

The travel diary of the young author to Greece and Turkey in 1967



Hanns-Josef Ortheil
The Mediterranean Journey
[Die Mittelmeerreise]

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Hanns-Josef Ortheil, born in 1951, is one of the most important contemporary German authors and has received many awards for his work, among them the Brandenburg Literature Prize, the Thomas Mann Prize, the Nicolas Born Prize and the Hannelore Greve Literature Prize. In 2009 he became the first director of the newly founded "Institute for Literary Writing and Literary Studies" at the University of Hildesheim. His novels have been translated into more than 20 languages.

In the hot summer of the year 1967 Hanns-Josef Ortheil and his father set off on a long journey. It takes them on a heavily laden cargo ship from Antwerp through the Straits of Gibraltar and on to Greece and Istanbul. They make the most of the long days at sea for thorough preparations for what is awaiting them.

For the young Hanns-Josef Ortheil Greece is a big adventure that puts what he learned at grammar school to a tough test: a centuries-old humanistic fascination meets the reality of the vibrancy of life in modern Greece, and then there are all the rituals and signs of profound Orthodox devoutness that are new to the boy. Against this setting, the end of the journey develops an especially powerful magic charm – the discovery of Istanbul and the world of Islam.

Press

"Hanns-Josef Ortheil is one of the most prolific and reflective authors of contemporary German literature." *Stuttgarter Zeitung*

"You really can't expect much more of inner movement from a piece of literature." *Deutschlandfunk Kultur*

"A great pleasure! Ortheil knows how to narrate in a relaxed manner, you get completely engrossed by this realistic life novel." *WDR2*

