Exploring Estelle

AIA ADVOCATE, JEWISH SITE PRESERVATION PIONEER

JESSICA DELLO RUSSO
INTERNATIONAL CATACOMB SOCIETY

WWW.CATACOMBSOCIETY.ORG
AIA Presentation Summary

• Overview: Linking the origins of ICS to the AIA Centennial (December, 1979) uncovers a chain of events & personal relationships that impact larger issues of heritage preservation & platforms for public scholarship.

• Estelle Shohet Brettman (1925-1991): Education & Career

• Volunteer with Boston-area cultural institutions (1968-1980)

• Program Director of the AIA Boston Society (1976)

• Missions to Rome: 1976-1980

Estelle Shohet: “A Jewess from Boston”

Girls Latin School
Assembly Hall, with Parthenon frieze. “Latin was inescapable.”
Florence Wolsky, Department of Greek & Roman Art, MFA Boston

Florence at work for the ICS (Founding Member & Secretary, 1980–)

Florence (l.) with Richard Brettman & Cardinal Giuseppe Caprio at 61 Beacon Street, Boston

Florence & Bernadette Brooten
Mediterranean Travels in the 1950s, ‘60s & ‘70s
Brettman served as Program Director for the Boston Society of the AIA in 1976. She organized one major fund raiser and a seasonal lecture program.

One of my Shady Hill 4th grade teachers!

Brettman & Wolsky co-chair the event
THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, Boston Society
AND HEBREW COLLEGE INVITE YOU TO AN
ILLUSTRATED LECTURE

The ANCIENT SYNAGOGUE of EIN GEDI
on the SHORES of the DEAD SEA

by DAN BARAG

Senior Lecturer: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem
Visiting Member: Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton University, N.J.

Admission Free — Hebrew College
61 Haven Street — Brookline, Ma.
Tuesday — April 27, 1976 — 8 p.m.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
555 W. 120th St., New York, N.Y. 10027 / PHONE: (212) 870-9700

August 18, 1976

The Discovery of a Long Sought Temple of Akhenaten, The Monotheistic Pharaoh

The Archaeological Institute of America, Boston Society
and the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
are pleased to present
an illustrated lecture by
PROFESSOR GERALD CADOGAN
Director of Excavations and Study at Pyrgos, Crete
*A NEW MINOAN VILLAGE AND COUNTRY HOUSE AT PYRGOOS*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

"Phoenicians in the Western Mediterranean"

Dr. J.A. Boston Society and the Museum
of Fine Arts, Boston present an
illustrated lecture by Dr. Anne Marie
Berd, professor of Near Eastern Studies
Archaeology at the University of
Virginia, and director and part-director
of excavations at the Petrasites in
"Exploring a remote Hellenistic to Byzantine cemetery in Sicily (at Palazzuolo Acreide), I stumbled over, and dislodged, a large rock. On the underside of the rock, I saw a crude graffito of a menorah, the quintessential symbol of Judaism. I had explored catacombs in Rome and Israel but this was the first time I had ever seen a Jewish symbol in such an unlikely place... I wondered how many other artifacts bearing such symbols might remain undiscovered in unexpected places..."
Brettman, on recommendation of Cardinal Caprio, received PCAS permission to photograph in the Catacombs of Rome (1976-1983)
Sister Maria Francesca Antongiovanni, Archivist for the PCAS

Walter Persegati, Secretary General, Vatican Museums

Salvatore Fornari, Director, Jewish Museum of Rome

Brettman’s “Guardian Angels”
In early July of 1979, Brettman met Pope John Paul II in an intimate audience for members of Cardinal Caprio’s “family”. She also illustrated the Vatican Jewish Lapidary to a Peace Mission of the American Jewish Congress.
The Jewish Catacombs of Rome were under Vatican jurisdiction from 1929 to 1984. While this concession in theory could have extended to other subterranean cemeteries of Jews in Italy, in practice it was only applied to those in the capital. The Vatican office which granted access to the Jewish Catacombs was the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology.
Eighty-First General Meeting

SECTION IC (COLLOQUIUM ON DIASPORA JUDAISM UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE: RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE)
A.T. Kraabel, University of Minnesota

The study of Diaspora Judaism, the Jews under Rome but outside ancient Palestine, has long been only a "related field" for classical archaeology -- which stresses "classical" sites and problems -- and for Biblical studies and Jewish studies, which tend to focus on other geographical areas or time periods. The latter also favor other kinds of evidence, chiefly religious texts, while the data for Diaspora Judaism are chiefly archaeological.

In the last quarter-century several major new sites have been discovered, and the reexamination of previously known evidence has progressed substantially. Presently major initiatives are under way to preserve and record endangered sites and other evidence from the Diaspora, chiefly in Italy and Egypt. Beginning with the new data, this colloquium attempts to view Diaspora Judaism in its own right, in order more fully to understand it as at the same time an important phenomenon of the society of the Roman Empire, and an authentic and creative expression of ancient Jewish culture and religion.

The newest evidence is coming from Italy, where some of the most ancient Diaspora communities were located; the major presentation, by Prof. Colafemmina, deals with some of this material, nearly all not yet published. The next three speakers summarize the results of their own excavations and related sites. Prof. Neusner, dean of academic Jewish studies in North America, assesses the new archaeological evidence against the background of the larger context of the Judaism of late antiquity, known previously chiefly from rabbinic writings.

The concluding discussion permits responses from the previous speakers and from the floor.
Nuove importanti scoperte nella catacomba ebraica di Venosa

La documentazione epigrafica di un'antica presenza ebraica a Taranto si rispecchia in alcuni codici del Sefer Yosef (sec. X), prigionieri ebrei sarebbero stati deportati nella città del secondo Tempio (70 d.C.). Non si hanno altre informazioni su tale presenza, così come accade per il resto della regione nel IV secolo, le colonie ebraiche si rivelano costituite da elementi che la loro inserzione dagli oneri curiali mette in evidenza la necessità di intervenire (1).

Un interesse per la cosiddetta Orono dobbiamo cercare a Taranto. Con le invasioni barbariche della Calabria crebbero d'importanza, essendo di approdo o di transito obbligato della via che dal nord menava a Roma passando per Venosa, Benevento, la via prospettiva per Lucera, raggiungendo Parma, oltre ad insediarsi nella valle del Renzo. Proprio perché colle-

NOTA
The lecture on The Jews in Southern Italy is part of the ongoing cultural programs offered by Hebrew College.

Programs being offered include adult education courses, lectures, symposia, art and film festivals among others.

The Plan of Hebrew College offers vital and dynamic Hebrew language instruction in the context of the exciting culture of Israel.

The Proctor Hebrew High School serves boys and girls of high school age with a comprehensive program of studies of the Jewish heritage.

The Jacob and Rose Grossman Library of Hebrew College, which houses 75,000 volumes of Judaica in all languages, represents one of the outstanding collections of its kind in the country. The library is open to the public for a $5 annual membership.

To be placed on the mailing list, or for further information, please contact:

Hebrew College
43 Havens Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02146

DON CESARE COLAFEMMINA of the Institute of Ancient Christian Letters, University of Bari, is a native of Venice, Italy.

He earned degrees in Philosophy (University of Bari), Theology (Pontifical University) and Bible (Pontifical Institute for Bible Studies and the Institute of Christian Ancient Literature at the University of Bari).

Don Colafemmina has made significant discoveries at the ancient Jewish catacombs at Venosa. He has published extensively on the history of Jews in Southern Italy.

The Department of Cultural Activities of Hebrew College

Cordially invites you to an illustrated lecture on

THE JEWS IN SOUTHERN ITALY

by Father Cesare Colafemmina
Internationally acclaimed archaeologist

Wednesday, January 2, 1980
at 8:30 P.M.

Admission is free

Hebrew College
43 Havens Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02146
232-8710

AGAPE!

Come and meet Father Cesare Colafemmina at the Brettmans’
Tuesday, January 8, at 6 p.m.
61 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

R.S.V.P. Regrets only 742-1285

Promotional material for Fr. Cesare Colafemmina’s talks in Boston on Jews in Southern Italy in from the Late Roman era to the Middle Ages (December 1979-January 1980).
Brettman organized a photo display of her catacomb slides at the BPL in December of 1979.
Vaults of Memory on Display at the Boston Public Library (1979-1980; 1987)
The ICCI was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non profit in 1980. In 1983 it became the ICS.

The International Committee for the Preservation of Catacombs in Italy

The International Committee for the Preservation of Catacombs in Italy, Inc. (ICCI, Inc.) is dedicated to the preservation, documentation and further exploration of the Jewish catacombs in Italy which are important archives of Judaism and early Christianity.

We welcome your donations in one of the following categories:

- Benefactor $1000 or more
- Patron $500 or more
- Sponsor $100 or more
- Member $25 or more
- Student member $10

I am enclosing $________ as a contribution.

Contributions made to ICCI, Inc. are deductible.

Name
Address
Phone ______________________ Date __________

Please mail to:
The International Committee for the Preservation of Catacombs in Italy,
P.O. Box 923
Back Bay Annex
Boston, Massachusetts 02117
Local press on Brettman's Vaults of Memory exhibit on Art and Symbolism in the Catacombs of Rome.
Brettman’s show did make it to Rome in 1985 (Castel Sant’Angelo).
Thank you! Grazie!
Please stay in touch
info@catacombsociety.org