

The first greek typographic school

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Systematic printing in the area of what is now Greece, only started in the 1820s, which was when the War of Independence began. The printing of Greek, however, has a history almost as old as that of other European countries. We can claim that 'Greece' was among the first countries, including Germany, Italy, Holland, England and France, to have produced a printed book by 1476.¹ This idiomorphic development of Greek printing history affected not only the practice but also the study of the art. As for the practice, an example could be seen in the design and use of the printing types: a foreign tradition in Greek alphabet design, employed even today, was imposed on the Greek printers and readers. As far as study is concerned, the Greek printing history which for three and a half centuries constituted part of the printing history of other countries, has been mainly the province of foreign scholars.

To write about the design and production of printed matter in modern Greece without referring to what has happened before, would result in a very detached approach. After all, such an approach would not make clear why printing started so late in Greece. Moreover, although the first printed Greek texts appeared in the 1470s, Greek typography never reached the 'plurality' that characterized the printing history of other European countries. Due to political and social factors the overall output of Greek printed material was extremely limited. Surprisingly, books that were printed in sixteenth-century Italy were still used as handbooks in nineteenth-century Greek educational centres.² This situation, above other things, resulted in an uninterrupted use of the Greek Aldine/Garamond letter for almost three centuries. A study of its significance as far as the reading and writing habits of generations of Greeks are concerned is still to come.³

the prehistory of Greek printing

The term prehistory is used to denote the first of two different eras in the production of Greek-language printed matter: the first covers more than three centuries, starting from 1476, the year when the first Greek book was printed,⁴ and the next begins with the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821 and continues to the present day. The main criterion that justifies this distinction is 'where' Greek texts have been printed: in the first period Greek texts were printed outside Greece, and in the latter within Greece.

The Ottoman army swept into Constantinople in 1453, only a few years after Gutenberg introduced the art of printing to Europe. By 1460 the whole southern area of the Balkan peninsula was under Ottoman rule. This signalled the expatriation of Byzantine scholars

1. Scholderer, V., *Greek printing types, 1465-1927*, London, 1927, p.4.

2. Rhodes, D., "Early printed books in Greece", in *The Library*, 5th series, vol.30, no.3, 1975, pp.183-198. Rhodes questions the following statement by D.J. Geanakoplos: 'From the marginal notations on the printed pages of the various first editions of Athos that I was able to examine in the summer of 1962, it is clear that certain Greek scholar-immigrants in Italy, and Venice in particular, were in the habit of sending books to Athos for the use of the monks'. Rhodes then adds that 'A nice subject of research would be to trace the export market of the many Greek liturgical books printed in Venice during the early centuries'.

3. We should bear in mind that calligraphy and manuscript writing were activities that continued in Greece for many years after the invention of printing. Some of the implications of this situation in Greek handwriting education were discussed in a unique and courageous study in 1935. See Amariotou, M., *Writing and education*, Athens, 1935.

4. Didot, A.F., *Alde Manuce et l' Hellénisme à Venise*, Paris, 1875, pp. 35-36. See also Layton, E., "The first printed Greek book", in the *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, vol.4, no.4, 1979, pp.63-79.

5. Reynolds, L.D., & Wilson, N.G., *Scribes and scholars*, Oxford, 1986, pp.130-146.

6. Geanakoplos, D.J., *Greek scholars in Venice*, Cambridge, 1962, pp.53-61.

7. Lowry, M., *The world of Aldus Manutius, business and scholarship in Renaissance Venice*, Oxford, 1979, p.79.

8. Koumariou, A., Droulia L., & Layton, E., *The Greek book, 1476-1830*, Athens, 1986, p.265.

9. I am not aware of any comparative study on design matters between Greek and Latin manuscripts and their influence on the printed book. Thompson wrote about the differences in the use of graphic conventions, such as accents and abbreviations in manuscripts, but obviously he would not have gone further than that. See Thompson, E., *Handbook of Greek and Latin palaeography*, Athens, 1903, chapters V, VI, and VII, pp.103-188.

10. Twyman, M., "The Bold idea: The use of bold-looking types in the nineteenth Century", in the *Journal of the P.H.S.*, no.22, 1993, p.108 (reprinted in this issue of *HYΦEN*, pp.5-39).

to the Western world. The weakening of Byzantium as a result of internal disputes had already caused the departure of a great number of their colleagues to Italy, where they took part in what was to be defined as the Renaissance.⁵ Plethon, long before the fall of Constantinople, delivered lectures to Italian audiences and was the moving spirit behind the establishment of the Platonic Academy in Italy. The Greco-Roman civilization that had been developed within the Byzantine Empire, dressed in a Christian Orthodox veil, exhibited examples of art and philosophy different from those of the Western world. The University of Padua, which gradually became that of the Venetian Republic, gave hospitality to a number of Greek scholars. Moreover, as a number of Greek islands were under Venetian rule, Greeks from these colonies came to Italy to seek a better fortune.⁶ Through them Renaissance Italy discovered two Greek worlds: the ancient Greek world through the manuscripts of classical works, and the Byzantine Greek world through the lectures and writings of the Greek teachers residing there. 'By the early 1490s there were a number of signs that Hellenic studies, ... were beginning to gain more general prestige and academic recognition. Once the tendency became well marked, the printers would be tempted to follow it'.⁷ This is what was happening in fifteenth-century Italy where the learning of Greek was in fashion. An almost similar scene was to be repeated four centuries later, when Western classicism, among other things, rediscovered the descendants of the ancient Hellenes living under Ottoman occupation. Both historical moments bore their marks on the history of Greek printing.

the first Greek typographic school

All sixty-seven recorded Greek incunabula were printed in Italy,⁸ the production of most of these works can be attributed to Venetian printing establishments. A small number of those establishments were owned by Greeks who were actively involved in the production procedures. Other Greeks were acting as editors, correctors, authors, or even as type designers and punchcutters. The Greek printer in Italy may have composed and arranged his material in a very different way from his European colleagues (such differences have been also attested between the work of say a German, and a French printer). Laonikos, Kounadis, Sophianos and others may have followed different paths from Aldus, Blado and other non-Greek printers of Greek texts. This seems even more reasonable if we consider that the outlook of the fifteenth-century books was under the influence of the manuscripts, and that Byzantine manuscripts were distinct from Western ones.⁹ The sixteenth century of Estienne and the monochrome book were still to come,¹⁰ so differences can be seen in the use of colour, the illustrations (handmade as well as printed), and in the design of types, borders, and ornaments. This distinction is apparent when comparing a double spread of Aldus's 1495 *Mousaios*

or his 1497 *Psalterion*, both printed in Venice, with the *Homer* that had been done by Damilas nine years earlier (Florence, 1488), or Kalliergis's *Etymologikon Mega* of 1499 (Venice). Such a comparison would immediately provide evidence of a design that was built on Byzantine origins distinct from West European flavour.

calligraphy and printing

Coincidentally or not, most Greeks who were connected with the early press were active scribes and calligraphers.¹¹ For this good reason A.F. Didot devotes a small chapter of his book to the Cretan calligraphers.¹² The boundaries between Greek calligraphy and the then current handwriting cannot be easily defined; this is probably due to the idiosyncratic development of Greek writing. No such thing as the black letter has ever existed in Greek writing because of the overall cursiveness of the characters; this may well be one of the reasons why high levels of individualism have been introduced into Greek writing. After the appearance of small letters in the ninth century at the Studios monastery in Constantinople,¹³ a variety of hands were to follow. The main characteristic was their great individuality. Some of these have been described as old round, old oblong, the Anastasios's kind, abbreviated, calligraphic cursive, bouletée (that is with small dots at the end of the strokes, a feature of the Didone type and the Greek series 90 cut by Monotype in the 1910s), Perlschrift, assos pica, liturgical of the seventeenth century, etc. Thompson states that 'in the fifteenth century the varieties of handwriting become most numerous' and admits that the only thing he can do is to 'select a few specimens to illustrate the period'.¹⁴ So a distinction between different hands aiming towards classifications and general conclusions related to type design, might be a risky exercise.¹⁵ It seems probable that those who were already experienced calligraphers took their own writing as the basis for translation into metal type. If this was the case, then people like Damilas, Laskaris, Kalliergis, or Sophianos, were doing what Vergikios was to do half a century later. Moreover, they not only played Garamont's role, cutting and casting their own types, but also Estienne's role as printer.¹⁶

early Greek printing types

To browse through some early Greek printing may seem to most people an interesting, fun exercise; but for the printing historian it is not so. Ascenders, descenders, abbreviations, contractions, and especially the excessive amount of diacritical marks on the top and even underneath the characters create a loose page. The lines literally dance, thus destroying any sense of base, or x-line. It was to take hundreds of years before the calligraphic features of the Greek letters surrendered themselves to the mechanical discipline of printing. Any attempt to extract from those Greek lower-case alphabets a letter that could give the typographic meaning of x, as it does in the Roman

11. Pettas, W., "Nikolaos Sophianos and Greek printing in Rome", in *The Library*, 5th series, vol.29, 1974, p.207.

12. Didot, *Alde Manuce*, pp.579-586.

13. Mioni, El., *Introduction to Greek palaeography*, Athens, 1985, p.80.

14. Thompson, E., *Handbook of Greek and Latin palaeography*, London, 1892, p.175.

15. For such a discussion see Barker, N., *Aldus Manutius and the development of Greek script and type in the fifteenth century*, 2nd ed., New York, 1992, pp.69-75, 121.

16. Garamont based his 'grecs du roi' type on Vergikios's handwriting. Vergikios was a Cretan scholar and 'notre écrivain en grec' at the court of Francois I. Estienne was the first to print Greek texts with Garamont's type in the 1540s.

alphabet, becomes a fruitless exercise. The various quality levels of the cutting and casting procedures also affected the final appearance of the composition. Sometimes it is much easier to trace baselines on a manuscript than a printed page.

Moreover, the involvement of non-Greek compositors resulted in an arbitrary use of breathings, accents and above all in a misuse of spaces between the words. This can be easily explained if we consider that the manuscripts, which were used as prototypes were translated into galleys by people who did not speak the Greek language. I shall recount a recent experience relevant to this issue: behind a window at the Plantin-Moretus museum an exhibit bears (1992) the label 'Greek composition'. Definitely 'it is Greek' to the non-Greek people or to those who do not read the language, but to those who do, it gives the impression that it was reassembled carelessly after having been broken up.

To somebody who practises typography, the heavily accented Greek alphabet must have affected the appearance of the page, as did the large number of descenders, which sometimes interfere with the next line's accents. To these problems various solutions were applied, some of which worked satisfactorily and others which did not. For example, in the first group we have Gilles de Gourmont's approach to cast accents on a body of the same size as that of the letters. The accents occupied only the lower half of the face and the page was made up of alternate lines of letters and accents.¹⁷ This approach resulted in non-tight setting but required very skilled compositors. Experiments such as the flattening of the hypersticha and hyposticha (stichos means line) by the Cretan printers Laonikos and Alexandros, and treatments such as the greatest possible diminution of the ascenders and descenders (see for example the Alcalà type used by de Brocar), indicate the existence of a continuous dialogue among craftsmen involved with the printing of Greek.

The Aldine Greek characters, which now appear out of place and time, were then more acceptable than the large round Brocar letter,¹⁸ or those used in 1486 by the Cretans Laonikos and Alexandros. These latter characters must have looked strange to the readers of Greek in Italy in those times. Nevertheless, reason in design dictates decisions which otherwise would be taken as irrational acts, and knowledge of the situation prevailing within Greece could drive somebody to employ such printing types. For example, many teachers were clergymen, used to that kind of lettering. Bearing in mind that the books printed by Laonikos were targeted at his native market,¹⁹ we then might be able to offer a hypothesis as to why he and his partner chose this type. This fount ought to be discussed as a typographic experiment, just like Laskaris's 1494 small and large capital fount. The latter was also a statement, one against muddled and ugly Greek type,²⁰ a statement which was repeated 23 years later by Kalliergis at a time when the Aldine letter ruled over Greek printing and was copied all

17. Proctor, R., *The printing of Greek in the fifteenth century*, Oxford, 1900, p.19.

18. Woody, K.M., "A note on the Greek fonts of the Complutensian Polyglot", in *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol.65, 1971, pp.143-149.

19. The selection of the specific titles (*Ψαλτήριον and Βατραχομουμαχία*) confirms his intention. See also Staikos, K., *Chart of Greek printing: fifteenth century*, Athens, 1989, p.200.

20. Laskaris had his own views about the use of capital letters in the printing of Greek. These views were explained in a letter of his to Pietro Medici. See Staikos, *Chart*, p.266.

over the world. The prime element which initiated and sustained that dialogue was the work of the Greeks who belonged to the 'first Greek typographic school'. This dialogue seems to have come to an end around the middle of the sixteenth century, when Greek craftsmen withdrew from printing activities.²¹

21. For an interesting (and unusual) approach see Morison, St., *Politics and script, aspects of authority and freedom in the development of Graeco-Latin script from the sixth century B.C. to the twentieth century A.D.*, edited by N.Barker, Oxford, 1972, pp.294-305.

22. About Sophianos see Tinto, A., "The history of a sixteenth-century Greek type", in *The Library*, 5th series, vol.25, no.4, 1970.

23. Didot, *Alde Manuce*, p.581.

the end of Greek typographic renaissance

It was out of the question for Greeks to learn the art of printing in their country, and after individuals such as Damilas and Sophianos²² disappeared, the dialogue referred to above, turned into a monologue. Angelos Vergikios, on whose handwriting Garamont modelled his 'grecs du roi' in 1556, was the last Greek to be mentioned in relation to an important typographic project.²³ At that time the first generations of Greek craftsmen ceased working and henceforth, until the middle of the eighteenth century, Greeks confined themselves to limited acts of editing, correcting or sponsoring the printing of Greek books.

In conclusion, Greek printing from its beginnings to the middle of the sixteenth century was characterized by the involvement of the most progressive Byzantine Greek scholars and craftsmen. Producing Greek texts either by means of printing or writing, they targeted the European humanists' market while also keeping an open eye on their native market. Their knowledge and experience as scribes and calligraphers were applied to printed matter. The Byzantine style, achieved by the use of ornaments, arabesque borders and colour, the care taken in type designing and cutting, the distinct – as opposed to the European – austerity in the arrangement and composition of their material (which did allow for experimentation however), established the first and unfortunately the last, Greek typographic school to be founded over a four-century period. Moreover, these Greeks, being esteemed scholars, transformed the printed book into a creditable product.

Nicolas Barker, emphasizing Lowry's comment, suggested that 'a whole book could be written about the layout of display and text pages in the Aldine books, as developed in the twenty years from 1495 to 1515'.²⁴ Obviously, another book could be written about the design, use, and influence of the text and display type, ornaments, and borders employed by Greek printers in that period. It is unfortunate that no study has been undertaken in such areas, for an observation of the differences and similarities between these two modes of the printing of Greek, could reveal interesting subjects of inquiry concerning the blending of Greek with European typography. If type design was investigated, not in isolation but as an integral part of the book design process, it might also produce some useful information. Kalliergis was the second – after E.Ratdolt – to print in gold,²⁵ and it is here worth mentioning Scholderer's articles on red printing as an example of such a study.

24. Barker, N., *Aldus Manutius and the development of Greek script & type in the fifteenth century*, Connecticut, 1985, p.102.

25. Proctor, *The printing of Greek*, p.119.

one step forwards two backwards

Further attempts by Kalliergis in 1510 and Sophianos in 1545 to produce books for their compatriots met with no success, and both returned to classical texts and their European readership. The non-Greek market for Greek books, which by definition was not big, shrank even more as a result of the European social and political turmoil. Moreover, the market within Greece was too general to preserve printing establishments dedicated to the printing of Greek books. It has been claimed that one of the reasons for this situation has been the social-political conditions there which prevented the spread of education and therefore helped to maintain a high level of illiteracy. Only later, establishments such as those of Estienne, Plantin, the Elseviers, and Didot, which were organized on a tight professional basis, published treatises which were aimed at the small Greek book market. Aldus's position differs from the others as his attempt to reach the actual Greek market did not blossom. This attempt was recorded in c.1497 when Dekadyos edited the *Psalterion* 'for the Greeks in Greece' (τοις εν Ελλάδι Γραικοίς).²⁶ After that, Aldus abandoned his plans to publish Greek liturgical texts and directed his attention to the printing of classics. Classical texts were also the bread-and-butter of the other notable printing houses referred to above; the difference is that they explored markets which did not exist in Aldus's time.

As long as the Orthodox Church was not threatened by Catholic propaganda which forced her to engage in a 'defensive kind' of printing, she did not encourage the distribution of books of ancient Greek literature among her flock. For example, Plato's ideas were declared as pagan, even after Pletho's attempt to smooth the Church's attitude toward them. To a great extent the Patriarchate controlled the lives of its followers and was not prepared to alter this situation. The ideology of its authorities was completely different to that of the exiles in Italy. Many of these refugees came from Crete, the Ionian Islands, and Cyprus which did not at that time belong to the Ottoman Empire. Although their tradition, religion, and culture were rooted in Byzantine Orthodoxy, they had already developed another attitude towards the Renaissance spirit. Moreover, there was a major distinction between the Byzantine scholars who fled to the West and had a hard time trying to settle and sustain themselves, and an elite group back home which, because it belonged to the high ranks of the Orthodox Church, enjoyed privileges from the conquerors and devotion from the enslaved nations.²⁷ These Greeks who lived under Venetian rule in Cyprus or the Aegean Islands, provided the first markets for Greek books outside the humanists' European market.

The Church's attitude changed when Pope Gregorius XIII established the Greek college of 'Agios Athanasios' in Rome in 1597, an educational institute which, apart from Greek, taught Catholicism.²⁸ In Venice, where the papal state had no authority, Greeks reacted against this situation and started printing Orthodox liturgical books.

26. This is one of the few undated Aldine Greek editions. Legrand suggests 1494, a date also given by Didot and accepted by Greek bibliographers. Legrand, E., *Bibliographie Hellénique ou Description Raisonnée des Ouvrages Publiés en Grec par des Grecs au XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, 4 vol., Paris, 1885-1906, vol.1, pp.22-25. N.Barker places this publication in 'c.1497'. Barker, *Aldus Manutius*, p.52. See also Layton, E., *The sixteenth-century Greek book in Italy, Venice*, 1994, p.272.

27. Kitsikis, D., *History of the Ottoman Empire 1280-1924*, Athens, 1988, pp.101-111.

28. Hatzopoulos, K., *Greek schools in the period of the Ottoman dominion, 1453-1821*, Thessaloniki, 1991, pp. 171-172.

αὐτὰρ ὅτε σφῆκον μέθοποιον ἠλίθα πολλοὶ
 πάντε βαβείθωσι· καὶ ἐσπίων προπρόισθε
 πλαιῶν τίποιτις ἐσπρχόμενον χεῖμῶνα
 οἷος ὡτὶ σφῆκατιν ἐβίανται αἰτίκα δῆμος
 θήλεια δὲ σύθλ· θέλεια δὲ μᾶλα καὶ αἶθε
 ὅπποτ' ἀνδρωφῶσιν ὄχε· λαδὲ γ' ἄρσενά πάντ'
 δὲ ξάμενα πλὴν αὐτίς ἀλάβληδον ὀχ' ὠνται·
 αὐτίς καὶ σφῆκατι μέλαν χεῖμῶνα λείβου·
 ὄφειδε μίσητο μάνων αἰῶν μῆλων τε σῦωντε·
 χαίρει δ' ἀνολθος δανή ὄοι οὐ μᾶλα βαλπίῶντι
 κῶσιον φαίνοσι βίαιόμηναι ἐνὶ αὐτοῖν



ἠδραμοὶ ἔγγεπε μοῦσα πο
 λυῖστον ὅς μᾶλα πολλὰ
 πλάγχθη· ἐσθ' τροίκε ἴθρον
 ππολιέβρον' ἐσθρε·
 πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν
 ἄσρα, καὶ μόον' ἔγνω·
 πολλὰ δ' ὄγ' ἐμ' ὅρτω πάθει
 ἄλγεια ὄν κατὰ θυμόν
 ἀρνύμενος, ἠΐτε ψυχῆ κ' ἔ
 μόστον ἔταίρων·
 ἔταίρους ἱρρύσατο ἰέμερός περ·
 φετέρησιν ἄτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλογο
 ατὰ βούς ὑπέρβιος κελίοιο

Damilas's script (left) and his printing type (right).

Δεσμὴν ἐκ πατέρων περὶν ἄκτ' ἠμόμα κλαίω·
 Πολλοὶ ἐμ' ἀντιόχοιο Δέμοις καὶ ἄρακτος ἀλόα,
 Ἄρμαλὴν ἔμμημον ἔμετρήσαμτο περέααι·
 Πολλοὶ δὲ σκοπᾶδ' εωτιμ' ἐλαυρόμεροι ποτὶ σακίμ
 ἠόσχοι σὺν κεραοῖσιν ἐμυκήσαμτο βόιοι·
 ἠυρία δ' ἐμ' πεδίον κραυώμιον ἐνδ' ἰάασκομ
 Ποιμέμες ἐκκρίτα μῆλα φιλοζήμοισι κλεώμαις·

Bonus Accursius, Milan, c.1479-80.

ἔλ' ἀλ' ἠσὸν ἐκαστὸς πρὸς τὸν πλῆ
 σίον αὐτοῦ· χθλῆ δόλιαι ἐμιαρδία
 καὶ ἔμκαρδία ἐλ' αὐλῆ σελικᾶ· ἐξολο
 φρεῦσαι κε πᾶσι ταῦ χθλῆ τῶ δόλιαι
 ἔλ' ὄσ' ἀμῶν λορρίμομου· τὸν σθ
 πῶν τας πλῆ ἔλ' ὄσ' ἀμῶν μενάλυ
 γῶν μῶν· τὸν χθλῆ ἠμῶν πᾶρ ἠμῶν
 ἐστὶ τίς ἠμῶν κ' ἐστὶ μ'· ὄν' κ' ὄν' τῆς τῶ
 λεπτορίας τῶν πῆ ὠχῶν καὶ τοῦ τε
 μῶν γῶν τῶν μῶν ἠμῶν· μῶν δ' ἠμῶν
 ἠμῶν μαῖλα ἔλ' κ'· ἠμῶν μαῖλα ὄν' σῶν τῆ

σεις ἰδίαις, τὰ ὄψασθ' ὑμ' παρεμπύτωμα εἰς ὄνκ ἐ
 πιδάλλουσαμ θέσιμ, ἐλέγχουσιμ διὰ τῆς παρέαν
 τῶν ἀκολουθίας· τῶν τοῖνυμ τοῦ λόγου μερῶν,
 ἃ μὲν εἰς ἀριθμούς καὶ γένη καὶ πτώσεις μετασχη
 ματιζόμενα, ἃ δὲ εἰς πρόσωπα καὶ ἀριθμούς, ἃ δὲ
 μὲν ἐπιθετικά μετὰ τοῦ τῆ, ἄλλα καθ' ἑμαὶ μό
 μοι σχηματισμὸν ἐκφερόμενα. Ταῦτα δὲ μεταληφ
 θέματα ἐξ ἰδίων μετασχηματισμῶν εἰς τὰς λεούσας
 ἀκολουθίας ἀριθμῶν ἢ προσώπων ἢ γεγῶν, τῆ
 τοῦ λόγου συντάξει ἀμαεμῆρισται εἰς ἐπιπλοκήν
 τοῦ πρὸς ὃ φέρεσθαι ἕκαστον δεῖ. εἰομῆι οὕτω τῶ
 χοι πλῆθυντικὸν πρὸς πλῆθυντικὸν κατὰ τὴν τοῦ
 αὐτοῦ προσώπου παρεμπύωσιμ γράφομεν ἢ μείζ
 μαθαμόνουσιμ ἀμῶν τῶν. Το γὰρ ἐμ' μετάβασει τοῦ
 προσώπου ὄν πᾶν τῶν ἀπαιτήσῃ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀριθ

Alexandros Alexandrou, Venice, 1486 (left);
 Arnaldo Guillen de Brocar, Alcalà, 1514 (right).

The language they used was the popular language of common Greek and this created a parallel market for popular literature. Unfortunately, it was impossible at that time to find Greeks combining the charismas of the craftsmen and scholars of the fifteenth century.

The percentage of Greek books published annually almost doubled in the seventeenth century when 74% of such book production was allocated to liturgical and religious publications.²⁹ However, after the period of what I have called the 'first Greek typographic school' (up to 1670), no Greek craftsmen worked in the printing field. Most of these books came out of Italian printing offices. Apart from other things, because Greek writers employed the services of non-Greek printers, this situation often resulted in the distortion of the character, and often of the meaning of the book. Many papers written by Greek scholars criticizing foreign printers can be found in books and manuscripts.³⁰ For example, in 1617 the craftsmen at Oxford University Press, not understanding the importance of the notes that surrounded the drawings by Christophoros Angelos, reproduced, in a very crude manner, only the sketches without his explanatory text.³¹

The 'dark ages' of Greek typography that were to last until the nineteenth century were interrupted by short intervals due to three printing establishments in Venice which were owned and run by Greeks and also by some sporadic attempts at printing carried out in places such as Moschopolis and Iasio.³² Typographically the results are of minimal interest. This is not because of the bad printing or their crudely cut type, but because they are lacking in freshness and experimental flavour. The output of the presses of Glykis,³³ Sarros and Theodosiou (1670-1820) cannot compete with the work executed by their pioneer compatriots who belonged to the 'first Greek typographic school'. These few Greek printers imitated their Italian colleagues, using baroque style borders and ornaments and producing heavy title-pages. A surviving specimen from 1812 produced by Glykis, shows his use of types from the sixteenth-century period and hence reveals his lack of innovation.³⁴

As Italy stopped being the heart of the production of Greek printed matter, other countries, such as Austria, England, France, Germany and the Low Countries gave hospitality to Greek people and their publishing ventures. The economic and political collapse of the Venetian Republic in the end of the eighteenth century had an immediate effect on the wealth of its Greek community and consequently on printing in the region.

the transitional period

As the Catholic propaganda spread in an attempt by the Papal Authorities to convert the Orthodox Christians of the Eastern world, the Church took her measures. She found ways to print books against the 'heretic Westerners', and, because of the circumstances, was

29. Patrinelis, C., *The Greek book in the Turkokratea, 1474-1820*, Thessaloniki, 1981, p.27.

30. Labros, S., "Αι κατά των τυπογράφων της Βενετίας αιτιάσεις του Καισαρίου Δαπόντε και του Παχωμίου Ρουσάνου", in *Neos Ellenomnemon*, vol.2, Athens, 1905, pp.337-351.

31. Simpson, P., *Proof-reading in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, Oxford, 1935, p.80.

32. For a documented account concerning these attempts see Bokos, G., "Early Greek printing establishments in the East, 1627-1827", unpublished doctoral thesis, Athens, 1986 (printed this year by ELIA and K. Spanos, Athens, 1997).

33. For a complete account of Glykis' printing activities see Veloudis, G., *The Greek printing house of the Glykis in Venice, 1670-1854*, Athens, 1987. About Theodosiou see Ploumidis, G., *The Venetian printing office of Dimitrios and Panos Theodosiou, 1755-1824*, Athens, 1969.

34. *Specimens and names of the characters of the Greek printing office of Nikolaos Glykis*, Venice, 1812. Reprint by the 'National Printing Office', Athens, 1981.

forced to use the common language of the people, something which her superiors were not happy about at all. To the Greeks the ecclesiastic principle of that time was well-known, and was indicative of the climate prevailing in the highest ranks of the Patriarchate: 'to the learned the wise things, to the holy people the holy things; not everything is for everybody'.

The Greek Orthodox Church never advocated a revolutionary solution. In their opinion there was nothing to be resolved. God, annoyed with the corruption of the Byzantine Empire, had sent the Ottomans to clear up the mess, so any attempt against the new Empire was an offence against Him. Furthermore, the Orthodox flock had never forgiven the Westerners and their crusades, especially the pillage of Constantinople by the Franks in the fourth crusade in 1204. For the Orthodox inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, Westerners were the schismatics who were directed by their Popes. This is basically the reason why the Church was advising Greeks, even after the first revolutionary movements, not to take part in a war against the Empire.³⁵ Such people were definitely indifferent to the spirit of Renaissance and to any innovation it carried with it. But this was true only for those people within Greece, those who were loyal to the Patriarchate, and the fact is, that the Patriarchate knew what printing was, for it ran its own printing office. It was officially established by Gregorios V in 1798 named 'Πατριαρχικόν Τυπογραφείον' (Patriarchal Printing Office) and its output consisted of ecclesiastical texts and other religious matter, especially polemics against the non-Orthodox theories. Nevertheless, books such as the *Psalterion*, *Octoechos*, the *Orologion* and other liturgical texts were used from 1576 onwards at Greek schools and may have replaced the primers, which existed hitherto. It was one of the means the Church employed to control her flock and retain Orthodoxy.

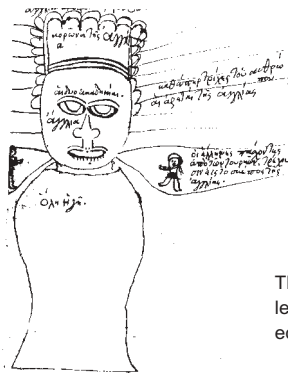
The old view that during the period of the Ottoman Empire, Greek education was suppressed, is no longer accepted by modern historians. On the contrary, there were Greeks who witnessed the sultan's tolerance of the existence of Greek educational institutions.³⁶ An exaggerated example concerns the (hi)story of the 'secret schools'. All Greek pupils have been taught how these schools looked, and Gyzis's painting is believed to be the most accurate representation of them: Greek children sit around an old monk, who teaches them their first letters in the dim light of the temple. An armed Greek is there to protect them from the fear of the Turks. No sources, however, have verified the existence of such schools.³⁷ But even so, we have to accept that there were educational establishments of a lower level which provided pupils with the basic learning skills. Most of these activities took place either in the narthex of various temples, or in monastery cells. Monks and clergymen acted as educators teaching reading and writing to the children by using the texts most available to them, i.e., the liturgical texts.³⁸

35. Clogg, R., "The Didaskalia Patriki, An Orthodox reaction to French revolutionary propaganda", in *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.5, 1969, pp.87-115. Clogg writes about the book *Didaskalia Patriki* (Paternal Exhortation) which was published in 1798 by the Greek Patriarchate in Constantinople: 'This not only advocated passive submission to the Ottoman authorities but also advanced the by no means uncommon view, that the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Empire came about by Divine Providence as a punishment for the Christian Empire's manifold signs and so that the Ottoman Empire might act as a shield for the Orthodox Church against the taint of the Latin heresy'. See also his *The movement for Greek independence 1770-1821, a collection of documents*, London, 1976.

36. Angelou, A., & Eliou, P., (ed.), *The intellectual movement of the Nation in the eighteenth and nineteenth century*, Athens, 1976. See for example, in pages 139-140 the case of M. Gedeon. We should not, however, apply this as a rule, oversimplifying thus later attitudes of the conquerors against enslaved peoples.

37. Hatzopoulos, *Greek schools*, p.53.

38. Angelopoulos, P., *Τα κατά τον αοίδιμον Γρηγόριον τον Ε΄*, Athens, 1865. Extracts from that book were published by A. Vakalopoulos in his *Sources of the history of modern Hellenism, 1669-1812*, vol.2, Thessaloniki 1977, pp.152-153. Angelopoulos writes: 'Κατά την προκαταρκτικήν εκπαίδευσιν...γινόμενην εν τοις περί τον ναόν οικήμασι, συνήθως υπό του ιερέως, ή ιεροδιακόνου...' and '...και τα εις τας χείρας των παιδων τιθέμενα βιβλία έπρεπε να ώσιν εκ των εκκλησιαστικών'. Also in Veloudis, *The Greek printing house*, p.123, where the author writes that 'it is worth noticing that the books used throughout the centuries of the Turkish domination, such as *Octoechos*, *Psalteri*, or the *Paedagogia*, and the 400 years old *Grammatiki* by Laskaris, remain the best-sellers for the schools in the newly established Greek State'.



The original drawing by Angelos on the left and the woodcut printed in the Oxford edition on the right, 1617.

39. See also some interesting remarks in Veloudis, *The Greek printing house*, pp.91-92.

40. As late as 6.1.1824 Stanhope writes to Bowring from Greece: 'The priests are said to be illiterate and immoral'. Stanhope, L.F.C., *Greece in 1823, 1824 and 1825*, London, 1828, p.76. See also Paparegopoulos, K., *History of the Greek Nation*, re-edited from the 1885 publication, vol.15, Athens, 1993, p.173.

41. For example, 44 such abbreviations were included in Michael Papa Georgiou *Μέγα Αλφαβητάριον*, printed in Venice in 1771. See Amariotou, *Writing*, pp.257-258.

42. Extremely interesting remarks about the relationship between Greek calligraphy, handwriting and printing types can be found in Amariotou, *Writing*, pp.32-82, 406-450.

43. Hart, H., *Notes on a century of typography at the University Press Oxford, 1693-1794*, edited by H. Carter, Oxford, 1970, p.141.

This may have had some effect on typography. The lighting conditions in the places where these gatherings were held would have made it difficult, if not impossible, for the priest and even more importantly for the young children, to read the kind of types accepted as standard by the literati in Italy. Everybody who has been in an Orthodox naos, where darkness is its main characteristic, would understand this point.³⁹ Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that many priests were semi-literate and had only a limited knowledge of the alphabet and reading.⁴⁰

It may sound exaggerated, but in those times contractions, which were the remnants of the manuscript practice abundantly used in Greek printed texts, could have played the role of graphic images. These images, which replaced three or four characters or even words, made a more legible shape than a row of letters, thus speeding up the reading process in much the same way that it speeded up writing. Apart from anything else, this situation created generations of Greek pupils accustomed, through the Venetian books, to the Aldine letter. Moreover, this may also provide an explanation as to why a large number of abbreviations are to be found in early printed Greek alphabetaria.⁴¹ Greek education always insisted on copying, and as early as the sixteenth century pupils copied their handbooks. This is one more reason why printed handbooks could not be found in large quantities in the Greek mainland. Even today pupils in Greece are taught a lesson called 'αντιγραφή' (copying) and this is also the case at the Greek schools run by the Orthodox Church in England and elsewhere. The exercise is to copy each day, a part of their actual reading book. This provides a clue as to how the Aldine/Garamond letter arrived safe and unchallenged into the nineteenth century, through generations of Greek pupils accustomed to this letter.⁴² Even in England, the numerous ligatures in Greek printing were, 'abandoned about 1816-1820', as H. Hart informs us, when discussing the practice followed at Oxford University Press.⁴³ For the first time in centuries, things started to change when education attempted to free itself from the Church's administration. In printing the immediate effect was the widespread introduction of the modern Didot type design at the turn of the nineteenth century.