes .



This documentary includes the history of the Jewish Community of Rhodes. It is titled: "Rhodes, the Little Jerusalem". It contains snapshots from the Synagogue and the Museum and it is available on

YouTube at the following link:

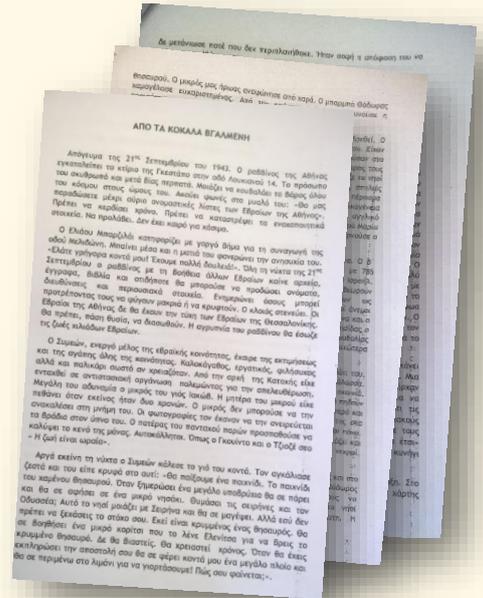
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqzYhH3jOKE>

## May

After the presentation of the periodic exhibition of the Jewish Museum of Greece titled "Hidden Children in Occupied Greece" in October 2017, at the French Consulate in Rhodes, the Jewish Community of Rhodes in cooperation with the Department Of Education in Rhodes, contacted a short story writing competition based on that exhibition. They had to write a fiction based on historical facts. The winners of the competition were:

1. POLOUKonstantina, Astypalea’s High School.
2. GOGKOU KLIO, 5th High School of Rhodes and
3. GEORGIU Alexndra – Nektaria, 4th High School of Rhodes.

The title of the short story has the title: “From the graves of our slain”, based on a verse of the Greek National Anthem.



## June

### Ben’s Alhadeff Bar-Mitzvah

On Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2018, in the Synagogue Kahal Shalom, the family of Deon Alhadeff celebrated their son’s Ben Bar-Mitzvah. The family has chosen our Synagogue to honor its origin from the island of Rhodes. Relatives from different parts of the world honored them with their presence for this joyous event.



**Marcia Ikonomopoulos and the Matza family from Portland**

The Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue Mrs Marcia Ikonomopoulos escorted the Matza family from Portland to Rhodes. The purpose of their trip was to get the family's descendants to connect with their Rodesli roots. Our tour guide Isaac Habib guided them to the Kahal Kadosh Synagogue, the Jewish Museum, the Jewish quarter and the Cemetery. They had also the privilege to meet with Sami Modiano, one of the last survivors from Rhodes.



**The Landsberg youth Orchestra**

Within the context of the third exchange program of Rhodes Music School and the Music School of Landsberg /Lech Bavaria, the Jewish Community of Rhodes in cooperation with the Ecumenical Centre of Rhodes organized a concert performed in the Kahal Shalom Synagogue on Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2018



The Landsberg youth Orchestra performed “Kol Nidre” Max Bruch’s composition.



A German volunteer at “Agios Andreas” children’s home, spoke about the teaching of the Holocaust in German schools.

The participants, after the event, were given a tour inside the Synagogue and Museum.

## July

### Chiara’s Franco Bat – Mitzvah



On 6 July 2018 the family of Isy Franco from Cape Town, with Rodesli roots, with relatives and friends from around the world, celebrated their daughter’s Chiara’s Bat-Mitzvah in “Shalom



“Synagogue. It was a beautiful and modest ceremony. The bat-mitzvah was followed by the Kabbalat Shabbat service.

### Commemoration Events

The annual Commemoration events for the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes and Kos, organized by the Jewish Community of Rhodes, took place from the 23rd until the 25th of July.

Monday, 23 July, there was the screening of the film “The Labyrinth of Lies.” The rewarded film of Giulio Ricciarelli is based on real facts, and it unfolds the clew of truth for the re-establishment of history, for the postwar refusal of Germans to admit and to accept their responsibilities for the Holocaust.



Tuesday, 24 July, a Hashkava service was held by the Rabbi of Athens Gabriel Negrin in the Jewish cemetery for the members of the Community and the Rodesli visitors from abroad.

The music concert which was scheduled the same evening, had to be canceled, due to our participation in the National Mourning for the loss of thousands of people caused by fires in Mati, Attiki.



Wednesday morning, 25 July, in the Synagogue was held the official Memorial service with the participation of the local authorities.

Representatives of the department of South Aegean Region, the Municipality of Rhodes, the Ecumenical Center of Rhodes, the Greek Orthodox Church of Rhodes, the Turkish

Consulate, the German Consulate, the consulates of Italy and France, the Embassy of Israel, the Central Police Department of Dodecanese, the Commander of the Army and representatives of the Greek Jewish Communities and organizations, paid their respect to the Holocaust victims.

Iris Mayraki, a local artist, whose mother was Jewish from Austria, performed the song “Arvolés Yoran Por Luvias”, in memory of her mother and the 80th anniversary of the annexation of Austria in the German Reich, in 1938.



The main speaker at the event was the journalist and translator Antzi Saltampasi, author of the book “Berlin.”



The Memorial service was followed by the wreath laying ceremony at the Holocaust Memorial situated in the Jewish Martyrs Square.

After the end of the event, lunch was organized by the community for those who wished to attend.

### **Jewish Community's of Rhodes donation for the fire victims.**

The Jewish Community of Rhodes proceeded to the donation of €1,000 to the special bank account set up by the Greek Government for the victims of the fires in Attiki

## **August**

### **Three generations in Rhodes**

In early August, the family of Deborah Krantzman came to Rhodes for a day by cruising in the Aegean in order to celebrate the B'nai Mitzvah of their small son 13 years old, the father in law, Merle Krantzman 90 years old, the uncle,



Steve Krantzman 56 years old and their nephew Stephen Krantzman 23 years old. This was very important for the family to be in Rhodes as the great-grandmother of Drew, Behora Alhadeff, had an origin from Rhodes.

The ceremony was officiated by the Rabbi of Athens Gabriel Negrin. Three generations,

«Le DorveDor», from generation to generation, as they had done their ancestors, desiring to strengthen and reaffirm their ties with Rhodes and our community

### **Bomse family Bat-mitzvah from Maryland**

The ceremony Bar or Bat Mitzvah is the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is an important milestone in every child's life and helps to strengthen the religious identity. The Bomse family, from Maryland of US, along with family friends, celebrated on THE 17<sup>th</sup> of August, the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter Emma.

The ceremony was very emotional for the few friends, relatives and family who attended the ceremony.

Members of the community were invited to the lunch that followed.

We are honored by all the families who decide to celebrate in our Synagogue such an important and happy event.

Once again we connected the joyful moments with the traditions of our religion and the past with the future.



### **Caden's Bialow Bar-mitzvah**

The family of Todd Bialow from New Jersey, along with 23 people from their immediate family, celebrated on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August the Bar Mitzvah of their youngest son Caden. It was a wonderful ceremony attended by members of our Community. Afterwards a small celebration took place in a local restaurant with Greek mezedes, dancing of Greek folk dances and plate smashing!



## Documentaries

- In early August, a crew from the Italian TV channel RAI UNO, visited the Synagogue . They interviewed Mr. Sami Modiano, Holocaust survivor and they took footage from the site of the Synagogue and the Jewish Martyrs Square for the TV program «ULISSE».

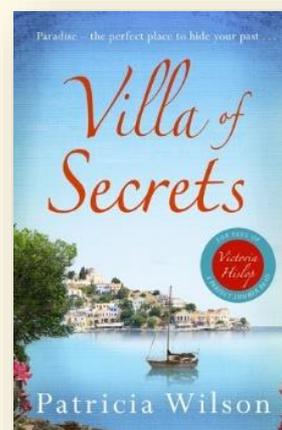


- The director Yiannis Ioannou from Cyprus along with fellow Australians in the context of producing a historical documentary on the population migration in the Mediterranean, met with Mr. Sami Modiano and recorded his personal story. The film is dedicated to the Sephardim and their history.

## Presentation of the book “Villa of Secrets” by Patricia Wilson



The International Writers and Translators' Center of Rhodes, held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August the presentation of the book "Villa of Secrets" by the British writer Patricia Wilson, in cooperation with the British vice Consulate of Great Britain in Rhodes and the Jewish Community of Rhodes. The story takes place in Rhodes and refers to a dramatic event, the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes to Auschwitz in 1944. It combines mystery, suspense, compassion. Family secrets are revealed at a staggering manner at the end of the novel. The author, Patricia Wilson, is from Liverpool. After she retired from business activities in England came to Greece, initially in Crete and lately she is living in Rhodes. Her first book "Island of Secrets" was released in 2017 and quickly became one of the best sellers of Amazon. In February 2018 she released her second book "Villa of Secrets" and already belongs to Amazon's best sellers. As the author said, Rhodes with its great history, beautiful landscapes and its people, was a big inspiration for her. The stories she heard from people in Paradisi (a village near the city of Rhodes"), where she resides, provided the impetus to start searching the island's history and finally write the Villa of Secrets book. The new book captures the turbulent historical period of World War II that is visible to humans and monuments in the alleys of the Medieval City of Rhodes. The book “Villa of Secrets”, is an historical / fiction book based on the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes. The British Vice Consulate Mrs Rania Kossiori and the translator Mrs Eleftheria Binikou commented on the book.



## **University visit**

Students from Northeastern University and students from DIKEMES (International Center of Greek and Mediterranean Studies - a non-profit educational institution that promotes the study of Greek culture), visited the Synagogue of Rhodes and were guided by Isaac Habib.

## **September**

### **Visit of the German Ambassador of Athens**



In the late September we were honored by the presence of the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Athens, Mr. Jens Plötner. Mr. Plötner, together with the German Consul of Rhodes Mr. Dimitrios Giortsos, toured the site of the synagogue «Shalom» and the Jewish Museum of Rhodes with Mr. Isaac Habib. The Ambassador offered the embassy's cooperation in different projects. He confirmed the embassy's representation at the 75<sup>th</sup> commemoration events.

### **Lynn's Schusterman visit**

Mrs Lynn Schusterman is an American philanthropist, founder and president of the "Charles and Lynn Schusterman" Family Foundation and founder of several charities including the Schusterman-Israel Foundation, the ROI Community and the Jerusalem Season of Culture. She visited us, accompanied by family members and expressed her satisfaction for her visit and our hospitality.



## Nahman's family Bat-Mitzvah

On Friday, September 28, the family of Steve Nahman celebrated the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter along with the 70th birthday of his mother. The grandparents of Mr Steve Nahman had married in 1934 in the Synagogue of Rhodes, and a lot of his family ancestors celebrated various religious ceremonies in our Synagogue. It was a nice and modest ceremony. Kabbalat Shabbat followed the ceremony. The festive dinner took place under our Sukkah.

## Open Doors 2018



On occasion of Open Doors 2018 the Kahal Kadosh Shalom Synagogue was free for a visit on Sunday 30 September from 10:00 to 18:00. Free guided tours in the Synagogue and the Juderia were provided by Isaac Habib on Sunday 30 September.

The entire last weekend of September was dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the registration of Rhodes on the Unesco World Heritage List, in 1988. Open Doors was organized for the 9th time since it started in 2010.



It was organized in close collaboration with, and support from, the Region of the South Aegean, Dopar and the General State Archives of the Dodecanese.

## October

### Ehud's Olmert visit



In October we received the sudden visit of the former Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Ehud Olmert. The Former Prime Minister together with his colleagues were guided inside the Synagogue and the Museum and discussed with Mrs. Cohen, the current issues that Israel faces, the developments in Greece and the relations between the two counties.

### Jewish Federation of San Diego

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, members of the Jewish Federation of San Diego visited us. Mr Sam Amiel, a good friend of the community officiated the Kabbalat Shabbat service. At the dinner that followed the service, members of the community were invited and they exchanged gifts with the members of the Jewish Federation of San Diego. The next day Mr Isaac Habib guided them through the old Jewish Quarter. Their visit was part of a journey leading to the Jewish Community of Sofia, where their organization sponsors educational programs.



## **Benatar's Family Bar-mitzvah**

On Saturday, October 20, in the Synagogue Kahal Shalom, the Benatar family from Johannesburg, along with 50 guests, celebrated the Bar Mitzvah of their son Oliver. The family has chosen our Synagogue to honor their origins from the island of Rhodes. After the ceremony a beautiful buffet that was set in the courtyard of the Synagogue by the family for their guests



## **“Rodion Pedia” event**



On Friday, October 26, the private local College “Rodion Pedia” organized a touching event dedicated to the Holocaust of the Jews. Guests of the event and the central speaker was the director of the Jewish Community of Rhodes Mrs. Carmen Cohen and Mr. Isaac Habib, who narrated his mother's story, Mrs. Lucia Capelluto, who was a survivor from Rhodes.

## **Poetry night**

The choir of the Ecumenical Centre of Rhodes on October 27<sup>th</sup> held a musical evening at the the Synagogue «Shalom». They sang religious hymns and recited poems of the poet Selma Merbaum - Eisinger, a Jewish girl who was born in Romania in 1924 and died at the age of 18 in a Nazi concentration camp. The collection of 57 poems, titled: "Anthology", was



rescued from her friend Else Schächter. Scholars now agree: The few poems, which Selma left behind, reveal an unusually charismatic personality and a special and unique person. Her poems were set to music by musicians such as Herbert Grönemeyer and were recited in public by well-known actors such as Iris Berben.



### Visit from forty-one (41) Swedes



*"Yesterday, I had the privilege to return to the ancient synagogue of Rhodes. This time it was with forty-one Swedes "from the birthplace" of the ship (Elida) We finished the morning by singing before leaving, bought dozens of rolls and breads at Kiki's, the bakery, across the street, and we went out armed with sandwiches in the convoy.*

*The journey from the new marina to the synagogue took about 20 minutes, with a little bit of constipation and discipline in the walking of the boys and girls crossing the roads at the traffic lights, a pleasure to see.*

*It turned out that on Rosh Hashanah, they were looking for a minyan to say Kaddish for a family, I was ninth, we found ten, I explained to the group what Kaddish is, and what is a minyan of ten, it turned out that some of them were Israeli tourists from Natanya. We did it inside the Synagogue, next to the memorial plaques and I felt a great mitzvah.*

*Carmen is the community's director. A community with only fifteen people counted, the remains of the Jews of the wonderful island, who on one day during the war were all taken on a ship straight to Auschwitz and only a few survived the Holocaust. She manages the small museum and the synagogue for twenty years.*

*She talked to them about the Kahal Shalom Synagogue of Rhodes that was built in 1577, the last one that survived the war out of the six synagogues, and about the Jews of Rhodes during the Italians and after the war.*

*I went up like the crew before me, to tell the children a little about myself and how I got on the cruise, not before I thanked Diana and Stephan the captain of the "halida" on the invitation, something that is not obvious and for me a great experience. I explained to them that I had participated in dozens of workshops throughout my life, and I also instructed them as I was a personal trainer.*

*I told them that only four years ago I discovered that I was a Cohen after learning Kabbalah*

*for twenty-four years and I came here as a Torah priest on Rosh Hashanah, in this ancient synagogue for the first time.*

*It was a moving position for me to say the least.*

*Stefan Kftein, "the leader" literally, explained to the children the meaning of Judaism, the Jews, the synagogue and the Torah, which is the basis, from which Christianity grew and therefore the chosen people, who survived so many years and were exterminated and persecuted, must be respected.*

*We finished with my request in Swedish and English in songs as we do in the morning and dinner on the ship.*

*The ancient synagogue, usually empty of the season, filled with holiness, Hod Hadar and a lot of joy."*

*(Translation from a Hebrew text written by Mr. Gabriel Confino, taken from his Facebook page)*

## **November**

### **Crocus Program**

The "Crocus" educational program is addressed to students from the age 11 until 18 and it constitutes an activity in a lot of schools around the world. The "Crocus" program is a way for younger people to learn about the Holocaust and to strengthen their knowledge in regards to the dangers of discriminations, biases and intolerance.



In Rhodes, a local high school, with the guidance of their professor Mrs Kliari, planted crocus bulbs at the courtyard of the Kahal Synagogue. This activity took place during their educational visit at the Synagogue and the Jewish Museum. The director of the Community, Mrs Cohen welcomed them and she talked to them about the history of the Jewish Community of Rhodes and for the deportation of Jews of Rhodes and Kos to Auschwitz - Birkenau. The students were presented with a little booklet about the basic meanings of Judaism, which was created by the Community. They were also

presented with a translation in Greek of Lucia's Capelluto testimony, one of the few survivors of Rhodes.

After that, the students planted the crocus bulbs at the courtyard of the Synagogue and Museum.

The Educational Organization for the Holocaust in Ireland provides schools with bulbs of yellow crocus in order to plant them in memory of the 1, 5 million Jewish children and the thousands of other children that were exterminated in the Holocaust.

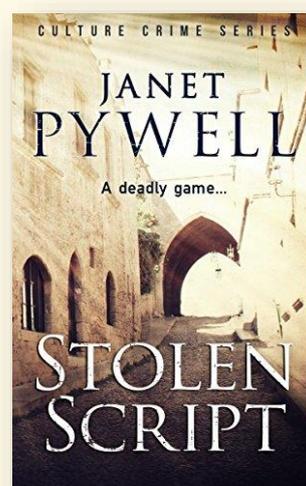
The involvement of children in the planting process and the follow-up of the growth of the flowers, encourages the continuous training in regard to the importance of tolerance and respect. The yellow flowers bring in the memory of the yellow Star of David which the Nazis compelled the Jews to wear.

The crocus flower flourishes at the end of January or in the beginning of February, near the International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January). In Greece the "Crocus" program is supported by the Jewish Museum of Greece, a partner organization of The Crocus Project.

## **Book releases**

### **STOLEN SCRIPT**

An exciting thriller from a series of books written by the author Janet Pywell. The author was inspired by the story of the 800 years old Torah of the Jewish Community of Rhodes. Mikkydos Santos, a smart and revolutionary artist and photographer, after a personal failure in New York, insists to go to Greece to proclaim a valuable parchment and promises to return it to the Jewish Museum of Rhodes. But time is running out ... An exciting thriller that evolves rapidly ... in New York (USA), Izmir (Turkey) and Rhodes (Greece).



## To remember our heritage.....

A moving composition by Joseph D. Alhadeff, of Rhodian origins, with which Diane Perelsztejn has chosen to begin her documentary film “Rhodes: Nostalgie”

Que quedó de mi judería,  
de la Cay Ancha al datilar,  
de l’Espejo a la Puerta de la Mar?  
Por las siete callejicas  
dando bueltas y bueltisicas,  
del Cal Grande a la Turquería  
que quedó de mi judería?

De Jidiós quedó vazía,  
que pecado y que manzía.  
Ma yo siempre bushco y digo  
un pariente, un amigo  
puede ser se salvaría.

Que quedó de mi judería?  
Caminando como un loco  
no topí muncho ni poco;  
de los mios, por dolor,  
Más ni uno, que malor.  
Por la poca l’alegría,  
nada quedó de mi judería.

What is left of my juderia,  
from the Wide Street to the date palm,  
from the Mirror to the Sea Gate?  
Along the seven narrow streets  
taking walks and short walks,  
from the Great Temple to the Turkish  
quarter  
what is left of my juderia?

It is empty of Jews now,  
what a pity, what a great pity.  
But I keep looking around and saying  
a relative, a friend  
has perhaps saved himself.

What is left of my juderia?  
Walking mad with anxiety  
neither much nor little have I found;  
of my family, unhappily,  
not one person, what ill luck.  
Much to our grief,  
nothing is left of my juderia.

\*Taken from “A history of Jewish Rhodes” by Esther Fintz Menasce



Join us for the 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Events!!!!

For more information please email us at  
[jcrhodes@otenet.gr](mailto:jcrhodes@otenet.gr)

In a few days a link will be uploaded to our web site where  
you can register!!!!

We will send you an email with the link!!!!