

Reprints of Jože Plečnik's Fairytales Makalonca

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on a small fairytale book entitled *Makalonca*, completely designed by Jože Plečnik, and its two reprints, which were unfortunately found inferior to the original design.

The Slovenian architecture by Jože Plečnik (1872–1957) is well known in Europe, while his work in the area of graphic design and typography is less known. During the Second World War he made all the decorations, vignettes and initial letters for fairytales and elaborated graphic design for the book. Two paperback reprints were subsequently published as well; one a year after the architect's death in 1958 and another in 1988, commemorating the centenary of the fairytales.

In both reprints it was stressed that the graphic design remained the same as done by Plečnik. However, both reprints are deformations of the original. Not only are they different in book and layout size, typefaces, one even in the type style and type size of the body text, but there are also many other differences to be found within the rest of the text. In consequence, the Slovenian cultural heritage has lost a great deal.

Keywords:

Cultural Heritage, Graphic Design, Jože Plečnik, Reprint, Typography

1. Introduction

The architect Jože Plečnik (1872–1957) is well known in Europe for his architecture works. However, less known is his work in the field of graphic design and typography.

In graphic design, Plečnik spent most of his time on logos, inscription lettering and various printed publications. (*Bernik, 1989; Bulovec, 1975; Krečič, 1997*) For *Makalonca*, a collection of fairytales, he designed all the decorations, vignettes, decorative initial letters and inscription lettering on the title pages, as well as the starting pages of the four fairytales in the book (*Možina, 2003*).

This paper focuses on the small fairytale book entitled *Makalonca*, which was completely designed by Plečnik, and its two reprints, which were unfortunately found inferior to the original design. Both reprints feature his illustrations, initial letters, vignettes and decorations. However, there are many illogical changes in the book size, the size of layout and margins, different type sizes and especially in different typefaces.

2. *Makalonca*

The book *Makalonca* (Finžgar, 1944; Finžgar, 1958; Šifrer, 1988) first published in 1944 in two different bindings, hardcover and paperback. Two paperback reprints were subsequently published as well: a year after the architect's death in 1958 and another in 1988 commemorating the centenary of the fairytales.

Since the first edition was sold out, later on a second edition was suggested. The author Fran Seleški Finžgar (1873–1963) was very pleased, but at the same time he insisted on the following: 'The book has to be published completely as Plečnik designed it' (Finžgar, 1958). Nevertheless, this was not done by the publisher. Jože Šifrer (1988) wrote that the third edition of *Makalonca* (1988) was the same as the 1944 edition from the point of view of the text, with the exception of the introduction and the endnote from the 1958 edition. He also observed that

'the printing with Plečnik's graphics is completely the same as in both previous editions [...].' It is stressed in both reprints that they are regarding the graphic design completely the same as the original, which was done under Plečnik's supervision. Unfortunately, this was not at all the case.

2.1 THE 1958 DESIGN OF *MAKALONCA*

The second edition of *Makalonca*, i.e. the first reprint, was published as a paperback. The cover design corresponded to the first hardcover edition, that is, white cardboard with a part on the left printed in red and with the illustration in 'gold' (which actually appears brownish). The red part of the cover is of the same width as the original red cloth in the first edition, while the illustration is slightly lower. The title of the book on the lower-right of the cover, also in 'gold', is added in this edition. Lettering for the title is copied from the title page of the fairytale 'Makalonca' and not from the title page of the main book.

This reprint was printed in letterpress (*Gascoigne, 1998; Kipphan, 2001*), on a paper similar to the lower quality paper used in the 1944 paperback. The book block sheets are side-sewn, which does not allow a full opening, and thus the gutter margin appears at least 5 mm narrower, unfortunately giving the impression that the text is closer to the gutter than in the first editions.

Table 1. Differences in book size, book block size, layout and margins in both reprints.

	1958	1988
Size of book with cover	165 × 122 mm	170 × 120 mm
Size of book block	165 × 122 mm	170 × 120 mm
Size of layout	278 × 168 (216) pt	280 × 156 (204) pt
Gutter margin	36 (18) mm	37 (20) mm
Head margin	28 mm	30 mm
Outside margin	22 mm	21 mm
Foot margin	32 mm	35 mm

The size of the book is the same as the book block itself, and the layout and margins are different from the first edition (*Table 1*). The body text has the same size and leading as in the first edition (*Table 2*). The bold typeface is in the

same style (*Bringhurst, 2002; McLean, 2000; Možina, 2003*) as the original, while the typeface¹ itself is different (*Fig. 1*); thus, the typographic tonal density² is different, it is namely slightly higher (*Table 2*).

Table 2. Differences in type style, type size and leading in both reprints.

	1958	1988
Body typeface	slab serif; bold	garald; bold
Size/Leading	8/10 pt	9/10 pt
Typographic tonal density	20.90%	16.76%
Pagination	slab serif; bold	garald; bold
Size	8 pt	9 pt
Typeface for motto	slab serif; italic	garald; italic
Size/Leading	8/10 pt	9/10 pt
Typeface for CIP	/	transitional; regular
Size/Leading	/	8/9 pt
Typeface for place and date of publication	slab serif; regular	transitional; regular
Size/Leading	10/14 pt	9/9 pt
Typeface for introduction	slab serif; italic	garald; bold slanted
Size/Leading	8/10 pt	9/10 pt
Typeface for explanation for publication	slab serif; italic	garald; italic
Size/Leading	8/8 pt (title: 8/12 pt)	9/10 pt (signature: 7 pt)
Typeface for table of contents	slab serif; bold (title: didone; bold)	slab serif; bold (title: slab serif; regular)
Size/Leading	8 pt (title: 16 pt)	8 pt (title: 14 pt)
Typeface for closing thoughts	slab serif; italic	garald; regular
Size/Leading	8/10 pt (signature: 8 pt)	9/10 pt (signature: 9 pt)
Typeface for additional text	/	garald; bold sloped
Size/Leading	/	9/10 pt
Typeface for colophon	slab serif; regular	transitional; regular
Size/Leading	6/8 pt	6/8 pt

¹ Due to the lack of specimens from the printing company "Primorski tisk", where this reprint was printed, and the lack of examples of Ionic and Excelsior typefaces used in Slovenia at that time, and no bold Excelsior to analyze in *Encyclopaedia of Type Faces* (Pincus Jaspert, Turner Berry, Johnson, 2001), we could not establish that the typeface is Ionic and not Excelsior. Some differences between these typefaces, e.g. x-height, width of letters, shape of some numbers (two and seven) indicate that the used typeface is Ionic rather than Excelsior (Paradiž, 1971; Pincus Jaspert, Turner Berry, Johnson, 2001). The printing company Primorski tisk went bankrupt and it no longer exists.

² Typographic tonal density or typographic tonality refers to the relative blackness or shades of grey of type on a page. Typographic tonal density can be expressed as the relative amount of ink per square centimetre, pica or inch. Changes in various type features can create various typographic tonal densities. Such type features include: typeface, counter size, stroke width, x-height, tracking, leading, condensed or extended type. The difference in typographic tonal density was measured numerically by image analysis with the computer program ImageJ (Keyes, 1993; Možina, 2001; National Institute of Health, Research Services Branch, 2010).

The illustrations, decoration and lettering are of the same size as in the first edition; but the layout is wider, so the decorations are not in the same position as they were in Plečnik's design (Fig. 1). In the third fairytale (p. 60) a part of the inscription text in the fifth line is not horizontal, but inclined by seven degrees.

The last 12 lines of the text on the last page of the third fairytale (p. 76) are divided into two columns, with a decoration between them. The width of each column should be 5 picas, but in this edition, the columns are 6 pts wider. Additionally, the white space between the text column and the decoration should be 6 pts, but the space to the left of the decoration is 5 pts, and on the right 7 pts. The decoration is also higher than it should be. A change was also made in the very text: the longer form 'obiskaval' [was visiting] was replaced by a shorter one 'obiskal' [visited], thus shifting the last 6 lines of the text.

The 'title sheet' has the same number of pages, but some are omitted, some replaced and three new pages are added (Table 3). The signature under the motto is changed, with lower case letters instead of capitals, as was the case in the first edition. For the motto, the italic style of the typeface is used. The place of publication is printed in smaller capitals than in the first edition (Table 2). The year is printed under the place of publication in the same size, both being tracked.



Figure 1. Typeface used in Makalonca from 1958. Note the wider layout, but the same illustration size as in the 1944 edition. The out-of-horizontal position of the inscription text is evident in the fifth line. Moreover, note that after the illustrated initial letter Z, the capital letter is not omitted, as well as another example of ligatures (TO).

Table 3. Contents of the first part of the book in all editions.

Page	1944 (both editions)	1958	1988
1	empty	motto	motto
2	empty	vignette	vignette
3	motto	main title page	main title page
4	empty	vignette	vignette
5	monogram	author's monogram	author's monogram
6	vignette	decoration	decoration
7	main title page	preface/introduction	preface/introduction
8	vignette	preface/introduction	preface/introduction
9	author's monogram	preface/introduction	preface/introduction
10	decoration	empty	empty

Table 4. Contents of the last part of the book in all editions.

Page(s)	1944 (both editions)	1958	1988
	Number of pages		
	7	7	16
90	decoration	decoration	decoration
91	author's thoughts	history of 'Makalonca' story	author's thoughts
92	decoration	decoration	decoration
93	table of contents	table of contents	table of contents
94	closing thoughts	closing thoughts	closing thoughts
95	colophon	colophon	additional text
96	empty	empty	additional text
97–103	/	/	additional text
104	/	/	colophon

The last part of the book, with its contents and the colophon, has the same number of pages as the first edition (Table 4). However, a number of editorial and design changes were performed. Instead of the author's thoughts (p. 91), there is a short history of the 'Makalonca' story. Bold capitals are used in the title of this table of contents. (Table 2). The typeface used is narrower than the typeface in the rest of the text, and it is realized in a different – didone³ style. The titles of the fairytales have different spacing from their illustrated initial letters. Moreover, the word 'Hudobin' is placed too far to the left and printed over the initial letter. The text of the colophon (with the exception of the last line) is justified and not centred as in the first edition. Lower case letters from the regular typeface are used (Table 2). The decorations (i.e. initial letters and illustration) are closer to the colophon than in the first edition. The illustration is notably lower by more than 2 picas.

2.2 THE 1988 DESIGN OF MAKALONCA

The second reprint was published as a paperback with a cover similar to that in the first reprint, but the illustration is positioned lower and the cover is laminated with reflective foil. This time the edition was offset printed (Gascoigne, 1998; Kipphan, 2001). The paper is similar to the lower-quality paper used in the previous reprint and the sheets of the book block are sewn.

The size of the book is the same as the book block (Table 1), and the width of the layout corresponds to the first edition, although the height is slightly lower. Owing to a different paper size, the margins are different from the first edition. The body text is larger, but with the same leading as in the first edition (Table 2). As in all editions, a bold typeface is used. Unfortunately, this time it is not just the typeface that was changed, but also the style – garald (*Bringhurst, 2002; McLean, 2000; Možina, 2003*). The typeface used is Sabon⁴ (Fig. 2). Consequently,

³ The five different capital letters (A, K, L, O, Z) used in the title do not suffice to analyze the typeface. We assume that it might be one of a Bodoni version or even Empiriana (Pincus Jaspert, Turner Berry, Johnson, 2001).

⁴ We obtained a type specimen from Delo Press, where this reprint was made, but it does not indicate the year of publication. Given the technological changes in the Slovenian printing companies (use of phototypesetting in prepress), we concluded that it was published in the 1980s (Fotostavek [Phototypesetting]). We also referred to Encyclopaedia of Type Faces (Pincus Jaspert, Turner Berry, Johnson, 2001) to confirm our assumptions. The printing company "Delo Press" no longer exists.

the typographic tonal density is substantially lower (Table 2). The illustration, decoration and lettering are of the same size as in the first edition, yet some are positioned differently.

On page 65 (line 18), there is a typographical error – instead of the letter ‘š’, letter ‘č’ is used, so ‘moraš’ [have to] became ‘morač’.

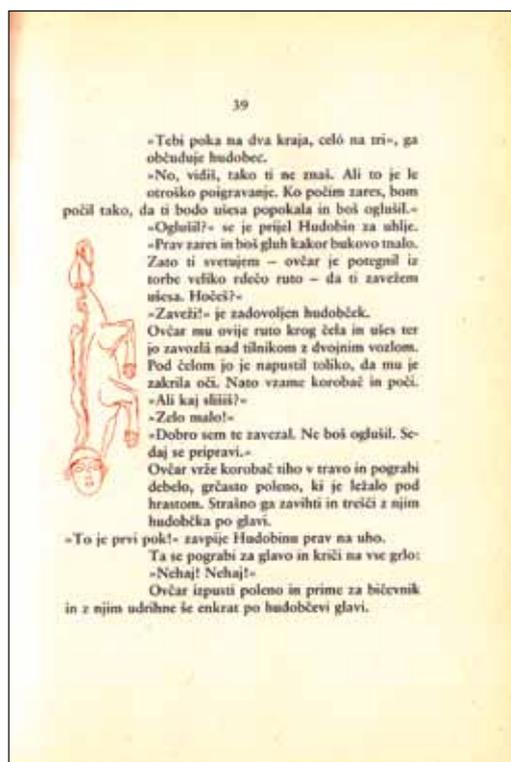


Figure 2. Use of Sabon typeface in Makalonca from 1988.

The ‘title sheet’ has the same number of pages, but some were omitted or replaced, and three pages from the first reprint (1958) were added (Table 3). The signature under the motto is different than in the previous reprint, using lower case letters instead of the capitals like the first edition. A decoration with the CIP information is set on page 2 in a different type style – transitional (Bringhurst, 2002; McLean, 2000; Možina, 2003) Times (Fotostavek; Princus Jaspert, Turner Berry, Johnson, 2001) (Table 2). The white space on the author’s monogram page be-

tween the illustration and place of publication is larger than in all previous editions. The place of publication is printed in even smaller capitals than are used in the first reprint (Table 2). The introduction from the first reprint is set in Sabon bold, sloped by 12 degrees to the right in pseudo or sloped italic⁵ (Table 2).

In the last part of the book, the contents and colophon occupy more pages than in the previous editions. Between the closing thoughts and colophon, nine pages of additional text (about the book and previous editions) were added (Table 4). The entire page of contents information is a photographic facsimile of the table of contents from the first edition – even the pagination mistake found in the first fairy tale is repeated. This facsimile also means that yet another type style and typeface were used here. The signature of the closing thoughts is changed from the previous reprint and for the first time a regular typeface (Sabon) is used for this text (Table 2). The layout of the added text is 1 pica wider, thus the margins are correspondingly smaller. Again, the pseudo-italic bold Sabon is used. On page 97, another error occurs – one paragraph is not indented. The text of the colophon is justified and not centred as in the first edition. The last line of the first paragraph of the colophon is centred, while the last line of the second paragraph is not.

3. Conclusion

For the first reprint in 1958, the author specified that the book should have the same design as the first edition; only an introduction was to be added. Unfortunately, author’s wishes were not given consideration – the book size and layout were radically changed. Due to the wider layout, the vignettes, decorative initial letters and inscription lettering used on the starting pages could not be in the same position as they were before. A number of inappropriate chang-

⁵ Pseudo or sloped italic is not an authentic italic, but derives from regular letters sloped to the right by some angle. This was common [sic] in the Slovenian phototypesetting, since for the first time in history, a type deformation was possible (Možina, 2003). It was even glorified as a new achievement in graphic design [sic] (Fotostavek [Phototypesetting]; Žiljak, 1988).

es were made in order to fill the width of the layout. The typeface was realized in the same style as before, but the characters are very different from the first typeface; consequently, the typographic tonal density is changed. The cover is an unsuccessful result, and there are also changes in the contents.

The second reprint also had allegedly 'just a few changes in the contents; but the design remained the same as was done by the architect.' The layout width is the same as in the first edition, but there are numerous unsuitable typographical changes. A completely different type style is used for the main text; therefore, the value of typographic tonal density is much lower. For some information (e.g. colophon), another stylistically different typeface is used. The table of contents is a facsimile of the first edition and thus introduces a third type style. There are also differences in the type size. The use of pseudo-

italics is inadmissible. The cover is similar to that of the previous reprint but is laminated with garish reflective foil.

Both reprints were not paying attention to the typeface, the typographic tonal density or at least to the type style (in 1988), they were concerned only with the letter width – with obtaining the same letters and words in one line, despite having to change the layout width (1958) and even the type size (1988).

The reprinting of such a unique and excellent work should have followed Plečnik's design. Instead, both reprints are deformations of the original, and thus the Slovenian cultural heritage (Vecco, 2010) has lost a great deal. We can at least hope that any eventual third reprint of this publication will at least be more similar, if not identical, to the first edition.

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