

Eleni Kakoulidi-Panou, Eleni Karantzola, Katerina Tiktopoulou, *Δημιώδης Πεζός Λόγος του 16ου αιώνα*. Athens: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 2023. Pp. cxii + 761.
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This anthology of Greek prose writing is pioneering for three reasons: unlike its (few) predecessors, it focuses on a single century, 1500-1600; secondly, it is limited to texts composed in a linguistic form based on the vernacular; and thirdly, it is not restricted to literary prose but embraces all kinds of written texts. It is the fruit of an ambitious research project begun twenty-five years ago by Eleni Kakoulidi-Panou. Her two long-standing collaborators, Eleni Karantzola, and Katerina Tiktopoulou, assumed responsibility for the final stages. Sadly, Professor Kakoulidi-Panou died a few months before publication. The protracted publication process meant it was not possible to update the bibliography on the anthologized texts and their authors beyond 2015/16, when pagination of that part was finalized; and the bibliography to the introduction, with a few exceptions, stops at 2019. This is unfortunate; however, the bibliography section – 48 pages – is substantial.


The lengthy introduction aims to provide the historical, cultural, and intellectual background, on a pan-European scale (and indeed beyond) up to and including the period covered by the texts. The discussion includes, among other topics: the emergence of the spoken European languages (typically, replacing Latin) as vehicles of literary and other written texts; Byzantine diglossia; humanism; the Reformation; printing; language standardization; then, with specific reference to the Greek-speaking world, the linguistic situation, intellectual life, education, and libraries. The focus then shifts to the corpus of prose texts which comprise the anthology. Eleven categories are defined: paratexts (e.g. prefaces and dedications); theological texts; didactic; narratives; literary/philological; history and chronicles; travel accounts; scientific (broadly defined); legal; documents (a rich category, ranging from wills and betrothals to inventories and contracts); and, finally, letters. The categories are not watertight. Indeed, some texts are excerpted in more than one category: the translation of Flavius Josephus by Manuel Chartophylax (of considerable linguistic interest) contributes a preface, while also appearing among theological and historical writings.

The introduction is valuable, although a few errors can be detected: in discussing the gradual acceptance of the European vernaculars for formal purposes, the authors claim that the coronation of Henry IV in 1399 was the first to take place in English since the Norman Conquest. Not so. It is true that Henry made a speech in English after the formal ceremony, but the actual coronation ritual would have been in Latin. Generally, however, this wide-ranging contextual survey is reliably informative.

The heart of this attractively presented book is the anthology of 250 prose texts, the majority of them previously unedited; some are brief notes, while others extend to four or five pages. All (except for the passage from Sofianos' Grammar) are edited in standardized orthography and monotonic. Each extract is preceded by information about its source, previous editions (if any), and bibliography. There follows a section

giving biographical information about known authors; then a glossary of over 90 pages listing words whose form or meaning requires comment, which certainly contributes to the linguistic usefulness of the book. The introduction also includes a check list of linguistic variables which enable us to characterize the language of a given text. It is a pity that there is no specific discussion of the language of individual texts, which range from dialectal (mainly Cretan, Heptanesian, and Cypriot) to texts in a sort of ‘common’ Greek with an overlay of learnedisms, especially those on religious themes.

The volume is a significant achievement, indeed a landmark. It offers a wealth of material inviting further study; it will surely lead to editions of hitherto unknown texts and research on various aspects of the history of Greek. The authors inform us that of the 43 ‘titles’ of books in vernacular Greek printed in the sixteenth century, 22 were in verse and as many as 21 in prose. I, for one, would not have guessed that their proportions were so even.

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Martha Karpozilou, *Τα ελληνικά περιοδικά του 19ου αιώνα*, Athens: Library of the Hellenic Parliament, 2021. Pp. 220 and 410.
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Academic interest in the Greek periodical press is not new; it has long been acknowledged as an important source for knowledge dissemination, cultural mediation, and public debate. But systematic study and indexing has been beset by delays and flawed practices. The indexing of pre-revolutionary journals (including *Hermes o Logios* [*Ερμής ο Λόγιος*], *Melissa* [*Μέλισσα*], *Philological Telegraph* [*Φιλολογικός Τηλέγραφος*] carried out at the Centre for Neohellenic Research of National Hellenic Research Foundation in the 1970s and the phototypeset reprint of these by the Greek Literary and Historical Archive (ELIA) constituted the first ‘good’ tools, as defined by C. Th. Dimaras, for the study of the early history of the Greek periodical. The pace accelerated in the years that followed; the recognition of the (primarily literary) importance of the periodical press is reflected in various theses and publications on specific literary journals; the digitization of nineteenth-century periodicals by ELIA; the open access databases in the Library and Information Centre of the University of Patras (*Cosmopolis*, *Pleias*, *Danielis*); and the subsequent development of more databases by other institutions (notably: *Lecythos* at the University of Cyprus and the *Portal for the Greek Language*). Additionally, the major *Thalys/ Chrysallis* research project set out to investigate cultural mediations and the formation of the ‘national character’ in the nineteenth-century periodical press, through a systematic indexing of a large corpus of periodicals (2015).