Harper, Joshua L. 2025. "A Review of The Cambridge Greek Lexicon." *Journal of Language, Culture, and Religion* 6 (2): 87–89. https://doi.org/10.64830/001c.145151.

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of The Cambridge Greek Lexicon

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https://doi.org/10.64830/001c.145151

Journal of Language, Culture, and Religion

Vol. 6, Issue 2, 2025

Diggle, James, Bruce L. Fraser, Patrick James, Oliver B. Simkin, Anne A. Thompson, and Simon J. Westripp, eds. 2021. *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*. 2 vols. Cambridge University Press. 1570 p.

The Cambridge Greek Lexicon was conceived by John Chadwick in 1997 as a revision of *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (usually affectionately nicknamed the "Middle Liddell"), originally published in 1889. The Middle Liddell was itself based on Liddell and Scott's much larger *Greek-English Lexicon* (LSJ, or the "Great Scott"), which has been revised several times since its initial publication in 1843. The 1889 intermediate lexicon on the other hand, has never been revised, and Chadwick felt the need of an updated student-friendly intermediate lexicon. After Chadwick died in 1998, the project changed slightly; the editorial team headed by James Diggle decided to produce an entirely new lexicon to replace, rather than revise, the "Middle Liddell." Thus, while many recent lexicons are revisions of older works, CGL is composed of new readings of the classical Greek texts. The corpus spans from Homer to Plutarch's *Lives* (2nd cent. AD), and most major authors in that period have been included. Instead of quotations and specific citations, word attestations are marked by author abbreviations. These abbreviations in the word entries free up space "for fuller description of meanings and for illustration of usage in a wider range of passages" (pp. vii–viii).

Thus, CGL is not just a rehashing of glosses and definitions from older lexica. The editors give clear and contemporary entries. For instance, where older lexicons like the "Middle Liddell" give euphemistic entries such as χέζω "to ease oneself, do one's need" (1889, 884), CGL does not shy away from the crass connotation of the lexeme—especially as used by Aristophanes—and glosses it "defecate, shit...PASS. (of a turd) be shat" (p. 1496). LSJ sometimes turns to Latin to provide glosses deemed indelicate in English, as in "*membrum virile*" for a slang use of κέρκος, which normally means "tail" (1996, 943); CGL gives the straightforward English equivalent (p. 797).[1] In other instances, the editors have availed themselves of lexicographical research that has been done in the century since the publication of the "Middle

1 Compare this to συγγίγνομαι, which itself is a Greek a euphemism for sexual relations. The "Middel Liddell" skips this meaning entirely; LSJ (1996, 1660) and CGL (p. 1296) both give "have sexual intercourse."

Liddell." Take, for instance, κυψέλη. The "Middle Liddell" has "any hollow vessel: a chest, box" (1889, 459); LSJ (1996, 1015) adds to this "of a corn-chest." Richard Carden in The Papyrus Fragments of Sophocles (De Gruyter 1974, 178n.13), points out that we can be much more specific: a κυψέλη is typically a ceramic container for storing grain, of about 300 liter capacity. This is reflected in CGL "large earthenware container for storing grain, grain-bin" (p. 850).[2]

The two hardback volumes of this lexicon come in a sturdy box. What is more surprising, in spite of the current hardback publishing trend, which involves gluing pages into the spine and adding hard covers to what is otherwise a relatively flimsy binding, these volumes are bound in the traditional manner by being sewn in signatures. Although this sewn binding is more complicated, it is much more durable. Thus, the binding promises to hold up to years of wear. Who should use this lexicon? It seems perfectly suited for its intended audience: students of Classical Greek and researchers with moderate interest in the literature between Homer and Plutarch. Serious scholars will need to use more in-depth tools, such as searches in the TLG and Montanari's Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek (2015, translated from the 3rd Italian ed.) The Cambridge Greek Lexicon, for instance, does not cover papyri or inscriptions. For New Testament and Septuagint scholarship, however, this volume provides an excellent snapshot of the meanings of lexemes in broader Classical usage.

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Published: December 09, 2025 CDT.

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2 I encountered this example while researching LXX Hag 2:16 ὅτε ἐνεβάλλετε εἰς κυψέλην κριθῆς εἴκοσι σάτα, καὶ ἐγενήθη εἰς δέκα.

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