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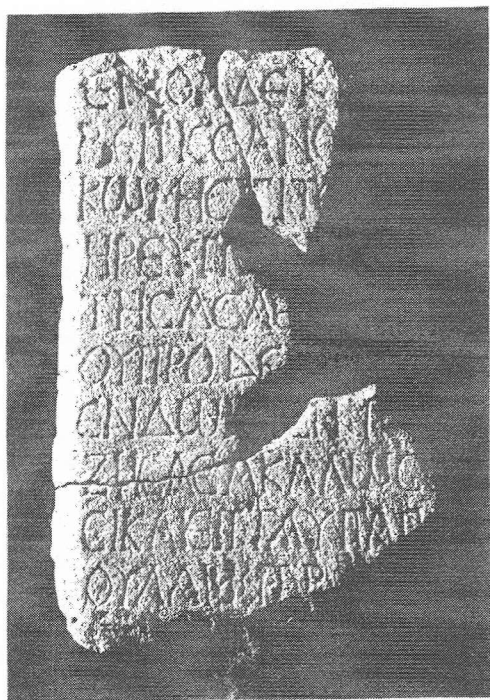
178 כתבי יד שומרוניים - אוסף הספריה הבריטית בלונדון - חלקם מהקדומים ביותר - יעברו תהליך דיגיטאציה ושילוב באינטרנט לכל קורא, בהשקעה של מיליון ליש"ט *** הסתיימה ליגת הקיץ לקט-רגל בחולון במוראל גבוה, כולם ניצחו באוירה ספורטיבית נהדרת *** מתקדמת בניית בית הכנסת השני בהרגרזים *** בחולון ננעלה תערוכת הציורים

אילנה טחן ובנימים צדקה מעיינים בכתב יד בלונדון



"תיבת מרקה" מהמאה ה-18 בספריה הבריטית בלונדון

NOMIA OF SALONA: A SAMARITAN WOMAN



Remembered by: **Yaqob bar-Karoza**

יעקב כרוזה [כריסטופר לי ג'ימס מואק], אמריקני, הוא מנהיג קהילת הישראלים-השומרונים באי יאזה [אינדונזיה]. כנוצרי לשעבר ומי ששם בראש מעייניו את המסורת הישראלית-שומרנית הדריך תחילה את בני קהילתו במה שמשותף

לנצרות ולשומרנות, עם מתן עדיפות לשומרנות. אך לאחרונה באמצעות כתובת שהתגלתה בעיר סלונה בקרואטיה, גילה כי מוצא משפחתו באשה שומרנית בשם נומיה מן היישוב השומרוני באזור בתקופה הביזנטית. הגילוי גרם לו ולתלמידיו הרבים לדבוק במסורת הישראלית-שומרנית בלבד, והוא רואה עצמו כנציגם באינדונזיה של

קהילת השומרונים בישראל. במקום קיימת קהילה שניה של ישראלים שומרונים בראשות שאל מיקלה. שתי הקהילות זוכות להדרכתנו. על הגילוי הפנטסטי מספר יעקב במאמר הבא ומציג את הכתובת ביוונית שהיתה על קברה של האשה נומיה, כיום בארכיון האוניברסיטה של העיר ספליט בקרואטיה.

One thousand four hundred seventy-seven years after her burial in the Manastirine Necropolis of Salona, the life and legacy of a Samaritan woman is honored by her scattered descendants. Her name was Nomia, wife of 'Anan (Greek: Νομία Ἀναν, Hebrew: נומיה אשת ענן), and she is the oldest attested ancestor of the last surviving Byzantine Samaritan diaspora family of Dalmatia (Croatia), whose members now live in America and Indonesia. Nomia's memory is cherished by those of her heirs who cling to the ancient truths and

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stories that characterize her people, the Shamerim, i.e., Keepers or Samaritans.

The Search for Nomia

Until 2011, all that we of posterity knew of our ancestress was a simple tale of her religious plight and of her family's flight to safety, which she found, at least for a time, in the haven of Salona. Separated from us by time, place, culture, and language, this Nomia, who plays such a special role within our narrative, seemed destined to remain an obscure, remote phantom figure of a bygone era. Besides, our family had long-since converted to Christianity, and had left Croatia and the rest of the Old World behind for a new existence in America; so whether Nomia was a Samaritan woman, a Jewess, or even a female figment

of folk imagination didn't seem to matter much. That did not content me, however; and I was compelled to pursue truth, regardless of what the truth turned out to be.

On account of our close association with Jews (for various reasons, including a strong sense of otherness and unsettledness, and, ironically, a recurrent participation in Jewish communal life), my assumption was that our best hope of finding any information about Nomia or her family lay in Jewish records. And so it was, by the grace of Eloowwem, that I came across a book called *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*, Volume I (Eastern Europe); therein I found an entry labeled 'Dal4. Epitaph of a Samaritan,' which left me truly flabbergasted. I sat frozen for a moment, with my eyes wide and

my heart fluttering, as I read intently the Greek text and English translation of what I soon realized was my ancestress's epitaph.

The first thing that came to my mind was the opening kissa (passage) of the ninth aalaak (portion) of Asfar Illa a d d e b a r e m (Deuteronomy), especially verse 4:

אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
נָשׁוּבָה וְנִשְׁכָּח
מִכָּל חַטֹּאתֵינוּ
וְנִשְׁכָּח מִכָּל
מִצְוֹתֵינוּ
וְנִשְׁכָּח מִכָּל
מִצְוֹתֵינוּ
וְנִשְׁכָּח מִכָּל
מִצְוֹתֵינוּ

אם יהיה נדחך בקצה
השמים משם יקבצך
יהוה אלהיך ומשם
יקחך.

"If your outcasts are at the ends of the heavens, from there יהוה your Eloowwem will gather you, and from there He will bring you back."

These words resounded within my soul, and I knew then that the

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Eloowwee of our Israelite forebears had not forgotten those of us in diaspora. Indeed, it was true: Nomia, our Samaritan heritage, everything that I had heard and read and dreamed for so long but was unable to prove. There it was, right in front of me, though only in words; I desperately wanted to see a photograph of the epitaph, as there wasn't one in the book.

My quest for tangible evidence had to be put on hold after that, as I was about to embark on my grandest adventure yet: relocating to Indonesia, marrying the love of my life, and teaching the Israelite Samaritan Toorah to Christians and Muslims who knew almost nothing of our people, our language, and our holy book.

Flash forward to this summer (2016). Here,

on the island of Java—at the end of the world, or so we joke, we rent out a small space to use as a community synagogue, where we offer up morning and evening prayers facing Aargaareezem (Mt. Gerizim), and where we worship Il Ileeeyone (God Most High) every Sabbath and read aloud from the Ancient Hebrew text of the Toorah that goes back all the way to Abisha the high priest (may his name ever be esteemed among us). We confess that there is but one God, Who is Eloowwee Yishraael, and that He is One and not three, and that He is neither man nor the son of man, just as is written in our Toorah (see Numbers 23:19). Moreover, we testify that Mooshe is the greatest prophet among the sons of Aadam, and we patiently await the coming of the Taheb and the Day of

Vengeance and
Recompense
Nonetheless, as of June,
I had not made any
progress on Nomia's
case, which bothered
me greatly, considering
how important she is to
our diaspora history.

Then, in early July, I decided it was time to dig deeper. After all, 18 August marks the anniversary of Nomia's burial, and I really wanted to have something more than just words on a page. My first move was to contact Dr. Josip Vrandečić, head of the history department at the University of Split (Croatia). He kindly and promptly replied, informing me that he had forwarded my email to Dr. Ivan Matijević, who teaches ancient history at the same university. Being knowledgeable about Salona and familiar with epigraphy, Dr. Matijević was exactly

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the person I needed to consult. With his help, I was able to get my first glimpse of Nomia's stele in the form of a black-and-white photo from Salona IV, a publication by l'École française de Rome.

In addition, I received from Dr. Matijević the contact information for his colleague, Mario Radaljác, who is the custodian of the epigraphical collection at the Archaeological Museum in Split. Mr. Radaljác arranged for a new color photo of the stele to be taken by museum photographer Tonći Sesar. The photograph is simply beautiful, with such a crisp, sharp image; it's really something special for me to behold. This was it: I could finally and truly gaze upon my ancestress, or least upon the monument that stood as a testament to her actuality. What a blessed opportunity! All

praises to Eloowwem.

Salona & Manastirine

As I am not a scholar of Byzantine or late antique Dalmatian history, I have consulted Dr. Ivan Matijević from the University of Split, who has graciously written a brief overview of the historical milieu of Salona and Manastirine during the era in which Nomia lived and died. Dr. Matijević's contribution is as follows:

'After the civil war between Caesar and Pompey in the middle of the 1st century BC, Salona became a colony (Colonia Martia Iulia Salona) and capital of the Roman province of Dalmatia. The city was blooming during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, especially in the time of the Emperor Diocletian, who built his palace nearby. In Salona acted a well-

organized Christian community with its own bishop, who became the metropolitan of Dalmatia at the beginning of the 5th century. Salona's early Christian archaeological remains are among the most important for studying the history of Christianity.

Between the 4th and the beginning of the 7th century, many parish churches were built all over the city, including the great episcopal complex with two basilicas, the baptistery, consignatorium, and the Bishop's Palace. Christian cemeteries were formed outside the city walls, around the relics of martyrs: Basilica of the Five Martyrs in Kapljuč and Basilica of St. Anastasius in Marusinac.

The stele of this Samaritan woman was found on the

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southwestern edge of the cemetery basilica in Manastirine. This archaeological site is especially important since Christians of Salona were buried next to their bishop and martyr Dujam, who was executed during Diocletian's persecutions in 304. Around the martyr's grave, many chapels with sarcophaguses were erected, making this site one of the greatest examples of ad sanctos burying style. Germanic invasions at the end of the 4th century demolished the sanctuary, and afterwards the great basilica with narthex, transept and schola cantorum was built. Life in Salona ended in the first decades of 7th century, when the city collapsed under barbarian Slavs and Avars.'

'For principal literature about Salona and

Manastirine in general see:

Longae Saloniae, ed. Emilio Marin, Split 2002.

Salona Christiana, ed. Emilio Marin, Split 1994.

Salona III. Manastirine - établissement preromain, necropole et basilique paleochretienne a Salona; eds. N. Duval et E. Marin, Rome - Split 2000.'

Nomia's Epitaph

The stele inscribed with Nomia's epitaph was recovered in three pieces (or fragments) via excavations that took place in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Two of the fragments were found together, while the third was discovered during a separate excavation. They are now kept at the Archaeological Museum in Split, the oldest museum in Croatia, under inventory

numbers A-3405 + B-380 + B-489. The first reference to any of the stele fragments in a publication was by Don Frane Bulić in 1902, but the most notable publication to date in relation to this stele is *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis* (Vol. 1) edited by Noy, Panayotov, and Bloedhorn, which presents in English the best scholarly analysis of the monument.

Here follow the stele's Greek inscription and an English translation thereof:

ἐνθάδε κ[τε Σαμα-]
ρεΐτισσα Νο[μία ἀπὸ]
κώμης Πιτο, [θυγάτ-]
ηρ Εὐγλω [σίου ,
τελευ-]
τήσασα ἐν [εὐρήνῃ
θε-]
οῦ πρὸ δε[κ]απ[έντε
καλ-]
ε ν δ ὦ ν
[Σ]επτε[μβρίου],
ζήσασα καλῶς [ἔτη
εἴκο-]
σι καὶ ἑπτὰ ὑπ[ατίας]

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Ἀπ[πίωνος τ-]
οὔ λαμπρ(οτάτου).
[ινδ(ικτιῶνος) β']

"Here lies the Samaritan woman Nomia, from the village of Pito, daughter of Euglossius. She passed away in God's peace fifteen days before the Kalends of September, having lived well twenty-seven years. In the consulship of the vir illustris Apion, 2nd year of the indiction-cycle."

Nomia's Legacy

As the family story goes, Nomia (born 512 CE) spent her childhood and much of her adolescence in Sicily, where she enjoyed a life of peace and prosperity. Her father, Euglossius the Levite (Greek: Εὐγλωσσιου ο Λευιτης), was a merchant of good repute and an elder in the Samaritan synagogue at Syracuse. Their

community experienced an influx of Samaritan migrants in the years preceding and following the Ben Sabar Revolt (529 CE). Among those who came from Shomron was a municipal official named 'Anan ben Shalum Amarkia (Hebrew: ענן בן שלום אמרכלא), who is thought to have been a tabularius or a scribe; he had formerly resided in Shechem, though he had descent from a Mannassite family of Tirzah.

'Anan and Nomia were betrothed within a year of their meeting, and were married shortly thereafter. When they heard word of opportunity in Ravenna, the two of them set sail for the bustling Adriatic seaport on the Italian Peninsula. They joined an existing Samaritan community there; and over the next few years they did quite well for

themselves, as did many Samaritans and Jews under Ostrogothic rule. However, their fortunes took a turn for the worse with the deposition of Queen Amalasuntha and the end of Arian tolerance.

The Gothic War (535-540 CE) spelled disaster for Samaritans and Jews living there; consequentially, 'Anan, his wife Nomia, and their two young sons, along with several other Samaritan families of Ravenna, fled to Dalmatia where the Goths still held sway. They settled in Salona, in a small village aptly named Pito (Πίτο), which in their dialect of Greek meant "piece (of bread)", as in their own little piece of Salona; it is derived from the Aramaic word כִּיתָּי, having the same meaning. They so loved their new home that they remained there even after the Byzantines took control of it from the Goths. Nomia's young life

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came to a tragic and mysterious end in 539 CE; she was 27 years old. Her husband had her buried in the Manastirine cemetery, where her grave was less likely to be desecrated or forgotten. The epitaph etched upon her stone honors both Nomia and her father, who had given 'Anan his blessing and support.

'Anan continued on in Salona, raising his sons in the dwindling Samaritan community of Pito until they reached marriageable age. He eventually returned to Sicily with his eldest son, Tabias (Ταβίας), while his youngest, Purgalikos (Πουργαλικός), chose to stay behind with his Gothic bride. It is from this Purgalikos that our diaspora family descends, through his son, Teron Purgalikou (Τηρόν Πουργαλικού) and his daughter-in-law, Iavodora (Ιαβόδωρα), the last Samaritan girl of Salona. The House of

Purgalikos (represented in later times by the surnames Purgali and Purgli, and in the United States as Purgley) persisted in Croatia for over a millennium, but war, upheaval, emigration, and a dearth of male offspring led to its rapid decline and disappearance. Its history and heritage now live on primarily through descendants bearing other surnames — we who, by our own volition, have returned to the ancient way, and, in doing so, have found an invaluable treasure: the stele inscribed with the epitaph of our beloved mother of yore.

Lessons from Nomia

There are two principal lessons that we glean from Nomia's life. The first is found in her name, which is a Byzantine (Medieval) Greek word meaning 'lawfulness', 'legality', or 'in keeping with the law.' Despite living outside of the Holy

Land, Nomia and her family continued to keep the Toorah as best they could, which is evident from their active participation in synagogue life and from their efforts to flee persecution and avoid conversion at all costs. Even though Nomia was ultimately buried in a Roman Catholic cemetery, she died a Keeper and never forsook Eloowwee Yishraael or His Toorah. Only in the time of her grandchildren, during the early reign of Heraclius, did Catholicization of the family take place, but that was undone in the 20th century; still, we maintain amicable relations with Catholics and other Christians, as most of them have proved to be genuinely good people and have been instrumental in the restoration of our diaspora. Today, every time we bow down in prayer toward the Blessed Mount and rise to recite the Shema, even from as far away as Indonesia, we honor

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the memory of Nomia and follow her example of diasporic Toorah observance.

The second lesson is evinced in how Nomia and 'Anan applied the Shema, specifically the commands to teach the words of Eloowwem and speak of them often. Their two sons, Tabias and Purgalikos, have names that respectively attest to the goodness of Aadaanee (the Lord) and to our sacred calling to love and to live according to His goodness by keeping His commands. Purgalikos literally means "one of commandment or precept," and conveys an innate association with or characterization by the mesaabot (commands) of Eloowwem; it is a dialectal derivative of the Aramaic פרגל purgal (instruction, command, order), from the loan verb פרגל pargil, corresponding to the original Greek παραγγεῖα and παραγγέλω. What we learn from this is that genuine "keeping" entails our being paragons for our

children and for others, walking בתורה (in the Toorah—a Hebrew mnemonic for 613) intentionally, lovingly, and spiritually. It is not enough to merely keep the commands of יהוה ritualistically; the real goal is to effect positive change in the world, that the goodness and faithfulness of Eloowwem will be made known to all peoples through us, whom He has chosen for Himself, and to whom He has entrusted with His most precious and holy message of truth and love.

I believe wholeheartedly in the glorious restoration of the remnant of Yoosef, in the promised return of the Samaritan diaspora to Shomron, and in the future unification of Yishraael under the Taheb. Belief gives us hope, hope motivates us to action, and action accomplishes change. The Law of Return currently applies only to Jews, but even if it did extend to Samaritans, I feel compelled to remain

abroad in order to teach all who are willing to hear about the great and marvelous deeds of Il Sheeddee (God Almighty) and about the peace that results within us and around us when we choose to walk the path of righteousness. This is your legacy, Nomia, that your life and death inspired your descendants many generations removed to follow in your footsteps, and to voice the story and the faith of your people, of our people, from the farthest reaches of the earth. May Eloowwee aa'eloowwem (the God of gods) prosper us, multiply us, and make His love manifest in us. In remembrance of Nomia.

Dr. Ivan Matijevic at the University of Split added: Scholars believe that in Salona existed a Jewish community.

Yaqob bar-Karoza

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