Danker, Frederick, ed.


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Frederick Danker and the late F. Wilbur Gingrich published the second, revised English translation of Bauer's lexicon in 1979 (= BAGD). Danker is solely responsible for the present edition, and it is right that the abbreviation for the volume henceforth be BDAG, recognizing the energy he invested in producing a lexicon that bears his stamp and in important respects differs from previous editions. This review will draw attention to some of those differences, particularly to changes from the second revision.

Rather than simply list different meanings of a word, Danker aims at expanding Bauer's definitions to attain greater clarity. A new structure of the lemmata, augmented by a new typography, is designed to achieve this end, for example, in the lemma ἀρχή, which has seven sets of meaning, each marked by a bold arabic numeral against a solid round black background, followed by a definition in bold roman, and then by an equivalent in bold italic, for example: “1 the commencement of someth. as an action, process, or state of being, beginning, i. e. a point of time at the beginning of a duration.” Subsets of meaning are marked by the traditional use of lettering (a, b, α, β, etc.) and are printed in normal italic, as are translations of references, supplied when deemed appropriate. Another most welcome feature is that all NT references are in bold roman, making it easier for the reader to find a passage of interest. This is a beautiful, user-friendly book, and the editor and the publisher deserve to be congratulated on its production. In physical appearance as well as content it marks a change in the tradition of Bauer lexicons.

The use of extended definitions makes the range of meaning of Greek words clearer; it also makes the volume larger (1108 pages) than the second revision (900...
pages. Also contributing to the increased size are two other factors. First, Danker makes more extensive use of early Christian literature, particularly the Apologists, Irenaeus and Origen, references to whom he frequently derives from Bauer’s sixth edition, and of inscriptions and papyri derived from *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, edited by G. H. R. Horsley (1980- ). Second, he includes more extensive bibliographies, especially in treating words in which he seems to have a special interest. These, supplemented by the bibliographies in the tenth volume of Kittel-Friedrich, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (1978-79) (not in *TDNT*), should prove useful in serious lexicographical research.

Danker applauds the fullness of Bauer’s references to Greek literature, and notes that the new appreciation for the “relevance of anthropological and sociological studies for the interpretation of ancient texts ... places new demands on the lexicographer” (p. viii). A major concern of Danker is to exhibit inclusiveness and tolerance, and he cautions against ideological pleading. In this regard, he mentions in particular the difficulty of translating ἀδελφός and Ἰουδαίος. He also cautions against assigning such terms as ἐπίσκοπος and διάκονος the technical meanings they assumed in ecclesiastical evolution, but which were absent from the NT (p. viii). These principles influence the way certain words, especially those with a male or ethnic dimension, are treated in this revision, as the following probes demonstrate.

In the second revision, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is rendered “the Son of Man, the Man,” and the discussion deals with the Jewish eschatological expectations (BAGD, p. 835). The present revision (BDAG, pp. 1026-27) provides a literal translation, “the son of the man,” in parentheses refers to passages in the LXX where the υἱοί τῶν ἀνθρώπων refers to human beings, and then adds, “‘the human being, the human one, the man’ in our lit. only as a byname in ref. to Jesus and in an exclusive sense the Human One, the Human Being, one intimately connected with humanity in its primary aspect of fragility yet transcending it, traditionally rendered ‘the Son of Man’” (BDAG, p. 1026). Danker returns to the quality of fragility, absent from the second revision, later, after which he introduces the eschatological dimension of the title and changes the earlier revision’s judgment, “(Jewish thought contemporary w. Jesus knows of a heavenly being looked upon as a ‘Son of Man’ or ‘Man’, who exercises Messianic functions such as judging the world ...”), which now reads, “On Israelite thought contemporaneous with Jesus and alleged knowledge of a heavenly being looked upon as a ‘Son of Man’ or ‘Man’, who exercises Messianic functions such as judging the world ...”, and he refers to scholarly discussion. He also adds, “Much neglected in the discussion is the probability of prophetic association suggested by the form of address Ezk 2:1 al. (like the OT prophet [Ezk 3:4-11] Jesus encounters resistance)” (BDAG, p. 1026). Clearly, Danker does not shy away from personal interpretation, partly based on recent scholarship, and exhibits a desire not to give offense to some persons in academic circles, who, out of a concern for “inclusiveness” are dissatisfied with the traditional “Son Man.”
It is unfortunate, given his recognition of the claims made on present day lexicography by sociological studies, that Danker, probably for the same reasons, obscures and diminishes the language of fictive kinship that is so important to certain texts. Thus in the set dealing with the NT in the lemma ἀδελφότης (“brotherhood”), the word is defined as “a group of fellow-believers, a fellowship ... of the Christian community, whose members are ἀδελφοί and ἀδελφαί 1 Pt 5:9 ... τὴν ἀ. ἀγάπαν 1 Pt 2:17” (p. 19). The clarification follows the definition, but it errs in suggesting that ἀδελφοί and ἀδελφαί appear in 1 Pet 5:9, which they do not. It also obscures the fact that 1 Peter explicitly describes the church as a brotherhood rather than a “fellowship,” which is a translation of κοινωνία (see the lemma 1 [p. 552]), which appears nowhere in the letter. It is ironic that Danker mentions the social signiﬁcance of the word, which appears only in these two places in NT, and refers to J. Elliott, A Home for the Homeless (1981; 1990; see now Elliott's Anchor Bible I Peter [2000]) for extensive discussion of the family image, but avoids “brotherhood.”

The same criticism applies to the treatment of φίλοδελφία, which is defined as love of brother/sister, but “in our literature in the transf. sense of affection for a fellow-Christian” (p. 1055). The latter statement is quite inadequate, for it completely misses the fictive kinship in 1 Thess 4:9 and 1 Pet 1:22, and overlooks the association of φίλοδελφία with ἀγάπη in these two passages and in Rom 12:10 and 2 Pet 1:7, rather rendering it “sense of affection.”

It is also instructive how this revision, which shares the current interest in women in Greco-Roman antiquity (note the bibliographies, not all of lexicographical interest, in the lemmata γυνή, γυνώκ, προστάτις), treats terms associated with women. The lemma διάκονος illustrates both this interest and the caution about anachronistic use of ecclesiastical titles (pp. 230-31). The general meaning of διάκονος is defined as “one who is busy with someth. in a manner that is of assistance to someone.” Then Danker provides two sets of meaning. The first is “one who serves as an intermediary in a transaction, agent, intermediary, courier.” Under this set the following use is identified: “W. specific ref. to an aspect of the divine message: of apostles and other prominent Christians charged with its transmission” (p. 230).

The second definition is “one who gets someth. done, at the behest of a superior, assistant.” This is where “deacon” would traditionally fit, but Danker objects: “the Eng. derivatives ‘deacon’ and ‘deaconess’ are technical terms, whose mng. varies in ecclesiastical history and are therefore inadequate for rendering NT usage of δ” (p. 230). Special notice is drawn to Phoebe: “Since the responsibilities of Phoebe as διάκονος Ro 16:1 and subscr. v.l. seem to go beyond those of cultic attendants, male or female ..., the reff. in Ro are better classified 1, above ...” (p. 231). It would appear, then, that Danker thinks that Phoebe is referred to as a preacher, although he does not provide a translation of διάκονος as it applies to her. But his expressed judgment begs the question of what functions a deacon or deaconess may have performed, and is not justified by the context, for the following verse says that Phoebe προστάτις πολλῶν ἐγενήθη καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ, which Danker, under the lemma προστάτις translates, “she has proved to be of great
assistance to many, including myself” (p. 885). As benefactor or patron, Phoebe, whatever one might further wish to read into διάκονος, surely belongs in 2.

Danker thinks that much acrimonious debate has been engendered by “the use of ‘Jew’ as a formal equivalent for ‘Ιουδαίος,” and proposes to use “Judean” instead in this revision, except for historical observations (p. viii). The lemma ‘Ιουδαίος is sure to be met with heated discussion in which this review need not engage. But it is worth pointing out that Danker’s practice does not quite conform to the intention enunciated. The fact is that he avoids using the word “Jew” even in historical observations, where he prefers “Israelites,” as in the discussion of οὐίς τοῦ συνθρόνου (see above), and in the lemma ἐθνὸς 2a, for which he cites Acts 14:5; 21:21; 26:17; Rom 3:29; 9:24; 15:10 (in Acts 26:17 and Rom 15:10 λαός, not Ἰουδαῖοι is used).

Danker is an equal-opportunity lexicographer when it comes to ethnic classifications, as his gentle, ecumenical treatment of ἐθνὸς shows. This appears in the subset 2a of the lemma, in which he changes the “heathen, pagans, Gentiles ... Named with Jews ... They, too, are to share in salvation ... Contrasted with Christians ...,” of the second revision (BAGD, p. 218), as follows: “those who do not belong to groups professing faith in the God of Israel, the nations, gentiles, unbelievers (in effect = ‘polytheists’) ... Named with Israelites ... They, too, are to share in salvation ... Contrasted with Christians ... Offended by Christian behavior ITr 8:2.” Danker thus makes changes which result in a much more positive view of non-Jews who are not Christians. He makes substitutions for “... heathen, pagans” and “Jews,” and provides more references to support the statement that the ἐθνὴς are to share in salvation, including 2 Clem. 13:3. In the second revision this reference supported a statement, “Pagans as subjects of conversion,” which is now dropped. A statement at the end of the entry in the second revision, “Prejudiced against the Christians ITr 8:2,” is changed to “Offended by Christian behavior,” which is a mistranslation of the passage, in which it is God’s community or congregation that is on the receiving end of pagan action (τὸ ἐν θεῷ πλήθος βλασφημησάται), not the pagans who are “offended,” which is in any case hardly a satisfactory translation of βλασφημεῖ. Danker himself in this revision defines βλασφημεῖ as “slander, revile, defame, speak irreverently/implyingly/disrespectfully of or about” (BDAG, p. 178).

These criticisms are not to be understood as reflecting a disregard for the sensibilities of readers: The matter is raised by Professor Danker himself in his introduction to the volume. After his plea for inclusiveness and tolerance, he offers the following caveat: “But a scientific work dare not become a reservoir for ideological pleading, and culture-bound expressions must be given their day in court” (p. viii). The critique of this review has called into question to what extent he has heeded his own warning.