

**‘The Jews have got into trouble again...’
Responses to the Publication of *Cronaca Israelitica* and the Question of
Jewish Emancipation in the Ionian Islands
(1861-1863)**

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Abstract

In late August 1861 Giuseppe Nacamulli published the first issue of his bi-lingual (Greek-Italian) newspaper Ισραηλιτικά Χρονικά/Cronaca Israelitica thereby inaugurating the first Jewish newspaper in the Greek speaking world. The appearance of a newspaper that advocated for full civil and political rights for Ionian Jews did not go unnoticed and provoked numerous responses of varying degrees of hostility and indeed praise. This article examines these responses within two broader contexts, namely the political and social ferment of the final years of British rule and the long-term, and often tense, co-existence of Jews and Christians on the islands.

- **Introduction**
- **Venetian Legacies and British Realities: Ionian Jewry during the British Protectorate**
- ***Cronaca Israelitica*: the Newspaper and its Publisher**
- **Responses to the *Cronaca Israelitica***
- **Conclusion**

Introduction

In 1861 – the year in which the bi-lingual Ισραηλιτικά Χρονικά /*Cronaca Israelitica* first appeared – a Jewish citizen of the British-administered Ionian Islands could not vote in parliamentary elections and could not practice as an Advocate (*Avvocato*) at the Bar, but could appear before the Islands’ lower courts merely as an Attorney (*Interveniente*). Jewish merchants were excluded as official assessors in commercial litigation. The Islands’ 1817 Constitution did not guarantee freedom of religion for Jews but it explicitly provided that “forms of religion” “other” than Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity were “tolerated.”¹ Jews were thus able to worship in relative freedom and as well as maintain their long-established right of internal self-government. The Code of Civil Procedure provided that Jews were not obliged to appear before any

¹ Chapter I Article 3 & Chapter V Section I Article 1-3, Constitutional Chart of the United States of the Ionian Islands, in *Statistics of the Colonies of the British Empire*, ed. Robert M. Martin, (London: Allen and Co, 1839), 258-270.

court on the Sabbath or during specific high holy days.² In accordance with the widely practiced custom of petitioning the islands' rulers the Jews could (and did continually) petition the British authorities for redress of their grievances. Furthermore an Ionian Jew could, as a consequence of a set of constitutional reforms that introduced freedom of the press, publish a newspaper. And indeed the publisher, Iosif Nachamoulis (Giuseppe Nacamulli), of *Ισραηλιτικά Χρονικά Cronaca Israelitica* (hereinafter *Cronaca*) undoubtedly took advantage of this reform in order to publicise the issue of civil emancipation of the Islands' Jews but also broader themes concerning Jewish history and culture. The following is not however an analysis of the content of the *Cronaca*. The existing albeit limited literature³ concerning the *Cronaca* has already summarised its content. And despite the breakthrough made in recent years with the publication of a major study of the Jewish history of Greece as well as a history of antisemitism in Greece,⁴ no attempt has yet been made to incorporate the *Cronaca* – especially its reception and impact- into the historiography of Ionian Jewry let alone Greek Jewry. This article aims to address this lacuna by presenting and contextualising a number of the manifold and predominately public responses to the newspaper's appearance and content. By its very existence and advocacy for full Jewish civil rights the *Cronaca* provoked responses that engaged with fundamental questions concerning not only Jews and Judaism but also their status in an imperial polity caught up in a process of change and passage from colonial to national rule. These responses thus merit close inspection, if for any other reason, than for what they tell us about the closing phase of British rule in the Ionian Islands.

² Article 36, *Codice di procedura civile degli Stati Uniti delle Isole Ionie* (Corfu: Tipografia del Governo, 1844)

³ While Noutsos' analysis places the *Cronaca* within a survey of Modern Greek Intellectual history, the other literature listed below provide the main factual details concerning the *Cronaca*'s publication and content: Panagiotis Noutsos, *Komvoi sti sizitisi gia to ethnos* (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2006), 310-315; Grigoris Kasimatis, "Oi Evraioi tis Eptanisou kai i Enosis" [The Jews of the Ionian Islands and their Union with Greece], *Nea Estia* 21 (1937): 724-735; Rafael Frezis, *O Evraikos typos stin Ellada* [The Jewish Newspaper Press of Greece] (Volos: Ores Publications, 1999), 162-171; Rafael Frezis, "Israilitika Chronika/Cronaca Israelitica," *Egkyklopaideia tou Ellinikou Typou* [Encyclopaedia of the Greek Newspaper Press], (Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, National Research Foundation, 2008), 4v, 2: 461-462; Pearl Preschel, *The Jews of Corfu* (New York: New York University, 1984 Unpublished PhD Thesis), 73; Kostas Dafnis, *Oi Israilites tis Kerkyras* [The Jews of Corfu] (Corfu: n.p., 1978), 16. A comprehensive study of the content, reception and readership of the *Cronaca* as well as Nacamulli's subsequent newspapers, *La Famiglia Israelitica* (1869) and *Mosè Antologia Israelitica* (1878-1885), is a pressing desideratum. Similarly a study on the establishment and evolution of his printing press, revealing named *Korais* after the seminal exponent of the Greek Enlightenment Adamantios Korais, would greatly enrich the existing historiography on book printing and the press in the Ionian Islands.

⁴ Katherine Fleming, *Greece A Jewish History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Bernard Pierron, *Evraioi kai Christianoi sti neoteri Ellada* [Jews and Christians in Modern Greece] (Athens: Polis Editions, 2004).

Venetian Legacies and British Realities: Ionian Jewry during the British Protectorate

When, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Campo Formio⁵ the French Republican forces formalised their rule over the Ionian Islands the Islands' resident communities of Jews were not newcomers. The two main communities, those of Corfu and Zante⁶ had a continuous and long-established presence stretching back to the period of Angevin rule in Corfu (1267-1386) and, in the case of Zante, at least to the beginning of Venetian rule (1482-1797).⁷ The community of Corfu was initially made up of Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews but following the expulsion of Jews from the Kingdom of Naples (1540-1541) and the subsequent settlement in Corfu of a Sicilian and Puglian Jews as well as the arrival in the early 17th century a number of Ponnentine Jews, the demographic composition of the Corfiot community began to change. The Italian or "Puglian" element became numerically dominant and the cultural and linguistic differences between these elements gradually solidified leading to the creation of separate synagogues, lay councils and even burial societies and cemeteries. In the case of Zante the community was much smaller and although initially of quite diverse origins, following the end of the War of Candia (1669) a number of Romaniote Cretan refugees arrived. Their arrival together with the subsequent erection in 1699 of a synagogue named *Candiotto* suggests that the Romaniote element came to dominate the community and impose its customs and practices on the whole community. This diverse

⁵ Under Article 1 Paragraph 5 of the treaty complete sovereignty of the former Venetian territories of the Levant passed to France, *Gazette Nationale*, 37, 7 Brumaire An 6/28 October 1797, 147-148.

⁶ For an overview of the history of Ionian Jewry see Antony Seymour, "Les séfarades de Corfou et des autres îles ioniennes," in *Les Juifs d'Espagne Histoire d'une diaspora*, ed. Henry Méchoulan (Paris: Liana Levi, 1992), 332-355. A recent issue of the *Mediterranean Historical Review* (27/2, 2012) contains the latest research on the various communities of the Venetian Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean. Despite their age the following works still remain relevant because of their use of original sources some of which no longer exist: Ioannis Romanos "I Evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras" [The Jewish community of Corfu], *Chronika (Kentrikou Israïtikou Symvouliou Ellados)* 174 (2001): 8-21 (Reprint of 1891 *Estia* edition); Moïse Caimi, "Corfu," *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901-1906), 12v, 4: 269-273; Leonidas Zois, "Oi Evraioi en Zakyntho" [The Jews in Zante], *O Israïlitis Chronografos*, 8 (1900) 1-3; 9 (1900) 2-3; 10 (1900) 6-7; Spridon de Viazis, "I Evraiki koinotis en Zakyntho epi Enetokratias" [The Jewish community of Zante during the period of Venetian rule], *Parnassos* 14 (1891-1892) 624-637; 662-670; 723-735.

⁷ Jews were also to be found living in Cephalonia and Leucas at various points in their respective histories. In the case of Cephalonia a Jewish presence can be traced to at least the early 19th century although the literature also points to an even earlier presence, while for Leucas Jews appear to have resided during the island's period of Ottoman rule (1479-1684). For further details: Aggelos-Dionysios Debonos, "Oi Evraioi tis Kefalonias" [The Jews of Cephalonia], *Chronika (Kentrikou Israïtikou Symvouliou Ellados)* 46 (1982): 5-9; 47 (1982): 8-12; Aggelos-Dionysios Debonos, "Evraikes oikogeneies stin Kefalonia" [Jewish families in Cephalonia], *Chronika (Kentrikou Israïtikou Symvouliou Ellados)* 115 (1991): 9-16; Anthony Seymour, "Leucas (Santa Maura): a forgotten Jewry," *Bulletin of Judaic-Greek Studies* 7 (1990): 21-22.

Jewish population lived alongside a Christian majority that although predominately Eastern Orthodox also included a number of Roman Catholics and from the early 19th century a small number of Protestant missionaries.

Given the numerous and repeated attempts, by way of Christian petitions direct to the Venetian authorities, to impose sartorial, residential and other restrictions⁸ on the islands' Jews it would be fair to state that the coexistence of Christians and Jews was not always harmonious and indeed it would be easy to conclude that Jewish life during Venetian rule was particularly arduous and oppressive. Such an interpretation assumes that the Jews were only victims of Christian hostility and that the former lacked any initiative in the management of their affairs. Matters between Christians and Jews were somewhat more complex and this complexity is well illustrated with the example of Jewish residency restrictions. Although the Corfiot Christians managed as early as 1406 to persuade the Venetian authorities to impose certain restrictions on Jewish ownership of real estate, restrictions that in any case were strengthened a hundred years later in 1524 with an order limiting Jewish residence to a specific district of the town,⁹ the fact that the Christians continued to petition Venice throughout the 16th century (1532, 1536, 1542, 1546, 1596)¹⁰ is significant and should not be overlooked. It should not be overlooked because it demonstrates not only Christian hostility towards their Jewish neighbours but also a certain sense of defiance, perhaps even confidence, on the part of Corfiot Jews in their contravention of the law. One may speculate as to the reasons for the Jews' contravention of this law but when the example of residency is juxtaposed with other legal measures affecting Corfiot Jewish life such as the exemption from the 1571 edict of expulsion of Venetian Jewry,¹¹ the 1578 Ducal confirmation of the community's "ancient privileges,"¹² as well as the introduction in 1614 of harsh penalties for the crime of desecration of Jewish cemeteries,¹³ one begins to observe certain patterns concerning Christian-Jewish relations. These relations can be characterised by the interplay of both Jewish initiative and agency as well as the latent and enduring hostility of the Christian majority. Supplementary to this interplay is the role played by the Venetian rulers. The latter had to balance the competing (and often divergent) interests of a Christian

⁸ Within the first decades of Venetian rule the Christians of Corfu sent an embassy to Venice demanding that the latter authorities recognize their "rights" to "stone" Jews. And although the authorities did not grant this particular demand they did however issue an order (1406) requiring all Jews to wear, on pain of fine, a marker of yellow cloth on their outer garments. Furthermore they issues another order prohibiting Jews from owning real estate within the city and suburb of Corfu with the only exception being homes already owned. Romanos, "I Evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyra," 16.

⁹ Romanos, "I Evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras," 18.

¹⁰ Elli Yiotopoulou-Sisilianou, "Oi Evraioi tis Kerkyras epi Venetokratias" [The Jews of Corfu during Venetian rule], *Chronika (Kentrikou Israilitiku Symvouliou Ellados)* 230 (2010): 5-6.

¹¹ Romanos, "I Evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras," 14.

¹² Caimi, "Corfu," 270.

¹³ Romanos, "I Evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras," 19.

majority against a Jewish minority. Such a balancing act was not easy to achieve because it needed to accommodate Jewish rights while simultaneously not alienate the Christian majority.

These competing interests did not dissipate with the end of Venetian rule and the complicated passage of the islands through French Republican, Russo-Ottoman, French Imperial and eventually British rule. Indeed of the numerous cultural and political legacies bequeathed by the Venetians to subsequent rulers was the tense and often hostile coexistence of Christians and Jews in the islands. This coexistence was particularly tense at times of prolonged crisis and instability. The arrival of the French Republican forces in 1797 initiated such a crisis. The French abolished the long-established political structures of the Ionian *ancien régime* and sought to include Jewish participation in the formal political process through the appointment of Jewish delegates to the Provisional Government of Corfu. These developments in turn provoked a conservative reaction that soon manifested itself and thus during one of the first sessions of the Provisional Government (29 June 1797), “a tailor,” according to Ermanno Lunzi,¹⁴ put forward a proposal to exclude the Jewish representatives in order to “protect the [Christian] religion.”¹⁵ This proposal led in turn to a raucous commotion whereby a crowd that had gathered outside the meeting hall ejected the Jewish representatives and subjected them to abuse and physical violence. Eleven years later, at the time of the second period of French rule, the Corfiot Chief of Police issued a public order (2 October 1808) stipulating that “from now on”¹⁶ nobody shall ‘in any way either by deed or word’ disturb the “peace and security” of those “confessing the Jewish religion.”¹⁷

It is thus in the context of the above inter-communal relations that the British commenced their Protectorate of the Ionian Islands. And given the abovementioned incidents it should not be particularly surprising that within less than a year of the formal handover of Corfu to the British (21 June 1815) that the latter authorities issued an order¹⁸ forbidding the movement of Jews outside the *Evraiki* (Jewish district) of Corfu from Good Friday to the Tuesday immediately following Easter. Another even more strongly worded proclamation followed a year later informing the Corfiot population that anyone who ‘insulted’ or harmed Jews and their property would be immediately

¹⁴ Ermanno Lunzi, *Storia delle Isole Ionie sotto il reggimento del Repubblicani Francesi* (Venezia: Tipografia del Commercio, 1860), 44.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Romanos, “I Evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras,” 21.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “Proclamazione,” 19 April 1816, Ionian State Records, File 682, Subfile 23/209, Corfu Prefecture Archives, Corfu.

imprisoned on the charge of disturbance of peace.¹⁹ Thus from the outset of British rule, the British like the French before them, had to face the prospect of inter-communal and inter-religious tensions and take some preventative measures. The latent antisemitic hostility that these proclamations evidence remained a constant throughout the Protectorate manifesting itself subsequently on several occasions, one case being in Cephalonia in the 1820s when in early 1823 some of the local Christians attempted to raise a riot against the island's small Jewish community.²⁰ Another occasion was the desecration of the Jewish burial ground of Corfu in the early months of 1861. In response to this desecration the head of the Orthodox Church of Corfu Metropolitan Athanasius published an officially endorsed encyclical letter²¹ in which he called on the members of his flock to halt acts that are "contrary to the Gospel and Christianity."²²

The antisemitic hostility exemplified in the events of 1823 as well as the cemetery desecration also found expression in a number of laws that in their practical application discriminated against Jews. The laws in question were three, those governing the Legal Profession (1845), Elections (1849) and the appointment of professional assessors drawn from the merchant body in the islands' commercial courts and tribunals.

As part of their modernising agenda of 1830s and 1840s the British colonial authorities reformed the Court system, revised the old legal codes and extended the electoral franchise to certain sectors of the male population hitherto excluded from the political process. It is in this context one should view the provision of the 1845 Law²³ concerning the Professions of Advocate (*Avvocato*) and Attorney (*Interveniente*). Article Two of this law stated that all future advocates had to be inscribed in the official list of advocates maintained by the judicial authorities. But in order to qualify for inscription on the official list one had to be a Christian. Article Three listed all the pertinent qualifications one of which clearly stipulated that a candidate 'must be of the Christian faith.'²⁴ The other qualifications concerned age, Ionian citizenship, ability in the Greek language, good character, possession of a degree in Law and practical work experience – qualifications that given the situation of some members of the Jewish elite could have been easily achieved. That said this law did provide some exceptions. Article One

¹⁹ "Proclamazione," 28 March 1817, Ionian State Records, File 682, Subfile 23/239, Corfu Prefecture Archives, Corfu.

²⁰ William Napier, *The life and opinions of General Sir Charles Napier* (London: John Murray, 1857) 4v, 1: 322, 327.

²¹ "Notice," May 27 / June 28, 1861, *Efimeris Episimos tou Inomenou Kratous ton Ionion Nison*, 1-2.

²² Ibid.

²³ N. 20, "Act of Parliament to establish a Regulation with regard to the exercise of the Profession of Advocate and Attorney in the United States of the Ionian Islands," 30 May 1845, *Acts passed by the Eighth Parliament of the United States of the Ionian Islands during its First Session* (Corfu: Government Printing Office, 1845).

²⁴ Ibid, Article 3, Paragraph 3.

permitted all advocates already inscribed in the list to continue as before. Thus the law intended to discriminate against all new Jewish advocates. Furthermore it must not be forgotten that the same law did not discriminate against Jews in its provisions concerning the lower profession of Attorney. In short the law sought to limit the lucrative position of Advocate to Christians only by narrowing the entry requirements for new advocates.

In a similar fashion Article One of the 1849 Electoral Law²⁵ provided that for an Ionian citizen to qualify as an elector he had to be at least 21 years of age, be domiciled in the Ionian Islands, possess either property (of various kinds) or a University degree or practice a profession, be able to read and write, could not be a bankrupt or convicted felon and finally he had, through birth or naturalisation, be an Ionian citizen and profess the Christian religion. On the basis of such a law it is clear that the intention of authorities that legislated this reform was to exclude Jewish men from the broadened franchise and thereby deny them the right to elect representatives to Ionian Parliament.

The third (and last) of the laws²⁶ that discriminated against the Jews differed from the first two in that it did not explicitly include any religious-based criterion for qualification as a court-appointed assessor in commercial litigation. Article One stated that an assessor was to be selected from ‘among the merchants’ and Article Two stated that merchants who were Ionian citizens qualified as long as they were at least of 30 years of age and were “honourably engaged in the mercantile profession at least five years.” On the basis of the above provisions there was no *prima facie* discrimination of Jewish merchants. But given the fact that within the space of two months of the law’s promulgation a number of prominent Jewish merchants petitioned²⁷ the Lord High Commissioner for redress it is obvious that in practice the law’s provisions were disregarded. And the way in which these provisions were circumvented was that the

²⁵ N. 87, “Electoral Law,” 19 December 1849, *Acts passed by the Eighth Parliament of the United States of the Ionian Islands during its Fifth (Extraordinary) Session* (Corfu: Government Printing Office, 1849).

²⁶ N. 6, “Law respecting the appointment of Assessors in the sittings of the Commercial Courts and Tribunals,” 22 July 1857, *Acts passed by the Eleventh Parliament of the United States of the Ionian Islands during its First Session* (Corfu: Government Printing Office, 1857).

²⁷ Petition 400, 1857, “Messrs Yarak, Mordo and other members of the Jewish community at Corfu requesting to be admitted to appear before the commercial court as ‘assessors,’” 8 December 1857, Colonial Office Records 136/857, National Archives, Kew. For a discussion of this petition see the following studies by Sakis Gekas: “The Port Jews of Corfu and the ‘Blood Libel’ of 1891: A tale of many centuries and one event,” *Jewish Culture and History* 7/1-2 (2004): 181-182; “Business culture and entrepreneurship in the Ionian Islands under British rule, 1815-1864,” *LSE Working Papers in Economic History*, 89 (2005): 10-13. This particular issue also received some coverage in the Corfiot press. The following articles do not appear in Gekas’ studies: “To Eparchiakon Symvoulion kai oi Israilitai” [The regional council and the Jews], *O Paratiritis* 17 February 1858, 1-2; [Leader], *Ta Kathimerina* 8 March 1858, 1-2; “To Eparchiakon Symvoulion Kerkyras kai o Paratiritis” [The regional council and the (newspaper) Paratiritis], *O Paratiritis* 17 March 1858, 1-2.

executive authority responsible for the compiling the list of qualifying names did not include Jewish merchants despite the fact that numerous, especially Corfiot Jewish merchants were both Ionian citizens and had been engaged in commerce for more than five years.

***Cronaca Israelitica*: the Newspaper and its Publisher**

It is within the political and social contexts described above that Giuseppe Nacamulli published the first issue of *Cronaca* on 22 August/3 September 1861. Nacamulli's newspaper was bi-lingual that is Greek and Italian and was published monthly from its first issue of August 1861 through to its final in May 1864. Its subtitle "periodico politico-morale" together with an accompanying note stating that "all profits" from its publication were intended for the education of the poor – "l'istruzione della classe indigente" – are clear indicators of how the *Cronaca* viewed itself. Furthermore its motto, taken from the Torah, "One law and one manner shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth with you" (Numbers 15:16) is yet another sign that is revealing of the publisher's attitudes and aims. Given these details it should not be surprising that an extensive amount of space²⁸ was dedicated to publicising the issue of Jewish Emancipation. However it would be incorrect to characterise the newspaper as only campaigning in favour of full rights for Ionian Jews. It also published public notices, biographical notes and obituaries, the opinions of learned rabbis on questions of religious law and morality as well as short fiction and divers news items. Thus the inclusion of the latter material tends to suggest that the *Cronaca* sought to educate a local Ionian Jewish leadership on matters concerning Jews and Judaism more broadly. That said one should not overlook or indeed ignore the possibility that motives other than the edification of Ionian Jewry may have influenced Nacamulli's decision to publish the *Cronaca*. As a practising *interveniente* Nacamulli, together with his fellow Jewish *intervenienti*,²⁹ stood to benefit from any potential changes to the existing laws governing the legal profession. Either way what is clear is that by publishing the *Cronaca* Nacamulli³⁰ and his editor A. Coen³¹ did not only establish the first Jewish newspaper in

²⁸ With the exception of a large American university library (UCLA) no complete set of the *Cronaca* is held in any of the major national and regional libraries of Greece or Israel. I have not been able to consult UCLA's copy but despite this a small number of individual issues are held in various archives in both Greece and Israel. Within these issues is the collected table of contents of *Cronaca*'s first two years (Anno II, No 12 - 1/13 August 1863) that provides a very clear thematic overview of its content.

²⁹ "Pros to Exochotaton Lord Megan Armostin" [To His Excellency the Lord High Commissioner], *Patris*, May 29/June 9, 1849, 103.

³⁰ For a brief overview of Giuseppe Nacamulli's career as a publisher, writer and translator see Rena Molho, "Nachamoulis, Iosif," *Egkyklopaideia tou Ellinikou Typou* [Encyclopaedia of the Greek Newspaper Press], (Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, National Research Foundation, 2008), 4v, 3:229 and the commemorative pamphlet *In memoria di Giuseppe Nacamulli* published in Corfu on the first anniversary of his death (1887).

the Greek speaking world but also sought to influence the political agenda vis-à-vis Jewish Emancipation at a time when *Enosis* or the political union of the Ionian Islands with the neighbouring Greek Kingdom was becoming increasingly likely. If anything the *Cronaca's* most significant aspect (and its most enduring legacy) was that it externalised a process that had been hitherto private and confidential. Before the newspaper's appearance the advancement of issues directly concerning Ionian Jews was an *ad hoc* and piecemeal process in which the islands' Jewish elite appealed through formal and long-established political channels³² for redress of grievances. The *Cronaca* removed this air of confidentiality and openly publicised a plethora of issues directly affecting the lives of Ionian Jewry. In the period since press freedom was established some issues, such as the commercial assessors law among others,³³ did receive some attention but the issue of Jewish Emancipation *per se* does not appear to have been raised in the evolving print media of the islands. Thus in the politically polarised climate of the early 1860s the appearance of the *Cronaca* did not go unnoticed either by the islands' press or by the authorities. To these responses we shall now turn.

Responses to the *Cronaca Israelitica*

The responses evoked by the publication of the *Cronaca* were in no way uniform nor indeed were they written by disinterested observers. They are however enough to enable us to present the basic thematic outlines that the newspaper's appearance and subsequent regular publication provoked. As part of their regular correspondence with their superiors in Britain, the Lord High Commissioner Henry Storks³⁴ and the

³¹ The pertinent literature of reference (Frezis, *O evraikos typos stin Ellada*, 162; Frezis, "Israilitika Chronika/Cronaca Israelitica," 461) list Giuseppe Nacamulli as "founder, publisher and editor." In all of the issues I consulted "A. Coen" is listed as editor without unfortunately any further details.

³² The numerous Registers of Petitions held in the extensive archive of the Colonial Office (COR 136/1032-1062) document a considerable number of appeals to the Lord High Commissioner by both Jewish communal leaders and individual Jews. Two such examples are: Petition 832 "Jewish Committee Corfu prays that a wall be erected round their cemetery," December 1862, COR 136/1060; Petition 519 "Governors of the Jewish Synagogue at Zante praying that an annual allowance may be allocated by the Government to the Synagogue for the education of the children of the Jewish community of that island," September 1859, COR 136/1054. For additional details on these and other petitions see Giorgos Zoumbos, "Israilitika Koimitiria tis Kerkyras" [Jewish cemeteries of Corfu] *Chronika (Kentrikou Israilitikou Symvouliou Ellados)* 138 (1995): 8-11; Giorgos Zoumbos, "Israilitiki koinotita Kerkyras" [Jewish Community of Corfu] *Chronika (Kentrikou Israilitikou Symvouliou Ellados)* 149 (1997): 19-22.

³³ The desecration of the Jewish Cemetery attracted relatively wide press coverage throughout the Islands. Although the Corfiot *Paratiritis* (Observer) provided the fullest coverage in the period from late May to August 1861, the *Ethnegersia* (National Rising) of Corfu, the *Foni Ioniou kai Rigas* (Voice of the Ionian and Rigas) of Zante and the journal *Lychnos* (Lamp) of the Cephalonian writer Andreas Laskaratos published comment and the full text of various letters of gratitude sent by numerous Rabbinical and other Jewish leaders in Italy and France. For articles on the commercial assessors law see note 27.

³⁴ After serving in a number of posts in the British military Sir Henry Knight Storks (1811-1874) became the last Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands in February 1859. For further biographical details,

protestant missionary William Charteris³⁵ each provide both an account of a significant antisemitic incident occurring in the immediate aftermath of the appearance of *Cronaca* as well as a more general account surrounding the paper's initial reception.

Storks places the appearance of the *Cronaca* clearly within the context of recent events. Having in mind the encyclical of Metropolitan Athanasius he wrote that the Jews of Corfu 'were flattered by the notice they had attracted'³⁶ and having 'gained courage, probably showed a little more exultation than was prudent'. Having thus brought into question the wisdom of the communal leadership Storks reported that 'amongst other acts of questionable discretion, they [the Jews] started a newspaper written in Greek' and continued declaring that,

"Only one number of this journal has appeared and although there is nothing in it which would offend the most sensitive Christian opposers of them and their religion, still a Jewish newspaper was a novelty displeasing to the ignorant and narrow minded amongst the Greek Christians."³⁷

Notice should be given as to how Storks juxtaposes the two opposing groups. Although critical of the Jewish leader's lack of "prudence" he views some of the Greek Christians as "ignorant and narrow-minded." The latter echoes a similar description sent a few months earlier at the time when desecration of the Jewish burial ground occurred. In the earlier dispatch Storks explains that the animus shown to the Jews was based on religious and economic grounds. The "[Greek Orthodox] people of these states," Storks writes,

E.M.Lloyd, "Storks, Sir Henry Knight (1811-1874)" rev. James Hunt, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, Online edition 2008 [accessed 18 February 2014].

³⁵ Reverend William Charteris (1822-1886) was a Protestant missionary in the service of the English Presbyterian Church. In November 1845 he and his wife arrived in Corfu in order to establish the Church's mission to the Jews of Corfu. The mission lasted until the end of the Protectorate. Charteris was one of numerous Protestant missionaries –attached to organisations such as the London Missionary Society, British and Foreign Bible Society, London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, American Baptist Missionary Union and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions- that dedicated the greater part of their lives to missionary, educational and medical work in Corfu and other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean. Further details on Charteris' mission are to be found in: "Mission to Corfu," *English Presbyterian Messenger*, 1845, 2, 107, "Missionary Intelligence Corfu," *English Presbyterian Messenger*, 1847, 308-309, "A Jewish missionary in the Ionian Islands," *The Jewish Herald*, May 1, 1870, 74-76 while the following cover in detail the work of other missions in Greece, Palestine and Asia Minor: Yaron Perry, *British mission to the Jews in nineteenth century Palestine* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), Theodore Saloutos, "American missionaries in Greece 1820-1869," *Church History* 24(2) (1955): 152-174, Gerasimos Augustinos, "'Enlightened' Christians and 'Oriental' Churches: Protestant missions to the Greeks in Asia Minor, 1820-1860," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 4(2) (1986): 129-142.

³⁶ Lord High Commissioner Sir Henry Storks to Secretary of State of the Colonies Henry Pulham-Clinton 5th Duke of Newcastle, 15 September 1861, Colonial Office Records 136/175, National Archives, Kew (hereafter Storks to Newcastle, 15 September 1861, COR 136/175).

³⁷ Storks to Newcastle, 15 September 1861, COR 136/175.

are “ignorant and prejudiced,”³⁸ “the tenets of the Greek Church are selfish and illiberal” and concludes that “other Christian religions, particularly the Roman Catholic, are looked upon as heresies of a formidable nature and the Turks and Jews are considered as out of the pale of humanity.”³⁹ Although rather frank and judgmental Storks’ comments were by no means novel. Like a number of his predecessors these comments reflected well-established and broader discourses⁴⁰ that viewed the Ionians as ‘unruly’ ‘an untrustworthy population’ and more broadly not fit for self-government. Returning to Storks’ dispatch on the *Cronaca*, he recounted the events surrounding the closure of the *Borsa* and specifically the decision of its members to exclude Jews,

“There is in the town of Corfu a Mercantile Exchange or “Borsa”, a private establishment, raised by shares and maintained by private subscription. The members of this society comprise almost the whole mercantile body of Corfu amongst whom are reckoned many members of the Jewish persuasion. On Thursday night, the 12th instant, a meeting was held at the Exchange, and which was convened for the purpose of excluding the Jews from that establishment. After a long discussion it was resolved to break up the society, sell all the furniture, and reconstitute it afresh. When steps are taken to reestablish the Exchange, the members of the Jewish persuasion will be of course excluded.”⁴¹

Storks ends his account of the *Borsa* incident by noting that a crowd gathered outside it during the meeting in question and that although the former Jewish members were ‘hissed’ at (and the Christians ‘cheered’) the ‘public tranquility was in no way disturbed’. William Charteris’ account of this incident does not differ substantively from Storks and it is especially noteworthy that Charteris, like Storks, does not consider the actual content of the *Cronaca* to be controversial. The point at which the two sources differ is the reason (or rather reasons) they each attribute for the antisemitic backlash at the *Borsa*. The relevant part of Charteris’ letter is as follows,

“The Jews have got into trouble again, a frequent occurrence in this place. They published a journal styled ‘The Israelitisch Chronicle’, which was very respectfully compiled and was of a very moderate political tone. But the editors did not disguise their intention to claim for the Jews privileges equal to those of other Ionian citizens, such as admission to seats in the Legislative Assembly, the right to plead as advocates in courts of

³⁸ Storks to Newcastle, 15 May 1861, COR 136/174.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ These discourses have been extensively studied in Thomas W Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity and Power in the British Mediterranean* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002) 15-55; Maria Paschalidi, *Constructing Ionian Identities: The Ionian Islands in British official discourses 1815-1864* (London: University College London, 2009, Unpublished PhD Thesis) 174-176, 247-263, 357-358.

⁴¹ Storks to Newcastle, 15 September 1861, COR 136/175.

law etc. A copy of this journal was laid on the table of the Exchange. It occasioned an uproar among the Greek subscribers to that institution. Backed by a large mob, they struck off the list of subscribers every Jew, and the ferment on both sides, in consequence of this act, continues. The Jews are very much crest fallen. They expected great things from the influence of their journal, but I had warned them that they might be disappointed and told them that there are better influences than those of journalism for the elevation of their race, and the vindication of their rights.”⁴²

The extract above seems to suggest that the reason for the incident at the *Borsa* was related to the demands the Jews of Corfu made for the acquisition of specific civil rights. Such a point of view contrasts with the reason given by Storks. Towards the end of his dispatch Storks makes it clear that he considered commercial rivalry as the reason behind the *Borsa* incident. Thus,

“The real cause of this animosity on the part of the merchants is that the Jews are almost entirely in possession of the oil trade in this island, and some members of the mercantile body think by the unworthy proceeding of excluding the Hebrews from the Exchange to do their trade an injury and secure some of it for themselves.”⁴³

Despite the differences of opinion in these accounts what is worth noting is that neither of the two cite religious reasons for the ‘animosity’ or ‘ferment’ against the Jews. Clearly they both understood that the *Borsa* incident was either politically or economically motivated. This fact is significant because it demonstrates a gradual and by no means complete shift away from Christian medieval contempt concerning Jewry and Judaism towards modern antisemitism, the latter prompted, at least at an ideological level, by secular motives. This is not to say that religious antisemitism disappeared completely from the Ionian Islands but simply that Storks’ and Charteris’ opinions document a steady secularisation of anti-Jewish thought symptomatic of Post-Napoleonic Europe when Jews across the continent were swept into a very long and uneven process of civil emancipation. The Ionian Islands were not immune from this process and thus the *Borsa* incident remains important because it created a precedent. And although the hostility the Jews were exposed to on that day does not appear to have been repeated (at least for the duration of the *Cronaca*’s publication), the antisemitic rhetoric it articulated set the tone for the numerous antisemitic responses published subsequent to this incident. That said not all the responses to the *Cronaca* were negative some were indeed quite the opposite.

⁴² *English Presbyterian Messenger*, 1861, 353.

⁴³ Storks to Newcastle, 15 September 1861, COR 136/175.

A case in point is the newspaper *Alitheia* (Αλήθεια) or ‘Truth’, a short-lived Cephalonian title⁴⁴ closely allied to members of the ‘Old’ Radical Party. In October 1861, just over a month after the first issue of *Cronaca* appeared, *Alitheia*⁴⁵ greeted positively *Cronaca*’s publication declaring that it ‘followed in the path of progress and common benefit’ and praising the “Heptanesian people” for its proven “inclination” towards “progress, liberty and equality.” However it did also comment on the British Protectorate. It did not shy from criticising the “oppressive system of foreign rule” that deprived the Jews of the Ionian Islands their “natural and social rights”⁴⁶ the latter rights being in accordance with the “spirit of the century in which we live.”⁴⁷ And finally in its carefully worded conclusion the editorial not only acknowledges the antisemitic prejudice of the past but also urges its readers to attempt to overcome them,

“The people of the Heptanese, far removed from the spirit of medieval bigotry, must, in accordance with Christian principles and the divine commands of Jesus, consider all people as brothers and that only through such mutual love and tolerance may the barriers which divide humanity be obliterated and therein bring about the government of God on earth.”⁴⁸

The example set by the *Alitheia* editorial was repeated in a letter⁴⁹ sent to the editor of the *Cronaca* by the Cephalonian author and translator Augustinos Livathinopoulos (Agostino Livathinopulo).⁵⁰ Like *Alitheia*, Livathinopoulos was similarly critical of the British Protectorate. Written just under a year after the *Alitheia* editorial Livathinopoulos’ letter not only casts doubt on whether the British authorities truly⁵¹

⁴⁴ The *Alitheia* was published for just over a year (September 1861- September 1862) and openly advocated the principles of the ‘Old’ Radical Party, namely those first enunciated by Ilias Zervos Iakovatos and Iosif Momferratos in the 1850s. Further details are to be found in Eri Stavropoulou, ‘Alitheia’, *Egkyklopaideia tou Ellinikou Typou* [Encyclopaedia of the Greek Newspaper Press], (Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, National Research Foundation, 2008), 4v, 1:171 & Maria Kotina, *To Rizospastiko kinima sta Agglokratoumena Eptanisa* [The radical movement in the English-occupied Septinsula], (Athens: Panteion University PhD Thesis Unpublished, 2011), 314-315.

⁴⁵ “Diafora” [Varia], *Alitheia*, 14/26 October 1861, 18-19.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ [Agostino Livathinopulo], [Letter, 10 July 1862], *Israilitika Chronika/Cronaca Israelitica*, Anno II No 2, 10/22 September 1862, 221-222.

⁵⁰ Augustinos Livathinopoulos published extensively in numerous Greek literary journals and worked as a newspaper editor and publisher within the Greek Orthodox community of Egypt. See Manolis Yialourakis, *I Aigyptos ton Ellinon* [Egypt of the Greeks], 2nd Edition, (Athens: Kastaniotis Publications, 2006), 556 & Eugenios Michailidis, *Panorama itoi eikonografimeni istoria tou dimosiografikou typou tis Aigyptou* [Panorama: An illustrated history of the (Greek) Newspaper press of Egypt] (Athens: Centre for Hellenic Studies, 1972), 155-156.

⁵¹ Ibid., 221

wished to grant Ionian Jews full civil rights but also introduces a new factor into the equation: nationality. In reply to the argument advanced by the opponents of Jewish emancipation, namely that the Jews of the Ionian Islands were serving British interests, Livathinopoulos openly and enthusiastically declares, “The Ionian Jews are Greeks with a Greek conscience, and in their veins flow pure Greek blood! They are Greek, they are not English, nor are they servants, as others are, of the English! The Jews are unjustly slandered.”⁵² Within the same letter he adds that Ionian Jews together with the island’s Christians “have in common,” the “same language, memories, tribulations, interests.” Livathinopoulos’ enthusiasm is reiterated in another letter⁵³ sent to the editor of *Cronaca*. In this case it was published following a key event in the lead-up to the formal cession of the islands to Greece, the visit of a Greek delegation headed by the War of Independence hero Admiral Constantinos Kanaris. In the admiral’s honour public celebrations were held in which the civic and religious leadership of the island participated and gave patriotic speeches praising *Enosis*. Written by the Cephalonian poet Epaminondas Anninos⁵⁴ the letter praises the Jewish community for their ‘love of the fatherland’ and envisions that under Greek rule Ionian Jews will be ‘counted’ as ‘brothers’ within Greece and will enjoy all the ‘benefits’ of belonging to the Greek nation, benefits that they were “deprived” of under British rule. The humane and philosemitic attitudes expressed by Livathinopoulos, Anninos and the *Alitheia* editorial were by no means coincidental. Although it is not clear whether Anninos or Livathinopoulos actually belonged to the “Old” Radical Party it is likely that the *Alitheia* editorial, although unsigned, was written by Panagiotis Panas,⁵⁵ a well-known veteran and member of the Radical Party of the 1850s. From its inception the short-lived *Alitheia* made it clear that it shared a political and ideological kinship with the earlier (and equally short-lived) radical newspapers *Anagenesis* and *Keravnos*. And through this kinship came a renewed commitment to the basic tenets of Ionian radicalism, namely national self-determination for the Greek populations of East under ‘foreign rule’ and the restoration of these peoples within a free and independent state in accordance with the “true and healthy principles of liberty and progress.”⁵⁶ That said the

⁵² Ibid., 222.

⁵³ “Filanthropia kai patriotismos. Epistoli tou k[yriou] Epaminonda Anninou Kefallinos/Filanthropia e Patriotismo. Lettera del Sig.r Epaminonda Anino, Cefaleno,” *Israilitika Chronika/Cronaca Israelitica*, Anno II, N. 11, July 1/13, 1863, 370-371.

⁵⁴ Brief biographical details can be found in Ilias Tsitselis, *Kefalliniaka Symmikta* [Cephalonian Miscellanea], (Athens: Leonis Press, 1904), 844.

⁵⁵ Over the course of his career as a journalist and militant of Ionian radicalism Panas wrote for, or edited, a number of newspapers and literary journals. Details are to be found in Eri Stavropoulou, “Panas, Panagiotis,” *Egkyklopaideia tou Ellinikou Typou* [Encyclopaedia of the Greek Newspaper Press], (Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, National Research Foundation, 2008), 4v, 3: 414-415.

⁵⁶ Dinos Konomos, “Eptanisiakos Typos 1798-1864” [The newspaper press of the Ionian Islands], *Eptanisiakia Fylla* 5 (1964) 134; Eleni Calligas, *The “Rizospastai” (Radical-Unionists): Politics and nationalism in the British Protectorate of the Ionian Islands, 1815-1864*, (London: London School of Economics, PhD Thesis Unpublished, 1994) 140-167; Kotina, *To Rizospastiko kinima*, 314-315.

views expressed in these responses are really not new. They fit within a larger anti-colonial discourse repeatedly and openly espoused by the Radicals since the advent of press freedom in 1848. This discourse did not only advocate the social and political transformation of Ionian society based on values it regarded as being universal and eternal to human nature but it also viewed this transformation as part of the work of Christianity and divine providence.⁵⁷

Having examined some of the responses that openly welcomed the *Cronaca*'s publication it would be wrong to think that the philosemitism embodied in these responses was only held by the Radicals or their allies. The Cephalonian writer Andreas Laskaratos is one such example. By no means a radical (and indeed quite critical of them)⁵⁸ he advocated the general improvement of Ionian society through education and adoption of 'true' Christian morality. In his 1856 work *Ta mysteria tis Kefalonias*⁵⁹ Laskaratos took aim at various cultural and religious practices castigating the clergy and peasant folk of his native island for perpetuating inhumane and outdated customs. He describes, for example, the rituals of Good Friday as essentially idolatrous serving merely to 'renew and empower'⁶⁰ Christian hatred of Jews rather than instill any Christian ethic. Six years after the publication of this work, at the time of the desecration of the Jewish cemetery of Corfu, Laskaratos wrote in praise of Athanasius' encyclical appealing to like minded priests to not only follow this prelates's example but also take "charge" of the "religion" because like "a carriage left to horses" it has been "left in the hands of the mob."⁶¹ It is in the context of these rather paternalistic and judgmental remarks that one should read his comments on the *Cronaca*. These comments appeared in two consecutive issues of his monthly journal the *Lychnos* (Λύχνος) or "Lamp."⁶² His first comments, published in the thirty-first number of *Lychnos* were deliberately ironical and directed to a number of local politicians or "rabble-rousers" as he preferred to call

⁵⁷ Eleni Calligas, "The 'Rizospastai' (Radical-Unionists)" 152.

⁵⁸ For a brief analysis of Laskaratos' opposition to the Ionian Radicals and Panagiotis Panas in particular see, Spiridon Asdrachas, "O 'Lychnos' tou Andrea Laskaratou. Kata ton 'neon' rizospaston kai tou 'anarchismou' tou Panagioti Pana" [The 'Lychnos' of Andreas Laskaratos. Opposed to the 'new' radicals and to the 'anarchism' of Panagiotis Panas], *Epta Imeres Kathimerini*, May 30, 1995, 21-22.

⁵⁹ [The mysteries of Cephalonia], (Cephalonia: Kefallinia Press, 1856).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, §12, 57.

⁶¹ *Lychnos*, June 22, 1861, [Andreas Laskaratos] *Apanta* [Collected Works] (Athens: Atlas Publications, 1959), 3v, 3:339-340.

⁶² The *Lychnos* was published with long periods of interruption over a period of nearly forty years (1859-1896). The newspaper's stated aim was the 'moral, religious and political transformation' of Ionian society but it was often used by Laskaratos as a platform to challenge and attack the ideas and politics of many of his detractors. See Giorgos Alisandratos, "Lychnos," *Egkyklopaideia tou Ellinikou Typou* [Encyclopaedia of the Greek Newspaper Press], (Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, National Research Foundation, 2008), 4v, 3: 81-83.

them. The *Cronaca*, Laskaratos wrote, “thanked”⁶³ all those “rabble-rousers” that utilised it as “rabble-rousing material” thereby enabling them to continue their work.⁶⁴ In the subsequent month’s issue Laskaratos followed up these comments reporting that the Jews of the Ionian Islands asked, by way of the *Cronaca*, “us to consider them as *humans* and citizens, *equal to us!*”⁶⁵ and added that the Jews’ request brought to light “our wretched medieval situation,” and how “we are drowned in corrosion and in the darkness of barbarism.” The metaphors of corrosion and barbarism are furthermore repeated throughout the rest of the editorial and are used as a pretext to attack the Zantiot politician Konstantinos Lomvardos and his supporters. By way of conclusion Laskaratos called upon his “brother Israelites” to show for the moment “patience” because the present generation was born at a time when “the European wind of progress” had not yet blown in “our islands.” “The degree of inanity of the mob’ and ‘the corruption of our leaders,” Laskaratos continues, does not permit the desired equality of Christians and Jews to come about immediately. Although one can’t doubt the sincerity of Laskaratos’ attitudes on Ionian Jewry his remarks about the *Cronaca* are essentially another variation on the same theme, namely the alleged backwardness of Ionian society and irresponsible mob politics of the local political leaders.

While Laskaratos was making the abovementioned comments, a number of other newspapers expressed doubt if not outright hostility concerning the publication of the *Cronaca*. The paper that initially set the tone for what was to follow was a Corfiot newspaper closely allied to the *Enosis* cause the aptly named *Ethnegersia* or “National Rising.”⁶⁶ Just over a week after the *Cronaca* appeared the *Ethnegersia* published its opinion on it and made its opposition patently clear. Despite the *Ethnegersia*’s assurances that its opinions were not motivated by a “spirit of fanaticism” or “superstition,”⁶⁷ it began its argument with the claim that there was no need for an exclusively Jewish newspaper to defend the rights and interests of Jews. Such a defence, the paper continued, could be done through the existing newspapers and moreover Jewish rights and interests did not, in any case, need any defence. Another two claims about Ionian Jewry are particularly revealing and exemplify the gradual secularisation of anti-Jewish hostility within the Ionian Islands. Firstly it argues that despite the fact that on numerous occasions Ionian Jews demonstrated their support for “[Ionian] nationalism,” the “addition of eight hundred Jewish voters”⁶⁸ to the electoral rolls will

⁶³ “Dimosia Fylla” [Public (news)papers], *Lychnos*, November 14 1861; *Apanta Laskaratos* [Collected Works of (Andreas) Laskaratos], eds. Christina Micha, Michalis Meraklis, (Athens: Lychnies Publications, 1981), 5v, 1: 311-312.

⁶⁴ Kotina, *To Rizospastiko kinima*, 216-221, 247-263.

⁶⁵ “Alloimono” [Alas!], *Lychnos*, 14 December 1861, *Apanta Laskaratos* [Collected Works of (Andreas) Laskaratos], eds. Christina Micha, Michalis Meraklis, (Athens: Lychnies Publications, 1981), 5v, 1: 324-325.

⁶⁶ For basic data on *Ethnegersia* see Konomos “Eptaniasikos Typos 1798-1864,” 113-114.

⁶⁷ “Diafora” [Varia], *Ethnegersia*, August 14, 1861, 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

essentially be of no benefit either to the Jews themselves or the Christian majority because for “reasons beyond their control, they [the Jews] do not possess the requisite cognitive development.”⁶⁹ And secondly it explicitly insinuates that the Jews of the Ionians are serving the interests of the British colonial rulers because of their alleged affinity for “commerce.” The editorial’s conceptualisation of the Jews (and their alleged relationship to trade) is worth citing in full,

“A people that it is generally said is dedicated to commerce may be offered thousands of temptations by the Protectorate, the most commercially-minded people in the universe, and a half hour meeting may suffice in order to destroy forever the national question.”⁷⁰

The insinuation made in this rather clumsily written extract is not difficult to decipher: the Jews, like the British are two similar peoples, both dedicated to commerce and thus given this fact it is possible that they could ally themselves, to the detriment of the Ionian Islands, by deliberately sabotaging the “national question,” namely the cause of *Enosis*. On this basis the editorial ends by declaring that it is a ‘national duty’ to “fight”⁷¹ the *Cronaca*. Although quite dismissive in its attitudes towards granting Jews the vote the fact that the *Ethnegersia*’s editors actually included it is of itself important and indeed foreshadows the electoral politics of the islands in the post *Enosis* period.⁷² Taken together with the clear insinuation that the Jews could potentially betray the *Enosis* movement one begins to notice how antisemitic stereotypes such as alleged Jewish omnipotence, treachery and avarice were instrumentalised for obvious political purposes. And judging from a follow-up editorial⁷³ it is clear that the *Ethnegersia*’s editors did not neglect their “duty to fight.” This second editorial once again sought, by way of conjecture and insinuation, to discredit the Ionian Jews rather than addressing in any substantive way the issues the *Cronaca* was attempting to place into the public arena. After asserting that the Jews “do not have the courage to tell us to which party they belong,”⁷⁴ the editorial deliberately equates the Jews with the Reformist Party,

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² In the period following *Enosis* the notion of the so-called “Jewish vote” first appeared in Greece and was deliberately exploited by Corfiot politicians in order to attack their opponents and disseminate the antisemitic charge that the Jews of Corfu decided the outcome of an election by voting collectively as a block. One such example concerns the parliamentary elections of 1885: Gekas, “The Port Jews of Corfu,” 187-189; Kostas Dafnis, *Georgios Theotokis* (Corfu: Society for Corfiot Studies, 1998) 86-87.

⁷³ “Ta Israilitika Chronika” [Cronaca Israelitica], *Ethnegersia*, August 30, 1861, 1-2.

⁷⁴ Ibid

“due to the nature of their [the Jews’] demands, it is obvious that they belong to the Reformist party, and even if there existed any other reason against them, this reason alone suffices for the majority of the Septinsula’s population to justifiably fight them.”⁷⁵

Given the fact that the *Ethnegersia* made it clear from its inaugural issue⁷⁶ that it opposed the Reformist Party (and was thus in favor of Union of the Ionian Islands with Greece) it would seem quite odd, given also the opinion of the Radical paper *Alitheia*, that it would take such a negative stance in relation to Jewish Emancipation. An examination of the *Ethnegersia*’s reactions to another event directly related to Ionian Jewry may provide a clue for this negative stance. In response to the news of the desecration of the Jewish cemetery of Corfu and the subsequent publication of Athanasius’ encyclical, *Ethnegersia*’s coverage began with a brief two-line news item stating that “some Jew has slandered us in the *Diavoletto*.”⁷⁷ In the subsequent issue it reminded the Jewish community that as far as “religious tolerance” was concerned the “Greek nation” was “not inferior to any other”⁷⁸ and furthermore followed up this statement by casting doubt, in light of the Encyclical’s publication, whether the Orthodox faithful did truly commit the desecration.

Although lacking the strident and openly confrontational tone of its articles on the *Cronaca*, these reactions are illustrative of the type of nationalist discourse it promoted. This discourse was in favour of Union but had an exclusivist and defensive streak. It sought to propagate a discourse of “us” (the Orthodox Greeks) and “them” (everybody else), in which the alleged faults and shortcomings of their opponents are emphasised and the virtues of the Greeks exulted. In practice this meant defending the Greek nation against unjustified slander, as in the case of the cemetery desecration, but it also meant, as in the case of the *Cronaca*, openly attacking Ionian Jewry as allies of the Reformists and/or the British. Furthermore it often meant tapping the reservoir of antisemitic myth and stereotype in order to strengthen the paper’s point of view. And the *Ethnegersia*’s second editorial contains one such example. In its concluding remarks it draws upon the well-known blood libel. It reports that a certain Stefanos Palatianos (in all likelihood a book collector or antiquarian) possessed a “treasure of Jewish books, one of which is by a certain Rabbi Neofytos, that according to Palatianos will greatly benefit the national question.” The “book” by “Rabbi Neofytos” is none other than the antisemitic tract *Anatropi tis thriskeias ton Evraion kai ton ethimon ton* [Refutation of the Religion and Customs of the Jews] originally published in Iași (Jassy) in 1803 by a Jewish convert, Noah Belfer,⁷⁹ who following his conversion to the Orthodox Church took monastic

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ “Prooimion” [Preamble], *Ethnegersia*, February 16, 1861, 1.

⁷⁷ “Diafora” [Varia], *Ethnegersia*, May 6, 1861, 3.

⁷⁸ “Diafora” [Varia], *Ethnegersia*, May 13, 1861, 4.

⁷⁹ For details on Belfer and the Blood Libel charge more generally see, Hermann Strack, *The Jew and Human Sacrifice* (London: Bloch Publishing, 1909); Vincenzo Manzini, *L’omicidio rituale i sacrifici umani* (Torino: Fratelli Bocca Editori, 1925), 195-196; Alan Dundes, *The Blood Libel Legend: A Case-Book in Anti-*

vows and the name Neofit. The work was subsequently translated into Greek and published in Iași in 1818. Further editions were published in Nafplion (1834), Istanbul (1834) and more importantly Corfu (1861) and Zante (1861). Its basic thesis was a variation on a well-established theme, the blood libel. It specifically propagated the idea that a certain class of rabbis performed ritual murder in order to utilise their infant's blood for various religious purposes. The *Ethnegersia* was not however the first newspaper to make use of this tract. Another Corfiot newspaper closely allied to the "New" Radical Party⁸⁰ of Lomvardos the *Nea Epochi* (Νέα Εποχή) or "New Epoch" had, in an article published a few weeks earlier, attacked the Jews of Corfu and furthermore written approvingly of the Neofytos tract.⁸¹ This particular article was like the analogous articles of *Ethnegersia* in response to the publicity surrounding the desecration of the Jewish cemetery of Corfu. Given this precedent it should not be surprising that the *Nea Epochi's* first (and only) editorial relating to the appearance of the *Cronaca* was written in a similar pejorative (and antisemitic) vein. Appearing only two days before the *Ethnegersia's* second editorial *Nea Epochi* argued, like *Ethnegersia*, that the Jews were somehow being dishonest by not declaring with which party they are affiliated and what their aim was in establishing the *Cronaca*. Specifically it wrote that "If the Jews wish to acquire full political and civil rights," then they should have "announced their principles, because their concealment gives us the right to say that we do not trust them, because they [the Jews] did not honestly and courageously express what path they wish to follow at the time of enjoyment of civil rights."⁸² What is clear from the preceding extract and indeed that one that follows below was that part of the rhetorical strategy of the opponents of Jewish emancipation was to avoid addressing the deeper question of emancipation. Instead other issues are highlighted such as the alleged partisan allegiance of Ionian Jewry, their disloyalty to the *Enosis* cause and its corollary their lack of patriotism, but also their supposed ingratitude for the 'tolerance' historically shown to them in the Ionian Islands. The latter is especially well-illustrated here,

"If they wish to indoctrinate us, then they are again mistaken, because we have no appetite to deny our religion. If they wish to defend their religion, then again they are mistaken because no one has insulted them, If they demand for us to tolerate them, then again they are mistaken, because nowhere did they [the Jews] find more tolerance and love, and [especially] during the medieval persecution, than in the Corfu and the East."⁸³

Semitic Folklore (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Ariadna Camariano-Cioran, *Les académies princières de Bucharest et de Jassy et leurs professeurs* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1974), 413-431; Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: "Ritual Murder," Politics and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 264.

⁸⁰ Kotina, *To Rizospastiko kinima*, 325.

⁸¹ "I pros ton evraion apandisis mas" [Our reply to the Jew(ish) author], *Nea Epochi*, July 8, 1861, 3-4.

⁸² "Israilitika Chronika" [Cronaca Israelitica], *Nea Epochi*, August 28, 1861, 2.

⁸³ Ibid

This oft-repeated and self-serving interpretation does not clearly correspond to any basic understanding of the evolution of Christian-Jewish relations in the Ionian Islands and should not be given any credence. The content of *Nea Epochi's* responses to *Cronaca* parallel those of *Ethnegersia*. Both papers sought to belittle the issue of Jewish Emancipation by denigrating Jews *in toto* through accusations such as treachery and dishonesty. But looking back at the context in which these two papers and indeed the other newspapers discussed in this article appeared one notices that all these newspapers were first published in the period 1858-1861. This was a period of particularly intense political ferment in the Islands. It was also at this point that divisions within the ranks of the Ionian radicals became more acute and eventually led to a split between the predominately Cephalonian "Old" Radicals and the "New" Radicals congregating around Konstantinos Lomvardos. As a consequence of the long internal exile of the movement's founders the centre of gravity and support of the Radicals moved from Cephalonia to Zante and with it to the leadership of Lomvardos. The latter took the Radical movement in a different direction by advocating the internationalisation⁸⁴ of the Ionian Question and the intervention of the Great Powers to bring about a diplomatic solution. This point of view alienated leaders such as Momferratos and gradually led to the formation of the "Old" Radicals and the "New" or Unionist radicals as well as newspapers that reflected this split.⁸⁵

Having in mind the material examined above it appears that the Old Radicals, by way of the *Alitheia* editorial, were in favour of Jewish Emancipation while the Unionist Radicals were dismissive and hostile. The latter hostility appears however to have waned, although not quite disappeared, as the *Cronaca* continued to be published. And it is interesting to notice that on the eve of the British decision to end its rule⁸⁶ the intemperate language that *Ethnegersia* initially used was largely gone. In response to a specific article of *Cronaca* on the progress of the "Ionian Jewish Question" it acknowledged the Jews' "justified" claims for civil rights but it also argued that if the "Jews are truly Greeks," "they must, like the Greeks, make sacrifices"⁸⁷ in the short term in order to bring the ultimate goal, *Enosis*, the latter granting them full rights. Furthermore the *Cronaca*, must not in the meantime the *Ethnegersia* argues, provoke "scandals" and upset the "harmony, unanimity and tranquility" of Ionian society. Following, a few months later, the announcement of the British government to

⁸⁴ Kotina, *To Rizospastiko kinima*, 295.

⁸⁵ These newspapers were the Unionist *Nea Epochi*, *Ethnegersia*, *Foni Ioniou kai Rigas* [Voice of the Ionian and Rigas] and the Old Radical *Alitheia*, *Alithis Rizospastis* [True Radical] and *Anagenesis* [Rebirth].

⁸⁶ The decision to cede the island was taken by the British cabinet on December 8, 1862, the Queen granting her assent the following day and the Greek Minister being officially informed soon after. For further details see Harold Temperley, "Documents illustrating the cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece 1848-1870," *Journal of Modern History*, 9(1) (1937): 48-55.

⁸⁷ "Pros tous sympolititas mas Israilitas" [To our fellow citizens Jews], *Ethnegersia*, November 8, 1862.

relinquish the Islands the *Ethnegersia* wrote that although it thought it “unnecessary”⁸⁸ to concern itself any longer with the issue of Jewish Emancipation, given that *Enosis* was near, it did however make one final and noteworthy attack against the *Cronaca*, arguing that it did not represent the interests of the community whose rights it advocated and that it ought to cease “provoking scandals in our society.”

Admittedly in comparison to the *Ethnegersia*'s initial reactions to the *Cronaca* these comments are an improvement. But one should lose sight of the fact that although the general tone of the commentary improved the target of critical attack was still Jewish. The *Cronaca* may have been a narrower target but a Jewish target nonetheless. Moreover this final set of reactions in the *Ethnegersia* demonstrates that even though political developments allowed for an easing of hostility towards Ionian Jewry the newspapers that reflected the views of the Unionist Radicals retained a basic kernel of antisemitism.

Conclusion

Having examined above a number of the published as well as private responses to the *Cronaca* a few tentative concluding remarks are in order. Firstly the *Cronaca*, with its publication of editorials advocating Emancipation of Ionian Jewry, served as a catalyst for an open and public dialogue on a plethora of issues concerning the legal and social standing of Ionian Jews, thereby exposing them to either praise or hostility, depending on the circumstance of each case. Secondly the responses the *Cronaca* garnered were by no means all the same and given that most originated in the party-affiliated press they reflected the party and factional divides of the period. It is thus clear that while the Old Radicals supported Emancipation the New Radicals rejected it with immense hostility. But the *Borsa* incident together with Andreas Laskaratos' responses complicate matters. Although quite vocal in his criticism of traditionalist Cephalonian society Laskaratos was equally vocal in his criticism of both the Old and New Radicals, while as far as the *Borsa* is concerned, it is by no means clear under what circumstances its governing body decided to exclude Jews. If anything these latter factors tend to suggest that the *Cronaca*'s impact went beyond the divisive politics of *Enosis* of the early 1860s and reflected other social, political and ideological forces at work such as interreligious rivalry within the Corfiot merchant classes or a political vision for the future of the islands that was not necessarily predicated on *Enosis*. *Enosis* however did take place and with it the recognition of equal rights, under the treaty arrangements and 1864 Constitution, for Ionian Jews and Roman Catholics. This leads us to the third, and final, point. Although the extension of full legal rights ultimately fulfilled the goals of *Cronaca* it did not correspond to any significant shift in attitudes concerning Jews within Greece. Despite the general goodwill demonstrated at the time of *Enosis* and the subsequent abolition of all British-era discriminatory laws as well as the election in 1870 of Giuseppe Nacamulli

⁸⁸ “Diafora” [Varia], *Ethnegersia*, January 4, 1863, 4.

as an alderman of Corfu,⁸⁹ antisemitic hostility did not take long to reappear. Within a few months of the formal handover of late May 1864 an antisemitic incident took place in Corfu between Greek conscripts and Jews.⁹⁰ In August of the same year the newly established paper *Koinotis Kerkyras* led with editorials accusing ‘Jewish usurers’ as being the cause of the poverty and high rate of indebtedness of the Corfu peasantry.⁹¹ Of themselves these events tell us little about the perpetuation of antisemitism in the islands but in a manner reminiscent of earlier ‘regime changes’ in the islands they remind us of the repeated pattern of latent antisemitism rising to the surface during moments of political change and adjustment. Moreover if these events are considered together with a number of other incidents directly concerning Jewish participation in the 1872 and 1875 parliamentary elections⁹² in addition to the well-known blood libel riots⁹³ of 1891 questions begin to arise as to how Ionian Jewry was incorporated into the Greek Kingdom and to what extent the latter actually enjoyed their political rights in practice. These questions however belong to another story.

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⁸⁹ “La libertà non è una vana parola in Grecia,” *La Famiglia Israelitica* (1869) 145-146.

⁹⁰ *Despatches from Her Majesty’s Consuls in Corfu, Zante and Cephalonia, containing information on the state of those islands since the withdrawal of British Protection, and their annexation to the Kingdom of Greece*, London, British Parliamentary Papers 1867 [3827]

⁹¹ [Leader], *Koinotis Kerkyras*, 24 August 1864, 1; [Letter to the Editor], *Koinotis Kerkyras*, 9 September 1864, 1-3 and reply by Jewish merchant Ilias de Mordo [Letter to the Editor], *Ellas*, 29 August 1864, 4.

⁹² According to reports and other complaints made at the time Corfiot Jews were threatened and physically prevented from voting on polling days. Gunnar Hering, *Ta politika kommata stin Ellada* [Political Parties in Greece] (Athens: Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece, 2004), 2v, 1: 406-407, 665 and Note 72 above.

⁹³ Eftychia Liata, *I Kerkyra kai i Zakynthos ston kyklona tou antisimitismou* [Corfu and Zante in the cyclone of Antisemitism] (Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, National Research Foundation, 2006); Maria Margaroni, “Antisemitic rumours and violence in Corfu at the end of the 19th century,” *Quest Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of the Fondazione CDEC*, 3 (2012) [www.quest-cdecjournal.it/focus.php?id=306].