

Irene Shaland Presnets

**The Return of the Jew:
Jewish Renaissance in Sicily and Sardinia**



Irene Shaland invites you to travel to the islands of Sicily and Sardinia that present an unusually optimistic chapter in the history of Jewish Diaspora. You will discover a world of little-known Jewish narrative: centuries marked by fear and secrets, decades filled with the search for one's identity, and courage to defy conventions by reinventing oneself. These are the stories of B'nei Anousim, or "children of the forced ones" from the South of Italy. The elimination of institutional Judaism by the infamous 1492 Edict of Expulsion and the Inquisition did not mean the end of Judaism itself. The destruction of synagogues and the burning of "Judaizes" five centuries ago forced the Jews of Sicily and Sardinia to take their traditions into the cellars of their homes where the memories and stories were kept alive, even when descendants forgot their exact meaning. And now, the number of those with a "call of blood," who think they have Jewish ancestry and want to learn more about it, or even embrace their newly-discovered heritage, is on the rise throughout these islands. Let the story of the Anousim lead you into the world of hope - the cultural and spiritual reawakening.