

Greek republic. Unfortunately, apart from the inferred theme of the Greek struggle to continuously preserve its cultural heritage, the conspicuous absence of any real centralizing, or unifying, historical theme in this particular anthology will possibly reduce its general appeal to various readers. On the one hand, the excellent essays of Gill, Vryonis, and Clogg were written for academic specialists in Greek history while, on the other hand, the timely essays presented by Rexine, Frazee, Papacosma, and Allen were written for the contemporary observer of the Greek scene. Of course, in either instance, the serious reader will naturally consult additional sources, and this situation is also true for the two essays by Peck and Woodhouse as the former contributor, in his first-hand account of the Greek struggle against the Slavonic communists, has recommended that interested readers should definitely consult other secondary accounts while the latter contributor, in advising readers that the topic of his essay is rather unpleasant, has presented a semi-official apologia for the British failure to constructively resolve the Cypriote issue during the early years which followed the second World War. Overall, this anthology is for the discerning specialist; however, the deliberate collection of such specialized essays in one volume, the standard practise in presenting the official proceedings of most historical conferences, will save these specialists and others much labour and aggravation from resorting to numerous and, possibly, obscure journals of the various academic disciplines.

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Ethelyn G. Orso, *Modern Greek humor: a collection of jokes and ribald tales*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979. xxiii + 262 pp. \$ 14.95 / £ 9.00.

"Tell me what jokes you like, and I will tell you who you are" may be as good an aphorism as any. In this collection of modern Greek jokes we find ample evidence to support the various generalizations which the anthropologist and folklorist Ethelyn G. Orso makes about contemporary Greek culture. That some of her Greek readers might not agree with some of her generalizations may have more to do with defensiveness on their part than with Orso's scholarly integrity and powers of observation.

The 346 jokes which make up the body of the book are divided into nine categories, occupying as many chapters, according to a classificatory system outlined in the Introduction (xxi-xxii): 1. Political jokes; 2. The Bobos joke cycle (whose inclusion here, by the way, is one of the great pluses of the book); 3. The clever Greeks: esoteric humor; 4. Ethnic-slur jokes: Greek exoteric humor; 5. Humor directed at the Church and the clergy; 6. Transportation jokes; 7. Lunatic jokes; 8. Very *sókin* jokes (*sókin* 'bawdy, obscene', ultimately from English *shocking*, possibly via French); and 9. Light *sókin* jokes. Some of the chapters are subdivided into sections, some of which are in turn divided into subsections.

In addition, there is a preface and an introduction, both quite informative, and also a short conclusion, followed by three appendices (A. Index of tale types; B. Index of motifs; C. Illustrations of gestures (with eleven photographs — a splendid idea), a glossary, and a list of references.

Although the author herself is aware that her categories are not the only possible ones, one does not have to be a taxonomic hairsplitter to disagree with her sharply in a few instances

—e.g., joke 160 has little to do with “priests’ virtues” (hence its inclusion in chapter 5) and everything to do with Greek men’s perception of women and marriage.

The book suffers from many kinds of blemishes. Space does not allow me to give details, but we find statements that smack of journalistic clichés or of junior high school civics textbooks; some inaccurate historical information; several mistakes traceable to misunderstandings of a cultural or linguistic nature; an inconsistent transcription of Greek words and phrases; a number of errors, probably typos, in the material presented in the Greek alphabet. Fortunately, few of those blemishes affect the essence of the book, which is to give an idea of what today’s Greeks find amusing.

Orso collected her material in 1976 and 1977. Her status as a foreign woman allowed her greater freedom of movement than a Greek female folklorist would have enjoyed, especially a single one travelling about unaccompanied. She frequented rural or small-town coffee-houses and managed to get Greek males to tell her some pretty bawdy stories. She says that many men did not look at her while telling their *sókin* jokes: “they told the jokes *for* me but not *to* me” (xiii).

Apart from the preface, the introduction, and the conclusion, I particularly enjoyed Orso’s preamble to the very *sókin* series of jokes, in which preamble she briefly touches upon such topics as the double standard of sexual behavior, the belief that women are sexually insatiable, the Greek male’s fear of being cuckolded, homosexuality, and sodomy, both homosexual and heterosexual. She comments insightfully on the pervasive sexual anxiety of the population, which surely contributes to the Greek predilection for hard-core —“very *sókin*”—dirty jokes with a sexual content: “for some individuals, telling *sókin* jokes seems to function as a means of expressing normally repressed drives” (134).

Besides sex, the other main concern of Greek humor is deception (or trickery), copiously illustrated throughout the collection, but especially in chapter 3 (The clever Greeks: esoteric humor), where it is often Greek matching wits with Greek. Here, as elsewhere in the book, we find examples of what Orso calls “the sharp urban-rural contrasts and conflicts found in Greek life today” (277), as well as illustrations of Greek “*philótimo* (‘honor’, ‘pride’, ‘self-esteem’ [or something like that, KK])” (42), and also of Greek machismo as reflected in jokes about supposed Greek sexual superiority.

It may come as a surprise to some non-folklorists that until quite recently the scholarly study and publication of bawdy folklore was virtually taboo, not only in countries like Greece, but also in Western Europe and North America (xvii-xix). Orso rightly criticizes the standard collections of Greek folktales, which by being heavily expurgated give “a distorted picture of the real nature of the expressive behavior of the Greek people” (xx). Consequently, and quite apart from its other merits, it is also because of its pioneering nature that this collection of jokes is such an important contribution to modern Greek studies.

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Walter Puchner, *Brauchtumerscheinungen im griechischen Jahreslauf und ihre Beziehungen zum Volkstheater*, Wien 1977, 437 SS.

Ohne Zweifel gehört das Thema dieser Arbeit zu den großen Desiderata der volkskundlichen Forschung. Bereits der Titel zieht nicht nur den Fachmann, sondern auch den Laien