



Weaving in Professional and Economic Life

The case of Greece

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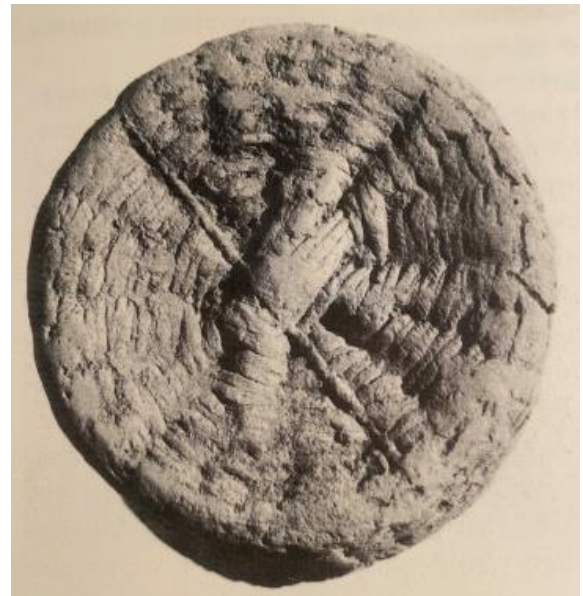
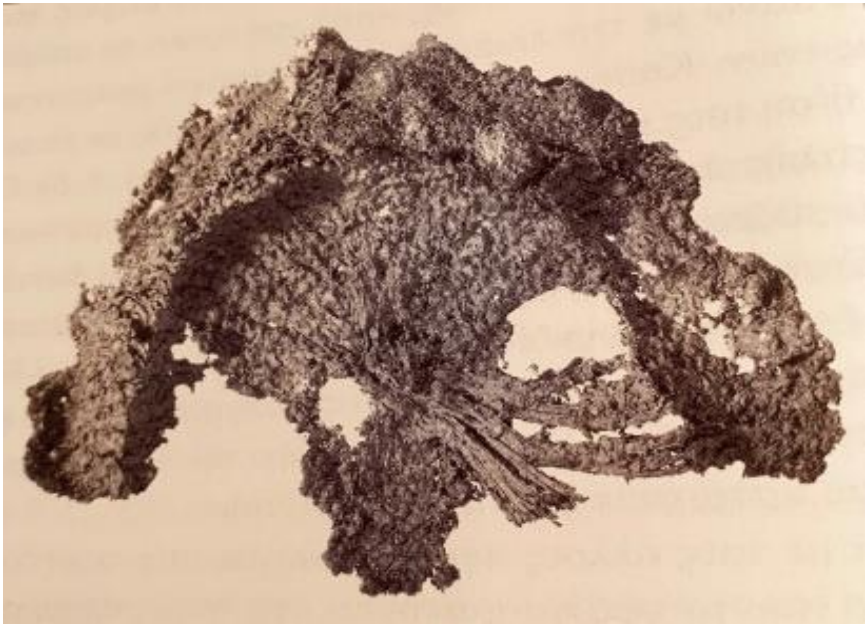
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Prehistoric period

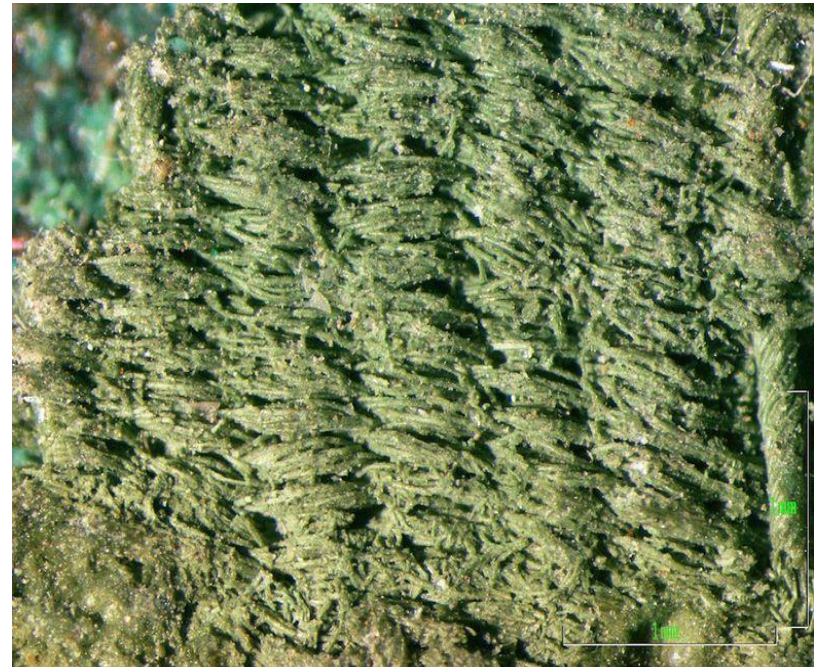
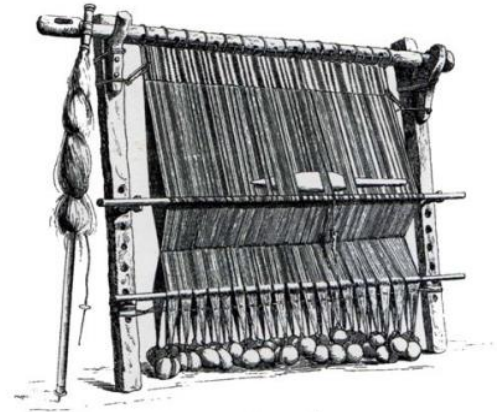
- ❑ The art of weaving has been very important ever since *antiquity*.
- ❑ Mediterranean *climate prevents fabrics preservation*. Only fabrics placed next to copper (usually weapons) have survived.
- ❑ Oldest traces concern *basket weaving, 6000 BC*, in Neolithic settlements and Early Bronze Age.
Basketry seems to have been a male occupation.
- ❑ Archaeological traces related to *wool* (bones, figurines, fabrics) and *flax* (seeds, fabrics) have been discovered in the prehistoric Aegean.



Ancient Greece

Evidence derives from

- Archaeological traces (few remains of fabrics and small parts of spindles and looms).
- Pieces of art
- Linear B tablets
- Palace archives
- Scripts
- Myths

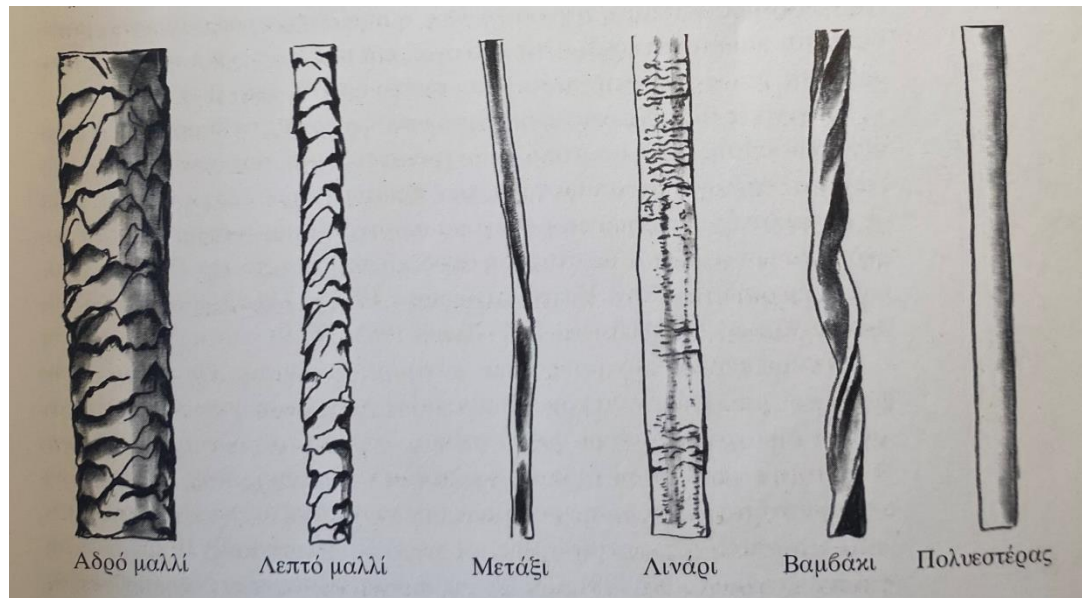


- Weaving was considered a respectable occupation of *queens and women of the aristocracy*.
- It was introduced and protected by *Goddess Athena*.
- The *Three Fates* were also weavers, spinning the web of human destiny.



Wool

- Its use was known long before the Minoan civilization (3000 - 1450 BC).
- In the Bronze Age (3300 - 1200 BC) it got widely used, while its production and processing became organized. Palaces had established *a system of detailed inventories and administrative control*.



Flax

It was the 2nd largest category of textile fibers in the Aegean area, along with hemp. It was known and used even before wool.

Palaces used to also *carefully control its production and distribution* to various professions.

Apart from clothing, it was used to manufacture

- Sails for ships
- Armors (flax combined with copper)
- Large nets and ropes for hunting

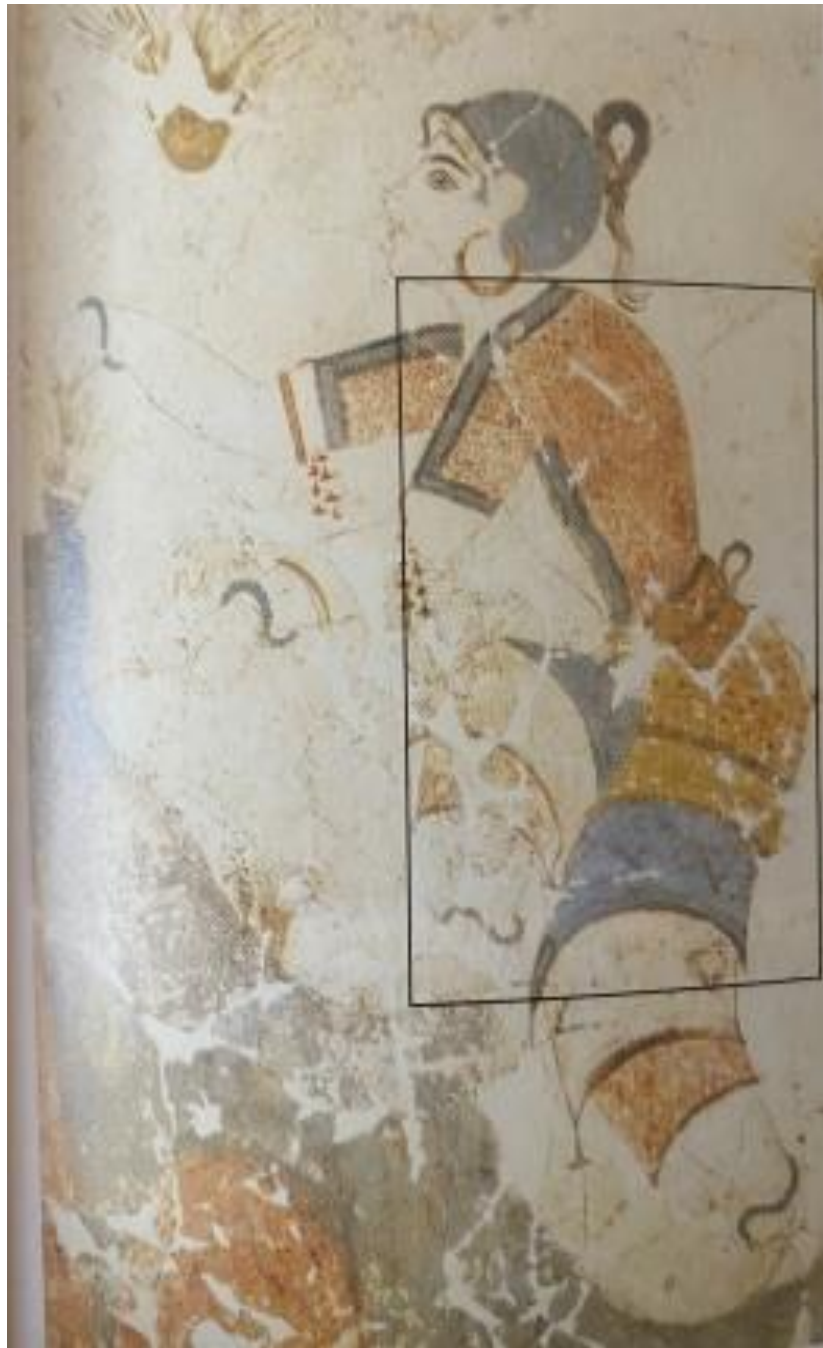


Cotton It first appeared in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 5th c. BC.

Silk It must have also been available at that time, as the fineness of the fabrics in the frescoes of Minoan Crete reveal.











Evidence that weaving had also been a commercial household industry was discovered in Olynthus, Macedonia. In the 4th c. BC, a large number of loom weights was discovered in houses, one of which was adjacent to a shop, revealing that they were engaged in commercial textile manufacture.

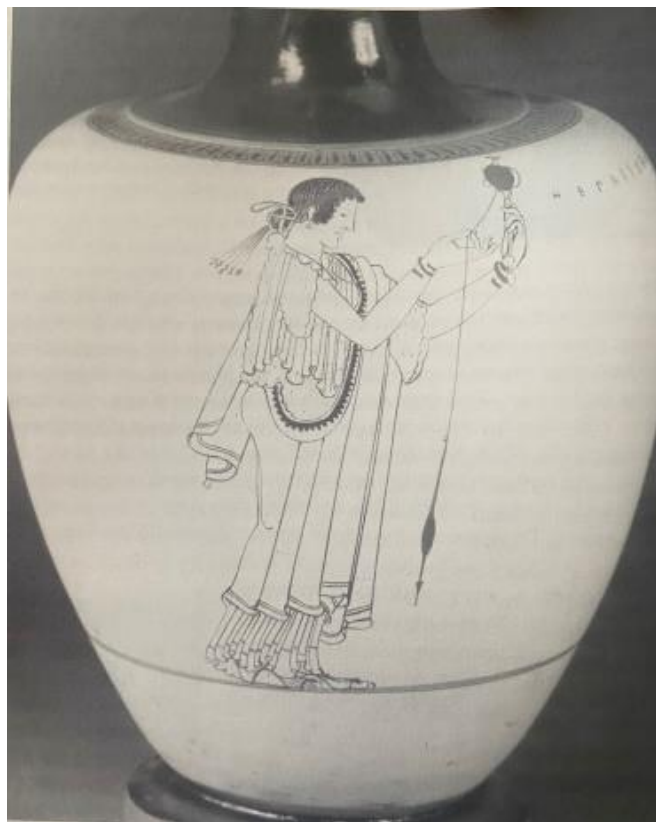
Weaving was a women's job, performed manually, as only the wealthy had a shaft and a rocket. Men only interfered at the final stage -*the finishing*- and *added value* to the end product. They were also responsible for *embroideries* on woven articles. Men worked outside the house, in workshops, organized in guilds. Upon completion, they also handled the trading part.





The importance of weaving also derives from the number of people involved in it. The process was so time-consuming, that *40% of the community members* had to be fully dedicated to it.

Importance is, predominantly, revealed by the continuous *efforts of the Palace and the City-States to control* the entire process. Authorities tried, therefore, to control raw materials, craftsmen and weavers, the full textile cycle; they also imposed taxation and exported / exchanged the surplus.



Modern Era

- Weaving has been practiced *for several centuries, in almost all Greek villages*. Livestock and flora provided high quality raw materials in abundance : *wool, flax, silk and cotton*.
- Processing of raw materials and manufacture of textiles for clothing, bedding and furniture took place *in the household*; spinning with the *rocket and shaft*, weaving on the *traditional loom*.



- The whole process was *women's duty* and an *inherited tradition* that passed down *from one generation to another*.
- Most houses in villages had looms. Girls were taught to use it from the age of 9 or 10.
- Court documents of the early 19th c. declare weaving as women's profession.





- At first, weaving used to cover exclusively the needs of the family.
- Later, artisans exchanged their handicraft products with others.
- As demand increased, they opened shops and hired workers.

This has been the first expression of artisanship that developed, together with other home crafts, during the 18th and 19th c.

The development of weaving in households and at a local level, has been **part of the history of market economy**, as it has **paved the way for the development of small industries** and later on, for the flourishing of the textile industry.

Yet, weaving is not only related to fabric manufacturing, but to tradition as well.

The series of actions required involves know-how and experiences, that are cultural elements.

Woven fabrics express the spirit, the living conditions and the aesthetics of each era. They also preserve this knowledge throughout centuries.





From domestic occupation to cottage industry & from small manufacturing enterprise to textile industry

Weaving soon developed into **cottage industry**.

The cottage or small-scale industry were operated by a workman or **family members**, skilled in the craft, who performed manual tasks with traditional techniques and marketed their goods themselves.

They often also operated as **sub-contractors**.

In 1989, *100,000 households* were operating in Greece, apart from those included in the national inventories of industries and handicraft enterprises.

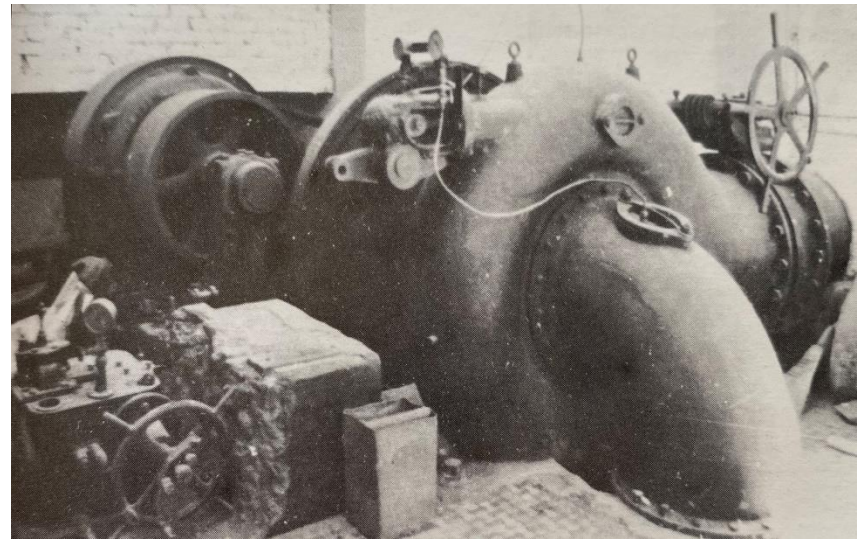
The advantages of the sector

Cottage industries and small manufacturing enterprises played a **significant role** in local and national economies:

- ▶ They **ensured additional income and employment**, particularly in rural areas that tend to get abandoned.
- ▶ They were particularly useful in developing economies, which may lack the capital and financial systems to support larger industries.

The difficulties

Sector problems appeared,
due to industrial development
and new living conditions:



- ☐ Availability of products at low cost
- ☐ Further development of technology
- ☐ Standardization of products, without eliminating their artistic character
- ☐ Consumers' search for innovative products

→ All these led to a **decline of the sector's activity.**

The opportunity

Governments, realizing the importance and peculiarity of the sector, started elaborating special measures.

Their aim was to develop

an institutional framework,

that would enable small manufacturing enterprises to adapt their structure and operation to the contemporary needs of industrial development.



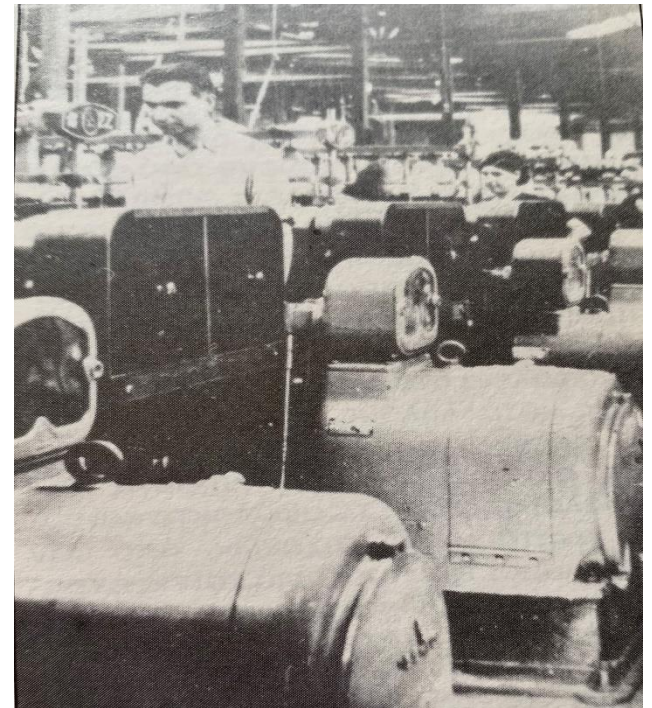
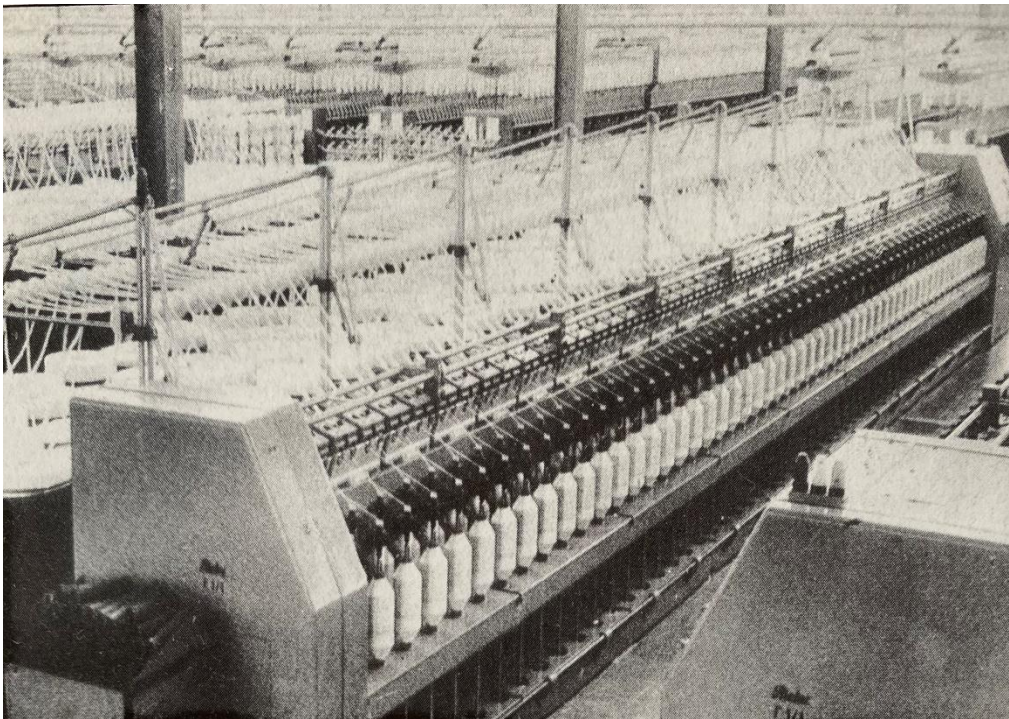
The Economic and Social Development Program of 1983-1987 was the first to incorporate such measures.

The success of the measures was limited, because of:

- ▶ The disproportionately large number of *very small* enterprises and the fragmented production
- ▶ The prolonged financial crisis, that led to staff reduction or even closure
- ▶ The rapid growth of SMEs in size, as from the 1960's, that was not followed by the corresponding organization and “business maturity”.
- ▶ The lack of preparation and readiness of the State to react in time and solve the issues.

The Textile Industry

Textiles developed as one of the most important sectors of the Greek economy, during the period 1955-1988. It served as a key pillar upon the efforts for industrialization.



A promising start

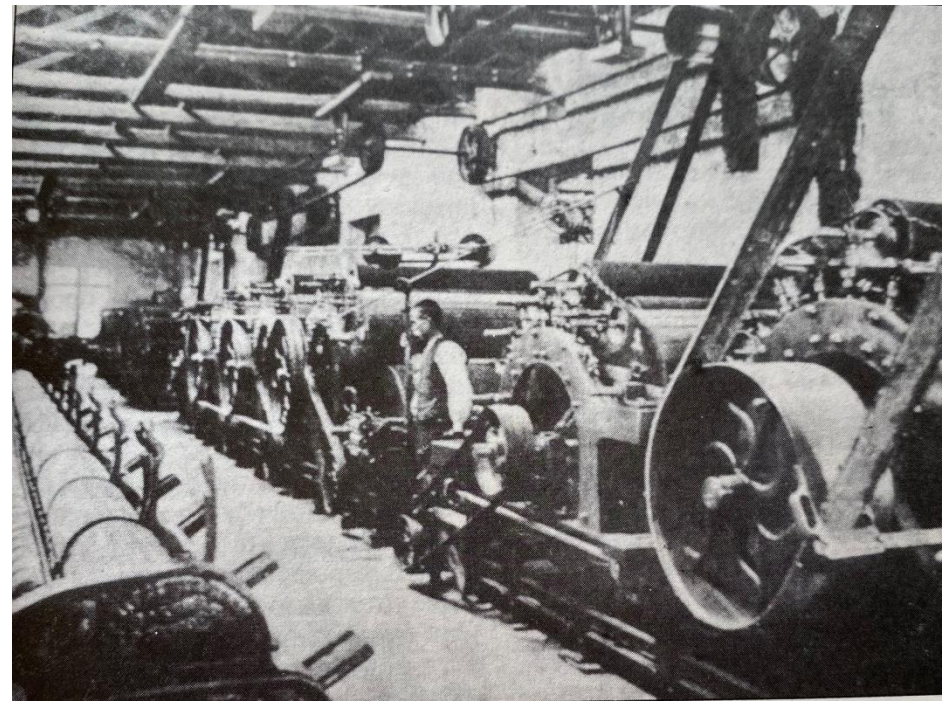
In the 1970's, the domestic textile industry revealed a dynamic growth and proved competitive within Europe. Its strength was

- The very good quality of domestic raw materials, mainly cotton, together with
- The low cost of labour,
- The tariff protection schemes and
- The slide of the local currency exchange rate against European currencies.
- The international subcontracting activity (*façon*) of the time, led to a spectacular increase of exports.

Powerful and competitive

A big number of industries developed in Greece, **13** of which operating with **over 400 employees** and **6** of them having **over 1,000 and up to 7,000 employees**. Most of the workers were still **women**.

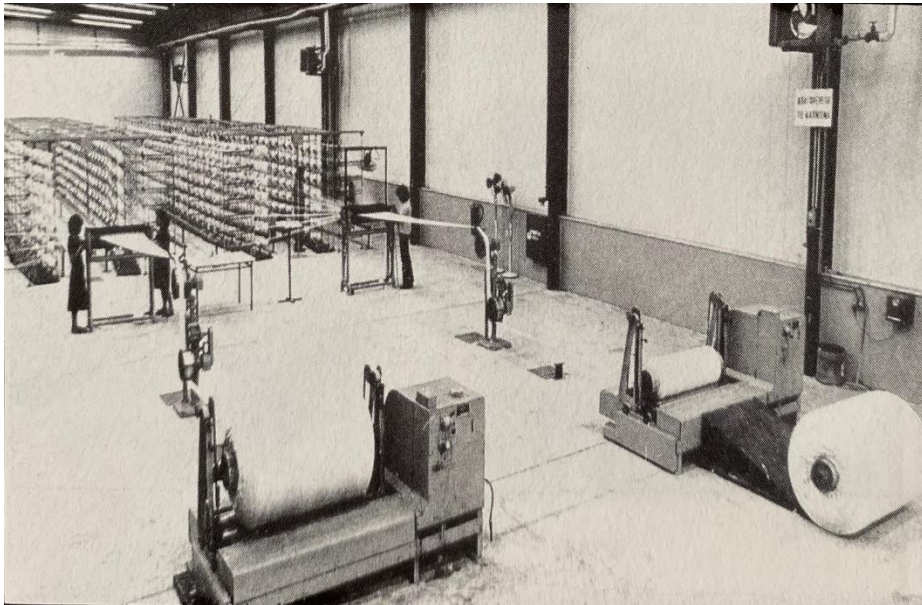
- The textile sector proved, in terms of size, employment and exports, the largest manufacturing sector in Greece.



Falling behind competition

However, over time, it could not withstand foreign competition in terms of production cost.

It is a traditional, *capital-intensive* industry and the technology behind which, keeps evolving and requiring further capital investments.

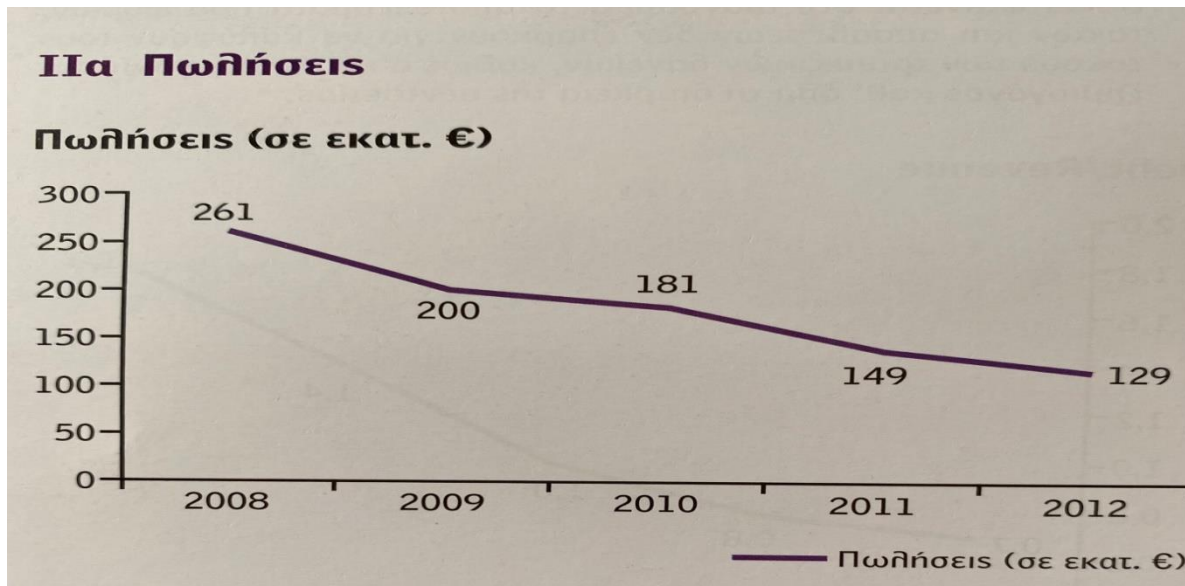


Financials

Even before the last crisis period, figures were discouraging.

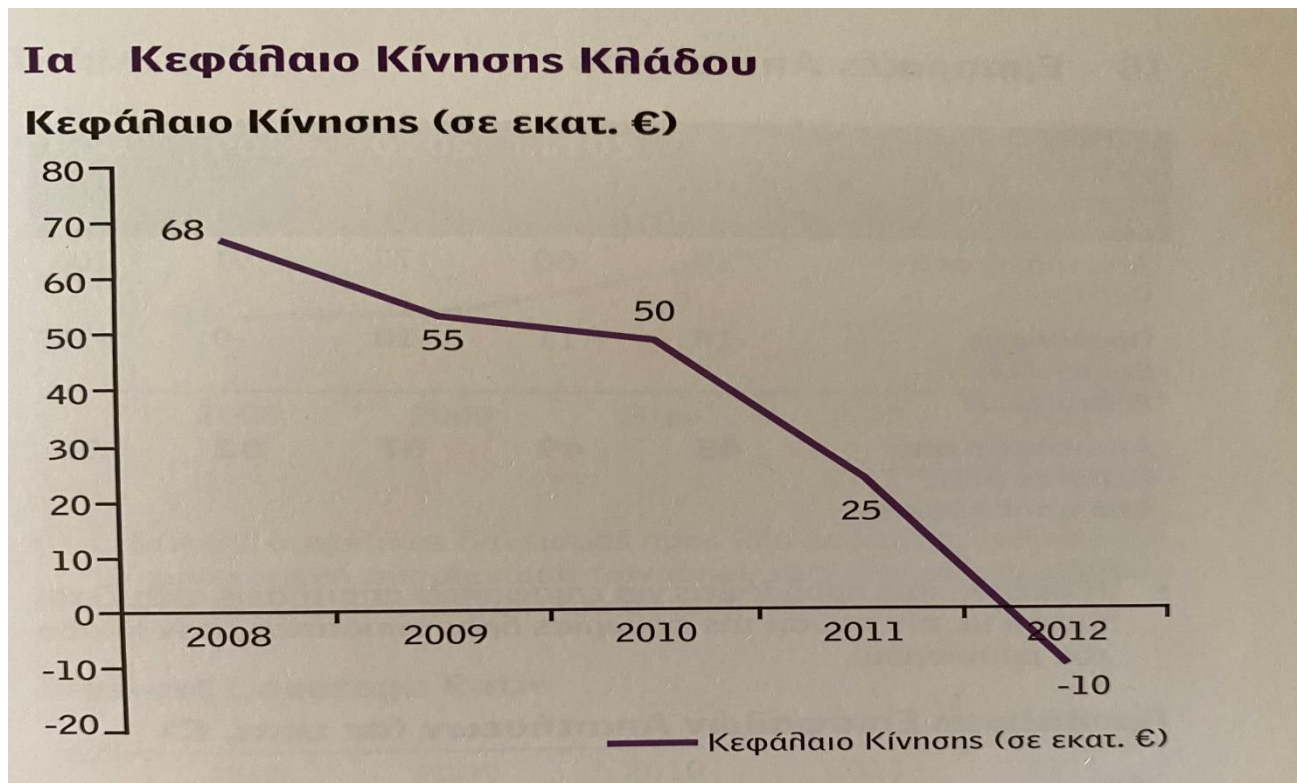
- The **turnover** of the sector showed a dramatic decrease from 2008 to 2012, amounting to € 129 million in 2012. Within 5 years, it was a reduction of 51%.

(The graph depicts sales figures in million € over the years).

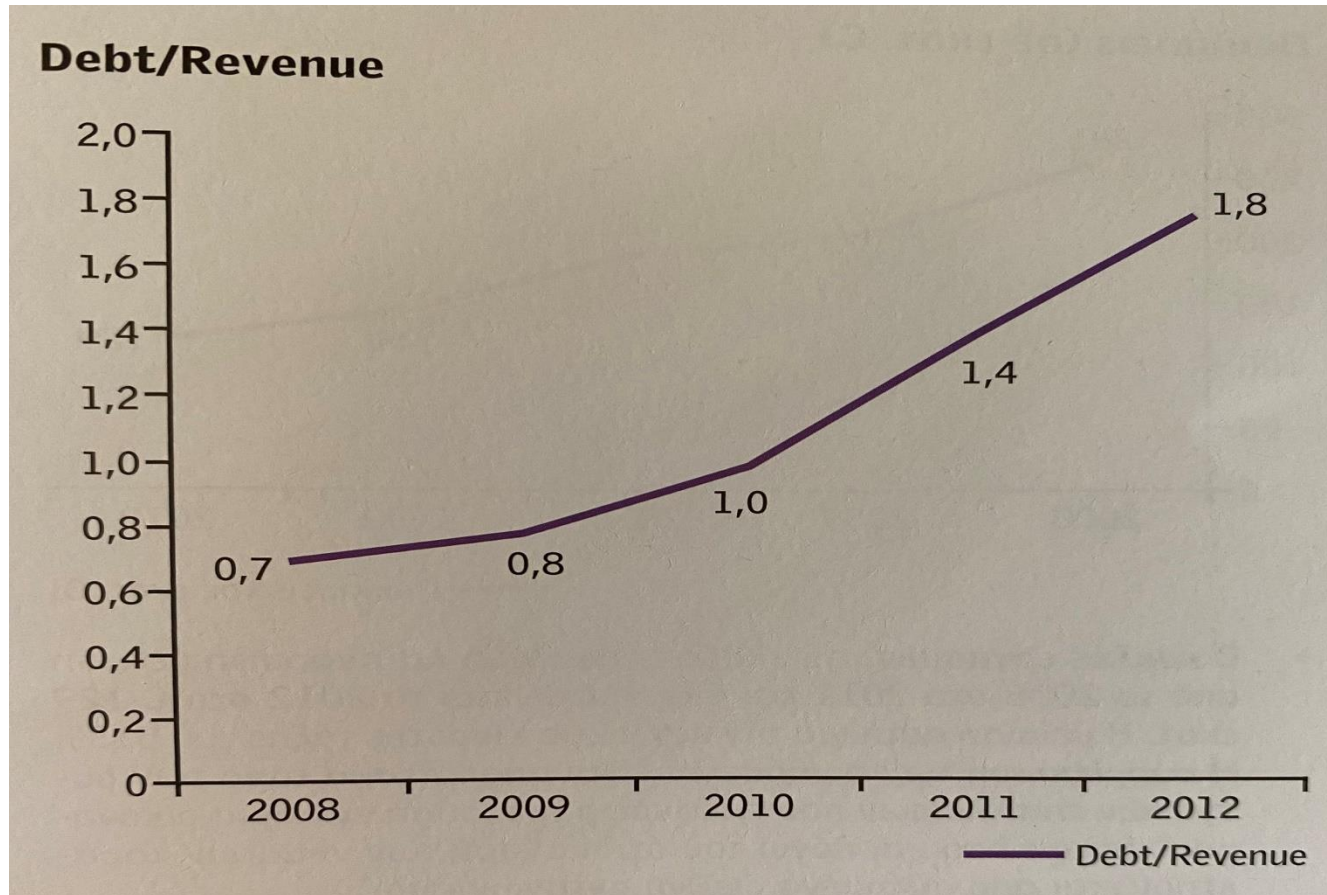


- The **working capital** of the industry was constantly decreasing. From € 68 million positive in 2008, it ended negative by € 10 million in 2012.

(The graph depicts working capital figures in million € over the years)

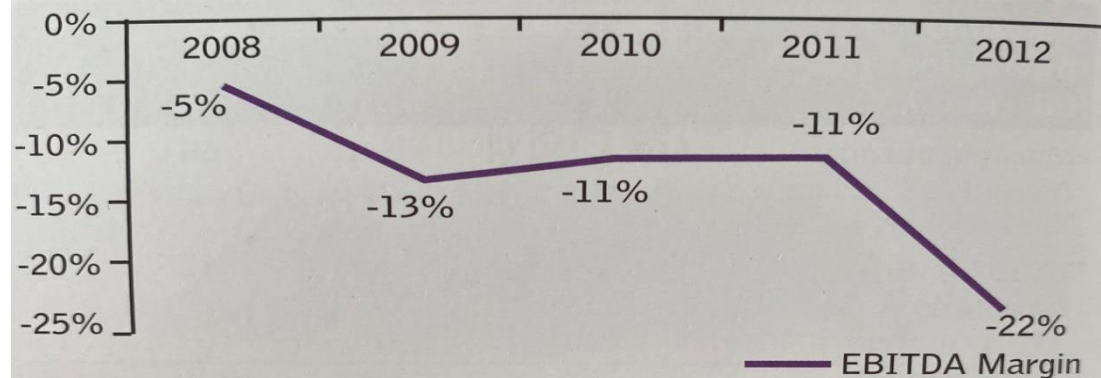


- The **ratio of total borrowing to turnover** showed a significant increase over time and from 2010 onwards, loans exceeded the turnover of companies.

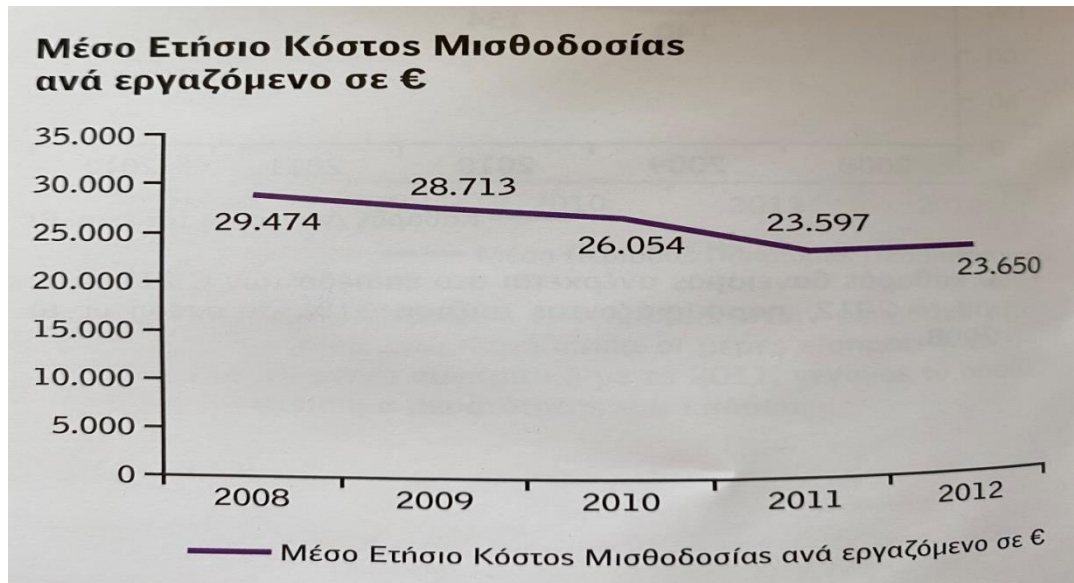


IIB EBITDA Margin

EBITDA Margin



(The graph below depicts the average annual salary cost per employee in €, over the years).



In this environment, **small manufacturing enterprises** seem to be having a **future** and an **irreplaceable role in the socio-economic development** of the country.

Specifically, they:

1. Ensure additional income and employment, particularly in rural areas.
2. Cover the needs of local markets, that large companies cannot reach
3. Help reduce development inequalities of the various regions.
4. Develop products that require special skills and are labor-intensive.
5. Produce items that are differentiated from standard ones and meet specialized demand.

6. Have an advantage over the big industry, in terms of originality and adaptability.
7. Operate as sub-contractors of large enterprises, supplying them with parts, which they produce cheaper.
8. Exploit local raw materials, even if those are available in small quantities.
9. Help ensure healthy competition.
10. Not only preserve and perpetuate folk art and tradition, but also create new forms and products, which constitute the cultural evolution and identity of every era and population.

Future prospects

- ▶ Obviously, **small and medium manufacturing enterprises cover key production and market gaps**, that cannot only be filled by large industry. They also have a unique, a key role in enhancing the **socio-economic development** of a country.
- ▶ Our **textile sector**, in particular, has **potential**. Especially nowadays, that new mentality and trend call for **natural and ecologically sensitive products**, they set an opportunity for our handicraft industries to be revived.
- ▶ Furthermore, **artistic crafts** need to be reinforced and promoted, as this is the way to **maintain cultural heritage**. And, being intertwined with folk art, they **express** the spirit and the lifestyle, the aesthetics and **the cultural level**, even the social and economic structures of each era.

Pictures and Graphs' References

Slide 2:

- Illustration of weaving scenes on 6th c. lekythos (see slide 16 below)
- Housewife weaves on the loom, in the early 20th c., while her husband keeps her company. Source: Staikou, Pantazi, 1984. «Παραδοσιακές Βιοτεχνίες – Οικοτεχνίες στην Επαρχία Ολυμπίας».

Slide 4: Remains of basket base from Thera and Imprints of basket from Thera and Crete. Source: Tzahili, I., 1997. «Υφαντική και Υφάντρες στο Προϊστορικό Αιγαίο 2000 - 1000 π.Χ.». p. 12, 14.

Slide 5:

- Ancient loom. Source: Η οικιακή τέχνη της υφαντικής. Available at: <http://epri.korinthos.uop.gr/openwebquest/view/resources.php?wg=1295>
- Fabric of the 6th c., from Corfu. Source: CNN, Sept. 26, 2017. “Η υφαντουργία των αρχαίων Ελλήνων διέφερε σημαντικά από αυτή των Ιταλών”. Available at: <https://www.cnn.gr/ellada/story/98948/h-yfantoyrgia-ton-arxaion-ellinon-diefere-simantika-apo-ayti-ton-italon>

Slide 7: Fibers of thick wool, thin wool, silk, flax, cotton, polyester. Source: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above).

Slide 8: Gold cup illustrating capture of bull in flax nets, currently at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens. Source: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above). p. 70 .

Slide 9: Frescoes at Knossos, Crete. Detail of woven garments. Source: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above).

Slides 10-11: Frescoes of young priestess and saffron collector with detail of fabric design, from Thera. Source: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above).

Slides 12-13: Figurines of the goddess of snakes with detail of fabric, from Crete. Source: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above).

Slide 14: Illustration of the sequence of tasks involved in the weaving process. Lekythos of the 6th c., on display at the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Source: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above).

Slide 15: Illustrations of weaving scenes on Lekythos of the 5th c., on display at Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

Slide 16: Illustrations of weaving scenes on Lekythos. Left and middle objects are of the 5th c., currently at the British Museum, London. The object on the right is of the 6th c. and currently at the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Source: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above).

Pictures and Graphs' References (cont.)

Slide 17:

- Source: Staikou, Pantazi, 1984 (as above).
- Source: <http://epri.korinthos.uop.gr/openwebquest/view/resources.php?wq=1295> (as above).

Slides 18-19: Young girls spinning on Mount Olympus in the 1960's. Weaving in a rural area of the Peloponnese.

Source: Staikou, Pantazi, 1984 (as above).

Slide 21: Indicative, traditional costumes of Greek regions illustrated on stamps. Source:

<http://epri.korinthos.uop.gr/openwebquest/view/resources.php?wq=1295> (as above).

Slide 22: Paintings by Nikolaos Gyzis, 19th c. "Arachne" on the left, based on related ancient myth. "Grandma's fairytale" on the right, revealing weaving as part of woman's daily routine. Source:

<http://epri.korinthos.uop.gr/openwebquest/view/resources.php?wq=1295> (as above).

Slide 25: Old turbine, once in use, in "Varvaressos" company, in Naoussa. Source: Demiri, K., 1991.
«Τα Ελληνικά Κλωστοϋφαντουργεία. Ιστορική και τυπολογική διερεύνηση».

Slide 26: Interior of "Pierrakos" textile factory.

Slide 28: Machines preparing for spinning, on the left. Electric motors can be distinguished, on the right.

Slide 30: Wool processing in the early 20th c. «Ελληνική Εριουργία».

Slide 31:

- Warp preparation, on the left.
- Source of photo on the right: "Υφαντουργία, τα σβησμένα φουγάρα στη Νέα Ιωνία", 30.09.2019.

Available at:

<https://www.cleaningfed.gr/%CF%85%CF%86%CE%B1%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%AF%CE%B1-νέα-ιωνία/>

Slides 32-35: Grant Thornton. 2013. «Ελληνικές επιχειρήσεις & οι επιπτώσεις της οικονομικής κρίσης ανά κλάδο. Χρηματοοικονομική παρουσίαση περιόδου 2008-2012».

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Slide 3

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- CNN, Sept. 26, 2017. “Η υφαντουργία των αρχαίων Ελλήνων διέφερε σημαντικά από αυτή των Ιταλών”. Available at: <https://www.cnn.gr/ellada/story/98948/h-yfantoyrgia-ton-arxaion-ellinon-diefere-simantika-apo-ayti-ton-italon>

Slide 5: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above). p. 288.

Slides 7-8: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above). p. 65,70-71.

Slide 9: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above). p. 31, 34-36.

Slide 14:

- Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weaving>
- Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above). p. 24, 247-248, 260-261, 286.

Slide 15: Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above). p. 22-23, 29-30, 253.

Slide 17: **Staïkou, Pantazi, 1984. «Παραδοσιακές Βιοτεχνίες – Οικοτεχνίες στην Επαρχία Ολυμπίας».**
p. 14, 19.

Slide 18: Staïkou, Pantazi, 1984 (as above). P. 20, 22, 65.

Slide 20:

- **Rokou, V., 1994. «Υφαντική Οικιακή Βιοτεχνία. Μέτσοβο 18^{ος} αι. 20ός αι.».** p. 29.
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Slide 21:

- Tzahili, I., 1997 (as above). p. xi, 7.
- **Μουσείο Νεότερου Ελληνικού Πολιτισμού (Museum of Modern Greek Culture).** Available at: <http://www.mnep.gr/gr/sylloges/oi-sylloges/yfantiki/>

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Slide 23:

- “[THE HISTORY: Cottage Industry, CONCEPT OF SMALL BUSINESS](https://www.zeepedia.com/read.php?the_history_cottage_industry_concept_of_small_business_sme_management&b=57&c=1)”. Available at :
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Slide 24:

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- **Kenton, W. September 23, 2020. “Cottage Industry”.** Available at:
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/cottage-industry.asp>

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Slide 26: Κέντρο Προγραμματισμού και Οικονομικών Ερευνών, 1989 (as above). p. 19-20, 35.

Slide 27: Κέντρο Προγραμματισμού και Οικονομικών Ερευνών, 1989 (as above). p. 68.

Slide 29: **Ινστιτούτο Οικονομικών & Βιομηχανικών Ερευνών (IOBE - Institute of Economic & Industrial Research), 1990. «Ευρωπαϊκή Ενοποίηση και Κλωστοϋφαντουργία». p. 19-20.**

Slide 30: **Katsou, G. Ch. & Ioannou, Chr., 1986. “Θέματα Προγραμματισμού. Διερεύνηση αναπτυξιακών δυνατοτήτων. Κλωστοϋφαντουργία, Ένδυση». Κέντρο Προγραμματισμού και Οικονομικών Ερευνών. p. 26.**

Slide 31: Katsou, G. Ch. & Ioannou, Chr., 1986 (as above). p. 13.

Slides 32-35: **Grant Thornton. 2013. «Ελληνικές επιχειρήσεις & οι επιπτώσεις της οικονομικής κρίσης ανά κλάδο. Χρηματοοικονομική παρουσίαση περιόδου 2008-2012».**

Slides 36-38: Κέντρο Προγραμματισμού και Οικονομικών Ερευνών, 1989 (as above). p. 55-57.



Thank you for your attention