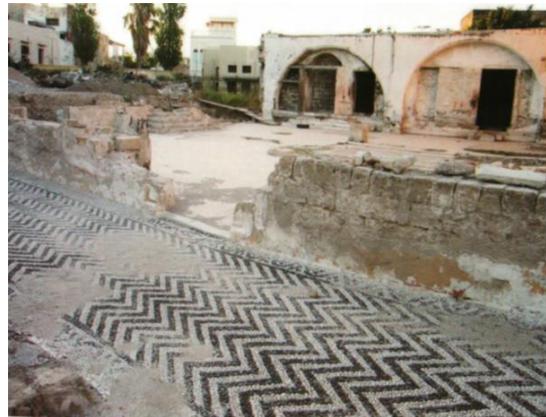


Kahal Kadosh Gadol

When the Sephardim came to Rhodes after the Turkish conquest in 1523, they found a synagogue building already in existence. They called this Kahal Kadosh Gadol (The Holy Great Congregation) or in Spanish, Kahal Grande. It had been built during the late 1400s after the Turkish siege of 1480. It was built replacing an existing Jewish Synagogue that was built earlier which was destroyed by cannonballs during the conflict of 1480.



The **Kahal Grande** today

Authorization was given by Pope Sixtus IV to Grand Master d' Aubusson, to permit the construction of the synagogue, considering that during the previous siege the Jews had “courageously” contributed to the defense of the citadel.

It was understood that this synagogue was attended by the Greek-speaking Romaniot Jews. After the arrival of a large number of Sephardic Jews in the 1500s the synagogue eventually utilized the Judeo-Spanish “Ladino” language and rituals.

In 1944 during World War Two, being so close to the central port, was accidentally damaged by air raids of the Allies targeting German ships. Although heavily damaged, the structural walls of the Kahal Grande synagogue remained standing for several more years. During the next twenty years, the walls collapsed and the area filled with rubble. In 2003, the Archaeological Department in Rhodes cleared away the 4 feet debris

which had accumulated exposing the synagogue foundation of the perimeter wall, floors, and other features.

The Kahal Midrash Camondo



Where the Kahal Midrash Camondo was located

The Camondo Synagogue was one of the minor synagogues. It was so-called because it had been built in 1865 (with some nearby houses for the needy families) thanks to the generous support of Count Abraham Camondo, a great banker and noted philanthropist of Constantinople.

It became known as a synagogue that had shorter religious services than another synagogue. It was located upstairs above the vault area of the street, known by the community as “La Kayeja del Talmud Torah” or “Kayeja de Havra”, today Vizantiou street. The religious elementary school Talmud Torah was located across the street from the synagogue’s entryway.

The Kahal Tikkun Hazot



Front entry of the Kahal Tikkun Hazot with a circular stairway leading up to the women’s prayer room

The Tikkun Hazot was another minor synagogue built in the 1870s. The name means “midnight service” and refers to the beginning of services at dawn. It was located on Gavala 8 Street. As the Synagogue was attended by the wealthier families of the community (mainly by the members of the wealthiest

in Rhodes family Alhadeff), it was also called as “El Cal de Los Ricos” the Synagogue of the rich people and the same name was given to the street “la Kaye de Los Rikos”, the street of the rich people

There were also two smaller synagogues serving a limited number of people:

- The Kal de Ham Yusufachi Franco opened in 1938 (located in front of one of the doors in the walled city that leads to the seashore).
- The Kal de el Ermano Shemuel Hanan (located on Kay Ancha)

[...] Joseph Hanan owned a store in the Jewish Quarter inside the walls of Rhodes on what was known as the “Piazza Bruciata” (“the burnt plaza”). There had been a major fire in that plaza, most likely the Great Fire in 1864, and the name stuck among the Jews in the quarter thereafter (it is today known as Hippocrates Square). In the store, Joseph sold household items such as carpets and antiques. He made a very good living and was able to purchase a block of homes in the Jewish Quarter, consisting of two or three adjacent two-story houses on a street known to Gella as Via Principe Umberto, also known in the Jewish community as the “Kaye Ancha” (meaning the wide street in Ladino – today’s Hebrew Martyrs Street). Joseph owned a horse and a carriage which he would use to travel around town. Some of his father’s piety did get passed down, next to the home where he lived. The Synagogue Hanan, it was a small family synagogue where he would fill the role of the Hazzan , or cantor[...]

All the synagogues had balconies with decorative wooden screens which served as the women’s section. The women seated in the balcony could see

and hear the services below, but the men could only see the screens. The men's area was known as La Kehilah and the women's section as La Azara. None of the Synagogues had social halls. Celebrations were held in the large court-yards of the Synagogues.

Sources:

"A history of Jewish Rhodes" by Esther Fintz Menascé

"A guidebook to the Jewish Quarter" by Aron Hasson

"The Family Treasure" by Tony Alhadeff

"I Remember Rhodes" by Rebecca Amato Levy