

Twinning Project: 'Greek Heritage in European Culture and Identity' (GrECI)

Research Meeting I: Greek Books and Europe's Common Culture University of Cyprus, Archaeological Research Unit (1-2 June 2023)

The project 'Greek Heritage in European Culture and Identity', explores the reception and appropriation of ancient Greek culture in early modern Europe (15th-17th century). This meeting aimed to address questions on the dissemination and reception of the Greek language and literature, through the perspective of book history, namely the numerous editions in Greek that appeared throughout western Europe in the early modern period. In doing so, it dealt with four aspects of Greek textual heritage in early modern Europe: the content of these editions; the audience for Greek books; their circulation across borders; and, finally, how they were used and appropriated within specific cultural and religious contexts.

Many of these themes were addressed in the very first paper of the meeting, by Julián Solana Pujalte and Inmaculada Pérez-Martin. Their paper discussed questions of book circulation, the context(s) for Greek printing in Spain (as in Alcala de Henares, Salamanca, Valencia, in connection with universities, or religious learning), as well as the context in which the printing of Greek was discontinued: the association of Greek books with reforming ideas.

The two next papers focused on the production of Greek books in Italy, by two important workshops, the Giunta in Florence, and the Zanetti in Rome, and the intended audience. Thus, as Raphaële Mouren showed in her paper, the Giunta family in mid-sixteenth-century Florence produced mainly humanist works, which they sent to other parts of Italy and Europe through an organised network of book dealers. Their production of Greek books, however, changed over time, indicating a shift in their intended audience. Similar connections between production and audience were discussed by Irene Frangou, who focused on the Zanetti workshop, in late sixteenth-century Rome. They focused their production on theological and educational works, catering to the preferences of their Jesuit patrons and religious colleges in Rome.

Three papers considered the market beyond the Alps, further addressing the question of the circulation of Greek books across Europe as 'international' products, parallel to Latin books. Janika Päll gave us a glimpse of the circulation of Greek Book at the Baltic Shores. She discussed both the acquisition of books from the European market in the earlier part of the period, as well as the beginnings of Greek printing in Great Sweden. As elsewhere, the printing of Greek there was connected to the educational reform of the 1620s, and centred on classical texts.

From a different point of view, Natasha Constantinidou considered the presence of Greek books at the Frankfurt Book Fair between ca. 1564 to 1600. As she demonstrated, most of the Greek books sold at the Frankfurt book fair came from three main cities: Basel, Geneva, and Frankfurt. In here presentation she

considered the audience for these books (both for Greek learners and for a general audience), while she also paid attention to the confessional contexts in which these books were published and the marketed, discussing editions of Bible part and the Greek Church Fathers.

Emphasis on the printing and marketing of religious editions in Greek, particularly the texts of the early Greek Church Fathers by the Reformers was the theme of Paolo Sacht's presentation. Focusing on Basel in the sixteenth century, Sacht highlighted the promotion of this enterprise by the city's council, in connection with their Reformed agenda. This agenda was put forward through specific selections by the editors, as well as inaccuracies in translation.

In a different context, focusing on a number of German editions of books which we do not always readily associate with ('classical' or religious) Greek learning, Dionysios Stathakopoulos. Stathakopoulos highlighted the interest of early modern Europeans in late Byzantine medical texts, and not just in the widely diffused Galenic and Hippocratic corpus. Analysing early modern Latin translations of these texts, he showed that the process of these translations paralleled the symbolic 'return to the sources' of humanist and reforming scholars, with early modern translators of Byzantine medical texts attempting to 'purify' them from Arabic elements.

The reverence of Greek books extended beyond their content, as Marie Barral-Baron underlined in her presentation. In Granvelle's rich library in Franche-Comté, Greek books existed outside of their practical use: in fact, as Barral-Baron stressed, Granvelle's knowledge of Greek was not sufficient for a careful study of them. In his case, the books took on the role of cultural artefacts, imbued with value: they were seen as part of an ideal of the humanist library, or even understood in terms of their aesthetic value.

The idea of the book as a cultural artefact also relates to the materiality of books, beyond the discussion of texts and editions. The participants experienced this aspect through a hands-on session at the end of the first day, during a visit to the Library. There, all the participants had the opportunity to examine and talk briefly about copies of two-three editions discussed in their presentations. Material evidence such as the size of the book, were pointed out, the degree of wear and tear, the existence of marginal notes, etc.: all evidence that can be used to understand how different books were used by early modern readers.

This session was an excellent conclusion to the first day; it also led nicely to the discussion of the second day, where attention was turned to personal uses of the books. Malcolm Walsby's paper analysed a student's *Sammelband* in early 17th century Verdun. Material analysis of this artefact, cross-referenced with archival sources revealed the revival of Greek studies in connection with a Jesuit college in a provincial area of France, as well as the existence of a lending library at the college. It also revealed unique surviving copies of Latin books printed in Verdun, and a previously unknown Greek edition from Pont-à-Mousson.

The papers by Xander Feys and Rena Papadaki took us to Louvain and Constantinople, respectively. Feys discussed the collection Rutgerus Rescius, professor and printer of Greek at the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain. He showed his awareness of Greek editions beyond Louvain, and reconstructed part of his personal collection. Papadaki considered the book inventory of Niccolo Cornaro, an educated Cretan of Venetian origin, who lived between his homeland, Venice, and Constantinople, in a multicultural environment. With these two papers we were able to gauge into two different educational and cultural contexts within which Greek books were used and read. The two papers connected the dots between those two culturally and geographically remote spaces, and underlined the significance of Greek books as well as their cultural importance as international artefacts: Niccolo Cornaro possessed a Parisian Estienne edition in Constantinople, while Rescius was in possession of a vernacular Greek edition in Louvain.

To conclude, the meeting highlighted the strong link between the printing and circulation of Greek books and education, and confessional matters. Impetus for the circulation of Greek books, therefore, beyond the spread of humanism north of the Alps, was given both from the Reformers' side, with their emphasis on 'returning' to the early Christian texts and reading the Bible in its original languages, as well as from the Catholic side, who used them in reaffirming the catholic doctrine. The Catholic side, moreover, sought to control the kind of Greek books that were published and taught in the areas it controlled. The meeting also gave a fresh perspective, looking beyond the towering role of the Aldine press. Along the same lines, it also stressed the importance of examining the matter from a wider perspective, and not just within strict geographical or confessional boundaries. Finally, it highlighted, moreover, the significance of these books for the culture of early modern Europe, both for their content, as well as for their cultural significance.