

at least). The ontological gap between the supplicant and God implies that no image could ever rightly contain or even symbolize the divine. The calling of pure prayer is to lay aside mental representations (note well: not to negate or to do away with

entirely); to recognize that while they play a role in the created goodness of life, communion with God involves transcending the realm of earthly images, to an experience of the uncreated light where words and even images themselves are but shadows. ✱



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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

A Note on Terminology: “Godmanhood” and “Divine-Humanity”

Jeremy Ingpen

Translators of Vladimir Solovyev and Sergii Bulgakov face a series of choices in glossing the Russian word *богочеловечество* (*bogochelovechestvo*) or the French *divino-humanité*. The early translators of these writers chose “Godmanhood,” and Professor Andrew Louth has argued in favor of this choice.¹ One can find justification for “Godmanhood” in the Athanasian Creed, as rendered in the *Anglican Book of Common Prayer* of 1662: “Who [Christ] although he be God and Man: yet he is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God.”² More frequently, we find the translation “divine-humanity,” as in Boris Jakim’s

many outstanding translations from the Russian.

As a translator from French who frequently handles quotations of texts originally in Russian, I find myself stumbling on both “Godmanhood” and “divine-humanity.” Let me explain. “Godmanhood” seems to me to objectify a spiritual mystery—the Chalcedonian synthesis that, Olivier Clément says, crucifies the human mind. In addition, in popular parlance manhood has become synonymous with maleness, and, euphemistically, with the male sex organ. That aside, “Godmanhood” does not allow for the formation of an adjective: Godmanly? I don’t think so! So

¹ Andrew Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present* (London: SPCK, 2015), 22.

² *Book of Common Prayer* (Cambridge: John Baskerville, 1762), n.p.

for all these reasons, I would place “Godmanhood” on the pile of worthy but obsolete theological translations.

What about “divine-humanity,” with or without its hyphen? My problem is one of balance. We sing in the Liturgy “One is Holy, One is the Lord, Jesus Christ.” Christ is the only divine—fully divine—human, and he is fully human. The understanding of his divine humanity was arrived at slowly and painfully, and not without misunderstandings, causing the centuries-long separation of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Churches.

In богочеловечество, there is a certain balance that can accommodate the idea that “God became man so that man might become god.” Consider, for a moment, the difference between a “Romano-British settlement,” a settlement of British peoples at the time of the Roman Empire, and a “Roman British settlement,” for example of Roman soldiers settled on lands in Sussex to defend the coastline. The latter is fully Roman, whereas the Romano-British graves are those of villagers who share the DNA of those still living in the region, as in the Cotswolds. One can make the same argument with Greco-Roman, Afro-Cuban, and so forth.

And so, in my translations, I have preferred to use “divino-human”



and “divino-humanity” for the Chalcedonian synthesis. “Divino-humanity” is, in my understanding, a balanced concept, fully equal to богочеловечество. And it leaves us free, when the occasion calls for it, to emphasize the unique, incarnate, divine humanity of Christ. For now, this is perhaps an idiosyncratic choice. We need to reconsider our terminology and perhaps bring back the adjectival “theandric” of earlier translators, or the “theanthropic” used by Robert Arida, for the theanthropos, the divino-human person on the path to deification. ✱

Ivan Kramskoy, Portrait of Vladimir Solovyov, 1885. State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg.



Jeremy N. Ingpen's translations include Olivier Clément, *Transfiguring Time* (New City Press, 2019), Michel Evdokimov, *Two Martyrs in a Godless World* (New City Press, 2021), and Olivier Clément, *Dialogues with Patriarch Athenagoras* (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2022). He has also translated poems by Anna Akhmatova and Rainer Maria Rilke. He is currently a post-career doctoral candidate at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, studying the work of Olivier Clément, with the working title “The Face is the Entry to the Kingdom.”