

THEODORE FORTSAKIS,
MINAS AL. ALEXIADIS,
MARIANTHI KAPLANOGLOU,
ARISTEIDES N. DOULAVERAS,
AND WOLFGANG MIEDER

“DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA” – WOLFGANG MIEDER

On December 16, 2014, Professor Wolfgang Mieder from the University of Vermont received the special honor of a “doctor honoris causa” from the prestigious University of Athens in Greece. The proclamation festivity took place in the main building of the university at Athens with many administrators, professors, and students in attendance for the special celebration. It was the wish of the colleagues and friends at the University of Athens that the various speeches of the evening would be published in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* as a sign of the high regard of not only Prof. Mieder’s contributions to international folkloristics in general and international paremiology in particular but also as a tribute to proverb scholars throughout the world. The speeches were delivered in Greek and are presented here in English translation. Prof. Mieder’s address was given in English.

THE PROCLAMATION OF
PROFESSOR WOLFGANG MIEDER
AS AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
DECEMBER 16, 2014

PROVERBIUM 32 (2015)



ΕΘΝΙΚΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟΝ
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΝ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑ
ΤΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΩΝ ΣΧΟΛΗΣ

ΤΥΧΗ ΑΓΑΘΗ.

Πρυτανεύοντος ἐν τῷ Ἀθῆναισι Ἐθνικῷ καὶ Καποδιστριακῷ Πανεπιστημίῳ Θεοδοσίου Ν. Πελεγρίνη, κοσμητευσούσης ἐν τῇ τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῇ Ἀμαλίας Λ. Μόζερ καὶ προεδρευούσης ἐν τῷ Τμήματι Φιλολογίας Ἑλένης Μιχ. Καραμαλέγκου, ἔδοξεν ὁμοφώνως

WOLFGANG MIEDER

ἄνδρα μάλ' ἐπιστήμονα περιώνυμόν τε, γῆς τῆς γερμανικῆς ἐξανιόντα καὶ ἐν τῇ πέραν τοῦ μεγάλου Ὠκεανοῦ γῆ τῆς νῦν καθουμένης ἱσαογραφίας διδάσκαλλον ἐπιφανῆ, εὐρυμαθῆ τε καὶ πολύγλωσσον, τῆς ἱσαογραφικῆς ἐπιστήμης θεράποντα ὀτρυνόν, πολλὰ τῇ ἐρεύη προσηνεγκόντα τῆς δὲ θεματολογίας τῆς παροιμιολογικῆς μέγαν ἀναρωτην καὶ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ παροιμιακοῦ τὴν λειτουργίαν ἀναδείξαντα καὶ ἀνὰ τὸν κόσμον κεκυρηκόντα, καινοτόμους μελέτας πολλὰς συγγράψαντα, ὥστ' ἐνδίκως ἐκ τῶν ὁμοτέχνων ἐπαίνου τυγχάνειν, αὐτόν τε αἰνέσαι καὶ ἐπίτιμον διδάκτορα τῆς τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆς ἀναδείξει, τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα τόδε εἰς μεμβράναν ἀναγράψαι, τὴν δὲ τοῦ Τμήματος Πρόεδρον δημοσίῳ ἐν τῇ αἰθούσῃ τῇ μεγάλῃ ἀναγνοῦσαν καὶ τὰς τιμὰς ἀνειποῦσαν, ἐπιδοῦναι αὐτῷ, ἢ ἂν ἡμέρα ἢ ἀναγόμεναι γένηται, καθ' ἃ νενόμισται.

Ἐγένετο Ἀθῆναισι, μηνὸς Ἰουλίου δεκάτῃ, ἔτει τρεισκαιδεκάτῳ καὶ δισχιλιοστῷ.

Ἡ Πρόεδρος τοῦ Τμήματος
Φιλολογίας

ΕΛΕΝΗ ΜΙΧ. ΚΑΡΑΜΑΛΕΓΚΟΥ

ΑΝΑΓΟΡΕΥΣΙΣ

Ἐπειδήπερ τὸ Τμήμα Φιλολογίας τῆς τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆς τοῦ Ἀθηνῶν Ἐθνικοῦ καὶ Καποδιστριακοῦ Πανεπιστημίου

WOLFGANG MIEDER

ἄξιον ἀπέφηνε τοῦ ἐπιτίμου διδακτορικοῦ ἀξιώματος, ἡ δὲ τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆ τοῦτ' ἀπεδέξατο καὶ ὁ Πρύτανης τῆ τῆς Σχολῆς γνώμη ἐπινεύει, διὰ ταῦτα ἐγὼ

ΕΡΑΣΜΙΑ-ΛΟΥΪΖΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

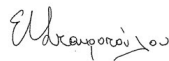
καθηγήτρια Νεοελληνικῆς Φιλολογίας, νῦν δὲ τοῦ Τμήματος Φιλολογίας Πρόεδρος, χρωμένη τῇ δυνάμει, ἦν παρὰ τῶν πανεπιστημιακῶν νόμων καὶ τοῦ Τμήματος ἔχω λαβοῦσα,

WOLFGANG MIEDER

ἐπίτιμον διδάκτορα τῆς τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆς τοῦ Ἀθηνῶν Ἐθνικοῦ καὶ Καποδιστριακοῦ Πανεπιστημίου δημοσίᾳ ἀναγορεύω καὶ πάσας τὰς προνομίας τὰς τῶ πανεπιστημιακῶ τούτῳ ἀξιώματι παρεπομένας ἀπονέμω.

Ἐγένετο Ἀθῆναισι, μηνὸς Δεκεμβρίου ἕκτη καὶ δεκάτη, ἔτει τεσσαρακαὶδεκάτῳ καὶ δισχιλιοστῷ.

Ἡ Πρόεδρος τοῦ Τμήματος
Φιλολογίας



ΕΡΑΣΜΙΑ-ΛΟΥΪΖΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ



From left to right: Associate Professor Marianthi Kaplanoglou, Professor Theodore Fortsakis (Rector of University of Athens), Professor Wolfgang Mieder, Editor of *Proverbium* (honoured person), Professor Helen Karamalegou, Dean of the School of Philosophy, Professor Erasmia-Louise Stavropoulou, President of the Department of Philology, Professor Minas Al. Alexiadis, Director of the Section of Byzantine Philology and Folkloristics, and Associate Professor Aristeides N. Doulaveras.



Professor Wolfgang Mieder

GREETINGS
OF THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

PROFESSOR THEODORE FORTSAKIS

Mrs Dean,
Mrs President of the Department of Philology,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Students,

With great joy our University welcomes today Mr. WOLFGANG MIEDER, Professor at the University of Vermont in the United States, a leading scientist of international repute and tremendous contributions in the field of folklore and especially that of paremiology.

The University of Athens is proud, because it is able to honor those eminent personalities from Greece and abroad who have been recognized and distinguished for their work, for their contributions and their productive life in the minds of their peers and of the society in general.

The offering of such an honor is a moral debt to the people who spent their lives in science and teaching, giving great services to our world to go up “a little higher.” They are people with a rich spiritual culture, with a social conscience and a deep sense of responsibility. So they become “spiritual beacons” that illuminate the path of our society to progress and to success.

We need such persons for the contemporary critical times we live in, in order to give a good example to younger generations and to the current leaders, an example of faith and devotion to duty, a selfless giving example, an example of sustained commitment to humanitarian and universal values.

Today we honor such a great personality in our university. We honor Professor Wolfgang Mieder, who in spite of our technocratic contemporary time—and even in a country where the humanities are underestimated—is dedicated to the study of popular culture, especially to the popular wisdom in its contemporary expression. It is no coincidence that his academic qualifi-

cations led him to be elected Assistant Professor at the age of just 26 years old.

Since then, he continues his academic career by teaching many subjects of his scientific field, with many lectures, articles and books, by promoting research, by supervising many doctoral dissertations and master’s in paremiology but also with rich administrative work and especially with huge published work in Folklore and Paremiology, which has international appeal. We also mention the editing of the important Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship “Proverbium” for 31 consecutive years.

We are very happy and proud that our University welcomes him today to our university community.

[The address was delivered in Greek, but the following remarks were in English.]

Dear Professor Wolfgang Mieder,

We are proud that you are with us today, that we welcome you to our university community and we wish you to always continue your thriving academic and research work. We also hope to have the pleasure of your presence here in the future.

Theodore Fortsakis
Rector of the University of Athens
Professor of Administrative and Tax Law
Department of Law
University of Athens
GREECE

PROFESSOR WOLFGANG MIEDER
AND MODERN FOLKLORISTICS IN THE UNITED
STATES:
THE EXAMPLE OF PROVERBS

PROFESSOR MINAS AL. ALEXIADIS

Mr Rector of the University of Athens,
Mrs Dean of the School of Philosophy,
Mrs President of the Department of Philology,
Mr President of the Greek Folklore Society,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear students,

With great joy and pleasure I will speak today about the internationally acclaimed folklorist and paremiologist in particular, Wolfgang Mieder, professor in the Department of German and Russian at the University of Vermont, at Burlington, USA, and I will present to you in brief his personality and his rich work.

Professor Mieder is coming from Germany. His parents lived in Leipzig, but because of the war left temporarily to the nearby town Nossen, where Wolfgang was born, on 17 February 1944. In 1960 he went to North America. He graduated from Olivet College and he received his M.A. from the University of Michigan and Ph.D. from Michigan State University.

In 1970 he was elected assistant professor at Murray State University in Kentucky, at age 26. In 1971 he was elected assistant professor at the University of Vermont, in 1975 associate professor, and in 1978, at the age of 34 years old, as professor. Barbara Mieder is his wife and also valuable companion in his life.

In his long university career, based on his erudition and solid scientific foundation, he taught and still is teaching many subjects of his scientific field, such as: German Language and Culture, History of the German Language, German Literature, German Folklore, The Proverb, The Tales of the Brothers Grimm, Folklore and Oral Culture, The Politics of Proverbs. Folklore and Advertising, etc.

Wolfgang Mieder, in addition to his other qualifications, is an excellent teacher. That’s why he has received many awards such as: Award for the best teacher of the year in Vermont (1991¹), the Kroepsch-Maurice Award for outstanding teaching ability (1995²) and the excellence award from the American Association of Teachers of German (1995³). On September 13, 2012, he received the European Fairy Tale Prize for his entire work and at the same year the Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Folklore Society.

His administrative work is also large and very important during his long university life, with posts of responsibility at the University of Vermont and in various other managerial positions in scientific societies. He served the Department of German and Russian as its chairperson for thirty-one years. He has repeatedly received scholarships and prizes from 22 organizations, university departments, Institutes and Foundations and is a member of 14 scientific associations in his field. He also has been honored with 25 distinctions by universities, scientific societies, associations and companies.

By March 2012⁴ Wolfgang Mieder had published 205 books. He has authored himself 93⁵ books and co-authored with another or other authors 15 books. Meanwhile he is the editor of 43 books and the co-editor of 21. Many of these proverb books were out of print and were reissued by W. Mieder. He also is the editor of seven series of paremiological books in America and in Germany.⁶ Valuable is also his two-volume *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology*,⁷ compiled and edited by him.

Since 1984 Wolfgang Mieder has been publishing the international yearbook *Proverbium*, with articles in five languages. He has edited 31 volumes (1984-2014) so far.

I had the honor to meet this indefatigable colleague personally, known to me originally from his great work, at the International Congress of Folk Narratives organized in Athens in June 2009 by the Research Center for Folklore of the Academy of Athens, and so I had the opportunity to know him better and to appreciate his academic wisdom, his ethos, generosity, simplicity and kindness.

Wolfgang Mieder beyond his contribution to international paremiology—Associate Professor Doulaveras will address

this—is also among those who contributed to the promotion of modern folklore in America. Very remarkable works of his serve this scientific field, such as:

1. *German proverbs in literature, politics, newspapers and advertisements.*⁸
2. *Proverbs, proverbial expressions, sayings: traditional formulaic language in modern times.*⁹
3. *Proverbs are never out of season: Popular wisdom in the modern age.*¹⁰
4. *Anti-proverbs from literature and media.*¹¹
5. *Proverbial iconography.*¹²
6. *Modern anti-proverbs.*¹³
7. *Proverbs are the best policy. Folk wisdom and American politics.*¹⁴
8. *Modern folktale memories in literature, media and cartoons.*¹⁵
9. *Articles in magazines and newspapers for the relevance or not of proverbs.*¹⁶
10. *Paremiological studies in literature and the media.*¹⁷
11. *Folk proverbs in art, culture, folklore, history, literature, and mass media.*¹⁸
12. *Contemporary tale memories in literature, media and cartoons.*¹⁹
13. “Yes, we can.” *Barack Obama’s proverbial rhetoric,*²⁰ etc.

W. Mieder proves through his studies that folklore is a living science that monitors and studies the culture of modern man and not only a science of the past.

I will briefly touch upon one of those books that is related to proverbs and politics, and upon a second one, related to the contribution of Wolfgang Mieder to so-called anti-proverbs, a term coined by him and already internationally recognized.

The first book is titled *Proverbs are the Best Policy. Folk Wisdom and American Politics.*²¹ For over ten years Mieder has made the study of proverbial political discourse one of the most important areas of his research, having written seven books.²² This particular book is a valuable contribution to this matter. It consists of eight individual chapters, five of which were previously published and three are published for the first time.

The first chapter is entitled “‘Different Strokes for Different Folks.’ American Proverbs as an International, National, and Global Phenomenon” and explains why American proverbs are an international, national and global phenomenon, noting that the proverbs today play the role that Latin proverbs did in former times. Moreover, with their orientation to a democratic society, they have a noticeable effect on global and political discourse. English today is an international language, *lingua franca*, and English proverbs are traveling around the world.

The second chapter is entitled “‘Government of the People, by the People, for the People.’ The Making and Meaning of an American Proverb about Democracy.” In this chapter the author investigates when the triadic sentence (*government of the people, by the people, for the people*) has started and how it became an American proverb, defining the idea of democracy. The words were spoken by Abraham Lincoln on November 19 (1863). Similar phrases had been spoken by Thomas Cooper (1794), John Adams (1798), John Marshall (1819), Daniel Webster (1830), Alphonse de Lamartine (1850) and Theodore Parker (1850). The author examines methodically the origin, the form and the course of this proverb, citing multiple sources.

The third chapter has the title “‘God Helps Them Who Help Themselves.’ Proverbial Resolve in the Letters of Abigail Adams.” The author attempts a paremiological analysis of the letters of Abigail Adams and examines how this great woman influenced her husband John Adams, her family and many politicians with her correspondence, full of proverbial wisdom.

The fourth chapter is entitled: “‘A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand.’ From Biblical Proverb to Abraham Lincoln and Beyond.” In this chapter Wolfgang Mieder examines the role played by this adage in American politics and he mentions specific examples of politicians who used the proverb.

The fifth chapter is titled: “‘Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You.’ Frederick Douglass's Proverbial Struggle for Civil Rights.” Douglass (1818-1895), a former slave, was the collective voice of 3-4 million African-American slaves. This chapter examines the profound relationship of Frederick Douglass with religion as expressed in proverbial speech. Douglass uses proverbs knowing the social significance and val-

ue of folk wisdom in the struggle against slavery and for civil rights of these people.

In the sixth chapter “‘It’s not President’s Business to Catch Flies.’ Proverbial Rhetoric in Presidential Inaugural Addresses.” it is investigated whether various U.S. presidents knew proverbs. For this purpose W. Mieder examines 55 official presidential speeches. Among others he highlights the proverbial quality and superiority of Lincoln and Kennedy speeches.

The seventh chapter is titled “‘We Are All in the Same Boat Now.’ Proverbial Discourse in the Churchill-Roosevelt Correspondence.” In this chapter the author analyzes the 1161 and 788 messages respectively, exchanged by Churchill and Roosevelt in the troubled years 1939-1945. The two leaders fought as allies against the dictatorial forces during the Second World War and their deliberations were clearly based on proverbial language for an effective communication.

In the eighth chapter on “‘Good Fences Make Good Neighbors.’ The Sociopolitical Significance of an Ambiguous Proverb,” the author examines the beginning, the story, the dispersion, the function and importance of this American proverb, through many examples from the 19th century until today. In the field of politics the proverb means that the defensive armor of a country acts effectively as a deterrent for neighboring peoples.

The book is documented with the necessary notes and references and also contains a Bibliography, an Index of Persons and Things and a Table of Keywords of the Proverbs.

In general, this book is a great work and a substantial contribution to the study of the relations between proverbs and politics, which is a topical issue that he has interpreted in many books. With convincing arguments and documenting his views every time, the author demonstrates the power of proverbial discourse in politics, especially since it is used by leading politicians and U.S. Presidents.

At this point, I would like to remind you that in Greece Dem. S. Loukatos, as is well known, was the first to deal with the relationship between proverbs and politics. I mention two of his articles: “*Proverbes et commentaires politiques: Le Public devant les Télécommunications actuelles*”²³ and “*Proverbs in Modern Political Cartoons*.”²⁴ In the spirit of this topic, I published my study in the Scientific Yearbook of the Department of Philology

of the University of Athens, titled “*The Proverbial and Maxim Discourse of Greek Politicians. Samples of the Athenian Press.*”²⁵

Another contribution of W. Mieder in Contemporary Folklore is related to his books on anti-proverbs. The term, which was first suggested by him, means the modification of the traditional proverbial text for the sake of humor or parody or advertising, etc. Dem. S. Loukatos in his article “*Folklorica Contemporanea*”²⁶ had pointed out these changes in the body of traditional proverbs, although he had not given a definition.²⁷ For the theme of anti-proverbs in the Greek press we have recently published a relevant essay.²⁸ Below I give two examples of Greek anti-proverbs:

1. *Beware of Danae bearing gifts.*
(Original text)
But we saw it in the Press with the form:
Beware of politicians bearing “packages.”
(Anti-proverb)

2. *Gerasko ai didaskomenos.*
(Original text)
Meaning: I am getting older and I am always learning.
But we saw it in the Press in the following form:
Gerasko aei parakolouthoumenos.
(Anti-proverb)
Meaning: I am getting older and have always been
under watching.

W. Mieder initially issued three volumes²⁹ with anti-proverbs in German. Then, with the cooperation of A.T. Litovkina published the book “*Twisted Wisdom. Modern Anti-proverbs,*”³⁰ that I will mention in brief. This book is the first that records this kind of proverb in 1999 in the Anglo-American language and it is the beginning of the study of this rich material that awaits systematic collection and study. The anti-proverbs are listed alphabetically and for each text there is a precise citation. Of course, the anti-proverbs can be effective means of communication, only if the traditional proverbs are well known. Otherwise the possibility of understanding and of communication will be lost. The two authors recorded 3000 anti-proverbs, coming from the 300

traditional ones. This big number of anti-proverbs shows the large and varied inspirations of modern man, who does not hesitate to use old proverbial texts, modifying them where necessary, to meet the current needs of communication and persuasion and mainly to satisfy his criticism and mocking mood, but also to laugh himself.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have presented briefly Professor W. Mieder through some of his rich curriculum vitae elements and by examining two important books of his. However, we all understand "the lion from its tail." Professor W. Mieder is today considered as a leading international scientist in the field of Folklore and Paremiology, having contributed in a unique way to international scientific research and having variously enhanced the work of paremiologists and encouraging many colleagues and students in their efforts. He is a leading paremiologist with international appreciation and recognition.

[the address was delivered in Greek, but the following remarks were in English]

Dear colleague and friend, Professor Wolfgang Mieder,

The fact that we are awarding you an honorary doctorate from the Department of Philology of the University of Athens is the result of the immense esteem that we feel towards you in person. It is also the outcome of the international recognition that your work in the area of Folkloristics and proverb studies enjoys. We, my colleagues and our students, are delighted today that you now belong to the ranks of those honoured by the Department of Philology of the University of Athens, since you are a most distinguished academic, the leading scholar of paremiology, a widely recognized university teacher, a tireless writer and a kind and humble man, full of goodwill to all.

Since I have the honor to welcome you to the academic family of the Department of Philology of the University of Athens, I would like to wish you, *ab imo pectore*, health, strength and long-lasting happiness, so that you may continue your splendid work.

I would also like to welcome your wife, Barbara Mieder, and wish you both a happy stay in Athens.

Thank you very much.

Notes for Alexiadis:

¹ Vermont Professor of the Year (CASE, 1991).

² Kroepsch-Maurice Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1995.

³ Goethe Institute/American Association of Teachers of German, Certificate of Merit, 1995.

⁴ <http://www.uvm.edu/~grdept/documents/MIEDERvita030512.pdf>

⁵ See his last book: Wolfgang Mieder, *Behold the Proverbs of a People. Proverbial Wisdom in Culture, Literature, and Politics*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2014.

⁶ *Sprichwörterforschung*, Book series published by Peter Lang Co. in Bern, Switzerland 1983. – *Sprichwörtersammlungen*, Book series published by the Georg Olms Co. in Hildesheim, Germany 1986. – *Studien zur Phraseologie und Parömiologie*. Book series published by the Norbert Brockmeyer Co. in Bochum, Germany 1993-1999. – *Supplement Series of “Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship,”* Book Series published by the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont 1997. – *Phraseologie und Parömiologie*, Book series published by Schneider Verlag Hohengehren in Baltmannsweiler, Germany 1999.

⁷ Wolfgang Mieder, *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology*. Volume 1: A-M, Volume 2: N-Z. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.

⁸ Wolfgang Mieder, *Deutsche Sprichwörterforschung des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1984.

⁹ Wolfgang Mieder, *Sprichwort, Redensart, Zitat. Tradierte Formelsprache in der Moderne*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1985.

¹⁰ Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs Are Never Out of Season. Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

¹¹ Wolfgang Mieder, *Phrasen verdreschen. Antiredensarten aus Literatur und Medien*. Wiesbaden: Quelle & Meyer, 1999.

¹² Wolfgang Mieder & Janet Sobieski, *Proverb Iconography. An International Bibliography*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.

¹³ Wolfgang Mieder & Anna Tóthné Litovkina, *Twisted Wisdom. Modern Anti-Proverbs*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 1999.

¹⁴ Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs Are the Best Policy. Folk Wisdom and American Politics*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005.

¹⁵ Wolfgang Mieder, “Hänsel und Gretel.” *Das Märchen in Kunst, Musik, Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen*, Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2007.

¹⁶ Wolfgang Mieder & Janet Sobieski, “Gold Nuggets or Fool’s Gold?” *Magazine and Newspaper Articles on the (Ir)relevance of Proverbs and Proverbial Phrase*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2006.

¹⁷ Wolfgang Mieder, *Sprichwörter sind Goldes wert. Parömiologische Studien zu Kultur, Literatur und Medien*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2007.

¹⁸ Wolfgang Mieder, "Proverbs Speak Louder Than Words." *Folk Wisdom in Art, Culture, Folklore, History, Literature, and Mass Media*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

¹⁹ Wolfgang Mieder, "Märchen haben kurze Beine." *Moderne Märchenreminiszenzen in Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen*. Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2009.

²⁰ Wolfgang Mieder, "Yes We Can." *Barack Obama's Proverbial Rhetoric*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.

²¹ See a book review by Minas Al. Alexiadis: W. Mieder, *Proverbs Are the Best Policy. Folk Wisdom and American Politics*, in the Greek Daily Newspaper *Kathimerini*, October 20, 2009.

²² Wolfgang Mieder, "A House Divided." *From Biblical Proverb to Lincoln and Beyond*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 1998. – Wolfgang Mieder & George B. Bryan, *The Proverbial Winston S. Churchill: An Index to Proverbs in the Works of Sir Winston S. Churchill*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995. – Wolfgang Mieder, *The Politics of Proverbs. From Traditional Wisdom to Proverbial Stereotypes*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997. – Wolfgang Mieder, "No Struggle, No Progress." *Frederick Douglass and his Proverbial Rhetoric for Civil Rights*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001. – Wolfgang Mieder, "Call a Spade a Spade." *From Classical Phrase to Racial Slur. A Case Study*. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs are the Best Policy. Folk Wisdom and American Politics*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005. – Wolfgang Mieder, "Yes, We Can." *Barack Obama's Proverbial Rhetoric*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.

²³ Arist. N. Doulaveras (ed.), *I paroimiologiki kai paroimiografiki ergografia tou Dem. S. Loukatou (The Paremiological and Paremiographical Writings of Dem. S. Loukatos)*. Athens : Poreia Publishing, Athens, 1994, pp. 453-456.

²⁴ Dem. S. Loukatos, "H paroimia sti sygxroni politiki geliografia" (The Proverb in Modern Political Cartoons), *Laografia* 34 (1985-1986), 143-150, Athens 1988 (= Arist. N.. Doulaveras (ed.), *I paroimiologiki kai paroimiografiki ergografia tou Dem. S. Loukatou (The Paremiological and Paremiographical Writings of Dem. S. Loukatos)*, *ibid.*, pp. 457- 463.

²⁵ Minas Al. Alexiadis, "O paroimiakos kai gnomikos logos ton Ellinon Politicon" (Proverbial and Maxim Discourse of Greek Politicians. Samples of the Athenian Press), *Scientific Yearbook of the Philosophical School of Athens University*, 40 (2008-2009), 45-66. See also: Zoe Gavriilidou, "Le proverbe dans la presse grecque," *Proverbium* 20 (2003), 187-203.

²⁶ Dem. S. Loukatos, *Synxrona Laografica (Folklorica Contemporanea)*, Athens : A. Myrtidi, 1963, pp. 33-37.

²⁷ Arist. N. Doulaveras, *Neoellinikos Paroimiakos Logos (Modern Greek Proverbial Discourse)*. Athens : Stamoulis Publishing, Salonica, 2010, p. 73.

²⁸ Minas Al. Alexiadis, “Antiparaimies (Anti-proverbs) in Athenian newspapers,” International Scientific Conference, “*Popular Culture and Artistic Discourse (Poetry-Prose-Theatre)*,” organized by the Research Centre for Greek Folklore, Academy of Athens (8-12 December 2010) (= Minas Al. Alexiadis, *Entypa mesa epikoinonias kai laikos politismos (Printed Means of Communication and Popular Culture. Modern Folklore)*. Athens: Institute Book – A.Kardamitsa, 2011, pp. 83-124. See also: Minas Al. Alexiadis, *Entypi diafimisi kai laikos politismos (Printed Advertising and Popular Culture)*. Athens: Armos Publishing – Institute of Folk Culture of Karpathos, Department of Philology of University of Athens, 2014, pp. 113-131).

²⁹ Wolfgang Mieder, *Antispruchwörter*, 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache, 1982, 1985, and 1989.

³⁰ Wolfgang Mieder & A. T. Litovkina, *Twisted Wisdom, Modern Anti-Proverbs*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 1999.

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“MANY DROPS OF WATER MAKE AN OCEAN”¹
METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN
WOLFGANG MIEDER’S PAREMIOLOGICAL WORK

PROFESSOR MARIANTHI KAPLANOGLU

Minas Alexiadis’s introduction has given us an idea about the size and depth of Wolfgang Mieder’s work. I would concentrate on a brief account of certain methodological aspects of this work and try to explain why it is theoretically and methodologically framed by the discipline of folklore.

In the beginning we may wonder why proverbs occupy the central stage in his pioneering research. Let me propose an explanation:

The study of folklore and its expressions, like customs, folktales, proverbs etc., is carried out by the discipline of Folklore and other related disciplines in essentially two differentiated directions: the first one (we may call it the direction of social anthropology) studies folklore under the prism of unifying concepts as in the concept of the underlying structure. The same discipline often uses the term “construction” referring to cultural products, a term somehow rigid; what happens then with the dynamism of folklore which can be under continuous re-appropriation?

The discipline of Folklore follows a different approach: it considers folk culture as a procedure of constant transmission and change; for example, it considers every specific genre of folk speech not as a typological abstraction but as “an ontological entity with a defined set of relations between language, symbols and reality” (to quote Dan Ben-Amos’s famous phrase). In this framework a single person is not a passive tradition bearer but an active agent taking part in the process of its transformation. Thus the polysemanticity and polyfunctionality (as are the terms used by W. Mieder) of a folklore genre can be fully explored.

In his paremiological and other pioneering studies, Mieder always holds this synthetic view of folklore research: he focuses on proverbs as expressions of worldview as well as personal

communicative strategies; through the prism of intertextual analysis of oral variants and written texts he charts the historical itineraries of proverbs as well as their ongoing reappraisal in our times, even in the present (like his study on *Barack Obama's Proverbial Rhetoric*). Thus he breaks new ground on complex matters generated by the appropriation of folklore in the new media technologies and its inscription in an international agenda of cultural politics. He studies proverbs at a global level always taking into account their local variants.

Although he considers structural analysis important, he does not abstain from the contextual usage of proverbs in active verbal communication. He examines proverbs as a symbolic system representing collective mentality and the so-called common sense but he does not consider proverbs as universal truths; he rather pays attention to their contrasting aspects which hide a deeper reality of unsolvable tensions in the social sphere. In this way Mieder enlightens us on the very genre of folk literature and on the societies which use it. In his own words, “one could go so far as to say that there is a ‘story’ behind every proverb, and it is usually a sizeable task to deal with just one text in this diachronic and semantic fashion.” If every proverb or better every single variant is a drop, then Mieder’s interest for each drop amounts to the mastering of a whole ocean which as a semantic whole is bigger than the simple sum of its parts.

[the address was delivered in Greek]

¹ Wolfgang Mieder, Stewart A. Kingsbury, and Kelsie B. Harder (eds.), *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 169.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF
PROFESSOR WOLFGANG MIEDER
TO INTERNATIONAL PAREMIOLOGY

PROFESSOR ARISTEIDES N. DOULAVERAS

Mr Rector of the University of Athens,
Mrs Dean of the School of Philosophy,
Mrs President of the Department of Philology,
Mr President of the Greek Folklore Society,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear students,

It's a great honor and unique privilege for me to speak from the tribune of the University of Athens for the distinguished folklorist and paremiologist, professor at the University of Vermont, Wolfgang Mieder, and I want to thank Prof. Minas Al. Alexiadis for his kind invitation to participate in this prestigious event and also the authorities of the University of Athens.

It was in 1984, when as a young philologist teacher I have had the first contact with Wolfgang Mieder. My memorable professor Demetrios S. Loukatos had recommended that I should subscribe to *Proverbium*, a Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship, in the U.S.A, the publishing of which had been undertaken by Professor Wolfgang Mieder. Since then, we occasionally had communication and collaboration in the yearbook, while our meeting in Athens in 2009 at the International Conference for Folk Narratives, renewed our relationship and gave us great pleasure.

It is certain that Dem. S. Loukatos from the world of divine bliss will rejoice and smile with happiness knowing that his special friend and colleague Wolfgang Mieder is honored today by the University of Athens.

Professor Wolfgang Mieder is a distinct personality, internationally known for his vast folklore and especially for his paremiological work. He has opened new ways of study in the field of Folklore and promoted paremiological studies much more than anybody else.

His work is mainly related to German, English and American folklore, history of the German language, Middle Ages and especially to the study of the proverb.¹ It is of course of great scholarly interest because of its theoretical pursuits and its contemporary and original research approach. His contribution to the field of International Paremiology can be summarized as follows.

He has taught mainly paremiological subjects for decades at the university and gave instructions for the work on proverbs to students at the undergraduate, Master and Ph.D. levels. Wolfgang Mieder has supervised 34 theses at the Master degree and he participated in 14 others as a committee member. He was also primarily responsible for the preparation of 17 doctoral theses.

Professor Mieder is the author and publisher of largely innovative books for the study of proverbs.² The number of his writings is incredible! By March 2012 he had published 205 books, as you have already heard. In his books he studies the meaning and morphology of proverbs, the proverbial language, the relationship of proverbs with politics, press, mass media and advertising, the iconography of proverbs, their presence in fiction and poetic texts, the Biblical proverbs, the contemporary function of proverbs, the anti-proverbs, etc.

He has issued many books on International Proverb Bibliography,³ which are valuable and necessary books for every paremiological study. In this work a lot of international paremiological research has been recorded. For example, in Mieder's *International Proverb Scholarship. An Annotated Bibliography* in four volumes,⁴ 7.368 entries have been registered, which clearly shows the great extent of international proverb research.

He also published numerous articles, around 465, in various related journals on folklore but mainly on proverb issues.

He participates willingly in international congresses with interest announcements on folklore and proverbs. His participation was always expected with great interest from his colleagues and they all waited for his scientific paremiological wisdom.

He has written 120 book reviews, in which he in fact gives lessons on proverbs but also highlights the global proverb research.

He has promoted the study of the proverb in Europe and America, even with a lot of lectures (over 327) on proverb top-

ics. He published a massive *Dictionary of American Proverbs* based on oral sources and he reprinted remarkable collections of old proverb books, providing valuable research tools to paremiologists.⁵

He also published his own correspondence⁶ with distinguished and leading folklorists and paremiologists such as Alan Dundes, Lutz Röhrich and Shirley L. Arora. In this correspondence they often talk about various interesting and topical proverb issues and they give the opportunity to the readers to enjoy their dialog and the essence of their thoughts. In the forthcoming issue 43 of the Greek yearbook “Laographia” his correspondence with Dem. S. Loukatos will be printed, under Mieder’s and my editorial care.

Finally, in 1984 he began to publish the highly valued and well known *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* with its by now 31 volumes (2014). It is an annual publication of about 550 pages that includes studies on proverbs in five languages. A member of the editorial board was also Dem. S. Loukatos along with other leading folklorists and paremiologists like Shirley L. Arora, Alan Dundes, Iver Kjaer, Arvo Krikman, Matti Kuusi, G.L. Permyakov, Lutz Röhrich and Vilmos Voigt.

The contribution of *Proverbium* to international proverb scholarship since then till now is huge. *Proverbium* is an international forum where the world’s paremiologists express their ideas, their thoughts, the results of their research and they learn about new publications. In this yearbook Wolfgang Mieder himself published excellent articles. He also wrote remarkable book reviews for publications and, most importantly, he recorded unfailingly new and reprinted proverb collections and the new international proverb scholarship – very important tools for the study of proverbs.

The recognition of his excellent and internationally known work was expressed repeatedly with 25 awards received from associations, universities, academies of sciences and other bodies, as we have already heard.

Five books also are dedicated to him. Three of them on his 60th birthday⁷, another on his 62nd⁸ and a fifth on his 65th⁹ birthday.

In short, Wolfgang Mieder has been a prolific writer, a prominent scientific personality in the field of international paremiology, a worldwide highly esteemed scholar, an indefatigable researcher, an inspiring teacher and the reference center of international proverb studies. His main purpose was to do his best and serve others, especially his students, colleagues, and fellow paremiologists throughout the world. Let me mention here that Wolfgang Mieder is the first professor of Folklore from abroad who is honoured by the University of Athens as Honorary Doctor.

The international assessment of this eminent and distinguished man, for his own personality and his unique work, is obvious in the following words in the *Festschrift* dedicated to him on his 60th birthday¹⁰:

“When it comes to proverb scholarship, we have all been taught by the same master, Wolfgang Mieder, without question one of the greatest paremiologists of all time. His body of work on proverbs is so extensive as to make it nearly impossible to say anything new, but we nonetheless dedicate our efforts to that very purpose as a way of thanking him for his brilliant leadership in the field of international proverb scholarship, his unsurpassed intellectual generosity, and his incredible humor, kindness, and spirit...”

[the address was delivered in Greek, but the following remarks were in English]

My dear Colleague Professor Wolfgang Mieder,

I feel extremely happy to participate in today’s commemorative event, organized by the famous University of Athens for your personality and your work. Congratulations *de profundis*! Of course, your dearest wife Barbara Mieder, the valuable companion of your life, who is with us tonight, deserves to share this honor with you.

Dear friend and distinguished Colleague,

Welcome to the academic family of the University of Athens!

Notes for Doulaveras:

¹ See his Curriculum Vitae in his website: <http://www.uvm.edu/~grdept/documents/MIEDERvita030512.pdf>

² See some of them: Wolfgang Mieder, *Das Sprichwort in unserer Zeit*. Frauenfeld: Huber Verlag, 1975. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Antisprichwörter*. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache, 1982, 1985, and 1989. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Honig klebt am längsten: Das Anti-Sprichwörter Buch*. München: Heyne, 1985. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Deutsche Sprichwörter in Literatur, Politik, Presse und Werbung*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1983. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Tradition and Innovation in Folk Literature*. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1987. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs Are Never Out of Season: Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Behold the Proverbs of a People. Proverbial Wisdom in Culture, Literature, and Politics*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2014, etc.

³ Wolfgang Mieder, *International Bibliography of Explanatory Essays on Individual Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1977. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs in Literature: An International Bibliography*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1978. – Wolfgang Mieder, *International Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography*. 4 vols. New York: Garland Publishing, 1982, 1990, 1993, and 2001 (New York: Peter Lang). – Wolfgang Mieder, *African Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: African Proverbs Project, 1994. – Wolfgang Mieder & Janet Sobieski, *Proverb Iconography: An International Bibliography*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999. – Wolfgang Mieder, *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology*. Volume 1: A-M, Volume 2: N-Z. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009. – Wolfgang Mieder, *International Bibliography of Paremiography. Collections of Proverbs, Proverbial Expressions and Comparisons, Quotations, Graffiti, Slang, and Wellerisms*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2011.

⁴ See note 34.

⁵ See the book review: Aristeides N. Doulaveras: W. Mieder, St. Kingsbury, K.B. Harder, *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, *Loagraphia* 36 (1993), 301-304.

⁶ Wolfgang Mieder, "Best of All Possible Friends." *Three Decades of Correspondence Between the Folklorists Alan Dundes and Wolfgang Mieder*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2006. – Wolfgang Mieder, "Freundschaft ist des Lebens Salz." *Dreieinhalb Jahrzehnte Korrespondenz zwischen den Folkloristen Lutz Röhrich und Wolfgang Mieder*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2007. – Wolfgang Mieder, "True Friends Are Like Diamonds." *Three Decades of Correspondence Between the Folklorists Shirley L. Arora and Wolfgang Mieder*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2010.

⁷ Janet Sobieski (ed.), "A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed." *A Festschrift for Professor Wolfgang Mieder on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, Febru-

ary 17, 2004. Burlington, Vermont, The University of Vermont, 2004. – Csaba Földes (ed.), *Res humanae proverbiorum et sententiarum. Ad honorem Wolfgang Mieder*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2004. – Kimberly J. Lau, Peter Tokofsky, and Stephen D. Winick (eds), “What Goes Around Comes Around.” *The Circulation of Proverbs in Contemporary Life. Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2004.

⁸ Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar, *Down the Proverb Lane. Musings of a Paremiologist. An Interview with Wolfgang Mieder. A Festschrift for Mieder at 62*. Hyderabad, India: The Proverbial Linguistics Group, 2006.

⁹ Kevin J. McKenna, *The Proverbial “Pied Piper.” A Festschrift Volume of Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.

¹⁰ Kimberly J. Lau, Peter Tokofsky, and Stephen D. Winick (eds.), “What Goes Around Comes Around.” *The Circulation of Proverbs in Contemporary Life. Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2004, p. 1.

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“DIFFERENT PROVERBS FOR DIFFERENT TIMES”
 PROVERBIAL DISCOURSE AT THE
 CROSSROADS TO MODERNITY

WOLFGANG MIEDER

Rector of the University of Athens,
 Dean of the School of Philosophy,
 President of the Department of Philology,
 Director of the Section of Byzantine Literature and Folklore,
 President of the Greek Folklore Society,
 Dear colleagues, friends, and students,
 Ladies and gentlemen,

Permit me to begin these remarks by expressing my sincere gratitude for the great honor that I am receiving from the internationally renowned University of Athens. I would like to thank the Rector of this distinguished university Professor Theodore Fortsakis, the Dean of the School of Philosophy Professor Helen Karamalegou, the President of the Department of Philology Professor Erasmia-Louise Stavropoulou, and the colleagues of the Department of Philology for their unanimously approved proposal for my proclamation as an honorary doctorate recipient. I also would like to thank my three eminent colleagues for their kind words regarding my scholarly work: Professor of Folklore Minas Al. Alexiadis, Director of the Section of Byzantine Philology and Folklore, Associate Professor of Folklore Marianthe Kaplanoglou, and Associate Professor of Folklore Aristeides N. Doulaveras. Of course, I also thank all of you in the audience for being present this evening at a most special occasion of my scholarly life.

When I received the incredible news in the summer of 2013 that the University of Athens would bestow the title of Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in the field of Philology upon me, I spontaneously wrote to Prof. Minas Alexiadis with a copy to Prof. Aristeides Doulaveras that stated in part:

Today is the 4th of July, and you know that is our big national holiday here in the United States. We remember the birth of this country on this day, and everybody is in

a festive and joyful mood, thankful for everything that this democracy, based on the old Greek idea of a free society, has accomplished during more than two hundred years. So you can imagine how excited I was when I discovered on my computer screen the line “Honorary Doctorate” [the official announcement of June 25, 2013, arrived by airmail a few days later]. My heart raced, and I nervously opened your letter, and then I read your wonderful letter with the most exciting news of my life! I simply cannot believe it, Minas! An honorary doctorate for little Wolfgang from the prestigious University of Athens! What an incredible honor for me and all parmiologists in the world! As I receive this honor, I know it is not just for me personally but for all proverb scholars of all times, starting right in your country with Aristotle all the way to Demetrios Loukatos, Archer Taylor, Matti Kuusi, Lutz Röhrich, Alan Dundes, Aristeides Doulaveras and, of course, yourself. It is a sincere recognition of proverb scholarship throughout the world, and I am so deeply honored to have been selected for this special award for my labors. [...]

Both my dear wife Barbara and I were so overwhelmed that we were literally speechless about this generous academic recognition by one of the most famous universities in the world. I say we, because it is important for you to know that I would not be standing in front of you without my wife’s support and love during the past forty-five years. And, of course, I would also not be standing in the limelight today were it not for my deceased best friend, the internationally celebrated folklorist Alan Dundes, who should be positioned in front of me right now.

But speaking of friends, I also want to mention another departed internationally recognized friend, namely Demetrios Loukatos from Greece, whom I met together with Alan Dundes the first time in the summer of 1974 at the Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research at Helsinki in Finland. I learned so much from these two great scholars and many others, on whose broad shoulders I have had the privilege and joy to stand for several decades. My vast correspondence with both of them and many other philologists in general and folklor-

ists in particular reveal how important such scholarly and personal connections are for the meaningful advancement of knowledge. I will never forget how Demetrios Loukatos influenced me when I began my paremiological studies, especially since he was one of the first paremiologists who looked at the use and function of proverbs in politics and the mass media of the modern age. And what a welcome surprise it was when Aristeides Doulaveras in 1994 sent me a massive volume of writings on proverbs by Loukatos that he edited in appreciation of this doyen of Greek paremiology. In the meantime, Evlampia Chelmi, Carlos Crida Álvarez, and Zoe Gavriilido have also made important contributions to the proverbial discourse in modern Greece. But it is Aristeides Doulaveras who has been of major influence regarding proverbs in the modern world, notably by his study on the proverbial materials in Nikos Kazantzakis' novel *Zorba the Greek* (1946) and the invaluable volume of his essays on *Modern Greek Proverbial Discourse*. The same holds true for Minas Alexiades whose articles on proverbs in Greek newspapers and in the speeches of Greek politicians provide ample proof that proverbial wisdom plays a significant role in journalistic and political communication in Greece, where traditional proverbs are also changed into innovative anti-proverbs that fit the signs of the time. All of this is convincingly argued in his important book on *Printed Media and Popular Culture: Studies in Contemporary Folklore*. The three of us, Minas Alexiadis and Aristeides Doulaveras in Greece, and I in distant Vermont in the United States, make a wonderful folkloric and paremiological triad, and I especially want to thank my two friends from the bottom of my heart for recommending me for the very special honor that I am receiving here at the University of Athens today.

From what I have said thus far it becomes clear that as I am about to speak a few words about the proverbial discourse at the crossroads to modernity I am in a way carrying owls to Athens, as the ancient Greek proverbial expression would have it. The people from my old homeland Germany still employ the German loan translation "Eulen nach Athen tragen," but the English equivalent "To carry owls to Athens" has been replaced by the British "To carry coals to Newcastle" that is on its way to distinction in the United States. It is a shame to lose such expressions from our cultural literacy, and I am trying to convince my

proverb students in Vermont, known for its sweet maple syrup, that they should adopt my invention of “To carry maple syrup to Vermont,” but that has not yet happened. Their professor is simply not important enough to influence the Anglo-American language to that degree. But fear not, there are many proverbs and proverbial expressions of ancient Greek times that continue to be in frequent use as loan translations throughout the world, to wit “Big fish eat little fish,” “One swallow does not make a summer,” and “One hand washes the other.” Many of the classical Greek, Roman, and medieval Latin proverbs that were spread throughout Europe and beyond in part by Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *Adagia* and its translations into the vernacular languages will survive because they represent what the great Finnish paremiologist Matti Kuusi, close friend of Demetrios Loukatos, Alan Dundes, and me, has called “monumenta humana,” that is concise generalizations of apparent truths reflecting basic and common experiences and observations of human existence.

But we live in a mightily different world today! Not that there have not been revolutionary changes during the past three millennia, but the societal changes that have taken place during the past hundred years or so occur with such extraordinary speed at all fronts including science, technology, mass communication, electronics, and much more, that we must not be surprised that these modern developments and upheavals bring about changes in worldview and mores that find their way into bits of wisdom that make up a whole new array of modern proverbs for which no antecedents before the somewhat arbitrarily chosen year 1900 can be found. Yes, indeed, as we should expect, the modern age creates its own folklore and consequently also its unique proverbs that are spread with never before imagined or experienced speed by way of the printed, aural, visual, and electronic communication available throughout the world. Twenty years ago I entitled one of my books *Proverbs Are Never Out of Season. Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. That is still true today, because we appear to need these ready-made sapiential formulas to hit the proverbial nail on the head in our oral and written communications. I showed all of this in that book, and I recall also that it led to an awareness worldwide of so-called anti-proverbs, that is the intentional serious or playful modification of standard proverbs to express a different point of view. What I did not

stress at that time is the ever more noticeable prevalence of absolutely new proverbs that could only be created because of our drastically changed existence. It is this aspect about which I would like to say a few words in the time allotted to me this evening, and by making use of the established proverbial formula “Different Xs for different Ys,” I would like to put my remarks under the heading of “Different proverbs for different times” that might become a proverb in its own right just as some anti-proverbs have become *bona fide proverbs* among the folk of today.

In the modern world the ancient languages of Greek and Latin have been replaced by English as the *lingua franca* not just of Europe but the entire world. Not surprisingly, older Anglo-American proverbs like “The early bird catches the worm” and “Good fences make good neighbors” as well as new American proverbs like “A picture is worth a thousand words” and “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence” are now conquering the world in their original English language or as loan translations. This is also true this late for the Bible proverb “A house divided against itself cannot stand” (Mark 3:25) that became a secularized folk proverb because of Abraham Lincoln’s frequent use of it as he dealt with the ills of slavery that were tearing the young American nation apart. In German, Martin Luther’s translation of this Bible verse had not become proverbial, but Willy Brandt, the former mayor of Berlin and federal chancellor, had discovered the English text when he gave a lecture at the celebration of Lincoln’s 150th birthday in 1959 at Springfield, Illinois. And then, when the unification of Germany took place in 1989/90, he remembered it and employed it numerous times in public speeches in his very own and good translation “Ein in sich gespaltenes Haus hat keinen Bestand.” As such, it was picked up by the media, and it has now in a very short time become a German proverb many centuries after the Bible by way of the United States and a politician aware of the expressive power of proverbial rhetoric.

These examples alone illustrate that it is high time that folklorists and especially paremiologists pay even more attention to the phenomenon of how traditional proverbs survive in the modern age and, very importantly, what new proverbs have been created in recent time. After all, the creation of new folklore has not

come to an abrupt end. In fact, the treasure trove of folkloric materials is an ever changing phenomenon, with some elements most likely remaining in circulation forever, while others, as for example misogynous and stereotypical proverbs, might hopefully disappear. All of this is happening while the changing times with their new attitudes and values will bring about innovative proverbial wisdom that spreads via the English language worldwide with never before observed rapidity. My friends Charles C. Doyle, Fred R. Shapiro, and I have documented over 1400 such proverbs in our *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*, and it is our hope that similar collections will now be assembled for other languages and cultures as well. While these new proverbs follow long established structural patterns and poetic devices, their realia and images reflect new insights into life's tribulations, trials, successes, and joys. At least in English texts, their average length remains seven words, with the shortest proverbs consisting of but two words, namely a topic and a comment, as it was already the case with proverbs like the Greek "Time flies." But modern two-word proverbs like "Life sucks," "Sex sells," and "Speed kills" have their at times pessimistic, sexual or prophetic wisdom. Many modern proverbs proceed in a similar fashion, to wit a few short proverbs about life: "Life begins at forty," "Life comes at you fast," "Life is a bitch," and "Nothing in life is simple." But there are also longer more metaphorical proverbs about the modern challenges of life: "Life is not a spectator sport," "If life hands you lemons, make lemonade," and "Life is a journey, not a destination." The latter proverb refers to the idea that life should be filled with life-long learning and never ceasing activity, where people face new demands in a committed and engaged fashion, as can be seen from such proverbs as "A crisis is an opportunity," "Dreams can't come true unless you wake up," "The glass is either half empty or half full," "There is no such thing as a free lunch," "Miracles take hard work," "Progress comes in small steps," and "Think outside the box." While time does not permit that I go into more detail about the origin, distribution, and contextualized use of these proverbs and others, let it be stated in general that for quite a few modern proverbs we actually know the author or where they appear in print for the first time, be it as a newspaper headline, an advertisement, a statement in a movie, a line in a poem or a song, etc. Be that as it

may, I certainly think that modern proverbs can match the wisdom of traditional proverbs in their new, albeit at times sexual if not obscene, language. Erotic and scatological folklore and proverbs have always existed, but collectors of older times have usually not recorded such matters. Those times have changed, and we included ample texts of that sort in order to present an authentic record of today's folk wisdom couched in proverbs.

I truly value the proverbs that I have already cited, and that is also true for new proverbs that express the complexities of the modern sociopolitical world, as for example "Freedom is not for sale," "Give peace a chance," and "Think globally, act locally." We have traced this last proverb back to 1942, a bit of a surprise for my proverb students who think that it originated more recently by way of the environmental movement and its concern with globalization. Of course, there is also the somewhat related proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" that the African American author Toni Morrison used during a 1981 interview. Since then, it is often cited as an African proverb, but no prototype from Africa has hitherto been found, with the Swahili proverb "One hand cannot bring up a child" at least also referring to the fact that raising a child is a communal effort. It appears that the proverb is actually of American coinage, and once former first lady, senator, and secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton entitled her acclaimed book *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us* in 1996, its wisdom spread throughout the United States and beyond. Here are her introductory words to the book with the proverb acting as a powerful leitmotif throughout:

It takes a village to raise a child. I chose that old African proverb to title this book because it offers a timeless reminder that children will thrive only if their families thrive and if the whole society cares enough to provide for them. [...] The village can no longer be defined as a place on the map, or a list of people or organizations, but its essence remains the same: it is the network of values and relationships that support and affect our lives. (Clinton 1996: 11-13; Mieder 2014: 202)

Clearly, today's children are citizens not only of a village in a particular country but of the entire interconnected world. The moral values with which they will be raised will not only come

from their home environment but also from the ethics that govern the globe. My own creation of the anti-proverb “It takes a village to change the world” takes these considerations from the local and national sphere to global concerns, emphasizing the need for responsible thinking and humane acting in a world committed to the safeguarding of the environment, human rights, and world peace where no person is an island in a brotherly and sisterly network of mutuality.

There are so many more proverbs I would like to comment on in much more detail, but I am afraid your patience with me will run out. So let me conclude with three of my favorite proverbs that I instill in my students in a large lecture course on proverbs that I offer every second semester. There is first of all the quintessential and liberating American proverb “Different strokes for different folks” that was coined among urban African Americans, with the earliest reference thus far being from a May 1945 newspaper account. It was popularized by way of heavyweight boxing champion Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) in 1966, the refrain in the song “Everyday People” (1968) by the group Sly and the Family Stone, and the successful television comedy show *Diff'rent Strokes* (1978-86). The general meaning of this modern piece of folk wisdom is that people should accept and respect the differences that exist among them and that everybody ought to have the chance to act out individual freedoms. The term “strokes” in slang actually has a sexual connotation, and it might well be that the proverb at its beginning referred indirectly to differences in coital practices. Be that as it may, in general parlance today “strokes” are understood as signifying ways, means, actions, movements, approaches, etc. The proverb originated in a country where individual rights and modes of behavior are valued, encouraged, and championed. Civil rights and freedom of expression belong to the basic principles of the American way of life. It is truly a liberating piece of proverbial wisdom and as such considerably different from the many prescriptive and proscriptive proverbs that abound in verbal communication throughout the world. After having discussed the origin, dissemination, meaning, use, and function of this proverb in literature, the mass media, songs, cartoons, comic strips, greeting cards, etc., I always add an important caveat for my students. After all, care must be taken that the liberating message of the

proverb is not interpreted to imply the absolute rule of individual egocentricity without proper consideration of social mores and behavior, that is, the emphasis on diverse freedoms must not be perverted to an ethical relativity. The proverb does not signify a *carte blanche* for “everything goes”!

The second proverb is the hopeful African American proverb “God can make a way out of no way” and its more popular secular variant “Making a way out of no way.” The earliest printed reference found thus far is from 1922, and it gained greater currency by way of Martin Luther King, who as civil rights leader, defender of nonviolence in the struggle of desegregation, champion for the poor, anti-war proponent, and visionary of an inter-related world of free people made the proverb to his credo as an expression of hope for oppressed and disadvantaged people everywhere. The proverb’s encouraging wisdom and orientation to the future made it the perfect verbalization for King’s religious and secular messages filled with faith, hope, and love for a world house of peace and freedom. Against all odds and obstacles, Martin Luther King, as a servant of God and humanity, was indeed a man who believed in and succeeded in “making a way out of no way” in words and deeds. There is then no doubt that this proverb epitomizes the entire civil and human rights movement in the United States and throughout the world, and as such it is the perfect verbal sign for unwavering hope and courageous action. And as their professor, I feel that my students would do well to keep this proverb of hope in mind as they face their own challenges and struggles during their life ahead.

Finally, during the semester and at its end, I draw my students’ attention to the significance of the golden rule that in the Bible appears as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matthew 12:7). During the semester we look at the effective use of this ultimate moral code by such renowned politicians and social reformers as Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Harry S. Truman, and Martin Luther King, with the final discussion being devoted to President Barack Obama’s reliance on this humane law of life. As a powerful example I cite what the new President Obama said on June 4, 2009, to several thousand Arabic students at Cairo University in Egypt. It is a call for a new world order of brother- and sisterhood informed by empathy and mutual re-

spect, with the center of this powerful peroration being occupied by the proverbial golden rule:

All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time. The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort – a sustained effort – to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to respect the dignity of all human beings. [...] There’s one rule that lies at the heart of every religion – that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. This truth transcends nations and peoples – a belief that isn’t new; that isn’t black or white or brown; that isn’t Christian or Muslim or Jew. It’s a belief that pulsed in the cradle of civilization, and that still beats in the hearts of billions around the world. It’s a faith in other people, and it’s what brought me here today. (Mieder 2014: 192-193)

This is rational and emotional rhetoric, coming both from the mind and the heart, as it calls for a new world order based on ethical values that bind humankind together. As their “grandfatherly” professor I simply want to leave my students with these three proverbs that might guide them through the exciting times that lie before them. An informed and empathetic adherence to their wisdom and that of other old and new proverbs should set them and all of us on a responsible and fulfilled life’s journey in which vigorous proverbial discourse will doubtlessly play a major communicative role in the confrontation with the challenges of modernity.

I am deeply honored and humbly proud of having become a member of your most excellent University of Athens.

Sas epharisto poli!

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