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The Old Testament Background of “Ecce Homo” in John 19:5

Starotestamentowe tło „Ecce homo” w Ewangelii św. Jana 19,5

Abstract. Pilate’s declaration ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος found in John 19:5 has given rise to a number of interpretations that seem in basic agreement, yet, at the same time, many others of a divergent and opposing nature. Among the many treatments of this verse is a whole set of proposals that see in Pilate’s words an allusion to various Old Testament texts. The present article aims at presenting the range of these scholarly interpretations (both older and modern ones) which resort to an Old Testament background for the famous *ecce homo* phrase. The article then focuses the discussion on Daniel’s “Son of Man”, the Isaianic “Suffering Servant”, the messianic “man” of Zec 6:12 and Num 24:17 (LXX), Adamic typology, the king of 1 Sm 9:17, and finally the figure of the bridegroom from the Song of Songs. In each case, an evaluation of the hypothetical Old Testament background is given. The author concurs with the idea of multiple intertextual Old Testament references encapsulated in Pilate’s *ecce homo* utterance.

Streszczenie. Słowa Piłata ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος (J 19,5) spotkały się z całą gamą różnorodnych interpretacji, czasem wzajemnie się wykluczających. Wśród nich znajdują się także propozycje widzące w wypowiedzi Piłata aluzję do kilku tekstów starotestamentowych. Niniejszy artykuł jest krytyczną prezentacją tych propozycji. Zostały zatem omówione interpretacje wskazujące na „Syna Człowieczego” z Księgi Daniela, Izajaszowego „Cierpiącego Sługę”, mesjańskiego „człowieka” z Za 6,12 i Lb 24,17 (LXX), Adama z Księgi Rodzaju, króla z 1 Sm 9,17 oraz oblubieńca z Pieśni nad Pieśniami. W każdym przypadku przedstawiono krytyczną ocenę danej interpretacji. Autor przychylił się do stanowiska uznającego jednoczesne istnienie aluzji do wielu tekstów starotestamentowych w Piłatowym stwierdzeniu „Oto człowiek!”

Keywords: *Ecce homo*; John 19:5; intertextuality; John’s use of the Old Testament; nuptial metaphor.

Słowa kluczowe: *Ecce homo*; J 19,5; intertekstualność; Janowe użycie Starego Testamentu; metafora małżeńska.

Introduction

Even a quick survey of recent commentaries on John 19:5 demonstrates a wide array of proposals concerning the significance of Pilate's expression "Behold the man!" (ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος). In fact, one is taken aback not only by the multiplicity of interpretations, but also by the lack of general scholarly consensus on the issue. In a recent study by D. Francois Tolmie, one reads: "The tone on his [Pilate's] words is difficult to determine (another empty space in the text). It could be indicative of a taunt, sarcasm, exasperation or irritation, or perhaps a combination of some or all of these."¹ The mystery of these words is also enhanced by their vague narrative function and a seeming lack of any larger significance. From the viewpoint of the narrative logic, Pilate's declaration adds nothing to the real course of Jesus' trial. In fact, some textual witnesses² omitted the whole sentence, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, apparently regarding it as unimportant.³ That being so, as Barnabas Lindars aptly noticed, "one must ask what effect John desires to produce."⁴ Raymond E. Brown argued that "in itself there is nothing particularly significant about the use of 'the man' [...], but the dramatic context lends importance."⁵

The complexity of the issue arises not only from the vagueness of the expression itself, its undefined narratological function, and the dramatic context, but also from the known Johannine devices of double entendre, irony, metaphor, riddle and misunderstanding all widely attested throughout the Fourth Gospel. Faced with such interpretative complexities, some have argued that the meaning of the enigmatic expression ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος can best be understood on the historical level, referring to a particular sense that Pilate intended and his audience perceived. At the same time, however, the famous words of Pilate might also convey another meaning to be found on the discourse level of the narrative, transmitting its message only to the most well-informed readers of the Gospel.

In his monographic study on the meaning of *ecce homo*, published in 1988, Charles Panackel listed at least five different literary meanings functioning on the level of history: (1) The ridiculousness of the Jewish charge, because Jesus,

¹ D.F. Tolmie, "Pontius Pilate", p. 592.

² P⁶⁶, *Vetus Latina* (a e ff²), Subakhmimic Coptic.

³ R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, p. 451, note 63. Bart Ehrman (*The Orthodox Corruption*, p. 94), however, interprets the omission as an anti-adoptionist corruption that served to underline Jesus' divinity.

⁴ B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, p. 566.

⁵ R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, p. 876.

accused of being a politico-messianic pretender to the royal throne, appears to be a poor and harmless man (Jesus' appearance should provoke only a burst of laughter in light of his supposed claim and the accusation); (2) an expression of Pilate's contempt for Jesus ("See the poor fellow!") and/or for the Jews ("Behold the poor creature – whom you are persecuting, and who is surely beneath your hostility!"); (3) an appeal to Jewish philanthropy (the Jews should be moved to sympathy and compassion); (4) an expression of the impression Jesus makes on Pilate, which ranges from respect ("See, what a man!"; "Here is a man!") to pity for Jesus and contempt for his accusers; and (5) a formula of acquittal.⁶ Referring to the ulterior, theological meaning, the same author distilled seven proposals: (1) The evangelist has intended the "Son of Man" title. (2) The evangelist pointed to the perfect man, who is the embodiment of the ideal man and the perfect humanity. (3) The evangelist referred to the heavenly or primordial man (*Urmensch*), attested in Jewish and Hellenistic myths. (4) The evangelist wanted to highlight the paradox and scandal of the Word incarnate (ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο – 1:14). (5) The evangelist, following the line of his anti-docetic agenda, intended an allusion to the real manhood and humanity of Jesus. (6) Jesus is presented as a Suffering Servant of Isaiah. (7) The expression *ecce homo* has to be understood in light of the title "the Son of God" in Jn 19:7.⁷

In Charles Panackel's own estimation, the historical and primary meaning can be deduced from the study of Pilate's character in the trial scene. This innovative approach, resorting to the Johannine characterization of Pilate, did not produce, however, any novel interpretation. Thus, in his opinion *ecce homo*, read in the context of the mockery and derision over a Jewish king, is nothing but an expression of Pilate's contempt for the Jews and for their messianic hopes. At the same time, Pilate's words express his declarations of Jesus' innocence and harmlessness. Jesus, made the caricature of a king, is a miserable "man" unjustly accused. As such, he does not pose any threat to Roman rule. The political charge of the Jewish authorities, being totally ridiculous and without any foundation, should be dropped. The false accusations by the Jewish authorities are only to be laughed at.⁸ As to the ulterior meaning, it is determined by C. Panackel by surveying all the occurrences of ἄνθρωπος designating Jesus in the Gospel of John. The evangelist, by the use of ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, wants to

⁶ C. Panackel, *ΙΑΟΥ Ο ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΟΣ (Jn 19,5b)*, pp. 312–314. The author furnishes also an ample bibliography.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 315–322.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 228.

achieve two goals. First, he wishes to emphasize the palpable humanity of Jesus. Second, he points toward a divine identity for Jesus as the Son of God (19:7).⁹

Acknowledging the unquestionable thoroughness of Charles Panackel's monographic study, it must nonetheless be admitted that he has paid no real attention to a possible Old Testament background for Pilate's *ecce homo* utterance. The present article tries to fill this vacuum, gathering the insights dispersed in many singular publications. Obviously, any intertextual connection with regard to ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος works only on the level of secondary (ulterior, theological) meaning, available only to an informed reader sufficiently acquainted with the Jewish scriptural heritage. In what follows, then, one will find a survey of scholarly proposals regarding possible Old Testament backgrounds for Pilate's exclamation *ecce homo*. The evaluation of these should help to identify the most convincing suggestions.

1. The Danielic "Son of Man"

The view that the Johannine ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος reflects the figure of the Son of Man from Daniel 7:13–22 seems to be one of the most popular views among those scholars who argue for the presence of a double meaning in John 19:5.¹⁰

⁹ Ibidem, pp. 336–337. The author (p. 338) concludes: "By placing in the *Ecce-homo*-scene (19:4–7) the term ἄνθρωπος (v. 5b) in stark *contrast* to υἱὸν θεοῦ (v. 7), the evangelist not only emphasizes the humanity of Jesus, but also, theologically yet implicitly, evokes the status of Jesus as the Son of God. Besides, by having Pilate *progressively* designate the bloody and battered Jesus as ἄνθρωπος (v. 5b) and then as βασιλεύς (v. 14), the evangelist once again highlights the basic humanity of Jesus." The reading of *ecce homo* as the affirmation of Jesus' status as Son of God is also favored by J. Gnilka, *Johannesevangelium*, p. 141. It must be also noted that, after C. Panackel's work, few other studies appeared that contributed any new insights in the quest for the meaning of Pilate's words. Let us give only a few examples: Pilate's declaration might be interpreted in the context of anti-imperial polemics: Jesus is mortal but at the same time divine Emperor. Cf. H.K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate*, p. 185. *Ecce homo* might also be seen as an allusion to the acclamation of the emperor Augustus in *Aeneid* 6.791, and as such should be rendered in Latin as *hic vir*. See L.J. Hunt, *Ecce homo or Hic vir?* Pilate's words are also interpreted as appealing to and subverting the prevailing imperial constructions of hegemonic manliness and dominion. See J.J. Ripley, "Behold the Man"?, pp. 219–239. According to Thomas Söding (*Ecce homo*, p. 137), "the human character of Jesus is the theological key to the Gospel of John's Christology. [...] so it is that *ecce homo* is revealed as a narrative icon of human dignity in the midst of suffering."

¹⁰ J. Blank, *Die Verhandlung vor Pilatus*, pp. 75.77; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, p. 541; F.J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, pp. 495 and 499; J.R. Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, p. 930; U.C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, p. 783.

There are a few points in favor of this interpretation. First of all, the Aramaic expression "son of man," found in Dan 7:14, simply means "man." The same can be said about its Hebrew equivalent. Then, in the *Parables of Enoch* (1 En 37–71), this title designates an omniscient, eschatological judge, sitting upon God's throne and enjoying divine praise and predicates, including measureless and eternal glory. Such a presentation of "the Son of Man" conforms with the Johannine characterization of Jesus.¹¹ Moreover, this proposal fits perfectly the immediate literary context, namely the objection voiced by the Jews in 19:7 that Jesus is not the Son of God, so he cannot share God's throne as the glorified Son of Man. The expression ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος is evidently paralleled with another of Pilate's exclamations, ἴδε ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑμῶν in Jn 19:14.¹² According to Ignace de la Potterie, John 19:5 is also paralleled with the royal presentation of Jesus as sitting on the throne in John 19:13¹³. This royal description of Jesus in John 19:5 and again in its immediate literary context conforms with the Danielic presentation of the Son of Man as exercising judgment and universal dominion. The Johannine Jesus receives indeed a juridical authority (5:27) and universal dominion (16:33). Thus, Pilate's words ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος might be understood as the royal investiture the Danielic Son of Man. Pilate's declaration *ecce homo* would be a fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic utterance: "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he..." (8:28). Both in 8:28 and 19:6, the Jews play an active role in Jesus' crucifixion, understood as "lifting up". In the opinion of some commentators, the fact that the evangelist did not use the whole expression "son of man" is self-evident, as "it would be inappropriate on Pilate's lips"¹⁴ and it "would have lacked the ambiguity that marks Pilate's words."¹⁵

It has been argued, however, that if John had wanted to allude to the title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, he would have done it directly, as he did on many earlier occasions.¹⁶ Andrew Lincoln also noted that "although 'Son' and 'Son of Man' are virtually synonymous in a number of places, nowhere else is 'man' used as

¹¹ E.J. Moloney, *The Parables of Enoch*, pp. 269–293; B.E. Reynolds, *The Enochic Son of Man*, pp. 294–314.

¹² Frédéric Manns (*Exégèse rabbinique*, p. 533) argues that both ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος in Jn 19:5 and ἴδε ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑμῶν in John 19:14 stem from Daniel 7:12–22 and are juxtaposed by means of the technique of *gezērā šāwā*.

¹³ I. de la Potterie, *Jésus roi*, pp. 217–247. Cf. J. Verheyden, *I. de la Potterie on John 19, 13*, pp. 817–837.

¹⁴ B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, p. 566.

¹⁵ C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, p. 541.

¹⁶ Cf. 1:51; 3:13.14; 5:27; 6:27.53.62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23.34; 13:31. Cf. R. Schnackenburg, *Die Ecce-homo-Szene*, pp. 378–379; D. Böhler, "Ecce Homo!", p. 105.

an abbreviation or equivalent for ‘Son of Man.’¹⁷ Rudolf Schnackenburg observed that if we agree that *ecce homo* is to be understood as the title “the Son of Man”, “the rule that the title only otherwise occurs spoken by Jesus (or in answer to him, 9:35; 12:34) would be broken.”¹⁸ The same exegete also argued that the title “the Son of Man”, given its lofty and pregnant theological meaning, does not match the overall tenor of the trial narrative being focused on Jesus’ kingship (18:33.36–37.39; 19:2–3.5a.12.14–15.19–22). The understanding of *ecce homo* as the exalted Son of Man does not fit well with the parallel saying in 19:14 (“Here is your king!”).¹⁹ According to Johannes Beutler, the prevailing context of humiliation for Jn 19:5 does not fit the idea of glorification encapsulated in the title.²⁰ The above critique, however, does not take into consideration the typical Johannine technique of double meaning, and for this reason it is not very persuasive. To sum up, the presence of an allusion to “the Son of Man” in Jn 19:5, from the theological point of view, is very tempting, but it has its difficulties.

2. The Isaianic References

The idea of reading Pilate’s words *Ecce homo* with reference to the Suffering Servant of the Book of Isaiah is already found in the medieval commentary by Rupert of Deutz (d. 1130). This Benedictine monk quotes Is 53:2 about the Servant in whom there is no beauty as an appropriate elucidation of the Johannine *ecce homo*.²¹ Pilate’s phrase was also compared with the Isaianic “man of sorrow” (מִן־בְּבוּטָה) or “a man being in calamity” (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πληγῇ ὦν) from Is 53:3. According to Anthony Hanson, this Isaianic prophecy “exactly fits” the image of a scourged and mocked Jesus in John 19:5.²² According to Xavier Léon-Dufour, this intertextual connection is, however, “too general.”²³

Walter Bauer argued that the Johannine *ecce homo* alludes to ἰδοὺ ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν in Is 40:9.²⁴ In fact, in both Is 40:9 and Jn 19:5 the audience and geographical place (Zion, Jerusalem, one of the cities of Judah) are the same. The

¹⁷ A. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, p. 466.

¹⁸ R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, p. 257.

¹⁹ Idem, *Die Ecce-homo-Szene*, pp. 379–380.

²⁰ J. Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium*, p. 490.

²¹ Rupert of Deutz, *Com. in Jo., ad loc.* (PL 169,782).

²² A.T. Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel*, p. 205.

²³ X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture*, p. 97: “trop générale pour s’imposer.”

²⁴ W. Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*, p. 218.

whole theological context is also similar: the salvation of Israel is coming from God, called a shepherd (Is 40:11; Jn 10:11). A competent reader of the Johannine Gospel would detect the irony that this seemingly helpless human Jesus is in fact to be identified with the almighty God (Jn 1:18; 20:28), enacting at this very moment his salvific act. Indeed, Craig Keener noted that “man” was an occasional euphemism for “God.”²⁵ Despite its strong points, this proposal faced criticism and did not find many followers.²⁶

Werner Grimm noted several parallels between John 19:3–6 and a few Isaianic texts. For instance, *καὶ ἐδίδοσαν αὐτῷ ῥαπίσματα* (“And they were giving him slaps”) of Jn 19:3 would allude to *τὸν νῶτόν μου δέδωκα εἰς μάστιγας τὰς δὲ σιαγόνας μου εἰς ῥαπίσματα* (“I have given my back to scourges and my cheeks to slaps”) in Is 50:6. The Johannine double reference to Jesus’ innocence in 19:4b (*ἴδε ἄγω ὑμῖν αὐτὸν ἕξω, ἵνα γνῶτε ὅτι οὐδὲμίαν αἰτίαν εὐρίσκω ἐν αὐτῷ*. – “Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no reason [for an accusation] against him.”) and 19:6b (*λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· λάβετε αὐτὸν ὑμεῖς καὶ σταυρώσατε· ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐχ εὐρίσκω ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτίαν*. – “Pilate said to them, ‘You take him and crucify! I find no reason [for an accusation] against him!’”) finds its parallel in Is 53:9 (*καὶ δώσω τοὺς πονηροὺς ἀντὶ τῆς ταφῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους ἀντὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἀνομίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲ εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ* – “And I will give the wicked for his burial and the rich for his death, because he committed no lawlessness, nor was deceit found in his mouth”). Finally, the expression in question, *ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος*, in Jn 19:5 would allude to Is 43:4 in the Hebrew version, which speaks of Israel as being precious in God’s eyes, honored and loved by God. Most importantly, however, God will give or hand over a man in exchange for Israel.²⁷ If one wishes to apply this prophecy to Jn 19:5, then the Isaianic *בְּנֵי* should be identified with Jesus. In fact, the idea of Jesus’ redemptive death for the nation is clearly present elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel (cf. 11:51–52). Nevertheless, this interpretation is hardly convincing, because the Hebrew *בְּנֵי* should be understood in a very general sense, namely as people, human-kind or humanity. This is corroborated by the following text, which speaks of the nations handed over in exchange for Israel’s life, as well as by the preceding verse which speaks of Egypt as a ransom price, and Cush (Ethiopia) and

²⁵ C.S. Keener, *Gospel of John*, p. 1123. He mentions Ezekiel, *Exagoge* 70; *Eccl. Rab.* 2:21, §1; 8:1, §1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 14:10.

²⁶ R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, p. 659: “it is not credible that the Evangelist wanted to make play on it [Is 40:9]”; M. Theobald, *Ecce homo, ad loc.*: „So tiefgründig dies Deutung erscheint, der Bezug von Joh 19,5 auf Jes 40,6 bleibt spekulativ.”

²⁷ W. Grimm, *Die Preisgabe*, pp. 133–146.

Seba as given in exchange for Israel. The Septuagint also talks about giving men in plural (δώσω ἀνθρώπους πολλοὺς ὑπὲρ σοῦ – “I will give many people on your behalf”).²⁸ Interestingly enough, 1QIs^a has here a definite article above the line (lacking in 1QIs^b), giving ׀ִיִּשְׁׁ and stressing the singularity of the man.²⁹ To sum up, the Isaianic allusions have much to be recommended in defining the Johannine description of Jesus, especially in the light of how the authors of other canonical gospels portray Jesus as the Isaianic Servant.

3. The Messianic “Man” of Zechariah 6:12

A few commentators have suggested that Pilate’s words *ecce homo* constitute an allusion to Zec 6:12.³⁰ The Septuagint version of this oracle reads: ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ Ἀνατολῆ ὄνομα αὐτῶ (“Behold, a man! Anatole is his name!”). Again a few arguments in favor of this intertextual connection can be mentioned. (1) The prophetic text refers to the coronation of Joshua, the high priest (Zec 6:11), and in the immediate literary context of John 19:5, Jesus is indeed crowned. The word στέφανος (“crown”) appears in John 19:2.5 and Zec 6:11.14. Both

²⁸ There were attempts to emend the text to אדמות (“lands”) or איים (“islands”, e.g. 41:1; 49:1) or ארם (“Aram”) or אדום (“Edom”, which can also be vocalized with no consonantal changes as אִדְּם), but the same parallel pair of terms occurs in Ugaritic, so an emendation is unnecessary. See W.G.E. Watson, *Fixed Pairs*, p. 465.

²⁹ Modern commentators read Is 43:3–4 in a christological manner. See J.N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 140: “[T]he Bible does speak of the wicked being a ransom for the righteous (Prov. 21:18). In that light, it seems best to see this passage as a concrete imaging of that principle, which was ultimately worked out in him who knew no sin becoming sin for our sakes (2 Cor. 5:21) and giving “his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). It was ultimately not Egypt and Nubia that God gave in ransom, but his own Son [...]. The language is that which a bridegroom might use of his bride. Just as a groom finds his bride precious and worthy and lovable when others fail to see those qualities in her at all, God sees these things in us and is willing to pay any price to redeem his bride from her captors. But God’s grace is that he loves us without the self-delusion of some human grooms (and brides). He knows what his people really are (42:18–25), but that does not make them less precious to him. That is grace.”

³⁰ W. Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*, p. 218; W.A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, pp. 70–72; B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, p. 566. According to J.D.M. Derrett (*Ecce homo ruber*, pp. 224–225), Pilate’s words allude to Lam 1:3 (ἐγὼ ἀνὴρ ὁ βλέπων πτωχείαν ἐν ῥάβδῳ θυμοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐπ’ ἐμέ – “I am the man who sees poverty by the rod of his wrath”), but quote Zec 6:12. The rationale for any connection with Lam is the following (p. 225): “The whole of the Third Dirge of Lamentations, the song of the Man of Sorrows, is relevant to the Passion Narrative. The Speaker is the Jewish people, undergoing the ‘rod’ (plagues) for her (their) sings [*sic*].”

texts, then, share the same royal overtones. (2) The expression ἐπιθήσεις ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰησοῦ from Zec 6:11 can be echoed in ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῦ τῇ κεφαλῇ in Jn 19:2, as this detail does not appear in the parallel Markan report (15:17–19; see however Mt 27:29). (3) As soon as Joshua is crowned by the prophet (Zec 6:11), the declaration “Behold, the man...” appears (6:12). The same sequence of events – coronation (19:2–5a) followed by declaration (19:5b) – occurs in the Johannine text. (4) The Greek name of Joshua, Ἰησοῦς, is exactly the same as the name “Jesus”. (5) The Septuagint of Zec 6:12 renders Hebrew כַּנְּזֵחַ (“Branch”) by Ἀνατολή.³¹ This Greek term has clearly royal and consequently messianic overtones, as it was used as a royal title by Ptolemaic kings who in turn alluded to the ancient Egyptian royal title “the son of Ra”, i.e. “the son of the Rising Sun”. (6) The Hebrew term כַּנְּזֵחַ used in Zec 6:12 refers neither to Joshua the high priest nor to Zerubbabel, but rather to a third party, a future figure identified with a Davidide.³² Title כַּנְּזֵחַ has messianic and eschatological overtones, as it is attested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Jer 23:5), Dead Sea Scrolls (דוד כנזח in 4Q161 8–10 17; 4Q174 1–3 I 11; 4Q252 V 3–4; 4Q285 IV [frg. 7] 3–4), Targum to Zec 6:12, and Philo (*Conf.* 62–63).³³ Especially elucidating is the Targumic version of Zec 6:12: *Behold, the man whose name is Anointed will be revealed, and he shall be raised up!* In John’s Gospel, Jesus is indeed presented as an eschatological Messiah (1:41; 4:29), a royal Davidic descendant (cf. 7:42), who is raised up (2:22; cf. 3:14; 12:32) and revealed (14:21–22). (7) According to Mary L. Coloe, the allusion to כַּנְּזֵחַ of Zec 6:12–13 in John 19:5 might be also present also in the Johannine expressions Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον in Jn 18:5.7 and Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος in Jn 19:9. The connection between the title כַּנְּזֵחַ and the Johannine Ναζωραῖος (“Nazarene”) stems from the fact that the Hebrew name Nazareth (נצרת) was based on the root נצר which, in turn, served as the messianic title in Is 11:1 (נצר) and in the Dead Sea Scrolls is juxtaposed or used interchangeably with דוד כנזח.³⁴ (8) Both in Zec 6:12 (cf. also 3:8) and in the context of Jn 19:5, there is a reference to the priesthood.³⁵ (9) Both texts,

³¹ The Septuagint faithfully renders the play on words found in the Hebrew text: The Branch (כַּנְּזֵחַ / Ἀνατολή) shall branch out (כַּנְּזֵחַ / ἀνατελεῖ).

³² For the elaborated analyses, see W.H. Rose, *Zemah*; A.R. Petterson, *Behold Your King*. This is important clarification, because it counters M. Theobald’s critique that in the Fourth Gospel there is no priestly Messiah. See Theobald, *Ecce homo, ad loc.*: “keine priesterliche Messianologie.”

³³ See A. Kubiś, *The Book of Zechariah*, pp. 374–387.

³⁴ For details see M.L. Coloe, *Dwelling*, pp. 46–47. M.L. Coloe, *The Johannine Pentecost*, p. 48; M.L. Coloe, *The Nazarene King*, pp. 843–848.

³⁵ J.P. Heil, *Jesus*, pp. 729–745; H.K. Bond, *Discarding*, pp. 183–194.

Zechariah and John, deal with the rebuilding of the temple. By envisioning the building of the temple by Joshua, Zechariah's oracle (6:13) makes an allusion to the messianic and eschatological prophecy of 2 Sm 7:13 about building the temple. The theme of the temple and the characterization of Jesus as its builder of the temple is one of the leitmotifs of John's Gospel (cf. Jn 2:19). Interestingly enough, as noted by Raymond E. Brown, the question of whether Jesus is the Messiah is connected with the issue of his rebuilding the temple, as reported in the Marcan and Matthean accounts of Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin.³⁶ It has also been argued that Zec 6:12–13 is alluded to in John 2:22 and 20:9, with reference to Jesus' resurrection, understood as the rebuilding of the temple.³⁷ I commented on it, in one of my previous studies:

The reference to Zec 6:12 during Jesus' trial should come as no surprise in light of the Johannine use of this prophecy in presenting Jesus' resurrection, both in the cleansing narrative and in John 20. Thus, the words ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ought to be seen as a public introduction or presentation of the king-messiah who is going to (re)build the temple. From this perspective, the timeframe of Pilate's utterance is perfect, because it gives an interpretative key for the subsequent passion narrative, preparing the reader for its final act: Jesus' bodily resurrection understood as an act of rebuilding the temple (cf. 2:19–22). Thus, the reference to Zec 6:12 would add to the literal and historical meaning of the words ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος a new, profoundly theological significance, being yet another example of Johannine irony and *double entendre*.³⁸

Finally, (10) Zec 6:12 was applied to the incarnation of Jesus by the early Christian writers, e.g. Justin, *Dial.* 106; 121. Interestingly enough, in *Dial.* 106 Zec 6:12 is combined with Num 24:17, another Old Testament oracle interpreted in a messianic way.

The main argument raised against an intertextual allusion to Zec 6:12 in John 19:5 is the use of the noun ἀνὴρ instead of the expected ἄνθρωπος.³⁹ According to Barnabas Lindars, however, "this does not destroy the allusion."⁴⁰

³⁶ R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, p. 876.

³⁷ A. Kubiś, *Zechariah 6:12–13*, pp. 153–194.

³⁸ Idem, *The Book of Zechariah*, pp. 457–458.

³⁹ R. Schnackenburg, *Die Ecce-homo-Szene*, p. 383; X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture*, p. 97; A. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, p. 466.

⁴⁰ B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, p. 566. The same author states, however, that the reference to Zec 6:12 must remain "no more than a suggestion, because John has provided no indication that there are deeper issues here." In the same vein, C.K. Barrett (*The Gospel*

David Litwa calls this objection "somewhat pedantic".⁴¹ In fact, Philo seems to quote Zec 6:12 using ἄνθρωπος instead of ἀνήρ (*De Conf. Ling.* 62: ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος ᾧ ὄνομα ἀνατολή). The critical note of Rudolf Schnackenburg that ἀνήρ in Zech 6:12 is not a messianic title, because it is actually מָשִׁיחַ/Ἀνατολή that is the Messianic title,⁴² could indeed have some value as an argument. However, the expression ἰδοὺ ἀνήρ or, following Philo's reading, ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος, appears in Zec together with the messianic title "Branch". So in the mind of a well-instructed reader of (or listener to) the Johannine narrative, the declaration "Behold the man!" would almost automatically evoke its messianically loaded parallel sequel "Branch is his name!"

4. The Eschatological "Man" of Num 24,17

Wayne Meeks argued that ἄνθρωπος was "an eschatological title at least in Hellenistic Judaism"⁴³ and noted an interesting parallel to Zec 6:12 in the Septuagint of Numbers 24:17: "A star shall dawn out (ἀνατελεῖ) of Jacob, and a man (ἄνθρωπος) shall rise up out of Israel." This famous prophecy was interpreted messianically and eschatologically in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QTest 12; CD VII,18–20; 1QM XI,6) and the *Testament of Judah* 24:1 (where Num 24:17 appears side-by-side with Zec 6:12).⁴⁴ This image of a man set in an eschatological context is found earlier in the same chapter: "A man (ἄνθρωπος) will come forth from his [Israel's] offspring and he shall rule over many nations" (Num 24:7). This verse is interpreted eschatologically by Philo: "there shall come forth a man (ἐξελεύσεται γὰρ ἄνθρωπος), says the oracle, and leading his host to war he will subdue great and populous nations" (*Praem.* 95). An eschatological judge of Israel dispersed over all the world is also envisioned in *Testament of Naphtali*, which speaks of "a man (ἄνθρωπος) who effects righteousness" and who will "work mercy on all who are far and near" (4:5). Wayne Meeks argues that the dramatic structure of the whole Johannine narrative of Jesus' trial, as well as the purport of Zec 6:12 and Num 24:7,17, only make sense if

according to *St John*, p. 541) argued that "it would be hard to affirm that John was referring directly to this passage."

⁴¹ M.D. Litwa, *Behold Adam*, p. 134.

⁴² R. Schnackenburg, *Die Ecce-homo-Szene*, p. 380–381.

⁴³ W.A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, p. 70.

⁴⁴ As was aptly noted by David Litwa (*Behold Adam*, p. 134), Christian interpolations have in all probability crept into the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which somewhat lessens the relevance of *Testament of Judah* for Meeks' theory.

ὁ ἄνθρωπος is understood as a title, a throne-name given to the King of the Jews.⁴⁵ If the intertextual allusion to Zec 6:12 is present in John 19:5, then Pilate would present Jesus to the Jews under a messianic title. According to Barnabas Lindars, “Pilate is unconsciously showing that the prophecy has been fulfilled, in fact he acts the part of the prophet.”⁴⁶

Meeks’ proposal received mixed response. Although the evidence is, as Andrew Lincoln argued, “meagre and the correspondence with the wording here is by no means obvious”,⁴⁷ some scholars are sympathetic towards Meeks’ interpretation.⁴⁸ In fact, in the late Samaritan text *Memar Marqah* the word “man” is five times applied to Moses, the Samaritan messianic prototype.⁴⁹ The use of the article could also suggest that ἄνθρωπος is to be understood as a title.⁵⁰ David Litwa summarized, however, a rather convincing critique of Meeks’ proposal:

[I]n Numbers 24:17 and 7, ἄνθρωπος is not a title, but merely an expression to indicate a person who has a messianic function. The fact that the Septuagint translator rendered the Hebrew שֵׁטֶף [scepter/staff] in Numbers 24:17 as “ἄνθρωπος” is not significant, because this translation practice is not otherwise maintained (e.g., in the messianic passage Genesis 49:10). Philo and the passages from the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* also do not help Meeks’ case, because these passages, in their references to “a man,” simply depend on the language of Numbers.⁵¹

⁴⁵ W.A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, pp. 70–72.

⁴⁶ B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, p. 566.

⁴⁷ A. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, p. 466. Craig Keener (*Gospel of John*, p. 1123) argues that “the title is too rare for us to infer that it was probably known both to John and to his audience.”

⁴⁸ R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, pp. 875–876; H.K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate*, p. 184.

⁴⁹ The references are given by Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, p. 255.

⁵⁰ Bart Ehrman (*The Orthodox Corruption*, p. 94) made an interesting comment in this regard: “In Codex Vaticanus the definite article has dropped out [...]. While there is nothing to commend this singular reading as original, it does make for an interesting shift in meaning. Now, rather than pointing to Jesus as “the man” that the Jewish leaders want to have destroyed, Pilate indicates that the mocked and beaten Jesus is only a man (“See, he is mortal”).”

⁵¹ D. Litwa, *Behold Adam*, p. 134.

5. Adamic Typology

The reference to Adam (a Hebrew word meaning "man/human/humankind"), the first man, in reading Pilate's phrase "Behold the man!" was suggested by a number of scholars. Alan Richardson pointed out the royal dignity of the first Adam, who was supposed to rule over the whole creation (cf. Ps 8). In Jesus, the king and new Adam, this original intention of the Creator is fulfilled.⁵² John Suggit argued that the Johannine emphasis on Jesus wearing the purple robe (19:2.5) alludes to the glorious clothing of Adam and Eve, allocated to them at the very moment of creation, as attested by Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen 3:7. Jesus, the new man, reveals then what God intended man to be in the act of creation.⁵³ According to Gerald L. Borchert, Pilate's words are also "a theological affirmation that Jesus was indeed "the man", the second Adam, God's Son, who dealt with the sin of the world introduced through the first Adam."⁵⁴ Dawid Litwa suggested the reference to Genesis 3:22, where God's utterance is opened with the phrase "Behold, Adam" (בְּהִיטֵם אָדָם/ἰδοὺ Ἀδάμ), which many modern English translations render as "Behold the man." Litwa resorts to an observation made by Joel Marcus that the second definite article in the title "the Son of *the* Man" functions to point out a particular and definite man, namely Adam.⁵⁵ In Litwa's opinion, the article has the same function in John 19:5 in the phrase ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, pointing to the first man, Adam. Taking into consideration the original context of Gen 3:22, especially the expulsion from Eden (3:22b–24), the words "Behold the man!" reflect "Adam's alienation and death", emphasizing his human nature. The image of Adam as almost divine and at the same time mortal reappears in Ps 87:1.7 and Ez 28:2.6–10.12.18. The phrase "Behold Adam!" is seen also in the Latin work *The Life of Adam and Eve* 13:3. The phrase is pronounced by God, when the archangel Michael presented Adam to the angels: "Behold Adam (*Ecce Adam*)! I have made you in our image and likeness" (13:3). Interestingly enough, Adam is presented in heaven in order to be worshiped by the angels as if he were a divine being. As Dawid Litwa observes: "the phrase "Behold Adam/the man!" in this context is thus an extremely lofty statement highlighting Adam's divine glory which he had with God (to use Johannine language) "before the world began" (John 17:5)."⁵⁶

⁵² A. Richardson, *The Gospel*, p. 197.

⁵³ J. Suggit, *John 19:5*, p. 334.

⁵⁴ G.L. Borchert, *John 12–21*, p. 250.

⁵⁵ J. Marcus, *Son of Man*, pp. 38–61 and 370–386.

⁵⁶ D. Litwa, *Behold Adam*, p. 138.

The American author noticed, however, that the exclamation *Ecce Adam!* appears as “a deeply ironic”, because the whole context of the narrative presents Adam as “fallen, tricked by the devil, helpless, hapless, unable to find the means of bare sustenance, unable to find relief from pain, and ultimately unable to flee death.”⁵⁷ On the basic level, then, the Johannine *ecce homo* underscores Jesus’ human frailty, but as to the deeper (theological) meaning, elucidated by the reference to Gen 3:22 and *Vita* 3:3, Pilate’s mocking phrase is to be connected with Jesus’ glory. The meaning on this deeper level is, however, reversed. Jesus understood his crucifixion as the hour of glorification (12:23; 13:31; 17:11) and acts during his arrest and trial in complete control of his destiny (18:5–6; cf. 10:17–18; 13:21–30). Thus, Pilate’s phrase underlines “Jesus’ divine sovereignty over his whole trial. The “man” Jesus is not a man doomed to die, but a heavenly being who voluntarily lays down his life. He is not weak but strong. He is not humble but exalted. He is, importantly, not mortal but divine.”⁵⁸ To sum up, according to David Litwa, Pilate’s declaration deliberately echoes Gen 2:22 and *Vita* 13:3 by means of reverse irony. In Gen 3:22 and *Vita* 13:3, Adam, seemingly divine and godlike, is in fact frail and mortal, whereas in John 19:5 the new Adam, seemingly pitiful and helpless, is indeed victorious, immortal and in control of the whole situation. This intertextual echo creates a contrast between Adam and Jesus.⁵⁹ Dawid Litwa suggests also that the existence of the intertextual echo of Adam in John 19:5 implies also an ironic fulfilment of Ps 8:4–5 (LXX 5–7), understood as a meditative commentary on Gen 1:26–30: only Jesus, not the first Adam, fulfills the Psalm, because Christ, the son of man, is crowned with glory and honor, and everything is subjected beneath his feet (cf. Heb 2:6–10).⁶⁰

According to Lionel Swain, in John 19:5 the evangelist evokes John 16:21, which describes the man who has been begotten into the world (ἐγεννήθη

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 139.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 141.

⁵⁹ David Litwa (*Behold Adam*, p. 142, note 26) mentions the following list of parallels: (1) Adam is in paradise (παράδεισος, Gen 2:8) and Jesus is in a garden (κήπος, Jn 18:1); (2) Adam tries to make himself a god (Gen 3:5) and Jesus was said to have made himself out the son of God (Jn 19:7); (3) Adam sins (Gen 3:6) and Jesus is betrayed (Jn 18:2–3); (4) God comes to call Adam to account (Gen 3:8–9) and the cohort comes to arrest Jesus (Jn 18:2–3); (5) Adam hides (Gen 3:8) and Jesus steps forth to meet the cohort (Jn 18:4); (6) Adam deflects responsibility on others (Gen 3:12) and Jesus takes responsibility for others (Jn 18:8); (7) Adam is punished with thorns (ἄκανθα, Gen 3:18) and Jesus is punished with thorns (ἄκανθα, Jn 19:2; ἀκάνθινος, 19:5); (8) Adam is clothed in a garment of skin (Gen 3:21) and Jesus is clothed in a garment of glory (Jn 19:2.5).

⁶⁰ D. Litwa, *Behold Adam*, p. 143.

ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν κόσμον). In Swain’s opinion, the allusion to Jesus’ suffering would be encapsulated in the mention of the pain (λύπη) and tribulation (θλίψις) of a woman giving birth to a child. The man (ἄνθρωπος) from Jn 16:21 is in turn an allusion to the male offspring of the woman (γυνή) from Gen 3:15. This man is to be identified with the Messiah. Thus, Pilate unwittingly presents Jesus to the Jews as their Messiah who accomplished his mission through his suffering and death.⁶¹

All the above-mentioned intertextual connections resort to Adamic typology. An argument in favor of the existence of Adamic imagery in John 19:5 is the presence of the Adam typology elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel.⁶² Its presence in the Gospel of John is, however, questioned by some authors.⁶³ Another argument in favor of Adamic typology is its intrinsic connection with the theme of Israel’s kingship, especially with the figures of David and Solomon.⁶⁴ To sum up, the allusion of Adamic typology in Pilate’s *ecce homo* is very plausible.

6. The King of 1 Sm 9:17

Dieter Böhler argued that Pilate’s declaration ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος in John 19:5 alludes to 1 Sm 9:17 (LXX): ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὃν εἶπά σοι οὗτος ἄρξει ἐν τῷ λαῶ μου (“Behold, the man about whom I said to you: ‘This one will rule among my people’”). The expression ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος is pronounced by God and ad-

⁶¹ L. Swain, *The Gospel*, p. 228. The connection between Gen 3:16 and John 16:21 was amply elaborated by A. Feuillet, *L’heure*, pp. 178–179.

⁶² E.g. J.K. Brown, *Creation’s Renewal*, p. 281: “In view of the number of allusions to Genesis 1–2 in John 19–20 and specifically the Adam christology that emerges in 20:15 when Mary identifies Jesus as the gardener, it is likely that “Behold, the man” alludes to that first man, Adam, in the first creation story. Once again, John shows in narrative fashion that God is inaugurating creation’s renewal in Jesus, the “second Adam”. Even as Pilate declares, “Behold, the man,” on the story level, on the discourse level the implied author is signaling that Jesus is the center of creational renewal.” Brown also provides bibliographical references to the authors who share her interpretation.

⁶³ Craig Keener (*Gospel of John*, p. 1077) excludes any reference to the Garden of Eden in the Johannine use of the word κήπος (18:1; 19:41), arguing that “John nowhere else uses any explicit Adam Christology.” C.R. Sosa Siliezar, *Creation Imagery*, p. 22: “[Jesus] is never explicitly (or even implicitly) portrayed as ‘Adam’ or ‘new Adam.’”

⁶⁴ Y. Simoens (*Secondo Giovanni*, p. 729) combines Adamic imagery in Jn 19:5 with the purport of sapiential texts such as Ps 8:6; Sira 17:1–4 and Wis 2:2–3. See also E.W. Klink, *John*, p. 778: “[I]n light of the Genesis-laden context of the Gospel of John and the Genesis lens applied to its interpretive telling of the person and work of Jesus, the connection to Adam is hardly a stretch. And the “royal” context is also implicit to Adam.”

dressed to Samuel, with reference to Saul as the first king over the Israelites. The expression ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος would be understood as a royal title, the proclamation of Jesus' kingship. Pilate would then deliver the same message about the kingship of Jesus on two occasions, in Jn 19:5 (*Ecce homo!*) and 19:14 (*Ecce rex vester!*). Moreover, the proclamation is to be understood as originating from God, the Father. Pilate would only serve as a channel of this communication, an unwitting prophet. Dieter Böhler also draws attention to the literary context of 1 Sm 9:17, namely the rejection of God's kingdom by the Israelites in 1 Sm 8. The same rejection of Jesus' kingdom, by the Israelites, occurs during the trial before Pilate. In Jn 18:40, they reject the release of Jesus, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων (18:39), preferring Barabbas. And in 19:15, the high priests profess: "We have no king except Caesar!" The rejection of Jesus as the king of the Jews in exchange for the human king Caesar in John 18–19 is then paralleled with the rejection of God as Israel's king in exchange for the human king Saul in 1 Sm 8–9.⁶⁵

Dieter Böhler's proposal was received sympathetically by a number of scholars.⁶⁶ In the opinion of Andrew Lincoln, the allusion to 1 Sm 9:17 LXX is "by far the most plausible suggestion for a secondary and ironic connotation [...]. The correspondence in wording is precise. [...] The irony is appropriate. John's formulation of Pilate's mockery of both Jesus and Jewish notions of kingship employs the words used of Israel's very first king and thereby reinforces Jesus' true identity as 'King of the Jews'. In this way 'Here is the man' anticipates Pilate's explicit 'Here is your king' in v. 14."⁶⁷ In Craig Keener's opinion, "John may well expect the more biblically literate members of his audience to recall Samuel's acclamation of Israel's first king with identical words."⁶⁸ Michael Theobald underlines the connection, present in both texts, between seeing the man and his royal dignity, although he also identifies different goals for the phrase in question: In 1 Sam the phrase identifies a person in order to be recognized by Samuel as a future king; in John the phrase does not serve to identify a person, but to demonstrate this person's harmlessness and vulnerability.⁶⁹ However, on the deeper level of meaning, the Johannine phrase can also serve as revealing the identity of Jesus. The reader can recognize the allusion and see that God himself identifies Jesus as a true king and true human.

⁶⁵ D. Böhler, "Ecce Homo!", pp. 106–108.

⁶⁶ Cf. X. Léon-Dufour, *Lecture*, p. 98; M.M. Thompson, *John*, p. 383.

⁶⁷ A. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, p. 466.

⁶⁸ C. Keener, *Gospel of John*, p. 1123.

⁶⁹ M. Theobald, *Ecce homo, ad loc.*

The choice of 1 Sm 9:17 as a hypotext of the Johannine *ecce homo* can also be corroborated by arguing that ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος in John 19:5 was pronounced by Jesus himself. In fact, there is no explicit indication in the text who is speaking these words. Thus some scholars, for example Friedheim Wessel, James Leslie Houlden and Roberto Vignolo, interpret the expression as spoken by Jesus.⁷⁰ Roberto Vignolo presented five arguments in favor of this view. The final one is the intertextual reference to 1 Sm 9:17. His four other arguments are as follows: First, from the syntactical point of view, the implicit subject of λέγει in 19:5b is to be determined by identifying the nearest explicit subject in the preceding text: ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔξω, φορῶν τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον καὶ τὸ πορφυροῦν ἱμάτιον (19:5a). The explicit subject of ἐξῆλθεν and φορῶν is ὁ Ἰησοῦς. An argument against it, although not very robust, is the fact that during the Roman trial Jesus never speaks to the Jews. Second, from the narratological perspective, Pilate, who is very active and promises to bring Jesus out to the Jews (19:4), suddenly becomes passive in the next verse (19:5), where Jesus is unexpectedly very active as he alone exits the praetorium to meet his adversaries. This surprisingly active role of Jesus would proceed naturally if the declaration ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος were to be attributed to him. Jesus exercises the same liberty in exiting, expressed by the same verbal form ἐξῆλθεν, in 18:1.4 and 19:17. The verse in question becomes a narratological climax, representing a reduplicated auto-presentation of Jesus, first on the level of action (moving outside and his royal attire) and secondly on a verbal level, by Jesus' own declaration. Third, Jesus' proclamation ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος (19:5) conforms with the purport of his other utterances, especially in 8:40 and 18:37, where he defines himself as ἄνθρωπος, who was born in this world in order to testify to the truth. The *ecce homo* exclamation would encapsulate the same message but in an extremely elliptical way. Fourth, the pronunciation of ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος by Jesus, being the last Johannine occurrence of the term ἄνθρωπος, creates a rhetorical climax of the Johannine theology of incarnation.⁷¹ This last argument

⁷⁰ See the ample discussion in R. Vignolo, *Chi pronuncia*, pp. 717–726. Cf. J.L. Houlden, *John 19.5*, pp. 148–149. The rejection of this view in D.F. Griesmer, *In den Prozeß*, p. 200, note 871. Anthony Hanson (*The Prophetic Gospel*, p. 204) commented on this view: "This is original and interesting but not really appropriate to the context. The Jesus of the Gospel is more likely to point out his divinity than his humanity."

⁷¹ John 19:5 is the last occurrence of the term ἄνθρωπος in John's Gospel. The term occurs 60 times in this Gospel and thirteen of these instances refer to Jesus (4:29; 5:12; 9:11.16bis.24; 10:33; 11:47.50; 18:14.17.29; 19:5). In the twelve other instances ἄνθρωπος occurs in the phrase "the Son of Man", which also refers to Jesus. Compared to the three other canonical Gospels, the number of occurrences of ἄνθρωπος employed to designate Jesus is highest in John.

can be countered by the observation that ἄνθρωπος does not occur in statements about Jesus' incarnation.⁷²

7. The Bridegroom of the Song of Songs

The reference to the figure of King Solomon in Song 3:11 is to be viewed here as a final proposal for the intertextual background of Pilate's declaration "Behold, the man!" To my knowledge, such an Old Testament background is never mentioned by modern commentators of John 19:5, and I am indebted to Nina Heereman for drawing my attention to such a possibility.⁷³ There are a few arguments in favor of this intertextual allusion. (1) Both Solomon in the Song of Songs and Jesus in the Gospel of John (see 3:29) are presented as bridegrooms. (2) Both Solomon and Jesus are described explicitly as kings by the use of the lexeme βασιλεύς (Song 3:11; Jn 19:2–3.5.12.14.15). (3) Both Solomon and Jesus are wearing crowns (στέφανος – Song 3:11; Jn 19:2.5). (4) In both cases – Solomon and Jesus – the context of coronation is the same, namely their weddings. Coronation of the bridegroom must have been an ancient custom, although it is elsewhere attested only in 3 Maccabees 4:8 (written around the turn of eras) and in rabbinic sources (*m. Sota* 9:14; *t. Sota* 15:8; *b. Sota* 49b). In Song 3:11, the nuptial context is stated explicitly (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ νυμφεύσεως αὐτοῦ). In the Gospel of John, Jesus' wedding, taking place at the "hour" of his death, is implicit, although proleptically enacted during the wedding in Cana (2:1–11). (5) In both texts the mother (μήτηρ) of the king is mentioned explicitly (Song 3:11; Jn 19:25–27), but his bride implicitly. (6) In both texts the action takes place in Jerusalem. This is evident in the Hebrew text of Song 3:11, referring to the "daughters of Zion" (cf. 3:5.10 – "daughters of Jerusalem", and 3:4 – "city"). (7) The immediately preceding verses of Song, namely 3:1–4, are alluded to in the Johannine description of the encounter between Jesus and Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:1–18).⁷⁴ The presence of Song 3:1–4 in John 20:1–18 makes more plausible the presence of the same chapter of Song of Songs in the preceding narrative, namely in John 19:5.14. (8) The Fourth Gospel contains

⁷² R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, p. 452, note 72.

⁷³ Nina Heereman presented a paper during *Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense LXVII* in July 2018, suggesting the possibility of an intertextual allusion to Sg 3:11 in Pilate's words *ecce homo*. Her insights will surely be published in a due course. Since I did not participate in the symposium and have no access to her paper, I will present my own argumentation in favor of this hypothesis.

⁷⁴ M. Cambe, *L'influence*, pp. 17–18; J. McWhirter, *Bridegroom*, pp. 93–96.

a significant number of other recognized allusions to the Song of Songs.⁷⁵ (9) Solomon was understood in Judaism as a messianic figure (cf. Ps 72; 127; PsSol 17)⁷⁶ and Song of Songs was also interpreted messianically. The best witness of the messianic understanding of the Song of Songs is its targumic version. (10) The figure of the bridegroom in the Song of Songs has also been interpreted as the God of Israel. This allegorical interpretation appears to be very ancient (it could even have happened already before the final fixing of the text of the Song of Songs⁷⁷) and predates the Fourth Gospel, in which Jesus is presented as equal to God of Israel. In fact, the immediate context of Jn 19:5 speaks of Jesus as the Son of God (19:7). (11) The Solomonic typology was employed elsewhere by the authors of the NT (e.g. Mt 2:1–12; Eph 2:13–22). This fact allows any reader to discover the Johannine intertextual identification of Jesus with Solomon in Song of Songs. (12) Adamic typology, present in the Fourth Gospel, is also connected with Solomon, who in biblical tradition is presented as first Adam, the king.⁷⁸ (13) The interpretation of Jesus' death as the moment of his wedding with the Church is widespread among ancient and medieval commentators. Most importantly, however, many of them interpreted Jesus' coronation in Jn 19:2.5 in light of the reference to Solomon's coronation in Song 3:11.⁷⁹ Thus, the history of interpretation of Song 3:11 demonstrates the histori-

⁷⁵ A. Roberts Winsor, *A King*; A. Taschl-Erber, *Der messianische Bräutigam*, pp. 323–375.

⁷⁶ B. Renaud, *Salomon*, pp. 409–426; J. Verheyden, *The Figure of Solomon*.

⁷⁷ N.S. Heereman, *Behold King Solomon!*, pp. 191–219; N.S. Heereman, "Behold King Solomon on the Day of His Wedding!", forthcoming.

⁷⁸ J.-P. Sonnet, *Côté cour*, pp. 247–260.

⁷⁹ Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394), interpreting Song 3:11, states that God Father placed the crown on the head of Jesus in fulfillment of Ps 20:4 ("you set on his head a crown of precious stone"). As God is not a sexual being, he can perform an act ascribed in Song 3:11 to the king's mother (*Homiliae in Canticum Canticorum*, GNO 6,214). According to Nilus of Ancyra (d. 430), Solomon's wedding in Song 3:11 should be interpreted as Jesus' wedding enacted by his death on the cross. Solomon's crown is to be identified with Jesus' crown of thorns, and Solomon's mother with the Synagogue or Israel, in which Jesus grew up. The entire verse is spoken by the friends of the bridegroom, namely the prophets, who call the pagan nations to come out of the darkness of unbelief and to contemplate the day of Jesus' wedding (*Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum*, SC 403,362). Theodoret of Cyrus (d. 466) identifies Solomon's mother with Jesus' mother, which should be understood as Judea. She crowns Jesus with the "crown of love" (τῆς ἀγάπης στέφανον), because Jesus' death is his wedding ceremony with the Church (*In Canticum Canticorum*, PG 81,128A-B). Michael Psellos (d. 1078) sees in the figure of Solomon's mother "the love of the Father" (ἡ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀγάπη) towards Jesus, the bridegroom of the Church (*Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum*; PG 122,608B). Among the Latin writers, Justus of Urgell (d. 546) identi-

cal plausibility of interpreting Pilate's words in John 19:5 in light of Song 3:11 by competent first century readers. To sum up, the cumulative force of all the above-mentioned arguments is impressive. It renders quite persuasive the proposal that Pilate's *ecce homo* lies an allusion to the messianic bridegroom of the Song of Songs.

Conclusion

Dawid Litwa makes the pertinent observation that "in 19:5 there is a surplus of meaning which goes beyond any intertextual echo or suggested background."⁸⁰ After the above scrutiny, one can easily concur with this view. None of the above proposals should be regarded as the uniquely true one that automatically excludes the others. Irony, double entendre, metaphor, riddle, misunderstanding and so on are the techniques employed by John to convey a real polyphony of meanings. As Gail R. O'Day aptly noted: "There is always some kind of opposition between two levels of meaning in irony – either contradiction, incongruity, or incompatibility." This polyphony of meanings should not be seen outside the text, as independent or removed from it, but rather, in Gail R. O'Day's words, "*in and through* the expressed meaning".⁸¹ Applying this theory to Pilate's words, the primary meaning can easily refer to Jesus' humanity, but the secondary meaning might evoke not only Jesus' royalty, but even his divine identity. The prospective reader, envisioned already by John, is to be regarded as an intelligent expert, acquainted with the reach of Old Testament imagery, who detects at least two levels of meaning in Pilate's words. Defining the primary, literal meaning, the reader should then be ready to discover also the ul-

fies the wedding day of Solomon with the day of Jesus' passion: *Qui dies passionis fuit etiam dies laetitiae cordis eius* (*Explicatio in Canticum Canticorum*, PL 67,976). According to Bede the Venerable (d. 735), Solomon's coronation performed by his mother refers to the incarnation of the Son of Man from Mary. The incarnation, and not crucifixion, is then understood as the messianic wedding (*Allegorica expositio in Cantica Canticorum*, CCL 119B,242–243). Angelomus of Luxeuil (d. 895) combines two interpretations of Jesus' wedding with the Church. In the first one, Jesus' coronation refers to assuming the human body from Mary; in the second one, Jesus' coronation refers to the crown of thorns (*Enarrationes in Canticum Canticorum*, PL 115,606). According to Wolbero of Cologne (d. 1167), Solomon's coronation is the pivotal point of the whole Song of Songs. The moment of coronation refers to the incarnation as well as to Jesus' crucifixion, when he accepts the Church as his bride (*Comm. in Cant.*; PL 195,1146–1147).

⁸⁰ D. Litwa, *Behold Adam*, p. 135.

⁸¹ Both quotes after G.R. O'Day, *Revelation*, pp. 23 and 8.

terior, theological meaning, which sometimes can differ in its purport from the former meaning. Pursuing this deeper meaning, the reader is invited to make multiple connections between Pilate's words and their Old Testament referents. This kind of intertextual reading enables a reader to see in Pilate's declaration a statement about Jesus real identity, which can be defined expansively as the true king of Israel, the Messiah, the Suffering Servant, the new Adam, the eschatological judge and universal ruler, the Son of God, and finally the messianic and divine Bridegroom. Again, none of these meanings excludes any of the others, rather they converge and paint together one multi-hued image of Jesus. Frederick Dale Bruner puts this polyvalent meaning in a very emphatic way, arguing that the audience of Pilate's words "gets an actual view of *"The Man"*, *the* representative human being, *the* Son of Man, Son of God, Second Adam, Son of David, Humanity's God-given and Humanity-assuming Substitute and Representative."⁸²

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⁸² F.D. Bruner, *The Gospel of John*, p. 1072.

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