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Though written primarily for and by human geographers, these papers are of general interest to students of folklore and folk life; for they are focussed on the kinds of society with whose cultural manifestations the folklorist is concerned.

STEWART F. SANDERSON

EUROPEAN ANECDOTES AND JESTS. Edited by KURT RANKE. Rosenkilde and Bagger, Copenhagen, 1972. Pp. 190 and indexes.

THIS is the fourth volume in the European Folklore Series published under the auspices of the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe. Whereas an earlier volume of *European Folktales* (1963) excluded material from those countries which were not members of **the Council of Europe or signatories of the European Cultural Convention**, the present collection of anecdotes and jests (which after all are particular categories of folktale) is truly representative of the whole of Europe; for it ranges alphabetically from Albania to Yugoslavia, and geographically from Lapland to Malta and from Iceland and Ireland to the USSR and Turkey.

In presenting his choice of 215 items (excluding variants and parallels cited in the commentaries) Professor Ranke displays his customary thoroughness of scholarship and provides his readers with the necessary critical apparatus for study. This is perhaps no more than one would expect of a leading specialist in folktale research. But he has done so much more; for he has exercised skilful judgment and taste in selecting the material, a task which by its very nature can not have been easy. The sheer volume of jesting tales available in printed books and in archives is overwhelming; and selection must take account of tangled questions of international and regional distributions; of the old debate on monogenesis, polygenesis and transmission; of joking psychology and cultural differentiation; and also of ephemeral fashions in the themes and even the forms of jests. To arrive at an anthology as well-balanced as this is a remarkable achievement, whether viewed in terms of organising multi-lingual correspondence with contributions from many countries, or in terms of critical and aesthetic judgment.

Professor Ranke deals with the main critical problems in an all too brief introductory essay, in which he explains the principles he has adopted both in the choice of texts and in the style of the translations, the final English versions of which were made by Mr Timothy Buck. The anthology is documented by commentaries giving the sources of the tales and usually offering some reference to parallels. But the sources are unfortunately not always pinpointed in time and space when culled

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from unpublished field collections, nor adequately referred to printed sources. (No. 125, for instance, while certainly in oral circulation, owes a good deal of its currency today to having appeared in print in Henry Cockburn's *Memorials of His Time* (1856), and Professor Ranke's contributor should have drawn his attention to this source.) The editor has provided a bibliography, an index of types and motifs, and an index of the countries and ethnic groups (gypsies, Jews, Lapps etc.) represented in the collection.

For students of folk narrative in general, and of joke material in particular, this volume is a valuable and excellent compendium. But it is also, as Professor Ranke himself observes in passing, a book of very funny stories, and good for many a laugh. To have maintained that character in a work of serious folklore scholarship is to have made a positive and — dare one say it? — European contribution to learning.

STEWART F. SANDERSON

THE URBAN EXPERIENCE AND FOLK TRADITION. Edited by AMÉRICO PAREDES AND ELLEN J. STEKERT. Austin and London, The University of Texas Press for The American Folklore Society, 1971. \$6.50. 207 pp.

THE papers in this collection are drawn from a symposium on 'The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition' held at Wayne State University in 1968. The symposium was concerned with how urban experience affects traditional culture and also with how the study of folklore can contribute to the understanding of urban problems. The papers were originally published as a special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* (volume 83, number 328, April-June 1970). This hardback volume is a reissue of the original, with the contents rearranged and with the useful addition of a bibliography and index.

In the introduction Dr Paredes notes that 'The symposium raised questions rather than answered them; its major conclusions are signposts along the roads that research in urban folklore must follow'. This statement sets the tone of the whole work. At a time when folklorists are becoming increasingly aware of urban tradition, this book examines the interaction of various traditions in the urban environment, and although the individual papers focus attention on the survival of rural folklore in the cities, we are left with a new awareness of the importance of urban tradition as a distinct entity.

In his stimulating paper 'Is There a Folk in the City' Professor R. M. Dorson summarises his experiences during a pioneering foray into the urban backwoods of Gary, Indiana, where he met and interviewed some