

T H E SHADOWS

NEXT TO THE PARASOL



*a greek-german
theater performance
80 years after the
deportation of the
cretan jewish community*

19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26

October 2024

Etz Hayyim Synagogue

20:00

Tickets:

www.tanais.de

performance in Greek/English



ΔΗΜΟΣ ΧΑΝΙΩΝ
MUNICIPALITY OF
CHANIA • CRETE



Προσκληση
της Ουπαπολυκερικής Διευκρητικής της Γερμανίας
AB/2024



ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΟ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΙΚΟ
ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ



The project „The shadows next to the parasol“ is financed by the German Federal Foreign Office by funds of the Greek-German Future Fund.

The Shadows Next to the Parasol

or

Until the Graveyard's a Sea

Playing

Giannis Dassios
Emilie Haus
Laura Hempel
Loukia Karakosta
Sven Reese
Annika Schüffler
Elia Verganelaki

Team

Artistic Direction	Jürgen Zielinski
Dramaturgy	Andreas Eberhardt
Set Design	Peny Korre
Choreography	Vassiliki Doudoulaki
Production	Ioannis Poulakas
Choirmaster	Loukia Karakosta
Coordination	Anja Zuckmantel
Assistant Artistic Direction	Chara Poulakas
Lights and Sound	Giannis Lykos / enaDyo Polymesa
Cinematography	David Ben Ivgi

Accompanying

Educational Project

Bettina Frank / Heldenfabrik
Katerina Adamara

On June 9th, 1944, the centuries-old history of the Jewish community of Crete ended with the sinking of the steamer Tanaïs, in which all the Jews of Crete on board drowned.

80 years later, Etz Hayyim commemorates this tragic event with a series of events. A special contribution is the theater collage *The shadows next to the parasol*, which was created as a joint Greek-German collaboration and will be shown in 7 performances in October 2024 in Chania and in December 2024 in Leipzig.

Etz Hayyim Synagogue,

nestled in the historic Jewish quarter of Hania, stands as a living testament to the profound legacy of 2000,300 years of Jewish presence on this ancient island. The synagogue is not merely a place of worship but a symbol of resilience, cultural heritage, and religious endurance, representing a history, that has weathered centuries of change. Today it remains the last remnant of Jewish life on Crete, a beacon for those who seeking to connect with a history rich in faith, community, and survival.

Beyond its historical significance, the synagogue serves as a vibrant cultural hub, where the past meets the present in ongoing dialogue. With over 30,000 visitors passing through its doors each year, Etz Hayyim plays a vital role in the educational and cultural fabric of Hania, offering guided tours, interfaith dialogues, cultural events, and initiatives that honor and remember the tragedy of the Holocaust. Its outreach extends far beyond the local Jewish community, touching the lives of visitors from all walks of life, providing a sanctuary for reflection, learning, and reconciliation.

The Jewish Cultural and Educational Center Ariowitschhaus Leipzig

is located in a building that was inaugurated in 1931 as a Jewish old people's home. During the time of the persecution of the Jews, the institution played an outstanding social role within Leipzig's Jewish community. On September 19, 1942, all residents and employees were deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp and the building was subsequently used by the Leipzig Gestapo.

Today, the Ariowitsch House Center of Jewish Culture, which opened on 15 May 2009, is a colourful focal point in the everyday life of the Jewish community, but first and foremost for all Leipzig residents and visitors to the city. Numerous cultural events, concerts and reading series, exhibitions, lectures and seminars take place here every year.





The Performance

Starting at the entrance gate on the alley, we will move through the courtyard, the hall and the graveyard of the synagogue during the performance. Please be prepared to accompany us. We tell the story with a variety of theatrical means: choral, verbal and non-verbal, with music and installations.

The scenes are performed in Greek and English, the performance will last about 90 minutes.

Scenes

1. Tourist Guides – At the Entrance
2. Your Absence Perfumes the Air – Courtyard
3. The Old Woman – Hall
4. “Gather in 45 Minutes” – Hall
5. The Escape – Hall
6. Jenny and Lambis – Hall

Installations and Break

Three short scenic installations will be shown.

To see them, the audience will be divided into three groups, according to the color of the wristband.

7.
 - a. Stairs Hall
 - b. Graveyard
 - c. Mikve
8. Under the Parasol – Courtyard
9. The Auction – Hall
10. Commander’s Office – Hall
11. Trees of Life – Courtyard
12. Until the Courtyard’s a Sea – Courtyard



A Ritual Performance with Choral Elements for Vivid Remembrance?

Grief - loss - love of life

An almost scenic ritual

by Jürgen Zielinski, Artistic Director

Finding a scenic and playful form for the tragic story of the deportation of the Jewish population was an enormous challenge! While there are many reports, contemporary witnesses, stories, songs and much more about the atrocious criminal massacres of the Wehrmacht in all the many Cretan towns and villages, we only had a few stories at the beginning of the conceptual work for the Tanaïs project.

It quickly became clear that a conventional play was not possible. Instead, a performance concept was developed with the existing material, while at the same time we searched for other tiny fragments of stories, e.g. the location of the Honolulu bar that actually existed at the time. In the course of researching and adding to the found material by dramaturges and historians, an epic form of play emerged: A pictorial, flash-light-like narrative theater, both with alienation effects, as well as leaps in time and with choral access from the found material, such as the elegy by Joseph Cohen and the poem by Nathalie Ventura. Which are largely typical characteristics of epic theater anyway.

The result was an artistic collage or a narrative, atmospheric performance with installations, interspersed with short episodes, levels of commentary, fictional scenes and songs, in the various locations and areas of the synagogue. This is also suitable for the directorial concept and dramaturgy, as it was to be a bilingual production. In such a production, "text-heaviness" is out of the question anyway. For the theater director and the team of actors, this is an appealing challenge with sometimes tense situations, without much dialogue. These images are by no means free of pain and horror when we consider the lives that were taken, and not just those of the many young people (almost 100 children and young people, but also many old people, were on the Tanaïs).

Bringing back the laughter, the joy of these people, their uninhibited, hopeful love and life was a major concern for us. For actors, it is a pleasurable and painful working process, with the aim of making the audience laugh (George Tabori) - on the small stage of the only remaining synagogue on Crete.

The youth choir - hope for the future.



A Sunken Story

by Andreas Eberhardt, Dramaturgue

The historic old town of Chania, the former capital of Crete, with its picturesque alleyways, the scenic Venetian harbor, and brightly colored parasols at its long beaches, is a tourist highlight for many cruise tourists. More than 80 years ago, other umbrellas characterized the picture. From 20 May 1941, thousands of paratroopers landed on the island, which was occupied after bloody battles. The German conquerors then used unprecedented violence against resistance fighters and the civilian population in the mountains of Crete. More than 40 villages were razed to the ground. A past that has not been forgotten by many Cretan families to this day.

In May 1944, with the war long lost, German soldiers rounded up the 300 or so Jews living in Chania to take them on the small steamship *Tanaïs* to Piraeus and from there by railway to Auschwitz. Cretan resistance fighters and Italian prisoners of war were crammed into the holds with them. The steamer, sailing under the German flag, was torpedoed by a British submarine in the early morning of 9 June 1944 and sank off Santorini within a few minutes. All the prisoners drowned. The sinking ended not only the history of a centuries-old community, but also the history of the coexistence of the Chaniot Jews with their neighbors in the old town district, which is still called *Ovraiki* today.

The story of the fall of the *Tanaïs* is almost forgotten. What remains is the name of the neighborhood, the old houses, the historic Etz Hayyim synagogue- and a photo. The photo shows two sisters, aged 20 and 22, a farewell gift to their best friend. Taken a year before they were deported to their deaths. If you look at the faces of Judith and Sara Kounio, you can imagine their life in Chania, what their wishes for the future were, perhaps you can even recognize their dreams. The photo was the starting point for our attempt to tell a story about the people from *Ovraiki*. A story that we don't know how it happened. A story that nobody knows, because there is nobody left to tell it.

In our search for the remains, we were surprised by small finds: The report of an American Jew who visited Crete and hardly found any Jews because they were not recognized. The text of a rabbi who complains about his congregation's lack of knowledge of Hebrew. The young woman who also learnt French at the nuns' school. Or the one who was educated as a concert pianist and played in a bar on the side to support her family. The popular band of Christian and Jewish musicians who played for dances at the weekend. The young man who rode his motorbike – a German BMW! – through the mountains, or the one who went on wild beach trips in his convertible. In short: we found people. Our surprise tells us a lot about the image we still have of Jews.

With their deportation to the extermination camps, the memory of the people disappears from one day to the next in many places. This is also the case in Chania. What remains is a void—the houses newly inhabited, the synagogue derelict, the cemetery a building plot.

80 years after the sinking of the *Tanaïs*, we talk about the people in the neighborhood. An attempt that must be incomplete. But it attempts to fill the void with our imaginations, ideas and wishes for how things could have been. A life of people among people.



The Historical Background

Following the German and Italian occupation of Greece 1941, the first deportations of Jews to Auschwitz took place in March 1943 from Thessaloniki. Deportations from Athens did not take place until March 1944 after corresponding orders had been issued from Berlin, which was relatively late compared to the situation in the rest of German-occupied Europe. In many cities and also on some islands, such as Crete, Jewish life had continued relatively undisturbed until then. This was mainly due to the different occupying powers in Greece. Italy and also Bulgaria, which had joined the Axis powers and had also occupied parts of Greece, were much more reserved in their approach to the issue. The deportations therefore apparently came unexpectedly for many, but then in a drastic form.

Only a few European countries occupied by the German Reich lost a higher proportion of their Jewish population than Greece; it is estimated that around 90% of Greek Jews were murdered. The Jewish community of Crete, which comprised around 300 people and lived almost exclusively in Chania, was initially registered by the Germans in 1941. Jewish businesses were banned for Germans. A second registration took place at the beginning of 1944. On May 12, 1944, the German commander received the deportation order and on May 21, the Jewish population was rounded up by German soldiers—there were no SS units on Crete—and initially taken to Ayias prison. On June 4, 1944, they were transported to the Makasi Fortress in Heraklion, from where they were taken to the steamship *Tanaïs* on June 8. Together with Cretan Andartes and Italian prisoners of war, the people were crammed into the cramped holds of the small steamer. They were initially to be transported to Piraeus and from there by rail to Auschwitz. The steamer, which flew the German flag and was not marked as a prisoner of war transport, was torpedoed by a British submarine after setting sail in the early morning of June 9, 1944 and sank off Santorini in just a few minutes. All the prisoners drowned.

The Sources

There is hardly any evidence of the lives of the Jewish inhabitants of Chania during the German occupation. They all drowned with the *Tanaïs*, except for Josif Kohen, who managed to escape. He survived in hiding with the Andartes in the mountains, later emigrated to Israel and told Yad Vashem about the events in Chania. We have used his testimony.

Nichos Stavroulakis wrote down the story of the photo of Judith and Sara. Without him, his research and his commitment, the cultural center Etz Hayyim Synagogue would not exist today. A few members of the community, such as Iossif Ventura, were able to reach Athens before the deportation; he survived there. His descriptions and his extensive collection of conversations with contemporary witnesses and former neighbors were an extremely important basis for the development of individual texts and motifs. He has made them accessible to the public in his book *Ibbur. The Jews of Crete 1900 – 1950*. He is also the author of the elegy *Tanaïs*, from which we quote excerpts in the play.

In addition, we have integrated the impressive poem *Memorial Service* by Natalia Ventura, as well as a motif from Pandelis Pravelakis' *Chronicle of a City*.

There are also several eyewitness accounts from neighbors who were interviewed decades later. The love story of Lambis the violinist and Jenny the pianist has become the basis of a novel. A few newspaper reports deal with the fate of the people who drowned on the *Tanaïs*. All these



sources were written retrospectively, sometimes decades later, in the knowledge of people's later fate and shaped by many different influences. We must therefore always view them critically.

Etz Hayyim Synagogue regularly publishes such reports, photos and historical documents on the history of the Jewish community in Chania in *Jottings – The Etz Hayyim Magazine*. It is warmly recommended to all who are interested. We have also taken important information from the *The Jews of Crete* series, which is published in irregular order by Etz Hayyim.

The German registration files have been preserved. They are our most important source on the names, places of residence, dates of birth and occupations of the Jewish inhabitants of Chania. All the names of the Jewish residents used come from these lists.

You will hear Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries". It was the soundtrack in *Deutsche Wochenschau 561* (German Newsreel) with the footage of the invasion of Crete- which seems to be the template for Coppola's famous scene in *Apocalypse Now*. It was made available for us by the Federal Archives (*Bundesarchiv*). It also provided us with the historical photos from occupied Chania used in the theater backpack. They were taken by German soldiers or war correspondents and therefore reflect the view of the occupying forces. At that time, the possession of private cameras was forbidden on Crete.

The War History

In one of the largest airborne operations in military history to date, the German army invaded Crete, the last unoccupied part of Greece, on May 20, 1941. In addition to the battles in Rethymnon and Heraklion, the battle for the area around Maleme airfield (known as *Height 107*) was a particular focus. The Germans finally captured the airport after heavy losses three days after their landing on May 22, 1941; they captured Chania after further heavy fighting on May 27 and the port of Souda on May 28.

The Allied defenders of the island decided to evacuate their troops to Egypt on May 27. Of the approximately 32,000 Allied soldiers—who came from Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand—18,000 were able to disembark for Egypt via Chora Sfakion in the south of Crete, 12,000 were taken prisoner by the Germans and 2,000 died in the fighting. 1,500 of them are buried in the Commonwealth war cemetery in Souda Bay. A total of around 14,000 German soldiers, some of whom were brought to the island via the port of Souda, conquered the island by June 1, 1941. 4,465 of the approximately 6,500 fallen soldiers are buried in the German war cemetery in Maleme.

Around 500 Allied and other Greek soldiers remained hidden in the mountains, supported by the rural population and numerous Andartes. The Cretan population's will to resist came as a surprise to the German occupiers. In the course of the occupation, numerous war crimes were committed by the Germans in an attempt to break this resistance. The number of Cretans killed is estimated to be at least 9,000. The German commander General Bruno Bräuer was executed for war crimes after the war. His grave is located in Maleme today.



Theater Backpack – an accompanying project for young generations

“The Shadows next to the parasol” is accompanied by the opportunity for teachers to lead their own theater workshop with their class- even independently of the play. Using the few available documents and photos and various theater techniques, the students get closer to the people who were on the *Tanaïs*, add facts to their ideas of everyday life during the occupation and finally make references to their own lives.

The workshop is by no means about re-enacting or even empathizing with the situation of the Jewish neighbors in prison or on the sinking ship. The units are an attempt to use the little information available to make everyday life in Chania during the German occupation more tangible for young people and to develop a sharpened view of their city. The materials form the basis for various workshops lasting between 45 and 90 minutes. There is also an information unit that can be used directly before the workshop or at a preparatory meeting with the participants. We are happy to make the backpack available to schools and extracurricular educational institutions in Chania and on Crete, in the rest of Greece, in Germany and other countries. For more information please contact: info@etz-hayyim-chania.org

Credits

The story of the people who were deported from Chania and drowned in the tragic sinking of the *Tanaïs* is almost forgotten today. Many people are helping to bring back the memory. Thanks to all of them.

Nikos Stavroulakis was the director of the Etz Hayyim Synagogue for many years. It is thanks to his commitment that a ruin was turned into a lively place for cultural encounters. Without him, the Etz Hayyim Synagogue cultural center would not exist today.

The teams of the Etz Hayyim Synagogue and the Jewish Cultural Center Ariowitsch-Haus have actively supported the project team. Our special thanks go to **Vassiliki Yakoumaki** and **Anja Zuckmantel** in Chania as well as **Küf Kaufmann** and **Marina Limperska** in Leipzig. **Lydia Schubert** orchestrated all the administrative processes on a voluntary basis, always calmly and effectively. A big thank you for that.

Iosif Ventura, who survived as a child in Athens, has researched the fate of the Jews in Chania and compiled countless interviews. His elegy “Tanaïs” is a memorial to them.

Our special thanks go to the **choir** with pupils from Chania and the **teachers** who tried out the educational theater backpack with us.

We are particularly grateful for the support of the **City of Chania**.

The project is financed by the **Federal Foreign Office** with funds from the German-Greek Future Fund.

A Ritual Performance? ©Jürgen Zielinski

A Sunken Story ©Andreas Eberhardt

Photo Judith and Sara Kounio ©Etz Hayyim Synagogue

All other photos by Andreas Markakis/amarkakis.com

Cover ©Milan Logar

Concept and Design Dr. Andreas Eberhardt | andreaseberhardt.de | www.tanais.de

 Design
Democracy



Ensemble

Giannis Dassios

Trained as an actor at the Athenian Stage drama school, he has appeared in various performances, most recently at the Roes Theatre "Project Medusa".

Emilie Haus

Actress, circus and ceramic artist. After performing on stages and in films, she discovered immersive theatre and pieces that are different from what we originally understand as theatre.

Laura Hempel

Actress, singer/songwriter, multi-instrumentalist. Collaboration with renowned theaters, nominated for the *German Record Critics' Award*, winner of the Album of the Week from *MDR Radio Kultur* as "Laura Liebeskind".

Loukia Karakosta

Musician and teacher at the First Experimental High School in Chania, has directed the school choir for three years. Master's degree in music from the University of Athens, violinist, member of the band "The Trio Runaways".

Sven Reese

Freelancer from Leipzig with a special interest in oral history and theater in lost places. Collaboration on German-Israeli projects and "The Last Jewel," the European railway theater. Worked for a long time at the oldest youth theater in Germany.

Annika Schöffler

Raised in Germany, lives in Chania. Master's degree in classical singing at the Hellenic Conservatory and music theater studies at the Academy of Performing Arts. Co-founder of the music school "Art Zone, Performing Arts" in Chania.

Elia Verganelaki

Actress and composer of film and theater music. Born and raised in Chania, trained at the Athens Drama School and the Academy of Arts in Berlin, has appeared in over 20 films.



Team

Jürgen Zielinski, Artistic Director

One of the most renowned directors of theater for young audiences in Germany. He has received numerous awards; from 2002 to 2020 he was artistic director and director of the Theater der Jungen Welt in Leipzig. He has served on many juries and curators.

Andreas Eberhardt, Dramaturgue

Foundation manager, contemporary historian, storyteller. Previously CEO of the Federal EVZ Foundation, Founding Director and CEO of the Alfred Landecker Foundation, and CEO of the German-Israeli Future Forum. He is convinced that knowledge is created by stories.

Anja Zuckmantel, Coordinator

Historian, Managing Director of the Etz Hayyim Synagogue, holding all the threads together.

Ioannis Poulakas, Production Manager

Cinema and theater enthusiast, born on Crete. He produced short films such as "Hijack" and various theater productions - and is an enthusiastic avocado farmer.

Peny Korree, Set Designer

Costume and set designer, numerous international scholarships, performances and exhibitions, most recently "Gwena" in Rethymnon and "Textile Memories" in Copenhagen.

Loukia Karakosta, Choirmaster

Musician, teacher and choirmaster at the First Experimental High School in Chania. Master's degree in music from the University of Athens, violinist, member of the band "The Trio Runaways".

Vassiliki Doudoulaki, Choreograph

Dancer and choreograph, Founder of "Jazz Train", organizes local and international dance events. She believes that Social-dance Communities can change people 's lives.

Chara Poulakas, Assistant Artistic Direction

Designer with a background in graphic design, digital arts and animation. She assists the director and production team with her expertise, insights and analytical skills.

David Ben Ivgi, Cinematographer

Born in Casablanca, lived in several countries, most in Amsterdam. Studied film and art.

Bettina Frank, Theater Pedagogy

Theater maker and educator, designed and distributed the theater backpack. She has already packed the theater suitcase for "Children of the Holocaust" and the sports bag for "Juller".

Katerina Adamara, Theater Pedagogy

Primary school teacher and theater pedagogue from Chania, founder of AMKE (Τέχνες στο μίξερ). Since 2023 artistic curator of the Kontomari Festival "Days of Remembrance".

