



ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF THESSALONIKI

The Jews of Thessaloniki

Indelible marks in space



In collaboration with
JEWISH MUSEUM OF THESSALONIKI

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF THESSALONIKI

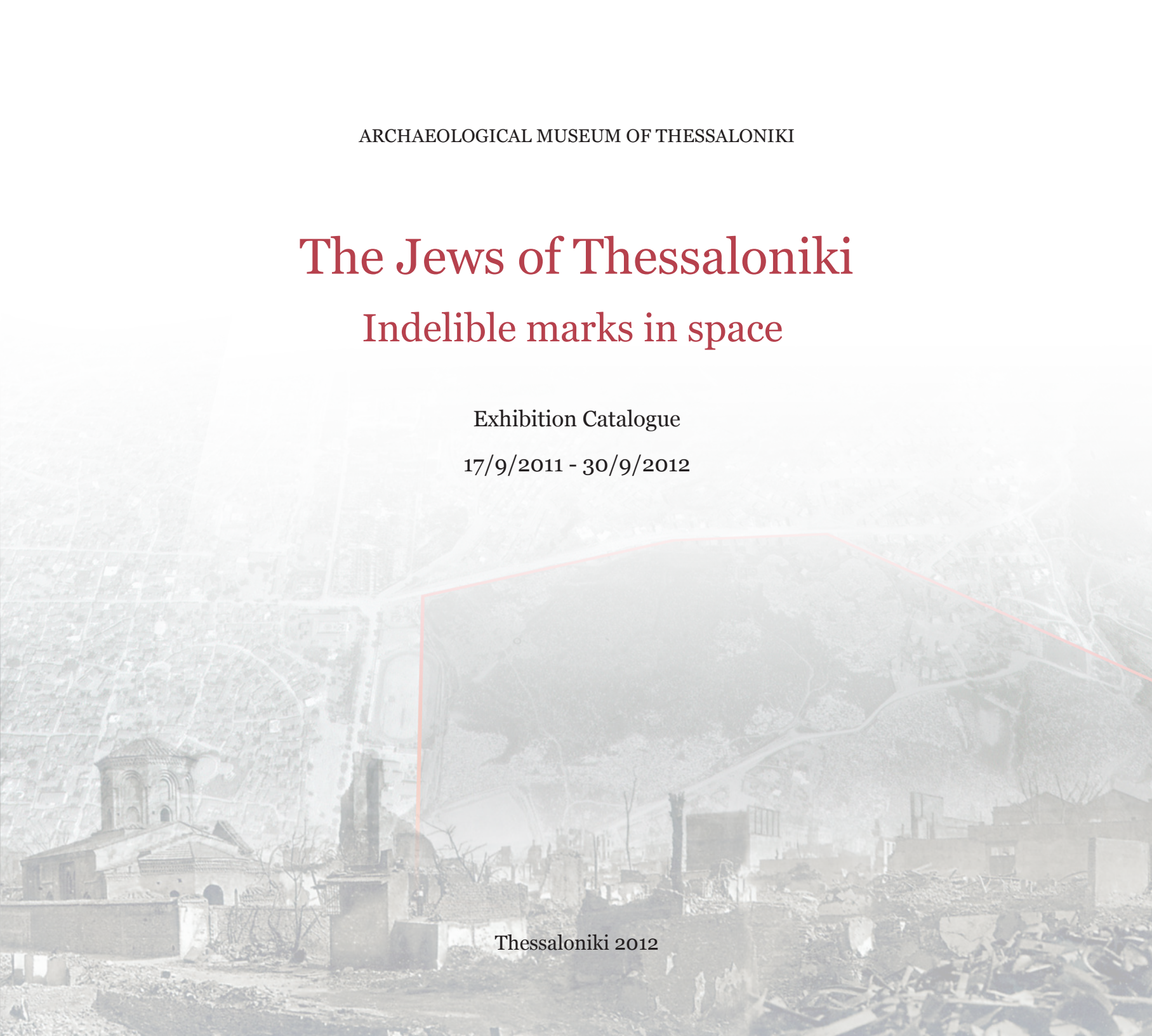
The Jews of Thessaloniki

Indelible marks in space

Exhibition Catalogue

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Thessaloniki 2012





Within the framework of the programme



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THESSALONIKI BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART



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THE JEWS OF THESSALONIKI. INDELIBLE MARKS IN SPACE

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The Jewish Community of Thessaloniki participated with great pleasure in a project concerning the long-standing Jewish presence in Thessaloniki; not only for the nature and width of the theme but also because this exhibition was not an initiative by the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki.

It was an enlightened initiative by the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. It is the first time that the idea for an exhibition was born and materialized outside the boundaries of our Community. We are especially pleased by the fact that the vehicle of this initiative is the most important Museum of the city.

But apart from the subject and the institutes, the quality of the exhibition “The Jews of Thessaloniki. Indelible marks in space” was an important factor as well. Experts devoted themselves to tracing the indelible marks of Jewish presence, which dates back more than 2,000 years, with great sensitivity and knowledge. Archaeological finds, objects and photographs were used in order to help the visitors grasp the length and richness of the cultural heritage that was abruptly and devastatingly disturbed by the Holocaust.

We are particularly glad because through the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, which this year is celebrating its 10th anniversary, with its expertise and its collections, we were able to contribute to the creation of this extraordinary exhibition, which already since the first weeks of its operation has had thousands of visitors.

We wish to congratulate, once more, everyone who contributed to this exhibition and express our gratitude to the Director of the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Dr. Polyxeni Adam-Veleni for her initiative and excellent cooperation.

David Saltiel

*President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki
President of the Central Jewish Board of Greece*

Hardly in any other place plagued by the Holocaust has the brutal extermination of the Jewish population been organized and executed so meticulously and fast as in Thessaloniki. Yet, the power of the Jewish civilization and its decisive influence on the development of the city, has resisted that barbarity to such a great extent that not only did a small group of the Israeli community of Thessaloniki manage to survive and ensure the collective memory, but has also enabled this civilization to continue markedly influencing the city's image.

This power and perseverance are presented in the exhibition at the Archaeological Museum in a particularly expressive and exceptional manner.

It is a great honour for the Consulate General of Germany to have the opportunity to support this exhibition on the occasion of its 125th anniversary.

2011 has been a significant year against oblivion and for remembrance.

For the impartial and explicit information of the German-speaking visitors to the Jewish sites of Thessaloniki, the book by Rena

Molcho and Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis has been translated into the language of the persecutors.

In order to provide scientists with new stimuli to research the Jewish history in Thessaloniki and the history of the Holocaust, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki has gained access to the Visual History Archive, which consists mainly of interviews with Holocaust survivors.

The Goethe Institute in Thessaloniki has held a discourse on northern Greece in the era of National Socialism, aiming at starting and keeping alive a stimulating public discussion.

A Multi-Media-Guide-System has been introduced at the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki where people of all ages, but especially the younger ones, can be informed, according to their age, of the history of the Israeli community and the Holocaust.

This catalogue is being published in the year of the completion of 100 years from the liberation of Thessaloniki; a year of reflection on the versatile and multicultural character of the city's past and composition; a year of reflection also on Jewish tradition and the Jewish people's contribution to the development of the city.

Thessaloniki, January 2012

Wolfgang Hoelscher-Obermaier

*Consul General
of the Federal Republic of Germany
in Thessaloniki*

The memory of the city

Since it was founded in 315 BC, by merging twenty-six settlements, Thessaloniki's special characteristic was its multiculturalism. This characteristic was preserved until the mid-20th century. Then, an important community of the city, the Jewish, was unexpectedly decimated. This vibrant population element gave the city a unique countenance. Traders and entrepreneurs settling in Hellenistic Thessaloniki (since the 2nd c. BC) made their presence clear throughout Roman, early Christian and Byzantine times, to be reinforced by the arrival of Hispano-Jews, who were persecuted by the Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1492.

The Hispano-Jews were the largest Jewish group to settle and live in Thessaloniki until World War II. Wealthy upper and middle class citizens, lower class workers and craftsmen created neighbourhoods that became landmarks for Thessaloniki. Their presence marked the city's streets and areas, through their indelible prints. Until the final, undue end.

The exhibition "The Jews of Thessaloniki. Indelible marks in space" of the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki was organised within the frame of the 3rd Biennale, 2011, with the Middle East as its central theme, through the programme of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "Thessaloniki, Cultural Crossroads".

It is the first time, outside the Jewish community, that a Greek state museum dedicates an exhibition to the unjustly lost Jewish population, a debt that cannot be ignored. A multitude of experts cooperated for its completion, with the constant help from the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki. We extend thanks to all of them.

We would also like to sincerely thank the German Consulate of Thessaloniki, the Goethe Institute, the Jewish Museum and the Friends of the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, who undertook the cost of publishing this catalogue.

A special mention is owed to the director Nikos Chrisikakis, who offered part of his documentary "The Geography of Memory" (in production), which examines the relationship between the World War II experience and space, as it was experienced by the few Greek-Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, as well as Ángela María Arbeláez, who generously offered clips from her long-lasting radio programme "Desde Grecia, aquí Salónica", which carefully collected whatever was left from the Hispano-Jewish language and culture.

The exhibition was greatly enhanced by personal testimonies and images through the artwork bestowed by two artists. As a result, they vigorously contributed to what every city must preserve as its uppermost testament: the constant revival of its memory.

Polyxeni Adam-Veleni

Director of the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki

Choosing Landmarks

What this exhibition is about

According to the population census held by the Greek authorities in 1913, 70-80% of the residents of the central district of Thessaloniki were Jews. To be more specific, in the area along the sea-coast between the “Old Fish Market” (i.e. the modern Emporiou Square) and the Orthodox cathedral of St Gregory Palamas, 86% of the residents were Jews. To the north of this, in the area between Venizelou Street, Egnatia Street and the Aghia Sophia neighborhood, 90% of the residents were Jews. In the area between the Rogos neighborhood (the Roman Forum) and the western suburb Regie Vardar, 64% of the residents were Jews. In the area along the sea-coast, between the Orthodox cathedral and the White Tower, 78% of the residents were Jews.

The fire of 1917 destroyed the first two areas totally and partially the third; it also caused serious damages to the fourth. This is why the prominent “indelible landmark” examined by this exhibition is the axis along the modern Aristotelous Street; this axis was a Jewish town, with nine Spanish-speaking out of ten residents. The map designed by Ellie Gala-Georghila (see in the next pages) illustrates the subversive changes in the building and planning of this area after 1917 and helps the reader to understand its geography. Following this map and based exclusively on cadastral documents we identified about 30 burnt synagogues.

The axis of Aristotelous Street was the historic uterus of the Salonikan Jews; today is a big empty cell, an uncured wound on the memory of the city.

What this exhibition is not about

First of all, this exhibition does not cover in details the extermination of the Salonikan Jews. Because the scholarly work is still in the beginning, an in-depth approach to this issue would fail, unless extensive preparation and co-operation of many specialists had been secured. Second, this exhibition is not a study on the

Jewish neighbourhoods which were formed after the fire of 1917; any study on this topic may have an extensive preparation as a prerequisite, in order to produce fresh knowledge and avoid repeating pieces of undocumented information.

The absent neighbours

If the dozens of thousands of children, which were killed in the extermination camps, had been allowed to grow up, they would have transmitted their family traditions about the geographical details for the older residents’ everyday life and the location of their synagogues and their houses. Along with the lost children, the historical perception of the urban space was also lost; with the help of the town planning and the extended rebuilding, this double loss resulted in erasing the city in our memory. The real Thessaloniki is a city sunk into oblivion.

Can we exorcize the oblivion with the landmarks presented by this exhibition? The system which reproduces cognitive structures keeps aside the killing of the Jews, especially the Salonikan Jews. A heavy majority of the high-school and university students know nothing about this killing; they are also ignorant of the fact that Jews lived and still live in their city.

Looking for “landmarks” in time and space this exhibition joins the unequal battle against oblivion. Contrary to the usual banalities, looking for into space is never a “trip”; is neither a safe nor a happy process. On the contrary, it is a painful choice, a choice about our past and our identity. While talking about places we really mean the people who lived in these places, by choosing our past, we put a landmark into our future.

Are we really talking about places? In fact, we are trying to brook our uncured wounds.

Evanghelos Hekimoglou

Ephor of the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki

An exhibition for the Jews of Thessaloniki or an excavation at the stratigraphy of memory. The museological approach

The organisation and presentation of an exhibition for the Jewish community of Thessaloniki cannot function in the same way of a typical archaeological exhibition organised by a museum such as the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. And not merely because the topic is clearly historical but also due to the fact that the Jewish community is still a living part of the city and thus cannot be dealt as a reminiscence or a cause for emotional flare.

As archaeologists we are trained to use certain methodological tools and theoretical approaches in our research, which secure the disciplinary formation of interpretations and protect our topics, as much as possible, from the subjectivity of personal analysis. It was thus inevitable to employ stratigraphy as a main means of approach on the theme of this exhibition. We thought that it would be more interesting, for the citizens of Thessaloniki as well as its visitors, to “discover” aspects of the Jewish presence in the city, through spaces, buildings and neighbourhoods, which are located around us, inextricably tied to our everyday life but hardly known for their stories or their changing roles throughout the city’s history.

The A.U.Th. campus, the wider Aristotelous axis, the eastern Thessaloniki along the Exoche boulevard (modern-day Vassilissis Olgas Street) and the Old Railway Station were chosen as areas important to the historical and architectural character of Thessaloniki, as well as especially significant for the Jewish community in space and time. The “excavation” of the stratigraphy of memory through these areas, re-discovered buildings / landmarks and re-constructed moments of the turbulent history of the Jews in Thessaloniki.

The presentation of landmarks did not prevent us from keeping the thin line of temporal narration, starting from the University,

where the Jewish cemetery was located since antiquity –when Jews first settled in Thessaloniki– until its destruction by the Nazi forces during World War II, and ending at the Hirsch neighbourhood, which was used as a concentration camp of the people who were boarded on trains and transferred to extermination camps. Furthermore, the landmarks operated as starting points for the thematic presentation of Jewish life in Thessaloniki. Thus, the Aristotelous axis was the framework for the presentation of thematic units, such as worship and synagogues, education and the crucial part of the Alliance, the residences and daily life of poor Jews, as well as financial activities, commercial flourishing, banks and the labour movement with Benaroya’s historical figure. The area of eastern Thessaloniki, with the opulent urban houses allowed us to talk about the role played by members of the Jewish community in the industrial, architectural and social modernisation of Thessaloniki in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The exhibition’s items chosen to visualise this search in space and time were few in number but characteristic of the multifaceted presence of the Jewish community: tombstones, secular and religious costumes, amulets, merchandise boxes, and a commercial house’s seal from the recent Metro excavations... fragments of a long history, an indelible presence.

The attempt to forcibly eradicate the Jewish community of Thessaloniki by the Nazi forces was one of most tragic moments in modern Greek history. Nonetheless, our exhibition’s message remains positive. If we remember, if we learn, if we discover our city over and over again and in the end narrate the knowledge we’ve acquired, the future can only be better.

Evangelia Stefani
Head of the Exhibitions Department A.M.Th.

The memory of the city.

Museographic proposal for the exhibition

“The Jews of Thessaloniki. Indelible marks in space”

The once strong presence of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki in every aspect of urban life –economic, social, religious– printed in space through its markets, synagogues, schools, mansions as well as houses and neighbourhoods of the less fortunate, was gradually erased during the 20th century, leaving scanty disconnected landmarks of its history. The Great Fire of 1917 that consumed the largest part of the city’s historic centre, destroyed areas with a strong Jewish presence within the densely-built urban web, which was later reconstructed according to an ambitious, and innovative for its time, scheme of modernizing and re-designing the city, thus radically altering its form. The narration of the Jewish community’s story in Thessaloniki and the remembrance of its presence in landmarks of the modern city attempts to reconstitute the memory of this historic image of the city, hardly discernible now and unknown to most of its current citizens.

The thematic units of the exhibition are presented through additional material that includes texts, photographs and maps, accompanied by selected heirlooms and archaeological finds. The exhibition hall, unified and limited in extent, should convey the countenance of the city’s past space, as the city web becomes the reference for the units of this museographic proposal. The map of Thessaloniki prior to the Fire of 1917 in black and white, as a symbol between free and built space, with the modern-day city plan superimposed on it in red, was chosen as the main communicative tool for the museographic proposal. It spreads across the hall’s centre space, extending on its long walls as well. The city’s imprint on the floor and the development of the exhibition units create a context, which cites the temporal and spatial framework of the museological narrative. The resulting museographic image contributes to the interpretation and the conveyance of meaning to the units,

urging the visitor to notice the association of the exhibition’s spatial narrative with the city space.

The exhibition area is organised in a tripartite division: the main space, where the historic centre map unfolds, bordered by the two spaces at each end, which in relation to the city’s natural space, deal with the eastern and western section of the city. Specially designed surfaces on the longitudinal sides refer to the geometry of city streets, designating the surfaces that house each unit’s supplementary material.

The map was thus placed, so the axis of modern-day Aristotelous Street would coincide with the hall’s longitudinal axis. Jewish presence along this axis was particularly vivid, with many institutions, such as synagogues, schools, as well as markets and private houses. The part of the map that includes this area, tracing the roads surrounding it, was used for creation of an elongated slightly-raised level at the centre of the hall,

which also designated the exhibition's direction by being evident but not obligatory.

The exhibition hall was kept unified, with only a small niche separated, which housed the audiovisual material. The visitors can focus on the screen and the sound of speech and music. The line of portraits along the surrounding walls, reminds us of the human presence and the real life-frame, through family photographs and scenes from various social events of the community.

Alkmene Paka

Assistant Professor A.U.Th, architect



145 BC	First possible Jewish settlement in Thessaloniki.
50 AD	Saint Paul preaches at the city's synagogue.
Roman times	An important Jewish community in Thessaloniki, who speaks Greek (Romaniotes).
1169	The famous traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, visits Thessaloniki and mentions a prosperous Jewish community of approximately 500 families, principally engaged in the silk industry.
1298	Document from Agion Oros mentioning the Jewish neighbourhood.
1420	Document from Agion Oros mentioning a burnt Jewish neighbourhood located SE of the Omphalos neighbourhood.
1423-1430	Thessaloniki under Venetian rule. The Jewish community sends requests to the Venetian senate regarding taxation and burial of its deceased.
1430	The Turks conquer Thessaloniki.
1454	A large part or the whole of Thessaloniki's Jewish population is transported to Istanbul.
1492	The Spanish monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, expel all Jews from their kingdom. A large percentage of Spanish-speaking Sephardim Jewish settle in Thessaloniki.
16 th century	The golden age of Thessaloniki's Jewish community.
1512	The first printing shop in the Balkans is founded by a Jewish family.
early 17 th century	Plagues and fires cause many Jews to flee the city. In 1657, the pseudo-Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi's sect leads to widespread conversions to Islam, but these Jews preserved awareness of their Jewish heritage (Dönmehs).
18 th century	Economic decline, depression of religious and secular studies.
mid 19 th century	Economic resurgence, increase in trade and commerce.
1912	Liberation of Thessaloniki and integration to the Greek state.
1917	Great fire destroys the city centre and the populous Jewish neighbourhoods. The city's urban redesign pushes the Jewish populations to peripheral neighbourhoods.
July 11, 1942 ("black Sabbath")	All of the city's Jewish males are summoned by the Nazis to Eleftherias Square and suffer humiliation.
December 1942 - February 1943	Destruction of the Jewish cemetery, all Jewish population is confined in ghettos and forced to wear the yellow star of David, seizure of Jewish property.
March - August 1943	96% of the city's Jewish population is forced out of the ghetto and sent to the Nazi concentration camps in Poland.
October 1944	The Greek and Allied forces recapture the city, gradual return of the very few Jewish survivors and reconstitution of the community.
Today	Organised community of approximately 1,000 people with two active synagogues, a youth centre, a community centre for all ages and a community nursing home for the elderly.



Exhibition views.
 Photograph by Or. Kourakis.

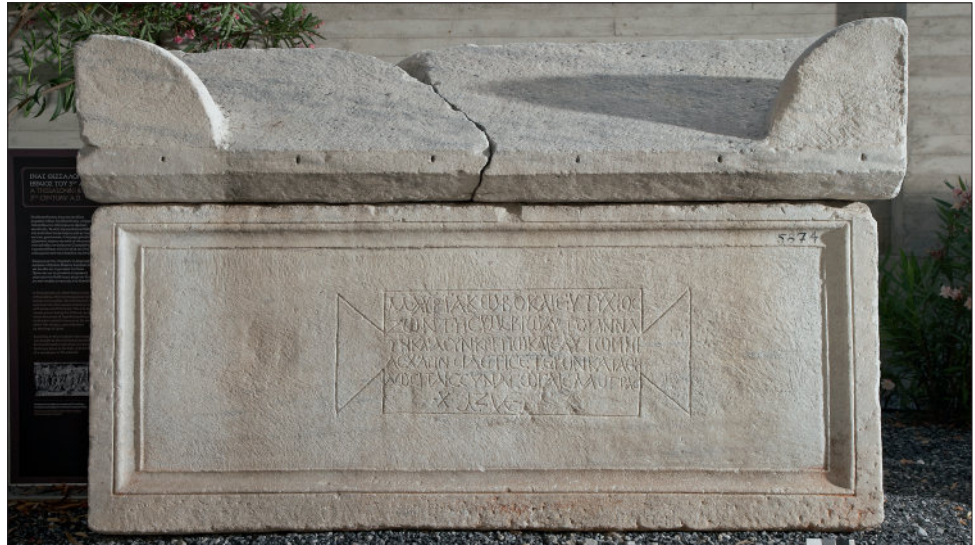
UNIVERSITY

The first settlement. A very old story...

The Greek-speaking Jewish community of Thessaloniki was one of the most important southern Balkan communities in antiquity.

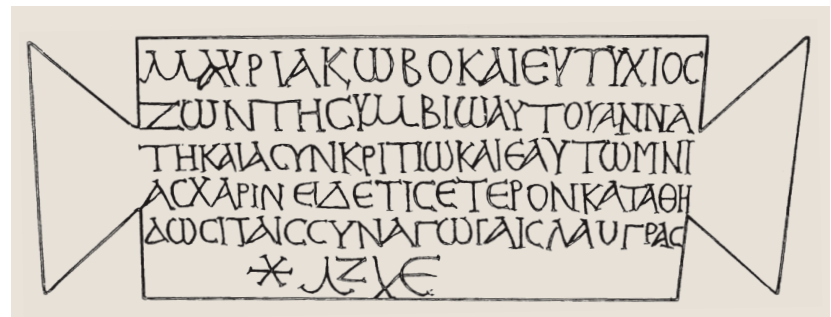
There is no safe evidence for the initial Jewish settlement at Thessaloniki. Most probably, a large number of exiled Jews reached the city from Alexandria in 145 BC, due to conflicts between the Ptolemies, the Egyptian royal dynasty. New waves of exiles from Alexandria arrived in the 1st c. BC, while after the two catastrophes that hit Palestine in AD 70 and AD 135, many people were sold abroad as slaves and were later freed by other Jewish.

These Jews constituted the first community of Thessaloniki, a Greek-speaking community whose members were known as *Romaniotes*, from the name Romania used for the eastern Roman state, a name that would persist throughout the centuries for the Greek-speaking Jews.



Sarcophagus of Marcus Aurelius Jacob and his wife Anna, 3rd century AD.
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, open-air exhibition "Field-House-Garden-Grave".

The inscription of the sarcophagus mentions that in case of a grave violation, the 75,000 dinar fine was payable to the synagogues of the city.



The earliest mention

The Acts of the Apostles (17, 1-9) is the first written source offering information on Thessaloniki's Jewish population. According to that text, Saint Paul visits the town in AD 50, converting a number of people to Christianity, which caused the objection of the Jewish community.

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. Paul, as was his custom, went in to them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures... Some of them were persuaded, and joined...

Acts of the Apostles (17, 1-9)



View of the excavations at the University Campus in 1965.
Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The cemetery of the Jewish community: A source of knowledge for an important community of the late antiquity

During the 60s and 70s, archaeological excavations in plots of the Aristotle University (Administration Building, School of Law) brought to light burial monuments, mainly of late antiquity (3rd-5th c. AD), which constitute the earliest archaeological evidence of the city's Jewish community.

In Roman Thessaloniki, the Jewish population used the city's eastern cemetery for their burials, and especially the area between the streams of Evangelistria and Saranta Ekklesies. Jewish graves are found next to the ones of Christians and pagans, which denotes the Jewish community's close ties with the local society. All evidence shows that the Jewish population of Thessaloniki, as the one at Veroia and Philippi, also important communities in Macedonia, were to a large degree incorporated to their living environment and did not constitute a marginal group. After all, the adoption of Greek names or Greek translations of Biblical names by the Jewish Diaspora is interpreted as an adjustment attitude, which never reaches assimilation though.

Their funerary monuments proudly exhibit their national and religious identity, with the mention of the national name, *Ιουδαίος* (Jewish) or *Εβραῖος* (Hebrew) and the depiction of religious symbols, such as the menorah, the citrus (ethrog-cédra) and the palm leaf (loulab). In certain cases, the fine for violating a grave is payable to the synagogue, not the Imperial fund or the city, which indicates the people's special relationship to the religious and cultural centre of their community.

The destruction of a place of memory

After 1492, with the mass settlement of Sephardim Jews from Spain in the city, the Jewish cemetery was expanded covering the whole area that is today's University campus. According to Jewish law, the exhumation of burials is forbidden, so the cemetery was in use for centuries.

In early December 1942, the Nazi military commander of Thessaloniki, Max Merten, visited the site of the Jewish cemetery. Its destruction commenced on the same day. The Jewish cemetery was converted into a huge area of ruined burial plaques and scattered bones. The Nazis used the ruined plaques as building material for road constructions, even a pool was made of stelae from the cemetery.

The Jewish cemetery, that covered an area of 360,000 square metres and was a source of information for the history of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, was completely destroyed.



A British soldier staring a German strongpoint, with slit trenches lined with tombstones from Jewish graves, 11.11.1944. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Joseph Eaton.*

“...the pits were innumerable, the Jews never dug up their dead. The graves were rectangular pits, built on the inside... The plaque had carved symbols regarding the occupation of the deceased... Many of them I could understand straightaway, when I was playing there as a boy. But others were just too symbolic that I could not interpret them... The cloths had the Star of David at the corners, made of white lines... The Jews never planted flowers or cypresses.”

Giorgos Ioannou, «Τα εβραϊκά μνήματα»

Tombstones from the Jewish cemetery as paving material at a building of post-war Thessaloniki. *Jewish Museum of Greece.*



View of the Jewish cemetery of Thessaloniki before its destruction by the Nazis. *Thessaloniki History Centre.*

THE ARISTOTELOUS AXIS

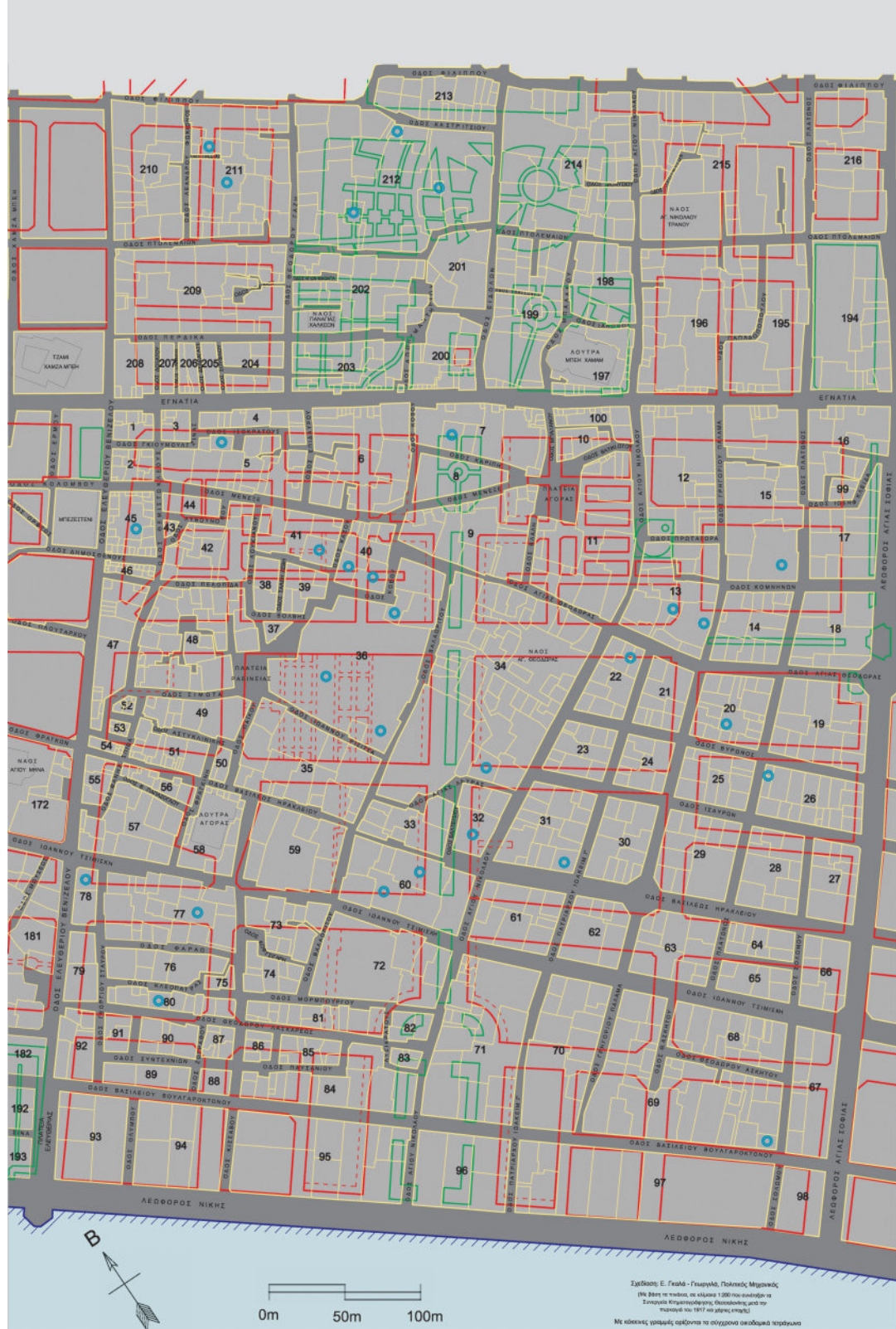
The central district of Thessaloniki Before and after the fire of 1917

The map illustrates on the one hand the city plan destroyed by the fire of 1917 and on the other hand the new city plan adopted in the 1920s (red lines). You can see the names of the old streets, which were abolished by the new plan. The blue circles illustrate the exact location of 30 identified synagogues.

For the elaboration of the map with electronic design software, copies of cadastral records in a 1:200 scale were used; these cadastral records were drawn in 1918 for the surveying of the burnt area.

The map was laid out on a contemporary city plan with the help of fixed reference points, e.g. the line of the waterfront and the monuments that survived the fire.

By Ellie Gala-Georgila, civil engineer



Anybody travelling from the sea towards the hills to the north of Thessaloniki, a hundred or more years ago, following the route of modern-day Aristotelous street, would encounter markets and workshops scattered among many narrow streets. They would see the poultry market and the fish market, near the harbour. Further north, the large school of Alliance would impress them, where Mitropoleos street meets Aristotelous. Then they would meet the large bazaar, near modern-day Vasileos Irakleiou street with its glassware stores and the meat market. Shops and storerooms could be found everywhere around. A little to the north of Vasileos Irakleiou street, the Talmud Torah, the main synagogue and the seat of the rabbi were located, next to the flour market square (Kapan), the city's most central and important market.

The markets were specialized, separated according to articles for sale, and Sephardic, the language of the Hispano-Jewish of Thessaloniki could be heard everywhere. Most shopkeepers, retailers and vendors were Jews. The Jewish neighbourhoods were located to the east and west of modern-day's Aristotelous street.

Thessaloniki's main centre suffered many destructions from fire. Due to frequent earthquakes, most buildings made of wood would burn easily. In the years between 1907-1916, 177 local fires were attested, mainly in the market area. The Great Fire of 1917 completely incinerated the larger part of the city centre.



The Un Kapan, the flour market, the city's central market. *Thessaloniki History Centre.*

The Jewish neighbourhoods and their organisation

The exact location of the Greek-speaking Jewish, the Romaniotes, eludes us. After the Fall of Thessaloniki to the Ottomans in 1430, a large number of Jewish citizens was transferred to Constantinople.

From the end of the 15th century, successive waves of Jews immigrants, driven out of Germany, Provence, Italy, but mostly the Iberian peninsula, arrive at Thessaloniki. With this increase of Jewish population, the Jewish neighbourhoods in the city covered most of its modern-day centre.

In the final years of Ottoman rule, we know that the Jewish neighbourhoods stretched mainly south of Egnatia street to the sea, from the Vardar Gate to the area of modern-day Palaion Patron Germanou street.

Greek neighbourhoods could be found among them, around the orthodox churches, as well as the catholic neighbourhood in the “Frangon” (“Franks”) area. The Muslim neighbourhoods occupied the higher levels around the castle.

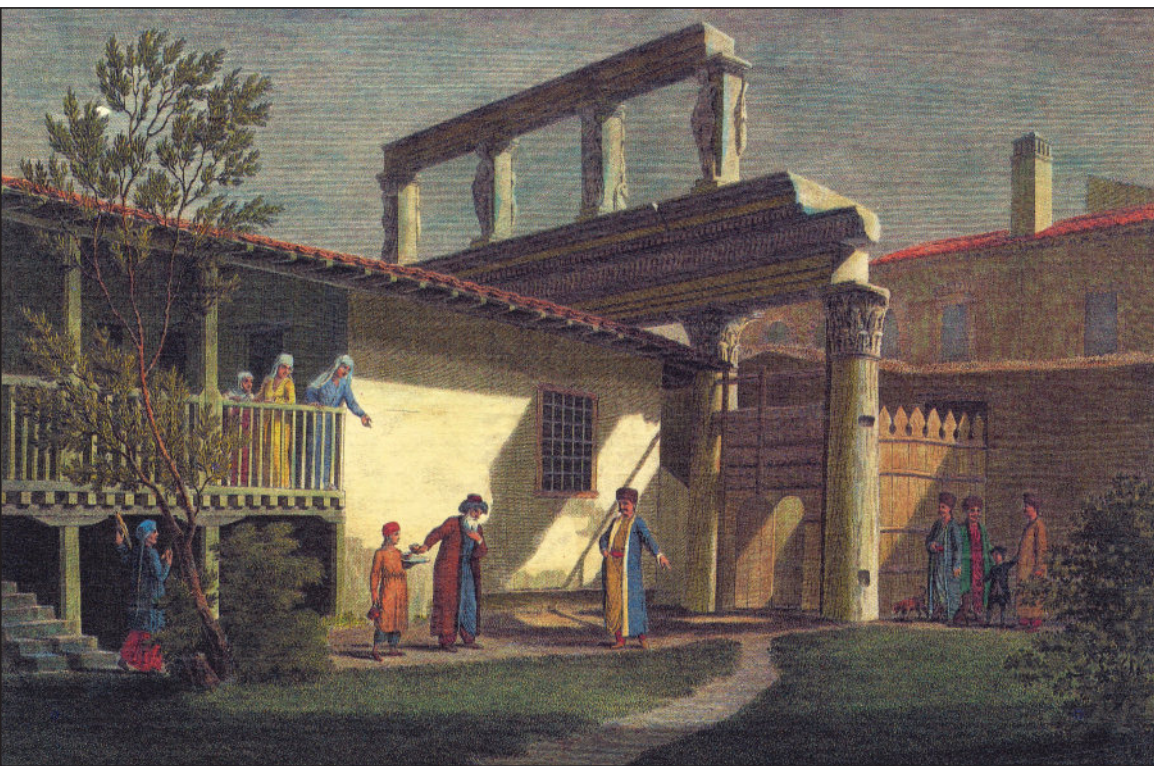
Houses usually had two storeys and were attached to each other. They were made of wood or mudbricks. An inner courtyard would form inside each block, where the kitchen was located.

The Jewish immigrants formed distinct groups called kehalim (singular kahal). Kehalim included families with common background and language, and were formed to help immigrants settle to their new home. Each kahal had its own synagogue, whose names echoed the origins of their members.

The Rogós neighbourhood

The Rogós neighbourhood stretched in the area between the church of Panagia Chalkeon (Our lady of the bronzes) and the Ancient Agora. Its most distinct characteristic was that in its narrow streets, the Jewish and Muslim faiths coexisted with synagogues and mosques. According to tradition, the Dönme (crypto-Jews), who preserved elements of their Jewish faith in secret, conducted their rituals in the tunnels that run underground, from the Panagia Chalkeon to the Roman Agora.

The most important landmark of the Rogós were the remnants of a Roman stoa. They were the famous Incantadas (Enchanted ones) as they were known in Spanish. The Greek-speakers called them Εἰδωλὰ (Idols), the Turkish-speakers, Suretler. Nonetheless, superstition did not prevent many families to live around the Incantadas.



The famous engraving depicts P. Paradise, the British ambassador in Thessaloniki. Paradise, a merchant himself, took under his personal protection most Livornese Jews who traded in Thessaloniki at the time. The ambassador accompanies the travellers J. Stuart and N. Revett at the courtyard of a house next to the Incantadas. The travellers wait at the entrance, for the ambassador to get permission from the house owner, who was a rabbi.

Published by the Thessaloniki History Centre (Κέντρο Ιστορίας Θεσσαλονίκης 1998).

The original in I. Tanimanides Collection.

View of the Rogós neighbourhood
after the Great Fire of 1917.

*Published by A. Karadimou-Gerolymbou
(Καραδήμου-Γερολύμπου 2002).*



Thessaloniki's synagogues

The synagogue is the most important religious, social, cultural and political centre of Jewish communities since antiquity. It functions as society's epicentre where not only religious ceremonies, but every other congregation takes place. Apart from the main praying room, synagogues were equipped with auxiliary rooms, which functioned as the community's treasury, lodging for travellers, and the guard's home. It also had a yard where people would gather.

...they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue...

Acts of the Apostles (17, 1-9)

It is hard to establish the location of the synagogue Paul visited in AD 50. Oral tradition has associated it with various areas of Thessaloniki, such as the Vlatadon Monastery, the Saint Demetrios church, Rotonda, the Saint Demetrius Hospital etc. Some believe that the Roman synagogue must be identified as the Ets Ahaim (Tree of Life) synagogue, which was located near the sea wall.

A 3rd century AD inscription on a sarcophagus from Thessaloniki offers valuable information. In case of a grave violation, the 75.000 dinar fine was payable to the synagogues and not the Imperial Fund or the city. According to the text, the city must have had more than one synagogues. This indicates an increase of the city's Jewish population, most probably by people arriving from other cities.

50 synagogues and midrasim were active in Thessaloniki until World War II. The names of the synagogues (Lisbon, Majorca, Katalan, Sicilia) reminded the believers of their place of origin. After the war, only the *Monastiriot* synagogue survived, thanks to the intervention of the Red Cross, which functions to this day as the community's official synagogue. It is located on Siggrou street and



The entrance of the Talmud Torah Synagogue during the festival of Jewish Passover, 16th April 1916. V. A. Mavrommatis Collection.

was founded in 1927 by Jewish immigrants from Monastir. It was built by the architect Eli Levi.

According to tradition, the oldest synagogue in Thessaloniki was the Ets Ahaim near the city's maritime walls, where modern-day Demosthenous street meets Kalapothaki street. It was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1917.

The famous Talmud Torah Agadol was the community's main synagogue. It was founded in 1520 and was located to the north of Vasileos Irakleiou street. The complex was a square two-storey building with an inner courtyard, which included libraries and a theological school. It was destroyed and rebuilt after various fires of the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries. In 1899, the keystone of a new, magnificent building was placed in the area of modern-day Vlali square. It was ultimately destroyed in 1917.

Dönmehs. The Jewish converts to Islam

The Ottoman Empire's decline around the mid 17th century affected the Jewish commercial activities as well. The cultural decadence led to an upsurge of mysticism and offered fertile ground for the appearance of a controversial figure, Sabetai Zevi, a Smyrne-born Jew, who was self-proclaimed the Messiah and attracted many adherents in the city. The Sultan arrested him and gave him a choice between death and conversion to Islam. Zevi accepted Islam and many of his followers imitated him. They were the converted Jews, who became known as Dönmehs (dönme means converted), while they called themselves *Maminin*, meaning truly faithful.

The Dönmeh community of Thessaloniki was the largest in the Empire. They would attend services at the Mosque, adopt Islamic names but they also practiced their Jewish rituals and spoke their mother tongue, all in secret.

In the early 20th century, the Dönmehs were the most emancipated part of the Muslim world. They played a crucial part in the Young Turks revolution in 1908 and contributed greatly to the spread of western culture. In 1923, with the Lausanne Treaty, they left the city as Muslims and settled elsewhere, mainly in Istanbul.

Yeni Camii (New Mosque) built by the architect Vitaliano Poselli, is a unique mixture of Islamic and European architectural styles. It was built in 1902 as the religious centre of the rich Dönmeh community. From 1925 until 1968 it housed the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki.

Yeni Camii (New Mosque), the religious centre of the Dönmehs.
Photography Museum "Christos Kalemkeris", Municipality of Kalamaria.



The Alliance school: Aristotelous and Mitropoleos streets (Electra Palace)

Until the mid 19th century, the Jewish community's educational system was exclusively controlled by rabbis, while the majority of the population lived in conditions of poverty and illiteracy. Within this frame, Moose Allatini, an elite member of the community, envisioned education as the only means of upgrading the Jewish population. Thus, with his initiative, the Alliance Israelite Universelle operated in the city. Alliance, a worldwide organisation based in Paris, aimed towards the education and cultural improvement of Jewish people around the globe. The first Alliance school in Thessaloniki

was inaugurated in 1873 and was called M. Allatini, in honour of its main sponsor. The educational reform, based on European standards proved to be very successful. Schools opened one after the other and even members of other communities in Thessaloniki sought to enroll their offsprings to these new institutions and technical schools of Alliance. The Alliance schools, apart from the academic and technical education they offered, also performed social work through kindergartens, day nurseries and children's homes.



The school of Alliance Israellite Universelle.
Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki.



Aerial view of Thessaloniki before 1917. The Alliance School is highlighted.
J. Levi Collection.

The commercial district

In the late Ottoman period Thessaloniki's commercial district was located around a central road, known today as Venizelou Street. Small shops and workshops of Jewish, Greek or Turkish merchants stood side by side. There were no occupational exclusions, but it appears that each ethnicity had its area of expertise. The Jews were mostly butchers, cooks, soap makers, tinsmiths, locksmiths, cobblers, glassmakers, tobacconists and weavers. The 'Romioi' (Greeks) were bakers, distillers, raisin traders, confectioners, greengrocers and shoemakers, while the Turkish were halvah-makers, grocers, tanners, farriers and coffee-makers.



The entrance of Venizelou Street. *Thessaloniki History Centre.*

The various professional groups were organised in guilds, many of which were mixed in terms of ethnic composition.



Sambri Pasha Street (modern-day Venizelou). Early 20th century. *A. Papaioannou Collection.*

Modiano Arcade

The central food market of Thessaloniki was created after the Great Fire of 1917 in the heart of the city's commercial centre, at the area designated for the bazaars, according to the Hebrard plan. Its creator, Eli Modiano, an architect and an engineer, the son of a wealthy Jewish family, also created other important buildings in the city. The market was inaugurated in March 23, 1925. It still functions to this day, as a market of meat, fish and other foods. The arcade's architecture presents a peculiar type of eclecticism. Its tripartite division into base, core and roof, its monumental design and its symmetry, its decoration with a variety of patterns and the references to classical antiquity, are basic elements of the facades' design.

The Modiano arcade is one of the first buildings in Thessaloniki to be built with reinforced concrete, a pioneering at the time, building material.

Saul Arcade

In the 1880s, Saul Modiano, a banker, hired Vitaliano Poselli to create the Saul Arcade to the north of the Agios Minas church, part of which still survives to this day. The building included 96 workshops, offices and storerooms. The shops within were luxurious and their rent was very high. It was destroyed in 1917 and redesigned by Eli Modiano in 1925-27.

Jewish Museum (Agiou Mina Street)

It was constructed in 1904 within the city's commercial district and survived the destructive fire of 1917. At some point, it housed the Bank of Athens and the offices of the French-language Jewish newspaper "L'Indépendant". In 1997, the building was renovated in order to house the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki.



The Modiano Arcade nowadays. Photograph by Or. Kourakis.



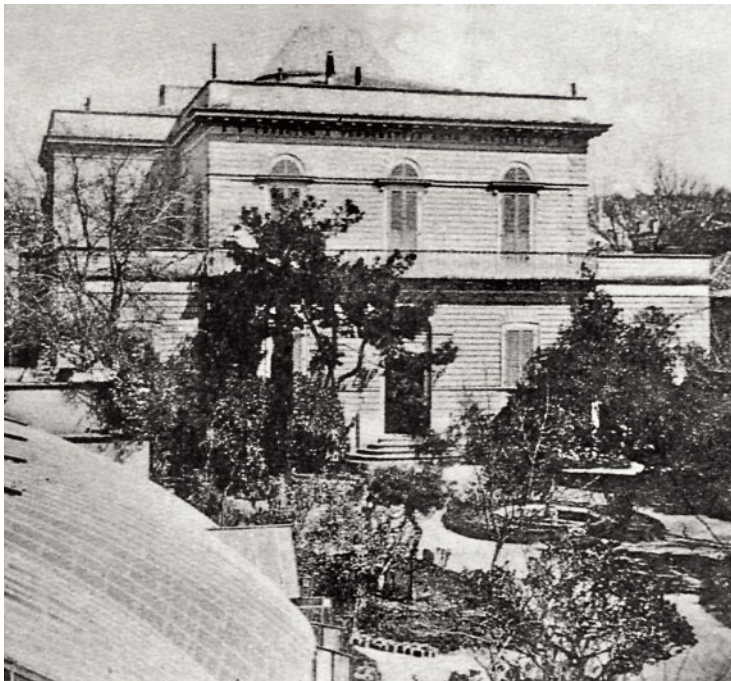
Saul Arcade in early 30s. Jewish Museum of Greece.



Jewish bank office. V. A. Mavrommatis Collection.

Chrimatistiriou Arcade - Stock Exchange Arcade (junction of Sigrou, Valaoritou and Vilara Streets)

The luxurious Allatini mansion was built in 1862 in the heart of the city's European neighbourhood, the *Frangomachala* (French neighbourhood). One hundred international celebrities celebrated the city's railway connection with Europe in its gardens in 1888. In 1907, the Bank of Thessaloniki building (*Banque de Salonique*) was erected in the same area where the city's first private bank was founded by the Allatini brothers in 1888. Other European banks participated in the Bank, while branches were opened in many cities throughout Macedonia.



The Allatini mansion in the Frangomachala (French district) in the early 20th century.
Published by E. Hekimoglou (Χεκίμογλου 1991).

Stein Mansion (Kalapothaki Street)

The Stein Mansion on Eleftherias Square was built in 1908. It was a department store of the namesake Austrian company and belonged to a Jewish family. It was one of the most important landmarks of the city in the early 20th century and one of the very few buildings to survive the fire of 1917 and still stand to this day.



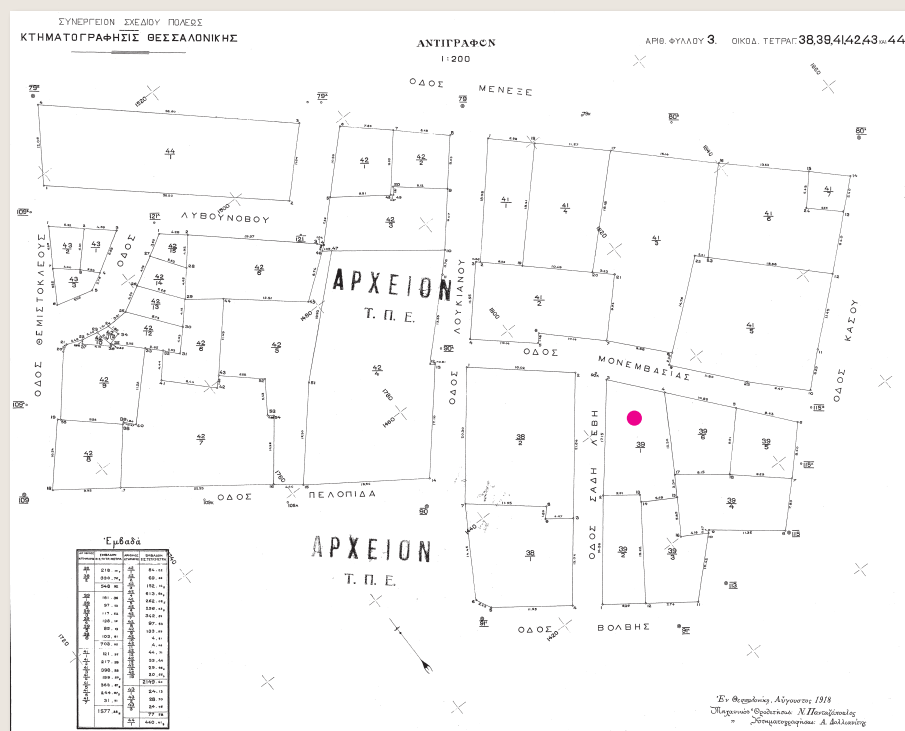
The Stein Mansion. *Thessaloniki History Centre.*

Saadi Levi, a pioneer of the Press

Sephardic Jews, bearers of an advanced urban culture, brought with them the know-how of typography. The first typographic press in the East operated in 1512 in Thessaloniki by Judah Gedaliah and his son Moshe, with fonts manufactured in Lisbon. Between 1865 and 1925, forty magazines and newspapers were published. The Jewish community's leading role in the Press is evident.

In the early 19th century, at a block between Vassileos Irakleiou and Egnatia streets, a two-storey building was located, with living quarters on the first floor and a workshop on the ground floor. Until the middle of the century, a 'basmatzis' operated there, i.e. a stamped fabric workshop. Thus the street parallel to Egnatia was named Basmatzi Street.

The family that lived in the house above decided to abandon fabric stamping for book printing. Saadi Levi, the 'basmatzis' son, was a typographer and a publisher. His press printed more than 200 titles from 1840 to 1902. In 1875 he published the first Jewish newspaper in Thessaloniki, "La Epoca" in Hispano-Jewish. "La Epoca's" publication ceased in 1911. In July of the same year, a fire burnt the Epoca's press, while soon after that, problems with Ottoman censorship began. Around the same period, the circulation of "Journal de Salonique", another newspaper published by Saadi Sevi's sons (Sam Levi was the publisher), also ceased.



Saadi Levi.
Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki.

Cadastral map showing Saadi Levi's residence marked in red.
Published by T. Mantopoulou-Panagiotoπούλου & E. Hekimoglou
(Μαντοπούλου-Παναγιωτοπούλου, Χεκίμογλου 2004).



The harbour

By the early 20th century, a series of large-scale modernizing public works have been completed, signaling a new era for Thessaloniki and its inhabitants: the railway connection with Belgrade, Monastir and Istanbul, the opening of the Sabri Pasha Street (modern-day Venizelou Street), the harbour's expansion by demolishing the maritime wall, as well as the formation of the quay and the coastal road.

The port, which accompanies the city throughout its history, evolves into one of the most important trade centres. The New Customs building was built in 1910 by Eli Modiano, which today functions as the central passenger station.

In the busy and noisy harbour, apart from the large commercial houses, Jewish or not, could also be found the “hamals” (manual labourers). Most of them were Jews and organised into guilds.



Jewish hamals (manual labourers). *Thessaloniki History Centre.*



The Customs building nowadays. *Photograph by Or. Kourakis.*



View of the harbour of Thessaloniki. *Thessaloniki History Centre.*

Eleftherias (Liberty) Square

Eleftherias Square was the first wide square designed in Thessaloniki. Its initial shape was created in 1870, when the maritime wall was demolished and the Sambri Pasha Street was opened, modern-day Venizelou Street. It was initially named Apovathras Square, then Olympou Square and became the focus of the new social life that developed for the first time in the city as barriers between communities were abolished and they approach each other.

The new plots at the area near the sea and next to the harbour and the market were the most expensive of this new seaside neighbourhood. Two rich and influential families at the time bought a large part of it: the Kapantzi family and the Modiano family.

In the late 19th - early 20th century, the Belle Epoque feeling sweeps the square. Associated with the new cosmopolitan urban class, it evolves into Thessaloniki's most stylish spot, a meeting and recreation point. The ordinary housing surrounding is substituted by impressive building blocks. The Tram line passes from this square that houses large department stores, offices, luxury hotels, classy cafes and clubs, most of which belonged to Jewish or Donme businessmen and owners.

Apart from a theatre of social events, the square also becomes a theatre for political events. The central concentrations for the Young Turks Revolution take place there in 1908 and the square takes its present name.

The Fire of 1917 completely destroyed the square's lavish buildings. From 1920 onwards, it was rebuilt, mainly to house banks and offices.



Eleftherias Square.
Thessaloniki History Centre.



Eleftherias' Square burning (1917).
J. Levi Collection.

One of the most tragic pages in the square's history, as well as the Jewish community's history was written on a Saturday, on July 11, 1942 (known as the Black Sabbath), when the Nazi conquerors gathered the Thessalonician Jews at the Eleftherias Square. Persecution and harassment of the Jewish community started right after the Nazi occupation of Thessaloniki, but now they take a more specific form. Under the pretext of recording the population, the Nazi's assemble nine thousand men in order to publicly humiliate them, in the form of forced "workouts".

It is in fact the beginning of a drama that will end a year after, annihilating the largest Greek Jewish community, of 50,000 souls. The casualties unfortunately hold the record of the highest percentage of all European Jewish communities.



July 11, 1942, at the Eleftherias Square.
Jewish Museum of Greece.

EASTERN THESSALONIKI

The Exoche neighbourhood

The Exoche (“countryside”) or Tower neighbourhood stretched from the White Tower to Villa Allatini, along the tram’s coastal line, modern-day Vasilissis Olgas avenue. Unlike the city centre, no designated areas for Jews, Christian or Muslim residents existed there. The criteria for living there were solely economic and social. All foreign consulates were located there, alongside the lavish mansions of Thessaloniki’s bourgeois. Of the almost one hundred villas, unique monuments of architectural heritage, very few survive to this day. Some of them, landmarks to this day for the citizens of Thessaloniki, belonged to prestigious members of the Jewish community.



The Exoche Boulevard in old postcards. *Thessaloniki History Centre.*

Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Thessaloniki - Villa Bianca

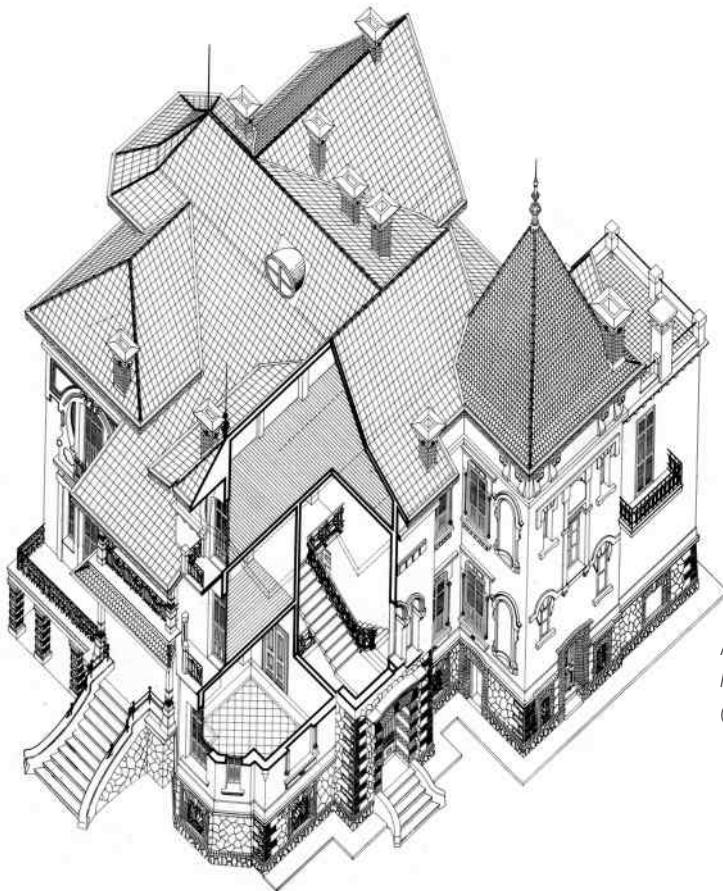
Villa Bianca was built in 1910 by the architect Pierro Arrigoni as the house of the Jewish entrepreneur Dino Fernandez, an Italian citizen and elite member of Thessaloniki's Jewish community. In 1893, Fernandez founded the Olympos Brewery, in cooperation with the Misrachi house, at the 'Sfageia' area, where today's FIX factory is located. Fernandez's wealth was estimated to 60,000 lire, approximately 3 million Euros today. Villa Bianca is a legendary landmark of Thessaloniki, as it was associated with the romantic story of Fernandez's daughter and a Greek lieutenant, Spiros Alimbertis. The family perished during World War II. Today, Villa Bianca functions as a cultural centre of the Municipality of Thessaloniki.



Villa Allatini. *Thessaloniki History Centre.*

Region of Central Macedonia Building - Villa Allatini

The luxurious country villa of Carolos Allatini was built in 1895 by Vitaliano Poselli between the ceramic factory and the Allatini flour mills. This villa was the largest and most luxurious in the whole city, the last one in the row of villas of the Exoche area, and dominated the city with unobstructed views towards the sea and the mountains. The Sultan, Abdul Hamid with his harem and sons resided there, after the Young Turks Revolution. The Greek state acquired the building after the city's liberation and it housed the then-newly founded University from 1926 to 1927. It now houses the offices of the Region of Central Macedonia Building.



Axonometric plan of Villa Bianca.
Published by N. Moutsopoulos
(Μουτσόπουλος 1976).

Folklife and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia-Thrace - Villa Modiano

Villa Modiano was built in 1906. Its eclectic style incorporates art nouveau elements. It was the seaside house of the banker Jacob Modiano, main owner of Thessaloniki's largest credit house, the bank Saul Modiano. The City Council decided to buy the villa in 1915 and converted it into a palace. In 1916, the Triumvirate used it as its seat, while it was commonly known to Thessalonicians as the "Old Kyverneion" (Governorate). From 1913 onwards, it was used successively as a palace, the seat of each Governor General of Macedonia, as a clerical school and as a military school. From 1970 to this day, it houses the Folklife and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia-Thrace.



Villa Modiano in the early 20th century.
Folklife and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia & Thrace.

National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation - Villa Kapantzi

The building known today as the "National Bank's Cultural Centre" was the home of a very rich Dönme, Mehmet Kapantzi, who was also mayor of the city in 1908. A typical architectural example that combines neoclassical, western European and eastern elements, it reflects the city's intercultural profile in the late 19th century in a most eloquent way. The building is associated with significant moments of Thessaloniki's life. After 1912 and the city's liberation by the Greek army, the building became the house of prince Nikolaos, in 1917 the seat of Eleftherios Venizelos, in 1918-23 the residence of Haimatsi Coen (MP). It became Nazi officers' club during World War II, then the historical 5th Gymnasium and finally nowadays it houses the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece.



The mansion of the Dönme Mehmet Kapantzi as it is today. *Photograph by Or. Kourakis.*

Industrial modernization

The members of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, carriers of European ideas, also pioneered in the city's industrial modernization, towards the 20th century. The first industrial units of Thessaloniki were investments of Jewish businessmen. The floor mills and ceramic factory of the Allatini family are characteristic examples of this. The new industrial buildings contribute to the upgrading of production and evolve into landmarks for the city, as post-cards of the era show.



View of the waterfront. The Saias Spinnery can be seen. *J. Levi Collection.*

**Industrial complex
of the Allatini Flour Mills
(junction of G. Papandreou
and Th. Sofouli streets)**

The “largest mill in the East” was inaugurated in September 1900, built by the Italian architect Vitaliano Poselli, on the site of a previous one, which was incinerated in 1898.

The innovative Allatini steam mill includes storerooms, administration offices, houses, and a dock for loading goods. Many workers were occupied there, while production reached 300 tons per day.



The Allatini Flour Mills in 1901. *Museum for the Macedonian Struggle Collection.*

**Allatini ceramic factory
(between Charilaou and Pilaia areas)**

The large factory was first built in 1880 at the north of the Folklife and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia-Thrace, next to the Arslan Dereshi stream that flowed to the sea. The Xortatzidon quarry was used for raw materials, which were transported by a rail track. The annual production of 500,000 tiles and 10,000,000 bricks reached most ports of the Ottoman Empire and many Aegean islands. In 1935, the factory was burnt and was transferred to the Nea Elvetia area.



Opening ceremony of the new Allatini Mill, September 1900.
Museum for the Macedonian Struggle Collection.

Avraam Benaroya and the labour movement

Since the second half of the 19th century, economic activity in Thessaloniki flourished. The Jewish element dominates trade and industry.

The presence of a large work force, the low wages and the poor working conditions created a fertile ground for the development of the labour movement and gave birth to powerful union organisations across the city.

In 1909, the Socialist Labour Federation (*Fédération Socialiste Ouvrière*) appeared within the numerous Jewish working class, which included as members workers of other religions and ethnicities.

Prime mover of the Federation, as it came to be known in history, was Avraam Benaroya (1887-1979), the founder of the labour and socialist movement in Greece and the Balkans. He was a prominent figure of Greek left-wing politics and exponent of its social-democratic inclinations. He practised various professions, being a teacher, a publisher, a journalist and a shipping agent. He survived the Nazi concentration camps (1943-1945) and returned to Greece after the war. In 1953, he settled in Israel where he lived until his death.

“We prepared a proclamation in four languages: Hispano-Jewish, Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian (...) Federation would be a wide labour movement of all local ethnic unions, on a federal basis, and the ethnicities would not have to abandon their language or culture, while working towards the same ideal: Socialism”.

Abraham Benaroya



Abraham Benaroya.
Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki.



This photo, taken soon before World War II, shows Benaroya seated, third from the left. His whole family is present, with his son Lazarus (standing, first from the left), a corporal of the 50th regiment, who lost his life in the Greek-Italian war.
Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki.

THE OLD RAILWAY STATION

The Hirsch neighbourhood and the tragic epilogue

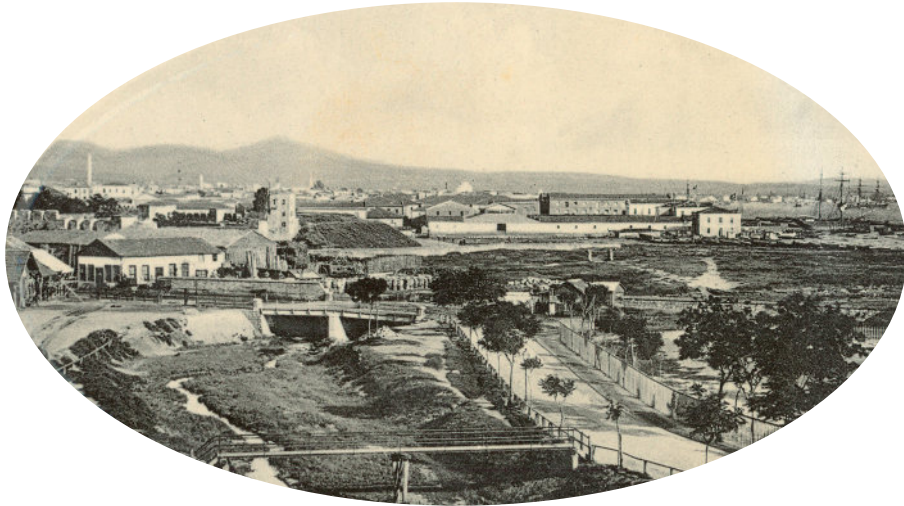
Despite what many might think, the Jewish community of Thessaloniki included a high percentage of very poor people. Underprivileged Jews lived in ramshackle apartment blocks in the city centre or in areas near the city's western edges. The area around the railway lines was one of the centres of these people in need, immigrants and other misfortunate people. The fires of 1890 and 1917 resulted to the displacement of the city centre's poverty stricken inhabitants towards the western areas.

The Hirsch neighbourhood was also located there. Its name derives from Maurice and Clara Hirsch, who paid for its construction, as well as for other charities, such as the Hirsch Hospital (modern-day Hippocrateion). Life at Hirsch, as in other western neighbourhoods was not easy. The municipality was barely able to collect the garbage, while the lack of running and drinking water resulted in outbreaks of diseases that scourged the local population.

The Hirsch neighbourhood was closely associated with the most tragic page in the history of Thessaloniki's Jewish community: in February 1943, Jews workers were ordered by the Nazi occupation forces to transform the neighbourhood into a fenced camp.

Wooden fences were raised in the area's periphery, which only allowed for three controlled exits, one of which led directly to the train station. The Nazi plan was to convert the Hirsch neighbourhood into a transit camp. At first, its inhabitants would be transferred elsewhere, and then new groups would be gathered there to board them on the trains that would take them to the main concentration camps. On March 14, it was first announced that the inhabitants would be transferred to Cracow. The next day, a large train left the city carrying almost 2,800 people. This first "shipment" to Auschwitz would be followed by fifteen more. The expulsion of the Jewish population was completed in August of the same year. The systematic extermination of the Jews of Thessaloniki, was not confined to the methodical genocide of the population. It attempted to erase the historic course of the Jewish community by burning their libraries, synagogues, institutions, their cemetery, the plundering of their property. The community of Thessaloniki mourned the most victims in all of Greece: of the 50,000 Jews living in the city, less than 2,000 returned home. Today, the Jewish community has approximately 1,000 members.





The old railway station area. *Thessaloniki History Centre.*



Jewish Thessalonicians being gathered at the Hirsch ghetto via Egnatia Street. *Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki.*



The Vardar Synagogue of the Hirsch neighbourhood.
Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki.

“Unable to redeem our guilt, we do not know how to trade our memories. Sometimes, you hear faint voices in a language familiar, yet unknown. The place has not been exorcised. The ghosts, ghosts of little children, of the destitute and the disabled, are lurking. Our dreary memory must, at some point, contain our true history”.

Evangelos Hekimoglou

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1. Funerary stele

Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, MΘ 6098
Thessaloniki, rescue excavation in the Administration building plot, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
h. 68 cm, w. 59 cm, th. 7.3 cm, h. of the letters 5 cm, space between lines 1.8 cm
Coarse-grained marble

The plaque was reused as a gravestone in a grave of Early Christian period. It has the following inscription:

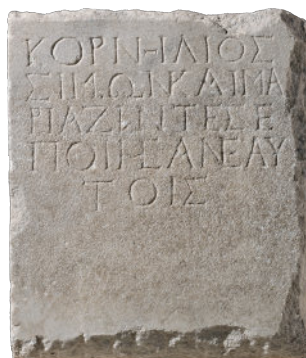
Cornelius Simon and Maria, while living, made for themselves.

The names show that they are apparently people of Jewish descent. Simon was probably a freed slave, who became a Roman citizen, hence the name of the gens (gentilicium) Cornelius.

Second half of 2nd c. AD

Bibliography: Αλεξανδρή, 1973-4, 669 • SEG 30, 1980, 643 • Νιγδελής, 2006, 342-346.

A.K.



2. Dedicatory stele

Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, MΘ 2286
Thessaloniki, near the church of the Holy Mother at Chalkeon.
h. 47 cm, w. 27 cm, th. 2.5 cm, h. of the letters 1-2 cm, space between lines 0.3-1.5 cm
Fine-grained white marble

The inscription is written in Samaritan Hebrew (ll. 1 & 15) and Greek.

I. 1 Blessed be our God forever!

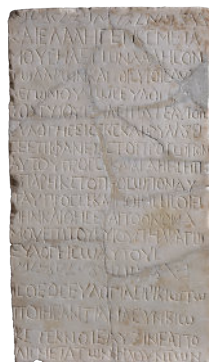
I. 5 Blessed be His name forever!

II. 2-14 text of Numm. (6, 22-26) in Greek. The inscription ends with a dedication of Sirikios. He is most probably identified with the orator and sophist Sergius Siricius from Neapolis (Nablus) in Palestine, who taught at Athens in the 4th c. AD. The salutation *prosper Neapolis* ("αύξει Νεάπολις") shows the ties between the Thessaloniki Samaritans and Nablus, their 'home' city. The inscription is a testament for the presence of a Samaritan community in Thessaloniki and it was probably enwalled in its synagogue.

4th-6th c. AD

Bibliography: Πελεκίδης, 1955, 408, πίν. 84 • IG X 2 1, 789 • Feissel, 1983, no. 291 • CIJ 1975, Prol. no 693a • Noy, Panayotov & Bloedhorn, 2004, 100-105.

A.K.



3. Funerary inscription of Samvatos and Maxima

Museum of Byzantine Culture, BE 230
Thessaloniki, north of the Jewish cemetery, Kedrinos lofos (Seih-Sou).
h. 46.5 cm, w. 31 cm, th. 2 cm, h. of the letters 3.5 cm, spac. 0.5 cm
Coarse-grained grey marble

Tombstone with christograms, enscribed in a circle and square, and engraved inscription:

Here are lay/ ing Samva/ tis and Ma/ xima.

The name *Samvatos(-is)* is of Jewish origin and in the 5th-6th c. AD it was already used by the Christians. In the collection of the Museum of Byzantine Culture there are two other inscriptions indicating the same name.

5th-6th c. AD

Bibliography: IG X 2 1, no 352, p.128-9 •

Nystrom 1981 • Feissel, 1983, no. 175 pl. XLII. A.T.



4. Funerary inscription of Samuel

Museum of Byzantine Culture, BE 242/1
Thessaloniki, rescue excavation site on Iassonidou-Arrianou str., opposite the church of St. Panteleimon.
h. 48 cm, w. 45 cm, th. 11 cm, h. of the letters 3.5 cm, spac. 2 cm
Off-white coarse grained marble

Part of a sill which was reused as a gravestone in a Jewish grave. It has the following engraved Hebrew inscription:

This monument is dedicated to the honourable rabbi Samuel, son of Abraham Tortousi who died the 15th day of the month Eloul in the year 5268. May his soul be eternal

The word *rabbi* is probably an honorary title and not a religious office. The father of the dead, Abraham Tortousis, probably came from the city of Tortousi(?). The inscription is the earliest epigraphic evidence of the arrival of Jewish refugees in the city. The phrase "*May his soul be eternal*" is a biblical verse (Samuel: 25-29).

5th-7th c. AD [first use], 15 Eloul 5268 (=September of 1508) [second use]

Unpublished

A.T. & N.D.L.



5. Rectangular funerary stone

9th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Thessaloniki, ΓΕ1
Thessaloniki, excavation of METRO, area between stations «Syntrivani»
and «Panepistimion» (old Jewish Cemetery of Thessaloniki).

h. 75 cm, w. 37.2 cm, th. 11.5 cm
Off-white marble with yellow tones

*This tomb (is) of the child, /the lovely Shlomo, son /
of the dear and great, h(onorable) r(abbi) / Israel Erera /
[...] / who died on Wednesday
[...] of the month [Ki]slev in the year of 5[...]*

The stone consists of a text written in Hebrew and
framed by a mihrab shaped decoration. In its every
free surface is decorated with paradisiac floral and
faunal motifs, which come from the ottoman rococo
and follow the Jewish aniconic tradition. The Errera
mentioned here is one of the oldest members of the
Hispano-Jewish community of Thessaloniki.

17th c., months of November-December
Unpublished

Bibliography: Molho 5735 • In Memoriam 1976 • Rozen 1994.
M.P.-A. & J.B.



6. Part of a rectangular funerary stone

9th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Thessaloniki, ΓΕ3
Thessaloniki, excavation of METRO, area between
stations «Syntrivani» and «Panepistimion»
(old Jewish Cemetery of Thessaloniki).

h. 33 cm, w. 41 cm, th. 14.5 cm
White marble

This stone [...]

Only the upper right part of the stone is saved.
It is decorated with a rosette while the text is
framed by a mihrab shaped line. Symmetrically,
on the left part of the stone, another bas-relief
rosette must have been sculpted, as a symbol of
the new, celestial residence of the buried.
The small saved relief on the right part and
the thickness of the stone indicate a rich buyer/
owner.

18th c.- early 19th c.

Unpublished

Bibliography: Molho 5735 • In Memoriam 1976 • Rozen 1994.
M.P.-A. & J.B.



7. Rectangular funerary stone

9th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Thessaloniki, ΓΕ2
Thessaloniki, excavation of METRO, area between stations «Syntrivani» and
«Panepistimion» (old Jewish Cemetery of Thessaloniki).

h. 110 cm, w. 62.5 cm, th. 13 cm
Local off-white marble with grey tones

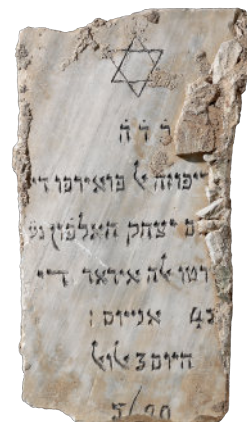
*Blessed is the Judge of the Truth /Here lies the body [...]
of Yitzhak Halfon May his soul rest in Paradise [Di]ed at
the age / of 4[8]years /today 3rd (of the month) Elul /5690*

The text is written in Hispano-Jewish language
with Hebrew characters. It is interesting to note the
interposed symbol of the shield of David which appears
for the first time on a stone of 1709 at the Old Jewish
Cemetery of Thessaloniki. The present internment
is one of the last made at the Old Cemetery after its
expropriation at the 4th of August 1930 and before its
destruction in December 1942.

August 27th, 1930

Unpublished

Bibliography: Molho 5735 • In Memoriam 1976 • Rozen
1994.
M.P.-A. & J.B.



8. Tectonic capital with relief representations of buildings

Museum of Byzantine Culture, AG 1002

Thessaloniki, Olympou st.,
south of the church of St. Demetrios.

h. 52 cm, length of abacus 36 cm
Off-white, coarse-grained marble

On one side is depicted a Jewish
synagogue with portico, colonnades and
three domes. The middle dome bears the
six-pointed star of David. The second side
is decorated with a mosque and a minaret,
the third with a kiosk and the fourth with
a two storey private house. This capital,
with another one of the same dimensions
(inv. no. AG 1001), was probably part of an
unknown building.

16th-18th c.

Bibliography: Ξυγγόπουλος 1930 •
Ξυγγόπουλος 1963 • Χατζηγεωργίου, Ćurčić
(eds.) 2009, 65-68, 132-158.
A.T.



The Jewish costume

The traditional Jewish clothing of both men and women follow in general the common dress codes of the 17th century.

The most characteristic elements of female clothing were the *Kofia*, which covered the head and was distinctive of married women, the *Sayio*, a body-long sleeveless cloth, open in front, and the *Antari*, a fitting garment made of a striped silk cloth with wide sleeves.

Jewish men wore the *Kusak*, a wide belt around their waist on top of their *Salvari* (breeches). The *Jube* or the *Binish* were worn on top of the *Antari*. The *Jube* was worn by commoners, and it was felt with fur. The wide and single coloured *Binish* was for the rabbis. Men also wore a tall red *Kavuk* (*fez*) from the 19th century onwards.

Children were usually dressed with the grown-ups' old clothing, which were altered to fit them. Girls that reached the age of marriage, between 15 and 18, began to wear the traditional dress with a simpler *Kofia*, while the boys wore the full traditional attire when they reached their 18th year of age.



The Simha Barnea's family, Thessaloniki 1911.
Jewish Museum of Greece.

9. Cotton, embroidered antari

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 82 00
Donated by the Benveniste family

In the traditional Jewish apparel antari is worn as an outer garment both by men and women.

Early 20th century
E.P.



10. Silk, embroidered sayo

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 84 00
Donated by the Benveniste family

Part of the traditional Jewish female apparel, is worn under the antari and over the chemise.

Early 20th century
E.P.



11. Silk, embroidered sayo

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 94 00

Part of the traditional Jewish female apparel, is worn under the antari and over the camise.

Early 20th century
E.P.



13. Brocade evening purse

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 67 03

Donated by Yvonne Kapon

Women's evening accessories.

1930s
E.P.



14. Moshe Halewa's hat

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 55 11

Hat worn by Rabbi Halewa during commemorative services. Moshe Halewa (1913-2000) served initially as a hazan (cantor) and afterwards as the Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki (1980-1995).

Late 1980s
E.P.



12. Wool, embroidered liseuse

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 72 00

Donated by Sterina Massarano

Loose jacket women usually wear over the nightgown to cover the upper body when sitting up in bed, for example to read a book, or for added warmth while sleeping.

1930s
E.P.



15. Small talith (tallit)

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 52 00

Cotton underwear worn by religious Jews. On the four corners are attached the tzitzit, symbolic strands made from threads twisted and tied in knots. Tzitzit are also attached to the talith, the ritual shawl that men wear in the synagogue.

20th century
E.P.



16. Mapa

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 59 00
Taffeta doily embroidered with gold thread. Usually used for religious purposes at home or in the synagogue, i.e., to cover the food prepared for Passover or to carry the baby boy for circumcision.

Early 20th century
E.P.



17. Mapa

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 62 00
Velvet doily embroidered with gold thread.

Early 20th century
E.P.



18. Me'il

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 152 03
Sefer Torah cover. Velvet, embroidered with gold thread. It is used exclusively during Jewish rituals in the synagogue.

Early 20th century
E.P.



19. Belt buckle

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 26 00

Silver, decorated with embedded stones and relief motifs. At the center the Star of David.

Undated
E.P.



20. Amulet

FEMM-Th (Folklife and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia - Thrace), 93.26.1

Thessaloniki, Yako Modiano family

Amulet totally made from beads. Three triangular parts are connected to a long string, held with three loops in a way that allows size variation to the amulet.

Probably late 19th-early 20th c.
E.B.



21. Cadastral document for the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 37 00

Cadastral document valued 34.817,40 drachmae and issued on 5.2.1922 for the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. It represents the value of the Ets A Haim synagogue. Following the fire both the land transactions as well as the tenancy for a period longer than a year were prohibited. The burned part of the city was confiscated, re-planned and resold through auctions. The former plot owners were given a cadastral document which represented the value of their plots and permitted them to participate in the auctions. Given that many of the old plots were small, whereas the new plots were big, holding a cadastral document was not sufficient for a landowner to regain his property. To do so, many cadastral holders acted together in an auction to buy a new plot collectively. Most of the old plot owners, in order to cover their immediate living expenses, had to sell their cadastral documents.

February 5, 1922
E.P.



22. Shadow puppet

Folklife and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia - Thrace, 79.15.67
h. 57 cm
Leather

Figure of the Greek shadow-puppet theatre, articulated, with joints in the neck and waist. Represents of a Jew character by the name Solomon. It was made by Vassileios Andrikopoulos, a greek shadow theatre player also known as Vassilaros (1899-1976).

Mid 20th c.
E.B.

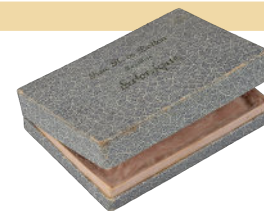


23. Jewellery box

Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, JCT 244 08

Jewellery box, owned by the jeweler Isaac R. De Botton.

1930s
E.P.



24. Box / glass case

Folklife and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia-Thrace (FEMM-Th), 85.55.66

Thessaloniki

l. 11.5 cm, w. 6 cm

Wood, leather, textile, metal

Wooden box / case for 2 little glasses. It is covered with leather externally and textile internally and seals with a metal clasp. Inside there is a ribbon where "M. Gattegno Co. 23 rue Venizelos 23 Salonique" is printed in calligraphic letters.

E.B.



25. Seal

9th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Thessaloniki, ΜΘ/07/ΑΣ/ΠΔ/Α/23

Excavation Thessaloniki METRO, Aghia Sophia Station

seal surface: l. 4.8 cm, w. 3.2 cm, th. 0.5 cm, handle h. 3.3 cm

Iron

Oval-shaped seal with the inscription LEON CARASSO *EXTRA* and a male bust to the left. Three merchants named Leon Carasso are found in the city's commercial catalogues at the beginning of the 20th c.: The first one dealt with wholesale trade of coffee and sugar, the second one traded rice and the third was a colonial products' merchant. The documents Archive of Jewish Entrepreneurship in Thessaloniki, housed at the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki mentions one more Leon Moys Carasso, who traded essential oils, soaps and perfumes without stating his place of business. None of the above can be securely identified as the seal's owner.

Early 20th c.

Unpublished

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