

ADAM, ENOSH, AND “THE SON OF MAN”

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INTRODUCTION

In John 9:35 the manuscripts and versions differ over which title was actually used by Jesus. The Greek manuscripts $\text{p}^{66,75}$ N B D W read τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου “the son of the man,” but manuscripts A K L X Δ Θ Ψ read τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ “the Son of the God.” The Peshitta reads here ܡܝܘܢ ܠܗܘܢܝܘܢ “in the Son of the God,” but the Old Syriac reads ܠܘܟܠܢ ܡܝܘܢ “in the Son of the Man.” Bernard (1923: 338) opted for the reading ἀνθρώπου, arguing “if the ‘the Son of God’ were the original reading here, it is surprising that scribes should have altered it to ‘the Son of Man,’ which does not appear in any of the other confessions of faith” Likewise, Brown (1966: 375) considered the “Son of God” reading to be “clearly the substitution of a more customary and complete formula of Christian faith, probably under the influence of the use of this passage in baptismal liturgy and catechesis.”

But in light of John 3:16–18, 10:34–36, and 11:4, the manuscript tradition followed by the Vulgate (*tu credis in Filium Dei*) seems preferable. Had the question by Jesus been “Do you believe in ‘the Son of the Man?’” the man’s reply might well have been, “Sir, what do you mean by that?” Biblical scholars have ever since been asking “What is the

meaning of the arthrous ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου?”¹ Bernard (1928: cxxii–cxxxiii) presented a helpful summary of the issues involved in the interpretation of “the Son of the Man,” and he concluded (cxxxiii), “It was not a recognized title of Messiah, and was not interpreted as such; rather was it always enigmatic to those who heard it applied by Jesus to Himself.” But Fitzmyer (1979, 154) concluded that the arthrous ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου must be read as a title for Jesus, although the “development of the titular usage is not immediately obvious, and the missing link still has to be found.” The remainder of this study focuses on the enigmatic Hebrew **בן אדם**, **בן אנש**, **בר אנוש** and the Aramaic **בר אנוש**. All possible options will be reviewed, and the “missing link” will be presented.

An important clue to the different meanings of **בן אדם** in Biblical Hebrew comes from the statement made by the Roman centurion found in Matt 8:9 in the *Shem Tob Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, which dates to the fourteenth century.² The verse reads,

ואני אדם חוטא ויש לי ממשלת
תחת ידי פירושים ופרשים ורוכבים
ואומר אני לא מהם לך וילך בא ויבא
ולעבדי עשו זה ויעשו.

This was interpreted by George Howard (1995: 33) to mean

I am a sinful man and I have authority
under the Pharisees and [I have] horses and riders
and I say to one of them go and he goes,
come and he comes,
and to my servants do this and they do it.

The very idea, though, of a Roman centurion’s being accountable to the Pharisees staggers the imagination. But this is the only translation available given the definitions in current lexicons of Biblical and post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic, where אָדָם must mean (1) man, (2) red, (3) blood, (4) Adam, or (5) Edom, which was also a code word for Rome (BDB 9–10; Jastrow 1903: 15–17; KBS 70–73). Ugaritic and Arabic cognates (Gordon 1965: 352; Lane 1863: 35–36) support all of these definitions except for making Edom a code name for Rome. But only the first of these definitions, “man,” fits the context of the centurion’s self introduction and was consequently the basis of Howard’s translation and has been the basis for all studies to date on the meaning of בֶּן אָדָם (υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου) “Son of Man” or בֶּן הָאָדָם (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) “the Son of the Man.”

But other definitions of אָדָם, attested in Arabic cognates, need to be added to the Hebrew lexicons. In addition to the Arabic آدمي (*ʿadamî*) “relating to Adam” = “human”³ are the following Arabic words for which there were certainly Hebrew cognates in use in Biblical times:

- آدم (*ʿidâmu*) and ادمّة (*ʿadamat*) “the chief, and provost, of his people, the aider, the manager of the affairs, the exemplar of his people,” which would be אָדָם in Hebrew;
- ادم (*ʿadama*) “he effected a reconciliation between them and brought them together, made them sociable, or familiar with one another, made them to agree, induced love and agreement between them,” the participle of which would appear as אָדָם in Hebrew;

- *أدمة* (*ʿudmat*) “agreement, familiarity, sociableness, companionship, a means of access,” which would be **אָדָמָה** in Hebrew;
- *مؤدم* (*mūʿdam*) “beloved, an object of love,” which is from the root **אָדָם** and would appear as **אָדָמָה**.⁴

The first of these definitions was surely to be found on the lips of the Roman centurion (ἐκατόνταρχος) when he identified himself to Jesus as an **אָדָם** “a provost.” This interpretation is reenforced by the second word from the centurion’s lips, **אָוִטָה**, which is not the very common participle **אָוִטָה** “sinner,” where the **ו** is the vowel letter for **ו**. This **אָוִטָה** is the cognate of the Arabic *حواط* (*ḥuwwāʿt*) “superintendent, manager, the one in charge.” Thus, the **ו** of **אָוִטָה** here is a consonant; and the **א** of this **אָוִטָה** is an Aramaism in the dialect of the centurion (for the **אָוִטָה** one would expect in Hebrew).⁵ Consequently, a more accurate translation of **אָוִטָה אָדָם** in the centurion’s self introduction to Jesus would be “for I am a provost, the one in charge.”⁶

In the Shem Tob text this is followed quite logically by the statement **ויש לי ממשלת** “and I have authority,” after which the centurion spelled out the nature of his authority. But the Greek and Latin texts of Matt 8:9 differ from the Shem Tob text—which is but one piece of evidence that the Shem Tob text is not a simple translation of the Greek or Latin Gospel of Matthew. The Greek and Latin texts of Matt 8:9, along with their English translations, read as follows:

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν,
ἔχων ὑπ’ ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας,

account in Luke 7:8, both the Peshiṭta and Old Syriac have

ܐܢܐ ܕܡܫܐܒܢܐ ܕܥܡܘܢܐ ܕܥܡܘܢܐ
 (°enā° damša°badnā°[damša°bad °nā°] thūt šûlṭānā°)
 I am made to serve, I am under authority.

Because everyone in the Roman Empire was under the authority of Caesar, there was little need for the centurion to state this in his self introduction. Therefore, the reading of the Old Syriac and the Shem Tob texts reflect the most accurate Hebrew textual tradition. The words חוטא ויש לי ממשלת “the-one-in-charge and I have authority” are reflected nowhere in the Greek and Latin text traditions. But it is most unlikely that a redactor would have created the phrase which included the rare חוטא אדם “a provost, the-one-in-charge.” Thus the rare אדם “a provost” and חוטא “the-one-in-charge” definitely need to be added to the Hebrew lexicons.⁸

EZEKIEL AS A בן אדם

Just as the Arabic cognate آدم (°idāmu) “provost” clarifies the meaning of the אדם (= אָדָם) spoken by the Roman centurion, the Arabic آدم (°adama) “he effected a reconciliation” clarifies the בן אדם (υἱοῦ ἀνθρώπου) “son of man” which appears about one hundred ninety times in the Bible, most frequently in Ezekiel where it appears ninety-three times.⁹ The בן אדם in Ezekiel may not have been the generic “Son of Man” but the title בן אדם “Conciliator/Reconciler.” The אדם in this title may have done double duty, referring

- to *Yahweh* who was seeking reconciliation with the unrepentant Israelites: “For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, says the Lord *Yahweh* (אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה),

there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land; there I will accept them (אֲרִצִּים). . . . As a soothing aroma I will accept you (אֲרִצָּה אֶתְכֶם) when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations” (Ezek 20:40–41); and

- to *Ezekiel* who was Yahweh’s agent of reconciliation: “So you, בן אדם ‘*Reconcilor*,’ I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me” (Ezek 33:7).

Failure to recognize that the בן אדם in *Ezekiel* was not “the son of man” but the “Son of Conciliation/Conciliator” greatly distorted the balance in the book between (1) the manifold threats of death for the inhabitants of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem, and (2) the far fewer promises that Yahweh would be their Good Shepherd (Ezek 34:11–31) and give the Israelites a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 36:26–30). Punctuated throughout the entire book of *Ezekiel* is Yahweh’s call for reconciliation with the rebellious Israelites—announced ninety-three times, as a matter of fact, in *Ezekiel*’s title, “Son of Conciliation/Reconciler.”

THE MEANINGS OF בן אנוש AND בר אנוש

Just as אדם had all the different meanings noted above (man, red, blood, Adam, Edom, Rome, provost, and reconciler), so also אנוש had multiple meanings. Psa 144:3 provides one clear definition:

יְהוָה מִה־אָדָם וַתִּדְעֵהוּ בֶן־אָנוּשׁ וַתִּחַשְׁבֵהוּ
 Yahweh, what is man that you acknowledge him,
 or the son of man that you take thought of him?

The אָדָם and בֶּן־אֱנוֹשׁ are synonymous, meaning “man” (i.e., gender inclusive humanbeings). The Arabic cognate of אֱנוֹשׁ is *أنس* (*ʿanisa*) “to be friendly, to be social” (Lane 1863: 113). Hebrew lexicons list several other meanings:

- אֱנוֹשׁ “to be weak, to be sick,” with *أنيث* (*ʿanîta*) being its Arabic cognate,
- אֱנוֹשׁ “to be soft, to be delicate,” with *أنث* (*ʿanut*) being its Arabic cognate.
- אֱנוֹשׁ “to be strong, severe, overwhelming.”¹⁰

These meanings are of no help in clarifying the *title* “Son of Man,” whether it be the Hebrew בֶּן־אֱנוֹשׁ and אֱנוֹשׁ or the Aramaic בֶּר־אֱנוֹשׁ.

Hebrew בֶּן־אֱנוֹשׁ and Aramaic בֶּר־אֱנוֹשׁ (unlike בֶּן־אָדָם) could have triggered a number derogatory word-plays, analogous to that of Simon Bar-Kokba, “Son of a Star,” who was known to his enemies as Simon Bar-Kozeba, “Son of a Lie.”¹¹ Given the occasional interchange of א / ש / ס, the אֱנוֹשׁ could equal אָנוֹס “a violent man” (Jastrow 1903: 86), and בֶּר אֱנוֹשׁ could mean “son of violence, a felon.” Also, given the occasional interchange of the א and the ע, the בֶּר אֱנוֹשׁ could be a variant of בֶּר־עֲנוֹשׁ, meaning “convict” (derived from עֲנוּשׁ “punishment, fine, mulct”) (Jastrow 1903: 1055).¹² And given the interchange of א and ע the אֱנוֹשׁ could be the cognate of the Arabic *عانس* (*ʿânis*) “a man who is far advanced in age and has not married” or “a virgin woman” (Lane 1874: 2173). Thus, בֶּן אֱנוֹשׁ (as a by-form בֶּן עֲנוֹשׁ) could mean a “mature bachelor” or “the son of a virgin.”

Moreover, the **בר אנש** need not be the Aramaic for “son” but the Hebrew/Aramaic **בר** “pure” (BDB 141; Jastrow 1903: 189), with some if not all of the overtones of its Arabic cognate **بر** (*barr*). Lane (1863: 176) cited **بر** (*barr*) as meaning pious [towards his father or parents, and towards God; obedient to God, serving God, or rendering religious service to God; and kind, or good and affectionate and gentle in behaviour, towards his kindred; and good in his dealings with strangers]; good, just, righteous, virtuous, or honest, true, or veracious . . . abounding in filial piety . . . dutifulness or obedience . . . benevolent, goodness, beneficence.

Thus, **בר אנש** need not be the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew **בן אדם**, but a Hebrew phrase in its own right expressing a superlative by means of the *nomen rectum* **אנש** being modified by the *nomen regens* **בר**. Ordinarily the attributive adjective follows the noun, but there are good examples of the modifying adjective being in the construct state and the noun being in the absolute state (GKC 132^c). Consequently, the Hebrew **בר אנש** “the most pure man / the man of purity” or “the Perfect Person”¹³ would have been a homograph of the Aramaic **בר אנש** “the son of man,” but not a homophone. Like the unvocalized **בן אדם**, the unvocalized **בר אנש** and the **בר אנש** could be very ambiguous.

I ENOCH 46 AND 48

The “Son of Man” texts in I Enoch 46 and 48 also point to a tradition in which both **בר אנש** and **בן אדם** may have been in the original parable. Verses 46:1–3 point to a **בר אנש** “*son*

of man” who can be recognized as “*the Perfect Person*” as interpreted above,

And I saw there One who had a head of days, and his head was white like wool and with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that *Son of Man*, who he was and whence he was . . . and he answered and said unto me: This is the *Son of Man* who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness.¹⁴

The focus on the righteous continues in 48:1, 4, and 7, “And in that place I saw the fountain of righteousness . . . He shall be a staff to the righteous, for he hath preserved the lot of the righteous.” In 53:6 “the *Son of Man*” is named “the Righteous and Elect One.”

But the power exercised by “*the Son of Man*” reflects that of the **בן אדם** as interpreted above, “*the Son of Authority*” who is in full control—like the centurion who told Jesus he was the provost (**אדם**) in full control (**חוט**). Enoch 46:4–6 reads,

This *Son of Man* [or *Son of Authority/One in Authority*] whom you have seen is the one who would remove the kings and the mighty ones from their comfortable seats and the strong ones from their thrones. He shall loosen the reigns of the strong and crush the teeth of the sinners He shall depose the kings from their thrones and kingdoms. The faces of the strong will be slapped and be filled with shame and gloom. Their dwelling places and their beds will be worms.¹⁵

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE

Johnson (1962: 418), along with many other commentators, rightly recognized that the Greek ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in the New Testament “is a Semitic phrase that would be familiar to Jewish hearers, however ambiguous it was, but no Hellenistic Christian would be likely to insert it into the tradition.” The two key words to note are “Semitic” and “ambiguous.” The ambiguity of the Old Testament בן אדם is minimal¹⁶ compared to the ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in the New Testament. Johnson noted also that

The double question, whether Jesus described himself as Son of Man and what he meant by it, is of great importance. . . . The most powerful affirmative argument is that in the gospels the term is always found in words attributed to Jesus himself. One gains the impression that *he used it without explanation and left it to his hearers to decide what meaning should be attached to it* (italics added).

Once the Greek ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is translated back into Hebrew and Aramaic—and written without vowels—at least fifteen meanings become possible (as noted above, seven for אדם and eight for אנוש). Even if Jesus and the disciples knew perfectly well what was meant when they spoke in Hebrew and Aramaic, ambiguity was unavoidable once the Hebrew and Aramaic sayings were written using consonants only. Nickelsburg (1990) questioned, “How was the Aramaic term *bar ʿēnašaʿ* used in 1st century Palestine?” But the *bar ʿēnašaʿ* in his question should have been written without vowels, for his vowels reflect but one of many interpretations. The real question is, “What did אדם and אנוש mean in 1st century Palestine?” The *ʿēnašaʿ* “man” is just one of eight possible meanings, as noted above.

The five most likely meanings of **בן אנוש**, **בן אדם**, and **בן אנוש בר אנוש** which became the anarthrous \acute{o} υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου “the son of man” and the arthrous \acute{o} υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου “the son of the man” can be summarized as follows:

- the son of man = a human being, a mortal (Hebrew *ben* + ^ʔ*ādām*, or *ben* + ^ʔ*enōš*, or Aramaic *bar* + ^ʔ*enāš*);
- the man of purity = the purest person (Hebrew *bār* ‘pure’ + ^ʔ*enōš* ‘man’).
- the son of the reconciler = conciliator (*ben* + ^ʔ*ōdēm*);
- the son of authority = one in authority (*ben* + ^ʔ*ēdām*);
- the Son of the the-One-In-Charge,” i.e., THE SON OF THE SOVEREIGN (*ben* + *hā* ^ʔ*ēdām*).

Early on Jesus was recognized as υἱὸς θεοῦ “the Son of God” (**בן אלוה**) and as \acute{o} υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ “the Son of the God” (**בן האלים**). The designation of Jesus as \acute{o} υἱός μου \acute{o} ἀγαπητός, “my Beloved Son,”¹⁷ appears six times in the Gospels. Three of these are in the Synoptic accounts of Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist when the voice from heaven declared, “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:17, Mark 1:11, and Luke 3:22); and three of them are in the Synoptic accounts of the transfiguration when the voice from heaven declared, “This is my beloved son” (Matt 17:5, Mark 9:7, and Luke 9:35). These quotations are indirect affirmations that Jesus was recognized by some as “the Son of God.”

The title “Son of God” appears in the Gospels twenty-eight times, and its meaning is unambiguous. It was affirmed by¹⁸

- Gabriel when he told Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you . . . therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son

of God” (Luke 1:35).

- John the Baptist, who at Jesus’ baptism stated, “I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).
- Nathaniel, when he came to Jesus, declared, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel” (John 1: 49).
- the disciples in the boat after Jesus walked on the water, who “worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God’” (Matt 14:33).
- Martha who confessed, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God” (John 11:227).
- the Satan who twice challenged Jesus saying, “If you are the Son of God . . .” (Matt 4:3, 6; Luke 4:3, 9).
- the unclean spirits after they were cast out of the sick “fell down before him and cried out, ‘You are the Son of God’” (Mark 3:11), or “What have you to do with us, O Son of God?” (Matt 8:29); and Luke adds (4:41) “they knew that he was the Christ.”
- the Gaderene demoniac who asked, “What have you to do with me, Jesus Son of the Most High God?” (Luke 8:28).
- the centurion and guards at the cross who stated, “Truly this was a /the Son of God” (Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39).
- John who wrote, “these [signs] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).
- Jesus himself when he reported to Mary and Martha, “This illness [of Lazarus] is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it” (John 11:4).
- Jesus himself in his answer to Nicodemus, “For God so loved the world . . . God sent the Son into the world . . . He who does not

believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:16–18).

- Jesus when he defended himself against blasphemy for having said, “I am the Son of God” (John 10:34–36).¹⁹
- Jesus when he asked the blind man to whom he gave sight, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” and then answered the man’s question, “Who is he, sir?” by saying, “You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.” (John 9:35).

Therefore, it is unlikely that **בר אנש**—meaning either the lofty but sub-divine “Perfect Person” or the mundane “son of man”— was ever interchangeable with the title “the Son of God.” The title **בן אדם** “the one-in-charge” or “the conciliator,” would have properly defined Jesus’ mission, but not his person. Only the last of the five titles listed above does justice to his person. He was **בן הַאֲדָמָה** “the Son of the Sovereign,” with the **הַאֲדָמָה** “the Sovereign” being Yahweh. **בן הַאֲדָמָה** was the equivalent of **בן הָאֵל** “the Son of God.” This is what lies behind the arthrous $\acute{o} \upsilon\iota\acute{o}\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon\acute{o} \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon$. The title **בן אָדָם** (without the definite article on the **אָדָם**) means “One-in-Authority” (as **בן-חַיִל** means “mighty man”) and refers to Jesus who said, Ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.” This **בן אָדָם** is the title behind the anarthrous $\acute{o} \upsilon\iota\acute{o}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon$ “the Son of Man.”

Support for this interpretation that **הַאֲדָמָה** “the Sovereign” is an epithet for Yahweh, and the **בן אָדָם** is a title for Jesus finds support from three sources. First is the use of the epithet **הַצִּוּר** “the Rock” for Yahweh in Deut 32:4, which was trans-

lated as θεός “God” in the LXX. The epithet צור “Rock,” without the ה, appears again in Deut 32:18, where it is again translated as θεόν “God.” The epithet comes a third time in Deut 32:31. כְּצוֹרֵנוּ צוֹרָם “like our Rock, their Rock.” This became in Greek ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν οἱ θεοὶ αὐτῶν “like our God, their god.” The same epithet found in Hab 1:12 is also noteworthy:

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי קְדֹשִׁי . . . וְצוֹר . . .

Yahweh, my God, my Holy One . . . and, O Rock, . . .

κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἅγιός . . . καὶ ἐπλασέν με

O Lord, God, my Holy One . . . you formed me.

Here the Greek translator read the MT וְצוֹר as the verb “to form, fashion,” and Jastrow (1903: 1270) noted that “in the *Agadah* צור “Rock” was used for *the Lord* and for *the Creator*, as though צור was derived from יָצַר “to fashion, to create.” In the Psalms צור “rock” was translated by θεός “God” in 18:31 (LXX 17:32 = II Sam 2:32], 62:3, 63:7 and 91:5. Thus comes the equation: *Rock* = *God* = *Yahweh*. The name, noun, and epithet were interchangeable.²⁰ By analogy a similar equation can be postulated: הַאֲדָם “*The Sovereign*” = *God* = *Yahweh*.²¹

The second source supporting the interpretation that הַאֲדָם is an epithet for Yahweh comes from parallels in Arabic usage of epithets for Allah. Among the epithets for Allah in Arabic are:

- الرحيم (*alrahîmu*) “the Merciful” (= הַרְחִימֵנוּ);
- الرحمن (*alrahmanu*) “the Compassionate” (= הַרְחֵמְנוּ);
- الواحد (*alâhadu*) “the One” (= הַאֲדָם), with the definite

article;

- **أحد** (*ʿahad^{un}*) “(the) One” (= **אֶחָד**), without the definite article);
- **واحد** (*waʿhid^{un}*) “(the) One” (= **אֶחָד**, a by-form of **אֶחָד**), without the definite article).

Lane (1863: 27) noted that **الإحد** [*ʿalāḥadu*], as an epithet, is applied to God alone and signifies *The One; the Sole; He who as ever been one and alone . . .*” and he called attention to the *Qurʿan* Sura 112:1, **قل هو الله أحد** (*qul huwa ʿalāhu ʿahad^{un}*), “Say, He is God, One God,” and noted that here the indefinite “One” equals the definite “The One” and it can be a substitute for the name *Allah*. The Hebrew **הַאֲדָם** “*The Sovereign*” parallels the Arabic and Hebrew **הַאֲחָד** “*The One*.”

The third source supporting the interpretation that **הַאֲדָם** is an epithet for Yahweh is a variant in the Shem Tob Text of Matt 19:17, where the phrase **כי האל לבדו הוא טוב** “for God alone is good” appears in Greek as **εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ ἀγαθός** “one is the good.” This *indefinite* **εἷς** “one” means “The-One-and-Only-God” This interpretation of the **εἷς** is supported by the **εἷς ὁ θεός** “one the God” in Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19, where the **ὁ θεός** “the God” is the appositional modifier of the *indefinite* **εἷς** (= **הַאֲחָד**). The **הַאֲחָד** in the *Vorlage* became in the Shem Tob text a doublet, wherein the **הַאֲחָד** became both **הַאֲל** “the God” and **לבדו** “alone.” There is no way to relate the **εἷς** “one” in Matthew and the **ὁ θεός** “God” in Mark and Luke until the Hebrew **הַאֲחָד** “the One = God” comes into focus.

As a matter of fact, in Matt 16:27 the ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου appears in the Shem Tob Text as בן האל “the son of the God.” and the τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in Matt 16:28 also appears as בן האלוה “the Son of the God.”

CONCLUSIONS

In speech the vowels precluded most ambiguities. The *ʿādām* “man,” the *ʿōdēm* “reconcilor,” and the *ʿēdām* “provost” were as distinctly different as the English ‘a dam,’ ‘a dame,’ and ‘a dome.’ The Aramaic *bar* + *ʿēnāš* has to mean “son of man” and the Hebrew *bar* + *ʿenōš* has to mean “the most pure person.” The *ā* vowel of *ʿēnāš* and the *ō* vowel of *ʿenōš* make all the difference. The Hebrew *ʿenōš* “man” requires the *bar* to be read as the Hebrew word for “pure,” whereas the Aramaic *ʿēnāš* “man” requires the *bar* to be read as the Aramaic word for “son.” When these words were spelled without vowels, ambiguity was inevitable.

With all of the right vowels restored and with the lexical options (summarized above, pp. 3–9, 12) in focus, it should be just as easy to recognize יהאֲרָם “the Sovereign” as a title for Yahweh as it is to recognize הַצֵּיִר “the Rock” and הַאֶחָד “the One.” Reverence for the holy name, whereby every reading of יהוה became אֲדֹנָי, was no doubt a contributing factor for using epithets—and even they may have been reverentially changed, as אלהים became אלקים and as “God” became “G-d.”²² Reverence for the name may well have been extended to יהאֲרָם itself so that the בן יהאֲרָם “the Son of the Sovereign” was intentionally mispronounced as בן האֲרָם “the Son of the Man” which, in turn, produced the baffling ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. The disciples and those in the

early church certainly knew that “*the Son of the Man*” meant “*the Son of the Sovereign*,” which was but another way of saying “*the Son of God*.” It was so well understood it required no commentary.

Reading “the Man of Purity” for the “Son of Man” in I Enoch clarifies there the ambiguity of the υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου. The disciples’ answer to the question of Jesus in Matt 16: 13, “Who do men say that the Son of Man to be?” is the clue for interpreting the ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in the question as the Hebrew בֶּר אֲנֹשׁ “the Most Pure Man” (the superlative of הַבְּרָאָה הַאֲנֹשׁ). Their answer, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets,” makes perfect sense with this meaning.²³

More ambiguity can be removed when it is recognized that ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου could translate not only the Aramaic בֶּר אֲנֹשׁ “the Son of the Man” and the Hebrew בֶּר אֲנֹשׁ “the Purist Person” but also the Hebrew בֶּן אָדָם “Son of Man” and the Hebrew בֶּן אֲדָם “Son of the Reconciler,” i.e., “the Concilator,” which was probably the title given to Ezekiel (contra the MT vocalization and the υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου in the Septuagint). It may have been the inspiration for Paul’s affirmation in II Cor 5:19, θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσειν ἑαυτῷ, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.”

In Matt. 16:27, Jesus stated, “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done.” In this saying the ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, “the Son of the Man,” could be the בֶּן אָדָם where the אָדָם was אָדָם “the-one-in-charge.” The title “Son of Authority” may well underlie the texts were the “Son

of Man” functioned as the judicial authority. Nickelsburg (1990) noted:

Perhaps the most remarkable fact about the NT son of man traditions is their consistent ascription of judicial functions to the exalted Jesus. In spite of the frequent use of Danielic language and imagery, these texts, with the exception of Revelation, do not emphasize the Danielic motif of “kingship,” much less an eternal reign. Constitutive and central is Jesus’ role as judge (or, occasionally, witness), an element introduced into the tradition from non-Danielic, albeit royally oriented sources. This judicial element, more than any other, identifies the NT texts as derivative from the conflated Jewish traditions.

However, it was not just a matter of “conflated Jewish traditions,” it was a matter of deflated lexical data—with some Hebrew and Aramaic lexemes having been lost in the post-Biblical period. Thanks to Arabic cognates, the recovery of **מְלִיךָ** “the-one-in-charge/the Sovereign” and **מְשַׁלֵּם** “the Reconciler” provides a reasonable explanation of the enigmatic ἀνθρώπου “man” in the title used by and about Jesus. Every occurrence of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου can be interpreted as “*the Son of the Sovereign*.” It was just another way of safely saying “*the Son of God*”—without possibly profaning the name or the epithet simply by saying it properly.

The name Yahweh occurs over six thousand times in the Hebrew Scriptures but not once in the New Testament. But, in the epithet ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου “the Son of the Man,” *the holy name appears in reverent disguise*. Behind the Greek is the Hebrew **בֶּן־אָדָם** “the Son of the Man,” and behind this is the epithet **בֶּן־מֶלֶךְ** “the Son of the Sovereign”—and “the Sovereign” is none other than Yahweh, God the Father.

ADDENDUM

THE אָדָם AND ἀνθρώπου IN
 AMOS 9:11–12 AND ACTS 15:16–17

Amos 9:11 and an abbreviated quotation of it in Acts 15:16 read much the same. But Amos 9:12 and Acts 15:17 have very different meanings, the latter being almost identical with the Septuagint reading of Amos 9:12. These texts read as follows:

AMOS 9:11

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶקְוֶה אֶת־סֹכֶת דָּוִד הַנִּפְלֹתָ
 וְנִדְרָתִי אֶת־פְּרֻצֵיהֶן וְהִרְסֹתִי אֶקְוֶה
 וּבְנִיתִיהָ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם:

In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen
 and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins,
 and rebuild it as in the days of old.

SEPTUAGINT OF 9:11

ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἀναστήσω
 τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυιδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν
 καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς
 καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀναστήσω
 καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτὴν καθὼς αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ
 αἰῶνος.

In that day I will raise up
 the tabernacle of David that is fallen,
 and will rebuild the ruins of it,
 and will set up the parts that have been broken,
 and will build it up as in the ancient days.

ACTS 15:16

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω
καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ
τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν
καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀνοικοδομήσω
καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτήν.

After this I will return,
and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;
I will rebuild its ruins, and I will strengthen it..

AMOS 9:12

לְמַעַן יִירְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׂאֵרֵי־אֲדוֹם
וְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שְׁמִי
עֲלֵיהֶם נֹאמַרְיְהוָה עֲשֵׂה זֹאת:

“On order that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations who are called by my name,”
says the LORD who does this.

SEPTUAGINT OF 9:12

ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων
καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ’ οὓς ἐπικέκληται
τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς
λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα.

that the remnant of men, and all the gentiles
upon whom my name is called,
may earnestly seek,
saith the Lord who does all these things.

ACTS 15: 17

ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι
τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν κύριον

καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ’ οὓς ἐπικέκληται
τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς,
λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα.

that the rest of men may seek the Lord,
and all the Gentiles who are called by my name.

According to Hatch and Redpath (1954: 430–431) ἐκζητέω “to seek” was used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew שׁוֹרֵךְ “to seek” over seventy times, but only here in Amos 9:12 does it appear as a questionable translation of שׁוֹרֵךְ “to possess.” Therefore, it is most likely that in the Masoretic tradition the ך of שׁוֹרֵךְ was misread as a ך. Consequently, the verb became יִרְשׁוּ “they may possess” when it was originally יִדְרְשׁוּ “they may seek.”

A second misreading in the MT was the reading of אָדָם in 9:12 as אֶדוֹם “Edom.” The Septuagint translators read it as אָדָם “man,” which was followed by Luke in Acts 15: 17. But there is a third option for interpreting the אָדָם in Amos 9:12. As discussed above (pp. 3–9, 12) אָדָם can be read as the cognate of the Arabic اَدَم (°adama) “he effected a reconciliation between them . . . induced love and agreement between them . . . that peace, or reconciliation, and friendship should continue” (Lane 1863: 35–36). Thus, אָדָם (or אֶדוֹם, with full spelling) could be read as the sequential infinitive construct אֶדוֹם/אָדָם “to reconcile.” By inverting the אֶת־שְׂאֵרֵית אֶדוֹם to read as אֶדוֹם אֶת־שְׂאֵרֵית, the purpose for Yahweh’s rebuilding the fallen booth and breaches of David was “in order that they seek *to reconcile the remnant* and all the gentiles upon whom my name is called.” The imperial and ethnocentric statement in the MT in Amos 9:12 may well

come from a triad of scribal errors: (1) misreading a ך as a ך, adding the ך to אֶדֹם and thereby changing the infinitive “to reconcile” into the name Edom, and inverting three words once the name Edom was mistakenly created.

NOTES

1. Davies and Allison (1991: 43–53, Excursus VI, The Son of Man) provide a helpful summary of the debate over the last half of the twentieth century about the meaning of “the mysterious synoptic title ‘the Son of Man’” in the Gospels. They concluded

In view of all we have said, we are inclined to think that Jesus used the son of man idiom on more than one occasion in a novel or quasi-titular manner with the intent of directing his hearers to Dan 7, and that he saw in Daniel’s eschatological figure a prophecy of his own person and fate.

Davies and Allison referred to the *one* occurrence of the כְּבֶן־אָדָם, “like the son of a man” (in Dan 7:13) forty-six times; but the בֶּן־אֶדֹם, which appears *ninety-three* times in Ezekiel, is mentioned only *three* times (in just two sentences in the whole excursus).

2. The twelfth book in the polemical treatise published between 1380–1400 by Shem-Tob ben-Isaac ben-Shaprut, entitled אֶבֶן בֹּהָן (°*eben bôhan* > *Eben Bohan*) meaning “The Touchstone,” contains the entire Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew. A critical edition of this Gospel has been published

by George Howard (1987, 1995). In the preface to the Second Edition, Howard stated,

The main thrust of this second edition is to demonstrate that the Hebrew Matthew contained in Shem-Tob’s *Evan* (sic) *Bohan* predates the fourteenth century. In my judgment, Shem-Tob the polemist did not prepare this text by translating it from the Latin Vulgate, the Byzantine Greek, or any other known edition of the Gospel of Matthew. He received it from previous generations of Jewish scribes and tradents.”

3. The usual word for “human” in Arabic is بشر (*bašar*); and أبو البشر (*ʿabû ʿalbasar*) means “Adam, the father of mankind” (Lane 1863: 208).

4. See Lane 1863: 35–37 and Castell 1669: 41–42, where the following definitions are included: “*pacem fecit, amore junxit, redintegavit amorem, concordia & consensum conciliavit, firmavit, . . . dux & antistes est.*”

5. Compare Hebrew חַוֵּט “thread, cord line” and its Arabic cognate حوط (*ḥawṭ*) “a twisted string” and خيط (*ḥayṭ*) “string, “thread” (Lane 1865: 671, 831; BDB 296). The Arabic حَيِّط (*ḥayyīṭ*) “a man who guards, protects, defends” is also noteworthy.

6. Note also the by-form חַוֵּטָא cited by Jastrow (1903: 448–449) meaning “to live in luxury as a nobleman, to be imperious, to lord it.” For the cognate حَوَاط (*ḥuwwāʿṭ*), Hava (1915: 150) included “tax collector” in his definitions. Had the centurion confessed that he was a “sinner,” one would

expect the tradition to have had some recollection of how Jesus responded to that confession.

7. According to Luke 7:2–10, Jesus and the centurion never actually met each other, the communication between the two of them being carried out by a deputation of Jewish elders. Luke 7:8^a, which reads, καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίας τασσόμενος “for I also am a man being placed under authority,” differs from Matt 8:9 only by the addition of τασσόμενος “being placed.”

8. The phrase פירושים ורוכבים in Shem Tob’s Matthew requires a comment. Howard translated this as “the Pharisees and [I have] horses and riders.” But “Pharisees” and “horses” just do not go together like “Pharisees and Sadducees.” The פירושים reflects the confusion in distinguishing between the ו and the י, so that the פירושים should be corrected to פורישים, the latter being the Hebrew cognate of Arabic فارس (*fâriš*) “(mounted) horseman.” The three Hebrew nouns correspond to the Latin *celerēs, equestris, currus* and to the English “cavalry, charioteers, and chariots.”

9. It appears 192 times in KJV; 190 times in NKJ; 189 times in RSV; 183 times in NAB, and 182 times in NIV. It appears 28 times in Matthew, 13 times in Mark, 25 times in Luke, 12 times in John, twice in Rev 1:13 and 14:14, and just once in Acts 7:56, Hebrews 2:6, and Sirach 17:30. In the Hebrew scriptures בן אדם “son of man” comes nine times as the parallel synonym of אדם “man” (Num 23:19; Job 25:6; 35:8; Psalm 8:4; 80:17; Isa 51:12; 56:2; and Jer 50:40). In Jer 51:43 and Psa 146:3 בן אדם appears without the synony-

mous אדם “man,” and Psa 144:3 has בֶּן־אֱנוֹשׁ.

10. Given the interchange of the א and the ע (as with אָמַע and עָמַע, both meaning “to suck”), אֱנוֹשׁ could be a by-form and cognate of Arabic عنس (*‘ans*) “rock, hard, firm” (Lane 1874: 2173).

11. Simon Bar-Kokba lead the third revolt against Rome during the reign of Hadrian after the *Aelia Capitolina* was built by Hadrian in 131 in Jerusalem and occupied by a Roman colony. (*Aelia* was derived from the emperor’s family name, and *Capitolina* from that of *Jupiter Capitolinus*, to whom a temple was built on the site of the Jewish temple.) Bar Kokhba’s revolt lasted for three years (132–135), but he was defeated by General Julius Severus.

12. This type of word-play may have contributed to the tale in *Sabbath* 104^b, which was thought by many, including zealous Christian censors, to have identified Mary Magdalene with Mary, the mother of Jesus, because it speaks not only of an adulteress but identifies her as the mother of a man who for his violence had been crucified.

13. In English the superlative “the most pious man” or “the most righteous man” may have overtones of a person’s being self-righteous. Thus, the superlative “the Most Pure Person” may best translate the title בַּר אֱנוֹשׁ “the Most Pure Man” (which could be misinterpreted as *machismo*) or “the Man of Righteousness / Purity” (which ignores the superlative).

14. Translation by Charles (1913: 216). For an extended discussion on the original language of I Enoch and the various translation of the term “son of Man,” see Charles’ *Introduction*, pages 174–177.

15. The translation is by Isaac (1983: 34). For a brief note by Isaac on the date of the Similitudes (37–71) being between 105–64 B.C., and the original language of I Enoch being partially in Aramaic and partially in Hebrew, see his *Introduction* on pages 6–7.

16. The Aramaic כְּבִר אֲנִשׁ “like the son of a man” in Dan 7:13 is a personification for the “kingdom of the saints of the Most High” (7:17, 21–22), which is the counter part to the zoomorphic representations of the nations in Dan 7:2–8. According to Dan 8:15–17, Daniel saw “one having the appearance of a man” (כְּבִר אֲדָהּ גִּבֹר) who had the “the voice of a man” (קוֹל־אָדָם). His name was Gabriel (= גִּבֹר “warrior/man” + אֱל “God),” and he called Daniel in Hebrew בֶּן־אָדָם “the son of a man.

17. See Aland (1968: 246) for Luke 9:35 which has ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλεκτός, “my Chosen Son” as a textual variant in a number of manuscripts.

18. Not included in this list are the title “Son of God” found in (a) the title of Mark 1:1, (b) the questions and charges of blasphemy made by the chief priests and scribes (Matt 26:63; Luke 22:66–70; and John 19:7), and (c) the taunts of those reviling Jesus (Matt 27:40, 43; Luke 22:70).

19. Psalm 82 is a short poetic parable which depicts the demise of henotheism and the rise of absolute monotheism. The gods (sun, moon, and stars, etc) allotted by Yahweh “to all the peoples under the whole heaven” (Deut 4:19) failed to adjudicate justly in their respective realms and were, consequently, sentence to death, as though they were mere mortals. Psalm 82 ends with this plea for monotheism: “Arise, O God, judge the earth, for to thee belong all the nations.” Brown (1966: 409) made no reference to this plain meaning of the psalm, but was correct “in recognizing that Jesus was arguing according to the rabbinic rules of hermeneutics which were often different from modern attitudes.” In the rabbinic tradition followed by Jesus the “sons of the Most High” were deemed to be earthly judges for whom “god” was an honorific title. Brown (1966: 410) noted “if there appears to be sophistry in John x 34–36, we are not certain that either the speaker or the audience would have had that impression.”

20. Compare the אֲבִיר “the Strong,” an old name of God found in Gen 49:24; Psalm 132:2,5; Isa 1:24, 49:26, 60:16. The לְאֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב in Psa 132:2 and 5 became in the Septuagint τῷ θεῷ Ἰακωβ “to the God of Jacob.”

21. Note the beloved hymn of Augustus Toplady entitled *Rock of Ages*, written in 1776. Similar to the way Toplady made the “Rock of Ages” apply to Jesus rather than to Yahweh, scholars have tried to make the τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (= הָאָדָם) refer to Jesus. But in reality the הָאָדָם (≠ ἀνθρώπου) in the title בֶּן הָאָדָם referred to Yahweh “the Sovereign.”

22. It is analogous to Jastrow’s citation (1903: 73) on אֱלֹקִים, which is nothing but a cross reference to אֱלֹהֵי, where it is simply noted that אֱלֹקִים and אֱלֹהֵי were “adopted in order to avoid uttering the divine name.” It goes without explanation! But questions loom as to why of ה became a ק. Was the ק randomly selected or was אֱלֹקִים an indirect reference to the Shekinah since אֱלֹק (the cognate of Arabic الق [ʿalaqa]) means “to shine, glow, glean” and the plural אֱלֹקִים could mean “lightnings,” like those mentioned in Rev 4:5?

23. The parallel texts suggest that three questions were asked, the *second* one being, τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι; “who do men say that I am?” (Mark 8:27) or τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ὄχλοι εἶναι; “who do crowds say that I am?” (Luke 9:18); and the *third* being, Ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι; “but who do you say that I am” (Matt 16:15; Mark 8:28; Luke 9:20). The Shem Tob Hebrew Matthew at 16: 13–15 omits the first question all together. The Peshiṭta and Old Syriac of Matt 16:13 conflated the first and second questions, “What do men say concerning me, that I am a son of man?” But the answer in Matt 16:14, which mentions John the Baptist, Elijah and Jeremiah, is not a logical answer to this question. (The Peshiṭta and Old Syriac of Mark 8:27–29 and Luke 9:18–20 also omit the first question.) Mark 8:28 and Luke 9:19 are perfectly good answers to the question in Matt 16:13, but not to the question in Mark 8:27 or Luke 9:18.