

Inevitably a reviewer must make a few criticisms of a book in order to prove that he has really read it. That is the purpose of this paragraph. Hillbilly music and its offspring, country and western music, seems to be slowly winning a grudging academic acceptance and Abrahams dutifully makes a gesture in that direction by noting that "The Boys in Blue" (usually known as "He's Coming to Us Dead") was recorded by Grayson and Whitter and "Man of Constant Sorrow" was recorded by both Emry Arthur and the Stanley Brothers. One wonders why these recordings are cited when no mention is made that "Rome County" (usually known as "Hills of Roane County"), "Black Jack Davey," "The Wayfaring Stranger," "Don't Go Out Tonight, My Darling," "The Sinking of the Titanic," "Cole Younger," "Twenty-One Years," "Sinful Flirt" (usually known as "Sinful to Flirt" or "Willie Down by the Pond"), "The Roving Gambler," "The Burglar Man" (also known as "The Old Maid and the Burglar" or "Old Maid's Last Hope"), "Jim Blake," "Letter Edged in Black," "Pictures from Life's Other Side," "Gambling on the Sabbath Day," "Mother, the Queen of My Heart," "Drunkard's Lone Child" and several others in Almeda Riddle's repertoire have appeared on hillbilly or country and western recordings, some of them originating from that source. Indeed, the whole impact of the mass media on Mrs. Riddle's repertoire is slighted. Perhaps this is because the informant knows the ballad scholar's checks for authenticity too well and simply refuses to discuss topics which she thinks may disclose facts which could be interpreted as evidence that her songs come from something other than pure oral tradition. It is evident, though, that either directly or indirectly some of the ballads Almeda Riddle knows come from hillbilly or country and western records. One other criticism is of Abrahams's use of *memorat* (p. 148). Like some other scholars he seems to employ the term as a subcategory of legend, clearly a different interpretation than that of Carl W. von Sydow, who coined the word. Von Sydow and Gunnar Granberg, who was one of the earliest commentators on the term, viewed the *memorat* as a category distinct from legend rather than merely another type of legend. The preceding quibbling, however, does not mean that this is a bad book. On the contrary, it is a sound contribution to Anglo-American folksong scholarship and indicates that we might arrive at a better understanding of folklore performance if more scholars would occasionally give the folk a chance to discuss their lore. Hopefully folklorists will in the future produce more volumes like A Singer and Her Songs.

Greek Folk Religion, by Martin P. Nilsson.

Foreword by Arthur Darby Nock. Index, illustrations, xx - 166 pp.
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.

by Robert Thomas Teske.

Martin P. Nilsson's Greek Folk Religion has long been recognized as a unique contribution to the study of ancient history and of ancient religion. Composed of seven lectures delivered during 1939 and 1940 under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Norton Lectureship of the Archaeological Institute of America, and first published under the title Greek Popular Religion, the book was immediately hailed by classicists and archaeologists as a valuable treatment of "a somewhat elusive and hitherto neglected aspect of Greek religion."*

* Greece and Rome 10:30 (May, 1941): 142.

Nilsson's discussions of the religion of the countryside, rural customs and festivals, the religion of Eleusis as "the highest and finest bloom of Greek popular religion," the place of house and family among the ancient Greeks, the effect of urbanization on Greek folk religion, the important roles of superstitions, seers and oracles -- topics seldom, if ever, broached by the classical scholarship of the period -- opened to view "a religion of simple and unlettered peasants" which has proven to be "the most persistent form of Greek religion."

Within the past decade, Nilsson's little work -- mainly in the reprinted editions of 1961 and, now, of 1972 which bear the title Greek Folk Religion -- has attracted the attention of a new and appreciative audience: the academic folklorists of the United States. Their appreciation has been occasioned by several aspects of Nilsson's work. First of all, his choice of subject matter, as the individual chapter headings noted above indicate, clearly anticipates the orientation of many current forays into the field of folk religion. Books and articles treating religious customs, festivals, superstitions and seers in many different societies dot the publishers lists and the pages of numerous recent journals. Secondly, Nilsson's sympathetic depiction of the social background of the Greek peasantry, the result perhaps of his own descent from "an old line of peasants who occupied the same farm for two hundred years," looks forward to the sensitivity toward context which has recently overtaken the field of folklore. Finally, Nilsson's explicit assertion that one might gain a more balanced and comprehensive view of the whole of Greek religion by beginning from a consideration of the agricultural life of the peasants and of their beliefs -- that is, from the lower levels of Classical Greek life and thought -- presents an intriguing challenge to the modern folklorist and/or student of religion: does contemporary "official" religion become more meaningful or comprehensible when viewed from the perspective of its "folk" counterpart?

These sophistications of focus, methodology, and approach, coupled with Nilsson's easy style and the well-chosen illustrations of the work, have made Greek Folk Religion the best introduction to ancient Greek religion for the past thirty years and one of the best introductions to folk religion for perhaps the last ten. Indeed, what Arthur Darby Nock said of the work some eleven years ago has acquired in the interim even more meaning: Nilsson's Greek Folk Religion, despite its age, "retains all its freshness."

A Guide for Collectors of Folklore in Utah, by Jan Harold Brunvand.
xi - 124 pp.

Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971.

by Keith Cunningham.

Brunvand's book is, by and large, a worthy successor to the long line of guides published by various state societies to stimulate collecting in their areas; it is well organized, informative, and complimented by a number of aesthetically pleasing photographs from a variety of sources.

The book begins with a brief introductory discussion of "Folklore and Its Study," "Suggestions for Collecting Folklore," and "Folk Groups in Utah"