

Issues of Concern

What do others think of us Hellenes? If some the opinions about the people of Greece are inaccurate, that, in part has to do with quite a lot of trash which people write either seriously, or for fun. The following snippets come from a book for travellers to Greece, whose title is *'Wicked Greek'*. It was published in 1995 by one *Workman Publishing Company* and its author, Howard Tomb, acknowledges *Elisabeth Louise Brown, Vassilios Gargalas* and *Carbery O'Brien* - who are these people?

From one of the sections called **Getting Around:**

<p>Is this motor-bike equipped with a Virgin Mary ?</p>	<p>Εχει το μοτοποδήλατο εικόνισμα της Παναγίας;</p>	<p>Ay-hee to moh-toh-poh-DHEE-lahto-ee-KOH-nee-smah- tees pah-nah-gh-EE-ahs?</p>
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Apparently, that's

what you check when you go to the rent-a-bike place.

I always wondered what caused these funny accents when Americans try to speak Greek! I shall spare my phonologically educated readers from any further torture for the snippets which follow:

From the same section, a few pages later, just the thing to shout over the wire, if your boat or yacht is sinking!!

"Calling all vessels and maritime deities"

Κληση προς ολα τα σκαφη και τις θαλασσιες θεοτητες

If you get mad with another driver, you can shout things like:

"Your car is uglier than your wife!"

Η σακαρακα σου ειναι πιο ασκημη και απο την γυναικα σου!

"Hey, you Turk! Can't you tell right from left?"

ΕΕΕ! Τουρκοσπορε, Σκορδο ρεεε κρεμυδι;

In the **Culture and Arts** section, we learn that Socrates' queries included: **"Is there an ideal size for pectoral muscles?"** **"Are you certain you have to go home tonight?"** while on page 29, male travellers are cautioned about the jealousy and possessiveness of Greek men, yet are advised to use some of these immortal phrases:

"Will you be my vestal virgin?"

Θελεις να γινεις η εστιαδα παρθενα μου;

"You could tend my eternal flame"

Θα επισταταις την ασβεστη φλογα μου.

The heading on the next page ("MEDEA, WHAT A B _ _ H!) is just a preamble to what you might say to a Greek lady by way of 'smooth talk'.

"You look nothing like a horse to me".

Δεν μου μοιαζεις καθολου για αλογο.

"I admire your mustache".(sic)

Θαυμαζω το μουστακι σου.

And on visiting, say, the Parthenon, one might remark casually:

"It's pretty banged up."

Ειναι πολυ στραπατσαρισμενος.

"What happened to that Karyatid's face?"

Τι επαθαν τα προσωπα των καρυατιδων;

"How did that fellow lose his limbs?"

Που εχασε ο μαγγας τα ξερα του;

TIMELINE: FIND YOUR ANCESTORS

Year	What Greeks Were Doing	What Other Europeans Were Doing
c.1500 B.C.	Linear B Script developed	Burfr learns how to spit
c.800 B.C.	Homer composes The Odyssey and The Iliad	Gloph chases a squirrel
c.600 B.C.	Anaximander theorizes humans arose from another species	Moght notices her boyfriend's bad breath.
447 B.C.	Parthenon completed	Urml emits a series of grunts
367 B.C.	Aristotle joins Plato's Academy.	Curbl and his gang sharpen some sticks.
c.250 B.C.	Eratosthenes calculates the dimensions of Earth to within 1.3 percent.	Horb-kek begins strapping live animals to his body for

The only positive section about Greece - on page 9 - and the only one which contains any self-directed humour is the timeline above. The rest is all against your regular or not so regular Greek. Still, I thought you might enjoy it.

by Marisa Constantinides