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Larry W. Hurtado – Paul L. Owen (eds.), *"Who Is This Son of Man?"*. The Latest Scholarship on a Puzzling Expression of the Historical Jesus (Library of New Testament Studies 390; London – New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012). Pp. 191 + XVI. $34.95 (Paperback). ISBN 9780567323316.

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The book edited by Larry W. Hurtado and Paul L. Owen *"Who is This Son of Man?"* touches upon one of most debated phrases in biblical studies, namely, *ho hyios tou anthrōpou.* The phrase is a frequent mean of self-expression on the part of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and it's often interpreted as going back to the historical Jesus. The present volume seeks to advance scholarly discussion pertaining to the usage of this expression in the Greek Gospels. There is a plethora of issues connected with the expression in question, which Paul L. Owen mentions in Preface entitled "The Son of Man Debate: What's the Problem?". These questions have received an array of competing answers whose assessment and critical response is the purpose of the book.

It is divided into eight chapters, the last of which is the summary and concluding observations by Larry W. Hurtado. They are supplemented with Preface, Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Sources, with Subject and Author Index. The authors contributing to the volume are experts in the field of Aramaic studies and historical Jesus research. They represent different academic centers in US, UK, and Canada.

Chapter 1, "Issues Concerning the Aramaic Behind", by Albert L. Lukaszewski, is a survey of the history of the "son of man" discussion with an overview of the numerous methodological and linguistic issues involved in the problem. The author divides the survey into three parts: the first one from Tertulian to Fiebig's treatment in 1901, the second one from the period after the II World War to Sjöberg's study in 1951, and the third one starting with Geza Vermes' presentation in 1965 up to the present. In the first part, Lukaszewski reviews the positions of Wellhausen, Lietzmann, Meyer, and Dalman to finish with Fiebig's work *Der Menschenson*. In the most comprehensive treatment of the "son of man" problem of his generation, Fiebig stands in the same line with Tertullian's interpretation of the expression as

a self-reference to Jesus, link to Dan 7:13, and the messianic designation. The second part of the research discusses the scholarly works by Campbell, Bowman, and Sjöberg who was the first one to attempt a large diachronic analysis of the term in question, including non-biblical sources. Finally, the last part of the debate starts with Vermes' contention of the messianic use of the phrase which arose the critical reaction of Jeremias and Fitzmyer, but also was taken up and modified by Lindars and Casey. The last one's understanding of the Aramaic "son of man" as a normal term for man was addressed by Paul L. Owen and David Shepherd in 2001, who criticized it for treating the absolute and emphatic forms in Aramaic as coalescing. The subsequent part of Chapter 1 is a methodological discussion on the Aramaic *Vorlage* of the expression "son of man" with much attention paid the positions of Casey, heavily criticized for his dogmatism and lack of scholarly support for his arguments. According to Lukaszewski, the Aramaic background to the expression "son of man" should be sought in the construct phrases of Qumran Aramaic. In conclusion, the author proposes a couple of methodological steps that should guide the investigation on the meaning of *ho hyios tou anthrōpou*.

Chapter 2, "Problem with Casey's Solution", by Paul L. Owen, engages the work of Maurice Casey and his interpretation of the "son of man" as an ordinary term for "man". According to Owen, however, the expression bears clear reference to Jesus himself and to the messianic figure from Dan 7:13. In the present contribution, Owen examines Casey's response to his previous critique in "Aramaic Idiom and the Son of Man Problem: A Response to Owen and Shepherd", *JSNT* 25 (2002) 3-32, and refers to Casey's later book *The Solution to the "Son of Man" Problem* (London 2007). He criticizes the notion of the static Aramaic language, the idea of generic use of the emphatic singular "son of man" in Aramaic, the alleged breakdown between emphatic and absolute state, and Casey's use of later source material. After having tackled some particular points of the dispute Casey vs. Owen and Shepherd, the author passes to the general issues underlying the debate. They regard the meaning of Dan7 as a messianic text, the role of the early church in giving the expression its new meaning, and the authenticity of the son of man sayings in the Gospels. Casey's questioning of the passages like Matt 24:27.30.37.39.44, Luke 17:22.26.30, 18:8, Matt 10:23, 12:39-40, Luke 11:29-30, Matt 13:37.31, and Mark 13,26, 14,62 is shown as incoherent and contradictory to the comparative Gospel material. Casey's interpretation of the "son of man" sayings also fails to account for their preserving by the early church. It does not explain their transformative power and the opposition they raised among religious and political establishment. The last points of Owen's critique regard Casey's denial to read the messianic figure of Dan

7 in *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, and *Ezekiel the Tragedian 68-69*, and his speculative Aramaic reconstructions of the Greek phrase *ho hyios tou anthrōpou*.

Chapter 3, "Re-Solving the Son of Man 'Problem' in Aramaic", by David Shepherd is a continuation of the debate Casey vs. Owen and Shepherd presented in the previous chapter. In his contribution, the author offers a closer look at the debated singular emphatic form *bar enash(a)* in relevant phases of the Aramaic language. The research material are the texts of *Targum Onkelos* to the Torah and *Targum Jonathan* to the Prophets, both originating, according to the scholars, prior to 200 CE in Palestine. From the brief survey results that the singular emphatic "son of man" in Aramaic does not speak of a generic man, as argued by Casey, but specifies a particular man. The expression is lacking in other middle Aramaic corpora which also contradicts its ordinary use in Aramaic.

Chapter 4, "Expressing Definiteness in Aramaic: A Response to Casey's Theory Concerning the Son of Man Sayings" by P. J. Williams is one more contribution dealing with Casey's view that the Greek translation *ho hyios tou anthrōpou* substantially changes the meaning of the Aramaic original. The author focuses on the Aramaic stages of the sayings tradition and on the transfer of the sayings into Greek. The ancient translation practices as well as the competences of the bilingual translators standing behind the Greek version of the Aramaic saying suggest that from the very beginning it should be perceived as definite. In conclusion, one should not perceive great dichotomy between the Aramaic sayings as spoken by Jesus and the Greek words recorded in the Gospels.

Chapter 5, "The Use of Daniel 7 in Jesus' Trial, with Implications for His Self-Understanding" by Darrell L. Bock, explores the use of the "son of man" expression in Daniel 7 at Jesus' trial. The author first analyzes the use of Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13 together. According to Bock, the evidence from Mk 12:35-37 indicates that the messianic interpretation of Ps 110:1 goes back to Jesus himself, to the period when the issues concerning his identity were surfacing. Similarly, the exalted figure of the Son of Man in Dan 7, already present in the eschatologically oriented Judaism, would be appropriated by Jesus himself expecting his vindication by God. Consequently, the author discusses the use of the image of the apocalyptic "son of man", qualifying it as associated with Jesus' own speech and as such preserved by the Gospel tradition. The figure is connected with the messianic David through the notion of authority, so that there is no way these two can be separated. Jesus' claims concerning his identity, not political or juridical terms, would be the reason for his condemnation, and, instead of being made up by the early church, they in turn would shape its creed.

In Chapter 6, "The Use of the Son of Man Idiom in the Gospel of John", Benjamin E. Reynolds, analyzes the "son of man" expression in John's Gospel. John is usually absent from scholarly discussions due to the questions surrounding his historicity. However, the contemporary trends to reconsider the historical reliability of the Fourth Gospel and early Christian understanding of Jesus contained here provide good reasons to undertake the present study. Consequently, the author analyzes the use of the "son of man" expression in John to compare it with the portrait of the "son of man" in the Synoptic Gospels. The three themes emerging from the textual analyses of the expression "son of man" in John are: his pre-existence, his exaltation on the cross extended to his resurrection and return to the Father, and his glorification, that is, passion, resurrection and ascent. The sayings not fitting within the common thematic categories anyway portray the son of man as a heavenly, apocalyptic figure (1:51; 6:53; 9:35), as a judge (5:27), and as the life-giving food (6:27). In John's Christology, Jesus, the son of man, is presented as a true man, Son of God, and heavenly figure. Despite obvious differences between John and the Synoptic Gospels, there are many startling similarities in their presentation of the son of man: the language of crucifixion, resurrection and return; the image of judgment; the same idea of salvation; the messianic character of the figure; the glory of the son of man; and the vision of gathering the righteous ones. Concluding, it is possible that in some instances the Gospel of John interprets the expression "son of man" through the Synoptic tradition, while in other instances it clearly draws from different stream of Jesus' tradition, providing us with another reliable early Christian testimony on the understanding of the expression.

Chapter 7, "The Elect Son of Man of the *Parables of Enoch*" by Darrell D. Hannah, reflects on the use of the "son of man" in the *Parables of Enoch* (*1 Enoch* 37 – 71). The author first discusses the *Parables* themselves and the difficulties they present to the readers, that is, their origins, dating (from 64 BC to 270 AD, according to the author ca. 70 AD), languages and translations (Ethiopic, Aramaic, Hebrew), as well as the manuscripts at our disposal. Then, Hannah examines the four main titles of the son of man figure, namely, the Elect One, the Righteous One, the Messiah, and the son of man. Consequently, he looks at the Hebrew Scriptures (Dan 7; Isaiah's "Shoot of Jesse"; Deutero-Isaiah's Servant Songs) as the exegetical basis for the Elect son of man concept in *1 Enoch*. The principal role of the Elect son of man is to be an eschatological judge. He enjoys both an ontological and a pre-mundane pre-existence. In the last step, the author puts forward the hypothesis that the identification of the mysterious son of man with Enoch

in *1 En* 70-71 is late and may be explained as the effort of a pious Jew who wanted to counter similar claims about Jesus made by Christians.

Chapter 8, "Summary and Concluding Observations" by Larry W. Hurtado is in part a summary of the contributions made in the book, and in part the author's own observations concerning the origins of the expression in question. Hurtado reminds, that the "son of man" is not native or common in ancient Greek. It never appears in LXX in singular articular form, and as such it would be regarded as highly unusual. Nearly all of the articular-singular expressions that appear in NT are in sayings ascribed to Jesus, and are his typical self-designations. In these texts the expression's primary function, according to the author, is to refer, not to characterize. The origins of the expression should be looked for in the historical Jesus, not in the proclamation, confession, or liturgy of the early church. Hurtado claims that Dan 7:13 might be especially important to Jesus in framing his self-understanding. In light of the linguistic data comprised in the book, the author reiterates his thesis put forward a decade ago that the "son of man" is a translation of an equivalent Aramaic expression *bar enasha* which was regarded with reverence not because it functioned as a title of honor, but because it was Jesus' preferred self-referential device. It simply functioned to express his sense of being chosen for a special mission.

Summing up, the book *"Who Is This Son of Man?"* provides us with a very useful summary of the scholarly research on the much debated expression "son of man". Some essays concerning the Aramaic background of the expression will be difficult to digest for readers not introduced in the field of North Semitic syntax and languages. Anyway, all the contributors made a great effort to present the debated issues with much possible clarity, using good and accessible language. The three contributions dealing with the thesis by Casey may seem a bit repetitive. Yet, they engage his work from different angles and envisage, especially Owen and Shepherd, the marks of vivid scholarly polemic, which makes the reading all the more interesting. Of interest for both exegetes and theologians of NT will surely be the texts on the use of the "son of man" expression at Jesus' trail and in the Gospel of John, as they convey some important hints on Jesus' self-understanding. The contribution on the Fourth Gospel makes also a significant point in vindicating the historicity of John and warns against dismissing it as a late comparative material. Quite innovative and inspirational is also the conclusion of the essay on the origins of the "son of man" expression in the Book of Enoch. Ultimately, *"Who Is This Son of Man?"* is the book meeting all the standards of well-founded and methodologically sound biblical analysis and as such it is worth recommending both to the scholars and to the students of biblical classes.