

Negotiating a Greco-Corsican Identity

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Abstract

The Greek settlement in Corsica, dating from 1676, is remarkable among the colonies of its time for its very slow assimilation—a process that did not become irreversible until two centuries later, with some sense of Greek identity persisting to this day. However, while past commentators have interpreted this as indicating undying loyalty to Greece, the Greco-Corsican construction of identity has been rather more precarious. To establish how and to what extent a distinct Greco-Corsican identity was maintained, the particular historical circumstances of the colony are considered, along with its recorded attitude towards its Corsican neighbors, the continuity of its folk culture with its Greek antecedents, the conditions giving rise to its creedal identity, and the contrasting outcomes in assimilation of transplanted Greco-Corsican colonies. With this information, an account of the delay in assimilation is given in terms of Social Identity Theory, and the particular role the colonists' creed played in the formulation of their distinct identity.

The colony of Paomia in Corsica was established in 1676 by settlers from Vitylo, Mani. It was one of several colonies settled by Maniats through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in both Greece and Italy. The rest of the colonies established in Italy were soon assimilated: they embraced Catholicism (a condition consistently imposed on the settlers), and intermarried with the local population (Nicholas 2005). By contrast, the Corsican colony which moved to Ajaccio in 1731 and ended up in Cargèse in 1775, resisted assimilation for an extraordinarily long time. Assimilation proper did not begin until the 1850s, and the last full speaker of Greek died in 1976. Clearly something unusual has taken place in this community.

The conventional, patriotic account of this development, evident particularly in Vayacacos (1965b), is that the Greco-Corsicans never lost sight of their Greekness. Such an account does not yield all the answers. It would be difficult to claim that the other colonies which assimilated readily in Italy were somehow composed of less patriotic Maniats. There was significant pressure on Greeks to adopt Roman Catholicism, as

distinct from Greek rite Catholicism—that is, to fall in line with the Roman church in matters of ritual as well as doctrine and jurisdiction.¹ Yet Greco-Corsicans converted in significant numbers only after they were no longer under pressure to do so. Whereas there was acrimony between Greeks and Corsicans in the first half of their history there, assimilation has been under way for the past one and a half centuries; yet it has still been rather slow. And the Greco-Corsican understanding of what it means to be Greek has not survived intact from the seventeenth century: it has been diluted and mediated through several filters, and is in many ways ambivalent, particularly towards Greece.²

I will present the evidence for and against survival of a Greek identity in its various forms in Corsica before attempting to explain this particular outcome. Since the outcome is a result of particular historical circumstances, I will begin with an historical background-sketch of the colony. I will then consider the evidence we have of a distinct Greco-Corsican identity. The most explicit evidence is what the Greco-Corsicans have stated: explicit disavowals or claims of a common identity with their Corsican neighbors. The next evidence is what an anthropologist might record: those survivals of Greek folk culture that can be counted as contributing to a continuing sense of a separate identity. The major locus of separateness for the Greco-Corsicans, however, is the particular credal identity they had forged. Since creed has proven so central to Greco-Corsicans, keeping them distinct from both Corsicans and Greeks from Greece, I will present at some length the circumstances under which this credal identity was formed.

The final piece of evidence I will consider is contrastive: offshoots of the Greco-Corsican community, transplanted into two other colonies. Neither colony succeeded in perpetuating the sense of separateness in Corsica so strongly. The reasons for this are instructive in considering the Corsican colony itself. Given this evidence, I will give an account as to why a separate Greco-Corsican identity persisted for so long. I will do so by appealing mainly to Social Identity Theory, and by explaining what the mechanisms for this persistence were.

Historical sketch

The history of the colony is detailed in several places (Blanken 1951, Comnène 1959, Kalonaros 1944, Phardys 1888, Stephanopoli 1865, Vayacacos 1965b—and most comprehensively Stephanopoli de Comnène 1997, 2000, 2002); I give my own outline of the history elsewhere (Nicholas 2005).

Paomia was settled under Genoese sponsorship. Genoa intended the

Greek settlers to help impose order on the restive Corsican population. The surrounding villages resented the presence of the Greeks, who they felt were trespassing on their land. The frequent acts of violence between the two communities culminated during the 1729 uprising against Genoa. When the Greeks did not join the Corsicans in rebellion, Paomia was destroyed, and the Greeks were forced to flee to Ajaccio, the capital of Corsica. The Greeks in Ajaccio accounted for 20% of its population, and they served as the city guard under Colonel Micaglia Stephanopoli and his son Georges-Marie,³ fighting the Corsicans and defending Genoese interests. The Greeks also fought Corsicans when it was not in Genoa's interest. They became a liability to their masters when the latter were unable to support the Greeks financially. In straitened circumstances, and unable to farm around Ajaccio because of ongoing conflict, the Greeks sought to leave Corsica *en masse*. To that end they entered into negotiations with Spain, Tuscany, and Sardinia. Indeed, some Greeks did leave for Sardinia (1749 and 1752), Minorca (after 1745), and Florida (New Smyrna, 1768). The new French governor of Corsica, the Count de Marbeuf, put a stop to these efforts in 1768; the majority of Greeks ended up settling Cargèse, near their original settlement of Paomia, in 1775. The Busacci faction of the ruling Stephanopoli family, who had earlier attempted to settle Sardinia, remained in Ajaccio. A further drop in Greek numbers took place in 1874–1876, when a fifth of the population left Cargèse for the colony of Sidi Merouan in Algeria.

The Greeks of Cargèse remained in conflict with their Corsican neighbors, who raided the village several times over the next few decades. The last such raid took place in 1830, and no violence with Corsicans has been recorded since. Although the first colonists refused to intermarry with Corsicans, such marriages are attested after 1727. Corsicans began to settle Cargèse in the 1790s when intermarriage began in substantial numbers. By the 1870s, many young Greco-Corsicans rejected Greek identity (Lear 1870:122; Tozer 1882:197). But the refusal of the Cargesian colonists to Sidi Merouan to admit Latin rite settlers in 1874–1876 (Bartoli 1975:124) indicates that not all Greco-Corsicans were yet of this mind.

Sidi Merouan dealt the Greek population of Cargèse the final demographic blow. Assimilation accelerated thereafter, and all Greek families of the village eventually intermarried with Corsicans and increasingly spoke Corsican. After a petition in 1882 signed by 200 Cargesians (SdC III:68), Nicholas Phardys arrived in Cargèse in 1886, sent from the Marseilles Greek community, to bolster the Cargesians' "national sentiment." His mission was a failure (Phardys 1888), and he left after two years. The native Cargesian Greek teacher Pierre Ragazacci Stephanopoli

prospered by contrast, working from 1880 to 1920; yet his contribution appears to have made little difference. By 1934 there were around 20 Greek speakers left in Cargèse, out of a population of around 900. The last native speaker of Greek, Justine Voglimacci, died in 1976.⁴ With linguistic and cultural assimilation, the only criterion for considering someone Greek has been adherence to the Greek rite. Ironically, language in Cargèse has been passed down by the mother, and creed by the father; as a result, most remaining speakers of Greek in the twentieth century belonged to the Latin rite, and were not counted as “Greek” at all (Maurras 1926:126–127).

As a condition of settlement in Corsica, as elsewhere in Italy at the time, the colonists were obliged to embrace the Catholic faith, though they were allowed to retain Greek ritual. The religious and secular leaders of the colony, like their contemporaries elsewhere in Italy, had held unrealistic hopes of remaining Orthodox. The Greco-Corsicans nominally acceded to the request quickly. But the representatives of Rome had acrid disputes with the Greco-Corsicans through the next several decades over their adherence to Catholic doctrine. There is reason to conclude that, until the nineteenth century, the Greco-Corsicans were only nominally Catholic.

In 1804, Elie Papadacci was designated the Latin rite priest of Cargèse, in competition with the Greek rite priests. Since the Corsican population of the village was still small, the dispute between the two rites involved Greeks against Greeks, as determined through family allegiance. The dispute grew violent after the attempt by the regional government in the 1820s to abolish Greek rite, whereby the village went without a Greek rite priest for seven years; and it remained violent through clashes between the eventual appointee (1829), Joseph Vouras from Chios, and Papadacci. The last priest born in the colony was César Coti, who served from 1882 to 1933. His successors have not been Greek: Maurice Chappet (1931–1964) was a Savoyard, and Florian Marchiano (1964–) an Italo-Albanian (Figure 1). Both however have been committed to upholding the Greek heritage of the village.

Identification with Corsica

On its establishment, Paomia was a solidly Greek settlement.⁵ Intermarriage was not enough to merge the two communities, despite the best hopes of the new French administration (SdC III:10). The most infamous instance of this was in the 1796 raid on Cargèse, when the Corsican wife of a Greco-Corsican, entrusted with the care of Marbeuf’s unoccupied chateau, let the Corsicans into the village (Phardys 1888:90–91; SdC III:57–58).



Figure 1. Fathers Marchiano, Chappet, and Coti (from left to right): The mural in the church of St. Spyridon, Cargese.

In the early years of the colony, Greco-Corsicans aligned themselves politically against the Corsicans, and with the rulers of Corsica—Genoa until 1768, then France (interrupted by British rule in 1794–1796). This was explicit in the Paomians’ response when the Corsicans appealed to them to join in the 1729 revolt against Genoa. The Corsican leaders argued that «καὶ ἐσεῖς Κόρσοι εἶσταν καὶ εἶναι πρέπον νὰ στέκεστε καὶ ἐσεῖς εἰς ὅλα ἐκεῖνα ὁποῦ ὀρίζομε καὶ προστάζομε διὰ συμφέρον τῆς πατρίδος μας» (for you too are Corsicans and you must stand by us in all we command and order for the good of our country) (Stephanopoli 1865:36). The Greek response—before dismissing the Corsicans as “poncho-wearing goats” («ῥασάδων γκενεραλέων . . . τράγους καὶ αἶγες»)—was as follows:

... ἐμᾶς δὲν μας ἐννοιάζει τίποτες διὰ τοὺς πολέμους τῶν Κορσῶν, ὁποῦ ἀδίκως κάμνουν ἐναντίον εἰς τὸν πρέγκηπέ μας· διὰ τί ἐμεῖς εἴμεσθεν ξένοι εἰς τοῦτον τὸν τόπον, καὶ κάνομε τὴν δουλειάν μας· καὶ ἂν ἔχετε ἐσεῖς λογαριασμοὺς μετ’ αὐτὸν, ξεχωρίστε τους· ἐμεῖς δὲν γνωρίζομε ἄλλον αὐθέντην παρὰ τὸν πρέγκηπε (sic) τῆς Γένοβας, ἀπὸ τὸν ὁποῖον γνωρίζομεν κάθε πρῶγμα ὁποῦ μᾶς εὕρσκεται· καὶ εἴμεσθεν ἔτοιμοι νὰ ἀποθάνωμε χίλιες φορὲς, ἕνας ὀπίσω ἀπὸ τὸν ἄλλον διὰ ἀγάπην του.

... we do not care at all about the wars of the Corsicans, which they wage unjustly against our prince; for we are strangers in this land, and tend to our own business; and if you have issues with him, you sort them out. We recognize no master other than the prince of Genoa, to whom we acknowledge everything we own; and we are ready to die a thousand times, one after the other, for his sake. (Stephanopoli 1865:38)

At a superficial level, Maniats and Corsicans have much in common (Kalonaros 1944:113–115; Vayacacos 1965b:29–34; Vayacacos 1998) Vayacacos 1998), particularly in their attachment to the feud. This points to a similarity of socio-economic background, though the similarity cannot be pushed too far. But even if the Greeks understood the Corsicans well through similar social institutions, this was a familiarity that bred contempt, not empathy. And the Greeks of Paomia felt no loyalty to the land, in which they still felt themselves as strangers two generations after settlement. Paomia was to them little more than real estate, for which they were obligated only to Genoa as their landlord.

During the subsequent political upheavals, the Greeks’ allegiance shifted away from Genoa. By 1739 the Greeks were negotiating with the self-declared King Theodore Neuhoff of Corsica to assure their pardon and pay should he prevail (SdC II:19–20). In the 1740s, Greeks were deserting, or in revolt over lack of payment (SdC II:20, 47). Georges-Marie initially upheld his oaths against the Corsican revolutionary Pascal Paoli

(Phardys 1888:77 gives an oral tradition of his rebuff); but by August 1767 he was negotiating with Paoli, to obtain assurances for the colony (SdC II:34). Georges-Marie's rival Costantino Busacci Stephanopoli, meanwhile, organized a cavalry unit under French sponsorship in 1757, which resulted in Genoa imprisoning him (SdC II:50–51). Costantino eventually threw his lot in with Paoli in 1766 and moved against Ajaccio, before the Greek Council of Elders and Paoli himself persuaded him to back down (SdC II:33–34).

But these moves against Genoa were not motivated by love of Corsica and identification with the Corsicans, but by self-preservation. Several contemporary commentators pointed out that the Greeks had been ill treated by the Genoese (“réduit au désespoir” according to a report on the first Sardinian colony: SdC II:58). Genoa dissolved the Greek military companies in 1752, and was 100,000 pounds in debt to them (SdC II:49–50, 80). By the end of the Genoese tenure, the Greeks themselves could see their situation was bleak.

Once Corsica was transferred to France, both the Ajaccio and Cargèse Greeks aligned themselves with France, not Corsica. Complaining of the Cargesians' refusal to pay the vingtième tax in 1790, Casanova, president of Vico district, pointed out that “Au cours de la dernière guerre, satellite des ministres de Gênes, ils ont défendu les ennemis de la patrie” (During the last war, as a satellite of the ministers of Genoa, they defended the enemies of the fatherland) (SdC III:49). But whatever Casanova was hoping to insinuate, the Greek troops of Ajaccio had been quite cooperative with France once she established control; the fatherland they were defending against was Corsica itself.

Identification with Corsicans at a local level began later. The earliest indication of this is from 1826, when Count Dulong de Rosnay noted that “ce n'est que depuis peu qu'elle n'est plus considérée comme étrangère au milieu du pays” ([the community] has only recently ceased to be considered a foreign body in the country) (SdC III:65). By the time he visited Corsica as a Greek teacher, Phardys (1888:55–56) found that, in contrast to previous generations,

... μόνον δ' οἱ σημερινοὶ Ἕλληνες τῶν Καρυῶν, πρὸς μεγάλην βλάβην των, δὲν εἶναι Κυβερνητικοί. Εἶναι Βοναπαρτικοί, ὡς καὶ οἱ ἐπιλοιποὶ τῶν Κορσικανῶν. Καὶ ὅμως, ὡς πληροφοροῦμαι, περισσότερα ἔπραξεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἢ σημερινὴ Δημοκρατία παρὰ ὅλοι οἱ Βοναπάρται ὁμοῦ.

... only the modern Greeks of Cargèse, to their great harm, are not pro-government. They are Bonapartists, as are the remainder of the Corsicans. Yet as I am informed, the present Republic has done more for them than all the Bonapartes put together.⁶

Phardys links the turn away from their French benefactors and identification with Corsica to the corruption of Cargesian Hellenism. Phardys certainly had an axe to grind: this identification with Corsica got him dismissed from Cargèse. But his perception was accurate. Lear's (1870:14) first host during his trip to Corsica had a daughter married to a Cargesian. He noted to Lear that "the people there [...] have for a long time past intermarried with Corsicans, and, although among themselves they keep up their own language, they can hardly, except in that one particular, be any longer called Greek."

So the original settlers were loyal to their Genoese sponsors (though not necessarily to their creed), and scorned any identification with Corsica. The stresses of the mid-eighteenth century forced pragmatism on the Greeks, and turned them away from Genoa. And by the 1870s, the Greeks were being assimilated. Most of the cultural and creedal frictions had been resolved or at least deferred, and the community's politics now conformed to that of the rest of Corsica, rather than Corsica's external rulers. Despite efforts to reverse it (as in the 1882 petition), assimilation was inevitable.

Continuity in folk culture

When they first arrived in Corsica, the Greeks looked, spoke, and acted in a manner alien to their surroundings. This tangible difference reinforced a sense of separate identity, although it did not necessarily cause it. Each of these differences was gradually discarded, signaling Greco-Corsican assimilation.

The first distinction we know the Greeks abandoned was their traditional dress, during their stay in Ajaccio. The 1731 icon of the Virgin Mary in the "Chapelle des Grecs" in Ajaccio still depicts Maniats in traditional dress and armed (Vayacacos 1963:707).⁷ The Corsicans derided Greek dress (Blanken 1951:7), and called the Greeks "Turks" for it (1739 description of Corsica cited in Kalonaros 1944:139). Given the animosity between Corsicans and Greeks, Corsican derision would not have motivated them to dispense with their dress—especially as the Greeks already stood out as the Ajaccio civil guard, and the Greeks had little motivation at that time to assimilate. Galetti (1863, cited in Lear 1870:124) and Papadopoulos (1864:414) give a more plausible reason: their dress made them an easy target for Corsicans, especially the villagers of Mezzana, with whom the Greco-Corsicans were feuding.

The Greco-Corsicans kept their Greek costume for special occasions; women wore Greek dress for a dance in honor of Sir Gilbert Elliot, English viceroy of Corsica, in 1795 (Blanken 1951:9; SdC III:55–56);

most old women still wore Greek clothes in 1843 (Lear 1870:127); and Papadopoulos (1864:414) found some families preserved old silk clothes as relics. But Lear (1870:14) was already told in 1868 that he would not find any Greek costumes in Cargèse to include in his landscape paintings, much to his disappointment.⁸ And Phardys (1888:102) found Greek costume long since disused. (The photographs of Cargesian women wearing Maniat dress in Vayacacos 1970a:218 are presumably staged.)

Greco-Corsican folk-songs (Papadopoulos 1864, Tozer 1872, Phardys 1888) were collected as early as 1807, for the French administration's survey of the "Divers langages et dialectes usités dans l'étendue de l'empire": they were translated by Adamantios Koraes—much to his predictable revulsion at their vernacular "honking song" («χηνωδία») (Polites 1984:75). Polites finds that this early privileging of folk song—over a decade before Fauriel's pioneering collection—signals their importance to the language community. Greek folk-song represented a connection to the Greek past. Given the special role of religion in Greco-Corsican identity (see below), it is no surprise that religious songs survived the longest: the songs of Lazarus and St. Basil, caroled throughout Greece, were two of the three songs still remembered by Blanken's (1951:292–296) consultants in 1934, and Parlangèli (1952a) found Lazarus's carol the only song even partly recalled two decades later. Marie-Anne Comnène (1959:68–70) confirms that some families still sang the carols around 1935.⁹

Kalonaros (1944:156) was impressed in 1921 to see Gianetto Frimigacci produce the Greek insulting gesture of the μούτζα, the spread palm. Other than that, the number of secular customs he found preserved was minimal (Kalonaros 1944:172). Observers in 1829 and 1831 had already noted complete Cargesian adoption of Corsican customs (SdC III:66, 126), though these early reports are likely exaggerated. Phardys (1888:98) dates the elimination of Greek secular customs from the 1850s. The customs Phardys enumerates as defunct are lamenting the dead laid out on a carpet on the ground floor of the house; holding a wake (συγχωρία) on the eve of the funeral; having newlyweds lie on sacks of wheat while well-wishers placed presents on the bride's head or shoulder; and caroling on Christmas, St. Basil's, and St. Lazarus's feast days. However the carols were still remembered by Blanken's informants (and even Vayacacos's 1964:83). Vayacacos (1964:51, 200) appears to refer to the wake as an ongoing practice; and Vayacacos (1964:99, 180; 1965a:32) records the memory of laments in Greek, which places their demise at 1900 at the earliest.

The early abandonment of distinct dress was a defensive measure, not a signal of assimilation; this is confirmed by its persistence in the

1840s among old women. Otherwise, customs reflecting difference from the Corsicans (including songs) were subject to assimilatory pressure by the 1850s, and in many households fell out of use. But individual households resisted such pressure (as they did with language maintenance): while some families dropped customs in the 1830s, others maintained them into the 1900s.

Religion: Paomia and Ajaccio

With linguistic and cultural assimilation, the Greek rite has become the only effective distinction between Greco-Corsicans and indigenous Corsicans. This suggests that the rite is an underpinning of Greco-Corsican identity, as is corroborated by the Cargesians themselves (Vayacacos 1965a:652, 655). The privileging of religion in the identity of Greeks has had a long history: in the Ottoman empire the Orthodox church was the main—and in most instances the only—large-scale social institution most Greeks had contact with, in both the secular and the spiritual domains, and it was an institution defined as distinct from Islam. This made the church the only social institution enabling a distinct “Greek” identity, even before the full institutionalization of the *millet* system in the eighteenth century (Kostis 1991:60). The identification of religion with “ethnic” identity through the *millet* was embraced by the Greeks, and is an inheritance common to all the Ottoman *milletler* (cf. Hirschon 2000 on this ongoing identification among ethnic Armenians and Turks living in Greece).¹⁰ So in their adherence to a creedally based, “Romaic” identity, the Greco-Corsicans were merely continuing the practice endemic in Ottoman Greece; this practice predated the Enlightenment-era construction of a “Hellenic” identity (Roudometof 1998) centered on Classical patrimony and ultimately the Greek nation-state. (The debate on the role of Orthodoxy in this Hellenic identity is of course ongoing; e.g., Stavrakakis 2003.)

The Maniat migrations to Italy were triggered by the fall of Crete to the Ottomans (Nicholas 2005). La Guilletière (1675:46) reports that in order to bolster anti-Ottoman sentiment, Maniats claimed that Ottomans ruling Mani would allow only one church per village—a prospect which “fait trembler les Grècs” (made the Greeks tremble). And bishop Parthenios, accompanying the colonists to Corsica, said that the colony was undertaken to avoid Ottoman taxation—and the threat that the Ottomans would convert to Islam the children of families that could not pay (Kalonaros 1944:134). The Maniats famously repudiated Ottoman authority; but these reactions, and their readiness to submit to Genoan sponsorship, make it clear that their concern was to safeguard their

creedal identity even more than their political autonomy. Accordingly, the role of the church as the repository of Greco-Corsican identity has been explicit from the beginning: St Spyridon houses the church bell, the four icons and the *epitaphios* brought over from Mani by the colonists, and carried around the village in the Easter Monday procession (Phardys 1888:123–124; Comnène 1959:75–76; Vayacacos 1963:708, 1965b:28; Stephanopoli de Comnène and Manceau 2002:23–26; Range 2003:58–59). And the Cargesians themselves continue to view their creed in that light. But the Greco-Corsicans' adoption of Greek rite Catholicism complicates the way creed bolstered identity: the Greco-Corsicans had to negotiate how distinct they were from the Latin rite.¹¹

Paomia was founded with a heavy religious presence: the colony of 520 in July 1676 included a bishop, eleven monks, five priests, and several nuns. (SdC I:70 refers to ten priests and twenty monks.) This “overkill” is reminiscent of La Guilletière’s threat: only one church per village was unacceptable. And it remained characteristic of the colony: the 1773 census in Ajaccio found no less than eight Greek priests (Phardys 1888:132–133), and Intendant de Boucheporn felt obliged to ask in 1775 whether a village of 200 families needed so many clergymen (SdC II:156). With such a strong clerical presence in a community established in order to safeguard its creed from Islam, this was not a population prepared to accede to Roman spiritual authority. There are detailed reports of deviation in Paomia from Catholic doctrine and ritual, drawn by Latin clergymen well acquainted with the colony (1684, 1686, 1712, and two in 1714—the second by Giacomo Stephanopoli, a native of the village studying in Rome to be a Latin rite priest, and who the next year took over both the Latin and Greek rite churches: SdC I:73–78). The reports are increasingly unconvinced that the Greeks were good Catholics. (Expressions of concern continued in the 1720s: SdC I:113, 114.)

The Greek religious leadership rankled the Genoese administration from the beginning (SdC I:84–85). In 1679 Odorisio Pieri, a Catholic from Greece himself, was sent to the colony by the *Propaganda Fidei* Congregation. Pieri had previously worked among the Maniats of Tuscany to ensure their adherence to Catholicism. He pursued the same end in Paomia as a missionary and as apostolic vicar (the representative of Rome), from 1678 to 1683 and from 1685 to 1696. But although Pieri was a formidable adversary of the Greeks, he did not get far with them. By 1688, the chiefs and monks of Paomia were emboldened enough to petition Genoa for Pieri’s removal, “si l’on veut que la Colonie vive en paix” (if they wanted the colony to live in peace) (SdC I:92). And even in his very first letter to the *Propaganda Fidei*, Pieri complained that the Greeks of Soana (Tuscany) were saints compared to the Paomians “si

malheureuses, si superstitieuses, prises dans tant d'erreurs" (so unfortunate, so superstitious, in so much error) (SdC I:86).

So Pieri found the Maniats of Paomia more intransigent than the Maniats of Tuscany, even before hostilities broke out. The first time a Greco-Corsican was killed by Corsicans was a month after Pieri's letter (SdC I:40–41); animosity between the Greeks and the locals may have already been building when Pieri arrived, but it is unlikely to have caused intransigence on its own so early. It is likelier that the Greco-Corsicans were more intransigent than the Tuscans not because of what they encountered in Corsica, but because of who was in the colony to begin with.

The obvious difference between Paomia and the other Maniat colonies was the presence of the monastery, as an institutional centre of anti-Catholic sentiment. The Roman Catholic hierarchy certainly understood this, repeatedly reporting it to their superiors (SdC I:23, 93, 106); and Giacomo Stephanopoli believed the worst evil in the colony in 1715 was that the colonists confessed to the monks, rather than the Latin confessor (who did not know Greek). Accordingly, Giacomo instructed his assistant Abbot Giovanni Stephanopoli in how to give confession (SdC I:107). Beside the monks, the village chiefs also resisted Catholicism: Giacomo reports two chiefs refusing to allow Roman Catholic missionaries into the village. That some chiefs were more sympathetic to Catholicism than others is confirmed by correspondence through the 1690s (SdC I:92–93, 100), and the agreement of only some chiefs to follow the Gregorian calendar imposed by Pieri in 1694.

Although dissent against Roman Catholic authority was clear, Catholic efforts remained concentrated on doctrine; there is no indication of a serious attempt to suppress the rite of the Greco-Corsicans. We have much evidence that the Catholic hierarchy intended the opposite. The measures taken by Msgr. Giovanni Domenico Cavagnari to restore order in 1715, after the church books dispute (see below)—banning members of one group from working during another's feast day, breaking their fast at another's house, or intermarrying without the bishop's authorization—were expressly intended to preserve the Greek rite as distinct (SdC I:109). Likewise, although Paomia had a Latin rite church from the beginning (SdC I:90), the Latin rite church was not intended to supplant the Greek churches of Paomia. It was only for the use of the Genoese officials in Paomia and the Corsicans of the surrounding area—in 1710 nine Latin families against around 700 Greeks (SdC I:103), in 1718 25 out of 600 villagers (SdC I:111). The chiefs' attempt to block the funding of repairs to the Latin rite church shows that they still considered themselves under threat of assimilation nonetheless (SdC I:24).

Towards the end of the Greeks' stay in Paomia, Vicar Tommaso Maria Giustiniani intended to use a donation by Chief Teodori to build Latin-style altars in the village (SdC I:113). This would bring the Greek churches in conformity with the Latin, and Tommaso's intent was to assimilate the Greek to the Latin rite. But Batista Picimbobo S.J., asked for advice by Genoa, recommended against changing the population's rite—a move he feared would lead to violence or heresy. So even if individual chaplains wished to encroach on the Greek rite, there was no enthusiasm for such a project in Genoa or Rome.

The religious authorities' reluctance to interfere with the Greeks was even more pronounced once they arrived in Ajaccio. The Greeks were self-administered, and were assigned churches to perform their own rite (San Gerolamo in 1731, the Madonna del Carmine in 1762). As far as the authorities were concerned, the Greeks were good Catholics (1744: SdC II:21). But it seems the authorities were not eager to look too closely and find out otherwise. Lay Corsicans, as recorded in a 1739 description of Corsica (Kalonaros 1944:139), were not convinced, and still considered the Greeks schismatics. A report from the Vatican in 1754 (SdC II:63) also questions the creed of the Greco-Corsican colonists to Montresta, Sardinia—removed from Genoese oversight, it may have been freer to do so.

Calendars and missals. The Greeks of Paomia pushed back at the ecclesiastical authority of Rome in various ways. When in 1696 Chief Apostolo became a monk, he was ordained by the Greek Orthodox bishop of Venice, under Constantinopolitan jurisdiction (SdC I:98). In 1676, Apostolo had written that he expected the next bishop to be ordained in Venice (Comnène 1959:18, 21); since it was his aim to become bishop himself, he acted accordingly in 1696. Father di San Giovanni Xomo was still complaining of Paomian clerics being ordained in Venice rather than Rome in 1712 (SdC I:98). This was in violation of the colonists' agreement with Genoa, and shows that the Greeks still looked eastwards not only for their ritual, but also for their legitimation.

The most intense focus of Greek resistance to Catholic authority was the adoption of the Gregorian calendar. The choice of calendar makes sense as a rallying point for the general population: unlike theological disputes like the *filioque*, the difference in calendar was a concrete distinction between the Greeks and Latins of Paomia, which encompassed not only their church services but their daily life.

The dispute started in 1686, with the Greeks refusing to change calendars (SdC I:74). Matters escalated, and in 1694 Pieri assembled the clergy and chiefs repeatedly to demand their adherence (SdC I:93–97).

When the Greeks sought to defer the change to their children, Pieri responded by suspending all confessors, the prior of the monastery, and the administration of sacraments, and closing down all but one church. This was too much for the Genoese governor, who organized an enquiry, and after two more years of recriminations Genoa had Pieri removed. The chiefs wrote to the Governor a few months after the arrival of his replacement Raffaele Giustiniani, that they were well satisfied with him (SdC I:99).

The Greeks' claims notwithstanding, the Gregorian calendar was desirable to Rome, and several missionaries sent from Genoa and Rome had pressed the Greeks on the issue. Lazzaro Maria Figari (presumably the fact-finding missionary sent after Pieri's 1694 outburst) believed that the calendar was an issue independent of rite, which the *Propaganda Fidei* had no jurisdiction over (SdC I:98). Yet Figari still encouraged the Greeks to change calendars; and even if the Corsicans were indifferent to the distinction in calendars (as the Greeks claimed in 1694 and Pieri himself admitted in 1689), its rejection was a rejection of Roman authority.

The Greeks' insistence on the calendar continued in the following decades. Father di San Giovanni Xomo reported in 1714 that the colony was prepared to accept the Gregorian calendar, respecting their oaths to live like the other Greeks under Roman jurisdiction (SdC I:105). Yet the monks of St. Basil sent a procurator to Rome the following year, requesting permission to retain their rite and the old calendar (SdC I:34). And when in the same year the new chaplain, Giacomo Stephanopoli, published a declaration accepting the new calendar in the name of the colony, the chiefs—that is, his relatives, including his own uncle—demanded from Genoa that he be removed. The Genoese director of the colony, who knew how important the issue remained for the Greeks, supported the request.

Cardinal Vallemanni found the parish observing the Gregorian calendar in 1718 (SdC I:111), and concluded that the parish was no more undisciplined than others in the region. But as Phardys (1888:59) remarked, Nicholas Stephanopoli still used the Julian calendar in his 1738 chronicle: he dates the Greeks barricading themselves in the tower of Omigna on Holy Tuesday, «δεκάτην τρίτην τοῦ Ἀπριλίου μηνὸς παλαιοῦ» (on the thirteenth of the month of April, old [calendar]): Stephanopoli 1865:42). The choice of a Julian date is an explicit signal of the Greeks' rejection of their Corsican, Latin environment. As late as 1782, the year's entry in the baptismal registry book needed to be qualified with «κατὰ τὸ νέο» (according to the new [calendar]) (Vayacacos 1978:§1824).

Before the calendar controversy had settled, a new dispute challenged Roman control of Paomia. Di San Giovanni Xomo and Giacomo

Stephanopoli blamed the doctrinal deviation they had observed on Orthodox church books brought in from Venice (SdC I:108–109). Since literacy cannot have been widespread, this again shows the local clergy taking the lead in differentiating their flock from Catholicism. The clergy was reported as venerating Gregory Palamas, the thirteenth-century Orthodox theologian, and Mark Eugeniacus, the fifteenth-century polemicist against Church Union (SdC I:75, 77)—which counts as nothing less than a provocation.

The church books had symbolic resonance for the general population. So while Giacomo successfully confiscated the book of Gregory Palamas in 1715, his attempt to confiscate other books led to uproar. His assistant Giovanni Stephanopoli was obliged to disclaim foreknowledge of the confiscation, and Giacomo's initiative turned even di San Giovanni Xomo against him. The Italian priest, sensing the change in fortunes, told the chiefs that his own 1714 doctrinal check on the colony was all Giacomo's idea (SdC I:108). When Giacomo left to make his report to Genoa, he had to do so under armed guard. Disquiet continued until Giacomo's death in 1721.

Outside the issue of the calendar, overt resistance to Catholicism did not outlast the monastery—already down to three monks in 1710; the last monk died in 1724 (SdC I:114). Greek parents boycotted Pieri's school (SdC I:98), which taught Catholicism as well as Italian, but his successor did not face that problem. In fact, praising the newly arrived Giustiniani, the chiefs pointed out that thanks to him, their children corrected them at home if they "said anything wrong" (SdC I:100).

So we have an inconsistent picture of the colony's religious status in late Paomia. The colonists are often declared good Catholics—a description that continued in Ajaccio, by which time the Roman Catholic hierarchy was no longer overly concerned in policing them. Yet occasional rallying issues emerged—the calendar and the church books chief among them—which provoked the colonists' reaction. The reaction was strong enough to make the chiefs demand the offending churchman's removal repeatedly—a request granted once. The rallying issues were ritual, not doctrinal, reinforcing the emblematic use of religion in the colony. But there are indications that the doctrinal standing of the colony was not consistently sound either.

By the end of their stay in Paomia, the chiefs could add another accusation in seeking the dismissal of Father Tommaso Maria Giustiniani: consorting with the surrounding villagers who were hostile to the colony, and already raiding it (SdC I:116). This reinforced the perception that the Latins did not have Greek interests at heart, and gave them even less incentive to identify as Catholic. Stephanopoli (1865) does not mention

the capitulation to Catholicism in his 1738 chronicle at all. This may have been out of embarrassment, as Phardys (1888:42) confidently concludes, but Catholicism may still have been regarded a mere formality by the Greco-Corsicans.

One final, late piece of evidence for a separate creedal identity is the Greco-Corsicans' still refusing to pay tithes to the local Roman Catholic bishop in 1773 (Phardys 1888:127; SdC II:36, 92, 102); Busacci's colonists to Sardinia also refused to pay tithes to the archbishop of Cagliari (SdC II:72). A century after arriving in Corsica the Greeks gave no outward signs of doctrinal deviance, yet they still regarded themselves as not subject to local Roman Catholic jurisdiction—i.e., as a population religiously separate from Latin rite Corsicans.¹²

Religion: Cargèse

The clash of the rites. By the time Cargèse was settled, the Greco-Corsicans gave Rome no reason to worry about their adherence to Catholicism, but just as they refused to pay tithes to the Latin bishop, they zealously guarded their distinct rite. Failure to guard that rite was reason enough to be excluded from the settlement; of the Greeks staying in Ajaccio, Nicolo Vlaccacci “irait volontiers si son fils, le prêtre duquel il attend des secours, n'était point brouillé avec les prêtres grecs, par le motif qu'il ne s'habille pas comme eux, et est vêtu comme les prêtres romains” (would go readily if his son the priest, from whom he expects support, was not embroiled with the Greek priests, because he does not wear the same clothes as them, and is dressed like the Roman priests) (SdC II:214).¹³

Circumstances changed by 1792 when Latin rite Corsicans started settling in Cargèse, taking up land abandoned by Greeks (SdC III:98). The village now had a Latin rite community, which required its own priest. Marbeuf had recommended Elie Papadacci train at the Aix-la-Provence seminary (Phardys 1888:134); when he returned, Papadacci was the only celebrant using Latin in the church registry (1792: Vayacacos 1978:§2012–2015, 2017): *Elias Stephanopoli rector fidelium qui latino utuntur ritu* (Elijah Stephanopoli rector of the faithful using the Latin rite). Papadacci was named Latin rite priest of Cargèse in 1804 (SdC III:98), with a congregation of 40 families, including both Corsicans and his relatives.¹⁴ In 1817, he was elevated to curate (SdC III:116).

Phardys's (1888:134–135) description of Papadacci as «φανατικὸς δ' ἐν τῇ νέᾳ του ταύτη θρησκείᾳ» (a fanatic in this new religion of his), whose relatives were «πρῶτα θύματα τῆς κακοφροσύνης τοῦ ἀρνησίθρησκου τούτου» (the first victims of the evil notions of this traitor to his creed), is predictably overwrought. But Papadacci was certainly dedicated to expanding

the Latin rite. By 1827 he was making the inflated claim of 40 Corsican and 50 Greco-Corsican families adhering to the rite (SdC III:117).¹⁵ With the Greek priest's position vacant since 1822, it was possible to do away with the Greek rite permanently. There was support for eliminating the Greek rite by 1827 from the prefect of Corsica (SdC III:118). Ironically, given Phardys's accusations of Roman perfidy, it was once again left to the Catholic hierarchy, in the person of bishop Sebastiani, to defend the Greek rite: "Au reste, Monsieur le Préfet, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire observer qu'il n'est pas de mon ressort de créer ou de détruire un rite approuvé par l'Église Universelle" (Besides, Prefect, I have the honor of pointing out to you that it is not up to me to create or destroy a rite approved by the universal church).¹⁶

The appointment of Joseph Vouras in 1829 signaled the end of any attempt to eliminate the rite—an attempt that had scandalized the metropolitan French authorities.¹⁷ But Vouras's appointment marked the beginning of open conflict between the two communities.

The two church communities had been obliged to share the one church since the establishment of Cargèse. In 1817 the Latin congregation decided to have their own church built: an 1822 petition justified it "pour fuir l'antipathie qu'ils rencontrent dans l'église de rite grec pour l'exercice des fonctions religieuses" (to avoid the animosity encountered in the Greek rite church towards the exercise of their religious functions) (SdC III:116). But construction of the two new separate churches took decades (SdC III:100, 104–107); so when Vouras took office, the two priests still shared the one church, celebrating Mass in shifts (SdC III:119).

The disputes between the two rites, involving Papadacci and (initially) the mayor versus Vouras, intensified (SdC III:121–126): the Easter celebrations of 1831 were marked by death threats and guns pulled in church, and gunshots were fired into Vouras's bedroom in 1832. The dispute escalated into a demand by the minister of religion to remove Papadacci. Lt. Walter, who compiled a report in January 1831, noted that some Greeks insisted that there be only a Greek rite priest in Cargèse—and that when the mayor demanded they declare to their parishioners that they were all Catholics, Papadacci was rather more eager to do so than Vouras (SdC III:123).¹⁸

No violence between the rites is recorded after 1832. But the survival of the Greek rite remained a touchy issue. When the new bishop of Ajaccio launched an inquiry into Vouras in 1842, the Greek parishioners read this as an attempt to eliminate the Greek rite, and the bishop desisted (SdC III:128). Although the bishop defended Vouras to the minister in the subsequent correspondence, he decided to be rid of

both priests. Papadacci was reassigned in 1845, and replaced by the Abbé Villanova—whom the Greek rite parishioners promptly also accused of working to eliminate their rite (SdC III:130). Vouras was replaced by Michele Medourios Stephanopoli in 1846 (SdC III:131), and died in 1854 (Phardys 1888:138); he may have left Cargèse beforehand, as he is not recorded in the burial registry.

Medourios affirmed in 1847 that he was on the best of terms with Villanova (SdC III:133): as far as the clergy of Cargèse was concerned, the dispute between the rites was over. But Medourios's parishioners still did not feel they belonged to the Catholic community. Their constant protests that their rite was being eliminated shows that they felt under threat. As in Paomia, this conclusion was not justified by the behavior of Rome: the decision to have Greco-Corsicans train at the Greek rite St. Athanasius's College was a move by Rome to preserve the rite in Cargèse—making sure the priests were “doctrinally correct.” Nonetheless as late as 1865, when Michele Medourios and Stefano Ragazacci were fighting over the office of Greek rite priest, villagers appealed to the Greek Orthodox church of Marseilles to send them a priest (Phardys 1888:139–140, who tendentiously claims it was the entire village). These Cargesians were still ignoring Roman jurisdiction over their church. In response, the Greek Orthodox Church in Marseilles in conjunction with the Church of Greece sent Archimandrite Versis to Cargèse on a fact-finding mission. Versis made the prudent choice of recommending to the Cargesians that they remain under papal authority (Phardys 1888:140–141).¹⁹

The notion of Greek doctrinal distinctness has also been a long time dying. Maurras (1926:124) was told in 1898 that some families retained disdain towards Rome, as Phardys (1888:129) also implies. The *filiouque* was the target of much of Odorisio Pieri's effort in 1679, and the Greeks were continually assured as accepting it thereafter; yet Leigh Fermor (1958:111) notes that it was still being omitted from the Greek Church's Nicene Creed: “a tactful gesture towards the atavistic susceptibilities of the Cargesians.”

Syncretism. Like the ban on the *filiouque*, the tenacity of Orthodox ritual custom as a vehicle for a separate identity persisted for centuries. One exceptionally early concession to Roman convention (1720s) was the practice of having a godfather and a godmother, rather than a single godparent, as among the Orthodox.²⁰ Otherwise, the majority of changes in ritual practice seem to date from the same time as the onset of assimilation in general—the late nineteenth century.

- Papadopoulos (1864:414) notes the continuing distribution of boiled wheat, κόλλιβα (*kólliva*), at funerals.
- On founding Cargèse, the Greeks observed the various fasts dictated by the Eastern church—four annual fasts and Wednesdays and Fridays—which added up to two thirds of the year (SdC III:13). Maurras (1926) confirms Wednesday fasting in 1898. Vayacacos's (1965a:173) informant reports that «πρῶτα ἐνηστεύανε τετράδη καὶ παρασκηνή, ἐδανὰ δὲν ἔναι πλὸ παρὰ παρασκηνή» (at first they would fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, now it's only Fridays). This implies that this Latin trait was adopted by Greek rite Cargesian within living memory.
- Tozer (1882:355) noted that “their priests still wear the dress of the Greek Church, and they employ in their public worship, with some modifications, the same service-books which they brought with them from Greece.” Vayacacos (1963:708) and Phardys (1888:149–150) also insist on the authenticity of the Greco-Corsican liturgy.
- Cargesian priests were buried under Eastern ritual, with the priest seated in state for the villagers to pay their respects, before being buried still seated—a ritual attracting curious attention from surrounding villages (Phardys 1888:133–134).²¹
- Dragoumis (1971:30) finds that the Cargesian version of the antiphon of the Chrysostom Mass, «Ταῖς πρεσβίαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ, σῶσον ἡμᾶς,» is closer to its mediaeval form than the form current in Greek churches; and that Cargesian chant in general does not have the micro-tonal tuning believed to be an Ottoman-era innovation in Byzantine chant.
- Greek rite priests in Corsica were able to marry, as Phardys (1888:132) confirms, up to 1817; this is expected of Greek Orthodox priests, and is allowed in Greek rite Catholicism. As Medourios himself told Lear (1870:122), the priests of Cargèse no longer married.
- St. Spyridon houses a statue of the Virgin Mary—a practice disallowed in Orthodox churches (the Greco-Corsicans in the 1710s regarded praying to statues as idolatry: SdC I:75, 107). Though St. Spyridon is a Catholic church, Maurras (1926:126–127) reports that this was still considered a scandalous concession to the Latin rite at the time.²²

- Phardys (1888:145) found the Greek rite church ritual outside the Mass had by his time mostly become aligned with the Latin: Sunday matins and midnight prayers had been abandoned; the Lenten Great Complines and Service of the Bridegroom had been replaced with the Rosary; and Sunday benedictions, the Jubilee, and the Roman Catholic religious calendar had been adopted.

By this time the old hostility towards Rome was abating, and Cargesians of both rites regarded the two churches as interchangeable. Maurras (1926:125) reported flocks swapping over when the other rite priest was unavailable in 1898. From 1915 on Xanto Mattei, the village's Latin priest, officiated over Greek rite funerals while Coti was overseas or ill (Vayacacos 1983:§2201ff, §2284, §2297), and obligingly wrote his entries in the registry book in Greek.²³ Nadia Ivanoff was the last child christened by Coti in the Greek rite (and she and her siblings had passive competence in Greek, as the daughters of Constance Versini: Blanken 1951:36); Parlangèli (1952b:54) reports that the Ivanoff children belonged to the Latin rite, but attended Greek mass. Their aunt Françoise Versini, though also of the Latin rite, was prominent in the Greek rite church choir; and their (Russian) father Nicolas had no problem painting the interiors of both Sainte-Marie and St. Spyridon (Stephanopoli de Connène and Manceau 2002:10, 23).

Such eclecticism was not restricted to the Versinis: Blanken (1951:12) found that on certain feast days, Latin rite Cargesians would attend the Greek rite church. One of those days is Easter Monday, when the icons brought with the colonists are paraded around the village, to celebratory gunfire from the villagers (see also Kalonaros 1944:174). The procession is significant in asserting the historical identity of the Greek Cargesians, but is shared by the whole village—all the easier since Easter gunfire is a feature native to Corsica (cf. Lear 1870:20 while in Ajaccio). The same holds of the cult of St. Spyridon, which Corsicans from surrounding villages were already participating in during Phardys's (1888:148) time.

There is still a hint of animosity between the rites in Vayacacos (1965a:189): «δέ δρέπεσαι ἡρθε παδὰ νὰ περάση τις σκολάδε, ἀπέϊ πάει στή φράγκικῆ ἐκκλησία» (you should be ashamed of yourself: you've come to spend the holidays here, and then you go to the Frankish church). For someone of Greek descent to attend the Latin church—even when no longer a permanent resident of Cargèse—could still be seen as a betrayal. However, Msgr. Marchiano now ministers to both communities, alternating churches each Sunday (<http://www.mani.org.gr/apodimoi/karaep/>

kargkeze_aep.htm); Range (2003:59) quotes him as saying that “when I am with Greeks, I am Greek. When I am with Romans, I am Roman.” All that remains of the erstwhile conflict are Marchiano’s animadversions on the church schism (Mihalopoulos 1998)—and the defiantly Byzantine style of the frescos he commissioned for St. Spyridon between 1987 and 2001 (see Figure 1; Stephanopoli de Comnène and Manceau 2002:33–55), clashing with the church’s neo-Gothic architecture and its Western-style iconostasis (see front cover; Stephanopoli de Comnène and Manceau 2002:27–32; SdC III:111).²⁴

Greco-Corsican religious practice has been syncretistic; but we should be careful in how we interpret such syncretism. Since the mid nineteenth century, syncretism has resulted from cultural contact. There has been some Greek influence on the surrounding Latin rite—most notably the cult of St. Spyridon and the Easter Sunday ritual. But the Greek rite is affected the most, as one would expect. Its syncretism has gone much further than Rome requires of Greek rite Catholicism, and points to a cultic assimilation incorporated within the cultural assimilation of the Greco-Corsicans. Marchiano’s frescos, which undo the earlier syncretism of the Western-style iconostasis, show that this process is not being allowed to run to completion. But just as with the appeal to pagan-Christian syncretism by Modern Greek intellectuals validating their construction of Hellenic identity (Stewart 1994), such assertion of a distinct identity is now largely symbolic, and does not challenge the prevalent religious order.

The earlier phase of syncretism, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was not contact-driven but dictated by policy: it was a strategic move by the Catholic church to preempt resistance to Catholicism by Orthodox converts, legitimizing the syncretism that would follow mass conversion. In some instances, notably the Ukraine, this official syncretism has remained in place for centuries, and has proven very successful as a missionary strategy. In others, the Greek rite was clearly intended only as a bridging phase before full ritual conversion: this was the case with the Maniat colonies in Southern Italy, and was originally the intent for Corsica as well.

Syncretistic religions have been brought into being as a deliberate act of rapprochement (Shaw and Stewart 1994:17): the conventional narrative of syncretism as credal resistance does not apply universally. It has been however the norm in Europe: when an externally imposed new religious order arrives—particularly when state-sponsored as with Southern European Christianity—the population adopts the new order of necessity, but persists in expressing its old credal identity as much as it can get away with. Different religious regimes have different levels

of tolerance for such persistence (Shaw and Stewart 1994:11). But we can note such survivals throughout Christendom: more prominent in Latin America, but notoriously also in folk religious practice in Greece (Stewart 1994).

In Corsica, the Catholic gamble did not pay off. Rome attempted to forestall resistance by anticipating syncretism, but the Greco-Corsicans still saw the Greek Catholic syncretic rite as an imposition, and reacted as they would towards an imposed Latin rite: they resisted it, and persisted in their old credal identity as much as possible. Not only did they refuse to make the minimal ritual concessions required by the Catholics (Gregorian calendar), but their doctrinal compliance itself was suspect (as with the incendiary possession of anti-Catholic writings). Syncretism was not held up as a goal but as a problem by the local religious agents seeking to preserve distinct credal identities: the local Latin and Greek clergy were equally opposed to the syncretic project.

Even when syncretism was an established fact, it was an embarrassment, and was disavowed in the interest of promoting the community's notion of a unique, distinct identity.²⁵ This explains the misleading picture of Cargesian religious life Medourios gave Lear (1870:127). Medourios portrays his predecessor Vouras, a “‘fugasco’ Latin priest from Syra, in the time of Leo XII [1823–1829]”²⁶ as having introduced “many changes” to the religious practice of Cargèse—neglecting to tell Lear that Vouras had been his teacher (Phardys 1888:138). He further claims, “in maintaining that their religious ritual is unaltered,” that the Catholic Athanasian creed is also used by the Greek Orthodox Church. (This inaccuracy made Lear mistrust Medourios's account of Vouras.) The adoption of the Athanasian creed is an act of syncretism that Medourios denies, claiming there was no change to begin with. Medourios, the loyal Catholic, was a more successful agent of syncretism than Vouras, who was reluctant to declare himself Catholic in public. But the Romaic credal ideal persisted in the community, and Medourios could only gloss over his deviation from it by portraying Vouras, the Romaioi from Greece, as the unscrupulous innovator—indeed, as a practitioner of the reviled, encroaching Latin rite.

It was only in the late nineteenth century, when the mechanisms imposing syncretism worked in tandem with cultural assimilation, that the Greco-Corsicans made peace with syncretism. The reasons why this population was able for so long to resist even syncretism, let alone cultic assimilation, are considered below.

Corsican offshoots

New Smyrna. The New Smyrna colony in Florida, established in 1768, was intended to be Greek: according to the pamphleteer Archibald Menzies, the Greeks would be a population “whose religion will be a bar to their forming connections with the French or Spaniards; and who will readily intermarry and mix with our own people settled there” (Menzies 2004–2005 [1763]:199; Britain had acquired Florida from Spain in 1762). Despite his poor management of the colony, Andrew Turnbull made provision for a Greek Orthodox priest-cum-schoolmaster to be salaried (Panagopoulos 1965:19, 105). Menzies (2004–2005 [1763]:201) had also pointed out the importance of Greek clergy to such a venture, “as the priests have entirely the direction of them.” But half the colony was Minorcans fleeing drought. The Greek priest was not provided; and although the colony did produce a Greek schoolmaster, the Maniat Juan Janopoli/Genoply (Ioannis Giannopoulos), he started out as a carpenter (Panagopoulos 1965:181). New Smyrna was instead ministered to by two Minorcan priests, who followed the colonists on their own initiative (Panagopoulos 1965:104–109).

Seventy of the 1400 colonists were Greco-Corsicans, and 500 were Greeks, mostly from Mani. So initially, it was possible for the Greco-Corsicans to retain an identity distinct from the Minorcans, or to be subsumed into the Greek population. The British authorities and Turnbull himself continued to refer to the colony as Greek (“the Doctor and his Greeks”: Panagopoulos 1965:21, 49, 60, 70, 86)—Turnbull signing a loyalty oath to Britain in 1776 on behalf of the “upwards of two hundred families of Greeks and other Foreigners on the Smyrna settlement” (Panagopoulos 1965:132).

However New Smyrna endured considerable hardship; of the 1400 colonists, half died in the first three years alone. The greater susceptibility of Maniats to malaria pushed the demographic balance in favor of the Catholics (Panagopoulos 1965:82, 173). Adversity led the colonists to associate closely, with ties cemented through intermarriage and godparenting. The settlers must have learned either English or likelier Catalan by the time the plantation was dissolved in 1777. They required only a Minorcan interpreter for their depositions against Turnbull (Panagopoulos 1965:149)—the 18 depositions including the Greco-Corsican Anthony Stephanopoli. Moreover, contrary to Menzies’s expectation, the Greeks were only too glad to accept Spanish rule, as they stated in a memorandum when Florida was transferred back to Spain in 1783 (Panagopoulos 1965:176).²⁷ This shows the remaining Greeks making common cause with the Minorcans.

The absence of a Greek priest, and the moral leadership provided by the Minorcan priests, led the Greeks to convert to Catholicism *en masse*. By the 1783 census, only Demetrios Fundulakis from Crete reported himself as Greek Orthodox (Panagopoulos 1965:37). This is in contrast to Minorca where the Greco-Minorcans were expelled as schismatics in 1782, once Spain resumed rule: of the 37 Greeks who remained, 19 were still counted as “schismatics” (Sanz 1925:360). So the solidarity bred in New Smyrna bonded the Greeks to the Catholic Minorcans more successfully than did Spanish compulsion.

The assimilation of the Greeks in New Smyrna was rapid. The Catholic chapel established for the New Smyrna colonists, when they abandoned New Smyrna for St. Augustine, was called both “the Greek church” and “the Church of the Mahonese” or “the Minorcan chapel,” Mahón being the capital of Minorca (Panagopoulos 1965:174).²⁸ Catalan became the language of the community, with Minorcan songs still surviving long enough to be recorded in 1939.²⁹ And posterity has named the descendants of the colony Minorcans (Panagopoulos 1965:111)—as indeed the majority of them always were.³⁰

So the Greeks of Paomia and Ajaccio resisted assimilation in their adversity, well into the nineteenth century; the same Greeks, moving from Ajaccio to New Smyrna, embraced it well before.

Sidi Merouan. The 1874–1876 settlement of 41 families was Greek, except for a few Italians and Frenchmen already married to Cargésians (SdC III:75; Bartoli 1975:123). Despite the links between the Greeks and Corsicans in Cargèse, the Sidi Merouan Greeks considered themselves apart from other Corsicans, and from the Latin rite. The secretary general of Constantine prefecture commented on the colonists’ rare sense of solidarity and religiosity (SdC III:72). What this entailed became apparent in 1880, when the Sidi Merouan colonists refused to admit Latin rite settlers (Bartoli 1975:124; SdC III:75). The few Latin rite colonists in Sidi Merouan were obliged to follow the Greek rite, and those colonists returning to Cargèse entered the Greek rite congregation (Maurras 1926:128). So even in Algeria, the colony managed to assimilate its non-Greek members to a Greek religious identity.

However, Blanken (1951:12) reports that by 1931, when the population had fallen to 125, the village was no longer Greek-speaking, and the Greek rite church of the village was closed;³¹ the priest Nicolas Frimigacci, still a native Greek-speaker, had moved to Constantine (Blanken 1951:36). Dawkins (1926–1927:376) reported Frimigacci as still ministering to the Sidi Merouan parish, though the expectation was that he would soon

replace Coti in Cargèse; Dawkins confirms that Greek had already disappeared in Sidi Merouan.

So the Sidi Merouan community fiercely guarded its Greek identity in 1880; yet fifty years later, Greek was no longer spoken in Sidi Merouan. Justine Voglimacci found it noteworthy that her grandfather Theodore returned from Sidi Merouan with his Greek intact (Vayacacos 1965a:30); and one of the first colonists to abandon Sidi Merouan was the Greek teacher Pierre Ragazacci Stephanopoli, once the position of Greek teacher in Cargèse opened in 1880 (SdC III:74, 76). The rapid language death of the Greeks of Sidi Merouan was not caused by demography: there is no evidence that the Greeks intermarried or mixed with the Arabs. The second generation of Sidi Merouan colonists married women from Corsica as well as from the colony (Bartoli 1975:139); but the bride Bartoli mentions was from Piana, and possibly Greek.

So unlike Cargèse, marriage did not provide the impetus for assimilation in Sidi Merouan: the Latin rite members of the colony were too marginal to impose their identity on the other colonists, and instead were themselves assimilated. Language shift rather was already underway in Corsica, as Lear and Tozer had noted before the colonists departed. The colonists were for the most part young families, and semi-speakers of Greek; while the colony leader Pierre Petrolacci Stephanopoli was in his sixties, the elders fluent in Greek and able to impose a conservative influence were absent from the colony. (Petrolacci himself abandoned the colony in 1877: SdC III:77.)

Language shift continued even in the absence of Latin rite neighbors, and was reinforced once brides arrived from Corsica: even if they adhered to the Greek rite, they were probably already monolingual. The colony included Greeks from Piana, Vico and Ajaccio, which were assimilated to a greater degree than the Cargèse Greeks. Moreover, the entire community was fluent in Corsican from the outset. In 1879 the French administration appointed Dominique Versini as Corsican interpreter for the region, including Sidi Merouan (Bartoli 1975:138). As in Cargèse, the major determinant of Greek identity was the church rather than the language. The Greek rite church closed down as this element of identity faltered as well.

Discussion

Why? The Greco-Corsican resistance to assimilation lasted an extraordinarily long time: a century by some standards (intermarriage, distinct dress), two centuries by others (ideology, secular customs), three centuries

by yet others (language death, religious separation). The attested processes of assimilation cluster around the mid nineteenth century, when the conflict between the rites was defused. Once assimilation began, it was rapid—a generation's time for most of the village, notwithstanding individual holdouts like the Versinis. But this does not account for the delay in assimilation of two centuries. By contrast, the Maniats of Puglia and Tuscany and the Greco-Corsicans of Florida all assimilated within a generation of arrival. The colony of Algeria was a special case: it had institutional support for not mixing with the surrounding population. But by that time assimilation in Corsica itself was well under way; and though the Greco-Corsicans were still able to shut the door on Latin rite Corsicans in 1880, within fifty years Sidi Merouan had run out of Greek rallying points (church and school), and was fast running out of colonists.

The question is what made Cargèse different. The obvious answers are inadequate. That the Cargesians retained the Greek rite has clearly been the major factor in retaining a separate identity. There is a striking similarity to the sixteenth-century Albanian colonies in Italy: the Geg colonies, which followed the Latin rite, were assimilated quickly, while the Tosk colonies, which followed the Greek rite (and produced the Cargesian priests Franco and Marchiano), remain largely Albanian-speaking to this day. Phardys (1888:131) blamed Cargesian assimilation on the increasing Roman overlordship of the Cargesian church. But as the historical record shows, Paomia was under much more ecclesiastical scrutiny than Cargèse, to little effect. And the survival of the Greek rite is an effect of resistance to assimilation, not its cause: it does not explain why the Greek rite survived in Corsica and not the other Maniat colonies. Conversely, though the indigenous Greek communities of Salento and Calabria converted to the Latin rite from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century (Kalonaros 1944:106), Greek has also remained spoken there, though steadily retreating.

The refusal of the Greeks to intermarry until they moved to Cargèse, which Phardys (1888:153–155) elsewhere uses to justify the delay in assimilation, is also effect rather than cause. As there was sporadic intermarriage from 1727, one still needs to explain why the bulk of villagers did not intermarry until the 1800s. One could also appeal to the warlike character of the Maniats to explain their resistance—as Kalonaros (1944:107) does for the Italo-Albanians. The Greco-Corsicans certainly distinguished themselves in battle and in unruliness. But it is hard to see what made them more unruly than their fellow Maniats in Italy, who assimilated quickly if not willingly. For that matter, the priestless Cargesians improvised church services for seven years before the arrival

of Vouras, rather than set foot in a Latin church (Phardys 1888:136); the Greco-Corsicans of New Smyrna, fifty years earlier, did not feel they could afford that luxury, and went willingly to the Minorcan chapel. So the Cargesian resistance to assimilation was clearly conditioned by their environment.

A more promising reason for the delay, identified by Blanken (1951:10) and Stephanopoli de Comnène, is the sense of siege felt in the colony:

“Livrée à elle même, harcelée par des voisins qui jugeaient injuste l’octroi de terres leur ayant appartenu, et par un clergé latin, souvent peu compréhensif, parfois hostile, et pressé d’obtenir des résultats, elle trouvera, dans le maintien de la religion léguée par ses ancêtres, la force de résister.”

Abandoned to its own devices, harassed by their neighbors, who considered it unjust that they had been granted land once theirs, and by the Latin clergy—often not very understanding, sometimes hostile, and under pressure to obtain results—the community found, in maintaining the religion bequeathed by its ancestors, the power to resist. (SdC I:83)

This explains much of the Greeks’ resistance: the colony started off defiantly, and even during their privileged stay in Ajaccio the Greeks were embroiled in continuous violence with the Corsican villagers, and kept apart from them. In New Smyrna, there was a different travail, pitting Minorcans and Greeks against Turnbull; the Greco-Corsicans there were not being oppressed by the Roman Catholics, and were eager to make common cause with them. And once relations between Corsicans and Greco-Corsicans were normalized, in the 1820s, assimilation came quickly: so quickly, that the Greek surviving in Cargèse owed surprisingly little to Corsican or French, indicating that Cargèse did not have a protracted experience of bilingualism. The Greek anxiety to retain their own rite persisted, but religious disputes were mostly an affair internal to the Greeks, even though the Corsicans benefited from the Latin rite’s gaining ground.

But there are some facets that this still does not explain. The other Maniat colonies also felt besieged: the Maniats of Brindisi fled rather than convert to Catholicism (Hasiotis 1969:135), and the Roman Catholic administration managed to remove the Greek rite priest from the Tuscan colony after twenty years (Moustoxydes 1965 [1843–1853])—something unthinkable in Corsica for the previous three centuries. The ecclesiastical and secular authorities could have stamped out the Greek rite of the Greco-Corsicans quickly, as occurred in several locations in the West. Instead, it prospered. The state of siege prolonged the delay in assimilation, and its memory explains the enduring resentment against Rome,

shown in the private disparagements of Rome recorded by Maurras, or the reproach of a holidaymaker attending the wrong church recorded by Vayacacos. But it does not explain the early survival of the rite.

We can account for the delay in assimilation through an appeal to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1974). The settled Greeks in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic dominions were a socially mobile, inferior group. The inferiority stemmed from their lack of power in their new residence. They lacked any substantial material resources (other than what they could get out of the land); they had little political control of their destinies as guests of the local regents; they were unfamiliar with the territory and its social structures, and dependent on the good will of their indigenous neighbors; and they were poorly regarded as schismatics by the entire local population, both commoner and elite. On the other hand, individuals could very easily escape their disadvantaged social position, by turning away from Greek creed and rite, and dispensing with the Greek language. They were expressly encouraged to exercise such mobility by their sponsors.

If we accept with Tajfel that a major motivation of adhering to a social group identity is deriving a positive self-image, then if some find themselves in a group with a negative self-image, and have the option of getting out of the group, they will take that option. They will only remain in the socially disadvantaged group if the sanctions against moving out, imposed either by the in-group or the out-group, are too great; if the values they have internalized would generate too great an internal conflict; or if there are other factors making mobility impractical.

The Maniats certainly did not look forward to converting to Catholicism—as is obvious from the flight of the Brindisi settlers. So clearly the prospect of assimilation generated internal conflict. Yet the Brindisi colonists did convert within two years; however unwillingly they did so, they did not regard it as an outcome worse than death or expulsion. And cut off from Mani, colonists made their own decisions. The more die-hard may have censured individuals prepared to convert in the early days of the colonies, before the colonists adjusted to their new reality. Yet with the entire community disadvantaged, self-preservation forced realism—especially once they were deprived of their Greek Orthodox priests, who dealt out censure as authority figures. The small sizes of the colonies made intermarriage inevitable, and this accelerated assimilation: a social identity that generates alienation from one's socially superior spouse and in-laws is problematic.

While these factors applied to all Greek colonies in the West, there are two factors specific to Corsica that delayed assimilation. The first was the makeup of the colony. Though cut off from Mani, the Greeks

of Corsica had a disproportionate presence of conservative authorities ready to issue censure. The colony had its own bishop and monastery, as an institutionalized centre of opposition to Catholicism—an opposition directed towards Pieri and Rome before hostilities broke out with the Corsicans. The moves against the monastery were necessary for Rome and Genoa to cement control of Paomia; but they were also part of a general move against Greek rite monasteries in Italy, with Grottaferrata now the only remaining such monastery.³² Still, even after the Paomia monastery closed, the colony emulated it with a surfeit of priests. So the colony maintained a robust native clergy in order to resist ecclesiastical assimilation. The chiefs also positioned themselves as an authority against assimilation: Chief Apostolo was prominent in opposing the Gregorian calendar (SdC I:92–93).

Moreover, the community itself was sizable enough to survive on its own. While the contemporary Maniat settlements numbered only a couple of hundred colonists, up to 1500 Maniats embarked for Corsica, and over 500 arrived there. Not only was Paomia large enough to sustain a monastery for at least a few decades; it was large enough not to need any Corsican inhabitants—and the numbers of Latin parishioners in Paomia remained minimal: 25 out of 600 in 1718 (SdC I:111), 4% of the population. So the colony was large enough not to need to intermarry, which reduced the pressure from in-laws to assimilate: the onset of intermarriage was delayed by two generations, and substantial intermarriage by another two.

However, although the Tuscan colony of Maniats had five priests among its “several hundred” colonists in 1671, not only did it accept Catholicism from Odorisio Pieri with alacrity, but it switched to the Latin rite and assimilated (or perished) soon after its Greek priest was removed in 1693. So while the makeup of the colony certainly helped, it was not decisive in averting assimilation.

The more important factor in preventing Greco-Corsicans from assimilating into a superior Latin rite social class was that there was nothing inferior about being Greek Catholic in Corsica to begin with. The Greeks had contempt for the Corsicans, as is evident in the exchange with the 1729 insurrectionists: the “poncho-wearing goats” they were addressing, Gafferri and Ceccaldi, were the elected generals of the island, and Ceccaldi was a nobleman.³³ The Corsicans were their inferiors as far as they were concerned, so there was no prospect of assimilating to them. But they had the highest respect for the Genoese, whose interests they claimed to identify with. This did not mean they could assimilate into the Genoese social class: social mobility did not extend that far, and demographically the Genoese rulers were a small group anyway. But they did

not really have to: the Greeks were running Paomia and Ajaccio for the Genoese as far as they were concerned, and had all the power and social validation they needed. There were plenty of commoner Corsicans for them to feel superior to, so their psychological need to derive a positive self-image from their identity as Greco-Corsican was met.

The feeling on both sides was mutual. The Corsicans long dismissed the Greeks as schismatics and Turks, while the Genoese treated them with deference and respect: the godparents of Chief Micaglia's children were a Who's Who of the Ajaccio elite, military, aristocratic and religious (Vayacacos 1978:§196, 307, 386, 464, 544, 597, 686). The Greeks were essential to Genoa (at least until the 1745 crisis), and Genoa did as much as it could to appease them. There were limits to what Genoa could do against Rome, as with all the negotiations for Maniat colonies in Italy. And Genoa had the stated goal in 1676 of Latinizing the Greeks eventually (SdC I:79). But Genoa was in no rush to carry this out, and did side with the Paomian chiefs against the representative of Rome during the calendar crisis. Even as late as 1760, when they had long suspended pay to the Greek military companies, Costantino Busacci's cavalry venture prompted Genoese officials to state grandly that Genoa "préférerait plutôt qu'on tira dix mille Corses de l'intérieur de l'île que de se priver de cette colonie" (would rather have ten thousand Corsicans removed from the interior of the island than be deprived of this colony) (SdC II:53).

The choice of representative of Rome itself showed concern for rapprochement. The first choice, Pieri (born George Spatalos), a Greek from Chios, backfired; but his replacement Rafaele Giustiniani was a member of the family that had ruled Chios on Genoa's behalf for centuries. In both cases Genoa wanted someone who could engage the Greeks. Indeed, after Giustiniani died in 1709, Genoa insisted on naming his successor.³⁴ Genoa, with its unenthusiastic response to Tommaso Maria Giustiniani's altar Latinization project, and its hands-off approach to the Greco-Corsicans in Ajaccio, showed that it had changed its mind on its 1676 goal: it did not suppress their rite. It probably had little choice: Paomia was a self-contained entity, and the demographic cogency of the colony was maintained in Ajaccio—700 out of a population of 3200 (SdC I:11), or 20%, and a well-defined, socially privileged community within the city. And they were an armed 20%, which Genoa was barely able to control for its own ends. It was impossible to impose loyalty to Rome on them, and this explains why the church authorities looked the other way in Ajaccio, even as the Greco-Corsicans refused to pay tithes to them.

This practical constraint on assimilation—the Greco-Corsicans had influence and guns—translated into a psychological constraint: the Greco-Corsicans knew they had influence and guns, and had no reason

to give that up by assimilating. When their fortunes turned in the 1740s, such motivation materialized. But chiefs Micaglia and Costantino, who maintained their hierarchical control through the clan-based military companies, were able to compel their men to prefer mass migration to assimilation: the censure of the still-powerful chiefs and priests averted assimilation, as Dom Strati Vlaccaci found. By the time the chiefs' power started to erode, it was supplanted by a different source of social validation: the common myth of descent from the imperial family of the Comneni. The birthright of the Ajaccio Stephanopolis, whose royal recognition was petitioned for by Demetrius Busacci (Comnène 1999 [1784]), was appropriated by much of Cargèse, as its householders rushed to tack *Stephanopoli* and *de Comnène* onto their surnames.³⁵ Commentators have dismissed this as vanity (Kalonaros 1944:146, Phardys 1888:34–35). But it guaranteed survival of a distinct identity much longer. As Descamps put it in 1898 (cited in Blanken 1951:34), “il est de bon ton à Cargèse d’être Grec d’origine et de langue” (it is socially advantageous in Cargèse to be Greek by descent and language). The “bon ton” which made Cargésians continue to identify as Greek was the same positive self-image they derived from the Comneni.

One last constraint on assimilation is obvious: it is hard to identify as a Corsican when Corsicans are shooting at you. It is simplistic to claim, as early researchers imply (e.g., Sherif 1966: Group Conflict Theory), that social group identity is forged primarily through competition with a hostile out-group. The “state of siege” account of Greco-Corsican resistance to assimilation is based on such thinking; but the Maniats of Italy did not feel any less besieged. However, where such competition occurs, dislike for the out-group intensifies, and in-group cohesion becomes more urgent. Many modern nationalisms were catalyzed through warfare—or at least promoted such origin myth. In such circumstances, assimilating with the out-group is seen as treason, seen as treason, not only by the community, but also by the individual who has internalized the community’s animosity. (Conversely, as Group Conflict Theory predicts, a new hostile out-group can make two groups put aside their differences: this is what motivated the Greeks in New Smyrna to assimilate so rapidly, combined with a dearth of Greek Orthodox authority figures to inveigh against it.) The last raid on Cargèse was in 1830, but a sense of competition persisted with the shared use of Marbeuf’s chapel by Latin and Greek rite, and the power struggle between Vouras and Papadacci—involving clans as much as ethnicities. Relations between the rites were only normalized once Vouras and Papadacci were removed, by 1847, and symbolically defused once Sainte-Marie was completed in 1850, and the two rites no longer had to compete for liturgical space. Though substantial intermarriage and

Corsican residency in Cargèse had started in the 1790s, it is no accident that it was the 1850s when the process of assimilation accelerated.

Nationalism and Sectarianism. The Greco-Corsican experience is difficult to compare with more recent instances of assimilatory pressure on Greeks—either in the diaspora or in situ (under rule by non-Greeks). The reason is that the encounter of the Greco-Corsicans with the Genoese and Corsicans predates the modern nation-state, whereas nineteenth- and twentieth-century encounters are informed by nationalist allegiances: Greeks had a nationalist imperative to remain Greek, and the ruling or host societies typically had a nationalist imperative to assimilate. By contrast, not only did the Greco-Corsicans have a Romaic rather than Hellenic identity, but the Genoese likewise had no nationalist ideology. This meant that Genoese standards of loyalty were less exacting than in a modern nation-state: the Greeks could be “loyal to their prince” without partaking of the prince’s creed, language, cultural patrimony, or biological affinity. (The same held for the Ottomans, although the Maniats were not prepared to grant the Sublime Porte the same allegiance.) This means that the Genoese exerted less assimilatory pressure on the Greco-Corsicans than the French subsequently would.³⁶

So the Greco-Corsicans postponed assimilation because of their numbers and social privilege; but this in turn was only possible because Genoa had less mechanisms for coercing a change in identity, and less motivation to do so, than would a modern nation-state. And unlike elsewhere, Genoa was able to prevent the one agent that could coerce such change, the Roman church, from doing so. The disadvantaged Maniats of peninsular Italy could easily be convinced of the merits of assimilation; but with the Greco-Corsicans enjoying their privileged status as Greeks, Genoa could not, would not, and needed not convince them otherwise.

A comparison with the Dodecanesian experience of Italian colonial rule in the early twentieth century is instructive. As Doumanis (1997) establishes, outside the local intelligentsia Dodecanesians had not developed a nationalist consciousness by the time the Italians arrived, and did not automatically reject Italian rule. The two occasions of mass resistance to the Italians were not driven by Hellenocentric nationalism, but by perceptions of threat to their local, Romaic identity. The first, centered in Kalymnos, had a motive very familiar from Corsica: a popular perception that the Italian authorities were encouraging the ecclesiastical autonomy of the Dodecanese in order to convert them to Catholicism (Doumanis 1997:52–55, 67–80). As in Corsica, the evidence for such plans was scanty, but the suspicion alone that the community’s Romaic, creedal identity

was under threat was sufficient to mobilize it. (As in Corsica, the prospect that the conversion would be to Greek rite Catholicism mollified noone.) This shows that both locales privileged creed in their identity, and were prepared to defend it against perceived threats.

The second occasion, which generated a more widespread reaction, was the banning of the Greek language from secondary education and the public sphere (Doumanis 1997:55–57, 82–89). The move was implemented by Governor De Vecchi, a former Fascist minister for education, and it was overtly assimilatory: the Dodecanesians correctly identified and resisted De Vecchi's purpose to make of their children "little Italians" (Italákia) and young fascists—a common refrain among Doumanis's (1997:85) interviewees. Even though most Dodecanesians were not yet themselves Greek nationalists, they had come to value education (Doumanis 1997:92–96), and their experience of it had always been in Greek and Hellenocentric. More importantly, they recognized the assimilatory encroachment of Italian nationalism—which had the predictable effect of galvanizing their nationalist consciousness.

Admittedly, the first generation of Greco-Corsicans boycotted Pieri's school, identifying a similar assimilatory intent. But unlike creedal resistance, educational resistance did not continue in Corsica. Partly this was because it proved impractical—although the alacrity with which Greco-Corsicans allowed their children to correct their doctrinal deviance with the benefit of their schooling (SdC I:100) is surprising. But more importantly, it was unthinkable that an eighteenth-century school should make Greeks or Corsicans "little Genoese" or young republicans: schools were not yet exploited to impose identity as with compulsory education in the nation-state, and the Republic of Genoa was no such nation-state. So the Paomians felt no such threat from their children's schooling. A school could (and did) produce little Catholics; but that only underlines that the battleground for identity in Corsica was exclusively creedal. (The Greco-Corsicans' countermeasure was making sure their priests were trained locally.)

Creed, so privileged in the construction of Romaic identity, was the last feature to survive as distinguishing Greco-Corsicans from their neighbors. It confirms this role that religious carols were the last folk songs to survive; and that all Giannetto Frimigacci wanted to talk about in Greek, when Kalonaros (1944:156) visited Cargèse in 1921, was Bible stories. Creed rather than language determined who was considered Greek. Phardys (1888:156) was convinced there were no young speakers of Greek in Cargèse, and had only one pupil out of 45 who knew Greek, for just that reason. Only Greeks by creed would send their children to Phardys, but those children had learned no Greek from their Corsican

mothers. The Versinis had a Corsican father and a Greek mother, which allowed full Greek speakers to be born into the family as late as the 1900s (Blanken 1951:35–36). But as Latins, they were not among Phardys's recruits.

The Catholic Church allowed this outcome in Corsica, despite the local church authorities' efforts to the contrary. This is curious given the history of the other colonies in Italy, where the church took the lead in forcing assimilation—at a time when the church was the only social institution with an interest in assimilation, and the coercive mechanisms to achieve it. The only move in Corsica that could be seen in that light was the appointment of Giacomo Stephanopoli as joint Latin and Greek chaplain; but Rome did not press the point after his debacle over the church books. Msgr. Cavagnari's move during Giacomo's tenure to safeguard the integrity of the Greek rite community shows that the Greco-Corsicans were safe from religious assimilation—though it may not have seemed so at the time.³⁷

The role of Genoa as the Greeks' solicitous patron was crucial. By the time Genoa could no longer guarantee the Greeks' ecclesiastical autonomy, circumstances had changed in the Catholic Church: there was greater tolerance for Greek rite Italo-Albanians through the eighteenth century (<http://www.cnewa.org/ecc-italo-albanian.htm>), and a gradual shift in church attitudes culminating in the ecumenically-minded praise for Greek rite Catholicism in the Second Vatican Council (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*: <http://www.cnewa.org/ecc-catholiceastern.htm>). By the 1820s, when the only serious attempt at suppression took place, the Catholic church would no longer support such suppression, and this attitude had percolated to the local hierarchy, as the bishop of Ajaccio's response shows. The shocked response of Paris to the 1820s campaign showed that the Greek rite was also safe from the metropolitan secular authorities. The window of opportunity for imposed religious assimilation had passed—though not without the Cargesians themselves digging in their heels.

Allowed their own rite, the Greco-Corsicans constructed a distinct identity centered on their rite. The effectiveness of the rite in preserving Greek identity was clear in the extraordinary appeal for a Greek Orthodox priest in 1865. The point of the request was not that the priest should be Orthodox—Phardys's debacle two decades later shows that a Greek Orthodox priest would never have worked out in Cargèse, and Archimandrite Versis made the right decision in advising against it. The point rather was that Cargèse had to have its Greek rite, if the Cargesians were to hold on to their distinct identity: with Ragazacci and Medourios

arguing over the post, the Cargesians must have decided that one Greek priest is as good as another.

When Lear (1870:122) visited Cargèse three years later, his landlady's daughter was quick to point out (in Italian) that her Latin rite friend was a "Frank." "Frank" is a term Levantines use for Westerners, and this would have been the furthest west the term has been used by a native.³⁸ It only underlines this incongruity that Corsica lies between the countries the Greco-Corsicans called *Fràd'zia* (Italy) and *Frantsa* (France). The persistence of the term shows that the Greco-Corsicans did not regard themselves as part of "Frankia," but as outsiders. In 1678 Colonel Butti reminded Bishop Parthenios that he was not in Mani any more (SdC I:85). On some level, two centuries later, Lear's landlady still had not gotten the message. The message clearly appears to have got through in the ensuing few decades, so that any twentieth-century survival of a Greek identity in Cargèse was vestigial. But the delay in assimilation until that point, in a settlement quite isolated from Greece is without precedent in the Modern Greek diaspora.

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NOTES

Acknowledgements. For their material assistance I wish to thank Genevieve Czarnecki, John Hajek, and Io Manolessou. Thanks also to John Hajek and George Baloglou for extensive discussions.

¹In this paper, I differentiate between Greek rite Catholicism (Greek Catholic) and Latin rite Catholicism (Roman Catholic), with "Catholic" a cover term for churches accepting Roman authority and doctrine. The term "Uniate" is regarded as pejorative by Greek Catholics.

²There were tensions in the nineteenth century between the indigenous, Romaic identity of the Greco-Corsicans, and the attempt to introduce a Hellenocentric identity by the teacher Nicholas Phardys. As I concentrate here on the survival of a distinct identity in the first two centuries of settlement, I do not address the conflict between a creedal Romaic and a civic Hellenic identity—let alone the rival claims on Cargesians of civic French nationalism and Corsican separatism. Moreover, it is difficult at this remove to tell the extent to which Phardys's difficulties stemmed from personality rather than identity conflicts. Nevertheless, by Phardys's time the Greco-Corsicans were clearly not Greeks in the same way that the Greeks of Greece were. They had remained isolated from the nation-building of nineteenth-century Greece, with its emphasis on Hellenism: as with other old Greek

communities, the Greco-Corsicans continued to call themselves ρωμέος (Romaioi: Blanken 1951:272; Lear 1870:121), and had only a passive familiarity with the term Ἑλλην (Hellene). Despite the efforts of Phardys and his competitor Pierre Ragazzaci, the church rather than the schoolhouse remained the major institution instilling a distinct identity in the villagers. As a result, calling the Greco-Corsicans Greek becomes problematic in their later history, and “Greek” should be considered here more a label of convenience than anything else. Since they had little direct contact with the Greeks of Greece, of course, Greco-Corsicans had little incentive to take on a “hyphenated” identity, and differentiate themselves from Greeks: “Greek” would have been defined by them oppositionally (“not Corsican”), rather than with reference to contemporary cultural realities in Greece.

³I have used the forms of the Greco-Corsicans’ names as they appear in my primary source, Stephanopoli de Connène (1997, 2000, 2002)—although for most of his life, Georges-Marie went by Giorgio Maria, and was «καπετῶν Γιουργάκης» (*kapetῶn Yiourgákis*) to his countrymen. Because of the extremely frequent use of the Stephanopoli surname by Greco-Corsicans, I leave it off when discussing recurring figures.

⁴The process of language death/shift (Dorian 1981; Crystal 2000) that took place in Cargèse is detailed elsewhere (Nicholas and Hajek forthcoming). Although the emphasis on the more fluent speakers of Greek by linguists working on Cargèse tends to obscure it, what we know of the sociolinguistics of Greek in Corsica matches the trends identified in other studies of language death, including Tsitsipis (1998) for Arvanitika in Greece. The last generation of users of the language are “semi-speakers,” with only a vestigial command of the language (already evident in Cargèse in the 1870s). Language death proceeds by a diminution of social spheres and speech genres in which the language is used, until it is restricted to the family domain (see Parlangèli 1952b on the Versini siblings as the only Cargesian actively using Greek among each other). The language retains a symbolic role in the community long after its functional role is superseded (Kalonaros 1944:115 mentions Cargesian students in 1919 joking in Corsican with only an occasional emblematic word of Greek thrown in). As the norms of the language become difficult to police in the absence of fluent speakers, the dying language innovates more rapidly (“fantasy morphology”), with individuals exerting disproportionate influence on the language (Blanken 1951:30; cf. Tsitsipis 1998:63). What is unusual about the Cargesian process was the unequal speed of the process among speakers—from the 1870s to the 1970s; the high prestige of Greek in the community explains this.

⁵Phardys (1888:24) was told by Cargesian that Genoese families joined the colony. The surname they assumed was Italian, Ragazzaci, was not (Blanken 1951:267); and only a few Genoese are recorded among the colonists (e.g., Vayacacos 1983b:§21: burial of Thomas Chiotto, a Genoese from Arenzano).

⁶By “Bonapartism,” Phardys means that the Cargesian were partisans of Napoleon’s family and their hopes to restore the Empire in France, instead of the Third Republic. An early instance of Bonapartism in Cargèse may be seen in 9 May 1815—a month before Waterloo—when Theodore Frimigacci and Maria Tzimiza [= fem. of Zimacci, a Greek surname] chose to christen their four-day-old child “Napoleonis” (Vayacacos 1978:§2184).

⁷See <http://www.mani.org.gr/apodimoi/eikona/eikona.htm>, which includes a reproduction of the icon.

⁸Edward Lear went to Corsica to paint, but is best known to posterity for his limericks and nonsense poetry. Lear had traveled in Albania and Greece, and his manservant in Corsica was a Souliot.

⁹Dragoumis (1971) found that the Lazarus carol and a ballad recorded by Phardys have tunes extant in Greece.

¹⁰The scare quotes are necessary because, as Roudometof (1998) points out, ethnic affiliation was fluid and situational: the elites of the non-Grecophone Balkans frequently

aligned themselves with the Greek *ethnie* (after Smith 1991), and this fluidity played an important role in the nineteenth-century history of the region. Yet such fluidity was only possible because the Balkan ethnies, being Orthodox Christian, all belonged to the *Rum millet*. The confessional barrier between Muslims and Orthodox Christians was not negotiable, and was critical to the self-perception of the ethnies as groups distinct from their rulers if not from each other. It was natural for the Maniats to transfer such thinking to their new environment, and to their distinction from the Corsicans and Genoese, which was likewise creedal (even though it was only supposed to be ritual).

¹¹The adoption of Catholicism by the colony was admittedly a formality through the eighteenth century; the impression in most of the literature is that this occurred through benign neglect—Kalonaros (1944:169) even finds that «οἱ λατῖνοι ἐπίσκοποι τοὺς εἶχαν ἀφήσει σὲ ἀπόλυτη σχεδὸν ἀσυδοσία» (the Latin bishops had left them in an almost total lack of accountability). The Greco-Corsicans did choose their own priests until the nineteenth century (Phardys 1888:128–129). But the subsequent training of the priests in Rome was not the primary cause of Greek assimilation, as Phardys claims. And in Paomia the Greeks were not left alone: their adherence to Catholicism was a matter of protracted interest from Rome.

¹²This autonomy was foreseen in the way Rome administered its Greek Catholic parishes, but the Greeks sought to perpetuate it. The Corsican bishops, who keep figuring in the history of the Greco-Corsicans, certainly sought such jurisdiction, and the withholding of tithes (a substantial source of income) was a sore point, also of concern to France. Interference by local Latin bishops has been a consistent characteristic of the history of Greek Catholic settlements in the West. The independence of the Greek Church has not been challenged since, outside the uncertainty of the 1820s. In 1954 the Greek parish of Cargèse, lacking its own bishop, passed to the jurisdiction of the Greek Catholic archbishop of Paris (SdC III:136). Until then, the Greek Catholics of Corsica were directly under Roman jurisdiction, through the *Propaganda Fidei* and the Greek Catholic archbishop of Rome.

¹³The priest is named as Stratis Vulaccacci, and a Dom Strati Vlacacci did request permission of Georges-Marie to settle Cargèse from Pistoia in 1784 (SdC III:20).

¹⁴The relatives of Papadacci that converted to the Latin rite included the Petrolacci family and some members of the Dragacci family: http://www.corsica.net/corsica/uk/regajac/cargese/carg_egl.htm.

¹⁵Similar point scoring appeared in the 1822 petition to establish the Latin church of Sainte-Marie, where the Latin rite was said to be “incomparablement le plus nombreux” (by far the most numerous), and in the contemporary correspondence of Sollier, secretary to the prefect of Corsica, hoping to “éteignit toute espérance de succès parmi la très petite partie de la population” (extinguish all hope of success among this very small part of the population). The bishop of Ajaccio nonetheless found that the Greek rite “réclame encore la majorité des habitants bien déterminés à ne pas embrasser le rite latin” (still claims the majority of the population, who are quite determined not to embrace Latin rite) (SdC III:117). The tenuous position of the Latin rite in Cargèse, even during the seven year absence of a Greek priest in the 1820s, was shown by the fact that Jean Colonna, a Latin priest in Cargèse, had the support of Cargèse and Ajaccio Greeks to become curate—provided he switched to the Greek rite.

¹⁶There are hints that assimilation was sought even earlier; inspecting the wedding registry of Cargèse in 1778, Bishop Pietro Maria Versini of Sagona recommended that from the next volume Latin be used (Vayacacos 1970b:§377). Versini’s wish was not realized: the registry book stops in 1816 only half-full, amidst the religious upheaval of the time; but despite being the Latin priest, Papadacci stuck to Greek until then.

¹⁷As the minister of the interior wrote in 1831, “on voudrait dans une commune française, et sous l’empire de la liberté des cultes, placer les Grecs dans une situation analogue

à celle des juifs sous Louis XIV” (in a French community, and in the empire guaranteeing freedom of religion, they would place the Greeks in the same situation as the Jews under Louis XIV) (SdC III:127).

¹⁸In his retort to Bishop Sebastiani after his first run-in with Vouras, the mayor defended Papadacci as trusted by the Cargesian to administer confession to them in Greek—showing a disjunction between linguistic and creedal affiliation (SdC III:122).

¹⁹Versis’ arrival still prompted the bishop of Ajaccio to report him to the local authorities for disturbing the peace: the Catholic establishment saw his presence as a threat, and could not rely on its Cargesian flock to stay disciplined.

²⁰Of the ten baptisms recorded from 1686–1700, five involved two godparents; in two instances (Vayacacos 1978:§2, §8), one child was baptized with two, its sibling with one godparent. By the time the continuous surviving record begins, in 1715, children were increasingly baptized with two godparents (7 out of 21 in 1715, 12 out of 30 in 1720, 22 out of 29 in 1725, 20 out of 22 in 1735, 42 out of 44 in 1745; children baptized without godparents as an emergency not counted). The practice was an efficient means of social networking with the Corsicans, which may be why the Greco-Corsicans found it expedient to adopt it so early.

²¹Phardys is almost certainly describing the funeral of Michele Medourios on 26 March 1887 (Vayacacos 1983:§1951), a month before Phardys left Cargèse.

²²Lear (1870:126) also found the church’s predecessor “differing only from similar places of worship, in its having a crucifix above the altar; a fact sufficiently demonstrating that the [Latin] Catholic had superseded the Orthodox in the religious system of Cargésé [sic].” But the church was originally built as the Latin Marbeuf’s private chapel, so this does not prove an earlier move towards Latin ritual.

²³Medourios had already stood in for the Latin priest in a funeral in 1853 (Vayacacos 1983:§1776), but tensions between the two communities were still present then.

²⁴A more subtle such correction was made by Marchiano’s predecessor: the original altar in St. Spyridon was that in Marbeuf’s chapel, and was shaped as a Latin altar. Chappet modified it to conform to the requirements of the Greek Church (SdC III:108).

²⁵Cf. in this regard the discourse about the Venezuelan Day of the Monkey (Guss 1994): though the local practitioners of the ritual know that it is syncretic, expatriates from the city where it is celebrated—eager to assert their indigenous credentials—deny that there is any Catholic component to the ritual. Even though there is now a Venezuelan identity distinct from Spanish and Indian, individuals identifying with the colonised are as eagerly opposed to syncretism in opinion, if not in practice, as the colonial priests were. (See also Shaw and Stewart 1994:7–9 on the underpinnings of anti-syncretism, in pursuit of an “authentic” or at least unique identity.)

²⁶The reference is clearly to Vouras: Syra was the major center for (Roman) Catholicism in Greece, and Vouras, who arrived in 1829, described himself as fleeing the Turkish massacre at Chios (Valery 1837:104). The Latin priest of Cargèse at the time was the Cargesian Papadacci, appointed in 1804 and made curate in 1817; he was replaced by Abbot Villanova in 1845. So Medourios could not have been referring to either Latin priest.

²⁷The Greco-Corsican Petro Cozifacny had attempted to leave for the British dominion at Dominica in the Caribbean, and was forced to remain behind on falling ill. Panagopoulos (1966) believes his signing the memorandum shortly afterwards reflects relief at gaining the right to property and free movement.

²⁸In 1966 the Orthodox Archdiocese purchased Avero House, the site of the Minorcan chapel; the Archdiocese constructed the St. Photios national shrine there in 1982, and an Orthodox chapel in 1986 (<http://www.holytrinity.ct.goarch.org/stphot.html>). The present Orthodox Greek community, integrating New Smyrna into its own history, has appropriated the Roman Catholic past of the Greeks, Greco-Corsicans and Minorcans of New Smyrna.

The Greek community claims that a “Greek Orthodox cross” has been found in Averro House (http://web.classics.ufl.edu/CGS/florida_hellenism.htm); of course this proves nothing about the creedal identity of its parishioners.

²⁹ [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/flwpabib:@FIELD\(OTHER+@band\(+minorcan+americans+\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/flwpabib:@FIELD(OTHER+@band(+minorcan+americans+)))

³⁰ Of the 46 inhabitants and landowners in St. George St. in the Minorcan Quarter in 1788 (http://web.nwe.ufl.edu/pic/pres_intro/StGeorgeSt/history2.html), there were only three Greeks (Dimitre Fudelache = Demetrios Fundulakis from Crete, Gaspar Papi from Smyrna, Juan Yenopoly = Ioannis Giannopoulos from Mani), and two Greco-Corsicans (Don Pedro Cosifacio, Nicolas Estefanopoly). Despite the high number of Maniats in the original colony, Giannopoulos is the only Maniat on the list; this confirms the depopulation of Maniats through illness.

³¹ Stephanopoli de Comnène (SdC III:77) writes that the last Greek rite priest left Sidi Merouan in 1940.

³² <http://www.cnewa.org/ecc-catholiceastern.htm>, <http://www.cnewa.org/ecc-italo-albanian.htm>

³³ The Maniat use of “Vlach” as a derisive term for a pastoralist survived in Cargèse as a reference to Corsicans long enough to be recorded by Vayacacos (1965a:35).

³⁴ Rome refused, and Genoa’s stopgap, the confessor Pier Francesco delle Scuole Pie, was a disaster as he did not know Greek (SdC I:105).

³⁵ One of the first to do so was Father Constantine Stephanopoli in 1786 (Vayacacos 1983:§1491). Constantine did not use the authentic Greek form Κομνηνός (Komninós), the orally transmitted form Nicholas Stephanopoli still used in his 1738 chronicle, but a hellenization of the French *Comnène*, Κομνένος (Komnénos). This is an early illustration of how the Cargesian construct of Greek identity, particularly when removed from the Cargesian here-and-now, was mediated through French. No less revealing is Justine Voglimacci’s code-switching in «δὲ σβήνεται καὶ *la colonie grecque*, ἔχομε τὸ ἅγιο Σπυρίδωνα καὶ μᾶζε βοηθῶ.» [*the Greek colony shall not vanish, we have St. Spyridon who aids us*] (Vayacacos 1964:31–32)—one of only three instances of code-switching in Vayacacos’s field notes.

³⁶ Although the interaction of French nationalism with Cargesian identity is beyond the scope of my investigation, it is apparent in the tablet erected at the church of St. Spyridon, recounting the history of the village (Vayacacos 1965b:46; 1970a:230). The tablet extols the Greek heritage of Cargèse, but it can only do so in terms loyal to France—concluding with “*Et, ce qu’avec honneur, elle fut jusqu’ici / elle doit le rester: Ville Grecque et Française. / C’est son titre de gloire, et c’est le nôtre aussi.*” (And what it has become up to this point with honour, / it must remain: a French and Greek town. / This is its title of glory—and ours as well.)

³⁷ John Hajek has suggested to me the intriguing hypothesis that this was a deliberate public relations move for Rome, pursuing the establishment of Greek Catholicism in Orthodox domains and moving Greek Catholics to the west: Corsica could be held up as a model example of a safely unassimilated Greek Catholic parish. (The Greco-Minorcan petitioners for a Greek priest in 1743 mentioned the precedent of Leghorn, Naples, Sicily, Corsica, and Rome: Sanz 1925:375.) If that was so, Corsica was not an unalloyed success story, and the PR campaign did not translate into further Greek Catholic settlements in Corsica. I think it likelier that the normally inflexible church authorities made an exception given the particular difficulties of Genoa in Corsica.

³⁸ As George Baloglou points out to me, Minorca is further west still. The Greco-Minorcans certainly would have called their Roman Catholic neighbors Franks, but in 1782, a generation after settlement, only 19 Greek Orthodox Minorcans remained (Sanz 1925:360), and it is doubtful they continued speaking of “Franks” long after that. Lear’s interlocutor was speaking two centuries after colonization, not forty years.

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