

PROVERBS–APHORISMS-APOPHTHEGMS

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ΚΑΛΙΟ ΑΡΓΑ ΠΑΡΑ ΠΟΤΕ – BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

I am sure you have heard and probably used the above proverb. Proverbs, sayings, apothegms, aphorisms, etc. abound in all languages and cultures. Many times you encounter almost verbatim the same proverb in many languages as in the above example. But there are some strange exceptions like my favorite one for “*paying dearly*”: I paid through the nose [**American**]; Πληρωσα τα

μαλλια της κεφαλης μου [**Greek** = *I paid the hair of my head*]. Pagare los ojos de mi cara [**Spanish** = *I paid the eyes of my face*]. Je payai le peau de mes fesses [**French** = *I paid the skin of my butt*].

I leave it up to you to interpret the socio-ethno-linguistic significance of why in each of these languages “*paying dearly*” is expressed in such different ways. What does it say about the national character for each of these countries?

As one would expect a culture like the Greek, which has endured more than 3500 years, has a wealth of proverbs. Kostas Strategakis has collected 1760 modern Greek proverbs in his book and lists for some of them the equivalent in Byzantine Greek and in classical ancient Greek. Here are 3 proverbs from the category ΨΕΥΔΟΣ [**LYING**]: Ο ψευτης δεν πιστευεται κι οταν αληθεια λεγει. (*The liar is not believed even when he tells the truth*).

Byzantine

Greek:

Τι καλον εχει ο ψεματαρης; Οτι λεγει την αληθειαν και ουδεν τον πιστευουν.

[*What good does the liar have? That he tells the truth and no one believes him*]. Ancient Greek:

Τουτο κερδαινουσιν οι ψευδομενοι, το μηδεν, οταν αληθευωσι, πιστευεσθαι. [*This is what liars achieve, when they tell the truth, no one believes them*]-Aesop.

Do you have any favorite proverbs you would like to share? Please send them to me, greekwordedit@greekethos.org, and

I will see if Strategakis has an equivalent one in Byzantine or classical ancient Greek.