

HESYCHIUS CONTINUED

HANSEN (P.A.) (ed.) *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon. Volumen III: Π–Σ*. (Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker 11/3.) Pp. xxxiv + 404. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005. Cased, €128. ISBN: 978-3-11-017852-4.

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Hesychius' lexicon is the most important surviving ancient dictionary. Composed in the fifth or sixth century A.D., based largely on the (lost) lexicon of Diogenianus from the second century A.D., it preserves scholarship dating as far back as the Alexandrian period. For modern scholars, this huge lexicon offers precious information on numerous rare Greek words (indeed Hesychius provides the only surviving attestation of a considerable number of words, especially dialect forms), with explanations of their meaning and often with citations to lost works of literature as well.

Unfortunately, Hesychius' work survives in a unique, damaged and highly corrupt fifteenth-century manuscript that is part of a complex textual tradition involving other enormous (and in some cases still unpublished) lexica; it thus needs particularly good editorial work. The few complete editions of the text, which are all well over a century old, are based on a poor understanding of the lexicographical tradition and on inadequate texts of many relevant authors, and thus some of the information they provide cannot be relied upon, while other necessary information is not given at all.

In 1953 and 1966 Kurt Latte produced two volumes of a new edition that is much more helpful, but his death cut short the work at the letter omicron. Since then scholars have attempted to confine their Hesychian researches to the first half of the alphabet or struggled miserably with the pitfalls of the second half.

The present volume is a continuation of Latte's work; it picks up where the second volume left off and covers letters pi to sigma, using the same general format and marginal symbols as Latte did. (A fourth volume covering the rest of the alphabet is in preparation, and a fifth with indexes is planned.) Its appearance is cause for rejoicing among those who have experience of dealing with the existing editions of Hesychius, particularly as the Editor, P.A. Hansen, has an excellent track record (e.g. *Carmina epigraphica graeca* i–ii).

Being the third in a series, this volume is not self-standing; Latte's prolegomena function as its introduction, so most of the information on the text and its history is not repeated in this volume. There is, however, an extremely useful set of corrigenda to Latte's prolegomena, explaining the points on which subsequent scholarship has shown Latte to be in error and providing useful references to the scholarship concerned.

H.'s edition differs from Latte's in several ways. It has a fuller apparatus, better presentation of the information given in the margins, fuller citations of ancient sources (often using better editions), and a numbering system that exactly matches that of Schmidt's edition. (Latte, by renumbering entries, created a double numeration for the first half of Hesychius that causes confusion and annoyance to this day.) H.'s text also benefits from an improved understanding of the lexicographical tradition.

The edition with which H.'s text will most be compared is not Latte's but Moritz Schmidt's 1858–68 *editio maior*, which was the standard text for the second half of the alphabet until H.'s edition appeared. (This edition is not to be confused with the same editor's 1867 *editio minor*, which although more readily available has always been

avoided by experts because of its omission of many entries.) At first glance Schmidt's and H.'s texts seem radically different, but this difference arises chiefly from the symbols and references H. inserts into the text, and from variations in what material is bracketed. In terms of the actual words printed as part of the text, the difference between H.'s and Schmidt's texts is not large: in a sample of 200 entries (ρ 1–100, σ 1–100), 86.5 % were identical between the two editions in terms of the actual Greek words printed (in an equivalent sample comparing Latte's and Schmidt's texts [δ 1–100, ϵ 1–100], 78.5 % of entries were identical). Most of the non-identical entries differ only on a single point, usually a minor one, and when more significant divergences exist they tend to result from the movement into the text of variants that Schmidt had placed in the apparatus; there are, however, a few major alterations and additions (usually drawn from other portions of the lexicographical tradition, as H. is less prone to bold conjectures than was Latte).

In addition to changes of this sort, H.'s text provides a large amount of critical information, including much that is not in Schmidt. As in Latte's edition, the probable sources of entries (Diogenianus, Cyrillus, etc.) are indicated in the margins, but H. adds more information on manuscript readings for the related lexica, conjectures and other possible readings, and references to occurrences of the lemmata in preserved literature. This information is very useful (particularly given the obscurity of some of the texts involved), but it is not always easy to comprehend, as it is given in a highly condensed format relying on conventions that are not always explained in the prefatory material (for example, the symbol A after an entry refers to Book 1 of the *Iliad* if it is followed by a number in ordinary type, but to one of the manuscripts of Cyrillus if it is followed by a superscript number, while two dots after a Homeric reference mean that there are other occurrences of the word in Homer). The fact that H. has put more of this material in the text itself than did either Schmidt or Latte gives this edition a more intimidating appearance, but the information will generally be welcome none the less.

It is generally agreed that the only serious flaw in Latte's edition is its apparatus, which is unreliable in reporting the manuscript readings; this problem is admitted with admirable candour on the first page of H.'s corrigenda, leading one to hope that H. has avoided falling into the same error himself. Unfortunately I do not have access to the manuscript and cannot state with certainty how accurate H.'s apparatus is, but a comparison of it with Schmidt's found few discrepancies, none significant. And whereas Latte systematically failed to report the accentuation of the manuscript (a choice that is unwise even in the case of a manifestly incorrect accent, because when a lemma is corrupt, as they often are, the accentuation can be a clue to understanding what has happened to it), H. frequently notes accentual divergences (though he sometimes takes credit for the correct accentuation in cases where it is already in Schmidt's edition). Schmidt's impressive apparatus is not entirely superseded by the new text, because there is information in it that H. does not provide, but for ordinary purposes H. will certainly be the text to consult first when using this section of Hesychius.

In general, this is an excellent edition which will be a great help to everyone who uses Hesychius – and almost every Classicist ends up needing to use Hesychius sooner or later. Readers will be very grateful to the Editor for the persistence and dedication that led him to complete the volume in the face of a debilitating illness.

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