

EXTENDED DEFINITIONS IN THE THIRD EDITION OF BAUER'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON

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The third English edition of Bauer's lexicon (BDAG)¹ introduces for the first time a concerted use of "extended definitions." These have a significant positive value, but also show some pitfalls, of which users should be aware.²

The earlier English editions (BAG and BAGD)³ gave information about meaning primarily through glosses, that is, italicized expressions in English that provide meaning-equivalents of the Greek. Bauer's sixth German edition, on which the third English edition is based, mostly uses boldface type in a manner roughly corresponding to the italics of the English editions (but sometimes items in italics in German correspond to italics in English). On occasion, for greater precision and clarity, the German and English editions also offer further explanations in ordinary roman type (the German also uses italics for some of this information).

The third English edition differs from all these earlier editions by providing "extended definitions" in boldface nonitalic type, in addition to the glosses, which are now in boldface italics. For example, consider the entry under σοφία. The earlier BAGD has simply the gloss *wisdom* (in italics) to indicate the primary meaning of σοφία. The newer BDAG gives us the following: **the capacity to understand and function accordingly, *wisdom***. The added words "the capacity to understand and function accordingly" (in bold) constitute the extended definition, clarifying the meaning of the gloss *wisdom* (in bold italics).

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¹ *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (rev and ed Frederick William Danker, 3d ed, Chicago/London University of Chicago Press, 2000), based on Walter Bauer's *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur* (ed Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, 6th ed, with Viktor Reichmann and on previous English editions by W F Arndt, F W Gingrich, and F W Danker) Henceforth BDAG

² In an earlier article, Vern S Poythress, "Greek Lexicography and Translation Comparing Bauer's and Louw-Nida's Lexicons," *JETS* 44 (2001) 285–96, I focused primarily on other aspects of the usefulness of Bauer and Louw-Nida, with particular emphasis on comparing the two lexicons. This article, by contrast, primarily compares different editions of Bauer with respect to the idea of "extended definitions"

³ *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans William F Arndt and F Wilbur Gingrich, Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1957) [BAG], *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (2d ed rev and augmented by F Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W Danker, Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1979) [BAGD]

These extended definitions in BDAG can help significantly in clarifying meaning. Glosses, though useful, are sometimes imprecise. Words in English, as well as any other language, may have multiple senses, so that it may not always be clear which sense of an English word is intended. When several English glosses are provided, they help mutually to define one another, but they may not be completely synonymous, and the meaning may still be too narrow or too broad to match exactly the meaning of the Greek. For this very reason, the Louw-Nida lexicon (LN) consistently provides extended definitions as well as glosses, and indicates in its preface why this practice is to be regarded as preferable.⁴

LN was the first Greek-English lexicon consistently to employ extended definitions. But Danker's preface to BDAG says that "this revision [BDAG] builds on and expands Bauer's use of extended definition."⁵ This sentence could easily be misunderstood to imply that some earlier edition of Bauer explicitly used the technique of extended definition with a distinct typeface. In fact, such is not the case. Neither the sixth German edition nor earlier English editions provide any extended definitions using a distinct, explicit typeface. What then does Danker mean? The latest edition BDAG sometimes takes material in ordinary type from the earlier editions and converts into a boldface extended definition (see case 2 below). The information was there in the earlier editions, but was just not marked out and made prominent through the use of a distinctive typeface. But in many other cases, the extended definitions in the third edition have no analog from earlier editions.

Since the extended definitions with a distinct typeface are a new feature of the latest edition (BDAG), they invite examination. After observing a number of the extended definitions here and there, I decided to undertake a more thorough study, by choosing at random a starting page number in BDAG (p. 934) and examining the next 10 pages of entries, to see what the extended definitions do. On pages 934-43 in BDAG I found 76 entries.⁶ The entries fall into several types of cases, which I now classify.⁷

I. ANALYSIS

1. *Entries with no extended definitions.* First, quite a few entries in BDAG remain fundamentally unchanged from the second English edition (BAGD). In BDAG there are no explicit extended definitions for the following:

Σόδομα, Σολομών, σορός, σουδάριον, Σουσάννα, Σπανία, σπαράσσω, σπείρα, σπείρω, σπεκουλάτωρ, σπένδω, σπερμολόγος, σπήλαιον, σπίλος, σπιλώω, σπλαγχνίζομαι, σπόγγος, σποδός, σπονδίζω, σπορά, σπυρίς, σταγών, σταθμός, στάμ-

⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988) vii [LN].

⁵ BDAG viii.

⁶ There is also one entry *σπαρείς* that I have left out of the count, because it simply redirects the reader to the entry *σπείρω*.

⁷ But some of the boundaries between the different types of cases are imprecise.

νος, στατήρ, Στάτιος, στατίων, σταυρίσκω, σταφυλή, Στάχυς, στέαρ, στέγη, στέγος, στείρα, στέμμα, στενός, στερέω, Στεφανᾶς, Στέφανος (39 cases in all).

By contrast, LN *regularly* provides extended definitions.⁸ Danker's preface explains the reason for the omissions: "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."⁹ That is, BDAG has omitted extended definitions when they seemed superfluous, and added them only when it was useful for clarification. Most of the entries with no extended definition deal with lexical items that occur only a few times in the corpus of early Christian literature. And in many cases the meaning is indeed clear from the glosses.

But in a few cases the meaning is not as clear as it could be, and one could wish that BDAG had gone further. For example, for the word σπεκουλάτωρ BDAG provides no extended definition. It only includes in slightly different form the glosses already in the earlier English edition (BAGD): "prim. 'spy, scout,' then *courier*, but also *executioner*." It is difficult from this information to see how "courier" and "executioner" relate to one another and to "spy, scout." What then is the meaning of the Greek word σπεκουλάτωρ? It cannot mean both "courier" and "executioner" at the same time because these are two distinct meanings. Is the meaning somewhere in between? Or are there two quite distinct meanings for this word, which should then lead to separating the lexical entry into sense 1 and sense 2?

The fuller explanation in LSJ is helpful:

= Lat. *speculator*, prop. *scout*: but in the Roman Imperial army, 1. one of the *principales* or head-quarters' staff of a legionary commander or provincial governor (whose duties included the carrying out of executions), . . .¹⁰

We meet here the idea of someone being on the staff of a commander or governor, with functions of carrying out various duties at his command. This idea explains how "courier" and "executioner" are not so far apart in meaning. An extended definition could have explained this background, and untangled what otherwise looks confusing.

Another interesting example comes with the word σπεῖρα, "a military t.t. [technical term]."¹¹ A technical term would seem to beg for an extended definition, but surprisingly BDAG leaves BAGD basically unchanged: "*cohort*, the tenth part of a legion (the sp. thus normally had 600 men, but the number varied; . . .)." "The tenth part of a legion" is surely close to an extended definition, but BDAG does not format it in bold to indicate that it is an extended definition.

⁸ But LN notes, "In a few instances, however, no definition is given, but simply a gloss which serves the function of a definition" (LN xiii). LN's reason is similar to BDAG's: in these cases an extended definition would be "unnecessarily repetitive" (ibid.).

⁹ BDAG viii.

¹⁰ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (rev. Henry Stuart Jones; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

¹¹ BDAG 936; BAGD 761.

2. *Extended definitions obtained from the wording of BAGD.* Second, a number of entries in BDAG have extended definitions whose wording obviously derives from earlier English editions.¹² In these cases BDAG has rearranged the material already found in BAGD. Typically, it moves forward something that occurs in nonitalic type in BAGD and converts it to bold nonitalic type. The terms in question are the following: *σπαργανόω*, *σπιθαμή*, *σταδίων* (1), *στέγω* (1), *στενάζω* (1) (5 cases in all).

Consider as an example *σπιθαμή*. The earlier edition BAGD has “*span*, as a measure of distance = the space betw.[een] the thumb and little finger of the hand when spread out, about nine inches.” In this entry “*span*” is the gloss, followed by wording that serves the same fundamental purpose as an extended definition. BDAG accordingly moves this material forward, slightly alters the wording, and puts it in bold: “**a measure of distance equal to the space betw. the thumb and little finger of the hand when spread out, about 23 cm., *span*.**”

In these cases the two editions are providing the same information in substance. Whether one is preferable to the other seems mostly to be a matter of style, consistency, and ease of reading. Since BDAG is consistently adopting a style that provides extended definitions, it is proper to make these cases conform.

3. *Extended definitions that repeat the information in glosses.* Third, some entries add boldface type that does little more than repeat more elaborately what is found in earlier editions.¹³ The words are: *σός*, *σπάω*, *σπόριμος*, *σπόρος* (1) (4 cases in all).

Consider *σπάω*. For this word BAGD has “*draw, pull*.” BDAG has “**to exert force so as to pull or draw, *draw, pull* (out).**” The extended definition consists in the added words, “to exert force so as to pull or draw.” Unlike case (2) above, these are extra words not found in earlier editions.

What does the extended definition do? Does it clarify or add anything? “*Draw, pull*” seems almost as clear. Moreover, BAGD and BDAG both indicate that the word is used “in our lit. (as almost always in the LXX) only mid. in the sense *draw* a sword.” With this clarifying and narrowing of the meaning, the insertion of the extended definition seems to be unnecessary.

Or consider *σπόριμος*. BAGD has the gloss “*sown*.” BDAG adds an extended definition: “**pert. to being sown, *sown*.**” The added words, “pertaining to being sown” add nothing in precision or clarity to the single word “*sown*.”

In cases like these, the additions may add a little in clarity. But it is at most a tiny improvement in clarity, and some burden in verbosity.

4. *New extended definitions with new wording similar to Louw-Nida’s Lexicon.* Fourth, in a few cases the wording for extended definitions is

¹² But the boundary between this case and case 5 is imprecise. Sometimes BDAG reformats wording from BAGD and also adds some wording not in BAGD.

¹³ The boundary between this case and case 5 is imprecise. There can be cases where there is repetition of wording in BAGD and also addition to it.

similar to the wording in LN and may have been taken from the LN.¹⁴ The terms are: σοφία, σοφός (2), σπλάγγνον, σπόρος (2), στερεός (5 cases in all). But the resemblance to LN may be an accidental convergence due to the common goal of producing extended definitions. For the most part, BDAG remains independent of LN, as the final category below shows.

5. *New extended definitions with substantially new wording, not drawn from LN.* Finally, in a large number of cases BDAG provides extended definitions whose wording is essentially new: σοφίζω, σοφός (1), σπαταλάω, σπέρμα, σπεύδω, σπιλάς, σπουδάζω, σπουδαῖος, σπουδαίως, σπουδή, σταδῖον (2), στάζω, στασιάζω, στασιαστής, στάσις, σταυρός, σταυρώω, σράχης, στέγω (2), στέλλω, στεναγμός, στενάζω (2), στενοχωρέω, στενοχωρία, στέργω, στερεόω, στερέωμα, στέφανος (28 cases in all).

The wording in these entries derives neither from LN nor from earlier material in BAG or BAGD or the sixth German edition. This new material does not attempt to change the definitions from earlier editions, but simply clarifies what is found there. After all, the glosses from the second English edition (BAGD) are left in place (and in a few cases, incorporated into extended definitions; for example, see στερέωμα (1) and case 2 above).

The function of the extended definitions is at times somewhat different from the extended definitions in LN. LN consistently tries to provide extended definitions that are maximally specific, by including in the definition every significant meaning feature belonging to a particular sense, including connotative aspects.¹⁵ The danger here is that LN might accidentally include aspects that belong to the NT context of occurrence but not to the word itself (though LN is aware of this danger; see LN xvii). The extended definitions in BDAG are not always so specific; in fact, at times they are quite broad and do not match the specificity of the glosses. An extended definition in BDAG may mark out the general area of meaning, while the glosses that are offered indicate the more specific sense within the general area.

For example, under σπουδαῖος BDAG has the following: "**pert. to being conscientious in discharging a duty or obligation, eager, zealous, earnest, diligent.**" As usual, the extended definition consists in the words in boldface nonitalics: "pert. to being conscientious in discharging a duty or obligation." These words are new to the third edition (BDAG). "Conscientious" marks out the general area of meaning. But it is less specific than the glosses, "eager, zealous, earnest, diligent," in that it does not indicate whether there is an inward positive desire or eagerness. A person might be "conscientious" just from fear of being found in a mistake. "Eager, zealous, earnest, diligent" suggest a more positive desire.

Or consider BDAG's information on στάδιον (2): "**an area for public spectacles, arena, stadium.**" The extended definition, "an area for public spectacles," indicates the meaning only in a broad fashion. Theoretically,

¹⁴ The resemblance to the wording in LN is obviously a matter of degree, so the boundary between this category and case 5 is imprecise.

¹⁵ LN vii.

“an area for public spectacles” might be only an open field, or the open area that a crowd watches in distinction from the place where the crowd sits. “Arena, stadium” is much more specific. LN’s extended definition is even more specific: “an open, oval area (frequently including a racetrack) around which was built an enclosed series of tiers of seats for those who came to watch the spectacles—arena, stadium.”

On στάσις sense (2) BDAG has the following: “**movement toward a (new) state of affairs, uprising, riot, revolt, rebellion.**” The extended definition “movement toward a (new) state of affairs” is very general. It does not include the specific idea of violent, defiant, emotionally-laden overthrow such as is found in the glosses.

On στάσις sense (3) BDAG has the following: “**lack of agreement respecting policy, strife, discord, disunion.**” The extended definition “lack of agreement respecting policy” is less specific than the glosses “strife, discord, disunion.” The glosses indicate that the disagreement is serious and that it is accompanied by emotional tension.

On στέργω BDAG has “**to have a benevolent interest in or concern for, love, feel affection for.**” “To have a benevolent interest in” is more general and less emotionally laden than “love, feel affection for.”

Extended definitions like these may be of some use provided one does not expect too much of them. They often function as broad, general demarcations of a meaning area rather than being exact definitions of the scope of meaning.

A few of the extended definitions seem to show an additional problem: confusion between a state (a static condition or state of affairs) and an event. For example, concerning σοφίζω BDAG offers under meaning 2 the following: “**to be skilled in formulating or creating someth. in an artful manner, freq. w. implication of self-serving cleverness, reason out, concoct ingeniously/slyly or devise craftily.**” The glosses from BAGD, “reason out, concoct ingeniously/slyly or devise craftily” all designate *events*, which involve change. The extended definition, “to be skilled in formulating or creating something in an artful manner,” describes a *state*, involving no change. The two do not match. The data from BAGD and LSJ indicate that the interpretation as an event is more accurate. Similarly, BDAG defines σπεύδω 1 as “**to be in a hurry, hurry, hasten.**” “To be in a hurry” is a *state*; to “hurry, hasten” is an *event*. The latter is the correct rendering.¹⁶

Lest I end on a negative note, I should mention one case where the extended definition does provide greater specificity than the glosses. For στέφανος BDAG says, “**a wreath made of foliage or designed to resemble foliage and worn by one of high status or held in high regard, wreath, crown.**” This kind of information is genuinely useful, because the underlying custom may not be familiar to modern readers. The same goes for extra information in the case of technical terms like σπεκουλάτωρ “courier, executioner” and σπείρα “cohort.” The provision of such information

¹⁶ Noticing this confusion between state and event in some other instances (ἐνέργεια, ἡγήομαι 1, 2) prompted this investigation.

shows the potential of extended definitions in cases where an English gloss does not provide enough explanation.

II. CONCLUSION

Introducing extended definitions undoubtedly provides the potential for further precision in defining meaning. And from time to time extended definitions aid in clarity. Sometimes precision has already been achieved in the third English edition of Bauer (BDAG). But it must be realized that BDAG is a first attempt in this area and still shows some rough edges in its extended definitions. The full potential for extended definitions remains to be realized, as future editions refine what we now have in BDAG. In such future editions, extended definitions might usefully be added in some cases where they are still lacking. In the other cases, BDAG needs a consistent policy as to whether the extended definitions will be as specific as the glosses or whether they will typically be used only to mark out the broad, general area of meaning. And it needs to straighten out the instances that confuse state and event. For the moment, the user of BDAG should be aware of the fact that the extended definitions are often broader and vaguer in meaning than the corresponding glosses. In most cases they function at most to clarify but not to make more precise the meaning of the glosses.