

## Return to Salonique<sup>1</sup>

LOUIS MENASHE

*....the wind forgets always forgets  
but the flame doesn't change.*

– George Seferis

Years ago, when I was very active in left-wing politics, and identities were forged according to the particular groups and grouplets you belonged to in “the movement,” someone had this insight about my affiliations: “Have you ever noticed,” he asked, “that when Louis says “we,” he means “we, the Sephardic Jews?” It was partly friendly criticism, and only partly true, but he had picked up on something. My sense of being Sephardic was always just as strong as any of my other identities, be they political, national, or religious. Oddly, I’ve always felt it was less a *Jewish* identity than a *Sephardic* one. A non-Jewish Sephard? An oxymoron, of course: How can you be Sephardic, and not be Jewish? My feeling more of one and less of the other perhaps came from my having grown up among friends with mostly Eastern European backgrounds, the *Ashkenazim*. They were Jewish. I was Jewish, yes, but *different*. It bothered me as a boy, but later I experienced this difference positively, as something special. Most prominently, we spoke Ladino (there’s that “we”) or, as we called it, *Spagnol*, a blend of Greek, Turkish, and Hebrew infusing the rich 15<sup>th</sup>-century Castilian the Sephardim took with them when they were expelled from the Iberian kingdoms. In our usage there was even a strong verbal distinction between the Ashkenazic them, *los Judios* and the Sephardic



us, *Djidios*. So it wasn't just I who felt this odd dualism distinguishing very separate Jewish identities; it was there in the deep structures of language, a reflection of our own collective consciousness, cultivated over time by differing cultural imprints, differing historical experiences.

Further, Sephardic for me always evoked *Salonique*, whence my parents and relatives and many of their friends originated. *Salonique*: that was always our name for the gloriously multi-ethnic ancestral metropolis of northern Greece, and never *Thessaloniki*. Since the city was Greek and before that, controlled by the Ottoman Turks, why the Gallic form of its name in our circle? There was no equivalent in the Ladino language we spoke. (For Spaniards the city is *Salonica*.) For my mother and her three sisters – my aunts Mary, Lily and Elvira – the French form was natural; they had been educated in a French Catholic school in the city, and important parts of their lives were later spent in Paris. We still treasure my mother's *Diplome d'Honneur* from *L'Ecole de Jeunes Filles* in Paris, dated 1918. I don't know why they attended the Catholic St. Vincent de Paul school; possibly it was a conspicuous mark of their social class, or because the Molho family insisted on a more rigorous and strait-laced education for their daughters. But it was *Salonique* even for my parents' friends here in New York, most of whom hadn't experienced my mother's comparatively elite education. Some were not educated at all; I remember my mother reading and writing letters for them. In a bit of charmingly apt wordplay, French soldiers in the enchanting city by the sea they occupied in the last years of World War I called it *le Salon Unique*. Occasionally, I would hear one of my mother's friends refer to *Selanik*, in the Turkish manner. The friend was probably older, more Turkish than Greek (the city was reclaimed by Greece in 1913, after the Second Balkan War). Maybe she was a *Stambuliya* from Istanbul, or perhaps she was an *Izmirliya*, from Izmir, the city Greeks called Smyrna. With my young ears I could hear how different their Ladino was, different from

what my father insisted was the purer Ladino of his city. Not very educated himself, he would nevertheless parody their accents, as if they were some backward, inferior caste, never mind that they were fellow Sephardim. As for the *Ioannotes* – Jews from Ioannina who traced their ancestry to Roman times, hence also known as *Romaniotes* – they didn't speak Ladino at all; Greek was their language. Probably because I heard they spoke no Ladino, for a long time I thought a *Ioannot* was someone who hadn't the capacity for speech. Locating those other cities where Sephardim dwelled, and where their Ladino had a different tonality, provided me with good early lessons in Greek and Turkish geography. So-and-so was a *Chanakkali* (from Turkish Chanakkale); she was a *Kastoryaliya* (from Kastoriya); they were *Rhodesliyes* (from Rhodes).

Only after my first visit to Salonique did I learn to call the city by its rightful Greek name of old, Thessaloniki. As to why the common designation "Salonique" among us, it's something I never even thought about until that first visit.

I write of a *return* to Salonique. It was late in my life, and I had never been there, but it was as if I were reentering a place I had known since childhood. My father never reminisced. He was unsentimental in general, but maybe it was pain that accounted for the silence about his native city. Whatever pleasant recollections he may have had of the Salonique he had left for New York sometime in the first decades of the last century were to be, I think, forever darkened by Auschwitz-Birkenau, where two of his three brothers and their families met their fate. His third brother died of illness long before WW II; a sister emigrated to Palestine, also before the War. To remember Salonique was to remember them, and that was a memory that invited sadness. There was no equivalent anguish on my mother's side; her family had all left before the Holocaust, and in her recollection the city remained a garden of delights. And she loved telling me about them. Ah, that curving shore, and the mountains behind us, she would recall. How pleas-



ant to enjoy an ouzo or a coffee at a table in a café off the *paraliya*, bordering the Thermaic Gulf. And *La Tour Blanche* – always the French form, never the Greek *Lefkos Pyrgos*, or the Turkish *Beyaz Kulle* – *La Tour Blanche*. That massive medieval White Tower dominating the port never left her remembrances, and it seemed to be the fixed point defining the social topography of the city: her family, the Molhos, lived near *La Tour Blanche*, or the hospital was just beyond *La Tour Blanche*, or my father's family ran a shop not far from *La Tour Blanche*, or the bank she worked at....

All of her tales, together with conversations I overheard among family and friends, and especially the images from old sepia-tinted photos and faded postcards cluttering the drawers in our household, all this engraved in my young imagination a picture of Salonique I have carried since. It is an "Orientalist" tableau, a leisurely place where men wore the fez, and married women covered their heads in the elaborate *kofya*. In my picture all the city's women looked like my beautiful, raven haired aunt Mary. The streets were cobblestoned, noisy with vendors shouting their wares. Minarets adorned the skyline. Young men in uniform had Sam Brown belts girding their tunics and they wore polished boots. I see one of them astride a horse. There were men dressed in the Greek *fustanella*. At the docks and along the streets, *hamales* – porters – carried their burdens silently. There were also lowly *Arnautes* and *Buzhniaks* – people from the northern hinterlands. Years later I learned the references were to Albanians and Bosnians. I knew the names Venizelos and Abdul Hamid and Kemal Pasha from political conversations among the elders. Turbans, beards, caftans, water pipes crowded my mental panorama.

Of course I knew Thessaloniki had said goodbye to all that; the 20<sup>th</sup> century with its fire and sword and massive displacements had had transforming effects. The Turks are long gone, and so are their minarets. The Sephardic popula-

tion is now but a slight shadow of what it once had been, and only one of the once numerous synagogues remains. Economic development and Greece's largest university have made Thessaloniki a much-changed incarnation of the old "Pearl of the East"; it is now mostly a gleaming modern city that never sleeps.

But still, still.... Still – this is very peculiar, I admit – my first impressions there let me down; I realized that the picture I carried was of a vanished place, not entirely, I was happy to discover, but our Salonique, *La Madre de Israel*, had been replaced by today's Greek city, Thessaloniki. Many years into their long marriage, when my father retired, my parents returned to Greece for the first time in three decades for a visit. Salonique had been on their itinerary, after a stay in Athens. Before departing they had a conversation with an old friend who had been back. "*Si no quieres llorar*," he told them, "*no vayas a Salonique*." (If you don't want to cry, don't go to Salonique). That sorrowful warning discouraged them, my father especially, and they cancelled the planned trip to their birthplace. My Sephardic Salonique was only imagined, a picture drawn from a medley of secondary sources; theirs was a palpable memory of a life once lived in a place to which they would never return. It was now the memory of a ghost.

Sephardic, always Sephardic, of course, but just before my journey to Thessaloniki I began thinking of myself in a new way; I was now clothed in an additional identity, one I had never thought of myself as wearing, that of "Greek Jew". I was flattered not long ago to hear a Greek describe me as "an interesting Hellenic fellow." In the old days, my father and his circle were called "Turks" by New Yorkers; they were born as subjects of the Ottoman Empire, after all. That term stuck even after many had become Greek citizens. I remember leafing through my family's passports, with their Hellenic-blue covers. But where was my Greek language,



bits of which I often heard at home? The most frequently heard phrase I remember was "*Mi milas poly brosta sto mikro!*" Naturally: When certain subjects were off limits to the young ones, Mama would say to Papa, "Don't talk much in front of the little one." My older brother Bobby and I understood and spoke *Spagnol*, not Greek. When it was time to get us somewhere, I often heard my mother say, using the Greek as if for emphasis, "*Embros, paedia!*" – "Move it, kids!" The classic Sephardic exchange of greetings was the Ladino "*Que Haber?/Todo Bueno.*" But often it was "*Yasou!*" and in response, "*Ke khara sou.*" Less frequently heard was the traditional Turkish Hello, "*Merhaba!*" There was certainly more vocabulary of Turkish origin in the Salonique Ladino of my parents' generation than Greek, but the latter left its mark. A phrase in Greek would turn up in an old Ladino song, as in the haunting traditional ballad, *Morena, a Mi Me Llama*, where the line "*mavro- mata mou*" appears, alluding to the dark eyed beauty of the song. Our grandma was always *nona*, but I knew *yiayia* as well. An old woman was a *vava*, an old man, a *pappou*. "*Mira, mira, Nona – pappou con barba.*" was something I exclaimed in Graeco-Ladino as a toddler when I spotted an old bearded man, or so it was gaily recalled in the family. I was very proud of my Ladino during my first visit to Spain. I got along fine, despite my un-Castilian accent – people thought I might be from another region, or maybe from Latin America. But sometimes the odd Graeco-Turkish that sprinkled my lingo betrayed me. That I was an alien became clear once in a restaurant when I asked the waiter, unsuccessfully, for a *piron*, thinking I was requesting a fork – it was always a *piron*, from the Greek, at home. A quick look in my Spanish dictionary told me it was otherwise in Barcelona; *tenedor*. I recovered, answering the puzzled waiter.

After World War II, a younger generation – younger than my parents – arrived in our community, survivors from

Thessaloniki and from other Greek cities once populated by the Sephardim. Some had numbers tattooed on their arms. Inter-marriage with non-Jewish Greeks was common among them. In addition to the usual Sephardic *Sumuel* and *Sarah* and *Perla*, they had names that were strange to me, and impressively exotic, I thought – *Stavroula* and *Stamatiya* and *Panayiota* and *Dimitrios*. Later, in Thessaloniki, I was delighted to meet people named classically – *Elektra* and *Adonis* and *Iphigenia*. The everyday language of the new arrivals was Greek, not Ladino, and they usually sought out only the Greek restaurants of New York. The songs they sang were Greek songs, not the *romanzas* of my parents' repertoire. The jolly *Samiotissa*, *Samiotissa* always graced celebrations when they were in attendance. I can still hum it. And *Miserlou*, of course – which, I'm told, originated among earlier Greek immigrants to America.

The influence of this new, Greek-speaking wave of *los nuestros* ("ours," i.e., "our people") coincided with my college-freshman infatuation with Hellenic history and culture – my paperback copy of Kitto's *The Greeks* was a well-thumbed source – and I pestered my mother to teach me Greek, the alphabet at the very least. I never got very far. Other interests pointed me in other career directions, and I dropped the idea – a decision I very much regretted when I "returned" to Salonique/Thessaloniki. I had had a good head start in the Greek language as a boy, but I never built on it. Oh, my embarrassment when I thanked the cab driver who took me from the airport to the city on my first trip, I said, "*Parakalo,*" when it should have been "*Efkharisto!*" He shrugged, in a friendly, nonjudgmental way; welcome to Thessaloniki.

The cabbie reminded me of many of the men with whom I shared the waiting lounge at the Frankfurt airport, assembled for our flight to Thessaloniki. Short, plump, dark with broad thumbs. Just like many of my father's friends. And the women looked familiar too: short, plump, dark with thick rounded



wrists. Similar figures populated Thessaloniki's Makedonia airport on my arrival. I had landed in the mythic Salonique, and people looked so familiar. I was close to tears, almost as if I were returning home after all these years. But my heart sank when we drove out from the airport. The cabbie was taking the shortest route back to the city, not the scenic one, and at first all we passed were the tacky components of poor shorefronts anywhere in the world – gas stations, Hyundai and other billboards, homes and commercial establishments scattered in low, dull stuccoed buildings. Salonique? No, just the outskirts, I tried to reassure myself. A glimpse of the sea on the left. Soon enough, we were in denser, handsomer precincts. The architecture now had a Mediterranean look, pastel-colored facades and balconies shaded by awnings. I kept a watch on my left, in the direction of the sea, as the driver sped toward the center. It was raining. THEN! I caught a glimpse of it, but quickly gone, as in a movie flashback – *La Tour Blanche! La Tour Blanche!* I grinned to myself. But also, again, the verge of tears. I wished I could speak to the cabbie to tell him what I had just seen, and who I was, where I came from, and what it all meant. *I had returned to Salonique.* Later, since most of the Greeks I got to know spoke English, I could tell my story to many others, and often at great length because they showed an interest in, and were actually quite fascinated by, this Graeco-Sephardic odyssey of mine from America.

Thanks to my brother, the family archivist, who kept finding nuggets of valuable information among my mother's papers, I knew of a surviving cousin still in Thessaloniki among the roughly 1,000 Sephardim remaining of the venerable community that once numbered some 50,000 before the Nazis got to them. A first task, after settling in at the comfortable Elektra Palace hotel fronting the harbor, was to get in touch with Joseph Matalon – Pepo, familiarly – on Nona's side of the family. I dialed the right number and asked for him, but I

hung up when I thought the voice at the other end answered in the negative. Another embarrassment. Maybe I was so excited that I forgot what I once had known, the Greek for yes and no, and his Greek "yes" I interpreted as a Russian-sounding no. (A recurring thought lately, since that trip: Why had I chosen Russia for my professional specialization, instead of something more ethnically rooted, like Mediterranean or Balkan studies? A long story.) I tried calling again, and this time, contact! We slid easily, much easier than I expected after not speaking it regularly in many years, into the mother tongue, the sonorous Ladino of our family. It pleased Pepo that I could handle the language. "*Ah, Bravo!*" he would say when I told him I knew the meaning of a certain word he used, or when I in turn recovered a word or an expression from somewhere in the hidden recesses of a long dormant vocabulary. The *Ah, Bravo!* was offered with a certain lilt and that slight nod of the head reminding me at once of my father's voice, or the gestures of my uncle Danny.

Pepo didn't speak Ladino regularly either; it was Greek with his son, Solonas, and often Italian with his wife, Vincenza, born in Thessaloniki, but of a Sephardic mother and a Neapolitan father. It was a pleasure for both of us to speak the Ladino of our respective youths. There our similarities end. His youth was shattered by the German occupation. Barely out of his teens, he fled from the ghetto, and thanks to Greek partisans in the mountains and a Greek family in Athens, he survived the war and returned to Thessaloniki in 1944. His whole immediate and extended family, some 60 relatives, he said, never returned from Auschwitz. He told me his story evenly, with no self-pity, not even when he described his grief upon returning, by sea, to his native city. It was unrecognizable; the Sephardic Atlantis had disappeared, with it all his kin. He felt, he said, a bit like our ancestors must have felt in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century when they arrived on those unknown shores. He always wore a black tie then, in



memory of his family, and began suffering a terrible despair – he used the word *merak* (in Sephardic usage, probably derived from the Turkish, though there is also the Greek *meraki*). Did I know what it meant? “*Seguro*,” I replied. “*Ah, Bravo!*” This *merak* was unbearable, and he left the degraded city for Italy, where he met Vincenza. They married and eventually returned to the irresistible Salonique.

My encounter with the Matalon family was one part, a very big part of my first journey to Salonique, but I was there as an invited guest of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, representing the American film journal *Cineaste*, and I had much business to attend to. It was difficult declining Pepo’s constant invitations to get together, to walk the city pavements, to visit the lively, colorful Modiano Market (old Salonique!), to dine out, or, especially, to enjoy their hospitality and Vincenza’s cuisine at their apartment on bustling Tsimiski Street. Once, when I was about to turn down another invitation, he said, with great emotion, “*Hombre! Es cosa de sangre!*” (Hey, man! This is about blood!) How could I say no to that? Besides, there was Vincenza’s cooking.

The author and translator, Joel Agee, once tried to explain the meaning of the German word for homeland, *Heimat*, as beyond simple political or geographic definition, and he cited a response of the Nobel laureate Elias Canetti when the latter was asked where his *Heimat* was. Canetti was Sephardic from Bulgaria, had lived in Switzerland and England, but he considered his *Heimat* the German language in which he wrote. A telling remark; in a way, one I could identify with. Not Canetti’s German, but Ladino is a kind of *Heimat* for me, a verbal space bordering my American homeland. But something else is its necessary collateral – the food I always associate with the language. That first night in the city I stopped in at a café on handsome Aristotle Square for a quick bite, and immediately felt at home – the feta, the olives, the *taramasalata*, the lemon-flavored *avgholemono*

soup could have come from my mother’s kitchen. Nothing special; any ordinary Greek diner in New York could have served this up as well, but this was in Thessaloniki! And the waiter smiled when I told him “*metrio*” for how I liked my coffee. (At last I got a bit of Greek straight.) This was but an appetizer, a small appealing hint of the feasts Vincenza was to set before me, recalling what once nourished me. An evocative dish was her *fijon y arroz*, the stewed kidney beans and rice prepared on Fridays in old Salonique, and a weekly feature in our household. Vincenza’s ample repertory of baked desserts included what we call *bourequitas*, delicious pastries filled with cheese, spinach, or eggplant. (Note the Ladino suffix to the Turkish *borek*.) She wrapped some carefully for me to take home for my brother Bobby who adored eggplant. Pepo’s humor graced these meals. Why didn’t she prepare these things for him? In a mock whisper he told me to request certain dishes he preferred that Vincenza was sure to make for me if I asked for them, *sazan*, for example. I could understand why – I remember my mother’s exquisite *carp* in a vinegary walnut sauce especially prepared for Passover. Those meals at the Matalones were terrific facsimiles of the meals we were raised on. The food plus the mother-tongue conversations with Pepo and Vincenza, who opened their arms with a warmth and affection that parents welcoming a son long gone might display: what else was this but *Heimat*?

Of course, I also feasted on dishes of the same general cuisine in Thessaloniki’s many and excellent tavernas, ouzeris, cafes, restaurants. Naturally, ouzo was a regular part of the dining experience, often in glass after glass. A particular treat was enjoying some at a table overlooking the Gulf under a big sky. Just as in my mother’s remembrances. I knew that fragrant, anise-flavored brandy from what my father used to bring home in gallon jugs prepared by friends, bathtub ouzo ( *raki*, in the Turkish version). It was thought



to have magnificent medicinal properties, and as children we didn't drink it, but had it applied to various parts of the body. In Thessaloniki I drank it. Often. Ouzo is not just a wonderful aperitif, but also, in the right quantities, a sure route to merriment. Once, it could have led to trouble. At Mylos, an all-purpose arts and entertainment center on the outskirts the city, I got into the swing of things one evening, Zorba-like, thanks to ouzo, the *bouzuki*, the lively dancing crowd, the sultry songs (I wish I could have understood the lyrics, though I could make out the oft repeated *s'agapo*). But instead of shouting the encouraging and appreciative *Opa!*, what came into my head was my father's *Y'Allah!*, something he exclaimed when spirits were high. I danced, I drank, "*Y'Allah!*" I shouted. Until Bozhidar, a Serb critic I met at the Film Festival, intervened. "Better stop that," he insisted, "Don't you know Greeks may not take kindly to that Turkish expression?" I stopped, sheepishly. But I continued dancing – I was in Thessaloniki!

Bozhidar's warning pointed to the dark side of inter-communal relations in that part of the world. A Turkish filmmaker told a press conference at the Festival how pleased she was by the warm reception she met everywhere in Thessaloniki; there was none of the Greek hostility to Turks she feared she might encounter. (A good example of cinema as a universal language and a fine medium for peaceful exchange.) I felt the same way about the possibility of anti-Semitism. Didn't my father tell me of locking doors during Passover when Greek zealots and bigots threatened violence, animated by the ancient hoax of the blood libel? But that was then; that was Salonique, this was Thessaloniki. Happily, my experience duplicated the Turkish filmmaker's. The Greeks I met were pleased to hear my family originated in Greece and were intrigued by the Greek-Sephardic story. It is, unfortunately, not a very well-known story, even though some of the Greeks I met and befriended had their own tales to tell

about the old Sephardic communities, things they heard from parents or grandparents who remembered the Jewish presence. It is said that in old Salonique, everyone, including non-Jews, spoke Ladino as the *lingua franca*. On the Jewish Sabbath, the port itself shut down.

In recent years more and more official and unofficial attention in Greece has finally turned to remembering and honoring and mourning the once large and thriving Sephardic communities there. Pepo took me to visit the sculptured memorial to the perished Thessaloniki Sephardim, erected a few years ago. (It has since been transferred to Liberty Square, where the Germans staged a mass humiliation of Sephardic men of the city in 1942.) We bowed our heads together at the memorial; a strange, moving moment for both of us. At the bookstore of the Molho family (no relation) I bought a just published volume brought out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the University of Athens, *Documents on the History of the Greek Jews*. In 2003 the Greek government marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Nazi annihilation of the venerable Sephardic community of Thessaloniki, and established an annual day of national commemoration remembering the fate of Greece's Jews on January 27, the date when the Red Army liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945. There were other similar observances, including important gestures by the Greek Orthodox Church. In New York, the commemoration has become an annual event at the Greek Consulate, where Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, offers prayers and shares his reminiscences of the Sephardim of Thessaloniki, his own birthplace. Greece and Israel have established full relations. Last year their respective Presidents, Karolos Papoulias and Moshe Katsav paid a joint visit to Thessaloniki, stopping first of all at Liberty Square. Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis sent an eloquent message calling for keeping alive "the historic reality of the Holocaust



as a shield for the future of humanity. For Greece this duty is of special gravity since thousands of our fellow countrymen left their final breath in the concentration camps. The Jewish communities of our cities, nuclei of culture and creation, were almost annihilated and especially so in Thessaloniki."

All this has been very welcome news from Greece, the only nation in the Euro zone that had failed to officially commemorate the Holocaust. There was always something very disappointing in that Greek blind spot. Not only did it overlook an important part of the modern historical record, the enormous role of the Sephardim in shaping old Thessaloniki, say, but it compromised a connection that spiritually united Jews and Greeks, their respective contributions to the development of what we know as Western culture and civilization. It is gratifying that signs point to a conscious and active re-connection.

The only hostility I experienced in Thessaloniki had to do with a reflexive anti-Americanism – not directed at me personally, and I didn't take it personally, but disconcerting nonetheless. There were graffiti equating the U.S.A. with the swastika, for example. Or consider the remark of a pleasant young assistant at the Festival I got to know, who answered my question about local reactions to the 9/11 catastrophe: "We thought you had it coming," he said. Greek anti-Americanism has a long modern history, dating from Washington's Cold-War temperament and hostility to the Left, not to mention its support of the repressive regime of "the Colonels". Antipathy to the U.S. was to be expected in Thessaloniki; the city has always been in the forefront of Greek radicalism. My family was probably touched by it in ways I would love to explore someday. I was astonished – pleased, actually – to discover in a notebook my mother kept for recording Ladino poetry, songs, and proverbs, the lyrics of a May Day socialist hymn concluding, *Alevantate puevlo leale, al grito de Revolucion social* (Rise up you loy-

al people to the cry of social revolution). *Brava, Mama!* The radical tradition has been a mainstay of Greek political life, then as now, and today a powerful anti-American current, strengthened by the foreign policies of George Bush, is very visible, never mind the generally welcoming attitudes displayed at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens.

But for me these are all side issues obscured by the epiphanies I experienced in Thessaloniki, especially on that first trip. Of those street vendors of old my mother told me about, one always captured my imagination, the man who shouted "*Salep!*" – in the Sephardic rendition, "*Salep, Salepico!*" I pictured a grizzled fellow well on in years ladling out what I thought to be a cold milky-white liquid slaking the thirst of passersby on a hot summer afternoon. Well, coming out from a screening one evening I heard the cry – it wasn't imagined – "*Salep!*" "*Salep!*" No Ladino curl at the end of the word this time, but there he was out on the street, a grizzled old fellow ladling it out from his cart, "*Salep! Salep!*" My picture was wrong on several counts. The orchid-root derivative was colored off-white and poured steaming hot, so hot I had to wrap the paper cup in a handkerchief to hold it comfortably, but I sipped it blissfully.

I've *returned* to Salonique several times since, and it has yielded many pleasures, but none so delicious as that first cup of *Salep*.

*Salepico!*

## NOTES

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