

THE *HISTORICAL DICTIONARY* OF THE ATHENS ACADEMY

CHRISTOPHOROS CHARALAMBAKIS

Athens University

1. INTRODUCTION

To avoid any misunderstanding, I should like to state first of all that I am here in my capacity as a lexicographer and not as the elected Director of the Centre for the Compilation of the *Historical Dictionary* of the Athens Academy. This means that what I have to say does not necessarily reflect the views of the country's highest institution of learning. I shall be formulating my own opinions on the quality, progress and prospects of the *Historical Dictionary* (*HD*), some of which have already been published in various scholarly journals.¹ Furthermore, in another series of studies I have discussed questions of lexicographical practice and meta-lexicography directly linked to the *Historical Dictionary* (Charalambakis 1994a; 1999a, b, c). Having served for six years (1977-1983) as a redactor of the *HD*, I have first-hand experience of the various theoretical and practical problems encountered in this ambitious lexicographical enterprise, the most grandiose ever undertaken in Greece.

2. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE DICTIONARY

Ninety years have now passed since the special Commission² embarked on the preliminary stages of compiling the *Comprehensive Thesaurus of the Greek Language* (*Θησαυρός όλης της Ελληνικής γλώσσας*). It soon became apparent, however, that the grand design would prove impossible to realize.³ It was thus decided to compile a "Provisional" Dictionary –its provisional character has remained unchanged until today– but without altogether abandoning the idea of the

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1. I have addressed the lexicographical issues involved in the *HD* in Charalambakis 1982a (see particularly p. 57-58) and 1982b (see particularly p. 38-40 which examine the dialect features of literary works not recorded in the *HD*). The theoretical and practical problems encountered by the *HD* are examined exhaustively in Charalambakis 1994a.
 2. It was established by Royal Decree on 4th November 1908, with K. Kontos as chairman, G. Hatzidakis as his deputy and S. Menardos as secretary.
 3. Georgacas (1976, 253) notes: "The romantic idea that a colossal dictionary is required, covering all the periods between 1400 B.C. and 2000 A.D., is utterly unrealistic and as such should play no part in serious academic discussion".

“Great” Historical Dictionary, the true thesaurus of the language.⁴ In 1914 the father of Greek linguistics, G. Hatzidakis, persuaded prime-minister Eleftherios Venizelos to set up a public entity under the name *Historical Dictionary of Modern Greek, both in its standard form and in its dialectal varieties* (Ιστορικό Λεξικό της νέας Ελληνικής της τε Κοινώς Ομιλουμένης και των Ιδιωμάτων). The Athens Academy took over the compilation of the *Historical Dictionary* from the year 1927, approximately a year after its foundation.

The idea of compiling a Dictionary of the Greek language, both ancient and modern, was first conceived by Adamantios Korais, evidently influenced by similar enterprises undertaken during the Enlightenment in France and other European countries.⁵ Although the name of G. Hatzidakis was associated with the creation of the Dictionary, the fact is that at the beginning of the 20th century the climate was not sufficiently calm and sober for laying the proper scholarly foundations required for such a work, which became inopportunistically linked with the celebrations to mark the centenary of the rebirth of the Nation, and was to be:

... a glorious and resplendent beacon, signalling the immortality of the Hellenic race and the indivisible unity of the Greek Nation, and moreover, a monument to the immortality of the richest of all the languages of the world ... (Papadopoulos 1933, η’).

The emotional and ideological charge the Dictionary was made to bear had direct consequences for its overall structure and organization. Particular emphasis was laid on the national character of the work, whose ultimate objective was to illuminate the history, folklore and, in general, the culture of the Greek people by means of their language – as it manifests itself in the powerfully expressive idioms of modern Greek. The shilly-shallying of the editors and, finally, the innumerable instances of substantial divergence from the original plan, led to a host of inconsistencies and inaccuracies, which were to grow even more numerous as the Archive of the *HD* grew richer.

4. It appears that the word “Thesaurus” was also understood in its literal sense, to judge from the first Royal Decree of 1908 which stipulated (article 11) that at the offices of the Commission “all the proofs ready for printing shall be kept far from danger of fire in a safe to which keys shall be held by the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and of Public Education and by the Chairman of the Commission”. It is apparent from this section of the Decree that the “Great” Historical Dictionary was not originally intended to be particularly large.

5. See Vayakakos 1977, 43-50 where the contribution of Hatzidakis to the establishment of the *HD* is examined. Hence we can regard as inaccurate the assertion of Papadopoulos (1933, ζ’) that G. Hatzidakis was the first to conceive the idea of compiling a dictionary of the ancient, medieval and modern languages. Also inaccurate is the statement that the first to stress the need for and to support in theory, as early as 1886, the idea of compiling a Historical Dictionary of Greek was Psycharis, made by Kriaras (1981, 191).

First and foremost, the title “historical” was accorded to a dictionary which is in reality nothing of the sort,⁶ since “the language regarded as currently spoken is that used from 1800 onward”. Texts and dictionaries dating from before 1800 and back to the 16th century were, it was decided, to be taken into account only in the etymological section of the entries – not that this rule was consistently observed.⁷ But what are in fact the criteria by which a dictionary is defined as “historical”? International practice has shown that even a large contemporary dictionary can take into account up to five hundred years out of the life of a language.⁸ The supposedly *Historical Dictionary* of the Athens Academy finally confined itself to the last two hundred years, and these are only subjected to fragmentary examination, using the vaguest of criteria in its selection of varieties of text.⁹ The adjective “historical” denotes both the evolution of the linguistic stock of former and contemporary stages in the language, and the evolving aspect of, exclusively, earlier stages, which is complemented with synchronic observations. In the *HD* the notions of *synchronicity* and of *diachronicity* in language are confused: the interpretations of the lemmata employ ancient words which, by synchronic criteria, are outside of linguistic use. The reader is thus confronted with a grave methodological contradiction: the dictionary listing as its lemmata words dating from the last two hundred years, but in many cases explaining them by means of words dating back to much earlier periods and in fact unknown to the mass of the educated public. One wonders what the point is of explaining the word *γυναικάς* in its sense of ‘θηλυπρεπής’ by using the word *θηλυδράας*, which we meet infrequently in Herodotus, Lucian, the sophist Libanius and Nikitas Choniatis. Under the entry *αθάνατος* (II) we are informed that “from the fibres (of the agave) are manufactured ‘trichapta’ [a kind of lace-work], and ropes”. How many readers can possibly know the word *τρίχαπτον*?

Secondly, the *HD* is not even the dictionary of the language “in its standard form” that its full title proclaims. It omits most learned words from its entries on the

6. Manolis Triandafyllidis (1963, 441) emphasized as early as 1916-17 that it was not correct to describe the dictionary in its current form as “historical”, since such a title did not correspond to what the work actually offered its readers.

7. Regarding the chronological limits of the language to be studied by the *HD* utter confusion prevailed. Of the three possible strategies discussed (i. That only the living language be included, ii. That the language of the people be included from 1453 onward, and iii. That the scope be broadened to include the modern Greek which was already emerging as early as the 11th century) no single one was consistently preferred.

8. This has been the case in most comparable works of lexicography in Western European languages. The *German Dictionary* (*Deutsches Wörterbuch*) compiled by the brothers Grimm took as its starting point the mid-fifteenth century. The Dutch dictionary (*Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*) explores the history of words from the year 1500 onward. The comparable *Dictionary of the Swedish Academy* (*Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*) describes the language from the beginning of the 16th century onward.

9. Once again, quite arbitrary criteria determined the starting date of 1800, instead of 1821 or, even better, 1830 – the year in which the independent Greek state was founded.

grounds, according to Hatzidakis, that these constitute the vocabulary of the “katharevousa”.¹⁰ Now the “katharevousa” form of the language was indeed at one time “independent”, in the sense that it constituted a “closed system”, divorced from the actual linguistic reality. But today things have changed. The demotic has been enriched by the learned language, innumerable lexical items from the latter having been harmoniously incorporated into the nucleus of standard modern Greek.

In essence the *HD* was and remains a dictionary of modern Greek dialects and idioms, characterized by failure to reach a satisfactory balance in its treatment of their various lexicological, morphological and semantic peculiarities. However, even if it is regarded as a dialect dictionary pure and simple, problems still arise in the presentation of dialect material so disparate from the historical, chronological and geographical points of view as to include on the one hand the Cretan, Cypriot and Pontic dialects, in parallel with a study of the idioms of the rest of Greece, and on the other perceptibly different dialects, with their many peculiar features, such as those of the Tsakones, the Greeks of Cappadocia and those of southern Italy. It was this “breach” between the modern Greek dialects which led A. Thumb to conclude that these dialects differ more greatly from one another than the Romance languages from each other.

The impossibility of covering such disparate dialect material in one and the same dictionary, which would either have to assume such unmanageable dimensions as to prove of little practical use, even to the expert, or would never advance beyond the planning stage, seems to have been acknowledged, implicitly at least, by the Athens Academy, which in a number of ways supported experienced redactors of the *HD* in their efforts to produce separate dictionaries, issued by the Academy in tastefully produced editions of irreproachable scholarship. These were the dictionaries of the Greek of southern Italy, by A. Karanastassis (1984-1992), and of the Tsakonian dialect, by T. Kostakis (1986-87).

The first serious problems began with the creation of the Archive for the *Historical Dictionary*. Excerpting started with printed dictionaries and glossaries, literary works,¹¹ manuscripts of the Athenian Linguistic Society (η εν Αθήναις Γλωσσ-

10. This issue was treated in Georgacas 1983. See in particular Appendix 1, p. 21-23, which is based on material gathered by Ch. Charalambakis. It is inconceivable that a dictionary of standard modern Greek should omit words such as: *ακτίνα*, *ακτινίδιο*, *ακτινογραφία*, *ακτινολόγος*, *γαριδάκι*, *γαριδοσαλάτα*, *γαστροοραγία*, *γελοιοποιώ*, *γελοιότητα*, *γενναϊόδορος*, *γενετική*, to name but a few. Even the latest volume, issued in 1989, omitted the words *γραμματολογία*, *γυμνισμός*, *γυμνιστής*, *γραφειοκρατία*, *δακτύλιος* (e.g. *εσωτερικός δακτύλιος*), *δακτυλογράφος*, *δακτυλογραφώ*, etc. Despite the pleas of several of the original compilers of the *HD* that learned items should not be omitted, their exclusion was finally decided upon on the grounds that to include them would damage the internal unity of the work and create an inopportune and needless “diglossia”.

11. From the very beginning the criteria for selection of literary works were arbitrary, and in the course of time the whole enterprise was abandoned. Thus, excerption was made of, for example, the poetic works of Ioannis Polemis and Sotiris Skipis, but not of Angelos Sikelianos or Kostas Varnalis.

σική Εταιρεία) and the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople (ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύνδεσμος). As early as 1910 this Archive was deemed inadequate and work commenced on a second, for which the accumulation of material still continues today. Thus instead of setting a date for the completion of the Archive and compilation of the Dictionary on the basis of this material and this material alone, as M. Triandafyllidis urged from as early as 1916-17, it was decided that priority should be given to the collection of material. This was not unreasonable, given that the dialects and idioms had now begun to lose ground at an alarming rate under the pressure of standard modern Greek, and there was imminent danger of perhaps irrecoverable loss of a large part of the spoken language of the uneducated people of the countryside. As a consequence of this decision, the actual compilation of the dictionary became secondary to the amassing of material, as is evident from the tardy progress made towards publication.¹²

The flaws in the compilation of the *HD*, at least as it was originally conceived, were apparent from the very beginning. The celebrated *Memorandum concerning the Historical Dictionary* or *Υπόμνημα περί του Ιστορικού Λεξικού* (Triandafyllidis 1963) is worth studying in this connection. In collaboration with the other redactors of the Dictionary, Triandafyllidis displays considerable sagacity in identifying all those changes which would be required to permit the unhampered production of a work of scholarly integrity. The whole work, he says (op.cit., 441-2), bears the stamp of the temporizing and the provisional, a patchwork of piecemeal solutions, without ultimate authority. He candidly and emphatically declares that the dictionary lacked internal unity, and that in their labours the compilers were compelled to take inordinate account of external constraints. They themselves had admitted that the articles they had compiled were riddled with imperfections, that insufficient information was supplied on the more common words, on disputed forms, meanings and uses of words, that information on various dialect regions was altogether absent, etc. (op.cit., 414).

The irony is that the many valid observations of the capable and experienced compilers of the *HD*, many of whom later earned distinction as academic teachers, were not formalized and set down in such a way that recurrence of the same methodological errors might be avoided in the subsequent volumes of the dictionary; in many cases, in fact, these observations were utterly ignored.¹³ Long before the publication of the first volume of the *HD* the following shortcomings had been remarked upon: the lack of a working plan based on a clearly defined and practicable timetable; the failure to enter into cooperation with other Academies

12. To date the following volumes have been published: *Ιστορικών Λεξικών της Νέας Ελληνικής της τε Κοινώς Ομιλουμένης και των Ιδιωμάτων*, vol. I-V (α-δαχτυλωτός) (1933-1989).

13. One of the most substantial criticisms of the *HD*, mainly in respect of the method of excerpting the material, is to be found in Kakridis 1971.

and research centres abroad involved in similar lexicographical enterprises; the lack of a properly equipped library; the absence of a modern code of practice to regulate the compilation of the dictionary,¹⁴ etc.

What Manolis Triandafyllidis observed as long ago as 1916-17 is every bit as true today: the lemmata of which the dictionary is made up, no matter what additions and supplements their compilers may insert, present the data which was gathered through exploration of the material collected at random for the Archive, and in essence fail to shed any illumination on contemporary use (op.cit., 426).

3. THE HISTORICAL DICTIONARY AND THE GERMAN DICTIONARY BY THE BROTHERS J. AND W. GRIMM: PARALLEL DEVELOPMENTS

Ambitious lexicographical enterprises require labours that are measured in decades. The renowned *Deutsches Wörterbuch* of the brothers J. and W. Grimm commenced publication in 1852; the final, complete edition of 16 volumes (32 semi-volumes with 67,744 columns) was not issued until 1960. No less than 108 years, then, was required to complete the task.¹⁵ The original plan had anticipated the publication of 6-7 volumes, in a period of over six but no more than ten years. The brothers Grimm accumulated 600,000 index cards, employing 80 collaborators over a period of 12 years. The *HD* never mustered more than 11 redactors, and lengthy periods often elapsed during which no more than 2 or 3 were employed. Today the staff at the Compilation Centre consists of 8 researchers and one clerical assistant.

The most important parallel developments and the most fundamental common features of the two dictionaries are as follows:

1. They were unable to adhere to their original plan. Although smaller or larger modifications were forced upon them, they failed to make any trail-blazing changes or any of the radical revisions which were in fact required.
2. In political and ideological terms, both claimed the mantle of a work of supreme national importance, while finally offering no more than a partial account of the lexicological wealth of their respective languages. In both Germany and Greece, the romantic and nationalistic aspect of the projects was censured by a number of researchers.
3. They are addressed first and foremost to linguists, other specialists and scholars, but also to laymen interested in the language and its history. In

14. From the outset, the first *Redaction Guidelines* (“Κανονισμός συντάξεως του Νεοελληνικού Λεξικού. Ιστορικών Λεξικών της ελληνικής γλώσσας”, Appendix of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and of Public Education’ Bulletin, 1916, 28 pages) was unable to meet the lexicographical requirements of its time. Even today there is still no up-to-date code of practice for the *HD*.

15. For the information presented here and the comparative conclusions drawn therefrom I am indebted to Bahr 1984.

reality, however, they failed to foster any new awareness of their languages in the minds of the educated public. The Grimm Dictionary was first issued in 5,000 copies, a number which was reduced to 1,300 in the latest revised edition. Of the two most recent volumes of the *HD* (1984; 1989) only 600 copies were printed, most of which still remain in the storerooms of the Athens Academy.

4. They do not include the contemporary terminology of science, technology and the arts. The Grimm Dictionary does belatedly acknowledge a part of this important vocabulary, but the *HD* ignores it completely.

As far as the presentation of the material and the more general lexicological implications are concerned, both dictionaries suffer from the following defects:

1. The concept of the word and the lexical unit does not concern the compilers of the articles on either the theoretical or the practical level. Where words of the same spelling are distinguished, the distinction is made on the basis of their different etymologies. But generally speaking, especially in the case of the Grimm Dictionary, there is a tendency not to make any such distinction.
2. The structuring of the lemma into its “morphological”, “etymological” and “semantic” parts is a common feature of both dictionaries. In its morphological section the *HD* presents an extremely sketchy phonetic representation, making absolutely no use of the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet. The number of examples allotted to the lemma is quite unrepresentative of the frequency of use of the word in question. It is determined according to the variety of the word’s forms and the emphasis laid on its history. In determining meanings and the manner in which they are to be presented, the Grimm Dictionary, like many others, regards the word as a combination of sounds denoting objects or states of affairs in extra-linguistic reality. Meaning is viewed as a psychological, not as a linguistic, quantity. The various submeanings are not parts of a general meaning, but autonomous semantic units. The meaning of certain words is defined in accordance with the accepted etymology. Multiple meanings are regarded as properties of the semantic structure of a word. The linguistic criteria for semantic changes did not concern the compilers of either dictionary. Yet as a rule the structure of the entry should depend on understanding the workings of just these semantic changes and developments. The difficulty lies in the fact that the phenomenon of multiple meaning due to historical factors has not yet been satisfactorily explained. Publication of the *HD* cannot proceed, for the simple reason that it does not take account of contemporary semantic theories. The definition of words is not based on rigorously scholarly criteria, but on the prejudices in which the redactor of the entry is

trapped by the material he has at his disposal and the etymology he has preferred. In hundreds of entries we see meanings proliferate without justification, creating non-existent nuances or presenting what are patently metaphorical uses as if they were literal, as already observed by I. Kakridis (1971, 237). The theories of synonymy implied by the accumulation of alleged synonyms at the end of certain entries are completely out of date.

Finally, both the Grimm Dictionary and the *HD* are philological, not linguistic, dictionaries. Instead of describing how words function in terms of their usage in a specific context, they present an interpretation provided by the lexicographer to the dictionary user, based on the available, and in the case of the *HD* often utterly inadequate, linguistic material. It is a case, to borrow the harsh words of J. Bahr (1984, 500), of “naive linguistic realism” (“naiven Sprachrealismus”).

4. THE CURRENT SITUATION: OBSTACLES IMPEDING THE PROGRESS OF THE HISTORICAL DICTIONARY

The first volume of the *HD* was printed in 1933, a full twenty-five years after the appointment of the three-member commission who were impanelled to oversee its compilation. Ever since then the pace at which work has proceeded has been disappointing. The second part of the 5th volume was published in 1989, its entries extending from *γναθάδα* to *δαχτυλωτός*. After almost a century we are still no further advanced than the beginning of the fourth letter of the alphabet. Over the last ten years work has, in effect, come to a standstill. Publication can no longer continue in the familiar, traditional form; firstly because advances in the science of lexicography have introduced radical changes in the methodology of lexicographical practice, and secondly because the omissions and shortcomings of the volumes published in recent years are now widely acknowledged.

Given the disappointing, if to some extent understandable, tardiness in publication of the *HD*, in combination with the introduction in 1976 of demotic as the official language of education and, one year later, of public administration, and given also the dramatic advances in the field of high technology and information science, in electronic lexicography in particular, it is time for the Athens Academy to face up to reality and announce officially what is in practice already the case: that the wholly obsolete lexicographical practices followed for decades in the compilation of the *HD* are now to be abandoned. If perhaps at the beginning of the 20th century it was still acceptable to translate the word *αγγούρι* as ‘σκυός’ (ο), and the word *βοσκοπούλα* as ‘πομενίς’ (η), now, at the end of the century, the attempt to explain modern Greek words in “katharevousa” or even in the archaizing form of the language, is utterly absurd. Moreover, there are no longer compilers able or willing to “translate” the entries and illustrative examples into a language so lacking in warmth, colour and grace.

The limited publishing activity of the *HD* Redaction Centre has made almost no impact at all, even among experts in the field. There has been virtually no critical notice of the two latest volumes of the *HD*, published in 1984 and 1989 (the year in which stocks ran out), evidence of both the crisis in criticism in Greece and the tendency to ignore any work which has anything to do with the neglected idioms and dialects of modern Greek.

On the occasion of the publication of the first part of the fifth volume of the *HD*, in 1984, I wrote a paper presenting the grave theoretical and practical problems which have now remained unsolved for decades, raising questions as to the academic authority of not only the dictionary's compilers but the Academy itself (Charalambakis 1994b). The paper examined specific cases illustrating: the confusion between words of multiple meaning and homonymous but distinct words; contradictory classifications; mistaken etymologies;¹⁶ duplication of entries; dubious semantic categorizations and inaccuracies; the omissions in the list of lemmata and so on. My harsh, but, I believe, valid criticism has cost me dear. Among other things, I have lost old and valued friends. But when I first embarked on my criticism of the *HD*, it never crossed my mind that I should be rewarded with an appointment to the post of Director of the Dictionary, an appointment which proves, firstly, that the Athens Academy is able to appreciate well-intentioned criticism and, secondly, that a wind of change has begun to be felt in the country's highest institution of learning.

5. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

So far I have been painting a broad picture of a depressing situation already more or less familiar to specialists in the field. It is now time to turn to more cheerful aspects of the enterprise in question. But before I proceed, one point needs to be made clear: many of those, especially in the press, who have criticized the Academy for the slow pace of publication of the Dictionary have not understood that the *HD* is not just another modern Greek dictionary, but an enormous work, whose compilation rests on some six million index cards. Correspondingly ambitious projects undertaken by Academies of states economically and technologically far more advanced than ours have taken an average of 150 years to complete.¹⁷

The linguistic material which has been accumulated in the archive of the Athens Academy *HD*, garnered from every corner of Greece, is a true store of

16. Many of the *HD*'s etymologies are grossly erroneous, as demonstrated by Skouvaras 1954 and 1957. It should be pointed out that the new etymologies proposed by Skouvaras are not always convincing.

17. Work began on the *Dictionary of the Swedish Academy* (*Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*) in 1880 and the first volume was issued in 1893. To date (1997) 31 volumes have been issued (*A-Sta*). It is estimated that the remaining ten volumes will have been published by the year 2020. In other words, it will have taken 140 years to complete the dictionary, which is based on an archive of 7.5 million index cards.

riches for the student of our language. The worthy compilers of the Centre have for a number of years devoted one month a year to missions for collecting linguistic material, in the course of which they have gathered priceless material in manuscript collections now numbering no less than 1,385. Alongside these are the invaluable manuscripts of the Philological Society of Constantinople, dating from the last century, and manuscript collections from the competitions held formerly by the Athenian Linguistic Society (η εν Αθήναις Γλωσσική Εταιρεία) and now held by its successor, the Linguistic Society of Athens (Γλωσσική Εταιρεία των Αθηνών). Even if the Academy had done no more than this, the collection of dialect and idiomatic material, otherwise lost for ever, would have been enough to deserve the gratitude of the people and the nation.

The time has now arrived to employ high technology to make the best use of this invaluable material. Priority must be given to the creation of an electronic Data Base and a preliminary record, in printed or electronic form, of the list of entries of the *HD*, of whose true size, strange as it may seem, we still have no real idea. This will resolve the problem of necessary cross-references in the entries and will prevent the occurrence of duplicated entries, even in the same volume.

The Speech Processing Institute, under its energetic Director, Professor at the National Metsovio Polytechnic, Georgios Karayannis, and the academician P. Theocharis, has already drawn up a plan of action and we will soon, I believe, witness the realization of a dream which just a few years ago would have been dismissed as “unattainable”. An invaluable contribution in this respect has been made by Professor J.N. Kazazis, coordinator of work on the *HD* from 1986-1990 onwards and, up until today, an unsalaried research associate of the Athens Academy.

In tandem with the creation of an electronic Data Base, the Academy, in cooperation with our universities and the Centre for the Greek Language, must make plans for the publication in stages of a series of dialect and idiomatic dictionaries on the basis of geographical regions and in accordance with the principles of contemporary lexicography, or provide support for the endeavours of other agencies seeking to publish such dictionaries, such as the Kykkou Monastery, which is preparing the *Great Historical Dictionary of Cypriot Greek*, and the Society for Pontic Studies, which intends to issue a radically revised dictionary of the Pontic dialect. The most pressing current need is for the compilation of a comprehensive Dictionary of the Cretan dialect; it is to be wished that the Academy might undertake this project as part of the process of reorientation of the goals, objectives and activities of its old research Centre. The publication of the historical dictionaries of the three Greek dialects (Crete, Cyprus and Pontus) would make considerably easier the compilation of a one-volume dictionary of the modern Greek dialects for the use of the educated layman, since specialist researchers will have at their disposal the electronic Data Base. Had the option of special

dictionaries by geographical region been chosen in the beginning, we would not have found ourselves facing the present impasse.

The objectives of the *HD* must be enlarged to include activities which will be in tune with contemporary technological advances, especially in the field of information science and telematics. The energies of the Centre for the Redaction of the *Historical Dictionary of the Modern Greek Language* need, in my opinion, to be concentrated in the following areas:

1. Creation of an electronic Data Base from the approximately 6 million index cards of dialect material, and the approximately 1,400 manuscript collections.
2. Publication, in both electronic form and hard copy, of the entry catalogue of the *HD*, with reference entries.
3. Publication of a series of dictionaries devoted to various regional dialects, in accordance with a specific timetable.
4. Extension of the Centre's activities into other neglected areas, such as the Archive of place names and the Linguistic Atlas of Greece.
5. Publication, in a special series, of the older and more important manuscripts held in the Archive of the Centre for the Compilation of the Historical Dictionary.
6. Enlargement of the Centre's library, at present pitifully inadequate, by the acquisition of contemporary works of lexicography and the provision of access to electronic bibliographies. Creation of the country's most complete Lexicographical Library with all the Greek dictionaries, old and new, including bilingual ones.
7. Renewal of the structure, organization and material of the *Lexicographical Bulletin* (*Λεξικογραφικόν Δελτίον*). To date the journal has never published any metalexicographical study or empirical research.
8. Reorganization of research trips for the collection of dialect material from representative dialect regions, to involve mandatory tape recording with a view to eventual digital storing of data. The priority today must be the synchronic study of the dialects and idioms, not a quest for the idealized linguistic variety of the past.
9. Resumption, in collaboration with other agencies, in particular the Centre for the Greek Language, of work on compiling a Bibliography of the modern Greek language, a project suspended since 1979. Creation of the necessary Data Base.
10. Resolution of the country's spelling problem through the issuing of a Guide by the Athens Academy, in association with other appropriate agencies.
11. Cooperation with similar large centres abroad in order to exchange ex-

- perience, train researchers and increase familiarity with elements of electronic lexicography.
12. Organization of training seminars on lexicography in collaboration with Greek and foreign universities.
 13. Development of a system of internal and external evaluation of the work of researchers and the director.
 14. Publication of an information leaflet on the *HD* and creation of a web site to inform the educated public of the major contribution made by the Centre to learning and to the Nation. It is also deemed necessary to establish a non-profit-making association, to be called “The Friends of the *Historical Dictionary*”.

For many years now the *HD* has been a breeding ground for young and talented scholars, who have conducted in-depth studies of the many varied aspects of standard modern Greek and its idioms. Many of them have gone on to earn distinction as linguists and philologists. Among the scholars who have made their mark on the academic and intellectual life of modern Greece are Manolis Triandafyllidis, Ioannis Kakridis, Stylianos Kapsomenos and Nikolaos Andriotis, all of whom have been redactors of the *Historical Dictionary*. They have also enriched, with their research work and teaching, the School of Philosophy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, which today so generously extends its hospitality to us.

The Centre for the Compilation of the *Historical Dictionary* of the Athens Academy deserves a better future. On the occasion of the completion in 1998 of ninety years since the establishment of the Commission entrusted with the compilation of the Dictionary, the Academy should organize an international conference where the foundations could be laid for a new beginning. I hope that we have learned our lesson from the mistakes of the past.

Translation CHRIS MARKHAM

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