



# Kehila Kedosha Janina

## Synagogue and Museum

### July 2019 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

In the midst of sad news from around the world and a rise of anti-Semitism, we Greek Jews have cause for celebration. In the city of Ioannina, our sister city, where only some 30 Jews live and the Christian population is about 60,000, a Jewish mayor was elected, our own Moisis Eliasaf, President of the Jewish community of Ioannina and Head of Internal Medicine at the University of Ioannina. The people of Ioannina voted for the best man, who happened to be Jewish! Moisis is the first Jew ever elected as Mayor in Greece.



See additional articles in this issue about this monumental victory.

This newsletter, our 124<sup>th</sup> will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website [www.kkjsm.org](http://www.kkjsm.org).

We have now reach over 10,000 households worldwide. What an accomplishment for a little synagogue on the Lower East Side of New York City. Our community of 'friends' continually grow with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at [museum@kkjsm.org](mailto:museum@kkjsm.org)

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up by emailing [info@kkjsm.org](mailto:info@kkjsm.org) so we are sure that our Kiddush (traditional Greek Jewish Kosher foods) is sufficient. If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush for a special occasion or an Adara, contact Sol.

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## Simchas

On June 14<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the 99<sup>th</sup> birthday of Mildred Negrin Froot. Born in Harlem into a proud Yanniote family, Millie has always been a joy to the community. Millie is the daughter of Mollie Barouch and Abraham Negrin. The photo below was taken in Millie's apartment on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2 days before her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. A lovely, special lady, and an inspiration to us all.



On June 20<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Shirlee Paganetti (born into the Cabellis family). This month, Shirlee also became a great grandmother! See more below. We celebrate you Shirlee!



In June we had the birth of two beautiful baby girls, two princesses in our Greek Jewish world. Dylan Di Castri Paganetti the great-granddaughter of Shirlee Paganetti, and Eliana Brielle Salwen the great granddaughter of Bea and Eli Zagha (both of Blessed Memory)

Eliana Brielle Salwen is the daughter of Tina and Jared Salwen, the granddaughter of Maurice and Barbara Zagha, the great granddaughter of Bea and Eli Zagha (both of Blessed Memory) and a descendant of the Sabba family of Greece.



Dylan Di Castri is the first child of Adam and Lee Ann Paganetti, the first grandchild of Glen and Kathy Paganetti, the first great-grandchild of Shirlee Paganetti, the great great-grandchild of Eva and Moses Cabellis (both of Blessed Memory).

### AIKOI MAS – Dikoi Mas – Los Muestrros

Where all visitors are welcome, it is always a special occasion when "Our Own" visit. In June, Magda and Len Brown visited from England. Magda is a Corfiote and descends from the Ferro/Dente and Battino families of Corfu (with descendants born in France and Italy). Len and Magda enabled Kehila Kedosha Janina to receive the precious megillah from Buenos Aires, which will be on exhibit in early 2020.



## Visitors Flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

As always, visitors from around the world came to Kehila Kedosha Janina. There were school groups, family groups, tour groups and interested individuals.



Olivier & Vieyra Lester from France



High School Seniors from Israel



Yiannis and Andrea Katsimbaris  
from Detroit with Epirotiki roots



Shapiro family from the Netherlands

## Past Events of Interest

Kehila Kedosha Janina was proud to participate in the Museum at Eldridge Street's Egg Rolls, Egg Creams, and Empanadas street festival. We brought a Greek Jewish flavor to their festival with bourekas and baklava.



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## Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network

The Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network recently hosted a picnic in Central Park. More than 30 young community members had a great time enjoying delicious foods like bourekas, koulouria/biscochos, watermelon, wine, and other delicacies, and enjoyed beautiful weather and fun games. After the picnic they attended a free concert in the park from the Israeli-Yemenite band A-Wa. Special thanks to Shawn and Loni (Lafazan) Ezhaghi for sponsoring the event.



## Upcoming Events

We are honored to host Rabbi Marc Angel for a special book presentation on Sunday September 8 at 2pm. Reservations are required, so please email [museum@kkjasm.org](mailto:museum@kkjasm.org) if you can attend. Rabbi Angel will be signing purchased books.

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA IS HONORED TO WELCOME  
**RABBI MARC D. ANGEL**  
FOR A SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON HIS LATEST BOOK  
**A NEW WORLD: AN AMERICAN  
SEPHARDIC MEMOIR**



**SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup> AT 2:00PM**  
**KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA**  
**280 BROOME STREET NYC**

"This memoir of growing up in a close-knit Sephardic immigrant community is poignant and a pleasure to read. It's also sharp and provocative. It pushes us to figure out how, in our vexed, complicated world today, we can provide our children with a natural sense of belonging and joy." - Jane Mushabac

Rabbi Marc D. Angel is Founder and Director of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. He is Rabbi Emeritus of the historic Congregation Shearith Israel where he served since 1969. Born into Seattle's Sephardic community, his ancestors are from Turkey and Rhodes. He received his B.A., M.S., Ph.D., Th.D. honoris causa, and his Semikhah (Rabbinical ordination) from Yeshiva University and also has an M.A. in English literature from the City College of New York. He is a recipient of the Bernard Revel Award in Religion and Religious Education. Author and editor of 36 books, he has written and lectured extensively on various aspects of Jewish law, history and culture. Rabbi Angel will be available to sign purchased books.

**REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED. RSVP TO [MUSEUM@KKJSM.ORG](mailto:MUSEUM@KKJSM.ORG)**

## News from Jewish Greece

### Ioannina

In June, history was made. The first Jewish Mayor in the history of Greece was elected in our sister city of Ioannina. The world stood up and paid attention. The news was covered in Jewish papers, US papers, Greek papers and Israeli papers. Many were surprised. We were not. We know Ioannina. We know Moisis Elisaf. We are there every year and we know the beautiful warm reception we receive, as Jews, as Americans and, of course, as Greek-Jews. There are too many articles to copy here, so we will just include two: the first, an interview by Marianna Varvarrigou. Translation into English by Nefeli Mosaidi. And, the second, an interview by Ethnikos Kirikas of our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos.

#### **Rethinking Greece - Interview with Moses Elisaf, the first Greek Jew to be elected Mayor**

Full article by by Marianna Varvarrigou available [here](#)

Moses Elisaf, a doctor and Professor of Medicine, became the first Greek Jew to be elected Mayor. The voters of Ioannina, a major Greek city in the northwestern part of the country, elected Moses Elisaf, who ran as an independent candidate in the second round of local elections, on 2 June 2019.

Professor Elisaf was born in Ioannina, in 1954. He graduated from the School of Medicine, University of Athens, in 1979. He is currently Professor of Internal Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ioannina and Director of the 2nd Department of Internal Medicine (University Hospital of Ioannina). He is also Head of the Lipids, Atherosclerosis and Obesity Department of the University Hospital of Ioannina.

Elisaf comes from the Romaniote community of Ioannina. The Romaniotes are one the most ancient extant Jewish communities in the world and the oldest Jewish community in Europe. Their distinct language was Judaeo-Greek. They derived their name from the old word for the people of the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire). Greece's Romaniote population was decimated during the Holocaust, yet active communities still exist in Ioannina and a few other Greek cities. Greek News Agenda spoke with Moses Elisaf on the occasion of his appointment as Mayor.



*You are the first mayor of Jewish descent in Greece. Do you think this sends out some message?*

I am the new Mayor of Ioannina. A difference in religion brought a lot of publicity to my election and, by extension, to my city, something I find very important.

My fellow citizens did not choose me on the basis of religious identity but rather, I believe, on account of the path I have followed as a member of the scientific community, as well as my active involvement in the local community. They put confidence in the team on our ticket, our campaign program and our proposals. I was assessed and judged the same way all candidates were.

Through my election, my fellow citizens sent a message against intolerance, racism and extremism. I think this message holds particular value at a time when ghosts of the past are being revived in our collective home, Europe, to which the majority of the citizens of Ioannina have given a resounding response.

*Do you believe that Greeks have left behind past prejudices and stereotypes against the Jewish people?*

I believe in the peaceful coexistence of people and in democracy, whose birthplace was Greece. There will always be extreme voices, but these will be isolated by society at large. There will be those who live by prejudices of the past, but there will be more who proceed looking into the future. There will be those who deny the Holocaust, but history is written by facts. In my city, Ioannina, Jews and Christians have coexisted for centuries, as well as with Muslims from some point on. The city bears the mark of their presence. The monuments are alive, telling their stories. Today our role is not to live with memories, but to bring hope and work together for our children's future.



*Have you ever been faced with bias and racism in the past?*

I am Greek. I was born in Ioannina, as were my parents, my grandparents, my ancestors. I grew up in Ioannina. I was established as a scientist in Ioannina. My scientific work and my career as a doctor are acknowledged by my fellow citizens. This is the rule, which has its exceptions, and we have witnessed these in the incidents of vandalism against religious monuments of the Jewish Community.

*What is your vision for the city of Ioannina, what are your priorities?*

The vision of my team, as it was outlined in our campaign program, is to turn Ioannina into a veritable hub in the southwestern Balkans. Until a few years ago, our city, like the whole of Epirus, experienced isolation and felt cut off from the rest of the country. Today, the city of Ioannina stands at the crossroads of the two major motorways, Egnatia and Ionia, with an expanded and modernized airport, two large hospitals and one of the largest universities of the Greek periphery. It combines history and culture with unparalleled natural beauty. In other words, it has all it takes to become a year-round tourist destination. So, one of our priorities, is to enhance the city's visibility.

Beyond that, our main priority is to tackle everyday problems in order to improve the image of the city and, above all, to improve the quality of life for our fellow citizens.

Better waste management, recycling, improvement of road infrastructure, upgrading of public spaces and playgrounds, all these are issues that need to be addressed immediately.

Our goal is to hand over in 2023 a modern city with its basic problems solved and in a position to provide excellent services to its citizens and visitors, i.e., a city that has become truly European.

*What changes to Municipal service do you consider necessary in order to improve citizen day-to-day life?*

The restructuring and modernization of municipal services is a priority for us, for two fundamental reasons: one, so that citizens are swiftly and effectively served, and two, in order to be able to draw and implement our projects. City services constitute a driving force. We have qualified and competent human resources that we need to make good use of, and we must utilize new technologies and every digital tool available to the benefit of all, services and citizens.

\*Interview by Marianna Varvarrigou. Translation into English by Nefeli Mosaidi.

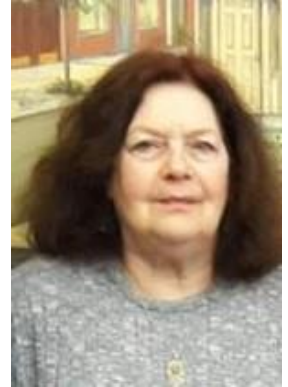
## **Greek-Jewish Synagogue in NY - The Message of Elisaf's Election**

Full interview of Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos by Matinas Demeli available [here](#) (in Greek)

*How do you feel, as community that a Jew is elected in a Greek village?*

First of all, Ioannina is not a village. It is a small city with a prestigious teaching hospital, where Moisis Eliasaf was head of Internal Medicine. We, Greek Jews, even those who live in outside of Greece, feel proud that in Ioannina, the population voted for the "man" and not what religion he practiced. Moisis Elisaf is highly respected in the city of Ioannina for his many accomplishments.

*Elisaf, as a Romaniote Jew, do you think his victory is a vindication for the community, which was exterminated by the Nazis?*



Vindication does not, nor should it, enter into our celebration of Moisis' victory. The Greek Orthodox citizens of Ioannina were not responsible for the almost complete extermination of the Jewish community of the city. The Germans were responsible. Having had close contact with both the Greek Orthodox and Jewish citizenry of the city of Ioannina, I know of the moral fiber of the both communities. We have worked together in the past and will continue to work together. Whenever I bring groups to Ioannina and we have special events, our Greek Orthodox friends always join us. This is a friendship built from mutual respect.

*We see an increase of radical right in Europe. Is this election is a hope for the future?*

I certainly hope this is election is hope for the future. There has been an increase in the radical right, not only in Europe but, also, in the United States. We are living in dark times now, with an increase in anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia. Hopefully, this positive outcome of a local election will act as a beacon of light for the future.

*How do you describe the relationship between Jews and Greeks?*

Greeks and Jews have a long history of interaction, in fact the longest history between the two cultures (Hellenistic and Judaic) that shaped western civilization. We share much in common. We both have long histories and never forget our friends nor our enemies. We have borrowed from each other and learned from each other. One of the most promising relationships is the most recent one; the strong relationship between Greece, Cyprus and Israel.

*What is the message that people in Ioannina who voted for Elisaf are sending?*

The people of Ioannina have sent a strong message. A man should be measured by his character and not by the religion he practices. They have also sent a strong message to those who believe that Greeks are anti-Semites. Some may be, but the greater majority are not! If I may quote from a dear friend of mine, a citizen of Ioannina and a member of the Jewish Community in the city, Mathilda Kalef-Ezra, after a particularly vicious desecration of the Jewish cemetery of Ioannina: "Yes, we have enemies but we also have dear friends." As a postscript to that event, the Christian citizens of Ioannina formed a human chain around the cemetery to show their support for the Jewish community of the city and to let the world know that they would not be defined by the fanatics in their midst. I was not surprised to see the results of the election in Ioannina. I have seen the firsthand the warm relationship Jews and Christians share in this special city.

## Veroia

Just recently, six Stolpersteine (stumbling stones) were placed outside the former public school in Veroia, in memory of six of the former Jewish students who were rounded up from Veroia and sent to their deaths in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943. The event was made possible by Gunter Demning, who created the idea of the Stolpersteine. These stones have been placed throughout Europe so that the citizens living in these cities where Jews once lived but who were deported to their deaths, can remember. Recently, in Thessaloniki, 143 such stones were placed in memory of students from the former High School for Boys, from where the young boys were rounded up to be sent to their deaths at Auschwitz-Birkenau in the Spring of 1943. In Thessaloniki, there were also Stolpersteine placed at the port. Now Veroia has been added to the list of places in Europe where memory will not be lost. Probably, the most moving part of this ceremony was the reaction of young students who "adopted" the stones of fellow students who perished.

The stones were placed in memory of:

Isaac Pinto 15 years old  
Moses Pinto 14 years old  
Asér Daniél 12 years old  
Michelle Azariá 14 years old  
Laura Azariá 10 years old  
Rachel Benroubê 12 years old

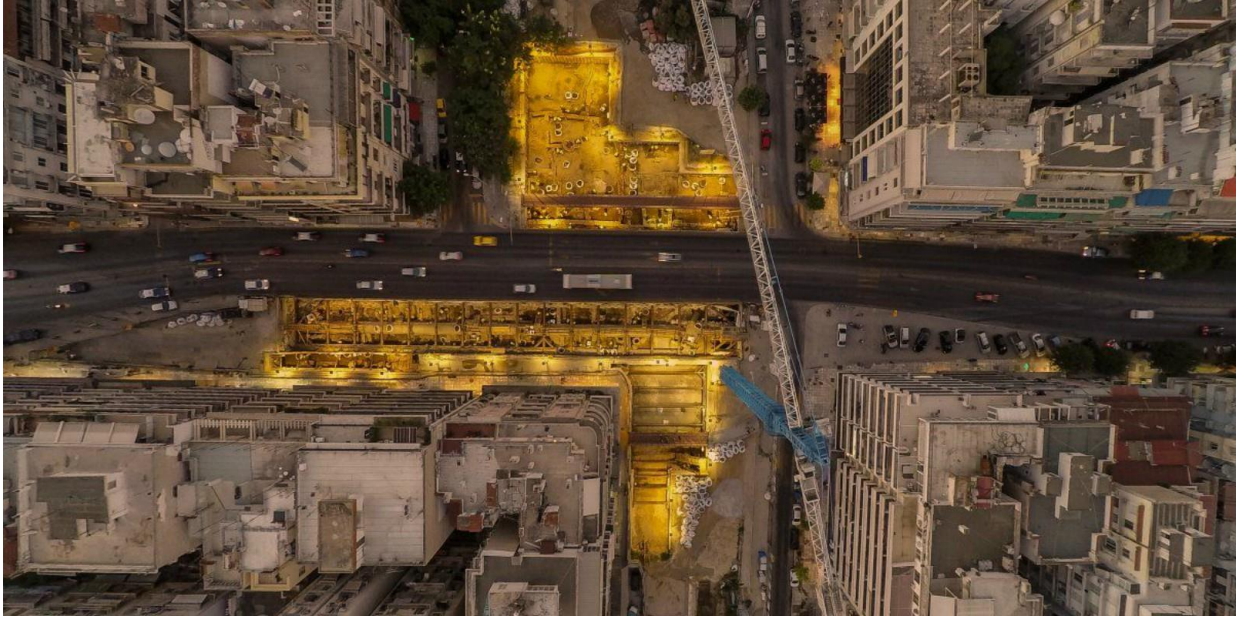


## Thessaloniki

UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture

On November 17, Dr. Polyxeni Adam-Veleni will be lecturing about the finds from the Thessaloniki metro excavations at UCLA. Here is a taste of what she will show us.

With the construction of the Metro in Thessaloniki, which began in 2006, findings that tell the story of 2300 years of the city were discovered. The findings tell the story of everyday life in the city through the ages, the commercial and social life of the citizenry. Truly a remarkable discovery.



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**Kehila Kedosha Janina welcomes the new Greek Orthodox Archbishop of America, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros. We look forward to meeting him.**

Learn more about the new Archbishop [here](#) and [here](#).



### Photo of the Month

Thanks to Eddie Levy for sharing a photo of Rae Dalven in front of KKJ in 1981.  
How different our synagogue looks!



**So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.**

If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) made out to *Kehila Kedosha Janina*, to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.

Some of our major donations have been generous bequests, which have enabled us to complete major work in our synagogue/museum. Do remember us in your will. Your legacy will be present in our legacy.

When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street. We are open for services every Saturday morning at 9:30am and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm and by appointment during the week.



**Kehila Kedosha Janina E-Newsletter – Number 124**

**July 2019**

**Kehila Kedosha Janina**

**280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002**

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**Your donations enable us to continue our work. You can send donations via mail directly to 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 or you can donate via our website [www.kkjsm.org](http://www.kkjsm.org)**