

Marmara Islands

Sources for Marmarian Genealogical Research

Ioannis Papachristou

(Contact email: ex.anatolis@hotmail.com)

I would like to offer a list, as exhaustive as possible, of the sources that one may use when researching Marmarian ancestry. To begin with, the sources are limited, as in the case of any other Greek community of Asia Minor. However, a systematic research on the extant sources should give some results. In an attempt to categorize the sources we possess, I would say that there are four categories: institutional archives, private archives, newspapers and databases. For each source I will explain what one should expect to find.

Institutional archives – Under this category fall sources of various statuses of accessibility:

- 1) The General State Archives of Greece (ΓΑΚ): the Archive of Evaluation Committees of Refugees (to be found in Athens) includes the detailed fortune declarations, made in 1923-1925, of the refugees from each village of Marmara islands that were not farmers; the declarations sometimes include information about relatives of the refugee. The books also contain lists of the refugees that declared their fortune even if some of them in the meantime immigrated outside Greece. The local offices of the GAK at Chalkida and Limni at Euboea island also possess codices of interest from Marmara islands.
- 2) Centre for Asia Minor Studies: the Oral Tradition Archive contains interviews of refugees also from the Marmara islands that were taken in the 1960's. The refugees describe their villages, their life, give a number of interesting information for the history and the topography of the islands. The interviewed refugees also give some family info. The interviews are handwritten in Greek.
- 3) The Catalogue of Farmer Refugees made by the Greek State may be found online and they contain alphabetically the names, surnames, and the father's or husband's name of refugees.
- 4) Associations of Marmarians in Greece: some of the associations such as that at Nea Palatia, Neos Marmaras, Sarti (Nea Afisia), Kalamaria Thessaloniki, Nea Koutali at Limnos are in possession of archive material

such as books of the local councils of the islands that survived, ottoman records, photographs and books. Some of these associations also created museums. A list of these associations follows (all of them have websites and/or Facebook page):

Πολιτιστικός και Πνευματικός Όμιλος Νέων Παλατίων (Nea Palatia, Attica)

Πολιτιστικός Λαογραφικός Σύλλογος ΄Προικόννησος (Neos Marmaras, Chalkidiki)

Πολιτιστικός Σύλλογος Σάρτης ΄Η Αφησιά΄ (Sarti, Chalkidiki)

Πολιτιστικός Σύλλογος ΄Αφθόνη΄ (Pyrgadikia, Chalkidiki)

Πολιτιστικός Σύλλογος Μικρασιατών Προσφύγων Χαλκίδας (Chalkida, Euboea Island)

Groups on Facebook:

Marmara Island (History and Genealogy), Koutalis Ancestors and Descendants of Koutali.

- 5) The Ottoman Archives of the Turkish Republic in Istanbul contain a remarkable material about the Marmara islands, which is accessible upon appointment. The only requirement is that one needs to have a good knowledge of Ottoman and modern Turkish language. The archives cover the period 16th-20th centuries and contain, among other types of documents, population censuses, administrative documents, court documents, records about buildings (mainly churches, monasteries, schools), and the marble trading.
- 6) The Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul: it contains 1) church records (wedding-baptism-funeral certificates) from neighborhoods in which many Marmarians were living in Istanbul, such as Balat, Fener, Pera, Tatavla etc; 2) the patriarchal correspondence with the Metropolis of Proconnesus. Both are rather difficult to access for different reasons.
- 7) The Mount Athos Collections in Chalkidiki, Greece: the libraries of some monasteries contain material related to Marmara islands, especially of monasteries that may shed some light into genealogical research too. Most of this material is digitized and uploaded to www.athoskivotos.eu.

Private archives – Apart from private archives in the strict sense, in this category I include also some scattered material that are difficult to approach, such as archives stored in churches. Some private archives and documents end up in the aforementioned associations of Marmarians in Greece, but most of them are not digitized. Exception is the digitized archive of the Association of Nea Palatia that I pursued along with the director of the Historical and Palaeographical Archive

in Athens. A very important archive, that of Theofanis Theofanidis, from Prastio in Marmara Island, passes to my hands by his son Spyros Theofanidis and it currently is under digitization. The OGUS project, and George Topalidis, also managed to digitize the books of the Society of Afthoni in Los Angeles (among other important items) and we are grateful to him because we were able to create a list of all the names included in the books of the Society and post it to our page on Facebook 'Marmara island (History and Genealogy)'. In this category, I should mention the oldest church manuscript of the Metropolis of Proconnesus that survived at Egio, near Patra. I have digitized the manuscript a decade ago. It contains acts from 1651 up to 1833 mainly related to Aloni Island, the ancient seat of the Metropolis, and other ecclesiastical matters of the Metropolis. The transcription of the manuscript is almost ready and I prepare an edition that I will try to publish in the near future.

Newspapers – Newspapers created by refugees in Greece are a valuable source for research. Marmarians had two newspapers published from 1938 up to the 1970's: the *Pamprokonnisiakon Vima* (before World War II) and its sequel the *Marmarina Nea* (after the war). The *Pamprokonnisiakon Vima* is digitized in the collections of the library of the Greek Parliament (accessible online), and the *Marmarina Nea* is partly digitized by the library of Sismanoglio Megaro of the General Consulate of Greece in Istanbul (accessible online too) and I have digitized a big part of it from the collection of Theofanis Theofanidis. The newspaper *Mikrasiatiki* published in Chalkida, Evia is also of importance for Marmarians (but difficult to find, since it can be found in private collections at the moment).

Databases – Most of us today are familiar with various databases, like the Ellis Island, the Family Search, and other records in the United States, in Canada and in Europe that are public. The companies Greek Ancestry, MyHeritage and Ancestry also provide access to numerous documents that are useful to Marmarians across the world (through paid subscriptions).

In MyHeritage we also created until today, mainly with the efforts of the extinguished researcher of Marmarian genealogy, Vasiliki Babatsikos, family trees that contain more than 7.000 persons hailing from Marmara Islands.