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ritual therapy heals minds by letting bodies dance, bodies by engaging the spirit. This unusual articulation of the mental and the material enhances our appreciation of their normal integration in everyday lived life.

Muriel Dimen
New York Institute for the Humanities, New York University


Occasionally one is pleasantly surprised when reviewing a book. I must confess that I was expecting something quite different when I agreed to review this one. I had assumed that it would be nothing more than a competent but dry cataloguing of ancient Greek metrics with an account of the ways in which they had been transformed, adapted, or replaced by medieval and (especially) modern Greek poets and dramatists. Instead, I found a fascinating account of a serious and ideologically tinged debate among the literati and intellectuals of 19th and early 20th century Greece regarding the nature of the relationship—if any—that held among the Greek meters at different stages in the development of the language.

In this carefully researched and copiously documented study, Garantidis chronicles the different positions taken by Greek writers in the 19th and 20th centuries concerning the use of ancient Greek meters in modern works, especially in modern translations of classical texts. The basic problem facing these writers was the following: ancient Greek had a phonological system which allowed poetic meter to depend on the timing (better known as the “quantity”) of syllables in a sequence, with the basis for metrical rhythm being alternations between “long” syllables (those containing a long vowel or a diphthong or closed off by one or more consonants) and “short” syllables (those with a short vowel closing off the syllable). Modern Greek, however, has a phonological system in which quantity plays no distinctive or significant role, the relevant syllabic distinctions being between accented (stressed) and unaccented (unstressed) syllables. This development probably began even as early as the end of the Hellenistic period.

It is thus not at all obvious what would correspond metrically in post-classical Greek to a classical Greek sequence such as the so-called “adonic”—( where — indicates a long syllable, and - a short syllable), as in ἑβάτον Νέατος (Iliad 2.336); in particular, would it have accented syllables corresponding to the long syllables, and thus be accented-unaccented-unaccented-accented, or what? In a sense, medieval Greek poets solved the problem on their own through the use of various syllable-counting verse lines (as opposed to the earlier timing-based verse), for example, the 15-syllable πολιτικός στίχος. But the issue came up in a more serious way when 19th and 20th century Greeks began to make translations of classical works into the modern language and thus had to choose how to render the ancient Greek meters into the modern idiom, that is, whether to imitate, to adapt, to replace, etc.

Moreover—and this constitutes the most fascinating aspect of the book, to my mind—19th and 20th century Greek writers were not free simply to write as they pleased; every choice they made, both in diction and, as Garantidis shows, in meter, had to be viewed against the backdrop of the language question which, though a part of the Greek sociolinguistic scene for centuries, came to a head in the 19th century with the founding of the modern Greek nation state. Thus, Garantidis points out, in a real sense there was a “metrical zitima” that paralleled the better documented and more widely discussed glossikó zitima, though he is careful not to overstate the parallel (see, for example, pp. 72–73). In this way, Garantidis’ work is a contribution to the examination of the interplay between ideology and intellectual history in Greece that parallels Michael Herzfeld’s Ours Once More (1982) regarding nationalism and scholarship in folklore and my own more modest attempt to explore some effects of ethnocentrism on Greek linguistic scholarship (in JMG 3 [1985]: 87–96).

Garantidis discusses all the major figures—Rangavis, Sútos, Zambéios, Aravandinós, Gritsánis, Stáis, among others—and their positions on this metrikó zitima, as evidenced in their literary works and their theoretical treatises on metrics. He basically follows a chronological sequence in his presentation, but further groups writers according to literary schools where appropriate, for example, the Athenian school of Rangavis, Sútos, and others, of the first half of the 19th century, or the Heptanesian school of Laskarátos, Melisinós, et al. of the second half of the 19th century. Garantidis ends the body of the book with a consideration of the problems posed by the terminology associated with ancient metrics (for example, what would correspond best to the ancient iambos—perhaps zygotomistós, as suggested by Stávos, or defteronos, as suggested by Saráis, or disyllabos...
gees, focusing on a district of some 3518 persons called Yerania. Hirschon here offers (as I judge) five sets of ethnographic facts which seem especially salient. First, chapters 4, 5 and 6 contain the most graphic account yet of the fierce autonomy of the elementary family household here, as in Mediterranean traditions quite generally. In Yerania in 1927, for example, 552 prefabricated housing units were turned over to as many refugee households. The units were small (4 x 9.5 meters, in three rooms, on small plots). By 1971, 1,071 households, almost double the original, occupied virtually the same units. How? A daughter’s marriage is arranged; as dowry she is given one or two rooms (of the three); there she and her husband establish a household, critically including their own cooking area in the corner of one of the rooms; later, for a second daughter or a daughter’s daughter, space is excavated under the house for a room or two and another cooking area, and so on. (See pp. 124-125, where Hirschon traces permutations in genealogy and floor plans for one family from 1928 to 1972.) In no instance do these become extended families; each elementary family has its own budget, pursuing its own household interests independent from, and often in competition with, the others.

The second array of ethnographic facts (chapter 8) sketches the tension between the centrifugal forces generated by these autonomous households versus centripetal forces generated by reciprocal exchanges among neighbors. The author describes these forces from the vantage of adult women who are wives and mothers and, to each other, neighbors. These women look to their respective houses and household interests, and they also look outward to their proximate neighbors toward whom behavior is (ideally) cooperative. First one force, then the other, comes to the fore, according to the situation and, engagingly, according to the seasons and the time of day.

A third set of facts (pp. 219-235) traces how concerns for the material and spiritual well-being of the household are foregrounded or backgrounded in preoccupation and activity, as this varies with gender and age. A fourth set describes the community’s annual round of ritual of church and state, and the analogous round which accompanies life crises from birth to death. The fifth set of salient ethnographic facts describes two Judeo-Christian stories, the Fall and the Resurrection, which I discuss below.

This is, in sum, a very good ethnographic monograph. I recognize two broader purposes. Hirschon says several times (see especially pp. 232-235) that this community seems more “traditional” (more “folk”) and less changed yet better adapted than we would have thought. She means this only as a preliminary conclusion but, having raised the matter, could well have mentioned two often-noted matters

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This fine study describes a community of war refugees living in the Athens-Piraeus metropolitan sprawl as of 1971-72. The refugees are Greek, displaced from Turkey in the early 1920s. They are virtually indistinguishable from the other Greeks around them, but they call themselves Mikrasiates, which alludes to their Asia Minor origins, and call others Paleoelladites, old Greeks.

The first three chapters recount the history of the Greek-Turkish war and its aftermath, 1920 to 1972. When the war began, some 1.5 million Greeks lived in Turkey. Several hundred thousand made their way out of Turkey during the fighting, and another 200,000 were removed two years later. These survivors were absorbed by Greece, then a small kingdom of 4.5 million. The refugees saw themselves as the heirs of Byzantium; they viewed other Greeks, more remote from Constantinople, as unsophisticates from the hinterlands. They brought with them the experience of having lived long as an enslaved community. And, by 1971-72, they had experienced three generations of bungling or worse in the handling of refugee matters by a succession of Greek regimes.

Chapters 4 through 10 describe the everyday lives of these refu-