

THE *DICTIONARY OF THE COMMON MODERN GREEK LANGUAGE*
OF THE INSTITUTE OF MODERN GREEK STUDIES
(MANOLIS TRIANDAFYLLIDIS FOUNDATION)
OF THE ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

ANASTASSIA TZIVANOPOULOU

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

The *Dictionary of the Common Modern Greek Language* is being compiled¹ under the supervision of the Institute of Modern Greek Studies (Manolis Triandafyllidis Foundation) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The intention is to produce a dictionary of the modern Greek language as spoken by the average Greek of today, as written in modern Greek prose and in the daily and periodical press, as heard on radio and television. Essentially descriptive in character, it will to some extent find itself obliged to prescribe as well as to describe; it will pave the way for a broader and more systematic lexicographical record of the Greek language.

The Dictionary is addressed first and foremost to Greek secondary school pupils and their teachers, to Greek university students, foreign learners of Greek at a fairly advanced stage and teachers of modern Greek as a foreign language. However, insofar as the Dictionary is intended to instruct in the functions and use of the language in the various different registers and in all areas of community life, it is addressed to the educated public at large.

1. SELECTION OF ENTRIES

Words of highly limited or specialized use are not included, since the Dictionary is not intended to be a Thesaurus of modern Greek. The items selected include, apart from those words making up the core of modern Greek: all grammatical words; prefixes and suffixes; first and second parts of compound words. Of scientific terms, the most common are included: those known from use in newspapers, magazines and articles of a popularizing nature, as well as those terms common to two or more sciences. Of words used in literary writing, those which have passed into ordinary written or spoken use. Of neologisms and loan-words, only those

1. It appeared in 1998. By agreement with the Institute the Centre for the Greek Language has also prepared an electronic version of the Dictionary and made it available in 2000 to the Greek educational community. Compilers of the Dictionary: E. Mavrakaki-Polyviou, Y. Moros, N. Papaioannou, Y. Papanastassiou, A. Simota-Vassila, S. Tsolaki, P. Florou-Panayotopoulou, N. Fotiou.

which are in general use. Entries will also include items from vocabulary of historical value, even outdated words, the more common slang words and profanities, adjectives derived from proper nouns, examples of onomatopoeia, and words from the metalanguage of the Dictionary. The compilers have excluded idiomatic words and dialect forms of standard words as well as ancient words (but not archaizing types of words or expressions which are still used in the language of today). The best-known idiomatic words have been included, and appear in the Dictionary clearly indicated as «λαϊκότροπος».

The Dictionary will include some fifty thousand lemmata and will be published in one volume.

To make rapid consultation of the Dictionary possible for the user, the lemmata have been listed alphabetically. However, to save space this principle has not been followed in the case of diminutives, augmentatives and adverbs derived from adjectives which hardly differ in semantic terms from the original word under which they are entered. Naturally, separate lemmata are made for any of these derivatives which do differ semantically from the root word. Evidently, the above is true only of those diminutives and augmentatives which have not lost their original diminishing or magnifying function. For the same reasons and in the same cases, many adjectives which have become nouns are not accorded their own separate lemma.

One of the Dictionary's original features is that it applies the method of homophony where older dictionaries use the method of multiple meaning: in other words, two or more lemmata are made for words which would be dealt with in older dictionaries as alternative meanings of the same lexical item. This separation into distinct lemmata is applied in the following circumstances: (a) when two or more lemmata with the same phonetic form and spelling have a different etymology, (b) when they differ morphologically, and (c) when they have completely different meanings.

In the case of words with more than one form, the most common form will be selected as the basic lemma; below the other forms will be listed in alphabetical order, referring to the basic lemma.

2. INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE ARTICLE. THE HEADWORD

We take as the standard form of the headword: for nouns the nominative singular, for adjectives the nominative singular in all three genders of the positive degree, for pronouns and numerals the nominative singular in all three genders, and for verbs the first person singular of the present tense active (or passive). We diverge from this principle only in special cases such as the *pluralia tantum*, the deponent verbs or some verbs which occur only in the third person.

The noun is indicated by the presence of its article; when a corresponding feminine form exists, it is inserted alongside the masculine.

In the case of adjectives, numerals and pronouns, the whole form of the masculine is given, but, for the other genders, only that part of the word which changes is provided (which usually coincides with the ending).

The *-άω* form of verbs is given where such a form exists.

The lemma is followed immediately by its phonetic transcription, based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (*Principles of the International Phonetic Association* 1949) adapted to suit modern Greek. As no special studies have yet been conducted which might provide us with statistical data on elision or the pronunciation of loan words, in the case of elision it was decided that preference would be shown to the non-elided pronunciation in those learned forms which can be pronounced either with or without elision, e.g. *διάθεση* [diaθesi] and not [ðjaθesi]. For loan words, the pronunciation which is closest to the original foreign form will be preferred, provided that such pronunciation is actually employed with some degree of frequency by Greeks, e.g. *σαμπάνια* [sampaña].

The numbers which follow the phonetic transcription of inflectional words refer to tables of inflectional paradigms. Forms not covered by these tables are given within the entry itself in italic letters.

Of the various types of definition which are used elsewhere, we have generally avoided the following: definition by means of a scholarly synonym, etymological definition, definition by means of words related to the entry itself, and encyclopaedic definition. We have preferred to define the entries on the basis of their distinctive features and their syntactic form, whenever this leads to differentiation of meaning, as in the case of transitive and intransitive verbs. In certain cases, an entry may not be defined by a synonymous paraphrase but by an explanation in the metalanguage. Such explanations are frequent in the case of prefixes, suffixes, first and second parts of compound words, in phrases and expressions, in grammatical words and elsewhere, e.g. *ήλιος με δόντια* for 'a winter day, sunny but freezing cold'. We have tried to keep the words used in the definition as simple and common as possible, and they are themselves of course to be found as lemmata in the Dictionary.

The meanings of each lemma are not necessarily listed in their chronological order of appearance. Priority has been given to the general over the particular, the literal over the metaphorical, the more commonly used over the less common or rare. We must not of course forget to mention the degree of subjectivity inevitably involved here.

As a rule, synonyms are offered after the definition. Synonyms for the word in some special use are listed after the example of that use and are given in the same case as the word in the example on which comment is being made. A synonymous phrase may be offered as a synonym. Since the Dictionary is not a special dictionary of synonyms, to save space, only the closest synonyms are supplied. When a

given synonym has more than one meaning, it is accompanied by the number referring to the relevant semantic analysis under its own lemma. The instruction *πρβ.*, ‘παράβαλε’, ‘compare’ is used for distant synonyms to which we refer for purposes of comparison or differentiation. Antonyms are supplied even more sparingly. They are omitted altogether when mentioned in the definition. Moreover, as in the case of synonyms, an antonym may be given after the example.

The examples will be sufficient in number to confirm and demonstrate the meaning, use and syntax of the entry. Every effort has been made to keep the examples concise and clear, to choose examples which represent –as far as possible– a variety of grammatical types and syntactic structures but without overlapping in meaning. Examples have been drawn from the following sources: literature² (the extracts from writers are presented unacknowledged and unedited, where they are short and succinct; otherwise they have been adapted); the press (newspapers, periodicals, popularizing works and scientific publications); television and radio, and finally the compiler himself. The last has many advantages as a source of examples: his material is taken from contemporary linguistic reality, and he can select examples of speech which are commonplace without being ridiculous. The use of these examples does, of course, increase the degree of subjectivity of the Dictionary.

The definitions of meaning for each entry are followed by corresponding phrases (phrases, expressions, sayings, proverbs) with the same meaning. The phrases are always explained and an asterisk is used to refer readers to the analysis of a phrase under another entry. Proverbs are included only when they are very commonly used or serve to clarify the meaning of the entry.

Before the definition, and in parenthesis, are supplied the semantic features, *metaphor*, *extension*, which justify the classification and determine the semantic derivation. Information is also given concerning the register of use of the word or particular meaning; in other words whether the use is rare, if it belongs to a particular science, art, profession, whether it is used in familiar language (the language of friendly intercourse), whether it is spoken in slang, whether it belongs to literary, dated or broadly known dialect forms of the language, whether it is used to describe persons or things.

In the etymological part of each article, drawn up by Professor E. Petronias, the reader will find the history of the word, in both its morphological and semantic aspects, and, in certain special cases, in its phonological aspect as well. The etymology will clarify whether the word originated in ancient Greek, in the Hellenistic period, or in medieval Greek, whether it is a word borrowed to medieval or modern Greek, or whether it is a recent popular creation; in the last case characterization is omitted. It will also be established whether the word was created

2. The late Professor Linos Politis donated to the Institute the unedited material gathered from excerpting of Greek literary texts (from the 18th to the first half of the 20th century).

within the more recent learned tradition on the basis of an earlier original or whether it is a learned loan from earlier periods in the language's history, an example of internal borrowing. An etymological history is also provided for those words which have come from foreign languages, either by means of the popular or the learned tradition. There is a description of those scientific and technical terms which did not exist in ancient times but have been created by foreign scientists on the basis of ancient Greek, or a combination of ancient Greek and Latin linguistic elements, and have now entered the modern Greek language via modern foreign languages or international scientific terminology.

Our immediate goal is to complete the first edition of the Dictionary. Once it has been published the work of improvement and renewal will continue, just as it does in dictionary publishing houses all around the world. From that point on, the basic dictionary itself will require immediate revision, paving the way for an improved second edition, and new dictionaries may also be prepared on the basis of the original volume: e.g. a small version for primary school use, special editions produced in collaboration with scientists and technical experts in various fields of human knowledge, a dictionary of endings, a phonetic dictionary, an illustrated dictionary, etc.

The importance of our task –the compilation and publication of a scholarly, properly edited dictionary of modern Greek– requires little comment. The spread of the demotic language into every area of modern Greek life makes the compilation of such a dictionary an absolute necessity, not just in the sphere of education but for the whole of Greek society. The remarkable technological progress in all areas of human activity, all over the world, results in the creation every day of new scientific terms and expressions which are absent (and this is of course an international phenomenon) from existing dictionaries.

In conclusion, we should like to thank all the members of the Administrative Council of the Institute for their unstinting support, the President, Professor G. Parassoglou, for the time he has devoted to every problem which has arisen, especially now that we find ourselves in the last stages of publication, and the Director, Mr. K. Prokovas. Last but not least, we must emphasize how valuable we regard the contribution of the three-member committee of professors from the Faculty of Philology of the University of Thessaloniki, D. Lypourlis, M. Setatos and K. Tsantsanoglou, which is overseeing the production of the Dictionary and collaborating on a regular basis with the Dictionary team in resolving problems and laying down guidelines.

Translation CHRIS MARKHAM

References

Principles of the International Phonetic Association. 1949. London: Department of Phonetics, University College London.