

Liddell–Scott–Jones: Then and Now*

Liddell and Scott has been with us for 150 years and needs no introduction. In its present form it attempts to act as a guide to the vocabulary and usage of the Greek language from Homer to about a. d. 600. This is a very long time in the life of a language one has only to consider the changes that have taken place in any of our modern languages in a much shorter period. Considering also that it is a language which, in its earlier stage at least, for geographical and political reasons, occurs in a wide range of dialects, one might be tempted to wonder whether it is already attempting more than can fairly be expected from a single dictionary. The closing date is inevitably somewhat arbitrary and could not be enforced too strictly, because of the existence of large numbers of Byzantine epitomes and other compilations, which consist partly or completely of earlier material. In this paper I want to consider how Liddell and Scott has reached its present form, what can be said to be some of its shortcomings, and what can be done within the confined space of a supplement to increase its usefulness. I am restricting my remarks to the problems of a Greek-English dictionary, but I hope that some of them may be relevant in any language.

The history of Greek-English dictionaries is comparatively short. While the use of the vernacular in Latin dictionaries can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times, the American John Pickering could write in 1826: "It is a remarkable fact in the history of education, that we have so long continued the practice of studying the Greek language through the medium of the Latin; and that until very recently we have not had Greek as well as Latin dictionaries with explanation in English".

Liddell and Scott themselves felt bound to justify the use of English in their Lexicon. "It may be asked (they say) whether such a lexicon should be in Latin, as in the old times; whether the other is not an unworthy condescension to the indolence of the

* This paper is adapted from a report originally written for the "XVII^e Congrès International des études byzantines", Moscow, August 1991.

age. In answer we would draw a distinction between an English lexicon and English notes to Classical Authors. We hold that critical notes to these Authors will always be best in the Latin Tongue... The chief business of Lexicography is one, to interpret words; of Criticism another, to unravel the idioms and intricacies of language. The Latin tongue may be the best organ for the latter work, yet very unequal to the due execution of the former. And quite unequal it is. For just as impossible is it to render the richness, boldness, freedom and variety of Greek by Latin words, as it is to give any adequate conceptions of Milton or Shakespeare by French translations. Yet French is, confessedly, the language of Mathematics. So Latin is the language of Classical Criticism. But we hold it feeble and defective for the purposes of Lexicography. And when we add to this the fact, that in richness at least and freedom (though certainly not in beauty or exactness) our own language is not unworthy to compare with the Greek, we conclude confidently that the best lexicon an Englishman can use to read Greek with, will be in English. A Frenchman may have reason for using a Greek-Latin Lexicon; an Englishman can have none."

The upshot of this is that that lexicon which is now the standard reference work for the English speaking world, and is of course used more widely than that, is one that was composed for the particular needs of students in English schools and universities in the middle of the nineteenth century, but has since overflowed its banks to cover a much wider area, albeit very unevenly.

The statement of policy made by Liddell and Scott in the preface to the first edition of their Greek-English Lexicon is as comprehensive as could be wished. As they say, "Our plan has been that marked out and begun by Passow, viz. *to make each Article a History of the usage of the word referred to*". Had they succeeded in carrying out this policy absolutely, the task of the reviser would be very much simpler, and confined mainly to feeding in new words and usages from sources not available to the original editors. That they themselves took a limited view of their assignment appears from the very next words of the preface. "That is, we have always sought to give the earliest authority for its use first. Then, if no change was introduced by later writers, we have left it with that early authority alone, – adding, however, whether it continued in general use or no, and taking care to specify, whether it was common to prose or poetry, or confined to one only. In most cases the word will tell its own story: the passages quoted will themselves say whether it continued in use, and

whether it was used or no both in poetry and prose. The Greek-English Lexicon of Liddell and Scott began life with some obvious limitations, though given the youth and inexperience of the authors and the speed with which it was produced, it was a considerable achievement. It could be seen as a tool for students of Classical Greek, with the needs in mind particularly of students at Oxford University in the mid-nineteenth century. It was not an entirely original work, as they themselves insisted. "In the Title-page our work is said to be "based on the German Work of Francis Passow". We cannot too fully express our obligations to this excellent work." Passow worked to a plan which his early death did not allow him to complete. Briefly, it was to begin with Homer and Hesiod, then to concentrate on Herodotus and the lyric poets, and so on in historical order, until the work was complete.

The needs of the present-day user are different in many respect. There are fewer pupils studying Greek and Latin in our schools today, and many fewer in our universities, but there may be more doing advanced research. It is undeniable that this latter group forms a much higher proportion of the potential customers for larger dictionary than was formerly the case. These may be using documents from any part of the period covered by the dictionary and may not be concerned at all with literary merit of what they are reading. Much of the time of earlier students was spent in translating from Greek into English or from English into Greek. And so the dictionary gave a lot of weight to the provision of elegant translations and information about the suitability of a word for this or that type of literature; numerous phrases have been given a full translation. These translations may date very quickly, especially when a colloquial style is being attempted, and they are often paraphrases of a passage as a whole rather than literal translations of the actual Greek words. Other dialects are judged by the degree to which they measure up to the standard of Attic, and not only Attic, but "good Attic".

Liddell and Scott concluded the preface to their first edition with the words: "And we send it forth in the hope that it may in some wise foster and keep alive the accurate study of the Greek Tongue; that tongue which has been held one of the best instruments for training the young mind; that tongue, which as the organ of Poetry and Oratory is full of living force and fire, abounding in grace and sweetness, rich to overflowing, while for the uses of Philosophy it is a very model of clearness and precision; that tongue, in which some of the noblest works of man's genius lie en-

shrined, – works, which may be seen reflected faintly in imitations and translations, but of which none can know the perfect beauty, but he who can read the words themselves, as well as their interpretation". This will appeal less to the modern student. It is also often the case that his knowledge of the language is much less secure than that of his predecessors and so he may be more confused by an inexact translation. The definition of a word for him must put explanation first and translation second. The researcher in out-of-the-way fields will not expect to find his particular text translated, much as he might like it; he does have the right to know what senses exist and if possible which are likely to occur in the area that he is covering. To what extent has Liddell and Scott kept up with this changing need?

It has gone through nine editions since its first publication, some involving considerable additions, and some little more than reprints. In addition we have had the 1968 Supplement. Most scholars know their way about it and can as often as not supply from their own experience what they do not find or adjust mentally what is imperfectly expressed. Nevertheless few would assert wholeheartedly that the present work is ideal in all respects.

To work towards the unattainable ideal two things must be done: errors and imperfections in the existing work have to be put right, and omissions have to be remedied. Errors of course there are. It would make nonsense of the work of the last hundred and fifty years of scholarship to deny that in a vast number of cases new understanding has made it necessary to revise definitions. Nor would lexicographers be human, if there were not some plain mistakes. Referring to the 7th edition in vol. 3 of the *American Journal of Philology* Basil Gildersleeve sounded a note of caution. "In the preface the editors say that the whole work has been thoroughly revised and large additions made. Another edition is not likely to appear in the lifetime of the editors, as they say not without a touch of pathos, and it is especially important that the thoroughness of the revision be put to the test and errors recorded". By vol. 19 of the same journal he was saying: "Liddell and Scott were even greater sinners than the average lexicographer, and complaints enough were heard in their lifetime. In the 7th edition they not only kept in mistakes of their own but spoiled other people's work". And he goes on to detail the way in which they mangled and misrepresented his contribution for the article on $\mu\acute{\eta}$.

Less seriously, in a report of a dinner given to mark the retirement of A. L. Madan from his post of Bodley's Librarian in

1919 appear the following words: "He ran lightly through the long years of his connexion with the Library, from the day when he was first led to make use of it by his discovery of an enormous number of mistakes in Liddell and Scott, down to the time when he left it (the library, that is) better equipped and organized than it had ever been before". Whether or not there was some element of exaggeration in these comments, there are mistakes, and this is the more understandable in a language of which so much is a matter of conjecture. I shall mention some of the kinds of error that are to be found in Liddell and Scott, not in order to score points off them – I am aware that I am in a similarly vulnerable position myself – but in order to point out some of the things one has to look out for in working on a dictionary of this sort. Perfection in any case is unattainable. Since there is no exact correspondence between languages there can never be more than an approximation in type definitions of a bilingual dictionary.

Some of the shortcomings of LSJ are the direct result of the process to which we are now adding one extra stage – that of its frequent revisions. Inconsistencies are bound to arise when entries are changed, unless every word in a context is checked throughout the dictionary, whenever the interpretation of one word is changed; or, whenever a word is quoted from a new edition of an author already included with an old text. As an instance of what can happen when an article is subjected to constant revision, let me refer to the verb *τρέφω*.

Section I is in all editions given the sense *curdle*; I am not sure whether this is right, but it is not to the point here. Section II in the early editions reads: *make fat, fatten, nourish, feed, make to grow or increase, nurse, bring up, rear, esp. of children bred, brought up in a house*. In the sixth edition two further sections are added: III *nourish, maintain, support*, IV *bring up, educate*. In the seventh we have II *make to grow or increase, bring up, breed, rear, esp. of children, etc.* III *maintain, support*. IV *bring up, rear, educate*. This has continued into the ninth edition, except that *breed* has disappeared. The definitions of II and IV are now hardly distinguishable, and should you be tempted to work out the actual difference, you will find that all that distinguishes one of the examples in IV from some of those in II is that in one case the boys were brought up in a house, and in the other, in a cave.

Inasmuch as the usual purpose of consulting a dictionary is to find out what a word means, the definition is the first thing to which the reader goes. A definition should, it goes without saying,

be clear and unambiguous; it should convey to the reader as far as possible the sense that the original user of the word wished to convey to *his* audience, and should not be a gloss on any particular passage, but rather an indication of the broad sense of which the author was aware when he chose to use it in that passage. A simple example of ambiguity occurs in the entry for the word διάλευκος, which is defined as “quite white”; “quite” in English can mean “absolutely” or “to a noticeable degree”. It is inevitable that some of the definitions in LSJ should have a somewhat old-fashioned appearance, not only because it has long been the practice, in English at least, to translate the Greek and Latin classics in a sort of pseudo-poetic language not employed elsewhere. An expression I noticed recently was “fire-drill”. The object intended was a wooden stick which was rotated rapidly in a hole in soft wood to produce fire. In modern use the term is confined to a rehearsal of the procedures to be followed in the case of an outbreak of fire. It is true that in practice there is no ambiguity here, but it gives an archaic appearance and fuel to those who see a museum as the proper place for the Greek language.

At the same time it is wise not to be too up-to-date. Under ἐπίκυρος we have “a game resembling Rugby Football”. This is no doubt more vivid than, say, “a ball game played between two sides”, but it is dangerous to compare ancient with modern games, especially when there is, as is the case here, very little evidence. I can only say that, insofar as ancient sport showed a tendency to violence, the definition is more apt today than it was some sixty years ago when Stuart Jones drafted it. Similarly ἀωιλιασταί are described as “navvies”, a word with rich connotations in English, but quite unsuitable for the Greek context.

And it is equally wrong to be too technical. The present supplement gives “topmast” as the translation of ἀκρόπτερον. That is a technical term of sailing ships of a later age; it gives a nautical flavour to the definition, but is nonetheless wrong. In fact, in the passage concerned, the reference is to the practice of attaching sealskins to the tip of the mast – apparently a primitive form of lightning conductor. The plant δόλιχος is boldly identified as calavance, *Vigna sinensis*. Calavance is not a very common word; it is of Spanish origin and according to *OED* its use was confined to travellers in South America, the South Seas, or suchlike parts of the world. The plant mentioned by Theophrastus may very well be of the same family, but the definition indicates certainty where there is none. A word is not a technical term just because it occurs

in a technical passage. διάγγελος is a *messenger* or *go-between*. LSJ say “as a military term *adjutant* Plu. 2.678 d, but = *speculator* Plu. *Galba* 24”. The first occurs in a discussion on seating at a feast, and the writer is saying that you don’t have to have people so far apart that they need a διάγγελος like officers in the army – nothing technical here, certainly not as specialized as an adjutant (which is not a Greek rank, and does not correspond to one). As for the *speculator*, the quotation goes ὁ μὲν ὀπίων ὁ δὲ τεσσεράριος, οὕτω γὰρ καλοῦνται οἱ διάγγελοι καὶ διοπτῆρων ὑπηρεσίας τελοῦντες. They are in fact both *speculatores* – the unit was entirely composed of them. All Plutarch is doing, is explaining in ordinary Greek terms what he believed these men did.

There is a common danger in deciding on the general sense of a passage and then forcing an individual word to fit in with this preconceived notion. Etymology, which in a positive sense is a somewhat unreliable guide to meaning, can at least help here. A clear example is to be found in the present supplement entry for ἀχρεία. It runs: “add *b violence*, ἀχρίαν ἀπέδιξεν SB 7449 (V A.D.)”. It is impossible that the combination of the privative α- and the root of χρή could bear that sense, but the document is in the form of a complaint of assault and so violence would fit very easily into the context. Actually a careful reading of the text makes it clear that what is here being referred to is the incapacitation of the victim. A more complicated example can be found in the entry under συγχωρέω. The opening definition is *come together, meet*; the second is *get out of the way, make way*, which would appear to be the exact opposite of the first. Although there is an old joke which says that in Arabic every word means itself, its opposite, a name of God, and a part of a camel, this is a ludicrous exaggeration, and is no more true of Greek than it is of Arabic. The first example quoted under the second sense comes from Aristophanes *Wasps* 1516; it runs:

φέρε νυν ἡμεῖς αὐτοῖς ὀλίγον συγχωρήσωμεν ἅπαντες,
 ἵν’ ἐφ’ ἡσυχίας ἡμῶν πρόσθεν βεμβικίζωσιν ἑαυτοῖς.

One of the characters is certainly telling the others to get out of the way so that the chorus can proceed with its dance; what he actually says is: “Let us all get together in a group (so as to leave room, etc.)”. The writer of the article has translated what he supposed to be the sense of the passage, without considering whether the word could possibly have the meaning he assigns to it. He then goes on *give way, yield, defer to*. These translations again express

the general drift of the passages cited to support them, but it would be more accurate to say *agree with*, *fall in with*; the dictionary user would then have a much clearer idea of how one sense leads into the other.

The article on ἀναφορά in the first edition of LS has two main divisions, covering the ideas of “raising” and “leading or referring back”; the sixth edition introduces a third section, with one reference, and definition “floor of a wine-press”. LSJ changes this to “ceiling of a wine-press”. Neither of these alternatives has any obvious connection with ἀναφέρω. The editors of the editions concerned appear to have taken what seemed an appropriate meaning for the context, and finding that it did not fit in with the definitions already in the dictionary, consigned it to a lonely eminence in a section of its own. Now the passage, from *Geoponica* 6.1.3 runs:

Δεῖ δὲ τὸν ληνεῶνα ὄλον κατηλεῖφθαι πάντοθεν λειοτάτοις κονιάμασι, καὶ οὐχ ἦττον τὰς ἀναφοράς, ἵνα μηδὲν γεῶδες, μήτε τῶν ζωογονουμένων ἐν αὐταῖς, ἐμπίπτον μίᾳση τὸν οἶνον.

For impurities to fall into the wine from the floor, unless the vat was sunken below floor-level, would not be easy; hence, presumably, LSJ's preference for the ceiling. (The fact, by the way, that singular ληνεῶν has plural ἀναφοραί has not been noticed.) The ceiling, however, is not the most likely place for anything γεῶδες.

There are two fields in which special caution is needed. The scholiasts and grammarians set out to explain the unfamiliar features of earlier literature to their readers. Often they did not *know* – the alternative explanations they sometimes offer makes that clear enough – and what we have is no more than a guess, with no more authority than our own conjectures. A different kind of problem is set by the Septuagint version of the Bible. Here there may be no absolute certainty of the Hebrew text that was being translated, whether the translator understood it, or whether the word chosen was a calque rather than an established use or even an approximate homophone of the Hebrew. To assume always that the Greek means the same as the accepted translation of the Masoretic text is highly dangerous.

Mistakes are frequently made by Byzantine commentators. They are sometimes made by established classical authors. LSJ has an entry for the word ἀκρίδιον which is described as a diminutive of ἀκρίς (*grasshopper, locust, cricket* – one of these, anyway).

The sole passage containing it comes from Dioscorides 2. 94, and runs:

βρόμος κάλαμός ἐστι πυροῖς ὅμοιος καὶ τοῖς φύλλοις,
γόνασιν ἐνδιειλημμένος, καρπὸν δὲ ἔχει ἐπ' ἄκρῳ ὡσπερ
ἄκριδια δίκωλα, ἐν οἷς τὸ σπέρμα χρησιμεῖον εἰς
καταπλάσματα ὡς ἡ κριθή.

Following immediately on ἄκρῳ one would naturally expect ἄκριδια to be the diminutive of that word, and that Dioscorides means that on the head of the stalk there are two-branched *spikelets* (to use LSJ). But all the dictionaries from the very earliest are adamant that we have here the diminutive of ἄκρις. Now in Wellmann's edition of Dioscorides, and no doubt elsewhere our attention is directed to the parallel passage in Pliny the Elder (*HN* 22. 161). In the paragraph on *bromos* he writes: *in cacuminibus dependentes parvulas velut locustas habet*. Copying Dioscorides, or their common source it is *he* who has misunderstood ἄκριδια. Though one has to admit that he demurred at the thought of *two-legged* ones. Anyway, here is an error that has been blessed by two thousand years of transmission. So much for sins of commission; how about sins of omission? Perhaps one should not refer to these as sins. Dictionaries are written to supply a recognised need, not as Platonic Ideas. And so we should not complain too loudly if the Victorian schoolboy did not greatly care about the works of the astrologer Hephaestion. Though even the Victorian schoolboy could be disadvantaged by the second-class treatment given to "non-school" authors. I noticed recently (and unfortunately failed to make a note of) a word which was illustrated by three examples from Euripides and one from Hippocrates. This gave the impression that it was basically a poetic word, which Hippocrates had somehow picked up and used to make his account of a malady more graphic. In fact, those three examples in Euripides were the only ones in all his surviving work, whereas the word is quite common in the Hippocratic writings. Clearly Euripides was making metaphorical use of an established medical term. Now that all is grist to our mill, we realise that there are numerous works for which our dictionary does not provide adequate explanations. And of course from the point of Byzantine studies a hiatus between Classical and Byzantine Greek is highly inconvenient. Meanwhile a flood of new material continues to issue forth in the fields of epigraphy and papyrology.

The need is therefore clear enough. Ideally we should have a new edition incorporating all the required improvements, granted the impracticability of a completely new dictionary. This would in the first instance require that the original text be recaptured in a form in which the new material could easily be inserted. This is not, or certainly was not when the work was planned practicable. In some cases optical scanning is possible; in this case we have a text printed with the numerous minor imperfections of hot metal type, in several different fonts, two alphabets, complicated punctuation, irregular spacing, and so on. A test showed that the time spent in correcting a section so scanned was considerably greater than would have been required by complete resetting. And then only the new words would have been dealt with satisfactorily, with perhaps a few extra references added to existing words which were inadequately documented. For the rest it would have been a case of patching old garments with new material – with the result vividly predicted in the Gospel. While I should not like to assert that everything in the present dictionary is wrong, to print the new and old embodied in one article would appear to endorse the whole in every place where an addition or alteration is made. Even then, the arrangement of many of the articles is such that there is no way of fitting in the new material.

Given these disadvantages, and considering that in addition to lack of resources it was desirable to make the new material available within a reasonable space of time, the only answer was to issue a new supplement, combined with the present one in order to prevent consultation becoming too laborious¹. There is a slight change in format in that I have tried to make the entries more self-explanatory than the old ones, which were often completely incomprehensible without reference to the main work. Other changes include the occasional alteration of references and abbreviations to bring them in line with common practice; the abbreviations used in *L'Année Philologique* have for instance usually been preferred. These will, where necessary be explained in the revised lists in the front of the Supplement, but are often self-evident. A number of upper case letters have, in line with modern typographical practice, are being changed to lower case.

The Supplement consists of corrections and additions. In order to keep the work within bounds we have had to restrict the

¹ See now *Greek-English Lexicon. Revised Supplement* edited by P. G. W. Glare with the assistance of A. A. Thompson (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996) [Edit.].

scope of the former. Anything which is plainly wrong must be put right when it is noticed, and as a last resort some short articles are completely rewritten, but no attempt is made to recast the longer ones. To do so would be a lengthy task, even if one could assure oneself that the original authors' selection of examples was a truly representative one. In fact, a new article would require a great deal of reading. Nor, at the other end of the scale, does it seem worth while to correct every minor misprint. As with the previous supplement, references are not changed in the body of the work, unless the new edition involves a significant change in the text or contains other information which it is desirable that the reader should have.

Additions comes from two sources – from a re-examination of old texts, and from newly published ones, mainly epigraphical and papyrological. The second group is in many ways more straightforward. The texts are of course often damaged to some degree but they have not gone through the process of centuries of scribal copying, so that insofar as we can read them, we have the texts as they were originally written. They are mostly to be found in readily identifiable publications and editors nowadays usually present us with a fair amount of information. Not all is quite as simple as that. Damaged documents are likely to have obscure contexts. Other documents may be too short to allow the reader to deduce much in the absence of external assistance. From these sources of course come most of the new words. From the inscriptions comes a vast amount of new material relating to dialects.

To deal with already known texts is more complicated. The bulk is very great. As I have said, much of the later writing was not treated in the same detail as the accepted literary masterpieces, though from the point of view of vocabulary it may have been just as deserving. The problem is made more acute by the fact that patristic writings were excluded from LSJ⁹ for reasons of space. In fact, only a small proportion of their vocabulary is too technical to be considered as part of the normal scholarly language of the day. Much of the material is included in the *Patristic Greek Lexicon* edited by G. W. H. Lampe, but apart from the inconvenience of having to work simultaneously with two dictionaries, Lampe does not take much notice of epigraphical and papyrological texts, and from the authors he does quote omits a lot which appears to have no immediate theological application. Unfortunately we have not had the resources to embark on a systematic reading of all these sources, and have had to content ourselves with a search of in-

dexes and concordances, where they exist, supplemented by voluntary contributions from outside.

At the time of the publication of the first Supplement, the validity of Ventris' decipherment of the Linear B script was still doubted by some scholars. With its general acceptance it seems wrong to exclude evidence which assists in our understanding of Greek words, as regards both morphology and sense, and so Mycenaean forms are being included where the interpretation seems reasonably certain. This material is attached normally at the end of articles, since there are difficulties in the way of complete incorporation. There are one or two changes in the new articles which I hope will make for greater accuracy. In introducing the definition of verb LSJ frequently say "of" with a noun which may turn out to be the subject or the object of the action, or perhaps neither, and this confusion often occurs within a single article, or even section. To avoid ambiguity, this form of expression is confined to the subject, and other relationships are conveyed by different means. "Dubio sensu" is unhelpful, and also misleading when the sense is not just doubtful, but totally unknown. One can however still give useful information, such as indicating the context in which the word is found, e. g. an inventory of temple equipment. Exact synonyms are very rare indeed, and the formula "(one word) = (another)" is generally avoided, though I think this is legitimate in some cases where, say, common verbal suffixes such as $-i\zeta\omega$, etc. are attached to the same root.

A new supplement can only be a temporary and imperfect expedient. It can deal adequately within the bounds of our knowledge with previously unrecorded words, but to revise existing articles is fraught with problems. I hope that it will one day be possible to compile a completely new dictionary. This would be a considerable task, but we have two advantages. The TLG Data Bank can supply all the material far more conveniently than was previously possible and at the same time keep it within practical bounds by relieving it of the need to act as a thesaurus.

P. G. W. Glare
Oxford

В докладе, прочитанном на XVII Византиноведческом конгрессе (август 1991 г.), автор (издатель *Oxford Latin Dictionary*) рассматривает историю создания греческо-английского словаря

Г. Дж. Лиддела и Р. Скотта, переработанного Г. С. Джонсом. Оценивая задачи, которые ставили перед собой создатели старого словаря, связанные с ними недостатки, а также типичные ошибки, характерные для него, автор сообщает о принципах нового дополнения к LSJ, составленного им вместе со своими коллегами (издано в 1996 г.). Новый Supplement включает материалы прежнего, изданного Э. Барбером в 1968 г., а также исправления и дополнения к основной части словаря – всего 25 000 статей, из которых 6000 посвящены словам, отсутствующим в LSJ.