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Danai-Dimitra Klothaki, Kathrin Thull

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Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0

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Athens, Greece

Project ARCHAthen: Archives of the DAI Athens and the Archaeology of Greece

A Progress Report 2021 to 2024

DANAI-DIMITRA KLOTHAKI, KATHRIN THULL

Athens Department of the German Archeological Institut (DAI)

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HEAD OF PROJECT

K. Sporn

TEAM

K. Brandt, M. Düntzer, D. Grigoropoulos, D.-D. Klothaki, K. Thull

ABSTRACT

The project »Archives of the DAI Athens and the Archaeology of Greece« (ARCHAthen), funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), intends to make a significant part of the archive of the DAI Athens publicly available through iDAI.archives. It includes numerous documents, bound objects, drawings, maps, photos and newspapers that have been organised, described, conserved and digitised. The digitised copies will now be uploaded and interlinked within the iDAI.world. All the archival material combined will be able to provide researchers with an overview of the DAI Athens' history, activities, important events, members and associates.

KEYWORDS

analog documentation, archival records, databases, annual reports, correspondence, documents/certificates, history of research, aerial photography, conservation, retrodigitization



Fig. 1: Collage of materials from Project ARCHAthens

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das DFG-Projekt »Archive des DAI Athen und die Archäologie Griechenlands« (ARCHAthens) hat zum Ziel, ausgewählte Archivbestände des DAI Athen zu erschließen, zu digitalisieren und für die Wissenschaft sowie für eine breitere Öffentlichkeit online bereitzustellen. Es umfasst zahlreiche Dokumente, gebundene Objekte, Zeichnungen, Karten, Fotos und Zeitungen, die klassifiziert, beschrieben, restauriert und digitalisiert wurden. Die Digitalisate werden nun in die iDAI.world hochgeladen und miteinander verlinkt. Die Gesamtheit des Archivmaterials soll Forscher:innen einen Überblick über die Geschichte, die Aktivitäten, die wichtigsten Ereignisse, die Mitglieder und die Mitarbeiter:innen des DAI Athen geben.

SCHLAGWÖRTER

Analoge Dokumentation, Archivalien, Datenbanken, Jahresberichte, Korrespondenzen, Dokumente/Urkunden, Forschungsgeschichte, Luftbildfotografie, Konservierung, Retrodigitalisierung

Introduction

1 The project »[Archives of the DAI Athens and the Archaeology of Greece](#)« (ARCHAthens) (Fig. 1) aims to make selected archival holdings of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) Athens available online for scholars as well as for the general public through its classification, description and digitisation. The relevance and importance of the archives of the DAI for research both in physical and digital form has come to the fore in recent years, with many archaeologists, historians and students, among others, showing interest in accessing the content of the archive. Therefore, a well-structured and organised archive and an easily accessible online database are essential for the faster and easier retrieval of the desired information. The following paragraphs aim to show the breadth and depth of the material that is currently being processed as part of ARCHAthens and whose digitisation and description will benefit researchers in a wide range of disciplines.

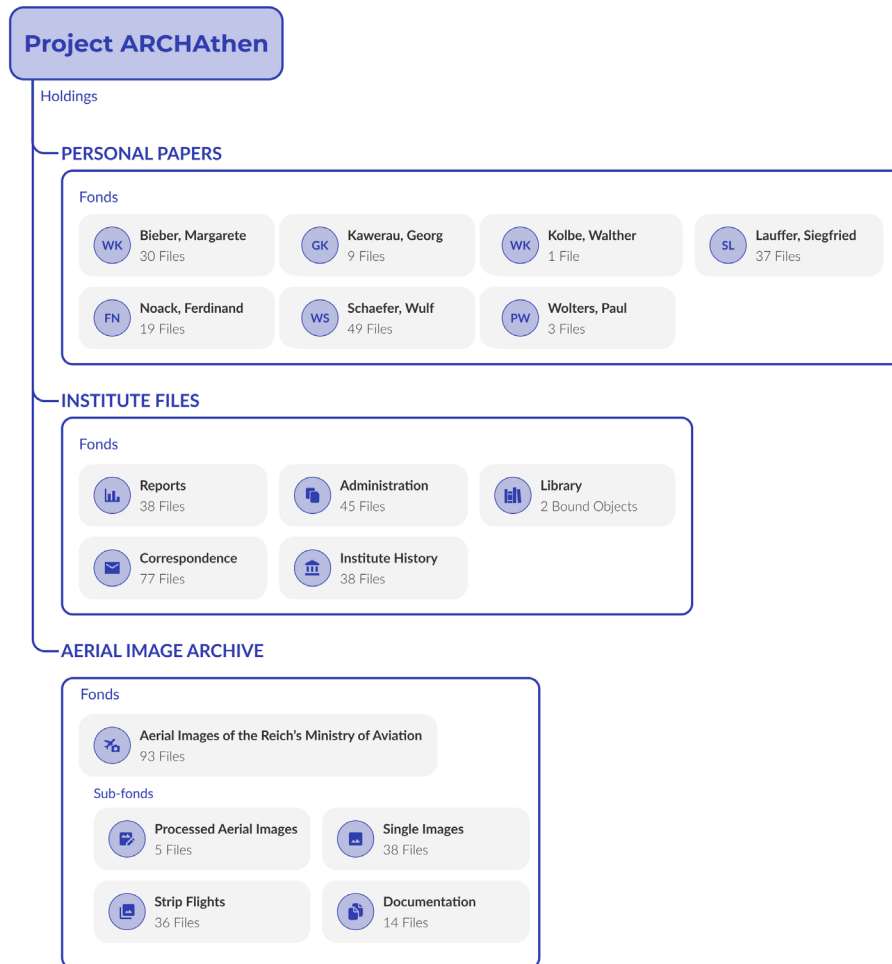


Fig. 2: Chart of the project's archival holdings

Archival Material Featured in ARCHathen: an Overview

2 The Athens department is the second oldest department of the DAI abroad and has extensive archives that go back to even before its foundation in 1874. ARCHathen is intended to emphasise the significance of these archives for the history of the institute and the contribution of the DAI Athens to Greek archaeology, but also for the history of the German presence in Greece. A primary section of the material that was selected to be incorporated in the project includes parts of the so-called old registry or institute files up to 1944, which contains correspondence, reports, administrative records, documents about the institute's history and the library archive (Fig. 2). As part of the project, the aerial photograph archive (RLM series) and the personal papers of seven well-known scholars of antiquity are also to be made accessible. The latter include personal documents and diverse material produced and/or collected by German scholars connected to the DAI Athens, such as the building researcher Georg Kawerau (1856–1909), the epigraphist Walther Kolbe (1876–1943), the archaeologists Margarete Bieber (1879–1978) and Ferdinand Noack (1865–1931), the ancient historian Siegfried Lauffer (1911–1986), the architect and building researcher Wulf Schaefer (1907–1994) and the archaeologist Paul Wolters (1858–1936).

The Archival Material in Detail

Personal Fonds of Scholars

3 Among the seven personal fonds, the ones of Georg Kawerau, Siegfried Lauffer, and Wulf Schaefer are the most extensive. Kawerau's personal papers document his work on the Athenian Acropolis with Panagiotis Kavvadias (1850–1928) and Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1853–1940) in the 1880s, both in the form of original manuscripts and drawings¹. The latter was published by Jens Andreas Bundgaard

1 Köster 1909, 68–69.



Fig. 3: Personal fonds of G. Kawerau including architectural and aquarelle drawings and notebooks

in 1974². Additionally, there are several aquarelle drawings from Kawerau's travels showing ancient sites like Mycenae and cities like Nauplion, as well as studies of people in their contemporary clothes (Fig. 3).

4 Schaefer's scientific work was almost solely focused on the architectural history of Nauplion, especially its fortifications and secular and religious buildings, during the Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman periods. Throughout his life, he also corresponded with various German, Greek and American archaeologists, among them especially Ulf Jantzen (1909–2000), Kurt Müller (1880–1972) and Walther Wrede (1893–1990), as well as other scholars/artists like Georg Vinko von Peschke (1900–1952). It was the former first director of the DAI, Georg Karo (1872–1963), who encouraged Schaefer to do his doctoral thesis on the building history of Nauplion in the Middle Ages. In the meantime, he worked as an architect in the excavations of the DAI as well as of the American School of Classical Studies in Corinth. His work is significant as many of the monuments depicted, such as the vaulted water reservoir of Nauplion's Venetian port, no longer exist or have suffered irreversible damage³. Schaefer never published his thesis, but the many photographs, drawings, manuscripts, and notes he assembled for it are now part of the archive. His work was finally published in 2021 through Alexander Zäh⁴.

5 Siegfried Lauffer, who received a travel scholarship from the DAI in 1939/40, focused his research activities on Boeotia, especially the Kopais area. His material also concerns excavations in Chalkis and the study of inscriptions from Chalkis and Amorgos. It comprises numerous maps and drawings, notes, manuscripts, copies of inscriptions and photos, including a collection of his personal photos from his field trips. An important part of his papers also included in the project is an unpublished, two-volume manuscript on the topography and history of Chalkis. His research in Boeotia and Chalkis, much of which was carried out after the beginning of the German occupation of Greece during the Second World War, is especially revealing about the activities of German archaeologists in Greece during that period (Fig. 4).

- 2 Kawerau et al. 1974.
- 3 Grigoropoulos 2021.
- 4 Schaefer 2021.



Fig. 4: Personal fonds of S. Lauffer including his manuscript, photographs, slides, one map and one aerial photo



Fig. 5: Personal fonds of F. Noack including architectural and aquarelle drawings, ink studies, a letter from Spyridon Marinatos (1901–1974) with a photograph and an envelope addressed to F. Noack

6 The personal fonds of Ferdinand Noack, Walther Kolbe and Paul Wolters, on the other hand, highlight only certain aspects of their work. Margarete Bieber was the first woman ever to receive the DAI travel scholarship for Classical Archaeology in 1909/10⁵. Her papers include working materials on ancient reliefs in Greece and Italy, and scholarly correspondence between her and various archaeologists. Ferdinand Noack received the travel scholarship in 1891/92, during which he studied Mycenaean settlements in Boeotia and later became a member of the *Zentraldirektion*⁶. His papers consist mostly of a collection of materials on Minoan and Mycenaean decorative elements and building ornaments in the form of compiled drawings and collages (Fig. 5). The personal papers of Walther Kolbe, a holder of the travel scholarship in 1901/02, consist of less than 30 drawings and rubbings of Laconian and Messenian inscriptions documenting his work on the *Inscriptiones Graecae* V 1 that he took over from Hans von Prott after his death (1869–1903). Finally, Paul Wolters' personal fonds consist mostly of a compilation of quotes from ancient authors on Olympia and a correspondence book from his time as second secretary of the DAI Athens under Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1853–1940)⁷.

Correspondence

7 One of the largest and most important archival holdings that forms part of the project is the general correspondence from 1920 until 1944. It documents the eventful time between the institute's reopening in 1921 after the First World War and its second closing in 1944 towards the end of the Second World War. The largest amount of letters dates to the late 1920s and early 1930s, when the institute was under the direction of Georg Karo and Walther Wrede. Back then, the institute was not only a contact point for archaeologists but also for travellers with a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds, from students and artists to doctors. It showcases the institute's affairs, its international network, and its position in the Greek scholarly and political landscape, as well as attests to contemporary history and events. This continues well into the National Socialist era and the beginning of the Second World War, revealing the endless and often

5 Recke 2013, 142.

6 Schwandner 1988, 162.

7 Lullies 1988, 124.



Fig. 6: Olympia correspondence including architectural drawings and photographs of the excavation house, letters, a telegram and a Greek newspaper

bizarre bureaucracy of that time. There are extensive records to reconstruct how the institute adapted during and after the war and during the German occupation of Greece, as well as to study contemporary developments within German Classical archaeology at that time. They sometimes even allow glimpses into individual persons' political views.

8 Apart from the general correspondence, the project also contains letters about the institute's fieldwork activities (1887–1944), including the Institute's two big excavations in Olympia (Fig. 6) and Samos, as well as other smaller projects that were taking place all over Greece (e.g. Argos, Naxos, Sparta etc.). In addition, the correspondence archive also includes a small number of folders with letters from and to the Greek authorities regarding the administrative and legal proceedings of the institute in Greece.

Reports

9 Quarterly and yearly reports make up another extensive group of documents that shed light on the internal workings and the history of the department. They are addressed to the DAI Headquarters and the Executive Committee in Berlin by the directors in Athens, who inform them about various departmental matters, problems, or requests. These documents are valuable since, in addition to providing an image of the Athens department at the time, they can be used as a source of information for the economic, social and political conditions in Greece. As some of these documents no longer exist in the archive of the DAI headquarters in Berlin, they form a unique source of material. In the future, making these rich sources available will help bring forward interconnections with other documents in the Athens department or other DAI archives and enable scholars to tap their research potential comprehensively.

Institute's History, Administration and Library Archive

10 Equally significant are the institute's history archive (1874–1954) and the administrative archive (1873–1950). The former contains documentation of past events and anniversaries, members and associates of the institute, information on travel and research, as well as a collection of newspapers covering the

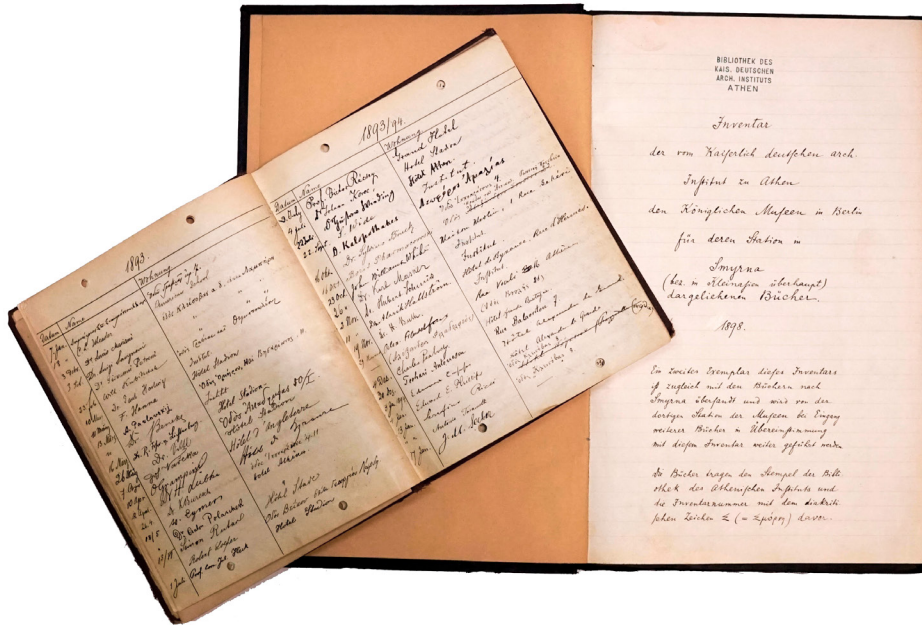


Fig. 7: Inventory of the Station Smyrna and the library's visitor's book

institute's works and accomplishments or archaeological news in general. The latter consists mostly of accounting documents, as well as letters, drawings and contracts concerning the past and current institute buildings in Athens, presenting an insight into how the finances of the department have developed throughout the years.

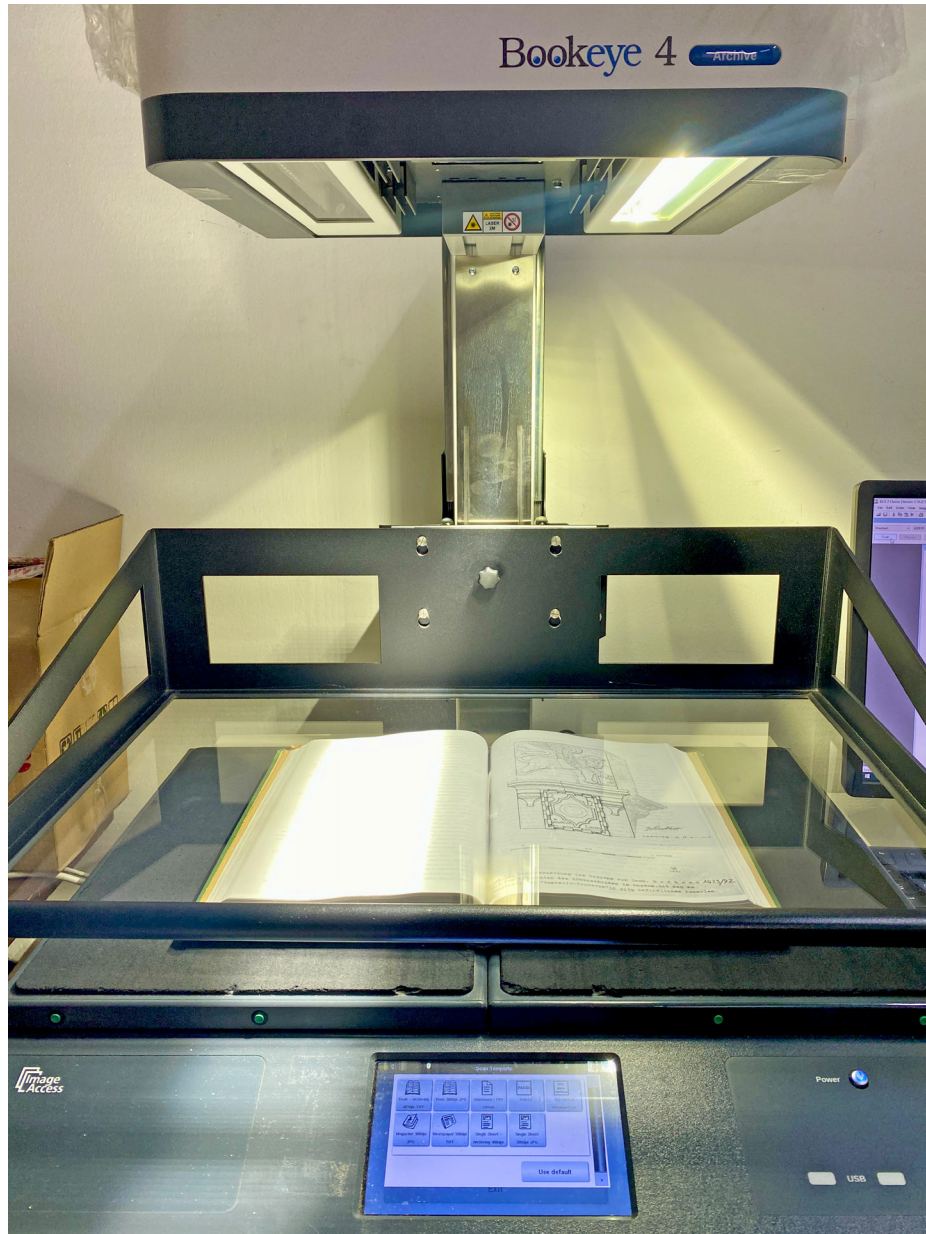
11 In addition, two bound items are included from the library archive. One is an inventory of books from the library of the Athens department borrowed by the *Station Smyrna*, a branch office of the Berlin Museums (1884–1899) whose first director was Carl Humann (1839–1896)⁸, showing a nice example of the crucial role of the DAI Athens for early German archaeological research in Asia Minor. The other one is a book detailing the names and addresses of all the library visitors from 1892 to 1956 (Fig. 7).

Aerial Photos

12 Part of the project is also a collection of aerial photo prints of Greece and its neighbouring countries taken by the Reich's Ministry of Aviation, *Reichsluftfahrtministerium* (RLM), mostly between July 7 and 16, 1941 and September 30 to November 8, 1941, as well as in 1942⁹. On behalf of the DAI, three different planes managed to take 3693 pictures, mostly of Attica, Euboea, and Argolis, as well as several other places, islands, and archaeological sites. Following reconnaissance flights by the X. Fliegerkorps, photographs of North Africa, Cyprus and Crete were added. The flights were undertaken in North-South and South-North strips and the photos overlap. As the negatives no longer exist, the surviving photo prints are of great historical and topographical value. Documentation of the process is included in the form of correspondence between the DAI (Athens/Berlin), the *Referat Kunstschutz* and the *Reichsluftfahrtministerium*. The surviving correspondence and other documents will also be digitised as part of the project, as they provide detailed background information on the preparatory work, implementation and follow-up work of the aerial photography.

8 Bittel 1979, 70.

9 Hiller von Gaertringen 1995, 470–475.



Work in Progress and Future Plans

13 At the time of writing, the classification of all archival material, as well as the description and the upload of the resulting data onto [iDAI.archives](#), has been completed. Altogether 10,035 documents in various formats, 4609 photo prints as well as 182 film negatives and slides were digitised, and more than 14,000 new archival descriptions have been generated. To ensure the most efficient retrieval of information, item-level descriptions were made according to the General International Standard for Archival Description ISAD(G). Furthermore, authority files have been created for the people and places connected to the archive. To prepare for digitisation, it was also deemed necessary for numerous archival documents to undergo conservation by paper conservators. This was done in collaboration with the Department of Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art of the University of West Attica.

14 The digitisation of the material has been carried out by the company »IMS – Innovative Micro Solutions SA«, according to the DFG standards and principles (Fig. 8). A total of 41,619 digitised objects, both in JPEG and in TIFF format, have been produced. It is currently being followed by the data control and upload of the digitised copies and metadata onto the corresponding platforms of [iDAI.world](#). The archival descriptions and digitised material will be also made available on supra-regional archival reference systems, such as [Archivportal-D](#) and the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek (DDB). A second phase of digitisation and publication of further archival materials as part of ARCHATHen is planned for the near future.

Fig. 8: Digitisation of W. Schaefer's manuscript using a book scanner

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CONTACT

Danai-Dimitra Klothaki, B.A.
German Archeological Institute, Athens Department
Fidiou 1
10678 Athens
Greece
danai-dimitra.klothaki@dainst.de
ORCID-ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7403-2919>
ROR ID: <https://ror.org/05nqsnd28>

Kathrin Thull, M.A.
German Archeological Institute, Athens Department
Fidiou 1
10678 Athens
Greece
kathrin.thull@web.de
ORCID-ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9454-2155>
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