The AGNT Project Report—Q3 2013

As a licensee or friend of AGNT or ANLEX, we would like to update you once a quarter about our continuing work to enhance and perfect these databases and about our plans for the future.

The Project. *The AGNT Project Report—Q3 2008* introduced the team, outlined ongoing tasks, and discussed potential tasks.

English Reference Glosses in AGNT and BYZAGNT

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The following short presentation has as its purpose a discussion of the choice of the ERGs (English Reference Glosses) found with our AGNT and/or BYZAGNT analyses. First, I will provide a general review of the main features of the lexical write-ups found in *ANLEX* (*Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*). Though every lexicon has its unique character, the main features of *ANLEX* write-ups share a significant overlap with those of other lexicons, whether scholarly or analytical. Second, there is a question for you, our reader. Please honor us by giving your input!

An entry may begin with *strictly*, denoting the basic sense of a word. This is sometimes followed by *hence*, giving derived or contextually developed senses of the form.

A frequently encountered organizing device is the division between *literal* and *figurative*. A literal meaning may or may not actually occur in the literature of the Greek New Testament. A case where it is noted, but absent in the GNT, is with the write-up ἁμαρτάνω.

Figurative usage usually comprises "dead metaphors," that is, expressions of language that, once created for an occasion, have become fixed and regular. *Metaphorical* is used to express "live metaphors," either the special creation of an author thus cited or thought to be sufficiently new as to involve special reader/listener attention. Some expressions thought metaphorical may actually have been set expressions of language, a matter hard to determine, since we are so far removed in time from the original authors.

Idiomatic(ally) refers to (usually) a phrasal construction in which the overall meaning is other than the sum of the meanings of individual parts would lead us to understand.

We mark *technical terms* for specialized areas of language use, say, business, religion, law.

The recent release of our new ERG module with accompanying PERGs (Phrasal ERGs) was meant to be a serious aid to the user not totally comprehensive in his grasp of Greek vocabulary, without in fact becoming an interlinear translation of the text. Since we don't know which Greek reflexes might not be comprehended by the user of AGNT, we in fact give ERGs for each and every reflex in the GNT.

Though not yet fully implemented, the ERGs of AGNT are intended to be electronically cross-referenced to the write-ups of *ANLEX*. In particular, there should be no ERG except that the same gloss is also found somewhere in the write-up of *ANLEX*. When this system is fully implemented, hopefully the user of AGNT should be able to have a media box appear that

shows the place of the ERG as part of a fuller list of glosses that explicate the Greek reflex and the particular definition (supporting discussion) as part of the fuller lemma write-up (where relevant).

As stated in an earlier AGNT newsletter (1Q 2012), where we introduced the concept of ERGs, they will comprise a contextually appropriate figurative meaning—if not literal—where that meaning does not intricately depend on other Greek reflexes in the clause. Where there is an interplay of Greek reflexes determining an extended figurative meaning, we give that interactive set its figurative meaning only as part of an accompanying PERG.

We have followed this rule of thumb quite carefully, though there is always the possibility that we have inadvertently ignored it in particular cases. Indeed, we are about to undertake a comprehensive review of all ERGs (and PERGs) both for the AGNT and BYZAGNT databases. It never hurts to recheck one's decisions for the "dozenth" time!

It has recently been called to our attention by a user of the beta version of this enhanced module as found in PARATEXT that our ERGs tend toward figurative, when in fact a more literal rendering would be called for—at least in one particular case and perhaps more widely.

The case he called to our attention was the two ERGs assigned to the Greek reflexes of πορνεύω in Revelation 2.14, 20. We gave "practice idolatry," the figurative sense of the verb, where in fact he suggested that the literal "practice sexual immorality" was more appropriate. I readily agreed to make the change in those two references, especially since they show historical reference, the first actual (Numbers 25.1) and the second implied (1Kings 16.31; 21.25-26). Several other cases (for example, Revelation 17.2) we have left as figurative.

The wider question is open: whether we should give the literal meaning in the ERG for the sake of readers, whether they be translators or students or pastors. There are perhaps three logical possibilities.

1. Leave well enough alone. That is, *ANLEX* as a lexicon and our ERG enhancement for AGNT have been very carefully thought through and we should stick with those basic decisions, though potentially making local corrections, as above.

2. Make a general shift toward a more literal expression in ERGs. The question here is whether the typical user is more motivated to know how the reflex should be translated in its context or to know what its more literal meaning is. Our P/ERGs are being beta tested among translators. But do translators have a monolithic opinion on the subject? Further, is there a difference of motivation between translators, on the one hand, and pastors and teachers, on the other?

3. We could perhaps try to be all things to all men by giving the more literal meaning in the ERG and introduce a figurative ERG (FERG?) to give more figurative meanings, when it isn't already a part of a larger phrase (and thus PERGs). Trying to cover all the bases has its advantages, but it might ruin the inherent simplicity of the current P/ERG designations.

If you are interested in looking at a few test cases, randomly chosen, check out the following:

a. ἀπορφανίζω: literally *make an orphan of*; figuratively (and passive) *be torn away from, be deprived of*. Reference: 1Thessalonians 2.17.

b. δαμάζω: literally *subdue, tame*; figuratively, of the tongue *bring under control, restrain*. References: Mark 5.4; James 3.7, 8.

c. ἐξαρτίζω: literally *finish, complete*; figuratively of thorough spiritual and moral preparedness *equip completely, make adequate;* as ending a prescribed time *be up, be over.* References: 2Timothy 3.17; Acts 21.5.

d. κινέω: as putting something in motion, literally *move*; as moving the head as a sign of contempt *shake, wag* the head; figuratively, of a mental or spiritual impression that stimulates to action *move, arouse, stir up*; politically, *instigate, stir up, cause*. References: Matthew 27.29; Acts 21.30; 24.5.

e. πυρόω: literally, (a) *be destroyed by fire, be burned up*; (b) of tested and refined metals *become fiery hot*; figuratively, (a) of sexual passion *burn with desire, be sexually aroused*; (b) of active sympathy and indignation arising from great concern *burn*, i.e. *be very worried and distressed.* References: 1Corinthians 7.9; 2Corinthians 11.29; 2Peter 3.12; Revelation 1.15; 3.18.

A serious question is whether the literal/figurative distinction addressed above is so locally determined that no basic alternation in presentation philosophy would really be adequate, but rather a item-by-item review of cases would have to be done, whether systematically or as called to our attention by users.

We would greatly value three minutes of your time! Would you please respond to us on the issues discussed above? Whereas the AGNT project has been very stable over the decades, we are sensitive to the desires and needs of our users. Please respond to this presentation with a few thoughts of your own. You may send your thoughts to me at this email address trfriberg@mailit.org. Thank you very much for whatever input you may be able to provide.

As always, we remain open to developing AGNT and ANLEX in ways that are most useful to the needs of students and readers of God's Word.

Thank you for your continued support of *The AGNT Project*, for faithfully marketing the AGNT and ANLEX databases, and for making these state-of-the-art tools for studying the Greek New Testament available to students, scholars, pastors, translators, and laymen worldwide.

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