sense of what and how exactly Lund’s informants feel about fishing, and what being a fisherman or fisherwoman means to them. The book, however, is extremely useful to anyone studying this geographical area, especially people wishing for an in-depth description of the occupational folklore and folklife of fishing.


Suzanne Waldenberger
Indiana University

In *Answered Prayers*, Eileen Oktavec summarizes more than two decades of studying milagros—tiny metal figures attached to saints’ statues in prayer or thanksgiving. Through careful study of these little artifacts, Oktavec explores the intangible religious and cultural life of the people of the Sonoran desert. She sheds light on the interpretation of prayer, petition, and negotiation between the devout and the saints, and on the ways in which milagros and their uses create connections between the mostly Native American and Hispanic people who follow this custom. Oktavek painstakingly covers virtually all aspects of a milagro’s existence, including their creation, use, and design. The appendix contains tables which categorize the milagros by type and by year. She discusses the most common designs of each type of milagro as well as the unique figures whose forms show the individuality with which this type of devotion is approached. Oktavek’s *Answered Prayers* contains the most comprehensive gathering of available milagro statistics, and will serve as a primary source.

At the heart of *Answered Prayers* are not the milagro figures themselves, but the manner in which these figures illuminate the beliefs, hopes, and fears of the people who use them. To understand the faith that the milagro represents, Oktavec conducted scores of interviews with the people involved in every aspect of production, marketing, use, and disposal of the figurines, ranging from the artisans who craft them to the priests of the churches where they are displayed. On the one hand, the fieldwork and discussion lend a sense of immediacy to the quotations and illustrations that are provided in the book. On the other, they seem to preclude a deeper exploration of the ways in which the various meanings of milagros and their uses may overlap, converge, or even conflict in the viewpoint of a single
person. Oktavec's work is a broad overview. However, by not presenting the reader with some of the faces and voices of the people who communicate with heaven through the medium of the milagro, she leaves out an important component of her research: the people for whom the milagros mean so much in those moments of prayer or thanksgiving.


David Adu-Amankwah
Indiana University

“Nyansa nni baakofo τirim”

This Akan proverb states something to the effect that no one person has monopoly over wisdom. The Wisdom of Many, edited by Wolfgang Mieder and Alan Dundes, confirms this view. First, it is a collection of twenty scholarly essays on the proverb. Second, the contributors are drawn from such diverse fields as psychology, linguistics, literature, anthropology, and folklore. Finally, the writers draw on Chinese, African, Yiddish, Irish, Finnish, and Spanish examples.

The editors' decision to open the book with an essay other than their own is appropriate; they should not claim monopoly over wisdom since that would have placed them beyond the boundaries of credibility. They begin with an essay by Archer Taylor (the accredited doyen of proverb studies) entitled “The Wisdom of Many and the Wit of One,” which leads the reader to discover the full title of the book. The essays bring out the multifaceted nature of the proverb as well as the problems—especially in regard to definition, content, and structure—that are encountered in the study of proverb use. Taylor explains that the proverb was an invention of an individual which was applied to a particular situation, often referenced by “signposts” such as “As the Bible, Plato, Shakespeare, etc. says,” which authenticate the proverb or proverbial expression. Ruth Finnegan mentions in her contribution, “Proverbs in Africa,” the problem of assigning an all-encompassing definition to the term “proverb.” Peter Seitel draws on the oblique and allusive nature of proverbial expression to build a heuristic model of proverb use, bringing out the metaphorical relationship between the imaginary situation which the proverb presents and the social situation to which it refers.

One may disagree or share the opinions expressed in The Wisdom of Many, but one thing seems clear: there is a need for a multiple approach to