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Greek Libraries: Past, Present and Perspectives

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Abstract: The history of Greek libraries can be divided into 3 phases. The first phase, lasting until 1994, was the longest. It was characterized by traditional organization, poor services, understaffing, shortage of licensed librarians and low social status. European exchange programmes together with the EU financing, brought most Greek libraries into their 2nd phase (1995–2009), which was characterized by modernization, automation, innovation, internationalization and qualified personnel. This phase lasted less than 2 decades, yet, its effects were spectacular for a number of libraries. These were the libraries funded by the government and the EU, which implemented strategic programmes of development. They thrived. However, faced with economic problems, organizations, including libraries, were obliged to reduce the number of their employees and cut budgets. For the last five years Greek libraries have been undergoing their 3rd, unpredictable phase, during which their achievements may be lost due to the lack of funds and staff redundancies. This paper focuses on the 2nd phase of development. At present, libraries have only two alternative options: further improvement or deterioration.

Keywords: Greek Libraries. History of Libraries. Libraries and Information Science. Management of Libraries. Organization of Libraries

Introduction

The purpose of the article is to describe the situation of Greek libraries, their development and today's decline brought about but the country's worsening economic conditions. Although in the past few years, the libraries were undergoing a phase of rapid development, the state budget cuts also hit the libraries. Currently, inadequate resources (including databases and human resources) pose a problem for all libraries in Greece. This paper is an effect of ongoing discussion

among librarians. It also contains information gathered from bibliographical sources.

According to the survey conducted by the National Book Center [20], Greece has 1.566 libraries, including: public, academic, school and specialist (medical, bank, corporate and ecclesiastical). They are parts of public or private organizations and cultural institutions. However, it must be mentioned that only 593 libraries were listed by the Hellenic Statistical Authority (<http://www.statistics.gr>; see also [10]) in 2008.

Academic libraries receive the highest financial support from the government and EU, because of their importance for education and research. It is crucial that all types of libraries should work in partnership and be involved in a range of activities and projects to benefit from the academic libraries' development.

A report of KEPE¹ in the 1980s, described the condition of libraries as follows "Most libraries operate under obsolete legislative framework, with limited financial capabilities, without coordination, cooperation and communication, although their similarities are many; the content, the users, the goals and the mission. Despite the common content, audience, purpose and mission, libraries remain isolated resulting in work duplication, the economic waste and the reduction of the effectiveness"².

According to a 2002 study, 99% of academic and research libraries were fully technologically equipped, although public and municipal libraries offered considerably less Internet services on average [5].

At that time, some pioneering initiatives were started, such as union catalogues, automation system implementation, the first though basic nationwide network of science and technology libraries and recruitment of professional librarians [25].

The educational system in Greece used to be teacher/instructor-centred and libraries played a secondary role in education. This model has undergone a transformation in recent years following the legislative changes aimed to meet the educational needs of today's society. Library and Information Science must provide foundations for the new era.

¹ KEPE is the largest economic research institute in Greece (http://www.kepe.gr/EN_Pages/about_en.htm).

² KEPE report on the 5-year development project 1988-92, cited by [37, s. 106] in "Government policy on book" Athens: Odysseus pub, 1995, s.106 (in Greek).

Library and Information Science in Greece

In Greece there are three Higher Education Institutions that offer LIS curricula and degrees. Only one is part of a university, namely *Ionian University*, and the other two are parts of *Technological Educational Institutions (TEI)*. In Greece, the Library and Information curriculum encompasses libraries, archives and museums, as they all must preserve cultural heritage and support development [19].

a. Ionian University: The Department of Archives, Museums and Library Science (<http://tab.ionio.gr>) was established in the academic year of 1993–1994. Its aim is to provide students with theoretical education and practical training (including computer skills) required in all kinds of public and private libraries, archives, museums, documentation and information centres.

The department offers Postgraduate Specialisation Diploma (MSc) and PhD. The research laboratories of the department are the Cultural & Historical Heritage Documentation, Information Technologies and Digital Libraries & Electronic Publications. They participate in research projects and implement projects undertaken with other institutions. They conduct research, the results of which have been published in scientific journals.



Fot. 1. National Technical University of Greece

Source: http://www.ntua.gr/index_en.html.

b. TEI of Athens: Department of Library Science and Information Systems (<http://www.teiath.gr/sdo/lis>) was the first department in the field of Library Science in Greece, established in 1977. Pursuant to the Law 3794/2009, which acknowledged the Technological Educational

Institutes as equivalent to Universities, the department upgraded its curriculum in the direction of information management, and created infrastructure to meet the requirements of the academic level of education.

The Department aims to provide students with theoretical knowledge and training in library organization and management, as well as to prepare them for work in archives, museums, documentation and information centres, private companies and information management departments. It also aims to boost students' interest in research. The department promotes research in Information Science and its associated disciplines, and interdisciplinary research.

c. TEI of Thessaloniki: the Department of Library Science (<http://www.libd.teithe.gr>) was established in 1984 as Department of Librarianship. The curriculum is focused on techniques of retrieving information, acquisition, processing, organization, management and dissemination of information, with emphasis on information technology. It also encompasses organization and administration of libraries and information services in the private and public sectors. In addition, the Department offers stakeholders consulting services in library organization and function.

The Department, in cooperation with local authorities, actively participates in European educational programs and operations financed by the Support Framework II of the E.U., organizing seminars and lifelong learning events.

In 1989, a scientific library of the Faculty of Economics and Management was established. The body responsible for the organization and the functioning of the library was the Library Science Department. In 1990, a lending department decorated with replicas of works by Greek artists was opened. The library boasts laboratories of bibliography and audiovisual media, computers, subject catalogues, online information retrieval, and document production/publication.

It is worth emphasizing that in Greece, information science is seen as an integrated interdisciplinary field encompassing library, archives and museum science.

National Library of Greece (NLG)

According to its website (<http://www.nlg.gr>) the mission of NLG is “the concentration, organization and dissemination to the public of the written works of science and culture that is associated with Greece”.

The goals of the National Library of Greece are to:

- develop and maintain a national collection, which includes material produced in Greece and material produced abroad, but is relevant to the people, country, history, traditions and culture of Greece in any language and format available. To this end, NLG gathers, processes, maintains, preserves, promotes and makes the material of the Collection accessible to anyone interested in, pursuing freedom of knowledge, information and research;
- develop activities aimed at enhancing the cultural and intellectual life of the country;
- operate as national bibliographic and information centre and as recipient of the national deposit of published material;
- compile and issue the retrospective and current National Bibliography as well as the catalogues of manuscripts, printed and any other forms of material in the collection;
- operate as the official national center for providing guidelines, directives, orientations and development of standards in the areas of bibliography, conservation, preservation, digitization and restoration of material and relevant information;
- be the national provider of international numerations of books (ISBN), of periodical publications (ISSN) and of music (ISMN);
- collaborate on library issues with other organizations and individuals, internationally, and participate in research and development projects;
- represent the country overseas in relevant international bodies on issues linked to its mission.

History. The National Library of Greece was founded by a decree published on May 15, 1832. It was originally named the “Public Library”, with George Gennadio serving as its first supervisor.

The idea to establish the Greek National Library was first mentioned by a philhellene John Mayer in an article of “Greek Chronicles in Messologhi” in August of 1824. John Mayer had fought in Messologhi during Greece’s Independent war. His idea was implemented in 1829 by the Governor John Kapodistrias, who connected the Library with other intellectual institutions, including schools, the National Museum and the typographic houses. All of them were located at the Orphanage of Aegina, and Andreas Moustoxidis was appointed chairman of the committee of the Orphanage, registrar and director of the National Museum, registrar of the national school, etc.

By the end of 1830, the library, which was characterized as the National Library by Mr Moustoxidis, held 1.018 volumes of print books, which were donated by Greeks and philhellenes, various authorities and monasteries. In 1834, the library moved to the new capital, Athens, and

was firstly housed in the building of Roman baths in the Roman Agora, and later, in the church of Agios Eleftherios, next to the Cathedral.

The collection was growing rapidly. In addition to the purchase of books from private collections, including Dimitris Postolakas' (1.995 volumes), the Library received many large donations of books, to mention but the two: one from Christoforos and Konstantinos Sakellarios (5.400 volumes), and another from Markos Renieris (3.401 volumes).

In 1842, the Public Library (with 35.000 volumes) merged with Athens University library (collection of 15.000 volumes), and they moved, together with the Numismatic collection, to the new building of Othonos University. George Kozakis-Typaldos was appointed the first registrar – director of the newly enlarged institution and remained in his position until 1863. At that time, the Library was enriched with significant donations of rare foreign language books from kings and sovereigns from all over Europe. Pursuant to the royal charter of 1866, the two libraries merged, and were administered as the “National Library of Greece”.

On March 16, 1888, the foundation stone for a neoclassical marble building was laid, financed by three brothers from Kefallonia: Panagis, Marinos and Andreas Vallianos. The Library was initially housed in the University building until 1903, and then, it moved to a new magnificent building designed by Theofilus Hansen and built under the supervision of Ernest Schiller.

Today, the National Library is still housed at the Vallianos building in the center of Athens and two other buildings. Their valuable collections are treasures of Greek culture.

Collections. The National Library of Greece holds one of the largest collections of Greek manuscripts worldwide. It hosts approximately 4.500 manuscripts, parchments, chartoous (dating from the 9th to 19th century), hagiographic scrolls, palimpsest codes, manuscript codes of Byzantine music and foreign language manuscript codices (including Arabic, French, Italian, Latin).

The collection of NLG, also includes a variety of historical documents from Byzantine Empire, Patriarchate, Ottoman rule, as well as the archives of the agonists at the national regeneration of 1821 consisting of 25.000 documents and 100.000 folders. There are also archives of prominent figures (including Dionysios Solomos Asopios Stavrou, Philemon, Dionysios Romas, Dimitrios Vikelas and Angelos Sikelianos), the archive of the Greek communities abroad, and the archive of the philhellenic association of London.

These are unique documents of Greek heritage and culture.

Digitazion. NLG develops a long-term project of journal digitization, called *e-efimeris*. The library offers access to over 220.000 digitized pages that can be browsed by content, journal title and publication date. It also offers access to approximately 1 million journal articles (browsed by author and title). This project is in progress. Access is free for everyone at <http://www.nlg.gr/digitalnewspapers/ns/main.html>.

NLG also developed a project of digitization of manuscripts. It involves digitization, electronic archiving, documentation and promotion of selected manuscript codices and facsimiles from the National Library's collection. The main objective is the physical preservation of the collection for research and educational purposes, the creation of primary digital material that can be used to produce secondary digital and conventional products, but also providing access to the public. In total, 658 manuscript codices and facsimiles have been digitized.

The digital catalog of manuscripts allows online access from the outside of the library.

The New building. Currently, a new building is under construction. It is financed by Stavros Niarchos foundation (www.snf.org/snfcc/html/page.php?pid=5) which describes it as follows: "The new building for the National Library of Greece will modernize an institution dating from 1832, allowing it to enhance its research profile, and at the same time, extending its focus and activities to an all-inclusive public resource. In its new and enlarged role, the library will serve guests of all ages and educational levels, from academic researchers, to children and young adults".

It is designed for three groups of users: adults, adolescents and children. Moreover, it is planned as a hospitable environment for individual and group learning and cultural activities.

This modern building of 22.000 m² combines tradition with technological innovation. The flexibility of the building's design derives from the cooperation between BL (www.bl.uk) and SNF.

Connecting NLG to other libraries on national and international level provides users with access to valuable sources relevant to Greece and hellenism.

The Business center will provide a modern, active, innovative enterprise center of knowledge and information supported by computerized workstations with Wi-fi Internet. A research unit will be established with access to research collections in another section of the building. Modern facilities will ensure the preservation of rare collections which will be displayed at regular time intervals.

The National Library of Greece participates in international fora (e.g. European Library, IFLA, UNIMARC) and cooperates with other libraries nationwide.

The Library of the Greek Parliament

The library was established in 1844 to support the work of parliament and congressmen. Thanks to George Tertsetis, the first archivist, the library flourished as a cultural and intellectual center of that period of time. Timoleon Filimon, elected in 1875, enlarged the collection through donations from Greece and abroad. Between 1875 and 1887, Filimon managed to increase the collection from 5.000 to 100.000 volumes (<http://www.hellenicparliament.gr>).

At present, the library contains 600.000 volumes of books (average annual increase is 4.000 Greek and 1.000 foreign titles), 12.000 volumes of rare books, 600 manuscripts, 5.000 maps, all documents relevant to the Parliament, 100.000 volumes of journals and periodicals, historical archives of Greek famous and important persons, 21.000 microfilms, 2.500 CD ROM and about 1.000 artefacts. The library has a digital collection [8] of 18th century journals and periodicals, the historical parliamentary archive, and the constitutions and regulations of Greece.

The collections are open to the general public. Although the main goal of the library is the support of parliamentary work, it supports research and documentation by any scientific and public organization. Queries can be submitted electronically, by e-mail, fax or telephone. The library operates the interlibrary loan network.

Academic libraries

There are 23 universities and 15 Technological Educational Institutions (TEI) in Greece, and they have central, departmental, and laboratory libraries. The older libraries have good print collections and rare books as well as departmental and laboratory libraries.

In the past, academic libraries offered rather limited services and their technological infrastructure was poor. Their buildings were ill-adjusted, their routines not automated, and their personnel was inadequately trained and specialized. 1996 was a breakthrough thanks to the funding by the EU Second Community Support Framework. The driving force behind the transformation was the recognition of the crucial edu-

cational role that libraries play in the country's modernization³. Hence, the objective for the Greek academic libraries for the years 1994–1999 was to modernize so that they could support scientific research and meet the current teaching requirements.

Comparing the situation of the libraries before and after the transformation, it is obvious that they have greatly improved their services and the context in which they operate. Bigger and better-adjusted buildings, technological and communication facilities, automation, better management concept, standardization, innovation, professional development, communication, cooperation and international relations are the keywords that characterize this period.

Data from the statistical report of Total Quality Management Unit of the academic libraries, in 2010 are very revealing. Academic libraries had: 4.979.650 new print books, 30.016 current subscriptions to print and electronic journals (except for those of HEAL-Link, below), 4.521.569 visits to the electronic resources accessed from library websites (through which users access the databases and electronic journals of HEAL-Link).

Along with individual action and development, academic libraries were involved in joint projects, which gave rise to a consortium.

New projects were successfully implemented. These include: the digitization of rare collections, implementation of academic repositories and advanced reference services, enrichment of print collections, enhancement of electronic and media collections, creation of information literacy projects, support of e-learning, plus the increase of qualified staff with Masters and PhD degrees and, consequently, the participation of staff in international scientific and professional events and actions with papers and posters⁴.

Academic libraries have emphasized digitization of the content, mainly historical, cultural and scientific documents, free of copyright restrictions. They also came up with additional services such as reference and information literacy courses. And last but not least, three academic libraries have earned ISO 9000.

Unfortunately, in the last 5 years, academic libraries began to face problems caused by the onset of an economic crisis, austere funds,

³ Unfortunately, this was adopted only by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. That is why school libraries were established and public “dimosies” libraries were financed and legislative framework was changed.

⁴ Visit the E-lis repository at <http://eprints.rclis.org>. If you browse the papers under the search term country Greece and sort these by the publication date, the number of papers under each year supports the claim.

redundancies of specialized staff and, consequently, some services had to be suspended.



Fot. 2. The Technical University Library

Source: Fot. A. Katsirikou.

Library and information professionals struggle to maintain a high level of services, but it is not always possible. Still, for the next 2 year academic libraries have the opportunity to develop more digitized services funded by the EU. They follow the standardization of European and aim to increase the scientific digital content significantly. Although their future is unpredictable, they do not abandon innovation efforts.

Public libraries

There exist three types of public libraries in Greece: the “dimosies”, which are governed and supported by the Ministry of Education, municipal, which are financed by local authorities, and children’s libraries

under the Ministry of Education⁵. In total, there are 47 public libraries, one of them being the National Library; 25 are characterized as central libraries and they serve 2 or 3 counties (a geographic area much larger than their immediate jurisdiction) [24].

Public libraries are in a privileged position in comparison with the municipal libraries. The main reason is that they operate under the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, under the Special Council of Libraries, Archives and Educational TV, that is to say, they are administered and financed by the central government without the liaison with local authorities and politics.

In the last decade, the legislation framework was modernized, raising the role of the library in the cultural and economic development of the local community⁶. To sum up, the most important reason for the development of libraries is the unified legislative and administrative policy [5].

In those days, public libraries filled the gap of many decades in the supply of computers and other electronic equipment, use of ISDN, access to Internet via the national network EDUNET, automation of their cataloguing procedures (OPACs) and other services (acquisitions, circulation, periodicals check in etc.) using the ABEKT 5 automation system, and professional development through lifelong learning projects for their staff. The main reason of the success is a well-planned strategy and the spending of the budget in a rational, effective and efficient way.

Central public libraries organized mobile libraries in order to support schools and peripheral areas around the cities. This was a project aimed at providing service for Greek countryside.

Information centers in public libraries

Information centers are an innovative project of the last decade, funded by the EU. The objectives of the project were the following:

- advancement and modernization of the traditional library catalog and online access to national and international databases;
- inter-library loan services on local, national and international level;

⁵ In this paper we refer to public libraries as “the dimosies public” and to public municipal libraries as municipal.

⁶ Compare “Derived by their mission public libraries take the challenges to proactively serve different kinds of populations, some of them are: 1) Long-term efforts in trust building and promoting participation of individuals and groups representing the multicultural publics; 2) Lack of awareness and use of the library by underserved populations; 3) The library’s inertia towards outreach and its lack of awareness about various local underserved populations; 4) Society’s lack of recognition of various libraries as significant players in catalyzing social change; 5) Local politics and identification of key stakeholders and potential partners” [17].

- continuing assessment of users' needs and modification of the services;
- participation of staff in lifelong learning projects, such as conferences, workshops and seminars for professional development.

The information centers now place emphasis on access to digital sources and their optimized management to meet the specific needs of local communities⁷.

Municipal libraries are on the lowest level of development in comparison with others. The most common causes for this are:

1. lack of a common administrative authority that defines the mission, goals and the policies,
2. lack of homogeneity of the organizational structure,
3. a plethora of legislative framework,
4. different funding resources and low budget,
5. insufficient and low qualified staff.

In most cases, local governments, following the decisions of the mayor and his governing council, refuse to recognize the importance of a library to the local economic and cultural development. As a consequence, a lot of the municipal libraries are characterized by poor collections, lack of information sources, short opening hours, ill-adjusted buildings, lack of ICT infrastructure and Internet access. Most of their staff do not participate in lifelong learning projects for professional development and they are either low qualified librarians or paraprofessionals. Finally, we should point to “[...] the lack of an authority that would function as coordinator of the municipal libraries supporting them know how, guidelines and financing resources, remain them static and disappointed. The modernization and the technology transfer seems impossible for them and the changes in services a dream” [5].

The Center of Children and Adolescents (OPEB) has been under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious affairs since 1993. OPEB established 28 children's and adolescent libraries. The main goal of the project was the social inclusion of special groups of youth, including youth from remote areas, prisons,

⁷ Unlike other types of libraries, the public library is set to serve the local community, varying from children to elderly people, from blue collar to professional and managerial, from illiterate to highly literate. The diversity of the user community makes the public library service delivery more difficult than that of other types of libraries. It becomes even harder to meet the needs of everyone of different ages and different social classes. Thus, community consultation becomes a priority for public libraries, both to improve service and achieve targets [29].



Fot. 3. Municipal Library of Chania, Crete

Source: <http://www.librarychania.gr/index.php/library-history>.

areas with language and rational minorities. Last year, the Ministry of Education ceased to support these projects, because of Greece's economic problems.

During the past years, cooperation between the 3 kinds of public libraries improved considerably.

School libraries

School libraries do not have a long history in Greece because the educational system is teacher – centered and school libraries were undervalued. In 1985, a new legislation ruled the establishment of a school library in every school. This was the first step. In 1999, 450 school libraries were established throughout the country. “The problems that will have to be faced are still enormous: the continuous funding and support of these libraries, the renewal of their collections, and their integration in the educational system. Most important though is the change of attitude that is required by the teachers who are being asked

to apply a new educational model, one that requires and is based on the school library” [24].

A decade later, we can say that the problems of school libraries linger. Many are on the brink of closing down, or were closed down as a result of the compulsory budget cuts and staff redundancies in the public sector in 2011.

Specialist research libraries of individual organizations

The condition of specialist and research libraries is parallel to that of public and municipal ones. A disparity of administrative organization, fund resources, staff level and infrastructures lower the level of their services.

This applies to libraries of banks, museums, research centres, hospitals, scientific foundations and institutions.

Thesauri

In Greece, two classification systems are used in libraries and information units: Subject Headings lists and Thesauri. Their respective advantages and disadvantages are commonly known. The dilemma is whether to use arbitrary terms in native language or the authority terms in a foreign language. Greek libraries either use authority records and subject headings in English or create their own.

During the last years, there is a strong tendency in Greece towards the implementation of such semantic tools as thesauri and controlled vocabularies in Greek language. The more the libraries are modernized, the more urgent the necessity is to fill the gaps in terminology serving the content subject analysis in the Greek language.

Given the peculiarity of the language (difference in alphabet and terms) some significant initiatives have occurred in this context:

1. the subject headings list of the National Library of Greece, which, however, were inadequate for scientific and special libraries,
2. the authority records of public libraries union catalog,
3. the subject and name list of school libraries,
4. the terminology of the library of the Technical Chamber of Greece,
5. the subject construction of the databases of the National Centre of Social research, and

6. the subject terms of academic libraries that maintain the union catalog.

It is worth noting that the Library and Information Science department of TEI of Athens developed micro-thesauri on library and information science, economics, industry, Greek traditional music instruments and renewable energy systems as students' graduate theses, which will be integrated into the union catalogue of academic libraries in the Panhellenic repository called "Artemis" [33].

The National Documentation Centre made a first step for the creation of proportional infrastructure in the Greek libraries with the growth of Thesaurus of Greek Terms on a cooperative basis. Librarians and specialists from all kinds of libraries participated in the compilation of the thesaurus, assisting new technologies and electronic infrastructure. The NDC Thesaurus of Greek general terms is compiled in Greek and translation in English [1].

The thesaurus follows the international standardization of thesaurus compilation and includes horizontal and vertical interconnections between terms. In addition to the general thesaurus, a separate medical and health terminology thesaurus was also compiled.

Thesaurus of scientific terms. Thesaurus of Greek terms constitutes a powerful conceptual tool of Greek language, in which few initiatives have been realized up to now. The present paper describes the administrative context and the work carried out for the compilation of a Greek thesaurus within the frame of the Consortium of Greek Academic Libraries.

The committee decided to have micro-thesauri compiled by librarians and specialists in particular fields to ensure the accuracy of terms. Each proposed term is examined and approved by the thesaurus committee [31].

Nowadays, many libraries have developed social tagging services, after the considerable use of social tagging and deployment as key components of Web 2.0. Another group of libraries has enriched the search and indexing services of their OPACs with the folksonomy of Library Thing. Research focuses on the evaluation of these metadata (folksonomies) and their further exploitation. It has been found that a large number of tags constitutes new terms for the authority file of a Library. There are also developed methodologies for social tagging evaluation and policies to integrate social tags in their indexing processes [12].

Digital archives, repositories, collections

An emphasis is laid on digitization of rare books and the primary sources. Universities, Technological Institutions, Research Institutions and cultural foundations of private or public sector do their best to increase and enrich the digital content, financed either by European or national resources. Digital libraries and the institutional repositories are generally maintained by higher education institutions⁸.

The National Documentation Center (NDC) was among the first organizations to create digital content. NDC offers free access to 15.500 digital or digitized PhD full text theses. Those are hosted at the National Archive of Theses. NDC also has developed the repository Helios that contains 4.300 research documents, the repository Pandektis of 40.000 historical monastery documents (25.000 full text).

Open access is also offered to the digital collections of the public libraries of Serres and Livadia.

Greek digital libraries' search engine is a federated search engine serving 57 Greek digital libraries and institutional repositories.

Despite the economic conditions of the country and the problems that libraries face, in January of 2011, the Minister of Education announced that 17.200.000 pages of the collections of the National library and the public libraries, and 7.500.000 pages of archives have been digitized. The access to digital content is free for all citizens [21].

Library personnel

The majority of Greek libraries employ library professionals, except for school libraries. By international standards, most Greek libraries are small and medium, so the specialized staff are firstly, librarians, and secondly, IT professionals. A lot of library personnel hold Master's or PhD degree.

The results of a survey conducted in 2008 proved the high educational level of the majority of the personnel and high standards of their services. The purpose of the survey was to assess the situation in human resources following the technological change. Some important results are the following:

⁸ Visit Open Archives at <http://www.openarchives.gr/> to discover the content and access them.

1. Both the organizations and the employees themselves tried to improve their knowledge and skills in order to manage the new working conditions.
2. Libraries tend to apply the technological innovation rather than adopt innovative procedures.
3. Library staff reacted positively to the changes because they were expected. The majority of librarians accepted the challenges and only a low percentage expressed their fear and insecurity.
4. The library staff participate in the library's decisions, take initiatives, solve problems, create new services and are involved in their development.
5. The majority of the staff seek information not only about their jobs or their library, but about general issues concerning libraries. It is a positive element and shows that the information channels are both vertical and horizontal [15].

Consortia and Cooperation

A. HEAL-Link (Hellenic Academic Libraries Link) (<http://www.heal-link.gr/enh>) started as a project funded by the Greek Ministry of Education under the umbrella of European Union Structural Funding. It includes 57 institutions:

- 37 higher education institutions (universities and TEI),
- 14 research institutions,
- The Academy of Athens,
- The National Library of Greece,
- The Greek Parliamentary Library,
- The Pedagogic Institute,
- The National Institute of Agricultural Research, and
- The Cyprus Universities.

The aims of Heal-Link include:

- adoption of the common policy on print and electronic journals subscriptions and the rationale development of collections of journals among partners for saving funds and increasing the sources to meet the educational and research needs of users of participating institutions;
- joint subscription and remote access to electronic resources and information services electronic journals;
- development and function of the Union Catalogue of bibliographic records of Greek academic libraries and the wide use of them;



Fot. 4. University of Cyprus Library

Source: http://library.ucy.ac.cy/el/library/libraries_collections_branches/main-library.

- development and establishment of standards on every library activity and topic;
- continuing education of libraries' personnel and their professional development;
- cooperation in ILL procedures, offering access to libraries' users;
- cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions nationally and globally in order to monitor the international developments in copyright and consortia management;
- every initiative that promotes and supports academic libraries and their active synergy.

The development of the consortium determined the change of libraries in various sectors. As an example we refer to the policy on scientific journals: during its first three years of operation, HEAL-Link members were obliged to keep their print subscriptions to the cooperative publishers, while the project shouldered the extra costs relating to license agreements. In 1998, six of the thirty-four academic institutions had more than 80% of the total print subscriptions and carried the corresponding cost. In 2001, the Council of Rectors of the Greek Universities decided that the consortium should move over to e-only agreements with mandatory cancellation of print subscriptions for the

corresponding e-journals. One printed archive copy was to be deposited at the National Documentation Center. The cost was to be distributed among the institutions in accordance with the financial support each of them was receiving from the state. The Council of Rectors suggested that the financial contribution from each university budget be sliced off the top by the ministry and given to the coordinating organization to cover the cost of the license agreements. The ministry decided not to cut the budgets of the academic institutions any further but to shoulder the cost of all the HEAL-Link agreements with extra funding over the next three-year period (2003–2005). Starting in 2003 HEAL-Link had agreements with twelve publishers, thus giving its members access to 7.500 full-text, peer-reviewed journals [36].

There is also an alphabetical list of all electronic journals in the HEAL-Link collection, with links to the journals' tables of contents at the corresponding publishers' homepages. A metasearch engine enables a simultaneous search of all the journals from different publishers by keywords and subject terms.

HEAL-Link enriched its services by creating the portal which, in addition to access to the corresponding scientific journals, offers an option to browse the Union Catalogue of bibliographic records of Greek academic libraries as well as access to Online Public Access Catalogue (OPACs) of all Greek academic institutions using Zephyr, a Z39.5 interface.

HEAL-Link is member of the International Coalition of Libraries Consortia (ICOLC) and Southern European Libraries Link (SELL) (<http://www.heal-link.gr/SELL/index.html>).

B. Synergasia. In 2003, following an initiative of the Goethe Institute library in Athens, an Organising Committee for the Support of Libraries was established. It consists of some of the foreign cultural institutions in Athens, the National Library, the National Documentation Centre, the National Book Centre, the EU Delegate in Greece, the Association of Greek Librarians and Information Scientists, and it remains under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The Committee is very active in organizing conferences, workshops, lectures and other events. It mainly focuses on public and municipal libraries. In 2006, the Committee inaugurated the *Synergasia*, a free online library journal published quarterly in Greek [4].

C. HELiN – Hellenic Economic Libraries Network. The Network consists of 11 libraries.

Union catalogues

The project of the Greek Union catalogue was a project financed by the EU with the aim of creating an electronic network of Greek academic libraries to provide infrastructure for the implementation of the Union catalog in Greece.



Fot. 5. Hellenic Academic Libraries Link

Source: <http://www.heal-link.gr>.



Fot. 6. Union Catalog of Hellenic Academic Libraries

Source: <http://www.unioncatalog.gr>.

The Union Catalogue, is a result of the cataloguing efforts of many different organizations. Currently, the Union Catalogue collects records from different institutions, and they are consistently indexed. It is a bibliographic database of all items in Greek libraries allowing inter-library loans, joint cataloguing and access to foreign databases [16].

The effects of works on union catalogues are:

- The National Archive on Dissertation Theses (HEDI), the doctoral theses of Greeks submitted in Greece or abroad;
- The Union Catalogue of Periodicals. The NDC, with the cooperation of the 212 contributing Greek scientific libraries, develops and updates the Union Catalogue of Periodicals. The Catalogue includes a total of 27.000 periodical titles. It is published in print and CD-ROM format and is also maintained online;
- The Union Catalogue of Collections on Hellenic History and Culture (*ARGOS*: Archaeological Greek Online System). The database covers topics in history, geography, anthropogeography, law, economics and culture of Greece, Balkan countries and the Mediterranean area. It comprises works in Greek and other languages.

The analysis of the condition of academic libraries in Greece in 1998, revealed some peculiarities, which are enumerated below:

- lack of a coordinating body and cooperation mechanisms to make decisions for the implementation of commonly accepted standards;
- variety of automated systems used by the libraries, different potentials, different MARC formats and support either all or a part of an online system modules;
- the general standard used for cataloguing is the Anglo American Cataloguing Rules. The level of the implementation and the rules interpretation does not show any consistency, since it has not been agreed or dictated by a national decision making committee;
- the use of standards related to bibliographic records is neither widespread nor standardized. The Bibliographic records of non-Greek material are purchased from foreign organizations. The cataloguing of Greek material is accomplished individually by each library;
- academic libraries had to face the subject analysis of material without authoritative Greek sources [16].

A Union Catalogue is presented to its users as a high-quality management information access system. This means that the system should meet standards for reasonably rapid and predictable response time, high availability and reliability, and good communication about out-ages. There are two options of the organization of the catalogue: central



Fot. 7. Bank of Greece Library

Source: <http://www.bankofgreece.gr/Pages/en/Bank/Library/default.aspx>.

and distributed. Greek libraries lean towards the central administration scheme and the Slave Union Catalog: The participating institutions catalogue their material at first locally, and then load the new or modified records to the central database [3].

The administration scheme was designed as follows “For the development, management and implementation of the Union Catalogue it is necessary to establish a consortium. It will be a non-profit organization of participating academic libraries and the National library. It will be directed by a project manager with proven experience in managing complex projects, and also knowledge of the issues of library cooperation and union catalogue implementation. [...] The Project Steering Board consisting of representatives of all participating libraries already exists and has appointed an Executive Group of its members. The manager will be referred to the Executive Group, members of which come from Academic institutions-members of the consortium. Work groups consisting of experts in various specialized areas from the participating institutions and libraries will work on topics relevant to the investigation, evaluation, implementation, standardization and adoption of rules and procedures. The remaining Greek libraries, research and public, will obviously join the Consortium in a later phase” [16].

In 2007, the 1st edition of the Union Catalogue – HALUC was presented, with the following statistics: 38 bibliographic databases, 2.391.741 bibliographic records of which the 86.45% (2.005.320) of records integrated in the Union Catalogue.

1.549.098 were unique bibliographic records. In October 2012, 8th edition of HALUC was issued with 3.964.785 bibliographic records, distributed in 68 bibliographic databases of 58 HALUC member-libraries [7].

Statistical and Total Quality Management Unit

Total Quality Management Unit of Greek Academic Libraries. The TQMU (MOPAB in Greek) is a project launched by the consortium of Greek academic libraries (Hellenic Academic Libraries Link – HEAL-Link) as part of the “Development of digital cooperation between Greek Academic Libraries”. The project was funded by the European Union, and its main objective was the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of statistical data concerning Greek academic libraries, according to the ISO 2789:2003 and the

ISO 11620 *Information and documentation – Library performance indicators*. Other objectives involved:

1. use of performance measurement procedures and the implementation of quality management rules to Greek academic libraries;
2. digitalization of the collection and analysis procedures of the statistical data;
3. creation of a thematic portal allowing academic libraries electronic access to statistical data and methods of data analysis.

National conferences

Panhellenic Academic Libraries Conference (PALC). The first idea was to initiate annual meetings of academic libraries' directors and decision makers in order with an aim to discuss current library issues, coordinate common goals and promote the library and information science. Each annual meeting was to be preceded by lectures of experts from Greece and abroad. The first symposium was held in the University of Ionina in 1991. The topics that were discussed then included:

- the role of libraries in the higher educational institutions (Universities and TEI) in the educational processes and research;
- human resources and their education in Library science departments;
- adoption of common standards in bibliographic processing, classification and subject analysis;
- the principles of acquisition and cooperation between libraries in the management of libraries;
- design concepts for new libraries;
- budget and fund raising;
- automation of services and routines.

Since 1991, 22 conferences have been organized and a lot of issues have been presented and discussed. The primary goal of the symposium/conference was a tentative cooperation and synergy between libraries. The consortium managed to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of the libraries in a short time.

Conference of Public Libraries. EEBEP⁹ has organized a series of National Conferences on Public Libraries. The first conference took place in 2009, and the last was held in 2011. The aim was to determine the ability of public libraries to contribute to the national context.

⁹ Greek Librarians and Information Specialists Association.

Conclusions

The analysis of the condition of Greek libraries led to the conclusions presented below. They were also confirmed by a survey carried out in 2008.

1. More than half of the libraries have a rather fuzzy idea of their mission, whereas few have a written strategic plan of how to fulfil their mission and goals.
2. A small percentage of libraries set financial goals, whereas the majority pursue non-economic objectives.
3. Most libraries function in the traditional way; they lack procedures to offer new services. The preferred new services are related to the use of material rather than communication.



Fot. 8. The Child library in the National Garden

Source: www.culturenow.gr/43957/afghseis-paramythiwn-ston-ethniko-khpo (In Greek).

4. The organization and operation of libraries is more collection-centered than user-centered; libraries ignore the strategic planning of how to be appealing to their target group.
5. The majority of libraries have created procedures for informing the public about their services. They organize events for the library users. It appears that this helps develop positive attitudes among users.
6. Low percentage of libraries think of strategic alliances and develop communication programmes. Libraries seem to overlook the importance of inter-library exchange and communication.

Generally speaking, librarians zealously perform the tasks that are traditional and collection centered, as opposed to innovative initiatives. Libraries must gradually transfer knowledge and information centers and enter into partnerships with stakeholders, target groups and enterprises. They can and must develop strategic plans to attract potential users [14].

Greek libraries operate within a problematic legislative framework. Nevertheless, they have achieved a lot because of the commitment and efforts of staff. The problem is the management, which involves the institutional framework, the regulations of the operation, budget increase, administration and the control, and periodical evaluation [25].



Fot. 9. The Child library in the National Garden

Source: <http://www.paidorama.com/paidiki-bibliothiki-ethnikou-kipou.html> (In Greek).

In the beginning of 2011, a national conference was organized devoted to “the national policy on libraries and archives”. The conference was organized under the aegis of President of the Greek Republic.

The Minister of education set out the guidelines for the new national policy on libraries and archives:

1. The new policy is short-term, its deadline is the year 2020 and the main goal is the construction of electronic space for information and knowledge.
2. The design of a new national system of libraries with an aim of connecting it to archives and museums in the future.
3. The integration of libraries with the educational system and the promotion of reading policy.
4. The core of the system will be the National Library of Greece, the Library of the Greek Parliament and the consortium of Academic libraries.
5. Public and municipal libraries will create a network connected to NLG.
6. The center of the library system is the user: scientist, child, student, researcher etc.

However, further development and projects continuation were hindered by the economic crisis.

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Biblioteki greckie: przeszłość, teraźniejszość i perspektywy

Abstrakt: Dzieje bibliotek greckich można podzielić na 3 etapy. Pierwsza faza, trwająca do 1994 r., trwała najdłużej. Cechowała ją tradycyjna organizacja, słabe usługi, brak licencjonowanych bibliotekarzy i niski status społeczny. Europejskie programy wymiany oraz finansowanie UE przyczyniły się do rozwoju bibliotek greckich w czasie drugiego etapu (1995–2009), który charakteryzował się wprowadzeniem modernizacji, automatyzacji, innowacyjności, internacjonalizacji i zatrudnieniem wykwalifikowanego personelu. Ten etap trwał niecałe 2 lata, jednak jego efekty były spektakularne dla wielu bibliotek. Były one finansowane przez rząd i UE, które wprowadziły strategiczne programy rozwoju. Dzięki temu biblioteki rozwijały się. Jednak w obliczu problemów gospodarczych i organizacyjnych zostały zobowiązane do zmniejszenia liczby pracowników i cięć budżetowych. W ciągu ostatnich pięciu lat biblioteki greckie są w trakcie trzeciego, nieprzewidzianego etapu, podczas którego ich osiągnięcia mogą zostać utracone z powodu braku funduszy i zwolnień pracowników. Artykuł koncentruje się na drugiej fazie rozwoju. Obecnie możliwe są tylko dwa alternatywne rozwiązania: dalsza poprawa lub pogorszenie sytuacji bibliotek.

Słowa kluczowe: Biblioteki greckie. Biblioteki i informacja naukowa. Historia Biblioteki. Organizacja bibliotek. Zarządzanie bibliotekami