

## **Tobacco firms and their purchasing offices in Cavalla during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.: The dissemination of the Austro-Hungarian and Swedish architectural style**

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**Abstract:** The objective of this paper is to discuss the different architectural styles that influenced the construction of the purchasing offices of foreign tobacco firms in Cavalla, during the era of booming tobacco trade. The diffusion of architectural principles from the relevant European cultural centers into local buildings is analyzed through an extensive archival, literature and field research. We identify a multitude of legible differences in a rare collection of buildings representative of European trends prevalent in this era. They range between the castellated style, extremely popular in Hungary in the early 20th c., incorporated in M. L. Herzog's central office (1899) and the French Beaux Art Style, in the office of the New York based Schinasi Bros Co (1905), to the midwar architectural modernism in the so-called "Swedish Guesthouse" (1934-1936). Who designed and to who was their construction commissioned to? What was their impact on the city's architectural profile and how were the ideas they incorporated disseminated? What similarities with relevant buildings in other northern Greek cities can be identified? How were they later maintained and how was their use changed after the companies had departed? Particular emphasis is placed on the most recent example, the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly building, which is analyzed as the postscript of an era; an era when the tobacco trade conveyed from Europe to Cavalla not only wealth, technological developments and social behaviors, but also aesthetic trends.

**Keywords:** Tobacco trade buildings, critical historiography of Modern Greek architecture, dissemination of architectural trends, Cavalla (Kavala).

### **1. The buildings of the tobacco trading companies in Cavalla**

The rich literature concerning the settlement of tobacco firms in Cavalla<sup>3</sup> focuses primarily on the warehouses and to a lesser extent on the administration offices. The typological and morphological elements of the large scale warehouses attracted the attention of researchers, photographers and artists, as loci associated with the tobacco trade and tobacco workers. The administration offices were located in smaller buildings -either privately owned or rented- usually attached to the warehouses.<sup>4</sup> The offices of larger

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<sup>3</sup> The spelling used (Cavalla) is encountered in the correspondence retrieved from the archives and was used extensively during the examined period.

<sup>4</sup> In certain cases, local directors resided in separate houses, in the vicinities of the tobacco warehouses they represented. The surviving residence of Adolf Wix (M-L Herzog Co) and the

tobacco companies would also house the residence of the company's local representative: and in the case of foreign companies they would also serve as the seat of the respective vice-consulate. In this essay, we argue that the offices of the tobacco companies in Cavalla constitute a distinct building corpus, formed in parallel to the warehouses through processes sometimes similar and sometimes diverse.<sup>5</sup>

Starting with the demolished buildings, it is worth quoting the researcher Aggeloudi, who pointed out that the oldest firm, the Abbott Brothers (Levant Co Ltd) settled in Cavalla in 1860, had their own administrative office: "*west to the Abbott's tobacco warehouses, located on the seafront, was a three-storey building with cumba, that possibly housed the administration offices of the company*" (Aggeloudi, 2009: 57). Another early example is Demetrius Tokkos' property built in 1879. The first two floors were used as a tobacco warehouse and the third as a dwelling (Aggeloudi 2009: 48). The offices of the Commercial Company of Salonica Ltd were located adjacent to an extensive array of warehouses, dominating Cavalla's port. The layout of the offices was symmetrical with a centralized access and featured small balconies on two diametrically opposite sides. The corners of the building were accentuated with double pilasters on both floors featuring horizontal flutes. A round skylight with the star of David decorated the pediment. The front door had an arched semicircular lintel with a skylight, and the door frame had horizontal flutes extending to a radial arrangement over the arched lintel (Theodoridou, 2007). The Alston Tobacco Co administration office was erected around 1910 by Demetrius Fesa, who rented it out to the company (Aggeloudi, 2009: 42). It consisted of an elevated basement featuring a crown on the parapet of the main entrance and incised decorative motifs on the window lintels. The building was demolished in 1987.



Figure 1: Commercial Company of Salonica Ltd (source: Aggeloudi, 2009)

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demolished of R. Mizrahi (Commercial Co) are such examples.

<sup>5</sup> This is also observed in neighbouring cities such as Xanthi, Drama and Serres. The Papastratos tobacco company in Agrinio also had a separate office building adjacent to the warehouses.

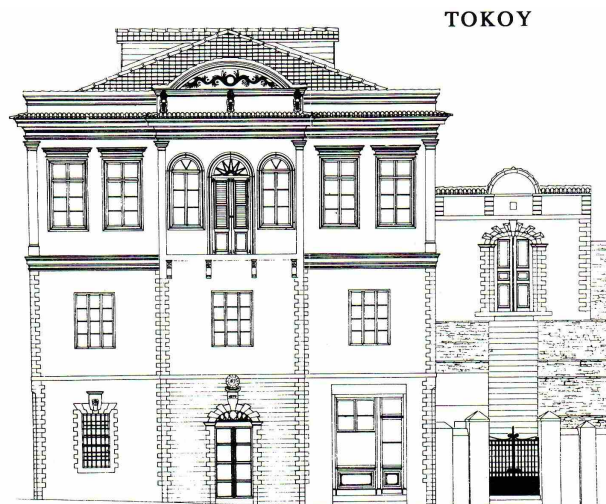


Figure 2: Demetrius Tokkos' property (1879) (Kiourtzi, 1995)



Figure 3: Alston Tobacco Co (1910) (Ziogas, 1995)

Traces of a number of smaller offices disappeared in the postwar construction uproar. They were probably temporarily rented premises in plain buildings. Unlike the sturdy stone-built warehouses that were difficult to demolish, they were easier targets. Fortunately, today in Cavalla, four offices of large tobacco firms survive, witnessing the history of the tobacco trade through a different perspective: the Austrian-Hungarian M. L. Herzog et Cie (1899) offices, that of Schinasi Bros Co (1905) and finally the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly House (1936) testify to the intentions of tobacco firms to establish their presence in the urban landscape through relevant architectural choices (Theodoridou, 2007: 254-257).

### 1.1 Herzog et Cie buildings

The two buildings of Herzog Co were built in the castellated style, extremely popular at that time in Austro-Hungary. Castellated details and the pointed arches of the roof parapet, typical characteristics of the style, appear in both buildings. The earlier building (on Damianou Street) features an imposing east entrance framed by incised architectural motifs in the same style. On the lintel over the first floor balcony door, an ornamental relief depicting an equilateral cross with half-round shamrock-like endings, resembles that of the south side of the latter building on Cyprus Street (now the City Hall).<sup>6</sup>

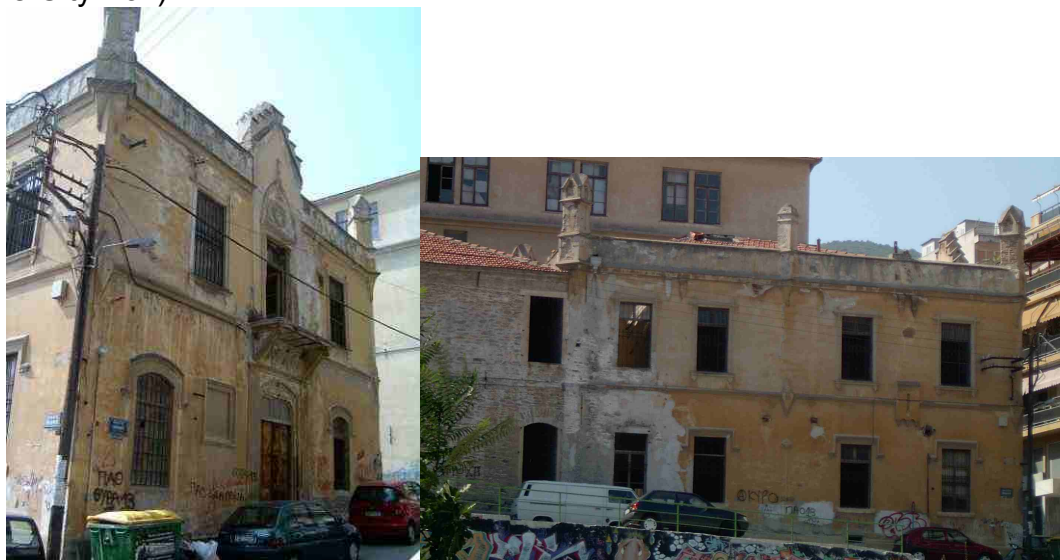


Figure 4: The first offices of M. L. Herzog et Cie, built after 1891. Today stands empty

Maybe the building on Damianou Street was not spacious enough or possibly not as imposing for a company of the magnitude of the Austro-Hungarian Jewish Family,<sup>7</sup> because during 1899-1900 a second more stately one was erected (Kover, 1991; Kover, 1993). It is said that the director of the tobacco firm and honorary consul of Austro-Hungary, Adolf (von Zsolnay) Wix, commissioned the project to the “master builder” Giangos Siagas after being impressed by the Villa “Chateau Mon Bonheur” in Thessaloniki, built by Siagas (Theodoridou, 2007). A thank-you letter sent by Adolf Wix to Siagas on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1899 proves that Siagas constructed the building (Cholevas, 1992:11). The origin of the design, however, can be traced in Hungary, where already since the 1870s, similar drawings had been featuring in architecture magazines and various impressive castellated mansions were being erected (Orszagh, 1981: 168-179). It is worth mentioning that the Hungarian noble families used the castellated style in their mansions in order to point out the centuries-old history of their families. It is possible that the family of Baron M. L. Herzog, a famous art collector of the time, were attempting to express the firm’s prestige through artistic buildings.<sup>8</sup> Indeed,

<sup>6</sup> Papazoglou, G. (1988) “Cyprus street- a walkthrough”, *Ypostego Magazine* (4) 9-16.

<sup>7</sup> M. L. Herzog et Cie was later renamed “Tabacus”. A head office in Budapest coordinated the Greek, Bulgarian and Turkish branches. See: *Panhellenic National Centenary Collection: the Golden Bible of Hellenism*, Hatjioannou (ed.), v. B, 1922, p. 245.

<sup>8</sup> The Herzog Art Collection in Budapest was confiscated and went through many adventures when the family was persecuted by the Nazi regime during WWII. In 2000, the court upheld



this building portrays the wealth and power of the company. It is broad-faced, symmetric and overlooking the port. Its visual impact upon the inhabitants as well as the visitors of Cavalla (both then as well as today) is unique.

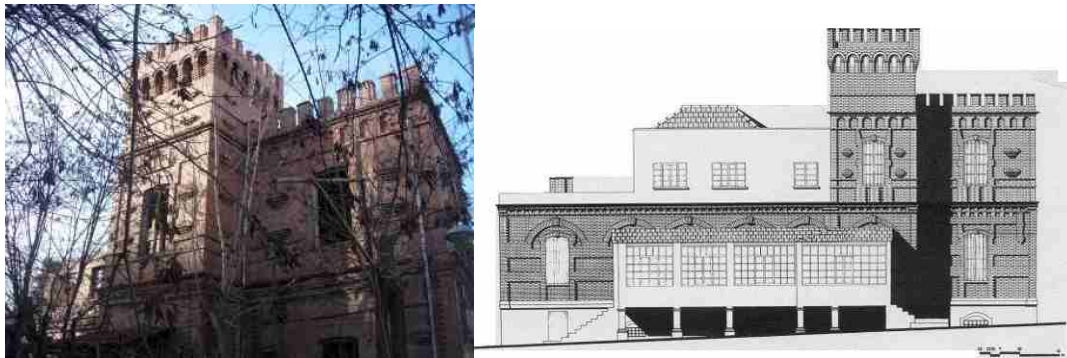


Figure 5: Chateau Mon Bonheur in Salonica (source: Moutsopoulos, 1976)



Figure 6: M. L. Herzog et Cie office (1899), today's City Hall

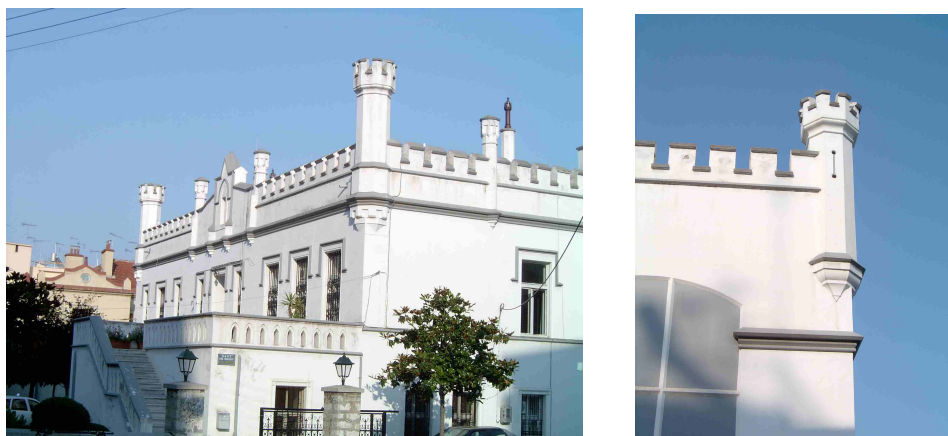


Figure 7: Castellations details in Herzog et Cie

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the return of ten valuable paintings from the Museum of Budapest to Moritz Herzog's granddaughter.

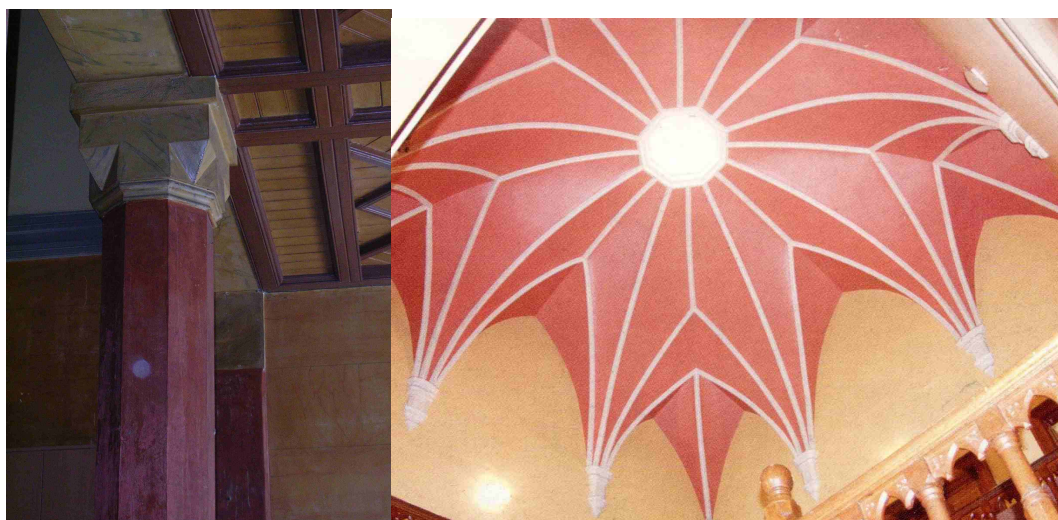


Figure 8: Interior details in Herzog et Cie

## 1.2 The office building of the Schinasi Bros

The building housing Schinasi Bros's offices was built in 1905, shortly after the company had settled in Cavalla.<sup>9</sup> It is a cubic, symmetrical semi-detached structure, an elegant town mansion in the Beaux Art style, adjacent to a terrace of tobacco warehouses that belonged to the same company. Its main entrance was located on the same alley which the tobacco workers used to enter the warehouses. The entire façade of the office bears horizontal flutes and features large openings with lowered cills. The façade is plastered on the first floor level. The ground and first floor are separated with a horizontal cornice. Verticality is accentuated by means of a recessed cill and lintel. The slight protrusion of the middle section reveals the location of the staircase. The frieze and the parapet on the roof are elaborately decorated and molding features bring out the cornice. The balcony railing and the metal entrance door, bearing the initials of the company, are of exquisite art.



Figure 9, 10: Schinasi Bros office building today (left) and in the 1980s (right) (Ziogas, 1995)

<sup>9</sup> According to an inscription on the lintel of the first floor balcony door.





Figure 10: Schinasi Bros office. The main entrance located adjacent to the warehouses



Figure 11: The Schinasi Bros warehouses



Figure 12: The interior staircase with a railing of excellent craftsmanship

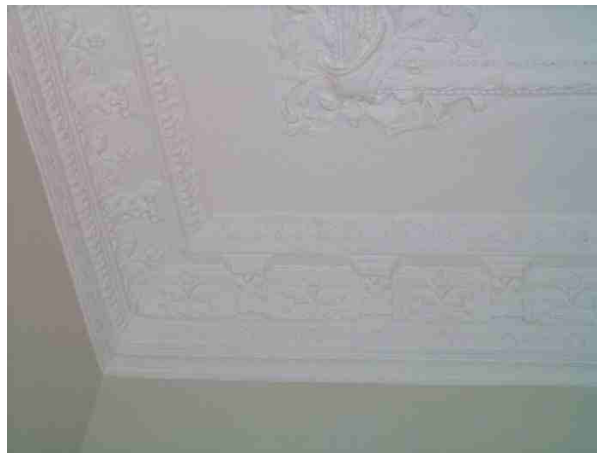


Figure 13: Ornamental plaster ceiling details on the ground floor

The Morris and Solomon Schinasi were Sephardic Jews from Ottoman Manissa, in the vicinity of Smyrna. Morris (1855-1928) sailed to Alexandria-Egypt in 1870 to work for a Greek tobacco merchant named Garofollo. In 1877 he founded the tobacco firm “Schinasi Bros” and in 1892 he settled in New York, where he developed a prosperous entrepreneurial activity. Morris returned to the Ottoman Macedonia in 1903 and married to Laurette Ben Rubi, a Jewish girl from Salonica, with whom he had three daughters. In New York, in 1907, he built a mansion on Riverside Drive, today a listed building. Three years after his death, his wife travelled to Manissa to found the Morris Schinasi Children's Hospital.



Figure 14: Morris Schinasi (left) and with his wife (right)  
(source: [www.turkofamerica.com](http://www.turkofamerica.com))



The building of Schinasi Bros differs from that of Herzog's: it has a less pompous style and is located in close proximity to the firm's warehouses. The impact it delivers is that of elegance and urbanity. Bearing in mind Schinasi's cosmopolitanism, we can safely argue that the choice of the specific architectural style reflects their experiences in New York's avant-garde scene.

The information concerning Herzog and Schinasi's buildings draws upon the literature. The Swedish Tobacco Monopoly building will be analyzed in more detail using material collected from various archival sources and interviews, because it constitutes a well preserved example of interwar architectural modernism, of which little evidence exists in the city of Cavalla. Another reason for focusing on the Swedish House is the status of ownership. The Herzog buildings were sold in 1921 to the "Société Anonyme des Tabacs d'Orient et d'Outre Mer" and in 1937, and after going into forced auction, were bought by the Municipality of Cavalla.<sup>10</sup> The Schinasi building came under the jurisdiction of the Greek State, while quite recently has been renovated to shelter public services of the Precinct of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The Swedish Tobacco Monopoly Building is the only one remaining today under the same owner: the Swedish State.

## **2. The questhouse of Swedish Tobacco Monololy (STM)**

The Swedish Tobacco Monopoly building was erected in the mid 1930s in a modern style and was inaugurated on the 15th of May 1936. The Architect Panais (Panagiotis) Manouilides signed the design, while part of the interior wood furniture bears the imprint of the Swedish designer Axel Einar Hjort. We believe that documenting this unique building will extend the boundaries of Cavalla's architectural historiography into the realm of the modern movement.

The Swedish Tobacco Monopoly (Svenska Tobaksmonopolet AB) was founded in 1915 by the Swedish Government in an effort to collect funds to finance the formation of a Swedish army and to create the Swedish social pension system. The establishment of a State Tobacco Monopoly was considered the most effective means to accomplish their goals. Alongside the nationalization of the existing infrastructures, all processes of tobacco leaf treatment were concentrated in new facilities near Stockholm, equipped with state of the art technologies.

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<sup>10</sup> The Wix building was initially sold to the American Tobacco company in 1925; later it came into the possession of the Glenn Tobacco Co, later to the local tobacco trader N. Petridis and finally to the Municipality of Cavalla.



Figure 15: The Swedish Tobacco Monopoly logo(source: [www.appoub.uuo.se/](http://www.appoub.uuo.se/))



Figure 16 (Left): Sketch-portrait of Gustaf Åkerlidh,  
President of the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly from 1929 to 1939  
Figure 17 (Right): "Cavalla" cigarettes by the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly  
(source: [www.appoub.uuo.se/](http://www.appoub.uuo.se/))

The Swedish Tobacco Monopoly was established in Cavalla in the late 1910s.<sup>11</sup> Lack of accommodation for the employees led to the decision to erect a privately owned building in the area known as "Tank". The choice of this particular plot seems to have been associated with the low value of the land, the healthy locality and the panoramic view. The building of the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly had a twist: it was neither a house nor an office building. It was, in a way, a type of social housing, where the senior officers of the company could stay for any period of time, supervising the harvest and overlooking the processing of tobacco leaves. We must bear into consideration that the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly was at the time a state company with an increased sense of social responsibility towards its workers; alongside the salary provision, other needs (food, shelter, holidays) also had to be catered for.

<sup>11</sup> In 1929, C. Petridi Fils reached an exclusivity agreement to supply the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly with tobacco leaves from the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace regions. Two other trading houses supplied the Monopoly with tobacco leaves. The Zan Nikou in Central Macedonia and Constantin Soujountzoglou in Agrinio.

In January 1934, Emil Lindqrisk, the chief architect of the company in Stockholm drafted a series of preliminary drawings at a scale of 1:100. Copies of the drawings are available in the Panais Manouilides Files, kept in the Benaki Museum's Neohellenic Architecture Archives (N.A.A). The plans depict an old fashioned two-storey building with a roof. Nonetheless, they exemplify the intentions of the Lindqrisk and Swedish Tobacco Monopoly: on the elevated ground floor were the rooms for the staff, a shared kitchen and dining room and on the first floor a communal lounge and the manager's private chambers.

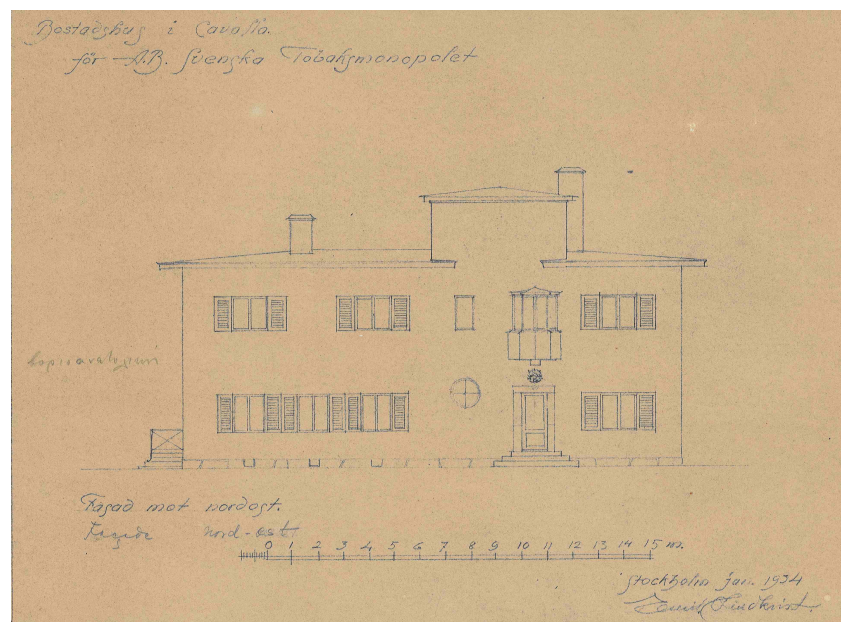
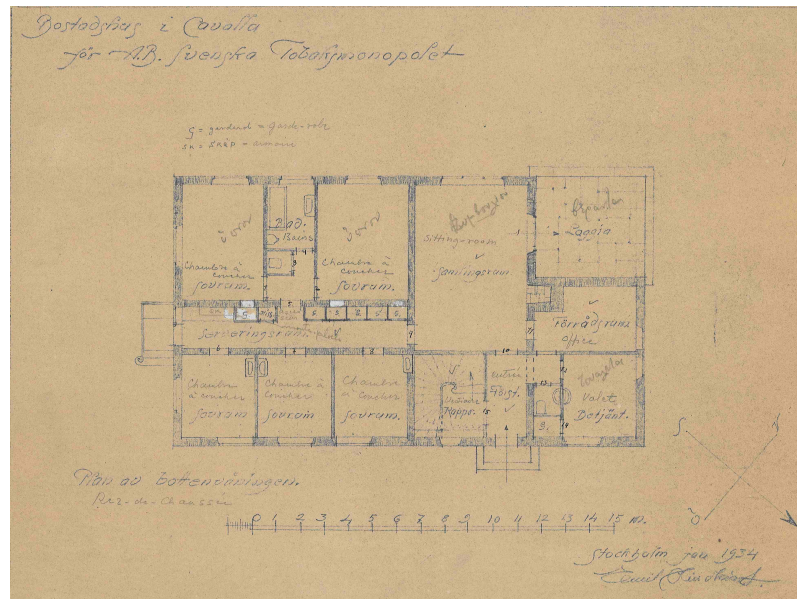


Figure 19: Preliminary sketches by Emil Lindqrisk (source: NAA)



In March 1934, an initial set of drawings in a 1:100 scale was drafted by Manouilides containing all the features of the final version. In May of the same year, a final set of drawings on a 1:50 scale was completed. In September 1934, amendments on the balcony props were made, while in December 1934, further changes in the layout of the southeast bedroom are noted. The building designed by Manouilides consisted of two main floors and a basement, with direct access to the garden due to the sloping ground. The dining room and the four bedrooms for the employees were located on the ground floor while the director's private compartments and lounge were upstairs. The construction of the building commenced the following spring, in the presence of the company's staff, as illustrated in various photos. The stone walls of the perimeter were made of 70 cm thick hewed sandstone and were topped with a concrete coping. It is cited that some of the craftsmen had come from Athens (Thömmel, 1999) and the general contractor was M. Samouhos (see C. Petridi archival collection).<sup>12</sup> The building cost, together with the furnishings, a total of 138.384.000 Swedish crowns. It was inaugurated on the 15th of May 1936 in the presence of Gustaf Åkerlidh, the company's president. To mark the occasion, a chessboard bearing the inscription: "for the Viking Palace" was donated some months later (Bröberg, 1987).

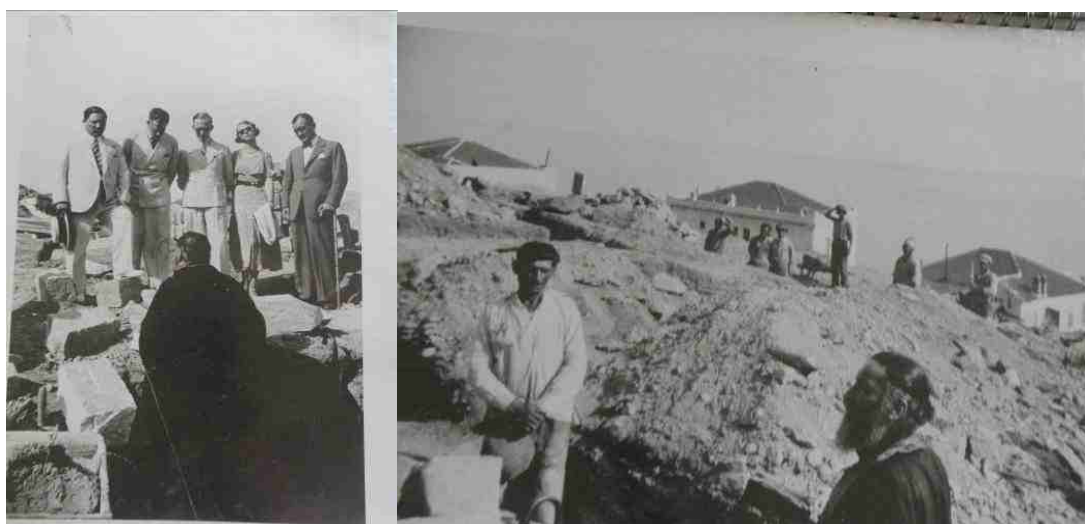


Figure 20: Foundation stone laying ceremony  
(courtesy of Swedish House-Cavalla)

<sup>12</sup> We identified Argiris Samouhos signature in various constructions in Elliniko (Athens). Marcos Samouhos (maybe his brother) was the general contractor of Cavalla's Saint Paul cathedral. We need more investigation about the work of contractors Samouhos.



Figure 21: The general consul of Sweden in Athens, president Åkerlidh, staff members and associates (such as Giovanakis Demerdioglou and Argiris Soultos) on the terrace on the opening day. In the middle Miltiades Petridi (courtesy of Swedish House-Cavalla)



Figure 22: View of the house (courtesy of C. M. Petridi)

Tobacco trader Miltiades C. Petridi (1883-1946) greatly contributed to the building of the house. Various documents, currently in his son's archive, demonstrate that Petridi was the person who inspired, supervised and supported the whole project. Petridi came from a distinguished family of tobacco merchants from Constantinople. His father Constantin was a tobacco supplier and later became a general director at Regie des Tabacs de l' Empire Ottoman. He founded the "C. Petridi Soehne et Cie" tobacco company (later C. Petridi et Co and finally C. Petridi Fils), which also had a branch in Dresden. His sons Stephanos, Petros, Dimitrios and Miltiades carried on exporting tobacco leaves to Finland, Serbia, Belgium, Romania and Sweden. When Eastern Macedonia was liberated, the head office of C. Petridi Fils Co was transferred from Xanthi to Cavalla. From 1929 until the early 1950s they cooperated exclusively with the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly which they

supplied with tobacco from Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace. Miltiades Petridi studied in Grenoble and Marceille and was a smart, open minded and elegant gentleman. He lived in Athens socializing with the capital's bourgeoisie, as many other entrepreneurs, that came from Constantinople, Asia Minor and Alexandria. Between 1929 and 1937, he was the chairman of the Tobacco Company Federation of Greece. It is highly probable that Petridi personally appointed Panais Manoulides. Petridi had put down a detailed account of the cost of the construction: 166.790 drachmas for the plot of land, 12.518 for the building permit, 73.600 for the architect's fees, 155.826 paid to the contractor Markos Samouhos, etc. The total cost came up to 2.749.660.70 drachmas.<sup>13</sup> The Petridi family had a long-standing close relationship to the Swedish officers of the Monopoly and the Swedish Embassy in Greece.

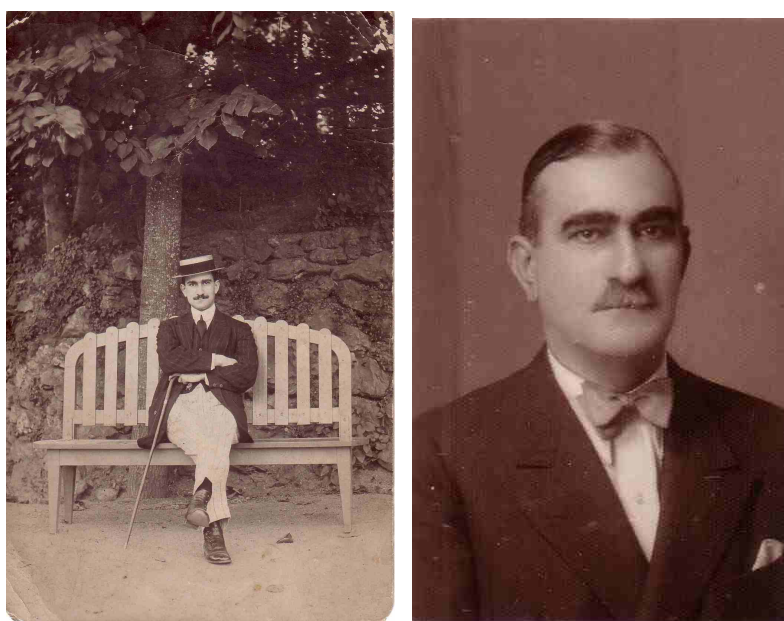


Figure 23: Miltiades C. Petridi (courtesy of C. M. Petridi)

<sup>13</sup> Many thanks to C. M. Petridi for providing these data from his family's archives (interviewed on 21-05-2013). Additional information for Petridi family and their entrepreneurial activities see in Visikas, 2009: 99-100 and in Roupa et al., 2004: 524-526.





Figure 24: Miltiades C. Petridi and his brother Dimitrios on the steps of the main entrance of the Swedish House (courtesy of C. M. Petridi)

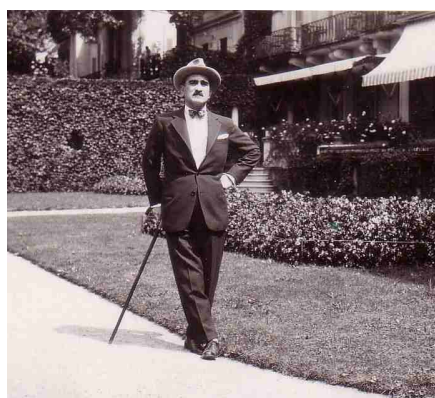


Figure 25: Miltiades Petridi in Grenoble (courtesy of C. M. Petridi)



Figure 26: From the right: Miltiades Petridi, Constantin Soujountzoglou and Perh Olof Holsti (general director of the Company). Petridi's daughter married Soujountzoglou's son

### **The architect Panais (Panagiotis) Manouilides (1894-1977)**

Panagiotis Manouilides was born in 1894 in Kadirli Nikomedeia, near Constantinople.<sup>14</sup> He went to Paris in 1914 to study architecture at the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux Arts, with a short break in between, from 1916 to 1921 during which he joined the Greek Army to fight in the First World war (WWI). While a student, he was employed in the architectural firm of Gaston Herre & Albert Lefèvre in Paris. He graduated in 1927 and he moved to Athens in 1928 to work as a freelance architect. Houses, mansions, apartment buildings, but also sanatoria, preventoria, hospitals, orphanages, hotels and industrial buildings were included among his works.

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed account on the work of architect Panais Manouilides see Lila Theodoridou-Sotiriou (research in process).



Figure 27: Manouilides family: Basileios, Dimitros (medical doctor), Alexis, Stavros, Panais (with a soldier's uniform), Manolis and Stefanos (dentist).  
(courtesy of Eleni C. Manouilides)

During the postwar period he served as a technical advisor to the National Bank of Greece and produced the blueprints for the refurbishment of the National Bank head offices on Aeolou Street, the accounting center on Syggrou Street and several other branches outside Athens (i.e. Mytilini Branch Office in 1951).

Manouilides maintained privileged relations with the Swedish Embassy in Greece. He was awarded the Swedish Red Cross medal and knighted to the first rank of the VAZA guild, by the King of Sweden, for two of his postwar projects; the Preventorium of Patras "Agios Andreas" (1957-1958), donated by the Swedish Red Cross, and the Preventorium of Thessaloniki "Agios Dimitrios" (1947-1951) donated by the Swedish Organization "Save the Children" (Radda Barnen).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See *Biographical Dictionary of Greek Technicians* (Viografiko Leksiko Ellinikon Texnikon (1961), special edition by "Architecture" magazine, p.23.



Figure 28: Left: Architect P. Manoulides in the 1930s (source N.A.A)  
Right: The Royal Order of Vasa Knights (courtesy of Eleni C. Manoulides)



Figure 29: Petridi, Manoulides and officers of the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly in Faliro, Athens in the mid 1930s (source: N.A.A)

### The architecture of the building

The asymmetrical plan and the simple shaped volumes of the building draw on the tradition of the European modernist movement. The bare openings with no surrounding ornamental features, the large balcony with the curved finish and its round columns, the eaveless roof and its uniform pale colour are all features with a clear references to Bauhaus tradition. Construction details such as the curved edges on the opening of the main entrance, the steel entrance door with the glass window and the small eave, are encountered in many urban condominiums and mansions in Athens, built during the interwar



period, while the free arranged openings reveal the maturity of the architect's architectural vocabulary. The house emits dignity and grace: oak floors in the interior, built-in wardrobes in the bedrooms, an interior staircase with built railings, absence of any stucco decoration, a functional kitchen with a food elevator, ergonomic sinks etc. Undoubtedly, the most impressive element of the construction is the broad southern balcony with the magnificent sea view. While the modernist organization of the façade may not be groundbreaking, it is nonetheless noteworthy.



Figure 30: Preliminary plan for the southern elevation  
(before the amendments to account for the slope) (source: N.A.A)

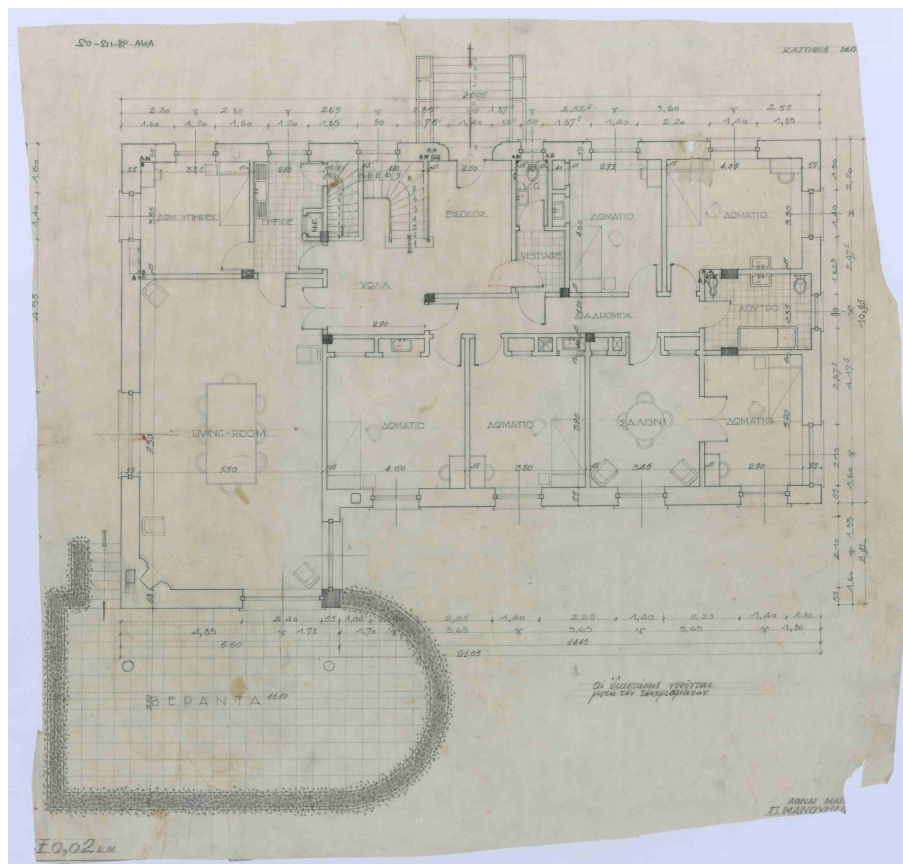


Figure 31: First floor plan (source: N.A.A)

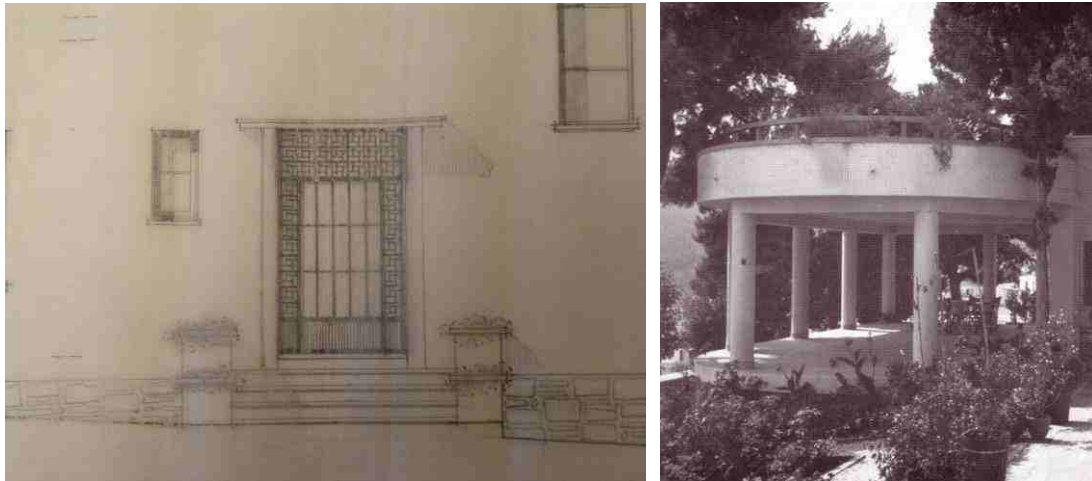


Figure 32: Main entrance detail (source: N.A.A). The balcony (Hellenika 42, 1987)

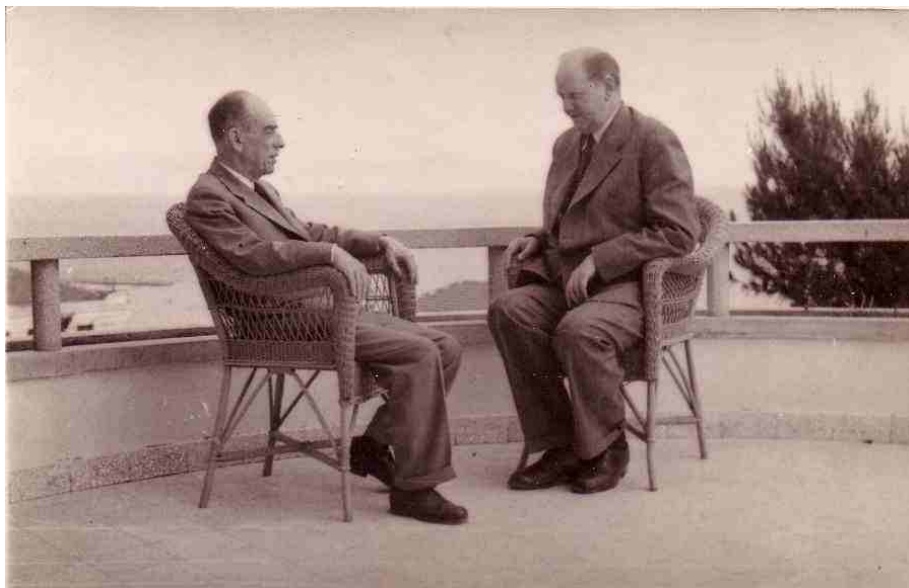


Figure 33: Dimitrios Petridi and David Larsson (purchasing officer in Stockholm) seating on elegant armchairs at Cavalla's balcony (courtesy of C. M. Petridi)

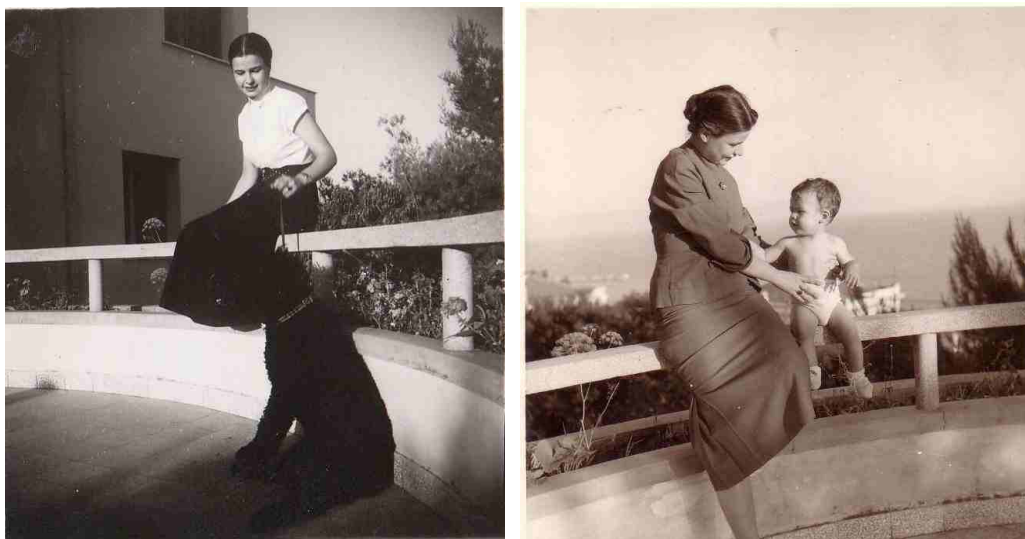


Figure 34: Liza Skouze-Petridi (Costantin's wife) and her son Miltiades in the mid 1950s (courtesy of C. M. Petridi)

By 1934, Manoulides was already an experienced architect. He had practiced in Paris (1921-1927), he had worked on the housing typologies for the suburb “New Alexandria” (now Philothei) in Athens (1931) alongside with other young architects such Angelos Siagas, Kimon Laskaris, Panos Tzelepis and George Kontoleon and had erected a number of villas in Elliniko (among them his own). He had social and professional connections with the Athenian bourgeoisie, prominent families from Constantinople (such as Sismanoglou) and other practicing colleagues. In the aftermath of the IV Congress International d’ Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in Athens (1933), the so called “contemporary architectural movement” had a strong feeling of self confidence and Manoulides found this social and economic environment appropriate to put forth the dissemination of his modernist ideas. In the same year that he designed the Swedish House (1934), he participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> Architectural Exhibition organized in Zappeio by ATELIER, with the model of a villa in Elliniko.<sup>16</sup> The assignment of the design of the Swedish Tobacco building, gave him once again the opportunity to unfold his talent.



Figure 35: Manoulides private home in Elliniko (1930). Now demolished  
(courtesy of Eleni C. Manoulides)

<sup>16</sup> Probably the model of his own private house.



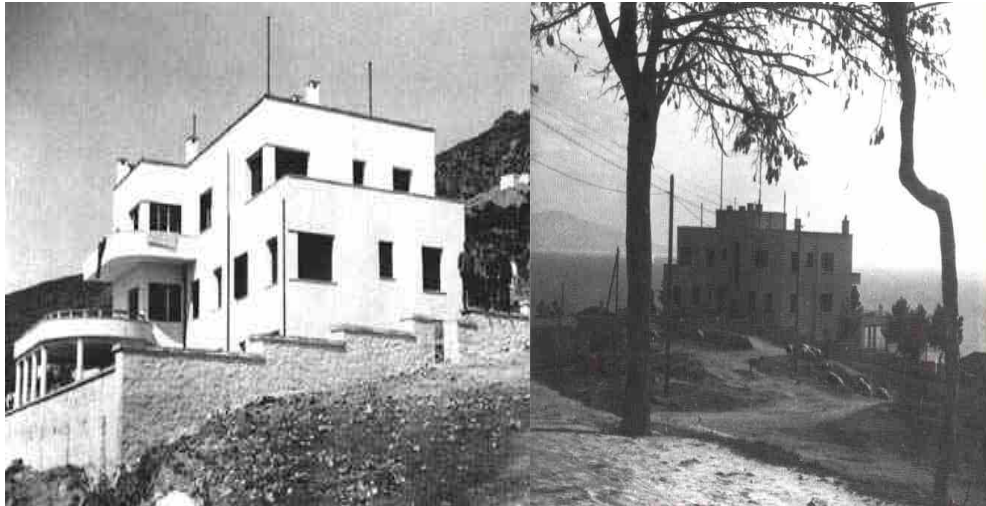


Figure 36: Left: Photo from the inauguration day (15/05/1936) (Hellenika, 42, 1987)  
Figure 37: Right: View from the southern during 1930s (Hellenika, 42, 1987)



Figure 38: Elevation (source N.A.A)



Figure 39: Northern view today



Figure 40: The entrance today



Figure 41: South elevation (final) (source N.A.A)



Figure 42: The interior staircase

### The garden

Particular emphasis, right from the beginning, was placed on the garden. Additional land was purchased to extend the plot to the south, and it was converted to a garden with Mediterranean herbs and pine-trees. When Constantin M. Petridi took over the family business in 1949, he continued in his father's footsteps. He took care of both the house and the garden. In a letter sent to Olöf Söderström, the director of the Monopoly in Stockholm, Petridi refers to the garden landscaping with trees and plants by the Athenian landscape architect Spyros Tsaousis. Worth mentioning is the relationship between the building and the surrounding open space. In an article in the magazine *Hellenika*, edited by the Friends of Swedish Institute in Athens, the architect Hans Bröberg cited that this house should be considered "*as a prominent sample of a private villa, open to the sea with the garden at the back*" (Bröberg, 1987: 3-7). Although today the panoramic view of the house to the sea has been partly blocked, it is still a house that enables the sea breeze and the garden's aromas to enter freely, blending the outside magnificent landscape with the elegant interior.



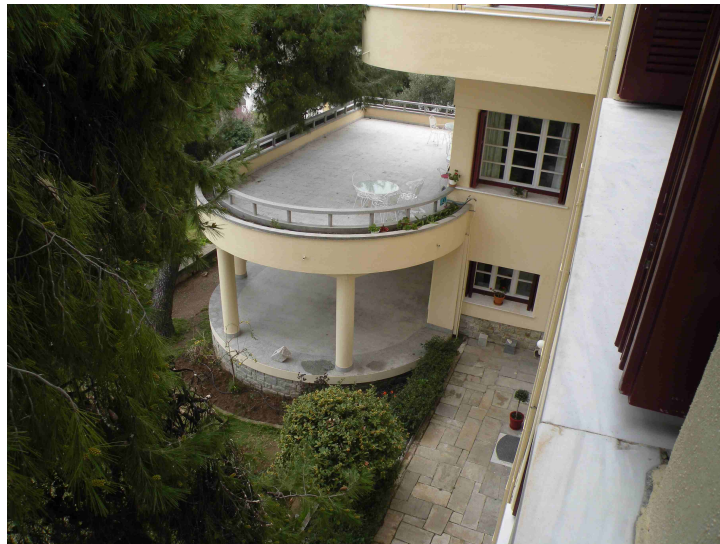


Figure 43: View of the balcony



Figure 44: Southern facade. The retaining wall mark the boundary of the former plot



Figure 45: The initial plot (source N.A.A)



Figure 46: Garden landscaping today

### Interior Wood Furniture

The Scandinavian design of the 1930s was the dominant aesthetic trend in the interior of the house. Some pieces of the interior wood furniture were produced by Nordiska Kompaniet and specifically by the Swedish designer Axel Einar Hjort (1888-1959). It was a cultural import with a strong symbolic meaning. Hjort, who holds a special place in Swedish Design History, was originally influenced by the French version of Art Deco, but at some point in 1930s he turned to modernism. Thus, he could be described both as a modernist and a classicist. He had designed the interior and furnishings of the Swedish pavilion in the 1929 Barcelona's International Exposition and had exhibited several pieces of furniture (ranging from luxurious ebony and walnut to cheap pine wood) in the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930. He served for 11 years as the chief architect of Nordiska Kompaniet (furniture, textiles and decorative objects). Nowadays, Hjort's furniture is considered collectible (Bjork et al., 2009). The Swedish Tobacco Monopoly administration, catered also for the household objects: plates and glasses bearing the company's monogram as well as a set of modern cutlery were imported from Sweden.



Figure 47: An overall view of the dining room



Figure 48: A view of the living room from the '30s with modernist armchairs.  
On the right Naoum Tsirlis (from Neveska), employee at C. Petridi Fils since 1939 and later  
director of the Swedish House (courtesy of Swedish House-Cavalla)



Figure 49: The living room today. The authentic chimney is decorated with colourful marble in  
modern style



Figure 50: The buffet and armchairs in the dining room





Figure 51: Vintage twin kitchen sink: porcelain with wood detail



Figure 52: Antique radio furniture set from 1930s



Figure 53: Desk and Chair by the Nordiska Kompaniet (unknown designer)

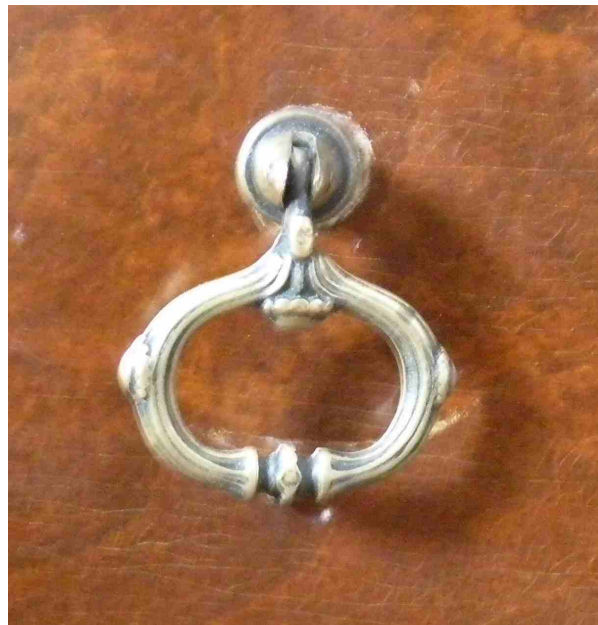


Figure 54: Handle detail



Figure 55: Metallic brand-marked (Nordiska Kompaniet)



Figure 56: Identification tag of Nordiska Kompaniet



Figure 57: Bespoke China dinning set sealed with the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly monogram

Figure 58: Glassware sealed with the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly monogram





Figure 59: Chess set with personalized box (courtesy of the Swedish House, Cavalla)

Figure 60: Chess box with the owner's name engraved

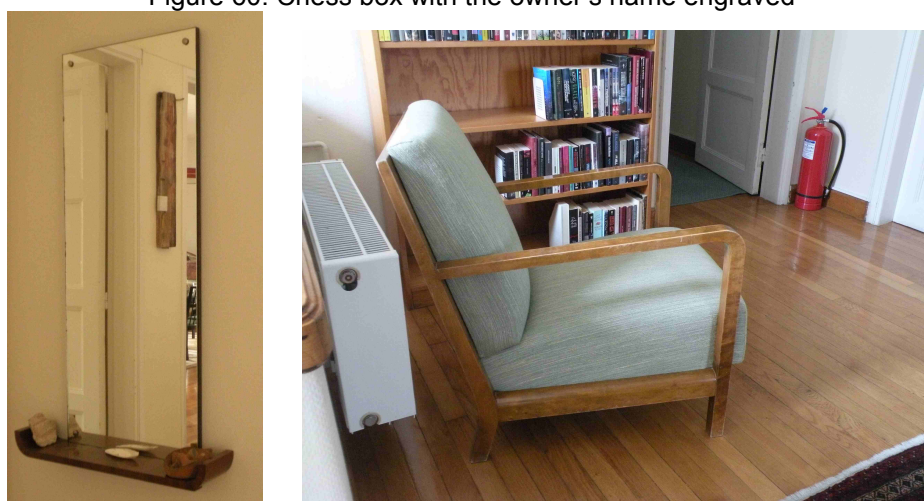


Figure 61: Left: Pallisander rosa birch wall mirror. Model «Typenco», designed in 1931 by Axel Einar Hjort (Nordiska Kompaniet).

Right: Pallisander armchair (unknown designer)

It is worth mentioning that around the same time Manouilides had undertaken another project in Cavalla: the coastal mills of "Georgis & Nikolettopoulos", a seafront industrial complex demolished a few years ago. It has to be pointed out that at the same time Manouilides was working on the Swedish House, six new school buildings were being erected in Cavalla, commissioned by the Greek Ministry of Education in a modernist style.<sup>17</sup> Given that the modernist buildings were not so much appreciated in the postwar years (and many of them were demolished) the existence of the Swedish House could be seen an architectural heritage that has embellished and enriched Cavalla's built environment.

### The Swedish Guesthouse during and after the WWII

The building always carried two flags: a Greek and a Swedish one because the serving manager of the Svenska Tobaksmonopolet AB in Cavalla had also been serving as a vice-consul. Only during the Bulgarian occupation (WWII) was the Greek one lowered, without however a Bulgarian one ever been raised. For the Greek residents of Cavalla this was quite a sight and many would often go and gaze at the Swedish flag (bearing a great resemblance to

<sup>17</sup> For a more detailed account on modernist school buildings in interwar Cavalla, see Antoniou, 2010: 487-513.

the Greek one) and *“their eyes would flood with tears”* (Bröberg, 1987 and Aggeloudi, 2008). During the WWII, the Swedish Tobacco Monopoly was no longer guaranteed the safety of the leaf trade from Macedonia and Thrace to Sweden as transports both by sea and rail had become dangerous. So the company’s manager in Cavalla, Sten Backman, moved to Turkey for his safety. Only the two Greek maids of the serving staff remained in the building during that time. In 1945, after the end of WWII, the Cavalla Branch of the United Nations Relief Administration (UNRRA) settled there briefly and the company took over again, shortly after. However, during the postwar period, American cigarettes increased in popularity and oriental tobacco blends were not in demand. In 1961, the monopoly of the importation and distribution of tobacco products in Sweden broke up, while the production of monopoly cigarettes within Sweden came to an end in 1967. The Svenska Tobaksmonopolet AB turned into a new state company under the name Svenska Tobaks AB.

Following the withdrawal of the firm from the leaf tobacco market of the region, the building fell into decline. In 1964 it was re-used as a guesthouse for artists and a summer accommodation for the company’s employees from Sweden. Due to its limited use, Svenska Tobaks AB decided to close it down in 1973. Initial thoughts concerning the selling of the building, were never realized. In 1976, the director Olöf Söderström donated it to the Swedish Institute of Athens, and since 1983 both the building and the surrounding garden have been listed as a national protected heritage site. Nowadays, it has been successfully renovated and offers hospitality to artists and scholars from Sweden. It is so popular that it has been repeatedly portrayed in artworks produced by the guests.

### **The building as part of STM’s social policy**

The Swedish House in Cavalla is one of the few modern houses of the '30s in Greece that has remained intact until today, precisely because of the “collectivity factor” in its proprietary status. A group of senior employees acting on behalf of a state could not but keep a low profile in the building they resided. Unlike the Herzog offices, the Swedish House displays not an image of wealth and power, but of austerity in its modernist expression. A desire to act upon values of modernism is evident not only in the morphology of the building, but also in the internal comfort (central heat, baths, sinks). Values of coexistence among its occupants rather than reclusion and isolation are evident. The Swedish House portrays a different attitude to life. It is therefore not a surprise that around the same time (1935) the Swedish architecture avant-garde, such as the Swedish modernist architect Sven Markelius, was experimenting with a housing typology known as the “collective” house. Therefore, the Swedish House in Cavalla should not be viewed only as an immaculately preserved specimen of modernist architecture, but also as a rare typological sample of its kind in Greece: a collective house in the

provincial but thriving interwar Cavalla. While the building's morphology may be attributed to the architect Panais Manouilides, traces of its typology are identified in the interwar social and architectural experimentation of Swedish architecture.

### **Concluding Remarks**

We have stressed that the foreign tobacco firms built their imposing offices in order to impress their social surroundings and affirm their cultural "superiority". Their aspirations of cosmopolitanism and desire to showcase their nobility shaped the architecture of their offices in a different way to their warehouses; apart from the different function they housed and the obvious morphological differences, they were distinct in two ways. The first one relates to their genealogy and the routes of influences the building bears: the warehouses following a primarily vernacular tradition rooted in local craftsmanship, while the offices, more intricate and complex, are not locally restricted but draw on cosmopolitan networks. The second difference related to their purpose. While the warehouses had a purely functional role, the offices also served the purpose of portraying an image of superiority: not only cultural but also extending to social structures and processes, as in the case of the Swedish Guesthouse.

We have also stressed that the influence of the tobacco firms passing from Cavalla, however short it may have been, it has yet left indelible traces in the city's landscape. The ensemble of the four buildings examined, built at different times, dissimilar in typology and morphology, constitute irrefutable evidence of the dissemination of European architectural trends through the tobacco trade. Viewed as a whole, they can be considered as the postscript of an era; an era when the tobacco trade brought to Cavalla not only wealth but also European architectural trends.

Further research into archival resources in Stockholm, Budapest, Vienna and New York are expected to yield more information regarding the construction of the four buildings examined. Until then, we hope that the present essay will be a starting point to expand the way Cavalla's urban fabric is perceived with the inclusion of the tobacco trade purchasing offices.

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**Note:** All unreferenced information in this paper is based on four hours of interview conducted in April and May 2013 with Constantin M. Petridi and on the photographs and paper held in his personal collection.

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