Danker, Frederick, ed.


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“This revision makes a primary departure in the use of bold roman typeface to highlight the meanings of words in their functional usage ... this revision builds on and expands Bauer’s use of extended definitions ... Extended definitions are given in bold roman and may be followed by one or more formal equivalents in bold italics. The user of the lexicon can explore such equivalents for translation of passages that follow, but within the boundaries of the definition” (BDAG, p. viii, paragraph 1). Danker, and the publisher, are justified in focusing attention on the inclusion of definitions in the third edition of this important New Testament (NT) lexicon. Any reader familiar with the second edition (BAGD - 1979, details below) will notice an immediate and sharp improvement in semantic clarity and presentation in this third edition. BAGD employed glosses—an English word or phrase or selection of these—to assign meaning. These are what BDAG refers to above as formal equivalents. The unfortunate consequences of relying on glosses alone to convey semantic content accurately, which is the approach generally used in Greek lexicography, have been pointed out by many, including Danker elsewhere in the paragraph referred to above. The NT lexicon of Louw and Nida (LN - 1988, details below) was based expressly on the principle of providing definitions: “For many persons the most distinctive and helpful feature of this lexicon is the fact that meanings are indicated by definitions and not simply by glosses, as in most dictionaries” (LN vol 1, p. vii). It is a credit to Danker that he has adopted this process: difficult, frustrating and time-consuming as it is. Such labour deserves recognition and critical attention. In this review, therefore, I will look squarely at this aspect of the lexicon.
At the outset I must mention terminology. I will refer to definitions simply as definitions—not extended definitions. BDAG uses the latter term to distinguish the definitions which are flagged as such by the typeface allocated to them, from those which are regarded as being implicit in formal equivalents, which I will call glosses. BDAG comments: "When a formal equivalent is sufficient to convey the meaning, as marry in the entry γαμέω, this meaning stands in bold italics without extended definition" (viii). I will state of such an entry that a gloss, but no definition, has been provided. Some of these glosses which stand alone, that is without a flagged definition, indeed many of them (but not the majority) amount to a definition as BDAG implies, but does not state. Nevertheless, for clarity of discussion I will refer to these, as to all formal equivalents, as glosses. I should state immediately that I regard it as a methodological shortcoming for BDAG, having set up this distinction, to have failed to provide for each sense of each entry a single definition—be that definition no more than what appears to be a gloss, even a single word equivalent, if that is sufficient to convey the meaning. My reasons will become clear in the course of the review.

This distinction drawn by BDAG immediately alerts the reader to the fact that some entries contain a definition and some do not. How many of each? I surveyed approximately 5000 entries, the vocabulary of the NT itself (which contains approximately 5170 lexical items, excluding proper names) leaving aside entries such as numerals, letters, transliterations and so on. I found that approximately 3000 contain definitions. I claim no false precision for this exercise, but this is a reasonably accurate indicator. 60% of entries, then, contain one or more definitions.

The scope of this undertaking is even greater than might appear at first. Many more than 3000 definitions have been provided in these entries. Complex entries, with a large number of senses, can require a considerable number: for example, ἰστημι contains 17, ἐγείρω contains 13. In fact, very few of the 1108 pages in the lexicon proper contain no definition and many pages contain a large number: p. 272, for example, contains 14.

The lexicographical effort demanded by work on this scale may not be appreciated by all, but will be obvious to those who have attempted similar work, on even a small number of words. Add to this the difficulty of many items in the NT vocabulary, and the accretion of comment (of variable lexical worth) on these items, and the achievement is seen to be very substantial indeed. Immediately, it seems to me, all NT lexicons, including Bauer's sixth edition (BAAR - 1988, details below), are put in the shade. This will become, for the near future, the lexicon to be consulted - and argued with.

Before examining the definitions themselves I turn to those senses which are equipped with glosses alone. These number more than 2000 since some entries containing more than one sense are partly defined and partly glossed. Are the glosses such as BDAG has described above, and is the end result satisfactory? The example given by BDAG itself is an unfortunate one. The gloss marry is ambiguous (it could mean: “join in marriage” - of a celebrant; “give in marriage” - of a parent; “take in marriage” - of a spouse) and, in fact, this has been recognised by BDAG. The entry does have a definition: to take another person as spouse. Revision of this entry has occurred
since the introduction was written. But there are clearly cases where only one gloss is
given and it does function as a definition (and could have been given as such): διαφεύγω
escape; δυσνόητος hard to understand; γραμμή characteristic of an elderly woman.
The first two glosses have been preserved from BAGD - as is very often the case; the
third has been slightly polished from BAGD’s characteristic of old women, with one eye
toward late twentieth-century sensibilities, as is also often the case (ἀνήρ and γυνή
themselves are obvious cases, but, for example, ῥαβδούχος: police officer [BAGD:
policeman] and τεχνίτης: craftsperson [BAGD: craftsman]). There are however
numerous senses without definition and with more than one gloss; examples: ἐκτρέπω
sense 1: turn, turn away; κατπλέω: trade in, peddle, huckster; ἵναω sense 4: have
meaning, be valid, be in force; μόλωψ: welt, wale, bruise, wound. In such cases which
gloss, if any, is taking the place of a clear definition? Often the gloss contains a feature
in brackets leaving the application of the bracketed feature unclear without additional
information: πρίζω saw (in two); τεκνίον (little) child; ἐκκολυμβάω (dive overboard
and) swim away; πυρρόζω to be (fiery) red; συγκάμπτω (cause
to) bend. cf. κλίνω sense 1: to cause something to incline or bend (definition); πόντος
the (high/open) sea; προσφάγιον fish (to eat) cf. ὀψίριον fish (both are for eating).
In some cases the inadequacy of the gloss alone is made apparent by additional information
(given here, as there, in plain font): βρύω of someth. that is teeming w. a substance pour
forth; ἀμφιβάλλω cast, a t.t. for the throwing out of the circular casting-net; ἐμβάζω
put in ... cause someone to embark, put someone on board ship; ἐπακροάμαι listen to
... in the sense of overhearing.

Vice versa, the gloss sometimes incorporates contextual material. μετεωρίζομαι
is glossed in the negative: do not be anxious, worried. Sometimes neither definition nor
gloss is given, but simply a translation of the occurrence in context, for example ἤπιος,
θάλασσα sense 5, καθημερινός, μετέπειτα, ὀσίως—occasionally this looks like simply a
typographical slip (that is, a gloss was intended, but the font convention was not
observed): ιμάτιον sense 2; οἰκουμένη sense 3; ἀστίς: ‘asp, Egyptian cobra’, gener. of
venomous snakes cf. the full treatment in ἄκρις: the desert locust: ‘Schistocerca
gregaria’ (definition, glossed locust).

Lastly I make brief mention, in this context, of the variable treatment within more
complex entries and give an example of a third repository of semantic information in
BDAG. φρόνος is given a first sense of chair, seat (glossed). This is subdivided into a)
gener. and b) spec. a chair set aside for one of high station, throne. The last word is
given as a translation equivalent - not a definition and not a formal equivalent (gloss), but
a translation equivalent - and therefore in normal italic type. In subsection β of b) we
read ‘Of heaven as God's throne.’ At this point we have left the realm of chair or seat,
even one set aside for the divine. The failure to provide definitions systematically is
beginning to involve us in lexical confusion.

That systematic defining was an option is made clear by πώλος sense 2 which is
defined as horse. Note that this is presented as a definition—thus demonstrating that any
gloss so regarded can be so treated. However this same sense is glossed horse in the
same entry, showing the strong attachment of BDAG to the gloss. This becomes very clear when it is noticed that, although there are many hundreds of occurrences of glosses without definitions, as has just been discussed, very few definitions are unaccompanied by a gloss—I have noticed only two: θυμιατήριον incense altar and καταλέγω to make a selection for membership in a group. The reverse process is graphically illustrated by ἐμφανίστηκε whose definition an endeavour to gain some personal end through clever or tricky means is accompanied by six glosses chicanery (sic), wickedness, villainy, deceit, fraud, unscrupulousness. The only occurrence of this word in our literature is at Acts 13:10. My conclusion from this data (and more below) is that BDAG has not yet shaken loose from the lure of the gloss; that the role of the definition is not yet fully appreciated and distinguished from that of the gloss; and that entries without a gloss have been deliberately shunned, thus explaining the many single gloss entries which, with the gloss presented as a definition, would have been gloss-less.

I turn now to the definitions themselves and will look at some of their characteristics and sources, their integration with glosses and the extent to which BAGD has been recast by their inclusion.

Several features of the definitions are very soon obvious. Parts of speech are usually carefully distinguished. It might seem surprising that this is even worthy of comment. Readers familiar with LN, however, will know that this is not to be taken for granted. In that lexicon, due partly to the layout of the material by semantic domains, different parts of speech are sometimes grouped together and the definition is not grammatically apposite to all. BDAG, however, signals verbs by indicating the infinitive: διεξάγει to pass from physical life; nouns by various substantival signals: indefinite article: κρίτηριον sense 1 a forum for justice (but sense 2: case before a court); definite article: δῶμα the level surface of a flat roof; others: ἔργον sense 2: that which one does as a regular activity; ἐργάτης one who is engaged in work; νότος back part of the body from the neck to the pelvis; adjectives frequently by ‘pertaining to’ : νέος pert. to being in existence but a relatively short time; ἐκτενὴς pert. to being persevering, with implication that one does not waver in one’s display of interest or devotion; adverbs often in the same way: δικαιῶς pertaining to being just or right in a juridical sense. This treatment of adverbs blurs the distinction between adjectives and adverbs. Compare the definition of ἐκτενής just given with that for ἐκτενῶς pert. to being persevering. Similarly: ἀλλως, βεβαιῶς, παρεκτός etc. Yet these are usually glossed as adverbs: δικαίως (defined above) is glossed as justly, in an upright manner. καλῶς sense 3 pert. to being of advantage, in a manner free from objection is similarly defined as an adjective and glossed as an adverb. But occasionally the gloss too can be adjectival: κακῶς pert. to experiencing harm in a physical sense, bad, badly.

Occasionally other parts of speech are blurred. A verb can be defined as a noun: ἐπιτεθῆκε a rapid motion forward into; καταλλάσσω the exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship (see also πορνεύω sense 2 and ἀποθνῄσκω sense 2)—an adverb as a noun: κακείθεν sense 2 a point of time subsequent to another point of time;
déinwōs an extreme negative point on a scale relating to values—a preposition as an adjective: πορεκτός sense 2 prep. w. gen., pert. to something left out of other considerations - a noun as an adjective: προστόμαρτς ó of one especially distinguished for testimony to the death—a noun as a verb: ὑπόκρισις to create an impression that is at odds with one's real purposes or motivations. The grammatical form of the last is probably influenced by LN's definition of the same word (together with ὑποκρίνομαι) to give an impression of having certain purposes or motivations, while in reality having quite different ones (88.227). Yet διαπεράω, defined by BDAG as a noun: movement across the area between two sides of a geographical object does echo LN, but there it is defined as a verb: to move from one side to another of some geographical object ... (15.31). Finally, παρακοή is an instance where the definition is of mixed grammatical form: refusal to listen and so be disobedient. The first part of the definition is substantival; the second verbal. This definition is probably influenced by LN: to refuse to listen to and hence to disobey (36.27) which may in its turn, since LN was published after BAGD, have been influenced by the glosses in the latter: unwillingness to hear, disobedience.

Another salient feature of the format of the definitions is the varying degree of concern for a close syntactic fit with the collocation, which calls for strict demarcation between the semantic weight carried by the word under definition and that carried by the words required to complete the meaning of the word group. Close examination of this issue would be too detailed for this review. I simply give a few examples to clarify my meaning. ἐκμόσσω is defined as to cause to become dry by wiping with a substance. Notice that the direct object is not mentioned in the definition, but the instrument is. Both occur explicitly in the text, as is clear from BDAG's next words: wipe tί tινι someth. w. someth. Therefore if I insert this definition (as if it were a gloss) into the text in place of the verb I will get a close fit with the direct object, which is expressed in the text but not in the definition, but the instrument will be semantically duplicated since it is expressed both in the definition (in general form) and explicitly in the text. If I were to define the verb as simply to cause to become dry by wiping or alternatively as to cause (something) to become dry by wiping (with something)—where the bracketed features, although essential to the overall meaning of the word group, are to be supplied by other words in the collocation - I would get a close syntactic fit and have restricted the semantic content of the verb itself to that which it carries, by itself, in the context. This may appear both trivial and disputable. Not all will agree on this point. But reasonable consistency is desirable.

Within a page of ἐκμόσσω the following definitions are met: ἐκπειράζω sense 1: to subject to test or proof (no direct object in the definition); sense 2: to entrap someone into giving information that will jeopardize the person (direct object included); sense 3: to entice to do wrong by offering attractive benefits (no direct object); ἐκπέμπω to cause someone to go away (for a purpose) (direct object). These definitions do however make it clear that a direct object will be seen in the text. κολοφίζω sense 1 is defined as to strike sharply, esp. with the hand. It is fairly clear
from this definition that a direct object will be taken. The definition of sense 2 is: **to cause physical impairment.** It might appear from this definition that if an object is required at all it will be an indirect object. In fact a direct object is taken as with sense 1. A definition such as **to cause physical impairment to** (someone) could have made this explicit, but BDAG employs the reverse convention. **ἐπιστέλλω:** **to send someth. to** and **ὁπτάνομαι:** **be visible to** (sic - not to be...), for example, both take the dative of which the ‘to’ has been incorporated in the definition. Yet **περιβλέπω:** **to be on the lookout for** takes the accusative; while **ἐπιπήπτω:** **to cause pressure by pushing against or falling on** takes the dative; while **ἐρωτάω:** **to put a query to someone** takes the accusative. These are but some examples on a small scale of a widespread feature of BDAG’s style of definitions: it is the concept that is the centre of interest; contextual fit is secondary and, at times, appears haphazard.

Just one feature of this type of treatment is that not infrequently it is unclear exactly how the definition functions in context. For example, with **ὁφείλω** sense 2: **to be under obligation to meet certain social or moral expectations,** it is unclear what, if anything, might be the direct or/and indirect object of this verb. Further information is necessary (and provided - in fact both occur). Other examples are: **περιστράπτω** sense 1: **to shine brightly on an area that is all around a person** (the direct object is the person); **ἐσφέρω** sense 2: **to cause someone to enter into a certain event or condition** (either a person or a thing can be the direct object under this BDAG grouping); **στρωνυω** sense 1: **to distribute something over a surface** (either the surface or the object/s distributed can be the direct object in this BDAG grouping). By contrast **ἐκκαθάρω** distinguishes senses by close observation of the direct object in the collocation - that is, by tighter definitions: sense 1: **to remove as unclean** (direct object: what is removed); sense 2: **to rid of something unclean** (direct object: what is cleansed - as BDAG notes).

Before leaving the question of format I should remark that occasionally, as with glosses, definitions carry bracketed phrases. **ἐκπεμπω** (given above): **to cause someone to go away (for a purpose)** is an example. Alternatives are also sometimes given within definitions: **προσαναληρω:** **to fill up or replenish besides; μαγεια:** a rite or rites ordinarily using incantations designed to influence/control transcendent powers, **magic** (the gloss). (I might add that ‘transcendent’ is a much-favoured word in BDAG, picked up in ἄβυσσος sense 2, ἀγγελος sense 2, ἀναλαμβάνω sense 3, ἀνήρ sense 3, ἀνθρωπος sense 5 and running like a thread throughout the lexicon.) Also occasionally not one, but two definitions of the one sense are given: **ἀναιδεια** lack of sensitivity to what is proper, carelessness about the good opinion of others; **συράνιος** belonging to heaven, coming from or living in heaven - see also **συναντιλαμβάνομαι,** **ὀράμα** sense 2. διίστημι sense 1 contains three definitions: **to move from, separate from, or take leave of.** The definition of **ὀκνος** contains an inset definition, complete with its own glosses: sense 1: **possessing ὀκνος** (a state involving shrinking from someth., ‘holding back, hesitation, reluctance’). This format is retained from the Bauer tradition.
(BAAR: sense 1: ὄκνως besitzend). ὄκνως itself has no entry in the lexicon. ὄκνέω does - but its definition is self-contained.

BDAG says (vii, last paragraph) “... the publication of any new lexicon creates a crop of instant lexicographers. And this is as it should be.” This is surely correct. But this comment conveys more than that it is easy to criticise lightly what is quite difficult to do. The fact is that opinions will very often differ over the precise wording of lexical definitions even, or perhaps especially, after careful consideration of a proposed definition. (Indeed, before this point is reached, the number of different senses in which a word is used could be contentious. For such changes in BDAG see below.) It is interesting then to observe some of the sources of the BDAG definitions - where these are not wholly fresh creations. Sources include BAGD itself and LN, the latter acknowledged by BDAG “...their forward linguistic thrust has left its mark, along with generously shared verbal echoes,...” (xi, centre).

I give some examples of the use of material from BAGD. πυκτεύω: BAGD fight with fists, box BDAG to fight with fists, box (gloss becomes definition); συμπεριλαμβάνω BAGD embrace, throw one’s arms around BDAG to throw one’s arms around, embrace; χρός: BAGD skin, surface of the body BDAG surface of the body, skin. Note the selection of the gloss better suited as a definition (and see my comments above on the gloss/definition question). ὁββίζω: BAGD beat with a rod BDAG to beat with a rod, beat illustrates the discussion above. The gloss of BAGD has been elevated to a definition in BDAG thus leaving the entry temporarily glossless. The gloss beat - which is more imprecise than the definition (as was the gloss wipe in ἐκμάτωσα above) - has been added to fill the vacuum. Additional information from BAGD is sometimes coupled with the gloss to create the definition in BDAG: συμπόσιον: BAGD a party or group of people eating together BDAG a party of people eating together, party, group; στέφανος BAGD sense 2b that which serves as someone’s adornment, pride BDAG sense 2 that which serves as adornment or source of pride, adornment, pride. The latter example also indicates, as the sense numbering given implies, the re-arrangement of an entry under the discipline of defining. BAGD translations can be employed as definitions: διάκρισις BAGD sense 1 distinguishing, differentiation ... πνευμάτων ability to distinguish betw. spirits 1Cor 12:10 (translation) BDAG sense 1 the ability to distinguish and evaluate, distinguishing, differentiation. It appears that evaluate has been added here under the influence of LN’s definition: the ability to evaluate and judge (30.112).

Clearly, LN has had some influence on BDAG’s definitions. A reader familiar with the terminology of LN’s definitions will recognise the impact on the definition formatting described above. To take just one example: LN also uses ‘pertaining to’ for adverbial definitions: εἰκὼν LN: pertaining to there being no cause or legitimate reason (89.20) BDAG sense 1: pert. to there being no cause or reason, without cause (BAGD sense 1: without cause); παρεκτός (adv.) LN: pertaining to being different and in addition to something else, with the implication of something being external to central concerns (58.38) BDAG sense 1: pert. to being different and in addition to
someth. else, w. focus on being external, besides, outside (BAGD sense 1: besides, outside ... apart from what I leave unmentioned or what is external ... 2 Cor 11: 28 [translation]). These examples also shows the closeness of the verbal echo of LN, signalled by BDAG in the quotation above.

There are many such examples. I have noticed - without any attempt at systematic checking - more than 50 BDAG definitions prompted to a noticeable degree by those of LN. These include the verbatim (LN references given in brackets, sense numbers are those of BDAG): μολύνω sense 1 (79.56) - to cause something to become dirty or soiled, συμβιβάζω sense 1 (63.5) - to bring together into a unit, συμβιβάζω sense 4 (33.298) - to advise by giving instructions, πίναξ (6.134) a relatively flat large dish, πατρικὸς (10.21) - pertaining to one’s ancestors; and verbatim abridgements: ἐπανάγῳ sense 2: LN: to go back toward or to some point or area (15.91) BDAG: to go back toward some point or area; ἐξακολουθῶ sense 2: LN: to imitate behaviour closely (41.48) BDAG: to imitate behaviour; σφόδρα LN: a very high point on a scale of extent and in many contexts implying vehemence or violence (78.19) BDAG: a very high point on a scale of extent; πλοῦς (πλοῦς): LN: the movement of a boat or ship through the water, either rowed or blown by the wind (54.1) BDAG: movement of a boat through water. In the last case, although LN’s definition may not be ideal, technically, BDAG’s definition could include sinking.

Occasionally there is straightforward expansion: παραγγέλλω: LN: to announce what must be done (33.327) BDAG: to make an announcement about someth. that must be done. More often there are abridgements and expansions: ἐρμηνεύω: LN a largely uninhabited region, normally with sparse vegetation (1.86) BDAG: uninhabited or lonely region, normally with sparse vegetation; with adjustment of phraseology: βραβεύω: LN: to control the activity of someone, based presumably upon correct judgment and decision (37.20) BDAG: be in control of someone’s activity by making a decision; προσδοκία LN: to expect something to happen, whether good or bad (30.55 - defined as a verb; προσδοκάω is being defined simultaneously) BDAG: expectation of someth. that is to happen, whether good or bad BAGD: expectation. It appears that two definitions are being drawn on with ζόφος: LN: a condition of darkness associated with feelings of despair and foreboding (14.57) BDAG: darkness ranging from partial to total state, with suggestion of foreboding, but notice LN 14.53 (οὗ σκότος, σκοτία and γνόφος): a condition resulting from the partial or complete absence of light. However, despite these examples - which are but a small fraction of the total number - I do not wish to imply that LN has been any more than an influence on BDAG. I could give much evidence of treatment independent of LN. But this can be taken for granted.

I turn finally to the question of the success of the definitions as definitions. Generally, I think there is no doubt that the glosses of BAGD have been sharpened and clarified by the definitions of BDAG. In very many instances it is much clearer how BDAG intends or understands the glosses. (This is true independently of the extent to which any definition seems accurate - a point on which opinions will often differ.) I give
just a few examples. πραΰς: gentle, humble, considerate, meek (glosses) defined: pert. to not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance; ἐλεμοσύνη: BAGD glosses: kind deed then spec. alms, charitable giving (two senses mixed) BDAG sense 1: exercise of benevolent goodwill, sense 2: that which is benevolently given to meet a need (senses separated); ἐπειείκης: not insisting on every right of letter of law or custom, yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant; εὐλογία: act of speaking in favourable terms, praise (the gloss is process/product ambiguous - see below).

At times this process of clarification leads to some surprising definition/gloss pairs.

νίπτω sense 2: to provide generous service, wash feet; οἶνος sense 2: punishment that God inflicts on the wicked, wine fig. ext. of (sense) 1; πορνεύω sense 2: engagement in polytheistic cult, fornication, in imagery; πόρνη sense 2: a political entity hostile to God, prostitute, whore fig. ext. of (sense) 1; προβάτον sense 2: people of God, sheep; ένδέχομαι: to be acceptable to one’s way of thinking, it is possible.

Occasionally the definition seems not so much to sharpen the gloss as to be sharpened by it. επιστέλλω: to send someth. to, inform/instruct by letter; άνδρείος: pert. to being manly, manly, courageous. At times the two are in apparent conflict.

εὐακούω: a period of time other than a calendar year, year; ἐρμηνεύω: capacity of doing translation, translation. The latter is illustrative of the sometimes erratic interaction of definitions and glosses where it is a question of a state/condition versus a process/activity versus a product/outcome. Although these are typically carefully differentiated in definitions, coupling with glosses is not always seamless. As an illustrative example: πλοκή (a v.l. at 1 Pet 3:3): the condition of being braided, braiding, braid. The definition is a state, while the second gloss is a product and the first gloss, although ambiguous, probably refers to the process. (Compare ἐμπλοκή [the accepted reading at 1 Pet 3:3]: (no definition) braiding, braid. It might seem odd that the v.l. is defined and the accepted reading not, but there is a reference to the v.l. in the entry.) The context at 1 Pet 3:3 seems to favour the process: ... ὁ ἐξώθην ἐμπλοκής τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ενδύσεως ιματίων κόσμος ... (KJV: ... that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.) Note that περιθέσεις and ἐνδύσεις are both defined by BDAG as processes/activities - putting on or around as an act of wearing, the act of putting on respectively. (The first of these definitions is slightly odd and possibly influenced by the usual translation.) The confusion can extend to definitions: ἐξαισθάνεσθαι: the state or condition of coming up from the dead, ἐρήμωσις: state of being made uninhabitable, πτώσις: state or condition of falling, all of which seem to combine a state and a process. ὀράμα sense 2 gives the two as alternatives: the act by which the recipient of a vision is granted a vision, or the state of being in which the pers. receives a vision.

For the most part the definitions are clear in themselves. This can be more difficult to achieve than the reader might think. Use of language typical of definitions, and an intense focus on the word during lexicographic activity, can lead to unintended
vagueness, or even meaninglessness. I am not sure what some readers would make of BDAG’s ἐργον sense 1: that which displays itself in activity of any kind; προλαμβάνω: to do something that involves some element of temporal priority; ἐρεθίζω: to cause someone to react in a way that suggests acceptance of a challenge; κάκεινος: pert. to specification of an entity, w. ascensive force in ref. to what is highlighted.

Conversely, while the lexicographer strives for precision the focus of the definition can shift so that the end product seems slightly off-centre: κεφαλή: the part of the body that contains the brain, head; καθεύδω: to cease being awake, to sleep; δένδρον: a relatively large woody plant, tree; νότος: direction to the right as one faces east, south; θέατρον: a place for public assemblies, theater; φιλέω sense 1: to have a special interest in someone or someth., freq. with focus on close association (a strangely cold definition); μαθητεύω: to cause one to be a pupil, to teach; ποτιζω: make it possible for someone or someth. to drink; μνήμη sense 1: a recollection that one has of events, opp. of ignoring by forgetting; ὀπλον sense 2: an instrument designed to make ready for military engagement, weapon.

The last example illustrates the urge to use etymology, or other senses of the word, in the definition. These are both valid tools of course, but can lead to a false sense of precision or sense development. νεόφυτος: newly planted in the Christian community, newly converted; εἰσακοῦω: to obey on the basis of having listened carefully, obey; ἐκζητέω sense 4: to look for in expectation of fixing blame. In the last example the etymologically based definition sits oddly in the context. The only occurrence is at Luke 11:50: ἵνα ἐκζητήθης τὸ σῶμα πάντων τῶν προφητῶν τὸ ἐκκυκλημένον ἢ ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης. (KJV: That the blood of all the prophets which was shed ... may be required of this generation.) BDAG has added references to DELG (for abbreviation see below) to many entries, indicating the level of interest attaching to etymology. (Occasionally these have been misprinted: the DELG references for ἐξουθενέω and ἐξωτερος both apply to the preceding entry.)

Other interesting questions remain to be asked of the definitions themselves - the treatment of synonyms, near synonyms and cognate groups; the treatment of figurative language (a vexing question); and perhaps most importantly of all the question of accuracy (to one observer) - but space prohibits a fuller examination. So, I would like to conclude with the question of the extent of the recasting of BAGD by the integration of definitions. It is already clear from a number of the examples given that the presentation of individual senses has been widely improved. And I noted occasional examples of entries re-arranged in consequence. To what extent has this occurred? BDAG merely comments: “Numerous entries therefore variously modify some older classifications that were based on mere grammatical or theological distinctions” (viii, paragraph 1). This is a modest claim, and the modifications run well beyond this. Although I carried out no systematic analysis of this aspect of the lexicon, occasionally the examination of another issue revealed re-arrangement en passant.
For example, κατάκειμαί sense 2: **to recline (on a couch) for the purpose of dining**, is followed by the comment: “The sense ‘couch’ for the related noun (κλίνη [sic]) does not appear in the NT.” A check of the entry κλίνη causes some difficulties. The entry has been expanded from that of BAGD. Two senses are given in BDAG, whereas in BAGD all occurrences are grouped together with a series of glosses. Sense 2 of BDAG is: “*dining couch* (gloss) Mk 7:4 as suggested by the context: the only NT pass. that qualifies for this mng.” This is not what one would expect to find here! However, the end of Mark 7:4 is bracketed in the text: [καὶ κλίνων]. It is likely that the entry for κατάκειμαι implicitly reflects a rejection of this textual reading - note the wrong accent above; Mark 7:4 is the only occurrence in the gen. pl and hence with the accent on the ultimate (transferred to the nominative after the reading of this passage?) - while the entry for κλίνη reflects the striving for comprehensiveness, and it is precisely the re-writing of the two entries that brings the apparent inconsistency into view.

However, I can offer no arithmetical comment on the extent to which substantial revision has occurred. My feeling, and it is only a feeling, is that the basic lexical substructure of BAGD - that is, the basic sense analysis and allocation of citations to those senses - has been preserved in the majority of cases. Hence, to a large degree, the definitions have been superimposed on a pre-existing sense structure driven by glosses. This is not surprising in a work that claims to be only a revision and I intend no criticism of BDAG for not being what it did not aim to be. However, revisions of substance have occurred. So one can only ask how different the lexicon might look if testing of word occurrences against tightly worded definitions had taken place **at the time of allocation to senses** rather than after this was complete.

This work must be left to others. For the present Danker has earned our gratitude. So, I conclude where I began. In my view, for the future, BDAG will be the work to consult where formerly one would have consulted BAGD, and it will be consulted with much more profit.

**Abbreviations:**

**BAGD:**


**LN:**

BAAR:


DELG: