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**Electronic version**

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/acrh/9966>

DOI: 10.4000/acrh.9966

ISSN: 1760-7914

**Publisher**

Centre de recherches historiques - EHESS

**Electronic reference**

Maria Christina Chatziioannou, « Contextualizing twentieth century business life histories: The cases of Papastratos and Katsambas », *L'Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques* [Online], 21 | 2019, Online since 11 July 2019, connection on 06 January 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/acrh/9966> ; DOI : 10.4000/acrh.9966

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# Contextualizing twentieth century business life histories: The cases of Papastratos and Katsambas

Maria Christina Chatziioannou

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- 1 In this paper I intend to contextualize the case of two major Greek industrialists, who both published their personal memoirs in the 1960s. Both invested in the Greek national economy and differentiated themselves from the “interlopers” of Greek wealth, such as the global maritime tycoons Onassis and Niarchos. In the mid-1960s they shared with the Greek public their personal thoughts on the “indigenous” self-made businessman; Evangelos Papastratos (1884-1973) with *Work and Its Toil*, and Christoforos Katsambas (1893-1984) with *Putting faith in the Future*. These rare examples of Greek business life-writings can be analyzed in the context of relevant texts on American businessmen, known as *rags to riches* examples. In the 20th century, the model of the self-made American entrepreneur originating from the land of unbounded opportunities created an influential political and economic model around the world. In the 1960s, when Americanism and anti-Americanism was developing in Greece, new cultural and consumption habits were introduced into Greek life in the frame of the expanding American business world.<sup>1</sup> It leads us to assume that the two case studies were an unfinished step towards writing businessmen biographies in Greece.
- 2 The American model of the self-made man goes as far as Benjamin Franklin in the eighteenth century and it is interesting to discover similarities and discrepancies with other national examples.<sup>2</sup> Autobiographies as part of life-writing have been considered to be a major source for biography, as well as forms of biography within themselves. Economic and business history has challenged the way businessmen wrote about their lives as ‘pioneers’, or ‘creators’. Businessmen’s lives as individuals or as groups have illuminated economic success in national and international context and have given food for thought about their perception in wider audiences. Yet the intention of a businessman’s biography to teach by example is closely related to other biographical

examples. Quite often a biography is a laudatory text and the lives of various businessmen make no exception to that.

- 3 If we acknowledge that Biography is a form of historical writing, then the value of understanding a particular life in its social context is precisely this; it examines the process of historical change through an individual, who, similarly to others, copes simultaneously with complex forces both public and private. The challenging question for biography is not whether the subject is role model whatever this may mean, but rather what we might learn from a study of a specific life.<sup>3</sup> The innovative biography of the self-made Austrian-American economist and political scientist Joseph Alois Schumpeter (1883-1950) sheds new light on one of the most influential economists of the twentieth century. The author uses character and performance analysis in interpreting Schumpeter's diaries and other personal writings in order to thoroughly reevaluate his work and life.<sup>4</sup>
- 4 Scholars sometime argue that biography is a misleading way of writing about the past.<sup>5</sup> The biographical approach has many similarities with the case study approach, therefore both have been charged of having a narrow format of representation. To set one great life center stage can be read as promoting a particular political agenda or consolidating a hierarchical, anti-egalitarian social structure. Biography always reflects and provides a version of social politics even if there is a nationalist agenda behind the collective. The popularity of certain biographies in different countries, periods and cultures, biographies of saints, naval heroes, religious and political leaders, athletes, rock stars, businessmen provide insights into that society; the values, the visible and invisible men and women.<sup>6</sup>
- 5 European historiography on Biography has examined the diverse forms of personal writing that characterize western cultures, qualified as "cultures of confession" which include oral testimonies, blogs, personal web pages, television programs. All these impose a new taxonomy from the pioneering work of Philippe Lejeune *L'autobiographie en France*<sup>7</sup> and *Le pacte autobiographique*<sup>8</sup> to new forms de *thématisation de soi*.<sup>9</sup> Three Mediterranean countries offer the national background necessary, comparing elements from the cultural life of Spain, France and Italy, and highlighting the contradictions that the craft of biography carries out; an ambiguous category included neither in history nor in narrative. Biography by choice gives value to one person by compiling different non-homogenous sources.<sup>10</sup> The methodological approach to various subjects using biography has a long history, and here we only argue about some of the late discussions on the so-called "biographical turn".<sup>11</sup>
- 6 Biography as a means of identification, study and interpretation of the modern bourgeois world, has renewed the study of the businessman as a constituent member of the civil society in the industrial era.<sup>12</sup> Peter Gay in his work highlights the biography or modular biographies as a tool for the identification and study of the bourgeois world. An important point in his methodological proposal is the analysis and integration of a set of experiences and virtues of the bourgeois world with the goal of understanding a large group beyond state borders, classified as "Victorian bourgeoisie", in which he examines characteristics such as sexuality, aggression, taste and sentiments. Gay examines the Victorian view of human nature, of self-control and the importance of the agent. The emergence of self-control (self-management) in Man is manifested by channeling inner anger towards the pursuit of achievement and

power. These views emerged in the nineteenth century and are interpreted by Gay as matching Christian values with a gendered social Darwinism.<sup>13</sup>

- 7 It is almost impossible to draw conclusions from such diverse manifestations of history on (auto)biographies, but a useful background for our discussion can be formed by assessing a number of more generalized conclusions: the first concerns biography as a process of self-definition by bringing private affairs into the public sphere; and the second involves the didactic potential of biography going back to Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, commonly called *Parallel Lives* or simply *Plutarch's Lives*, a series of biographies of famous men, arranged to illuminate their common moral virtues or failings. *Parallel Lives* examine a series of exemplary lives in pairs aiming at comparing Greek and Roman culture.<sup>14</sup> From Plutarch to Francesco Petrarca (*De viris illustribus*, fourteenth century) and to Giorgio Vasari (*Vite de' piu eccellenti pittori scultori architetti*, 1550-1568) the problem of the separation of History from Life is rarely the case in any biography. The compilation, however, of a life story may become a collection of biographies belonging to the same period, to the same profession, and grouped together in order to be compared, have a genealogy created and become a didactic example.
- 8 The ability of biography to teach by example was reaffirmed on various occasions. Such is the case of a series of biographies of American businessmen prepared by the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* in the middle of nineteenth century. Interestingly, this was justified in a later American account:

We have lives of the Poets and the Painters; lives of Heroes, Philosophers, and Statesmen; lives of Chief-Justices and Chancellors [...] Yet no one has hitherto written the Lives of the Merchants. There are a few biographies of individuals, such as the life of Gresham; but there is no collection of such lives which, to the merchant and the merchant's clerk, would convey lessons and present appropriate examples for the conduct of his business life, the "Plutarch's Lives" of Trade; while for the historical student the lives of the Merchants of the world, and the history of the enterprises of trade, if thoroughly investigated, would throw much light upon the pages of history.<sup>15</sup>
- 9 The biographical narrative of the economic activity of businessmen has a distinct role in the construction of national historiographies in Europe and North America, and it is largely identified by the public reception of such persons.
- 10 In Greece, correspondingly, the didactic example was established in the nineteenth century with the work of Anastasios Goudas titled *Parallel Lives*.<sup>16</sup> A series of attributes can be ascribed to his biographies: a laudatory view based mainly on family and local origin, "Hellenophilia", the uniqueness of personality, selective relationships with politicians, and, certainly, a successful economic activity accompanied by a rich social and charitable work. The ambitious Greek doctor compiled a corpus of exemplary lives of illustrious Greek men in several volumes, one of which was dedicated to merchants and bankers. The main didactic theme here is deprivation and thrift accompanied by the ethics of patriotism and a commitment to personal benefactions. There is no economic activity per se, but rather a private life committed to offering, donation, and bequeathal to the Greek nation. Goudas also published one volume with various opinions about his work, written by his contemporaries, who exemplified the didactic aspect of his work: « Par le temps où nous vivons, cet ouvrage ne manquera pas d'avoir une influence salutaire sur notre jeune génération ».<sup>17</sup>

- 11 Individual and collective biographies, as well as biographical sketches have been used as techniques to study and analyze the bourgeois world using cultural, psychological and other non-economic factors. Individual entrepreneurial paths and career patterns in Greek diaspora and the Greek state offer a vast ground to investigate the presence or absence of the biographical turn in Greek historiography. The typology of the businessman in a national and international context through a comparative and transnational prism, and its contribution to the configuration of markets in the Mediterranean can be analyzed through the identification of agency as an active intermediary of collective processes and the emergence of lived experience as a decisive parameter in our understanding of history. An interesting question to pose is why the biography of the businessman, with thriving Greek examples, such as maritime magnates, stumbles between oblivion and laudatory approaches or success stories. The didactic appeal of these works is under dispute. Diverse Greek historiographical trends in the twentieth century consistent with Marxist interpretations of social history have somewhat downplayed the role of the businessman and his biography, and have condemned merchants as the “comprador bourgeoisie” emphasizing the key role of structures in social and economic history.<sup>18</sup>
- 12 Furthermore, the failure of thorough interpretation of personal business activity by purely economic factors has highlighted the role and importance of sentiments and personal characteristics. The tone was shifted to non-economic factors that determine the effectiveness of economic behavior as well as the evaluation not only of economic motives, but other conditions also that make economic activity possible.<sup>19</sup>
- 13 The biography of the businessman, the person who stars in the conception, organization, operation and expansion of business can be ascribed to the general category of Biography. Not only independent biographies, but also biographical dictionaries and obituaries briefly narrate the life and work of the businessman. Most biographical dictionaries follow the nineteenth-century tradition that emphasizes the evolution of the *nation-state and the role of individuals in it. Thus, these dictionaries and their selection of content give an image of national and social reception in each country and in different historical periods.*<sup>20</sup>
- 14 The biography of the Swedish banker and industrialist Marcus Wallenberg (1899-1982) is an interesting historiographical example.<sup>21</sup> Here, the absence of personal writings is rather narrowly interpreted:
- There is little material available of a biographical nature about Marcus Wallenberg, in the sense that there exist almost no sources recording his thoughts on personal matters. He was not given to introspection and did not leave after him any notes, or other reflections, on his life. Every time he expressed a personal opinion, it was addressed to a particular person, or was for a specific reason.<sup>22</sup>
- 15 This biography was compiled by an eminent Swedish economic historian who exemplified the general economic history of Sweden and the rest of the World mainly from the interwar period to the 1970s through the economic activity of a national *homo economicus*. It is apparent that the author of the biography takes a conscious distance from other types of “literary” biography.
- 16 Economic and Business History studies have frequently emphasized the role of structures in the economy. At the same time, they have often examined the life and deeds of businessmen without employing the tools of Economic Sociology or biography-writing. One trend within this field of studies is to reassess these methodological issues

by addressing and exploring relevant key themes, such as the typology of businessmen in a national and international context from a comparative angle, and their contribution to the configuration of the markets. Through the identification of agency as the active intermediary of collective processes and the emergence of lived experience as a decisive parameter in our understanding of history, several studies have sought to “humanize” Economic and Business History.<sup>23</sup>

- 17 Both academic disciplines have confronted the issue of character and performance analysis in theoretical and empirical studies, including studies concerning biographical portraits of businessmen. For example, the founders of the Harvard-based *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* (Norman S. B. Gras and Henrietta Larson) since 1927 dedicated themselves to collecting and preserving the personal data of businessmen. Now biography in the area of Economic and Business History is often related to the recent historiographical turn from structures to agents. Biography-writing as a means of identifying, studying and interpreting the urban and bourgeois world has reinstated the businessman as a constituent member of civil society in modern times. The quest for an integral interpretation of economic activities and the failure of explaining them by purely economic factors has highlighted the importance of culture and personal characteristics in identifying agency. The focus has shifted to non-economic factors that determine the effectiveness of economic behavior as well as to the reassessment of the economic environment that make economic activities possible. Quite often there is a generally accepted rule in the biography of the businessman that he formed a unique economic behavior which is gender defined (male) and constitutes an exemplary standard.<sup>24</sup> The biographical identity of the businessmen emphasizes that they are persons who are innovative, take risks, grasp opportunities and make decisions at the highest level, so as to study the different levels of entrepreneurship and the typology of the businessman. The biographical account of their business activity and its classification has often been a separate, each time, construction of national historiography that also defined social acceptance.
- 18 The History of entrepreneurship that begins from the study of the business as a unit, from the entrepreneurial branches of national economy, the analysis of the relations between private company and the state and politics often aimed at educating corporate staff, shaping theoretical models and constructing exemplary social and cultural role models. The usual topics of this discussion usually concern family, company, markets and state, as well as technology.
- 19 Taking the United States as the cradle of the self-made businessman, we notice that most studies on US businessmen and business elites were published between 1945 and 1958.<sup>25</sup> The standard agenda on the biography of the businessman comprises: private life, business career, entrepreneurship, public image, the examination of two main issues concerning wealth (how much) and background (earned vs inherited fortune). An enriched agenda on the biography of the businessman opens up to gender issues (masculinity), regional studies, social mobility, social prejudices, ethnic and religious characteristics, as well as the iconic figure of the businessman.
- 20 Another widespread trend is the laudatory narration of the life of various self-made tycoons transformed into mythical figures. These examples were and are quite common in European and American literature; they are the *rags-to-riches* well-known success stories about Rockefeller, Carnegie, Ford, Morgan or Onassis. The common thread for writing biographies of public legends of business life is the commemorative spirit of

Victorian biography. A common feature in these cases is the authenticity of narrative details that lead to a truthful representation of life. The most common goal of such biographies is to bring out the feelings of admiration the biographers hold and to highlight their desire to follow these success stories. In a similar pattern, Henry W. Sage (1814-1897) was another successful businessman who traded lumber and invested in railroad and industrial securities; a self-made businessman who rose from humble but respectable origins to earn a position of wealth and power. His life was described as a man of determination and intelligence, who took advantage of the opportunities inherent in an open society with rich resources.<sup>26</sup>

- 21 In the United States, since the nineteenth century, the most tenacious and popular hero is not some type of Robin Hood or Davy Crockett, but the self-made man, the man who rose from rags to riches, becoming a person of wealth and substance. His rise came about not from a whim of fate or luck; it was always the result of the cultivation of virtues conducive to material prosperity: toil, meticulousness, saving, and sobriety, with an unyielding fear of luxury and extravagance. Hard work and religious faith offered the tools to construct one's fortune. In a book published in 1954, Irvin Wyllie traced the development of the gospel of material success from colonial days down to the Great Crash of 1929. He argued that the notion of the self-made man was a way to inspire hope and faith in the economic system, but that as a method of ensuring the individual's chances of acquiring material wealth, it was more of a myth than reality. Many Americans believed in this idea, and thousands of ill-paid clerks stuck to their desks throughout the nineteenth century, waiting for the reward that for the most never came. In the 1950s a number of US academics put forward a serious critique of this self-help ideology of nineteenth-century American literature on the self-made man myth.<sup>27</sup> Other views have also been expressed on the unjustifiably critical image of the businessman in American literature, a critique mainly conditioned by protestant ethics.<sup>28</sup> It is Pamela Walker Laird who re-examined narratives of self-made men in America. She analyzed the American self-made men down from Benjamin Franklin, "the patron saint of the self-made men", and proposed another analysis through "role models, mentors, networks", an examination based on different forms of life writings as well.<sup>29</sup>
- 22 Journals, memoirs, testimonies and self-portraits are often recognized as different forms of autobiography. They comprise a plurivalent source of research and debate, and a corpus for raising several questions about the construction of self and its skills, the nature of the subject, the nature of language, the relationships between the reader and the writer, and their relationship with time. Compared to the genre of life-writing, autobiography has attracted much more interest. Studies on Victorian autobiography have shown the way specific groups consolidated their power in the public sphere, providing at the same time valuable insights for the study of hidden lives and, in a general way, demonstrating how agents negotiate their ideas. In addition to its social and cultural function, Victorian autobiography raised the question of whether Victorian life-writing tended to group autobiography and biography together, since many works of nineteenth-century (auto) biographies were hybrid.<sup>30</sup> In any case, it can be argued that every autobiography is an act of re-creation, the life details selectively arranged to represent an integrated, essential *self*, stripped of the disparate and sometimes conflicting particular details.
- 23 The created character in both cases represents values recognized by the reading public at large. A consideration of several American autobiographers as cultural types can



provide new ways of viewing this special genre in our literature. It also suggests that autobiography in general is, according to the German philosopher Georg Misch (1878-1965), “not only a special kind of literature but also an instrument of knowledge”. By regarding the creation of the autobiographical character in America as a cultural act, one observes that one of the ways in which Americans shaped their views of themselves was by attending closely to the dominant patterns of their culture. When a person writes his autobiography he translates a unique view of himself into the language of his culture, subjecting some part of his private self to public evaluation. In doing so, he creates a fictive character that undergoes adventures drawn from the author’s memory, and a narrative persona that reports these experiences and evaluates them according to their place in a cultural pattern transformed into “the American myth”.<sup>31</sup> As for the meaning of “the American myth” it is almost impossible to talk about the myth of any culture, since cultural values will undergo continual change as long as individuals have experiences and translate them into social belief. Even when communal assumptions take the form of a concrete story, that tale must remain sufficiently flexible and suggestive to allow for repeated interpretation. When it can no longer be reinterpreted to depict contemporary belief and explain present problems it must fall into disuse and be of interest only to the antiquarian.

- 24 We have seen that autobiographical form is inextricably bound with cultural belief, that civilization prescribes fairly specific roles for its citizens to adopt when portraying themselves in writing. In the Western civilization, these roles share a common quality: they all express an integrated, continuing personality which transcends the limitations and irregularities of time and space and unites all of one’s apparently contradictory experiences into an identifiable whole. This notion of individual identity, in fact, may well be the central belief of our culture. With all its ramifications—personal responsibility, individual destiny, dissent, vocation and so forth, it forms the core of our being and the fabric of our history. A new interest about the life-writing genre seems to have been provoked partly by an interest in the questions of self and subjectivity, partly by the new concern for alternative forms of historiography, as, for example, race and gender, which have turned autobiography into a strong form of subaltern protest, self-assertion and identity-formation;<sup>32</sup> in other words, a convergence of literary, philosophical and psychological interests in the study of autobiography. There are countries and historical periods by which autobiography has been granted a special authority, from the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (first published in French in Paris in 1791) to the various autobiographies from the civil wars of Spain (1936-1939) and Greece (1946-1949).
- 25 Autobiography holds a position of priority –many would say pre-eminence– among the narrative traditions concerning the stage actors of the Greek War of Independence in 1821 and the “self-justification” testimonies of the Greek Resistance and civil war of 1941-1949. Parallel to these two life-writing sources there is another group of stage actors, the Greek businessmen. This desire of the modern businessman auto-biographer to liberate the voice of the self by inscribing it into the community is a twentieth-century phenomenon in Greek historiography, since the most well-known nineteenth-century example is A. Syngros, *Memoirs*, published post mortem in 1908. Andreas Syngros (1830-1899), from the island of Chios, was the epitome of the successful businessman in the Levant. He told his own story of a successful self-made man throwing an intriguing light on the business culture of the author and his time. His *Memoirs* can be interpreted as the written evidence of the authority and business



example of a businessman coming from Constantinople with the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. He introduced new business ethics and practices in a new political and social environment, the Greek state.<sup>33</sup> This “autobiography” gives a description of selected facts and events concentrated around the author’s everyday life stressing some of them which seem to him more important, a logical construction, rationalized and composed as a rational entity. Hence the life of the author is presented as a chain of facts or events in a process more or less logically organized.

- 26 At this point, many questions may be raised: can there be a theory applicable to the variety of autobiographies and self-portraits in Greece, in France, in America, or elsewhere based on the indigenous cultural concepts of self-knowledge and language? How can we bring together national history and individual history? Or is it gender, race, class, sexual preferences that define and qualify the form and content of autobiography? And what about transnational approaches from immigrants’ experiences?
- 27 In order to contextualize the life-writings of Evangelos Papastratos<sup>34</sup> and Christoforos Katsambas, I will address two key questions: Why were these two texts published in the so-called long 1960s?<sup>35</sup> Did they represent cultural models of their time? Did they create a cultural pattern? I doubt it very much, and I shall explain why. We might also raise another question in this context: did they write down their life stories by themselves or by ghost-writers?<sup>36</sup> But what remains valid here is their intention to make public their lives and ‘teach’ by example.
- 28 It is a well-documented fact that following the monetary reform of 1953, and until the 1973 oil crisis, Greece underwent large-scale economic and social changes.<sup>37</sup> A relative economic stability, high rates of growth, and increased domestic and foreign investment was accompanied by an improvement in living standards. At the same time, the share of industrial production in the country’s GDP increased from 20% to 34.5%. These changes were accelerated in the 1960s as a result of the association with the EEC and a protective state policy towards industry. Together with the increase of the impact of industry on the economy, one would also expect a radical change on how the image of industry and industrialists was perceived by the public.
- 29 Both Papastratos and Katsambas belong to the group of Greek industrialists, which like most professional groups are socially defined. Nevertheless, once this group has been socially defined, an individual’s membership or non-membership in it usually becomes a matter of “objectivity”. In 1907 the *Association of Greek Industrialists and Manufacturers* (SEVV) was established in order to enforce the industrialists’ unity in the face of the demands of employees and workers, and to reinforce their collective identity and negotiation ability. This association was responsible at large for the public image of industrialists as a collective entity, as well as individuals.
- 30 Both men were key figures of the Greek industrial world. Katsambas served as President of the Association in 1945-1949, 1950-1952, and in 1963, before becoming its honorary president, a post also held for life later by Papastratos.<sup>38</sup> The former was also responsible for creating a favorable public image for Greek industry by contributing to the publication of pertinent scientific and statistical studies,<sup>39</sup> and for promoting public acceptance.<sup>40</sup> This image was also cultivated in the first *Great Greek Biographical Dictionary*, which the Vovolinis brothers brought out between 1958 and 1962, and which contained biographical portraits of various businessmen and industrialists, including a ten-page text on Papastratos.<sup>41</sup> In other words, the mid-1960s was the right time for

both men to unveil their life stories and experiences as testimony of an industrial epopee –at least of Greek standards.

- 31 The standard agenda in both autobiographical texts is *private life* (family and town of origin); *business career* (from lower assistant jobs to ownership and management); *entrepreneurship* (sincere hard work in trade and industry and not in finance);<sup>42</sup> *public image* (wealth distribution through acts of benevolence for their birthplaces and the general public) in order to demonstrate how an earned, not inherited, fortune was created *alla greca*.
- 32 Commerce was the starting point of their business experience and both held diverse business career in the interwar period, eventually focusing on two characteristic agricultural products. Papastratos on the tobacco production of his place of origin, Agrinio, by creating the largest cigarette industry; and Katsambas on cotton, the traditional agricultural product that fueled the industrial revolution all over the world, by creating a major textile industry. They both lived a youth devoted to work in assistant trade positions. Family capital, as in the case of the four Papastratos brothers, or personal partnership, as in the case of Katsambas with his fellow industrialist Stamoulis Stratos, led to economic independence and business careers in industry, strongly rooted in a tightly knit business nucleus. Their faith in industry was supported by close relations with the Right and Centre political elites of their times as well as their support of national ideals and aspirations through the *Association of Greek Industrialists*.
- 33 Another common characteristic in their autobiographies is their open anti-communism in a period of cold war tensions. Both men narrate in some detail their experiences from the *Dekemvriana*, the civil war that raged in the streets of Athens for much of December 1944 and early January 1945 between the communist resistance movement of EAM/ELAS and the British-backed government of Georgios Papandreou. Papastratos, in particular, maintains that it was this unavoidable accident, this *force majeure* that led him to write his memories, which he published twenty years later, at the age of sixty.<sup>43</sup> In December 1944, Katsambas was also stuck in his house some blocks away from Papastratos, cut off from his industrial premises in the Athens district of Kallithea, which was under communist control at the time.<sup>44</sup> From such details a full-blown anti-communist, anti-Marxist public icon would be built together with their general attitude towards labor strikes. Yet, the motto of Katsambas' close friend and business partner, Stamoulis Stratos, "be slaves of work so that you will not be slaves of people"<sup>45</sup>, together with Papastratos' motto "the story of a poor Greek boy who thrived through his work"<sup>46</sup> could not create a uniting cultural pattern of the self-made business man *alla greca*.
- 34 The early post war Marxist interpretation of the Greek economy begins from Dimitris Batsis' work on the *Heavy industry of Greece* first published in 1947 with a preface by Professor N. Kitsikis. This book in a way turned its back to an existing industry that in the 1960s would principally cater for the needs of a rising consuming society in Greece. The evolution –in socialist terms– of heavy industry in Greece promised welfare, development and civilization. Additionally, heavy industry would liberate the Greek economy from its dependence on foreign technology, and finance, as well as protective state legislation.<sup>47</sup>
- 35 Whether as a socialist scheme or as western consuming habit, the paths of Greek industry in the 1960s were intertwined with politics. Was there a rivalry that annulled,

in a way, a cultural pattern that otherwise might have accompanied a culminating period for Greek industry? In any case, the American cultural pattern of the self-made businessman, which was under serious historiographical critique in the United States in the 1960s, failed to gain deep roots in post-war Greece through the industrialists' autobiographical vision. It was a cultural pattern, a social typology that never really succeeded to become a didactic prototype but had a rather restricted influence. I contemplate that Greek society had followed with impassibility the nineteenth-century Horatio Alger's tradition. H. Alger jr. (1832-1899) was the author of numerous novels referring to young working-class males eager to follow the classic American myth from rags to riches. In Greece the prototype of the self-made businessman –mostly involved in trading activities at that time– has its roots in the previously mentioned exemplary lives of A. Goudas, but their didactic message was not the social and economic success of the self-made businessman who rose from rags to riches in an advanced capitalist environment, but was rather the nation's support through private deeds.

- 36 In the 1960s both industrialists in question, Papastratos and Katsambas, were still alive and it would be difficult for their life and deeds to become an exemplary model in an after civil strife cold war period. Were they too big businessmen, too rare as to lead role models in Greek economy and society? Greek rural society was becoming acquainted with labor migration to Germany, and middle classes were much occupied with small-scale personal economic improvements. A whole array of reasons may be scrutinized here giving prominence to politics over the economy.<sup>48</sup> Teaching by example was the authors' intention, but the long-lasting positive reception of that message was practically unfulfilled in Greece.
- 37 Later in time, Greek historiography remained quite dubious towards the case study approach, being accused as a descriptive and oversimplifying historical approach, which could be correct. Nonetheless, that was not the only reason to neglect entrepreneurial careers, where autobiographies, diaries and other personal accounts could generate useful insightful thoughts. The same Harvard Business School despite its early enthusiasm on individual entrepreneurs and their firms changed its focus towards corporate business. There were fewer arguments of heroic businessmen or managers, but the stress was to corporate units. Nonetheless, the history of the firm and the history of entrepreneurship imply the study of motives and behavioral studies that encourage the examination of documented life histories.

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## NOTES

1. Alexander STEPHAN (ed.), *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*, New York-Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2007; Victoria DE GRAZIA, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe*, Cambridge-MA, Harvard University Press, 2005. From the political point of view, Zinovia LIALIUTI, *Ο Αντιαμερικανισμός στην Ελλάδα [Anti-Americanism in Greece]*, Athens, Asini, 2005.

2. The didactic role of a successful life is indicated from the very first lines: "I was born and bred to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducting means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated", *Benjamin Franklin, His Autobiography 1706-1757*, with introduction and notes, Charles William Eliot (ed.), New York, Peter Fenelon Collier and Son Company, 1909, see <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/biographies/benjamin-franklin/the-whole-autobiography-in-one-file.php> (accessed 8/2/2016).
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## ABSTRACTS

In this article the main goal is to contextualize the case of two major Greek industrialists, who both published their personal memoirs in the 1960s, written in an earlier period. Both invested in the Greek national economy and differentiated themselves from the “interlopers” of private wealth. In the mid-1960s they shared with the Greek speaking public their personal thoughts on the Greek self-made business man; Evangelos Papastratos (1884-1973) with *Work and Its Toil*, and Christoforos Katsambas (1893-1984) with *Putting faith in the Future*. They shed light in their lives, their sacrifices and labour. The term “self-made man” was used in the first decades of the 19th century American politics, while defending and praising manufacturers who deserved the nation’s honours and favours because they had acquired wealth by hard-working devotion to business. Businessmen’s lives as individuals or as groups have illuminated economic success in national and international context and have given food for thought about their perception in wider audiences. Yet the intention of a businessman’s biography to teach by example is closely related to other biographical examples

L’objectif principal de cet article est de contextualiser le cas de deux industriels grecs majeurs qui ont publié tous les deux leurs mémoires personnelles dans les années 1960, bien qu’ils les avaient rédigées auparavant. Tous les deux ont investi dans l’économie nationale grecque autrement que les « intrus » de la richesse privée. Au milieu des années 1960 ils ont partagé avec un public grécophone leurs réflexions sur l’homme d’affaires grec « self-made » ; dans leurs livres *Travail et labeur* et *Croire à l’avenir*, Evangelos Papastratos (1884-1973) et Christoforos Katsambas (1893-1984) éclairent leur vie, leurs efforts et sacrifices. Le terme « self-made man » était utilisé dans la politique américaine des premières décennies du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle pour défendre et louer des industriels dignes d’honneur et de faveurs nationales comme ayant acquis des richesses par un labeur consacré aux affaires. Les vies individuelles ou collectives des hommes d’affaires ont éclairci le succès économique dans un contexte national et international et ont permis à un



public plus vaste de saisir leur point de vue. Pourtant la volonté d'instruire dans une biographie d'hommes d'affaires est étroitement liée à d'autres exemples biographiques

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**Mots-clés:** Histoire sociale, (auto)biographie, homme d'affaires « self-made », années 1960, Evangelos Papastratos, Christoforos Katsambas, Horatio Alger

**Keywords:** Social History, (auto)biography, self-made business man, 1960's, Evangelos Papastratos, Christoforos Katsambas, Horatio Alger

## AUTHOR

### MARIA CHRISTINA CHATZIOANNOU

Research Director in the Institute for Historical Research/National Hellenic Research Foundation  
Maria Christina Chatziioannou (PhD. Modern History 1989, Department of History and Archeology-National Capodistrian University) has taught graduate and undergraduate courses at the Universities of Athens and Crete. Her long standing academic career has focused primarily on the promotion of Modern Greek studies in the fields of social and economic history (19th-20th.centuries) based on archival material and in correspondence with new historiographical trends (like microhistory, business history, entangled history). <https://eie.academia.edu/mariachristinachatzioannou>.

E-Mail: marstina [arobase] eie [point] gr

Maria Christina Chatziioannou (docteur en Histoire moderne de l'Université d'Athènes, 1989) est Directrice de recherches à l'Institut de Recherches Historiques de la Fondation Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique de Grèce. Elle a enseigné à l'Université d'Athènes et à l'Université de Crète (Rethymno). Ses recherches scientifiques portent principalement sur l'histoire sociale et économique de la Grèce (xix<sup>e</sup>-xx<sup>e</sup> siècles) à partir de fonds d'archives et d'une nouvelle problématique historiographique (micro-histoire, histoire des entreprises, histoire croisée). <https://eie.academia.edu/mariachristinachatzioannou>

E-Mail: marstina [arobase] eie [point] gr