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**Instructions for contributors to
SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL
OF
BYZANTINE
AND
MODERN GREEK STUDIES**

SJBMGS encourages scholarly contributions within Byzantine and Modern Greek philology and history.

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BOOK REVIEWS:

A short presentation of

ΧΡΗΣΤΙΚΟ ΛΕΞΙΚΟ ΤΗΣ ΝΕΟΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑΣ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

Rolf Hesse

During the last seventeen years three large-scale dictionaries of Modern Greek have been published:

- Λεξικό της κοινής νεοελληνικής από το Ίδρυμα Μανόλη Τριανταφυλλίδη, Thessaloniki 1998, 2013 ('Triantafyllidis'),
- Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας του Γεωργίου Μπαμπινιώτη, Athens 1998, 2012 ('Babiniotis'),
- and now (2014) the dictionary of the Academy of Athens¹, completed in only ten years ('Academy Dictionary').

The Academy Dictionary is – in spite of the relatively short time it took to compile it – a large and fully updated dictionary, based on modern lexicographical principles, thoroughly researched, and to a large extent built from scratch. A detailed review would demand much more time than the few weeks I had at my disposal. Therefore the following presentation should be regarded as only a first impression of the work.

¹ *Χρηστικό λεξικό της Νεοελληνικής Γλώσσας της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών*, σύνταξη – επιμέλεια Χριστόφορος Γ. Χαραλαμπίδης. 1,819 pages, 21 x 29,50 cm, weight 3,65 kg. Εθνικό Τυπογραφείο, Athens 2014. ISBN 978-960-404-278-4. Price 48 euro. E-mail address: vivliopolio@academyofathens.gr.

Χρηστικό λεξικό

The title *χρηστικό λεξικό* is explained² as meaning user-friendly (φιλικό στον χρήστη), in contrast to the ‘historical’ dictionary³ of the Academy. Thus *χρηστικό λεξικό* should be understood above all as a dictionary covering the Greek language of today, including the spoken language and a lot of terms of modern technology, both as transcribed terms, e.g. λάπτοπ, μείλ and μέιλ, and as calques (loan translations), e.g. ηλεκτρονικό ταχυδρομείο (under ταχυδρομείο).

According to my Greek-English dictionary *χρηστικός* can also be translated as ‘handy’ or ‘practical’. This is certainly not true of a book weighing 3.65 kg, but see below for a ‘handy’ suggestion.

Descriptive or normative dictionary

The aim of the Academy Dictionary is to describe the language as it is actually used, accepting parallel orthographies (κτίριο & κτήριο, αβγό & αυγό) and rejecting unusual spellings based exclusively on etymology or other theoretical arguments (e.g. αθλητίατρος, declared by Babiniotis to be ‘more correct’ than the usual αθλίατρος for ‘sports doctor’).

Alternative spellings of the same word are listed in their alphabetical place with a reference to the full entry (αυγό > αβγό, βρωμό > βρομό), while the entries mention both spellings: αβγό & αυγό, βρωμό & βρομάω & βρωμό.

For lack of an official spelling dictionary this acknowledgment of various widely used spellings can only be considered judicious and useful, allowing its users to choose between different spellings that the dictionary considers acceptable. The lexicographer is, however, bound to show his preferences, here preferring αβγό (the lemma) to αυγό (with only a reference to αβγό), εταιρεία to εταιρία etc., without excluding the

² By prof. Charalambakis in his speech to the Academy during the official presentation at the Academy in November 2014.

³ *Ιστορικών Λεξικόν της Νέας Ελληνικής, της τε κοινώς ομιλουμένης και των ιδιωμάτων της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών*, founded (in principle) in 1908, first volume 1933. Up until today only the letters Α-Δ have been published.

alternative spelling. It is one of the great advantages of the Academy Dictionary that it accepts variations, while at the same time it inevitably favours one spelling (the most frequent one?).

Megastructure

The dictionary has a four-page introduction titled ‘Δομή και οργάνωση του λεξικού’, which contains concise but very instructive information. The introduction is followed by a list of abbreviations and symbols, the alphabetical main part of the dictionary – 1,771 three-columned pages – and finally three pages with ‘Λατινικές φράσεις και ξένα ακρωνύμια’.

Selection of lemmata

The 75,000 lemmata and expressions⁴ have been gleaned from several electronic corpora, above all from *Εθνικός Θησαυρός της Ελληνικής Γλώσσας* (ΕΘΕΓ). I have compared the lemmata from λαμβάνω to λαμπροφόρος to the same section in Babiniotis (2012) and Triantafyllidis (2013). The numerical difference is small: the Academy Dictionary has 41 lemmata, Babiniotis 45 (including three proper names), and Triantafyllidis about 30.

But the differences are quite substantial: Babiniotis has λαμίνα, λαμνοκόπι, λαμνοκόπος, λαμνοκοπώ, λάμνω and λαμπροντυμένος, not found in the Academy Dictionary, which in turn has λαμβλίαση, λαμπάτος, λάμπραινα, λαμπραντόρ, λαμπρικέν. Thus in the Academy Dictionary we have a medical term (λαμβλίαση), a technical term (λαμπάτος), two zoological entries (λάμπραινα, λαμπραντόρ) and a contemporary textile word⁵, whereas Babiniotis has one rare biological term (λαμίνα), four words about rowing (λαμνοκόπι, λαμνοκόπος, λαμνοκοπώ, λάμνω), little used today, and the poetic adjective λαμπροντυμένος.

⁴ Σ’ αυτό εδώ το λεξικό αναπτύσσονται περίπου 75.000 λήμματα, σύμπλοκα και στερεότυπες εκφράσεις, we are told on the back flap of the book.

⁵ Λαμπρικέν [...]: διακοσμητική λωρίδα υφάσματος που καλύπτει το πάνω μέρος κουρτίνας.

The selection of lemmata in the Academy Dictionary seems to be absolutely adequate in covering the language of today (e.g. απτική οθόνη, κομπιουτεράς, σύγχροτρο) including that of the preceding decades. Thus we find almost all European currencies: ευρώ, κορόνα (& κορώνα), λεβ, φράγκο etc. but also most predecessors of the euro: δραχμή, μάρκο, πεσέτα (but not λιρέτα). Likewise European and other nationalities are of course generally included: Σουηδικός & σουηδέζικος, Σουηδός & Σουηδέζος⁶ etc. I have also checked if the Academy Dictionary can be used to read older plain dhimotiki literature⁷: almost all difficult words and expressions in the texts could be found in the dictionary (except for orthographical and dialectical variations).

A printed dictionary of this kind inevitably reflects the world in which it is written and the period in which it is published, but it is intended for long time use. However some words and abbreviations in the Academy Dictionary may be expected to be short-lived. For instance one might ask if lemmata such as αντιμνημονιακός and some abbreviations (e.g. for temporary taxes) should have been included. In electronic form this problem can be more easily dealt with through updates, but constant updating on the other hand demands many and continuous efforts and economic resources.

The lemmata

The lemmata are given in the traditional way, with a few exceptions: nouns that are mostly used in the plural are cited in the plural, and verbs are given in the 3rd person singular, if they are mostly used in the 3rd person: τρόφιμα, ζυμαρικά, and αντιβαίνει, αστράφτει, αστραποβολά. When you change lexicographical conventions, it ought to be a clear improvement, but I am not convinced that this is the case here. Of course the plural τρόφιμα is more frequent than the singular τρόφιμο, but τρόφιμο

⁶ The way it is now, however, it is not clearly indicated that the most frequent forms (at least in informal speech) are Σουηδός (m) and Σουηδέζα (f). Why my own national identity is not included is a mystery: you find δανικός & δανέζικος, but not Δανός.

⁷ Based on five pages from Laskaratos, *Ιδού ο άνθρωπος*, 1886, and five from Dido Sotiriou, *Ματωμένα Χρόνια*, 1963.

occurs 1,574 times in EUR-lex (the text corpus of the EU), and the verbs indicated are also found in the 1st and 2nd persons, e.g. αστράφτω: «Μητροπολίτη Κόνιτσας Ανδρέα να αστράφτεις και να βροντάς με την κριτική σου παντού και όχι μονόπλευρα [...]» (from Google).

Microstructure

Each article is organized as shown here (fig. 1):

υιοθετημένος, η, ο [υιοθετημένος] υι-ο-θε-τη-μέ-
νος επίθ. **1.** που έχει υιοθετηθεί: -ος; γιος. -η:
κόρη. Έμαθε ότι ήταν -. **2.** (μτφ.) που έχει γίνει
αποδεικτός: -η; άποψη.

υιοθέτηση [υιοθέτηση] υι-ο-θέ-τη-ση ουσ. (θηλ.)
1. (μτφ.) επιδοκίμασια και αποδοχή: μερική/
πλήρης/σταδιακή -. - άποψη/αρχών/μέτρων/
πρότασης/προτύπων/συστήματος/σχεδίου δράσης/
τακτικής. Πβ. ενστερνισμός. **2.** υιοθεσία παιδιού.
[< μτγν. υιοθέτησις]

υιοθετώ [υιοθετώ] υι-ο-θε-τώ ρ. (μτβ.) [υιοθετ-είς
... | υιοθέτ-ησα, -ήσει, -ήθηκε, -ημένος, -ώντας]
1. αναγνωρίζω ένα παιδί που στερείται τη φυσι-
κή του οικογένεια ως δικό μου και αναλαμβάνω
την κηδεμονία του μέσω της νομικής πράξης της
υιοθεσίας: -ήθηκε από ένα άτεκνο ζευγάρι.
2. (μτφ.) αποδέχομαι και υποστηρίζω: - αλλαγές/
αποφάσεις/μια άποψη/ερμηνεία/θέση/ιδέα/φράση.
- ένα δόγμα/έναν νόμο. Έχει -ήσει εχθρική/φιλική
στάση/συμπεριφορά απέναντι στον ... Πβ. ασπάζ-,
εγκολπών-, εναγκαλιζ-, ενστερνίζ-ομαι. **3.** παρα-
κολουθώ από μακριά, συνήθ. μέσω Συλλόγων
και προγραμμάτων, την εξέλιξη ενός απειλού-
μενου είδους ή οικοσυστήματος, προσφέροντας
οικονομική ενίσχυση: -ησε μια μεσογειακή φώκια.
Βλ. -θετώ. [< 1: μτγν. υιοθετώ, 2,3: γαλλ. adopter]

υιός [υιός] υι-ός ουσ. (αρσ.) (λόγ.): γιος. •
ΣΥΜΠΛ.: άσωτος (υιός) βλ. άσωτος, ο Υιός του
Ανθρώπου/του Θεού βλ. άνθρωπος • ΦΡ.: και
υιός/υιοί: σε επώνυμια οικογενειακής επιχείρη-
σης, για να δηλωθεί συνιδιοκτησία πατέρα και
γιου/γιων. [< αρχ. υιός]

Fig. 1:
Academy Dictionary, p.
1652, part of first column
(magnified)

The lemma υιοθετώ is followed by the polytonic spelling (υιοθετῶ) in brackets, then the syllabification (υι-ο-θε-τῶ), part of speech and inflection. The body of the actual entry is divided into three meanings: 1. ‘adopt a child’, with a detailed definition⁸, and one example, 2. ‘adopt in metaphorical use’ with several objects as examples, and with references to related verbs like ασπάζομαι, and 3. ‘follow and support economically an endangered species’, with one example. Then a reference to the lemma -θετώ, and finally the etymological part, divided into: [1: μπν.] = μεταγενέστερος, not found in the list of abbreviations, but under its own lemma μεταγενέστερος is explained as referring to «τους αλεξανδρινούς και ρωμαϊκούς χρόνους», and [2 and 3: French: adopter].

The polytonic spelling and the syllabic division are not found either in Babiniotis or in Triantafyllidis (which, on the other hand, gives the pronunciation of each lemma: υιοθετώ [iθetó]). The analysis/definition of the different meanings of the lemmata is convincing, and their number seems absolutely reasonable. Where Babiniotis for example distinguishes 34 meanings of κάνω and 52 (!) of κόβω, the Academy Dictionary has 18 meanings of κάνω and 10 of κόβω. The order in which the meanings are presented reflects their frequency. Thus, whereas the first meaning of υιοθετώ is the literal one, followed by the metaphorical meaning, the opposite is the case for υιοθέτηση: 1. επιδοκίμασία και αποδοχή [...] 2. υιοθεσία παιδιού [...]. Priority has been given to the frequency of the meanings in normal use.

The entry κάνω is divided into 18 meanings:

1. απολεξικοποιημένο ρήμα: ~ αγορές [...]
2. εκτελώ ένα έργο, προβαίνω σε ενέργεια [...]
3. φέρομαι: τι κάνεις έτσι; [...]
4. φέρνω, οδηγώ κάποιον ή κάτι σε μια κατάσταση [...]
5. φτιάχνω, κατασκευάζω [...]
6. ασχολούμαι με ...: ~ αγγλικά [...]

⁸ ‘αναγνωρίζω ένα παιδί που στερείται τη φυσική του οικογένεια ως δικό μου [...]’. Why ‘που στερείται τη φυσική του οικογένεια’? This is certainly often the case, but it has nothing to do with the legal definition of adoption.

It is interesting to note that the first meaning (i.e. the most frequent), is the function as a “dummy” verb: *κάνω απεργία = απεργώ* etc. In terms of methodology this is a very important and excellent principle, but I wonder if *απολεξικοποιημένο ρήμα* is understandable to the majority of users. After all, an important lexicographical principle is: do not explain a word with a more difficult or unknown one. Besides, people generally expect to find the ‘basic’ meaning as number 1. The Academy Dictionary has shown courage in breaking with this often problematic expectation, thus contributing to serious lexicography. That being said, in a few cases, as here with *κάνω*, it might have been better to deviate from this principle.

Collocations and Idioms

The definitions of the different meanings (with examples) are followed by collocations and idioms. A very large number of expressions has here been collected, presented, and explained, making the dictionary an indispensable instrument for studying Modern Greek at a higher level. The distinction between collocation (ΣΥΜΠΛ. = *σύμπλοκο*) and idiom (ΦΡ. = *φράση*) is nowhere defined⁹. My impression from a few tests is that established combinations of noun + adjective are listed as collocations, and other (typically longer) expressions are presented as idioms (phrases). In Germanic languages the innumerable combinations of verb + adverb/particle¹⁰ demand a different microstructure, but for Greek the system applied in the dictionary seems to function very well.

⁹ The usual distinction that a collocation consists of unpredictable but understandable combinations of words, whereas an idiom cannot be understood from the meanings of its single elements, does not seem to apply here. Wikipedia: Collocation is a “sequence of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance” (example: strong tea), and: “An idiom’s figurative meaning is separate from the literal meaning”.

¹⁰ E.g. Danish: *komme ind, ~ ned, ~ op, ~ ud, ~ ved ...* (‘come in, come down, come up, come out, regard ...’). In English such verbs are called phrasal verbs.

Etymologies

The last element in each entry are the etymologies, which have been updated on a very large scale and are short and precise. Thus *κατσάβραχα* is explained as coming from a hypothetical **ακανθάβραχα*, whereas Babiniotis' Etymological Dictionary (probably erroneously) gives *κακιά βράχια* as a supposed origin. In cases of loan translations what is given as etymology is the origin of the semantic contents of the word rather than the origin of the Greek word itself or its parts. Thus *εφαλτήριο* is simply explained as: [*< γαλλ. tremplin*]. The numerous etymologies of this kind help to correct the false image of Modern Greek vocabulary as almost genuinely Ancient Greek whereas many words in reality are foreign in origin. Thus we see how a lot of words have been created (in Greece or – especially for scientific terminology – in Western Europe or America) by combining elements of Ancient Greek or sometimes ascribing a modern (scientific) meaning to words that used to exist with another meaning. This is the case, for example, of *βιολογία*, which originally meant 'property tax'! The etymological information is very short, often limited to the immediate source, without going further back and without explaining the elements that compose the word. This is good practice in modern lexicography for practical use. Nevertheless *εφάλλομαι* is, after all, a well-established ancient verb meaning 'jump upon', and many users may be curious to see the connection between *εφαλτήριο* and *εφάλλομαι*. The extremely compact etymological information may also lead to some confusion, as with the etymology of *λάμπα* ('lamp') explained as: [*< γαλλ. lampe, ιταλ. lampa*], whereas the verb *λάμπω* comes from: [*αρχ. λάμπω*]. Is the resemblance just accidental, one might ask?

Suggestion: Prepare an abridged edition

Thanks to the enormous and competent work that has been completed with this new dictionary of Modern Greek, the ground has been prepared for a better future of Greek lexicography. No dictionary in the world can meet all needs and expectations, and a first edition of such a great work always leaves room for improvements and additions. Personally I would suggest that a smaller and handier dictionary should be

edited on the basis of the massive material and high expertise behind the Academy Dictionary. For this abridged and *practical and user-friendly* (χρηστικό) dictionary I have the following suggestions, above all as regards reducing its size:

1. Reduce a little the number of lemmata, e.g. rare words like ληψοδοσία. Some verbal nouns may be omitted or left as sublemmata without explanation, e.g. λήστευση from ληστεύω.
2. Drop the polytonic orthography and the syllabification. Instead, indicate, if necessary, the pronunciation (e.g. -ιο [io] or [jo]).
3. Drop most references to other lemmata. For collocations and phrases that implies: Establish clear and self-evident principles on where to look expressions up, typically the first ‘important’ word, and keep the references only when this principle remains unclear. Thus the entry πηγαίνω would become 74 lines shorter. Who would really look under πηγαίνω for the expression μου πάει ο κούκος αηδόني?
4. Reduce the number of examples and synonyms. On the other hand many users would certainly welcome some explanations about distinctions between synonyms.
5. Add a little more etymology. People are really interested!
6. Reduce the amount of encyclopaedic information about well-known animals, plants etc., but keep the very useful Latin names. If I want to know something about dogs, I would never look in a dictionary. There I expect to find information about the *word* dog (σκυλί, σκύλος), but not to learn that a dog has four legs and bites and barks.
7. More coordination of ‘word families’. Much excellent work has already been done in the full dictionary, but e.g. for the numbers 30-90, one of them (30) could be chosen as a standard with many examples, and the entries 40-90 could then refer to the standard and be reduced to central functions and special phrases and expressions.
8. Print with a slightly larger and clearer typography – especially for old eyes!
9. Perhaps the most urgent question for an abridged edition is: Will there be an electronic edition and can it be accessed online for free? If yes, some of the above suggestions may be superfluous.

At the University of Copenhagen a colleague told me that students use almost exclusively the online Triantafyllidis dictionary – they are simply more or less unwilling if not outright adverse to consulting a big paper dictionary.

I want to emphasize that the above suggestions concern a hypothetical abridged edition and are not meant as criticism of the existing Academy Dictionary. It is a fantastic achievement, realized in a very short time by professor Christophoros Charalambakis and his competent team, under the auspices and with the financial and moral support of the Academy of Athens.

A warm thanks to Leo Kalovyrrnas, Athens, for correcting and improving my English.

