



Jottings

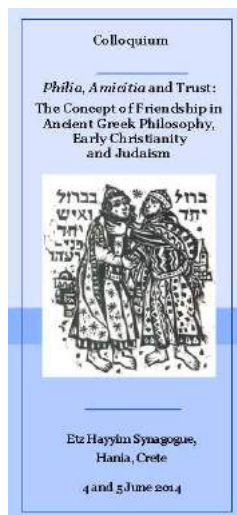
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Editorial

The most notable event in the late spring of 2014 was the decision to relocate his family and future to a move back the US by Alex Foundoulakis, our administrative secretary. He held this somewhat ill-defined position since shortly before the Fires of 2010. Initially, the ‘post’ had been carved out by a Dutch woman who assisted me in the growing activities in the Synagogue and the arduous attempts in managing the increasingly difficult task of making money out of nothing ... and she was a wizard. By the time Alex had arrived the position was somewhat well defined but became smothered under the increasingly greater number of tourists, especially of Israelis and this was recently somewhat alleviated to a degree by the participation of the young volunteers from *Gedenkdienst*. We will naturally miss him as he became quite dedicated to his work.

Change is, of course, the very fabric of life and accommodation to this means that we fulfill perhaps the meaning of who we are, essentially, the means of fitting and relating the particular into the universal ... a function of the virtue of wisdom according to the scholastics and Aristotle. Inevitably we will adjust in most likely new and innovative ways of to his leaving. Certainly the position of Alex had become quite ‘heavy’ and it is more than likely that two people will assume it. More in later editions of the Newsletter. N.S.

Philia, Amicitia and Trust— Colloquium on Friendship



The first Colloquium, that that we have hoped will inaugurate an aspect of our synagogue (as a place of learning and debate), took place on June 4 - 5 2014. We were more than fortunate in having a scholar from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Prof. Jeffrey Macy, who not only set a serious topic but also elicited the interest and involvement of two colleagues, Dr. David Satran (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Prof. Paul Mendes-Flohr (University of Chicago, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

The scholars not only gave papers but also participated in the summation of the colloquium. The topic of the Colloquium was Friendship and its role and influence in Antiquity and later as it stimulated early Christian development. The final paper was by Prof. Mendes-Flohr who spoke on Buber and his understanding of friendship. This final paper countered Prof. Macy's initial paper on the Aristotelian and

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Colloquium on Friendship (continued)

later scholastic understanding of friendship which set the context for understanding the intriguing change that took place when the idea of Eros was, in its Platonic sense, modified by the use of the word 'agape' in the Judaeo-Christian understanding of spiritual love and Friendship.

The three participants were very much conscious of the synagogue and its role in Hania and sights have been set for a more expanded panel for next year to be organised by Prof. Macy.

Both evenings were well attended and visitors not only closely followed the lectures but after lecturers had revisited the major themes of all three presentations during a panel discussion on the second evening a lively debate between the lecturers and the audience ensued. We document short summaries of the presentations below.

N.S.



Jeffrey Macy:
The Greek Philosophic Concept of Friendship and its Influence on Maimonides

The Greek concept of friendship, *philia* [φιλία], has great significance in ancient Greek philosophy. In Plato's *Republic*, friendship has considerable thematic significance, both as an illegitimate standard for being just to some (your friends) and not to others (those who are not your friends) and as a positive

standard encompassed in the idea that "friends share all things in common." For Plato, however, friendship appears to be more significant in a political context than as a clearly defined personal relationship with independent, individual significance. For Aristotle, the definition of friendship is far more personal and

well defined than is the case with Plato, although Aristotle also is concerned with the political implications of friendship. It is Aristotle's concept of friendship, presented in considerable detail in Books 8 and 9 the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that influenced much of later philosophic thought and, in the Jewish tradition, influenced in particular the outstanding Jewish medieval philosopher, Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides). While Maimonides examines various types of

friendship that are defined by Aristotle, the Aristotelian ideal of perfect friendship serves to highlight Maimonides' ideal of the intellectual community, expressing itself in Maimonides' description of the relationship between teachers and students that represents the model for promoting individual perfection. It is this idea of friendship that Maimonides attempts to integrate into Jewish religious thought.

Jeffrey Macy is a Senior Lecturer and Past Chair of the Political Science Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has been a visiting professor at numerous universities, including Yale University, Wesleyan University and the University of



Illustration above: *David and Jonathan*, woodcut, Copyright: Nikos Stavroulakis.

From the *Proverbs* collection of prints; available against donation. Contact the Synagogue for further information.



Crete. He has published and lectured in Ancient Greek and Medieval Jewish, Islamic and Christian political thought and philosophic thought, with emphasis on the relationship between religion, philosophy and political thought.



David Satran:

The Dilemma of Friendship in Early Christianity

A variety of attitudes toward friendship emerged in the early, formative centuries of Christianity – from the writings of the New Testament through the works of the great theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries. These attitudes, not surprisingly, drew on diverse sources: fundamentally, of course, the central Greco-Roman tradition of friendship (Greek: φιλία; Latin: *amicitia*), but also the discussion by Jewish-Hellenistic thinkers (e.g. Philo of Alexandria) of the special relationship between the divine and the unique individual, such as Moses, who becomes a “friend of God.”

It may be possible to explore some of these tensions through the investigation of two important documents (one Greek, the other Latin) by central figures of fourth-century Christianity. Gregory Nazianzen – one of the Cappadocian Fathers and a pillar of the Greek Orthodox theological tradition – composed a funeral oration for Basil (“the Great”) of Caesarea, including a remarkable portrait of their youthful friendship. Two decades later, Augustine of Hippo penned his *Confessions*, famously tracing his path through philosophy and heresy to Christian faith. Both works present us with striking and very challenging portraits of the promises and dangers of human intimacy.

David Satran is a Senior Lecturer and Past Chair

of the Department of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has served as the academic director of the University’s honors program in Humanities and of the Research Center for the Study of Christianity. He has been a visiting professor at Yale and Princeton universities and was recently a research fellow in the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. His



principal teaching and publication interests are the relationship between the religions and philosophies of the Greco-Roman world and the history of Christian thought in Late Antiquity.

Paul Mendes-Flohr:

Martin Buber on Friendship

For the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965) genuine friendship is secured and sustained by the bonds of mutual trust, which are forged by what he called dialogue. As the framework in which trust is established between individuals, dialogue demands that we are open – attentively and empathetically respectful – to the existential and spiritual reality of the other and *pari passu* allow, indeed, invite the other to appreciate our inner reality with all our pain, fears, hopes, creative eros, and sources of joy.

Paul Mendes-Flohr is Professor of Modern Jewish Thought in the Divinity School, an associate member of the Department of History at the University of Chicago and Professor emeritus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He serves also as co-editor-in-chief of the collected works of Martin Buber (in German). His major research interests include modern Jewish intellectual history, modern Jewish philosophy and religious thought, philosophy of religion, German intellectual history, and the history and sociology of intellectuals.



Poems by Ruth Padel about Beth Shalom and Etz Hayyim Synagogues



The latest collection of poems by acclaimed British poet, writer and literary critic Ruth Padel includes two poems that were inspired by her close ties to Etz Hayyim Synagogue. “The Electrification of Beth Shalom” responds to a photograph of Crete’s last Chief Rabbi Avraham Evlagon at Beth Shalom Synagogue when it was first illuminated by electric light. Until its destruction by German bombs in 1941 Beth Shalom Synagogue was located just across from Etz Hayyim. “After the Fire” takes the reader there.

The poems are embedded in a collection that connects the poet’s experiences of Crete and Nazareth and explores the link between experiences of multi-layered historical and cultural landscapes and creative responses to conflict, trauma and loss in those contexts. *The Independent* concluded: “Padel is not writing partisan polemic but attempting something much more difficult, a kind of cultural synthesis.”

After the Fire

If you sit and look through the sheaf of open doors,
double folds to the west where the Sabbath bride
enters at sundown, double folds to the east
where the ghosts gather, asking us to listen, please listen
in this dark that tastes of silence, and remember;
if you carry on looking, taking in the glitter
of twistable ring-handles, brass locks
and two semi-lunates of stained pine

giving a new frame to the angle of repose
for each limestone arch that has echoed
so many agitations and psalms — you see
a strip of green. Spears of an iris leaf, lobes
of young fern, dark fork of a pomegranate tree.
The soft blue naked stem of a Persian rose.



These poems appear in Ruth Padel’s poetry collection *Learning to Make an Oud in Nazareth*, published by Chatto & Windus, Random House UK. They are printed here with the permission of Chatto & Windus.

Image on the right: Chief Rabbi Avraham Evlagon (centre) at Beth Shalom Synagogue

Kate Kellaway in *The Observer* found that “in her poems the past is incessantly confronted but can never be recovered.”

Ruth Padel is member of a not-for-profit association in Great Britain that supports the work of Etz Hayyim Synagogue. She has given two readings of her poems at the Synagogue and a poetry workshop in 2012. She teaches poetry at King’s College London. A.Z.

The Electrification of Beth Shalom

I am looking too hard, or this scene is looking too hard
at me. Turn of the century and the last Chief Rabbi of Crete
is standing by seven naked bulbs, the first electric light
in town. What of the chandelier, a shiver of gold
chrysanthemums – or, if you prefer, the roof?
He has decades to go, this Rabbi. They’ll bury him in 1933.

But eight years on, avalanches of black fire
pouring from Luftwaffe bombers, rumble and rubble,
thunder flash like the crack of doom
and the whole island a furnace, lit
and ravaged by the *simurgh*, behemoth or *ziz* –
who could have foreseen that? This is prayer

sung for the first time in bright light, a dreaming
into chinks between old stones gleaming
edge to edge. Chain, bevel, flex and switch
and no way out, no way at all for between-thinking
as the glare disappears and then the walls themselves
like a drop laid on the tongue. *Listen*, says the dark.





Hashkabah—Memorial Service



The annual commemoration of the Shoah as it specifically affected Hania and its Jewish Community took place on 16 June 2014.

Annually, since 2000, the year following the re-dedication of Etz-Hayyim synagogue, this day is of some significance to all of us as it witnessed the destruction of the last Jewish Community of Hania in 1944. This year the actual Hashk-

bah was preceded by the screening of a very fine film on Jews of Greece during World War II by George Gideon that was sent to us by the Canadian Ambassador to Greece Robert Peck. Actually one of the supporters of the project that saw its success was the Canadian Foreign Service. The film is starkly matter of fact and keeps far away from the emotional jargon that far too often mars such attempts and too often becomes a barrier to coming to grips with harsh realities. After the film the Hashkabah was said by Stavroulakis and then the names of all the victims were read out loud together.

It may well be that we will follow the program of that evening next year as it appeared to be very intensely experienced by those of us who were there. N.S.



Presentation at French School of Classical Studies Athens

Reinvented traditions, revitalization of ritual practices, restored cult places and sites, and religious tourism are numerous examples of the contemporary role of heritage. A two day seminar was organized under the aegis of the French School of Classical Studies in Athens on 27 and 28 May 2014 by Profs.

Pierre Sintès of TELEMME Aix-Marseille University-CNRS and Olivier Givre of the University of Lyon dedicated to this complex and highly important subject that is especially notable in Hania.

In some sense it was inevitable that Nikos (Nicholaos) Stavroulakis, the present founder and Director of Etz Hayyim Synagogue and Emeritus Director of the Jewish Museum of Greece, be invited to give a paper and participate in panel discussions at the termination of the seminar. In a very great sense the Etz Hayyim project was one of the first that put the subject of the Seminar into contemporary focus as such in Hania and it is to be noted that its initial characterization as a 'place of prayer, recollection and reconciliation' is still operative. This was especially stressed in the excellent film on the project done a few years back by Prof. Vassiliki Yakoumaki of Volos University that was shown at the beginning of his presentation. Her film is especially notable as an encapsulation of the several facets that the project has evolved into. His paper that followed the showing of the film was titled 'The Restoration and Rededication of the 17th century Synagogue of Etz Hayyim in Hania.'

N.S.

Cooperation with Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service—*Gedenkdienst*

Since August 2013, the Synagogue team has been supported by *Gedenkdienst*er Jakob Hartmann, a young volunteer from Austria who assisted with the guided tours for visitors, community events, administration of the library and translations of information materials.

Jakob was sent by the organization *Gedenkdienst* (Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service), a non-profit association which does educational work on Austria's historical responsibility and sends young Austrian volunteers worldwide to historical and memorial sites, museums as well as research and educational institutions that deal with the remembrance and awareness of crimes committed by the "Third Reich." The one-year service is recognized by the Austrian Ministry of Interior as an alternative to Austria's compulsory military service.

Etz Hayyim's cooperation with *Gedenkdienst* goes back to the visit of a group of students from Vienna University in June 2012 during their study trip on the topic "Occupation and Resistance in Greece"



headed by Prof. Hans Safria. Among the students were Adalbert Wagner, Linda Erker and Lukas Meißel then Chair and Vice-Chairs of Gedenkdienst.

The association was founded in 1992 due to an initiative by Austrian Political Scientist Andreas Maislinger, who since the late 1970s had campaigned for the establishment of an alternative to military service which would include and foster Holocaust awareness education. Initially, the initiative focused on establishing a programme of volunteer services at the museum and memorial site Auschwitz-Birkenau. In 1980, the then Austrian Federal President still discounted the initiative by saying that “an Austrian has nothing to atone for at Auschwitz.” In 1995 he however acknowledged the “positive achievements” of *Gedenkdienst*, which had been formally established in 1991. Since 1992 *Gedenkdienst* is supported financially by the Austrian Ministry of Interior and the list of locations where young volunteers are sent has since been expanded and includes e.g. the Anne

Einsatzstellen

(locations for *Gedenkdienst* volunteers)

- Akko
- Amsterdam
- Auschwitz
- Berlin
- Budapest
- Buenos Aires
- Jerusalem
- Kreta/Chania
- London
- Marzabotto
- New York
- Prag
- Ravensbrück
- Santiago
- Tel Aviv
- Theresienstadt
- Vilnius
- Washington

Frank Foundation in Amsterdam, Yad Vashem, London Jewish Cultural Centre, Leo Baeck Institute New York, Jewish Museum Vilnius, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC ... and as of 2013 now also Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Hania.

Jakob concluded his one-year service at the end of August (see his article on the right). We would like to sincerely thank Jakob for his dedication and support during the past year and wish him all the best for the future. We will miss him and hope that he'll visit us again soon.

Etz Hayyim's cooperation with *Gedenkdienst* continues and a visit by its Chairman Adalbert Wagner is scheduled for early September (after the editorial deadline for this newsletter). In mid-August we welcomed the new volunteer for 2014/15 Moritz Plattner (see his article below). We are looking forward to his stay with us and to a successful continuation of our cooperation with *Gedenkdienst*.

From the *Gedenkdienst* volunteers at Etz Hayyim

My name is Moritz, I am from Vienna and in the course of my community service I will be working at the Etz Hayyim Synagogue for one year. I am eighteen years old and this is the first time that I will be working full time and living in my own flat alone in a foreign city, so there are lots of new and exciting tasks approaching in the upcoming year.

As I am writing this, I have been in Chania for one week, and I noticed that Etz Hayyim really is an exceptional synagogue. I really like that its doors are open for people of all beliefs (or non beliefs) to enter and learn about the synagogue and Jewish ways of life, even inviting them to be a part of it.

As of now, everybody who works at the synagogue or frequents it was very nice and supportive, and the city with its old town and nearby beaches is beautiful, too.

I am really looking forward to learning new things, getting to know lots of people and just making this next year into a stunning experience.

Moritz Plattner



Moritz (left) and Jakob



One Year

Approximately one year ago I arrived in Greece for the first time in my life. I was sent by the Austrian Organization "GEDENKDIENST", in the course of my community service, as their first volunteer to work at the Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Chania. For me it was something completely new. I had never been to a synagogue before and I knew little about Judaism, only the few things we learned in school. I had many questions and back then I couldn't imagine how this year would change me.

Today, after over one year of working at the Synagogue, my time will soon come to an end. But if I look back, there's nothing I'd change. Over the course of my time here I've met a lot of interesting

people, made new friends and got a completely new understanding of Judaism. Even though it wasn't always easy, with the help of my colleagues, we managed to overcome these challenges.

Even if I have to leave soon, it was definitely not my last visit here. I'm sure this unique place and its people will draw me back here again and again.

I'm confident we have built a good foundation for future cooperation. The first success can be seen in the fact that now a second *Gedenkdienner* began with his work that was started here at the Synagogue. He will continue the important work here and hopefully his experience will be as good as mine was.

Jakob Hartmann

So, why are you here?

Often, after I have spoken to visitors about the Synagogue and explained to them about the history of the building and the community, the conversation turns to a more personal level and it's then that I get the almost inevitable question: "So, what are you doing here?"

In the past, I would almost immediately answer something to the effect of Jewish/Christian common values, a shared foundation, etc.

But at some point recently, I actually stopped and asked myself that question: why was I here, what brought me in the door, over nine years ago, and maybe more to the point what kept me here?

I had to go back all those years, to the first time I stood outside the gate, never having stepped foot in a Synagogue before. A little nervous, not knowing what to expect. Being ever wary of religious establishments by nature, and the stereotypes I had grown up with running through my head. It was daunting!

But I made that step; and stuck

around for a bit too. I met Niko, and listened to him talk. It wasn't what I expected. I was never lectured about the benefits of Judaism or why Jews were

special... And that made a big impression on me.

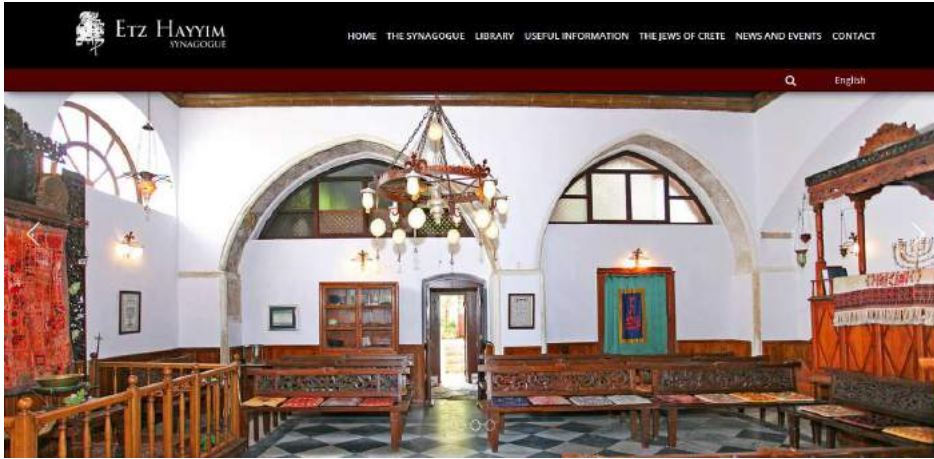
What I did get, was to learn about a community of teachers and cobblers; hairdressers and fish mongers. Grandchildren and cousins, who were taken from their homes seventy years ago, just because they were part of a "different" group, a community that was here for centuries and had walked the same streets that I walked now. Families, no different than my own, I'm sure, who were killed in the Aegean, because someone thousand of kilometers away decided that it would help their (political) cause!

That first experience at the Synagogue helped shape me, and my relationship to the place. The history of the Synagogue, was the history






You can now “Like” us - Etz Hayyim’s New Facebook Page and Website



Screenshot of www.etz-hayyim-hania.org

Etz Hayyim’s website has now a new design. It provides detailed information on the history of the Jews of Crete and Etz Hayyim Synagogue, news and a calendar of events and visitor information in an easily accessible format as well as our bank details for much appreciated donations. The library catalogue will also shortly be available through the website. Friends and supporters of Etz Hayyim Synagogue can now also keep in touch with us via Facebook. The easiest way to connect: click on

the “Follow Us on  icon and then “Like” us. We are posting regular updates and interesting news relating to the Synagogue and regularly check and respond to messages you might send us. You can also

send us photos, links etc that you’d like to share with the online Etz Hayyim community. We are looking forward to your comments on our new website. If you spot a typo ... please let us know.

So, why are you here? (continued)

of my neighbors. That thought created a bond between me and this place... What I realized was that I am here, not as a Christian, or a Greek, or even a Cretan, but as a human being, to tell the story of this community to anyone who will listen. In the hope that they too will under-

stand, and raise their voice when the time comes to defend their neighbor, no matter their ethnicity/ race/religion. That is why I am here. How about you? A.P.

Religious Services at Etz Hayyim

Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Every Friday;
service starts at sunset.

Check with Synagogue for times.

Synagogue Opening Hours

In autumn/winter
the Synagogue is open to visitors
Monday to Thursday 10 am to 5 pm.
Friday 10 to 3 pm, and again 30 min before service

Jottings

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Bankinformation for Donations

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We thank you very much for your continued support.