

## **Romaniote and Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Era**

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### **Part 1 - Ethnic Identification and Inter-communal Conflict in the Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries)**

More than sixty years after the publication of Joshua Starr's landmark text on the history of Byzantine Jewry, we are able to reflect on nearly a century of expansive study in the field of Graeco-Jewish history. From a corpus of ancient Jewish inscriptions in the Balkans to studies on the typology of gravestones and onomastics in Rabbinic *responsa*, there is no question that more material is available today regarding the Greek Jews than ever before. There may even be something akin to a renaissance in the field, with multiple associations springing up throughout America, Europe and Israel, spurred perhaps by the resurgence of Greek museums in New York as well as Greece. For all the presentations and publications that emerge addressing various features of the history of Greek Jewry, however, I cannot help but see that there are several areas of glaring lacunae when one considers the entire corpus of Graeco-Jewish history as a whole. Chief among these is an inadequate documentation of the history of the Romaniote<sup>1</sup> Jewish community in Greece, principally in the period of Ottoman domination.<sup>2</sup>

More attention has been paid to the Romaniote Jews in recent works such as Rozen's *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul*<sup>3</sup> and Ben-Bassa and Rodrigue's *The*

*Jews of the Balkans*<sup>4</sup>, but a concise text remains to be written and many facets of Romaniote Jewish history still warrant illumination. A comprehensive redaction of Romaniote history lies beyond the scope of this article, if not the capability of contemporary scholars given the limited amount of source material available. We can, however, focus on a particular aspect of the Romaniote experience in the Ottoman era, one that I feel is inadequately addressed in the current literature: the two centuries following the fall of Constantinople when the civilization and culture of these Greek Jews was not only razed by the Ottoman conquest, but challenged by the mass incursion of Sephardic refugees from Catholic Europe.<sup>5</sup>

The events of this period altered the face of Levantine Jewry and are primarily responsible for the relative obscurity to which Romaniote history has been relegated. At the time of the fall of Constantinople, the Romaniotes were an acculturated, productive and influential community, responsible for Mishnaic glossae, mystical works of Kabbalah, astro-nomic texts and translations of Aristotle and Euclid. By the end of the seventeenth century, the vast majority of Balkan Jewry would be Spanish speaking, with only a small number of Romaniote enclaves existing principally in Ottoman backwaters.

Due to the dearth of works that compile the myriad sources from this period into a single text, the eclipse of Romaniote civilization in the Ottoman state is often glossed over or merely mentioned in passing. The dominance of Ladino and Spanish customs among the Jews of the Ottoman Empire is presented in these works as something akin to a natural evolution, with the Romaniotes acquiescing, even rejoicing, in the incontrovertible superiority of their Sephardic co-religionists. This view is also coupled with an idyllic take on Ottoman administration vis-à-vis Balkan Jewry that sees the Turks as the protectors, if not at times the partners and advocates, of Jews in the Levant.

This approach is partially a result of the pro-Turkish and ethnocentric leanings of the original Sephardic scholars of Balkan Jewry (Rozanes<sup>6</sup> and Franco<sup>7</sup>), but Hacker has demonstrated that this attitude extends back much further, even to the contemporary writings of Elias Kapsalis of Crete.<sup>8</sup> This lack of critical examination given to the works of Rozanes and Franco has resulted in the perpetuation of their prejudice. Thus, claims of Sephardic cultural dominance and utopian relationships between Jews and Ottomans are rarely contested in the literature.

Tamir states in her text: "...the Iberian Jews, as a larger group of undoubtedly higher culture, who had actively participated in the social, political and intellectual life of Spain and Portugal...rapidly absorbed...the indigenous Romaniots [sic]...and lent them their idiom, customs, and life style. Soon a uniformly Sephardic community emerged, economically and culturally superior..."<sup>9</sup> This same sentiment is echoed by Ben-Bassa and Rodrigue in their work on Ottoman Jewry. "...the Sephardim eventually emerged triumphant ...It was the weight of their scholars, their culture, and the dynamism of their many rabbis which tipped the scales..."<sup>10</sup>

Even Salo Baron, a fairly even handed scholar of Jewish history, falls victim to this prejudice. In *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* Baron states that: "The Sephardic and Romaniot (sic) communities now lived almost exclusively under Ottoman rule and its system of legislation characterized by great stability and basic protection of human rights. The Jews reciprocated with a growing sense of Turkish patriotism [and] communication between the various Jewish communities became intensive..."<sup>11</sup>

In *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, Shaw claims:

In the towers of babel that were the Ottoman Jewish communities during the century after the ingathering, it was

Castillian Judeo-Spanish ...that above all else was the main force which brought all the national and regional groups together...its force of adaptation enabled it to assimilate [the other Jewish groups], helped considerably by the fact that its advocates dominated the community culturally and economically to a far greater extent than did their competitors...Its influence toward unity was supplemented and supported, moreover, by the fact that all Ottoman Jews now shared a common ruler and Middle Eastern civilization and way of life, while their separate legal interpretations were largely reconciled and brought together by the codification of Jewish laws.<sup>12</sup>

In the passages just quoted, Shaw and Baron have synthesized the entire tradition sprung from the opinions of Rozanes and Franco, presenting the presumed idyllic confraternity of Jews and Ottomans while reasserting the cultural dominance of the Sephards.

Accordingly, most scholars who record Jewish history in the wake of Rozanes and Franco ignore the Romaniote element in the empire and its relations to the Sephardic community and Ottoman rulers. The Romaniotes are mentioned as mere footnotes if they are even mentioned at all. Echoing the approach of Rozanes and Franco results in an inauthentic representation of Ottoman Jewish history. Careful erudition of various primary sources that include tax registers, Rabbinical *responsa* and tombstone inscriptions demonstrates that the Romaniote Jewish communities vigorously defended their cultural traditions in the face of the Sephardic newcomers. Although the Sephardic tradition would ultimately emerge as the dominant thread in Ottoman Jewry, this was by no means inevitable and the Romaniotes were able to establish cultural strongholds in some regions of the Empire, mainly Epirus, Crete, Central Greece and the Morea.

The Ottoman attitude towards their Romaniote subjects was markedly different from the way Sephardic Jews were viewed and this, in part, assisted the Spanish communities in

their move to establish cultural dominance in the Balkans. Relations between Romaniotes and Ottomans were far from ideal and distinctions must now be made between Jews of various ethnic and cultural affinities when discussing the Jewish experience under the Sultans.

## I

In 1453, with the final subjugation of Byzantine territory by the Ottoman Turks, the 2,000-year history of Hellenic-Jewish symbiosis came to an abrupt end. The fall of Constantinople, with few exceptions<sup>13</sup>, resulted in the definitive incorporation of Romaniote Jewry within the confines of Sultan Mehmed's empire. The cultural heirs to the magnificent achievements of Judaism in the Hellenistic age, these Romaniotes of Byzantium were at the end of two centuries of cultural and intellectual foment when their capital fell to the Ottomans.<sup>14</sup>

In the fifteenth century alone, a golden age of scholarship arose within the Byzantine Romaniote communities. Nourished by stimuli from their Greek and Jewish heritage, scholars like Kaleb Afendopoulou, David Kalomitis, Mordechai Khomatianos, Isaias Missinis and Solomon Chrysokokkos<sup>15</sup> were responsible for translations of Aristotle, mystical works of Kabbalah, Biblical commentaries and medical texts.<sup>16</sup> The communities that produced these authors called themselves *Romaioi* like their Christian neighbors and their prayer rite the *Mahzor bene Romania*, or "religious rite of the Roman lands." Their culture was a unique fusion of Greek and Jewish traditions and colloquial Greek translations of the Books of Jonah, Ruth, Lamentations and *Pirke Aboth* were employed in their synagogues.<sup>17</sup> Greek folklore provided the template for Romaniote creative writing and in almost every sphere of daily life the Romaniote communities were profoundly influenced by the surrounding

Greek Orthodox society.<sup>18</sup> Seasonal festivals, the game of *astragaloï* and the circular singing dance, the *choros*, were institutions among the Greek Jews.<sup>19</sup> The Romaniote prelates dressed in a manner similar to Orthodox priests, adopted the local Christian practice of crowning couples with marriage wreaths (*stefanomata*)<sup>20</sup> and religious prayer was heavily influenced by the "nasal intonation" of Greek Orthodox hymns.<sup>21</sup>

These features showed the Romaniotes to be an acculturated product of their Greek milieu. Byzantine Jewish scholarship was both well integrated and heavily influenced by the intellectual currents of the Paleologan period. In the last generation before the fall of Constantinople, there were as many Romaniotes involved in secular studies as there were devoting themselves to traditional religious work. But with the demise of the Byzantine state, the impetus for further cultural development within the Romaniote community was lost.

The cultural framework of the Ottoman Empire was markedly different from that of the Byzantine: Turkic in language, Arabic in culture and thought, decidedly eastern in its orientation. Furthermore, it would appear that the Turkish conquerors were initially hostile to the Romaniote Jews they encountered, seeing them as part of the subjugated Byzantine population. The choice of the name *Romaniote*, an appellation which the Byzantine Jews used to describe themselves, indicated their cultural outlook and sense of belonging to the population of *Romaioi*, or Greek speakers in the Balkans. This implication was not lost on the Romaniotes' new Ottoman masters who initially included the Greek-speaking Jews in the Orthodox *millet* under Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios. It would not be until two years after Sultan Mehmed's conquest that the Jews would be incorporated into their own *millet* under Chief Rabbi Moïssis Kapsalis.<sup>22</sup>

Contrary to the opinions of authors like Rozanes and

Franco, examination of primary sources demonstrates that the Turks did not distinguish between *Romaioi* of the Jewish and Christian faith and treated the Romaniotes just like the rest of the Orthodox population. As citizens of the fallen empire, the Romaniote Jews were subject to the Turkish policy of *surgun*, or forced deportation to various regions of the empire. The Christian Greek population also was viewed as eligible for the *surgun* but, as we shall see below, the Sephardic Jews were entitled to the status of *kendi gelen*, or voluntary migrants. Examination of Ottoman poll-tax registers (*cizye tahrir defterleri*)<sup>23</sup> demonstrate that part or all of the Romaniote communities in Rumelia, Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly and Asia Minor were deported to Constantinople.

These Ottoman expulsions were not a benign process and wrought great hardship on the Romaniote communities who became subject to this policy. The Cretan Romaniote, Michael Balbo, who witnessed the fall of Constantinople and the tumultuous *surgun* deportations, recorded the disastrous effect that this action had on the Romaniotes. "They send the Sons of the Lady down to the pit, while the taskmasters pressure us steadily. At this time the King...decreed that the poor, wandering nation go into exile, and went to gather them up to the daughter of Edom, Constantinople..."

Everyone lamented. The robbery and disaster, the famine and the sword and the forced conversion of children at this time defy comforting. All are affected and desolated by the oppressor..."<sup>24</sup>

This statement would seem to present evidence of the fact that Romaniote children suffered the same fate as Greek Orthodox children, conversion to Islam and introduction into the *Janissary* army, and paints a picture of crisis and upheaval. This hardly compares with the situation depicted by Rozanes and Franco, one that imagined the Jews welcoming the Turks as Heavenly liberators and cooperating with their new masters for the advancement of Ottoman interests. The

statements of these historians frankly do not mesh with the evidence presented in our primary sources and clearly represent an example of a redaction of the Sephardic experience, grafted onto the history of Byzantine Jewry.

The recordings of Michael Balbo are similar to the notes left to us by other Romaniotes of the period, many of whom echo his claims and relate the utter desolation of several Romaniote communities.<sup>25</sup> The scholars Mordechai Khomatianos and Shalom Anavis were captured and held for ransom by the Turks while other Jews were killed or sold into slavery. Cities like Demotika, Lamia and Verroia may have had their entire Jewish population exiled to Istanbul. Twenty to thirty Jewish communities from Roumeli and Asia Minor were completely transferred to the new Ottoman capital and would result in the complete absence of Jews from Asia Minor until the arrival of the Sephards.<sup>26</sup> Lowry's examination of Ottoman tax registers for Thessaloniki shows that the once prosperous Romaniote community was completely uprooted and no Jews lived in the city until the influx of Spanish exiles.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the depopulation of Romaniote Jews from the cities of Macedonia, Thrace and Roumeli would allow the Sephards to establish their initial cultural strongholds in the Balkans.

Thus, in the three decades following the Ottoman conquest there were hardly kind words or charitable feelings for the Turks on the part of Romaniote Jews. The Romaniotes were a demonstrable part of the conquered Byzantine population, both from a political-geographic as well as cultural standpoint. Rather than exempt them because of their religious beliefs, the historical record shows that the Ottomans meted out the same harsh treatment on the Romaniotes as they did on the autochthonous Christian population. As a result, a strong anti-Ottoman bias can be found among contemporary Romaniotes both within, as well as on the margins of Sultan Mehmed's empire.

Only one coeval Romaniote scholar, Elias Kapsalis, presents the Turkish conquest and Mehmed's policy towards the Jews in a positive light. This Cretan rabbi, who composed his history of the Ottoman Empire in 1523, relates that the Jews were actually invited to settle in Constantinople and... "[Sultan Mehmed] provided them with houses filled with all kinds of goodness in a place where formerly, at the time of the King of Byzantium, there were only two or three congregations..."<sup>28</sup> This sharp contrast to the stories of Romaniotes like Michael Balbo and Mordechai Khomatianos has been attributed to the fact that Kapsalis had not witnessed the disastrous conquest of Byzantium and his history is colored by the sanctuary provided to the Sephardic Jews in the wake of their expulsion.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, even this Romaniote author is guilty of viewing Byzantine Jewish history through the prism of the Sephardic experience.

Unfortunately, it is the altered history of Elias Kapsalis that was selectively cited by Salomon Rozanes, Moise Franco and Heinrich Graetz as proof supporting their idyllic representation of Ottoman-Jewish relations. These approaches have profoundly altered the understanding of the Jewish experience in the Ottoman Empire and obfuscated the fate of Romaniote Jewry following the fall of Constantinople. Only now, via careful evaluation of the sources left to us by contemporary scholars and Ottoman tax recorders can we realize that the Turks were not as charitable towards the Romaniotes as historians like Kapsalis, Rozanes and Franco would lead us to believe.

## II

Despite the ravages that followed in the wake of Byzantium's fall, the Romaniote community was able to establish a semblance of normalcy by the 1480s. As previously noted, the Greek Jews managed to incorporate themselves into an

autonomous *millet* along the lines of the Greek Orthodox community, and instituted a durable relationship with the Porte. Although the available information regarding the thirty years leading up to the arrival of the Spanish exiles is scant, it would appear that the 8,000 Romaniotes living in the capital<sup>30</sup> organized themselves into 25 congregations under Moissis Kapsalis who assumed the title of *Chief Rabbi and Metropolitan of the Jews of Istanbul*.<sup>31</sup> Much like the Orthodox Patriarch, Kapsalis was responsible for the administration of the Jewish community and presided over matters of religious importance as well relations with the government. As a recognized functionary of the Ottoman system, Kapsalis was granted a personal bodyguard and police force that he used to reinforce his position as well as to adjudicate matters in the Jewish quarters of the capital.<sup>32</sup> During Kapsalis' tenure as Chief Rabbi (*Hahambasi* in Ottoman records) the traditions of religious and secular scholarship were continued and the ancient rift with Istanbul's Karaite community<sup>33</sup> was healed.<sup>34</sup>

Moissis Kapsalis would hold the office of Chief Rabbi for approximately forty years (1455-1496/7)<sup>35</sup> and in that period the groundwork for the future Jewish community of the Ottoman Empire, both Romaniote as well as Sephardic, was laid. With nearly all Romaniote communities incorporated under Ottoman rule and a centralized nexus of power located in the largest community at Constantinople, an effective system was established whereby congregations, whether in the capital or on the periphery, could marshal resources to aid refugees, immigrants and pilgrims. This system would become particularly important once exiles from Spain began arriving on Ottoman soil in the fall of 1492.

The Iberian Jews had endured nearly a century of concentrated oppression in their Spanish homeland prior to the expulsion. Furthermore, they had endured untold hardships en route to the Turkish lands. Few Sephardic families arrived

in the Eastern Mediterranean without suffering some severe trauma. Many women were raped and now arrived with illegitimate children. Other families were robbed, separated, or sold into slavery by corsairs or Venetians.<sup>36</sup> Kapsalis brought the strength of his position to bear against the hardships of the Sephardic refugees and played an active role in the absorption of the new arrivals. The problems of providing food and shelter, as well as arranging for definitive settlement were assumed by the Chief Rabbinate. Kapsalis even sent out circulars to various communities, even as far as Crete which was outside the Turkish domain, asking that the Romaniotes do their utmost to assist the destitute exiles. Rozanes, Franco and scholars in their tradition tend to gloss over this period in Romaniote-Sephardic relations. They prefer to present the Romaniotes as culturally backward and immediate devotees of Spanish scholarship, culture and language.<sup>37</sup> After the Spanish arrival, the Romaniotes are barely mentioned and the reader is left to assume that, with few exceptions, the Greek-speaking Jews were rapidly assimilated into the rich Sephardic tradition, their Byzantine past readily cast off and forgotten.<sup>38</sup> Just as in the case of the rosy picture these scholars painted *vis-à-vis* Turkish-Jewish relations, careful examination of the sources shows that Romaniote assimilation into the Sephardic tradition was not an inevitable event. The historical record shows that the Romaniotes made a concerted effort to preserve their culture, although large-scale success was hindered by the *surgun* deportations as well as Ottoman policies.

### III

The initial impression that the Spanish Jews must have given to their Greek co-religionists is hard to imagine. The Romaniote Jews were mainly simple merchants and traders and, with the exception of a few esteemed scholars, were un-

aware of the elaborate Jewish culture that had been synthesized in Spain. Despite the hardship they had endured, the Iberian Jews carried with them the Renaissance culture of Western Europe. Many were highly acculturated and multilingual, accomplished in various fields and possessed of immense literary and religious resources. Some Romaniotes complained that the Spanish Jews in their midst were too lax in their religious observance.<sup>39</sup> Sephardic Jews speculated that the Romaniotes were not authentic Jews, as they did not speak Judeo-Spanish and too closely resembled the local Christian population in terms of language and culture.<sup>40</sup>

These initial misgivings would soon boil over into open conflict, aided by the self-conception of the Sephardic Jews as well as Ottoman attitudes towards the Romaniotes. From the Ottoman standpoint, the two communities occupied very different positions although they technically belonged to the same *millet*. As members of the conquered Byzantine community, the Romaniotes had the status of *surgun* and were saddled with various taxes and restrictions on mobility.<sup>41</sup> The Iberian newcomers were given the status of *kendi gelen*, or voluntary migrants. They suffered none of the disabilities imposed on the Romaniote Jews and consciously appreciated this difference in rank.

Furthermore, the Western culture of the Sephardic Jews and their advanced knowledge of Europe made them valuable to the Porte and, from the beginning of the sixteenth century onward, we find a number of Sephardic Jews in important positions at the court of the Sultan.<sup>42</sup> The Romaniotes on the other hand, even those few who excelled in scholarship, astronomy and medicine, were of little import to the Ottomans. Stavroulakis has even theorized that the very "Greekness" of the Romaniote Jews may have been a source for Turkish repulsion.<sup>43</sup>

These factors further enhanced the self-image of the Sephardic Jews and there is some evidence that, certainly

among the elite, a type of *Turkicization* in matters of cultural taste and dress occurred among the Iberian exiles. This can be witnessed in a contemporary watercolor contrasting the style of Sephardic dress with that of the Romaniotes. The Spanish Jew wears a high scarlet cap reminiscent of the headgear of Ottoman officials, whereas the Romaniote sports the simple yellow turban prescribed by Turkish law.<sup>44</sup> This difference in dress and appearance would have made a further distinction between the two communities. The Spanish Jews recast themselves as "Turkish" Jews and identified with the ruling caste, while the Romaniotes remained a part of the subjugated Greek community. The Sephards referred to the Romaniotes and their synagogues as *Gregos*, a term that carried an ethnic appellation but also served as a pejorative.<sup>45</sup> Clearly, being a member of the autochthonous community was not seen as anything positive and there are even examples of Romaniotes who created myths behind the origins of their surnames in order to establish kinship with the Iberian Jews.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the very Greek name Sakis is purported to indicate a Sicilian origin for the Jews who bear it.<sup>47</sup> Needless to say, this association seems very difficult and rests on shaky onomastic ground.

These feelings of Spanish Jewish superiority were not a new development, but merely a continuation of traditions nurtured by the cultural achievements of the Iberian Peninsula. Even when they were still resident in Spain, the Sephardim seem to have maintained a special sense of their own pre-eminence and elect status relative to other Jewish communities with which they came into contact. For example, the Sephardic Jews upheld a tradition that they alone were descended from the nobility of Jerusalem while the Jews of other countries were derived from the *hoi polloi*.<sup>48</sup> The vicissitudes of the Inquisition perhaps only hardened this self-concept and embedded the value of Sephardic cultural heritage in the exiled population. Individuals had

risked life and limb, lost entire fortunes and countless family members in order to preserve their unique traditions. Their very nature, their "Hispanicity," was intimately tied in to their Jewishness. They were loath to discard this inherited culture in their new homeland, especially in exchange for a Greek Jewish tradition which they found unsophisticated and distasteful.<sup>49</sup>

Within a few years of the Iberian immigration, we begin to see inter-communal conflicts of an ethno-cultural nature. The Romaniotes assumed that the new arrivals would assimilate into their communities the same way the Karaite sectarians had. The Sephards felt that, because of their superior culture and status, their laws and traditions should be imposed on the indigenous Jews. Rather than adopt the prayer rite and mores of the Graecophones, the Spanish Jews set up their own synagogues, communities and courts of religious law, thereby abjuring an accepted precept of the Jewish world.<sup>50</sup> Elias Mizrahi, the Romaniote successor to Moissis Kapsalis as Chief Rabbi, sent an epistle to the Sephardic Jews, reminding them that Talmudic injunction made it incumbent upon their communities to accept Romaniote ways.<sup>51</sup> The Sephardic Jews, however, had established their own religious tribunals in Thessaloniki and Istanbul, and the Ottoman government and Jewish personalities in the Porte supported these courts. Sephardic scholars countered that they were not compelled to obey Mizrahi's decision because their status as exiles allowed them to continue the practices of the country from which they came. The Sephards status as *kendi gelen* and "Turkicized" Jews may also be seen as reasons which exempted them from adopting the traditions of the vassal *surgun* Romaniotes.

#### IV

The Sephardic attitudes and religious injunctions passed

in the first years of their sojourn in the Ottoman lands can be viewed as a jumping off point for the steady erosion of Romaniote practice and influence in the communities of the Empire. The importance of Sephardic Jews to Turkish relations with the West and the prominence of Spanish Jewish physicians, tax collectors, farmers and adventurers at the Sultan's court minimized the importance of the Romaniote position of Chief Rabbi and Metropolitan of the Jews.<sup>52</sup> The Sephards had never maintained such a post in Spain and saw it only as a hindrance to their own autonomy. Following the death of Chief Rabbi Elias Mizrahi in 1526, Sephardic pressure and conflict with the Romaniotes would result in the abolition of the post.<sup>53</sup>

These factors, along with the decimation of Romaniote communities because of the *surgun* deportations, played significant roles in the eventual assimilation of the Greek-speaking Jews. Yet, even in this period, we can see glimmers of Romaniote resurgence and resistance to Sephardic domination. Romaniote leaders continued to prescribe bans against the Sephards, restating the claims of Chief Rabbi Mizrahi regarding preservation of native custom and the importance of defending their unique traditions. Rabbi Elias Ha-Levi Konstantinis, Mizrahi's successor as nominal leader of the Romaniote communities, issued several *responsa* reinforcing Romaniote traditions in the face of Sephardic challenges.<sup>54</sup> He also took the initiative to compile and publish the first printed edition of the Romaniote prayer book (the *Mahzor bene Romania*) at Constantinople in 1510. This was, in the main, an attempt to counteract the deleterious effect the readily available Sephardic prayer book had on Romaniote traditions.<sup>55</sup> The demand for the Romaniote *Mahzor* among Greek Jews is evidenced by the fact that two other editions were reprinted over the course of the century.<sup>56</sup>

In areas where the Romaniote population was scant (such as in Macedonia, Thrace and Eastern Roumeli), there was

hardly any resistance to the imposition of Spanish Jewish traditions. Even at Constantinople, where because of the *surgun* deportations the Romaniotes would outnumber the Sephardic Jews until the late seventeenth century, the pre-eminence of Spanish Jews within the community would lead to a gradual erosion of Greek Jewish custom. An inventory of the bills of divorce given at Istanbul in the early eighteenth century are but one of the many testimonies to the attrition of Romaniote traditions in the capital.<sup>57</sup> Identifiably Romaniote names like Polychronos, Papoulou, Irene, Diana and Esteroula are common in divorce papers from the seventeenth century, but began to disappear during the early 1700s. Of the 120 male names identified in the documents, only 4 are traditionally Romaniote. Bornstein-Makovetsky attributes this to the gradual assimilation of the Greek Jews by the numerically and politically stronger Sephardic element.<sup>58</sup>

As Romaniote Jews in the capital gradually assimilated to the vigorous Sephardic tradition, observance of their native Greek culture and prayer rite fell into abeyance. This fact also had a negative impact on the Romaniote communities on the periphery, as they looked to Constantinople for their leadership, scholarship and the publication of their *mahzor*. As mentioned above, the Greek Jewish prayer book was published three times over the course of the sixteenth century but failed to be published again after 1567. It would appear that by the early 1600s, with the readily available Sephardic prayer book disseminated throughout the Balkans, there was no longer a need for a specifically Romaniote edition.

With the truncation and assimilation of the leading Romaniote community at Istanbul, the Greek Jews were left to their own devices when dealing with the Sephards in their communities. In most instances this meant a fairly rapid acculturation over the first few decades of the seventeenth century. Only in the territories of mainland Greece and the

islands of Crete and Corfu were the Romaniotes able to resist Spanish inroads and absorb a sizable proportion of the exiles. The Romaniote dominance was aided by the fact that a relatively small number of Spanish Jews sought to settle in the regions of Epirus, Central Greece and the Morea. The Iberian exiles were also not attracted to the Jewish settlements on Corfu and Crete, which belonged to Venice at the time of the expulsion from Spain. Nevertheless, these Venetian territories attracted Italian Jews expelled from Apulia and Sicily and they were just as prone to conflict with the Romaniotes as other Sephardic cohorts.

During the 1530s, the rabbinical court of Arta in Epirus issued rulings that supported Romaniote practice in the face of Sephardic and Italian opposition.<sup>59</sup> In the neighboring Epirote community of Ioannina, the Romaniote and Sephardic congregations officially agreed to remain separate in 1577.<sup>60</sup> Despite this accord between the two communities, marriages between Greek and Spanish Jews were initially regarded as outside the faith.<sup>61</sup> These measures reinforced the dominance of the Romaniote community and, as a result, Sephardic customs and practices are conspicuously absent from the *responsa* literature in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Epirus.<sup>62</sup>

The turbulent relationship between Jews and the Venetian authorities on Crete limited the numbers of Italian and Sephardic migrants. As a result, in a list of able-bodied Jews compiled for Chania in 1536, there are a dearth of Sephardic names while Romaniote surnames like Mavrogonatos, Geniattis, Milopotamitis and Korchidis are prominent.<sup>63</sup> A similar situation existed in Corfu where, because of privileges granted to them by the Venetians, the Romaniote community was able to dominate Jewish immigrants until the late seventeenth century.<sup>64</sup> The ethnic identification inherent in these communities can be deduced from a letter sent by Corfu's Italian Jews to the Venetian Doge, complaining about

Romaniote intransigence in regards to their privileges.<sup>65</sup> The leaders of the Apulian congregation refer to themselves as Italians while the Romaniotes are called *Jews of the Greek Nation* and *Native Corfiote Hebrews* throughout the text.<sup>66</sup> Clearly, this letter from seventeenth century Corfu not only identifies the Romaniotes as members of an indigenous community associated with the "Greek Nation," but also emphasizes their dominance over the Italian immigrants.

The examples set by communal relations in Crete and Corfu convey a pattern that is equally identifiable in the communities of Central Greece and the Morea. The economic depression of these regions relative to Thessaloniki, Istanbul and the Northern Balkans inhibited a heavy Sephardic influx. Furthermore, the large Greek Orthodox presence in Epirus, Thessaly and the Peloponnesus would have reinforced Romaniote traditions in the face of the Spanish Jews, who were isolated from their cultural centers in Macedonia and Istanbul. The Romaniotes preserved their own synagogues in Patras and Mistra and examination of funereal inscriptions from these cities reveal a distinct Romaniote presence down to the late eighteenth century.<sup>67</sup> The Greek Jews also remained dominant in the city of Chalkis, where the powerful Kakamos clan held sway over the course of two centuries.<sup>68</sup> A consideration of Jewish tombstones in Chalkis not only demonstrates the continued presence of a viable Romaniote community, but also shows that traditional Judeo-Greek customs of burial were maintained here as well.<sup>69</sup>

## V

In essence, careful examination of the historical sources available to us renders the claims of scholars like Rozanes and Franco untenable. These pioneers of Balkan Jewish studies should be recognized for their landmark works and contributions to the field, but their presentation of Ottoman-

Jewish relations and Sephardic-Romaniote interactions must be reconsidered in light of the evidence presented above.

While it is fairly obvious that the Sephardic Jews benefited from Ottoman policies and supported the Turks, the situation was quite different for the indigenous Romaniote Jews. Far from welcoming the Ottomans as liberating saviors, or being treated as potential allies by the Turkish conquerors, the Romaniote Jews suffered the same harsh treatment that was meted out to the Christian population of the former Byzantine Empire. Reduced to the vassal-like status of *surgun*, the Romaniotes were disdained and maltreated by the Turks as well as by the Sephards who eventually settled in their midst.

Furthermore, the Greek language and traditions of the Romaniotes consciously separated them from their Spanish coreligionists and account for the ethnic appellations (*Jews of the Greek Nation*, *Gregos*, etc.) present in our sources. The Romaniotes' Judeo-Greek customs had reached their zenith during the last Byzantine generation and were jealously preserved whenever possible. The historical record simply does not support the reconstructions provided by early scholars of Balkan Jewry. Rather than eschew their "inferior" culture, the Romaniotes made valiant attempts to resist Sephardic assimilation and, in regions where the Spanish Jews did not achieve numerical superiority, eventually succeeded in absorbing the new arrivals. Rather than recede into the shadows of Sephardic grandeur, the Romaniotes preserved their unique culture and continued to thrive, albeit in isolated enclaves of mainland Greece and the islands.

Based on the material now available to scholars of Levantine Jewry, statements such as: "It is true that the [Romaniotes and Sephards] had their severe differences...but at the same time...what always united them...was their Jewishness,"<sup>70</sup> can no longer be considered authoritative. Without question, more research needs to be done on the universal Jewish

experience during the *Turkokratia*. But forthcoming publications must take into account the demonstrably different social, cultural and historical experiences of the Greek and Spanish Jews as presented in primary sources. The sweeping claims and generalizations of the first generation of Balkan Jewish historians no longer have a place in a balanced consideration of Greek Jewish history.

### Part II--Jewish Participation in the Greek Nationalist Movements of the Nineteenth Century

The events of the Greek Revolution of 1821 and the century-long struggle for liberation that ensued in its wake, have never been sufficiently recorded from a historical perspective. Long shrouded in the myth of a heroic national rebirth, the true story of this period was never primarily recorded, nor transmitted in a cogent form. Reconstructions from individual memoirs and sparse governmental documents are possible, but such records are woefully scant, especially as compared to the information available regarding the American, French, Russian, and other major revolutions. One consequence is that a true balanced history of the struggle for Greek Independence may never be written. In the matter how the Romaniote and Sephardic Jews responded to Greek nationalist foment, and the effect of the irredentist movement on each community, has not been properly investigated. The lack of primary sources and firsthand accounts play an important role in this regard but, unfortunately, the prejudices of the early historians of Balkan Jewry are also partially responsible.

Although the history of the Greek Jews stretches back to the time of Alexander the Great, the historical record of Greek Jewry is riddled with so many lacunae that the composition of a complete, chronological history would be a daunting, if not impossible, task. While certain epochs, such as the later

Byzantine and early *Turkokratia*, are fairly well illuminated, we are once again in the dark when it comes to the seminal period of modern Greek history, the years which encompass the movement toward Greek Independence and the rebirth of the modern state. The first historians of Balkan Jewry, Moses Franco<sup>71</sup> and Solomon Rosanes,<sup>72</sup> were Sephardic Jews who left us with a poorly documented,<sup>73</sup> one-sided, history based on their own prejudices.

The descriptions of Rosanes and Franco have subsequently been echoed with little alteration by successive generations of historians addressing the Jews of Greece in the modern era. Thus Shaw claims that: "During the height of the Greek revolution, five thousand Jews were massacred in the Morea along with most of the Muslim population, numbering about twenty thousand in all. In Tripolizza (sic!) alone 1,200 Jews were massacred along with uncounted Turks...Jewish communities on the islands (sic!) of Sparta, Patras, Corinthos, Mistra and Argos were wiped out by bands of Greek rebels along with those of Thebes, Vrachori, Attica and Epirus."<sup>74</sup>

This same story is repeated by Moissis Caimis who claims: "Up to the time of the Greek insurrection (1821) there were several Jewish congregations in Greece proper...but most of their members were killed by the insurgents, who thus vented upon these peaceful citizens their inveterate hatred of the tyrant of their fatherland."<sup>75</sup> Ausubel further elaborates on the situation as related by Caimis. "The Greek Wars of Liberation...brought mistreatment and misunderstanding for those Greeks who were Jews...[In the Morea] the Jews...were massacred to the last man. This blood letting marked the beginning of anti-Jewish excesses that have not yet come to an end in Greece and have led to the emigration of thousands of Jews."<sup>76</sup>

These reports are heavily dependent on the work of Solomon Rosanes, who was not an eye witness to the events of the Greek insurrection and made many claims and allegations

without citing proper sources.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, most presented evidence regarding Jewish mistreatment at the hands of the Greek insurgents revolves around the above-cited massacre at Tripolitsa, where 5,000 Jews were slaughtered after the fall of the city.<sup>78</sup> This massacre is well recorded in several memoirs and contemporary reports from the revolutionary theater,<sup>79</sup> and it was a central focus of Franco and Rosanes in their works on the plight of Greek Jewry in the nineteenth century. The massacre at Tripolitsa is incontrovertible. The Turks and all their allies were butchered. Nonetheless, discussion of the massacre by Franco and Rosanes amply illustrates their focus regarding the Jewish communities of the Balkans. As Sephardic Jews, these authors largely reported on how events affected their communities in Greece and largely ignored the experiences of the indigenous Romaniote Jews who lived in the Peloponnesus, Thessaly, Epirus and the Aegean littoral.

With very few exceptions, the Sephardic Jews identified with and fervently supported the Ottomans,<sup>80</sup> worked against the Greek revolutionaries<sup>81</sup> and many times, fell victim to the animosity of the insurgents when the Ottomans lost a battle. What is missing in too many commentaries is the different pattern found among the Romaniote. The majority of Romaniote Jews identified with the Greek nationalist ideology of their neighbors and supported Hellenic irredentist efforts both during the initial movement for Greek independence and over the course of the nineteenth century. While Romaniote Jews were probably not involved in atrocities against their own co-religionists or religious institutions, they did flock to the standards of the Greek Revolution, operated as irredentists in the regions of Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia, fought as *Makedonomachi* and served loyally in the Greek armed forces.

While Sephardic Jewish affinity and support for the Ottomans has been readily examined and explained by sev-

eral authors,<sup>82</sup> it has been somewhat more difficult for scholars to comprehend Romaniote solidarity with the Greek Christians during the nationalist foment of the nineteenth century. In order to do this, it is necessary to shed preconceived notions regarding Greek Jewry based on the experiences of the Sephards and European Jews as a whole. First and foremost, the Romaniote Jews were a rural or semi-urban community, as opposed to the Sephards, who congregated in urban/economic centers, living closely with the Turkish authorities.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the Romaniotes were concentrated in areas with large Greek Orthodox populations and their language, manner of dress and religious customs were heavily influenced by their Christian neighbors.<sup>84</sup> Romaniote men dressed "*a la Palikari*, wearing the...fustanelle, with a high fez on the head, and a heavy tassel hanging down the neck,"<sup>85</sup> and their women had familiar Greek names like Eftychia, Efthymia, Kalomoira and Chrysoula.<sup>86</sup> Romaniote rabbis wore vestments similar to Orthodox clergy, and mutual traditions such as *stefanomata* and *paratsoukli* were ubiquitous. The Romaniotes' family names were nearly always Greek. Common Romaniote surnames in the regions of mainland Greece included Hatzopoulos, Politis, Bakolas, Konstantinis, Mourtzoukos, Chajidhimiou, Vrachoritis and Koutsomitis.

While all Jews were afforded a certain degree of protection under Ottoman law, the Romaniotes were treated in a markedly different manner from their Sephardic co-religionists. The Romaniotes had a separate, subservient, status (*surgun*) as opposed to the Spanish Jews (*kendi gelen*),<sup>87</sup> were subject to the *paidomazoma*<sup>88</sup> and derided by both Sephards and the Turks, perhaps solely because of their Greek cultural mores.<sup>89</sup> Given their linguistic and cultural affinities with the Greek Christians and their status in the eyes of the Ottomans and Sephardic Jews, many Romaniotes sympathized with the nationalist endeavors of their Christian compatriots.

Additionally, the Enlightenment-influenced values and positions of leaders like Rigas Pheraios and organizations such as the *Philiki Etereia*, would have also attracted Romaniote support and sympathy.

In the years leading up to the Greek Revolution, numerous Romaniote Jews, for one reason or another, were agitating against the Ottomans. Chalkiote Jews were enthusiastic supporters of the Greek nationalist cause,<sup>90</sup> chief among them the highly educated members of the Krispis and Kohen clans, who were initiated into the *Philiki Etereia*.<sup>91</sup> Romaniotes in Arta<sup>92</sup> and Ioannina<sup>93</sup> were also anti-Turkish and active supporters of the Greek nationalist cause. Particularly in Ioannina, we find Romaniotes in the employ of Ali Pasha, which decidedly put them in the anti-Ottoman camp once Ali broke with the Sultan. These included Ali's agent Yesoulas and his chief banker, Raphael, as well as the arms suppliers Isaac Gorelis and Basil Noutzos.<sup>94</sup>

With the commencement of hostilities in March 1821, many Romaniotes flocked to the standards of the Greek rebels.<sup>95</sup> Members of the aforementioned Krispis and Kohen clans joined the ranks of the revolutionary forces, with one of the Krispis serving as a chieftain under Kriezotis.<sup>96</sup> Likewise, members of the Adam and David families contributed to the short-lived nationalist efforts in Macedonia.<sup>97</sup> Moissis Gaster, an associate of Alexander Ypsilantis, assisted in the initial revolutionary activities in the Romanian principalities and helped Ypsilantis escape into Austria after the crushing defeat at Dragashani.<sup>98</sup> Ypsilantis also maintained close relations with the Chief Rabbi (*Haham-Bashi*) of Iasi, who was a fervent supporter of the Greek revolutionary movement.<sup>99</sup>

A Jewish physician from Zakynthos, using the *nom de guerre* Hatzi-Ioannis, fought as a comrade of Andreas Metaxas and distinguished himself in several conflicts.<sup>100</sup> In recognition of Jewish support for the revolution and espousal of enlightened ideals, the National Assembly held at Epidaurus under

President Alexander Mavrokordatos recognized the Jews of Greece as equal citizens of the Greek nation on January 1, 1822.<sup>101</sup> At that time, only one other country in all of Europe (France) recognized their Jewish citizens as equal under the law.

Romaniote participation in the Greek nationalist and irredentist movements did not cease with the realization of Greek Independence in 1832, but continued throughout the century. Romaniote Jews joined irredentist bands and fought as *makedonomachi* in Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia. Tsakalos Sakis, a Romaniote physician from Larissa, participated as an irredentist during the period of the Macedonian insurrection.<sup>102</sup> He and his band operated in the region of Lake Giannitsa and Sakis was wounded, as well as partially disabled, during a conflict with Turkish regulars. In the later nineteenth century, a Romaniote *klepht* named Rabinos, operated in the Macedonian region around Thessaloniki,<sup>103</sup> and the journalist Daniel Bessos also fought as a *makedonomachos*.<sup>104</sup>

In the Graeco-Turkish war of 1897, 200 Jews, the majority of them Romaniotes, fought in the Greek armed forces. Many of them, including Avram Matalon, M. Konstantinis and H. Avram Koen were cited for valor and bravery.<sup>105</sup> Matalon and Konstantinis, among others, would go on to distinguished military careers, with Matalon eventually achieving the rank of colonel and Konstantinis receiving the Commander's Cross of the Order of the Savior.

In conclusion, the history of the Jews of Greece as written by Rosanes and Franco and those who echo their sentiments, is solely reflective of the political stance and experiences of a single Jewish community, the Spanish-speaking Sephards. Given their own experiences under Ottoman hegemony and their unique Greek cultural and ethnic affinities, Romaniote Jews had a different general profile. They supported and assisted their Christian compatriots in the struggle for lib-

eration. Although there were atrocities committed against civilian populations by combatants on all sides. An extrapolation of the Sephardic Jewish experience to the Romaniote community is inaccurate and obfuscates the true historical record.

The period encompassing the birth of the modern Greek state was a difficult time for both Jewish communities in Greece. The ravages of war despoiled many important Jewish centers and both Romaniotes and Sephards fell victim to the antagonisms of one or the other warring parties. Over the course of the nineteenth century, ancient Jewish communities like Sparta, Tripolitsa, Nafpaktos and Thebes were eradicated, never again to be revived. Indeed, at the end of the Greek War of Independence, only the Romaniote community of Chalkis emerged unscathed from the conflict. Nonetheless, it remains imperative to recognize the separate experience of the Romaniote Jews of Greece in this period and pay tribute to their participation and sacrifice for the Greek nationalist cause.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The indigenous Greek speaking Jewish inhabitants of Greece, the Balkans and Asia Minor.

<sup>2</sup> Bowman, Steven. *The Jews of Byzantium: 1204-1453*. (University of Alabama, 1985). Starr, Joshua. *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire: 641-1204*. (Athens, 1939). Starr, Joshua. *Romania: The Jewries of the Levant After the Fourth Crusade*. (Paris, 1949). Sharf, Andrew. *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade*. (New York, 1971).

<sup>3</sup> Rozen, Minna. *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul: The Formative years, 1453-1566*. (Boston, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Benbassa, Esther and Aron Rodrigue. *The Jews of the Balkans: The Judeo-Spanish Community, 15<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries*. (Oxford, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Principally Spain, Portugal and Sicily, but Southern Italy, France, Germany and Hungary must be included to a lesser extent.

<sup>6</sup> Rozanes, Solomon. *Divre Yeme Yisrael be-Togarmah*, vols. I-II. (Tel-Aviv, 1930).

<sup>7</sup> Franco, Moise. *Essai sur l'histoire des Israelites de l'empire ottoman depuis le origins jusqu'a nos jours*. (Paris, 1897).

<sup>8</sup> Hacker, J. The Surgun System and Jewish Society in the Ottoman Empire (Hebrew). *Zion*, 55(1), (1990), 50.

<sup>9</sup> Tamir, V. *Bulgaria and Her Jews: The History of a Dubious Symbiosis*. (Tel-Aviv, 1979), 58.

<sup>10</sup> Ben-Bassa, E and A. Rodrigue. *The Jews of the Balkans*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Baron, Salo W. *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 18. (New York, 1952-1980), 120-121.

<sup>12</sup> Shaw, S. *The Jews in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*. (New York, 1991), 56.

<sup>13</sup> Namely the Romaniote communities in the Morea, Corfu, Zakynthos and Crete.

<sup>14</sup> A discourse on Romaniote achievements under the Paleologan emperors can be found in Bowman, S. *The Jews of Byzantium*, 129-170.

<sup>15</sup> More commonly known by his Hebrew name Shlomo ben Eliahu Sharbit ha-Zahav. See: Bowman, S. *The Jews of Byzantium*, 147.

<sup>16</sup> Bowman, S. *The Jews of Byzantium*, 164-166.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 166.

<sup>18</sup> Krivoruchko, J. A Case of Divergent Convergence: The Cultural Identity of Romaniote Jewry, Abstract. *Cultural Identity in the Balkans: Convergence vs. Divergence*. (Ghent, 2003), 6.

<sup>19</sup> Roth, C. *Venice*. (Philadelphia, 1930), 316-317.

<sup>20</sup> Responsum of Rabbi Isaiah of Trani. Cambridge, MS 474, 63b.

<sup>21</sup> Krivoruchko, J. A Case of Divergent Convergence, 6.

<sup>22</sup> Kapsalis, E. *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, vol. I, ed. Aryeh Shmuelevitz. (Jerusalem, 1975), 81-82.

<sup>23</sup> Turkish State Archives in Istanbul documents No. 2060, 286 and 4646 as outlined in: Heyd, U. The Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century. *Oriens*, IV, (1953), 299.

<sup>24</sup> Michael ben Shabbetai Kohen Balbo. *Piyyutim u-Mikhtavim*, as presented in: Hacker, J. The Surgun System and Jewish Society, 16.

<sup>25</sup> See also the comments of Ephraim Karaferia and Shabbetai Pravatos as presented in: Hacker, J. The Surgun System and Jewish Society, 11-12.

<sup>26</sup> Hacker, J. Ottoman Policy Toward the Jews and Jewish Attitudes Toward the Ottomans During the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, (Eds.). *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, 2 vols. (New York, 1982), 120.

<sup>27</sup> Lowry, HW. When Did the Sephardim Arrive in Salonica? The Testimony of the Ottoman Tax-Registers, 1478-1613. Avigdor Levy, (Ed.). *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*. (New York, 1994), 206-207.

- <sup>28</sup> Kapsalis, E. *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, Vol I, 81-83.
- <sup>29</sup> Hacker, J. The Surgun System and Jewish Society in the Ottoman Empire, 7.
- <sup>30</sup> Rozen, M. *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul*, 51.
- <sup>31</sup> Turkish State Archives of Istanbul document KK 2411 cited in: Epstein, M. The Leadership of the Ottoman Jews in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, (Eds.). *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, 2 vols. (New York, 1982,) 104.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 105.
- <sup>33</sup> The Karaite Jewish community had been present in the Balkans since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Followers of a Mesopotamian charismatic named Anan ben David, the Karaites excelled in the fields of Arabic culture and science and abjured the traditional Jewish reverence for the Talmud and Mishnah. Prominent Byzantine Karaite authors included Elias Bashyachi, Aaron ben Elijah Nikomedios, Kaleb Afendopoulou and Elias Shubashi.
- <sup>34</sup> Bowman, S. *The Jews of Byzantium*, 177.
- <sup>35</sup> Epstein, M. The Leadership of the Ottoman Jews, 106.
- <sup>36</sup> Rozanes, S. *Divre Yeme Yisrael be-Togarmah*, vol. I, 60-62.
- <sup>37</sup> Ben-Bassa E and A. Rodrigue. *The Jews of the Balkans*, 14-15.
- <sup>38</sup> Shaw, S. *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, 51.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 45.
- <sup>40</sup> Dalven, R. *The Jews of Ioannina*. Philadelphia, 1986, 18.
- <sup>41</sup> Hacker, J. The Surgun System and Jewish Society in the Ottoman Empire, 63-64.
- <sup>42</sup> Epstein, M. The Leadership of the Ottoman Jews, 109.
- <sup>43</sup> Stavroulakis, N. *The Jews of Greece: An Essay*. Athens, 1990, 41.
- <sup>44</sup> Anonymous. A Jewish Doctor and Merchant. *Album of Water Colours*, 1574. Gennadios Library, Athens.
- <sup>45</sup> Stavroulakis, N. *The Jews of Greece*, 40.
- <sup>46</sup> See Dalven's claims that the Greek surnames Bakolas, Dostis and Kalamaras indicate an Italian origin, or that the name Kamontos is related to the Spanish name Comando. Dalven, R. *The Jews of Ioannina*, 154.
- <sup>47</sup> Sariyannis, G. From Catalonia and Aragon to Greece: The Saporta Family's Relations with Romaniotes and Sephardim in Hellenic Territory. IK Hassiotis (Ed.). *The Jewish Communities of Southeastern Europe: From the 15<sup>th</sup> Century to the End of World War II*. (Thessaloniki, 1997), 481. In this article, Sakis is alleged to be a corruption of Sciacca, the name of a town in southern Sicily.
- <sup>48</sup> Zimmels, HJ. *Ashkenazim and Sephardim*. (London, 1958), 43-44.
- <sup>49</sup> Ben-Bassa E and A. Rodrigue. *The Jews of the Balkans*, 13.
- <sup>50</sup> Dalven, R. *The Jews of Ioannina*, 19.

- <sup>51</sup> Eliahu Mizrahi. *Book of Deep Waters* (Responsa) as presented in: Rozanes, S. *Divre Yeme Yisrael be-Togarmah*, I, 216.
- <sup>52</sup> Epstein, M. The Leadership of the Ottoman Jews, 108.
- <sup>53</sup> Shaw, S. *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, 270. The position of Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire would remain vacant until 1835. The tradition of Chief Rabbi was continued in the post of Grand Rabbi of Istanbul but the powers vested in this office were markedly different from that of Chief Rabbi and, in any instance, all of the Grand Rabbis to succeed Mizrahi were members of the Sephardic community. For further reading on the differences between the post held by Kapsalis and Mizrahi versus Grand Rabbi of Istanbul, see: Shmuelevitz, A. *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Administrative, Economic, Legal and Social Relations as Reflected in the Responsa*. (Leiden, 1984).
- <sup>54</sup> Eliahu Ha-Levi. *Responsa, Zeqan Aharon*(ms), 38:36a.
- <sup>55</sup> Rozen, M. *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul*, 89.
- <sup>56</sup> Dalven, R. *The Jews of Ioannina*, 18.
- <sup>57</sup> Bornstein-Makovetsky, L. Jewish Names in Istanbul in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Study Based on Bills of Divorce. Demsky, A, J Reif and J Tabory (Eds.). *These Are the Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics*. (Ramat Gan, 1997), 13-26.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 16.
- <sup>59</sup> R. Benyamin ben Mattatya. *Responsa: Binyamin Ze'ev*. Venice, 1539, No. 303.
- <sup>60</sup> Dalven, R. *The Jews of Ioannina*, 19.
- <sup>61</sup> Rozanes, S. *Divre Yeme Yisrael be-Thogarma*, I, 216.
- <sup>62</sup> Bornstein-Makovetsky, L. The Social and Communal Organization of the Jewish Communities in Epirus During the Sixteenth Century. Ginio, Alisa M (Ed.). *Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean World After 1492*. (Portland, 2002), 210.
- <sup>63</sup> Archivio di Stato, Venice, Collegio, Relazioni, busta 61-I, ff. 180v-181r.
- <sup>64</sup> Baron, SW. Jewish Immigration and Communal Conflicts in Seventeenth Century Corfu. *The Joshua Starr Memorial Volume*, (1953), 169-182.
- <sup>65</sup> *Universita Italiana della Sinagoga Corfiota Aborigine contro Univesita della Sinagoga Corfiota Greca*. Columbia University Special Collections, MS X 893-28-v. 3-No. 6.
- <sup>66</sup> Baron, SW. Jewish Immigration and Communal Conflicts in Seventeenth Century Corfu, 171-172.
- <sup>67</sup> See Bowman, S. A Corpus of Hebrew Epitaphs in Patras. *Archaeologikon Deltion*, 31, (1980), 49-75, and Bowman S and D. Spiegel. He-

brew Epitaphs of Mistra. *Michael*, VII, (1981), 201-247.

<sup>68</sup> Jacobsohn, H. The Kakamo Family – Wealthy Lords of the Jewish Community of Egripon (Chalkis) in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies*, 20, (1997), 26-29.

<sup>69</sup> Jacobsohn, H. The Enigma of the Romaniote Tombs. Smythe, D. (Ed.). *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*. (Ashgate, 2000), 119-128.

<sup>70</sup> Personal correspondence from Dr. Nicholas Stavroulakis to the author.

<sup>71</sup> Franco, M. *Essai*.

<sup>72</sup> Rosanes, S. *The History of the Jews in Turkey*.

<sup>73</sup> Witness Joshua Starr's complaint in: Starr, J. *Romania*. Paris, 1949, 55.

<sup>74</sup> Shaw, S. *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, 190.

<sup>75</sup> Caimis, M. "Greece," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol V. New York, Ktav, 1904-1906, 85.

<sup>76</sup> Ausubel, N. *Pictorial history of the Jewish people*. New York: Crown, 1960, 208-209.

<sup>77</sup> Starr, 55.

<sup>78</sup> Bowman, S. The Jews in Greece. Clogg, R (Ed.). *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a Plural Society*. Oxford: Oxford University, 2002, 421.

<sup>79</sup> See: Koutsonikas, L. General history of the Greek Revolution (Greek). Protopsaltis, E (Ed.). *Memoirs of the Fighters of '21* (Greek), Vol IV. Athens, 1956, 51, and Laios, G. *Unpublished Letters and Documents of 1821*. Athens, 1958, 178.

<sup>80</sup> See the forthcoming: Schoenfeld, A. Ethnic identification and inter-communal conflict in the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire: 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. *Journal of Modern Hellenism*, 2006.

<sup>81</sup> Shaw, 191.

<sup>82</sup> Efthymiou, M. Official ideology and lay mentality during the Greek Revolution: Attitudes towards the Jews. Rozen, M (Ed.). *The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans: 1808-1945*. Tel Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 2002, 33-43, and Schoenfeld, A. cited above.

<sup>83</sup> Yerolympos, A. New data relating to the spatial organization of the Jewish communities in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire (19<sup>th</sup> c.). Hassiotis, IK (Ed.). *The Jewish Communities of Southeastern Europe: From the Fifteenth Century to World War II*. Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1997, 630.

<sup>84</sup> Krivoruchko, JG. A case of divergent convergence: the cultural identity of Romaniote Jewry. *Proceedings of Cultural Identity in the Balkans: Convergence vs. Divergence*. Gent, Belgium, Dec. 12-13, 2003.

<sup>85</sup> Caimis, 661.

<sup>86</sup> Dalven, R. *The Jews of Ioannina*, 152.

<sup>87</sup> Hacker, J. The Surgun System, 50.

<sup>88</sup> Michael ben Shabbetai Kohen Balbo. *Piyyutim u-Mikhtavim*, as presented in: Hacker, J. The Surgun System and Jewish Society, 16.

<sup>89</sup> Stavroulakis, N. *The Jews of Greece*, 41.

<sup>90</sup> Starr, 55.

<sup>91</sup> Koromelas, GD. The Period of Turkish Rule (Greek). *The Great Greek Encyclopedia* (Greek), Vol XI. Athens, 1929, 701.

<sup>92</sup> Tsilliyanis, CA. The Jews of Arta (Greek). *Chronika*, 192, 2004, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Dalven, 29.

<sup>94</sup> Kougea, S. The Epirot archive of Stavros Ioannou (Greek). *Epirotika Chronika* (Greek), 14, 1939, 12, 18, 71.

<sup>95</sup> Konstantinis, M. *The Contribution of the Jews to the Liberation of the Greeks* (Greek). Athens, 1971, 1.

<sup>96</sup> Koromelas, 701.

<sup>97</sup> Konstantinis, 2.

<sup>98</sup> Konstantinis, 9-13.

<sup>99</sup> Konstantinis, 3.

<sup>100</sup> Loukatos, S. Jewish philhellenes in the period of '21. *Chronika*, 166, 2000, 13.

<sup>101</sup> Dalven, 29.

<sup>102</sup> Besparis, PA. Thessalian Makedonomachi (Greek). *Trikalina* (Greek), 1, 1981, 7.

<sup>103</sup> Schoenfeld, A. Romaniote Irredentism and Hellenic Nationalism in Early Modern Greece (1821-1914). *Greece in Print*, 140, 2000, 12.

<sup>104</sup> Frezis, R. *The Jewish Press in Greece* (Greek). Volos: Jewish Community of Volos, 1999, 178.

<sup>105</sup> Frezis, R. *The Jewish Community of Volos* (Greek). Volos, 1994, 84.