

Greece's Historical Industrial Archives

by Spyridoula Arathymou

An important part of the industrial heritage of Greece is to be found in its historical industrial archives. These collections do not belong to the active files needed for the day-to-day running of an enterprise, but rather to the general category of business archives that often prove useful in the long term. The historical industrial archives include records of the General Meetings, architectural plans of the industrial buildings and so on.

The Greek historical industrial archives were created only one hundred and fifty years ago, tracing the industrialization of the country up to the early beginnings of de-industrialization. Their fate has followed that of the offices, plants or warehouses where they were housed: in the case of failed or defunct industries, their archives have sadly been abandoned or destroyed.

In Greece, historical industrial archives are considered to be private archives according to the law *About the State Archives 1946/1991* art. 4. Therefore, their creators are not obliged to deliver them to the State Archives. A business is required to file a report of its records to the Central Service of the State Archives or to one of its regional services. Unfortunately, this obligation has largely been ignored by private enterprise, except in the cases of a few enlightened industry owners, who have decided to turn over their historical records collections to the State Archives or to other archival organizations.

On many occasions, business archives are saved in the nick of time, before the demolition of an industrial plant. Sometimes the archives are found in rubbish bins or some other location irrelevant to their place of origin. The scene doesn't change for businesses that have been closed down—the buildings and all their contents, including all records, are confiscated. Thus, many historical industrial archives have been routed to the basements of court buildings along with other confiscated items, such as drugs or guns. If a Greek historical industrial archives exists at all, it is due to the thoughtful initiative of those individuals who realize that these records make up a crucial part of recent Greek cultural heritage.

Greece's archival organizations are not necessarily located in dynamic industrial centres. However, the saving and preservation of historical business archives currently depends on the dedication of the people who direct archival organizations, wherever they are located. In contrast, it should be pointed out that, in several Greek cities that are important centres of industry (or, perhaps were in the past), very little preservation of industrial records is carried out.

Another aspect to consider is that of some private collectors; individuals who have acquired industrial records and seek to make money out of them. Researchers do not have free access to these archives. Unfortunately, this sad situation exists for many cultural goods all over the world.

The development of heavy industry in Greece is relatively small. The archives that have been saved come from industries that include tobacco, chemical, food and wine, textile, ceramics and machinery. They are available to the general public, not just to scholars or researchers,

and they contain records from a broad range of fields, from labour history to accounting systems.

The saving and preserving of Greek historical industrial archives is not yet complete; much remains to be classified and catalogued. In many cases, an archive is not complete or contains only a few records. But the important thing is that they are saved and efforts are made for more acquisitions on behalf of the organizations, and others, who already keep industrial records.

These organizations and industries are:

Athens:

- National Research Foundation
- Central Service of the General State Archives
- Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece
- Historical Archive of Bank of Piraeus Group
- Greek Historical and Literature Archive
- Public Electricity Industry
- S& B Group
- ELAIS Industry

In Macedonia:

Thessalonica:

- Historical Archive of Macedonia
- Center of History of Thessalonica
- Greek Historical and Literature Archive
- ALLATINI Group
- Kyr – Gianni (Boutaris) wine industry

Kavala: General State Archive Service of the Kavala Region

Drama: General State Archive Service of the Drama Region

Serres: General State Archive Service of the Serres Region

Florina: General State Archive Service of the Florina Region

In Ionian Sea Islands:

Corfu: Patounis Soap Industry

In Peloponnesus:

Aigion: Local Archive of Aigion

Kalamata: General State Archive Service of the Messinia Region

Leonidio: Local Archive of Leonidio

In Cyclades Islands:

Syros Island: General State Archive Service of the Cyclades Region

In Dodecanese:

Rhodes: General State Archive Service of the Dodecanese Region

Leros: Local Archive of Leros

In North Aegean Islands:

Samos:

- General State Archive Service of the Samos Region
- Cooperative Union of Winemakers of Samos

Lesvos: General State Archive Service of the Lesvos Region

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