typographic corrections, from Mousouros to the Internet

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The Center for Neo-Hellenic Studies organised in memory of G. P. Savvidis its first scientific conference on "New Greek literature: Editorial problems and questions. Theory and practice" in Athens on 16 and 17 June 2000. The following text, maintains the structure of my speech at the afternoon session of the first day; it was printed in Greek in a book edited by Manolis Savvidis in 2002. Many thanks to Manolis (2000/2) and to Mary C. Dyson (2020).

Filippo de Strata, in a desperate attempt, if not to save, at least to extend the life of the scribal profession, asks the Doge to remove printers from Venice: *... printers guzzle wine and, swamped in excess, bray and scoff. The Italian writer lives like a beast in a stall. The superior art of authors who have never known any other work than producing well-written books is banished. This glory pertains to you, Doge: to lay low the printing-presses. I beg you to do this, lest the wicked should triumph. Writing indeed, which brings in gold for us, should be respected and held to be nobler than all goods, unless she has suffered degradation in the brothel of the printing presses. She is a maiden with a pen, a harlot in print*.

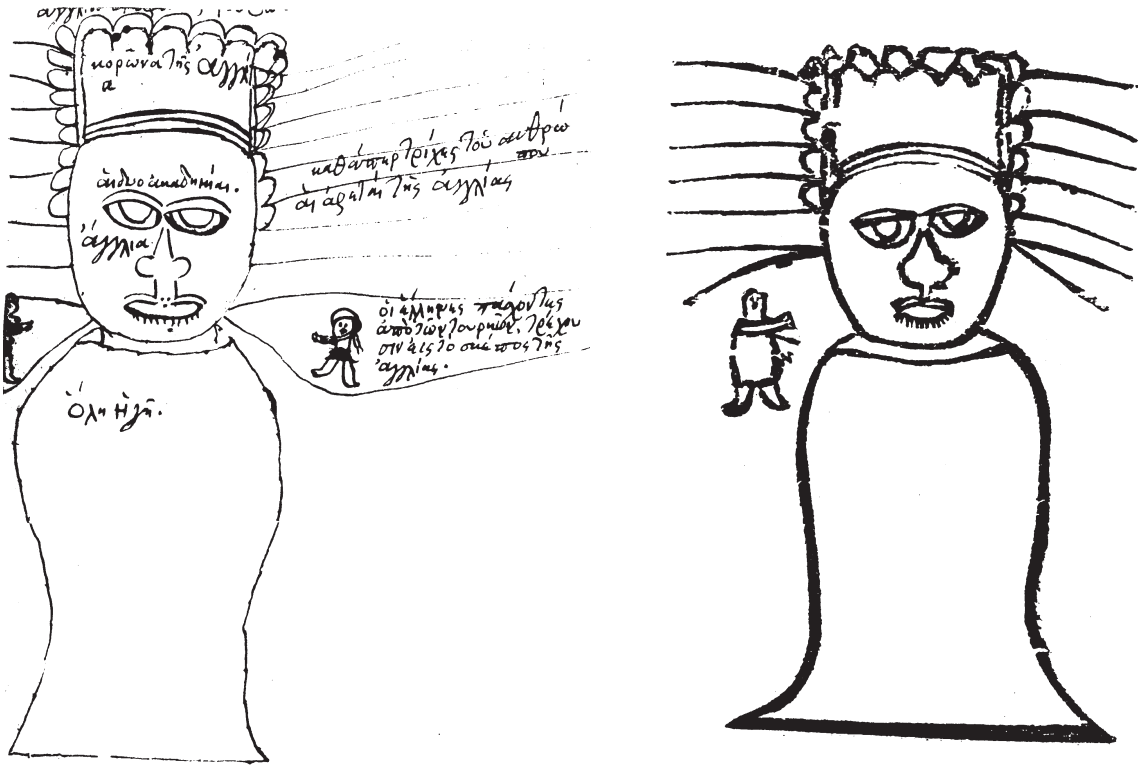
On this front, the printers were relatively easy winners; the triumph of technology had already been discounted. A few years later, manuscripts were treated as rare collector items, but in many cases they didn't get any attention since the printed book had arrived. A typical case is the superb manuscript collection of Bessarion (which later became the core of the Biblioteca Marciana), which, out of the indifference of those responsible, was found at some point in the market. Scribes had to adapt to survive. A lot of them had been involved in book decoration, some worked as proofreaders or editors, some ended up as printers.

But another front was to be created, which is still in existence today: the confrontation between author and printer/publisher. The allegations had been made public for years. We know, for example, since the publication of Lambros, of the complaints –two centuries apart– made by Rousanos and Dapontes, but also Konstanta's comment on the editing of *Philotheou Parerga* by Gazis: *Τα πάρεργα ο παπάς τα ετύπωσε παρέργως. There are more mistakes than words in the book. What am I supposed to do with him? He's a priest, God forgive him*.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of errors was not new. It predates the appearance of printing in Europe, as it is also found in manuscripts. In 1883, Alfred Watts published his study of the categories of errors that appear in Greek manuscripts of the New Testament and compared them with those in printed books, presenting an average of about four errors per page. The same applies to Renaissance printing. Respect for the –indeed impressive– efforts of the early printers, but also the mystery that still covers several parts of the story of the 'invention of printing', have led to the creation of some myths: that typography was done much better than now; books were printed more accurately when the methods and the machines of the art were simpler than those of today; early printers and publishers were men of high academic calibre who hired the services and worked closely with the literati.

Just two decades after the appearance of printing in Europe, one of the three protagonists, Peter Schöffer, in a 1468 edition, points out to his readers that he paid a lot of money to wise people to correct the texts. Then he adds: "there are competing printers who do not pay attention to this issue". As early as 1478 a book by Gabriel Petrus in Venice was accompanied by a two-page list of errors.

During this period, corrections are introduced by hand, after books are finished, or are printed in the margins. When larger parts of text are omitted, they are printed separately to take their proper place. A white stripe is affixed to the word to be cancelled and error lists are common in the years of incunabula. Furthermore, whole volumes are reprinted because of the many mistakes found in the first attempt. The American printer De Vinne wonders how a book by Mirandola printed in Strasbourg in 1507 –then the most important printing centre–, contains fifteen pages of errata.



Part of the original illustration by Christopher Angelos on the left and the final woodcut printed in the Oxford edition of 1617 on the right.

In 1617, Christopher Angelos, who is in Oxford, decides to publish his book at the famous university house in two languages, Greek and English. In the book, he recounts his sufferings at the hands of the Turks because of his faith in Christ. Unfortunately, his sufferings continued in the hands of Oxford university printers and proofreaders. The ill-crafted, crude woodblocks and the omission of parts of the text must have angered my compatriot. It was the first book by the then Oxford University Press in which images were printed. Despite the care taken in creating the manuscript (text and images were produced by Angelos himself), the printed result is disappointing. The same is true of Barker's version of the Bible printed in London in 1632, which has remained known as the 'Sinner's Bible', since the seventh commandment was missing the word "not".

In printing history books, there are stories about Henry Estienne hanging proofs on his front door challenging passers-by to highlight –for a fee– typographical errors, or Teobaldo Manucci rewarding his readers with a gold coin for every mistake found in his books. Although Aldus wanted his books to be beautiful and correct, towards the end of his life he acknowledged that he never managed to produce a version that fully satisfied him.

For Aldus in particular, Lowry showed that the reality is far from that of the academic-philosopher-worshipper of the publisher of printed letters we have in our mind. Examination of the vast body of his Greek and Latin publications leads to the conclusion that his so-called organised publishing policy, which led classical literature on a new course, was nothing but an 'academic wheel of fortune'. Lowry explains that when the proofreaders had good quality material in their hands, they usually had it by chance. They had little or no idea how to use it, and they had to learn all kinds of things

in order to communicate with the workers in the printing office. An aldine is as good as the original and the way it was used by the editor, and every case should be judged separately. Finally, Lowry points out that the Italian printer's contribution was not so much improving the quality of the texts but increasing the amount of material to be studied by the public.

Let me refer to a recent, personal experience: the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz exhibits Gazis' *Grammar* printed by Aldus in 1495. At the end of his introduction, the printer sets in two lines Isocrates' "Εάν ης φιλομαθής, έση πολυμαθής" (If you love learning, you will be very learned); the word φιλομαθής has an unnecessary contraction.

Johann Froben, Basel's excellent printer, is frank about corrections: *I do everything in my power to produce books without errors. In this edition of the New Testament in Greek I have doubled my care and my vigilance; I have spared neither time nor money. I have engaged with difficulty many correctors of the highest ability, among them Johannes Oecolampadius, a professor of three languages. Erasmus himself has done his best to help me*. After a year of preparations, the book was ready; when it finally came out it contained a page and a half of errata!

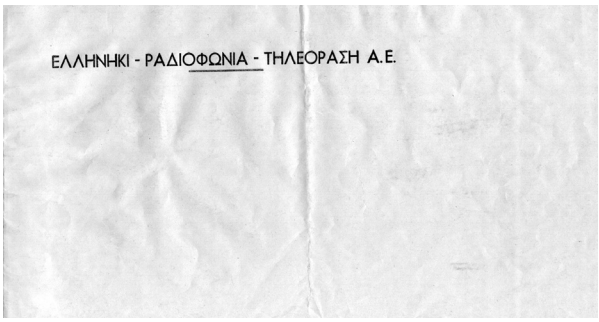
The above problems led in many cases to measures taken by official bodies. Countries such as Spain and France try to protect their library reputation by introducing strict controls. As early as 1503, Markos Mousouros acts as the representative of the Senate's censor of Greek books in Venice. As George Veloudis informs us, much later, on 15 July 1671, Nikolaos Glykis submits a petition to the authorities of this city; he refers to the poor typography of liturgical books and their abundant errors, and claims that religious misunderstandings often arise for these reasons. Of course, he expresses his intention to take over their reprinting. Five months later, the profession of reviewer is officially recognised as a public function and a fee is laid down by law. Gradenigo is the officially appointed corrector of Greek books in Venice, but he also acts as a censor. Obviously, Glykis didn't like it, and he was right not to like it.

The most important fact remains that these renowned printers, surrounded by excellent philologists, editors and reviewers (and among them the representatives of the "first Greek printing school"), have managed to give the printed book the necessary prestige by making it a reliable product. And Robert Estienne, in the 16th century, is showing his colleagues the way towards the production of the monochrome book, away from manuscript conventions.

We can't be sure about Moxon's motives in his definition of the proofreader. Was it part of his overall effort to deliver, in as precise terms as possible, what he considered ideal? Or was it an aura from the mythology of the renaissance printing of the past? Maybe, since at the time Moxon writes, any standards have fallen noticeably. Aldus, Estienne, Froben, Plantin, all belonged to the past. So, Moxon states that: *A Correcter should (besides the English tongue) be well skilled in Languages, especially in those that are used to be Printed with us, viz. the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriack, Caldae, French, Spanish, Italian, High Dutch, Saxon, Low Dutch, Welch, etc. … He ought to be very knowing in Derivations and Etymology of Words, very sagacious in Pointing, skilful in the Compositers whole Task and Obligation, and endowed with a quick Eye to espy the smallest Fault*.

Two and a half centuries later and while technology remains basically the same, Percy Simpson comments on Moxon's definition by writing: *Such a corrector might be an archetype laid up in heaven. Moxon never met him in any earthly printing-house on earth*.

But what could happen in an earthly printing house is described by Hornschuch in his *Orthotypographia*, published in 1608. After he writes that: "typography is worth of every praise and admiration", he points out that printers have neither the will nor the ability to appreciate what they print, and should therefore hire professional compositors and correctors. But beware: *The corrector too should shun assiduously the vice of drink, lest he should see either nothing at all, or more than is actually there. When a drunkard reaches for a candlestick for a light, he cannot properly and he stumbles. So, a person in this line of work who drinks freely does not drink for gain, but at a loss, which affects a great many people; he is a useless good-for-nothing; and if the master or manager of a printing house saw him in this condition*



"Correction" on a national road sign [left]. Greek Radio and Television SA official envelope; the word Ellinike/Greek is misspelled [right].

pretty often it would not be surprising if he said, 'Get out, you wretch!' Therefore let those whose business it is do the job soberly, not through a screen of expiring vapours from excess of alcohol.

D. Hatzopoulos, in 1894, described in a different way the wine affection of "Greek compositors, who often act as correctors and proofreaders. Because the doctors advise them to drink a couple of glasses of retsina, to neutralize the damage from antimony, they won't miss an opportunity to go out drinking".

In the small printing shops of the 17th and 18th century, the owner himself is often a proofreader. Later, the master printer plays this role, while in the large print shops more than one proofreader is employed. There are also 'expert proof-readers' called in by the author or the printer, especially when texts need to be set in foreign languages. This is only the case when there is the possibility of paying for external collaborators' services. These people do not belong to the body of employees in the printing press. Moxon writes: …*the Master Printer gives them a Waygoose; that is, he makes them a good Feast, and not only entertains them at his own House, but besides, gives them Money to spend at the Ale-house or Tavern at Night; And to this Feast, they invite the Correcter, Founder, Smith, Joyner, and Inck-maker, who all of them severally (except the Correcter in his own Civility) open their Purse-strings and add their Benevolence… But from the Correcter they expect nothing, because the Master Printer chusing him, the Workmen can do him no kindness*.

Finally, it is common practice for the author himself to correct the proofs, a process which Greek authors were carrying out, so that they could see their works printed abroad – before the establishment of printing in Greece. Later, people like Vendotis, Gazis, Pharmakidis, Alexandridis and others, did the same when publishing their own printed materials.

In late 1793, our Markidis Pouliou brothers, as sincere as Froben, communicate with their readers: *some typical mistakes, which may be spotted by the sympathetic reader, should be attributed to the compositors who are of a different language, as well as to time pressure. We have enough time only to print the newspapers impromptu and to correct them once, diverting our attention from other necessary typographic works of ours which need to be done, and indeed recalling the old apophthegm which is used to be said about books without mistakes, "nobody will ever find a sky clear from clouds and books without mistakes", even though books are corrected twice or thrice…*

The view that prevails in the relevant manuals of the early decades of the 20th century, is that in order to be useful, the corrector should know the names of the printing types and the working methods of the printing house. De Vinne points out: … *There are a few excellent readers who have not been printers or copy-holders, but the readers of most utility are those who have set type or held copy from their youth*.

ΕΚΔΟΣΗ

Ενα έργο ζωής για τον Δ. Χατζή

Τίτλος: «Βιβλιογραφικό Μελέτημα (1930-1989) Δημήτρη Χατζή».
Συγγραφέας: Νίκος Γουλανδρής.
Εκδόσεις: «Γνώση».
Είδος: Βιβλιογραφικό μελέτημα στην κυριολεξία! Μια μοναδική προσπάθεια (με μεθοδολογία και τρόπο ανάπτυξης πρωτοφανή για τα ελληνικά δεδομένα) να συγκεντρωθούν όλα τα τεκμήρια της 50χρονης πνευματικής παρουσίας του Δ. Χατζή. Η πρώτη και σημαντικότερη καταβολή για τη συγκρότηση ενός «Αρχείου Δημήτρη Χατζή».
Ο Νίκος Γουλανδρής λειτούργησε ως ερευνητής, ως συγγραφέας, αλλά και... ως ντετέκτιβ για να εντοπίσει, να συγκεντρώσει και να παρουσιάσει το σπάνιο υλικό του σε 1.000 περίπου σελίδες.
Το πρώτο μέρος του βιβλιογραφικού μελετήματος καταγράφει χρονολογικά την εργογραφία του συγγραφέα. Αναγράφονται τα έργα, η χρονολογική σειρά της δημοσιευσής τους και οι διαδοχικές εκδόσεις.
Το δεύτερο μέρος καταγράφει, επίσης χρονολογικά, το εντοπισμένο σύνολο των έργων και των άλλων γραπτών, δημοσιευμένων ή όχι, του συγγραφέα, παρέχει πληροφορίες για τα υπάρχοντα χειρόγραφα - και εκδίδει όσα από αυτά είναι αδημοσίευτα ή όσα μας γνωρίζουν το ελληνικό πρωτότυπο ξενόγλωσσων δημοσιευμάτων του συγγραφέα, σημειώνει την αλληλογραφία του και επιχειρεί να δώσει ώς ένα βαθμό το πλαίσιο μέσα στο οποίο εργάστηκε ο συγγραφέας.
Το τρίτο και τελευταίο μέρος του βιβλιογραφικού μελετήματος παρουσιάζει αναλυτικά τα φιλολογικά υλικά που έδωσε ώς τώρα η κριτική και η μελέτη των έργων του Δημήτρη Χατζή.

"A work of a lifetime for D. Chatzis", the author, with the photo of K. Chatzis (the musician) [left]. Municipality of Thessalo[m]iki [right].

Obviously, technological developments have influenced both the typesetting and correction practices. One such example is the two-pull press with a movable bed, which appeared in the 1470/80s allowing the printing of a surface twice the size of the presses used by Gutenberg and his fellow printers during the first twenty years of the art. This made it possible to print not one, but two or four pages of text on one side of a sheet, thus making the corrector's work more difficult as he couldn't check one page after the other in normal order.

In the correctors' room at the Plantin-Moretus museum in Antwerp, next to the main area housing the printing presses and the typecases, there are two large drawers. Their use was based on a specific system of what goes in and out along the way from the typesetters to the printers, to the proofreaders and vice versa. The foundry was far away, on another floor. The working conditions, which in many ways determined the quality of work, were ideal. And while Raphelengius or Kilianus, Plantin's proofreaders, worked under such good conditions, we could not claim the same for most of their colleagues.

For a period of more than four centuries from the appearance of printing in Europe, printing techniques have been limited to letterpress. The problem is obvious: direct printing material (text or images) had to be wrong-reading. The metal, in addition to the printing site, dominated the pre-printing stage, where, since the end of the 19th century, manual typesetting was complemented by mechanical typesetting with standard linotype and monotype machines. In 1909, the newspaper *Patris* (Homeland), advertising her linotype machines, explains: *The linotype machines provide speed in the composition of the newspaper and, above all, they assure its clear printing for they always compose with new types. Moreover, they have improved the working conditions of the typesetter, who now works comfortably without being condemned to stand up within the suffocating vapour of antimony.*

In terms of worker health and hygiene, things were not so rosy but they were certainly better than in the past; a memorandum submitted to the Greek Parliament by the Labour Association in 1911 mentioned that: …*The art of printing requires both physical and mental energy, which exhausts the printer. Printing types, with which printers are in constant and direct contact, made of lead and antimony, have a harmful and very often lethal effect on their health. Cases of lead and antimony poisoning occur every day within their craft union, which is literally ravaged by the devastating disease of tuberculosis.*

Pale and yellow, standing from morning to evening, most of the times inside hovels and dives, in a suffocating atmosphere of poisonous gases, undernourished due to lousy paying conditions, physically and mentally exhausted, live their lives in despair waiting for death to knock on their doors. It is worth mentioning that, according to Printers' Mutual Aid Association, out of 650 printers working in Athens, during the last fifteen years: 75 died from tuberculosis in the lungs and throat, 3 from stroke, 2 from other diseases and only one from old age!

The essential transition to a different reality began to be felt only with the evolution of the technique of transfer lithography and the application of photography to printing methods from mid-19th century onwards. Of course, at the level of mass production, offset, which marginalised metal typesetting (hand or mechanical), has a life of just half a century. These essentially photographic techniques, and even more so the recent introduction of digital typesetting and reproduction systems – after 1985, have brought about changes as important as those of 1450.

Harris-Intertype 1100, editing and proofing terminal. A stand-alone unit consisting of a VDU, a CRT console (TV screen) and a TTS keyboard. It was designed specifically for processing, correcting, and editing text. No matter how incomprehensible the above description may sound, it is one of the reasons for the dramatic changes which have taken place over the last few decades in the field of graphic communication. The typographer is no longer the printing pressman but the one who converts spoken language into graphic, organising the latter to visually convey messages as comprehensively as possible.

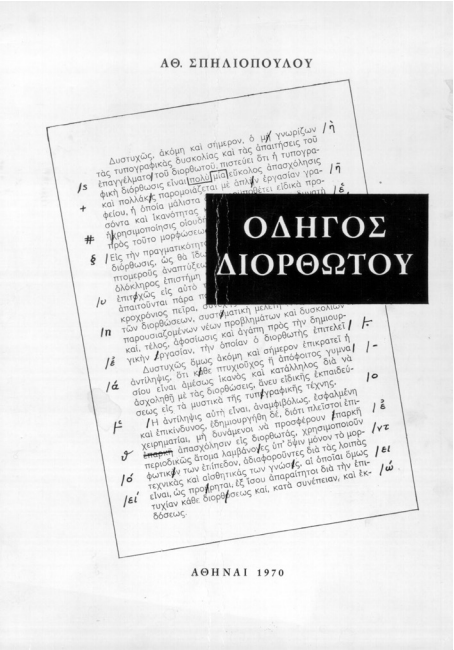
The possibility of the immediate multiplication of originals, which was only possible through printing, has ceased to be a process for a few and has been passed on to the many. The democratisation of the means of production achieved by desktop publishing systems puts authors in a much better position than the period of the manuscript, allowing for more complete control of their material. In addition, the ability to publish texts over the Internet and to directly access and interact with thousands of readers adds new momentum to the publishing process.

Today, in many cases, the publisher expects the author to act not only as a proofreader but also as a designer of his book. In the final analysis, the coherence of the text, punctuation, the use of capital letters etc., is above all the responsibility of the author and not of the typographer. It is just as absurd to hire a typographer to ensure the consistency of an author's text as to ask a qualified typesetter (if there still exists such a professional) to type a text that has already been typed by a typist. There are many, and not just computer and software manufacturers, who argue that typography for the masses is a wonderful prospect. But also in the actual print production field, developments have led to integrated units where human intervention will be remarkably limited. This year's DRUPA, the international exhibition that defines these developments, has left no room for doubt. Over the next ten years, digital printing will steal a large part of the market share from conventional offset. This means that the author will be able to go (or call) in the morning, order 200 copies of his 250-page book, and receive them on the same day, ready for the book market.

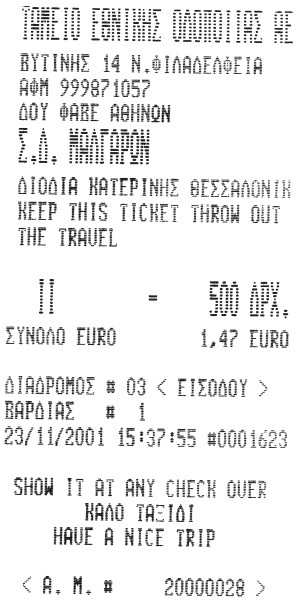
All these changes, many of which are already on the way, have a direct effect on editing and proofreading. The correction phase, at least as we have known it so far, is tending to disappear because of the new technologies. How, then, can we secure the high standards of publishing? How can we ensure that what was so difficult to achieve with the old controlled technology and knowledge is done today in such a fluid environment?

It may sound heretical, but perhaps we should now consider it abnormal that typographic knowledge should be the sole prerogative of typographers. And if this is or is likely to become a reality, then the safety valve is elsewhere: in the mass space of education.

Particularly interesting is Fernand Baudin's view that as long as writing (in every sense of the word, that is, micro- and macro-spacing, the overall arrangement, but also the words and punctuation) is not taught in schools and universities, most texts set on microcomputers will never come close to the standards required for a satisfactory transfer of ideas and information from one person to another as far as accuracy or readability are concerned.



19 years of work on typographic matters at the National Printing Office, the continuous study and systematic following of recent developments in the graphic arts field, as well as the special knowledge gained during the two years of training in London, encouraged me to write the present book titled *Corrector's Manual*. From the "Introduction" by Ath. Spiliopoulos [left].
National Road Construction Treasury SA, 23 November 2001. "Keep this ticket throw out the travel", but also "Show it at any check over" [right].



The important relationship between the manuscript and the printed artefact –that has not been researched as much as it should (and became even more fragile over the centuries of the omnipotence of printing)–, resurfaced through new technology. For example, the computer screen enables us to control text in such a way that was only possible at the time of the manuscript. We have to make the most of this by learning to properly use the tools that the new technology is amply providing.

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