The Greek Publishing Market during the economic crisis: Resilience, Innovation & Change

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68th Frankfurt Book Fair, 19-23 October 2016
Number of books published (read) every year

- **Decline in the number of new book titles published**
  - from **10,680** titles in 2008 to appr. **6,700** titles in 2015 (-37%)

- **New titles by subject:**
  - **Literature** (including fiction, nonfiction & poetry) 27%
  - **Social & Human Sciences** 22%
  - **Children’s Books** 18%
  - **other** (Practical & Self Help Books, School Books, Pure & Applied Sciences, Art) 33%

- **Average print runs:** novels-2,000 copies, poetry & essays-500 to 800 copies. A true bestseller is expected to sell 7,000 - 40,000 copies. Hardboiled bestsellers (only very few) have sold 100,000 to 500,000 copies (i.e. J.K.Rowling, Dan Brown, E.L.James, V. Hislop, et.al.)
Book reading statistics

- Population size: 11 million, <50% Book readers

- 42.3% over 15 yo read at least one book per year (source: National Book Centre, Reading Behaviour Survey, 2010)
  - 34.2% read 1 to 9 books/year
  - 8.1% read over 10 books/year (appr. 780,000), of which:
    - 1.7% read over 25 books/year (appr. 150,000)
  [Average: 5.9 books/year, Median: 3 books/year]

- 16.9% read books only for their professional/educational needs

- 40.7% read no books at all

- [Hoping to change that through our Educational & Cultural policies!]
Book reading between 1999-2010

- Διάβασαν από 25 βιβλία και πάνω:
  - 1,6
  - 1,6
  - 1,7

- Διάβασαν από 10 εώς 24 βιβλία:
  - 1,6
  - 6,6
  - 25,4

- Διάβασαν από 1 εώς 9 βιβλία:
  - 1,6
  - 7,0
  - 22,2

- Διάβασαν μόνο για σπουδές/επάγγελμα/πρακτικά:
  - 1,6
  - 16,9
  - 34,2

- Κανένα:
  - 1,6
  - 22,2
  - 40,7

- 1999:
  - 6,8
  - 29,3
  - 31,8

- 2004:
  - 1,7
  - 30,4
  - 43,8

- 2010:
  - 1,7
  - 30,4
  - 43,8

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Economic crisis and its impact

- Less available money by consumers to spend on books
- Steep fall of book sales, after 2009/2010
- Over-taxation, increased company costs, limited access to financing due to capital restrictions
- From profitmaking to losses [when consumption falls prices can’t go up, they have to follow, too]
- Weaker publishers and booksellers go out of business
- Harder competition within a small number of players
- De-regulation of the book market (with the partial abortion of the Retail Price Maintenance Law in 2014)
- Stock books sold at bazaar prices (1-5 vs. 16-18 euro: Unfair competition), backlist titles going out-of-print (including all time classics)
- Export and copyright markets raising their importance
- Cautiousness in decision-making in every step
Book Prices compared to the Average Price Level in 2005-2014

**Blue Line:** Consumer Price Index for Books  
**Red Line:** Consumer Price Index for All Goods & Services  
Year of reference: 2009 = 100  
© Office for National Statistics of Greece (EL.STAT)
Harsh Competition: 40% increase of ISBN codes attributed by the National Library in 2002-2015


Note: The majority of those titles WERE NOT published in time, as scheduled
Book Publishing: A renewed profile

- **Production: Concentrated, but still with a ‘very long tail’**
  - 3 publishers >200 titles/year (13.1% of production)
  - 10 publishers 80-199 titles/year (15.3% of production)
  - 146 publishers 10-79 titles/year (41.3% of production)
  - 760 publishers 1-9 titles/year (30.3% of production)

Therefore: **159** publishers (or, 1/6) account for **70%** of all titles

- **Market Leaders with diversified publishing profiles**
  - Patakis, Psychogios, Metaichmio
  - + Minoas, Kedros, Dioptra, Livanis, Kastaniotis

- **Resilience of the experienced Medium Size Publishers**
  - Polis, Agra, Hestia, Ikaros, Gutenberg, Kritiki, Alexandria, Papazisis, Papadopoulos, Nefeli, Potamos, Klidarithmos, Gavriilidis, Indiktos

- **‘Art quality books’ Startups**
Children’s books in the global market

- A specialized market with 20% market share, open to common projects through international cooperation
- Leading publishers:
- Acclaimed contemporary children’s books authors:
  - Children's books
  - Young adult fiction & non fiction
- High quality illustrators (i.e. Guest of Honour in Bologna Book Fair, 2004)
Foreign books translated into Greek

- Translations: from 42.5% to 32.1% of book title production.
- English language dominates in the number of translations (50), followed by French (11-12%), German (4%), Spanish (4%), Italian (3%), Russian (1%), and 33 other languages (all Scandinavian & Balkan languages, Portuguese, Arabic, Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Dutch, Catalan, Japanese, Chinese, etc.).

- Most popular foreign authors in translation (source: www.biblionet.gr)
  - Internationally acclaimed authors
    - Umberto Eco, Salman Rushdie, Jose Saramago, Haruki Murakami, Margaret Atwood, Philip Roth, Alice Munro, J.M. Coetzee, Paul Auster, Don DeLillo, Jonathan Coe, Günther Grass, Orhan Pamuk, Roberto Bolaño, Mario Vargas Llosa, Richard Ford, Richard Flanagan, Patrick Modiano, et.al.
  - Recently acquainted with Greek readers
    - Jaume Cabré, Karl Ove Knausgård, Elena Ferrante, Antony Doerr, Juan Gabriel Vásquez, Georges Saunders, Anthony Marra, Joël Dicker, Andrés Neuman, etc.
  - Crime fiction writers doing well
    - Jo Nesbo, Camilla Läckberg, Ian Rankin, James Ellroy, Philip Kerr, Andrea Camilleri, Arnaldur Indridason, Gillian Flynn, Arne Dahl, Ruth Rendell, et.al.
  - Non fiction: Klein, Chomsky, Žižek, Piketty, Krugman, Yalom, Steiner, etc.
The international focus in Greek literature

- **Greece:** *Guest of Honour in International Book Fairs, after 2001:*
  - *Thessaloniki Book Fair Guests of Honour, after 2008:* France, Germany, Serbia, Arab Literature, China, UK, Israel, Russia
  - Translation Subsidy Programme: Frasis (www.frasis.gr)

- **Predicting the crisis:** author Petros Markaris’ crime novels
  - 14 books translated & bestselling in German & in other languages (Diogenes Verlag)

- **Influence of the crisis:** Literary compassion for the ones affected
  - Christos Chryssopoulos: *The Parthenon Bomber, Shunyata, Enclosed World, Flashlight Between the Teeth, Disjunction* (novels, novellas, personal accounts, photographs), translations in France and the US, Laure-Batallion Prize in France
  - Christos Ikonomou, *Something will Happen You’ll See* (short stories), *All Good Things Will Come from the Sea* (short stories), rights sold/translations in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Croatia, US
  - Makis Tsitas, *God is My Witness* (novel), European Union Prize for Literature 2014, translation rights sold in Italy and in nine other languages

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The international focus in Greek literature

- **Influence of the crisis: Understanding the reasons**
  - Nikos Dimou: *On the Unhappiness of Being Greek*, translations in eight languages, over 35,000 copies sold in Germany
  - Yanis Varoufakis, *Talking to My Daughter About the Economy*, rights sold in Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Serbia and Brazil

- **International anthologies of a younger generation of talented, politically aware (or, even, agitated) Greek poets**
    + more in other languages (German, Spanish, Serbian, etc.)

- **Outside the approach of ‘literary compassion’**
  - Yannis Makridakis, *La Chute de Konstantia* (novel), translated into French
  - Dimosthenis Papamarkos, *Ghiak* (short stories), anthologised in French/Russian

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Bookselling: Chains & independents

- Chains and high-street bookshops mostly affected by the crisis. No ‘Amazon.gr’
  - Fnac, Papasotiriou, Eleftheroudakis, Metropolis, Kauffmann
  - Hestia Booksellers closed after 120 years of operation

- Fewer market leaders
  - Public (45 mixed cultural products stores - books, music, film & electronics) public.gr
  - Ianos (5 stores in Thessaloniki & 2 in Athens) ianos.gr
  - Discount stores with a big turnover: Politeia, Protoporia politeianet.gr, protoporia.gr
  - Patakis Bookstore patakis.gr
  - Evripidis (2 stores in Athens), Malliaris (Thessaloniki) evripidis.gr, malliaris.gr
  - Nakas Books (bazaar books chain), Max Stores (books, stationery & toys)
  - Hellenic Distribution Agency (distributor of foreign books & press)

- Opening up of small size, quality independents, with book launches and/or publishing activity
  - Epi Lexei, Pleiades, Saixpirikon, Mauve Skiouros, Booktique, Book Loft, Free Thinking Zone, Lemoni, Naftilos (central Athens & Thessaloniki)
  - Lexikopoleion, Le Livre Ouvert (Greek & foreign language books)
  - Booktalks, Sporos (Athens suburbs)
E-books & digital perspectives

- Greek eBooks were launched in the trade market in 2010; Total number of ebook titles, today (estimated): 7,000. Share of the book sales market: <1%.
- Slow growth because of the lack of a low-cost, ‘everyday’ reader (such as Kindle), with no large Greek language ebooks inventory (such as Amazon’s) - iOS and Android tablet/phone distribution channels being the principal ones.
- Main ebook sellers
  - cosmotebooks.gr (Cosmote, the No 1 Greek mobile services provider)
  - myebooks.gr (taking up services for booksellers websites, as well)
  - openbook.gr (Free download ebooks with Creative Commons licensing)
- Business innovation: New Platforms & Services
  - Thinking (services aiming at enhanced ebooks with a language inventory with Q’ & A’ incorporated into the text; an awarded project idea in the ‘Hack the Book’ contest by the Onassis Foundation, implemented for Faber & Faber in the UK) thinking.gr
  - Fairead.net (online service platform supporting self-publishing, from typesetting & proof editing to distribution, with services offered to SM publishers and a reading app for smartphones under way) fairead.net
  - Book Secrets (enhanced ebook services with ‘environmental’ info & audiovisual material added to the original book titles; startup recipient of the ‘Innovation & Technology Award’ of the National Bank of Greece) booksecrets.com
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Handy Contacts

- **Greek Publishers’ Directory**
  www.greekbookpublishing.org
- **National Library of Greece**
  www.nlg.gr, National Bibliography: http://vopac.nlg.gr
- **Greek Books-in-Print database**
  www.biblionet.gr
- **Studies and Archives of the National Book Centre of Greece**
  www.ekebi.gr/frontoffice/portal.asp
- **Hellenic Foundation for Culture**
  www.hfc.gr
- **Greek Collective Rights Organization**
  www.osdel.gr
- **Association of Greek Book Publishers**
  www.enelvi.org
- **Greek Ministry of Culture**
  www.yppo.gr
Thank you very much for your attention!

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Literary event at the Shakespearean (‘Saixpirikon’) bookshop in Thessaloniki