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HO HUIOS TOU ANTHRŌPOU, "THE SON OF MAN": SOME REMARKS ON AN ANDROCENTRIC CONVENTION OF TRANSLATION

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Ever since the King James Version gained popularity as the definitive English translation of the Bible, Christians have been familiar with the title "Son of Man" as a reference to Jesus. It remains a convention today to use this phrase as a translation for the Greek phrase *ho huios tou anthrōpou* in Bibles and scholarly articles about the meaning of the expression.[1] Notwithstanding the popularity of the English convention, it is probably time to consider whether the phrase is in fact now archaic, and androcentric to modern readers. It preserves the word "man" as a noun which is meant to include women in the category, but increasingly in modern English "man" has substantially lost this generic reference and many people prefer to use "humanity" or "humankind", for "man" or "mankind". "Man" as a term is frequently seen as being non-inclusive, or at the very least androcentric in its presentation of the normative human being as male in gender. All this is well-known. Curiously, however, "the Son of Man" is so entrenched as a convention that it has survived critical re-evaluations of language in translations of the New Testament which would otherwise seek to avoid such exclusive terms, such as in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

One exception is the Scholars Version (SV) of the Gospels used by the Jesus Seminar,[2] where *ho huios tou anthrōpou* is translated as "the Son of Adam". This is apparently done in order to avoid an androcentric reading, since in Hebrew *'âdâm* denotes all humanity. Such a rendering reflects the Hebrew expression *ben 'âdâm* found in Ezekiel some 93 times (cf also Ps 80.17[18]; Dan 8.17), where Ezekiel is being addressed by God.[3] Essentially, Ezekiel is being addressed as a human being, by the Divine. The SV translation "Son of Adam" also makes explicit the probable implied reference in the Greek phrase to Jesus as the salvific progeny of the first

1 It would be very cumbersome in this short study to include even an adequate summary of the main work on this problem; mention of work relevant to the discussion will follow.

2 Robert J. Miller (ed), *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version*, Polebridge: Sonoma, California 1992.

3 The NRSV translates the phrase as "mortal"; compare "one" at Ps 80.17(18).

and errant human beings, Eve and Adam (cf Rom 5.14; 1 Cor 15.45, 47; 2 Cor 15.14).[1] Clearly, those responsible for this amendment are aware of the problem of the "Son of Man" convention, but in modern English—as opposed to biblical Hebrew[2]—Adam effectively refers to the first *male* human being, the partner of female Eve, not also to humanity in general. That God created "Adam" (humankind) in his image as male and female (Gen 1.27) is not popularly recognised outside scholarly circles in which Hebrew is known. Therefore, "Son of Adam" is, from the perspective of gender exclusivity, barely superior to the "Son of Man" convention, for it still leaves us with two masculine nouns: "son" and "Adam".[3] The translation of *hâ-'âdâm* as "humankind" in the NRSV is then much better; the editors have provided a footnote to tell readers that the word in Hebrew is "*adam*". Similarly, in the preliminary remarks to R. Gold and others (ed), *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*[4], the editors state that "[t]he term [Son of Man] may easily be misunderstood...as referring to a male offspring, 'the son', of another male being, 'the man'; hence this version uses 'the Human One' as a formal equivalent to 'the Son of Man' " (xiii).

Before proceeding further, it may be useful to suggest a basic rule of translation in regard to gender when dealing with androcentric terms in the original language. If a word or phrase refers to males exclusively in the original language, then a modern English translation should properly reflect that the referents must be male (whichever way one might subsequently apply hermeneutical principles to this material). If, however, the reference may be inclusive of females, even if the language used is entirely masculine in gender, or even if the individual referents happen to be male, then the translation should use terms generally understood in modern English to be inclusive of males and females.

Commendably, the NRSV sought to produce a truly inclusive scripture, by applying roughly the same principle. Bruce Metzger writes (for the committee):

> The mandates...specified that, in references to men and women, masculine-oriented language should be eliminated as far as can be done without altering passages that reflect the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture.[5]

However, as just noted, still in the NRSV, the "Son of Man" remains intact in the Gospels, even though the translators have been careful to avoid androcentrism in similar Aramaic and Hebrew phrases. In Dan 7.13, for example, the NRSV has "one like a human being" for *kêbar 'ênâsh*. For the expression *bênê 'ânâshâ'* in Dan 2.38, again we have the correct, inclusive translation "the human beings". The

1 See below, and also, in particular, Juan Cortés and Florence Gatti, "The Son of Man or the Son of Adam?", *Biblica* 49 (1968) 457-502, especially 487: "The Son of Adam, like Adam himself, is both an individual person and a corporate one, a particular human being who mysteriously carries within himself a universal representation, a physical solidarity with the entire human race".

2 Or in modern Hebrew, in which *ben 'âdâm* still means "person".

3 Importantly, too, the New Testament does not give us *ho huios tou Adam*; see J. Fitzmyer, "The New Testament Title 'Son of Man' Philologically Considered", in *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Essays,* Missoula: Scholars Press 1979, 143-160, here 144-145. It may also be worth noting that C.S. Lewis, in his Narnia books, designates male human beings as "sons of Adam" and females as "daughters of Eve", indicating an implicit understanding of the maleness of Adam.

4 New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995.

5 The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books: New Revised Standard Version, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989, xiv.

book of Daniel, of course, gives us an indication of the Aramaic phrase which is thought to underlie *ho huios tou anthrōpou*.[1] There is little doubt that the Aramaic expression *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')* is a circumlocution for "human being" or "person", though it may at times have carried a self-reference, that is, "a human being/person in my position", to paraphrase Lindars.[2] It might also at times have been generic in reference; Maurice Casey argues that *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')* is a "normal term for 'Man' ", that is, humankind, used in the Targums to translate (occasionally) Hebrew *'âdâm,, 'ish, 'ênôsh* or *nephesh*.[3] The Danielic form *bar 'ênâsh* would simply be an early variant, though it should be noted that it is indefinite while the Greek phrase *ho huios tou anthrōpou* is definite. Jastrow notes that *bar 'ênâsh* means a "being, especially a human being".[4]

While any given individual speaker or referent in our Aramaic source material who happens to use *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')* as a reference may be male, the plural usually includes females—*bênê ('ê)nâsh(â')* are "human beings" not simply "men"[5]—and, therefore, the singular should in literal translation reflect this inclusivity; that is, it really is "human being" rather than "man". In other words, the gender of the individual referred to is not relevant, because what is at issue is the person's inclusion in humanity, not the fact that the person happens to be male. This is because the construct term "*bar*" is not understood only as "son of". It should be considered in the light of the fact that what seems to read as "son of" in Hebrew and Aramaic was a way of designating membership of a group, class, guild, category or people.[6] So, for example, in Hebrew, *bênê 'ebyôn* are poor people, members of the group of the poor (Ps 72.4); *bênê 'âdâm* are then members of the class *'âdâm*, humankind, or, to use English periphrasis, "the human race".[7] A so-called "son of Adam" has therefore a quite literal meaning of "member of the

1 On the philological problems of the Aramaic term and key issues in the extremely complex "Son of Man" debate see, among others: G. Vermes, "The Use of *bar nâshâ' /bar nâsh* in Jewish Aramaic"; in M. Black (ed), *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd ed, Oxford: Clarendon 1967, 310-328; "The Son of Man Debate", *JSNT* 1 (1978) 19-32; *Jesus the Jew* (2nd ed), London: SCM Press 1983, 160-191; J. Fitzmyer, "Another View of the Son of Man Debate", *JSNT* 4 (1979) 58-68; "The New Testament Title"; J. W. Bowker, "The Son of Man", *JTS* 28 (1977), 19-48; J. R. Donahue, "Recent Studies on the Origin of 'Son of Man' in the Gospels", *CBQ* 48 (1986) 484-498; P. M. Casey, "General, Generic, and Indefinite: The Use of the Term 'Son of Man' in Aramaic Sources and in the Teaching of Jesus", *JSNT* 29 (1987) 21-56; and, for useful summary up till 1965, H. M. Teeple, "The Origin of the Son of Man in Christology", *JBL* 84 (1965) 213-250.

2 B. Lindars, *Jesus, Son of Man: A Fresh Examination of the Son of Man Sayings in the Gospels in the Light of Recent Research*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1983, 24. R. Leivestad argued in "Exit the Apocalyptic Son of Man", *NTS* 18 (1971-1972) 243-267 that the term denoted, both in Greek and Aramaic, solidarity and identification with the "sons of man", that is, with human beings. See, however, R. Bauckham, "The Son of Man: A Man in my Position or Someone", *JSNT* 23 (1985) 23-33 and B. Lindars, "Response to Richard Bauckham: The Idiomatic Use of Bar Enasha", *JSNT* 23 (1985) 35-41.

3 P. M. Casey, "The Use of the Term *bar (ê)nâsh(â) in the Aramaic Translation of the Hebrew Bible*", *JSNT* 54 (1994) 87-118, here 88.

4 M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* , 2 vols, New York 1950, 937, compare 53, 82.

5 See for example the Targum Neofiti translation of Gen 6.1-5, 7; 7.21, 23; 8.21; 9.5; 16.12 or Targum Jonathan at Gen 6.1; 11.5.

6 F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic*, Oxford: OUP 1966, 119-122; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 188-189.

7 The word *bat* carries precisely the same meaning, in that it denotes a female member of a class, compare Gen 27.46. However, while *ben* may include females in the reference, especially in the plural, if the feminine is used on its own, the reference cannot include men. Therefore, while in Hebrew *bênê 'âdâm* are "human beings", *bênôt hâ-'âdâm* (note the definite object) are specifically women (Gen 6.2, 4).

group of *'âdâm* (humankind)', even though at the same time this person is of course a descendant ("son") of the first human being Adam. It should also be remembered that "son" itself is inclusive in Hebrew, and may better be translated "child" unless a specific male reference is clearly intended. There is then quite a good case for translating masculine Aramaic *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')*, not as "son of man" but, quite literally, as "member of the human race" or "child of humankind". The simpler option of translating the phrase as "human being" or "person" is, of course, far less awkward, though not as literal.

In any individual case, *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')* may well be translated as "*son* of humanity" or "human *son*" or "man" if the situation is clearly about a man, even though the man may be representative of human circumstances or behaviour. This is especially true of cases in which we find the expression *chad bar nâsh* to introduce a story (for example, Jerusalem Talmud, *Terumot* 46a). Geza Vermes has noted that where in these instances the subject of the anecdote is specifically identified as feminine, we find the expression *châdâ' 'îtta'*.[1] This results from the androcentrism of the Semitic languages themselves, in which the normative human being is understood as a man, as in English up until recently. In order to distinguish a woman, the *exclusive* feminine form of a word must be used. But while whoever was representative of the normatively human in the texts might be male in gender, whoever is representative of the normatively human today is either male or female, or rather the gender is not taken into account. Therefore, the translation of an expression where the humanity of the subject is what is crucial (and not the gender) should use gender-inclusive language. When any particular subject is male, then there is a case for translating the expression as "man". Nevertheless, the onus will be on those who would wish to argue for the male exclusivity of what would otherwise be understood as a term inclusive of females.

However, what is probably more difficult here is not the translation of the masculine Aramaic or Hebrew phrases, but the very cumbersome Greek term *ho huios tou anthrōpou* found in the New Testament with specific reference to Jesus.[2] Clearly, it is found in New Testament Greek because the early Church considered it significant in this form as a reference to Jesus. In choosing to preserve an Aramaic circumlocution that reads so strangely in a Greek text, the writers of the New Testament all testify to the preservation of the term in many Greek-speaking Christian communities as a specially significant "Aramaic-sounding" reference to Jesus. Whatever translators of the Greek text into English may do, it is this Greek phrase that needs to be preserved, regardless of what may be known about the Aramaic which lies beneath it. Nevertheless, a firm understanding of the underlying Aramaic can help us better translate the term.

Let us consider the Greek phrase more closely.

It is immediately apparent that there is here the generic term *anthrōpos*, "person, human being" within this construction, not the exclusive "man", *anēr*;[3] the reference is to "the son of the human being" rather than "the son of the man".

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1 Vermes, *bar nâshâ' / bar nâsh*, 319.

2 The phrase appears almost exclusively in the Gospels: 13 times in Mark, 12 times in Q, 8 times in "M", 6 times in "L", and 11 times in John. In addition to these 50 instances, it is found also at Acts 7.76 and Rev 14.14. In the Gospels, the expression is found on the lips of Jesus in all cases except Jn 12.34.

3 Liddell and Scott, 141. The term can be both generic and individual, a reference to the ideal man, or humanity as a whole; though humanity in general is usually referred to in the plural, with or without the article.

German scholarship, following the common inclusive German usage of *Mensch*, has always recognised this, with the more accurate translation convention *der Menschensohn*. Like the Hebrew or Aramaic *ben* or *bar*, the Greek *huios* can be periphrastic: *Achaioi*, Greeks, may be referred to as *huies Achaiōn*[1]. The translators of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek also retained Hebraic turns of phrase, and therefore those familiar with the Septuagint would have been aware of the expression.

It was suggested long ago that the definite Greek phrase *ho huios tou anthrōpou* cannot easily be translated along the lines of the usual indefinite Aramaic to read "man".[2] It has been noted recently by Bruce Chilton that in both the Aramaic indefinite and definite states, the expression *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')* means "a human being"; there is no real difference between the two states since there was a tendency for the definite state to be used *with an indefinite sense*.[3] But in the arthrous Greek expression *ho huios tou anthrōpou* we have precisely the reverse situation: the Greek form consistently stresses the *definite* states of both the nominal components of the Aramaic. A "proper" Greek rendering of *bar-(ê)nâsh(â')* should consistently have been *huios anthrōpou*, anarthrous and general. In fact, this is precisely what we find in the Greek translations of the Aramaic of Dan 7.13 (Theodotion and the LXX) and also of the Hebrew of Ezekiel, Ps 80.17(18) and Dan 8.17. Indeed, the Syriac translations of the New Testament reflect the fact that Christians believed that the Greek term could not be converted back into the common Aramaic phraseology of the day—in this case a later and different dialect from that spoken by Jesus—without modifications which render it distinct from the usual reference to a human being, *barnâshâ'*.[4] In Syriac we have, literally, "his son, of the human being": *bereh d'inâshâ* which preserves the titular aspect of the phrase. Nevertheless, the 4th-5th century Syriac translations were made for a church with a particular, developed Christology; we do not need to suppose that a translation back into Palestinian Aramaic of the first century would have engineered the same phraseology.

In fact, the logic of the usage regarding the definite has been known for a long time. W.B. Stevenson noted in 1924 that in Palestinian Jewish Aramaic, "The emphatic[5] ending...has a demonstrative force equivalent to the Hebrew definite article. The corresponding English expression may, however, be indefinite, e.g. when a noun is abstract...or a generic word."[6]

Bar-('ê)nâsh(â') has this generic reference, since it refers to a member of the class humanity, or (especially in the plural) to humanity itself. It can therefore carry the emphatic ending, even though a definite English translation would not be required. This surely does *not* mean that the noun can never carry a definite *sense*, but it is necessary to determine the entire semantic context of the text, in order to

1 Homer, *Iliad*, I.162.

2 G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and their Aramaic Language*, translation by D.M. Kay of *Die Worte Jesu mit Berücksichtigung des nachkanonischen jüdischen Schrifttums und der aramäischen Sprache erörtert* (1898), Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark 1902, 238-241.

3 B. Chilton, "The Son of Man, Human and Heavenly" in *Judaic Approaches to the Gospels*, Florida: Scholars 1994, 75-109, here 78, compare 75-76.

4 See J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon 1903, 53.

5 Or definite.

6 W.B. Stevenson, *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic*, Oxford: Clarendon 1924, 22.

ascertain whether the translation should be definite or indefinite. The Aramaic periphrastic expression *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')* may generally have been used with an indefinite sense, whether the form was in fact indefinite or definite; but the de finite Aramaic form could still be quite definite in meaning.[1] For example, to take an equivalent feminine example, in Gen 6.2, 4, the Aramaic Targum Onkelos renders Hebrew *bênôt hâ-'âdâm*, "the daughters [female members] of humankind" as *bênôt 'enâshâ'*, the definite form, and in this case it must have been understood as definite, as in the Hebrew; the LXX accordingly translates the definite Hebrew form *bênôt hâ-'âdâm* as *tas thugateras tōn anthrōpōn* (in this case the LXX translation employs the more common plural Greek form to indicate humankind in general, rather than the "collective" singular, as in Hebrew,[2] a point we shall return to below). "The daughters of humankind", *tas thugateras tōn anthrōpōn* therefore parallels "the son of humankind", *ho huios tou anthrōpou*: the second definite article need not be translated as "the" in this case. It simply follows the first definite article and reflects the use of the definite article in the Hebrew construct form.

What all this means is that while the expression *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')*—especially as the contraction *barnâshâ'*—may have frequently lost its definite sense in common speech, as a generic or indefinite reference, one could still use it with the definite sense and mean it if one wanted to; for example, where Targum Neofiti uses *bar nâshâ'* in Gen 1.27, 2.18, or when the Hebrew definite article is reflected.[3] The fact that the Targums are relatively late evidence does not invalidate the general principle of language. No one can argue that it was absolutely impossible for anyone to use the expression *bar-('ê)nâsh(â')* in a definite sense at any time. A Greek translation would then reflect the definite sense of the phrase. In Dan 2.38 the definite Aramaic plural expression *bênê 'ânâshâ'* is understood as definite by the earlier Greek translators and rendered as *hoi huioi tōn anthrōpōn*. Greek translators were apparently conscious of the differences between the indefinite and definite senses and rendered these accordingly.

If the Aramaic expression underlying the Gospels' *ho huios tou anthrōpou* was *understood* as definite, then this explains why we find it definite in the Greek. If we were to formulate an exact translation of the underlying Aramaic, it would always have to be "*the* human being", "the member of the human race", or even, in reference to a male, "*the* man": the article is all-important.[4]

All this is relevant in the search for an inclusive and accurate translation of the Greek (and the underlying Aramaic), since it means that we have to consider whether the use of the definite form alludes to a specific figure. This is not meant to suggest that the expression was Messianic or titular, since an allusion to a figure does not require us to imagine that the figure might have a "title", and that this

1 This point was noted some time ago by Matthew Black, who stated, "it is true the distinction between definite and indefinite forms in first century Aramaic tended to be blurred, but this does not mean that the distinction becomes wholly meaningless", see M. Black, "Jesus and the Son of Man", *JSNT* 1 (1978) 4-18, here 12-13, compare his "Aramaic Barnasha and the 'Son of Man' ", *Expository Times* 95 (1983-4) 200-206.

2 See above, 104-105.

3 For a detailed survey of the Targumic evidence, see Casey, "Use of the Term", especially 94, table 2. Casey, however, would argue that even when the definite is found, it has an indefinite meaning.

4 Scholars who believe that the indefinite sense of the Aramaic phrase underlies the Greek form are discussed by D. Burkett, who observes that the suggestion that the Gospels' expression might reflect a circumlocution for "this man, I", "a person, someone" or else "humankind" goes back to the year 1557: "The Non-Titual Son of Man: A History and Critique", *NTS* 40 (1994) 504-521.

"title" is something which we might infer from the form of the allusion.[1] As Bruce Chilton notes in regard to the first definite object, it seems almost impossible not to consider that there was in the Greek phrase *ho huios tou anthrōpou* some awareness of the figure in Dan 7.13, who is, comparatively and indefinitely, "one like a human being" in Aramaic and one *hōs huios anthrōpou* in the LXX.[2]

But how can the definite form refer back to this figure of Dan 7.13, who is only "like" a human being? To answer this, I think the evidence of the *Similitudes of Enoch* must assist us, regardless of how the text is dated, since precise contemporaneity is not the issue. In the Ethiopic text of *1 Enoch*, reference back to the one "whose face had the appearance of a human being" or "like one of the angels" (46.1) is by means of a demonstrative: "that human being" (46.2, compare *1 Enoch* 70.1) or "the human being who has righteousness" (43.3).[3] Whether the Ethiopic usage employs the definite or demonstrative is probably not important;[4] what is important is that in the first instance there is an indefinite comparative phrase, "something is *like* another thing", but that this has effectively become "*the* other thing" when a reference is made to it (see also *1 Enoch* 48.10; 52.4).[5] One "like a human being" becomes "the human being". In other words, the figure of Greek Dan 7.13 who was *hōs huios anthrōpou* and yet accepted into heaven and given a kingdom, may be indicated in the expression *ho huios tou anthrōpou.* We may suppose that a similar process may have occurred in Aramaic, so that the figure of Dan 7.13, referred to as "one like a human being", *kêbar 'ênâsh* could be alluded to by the rather ambiguous—but loaded—term "the human being": *bar 'ênâshâ'*. Moreover, if Dan 7.13 was implicitly referred to, then we have a good reason why the Greek-speaking church could not translate the Aramaic expression more

1 See V.R. Donahue, "Recent Studies on the Origin of the 'Son of Man' in the Gospels", *CBQ* 48 (1986) 484-498, here 491 n32. Against the Messianic interpretation, see also Casey, "Use of the Term".

2 Chilton, "Son of Man", following C.F.D. Moule, *Essays in New Testament Interpretation* ,Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982, 77, 82-85, 89, who thought that the definite article proves that the expression is titular, and that the title must have referred to Dan 7.13 (compare Mk 13.26; 14.62 and parallels) though he considered this a self-designation used by Jesus (compare Dalman, *Words*, 256-257) so also V. Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, London: Macmillan 1953, 25-35, but contra Casey, "General", 31-34. The notion that "Son of Man" might refer to a particular figure has been widely disputed, see R. Leivestad, "Der apokalyptische Menschensohn, ein theologisches Phantom", *ASTI* 6 (1967-8) 49-109; also his "Exit"; N. Perrin, *A Modern Pilgrimage in New Testament Theology*, Philadelphia: Fortress 1974, 24; Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 177-186. Lindars believes that the use of the definite article in *Greek* effectively means the reference is to a particular figure, namely "that son of man", but conjectures that it was the translation of the saying from Aramaic to Greek that brought a Messianic or Danielic meaning to the saying; see in particular Lindars, "The New Look on the Son of Man", *BJRL* 63 (1981) 437-462; also his *Jesus Son of Man*, 3. It is, however, a little strange to attach such a massive theological innovation to a simple process of translation, especially since Greek-speaking and Aramaic-speaking Christians were in close contact with one another in the first century. The pendulum seems to be swinging to a recognition that there may have been some kind of a "Son of Man" figure in Second Temple Judaism; see J.J. Collins, "The Son of Man in First-Century Judaism", *NTS* 38 (1992) 448-466. Collins discusses not only Daniel, but also *1 Enoch (Similitudes)* and *4 Ezra*; see also Thomas B. Slater, "One Like a Son of Man in First Century Judaism" *NTS* 41 (1995) 183-198.

3 In Ethiopic Enoch, the term conventionally translated as "Son of Man" is actually found most often as "son of the mother of the living", that is, "human being"; see J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol 1, London: Darton, Longman and Todd 1983, 50, and also P.M. Casey, "The Use of the Term 'Son of Man' in the similitudes of Enoch", *JSJ* 7 (1976) 25-26. J.Y. Campbell, in "The Origin and Meaning of the Term 'Son of Man' ", *JTS* 47 (1947) 145-155, noted that "son of the mother of the living" is the usual translation for the Gospels' *ho huios tou anthrōpou* (148); I am not sure, however, that this gives us licence to translate the phrase in this way here, scholarly convention notwithstanding.

4 Black ("Aramaic Barnasha", 202) notes that the demonstrative in Ethiopic could translate the definite article in Greek as well as the demonstrative.

5 See T.B. Slater, "One like a Son of Man", 192, 195-196. The same process occurs in *4 Ezra* 13.2-3.

loosely, and had to arrive at such an awkward term: since the Greek Daniel already had the Aramaism *huios anthrōpou*, the definite term which was to refer back to Dan 7.13 had to preserve the same Aramaism. In other words, whatever translation is made into English would need to ensure a correlation between this term and the way in which the figure of Daniel 7 is described.[1]

Let us now consider the decision of the Greek-speaking church to render Aramaic *'ênâsh(â')*, "humankind", by means of the singular *tou anthrōpou*, when it would normally be a plural form, *tōn anthrōpōn*. This usage also preserves the correlation with the figure of Daniel 7, for this figure is also "son of *anthrōpos*" in the singular rather than plural. In both these instances, we must look again to the generic singular—yet collective—term *hâ-'âdâm*. The reference to humankind in general and yet also to the first human being would have been obvious to all those familiar with the Septuagint, in which Hebrew *hâ-'âdâm* is frequently translated as *ho anthrōpos*, in the singular, even when the meaning is collective. Essentially, in the LXX version of Genesis 1-3, *ho Adam* appears to be used where the figure in the text acts as an individual (male) person, Adam (Gen 2.16, 19-23; 3.8, 12, 13). But *ho anthrōpos* seems to refer to Adam as "the (representative or first) human being", compare Gen 1.27 where God creates *tōn anthrōpōn*, Hebrew *hâ-Âdâm* (also Gen 2.7, 8, 15, 18). In other words, the form *tou anthrōpou* preserves the more specific allusion to *Adam* as first human. The Greek translators of *bar 'ênâshâ'* may have ensured that people would consider the phrase in the light of the usage of the Septuagint, with its specific reference to Adam as first representative human (not as a man named Adam).

If we then consider the first part of the expression more closely, we must ask if *ho huios* implies a necessary gender exclusivity? Here again, the reference to Daniel 7 may help us, for in this story the one "like a human being" is clearly masculine, and not of indeterminate sex: masculine pronouns are used throughout the vision in reference to this figure, who is characterised as receiving sovereignty as a king. This is not surprising, for the figure of Daniel is most probably to be understood as an angel.[2]

Clearly, the normative human being was considered to be male; angels themselves, the "sons of God"[3] were understood to be males. What is interesting as regards the Jesus tradition is that women could be counted as being "like angels" just as men could (so Mk 12.25; Mt 22.30; Lk 20.34-36).[4] If so, we need to ask how rigid the boundaries were in terms of sexual classification in the ea rly spiritual tradition of the Church. In early Gnostic texts, for example, femininity itself (as

1 Whether Jesus did in fact use the term of himself will not detain us, as it requires a detailed examination of the passages in which the expression occurs. There seems no reason to suppose that Jesus could not have used the expression of himself, however, as one who was receiving a kingdom from God, being one of (or representative of) the people of the "holy ones of the Most High" who "shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever" (Dan 7.18, compare 7.22, 27).

2 In Daniel, the figure appears to have been an angelic representative of "the people of the holy ones of the Most High" (Dan 7.27); the "one like a member of the human race/human being" is both individual and collective. J.J. Collins has argued convincingly, in *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel, HSM* 16: Missoula: Scholars Press 1977, 96-101 that this figure may originally have been understood as the archangel Michael.

3 Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 194, 196, 200; see Gen 6.2, 4; Deut 32.8; Ps 29.1; 89.7; Dan 3.25; 1QS 11.8; 1QH 3.22.

4 The males "marry" and the females "are given in marriage" in the present world, but both are like the angels in heaven in their resurrected state.

exclusive) may be transcended in order that women would be included in the category of the normative (male) human-cum-heavenly being.[1] If we are to leave the notion of the normative male human or spiritual being behind as archaic, then perhaps we also need to question the normative maleness of humanity's heavenly representative, as indicated in Dan 7.13.

Still, we may here be straying too far into the realm of hermeneutics, which is of course not irrelevant in a discussion of translation, but should not overpower the discussion. Whatever translation is used for *ho huios tou anthrōpou*, the retention of the implicit Greek and underlying Aramaic references to both a child of humankind (and the first human being) and the "one like a member of the human race" (Dan 7.13) seems necessary. If in Daniel we choose to translate the Aramaic as "one like a human being" then the New Testament term should possibly be "the human being". If in Daniel we opt to preserve, with the Greek text, an Aramaism, "one like a son (child) of humankind", or "one like a member of the human race" we may possibly use in the New Testament the more literal "the son (child) of humankind" or "the member of the human race", though admittedly this does read as awkward. All that may be said here is that in Greek the expression reads as awkward also. There seems to be no good reason to avoid the awkwardness in an English translation. Therefore, my personal preference would be "the child of humankind".

In translating the phrase in this way, this is not at all meant to suggest that the historical Jesus always used this expression of himself in order to allude to Daniel 7, and accepted its usage concerning him, though it seems likely to me that a core group of sayings were preserved which contained this idiosyncratic usage. We may well conjecture that Jesus in fact also used the usual Aramaic circumlocution for "a human being" to refer either to himself or to someone else, or to people in general, and that this was later translated from some Aramaic sayings of the Jesus tradition into Greek in line with a developing understanding of any such term as being a reference to the figure of Daniel 7, that is, to Jesus himself who was believed to be that figure. These mistranslations were then added to the core group of sayings concerning the figure. An awareness of the possibility of these instances would then also need to be remembered by translators today.

At any rate, whatever improvements others may suggest to these preliminary remarks, I hope very much that we can dispense with the "Son of Man" as a convention. What was appropriate in the 17th century is surely not appropriate now.

PAUL ELLINGWORTH

TRANSLATING "THE SON OF MAN": A RESPONSE

The author is Editor of the Technical Papers series of *The Bible Translator*.

Dr Taylor has perceptively drawn attention to the inadequacy of the traditional translation "the Son of man", has suggested other options, and has invited further suggestions. She has also assessed and contributed to current discussion of the

1 *Gospel of Mary* 9.20; *Gospel of Thomas* 114. See for an interesting discussion, W.A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity", *History of Religions* 13 (1974) 165-208.