

Publication News from The Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF KASTORIA

The Foundation is planning an English-language reprint of the book *Histoire des Israélites de Castoria* which has been out-of-print for over 60 years.

The small volume was originally published in 1938, in both French and Judeo-Spanish editions, with the hopes of documenting for the first time, the history of the small Jewish community of Kastoria in Greece. It was written by Salonica Rabbi and historian Michael Molho, with the assistance of Abraham Mevorah, Hebrew teacher and *Shoet* of the community in Kastoria, and son of the Chief Rabbi. The community history was prepared from then-existing Rabbinical literature, communal records, and from family papers and manuscripts. The famous pre-war libraries from the Jewish Community of Salonica were also available and put at the disposal of the authors. Unfortunately all of this original materials were confiscated or destroyed during the Second World War, and thus the book stands as a rare monument to the history of this ancient community.

Greek Jews had inhabited the small town of Kastoria, in western Macedonia, as early as the 10th century, but were assimilated by the influx of Sephardic Jews in the 16th century. These Spanish-speaking Jews had fled the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition a century earlier, but as commerce flourished and expanded, relocated from Salonica and Italy. By the onset of the 20th century the small Jewish Kastoria community numbered less than 1,000, many of its members having immigrated to New York or Palestine in the previous decades.

The English-language edition will provide a complete translation of the original French, Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish text, along with additional footnotes and references. An updated account of the community in the 1930's and 1940's will be added recounting the fate of the Jewish community during the Second World War. During the German occupation, the entire community was deported to Auschwitz/Birkenau in Poland - less than 36 members survived the war's end.

The book will be published in conjunction with a planned film documentary on the Jewish community of Kastoria, and will be available early in spring of 2003.

BOOK INFORMATION

HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF KASTORIA

by Michael Molho with
Avraam Mevorah.

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