

Review

A LEXICON TO THE LATIN TEXT OF THE THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG (1688-1772) Edited by Dr. John Chadwick, Dr. Jonathan S. Rose, Swedenborg Society, London, 2008, 583 pages.

Finally, a definitive Lexicon for Swedenborg's Latin. How often have you found the need to check on the real meaning of some interesting phrase or subject in the Writings? Well, perhaps not too many may exactly have that urgent need. But think of all the translators out there! Hurrah for this work.

The Lexicon reads as any other professional language lexicon, the A-4 size is easy to handle, the dark blue hard covers with gold script and Swedenborg's Coat of Arms bespeaks modest power. On the base of the Spine is the oft-recurring image of a man digging in a garden, from an ornament used by Swedenborg in his first editions, I suspect a special touch by Dr. Jonathan Rose who has researched all the ornaments. Each letter of the alphabet is introduced by a 48-font size centered letter on a fresh page, followed by the material in two columns, the Latin words in bold, and explanations following in standard succinct mode. The references, of course, are to the various places in the Writings where this word has been used, its form, etc., citing the actual Latin phrases in which they occur, with a swung dash ~ indicating the word itself or its root, with its endings next to it. If there is more than one use, each use is marked 1, 2, etc. One has to learn the abbreviations for the Latin titles of the Writings, e.g. AM is Amore Conjugialis, MI is De Miraculis, etc. listed up front. The Lexicon covers from a, ab to Zwinglianus, in 509 pages, followed by another section of "Proper Nouns", from Abaddon to Zwingliani, ending on page 570.

There are all kinds of Latin dictionaries in existence, and at the

Swedenborg Library in the Swedenborgiana section (Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania), the ones from Swedenborg's own era are among the most frequently used items by our local scholars. There has never been anything quite like this Lexicon, however. It fills a long foreseen need. It has been years in the making. I recall in the 1970s when I had the privilege of sitting on the Advisory and Revision Board receiving loose-bound sections as each letter of the alphabet was covered, and keeping them handy. I was sorry to leave England in 1981 with my collection only reaching part IV ending with Korus. I did receive the next two sections, extending my access to Quum. The eight parts of the first edition came out from 1970 to 1990, when it was finalized as the First Edition. However, the beginning goes further back.

Contents first, then the Preface by Rev. John Elliott outlines how Dr. John Chadwick's father, Fred Chadwick, had also contributed much to the early work of the Swedenborg Society, officiating at many memorable moments. It details Fred then John Chadwick's continuing contributions, with this Lexicon as a kind of apotheosis. Elliott's Preface ends in a touching tribute to John Chadwick, now among those who "enjoy endless Sabbaths." The Introduction by Dr. Jonathan S. Rose comes next, first paying tribute to John as the New Church member who was also one of the most recognized world authorities in Classical Linguistics, a Reader at Cambridge University and a partner in deciphering Linear B Minoan script — also mentioned by Elliott. I insert here part of an obituary I found on the web, from *The Guardian* (England), Dec. 2, 1998: "Incorrigibly modest" and always taking second place deferring to Dr. Michael Ventris, John Chadwick's "arduous and brilliant research, unaided by computers, proved the theory" that the Linear B of Minoan script John helped decipher, was in fact "a version of Greek" (Obituary by Michael Everson). John Chadwick was the hero who made use of the assembled slips of

paper which various contributors had made over the years, noting special meanings for Latin words. The first edition in 1990 was the outcome. Unfortunately, John Chadwick passed away in 1998 before a revised version could be made more permanently binding, so to speak, although not before he had circulated some six hundred changes and additions. The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose had already been asked by Dr. Chadwick to become his successor. With Jonathan's involvement came the scanning of the Lexicon by the General Church and the Academy of the New Church, applying to it a program which allowed for checking a greater scope of endings, declensions and participles. Besides Dr. Chadwick's own corrections, some 1800 improvements, quite a few additional corrections plus 450 new entries could now be added. This new publication interpolates between the previous edition of the Lexicon and this latest one, illustrating some of the changes.

The Introduction includes a Morphology of Swedenborg's Latin, categorizing the Neo-Latin Swedenborg used so as not to confuse it with Classical Latin. It actually is a useful primer of Neo-Latin. Jonathan ends with acknowledgments to a good number of individuals spanning the Atlantic for their outstanding contributions and assistance. Kindly thank some of them yourself next time you see them.

Next comes the reprint of the Preface to the first edition of the Lexicon, by Dr. Chadwick himself, explaining how the early comments on Swedenborg's Latin had been correlated, a project in which he was "encouraged and supported" by not only the Swedenborg Society but from "other countries." Much of his explanations of contents carry over to this final edition of his "brunt" of the work. He ends his Preface with the hope for future revisions,—now materialized. This is followed by a list of abbreviations, all totaling pages vii – xlviii.

In Three Appendices p. 573 to 583, the first is a chronological

list of all of Swedenborg's Latin works, beginning with those published by Swedenborg, then the posthumous works. The second explains the "repeated sections" i.e. paragraphs in the Writings which have been used more than once, and how the referencing system works. Variations in numbering systems Swedenborg used for various works are capped by a couple of odd uses of verbs and spellings. The third 1-page Appendix deals with Sebastian Schmidt's Latin Bible, some history of the famed Schmidius Bible which Swedenborg used and we know he covered with marginal notes as the Divine inspiration took hold. Here it takes note of how close to verbatim or not Swedenborg quoted passages of Sacred Scripture from Schmidius. An imprecise art, it seems.

Highly recommended for all New Church scholars, for all New Church members, and as a great gift to someone, even as a coffee-table book. Wherever Swedenborg's Latin is taught, salutes are in order. Also a good gift to all New Church young people from toddlers and on up, to encourage future translators! Its launching date is this April 17th, in London. Note the weather over London on that date. It should be available at your closest New Church book store soon. Thank you Swedenborg Society.

Erik E. Sandstrom

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