Sarx

A. The noun *sarx* has the following cognates:
   2. *Sarkikos* (σαρκικός) (adjective), “fleshly, in the manner of the flesh, belonging to the realm of the flesh, material.”

B. Classical
   1. The noun *sarx* in Homer nearly always is used in the plural with the only exception being in the Odyssey 19, 450.
   2. It means the flesh of a man as distinct from his bones, sinews, etc.
   3. From Hesiod onwards it means also the flesh of an animal, and in a wider development (also used now in the singular) the flesh of fishes and small animals, as well as fruits.
   4. The *soma*, “body” consists of bones, blood, sinews, flesh and skin (Plato Phaedrus 98c.d); or of hair, flesh, bones (Symp. 207d).
   5. Occasionally *sarx* denotes the whole physical body which can be old (sarki palaia, Aeschylus Ag. 72) or young.
   6. A typical expression is hai *sarkes kenai phrenon* (Euripides El. 387), by which men are meant who ae without understanding and so mere flesh.
   7. Transitoriness is a particularly characteristic mark of *sarx*.
   8. When vital energy (*psuche*, “soul”) and desire (*thumos*) pass away, flesh and bones disappear (Odyssey 11, 219-222).
   9. Unlike men and animals, the gods have no *sarx*, but are nous, “mind,” episteme, “insight,” logos, “word, reason” (Epictectus Diss. 118, 2).
10. Accordingly, man’s imperishable nature is increasingly contrasted with his perishable flesh.
11. The *onkos sarkon*, “body of flesh,” which is buried, is not our own real being (Plato Leg. 959c; cf. “the strange garment of the flesh” Emp., Frag. 126).
12. Epicurus, however, gave a new turn to this idea.
13. Disappearance is only a dispersion of atoms; but this does not leave behind it any remainder.
14. Accordingly, the start and root of all good is well-being, the *hedone*, “desire” of the belly (Frag. 409).
15. When flesh cries out, “Do not hunger, do not freeze, do not thirst,” the soul heeds this reminder (Frag. 200).
16. Since the *dianoia*, “understanding” knows the end and limit of the *sarx*, Epicurus certainly does not invite men to a life of luxury, but on the contrary to one that is utterly controlled and temperate.
17. For not only present but also future *hedone* is essential to good fortune (Frag. 68).
18. These ideas were much debased and popularized in a form that was depicted as favor of evil desire, especially by their opponents of the Platonic school.
19. Accordingly to them, the cravings and lusts of the body defile the soul which has a share in the divine.
20. Epicurus was obliged to defend himself against the imputation of approving appetite, bodily desire, fornication, and intemperance (Frag. 414).
21. The anti-Epicurean polemic was widely spread in Hellenism and it penetrated deeply into Judaism.
22. The pre-Socratics were already discussing the development of flesh out of the 4 elements, Emped. Fr., 98 (Diels, I, 346, 23) cf. Ps. –Heracl. C, 1 (I. 185, 9) and Emped. A, 78 (I, 299, 5 f.) or out of female seed, the bones, soul and faculty of perception coming from the male seed, Hippon. A, 13 (I, 386, 41); an anon. Pythagorean Fr. 1a (I, 450, 4).
23. But perhaps flesh and bone are themselves elements, since flesh cannot arise out of non-flesh, Anaxag. A, 43 (Diels II, 17, 19); Fr. 10 (II, 37, 7).
24. The next to be mentioned is blood, Emped. Fr., 98 (I, 346, 23), which is absorbed by the fleshly parts, the *sarkode*, Diogenes of Apollonia Fr. 6 (II, 65, 13).
25. Plato teaches that flesh and sinews arise out of blood (Tim. 82cd cf. 80e. Hippocrates De *natura infantis*, 14-17 (Littre, VII, 492-498) has the same doctrine: The *sarx* of the child originates in the blood of the mother.
27. The use of *sarx* in classical literature indicates that the Greeks understood the body as a whole or unity.
28. Since the skin is only dried up *sarx* (Aristotle Probl. 10, 27, p. 893b, 33; Gen. An., II, 6, p. 743b, 6; cf. Plato Tim. 75e-76a), the inner part of the skin can be called *sarx*.

29. Finally the word is used for the flesh of fruits such as the olive or the poppyhead (Theophr. De causis *plantarum*, III, 14, 6; VI, 8, 5 f.; Hist. Plant., I, 11, 1; IV, 15, 1; Aret., V, 10, 10; VI, 1, 2; VIII, 2, 3).

30. The reference in Aristotle (De Plantis, I, 4, p. 819a, 35, cf. p. 818a, 33) is to the veins and flesh of a tree and in p. 820a, 37, to the fruits.

31. Finally note should be taken of the fabulous idea of a monster with “iron flesh” (Theocr. Idyll., 22, 47).

C. LXX

1. The noun *sarx* appears 199 times in the LXX.

2. It is used in the LXX to translate the following Hebrew terms:
   c. *Chay* (חי), “life, people; flesh” (Sir. 44:24).
   e. *Sh*’er (שר), “flesh” (Mi. 3:2).

3. The difference between Greek and Hebrew anthropology is that the Greeks used “flesh” to describe the physical body whereas the Hebrews used it to denote man as a whole.

4. This is demonstrated in the fact that the confident expectation of the OT centers upon a resurrected body, whereas the Greeks looked for a spiritual immortality that had no need (or desire) of a body.

5. The noun *sarx* is used to denote humanity as a whole (Is. 40:5f.).

6. Baumgartel lists the following usages for the Hebrew basar (TDNT volume 7, pages 105-108):
   a. Flesh in the strict sense
   b. In an extended sense: body of man
   c. All living creatures, men and animals
   d. As a term for blood-relationships
   e. Euphemistically
   f. In a transferred sense
      1. For all man’s external life, existence
      2. Expressing the whole inner attitude
      3. Expressing human frailty and impotence
   g. Metaphorically

7. Baumgartel lists the following usages for *sh’er* (שר) (pages 107-108):
   a. Flesh in the true sense
   b. As a term for blood-relationship
   c. In a transferred sense for all man’s external existence

8. The word *basar* refers basically to animal musculature, but by extension it can mean the human body, blood relations, mankind, living things, life itself and created life as opposed to divine life.

9. *Basar* can mean “body” even without reference to bones (Nm. 8:7; 2 Kgs. 4:34; Ecc. 2:3).

10. As such it refers simply to the external form of a person.

11. This is seen as one of the components of the human being, the others being especially *leb*, “heart” and *nephesh*, “soul” (Ps. 16:9).

12. However, it would be inappropriate to think that the Hebrews conceived of a living soul inhabiting an otherwise dead body.

13. Rather they saw the human reality as permeating all the components with the totality being the person.

14. The principle of sin resident in the flesh or human body is an intertestamental idea.

15. The LXX shows no inclination to link sarx especially with sexuality, but rather avoids this usage.

16. On the other hand, in connection with circumcision there is common reference to the foreskin *sarx*, even where there is no Hebrew equivalent (Gn. 34:24; Jer. 9:25).

17. The noun *sarx* is used to denote the following in the LXX:
   a. Humanity
   b. Animal life
   c. Foreskin of male penis that is circumcised
   d. Human body
   e. Fat of an animal
   f. Body of an animal
g. Blood relative
h. Fellow countrymen
i. Animal flesh as food

18. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words contains the following article regarding the Hebrew term *basar*, they write, “*basar*, "flesh; meat; male sex organ." Cognates of this word appear in Ugaritic, Arabic, and Aramaic. Biblical Hebrew attests it about 270 times and in all periods. The word means the "meaty part plus the skin" of men: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof" (Gen. 2:21)-- the first occurrence. This word can also be applied to the "meaty part" of animals (Deut. 14:8). (Gen. 41:2) speaks of seven cows, sleek and "fat of flesh." In (Num. 11:33), *basar* means the meat or "flesh" of the quail that Israel was still chewing. Thus the word means "flesh," whether living or dead. *Basar* often means the "edible part" of animals. Eli’s sons did not know God’s law concerning the priests’ portion, so “when any man offered sacrifice, the priest[s Eli’s] servant came, while the flesh was [boiling], with a [threepronged fork] in his hand" (1 Sam. 2:13). However, they insisted that "before they burnt the fat..., Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have [boiled] flesh of thee, but raw" (literally, "living"-- 1 Sam. 2:15). *Basar*, then, represents edible animal "flesh" or "meat," whether cooked (Dan. 10:3) or uncooked. The word sometimes refers to "meat" that one is forbidden to eat (cf. (Exod. 21:28)). This word may represent a part of the body. At some points, the body is viewed as consisting of two components, "flesh" and bones: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2:23). That part of the "fleshy" element known as the foreskin was to be removed by circumcision (Gen. 17:11). In other passages, the elements of the body are the "flesh," the skin, and the bones (Lam. 3:4). (Num. 19:5) mentions the "flesh," hide, blood, and refuse of a heifer. In (Job 10:11), we read: "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast [knit] me with bones and sinews." Flesh sometimes means "blood relative": "And Laban said to him [Jacob], Surely thou art my bone and my flesh" (Gen. 29:14). The phrase "your flesh" or "our flesh" standing alone may bear the same meaning: "Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh" (Gen. 37:27). The phrase *she’er basar* is rendered "blood relative" (Lev. 18:6); KJV, "near of kin". About 50 times, "flesh" represents the physical aspect of man or animals as contrasted with the spirit, soul, or heart (the nonphysical aspect). In the case of men, this usage appears in (Num. 16:22): "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" In such passages, then, *basar* emphasizes the visible and structural part of man or animal. In a few passages, the word appears to mean "skin," or the part of the body that is seen: "By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin" (Ps. 102:5; 119:120). In passages such as (Lev. 13:2), the ideas "flesh" and "skin" are clearly distinguished. *Basar* sometimes represents the "male sex organ": "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When any man hath a running issue out of his flesh [NASB, "body"], because of his issue he is unclean" (Lev. 15:2). The term "all flesh" has several meanings. It means "all mankind" in (Deut. 5:26): "For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God?...?" In another place, this phrase refers to "all living creatures within the cosmos," or all men and animals (Gen. 6:17). (pages 83-84).

D. NT

1. The noun *sarx* appears 151 times in the NT.

2. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words contains the following article regarding the noun *sarx*, they write, “*sarx* has a wider range of meaning in the NT than in the OT. Its uses in the NT may be analyzed as follows: (a) "the substance of the body," whether of beasts or of men, (1 Cor. 15:39); (b) "the human body," (2 Cor. 10:3a; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:22); (c) by synecdoche, of "mankind," in the totality of all that is essential to manhood, i. e., spirit, soul, and body, (Matt. 24:22; John 1:13; Rom. 3:20); (d) by synecdoche, of "the holy humanity" of the Lord Jesus, in the totality of all that is essential to manhood, i. e., spirit, soul, and body (John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7), in (Heb. 5:7), "the days of His flesh," i. e., His past life on earth in distinction from His present life in resurrection; (e) by synecdoche, for "the complete person," (John 6:51-57; 2 Cor. 7:5; Jas. 5:3); (f) "the weaker element in human nature," (Matt. 26:41; Rom. 6:19; 8:3a); (g) "the unregenerate state of men," (Rom. 7:5; 8:8,9); (h) "the seat of sin in man" (but this is not the same thing as in the body), (2 Pet. 2:18; 1 John 2:16); (i) "the lower and temporary element in the Christian," (Gal. 3:3; 6:8), and in religious ordinances, (Heb. 9:10); (j) "the natural attainments of men," (1 Cor. 1:26; 2 Cor. 10:2,3b); (k) "circumstances," (1 Cor. 7:28); the externals of life, (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 6:5; Heb. 9:13); (l) by metonymy, "the outward and seeming," as contrasted with the spirit, the inward and real, (John 6:63; 2 Cor. 5:16); (m) "natural relationship, consanguine," (1 Cor. 10:18; Gal. 4:23), or marital, (Matt. 19:5). In (Matt. 26:41; Rom. 8:4,13; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:8) (not the Holy Spirit, here), "flesh" is
contrasted with spirit, in (Rom. 2:28,29), with heart and spirit; in (Rom. 7:25), with the mind; cf. (Col. 2:1,5). It is coupled with the mind in (Eph. 2:3), and with the spirit in (2 Cor. 7:1). Note: In (Col. 2:18) the noun sarx is used in the phrase "(by his) fleshly mind," lit., "by the mind of his flesh" [see (h) above], whereas the mind ought to be dominated by the Spirit. 2. kreas denotes "flesh" in the sense of meat.

   a. Literally of the material that covers the bones of a human or animal body
   b. The body itself, viewed as substance
   c. A man of flesh and blood
   d. Human or mortal nature, earthly descent
   e. Corporeality, physical limitation, life here on earth
   f. The external or outward side of life, as it appears to the eye of an unregenerate person, that which is natural or earthly
   g. In Paul’s thought especially the flesh is the willing instrument of sin, and is subject to sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are likewise present and no good thing can sarx.
   h. The sarx is the source of the sexual urge, without any suggestion of sinfulness connected

   a. Flesh (the soft substance of the living body, which covers the bones and is permeated with blood) of both mean and beasts
   b. The body, not designating it, however, as a skillful combination of related parts but signifying the material or substance of the living body.
   c. A living creature whether man or beast
   d. Human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God.

5. The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised (pages 363-364):
   a. The human body
   b. Flesh, human nature, human frame
   c. Kindred
   d. Consanguinity, lineage
   e. Flesh, humanity, human beings
   f. The circumstances of the body, material condition
   g. Flesh, mere humanity, human fashion
   h. Flesh as the seat of passion and frailty
   i. Carnality
   j. Materiality, material circumstance as opposed to the spiritual
   k. A material system or mode

   a. The bodily substance, the flesh of circumcision; human body; entire person; humanity in the universal sense; physical lineage; genealogical membership in Israel
   b. Earthly and natural existence and then to the merely worldly existence of human beings
   c. Mankind subject to the power of sin

   a. The flesh of both animals and human beings (page 102)
   b. A living body – ‘body, physical body’ (page 94)
   c. ‘person, individual’ (page 105)
   d. Human nature, with emphasis upon the physical aspects – ‘physical nature, human’ (page 105)
   e. A relatively large group of persons regarded as being biologically related – ‘race, ethnic group, nation’ (page 112).
   f. The psychological aspect of human nature which contrasts with the spiritual nature; in other words, that aspect of human nature which is characterized by or reflects typical human reasoning and desires in contrast with those aspects of human thought and behavior which relate to God and the spiritual life – ‘human nature, human aspects, natural, human’ (page 322).
   g. Human nature, particularly in reference to the physical aspect of human life – ‘human nature, physical nature of people’ (page 587).
   h. Physical life (page 262).

8. The following is a comprehensive list of usages and meanings:
a. Human being, the individual
b. Humanity in the universal sense
c. Human body
d. Old sin nature, fallen Adamic nature located in the cell structure of the human body
e. Animal life
f. Animal flesh
g. Impeccable human nature of Christ
h. Unregenerate Gentiles, unregenerate humanity
i. Metaphorically for the spiritual body of Christ
j. Human existence
k. Jew by racial descent, Jew in the genetic sense
l. Metaphorically for the consummation of marriage through sexual intercourse
m. Metaphorically for the body of Christ at the communion table
n. Human nature of Christ’s Jewish descent
o. Male penis in relation to circumcision
p. Metaphorically for rituals in the Levitical offerings
q. Metaphorically of temporal spiritual death
r. Metaphorically of unregenerate cosmic viewpoint