Anyos Munchos i Buenos

"Good Years and Many More"

Turkey's Sephardim: 1492-1992

Text by Ayse Gürsan-Salzmann
Photography by Laurence Salzmann

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We dedicate this book to Ayş e's parents; Nimet and Kemal Gürsan who, for four decades, devoted their lives to the education of Turkish youth, according to Atatürk's principles.

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* Meaning "Good Years and Many More"
in the Ladino of the Jews of Turkey.

לכייום מוכּוס חי בואיכום

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Text and captions by Ayşe Gürsan-Salzmann
Photographs by Laurence Salzmann

with Afterword by Rabbi Isaac Jerusalmi

Books by the authors:
Neighbors on the Block, New York State Council on the Arts, 1979.
A Family Passover, photographs Laurence Salzmann Jewish Publication Society of America 1980
La Baie/bath scenes, Han Books 1980.
The Last Jews of Rădăuţi Dial Doubleday, 1983.

Films:
Song of Rădăuţi, 1979.
Who's Havin' Fun?, 1980.
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Exhibit Schedule: Anyos Munchos i Buenos

1. Hebrew College of Brookline, Boston. May - June 1990.

2. Klutznik Museum, Washington. February 27 - April 16, 1991.

3. The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. April 25 - August 17, 1991.

4. Lehigh University, Bethlehem. September 5 - October 16, 1991.

5. Cultural Arts Center, Ft. Lauderdale. October 24 – December 24, 1991.

6. Beth Hatefutsoth Museum, Tel Aviv. October 24 - December 24, 1991.
   Exhibit at Beth Hatefutsoth made possible by Memorial Fund for Jewish Culture, New York.

7. Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien. December 10 - February 24,1992.

8. Mittleman Jewish Community Center Portland. January 3 - February 28, 1992.

9. Mizel Museum of Judaica, Denver. March 12 - May 17, 1992.

10. Whitte Museum of History, San Antonio. April 5 - June 5, 1992.

11. Jewish Community Center, Omaha. June 21 - July 23, 1992.

12. Jewish Historical Society of Maryland, Baltimore. July–August, 1992.

13. Wolf Gallery of the Raymond and Miriam Klein Branch Jewish Community Centers of Philadelphia. August 1 - September 22, 1992.

14. Department of Education, New Haven. November 1 - December 13, 1992.

15. Plotkin Judaica Museum, Phoenix January 15 - March 15, 1993.

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The expulsion, according to Rachel:

In Spain, there were many rich people, of those some were jewelers. You know what a jeweler is?

So, an old jeweler who did not work anymore, had in his possession one ring… so valuable that when he tried to sell it no one could afford it, for he put a very high price on it.

He finally tried to sell it to the King, who liked it very much but couldn't buy it either… even though the Queen's eyes were dazzled by it. The King said, "I don't have that kind of money to buy it."

There was a Jewish ambassador by the name of Don Isaac Abravanel who could pay what the jeweler asked for the ring. And got it.

A month later, at a ball in the Royal Palace to which the Ambassador and his wife were invited, she wore the precious ring.

When the Queen saw the ring she got very upset and said to the King, "you, the rich King, you couldn't buy this ring for me… But the dirty Jew bought it for his wife…. The Jews are going to have to leave from here…"

So, the Jews were expelled from Spain, and Turkey received them with open arms.

Afterwards, the Turkish Sultan was heard to have said about the Spanish King, "you made your country poor and made mine rich…"

As told by Rachel Benhabip Levi,
80 year old Sephardic resident of İstanbul.
(Excerpted from the film Turkey's Sephardim: 500 Years).

Rachel (whose picture appears on opposite page), like all Jews of her time, speaks Ladino and French. But with the passing of this generation, who will remember the rich heritage of the Sephardim in which she grew up and spent all her life?

En Espanya aviya munchos rikos, i lo mas eran djoyeros. Saves lo ke es djoyero…?

Aviya un vyejo ke no lavoro mas, desho el magazen, i a poko a poko vendyo las djoyas, i este modo se manteniya. Al kavo, al kavo le kedo un aniyo muy, muy, muy emportante i muy valorozo. Se fue ande munchos a venderlo i no le pudyeron pagar, porke demandava munchas paras.

Se fue ande el Rey. Disho, "el solo ke lo puede merkar es el rey." El Rey no lo pudo merkarlo, a la mujer le plazyo muy muncho. El Rey disho, "yo no posedo este karar de paras para merkar esto."

Aviya un ambasador Djudyo ke se yamava Don Isaac Abravanel. Se lo yevo aya, kuanto le demando, le pago. I se lo merko para la mujer.

Despues de un mez uvo en el Palasyo del Rey un balo muy emportante. Estava envitado el ambasador kon la mujer, i se metyo el aniyo muevo.

I la Reyna kuando lo vido, se inyervo muncho i se metyo en kolora. Le disho al marido, "tu, un riko Rey, no pudites merkar un aniyo… Este sal, suzyo Djudyo, lo merko, disho, para la mujer... De agora en delantre los Djudyos se van a ir de aki..."

I los enbiyo de Espanya. I los risivyo la Turkiya. La Turkiya los risivyo a brasos avyertos.

Despues, el rey Turko le embiyo a dizir al de aya, "tu lo izites a tu payiz prove, i lo izites el payiz miyo riko..."

Kontado de boka de Rachel Benhabip Levi
aedada de ochenta anyos i vyeja moradera de Estanbol
(tomado del filmo, Los Sefaradim de Turkiya:500 anyos)

Komo todos los Djudyos de su tyempo, Rachel avla en Ladino i en Fransez. Ma kon el pasaje de esta jenerasyon, ken se va akordrar de la rika erensya de los Sefaradim en la kuala se engrandesyo i bivyo toda su vida?

Introduction

This book is about Jews living in Turkey today. As such, it focuses on the way in which a Sephardic Jewish community has successfully lived and maintained its traditions, without interruption, for the past 500 years in a predominantly Muslim society.

The Jewish existence in Turkey dates back to Biblical times. However, for the most part, the communities that we visited traced their origins to the Spanish Jews who, in the late 15th Century, were expelled from Spain and Portugal and made welcome on the lands that were then under Ottoman Turkish rule. The Jews were welcomed, and in fact, encouraged to settle in Turkey during the Ottoman period, as the new imperial policy was to populate the lands that had just been conquered.

In the words of the noted scholar Bernard Lewis…"they [the Jews] were complementary to the Turks and not in competition with them: one, the Jews functioned in economic pursuits which lay outside the domain of the Turkish elites; two, from the Turkish point of view, the Jews not being Christian, had the advantage of not being suspect of treasonable sympathies with the major enemy of the Ottomans, which of course meant European Christendom."

Turkey is a country little known in the West. Other than being the special area of interest of scholars and informed travelers and curious individuals, Turkey is best known as a country straddling Europe and Middle East, and for her long-standing, faithful membership in NATO. Even though the Turkish tourism industry has made some headway in the last decade in introducing the multifarious aspects of the rich landscape, history and culture, the historic city of Istanbul is still occasionally referred in the West as 'Constantinople,' while the Turkish language is confused with Arabic.

It is our hope that this book will provide some little-known facts, such as the location of the country and aspects of how people live and even evoke thoughts on the nature of co-existence between these two groups, the Muslim and Jewish Turks, irrespective of their ethnic and religious differences.

As to how this project came about…

In March of 1984 Laurence received a telephone call from fellow photographer Bill Aron who had been asked by the Beth Hatefutsoth Museum (in Tel Aviv), in collaboration with the American Jewish Committee of New York to go to Turkey for two months to undertake a photographic survey of the existing Jewish monuments of that country. Laurence asked Bill if it might be possible for the two of them to work jointly on the survey. Bill agreed, but later, he was unable to go and the whole project fell upon Laurence.

During the 6-month survey of the monuments Laurence oftentimes envisioned the missing parts of a decayed building; I, on the other hand, tried to reconstruct life in smaller towns where there was no longer a living Jewish community there (as in Silivri, Çorlu, Diyarbakır). I searched for Turkish informants who remembered their Jewish friends and neighbors, the roles they had played in the community and circumstances of their departure. In essence we set out to recreate the past. In the cities where 95% of the 22,000 Jews live today (Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa etc.), some were willing informants, while others remained evasive.

We conducted our interviews and conversations in Spanish and Turkish. I, a native speaker of Turkish, did the interviews in Turkish. Laurence who is fluent in Spanish had no difficulties in understanding the archaic Spanish known as Judeo/Spanish or Ladino spoken by most of Turkey's older Jews, and often our conversations with the local Jewish residents started in Spanish. But the Jews of Antakya and Iskenderun of the Southeast spoke only Arabic and Turkish.

We observed that in the small towns where there was still a Jewish community, if one or more persons among them had the interest to maintain the synagogue, it was maintained, even though the community might not have sufficient numbers to make up a minyan to pray in it each day. Thus Davit Kohen in Çanakkale came each day to the town's synagogue to open it and look after it. In other places where there were more people but no one interested in maintaining the synagogue, it fell after a short time into such disrepair as to be no longer usable. Usually in those places the community was embarrassed by the state of their synagogue or just shrugged their shoulders as if to say it was not a thing of great importance to them.

In places where the land on which the synagogue, cemetery or other community-owned Jewish buildings stood was not needed for urban expansion, it was left to nature to slowly erode, and in some cases the surrounding poorer communities made free use of the building materials and thereby speeded up the disintegration process.

What started out as a 2-month project of documenting historic remains developed into a 5 yearstudy of the contemporary Turkish-Jewish community.

How this came about is a story in itself; but in short, everything in Turkey takes longer than anticipated. For most Turks and Jews alike, the concept of time has a different meaning. "Patience" is the watchword; so we waited endlessly for our work permits. To establish good-will and trust was another issue which required considerable time. Last but not least, Laurence spent most of his time, when he was away from the camera, in raising funds for the 70 -minute color film he was to make on the Jewish community of Turkey.*

Our presentation is intended to portray the Turkish-Jewish community as it is, not as it should be. Though the Jews are culturally Turkish, they are a unique combination of East and West, speaking Western languages and travelling frequently to Europe, United States, South America and Israel for business and family reasons.

Historically, the "millet" system in Ottoman Turkey allowed all non-Muslims , including the Jews, to speak and worship in the manner of their traditions. So, in a sense, group difference became a source of vitality… rather than of weakness.

In the latter part of the l9th century French culture and language were introduced to the Turkish Jews . This was initiated by French Jews as part of a movement through the Middle East, to educate their co-religionists who were "backward", thus establishing the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools. So, French was adopted as the language of the educated which, to some extent, delayed the learning of Turkish, and at the same time replaced Spanish which was becoming a symbol of the old-fashioned ways.

Presently, there are at least three languages spoken in most of the Turkish Jewish homes – Ladino, spoken by the elderly, French and Turkish, by the middle-aged and younger. While the latter speak very good Turkish, in addition to English, the older generation reveal their ethnic origins by their speech patterns. The younger generation is now adopting Turkish names which makes them less visible as Jews.

How do the Jews see themselves vis-à-vis the Turks? Do they identify themselves as Jews and, if so, how do they express that identification? These are questions for which there are no easy answers. When they talk in public about their feelings as Turkish Jews, they sound as loyal Turkish citizens and an integral part of the Nation. They talked about having a "very good life here. But they also liked to remember where they came from and the strong religious tradition which linked them with other Jews around the world.

Jews have begun to move into the limelight as public figures in leadership roles. Among then are well-to- do businessmen, industrialists, journalists, intellectuals who are becoming politically active, in support of economic and foreign policies, even encouraging the future alliance of Turkey with the European communities.

The same group is actively seeking and creating opportunities to bring about a reawakening of their cultural heritage, restoring synagogues, establishing a museum in the time-honored Ahrida synagogue in preparation for the 500 year anniversary.

The educated Turkish opinion of the Jews is that they are mostly well-to-do, serious businessmen whose main goal in life is to acquire wealth and social status and to keep it in the family. Besides, they are looked upon favorably as the representatives of "Western culture."

In the mind of the Muslim Turk, the image of the "thrifty Jew" as a person who is easily scared, is fading away .

At present, the main question facing the community is how to preserve their Jewish identity while integrating themselves into Turkish culture and society. Having completed five centuries of uninterrupted existence in a largely Muslim society, the Jews of Turkey have been able to deal with their concern with Jewish survival. But still, there appears to be a tension between their concern with survival and their desire to be fully integrated into Turkish life.

This work attempts to explore the means by which the Turkish Jews try to resolve the tension and to render a portrait of the Jewish people of Turkey, as people who live ordinary lives and whose existence depends upon the well-being of the total community.

* Relevant information about the film Turkey's Sephardim:500 Years is on page 63.

Map of Turkey

Most of Turkey's Jews live in İstanbul or İzmir. Smaller communities exist in Adana, Ankara, Antakya, Çanakkale, Edirne, Gelibolu, Kırklareli, and Mersin.

Towns where we found evidence of a Jewish past or present are indicated on the map.

Arrow shows sea route taken by Spanish and Portuguese Jews who made their way to Ottoman Turkey in the late 15th century.

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Capturing images to reveal a way of life,

searching to create and recreate the Past,

reading the Community in the traces of their monuments
and in the memories of people who knew them,

and, in so doing, to predict the Future in the images of the Present.

BenAdrete Family Seder.

The sundial from the Sardis synagogue, dated to 325 B. C.E.

Bulisa's family lived in Bergama for several hundred years. Her husband, like her grandfather and her father, had been an itinerant merchant dealing in wool, acorns, pistachio nuts, almonds…

He was known to be a benevolent man, generous to the poor Jews and Turks alike.

On Büyükada and Burgaz islands, Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are generally followed by an elaborate reception at one of the more exclusive clubs. There, food, pastries and drinks are served under the careful surveillance of the sponsoring parents.

In Search of the Past.

…when we drove into a small town, we stopped near the center, preferably where the main tea houses were located, to have a cup of tea and acquaint ourselves with the main flow of conversation and the people… Then , we would ask an older man if he knew where the old Jewish quarter -mahalle- was and if he knew about the Jewish residents. He would turn away from his backgammon board and the information flowed… Yes, the Jewish quarter was near the synagogue, there was the store of the textile merchant, Salomon, at the entrance to the main shopping area, there was also an old grocer named Abraham whose family had left for İstanbul… The old man would remember the people and the community down to the smallest detail… During Passover holidays Jews would bake unleavened bread and bring it to their Turkish neighbors; on the Sabbath the Turkish neighbors would render little services to the Jews, like turning their electrical switches, or lighting their stoves for them. Their children played in the street with Turkish kids, the local Jewish butcher gave away meat to the poor Jew and Turk alike… The implication was that the two communities were in harmonious co-existence…

**At Çorlu we found the Jewish cemetery next to a field planted with sunflowers.
With no one to look after the cemetery, its stones were in various stages of disintegration.**

Harran

**Harran Plain stretches in the western province of Urfa, along Turkey's southeastern border with Syria.
It takes its life from the river Euphrates.
Home to the earliest farming communities in the Near East, the region abounds with traces of settlements from Neolithic, Hittite, Assyrian, to Greek, Roman, and Ottoman...**

It is also the land where the Prophet Abraham [according to references in the Bible (Gen. 11:31)] had wandered over 3000 years ago. Rising from the plain today are beehive shaped village houses which continue the ancient tradition.

İzmir

İzmir's Bikur Holim is one of several synagogues still in use in the Juderia section of that city. The Jewish community there, which once numbered over 25,000, has been reduced to about 1,800.
The many synagogues that once served the community scarcely manage to find minyans for services that are held on a regular basis.
Along Havra Sokak—meaning "street of the synagogue" (near the Bikur Holim synagogue) are several old synagogues, each one like a precious gem, recalling the golden era of İzmir's Jewry in the 17th century. The city, then, became an important center of Mediterranean commerce and the Jewish community included eminent Rabbis, renowned physicians, wealthy merchants, and Talmudic learning and Hebrew literature flourished. İzmir is also the birthplace of Sabbetai Sevi, the false Messiah who in the 17th century found a following that extended to the whole known Jewish world. Descendants of his followers who converted to Islam live in Turkey today.
The *Teva* of the Bikur Holim Synagogue is reminiscent of late 19th century Ottoman decorative wood work.

Kilis

As we travelled through the countryside we came upon many traces of monuments, from the most distant to the recent past, of different cultures and civilizations. For example, superimposed upon a Roman bath would be a partially standing 12th-century, deserted caravanserai or a couple of column bases from the Hellenistic period with Hebrew inscriptions … wooden houses dating back to the 18th century Ottoman period with gilded frescoes peeling off… onto a floor piled with cereals… a synagogue with only the four walls and the bimah standing, the rest of the structure open to the sky… and many more such examples of historical structures… we silently wished for their preservation.
But in a land so rich with cultural remains, which ones would be selected for preservation? And where could the resources be found to do it, and who would implement it?
Would the Jewish community of Turkey, one day, restore its synagogues to house the treasures of its past?

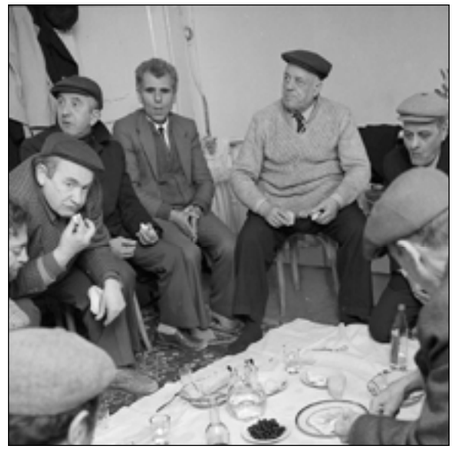
Gelibolu

The Gelibolu community goes back over 400 years. When someone dies they have to invite friends from neighboring towns to make up a minyan for the burial services. The young people are moving out to big cities for education and matrimony. As in other small towns, it is as difficult for Jews to be buried as to be married. In 1990 when we revisited Gelibolu, there were just three Jewish people left living there.

Roza Sivaci (Pasi) near her mother-in-law Alegre's body prior to burial. The washing – *tahara*, (Hebrew for cleansing) was done at home by close female relatives.

Simha Alegre's two sons – Solomon and Eşladiye – facing the prayer man (Avram Karaoğlan) who enacted the ritual of *Keria*. According to tradition, a piece of the garment worn by the close blood relatives of the deceased is torn, in keeping with Genesis 37:29, where Jacob rent his clothes when he was told of Joseph's death. For the next seven (*syete*) days, close blood relatives sit in mourning.

Lale Kalo (now living at the Home for the Elderly, in İstanbul) is twisting pieces of cotton to form wicks which she will place in olive oil containers. These are kept burning for seven days at the home of the deceased.



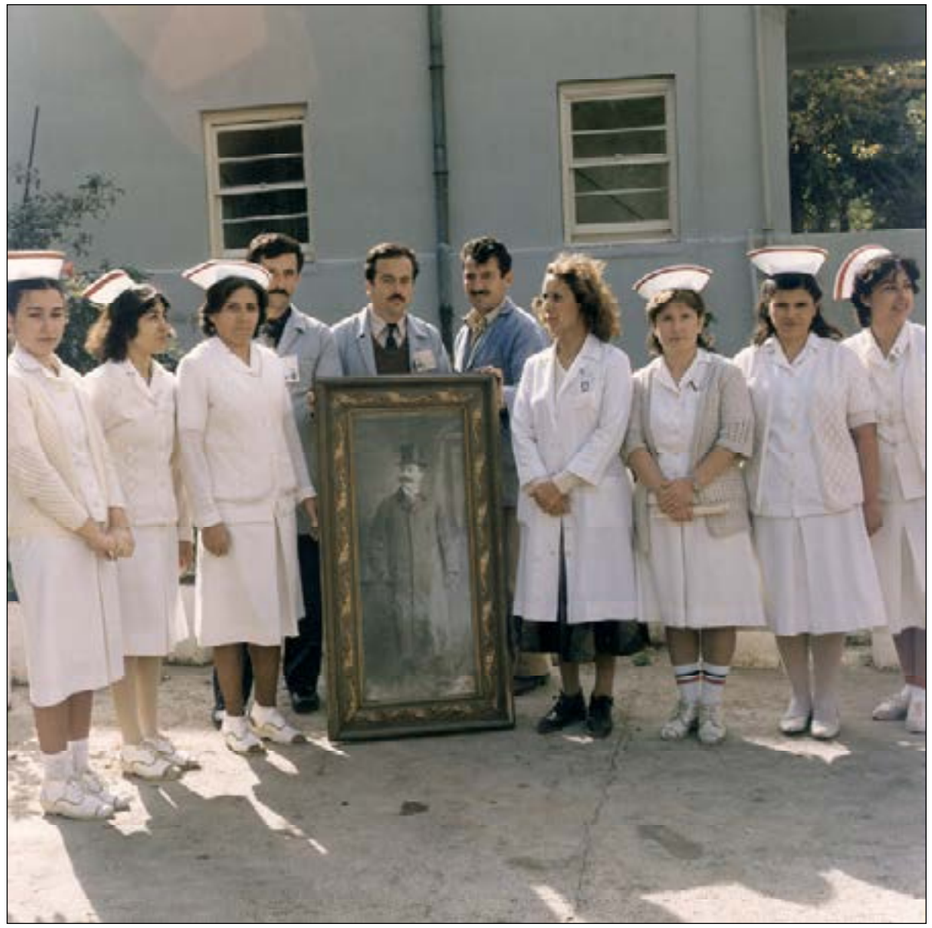
The Mourners 'Meal served following the funeral is called by the Sephardim *La Meza de Guevo* (the egg table). In addition to hard boiled eggs, white cheese, olives, and bread etc..are served. The meal symbolizes ongoing life. The close relatives sit on the floor in a humble position, as tradition dictates.

Manisa

Driving northeast from İzmir, at about 60 kilometers distance, we approached a crossroads with an arrow pointing to Moris Şinasi Children's Hospital. We had been told about this hospital which was set up as an endowment by a native Jew who had emigrated by way of Egypt to the United States in the 1890's. There, he had started a small tobacco business which developed into a substantially lucrative business, with some of the tobacco coming from Manisa. As a way of showing his appreciation of his native town to which he owed his good fortune, Mr. Şinasi (originally Eskenazi) left instructions in his will that a hospital be built to serve the people living there. We could see how beautifully the whole place was maintained when the chief administrator, Seniha hanım, proudly took us on an extensive tour. "There are only 50 beds, we need to increase the number, buy more equipment and materials," she said. Already a new pavilion is being built for premature babies. How did they fund the hospital? Principally, through the Şinasi Trust Fund and supplementary funding given by the Ministry of Health. Seniha hanım went on to say that all the equipment and building materials were imported from the United States. It seemed that the surgery rooms, the kitchen, even the washroom facilities and the linoleum on the floor were of 1930's vintage, but still in beautiful condition.

I felt that I was taking a tour through time, as one does in a museum. Juxtaposed against the ancient wooden refrigerators, dishwasher, the freight elevator which worked on pulleys was the spirit of new life which reverberated through the old walls of the hospital – mothers with children-in-arms milling about, newborn babies crying, and surgery done on a daily basis.

With the additional pavilion, new equipment and more specialists on the staff, the hospital will undoubtedly serve the public more efficiently. The legacy of Mr. Şinasi will be long preserved in Manisa as a native Jewish philanthropist who had made a gift to the town of his birth. Our tour ended at the Chief Surgeon's office – here was a grand, full-length photograph of Moris Şinasi hanging on the wall. He could have been a French or a German industrialist of the 1920's: the image of a distinguished gentleman, wearing a long black coat, a top hat and a walking stick. His moustache appeared to be of the handlebar variety. Upon our request, the photograph was carried out to the garden, with due care, so Laurence could capture the moment of reverence for the mentor.



Inland from the Aegean coast the Menderes River gives life to the narrow plains of Manisa where farmers are engaged in cereal agriculture, fruit orchards and extensive tobacco farming.
For several hundred years, the Jewish people in this region had been marketing the various locally grown crops.

Bergama

Bergama, the site of the glorious Hellenistic city called Pergamon, has a synagogue which is now used as a granary. In its upper story pigeons and doves nest, waiting for opportunities to swoop down and pick up grains that fall on the marble floor. On the ceiling are faint traces of blue and red paint which outline bouquets of flowers. Its main reading desk, teva, as it is called by the Sephardim, has the shape of an ark, suggesting the boats that brought the Spanish Jews to the Ottoman Lands.

On market days lines of horse drawn carts waited their turn outside the old Bergama synagogue to load the hay and grains that are stored inside.

Çanakkale

The scarcity of the Jews in small towns was significantly visible. What had happened to these once bustling communities extending from the northwest to the southeast of the country? It was a combination of factors. Dr. Yasef Bayar, a medical doctor of Edirne explained that wars, riots and revolutions… all had helped to create periods of instability intermittently in the past 80 years – and that Jews had already begun to move away from Thrace since the beginning of the century. The wars that he referred to were the First Balkan Wars, World War I and later, the Turkish War of Independence (1919). All of these wars ran over the small towns of Thrace and Aegean Turkey where many Jews had lived. Added to everything else, he said, was a special tax called the Varlık Vergisi (assets tax) which was unfairly leveled against Turkey's minorities during the early days of World War II. With the establishment of the State of Israel, many of Turkey's Jews emigrated there, thinking that their opportunities could only improve.

Davit Kohen's jewelry store in Çanakkale did a brisk trade on market days when peasant women from the surrounding countryside traded in their gold bangles for ready cash.

Mr. Yusuf Asaz, one of three Jewish shopkeepers in Çanakkale.

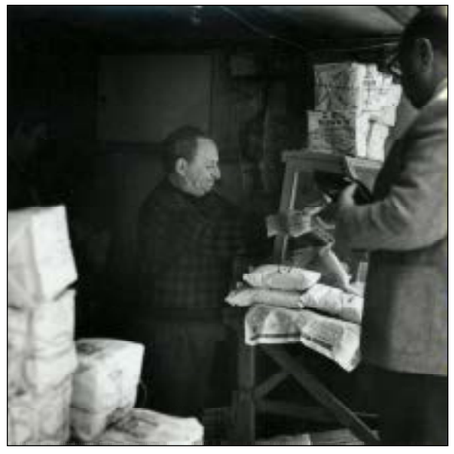
Milas

We entered the city of Milas through the monumental gate built by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C.E. Walking down the main street, quite by chance, we spotted a plaque with the name "Dr. Yakup Siyman." Inside his office, Yakup was graciously cooperative despite his busy schedule. We sat in his waiting room to get his attention between his consultations. Dr. Yakup loved his town, his neighbors and patients. As the only Jewish person (with his wife) he had devoted his life to the practice of medicine in this town where his grandfather's 120 year old home was still standing. He told a personal story, tinged with compassion, about his grandfather's brothers, who in the 1900's had left for the Belgian Congo to seek their fortunes. Eventually, they had become very wealthy in the processing of gold and other metals. They traveled regularly to Europe to establish business contacts. In the 1940's they were caught by the Germans, and the only way they escaped Nazi camps was by proving their Turkish citizenship. How did they do it? They sent a very long telegram to their brother (Yakup's grandfather) requesting their birth registrations from the Turkish government.

At the Jewish cemetery which was almost completely taken over by a sprawling shantytown, we found the grave of Yakup's maternal grandfather.

The Past becomes the Present, İstanbul

After our travels we took up residence in the city of İstanbul where Jewish life thrives. (Of the nearly 22,000 Jews in Turkey, 19,000 live in İstanbul.) We continued our work in the community, visiting families at home and at work, attending their celebrations and observing the way they interacted in private as well as in public, trying to decipher the delicate balance between the two.
As one strolls through the streets of İstanbul, a monumental metropolis of eight million people, it would not be easy to distinguish the Jewish people among others, at a casual glance. They look, dress and talk like everyone else; moreover, they live in new neighborhoods, intermingled with middle-class Turkish families instead of the "Jewish neighborhoods" where they used to live in the past.
In the last 35 years, the city of İstanbul, has undergone an enormous explosion in population – from 800,000 to nearly 8 million people.
Only a small minority call themselves "İstanbullu" (native of İstanbul). The rest are immigrants from small towns located in rural regions of the country.
They came to search for better work opportunities and education for their children.
Likewise, the Jews from small towns who did not choose to emigrate to Israel started to move to İstanbul in the l920's. They brought with them a mosaic of regional traits, local speech patterns, foods, memories which made them stand out among the urban Jews and Muslims. The Jews , supported by their friends and relatives, integrated themselves into the urban way of life in less than a generation. They pursued lines of work,to which they were accustomed, went to the prescribed schools, worshipped in synagogues and spoke "Ladino," the language of their grandparents. There is still an elusive sense of class difference within the community, based on material success and higher education. (One still finds a small number of families whose subscription to the "elite" society is defined through their education – particularly, being educated in the West, knowledge of several languages and, to a small extent, 'noble' ancestral lineage.)



Avram, the Jewish fish seller of Kuledibi sells his *gayas* (Rockling fish), to Turkish Jews who prepare them with a special plum sauce. At Passover one can find Matzoh and kosher wine alongside his fish.

The Galata Tower, the most prominent landmark on the left bank of the Golden Horn and one of İstanbul's most historic monuments, was built by the Genoese in the 14th century. It is at the center of a district called Kuledibi, meaning "at the foot of the tower." By the turn of the century, large numbers of Jews were moving here and to nearby Pera (now called Beyoğlu). The new address implied a higher social status, as this was then the area for Europeans and the well-to-do. Here the community built schools and offices of the Chief Rabbinate, as well as synagogues. (Note on the map of İstanbul that this area shows the highest concentration of synagogues). This area, along with Balat and Hasköy, was mainly Jewish until the 1950's when many of İstanbul's Jews moved on to Israel.

Education

Investment in the education of children is one sure way to social mobility and economic growth. Usually, it matters little which field of study a son/daughter pursues in college, he/she will more than likely join the father's business and become eligible for a "good marriage."

A young woman sociologist, single and educated in France, returns to İstanbul, excited about starting a new research project. Her parents, after a lavish meal, corner her: "my dear, we are thinking of diversifying our ready-made clothing business, please tell us, would you want to get into 'confection pour les femmes, ou confection pour les hommes ?' What do you want to be in charge of, men's or women's ready-to-wear)?"

İstanbul's Jewish primary school is similar in many respects to other Turkish primary schools, including the bust of Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic and its first president, under which are written the words familiar to all Turkish schoolchildren: *Ne mutlu Türküm diyene*– "How happy I am to call myself a Turk."

Community

The Jewish community in İstanbul is structured around an administrative center located in Şişhane which is one of the oldest residential quarters in the Pera section of the city. At the Center are the offices of the Chief Rabbi (Hahambaşı), David Asseo, the president of the community, members of committees and secretaries. The principle of administration is still patterned on the traditional "millet" system. The administrative body is in charge of the community institutions – maintenance of synagogues, hospital, old-age home, school, youth clubs, etc.
The Chief Rabbi and the secular administrative body cooperate closely to answer the needs of the community while setting policies in accordance with the existing political climate of the country.

Meetings are a part of community life here as elsewhere. One of the many committees that deliberate on matters of community interest is the *Hevra Kadisha* (Burial Society), which meets monthly. Notice, on the rear-wall, the large portrait of Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Turkey. During the 1930's, he invited many German Jewish professors to settle in Turkey.

The most visible of the community offices is the Matan Baseter (Aid to the Jewish Poor, literally confidential giving), whose offices receive contributions which provide for the basic needs of the poor and the elderly members. Chickens slaughtered in the name of the donor during *Kaparot* ceremonies are distributed along with staples of sugar, oil and rice on a regular basis.
The homeless and the elderly, numbering about 300 people, are provided with nursing care at Or-Ahayim hospital in Balat. Their emotional and physical needs are met by a volunteer corps of housewives who cook, read, sew and talk with them—-sometimes even bathe them and cut their nails . "You have to have very good stamina and a good sense of humor to survive as a volunteer," said Rozi who is a regular attendant at the hospital. "The first thing the residents will tell you as you enter the room is who had a brain hemorrage, who died, who refuses to get out of her room… you quickly get into the atmosphere and try to pick up the pieces, and even crack a few jokes. We usually get the very old and hopeless ones here. In fact, once the Ministry of Health authorities became suspicious and carried out an investigation when they noticed the high number of deaths in short spans of time....nevertheless, they were satisfied when they found out the ages and the conditions of the patients at the time they were admitted into the hospital. One might say, 'they were five minutes to twelve".

Synagogues

The Ottoman State had been pluralistic. The Armenian, Greek and Jewish communities were organized under a "Millet" system, which allowed each community the freedom to be subject to their own religious and social laws with their respective religious leaders. The different communities lived in quarters of their own choice which were organized around their places of worship.

In essence, they co-existed with the Muslim communities, oftentimes being adjacent to them… so that one could hear the sound of church bells jingling with the müezzin's call from the minaret and the chanting in the synagogue…

The older synagogues were usually named after the place of origin of its members like Kastoriya, Aragon, Katalan, Yanbol, Salonika, Orid. In later times, they came to be known after the names of the local quarters where they were located, like Şişli, Ortaköy, Kuzguncuk and Sirkeci..

There are a total of 16 functioning synagogues in İstanbul today.

Dos Cudyos, kuatro kales.
Two Jews, four synagogues.
Ladino Proverb

Kuzguncuk

At Simhat Torah, the holiday that celebrates the end of the yearly reading of the Torah, a joyous mood prevails in all of the synagogues of İstanbul. At the Kuzguncuk synagogue, as part of their celebration, theTorah scrolls were danced around the synagogue seven times to the sounds of cheering songs and with animated dancing on the part of both men and women.

Afterwards there was one more shared symbolic meal in the synagogue's sukkah which was covered by pungent smelling bay leaves.

Ahrida

The main reading desk, or *teva* (Ashkenazi: bima), of the Ahrida synagogue in Balat is shaped like a ship at sea with its prow pointing towards the Holy Ark. The significance of this shape is uncertain. Siman Tov, the synagogue's caretaker, suggests that it was intended to represent Noah's ark, which some believe came to rest on Mt. Ararat in eastern Turkey. Others consider the teva's form a memorial to the ships which brought the Spanish Jews to the Ottoman Empire in 1492.

Thought to have been built in the early 15th century, the Ahrida synagogue was badly damaged by fire in the late 17th century, which may have destroyed it completely. An imperial "ferman" (decree) dated 1694 called for the rebuilding of the synagogue. The reconstruction was done in the Baroque style of the "Tulip Period".

To attest to its importance in Jewish history, a maquette of the Ahrida is on permanent display among major synagogues of the world, at the Beth Hatefutsoth Museum in Tel Aviv.

Neve Shalom

Violette Ṣaul wanted written under this picture: "Here stands a woman waiting for a husband who will never return." On September 6, 1986 two Arab terrorists entered the Neve Shalom Synagogue during the Shabbat morning service and attacked the congregation with submachine guns, killing 22 worshippers. Among them was Violette's husband, Dr. Moiz Ṣaul.

Eti Alkanlı, a close friend of ours, described that Black Saturday… "It was a Saturday, (era un dia de Ṣabat) Sabbath morning, the people had gathered inside to say their morning prayers…
The women were seated upstairs, the men below, as there were not too many people, they were all seated together… sons were seated next to their fathers… Then, all of a sudden, through the front door a man with a machine gun ran in…

as told to me by a living witness of the event, Dr. Ṣaul's son… seconds later another man appeared and started shooting indiscriminately at the people while they were praying… No one could stir, they were frozen still…"

Ironically, it had to be a tragic event to confirm the Turkish-Jewish solidarity and made the world at large aware of the Jewish community living in Turkey.

Ayşe Şen scrapes blood off the floor of the Neve Shalom Synagogue (meaning Oasis of Peace) two days after the massacre. Neve Shalom, İstanbul's largest synagogue, had undergone extensive renovations during the months prior to the attack; the Shabbat service had been planned as a celebration of its completion and of the synagogue's return to regular use.

Kal de los Frankos

Both Jewish and Turkish motifs are incorporated into the design on the silver *rimonim* (pomegranate shaped ornaments) adorning the wooden handles of the Torah scrolls in the Italian Synagogue of Karaköy. This synagogue is also known as Kal de los Frankos. Kal, from the Hebrew kahal for synagogue or congregation; franko, 'French' in earlier generations was also a general Judeo/Spanish term meaning 'western' or 'European'.

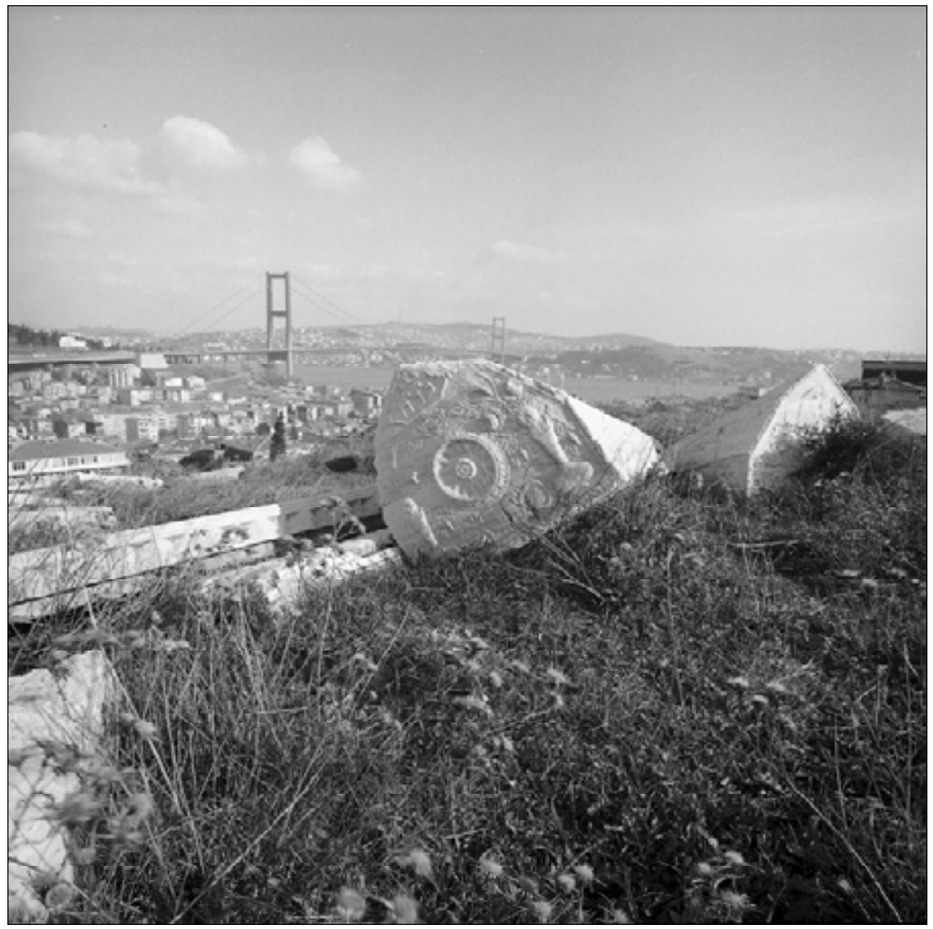
Yanbol

At the kiddush following Sukkoth services at the Yanbol Synagogue, grapes, white cheese and borekas (small cheese-filled pastries) were served in the sukkah. Although kosher wine was available, most people preferred tea served Turkish-style, in small tulip- shaped glasses.

The Yanbol Synagogue founded by Jews who came from Yanbol in Northern Greece served a community of artisans and the less well-to-do. Now the Yanbol synagogue is used only once a year from Sukkoth to Simhat Torah.

Each year for the holiday of Sukkoth, Siman Tov, the *sammas* (*shames*) or caretaker of the Yanbol and Ahrida synagogues, makes bouquets of leaves from the bushes found in the synagogue's courtyards. This bouquet, or *arava* (Hebrew: 'willow') is used in a ritual during the morning services of the seventh day of Sukkoth, where it may symbolize life's continuity. Later, the arava is taken home and hung at the entrance of the house to insure a productive year.

Cemeteries



The Ortaköy cemetery on the European shore of the Bosphorus commands a wonderful view of the Atatürk Bridge which links Europe with Asia. Ortaköy was once home to João Miguez, the Portuguese converso better known as the Duke of Naxos. He was a well respected advisor to two sultans and benefactor of his co-religionists in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere.

He was granted title to the lands around Lake Tiberias where he hoped to establish a Jewish Colony. One of the larger contracting firms, Alarko, owned by Jewish builders İshak Alaton and Üzeyir Garih, is currently building luxurious town houses in the hills surrounding the old Jewish Cemetery of Ortaköy.

İstanbul's cemeteries offer a quiet resting place, not only for those interred in them but also for the visitors who visit to reflect. On one of the tombstones we found the following inscription: "I was like you yesterday and you will be like me tomorrow."

The Jewish cemeteries, like the synagogues, are the markers of Jewish life whose inscriptions and designs bear witness to the Jewish history of İstanbul.

The cemeteries of Hasköy and Ortaköy have tombstones that date back 400 years. Along with the old cemetery of Kuzguncuk, they are situated on hilltops with fantastic views of the Bosphorus.

The Jewish cemetery of Hasköy with stones dating back some 400 years is one of İstanbul's most historic cemeteries. Sheep and goats belonging to people who live in the neighboring districts help to keep in check the wild oregano which grows in the cemeterythe unofficial ground's keepers if you will!

The shops along Leblebiciler street in the district of Balat were once all Jewish-owned. SInce early Byzantine times, Balat was one of the principal Jewish quarters of the city.The houses that were once lived in by Balat's Jews are now homes for İstanbul's latest immigrants – Anatolian Turks.

Today, instead of living in neighborhoods which in the past consisted of tightly woven groups of people from similar socio-economic classes, the Jews live dispersed throughout the city in neighborhoods also preferred by middle-class Turkish-Muslims.

New residential pockets were built up on both the Asian and European shores of the Bosphorus, such as Bostancı, Ulus, Gayrettepe, Etiler. While on the one hand this shift allowed for a closer integration of the Jews and Muslim populations, the Jewish people became further distanced from their neighborhood institutions – synagogues, cemeteries, schools and a hospital.

The Kamondo Steps (*Las eskaleras de Kamondo*), leading up from Bankalar Caddeşi in the Galata district were built by the Kamondos, a Sephardic family of financiers and philanthropists, who migrated from Italy to Istanbul. The most famous member of the family, Count Abraham Kamondo, was born in 1785.
Known as the Rothchild of the East, Count Kamondo was a financial adviser to the governments of Austria and Italy (which granted him his hereditary title) and two sultans of the Ottoman Empire, over whom he exerted considerable influence. A plaque mounted on the steps states that they were refurbished by the Demir Bank and the St. George's Austrian School, without any mention of Kamondo's name.

Work

Büyük Çorapçi Han, the Grand Inn for Socks, originally built as an Inn for Travellers 300 Years ago, was later converted into a series of shops which at one time were all Jewish owned. The Büyük Çorapçi Han has the distinction of being the only Han to house both a mosque and a synagogue. On some days the call to prayer from the mosque's müezzin coincides with the time of the Minha, the afternoon prayer held at the synagogue which is mainly frequented by the men who work in the neighboring Sultan Hamam and Mahmut Paşa districts that are nearby.

Robert Mevorah and his son Marsel own Mor Ticaret (Purple Commerce) located in the Büyük Çorapçi Han. The firm which is over 40 years old specializes in selling high quality Belgian woolens.

The Sirkeci/Eminönü sections of old İstanbul with their surrounding districts of Sultan Hamam, Yeşil Direk and Mahmut Paşa, are the districts where many of İstanbul's Jews work. The majority is involved in the textile business – every aspect of it, from importing sewing needles and machines to making buttons and zippers, from manufacturing thread to the production of lingerie, T–shirts and high fashion ready-to-wear clothing.

Traditionally, Jews have been involved with textiles for some time in Turkey. One reads of the 16th and 17th century Jewish families who had been the quartermasters of the Janissary corps of the Turkish army, supplying it with the woolen cloth out of which the uniforms were made. The early immigrants from Spain brought with them many skills (medicine, diplomacy, printing) and capital to help them succeed in their adopted land; they, in fact, became very important to the economy of the Ottoman Empire.

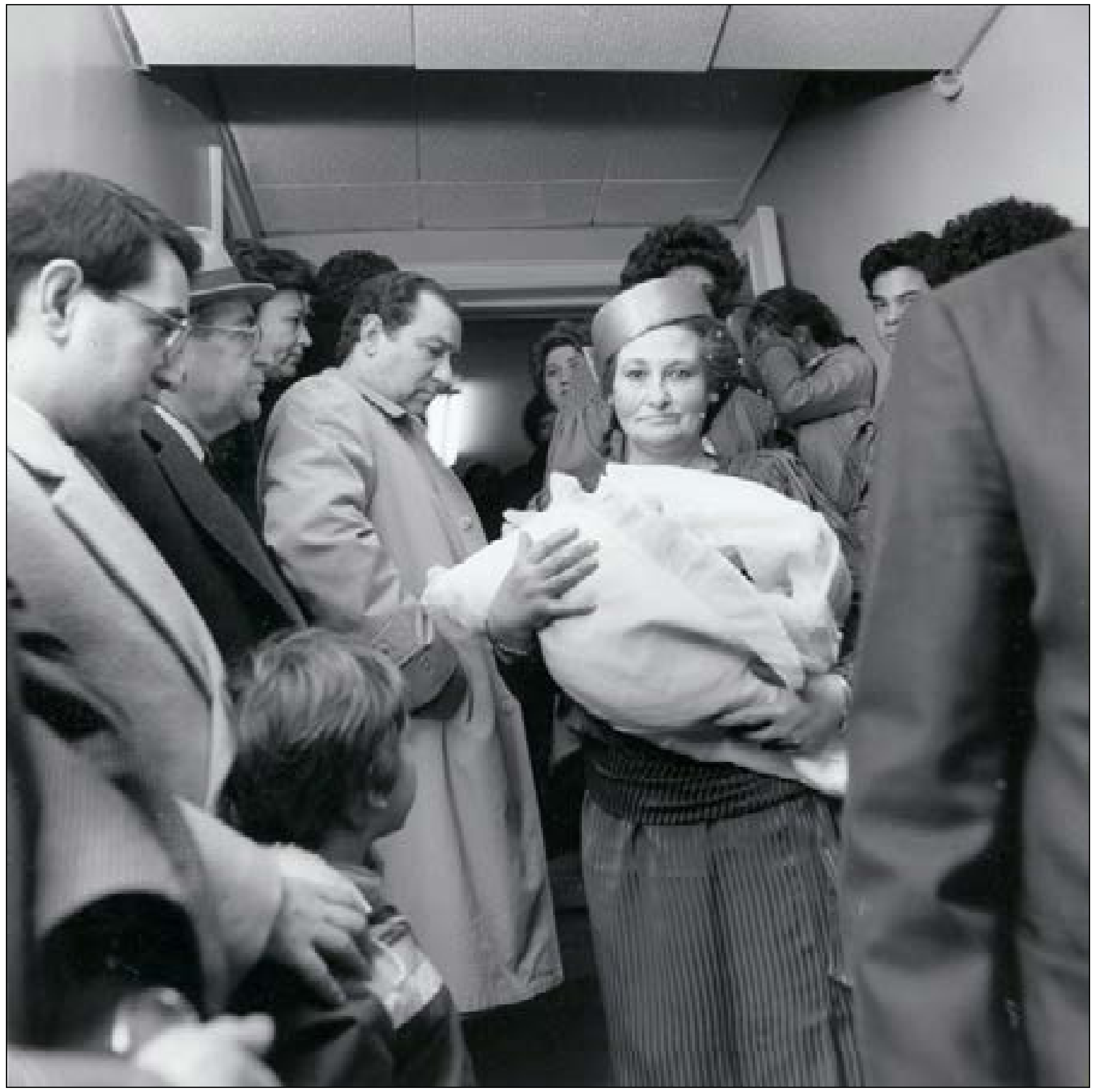
These assets continue to make them successful participants in Turkey's economy. With few exceptions, business is in the domain of men.

The modest location of Yusuf Reyna's textile company's main office in Eminönü underplays his firm's importance as a leading producer of cloth for the Turkish market.

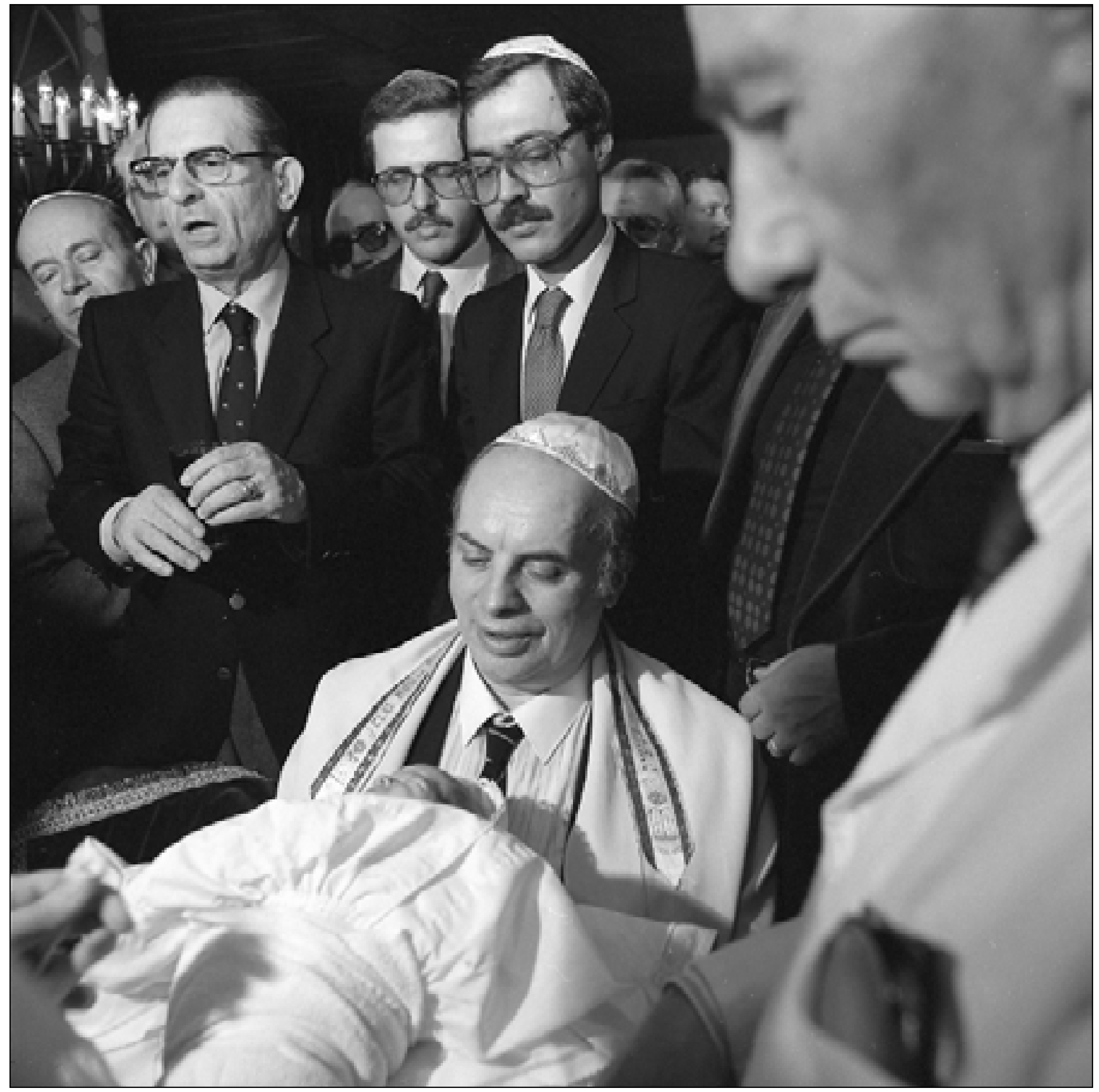
Marsel Gülçiçek (Mr. Rose Flower), wearing a tie, is a perfume manufacturer. His company sells lemon cologne and many other sweet smelling mixtures throughout the Middle East.

Traditions

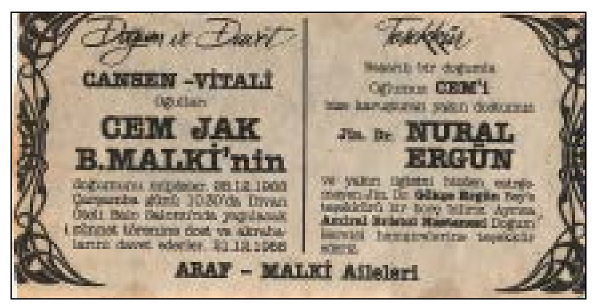
At a Berit Milah party we had a glimpse of the Jewish Social Life as it is carried on in İstanbul. The circumcision parties are announced in one of Istanbul's leading newspapers and anyone wishing to attend may do so; however, Muslim Turks seldom do. Why? Because Turkish-Jewish relationships remain on a formal business level and less personal.
Such celebrations like Berit Milah, Pidyon, and Bar Mitzvah, while preserving traditions, help to keep clear boundaries between the two groups.
The ceremonies take place either in the ballroom of one of the city's major hotels, where there are often up to 200 guests in attendance, or in the more modest surroundings of the hospital where the child was born.
Among Sephardim the baby's grandparents are his "Godparents".



Berit Milah



Significant events in the life cycle are announced in the Turkish daily newspapers. Here, an announcement of birth and berit is coupled with a note of appreciation to the doctor who delivered the "precious" boy.



Doğum ve Davet

CANSEN - VİTALİ

CEM JAK
B.MALKİ'nin

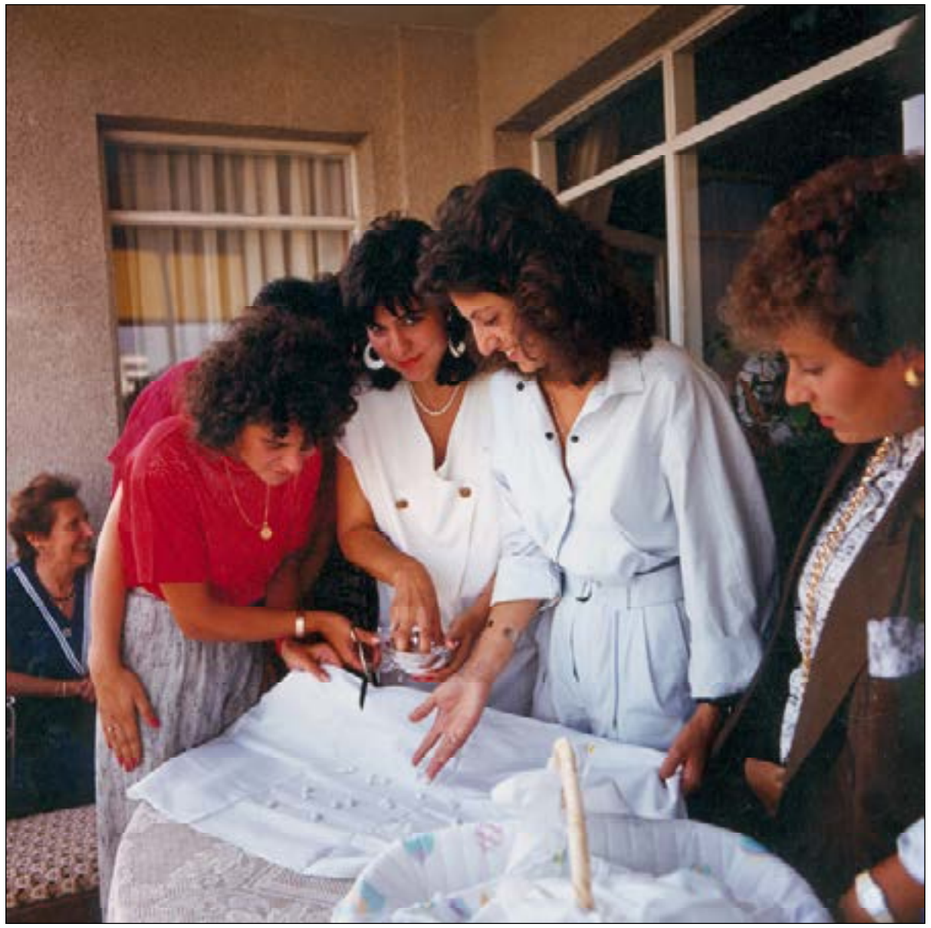
Teşekkür

Jin. Dr. NURAL
ERGÜN

ARAF - MALKİ Aileleri

Şaul Kapeluto is an important member of İstanbul's Jewish community. At the Berit Milah of his grandson held in the ballroom of the Divan Hotel, many of the community's leaders, including the Chief Rabbi, were present.

The ceremony was followed by a delectable brunch that included some of the specialities of the Divan's dessert chef, guaranteed to raise everybody's cholesterol levels.

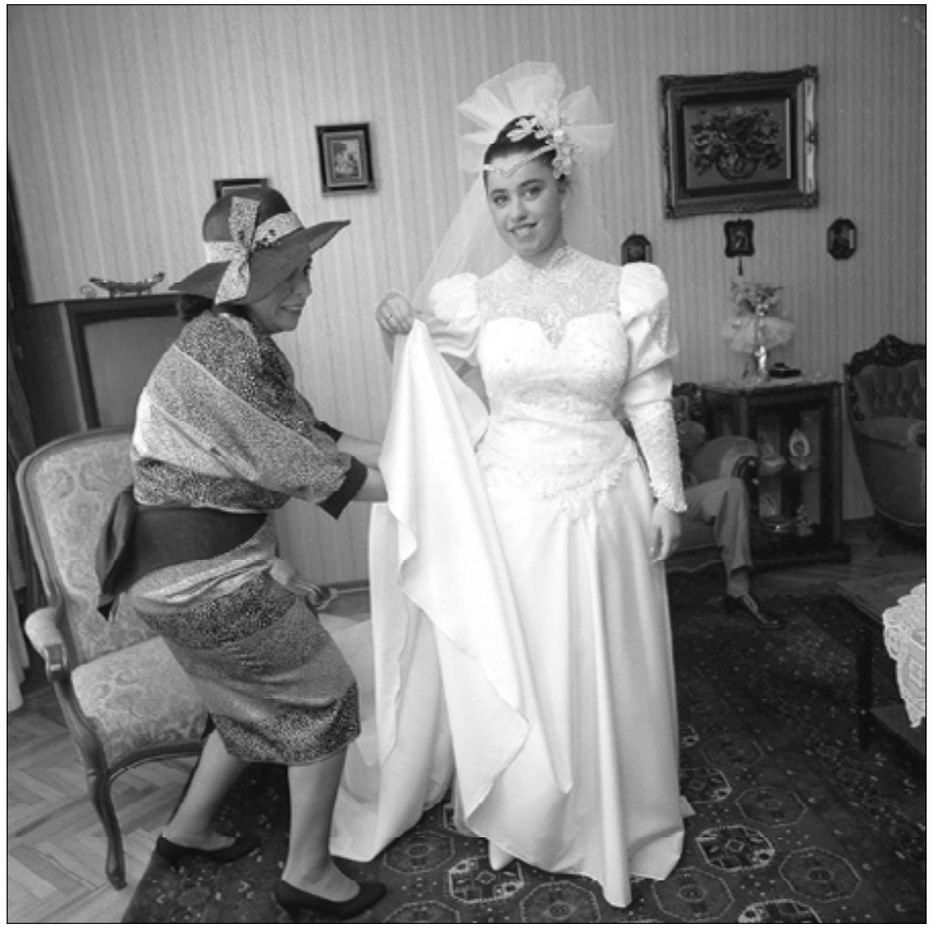


At the *Fyesta de Faşadura* held in honor of the expected baby of Ece Mizrahi, her relatives and friends cut the *faşadura*, the white swaddling cloth which traditionally becomes a baby's first garment. This event usually takes place in the fifth or sixth month of pregnancy. The guests bring gifts for the baby and throw white sugar-coated almonds onto the cloth to ensure a sweet and prosperous future for the child.

In addition to the commonly celebrated events such as weddings, Bar / Bat mitzvah, Berit Milah, Pidyon, and the annual religious cycle, there are other occasions which are specific to the Sephardim.

One of those is the Fyesta de Faşadura (cutting of the first garment to be worn by the newborn) which has several layers of meaning borrowed from Spanish, Hebrew and Turkish traditions.

The survival of traditions depend upon their being practiced on a continuing basis. The old teach the young who, in turn, continue the legacy.



The fundamental question for the Jewish community of Turkey is, to what extent can the traditional values be upheld in the midst of acculturation to the Turkish way of life?

Clearly, in 500 years' time, the Jewish and Spanish cultural elements of the Sephardim have formed the backdrop onto which the Turkish culture has been woven.

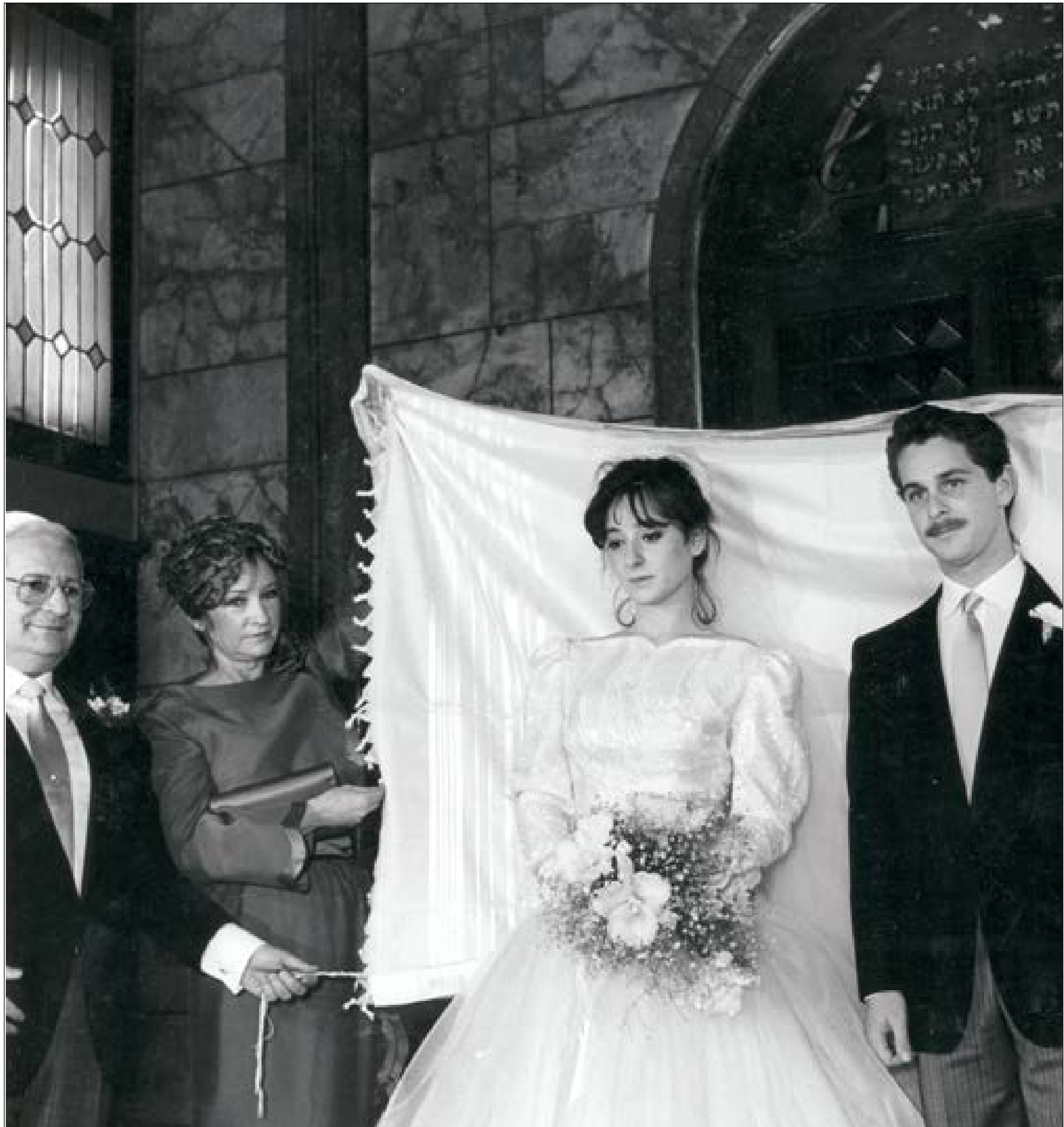
The Muslim and Jewish communities share in a strong emphasis of: family, community and religious principles.

These form the pillars of both societies.

Muslim and Jewish Turks alike believe that one's good fortune can be protected through the practice of certain rituals. Here, Perlin Ojalvo's aunt pins a blue bead (Turkish *bonjuk*) beneath her niece's wedding gown to protect her from evil eye (Turkish and Ladino: *nazar*).

Weddings

The rule rather than the exception calls for an "arranged" type of marriage…
Preparations for marriage, after the mate has been selected, is a long process. While one bride's wedding gown is bought in Paris, another one can only afford to rent her gown for the day. The decision about the dowry is a significant factor in marriage. To what extent must the girl's parents contribute to the new household? Will the man's family live up to their promises? The negotiations will go on until the marriage, and even after it.
As the marriage ceremony ends, the parents let out a long deep sigh of relief – finally, the long search is over, and the alliance between families is sealed.



Rifat and Nadia's parents spread over them the *tallit* (prayer shawl) which in Turkish- Jewish weddings forms the *huppa*, the traditional canopy under which Jewish couples are married. Most Jewish weddings in İstanbul take place in the Neve Shalom synagogue.

The Islands

The nine Prince's Islands off the Asian coast of İstanbul in the Sea of Marmara were places of exile for the fallen Byzantine aristocracy. Later they came to be favored as summer vacation spots for Turkey's three principal minorities – Armenians, Greeks and Jews.

The islands' most famous Jewish resident was Leon Trotsky, who for four years, at the end of 1920's, was permitted a safe refuge on the island of Büyükada.

Turkey is still a country where people have time for the simple pleasures of life, and one of them is card playing. On any given Sunday afternoon at the Horozlu Casino of Büyükada there is a friendly game of Relans or Konken under way. The ladies like to entertain each other every now and then with a song in Judeo/Spanish.
N.B. (They also asked me to inform the readers of this book that not all Turkish Jewish ladies play cards.)

We stayed two summers on Büyükada, and observed the relaxed rhythm of summer life. Here the Jewish families choose their future in-laws, and encourage their children to "keep company" with those favored ones.

For all, the islands offer a serene atmosphere of country life, free of pollution and motor vehicles where breezes from the sea carry sweet perfumes of jasmine and honey suckle.

Life on the Islands is especially a pleasant vacation for the mother of the family, who waits for her husband on the pier at evening time; after a brief embrace, they go home to a delicately prepared dinner with raki and meze…

Hebrew is learned by the young both at the Jewish Community schools and in summer and weekend programs conducted by the volunteer members of the Mazet haTorah Society.

Where does the future lie for Turkish Jews?

It is very much linked to the future of the country, its political and economic stability to which the Jews, as all Turkish people, must contribute.

In the course of 500 years of co-existence with the Turks, Jews made a home in Turkey. In turn, they helped to create a bridge extending to the Western World.

In 1992, the year when Europe becomes one community, Turkey will belong to that community, or be closer to it than ever before.

In striving toward the same goals, Turks and Jews are cooperating to lead the Nation closer to the Continent whence the Jews had been uprooted 500 years before.

Map of İstanbul showing places of Jewish interest.

Fyesta de Fasadura çççç

Text by Ayse Gürsan-Salzmann
Photography by Laurence Salzmann çççç

Laurence Salzmann , a native of Philadelphia, has worked as a photographer/filmmaker since the early 1960's. His projects include social commentaries on little known groups in America and abroad. They range from a study of the residents of Single Room Occupancy Hotels in New York City, Philadelphia Mummers, Mexican Village Life, Jews of Rădăuți, transhumant Shepherds of Transylvania, to a study of the Nude. His work has appeared in the New York Times Sunday Magazine, Natural History and GEO. Presently he is teaching photography at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

The sundial from the Sardis synagogue, dated to 325 B.C.E.

The modest location of Yusuf Reyna's textile company's main office in Eminönü underplays his firm's importance as a leading producer of cloth for the Turkish market.

The modest location of Yusuf Reyna's textile company's main office in Eminönü underplays his firm's importance as a leading producer of cloth for the Turkish market.

İzmir's Bikur Holim is one of several synagogues still in use in the Juderia section of that city. The Jewish community there, which once numbered over 25,000, has been reduced to about 1,800.
The many synagogues that once served the community scarcely manage to find minyans for services that are held on a regular basis.
Along Havra Sokak— meaning "street of the synagogue" (near the Bikur Holim synagogue) are several old synagogues, each one like a precious gem, recalling the golden era of İzmir's Jewry in the 17th century. The city, then, became an important center of Mediterranean commerce and the Jewish community included eminent Rabbis, renowned physicians, wealthy merchants, and Talmudic learning and Hebrew literature flourished. İzmir is also the birthplace of Sabbetai Sevi, the false Messiah who in the 17th century found a following that extended to the whole known Jewish world. Descendants of his followers who converted to Islam live in Turkey today.
The *Teva* of the Bikur Holim Synagogue is reminiscent of late 19th century Ottoman decorative wood work.

The film begins slowly, like the half-heard wail of a müezzin, gradually transforming into a full orchestral crescendo…

Sıvacı,

Şişli, Ortaköy, Kuzguncuk \p.24

(Of the nearly 22,000 Jews in

Ayşe Şen scrapes blood off the floor of the Neve Shalom Synagogue (meaning Oasis of Peace) two days after the massacre. Neve Shalom, İstanbul's largest synagogue, had undergone extensive renovations during the months prior to the attack; the Shabbat service had been planned as a celebration of its completion and of the synagogue's return to regular use.

Avram, the Jewish fish seller of Kuledibi sells his *gayas* (Rockling fish), to Turkish Jews who prepare them with a special plum sauce. At Passover one can find Matzoh and kosher wine alongside his fish.

eventually excommunicated by the Rabbis of İzmir but his disciples increased.

The Rabbis, greatly shaken by his messianic claims, could not stop Sevi from forming a passionate group of followers. Finally, they threatened to excommunicate him and appealed to the Sultan to order Sevi to stop his fanatic teachings. He was taken to Edirne to have an audience with the Royal Council...
The legend is that the Sultan asked Sevi to submit to a test to prove he was the Messiah – that his archers would shoot

A tour of Jewish İstanbul

Start at the top of the Galata Tower. From there you can look out over much of İstanbul. Directly at your feet is the Neve Shalom Synagogue – the surrounding neighborhood was almost all Jewish until the 1950's. Looking further out over the Golden Horn (and it appears to be Golden if you are there at sunset) you can see both Balat and Hasköy, two of the early Jewish settlement sites of İstanbul. At Hasköy, you will find the Jewish Old Age Home, a beautiful Karaite synagogue, and one of the oldest Jewish cemeteries in Turkey with stones that date back to the 15th century. Across the Golden Horn , or Haliç as it is called in Turkish, is Balat. Presently no Jews are living there but the famous Ahrida synagogue is a "must".

Walking around to the other side of the Tower you will be able to see out to the Prince's Islands. The largest and the farthest from İstanbul is Büyükada. A ferry boat from the Sirkeci İskelesi will take you out there in about an hour and 15 minutes. During the summer months Turkey's Jewish community is most visible there. Try gaining entrance to one of the clubs frequented by the Island's Jewish residents like the Anadolu or Seferoğlu Club or visiting the island's small synagogue. Now turn further around on the viewing platform and look out over the Bosphorus, up a little ways towards Kuzguncuk. There, if you choose to visit, you will find one of İstanbul's most beautiful synagogues, where on any Saturday morning a very spirited group is in attendance. Now, turn and look out over the Galata Bridge. You will see the Eminönü and Sirkeci districts
where about 80% of Turkey's Jews work. Most are involved in all aspects of the textile business. Here, there is much to see and do. Use the pages of this book as a reference point to find further places of interest. Remember, ferry boats and dolmuş (shared taxis) offer the quickest and most interesting transportation.

Afterword

As a Turkish Jew of the Atatürk era, I take immense pride in my generation's attainments which extend from my country's dark days in the post World War I period to the promising successes it has by now quietly but steadily gained among the nations of "contemporary civilization". As an academician whose alma mater is the University of İstanbul, I know how pivotal the reshaping which took place at that institution during the thirties has been for the future of my country's burgeoning aspirations as a modern state, confident in its youth and reliable in its practices. That is why I welcome this opportunity to express my appreciation to Laurence Salzmann and Ayşe Gürsan-Salzmann for their magnificent work which conveys pictorially what all of us felt deep in our hearts, but failed to record with our cameras and pens, to enlighten the world as well as to instruct future generations of the good that took place in Turkey.

This book is but a lean selection culled from the thousands of pictures the Salzmanns took during their visits to almost every locality in Turkey where Jews lived at one time or another, or where they continue to thrive presently. In spite of its self-imposed brevity, this collection admirably conveys the authors' sense of discovery which animated them in leaving no stone unturned, no major historic event untold. To have crossed the country from Edirne to Van, and then from Başkale to Bergama and beyond, theirs must have been a labor of love, as well as an exciting adventure in discovery.

I can think of no better characterization of their daring enterprise than to invoke the Ladino proverb which states "dinguno no save lo ke ay en la oya mas ke la kuçara ke la karishtereya," (only the spoon that stirs it knows best what is in the kettle). Indeed, on this Quincentennial occasion of the welcome of the Sephardim by the Ottoman Sultan Beyazıt II, the Salzmanns have turned themselves into that "proverbial spoon" as perhaps the only one liable to capture the truth of the story from inside the kettle.

Their film entitled Turkey's Sephardim: 500 years and their display called Anyos Munchos i Buenos are mere first-fruits. A fuller harvest is still in storage. Public interest and generous funding are needed for a more comprehensive accounting of this little known chapter in Jewish-Muslim cooperation and good neighborliness. It is a precious paradigm probing what it meant in the past, but also having implications for solving tomorrow's interdenominational equations.

The Turks and the Jews have had complementary interests which, by their very origin and nature, maximized cooperation and minimized areas of conflict. Traditionally, each side favored developing an appreciation for the other. At times, when the external political climate was not helpful, instead of looking for easy scapegoats, both bowed to circumstances and suffered together. This was the hallmark of a mature relationship, reflected in their mores and crystallized by our ancestors after their traumatic expulsion from Spain as unwanted persons, and their immediate welcome to Turkey as wanted partners.

In the long five centuries that ensued, we emulated the Turks in dress, food and vocabulary, but most importantly in our liturgical music as well. One of the most eluding strongholds of human expressiveness is grounded in the melodies which stir our hearts and move us to tears. That is when we begin to open up. If the entire range of traditional Turkish makams finds receptive echoes in the recesses of every Jewish heart; if it is quite appropriate to wrap musically our daily conversation with the Almighty with these exquisite makams, then efforts to foster nostalgia for Spain at this late hour run against the grain of the culture we so painstakingly and for so long developed on the blessed soil of Turkey.

In special situations of camaraderie such as the army, etc., our cantors and music aficionados loved to sing for the Turks. To gain their commendation was like winning an Oscar. I knew a Salonican hazzan whose father – himself a Turkish music enthusiast – would often eavesdrop at the local Mevlevi Tekkesi, or Dervish Lodge, just to capture their latest musical arrangement for adaptation and use in some Jewish liturgical setting. My hazzan in Kuzguncuk took special delight in reminiscing of the izins, or leaves from the army, he got for singing Hebrew liturgical songs for the officers in his unit! Recast in Hebrew or Ladino words, that heavenly Turkish classical music continues to bind us as no other bond ever could.

Since the Middle Ages, Sepharad has been the Hebrew word for Spain. But, in the Book of Obadiah, there is a puzzling reference to "the exiles who are in Sepharad". As it is unlikely that there was a Jewish settlement at that time on the Iberian Peninsula to back up this identification, scholars have been looking elsewhere for a better explanation. In cuneiform sources, the reference to Saparda as the capital of Lydia, otherwise known as Sardis, may contain the clue to this Sephardic puzzle: The real Sepharad in the Book of Obadiah would

not be in Spain, but in Anatolia! And quite appropriately, it was with a description of the archaeological remains of the magnificent synagogue in Sardis/ Saparda, the original Sepharad, that the Salzmanns began their documentary movie on the Sephardim!

To rephrase Turkish President Özal's words, when in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was beset by problems, it was fashionable to call it the "sick man of Europe". Now that modern Turkey has so drastically enhanced its position, why not refer to it as the "healthy man of Europe"?

Yes, Turkey is now enjoying good health. And it is European. It has a citizenry on the move. It is also a very rich country in tune with the heartbeat of the world. These are its solid credentials for full partnership in Europe's destiny. We, Turkish Jews, have known these bounties all along. May the efforts of Laurence Salzmann and AyşeGürsan-Salzmann spread these truths to an ever widening circle of people of good will everywhere.

Rabbi Isaac Jerusalmi
Cincinnati, July 1991

A note on the Sephardim and their language:

When the Jews left Spain, they followed two basic routes. Some went north to France, Holland, England, and eventually west to Central and North America. We call them Western Sephardim. In their writings, they continued to use the Latin alphabet, but soon they became linguistically accultured to their adoptive countries. Until World War II, Amsterdam was their religious and cultural center.

Others went east to the vast domains of the Ottoman Turks (Memâlik-i Osmaniyye). We call them Eastern Sephardim. With their cultural ties to Spain and Europe severed, these Eastern Sephardim began to use the Hebrew alphabet in its cursive Rashi style for personal and business matters. Their script is called soletreo. Its ingenious ligatures – ganços,"hooks"– are only surpassed by those of the Ottoman script –also called çengel, "hook".

The cultural centers of Eastern Sephardim developed mainly in İstanbul and Salonika, with offshoots in İzmir, Edirne, Safed, Jerusalem and Rhodes. For their size – just a few hundred thousand souls at their peak—the Sephardim succeeded in maintaining a common language for scholarly as well as for daily discourse. This language which thrives on accurate translation – or Ladino – was rooted in, and dominated by their religious heritage which permeated and regulated every aspect of their lives, and was propagated by their printing presses whose output was out of proportion with their size as a miniscule community.

There can be no disagreement that the basic stock of this language was and remains Hispanic. But soon it became a semiticized version of Spanish, tailored by design to facilitate a thorough comprehension of the entire range of religious texts, from Bible to Mishna, from Talmud to Zohar, from legal responsa to historic or poetic writings, outside of which there was nothing else anyway.

In those pre-daily newspaper and pre-TV days, when the average synagogue-going individual knew literally hundreds of pages of Hebrew texts by heart, the vernacular of the Sephardim naturally molded itself for half a millennium around Hebrew/Aramaic patterns of derivation and composition culled from the vast areas of legal (halakhic) and homiletic (midrashic) expositions. Even story-telling or proverb-coining invariably imitated the many aggadot and the countless other clichés heard at synagogues and endlessly repeated at the meldados conducted in their homes. That is why the hundreds of books which have come down from those days invariably display, on their title-pages, the constant reminder that they have been written en Ladino klaro, in "clear Ladino" for everybody to understand!

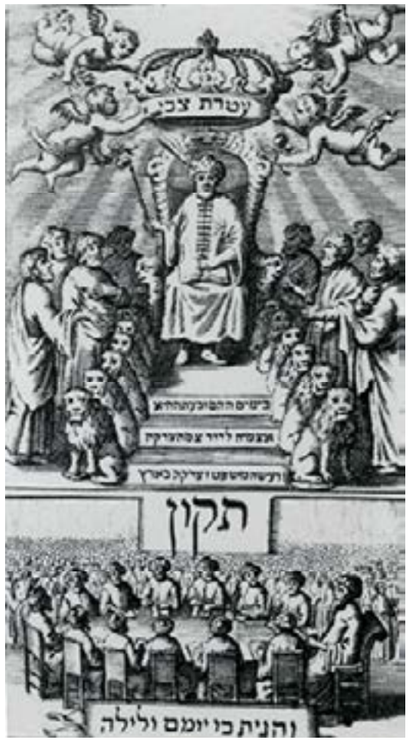
Of late, and over the protest of knowledgeable natives who never called their language Judeo-Spanish, linguists seem to have reached their own, independent consensus. Through their efforts, the hyphenated term Judeo-Spanish – as an appendage to the Judeo-German, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Greek series – has been popularized as the only appropriate name for the language of the Sephardim. By the same token, Ladino has been devalued and declared a non-language. True, the word Ladino has been retained, but only after it was placed in a linguistic quarantine of sorts. Ladino's niche is now clearly delineated. The term may still be used, but only if applied to those slavish translations of biblical and liturgical texts. And there is a real "war" of terminology going on as to the appropriateness or the superiority of this term over that term in a given situation.

In reality, people who are knowledgeable in Hebrew and Aramaic have long felt that the criteria used to define Ladino, Judeo-Spanish or the tens of other names that have sprung up lately for this tiny area of linguistic inquiry, hinge around considerations of quantity, not quality. Translation and literalness being the norm, these may be expected to pop up at every possible corner. Indeed, some of the clearest and most obvious "Judeo-Spanish" words such as akeya madre, el aya, se esperto, se le aparesyo do reflect, upon close scrutiny, undercurrents of Semitic thought. And as such, they fall right back into the lap of Ladino!

As this beautiful language which displays the combined elegance of Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and French enters its final stage, it behooves us to leave its dissection and verdict of appurtenances to a later date, presumably better suited for theory building and ultimate categorizations.

I.J.

Appendix: Sabbetai Sevi



Sabbetai Sevi as messiah, sitting on the kingly throne, under a celestial crown held by angels and bearing the inscription "Crown of Sevi.' Below: the Ten Tribes studying the Torah with the messiah. From an etching after the title page of one of the editions of Nathan's Tiqqun Qeri'ah (Amsterdam, 1666)

Sevi's preaching reached people throughout the Empire and Europe via his emissaries and the broadsheets which were printed in Germany and Holland depicting his fantastically colorful story.

In Turkey today, there is a small group of "Dönme" (convert) families who are also referred as "Selanikli" (from Salonika). They are descendants of the followers of the false Messiah, Sabbetai Sevi – a Jew born in Izmir in 1626. The noted scholar of Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem, calls the Sabbetaen movement "the most important messianic movement in Judaism since the destruction of the the second Temple". Alternating between ascetic piety and trangressions of the law, Sabbetai Sevi stood at the center of an unprecedented religious turmoil. He was eventually excommunicated by the Rabbis of İzmir but his disciples increased.

The Rabbis, greatly shaken by his messianic claims, could not stop Sevi from forming a passionate group of followers. Finally, they threatened to excommunicate him and appealed to the Sultan to order Sevi to stop his fanatic teachings. He was taken to Edirne to have an audience with the Royal Council...
The legend is that the Sultan asked Sevi to submit to a test to prove he was the Messiah – that his archers would shoot Sevi full of arrows. and if no blood appeared, the Sultan would accept Sevi's claim of being the Messiah. If, on the other hand, Sevi didn't wish to take this test, he had to convert to Islam. The pragmatic Sevi chose Islam, as did many of his followers. It is believed, though, that Sevi and his followers continued their messianic prophecies in less obvious ways.

Toward the end of his life, Sabbetai Sevi became involved with Muslim mystics among the Dervish orders.

He died at age 50, in exile at Dulcigno, Albania in l676, leaving behind him a following who were outwardly fervent Muslims but privately Sabbetaen.

Up until l924, the city of Salonika was the center of the Sabbetaen activities. After the Greco-Turkish war, the "Dönme" left Salonika and settled in İstanbul and İzmir. Today some are totally assimilated to the Turkish-Muslim way of life; but in the eyes of the Turkish-Jewish community the "Dönme," as a group, is considered neither Muslim nor Jewish. Little is known about the true religious inclinations of this small group whose numbers are estimated to be around 25,000 - 30,000.

On the Asian side of the Bosphorus, in Üsküdar, there is a monumental cemetery tucked away from the mainstream of the busy shopping center. Its Turkish name is "Bülbüldere Mezarlığı"(Stream of Nightingales Cemetery) According to the Talmud the Messiah would come when he heard the nightingales sing. Here are buried some of the followers of Sabbetai Sevi.

Exhibition Photographs

Note that only a selection of the photographs in this book are in the exhibit; and, not all the exhibit photographs are in the book. Captions for exhibit photographs which are not in the book are printed in bold.

Introduction

1. Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first president of modern Turkey.

2. The Kamondo Steps (*Las eskaleras de Kamondo*) leading up from Bankalar Caddesi in the Galata district were built by the Kamondos, a Sephardic family of financiers and philanthropists who migrated from Italy to İstanbul, where its most famous member Count Abraham Kamondo was born in 1785.
Known as the Rothchild of the East, Count Kamondo was a financial adviser to the governments of Austria and Italy (which granted him his hereditary title) and two Sultans of the Ottoman Empire over whom he exerted considerable influence.
A plaque mounted on the steps states that they were refurbished by the Demir Bank and the St. George's Austrian School, without any mention of Kamondo's name), page 35.

3. The Galata Tower, the most prominent landmark on the left bank of the Golden Horn and one of İstanbul's most historic monuments, was built by the Genoese in the 14th century. It is at the center of a district called Kuledibi, meaning "at the foot of the tower." By the turn of the century, large numbers of Jews were moving there and to nearby Pera (distric), now called Beyoğlu). The new address implied a higher social status, as this was then the area for Europeans and the well-to-do. Here the community built schools and offices of the Chief Rabbinate, as well as the synagogues. (Note on the map of İstanbul that this area shows the highest concentration of synagogues.) This area, along with Balat and Hasköy, was mainly Jewish until the 1950's when many of İstanbul's Jews moved on to Israel, p 19,(exhibit photo color).

4. Although there are few Jews left in Kuzguncuk (about 40 people) its synagogue , is full to the brim on all of the Jewish holidays.

5. The ancient sundial from the Sardis synagogue, dated to 325 B.C.E., page 1, (exhibit photo color).

6. Moris Şinasi had accumulated his wealth as a tobacco merchant in the U.S. His mansion still stands on Riverside Drive in New York.
At his death, he left monies for the construction of a hospital which bears his name, to serve the people of Manisa, his hometown, page 11.

7. On Büyükada and Burgaz islands, Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are generally followed by elaborate receptions at one of the more exclusive clubs.
There, food, pastries and drinks are served under the careful surveillance of the sponsoring parents, page 3.

8. Map of İstanbul, p. 50.

Travels

9. Dr. Yakup of Milas loved his town, his neighbors and patients. As the only Jewish person (along with his wife) he had devoted his life to practicing medicine in the town where his grandfather's l20-year old home was still standing. At the Jewish cemetery which was almost completely taken over by the sprawling shantytown, we found the grave of Yakup's maternal grandfather, p. 16.

10. Map of Turkey, p.xiv.

11. Süzet Sıvacı, the youngest member of the Gelibolu community stands in front of her grandmother Alegre. The ladies seated are Fortuna Kalo (left), and her sister Lalo Kale (right). Picture made in 1984.

12. At the Gelibolu cemetery we were surprised by a group of off- duty soldiers who made us a gift of apples.

13. The Çorlu synagogue with an addition of a Minaret is now known as the Havra-Camii – the synagogue mosque.
It was donated by the Jewish Community to the Islamic Pious Trust, following the Jewish immigration to Israel and İstanbul in the 1960's.

14.The Mehor Hayim synagogue of Çanakkale was kept in pristine condition by Davit Kohen, an elderly man who with his wife owned a Jewelery store nearby. Davit explained that even though there was no longer a minyan in Çanakkale it was his duty to keep the synagogue clean and open to those who wished to come to pray there, p.14.

15.Simha Alegre's two sons – Solomon and Eşladiye – facing the prayer man (Avram Karaoğlan) who enacted the ritual of *Keria*. According to tradition, a piece of the garment worn by the close blood relatives of the deceased is torn, in keeping with Genesis 37:29, where Jacob rent his clothes when he was told of Joseph's death. For the next seven (*syete*) days, close blood relatives sit in mourning, page 8.

16. The Torah Arc of İskenderun contains a Torah for each member of their small community.

17. The only trace of a Jewish existence in Diyarbakır was an illegible Hebrew inscription above an arched entranceway. We were led to it by our guide Ali.

18. Nisim Escapa helped us in our discovery of many of the old synagogues of İzmir. Here he is holding the *Parokhet* (Torah arc cover) of the Bikur Holim Synagogue, one of the many along Havra Sokak, the street of the synagogues, each one like a precious gem. They recall a period when the surrounding district called the Juderia had a Jewish population of some 30,000.

19. The Jews of Kilis in southeastern Turkey had left the town over 40 years ago. Their synagogue was built with cut stone, in tune with the traditional architecture of the region, dated to the turn of the century, p. 7.

20. The afternoon prayer at the Senyora synagogue, İzmir.

21. Detail from synagogue of Bergama. We hoped that this synagogue would somehow be preserved for future generations.

22. Bulisa's family lived in Bergama for several hundred years. Her husband, like her grandfather and her father, had been itinerant merchants dealing in wool, acorns, pistachio nuts, almonds… He was known to be a benevolent man, generous to the poor Jews and Turks alike, page 2.

23. Mr. Yusuf Asaz, a cloth merchant of Çanakkale, page 15.

24. Bergama, site of the glorious Hellenistic city called Pergamon, has a synagogue which is now used as a granary. In its upper story pigeons and doves nest, waiting for opportunities to swoop down and pick up grains that fall on the marble floor. On the ceiling are faint traces of blue and red paint which outline bouquets of flowers.
Its main reading desk, *teva*, as it is called by the Sephardim, has the shape of an ark, suggesting the boats that brought the Spanish Jews to the Ottoman Lands, page 12, (exhibit photo color).

25. **İzmir's Beth Israel synagogue on October 29th, the Turkish Independence Day.**

26. The Karaite synagogue of Hasköy is not only hard to find but even harder to gain entrance to, as it is seldom open. Most of people in the Karaite community whose ancestors predate the Sephardim in Turkey have left for Israel, the U.S., or France.

27. The teva of the Bikur Holim Synagogue of İzmir, page 6.

28.Entrance to synagogue of Kırklareli.

29. The Karaite synagogue of Hasköy stands behind large stone walls that date to Byzantine times when members of this schismatic sect first settled in İstanbul. Their community, never too numerous, now numbers fewer than 70.

Neighborhoods/synagogues/community

30. İstanbul's Jewish primary school is similar in many respects to other Turkish primary schools, including the bust of Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic, under which are written the words familiar to all Turkish schoolchildren: *Ne mutlu Türküm diyene* -"How happy I am to call myself a Turk." page 20.

31. The minyan of the Sirkeci synagogue is made up of men whose fathers or grandfathers came to İstanbul from small towns in Thrace. Disembarking at the nearby Sirkeci train station, built in 1889, (as the terminus for the Orient Express, it was the last stop for trains from Europe), they settled in what was then a residential district nearby. Note: Some of the younger Jewish people distinguish themselves from their fathers by their moustaches, '*a la Turka*.'

32. At the kiddush following Sukkoth services at the Yanbol Synagogue, grapes, white cheese and *borekas* (small cheese-filled pastries) were served in the sukkah. Although kosher wine was available, most people preferred tea served Turkish-style, in small tulip- shaped glasses.
The Yanbol Synagogue founded by Jews who came from Yanbol in Northern Greece served a community of artisans and the less well-to-do. Now the Yanbol synagogue is used only once a year from Sukkoth to Simhat Torah, page 30.

33. Each year for the holiday of Sukkoth, Siman Tov, the sammas (shames) or, caretaker of the Yanbol and Ahrida synagogues, makes bouquets of leaves from the bushes found in the synagogue's courtyards. This bouquet, or *arava* (Hebrew: 'willow') is used in a ritual during the morning services of the seventh day of Sukkoth, where it may symbolize life's continuity. Later, the *arava* is taken home and hung at the entrance of the house to insure a productive year, page 31.

34 . Both Jewish and Turkish motifs are incorporated into the design on the silver *rimonim* (pomegranate shaped ornaments) adorning the wooden handles of the torah scrolls in the Italian Synagogue of Karaköy. This synagogue is also known as Kal de los Frankos. Kal, from the Hebrew kahal for synagogue or congregation; franko, 'French' in earlier generations was also a general Judeo/Spanish term meaning 'Western' or 'European', page 28.

35. On the Asian side of the Bosphorus, in Üsküdar, there is a monumental cemetery tucked away from the mainstream of the busy shopping centers. Its Turkish name is "Bülbüldere Mezarlığı" (Stream of Nightingales Cemetery). According to the Talmud the Messiah would come when he heard the nightingales sing. Here are buried some of the followers of Sabbetai Sevi, page 57.

36. Turkey is a country where people still have time for the simple pleasures of life, and one of them is card playing. On any given Sunday afternoon at the Horozlu Gazino of Büyükada there is a friendly game of Relans or Konken under way. The ladies like to entertain each other every now and then with a song in Judeo/Spanish.
N.B. (They also asked me to inform the readers of this book that not all Turkish Jewish ladies play cards), page 46.
37. Hebrew is learned by the young both at

the Jewish Community schools and in summer and weekend programs in classes conducted by the volunteer members of the Mazet haTorah Society, page 48.

38. The white obelisk of Nişantaşı, at the corner of Valikonak and Rumeli Streets, indicates the spot which the Sultan's archers once used for target practice. It also marks one of the boundaries of a fashionable neighborhood where many of İstanbul's Jews live.

39. Şişli one of the most popular Jewish residential quarter in İstanbul today, having the largest number of Jewish families living within its boundaries. Migration to this quarter dates to the early 1950's when block upon block of mostly non- descript apartment buildings came to replace the empty fields which were once there.

40. The Dolmuş shared taxi – stops right in front of the Kal de Abajo (lower synagogue), one of the two synagogues at Kuzguncuk which was once favored by the well-to-do Jews of İstanbul.

41. The shops along Leblebiciler street in the district of Balat were once all Jewish-owned. Since early Byzantine times, Balat was one of the principal Jewish quarters of the city.The houses that were lived in by Balat's Jews are now homes for İstanbul's latest immigrants, Ana-tolian Turks, page 38.

Ahrida

42. The Ahrida synagogue which was founded by Jews from Ohrid in Yugoslavia dates back several hundred years. Rumor has it that Sabbetai Sevi once spoke from its pulpit.

43. Once a year Chief Rabbi David Asseo comes to officiate at services held in the Ahrida synagogue of Balat.

44. The main reading desk, or *teva* (Ashkenazi: bima), of the Ahrida synagogue in Balat is shaped like a ship at sea with its prow pointing towards the Holy Ark. The significance of this shape is uncertain. Siman Tov, the synagogue's caretaker, suggests that it was intended to represent Noah's ark, which some believe came to rest on Mt. Ararat in eastern Turkey. Others consider the teva's form a memorial to the ships which brought the Spanish Jews to the Ottoman Empire in 1492. Thought to have been built in the early 15th century, the Ahrida synagogue was badly damaged by fire in the late 17th century, which may have destroyed it completely. An imperial "ferman" (decree) dated 1694 called for the rebuilding of the synagogue which was done at that time in the Baroque style of the "Tulip Period", page 25.

Traditions

45. At the *Fyesta de Faşadura* held in honor of the expected baby of Ece Mizrahi, her relatives and friends cut the *faşadura*, the white swaddling cloth which traditionally becomes a baby's first garment. This event usually takes place in the fifth or sixth month of pregnancy. The guests bring gifts for the baby and throw white sugar-coated almonds on to the cloth to ensure a sweet and prosperous future for the child, p.42.

46. Rabbi Yeuda Adoni who was to conduct the Pidyon haBen service for young Niso Eşim asked the guests if they would prefer the explanation in Ladino or Turkish.

47.The *Faşadura* parties begin with the offering of chocolates and sweet liqueurs to the guests.

48. According to the old Testament all first born male Jewish children belong to God. The child can be symbolically redeemed by his parents during the Pidyon ceremony by presenting a Kohen with symbolic pieces of silver. At Niso Eşim's Pidyon silver spoons which were thought to be equal in worth to the 5 shekalim (the coins mentioned in the Bible) were used.

49. Şaul Kapeluto is an important member of İstanbul's Jewish community. At the Berit Milah of his grandson held in the ballroom of the Divan Hotel, many of the community's leaders, including the Chief Rabbi, were present. The ceremony was followed by a delectable brunch that included some of the specialities of the Divan's dessert chef, guaranteed to raise everybody's cholesterol levels, page 41.

50. The Berit Milah ceremonies of İstanbul are occasions for much celebration. Often there are up to two hundred guests in attendance. The gathered guests wait for the child's maternal grandmother to carry the child in so the ceremony may commence. Among Sephardim the baby's grandparents are his "Godparents", p 40.

51. Izak Azus (left) and Ezra Azar (right) are ritual washers who prepare the deceased for burial. New washers are needed but are hard to find.

52. Following the funeral of Emma Keribar, friends and relatives of the family shared a traditional meal at her Harbiye apartment and offered their condolences to her two sons, Loni and İzzet.

53. Anita BenAdrete served more than 30 guests at her Passover seder, which among the Sephardim is called Haggada. In addition to traditional Sephardic dishes like *Keftes de Prasa* (leek croquettes) and *Fritada de Espinaca* (spinach casserole), the meal included several Georgian recipes which Anita had borrowed from her grandmother who had emigrated to Turkey from Soviet Georgia, p 1.

Weddings

54. On Verda Kohen's wedding day close friends and relatives gathered at her parent's Nişantaşı apartment to watch as she left in the Lincoln Continental limousine that had been rented for the day.

55. Yasemin Keribar was 20 on her wedding day. Only a few Turkish Jewish brides are older than 25. Marriages are made to last (although this is changing!). To marry out of the religion is as rare as to divorce.

56. Leslie Duek signs the bottom of the bride's shoe, a local ritual to ensure good luck for the bride.

57. Muslim and Jewish Turks both believe that one's good fortune can be protected through the practice of certain rituals. Here, Perlin Ojalvo's aunt pins a blue bead (Turkish bonjuk) beneath her niece's wedding gown to protect her from evil eye (Turkish and Ladino: nazar), page 43.

58. Rifat and Nadia's parents spread over them the tallit (prayer shawl) which in Turkish Jewish weddings forms the *huppa,* the traditional canopy under which Jewish couples are married. Most Jewish weddings in İstanbul take place in the Neve Shalom synagogue, page 44.

Work

59. Albert Behar manufactures and sells shaving brushes in Eminönü.

60. Avram, the Jewish fish seller of Kuledibi sells his *gayas* (Rockling fish), to Turkish Jews who prepare them with a special plum sauce. At Passover one can find Matzoh and kosher wine alongside his fish, p.18.

61. Yıldız Levi, like many other Jewish women, volunteers at the community's Old Age Home in the Hasköy district. She cheerfully attends to the needs of the Home's residents, including cutting their hair and nails. The Home, which receives no government funds, is run and supported by the Jewish Community), page 23 (exhibit photo in color).

62. Meetings are a part of community life. One of the many committees that deliberate on matters of community interest is the *Hevra Kadisha* (Burial Society), which meets monthly. (Notice, on the rear wall, the large portrait of Kemal Atatürk, first president and founder of modern Turkey. During the 1930's, he invited many German Jewish professors to settle in Turkey), page 22.

63. The modest location of Yusuf Reyna's textile company's main office in Eminönü underplays his firm's importance as a leading producer of cloth for the Turkish market, page 38.

64. Marsel Gülçiçek (Mr. Rose Flower), wearing a tie, is a perfume manufacturer. His company sells lemon cologne and many other sweet smelling mixtures throughout the Middle East, page 39.

65. Mr. Levy and his son-in-law, David own the İstanbul Çorap Pazarı.

66. The most successful merchandizer and innovator in Turkish high fashion is Vitali Hakko (seen here at right in his Beyoğlu branch store), who started out as a hat maker capitalizing on the market for hats at a period when Atatürk initiated the hat reform in the mid thirties. Copying the latest European fashion designs and combining manufacturing and marketing know-how, he has become one of Turkey's leading producers and retailers of high-fashion apparel.

Cemeteries

67. The Ortaköy cemetery on the European shore of the Bosphorus commands a wonderful view of the Atatürk Bridge which links Europe with Asia. Ortaköy was once home to João Miguez, the Portuguese converso better known as the Duke of Naxos. He was a well respected advisor to two sultans and benefactor of his co-religionists in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere. He was granted title to the lands around Lake Tiberias where he hoped to establish a Jewish Colony
One of the larger contracting firms Alarko, owned by Jewish builders İshak Alaton and Üzeyir Garih is currently building luxurious town houses in the hills surrounding the old Jewish Cemetery of Ortaköy, page 32.

68. The Jewish cemetery of Hasköy with stones dating back some 400 years is one of İstanbul's most historic cemeteries. Sheep and goats belonging to people who live in the neighboring districts help to keep in check the wild oregano which grows in the cemetery – the unofficial grounds' keepers, if you will! page 33.

Neve Shalom

69. Violette Şaul wished to have written under this picture: "Here stands a woman waiting for a husband who will never return." On September 6, 1986 two Arab terrorists entered the Neve Shalom Synagogue during the Shabbat morning service and attacked the congregation with submachine guns, killing 22 worshippers. Among them was Violette's husband, Dr. Moiz Şaul, page 26.

70. Ayşe Şen scrapes blood off the floor of the Neve Shalom Synagogue (meaning Oasis of Peace) two days after the massacre. Neve Shalom, İstanbul's largest synagogue, had undergone extensive renovations during the months prior to the attack; the Shabbat service had been planned as a celebration of its completion and of the synagogue's return to regular use, page 27.

Additional……
party favors, Şalom newspapers, etc., etc.

Mr. Salzmann's photographs are in the collections of:

Beth Hatefutsoth Museum, Tel Aviv.
Benoliel Family, Philadelphia.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn.
Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr.
George Pompidou Center, Paris.
Corcoran Gallery, Washington.
Harvard College Library, Cambridge.
International Center of Photography, New York.
Israel Museum, Jerusalem.
Lehigh University, Bethlehem.
Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego.
Philadelphia Museum of Art.
Steinmann Family, New York.
The State Museum, Amsterdam.
The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia.
Yale University, Library, New Haven.

Three Ladino Proverbs: (collected by Nimet Jerusalmi)

La alguenga no tyene gueso, Ma rompe al gueso!	Tongues have no bones, Yet they can shatter bones. (Watch what you say)
Kuando el oro avla, A kada lingua kaya.	When gold talks, It can silence any (tongue) mouth.
Partimos kon kavayo, Tornimos kon azno.	We left on a horse. We came back on a donkey. (in disappointment)

A note on Turkish and Judeo/Spanish pronounciation.

The modern Turkish letters are pronounced more or less as an English person would , with the following exceptions:

c – as j in jam
ç – as ch in chapter;
ğ – barely pronounced at all; tends to lengthen the preceding vowel.
ı – distinct from i rather like the indefinte unemphasized vowel in English, e.g., tion in fraction;
ö – as eu in French veut
ş – as sh in shop
ü – as une in French

Judeo/Spanish words make use of the above Turkish letters.

Turkey's Sephardim:500 Years, the film.

Turkey's Sephardim: 500 Years is a 70 minute, color film which tells the story of Turkey's Sephardic Jews as they are today against a background of 500 Years of uninterrupted existence on the lands of the Ottoman Empire, since 1492, the year when they were uprooted from the Iberian peninsula by order of expulsion...

Laurence Salzmann, accompanied by his wife Ayşe, made many trips to discover and record the Jewish past in Turkey. What they found most exciting were the Jewish and Turkish people they met, their tales, their songs, their jokes about themselves and each other… for example:

"meeting Bulisa, the widow of the grain merchant Karaoğlan in her village… sharing her excitement as she took them through the unpaved roads to the old synagogue (now a granary)… it seemed like the 100 year old reading desk was suddenly transformed to its original state… reminiscing about her almond candies, and how the neighbor's sons enjoyed eating them…"

Then, there is the legacy of the sucessful American tobacco merchant, Moris Şinasi, whose roots go back to a modest existence in Manisa. One sees many contrasting images of the traditional and the modern, the hub of urban life blending with intimacies of domestic existence.

The viewer is gently led to discover the daily rituals of Turkish-Jewish life. Over and over again, the film weaves together images of ordinary people as well as the spiritual leaders – the schoolchildren, the housewife, the small tradesman, the fishmonger, the businessmen – to create the portrait of a community whose strength and color derive from its multicultural heritage. The film begins slowly, like the half-heard wail of a müezzin, gradually transforming into a full orchestral crescendo…

Viewer's comments:

"As the daughter of İzmirlis I was thrilled to see the harbor my parents remembered so vividly and precisely. As a scholar and teacher of Sephardic studies with a special interest in the folk tradition I found the film with its presentation of some of the older Turkinos speaking and singing in our Spanyol especially interesting and valuable."

Gloria J. Ascher, Tufts University

"I found the film to be a visual treat and an enlightening documentary on contemporary Jewish Life in Turkey. Unlike other documentaries of this kind, about once significant and powerful Jewish communities that are now impoverished and depressed, the Turkish community seems to be happy and contented."

Sylvia A. Herskowitz, director, Yeshiva University Museum

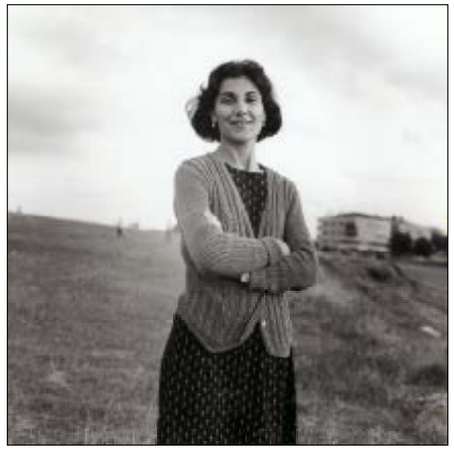
"What pleasure it gives me to say that Turkey's Sephardim: 500 Years is not only very good on the Sephardim and historically accurate, it is also perhaps the best film I have seen on life in Turkey generally, and captures both the sweetness and complexity of living there."

Bruce McGowan, U.S. Cultural Officer İstanbul 1983 –1988.

To order your copy of Turkey's Sephardim: 500 years or additional copies of this book write: 500 Year Project• 3607 Baring Street• Philadelphia, Pa. 19104. fax no. 215 222-2649.

About the Authors

Ayşe Gürsan-Salzmann, born and raised in İstanbul, was trained as an anthropologist at the University of Pennsylvania. Her interest in the study of man ranges from prehistoric cultures as excavated in the Near East, to delineating living communities, particulary those on the margins of society. Her collaboration with Laurence Salzmann on projects in Mexico, Romania and Turkey reflect her attention to painstaking detail and keen observation of specific people interacting as part of a larger community or nation. She has taught cultural anthropology and archaeology and served as director of the Turkish Cultural Foundation in İstanbul.



Laurence Salzmann , a native of Philadelphia, has worked as a photographer/filmmaker since the early 1960's. His projects include social commentaries on little known groups in America and abroad. They range from a study of the residents of Single Room Occupancy Hotels in New York City, Philadelphia Mummers, Mexican Village Life, Jews of Rădăuţi, transhumant Shepherds of Transylvania, to a study of the Nude. His work has appeared in the New York Times Sunday Magazine, Natural History and GEO.

La boka ke dize "no", dize "si".

Colophon:

Printing:
Becotte & Gershwig
Bindery:
Horowitz
Text type
ITC Garamond, Helvetica
Typesetting
Design & Imaging Studio,
Drexel University.
Color Separations:
Imaging Systems, Inc.

In 1984 Laurence Salzmann, an American photographer, and his wife Ayse Gürsan-Salzmann, a Turkish- born anthropologist, were invited by the Beth Hatefutsoth Museum of Tel Aviv to do a photo-documentation of Jewish monuments throughout Turkey.

…monuments of a people who were welcomed by Sultan Beyazıt II to the lands of the Ottoman Empire, now the Republic of Turkey, following their expulsion from Spain in 1492.

But monuments could tell only a partial story; so, the Salzmanns expanded their photo project to include an in- depth photo-graphic portrait of the Jews of Turkey, numbering 22,000 people, and a film that explores the ways in which the Jews had become a favored ethnic group among a largely Muslim population.

The film entitled: Turkey's Sephardim: 500 Years tells the story of Turkey's Sephardic Jews. The photographs have been organized into a traveling show entitled: Anyos Munchos i Buenos / Celebrating Turkey's Sephardim: 1492-1992.

During the course of their trips the Salzmanns traveled with their 5 year old daughter, Han. Often they had to stop at repair shops to fix damages caused by the roads to the underbody of their car, a miniscule Renault 4. Near Adana, they replaced the muffler that had been damaged. Their travels took them to over 36 towns where Jews had lived or are still living in Turkey.

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Anyos Munchos i Buenos

"Good Years and Many More"

Turkey's Sephardim: 1492-1992

Text by Ayşe Gürsan-Salzmann
Photographs by Laurence Salzmann