

NEWSLETTER 2019

Dear friends,

In recent weeks, all people around the world have been experiencing something unprecedented.

The outbreak and spread of the coronavirus at such fast and alarming pace have caused panic, the closure of the borders of many countries and the confinement of residents in their houses.

The economic impact for all of us is enormous. Everyone's habits need to change and adapt to today's reality. We are called to keep distances from each other.

But all these are a small price to pay to protect our health and the health of our beloved ones. To protect our parents, grandparents, and people with serious health issues.

Our thoughts are with all the people who have lost their lives because of this deadly virus and those who had suffered the loss. The pain is unbearable.

That is why we stay at home. So, we can all stay safe.

Dear friends, here is our newsletter for 2019. We hope that the reading of our news will get your mind out of the current problem for a while and make your home enclosure more enjoyable.

We hope and wish all these to be over soon! Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Take care of yourselves and be safe!

May G_d protect us all!

A tribute to Ester Amato



On New Year's Eve, 1/1/2019, Ester Amato, daughter of Moses Behor Amato and Vida Piha, passed away.

She was born on January 9, 1922, in Rhodes.

She was captured and deported alongside her entire family, maternal and paternal, to Auschwitz concentration camps.

She was the only one from her family who survived. Her whole family was sent to the gas chamber.

Esther was brought into the women's sector of the camp to become "slave labor", with the tattooed number A 24260.

Inside the camps, overcrowding, poor hygiene conditions, and lack of food and water created the outbreak of diseases such as typhus and tuberculosis. She had typhus, high fever. She was washing with cold water to bring down

the fever. She didn't want to show that she was sick. She was squeezing her cheeks, so she wouldn't look pale. The sick were sent to the crematorium.

She had watched many of her friends take a run and fall on the high-voltage electric fence to spare themselves from hardship.

In early 1945 the Nazis organized the "March of Death", a March of humiliation, moving on foot thousands of prisoners. There was no provision for them. Neither food, water, nor shelter. Not to be able to sleep, with the cold and under the threat of being killed. A march that Esther managed to survive until their liberation by the Allies.

When she had been freed, they moved her to Milan, Italy, to a medical clinic. While she was there, she requested help to find an Italian officer, who she had met in Rhodes. She still had his home address in Perugia, his hometown, where he had returned after fighting alongside the Greek rebels. The name of the Italian officer was Enrico Giannotti.



A doctor was able to find him. Ever since they lived together, they got married and had 4 wonderful children, Elena, David, Giuseppe, and Roberto. Enrico died in 1992, 73 years old.

During her life, she often repeated: "Everything brings me back to the camp, whatever I do, whatever I see, my spirit always comes back to the camp, from the crematorium you never go out." A phrase that many former deportees have repeated during meetings with school youth...

She was a “fundamental column” of the National Aned and Savona, one of the most important testimonies of racial and female deportation in the Nazi lager. She never shied away from her duty as a witness, to remember her murdered family and her fellow lager inmates. On 27th of January 2018, on Remembrance Day, the Prefect of Savona presented her with the Medal of Honor as a Holocaust Survivor.

In Rhodes, she didn't want to return. So many memories... But at one point her love for the island overcame her. She returned in 2014 for the 70th anniversary of the deportation.

A few days before the New Year's Eve, she had requested to be buried in her birthplace, Rhodes. And she did... On the 9th of January 2019, 97 years after her birth.

Selma's Avzaradel-Elalouf birthday reunion



On June 1st, 1931, Selma Avzaradel was born in Rhodes. She had lived on the island, for the first eight years of her life. In 1939 her family immigrated.

Her children grew up listening to stories about their mother's early life to the island, the lives of their ancestors, descriptions of the old city, the streets, the buildings, the people....

Decades later, her husband, children, grandchildren, nieces and other very dear ones of hers, gathered and organized a surprise family weekend to Rhodes. The purpose of this trip was to celebrate her birthday by remembering and retracing the footsteps of her childhood.



On May 24th, 2019, the Vice Mayor of Tourism in Rhodes, Mrs. Chatzilazarou, in a special ceremony, presented Mrs. Selma Avzaradel with an honorary plaque and declared her “Friend Of Rhodes”.

After the ceremony, they visited the cemetery, the tomb of their great grandfather Joseph Mizrahi.

A tour at the Jewish Quarter, the Synagogue and the Museum followed.

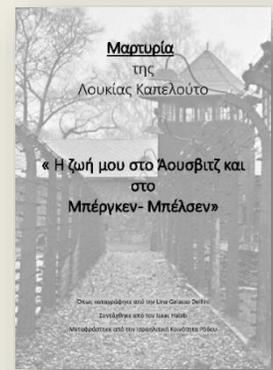
Their journey to the past ended with a Kabbalat Shabbat service at the Synagogue, the first Kabbalat Shabbat service of the year.

Publications for educational purposes



In recent years, the Synagogue and the Museum have been included in local school students' educational visits organized by the primary and secondary educational department of Dodecanese. Over the years we have noticed the lack of knowledge not only of students but also of teachers on issues related to the Jewish religion and on the history of the Holocaust. For the above reasons, we decided to publish 2 booklets

in Greek. The first one is a short guide to the basic concepts, symbols and religious holidays of Judaism. The second is a translation of Mrs. Lucia Capelluto, a Holocaust survivor from Rhodes, testimony. These books are available free of charge exclusively to local schools that visit us.

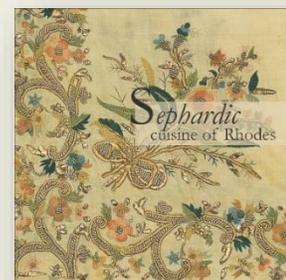


Republications



The community proceeded to reissue and renew two books. The first is the museum's guide and the second Mrs. Stella's Cohen cookbook "Sephardic cuisine of Rhodes." Mrs. Stella Cohen's cookbook was first released in 1986 with the support and sponsoring of prominent members of the Sephardic Community in Zimbabwe. The

book was re-published in 1995 and after high demand, with the sponsoring of Mrs. Claudia Restis-Breibart, it was republished in 2019. They are now available for sale at the Gift Shop of the Synagogue.



75th Commemoration events

The Jewish Community of Rhodes hosted several events during July 2019, marking the 75th anniversary of the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes and Kos, and their extermination in Auschwitz.

The events began on the 19th and ended on the 24th of July with an **open to the public symposium** dedicated to the history of the anti-Jewish persecution, Italian rule and German occupation in Rhodes. Stories of Jewish



families in Rhodes were revived by speakers based on the recently discovered and partially digitized Italian archives. **Dr. Vadim Altskan** from the Holocaust Memorial Museum in USA, which is funding the digitization of the archive, was among the forum's speakers.

Other scholars, who presented their work and shared their research, were:

Professor Marco Clementi, from the University of Calabria, who did the filing of the Italian records and who has many publications on war, politics and society in the twentieth century.



Professor Richard Freund, former Director of the Maurice Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies and at the present, Professor of Jewish Studies in Christopher Newport University. Dr. Freund has directed over a dozen archaeological projects in Israel, including sites associated

with the beginnings of Christianity and Judaism and the site of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In addition, he has directed projects in Spain Poland, Rhodes, Greece and Lithuania. His work has been featured in the New York Times, Time Magazine, Newsweek, Archaeology, Smithsonian Magazine and featured on the BBC, MSNBC, CNN, NPR and Fox News and in hundreds of media outlets worldwide.

Professor Anthony McElligott, University of Limerick a founding Professor of History in University of Limerick and Director of the Centre for Historical Research and a renowned historian of Weimar and Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.



And



Milena Cosentino a PhD Teaching Fellow at University of Limerick (Ireland) – Post-Graduation Program in History and Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (FAHSS).

The participation from the “Rhodesli Diaspora”, that gathered from all over to commemorate the loss and celebrate the legacy of the community, was moving.

An innovation of this year's events was the Memory Walk, which took place on the 23rd. A symbolic march started from the Holocaust Memorial, in the Medieval City of Rhodes, and ended at the port, where the





Jews of Rhodes and Kos had begun their journey without return 75 years ago. A memorial service was held in the harbor area and Mrs. Cohen, Director of J.C. Rhodes, threw a wreath of flowers at the sea honoring the memory of the victims.

With the significant presence of Auschwitz survivor Samuel Modiano, the march was led by the Rabbi of Athens Gabriel Negrin, the Vice President of the Central Jewish Board of Greece and Secretary General of J.C. Rhodes, Moris Magrizos, representatives of the Communities from all over Greece and the Rhodesli participants from around the world.

In his remarks, Mr. Modiano emphasized, among other things: "I believe that I survived because God has chosen me as witness to let the world know what happened, so that humanity would not experience such atrocities again."



The week of the events included movie screening of the film “Woman in Gold”, guided tours to the Jewish quarter, musical tribute to Leonard Cohen, memorial

service at the cemetery, and day trip to Kos for a Commemoration ceremony at the Jewish cemetery for the victims of the community. The ceremony was held in the presence of local religious and public authorities.





The **official commemoration event** was held on Sunday 21st at the Kahal Shalom Synagogue. Rabbi Negrin led the service followed by addresses by the representative of the South Aegean Department Mr. Sotrillis, the Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Hatzidiakos, the president of the Central Jewish Board of Greece Mr. David Saltiel, the deputy chief of mission of the Embassy of Israel Mrs. Sawssan Hasson, the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany in

Athens, deputy head of mission, Mrs. Heike Dettman and the Vice President of the J.C. Rhodes Mr. Daniel Benardout. A keynote speech was given by the well-known journalist Mrs. Marianna Pyrgioti.

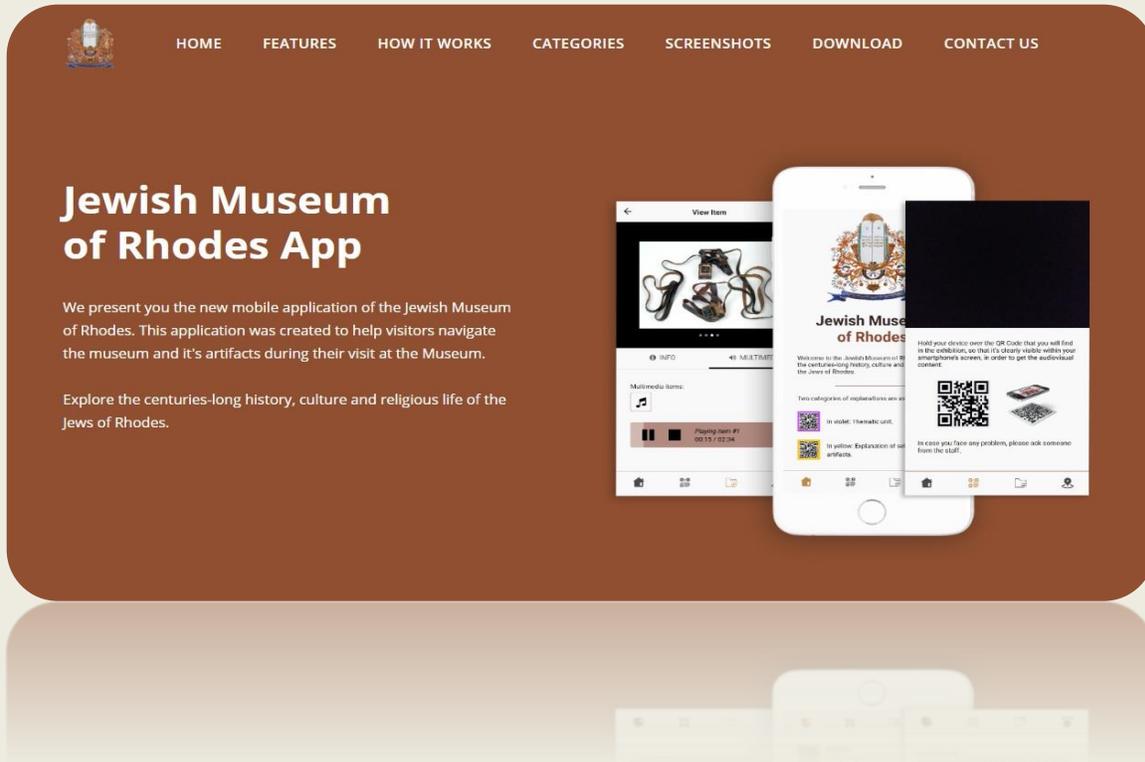


The ceremony ended with the **laying of wreaths at the Holocaust Memorial.**



Mr. Benardout, invited everyone to join the Commemoration events in 2020 in Rhodes and in Kos. He underlined the importance of the participation of the Rhodesli from around the world to the events. He pointed out: "Our presence here may be symbolic, but it means a lot. It means our dedication to the memory of our ancestors and our commitment not to forget. It means our determination to fight against anti-Semitism and all forms of racism, so as not to allow the conditions that raise Nazism to be created again. It means the need to preserve our cultural heritage to give our children the thread of tradition and proud identity."

Mobile phone application



In 2018, the German Embassy of Athens approved a grant fund to the Jewish Museum of Rhodes. The purpose of the grant was, to sponsor the creation of a mobile phone application that will offer our visitors, an audio-visual tour of the synagogue and the Museum. The project was completed at the end of 2019. From 2020 our visitors will be able to use it on android and iPhones. We are pleased that this application enables us to upgrade the services we offer to our visitors.

Celebrations



In 2019, within the Kahal Shalom, we hosted two b'nai mitzvah and three b'not mitzvah. The families that shared the joyous occasion with us were:

- Chanin family, USA, celebrated Ben's bar mitzvah.
- Hankin family, USA, celebrated Kate's bat mitzvah.
- Greenberg family, USA, celebrated Wes's bar mitzvah.
- Prohens family, USA, celebrated Abby's bat mitzvah.
- Aelion family, USA, celebrated Gabriella's bat mitzvah.

Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement in Rhodes 1949-02-24



“Rhodes Armistices” is a term recognizable in the circles of International Relations and Diplomatic History. They mean the end of hostilities, the end of the Arab-Israeli war.

This was finally decided in Rhodes, at a Conference held for three months in 1949 at the hotel “Grande Albergo Delle Rose” and was the beginning of the recognition of the State of Israel which gained a border within, which it could act as an independent state. That is why the Israelis are still moved when they see the Hotel of the Roses and tour its premises.

The conference “The tragedies of Rhodes — 70 years later” was held in Rhodes this year. It was an international meeting in history, international politics and law. The Municipality of Rhodes and the South Aegean region supported it to highlight the fact that Rhodes was, is, and will be the point where international events will unfold.

"The Mission, from Rhodes to Auschwitz"



The first documentary in Greek about the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes was completed in 2019. The initiator of this project was Stamatiou Foundation.

The Foundation's goal is to preserve local history and heritage.

The documentary is titled "The Mission, from Rhodes to Auschwitz" and is based on the testimony of Sami Modiano, a Holocaust survivor.

The documentary's premiere was on September 21st at the open-air cinema, "Rodon". The cinema was flooded by people. Mr. Modiano's narrative had engulfed the audience. The documentary records and combines



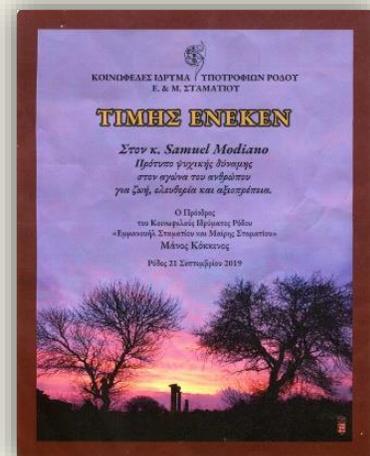
local history with his personal story. With this documentary, the Stamatiou Foundation wants to emphasize the fact that the preservation of memory, and the defense of human rights and dignity, is not only the duty of those who survived. We all must preserve the memory and the historical facts of the Holocaust for future generations.

The narrative was shocking, and as long as the documentary lasted, many of the viewers could not hold back their tears listening one more time the atrocities committed at Auschwitz.



At the end of the screening, the President of the Foundation, Mr. Manos Kokkinos, awarded a commemorative honorary plaque to Mr. Samuel Modiano, whose presence and narration, made this screening an

unforgettable experience for those who watched it. Mr. Modiano dedicated this film to Rhodes and warmly thanked all those who contributed to the filming of the documentary and the audience for their presence in the screening.



**Paideia Center - Commemoration for the 75th anniversary of
the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes and Kos**

On Sunday, October 13, Paideia Center in Storrs, Connecticut, USA, hosted a commemoration event on the 75th anniversary since the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes and Kos islands.



Dr. Daniel Weiner

Dr. Daniel Weiner, UCONN Vice president for Global Affairs supported Mr. Tomazos' initiative to organize this event. Dr Weiner was one of the main speakers.

Mr. Ilias Tomazos is the director of the Center for Hellenic Studies PAIDEIA, professor at the University of Connecticut and a dear friend of our Community. He organized this tribute to the historical past of the Jewish community of Rhodes and made feasible Mrs. Cohen's presence.



Mr. Ilias Tomazos



Mrs. Carmen Cohen

Mrs. Cohen, director of the Community, was the leading speaker of the event. She guided the audience on a trip from the past up to the present days of the Community.

Mr. Konstantinos Koutras, the Consul General of Greece in New York, Mr. Avinoam Patt, director of the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary

Jewish Life AT Hartford University, Mariza Hatzilazarou former vice mayor for tourism and cultural affairs, addressed also the audience

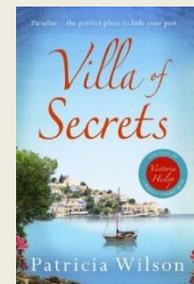
Emmanouil Cassotis writer of historical books and articles on Dodecanese islands, many members of the Pan Rhodian Society of America “Apollon” and of the Dodecanesian Federation and students of UCONN University honored with their presence the event.



Mr. Emmanouil Cassotis

Events in the framework of the Choir Week of Rhodes in collaboration with the Jewish Community of Rhodes and the Ecumenical Center

At the Ecumenical Center of the German-speaking Church, Thursday 17th of October, Patricia Wilson presented her book "Villa of Secrets", a novel based on the history of the Jews of Rhodes during the Nazi occupation.



Concert of Choral Music was held at the Kahal Shalom Synagogue on Saturday 19th of October, after the end of Shabbat. The Choir of the Ecumenical Center of the Rhodes Germanic Church under the

direction of Heinz-Hermann Grube, interpreted songs about peace, hope for the future and the love of G_d. People, regardless of their religion, political beliefs, different origins, languages, are all the same. They all want and seek the same things. To be happy, healthy, with the people they love and to live in peace. We all need to respect each other, to live in harmony. The event was open to the public.

AEJM



In November we participated in the meeting of AEJM, the Association of European Jewish Museums, held in Ferrara, Italy. Our Museum was presented by Mrs. Carmen Cohen. Our membership as a member of the organization was approved unanimously. We hope that our accession will benefit us in the future in terms of support, exhibit preservation, and museum presentation, given the fact that they have the know-how and will be able to join European programs.

Things that you didn't know about Rhodes.....

The Miniature Horse of Rhodes



All horse species belong to the *Equus Cavallus* sub-species. They first appeared fifty four million years ago, after the dinosaurs' extinction. Approximately ten thousand years ago, mankind domesticated the existing four species of horses. They were the size of a small dog and lived in forests. After the last ice age, approximately ten thousand years ago, there were four species of horses. Mankind domesticated these species creating the breeds we all know today. Two of these original species are believed to be the ancestors of the Rhodian horse.

This miniature horse is the vestige of an enormous family extensively spread throughout Greece hinterland, the islands of Aegean and the shores of Asia Minor, all the way to the Caspian Sea and North Africa. The reason for the extensive geographic spread was the horse's good character, great stamina and minimal nutritional needs.

Greeks depended on this miniature horse for all their tasks, from ploughing and transport to games and feasts. Two hundred years ago, every family on the island owned at least one miniature horse. In 1975, the horse population numbered approximately sixty, today only eight remain.



The horses' height is about 110 cm and unlike most small breeds of horses the body of the Rhodian Pony is elegant and harmonious proportions resemble the shape of large horses. Their head has large intelligent eyes and medium sized ears, the neck and legs are strong and muscular, the mane dense and rich and the tail is very thick and reaches almost to ground.



Today, the few remaining horses live in a controlled reproduction area with modern facilities in the region of Archangelos. There is also an area covering approximately five hectares for them to run in as well as an area covering four hectares where alfalfa is grown for their diet.

The members of “Phaethon” an Association for the Protection of these miniature horses, have become their everyday guards and caretakers. The miniature horses have become part of the cultural tradition of the islands. This is why all Rhodians and island organizations have embraced the miniature horse with love, interest and affection.

Natural Sea Sponges



Natural sea sponges live on the seabed and are primitive animals belonging to the merchant category. The Dodecanese islands such as Kalymnos and Symi are re-known all over Greece and worldwide, for Natural Sea Sponges.

The ancient Greeks referred to sea sponges as the 'Zoofitan' – a rare and unique category of marine species – literally meaning a “half plant/half animal” organism. Eventually Zoologists found new evidence to challenge this theory, and sea sponges were re-classified as a simple multi-cellular, bottom-dwelling animal which has neither; brains, digestive, circulatory, nor central nervous systems.

According to this definition, while sea sponges are technically “animals,” for all practical purposes, they grow, reproduce, and survive as plants and for this reason, among other reasons, are considered as “vegan-friendly” by many vegans.

Mediterranean sponge types; The honeycomb sponge is almost spherical and mainly heavy and thick usually found with a dark brown color found in depths of 9 to 100 meters. The honeycomb's fishing grounds are mainly in Crete, the Cyclades, Euboea and the Dodecanese.

Fina Sea Silk Mediterranean sponges are very hypoallergenic, so individuals with allergies and especially sensitive skin can enjoy how these velvety soft, dense, and super absorbent natural sponges allow for a



gently exfoliating and effective cleanse even without the use of soap. Fina silk, is considered as the best and most expensive type of sponges with a wide variety.

The goodness of the natural sponges when moistened glides smoothly and softly over the face, allowing for an even application of facial products and

very effective facial cleansing. Ideal as an applicator / cleanser for a variety of facial applications;

- » Allergy FREE - Cleansing and exfoliating to rejuvenate and soften the skin
- » Massaging to stimulate skin cells and blood circulation
- » Excellent for application of facial treatments and moisturizers. Ideal for application and removal of cosmetics
- » BABY CARE THE Natural Sea Sponge is the softest sponge in the world! Incredibly gentle and absorbent, it is the perfect choice for bathing newborns and babies and toddlers alike!

Sponges of various sizes of very good quality can be obtained from many shops scattered around the Island. They can also be purchased from retail outlets located both in the port of Kolona in the town of Rhodes and in the area behind the taxi rank in the Mandraki.



Suggested articles about Jewish Rhodes



<https://athjcom.gr/headlines/the-flavor-of-rhodes-paradise-lost-recipe-saved/>



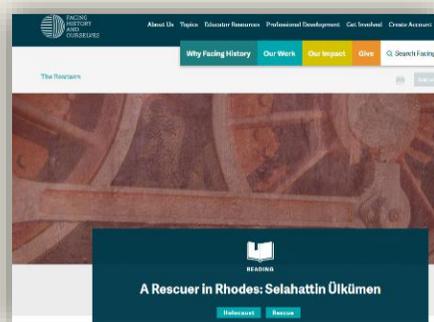
<https://momentmag.com/rhodes-75-year-anniversary-jewish-deportation/>



<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/jewish-h-community-of-rhodes-greece/>



<https://smartbitchestrashybooks.com/stuffwe-like/still-kahal-shalom-synagogue-rhodes-greece/>



<https://www.facinghistory.org/rescuers/selahattin-ulkumen>

If you wish to add a historical fact about the Jewish Community of Rhodes, write about your family's history, your personal experience, or give us ideas on how to improve the newsletter

PLEASE

contact us at

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