

Reflections on a Cultural Crossroad — The Archive of Turkish Oral Narrative, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

Because it lay between East and West, and because, during its Ottoman period, it influenced and was influenced by many different peoples, Turkey became a microcosm of Old World cultures. The best mirror of this microcosm may well be the Turkish oral tradition, the most important component of which is undoubtedly the folktale. Now this folk genre, in all its richness and multi-ethnic variety, can be studied in the Archive of Turkish Oral Narrative at Texas Tech University.

A research facility for students and scholars interested in any form of Turkish folk narrative, the Archive presently contains between 2,500 and 3,000 items current in the oral tradition: folktales, legends, myths, folk epics, folk history, and anecdotes. These range in length from a performance time of two or three minutes to several hours.

Recorded between 1951 and the present, more than 90% of these holdings are available on magnetic tape. Researchers who wish to hear these recordings may use Archive audio equipment for that purpose. There are Turkish transcripts of many of these taped items, but of greater usefulness to most American and European researchers are the English translations, annotated and bound in typescript volumes. To date, 600 narratives have been so processed, and another 400 are in varying stages of completion. Translation of the remaining 1,500-2,000 items will constitute the major undertaking of Archive personnel for the next several years. But beyond present holdings, such work may never be completed, for material is continually being added to the collection from ongoing field work.

Although the actual organization is necessarily more complex and detailed, the holdings are divided for cataloguing purposes into eight major sections:

- I. Supernatural Tales (tales including any element outside the natural laws of cause and effect)
- II. Perplexities, Dilemmas, and Ingenious Deductions
- III. Humorous Tales
- IV. Moralistic Narratives (items in which the didactic thrust is primary)
- V. Heroic Tales and Folk Romances (both usually sung by minstrels)
- VI. Anti-Clerical Accounts
- VII. Anecdotes
- VIII. Miscellaneous

Each narrative (in both taped and written forms) has an individual number (in Arabic numerals) and a section number (in Roman numerals). Narratives are also indexed in three ways: (1) by narrators, (2) by collection sites (villages and city districts), and (3) by provinces in which collection sites are located. Most of these narratives were collected in villages, but since very few of Turkey's 40,000 villages are shown on conventional maps, the index of provinces is important for distribution studies. In progress is a subject index which will, of course, be much larger than any of the other three indexes, and which should be more generally functional.

The bulk of the material in the Archive was collected by the donors: Ahmet E. Uysal (Ankara University), Barbara K. Walker (Texas Tech University), and Warren S. Walker (Texas Tech University). Many others, however, have made valuable contributions to the holdings, among whom were Wolfram Eberhard and the late William Hugh Jansen in this country, and Tuncer Gülensoy, Sain Sakaoglu, Filiz Erol, and Mine Erol in Turkey.

Requests for copies of *Preliminary Catalogue 1* and queries about holdings should be addressed to:

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WARREN S. WALKER

John T. A. Koumoulides (ed.), *Hellenic Perspectives: Essays in the History of Greece*, Lanham, Md., University Press of America, 1980, pp. xxii + 376.

In editing this interesting anthology, Professor Koumoulides has initially stated that it is not a complete account of Greek history from ancient times until the present era, but rather it is a basic collection of essays that examine some specific aspects in this long chronicle of historical events. As a result, the editor has selected ten essays which were originally presented during a three-day conference on Greek history and society by some foremost scholars in this curious field. While linking elements among all these essays will not be necessarily discernable, such common themes as the Greek struggle for the preservation of their Hellenic heritage against foreign influences, or the Greek inability to adequately handle the contemporary challenges of the modern world, will be found within the pages of *Hellenic Perspectives*.

Along these particular lines, in his essay on Greece and the Near East in ancient times, Jack Balcer examined the historical theme concerning the Hellenic struggle against foreign influences. In this long struggle, Odysseus serves as the Homeric personification of lost dreams and world-weariness by both leaving his homeland and wandering through foreign lands; a literary theme so eternal that John Rexine has accurately traced it in the modern poetry of George Seferis. Nevertheless, despite the endless conflict with alien races, the Greeks were attracted to certain elements possessed by their cultural enemies, thus accepting, as Father Gill noted in his essay on the religious divinity of Eastern Rome, some beneficial aspects as paved roads, maritime peace, and common languages that were imposed by such foreign conquerors as the Romans. Consequently, the reluctant acceptance of such foreign benefits promoted the rapid spread of Christianity among the Greek people; however, despite this particular situation, they generally attempted to either expell, or ignore, most foreign influences. In this respect, by retaining their own cultural preferences, especially on such important matters like the essential cooperation between the church and the state, the Greeks eventually found themselves seperated from the western regions of the Roman Empire. Although ignoring the West, the Greek people now faced new cultural threats which originated from the East, but as related by Father Gill, the Greek emperors of East Rome merely devised some psychological solutions to officially excuse the successful incursions and military victories of the barbaric intruders. This mild strategy was not an adequate solution for such a grave situation and, although assuming another form, the major threat to Hellenic culture and civilisation persisted. In his essay on Islamic sources and the Greek people, Speros Vryonis accurately observed that, through the linguistical medium of Syriac translations, such barbaric