

ADAMANTIOS KORAI (1748-1833) AS LEXICOGRAPHER OF ANCIENT GREEK:  
PAGES KNOWN AND UNKNOWN<sup>1</sup>

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The name of Adamantios Korais (1748-1833) is inseparably bound to the intellectual and political renaissance of modern Hellenism (Kalospyros 2004). Korais himself, in his brief *Autobiography* (Korais 1833, κα' ff.), written four years before his death in 1829, points out the catalytic role played by his move to Montpellier (1782) to study medicine and his settling in Paris six years later (1788). His inclusion within the climate of pre-revolutionary France made him realize in a deeper sense the importance which education would have for his fellow-Greeks, subject to the Turks. He saw that the increase and spread of education aroused in the French a love of freedom, and he envisioned the same result for his compatriots. For this purpose, Korais believed that the best means at hand were editions of ancient Greek writers, provided with introductions and critical notes. However, a necessary prerequisite for the preparation of these editions, as Korais himself wrote, was “πλειότερα γνῶσις τῆς ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης, διὰ τὴν κριτικὴν ἔκδοσιν τοῦ κειμένου τῶν συγγραφέων. Εἰς ταύτης λοιπὸν τὴν ἀπόκτησιν ἔδωκα ὅλην μου τὴν προσοχὴν, ἀφίνων καὶ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τῆς ἰατρικῆς καὶ πᾶσαν ἄλλην ἀσχολίαν” (Korais 1833, κε').

It is worth noting here that Wilamowitz, in his *Geschichte der Philologie* (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1921, 5) devotes a good number of lines to Korais:

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he stresses that it was he who opened the way for the political and intellectual rebirth of his nation, and that his philological method was a miracle, if one considered that the knowledge of the Greek language to which his many editions testify could not have been obtained by Korais either in Montpellier, where he studied medicine, nor in Paris, where he lived until the end of his life. At the same time, Wilamowitz extols Korais' accuracy in making corrections to the ancient Greek texts, offering as an example his unparalleled corrections to the text of Strabo; corrections of comparable quality, almost no one else could have proposed. Finally, he emphasized Korais' contribution to historical research on the Greek language in his course from ancient Greek and its dialects up to the living Modern Greek language.

In 1799, eleven years after moving to Paris, Korais began what was to prove a long editorial career working on the texts of ancient Greek writers (Mamoukas 1881, κζ' ff.; Kalospyros 2004, *passim*). The first edition to appear, in 1799, was Theophrastus' *Characters*, in French; this was followed (in French as well) by the pastoral poems of Longus (1802), the *Aithiopica* of Heliodorus (1804), Strabo's *Geography* (1805-1819) in French, in collaboration with French scholars; at the urging of Napoleon Bonaparte, the seventeen volumes of the *Greek Library* (*Elliniki Bibliothiki*) (1805-1826), followed by works by Isocrates, Plutarch's *Lives*, Strabo's *Geography* (this time in Greek), Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, and other works such as the nine volumes of the *Parerga* of the Greek Library (1809-1812) containing works by Polyainos, Aesop, Xenocrates and Galenus, Epictetus, and others.

What Korais described in his *Autobiography* as a necessary condition for his editorial programme, viz., “πλειοτέρα γνώσις τῆς ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης”, is obvious to all not only in the long catalogue of his published work, but in the thousands of pages of his manuscripts as well. These have lain unpublished, for the most part, until the present in Chios' “Korais Library” (Kavvadas 1933; Christodoulou 1986b; Taifakos 1997). Here we refer to manuscript notebooks

or loose leaves of paper, where Korais has recorded his critical observations and corrections to a great number of Greek writers of both poetry and prose, as well as some Roman writers including Cicero, Petronius, Plautus, Tacitus and Lucilius. We are also speaking of his countless notes on the margins of the books in his personal library; here it suffices to relate that most of the approximately 4,000 books in his personal library which were saved and are today collected in the “Korais Library” bear the marks of having been subjected to his critical attention to a greater or lesser extent (Politis 1872; Kavvadas 1933). All these testify in the most incontrovertible fashion to the unique feel for ancient Greek which Korais possessed – a sense which allowed him, with unerringly sound judgment, to identify and restore erroneous readings in the texts of ancient writers. As Schweighäuser observed in the introduction of the edition of Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistai* (Christodoulou 1986a, 249-250), Korais was “verissimus Valchenarianae et Ruhnkenianae scholae alumnus”, i.e., a true descendent of the Dutch school of philology, which as is well known was led by Hemsterhuys, Valckenaer and Ruhnken (Müller 1869, 74-89).

This conference, devoted to the lexicography of ancient, byzantine-medieval, and Modern Greek civilization, gives us the opportunity to examine in general terms one of Korais’ philological activities which has not occupied scholarly research up to today to the extent it deserves. Here, I am referring to the Greek scholar’s work in ancient Greek lexicography. In contrast, his occupation with the study of medieval and Modern Greek, and indeed, with the corresponding lexicography of both (as in the edition of the *Ἀτακτα*), appears to have monopolized interest in the relevant bibliography (Vayakakos 1984; Georgoudis 1984; Aggelou 1994). This unequal treatment of the lexicographical production of Korais on the part of researchers may to some degree at least be explained by the fact that during his lifetime Korais never bothered to publish volumes containing lexicographical studies on

ancient Greek. As research has demonstrated, these are both numerous and of high quality. He kept them in his study unpublished, but he drew upon them continuously to enrich the critical commentaries to his own editions, or made them available generously and in abundance to his colleagues when they requested assistance with their own books.

From the study of what Korais left behind, in the Library of Chios –i.e., of unpublished or published manuscripts and the books in his personal library, one may come to understand his working method: reading the texts, he made notes –critical, corrective, linguistic– which he later transferred to separate pages of paper or collected in volumes, enlarging upon them constantly with additional details or arranging them if circumstances required. In turn, the fuller forms of critical notes, corrections, and linguistic observations frequently returned to the margins of other books, thus taking on a more permanent character. More specifically, in regard to his lexicographical work, at some moments he limits himself to an informal lexicography, i.e., to collecting, describing, and defining words at an elementary level. At others, he advances to narrower or wider syntheses, which frequently are developed into entries exemplary for their completeness and which could easily find a place in the pages of a lexicon of ancient Greek. It is obvious that the plethora of marginal additions, whether related to critical comments and corrections to the ancient texts or to questions of etymology and the history of words, are not the result of casual activity but of long and systematic study over the course of time.

Almost sixty years were to pass following Korais' death before three volumes containing lexicographical material relating to ancient Greek were published. The first of these volumes was published in Athens in 1889, as the seventh volume of the *Μετὰ θάνατον εύρεθέντων...* of Korais (Damalas 1889). It contains the corrections and critical observations, numbering in the hundreds and frequently extending to brief lexicographical essays, which

Korais had introduced into the margins of the two-volume edition of Hesychius by Joannes Alberti (Lugduni Batavorum 1746, 1766 – the second volume was published under Ruhken’s supervision after Alberti’s death). Korais’ personal copy of Alberti’s edition is in the Library of Chios, entered as **Γλωσσολ. 7140**. It was a misfortune that Korais’ *marginalia* to Alberti’s Hesychius were published by a man who while wishing to do his best was unprepared to respond to the challenge of this important publication effort: Nikolaos M. Damalas, the editor of the volume and Professor of Theology at the University of Athens, not only published Korais’ scholia with countless omissions and incorrect readings, but even more important, mingled the entries in Hesychius’ lexicon with critical observations by Korais and corresponding observations by previous scholars, in particular by M. Schmidt (also an editor of Hesychius, Jena 1868). Thus, one cannot distinguish in most cases what belongs to Hesychius, what to Korais, what to Schmidt, and what to others! There is need of a new edition of Korais’ Hesychius, one done with the requisite philological exactitude.

The second volume of lexicographical material, published in Athens in 1891 as the eighth volume of the *Μετὰ θάνατον εύρεθέντων...* of Korais (Damalas 1891), bears the title *Λεξικόν Αντιθέτων Λέξεων*, and is a transcription of the “Korais Library” **χφ. 449**. It contains two plans with hundreds of entries, some of which, such as those on Hesychius, are developed into short essays. Characteristic are the entries for *ἀληθής* (p. 8-11), *ἀμιλλάομαι* (p. 12-14), *δεινός* (p. 19-22), *δίκαιος* (p. 23-25), *ἴδιος* (p. 31-33), *ιδιώτης* (p. 33-36), *πρᾶος* (p. 43-44), *σεμνός* (p. 45-47), and others. This volume, published by the editor of Korais’ Hesychius N.M. Damalas, is burdened by the same weaknesses as the previous volume.

The third volume of lexicographical material was published in 1934 by Stylianos Vios. Among other things, it collects and arranges alphabetically on part of Korais’ lexicographical notes in the margins of four lexica in his

personal library, three of which concern ancient Greek: the anonymous *Lexicon Graecolatinum recens constructum*, apud G. Leimarium [Geneva] 1583, and the lexical *Lexicon manuale Graecum* by B. Hederich, Leipzig 1722, and *Kritisches Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*, I-II, Jena and Leipzig 1805-1806, by Jo.G. Schneider.

So much for the already-published (inadequately, for the most part), following Korais' death, lexicographical works by Korais which are preserved in the "Korais Library" on Chios and relate to ancient Greek. Among Korais' papers, however, there are also preserved another two important testaments to his lexicographic occupations. To date, neither of these has had the good fortune to attract the interest of research. First, there is the *Τιμαίου σοφιστοῦ Λεξικὸν περὶ τῶν παρὰ Πλάτωνι λέξεων* (*Timaei Sophistae Lexicon Vocum Platoniarum*), based on D. Ruhnken's edition (Lugduni Batavorum 1754). Second, there is the *Lexicon Vocum Graecarum Synonymicarum potissimum ex Ammonio Lesbionacte et Philopono collectum et locupletatum* of M. Dan. Peucer (Dresden 1766).

The only work by Plato which Korais ever published was *Gorgias*, which, as the fifteenth volume of the *Greek Library* (*Elliniki Bibliothiki*), came out in Paris in 1825 together with Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (Korais 1825). But from Korais' preserved manuscripts and from study of his published work it is proven beyond a doubt that Korais knew the entire Platonic corpus, and his contribution to the restoration of the ancient text, as earlier research has shown (Christodoulou 1986b, 280-335) is important. Indisputable witness to this is the lexicon to the Timaeus referred to above. Korais' personal copy is preserved in the Library at Chios (under catalogue number ΕΦ 32875). It is crammed with additions and every sort of critical observations, and must have been especially dear to him, as he himself repeatedly in both his published and unpublished works refers to it with such expressions as "Timaei Lexicon meum auctum", or "meum Timaei Lexicon cum notis mss.",

and many similar such phrases. It is enough to note that to the approximately 470 entries of the ancient text of Timaeus Korais adds over two thousand more, all of them accompanied by exact references to the eleven-volume edition of Plato known as the *editio Bipontina* (1781-1787). The same is true of Peucer's lexicon of synonyms; existing entries are enriched with new ones, and to these Korais attached all manner of critical, corrective, and linguistic observation. These two lexica, were they to be published, would fill an important gap in the lexicographical bibliography of Modern Greek.

This year is the 170th anniversary of Korais' death in Paris. An unfulfilled debt of scholarship to the wise Greek who never ceased describing and interpreting the linguistic wealth of Greek –for it was just this that he considered as the foundation of true education of his fellow-Greeks– is to catalogue systematically and work through the details not only of what has been saved amongst the papers left behind by Korais –whether unfinished, partially finished, or completed– but also of whatever has already been published. In this way, through the collection of all relevant material and the use of modern technology, the *corpus lexicographicum Coraicum* could be created. The Centre for the Greek Language, our hosts for this conference, making use of its specialized scholarly personnel, could contribute to fulfilling this unfilled debt, one owed not only to Korais himself, but to the scholarship of antiquity in general.

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