

Neighbours on Paper: A Contribution to the History of Multiscript Printing in Colonial Cyprus

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Abstract

In Cyprus the introduction of printing coincided with the beginning of the British occupation. Thereafter, all printed documents had to address a multilingual audience as English, Greek, and Ottoman Turkish were in use. This article focuses on a distinctive characteristic of the local printing history namely the practice of multiscript printing and the visual appearance of multilingual documents that addressed a linguistically multifarious society. For comparative reasons two different kinds of documents are examined: multilingual administrative documents and advertisements. The analysis of the documents provides insights into the practice of multiscript printing, i.e. the technical resources (printing methods and available types), the skills of printers, and the typographic conventions applied on multilingual documents. In conjunction with archival evidence these documents become mirrors of political convictions, social norms, and commercial transactions that linked a peripheral printing trade with the European centres.

Keywords: Printing, Cyprus, Typography, multiscript, multilingual, Greek, Ottoman Turkish, English

Introduction

Research in printing history as a field of study concentrates on the following broad thematic areas: 1) the development of printing technology, focusing on the machinery and techniques used from the transformation of written manuscripts to typeset galleys and the reproduction of multiple copies; 2) the printing trade, namely the everyday work in a print shop covering administrative and financial issues, the particular role of the various craftsmen involved in print production, and the related trades surrounding the print shop such as typefounding, punchcutting, stereotyp-

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ing, and papermaking among others; and 3) the wide array of printed products that constituted the main output of presses, their manufacture and design.²

Following similar research paths, Andreas Cl. Sophocleous laid the ground for the history of printing in Cyprus in his foundational work on the history of Cypriot press.³ His main approach was through the lens of journalism and media studies; his primary goal was to investigate the development of the press as an institution that helped structure socio-political and cultural aspects of Cypriot society by publicising new ideas and influencing the public opinion. However, as the first printing ventures in Cyprus constituted an integral part of newspaper production, Sophocleous expanded his research to reveal aspects of the printing history of the periodical press. Therefore, he shed light on the history of the operation of printing enterprises within a colonial administrative and political context, the characteristics of their workforce and, in some cases, their technical equipment. He publicly announced his plans to publish his work, *A Chronicle of Printing in Cyprus*, in the early 2000s.⁴ The book can be regarded as the culmination of a life-long research and the author's main contribution to the history of printing on the island. In it, he addresses various aspects of the beginning, growth and operation of the printing trade in Cyprus covering the period from the introduction of printing in the late 19th century until the 1960s, when the advent of a new technology, i.e., photocomposition, brought structural changes in the printing trade.⁵

Sophocleous bravely stepped in a completely uncharted area and opened up a field of study which still requires much work. Until the appearance of his first book on the history of Cypriot newspapers,⁶ research in the history of printing in Cyprus

² Indicative works that illustrate the different research approaches to the history of printing are the following: S. Morison, *Four Centuries of Fine Printing*, 2nd ed. (London: Ernest Benn, 1949); M. Twyman, *Printing 1770-1970, an Illustrated History of its Development and Uses in England*. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970); J. Moran, *Printing presses: History & Development from the 15th Century to Modern Times*. (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1973); S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*. (London: The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 1996, new edition revised by John Trevitt); P. Duffy, *The Skilled Compositor, 1850-1914: An Aristocrat among Working Men*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000).

³ A. Cl. Sophocleous, *A Contribution to the History of the Cypriot Press*, Vols 1-6. (Nicosia: IMME, 1995-2011).

⁴ A. Cl. Sophocleous, *Lefkosia, the Oldest Surviving Printing Press in Nicosia*. (Nicosia: Nicocles Publishing, 2003), p. 8.

⁵ A. Cl. Sophocleous, *A Chronicle of Printing in Cyprus*. (Nicosia: Nicocles Publishing, 2018).

⁶ A. Cl. Sophocleous, *The First Cypriot Newspapers and Human Rights of the Greeks in Cyprus*. (Nicosia: Intercollege Press, 1995).

was limited to two works that kept appearing in the relevant bibliography. The first is a lecture on printing in Cyprus addressed by Kypros Chrysanthis to a lay public attending the first book fair organised on the island at Phaneromeni's School for Girls Library in Nicosia in December 1954.⁷ Based on his experience as a published author and journals' editor, Chrysanthis provided a first account of printing and publishing activities and products in Cyprus. Any influence on Sophocleous' interest in printing history can only be speculated. The second was published by Roxane Argyropoulou; her article remains the only work on the beginnings of Greek book production in 19th century Cyprus, a fact that underlines the need for further research.⁸ Recent conferences, both local and international, provided opportunities to present ongoing research in the field that hardly find its way to publishing due to limited resources and the small size of the targeted market.⁹

This article expands on issues about printing history in Cyprus with the aim to address a distinctive characteristic of the local print market that has not yet pre-occupied researchers.¹⁰ It is revealed through the sample pages of a type specimen produced by one of the first Armenian printers who moved to Cyprus in the first decade of the 20th century where a vivid image of a diversified print market on the island is visually articulated.¹¹

In the 32 pages of the specimen five languages, English, Greek, Armenian, Turkish and French are represented and four scripts, Latin, Greek, Armenian and Ottoman Turkish are exhibited in a variety of sizes, styles and weights. It is apparent

⁷ K. Chrysanthis, 'Printing in Cyprus', *Bulletin of the Cyprus Hellenic Cultural Association* 1954/55, pp. XII, 133-139.

⁸ R. Argyropoulou, 'The Greek Book in the 19th Century Cyprus', in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Cypriot Studies*, Nicosia 1969, Vol. 3., eds. Th. Papadopoulos and M. Christodoulou, (Nicosia: Society of Cypriot Studies, 1973), pp. 11-14.

⁹ One-day Conference on 'The History of Greek Publications and Printing' (2014) organised by Petros Papapolyviou at the Department of History and Archaeology, University of Cyprus, <https://bit.ly/2S1i2Fn> [accessed December 2018]. K. Mastoridis, 'Making (Printing) History in Cyprus', *Proceedings of the Association of European Printing Museums Conference*, Chania 2017, <https://bit.ly/2RjpfvG> [accessed December 2018]; N. Sioki, 'Outside the Printing Museum: Printed Ephemera in Cyprus Local Museum Collections', *Proceedings of the Association of European Printing Museums Conference*, Chania 2017, <https://bit.ly/2DE4lnL> [accessed December 2018].

¹⁰ The article is based on the paper presentation given at the 'Script, Print, and Letterforms in Global Contexts: The Visual and the Material' Conference, The Centre for Printing History and Culture, Birmingham City University, 28-29 June 2018.

¹¹ SA1 1263/1922, 'Specimens of Type of the Mosditchian Printing and Rubber-Stamp Works'.

that the main purpose of the specimen was to serve the needs of a linguistically heterogeneous society.

The present discussion is part of a broader ongoing research that investigates what is known about multiscrypt printing and the visual appearance of multilingual documents produced on the island. The focus is particularly placed on the period between the arrival of the British to Cyprus and the Turkish script reform of 1928 that ‘was quickly adopted, but put into effect more slowly than in Turkey’.¹² At the centre of the exploration lies the examination of a different kind of printed documents that played a significant part in the transition of local society to a new administrative and political state. These are multilingual administrative documents that mediated the power relations that underlay British rule. On a second level and for comparative reasons, advertisements, though limited in number, are examined; signaling the beginning of a consumer society they promoted products and services to a multilingual market through the pages of the first newspapers. The analysis of the documents provides insights into the practice of multiscrypt printing, i.e., the technical resources (printing methods and available types), the skills of printers, and the typographic conventions applied on multilingual documents. In conjunction with archival evidence these documents become mirrors of political convictions, social norms, and social and commercial transactions.

The present work is based on the documentation kept at the Secretariat Archive in Cyprus State Archives, Nicosia. All narratives that emerge from the surviving documents at the archive concern Government Printing Office (GPO) printed matters for administrative purposes.

The conditions surrounding the establishment of the first printing press in Cyprus are related to the beginning of the British rule, a time when new political and administrative processes and social relationships were enacted and brought change in an area that was part of the Ottoman Empire since the 1570s. Under the Cyprus Convention, signed in the summer of 1878, the British ‘assumed responsibility for the administration of the island from the Ottomans, while the Sultan continued to keep the sovereignty over the island’.¹³ The island afforded a naval position in the eastern Mediterranean that could serve Britain’s strategic goals and geopolitical

¹² M. Strohmeier, ‘The Ottoman Press and the Turkish Community in Cyprus’, in *The Middle Eastern Press as a Forum for Literature*, ed. H. Unbehaun, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 249.

¹³ This is the term used to indicate the ‘treaty of defensive alliance’ that the British and Ottoman empires signed on 4 June 1878 during the Berlin Congress which formally ended the Russo-Turkish war in

interests with a focus on Western Asia. The convention was cancelled in 1914 when the formal annexation of Cyprus by Britain took place. Finally, in 1925, Cyprus was officially declared a Crown Colony and the High Commissioner acquired the title of Governor.

Social and Linguistic Context

According to the first British census of 1881 the island had a total number of 186.173 inhabitants; at the beginning of 1920s the population exceeded the number of 300.000 inhabitants of which 78.8% were Greek Christian Orthodox and 19.7% were Turkish Muslims.¹⁴ From the beginning of the British administration English became the official language for all government business and official communication but not ‘a *lingua franca*’.¹⁵ Translation became the official route of communication between the administration and the local communities. Administrative documents, such as laws, circulars, public notices and the official *Government Gazette* had to be translated into the two indigenous languages, Greek and Turkish. At the same time both Greek Christians and Muslim Turks could address the administration in writing using their ethnic mother tongue. Official translators were responsible to translate or summarise all texts in English.¹⁶ It becomes apparent that there was a multilingual situation quite complex in its details in Cyprus. Greek Cypriots used the local Cypriot Greek dialect for oral unofficial communication and the *katharevousa* form of the Greek language for written and oral official purposes. This was the form of Greek that was taught at schools. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriots used Ottoman Turkish for official purposes, a ‘written *lingua franca* for the governing elite of the empire’¹⁷ that was laden with Persian and Arabic vocabulary, and a local dialect of Ottoman Turkish for informal oral communication. From the early 1930s they adopted the use of Modern Turkish and the Latin alphabet.

June 1878, in A. Yiangou, ‘Britain and Cyprus: a Historical Overview’, in *Linked by History – United by Choice*, eds. G. Georgis, and G. Kazamias, (Nicosia: En Tipis Publications, 2012), p. 770.

¹⁴ G. S. Georghallides, *A Political and Administrative History of Cyprus 1918-1926*. (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1979), p. 427. A small percentage 1.4% of the population comprised other religious groups.

¹⁵ D. Karoulla-Vrikki, ‘Language and Ethnicity in Cyprus under the British: A Linkage of Heightened Salience’, in *Britain in Cyprus: Colonialism and Post-Colonialism 1878-2006*, eds. H. Faustman and N. Peristianis, (Mannheim: Bibliopolis, 2006), p. 348.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ T. L. Darling, ‘Ottoman Turkish: Written Language and Scribal Practice, 13th to 20th Centuries’, in *Literacy in the Persianate World, Writing and the Social Order*, eds. B. Spooner and L. W. Hanaway, (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2012), p. 171.

The Advent of Printing in Cyprus

In the Cypriot context and until 1878 printed material in the form of books, newspapers and periodicals circulated among the minority of the population who were literate by being imported from abroad.¹⁸ If we subscribe to the notion that it is not the existence of printed products that determines the presence of print culture in a society but that the latter involves a broader social knowledge of these documents and ‘the familiarity with producing, buying, borrowing, lending, reading and handling these physical items’,¹⁹ then we can claim that a print culture was not present in Cyprus before 1878. In that year printing technology was introduced on the island through two distinct channels in order to serve two disparate purposes. On one side, wealthy Cypriots in Egypt decided that the establishment of a Greek printing office and the publication of a Greek newspaper would benefit both morally and intellectually those living on the island.²⁰ More research is necessary to explore their personalities and contextualise their motives as members of the Greek community in Egypt. For the time being we can discern that their exposure to the rich and multilingual print culture of Egypt had convinced them of the power of print as a medium that could be used to promote political and religious discussions and ideas and cultivate a sense of identity.²¹ Sophocleous evidently argued that discussions about publishing a newspaper in Cyprus had started even before the arrival of the British in Cyprus.²² The first printing press arrived to Larnaca, one of the three safe anchorages where foreign vessels called and cargoes were landed,²³ from Alexandria, Egypt, in the summer of 1878.²⁴ Theodoulos Constantinides, a

¹⁸ Argyropoulou, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

¹⁹ E. Patten, and J. McElligott, ‘The Perils of Print Culture: An Introduction’, in *The Perils of Print Culture: Book, Print and Publishing History in Theory and Practice*, eds. E. Patten and J. McElligott, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 5.

²⁰ A. Cl. Sophocleous, *A Contribution to the History of Cypriot Press*, vol.1: 1878-1890. (Nicosia: Intercollege Press, 1995), pp. 32-33.

²¹ A. Kittroef, ‘The Alexandria We Have Lost’, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. X, No. 1 & 2, 1983, pp. 11-21.

²² Sophocleous, *The First Cypriot Newspapers*, pp. 89, 91.

²³ M. Panagiotou, (2013) ‘Harbours, Harbour Works and Commerce in Cyprus, 1878-1910’, in *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the Biennial International Conference of Greek Studies*, Flinders University June 2011, eds. M. Tsianikas, N. Maadad, G. Couvalis and M. Palaktoglou, Flinders University Department of Language Studies - Modern Greek. (Adelaide: Flinders University, 2013), pp. 95.

²⁴ Greek books, newspapers and periodicals were published in Egypt from about the middle of the 19th century to serve the Greek community that eventually developed to be one of the most active and pow-

journalist and teacher in Alexandria, played an instrumental role in this venture. As the future editor of the newspaper, he had managed to get permission to publish a local newspaper from the newly arrived first British High Commissioner of Cyprus, Sir Garnet Wolseley. Wolseley demanded that an English version of the newspaper should be simultaneously published. In August 1878 the first issue of the bilingual newspaper *Kypros/Cyprus* was finally produced inaugurating the beginning of print production on the island;²⁵ at the same time it heralded the multilingual character that would determine thereon part of the local print culture.

Eventually, the existence of the press signaled an expansion in the movement of ideas and contributed to the transformation and evolution of the local society. The production of serial publications of an ephemeral nature initiated the emergence of a print culture, since print became eventually part of daily life.²⁶ But still further research is required on the impact that printing technology brought upon the pre-existing social norms and the changes it inaugurated. There is evidence that by 1880 commercial printers could print in all three languages.²⁷ Two years later six commercial printing presses operated and were mainly associated with the publication of Greek newspapers.²⁸ As for the Turkish Ottoman press, although newspapers appeared as early as 1880, the first surviving Ottoman newspaper, *Zaman* (The Times), was printed in Nicosia in 1891.²⁹

For the British troops arriving in Cyprus in the same year, printing technology was a ubiquitous tool that had already been used when European powers had invaded new lands as if ‘it was impossible to conceive of creating a society without recourse’ to the printing press.³⁰ The printing equipment they brought was meant to support building up an administrative infrastructure. For the colonial administration, printing, at least in the beginning, was an instrument for all government business. In the form of public notices, circulars, reports and various other records,

erful communities in the commercial and cultural life of the country, in Municipality of Athens Cultural Centre, *Greek Publications in Egypt: books, periodicals, newspapers*. (Athens 1987), pp. 9-11.

²⁵ Sophocleous, *A Contribution to the History of Cypriot Press*, vol. 1, pp. 36-56.

²⁶ Patten and McElligott, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

²⁷ SA1 9375 /1880.

²⁸ Sophocleous, *The First Cypriot Newspapers*, p. 95.

²⁹ From secondary sources it appears that *Saded*, a short-lived newspaper started to be printed in 1889 but no copies survived, Strohmeier, op. cit., pp. 250, 255 and 267.

³⁰ Patten and McElligott refer to two examples: a) when the Dutch invaded England in 1688 brought with them a printing press and paper for producing propaganda leaflets, and b) when the British landed on Australia, they were equipped with resources for printing, p. 1.

printed texts were the basis of the day-to-day operation of the colonial rule. In a barely literate society public announcements³¹ that were used as standard vehicles of communication, were the utilitarian documents that brought people in contact with print; for a long time newspapers remained expensive and available only to literate subscribers.³² The Government Printing Office was established at an early stage in order to cover the needs of the administration for print.

Among the first materials that landed on the island soon after the arrival of British troops were field equipment for the operation of a letterpress and a lithographic printing unit. Operation of the first unit started in October 1878 and within one month the first issue of the *Cyprus Gazette* (5 November 1878) appeared; it was the official paper where all laws, bills, decrees and any other official governmental announcement or decision would be published; the early issues were available only in English. The lithographic unit started to operate sometime later at the beginning of 1879.³³ Type acquisition proved to be a major issue as all documents should appear, almost simultaneously, in three languages. By the summer of 1879 English and Greek types in different sizes and quantities had been supplied to the Government of Cyprus from England.³⁴ A descriptive list entitled ‘An account of printing and lithographic materials supplied to the Government of Cyprus on orders received previous to July 1879’ provides evidence of the materials that were included among the equipment of the first established printing unit.³⁵ Greek printing types were purchased in three sizes, ‘double pica’, ‘pica’ and ‘small pica’ both capitals and lower case; English printing types were also available in a variety of sizes, for e.g. ‘long primer’, ‘non-pareil’ and ‘pica’, and different styles such as roman, italic and thin faced Clarendon.³⁶ The latter refer to a very popular typeface introduced in England

³¹ SA1 2067/1887, a sample of the public announcement in English and Greek is provided together with a request for 100 copies in Greek and Turkish translation to be printed and distributed.

³² According to the census of 1911, 73.2% of the Cypriot population were illiterate, in P. Papapolyviou, ‘Cyprus 1909-1922, the “Political Crisis” of 1912’, in *History of New Hellenism 1770-2000*, vol. 6: The National Integration 1909-1922, ed. V. Panagiotopoulos, (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2003), p. 305.

³³ SA1 8263/July 1879–March 1881.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ The terms refer to the different sizes in which printing types were manufactured and were used for defining type sizes in English throughout the hand-press period: double pica=22 points, pica=12 points, small pica=11 points, long primer=10 points, non-pareil=6 points, in J. Bowman, *Greek Printing Types in Britain, from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century*. (Thessaloniki: Typophilia, 1998), p. 22.

in 1845 as the ‘first related bold type design’;³⁷ it was designed for display use, enabled the printer to save space by accommodating a larger number of words in a limited space, combined harmoniously with roman type, and could put an emphasis on keywords without impeding the normal reading process. A number of indispensable complimentary tools and materials for the operation of the printing unit, such as spaces and quads in different sizes, lithographic stones, ‘litho black ink’, ‘writing transfer ink’ were also purchased. Letterpress printing from metal types catered for the production of the *Gazette* and other official documents, while lithography accommodated the reproduction of handwritten documents in anyone of the three languages in use, either as single sheets or in a limited number of pages, in small quantities and at a low cost. Finally, it seems that Turkish types were also available by 1879, but the lack of skillful compositors was still a barrier to overcome; as a result some work had to be outsourced to local private printing offices, but it was not at the expected quality.³⁸

Requisition of Printing Types

Cyprus was an importer of type, printing machinery and lithographic equipment.³⁹ In this section the focus will be on the commercial networks through which type arrived to the island for the needs of the administration. The communication between the GPO and European foundries brings to light various commercial and technical issues surrounding the printing of Greek, Ottoman Turkish and the way they were set in combination with the Latin script.

Greek Type

Greek types were initially purchased from England. They were primarily used there for printing the work of the Classical Greek writers, the Church Fathers and the Bible; changes in the variety of documents produced and their content occurred in the 19th century.⁴⁰ As mentioned above, among the first supplies provided by Her Maj-

³⁷ M. Twyman, ‘The Bold Idea: The Use of Bold-Looking Types’, *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, No. 22, 1993, pp. 125-126.

³⁸ SA1 9375/1880.

³⁹ During the first years of the presence of the British on Cyprus, work for the improvement of harbour facilities commenced. It was after 1894 that foreign ships could call to all ports. Eventually from the beginning of the century the shipping network of the island was expanded through direct steamship connections with Egypt, Greece and Turkey, Panagiotou, op. cit., pp. 100-111.

⁴⁰ C. Michaelides, ‘Greek Printing in England, 1500-1900, I. A survey, II. Stephanos Xenos, a Greek Publisher in Nineteenth-Century’, in *Foreign-Language Printing in London 1500-1900*, ed. B. Taylor, (London: The British Library, 2002), pp. 203-226.

esty's Stationery office soon after the arrival of British to the island were capitals and lower case types in three sizes, while, later, supplies came from the then H. W. Caslon and Co foundry. The types were of the Porsonic style and were continuously used until the turn of the century.⁴¹

In that time, the legibility of Greek type produced in Britain was questioned by the Chief Greek translator a Mr Karageorgiades. He complained to the Director of the GPO about 'the difficulty and fatigue we, translators, experience in revising the proofs of the Greek edition of the Cyprus Gazette, because of the very small size of the type used for the printing thereof'.⁴² Consequently Karageorgiades asked for a replacement of a bigger size that would oblige 'very much both myself and the assistant Greek translator as well as the Greek printers who have always complained to me about the size of our type'.⁴³ To follow up this complain, W. G. Archer, the Superintendent of the GPO, asked permission to place future orders for Greek type with France, although he personally preferred English-made materials to those of foreign manufacture. In his request to the Chief Secretary he provided specimens of English and French made types (fig. 1) for allowing comparisons to be made; he also emphasised the advantages of French made type claiming that 'it is much more distinct to read while it is sold at about one-half the price of English made type, [...] and wears as well as the English made type' namely that it endures as long as the English type.

Considering the operation of the whole plant he suggested that overall a 'better assortment can be obtained [from France] and Greek work can be done more like the English style which it is impossible to do under present conditions with only one style of type which is the only one made by English typefounders and prevents the proper treatment of Greek printing, often found necessary to attract the attention of the Greek speaking population of this island'.⁴⁴ Thus a request for a quotation was sent to *Fonderie Générale de caractères Français et Étrangers* a long-established foundry in France (1834-1912) with a specialisation in the production of foreign characters and the capability to supply type of English height but French body.⁴⁵ A note regarding the height of type would appear in every order placed by

⁴¹ SA1 1411/1889; For the H. W. Caslon and Co foundry see Bowman, op. cit., p. 242.

⁴² SA1 2688/1904.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Since 1894 the firm was directed by Charles Beaudoire; in 1912 it was acquired by Peignot Type Foundry.

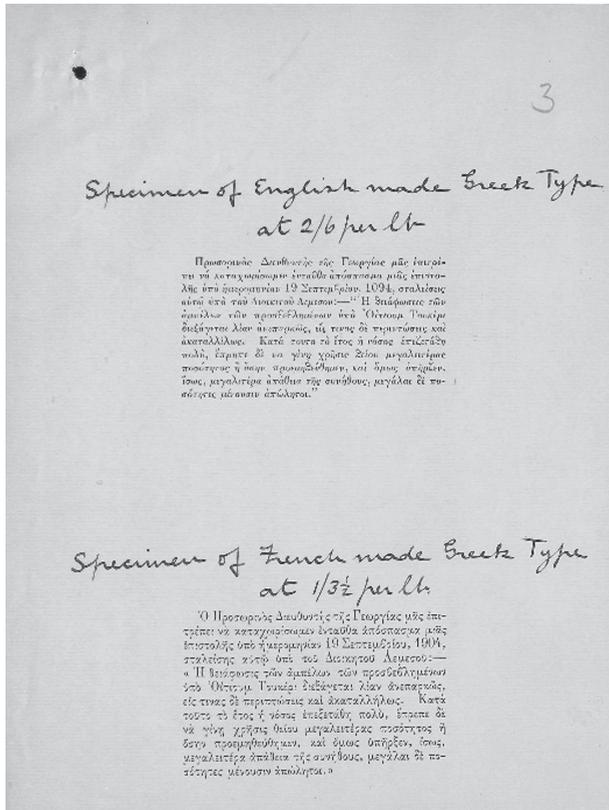


Fig. 1 Specimens provided by the Superintendent of the GPO to allow a comparison between the French and English manufactured Greek types (Cyprus State Archives, SA1 2688/1904)

the GPO to suppliers outside Britain and reveals one of the challenges of multiscript printing, namely mixing types from different foundries.⁴⁶ As type sizes and height-to-paper were not standardised yet, orders for printing types should provide clear instructions about both.⁴⁷ The available records indicate that Greek roman type, as presented in Beaudoir’s type specimens, was ordered in a variety of sizes for text setting complemented by a range of display types.

⁴⁶ SA1 2688/1904.

⁴⁷ The Fournier and Didot point systems that were widely adopted in continental Europe to measure printing types were different from English and American standards. Similarly European foundries gradually adopted the French measure of height-to-paper (i.e. the distance from the face that touches the paper to the feet of the metal type) that was also different from the American standard, in P. Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 208, 283.

This was the Greek Didot type, known as ‘apla’ [plain], that ‘was the first widely used printing type that departed from the Greek “italic” type-design tradition’;⁴⁸ its presence in Greek printed documents proved to be longstanding, spanned the whole letterpress era and started to show the first signs of replacement only after the introduction of photocomposition in Greece in the 1970s.⁴⁹

The replacement of Greek type that took place in the GPO was initiated by the Greek translators’ complains. It is probable that as readers they were accustomed to encounter pages set in Didot type, found them more comfortable, and finally managed to introduce them to the GPO’s typesets.

Turkish Type

In the beginning, Ottoman printing types were necessary for printing the *Cyprus Gazette* and various official forms. Lithographic reproduction was the most practical solution for notices that were mostly generated by handwriting, consisted of continuous text, had to be produced in short print-runs, at a low cost, and with as little delay as possible.⁵⁰

The main supplier for Ottoman Turkish type was Constantinople.⁵¹ Although of an inferior quality—type produced by foundries in Constantinople was made of soft metal and tended to wear out within a short period of time—it was much cheaper than the type manufactured in England and therefore remained the GPO’s main choice until the turn of the century.⁵² However, in 1904 the need arose to procure type from other sources.⁵³ Enquiries were addressed to English foundries such as Caslon and Figgins. The quotations received were considered problematic as they were limited in sizes and styles or expensive. For example Figgins’ foundry could provide ‘three complete founts of Turkish in Long primer, Pica and English body’, albeit ‘at a price higher than those paid for Turkish type from Egypt’.⁵⁴ Then, one of

⁴⁸ K. Mastoridis, *Casting the Greek Newspaper: A Study of the Morphology of the Ephemeris from its Origins until the Introduction of Mechanical Setting*. (Athens: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, 1999), p. 52.

⁴⁹ N. Sioki, ‘Reading and the Morphology of the Page: A Historical Study of the Typographic Design of the Greek Alphabet Book, 1771-1919’, PhD Thesis. (Reading: University of Reading, 2014), p. 70.

⁵⁰ M. Twyman, *Early Lithographed Books: A Study of the Design and Production of Improper Books in the Age of the Hand Press*. (London: Farrand Press & Private Libraries Association, 1990), p. 60.

⁵¹ SA1 8288/1883; SA1 923/1888.

⁵² SA1 1411/1889.

⁵³ SA1 589/1904.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

the most well-equipped foundries, Offizin Wilhelm Drugulin, in Leipzig, Germany was contacted; a quotation for Turkish type in ‘8, 12, 16, and 24 points or nearest size stocked, Didot or American body’ but with English height was required.⁵⁵ According to a promotional brochure, the firm, founded in 1829, could cast type in 69 languages. It had gained world fame as no other establishment in Europe had such a variety of stamps, matrices and scripts with the exception of the Viennese and Parisian state printers.⁵⁶ A selection was made based on the specimens supplied but once again prices were higher than those offered in Egypt; types were finally supplied by the firm of Krikor Rapaelian in Cairo, Egypt, who would eventually become the main supplier of Ottoman Turkish to the GPO.⁵⁷

The above cases depict the contextual framework within which multiscript printing was taking place until the first decade of the 20th century. Procurement of type was a time-consuming process that was carried out through the established commercial relationships of the island; from the beginning of the 20th century, trade routes were established through an expanded shipping network. Until 1910, imports came mainly from the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Britain, even though new markets were explored for special needs.⁵⁸ After 1911 imports from the Ottoman Empire declined as Britain and Turkey were in opposite camps during the First World War.⁵⁹ Financial considerations were essential in the decision-making process; the lack of standardisation in height-to-paper and body size compelled printers to place orders for customised type that increased the cost of purchases; additionally, scripts as Greek and Arabic that required rather extensive character sets put extra charges to the overall expenditure on type. There were no aesthetic concerns in the choice of type mainly due to the nature of the documents produced and their purpose. The administrative documents under examination were merely instrumental, and meant to be used and archived. They consisted of textual information that was organized in configurations where lists and tables tended to prevail. They were available in material forms other than the book, namely broadsides

⁵⁵ SA1 589/1904.

⁵⁶ Entry on ‘Drugulin, Wilhelm Eduard’, Deutsche Biographie, <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz11925.html> [accessed June 2018].

⁵⁷ SA1 1429/1904.

⁵⁸ G. Kazamias and M. Panayiotou, ‘Cyprus’ Trade with the Levant, 1881-1946/47’, in *The Greeks and the British in the Levant, 1800-1960s*, eds. A. Yiangou, G. Kazamias and R. Holland, (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 114.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

such as proclamations and broadsheets such as forms. Their appearance, which I will discuss next, brings to light issues related to the politics that underpinned the production decisions for multilingual documents.

The Visual Appearance of Multilingual Documents

Right from the beginning various administrative forms had to be produced in the three languages with the aim to gather information and control various procedures. A few examples can demonstrate how forms were produced and how decisions about the languages of use and the appearance of forms were made.

In October 1881 the Director of Survey, Horatio Herbert Kitchener (1850-1916),⁶⁰ identified the need for ‘proper forms of auction bills to be printed both in Turkish and Greek’⁶¹ in order to avoid collision between the interested parties when properties for sale were auctioned. As a response to this request, two handwritten bilingual forms were produced, in 500 copies each, by transfer lithography (fig. 2); as a process, lithography allowed for correcting mistakes that occurred while translated texts were copied, before the transfer of text on stone and its reproduction in multiple copies.⁶²

Texts were presented in parallel horizontal rows which established a hierarchy in between the languages; the language of the administration was positioned at the top followed by the language of the community addressed; the two sections were clearly divided by a horizontal rule. The text arrangement was imposed by the portrait orientation of paper, which also served one of the ways in which the forms were used. They were posted in public space in the village or neighbourhood where the auction would take place.⁶³ Following a common practice in the presentation of printed forms dotted rules were used as a guide to filling in. The use of transfer lithography ensured economy in cost and time in the production of documents whose functionality prevailed over quality.

Almost two years later the Chief Justice ordered a number of criminal forms for various uses to be printed. After acknowledging that the printing office had by

⁶⁰ During his sojourn on Cyprus (September 1878-February 1883), Lieutenant Kitchener was assigned to map the island. Thus he produced the first full triangulated survey and map of Cyprus, see R. Shirley, *Kitchener's Survey of Cyprus 1878-1883: The First Triangulated Survey and Mapping of the Island*. (Nicosia: The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2001).

⁶¹ SA1 3695/October 1881-April 1882.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ SA1 3695/1881.

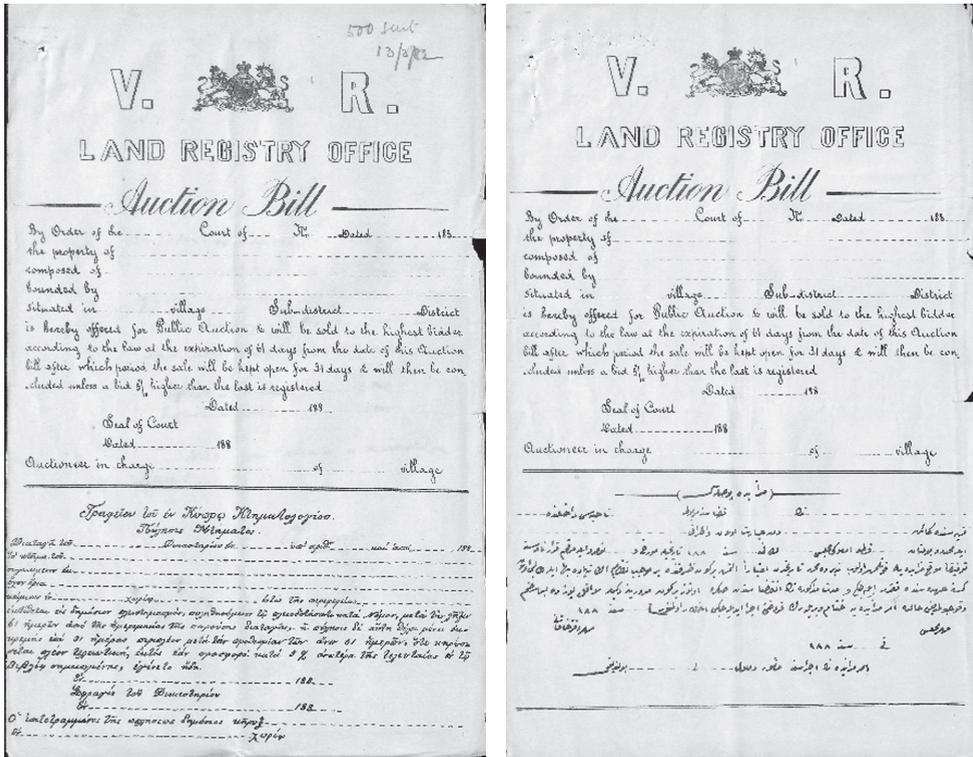


Fig. 2 Handwritten forms including the translation of the English text in Greek and Ottoman Turkish reproduced by lithography, 1881 (Cyprus State Archives, SA1 3695/1881)

now the resources for printing in all languages, he ordered that all three languages should appear on the same sheet in a number of forms (4, 5, 6, 14 and 15) and requested quantities that ranged from 1000 to 10000 copies. At the same time he was also concerned with the order of the appearance of languages; therefore he suggested that Turkish text should follow the English text with the Greek at the end.⁶⁴ There is no explicit evidence about the reason for this latter suggestion; it could have been implied by the use and users of the forms or, probably, as I will explain, by the existing political situation.

More examples demonstrate that in governmental documents the juxtaposition of texts in parallel horizontal rows became a norm. The order in which the three

⁶⁴ SA1 4251/1883.



Fig. 3 Three scripts coexisted on leaflets that promoted the local fairs. Titles in English were set in the largest size in order to appear more prominent. The arrangement of text allowed the reader to access directly his/her language.

From A. Cl. Sophocleous, *The History of Advertising in Cyprus* (Nicosia: The Laiki Group Cultural Centre) 166

languages appeared was not accidental; it was, rather, indicative of power relations.⁶⁵ It reflected the then current status of Cyprus, where, although the British were responsible for the administration, the island was still under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, Turkish language was accorded precedence and should appear second after the official one. To provide a solution to complaints provoked by the order of texts on public notices and other official documents, the Colonial Secretary, Arthur Young, issued a directive in 1903 about the order of languages that was addressed to all heads of departments and commissioners: ‘Whenever you may have reason to issue any authorised Notice or Order in the three languages

⁶⁵ D. Karoulla-Vrikki, op. cit., pp. 352-353.



Fig. 4 Examples of multiscript printing on an advertisement and a cigarette label where solutions to grab attention were necessary. Advertisements of tobacco factories:

- a) a rare tri-lingual promotional sample,
- b) the absence of Greek may indicate an export market.

From A. Cl. Sophocleous, *The History of Advertising in Cyprus* (Nicosia: The Laiki Group Cultural Centre) 88, 287

the order of these should be English first, Turkish second, Greek third'.⁶⁶ This order was followed for the printing of documents where all three languages had to appear in combination (fig. 3).

⁶⁶ Colonial Secretary Circular No. 2913/1903 in SA1 621/1912.

Until now I have not come across any administrative document where all three languages appear in different configurations than the one already discussed. That mixed-language setting required the accommodation of two different reading directions, and the standard text configuration adopted for administrative documents created an orderly page view; each reader could follow the text in his or her language without any diversion or time-consuming skipping. A few examples of commercial advertisements indicate that different solutions, some more creative than others, were sought when promotional purposes and market needs had to be served. In order to address a multilingual market, the graphic language was strengthened by the use of pictures, ornaments and colour; despite their small size and short texts, advertisements were organised graphically in rather inventive ways in order to attract consumers' attention (Fig. 4).

Conclusions and Further Research Suggestions

The advent of printing in Cyprus laid the ground for the emergence of a print culture as, eventually, both printing presses and printed documents became entangled in everyday life. The development of the first printing ventures during the end of the 19th and early 20th century was partly defined by a) Cyprus' geographic position as a small country at the periphery of the European printing market and an island located not far away from the Levant big ports; and b) by the transition from a territory ruled by the Ottoman Empire to a British Colony. This article brought attention to a rather unexplored aspect of local printing history, namely the production of multiscrypt documents that served the needs of a linguistically multifarious society.

Multiscrypt printing and typography in the time period under examination were processes of high complexity as they challenged status relationships and political sensibilities of readers of different cultures; in addition, documents had to accommodate three scripts whose setting followed different conventions and required different typographic approaches.⁶⁷ In such an environment printing technology was not an ally. Only a few foundries specialised in printing type production for different languages for small markets and readerships. Fonts were available in re-

⁶⁷ Typesetting for letterpress printing in Arabic script was a complicated process as Arabic script consists of connected letters and is read from right to left. For this reason it was extremely time-consuming and radically different from Latin and Greek that share certain conventions, see G. Sadek and M. Zhukov, *Typographia Polyglotta, a Comparative Study in Multilingual Typesetting*. (New York: Association Typographique Internationale & The Cooper Union, 1997), p. 1

stricted assortments and high prices. Cost-effective solutions limited the variety of styles and sizes available for printing. Specialised compositors and typesetters with the necessary knowledge and skills were hard to find and educate, especially on an island positioned rather afar from European printing centres. In the context of multiscript printing there are still questions waiting for answers. For example, the clear-cut juxtaposition of languages on administrative documents allows to compare the typesetting of texts and explore influences between them. This is a strand that we tend to pursue in our research in order to identify the potential influence of British typographic style on the appearance of texts that were set in the local languages. Regarding this matter, the skills and linguistic qualifications of compositors were a determining factor for the quality of composition and the visual appearance of the end products, a theme that also requires further investigation.

The present study suggests that the exploration of the local printing history is a fascinating project that touches on different genres of documents, practices in the printing office, commercial exchanges, reformations in script, identity issues in relation to language and an interesting and intensive socio-political context. But also it is time-consuming, as records and artefacts are dispersed in archives, museums and private collections, both locally and in neighbouring countries in the wider Eastern Mediterranean area. However, this project reveals that the development of printing and of printing practices in peripheral countries may have its own distinct character that is worth further study; local narratives may improve our knowledge about regional realities and probably bring to light unknown facets of printing history as it was developed in the European centres.

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