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ARTICLE

# THE RENEWAL OF THE GREEK ILLUSTRATED CHILDREN'S BOOK DURING THE *METAPOLITEFSI*

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## THE RENEWAL OF THE GREEK ILLUSTRATED CHILDREN'S BOOK DURING THE *METAPOLITEFSI*

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### Abstract

With the restoration of democracy in Greece in 1974 a period of transition began, known as *metapolitefsi*, which saw deep political, social and economic changes. Progressive developments also occurred in art, culture and education. The rules of the new pedagogy affected the field of literature and more specifically children's illustrated books.

Thus, writers departed from the old conservative models, dominated by protectionism and superficial idealism. Instead, they introduced political, social and environmental concerns, while the language became friendlier and modern.

At the same time, illustrators such as Kyritsopoulos, Zarampouka, Fakinou, Maroulakis, Psaraki a.s.o., begin to move away from the dry literalness and naive realism of most of their predecessors. They draw on a wide range of sources, from cartoons to abstraction and from Art Nouveau to Pop Art, they experiment with techniques never before used in Greek book illustration, and use innovative symbolism to convey textual meanings. Their style becomes intimate, imaginative and humorous.

Pictures are no longer a merely decorative accompaniment to the text which is particularly important. They often cover the entire surface of the page, and play a decisive role in the development of the story. In short, they become central to the experience of the book. It is no coincidence that the young illustrators of the 70s and 80s often wrote their own texts. Typography, too, escapes from strict rules. Handwritten lettering, previously unheard of in Greek books, is often used on covers and title pages.

Overall, during the early years of the Greek *metapolitefsi*, children's illustrated books changed radically and caught up with international developments.

The predictable layout and obvious didacticism of previous decades, especially during the military junta (1967-1974), gave way to sophistication, sensitivity and wit, fresh and intelligent ways of introducing children to real-life social and ethical issues.

### Keywords

illustration  
Greek illustrated book  
children's book  
layout  
typography  
lettering

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## INTRODUCTION

The re-establishment of democracy in Greece in 1974, after a 7-year military junta, marks the beginning of the period known as *metapolitefsi*. During the *metapolitefsi*, Greece underwent important and welcome social and cultural changes. Historians are not unanimous as to when exactly this period ends – different years have been proposed, such as the end of the Cold War (1989-1991), or the death of prime minister Andreas Papandreou (1996) (Voulgaris, 2001). In any case, the restoration of democracy also brought changes in Greek culture and education, including the field of children's literature which is now influenced by the ideas of the new pedagogy. Thus, there are writers such as Georges Sari and Alki Zei who, departing from conservative models of protectionism and fabricated idealism, introduce political, social, and historical elements into the Greek youth novel and help establish a new outlook.

The new spirit also affects illustrated children's books. The emergence of new authors, illustrators, and author-illustrators was facilitated by the general flowering in the field of publishing (Skiada, 2018, p. 60). Besides the air of freedom that followed the fall of the junta, the development of technology with the new printing possibilities contributed to the growth in the production and quality of publications.

The stories touch upon a wider range of themes, from social issues to ecology, sometimes involving subtle existential concerns and more rarely elements of the absurd. The writing style changes; it becomes more intimate, intelligent, humorous, and the language is modernized. At the same time, the illustrations take on an essential and decisive role in the stories, ceasing to be decorative. The new wave of illustrators of the 70s and 80s began to explore new directions, away from conventional drawing and mere technical perfection (Tzitzili, 2016, p. 72). They often write the texts themselves or work on stories by pioneering contemporary authors that satirize the morals of the time. Eugene Trivizas' humorous commentaries on situations of modern Greek reality were illustrated by Nikos Maroulakis, while Alki Zei's social and ecological concerns were visually expressed by Sofia Zarampouka. At the same time, artists such as Alexis Kyritsopoulos brought innovations to the whole book concept, in layout and pictorial style; he introduced unusual techniques to the hitherto mostly conservative Greek illustration and used various materials in elliptical, abstract compositions, without margins and limitations.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF GREEK ILLUSTRATION

Historically, the first notable examples of Greek book illustration appeared in the second decade of the 20th century. They were monochromatic woodcuts and etchings in academic style, sometimes enriched with elements from antiquity or the Greek folk tradition, and usually illustrated poetry and literature books. They were created by artist-printmakers such as Dimitris Galanis, Lykourgos Kogevinas and, in later decades, Markos Zavitsianos, Giannis Kefallinos, Spyros Vassiliou, Giorgis Varlamos and Tassos.

The dictatorial regime of Ioannis Metaxas (1936-41), in order to control the communist ideas that had been spreading after the Russian Revolution and the destruction of Smyrna in 1922, implemented the state monopoly policy of schoolbooks. As a result, literary didacticism and national-religious propaganda prevailed in most of the children's publications (Delonnois, 1986, p. 27). In the early post-war period Kostas Grammatopoulos introduced important changes to illustrated books with the internationally awarded *Ta kala paidia*<sup>1</sup> [The good kids, 1949] and *Alphavetario* (1955). Noteworthy was also Louisa Montesantou's second grade reading book *Ergasia kai hara* [Work and joy, 1949], where colour was the dominant element. A more abstract approach was adopted by important modernist painters such as Yiannis Moralis, Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghikas, Nikos Engonopoulos and Yiannis Tsarouchis, who occasionally worked on editions of poetry, theatre programs and vinyl record covers.

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1. In the same year he was awarded with the first prize of the International Teaching Book Fair, at the World Pedagogical Symposium in Laeken, Belgium, for his alphabet *Ta kala paidia* [The good kids].

In the '60s Agni Katzouraki made a decisive contribution to the evolution of Greek graphic design by creating advertising posters and children's books, introducing a cosmopolitan aesthetic, ignoring the Greek stereotypes and challenging the design rules of the time (Konstantopoulos, 2017). Although pioneering compositions had begun to appear in the '60s, the bans and censorship imposed by the military junta of 1967 in the field of publishing brought a relapse into nationalist conservatism and simplistic Greek-Orthodox moralism (Asonitis, 2001, p. 104).

### **ILLUSTRATED CHILDREN'S BOOKS DURING THE *METAPOLITEFSI***

With the restoration of democracy in 1974, the rapid developments in all sectors of political, social and economic life, as well as the movements for human rights and feminism, led to a stylistic and thematic renewal of literature (Tzitzili, 2016, p. 63). In general, there was a freedom in the arts, an upsurge after the repressive censorship of the previous years. New publishers and magazines move in liberal directions and even more so in the children's book, as the new pedagogy seeks to introduce children to contemporary concerns. New literary magazines such as *Diavazo*, *Diadromes* and *Lexi*, as well as the children's magazines *To Rodi*, *Gia Hara*, *Eleftheri Genia a.s.o.*, offered the opportunity to young creators to present their work.

Young writers began to be inspired by everyday life, addressing real issues through a kind of metafiction linked to the wider social environment, usually with a sense of humour. The writing style changed, becoming more intimate and intelligent, in modern language. At the same time, the illustrations cease to be decorative and take on an essential and decisive role in the stories.

In this transition to democracy the illustrators, unlike their predecessors, quite often write their own stories where social issues are raised through allegory and humour. In technique and composition, their work is entirely different from conventional Greek illustration, with various materials used in off-centre, playful and abstract ways.

What used to be black and white, simple, realistic illustrations, with their strict contours and origins in folk painting, now become colourful and occupy entire layouts. Illustrations become integral parts of the texts, and sometimes it is the text that adapts to the picture rather than the other way round. Illustrators are no longer concerned with the realistic depiction of subjects, but with constant experimentation they seek to convey emotions and messages through innovative techniques and symbolisms (Tzitzili, 2016, p. 73).

Book design and typography not only began to deviate from the strict rules that applied until then, but often overturned them. Covers were often printed with hand-written titles and credits. The usual portrait book format changed into landscape or square so that the images could be spread better, and paperback covers sometimes folded inwards like book jackets. Also, the texts were given more freedom, so left alignment of large texts first appeared, while section titles were often handwritten in media such as markers, pastels, and even collage.

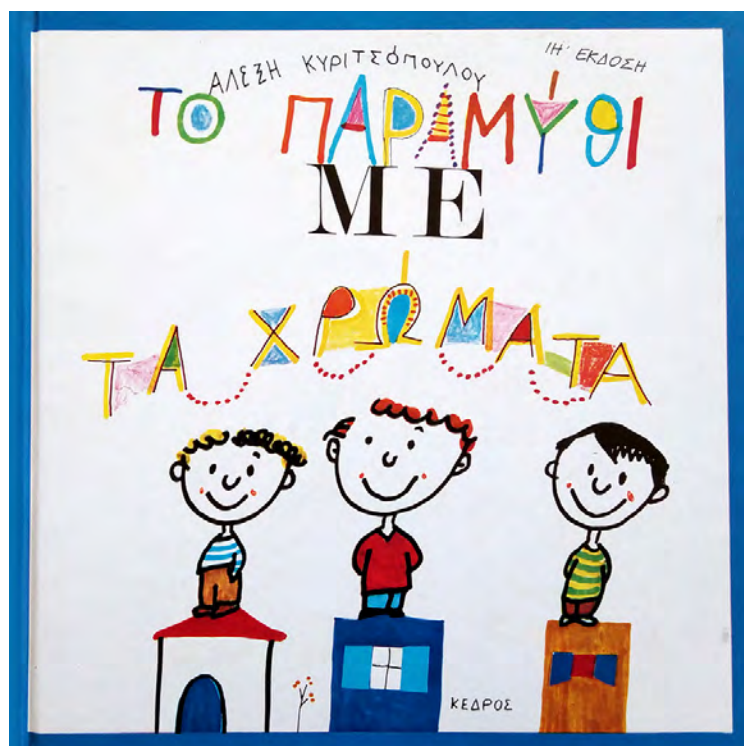
### **ALEXIS KYRITSOPOULOS**

As some of the new illustrators came from the field of comics, cartoon and caricature, they introduced such elements into their images. They moved away from realism and the traditional design aesthetic was replaced by a new concept, emphasizing the atmosphere of the story and not so much the figures of the heroes.

Such is the case of the artist Alexis Kyritopoulos (b. 1943) who first appeared in the field of children's books in 1976. His revolutionary aesthetic had been prefigured in his mid-60s work for the covers of singer-songwriter Dionysis Savvopoulos' vinyl records.

Until then, the graphic design of record covers was restricted to the use of simple typography combined with photographs or sometimes works by well-known fine artists such as Yiannis Moralis and Yiannis Tsarouhis. But there was absolutely no Greek precedent for the cover of Dionysis Savvopoulos' album "Fortigo" (1966), with its emblematic, typographic collage. Kyritopoulos' intention was to visualize in the word "Fortigo" the husky voice, screams and breathing of Savvopoulos.





**Figure 1.** Alexis Kyritsopoulos, book cover of *To paramythi me ta hromata*. Kedros Publishers, 1976. (<https://www.kedros.gr>)

own loose and sketchy use of the marker creates an intimate feel for the reader. The brilliant colours build up the image and give it a festive, joyful mood, which begins with the placement of the colourful capital letters that take up almost half of the cover's surface. This dominant placing of the title on the cover was also unprecedented for Greek standards. The bright cover is followed by the title page in deep red. Here all the credits were written by hand in capitals with black ink, but more like a draft, since the guides of pencil between the letters and the leading lines are left intentionally visible. Kyritsopoulos works by instinct. Considering the way he mixes the different techniques in each illustration, one realizes that his work is not based on predefined principles, but on the "visual surprise of contrasts".

For the book *Nastradin Hodza*, published by Kedros in 1980, he chose the collage technique of composing his images out of painted paper cut-outs upon which he draws with oil pastels. The figure of Hodza shows similarities with those of folk shadow theatre and particularly Karagiozis. This influence is often found in the works of Kyritsopoulos and especially in his illustrations for the Savvopoulos covers, as he believes that Karagiozis represents the modern Greek who is poor, clever and a bit of a rascal. Kyritsopoulos approached the theme of the book in an abstract way using colours reminiscent of sunrise, such as many different tones of blue, along with orange, ochre and green, illuminating with small amounts of white.

Giorgos Ioannou's satirical play for children *To avgo tis kotas* [The hen's egg] was published by Kedros in 1981. With sarcasm and bitter humour, the author comments on the difficult cohabitation of humans and animals in the apartments of big cities. For this book, Kyritsopoulos created ten images in the simple but effective style of his earlier work. Large parts of the illustrations were coloured flat so as to provide the space for the actions of the human and animal characters.

Ten years later, and in a similar spirit, he wrote and illustrated the innovative children's book *To paramythi me ta hromata* [Fairy Tale with Colours, 1976]. In this allusion to the lifestyle of modern man, the author-illustrator uses a wide range of materials with an impressive variety of techniques (crayons, tempera, collage with cardboards, coloured and ripped papers), so that almost every spread has a different feel and quality.

Moreover, Kyritsopoulos spread the images of *To paramythi...* beyond the limits of the pages, without any margins. Overall, the book displays an unprecedented freedom from the established structure of Greek children's books. His disorderly compositions broke with the rules which pioneering graphic designers such as Agni Katzouraki and Freddy Carabot had begun to apply in the early to mid-1960s. Instead of adhering to Bauhaus and Swiss design principles, he incorporated hand-written lettering into the images and also treated the layouts as painting canvases, the result being that each one becomes a unique work of art. This approach is even more manifest in his later book *ELA*. A gifted colourist, with a preference for summative and abstract forms, Kyritsopoulos has often spoken of his love for the art of Paul Klee and other European modernists. Indeed, such influences are recognizable throughout his work.

The cover of *To paramythi me ta hromata* was done mainly with markers. The choice of this handy medium was somewhat risky, as it had been exclusively associated with children's drawings. However, his



**Figure 2.** Alexis Kyritsopoulos, book cover of *Nastradin Hodza*. Text by Sophoklis Dimitrakopoulos. Kedros Publishers, 1980. (<https://www.kedros.gr>)



**Figure 3.** Alexis Kyritsopoulos, book cover of *To Avgo tis kotas*. Text by Giorgos Ioannou. Kedros Publishers, 1981. (<https://www.kedros.gr>)

The figures have no details and are shaped by strong black outlines. On the edge of these outlines, Kyritsopoulos adds a touch of pink watercolour to create a sense of luminous volume. Sometimes he also thins the black to suggest shadow and depth. Kyritsopoulos' favourite colour, blue, is absent from the book, possibly for reasons of printing economy, but it could also symbolize the absence of the sky from the big city.

In 1985 Kyritsopoulos worked on Eugene Trivizas' *O Laimargos Tunnelodrakos*. [Gluttonous tunnel dragon]. The innovative twists of the humorous, filled with puns, text of Trivizas and the artist's visual interpretation complement each other, creating a complex, brilliantly anarchic book. Some of the illustrations are made with collage and are quite abstract, while those in mixed media techniques (crayons, oil pastels and watercolours) are more descriptive, with elements borrowed from children's drawings.



**Figure 4.** Alexis Kyritsopoulos, book cover of *O Laimargos Tunnelodrakos*. Text by Eugene Trivizas. Kedros Publishers, 1985. (<https://www.kedros.gr>)

In 1994 Kedros published another personal work of Kyritsopoulos, *To aspro alogo* [The white horse], a collection of nine short stories "for minors and grown-ups".

The absence of any uniformity or consistency in the design reflects the surreal development of the stories. Together they work like free associations of thought with dreamlike paradoxes.

This is particularly noticeable in the final - and lengthiest - story where all sorts of absurdities unfold. In the midst of all this feast of colours and textual irrationalities, there is the occasional allusion to ecological issues.

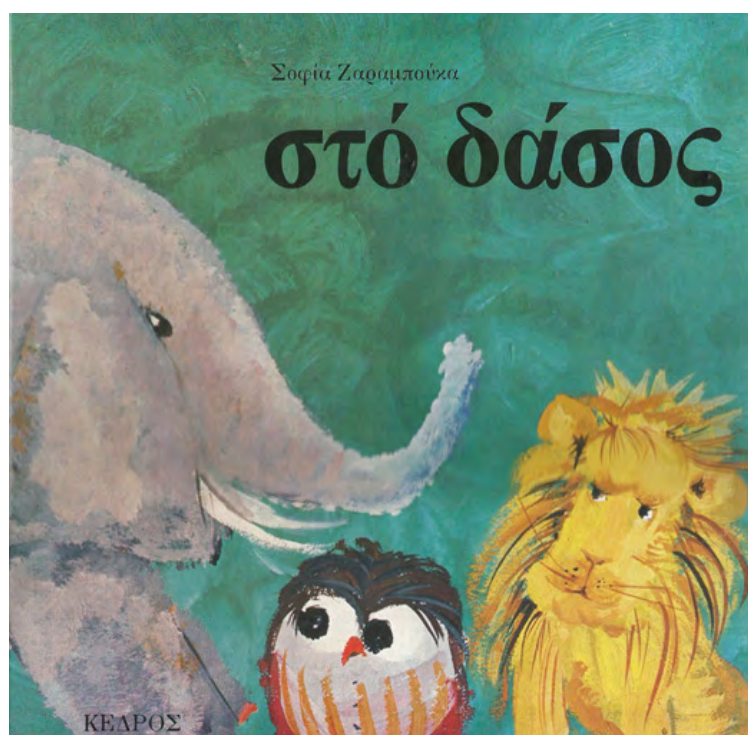
To sum up, Alexis Kyritsopoulos was a central figure in the renewal of Greek children's book illustration during the metapolitefsi. He subverted all rules and stereotypes, introduced an original pictorial style, and his influence has been steadily growing among younger illustrators.



## SOFIA ZARAMPOUKA

In 1976, the same year that Kyritsopoulos released *To paramythi me ta hromata*, another important book caught the public's attention. Titled *Sto dasos* [In the forest], it was written and illustrated by Sofia Zarampouka (b. 1939), a major figure in the modernization of Greek illustrated children's books. Compared to Kyritsopoulos, Zarampouka's books are more educational in nature. With very few exceptions, she writes her own stories and often uses anthropomorphic animals as protagonists as she believes that such characters make it easier to refer to issues such as racism, discrimination, divorce etc., to explain concepts like totalitarianism and democracy, and to share her concerns about environmental destruction.

Her aforementioned *Sto dasos* created a sensation. It is a political allegory in which Zarampouka tries to introduce children to the concepts of power and dictatorship through the microcosm of the forest. In the unusual square shape of the cover the massive figure of the elephant turns menacingly towards the two other protagonists, the chief owl and the ferocious but herbivorous lion. The large size of the owl probably corresponds to its qualities and its leading position in the story.



**Figure 5.** Sofia Zarampouka, book cover of *Sto dasos*. Kedros Publishers, 1976. (<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/56161432>)

The title and the author's name are placed as a block in the upper right side, in lowercase Times typeface, and in left alignment. This off-centre placement was rare in earlier book covers and marks a new tendency whereby the credits are adapted to the space available in the picture. Inside, the images are very large and outweigh the text. Although this was already standard practice in foreign books for small children, it had never been before attempted in Greece. The brightly coloured, without contours characters, move through the abstract environments of the forest, which consist of quieter colour textures and spread across the layouts of the book. The texts are embedded within the compositions as grey forms typed in left alignment, without any typographic treatment.

The full-page illustrations give a parallel visual narration of the story. The succession and consistency of the pictures enable the child to follow the story even if he/she cannot read. Although the forest background is abstract, carefully positioned details guide the child's understanding of the plot. Among such details are elements from the human world, like the bed and library of the owl, the suitcases of the animals etc. Also, the colour choices predispose the reader emotionally to interpret situations, e. g. between the symmetrical green trees on the small strip of the hunters' land there are orange forms that resemble fire and thus foreshadow the danger to come. In some cases, the horizontal division of the images creates a depth, where the story unfolds on three levels. At the bottom is the territory of the forest animals, separated from the hunters' land at the top by the uncrossable river and the small text on either side. The group of hunters, whose spears are visible among the trees, consists of schematic dark forms and create a strong contrast with the rich colours of the animals, with obvious influences from the illustrations of Eric Carle.

The book ends with a composition that shows the defeated elephants on the lower left, with their leader weeping in regret, while in the background on the upper right we can see the silhouettes of the other animals moving away on the hill. The bright warm reddish-yellow background gives a calm feeling of a tropical sunset. Peace and tranquillity have prevailed in the land of forest animals.<sup>2</sup>

2. *To paramythi me ta chromata* [The fairy tale with colours] by Alexis Kyritsopoulos, together with Vromohori [Dirtville] by Sofia Zarampouka, were the only illustrated children's literature books, of the short stories type that were exhibited at the National Gallery of Greece in 1994, as part of the 1st Panhellenic Exhibition of Greek Children's Book Illustrators, members of the Artistic Society AESOPOS.





In the same year, in 1976, Kedros published the first Greek children's book with ecological concerns, where the problem of smog was addressed. In *Vromohori* [Dirtville] the children decide to stop environmental pollution caused by narrow-minded and unscrupulous adults. It has been said by educators that the gloomy background in the pictures may be a little depressing for a young reader (Benekos, 1981, p. 48). On the other hand, the theme of the book, which is hardly joyful, justifies Zarampouka's choice. The typography on the cover is placed in its upper part, in left-aligned capital letters. The 11 illustrations occupy the right-hand pages of the book. Most of the action unfolds against a black background, representing the smoggy atmosphere (Sivropoulou, 2003, p. 146). Against this black, there are figures in vivid acrylic colours, schematic and flat, without perspective. Much of the light comes from the children's pale faces. Zarampouka's thick strokes may have been inspired by German expressionist painters such as Emil Nolde.

**Figure 6.** Sofia Zarampouka, book cover of *Vromohori*. Kedros Publishers, 1976. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24470883>

A completely different expressive technique in black and white is used by Zarampouka in *H Kyria Annoula* [Mrs Ann, 1978]. It is a social and sentimental tale, featuring an odd, mismatched couple: an anthropomorphic mouse falls in love with a lady who loves beauty and nature.

The drawing style, in black ink on white paper, is more detailed than *Vromohori*; it approximates the look of etchings and creates a melancholy atmosphere, subtly enriched with small touches of red. The grey of the text is integrated into the pictures creating a nice balance. *Kyria Annoula* was inspired by the personality of writer Anna Sikelianou and includes an indirect ecological message as the main character intervenes in the concrete jungle of the city by creating a garden of plant pots outside her house, which earns the admiration of all passers-by.



**Figure 7.** Sofia Zarampouka, book cover of *H Kyria Annoula*. Kedros Publishers, 1978. ([https://issuu.com/kedrospbl/docs/20101018\\_paidikos\\_katalogos/9](https://issuu.com/kedrospbl/docs/20101018_paidikos_katalogos/9))

## EUGENIA FAKINOU

Eugenia Fakinou (b. 1945) appeared as a children's book author-illustrator in 1977 with the legendary *Ntenekedoupoli* [Tin Town], published by Kedros. *Ntenekedoupoli*, which began as a successful object theatre play, voices social concerns similar to those of Zarampouka's *Sto dasos*. Its vivid illustrations are spread across whole pages, on coloured cardboards, with sophisticated simplicity. The characters are anthropomorphic tin cans, with strong contours of oil pastels. As with Kyritsopoulos' markers, Fakinou's choice of oil pastels – a medium primarily associated with classroom practice – was intended to give a more intimate feel to young readers. The figures and settings are two-dimensional. Only in the last image a slight perspective is created by the difference in the sizes of the characters and their positions, while the defeated dictator is depicted as a distorted square.

The book cover features an unusual typographic composition: all the letters are written by hand, including the publisher's logo which has the same size and colour as the author's name, in small caps, aligned left above and below the title, respectively. The title, in large outline white capitals, forms an arch over the figures of the protagonists.



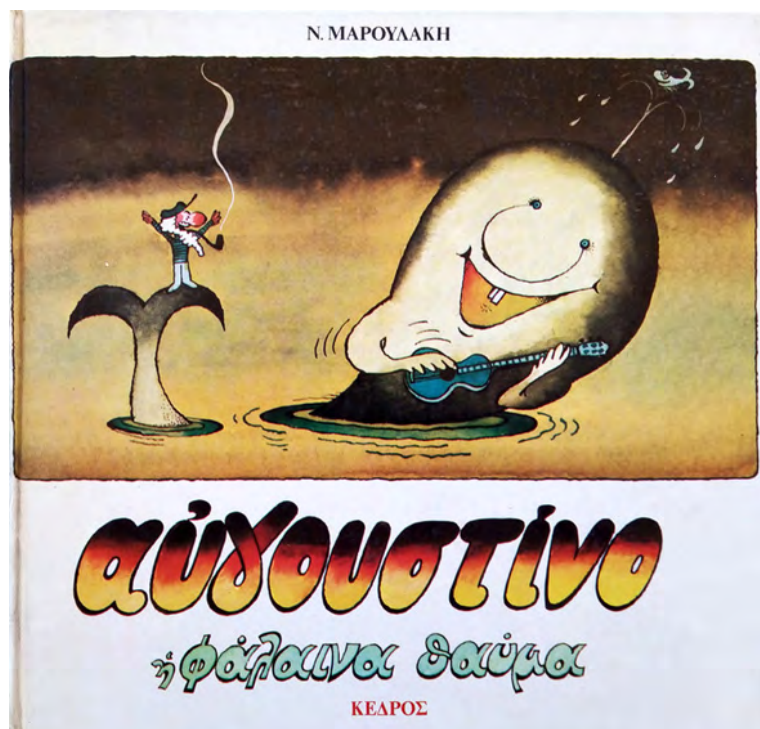
**Figure 8.** Eugenia Fakinou, book cover of *Ntenekedoupoli*. Kedros Publishers, 1977. (<https://www.kedros.gr>)

The soft book cover resembles a book jacket which folds inside and the image extends to the front flap – another innovation during this period. On the front flap, hand-written and in vertical position, are the words of the narrator *Helios* at the beginning of the text, by way of an introduction. The title page is dominated by the large image of *Helios* instead of the usual small ornament below the credits.

Inside, the body text is printed on the pictures and there is admittedly a problem with the legibility of some pages. Despite large margins and the loose leading of the text, the background colours make it rather hard to make out the words. Of note is also Fakinou's use of visual sounds in the pictures. For decades they had been a standard feature in comics but never before used in Greek children's books. Hand-written letters in oil pastel, with exclamation marks, such as "Ha! Ha! Ha!" or "Chr! Chr!" assure that someone is laughing or snoring. Fakinou's next books continued the story of *Ntenekedoupoli*. *Sto Kurdistan* [In Kurdistan, 1977], was created with vibrant marker colours. In *Xipna Ntenekedoupoli* [Wake Up, Tin Town] published in 1979 by Kastaniotis, she worked with watercolour on linocut prints, which gives her art a more expressionist tone. *Xipna...* is in

landscape format. The title on the cover is drawn by hand in red tempera and takes up the space from edge to edge, creating great tension on the white surface. The landscape format allows room for extensive spread of the illustrations. Fakinou also takes advantage of the large margins to the left and right of the body copy to present additional visual details of the story.

The same format and layout were used for *To megalo taxidi tou Meleniou* [The Great Journey of Melenios], the fourth part of the *Ntenekedoupoli* series, published in 1979 again by Kastaniotis. But this time, Fakinou worked with crayons, using black fine markers for the outlines; the combination of these media allowed for more detail and the compositions were more organized. The long landscape format of the book is ideal for spreading out the images of Melenios' wanderings. Of particular interest are the colour patterns that decorate areas such as the character's clothes or the foliage of the forests.



## NIKOS MAROULAKIS

Another distinctive artist of the *metapolitefsi* was Nikos Maroulakis (1941-2015). He is especially important for further developing the link between comics and children's book illustration. His style is light and funny, and his themes touch on everyday situations with subversive humour.

His first appearance was in 1979 with his story *Augustino, i falaina thauma* [Augustino, the wonder whale], published by Kedros. In this square format book, the pictures stand out on the right pages, while the text is placed at the bottom of the left, roughly at the golden section, leaving a large gap at the top. In *Mayiko tsoukali* [The magic pot, 1981] he keeps the same general layout, but here the text on the left pages is much larger. In order to break this monotony of long text, Maroulakis takes advantage of page margins by inserting little vignettes of characters and other visual elements in the story.

**Figure 9.** Nikos Maroulakis, book cover of *Augustino, i falaina thauma*. Kedros Publishers, 1979. (<https://www.kedros.gr>)





**Figure 10.** N. Nikos Maroulakis, book cover of *Augustino, To mayiko tsoukali*. Kastaniotis Publishers, 1981. (<https://www.kastaniotis.com/960-03-0118-2-c.html>)

Maroulakis draws with black marker and then fills in with vivid watercolours. His characters act on colour-graded backgrounds, from darker to brighter tones, which lend depth to the pictures. They also include lots of amusing details, which have no connection to the core of the plot (Asonotis, 2001, p.189). In most of the books where he has written the text himself, the images cover the entire page. As for the title lettering, it is usually hand-drawn and appears differently on the cover than on the title page – a practice not unusual in books of that period.

In 1983 Maroulakis illustrated a story by the Katsimihis brothers, entitled *I Agelasti Politeia kai i kalikantzaroï* [The unsmiling state and the goblins]. The goblin figures are elongated and narrow, with long legs and pointed noses and jaws, whereas ordinary citizens have more rounded features and soft edges.

As already mentioned, Maroulakis comes from the field of comics. For several years he worked in Germany for various magazines, including *Stern*. During those years, the Argentine cartoonist Guillermo Mordillo also collaborated with *Stern*, and his influence is traceable on Maroulakis. However, Mordillo's characters are always white whereas Maroulakis' are rich in colour and their flesh colours change to indicate their different moods. Also, Maroulakis tends to fill the scenes with a plethora of visual details, in order to prolong the young reader's attention.

The best-known project involving Maroulakis is *Frutopia* [Fruitopia]. Written by the famous author Eugene Trivizas, it is a wonderful parody of 1980s Greek society and a comment on exploitation, power and revolt wherein vegetables rise against the ruthless greengrocers. Rather than an illustrated children's book, *Frutopia* is actually a comic, with panels and speech balloons etc. It began in 1983 and extended to a series of 50 issues, later assembled in book form. Maroulakis adapted his marker-and-watercolour technique to the successive frames of the comic, all created in his, by now familiar, cartoonish style. The main difference is the absence of secondary details, which is not surprising, given the small space afforded by each frame.



### VASSO PSARAKI

In the post-1974 era of Greek illustrated children's books, subject-matter has changed significantly. Big cities replace the old enchanted forests, instead of authoritarian kings we get ugly anthropomorphic objects or evil animals, instead of beautiful princesses we have miraculous natural phenomena and intelligent animals.

Princes, who used to provide the solution to the stories, are now replaced by children who determine the future of the planet. And the 'monster' is not some fire-spitting dragon, but environmental pollution.

Where have all those heroes gone?

Zoi Valassi wrote an intelligent story with social and satirical edges, about old fairy tale heroes who lose their purpose since children have been won over by television, so they migrate to the world of reality to find work.

The book, entitled *Epanastasi ton paramythion* [The Revolution of Fairy tales, 1982] was illustrated by Vasso Psaraki.

**Figure 11.** Vasso Psaraki, book cover of *Mayika molivia*, text by Zoi Valassi. Kedros Publishers, 1981. (<https://www.kedros.gr>)



Over the years, and beginning with *Mayika molivia* [Magic Pencils, 1981], Psaraki has developed an attractive and sophisticated approach combining abstraction with exquisite graphic details, a personal mix of old-school caricature, folk art, Art Nouveau, high modernism and 1960s Pop and Psychedelia. In *Epanastasi...*, her black and white figures are outlined with dense black dots, and have an air of transparency as they move through the coloured environments of the real world (Asonitis, 2001, p. 182).

Compared to other books we have discussed, the typography of *Epanastasi...* is neater and tidier. Its structure follows rules and the long texts are easily legible. The whole book is part of the general 1980s tendency towards greater organization and attention to format, layout and typography, while keeping the innovative spirit of the '70s. Text and image work together, blending effectively in interesting narratives.

## EPILOGUE

A lot has changed since the early *metapolitefsi*. Globalization, digital technology and the abundance of visual information has affected developments in Greek illustration. The number of children's books publications has increased spectacularly, while elements of international contemporary art trends have been incorporated to such an extent that it is not always easy to distinguish the identity of the illustrators.

Of course, quality work is still being created and published and some of it does build upon the adventurous spirit of the 70s and 80s, which brought the true renewal and modernization of Greek illustrated children's books.

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