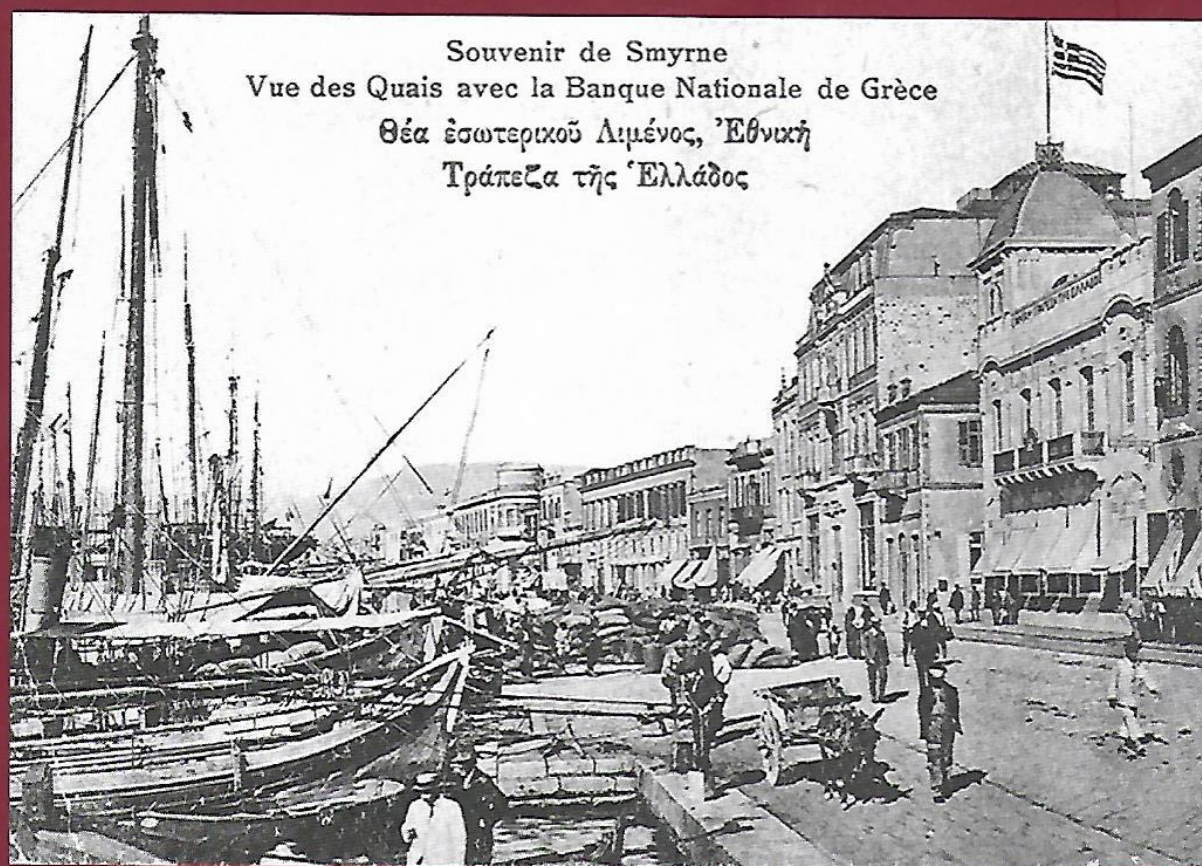


# The Greeks and the British in the Levant, 1800–1960s

## Between Empires and Nations

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## Chapter 12

# Merchant–Consuls and Intermediary Service in the Nineteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean

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This chapter argues that consuls and their market functions as well as their trade background were important in establishing intermediary relations between state institutions. Nineteenth-century consuls had good commercial experience, so they had an important role in the flow of information and market intermediation. Merchants of Greek origin arrived in Britain in the first decades of the nineteenth century and adapted to the needs of the British imperial economy. Parallel to that, the emergence of the Greek national state in the 1830s provided a new platform for political and economic activities. The appointment of consuls and consular agents from the Greek state in Britain and its colonies can be revealing about the intermediary role of certain important merchant houses deriving their expertise from the Eastern Mediterranean, an area of intense trade activities which corresponds more or less to the Levant. This trade expertise enabled them to penetrate 'new found lands', where they had established outposts for their business. Still the main issue until the late nineteenth century was the intermingling and separation of private interests from national sovereign ones. This controversial problem was smoothed over by national consular regulations and the strengthening of national trade.<sup>1</sup>

### Consuls and market functions

Governments, companies and individuals were all necessarily in constant need of fresh contacts to pursue their interests in complex local settings. Establishing connections has always been as important an art as maintaining them. Despite acknowledging their value, we do not know the parameters of success or failure, or the changing patterns of intermediation over time as world economies develop. From a methodological point of view, consular services can be the keyhole through which to observe sometimes indistinct developments and agency issues.<sup>2</sup>



The first distinction to be made is between envoys and ambassadors, who are diplomats representing the head of state at the court of another head of state, usually coming from upper social strata, and consuls, who represent citizens, states, legal and economic interests and usually come from the commercial middle classes. Every state has organized and regulated its diplomatic and consular services differently over the centuries; still, the majority maintained a similar etiquette and communication based on a more or less common professional range.<sup>3</sup> The role of consuls, from the early modern period to the rise of national states, in the flow of information, commercial or other, their arbitration function in commercial disputes and their integration in alien social and institutional context has been highlighted in several studies. 'Intermediaries', 'middlemen' and 'agents of information' are terms used indiscriminately and usually without specifying the consul's role.<sup>4</sup>

The multiplicity of roles, the creation of new forms of business organization and the involvement of merchants and commercial agents as consuls during the period 1840–60 in the case of the Ionian islands under British rule has been analysed by Sakis Gekas. One major difference between consuls and commercial agents was that a consul provided information on the country they lived in. In contrast, a commercial agent had only to take care of the interests of the merchant houses he represented. The same merchant acted as consul for several states. From various examples it is evident that merchants established in one of the Ionian islands could take on the representation of several companies, either as agents of these companies or under the more formal role of the consul, in which case they would have to cater for the needs of all the citizens of the state they represented. In the case of commercial agents acting for British and Dutch companies that wished to extend their network to the southern Mediterranean, local merchants ensured that the steamers of the companies they represented enjoyed the same privileges as the Austrian firm Lloyd, the company that had established a monopoly in the Adriatic.<sup>5</sup> In 1859 the Ionian government extended to the Greek Steam Navigation Company the right to convey merchandise from one island to another without the additional duty of 5 per cent *ad valorem*. The right was granted after the petition of the Greek consul at the time, a member of the international merchant house of the Rodocanachi, whose business extended from the Black Sea to London and New York.<sup>6</sup>

Consuls' reports are fundamental sources of information for analysing national economies and Diaspora communities' intermediary functions. Within the community consular agents mediate to reduce market uncertainty and optimize business transactions. The role of consuls as agents of market intermediation is connected to commercial services on a larger scale and to their past experience in trade. Their importance in opening up new trade opportunities and their ability to create and embody a real 'public service' of market intermediation were likely to compete – as agents of information



and co-ordination – with private networks and diminish over time particularly after the rise of nation-states. The transformation of the consular services accelerated during the nineteenth century as European states realized their significant contribution to the promotion of international trade and increased their number and their qualifications.<sup>7</sup>

European states invested in their diplomatic delegation in major Mediterranean economic centres from the early modern era. Dutch, Venetian, French, British and Austrian diplomatic delegates especially in the consular services competed for state and personal interests. Most European merchants in the Levant conducted trade both on their own account and on commission for other partners and merchant houses abroad. The eighteenth century saw an increase of trade privileges granted to agents of European states by the Ottoman authorities.<sup>8</sup> European consular protection was also granted to various agents in key economic centres. State choice and protection, personal networking, general social esteem and consensus were required in order to occupy a consular post.

The main quality required from a merchant in order for him to assume consular services was skill in trade transactions. The role of Greek merchants in the Mediterranean economic affairs has been highlighted in several studies. The emergence of the Greek nation-state in the 1830s and the consequent organization of its diplomatic service show the indispensable role of Greek-origin international trade networks in this process. It was the establishment of the Greek state that provided a new platform for political, economic activities and entrepreneurial careers to be pursued.<sup>9</sup>

Network analysis can translate, in concrete terms, social structures defined and determined by groups, interpersonal relationships and institutions. Groups and individuals are in constant interaction either at the micro level of interpersonal relationships or at the macro level of groups and institutions. The theory of intermediation is usually applied to interpersonal individual cases and not to relationships between groups or networks. Intermediation refers to the ability of certain individual members of the network to pioneer given cultural categories and conditions in accordance with personal and collective ideals, interests and duties. However, historical explanation of network analysis remains ill defined, unless we assume that networks should be combined with intermediation and culture. Social relationships and culture are interconnected, and some social structures are restrictive for the members of the networks.<sup>10</sup>

The multifarious presence of merchants of Greek origin in Britain has not yet been systematically examined. Alongside these merchants and strongly dependent on them, a number of diplomats (ambassadors as well as consuls) from Greece became intermediaries between the Greek state, Greek communities and British state authorities. The role of diplomats, consuls and consular agents of the Greek state in Great Britain and its colonies constitutes an interesting subject and will be further analysed here. Many significant figures



in Greek affairs in this era were associated at some point with the legation in London, such as Spyridon Trikoupis, Harilaos Trikoupis and Ioannis Gennadios,<sup>11</sup> to mention just three examples. The Greek diplomatic legation in London worked as an institution of intermediation between Greek commercial networks in Britain and the Greek state. Economic politics was also closely related to national diplomatic representation in important economic centres playing a crucial role for trade and Greek shipping.

The interdependent relationship between international Greek-origin trade networks and the emerging Greek state in the nineteenth century offers several case studies to be analysed that present unique insights regarding their role as formal and informal intermediaries in local and international affairs. From the eighteenth century, from the Eastern Mediterranean ports of Salonica, Constantinople, Odessa, Smyrna and Alexandria to Marseille and up to London and Liverpool, multi-ethnic enclaves were created with business communities. Greek entrepreneurs had diverse functions, in most places acting as trade intermediaries offering consular services too. The organization of trade by different ethnic or national groups presents a range of common characteristics of organizational structure, as well as common behavioural patterns, such as the creation of family networks and personal partnerships, and the acquisition of consular agency and merchant culture.

Constantinople remained throughout the nineteenth century a world economic centre. The direct gains for personal business were high. It is not accidental that in Constantinople and Cairo the British consul-general received one of the highest salaries, £1,600, higher than all similar posts in Eastern Mediterranean, and consuls were not allowed to conduct private trade.<sup>12</sup> The intermediation of one of the big Greek merchant families was indispensable for many foreigners exercising trade activities in Constantinople or travelling in the Levant. In the middle of the nineteenth century Robert Heywood (1786–1868), with a public career and private business interests in the quilting manufacturer John Heywood & Son, and the later owner of the Crescent Bleach Works in Salford, Manchester, arrived in Constantinople. He was stuck in lazaretto at Cavak on the Asiatic side overlooking the Black Sea. In June 1845 Haywood was trying to find a solution to his problem not through the British consular service but through his personal trade network. It was an international merchant of Chiote origin, M. Rodocanochi, whose family had a Manchester offshoot, who organized his trip via Trieste.<sup>13</sup>

### **International merchants and their comparative advantage in consular services**

The Greek consular experience was shaped by relations within the Ottoman Empire and Greek diaspora communities, where the consuls mainly represented not their country of origin but their community, or other



European states. Communities and national/ethnic groups nominated their consul representatives.<sup>14</sup> The issue of Greek diplomatic representation in the course of the nineteenth century was closely connected to Greek international trade networks. After 1833 a new relationship between the national state and the group of Greek merchants in Britain was established; sometimes the same people belonged to both groups. A relationship of mutual intermediation between the group of Greek consular officials and trade networks was shaped, facilitating communication between the Greek authorities and the group of Greek merchants in order to organize state consular representation, to increase profit, to face trade competition and to develop a visible national identity within the world of international exchanges. The establishment of a national diplomatic representation for Greece, the enlargement of public space and the fighting over this space by individuals and groups of Greeks in the field of international transactions constitute a new aspect of modernity for them, triggered by the founding of the Greek state.

At the same time, the social and cultural activity of Greek communities and expatriates was based upon the national diplomatic delegation, whereas the international economic activity had long been based upon local substructures and on international circumstances. Trade networks in Great Britain were connected to the Greek state, often using a new intermediation, the network of its diplomatic representatives. Even when Greek foreign policy was restricted in relation to the connections of the international Greek trade networks, establishing a relationship or, taking up the diplomatic representation of the Greek state was more than simply desirable. Therefore, one of the first diplomatic agents of Greece in London in 1836 was Pantias Ralli (1793–1865), an exemplary case study of the Chiot merchant diaspora, a member of a distinctive trade network and a central figure in the Greek community in London.<sup>15</sup>

The merchants of Greek communities had tried to combine trade activity and consular agency before. Taking up a consular post meant that their own trade activity would also benefit from power relations forged and advantageous access to information. The newly founded Greek state initially established eleven consulates-general, whose consuls and vice-consuls promoted the conclusion of treaties between states, regulating trade, merchant marine issues, port and post taxes and population movement.<sup>16</sup>

In the context of the Ottoman Empire and the international economic transactions, geographical origin was a typical qualification of transnational co-existence or a precondition of co-operation with other ethnic groups. Members of the Greek merchant networks enjoyed a quasi 'local autonomy' in the areas where they operated, in the Ottoman, Hapsburg and the Russian Empires. The merchants who first settled in Britain came from these empires, placed where Greek communities negotiated themselves privileges, rights and obligations towards the authorities of the areas where they settled.

The social and cultural agency of Greek communities was also based on the national consular representation while the international economic activities of



the Greek merchant houses drew for a long time on local conditions as well as the international context. Merchant networks in Britain linked with the Greek state using often a new mediation, the network of Greek consular agents. Issues of national identity and citizenship acquired a new dimension and dictated or offered different choices to the world of Greek merchants engaged in international trade.

Greek diplomatic representation in Britain followed the overall foreign policy of the Greek state after 1833. Until the middle of the nineteenth century Sp. Trikoupis held a central role in the Greek legation.<sup>17</sup> The Greek state founded a diplomatic legation and a consulate-general, first- and second-class consulates, vice-consulates, consular agencies in various ports and economic centres within Britain, all referring to and regulated by the London-based Greek diplomatic legation. At the same time a number of consulates and vice-consulates had been organized at the colonies of the British Empire. Diplomatic and consular representation in London, the heart of the empire, was important for Greek diplomacy. A number of prominent Greeks, all of them male members of the social elite, served in the Greek Embassy and consulate in London between 1833 and the end of the nineteenth century. These people, especially J. Gennadios, introduced new patterns of social behaviour and standard of living, since Britain offered both modern social and economic patterns through education and culture and business or career opportunities, especially from the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Greek diplomatic representation consisted of consulates, vice-consulates and consular agents based in merchant ports, serving the interests of ships carrying either the Greek flag or the needs of Greek sailors as well as, of course, the commercial affairs of the Greek state. In British industrial cities there were also Greek consular representatives. These salaried positions were created by law, while the unpaid positions were established through a royal decree. The men who filled these posts came from the Greek and British merchant world, and they were socially distinct from the ambassadors. Nikolaos Elefth. Giourdis, from a merchant family from Syros that was trading grain in the Eastern Mediterranean during the first half of the nineteenth century, was appointed non-salaried secretary to the Greek consulate in Liverpool in 1870.<sup>18</sup> Most consular agents, consuls and vice-consuls were interested in the post itself rather than the salary. The fringe benefits, social status and commercial networking advantages that came with it were more important. The consular representation of the Greek state depended often on family or other social-economic networking. When A. N. Yannakopoulos, unpaid consular agent in Liverpool, resigned from his post for health reasons, the Greek embassy in London suggested that the outgoing consul should select his successor, based on his network of trust.<sup>19</sup> The post of consular representation was attractive not only to Greek merchant-agents but also to foreigners interested in the job, such as James Scott, a shipping and insurance agent in the Scottish port of Dundee, which came within the



purview of the Leith consulate. Scott became the local consular representative of the Greek government in 1889; until 1909 members of the same family held the post.<sup>20</sup> It was common practice for the foreign representatives of Greece to take the public oath of devotion to the Greek state. The duties and role of these consuls became a topic of discussion and a recurrent issue among diplomatic authorities and the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Greek vice-consulates operated from 1869 in Birmingham and Cardiff, and soon after other cities and ports followed: Falmouth in 1873, Swansea in 1874, Belfast in 1875. The two key economic centres in north-west England, Manchester and Liverpool, acquired Greek consular representation in 1885. Most of these consular representatives came with previous commercial experience and continued to conduct private business within the British Empire and across the Atlantic.

Greece obtained representation in the form of vice-consulate or consular agency in many trade ports of England, Ireland and Scotland between the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Consular posts were highly demanded by British subjects: for example, the consular representation of Greece at Barry Docks in south Wales, the biggest port for the export of coal at the beginning of the twentieth century. The post was fought for by a ship-broker and a coal merchant.<sup>21</sup> Although not a salaried position, the post was a glittering one, as it offered access to Mediterranean and Atlantic maritime services and coal exports.

British consular agents representing the Greek state could be found in Newcastle, King's Lynn, Dublin, Glasgow, Sunderland, Yarmouth, Dover, Hull, Londonderry, Milford, Plymouth, Ramsgate, Dundee, Leith, the Isles of Scilly, Portsmouth, Southampton, Middlesbrough and Lowestoft. Greek consular agents served in Limerick, in Edinburgh, in Bristol, in Cork, in Yarmouth and in Newcastle. The broad picture shows that the Greek Embassy in London maintained the principle of negotiating Greek foreign policy in Britain. The knowledge and experience of Greek merchants from the Eastern Mediterranean, of British merchants and of other agents was indispensable in the management of private and international commercial and shipping affairs at the heart of the nineteenth-century global economy.

The creation of a network of Greek consular representatives in British colonies constituted a new upgrading of the presence of the Greek state, and of the presence of Greek merchants. In Gibraltar a British subject represented the Greek state from 1871, while in Malta Greek consular presence was entirely Greek: Ath. Theofanous, consular agent (1883); Efst. Chronopoulos, consul (1885, 1891); K. Charalambis, consul (1891–95); K. Papadiamantopoulos, vice-consul (1898) and consul (1900); and E. Petrokokkinos, consul (1902).<sup>22</sup>

The issue of choosing the suitable consular representative of the Greek state in Britain depended directly on the Greek numerical presence there and the strength of their economic activities in the period of coal-powered globalization. Sometimes people without any other resources tried to get or



remain appointed as consuls abroad to secure an income from the consular revenue.<sup>23</sup> This issue troubled the Greek state, which was unable properly to organize consular services abroad. The absence of vice-consuls created problems when consuls had to be replaced, while the requests of the Greek merchant marine required the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs to stay alert. In 1904 the Greek ministry wrote to the Greek Embassy in London that candidates for the non-paid consular authorities 'had to be chosen [from] among the most prestigious Greek merchants or[,] in the lack of, foreign merchants', since the goal of the Greek state was to support Greek commerce and shipping. Consular representation in ports that were crucial for the supplies and repairs of Greek ships was a long-standing request that changed according to the international routes of Greek shipping.<sup>24</sup> The reorganization of the Greek consular service in 1888 highlighted several issues related to the operation of consular offices or, rather, offered an opportunity to express problems accumulated during the thirty-year lifetime of the Greek consulates.<sup>25</sup>

London, Liverpool and Manchester, as major economic centres of Britain, became places where, during the nineteenth century, Greek communities were established through the efforts of Greek merchants, while official Greek consulates with diplomatic legations in London were established. Most of the consuls maintained their trade activity or had prior trade experience. For example, in Liverpool, Michael Antoniou Ralli, a member of the Ralli merchant family, was initially appointed as first-class consul (1885–91), and was later succeeded in the post by Edward Dionysius Barff, a second-generation member of an active merchant house in the Mediterranean, followed in 1899 by Vasilios Malandrinos, a merchant who had previously been second-class consul and secretary in the same city.<sup>26</sup> Michael Antoniou Ralli was born in Smyrna in 1845 and died in Wales in 1917. He was a merchant and a shareholder in the Bank of Alexandria Ltd and acquired British nationality in 1881, maintaining private houses both in London and in Liverpool. He was also a shareholder and cotton-broker in the A. & M. Ralli company (until 1891), along with Sophocles Spartalis, Antony Andr. Fakiris and, later, William Henry Hatch.<sup>27</sup> While his company was active in importing cotton at the Liverpool port destined for the cotton industries in Manchester, Michael Antoniou Ralli served as a consul of the Greek state for almost six years.

The obvious link between commercial activity and consular identity can be seen also in the case of Michael Antoniou Ralli's successor, Edward Dionysius Barff, born in Zakynthos and married in Smyrna, who came from a merchant family well known in Greek society.<sup>28</sup> His father, Samuel Barff (1793–1880), established the company Barff & Co., with branches in the Ionian Islands and England, which later became Barff, Hancock & Co., which provided banking services during the early phase of British-Greek commercial relations. This is a typical case of British commercial migration to the Eastern Mediterranean during the first half of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the century Barff's second generation made use of its long-term relationship with Greek



politicians and merchants and took over the consular representation of Greece in Liverpool.

Manchester was one of the outstanding industrial and trade centres after the port of Liverpool. In the 1820s the number of depots in Manchester where cotton goods were stored, exhibited and sold, rose from 126 to 1,000, and in the same decade the number of foreign consuls residing in the city also rose. It is not accidental that in Manchester a Consular Association was active for the period 1882–2006. It was after the accession to the Greek throne of King George I that the first Greek consul, S. N. Frangopulo (1864), an exporter of felts, was appointed in Manchester to represent the small Greek community there. It should be pointed out that several representatives of the Ottoman Empire, such as Abdullah Iblidi in 1842, Abdullah Effendi in 1862, acting consul C. C. Langton in 1871, vice-consul Thomas Read Wilkinson in 1882, and Mustapha Mersa Effendi Karsa in 1898 are mentioned in the sources, indicating a mixed ethnic representation (Ottoman and British) in this post, similar to that of the Greek representation. In 1885 Sotirios Hatzopoulos became Greek consul in Manchester; he remained in post until 1915.<sup>29</sup>

Sotirios Hatzopoulos, the Greek consul in Manchester, posed the question in 1888 of whether Greek consulates in Britain served economic interests and administrative needs of Greek merchants abroad, or whether the objective of the consulates was to gather information and intelligence for the Greek government.<sup>30</sup> Essentially Hatzopoulos was implicitly questioning the role of the Greek consulates, wondering whether they served British-Greek relations or supported the international business transactions of Greek-origin merchants. But were the two not interconnected? It was an important question to raise concerning private and sovereign economic interests.

The issue of Hatzopoulos's citizenship summarizes the challenges that Greek merchants operating in the sphere of international business in the Ottoman Empire faced. Both Sotirios Hatzopoulos and his brother Kyriakos were misleadingly registered as having been born in 1858 on the Greek island of Tinos; later Sotirios received a Greek passport in Constantinople. He founded a commercial house in Philippoupoli (Plovdiv) which he kept after moving to Manchester and settling there. In the early twentieth century the property of the Hatzopoulos brothers (Ottoman in origin but Greek citizens) in the area was jeopardized when the Young Turks movement and Bulgarian nationalism clashed. One source mentions that Hatzopoulos abandoned his Greek citizenship to save his property (worth £1,000–2,000) in Varna and Philippoupoli; he had previously asked to acquire British citizenship. His shop had been destroyed during the nationalist clashes in the region, and, as he mentions, one of his employees fled to Constantinople to avoid conscription in the Bulgarian army.<sup>31</sup> The case of Hatzopoulos raises the issue of the national identity of an Ottoman-origin merchant who had very little to do with the Greek state, although he represented it as a consul in Manchester.



The authority that consular agents acquired through their mediating role with the Greek state was not the same everywhere but depended on the economic significance of the city where the agents lived. At the end of their term of office their opinion on who would succeed them mattered, and they often received the title of honorary consul or some other award. In 1907, when Hatzopoulos and his successor, Akestoridis, resigned from active consular service in Manchester, the 'prestigious merchants' of the city were asked to suggest an appropriate person to serve as the Greek consul. Their letter mentioned K. Demetriadis, director of the Ralli brothers branch, Ios. Alexandroff, Geor. Zochonis, Theod. Kasdaglis, Negrepontis, the son-in-law of Petrokokkinos, and the son of the former consul Frangiadis.<sup>32</sup> The director of the Ralli brothers branch together with A. Agelastos seemed to support Athanasios Natzios. Natzios was a resident of Syros, a Greek citizen but a naturalized British subject. He had been awarded the Greek silver cross, served on the board of the Greek Orthodox Church in Manchester, was married to Alexandroff's niece and was a member of the committee that had welcomed King George I to London in 1905.<sup>33</sup> Natzios and E. G. Giurdis are examples of merchants who migrated to Britain from the Aegean island of Syros. But by the early twentieth century the Greek community in Manchester was in demographic decline, perhaps also due to their assimilation in English society.

A powerful business network within the British Empire – Ralli Brothers – was placed at the service of Greek diplomacy. The Greek authorities asked Ralli's opinion, through the Greek Embassy in London, on matters such as the appointment of consuls, especially to British Empire or North American posts. The Ralli network was also mobilized – through New York – in order to recruit a consul in Lowell, Massachusetts, an American textile centre. The Greek Embassy in London asked Ralli's advice in choosing the Greek sub-consul in Lowell.<sup>34</sup> The Ralli network defined the social and economic stratification of the Greek world of commerce in international business. The open and direct line of communication between British subjects, Ralli and the Greek diplomatic authorities in London gave meaning to their 'Greek identity'. In this way the business omnipotence of the Ralli firm extended to the political sphere. Companies with access to large capital and goods markets in Europe, Asia and America could be friendly or hostile to the state.<sup>35</sup> Ralli was a British citizen who, while assuming many British social traits, remained prominent among the Greek community in London, where his own Chiote provenance had a symbolic resonance.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the global and regional knowledge of Greek merchants from the Eastern Mediterranean was necessary in the management of both private and state trading and shipping issues in the British Empire. The issue puzzled the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was unable to consolidate the consular services. It was not easy to find consular representatives in Britain with the requisite skills. This difficulty created



problems, especially in immediately covering vacant posts; in the meantime, evaluating various issues of the Greek shipping and trade demanded special knowledge by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1904 the ministry wrote to the Greek legation in London about the candidates for consular posts in Britain: 'they must be chosen amongst the most prestigious Greek merchants living there, or amongst foreigners when there were few Greeks', since the main goal of the Greek state was to support and reinforce 'Greek trade and shipping'. Greek consular representation in ports – important for supplying and repairing ships, a constant request – was redefined according to the trends of Greek shipping. In 1908 twenty-five owners of steamboats, brokers and coal exporters asked the Greek consul in Cardiff to nominate a Greek consul at Port Talbot, a small port in Wales, where they could clean their boats so as to avoid having to move to Swansea, which was further away.<sup>36</sup>

The role of Greek consular representatives was mainly to achieve economic intermediation, and often to address issues of Greek nationality and the national representation of expatriates. Hellenization of expatriate merchants constituted a major problem and also a goal for the Greek state.<sup>37</sup> Greeks from the Ottoman Empire who had moved within its borders, or in the area of international transactions, sometimes sought Greek nationality. The international trade representation of Greek merchants from the Eastern Mediterranean, based on privileges and Capitulations, was entering a new era; this was about the institutionalization of national identity, following the foundation of the Greek state.

Often, when a merchant took up a consular position in Britain and its colonies, this was not as a result of an open competition or as a promotion in a public service career; on the contrary, it was part of an unofficial set of personal recommendations and relationships, shaped within the circles of Greek trade networks. The opinion of the Ralli Bros Company in London was crucial, as we analysed above, as it undoubtedly controlled the largest and most important international Greek origin business network of its time.<sup>38</sup> This case study offers new material for the understanding of the relationship between the Greek diplomatic services and Greek Diaspora commercial networks. The geo-political horizon of the Greek state was often different from that of the Rallis' international network; it seemed indispensable that the flow of information of the Greek sovereign diplomatic service should go through the Rallis' international trade network. In 1904 the Greek consulate in Sydney, Australia, was trying to find a suitable consul to occupy the post in Perth, in Western Australia. Markos V. Maniakis, a merchant from Patras with a commercial network that connected Piraeus, Patras, Smyrna and Sydney, was trying to establish the Greek consular agency there. From 1896 until 1903 Maniakis had served as the Greek consul in Sydney, the Greek consulate-general there being responsible for the whole of Australia. In 1899 sixty Greeks from Perth officially asked for Alexander William Page to be given the position of vice-consul. Page was British, born in Corfu (probably



during the time of British protection on the Ionian Islands), spoke Greek and was 'greatly respected by everyone'. The Greek diplomatic legation in London asked Ralli to give their opinion on this diplomatic assignment. The Ralli Bros, having gathered information from their network, replied that Page was unsuitable because of his low social status. Since finding the right person for distant consular posts constituted a difficult task for the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these issues seem to have been controlled by the omnipotent Ralli Brothers, especially as far as Britain and its colonies was concerned.<sup>39</sup>

The powerful Greek business network in the British Empire was put at the service of Greek diplomatic representation. Greek delegates asked for the opinion of the Ralli brothers, through the Greek diplomatic delegation in London, on issues of giving out consul posts, especially within the British Empire or in North America. The Ralli business network defined in great part the social and economic profile of Greek trade and business in the field of international transactions. The open communication between the Ralli company and the Greek diplomatic delegates in London supported, to a great extent, their 'Greek identity'. The Ralli brothers' commercial omnipotence could thus be extended to the political level. The Ralli business network and trade intelligence, having access to the powerful capital and stock markets, could become competitive or complementary to state affairs.<sup>40</sup>

## Epilogue

We may define intermediation as simply 'a relation in which one actor mediates the flow of resources or information between two other actors who are not directly linked', but human agency can be much more complex.<sup>41</sup> Right from the beginning consuls were traders, and following the rise of capitalism in the Eastern Mediterranean and the emergence of national economic interests in an international setting, consuls became an intermediate form of agency that was controlled by national and local regulations. Consuls served as the glue consolidating the relationships between merchants, firms and markets. Merchants and their firms, operating in various markets, created a constellation around consuls from the modern period up to the end of the long nineteenth century; consular intermediation was indispensable until global capitalism and financial markets surpassed it. The idea of intermediary service was coined in the course of the nineteenth century, referring not only to the advice furnished by consuls but also to those consuls' intervention in transactions. The Rodocanachi and the Ralli networks had access to 'raw information' in the Eastern Mediterranean due to their long experience in international business, so they could provide consular intermediary service to the Greek state and to other European or American states.



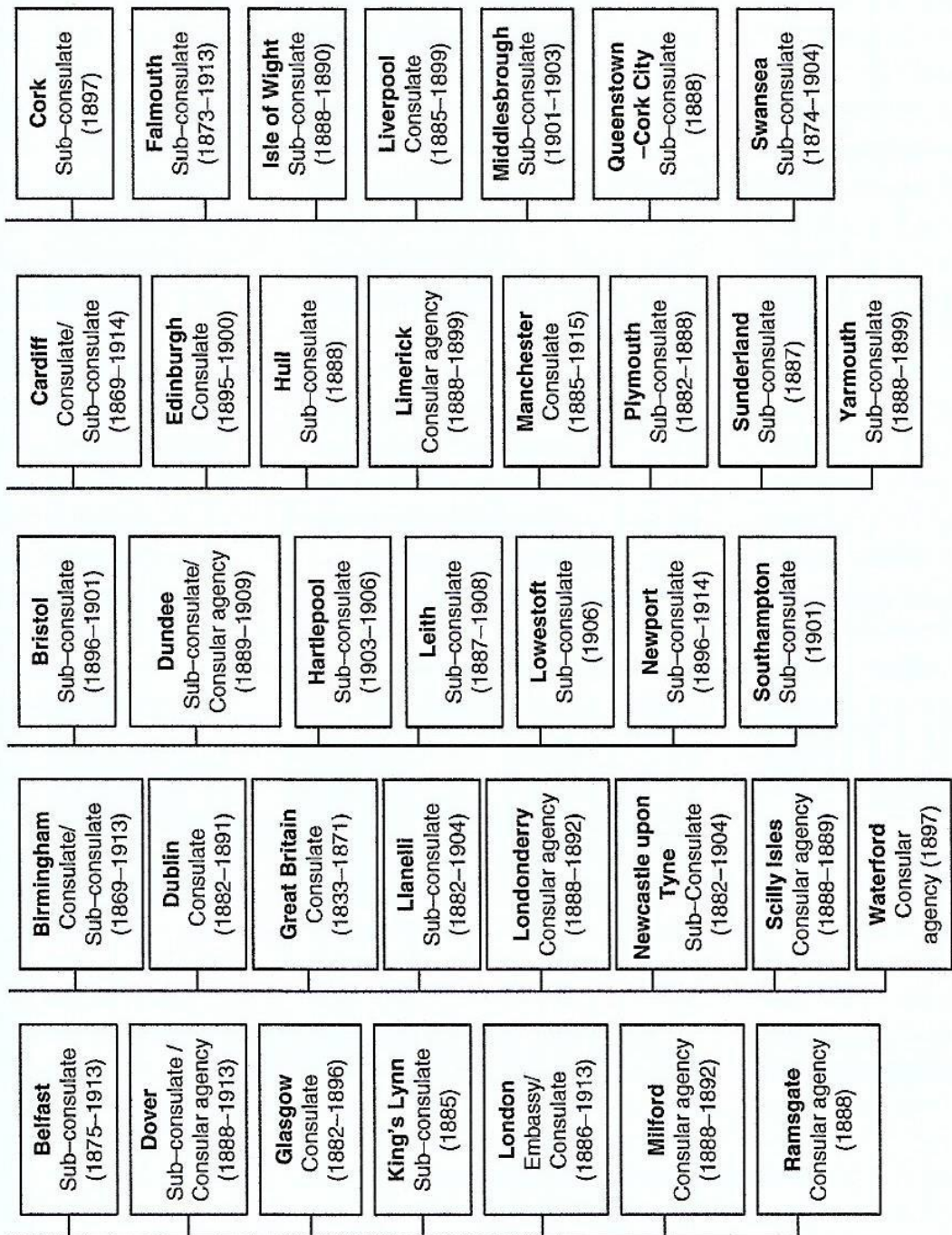


Figure 12.1 Diplomatic and Consular Representation of Greece in Great Britain (Nineteenth Century)



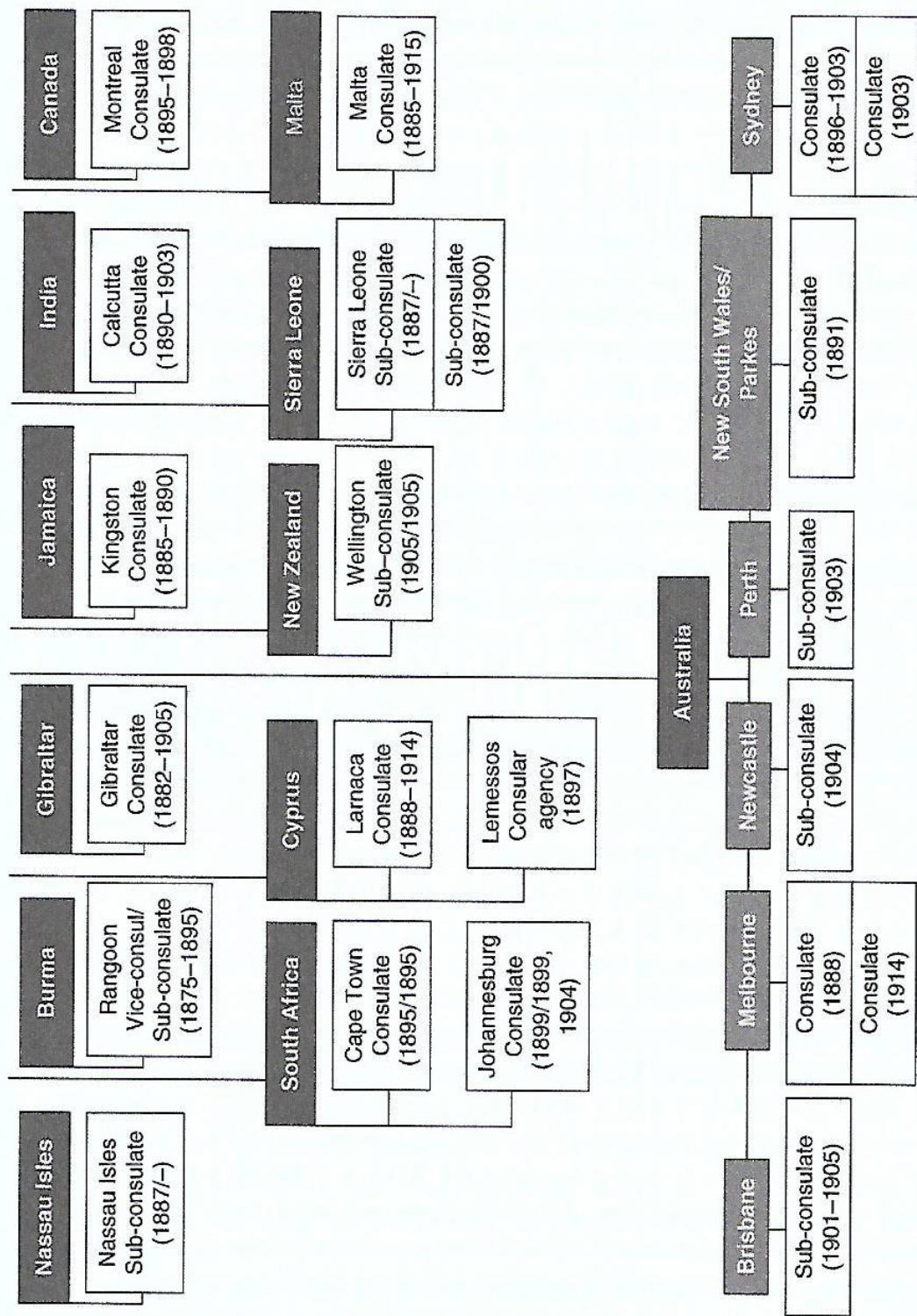


Figure 12.2 Diplomatic and Consular Representation of Greece in British Imperial Possessions (Nineteenth Century)



The expansion of trade in the Eastern Mediterranean shaped a large field of expertise and knowledge for a significant number of merchants of various ethnic, religious or national backgrounds. The establishment of trade and diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and European countries in the sixteenth century, the well-known 'Capitulations', meant that the Eastern Mediterranean became a major crossroads for connections, exchanges and encounters.<sup>42</sup> The creation and development of diplomatic legations, consulates and agencies over the years offered a new institutional framework. Trade networks were established and promoted the flow of information between various port-cities and inland economic hubs. The sphere of trade and diplomacy intertwined constantly in the long period from the early modern era to contemporary times. A major change was expressed in the intertwining and often conflicting field of private and state economic interests expressed in the context of transforming national identity.

With the economic expansion of the industrial revolution and the evolution of financial transactions, merchants adapted to the globalization of services and the role of consuls changed, but the Eastern Mediterranean remained the matrix of their expertise. Consular networking objectives varied, from social prestige and privileged access to information, personal trade, financial activities and state economic interests offering protection to agents of different ethnic and religious origins, and generating privileged sociability. Intermediary services regarding exchange rates and bankruptcies were slowly offered by other state and international institutions. Intermediary services beyond consular agency became critical in information and knowledge intensity and affected the competitiveness of the economy.

## Notes

- 1 This work was undertaken under the auspices of the Kyrtou Plegmata project within GSRT's KRIPIS action, funded by Greece and the European Regional Development Fund of the European Union under the O. P. Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship (NSRF 2007–2013) and the Regional Operational Program of Attica.
- 2 This is a different approach from what has been described as the importance of consular reports in economic and business history; see, for example, *Business History* 23, no. 3 (1981), with various contributions, such as: Coenraad A. Tamse, 'The Netherlands Consular Service and the Dutch Consular Reports of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', 271–276; Theo Barker, 'Consular Reports of the United Kingdom', 266–267; and Richard H. Werking, 'United States Consular Reports: Evolution and Present Possibilities', 300–304.
- 3 Ernest M. Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice. Contributions to International Law and Diplomacy*, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1917).



- 4 Dominique Margairaz and Philippe Minard, ed., *L'information économique, xvi-xix siècle: Actes des Journées d'études du 21 juin et du 25 avril 2006* (Paris: CHEFF, 2008); Leos Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce: The Swedish Consular Service and Long-Distance Shipping, 1720–1815* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet/Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis-Studia Historica Upsaliensia 213, 2004); Desmond Christopher Martin Platt, *Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825* (London: Longman, 1971). From a different point of view, Christian Windler, *La diplomatie comme expérience de l'autre. Consuls français au Maghreb (1700–1840)* (Geneva: Droz, 2002).
- 5 Sakis Gekas, 'The Merchants of the Ionian Islands between East and West: Forming Local and International Networks', in *Spinning the Commercial Web. International Trade, Merchants and Commercial Cities, c.1640–1939*, ed. Margit Schulte Beerbühl and Jörg Vögele (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), 44–63.
- 6 *Ionian Islands Governmental Gazette* 405 (28 March/9 April 1859).
- 7 Jan Melissen and Ana Mar Fernández, ed., *Consular Affairs and Diplomacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 9; Amalia D. Kessler, *A Revolution in Commerce. The Parisian Merchant Court and the Rise of Commercial Society in Eighteenth-Century France* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 33–41.
- 8 Maurits H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beratlis in the 18th Century* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 64.
- 9 Iakovos D. Michailidis, *Mikri perifani patrida. O kosmos ton Ellinon diplomatou kai proksenikon ypallilon sta Valkania kai tin kath'imas Anatoli 1830–1853* (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2012).
- 10 For the role of agency in network analysis, see Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin, 'Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency', *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 6 (1994): 1411–1454; Ananda Mukherji, Peter Wright and Jyotsna Mukherji, 'Cohesiveness and Goals in Agency Networks: Explaining Conflict and Cooperation', *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 36, no. 6 (2007): 949–964.
- 11 Lydia Tricha, *Diplomatia kai politiki. Harilaos Trikoupis-Ioannis Gennadios allilografia, 1863–1894* (Athens: Elliniko Logotekniko kai Istoriko Arheio, 1991); Maria Christina Chatzioannou, 'Between Tradition and Modernity: Joannes Gennadius at the End of the 19th Century', *The New Griffon: Hidden Treasures at the Gennadius Library* 12 (2011): 13–26. See also Marianna D. Christopoulos, *O Ioannis Gennadios kai i diamorfosi tis ethnikis politikis tis Elladas (1870–1918)*, unpublished PhD thesis (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University, 2012).
- 12 Whereas in Russia private trade was allowed to all consuls there whose salaries extended from £200 to £800. Robert Fynn, *British Consuls Abroad; Their Origin, Rank and Privileges, Duties, Jurisdiction and Emoluments* (London, 1846), 304.
- 13 BL, Heywood papers, 1799–1866, 'Europe and the Levant', 1845, 42. All his travel diaries were privately printed and can be found online in the British Online Archives in the BL.
- 14 Giorgos Georgis, *Stis aparhes tis ellinikis eksoterikis politikis* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1995), 43.



- 15 *The Times*, 25 February 1836. For a general view on London Greeks: Timotheos Catsiyannis, *The Greek Community of London* (London: privately printed, 1993).
- 16 Maria Christina Chatziioannou, 'To elliniko emporio', in *Istoria tou Neou Ellinismou 1770–2000, vol. 4, To elliniko kratos, 1833–1871*, ed. Vassilis Panagiotopoulos (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2003), 75–84.
- 17 Haris Karabarbounis, *Dia tis Diplomatikis Odou. To istoriko kai thesmiko plaiseio diamorfosis tou Ellinikou Ypourgeiou Eksoterikon* (Athens: I. Sideris, 2007), 53, 307; Marianna D. Christopoulos, 'Eksyghroneizontas to elliniko Ypourgeio Eksoterikon, 1875–1877', *Kleio* 5 (2009): 219–246.
- 18 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 36/10, Royal Decree, Corfu, 28 August 1870. In the nearby Queenstown another member of the Giourdis family had been appointed as a consular agent. The Giourdis commercial house had been active in the Syros grain trade; see Vassilis Kardasis, *Syros* (Athens: Morfotiko Idryma Ethnikis Trapezas tis Ellados, 1987), 77, 312 n. 135.
- 19 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1871, 36/10.
- 20 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nineteenth-century diplomatic yearbooks.
- 21 Tricha, *Diplomatia kai politiki*, 325.
- 22 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nineteenth-century diplomatic yearbooks.
- 23 In Southport, close to Liverpool, E. Anagnostopoulos served by chance as consular agent for a long time (1871–88). Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consular Agencies in England, 1889, 33/1, M. A. Ralli (Liverpool) to the Greek Legation (London), 11/23 July 1888.
- 24 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London Legation 1908, 1/2, Greek Foreign Ministry circular, Athens 11 November 1903, and the circular of 17 January 1904.
- 25 The restructuring took place in the context of the 1887 law concerning the legations, Karabarbounis, *Dia tis Diplomatikis Odou*, 100.
- 26 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nineteenth-century diplomatic yearbooks.
- 27 *London Gazette* 27 February 1873, 25 February 1887, 30 June 1891.
- 28 Joan M. Hussey, 'Barff, Samuel (1793?–1880)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1368>.
- 29 Hatzopoulos was also consul of Persia for a period and became also president of the Consular Association (1896) in Manchester. David J. Fox, *Manchester Consuls* (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2007), 17–23, 51, 75, 281, 287.
- 30 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1889, Consular Agencies in England. 33/1, S. Chatzopoulos (Manchester) to G. Manos (London), 12/24 July 1888. The Greek consul considered Hull, Newcastle, Bradford, Leeds and Blackburn as important commercial cities,



- albeit without Greek merchants active there. These cities were characteristic for their contribution to the British nineteenth-century industrial revolution.
- 31 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London Legation, 1908, 1/2, S. Chatzopoulos (Manchester), to D. Metaxas (London), 19/2 and 13/26 October 1906, 19/4 March 1907.
  - 32 For the conferment upon P. Akestoridis of the title of honorary consul in Manchester (1885–1908) see: Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London Legation, 1908, 1/2, Greek Foreign Ministry circular, Athens, 2 December 1908.
  - 33 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London Legation, 1908, 1/2, letters P. A. Argentis, to D. Metaxas, 3 January 1906, K. Dimitriadis (Manchester) to P. A. Argentis, 7 January 1907, Al. G. Skouzes (Athens), to D. Metaxas, 22 January 1907, K. Dimitriadis (Manchester), to D. Metaxas, 12 February 1907.
  - 34 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London Legation, 1904, Vice-Consulate in Lowell to London Legation, 30 December 1902.
  - 35 Susan Strange, 'States, Firms and Diplomacy', *International Affairs* 68, no. 1 (1992): 1–15.
  - 36 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London Legation 1908, 1/2, circular, Athens, 11 November 1903 and circular, Athens, 17 January 1904.
  - 37 Elpida K. Vogli, 'Ellines to genos'. *I ithageneia kai i taftotita sto ethniko kratos ton Ellinon (1821–1848)* (Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2006), 261–262.
  - 38 *History and Activities of the Ralli Trading Group Commodity. Merchants for 160 years* (No place: The International Trading Division of the Bowater Organization, 1976); Anthony D. Mango, ed., *Adventure Account: the Story of the Rallis in India* (No place: Rallis India Ltd, 1998); Katerina Vourkatioti, 'Anglo-Indian Sea Trade and Greek Commercial Enterprises in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century', *International Journal of Maritime History* 11, no. 1 (1999): 117–148.
  - 39 Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London Legation, 1904.
  - 40 M. C. Chatzioannou, 'I kataskevi mias epixeirimatikis dinastias; I oikogeneia Ralli', in *I matia ton allon; Proslipseis prosopon pou sfragisan treis aiones (18os – 20os)*, ed. Katerina Dede and Dimitris Dimitropoulos, (Athens: INR/NHRF, 2012), 149–172.
  - 41 Roberto M. Fernadez and Roger V. Gould, 'A Dilemma of State Power: Brokerage and Influence in the National Health Policy Domain', *American Journal of Sociology* 99 (1994): 1455–1491.
  - 42 See also: Sonia P. Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey: Paul Rycout at Smyrna, 1667–1678* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Niels Steensgaard, 'Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650', *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* 15, no. 1–2 (1967): 13–55.