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Shipping and Trade in a British semi-colony: the Case of the United States of the Ionian Islands (1815-1864)¹

Panayiotis S. KAPETANAKIS

Over the past two decades, following the general international trend, Greek maritime studies have experienced a significant growth. A rather large number of new and young researchers have grappled with the study of the maritime history of the Greeks, not merely in the Aegean and Ionian seas, but in the whole Mediterranean Sea. This important development has produced a most detailed and thorough study of the history of the Greek shipping and commerce during the last three centuries, and shed light on many aspects of the Greek maritime history, most of which had been previously anchored to a limited interpretive framework, or totally unknown. Former gaps in our knowledge stemmed, mainly, from the lack of both adequate research personnel and necessary long-term data series. These important hindrances were overcome through new research grants programs, an increase in the number of researchers in the field of Greek maritime studies, and the recourse to new technologies that facilitated the collection and processing of large datasets. This trend, about which we can truly speak of *New Greek Maritime Studies*, is presently headed by Gelina Harlaftis, professor at the Ionian University.²

1. A first version of this paper, under the title “Merchant fleet of the Ionian Islands under the British rule (1815-1864)” was presented at the workshop “Réunion du GIS d'Histoire Maritime.” The workshop was organized by the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis / Centre de la Méditerranée Moderne et Contemporaine and was held in Nice (France), on 7-8 April 2011.
2. For a brief review of Greek maritime history and its new directions and challenges, see Gelina Harlaftis and Katerina Papakonstantinou (dir.), *The Rise of the Shipping of the Greeks in the Mediterranean Trade in the 18th century*, Athens, (forthcoming); Gelina Harlaftis and Radu G. Păun (dir.), *Greeks in 19th Century Romania (Proceedings of the International Conference, Bucharest, 2009, October 2-4)*, Athens, Alpha Bank Historical Archives, (forthcoming); Maria Christina Chatziioannou, “When the History of Merchant Houses Met Business History: A Comparative Approach”, *Entreprises et Histoire*, n° 63, 2011, p. 53-65; Gelina Harlaftis, “The ‘Eastern Invasion’. Greeks in the Mediterranean trade and shipping in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries”, in Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood, and Mohamed-Salah Omri (dir.), *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel’s Maritime Legacy*, London, Tauris Academic Studies, 2010, p. 223-252; Gelina Harlaftis, Nikos Karapidakis, Kostas Sbonias and Vaios Vaipoulos, *The New Ways of History: Developments in Historiography*, London, I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010; Evrydiki Sifneos, “Merchant Enterprises and Strategies in

This paper belongs to this context. It aims at presenting the research findings about the main aspects of the maritime history of the Ionian Islands, during the 19th century. It is more specifically concentrated on the period of British sovereignty over the so called *Seven Islands* or *Eptanisa* of the Ionian Sea (Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, Ithaca, Paxos, Santa Maura - Lefkada, and Cerigo) which lasted from 1815 to 1864. Despite the fact that the cluster of the Ionian Islands was in the middle of the Mediterranean basin, and that some of the major European and international commercial routes passed through their ports and waters, we did not know much about their maritime past and their actual participation in the expanding Mediterranean and Atlantic economies of the 19th century.³

What we did actually know about 19th century Ionian shipping until a few years ago, was that shipping in the Ionian Islands experienced a significant development during the 19th century, especially during the period of British sovereignty; that the Ionian merchant fleet was regularly present in the major ports of the eastern and western part of the Mediterranean Sea; that the Ionians played an important role in transporting grain cargoes from the Black Sea to the main ports of the western Mediterranean, and that Ionian shipping offered to the Greek-owned commercial shipping an impulse to further development, via the separation of commercial and shipping activities, which produced a shift from the profession of tradesman-shipowner to specialized shipowner.

However, a great part of the whole picture of Ionian shipping was still missing, and as a result we were not able to study and understand thoroughly the terms of development, growth and operations of the merchant fleet of the Ionian Islands. To be more specific, we did not have a clear picture of the number, types and capacity of Ionian vessels; we did not know about the variety of cargoes Ionian shipowners transported or the cargoes they were interested in, the commercial routes they used, the ports they preferred to trade with. Furthermore, we knew nothing about the shipowning families of the Ionian Islands, the origin of the Ionian shipmasters and crews.

Apart from these quantitative aspects or features of Ionian shipping, we did not know much of its qualitative aspects, neither. For instance, we ignored whether and how the regime of British sovereignty influenced the development

the Sea of Azov Ports", *International Journal of Maritime History*, n° 1, June 2010, p. 259-268; Maria Christina Chatzioannou, "Networking and Spatial Allocation around the Mediterranean, Seventeenth-Nineteenth Centuries, Preface", *The Historical Review / La Revue Historique*, n° 7, 2010, p. 9-13; Evrydiki Sifneos, *Greek merchants in the Azov Sea. The power and the limits of a family enterprise*, Athens, INR/NHRE, 2009; Gelina Harlaftis, "From Diaspora Traders to Shipping Tycoons: The Vagliano Bros", *Business History Review*, n° 2, Summer 2007, p. 237-268; Gelina Harlaftis and Maria Christina Chatzioannou (dir.), *Following the Nereids. Sea routes and maritime business, 16th - 20th centuries*, Athens, Kerkira Publications, 2006; Gelina Harlaftis and Carmel Vassalo, "New Directions in Mediterranean Maritime History", *Research in Maritime History*, n° 28, 2004.

3. Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, [1949], Paris, Armand Colin, 9^e édition 1990, p. 149-165; Predrag Matvejevitich, *Mesogiaki Synopsis*, Athens, Patakis Editions, 1998 (in Greek); Ellen Churchill Semple, *The Geography of the Mediterranean Region: Its Relation to Ancient History*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1931.

of Ionian shipping, which was the real impact of Ionian shipping on the economy and, perhaps more importantly, we did not have a precise idea of the main structures of the insular society and of the maritime status of the Ionian Islands.

Consequently, we had to deal with two critical issues during our research: the first issue, the quantitative one, was the lack of large statistical series that could provide all the necessary information concerning the various developmental aspects and operational features of the Ionian merchant fleet. The second issue was qualitative, or more precisely institutional, and had to do with the institutional role that Britain, the protecting power of the Ionian Islands, played in the development and growth of Ionian shipping.

Facing these two critical issues for the study and understanding of Ionian shipping during the 19th century, we decided to search for the adequate archival material in the State General Archives of Corfu and Cephalonia, as well as in the British National Archives. The outcome of this research, which constituted a part of a doctoral dissertation, was the creation of the *Odysseus – Ionian Maritime History Database*. Part of the *Odysseus – Database* will be published online (<http://www.marehist.gr>).⁴ The *Odysseus – Database* includes more than 21,000 departures and arrivals from and to the Ionian Islands during the years 1809–1864. Most of the data come from the governmental newspaper of the British protected Ionian State, the *Gazzetta Ufficiale Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie*. Before proceeding to the presentation of the *Odysseus – Database* and its main results, which is the aim of this paper, it is necessary to present first a brief historical background of the Ionian Islands, emphasizing especially the British regime imposed over them by the Treaty of Paris in 1815.

In 1797, the end of almost four hundred years of Venetian rule over the Ionian Islands marked the beginning of a turbulent period for their history. The possession of the Islands, due to their valuable geographic position in the midst of Mediterranean commercial routes, constituted a key objective for the main 19th century European powers.⁵ As a result, the Ionian Islands experienced successive French, Ottoman, Russian and again French rules for almost seventeen years, until the British naval forces permanently occupied them in 1814.⁶

4. My three-year Ph.D. study was part of the research project entitled *Greek Maritime Centres: Identification and Administration of Maritime Heritage of the Ionian and Aegean Seas*, under the Program *PENED 2003*. The research project was financed by the European Union and the Greek Ministry of Development, and was completed under the supervision of Professor Gelina Harlaftis (Ionian University, Department of History). See: Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, "The deep-sea going merchant fleet of the Seven Islands during the time of British conquest and protection and the Cephalonian prominence (1809/15–1864). Fleet and ports, cargoes and sea-routes, maritime centres and seamen, entrepreneurship and networks, society and shipowning elites", Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, Ionian University – Corfu, Typescript, 2010 (in Greek), (<http://phdtheses.ekt.gr/ead%2Fhandle/10442/18428>).

5. Thomas W. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean*, Notre Dame - Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2002, Chapter 1.

6. Eleni E. Koukkou, *Istoria ton Eptanison. Apo to 1797 mexri tin Agglokratia. Protes Diplomatikes Energies tou Ioannou Kapodistria*, Athens, Papadimas Editions, 2001, p. 197–207 (in Greek).

Figure 1. *The Ionian Sea and its Islands*

On November 5th 1815, the Treaty of Paris declared the creation of a free and independent state, under the formal name of “The United States of the Ionian Islands”, or “Ionian State”. The latter became part of the British colonial Empire as a formal protectorate, with the tacit acceptance of the major European powers of that time, namely Russia, Austria, and France. According to the treaty, Britain undertook not only the political and economic protection of the Islands, but also the obligation to recognise the rights of a constitutional government in the newly established state. However, despite this formal and rather liberal reading of the treaty, the cluster of Ionian Islands constituted a significant part of the British colonial and commercial empire.⁷

Great Britain viewed the Islands as a strategic asset to her Mediterranean commercial interests. *The Saturday Magazine* of July 1840 stated:

The importance of these islands to England has reference principally to their geographical position, by which they are admirably adapted for protecting our trade in the Eastern parts of Europe, and of extending our commerce as soon as Greece becomes more settled and civilized.⁸

The British domination ended in 1864, when Great Britain took the decision to cede the Ionian Islands to the Greek Kingdom.⁹

7. Philip L. Cottrell, *The Ionian Bank. An Imperial Institution, 1839-1864*, Athens, Alpha Bank, Historical Archives, 2007, p. 118-119; Charles-James Napier, *The Colonies: Treating of their Value generally – In particular of the Ionian Islands*, London, Thomas and William Boone, 1833, p. 1-17.

8. *The Saturday Magazine*, n° 515, 11 July 1840.

9. On the historical background of the Ionian Islands, from the fall of Venice up to the union with the Greek State, see Nikos Karapidakis, “Ta Eptanisa. Europaiki Antagonismi meta tin ptosi tis Venetias”, in Vassilis Panayiotopoulos (ed.), *Istoria tou Neou Ellinismou: 1770-2000*, vol. I, Athens,

The *Odysseus* – Ionian Maritime History Database: contents

During their rule, between the years 1815 and 1864, the official government newspaper of the British was the *Gazzetta Ufficiale Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie*, which represents, as already mentioned, the main source used for the *Odysseus* – *Ionian Maritime History Database* (see indicative front- and back-pages of the newspaper in figures 2 and 3). The *Gazzetta*, which was published every Saturday during the above-mentioned years, is an invaluable source for the study of maritime history, not only of Ionian Islands and central Mediterranean, but of the western and eastern parts of the latter as well, due to the nodal geographical position of the Ionian Islands' ports in the Mediterranean basin.¹⁰

Figure 2. Indicative front page of *Gazzetta Ufficiale Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie* (*Gazzetta*, No. 655, Saturday 5 – 17 July, 1830)

Num.° 655.

GAZZETTA DELLE ISOLE

CORFU, Sabato 5/17 Luglio 1830.

DEGLI STATI UNITI JONIE.

PREZZO D'ASSOCIAZIONE.

Un Mese...	2	d.
Tre Mesi...	4	8
Six Mesi...	8	2
Un Anno...	15	2

Il Periodo di tutte le Associazioni anticipate termina al 31 Marzo. Le associazioni si ricevono in Corfu, nell'Ufficio della stamperia del Governo, e nelle altre Isole presso i rispettivi Deputati Ministri di Posta.

Tutti gli Atti Pubblici inseriti in questa Gazzetta, e firmati dalle Autorità competenti, saranno considerati Uffiziali, e si presterà quindi ai medesimi la dovuta obbedienza.

PER ORDINE DEL SENATO
ED. S. BAYNES,
Segr. del SENATO pel Dip. Gen.

CORFU.

NOTTIFICAZIONE.

Ufficio del Lord Alto Commissario,
Palazzo, Corfu, 12 Luglio 1830.

L'Onorevolissimo Lord SMYTH GOSPOURIN OSBORNE, essendo allontanato da questi Stati, i doveri del Tesoriere Generale degli Stati Uniti Joni verranno esercitati da WILLIAM CRICHTON Scudiere.

Per Ordine di S. E. il Lord Alto Commissario,
W. E. GILPIN,
Int. Seg. del Lord Alto Commissario.

STATI UNITI DELLE ISOLE JONIE.

Corfu, li 6 Luglio 1830.

IN SENATO — RISOLUZIONE.

Visto il rapporto del Collettore delle Pubbliche Rendite di Corfu, con cui assoggetta alcune difficoltà insorte nel mettere in pratica la Risoluzione del Senato 29 Maggio 1830, che fissa le basi da seguirsi

STATI UNITI DELLE ISOLE JONIE.

Corfu, li 10 Luglio 1830.

IN SENATO — RISOLUZIONE.

Viste le varie domande di alcuni individui, trasmesse con appositi uffizj dai rispettivi Governi Locali, colle quali implorano d'essere ammessi ad esercitare come Interventienti la professione Forense:

Visti li documenti con dette petizioni, accompagnati, e rilasciati ai medesimi dai Collegi Forensi in ordine alla Legge, comprovanti la loro abilità in tal Professione:

È risoluto:

Art. 1.° Li qui sotto segnati Individui sieno e s'intendano d'ora innanzi abilitati ad agire come Intervententi Forensi nelle Corti Giudiziarie di questi Stati, cioè da'

CORFU,
Sig. Niccolò di Lorenzo Brocchini.
Sig. Antonio Therianò q.m. Costantino.

Ellinika Grammata Editions, 2003, p. 149-184 (in Greek); Nikos G. Moschonas, "Navigation and Trade in the Ionian and Lower Adriatic Seas in the 18th century", in Apostolos Vavalopoulos, Constantinos D. Svolopoulos and Bela K. Kiraly (dir.), *Southeast European Maritime Commerce and Naval Policies: From the Mid-Eighteenth Century to 1914*, New Jersey, Atlantic Research and Publications, 1988, p. 189-196.

10. A digitalized image of the *Gazzetta Ufficiale Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie* is available online: <http://invenio.lib.auth.gr/record/29681/files/arc-2005-7589.pdf> [consulted on February 8th 2011].

The *Gazzetta* offers a total of more than 75,000 daily records of all the deep-sea going merchant vessels arriving in, or departing from, the main ports of the British Protectorate of the Ionian Islands.¹¹ It is important to note that these deep-sea going vessels were sailing to and from all the major European and non-European 19th century ports, under various flags, both European and non-European. The most common flags, apart from the dominant flag of the Ionian State, were those of Great Britain, France, Spain, Greece (after 1832), the Ottoman Empire, the Austrian Empire, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the Papal States, the Russian Empire, the Netherlands, Denmark, the United States of America, Norway and various German states.¹² Furthermore, according to the rules of the Ionian State, deep-sea going merchant vessels were all considered as merchant vessels if their capacity exceeded 25 metric tons, whereas trading vessels with a minor capacity were classified as coastal trading vessels, and were not published in the *Gazzetta's* lists.¹³

Due to the large volume of available archival material and the limited time available for research, we have chosen to import into the *Odysseus – Database* information for all merchant vessels calling at or departing from Ionian ports at five-year intervals, during the periods 1820-1830 and 1845-1860. Unfortunately, because of a lack of data on shipping in the *Gazzetta*, as well as in other auxiliary sources, for the years 1835 and 1840, these two years had to be excluded from our research. As a result from the above-mentioned 75,000 annotations, we have introduced into the *Odysseus – Database* details for more than 21,000 arrivals and departures of all merchant vessels, regardless of flag and destination, which have been recorded by the formal port authorities at the main Ionian Islands' ports, namely the ports of Corfu, Zante, Argostoli (Cephalonia), Vathy (Ithaca), Paxos, Santa Maura (Lefkada), and Cerigo. From the above mentioned 21,000 records of arrivals and departures, more than 12,000 are related exclusively to deep-sea going vessels of the Ionian merchant fleet. Apart from the names of the ports of call, ports of arrival and ports of departure, these 12,000 records provide valuable information concerning: the name, the type and the flag of the vessels, the year and the place of the shipbuilding, the name and the origin of the captain, of the shipowner, and of the crew, the type and the value of the cargoes, and the name of the shipper.¹⁴

11. For a brief historical review of the Ionian Islands and their status as a British Protectorate see Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, "The Ionian State in the 'British' Nineteenth Century, 1814-1864: From Adriatic Isolation to Atlantic Integration", *International Journal of Maritime History*, n° 1, June 2010, p. 163-184.

12. For the nationality of the vessels sailing to and from the Ionian Islands' ports, apart from the *Odysseus, Ionian Maritime History Database*, see indicatively: United States, House of Representatives, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, Ex. Doc. No. 63, *Letter of the Secretary of State, Department of State, Transmitting a Report on the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries, for the Year Ended September 30, 1862*, Washington-DC, 1863.

13. *Atti Emanati del Terzo Parlamento degli Stati Uniti delle Isole Jonie Sotto la Costituzione del 1817, durante la Sua Terza Sessione Tenuta nell' Anno 1831, Atto No. 44*, Stampati con Autorizzazione del Governo Generale, Nella Stamperia del Governo, Corfu, 1831, p. 30-41.

14. For more information of the *Odysseus, Ionian Maritime History Database*, see Panayiotis

Figure 3. Indicative back page of the *Gazzetta Ufficiale Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie*, with information regarding arrivals of deep-sea merchant ships in the port of Corfu (*Gazzetta*, No. 655, Saturday 5 – 17 July, 1830)

ARRIVI MERC. IN CORFU, dai 9 Luglio sino ai 15 d.o	
Agli 9 d.o	Goletta Greca San Spiridione, cap. Dimo Panajotopulo, da Patrasso giorni 10, legna da fuoco per conto proprio. — d.o Paranza Napoletana l' Addolorata, cap. Raffaele Calabrese, da Barletta giorni 4, grano, e aglio per conto proprio. — d.o Bombarda Jonia B. V. Eleussa, cap. Spiridion Condari, da Paxò giorni 1, tramesti per conto proprio. — 10 d.o Brigantino Jonio San Spiridione, cap. Vangeli Caravia Gianuzzo, da Tangarock giorni 51, e da Costantinopoli 21, grano per conto proprio. — d.o Pielego Pontificio Buon Amico, cap. Giuseppe Tabacchi, d'Ancona giorni 8, e da Tremiti 6, carbone per conto proprio. — 12 d.o Brigantino Austriaco Bella Ninetta, cap. Vincenzo Bacchiani, da Venezia giorni 9, legname, e merci per conto proprio. — 13 d.o Paranza Napoletana San Michele, cap. Giuseppe delli Santi, da Barletta giorni 6, e da Brindisi 3, grano, aglio, e cipolle per conto proprio. — d.o Pielego Pontificio San Ciriaco, cap. Giovanni Battista Sboccia, d'Ancona giorni 11, carbone per conto proprio. — 14 d.o Paranza Napoletana Santa Maria, cap. Francesco Catapano, d'Otranto giorni 3, carbone ed altro per conto proprio. — 15 d.o Trabaccolo Jonio Sant' Antonio, cap. Gio. Gavalà q.m. Crisso, da Bari giorni 3, grano, aglio, ed altro per conto proprio. — d.o Trabaccolo Pontificio Fortunato, cap. Giovan. Violini d'Ancona giorni 13, grano per conto del Governo. — d.o Brigantino Austriaco Sant' Andrea, cap. Paolo Marassi, d'Odessa giorni 43, da Costantinopoli 34, da Mosconissi 25, e da Zante 7, grano, ed altro per conto proprio. — d.o Trabaccolo Pontificio San Niccolò, cap. Giovanni Sansoni, d'Ancona giorni 11, grano per conto del Governo. — d.o Paranza Napoletana B. V. dello Storpetto, cap. Paolo Isernia, da Barletta giorni 4, grano, e orzo per conto proprio. — d.o Paranza Napoletana B. V. del Carmine, cap. Niccola Leucio Scuccimara, d'Ifaca giorni 4, grano per conto proprio. — d.o Brigantino Inglese Diadem, cap. John Airth, da Malta gior. 7, merci diverse per conto diversi.

Odysseus – Ionian Maritime History Database: main results

With this brand-new database at disposal we had the appropriate electronic tool in order to re-read the maritime history of the Ionian Islands during the period of British sovereignty.¹⁵ Within the context of this essay, particular emphasis shall be given to a brief presentation of the main developmental and operational structures of the Ionian shipping arising from the use of the *Odysseus – Database*. The presentation of the *Odysseus – Database* is divided into four sections: in the first part (a) we present the main characteristics of the Ionian merchant fleet (number

S. Kapetanakis, "The deep-sea going merchant fleet of the Seven Islands...", *op. cit.*, p. 15-27.

15. For a brief presentation of the importance of using electronic databases in order to study or re-study maritime economic history, see Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, "Gauging Maritime Trade between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe in the Late Eighteenth and mid-Nineteenth Centuries, using Electronic Databases", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, n° 2, 2010, p. 295-310.

of vessels, tonnage and type of vessels); in the second part (b) we analyze the development of the Ionian maritime network in the Mediterranean basin; in the third part (c) the emphasis is given to the grain-cargo specialization of the Ionian merchant shipping, whereas the last part (d) evaluates the gradual emergence of sea as the main source of wealth for the Ionians, replacing land, which was hitherto the main source of wealth.

a. The Ionian merchant fleet: tonnage, vessels, types of vessels

Let us first proceed to the presentation of the size (capacity) of the Ionian merchant fleet. Figure 4 depicts the capacity of the Ionian fleet, expressed in metric tons, at 5-year intervals in the period 1820-1860. As we have already mentioned, data for the years 1835 and 1840 are missing because of a gap of data for the years 1831-1844 in the *Gazzetta*. It is easy to see that the capacity of the Ionian fleet experienced a steady and considerable growth throughout the period of British sovereignty. From a capacity of 21,600 tons in 1820, at the beginning of the period of British sovereignty, the Ionian fleet grew to a capacity of almost 56,500 tons in 1860, four years before the end of the British regime: the growth represent more than 160% in forty years.

The growth of the capacity of the Ionian fleet was parallel to a steady increase of the number of its vessels as well. From 221 deep-sea going merchant vessels in the year 1820, the Ionian fleet grew to almost 400 vessels in 1860. It is also interesting to stress the changes in the types of vessels too. To be more specific, in 1820 the Ionian fleet numbered 17 different types of vessels, with an average capacity of 98 tons per vessel, whereas in 1860 the Ionian fleet numbered only ten different types of vessels, with an average capacity of 145 tons per vessel. By that time, the brig was the most common type of sailing ship, and represented more than 65% of all the vessels of the Ionian fleet. In other words, two ships out of three of the Ionian fleet were brigs.¹⁶ The reduction of the different types of vessels, as well as the increase in their average capacity were, actually, related to the gradual specialization of Ionians in transporting grain cargoes from the Black Sea towards the ports of the central Mediterranean.¹⁷

16. In the absence of the formal Ionian Register of Shipping (which I have not found yet in the Greek or British archives), I used the lists of arrivals and departures of the Ionian merchant vessels, by removing the duplicates (e.g. same ship entering twice or more in a given year has been counted as one ship), in order to estimate the numerical data on the capacity (number and type of vessels) of the Ionian fleet.

17. For the gradual specialization of the Ionian merchant fleet in transporting grain cargoes from the granaries of the Black Sea towards the Mediterranean ports, see Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, "The Ionian Danube, 1815-64: Terms and conditions of the Ionian maritime presence in the Danube River, and how the latter has affected the Ionian shipping business' structures", in Gelina Harlaftis and Radu G. Păun (dir.), *Greeks in 19th Century Romania (Proceedings of the International Conference, Bucharest, 2009, October 2-4)*, Athens, Alpha Bank Historical Archives, (forthcoming). Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, "The Ionian State...", art. cit., p. 163-184.

Figure 4. Capacity in tons of the Ionian Merchant Fleet (1820-1860)

Source: Odysseus-Ionian Maritime History Database. Intra-Ionian voyages are excluded; No data is available for the years 1835 and 1840.

b. The Ionian merchant fleet: maritime and commercial routes network

Which were the main areas of the maritime and commercial activity of the vessels sailing under the Ionian flag, during the period between 1850 and 1860? This decade was chosen because it represents the peak of the specialization of the Ionian merchant shipping in specific trade routes and products before the end of the British regime (1864). This period provides the clearest picture of the radius of commercial activity of the Ionian merchant fleet, and allow us to identify the main trading ports used by Ionians and, consequently, those of their Islands during this period, Figure 5, based on a total of 2,135 voyages of Ionian vessels in the *Odysseus – Database*, shows that the ports with which Ionian vessels traded, are located in the central and eastern part of the Mediterranean, mainly in the areas of the Black Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Aegean Sea. The map shows the most important trading ports for Ionian merchant vessels, those for which at least 10 ship-movements (arrival or departure) among Ionian merchant ships were recorded. Three Mediterranean ports stand clearly out: the port of Constantinople, with a total of 561 Ionian ship-movements (departures & arrivals for the years 1850, 1855 & 1860), the port of Trieste with a total of 210 ship-movements, and the port of Valletta (Malta) with a total of 176 Ionian ship-movements. The *Odysseus – Database* shows also that Ionian vessels hardly sailed outside the Mediterranean.

During the period 1850-1860, we recorded less than ten voyages of Ionian vessels to and from non-Mediterranean ports. We believe that this is the result of the specialization of the Ionian merchant fleet in trading grain cargoes almost exclusively within the Mediterranean basin.

Figure 5. The Ionian deep-sea going merchant fleet: main ports of commercial activity (1850, 1855 and 1860)

Source: see figure 4.

Notes: Numbers in circles indicate the total amount of Ionian ship-movements to and from the ports of Constantinople, Trieste and Malta. All other ports had at least 10 ship-movements.

In other words, we observe the creation, during the mid-19th century, of a commercial triangle, the angles of which coincide with the ports of Constantinople (representing more than 26 per cent of the total Ionian ship-movements for the years 1850, 1855 and 1860), Trieste (representing almost 10% of the total), and Malta (representing more than 8%). The importance of Constantinople proves the strong Ionian maritime and commercial presence in the Black Sea wheat-export ports, mainly in the ports of Odessa, in the Azov Sea (Taganrog, Rostov on Don, Kerch, Berdiansk, Mariupol, Yeysk), and in the Danube outlet (Sulina, Galatz, Braila). The Ionians were engaged, almost exclusively, in a sea-trade within the above-mentioned commercial triangle. This reality should be viewed as the result of the gradual specialization of the Ionian merchant fleet in transporting grain cargoes from the granaries of the Black Sea towards some of the main import and transit ports of central Mediterranean, such as the transit port of Malta or the import port of Trieste, although this picture is partially affected by the fact

that the *Odysseus – Database* captures only the itineraries of those ships which called in the Ionian Islands.

c. The Ionian merchant fleet: cargoes

Having presented the most significant trading ports for the Ionian merchant shipping, let us now focus on the products cargoes that Ionian vessels supplied to the Mediterranean during the years 1850, 1855 and 1860. Due to a lack of information in the *Gazzetta* on the value and volume of the traded merchandise, we chose to present in the following chart the percentage of the cargoes traded by Ionian sea-going vessels from, to and via the Ionian Islands ports, based on the number of cargoes being traded. Although we do know that the use of the number of cargoes may be somewhat problematic, there is no alternative at present to provide a rough picture of the cargoes supplied by the Ionian fleet in the Mediterranean ports at this time.

Figure 6. Nature of the cargoes traded by the Ionian sea-going vessels from, to and via the Ionian Islands ports (1850, 1855 and 1860)

Source: see figure 4. Total number of transported cargoes for the years 1850, 1855 and 1860: 1356.

The Ionian merchant fleet clearly specialized to a great extent in the transport of grain cargoes, which came from the Black Sea and the Danube: grain accounted for 41% of total transported cargoes. Cattle and other agricultural products, including fruits, almonds, tartar, saffron, sumac, hazel-nuts, raw silk, frankincense, liquorices, legume, animals, wood, timber and olives, amounted to 22% of the total number of cargoes. Handicraft and industrial products, namely verdigris, cotton yarn, wrought silk, soap, soda, metal ores, leathers and gum, amounted

to 19% of the total, whereas processed foodstuffs consisting mainly of salt, currants, olive oil, dried figs and plums, salted lemons, treacle, vinegar, meat and dairy products (mainly cheese), amounted together to 39% of the total number of cargoes.

d. The Ionian merchant fleet: a new source of wealth replacing land

Besides providing information on the capacity, number and type of sailing vessels, commercial routes, and transported merchandises, the *Odysseus – Database* has functioned as a scalpel, with which we had the opportunity to get deeply into the various layers of the body of the Ionian society. Thanks to the *Odysseus – Database* we have found out that almost one fourth of the population of the tiny state of the Ionian Islands was working in or related to the Ionian maritime industry. The sea was, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and still is, a difficult, strange, and changeable working environment, with demanding and dangerous working conditions both on board and on shore. In the midst of the 19th century, the Ionians began to face sea not only as an attractive and relatively easy-to-obtain source of wealth, but also as an opportunity to build solid and successful careers in the promising field of maritime industry.

*Figure 7. Maritime population of the island of Cephalonia
(data for the years 1810, 1825, 1845 and 1860)*

Year	Total male population (a)	Active, male population (b)	Maritime population (deep-sea going merchant vessels & coastal shipping) (c)	(b) / (a) (%)	(c) / (b) (%)
1810	26,593	13,716	2,365	52%	17%
1825	26,193	12,481	2,463	48%	20%
1845	36,158	16,271	2,945	45%	18%
1860	39,851	17,932	4,340	45%	24%

Source: see figure 4.

The main maritime centre of the Ionian Islands, the island of Cephalonia, provides a significant case study.¹⁸ According to our estimations based on the

18. For the maritime centre of Cephalonia during the period of the British protection (1815-1864), see Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, “The maritime centre of Cephalonia in the era of the British protection: terms of development and supremacy”, in *Proceedings of the IX International Panionion Conference*

type of vessel and on the average number of the crew for each different type of vessel, we have reached very interesting conclusions. The maritime population of Cephalonia has experienced a steady growth. Whereas in 1810 –the first year of the British occupation of the island of Cephalonia– the maritime population of Cephalonia numbered no more than 2,400 seafarers, representing 17% of the active male population of the island at that time, fifty years later, in 1860, the maritime population of Cephalonia numbered almost 4,500 seafarers, accounting for more than 24% of the active male population of the island (see figure 7 above).

However, what is even more interesting, according to our opinion, is the fact that many powerful members of the old Venetian nobility, a nobility based on the possession of land, and many members of the new political elite of the British protected Ionian State, started to orientate their business interests towards the sea, ships and sea-trade, in other words towards the promising fields of maritime businesses. At the beginning of the 19th century Ionian society started experiencing the gradual emergence of the sea as the main source of wealth replacing land, the hitherto main source.

The case of Pavlos Focas Alexandratos, who was one of the most important politicians, landowners, ship-owners and merchants of the Ionian State during the decades 1840 and 1850, clearly illustrates this shift. Pavlos Focas Alexandratos was born in 1793 in the capital of Cephalonia, Argostoli, and died in 1864. He was a Cephalonian of distinguished and noble origin, and according to unpublished notarial deeds, he was a well known ship-owner, financier of Cephalonian captains, and guarantor of many Cephalonian ship-owners for building their ships, since the decade 1820.¹⁹ Yet, during the first decades of the British regime over the Ionian Islands, his main source of wealth was land, not sea. However, in 1842, and after having served for many years as member of the parliament of the Ionian State, he decided to abandon the “safety” of land and he entered dynamically the field of merchant shipping by establishing the first Ionian and one of the first Greek maritime insurances company, named *Kefallinia Insurance Company*, with its head-office located in Argostoli. The commercial orientation of the Ionian merchant vessels towards the Black Sea and the Danube River, and the consequential increasing demand of Cephalonian ship-owners for underwriting their vessels and cargoes, led to the rapid expansion of the activities of *Kefallinia Insurance Company*. Its activities encompassed not only the Ionian Islands and the main ports of the Aegean Sea, but also the nodal ports of the Black Sea and especially the ports of the Danube River. *Kefallinia*’s agents were appointed in Ithaca, Corfu, Patras, Thessalonica, Mytilene, Dardanelle, Constantinople, the Azov Sea, Odessa, Galatz and Sulina, and soon the company started cooperating with foreign insurance companies.

(*Paxos Island, 26-30 May 2010*), Paxos, Eteria Paxinon Meleton, (forthcoming) (in Greek).

19. Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, “The Ionian Danube...”, art. cit. For the *Kefallinia Insurance Company* and the commercial house of Focas Alexandratos see notarial deeds of Gerasimos and Athanasios Solomos (1810-1830, 1849-1859): Solomos Archive, General State Archives, Archive of the Prefecture of Cephalonia. See also Stanley Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain. From the Industrial Revolution to World War I*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 57.

Alexandratos' company entered also into trading bulk cargoes of grain from Danube –especially after the Crimean War (1853-1856)– to the Ionian Islands but also to London, where he established, probably at the beginning of the 1850s, a joint-stock trading company, along with Panas from Cephalonia and Kremidis from Corfu, according to unpublished notarial deeds found in the Archive of the Prefecture of Cephalonia. Besides Danubian grain, the house of Alexandratos traded also Cephalonian currants to England, as well as to the Black Sea. In addition, he chartered his fleet of brigs, taking advantage of the high freight rates, especially during the Crimean War. Thus, the *Kefallinia Insurance Company*, and in fact the house of Pavlos Focas Alexandratos, diversified its business, and invested in maritime trade, shipping and even in the food industry.

The hitherto unknown case of Pavlos Focas Alexandratos is one of the most important and indicative examples of how the promising field of maritime industry offered Ionians an opportunity to build solid and successful careers. In other words, the case of this noble landowner clearly shows the gradual emergence of sea as the main source of wealth for the Ionians instead of land.

Epilogue, or the advantage of being a British semi-colony

In the introduction to this essay, we raised the question of the institutional role that Britain, as the protecting power of the Ionian Islands, played in the development and growth of the Ionian shipping. In providing valuable information concerning the Ionian maritime past, the *Odysseus – Database* raises the question of understanding why the Ionians developed such a worth noticing maritime activity, whereas other Mediterranean islanders, like the Maltese for example, did not.

I believe that the *status quo* of British protection over the Ionian Islands represented the major determinant factor in their economic development during the 19th century, and in particular in their commercial and maritime expansion. The insular Ionian State was part of the British Empire, as a sovereign state under the protection of the British crown, although it did not constitute, strictly speaking, a British colony.²⁰ Nevertheless, the British administration treated Ionians as British subjects to a great extent. This meant that Ionians enjoyed the important privilege of having a double citizenship, Ionian and British. This reality offered them the opportunity of benefitting from the protection provided by the British consuls or the British flag, whenever they needed it.²¹ British protection over the

20. Christopher A Bayly, "The First Age of Global Imperialism, c. 1760-1830", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, n° 26, May 1998, p. 28-47; John Dunn Gardner, *The Ionian Islands in relation to Greece, with suggestions for advancing our trade with the Turkish countries of the Adriatic, and the Danube*, London, James Ridgway, 1859, p. 64-65; Bipan Chandra, *Essays on Colonialism*, New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 1999, p. 1-20; see also J. H. Parry, Philip Sherlock, and Anthony Maingot, *A Short History of the West Indies*, Oxford, Macmillan-Caribbean, 1956, ch. XIV.

21. See Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, "The Ionian State...", art. cit., p. 163-184.

Ionian State had a dual and ambiguous dimension. The Islands were neither a colony, like the Mediterranean island of Malta, nor a truly independent state. Thus, the use of the term semi-colony for the case of the United States of the Ionian Islands seems to be the most appropriate.²²

Ionians managed to exploit successfully all the available opportunities and positive aspects resulting from this status, and they succeeded in bolstering their commercial and shipping activity. Furthermore, Ionian traders and shipowners took advantage of the continuously expanding commercial and financial frontiers of their Protector in the Eastern Mediterranean, and succeeded in shaping up the terms of a prominent position in the commerce of the Mediterranean Sea too.²³

On the other hand, Great Britain sought to use the key geographical position of the Ionian Islands and the trade networks they belonged to since the time of the Venetian rule, in an endeavor to bolster British trade in the wider region of the central Mediterranean, to obtain and keep hold on new markets for its industrial products, and to find new sources of food supplies for its increasing urban and industrial population. The decision by Britain to give the Ionian Islands' merchant navy the option to engage in a safe and independent business activity, without the restrictions it normally imposed on its colonies, should be understood with that consideration in mind.

22. On Malta, see Carmel Vassallo, "The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century", *International Journal of Maritime History*, n° 13, December 2001, p. 19-36.

23. Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, "The Ionian Danube...", art. cit. See also Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, "From Amphitrite to Odysseus: sailing with the Ionian Shipping in the eastern Mediterranean waters during the revolutionary decade of 1820's", in Gelina Harlaftis and Katerina Papakonstantinou (dir.), *The Rise of the Shipping of the Greeks in the Mediterranean Trade in the 18th century*, Athens, (forthcoming) (in Greek).