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For citation : *Smyrnelis Marie-Carmen , "Baltatzis Family", Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World, Asia Minor*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=8378>

Summary :

Important family of Smyrna activating in commerce, banking, politics, diplomacy and letters between the 18th and the 20th century. Several of its members settled in European capitals and financial centres, such as Constantinople, Marseilles, Paris, Vienna and Athens, and successfully expanded their activities over various sectors. The marriages with members of influential families played a key role in the spread of the family.

Other Names

Baltazzi

Date and Place of Birth

Chios, 18th c., possibly from Venice – Crete

Main Role

Family activating in business, commerce, politics and letters

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1. Origins

According to the family tradition, the Baltatzis family originally came from Venice. Its members, at an undefined moment are supposed to have gone from Venice to Crete before they moved to Chios. The sources refer only to their Chian origin and the Baltatzis family became known in Smyrna and in the other places they settled as a ‘Chian family’. When they were in Chios and later in Smyrna, the Baltatzis family continued to maintain their relations with Venice. At the time they were Venetian citizens, according to the passports of Marinos, Dimitrios and Evangelinos Baltatzis issued in Venice in 1745, 1774 and 1788 respectively.[1]

Marinos Baltatzis was a merchant and the first member of the family to settle in Smyrna. In 1743 he was already settled there. Marinos invited his nephew, Dimitrios Baltatzis, to move to Smyrna with his wife. In 1760, Dimitrios and his wife, Christina, must have been in Smyrna. The branches of the Baltatzis family were founded and reproduced by their six children, and particularly the five boys.

2. Professional Activity

The Baltatzis family played an important role in commerce in the 18th and 19th century, in banking from the early 19th century onwards, in diplomacy and politics from the second half of the 19th century and in cultural life from the late 19th century onwards. As a matter of fact, the Baltatzis family managed to participate in complex professional activities thanks to the economic conjuncture of the time: in this way, it managed to be involved in banking already from the first decades of the 19th century. In the second half of the 19th century, it was also successfully involved in non-economic activities.

In the second half of the 18th century, Evangelinos Baltatzis (1765-1809) was running one of the most important Greek business establishments of Smyrna. The importance of the business establishments of Georgios and Emmanouil, sons of Evangelinos Baltatzis, was recognised in the entire eastern Mediterranean in the first half of the 19th century. Evangelis Baltatzis (1826-1889) was a notable banker in Constantinople and Athens in the second half of the 19th century. Georgios Baltatzis (1868-1922) repeatedly served as minister in Greece in the early 20th century. His son, Nikolaos-Emmanuil, resumed his father’s career and became a politician in the 20th century. Periklis (1830-1908) was a distinguished trader and exchanger in Smyrna in the second half of the 19th century. In the second half of the 19th century, Xenofon (1833-1895) was the first member of the family to be involved in diplomacy: he served as a diplomat of the Ottoman Empire and spent part of his life in the United States. Towards the late 19th century, Demosthenis (1836-1900) became the director of the archaeological museum of Constantinople and wrote articles on ancient Greek history in French.

A branch of the Baltatzis family ‘specialised’ in only one professional sector: Georgios Baltatzis (1778-1858) and his descendants were traders and bankers. Except for this one, the rest of the family branches pursued a large variety of professions. For example, as

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for the four sons of Emmanouil Baltatzis and Katerina Petrokokkinou, Spyridon was a landowner, Epameinondas was a trader, Aristeidis a politician -and mayor of the Bosphorus- and Xenofon a diplomat.

3. Geographic Settlement

The Baltatzis family activated in an area beyond Chios, Smyrna and, generally, Asia Minor. Their history is similar to the histories of the rest of Chian families and the great Greek families of the diaspora. The dates of their settlement verify the main phases of the Greek diaspora. The movements of the Greek families all over the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and Western Europe from the late 18th century until the early 20th century helped the development of commerce.[2] Among these families, the Chian families were particularly distinguished. From the early 19th century until the early 20th century, members of the Baltatzis family were settled in the Ottoman capital, Marseilles, Odessa,[3] Paris, Vienna, Athens and the United States. The Baltatzis family moved a lot: several members of this family were born in one place, lived in another, or in more than one places, and died in a third place. In the cities where they settled they tried to distinguish themselves and play an important role.

The Baltatzis family settled in Marseilles mainly in the first half of the 19th century and became prominent traders of the city: in the mid-19th century, the Baltatzis establishment was the main importer of wheat in Marseilles.[4] The Baltatzis family settled in Marseilles due to the importance of the city, as it was the main western European harbour importing goods from the Greek business establishments of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea.[5]

Aristeidis Baltatzis, settled in Vienna in the last third of the 19th century, was one of the most important bankers of the city. He managed to become a member of the local aristocracy and participate in social events and horse races. His stables were among the best in Central Europe. His marriage to countess Stockau introduced him to the upper class of Vienna.[6] The marriages of the brothers of Aristeidis Baltatzis in Vienna to members of Viennese aristocratic families allowed the family to put down roots in this society and strengthen the bonds created by the marriage of Aristeidis to the Stockau family. Besides, the name Baltatzis became rather unfavourable in Vienna after the suicide of the archduke Rudolf, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his lover baroness Maria Vetsera, daughter of Helen Baltatzis and Albin Vetsera, in Mayerling.

In Athens, while Evangelis Baltatzis consolidated his position as a banker, two of the daughters of Aristeidis Baltatzis and Amelie Reineck were accepted by the royal court as ladies-in-waiting. Their presence in the city shows the desire of some members of the family to settle in Greece in the last third of the 19th century and invest there. However, this was not the desire of the entire family. In the same period, some members of the Baltatzis family settled in Constantinople played an important role, such as Leonidas (1829-1895), one of the founders of the Ottoman tobacco monopoly, and Evangelis (1826-1889), a banker who was particularly active in the economic life of the capital, as well as Aristeidis (1831-1887), who managed to become mayor of the Bosphorus.

4. The Chian Endogamy

The Baltatzis family married into other Chian families in the 18th and the 19th century, such as the Mavrogordatos and Mavrokordatos[7] families, as well as the Psycharis, Petrokokkinos and Rallis families. There were several marriages into these families so that their bonds could be strengthened.[8] These marriages helped the Baltatzis family preserve the principle of endogamy between Chian families; thus, they strengthened and reproduced the marital relations among them. Endogamy was the means to keep the body of the Chian families united and boost their economic power both inside the Ottoman Empire and abroad.[9] Family ties were of primary importance for the creation of the Chian commercial networks abroad, whose operation was mainly based on trust.[10] Besides, the commercial activities of these families often took place with the mediation of relatives, as it happened in the case of Ioannes and Dimitrios Baltatzis, settled in Marseilles, who represented in the mid-19th century the business establishment of their brother, Emmanouil, which was based in Smyrna. Within this framework, the marriages into this body enabled the families to foster and strengthen the activities of their establishments. As a result, the marriage of Dimitrios Baltatzis to Maria Amira, daughter of Loukas, one of the most important Greek traders coming from Chios and settled in Marseilles, offered him protection and solidarity for his own establishment in Marseilles.[11]

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5. Other 'Marital Strategies' of the Family

The 'marital strategies' of the Baltatzis family seemed to expand beyond those of most Chian commercial families. In the second half of the 18th century, the members of the family married into Greek families outside Chios. In the same period, the Baltatzis family proceeded to marriages into non-Greek families, though always within the Christian doctrine.

The Baltatzis family renewed their marital relations with some non-Chian families, whether they came from Greece or not, while sometimes they had to have the consent of the Church due to close kin.[12] These marriages, anyhow, were 'worthy marriages'.

In the 18th century, Maria Baltatzi, daughter of Emmanouil, got married to Ioannis Kanas, benefactor of the Evangeliki (Evangelical) School of Smyrna and potentate of Burnova. The Baltatzis and Karatheodori[13] families proceeded to two marriages between them in the second half of the 19th century.[14] Aristeidis Baltatzis (1831-1887) married Amelie Reineck, the daughter of the German Philhellene Eduard von Reineck[15] and Efrosyni Mavrokordatou; Sophia (1863-1942), daughter of Evangelis Baltatzis and Zoi Karatheodori, married Nikolaos Balanos, a civil engineer who directed the restoration of the Acropolis of Athens and other monuments in the late 19th century. The marriages of the three daughters of iBaltatzis and Amelie Reineck gave the Baltatzis family the opportunity to consolidate its position in the diplomatic circles: Amalia married Nikolaos Deligiannis, a diplomat who served as the ambassador of Greece in Paris for a long time; the husband of the second daughter, Ioulia, was Georgios Karatzas, who came from a notable Phanariote family and served as Greek ambassador in several European capitals in the late 19th and the early 20th century; the third daughter, Eliza, married Alexandros Tombazis, the ambassador of Greece in Bucharest and Saint Petersburg, who came from a noble family of Hydra that was successfully activating in shipping and had participated in the Greek War of Independence of 1821.

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1. Μπενάκης, Α.Μ., 'Οι Μπαλτατζήδες. Βιογραφικά σημειώματα Σμυρναϊκών Οικογενειών', *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* (1948), p. 325.

2. Χαρλαύτη, Τ., 'Εμπόριο και ναυτιλία τον 19ο αιώνα. Το επιχειρηματικό δίκτυο των Ελλήνων της διασποράς: η "χιώτικη" φάση (1830-1860)', *Μνήμων* 15 (1993), p. 69. In the mid-19th century, the Greeks were the major transporters from and to the eastern Mediterranean, depending on the supply of the East and the demand of the West.

3. Only two female members of the Baltatzis family settled in Odessa: Christina (19th century) and Loukia (1861-1897), thus following their husbands, who were Greek traders.

4. Mandilara, A., *The Greek Business Community in Marseille, 1816-1900: Individual and Network Strategies, Thesis in History* (European University, Institute of Florence 1998), p. 220.

5. Χαρλαύτη, Τ., 'Εμπόριο και ναυτιλία τον 19ο αιώνα. Το επιχειρηματικό δίκτυο των Ελλήνων της διασποράς: η "χιώτικη" φάση (1830 - 1860)', *Μνήμων* 15 (1993), p. 77.

6. Sturdza, M., *Grandes familles de Grece, d'Albanie et de Constantinople* (Paris 1983), p. 224.

7. Sturdza, M., *Grandes familles de Grece, d'Albanie et de Constantinople* (Paris 1983). They are two different Chian families, despite the same surname, which, however, definitely have distant common origins and played an equally active role in the commerce of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The prominent Mavrokordatos family was among the most distinguished families of Phanari.

8. In the mid-19th century, two marriages took place between the Baltatzis and the Petrokokkinos families. In the second half of the 19th century, four marriages were held between the Psycharis and the Baltatzis families. Finally, in that period the Baltatzis family

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renewed their marital agreements with the Mavrogordatos and the Mavrokordatos families.

9. Φραγκάκη-Syrett, E., *Οι Χιώτες έμποροι στις διεθνείς συναλλαγές (1750-1850)* (Athens 1995), p. 10.

10. Χαρλαύτη, Τ., 'Εμπόριο και ναυτιλία τον 19ο αιώνα. Το επιχειρηματικό δίκτυο των Ελλήνων της διασποράς: η "χιώτικη" φάση (1830-1860)', *Μνήμων* 15 (1993), p. 91.

11. Mandilara, A., *The Greek Business Community in Marseille, 1816-1900: Individual and Network Strategies, Thesis in History* (European University, Institute of Florence 1998), p. 205. The business establishment of Loukas Amiras was the only Greek establishment competing in 1817 and 1818 against the most important importers of Russian wheat in the city.

12. This is, for example, the case of the Baltatzis members who settled in Vienna: two Baltatzis sisters, Evelyn and Virginia, got married to Georges and Otto Stockau respectively, while their brother, Aristeidis Baltatzis, got married to a niece of Otto and Georges.

13. It is a notable family from Phanari, several members of which were famous scholars, doctors and diplomats.

14. Two sisters, Zoi and Smaragda Karatheodori, got married to two Baltatzis cousins.

15. Eduard von Reineck played an important role in the Greek War of Independence of 1821; he became governor of Crete in 1828, before he was appointed director of the officers' school from 1829 until 1840; finally he became the governor of Argos and was appointed a general of the army.

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