

The Historical Review/La Revue Historique

Vol 15 (2018)



Family Business in the Brick and Tile Industry in Athens, 1900–1940

Michalis Bardanis

doi: [10.12681/hr.20446](https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.20446)

Copyright © 2019, Michalis Bardanis



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

To cite this article:

Bardanis, M. (2019). Family Business in the Brick and Tile Industry in Athens, 1900–1940. *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, 15, 91–132. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.20446>

FAMILY BUSINESS IN THE BRICK AND TILE INDUSTRY IN ATHENS, 1900–1940

Michalis A. Bardanis

ABSTRACT: From 1900 to 1940, family businesses in the brick- and tile-making industry of Athens and its port, Piraeus, were a notable institution that played an important role in the development of the sector and its transformation from artisanal to factory production. They formed a dense network of small and medium-scale units, from which more than 20 big factories would emerge after the 1920s. A strong and constant antagonism between them, on the one side, and the few European-scale large industrial units, on the other, developed. Within this framework, the story of the Athens brick industry in this period can be vividly interpreted through the function and evolution of familial firms (which were under the control of nuclear, extended or multinuclear families) and the actions of their owners.

This article deals with the strong presence and the prominent role of the family business in brick and tile manufacture in Athens and the port of Piraeus from 1900 to 1940.¹ From 1900 onwards, and especially during the 1920s, the Greek

This research was conducted within the framework of my ongoing PhD at the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Ioannina, entitled “Οι οπτόπλινθοι στην αθηναϊκή αρχιτεκτονική του 19ου και του πρώτου μισού του 20ου αιώνα και ο κλάδος της πλινθοκεραμοποιίας σε Αθήνα, Πειραιά, Χαλκίδα και Πόρο” [Bricks in Athenian architecture, during the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, and the brickmaking sector in Athens, Piraeus, Chalkida and Poros] under the supervision of Prof Leda Papastefanaki. At this point, I would like to thank her for her guidance on the matter of family businesses, as well as the anonymous reviewers of *Historical Review* for their corrections. Earlier versions of this text were presented on two occasions: firstly, at the seminar “Crises, Gender and Adaptive Family Economies in Mediterranean Europe (Late 19th–20th Centuries)”, held at French School at Athens, on 29 May 2017 and, secondly, at the Fifth Doctoral Seminar in Modern History and Folklore, at the Department of History and Archaeology, University of Ioannina, on 28 June 2017. I would like to thank Angelos Dalachanis, Manuela Martini, Cristina Borderías, Christina Agriantoni, Anna Mahera, Domna Iordanidou, Dimitris Kopanas, Akis Palaiologos and Francesca Sanna for their comments on those presentations, as well as Vassilis Nitsiakos, Maria Papathanassiou, Margaret E. Kenna and Amy Louise Erickson for their help. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to a group of old brickmakers or their descendants for allowing me to interview them. The article is dedicated to the memory of one of them, Antonios Bakopoulos, who passed away in 2017.

¹ Despite the acknowledged existence of familial firms in the – in many ways – interrelated pottery sector, this research focuses on brick and tile production.

capital experienced a remarkable demographical and spatial increase, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1
The development of the population of Athens and Piraeus, 1896–1940

	1896	1907	1920	1928	1940
Athens	111,466	167,479	292,991	459,219	481,225
Piraeus	51,020	71,505	131,170	251,659	205,326
Greater Athens			453,042	802,000	1,124,109

Sources: Michail G. Houliarakis, *Γεωγραφική, διοικητική και πληθυσμιακή εξέλιξις της Ελλάδος 1821–1971* [Geographical, administrative and population development of Greece, 1821–1971], Athens: National Centre for Social Research, 1974; Lila Leontidou, *Πόλεις της σιωπής: Εργατικός εποικισμός της Αθήνας και του Πειραιά, 1909–1940* [Cities of silence: working-class space in Athens and Piraeus, 1909–1940], Athens: Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, 2001, p. 331.

This increase was accompanied by the rapid growth of a substantial building construction sector, which included a large number of companies engaged in the production of building materials.² Among them was a group of older or new brick- and tile-making units of every size, which supplied the demand for building materials made of clay, for public works and private housing. Below, we will concentrate on those units which were established in the Athens–Piraeus area.³

Although family involvement in the brickmaking sector in Athens (in terms of brickyard owners or renters in, as well as brick workers) is evident in the nineteenth century (and even before), it became more common from the early twentieth century and especially after 1920, when a number of major changes occurred.

² Christina Agriantoni, “Χτίζοντας την Αθήνα: Οι επιχειρήσεις του κατασκευαστικού τομέα στο πρώτο μισό του 20ού αιώνα” [Building Athens: the industries of the building sector during the first half of the twentieth century], in *Ελληνικός αστικός χώρος* [Greek urban space], ed. Ourania Kaiafa, Athens: Society for the Study of Modern Greek Culture and General Education, 2004, pp. 241–258.

³ Many brickyards were situated around Athens, within the Attica basin, in various settlements, such as Liosia, Chalandri, Agia Paraskevi and Kifissia. Additionally, a number of units were established beyond the surrounding mountains of Athens (Aigaleo, Pentelikon and Hymettus) that supplied the building trade; bricks and tiles from small towns of Attica such as Elefsina, Lavrio, Oropos and further afield, as well as from the Chalkida area (and especially villages like Vasiliko and Fylla) and the island of Poros, were employed systematically in the building of the capital since the nineteenth century. These areas are excluded herein, as the data regarding their familial character is insufficient.

Firstly, the total number of units increased dramatically, as stone was rapidly replaced by brick as the main building material.⁴ Handmade compact bricks and machine-made hollow bricks became more and more in demand. Table 2 shows the production output of brick and tiles by the few large factories nationwide from 1921 to 1939.⁵ These numbers are indicative of the market consumption flow in the period, as there is evidence that the total production of the brickworks in the Athens–Piraeus area could have been in the double digits.⁶

Secondly, most of the units eventually conglomerated in two particular areas: the industrial zones of Kaminia (close to the port of Piraeus) and Elaionas, transforming them into brickmaking “villages”. In addition, from the 1860s two of the four dominant brickmaking patterns (itinerant brickmakers and the seasonal use or rent of a plot for a kiln for making bricks and tiles)⁷ almost disappeared, while the other two (the long-term rent of a unit and private brickyards) become dominant, especially after 1900.⁸ The homes of brickmakers were usually adjacent or close to the brickworks and it was easy for their families to get involved in the industry. By 1940, there were between 150 and 200 such units.⁹ Thus, the Athens brickmaking industry represents an ideal case study to trace the family firm pattern.

⁴ The gradual introduction of concrete-framed buildings played an important role in this process, as the use of lightweight materials such as bricks (solid and especially hollow machine-made ones) was considered much more suitable than stone. For a typology of bricks used in Greece after 1900, see Th. K. Papatheodorou, *Οικοδομική* [Building construction], Athens: s.n., 1947².

⁵ Lime bricks are excluded. No data for 1940 has been found.

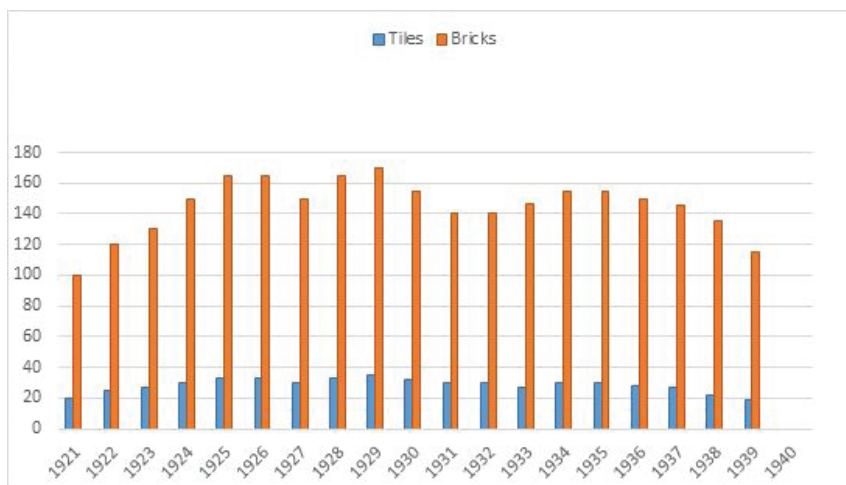
⁶ In 1934, the production of 64 brickworks – of every kind – in Attica (Athens, Piraeus and Elefsina) reached almost 300 million pieces. National Bank of Greece Historical Archive (NBGHA), A1S34S31F14, Catalogue of brick and tile annual production, 1934), while the table which follows shows 185 million pieces for the same year. Unfortunately, the lack of official data prior to 1921 and especially 1900 prevents an observation of the previously implied increase in production-consumption.

⁷ A proportion of the production was often given to the owner as a reward.

⁸ It should be mentioned at this point that the relevant data for 1870–1900 is poor, which is another reason to restrict the present study to after 1900.

⁹ This number may be assumed in the figures given in a 1931 report. Ministry of National Economy, *Η ελληνική βιομηχανία (εκθέσεις και πορίσματα)* [Greek industry (reports and conclusions)], Athens: Commerce and Industry Directorate, 1931. Other relevant sources will be presented below.

Table 2
Brick and tile production in Greece, 1921–1939 (in millions of pieces)



Sources: Nikolaos Mikelis, “Η εξέλιξη της ελληνικής βιομηχανίας” [The evolution of Greek industry], *Βιομηχανική και Βιοτεχνική Επιθεώρησης* 5 (1923); Nikolaos Mikelis, *Η βιομηχανική κίνησις* [Industrial development], Athens: Makris, 1924; Mikelis, *Η Βιομηχανική κίνησις παρ’ ημίν, κατά το έτος 1924* [Industrial development in 1924], Athens: Makris, 1925; Mikelis, *Η Ελληνική Βιομηχανία κατά το έτος 1925* [Greek industry in 1925], Athens: Makris, 1926; Konstantinos Argyros, “Αι οικοδομικαί βιομηχανίαι” [Building sector industries], in *Η ελληνική βιομηχανία (εκθέσεις και πορίσματα)* [Greek industry: reports and conclusions], Athens: Ministry of National Economy, 1931; *Εμπορικός και βιομηχανικός οδηγός της Ελλάδος* [Commercial and industrial guide to Greece], Athens: Commercial and Industrial Chamber of Greece, 1935; Panos Pafylas, “Η βιομηχανία της Ελλάδος” [Industry of Greece], *Βιομηχανική Επιθεώρησης* 31 (January 1937); UNNRA, *Εισηγήσεις επί της αξιοποιήσεως πλουτοπαραγωγικών πόρων Ελλάδος* [Proposals for the utilisation of Greek resources], vol. 3, Athens: s.n., 1947.

Our analysis ends in 1940 as, with Greece’s entry in World War II, the brick industry changed radically. Construction, and consequently building materials production, almost stalled for the next six to seven years, remaining problematic for the rest of the decade due to the country’s major political, social and economic problems, like the Civil War and pauperisation. After 1950 and the rapid “rebirth” of the Greek economy, the building sector was engaged in the increasingly significant development and demographic growth of the capital. The brickmaking sector proceeded with a number of changes in order to adapt to the new commercial needs, such as the manufacture of better-quality products and

the increase in overall output. As a result, a number of structural changes, such as the decrease in the total number of brickworks and a massive upgrading of technology in those that survived, as well as the end of seasonal work and child labour, occurred. These alterations led to a major restructuring of the sector.

Prior to attempting to answer questions about the dimensions of the family business pattern in Athens from 1900 to 1940 and its impact on the development of the brickmaking sector, it is necessary to clarify the terminology regarding the topics of family and family business and several related notions. In addition, we will consider the global presence of family businesses in the brickmaking industry. Then, the relevant data regarding Athens and the special role of each family member will be addressed. In addition, the importance of the study of the supporting framework of the family business model, as well as its limitations and the changes it underwent, will be discussed. Finally, the article concludes with some thoughts on the effects of family-business pattern on the brickmaking industry and some general conclusions.

The Terminology of Family and Family Business

Family, as well as notions such as kin, kinship, household and household formation, have been analysed across the humanities.¹⁰ In Greece, the family and its importance in society should always be considered within the framework of the Mediterranean Sea, a somewhat unique “cultural unit” with its own characteristics.¹¹ Family, on the one hand, and religion, on the other, have been described as the two basic components on which the Greek state was established. Different types of family exist, such as the nuclear (parents and children) or the extended family (parents, children, grandfathers, brothers, sisters and so forth).¹² Another type of family found in Greek society, belonging to the extended family category, is the multinuclear or complex

¹⁰ See Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972; William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, New York: Free Press, 1970.

¹¹ For this subject, see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols, London: Fontana, 1975. Among the studies on the similarities and the divergences of families in the Mediterranean region, see Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, and J.G. Peristiany (ed.), *Mediterranean Family Structures*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

¹² For the problems of terminology related with the terms family and household, see Roxani Caftantzoglou, “Η ιστορία της οικογένειας στην Ελλάδα: Μερικά προβλήματα μεθόδου” [The history of the family in Greece: some methodological problems], *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 69 (1988), pp. 225–242, doi:10.12681/grsr.873.

family: the father or father-in-law remains the head (patriarch) of the institution, which includes unmarried and married sons and daughters and their own families; he maintains that particular role and the management of the familial property until his death;¹³ “the iron chain of reproduction and inheritance” functions, at the same time, as a system of reproduction and patriarchal domination”.¹⁴ Different types of family could be found according their resilience over time. So, the term “can refer both to the immediate kin group (parents and children) and to a lineage over several generations”.¹⁵

Hereafter, as the majority (up to 70 percent, maybe more) of the brickmakers (both brickyard owners and workers) in Athens during the first half of the twentieth century originated from the Cycladic island of Kythnos,¹⁶ it is essential to focus on the properties and the development of the family in this area, and particularly in Kythnos. In general, family bonds and hierarchies, as well as kinship relations and marriage patterns, were transferred by islanders who migrated to Athens,¹⁷ or were duplicated and reproduced by their descendants, who were born in Athens.¹⁸

¹³ Spyros Asdrahas and Nikos Karapidakis, “Το ανθρώπινο δίκτυ” [The human net], in *Ελληνική οικονομική ιστορία: ΙΕ΄–ΙΘ΄ αιώνας* [Greek economic history: 15th–20th centuries], ed. Spyros Asdrahas, Athens: Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, 2003, p. 124.

¹⁴ Richard Tilly and Charles Tilly, “Agenda for European Economic History in the 1970s”, *The Journal of Economic History* 31/1 (1971), 189, quoted in Hans Medick, “The Proto-industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Households and Family during the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism”, *Social History* 1/3 (1976), p. 303.

¹⁵ Béatrice Craig, “The Family Firm in History and Historiography” (paper presented at the International Economic History Conference, Finland, 21–25 August 2006), p. 5, accessed 23 December 2017, <http://www.helsinki.fi/iehc2006/papers1/Craig.pdf>.

¹⁶ Michalis Bardanis, “Brickworkers from the Island of Kythnos in Athens, 19th–first half of 20th centuries: A Local Network of Labour” (paper presented at the 3rd International Conference in Economic and Social History, Ioannina, 24–27 May 2017).

¹⁷ Kythnos islanders systematically migrated to Athens during the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth centuries. Eugenia Bournova, *Οι κάτοικοι των Αθηνών, 1900–1960: Δημογραφία* [Inhabitants of Athens, 1900–1960: demography], Athens: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2016, pp. 98–99 *passim*, accessed 10 February 2018, <http://ebooks.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/econ/catalog/book/4>.

¹⁸ Margaret Kenna, “The Occupational Culture of Building Workers in Athens” (paper presented at the SSRC Seminar on Anthropological Research in Europe, 16–17 December 1978), accessed 2 March 2018, https://www.academia.edu/12112953/The_Occupational_Culture_of_Building_Workers; Kenna, “Family and Economic Life in a Greek Island Community”, in *Family, Economy and Community*, ed. C.C. Harris, Cardiff: University of Wales, 1990, pp. 143–163 (both works concern Anafi); Violetta Hionidou, “Marriage, Inheritance and House Formation on a Greek Island, Mykonos (mid-nineteenth to mid-

Moreover, as a large number of brickmakers in Athens were Arvanites (a clan from Albania that settled in Greece in the Middle Ages),¹⁹ and as many Kythneans were Arvanites too,²⁰ we are particularly interested in family structures in Arvanitic society. This clan, which gradually integrated into Greek society, is known for its involvement in landowning and agrarian occupations. The dominant role of men over women, marriage strategies and the use of the dowry as a vehicle for financial insurance and upward social mobility are clearly visible.²¹

Concerning *family business*, a family firm, in its strictest definition, is fully owned and managed by family members.²² But, in many Western languages *family* can refer both to the immediate kin group (parents and children) and to a lineage over several generations, as we have mentioned above.²³

The family business has been defined as an international economic system, with a notable persistence, spread over time and widely diffused, in different economies throughout the world,²⁴ where the social and economic identification between the two institutions, family and business firm, is almost complete.²⁵

twentieth century), in *Inheritance Practices, Marriage Strategies and Household Formation in European Rural Societies*, ed. Anne-Lise Head-König and Péter Pozsgai, Turnhout: Brepols, 2013; Hionidou, "Independence and Inter-dependence: Household Formation Patterns in Eighteenth century Kythera, Greece", *History of the Family* 16 (2011), pp. 217–234.

¹⁹ Kostas Biris, *Αρβανίτες: Οι Δωριείς του νεώτερου Ελληνισμού. Ιστορία των Ελλήνων Αρβανιτών* [Arvanites: The Dorians of new Hellenism; History of Greek Arvanites], Athens, s.n., 1960; G.D. Hadzisotiriou, "Προέλευση και σύνθεση του πληθυσμού της ΝΑ. Αττικής" [Origin and composition of the population of southeast Attica], in *Πρακτικά Α' Επιστημονικής Συνάντησης ΝΑ Αττικής (Καλύβια 19–21 Οκτωβρίου 1984)* [Proceedings of the first scientific meeting of Southeast Attica], Kalyvia: s.n., 1985.

²⁰ Regarding the settlement of Arvanites in the Greek islands and especially Kythnos, see Frederick William Hasluck, "Albanian Settlements in the Aegean Islands", *Annual of the British School at Athens* 15 (1908–1909), pp. 223–228; A.N. Vallindas, *Ιστορία της νήσου Κύθνου από των αρχαιοτάτων χρόνων μέχρι τα καθ' ημάς, σχετιζομένη προς την των ομοταγών νήσων του Αιγαίου* [History of the island of Kythnos from ancient times to today in relation to the Aegean island complex], Athens: Spyridon Kousoulinos, 1896.

²¹ Among others, see Eleftherios Alexakis, *Τα παιδιά της σιωπής: Οικογένεια, συγγένεια και γάμος στους Αρβανίτες της Αττικής (1859–1940)* [The children of silence: family, kinship and marriage among the Arvanites of Attica (1859–1940)], Athens: Parousia, 1996.

²² Among the inexhaustible international bibliography, see Andrea Colli, *The History of Family Business, 1850–2000*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, and Paloma Fernández Pérez and Andrea Colli (eds), *Endurance of Family Businesses: A Global Overview*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

²³ Craig, "Family Firm," p. 5.

²⁴ Colli, *History of Family Business*, p. 2–4.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 74.

Additionally, Mark Casson underlines that a common mistake of historians is to think of the family business as a form of productive organisation suitable only for small and medium-sized firms. Another one is failing to take into consideration chronological and topographical divisions.²⁶

Of course, the family business was closely related to notions that were long considered negative and associated with the preindustrial era,²⁷ such as trust among participants, the paternalism of employers, backwardness, primitive technology, simple organisational structures as well as commercial and distributional weakness.²⁸ As family firms were engaged in small-scale production and were associated with labour-intensive industries, they were said to belong “to economic ghettos outside modernity”²⁹ and seen as a weakness in the industrial capitalist system as they slowed down its dominance.³⁰

Nevertheless, more recent research highlights the contribution of family firms to the evolution of industrial capitalism until the end of the twentieth century (in the era of globalisation, large corporations, scale-intensive industries and managerial enterprises).³¹ Indeed, they “marked the first steps of economic activity and in most industrially advanced societies evolved into hierarchical structures and paved the way to late capitalism”.³²

Regarding Greece, the family has constituted the core of the Greek economy and business, at least since the eighteenth century.³³ George Dertilis characterises the Greek family as a highly productive unit and as the predominant production

²⁶ Mark Casson, *Enterprise and Leadership: Studies on Firms, Markets and Networks*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2000, p. 201.

²⁷ Medick, “Proto-industrial Family Economy”, pp. 291–315.

²⁸ Colli, *History of Family Business*, p. 1. Colli also states that “the family firm proves historically to be conservative in its policies of development and investment and, subsequently, unable to sustain growth and innovation” (ibid., p. 12).

²⁹ Craig “Family Firm”, p. 2.

³⁰ Medick, “Proto-industrial Family Economy.”

³¹ See Colli, *History of Family Business*, pp. 1, 11, etc.

³² Margarita Dritsas, “Family Firms in Greek industry during the Twentieth Century”, in *European Enterprise: Strategies of Adaptation and Renewal in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Margarita Dritsas and Terry Gourvish, Athens: Trochalia Publications, 1997, p. 85.

³³ Efi Avdela, “Η Ιστορία των γυναικών και του φύλου στη σύγχρονη ελληνική ιστοριογραφία: Αποτιμήσεις και προοπτικές” [The history of women and gender in contemporary Greek historiography: the state of the art and prospects], in *Ιστοριογραφία της νεότερης και σύγχρονης Ελλάδας 1833–2002* [Historiography of modern and contemporary Greece, 1833–2000], ed. Paschalis Kitromilides and Triantafyllos E. Sklavenitis, Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, 2004, pp. 123–138.

cell of the Greek economy for centuries,³⁴ whereas Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou suggests that kinship business ties were much denser in Greece than abroad.³⁵ Actually, family firms are “widely recognised as the basic vehicle of Greek development” and they proved to be much more than a transitional pattern to the world of big firms; they seem to be well entrenched, in contrast to other Mediterranean countries.³⁶ Furthermore, Efi Avdela believes that the role of patriarchal relations in family and family business is known as a non-proletarianisation process in the Greek case.³⁷

The small family firm, in parallel with self-employed workers, played a precociously predominant role in the financial, social and political development of the country, both in urban and rural areas.³⁸ One of the first forms of family business in the newly established country was that of domestic production.³⁹ Moreover, the role of family and kinship has been detected even in many cases of itinerant work patterns, such as the mobile groups of workers active in Greece at least until the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁰ In addition, the bibliography highlights the prominent role of families in the development of trading companies. The Greek diaspora established large mercantile firms that were based on the development of familial networks and strategies, leading to a successful intergenerational commercial presence.⁴¹ The existence of family firms in Greece

³⁴ George Dertilis, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Κράτους, 1830–1920* [History of the Greek state, 1830–1920], Athens: Estia, 2005³, vol. 1, p. 20.

³⁵ Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, “Women and Family Capitalism in Greece, c. 1780–1940”, *The Business History Review* 81/3 (2007), p. 518.

³⁶ Dritsas, “Family Firms”, p. 85.

³⁷ Efi Avdela, *Le genre entre classe et nation: Essais d’historiographie grecque*, Paris: Syllepse, 2000, p. 52.

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 38 and 40.

³⁹ Christina Agriantoni, “Η ελληνική οικονομία στον πρώτο βιομηχανικό αιώνα” [The Greek economy during the first industrial century], in *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού* [History of new Hellenism, 1770–2000], ed. Vassilis Panagiotopoulos, Athens: Ellinika Grammata/Ta Nea, p. 63.

⁴⁰ For the stonemasons from several parts of Greece, see Irene Fatsea, “Migrant Builders and Craftsmen in the Founding Phase of Modern Athens”, in *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity*, ed. Ulrike Freitag, Malte Fuhrmann, Nora Lafi and Florian Riedler, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 195, 198, and Vassilis Nitsiakos, “Συγγένεια και σχέσεις παραγωγής στα μπουλούκια των μαστόρων της Ηπείρου” [Kinship and relations of production among the stonemasons of Epirus], *Εθνολογία* 8 (2000), pp. 7–8.

⁴¹ Evrydiki Sifneos, *Έλληνες έμποροι στην Αζοφική: Η δύναμη και τα όρια της οικογενειακής επιχείρησης* [Greek merchants in the Sea of Azov: the power and the limits of a family business], Athens: Institute for Neohellenic Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2009; Maria Christina Chatziioannou, *Οικογενειακή στρατηγική και εμπορικός ανταγωνισμός: Ο οίκος Γερούση τον 19ο αιώνα* [Family strategy and commercial competition:

can also be detected in the case of the small-scale commercial firm,⁴² as well as craft-based firms or artisanal workshops.⁴³

Familial workshops, in particular, existed at least since the establishment of the Greek state in 1828, but they became ubiquitous after 1900; from that time until 1940, when the Greek economy faced stagnation, society was open to small producers.⁴⁴

By 1930, 90 percent of the enterprises in cities were small familial firms, with a staff of one to five people.⁴⁵ Most of the workshops were engaged in seasonal production, where all or most of the staff belonged to the owner's family.⁴⁶ Significantly, out of a total of 47,155 employers in the secondary sector in 1928, 30 percent of them recruited employees from within their own family.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the familial model had an important presence, too, in joint stock companies.⁴⁸ In general, "nearly all Greeks SAs [sociétés anonymes] were private joint-stock companies whose founding shareholders were drawn from the family and a tightly knit group of business or social acquaintances".⁴⁹

the Gerousis merchant house in the 19th century], Athens: Cultural Foundation of National Bank of Greece, 2003.

⁴² Nikos Potamianos, *Οι νοικοκυραίοι: Μαγαζάτορες και βιοτέχνες στην Αθήνα, 1880–1925* [The Noikokyratoi (wealthy middlebrow men): Shopkeepers and artisans in Athens, 1880–1925], Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2015.

⁴³ Christina Agriantoni, "A Collective Portrait of Greek Industrialists", *Enterprises et Histoire* 63 (2011), p. 22.

⁴⁴ Christos Hadziiossif, *Η γηραιά σελήνη: Η βιομηχανία στην ελληνική οικονομία 1830–1940* [The old moon: industry in the Greek economy 1830–1940], Athens: Themelio, 1993, p. 389.

⁴⁵ Avdela, *Le genre entre classe et nation*, p. 41.

⁴⁶ Stathis Tsotsoros, *Η συγκρότηση του βιομηχανικού κεφαλαίου στην Ελλάδα (1898–1939)* [The formation of industrial capital in Greece, 1898–1939], Athens: National Bank Cultural Foundation, 1994, vol. 2, pp. 90–97.

⁴⁷ Petros Pizanias, *Οι φτωχοί των πόλεων: Η τεχνογνωσία της επιβίωσης στην Ελλάδα το Μεσοπόλεμο* [The city poor: The know-how of survival in interwar Greece], Athens: Themelio, 1993; Kostas Fountanopoulos, "Μισθωτή εργασία" [Paid labour], in *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ου αιώνα: Οι απαρχές 1900–1922* [History of 20th-century Greece: the beginnings 1900–1922], ed. Christos Hadziiossif, Athens: Vivliorama, 2002, vol. A1, p. 93; Kostas Fountanopoulos, "Εργασία και Εργατικό Κίνημα στην Ελλάδα" [Labour and labour movement in Greece], in *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ου αιώνα: Ο Μεσοπόλεμος 1922–1940* [History of 20th-century Greece: the interwar period, 1922–1940], ed. Christos Hadziiossif, Athens: Vivliorama, 2002, vol. B1, pp. 294–335.

⁴⁸ Dritsas, "Family Firms", p. 85–103; Aliki Vaxevanoglou, *Οι Έλληνες κεφαλαιούχοι, 1900–1940: Κοινωνική και οικονομική προσέγγιση* [The Greek capitalists, 1900–1940: a social and financial approach], Athens: Themelio, 1994, p. 76.

⁴⁹ Pepelasis Minoglou, "Women and Family Capitalism", p. 529. See also Pepelasis Minoglou, "Επιχειρηματικότητα" [Entrepreneurship], in *Η ανάπτυξη της ελληνικής*

Clearly, a family firm is directly connected to terms like kin, ownership and succession.⁵⁰ Of course, much more detailed terms and notions will preoccupy us here. Firstly, as the literature has underlined the need to highlight the different family roles,⁵¹ we should focus on matters like *familial hierarchies* and *division of labour between members of a family, male (husbands and sons), female (wives and daughters)* and *child labour*,⁵² *male and female entrepreneurship*⁵³

οικονομίας τον 19ο αιώνα (1830–1914) [The development of the Greek economy in the 19th century, 1830–1914]], ed. Kostas Kostis and Socrates Petmezas, Athens: Alexandria, 2006, p. 485.

⁵⁰ Maria Christina Chatziioannou, “When the History of Merchant Houses met Business History: A Comparative Historiographical Approach”, *Enterprises et Histoire* 63 (2011–12), p. 62.

⁵¹ For recent accounts on women’s and gender-labour history in Greece, see Efi Avdela, “L’histoire des femmes au sein de l’historiographie greque contemporaine”, in *Writing Women’s History in Southern Europe, 19th–20th Centuries*, ed. Gisela Bock and Anne Cova, Lisbon: Celta Editora, 2003, pp. 81–96; Dimitra Lambropoulou, Antonis Liakos and Yannis Yannitsiotis, “Work and Gender in Greek Historiography during the last Three Decades”, in *Professions and Social Identity: New European Historical Research on Work, Gender and Society*, ed. Bertheke Waaldijk, Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2006, pp. 1–14; Efi Avdela, “Η ιστορία του φύλου στην Ελλάδα: από τη διαταραχή στην ενσωμάτωση;” [Gender history in Greece: from disturbance to incorporation?], in *Φύλο και κοινωνικές επιστήμες στη σύγχρονη Ελλάδα* [Gender and social sciences in modern Greece], ed. Venetia Kantsa, Vasiliki Moutafi and Evthymios Papataxiarchis, Athens: Alexandria, 2010, pp. 89–117; Leda Papastefanaki, “Labour in Economic and Social History: The Viewpoint of Gender in Greek Historiography”, *Genesis* 15/2 (2016), pp. 59–83; Dimitra Vassiliadou, “Όταν η ιστορία της οικογένειας συνάντησε την ιστορία του φύλου” [When history of family met gender’s history], in *Το φύλο στην ιστορία: Αποτιμήσεις και παραδείγματα* [Gender in history: Evaluations and paradigms], ed. Georgia Gotsi, Androniki Dialeti and Ελενι Fournaraki, Athens: Asini, 2015, pp. 189–208.

⁵² See Avdela, *Le genre entre classe et nation*, pp. 45–48; Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Michalis Riginos, *Μορφές παιδικής εργασίας στη βιομηχανία και τη βιοτεχνία (1870–1940)* [Aspects of child labour in industry and artisanship], Athens: Historical Archive of Greek Youth/Centre for Neohellenic Studies, 1995.

⁵³ Pepelasis Minoglou, “Women and Family Capitalism”, pp. 517–538. For the entrepreneurial role of widows, see Laurence Fontaine and Jürgen Schlumbohm, “Household Strategies for Survival: An Introduction”, *International Review of Social History* 45 (2000), pp. 9–10 and for the Greek case, see, among others, Pepelasis Minoglou, “Women and Family Capitalism”, p. 526; Pepelasis Minoglou, “Επιχειρηματικότητα” [Entrepreneurship], p. 481; Despina Vlami, “The Female Environment of a Greek Merchant Entrepreneur (Eighteenth to Nineteenth Centuries): New Evidences from the Personal Archive of Michail Vassiliou”, in *Θεωρητικές αναζητήσεις και εμπειρικές έρευνες* [Theoretical pursuits and empirical research], ed. Socrates Petmezas, Gelina Harlaftis, Andreas Lyberatos and Katerina Papakonstantinou, Rethymno: Publications of the School of Philosophy, University of Crete/Alexandria, 2012, p. 377.

and *invisible labour*.⁵⁴ Clearly, men had the dominant role, especially the founder of a family firm, the *patriarch*, *genitor* or *patron*.⁵⁵ His aims were a) the wellbeing of the family firm, as he was the breadwinner, responsible for the family's survival, and b) to pass on his knowledge and, of course, his company to his sons – his successors – in order to become a patriarch and to establish or continue a dynasty.⁵⁶ On the other hand, female involvement is often characterised as subsidiary and secondary, although we should bear in mind that women's occupational activities are not recorded in many cases, as Leda Papastefanaki notes.⁵⁷ Furthermore, terms like *domestic autonomy*,⁵⁸ *patronage* and *paternalism*,⁵⁹ *self-exploitation*, *work flexibility*, *household-family*

⁵⁴ Marion G. Crain, Winifred Poster and Miriam A. Cherry (eds), *Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary World*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2016; for Greece: Michalis Riginos, *Παραγωγικές δομές και εργατικά ημερομίσθια στην Ελλάδα, 1909–1939: Βιομηχανία–βιοτεχνία* [Productive structures and labour wages in Greece, 1909–1936: Industry–artisanship], Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece, 1987, pp. 74–75, where invisible female labour is correlated with small familial businesses.

⁵⁵ Androniki Dialeli, “Ο ιππότης, ο ιερέας και ο πατριάρχης: Όψεις του ανδρισμού στη μεσαιωνική και πρώιμη νεότερη Ευρώπη” [The knight, the priest and the patriarch: options of masculinity and early modern Europe], in Gotsi et al., *Το φύλο στην ιστορία*, pp. 216–226.

⁵⁶ Andrea Colli and Mary Rose, “Family Business”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Business History*, ed. Geoffrey G. Jones and Jonathan Zeitlin, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 204.

⁵⁷ Leda Papastefanaki “Καταμερισμοί εργασίας και φύλο στις ελληνικές πόλεις, 1830–1940” [Labour division and gender in Greek cities], in *Γυναίκες και άνδρες στους χώρους της καθημερινότητας* [Women and men in workaday space], Athens: National Technical University of Athens, 2005, p. 122. On the subject, see also Efi Avdela, *Δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι γένους θηλυκού: Καταμερισμός της εργασίας κατά φύλα στον δημόσιο τομέα, 1908–1955* [Female civil servants: labour division by sex into the public sector, 1908–1955], Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece, 1990, pp. 16–18.

⁵⁸ Avdela, *Δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι*; Avdela, *Le genre entre classe et nation*, pp. 37–60.

⁵⁹ Leda Papastefanaki, “Το πατρικό ενδιαφέρον των βιομηχάνων και η διαχείριση της εργασίας στην κλωστοϋφαντουργία Καρέλλα (Ερμούπολη, πρώτο μισό του 20ού αιώνα)” [The paternal interest of industrialists and the management of labour in the Karellas textile mill (Ermoupoli, first half of the twentieth century)], in *Σύρος και Ερμούπολη: συμβολές στην ιστορία του νησιού, 15ος–20ός αιώνας* [Syros and Ermoupoli: Contributions to the history of the island, 15th–20th centuries], ed. Christina Agriantoni and Dimitris Dimitropoulos, Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2008, pp. 155–185; Leda Papastefanaki, *Εργασία, τεχνολογία και φύλο στην ελληνική βιομηχανία: Η κλωστοϋφαντουργία του Πειραιά (1870–1940)* [Labour, technology and gender in Greek industry: the textile industry of Piraeus, 1870–1940], Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2009, pp. 360–364.

strategies of survival,⁶⁰ marriage strategies,⁶¹ dowry and inheritance⁶² should not

⁶⁰ This contribution, by all members of a family, is an acknowledged international survival strategy. See Fontaine and Schlumbohm, "Household Strategies for Survival", p. 3. Medick, in "Proto-industrial Family Economy", notes that "the family functioned as an internal engine of growth in the process of proto-industrial expansion because subjectively it remained tied to the norms and rules of the traditional familial subsistence economy". These strategies could be divided into *private* (personal efforts for a "decent living, serving as valued members of the community and raising children") and *public* ("when members of various households operate collectively with respect to third parties"). See Marcel van der Linden and Jan Lucassen, *Prolegomena for a Global Labour History*, Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, 1999, p. 13. For the Greek case, see Pizanias, *Οι φτωχοί των πόλεων* [The city poor], pp. 142–146; Antonis Liakos, *Εργασία και πολιτική στην Ελλάδα του μεσοπολέμου: Το Διεθνές Γραφείο Εργασίας και η ανάδυση των κοινωνικών θεσμών* [Labour and politics in interwar Greece: the International Labour Office and the emergence of the social institutions], Athens: Research and Education Foundation of Commercial Bank of Greece, 1993, pp. 76–80; Leda Papastefanaki, "Όψεις της εργατικής εγκατάστασης στον Πειραιά στη δεκαετία του 1930" [Aspects of the labour settlement in Piraeus in the 1930s], in *Η πόλη στους νεότερους χρόνους: Μεσογειακές και βαλκανικές όψεις (19ος–20ος αι.)* [The city in recent times: Mediterranean and Balkan perspective (nineteenth–twentieth centuries)], Athens: Society for the Study of Modern Hellenism, pp. 473–489.

⁶¹ See the widely influential work of Pierre Bourdieu, "Marriage Strategies as Strategies of Social Reproduction", trans. Elborg Foster, in *Family and Society: Selections from the Annales economies, sociétés, civilizations*, ed. Robert Forster and Orest A Ranum, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, pp. 117–144.

⁶² For an anthropological approach to the subject of dowry and devolution of property, see Jack Goody and S.J. Tambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973. For the Greek case, see Michael Herzfeld, "The Dowry in Greece: Terminological Usage and Historical Reconstruction", *Ethnohistory* 27/3 (1980), pp. 225–241; Paul Sant Cassia and Constantina Bada, *The Making of the Modern Greek Family: Marriage and Exchange in Nineteenth-century Athens*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Margaret E. Kenna, "Houses, Fields and Graves: Property and Ritual Obligation on a Greek island", *Ethnology* 15/1 (1976), pp. 21–34; Eleftherios Alexakis, "Διτοπική μεταγαμήλια εγκατάσταση και προίκα σε μια νησιωτική κοινότητα: Κέα Κυκλάδων" [Bilocal post-marriage residence and dowry in an island community: Kea in the Cyclades], *Εθνολογία* 5/1–2 (1996), pp. 5–66; Socrates Petmezas and Evthymios Papataxiarchis, "The Devolution of Property and Kinship Practices in Late- and Post-Ottoman Ethnic Greek Societies: Some Demo-economic Factors of 19th and 20th Century Transformations", *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée* 110/1 (1998), pp. 217–241. For contributions on the subject from the historical perspective, see, among an extensive bibliography, Hionidou, "Independence and Interdependence", p. 219–221. See also Pepelasis Minoglou, "Women and Family Capitalism", pp. 522–525; Renée Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1989; Eleni Varikas, *Η εξέγερση των κυριών: Η γένεση φεμινιστικής συνείδησης στην Ελλάδα του 19ου αιώνα (1833–1907)* [The rebellion of

be ignored, as they concern the management of a familial firm and also had an important role in its formation in Greece.

Finally, the role of *marriage sponsor*, *god-parenthood*,⁶³ *kinship business ties*, *kin assistance*⁶⁴ and *commitment*⁶⁵ in the formation of the family businesses should also be underlined.

Family Businesses and Brickmaking: A Worldwide Perspective

Fired bricks, being one of the most important and widely used building materials, had an enormous role in architectural tradition across the world.⁶⁶ Their production depended on several types of brickworks, which consisted of large but not always visible production units. A growing bibliography has shed light on different aspects of the history of the sector, which, despite its dimensions, had remained neglected in many cases, both before and after industrialisation. Although, historians and ethnographers would quite often agree with the

women: The birth of the feminist consciousness in 19th-century Greece, 1833–1907], Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece, 1987, pp. 93–95.

⁶³ Known as a type of the so-called *alternative social structures* or *ritual kinship* (Eugene A. Hammel, *Alternative Social Structures and Ritual Relations in the Balkans*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968) or as *pseudo-kinship* (Julian Pitt-Rivers, “Ritual Kinship in the Mediterranean: Spain and the Balkans”, in Peristiany, *Mediterranean Family Structures*, pp. 317–334). The important role of wedding sponsorship (bestmanship) and godparenthood in Greek society and the bonds deriving from them is highlighted in John K. Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, pp. 217–224; Margaret E. Kenna, “The Idiom of Family”, in Peristiany, *Mediterranean Family Structures*, pp. 347–362; Vassilis Nitsiakos, “Μηχανισμοί εναλλακτικών κοινωνικών δομών: κουμπαριά και πελατειακές σχέσεις στην αγροτική Ελλάδα” [Mechanisms of alternative social structures: bestmanship and client relations in rural Greece], *Θεωρία και Κοινωνία* 2 (1990); Ernestine Friedl, *Vasilika: A Village in Modern Greece*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962, pp. 111–116.

⁶⁴ Van der Linden and Lucassen, *Prolegomena*, p. 13.

⁶⁵ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 321–356; Dritsas, “Family Firms”, p. 91; Michalis Riginos, “Παραγωγικές δομές και ενεργός πληθυσμός στην ελληνική βιομηχανία–βιοτεχνία, 1909–1936” [Productive structures and active population in Greek industry–artisanship, 1909–1936], in *Νεοελληνική πόλη: Οθωμανικές κληρονομίες και ελληνικό κράτος* [Modern Greek city: Ottoman inheritances and the Greek state], ed. Odette Varon-Vassard, Athens: Society for the Study of Modern Hellenism, 1985, vol. 2, p. 555. On the term commitments, see also Pizanias, *Οι φτωχοί των πόλεων* [The city poor], pp. 142–143.

⁶⁶ For a concise world history of brick, see James W.P. Campbell and Will Pryce, *Brick: A World History*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2004².

opinion of Gijs Kessler and Jan Lucassen that “production technique before mechanization [...] shows very little variation across the vast Eurasian land-mass (and indeed elsewhere)”,⁶⁷ we should not ignore Richard Goldthwaite’s claim that “the industry varies in different parts of Europe at different times. It is not surprising, therefore, that the history of brick and lime production has yet to be written, for it requires a synoptic vision of many local operations, few of which, in fact, have ever been studied.”⁶⁸

As regards familial brickworks, there is evidence that they existed since early Byzantine times at least.⁶⁹ Although seminal works on brickyard labour focus primarily on the subject of kinship/familial bonds between the workforce in a unit and less on the matter of its ownership,⁷⁰ a considerable number of studies on different places around the world⁷¹ confirm that familial brickyards represented

⁶⁷ Gijs Kessler and Jan Lucassen, “Labour Relations, Efficiency and the Great Divergence: Comparing Pre-industrial Brickmaking across Eurasia, 1500–2000”, in *Technology, Skills and the Pre-modern Economy in the East and the West: Essays Dedicated to the memory of S.R. Epstein*, ed. Maarten Prak and Jan Luiten van Zanden, Leiden: Brill, 2013, p. 260.

⁶⁸ Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982², p. 177.

⁶⁹ Konstantina Gerolymou, “Πλινθευτές, κεραμοποιοί και καμίνια στους βυζαντινούς και μεταβυζαντινούς χρόνους” [Brickmakers, tilemakers and kilns in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine periods: detecting textual and iconographic evidence], *Byzantina Symmeikta* 27 (2017), pp. 290–291, accessed 26 February 2018, doi: 10.12681/byzsym.10610.

⁷⁰ Kathleen Ann Watt, “Nineteenth-century Brickmaking Innovations in Britain: Building and Technological Change” (PhD diss., University of York, 1990), p. 31; Kessler and Lucassen, “Labour Relations”, pp. 277–278 and 283; Jan Lucassen, “Brickmakers in Western Europe (1700–1900) and North India (1800–2000): Some Comparisons”, in *Global Labour History: A State of the Art*, ed. Jan Lucassen, Bern: Peter Lang, 2008, pp. 525, 527, 529 and 557. The subject of ownership and familial involvement is discussed less in the work of David Peacock regarding pottery and brickmaking, where female (wife) and family involvement is implied for the cases of *household production* (for domestic use) and *household industries* in the Balkans and North Africa. See *Pottery in the Roman World: An Ethnographical Approach*, London: Longman, 1982, pp. 12–25.

⁷¹ For the UK, see Campbell and Price, *Brick*, p. 175; Adrian Corder-Birch, *Our Ancestors were Brickmakers and Potters: A History of the Corder and Related Families in the Clayworking Industries*, Halstead: Adrian Corder-Birch, 2010; David Wilders, *Hartleys: Brick by Brick – Pot by Pot*, Castleford: Castleford Press, 2003; Alan Cox, “Love Story: A Brickmaking Family”, *British Brick Society Information* 124 (June 2013), pp. 9–15; for Austria, Maria Papathanassiou, “Aspects of Industrial Child Labour in Central Europe/Austria (from the 1880s up into the 1930s)” (paper presented at the 3rd International Conference in Economic and Social History, Ioannina, 24–27 May 2017), pp. 7–8; for the US, Duane F. Alwin, “A Century of Brickmaking at Berlin Junction: A History of the Alwine Brick Company”, *Adams County History* 18 (2012), pp. 40–66; for India, A. Bhukuth and J. Ballet, “Is Child Labour a Substitute for Adult Labour? A Case Study of Brick Kiln Workers in Tamil Nadu, India”, *International Journal of Social*

a worldwide pattern – a commonplace, at least during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The phenomenon extended to every kind of brickmaking unit, such as household production units, household industries, workshops, manufactories and factories,⁷² which were either run by the owners or rented out to other families.⁷³

Regarding Greece, the literature confirms the existence of brickmaking family firms, both small and large in scale, in many parts of the country. References to family brickworks, based on handmade and seasonal production, or on a partially mechanised process, can be found in publications from the field of anthropology, ethnology and rural studies but less from the economic and industrial history perspective.⁷⁴ A few contributions have appeared on the subject of large-scale, family-owned brick and tile factories that mechanised the production process, such as the Allatini brickworks in Thessaloniki,⁷⁵ Tsalapatas brick factory in Volos,⁷⁶

Economics 33/8 (2006), pp. 594–600; for Mexico, Tamar Diana Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism: Brickmakers on the U.S.–Mexican Border*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005; for Australia, Ron Ringer, “Turning up the Heat: Sydney’s 19th-Century Brickyards”, *The Hummer* 8/1 (2012), pp. 9–11, accessed 12 December 2017, <http://www.labourhistory.org.au/hummer/the-hummer-vol-8-no-1-2012/brickyardssydney>.

⁷² The proposed division here is taken from Peacock, *Pottery*, pp. 12–51.

⁷³ Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism*, p. 35 passim.

⁷⁴ Angeliki Vafiadaki and Lina Mousioni, “Συμβολή στην μελέτη των θεσσαλικών κεραμοποιείων” [Contribution to the study of Thessalian brickworks], in *Θεσσαλική κεραμική, χώμα και νερό: Από την προϊστορία στην Τρίτη χιλιετία* [Thessalian ceramic art, earth and water: from prehistory to the third millennium], Larissa: Folk and Historical Museum of Larissa, pp. 213–225; Roland Hampe and Adam Winter, *Bei Töpfern und Töpferinnen in Kreta, Messenien und Zypern*, Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseums, 1962, pp. 47–52; Hampe and Winter, *Bei Töpfern und Ziegeln in Südtalien, Sizilien und Griechenland*, Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseums, 1965, pp. 133–134, 154–157; Maroula Klifa, *Άνθρωποι του μόχθου: Θεσσαλία* [People of work: Thessaly], Athens: Metaichmio, 2007, p. 146; Zoi Ropaitou-Tsapareli, *Ο Ελαιώνας της Αθήνας* [Elaionas in Athens], Athens: Filippoti, 2006.

⁷⁵ Evangelos Chekimoglou, “Η ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στην Θεσσαλονίκη: Οθωμανική περίοδος” [History of entrepreneurship in Thessaloniki: Ottoman period], in *Ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στη Θεσσαλονίκη* [History of entrepreneurship in Thessaloniki], vol. 2/1, *Οθωμανική περίοδος* [Ottoman period], Thessaloniki: Northern Greece Businesspeople’s Cultural Foundation, 2004, pp. 290–295; Efrosyni Roupa and Evangelos Chekimoglou, *Μεγάλες επιχειρήσεις και επιχειρηματικές οικογένειες* [Big firms and entrepreneurial families], *Ιστορία της επιχειρηματικότητας στη Θεσσαλονίκη: Η επιχειρηματικότητα στην περίοδο 1900–1940* [History of entrepreneurship in Thessaloniki: entrepreneurship in the period 1900–1940], Thessaloniki: Northern Greece Businesspeople’s Cultural Foundation, 2004, pp. 372–386.

⁷⁶ Yiannis Antoniou, *Η πλινθοκεραμοποιία Ν. & Σ. Τσαλαπάτα (1917–1978)* [N. & S. Tsalapatas Brickworks, 1917–1978], Athens: Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, 2009.

Elephas brickworks on the island of Chios,⁷⁷ the short-lived Polymeris & Co in Serres,⁷⁸ and the units established by Efstathios and Kriton Dilaveris in Piraeus.⁷⁹

Internationally, the labour division in brickworks assigns men, women and children with different duties.⁸⁰ The brickyard owner, who was always male, except in cases where a widow had assumed control, was responsible for the production line and may also have been involved in the brickmaking process. Brickyard owners' wives often contributed to the family income by undertaking jobs in the brickyard, although this generally happened in a discreet manner as the gender ideology in many countries "makes it a shame for men to allow their wives to work".⁸¹

The participation of children in production is one of the constant characteristics of the industry.⁸² Children, very often those of the brickyard

⁷⁷ Sevasti Maneli, "Βιομηχανικά κτίρια του 19ου–αρχές 20ού αιώνα, Κεραμεία Χίου" [Industrial buildings during 19th and early 20th centuries: Chios brickworks] (BA diss., Technological Educational Institute of Piraeus, 2007).

⁷⁸ Helen Abadzi, "Η χαμένη κεραμοποιία Πολυμέρη μέσα από την ιστορία των Σερρών" [The lost Polymeris brickworks through the history of Serres], 2016, accessed 5 March 2018, <http://www.academia.edu/5121286>.

⁷⁹ Eleni Anagnostopoulou and Litsa Bafouni, "Εργοστάσια μωσαϊκών πλακών και κεραμοποιίας Ευσταθίου και Κρίτωνος Δηλαβέρη στον Πειραιά" [Mosaic-tiles factories and brickworks Eustathios and Kriton Dilaveris in Piraeus], in *Ιστορικός βιομηχανικός εξοπλισμός στην Ελλάδα* [Historical industrial equipment in Greece], ed. Yannis Polyzos, Vassilis Panagiotopoulos, Christina Agriantoni, Nikos Belavilas, Athens: Odysseas, 1998, pp. 298–307. Especially, regarding the cases of Efstathios Dilaveris and his son Kriton more research is required; it still remains unclear if we should classify among the familial group companies or if they belong to what we call *personal companies*, where a single man holds the main managerial role. The nature of involvement of Kriton Dilaveris in his father's enterprise remains unknown until 1935, when he established another big factory, in Nikaia, close to Piraeus. Withal, more light should be shed on the role of Charalambos Dilaveris, Efstathios' brother, and his children, who probably had a role in the management of the Dilaveris brickworks.

⁸⁰ Papathanassiou, "Aspects of Industrial Child Labour", p. 8. It should be underlined that, according the aforementioned international bibliography on brickmaking, there are some differences in labour division, between men and women in a brickyard, across time and space.

⁸¹ As in the case of Mexico. See Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism*, p. 76. Similarly, in the Greek case, Georgios Kokkinogenis claims that "back then, a man was ashamed to allow his wife to work", as it was an indication that he was not the breadwinner. However, he states that "a brickmakers' wife did not work in the brickworks, rather she helped." Interview with Georgios Kokkinogenis (2018).

⁸² George Smith, *The Cry of the Children from the Brick-yards of England and How the Cry has been Heard; with Observations upon the Carrying Out of the Act*, London: Houghton, 1879; Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p. 110; Ringer, "Turning up the Heat", pp. 9–11; Papathanassiou, "Aspects of Industrial Child Labour"; A. Bhukuth and J. Ballet, "Is Child Labour", p. 595; E. Wallace, *Children of the Laboring Poor: The Working Lives of Children*

owner, took part into the production process by the age of 10, sometimes even earlier. As Maria Papathanassiou, referring to the Austrian case, states, “children were believed to be in a better position to carry out such tasks, due to their small bodies and feet, which permitted them to move among the lines of drying bricks without damaging the products”.⁸³ Most of the sources state that boys were mainly employed⁸⁴ and that brickmaking was not internationally a favourable place for female child labour, as other industries traditionally were.⁸⁵ Despite that fact, exceptions have been documented.⁸⁶ Finally, as members of a family bound to a business, brickmakers’ children were relatively lucky, as working for their parents they could avoid overexploitation, enjoying simultaneously privileges such as flexibility, protection and care,⁸⁷ something which did not happen in other cases. So, child labour in brickfields took place within the framework of an apprenticeship, by which “skills were passed down from father to son and those who excelled in the craft ... were often referred to as brick masters”.⁸⁸

Brickmaking in Athens, 1900–1940

As part of my PhD research, I compiled an inventory of brickmaking firms in Athens that also includes some details of each unit and a biography of their owners. This has proved an invaluable tool for my research, as a complete and detailed record of brickworks and their owners had been lacking. The inventory contains the names of more than 400 brickyard owners, 100 board members of public limited companies and 200 enterprises in total,⁸⁹ from Athens and Piraeus alone, between 1900 and 1940.⁹⁰

in Nineteenth-century Hertfordshire, Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010, pp. 91–108. Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism*, pp. 75–93.

⁸³ Papathanassiou, “Aspects of Industrial Child Labour”, p. 6.

⁸⁴ For the example of nineteenth-century England, see Goldthwaite, *Building of Renaissance Florence*, p. 201.

⁸⁵ An example was the textile industry. See Papathanassiou, “Aspects of Industrial Child Labour”, p. 3.

⁸⁶ For the case of Mexico, see Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism*, p. 84; for Germany, Kessler and Lucassen, “Labour Relations”, p. 283.

⁸⁷ Avdela, *Le genre entre classe et nation*, p. 52.

⁸⁸ Ringer, “Turning up the Heat”, p. 12.

⁸⁹ The term includes brickyards owned by brickmakers or rented by others. This number could be less, as in many cases a brickworks may have been counted more than once, as it could be, sequentially, used by more than one enterprise. On the other hand, more research should be carried out in this field, as it is clear that some enterprises operated more than one plant simultaneously.

⁹⁰ Regarding the period under examination, the total number of enterprises in Attica could be 220. If we include all the areas that produced bricks for Athens, that number could exceed 300.

In order to compile the inventory, it was necessary to consult several sources, chiefly commercial and industrial directories of that period, such as those edited by Igleis, Alexakis, Panagopoulos, Kousoulinos, Sideris and others (amounting to almost 50 volumes in total), as well as a number of company brochures and reports. Also useful were the contributions and advertisements regarding brickmaking firms of all types published in newspapers and technical periodicals such as *Αρχιμήδης*, *Έργα* and *Βιομηχανική Επιθεώρησης*. Research was also carried out in a number of archives, such as the National Bank of Greece Historical Archives (NBGHA) and the Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive (ELIA), which contain files pertaining to several businesses. Finally, a series of interviews (more than 70) and shorter discussions (more than 40) with former brickmakers or their descendants proved an invaluable source, in terms of quality and quantity. Many of these interviewees provided me with items from their personal or familial archives, like rare photographs, family trees, notarial and other public documents, notes and booklets, sketches and architectural drawings.

Before proceeding to the presentation of the relevant data, it is essential to turn to the basic characteristics of the brickmaking industry in greater Athens since 1834 (the year it became capital of Greece). In particular, in 1857 there were more than 50 kilns in Piraeus, as Christina Agriantoni states.⁹¹ Until 1920, the vast majority of brickworks worked only five months a year, from May to September. Most of these were small firms, with a staff of 5, 10, or 20 people engaged in handmade production. This arduous work included the following tasks: a) digging clay from pits in order to ensure the appropriate supply of raw material, b) clay preparation and refinement (pugging clay using tools, hands and feet), c) the formation by hand of bricks and tiles on a bench, d) the drying process, e) loading the kiln (in Athens a rectangular intermittent type of updraught kiln was extensively employed),⁹² f) the firing process, g) the unloading of the kiln.⁹³

⁹¹ Christina Agriantoni, *Οι απαρχές της εκβιομηχάνισης στην Ελλάδα τον 19ο αιώνα* [The beginnings of industrialisation in Greece during the 19th century], Athens: Katarti, 2010², p. 111.

⁹² This particular kiln was called a “Turkish kiln” in Greece (interviews with Frangiskos Martinos (2012) and Konstantinos Bouritis (2018) and many other interviewees) and a “Roman kiln” in the international bibliography. See Campbell and Price, *Brick*, p. 49.

⁹³ The manual production process of brick and tiles in Athens is exhaustively described by several interviewees within the framework of my research. Here, among others, I should mention my interviews with Panagiotis Tranoulis (2001) Dimitrios Kokkinogenis (2001), Georgios Kokkinogenis (2018), Kostas Bouritis (2018), Frangiskos Martinos (2012) and Vassilis Tridimas (2003). Of course the aforementioned bibliography on small-scale brickmaking in Greece provides significant information. To this we should add the seminal work of Kalliopi Theocharidou, “Συμβολή στη μελέτη της παραγωγής οικοδομικών κεραμικών προϊόντων στα βυζαντινά και μεταβυζαντινά χρόνια” [A contribution to the

Efforts to establish big firms involving machinery initially failed. A few big brickworks that relied on steam power shared the same fate from 1870 to 1900.⁹⁴ Only after 1900 and especially after 1920, when the population expanded and there was a notable increase in the use of brick instead of stone, did five or six larger brickworks industries emerge, such as Dilaveris, Cyclops and Atlas, which used imported integrated production systems, employed large numbers of workers (over 150 in each case) and operated throughout the year.⁹⁵

At the same time, a great number of the small firms and enterprises proceeded to build extensions and upgrade equipment. The most prominent efforts were those undertaken by Frangiskos Verros, Anastasios Martinos, Angelos Nikas, Papamakarios Bros, Antonios Lebesis & Bros, Markos Goumas & Bros, Manolis Panagiotopoulos & Bros, Ioannis Lebesis and others,⁹⁶ which transformed them from the category of “cottage industries”⁹⁷ or “workshop industries”⁹⁸ to that of medium or large-scale factories (employing up to 100 workers). Machines were adopted selectively for some stages of the production line.⁹⁹ Simultaneously, many of these companies continued to produce handmade bricks and tiles too, during the summer. There were more than 170 or even 200 of these enterprises,¹⁰⁰ which may be classified as *labour intensive*

study of brick and tile production in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods], *Δελτίον ΧΑΕ* 13 (1985–86), pp. 97–112.

⁹⁴ Our knowledge of these efforts is very poor. Even if some data has been published, there is a great need for a further and thorough study of the brickmaking industry of that period. See Agriantoni, *Οι απαρχές της εκβιομηχάνισης* [The beginnings of industrialisation], pp. 27 and 198.

⁹⁵ Anagnostopoulou and Bafouni, “Εργοστάσια μωσαϊκών πλακών”; *Αν. Κεραμουργική Εταιρεία “Ο Κύκλωψ” Γ. Βεντούρης & Σια* [Cyclop Ceramics SA, G. Vendouris & Co.], undated leaflet; *Καταστατικόν της Ανωνύμου Ελληνικής Εταιρείας Υλών Οικοδομικής “ΑΤΛΑΣ”* [Article of incorporation of the Greek building materials SA ATLAS], 1913.

⁹⁶ According the annual production size and the extent of their industrial premises. NBGHA, A1S34S31F14, Catalogue of brick and tile annual production, 1934.

⁹⁷ The term is used in Maxine Berg, Pat Hudson and Michael Sonenscher, “Manufacture in Town and Country before the Factory”, in *Manufacture in Town and Country before the Factory*, ed. Maxine Berg, Pat Hudson and Michael Sonenscher, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 18 and especially regarding brickmaking by Ringer, “Turning up the Heat”, p. 9.

⁹⁸ For the term, see Peacock, *Pottery*, pp. 25–43.

⁹⁹ Antoniou, *Η πλινθοκεραμοποιία* [The brickworks], p. 157.

¹⁰⁰ This number concerns the units in the core of the city until 1940. Brickworks around Athens are excluded. It should be mentioned that 20–30 pottery workshops, which were specialised to the production of other building materials made of clay (such as drainpipes, floor tiles), are not included.

units of small, medium or large scale. Most of them were located in the industrial zones of Elaionas in Athens and Kaminia in Piraeus.¹⁰¹

Brickmaking Family Businesses in Athens: Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the labour-intensive units in Athens and Piraeus between 1900 and 1940.¹⁰²

Table 3
Brickworks in Athens and Piraeus: units and owners, 1900–1940

169 labour-intensive brickworks					5 industrial brickworks	
157 labour-intensive units		12 labour-intensive units (with at least 2 persons with different surnames among the owners)			The 5 biggest industries (Ltd)	
					2 units	3 units
53 units	104 units	3 units	2 units	7 units		
All brickworks owners with the same surname	One person known as owner	Relatives	Non- relatives	?	Totally controlled by a person or a family	Family groups on board of directors

Sources: a) Industrial and commercial guides: G.N. Alexakis, *Πλήρης οδηγός του Πειραιώς, 1906–1907* [Complete guide to Piraeus, 1906–1907], Piraeus: Ermis, 1907; P. Anninos and A. Gounaropoulos, *Νέος επαγγελματικός οδηγός Αθηνών–Πειραιώς–Περιχώρων, 1924–1925* [New business guide to Athens–Piraeus–suburbs, 1924–1925], Athens: n.p., 1924; *Μέγας οδηγός Πειραιώς* [Guide to Piraeus], 1928–29 and 1930–31, Piraeus: Artia, 1928 and 1930; *Πανελλήνιος οδηγός (Το ελληνικόν ντιρέκτορι)*, 1913 [Panhellenic guide (The Greek directory), 1913], Athens: Eastern Advertisement Company, c. 1913; *Εμπορικός και βιομηχανικός οδηγός της Ελλάδος, 1935* [Commercial and industrial guide to Greece, 1935], Athens: Athens Chamber of Commerce & Industry-Flamma, 1935; Gavriil Gavriilidis, *Μέγας Εμπορικός–Βιομηχανικός Επαγγελματικός Οδηγός Αθηνών–Πειραιώς–Περιχώρων, 1939* [Commercial-industrial guide to Athens–Piraeus–Suburbs, 1939], Athens: Gavriilidis, 1939;

¹⁰¹ For the many reasons for the acknowledged phenomenon of nucleation (clustering) of pottery and brickmaking units worldwide in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Peacock, *Pottery*, pp. 38–43.

¹⁰² Pottery works that were involved in the production of other clay building materials, such as clay pipes, clay floor-tiles, are not included. Also excluded are firms involved in the manufacture of cement or lime bricks, although it should be mentioned that most of them (more than 10) until 1940 were related to or under the control of big enterprise-industries of other sectors or had been established as departments of the few industrial brickworks.

(Table 3 continued)

Nikolaos Iglesias, *Οδηγός της Ελλάδος* [Guide to Greece], 1905–06, 1908–09, 1910–11, 1915, 1916–17, 1918, 1920, 1921, 1925–26, 1928–29, 1930, 1931, 1934–35, Athens: Iglesias, c. 1905–1934; Spyridon Kousoulinos, *Οδηγός της Ελλάδος, 1904* [Guide to Greece, 1904], Athens: n.p., 1904; Kyrieris and Giannopoulos, *Ελληνικός Οδηγός, 1921* [Guide to Greece, 1921], Athens: Kyrieris-Giannopoulos and Co, c. 1921; *Εμποροβιομηχανικός οδηγός της Ελλάδος, 1935* [Commercial and industrial guide to Greece, 1935], Patras/Athens: Panagopoulos-Ganasoulis, 1935; *Εμποροβιομηχανικός οδηγός της Ελλάδος 1938* [Commercial and industrial guide to Greece, 1938], Athens/Patras: A. Panagopoulos, c. 1938; *Εμποροβιομηχανικός οδηγός Αθηνών Πειραιώς και Θεσσαλονίκης, 1929* [Commercial-industrial guide to Athens, Piraeus and Thessaloniki, 1929], Athens: Fimi, 1929; *Οδηγός βιομηχανίας της Ελλάδος, 1939* [Industrial guide to Greece, 1939], Athens: N. Sideris, 1939; Theoklis Skenderidis, *Οδηγός της ελληνικής βιομηχανίας, 1933–34* [Hellenic Industry Guide], 1933–34 and 1949–50, Athens: Theoklis Skenderidis, 1933 and 1949; K. Stamatiou and V. Bouzouras, *Πανελλήνιος οδηγός, 1912* [Guide to Greece, 1912], Athens: n.p., 1912; *Εμπορικός οδηγός “Ο Ερμής”, 1930* [“Ermis” commercial guide, 1930], Athens: A. Tsapogas and S. Koudouris, 1930; Takis Hairopoulos, *Ο οικονομολογούμενος ελληνικός επαγγελματικός οδηγός εμπορίου–επιστημών–βιομηχανίας, 1933* [The illustrated Greek guide to commerce–sciences–industry, 1933], Athens: Panhellenic Illustrated Library, 1933; b) interviews with Maria Athanasaki, Antzela Alessandri, Anna Anaplioti, Antonis Bakopoulos, Konstantinos Bouritis, Konstantinos Delavinias, Yannis Dousis, Georgios Filippas, Athanasia Fragoulaki, Ioannis Gardelis, Dimitrios Gardelis, Marietta Georgouli, Paraskevi Gonidaki, Markos Goumas, Vassilis Goumas, Polyxeni Gouma, Petros Kallilas, Antonios Kambanelis, Konstantinos Karamanolis, Dimitrios Kokkinogenis, Georgios Kokkinogenis, Stavros Koumousis, Vassilis Leloudas, Georgios Lebesis, Antonios Markensko, Yannis Martinos, Frangiskos Martinos, Anastasios Mavrogonatos, Eleni Panagiotopoulou, Georgios Panopoulos, Zoe Ropaitou, Georgios Stinis, Panagiotis Tranoulis, Dimitrios Tranoulis, Vassilis Tridimas, Georgios Tridimas, Nikolaos Tsirdimas, Manolis Vassalos, Petros Vassalos, Frangiskos D. Verros, Frangiskos K. Verros, Anastasios Venetsanopoulos; and brief communications with Theodoros Bakopoulos, Georgios Karamanolis, Dimitrios Leloudas and Ioannis Malikoutis; c) files from the National Bank of Greece Historic Archive (NBGHA): A1S10S112F323, Mantzoros–Zafeiropoulos; A1S80S1F357, Mantzoros–Sotiropoulos; A1S34S5F268, Th. Bakopoulos; A1S44S8F55, I.A. Lebesis; A1S34S45F51, A. & E. Lebesis; A1S34S172F66, M. Koumousis; A1S40S81F468, P. Markensko; A1S34S184F4, I. & K. Kokkinogenis; A1S10S97F111, Goumas.

The data in Table 3 could be read as follows: Fifty-three of the 169 businesses were intergenerational family-controlled firms: the owners of each brickworks were members of a family (with the same surname, so obviously paternal relatives).¹⁰³ Examples of firms that lasted four or five generations include

¹⁰³ Even in cases when they were converted into limited enterprises, most were never considered as listed companies and their boards of directors were absolutely identical to the list of owners, who were always family members, as has been mentioned for the Greece case in general. Pepelasis Minoglou, “Επιχειρηματικότητα” [Entrepreneurship], p. 485.

Lebesis–Bakopoulos, Leventis–Fragoulakis, Martinos and Gardelis, whose existence can be confirmed for both before 1900 and after 1940.¹⁰⁴

Only one person could be identified the owner in 104 units. The data is not adequate to confirm the further involvement of other family members in these cases.¹⁰⁵

In 12 of the 169 brickworks, two or more people among the owners have different surnames. In three cases it seems that they were relatives (fathers and sons or brothers-in-law).¹⁰⁶ In another two, no kinship bonds can be traced. A rare case, the adjacent brickworks of Christos Martinos and Alexandros Mantzoros–Efstathia Zafeirakou, located on the Iera Odos road, in Votanikos, merged in 1953.¹⁰⁷ Their owners were clearly bound together through godparenthood. This strategic bonding between the two families, which coincided with the merger, gave a family-like sense to the collaboration between the two brickmakers.¹⁰⁸ No information exists for the remaining seven cases,¹⁰⁹ but the hypothesis that

¹⁰⁴ Interviews with Antonios Bakopoulos (2013), Ioannis Gardelis (2002), Frangiskos Martinos (2012), Athanasia Fragoulaki (2017).

¹⁰⁵ In many cases, brickmakers with the same surname existed. However, it is not always possible to say whether they were involved in the same brickyard. Further study may reveal other links and thus increase the total number of family-owned brickyards in Athens.

¹⁰⁶ After he married Maria Bouriti, Kostas Bouritis' sister, Georgios Gonidakis joined the company. Interview with Kostas Bouritis (2018). The same happened in the case of Andreas Martinos and his son-in-law Panagiotis Zoulis in Piraeus. Interview with Manolis Vassalos (2014).

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Frangiskos Martinos (2012). These two units were established many years ago. This unique example reminds us that “family firms may be unwilling to accept the risk of cooperation for many reasons, which are related to their own nature. Cooperation means, as already stated, giving up – to a greater or lesser extent – control over strategic resources, and accepting a partial loss of independence in business decision.” Andrea Colli, “Risk, Uncertainty, and Family Ownership”, in Fernández Pérez and Colli, *Endurance of Family Businesses: A Global Overview*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁸ It is important to remember that one of the most prominent components of patronage is bestmanship (Pitt-Rivers, “Ritual Kinship”, p. 324). Entrepreneurs, as it has been observed in the case of the Greek paint industry, often cemented commercial networks with kinship relationships, such as baptism (Dritsas, “Family Firms”, pp. 92–93). Furthermore, regarding the relation between godfather and godchild, it has been stated that it “is even more asymmetrical than that between parent and child: unilateral beneficence on the part of the godfather, respect on the part of the godchild”. J.G. Peristiany, “Introduction”, in Peristiany, *Mediterranean Family Structures*, p. 19. The obligations and working arrangements that derive from the bonds between *koumbari* are discussed in Kenna, “Idiom of Family”, p. 349.

¹⁰⁹ Such as the brickworks of Alexandros Geramanis and Georgios Galanakis on Pireos St. Theoklis Skenderidis, *Οδηγός της ελληνικής βιομηχανίας 1933–34* [Hellenic industry guide, yearbooks 1933–34], p. 182.

the partnership involved non-relatives should not be excluded from further research.¹¹⁰

Even among the few larger industries, which of course belonged to the group of limited companies, it is evidently clear that some were under the full control of a person or a family, or of board members. In other cases, small familial groups were in control of the company.¹¹¹

From the aforementioned data, the prominent, if not the dominant, role of Greek family businesses in the brickmaking industry is more than obvious.¹¹² It concerns a group of units that were developed around what we now call the nuclear family (father, mother and children) or stem family (grandparents, parents and children) or even its extended version (grandchildren, nephews, sons-in-law, etc.). The term includes owners or renters of brickyards, whether they were involved in a hands-on way on site (as was especially the case in small or medium-sized brickworks) or acted as managers.

A strong motive for the dominance of this certain pattern was the survival of the brickyard and the wellbeing of the interdependent family of the brickmaker. As bricks and tiles were cheap products in the building materials market and there was a great competition among the producers, brickmakers had no choice other than to sell their products more and more cheaply.¹¹³ At the same time, as they could not play with the cost of raw material, in order to ensure household survival they intensified the mechanism of self and family exploitation, so that they themselves, their wives and their children (mostly the males, over the age of 10 or 11) were engaged in the brickmaking process. This particular approach provided income for the family economy, in a strategy

¹¹⁰ A partnership was the advisable solution for a young entrepreneur whose individual funds/capital was not enough for the creation of a unit. Yannis Yannitsiotis, *Η κοινωνική ιστορία του Πειραιά: Η συγκρότηση της αστικής τάξης 1860–1910* [The social history of Piraeus: the making of bourgeoisie, 1860–1910], Athens: Nefeli, 2006, p. 177.

¹¹¹ These particular businesses are beyond the scope of this article.

¹¹² It is necessary to examine in the future the possibility that the high percentage of family businesses in the Greek brickmaking industry represent a rare and exceptional phenomenon. A comparison with other sectors of production (or the economy in general) in Greece and the study of the dimensions of familial brickyard patterns worldwide would be essential in this regard.

¹¹³ To the bricks and tiles made in brickworks in Athens, we should add the millions of products coming from further afield (Elefsina, Lavrio, Poros and especially the villages around Chalkida, as Vassiliko, Fylla and Lefkandi) by carriages and trucks, boats and trains. Thus, prices remained low in general.

known as “endofamilial accumulation”,¹¹⁴ and ensured the well-being of both business and family.¹¹⁵

What social anthropologists call the *patrilineal* way of family development characterises these businesses: a brickworks passes through conveyance or a will to the male children of the family, over and over. While girls were given a dowry upon marriage, they never received a stake in the brickworks.¹¹⁶ If her husband was also brickworks owner, a bride would follow him to his or his family’s brickyard.¹¹⁷ Only if he was at the time of marriage a worker in his father-in-law’s unit¹¹⁸ or there was no male child in the family would the son-in-law join the business.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, a rather rare way for a woman to become herself a member, or even the head, of the business was widowhood: by inheriting a share or the whole of the unit. That happened especially when she was childless or her husband died intestate.¹²⁰

Apart from the observations presented thus far, a careful approach to the subject reveals an obvious wider character of the term *familial brickyards*. It

¹¹⁴ Scott Cook and Leigh Binford, *Rural Petty Industry in Mexican Capitalism*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.

¹¹⁵ As Maria Athanasaki (2013), Konstantinos Bouritis (2002), Paraskevi Gonidaki (2013) and many other informers stated in their interviews.

¹¹⁶ The phenomenon is confirmed in many of the cases examined here, and there is no evidence for the contrary. An example is the case of the Lebesis–Bakopoulos unit, on the former Kavalas St, in Vouthoulas, Elaionas. Georgios Lebesis transferred (through a rather iconic sale) his brickwork to his grandson Theodoros Bakopoulos, while a dowry was given to his granddaughter, Eleni Bakopoulou, by her father Michail Bakopoulos. Interview with Antonios Bakopoulos (2013). Some other similar cases are the brickmaking units owned by Georgios Papamakarios, Manolis Panagiotopoulos and Georgios Degleris, all established during first half of the twentieth century on Kavalas St. Interviews with Paraskevi Gonidaki (2013), Eleni Panagiotopoulou (2014), Anna Anaplioti (2014) and Georgios Papamakarios (2016).

¹¹⁷ It is necessary to underline that even if marriage among the group brickmakers was heavily endogamous, there is no evidence for collaboration/partnership between the two family businesses after the marriage. None of the interviewees claim that. In general, for the attachment of the wife to the husband’s family in Greece, see Vassilis Nitsiakos, *Παραδοσιακές κοινωνικές δομές* [Traditional social structures], Ioannina: Isnafi, 2016, p. 86.

¹¹⁸ As in the case of Georgios Fragoulakis, who married Marigo Levadi, daughter of one of the best-known potter-brickmakers in 1900, Ioannis Levandis. Interview with Athanasia Frangoulaki (2017).

¹¹⁹ This is the case of Michail Bakopoulos, son-in-law of Georgios Lebesis. Interview with Antonios Bakopoulos (2013).

¹²⁰ A notarial document from 1919 confirms the existence of a kiln that belonged to a woman called Strefena. The name suggests that she was the widow of a man named Strefis, probably the owner of the specific brickyard. Contract conducted by solicitor D. Vinandos,

is a commonplace that brothers of brickmakers (who were not co-owners for several reasons), cousins, nephews, sons- and brothers-in-law, godsons and other relatives from both sides (the husband's and the wife's), and even women (wives, daughters and nieces) were hired as workers.¹²¹ It is certain that in many cases, especially in small brickworks (up to 5 or 10 workers), family members (nuclear or wider) exclusively comprised the working staff,¹²² thus putting the brickmaker among *the petty commodity producers*.¹²³ Regarding bigger firms (where the number of workers approached 100), where the brickmaker belonged to the group of *petty capitalists*,¹²⁴ the higher the number of workers, the lower the percentage of family members.

In such cases, the working staff were mostly substituted by distant relatives and members of what has been called the pseudo-family, as well as by people with

no. 69,959, date 19 October 1973. Many examples could be traced especially to the post-World War II period, such as those of Efstathia Mantzorou (NBGHA:A1S10S112F76, NBG document, 22 June 1945, and A1S10S112F323, NBG document, 6 April 1949) and Aikaterini Verrou, who undertook the management of her father's brickworks in 1944, after he and his sons were killed by the Nazis. Interview with Yannis Dousis (2017). A decade later, in 1955, after the death of brickmaker Panagiotis Karamanolis, in Piraeus, his wife, Maria Karamanolis, got involved with the unit, with their sons Georgios, Ioannis and Konstantinos. Interviews with Konstantinos Karamanolis (2003), Georgios Karamanolis (2003) and Konstantinos Delavinias (2003). An uncommon case is that of Kalliopi Larentzaki-Bouriti. During the 1920s, she rented a brickyard (where she produced brick with her male and female children and grandchildren), not because of widowhood, but because of poverty. A few years before, her husband, Kostas Bouritis, had migrated to the US and abandoned her. He never returned and never succeeded in sending her enough money to survive. So she became a brickmaker. Interview with Konstantinos Bouritis (2018) and Maria Kokkinogeni-Bouriti (2018).

¹²¹ The Greek law of 1912 on women and child labour, "Περί εργασίας γυναικών και ανηλίκων" [On female and child labour], ΦΕΚ Α' /46 (7 February 1912), defines as family members working in a family firm as the husband/unit owner, his wife, his parents and their children, but also other relatives, until the third degree of consanguinity.

¹²² An example is the brickworks of Angelos Bouritis [interview with Konstantinos Bouritis (2018)]. In terms of staff, it is not clear if the family brickworks are based only on a type of agnatic extended family (parents and male children and their male descendants). There are many examples where family members from the wife's side worked in the husband's brickyard. In the case of the Goumas Bros brickyard at Tavros, among the workers were many people from Amfissa, which was the birthplace of Aspasia Lytra, Kostas Goumas' wife. Interview with Polyxeni Gouma (2014). This may be linked to the role of the woman in the family and especially to the bonds with the wife's family that were maintained after marriage. Nitsiakos, *Παραδοσιακές κοινωνικές δομές* [Traditional social structures], p. 102. On the other hand, the phenomenon cannot be easily traced in the many cases where the husband and wife had the same origin.

¹²³ Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism*, p. 51.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

a common origin to their employers. Almost half of the owners of the units and the workers in Athens were from island of Kythnos.¹²⁵ The formation of a complex familial-regional network, on which the orderly functioning of the enterprise was based, was clearly related to a number of working patterns and different forms of commitments between the owners' group and the workers in each brickyard, such as loyalty, trust between friends and neighbours, commitment, paternalism and patronage.¹²⁶ Thus, a significant degree of flexibility can be traced, in many aspects (such as the total number of the workforce in every unit, wages, working hours, etc.),¹²⁷ which led to resilience in many cases, especially in periods of financial depression.

Husbands, Wives and Children: The Individual Role of Each Member of the Brickmaker's Family

The brickmaker, owner or renter of a unit was simultaneously both the head of the family and the master/chief of the brickyard.¹²⁸ Qualities such as skilfulness, a willingness to work hard, the wise investment of yearly profits and a continuous desire to enlarge the unit gradually, step by step,¹²⁹ not only created the myth of

¹²⁵ See Bardanis, "Brickworkers". Regarding relations between peasants/villagers and their kin/relatives who migrated to cities and the mechanism for maintaining urban-rural connections, see Ernestine Friedl, "The Role of Kinship in the Transmission of National Culture to Rural Villages in Mainland Greece", *American Anthropologist* 61/1 (1959), pp. 30–38, where she claims that in places (other than Greece) where upward social movement from farm to town exists, the strong kinship ties are not necessarily duplicated (Ibid., p. 36). This indicates the significance of this pattern and its link with the particularity/importance of the family business institution in Greece. For a parallel example to the Kythnos workforce, see Kenna, "Occupational Culture of Building Workers", which discusses the case of builders from Anafi, another Aegean island.

¹²⁶ As it has been stated in another context, "with the spectre of bankruptcy ever present, a combination of the common-law partnership and unlimited liability meant that many businesses preferred to be associated with their family and community-based connections rather than with outsiders". Colli, *History of Family Business*, p. 29.

¹²⁷ It is known that in the units which were in operation during the whole year and the brickmaking process was partially mechanised, the number of workers increased every summer, when the handmade department was in operation again, for 4–5 months. Interview with Frangiskos D. Verros (2012).

¹²⁸ We should bear in mind that Greek society was strongly androcentric at that time (Avdela, *Le genre entre classe et nation*, pp. 40). The male was the "head of the household" under Greek law until 1983. See Pepelasis Minoglou, "Women and Family Capitalism", p. 520.

¹²⁹ The systematic study of the deeds of several cases reveals that the brickyard site was formed, finally, after a number of consecutive acquisitions of adjoining plots over a period of

the successful, self-made entrepreneur¹³⁰ but also earned him the title of patriarch and patron. A specific personal management style, involving paternalism and a deep knowledge of the craft, made him a respected person in the eyes of the members of the vibrant brickmaking community in Athens, as well as of the community of workers.¹³¹ One of his aims was to pass on his knowledge and, of course, his company to his sons – his successors – in order to establish or continue a dynasty. Nevertheless, he would always remain the *patriarch* – the *founder* – the oldest in the hierarchy. Even if he, ostensibly, handed over the brickyard and the management to his successors, he always had the final say in any subsequent decision.¹³²

On the contrary, brickmakers' wives followed a different pathway. A few testimonies suggest that they and their daughters participated in the brickmaking process mostly in a subsidiary role.¹³³ A typical job for women, after the

several years. One of the most characteristic examples is that of the Fragos Verros brickworks in Athens; the brickworks' 6.5-hectare property was obtained by purchasing 23 properties between 1905 and 1933.

¹³⁰ For the term, see Yannitsiotis, *Η κοινωνική ιστορία*, p. 185; Drtilis, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Κράτους, 1830–1920* [History of the Greek state, 1830–1920], vol. 2, p. 625.

¹³¹ As many interviewees state for their ancestors. Interviews with Antonios Bakopoulos (2013), Georgios Lebesis (2014), Paraskevi Gonidaki (2013), Polyxeni Gouma (2014), Antzela Allesandri (2017), Georgios Papamakarios (2017), Frangiskos Martinos (2013), Eleni Panagiotopoulou (2014), Anna Anaplioti (2014), Dimitrios Tranoulis (2012), among others.

¹³² Interviews with Athanasia Frangoulaki (2017), Frangiskos Martinos (2013), among others. Nevertheless, the degree to which the father was involved in an “invisible” way in the management of the brickyard after he passed on the firm to his sons depended on their character, too. Of course, we should underline the supporting role of a well-known phenomenon, like the building of different houses for the members of a brickmaker's family in Athens; the nuclear households of different members of a family were all built close to one another, in the same part of the brickworks, too. Interviews with Frangiskos Martinos (2012), Georgios Tridimas (2015), Georgios Papamakarios (2016) and others. Evidently, we are dealing with a kind of *pseudo-nuclear* household, actually a type of a cluster “of households whose members bore the same surname”. As Hionidou writes, in a *multi-housed extended household*, the boundaries between each house were not clear and the parental involvement in their children's social and economic life was, in many cases, unavoidable. “Independence and Inter-dependence”, p. 229.

¹³³ This should be seen within a general framework of a low female presence (less than 10 or 20%) in the brickmaking industry in Athens, during the period under examination; something which is ascertained by all the old brickmakers that I interviewed. Two examples of brickmakers' wives with hands-on experience in brickmaking process are Maria Martinou, Frangiskos Martinos' wife, and Angeliki Martinou, Christos Martinos' wife. Interview with Frangiskos Martinos (2012).

introduction of the brickmaking machine, was the handling of the wire cutting device to cut the extruded clay into bricks.¹³⁴ Widows formed an exception as they very often had an active managerial role, if not hands-on involvement too. The capability of widows to continue their husbands' craft suggests they were already actively involved in the family business.¹³⁵

But as the family home was attached to the brickworks until the 1930s or 1940s and even after 1950,¹³⁶ it was easy for family members to get involved, beyond domestic work and childrearing (which was their realm), in supplementary activities in the unit, in what is called "invisible" work,¹³⁷ which included the raising of small livestock and poultry, preparing meals for the unit's paid laborers¹³⁸ and doing the laundry.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Interviews with Antonios Bakopoulos (2013) and many other brickmakers.

¹³⁵ As Beatrice Zucca Micheletto notes for another case. "Only Unpaid Labour Force? Women's and Girls' Work and Property in Family Business in Early Modern Italy", *The History of the Family* 19/3 (2014), p. 2, doi:10.1080/1081602X.2014.92.

¹³⁶ As happened in general in the case of artisans. See Pizanias, *Οι φτωχοί των πόλεων* [The city poor], p. 147. Examples of brickmakers whose home and brickmaking unit were built on the same plot are those of the Goumas Bros, in Tavros (interview with Markos Goumas (2014) and Polyxeni Gouma (2016)), Frangiskos and Christos Martinos on Iera Odos (interview with Frangiskos Martinos (2012)), Emmanouil Vassalos, in Tavros (interview with Petros Vassalos (2014)), Antonios Athanasakis, in Tavros (interview with Maria Athanasaki (2013)), Evangelos Kafetzopoulos, on Iera Odos (Ropaitou-Tsapareli, *Ο Ελαιώνας* [Elaionas], pp. 222–223), Tridimas Bros, on the former Kavalas St (interview with Georgios Tridimas (2015)), Frangiskos Verros, on the former Kavalas St (interview with Frangiskos Verros (2012)), Georgios Deglaris, on the former Kavalas St, Vouthoulas (interview with Paraskevi Gonidaki (2013)), Angelos Bouritis, on Ploutonos St, Aigaleo (interview with Konstantinos Bouritis (2018)), Panagos Panagiotopoulos, on the former Kavalas St (interview with Anna Anaplioti (2014)), Georgios Papamakarios, on the former Kavalas St (interview with Georgios Papamakarios (2016)), Georgios Fragkoulakis, Kerameikos (interview with Athanasia Frangoulaki (2017)), Georgios Vassalos, in Kaminia, Piraeus (interview with Manolis Vassalos (2014)) and many others.

¹³⁷ In general, as Avdela notes, "the blurring of boundaries between paid work and domesticity, workplace and family is repeatedly evoked". Efi Avdela, "Work, *Gender & History* in the 1990s and Beyond", *Gender & History* 11/3 (1999), p. 530.

¹³⁸ This was the role of the sister of Nikos, Georgios and Kostas Vassalos, brickmakers in Votanikos. Interview with Vassilios Leloudas (2016), who probably refers to the period just after World War II.

¹³⁹ As is stated for the case of pottery and clay-pipes works in Marousi, a suburb of Athens that time. Interview with Antonios Loutsis (2013).

Family members were often called on in emergency situations, such as to save fresh bricks when storms erupted in the middle of the night.¹⁴⁰ In all cases in Athens, it remains unclear whether the brickmaker's wife was paid for her contribution to the company. Financial remuneration seems rather impossible, but more research is necessary on the subject.¹⁴¹ Anyway, as brickmakers' wives did not work outside of the household, they could never claim the role of breadwinner.

Nevertheless, quite often, these women were addressed by the workers as "ma'am" or "lady" (*κυρά* or *κερά* in Greek) and were responsible for the orderly functioning of the units in the absence of their husbands. Furthermore, in many cases it is known that they were involved in commercial affairs.¹⁴² A number of interviewees recall them as strict, clever, powerful and respectable women, who could cope easily with both workers and clients.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ As Anna Anaplioti confirms for the case of Panagos Panagiotopoulos' brickyard. Interview with Anna Anaplioti (2014). It is known that "family firms were able to respond quickly to sudden changes in their environment and to neutralize potential shocks". Dritsas, "Family Firms", p. 93.

¹⁴¹ For a detailed description of a brickmaker's wife's involvement, visible or otherwise, that is quite similar to the situation in Athens, see Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism*, pp. 75–98.

¹⁴² Yannis Martinos states that Maria Filippaiou, wife of Michalis Trepas (a brickmaker in Elaionas–Aigaleo), was engaged in the commercial affairs of her husband's brickworks after 1945 – and possibly before 1940 – while he was involved in the production line. Interview with Yannis Martinos (2015).

¹⁴³ These are the cases of Angeliki Degleri, wife of Georgios Degleris (interview with Paraskevi Gonidaki (2013)), Angeliki Martinou, wife of Christos Martinos (interview with Frangiskos Martinos (2012)). Although they are many more relevant testimonies, there is no data regarding wives' involvement in the decision-making process, even when they had made a contribution to the development of the family firm with a dowry. On the contrary, "in contemporary developing countries, women's property and its social acknowledgement enhances women's agency, since it gives them influence over family economic decisions and over society, and finally contributes to the reduction of inequalities among sexes". See Zucca Micheletto, "Only Unpaid Labour Force?", p. 2. Obviously, more research should be done in this direction for the herein presented case, while it necessary to view the "hidden" managerial role of the brickmakers' wife in Athens in relation to the fact that in Greece a) despite the focus on patrilineal development, kinship is often bilateral (cognatic), and b) the remains of matriarchal standards of the past, concealed by the dominant patriarchy for so many centuries, can be found in Greek society. See Eleftherios Alexakis, "Περί της Βιτόρας ή του στοιχείου του σπιτιού: Η συμβολική συγκρότηση της οικογένειας και της συγγένειας στους Αρβανίτες της Αττικής" [Vitora or the spirit of the house: The symbolic construction

Child labour was extensively employed in the brickyards until the 1950s. Often, child labour was related to the system of seasonal work; a brickmaker's children participated in the brickmaking process during the production period¹⁴⁴ or, selectively, during holidays and school vacations, in order to help their fathers.¹⁴⁵ Sons (and daughters, too, in a few instances)¹⁴⁶ from the age of 10 or 12, were involved in a variety of duties, such as moving the bricks and tiles from the brick worker's bench and setting them to dry.¹⁴⁷ Skills were passed down from father to son; through a demanding apprenticeship they were actually prepared for the next levels of the hierarchy, like those of the adult worker, brick masters (for those who excelled) and ownership of the unit.¹⁴⁸ As in the case of brickmakers' wives, there is not enough evidence to state whether their children got paid for their services, though this was certainly the case for other children who worked in Athens brickyards.¹⁴⁹

of family and kinship among the Arvanites of Attica], *Ethnologia* 2 (1994), p. 141 and Panagis Lekatsas, *Η μητριαρχία και η σύγκρουση της με την ελληνική πατριαρχία* [Matriarchy and its conflict with Greek patriarchy], Athens: Kastaniotis, 1977.

¹⁴⁴ Between May and September, for the units that operated seasonally, or during the whole year, especially after 1920s and 1930s.

¹⁴⁵ Riginos, *Μορφές παιδικής εργασίας* [Aspects of child labour], p. 43.

¹⁴⁶ There are some examples of female child-labour in brickworks in Greece, especially in rural areas and before the 1920s, although sons were always considered as more "suitable" than girls for work outside the home and especially in an open space like a brickyard. Girls from the age of ten were among the staff in the brickyards of G. Levantis in Votanikos before 1920 (interview with Athanasia Frangoulaki (2017)), and in the same unit after 1920, when it was rented by members of the Bouritis family (interview with Konstantinos Bouritis (2018) and Maria Bouriti-Kokkinogeni (2018)). In both cases, the daughters of the brickmakers/owners could be found among these girls. Additionally, Maria Athanasaki recollects that when she was a small child, her father, brickmaker Antonios Athanasakis, gave her, from time to time, permission to work in the brickfield with the boys. Interview with Maria Athanasaki (2013).

¹⁴⁷ Interviews with Panagiotis Tranoulis (2001), Dimitrios Kokkinogenis (2001), Konstantinos Delavinias (2003), Frangiskos Martinos (2013), among others.

¹⁴⁸ In general for the apprenticeship system in Greece, see Christos G. Konstantinopoulos, *Η μαθητεία στις κομπανίες των χτιστών της Πελοποννήσου* [Apprenticeship in builder groups in the Peloponnese] Athens: Historical Archive of Greek Youth–General Secretariat for Youth, 1987, and Giorgos Papageorgiou, *Η μαθητεία στα επαγγέλματα (16ος–20ός αι.)* [Apprenticeship in the professions], Athens: Historical Archive of Greek Youth–General Secretariat for Youth, 1986.

¹⁴⁹ Yet Konstantinos Bouritis recalls that he received a weekly remuneration when he worked, at the age of 10, in the brickyard of his father, Angelos Bouritis, in Elaionas. Interview (2003 and 2018).



Fig. 1. Bouritis' brickworks, Orpheus Street, Elaionas, c. 1945–1950

Source: Personal archive of Konstantinos Bouritis.

The Supporting Factors

In studying the family business case, “it is important to take account of the country’s system of values, culture and ideology, all of which shape the institutional framework influencing the form – and consequently, the strength and weakness – of a family firm”.¹⁵⁰ Of course, the values and culture aspect, and its impact on production patterns, is not new and remains a pivotal parameter in many occupations.¹⁵¹ As regards our subject, having already discussed the prominent role of the family and the dimensions of family businesses in Greece, it is essential to make some comments regarding the supporting factors in familial brickworks.

Historians claim that the institution of the family business has its origins in the agrarian economy.¹⁵² In the Greek case with urbanisation, the model of small agrarian production, based on a small piece of land and its exploitation by a single family, was transferred to the cities with the creation of small workshop and

¹⁵⁰ Colli, *History of Family Business*, p. 75; Berg, Hudson and Sonenscher, “Manufacture in Town and Country”, pp. 83–90.

¹⁵¹ Berg, Hudson and Sonenscher, “Manufacture in Town and Country”, pp. 83–90.

¹⁵² Peter Laslett, “Le rôle des femmes dans l’histoire de la famille occidentale”, in *Le fait féminin*, ed. Evelyne Sullerot, Paris: Fayard, 1978, pp. 447–465; Martine Segalen, *Mari et femme dans la société paysanne*, Paris: Flammarion, 1980.

commercial units.¹⁵³ In most of them, as in the agrarian world, the cooperation of husband and wife ensured the wellbeing of the whole family.¹⁵⁴ In our case, the establishment of a small familial brickyard and the personal involvement of the owner in the enterprise, often to the point of taking part in the production line, could be seen as a leftover from the agrarian origin of brickmakers.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, in more than 50 percent from the family brickworks under study, the founders were either landowners (mostly the Athenians) or had once been peasants (primarily the case for brickmakers from Kythnos).¹⁵⁶ Additionally, the bigger the brickworks (and the higher its production), the bigger the proprietary land for clay extraction had to be.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the presence of familial brickyards encouraged, in a way, directly or indirectly, a) the land ownership system in Athens (in Elaionas, fields that had served agricultural purposes continued to be fragmented until 1900 or 1920), b) the gradual increase in land prices in Elaionas and Kaminia (as unbuilt space became scarce), and, especially, c) the land/workshop succession system (with the brickmaker bestowing his property on all his sons).

¹⁵³ Avdela, *Le genre entre classe et nation*, p. 49, where she argues also that it was mostly the cultural model of “family autonomy” prevailing in Greek rural society that led to the predominance of small properties in the countryside and in the city, and not only state policy (ibid., p. 38). Actually, the agrarian reforms of 1871 and 1917–1932 led to the consolidation of the small property. See Dritsas, “Family Firms”, p. 90, and Petmezas and Papataxiarchis, “Devolution of Property”, p. 233.

¹⁵⁴ Michalis Riginos, “Η ελληνική βιομηχανία 1900–1940” [Greek industry, 1900–1940], in *Εισαγωγή στην Νεοελληνική Οικονομική Ιστορία (18ος–20ός αιώνας)* [Introduction to modern Greek economic history, 18th–20th centuries], ed. Vassilis Kremmydas, Athens: Typothito, 1999, p. 204.

¹⁵⁵ It has been mentioned (for the brickmakers of Mexico) that “peasants and brickmakers are similar along three dimensions: the type of means of production needed to carry out their productive activities; the utilization of various types of labor force; and the internal class stratification”. Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism*, p. 63. This has been proved not only for Mexico and Wilson stresses Alexander Chayanov’s model of transition from peasantry to the world of rural artisans.

¹⁵⁶ This particular conclusion derives from the aforementioned inventory of Athenian brickmakers. Further research may reveal a greater percentage, as there is not enough data at present. It is quite indicative that pottery, brickmaking and farming were often successfully combined all over the word. For some case studies, see George Bourne, *William Smith, Potter and Farmer, 1790–1858*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1919, Hafedh Sethom, “Les artisans potiers de Moknine”, *Revue tunisienne de sciences sociales* 1/1 (1964), pp. 53–70.

¹⁵⁷ Until 1940 the majority of the units had their own clay pits, adjacent or close to the brickworks.

Furthermore, it should be underlined that the operation of the familial brickyard was underpinned by the acknowledged tendency of Greeks to work independently by creating their own businesses.¹⁵⁸ The Greeks' distrust of central authority, which "was forged over centuries of foreign occupation and by an inefficient state bureaucracy",¹⁵⁹ boosted the family business pattern. Research has highlighted "the refusal or inability of independent producers (whether male or female) to become industrial workers, seeking instead alternative solutions for survival, and working only *opportunistically* in industry".¹⁶⁰ This was combined with the "abnormal" or "defective" proletarianisation process.¹⁶¹ Additionally, the concept of self-respect in Greece was bound up with the idea that a man must regard himself as subordinate to no one.¹⁶²

Moreover, it was the brickmaking process itself that supported this tendency to engage in the small-unit model. For handmade production, the necessary capital to establish a brickyard, and especially to rent it, was very small;¹⁶³ no machinery was needed, and the appropriate piece of land (to buy or to be rented) did not need to be more than 0.1 or 0.2 hectares to provide a small family with a living.¹⁶⁴

Regarding labour organisation in the sector, during the period of handmade production (which lasted up to the 1940s and even 1950s), the importance of having the minimum number of people who could undertake the production of bricks and tiles is widely acknowledged.¹⁶⁵ A team of five to ten workers,¹⁶⁶ known in the international bibliography as *the gang* or *the table*¹⁶⁷ and in Greece as *the*

¹⁵⁸ It seems that the small family firm (as well as property) in Greece "became sacrosanct for the average Greek citizen. It represented an alternative to the much-coveted position in the civil service, and at the same time a refuge and defense mechanism against incursions by the state and dislocations of the market". See Dritsas, "Family Firms", p. 90.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁶⁰ Papastefanaki, "Labour in Economic and Social History", p. 68.

¹⁶¹ Riginos, "Παραγωγικές δομές και ενεργός πληθυσμός" [Productive structures and active population].

¹⁶² Kenna, "Idiom of Family", p. 348.

¹⁶³ As it has been stated for the brickmaking process worldwide. For example, see Goldthwaite, *Building of Renaissance Florence*, p. 1920.

¹⁶⁴ Interviews with Panagiotis Tranoulis (2001), Frangiskos Martinos (2003), among others.

¹⁶⁵ This also applied during the period of the partial mechanisation of production (1920–1940).

¹⁶⁶ The bigger the number, the larger the production at the same time.

¹⁶⁷ Watt, "Nineteenth-century Brickmaking", p. 31; Lucassen, "Brickmakers in Western Europe", p. 535.

bench,¹⁶⁸ was the *necessary cell* to undertake the production of the appropriate amount of product during one season (from May to September).¹⁶⁹ Each member of the team, which was ideally staffed by the members of just one family (nuclear or wider), undertook different roles.¹⁷⁰

Additionally, the endurance of family businesses in the brickmaking industry in Athens should not just be attributed to the aforementioned migratory pattern and the presence of a workforce from the island of Kythnos, but also to the formation of the brickmaking zones of Kaminia in Piraeus and Elaionas in Athens (Votanikos, Vouthoulas, Tavros and Aigaleo). The conglomeration of the units and clay pits, on the one hand, and a common residential net for both brickyard owners and workers, on the other, is more than obvious. Under these conditions, this strong network, with the aforementioned qualities, played a crucial, supporting role in the development of familial units to the full extent.¹⁷¹

Finally, it seems that despite the fact that even in the eighteenth century the state tried on several occasions to control brick and tile production and keep units far away from residential areas,¹⁷² after 1900 it followed a different policy; the brickmaking units in Elaionas and Kaminia were tolerated by

¹⁶⁸ Interviews with Panagiotis Tranoulis (2001), Manolis Vassalos (2014), Georgios Filippas (2014), Yannis Martinos (2014), among others.

¹⁶⁹ In the big brickyards of the era, the bigger the size of production, the higher the number of cells; Stinis recollects that in the Tassos Martinos and Frangiskos Verros brickworks, two of the biggest units in Athens, there were up to nine brickmakers' benches in action during the summer. Interview with Georgios Stinis (2017). On the other hand, in units where the production line was partially mechanised after 1920, the necessary and absolutely vital group of workers comprised 10–20 people or even more, depending on the daily production and machinery in use.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Frangiskos Martinos (2012).

¹⁷¹ The presence of this strong ethno-kinship network of labour is probably responsible for the absence of an institution, well known in many countries – that of labour mediation between brickyard owners and brick workers. On this subject, see Piet Lourens and Jan Lucassen, "Labour Mediation Among Seasonal Workers, in Particular the Lippe Brick Makers, 1650–1900", in *The History of Labour Intermediation: Institutions and Finding Employment in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Sigrid Wadauer, Thomas Buchner and Alexander Mejsstrik, New York: Berghahn, 2015, pp. 335–367. It is obvious that it was no need for a labour mediator in our case, given the immediate relations between employer and employee, through a system of an "invisible"/unpaid mediation, implemented by relatives and compatriots.

¹⁷² Agriantoni, *Οι απαρχές της εκβιομηχάνισης* [The beginnings of industrialisation], pp. 110–111.

the authorities, who turned a blind eye to the problem.¹⁷³ Kaminia, until the 1950s,¹⁷⁴ and Elaionas, until the 1970s, remained the city's brickmaking zones, even though they had been surrounded by residential neighbourhoods.¹⁷⁵ Many brickyards, and especially the small familial firms, operated without any control. The state was unable to count the exact number of workers in each unit, to monitor the actual size of annual production, and even to document their existence in some cases,¹⁷⁶ making it impossible to collect health insurance contributions and the appropriate taxes.¹⁷⁷ As a result, these areas became an extended informal economy zone and the ideal place to maximise brickmakers' profit.

The Limitations of the Family Brickmaking Sector: Reproduction of a Model and its Transformation

It is important to comment on the factors which led, in many instances, to the interruption of the enlargement process and the very existence of a family brickyard. Even if different duties had been allocated to the successors of a company (such as production, technical maintenance, supervision, finance, commerce and transport of output),¹⁷⁸ the enlarged family brickworks, in terms of the total number of involved family members, was no longer a viable system in

¹⁷³ "Η βιομηχανική ζώνη" [The industrial zone], *Βιομηχανική επιθεώρησης* 48 (June 1938), pp. 223–224.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Manolis Vassalos (2014).

¹⁷⁵ It should be mentioned that around the brickwork zones, an industrial-housing zone had developed, where the majority of brick workers found accommodation. Interviews with Yannis Martinos (2015), Frangiskos Martinos (2012), Georgios Gonidakis (2014), and many others.

¹⁷⁶ From time to time, pressure was put on the brickmakers to operate only the authorised ones. An example is Bakopoulos brickworks, which received a permit for one year until it conformed to the appropriate requirements. Personal archive of Antonios Bakopoulos, File 251, Ministry of Railways and Automobiles, Authorisation, no. 81110, 16 December 1939.

¹⁷⁷ Interviews with Antonios Bakopoulos (2013) and Tina Padadopoulou (2014). The same is stated for 1945: NBGHA, A1S10S112F73, NBG report, 13 July 1945.

¹⁷⁸ Georgios Tridimas claims that at the brickworks, owned by his father and his two brothers, Dimitrios Tridimas was involved in the technical matters of the enterprise, Panagiotis Tridimas, more in management, and Vassilis Tridimas in commercial affairs. Interview with Georgios Tridimas (2015). The situation was similar at the F. Verros and Lebesis brickworks. Interviews with Frangiskos D. Verros (2012), Antonios. Bakopoulos (2013) and Georgios Lebesis (2014).

all cases.¹⁷⁹ That they were often shared properties was one disadvantage. Family members could either create their own brickmaking units, based on the same familial-labour intensive model,¹⁸⁰ thus following a reproduction model, more or less successfully (such as in the case of the Lebesis family, outlined below), or they could turn to other professions connected to brickmaking (the sale of building materials,¹⁸¹ lime and cement production, etc.).¹⁸² As some brickmakers had the opportunity to establish “independent enterprises, [...] inheritance became less important, and dependence on the fathers’ goodwill for economic survival was eroded”.¹⁸³

The family tree of the Lebesis family, one of the most important brickmaker families in Athens,¹⁸⁴ is shown in Table 4.¹⁸⁵ The different units created by or passed down to different members of the family are indicated.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁹ The mechanism of leaving the family brickyard to create a new one is internationally known. The case of McGladery family is an example from Northern Ireland. Desmond Sloane, “Brickmaking in Northern Ireland”, *British Brick Society Information* 65 (May 1995), p. 14. Regarding Athens, among many other examples, we should refer to a) Antonios Athanasakis, who created his own brickworks after leaving the one which he had with his brother Spyros (interview with Maria Athanasaki (2013)) and b) Georgios Martinos, one of the four sons of Frangiskos Martinos, who left the family business to create his own (interview with Frangiskos Martinos (2012)).

¹⁸⁰ Splitting a unit was, in most cases, difficult, and the redemption of a share even more problematic. So, abandoning a family firm usually involved a personal cost – the giving up of property claims, including to the brickworks and plots used as clay pits. Interview with Georgios Papamakarios (2016). The phenomenon is mentioned in other cases of production in Nitsiakos, *Παραδοσιακές κοινωνικές δομές*, p. 95.

¹⁸¹ As Emmanouil Martinos, son of Frangiskos Martinos, did. Interview with Frangiskos Martinos (2012).

¹⁸² Mimis Degleris, the youngest son of the Degleris family, was originally involved with the company trucks and the transportation of output to building sites. After 1950, he owned a series of taxicabs. Interview with Paraskevi Gonidaki (2013).

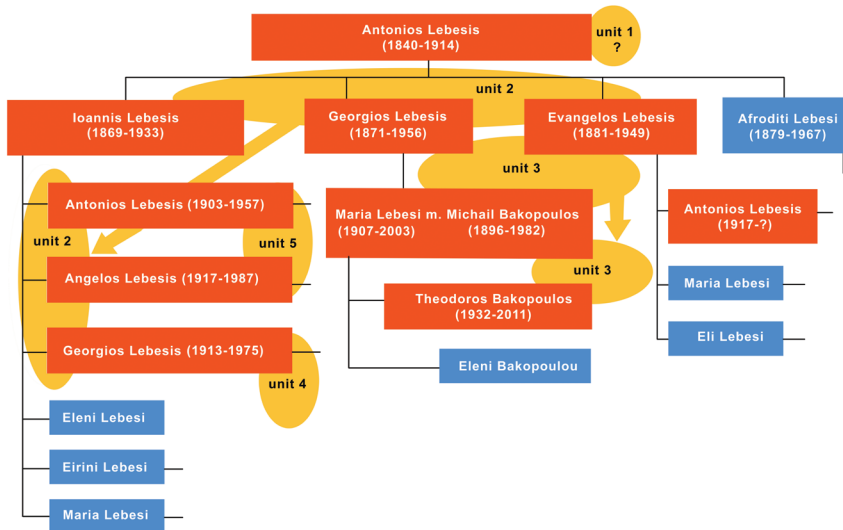
¹⁸³ As has been observed in the Mexican case. Wilson, *Subsidizing Capitalism*, pp. 101–102.

¹⁸⁴ Family members, including brickmakers, also got involved in other occupations, such as landowning, agriculture and cattle farming.

¹⁸⁵ The names of the brickmakers’ wives are mentioned, except for Maria Lebesi, the only child of Georgios Lebesis. Her husband and son got involved in the unit of her father and uncle, Georgios and Evangelos Lebesis, respectively. Moreover, it seems that Afroditi Lebesi’s husband and family had no involvement in the brickmaking sector. Finally, it is not clear how Antonios Lebesis, Evangelos’ son, was involved in the firm.

¹⁸⁶ It is not clear if the three children of Antonios Lebesis (the family genitor and patriarch), Ioannis, Georgios and Evangelos, had the same brickyard with their father (so, unit 1 is the same as unit 2), or whether they created another genitor (in that case, unit 1 and 2 would be different).

Table 4
The Lebesis family: four generations of brickmakers



Source: Interviews with Antonios Bakopoulos and Georgios Lebesis.

Moreover, changes in the family-controlled firm should be attributed to the upward social mobility of brickmakers. Increasingly after 1920, female family members stayed away from the kilns and clay pits. Their withdrawal from the workplace was associated with wealth accumulation, the growth of the business and, of course, a sense of dignity.¹⁸⁷ Their role in the unit came to an end by moving to a new home, away from the brickyard and the industrial zone, to a more upmarket area in the city grid, where they adopted habits that were compatible with the middle class.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ The particular attitude in the Greek family is discussed in a number of papers and publications, such as Eleni Varikas, *Η εξέγερση των κυριών* [The rebellion of women], p. 40; Evrydiki Sifneos, "Rentiers, Teachers and Workers: Greek Women in Late Nineteenth-century Odessa", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 34/2 (2010), pp. 182–200.

¹⁸⁸ Regarding place of residence, between 1900 and 1960 members of the Lebesis family followed a trajectory from the brickyards (at Vouthoulas) in 1900, to Metaxourgeio in 1920–30, and from there to Mavromataion St, Mouseion, after 1950 and Kolonaki, Kifissia and other areas during 1950s and 60s. Interviews with Antonios Bakopoulos (2013) and Georgios Lebesis (2014). The same pattern can be traced for the members of many other families, such as the Verros, Goumas, Papamakarios. Interviews with Frangiskos D. Verros (2012), Polyxeni Gouma (2016), Georgios Papamakarios (2016), among others. For the phenomenon in Greek society at

After 1950, the massive introduction of machinery (and the demise of the brickmakers bench), the ending of child labour,¹⁸⁹ the notable rise in output, as well as the upward social mobility of brickmakers, led to some structural changes in the family businesses, such as enlargement of the units and, consequently, the reduction in their number (many small and medium-scale units stopped operations). From that point, family members gradually withdrew from the production line and dedicated themselves to the management of units. The brickyards remained under family control, but the physical presence of its members on site and the hands-on participation in the production line decreased.

Conclusions

Before concluding, it is useful to briefly recount the impact of the dominance of the family-business pattern in the brickmaking industry.

The constitution of a strong network of labour-intensive familial brickworks of every size supported the role of the patriarch and personal management rather than the institutionalisation of managerial hierarchies in family-controlled enterprises. Consequently, the persistence of a number of pre-capitalistic patterns of production (such as child labour, handmade production) and the retarded advent of machine and modern systems of production may be noted.

Additionally, a number of pull factors (strongly related to the paternalistic management system and the relatively high pay levels)¹⁹⁰ engendered the

that time, see Potamianos, *Οι νοικοκυραίοι* [The noikokyraioi (wealthy middlebrow men)], p. 112; Eleni Varikas, *Η εξέγερση των κυριών* [The rebellion of women], p. 40; Varikas, “Αόρατη Εργασία και επιδεικτική κατανάλωση: Δίχως ρολόι ούτε μισθό. Εικόνες και πραγματικότητα των γυναικών των μεσαίων στρωμάτων στην Αθήνα (1833–1870)” [Invisible labour and conspicuous consumption: without neither watch, nor salary; images and reality of middle-class women in Athens, 1833–1870], in Varon-Vassard, *Νεοελληνική πόλη* [Modern Greek city], pp. 155–166; Riginos, “Η ελληνική βιομηχανία” [Greek industry], pp. 183–184.

¹⁸⁹ Yannis Martinos mentions, as many other informants do, that the end of the *bench* (handmade production of bricks and tiles) led to the elimination of child labour. Interview (2017). It is of vital importance to underline that the particular role of child labour in brickworks was linked, mainly, to the artisanal/handmade way of production. The development of elaborate industrial technology and heavy industry gradually made child labour obsolete. The era of childhood protection had also started in Greece. More and more brickmakers, especially those who had succeeded in accumulating wealth, choosing the alternative route of education for their children. In any case, both “education and wealth” were considered “largely synonymous in modern Greece”. See Sant Cassia and Bada, *Making of the Modern Greek Family*, p. 9.

¹⁹⁰ The high wages in the Athens brickmaking sector during the period under study is mentioned by a number of old brick workers in their interviews. They claim that this could be achieved by their own exploitation (by working overtime); regarding the final day wage,

“attachment” of the workforce to the family brickyards and, as a consequence, hindered the proletarianisation process.¹⁹¹

Within this anti-industrial framework, the few big industrial units of the time came under notable pressure.¹⁹² Their survival up to the 1950s, sometimes even later,¹⁹³ should be attributed to competition with other family brickworks, a point that had been stressed here.¹⁹⁴ The spread of so-called managerial capitalism, an unpopular institution in Greece,¹⁹⁵ had to wait a few more decades¹⁹⁶ and in many cases still does.

In conclusion, it is more than obvious that in the case of the brick and tile industry not only did familial patterns dominate numerically but they also served as a catalyst for the endurance of the sector. The family remained a productive, successful and powerful cell. That kind of unit formed a strong group of entrepreneurs, which, through their trust-based collaboration, controlled the market. They did not fight using innovation, novelty, modernity and entrepreneurial risk; rather, they invested more in the well-tested methods of the past, in smaller and more modest schemes of production and in a deep knowledge of the market. Family brickyards, despite their conservative form, proved to be agents of a successful slow development. The intergenerational transition from artisanal brickmaking to the modern production of bricks and tiles (a process that took over 50 years or so) was accomplished through a well-planned transformation that was not at all incidental. Brickmakers’ families and their brickworks were undoubtedly the medium for that. Step by step, every new generation, without risking what the previous one had achieved, proceeded to

it seems that brickmaking was a well-paid job, especially for skilled workers. In general, it has been claimed that labour costs in the early twentieth century remained high in Greece, “in spite of the dense inflow of refugees, who were not employed in industry”. Papastefanaki, “Labour in Economic and Social History”, p. 61. For the matter of daily wages based on a piece-rate system, see Papastefanaki, *Εργασία, τεχνολογία και φύλο* [Labour, technology and gender], pp. 360–364, 256–257 passim.

¹⁹¹ Among others, see Fountanopoulos, “Μισθωτή εργασία” [Paid labour], pp. 86–119.

¹⁹² For example, see NBGHA, A1S40S9F248, Cyclop–G. Ventouris SA, board of directors report, 1927, p. 5.

¹⁹³ The only exception was Dilaveris, which survived long after 1950 and was also the only personal/familial unit among the others of that size in Athens.

¹⁹⁴ The big industrial units, apart from their structural problems, had to deal with complications directly related to the group of their smaller competitors, such as keeping down the prices of products and finding the appropriate workforce.

¹⁹⁵ Pepelasis Minoglou, “Επιχειρηματικότητα” [Entrepreneurship], p. 486.

¹⁹⁶ Brickworks in Athens passed from the craft sector to a pure industry only after the 1960s, something which comprises a notable delay.

the next level of development. They were grateful to their ancestors, had a sense of duty to the next generation and had faith in tradition. Their choices did not lead to booming enrichment and quick, upward social mobility (even though that did sometimes happen), but minimised risk, ensured the stepwise growth of the firm and fulfilled the successful passage of it to the next generation.

University of Ioannina

