"Modern" Graphic Design in Greece after World War II

Marina Emmanouil



Figure 1
"Such was the War in Greece" was the title of the international call for aid, and was presented through radio and printed means by C. A. Doxiadis. Photograph from the retrospective exhibition "Constantinos Doxiadis's Ekistics and the Architecture of Entopia" at the Benaki Museum, November 2006–February 2007. (photo by the author).

Post-War Greece

As in other countries across Europe, Greece's post-war reconstruction was directed toward rebuilding and reshaping the war-torn nation.[1] The country's desperate call for international help was transmitted immediately after the end of the occupation in late 1944 via radio broadcasting, as well as through graphic means, such as charts, maps, and diagrams. These graphic forms were presented at several fairs and events in 1945 in key cities around the world (see Figure 1),[2] and they were compiled a year later to form an ISOTYPE-inspired album (see Figure 2).[3] In its volume, production quality, and graphic style, the war album was a testimony to two important accomplishments in the history of graphic design in Greece: First, it signaled awareness and appropriation of an international modern language to participate on equal terms and in common ways in the international forum of post-war reconstruction;[4] and second, it served as acknowledgment by the Greek state of the economic and political role of graphic design in international communication.

1 The total number of civilian deaths from hunger, disease, and violence during the Axis occupation is estimated around 450,000; one-quarter of all housing was destroyed, and roads, railways, ports, and bridges had been devastated: see "Total devastation, 1941–44" in David H. Close, *Greece since 1945* (London: Pearson, 2002), 11-14.

2 Such as the United Nations Charter Session, and conferences in London, Paris, and San Francisco by the then young architect Constaninos A. Doxiadis (1913–1975).

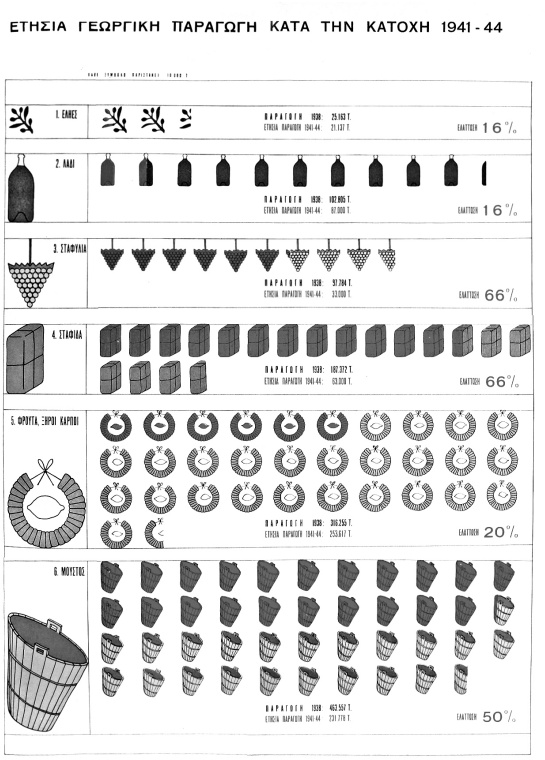
3 Constantinos A. Doxiadis, ed., *The Sacrifices of Greece in the Second World War* (Athens: Ministry of Reconstruction, 1946). With summaries in four languages: Greek, French, English, and Russian.

4 Following the norm of similar international war publications at the time, such as the Penguin paper-back album (~11x18cm) by Rudolf Modley, *A History of the War* (Washington/New York: Infantry Journal/Penguin, 1944).

doi: 10.1162/DESI_a_00295

© 2014 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Figure 2
Page from the hardbound album (35.5x47cm) "The Sacrifices of Greece during the War" (1946) showing the losses in agricultural production during 1941–44. Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr



The Greek cry for help was answered by the United States in 1947, replacing Britain in the role of official patron.[5] Economic growth—in fact the fastest in Europe—occurred in Greece in the middle of the next decade.[6] Greek and foreign economic analysts referred to it as an "economic miracle";[7] still, it was a fragile economy, and Greece remained a poor country.[8] The devaluation of the national currency in 1953 helped increase private investment,[9] and American economic aid under the Marshall Plan remained important.[10] Meanwhile, remittances sent home by Greek migrants working abroad and revenue from shipping and international tourism became vital sources of foreign currency exchange.[11]

Tourism was indeed the first area to which the Greek state turned to lift the withered economy, with impressive results.[12] In a 1947 poster, the fisherman's effort to hoist his sails could be interpreted as the struggle of the Greek nation to build itself anew (see Figure 3). Paradoxically, this early material appeared when the Greek Civil War (1943–49)[13] on the mainland was entering its final and most bloody phase.[14] At the time tourism posters and leaflets portrayed a highly selective view of a peaceful Greece, focusing on the Ionian and Aegean islands, which were less affected by Civil War chaos.

5 John K. Campbell, Phillip Sherrard, *Modern Greece* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1968), 312.

6 The average increase of the annual Gross National Product between 1953–73 was 6.9%, which is among the best in the world at the time. Chrysafis Iordanoglou, "The Economy, 1949–74," in *The History of the New Hellenism, 1770–2000,* vol. 9 (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2003), 59-86.

7 "A 'Miracle' They Called It" forms a chapter title in Markos Dragoumis, *The Greek Economy, 1940–2004* (Athens: Athens News, 2004); Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece* (London: Arnold, 2001), 178; James Pettifer, *The Greeks: The Land and People Since the War* (London: Penguin, 2000), 14; Yorgos Stathakis, "The Unexpected Economic Development during the 1950s and 60s; Athens: A Paradigm of Development," in the Conference Proceedings *1949–1967: The Explosive Twenty Years,* ed. by Ourania Kaiafa (Athens, Greece: November 10–12, 2000), 43-65.

8 Iordanoglou, "The Economy, 1949–1974," 59.

9 Keith R. Legg, John M. Roberts, *Modern Greece: A Civilization on the Periphery* (Colorado/Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), 47.

10 It is estimated that between 1946 and 1963 Greece received US $3.3 billion, of this amount 54.7% represented economic aid and loans and the remaining 45.3% was received as military materials or grants for their purchase. Campbell and Sherrard, *Modern Greece,* 312.

11 For the period 1948–51, tourism promotion constituted the first priority of American investment funds under the Marshall Plan, and the fourth of Greek funds. Anon, *Study of the Needs of the Greek Tourism Economy* (Athens: General Tourism Administration/Kingdom of Greece, November 1948), 24, Table 11.

12 From a level of 90,000 visitors in 1938 and 33,333 in 1950, tourism more than



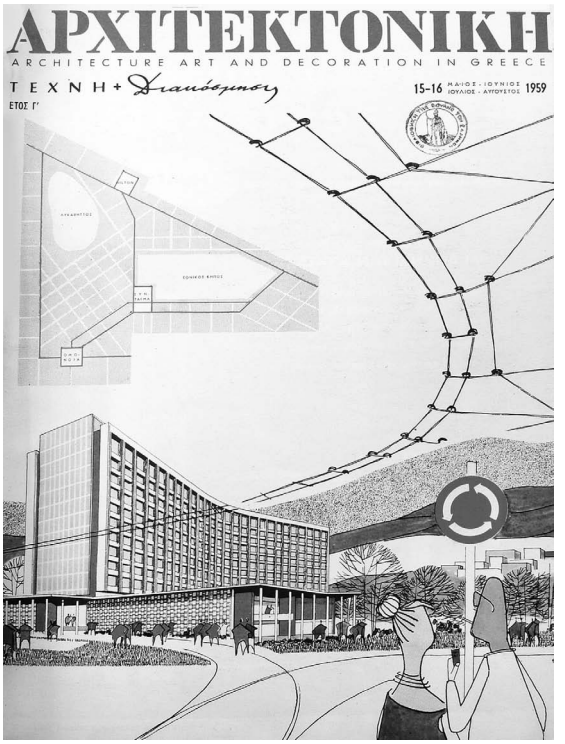


Figure 3 (left)
A poster for Greece by painter Spyros Vassiliou commissioned in 1947 by the predecessor of the Greek Tourism Organization, the State General Secretary for Tourism and Press. Source: S. Karachristos, *Greek Posters* (Athens: Kedros, 2003). www.spyrosvassiliou.org.

Figure 4 (right)
An illustration of Hilton Hotel in Athens on the cover of *Architektoniki* 15-16 (May–August, 1959). Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr

At the end of the Civil War, the government reconstituted the Greek Tourism Organization (GTO, 1950),[15] and toward the end of the decade, the luxurious and modern Hilton Hotel was built in the center of Athens in the midst of what were then bare fields (see Figure 4). Although tourism was the flagship of the state modernization project and a primary economic resource for the country,[16] electrification became the "dynamotor" that drove forward the new way of life led by capitalism and industrialization (see Figure 5).[17] These initiatives, which ended up as state monopolies, signaled a turning point in the country's modernization.[18]

Following Greece's connection with the Western capitalist block in the late 1940s and during the early years of the next decade, the changes in Greek society became noticeable. Massive internal migration toward the big urban centers—particularly Athens to the south and Thessaloniki to the north—was motivated by the deprivations and hardships of rural life, and the economic opportunities, material comforts, and cultural attractions of the cities.[19] The face of Athens, especially, changed dramatically.[20] In 1961, 44% of the metropolis's population was newly arrived from other, mostly rural, areas.[21] Shops, theatres, and modern public transport (e.g., trams and trolley buses), most of which had been destroyed during the war, also helped develop the urban lifestyle

quadrupled by 1960, and quadrupled again during the following decade (2,000,000 in 1973); Dimitrios Buhalis, "Tourism in Greece: Strategic Analysis and Challenges," *Current Issues in Tourism* 4, no. 5 (2001): 440–80, Table 1.

13 David H. Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (London: Longman, 1995).

14 This is considered a traumatic period for the nation, which left thousands dead, wounded, exiled, or stigmatized. The number of casualties (100,000) and fatalities (60,000) was more than in any of the other five wars in which the country had engaged in the previous 50 years. Close, *Greece Since 1945*, 39.

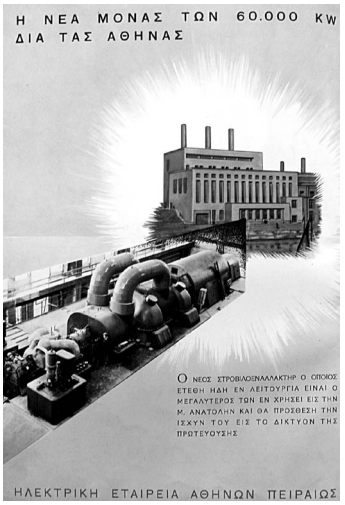


Figure 5 (left)
An advertisement of the private electricity provision company, Electrical Company Athens-Piraeus, published in *Architektoniki* 1 (January–February, 1957). Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr



Figure 6 (right)
A car advertisement for Renault Dauphin by caricaturist Bost (Chr. Bostantzoglou). Word play, idiomatic slang, and intentional spelling mistakes shaped Bost's distinct advertising style. Source: Papapolizos, F., Martzoukos, Kostas, ed., *HELLAdS. Hellas Through Advertising, 1940–1989* (Athens: Omikron, 1997). Source: K. Bostantzoglu.

of cities as old dwellings gave way to modern apartment blocks. Urbanization was also facilitated by the extension of roads, the proliferation of radios, and the evidence in newspapers and magazines of Western consumer goods flooding into cities.

In advertising, new products such as telephones, refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and especially cars confirmed the rising status and prosperity of city dwellers (see Figure 6). The modern way of life represented by products from abroad—products that were sold for their convenience, practicality, aesthetics, functionality, and comfort—fashioned the values of post-war conformity and aligned Greek consumer society with a Western capitalist model, thus resulting in the social and economic advancement the country needed.[22] Although distinctions between social classes in Athens remained rigid, commercial advertising promoted new, boundary-crossing urban habits, emphasizing the differences between old and new (modern) ways of living. Consumer preferences for imported everyday products, or indeed for foreign-sounding brands, became evident.[23] Even calling new advertising agencies by foreign words was thought modern and progressive.[24]

The rising connection and interdependence between graphic design and commerce started to be noted in the local press. In particular, the role of advertising in the country's modernization and economic prosperity featured frequently in art and design journals, as well as in specialist economic and general interest periodicals.[25] The growth of advertising was visible in its increased expenditure, which quadrupled between 1960 and 1966, reaching 600 million Greek drachmas—a growth that surpassed that of national income.[26] And by the late 1960s, more than 100 advertising agencies were in operations, making advertising a significant and accountable economic force.[27]

For figures, see the editor's Introduction in David H. Close, ed., *The Greek Civil War: Studies of Polarization 1943–1950* (London: Routledge, 1993), 8-10; Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War,* 219-20.

15 GTO remains today the official state body that plans, implements and promotes Greece abroad.

16 By 1961 the state had constructed and operated 171 hotels, the so-called Xenia Hotels, to cater for the needs of a middle- and upper-middle-class international clientele.

17 This became possible by the establishment of the Public Power Corporation in 1950, which was the only electricity provider for the whole country by the early 1960s. See: Nicos S. Pantelakis, *Electrification of Greece: From Private Initiative to State Monopoly, 1889–1956*



Figure 7
An advertisement for the Greek cement company Titan in *Architektoniki* 22-23 (July–October, 1960). Text reads: "2000 tons daily production" and includes images of two packages of cement, an ancient column and a construction trowel. Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr

Commercial advertising in Greece consisted primarily of newspaper and magazine promotion until the late 1960s, when television became the new advertising medium. National identity was largely expressed in the printed medium via images carrying distinct historical and symbolic references. An overuse of blue and white signified the national flag and encouraged adulation from the Greek people. Three periods in Greek history featured extensively in graphics and advertising of the 1950s and 1960s, serving the greatest symbolic use. First was the period of ancient Greece, especially the "golden" age of the fifth century BCE; second was the Byzantine Empire, lasting nearly 1,000 years, from approximately the third century CE to the conquest of the country by the Ottoman Empire in 1453; and third, the period of the War of Independence (1820s–30s).[28]

From the first period, features such as ancient Greek monuments (the Acropolis, temples, and theatres) and sculpture, landscapes, figures from Greek mythology (gods, heroes, etc.), geometric shapes, and writing chiselled on stones were some of the visual clichés used in Greek ads (see Figure 7). Advertising

(Athens: Educational Foundation of National Bank, 1991), and Stathis N. Tsotsoros, *Energy and Development in Post-war Period, The Public Power Corporation,* 1950–92 (Athens: National Research Foundation, 1995).

18 Iordanoglou, "The Economy, 1949–74," 60, 83; Close, *Greece Since 1945,* 90. See Table 8 in Vassilis Karapostolis, *Consuming Behaviour in Greek Society,* 1960–1975 (Athens: National Centre for Social Research, 1983), 187.

19 In 1941,15.3% of the population resided in Athens and 3.7% in Thessaloniki. The rates have been in 1951, 18.6 and 4.0; in 1961, 22.1 and 4.5; in 1971, 29.0 and 6.4 respectively. Also, 56% of the inhabitants of the greater Athens area were post-war migrants in 1960, Gallant, *Modern Greece,* 188-89.

20 A description of the post-war building frenzy in Athens during the 1950s is discussed in Nicos Papamichos, "The Post-War City: the City of *Antiparochi*'," in Conference Proceedings *1949–67: The Explosive 20 years Symposium,* Ourania Kaiafa, ed. (Athens, Greece: November 10-12, 2000), 79-86.

21 Close, *Since 1945,* 61. Population distribution in urban/suburban/rural areas in 1951 (total population 7,632,684): 32.8/14.8/52.4%. In 1961, total population was 8,388,553: 43.3/12.9/43.8%. In 1971: total population was 8,768,641: 53.2/11.6/35.1 as quoted from the Statistical Yearbook of Greece in Legg, *Modern Greece: A Civilization on the Periphery,* 79.

22 As argued in Karapostolis, *Consuming Behaviour in Greek Society,* 248-50, 256.

23 Lee E. Preston, Constantine Tzavelas, *Consumer Goods Marketing in a Developing Economy;* Research Monograph Series 19 (Athens: Center of Planning and Economic Research, 1968), 178-79; Also, Artemis Yagou, "The Emergence of Industrial Design

commentators saw the concept of nationalism in graphic design as the alternative to mimesis (copying foreign models) and encouraged the use of historical insignia for the promotion of Greek goods.[29] Conventions drawn from the Byzantine Empire included Christian iconography (Jesus Christ, the Cross, saints, and angels) and techniques of icon painting and mosaic. Christian Orthodoxy was seen as an element of national identity. To be Orthodox meant to be Greek, and therefore symbols of this era and culture were frequently used as national signifiers. This approach, known as "Helleno-Christian," was especially promoted during the dictatorship years of 1967–74, when the regime's overriding mission was expressed in the motto 'Hellas of Orthodox Hellenes' (Greece of Orthodox Greeks). For the third period (1820s), war heroes and the traditionally dressed figure of *tsolias* wearing *fustanella* dresses featured in a range of advertisements for commercial products, such as shoes, light bulbs, and detergents.[30] These references usually were copied from original sources and pasted into the maquette next to the product, which itself was often taken from a ready-made picture.

Advertising and Abstract Art

Modern abstract art began to affect Greek graphic design in the early 1960s. In previous years, modern art had been poorly received, as seen from critical reception of the post-war exhibition, "Hommage à la Grèce," held at the French Institute in Athens in 1949.[31] Conservative members of society and culture linked modern art, especially abstract art, to anarchy and the "far left," and they insisted on the primacy of classical ideals inspired by Helleno-centrism and Greek Orthodoxy.[32] Likewise, the first post-Civil War exhibition of abstract art, held in 1958 at the Athens-based Kouros gallery, was followed by a variety of reactions, especially from conservative voices.[33] Until at least the early 1960s, little dissemination of modern art occurred in Greece, and responses were still negative.

> Aided by books and articles on modern art, the Greek public is now endeavoring to understand the abstract school of art at present in vogue, a form that has not as yet succeeded in winning popular favor.[34]

The picture is thought to have changed radically around 1965, by which time abstract art was generally accepted in art circles.[35] Art historians claim that these artists were ready to reject all that reminded them of Parisian modernism, "Greekness," or Socialist Realism, and throw themselves into experimentation.[36] In the

in Inter-war Greece, 1922–1940," *Design History Society Newsletter* 100 (2004): 9.

24 Advertiser Stathis Georgiadis entitled his advertising agency by the anglicised 'ΜΠΙΖΝΕΣ' (Mpiznes) [Business] as it was taken to be innovative, modern, and different from the other pre-war agencies that used mostly Greek titles, such as ALEKTOR, MINITOR, ICHO. Stathis Georgiadis, *What An Advertiser Saw, Heard, Said!* (Athens: Romanos, 2003), 14-15.

25 Maria Kotzamani, "The Graphic Arts Express the Progress of the Country with the New Forms of their Accomplishments," *Ikones* (January 31,1964), 44-46; I. Papamichalakis, "Advertising: An Essential Supporter of Every Contemporary Economic Activity," *Viomichaniki Epitheorisi* (1960), 591-95; B. Ard, "Advertising is an Essential Prerequisite for Success," *Typographia* 16, no. 322, (April 20, 1973): 4.

26 Article published in Mesimvrini Business and quoted in ADEL's (advertising agency) in-house publication, no. 2 (February 6, 1967). In 1956, Greek advertising expenditure reached US $6 million, corresponding to US $0.70 per person. Income per person was estimated that year at $270 in Greece, in contrast to the $2,043 in America; C. Stratos, "Advertising of Greek Products," *Dimosiotes Ke Provoli* 4-5, (March–April 1959): 3-4. One million drachmas was US $333,000 in 1964, Preston and Tzavelas, *Consumer Goods Marketing in a Developing Economy,* 177. The advertising journal *Dimosiotis ke Provoli* presented the advertising expenditure in the press monthly from 1960.

27 However, only one-fourth of these was of any considerable size: Preston and Tzavelas, *Consumer Goods Marketing in a Developing Economy:* 177.

28 The Byzantine Empire laid the foundations for Orthodox Christianity in Greece, the Balkans, and Russia. The conquering of Constantinople (the capital) in 1453 meant the end of Christianity in the Middle East, and the rise of Ottoman-Muslim power.

29 Anon, "A Paradigm to Follow," *Dimosiotis ke Provoli,* page missing from original source.

30 See Artemis Yagou, "Metamorphoses of Formalism: National Identity as a

graphic design scene, the winning posters in the 1962 and 1963 competitions for the International Fair of Thessaloniki, organized by the popular magazine *Tachydromos,* used abstract geometric shapes.[37] The painter Spyros Vassiliou (1902–1985), who taught at Athens Technological Institute (ATI) based at Doxiadis's Colleges, offered a piece of advice on this "international language of communication" as he termed it:

> It is obvious that the influence of modern art, with a tendency for abstraction, has started to increase in our country too. Yet, I would like to warn of the danger that lies beneath [...] the fanaticism of the devotee; we end up promoting milk, detergents, nylon hosiery, etc., with irrelevant combinations of geometric shapes.[38]

Thus, new poster designers and advertisers were advised to be careful when using this universal language and not to forget the local context. He further argued that this "peculiar accent" spoke to an "educated and cultured public in places more advanced and with longer tradition in the applied arts, in order to serve a strong cultured sense of good taste."[39] In particular, he noted that:

> It is useful to learn this language. But it is important not to lose the quality *[charisma]* of the special offering, accent, and distinctiveness that need to give in this expression [the applied arts] of our civilization the special hue, originality, and truth.[40]

The following year, abstract geometric shapes, experimental typography, and symbolism featured once more in the winning posters, exemplifying the popularity of this new visual language. The jury of the competition, comprising a university scholar, the director of the National Gallery, an architect, and a representative of *Tachydromos,* noted with satisfaction the quantitative and qualitative progress of the material submitted (320 posters), in relation to that of the previous year. The juries claimed:

> Gladly, some key principles of poster design have been broadly met…. [T]he artists, most of them young, are not restricted to the ways their school taught them, mostly painterly ways, but they seek the most contemporary media that are established outside of Greece.[41]

Quotations such as these demonstrate that international graphic design was officially accepted and even encouraged. However, on this occasion the issues of copying foreign ideas and loose copyright laws in Greece were also raised because of the similarity

Recurrent Theme of Design in Greece," *Journal of Design History* 20, no.2 (2007).

31 It hosted 46 works by famous French painters as support to the Greeks of the Resistance. Martha-Elli Christofoglou, "Post-War Art, 1949–1974," in *History of the New Hellenism, 1770–2000: Winners and Losers, 1949–1974* vol. 9 (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2003), 275–90, 276–79.

32 Martha-Elli Christofoglou, "Post-War Art, 1949–1974," 276–79; Martha-Elli Christofoglou, "The Challenge of the Anti-academism in the Visual Arts (1949–1967)," in the Conference Proceedings *1949–1967: The Explosive 20 Years* (Athens, Greece: November 10–12, 2000), 87–97. A contemporary reference on the shift towards abstraction in the applied arts and advertising, see Panayiotis A. Michelis, "Industrial Aesthetic and Abstract Art," *Zygos,* B 39 (February 1959): 27–41, 51.

33 Gallery Kouros was founded by Leonidas Christakis. Interview with L. Christakis on March 28, 2007.

34 Spyros Panayotopoulos, "Greece," in *Who's Who in Graphic Art* vol. I, Walter Amstutz, ed., (Zurich: Amstutz & Herdeg Graphis Press, 1962), 265–69.

35 Aided by the liberal political conditions of the time and the emergence of a new generation of artists, abstract art was sometimes considered "out of date;" Christofoglou, "The Challenge of the Anti-academism in the Visual Arts (1949–1967)," 92. The fear of "academism," which was directly linked with the complex of underdevelopment and cultural lag, was dominant in Greek cultural life up until the end of the 1970s. Christofoglou, "The Challenge of the Anti-academism in the Visual Arts (1949–1967)," 93.

36 Christofoglou, "The Challenge of the Anti-academism in the Visual Arts (1949–1967)," 95.

37 1st prize to E. Schina (F. Carabott's student), and 2nd to Y. Svoronos (from Thessaloniki).

38 Spyros Vassiliou, "On Poster: Attention to the Trend of Modern Art. An International Language, but with a Distinct Accent," *Dimosiotis ke Provoli* 37, (January 1962).

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

Figure 8
An article on the issue of copying foreign concepts, as seen in two Greek submissions to the competition for the promotion of the International Fair of Thessaloniki in *Zygos* 96-97 (November–December, 1963). Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr



between the winning poster designs and foreign examples that appeared in *Graphis* in 1959–60 (see Figure 8).[42] In art and design publishing, especially in the advertising journal, *Dimosiotis ke Provoli* [Publicity and Promotion], first published in 1958, and the art journal *Zygos* [Scale], first published in 1955, editors or contributors to these journals, usually anonymously, argued that foreign design concepts were frequently copied in Greek advertising, to the extent that this practice constituted a "scandal."[43] At this point, advertising-related people elaborated the issue of "copying" for the first time, and questioned the legal limits of what constituted a copy and what was merely influenced.

The Hellenic Institute of Graphic Arts and Marketing (HIGAM), the short-lived official professional body initiated by artist and editor Leonidas Christakis (1928–2009), brought up the issue once more three years later, in 1966, showing that little had changed.[44] In reality, the practice of taking ready images of fashionable ladies or well-groomed gentlemen, literally copied from foreign advertising, was hardly ever reported as bad practice, but instead was accepted as the standard approach.

41 Anon, "Selected and Current: Poster," *Zygos* 96–97, (November-December 1963): 49–52.

42 Ibid., 49.

43 "Professional" or "scientific advertising" was a term used to describe the new approach to the practice, stressing the need for radical reform with regard to Greece's connection with the EEC in 1961; Vangelis Goufas, "Analects," *Dimosiotis Ke Provoli* 38, (February 1962): 47. With the motto "slyness no longer works," the author launched an anti-copying campaign, making special references to the legal and economic dangers following this operation. See later issues, especially 40 and 41. Paratiritis, "The Easy Solution," *Dimosiotis ke Provoli* 40, (April 1962): 6–7. A copied advert from *Modern Publicity* was reported in *Zygos* 90, (May 1963). Also, Anon, "Selected and Current: Advertising," *Zygos* 91–92, (June–July 1963): 62.

44 The issue was brought up in *Fori Epistule,* the newsletter of HIGAM.

Sources of Influence

In the 1950s and 1960s, modernist graphic design reached Greece through international periodicals and annuals on art and design, including *Graphis, Modern Publicity, The Penrose Annual, L'architectura, Casabella,* and *Domus*.[45] In theory, international periodicals were available to Greek designers through orders placed with central bookstores, such as Eleftheroudakis and Architektoniki; however, placing orders was not an easy or straightforward process. According to designer Kimon Eliopoulos (1922–2011), the process of obtaining foreign books and periodicals was cumbersome and took up to two or three months.[46] Moreover, individual buyers needed special permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the sum of money they were allowed to spend abroad was very limited.[47]

Despite these difficulties, Greek graphic designers and advertisers generally were able to keep an eye on the European and American design community, and they widely endorsed the design solutions featured in the foreign press as the modern approach to graphic design. Asymmetry in layout and composition, sans-serif typefaces, and different typographic weights and sizes, as well as grids and photographs in preference to other forms of illustration, formed the basic principles of the modernist project, as featured in these periodicals.[48] Painter-advertiser Alfonso Horovic also made special mention of the New York-based trade journal *Design and Paper,* for its discrete layout and advertising with small-size brand names, as well as for its covers by both known and lesser known graphic designers, such as L. Sutnar, W. W. Westervelt, C. C. S. Dean, and H. N. Russell.[49] Horovic stressed that this approach should be accepted by Greek business people (advertisers or clients), who in the majority relied on or requested "exaggeration in promotion, and coarse-cut and wishy-washy speech."[50] Similarly, graphic designer Freddie Carabott (1928–2011), in one of his few writings on advertising, argued that:

> [… the] printed advert need be not only attractive, but also clear, brief and laconic in content. When less time is needed for an advert to be read, the more people will read it, aiding to the effectiveness of the promotion.[51]

For Anakreon Kanavakis (1938), a self-taught illustrator and designer, the international press archive of the newspaper *Empros,* where he worked as an apprentice in the 1960s, was a thesaurus of inspiring ideas and influences:[52]

> From this [work experience], I followed the layout of newspapers and magazines and advertising designed abroad.… I was observing advanced things in the foreign press. Things that we could not do over here because of

45 A selection of international titles was advertised in *Architektoniki* 59, (October-November 1966).

46 Interview with K. Eliopoulos, June 30, 2006. K. Eliopoulos archive included an almost complete selection of *Modern Publicity, Graphis,* as well as other international periodicals.

47 Interview with K. Eliopoulos, June 30, 2006.

48 Modernist design principles as set by Jan Tschichold, *The New Typography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006 [1995]).

49 Alfonso Horovic, "Discrete Advertising," *Zygos* 91-92, (June–July 1963): 57–59.

50 Horovic, "Discrete Advertising," 58.

51 Freddie Carabott, "The Advertising Print," *Zygos* 90 (May 1963): 64–66. In this article, a list of the basic principles of designing posters was put together in the trade press, possibly for the first time.

52 Interview with A. Kanavakis, April 27, 2006.

> established situations…. I saw that they used differently the titles and the text, and layout too.... [T]hey had a different dynamic that for me was a great challenge to adapt to Greek circumstances.… I was influenced [by the foreign press] in many different ways.… I became crazy for *The New Yorker,*… [also] with many Italian magazines, for instance, *La Domenica del Corriere*.… I had the privilege of all these magazines passing through my hands.[53]

This plurality of influences was also acknowledged by Carabott, who was a direct exponent of the Swiss or International Typographic Style; he trained at the Central School of Arts and Design from 1950 to 1953, which at the time was a center of Swiss influence under the teaching of modernist designers, such as A. Froshaug, E. Wright, and H. Spencer.[54]

> We were certainly influenced by England, which interestingly wielded the scepters in graphic design *[graphismo],* in smart posters and witty advertising. […] [We were also influenced] from France, and of course, from America, and the countries of the Eastern Bloc, [that is] Poland, and Czechoslovakia, which interestingly led [in graphic design] when under the Russian influence. These were the things that struck us.… Among the places that influenced us, I forgot to mention, naturally, Switzerland, which wielded the scepters of clear, "neat" design.[55]

In Greece, the publishing that displayed the most modernist qualities of graphic design, as in other Western countries, was the architectural press. *Architectoniki* for example, was designed by Spyros Cosmetatos (1937); beginning with its first volume in 1957, it followed a very consistent modernist profile, with photography used as the dominant medium for its covers and contents. For more than 20 years, the interior design and architecture annual, *Themata Esoterikou Chorou* [Issues of Interior Space] and later *Themata Chorou ke Technon* [Issues of Space and the Arts], first published in 1970) demonstrated a close affiliation with and devotion to the aesthetic qualities of clean and sharp design.[56] A new group of "modern" graphic designers, the majority of which had studied abroad, was featured for the first time in its pages.[57] This systematic approach of indexing graphic designers and their work under "graphic arts" lasted only a few years.[58] After 1974, the number of references to the graphic arts decreased rapidly.

The graphic design professionals listed in *Themata Chorou ke Technon* included primarily an elite group of Greek designers who had studied graphic art/design abroad and returned to found new advertising agencies and independent graphic design studios in

53 Ibid.

54 Rick Poynor, "Spirit of Independence," in *Communicate: Independent British Graphic Design Since the Sixties,* ed. by Rick Poynor (London: Laurence King, 2004), 12–47, 17.

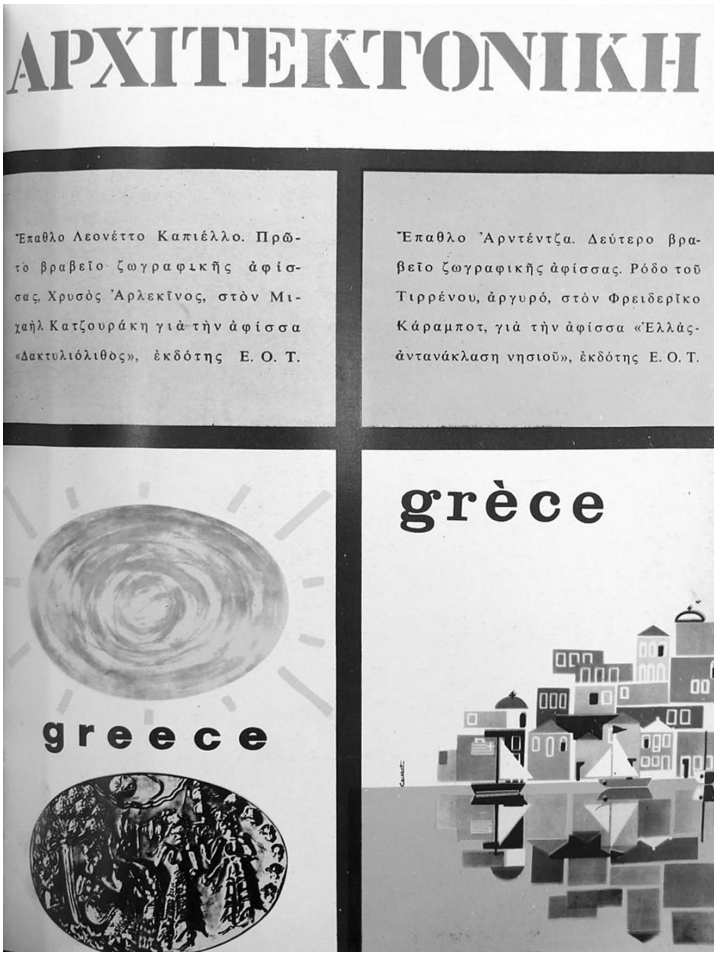
55 Interview with F. Carabott, September 4, 2004.

56 See Richard Hollis, *Swiss Graphic Design* (London: Laurence King, 2006).

57 Names include: M. Katzourakis, A. Katzouraki, F. Carabott, Y. Angelopoulos, S. Cosmetatos, G. Mansolas, D. Rikakis, L. Apergi and N. Saxonis. Anon, "Graphic Design, Packaging, Exhibitions, Advertising Art," in *Themata Esoterikou Chorou* 1, (1970): 186–206.

58 This was included as a distinct section in the journal's contents. This section was rather a presentation of graphic design than a critical view, as was the case with the subject of architecture and the visual arts.

Figure 9
Cover of *Architektoniki* 34 (July–August, 1962), featuring the two internationally awarded tourism posters by M. Katzourakis (left) and F. Carabott (right). Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr



Athens (e.g., Cosmetatos, a graduate of Kingston School of Art (1958–59) and the Central School of Design (1959–62) in London).[59] Also among the professionals was the more recognized designer trio of Michalis Katzourakis, Agni Katzouraki (née Megareos), and Freddie Carabott, who studied in art and design schools in Paris and London in the early 1950s and in the early 1960s co-founded the K&K Athens Advertising Centre.[60] These latter three received exposure in the local and international press and were awarded international prizes for their tourism posters and other commercial works (see Figure 9).[61] On the reception of their work by clients, Katzourakis added:

> [W]hen we started the "story," 1962–63, there was an enthusiasm. Greece was coming out of a War and a Civil War. New things were happening for the first time. The clients were young, of our age more or less, and so we had direct contact with the company owners.… We could persuade the director of CitiBank in a different way, … and we could pass on an idea when I, or Freddie, said so, and they accepted it. And because they were kind of acquaintances, we had a positive response to what we did.[62]

59 Designer of architecture and interior design magazines *(Architectoniki, Architektonika Themata* and *Technika Chronika),* and of the corporate identity of the Commercial Bank of Greece, among others. He is one of the very few of his generation and background to write about graphic design in the Greek press.

60 For their portfolio, see Anon, *Design Routes: Freddie Carabott, Michalis & Agni Katzouraki* (Athens: E.L.I.A.- Benaki Museum, 2008).

61 Their work in the early 1960s was featured in *Modern Publicity* and *Graphis* primarily for their work in the Greek Tourism Organization between 1958–1967. Their "modern" profile is noted in: A. Perrakis, ed., *K&K. The Greek Profile of Modernism* (Athens: Perrakis, 2005).

62 Interview with M. Katzourakis, March 22, 2008.

However, especially in the beginning, Katzourakis found his work to be considered "a bit too modern" for the Greek market.[63] Clients thought his design innovative but felt it was not appropriate or accessible to the Greek audience. In response to the question "What made your work modern?" Michalis and Agni replied:

> Katzouraki (AK): I think the use of vivid, bright colors. Formerly, there were the "exquisite" *[aisthantika]* colors, olive-greens, browns, blues…, and secondly, we chose one single element to highlight.
>
> Katzourakis (MK): …to be able to read in seconds.
>
> AK: We had to make an image that would attract your attention among a thousand other things that existed around.
>
> AK: To be simple and clear. I think this was the change. What we did was clearer in relation to the previous works, which were art paintings…
>
> MK: …which were very descriptive…
>
> AK: …which was like a soup all together.[64]

Attention to "one idea" seems also to have been in rigid contrast to standard commercial behavior. The tendency of shop owners to display all available merchandise in shop windows was seen as an old-fashioned practice that needed to be changed.[65] Carabott also considered the introduction of certain colors as revolutionary at the time:

> [We] introduced the colors black and red.... Black [was connected to] bereavement, [thus] bad. Red [signified] Turkey, communism, bad things.... [T]hese are nonsense talk, but they existed as elements and were a taboo in Greek society.[66]

Their design approach represented an alternative to the imitative works then widely produced and to more conventional design solutions. Even though K&K won several international design awards in the 1960s and served as a model for certain new graphic designers in Greece,[67] its founders changed direction in the early 1970s because of the growing division of labor in the field:

63 Ibid., February 6, 2004.

64 Interview with M. Katzourakis and A. Katzouraki on March 22, 2008.

65 As M. Katzourakis noted in an interview by Dimitris Michailidis, "Shop Window Displays with Songs," *Dimosiotis ke Provoli* 39 (1962): 19-27, 25.

66 Interview with F. Carabott, September 4, 2004.

67 As informed by ATI student interviewees. See also Yorgos Zannias, "One and a Half Month..." in *Design Routes* (Athens: 2008), 239-41.

> After 1970, things started to become complicated. We had account executives, they [clients] created the relevant departments, and it was becoming circular.… [W]e did not have the freshness of the beginning [the direct contact with the owner of the company]. [After that] we turned to interior design in cruise ships.[68]

Forces of Resistance

Modern or new practices in Greek graphic design were debated rather than straightforwardly accepted in the period under examination. Specific kinds of practices were thought of as threatening to established patterns, exemplifying the struggle to accept the new as part of being modern. Resistance to modern aesthetic qualities and a conservative response to new methods and styles could be seen in technical circles. This resistance was usually expressed most vociferously by older practitioners of typography (e.g., bookbinders), who were the main practitioners to write about the discipline.

One of the few articles on aesthetic issues in the trade journal *Typographia* [Typography], first published in 1958, was a polemical account of the New Typography of the 1920s and the new printing technique of "photo-typesetting"—presumably, the two "attackers" of traditional typography. On that occasion, *Typographia* translated and cited in full an article published in *The Penrose Annual* by the French academic Robert Ranc, which warned of the danger posed to traditional typography by the new aesthetic fashions:[69]

> …it does not matter that these modernisms come from Mallarmé and Apollinaire…. [N]either I [R. Ranc] accept, nor do I condemn, modernistic flights of fancy, but this does not mean that I take these seriously, because they are more drolleries than bywords.[70]

The editors of *Typographia* embraced Ranc's views and rushed to affirm that the basic principles of typography were essentially established and undisputed. Foreign articles appear largely to be included for information purposes, or for legitimizing the editors' own position, rather than to stir up any sort of debate. In any case, this rare citation of a foreign article on the subject of aesthetics in a Greek periodical displays a conservative approach to the new typographic experiments undertaken abroad.

In the words of ATI graduate Yannis Koutsouris (1944), another "revolution" in graphic design in the mid–1960s was the availability of ready-made letters in different styles and sizes (see Figure 10). Known as Letraset, this instant lettering not only allowed the designer to create the textual part of a layout with new typefaces but more importantly, also saved time.[71]

68 Interview with M. Katzourakis and A. Katzouraki, March 22, 2008.

69 Robert Ranc, "Typography Today and Tomorrow," *Typographia* 9, no. 187 (January 1, 1967): 10. Ranc was the director of research at the École Estienne and general inspector of technical education in France. The original issue and date of the Penrose article are not cited in *Typographia*.

70 Ibid.

71 Interview with Y. Koutsouris, January 28, 2006.



Figure 10
"With a soft rub… the letter is transferred instantly." An advertisement for Letraset lettering in *Architektoniki* 61 (February–March 1967). Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr

Beyond the Roman alphabet, Letraset also offered the Greek alphabet, although in little variety, which led to a general internationalizing of the language of advertising and Greek brand names. However, in 1970, Frantzis Frantziskakis, a key figure in the Greek art scene (an academic, art critic, gallery owner, and editor of the art journal *Zygos*), expressed opposition to this typographic novelty. He saw Letraset as a "disaster" for typography, defending the traditional slower and more "qualitative" pace of work.[72] His romanticized view of the past, as well as his definition of older and contemporary graphic design work, can be seen in the foreword to the catalogue of the "Graphic Arts" exhibition organized in Athens in October 1971:[73]

> Those who will visit the exhibition and think they will find typographic artwork [objet d'art] or pompous publications strictly of artistic character will be disappointed. It is as if they visited an industrial textile exhibition and expected to see lace and flounces. This exhibition promises modern printed stuff, those that our age requires, that the new status quo commands us to produce.[74]

While contemporary styles and approaches were seen forced rather than original or fitting, and advertising was presented as "a masterful discipline able to cover the potentially bad quality and performance gaps of a product," Frantziskakis praised the "finesse

72 See Frantzis Frantziskakis, "Graphic Arts: We Forgot the Typography," *Dimosiotis ke Provoli* 100 (July–August 1970): 64-66.

73 Organized at the cultural center 'ORA' (1969) by Assantour Bacharian, a painter and advertising director of the advertising agency ORA (1963) and publisher of culture journal *Chroniko* (1970). K. Eliopoulos archive. No documentation was found so far to document graphic arts exhibition in Greece other than that of the catalogue of ORA; Assantour Bacharian, ed., 1969–1979. *Ten Years of the Artistic Cultural Centre ORA* (Athens: ORA, 1979).

74 Frantzis Frantziskakis, prologue to *Graphic Arts Exhibition* (Athens: ORA, 1971), 2-3.

Figure 11
Catalogue cover of the graphic arts exhibition in Athens (1971). Source: K. Eliopoulos personal files.



of the printed book, which is intended for the few and privileged."[75] In a similar tone, *Typographia* introduced the exhibition and a seminar on September 30, 1971. An overview of the seminar was also presented on October 20, 1971 in a full-page article that included photographs of the exhibition venue and key speakers.[76] It was reported that:

> Two periods were presented in the Graphic Art exhibition… the first prior to 1900, with the huge lithographic stones and with the artist-engravers, and the second, with the modern Offset…. [T]hese two watersheds give visitors the opportunity to see the great progress of the sector in our country.... [V]isitors have the opportunity to admire the beautiful examples of modern and artistic work of the largest typographic and lithographic companies of the country.[77]

However, what impressed the authors in *Typographia* were the lithographic posters of 1912 and 1925 presented in the exhibition, rather than the more recent offset design work, which they largely ignored. They also failed to comment on the innovative exhibition catalogue cover in the form of a folder, with its playful typographic setting; it included ten loose sheets of paper with factual details of typographic metrics, standards, types, paperfolds and sizes, and some advertisements (see Figure 11).[78] The modern elements were seen as necessary and unavoidable but of

75 Ibid.

76 Including Y. Vakirtzis (painter), P. Gravvalos (engraver), A. Matsoukis (typographer) and A. Bacharian (painter and editor. Approximately 50 people attended the seminars. See *Typographia* (October 20, 1971).

77 D. Servos, "The Role of the Graphic Art in Our Life was Highlighted at the Graphic Arts Seminar," *Typographia* 13, no. 288 (October 20, 1971): 3.

78 K. Eliopoulos archive.



Figure 12
The Greek military dictatorship crest featuring a soldier and a phoenix as the symbols of the "revolution," probably co-conceived by Brigadier S. Patakos and A. Skylitsis, who was the owner of the Athens-based Greka advertising agency. Source: Papapolizos, F., Martzoukos, Kostas, ed., *HELLAdS. Hellas Through Advertising, 1940–1989* (Athens: Omikron, 1997), p. 130. An image of the crest can also be found online at: www.idtg.org/archive/418-arms-of-greece/ and at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_military_junta_of_1967%E2%80%9374.

little "artistic" value, and the cover, in which a variety of typographic styles was arranged in an unconventional manner, was largely ignored out of nostalgia for the lithography of the past.

Dictatorship and Graphic Design

One of the first preoccupations of the Greek Junta leaders was to create a strong image for their "Revolution" regime through a crest (see Figure 12). This crest showed a Greek soldier in front of a phoenix, the bird symbol of the first Greek government of Ioannis Capodistrias after the War of Independence in 1821. Although no evidence indicates that the leaders of the dictatorship, either personally or through their propaganda department, developed the regime's promotional material, one of the coup leaders contributed to the design of the crest. Upon the crest's inception, Brigadier Stylianos Patakos stated that:

> …the idea of the bird was somewhat mine and Skylitsis [owner of the advertising agency Greka]. ...Skylitsis suggested the bird as a symbol of the Revolution [on April 21, 1967], and I proposed that in order not to fly away... to add a Greek soldier so as to guard the bird and protect it.... In this way, our political connection with the first governor of Greece [Capodistrias] will be shown.[79]

79 Takis Kambilis, "The 'Bird' of Junta and Capodistrias," April 22, 2007, http://enstaseis.blogspot.com/2007/04/blog-post.html (accessed August 2, 2010).

The crest featured in all their propaganda and was promoted on every occasion, especially in celebrations and on national days. As indicated by the extensive self-promotion of the dictatorship in all media, including the new medium of television (in Greece) over which they exercised full control, the power and benefits of graphic design and advertising were fully exploited. At one time, representatives of the regime (whether the colonels directly, specific individuals in the government, government departments, or the designers and publicists working for them) requested that the crest be included in the "Exhibition of Packaging and Logotypes" organized by HIGAM in 1968.[80] However, HIGAM's founder and director, Christakis, refused—resulting in the event's cancellation.[81]

For a later propaganda poster created to win over public support for abolition of the monarchy, known as the "Yes or No" campaign of 1973, the officials turned to the well-known K&K advertising agency. Carabott remembers:

> As we had a good reputation in the advertising community at that time, they asked us to do the "Yes or No" campaign.... Of course we didn't want to be stigmatized, and we turned their offer down skillfully. We told them that our contract with the international advertising agency UNIVAS restricted us from being involved in any political campaign or promotion. In reality, there was no such restriction; we could well have done it.[82]

The colonels' seizure of power in April 1967 affected the progress of graphic design, advertising, and the publishing field in an ambiguous way. On the one hand, it suppressed or even led to the termination of certain publications (e.g., the popular magazine *Ikones* [Pictures] and of other creative initiatives and publications; such as those of Christakis, for which he was prosecuted several times.[83] He claimed openly that the dictatorship stopped him from implementing his plans for the progress of graphic design, and during the dictatorship he basically ceased his activities in advertising and publishing.[84] On the other hand, the regime seems to have exercised less strict control over other developments, such as the foundation of the Hellenic Advertising Agencies in 1968 and the publication of art and design journals, such as *Chroniko* and *Themata Chorou ke Technon,* both published in 1970.

Carabott provides another example that reveals the low interest of the dictatorship in imposing its authoritarian policies on graphic design. On one occasion, the colonels were concerned that the logo for a soft drink should appear in the pure form of the Greek language, *katharevoussa,* instead of in the demotic. In particular, in 1969 Carabott was asked to redesign the logo of IVI, a

80 Interview with L. Christakis, March 28, 2007. The 'Exhibition of Packaging and Commercial Logos,' which was scheduled for March 9–20, 1968, was announced in *Dimosiotis ke Provoli,* January–February 1968.

81 Interview with L. Christakis, March 28, 2007. There was no post-exhibition news in *Dimosiotis ke Provoli* thereinafter.

82 Interview with F. Carabott, September 4, 2004, and March 22, 2008.

83 Christakis published the state-banned fanzines *Kouros* and *Panderma* in 1971 and 1972 respectively.

84 Interview with L. Christakis, March 28, 2007.



Figure 13 (left)
A magazine advertisement for IVI drink refreshment in *Architektoniki* 3 (May–June, 1957). Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr



Figure 14 (right)
The new branding of IVI by F. Carabott presented in *Themata Chorou ke Technon* 1 (1970). Source: The Library of the Hellenic Parliament. www.hellenicparliament.gr

popular Greek refreshment brand since the interwar period (see Figure 13). No fundamental changes were required to be made to the identity because "it was felt that the new image should, as much as possible, derive from the old, so that the consumer would recognize [the] familiar product under its new guise."[85] However, as Carabott noted, the new "clear and simple" design conveyed a "streamlined, modern image," different from the "superfluous" graphic elements previously used.[86] It was obvious that the original IVI logo was designed according to aesthetic principles of previous times, which included handwritten lettering, vignettes, and the accents demanded by a polytonic system.[87]

Carabott proposed a logo free of accents and was immediately told by military officials to appear at the military-run television headquarters to explain his "misconduct" (see Figure 14). The officials requested that the logo be revised to include the appropriate accent. Carabott explained that a brand operates on a different level than an everyday word. In the same way that the military uniform operated as a symbol of the state and was not common dress, a brand was a symbol, a representation of a company, and thus should not be considered a common word that has to comply with grammatical rules. This rationale and explanation apparently was strong enough not to be disputed. IVI appeared in its modern version for several decades—until recently, when a design similar to the original reappeared.[88] As Carabott explained:

> [T]he "junta" didn't hold influence on the aesthetics of things... only very small things, such as accents,… enough to keep a sort of decency.[89]

85 Interview with F. Carabott, October 18, 2004.

86 Along with the print promotion, a cinema commercial was also produced which was shown before the intermission. Interview with F. Carabott, October 18, 2004.

87 The polytonic system (part of the old-style *katharevoussa* type of language) uses several types of accents in the letters of a word that comply with a vast number of rules.

88 The case of IVI within the history of soft drinks in Greece is discussed in Marina Emmanouil, *"At Last Now in Greece! Greek Advertising and America in the 1950s and 1960s"* (MA diss., Royal College of Art, 2004), 82.

89 Interview with F. Carabott, September 4, 2004.

These controversies pose certain questions related to the degree of influence exerted by the dictatorship over graphic design and its development. Advertising was favored and supported by the regime, which allowed the operation of multi-national advertising agencies in Athens and importation of products, such as *Coca-Cola.*

Conclusion: A Way to Modernization

Perception today of what constituted modern graphic design in Greece during the time period studied is influenced by the assimilation of modern Western design principles by agencies like K&K. Becoming modern required the diffusion of dominant design practices, especially the Swiss or International Typographic Style. Visually, modern idioms embraced simple and clear forms and the unique selling point, as opposed to the clichéd, painterly styles of previous times. In many respects, to be "modern" was to follow the Western paradigm of graphic design and advertising, as seen in numerous examples of copied works.

While accepting that this perception was indeed the case in certain contexts, this paper has also shown the form and structure that modernization took beyond assimilation of Western design styles. The status of Greek graphic design at any one time can be gauged from the extent to which it critically responded and adhered to imposed or imported ideas of design. Despite the introduction of new styles and approaches, mainly by the new generation of trained graphic designers, older styles and techniques were seldom discarded entirely. Moreover, although application of the principles of modern abstract art was encouraged and rewarded as forward-looking, concerns over accessibility among local Greek audiences were also expressed.

Articulation and use of the "modern" was a factor of constant negotiation, and modernist examples co-existed with other works in the same space, even on the same page. Modernization of visual language was commonly accomplished through a customized form of Westernization. Through resistance and negotiation, Greek graphic design demonstrated that it could occupy a flexible space in the hegemony of design.

Acknowledgements

This paper is part of my PhD research, Marina Emmanouil, "Graphic Design and Modernization in Greece, 1945–1970" (PhD dissertation, Royal College of Art, 2012). I would like to thank my supervisors, Jeremy Aynsley and Viviana Narotzky, as well as external advisor Artemis Yagou and viva-voce examiners Philip Carabott and Paul Jobling for their valuable comments.