

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT OF THE GREEK COMMUNITY IN JERUSALEM.

Between the 22nd of June / 6th of July and the 23rd of June / 7th of July, the Swedish Christian Study Centre (SCSC) located nearby David's Gate, organised an International Conference on the Christian presence and its heritage in the Holy Land, particularly that of the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Gaza.

Amongst the speakers at this Conference, was the representative of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem His Eminence Aristarchos Archbishop of Constantina and Chief Secretary, who held a speech on the theme of Saint Porphyrios Bishop of Gaza—'The life and Thought of St. Porphyrios'.

Invitee speaker was also Dr. John N. Tleel, as the representative of the Greek Community in Jerusalem. Dr. Tleel is an elder Jerusalemite, Rum -Orthodox and dentist by profession. He is one of the devoted members of the Patriarchate and author of the book 'I am Jerusalem'. Dr. Tleel gave a lecture with the title: 'Profile of the Hellenic Community in Jerusalem in the 20th Century' which is cited below:

"International Conference:

CELEBRATING THE FIRST 2000 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN HERITAGE IN
THE HOLY LAND

'Profile of the Hellenic Community in Jerusalem in the 20th
Century'

John N. Tleel, author of "I am Jerusalem"

This profile theme, is not a research, or a study, it is not a full history, it is not about personal experiences, it is not a living making of history, but it can be, a tentative and brief combination, of a huge and vast historical contribution, to the Holy City of Jerusalem, ⁴of the Hellenic Community, or the Hellenic expression, the Hellenic Παροικία (Paroikia) in Jerusalem, in the 20th Century', and regrettably and sadly, its ultimate decline, and almost fateful disappearance, as it looks today in 2011.

Hellenic civilization penetrated and expanded in this part of the world and especially in Jerusalem, in the fourth century BC, when Alexander the Great, sitting victorious on the back of his horse, entered and saw Jerusalem from Mount Scopus, not so far from this room, where we are gathered today, and Sune Fahlgren, our host, and Director of the SCSC, will, certainly and boastfully, ask us later on, to go upstairs on the roof, to view and admire the fantastic panorama of the surrounding Jerusalem area.

Alexander the Great, fourth century BC, Constantine the Great, fourth century AD, Patriarch Sophronios the Rum, seventh century AD, great makers of the Jerusalem history, are the interconnected inspirers, to all the 24 BC and AD centuries, of the rich and many-sided Hellenic history of Jerusalem.

Even before the 20th century, we can discover celebrated names, like Φιλοκτιήτης Νέγρης (Philoktitis Negris) (1860) doctor, who published an essay "on cholera", also the famous doctor Χαράλαμπος Μαζαράκης (Charalambos Mazarakis) (1870), who acted as substitute for the Greek Consulate, Αστεριάδης (Asteriadis), a Government official, who was also Mayor of Jerusalem, Σταματιάδης (Stamatiadis), a doctor, Φλωρέντζου (Florentzou) and many others.

Until 1948 the Hellenic Community of Jerusalem, or the Paroikia, numbered 2000 residents. They were living in

theOldCity, within the walls, in the Hellenic Ὀμιλος (Homilos), called Greek Colony, in the upper Bakaa, in Katamonas, the ancient Hellenic name and location of the Katamon, and in all the neighborhoods of the Capital of Palestine, which wasJerusalem.

All the 23 Greek/Rum Orthodox convents and monasteries of theOldCity, at that time, not as today, were full and vibrant with Greeks of all ages.

1902 to World War One

The residents were confined in theOldCity. Outside the Walls, making their appearance, sporadically and fearfully, were various neighborhoods. Institutions and Monasteries belonging to the French, Americans, Germans, Italians, Swedish etc.

At that time the few in number members were professionals, more merchants, employees and technicians.

Among the Professionals were, the doctors: Nikolakis Spyridonos, Photios Eukleidis, Nikiphoros Mazarakis, Nikolaos Papaioannou, Georgios Yerousis, Varnavas Vareltzis.

A parenthesis: Nikiphoros Mazarakis was also the President of the early and already Benevolent Hellenic Association "Ευποιία" (Eupoia) and served as director in theIsraeliteHospitalas well. Nikolaos Papaioannou was the physician of Patriarch Damianos. End of the parenthesis.

Chemists: Christakis Gaitanopoulos, Neoklis Ioannidis, Argyrios Mavromichalis.

A personal parenthesis, for the sake of the Hellenic History in the 20th Century: My mother came toJerusalemfrom Mathytos, sometime before its destruction in 1915. Mathytos is situated in the north of thePeninsulaofThraki, on the west side of the Hellisponte and not far from theDardanelles. Today it makes the western or European part ofTurkey. My mother came for an

eye treatment, at the St. John Ophthalmic Hospital. Her brother Evangelos, was already in Jerusalem, but she stayed in the house of the Chemist Neoclis Ioannidis and his wife Euthalia, until she married my Palestinian father. Euthalia was the sister of the known Jerusalem historian of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, and later on, Archbishop of Athens and all Greece and author of 'The History of the Church of Jerusalem'. Neoclis was the Pharmacist at the drug store and the hospital of the Patriarchate, located in the Old City, in the old and first floor, under the two upper structures, of today's, two-storied Gloria Hotel, built in 1951 and 1969. This much, much older part of the three stories building, during the Jordanian rule 1948-1967, served as the main office of the Palestinian/ Jordanian Mayor of Jerusalem, as well as the Municipality. Today, 201 1, this nearby Rum Orthodox monument in the Old City, a hospital and a pharmacy, during the Ottoman occupation, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, today, is an Israeli Municipal annex. End of the parenthesis.

Advocate: Symeon Petasis.

Architects: Nikiphoros Petasis, Christodoulos Spyridonidis.

Professors: Georgios Vrachy pedis, Konstantinos Eli ad is, Georgios Modinos, Nikolaos Lodis, Agapitos Arfaras, Nikolaos Ka'iretlidou and many others.

Merchants: Theodoros Inglesis, Minas Spathopoulos, Christophoros Christophorou, Antonios Kapelos, Sakelaris, Konstantinos Micha'ilidis, Avramidis, Konstantinidis, Lambrou, Dedas (Chadjipetrou), Sotiriou and many others.

Book-seller: Dimitrios Takos.

During that early, important and active period, the Greek Government was no less active. Γρυπάρης (Gryparis) was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, and Μιλτιάδης

Ραφαήλ (Miltiadis Raphael) was serving as Consul of Greece in Jerusalem.

Some names as a tribute to the memory of the families of that time and period:

Avramidi, Aga, Anastasiadi, Argyriadi, Atseli, Attaliotou, And read L Apergi. Alamanidou, Avgerinou, Valvi, Vasiliadou, Vareltsi, Velazertou, Vozemberg, Voskopoulou, Gavrielidou, Galtanopoulou, Karafylaki, Yerasimou, Yerousi, Georgiadou, Georgiadou, Yerousi, Georgiou, Yianniou, Daga, Danielidou, Deda, Dimitriadou, Drakouli, Zafiriadou, Zographou Zographou, Inglesi, Inglesi, Ignatiadou, Ioannidou, Kaloudi, Kantopoulou, Kara'itlidou, Carnapa, Karaphylaki, Katsinopoulou, Keladitou, Kretekidou, Lambrou, Laskaridou, Louvari, Lykidou, Malafatopoulou, Matzaridou, Mauridou, Banes, Megasthenous, Meimaraki, Mykonos, Misyrlis, Michailidou, Moustaki, Moutafidou, Mylona, Mystakidou, Nikolaidou, Nikolaidou, Ninon, Panaretou, Papadopoulou, Patetsou, Patlakou, Petridi, Podia, Poteri, Protopapa, Reveli, Repanidou, Savvidou, Saridi, Solomonidi, Strafti, Sphaellou, Philippidou, Flamba, Fokylidou, Chatzipetraki, Chnaroyannaki, Chouli, Antoniou and, and...

In 1902, with the Greek Consul General I. Alexandropoulos at the head, and some of the persons already mentioned above: Nikiphoros Mazarakis, Nikolaos Spyridonos, Photios Eukleidou, Nikolaos Papaioannou, Georgios Yerousis, Christakis Gaitanopoulos and Konstantinos Eliadis, and with the generous donation offered by the great benefactor and the known Jerusalem builder. Archimandrite Euphthymios, the Greek Orthodox Superior (Skevophylax) of the Church of the Anastasis (Resurrection), the area and the land of the GREEK COLONY was chosen. The holy earth of Jerusalem was dug and the foundations, for the building of the first houses and the Club (Λέσχη), were placed.

The start of 1920

The war was over. The British entered Jerusalem. A new wind of hope began blowing, the community started again to reorganize itself, after the destructive effects of the war. New names of university graduates, doctors, chemists, teachers etc., were added to the list of the professionals.

In 1922 the “Φιλόπτωχος Ελληνική Αδελφότης” (Charitable Hellenic Brotherhood) was founded. The founders were seven members of the community.

In 1924 the first women’s Association was founded: “η Ένωσις Ελληνίδων Κυριών” “η Οδηγήτρια”, (The Hellenic Ladies Union). Photo Mavromichali was the foundress, and Sophia Spyridonos was the first President, of a committee of nine members.

The Hellenic Boy Scout Movement, the oldest in Palestine, was founded by Markos Lioufis, in 1920. He came from Cairo. He organized the movement and made it a member of the Universal Scout Family. In 1950, after participating in the Pan-Hellenic Jamboree, in Dionysos, Greece, the Boy Scout Association (1928) became a member of the Scouts of Greece. Some leading names for the sake of history: Evangelos Solomonidis, Elias Kareklas, Christophoros Christophorou, Konstantinos Papadopoulos, Panayiotis Ignelis, Kyriakos Papanastasiou, Chrysostomos Karathanasis, Ioannis Ardizoglou, Evangelos Kaloudis.

Back in Jerusalem from the Jamboree in Dionysos, in 1950, I was asked to contribute to the activities of the Greek Boy Scouts. Reluctantly, and with mixed feelings, I consented. It was a mission impossible, in difficult, uncertain and changing political times. From 1952 to 1973, I published the Greek Scouts Magazine “Το Τρίφυλλο”, (To Triphyllo, the Trefoil), the Scouts emblem, and “Al-Zambaka” in Arabic. Initially it was stenciled and in Greek only, but blossomed, not only into a multilingual printed magazine, but also ecumenical, serving

the entire population. In 1957, " Το Σώμα Ελλήνων Προσκόπων", the Boy Scouts of Greece, honoured me with the " Special Service Medal", "Μετάλλιον Ευδόκιμου Υπηρεσίας". It was not for me, but it meant " Ο! Hellenic Scouts of Jerusalem, thank you for, τοις κείνων ρήμασι πειθόμενοι", (Thermopylai, "the hot gates," 480 BC, Leonidas with the 300 Spartiates). The Medal was conferred on me, by Greek Consul General Pavlos Pantermalis, on behalf of Greece, at the Greek Consulate in the Old City, in St. Anne's Greek Orthodox Monastery. The Consulate also became a 'distinguished refugee' in the Old City!

Scouts are sometimes the mosaic mirror of Jerusalem. Parading in Jerusalem with their national Greek Scout flag waving, on Hellenic national days, the Greek Scouts, entered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the flag, and then folding it, and placing it behind the door, on the right side of the Church of the Anastasis. This was an exclusive right.

In 1928, the "Social and Athletic Association "Ηρακλής, (Hercules)" was founded, and in the middle of the century, a new Association, the "Ολυμπιακός" (Olympic) replaced it.

In 1938 the "Hellenic Community of Jerusalem", "Η Ελληνική Κοινότης Ιεροσολύμων", was founded. The long awaited dream and event at last was realized. It was an official and historic recognition. The first Executive Committee: Themistoklis Saoulis, the first President, and members: Socratis Tokatlidis, Pangratis Vareltzis, Eugenios Philalithis, Argyrios Ignatiadis, Emmanouil Kasotis, and Antonios Antipas. M. Sakelariadis and Dimitrios Papas were the involved Consuls General of Greece.

In 1938, and for the first time, the Greek Government, injected some modern Greek education into the classic Gymnasium of the Patriarchate. They sent three professors: Georgios Chronopoulos, and Apostolos Chatziemmanouil, philologists, and Dimitrios Photopoulos, for mathematics, physics, and chemistry. My brother David and I, were

fortunate, to have known them as our professors, as well as friends.

1940 World War TWO

October 28, 1940, the famous and historic: OXI-NO! The Greeks fought heroically an unequal war, against the invading Italians and Germans, but eventually the Germans occupied Greece. The war and the occupation brought temporarily, a change in the Hellenic demographic map of Jerusalem. Greek refugees fleeing the German occupation, took refuge in Palestine and especially in Jerusalem. King George the second of Greece made a historic visit to Jerusalem. Patriarch Timotheos and the King, in the Church of the Anastasis (Holy Sepulchre). The Patriarch addresses the King: "Your Majesty, you are the first Hellene King,

who visits the Holy Places, after the triumphal entry of Emperor Heracleios, into the Holy City of Jerusalem", in 630 then, and today, 2011, in this Swedish room, we are "Celebrating the first 2000 years of Christian Heritage in the Holy Land". And eleven years more.

The Hellenic community took an active share and fought also in the war. Two young Jerusalemites, Anestis Zographos and Manolis Mykonos gave their lives serving in the submarine "Papanikolis", and in the destroyer "Adrias". Moreover the twenty years old, Chrysanthi Antipa, was one of the victims, at the King David Hotel explosion. Then, I was an eye-witness, of the passing by, in front of me, of the terrible mass of funerals.

A tribute to the valiant Jerusalem young men who fought:

1) Avramidis K., 2) Abouggelis N., 3) Arkeftidis or Ardizoglou S., 4) Yanniou An.,

5)Danielidis Str., 6) Dimitriadis Chr., 7) Iordanou Pan.,
8)Kalamatianos P.,
9) Kalogeropoulos Γ., 10)KaraphylakisI., 11)Katsopoulos St.,
12) Michailidis Γ.,
13) Papadopoulos Em., 14), Plakas G.,15) Potaris N.,16)
Sophoulis Em., 17) Spathopoulos AI.,
18) Tsihlakis Gavr.,19) Christophorou Chr., 20) Anthopoulos
A., 21) Dimitriadis P.,
22)DimitropoulosI., 23) Zacharakis Γ., 24) Zografou P., 25)
Zographos F.,
26) Kalogeropoulos D., 27) Kardasopoulos B., 28) Kosmidis Γ.,
29) Kaskaridis N.,
30) Bogdanidis D., 31) Papanikolaou K., 32) Mykonos AI.,
33)MykonosManolis,
34) Zografos Anestis, 35) Papadopoulos A., 36) Papadopoulos
H., 37) Spathopoulos G.,
38) Tsihlakis K., 39) Chavounitis Th., 40) Elenitsas K., 41)
Elenitsas P., 42) Sophoulis Γ.

A solemn moment of History! Patriarch Timotheos, ατή Λέσχη,
in the Hellenic club, addresses the newly mobilized and offers
to each one of them a cross.

May 1948

Jerusalem was cut in two. When history is cruel, it is also
indiscriminate and makes no distinction. The fate of the
Palestinian Arabs, was also the fate of the Palestinian
Hellenic Community. The majority of the families took refuge
in theOldCity. Many names, are immortalized in the last issue
of the Magazine Triphyllo (1973), as well as in I amJerusalem.

It was the beginning of the bitter dispersal. For a little they continued struggling and coping with the situation and at the same time continuing faithfully their activities. To my profound conviction, this Jerusalem Hellenic Community of the 20th century, wherever in the world they settled, Jerusalem and only Jerusalem, was Jerusalem. And this should be our eternal tribute to them.

The result, two Communities emerged, one in the Jordanian Old City and around, and one in the Israeli side, and around the Hellenic club.

Today, and after the 1948 and 1967 wars, still two Committees exist for the few remaining persons, one in the Old City, East Jerusalem: Dr. Konstantinos Petrakis, Dr. Nikolaos Ninos, Vailios Triantaphyllidis, Ioannis Ardizoglou, Georgios Stavridis, and Georgios Varacilas, and one in the old Greek Colony, West Jerusalem: Vasilios Tzaferis, president, Konstantinos Anastasiou, vice-president, Vasilios Triantaphyllidis, secretary, Konstantinos Moumtzoglou, treasurer, Anastasios Damianos, commissioner, Panayiotis Secherlis,

Alexandras Korfiatis, consultants, and two members from the Old City, Nikolaos Ninos, and Sophia Vottarou.

And, I cannot leave out, the charitable Ladies of the Old City: Sophia Vottarou, Eleni Petraki, El I i Solomonidou, Mariana Banayan, Phano Papanastasiou, Theodora Panayiotopoulou-Vasiliadou and Artemis Anastasiou.

On the 15 of May, 2011, the Committee in the Israeli side of Jerusalem, invited me to attend an Easter Festivity at the famous and historic Greek Club, in the historic Hellenic Colony, known, as the Greek Colony. The Greek Consul General Mr. Sotirios Athanasiou, his wife, Mrs. Kantiana, a handful of the traditional Greek Jerusalemites, and more non Greeks were present. The nostalgia for the glorious past was deeply felt.

Ending wishfully, and thinking hopefully, I feel confident, that the Hellenic Phoenix of Jerusalem, shall rise again from its ashes, and this time, before being completely burnt!"

Sources:

– Archimandrite Kleopas koikylidis, 1905.

-Konstantinos Mavridis, Bulletin, "Ελληνική Ζωή", (Hellenic Life, 1946)

-Irini Philalithi- Mavromichali, Magazine, "To Triphyllo" (1972-1973 No. 110-113)

-John N. Tleel, "I am Jerusalem" (2007 Second Edition)

OldCity Jerusalem July 6,2011 Bilda

Swedish Christian Study Centre

Chief Secretary's Office.