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PROVERBS AND ANTI-PROVERBS AS A MEANS OF
PROMOTING AND ADVERTISING PRODUCTS IN THE
GREEK OPEN-AIR MARKETS. AN ETHNOGRAPHIC
APPROACH

Abstract: This study presents the functionality of proverbs in a modern Greek open-air market. The study is based on the ethnographic research of an open-air market in the centre of Athens, which, apart from capturing traditional and modern proverbs within the urban space of Athens, aims, on the one hand, at depicting the communicative function of proverbs, and, on the other hand, at highlighting their importance in the advertisement of products and the commercial promotion of the latter.

Keywords: proverbs, anti-proverbs, prolongement – elargissement, street ethnography, open-air market, communicative use of proverbs, product advertising

Introduction

This study deals with proverbs, as used today in the Greek social reality, and in particular in the Greek open-air markets.¹ The primary aim of this study is not the text-centric approach of proverbs, but the social “reading” of this type of artistic folk discourse, through the field research carried out in an open-air market in Athens. It took place within the framework of my post-doctorate research at the University of Athens during the academic years 2015 and 2016.

This study aims primarily at: a) highlighting the long life of proverbs and proverbial phrases that remain in use even today in multiple daily occupations of the residents of the Greek urban centre; b) depicting the vigour and adaptability of proverbs within the new frameworks of economic and social life, such as the commercial activities in the open-air markets; c) analysing at the same time the coining of new proverbs, anti-proverbs, modern prolongements – elargissements of proverbs based on the ethnographic example of the open-air markets; d) adopting familiar and in good part “traditional” proverbs by immigrants who work

at the Greek open-air markets, either as sellers or as helping personnel.

Theoretical framework

A) Open-air markets in Greece

An open-air market is a weekly event for the sale of fresh food aiming primarily, on the one hand, at providing basic food products directly from the producers and, on the other hand, at offering the producers the opportunity to channel their products directly to the consumers.² It goes without saying that, apart from the agricultural products, one may also find at an open-air market other products, alimentary or not, such as fish, clothing etc.

An open-air market is usually held once a week at a predefined location, which is always the same, and is usually a square or a street. It lasts for a few hours. It usually starts in the morning (8:00 am) and ends in the afternoon (14:00 or 15:00). The market stalls are portable, attached in the morning and detached at the end of the working hours.

Open-air markets, claiming their roots back in ancient times, are considered in some parts of the world, such as in many regions of Italy, as a cultural heritage and a main tourist attraction.

In Greece, the institution of open-air markets was established in 1929.³ Three years later, the Open-Air Market Fund was established. Open-air markets, since their establishment until the moment they reached today's form, have gone through many stages of development.

An open-air market is one of the most important events of economic and social activity in each municipality of the Attica region. As of 1932, in Athens, where only 44 open-air markets used to exist, the Open-Air Market Fund is being established.⁴ Nowadays, in Athens and Piraeus alone, 180 open-air markets take place on a weekly basis, with approximately 8,500 producers and sellers. Moreover, during the last years, 22 weekly open-air markets with organic products have sprung up, where approximately 350 producers of uniquely organic products take part.⁵

In the Greek open-air markets there are two categories of sellers: The Producers and the Professionals. The Producers are farmers or bee-keepers who sell the products they produce themselves (fruits, vegetables, honey). The Professionals buy the products they sell from different sources without being neces-

sarily Producers themselves. Every open-air market seller needs to have posted a sign indicating their name, the open-air market to which they belong and the words “Producer”, “Farmer” or “Professional”, depending on their capacity. In order to pursue the profession of an open-air market seller, a special permit is needed, the conditions of which are specified by Law.

In Greece, open-air markets are also a tradition for many, if not all cities, and are also an attraction for many tourists.

The subject of open-air markets has been addressed by many Greek folklorists and anthropologists. A very brief reference can be made to Dimitrios Loukatos, the first who noted down the importance of studying open-air markets.⁶ Dimitrios Loukatos, a pioneer in the study of modern subjects and an introducer of urban folklore in Greece, had noticed, since the early 1960's, the importance of the capital's markets (open-air markets, the central vegetable, meat and fish markets) and shops (butcher's, green-grocer's etc.). At the same time, he had not omitted noting down the importance of cryings and shouts of merchants in the markets, suggesting even the recording of these sounds (The Peddler Voice Museum - The Sounds of the Market Museum, as he used to call it).⁷ in order to preserve the original voices, the witticisms, as well as the advertising inventions and the proverbs used by merchants and producers. It is also known, as suggested by Aristeidis Doulaveras,⁸ that Loukatos⁹ gave particular attention to proverbs and their presence in the Greek economic life, both by the analysis of the main patterns used in proverbs and the presence of proverbs in advertising.¹⁰

Loukatos' contribution in the use of proverbs at the open-air markets of Athens is particularly important. It is in essence the core of this study, since it has been the kick-start for me to get involved in this subject and transform an initial suggestion into an article on the use and transformation of proverbs today.

In the following decades, Michalis Meraklis¹¹ put emphasis on the role of markets in urban centres and particularly on the new products circulating nowadays in urban flea markets. Moreover, younger folklorists, such as Vozikas¹² and Kouzas,¹³ apart from the economic procedures and the atypical economy, have also raised in their studies the matter of the way an open-air market is organised, its social role and the relationships of the urban space residents with the fair market. In general, they focus

on an overall study of the market, including its economic, commercial, social, and recreational parameters. Renée Hirschon's¹⁴ analysis on the open-air market of the municipality of Kokkinia is particularly important; it was an overall analysis of all aspects of Greek open-air markets.

B) Oral discourse and proverbs: Communicative dimensions and advertising dynamics

According to Walter Ong,¹⁵ nowadays the psychodynamics of orality has become more perceivable than ever before. The ability of words to have power and act in a determining way within modern society has become more straightforward than ever. In particular, in the advertising industry, oral dynamics has a prominent role.¹⁶ No advertisement has ever existed nor shall it ever exist, without written or oral discourse. For an advertisement to serve its purpose –sell products– insinuating, polysemous and efficient language is used. According to Alan Dundes¹⁷ this is the discourse that surprises and provokes, by violating our linguistic ambitions (but not exclusively), in a way that it can impress, be memorised and in the end convince.

Nowadays, oral advertisements are a form of mass communication in everyday life, in everyday commercial activity. On a daily basis, there are plenty of advertisements bombarding us on radio and TV shows, as well as in the streets by merchants and salespeople. The one and only goal of these advertising messages is to “sell” the advertised products and, in that way, form standards, values and the public opinion that is the leading power in the creation of prosperity and culture.¹⁸

In general, the main function of advertising messages is to pass on information to the public regarding the product and its usefulness. In other words, at first, the product is presented by the merchant in order to make it known and then a quality-advantage is presented, so that the public gets motivated to buy it.

As pointed out by American¹⁹ and Greek²⁰ folklorists, the presence of proverbs in advertisement is far more than vivid. The presence of advertisements is not confined only in printed and electronic media, but they are also inherent primarily in the oral advertisement of products, especially when sold in the streets. The view that proverbs are among the most dynamic and vivid

elements of our folk culture that adapt very easily to the new data of everyday life is thus confirmed.

But let us move on with the results of the research regarding the advertising dynamics of proverbs.

An ethnographic research: doing research on the use and functionality of proverbs at an open-air market

Approaching and getting to know the sellers and employees of the stalls has been a procedure that went through various stages. The lack of acquaintance and familiarity classified me directly to the “strangers”. However, my intention was not to hide my identity and record everything I noticed, nor stay at a distance from the subjects of the research. Thus, the method I chose for the field qualitative research was that of *participant observation*²¹ by stating on the one hand my capacity and intentions, and, on the other hand, by actively participating in the activities of the open-air market (from the beginning in the morning until the afternoon at 16:00 – 17:00, when the producers or merchants used to dismantle their stalls and leave), every Monday at the district of Patissia, where I also live. I tried to create a few *communication networks*²² with the producers and sellers of the open-air market, in order to be able to meet them and make any feeling of suspicion or disbelief towards myself disappear. The most suitable hours to meet them were the ones after 15:00, when the open-air market steadily closed, the merchants sold out their products and frequented the outdoor canteen to have a coffee or eat something. The merchants were initially reluctant to have a conversation. At first, by the means of friendly conversations and simple chats, without any questions, I tried to get access to their lives, their reality. However, even when we finally knew each other better, I thought there was no need in using strictly specific questionnaires that aim at retrieving an absolutely specific response. Having prepared already from home a set of questions, I tried, by having a conversation with them (through a *semi-structured interview*),²³ to capture their views on the proverbs and, at the same time, not to isolate these views from their broader social and economic framework. In other words, my questions aimed at various fields: a) recording the proverbs that are being used; b) highlighting the transformations and modifications of traditional proverbs; c) examining the occasions and mo-

tives for which these proverbs are uttered, and, above all, examining the extent of their efficiency as a means to promote and advertise products at the open-air market; d) verifying the reason why the merchants of the open-air market use these proverbs during the open-air market, and e) pointing out the reactions of the other side, i.e. the one of the customers and the importance of proverbs when choosing a product.

Among the tools that I used were my field notes and the researcher's notebook, which I used to record a big part of the material derived from the *participant observation*, given that the recording of the data of the research –during a period of approximately 3 months– was not easy to take place on the spot, such as on occasions where the conversations took place standing at the canteen and during transactions at the open-air market. On all the aforementioned instances, the record keeping took place after leaving the area of the open-air market. In my notebook I recorded both the proverbs and the anti-proverbs I had heard and retained.²⁴ Moreover, I recorded information on the broader economic and social framework in which the proverbs were used, i.e. I recorded the occasions on which they were used (e.g. when promoting a product or complimenting a client), and I did not omit to record the communicative impact of the proverbs, as sometimes they were warmly welcomed and sometimes rejected by clients. Finally, a camera and a voice recorder have helped me carry out the research.²⁵

The results of the research

It is quite accurate when Mark Ritson and Richard Elliott²⁶ describe advertising as a promise, which should be neither exaggerated, as it could end up being misleading, nor should it be trivialised, as competition is strong and the product would not be able to stand out. For the advertisement to “work” and not simply be “liked”, just as is suggested in their book, it should: (1) stand out, (2) link the message with the product, (3) convince, and (4) withstand in time, since the consumer should be convinced about the appropriateness and necessity of the product, in order to buy it. In order to achieve this, an open-air market merchant treats discourse or simply language in a special and creative way. So, advertising as a humble form of art without a par-

ticular style evolves into a “language”, into the “art and science” of communication.

In today’s open-air markets, well-known proverbs are used in their traditional form, and quite often their variations are also used as anti-proverbs, referring directly to products sold in an open-air market. Within the aforementioned framework, we shall try to detect the function of proverbs both as a means of advertising and as a means of commercial promotion of products in an open-air market in the city of Athens today. For convenience, noting and analysis reasons, proverbs shall be divided into two big categories:

A) proverbs as a means of advertising products

B) anti-proverbs as a means of promoting and advertising products

A) Proverbs as a means of advertising products

Proverbs may be grouped not entirely exclusively based on content, i.e. whether they refer to fruit, vegetables or fish. In any case, all proverbs of the Greek open-air market refer either literally or figuratively to Greek products, as it would be reasonable and expected. On the contrary, we may examine the grouping of proverbs based on their purpose, which is not always commercial or which is both commercial and social. Within this framework, besides the collection of proverbs, the opinions of the merchants uttering them and explaining the reason why a proverb is used on each occasion were also collected.

The following may be pointed out as the basic groups of proverbs based on their content and function:

A1) Proverbs aiming solely at the advertisement of products by highlighting elements such as the quality of the products, the strength and health they provide to anyone consuming them, the good natural conditions in which they were produced.²⁷ The main role in these proverbs is played by the products and their qualities, and the latter represent the biggest percentage of proverbs in the open-air market. Within the framework of every merchant’s advertising strategy belongs the strategy of advertising discourse. The proverbial discourse in the market is not random but is characterised by a particular advertising strategy. The advertising strategy includes (a) the central advertising message (advertising promise or proposal) based on the consumer’s gain,

(b) the rational validation of the promise, and (c) the original advertising style. Very often at the open-air market, a motto that takes the form of a verse, i.e. the form of a proverb, is the result of condensation of the three parameters mentioned above.

Yet, it is quite often the case that a proverb becomes in essence a slogan, a motto remembered by the clients of the market and in many cases it is repeated for weeks or even for months. It may be suggested that the motto or slogan is a condensation of the advertisement. It usually has a particular form and it is the “flagship of the merchant’s effort”, because its inception and coining demands care, creativity, and talent.²⁸ Victoroff describes slogans as a condensed form of a message that may be easily imprinted on one's memory, due to its brevity and originality.²⁹ To be more specific, a motto is a remarkable phrase or proverb that is generally used within a political or commercial framework and is a repeated expression of an idea or purpose. These mottoes vary depending on the genre and style; they are not detailed, but are particularly attractive. They are usually classified in two types: (a) the political,³⁰ and (b) the advertising one. In particular, the advertising message should catch the consumers’ attention and interest, convince them about the product, stimulate the desire for purchasing, guide them to buy it, and perform all the above within the few seconds that the advertising message lasts. The key traits of the message are its brevity, the easiness in memorisation and the impression it makes.³¹ Quite often an advertising message is also based on a pun or rhyme for easier memorisation. Research has ascertained that for a message to be successful (1) it should be specialised, i.e. used exclusively for this product, (2) it should be easily memorable, i.e. have a short form (the average length should be about 5 to 8 syllables), (3) it should present a charming image of the product (quality, duration, effectiveness etc.), and (4) it should maintain the attention through images, puns, proverbs, contrasts, rhyme, unison etc.³²

Namely, the following proverbs, which act in an advertising manner, may be discerned:

1. Proverbs about fruit

Πίσω έχει η αχλάδα την ουρά (The big pear has its tail at the back)

This proverb highlights that, even though not expected, bad people often lurk for vengeance.

Ένα μήλο την ημέρα το γιατρό τον κάνει πέρα (An apple a day keeps the doctor away)

This is a very well-known proverb that exists in many countries and overemphasises the importance of apples for the maintenance of human health.

Μάζεψε και αν είν' και ρώγες (Collect even if it's just grapes)

This proverb highlights the importance of money economy and the importance of the products even in small abundance.

Να λέμε τα σύκα σύκα και τη σκάφη σκάφη (Calling a fig a fig and a tub a tub)

The proverb puts emphasis on the importance of direct and plain discourse.

2. Proverbs about vegetables

Καιρός φέρνει τα λάχανα καιρός τα παραπούλια (Time brings cabbage and time brings cauliflower sprouts)

This proverb highlights the fact that there are time and social changes to which we all ought to pay attention.

Που πας ξεβράκωτος στα αγγούρια; (Where are you going bare-assed amidst the cucumber grove?)

The proverb points out mockingly that nobody should go unprepared for work.

Τι κάνεις Γιάννης; Κουκιά σπέρνω (What are you doing, John? I'm planting beans)

This proverb is used on occasions when a person does not act and in general is occupied with trivial issues instead of focusing on what is essential.

Ψωμί δεν έχουμε να φάμε, ραπανάκια για την όρεξη γυρεύουμε (We don't have any bread to eat, but are looking for radish for the appetite)

This proverb is generally used when a person does not have enough money but wants to have many goods and enjoy luxuries.

Κάλλιο χόρτα με ομόνοια, παρά ψάρι με διχόνοια... (Better greens with agreement, than fish with disagreement...)

In other words, it is better to be poor and reconciled than rich with disputes.

3. Proverbs about eggs

Κάλλιο να χω σήμερα τ' αυγό παρά αύριο την κότα (It's better to have the egg today than the chicken tomorrow)

In this proverb, the importance of prudence in life is highlighted.

Χάσαμε τα αυγά και τα καλάθια (We've lost both the eggs and the basket)

This proverb means that there has been a complete loss of an object or even loss of control of a situation.

4. Proverbs about honey and its products

Αγάλι, αγάλι γίνεται η αγουρίδα μέλι (Unripe grape gets sweet as honey at a slow pace)

Anything growing or taking place without rush matures correctly and becomes better.

Όλα είναι μέλι-γάλα (It's all honey and milk)

This proverb highlights that there is no disagreement at present.

5. Proverbs about oil, vinegar and wine

Φάε λάδι και έλα βράδυ (Consume oil and come back at night)

By this proverb, the nutritional value of oil is highlighted, as well as the sexual power it offers to the person consuming it.

6. Within the same framework belong the proverbs that highlight the importance of proper nutrition, always with good ailments.

Νηστικό αρκούδι δεν χορεύει (A hungry bear does not dance)

Άμα βρεις φαί κάτσε, άμα βρεις ξύλο φύγε (When there's food, stay; when there's beating, go)

Όταν έχεις και δεν τρως, πρέπει να σε δει γιατρός (When there's food and you're not eating, it's the doctor you should be seeking)

As admitted by the merchants themselves, the proverbs referring to ailments and highlighting in particular the fact that whoever is full is also happy, they usually urge the people passing by the

market to buy the relevant products. Manolis, 65 years old, a merchant at the market makes a relevant statement:

“These proverbs help us a lot in what we do: sell our products. It could be said that they whet the appetite of the people passing by in order to buy more.”

A2) Proverbs referring to the products of the market, but have a different targeting. Their aim is to attract the interest of the people, by provoking them. These proverbs aim at:

1. Being used as compliments for both women and men.

These compliments stress basic beautiful characteristics of their body or key characteristics of their gender.

Είσαι το κερασάκι στην τούρτα! (You're the cherry on the cake!)

This proverb wants to highlight the fact that a woman has particularly beautiful characteristics.

Αγάλι, αγάλι γίνεται η αγουρίδα μέλι (Unripe grape gets sweet as honey, at a slow pace)

This proverb refers mainly to young girls seen by the merchants at the open-air market getting more beautiful year after year.

2. Being a teasing of erotic nature, mainly regarding women.

Φάτε μάτια ψάρια και κοιλιά περίδρομο (Eyes, eat fish; and belly, the running rope of the net)

The proverb stresses that desires are often not realised. In other words, the beautiful lady passing by is not going to take any notice of the merchants.

Τα μεγάλα ψάρια, πιάνονται με μικρά δολώματα (A little bait catches a large fish)

The proverb highlights that big success may be achieved with tiny media. This is a proverb generally used for short and delicate women who are successful with men.

Το κάστανο θέλει κρασί και το καρύδι μέλι κι η όμορφη θέλει φιλί, πρωί και μεσημέρι.

(The chestnut needs wine, and the walnut needs honey, just like a beautiful lady that needs a kiss in the morning and at noon)

The proverb highlights that just like various aliments should be eaten in combination, it is thus suggested that beautiful women should be kissed often.

3. Being mocking and satirising comments mainly about the elderly, by promoting the importance of the products.

Γριάς το μεσοχείμωνο, αγγούρι της θυμήθει (In the midst of winter, the old lady asked for a cucumber)

This proverb is used on occasions when a person has demands that are irrational or way off the mark.

Η γριά η κότα έχει το ζουμί (It's the old chicken that has the good juice)

This is generally used for claiming that even mature women are beautiful.

Γλυκάθηκε η γριά στα σύκα θα φάει και τα σκόφυλλα (The old woman relishes figs so much, that she is going to eat the very leaves)

This is used when a person becomes used to a situation and constantly presents new claims.

4. Mocking but not blaming people or situations in order to promote themselves and their products.

Να μου λείπει το βύσσινο (I would rather miss the sour cherry)

This is a proverb used for other merchants, who are detestable or for goods that are considered inferior.

Περσινά ξινά σταφύλια (Last year's sour grapes)

This proverb refers to merchants bringing bad or off-season products.

Σαν το ψάρι έξω απ' το νερό (Like a fish out of the water)

This means that a person is a bit confused, that they are outside their comfort zone or in a difficult situation.

Υπάρχουν και αλλού πορτοκαλιές που κάνουν πορτοκάλια (There are orange trees that make oranges elsewhere too)

The proverb is used for indicating that if we are not satisfied by the products of a merchant, we can also choose from another merchant's products.

5. Projecting sexual insinuations, which are widely known, based on certain attributes of the products they are selling.

Φάε λάδι και έλα βράδυ (Consume oil and come back at night)

This proverb stresses that as oil has many nutritious values, it brings good health and thus sexual strength.

Κορίτσι μου, δίχως λάδι, δίχως ξύδι, πώς θα κάνουμε ταξίδι; (My lady, who are we supposed to go on a trip without oil and vinegar?)

The basic ingredients of the Greek cuisine, i.e. oil and vinegar are linked to the importance of the trip. In other words how is the merchant going to take the girl out for a walk.

6. Being ironic about the origin of the products based on proverbs regarding various origins in Greece.

Καλός, αλλά Πελοποννήσιος... (Good one, but from the Peloponnese...)

This proverb is generally used in an ironic way for products coming from the Peloponnese.

Παπούτσι από τον τόπο σου και ας είναι και μπαλωμένο (Shoe from your place, even if it is patched)

This proverb aims at supporting local products.

At this point, and before moving on with anti-proverbs, it would be interesting to have a look in general at the clients' reaction. By asking questions during my research I first wanted to find out whether the proverbs used as compliments or teasings bothered or flattered the clients. Most of them answered that not only are they not bothered by the merchants' compliments, but also the fact that they are uttered in verses, as if they were proverbs, makes them particularly beloved, since they are widely known.³³ The informants' answers make it obvious that they think the choice of praising comments or teasings at the open-air market through proverbs is pertinent.

"I'm not bothered by teasings or compliments. We, women like things like these. I personally think it is a smart way to approach clients passing through." (Eleni, 38 y.o.)

“I like it because I go to the open-air market and listen to proverbs instead of American slogans. What I mean is that I listen to traditional Greek sayings and expressions and that pleases me, because I want the Greek tradition to be preserved.” (Kostas, 56 y.o.)

Moreover, as for the commercial leg and dynamics of proverbs, most informants –who are clients at the open-air market– think this is an exceptionally successful choice³⁴ and claim that the use of proverbs referring to the merchants’ products makes them buy merchandise that they had not thought about buying in the first place.

“I myself admit that, on various occasions, proverbs on products sold at the market have pushed me to buy products that I had not thought about buying in the beginning. What I would like to say is that this is a first-class advertisement, especially for the Greek products.” (Angeliki, 41 y.o.)

B) Anti-proverbs as a means of promoting and advertising products

It is widely known that anti-proverbs meet with success at the open-air market, particularly in the last few decades. These are adjusted proverbs and I have adopted the term anti-proverbs to describe them; a very successful internationally accepted term coined by Wolfgang Mieder.³⁵ In short, it may be suggested that, based on what Mieder pointed out, anti-proverbs refer to each intentional variation of a proverb deriving from a meaningful change in one of its constituent parts. This change derives either by deleting, transforming or adding an element to the proverb.³⁶ Its main role on both written and oral level is communicative and primarily advertising: i.e. firstly, it aims at providing information, communicating an idea and, in the end, convincing.³⁷

In that respect, anti-proverbs fall exactly into the framework of the study of advertising, as defined by Dyer, who points out that the language of advertisements is more important than their visual part, and also notes that merchants use language in a particular way (playing with words and distorting their meaning), thus gaining the advantage of articulating paradoxical and controversial statements.³⁸ Among the usual strategies of the mer-

chants is the use of proverbs, the imperative grammatical mood, puns, pleasantries, unusual words, small sentences, slogans, mottoes, rhythm, rhymes, alliterations, repetitions and, in general, any kind of technique serving their goal.³⁹ Their most commonly used strategy is using language in such a way so as not to have a real meaning or at least in a way that the promises made are vague to an extent that would not bind them for a specific action, service or product. Moreover, they use language figuratively in order to make impression and attract customers' attention, by breaking linguistic rules. This special use of language in advertising messages has been noted, since "advertisements" – with regards to the intrinsically linguistic part – have formed a different genre, which has its own particular characteristics.

In general, both proverbs and sayings go through a series of changes by merchants in order to attract the attention of passers-by on a first level and promote the products they sell on a second level. During the research, when I asked them why they use anti-proverbs, most merchants noted that it was a way to attract the attention of people passing by and that in the end this brought more customers to their stalls.

The statement of Manolis (62 y.o.), a fruiterer who has been working at open-air markets for more than 40 years is indicative:

"The "tweaked" proverbs (i.e. anti-proverbs) always make people laugh more and at the end of the day attract the attention of the people passing by. On various occasions I change certain elements of proverbs in order to attract the attention of the people passing by."

In general, the following deviations from the basic patterns of standardised proverbial discourse can be noted:

1. Substituting a basic word of the proverb

- *Ενός ψαριού μύρια έπονται (Fish never come alone)*
An anti-proverb used by a fishmonger.
- *Φάτε μάτια σάντουιτς (A sandwich only to look at)*
An anti-proverb used by an itinerant peddler selling sandwiches.

2. Changing both parts of the proverb

- *Ιδού τα ρούχα... ιδού και τα εσώρουχα (Here are the clothes... here is the underwear)*
An anti-proverb used by a seller of clothes and underwear.
- *Δείξε μου τα στήθη σου, να σου πω τι σουτιέν να πάρει (You may know your breasts, by the bra they fit)*
An anti-proverb used by a seller of women's underwear.

3. Changing the first or the second part of the proverb

- *Μπρός γκρεμός και, ευτυχώς, πίσω εγώ (Between the devil and, luckily, me)*
An anti-proverb used by a merchant who wants to denote the low prices at which their products can be purchased.
- *Κάθε πράγμα στον καιρό του, και οι φτηνές τιμές εδώ! (There is a time for everything, and the place for low prices is here!)*
An anti-proverb used for highlighting low prices.
- *Το μεγάλο ψάρι τρώει το μικρό και οι πελάτες μας τρώνε μόνο φρέσκα (The big fish eats the small fish and our customers eat only the fresh fish)*
An anti-proverb used for highlighting the meaning that the fish sold is fresh.
- *Όποιος βιάζεται σκοντάφτει, αλλά με παπούτσια από εδώ σίγουρα δεν θα σκοντάφτει (More haste, less speed, but with our shoes you will certainly have speed)*
An anti-proverb used for highlighting the good quality of merchandise and in particular of shoes.

4. Changing the gender of an important word of the proverb

- *Όσα δεν φτάνει ο πελάτης, τα κάνει κρεμαστάκια (It's sour grapes for the customer)*
An anti-proverb used by a seller of electric appliances.

5. As the proverb is widely known, only its first part is uttered and this has been altered

- **Όσα δεν φτάνει η αλεπού... (It's sour grapes...)**
Only the first section of a famous proverb is uttered in order to highlight that the merchant sells products at low prices.
- **Κάθε πράγμα στον καιρό του... (There is a time for everything...)**
This is used for noting that the merchant has fresh products.

Conclusion

Based on all the above, it can be deduced that those claiming that proverbs are not a “museum piece” of artistic folk discourse, but on the contrary, have direct relevance to everyday life and in particular to commercial activity and life are vindicated. As merchants themselves note, proverbs are an integral part of the way they advertise their products. After all, as it has become obvious, proverbs are not used solely with reference to each merchant's products in order to stimulate the memory and the senses of the consumer, and buy products, but they are often used also as a means of social interaction (taking various forms: teasings, pleasantries, compliments, or irony). The social functionality of proverbial discourse is also apparent from the extensive use of anti-proverbs in the market, which are highly appreciated by customers. Lastly, the customers' statements at the open-air market make it more than obvious that they consider the presence of proverbs at the open-air market a positive aspect, which is affecting quite often the products they choose to buy. Last but not least, it is important to mention that, for many informants, proverbs used for advertising the products are in the end asked for, since they are considered to be an integral part of the open-air market. So, I would like to end with the words of Matoula – a 72 year old customer– on this subject:

“The products at the open-air market can be advertised correctly only with the use of proverbs. The reason is that this is a way merchants make the products look better and the people are asking for it. We are after proverbs because they are familiar to us; they are a part of

our everyday life and of our folk culture to which we feel so close.”

Notes

¹ G. Kouzas, “The World of the Greek Open-air Market. A Social Analysis of Functions of Open-air Markets”, *Laographia*, 42 (2013), pp. 505-518.

² See also for the open-air markets in other countries: Al. Gell, “The Market Wheel: Symbolic Aspects of an Indian Tribal Market”, *Man* 17: 3 (1982), pp. 470-491. A. Smart, “Oriental Capitalism and Sugar-coated Bullets: Representation of the Market in China”, in: J. Carrier (ed.), *Meaning of the Market*, Berg, Oxford 1997, pp. 323-342. E. Hertz, *The Trading Crowd: An Ethnography of the Shanghai Stock Market*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998. T. Bestor, *Tsukizi: The Fish Market at the Center of the World*, University of California Press, California 2003. K. Applbaum, “The Anthropology of Markets”, in J. Carrier (ed.), *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham-Massachusetts 2005, pp. 275-289.

³ G. Kouzas, “The World of the Open-air Market. A Social Analysis of Functions of Open-air Markets”, *ibid*, pp. 505-506

⁴ G. Kouzas, “The World of the Open-air Market. A Social Analysis of Functions of Open-air Markets”, *ibid*, pp. 506-507.

⁵ G. Kouzas, “The World of the Open-air Market. A Social Analysis of Functions of Open-air Markets”, *ibid*, pp. 507-508.

⁶ D. Loukatos, *Contemporary Folklore*, Athens 1963, pp. 17-20, 44-47.

⁷ D. Loukatos, *Contemporary Folklore*, *ibid*, pp. 44-47.

⁸ A. Doulaveras, “Demetrios Loukatos as a Paremiologist”, *Proverbium*, 20 (2003), pp.133-158.

⁹ D. Loukatos, “Images of a Pedlar from Our Folk Poetry and Proverbs”, *The Syneteristis*, 59 and 60-61 (1951), pp. 85-86 and pp. 109-111. D. Loukatos, “Images of Buying, Selling and Paying in Modern Greek Proverbs”, *The Syneteristis*, 65 (1952), pp. 1-12.

¹⁰ D. Loukatos, “Proverbs and Advertisement”, in his book *Contemporary Folklore*, *ibid*, pp. 33-37.

¹¹ M. Meraklis, *Greek Folklore: Social Establishment – Custom and Practices – Folk Art*, ed. Kardamitsa, Athens 2011, pp.44-45.

¹² G. Vozikas, *The Quarter of Aghia Marina in Ilioupoli and Its Fair Market: Everyday Life and the Identity of the City*, Municipality of Ilioupoli, Athens 2009.

¹³ G. Kouzas, “The World of the Greek Open-air Market. A Social Analysis of Functions of Open-air Markets”, *ibid*, pp. 505-518.

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¹⁵ W. Ong, *Orality and Literacy, The Technologizing of the Word*, Routledge, London & New York 1982.

¹⁶ W. Ong, “Literacy and Orality in Our Times”, *Association of Departments of English Bulletin* 58 (1979): 1-7.

¹⁷ Al. Dundes, "Advertising and Folklore", *New York Folklore Quarterly*, 19: 2 (1963), pp. 143-151.

¹⁸ V. Newton, "Folklore and Advertising: An Examination of Traditional Themes and Motifs in British Twenty-first-century Television Advertising Campaigns", *Folk Life* 48 (1) 2010, pp.48-49.

¹⁹ Al. Dundes, "Advertising and Folklore", *ibid.*, pp. 143-151. Francis de Caro, "Studying American Folklore in Printed Sources", in R. Dorson (ed.), *Handbook of American Folklore*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1983, pp. 411-421. V. Newton, "Folklore and Advertising: An Examination of Traditional Themes and Motifs in British Twenty-first-century Television Advertising Campaigns", *ibid.*, pp.48-62.

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