

NEW EUROPE COLLEGE



Social Behaviour and Family Strategies in  
the Balkans (16th – 20th Centuries)

Comportements sociaux et stratégies  
familiales dans les Balkans  
(XVIe-XXe siècles)

Actes du colloque international  
9-10, juin 2006  
New Europe College Bucarest

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La publication de ce volume a été rendue possible par l'appui accordé au NEC par l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie.

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ISBN 978-973-88304-2-4

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## **Family Tactics and Family Fortunes in Nineteenth-century Greece**

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In this paper I try to examine the main aspects of family 'policy' in 19<sup>th</sup> century Greece, a newly established state whose independence was recognized by the great European powers in early 1830s after an almost unexpected national revolution. As the long duration of the war and its shifting fortunes disrupted the existent social structures, the transition of the Greek society from the Ottoman world to a national civil society was marked by a shift in the balance of power between the hitherto influential and non-influential groups, and a growing demand for the acquisition of power (whatever such a purpose indicates), together with a continuous debate about the means by which such purposes could be achieved. It is with these changes and their impact on the lives of individuals that this article attempts to deal with.

In other words, the aim is to describe and analyze the recognition of the Greek society, which started in the early 1820s and continued for almost the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, through certain pieces of it; through individual family groups and their networks, which inevitably involve more families as well as "strange" people – who are non-relatives. And this objective is achieved by taking for granted the known virtues

of micro history, but with consciousness of the also known dangers lurking in micro history.

The tactics and fortunes of the three families presented here as separate histories<sup>1</sup>, are based mainly on their extant archives,<sup>2</sup> which illuminate some aspects of their histories and leaves out some others. Although these gaps are almost impossible to be filled through the research into other pertinent sources, they do not diminish the historic value of the family archives. The material of each family was stored in the course of the long process of its evolution and as a consequence they developed interdependently. The motives that could lead some members of a family – while some others not – to retain, apart from documents of economic interest which retain their probative value for their heirs, documents concerning their activities or even parts of their correspondence which depict certain aspects of their private life, arise from subjective judgments and some times from accidental factors. Thus, it could be suggested that, excluding the probable posterior interferences in the preserved material, the process of storing an archive defines, to some extent, the very history of a certain family, since it is the decision to preserve or not a document or a letter that eventually illuminates or suppresses certain aspects of its development. And it is the decision of the family members of the next generations to add the documents regarding their own activities to the existing archive material that creates continuous family histories in the course of time. Moreover, by keeping their own records in diaries or in autobiographical notes or even in their correspondence, they provide valuable information concerning the way they themselves understand not only their multidimensional roles in everyday life, but also the course of their personal history.

In this view, a person as a social and historic subject seems to be overshadowed by the family unit, which places his efforts for survival and improvement of his living conditions to the sphere of the wider family pursues and interests. Nevertheless, the concept of survival includes the prospect of progress, regardless if its results are considered successful or not: it has to do with the maintenance and growth of financial power, the increase of social and political influence, the pursuit of satisfactory conditions of vocational rehabilitation through full schooling or maybe through a secure appointment, the shaping of financial and social requirements for a “good marriage”, the accession to extended and powerful networks for the better protection of the family interests or, finally, the handing down to the next generation not only of material goods, but also of moral values.

At this point it should also be stressed that there is no intention of presenting three or more families as “typical” cases in any way, nor is my intention to show off through their study one or more set or widespread standards or “models” of family development. Besides, family and family groupings or networks cannot be regarded, at least not from the history angle, as fossils in time, and consequently their development cannot be interpreted based on general rules of widely accepted standpoints, outlooks and attitudes – despite the fact that it is indeed natural that common points of reference be discovered in their course. The common points depend on or are defined first of all by the multidimensional effects of the dominant ideologies and outlooks, which are inevitably developed and reproduced in the context of a particular local society in its development through time. The evaluation of their impact in the planning of certain family strategies is here another point of reference.

## **1. Traditional family networks after their integration in the national state**

The Boudouris family start, according to their archive material, from the little and barren Hydra of the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as ship-owners and merchants who carried through their transactions in an extended zone, which covered the biggest part of the Mediterranean basin. As many Hydraoi, the members of the first generation, the brothers Stamatis (1770-1853) and Vasilios (1775-1851) Boudouris,<sup>3</sup> managed to avail themselves of the offered opportunities during the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and made remarkable fortunes.<sup>4</sup> What was though the most important advantage the Boudouris brothers had, was their Hydraic identity and subsequently their acquaintance with the principles of cooperation and friendship which traditionally prevailed on the island and allowed their accession to a wide circle of networks which was not limited on the basis of the kinship.

As it is depicted in one of the most illuminating –although rather romantic– social interpretation of the transforming revolutionary society, written at the behest of the Bavarian juvenile prince Otto after his accession to the greek throne by his compatriot and a lifelong Philellenist Friedrich Thiersch, the expansion of Hydraic family networks was so enormous that used to cover almost the whole of the local society, as if each family was just a link of the same “chain”.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, there were in pre-revolutionary Hydra the preconditions for the creation of such networks.

The ship-owners preferred the building of company ships and partnerships in business transactions because they reduced the investment risk significantly, at a time when the pirate raids were very often while ship insurance, which would guarantee the owners’ compensation, was still non-existent. In other

words, in case of damage either from a pirate raid or a sea accident the co-ownership limited each owner's and partner's loss deterring the danger of total bankruptcy.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, in a small local society like that of Hydra it was quite easy to gather information regarding the ability and credibility of the "strange", namely the non relative, candidate partners. And it was also easy to obtain references or guarantees, as was the common practice in the trade or business circles of the time. But the presence on the island of a powerful and centralized local government which also had extensive judicial power to intervene effectively and resolve possible disputes among the ship-owners could be considered the most important factor which favoured the spread of the joint co-operation outside the limited circles of the close relatives. From this point of view, the possibility to appeal to justice, to the extent that its unhindered administration is connected with the development of feelings of security and trust for the defense of private interests, offered the necessary safety valve for the development of wider partnerships among the Hydraioi. In the course of time, their familiarity with the loin businesses contributed, naturally, to the development of feelings of solidarity and consequently to the formation of a strong company tradition, which continued when the Greek Revolution curtailed their economic activities and turned their interest to the area of the later free Greece.

At this juncture, the need to fill the power gap left by the abolished ottoman authorities created the profession of the national politician and it was the affluent, who could provide the soldiers with ammunition, the navy with ships and the state with money to meet the inevitable needs of the war, that had normally access to the politics. Among the autochthonous family leaders who represented the nation at the First National

Assembly, was Vasilios Boudouris, who begun the long family tradition in politics.<sup>7</sup> Until 1827 however the two Boudouris had offered to the revolutionary state as a kind of loan the most part of their fortunes, while Stamatios offered three times as much as Vasilios did.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the drastic decrease of Stamatios capitals explains why he did not join his brother at the beginning of the 1830s in the investment in the Euboic land, where the sale of cheap ottoman land opened new prospects of financial development for the indigenous or not, even for foreigners, who had and were willing to invest the necessary capital

At the first stage the investment in the Euboic land seemed to create a coherent network of two families connected by a marriage between their members. This network comprised of Vasilis Boudouris and the two brothers Manolis and Iakovos Tompazis, each one with a share of  $\frac{1}{4}$  in the common property, and, as owners of the rest  $\frac{1}{4}$ , the two sons in-law of Manolis Tompazis –the son of Stamatios Boudouris and Lazaros Giourdis.<sup>9</sup> But the promised coherence of such a network comprised of two families, in a wide interpretation of the term, and five separate households proved dubious pretty soon.

The excuse was firstly given by Iakovos Tompazis' death, which led to the transfer of his share to his sons, and before the middle of the decade the death of Manolis Tompazis, who was the last representative of the Tompazis family in the management of the property. When Vasilis Boudouris was left sole trustee of the Euboic land, Iakovos Tompazis' heirs questioned his honesty as well as his effectiveness of his financial management.

However, the reasons for the conflict of interests should be sought out first in the limited profits the cultivation of the euboic land yielded at this stage and secondly in the diverse outlooks on the expected profit of the members of the company. The



purchase of the euboic land was decided by the first members of the company mainly because it was considered a secure investment, since even reselling it would mean multiplication of the capitals spent to buy it. Nevertheless, the lack of experience on land cultivation of the, until recently, ship-owners and traders from Hydra, the absence of familiarity with the farm workers of Euboia but also other, more general factors, like the non-existent road network, which made the transport of goods time consuming and expensive, rendered the investment harmful rather than profitable. While Vasilis Boudouris and the Tompazis brothers, as representatives of the old generation of ship-owners and traders from Hydra, chose to count on the long term profits their investment would yield, the Tompazis heirs seemed to be interested mostly in the direct profits and the fastest possible recovery of their families after the destructive war. In fact, two out of the three younger co-owners backed out from the company ownership before the middle of the 1830s.

First to back out was one of Manolis Tompazis' sons-in-law and Stamatis Boudouris' son, who sold his share to the brothers Dokos from Hydra who were also relatives of the Tompazis, complying with the original stipulations of the company. But it was much more difficult for Iakovos Tompazis' heirs to back out, which revealed the weaknesses of the joint ownership and also the lack of predictability for a possible dissolution of the company. The redistribution of the joint property (that is three villages and a plot of land with a house and livestock in Chalkida split in four autonomous shares, one of which should also be split in two) was not only a time consuming and complicated procedure, but also unprofitable for everyone since it would give several small and unconnected parts of private land, with very little development margin. Moreover, the value of the parts

of land was different from place to place, rendering the fair redistribution rather impossible.

These weaknesses, resulting from the transition from the traditional ways of partnership in ships and trade with direct profit to common land ownership and also in a faraway and unknown place, tied even the strongest bonds that until then kept the Hydraic “companies” together; family, kinship and friendship. After the allotment of a part of the company land to Iakovos Tompazis heirs and their compensation in cash for their demands on other parts of it, the marriage between Vasilis Boudouris’ son and Lazaros Giourdis’ sister, the only one of the younger co-owners who remained in the company, offered enough guarantees for the future of their common course, strengthening the existing closed circles of family ties and interests among the co-owners. Thus, it seems that until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the company concentrated almost exclusively around Boudouris and Giourdis with new members, apart from the Dokos brothers, Giourdis’ brother-in-law and his wife, who inherited Manolis Tompazis’ share, and his brother, Manoli Giourdi. In the following decades the same family circles were the nuclei around which the network of co-owners from Hydra expanded, after the deaths of its members.

The death and the marriages, as natural and expected developments in human life, inevitably influenced the future of the company property which came from the cultivation of the land and also from the businesses that had been developed since the 1860s aiming at the exploitation of the underground. However, the transition to the next generations did not only mean the increase in the number of the shareholders and the several family branches who had a share in the common interests, but also the company’s departure from the original

bonds on which it had relied – that is mostly the bonds with the common place of origin, Hydra. Most of the descendants by marriage of the relative families who belonged to the first company were now residents of the capital city and their spouses were not necessarily from Hydra. We can't say that the intermarriage tendencies in the Hydraic society were a strong tradition, but rather a habit developed in the course of time, when the common interests and the credibility among the ship-owners from Hydra had a clear content in the context of their small, local society. Survivals of such local values, which are not found of course only among the people of Hydra but are characteristic of the social behaviour of most Greeks on the islands, can be sought out mostly in the choices of the first generations after the formation of the Greek State. And in any case, intermarriage is not strengthened by any other factors, like religious particularities of a group. Only in rare cases does it continue for long in the next generations.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the departure of the next generations from the family's birthplace was one of the inevitable developments which in the case of the Greek families became clear in the lapse of only a few decades, maybe because they were strongly connected with the transitions caused by the formation of the free Greek State and mostly its transition from the East to the West. Despite what would someone expect, this departure did not lead to the weakening of the family unity and coherence nor to the disorganization of its networks. Actually, the outstanding adaptability of the Greek family remains a question in historic analysis that still needs a thorough approach; and it is still being explored all the more nowadays through the study of certain family cases, which attract the interest of social and economic historians.<sup>11</sup> So, the answer offered by the case of Boudouris family and the longevity of their wide networks

explains this impressive adaptability partly as the result of subordinating the public interests to the private ones and partly of the seeking out of ways to satisfy these private interests in the public life.

## **2. The reconstruction of a family under the impact of unexpected and unfortunate occurrences**

Considerably limited was the influence of local traditions and ethics prevalent in the birthplace, on the development of the second family presented here; the Kourousopoulos family from Tripolis (Peloponnese). This should be ascribed mainly to the following factors: to the absence of land property in their birthplace and to a concurrence of unforeseen occurrences as well as untimely deaths that inevitably reduced not only the members of the family but also weakened their bonds with the local networks of their homeland.

In 1818, a few months after the juvenile Vasilis Kouropoulos (1803-1882) (the central figure of the first Kourousopoulos generation in their archive material) left his father's home to join his uncle on his mother's side in Malta and start his merchant career, the bankruptcy of the latter while Vasilis was still in Hydra working for a local commercial company, was the factor that drove him to Smyrna. Before the end of 1818 the sudden death of his mother and his father's decision to contract a second marriage isolated definitely the family from its previous networks. Later on, it was the unforeseen political circumstances that led to the end of his short, although rather promising, merchant career: the outbreak of the Greek Revolution.<sup>12</sup>

Since his repatriation, the history of the Kourousopoulos family seems to be suitable for the examination of the

educational parameter as an element of the post revolutionary social mobility in the context of the broader factors and developments that influenced seriously the “out of nothing” formation of the modern Greek society. Vasilis Kourousopoulos was included among the few well-educated indigenous men of his fatherland, although the education he had received was nothing more than the elementary knowledge of the Greek language and arithmetic, which is the knowledge necessary for the merchant career his father was planning for him. However, after his short tenure in the trading world, apart from the other experiences he gained, he returned to the revolting country with the additional asset of the knowledge of two foreign languages, French and Italian, while, as proved, the young merchant’s most important asset in the revolting Greece was his familiarity with the basic rules of negotiation and transaction for securing a powerful position under conditions of competition.

In the context of the reforming “system” of the revolutionary Greece Vasilis Kourousopoulos managed at first to get the position of the secretary in the Peloponnesian Senate. Later, after its dissolution by the reforming National Assembly of 1823, he attained the same position in the two revolutionary governments and finally his permanent appointment during the Kapodistrias governing as magistrate and president of the court, since the favorable circumstances of the time allowed the appointment in the Bench without a university title. Since then he presented as the family leader who assigned the roles of the rest of its members, deciding upon their education and occupation. As a consequence, Kourousopoulos family seemed thereafter to answer perfectly the model of the emergent urban family described by foreign observers or social critics of the time: it was comprised of well-educated bourgeois, doctors

and jurists who held state positions, and army officers who came to prominence at the several stages of the long unification procedure of modern Greece.

No doubt, the formation of certain professional traditions and subsequently the access to extended and powerful urban networks of the Greek capital –indeed a common feature in the development of many emergent bourgeois families in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century– was the safest tactic for retaining a position in the highest ranks of the Greek society. However, the accomplishment of this objective did not necessarily imply high incomes, sufficient enough to meet the needs of the urban life. Both of Vasilis Kourousopoulos' sons for instance, the jurist as well as the officer (the doctor died soon after his return from Paris, where he completed his post-graduate studies) attained a high standard of living after they had succeeded in contracting “good” marriages; especially the lawyer, who was connected through his marriage with an affluent merchant family of the Greek Diaspora. Even when the officer Kourousopoulos negotiated, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, his daughter's marriage to an army officer, despite the fact that he had already designated his own son as his successor in the army, he admitted that the earnings of a young army officer were not enough for the support of a new household without privations, unless he, as a father-in-law, offered his own backing regularly.<sup>13</sup>

It is true, that in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Greece it was just a few men who made fortunes by the emoluments they got as lawyers or jurists,<sup>14</sup> while the officers gained a regular but average salary which could be increased only after a promotion to a higher military rank. But both an appointment of a lawyer –for lawyers since 1838 were regarded as public servants– as well as a military promotion did not depend necessarily on objective or meritocracy criteria; most of the times the effect of their

families acquaintances seemed to be the determinant factor. Consequently, these professions did not attract the attention of bourgeois families because of their implied incomes, but rather by virtue of the promising prospects of a social elevation as well as of the easy access they offered to the politics and the public domain.<sup>15</sup> After the completion of the law studies it was quite easy to pursue a high position in the public sector or in the diplomatic corps or even an election to the parliament, especially after the dethronement of King Otto, since it was the young graduates and the students of the Faculty of Law who figured prominently in the struggle against the first King of Greece.

On the other hand, the army officers, especially the Military School graduates, having as their mission the fulfillment of Greece's irredentist aspiration as well as the promotion of its expansionist goals, were the men who added to their family biographies the names of respectable national heroes and enriched its identity with the feature of an unquestioned patriotism, in a country where patriotism was no less a necessary feature of a bourgeois family identity than it was affluence.

It appears, though, that politics and the public system in conjunction with the irredentist nationalism were some of the most important historical factors that affected the decisions of the emergent urban families and defined their own "politics". However, it was the widest spectrum of human life and unexpected occurrences that many times happened, that constituted the particular context of each family development in the course of time. In this view the frequency of untimely deaths and the high rates of infant mortality in the history of Kourousopoulos family revealed some interesting aspects of human life, as well as of the social evolution in a certain period. En 1820s, Vasilis Kourousopoulos was deprived both of his

parents and three of his four brothers. In the next two decades, however, he was much more unlucky than many of his contemporaries and saw the untimely death of his first wife and the eight of the twelve children he had had from his two marriages.

The confusion of people before the hazard of death is reflected clearly in the autographic history of the Kourousopoulos family which was written serially by members of three generations; and it was this confusion that led mostly to quite simple interpretations of the more frequent at the time serious diseases or some rarer complications, especially during the parturition, that were likely to cause an untimely death.<sup>16</sup> The hazard of untimely deaths increased the insecurity of the greek family dramatically, proving that it was not always possible to achieve the pursuing security through the affluence or the extended and powerful networks.

### **3. Peloponnesians refugees or Zakynthians in Athens of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century**

Quite different was the development of the third family presented here; the Stefanou family. So, the research into their archive material, introduces additional historical parameters in the analysis of the interdependent relationship which developed between the private and the public life; between the family, as the smallest cell of the social structure, and the wider society. And the most significant of them is the refugee experience of the family.

The Stefanou family was one of the Peloponnesian families that were driven to Zakynthos (Zante) after the Orlof uprising, and within a short period of time they managed to be successfully embodied in a new and totally different society.<sup>17</sup>



So, it seems that their expatriation and since then their rehabilitation in Zakynthos were the occurrences that marked the transition of the Stefanou family from the world of the obscure and impotent Peloponnesian merchants into the circle of the prominent bourgeois, businessmen and chevaliers of a europeanized Ionian society. However, the accidental conjecture that led to refugee does not suffice as a certain starting point to explain cogently the dynamic of such a transition; or even to describe the motivations that could alter the temporary asylum-seeking and encourage the total accommodation to the circumstances of a different public system and a distant local society. It should be underlined here that the refugee movements, a common phenomenon in pre-revolutionary Greek history, could not be compared to the also common at the time voluntary emigration which aimed almost exclusively to economic pursues. In other words, if the achievement of the pursued welfare in a foreign society could moderate the emigrants desire to repatriate, the motivations that respectively could lead the people who could be described as refugees in the contemporary meaning of the term to the decision for a permanent placement in a new society, are not so easy to isolate.

However, the provided opportunities for wellbeing as well as the sense of security were factors that could not be ignored easily, especially by people who, like the Stefanou family, came from a declining state. To the extend that the political institutions that prevail in a certain society influence not only the private pursues of its people but also their moral attitudes, it is almost certain that the integration of new people in this society follows its predetermined rules. On the Ionian Islands these rules were to be found in the set of the principles, the values and the traditions that during the long Venetian occupation had

reproduced the stability and the continuity of each island society in its developing course and had legitimized its strict stratification. And it was the same principles and values that had prepared the ground for the emergence of a remarkable social mobility after the withdrawal of the Venetian authorities.<sup>18</sup>

In this social context the Stefanou family promoted in the last quarter of 18<sup>th</sup> century their own commercial company, which was included among the biggest Zakynthean companies before the end of the century. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the grandsons of the refugee Pantazis Stefanou', who were the first members of the family born on the island, appeared as graduates from universities of the neighboring Italy, just like the descendants of the traditionally powerful Eptanesian families, while at the same period the family was given their nobility title.

What was even more striking in the development of the family at that period, is the combination of modern European and cosmopolitan inclinations and predilections that prevailed in the Zakynthean society with the rather conservative ethics which came from the remaining family ties with the Peloponnesian society as well as from its refugee experience and still affected its attitudes and outlooks. The presumed hazard of modernity caused concern and insecurity to the refugee Pantazis Stefanou who, as the leader of the family, made anguished efforts before his death to define a set of preconditions which were likely to guarantee not only the preservation of the family property but also the continuity of the family cohesion. Thus he revealed his belief, which was also accepted by his sons, that the concept of family reflected a set of material and moreover moral transferred values. Two decades after his death, however, the preservation of family

unity in the way Pantazis Stefanou had imagined, proved infeasible; and the marriage in 1823 of one of his grandsons to a European wife, the daughter of the French consul in Corfu, sufficed to set off the cleavage in the family. The adoption of the European style of life in the house of one family member, which in fact constituted part of a common family house, led to its apportionment as well as to the separation of the family estate and finally, in 1838, to the dissolution of the family company.

These developments, however, resulted in the emergence of a remarkably cohesive family cell that survived in the course of time. True, it was the loyalty to Zakynthos that provided the principal bond between its members, but they did not live on the island any longer. In 1908, for instance, the great grandson of Pantazis Stefanou at the age of seventy-three, wished his descendants would not forget the island but visit it often in order to keep in contact with the family and its homeland.<sup>19</sup>

A concise explanation of the strong Eptanesian nationalism lies to the particularities of the Islands' history. As the Ionian Islands were excluded from the "imagined" and irredentist or ottoman-occupied national territory, when in 1860s begun the procedure of their administrative incorporation into the Greek state, it was necessary for the Eptanesians to prove that they formed a distinctive and united "Greek world" –although it is uncertain if they had ever constituted a united "world". Nevertheless, the Ionian Islands could be presented as a united "world" with reference to their distinctive development in an area excluded from the Greek territory, to their common European past as well as to a set of similar customary, legal, political and more generally social traditions. As a consequence, the more loyal the Eptanesians remained to their island, the more assiduous they appeared to their own families.

Greek politics attracted the attention of many Eptanesians, mainly because their participation in the Greek governments seemed to prescribe the power and the roles they and their families could assert as well as the position of their islands in the Greek state. Besides, the Eptanesians who since 1860s pursued their involvement in politics were the very same descendants of the privileged hitherto families who lost at once, after the annexation of the islands to the Greek state, the respect and the reputation that came from by their nobility title. Thus, it could be suggested that their interest in politics was also connected with their belief about their intellectual, educational and political superiority over the other Greeks. And it was this belief, among others, that affected the planning of their family strategies with regard to the next generations, who had not particular motivation to remain loyal to the Ionian Islands.

While it is natural that the financial choices and pursues enforce a family's bonds with a certain place, what we call the birthplace, the same factors inevitably define their possible extension in space and, therefore, the wider "great" homeland. From this point of view, it was natural for Athens, as the seat of the administrative mechanism, especially in the context of a newly-established country with inefficient regional development from its establishment and a country gradually formed through a long procedure of annexations and embodiments, to attract families or family branches not only from the old Greek provinces and the newly-annexed regions, but also from the Ottoman state and the Greek Diaspora. At the encounter of heterogeneous Greek groups it can be said that the capital and largest city of the country functioned as a "melting pot" of different local traditions, manners and customs during the formation of a uniform national ideology.

### **Some final comments**

As it is suggested here, the study of certain greek family cases reveal certain aspects of the private life as it is developed under the impact of individual decisions as well as of political events and social developments. Nevertheless, the question remains if and to what extends the emphasis on the multidimensional role of the Greek family, or even the discussions about “nepotism” refer to yet another singular national trait of the Greeks which affects or even defines the particularity of the Greek society and its structure. In part an answer to this question was given by several foreign observers—including Thiersch— who claimed that the Greek family and its subsequent networks constituted the unique social institution as well as the only coherent grouping that had survived after the collapse of the ottoman social structure.<sup>20</sup>

The tenability of this interpretation was to be confirmed soon after the advent of the Bavarian Regency, when its members, during the rebuilding of the Greek national society, had no choice but to define civil allegiance with regard to the given bonds of social coherence; namely the family ties or kinship, the friendship or even other relevant relationships denoting common interests as they had been developed since then in the limited context of the birthplace. Defining the smaller units of the reforming administration on the grounds of the existent collective ties was the only way to promote the integration both of indigenou and eterothonous groups in the emergent national citizenry.<sup>21</sup>

Undoubtedly, the assiduity to the family and family networks is not characteristic only of the Greeks and the Greek society. It is true however that it was its people – the Greek citizens— who offered the first definable “element” of the Greek state in the revolutionary constitutions, while it was still

impossible to define clearly its territory and its legal existence was not yet recognized. So were the existent relationships among the Greek people that defined their social cohesion and inevitably enhanced the traditional meaning of the Greek family. Consequently, its role in the development of the state and the society draws, on the one hand, elements from the Greek past, has several similarities to the equivalent role of the family in other societies and state formations in the Mediterranean societies or maybe especially in states which also appear “out of nothing” in the Ottoman Empire, perhaps in other parts of the world too, but on the other hand it keeps its special dynamic based both on the beginning of the state formation and the political, financial and wider social developments that influence the revision of the needs as well as of the dominant outlooks of the Greek people.

In the course of time, the Greek family seemed to embody but also reproduce in its bosom the wider spectrum of historic developments and conjunctures which in their turn define the so-called particularity of the Greek society: the Greek patriotism, the nationalistic alytrotism and the “nepotistic” regard of a nation with branches in the Greek territory and the wider Diaspora, the effects of religion in private life as well as the basic features of the Greek political and social life in their interdependence on the economic development of the country.

It's about a dialectical relationship in the context of which the effects are not one-sided. And if in the end the family, as the smallest nucleus of social coiling proves to be a vehicle of the particularity of a people – like the Greek people too – it is connected with several other factors such as the viability of the outlooks or the fears of distancing from the old or traditional methods of dealing with the immediate needs for survival, even under conditions that tend to completely change the wider

political and social context, the effect and the duration of the influence exerted by the forming national visions or the myths connected with the Greek “self-knowledge” and the national character of Hellenism.

In this view, the multidimensional role of the Greek family in its historic route can be regarded that can be traced in previous stages of the national history, that is due to the fact that the family – more than the church or the communities of the ottoman years – comprised the imaginary bridge between the pre-state Greek past and the independent state future inaugurated by the Revolution of 1821. In other words, the church promoted consistently the social order of its flock in family units in order to secure through the family and its reproduction the maintenance of its Greek-orthodox identity in the context of the non-Christian and multinational empire of the sultan. On the other side, the communities or, better, the common law which ruled their organization and function, promoted in an equivalent way a mixture of mainly oral rules of social accession based once more on the family unit – and obviously this pursue didn’t change when the communities were substituted by the local government of the Greek state. And up to a point, the modern state was structured or just occasionally utilized the beneficial functions of family in order to promote its objectives.

The appointment in the army and navy of the sons of the men who fought in the War of Independence allowed the state, among others, to endear the newly formed armed forces to the patriotic colors. Soon it proved that the profession of army-officer was a reputable and influential one and, as many others, could be inherited from a father to his son. In the following decades the admission of a young male to the military academy attracted steadily the attention of many influential

families, despite the fact that it demanded stiff tuition fees and a long training.

The practice of limited issuing of passports in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the protected members of a family – women and underage children- while the heads of the families lived and worked in ottoman cities was a solution which allowed the state to prevent the family unification and thus curtail the unpleasant for many reasons phenomenon of reverse emigration towards the ottoman state. The appliance of certain sanctions by law to the rest of the family members of the unruly bandits was useful so that the thorny for decades problem of robbery could be dealt with. The obligation to raise the offspring of lawful weddings in the Greek-orthodox manner, when the mothers-to-be belonged to a different religion – was a step back in favour of the “dominant” religion of Greece; but it was also a tactic aiming at the conservation of the national character of the Greek society. Politics seemed for the most part of 19th century to create and develop a public sector reminiscent of the attitudes and practices inherited from the revolutionary time, or even the pre-independence past, and were not adaptable to the cultivation of corporate loyalties outside the family; while it was just the traditional notion of politics that had changed and referred now to strategies of survival in a more general meaning of the term which denoted not only the protection of life against the threat of war but also the improvement of living standards in the national order.

Even the basic components of the inefficient welfare system after the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is completed by the provision of the Greek family, are characteristic examples of the structure of the Modern Greek state around the family. In this context, the private life and the mapping out of the special “strategy” of the Greek families contributed to the maintenance



and readjustment of several features of the traditional society. This observation gains special significance based on the fact that exactly as there was no discernible stable noble class in the history of the main Greek territory – with the exception of the history of the Eptanese – there was also no formal nepotistic continuation that would offer guarantees for its smooth, in a way, reproduction in the circles of the privileged, and would, by extension, enforce its terms or better its limitations to the circles of the underprivileged. Under the conditions of the reforming reality, the Greek family, in the general meaning of the term, defined and readjusted its social pursues according to the conditions, based on the one hand on the traditional and permanent needs of private life – the survival the will for improvement of living conditions – but on the other hand under the catalytic effect of the modernizing tendencies which more and more influenced the Greek traditions.

So, the general statement that the Greek family retained its major impact in the long process of national building during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and bequeathed as a consequence a presumed national feature to the following Greek generations or an “admirable” social institution for it has proved its remarkable vitality and adaptability to changes and transitions remains striking. Some historians, in their recent approaches of economic history, attribute these peculiar features of Greek family not only to the inefficiencies of state building but also to the lack of predictability in financial politics as well as the multidimensional consequences of an ineffective industrialization, while their last but not least recommendation calls on a thorough analysis of the social effects of Greek family.<sup>22</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A thorough analysis of these family histories see VOGLI, E.K., *Deeds and Days of Greek Families, 1750-1940* (in Greek), Athens, 2005, p. 23-99, 159-201 and 205-263 respectively.
- <sup>2</sup> The archives of the three families presented in this paper are kept in the collectives of E.L.I.A. (Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive). I am very grateful to Christina Varda and Dimitris Portolos who gave me the motivation and contributed to my research in the family archives. I would also like to thank warmly Eleni Dimitriadou, who has read and checked the final draft of this paper.
- <sup>3</sup> For further information concerning the family members see VARDA Ch., *Boudouris family. Index* (in Greek), ELIA, Athens, 1995.
- <sup>4</sup> For the development of the Greek-owned fleet in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, see LEONTARITIS G., *Greek Merchant Shipping (1453-1850)* (in Greek), Athens, 1963, pp. 47-61; KREMMYDAS V., *Greek Shipping, 1776-1835* (in Greek), v. 2: *The Mechanisms*, Athens, 1986 and HARLAFTIS G., *A History of Greek-owned Shipping, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century* (in Greek), Athens, 2001, pp. 73-81.
- <sup>5</sup> THIERSCH F., *De l' état actuel de la Grèce et des moyens d' arriver à sa restauration*, v. 2: *Des moyens d' arriver à la restauration de la Grèce*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Leipzig 1833, translated in Greek by A. Spiliotis, Athens, 1972, pp. 67-68.
- <sup>6</sup> PETROU Th., *Hydra in the late of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Aspects of its social, political and economic life, as shown in the archive of the Community of the Island (1778-1802)* (in Greek), M. A. thesis, School of Philosophy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2002.
- <sup>7</sup> See VOGLI, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-59.
- <sup>8</sup> E.L.I.A., Archive of Boudouris family, 1<sup>st</sup> part, f. 1.1.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 2.2.
- <sup>10</sup> See for instance HARLAFTIS G., "Trade and Shipping in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Entrepreneurial network of the diaspora Greeks. The 'Chiot' phase (1830-1860)" (in Greek), in *Mnemon* 15, 1993, pp. 69-127.
- <sup>11</sup> It is worth mentioning PAPAGEORGIU S. and PEPELASI-MINOGLU I., *Prices and Goods in Athens (1834). Social Attitude and Economic logic of Vasos Maurovouniotis family* (in Greek), Athens 1988; EXERTZOGLU Ch., *Adaptability and Politics of Expatriate Capital. Greek Bankers in Constantinople: The Establishment of "Zarifis Zafeiropoulos"*, 1871-1881 (in Greek), Athens, 1989; LOUKOS Ch. and

- SAMIU D., *The Economic Attitudes, the Temperament and the Standard of Living of a money-lender from Syros: Stefanos D. Rigas* (in Greek), Athens, 1991; KREMMYDAS V., *Commercial Practices in the Late Ottoman Period. Mykonian Merchants and Ship-owners* (in Greek), Athens 1993; CHATZIOANNOU M.-Ch., *Family Strategies and Mercantile Competition. The Firm Gerousis in 19<sup>th</sup> century* (in Greek), Athens, 2003.
- <sup>12</sup> See the first part of the autographic family history, the one written by Vasilis Kourousopoulos, E.L.I.A., Archive of Kourousopoulos family, f. 1.1.
- <sup>13</sup> Themistokles Kourousopoulos (Vasilis' son) to his son, 13 October 1909, *op. cit.*, f. 5.2.
- <sup>14</sup> TRIXA, L., *Lawyers in Athens ... A Journey through the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (in Greek), Athens-Komotini 2003, pp. 89-100 and 117-122.
- <sup>15</sup> For the attraction of state employment see KOLIOPOULOS J. and VEREMIS Th., *Greece. The Modern Sequel from 1831 to the Present*, London, 2002, pp. 58-60.
- <sup>16</sup> VOGLI, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-184.
- <sup>17</sup> See "Concise history of the Stefanou family", written in Bucharest (1890) by his great grandson who wished to leave a short family history to his children. A part of this document, which a descendant of the family put at my disposal, is published in KONOMOS D., *Stefanou Family. History and Unpublished Documents*, Athens, 1973, pp. 31-32.
- <sup>18</sup> LOUTZIS E., *The Political Conditions in the Eptanese during the Venetian Occupation*, Athens, 1856, pp. 13-18, 47-55, 60-75 and 193-202.
- <sup>19</sup> Dionysios Stefanou (the great grandson of Pantazis) to his wife, 16 April 1908, E.L.I.A., Archive of Stefanou Family, f. 6.6.
- <sup>20</sup> Regarding the distinctive development of the Greek family see SANT-CASSIA P. and BADA C., *The Making of the Modern Greek Family. Marriage and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Athens*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 3-19.
- <sup>21</sup> VOGLI E.K., "Greeks by descent". *Citizenship and National Identity in Greece, 1821-1844* (in Greek), Hrakleio, 2006, p. 254 ff.
- <sup>22</sup> For a new and penetrating approach to the subject see DERTILIS G., *History of the Greek State, 1830-1920* (in Greek), vol. 1, Athens, 2005, pp. 19-43; see also HERING, G., *Political Parties in Greece, 1821-1936* (translated in Greek by Paraskeuopoulos Th.), Athens, 2004, vol. 1, pp. 126-130.