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Who is the Son of God in 4Q246?

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DARIUSZ IWAŃSKI

WHO IS THE SON OF GOD IN 4Q246?

E. Puech, the author of the first critical edition of 4Q246, introduced the document under the name *4QApocryphe de Daniel ar.*¹ This designation might suggest that the scroll is a derivative of the Book of Daniel. It is true that the apocalyptic and eschatological content of 4Q246 renders the document resembling the Book of Daniel in many respects.² Nevertheless, this fact should not be overestimated, since there are also significant differences between the two documents. 4Q246 is known also as the *Aramaic apocalypse* or the *Son of God text*.³ The latter is due to a mysterious figure that appears there and is addressed as the 'Son of God' and the 'Son of the Most High'. The figure has been differently interpreted.⁴

The current paper is an attempt to present the so far proposed interpretations and to indicate the most convincing of them. The degree of capability of convincing will be of course measured against the amount of potent and persuasive arguments. In order to draw the most complete picture of the issue I will first dedicate some space to the question of the document's genre. Then there will be provided a survey of opinions concerning the Son of God's identity. After that I will analyze the lines, which seem crucial for the comprehension of the identity of the personage at stake. After having set such a background I will proceed to draw the final conclusions.

¹ E. Puech, *4QApocryphe de Daniel ar* in: *Qumran Cave 4. XVII. Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* (ed. E. Tov) DJD 25, Oxford 1996, p. 165.

² Cf. *ibidem*, p. 180.

³ Cf. e. g. J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism and literary genre in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in: *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years. A comprehensive Assessment II* (ed. P. W. Flint, J. C. VanderKam), Leiden 1999, p. 413.

⁴ Cf. F. G. Martinez, *4QApocalisse aramaica (4Q246 [4QpsDan^d])*, in: *Testi di Qumran*, Brescia 1996, p. 250-251.

Apocalypse: literary genre of 4Q246⁵

The genre of 4Q246 was determined by E. Puech as apocalypse.⁶ In this context it is worth observing that in different publications on 4Q246 the question of the genre was discussed (if ever) only marginally. Its apocalyptic or eschatological character is rather generally taken for granted. I agree with the classification of the genre as apocalypse; however, I feel obliged to provide arguments in support of this claim. Before doing so, one must realize that the definition of the genre apocalypse was a highly debated topic for more than a century.⁷ In 1979 an important step forward was taken when the members of the *Apocalypse Group of the Society of Biblical Literature's Genres Project* (led by J. J. Collins) determined its meaning:

“«Apocalypse» is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world”.⁸

This definition was intended to be a starting point for further studies and elaborations. As a matter of fact, in 1984, A. Y. Collins augmented it determining the function of the genre, saying that apocalypse is: “intended to interpret present earthly circumstances in the light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority”.⁹ In the current study, I will follow this (augmented) definition.

Talking about the genre of 4Q246 one might be surprised by the fact that E. Puech although defining the document under elaboration as apocalypse, does not make any reference to the definition presented above, nor to any other definition. He uses interchangeably the designations ‘genre apocalyptique’ and ‘apocalypse’. He observes that the text contains many apocalyptic and eschatological motifs, underli-

⁵ The term “literary genre” is meant here as a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics that constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing; cf. Collins, *Introduction: Towards the morphology of a Genre*, Semeia 14 (1979) 1.

⁶ Cf. E. Puech, *Fragment d'une apocalypse en araméen (4Q246= pseudo-Dan^d) et le “royaume de Dieu”*, RB 99/1992, p. 98-131.

⁷ Cf. D. E. Aune, *Qumran and the Book of Revelation*, in: *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years. A comprehensive Assessment II* (ed. P. W. Flint, J. C. VanderKam), Leiden 1999, p. 625.

⁸ J. J. Collins, *Introduction: Towards the morphology of a Genre*, p. 9.

⁹ A. Y. Collins, *Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism*, p. 1.

ning also very strong similarities of the language and genre between our text and the Aramaic chapters of Daniel. In conclusion the reader is only authoritatively told that “le genre apocalyptique de la vision relative aux calamités eschatologiques ne fait pas de difficulté (...)”.¹⁰

Such an approach did not satisfy J. J. Collins, who carefully verified the data concerning the genre of 4Q246. The author admitted that the text contains some common motifs “familiar from other apocalyptic texts”,¹¹ but at the same time he holds that it lacks at least one element, which is essential for every apocalypse, namely there is no angelic or divine interpreter. Besides, J. J. Collins notes that there has not been preserved either original beginning or the end of the text. Hence he concludes that, although “the designation of this writing as an apocalypse is not unreasonable”, we cannot claim it with an absolute surety.¹²

I hold that the classification of genre of 4Q246 as apocalypse is correct. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to see how the document con-cords with the definition of the genre apocalypse in its augmented form as quoted above. In short we can distinguish three crucial elements in that definition, which are decisive in determining a text as apocalypse: revelatory form, content (temporal and spatial elements), intention (function). Let us see now how they are present in our document.

A) REVELATORY FORM. In 4Q246, it is the vision / dream of the king that is being explained and recalled to him by a mysterious person. In this context the objection raised by J. J. Collins that there is no

¹⁰ E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar*, p. 183. J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch*. Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4, Oxford 1976, p. 60, uses the designation *Aramaic apocalypse*, but he does not provide any arguments for having chosen it. F. Garcia Martinez, *The eschatological figure of 4Q246, Qumran and Apocalyptic*. Studies on the Aramaic texts from Qumran, STDJ 9, Leiden 1992, p. 162-179, does not exactly determine the genre but he says that “the text is eschatological from beginning to end”. J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The Son of God Document from Qumran*, Bib 74/1993, p. 153-174 and D. Flusser, *The Hubris of the Antichrist in a Fragment from Qumran*, Immanuel 10/1980, p. 35, consider the text as apocalyptic, but similarly do not care for any further explanation. F. M. Cross, *Notes on the Doctrine of the Two Messiahs at Qumran and the Extracanonical Daniel Apocalypse (4Q246)*, in: *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Conference on the texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem 30 April 1995 (ed. D. W. Parry, S. D. Ricks), STDJ 20; Leiden 1996, 1-13, uses the term ‘apocalypse’ (‘apocalyptic genre’) and, as well as Puech, enumerates apocalyptic elements there but still without any concrete statements explaining his understanding of the genre (cf. also the author’s most recent article: *The Structure of the Apocalypse of ‘Son of God’ (4Q246)*, in: *Emmanuel*. Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of E. Tov (ed. S. M. Paul, R. A. Kraft, L. H. Schiffman, W. W. Fields), VTS 94, Leiden-Boston 2003, p. 151-158).

¹¹ J. Collins, *Apocalypticism and literary genre*, p. 415.

¹² *Ibidem*.

angelic or divine interpreter (typical for all apocalypses) is not very convincing. Actually, further on in his article the author admits that as far the mysterious person in 4Q246 “we can easily imagine a variation, modeled on Daniel 2 where the interpreter is human”.¹³

B) CONTENT. The vision discloses a transcendent reality, which is evidently temporal because it envisages eschatological salvation depicted in terms of kingdom. The latter is to be established after a period of wars and other disasters that are presented also in a supernatural perspective where God himself fights for His elected ones or in a different way acts in their favor. This stands for the spatial factor spoken of in the definition. So the temporal and special factors are clearly seen.¹⁴

C) INTENTION. The interpreter’s words are to comfort the king (disturbed by what he saw in the dream¹⁵), so that he may not be afraid of the earthly events, because they belong to the divine plan of the future salvation. Thus, it is intended to influence by means of divine authority both the understanding and the behavior of the king and of all those that would read the text.¹⁶

Summing up, we may observe that all crucial element of the definition of the genre apocalypse are found in 4Q246. Hence we are fully authorized to consider this document as an apocalypse. Now, it is in order to see the main elements of the apocalyptic setting.

Apocalyptic setting

Having resolved the problem of the genre of 4Q246 (=literary background) faced, it is time to highlight the elements that determine apocalyptic circumstances of the appearance of the Son of God (=contextual background). Two of them seem to be of crucial importance here: the end of days and eschatological kingdom.

“The and of days”: disasters and hope

In 4Q246, there is much about wars and afflictions. It is worth observing some characteristic terminology: עקה *affliction* col. i 4; נחשירון

¹³ J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism and literary genre*, p. 415.

¹⁴ Puech’s observations concerning apocalyptic motifs in 4Q246 are also important in this context.

¹⁵ Cf. 4Q246 – col. i 2.

¹⁶ A. Y. Collins, *Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism*, p. 1.

carnage col. i 5; דָּוָשׁ *to trample* col. ii 3; עָבַד קָרֵב (*to make war*) col. 2, 8. Although the term ‘war’ is not prevailing here, it is hard to imagine that those disasters might take place in other than war circumstances.¹⁷

The text also incorporates and elaborates on some war motifs from Daniel. For instance, we find there references to Dan 7 (description of a demonic force) and Dan 10 (human conflict viewed in the context of heavenly battle among angelic “princes” of various nations).¹⁸ Moreover, in 4Q246 (col. i 6) the enemy is determined as the kings of Asshur and Egypt. The same classification is found also in Dan 11¹⁹ In the apocalyptic literature wars and disasters are usually incorporated within a larger scenario of ‘the end of days’, which is actually one of the most significant apocalyptic and eschatological motifs.

The expression ‘the end of days’ has a twofold meaning in the Qumran writings. It is a time of testing and a time of at least incipient salvation.²⁰ The first one is often described in terms of wars and calamities. The motif of war and struggle between the forces of good and evil is also familiar from the prophets (cf. e. g. Ezek 38: 7-16; 39: 2; Joel 3: 2; Zech 12: 1-9; 14: 2; 4 Ezra 13: 33-34). It was then adapted and elaborated on in the Scrolls (e. g. 4Q161, 4Q174, CD 7: 20-1, 1QH 11: 35, 1QM).²¹

The second nuance of the expression ‘the end of days’ is “dawning of the era of salvation, with the coming of the messiahs, and at least in some sources it extends to the final war”.²² The messianic issue will be dealt with separately. Now, a few words about the final and decisive war should be said. One document especially provides us with a scenario of such a war. This is the Rule of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness (1QM). The war shall last for forty years, divided into seven

¹⁷ Cf. H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran. Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York 1995, p. 152.

¹⁸ Cf. J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The periods of history and the expectation of the end*, London-New York 1997, p. 100.

¹⁹ Cf. id., *Daniel. A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Minneapolis 1993, p. 77.

²⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 68.

²¹ Cf. idem, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 95. There is another expression used there, namely the ‘time of refining’. It occurs for example in 4Q174, which interprets Ps 2: 1 as referring to the elect of Israel in the last days. It is also present in such documents as: 4QpPs^a 2: 17-19, 1QpHab, 4QpNah; cf. G. Martinez, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism. The origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity I* (ed. J. J. Collins, B. McGinn, S. Stein), New York 1998, p. 176.

²² J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 62.

phases (punctuated by five sabbatical years when it is not allowed to fight). The first three will be victorious for the Sons of Light but, in the next three, the enemy will prevail. In the final, seventh phase, God himself will intervene in favor of the Sons of Light. The evil forces will be once and forever destroyed (1QM I, 14-15).²³ In general, we may say that it was believed to be a sort of *praeludium* to the final salvation.²⁴

It seems that 4Q246 follows this scheme up to a certain degree. In the vision, there are first wars and disasters described. Then, there appears a person that is somehow hoped to bring rest. In fact, the hostile kings of Asshur and Egypt perish and that person becomes a kind of liberator that puts an end to the conflicts, gains the reign over the whole earth and is then called with the title 'Son of God'. His kingdom will be eternal and characterized by peace, justice and truth.

Eschatological kingdom

The 4Q246 speaks of an eternal kingdom (col. ii, 5 מלכות עלם מלכ) that will be established as a sort of alternative for the hostile kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt. It is meant to be an oasis of justice and an abode for the people of God. The key figure there is 'the Son of God'. J. J. Collins observes that we can find similar images in the Book of Daniel when it says that the eschatological kingdom is given to the 'one like a son of man' and to the 'people of the holy ones'.²⁵ It becomes even more interesting when we go to the Book of the Similitudes (1En. 37-71) that is closely related to Daniel. God "sets [there] the Son of Man on his throne of glory (68: 1; 62: 5); [the latter] who is also "messiah", assumes traditional kingly functions (48: 10; 52: 4) and judges and destroys all the earthly kings (cf. 46: 4-5; 48: 4-5)".²⁶

In the War Scroll, we find also some important details concerning God and His kingdom. God is said there "to intervene on behalf of his people in the war against earthly kingdoms, [and to] establish the kingdom of justice (1QM 12: 10)".²⁷ This kingdom is associated with peace, renewed temple and purified cult (cf. 1QM 12: 3,16; 19: 8).

²³ Cf. J. VanderKam, *Manoscritti del Mar Morto*, Roma 1997, p. 79.

²⁴ Cf. J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 62.

²⁵ *Idem*, *Daniel*, p. 77.

²⁶ Cf. D. C. Duling, *Kingdom of God, kingdom of Heaven*, ABD IV, p. 51.

²⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 52.

In general, we may say that the eternal kingdom refers to the reconstituted reality on earth after the end of time and after the judgment on humanity. God then “will perform marvelous acts such as have not existed” (4Q521 *Frag.* 2 col. II, 11). Also, the heavens shall be transformed. Eden will be fully restored. Jerusalem, purified and renewed, will become the center of the new order. There will dwell only the righteous and holy ones. Messiahs shall rule over them (cf. e. g. 4Q521 *Frag.* 2 col. II, 1-2; 1Enoch 45: 4-6).²⁸

4Q246 speaks also of the eternal kingdom of the Son of God.²⁹ It is totally different from all those hostile kingdoms, which trample one another. It is based on truth, justice and peace. It is in possession of the people of God, but undoubtedly the one who is in charge and reigns over it is the Son of God. Now, when the context of the genre and of the apocalyptic circumstances has been drawn, we should finally focus on the central figure of the document, namely on the Son of God.

The Son of God identity: survey of interpretations

It has already been mentioned that the identity of the ‘Son of God’ figure from 4Q246 has been debated for a long time. It is in order to present the main views and interpretations in this regard.

J. J. Collins

J. J. Collins expressed his opinion concerning the Son of God interpretation in various articles and books.³⁰ He showed a special interest in the similarities found between our text and the Daniel literature. Collins first underlined similarities with ‘the one like a son of man’ from Daniel 7. He even suggested that the Son of God could be a reinterpretation of ‘the one like a son of man’, but he acknowledged honestly that this cannot be proven.³¹ At any rate, the correspon-

²⁸ Cf. S. A. Fisdell, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Understanding Their Spiritual Message*, Northvale 1997, p. 259-264.

²⁹ Some authors do not agree with the claim that the Kingdom belongs directly to the Son of God, or that he is the one to establish it. This opinion will be dealt with in the exegetical section.

³⁰ Cf. e. g. J. J. Collins, *The Son of God text from Qumran*, in: *From Jesus to John. Essays on Jesus and Christology in Honour of Marianus de Jonge* (ed. M. C. De Boer), JSNTSS 84; Sheffield 1993, p. 65-82; idem, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The periods of history and the expectation of the end*, London-New York 1997, p. 65-82.

³¹ Cf. idem, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 85.

dences between the two are not to be denied. Moreover, the author recalled the fact that ‘the one like a son of God’ was interpreted as the messiah in other ancient Jewish apocalypses (the Similitudes of Enoch, 4 Ezra).³² It might be strengthened by the parallel in Luke 1: 32, 35 where the Lord is said to give to the ‘son of the Most High’ the throne of his ancestor David.³³

J. J. Collins admits that the word messiah does not appear in the text of 4Q246, but the titles and acts of the main protagonist render him messiah. Hence, the whole document shall be read as a prediction of the messianic king.³⁴ In short, J. J. Collins interprets the Son of God figure in terms of a Jewish messiah.³⁵ It is then a ‘messianic interpretation’.

J. A. Fitzmyer³⁶

J. A. Fitzmyer’s opinion seems to be misunderstood by some scholars who determine it as messianic. It is in order then to point out carefully the most important elements of Fitzmyer’s interpretation of the Son of God.

First, the author held that the entire 4Q246 document has an apocalyptic character. That could be proven by an examination of its language and content. In this very apocalyptic context stands the promise of ‘the emergence of some figure, called ‘Son of God’ and ‘Son of the Most High’, who will rule in peace and everlasting prosperity’.³⁷

Second, Fitzmyer acknowledged that, in light of the material of col. ii, it is tempting to regard the title ‘Son of God’ as a designation of messiah. But, the term ‘messiah’ must be very carefully verified, because it appears relatively rare in the sense of a future, eschatological agent, anointed by Yahweh. Moreover, the title ‘Son of God’ is never used in any of the commonly considered messianic fragments found in Qumran. Some other evidence made the author think that there is “yet nothing in the OT tradition or in the pre-Christian Palestinian Jewish

³² Cf. *idem*, *Apocalypticism and literary genre*, p. 415.

³³ Cf. *idem*, *Daniel*, p. 78.

³⁴ Cf. *ibidem*.

³⁵ Cf. *idem*, *Apocalypticism and literary genre in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 414.

³⁶ Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran*, Bib 74/1993, p. 153-174.

³⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 166.

tradition that we know of to show that ‘Son of God’ has a messianic nuance”.³⁸

Third, Fitzmyer considered the ‘Son of God’ figure as a king (human being) that would be a coming Jewish ruler, perhaps a member of the Hasmonean dynasty – a successor to the Davidic throne. However, this ruler would have nothing to do with the messiah. He might be at most a son of the enthroned king. Finally, Fitzmyer stated: “I continue to think that the successor may be a son of the enthroned king”.³⁹

Summing up, Fitzmyer’s interpretation can be called ‘historical’ or ‘apocalyptic – historical’.

D. Flusser

D. Flusser aimed to see the ‘Son of God’ figure in light of parallels in some other Jewish and Christian literature. At the time he published his first article on the issue (1980)⁴⁰, the text of 4Q246 was only partially published. He started his investigation from observing that the text might be divided into two parts, with the turning point in col. ii 4, which deals with the rising of the people of God. This proceeds the describing of the wicked rule of the last empire of the heathen.⁴¹ With the rising of the people of God, a totally different epoch comes – a time of happiness. There is no place for anything that has to do with the previous stage. The figure described in the first part can be only a king or a leader of the wicked kingdom.⁴²

According to Flusser, such a view was to be additionally supported by the parallel text from Rev 13: 8. Flusser went further and said that the figure who is concerned usurps the title ‘son of the Most High’, demanding that people acclaim him with this name. In consequence, this figure should be regarded as a superhuman hubris of the Antichrist. That would fit very well with a similar tradition from 2 Thes 2: 1-12.⁴³ He continued saying that in the second part there is only one hero to act

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 173.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 173-174.

⁴⁰ Cf. D. Flusser, *The Hubris of the Antichrist in a fragment from Qumran*, Immanuel 10/1980, p. 31-37.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 32.

⁴² Cf. *ibidem*, p. 33.

⁴³ Cf. *ibidem*.

– the people of God. There is no mention of any other agent like messiah or similar to that.⁴⁴

The Antichrist is not conceived here as a real, historical person, but rather as a personification of evil, a human exponent of the satanic forces of evil.⁴⁵ The opinion of Flusser can be called ‘diabolic interpretation’.

F. Garcia Martinez

F. Garcia Martinez attempted to clarify the meaning of the mysterious ‘Son of God’ figure in light of parallels in other Qumran documents. He found and examined some useful data in 4Q175, 1QH, 11QMelchizedek, 1QM.⁴⁶ The most important thing he noted in those texts was the presence of a mysterious personage (often identified as Melchizedek, Michael or the Prince of Light) that would play a crucial role in the eschatological confrontation. There were some other similarities that brought Martinez to think of the 4Q246 as of an eschatological text, where the key personage – the ‘Son of God’ – has a positive character and an angelic nature. The reign that was to come was that of the people of God.⁴⁷ This view is called ‘an angelic interpretation’.

Later on, however, Martinez decided to leave apart the adjective *angelic* and substitute it with *heavenly*. He considered the figure as “endzeitlicher Befreier himmlischer Natur, ähnlich dem Menschensohn aus Dan 7”.⁴⁸ Finally, he would rather favor the understanding of the figure as an eschatological liberator or a heavenly being similar to Melchizedek of 11QMelchizedek.⁴⁹

J. Milik

J. Milik, who was the first ever to work on the original text of 4Q246, has never published a separate article dedicated solely to the

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 36.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 37.

⁴⁶ Cf. F. G. Martinez, *The eschatological figure of 4Q246, Qumran and Apocalyptic. Studies on the Aramaic texts from Qumran*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1992, p. 163-179.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 173.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, *Messianische Erwartungen in den Qumranschriften*, JBTh 8/1993, p. 192.

⁴⁹ Cf. *idem*, *Two Messianic Figures in the Qumran Texts*, in: *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. D. W. Parry, S. D. Ricks), STDJ 20, Leiden-New York-Köln 1996, p. 28.

topic of the ‘Son of God’ figure. All the data we have concerning his view in this matter come from his orally expressed opinions (which then have been published by Fitzmyer) and other articles where some notes regarding the issue are found.⁵⁰ According to Milik, the whole vision found in our document is a sort of historical description of the Seleucid period. It means that behind all the events and personages present there, we should see some real (historical) circumstances and figures. As for the Son of God figure, Milik held that the context enables us to claim that behind the mysterious figure there is to be seen the king of Syria Alexander Balas (150-145 B. C.) – self-proclaimed son of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and successor to Demetrius I Soter. Milik argues that the inscription *Theopator* on coins dated back to the time of his reign is stands for a historical evidence that Alexander demanded to be called with this title.⁵¹ In general then, the mysterious figure of 4Q246 is of a negative character. This interpretation is called ‘historical’.

E. Puech

E. Puech argues for the “historicisante” interpretation of the Son of God. In this, he is similar to Milik. However, behind the figure of the Son of God he would rather see Antiochus IV Epiphanes (not Alexander Balas).⁵²

In course of the presentation of the text in its official publication, Puech discusses also some data that would testify to the messianic character of the ‘Son of God’. However, he favored rather the negative interpretation of the figure claiming that in the text there are more elements in its support. Thus, the ‘Son of God’ from 4Q246 is to be an evil king who is an arrogant blasphemer, usurping the use of theophoric titles.⁵³ “The absence of any indication in favor of the messianic interpretation, especially the absence of the word *messiah*, confirms the conclusion that we have to interpret the figure as a negative or wicked historical character”.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Cf. e. g. J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, Oxford 1976, p. 13, 60, 213, 261; id, *Modèles araméens du livre d'Esther dans la grotte 4 de Qumran*, RevQ 15/1992, p. 383.

⁵¹ Cf. J. J. Collins, *The Son of God text from Qumran*, p. 67.

⁵² Cf. E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar*, p. 183.

⁵³ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁵⁴ *Idem*, *Some remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521 and Qumran Messianism*, p. 549.

It seems that there is a sort of rethinking on the part of the author, because, in one of his recent articles, he states that there are still two hypotheses possible: “la figure negative avec Antiochus IV, ou positive, le messie davidique”.⁵⁵ Puech concludes that the hesitations about choosing one or another reading remain, because each has arguments in its support (“chacune ayant des arguments en sa faveur”).⁵⁶

Different views proposed on the identity of the Son of God from 4Q246 can be really confusing. Is he as a successor of the Seleucid or Hasmonean dynasty, Melchizedek, angel, messiah, oppressor or liberator? In my opinion, the most convincing interpretation is the one of J. J. Collins that considers the Son of God figure as messiah. The core Qumranic documents describe the messiahs of Israel and Aaron and their respective tasks. It is true that in our document there is no word ‘messiah’ used. However, other titles and especially acts and deeds of the mysterious figure seem to suggest his messianic dignity. Collins focuses also on some similarities with the ‘one like a son of man’ (traditionally interpreted as a messianic liberator) that may additionally strengthen the claim. In this context, he also takes into consideration the parallel text in Luke 1: 32,35 where Jesus is spoken of with the same epithets as the mysterious figure of 4Q246. In these verses from Luke the messianic dignity of Jesus is emphasized. Hence it in 4Q246 most probably the same messianic nuance is being conveyed.⁵⁷

Now, there is time to examine the most important textual data and to see all the arguments *pro et contra* messianic dignity of the Son of God from 4Q246. The following questions should be asked:

- 1) Should the Son of God be interpreted as a positive or negative figure?
- 2) What is the relationship between the ‘Son of God’ and the ‘people of God’?
- 3) What is the most important data for a possible messianic dignity of the Son of God figure?

Text analysis

As it has already been mentioned, the document 4Q246 (with reconstructions and French translation) was officially published by E. Puech

⁵⁵ Id, *Le Fils de Dieu*, p. 144.

⁵⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 149.

⁵⁷ Cf. J. J. Collins, *Daniel*, p. 78.

in 1992 (DJD edition).⁵⁸ The text in its entirety can be confronted there. For the following presentation we picked up only those lines, which seemed the most important from the point of view of the identity of the Son of God.

Before going to the textual analysis it would be in order to present a general view of the document.

Contents

The opening line is fragmentary: “[he] fell before the throne” (i 1). We are not provided with any information as to who is meant here. We do not even know who the figure who sits on the throne is. But at least the next line (i 2) makes clear that the one sitting on the throne is a king and that he is in great distress, apparently because of a vision or a dream he had. The vision is then explained in the following lines (i 4-6). The anonymous figure announces to the king all the disasters that must come and explains the role of the king of Assyria and Egypt in it (i 6). The appearance of a mysterious personage, to whom the titles ‘son of God’ and ‘son of the Most High’ will be given, shall open a new chapter in history (i 7-9; ii 1ab). Surprisingly, his appearance once again would be followed by a war and many other disasters. These calamities, however, will be definitely finished at the moment when the people of God arise (ii 1c-4). That would also bring peace and an eternal reign of the ‘son of the Most High’: “his kingdom (shall be) an everlasting kingdom” (ii 5).⁵⁹ All his enemies shall be subdued and shall serve him, thanks to the Lord who would forever sustain him (ii 7).

Exegesis of chosen lines

As it has been already stated, the exegesis is limited to the most important passages, which can clarify some doubts and help to answer the three questions raised at the end of the previous paragraph. The following lines will be dealt with: i 9; ii 1,4-9.

⁵⁸ Cf. E. Puech, *4QApocryphe de Daniel ar.*, p. 165-84.

⁵⁹ There are some objections raised against the Son of God as the possessor of the kingdom. That will be dealt with in the following, exegetical part.

a) i 9

וְהוּא בֶר אֵל רַ בָּא יִתְקְרָא וּבְשֵׁמָהּ יִחְכְּנָה

“(For) he Son of the God Gr] eat will be called.

And by his name he shall be named”⁶⁰

The first part of this line is reconstructed. There for the first time in the text the key figure is named. Unfortunately, there is no unanimity among scholars as for the reconstruction of this part. Moreover, various restorations proposed by different scholars seem to affect their understanding of the one who shall be named here. Milik argued for the following reading: בָּא רַ חֲלֻפָּת מַלְכָּא רַ בָּא (“le Souverain du Gra] nd [roi]”).⁶¹ According to Puech the text should be read: בָּא רַ בֶּר מְרִיא רַ בָּא (“le fils du Gra] nd [Souverain/Seigneur]”). Moreover, he holds that there would be possible one more restoration in favor of the messianic interpretation (“en faveur d’une interprétation messianique [= le fils de David]”) namely: בָּא רַ בֶּר מַלְכָּא רַ בָּא (le fils de Gra] nd [roi]. However, he prefers the first reading because it is “plus neuter”.⁶² The above proposals represent historical interpretation, according to which the figure that is concerned has a real historical counterpart in the person of the wicked kings – Alexander Balas (J. Milik) or Antiochus IV Epiphanes (E. Puech).

Fitzmyer proposed a different restoration – וְהוּא בֶר אֵל רַ בָּא.⁶³ This, in fact, seems to be the best solution because of two reasons: its length fits well into the lacuna, and “it suits the context, especially in light of the following clauses”.⁶⁴ These arguments convinced us to follow Fitzmyer’s restoration.

There are also some points to be made on the vocabulary:

– קָרָא – is a verb Ithp^{el} (Gt) imperfect 3 masc. singular, meaning *to call*.⁶⁵ The conjugation Ithp^{el} is derived from P^{al} (G). Its basic meaning is reflexive, but also passive. The latter is the case in our phrase: “he will / shall be called”.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ The reconstruction is after J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran*, p. 161

⁶¹ J. Milik, *Les modèles araméens du livre d’Esther dans la grotte 4 de Qumran*, p. 383.

⁶² E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar.*, p. 173.

⁶³ Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ document from Qumran*, p. 161.

⁶⁴ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁶⁵ M. Jastrow, קָרָא, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature*, New York 1996, p. 1409.

⁶⁶ W. B. Stevenson, *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic*, Oxford² 1962, p. 44, notes that “the stems having preformative *ith* are reflexives, which serve also as passives”.

– יתכנה – is the Ithpa‘al imperfect 3 masc. singular from of the verb כני, meaning “to qualify, to define, to surname”.⁶⁷ The conjugation Ithpa‘al derives from Pa‘al and has the passive nuance. Once again, we have here the 3 masc. sing. suffix ה.⁶⁸

The translation of the first – very much reconstructed – part of the line would be then the following: “[(For) he, Son of the God Gr] eat will be called”. At this point it is time to address another important problem, namely the character of the figure we deal with in this line. In other words it must be determined whether the figure is of a positive or of a negative character. This is actually one of the most crucial points of the discussion on the identity of the Son of God. The problem is strictly depending on the translation of the verb קרא in our line.

Milik takes it for a middle form. According to this rendering the protagonist would be “calling himself Son of God” (“il se proclamera Fils de Dieu”). In other words, he would usurp the title.⁶⁹ Consequently, the second part of the line (“And by his name he shall be named”) is rather viewed as a compulsory act. Milik concludes that this personage is a symbolic representative of Alexander Balas (150–145 BC) – a wicked king who demanded to be called ‘son of God’.⁷⁰

J. J. Collins observed that this claim so far has found no followers.⁷¹ In addition, J. Zimmermann noted also that there is no proof for the negative usage of the titles present in 4Q246 in pre-Christian times: “All possible cases derive from later times – for example they can be found in Christian texts”.⁷²

Some observations concerning the use of the very verb קרא may also be of help to pass judgment on the issue. For instance, in several OT

⁶⁷ Cf. M. Jastrow, כני, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature*, p. 648.

⁶⁸ J. C. Greenfield, M. Sokoloff, *Qumran Aramaic*, in: *Studies in Qumran Aramaic* (ed. T. Muraoka), *AbrNahrSS 3*; Louvain 1992, p. 88-89, observed: “כני to name 4Q246 i 9 – ii 1. The verb occurs in this text for the first time in Aramaic, and it is well attested to, both in all the later Aramaic dialects and in Mishnaic Hebrew”.

⁶⁹ Cf. J. T. Milik, *Modèles araméens du livre d'Esther dans la grotte 4 de Qumran*, p. 383.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*: “Dès sa première issue monétaire il se proclame Basileos Alexandrou theopatoros euergetou, et affiche l'image de Zeus Nicéphore”.

⁷¹ J. J. Collins, *The Son of God text from Qumran*, p. 67.

⁷² J. Zimmermann, *Observations on 4 Q 246 – The ‘Son of God’, Qumran – Messianism. Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth), Tübingen 1998, p. 181.

Aramaic Apocrypha where it occurs in the context of ‘calling and naming’, it is always employed for a deliberate action in favor of an exceptional or extraordinary personage.⁷³ The context of 4Q246 seems to confirm that the figure is an exceptional individual who deserves recognition. Considering all these points, it seems more likely to give precedence to the passive form of קרא in the line i 9. Thus, it seems that the figure should be viewed as having a positive character and being deliberately addressed (with the exceptional names) by others in order to emphasize his outstanding dignity. The following line can additionally strengthen what’s been just stated about the character of the figure.

b) ii 1

ברה די אל יחאמר וברע ליו ןיקרונה

“Son of God he shall be hailed.

And they shall call him son of the Most High”

This line is preserved in one piece. Thus, there are no restoration problems here. Nonetheless, there are some other points to be made.

* ברה די אל *son of God*. This is an example of expression rendering the genitive relationship in Aramaic. There are two other ways to render this relationship. Our construction is relatively rare. The first word stands in the construct state with the preposition די + proleptic pronominal suffix (3 masc. sing.). This preposition is almost obligatory before the divine name.⁷⁴ There is however another element that makes our expression peculiar – namely, the use of the divine name in its Hebrew

⁷³ For instance in **R**: Die Abschiedsrede Amrams 1: 17-22: Biografisches

17. לך [] אל תהיה ומלאך

18. תתקרה [] תעבר בארעא דא

19. ודין חסין [] ודין לה שמך לכל

20. מ [] לדרי עלמ ין

21. ... בה תעבר

22. ... ישר [] אל

17. [...] Der [...] “Gottes” wirst du sein, und der Engel “Gottes”

18. wirst du genannt werden. [...] wirst du tun in diesem Land

19. und ein starkes Recht [...]. Und wenn er/sie deinen Namen trägt für alle

20. [...] für ewige Generationem

21. [...] wirst du tun 22. [...] Israels. K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, Göttingen 1994, p. 86-87.

Other texts to compare – in the same book – would be for instance **R**: (Die Abschiedsrede Amrams) 7: Aaron 18-19 (87); Daq 5: 12 (154-156).

⁷⁴ Cf. F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, Wiesbaden 1995, p. 29.

form: אַל (God). This is never used in Biblical Aramaic. In our text though, it occurs three more times (ii 2,4,6).⁷⁵ F. Moore Cross observes that “this makes it most implausible that they be applied to any but an Israelite king. If these were (...) titles claimed by a foreign king, we should expect 'lh' and 'ly', the ordinary Aramaic words for *god* and *most high*”⁷⁶ J. Fitzmyer holds that the expression is probably inspired by 2 Sam 7: 14, where Nathan’s oracle says of David, “I will be a father to him, and he shall be my son”.⁷⁷

* וברע ליו ןיקרונה – “and the son of the Most High they shall call him”

– עליון “the Most High” (noun, sing. masc. abs.) is another name or title reserved for God in the Bible. However, this is not an exclusively biblical term. As well as אַל, it was found elsewhere in extra biblical texts, inscriptions, etc. Moreover, the two names sometimes appear in parallelism in the Hebrew Bible (e. g. Ps 73: 11; 91: 9; 107: 11).⁷⁸

– The final verb is קרי (“to call, name, invite”) ⁷⁹ Peal (G) imperfect 3 masc. plur. + suff. 3 masc.

sing.

In the OT the title ‘son of God’ is not restricted to one only subject. It is used to designate entire Israel (e. g. Exod 4: 22; Hos 11: 1), the king of Israel (e. g. Ps 2: 7), the assembly of angels (plural e. g. Job 38: 7), the righteous individual (Wis 2: 18).⁸⁰ A word of caution is in order here. Although the word בן *son* (Aram. בַּר) in the OT describes mainly biological ancestry, the title ‘son of God’ is never used in terms of divine nature or divine origin. It is only an analogous way of speaking. The

⁷⁵ J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran*, p. 162: “Note also the use of אַל as “God” in an Aramaic text. Though not used in Biblical Aramaic, it occurs again in 2,4,7; so there is no doubt of its use in Aramaic”.

⁷⁶ Cf. F. Moore Cross, *Notes on the Doctrine of the Two Messiahs at Qumran and the Extracanonical Daniel Apocalypse (4Q246), Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Conference on the texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem 30 April 1995* (ed. D. W. Parry, S. D. Ricks) STDJ 20, Leiden 1996, p. 12.

⁷⁷ Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran*, p. 162.

⁷⁸ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 162-163. S. E. Fassberg, *Hebraisms in the Aramaic Documents, Studies in Qumran Aramaic* (ed. T. Muraoka), *AbrNahrSS* 3, Louvain 1992), p.57, noted “עליון – “Most High” is attested ten times in 1QapGen in the phrase עליון אַל, which is a Biblical Hebraism. (...) עליון is also attested at Qumran in the Biblical Aramaic phrase עליון קד [ישׁי] 4QDan a 14.6 (= MT Dn 7.27)”.

⁷⁹ M. Jastrow, קרי, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literatur*, p. 1417.

⁸⁰ R. H. Fuller, *son of God*, HCBDB, p. 1051.

idea of a physical father-son relationship between Yahweh and other divine beings or angels is totally alien to the OT and is not even remotely suggested there.⁸¹ “Primarily it denotes not physical filiation but a divine call to obedience in a predestined role in salvation history”.⁸²

Finally, it is again worth noting the striking similarity in use of the above epithets in 4Q246 and in the Gospel of Luke – 1:32 (καὶ υἱὸς ὑψίστου κληθήσεται) and in 1:35 (κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ). F. Moore Cross observes that in Luke the positive and messianic interpretation of these verses is patent. Moreover, both of the instances (4Q246 and Luke 1: 32,35) are as well “dependent on a Danielic text”.⁸³ In any case, we have here another argument for considering the Son of God of 4Q246 as a figure of a positive character.

c) ii 4⁸⁴

[vacat] עד יקום עם אל וכלא ינוח מן חרב [vacat]

“[vacat] until (there) arises the people of God,

And all (everyone) shall rest from the sword [vacat]”

* אל עד יקום עם *until (there) arises the people of God*

– עד “until”. This preposition on the one hand determines the end of the war which is dealt with in the two previous lines and on the other hand it contains also a nuance of expectation and of hope for a new beginning.⁸⁵

– יקום – verb קום = “to rise, stand up, exist”.⁸⁶ It is the Peal (G) imperfect 3 masc. sing. Although Puech accepts this reading, he observes that it might be read also as Aphel (C) imperfect 3 masc. sing.⁸⁷ In such case, it would have to be translated: “until he / it will cause to stand; he / it will raise up”. In fact, the two forms are very similar. They differ only with one letter. The Peal form has a *waw* as the penultimate letter

⁸¹ Cf. G. Fohrer, *uḥōs. Old Testament* TDNT VIII, p. 341-348.

⁸² R. H. Fuller, *son of God*, p. 1051.

⁸³ F. Moore Cross, *Notes on the Doctrine of the Two Messiahs at Qumran and the Extracanonical Daniel Apocalypse (4Q246)*, p. 12.

⁸⁴ The text of this verse is brought after Milik. Cf. J. Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, p. 213. The version provided by Puech differs in reading and translating of the form of the verb חרב. The reasons will be taken into consideration during the examination of the text.

⁸⁵ Cf. M. Knibb, *Eschatology and Messianism, The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years. A comprehensive Assessment* (ed. P. W. Flint, J. C. VanderKam), Leiden 1999, p. 384.

⁸⁶ M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*, p. 1330.

⁸⁷ Cf. E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar*, p. 174-175.

and the Aphel form has a *yod*. Since the text is not perfectly visible in this place, it is very difficult to pass judgment on that. Milik interpreted the verb form as Peal.⁸⁸ Fitzmyer admits the possibility of the Aphel form here, but he says that it is “less likely because of the syntax of the following clause (...)”.⁸⁹ This argument seems to be most convincing and that is why the Peal form is the one accepted in the current paper.

– עַם אֱלֹהִים “people of God”. This expression does not appear in the Hebrew Bible. Instead of that, one might find עַם יְהוָה (Num 11: 29; 17: 6; 1 Sam 2: 24; 2 Sam 1: 12; 2 Kgs 9: 6; Zeph 2: 10) or עַם אֱלֹהִים (Judg 20: 2; 2 Sam 14: 13); also “my people” (Hos 2: 25; Isa 22: 4; Jer 51: 45; cf. Lev 26: 12). “The phrase itself does occur in similar eschatological usage in 1QM 1,5; 3,13”.⁹⁰

So then, with the line under examination there comes into the fore another participant of the drama – the people of God. Their appearance stands for a turning point of the whole narration. This fact might have been deliberately marked by the short vacat (of respectively, 0,9 and 0,6 cm) that frames the text of this line.⁹¹

* וְכָל־אִישׁ יָנוּחַ מִן־חֶרֶב “and all (everyone) shall rest from sword”

– נוּחַ – a Biblical Hebrew verb in Peal (G) imperfect 3 masc. sing., meaning “to rest, to be at ease, to rest satisfied”.⁹² This is in fact the reading proposed by Milik.⁹³ Puech prefers to read it as an Aphel form.⁹⁴ The translations would be then: “and (the people of God) will make everyone rest from the sword”.⁹⁵ Both versions seem to be very plausible. They do not change much and the expected solution (the ceasing of the sword) is reached. But in view of another eight occurrences of the

⁸⁸ Cf. J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, p. 60.

⁸⁹ J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran*, p. 164.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*; A. Steudel, *The eternal reign of the people of God – collective expectations in Qumran texts (4Q246 and 1QM)*, in: *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Technological Innovations, New Texts and Reformulated Issues* (ed. D. W. Parry, E. Ulrich), STDJ 30, Leiden-Boston 1999, p. 51, noted that: “The term “people of God” occurs only in 1QM i, 5; iii, 13 and in 4Q246 ii, 4. עַם אֱלֹהִים “people of God” is attested nowhere in the OT and nowhere else in Qumran texts, neither in Hebrew nor in Aramaic. As in 4Q246 ii, 4-9, the passage in 1QM I, 5-9 describes the time of salvation and reign for the “people of God”.

⁹¹ Cf. E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar*, p. 174.

⁹² M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, TalmudBabli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*, p. 885.

⁹³ Cf. J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, p. 60.

⁹⁴ Cf. E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar*, p. 174-175.

⁹⁵ Cf. *idem*, *Some remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521 and Qumran Messianism*, p. 547.

noun כלא in our document, where it always stands at the head of the clause, and mostly (with one exception) functions as a subject, the version of Milik seems much more probable.

In addition, such reading would have a close parallel in the expression of 1 Macc 9: 73 that served to describe the result of the pact between Jonathan and Bacchides: “The sword rested in Israel”.⁹⁶

So then, in our line the period of disasters and wars incited and waged by the evil kings, i. e., the opponents of the Son of God, is described in terms of *the sword*. When *the sword* finally ceases and everyone is able to rest. At this very moment, the prophecy that the Son of God would be great upon the earth (cf. i 7: “il sera grand sur la terre” ארעא אל (רב להוה על)⁹⁷ starts to come true. This is actually what the subsequent lines will be dealing with.

d) ii 5, 6

מלכותה מלכות עלם וכל ארחתה בקשוט ידי [ן]
ארעא בקשט וכלא יעברד שלם חרב מן ארעא יספ

⁵(Then) his kingdom (shall be)

“An everlasting kingdom (kingdom of eternity),

And all his ways (shall be) in truth.

He shall jud [ge] ⁶ the earth in truth (righteously)

And everyone shall work for peace.

The sword will cease from the earth”.

* מלכותה מלכות עלם – This phrase has some obvious resemblances with the Book of Daniel. F. Garcia Martinez notes especially its striking similarity with Dan 7: 27.⁹⁸ He concludes that Daniel’s vision of the ‘one like a son of man’ must have been certainly an inspiration for the author of the 4Q246.⁹⁹

This phrase introduces the idea of eternal kingdom. One might ask to whom it belongs. An answer to this question is also of crucial importance for the exegesis of 4Q246 and interpretation of the Son of God figure. F. M. Croos holds that the context of ii 7 excludes a theoretically possible claim that it is God to be meant here. However, there are still two possible subjects: “the people of God” and “the Son of God” figu-

⁹⁶ Cf. F. G. Martinez, *The eschatological figure of 4Q246*, p. 167.

⁹⁷ Cf. E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar*, p. 169.

⁹⁸ Cf. Daniel 7: 27b וישתמעין לה יפלחון וישתמעין לה וכל שלטניא לה יפלחון וישתמעין לה

⁹⁹ Cf. F. G. Martinez, *The eschatological figure of 4Q246*, p. 167.

re. It seems that, in order to resolve this problem, we must first take a closer look at the 3 masc. sing. suffix and examine its other occurrences in the text.

In the phrase that is concerned, the suffix could refer back either to an individual (the Son of God = 'his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom') or to the people of God (= 'its kingdom is an everlasting kingdom'). They both sound plausible. This way we've come to the very *crux interpretum* of 4Q246. In fact, judgment on this issue affects the further reading of the text, where the 3rd pers. sing. suffix occurs again. E. Puech does not exclude definitely the reading 'his', but he prefers to read it as 'its' and take it as referring to the 'people of God' ("son regne"). It is the "structure du passage et la succession des prepositions" that impelled him to claim so.¹⁰⁰ J. Zimmermann, after having examined the text and context, came to the contrary conclusion. He says that, in fact, grammatical considerations can favor the opinion that the suffix refers to the 'people of God' as to a collective subject. But, the content would rather favor referring it to an individual.¹⁰¹ J. A. Fitzmyer also prefers to read it as 'his' "because of the following clauses, and especially the second one, 'he shall judge the land with truth.'"¹⁰²

* ארעא בקשט ידי [ן] "He shall judge the earth in truth (righteously)"

J. J. Collins notes, "in the Hebrew Bible, it is the Lord himself who is the judge of the earth (Gen. 18: 25; 1 Sam 2: 10; Ps 7: 9; 9: 9). Judgment is a royal function, and the Davidic king transmits the divine justice to the people of Israel (Ps 72: 1-2). (...) In the peshar on Isaiah from Qumran, his sword will judge all the peoples. Again in the Psalms of Solomon, the eschatological king will 'judge peoples and nations in the wisdom of his righteousness (Ps. Sol. 17: 29). In no case, however, is the function of judgment given to the people collectively".¹⁰³ Thus, it is almost impossible that the 'people of God' of 4Q246 were given such authority.

A. Steudel does not agree with that and argues that it is very probable that the people of God might have been the subject of judgment. She admits that the idea of God or the royal messiah judging at the end of times is prevailing, but she says that it is "also attested by other Je-

¹⁰⁰ Cf. E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar.*, p. 175.

¹⁰¹ Cf. J. Zimmermann, *Observations on 4Q246 – the Son of God*, p. 185.

¹⁰² J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The 'Son of God' Document from Qumran*, p. 164.

¹⁰³ J. J. Collins, *The Son of God text from Qumran*, p. 71.

wish texts that the pious ones will execute the final judgment (cf. e. g. Dn 7: 22, 1Hen 91)".¹⁰⁴ Her further explication seems a bit obscure. She first states that "the exercising of judgment is a necessary part of being a king".¹⁰⁵ Then, she concludes: "therefore it is self-evident that the people of God occupying the מלכות of the time of salvation also have the power to judge".¹⁰⁶ She also reads the 3 pers. sing. suff. as 'its' (its kingdom).

Milik presented similar views on the case. Having argued for the negative character of the personage in ii 1, he then held that it is the "people of God" to establish the kingdom and exercise eternal dominion.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the 3rd sing. masc. suffix that is discussed here would refer to the collective subject – the people of God.

There have been proposed some solutions to the difficulties raised above. The correspondence of the topics of the kingdom, and the people of God with Daniel 7 might be helpful for further research on this issue. There are three mentions about giving the eternal kingdom and dominion in Daniel 7. It is given to the 'one like a son of man' (Dan 7: 14), to 'the holy ones of the Most High' (Dan 7: 18) and to the 'people of the holy ones of the Most High' (Dan 7: 27). It is generally accepted that the expression 'the holy ones' in the OT refers to angels. The 'people of the holy ones' (with the use of genitive possessive) are the human beings under the protection of the holy ones.¹⁰⁸ J. J. Collins makes note of some internal (present in the text of Dan 7) interpretation. For instance, in v. 23, the fourth beast from the sea is interpreted as "a fourth kingdom".¹⁰⁹ As far as the 'one like a son of man' is concerned, Collins found also some parallels in the 1QM 17: 7-8 where the 'one like a son of man' is interpreted as Michael, the leader of the heavenly hosts but also a sort of representative of the people of the holy one.¹¹⁰ All that data impelled him to claim that "a king can stand for a kingdom, and a representative individual can stand for a people".¹¹¹ If we then, by way of analogy, understand the Son of God as the ruler or

¹⁰⁴ A. Steudel, *The eternal reign of the people of God*, p. 517.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. J. T. Milik, *Modèles araméens du livre d'Esther dans la grotte 4 de Qumran*, p. 383.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. J. J. Collins, *Daniel. A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Minneapolis 1993, p. 312-323.

¹⁰⁹ *Idem*, *The Son of God Text from Qumran*, p. 71.

¹¹⁰ *Cf. idem*, *Daniel*, p. 319.

¹¹¹ *Idem*, *The Son of God Text from Qumran*, p. 71.

representative of the people of God, we will come to a very satisfactory solution. Namely, both subjects possess the kingdom, “and the Son of God exercises universal judgment on behalf of his people”.¹¹²

* וכלא יעבד שלם “and everyone shall work for peace”

The verb עבד (Peal imperfect 3 masc. sing.) means “to do, make, serve, work for”.¹¹³ It is usually translated: “[everyone] will make peace”. This would fit better in the context of a political situation where enemies make a covenant, breaking the hostility between them. The absence of war is, in fact, one of the main meanings of שלם *peace*. But, the word has much deeper connotations. It includes the idea of prosperity, justice, righteousness, friendly relationship among people.¹¹⁴ In other words, there is a sort of positive tension that the idea of שלם introduces to the world. Namely, it requires from everybody that he / she would actively participate in the process of constructing peace. The most important task in this process is practicing justice and righteousness.¹¹⁵ The translation chosen in the current paper seems to highlight better this process. This process requires an effort and involvement of everyone: “everyone shall work for peace”.

* חרב מן ארעא יסף “The sword from the land shall cease”

Surprisingly, we have here another occurrence of the word *sword*. In ii 4, it is said that “everyone shall rest from the sword”. It is worth repeating that *the sword* is a euphemism here. It designates war, violence, death, fear, disasters, etc. In other words, it contains all that everyone would like to avoid. It might be that both of the expressions are reminiscences of a fixed apocalyptic formula (one of many) that was taken for creating such eschatological scenarios.

In the fragment of En^c 210: 28, we read וחסא יכלא מן ארעא יסף “and evil and wickedness should come to an end, and violence should cease from the earth”. This resembles what we had above. As a matter of fact, it speaks of the very same thing, namely of the moment of the final and everlasting peace that can be reached only in the time to come.¹¹⁶

¹¹² *Ibidem*.

¹¹³ M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and Midraschic Literature*, p. 1034.

¹¹⁴ Cf. J. P. Healey, *Peace. Old Testament*, ABD V, p. 206-207.

¹¹⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 206.

¹¹⁶ Cf. J. C. Greenfield, M. Sokoloff, *Qumran Aramaic*, in: *Studies in Qumran Aramaic* (ed. T. Muraoka), AbrNahrSS 3, Louvain 1992, p. 97.

The final verb יסף stands in Peal imperfect 3 masc. singular form, having for its subject *the sword*. Fitzmyer, however, considers it as a defective writing for יסוף. But, this hardly changes the sense of the whole expression.¹¹⁷

e) ii 7

וכל מדינתא לה יסגדון אל רבא באילה

“And all the provinces shall pay homage to him.

The great God – (He himself) is to his help (support)”

* כל מדינתא לה יסגדו “And all the provinces shall pay homage to him”. In other words the people living in those provinces will bow down before him.¹¹⁸ This theme will be taken up and further developed in the following line (ii 8).

* אל רבא באילה “The great God – (He himself) is to his help”

Grammatically speaking באילה is a noun masc. sing. *help* + suff. 3 masc. sing. The preposition ב is probably an instance of “beth essentiae”. Altogether, it should be read: “to his help” (Ger.: “zu seiner Hilfe”). In short, this is God himself to empower his elected. His Son then acts not only as being authorized by God, but also as being given a sort of superhuman power. In fact, it is divine power acting through him.

In the context of the above line, J. J. Collins points out some similarities with other OT texts where the figure of a Davidic king or his eschatological counterpart is present (cf. 2 Sam 7: 14; Ps 2: 7-8; Ps. 89: 26-27). He states that what is said in the current line “can apply well to the king” in those texts. He provides an example from Qumran – 4QpI-sa^a 7iii 23 – where “God is also said to sustain ‘the shoot of David’” and other parallels from the texts important from the point of view of messianism (e. g. 4Ezra 13, Florilegium, 1QSa, 1QM).¹¹⁹ He then concludes that the “Son of God” has much in common with the personages present in those documents. Moreover, while our personage “is not called Messiah, the titles he is given have messianic overtones”.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran*, p. 165, observed: “יסף is defective writing for יסוף. It could conceivably be defective writing for the Aphel (imperfect, 3 masc., sing.) יסוף, but then the question would be, who is the subject of «cause to cease». God? The successor king? Or the people? Compare the Greek of 1 Macc 9: 73 και κατέπαυσεν ῥομφαία ἐξ Ἰσραήλ, which argues in favor of the imperfect peal”.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁹ Cf. J. J. Collins, *The Son of God text from Qumran*, p. 76.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 77-81.

f) ii 8,9

הוא ועבד לה קרב עממין ינתן בידה וכלהן
 ירמה קדמוהי [...]

⁸ And He (God) shall wage war for him.

Peoples He shall put in his power, and all of them

⁹ He shall cast before him”

* קרב לה עבד “He (God) shall wage war for him”

It is an idiomatic phrase meaning *to make war, to wage war*. It occurs also in 1QapGen 21, 25.31; 4 QenGiants^c 2.4.¹²¹ In the OT, God was often pictured as a warrior. It is characteristic for the earliest literature of Israel (e. g. Exod 15: 3-4, Deut 33: 27, Ps 68: 20-21). One might also find it in the literature that comes from the monarchic period (Ps 18: 14-15; 24: 7-8; 144: 1-8). After the exile, such an image of God was preserved mainly in the apocalyptic visions (e. g. Isa 27: 1-5, Zech 9: 1-17).¹²² What is interesting, Yahweh was sometimes portrayed as a military leader of foreign nations. For instance, “Cyrus is depicted as an anointed, the instrument of righteousness. Of him, it is said that God will ‘take him by the hand, to subdue nations before him.’ (Isa 45: 1-8).”¹²³ In our line, the idiom seems to assume such an understanding of God’s assistance, which is *conditio sine qua non* for gaining victory over the hostile kingdoms. The decisive role of God for such victory is also mirrored in 1QM, which has been already mentioned in the first chapter.

* עממין ינתן בידה וכלהן ירמה קדמוהי “He shall put peoples in his power, and all of them He shall cast before him ”

The two parallel expressions highlight the element of God’s active participation in establishing and supporting the king. Here, the relation with the earthly occupant of the throne is of great importance. The king was the ‘son’ or the ‘first born’ of Yahweh, while Yahweh was the father of the king (Ps 2: 7; 89: 27; 2 Sam 7: 14; Is 9: 6).¹²⁴ This does not imply any change of nature, but only a very intimate relationship between God and his anointed. In fact, king was supposed to be a sort of image of God on earth. His basic duty was to preserve and protect the order and harmony of the kingdom and, thereby, the whole of Yah-

¹²¹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 76.

¹²² Cf. T. Hiebert, *Warrior, divine*, ABD VI, p. 876-880.

¹²³ W. Klassen, *War in the NT*, ABD VI, p. 869.

¹²⁴ Cf. K. W. Whitelam, *King and Kingship*, ABD IV, p. 43.

weh's creation (Ps 72: 3,5-7,15-17). But, at the same time, he was promised universal dominion and the defeat of his enemies (Ps 72: 8-11). It is then God who acts and the prosperity of the Kingdom and the earthly kings depend on Him.¹²⁵ The phrases that are the matter of our concern here would fit well with this concept, especially in the context of the col. ii 5-7.

Conclusions. Identity of the son of God in 4Q246

There is no doubt that the figure of the Son of God is in the center of attention in our text. He stands in a close relationship with defeating hostile forces, establishing the eternal Kingdom. Moreover, his relationship with the people of God and God himself ought not to be overlooked. What can be said about the mysterious Son of God after having analyzed all the necessary data? The following conclusions might be drawn.

Positive figure

One of the issues of crucial importance for determining the identity of 'the Son of God' was his character. Namely, whether he should be viewed as a peaceful, virtuous and so positive figure or rather as a cruel tyrant and usurper of the title 'Son of God'? Milik proposed the second interpretation. He saw in the figure a symbolic counterpart of the wicked king Alexander Balas (150–145 B. C.). The main proof for that was to be an inscription on coins from the time of the concerned king. Collins and Zimmermann rejected this claim, showing the weakness of this argumentation and lack of parallel cases that might support it. In addition, the use of the verb אָרַךְ in the OT Aramaic Apocrypha seems to prove the contrary, i. e., a positive character of the figure. Namely, everywhere the verb occurs in the context of "calling and naming", it is always employed for a deliberate action in favor of an exceptional or extraordinary personage.¹²⁶ Further arguments are the following:

The preceding context – the Son of God figure appears in the vision after the hostile and absolutely evil kings are already introduced. He

¹²⁵ Cf. *ibidem*.

¹²⁶ Cf. K. K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, Göttingen 1994, p. 86-87; 154-156.

clearly stands in opposition to the evildoing of the other kings. He is said to be “great upon the earth”.

The following context – there is being established a kingdom and the Son of God is in charge of it. He acts righteously. He judges in truth and causes the sword to cease.

God’s authorization and support – God shall make war for him.

The above data seems to confirm that the Son of God figure was intended as an absolutely positive personage. He plays a crucial role in the eschatological kingdom that is established after the period of disasters.

Successor of the kingdom

In the context of the kingdom, another related problem was faced, namely the question of the legitimate ruler of that kingdom. In other words: to whom does the kingdom belong? In order to answer this, we have discussed in detail the matter of the 3 sing. suffix appearing in the lines that follow the rise of the people of God. It seems to be the very key issue for deciding about the possessor of the kingdom. In light of the context, we have seen that there are two possible subjects that the suffix could refer back to: 1) the Son of God (= his kingdom) or 2) the people of God (= its kingdom). They both sound probable and this fact creates a bit of confusion among scholars. E. Puech does not exclude the first possibility but, at the same time, on the basis of grammatical considerations, he argues for the second reading.¹²⁷ J. Zimmermann favors and chooses the first reading. His argumentation seems to be more convincing, because he takes into consideration not only grammatical data but also the entire content and context. The latter two would rather favor referring the suffix to an individual.¹²⁸ J. A. Fitzmyer¹²⁹ and J. J. Collins¹³⁰ represent the same view and their argumentation is based on examining the content of the following lines. The key one would be the statement: “he will judge the earth in truth”. It is unlikely that the people of God might be an antecedent for such a statement.¹³¹ It is then the Son of God to whom the suffix refers back. He is the very legitima-

¹²⁷ Cf. E. Puech, *4Qapocryphe de Daniel ar.*, p. 175.

¹²⁸ Cf. J. Zimmermann, *Observations on 4Q246 – the Son of God.*, p. 185.

¹²⁹ Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran.*, p. 164.

¹³⁰ J. J. Collins, *The Son of God Text from Qumran.*, p. 71.

¹³¹ *Ibidem.*

te ruler and the kingdom belongs to him. Another question arises: how about the people of God? What is the relationship between the Son of God and the people of God?

Representative of the people of God

The title 'son of God' in the OT denotes primarily a "divine call to obedience in a predestined role in salvation history".¹³² The latter seems to harmonize very well with the special role and function of the 'one like a son of man'. In fact, the two figures have some other things in common, which were also mentioned on the previous pages and now will be more clearly presented:

a) both are brought to the fore in frame of visions; the literary genre to be identified here is apocalypse;

b) both appear in a very unique context of the end of days; the circumstances are far from peace;

c) they are given kingdoms that are said to be eternal (4Q246 col. ii 5; Dan 7: 14), and their dominion shall last forever (4Q246 col. ii 9; Dan 7: 14);

d) they stand in a strict relationship with the 'the people of God' (in Daniel 'the people of the holy ones of the Most High');¹³³

e) they both will be served and paid homage to by other nations (4Q246 col. ii 7-9; Dan 7: 14);

f) they are authorized and supported by God;

g) for both of the figures, we find parallels in extra biblical sources that seem to confirm their messianic identity (cf. e. g. 4 Ezra 7: 28 for the Son of God;¹³⁴ and 4 Ezra 13 for "the one like a son of man"¹³⁵).

These similarities might be tempting to associate and identify the two figures. But, the fact that they have much in common does not mean necessarily that they are identical.¹³⁶ There are also some divergences that may not be overlooked.

a) although the two figures are set in a visionary perspective, in 4Q246 there is a lack of the elements characteristic for the setting of

¹³² R. H. Fuller, *son of God*, HCBDB, p. 1051.

¹³³ Cf. J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism and literary genre in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 414.

¹³⁴ Cf. G. W. Buchanan, *The Book of Daniel*, MBC 25, New York 1999, p. 201.

¹³⁵ Cf. T. B. Slater, *One Like a Son of Man in the First-Century CE Judaism*, NTS 41/1995, p. 193-197.

¹³⁶ Cf. J. J. Collins, *The Son of God text from Qumran*, p. 81.

the appearance of ‘the one like a son of man’ (the sea, the beasts, the clouds, the judgment);¹³⁷

b) they bear absolutely different titles;

c) ‘the one like a son of man’ comes after the afflictions are ceased; the ‘Son of God’ seems to be actively involved in defeating enemies;

d) “ ‘the one like a son of man’ rules in God’s name from a heavenly realm, the ‘Son of God’ exercises – also in God’s name, but essentially as a kingly task – sovereignty or jurisdiction on earth;”¹³⁸

e) 4Q246 is not exclusively dependent on the Danielic tradition. There are in it traces of some other Qumran documents (e. g. 1QM, 4Q174).¹³⁹

At any rate, the above data allow us to claim that there is a trace of relationship between the two figures. J. J. Collins suggested that this relationship could be further developed for answering the question of the relationship between the Son of God and the people of God. As it has been already said in the exegetical part, Collins went to examine in detail the data of the very chapter 7 of Daniel. After doing so, he concluded that there might be established one interpretational paradigm here: “a king can stand for a kingdom, and a representative individual can stand for a people”.¹⁴⁰ Analogously, in our text, we can understand the Son of God as a ruler or a representative of the people of God. That would extend also our claim about the possessor of the kingdom. As a matter of fact, both of the subjects possess the kingdom – each of them in its proper sense. The Son of God, as representative of the people of God, is the anointed of God who “exercises universal judgment on behalf of his people”.¹⁴¹ The people of God are ruled by the Son of God, but, in fact, they are not at any worse position. In some sense, the kingdom belongs to them too. The way of ruling is so perfect that there is no need to think in terms of being subdued, oppressed, used selfishly. There is a new order set where justice and peace are perfectly functioning. In this context, the last question has been raised – namely, what is the nature of the one who rules this way? How to interpret him? Among many proposals, one seemed to be preferred – he is a Messiah.

¹³⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 72.

¹³⁸ J. Zimmermann, *Observations on 4Q246 – the Son of God*, p. 187.

¹³⁹ Cf. J. J. Collins, *The Son of God Text from Qumran*, p. 72.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

Messiah

E. Puech, after having examined the data of 4Q246 concerning the Son of God figure, admitted that the messianic interpretation is theoretically possible here. However, he favored rather the historical interpretation that has nothing to do with messianic expectations. Some other authors, for example J. J. Collins¹⁴² and F. M. Cross¹⁴³, represent a different opinion. For those authors, the central figure of 4Q246 has clear messianic overtones. How is it possible if there is no word 'messiah' directly used in the text?

In answering this question those authors again recall the above presented similarities with the 'one like a son of man' Daniel 7. The latter also raised several different interpretations. The most traditional was the messianic interpretation. T. Slater argues that that is in fact still the most convincing one. This is mainly due to the observation that the title 'one like a son of man' is simply a descriptive comparison and must be distinguished from generic expressions (e. g., 'son of man'). The latter refers only to human beings.¹⁴⁴ T. Slater noted in Ezekiel, Daniel, 1 Enoch, and 4 Ezra consistent usage of descriptive comparisons to designate heavenly beings. Moreover, 1 Enoch 37-71 and 4 Ezra 13 apply such comparisons to the Messiah (who is an individual figure) in Dan 7: 13.¹⁴⁵ These texts provide us with a very important testimony that "the one like a son of man" of Daniel 7 was understood in the first century CE as a pre-existent, individual messiah.¹⁴⁶

Since our document has been found in Qumran, we must also take into consideration this context. According to M. Knibb, it is rather commonly accepted that there were at least two messiahs expected at Qumran: one royal (Davidic) and one priestly.¹⁴⁷ Of course, it is not that such expectation is attested in every single scroll. We have texts

¹⁴² Cf. *ibidem*, p. 154 ff.

¹⁴³ Cf. F. M. Cross, *Notes on the Doctrine of the Two Messiahs at Qumran and the Extracanonical Daniel Apocalypse (4Q246)*, p. 13; *idem*, *The Structure of the Apocalypse of 'Son of God' (4Q246)*, p. 153.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. T. B. Slater, *One Like a Son of Man in the First-Century CE Judaism*, p. 184-193.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 193-197.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. J. J. Collins, *The son of man in the first century Judaism*, NTS 38/1992, p. 464-465. The term *messiah* is of a biblical origin. Its Hebrew counterpart occurs 39 times in the Hebrew Bible, and means simply *anointed*, cf. F. G. Martinez, *Two Messianic Figures in the Qumran Texts, Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. D. W. Parry, S. D. Ricks), Leiden-New York-Köln 1996, p. 19.

speaking only of an eschatological priest (4Q541) or only of a Davidic messiah (4Q252). But, at least in the core sectarian documents, the pattern of dual messiahship is typical.¹⁴⁸ What is interesting, Martinez holds that messianic figures in the Dead Sea Scrolls do not necessarily need to be called by this term. The acts, deeds and functions are to be decisive in determining whether someone is a messiah or not (e. g., ‘the prince of the whole congregation’ – CD 7: 18-21; ‘the branch of David’ and ‘the interpreter of the Law’ – 4Q174 3: 11-12; ‘searcher of the Law’ – CD 7: 18-21; ‘the Elect of God’ – 4Q534-536).¹⁴⁹

As far as the Son of God of 4Q246 is concerned, J. J. Collins says that the figure fits well with the statements about the “messiah of Israel” (the so called “royal messiah”) in the Scrolls. He might be considered fulfillment of all the expectations regarding the eschatological ideal ruler, successor of the Davidic line. And although there is no name “messiah” used in the text, he acts as one.¹⁵⁰ What are then the tasks of the royal messiah? According to some data from the scrolls, he was to wage war on the Kittim, the Gentile enemies of Israel (cf. 4QpIsa^a *Frgs.* 8-10 col. III, 18-21) in the end of days.¹⁵¹ Collins continues saying that the royal messiah was also to establish the kingdom of his people and be in charge of the administration of justice in it (cf. 1QSb col. V, 20-23).¹⁵²

The role of the messiah of Aaron, seems however to be more important. His main tasks would be to atone for the sins of the people and teaching (cf. e. g. 4Q541 *Frag.* 9 col. I, 1-3).¹⁵³ The functions of the two messiahs are strictly connected to the Final War. The royal messiah shall lead the troops of the sons of Light in the Battle, but this is the priestly messiah to exhort the army and to rally it (1QM X, 2-4). In general, it looks then that the work of salvation is the joint effort of both of the Messiahs (cf. 4Q174, col. 1: 11).¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁷ Cf. M. Knibb, *Eschatology and Messianism, The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years. A comprehensive Assessment* (ed. P. W. Flint, J. C. VanderKam), Leiden 1999, p. 384-385.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 87.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. F. G. Martinez, *Two Messianic Figures in the Qumran Texts*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 85.

¹⁵¹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 62.

¹⁵² Cf. *ibidem*, p. 82.

¹⁵³ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 86-87.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. S. A. Fisdell, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Understanding Their Spiritual Message*, Northvale 1997, p. 253-255.

Going back to the Son of God activity in 4Q246, it seems that J. J. Collins is right in saying that he acts as the royal messiah.

– He is a warrior, who first appears in the context of wars waged by the wicked kings of Assyria and Egypt. His role in the eschatological battle is noteworthy. J. J. Collins observes that the Son of God stands in a close parallel with the Messiah of 4 Ezra, not only as far as the circumstances of his coming are concerned but also in the matter of defeating the Gentiles and gathering the dispersed of Israel.¹⁵⁵ In another place, J. J. Collins says that “the Jewish sources of the time consistently portray the Davidic messiah as a militant figure who would crash the enemies of Israel. (...) the militant character of the Davidic messiah is consistent”.¹⁵⁶

– He is a King, although such a title appears in the text not even once. His deeds seem to testify to it perfectly. In the OT the main task of the king is to be a warrior (cf. 1 Sam 8: 20).¹⁵⁷ In fact, as it has been stated above, the Son of God is a warrior. He then establishes an exceptional kingdom, which is an eternal abode for the people of God. He exercises power over it on behalf of his people. His reign is based on righteousness and truth. J. J. Collins notes that in doing so the Son of God resembles pretty much the “Prince of the Congregation”, who is identified with the “Branch of David” (cf. 4Q285). In the Scroll of the Blessings (1QSb col. V, 21), there is a blessing for the Prince of the Congregation, “that he may establish the kingdom of his people for ever.”¹⁵⁸ In addition, J. C. VanderKam observes that the Davidic Messiah is also the agent through whom God’s people are delivered or saved.¹⁵⁹

– He judges with righteousness, which is one of the very privileges of the king. “The king is fount of justice (Ps 45: 4, 6; 2 Sam 23: 3)”.¹⁶⁰ In fact, in the OT, only God could exercise such power (Gen. 18: 25; 1 Sam 2: 10; Ps 7: 9; 9: 9), but it is a common motif there that the Davidic king transmits the divine justice to the people of Israel (Ps 72: 1-2).¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ Cf. J. J. Collins, *The Son of God Text from Qumran*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁶ *Idem*, *The works of the Messiah*, DSD 1/1994, p. 108.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. K. W. Whitlam, *King and Kingship*, ABD IV, p. 46.

¹⁵⁸ J. J. Collins, *The Son of God Text from Qumran*, p. 79.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. J. C. VanderKam, *Messianism and Apocalypticism*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism. The origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity I* (ed. J. J. Collins, B. McGinn, S. Stein), New York 1998, p. 211.

¹⁶⁰ K. W. Whitlam, *King and Kingship*, ABD IV, p. 46.

¹⁶¹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 43-46.

– He is authorized by God, who is simply his ally. The king in the OT is said to be in a special “father-son” relationship with God (cf. Ps 2: 7). This must not be understood in terms of affiliation but of an exceptional community between God and his representative (anointed – king) on earth. Yahweh enables “His son” to fulfill all the tasks that are bound with his ministry. But, as a matter of fact, it is God himself acting through the king.¹⁶² It is not only the name “Son of God” that makes us think of such exceptional relationship between God and the main personage of 4Q246. There are also his deeds and prophecies that his kingdom will be eternal, that God will wage war for him and subdue his enemies so that all the nations may come and pay him homage.

– He is finally an eschatological agent similar to other figures considered messianic and familiar from other biblical and extra-biblical literature that have been dealt with several times in the above study.

It is right then that in 4Q246 there is no clear-cut and direct statement about messianic dignity of the ‘Son of God’. However, as it was said above, such a situation is nothing unique in the Qumran scrolls. In declaring somebody messiah, the crucial importance is rather acts, deeds and functions that the personage exercises. All the above data seem to bear witness to the royal and messianic dignity of the ‘Son of God’ figure of 4Q246. He could be then likely identified with the messiah of Israel – one of the two that were expected by the Qumran community.¹⁶³

Appendix. Jesus and the Son of God pattern

One more issue can considerably support the messianic interpretation of the Son of God from 4Q246. Namely, the surprising parallels with Luke 1: 32-35. C. A. Evans notes that the titles used by Luke were to stress the messianic dignity of Jesus.¹⁶⁴ Evans enumerates several similar statements:

¹⁶² Cf. *ibidem*, p. 45.

¹⁶³ Cf. J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 85.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. C. A. Evans, *The recently published Dead Sea Scrolls and the historical Jesus*, in: *Studying the Historical Jesus. Evaluations of the state of current research* (ed. B. Chilton, C. A. Evans), NTTS 19, Leiden-New York-Köln 1994, p. 550.

LUKE		4Q246	
ὕτος ἔσται μέγας	(1:32)	ברך רב להוה	(1:7)
υἱὸς ὑψίστου κληθήσεται	(1:32)	ובר עליון יקרונה	(2:1)
κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ	(1:35)	ברדה די אל יחאמר	(2:1)
βασιλεύσει ... εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας	(1:33)	מלכותה מלכות עלם	(2:5)

These similarities are in fact of a unique kind. Their messianic character – according to Evans – would additionally support the reading of 4Q246 as messianic. Of course, it would be certainly exaggerated to draw conclusions on a common origin or authorship of the two documents. Nonetheless, it can hardly be overlooked that in both of them appears one common pattern: *to be called the Son of God*. J. Fitzmyer says that it is almost sure that the Greek expression used by Luke had its prototype in another Semitic expression. He argues for that, indicating as a proof, the absence of definitive articles in the Greek texts.¹⁶⁵

Evans continues his argumentation observing that “in the Synoptic tradition Jesus is called ‘Son of God’ (Matt 4: 3,6; 16: 1; Mark 3: 11; 15: 39) and He is addressed as the ‘Son of the Most High’ by the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5: 7; Luke 8: 28)”.¹⁶⁶ In all probability, these epithets were understood in the messianic sense and as such they were applied to Jesus.

One may reasonably think of the common thoughts, titles and names that functioned at that time and were used with reference to the messiah (s). The application of the above titles as bearing a messianic sense to Jesus took place in a determined historical and theological context. Of course, we should avoid looking at the Jewish messianism in our Christian perspective. Nonetheless, it is allowed at least to claim that the messianic dignity ascribed to Jesus had its origin in the messianic beliefs of the epoch. The authors of the Gospel, wishing to highlight the messianic dignity of Jesus, did not need to invent any new titles, but simply used those that were perfectly comprehensive to their audience as messianic. It may seem then that there was some common ‘Son of God pattern’, i. e., an epithet that was understood as indication of messianic dignity. These are only suppositions that cannot be proven with surety, because we hardly have any scribal data that might testify to the claim. In any case, it is a very interesting point in the discussion on the messianic character of the Son of God figure of 4Q246.

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¹⁶⁵ Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran*, p. 162.

¹⁶⁶ C. A. Evans, *The recently published Dead Sea Scrolls and the historical Jesus*, p. 550.

Abbreviations

- ABD* – *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AbrNahrSS – *Abr-Nahrain Supplement Series*
Bib – *Biblica*
DJD – *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*
DSD – *Dead Sea Scrolls Discoveries*
HCBD – *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*
JBTh – *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie*
JSNTSS – *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series*
MBC – *The Mellen Biblical Commentary*
NTS – *New Testament Studies*
NDTB – *Nuovo Dizionario di Teologia Biblica*
NTTS – *New Testament Tools and Studies*
RB – *Revue biblique*
RevQ – *Revue de Qumran*
STDJ – *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*
TDNT – *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*