

The Gospel of John: More Light from Philo, Paul and Archaeology

The Scriptures, Tradition,
Exposition, Settings, Meaning

Peder Borgen

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The Gospel of John: More Light from Philo,
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By

Peder Borgen



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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

In Memory of my Teachers at the University of Oslo,
Sigmund Mowinckel, Nils Alstrup Dahl, Einar Molland.

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INTRODUCTION

The Scriptures, Tradition, Exposition

The sub-heading gives indications of some of the perspectives followed in the research which lies behind the present book: "The Scriptures, Tradition, Exposition, Settings, Meaning." In this introduction these perspectives will briefly be characterized. Then the chapters and the book as a whole will be surveyed in order to show how the different parts function together. The first points are, accordingly, The Scriptures, tradition, expository methods and use.

In Judaism of New Testament times *The Scriptures* had authority and they had a written literary form. They existed together with oral traditions and with practices which were woven into the fabric of society, including the Temple and its functions and, moreover, into religious, judicial and personal aspects of life and the people's understanding of the nation and the world. As The Scriptures they were authoritative writings which were subject to interpretations in written, oral and behavioral forms. The written expositions might have the form of paraphrasing elaborations in which words and phrases from a text were interpreted. Such interpretative activity is clearly seen in the exposition of the Old Testament quotation about the manna, the bread from heaven, in John 6:31–59.

In 1959 I published a brief study on this paragraph in John, the note "The Unity of the Discourse in John 6," in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 50 (1959) 277–78. The editor of the Journal, professor W. Eltester, responded positively to my observations. In my book *Bread from Heaven*, published by Brill Publishers in 1965, it was shown that the quotation rendered in verse 31, "Bread from Heaven he gave them to eat," received a subsequent elaboration in which words from the text were repeated and interpreted. The commentaries of Philo of Alexandria, written some times before the year 50 C.E., were extensive examples of such interpretative elaborations of parts of the Pentateuch and of related traditions.

One might ask whether the traditions of the words and works of Jesus, as rendered in John, had gained such a degree of authority that they also were in the process of being treated in the same or similar way. The

answer is “yes”. Fortunately, evidence for expository use of traditions from and about Jesus, is already provided by Paul, especially in his First Letter to the Corinthians, as is documented in the present book where some such relevant texts are analyzed. More expository varieties in the interpretation of The Scriptures and of the Jesus-tradition need be investigated, however.

Setting and Meaning

The word ‘setting’ is used because it is less technical than ‘context’ and less specific than ‘history’. The ‘setting’ of John consists of several aspects or levels. On one level the topographical locations and related points of information in John are important data. Moreover, they can to some extent be related to archaeological findings. In the present book the intention is not to provide new insights into this area of research, but surveys and articles by other scholars have been consulted and utilized. Publications by J. Charlesworth (1988, 103–30; 2003, 37–70; 2009, 56–72, esp. pp. 61–66) and U. von Wahlde (2006, 523–68; 2009, 155–73; 2010, 2:216–2018) have especially been helpful.

Also some related studies of Martin Hengel have provided fruitful insights. In various publications he has dealt with central problems in Johannine research. He has pointed to the surprising combination in John of theological elaborations on the one hand, and specific topical, philological, social, legal and other points of information on the other hand. (Hengel 1999, 334). He claimed that these observations demonstrate that the author comes from the Jewish Eretz Israel prior to the year 70 C.E., although the Gospel itself was written later. (Hengel 1993, 276)

Hengel related the confession of Thomas “My Lord and my God”, John 20:28, to Pliny’s letter to the Emperor Trajan which is dated between 110 and 112 C.E., and suggested that John was written between ten and twenty years earlier. (Hengel 1992, 425 and 430). One might ask the question, however, if it is as plausible to assume that this author also have brought with him from his earlier home-land Jesus-traditions and expository usages of it. A positive answer to this question seems to be strengthened by the investigation in the present book.

If a timeline is drawn in the opposite direction, the contextual setting goes back to the fifties C.E. for the letters of Paul, and even further back in time to Philo’s writings. Here the different levels are exemplified, such as specific data of historical events, geographical locations, expository methods,

and furthermore transmitted traditions and structures and ideas seen within a cosmic context and beyond.

It is important to note that Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians exemplifies how gospel tradition had such a degree of authority that they were subject to expository interpretations of similar kinds to the expositions of The Scriptures. For example, Paul adds expository interpretations to the traditional logion on divorce (1 Cor 7:10–16). Although the timeline from the times of Philo and Paul to the end of the century has been considered above, the focus in the present book is not set on time and date, but on whether or not John draws on and interprets Gospel traditions independently of the other three written Gospels. A positive answer to this question of independence hopefully has been strengthened by the present investigation.

As far as meaning is concerned, several aspects are examined, but in various degrees. Special attention has been given to some legal concepts, principles and practices. In 1968 I published an essay in the memorial volume for the Philo-scholar Erwin R. Goodenough, *Religions in Antiquity*, edited by Jacob Neusner. The title of my contribution was "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel", where I maintained that the concept of sending in John is closely connected with the *halakhic* understanding of agency. The main sources used were found in rabbinic writings. Later I have drawn more extensively on Philo's writings, both with references to agents in human inter-relationships and to intermediary messengers between God and human beings. In the present book the Christological use in John of this legal concept is given further attention.

Of course, other concepts should be analyzed in the same way. The reason for the focus on agency is the need seen for analyzing further John's Christological use of this concept. However, it is of basic importance to note that *the Son* is the One who is being sent on a mission by his Father. Thus, the basic family concepts of Father and Son and love and care, should be brought in more than what is done in the present volume. Likewise, other Christological concepts and titles need to be more fully included, such as Wisdom/the Law, the Son of Man, the Messiah. Some of these have been touched in the present studies, but the Johannine usages should be further examined.

A key question in the interpretation of John is the understanding of the relationship between the human and divine aspects in Christology. In the monograph *Bread from Heaven* I followed the scholars who see an anti-Docetic tendency to be central in John. At this point my view has changed: The problem reflected in John is not Docetism. The Docetists

denied Jesus' humanity. The problem as pictured in John is rather: how can a human person be divine and 'come down from heaven'? (John 6:41–42. See Menken 1997, 199, note 61). In this way the problem was the denial of the divinity of Jesus.

The Book

As can be seen from the list of acknowledgements some of the chapters build on studies which have been previously published. They have been selected because they fit into the larger whole of a book. Together with the newly written chapters this intention hopefully has been fulfilled. Accordingly, the book is divided into five parts: In Part A I republish two essays. The first essay was published in 2010 and is a survey of main areas of my research in John. M. Labahn has written a response. The next study was published several years ago, in 1983. It contains my comments on aspects of debates on expository method and form uncovered in the Johannine section on the manna, the bread from heaven, John 6. This debate has still relevance for present day studies of John. Against the background of this survey of my research more specific aspects are selected in the different parts of the book.

The task is to see how far Philo of Alexandria and the Apostle Paul prove to be a fitting and fruitful setting for understanding the Gospel of John. Thus, the next part of the book (Part B) deals with the context of Judaism and Christian Beginnings as seen within the context of the Hellenistic world. Judaism is represented by Philo of Alexandria. His writings are not only a source for ideas, but are a 'treasure chest' for research on expository methods, on structures of form, on hermeneutics, and on Jewish traditions which contain degrees of influence of ideas from philosophy of Greek origin. Philo also gives glimpses from Jewish pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and from the impact of Rome on the Roman empire as a whole, for observances of the Sabbath, circumcision and festivals, and for the application of the Laws of Moses in community life and to historical events, and for Pythagorean like speculations on numbers. Philo's writings can be dated to the period prior to the year 50 C.E.

Christian Beginnings are represented by the Apostle Paul as well as by the Gospel of John. The wider context is looked at in the chapter "The Gospel of John and Hellenism". A main perspective here can be formulated in this way: Instead of looking for direct influence from outside of Judaism, the challenge is to look into the possibility that the Gospel of

John contains distinctly Jewish and Christian elements within the context of broader Hellenistic features.

Although Philo and Paul provide a fruitful surrounding for important aspects of John, John is not dependent on these writings and letters. How is in turn John's relationship to the other gospels to be understood? Is John in one way or another dependent on one or all of the other three gospels? The question needs to be formulated differently, however, since gospel traditions are found in Paul's letters. For that reason Part C reads "From John and the Synoptics to John Within Early Gospel Traditions."

The relationship between the Gospel of John and the other three gospels has been a much debated topic in New Testament research. A wide range of views and suggested conclusions have been proposed. Some scholars maintain the view that John is dependent on the other Gospels, or at least on one, the Gospel of Mark. Others conclude that John is independent of the other written gospels, or is partly dependent on the other gospels and partly draws on oral tradition. The last view was at first maintained by the present author.

The formulation of the title of Part C reflects that the present author has increasingly moved into also comparing John with the gospel traditions found in Paul's letters, primarily in his First Letter to the Corinthians, to see how the traditions have been subject to expository use. My 'journey' in this area has step by step led me into reaching the conclusion that John's independence is the most probable understanding. More light from Paul has illuminated this subject area.

Part D, "God's Agent in Johannine Exposition", focuses on one of the central themes in the Gospel, that of Jesus as the one who is sent by God. This concept is associated with Jesus in all four gospels, but has a more explicit and central role in John than in the other three. Philo's use of the concept and occurrences in rabbinic writings are important for understanding its use in John.

In order to avoid abstractions away from the Johannine text the method employed is to include the examination of the use and meaning of the concept within sections of John. In this way the aspects of transmitted traditions and expository elaborations are placed in context.

It needs to be stressed that other themes in John need to be taken up in a similar way, such as 'Father and Son'. The concept of agency is also to be related further to other Christological designations, such as Wisdom, Son of Man, Messiah, etc. Moreover, it is shown that the quest of the historical Jesus can be raised against this background. Here further research needs to be done.

The conclusion is: More light from Philo's writings has been seen in the present investigation of the Christological concept of Jesus as God's agent/messenger/ambassador.

How far can Philo also be of help in the search for answers to other debated questions in the research on the Gospel of John? Some of such further questions are taken up in Part E, which has been entitled "Challenge and Response". Here responses are given to three challenges: 1) Is John in one way or another dependent on Mark as to structural form, or do both works rely on a form which was of broader use? 2) How can extensive theological/ideological elaboration be combined with the specific geographical, historical and social awareness and interest? 3) It is suggested that the setting in John of Thomas' confession to Jesus as God must be dated late, and that it actually renders the confession of the Church, as reflected in Plinius' letter. As for this point, it is suggested here that the traditional accusation of Jesus for blasphemy was interpreted by John as telling the truth: Jesus was God. Mistakenly this truth had been understood to be the capital crime of blasphemy.

Moreover, Philo's treatises *De Legatione ad Gaium* and *In Flaccum* seem to offer help in understanding the form and the combination of history and interpretation in John. In a study of mine (2001, 86–101) I have outlined how the Laws of Moses, as interpreted by Philo, play an important role in Philo's understanding of society and of historical events in *De Legatione*. D. Runia (2003, 351) expresses general agreement with this view. In *In Flaccum* Philo interprets the actions of Flaccus by using the Laws of Moses as lens. In both treatises Philo's responses are words of hope and encouragement. These and other observations justify that the following question is raised: Can these two treatises give help for the understanding of John?

The general conclusion to be drawn of the analyses made in this volume is that the case for the independence of John seems to have been strengthened. Further points of a summary is given in the final chapter: "John, Archaeology, Philo, Paul, Other Jewish Sources. Where my journey of research has led me. John's Independence of the Synoptics."

Technical Matters

In the study "The Scriptures and the Words and Works of Jesus" edited by T. Thatcher in *What We Have Heard from the Beginning*, the notes were included in the running text, and only some special notes were placed as foot-notes. In order to make the book into a structural whole, this system

has been followed. As a result the contents of some of the extensive original footnotes have been included in the text itself as far as possible. When additional material has seemed relevant, it has been added to the chapter concerned, or has been integrated as part of the new chapters written for the present book.

To some degree repetitions are unavoidable when previously published studies are re-used. However, if the same content is repeated in new contexts and under different perspectives, it contributes to new insights and contributes in a fresh way to the ongoing research. In exceptional cases a repetitious section has been omitted.

The repetitions in the final chapter have a special function. They serve as summaries of main aspects examined, and, together with new points, give basis for a summary of conclusions drawn. Thus, the final chapter has the function of being a summary of main issues which are analyzed and discussed.

Appreciations

Most of all I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my wife, Inger, for her love and her understanding patience and for her encouragement and support.

Thanks are extended to Brill Academic Publishers for publishing the book in the Series *Novum Testament Supplements*. Thanks to the Supplement Editors, Margaret M. Mitchell and David Moessner, and to the Production Editor Mattie Kuiper.

It should be mentioned that careful modifications of the language and the working out of the indexes have been made by an expert in the field, but as the author I am alone responsible for the end result.

Also another context should be included here: As I look back upon my 'journey' of research in The Gospel of John, I realize that the background foundation was laid by my teachers at The University of Oslo:

- Sigmund Mowinckel taught me to focus on text and context in the Old Testament, and he also illuminated its use in Judaism and in early Christianity.
- Nils Alstrup Dahl encouraged me to compare John with each of the other gospels. He advised me also to emphasize the Jewish context of the New Testaments. He stressed the need for reflections being made on exegetical methods.

- Einar Molland, himself concentrating on Norwegian Church history, had at the same time excellent knowledge of the transitional period from the New Testament times into the subsequent history of the Church.

With gratitude I dedicate the present book to their memory, having learned from their engagement and from their excellence in research, teaching and guidance.

Lilleström, Oslo and Trondheim, June 2013

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ABBREVIATIONS OF JOURNALS AND SERIES

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der Neueren Forschung
ANSU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
ARW	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AV	Authorized Version
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAGD	Bauer, W., Arndt, W. F., Gingrich, F. W. and Danker, F. W. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Oxford: Clarendon, 1907
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BEvTh	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CCAT	The Center for Computer Analysis of Texts
ConBNT	Coniectanea neotestamentica or Coniectanea biblica
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
EJ	Encyclopaedia Judaica
ETL	Ephemerides Theologiae Lovanienses
EvQ	Evangelical Quarterly
Ex Aud	Ex Auditu

FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literature des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HibJ	Hibbert Journal
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HR	History of Religions
HThK	Herders theologischer Kommentar
HThKNT	Herder theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
HUTh	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IBS	Irish Biblical Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
ITQ	Irish Theological Quarterly
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JB	Jerusalem Bible
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JHI	Journal of the History of Ideas
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNTS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KEK	Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones. A Greek-English Lexicon. 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon
LXX	Septuagint
MeyerK	H. A. W. Meyer, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
MGWJ	Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentum
MT	Massoretic Text
MthZ	Münchener theologische Zeitschrift
NEAEHL	The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, 1993
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTS	New Testament Studies
OEANE	The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East
OTP	Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
QD	Quaestiones disputatae
RGG	Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. 3rd ed.
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions
RSR	Recherches de science religieuse
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Studies
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SD	Studies and Documents
SEÅ	Svensk exegetisk Årsbok
SNTSMS	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas Monograph Series
SO	Symbolae Osloenses
SPhilo	The Studia Philonica Annual
STDJ	Studies on the Text of the Desert of Judah
Str-B.	Strack, H. L., and P. Billerbeck. Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testament
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
ThHKNT	Theologische Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TSJThS	Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. Edited by G. Kittel und G. Friedrich. Stuttgart, 1932–79
UaLG	Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte
UBS	United Bible Societies
VC	Vigiliae Christianae
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	Zeitschrift für neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft
ZNWBeih	Zeitschrift für neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft. Beiheft
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

PART A

SURVEY OF RESEARCH AND DEBATE

CHAPTER ONE

THE SCRIPTURES AND THE WORDS AND WORKS OF JESUS

With a Response by M. Labahn

This survey covers the main aspects of my studies on John's Gospel as of the year 2007. Points from this broad presentation serve to preview some of the conclusions reached later in this present volume. In this way the subsequent chapters will illustrate my journey as scholar studying John and its setting relative to Philo of Alexandria, the apostle Paul, findings from archaeology, and finally the Synoptic Gospels. The focus is on the Scriptures, oral and written traditions, and expository methods and applications. Concepts and ideas are included, but further studies are needed in this area.

Glimpses from My Research in the Gospel of John

As I was doing research on the interpretation of manna as “bread from heaven” in John 6, I also examined the phrase “He who sent me” and similar terms. Through this study, I realized that the forensic perspective played an important role in the Gospel of John (=John). As I looked further into the background of this idea of agency, I found it to represent a distinct Jewish usage within the broader perspective of Hellenism. (Borgen 1965/81, 158–64; id. 1968, 137–48 and 1986, 67–78; id. 1996b, 101–2 and p. 110). Moreover, Philo of Alexandria provided material of interest on heavenly agents. He applied this juridical concept to the personified Logos, who acts as ambassador of God (*Heres* 205), and to angels, who are envoys between God and the people (*Gig.* 16, and *Abr.* 115). Philo's ideas illuminated the understanding in John of Jesus who, as the Son, is the emissary of God, the Father.

As I looked further into the forensic aspect of John, I learned from Théo Preiss that this judicial concept may also have mystical connotations: the agent can be seen as a person identical with his principal (Preiss 1954, 25). This union of the agent with the sender is in John strengthened because Jesus is seen as the Son of God, with God as the Father.

Among the scholars who have examined the forensic aspect in John, N. A. Dahl and S. Pancaro have made helpful contributions. Dahl recognized that the Johannine concepts of “witness” and “testimony” have judicial connotations. According to him, the forensic perspective was so basic and broad that it determined the Johannine understanding of history: the conflict between God and the world is conceived in forensic terms as a cosmic lawsuit. Christ is the representative of God, and the “Jews” are representatives of the world. (The term “the Jews” is in quotation marks to make clear that John’s usage may be different from that of the reader.) The “Jews” base their arguments upon the law, and Jesus appeals to the witness borne to him by the Baptist, by Jesus’ own works, and by the Scriptures. The lawsuit reaches its climax in the proceedings before Pilate. In his very defeat, Jesus won his case (Dahl 1962). In the introduction to his monograph *The Law in the Fourth Gospel*, Pancaro writes: “The confrontation between Jesus and the Jews unfolds itself in John as an impressive juridical trial and, within this dramatic framework, the Law appears as a hermeneutical key to much John has to say concerning the person of Jesus and his ‘work’” (Pancaro 1975, 1). Accordingly, in his extensive study Pancaro deals with (a) the Law as a norm used in vain against Jesus, (b) the way in which the Law testifies against the Jews and in favor of Jesus, and (c) with the way in which the transferral of nomistic terms and symbols in John takes place.

I shall touch on this forensic aspect of John’s presentation directly and indirectly at several points and deal with it further at the close of the chapter.

In my research I have given much time to detailed analysis of sections in John as seen within larger contexts. It is natural that I also use the same approach in this study. I begin with John 5 and 6.

Thematic Connections between John 5 and 6

In the report on the revelatory words and works of Jesus as outlined in John 5:30–47, the Baptist, Jesus’ own works, God the sender, and the Scriptures/Law serve as his witnesses. The context is as follows: In John 5:1–18 the story of Jesus healing a paralytic on the Sabbath is followed by judicial exchanges. The story in vv. 1–9 serves as a foundational text with select words repeated and paraphrased in the subsequent discussion in vv. 10–18.

The accusation against Jesus is twofold: (a) it is not lawful to carry a pallet on the Sabbath, and (b) to justify healing on the Sabbath Jesus makes the blasphemous claim that when he healed the paralytic on the

Sabbath, he was doing the same work as God the Father was doing. He makes himself equal to God, and the “Jews” sought to kill him, John 5:1–18 (Cf. Seland 1995, 59 and 236). Here Jesus drew on traditional exegesis: God cannot be resting on the Sabbath, in spite of the reference to God’s rest in Gen 2:2–3.

In the section which follows, John 5:19–30, the relationship between the Son and God the Father is described. A conclusion is drawn in v. 30: “I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.”

The remaining verses of chapter 5 center on persons, activities, and writings that bear witness to the Son, whom the Father sent. John the Baptist, with reference to John 1, the Son’s works, the Father, and the Scriptures, bear witness to him, vv. 31–47.

Although there is a geographical discrepancy between John 5 and 6—the action in chapter 5 is situated in Jerusalem, while 6:1 indicates that Jesus is in Galilee—a close thematic connection between the chapters can be seen.¹ Several observations will highlight the unity of these chapters. In John 5:36 it is said that Jesus’ works bear witness that “the Father has sent me.” The summary statement about Jesus’ healing activity, the report on the feeding of the 5000, and Jesus’ epiphanic appearance to the disciples in John 6:1–21 demonstrate this witnessing function of his works: Jesus was more than the prophet-like-Moses, that is, more than the crowd’s misconception of what this event meant.

As for Jesus’ appearance to his disciples at the crossing of the sea, it seems to presuppose the union between God the Father and the Son as outlined in John 5:19–30. The co-working of the Father and the Son is expressed in the epiphanic “I AM” in 6:20 (O’Day 1997, 156–57).

In John 5:37a, Jesus said: “And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me.” It is not clear to what the specific witness borne by the Father refers. If this testimony by the Father refers to biblical events, such as the revelation at Sinai, then the emphasis is on a negative reaction to this witness: God’s voice has not been heard, nor has his form been seen, and they do not have his word abiding in them, vv. 37b–38.

Another possibility should not be overlooked. In John 6:27–29 there is a verb that belongs to the terminology of witnessing, the verb *ἐσφράγισεν*,

¹ John 6:2 tells us that “the multitude followed him, because they saw the signs he did on those who were diseased.” This reference presupposes that Jesus had an extensive healing activity prior to crossing the Sea of Galilee in 6:1. Thus, the focus in 6:1–2 is not on time and geography. *μετὰ ταῦτα* in 6:1 is “John’s usual expression for denoting the laps of an undefined period” (Barrett 1978, 272).

“to seal, to close with a seal, to authenticate, to certify, to accredit as an envoy.” God has set his seal on the Son of Man, who will give the food which endures to eternal life. Thus, “to set the seal on” can mean to accredit a person, for example as an envoy (Borgen 1993a, 272–74 and 287–90, Schnackenburg 1965–71, 2:50; Liddell and Scott 1958, 1742). In this way God, the Father has borne witness.

In John 5:39–40 it is stated in a pointed way that the Scriptures bear witness: “You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.” Then in 6:31 an explicit quotation from the Scriptures is given: “as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” In the subsequent exposition, words from this quotation are repeated through v. 58. In this exegetical commentary it is shown that this text from the Scriptures bears witness to Jesus as the bread from heaven, as explicitly stated in vv. 35 and 48, “I am the bread of life”, and in v. 41, “I am the bread which came down from heaven,” and similarly in v. 51, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven.”

If the word “to seal,” ἐσφράγισεν, in 6:27, does not refer to the direct witness by the Father as suggested above, then only the witnessing of Jesus’ works (6:1–21) and of the Scriptures (6:30–58) are presented in John 6, and the dialogue in 6:22–29 serves as bridge between these two units.

The connection with John 5 may also be seen in 6:60–71. Following Jesus’ offensive remarks about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, the text states that many disciples left Jesus and that Judas was to betray him. Peter, representing the Twelve, confesses that Jesus’ has the words (ῥήματα) of eternal life. “The words” may here refer to the positive reaction by the Twelve, over against the doubt expressed in Jesus’ question mentioned in 5:47: “how will you believe in my words (ῥήματα)?”

These points show that, as far as ideas and interplay are concerned, there is a close and smooth connection between John 5 and 6, despite the geographical discrepancy. In terms of the relationship between the chapters 5, 6, and 7, it is clear that in 7:1 John picks up the thread from 5:17–18, that the Jewish authorities sought to kill Jesus. Thus 5:17–18 and 7:1 form an *inclusio* around 5:19–6:71.

The Witness of the Scriptures

In tracing the relationship between the chapters 5 and 6 and then together with chapter 7, I have made clear that the works of Jesus, the stories of the feeding, and the crossing of the sea have weight together as a witness

along with the Scriptures exemplified in the interpretation of bread from heaven.

Jesus' comment in v. 26, "... you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves" shows that the narratives fully bore witness, but the crowd was motivated by a misconception.

Within this context some observations should be made from my analysis of John 6:31–58. The main structure of this homily needs to be outlined: words from the Old Testament quotation "Bread from heaven he gave them to eat," v. 31, are constantly repeated through v. 58. The exposition can be characterized in the following way:

First, the words from the main Old Testament quotation are repeated and interpreted in a systematic way throughout this section.

In vv. 32–58, the words "bread from heaven he gave them" are repeated and interpreted.

The words ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν from the quotation in v. 31 are repeated in vv. 32–48:

V. 32 δέδωκεν ... τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ... δίδωσιν ... τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ·

V. 33 ἄρτος ... ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ...

V.34 ... δὸς ... ἄρτον

V.35 ... ἄρτος ...

V. 38 ... τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

V. 41 ... ἄρτος ... ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,

V. 42 ... τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ...

V. 48 ... ἄρτος ...

Then in vv. 49–58, the term φαγεῖν (or the synonym τρώγων, see John 13:18) is added and given a central role.

V. 49 ἔφαγον ...

V. 50 ... ἄρτος ... ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ... φάγη

V. 51 ... ἄρτος ... ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ... φάγη τοῦ ἄρτου ...

ἄρτος ... δώσω

V. 52 ... δοῦναι ... φαγεῖν

V. 53 ... φάγητε ...

V. 54 ... (τρώγων) ...

V. 56 ... (τρώγων) ...

V. 57 ... (τρώγων

V. 58 ... ἄρτος ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ... ἔφαγον ... (τρώγων) ... ἄρτον ...

Second, the closing statement, v. 58, refers back to the main statement at the beginning and at the same time sums up points from the entire exposition.

Third, besides the main quotation from the Old Testament in v. 31, in v. 45 there is a subordinate quotation from Is 54:3, which is built into the exposition.

Parallels are found in *Leg.* 3:162–168; *Mut.* 253–263, and more stereotypical examples in *Exod. Rab.* 25:1,2,6 (Borgen 1965/81, 28–58).²

The subsections in this exposition can be characterized as follows:

The Old Testament quotation in John 6:31 is part of the question raised by the crowd in v. 30 (“... what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you?”), and Jesus’ answer in vv. 32–33 begins the commentary. A new question is asked in v. 34 and Jesus’ answer follows in vv. 35–40. The exegetical debate between Jesus and the “Jews,” referred to above covers vv. 41–48. Then Jesus moves into the verses 49ff. where the word “to eat” from the Old Testament text is a central term. A new question is raised by the “Jews” in v. 52, with Jesus’ answer given in the remaining part of the exposition, vv. 53–58.

It is important to remember that the question and answer form was part of Jewish exegetical activity. Thus, Philo tells us that when the Therapeutae assemble, the leader “examines some points in the sacred writings, or also solves that which is propounded by another” (*Contempl.* 75). Moreover, the question and answer form for exegetical matters is widely used in Philo’s writings and other Jewish sources (Borgen 1997, 80–101; cf. pp. 102–39).

It is an observable fact that words and phrases from the Old Testament quotation in John 6:31, ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν, are repeated from v. 32 to v. 58. Therefore this quotation serves as the text’s core, with the repeated words and phrases from the text woven together with other words and phrases into an exegetical exposition.

Some modifications have been suggested by scholars, such as those proposed by G. Richter (1969). Richter suggested that there is a paraphrasing

² Note that P. N. Anderson 1997b, 12, n. 21, makes a mistake when he writes: “. . . the homiletic pattern identified by Borgen . . . consists of the following points: (1) The Old Testament quotation. (2) The interpretation (3) The objection to the interpretation. (4) Point (2), the interpretation, freely repeated and questioned. (5) The answer which can conclude with a reference to point (2), the interpretation.” As can be seen, the points referred to by Anderson do not coincide with my characterization of the homiletic exposition, as indicated here. Anderson refers to page 85 in my book *Bread from Heaven* where I analyze the subsection John 6:41–48. These verses contain what I called “a pattern of exegetical debate.”

and systematic exposition of words from the Old Testament text in John 6:31ff. He also agrees that the closing statement in each case has many similarities with the opening statement. I maintain that John 6:58 is the closing statement. Richter suggested that v. 51a is the closing verse, since there are agreements between v. 51a and the opening verses in vv. 31–33. In this way Richter followed those who saw vv. 51bff. as an added interpolation about the eucharist. My answer to Richter is that in all these passages the closing statement comes when the Old Testament repetition itself ends. The repetition of words from the Old Testament quotation in John 6:31 runs beyond v. 51a and ends with v. 58. In Borgen 1983c, 32–38 with end notes, I have dealt more fully with Richter’s points.

Textual Structures

In recent years, we have seen an increasing interest in structural studies. Various methods are used. Instead of entering into a general discussion of methods, I shall give a few examples where similarities and differences may be seen. One example is related to my analysis of the Prologue of John (Borgen 1970, 288–95 and id. 1972, 288–95, and id. 1987b, 75–101). My observations suggest that John 1:1–18—the Prologue of John—is to be divided basically into two parts, verses 1–5, which deal with the protological and pre-incarnational “time,” and verses 6–18, which deal with the appearance of Jesus Christ.

Thus, John 1:1–18, seen as a unit, has the following structure:

- (a) vv. 1–2: the Logos (ὁ λόγος) and God (θεός) before the creation.
- (b) v. 3: the Logos who created (πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο).
- (c) vv. 4–5: Light and darkness (τὸ φῶς and ἡ σκοτία); darkness not overcoming the light.
- (c’) vv. 6–9: the coming of light (φῶς) as Jesus’ coming, with the Baptist as a witness.
- (b’) vv. 10–13: the Creator (δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο) claiming his possession through the coming of Jesus.
- (a’) vv. 14–18: The epiphany of the coming of Jesus. The terms the Word (ὁ λόγος) and God (θεός) are repeated.

R. Alan Culpepper’s interest in my study focused on my proposal regarding the structure of the Prologue. It represented a step forward, but my analysis had some weaknesses, one of which was the following: “It is based on only three key terms or phrases while the prologue contains several

other equally important terms which when taken into account alter the structure of the text” (Culpepper 1980, 1–31). My response is (Borgen 1987b, 93–96): Culpepper’s comment is inadequate, since it ignores the fact that these “three terms or phrases” come from the authoritative source on the creation, Gen 1:1–5, which is even marked out by the initial words “In the beginning” in both John 1:1 and Gen 1:1. These words or terms have special weight in the beginning section of the Gospel.

Furthermore, R. A. Culpepper characterizes my understanding of the structure of John’s Prologue as roughly chiasmic. He then maintains that the two references to John the Baptist (vv. 6–8 and v. 15) distort my proposed structure, since both lie in the second half of the chiasm. Here Culpepper has a theoretical model which he applies in a mechanical way. One should not overlook that the first half of John’s Prologue deals with the protological and pre-incarnational perspective and the second half with aspects related to the incarnation. Logically, John the Baptist belongs only to this second half. Correspondingly, in the *Jerusalem Targum* on Gen 3:24 the references to “this world” and “in the world to come” occur only in the second half. The reason is that the first half deals with protology and the second half with history and eschatology.

It is to be noted that J. Painter in his essay “Rereading Genesis in the Prologue of John” states that I have convincingly argued that the Prologue is to be understood as an exposition of Gen 1:1ff. From Painter I learned that the pre-incarnational aspect is present in John 1:1–5 (Painter 2003, in Aune, Ulrichsen and Seland 2003, 179–201). The conclusion is: structural models are not to be applied in a mechanical way. They should as far as possible develop from the intrinsic value system and thought forms present in the text. If possible, other relevant texts should be used for comparison. D. M. Smith’s advice is fitting here. He maintains that the identification of material on the basis of criteria obtained from outside the Gospel itself seems to be more easily controllable than one’s own standards of consistency and coherence (Smith 1984, 14–15).

In *Bread from Heaven* I concentrated my analysis of the Old Testament text quoted in v. 31b: “as it is written, ‘Bread from heaven he gave them to eat,’” and the subsequent exegetical exposition. The literary context was dealt with briefly (Borgen 1965/81, 41–46). I realized that chapter 6 as a whole and its thematic ties to chapter 5 called for closer examination (Borgen 1993a). To emphasize this, I have already looked at the two chapters together at the beginning of this chapter.

The contexts of Philo’s homilies used for comparison can be explored further. Observations on *Leg.* 3:162–168 will serve as an example.

Before looking at this text, a point of information about the extant treatises of Philo's *Allegorical Interpretation* series on Genesis will prove helpful. This exegetical series consists of a verse by verse commentary that covers the main parts of Gen 2–41. Thus, in this series there are no commentaries preserved on Exodus or on the other Pentateuchal books, but only on Genesis. Several scriptural sections from other parts of the Pentateuch are interpreted by Philo in the *Allegorical Interpretation on Genesis*, however. In this way there are, fortunately, still commentaries on texts from Exodus, such as those on the manna, Exod 16, etc., and on texts from the remaining books of the Pentateuch.

In *Legum allegoriae*, Book 3, the verses in Gen 3:8–19 serve as headings for chains of expositions on verses from other parts of the Pentateuch. I examined Philo's exposition of Exod 16:4 in *Leg. 3:162–168* as one of the parallels to John 6:31–58. This section is incorporated into an expository chain of units connected to Gen 3:14c: "earth shall you eat all the days of your life." This chain runs from § 161 to § 181. The different parts of this broad exposition have as a common theme the idea of food. In my *Bread from Heaven* (1965/1981, 44), I referred to the thematic and transitional words in *Leg. 3:162a*, "That the food of the soul is not earthly but heavenly, the Sacred Word will testify (μαρτυρήσει) abundantly." This statement introduces the scriptural quotation of Exod 16:4 and serves as bridge back to the brief exposition on the earthly food of Gen 3:14c in *Leg. 3:161*. Here Philo moves from the earthly food to the spiritual/ethereal food.

Scholars, including D. Runia and myself among others, have examined some of these "chains" of scriptural quotations and expositions which follow after a scriptural quotation in the running commentary. These added links in the chain have been called secondary quotations. There is no evaluation expressed in this term as such, since there is a large variety of relationships expressed between the main link and the subsequent links of a chain (Runia 1984, 209–56, 1987, 105–38, cf. 1991; Borgen 1997, 102–39). For example, in the transitional formulation in *Leg. 3:162a*, the verb μαρτυρέω is the key word: "The Sacred Word" will *bear witness* to the heavenly food. Here there is a correspondence to the idea in John 5:39 that "the Scriptures" bear witness to Jesus, who, according to 6:31–58, is "the bread of life" which came down from heaven.

In summary, the following forensic perspective on John 5:1–7:1 emerges: Jesus has committed two crimes (a) he broke the Sabbath and (b) he made himself equal to God, 5:1–18. He was then under the threat of capital punishment. In verses 19–30 Jesus explains the relationship between him,

as Son, to God, as Father. The conclusion is: "I can do nothing of my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me." Jesus refers to those who bear witness to him: John the Baptist, the works of Jesus, the Father who sent him, and the Scriptures.

The Scriptures bear witness to him (v. 39), and Moses accuses the listeners. Moses wrote of Jesus (vv. 44–45).

Then in chapter 6 the actual witnessing is documented: The crowd and the disciples, in 6:1–21, indirectly witness to Jesus' works.

In the dialogue between Jesus and the crowd, vv. 22–29, it is made clear that they had misunderstood Jesus' works to refer to earthly food. They should rather work for the food which gives eternal life. Then the crowd asked for a sign and referred to what was "written," "Bread from heaven he gave them to eat" (vv. 30–31). In his exegesis Jesus identifies the bread from heaven with himself, vv. 32–58. In this way the Old Testament text bears witness to Jesus as the bread from heaven. As suggested above, the verses 6:22–29 probably focus on the phrase "for on him [the Son of Man] God the Father has set his seal," v. 27. By this "sealing" the Father has borne witness to him.

In these two chapters, the different groups reacted in various ways to the witnesses: the "Jews" sought to kill him for his crimes, John 5:17–18, and they challenged his exegesis of the scriptural quotation on bread from heaven, 6:41ff. and 6:52ff. The crowd who searched for Jesus misunderstood his feeding of the 5000, 6:26. When Jesus identified himself by saying: "I am the bread of life," he criticized them for their disbelief, and said: "... you have seen me and yet do not believe" (6:35–36). The disciples were divided in their reactions. Many left, see 6:60–66. The twelve, represented by Peter, decided to remain. They had come to know that Jesus was "the Holy One of God," 6:67–69. Finally, Simon Iscariot, one of the twelve, was to betray him, 6:70–71. After this sequence in chapters 5 and 6 on crimes, the threat of punishment, Jesus' self-presentation, his list of witnesses and their role, and the various reactions, John 7:1 returns to Jesus living under the threat of being killed.

In my view, J. Painter's attribution of John 6:1–35, which he calls "a quest story," to the first edition of the Gospel, and his attribution of vv. 41ff. and 52ff., which he calls "rejection stories" to a later second edition, breaks down in 6:36–40. He claims that the crowd is on a quest, and the "Jews" (vv. 41 and 52) are the ones who reject it. (Painter 1997, 79–88) Against Painter, I suggest that verse 36 tells us that *the crowd rejected him*: "But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe." As for the

“Jews,” they objected to Jesus’ exegetical identification of the bread from heaven with himself, and they asked how he could give of his flesh to eat. It is not stated that they rejected him, however.

I agree with Painter that there is a history of traditions behind the Gospel, but I question his theory of two editions. The different reactions to Jesus’ works and words which are seen in the Gospel would also be present—with some variations—in the pre-Gospel period of the tradition.

When Painter calls v. 35, “I am the bread of life” the “text,” he ignores the fact that through the term “bread” this verse is an integral part of the repetition of words from the Old Testament quotation in v. 31, which runs through v. 58. Verse 35 also is an integral part of the questions and answers about the scriptural quotation. The central importance of v. 35 comes from the fact that from this point onwards the “bread” is explicitly identified with Jesus, as can be seen in vv. 41, 48, and 51. In all of these verses, the “I am”-sayings from the Old Testament quotation in v. 31 are repeated.

Many other approaches to structural analysis are seen in research today (see Beutler 1997). A few comments may be of some relevance in this connection:

1. When examining the use of misunderstanding and irony in John, one should try to integrate the “theological” aspect into the formal structural categories, for example by combining the analysis of misunderstanding with the theological category of earth and heaven and related ideas.
2. Since the interpretative and exegetical elements, even on a judicial level, are present in the Gospel, one should look into possible learned aspects of this activity. For example, Hebrew philological features are presupposed and used to express interpretative concerns and ideas, such as in John 1:51. In the background of this verse, we can see the Hebrew בּו in Gen 28:12 that is understood as a reference to a person, meaning “on him,” and in John 6:32 and 12:40 variances in the vocalisation of the Hebrew are presupposed. Compare with the combined grammatical and theological point made by Paul in Gal 3:16 (see Borgen 1965/81, 62–66, 172, and 179).
3. Finally, the discussion of structures and rhetoric should pay attention to the forensic character of words and events in the life of Jesus, leading up to his execution as a criminal, and as God’s Son and emissary returning to his Father.

John within the Early Gospel Traditions

The Scriptures had authority and small units, “verses,” were quoted and subject to exegetical exposition. One might ask the question if the works and words of Jesus were in the process of being treated in the same or a similar way. The answer is “yes.” For example, a “Jesus Logion” may serve as basis for various forms of interpretation. The logion “He who receives any one whom I send, receives me; and he who receives me, receives him who sent me,” in John 13:20 can serve as an example. This logion is found in all four Gospels and has thus a firm place in the Gospel tradition. There are two versions:

First those that mention a chain of two agencies, i.e. the sender (God, the Father), first agency (Jesus, the Son), second agency (the disciples), addressee (not specified), John 13:20; Matt 10:14; Luke 10:16b; Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:48.

Second, those versions that deal only with a single agency, i.e. the sender (God, the Father), agency (Jesus, the Son), or the addressee (not specified), John 5:23; 8:19; 12:44–45; 14:7 and 9; 15:23; Luke 10:16a.

There are rabbinic parallels of the formula of single agency, such as those found in *Mek. Exod.* 14:31: “. . . having faith in the Shepherd of Israel is the same as having faith in (the word of) Him who spoke and the world came into being,” and “speaking against the Shepherd of Israel is like speaking against Him who spoke . . .” It is of interest to notice that the idea of agency here is applied to the role of Moses in an interpretation of Exod 14:31 and Num 21:5.

One form of expository elaboration of this logion is found in John 12:44–50 (Borgen 1979, 18–35). In John 12:44–45 two versions of this logion with single agency (Jesus in first person singular) serve as the “text”: “He who believes in me (Ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ), believes not in me, but in him who sent me (εἰς τὸν πέμψαντά με). And he who sees me (ὁ θεωρῶν ἐμέ) sees him who sent me (τὸν πέμψαντά με).”

In the subsequent exposition, words from this “text” are repeated and woven together with other words and phrases.

A. Fragments from and related to these two versions:

v. 46 Ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ

v. 49 ὁ πέμψας με

B. Fragment from another version which is presupposed (cf. Luke 10:16, “he who rejects me”):

v. 48 ὁ ἀθετῶν ἐμέ καὶ μὴ λαμβάνων . . . μου

C. Terminology on agency:

v. 49 ἐξ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐκ

v. 50 καθῶς . . . οὕτως

D. Legal and eschatological terminology from the Gospel tradition and terms used elsewhere in the NT and in Judaism:

v. 47 ἐγὼ οὐ κρίνω . . . οὐ . . . κρίνω τὸν κόσμον . . .

v. 48 τὸν κρίνοντα . . . ὁ λόγος . . . κρινεῖ . . . ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ

v. 50 ζωὴ αἰώνιος

E. Other words from the Gospel tradition:

v. 46 ἐγὼ . . . ἐλήλυθα, ἵνα

v. 47 οὐ . . . ἦλθον ἵνα . . . ἀλλ' ἵνα

v. 47 (?) ἐάν τις μου ἀκούσῃ τῶν ῥημάτων καὶ μὴ φυλάξῃ

F. Terminological influence from the Old Testament: the giving of the law and the light and darkness in the creation story.

v. 46 φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ

v. 49 ἐντολὴν δέδωκεν

In 1 Cor 7:10–16 Paul testifies to such an expository use of a cited Jesus logion, the logion on divorce: “To the married I give the charge, not I but the Lord, that

‘the wife should not separate from her husband’ (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)—‘and that the husband should not divorce his wife’, vv. 10–11. In vv. 12–16 Paul repeats words from the Jesus logion and weaves them together with interpretative words.

The Jesus logion on agency is also in John 12:44–45 and followed in vv. 46–50 by an exposition. Although the themes differ, both deal with juridical applications. Paul develops rules for marriage and divorce, while John elaborates on rules of agency to describe the role of Jesus as the commissioned agent of the Father.

Paul also documents that a narrative unit in the Gospel tradition can be treated in the same way. In 1 Cor 11:23–25(26) he cites the institution of the Lord’s supper as a transmitted tradition. Then in vv. 27ff. he gives a commentary on this quoted unit of tradition by repeating the words and weaving them together with his own interpretation.

Paul’s use here of a story from the Gospel tradition can give insight to the rendering and expository application of narrative in John, such as the story of the healing of the paralytic in John 5:1–9, followed by a

subsequent juridical exchange in which words from the story are repeated and woven together with interpretative applications, vv. 10–18 (Borgen 1990a, 413–17).

What is the relationship between John and the other Gospels? In my study “John and the Synoptics in the Passion Narrative,” 1959, the conclusion was that John is based essentially on an independent tradition.

At some points, however, various elements from the Synoptic Gospels can be seen in John. John appears dependent on the Synoptic Gospels only in certain pericopes, so it is probable that oral tradition brought this material to John. This explains the relative freedom with which John has reproduced the Synoptic material. There is a continuity between my understanding in 1959 and my present view, although modifications and a shift of emphasis can be seen. Today I formulate my understanding in the following way. There are three main possibilities: (a) The exposition of an oral or written tradition may have received its form in the pre-Synoptic and pre-Johannine stages; the Evangelist has brought these units of tradition into his Gospel. (b) The Evangelist may himself have interpreted and given form to some oral or written traditions which do not come from the present Synoptic Gospels. (c) The exposition may have taken place after one or more sections of the other Gospels were known to the evangelist and were variously used by him. This knowledge of and influence from one or more of the other Gospels, or of units from them, may have been brought to him by travelling Christians (Borgen 1992, 1816). Since the publication of the essay “John and the Synoptics in the Passion Narrative” in 1959 I have moved more in the direction of points (a) and (b) without excluding the possibility that also point (c) could be at work.

Behind John, there was a process in which both preservation and continuity were present and expository interpretation had also been at work. A few examples will illustrate this understanding: First, aspects of the logion in John 13:20 and its uses have been discussed: (a) “He who receives any one whom I send” (b) “receives me,” (c) “and he who receives me” (d) “receives him who sent me.” The same points (a), (b), (c), and (d) are found in the parallels in Matt 10:40 and Luke 10:16, cf. Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:48. The words used by John differ from those found in the other Gospels. For example John has the verbs πέμπω (“send”) . . . λαμβάνω (“receive”) while Matt 10:40 has ἀποστέλλω and δέχομαι. Moreover, the contexts differ: the saying in John 13:20 is quoted at the Last Supper and the foot-washing, in John 13:1–20. The context of Matt 10:40 is the Missionary Discourse, Matt 9:36–11:1, and the context of Luke 10:16 is the Mission of the Seventy Two,

Luke 10:1–16. Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:48 conclude the Dispute about Greatness, Mark 9:33–37 and Luke 9:46–48.

For comparison, Paul's citation of the logion on divorce, in 1 Cor 7:10–11, with its parallels in the Synoptic Gospels offers helpful insight. The fact that the verb in the Synoptic versions of the logion on divorce (*ἀπολύειν*) differs from Paul's terms (*χωρίζειν*) and (*ἀφιέναι*) is a phenomenon that runs parallel with a comparison between the Synoptic Gospels and John concerning the versions of the Jesus-logion on agency.

The conclusion of our discussion of John's logion on agency is: Neither the words used nor their contexts reflect the words and contexts found in Synoptic Gospels. This observation and the formal parallel usage of another Jesus logion by Paul, the one on divorce, support the view that John draws on a Jesus logion which was transmitted, practiced, and interpreted in the community independently of the Synoptic Gospels (Borgen 1992b, 1820–23).

As second example, both in John 6:51–58 and in 1 Cor 10:3–4 together with vv. 16–17, and 21 manna traditions are connected with the eucharistic traditions.

John 6:51–58 paraphrases parts from the institution of the Lord's Supper. A version of the institution is presupposed. Similarly, Paul in 1 Cor 10:16–17, 21 selects words from the eucharistic tradition without quoting the story of the institution. The story of the institution is presupposed as known. The commentary in 1 Cor 11:(26)27ff. is also a parallel, but here the institution is quoted in 11:23–25(26).

John and Paul use the eucharistic tradition in the same way. They make expository elaborations on word sets. The sets in John 6:51b–58 are *ἄρτος/βρῶσις/σάρξ* (bread/food/flesh), *αἷμα/πόσις* (blood/drink), and *φαγεῖν/τρώγειν* (to eat), and *πίνειν* (to drink).

The Pauline word sets in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21 and 11:27–29 are *ἄρτος/βρῶμα/σῶμα* (bread/food/body), *πόμα/ποτήριον/αἷμα* (drink/cup/blood), *φαγεῖν/μετέχειν* (eat/partake), and *πίνειν* (drink). Both John and Paul apply the biblical story about the manna and the well to the eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper. In John 6:(31)51b–58 words from the eucharistic tradition are integrated into the exposition of the Old Testament text on the manna, cited in v. 31. In 1 Cor 10:3–4, the Israelites' eating and drinking in the desert exemplify the Lord's Supper. Against this background, it is probable that John 6:55 (“For my flesh is food, *βρῶσις*, indeed, and my blood is drink, *πόσις*, indeed”) refers to the manna and the well, just as the corresponding terms, *βρῶμα* and *πόμα*, in 1 Cor 10:3–4 do.

In John 6:51b, the phrase ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω ἢ σὰρξ μου ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς (“the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world”) comes close to rendering a formulation from the presupposed institution story of the eucharist in the Johannine community. This understanding is supported by the similar wordings in 1 Cor 11:24, Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (“this is my body which [is given] on your behalf”), and Luke 22:19, Τοῦτό ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον (“this is my body which is given on your behalf”).

These similarities show that John is here closer to Paul than to the Synoptics and support the view that John presupposes the practice of a communal, eucharistic meal. This circumstance reinforces the understanding that John here is independent of the Synoptics. John draws on a tradition, for which Paul gives evidence, and Paul shows that this association of the manna with the eucharist already existed in the fifties C.E. Thus, John is here independent of the other written Gospels (Borgen 1990b, 453).

To many it has become an accepted and self-evident principle that as a liturgical tradition and practice the story of the institution of the eucharist is firm and stable in a way different from the rest of the Gospel material (Neiryneck 1990, 440–41; Labahn and Lang 2004, 455–56). It is interesting that those who maintain this view realize that literary methods and analyses are not adequate and sufficient. It is necessary to look at the stable liturgical setting and usage of the eucharistic story in community life at the pre-Gospel stage. In this way they allow for oral tradition and its transmission to be even more decisive than literary analyses and considerations. Moreover, it seems difficult to envision that there were no other oral Gospel traditions in use in that same community before, during, and after the present Gospels were written.

Even so, one may maintain that a liturgical tradition cannot be used as a standard for the analyses of Gospel material in general, including John. I do not believe that those who hold this view mean that the Gospel tradition had no stability at the oral stage. Thus, one has to think in terms of various degrees of stability and some variations in the transmission process. A double motive was at work: the need and aim to preserve oral traditions in a recognizable continuity and the need to interpret and apply them.

It should be noted that the preserved eucharistic traditions themselves testify to a variety. As seen above, fragments are built into expository contexts. Editorial modifications are made, cf. 1 Cor 11:26 where Paul formulates a sentence parallel to Jesus' words in v. 25b, so that at first Jesus seems to be still speaking. That is not the case, however, since Paul refers

to Jesus in the third person as the Lord: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink his cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The different versions of the eucharistic tradition challenge the theory of their unique stability: the Markan version, the longer and shorter versions of Luke, and the version of 1 Cor 11:23–25(26) show both disagreements and agreements among themselves. Moreover, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke the eucharistic stories are parts of the Gospels, placed together with the other traditions about Jesus' words and works (Borgen 1990b, 452–53).

Against this background there is basis for comparing on the one hand the orally transmitted Pauline eucharistic material with the versions in Matthew/Mark, Luke and the Johannine fragments on the other. In this way one can discover degrees of agreements and differences that might exist between independent traditions.

Thus a comparison between the Paul's and Mark's versions can demonstrate what kind of agreements might exist between two independent versions: there are close verbal agreements in the form of sentences, word pairs and sets, single words, and corresponding variant terms. This approach may also be used in comparing Paul's material with the Lukan versions.

Such comparisons will also reveal that there are differences that give each version its distinctive character. One difference is that there are no specific agreements found in the context of the passages in Paul and in Mark, although Paul seems to presuppose a passion narrative corresponding to the passion narratives in the Gospels.

In view of considerations such as these, I have drawn the following conclusion with regard to the story about the paralytic, John 5:1–18, the story of the cleansing of the Temple, 2:13–22, and the eucharistic fragments in 6:51–58. I conclude that the agreements between John 2:13–22, 6:51–58 and the Synoptics are neither closer, nor more striking, than those between the Pauline passages and Mark, and in the case of John 5:1–18 there are fewer agreements with the Synoptics. As far as these three Johannine passages are concerned, they support the hypothesis that John and the Synoptics are mutually independent.

A note should be added here: It has been suggested that the passage about the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, John 5:1–18, uses elements from Mark 2:1–3:6, the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum and the disciples plucking grain, etc. (Neiryck 1990, 445–47). Among the several comments that could be made, one should be mentioned here: This view means that John has treated this Synoptic

material in a radical, almost violent way. Thus, in the research along these lines, it has not been clarified what method John has used in the treatment of these Markan stories. What is John's understanding of Mark and of tradition, and how and why would his readers find his radical treatment of Mark acceptable and authoritative (Borgen 1990b, 456; cf. Smith 1992, 186, n. 5)?

The Forensic Aspect

When the charges brought against Jesus are assembled, they form a crime report. If the trial and execution are included, a crime and trial-and-execution report on Jesus appears.

The Crime Report: Jesus was

- a violator of the Sabbath, of the Law—a “sinner,” John 5:1–18
- a blasphemer, John 5:17–18
- a false teacher who led the people astray, John 7:12; 7:45–49
- a blasphemer, John 8:58
- a violator of the Sabbath, of the Law—a “sinner,” John 9, esp. 9:14–16, 24
- a blasphemer, John 10:24–38
- an enemy of the Jewish nation John 11:47–53

Report on the Trial: Jesus was

- tried as a criminal, an evildoer, and sentenced to capital punishment, John 18:1–19:16a
- accused as a false teacher who led the people astray, John 18:19–24
- and accused as a blasphemer, John 19:7

Report on the Execution and the Burial: Jesus was

- executed by crucifixion as a criminal and was buried, John 19:16b–41.

The Jewish misunderstanding and misuse of the Law were behind these charges. In the eyes of the Jews concerned, the Law demanded the condemnation and execution of Jesus: “We have a law and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God” (John 19:7; see Pancaro 1975, 7–8).

According to the contrary view, the Scriptures/the Law and as well as other people bear a positive witness to Jesus, and Moses wrote of him, John 1:45, 5:40, 45, etc. From this we can see that John sees Jesus within a scriptural framework. A few glimpses have been given in this chapter.

I have shown how the Prologue, John 1:1–18, draws on Genesis, and deals on the one hand with aspects “before,” during, and after creation, namely the Logos, God, creation, the light, and on the other hand with the corresponding three manifestations in the incarnation mentioned subsequently.

In chapter 5 we read that Jesus, in accordance with scriptural exegesis, acted like God when healing on the Sabbath and for that reason faced the threat of being killed for blasphemy. As the Son of God he made clear that he was completely dependent upon God, his Father, and acted as the Father’s emissary. Jesus referred to the Baptist, his own works, the Father, and the Scriptures as his witnesses.

In chapter 6 examples are given of this witnessing function: Jesus works are exemplified in the feeding of the 5000, etc. God, the Father sealed and authorized the Son of man, and the Old Testament quotation and exposition of bread from heaven bore witness to him as the bread of life that came down from heaven. Then in 7:1 the threat of capital punishment referred to in John 5:17–18 is referred to again, and the debate about Jesus continues in a sharpened form. Within the scope of this chapter, it is not possible to follow the series of events and the line of thinking throughout the Gospel, but a basis for further studies has been given. The obvious fact should be made that the Gospel goes beyond trial, execution, and burial, and tells about Jesus’ resurrection and appearances. He then commissioned his disciples to be his emissaries.

Pragmatic Concerns

What is the pragmatic concern running through John? In my book *Bread from Heaven* (pp. 2–3 and 172–92) I saw an anti-docetic motif at work in John 6. I maintained that one aim of John 6:31–58, as well as of the Gospel in general, was to criticize a docetic tendency which drew a sharp distinction between the spiritual sphere and the external or physical sphere and played down the unique role of Jesus Christ in history. This point has been challenged by Johannine scholars such as J. Painter (Painter 1997, 80) and M. M. J. Menken (Menken 1997, 198–99). The comment made by Menken is to the point: “Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, pp. 183–92, rightly stresses that the ‘Jews’ of John 6:41,52 sharply distinguish between the spiritual bread from heaven and the man Jesus, but his identification of these Jews with the Docetists does not seem to be justified: the Johannine Jews deny Jesus’ heavenly provenance, the Docetists deny his humanity that culminates in his death” (Menken 1997, 199, f.n. 61).

I agree with Menken's understanding. The "Jews" were people who knew Jesus' human family. Therefore, they questioned his claim to be the Son of God and the bread that came down from heaven. In a pointed way this tension is present in the trial, verdict, and execution of Jesus: The claim is that a criminal, publicly crucified, is the heavenly Son of God, the Father. John 20:31 is to be read against this background: "... these [signs] have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." It is by believing in the criminal who suffered capital punishment, and who, nevertheless or for just that reason, is the Son of God "you may have life in his name."

In light of this, I have suggested that structural and rhetorical studies should pay more attention to the theological movements between the earthly and the heavenly levels when stories about misunderstandings and conflicts are analyzed. Moreover, attention should be given to the forensic aspect which runs through the Gospel and leads to Jesus' trial and execution. This forensic aspect indicates that the treatment of the Scriptures and tradition is quite learned.

Finally, the question about John and the Synoptics has been broadened so that Gospel material in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians has been included. Observations supporting the view that John is independent of the other Gospels have been listed. The possibility that one or several of the other Gospels has in part influenced John has not been completely excluded.

A Perspective to be Explored

A final remark on the nature of the Gospel of John as a whole should be given. Seeing that the structure of "a crime-and-punishment-report" is present in John, I have looked into such reports in Philo's *In Flaccum*, Josephus, *B.J.* 7:437–453 (Catullus), 2 Macc 4:7–9:29 (Antiochus), and Acts 12:1–24 (Herod Agrippa). It is of interest to note that, just as is the case in *In Flaccum* and 2 Macc 4:7–9:29, so also in the Gospel of John the report begins with the professional activities of the main person as an adult. The activities ultimately lead the person to suffer capital punishment. Against this background one might ask the question: Does John (and Mark?), who begins with the ministry of Jesus, follow the structure of "crime-and-punishment-reports," but in a recast form to the effect that the activities and death of a criminal are given a contrasting meaning? In this way the crucifixion of Jesus as a criminal has been turned "upside down" so as to become a central point of a Gospel (Borgen 2006a, 78).

Response by Michael Labahn: Living Words and the Bread of Life

Since the publication of his famous study on John 6, *Bread From Heaven*, Peder Borgen has become a well known and well established Johannine scholar. His contributions range from explorations of the religious background of Johannine thought to the quest for the sources of the Johannine tradition. On the former, Borgen, an expert on Philo, is aware of both Jewish and Hellenistic influences on the Gospel of John and has examined the Johannine interpretation of the Old Testament as a lively source for the Johannine presentation of Jesus.

On the latter, his research has brought him into the ongoing debate over John's relationship to the Synoptics (cf. D. M. Smith 2001, and Labahn and Lang 2004). His analysis in this chapter beautifully combines his expertise in these different fields of Johannine exegesis. It is very difficult to give a short but well-founded reply to such a rich contribution, so for reasons of space I will limit myself to a few remarks.

To contextualize my comments, I begin with a short overview of my own research on John 5 and 6. In my view, each of these incidents is a distinct literary unit within the Fourth Gospel. The narrator uses traditions present in his community as well as ideas from his theological school to elaborate two conflicts that develop Christological, theological, and pragmatic insights (cf. Labahn 1999, 213–304; 2000a; 2000b).

John 6 refers back to the preceding healing stories in chapters 4 and 5 but also establishes distinctive issues. At the same time, I do not deny that the narrator connects the episodes of his narrative very closely. I am grateful that Borgen has honored my studies by a friendly and thorough critique (cf. Borgen 2000) that shows our agreements as well as the differences in our approaches.

With this brief introduction, I will focus on four main issues in Borgen's article: his understanding of John 5:19–6:71 as a literary unity; his analysis of the interplay between John and texts from the Hebrew Bible; his remarks on the relationship between John and the Synoptics; and, his observations on the forensic structure of units in John's narrative.

First, Borgen's innovative approach takes John 5:19–6:71 as a single literary unit and views 5:17–18 and 7:1 as an *inclusio*. Several observations would challenge this proposal. The literary structures in John 5, 6, and 9 reveal that discussion and monologue often follow a narrated incident. The geographical distinction between Jerusalem (chapter 5) and the Sea of Galilee (chapter 6) is accompanied by statements indicating the passage of time ("after this" in 6:1, 4). Also, the new narrative setting in John 6

does not explicitly reflect the plot to kill Jesus (see 7:1, 25; 8:59; 10:31–39; 11:6, 53) and includes a new group of dissenters, a point that Borgen himself acknowledges by taking 5:17–18 as a first reaction to Jesus' witness and noting that in chapter 6 there are other reactions. Further, the God-given works mentioned in 5:36 are more generally connected with all the deeds of Jesus, including his speeches.

Of course, 6:31 may be the closest (in terms of the flow of the narrative) explicit example of how Scripture "witnesses" to Jesus in John, but the narrator refers to the witness of Scripture through numerous quotations and allusions throughout the book. Finally, the confession of Peter in John 6:68 ("You have the words of eternal life"), linked with the hint about Judas the traitor, is not to be read as a direct reply to 5:47 ("if you do not believe what he [Moses] wrote, how will you believe what I say?"). It is to be read alongside the testing of Jesus' disciples in John 6:5–8 as an exemplary reaction to Jesus' appearance. Following Borgen's reading, however, one may treat Peter's confession as a reply to the question of 5:47 as do others in John, e.g., the Samaritans in 4:39–42 or even, as 20:30–31 would propose, the reader.

One might accept that there may be a closer connection between chapters 5 and 6 than has generally been realized. Borgen's approach also helps us to read the Fourth Gospel as a horizontal line of thought—for instance, gradually learning more about the witness motif. John repeats motifs, taking them up again and again to help the reader join his "universe of thought" (cf. Labahn 2004, 330f). Nevertheless, I think Borgen presses the connection between John 5 and 6 too much. Second, Borgen's research shows that a wide range of conclusions may be drawn by analyzing the intertextual play between John and Old Testament texts. These conclusions include observations on the literary design of the Gospel and its structure: for example, demonstrating that the OT quotation in John 6:31 is an instance of the "witness" of Scripture, which is exposed—as Borgen says, is "repeated and interpreted"—throughout 6:31–58 to support the literary unity of the passage, or referring to Genesis 1:1–5 as an "authoritative source" for John 1:1–18. Borgen convincingly stresses that any analysis of structure—including any intertextual allusions—must be derived from the text itself and its "value system and thought," of course without denying comparison with other relevant texts. According to my view, any intertextual play receives support as well as contradiction from intratextuality in that sense.

Third, regarding John and the Synoptics, we must, I think, differentiate between at least two questions: (a) did the author of the Fourth Gospel

have knowledge of (an)other written Gospel(s)?; and, (b) was the tradition used by the Fourth Evangelist related to the Synoptic Gospels or their traditions? If the narrator of John's Gospel knew at least one Synoptic Gospel he obviously did not use it as his overall literary source; and *vice versa*, the Synoptics clearly were not the exclusive source(s) for John (as pointed out by Borgen's contributions). However, there remains the possibility that the author of John knew one of the Synoptic Gospels and used at least some of the Synoptic material, a hypothesis that Borgen now seems to accept.

Further, Borgen points to continuity and creativity by the Johannine narrator and "various degrees of stability" in transmission. Although we have to reckon with a certain amount of continuity to support the very notion of "transmission," I would like to underscore the creative aspect. It is now generally acknowledged, in contrast to the old *formgeschichtlich* approach, that oral tradition is not a stable entity. However, it is still too easy to refer to written texts as "fixed forms" while treating oral tradition as a fluid form of transmission.

Using traditions includes the establishment of new meanings in continuity and in dialogue with one's own public memory; in this way, traditions are kept alive for their intended audiences. Therefore, it is highly hypothetical to label any tradition behind a Johannine passage that seems to parallel a synoptic text as "pre-synoptic," "non-synoptic," or "synoptic." Nevertheless, in some cases it seems likely that the tradition used by the Fourth Evangelist—for example, the tradition behind John 6—has its roots in a synoptic text to which it is related through "secondary orality" (cf. Labahn 2000a).

If so, the Synoptics may be a source for the oral tradition material on which John has drawn. In other cases we may reckon with an independent Johannine tradition, as may be the case with the traditions behind John 5:1–18 and 6:51–58. Each individual text must be addressed with the type of methodological care that characterizes Borgen's style of analysis.

For Borgen, the relationship between John and the Synoptics has to be placed within the larger framework of the early Christian Jesus tradition and its transmission, which can also be detected in the letters of Paul. This is a methodologically well-grounded argument. Regarding the different kinds of tradition, however—and the assumption that liturgical traditions are more stable than others does not, of course, rule out the possibility of different traditions within a single community with regard to community rites—and the individual shaping of each, at present we are not able to establish general rules about the nature of the transmission of

early Christian Jesus tradition. Fourth and finally, Borgen underlines the forensic aspect in the overall structure and individual units of the Gospel of John, detecting “a crime and punishment report.” Herewith he correctly underscores that Jesus’ crucifixion became a central point of the narrative, establishing meaning in contrast to the humiliation which is inherently part of this kind of punishment.

By his inspiring studies, Borgen has shown that a close look at the use of sources and traditions by the Fourth Evangelist helps to deepen our understanding of John’s Christology and theology. We can learn that the word(s) of traditions—including the Old Testament, synoptic or non-synoptic sayings and narratives—are living words that were creatively and meaningfully taken up in order to present Jesus as the one who is God’s bread of life for all people.

Reflections by the Author

Labahn and I agree that there may be a closer connection between chapters 5 and 6 than has generally been realized. He also finds that my approach is of help in reading the Gospel as a horizontal line of thought—for instance, gradually learning more about the witness motif. Our agreement that the thematic connections between John 5 and 6 need be explored further is good. We also closely converge when Labahn writes “Of course, 6:31 may be the closest (in terms of the flow of the narrative) explicit example of how Scripture ‘witnesses’ to Jesus in John.” Nevertheless, Labahn believes that I press the connection between John 5 and 6 too much.

I believe that this degree of agreement gives us a good basis for further exchanges. I am pleased that we are moving in the direction of regarding John 6 as an integral part of the Gospel in its present location.

Labahn and I agree that The topic of “John and the Synoptics” should be rephrased as “John within the early Gospel traditions” and thus should include Paul’s use of Gospel material. Labahn finds this to be a well-grounded argument.

Labahn states that one should differentiate between at least three points:

First, did the author of the Fourth Gospel have knowledge of (an)other written Gospels?

My response: Such knowledge can be considered as documented only if the agreements in the parallels between John and one or more of the Synoptics make it necessary to draw this conclusion, more precisely, only if

they are too strong and comprehensive to be explained by oral traditions. Here Paul makes it possible to compare units from oral tradition with parallel units in the Synoptic Gospels, such as the logion on divorce and the story of the institution of the Lord's Supper. In this way agreements and freedom can be evaluated.

Second, there remains the possibility that the author of John knew one of the Synoptic Gospels and used at least some of the Synoptic material, "a hypothesis that Borgen seems to accept" as Labahn writes. That was my view as formulated in 1959. I still see that as a possibility, but observations from the Gospel material in 1 Cor, makes it unnecessary and improbable. Moreover, Paul already develops expository elaborations on the received traditions. Thus there is no need to see such an interpretative activity as a second orality based on the Synoptics.

Third, Labahn states that at present we are not able to establish general rules about the nature of the transmission of the early Christian Jesus traditions. On this basis one probably should use the inductive method and analyze the sources available with these questions in mind.

In his reconstruction of the history of tradition, Labahn suggests that the Eucharistic section in John 6:51c–58 is added to the bread of life discourse and represents the last stage in the history of tradition. The addition contains an application of the bread of life discourse to the eucharistic practice of the Johannine church and is a rereading for the next generation. Some of Labahn's own observations weaken this view, however. He recognizes that the section vv. 51c–58 contains Johannine *theologumena* and wordings. When this is the case, one has to ask why this application should not be seen as a part of the discourse itself.

Moreover, the fact that Paul's application of the manna to the eucharist was already done in the fifties C.E. shows that such an understanding was not a late development which originated half a century later.

CHAPTER TWO

DEBATES ON EXPOSITORY METHOD AND FORM

My monograph *Bread from Heaven* was published in 1965 and received many scholarly responses. My analysis of the Bread of life discourse in John 6 gave rise to fruitful debates. This research led to further debates with colleagues, on, for example, the topic of John and the Synoptics.

Homiletic Style

An important area of my research has been methods and structures in the expository use of the Scriptures and of tradition. The foundation for this approach in my research was laid in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This chapter shows how other scholars tested this approach.

In the monograph *Bread from Heaven* (Leiden; Brill, 1965, 2nd imprint 1981), I attempted to show that the Discourse on Bread (John 6:31–58) is an exposition of the Old Testament. This exposition is characterized by midrashic features with parallels found in Philo and in Palestinian midrashim. Among such features is the systematic paraphrase of words from Old Testament quotations interwoven with fragments from haggadic traditions. This understanding of the midrashic character of John 6:31–58 has received broad acceptance, as can be seen from commentaries on The Gospel of John written by R. E. Brown, C. K. Barrett, B. Lindars and R. Schnackenburg (Brown 1966, 1: 262–303; Barrett 1978a, 279–97; Lindars 1972, 250–53; Schnackenburg 1965, 53–87; cf. Wilkens 1974, 220–48; Dunn 1971, 328–38; Kysar 1975, 124–25).

G. Richter also accepts my understanding of John 6:31–58 as a midrashic exposition of an Old Testament quotation (Richter 1969, 21–55; cf. Thyen ThR, 1979, 338–59). Richter attempts, however, to show that my analysis at some points could be a boomerang. He suggests that my approach supports the hypothesis that John 6:51–58 is an interpolation, instead of disproving it. The discussion in this chapter will be limited mainly to the article of G. Richter, although in the final section on pure and applied exegesis, the viewpoints of other scholars will be brought into the discussion.

Richter's main issue is the question whether John 6:51b–58 is an interpolation or not, with several of his viewpoints also of interest for a discussion of homiletic style. Richter accepts my analysis to a large extent: He

approves of the observation that a paraphrasing and systematic exposition of an Old Testament text is found in *Leg.* 3:162–168, *Mut.* 253–263, and *John* 6:31ff., with close similarities also in *Exod. Rab.* 25:1.2.6.

Richter also approves of the observation that subordinate Old Testament quotations are woven into the exposition of the main Old Testament quotation, the text. He also agrees that a homiletic pattern can be found in the passages.

He concludes that he has discussed a work “die trotz aller geübten Kritik eine hervorragende Leistung ist” (Richter 1969, 54). In spite of all the details in Richter’s study, and in spite of his thoroughness, he criticizes me at times for viewpoints that I do not hold and which are not in *Bread from Heaven*. One such example is my ostensible stress on the independence of the Jewish homily over against the Hellenistic diatribe. Richter writes: “Auch mit der Eigenständigkeit der jüdischen Homilie scheint es nicht ganz so weit her zu sein, wie Borgen meint, denn andere Forscher meinen, dass sie von der kynisch-stoischen Diatribe gelernt hat, und zwar auch in formaler Hinsicht.” The footnote on this section reads: “Dieser Meinung ist z.B. der jüdische Gelehrte Ed. Stein (Warschau), *Die homiletische Peroratio im Midrash*, in *Hebrew Union College Annual* (Cincinnati) 8/9 (1931/1932), 318.370, zusammen mit Arthur Marmorstein (1882–1946), einem anderen jüdischen Gelehrten” (Richter 1969, 51). There is no reference to any page in my book, only to my name, “wie Borgen meint.” The reason is that Richter attributes viewpoints which are not found in my book. I have stated the exact opposite of what he attributes to me. In discussing the contrast drawn by some scholars between midrashic style and terminology and the Greek style of diatribe, I give reasons for not making such a contrast and continue: “This contrast is also weakened by some studies which demonstrate close points of agreements between the Greek and rabbinic style and method of exegesis. Therefore, it is possible to analyse Greek elements both in the Palestinian midrash and in Philo. The more limited undertaking to investigate the midrashic method in *John* 6:31–58 and draw upon Palestinian midrash and Philo for comparative material, therefore, does not exclude the possibility of an influence from Greek exegetical method” (Borgen 1965/81, 60–61). My footnote on this section reads (Borgen 1965/1981, 60, f.n. 6): “With regard to style, cf. A. Marmorstein, *HUCA* 6, 1929, pp. 183–204, and E. Stein, *HUCA* 8–9, 1931–32, pp. 370–71, who trace the diatribe in Palestinian sources. Concerning Greek and rabbinic exegetical method, see S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine. Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I Century B.C.E.–IV Century, C.E. TStJThS* 18, New York 1950, pp. 47–82;

and D. Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," *HUCA* 32, (1949), pp. 239–64; "Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis," *Festschrift Hans Lewald*, Basel 1953, pp. 27–44, and A. Kaminka, "Bibel. VII, Bibelexegese," *EJ* 4, Berlin 1929, Col. 622; M. Hadas, "Plato in Hellenistic Fusion", *JHI* 19, 1958, pp. 11–12."

The Unity of the Discourse on Bread, John 6

Richter emphasizes the observation in my book that the closing statements in *Leg.* 3:162–168, *Mut.* 253–263, John 6:31ff. and *Exod. Rab.* 25 show many similarities with the opening statements and sum up points from the exposition. He then finds that there are agreements between the opening in John 6:31–33 and 6:51a, which to him confirm the theory that vv. 51b–58 is an interpolation (Richter 1969, 23f.). In reply to Richter it must be said that since the Old Testament text is paraphrased in the exposition, there are, of course, agreements with the opening throughout the passage.

Thus, vv. 48–49 might serve as a close, if Richter's approach is to be followed,

John 6:31–33:

³¹ οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν τὸ μάννα ἔφαγον ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον· Ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν. ³² εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ Μωϋσῆς ἔδωκεν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἀλλ' ὁ πατήρ μου δίδωσιν ὑμῖν τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸν ἀληθινόν. ³³ ὁ γὰρ ἄρτος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ζῶν διδοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ.

John 6:48–49:

⁴⁸ ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς·

⁴⁹ οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἔφαγον ἔν τῃ ἐρήμῳ τὸ μάννα καὶ ἀπέθανον.¹

The underscoring shows the agreements in wording between John 6:48–49 and the opening in John 6:31–33, and proves that there is no need to continue further to v. 51a, as Richter suggests. Likewise in *Leg.* 3:162–168 there are corresponding agreements between the opening statement in § 162 and various parts of the passage.

In spite of such agreements throughout the passage it is still relevant to analyze agreements between opening and closing statements. Richter ignores one important point: The closing statements in *Leg.* 3:162–168,

¹ Holmes, M. W. 2010, John 6:30–33, and 6:48–49.

Mut. 253–263 and John 6:31–58 come when the paraphrase of the Old Testament quotation ends as stated in my study: “The unit which belongs to a quotation from the Old Testament may be traced by examining the extent to which the paraphrase of that quotation goes . . .” (Borgen 1965/81, 29). “No paraphrase of the Old Testament texts is found outside the homilies, apart from certain traces in the transitional sections which introduce them . . . There is no paraphrase in John 6, vv. 60ff., of the Old Testament text of the homily (cited in v. 31b)” (Borgen 1965/81, 46). From this it becomes clear that John 6:51a cannot, as Richter maintains, be shown to be a closing statement by using my method of analysis since the paraphrase of the Old Testament quotation in v. 31 continues in vv. 51b–58. In a recent study J. D. G. Dunn rightly puts emphasis on the aspect of paraphrase: “. . . Borgen’s well-argued thesis that 6:31–58 forms an exegetical paraphrase of the OT quotation (v. 31) strongly reaffirms the coherence and unity of the whole passage, and makes much less plausible any attempt to isolate vv. 51c–58 as a later interpolation” (Dunn 1971, 330).

Dunn also correctly adds another point: “. . . v. 58 has as much if not more right than v. 51a–b in terms of correspondence to v. 31 to be considered as the closing statement of the homily” (Dunn 1971, 330).

A Pattern?

One further point of general interest from Richter’s article should be mentioned. He touches on the question of a stricter and freer use of the word “pattern”: “Damit soll jedoch nicht behauptet werden, dass in Joh. 6:31ff. das homiletic pattern nicht vorliegt. Nur durfte es der Evangelist viel freier—vielleicht ohne bewusste Anlehnung? verwendet, als Borgen meint” (Richter 1969, 50–51).

Nowhere in *Bread from Heaven* is it stated that the evangelist was conscious of employing a certain pattern as a pattern. The evangelist expressed the ideas in traditional forms and had hardly any independent interest in form as such. Therefore, the forms were not applied in a mechanical way. This view can be found in *Bread from Heaven*: “The exegetical paraphrase . . . fuses together words and fragments from different traditions into traditional forms and patterns. This method of exegetical paraphrase, then leads to a dynamic process of new combinations within the framework of tradition” (Borgen 1965/81, 59). A similar view is held by Le Déaut: “The authors were conscious of writing in a tradition rather than in a certain form” (Le Déaut 1971, 270–71).

Since Richter thinks that the evangelist used the homiletic pattern in a free way, it is surprising that he criticizes me at points for having a stricter and more narrow use of the term “pattern” than my actual use of it in *Bread from Heaven*. In my analysis, the exegetical paraphrase was regarded as one main characteristic of the homiletic pattern under discussion. The outline of the paraphrase could vary, however: Sometimes, as in *Leg.* 3:162–168, *Mut.* 253–263, John 6:31–58, etc., the Old Testament quotation is divided into parts and paraphrased in a successive sequence; in other passages, as in *Leg.* 3:169–174, most of the words and phrases are paraphrased in the same sequence as they are given in the Old Testament quotation; and again other places, as in *Leg.* 3:65–75a, Rom 4:1–22, etc., the paraphrase does not follow the sequence in which words occur in the quotation. Rather the words are here drawn upon when they can throw light upon the problem that is discussed. Thus, the freer use of the word pattern, which Richter suggests, can be found in *Bread from Heaven* itself, while the too-narrow use is found in Richter’s summary of my views, as when he states: “Die Erklärung erfolgt nach einem bestimmten System. Das Zitat wird in mehrere Teile oder Abschnitte zerlegt, die dann der Reihe nach interpretiert werden.” “. . . in einer Aufgliederung und Reihenfolge, wie sie für das von Borgen aufgezeigte common homiletic pattern charakteristisch sind.” (Richter 1969, 21, 23).

In my analysis I use, at points, expressions like “the systematizing work of the exegetes,” “in a systematic way the words, . . . are paraphrased,” etc. (Borgen 1965/81, 34, 42) but I do not think of “ein bestimmtes System” of paraphrase as a general characteristic of the homiletic pattern concerned. In *Bread from Heaven*, therefore, I did not argue against the interpolation of John 6:51b–58 based on the proportional lengths of the two parts, vv. 31–48 and vv. 49–58. One of the points made, however, was: “In vv. 51b–53 the discussion of eating is at the center. This fact ties the section closely to the exposition from v. 49 onwards, where the word ‘to eat’ is the main subject for the exegesis” (Borgen 1965/81, 35). Richter’s report on this point lacks precision: “Die Tatsache, dass der Teil b mit v. 49 beginnt und in den vv. 51–58 seinen Höhepunkt erreicht, ist nach der Meinung von Borgen ein Beweis für die enge Zusammengehörigkeit der vv. 51b–58 mit den vorhergehenden Versen und spricht gegen ihre Interpolation” (Richter 1969, 22). I argue that the concept of eating is at the center, while Richter attributes to me a mechanical characterization of “Teil b.”

Richter counts the lines and concludes: “In der Homilie Joh. 6—so wie sie Borgen annimmt—wäre das Zeilenverhältnis zwischen dem Teil a (= vv. 31–48) und dem Teil b (= vv. 49–58) 36:24, der Unterschied würde

also nur das Eineinhalbfache betragen, während er bei Philo immerhin das Dreifache, Vierfache, Viereinhalbfache, Sechsfache und sogar das Achtzehnfache ausmachen kann" (Richter 1969, 23). In this summary, Richter does not include all the data, since he does not mention the proportion in *Leg.* 3:65–75a, which according to his own counting is 18:38, that is, approximately "das Zweifache," which comes quite close to "das Eineinhalbfache" in John 6. The natural conclusion that can be drawn from Richter's counting is that the proportional length among the parts vary and so cannot be used as an argument for or against the interpolation of John 6:51b–58.

Yet another point can be mentioned to illustrate how Richter applies a stricter use of the term pattern than I did—although he himself calls for a freer use. While my hypothesis is that various midrashic methods, patterns, terminology, and ideas are utilized in the homilies, he seems to be critical toward or hesitant to parallel material drawn from sources outside the homilies listed. Thus Richter criticizes a reference to an exegetical phrase in *Leg.* 2:86 ("for the flinty rock is the Wisdom of God") since it does not occur in a context which follows the homiletic pattern (Richter 1969, 32). In my study, the many midrashic features analyzed are of primary importance, while the theory of a homiletic pattern is of secondary interest for my thesis.

Richter's too strict use of the term "pattern" causes him to require that the various interpretations of the bread of life which he finds in John 6 itself must have a parallel in the other homilies listed. Such differences are, according to Richter, the idea in John 6:31–51, that the Father gives the bread, and in vv. 51b–58, that Jesus gives it, with another difference being the shift from φαγεῖν to τρώγειν (Richter 1969, 24–25). These differences can be explained within John's Gospel itself, however. John's Christology makes the alternative use of the Father and the Son natural, since they are one in action and echo a similar variation between John 6:44 and 12:32 (Borgen 1965/81, 158–64, especially 160–61). The word τρώγειν is used also in John 13:18 and probably reflects eucharistic traditions utilized by the evangelist (Borgen 1965/81, 92–93). It is to be noted that Richter himself regards John 13:18 as part of the original Gospel, and not as an interpolation. Hence Richter contradicts his own conclusion about John 6:51b–58 being an interpolation.

Even beyond possible comparisons between John with parallel homilies in Philo, there are parallel features to be found. In *Leg.* 3:162–168 there are terminological variations: The word ὁ ἄρτοι (Exod 16:4) in § 162 is later in the same paragraph rendered as ὁ λόγος, and in § 168 as ἐπίστημαι. So the

thought in the exposition moves from the heavenly principles (ὁ λόγοι) to the actual perception of these principles (ἐπίστημαι).

A movement of thought from one shade of meaning to another, and from the spiritual to the concrete, is also found in the same passage. Thus the phrase εἰς ἡμέραν (Exod 16:4) receives various interpretations: In *Leg.* 3:163 the phrase τὸ τῆς ἡμέρας εἰς ἡμέραν means that the soul should gather knowledge, not all at once, but gradually. In § 167 εἰς ἡμέραν is interpreted in the concrete sense as day and light, then as light in the soul, which is further specified as the right use of school or education: “Many, then have acquired the lights in the soul for night and darkness, not for day and light.”

Thus this homily in Philo presents two or more shades of meanings for the same Old Testament phrase and includes both the spiritual and concrete realities. Corresponding variations in John 6:31–58 do not support a theory of interpolation. Still another point in Richter’s article (1969, 21–55) calls for a comment: Richter uses the statement of purpose in John 20:31 to identify the authentic parts of the Gospel. Richter then writes: “Es ist auf den ersten Blick klar, dass die vv. 31–51a mit dem in 20:31 angegebenen Zweck übereinstimmen. Nicht nur die gemeinsame Terminologie, sondern auch die gleiche Thematik und die gleiche Tendenz beweisen das” (p. 35). “Das Verhältnis der vv. 51b–58 zu 20:31 sieht ganz anders aus. Es bestehen Unterschiede in der Terminologie, im Inhalt und auch in der Tendenz” (p. 37).

In his discussion of terminology, Richter deals with the following from John 20:31:

1. πιστεύειν, which Richter finds in John 6:35, 36, 40. Against Richter it must be said that this term is not only lacking in John 6:51b–58, but also in vv. 41–51a. Moreover, the question must be asked why Richter interprets φαγεῖν in vv. 49–51a as meaning πιστεύειν, when this term does not occur in these verses at all? Thus, Richter has overlooked the fact that the term πιστεύειν is missing in the whole section, vv. 41–58, in which the term and the concept of φαγεῖν are at the center of the exposition (see P. Borgen 1965/81, 189, n. 3).
2. ζῶν αἰώνιον ἔχειν. Richter admits that this and similar terms occur throughout the discourse, see John 6:51b–58: vv. 33, 35, 40, 47, 48, 51ab, 53, 54, 57, 58. This fact speaks against Richter’s view and in favor of the unity of the discourse as a whole.
3. ὁ χριστός, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. Richter sees that this term does not occur anywhere in John 6:31–58. He performs arbitrary exegesis when he

accepts expressions in 6:31–51a, ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ v. 46; καταβέβηκα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ v. 38; ὁ πέμψας με v. 44, cf. v. 39, etc., as being synonymous Christological expressions, but does not in the same way regard Christological phrases in vv. 51b–58 as synonymous: ἀπέστειλén με ὁ ζῶν πατήρ v. 57; οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς v. 58; ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου v. 53. Thus, Richter’s use of John 20:31 offers support for the unity of John 6:31–58 rather than a defense of the theory of interpolation.

Although the main purpose of *Bread from Heaven* was not to argue against the interpolation theory as such, several such points grew out of the analysis. Some of them are referred to by Richter. Elements both discussed and undiscussed remain untouched, however, by his criticism. Further observations which speak against the interpolation theory are dealt with in P. Borgen 1965/81, 25–26, 35, 37–38, 90, 95–97, 187–92. See also R. Schnackenburg, 1968, 248–52 and J. D. G. Dunn 1971, 328–38.

Comparative Midrash

Bread from Heaven has contributed to the discussion of terminology in the field of comparative midrash, as can be seen from Le Déaut’s approving reference to my use of the term midrash (Déaut 1971, 281, n. 82). It is essential to the thesis of *Bread from Heaven* that John 6:31–58, *Leg.* 3:162–168, *Mut.* 253–263 and *Exod. Rab.* 25:2.6 are exegetical expositions of the Old Testament, and that these expositions fall within Jewish exegetical traditions and activity. Meeks does justice to this intention when he writes: “P. Borgen (*Bread from Heaven*, [NovTSup, 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965]) has demonstrated the midrashic character of the discourse and has shown that a number of motifs incorporated in it were already familiar in Alexandrian Judaism and attested somewhat later in haggadah from Palestinian sources” (Meeks 1972, 58, n. 48).

The terms “homily” and “homiletic pattern”, as such, are therefore not essential to my study, but terms of convenience to account for the structural agreements in the main passages analyzed and other similar passages. Moreover, John 6:59 says that the preceding discourse was given as teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. The term “homily” was chosen because scholars had already used it to characterize passages like *Exod. Rab.* 25:2, 6 and parts of Philo’s works. Thus S. M. Lehrman writes about *Exodus Rabbah*: “The first chapters form a running commentary on each verse of Exodus I–XI, keeping at the same time the continuity of the

narrative steadily in view. The rest of the book (XV–LII) cites only selected verses, as a rule, the first verse in the section of the weekly Sidra. The result is a medley of heterogenous *homilies* [italics mine] with the first verse only as their text” (Lehrman 1961, VII. Cf. Borgen 1965/81, 53, n. 1). Among the many scholars who had applied the term to Philo’s commentaries, H. Thyen may be cited: “Die These, dass der allegorische Genesiskommentar Philos aus ursprünglich für sich bestehenden Homilien entstanden sei, ist nicht neu” (Thyen 1955, 7. Cf. Borgen 1965/81, 29 and n. 1).

In his study on midrash as literary genre, Wright classifies homilies as a subtradition within the genre, and he refers with approval to the works by Silberman and Borgen as recent studies on the subject (Wright 1966, 127–28). A word of caution is needed, however, in this connection. The terminology should not be based on abstract definitions but always on specific observations made from the historical sources, primarily in the midrashim. In my study, I delimited the homily to John 6:31–58 and regarded vv. 26–30 as a transition from the narratives to the homily. The transitional verses 26–27a refer back to the multiplication of the bread, while v. 27bff. points forward to the exposition on the bread from heaven. Meeks disagrees with this understanding and writes: “Though it is a saying of Jesus rather than a scripture text that provides the starting point of the ‘midrash’ (and we should therefore recognize that the form of explication may have had a wider application in rhetoric than only the exposition of sacred texts) that saying already has the manna tradition in mind . . .” (Meeks 1972, 58, n. 50). This view is worth testing, of course, and Meeks would then need to present a number of parallel forms from sources contemporaneous to the New Testament. Meeks makes a comparison with the dramatic style of Berthold Brecht, but this is not satisfactory from a historical point of view. (Meeks 1972, 56 and note 43). Among the other points to be answered by Meeks here, is the connection between John 5 and 6. The exposition of the Old Testament text in John 6:31–58 serves as example of Jesus’ words in 5:39: “You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me.” The narratives in John 6:1–25 are examples of “the works” mentioned in 5:36 (Borgen 1965/81, 180).

L. Schenke analyzed the structure of John 6:26–58 and finds my hypothesis of a homiletic pattern employed in 6:31–58 to be improbable since I have not accounted for the dialogue structure of the passage (Schenke 1985, 68–89). I admit that the form of dialogue has not been sufficiently analyzed in my book, although it was not completely ignored. Thus, the dialogue between “the Jews” and Jesus in John 6:41–48 is discussed in

detail (Borgen 1965/81, 80–86). Moreover, further studies of Jewish expository activity shows that there is hardly any conflict between the homily form and the dialogue form. For example, Philo says that when the Jewish community of the Therapeutae meets, at a certain point in the gathering the President discusses (ζητέω) some questions arising in the Holy Scriptures or solves (ἐπιλύομαι) an issue that has been proposed by someone else (*Contempl.* 75) (Hegstad 1977, 65–68). Furthermore, Philo’s commentaries on parts of the Pentateuch give ample examples for the fact that homiletic exposition comprises the form of questions and answers (Borgen and R. Skarsten 1976–77, 1–15; Borgen 1984b, 263; V. Nikiprowetzky 1983, 5–75; Runia 1984, 227–47).

The units of exposition studied in *Bread from Heaven* were identified by using the following criterion: “The unit which belongs to a quotation from the Old Testament may be traced by examining the extent to which the paraphrase of that quotation goes” (Borgen 1965/81, 29). The employment of this principle uncovered the following units: *Leg.* 3:162–168; *Mut.* 253–263 and John 6:31–58. In addition to these elements of (a) an Old Testament quotation and of (b) its paraphrase, other similarities were found: (c) Subordinate quotations from the Old Testament were used in the exposition, (d) when the paraphrase of the basic Old Testament quotation ended, there was a concluding statement referring back to the opening section, and (e) the exposition in these passages draws on received traditions, like those dealing with the giving of the manna in the desert (Borgen 1965/81, 29–43, 14–27, 54), (f) various midrashic methods, patterns, and terminology are employed in these passages (Borgen 1965/81, 59–98).

All of these characteristics are also found in Palestinian midrashim, as in *Exod. Rab.* 25, with the main difference being that the fresh and creative paraphrase of Old Testament words with fragments from the tradition becomes a text followed by compilation of fixed units from the tradition. Some paraphrases of words from the quotation still remain, however, and the quotation’s reappearance marks the end of the exposition (Borgen 1965/81, 51–54). These observations from Philo, rabbinic writings, and the New Testament indicate that the theories of Bacher, Theodor, and Vermes are inadequate with regard to the history of exegesis. Bacher pictures the development starting from philological, simple, and literal exegesis and growing to the authoritative body of exegetical traditions in the midrashim (Bacher 1892, 1, 121–235). A similar viewpoint is expressed by Theodor: “the simple exposition of Scripture is more and more lost in the wide stream of free interpretation” (Theodor 1904, 554).

Vermes is in general agreement with Theodor, since he thinks that “applied exegesis” represents the second stage in the history of exegesis, while “pure exegesis” characterized the first stage: “Whereas at first midrash was primarily required to eliminate obscurities in the biblical text, by the beginning of the Christian era other demands were being made of it. The point of departure was no longer the Torah itself, but contemporary customs and beliefs which the interpreter attempted to connect with scripture and to justify” (Vermes 1970, 221). Against Vermes’ viewpoint, it must be stated that most of his documentation of first stage “pure exegesis” is taken from writings which belong to the beginning of the Christian era or later: Philo, Josephus, the Talmud, the midrashim, and Eusebius. Moreover, our analysis suggests that one significant aspect of this developmental process is that a fresh, creative paraphrase of Old Testament words with fragments from the tradition has changed into a text followed by compilation of fixed units from the tradition. In many cases, therefore, philological exegesis, harmonization of contradiction, etc. (“pure exegesis”) in the earlier stage formed an integral part of the creative and contemporizing paraphrase, while they later were preserved mechanically as separate units of tradition.

In this way Philo and John throw light upon earlier stages of exposition represented at a later stage by the rabbinic midrashim.

PART B

JOHN, PHILO, PAUL AND THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

The question to be raised is: In what ways can Philo of Alexandria and the apostle Paul be a probable background for the setting of John, especially within the further context of Hellenism?

CHAPTER THREE

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

In the opening chapter, I referred to the writings of Philo of Alexandria which were written sometime prior to the year 50 C.E. The present chapter will move further into these sources.

They contain concepts, symbols and ideas, which have been brought forth to illuminate aspects of John. Philo also demonstrates methods, forms and structures used in expository activities. His own contemporary time is reflected, including references to and interpretations of historical and contemporary events. The Laws of Moses are central, as are traditions. He draws on and interprets legal principles and applications, and his writings reflect the impact of philosophy, sports, educational practices, political life, literature, Jewish feasts and pilgrimages to Jerusalem. There is even some focus on mystical ascent. Various tensions are reflected, in particular the tension and interaction between the Jewish community and those in the non-Jewish surroundings. He also brings inner-Jewish tensions and challenges to the fore. Our primary question then is: In what ways can he illuminate the Gospel of John?

Let me first characterize the Gospel of John and Philo of Alexandria as I see them. The Gospel of John was written toward the end of the first century C.E. I am among those scholars who think that it draws on traditions that are independent of the three other Gospels, although some of the traditional units used were parallel to some of those found in the other three. In the Gospel of John the traditions are interpreted and applied to new situations. My comparison of the Gospel of John and Philo of Alexandria focuses its attention more on these interpretative aspects than on the question of the pre-Johannine stages of the Gospel traditions.

Philo of Alexandria was a Jewish exegete who interpreted the laws of Moses based on Jewish exegetical traditions and Greek philosophical ideas. He applied his exegesis in part to his own contemporary situation. Philo lived in Alexandria from about 15 B.C.E. to about 50 C.E. A large number of his treatises have been preserved. My present task is clearly delineated. I shall examine how aspects of Philo's writings, written during

the first half of the first century C.E., can illuminate aspects of the Gospel of John, which was written during the last half of the first century C.E.

At the outset I shall offer glimpses from British scholar C. H. Dodd's interpretation of the Gospel of John, since for him Philo of Alexandria provided the most important background material for the Gospel. My own work has focused more on John and Philo as exegetes of the Old Testament. In their use of traditions and in their expositions, both John and Philo describe the people of God, although with different results:

Philo saw them as the Jewish people of the synagogue and criticizes some who were in danger of straying beyond the community's border, while John has his place in a group that had been separated from the synagogal community and understood itself in continuity and discontinuity with its Jewish heritage. Among the topics to be discussed here are the Sabbath observance, birth from above, the Temple, and ascent and descent.

Dodd's Comparison of John and Philo

According to C. H. Dodd (Dodd 1953, 133–43), there is a real affinity between Philo and John in their use of symbolism: for Philo, a symbol points to a hidden meaning, on the abstract, intellectual level (1953, 142). A narrative is at the same time factually true and symbolic of a deeper truth, since things and events in this world derive what reality they possess from the eternal ideas they embody (1953, 142–43). Some examples can indicate the similarities and the differences between Philo and John in the use of symbols. Philo can talk about God or Wisdom (ἡ σοφία)/the Word (ὁ λόγος) as the archetype of light (*Somn.* 1:75). The corresponding Johannine term is the true light (John 1:9) (1953, 202–4).

John speaks of living water and of a spring of water (John 4:10, 14). Philo speaks of the immortal-making well (*Spec.* 1:303; *Fug.* 197–199) (1953, 56).

Both writers use the symbol of the shepherd (56–7). Philo uses it in connection with God: “Indeed, so good a thing is shepherding that it is justly ascribed not to kings only and wise men and perfectly cleansed souls but also to God the All-Sovereign” (*Agr.* 50). The authority for this ascription is nothing ordinary, but a prophet, whom we do well to trust. This is the way in which the Psalmist speaks: “The Lord shepherds me and nothing shall be lacking to me” (Psalm 23:1; see further *Post.* 67–68). John sees Christ as the shepherd (John 10:1–18, 25–29). For both, to know God is the chief end of humankind and its highest blessedness. Philo says (*Deus* 142–143):

All flesh has corrupted the perfect way of the eternal and incorruptible which leads to God. This way is wisdom, for led by this straight and level way reason arrives at the goal; and the goal of the way is knowledge and recognition of God" (C.H. Dodd 1953, 58). Compare with this John 14:6: "I am the way," and 17:3: "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

Besides such abstract and mystical concepts, Philo also touches on thoughts of a more personal relationship to God—like worship and the concepts of faith and love. In the Fourth Gospel, faith and love are central thoughts (C. H. Dodd 1953, 179–86).

For Philo, God was transcendent and could not be identified with the world or any part of it. Platonic and Stoic ideas helped him to express the relationship between God and the world. Here the Logos is the Mediator. Logos proceeds from God and is the medium of the creation of the world. The higher world, *κόσμος νοητός*, cannot be thought of in terms of space, but it is the Word of God in the act of creating the world (*Opif.* 16–24) (1953, 66–67).

For Philo, the Word is also the medium of the divine government of the world. It is not only transcendent in the mind of God, but also immanent in the created universe (*Cher.* 36; *Deus* 57; *Agr.* 51, etc). Dodd concludes: "In all respects the Word is the medium of intercourse between God and this world" (1953, 68). By the Word, then, Philo means the Platonic world of ideas, conceived not as self-existent, but as expressing the mind of the One God. We find in the Prologue of John parallels to Philo's thoughts about the Word/Logos and the world, creation, and government and communication.

Dodd was aware of the fact that similar ideas were associated with the Jewish concept of Wisdom. He therefore examined the wisdom literature from which he tabulated an extensive list of parallels (1953, 274–75). With the concept of Wisdom, Dodd believed that "we are already half-way to Philo's Logos" (1953, 276). And it was in Philo that he found the material to supplement the Old Testament so as to explain John's understanding of the Word (Logos), which was not simply the uttered word of God, but implied the ideas of plan and purpose. Dodd concluded that "any reader influenced by the thought of Hellenistic Judaism, directly or at a remove, would inevitably find suggested here [in John's Prologue] a conception of the creative and revealing *λόγος* in many respects similar to that of Philo; and it is difficult not to think that the author intended this" (1953, 277).

Use of Scripture: Gen 1:1–3

My approach will differ somewhat from that of Dodd. He places emphasis on similar ideas and outlook. More attention needs to be given to the use of the Old Testament by John and Philo and to the situation of the Johannine community as it is reflected in the Gospel. As for the use of the Old Testament, the Prologue of John already makes it evident that this question is important, since John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word,” clearly refers to the story of the creation, and in particular to Gen 1:1, “In the beginning God created.”¹

The opening phrase, Ἐν ἀρχῇ is identical with the Septuagint translation of Gen 1:1. Thus one should consider the possibility that the LXX Gen 1:3 formed the background for the term Logos: καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Γενηθήτω φῶς, “And God said, ‘Let there be light’.” Haenchen (1963, 305, n. 3) objected to this explanation of the term Logos: „Aber Judentum hat jenes ‚und Gott sprach‘ von Gen 1 eben gerade nicht zu einer von Gott unterschiedenen Person hypostasiert.“ Haenchen overlooks the fact that Philo in *Somn.* 1:75 interprets Gen 1:3, and moves from the spoken word to the Logos as the model, τὸ παράδειγμα (P. Borgen 1983a, 99–100; id. 1987a, 76–78). In *Conf.* 146, alluding to points from the creation story and other passages in the Old Testament, Philo pictures the Logos as a personified hypostasis:

“... under God’s Firstborn [κατὰ τὸν πρωτόγονον αὐτοῦ λόγον], Logos, the oldest of the angels, as the Archangel [ἀρχάγγελος]. He has many names, for he is called ‘the Beginning’ [ἀρχή] and ‘the Name of God’ [ὄνομα], and ‘Logos’ [λόγος] and ‘the Man after His image’ [ὁ κατ’ εἰκόνα ἀνθρώπου] and ‘he that sees’, Israel [ὁ ὄρων, Ἰσραήλ].”² When the Archangel is called “the Beginning,” it is a personification of the word “beginning” in Gen 1:1; “Logos” is then a personification of Gen 1:3, “God said”; “the Man after His [God’s] image” comes from Gen 1:26, “Let us make man according to our image,”

¹ See R. E. Brown 1966, 1:522–23. At the same time there are parallels with the ideas of Logos and Wisdom in Gnostic writings, such as the tractate *The Trimorphic Protennoia*. C. Colpe and others see Jewish Wisdom traditions behind both Protennoia and John’s Prologue. Thus we can see that the Old Testament and Jewish Wisdom ideas were adapted along various lines, such as the Platonizing directions (Philo), the Gnostic mythological directions (*Protennoia*), as well as in the direction of Jesus traditions in John’s Gospel. See C. Colpe 1974, 109–25, especially 122.; K. Rudolph 1983, 280–82; C. A. Evans 1981, 395–401; G. W. MacRae 1970, 86–101.

² The term “he that sees” is an etymological interpretation of the name “Israel,” which was given to Jacob at Jabbok, Gen 32:28. The term “the Name of God” may refer to Exod 23:20–21, especially to the words about the angel “my Name is on him.” Philo quotes this passage in *Migr.* 174 and identifies the angel with the divine Logos. In 3 *En.* 12.5 and *b. Sanh.* 38b the angel of Exod 23:20 is identified as Metatron. See P. Borgen 1993b, 258–59.

“man” here interpreted to mean the Archangel and not created humans. Thus, Philo demonstrates that the phrase “God said” in Gen 1:3 is seen as an entity distinct from God, and even personified as an archangel. There is good reason for regarding the Logos of John’s Prologue as an elaboration of Gen 1:3, “God said” (P. Borgen 1972, 115–130).

What about the idea of (God’s) Wisdom as background for the Johannine Logos? This suggestion receives support from Philo, but his interpretation of Wisdom also demonstrates the importance of this term’s feminine gender. In *Ebr.* 30–31, Philo refers to the role of Wisdom in creation, citing Prov 8:22. He spells out the female aspect of Wisdom, σοφία, and the synonymous feminine word ἐπιστήμη. Philo sees God as the Father of creation and Sophia as the Mother, and creation itself as the birth of the visible world, the only beloved son which we see:

... The Demiurg who made this universe was at the same time the Father of what was thus born, whilst its mother was the knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) possessed by its Maker. With His knowledge God had union, not as men have it, and begat created being. And knowledge, having received the divine seed, when her travail was consummated bore the only beloved son who is apprehended by the senses, the world which we see. Thus in the pages of one of the inspired company, wisdom (σοφία) is represented as speaking of herself after this manner: God obtained me first of all His works and founded me before the ages’. (Prov 8:22) (H. A. Wolfson 1948, 1:253–61).

Philo’s interpretation in *Ebr.* 30–31 of the role of σοφία and ἐπιστήμη in creation supports the view that Jewish ideas about the personified Wisdom’s role influenced John’s Prologue.

However, his exploitation of the feminine gender of “Sophia” and ἐπιστήμη to mean that she was God’s female partner and Mother of the visible world, demonstrates the difficulty in identifying a male figure, like Jesus Christ, using these terms. Thus, there was good reason for using the masculine term “Logos” in John’s Prologue and not the feminine word “Sophia.”

Use of Scripture: Gen 2:2–3

In John 5:1–18 Jesus healed an invalid at the Bethzatha pool. When it is said in v. 17 that God works until now, that is, including the Sabbath, a widespread exegetical debate on Gen 2:2–3, that God rested on the seventh day, is presupposed and used (P. Borgen 1987c, 89–92). The problem was the conviction that God cannot stop working. Consequently, the notion of God’s Sabbath rest, as stated in Gen 2:2–3 (God rested on the

seventh day), stands in tension with this working. Evidence for such exegetical debate about the Sabbath rest of God is found as early as the second century B.C.E. in the Jewish Alexandrian exegete Aristobulus (N. Walter 1964, 170–71; P. Borgen 1984b, 277; id. 1987a, 12), and more material can be found in Philo and in other Jewish (rabbinic) writings. For example, according to rabbinic exegesis, the Sabbath commandment does not forbid one to carry something about in one's house on the Sabbath. God's homestead is the upper and lower worlds. He may thus be active within it without coming into conflict with the Sabbath (*Gen. Rab.* 30:6). Philo, relying on the Septuagint rendering, notices that Gen 2:2–3 reads *κατέπαυσεν*, not *ἐπαύσατο*. The verbal form *κατέπαυσεν* may mean “ended/ceased” but it may also be understood, as Philo did, to mean “put down/caused to rest”, as distinct from “rested,” *ἐπαύσατο*, “for He causes to rest that which, though actually not in operation, is apparently making, but He himself never ceases making” (*Leg.* 1:5–6). Thus, the meaning of the Seventh Day to Philo is that God, who has no origin, is always active. “He is not a mere artificer, but also Father of the things that are coming into being” (*Leg.* 1:18). All created beings are dependent and really inactive in all their doings: “. . . the Seventh Day is meant to teach the power of the Unorginate and the non-action of created beings” (*Migr.* 91).

An interpretation of Gen 2:2–3 similar to Philo's seems to be presupposed in John 5:1–18. The Son of God brings the Father's upholding and providential activity to bear upon the healing of a person on the Sabbath. And the healed person is dependent and inactive, even in the carrying of the mat on the Sabbath, because the Son of God told him to do so. Jesus said: “My Father is working still, and I am working,” John 5:17.

Use of Scripture: Bread from Heaven

Dialogue

Another exposition of Scripture produces much material for a comparison between John and Philo, i.e. the giving of the manna in John 6. Only a few salient points can be discussed here. In John 6:31 there is a quotation from the Old Testament, “Bread from heaven he gave them to eat” (See P. Borgen 1965/81, 40–42; R. Schnackenburg 1971, 2:54). The quotation is interpreted by means of a paraphrase in vv. 31–58. The setting is pictured as dialogues, a dialogue between “they”, i.e. the crowd and Jesus, vv. 28–40, which prompts reactions and objections among the Jews in a dialogue with Jesus, vv. 41–58.

In John 6:59 it is written that Jesus spoke in a synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. C. K. Barrett comments: "At v. 24 we learned that the scene was Capernaum, but the discourse with its interruptions suggests a less formal occasion than a synagogue sermon" (Barrett 1978a, 300). Against Barrett, it must be said that interruptions in the form of questions and answers, direct exegesis, and problem-solving exegesis were part of the discourses at the synagogal gatherings. All of these elements are found in rabbinic midrashim, as for example in *Mekilta on Exodus*, as well as in Philo's commentaries. Philo gives us a glimpse into this practice in his description of the Therapeutai. When they assemble, the leader "examines (ζητέω) some points in the sacred writings, or also solves (ἐπιλύω) that which is propounded by another" (*Contempl.* 75).

The term "examine," ζητέω and the composite verb ἐπιζητέω, are used elsewhere in Philo's writings when an exegetical question is raised, such as in *Opif.* 77, "One might examine (ἐπιζητήσῃ) the reason because of which . . .". Confer *Spec.* 1:214; *Leg.* 1:33; 1:48; 1:91; 2:103, and *QG* 1:62 (Greek fragment). Answers and solutions are given, and in *Leg.* 3:60 the verb λύω is used, corresponding to the use of the composite verb ἐπιλύω in *Contempl.* 75, when one "solves" (ἐπιλύεται) that which is propounded by another. In *Contempl.* 79 the leader is said to have discoursed, διαλέγομαι, and since questions and answers were part of the discourse, the verb means "discuss."³

Against this background the following conclusion can be drawn: In John 6:30, ("... what sign do you do...?") John recounts an incident from the Gospel tradition where Jesus was asked to give a sign and then gave his answer. (See John 2:18; Matt 16:1ff/Mark 8:1ff; cf. Matt 21:23ff./Mark 11:27ff/Luke 20:1ff.) When John elaborates upon this and other traditions in 6:30–58, he develops the exegesis of an Old Testament quotation in a dialogue, a method and form also used extensively by Philo. Thus, the reference to a synagogal setting in John 6:59 is appropriate.

Exegetical Exchange

The dialogue may include objections and replies. This form should be examined further in John 6. The Jews' objection to Jesus' exegesis of the

³ In Philo's commentary Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus a question or a specific view is introduced by simple formulas, for example by phrases such as "some say" (*QG* 1:8; 2:64, and 3:13, cf. *Opif.* 77); or just "why" (*QG* 1:1; 2:13,64, etc.) or "what" (*QG* 2:15,59).

manna in 6:41–42 is expressed by a term about the manna in Exod 16:2, 7, 8: they “murmured” (ἐγόγγυζον), John 6:41, cf. v. 43. The objection is an exegetical problem formulation followed by a solution, parallels to which are found in Philo. The exposition consists of the following points:

1. The Old Testament quotation John 6:31, “Bread from heaven he gave them to eat.”
2. The interpretation of the quotation 6:41, “he [Jesus] said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven’” (words taken from vv. 35 and 38).
3. The basis for the questioning of Jesus’ exegesis 6:42, “They said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?’”
4. The questioning of the interpretation 6:42, “how does he now say ‘I have come down from heaven?’”
5. The answer to the objection and the solution of the problem 6.:3ff, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do not “murmur” among yourselves. . . .’”⁴

In my book *Bread from Heaven*, I have referred to the corresponding points of exegetical exchange which are found in *Mek. Exod.* 12,1 and 12,2 and in Philo, *Mut.* 141a.142b–144 (P. Borgen 1965/81, 80–83). Only the Philonic passage will be quoted here:⁵

1. The Old Testament quotation § 141a “So much for the phrase ‘I will give to thee.’ We must now explain ‘from her’” (Gen 17:16).
2. The interpretation of the quotation in which “from her” is rendered “the mother”: § 142b “There is a third class who say that virtue is *the mother* of any good that has come into being, receiving the seeds from nothing that is mortal.”

⁴ In Jesus’ answer, the word “he who believes . . .” in John 6:47 refers back to vv. 35 and 29–30, and the words “I am the bread of life” in v. 48 repeats v. 35a, which in turn is the interpretation of the word “bread” in the scriptural quotation in v. 31b.

⁵ Cf. also QG 2:28:

The question:

“What is the meaning of the words

‘He brought the spirit over the earth and the water ceased?’”

Interpretation:

“Some would say that by ‘spirit’ is meant the wind through which the flood ceased.”

“But I myself do not know of water being diminished by wind . . . Accordingly, (Scripture) now seems to speak of the spirit of the Deity . . .”

3. The basis for questioning the interpretation § 143 “Some ask, however, whether the barren can bear children, since the oracles earlier describe Sarah as barren.”
4. The questioning of the interpretation: “and now admit that she will become *a mother*.”
5. The answer to the objection and the solution of the problem “Our answer must be that it is not the nature of a barren woman to bear, any more than of the blind to see or of the deaf to hear. But as for the soul which is sterilized to wickedness and unfruitful of the endless host of passions and vices, scarce any prosper in childbirth as she. For she bears offspring worthy of love, even the number seven The mind which holds fast to the ‘seventh’ and the supreme peace which it gives. This peace she would fain bear in her womb and be called its *mother*.” §§ 143–44.

Philological Exegesis

Philological exegesis is part of John’s exposition as seen from John 6:31–32 (P. Borgen 1965/81, 61–67):

1. Old Testament quotation:

Bread from heaven he gave them to eat.

2. Exposition:

Jesus then said to them: ‘It was not Moses who gave (Hebrew: *natan*) you the bread from heaven; my Father gives (Hebrew: *noten*) you the true bread from heaven’.

Here words in and from the Old Testament quotation (indicated by italic type) are woven together with other words. Moreover, the different tenses used in *gave* and *gives* are due to different vocalisations of the Hebrew word behind the Greek text, *natan*, *gave* and *noten*, *gives*. Similar methods and forms are found in the *midrashim* as well as in Philo. For example, in *Det.* 47–48 Philo finds that philologically there are two different possible readings of the Greek translation of Gen 4:8. The usual reading is as follows: . . . Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him (αὐτόν). An alternative reading brings out a different meaning: Cain rose up and slew himself (ἑαυτόν), not someone else.

Other Points of Similarity

Although the exposition in John 6:31–58 consists of dialogue including scholarly exchanges, there are several unifying threads which demonstrate that the passage is composed as a whole: The statement “Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness,” v. 31, is repeated with some changes in v. 49 and in v. 58. Even more important is the fact that throughout the section the words “Bread from heaven he gave them” (v. 31b) are built into the formulations, and from 6:49 to 6:58 the remaining word in the Old Testament quotation in v. 31, “to eat” is added. These threads which run through 6:31–58 show that the passage is systematically constructed as a homiletic whole.

Philo offers many examples of exegetical paraphrase in which an Old Testament quotation is interpreted in a systematic way. *Leg.* 3:162–68 may serve as an example. Exod 16:4 is cited:

- a. “Behold I rain upon you bread out of heaven,”
- b. “and the people shall go out and they shall gather the day’s portion for a day,”
- c. “that I may prove them whether they will walk by My law or not.”

In the exposition, the first phrase of the quotation, (a), “Behold I rain upon you bread out of heaven,” is paraphrased and discussed in § 162.

The second phrase, (b), “and the people shall go out and they shall gather the day’s portion for a day,” follows in the paraphrase and discussion of §§ 163–67a.

Finally, the third phrase, (c) “that I may prove them whether they will walk by My law or not,” is repeated verbatim as part of the exposition in §§ 167b–68.

Conflicts and Punishments

Sabbath Controversy

Philo can even throw light upon John beyond the area of exegetical methods and traditions. His writings illustrate how exegesis of the Laws of Moses played a role in controversies in the Jewish community. Thus, he provides comparative material to the way in which exegesis of the Laws of Moses, *in casu* Gen 2:2–3 in John 5:1–18, was a factor in the controversy between the synagogue and the emerging Christian community.

According to John 5:1–18, God’s providential activity was made manifest in the healing of the paralytic by the Son on the Sabbath. On the basis of God’s/the Son’s work on the Sabbath, Sabbath observances could be abrogated. It is crucial to note that expositions of Gen 2:2–3 already in Philo’s time were used as an argument in favor of the abrogation of Sabbath observances (P. Borgen 1983c, 87–88; id. 1987a, 65–68; id. 1991, 209–21). In *Migr.* 91, Philo gives the following advice and warning to those who draw the wrong conclusions from God’s being active on the Seventh Day, as stated in Gen 2:2–3 according to Jewish exegesis: It is quite true that the Seventh day is meant to teach the power of the Unoriginate and the non-action of created beings (Cf. Gen 2:2–3). But let us not for this reason abrogate (λύομεν) the enactments laid down for its observance, and light fires or till the ground or carry loads or demand the restoration of deposits or recover loans, or do all else that we are permitted to do as well on days that are not festival seasons. . . . Why, we shall be ignoring the sanctity of the Temple and a thousand other things, if we are going to pay heed to nothing except what is shown us by the inner meaning of things. Nay, we should look on all these outward observances as resembling the body, and their inner meaning as resembling the soul, so we must pay heed to the letter of the Laws. If we keep and observe these, we shall gain a clearer conception of those things of which these are the symbols; and besides that we shall not incur the censure of the many and the charges they are sure to bring against us.

Here we find a conflict between two ways of reasoning, both relying upon the Laws of Moses. Philo’s view could be characterized in this way: the universal principles and activity of the Creator are tied to the external observances of a particular people, the Jewish nation. The view which Philo criticizes seems to be that the Laws of Moses and the specific observances give witness to the universal principles and activity of the Creator. The universal principles can then be followed by those who hold on to them even apart from the particular external observances. Consequently, God’s activity and universal principles can be present also when one works and is active in society at large on the Sabbath just as one does on other days.

De migratione Abrahami 91 has similarities with John 5:1–18. In both, the exegesis of Gen 2:2–3 is presupposed and utilized, although this Old Testament passage is not quoted and therefore not interpreted in an explicit way. In both places, Scripture is applied to specific controversies related to the Sabbath observance. The Sabbath gives witness to the understanding

that God is always active. This understanding is what matters. Thus there is freedom as to the specific observances, such as the prohibition against carrying a load of goods. In John 5:10ff. the load is the mat carried by the one healed. Also the criticism of Jesus' healing on the Sabbath is in accordance with *Migr.* 91, when Philo prohibits actions that could be done on other days in the festival seasons.

There is a basic difference, however, between the spiritualizing Jews, whom Philo criticizes, and the views expressed in John. According to John, the activity of the Creator is the basis of the activity of the Son on the Sabbath, and the Son is the historical person Jesus of Nazareth. This view leads to the conclusion that the Sabbath observances against healing and against carrying could be set aside. The spiritualists in Alexandria, on the other hand, referred to an idea and a doctrine of God's providential activity in defense of their freedom from Sabbath observances.

Informer or Witness?

Further discussion is needed on the actual setting of the passage John 5:1–18 in John's community. J. L. Martyn thinks that the passage reflects a certain historical incident in the life of the Johannine Church: A member of John's Church attempts to make the healing power of Jesus real in the life of a fellow Jew. At that, the Jewish authorities step in and question the man. Then the Christian finds the man and talks with him but does not lead him to full Christian confession. He rather gives him a solemn warning as stated in v. 14: "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you." The man represents the Jew who, though presumably thankful to be healed, nevertheless remains wholly loyal to the synagogue, and even becomes an informer against his healer (J. L. Martyn 1979, 70–71). In support of his interpretation Martyn points to the parallel between John 5:15 and 11:46. John 5:15 reads: "The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him."

Correspondingly John 11:46 says: "But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done" (J. L. Martyn 1986, 113).

Against Martyn's understanding, it must be stressed that there is a basic difference between the two statements. In John 5:15 it is *the man healed* by Jesus (and not some spectator) who tells the Jewish authorities who healed him. In John 11:46 *the spectators* to Jesus' calling Lazarus back from the grave report it to the Pharisees. Thus the healing story in John 5:1–18 is rather an initiation story which served as paradigm for entry into the Johannine community. The healing then represents salvation as a whole,

and the word in v. 14, "See you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you" (cf. C. K. Barrett 1978a, 255), is an admonition to a convert to a new life. When the man went away and told the Jewish authorities that Jesus had healed him (John 5:15) he gave his witness to them about Jesus as his healer. This information given freely to the Jewish authorities about the healing incident is in general agreement with the point made in John 18:20 that Jesus said nothing secretly.

Discontinuity and Continuity

Dangers at the Boundary

Those whom Philo criticizes for abrogating the observance of the Sabbath and other observances in *Migr.* 91–93 were in danger of passing beyond the synagogal community's limit and thus of being subject to censure and accusations.

John 5:1–18 exemplifies a very Jewish exegesis of Gen 2:2–3 about God's working on the Sabbath, and when it is applied to Jesus and his healing activity on the Sabbath, it leads to the charge made by the Jewish leaders that he not only broke the Sabbath, but also made himself equal to God. For this reason the Jewish authorities sought to kill him, cf. John 5:18. They understood Jesus' claim to mean ditheism which merited the death penalty. According to John 16:2b–3 the disciples might also be killed: ". . . the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me."

Deuteronomy 13 gives a probable judicial basis for such a religiously motivated killing, according to which enticement to serve other gods is a crime deserving of the death penalty. This understanding receives support from Philo who, in *Spec.* 1:315–18, paraphrases Deut 13. He applies the passage to situations when a person who claims to be an inspired prophet leads people to worship the gods of different cities. There are several points of similarity between this passage in Philo and John: (a) the ones who commit the crime claim divine legitimation, as with ostensibly inspired prophets (Philo) or Jesus as the Son of God (John); (b) the crime is polytheism (Philo) or ditheism (John); (c) the death penalty may be executed without regular court procedure being followed (this is not explicitly stated in Deut 13); (d) the killing is seen as a service to God.

One difference is that Philo elaborates on the point in Deut 13 in light of polytheism in a pagan city, while the problem in John is the ditheistic

claim of Jesus who is in fact Jewish. However, ditheism is one form of polytheism, and thus it is probable that John here presupposes juridical traditions which draw on Deut 13. Philo's paraphrasing interpretation of this text demonstrates that in contemporary Judaism there were those who advocated for the death penalty for Jews who accepted polytheistic views and practices, and even sharpened Deut 13 to mean execution without trial.

Birth from Above

C. K. Barrett states that the evolution of the birth from above terminology begins primarily in the Jesus logion about the need to become like children to enter the kingdom, Matt 18:3 par. The belief that the kingdom was not only to be expected in the age to come but had already been made manifest, germinally or potentially, in the person and work of Jesus distinguished primitive Christianity from Judaism and made possible the development of the traditional material using Hellenistic terminology, where the concepts of rebirth and supernatural begetting were not uncommon. John did not plagiarize the notions of salvation and regeneration current in the Hellenistic world nor did he effect a syncretism of Jewish and pagan ideas. He perceived that the language of Judaism, "the kingdom of God," and the language of Hellenism (γεννηθήναι ἄνωθεν) provided him with a unique opportunity of expressing what was neither Jewish nor Hellenistic but simply Christian (C. K. Barrett 1978a, 206–7).

There are, however, exegetical traditions which give a basis for placing John's idea of rebirth within a Jewish setting. Philo says in *QE* 2:46 that Moses' ascent at Sinai was a second birth, different from the first. Philo interprets Exod 24:16 where God calls Moses on the seventh day:

But the calling above (Greek fragment: ἀνάκλησις) of the prophet is a second birth (Greek fragment: δευτέρα γένεσις) better than the first. For the latter is mixed with body and had corruptible parents, while the former is an unmixed and simple soul of the sovereign, being changed from a productive to an unproductive form which has no mother, but only a father, who is (the Father) of all. Wherefore, the "calling above" or, as we have said, the divine birth, happened to come about for him in accordance with the ever-virginal nature of the hebdomad. For he "is called on the seventh day", in this (respect) differing from the earthborn first moulded man, for the latter came into being from the earth and with a body, while the former (came) from ether and without a body. Wherefore the most appropriate number, six, was assigned to the earth-born man, while the one differently born (was assigned) the higher nature of the hebdomad.

There are several agreements between the Philonic passage and John 3:3ff. and 1:13 (See P. Borgen 1968, 146):

1. the idea of birth (John 3:5, 13);
2. this birth is from above (John 3:3, etc; Philo: calling above = from ether);
3. it is a birth with God as father, without a mother (John 1:13);
4. it is a second birth, different from birth from a woman (John 3:3ff.);
5. there is correspondence between John's distinction $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\xi}$ — $\pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$ and Philo's $\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha$ — $\nu\omicron\upsilon\delta\varsigma$.

Although John sees man as a totality, while Philo has a somewhat dichotomous anthropology, Philo keeps the Jewish understanding that both body and mind are created, and Moses' ascent included both, as can be seen from *Mos.* 2:69–(1)70 (see P. Borgen 1965/81, 182; cf. 118–21).

One could raise the question whether Philo's idea of a second birth here depends on Hellenistic ideas of rebirth such as those found in Hermetic teachings. In the *Corpus Hermeticum*, tractate 13 is entitled "Concerning Rebirth." According to this tractate, in rebirth the father is the will of god, the womb wisdom, the seed the real good, and the offspring a god, a child of god. (See C. H. Dodd 1953, 44.) One obvious difference between John and this Hermetic tractate should be mentioned: In the Hermetic teaching, wisdom serves as mother-womb, while both Philo and John assert that no mother is involved in the second birth.

It is important to notice that Philo identifies Moses' rebirth with his experience at Sinai. The implication is that Philo draws on Jewish exegetical traditions which he develops further in his interpretation. This understanding is supported by the fact that the experience of the burning bush and the revelation at Sinai are interpreted as birth in rabbinic traditions, as E. Stein and E. Sjöberg have shown (E. Stein 1939, 194–205; E. Sjöberg 1951, 44–85). Sjöberg gives *Cant. Rab.* 8.2 as an example:

'I would lead Thee, and bring Thee': I would lead Thee from the upper world to the lower. 'I would bring Thee into my mother's house': this is Sinai. R. Berekiah said: Why is Sinai called 'my mother's house'? Because there Israel became like a new-born child... (Translation in H. Freedman and M. Simon 1961, 303).

Sjöberg states that according to R. Berekiah, the Israelites at Sinai encountered a completely new situation. Their relationship to God was rebuilt upon an entirely new foundation. R. Berekiah's word about Israel as "a new-born child" was an interpretation of the "mother" mentioned in

Cant 8:2, and it is therefore evident that birth is meant here. Other parallels exist, such as *Exod. Rab.* 30.5, where it is said that the Torah conceived Israel at Sinai.

E. Stein has drawn attention to *Exod. Rab.* 3:15 on Exod 4:12, and *Tanchuma*, ed. Buber, *Shemot* 18 about Moses' vision of the burning bush. According to these texts, God's dedication of and commission to Moses can be compared to a mother who conceives and gives birth to a child. Moses at the burning bush experienced rebirth (E. Stein 1939, 196–97).

Although the dates of the written forms of *Cant. Rab.* 8:2; *Exod. Rab.* 30:5; *Exod. Rab.* 3:15 and *Tanchuma*, ed Buber, *Shemot* 18 are late, these passages and Philo, *QE* 2:46, illuminate each other: the rabbinic passages support the hypothesis that Philo relies on Jewish exegesis for his understanding of the Sinaitic ascent as a rebirth, and Philo supports the hypothesis that the core of the rabbinic passages goes back to the beginning of the first century or earlier.

Thus one can conclude that there is basis for interpreting birth from above in John 1:13 and 3:3ff. against the background of Moses' and Israel's rebirth at the Sinai event. In John, this concept of rebirth has then been combined with the Gospel tradition about being like a child as a condition for entry into heaven. This understanding of John 3:3ff. makes Jesus' rebuke of Nicodemus: "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this?" The idea of discontinuity and a new beginning associated with the Sinai event is in John transferred to the new beginning in the life and teachings of Jesus, the Incarnate One. Thus Nicodemus must face the message of discontinuity with his own background as "a teacher of Israel" as the condition for seeing/entering the kingdom of God. John has transferred Sinaitic traditions about birth to mean the birth of the people of God who believed in Jesus as the Son of God.

This interpretation of birth from above shows that the Jesus logion on birth from above was understood in a way which reflects that Judaism and Johannine Christianity were part of the Hellenistic thought-world familiar with the ideas of rebirth. (See C. K. Barrett 1978a, 206–7.)

Understandably John 3:11 reflects the experience of the Johannine community by the plural "we": ". we are talking about what we know, and we are testifying to what we have seen; but you people do not accept our testimony."

The Temple

At times Philo personifies the Jerusalem Temple by seemingly transferring it to the religious life of persons. Thus the external Temple and the actual city of Jerusalem seem to be of no value:

Do not seek for the city of the Existent among the regions of the earth, since it is not wrought of wood and stone, but in a soul (ἐν ψυχῇ) in which there is no warring. . . For what grander or holier house could we find for God in the whole range of existence than the vision-seeking mind. . . (*Somn.* 2:250–51).

Similarly, in *Cher.* 98–107 the main theme is that the house prepared for God, the King of Kings, the Lord of all, is not made of stone and timber, but it is the soul that conforms to Him. In the invisible soul, the invisible God has his earthly dwelling place. To this temple belongs teaching, virtues, and noble actions.

Philo also interprets the Temple cosmologically. The heavenly Temple is the highest and truly holy temple. He does not ignore the earthly temple but the spiritual and the cosmic realities have constitutive significance, *Spec.* 1:66–67. Accordingly he warns the spiritualists in *Migr.* 91–93 that “. . . we shall be ignoring the sanctity of the Temple and a thousand other things, if we are going to pay heed to nothing except what is shown us by the inner meaning of things” (92). “. . . as we have to take thought for the body, because it is the abode of the soul, so we must pay heed to the letter of the laws” (93).

In John's Gospel, the personification of the Temple is applied exclusively to one person, Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Logos. Jesus is the divine tabernacle (John 1:14: σκηνώω); his person (body σῶμα) in life, death, and resurrection is the Temple (2:21). His appearances and teaching activity at the Sabbath, Passover, Tabernacles, and the Dedication, reinterprets the meaning and replaces their significance (Cf. R. E. Brown 1966, 1:cxliv, and id. 1978, 11). In this way the true Temple has been transferred onto Jesus Christ in whom the disciples, including the members of the Johannine community, believe. The Johannine community formulates and applies continuity with the biblical-Jewish traditions in such a way that it means discontinuity with the synagogal community. Thus the Johannine community goes further than those whom Philo criticizes. They had been warned not to exceed the Jewish community's boundary manifest in the Temple and synagogue, while the Johannine community had experienced a (local?) traumatic separation from it.

Moreover, John's Gospel reflects a situation where the Johannine community had moved into the broader world that included other nations, as indicated by John's reference to the Samaritans, John 4, "the Greeks," John 7:35 and 12:20–21, and the "other sheep not of this fold" (John 10:16).

Ascent and Descent

Only a few observations from Philo and John can be dealt with in this study.

In the story about the Sinaitic revelation, the term *ascend* plays a central role, Exod 19:20, 23; 24:1, 2, 9, 13, 18. In Jewish exegesis, Moses is said to have entered into heaven when he ascended (Philo, *Mos.* 1:158f., cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 3:96; Pseudo-Philo *L.A.B.* 12:1; *Mek. Exod.* 19:20; *Num. Rab.* 12:11; *Midr. Ps.* 24:5 and 106:2). John 3:13, "No one has ascended to heaven . . .", seems then to serve as a polemic against both the idea of Moses' ascent and similar claims of or for other human beings. Philo gives an explicit formulation of this idea of *imitatio Mosis* in *Mos.* 1:158. After having discussed Moses' entry into the place where God was, he concluded: ". . . he has set before us . . . a model for those who are willing to copy it" (P. Borgen 1993b, 263–67).

As an example of a claim made by another human being, one might refer to Philo's own ascent to the heavenly sphere, *Spec.* 3:1–6: "I . . . seemed always to be borne aloft into the heights with a soul possessed by some God-sent inspiration . . ." (The Qumran fragment 4Q491 11,1.12–19 also describes the ascent of a human being. See M. Smith 1992, 290–301; C. A. Evans 1994, 563–65.) Thus, John 3:13 is probably a polemic against persons in the Johannine environment who maintained that they were visionaries like Moses (H. Odeberg, 1929, 72–94; N. A. Dahl 1962, 141; P. Borgen 1965/81, 185). The interpretation of John 3:13 as a whole is difficult (see P. Borgen 1977, 243–45; F. J. Moloney 1978, 54).

John's Gospel reflects the kind of environment Philo spoke of, in which Jewish versions of ascent-traditions existed, and persons experienced heavenly ascents in the Spirit. This Johannine polemic is partly due to the conviction that what is to be sought in heaven, such as God's glory, is now in the Incarnate One present on earth. Thus the ascent-motif is turned upside down in John's Gospel when it is applied to the Incarnate Logos/Son.

Several examples of such a descent motif in Philo's writings are: God, the King of kings, the Lord of all, comes down from heaven to God's house, i.e. the soul that is ready to receive him, *Cher.* 99–100; God's potencies

(δυνάμεις) will descend from heaven with laws and ordinances to sanctify those who dwell on earth, provided that the soul-house of God is raised among them, *Cher.* 106.

*Agent: "He Who is Sent"*⁶

A frequently used characterization of Jesus in John is "the One who is sent by the Father" and similar phrases, and Jesus characterizes God as "the One who sent me," and likewise similar phrases. Here John applies ideas of agency and diplomacy to Christology.

Philo applies the technical Greek term for an envoy, *πρεσβευτής*, to human envoys. The Governor Flaccus answered the Alexandrian Jews who asked him to forward their decree to the Roman Emperor Gaius: "I will send [the decree] as you ask or will fulfill the duties of an envoy myself that Gaius may learn your gratitude" (*Flacc.* 98).

As the leader of the Jewish delegation to the Emperor Gaius in Rome, Philo was alarmed by the Emperor's seemingly goodwill and said: "Why when so many envoys were present from almost the whole world, did he say that he would hear us only?" (*Legat.* 182). Philo later writes, "Surely it was a cruel situation that the fate of all the Jews everywhere should rest precariously on us five envoys" (*Legat.* 370).

Philo also uses this idea of envoys on the spiritual and divine level. He calls the personified Logos an envoy. The Logos acts as ambassador (*πρεσβευτής*) of the ruler, God, to his subjects: "This same Logos both pleads with the immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortality and acts as ambassador of the ruler to the subject" (*Her.* 205). Philo uses the term again for angels who are envoys between humans and God (*Gig.* 16). Angels are "the servitors and lieutenants of the primal God whom he employs as ambassadors to announce the predictions which he wills to make to our [Jewish] race" (*Abr.* 115). Here the notions of ascent and descent are evident. Thus Philo's world exemplifies a kind of Jewish milieu which would serve as the background for John's elaborations on the Jesus logion about the sender and the one who is sent.

It is important that the Jesus logion found in John 13:20, "... he who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me," has a firm place in the Gospel tradition, as seen from the parallels in Matt 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48 and 10:16 as well

⁶ See further P. Borgen 1968, 137–48; in J. Ashton 1986, 67–78; J.-A. Bühner 1977. Cf. F. H. Agnew, 1986, 75–96; M. M. Mitchell 1992, 641–62.

as the variants present in John 12:44–45; 14:7 and 19; 15:32; 5:23; 8:19. See P. Borgen 1979, 18–35; also in id. 1983, 49–66. Moreover, in the Old Testament the principles of agency are present in an embryonic form, God says when the people had rejected Samuel: “. . . they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me . . .” (1 Sam 8:7).

Wisdom: The Law and Manna

In John 6:31–58 Jesus identifies himself with the bread from heaven, which like the Law of Moses gives life to the world (*Tanchuma*, ed. Buber, *Shemot* 25; *Mek. Exod.* 15:26; *Exod. Rab.* 29:9). Like Wisdom, he satisfies the thirst and hunger of those who come to him: “Jesus then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ They said to him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst’” (John 6:32–35).

In a corresponding way, Philo combines wisdom, the Law, and the manna in *Mut.* 253–63, where it is said that the manna that rains down from heaven is the heavenly Sophia, sent from above on the Seventh day, the Sabbath, when the Law of Moses is read and expounded upon. The manna is identified with the Law also in *Mek. Exod.* 13:17 (See further P. Borgen 1965/81, 148–50). Important background material is also found in other Jewish writings: “The voice . . . gave life to Israel who accepted the Law” (*Tanchuma, Shemot* 25). “God said to Moses, ‘Say to Israel: the Words of the Law which I have given to you . . . are life unto you’” (*Mek. Exod.* 15:26); “if the world trembled when he [God] gave life to the world” (*Exod. Rab.* 29:9).

Again, traditions from and about Jesus have been elaborated upon with the help of biblical and Jewish traditions. In this way the Gospel functioned as a living entity in the life of the Johannine community.

Moses

In Philo’s writings, Moses is often associated with ascent and seldom with the idea of descent. Both motifs are present in *Sacr.* 8–9, however (W. A. Meeks, *Prophet-King* 1967, 103–5). According to *Sacr.* 8, God brought Moses so high as to place him besides Himself, saying “stand here with me” (Deut 5:31).

In § 9 Philo writes: “When He [God] after having lent him to the earthly things, permitted him to associate with them, he endowed him not at all

with some ordinary virtue of a ruler or a king, with which forcibly to rule the soul's passions, but he appointed him to be god, having declared the whole bodily realm and its leader, mind, [to be his] subjects and slaves. 'For I give you,' He says, 'as god to Pharaoh'" (Exod 7:1).

Correspondingly, Jesus was a divine person who, having been with God, John 1:1 and 17:5, and having been given power over all flesh, 17:2, dwelt among human beings on earth, 1:14 and 17:1. While Moses was adopted into his role, Jesus had been with the Father before the world was made, 17:5, cf. 1:1.

Moses is seen as sharing in God's nature in his mortal life, so that at his death he is not "leaving" or "added" like others. He is translated (Deut 34:5) through that Word by which the whole cosmos was formed. Thus, in Moses there was divine continuity between his life before and after his death. Accordingly, "no man knows his grave" (Deut 34:6).

In this way Moses is the prototype of the Wise Man (*Sacr.* 8, 10). When Philo sees Moses placed next to God and appointed god, he then must face the problem of ditheism, similar to what John faced in his Christology. In different ways both solved the problem by emphasizing that Moses and Jesus, respectively, were dependent on God. Thus, in *Det.* 160–61 Philo makes clear that God is himself true being and active, while Moses was passive when he appeared and functioned as god, as seen from the biblical formulation that God *gave him* as a god to Pharaoh (Exod 7:1).

Correspondingly, John placed emphasis on the functional union with God. In John 10:31–36, Jesus was accused of blasphemy because he, being a man, made himself God: "The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?' The Jews answered him, 'We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.'" Jesus answers in John 10:37–38 that in his works he is in complete union with his Father: "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe in me; but if I do them . . . , believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." Thus, Jesus did nothing by himself (8:28).

Conclusion

1. Philo demonstrates that the phrase "God said" in Gen 1:3 is seen as an entity distinct from God, and that the Word/Logos is personified as an archangel. There is good reason for regarding the Logos of John's Prologue as an elaboration of "God said . . ." in Gen 1:3.

2. The meaning of the seventh day to Philo is that God, who has no origin, is always active, and he caused his creation to rest on the seventh day, according to Gen 2:2–3. An interpretation of Gen 2:2–3, similar to that of Philo, seems to be presupposed in John 5:1–18 (the story about the healing of the paralytic) when Jesus says, “My Father is working still, and I am working” (5:17).
3. When John in 6:30–58 develops an exegesis of the Old Testament quotation “Bread from heaven he gave them to eat,” in the form of a dialogue, he uses a method also used by Philo. Thus, the reference to a synagogal setting in John 6:59 is appropriate. Philological exegesis is part of John’s exposition as seen from John 6:31–32 where he rejects the reading “given” (*natan*) in the Old Testament quotation and reads it in the present, “gives” (*noten*). Similar philological exegesis is found in Philo’s writings.
4. Philo criticizes fellow Jews who wanted to abrogate external observances such as the keeping of the Sabbath. Thus, he provides comparative material to the way in which exegesis of Genesis 2:2–3 in John 5:1–18 was applied to the controversy about the Sabbath; namely, that God also was active on the Sabbath, the day of rest. However, the healing story in John 5:1–18 is not just a controversy about the Sabbath. It also seems to be an initiation story that served as a paradigm for entry into the Johannine community.
5. Philo’s paraphrasing interpretation of Deut 13 demonstrates that some Jews in that time advocated for the death penalty for those who accepted polytheistic views and practices. Philo even honed Deut 13 to mean an execution without proper trial. Thus Philo illuminates John 16:2: “The hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.”
6. Exegetical traditions support placing John’s idea of rebirth within a Jewish setting, since Philo says in *QE* 2:46 that Moses’ ascent at Sinai was a second birth.
7. At times Philo personifies the Jerusalem Temple by seemingly transferring it to the religious life of the person. There is also a personification of the Temple in John’s Gospel, here exclusively applied to one person, Jesus Christ, the incarnate Logos.
8. John 3:13 is probably a polemic against persons in the Johannine environment who maintained that they were visionaries who ascended to heaven like Moses. Thus, John’s Gospel reflects an environment with Jewish versions of ascent traditions as discussed by Philo.

9. Philo and his community exemplify the kind of milieu that serves as background for John's elaborations about God as the sender and Jesus as the one sent from heaven. To Philo, the Logos and the angels serve as ambassadors from the heavenly God and king to the human beings on earth.
10. In John 6:31–58 Jesus identifies himself with the bread from heaven that, like the law of Moses, came down to give life to the world. Philo combines Wisdom, the Law, and manna in *Mut.* 253–263, where it is said that the manna raining down from heaven is the heavenly *Sophia*, Wisdom, sent from above on the Sabbath when the law of Moses is read and expounded upon.
11. When Philo saw Moses placed next to God and appointed god over the earthly region, then he had to face the problem of ditheism, similar to what John faced in his Christology. In different ways both solved the problem by emphasizing that Moses and Jesus, respectively, were entirely dependent on God.

Thus, instead of interpreting John in light of Philo's Platonizing views as Dodd did, the present study demonstrates that other points from Philo exemplify the kind of Jewish traditions, thought categories, and historical contexts that were formative elements in John's background. Such traditions are at the same time interpreted differently by Philo and by John. Dodd's study suggests, however, some degree of kinship between some of the Jewish traditions and ideas and the Platonizing ideas, among others, in the surrounding Graeco-Roman world.

Appendix 1

In the opening section of this chapter I stated: "The Gospel of John was written toward the end of the first century C.E." It should be noted that at present my focus is on the question of whether or not John uses oral or/and written Gospel traditions and expositions which were independent of the other three written Gospels.

Appendix 2

As seen already above in chapter one, I find that an important notion in John is the dual structure of a case story followed by a judicial exchange which might conclude with arrest followed by the execution (John 5–10).

As could be expected, there are examples of a similar dual structure in Philo, for example in *Mos.* 2:192–208, a blasphemer, and in 213–232, a Sabbath-breaker:

1. The blasphemer, §§ 192–208

The case:

The blasphemer had an Egyptian father and a Jewish mother, He had ignored the ancestral customs of his mother and turned to the impiety of the Egyptian people (193). He had a quarrel with someone of the (Jewish) nation. In his anger he lost control over himself and “cursed (καταρασάμενος) Him Whom even to bless is a privilege not permitted to all but only to the best, even those who have received full and complete purification.”

The Judicial exchange. The subsequent reaction and action caused by the event:

The crime is evaluated and characterized, as are also the forms of punishment to be executed either on the spot or through a judicial process to secure that justice would prevail. God commanded that the criminal should be stoned.

2. The Sabbath-breaker, §§ 213–232

The case:

A certain man, although he had heard of the sacredness of the seventh day, dismissed the ordinance and went forth on the Sabbath through the midst of the camp to gather firewood. He was observed, however, while still engaging in the wicked deed.

Judicial exchange: The subsequent reaction and action caused by the event:

Evaluation and characterization of the crime follow. Actually, he had committed a double crime, the mere act of collecting, and the nature of what was collected, materials for fire. Debates took place over which procedure to follow, execution on the spot by those who observed him committing the crime, or bringing the case to the judicial head, Moses. The latter alternative was chosen, and God, as the Judge who knows all beforehand, decided that the man should suffer capital punishment by means of stoning (Cf. T. Seland 1995, 20–24).

It is to be noted that both in the cases capital punishment by stoning was seen as the appropriate penalty. Correspondingly, the action and words of blasphemy, the breaking of the Sabbath laws, and the related capital punishment by stoning are seen together in John 5:18, and 10:31.

CHAPTER FOUR

GOSPEL TRADITIONS IN PAUL AND JOHN: METHODS AND STRUCTURES. JOHN AND THE SYNOPTICS

A survey of my research on John has been given in chapter 1, followed by examples of early debates with other scholars. Relevant points from Philo's writings were outlined in the next chapter showing how scriptural texts may be subject to methodical exposition word by word, or in topical sequence, etc. Several of these ideas illuminate similar points in John, such as the role and rules of agency among human beings and between God and humans. Philo exemplifies how phrases and terms from the Scriptures and units of tradition could be utilized in new contexts, with or without the foundational texts and units of tradition being quoted. Correspondingly, Paul interprets words and phrases from the institution of the eucharist in an expository application. In the present chapter, I will explore further how Paul can throw light on John's use of Gospel traditions.

Introduction

J. Frey (2010, 457–58) gives his characterization of recent research on the theme “John and the Synoptics.” As he sees it, there was a period of broad acceptance when John was seen as independent of the other Gospels. In recent years the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction: John presupposes and draws in various ways on the Synoptic Gospels. Frey thinks that John knew Mark and Luke. Knowledge of Matthew is less probable. Thus, the theological profile of John is largely developed as a distinct entity later in time than the Synoptic Gospels.

As for research on John and Paul, a study by J. Becker is helpful. The title is: “Das Verhältnis des johanneischen Kreises zum Paulinismus. Anregungen zum Belebung einer Diskussion,” in Sanger, D. and Mell, U. (eds.) 2006, *Paulus und Johannes*. Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 473–95.

Becker agrees with R. Bultmann that the Johannine circle and Paulinism existed side by side. In support of this thesis Bultmann finds that the Pauline terminology is missing in John and that it is especially significant that Paul's concept of the history of salvation is not present in John.

At the same time Becker realizes that Bultmann makes another important observation. Despite all the differences in Pauline and Johannine thought, there exists a deep relatedness in content and substance. Bultmann suggests that both draw on traditions from Early Christianity and then each takes them up in his own way. The resonance stems from both Paul and John seeing that Jesus' presence makes eschatological reality present now (Becker 2006, 475).

Another scholar who has formulated some basic views on the topic of Paul and John was C. K. Barrett (Barrett 1978, 54–59). He stated his views thus: “it seems easier to believe that Paul and John wrote independently of each other than that John was expressing Pauline theology in narrative form. John was not one of the deutero-Pauline writers; both he and Paul were dependent upon the primitive Christian tradition. It may however be added that, according to Barrett, Johannine theology presupposes the existence of the Pauline. When John wrote, some at least of the great controversies of the early church were past; they had already been won by Paul. In particular the controversy with Judaizing Christianity was over” (Barrett 1978, 58). “Even in the presence of John, Paul remains the most fundamental of all Christian theologians, but John is the first and greatest of the reinterpreters” (Barrett 1978, 59).

Becker raises questions against Barrett's linear thinking: Barrett does not sufficiently take into consideration that there also were other missionaries, the Hellenists, the opponents referred to in Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, i.e. Apollos, and many persons mentioned in Rom 16, as well as Peter. Paul was not the only missionary who went to other nations.

Becker concludes that a linear understanding of the relationship between Paul and John is not adequate and should not be used. Early Christianity is to be seen as a complex communitative fellowship. The basic uniting element was the conviction that the Christian world view and life styles were built on a Christological, archetypal event of the end time. The picture of a tree and branches may serve as illustration. This conviction allowed for a numerous, varied initiatives from individuals and congregations.

*The Experience and the Understanding of the Spirit*¹

The congregational life of the Pauline and Johannine writings was marked by spiritual gifts. The system of an organizational leader for one or several congregations had not yet developed. The presbyter of 2 and 3 John was a person with authority, however, a definite clerical “office” distinct from the congregation did not yet exist. The Spirit of truth will guide them into all the truth, John 16:13. Glimpses of the rich abundance of spiritual gifts in a Pauline Church are given in his First Letter to the Corinthians.

Both Paul and John say that the Son was sent. In John, the sending is systematized and central; in Paul’s letter there are a few references, primarily in Rom 8:3 (God . . . sending us his own Son) and Gal 4:4f. (God sent forth his Son). In these and other examples it can be seen that Paul and John draw from a vast tradition, and each picks up different aspects in his own way.

Thus Becker offers an alternative to the linear thinking. The Johannine circle and Paul and his fellow workers have existed side by side. They both have recourse to traditions from Early Christianity which each takes up in his own way.

Becker’s basic concept of a stem with branches seems fruitful. Some additional areas seem to fit into such an understanding and approach. Both Paul and John transmit Gospel traditions because these traditions had authority. For that reason they were subject to exposition for the sake of communication, argumentation, application, etc . . .

Both Paul and John fuse together traditions on the Lord’s Supper and the manna of Exod 16 (and “the well”), John 6:53–58 and 1 Cor 10:3–4; both locate the commission and the being sent to the appearance of the risen Lord, John 20:19–29 and 1 Cor 9 and 15. John’s prologue (John 1:1–18) closely parallels the Philippian hymn in Phil 2:5–11. John is more “down to earth” though, more freely designating the risen Jesus as God who appeared at an event on earth in time and space. In the Philippian hymn, Paul tells us that Jesus received “the name above all names” after the ascent, and within a cosmic perspective.

Most of all, Paul exemplifies how “pre-Synoptic” traditions were received orally, had authority, and were subject to exposition before they were written down *ad hoc* in the period prior to the Synoptic Gospels. It is

¹ See Becker 2006, 474–95.

important to note that the expository elaborations of the Gospel tradition seen in 1 Cor 9–11 are similar to those in John. Thus John's Gospel is closer to the interpreted Gospel units in 1 Cor than to the Gospel traditions rendered in the Synoptics.

John and Paul

It seems pertinent to examine passages in Paul's letters more in detail in order to gain insight into the usage of Gospel materials. In this way we may find evidence as to the form and the method employed in the transmission of the Gospel tradition and thus make the hypothesis of oral tradition less theoretical.² In investigating this topic the main points of the conclusions will be outlined first, and then the detailed documentation will be given:

1. As already indicated, among the passages containing traditional Gospel material in Paul's letters, the passages on the Lord's supper in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16, 17, 21 and 11:23–29 (34) stand out. Here Paul uses a unit of Gospel tradition of some length. What can we learn from these passages about the nature of the Gospel material in pre-Synoptic time?
2. The passages in 1 Cor 10 and 11 show that units of received tradition were used in Christian communities, 1 Cor 11:23–26.

Interpretative activity is evident. The expositions can have the form of a commentary attached to a cited unit of tradition. In this way 1 Cor 11:27–34 is attached to the quoted institution of the Lord's Supper in vv. 23–25 (26). In the exposition, words from the cited institution are repeated and applied.

Likewise it is important to note that the same structure is seen in the Gospel of John: John 5:10–18 is attached as an exposition to the story of the healing of the paralytic in vv. 1–9. In the same manner John 2:17–22 is attached as an expository comment of the cleansing of the temple in vv. 13–16. Similarly 1 Cor 7:12–16 is an exposition of the Jesus logion about divorce, cited in vv. 9–10.

Moreover, the unit of tradition may be presupposed, and not quoted, as is the case in the discussion of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21 and in John 6:51–58.

² Concerning Paul and the Gospel tradition in general, see the works by D. L. Dungan 1971; B. Fjärstedt 1974; Dale C. Allison, Jr. 1982; P. Stuhlmacher 1983; id. (ed.) 1983.

3. In the exposition, words from a given tradition are repeated and interpreted. Synonyms may be used. By the use of such expository elaboration and paraphrase, words and fragments from the tradition may be moulded into traditional forms.

The transmission and exposition of tradition can take both a written and oral form. The written form is found in written documents, as in 1 Cor, John and in the three other Gospels. The oral form may be primary, however, for the following reasons: (a) Paul states explicitly that 1 Cor 11:23ff. was brought orally to the church in Corinth. Thus, there is a basis for assuming that the tradition as recorded in the Gospels was also primarily transmitted orally; (b) Paul gives his expositions of the Gospel tradition in written form because he is not present himself and thus cannot interpret the tradition in person (i.e. orally). In this way transmission and exposition may have their place in oral settings; (c) The material discussed in 1 Cor 11 is centered around an identifiable pericope, the institution of the eucharist. Among the passages discussed in John, John 2:13–22 and 5:1–18(47), the cleansing of the Temple and the healing of the paralytic respectively, are subject to interpretative expositions.

The use of eucharistic words and phrases in 1 Cor 10 and John 6:51–58 are built into new contexts without the story of the institution being quoted. In both 1 Cor 10 and 11 and John 2:13–22; 5:1–18 and 6:51–58 the traditions are interpreted in order to spell out their meanings to meet the concerns and needs of the Christian communities (see especially Käsemann 1964, 122ff.).

Units of Tradition and Attached Exposition

With the interpretative formulation in 1 Cor 11:26 Paul sets the theme, “to eat the bread and drink the cup,” within the perspective of the eschaton. This perspective dominates the subsequent verses (cf. Käsemann 1964, 121–32).

The text of 1 Cor 11:23–34 as a whole should be cited:

Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἐκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν· Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνήσαι, λέγων· Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.

Theme

ὁσαύκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε, ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ.

Exposition

27 "Ὡστε ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου. 28 δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω. 29 ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα. 30 διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί. 31 εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα. 32 κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ κυρίου παιδευόμεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν. 33 "Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε. 34 εἴ τις πεινᾷ, ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω, ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρχῃσθε. Τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθω διατάξομαι.³

By using technical terms for the transmission of tradition (*παρέλαβον—παρέδωκα*) Paul introduces in 1 Cor 11:23 a quotation from the Institution of the Lord's Supper (11:23b–25) (see Gerhardsson 1961/1998, 290, 320–22).

As can be seen from the words underscored in the subsequent exposition in vv. 27ff., Paul utilizes fragments—words and phrases—from the quoted tradition and builds them into a paraphrase together with interpretative words. From this fact we see that (already) in the middle of the fifties the Jesus tradition was so fixed that it was quoted and used as the basis for an exposition.

In Paul's exposition, the genitive τοῦ κυρίου (v. 27) serves as a clarifying addition to the fragments from the quoted tradition, . . . τὸ ποτήριον . . . τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος . . . Legal terms are woven together with these fragments from the tradition of the Lord's Supper. Such legal terms are: . . . ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται (v. 27); and κρίμα . . . διακρίνων . . . in v. 29. In vv. 30–2 Paul elaborates upon these legal terms, without drawing on words from the quoted eucharistic tradition. Finally, in vv. 33–4 he returns to the explicit discussion of the eucharistic meal. Here he refers back to the institution of the Lord's Supper, vv. 23ff., and even back to the situation in Corinth, pictured in vv. 17ff.

Although Paul writes the exposition himself and applies the eucharistic tradition to a specific case, he nevertheless uses traditional ethical/legal forms (See Matt 5:21, 22, etc.; W. Nauck 1957, 29ff.; P. Borgen 1965/1981,

³ Holmes 2010, 1 Cor 11:27–34.

esp. 88f.; P. Fiebig 1925, 3–20). The form of casuistic legal clauses is especially evident.

27 ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ . . . ἔνοχος ἔσται

29 ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων . . . κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει

31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we should not be judged

32 But when we are judged . . . we are chastened, so that we may not

34 if any one is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you shall not

The form of v. 31 is similar to that of John 3:18 (“He who believes in him is not condemned”) and Matt 6:14 (“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you”). All these sentences state a provision, in conditional clauses in 1 Cor 11:31 and Matt 6:14, or by a participle in 1 Cor 11:29 and John 3:18.

In the sentences 1 Cor 11:32 and 34, the main verb is followed by ἵνα μὴ . . . to show what is to be avoided, and there are parallel forms in Matt 5:25; John 5:14; Luke 12:58 and Matt 7:1. The parenetic imperative is used in 1 Cor 11:28 (δοκιμαζέτω) (cf. v. 34), and in v. 33 (ἐκδέχεσθε).

The issue of eating unworthily is stated in v. 27, and exhortation follows in v. 28, followed by the rationale in v. 29 (γὰρ): to eat and drink “without discerning the body.” The negative effect (διὰ τοῦτο) is described in v. 30: many are weak and ill, and some have died. In vv. 31–32 the opposite alternative is presented, not to be judged, and then in v. 33ff. the conclusion is drawn, and the application is specified: the common meal should be held in an orderly manner.

This analysis shows that Paul uses a variety of forms in his elaboration and that he changes style from third person singular to first and second person plural, and from indicative to imperative, etc. Paul’s style is, moreover, argumentative. He draws logical conclusions.

This analysis indicates that one can talk only to a limited degree about a person’s particular and individual style, as can be seen from the observation that traditional style and terminology are used in 1 Cor 11:27–29.

The section is, nevertheless, expository application composed by Paul, and the following guide rule can be formulated: In the expository paraphrasing of Gospel traditions, both words and phrases are largely fused together into traditional forms. As A. G. Wright observes: “What the ancient writer was aware of was that he wrote within a particular tradition: it was this that largely decided the literary form to which we have given a name. He was a Deuteronomist, a priestly writer, a follower of the sages, an anthologist of the prophets, or the like” (Wright 1966, 110–11).

The same view is expressed by R. Le Déaut, “The authors were conscious of writing in a tradition rather than in a certain literary form” (Le Déaut 1971, 270; see further Vawter 1960, 33; Borgen 1965/1981, 59.)

Moreover, Paul does not indicate that he uses a novel approach when he comments on a given unit of tradition. From this circumstance one can assume that there were two activities running parallel in the church communities: (a) the Gospel tradition was being received, preserved, and handed on, as seen in 1 Cor 11:23–25, and (b) it was commented upon, paraphrased, and applied to relevant concerns and situations, as seen in 1 Cor 11:27ff.

Basically the same method and structure are at work in John 5:1–18:

This kind of commentary is identified by the following criteria:

- (a) Words and phrases from the quoted tradition are repeated and interpreted in the commentary. This criterion is central for delimiting the direct commentary in John 5:1–18; (b) The commentary may elaborate upon a theme not only by using words and phrases, but also by employing synonyms, metaphorical expressions, biblical phrases, and quotations, etc. to comment upon the theme and words concerned (cf. Wanke, J. 1980, 208–33; Stanton 1983, 273–87).

John 5:1–18

In John 5:1–18, verses 1–9 quote a story about healing from the tradition, and the expository repetition of words follows in vv. 10–18. C. H. Dodd and other scholars have shown that the story of the healing, vv. 1–9, follows the same general pattern as that of several healing stories in the other Gospels (Dodd 1963, 174–80). The structure can be seen in the following points:

The Scene:

Vv. 1–3: . . . there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethzatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed.

The Patient and his Condition:

V. 5: One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. Intervention by Jesus, Leading up to the Word of Healing: Vv. 6–8: When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your pallet, and walk.” (ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει)

Recovery of the Patient:

V. 9a: And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked.

Like some of the healing stories in the other Gospels, this story occurs on the Sabbath, v. 9b: "Now that day was the Sabbath."

Dodd deals only with John 5:10–18 in a summary fashion without examining it. He characterizes vv. 10–18 as the transition from the narrative of the healing at Bethesda to the discourse which follows (Dodd 1953, 320; id. 1963, 174–80). In these verses, phrases from the quoted unit of tradition (vv. 1–9) are repeated and paraphrased. This commentary has a systematic outline: In vv. 10–13 the sentence *ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει* from v. 8 (also in v. 9) is repeated and paraphrased.

In vv. 14–16 the phrase *ὕγιής γενέσθαι/ ἐγένετο ὕγιής/* (vv. 6 and 9) is repeated (*ὕγιής γέγονας*) and paraphrased. Finally in vv. 17–18, the speaking and acting person in the story, Jesus himself, becomes the explicit focal point of the commentary.

The term *σάββατον* in v. 9 is repeated in each of the three parts of the commentary—in v. 10, 16, and 18.

It is important to note that these verses are part of a larger context which has the form of a legal-case story followed by a subsequent judicial exchange.

The evangelist elaborated upon the Christological theme of 5:1–18 in the discourse of 5:19ff. Up to this point John 5:1–18 is in accord with the model form of quoted tradition and attached commentary found in 1 Cor 11:23–34. Is the paraphrastic commentary in John 5:10–18, like the one in 1 Cor 11:27ff., put into traditional form?

Two different cases are reported in John 5:10–18 and 1 Cor 11:27–34. In both cases the narrative stories are interpreted, viz. the act of healing (John) and the story of a meal (1 Corinthians). While the exposition in 1 Cor 11:27ff. is a didactic monologue, partly using legal terminology and form, the exposition in John 5:10–18 has the form of a dialogue, more precisely of a legal debate on a controversial action (miracle) performed on the sabbath.

The difference between John and Paul should not be exaggerated. In 1 Cor 10:14–22 questions are formulated (vv. 16 and 18), as well as questions and answers (vv. 19–20). Similarly, the exposition of the eucharist in John 6:51–58 includes the schema of question and answer (v. 52ff.).

Nevertheless, concerning the traditional format a further specification should be made: it is to be classified as a report on a legal case that is followed by a judicial exchange. Accordingly, in John 5:1–18 the legal

case is presented in vv. 1–9/10, and the judicial exchange is developed in vv. 10/11–18ff.

Consequently, with regard to form, Matt 12:1–8 (the plucking of grain on the Sabbath), and Luke 13:10–17 (the healing of a crippled woman on the Sabbath), parallel John 5:1–18 in an interesting way.

A Synoptic presentation of these three passages makes the agreement of form evident.

Since a comparison between Matt 12:1–8 and Mark 2:23–28 is also of interest for our discussion, the Markan version is included in the presentation. The agreement of form raises the question of John's dependence on or independence of the Synoptic Gospels, and for that reason possible agreements of content will be included in this survey.

See further below, chapter 8.

It should be remembered that Rabbinic parallels of cases followed by interpretative exchanges can be included, e.g. *m. Ter.* 8:1: Case: "(If a priest) was standing and offering sacrifices at the altar, and it became known that he is the son of a divorcee or of a *halusah* . . ." Debate: "R. Eliezer says, 'All sacrifices that he had (ever) offered on the altar are invalid.' But R. Joshua declares them valid. If it became known that he is blemished . . . his service is invalid" (cf. A. J. Avery-Peck 1981, 35–46).

Conclusion

J. Becker concludes that a linear understanding of the relationship between Paul and John is inadequate and should not be used. Early Christianity is to be seen as a complex communitative fellowship. The basic uniting element was the conviction that the Christian world view and life styles were built on a Christological, archetypal event of the end time. This conviction allowed for many varied initiatives from individuals and congregations. The picture of a tree and branches may serve as an illustration.

Both Paul and John fuse together traditions on the Lord's Supper and the manna of Exod 16 (and "the well"), John 6:53–58 and 1 Cor 10:3–4; both associate the commission and the being sent with the appearance of the risen Lord, John 20:19–29 and 1 Cor 9 and 15. John's prologue (John 1:1–18) closely parallels the Philippian hymn in 2:5–11. John is more "down to earth" though, giving the name "God" to the risen Jesus who appeared on earth in time and space. In the Philippian hymn Paul tells that Jesus received "the name above all names" after the ascent and within a cosmic perspective.

Paul exemplifies how 'pre-Synoptic' traditions were received orally, had authority, and were subject to expository elaborations. These expository elaborations seen in Paul's 1 Cor 9–11 are similar to those in John. Thus John's Gospel is here closer to the interpreted Gospel units in 1 Corinthians than to the Gospel traditions rendered in the Synoptic Gospels.

The expositions can have the form of a commentary attached to a cited unit of tradition both by Paul and in John as seen in 1 Cor 11:27–34, which is attached to the quoted institution of the Lord's Supper in vv. 23–25 (26). In the exposition words from the cited institution are repeated and applied. The same structure is seen in the Gospel of John: John 5:10–18 is attached as an exposition to the story of the healing of the paralytic in vv. 1–9.

Moreover, the unit of tradition may be presupposed, and not quoted, as is the case in the discussion of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21 and John 6:51–58.

By the use of such expository elaborations and paraphrases, words and fragments from the tradition may be moulded afresh into different (new) traditional forms.

At various points in the following chapters other insights from Paul's Letters will be gained. Of special importance are the Christological statements in Phil 2:5–11 and 1 Cor 8:4–6, and Paul's report that he was called by the risen Lord to become an apostle, 1 Cor 9 and 15. As for the expository method, Paul's interpretation of Jesus' logions such as the rule on divorce, see 1 Cor 7:10–16.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND HELLENISM

Having related John to the writings of Philo of Alexandria and the letters of Paul, we must now ask the following question: How should John be understood within the broader context of Hellenism? Some relevant points in John will be examined from this perspective.

*The Research Situation*¹

The topic of the present study is “The Gospel of John and Hellenism.” The first question to be addressed is the problem of defining the term “Hellenism.” It has been used to designate the period from Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.E.) to Roman Imperial rule (ca. 30 B.C.E.) (P. Bilde, 1990, 5–7; see also H. D. Betz 1992, 3:127). As far as culture, philosophy, and religion are concerned, the epoch does not end with the establishment of the Roman Empire.

When characterizing aspects of Hellenism, some scholars place the emphasis on Greek elements, others on Eastern or Oriental features. Considering this broad Roman context of John, even if John should have an inner Jewish setting, the question of John and Hellenism is quite relevant. In his book *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, C. H. Dodd emphasized Greek elements and developed a Platonizing interpretation of John. As his starting point, he took the thoughts and ideas of the Gospel rather than the person of Christ. In an appendix, he stated: “It will have become clear that I regard the Fourth Gospel as being in its essential character a theological work” (444). The author “. . . is thinking not so much of Christians who need a deeper theology, as of non-Christians who are concerned about eternal life and the way to it, and may be ready to follow the Christian way if this is presented to them in terms that are intelligibly related to their previous religious interest and experience” (9).

Dodd drew largely on parallel ideas in Philo’s writings and concluded that whatever other elements of thought which may be found in John, it

¹ For surveys of research on John, see Kysar R. 1975; Kysar R. 1985, 2:25:3, 2389–2480; J. K. Riches 1993, 175–97.

certainly presupposes ideas having remarkable resemblance to Hellenistic Judaism as represented by Philo. There is one decisive difference, however. John conceives of the Logos as incarnate, and of the true man (Jesus Christ) as dwelling in all men as more than reason. The Logos, which in Philo is personal only in a fluctuating series of metaphors, is in John fully personal, standing in personal relation with God and with men and having a place in history. As a result, those elements of personal piety, faith, and love, which are present in Philo's religion but not fully integrated into his philosophy, come to their own in the Gospel. The Logos of Philo is not the object of faith and love, but the incarnate Logos of the Fourth Gospel is both lover and beloved: to love Him and to have faith in Him is the essence of that knowledge of God which is eternal life.

Against Dodd it should be said that while in Philo's writings there is extensive use of Greek philosophical ideas which have a largely Middle-Platonic stamp (J. Dillon 1977, 139–83; P. Borgen 1984a, 21:1.147–54; id. 1984b, 264–74; Keener 2009, 18–19), this is not the case in John. Therefore one cannot use Philo's writings as directly as Dodd does to describe the background of John. However, Philo may exemplify Jewish traditions and thought categories that he and John interpret along different lines.

Dodd emphasizes that the Johannine ideas show kinship with ideas in some of the Hermetic tractates: "It seems clear that as a whole they represent a type of religious thought akin to one side of Johannine thought, without any substantial borrowing on one side or the other" (53). One can concur with Dodd's view that some ideas in the Hermetic writings are akin to elements of Johannine thought, but many other Hermetic ideas differ much from John (R. Schnackenburg 1972, 1: 3rd ed., 118–20). Thus, how the points of similarity are to be understood must be discussed further.

R. Bultmann placed John within the context of a Hellenistic syncretism in which Gnosticism was the dominant factor. He took as point of departure the person Jesus and interpreted Johannine Christology in light of the Gnostic myth:

The Gnostic myth depicts the cosmic drama by which the imprisonment of the sparks of light came about, a drama whose end is already beginning now and will be complete when they are released. The drama's beginning, the tragic event of primeval time, is variously told in the several variants of the myth. But the basic idea is constant: The demonic powers get into their clutches a person—who had originated in the light-world—either because he is led astray by his own foolishness or because he is overcome in battle. The individual selves of the "pneumatics" are none other than the parts and splinters of that light-person. . . . Redemption comes from the heavenly world. Once more a light-person sent by the highest god, indeed the son and

“image” of the most high, comes down from the light-world bringing *Gnosis*. He “wakes” the sparks of light . . . and “reminds” them of their heavenly home (R. Bultmann 1951, 1:166–67). In this way the figure of Jesus in John is portrayed in the forms offered by the Gnostic Redeemer-myth.

It is true that the cosmological motifs of the myth are missing in John, especially the idea that the redemption which the “Ambassador” brings is the release of the pre-existent sparks of light which are held captive in this world by demonic powers . . . But otherwise Jesus appears as in the Gnostic myths as the pre-existent Son of God whom the Father clothed with authority and sent into the world. Here, appearing as a man, he speaks the words the Father gave him and accomplishes the works which the Father commissioned him to do (R. Bultmann 1951, 2:12–13).

Bultmann’s characterization of early Gnosticism, which lies behind the later Gnosticism and is documented in literary sources, is rather hypothetical. Moreover, Bultmann himself admitted that John differs from the Gnostic myth at key points. Thus, scholars must see if other sources can give us a better picture of the background behind John’s thought world and at the same time look for affinities between Johannine ideas and ideas found in later Gnostic writings.

The only body of writings upon which John definitively depends is the Old Testament.² Thus, John’s use of the Old Testament and exegetical traditions needs to be examined to see whether it reflects any Hellenistic features. Other relevant sources of information can be used in a more general way, such as parallel ideas, methods and forms, and social and historical data gleaned from literary and archaeological sources.

Sources from ancient Judaism are of primary interest. A basic observation is that Judaism in Antiquity belonged to the Hellenistic world. Raymond E. Brown and Martin Hengel take this broader context of Judaism as background for John, but do not take it as the primary question. Brown (1966, 1:LVI) writes: “We take for granted, therefore, a Greek strain within Judaism which had an influence on Johannine vocabulary and thought. But the question which we ask here is whether there was another Hellenistic influence on John that did not come through Judaism but come from without.”

Correspondingly Martin Hengel stresses the Jewish nature of John and writes: “That does not mean that the Gospel is clearly cut off from the

² E. D. Freed 1965; Peder Borgen 1965, 2nd ed. 1981; G. Reim 1974; M. J. J. Menken 1988a, 164–72; id. 1988b, 39–56; B. G. Schuchard 1992.

world of 'Hellenism'; certainly not. Rather, it belongs in it to the degree that ancient pre-rabbinic Judaism in its creative multiplicity is also a part of the 'Hellenistic world', in Palestine and the Diaspora" (M. Hengel 1989, 113).

Instead of looking for direct influence from outside of Judaism, the difficult challenge is then to look into the possibility that John has distinctively Jewish and Christian expressions of broader Hellenistic features. Accordingly, the following hypothesis will guide the present analysis of John and Hellenism. Based on Gospel traditions and further Jewish and Christian developments, John cultivates ideas and practices which to some extent are distinctively Jewish-Christian versions of aspects present in the Hellenistic world at large. John's Gospel has a distinctive unity of thought in its interpretation of the traditions from and about Jesus. Its various aspects may, nevertheless, show affinities to different ideas and practices in the Hellenistic surroundings. Before entering into such an examination one must realize that the division between Palestinian (normative) Judaism and Hellenistic Judaism is not of fundamental importance and does not provide us with an adequate tool for categorization. Thus, Jewish writings from both the Diaspora, like the writings of Philo of Alexandria, and Palestinian writings, like the Dead Sea Scrolls, are relevant sources. The rabbinic material is hard to date, but some of the traditions go back to New Testament times or earlier. When parallels are found in datable writings such as Philo's, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus' works, and the New Testament, then there is a case for dating rabbinic material to the first century C.E. or earlier.

Within the limit of this chapter only a few ideas can be selected for analysis. Thus the observations made will be necessarily incomplete. Ideally, this study should be followed by further discussions about themes such as John's "I am"-sayings, "to know God/the Son," the docetism/anti-docetism issue, elements of predestination, etc. The present analysis will thus be limited to the following topics: agency, ascent/descent and vision of God, the Logos, equality with God, Jews, the cosmos, and light and darkness. The examination will be based upon the Gospel in its present form without entering into a discussion of the question of possible sources.

Agency

The idea and practice of agency can serve as a convenient starting point (P. Borgen 1968, 137-48; also P. Borgen 1987a, 171-84; J. Ashton [ed.] 1986, 67-78; See further Jan-A. Böhner, 1977).

The Jesus logion found in John 13:20—"... he who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me"—has a firm place in the Gospel tradition, as seen from the parallels in Matt 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48 and 10:16 as well as the variants present in John 5:23; 8:19; 12:44–45; 14:7 and 19; and 15:32 (P. Borgen 1979, 18–35; also in id. 1983a, 49–66). The saying as such formulates a principle and a rule of agency among persons, as stated in the halakah: "an agent is like the one who sent him" (*Mek. Exod.* 12.3 and 6; *m. Ber.* 5.5; *b. Metziah* 96a; *b. Hag.* 10b; *b. Qidd.* 42b; 43a; *b. Menah.* 93b; *b. Naz.* 12b, etc.).³

Another conventional rule for the practice of agency among persons is formulated in John 13:16: "a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent (ἀπόστολος) greater than him who sent him." A close parallel occurs in *Gen. Rab.* 78: "the sender is greater than the sent." Such rules reflect, of course, the normal conventions for agency and diplomacy in the Graeco-Roman world (M. M. Mitchell 1992, 641–62).

Philo may here serve as an example. He was the head of a delegation from Alexandrian Jewry to emperor Gaius Caligula, and he stated as a generally practiced rule that "the suffering of envoys recoil on those who have sent him" (*Legat.* 369). In general, therefore, the rules of agency and diplomacy demonstrate that Judaism, including early Christianity, functioned within the culture of the wider Hellenistic world. Philo uses the technical Greek terms for an envoy, πρεσβευτής (*Flac.* 98 and *Legat.* 182; 370) and for a body of envoys, a delegation, πρεσβεία (*Flac.* 97 and *Legat.* 181; 239; 247; 354) in his report on the embassy to the Roman emperor. This embassy consisted of five Jewish envoys (*Legat.* 370) who met before Gaius Caligula. Philo employs the same term when he refers to envoys from almost the whole world (*Legat.* 182). These technical Greek terms are not used in John. Thus, Johannine language is in this respect closer to halakhic language than Philo is. One point favoring Jewish halakah as the immediate background for John's use of agency is the term used in John 13:16, ἀπόστολος, "he who is sent," that renders the Hebrew word for an agent and an envoy, *shaliach*.

However, the Johannine and halakhic language and rules are to be examined against the broader background of the Oriental-Hellenistic world. The Oriental context is sketched by J.-A. Bühner 1977, 118–80;

³ In the Old Testament the principles of agency are present in an embryonic form, such as God's word when the people had rejected Samuel: "... they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me..." (1 Sam 8:7). This point was made earlier with the same wording. If it is going to be repeated, different phrasing and if appropriate a furthering of its insight would be helpful.

185–91. As an example Bühner refers on page 120 to Text 137 from Ras Schamra, lines 38–42, where it is stated that “a messenger has the word of his Lord on his shoulders.” Thus John’s Christological usage of the principle of agency presupposes the role of agents and envoys in the Jewish state and in Judaism, which functioned within the broader context of the Middle East and the Mediterranean world.

A Common Trend: Ascent/Descent and Vision of God

Visionary and “mystical” trends in Judaism have contributed to the interpretation of the Jesus-traditions in John. The notions of seeing God and his glory are central, and biblical epiphanic events serve as background and models. John objects to the motif of ascent, but keeps the motifs of glory and hearing and seeing and ties these ideas to Jesus, the incarnate One exclusively. Some of these Johannine ideas show affinities to ideas and phenomena in the wider Hellenistic world. The Old Testament story about the revelation at mount Sinai plays a central role in Judaism. Such a Sinaitic framework can be seen in John 1:14 and 18: “. . . we saw his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . No one has ever seen God . . .” The disciples saw the glory of the Son, who was “full of grace and truth” (see Exod 33:18, 22; 34:5–6) and thereby the Son mediated the vision of God’s glory, while a direct vision of God was denied Moses and human beings in general (Exod 33:20). The same view is formulated in John 1:18: “No one has ever seen God; the only God [mess Son], who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known” (M. É. Boismard 1953; N. A. Dahl 1962, 132–33). The brief exposition of Isa 54:13 (“And they shall all be taught by God”) in John 6:45b–46 also draws on features from the theophany at Sinai, as indicated by the ideas of hearing and seeing God: “. . . every one who has heard . . . Not that any one has seen.” John 1:17.⁴ The background idea here is that no one can see God, Exod 33:20: “. . . you cannot see my face; for man cannot see me and live.” Thus, according to John those who are taught by God have heard Him without actually seeing Him.

For the sake of contrast, John writes that the Jewish authorities have neither heard the voice of God nor seen his form, and thus they have no share in the revelation at Sinai: “His voice you have never heard, his form

⁴ On the “hearing” at Sinai, see Deut 4:12; 5:24; 18:16; Sir 17:13; 45:5; *Mek. Exod.* 19:2; 1QM 10.8b–11. See P. Borgen 1965/81, 150. See further C. C. Newman 1992, 110–13.

you have never seen" (5:37). It is probable that God's "form," εἶδος, 5:37, was the (pre-existent) Son of God, who is the only one who has seen the Father, (6:46). By rejecting Jesus as the Son, the Jewish authorities demonstrate that they did not see God's form at the (anticipatory) Sinaitic epiphany. This interpretation receives support from John's comment on Isaiah's Temple vision, Isa 6:1–10, in which he seems to identify the glory as the glory of Jesus, seen by the prophet ahead of time: "Isaiah saw his [Jesus'] glory and spoke of him," see John 12:41 (N. A. Dahl 1962, 133; P. Borgen 1965/81, 133–34).

In the Sinaitic revelation story, the term "ascend" plays a central role, Exod 19:20, 23; 24:1, 2, 9, 13, 18. Jewish exegesis says that Moses entered into heaven when he ascended (Philo, *Mos.* 1:158f., cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 3:96; Pseudo-Philo *L.A.B.* 12.1; *Mek. Exod.* 19.20; *Num. Rab.* 12.11; *Midr. Ps.* 24.5 and 106.2). John 3:13, "No one has ascended to heaven . . .", seems then to serve as a polemic both against the idea of Moses' ascent and against similar claims of or for other human beings. Philo gives an example of this kind of *imitatio Mosis* in *Mos.* 1:158. After having described Moses' entry into the place where God was, he concluded: ". . . he has set before us . . . a model for those who are willing to copy it" (P. Borgen 1993b, 263–67). As an example of another human claim, one might refer to Philo's own ascent to the heavenly sphere, *Spec.* 3:1–6: "I . . . seemed always to be borne aloft into the heights with a soul possessed by some God-sent inspiration . . ." The fragment 4Q491 11, 1.12–19 also probably describes the ascent of a human being: ". . . none shall be exalted but me . . . For I have taken my seat in the [congregation] in the heavens . . ." (M. Smith 1992, 290–301; C. A. Evans 1994, 563–65). Thus, John 3:13 is probably a polemic against persons in the Johannine environment who maintained that they were visionaries like Moses (H. Odeberg 1929, 72–94; N. A. Dahl 1962, 141; P. Borgen 1965/81, 185). John's Gospel reflects an environment in which Jewish versions of such ascent-traditions existed.⁵

Its polemic against human beings who claim that they have ascended to heaven is partly due to the conviction that what is to be sought in heaven, such as God's glory, is now in the Incarnate One. Thus the ascent-motif is turned upside down in John's Gospel when it is applied to the Incarnate Logos/Son.

⁵ The interpretation of John 3:13 as a whole is difficult. See P. Borgen 1977, 243–45, and F. J. Moloney 1978, 54.

John's polemic against others' heavenly ascent does not reflect a general attitude among early Christians. Paul reports that he was caught up into the third heaven, 2 Cor 12:3, and John the Seer heard a voice saying "Come up hither . . ." And then he was in the Spirit and saw a heavenly scene, Rev 4. None of these ascents are understood to challenge the unique revelation in Jesus Christ, however. In different forms, the idea of an ascent to heaven was widespread in the Hellenistic world (D. W. Bousset 1901, 136–69; J. D. Tabor 1986; P. Borgen 1993b, 246–68; W. Gundel and G. Gundel 1966, 29–30, 180–81, et passim; H. Himmelfarb 1993; id. 1988, 73–100). When John reacted against claims of ascent within a Jewish context, he reacted against a Jewish (and Christian) phenomena which was at the same time taking place within a Hellenistic context. Two accounts illustrate such a context.

The astronomer Ptolemy told the following story about his own experience: "Mortal as I am, I know that I am born for a day, but when I follow the serried multitude of the stars in their circular course, my feet no longer touch the earth; I ascend to Zeus himself to feast me on ambrosia, the food of the gods" (F. Cumont 1912, repr. 1960, 81). In Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, Menippus claims to have returned from a visit to heaven. He speaks of a three stage flight, from moon, to sun, to heaven. The ascent is bodily. Menippus reports: "Here I am, I tell you, just come back today from the very presence of your great Zeus himself, and *I have seen and heard wonderful things . . .*" (Translation by A. H. Harmon 1915, 2, ad loc.). It is to be noted that here, as in the Sinaitic traditions, the seeing and hearing are central notions.

*A Distinctive Expression of a Common Hellenistic Theme:
Equal to God*

In John 5:17 Jewish exegesis is utilized. When it is said in v. 17 that God works up to now, that is, including the Sabbath, a widespread exegetical debate on Gen 2:2–3 is presupposed and used (See P. Borgen 1987c, 89–92).

The problem was the conviction that God could stop working. Consequently, the notion of God's Sabbath rest, as stated in Gen 2:2–3, stands in tension with His working. Evidence for such exegetical debate about God's Sabbath rest is found as early as the second century B.C.E., in Aristobulus, 35 and more material is found in Philo and in rabbinic writings (N. Walter 1964, 170–71; P. Borgen 1984b, 276–77; id. 1983c, 180, 184–85; id.

1987a, 1–16). According to rabbinic exegesis, the Sabbath commandment does not forbid one to carry something about in one's house on the Sabbath. God's homestead is the upper and lower worlds. He may thus be active within it without coming into conflict with the Sabbath (*Gen. Rab.* 30.6). Philo, relying on the Septuagint rendering, notices that Gen 2:2–3 reads κατέπαυσεν, not ἐπαύσατο. Thus the text means “‘caused to rest’, not ‘rested,’ for He causes to rest that which, though actually not in operation, is apparently making, but He himself never ceases making” (*Leg.* 1:5–6). Thus, the meaning of the Seventh Day is that God, who has no origin, is always active. “He is not a mere artificer, but also Father of the things that are coming into being” (*Leg.* 1:18). All created beings are dependent and ultimately passive in all their doings: “. . . the number seven . . . Its purpose is that creation, observing the inaction which it brings, should call to mind him who does all things invisibly” (*Her.* 170).

An interpretation of Gen 2:2–3 similar to that of Philo seems to be presupposed in John 5:1–18. The Son of God brings the Father's providential activity to bear upon the case of healing on the Sabbath. And the healed person is dependent and passive, even when carrying his mat on the sabbath, since he does it as commanded by the Son of God. This passage illuminates the Johannine perspective that in Jesus, in his actions and words, the divine and heavenly realm is present on earth. Thus God's “heavenly halakah,” that He never ceases working, not even on the Sabbath, invalidates the earthly halakah about not working on the Sabbath.

When this Jewish exegesis of Gen 2:2–3 is applied to Jesus and his healing activity on the Sabbath it leads to the Jews' charge that he made himself equal to God (see W. Meeks 1990, 309–21). The Jews were harsh in their criticism of human persons who claimed to be equal to God, as was said of Antiochus Epiphanes in 1 Macc 9:12. Nevertheless, there was a debate about “two powers in heaven” (A. Segal 1977). In several places Philo drew on Exod 7:1 where Moses is called god to Pharaoh. According to *Mos.* 1:158 Moses was given the same title as God, in that he was named god and king of the whole nation and went into the darkness where God was (cf. Exod 20:21).

The theme of claiming equality with God occurs in the Old Testament (Isa 14:13–14), in Philo (*Leg.* 1:49; *Virt.* 171–72 and *Legat.* 75), and in various contexts in the Greek world. In Greek sources the scale went from a *positive* meaning to live a god-like life or do a god-like act to *negative and improper* meaning to claim that a person is like the gods (Homer, *Il.* 5.440–41; Philostratus' *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5 and 8.7.7). Thus, in Judaism and in

John distinctively Jewish ideas about being equal with God are expressed, but within the larger framework of the different shades of meanings in the wider Hellenistic world.

Wisdom and Logos

The Prologue of John in 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word,” echoes back to the story of the creation in Gen 1:1, “In the beginning God created.”

As is commonly recognized, this interpretation of Gen 1 is developed further on the basis of Old Testament and Jewish Wisdom traditions. Some of the relevant Wisdom ideas are (R. E. Brown 1966, 1:522–23):

(a) Like the Logos, Wisdom was an agent in creation. In Prov 8:27–30 Wisdom tells how she aided God in the creation. She was God’s craftsman. According to Wis 9:9 Wisdom was present when God created the world, and in 8:22 Wisdom is called “artificer of all”; (b) Like the Logos, Wisdom is life and light for men. In Prov 8:35 Wisdom says, “He who finds me, finds life,” and Bar 4:1 promises that all who cling to Wisdom will live. Eccles 2:13 says, “Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness”; (c) The Prologue says that Logos came into the world and was rejected by men, especially by the people of Israel, John 1:9–11. Similarly, Wisdom came to men; e.g., Wis 9:10 records Solomon’s prayer that Wisdom be sent down from heaven to be with him and work with him. Proverbs 8:31 says that Wisdom was delighted to be with men. Foolish men rejected Wisdom (Sir 15:7), and according to *1 En.* 42.2 “Wisdom came to make her dwelling place among the children of men and found no dwelling place.” The same idea is found in Bar 3:12, but here addressed to Israel in particular: “You have rejected the fountain of wisdom.” In John 1:14 it is said that Logos set up his tent and dwelt among men; so Sir 24:8ff. say that Wisdom set up her tabernacle and dwelt in Jacob (Israel).

Both Philo’s writings and Gnostic writing, such as the tractate *The Trimorphic Protennoia*, also parallel the ideas of Logos and Wisdom. For Philo God was transcendent and could not be identified with the world or any part of it. Platonic and Stoic ideas help him to express the relationship between God and the world. Here the Logos is the Mediator. The Logos proceeds from God and is the medium of the creation of the world. The higher world, *κόσμος νοητός*, cannot be thought of in terms of space, but it is the Logos of God in the act of creating the world (Cf. C. H. Dodd 1953, 67).

The Logos is also the medium of the divine government of the world. It is not only transcendent in the mind of God, but also immanent in the created universe. “In all respects the Logos is the medium of intercourse

between God and this world" (C. H. Dodd 1953, 68). By Logos, then, Philo means the Platonic world of ideas, conceived not as self-existent, but as expressing the mind of the One God. We find in the Prologue of John parallels of Philo's thoughts about the Logos and the world, creation, government, and communication.

There are several important observations that can be made about these similarities. Since Philo often uses the terms *λόγος* and *σοφία* interchangeably, he demonstrates how Wisdom categories and ideas can be expressed and further interpreted around the term Logos. Moreover, in *Somn.* 1:75 Philo interprets Gen 1:3, moving from the spoken word to the Logos as an entity distinct from God, as the model behind the work of creation: "... for the model was the Word of His [God's] fullness, namely light, for He says 'God said, 'Let there be light.'" Although Philo's Platonizing idea of a model behind the work of creation is not found in John's Prologue, a corresponding exegesis is presupposed, in which Gen 1:3, "God said," is understood to mean "Logos" (P. Borgen 1983a, 99–100; id. 1987a, 84).

There are also parallels in Gnostic writings, such as in the *Trimorphic Protенnoia* (C. A. Evans 1981, 395–401). There, a vocabulary and world of thought similar to John's Prologue can be found: "word," "truth," "light," "beginning," "power," "world," and "reveal." The similarity between John 1:14a and *Protенnoia* 47:13–16 is quite striking: John 1:14: "The Word became flesh and set up his tent among us." *Protенnoia* 47:13–16: "... I revealed myself to them in their tents as the Word and I revealed myself in the likeness of their shape. And I wore everyone's garment and hid myself among them ..."

There is also a basic difference. In John's Prologue the Logos becomes a historical and individual person, while according to *Protенnoia* it resides in a series of Sovereignities and Powers belonging to the various spheres spanning heaven and earth.

The many other differences speak also against any theory of direct influence between the two writings. C. Colpe and others see Jewish Wisdom traditions behind both *Protенnoia* and John's Prologue (C. Colpe 1974, 109–25, especially 122). It should be added that some scholars see the Gnostic Wisdom myth, which one finds in Gnostic systems, as an adaptation of the personified Jewish Wisdom (K. Rudolph 1983, 280–82; G. W. MacRea 1970, 86–101).

Thus it is seen that the Old Testament and Jewish Wisdom ideas were adapted to various lines of thought including Philo's Platonizing, the Gnostic's mythology (*Protенnoia*), as well as the Jesus traditions in John's Gospel.

Interrelated Concepts

Wisdom ideas have contributed to the descent-ascent motif in John. The most important passages are Prov 1:20–23; 8:12–36; Sir 24:1–22; LXX Wis 6–10; Bar 3:9–4.9; 1 *En.* 42; 94; 4 *Ezra* 5.10–11; *Syr. Bar.* 48.36. The aspect of descent is seen among other places in John 1:14: the Logos, which existed from the beginning and was God (1:1–2), became a human being, “flesh.” The theme of ascent is in particular present in chs 13–20 in the idea of the return to the Father. As shown above, in John 1:14 the idea of Wisdom is seen most directly in the term “the Word.” Verses 14–18 also reflect a Sinaitic and epiphanic model, according to which the Word of the Law was revealed and the theophanic glory was sought. Thus the Prologue also presupposes the identification of Wisdom and the Law, as testified to by Sir 24. The giving of the Law through Moses at Sinai is even referred to directly in John 1:17, and John 10:34–36 tells us that “the Word of God” came to the Israelites at Sinai.

Moreover, ideas about the Law and Wisdom are brought together in the concept of “bread from heaven,” which gives life to the world (John 6:33), just as the God gave life to the world when He gave the Law at Sinai (*Tanchuma*, ed. Buber, *Shemot* 25; *Mek. Exod.* 15.26; *Exod. Rab.* 29.9). A presupposition is the identification of the manna with the Law, as seen in Philo, *Mut.* 253–63 and *Mek. Exod.* 13.17 (P. Borgen 1965/81, 148–50).

As for the ideas of agency and diplomacy, they are applied to Christology in John (F. H. Agnew 1986, 75–76). Old Testament and Jewish ideas about Moses, and the prophets and angels as God’s messengers, have prepared the ground for this interpretation (J.-A. Bühner 1977, 270–385). A frequently used characterization of Jesus in John is “the One who is sent by the Father” and similar phrases, and Jesus characterizes God as “the One who sent me,” as well as through other expressions (P. Borgen 1968, 137–48; also in J. Ashton 1986, 67–78; J.-A. Bühner 1977). Since Philo’s writings were written during the first half of the first century C.E., they are of special importance. Philo applies the technical term for an envoy, *πρεσβευτής*, not only to envoys on the human level, but also to the personified Logos who acts as ambassador (*πρεσβευτής*) of the ruler [God] to the subjects (*Her.* 205). He also uses the term for angels who are envoys between men and God (*Gig.* 16), and who, as God’s ambassadors, announce predictions to the (Jewish) race (*Abr.* 115). Here the notion of ascent-descent is evident.

In John 6:31–58 the idea of God’s commissioned agent is woven together with the ideas of Wisdom, Law, and “bread from heaven.” Thus, Jesus

identifies himself with the bread and says: “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με),” John 6:38. Accordingly, by refusing to recognize “him whom he [the Father] has sent,” the “Jews” (the term used in the negative sense) prove that they have no share in the revelation to Israel, probably referring to the revelation at Sinai (John 5:37–38). The aspect of ascent is part of the logic implicit in the idea of Jesus as the commissioned agent of God, since one who is sent on a mission is to return and report to the sender, *p. Hag.* 76d (P. Borgen 1986, 142–43; id. 1987a, 175–76). John 13–20 is correspondingly dominated by the theme of Jesus’ return to his Father, and in 17:4 he reports that the charge has been accomplished: “I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

One might ask if this descent/ascent motif is to be understood as a cosmic dualism between the “heavenly” divine realm and the earthly evil realm. John 8:23 seems to fit into such an understanding: “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.” One possible understanding is that Jesus does not belong to the created cosmos as his audience does. If so, the distinction between “from below” and “from above” is in itself not the dualistic principle. To support this understanding one might refer to 8:21, where Jesus says that he is going away, meaning back to his Father. Correspondingly in 8:26 he states that he, as God’s commissioned envoy, declares to the (created) world what he has heard from the sender, the Father. The test of whether those who are from below and are of this world will die in their sins, vv. 21 and 24, is their reaction to God’s envoy, Jesus. Thus, although spatial distinctions are drawn, there is an ethical dualism and not a spatial one, even here in John 8:21–30. It is important to remember that in Jewish thinking that while the realm above may mean the heavenly world and the realm below may mean the earthly world, both are created. They do however set the stage for different possible actions: “No evil thing comes down from above” (*Gen. Rab.* 51.5). In rabbinic traditions man is understood to be a mixture of the upper realm and the realm below. If he sins, he will die, and if he does not sin, he will live (*Gen. Rab.* 8; see further *Str.-B.* 2:430f.).

In John, man as such is not seen as a mixture of heaven and earth. Jesus’ Jewish listeners were from below and not partly from above and partly from below. John’s distinction shows some similarity with Gnostic dualism’s distinction between the lower psychic world and the upper pneumatic world. As a parallel, *The Hypostasis of the Archons* can be cited:

“... beings that merely possess a soul cannot lay hold of those that possess a Spirit—; for they were from Below, while it was from Above” (2:87.16–20) (R. Schnackeburg 1971, 2:252). However, this dualism is of a cosmic nature, while the Johannine dualism is ethical, in spite of its spatial framework. Nevertheless, although John’s dualism remains within Jewish and Christian categories, it comes quite close to Gnostic views.

Internationalization

Another affinity between the Fourth Gospel and trends in Hellenism is internationalization. According to John 2:21 Jesus, as the risen one, takes on the role of the Temple in Jerusalem. Correspondingly, in 4:20–24 worship on mount Gerizim (as done by “the fathers”) and in Jerusalem will be replaced by the worship of the Father in spirit and truth. This statement, from the dialogue with the Samaritan woman, opens to an international perspective, as stated by R. Schnackenburg 1965, 1:473:

Als die ntl Gottesgemeinde löst sie den alten, heilsgeschichtlich bedingten und begrenzten Kult im Jerusalemer Tempel (V 22) ab durch die neue, auf Christus gegründete Gottesverehrung in Geist und Wahrheit und kennt dabei keinen Unterschied zwischen Juden, Samaritern und Heiden.

This perspective is also expressed in the two references to the Greeks in the Gospel. John 7:35 reads: “Does he intend to go to the Diaspora of the Greeks and teach the Greeks?” The word “Greeks,” “Ἕλληνες,” may refer to Greek-speaking Diaspora Jews. However, the genitive “of the Greeks,” can be translated as “among the Greeks.” Then the question raised is about whether Jesus will go into the Diaspora and teach Gentiles. The word “Ἕλληνες” also occurs in 12:20–21: “Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip . . . and said to him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’” Since these Greeks were pilgrims who came to worship at the feast, they were Gentiles who had become Jewish proselytes. In any case, the word “Greeks” refers to persons of Gentile origin (see R. E. Brown 1966, 1:314, 318, 466, and 470).

There is also a reference to the Gentiles in John 10:16 “. . . I have other sheep, that are not of this fold . . .” “This fold” means Israel, and the “other sheep” are Gentiles. It is also probable that Jewish ideas about the gathering of the scattered children of Israel in John 11:52 are transferred to the Christian community so that it refers to the ingathering of believing Gentiles.

These points in John indicate that the Johannine community comprised both Jews and non-Jews and that it had loosed itself from the Jerusalem Temple by transferring the role of the Temple to Jesus who died and rose again. Likewise, the story about the healing of the man born blind, John 9, who was afterwards barred from the synagogue, implies that there had been a break between the Johannine community and the synagogal community. J. Louis Martyn and R. E. Brown have drawn the probable conclusion that the writing of John's Gospel may have been occasioned by a Christian community's expulsion of a from their synagogue (L. Martyn 1979; R. E. Brown 1979b).

Thus, John's Gospel reflects that the Johannine community's self-understanding had moved beyond the Jewish ethnic boundaries to include the broader world of other nations, as indicated by John's use of the terms "the Samaritans" and "the Greeks." In its own way John here represents the Hellenistic tendency towards internationalization. Considering this background, how should one characterize this Johannine community? Some scholars have suggested that it was a sectarian ingroup defending itself against the outgroup (E. Käsemann 1968; W. A. Meeks 1972, 44–72). John's positive and open use of the terms "Greeks" and "Samaritans" does not fit well with such an understanding. As suggested below the traumatic experience expulsion from the synagogue contributed to transforming the terms "the Jews" and "the world" into negative concepts, laden with hatred. No such associations are indicated in the use of the terms "the Greeks" or "the Samaritans." John 3:16, about God's love of the world, also suggests a more positive and open attitude to a universal perspective than that of a sect.

Dualism: "Jews," "Cosmos," etc.

John's dualism may be understood as an interplay between traditional ideas and the self-understanding of the Johannine community in its continuity and discontinuity with Judaism. John's strange use of the term "Jews," οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, illustrates this duality (R. Schnackenburg 1968, 287). The continuity is expressed by the fact that Jesus was a Jew, John 4:9 and 18:35, and in Jesus' word to the Samaritan woman in John 4:22 "for salvation is from the Jews" (C. K. Barrett 1978, 237; R. Schnackenburg 1968, 1:435–36). The discontinuity is expressed in the characterization of the Jewish authorities as being hostile to Jesus, 5:10, 15, 16, 18; 7:1, 13; 8:48, 52, 57; 9:18:22; 10:24, 31, 33; 11:8; 18:12, 14, 31, 36, 38; 19:7, 12, 14, 31, 38; 20:19.

A division took place within Israel. On the one hand Jesus' Jewish disciples confessed that they had found the Messiah, John 1:35–42. Nathaniel, who recognized Jesus as the Son of God, the king of Israel, was the prototype of a true Israelite. Such true Israelites are the sheep who belonged to "this fold," John 10:16. The "Jews," negatively understood, do not believe and do not belong to Jesus' flock, John 10:26 (N. A. Dahl 1962, 136–37).

This movement towards internationalization has a cosmic dimension. It can be seen in the broadening of ethnic concepts into cosmic concepts, as is the case in John's interpretation of Israel as God's possession and that God chose Israel out of love. The words τὰ ἴδια and οἱ ἴδιοι in John 1:11 refer to the people of Israel, as explained in Exod 19:5 "... you shall be my own possession among all peoples..." (R. E. Brown 1966, 1:10). In the cosmic context of the Prologue, the concept has probably been broadened to mean human beings as belonging to the creator. This is seen in the parallel thought in John 1:10, where it is said that the world, ὁ κόσμος, did not recognize him through whom the world was made. This broadening of the concept emerges from the idea that Israel regarded itself as the center of the world (B. Lindars 1972, 90). This same broadening has another parallel in "the Jews," negatively understood, and "the world," negatively understood, in their hostility to God, see John 15:18–16:4. Here "the Jews" even represent the world.

Correspondingly, there is a broadening of positive ideas associated with Israel. The words in John 3:16, "God so loved the world," have their background in God's love for his people, as for example said in Deut 7:7–8: "It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord loves you..." (B. Lindars 1972, 158–59). For such positive use of the term "the world," see further John 3:17; 4:42; 6:33, 51; 10:36; 12:47.

The movement from national concepts to cosmic and international concepts is also present in Christology. Nathanael confesses Jesus as the king of the Jews, John 1:49, and Jesus tells him that he will see "greater things." These greater things are not specified, but they are connected with Jesus' reference to the "Son of Man" who will be in permanent contact with heaven, 1:50–51 (M. de Jonge 1977, 58–59). The concept of Messiah in 4:25–26 is likewise followed by the broader idea of "the Savior of the world," 4:42.

When the cosmic broadening of national and ethnic concepts in this way is combined with a movement towards internationalization, then John can be said to represent a distinctively Jewish and Christian tendency that parallels the Hellenistic movement from the city state to more

universal perspectives. It may even be said that the cosmic broadening of ethnic ideas in John corresponds to the cosmic broadening of the ideas of the city state, πόλις, to the view that the whole cosmos is a πόλις, inhabited by gods and men. See Araiōs Didymos in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15:15, 3–5.

In John's pointedly negative and dualistic usages of the concepts of "his own property," "the Jews" and "the world" one might find affinities between John and Gnostic views (Cf. K. Rudolph 1983, 305). Nevertheless, John bases his view on the biblical conviction that God is the Creator, positively understood. Thus the negative reaction is the rejection by God's/the Son's own possession, the created world with its center in Israel. To conclude: The main themes, discussed above, have as a focal point the transition from synagogal and ethnic boundaries to the inclusion of the world, represented by the "Greeks," John 7:35 and 12:20–21, and the Samaritan town, 4:39–42. The revelation at Sinai was a preview of the true revelation of God's glory in the Incarnate Logos (= Wisdom) as the Son (John 1:14, 17) who is the only one who has seen God. Moses was a witness to Christ, about whom he wrote, 5:39. The Teacher of Israel, Nicodemus, does not seem to understand that the birth from above, which was associated with the Sinai experience, was a birth of the Spirit to take place for those who believed in God's Son, 3:1–17. "The Jews" (negatively understood) had not heard God's voice nor seen God's form at Sinai, since they did not believe in Jesus, God's commissioned envoy, 5:38. Thus, as the Johannine community moved beyond the ethnic Jewish boundaries, it understood its identity both in continuity and discontinuity with the Jewish people and its traditions. God's Son, as the commissioned agent, caused a division between recognition/belief and rejection/disbelief within the Jewish people, and this dual reaction represented what was to happen everywhere, John 15:18–27, cf. 17:20.

It should be remembered that the God of the Jews is understood to be the creator of the world and of all of the nations.

Dualism: Light and Darkness

The first observation is that the terminology is drawn from the Old Testament. The word "light," τὸ φῶς, in John 1:4–9 refers back to Gen 1:3, "Let there be light"; and there was light." The word "darkness," ἡ σκοτία, is contrasted with light in John 1:5, and a corresponding contrast in the external world is found in Gen 1:18, where it is said that the sun and the moon had the task of separating light from the darkness. However, in John this image has become a dualistic contrast. The word "life" in John 1:4 points

back to Gen 2:7 about God's breath of life and man as a living being. Philo testifies to such an interpretation of the creation story (*Opif.* 30):

Special distinction is accorded by Moses to the breath and to light. The one he entitles the 'breath' of God, because breath is most life-giving, and of life God is the author, while of light he says that it is beautiful pre-eminently (Gen 1,4).⁶ When life and light is seen together in John 1:4, also Ps 36:9 gives a background: "For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light do we see light.

Furthermore, in Jewish sources light and life are associated with Wisdom and with the Torah. It is of interest that according to rabbinic sources the primordial light (Gen 1:3), which gave Adam universal sight, was removed because of the sin. However, the light will come back in the next age, *p. Hag.* 12a, *Gen. Rab.* 12,6; *Tanchuma B. Bereshit* 18. Correspondingly, according to John 1:5b light was not overcome by darkness, but nightfall must have had consequences. Since John 1:9 and 12:46 talk about the coming of light with the coming of Jesus, the reader must assume that the primordial light, which mankind had according to 1:4, was removed from them. And since the light's return occasions life's return, 8:12, it follows that the original life, mentioned in 1:4, was lost. This sequence follows Jewish traditions, which considered light and life among the things lost at the Fall and that would be brought back at a later moment in history, or in the coming aeon. Thus, the image of light follows to some extent the same line of thought as that of the primordial Logos/Wisdom which became flesh in Jesus, 1:1–2 and 14. The weaving together of light and life with the Logos is, moreover, seen in 1:4: "In him [the Logos] was life, and the life was the light of men."⁶

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, sin and darkness are also related to creation (J. H. Charlesworth 1972a, 76–106; R. E. Brown 1965, 102–31; P. Borgen 1972, 115–30).⁷ God "created the Spirits of Light and Darkness and upon them He established every act" (1QS 3:25). Although both the Dead Sea Scrolls and John represent a modified dualism, there is nevertheless an important difference. In John light and darkness are not created as two (almost) equal powers as they are in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In fact, in John 1:4 it is said of light only that it was with human beings in the beginning. On this essential point, John is closer to the tradition, which let Adam, and

⁶ On the textual problems in John 1:3–4, see C. K. Barrett, 1978a, 156–57.

⁷ See now D. Aune, 2003, 281–303.

thereby mankind, have light as their original possession, losing it after the ensuing Fall and darkness.

Both in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in John there is an ethical dualism. In 1QS 4:2–14 the ways of the Spirit of Light are described by means of righteous attitudes and moral deeds, and the ways of the Spirit of Darkness/ Perversity are characterized by immoral deeds.

John 3:20–21 also pictures an ethical dualism: “For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been brought in God.” In John, this ethical dualism is applied to the coming and role of Jesus, the Son and the pre-existent personified Logos, who existed before creation, John 1:1–3. As a parallel one might refer to the personal angelic leaders in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Prince of Light and the Angel of Darkness, but both of these were created. In John, there is no Angel of Darkness, although there is a trace of an angelic antagonist in the figure of the Ruler of this World, John 12:31. In contrast to the Dead Sea Scrolls, John associates light with the Logos who is also the Incarnate One.

The historical person of Jesus then is the light. Thus, the evil deeds mean basically humanity’s rejection of him, and the good deeds are humanity’s coming to him, while in the Dead Sea Scrolls the acceptance of the Law separated the sons of light and the sons of darkness (R. E. Brown 1966, 1:515–16).

Thus, the dualism of light and darkness in John is primarily grounded in the Old Testament and Jewish writings, at some points echoed the Dead Sea Scrolls. Nevertheless, by emphasizing the contrast between light and darkness, John and the Jewish writings employ a language that was also characteristic of the religious and philosophical language in the Hellenistic world. At certain points, the affinities are quite strong. For example, although the Old Testament sees life and light together, as in Ps 36:10, this combination is typical in the first and thirteenth Hermetic tractates (*Corpus hermeticum*). The terminology of life and light is also characteristic of the *Odes of Solomon*. In Poimandres, the formula of life and light is very important. In fact, the secret of immortality is the knowledge that god is life and light, and that we are his offspring. It is probable that light here is the eternal light of which visible light is the “copy.” The corresponding Johannine term is “the true light” (John 1:9). In Poimandres, over against the primal light stands the chaotic ocean of darkness, cf. John 1:5: “The light shines in darkness, but the darkness did not overpower it.”

However, this cosmological dualism in the Fourth Gospel is not ultimate like Poimandres' (see C. H. Dodd 1953, 36).⁸ As already stated, in John it is a modified form of dualism which exists within the context of the created world.

Conclusion

1. It is difficult to identify any direct influence on John from outside of Judaism. Thus the hypothesis which has guided the present analysis is: On the basis of Gospel traditions and further Jewish and Christian developments, John cultivates ideas and practices which to some extent are Jewish-Christian versions of aspects and trends present in the larger Hellenistic world.
2. The Christological usage of the principle of agency in John presupposes the role of agents and envoys in the Jewish state and in Judaism, an institution which functioned also within the broader framework of the Jewish people and other nations in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean world.
3. John 3:13 probably is meant to be a polemic against persons in the Jewish and Christian environment who maintained that they were visionaries who ascended to heaven like Moses. This polemic is partly due to the conviction that what is to be sought in heaven, things such as God's glory, is now in the Incarnate One present on earth. When John reacts against claims of ascent within a Jewish context, he reacts against a Jewish (and Christian) phenomena which at the same time is a widespread phenomenon in the Hellenistic world.
4. Wisdom ideas have contributed to the descent-ascent motif in John. Ideas about the Law and Wisdom and the motif of descent are brought together in the concept of "bread from heaven." The aspects of descent and ascent are part of the logic implicit in the idea of Jesus as the commissioned agent of God, since one who is sent on a mission is to return and report to the sender. Jesus' claim that he is from above while his listeners are from below echoes Gnostic dualism between the lower psychic world and the upper pneumatic world. However, this Gnostic dualism is of a cosmic nature, while the Johannine dualism is basically ethical, despite its spatial framework. Nevertheless, although John's

⁸ See now J. Painter 2003, 186–89.

dualism remains within Jewish and Christian categories, it has some similarities with Gnostic views.

5. Another affinity between John and trends in Hellenism is internationalization. This movement towards internationalization has a cosmic dimension. It can be seen in John's broadening of Jewish ethnic concepts into cosmic concepts. John's Gospel suggests that the Johannine community moved the Jewish ethnic boundaries to include the broader world of other nations, as indicated by John's use of the terms "the Samaritans" and "the Greeks." It may even be said that the cosmic broadening of ethnic ideas in John corresponds to the cosmic broadening of the city state, *πόλις*, to the view that the whole cosmos is a *πόλις*, inhabited by gods and men.
6. As the Johannine community moved beyond its ethnic Jewish boundaries, it understood its identity both in continuity and discontinuity with the Jewish people and its traditions. God's Son, as the commissioned agent, initiated a choice between recognition/belief and rejection/disbelief within the Jewish people, and these two options had to be faced by all. In John's dualism the terms "the Jews" and "the world" have both positive and negative usages.
7. The dualism of light and darkness in John comes primarily from the Old Testament and Jewish writings, including the Dead Sea Scrolls. Nevertheless, by emphasizing the contrast between light and darkness John and the Jewish writings employ a language that was characteristic also of Hellenistic religious and philosophical language. At certain points, there are strong affinities between Johannine and Gnostic ideas, such as the close connection between life and light.

PART C

FROM JOHN AND THE SYNOPTICS TO JOHN WITHIN
EARLY GOSPEL TRADITIONS

CHAPTER SIX

JOHN AND THE SYNOPTICS IN THE PASSION NARRATIVE

The gospel traditions utilized by Paul provide us with important pre-synoptic expositions akin to John's expository use of tradition. Against this background, one should look afresh on the much discussed topic of John and the Synoptics. The next chapters will report on my journey in this area of research. I grew from maintaining that John is based essentially on an independent tradition with some influence from the Synoptic Gospels to seeing John being wholly independent of the other written Gospels. The remaining question of the gospel form will be dealt with in a later chapter. The point of departure is my study rendered below, published in 1959.

In an article entitled "Zum Problem 'Johannes und die Synoptiker,'" S. Mendner (Mendner, S. 1957/58, 282ff.) has again raised the question of the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Synoptics.

Comparing John 6:1–30 with the Synoptic parallels, he discovers that John's account of the Feeding of the Five Thousand is a literary development of the Synoptic account (ibid., 289). On the other hand Mark and Matthew have moulded the account of Jesus walking on the sea after the Johannine example (ibid., 293).

As a result of his investigation, Mendner maintains that the Gospels approximate and thereby complement each other. Thus the Johannine *Grundschrift* has been re-edited in terms of the Synoptic material, thereby becoming accepted along with the Synoptics (ibid., 306).

It is important to notice that Mendner has broken with all the classical solutions for the problem of John and the Synoptics. His solution cannot be included with the supplementary theory, the independence theory, the interpretation theory, or the repression theory (See Windisch 1926, and commentaries on John). Instead, he undertakes a detailed investigation of the agreements within comparable pericopes or groups of pericopes.

Nevertheless it is difficult to accept Mendner's conclusions. If, in order to gain acceptance, a Johannine *Grundschrift* was re-edited in terms of the Synoptic tradition, then it must be said the effort was less than successful: John is still quite different. And despite a certain unevenness in John, still it is very likely a unified whole, so much so that one can hardly believe it to be the result of re-editing. Those who maintain the independence

theory are correct in stressing this point (Gardner-Smith 1938; Dodd 1953, 289f., 447f., etc.).

Scholars such as Rudolf Bultmann (Bultmann 1950), Bent Noack (Noack 1954), Gardner-Smith (Gardner-Smith, 1938), and C. H. Dodd (Dodd 1953) clearly maintain John's independence. However, it is also difficult to agree completely with this point of view inasmuch as there are actually agreements indicative of some type of relationship between certain parts of John and the Synoptics. It is because of these agreements that Mendner can conclude that John depends on the Synoptics in the narrative of the Feeding of the Five Thousand (John 6) (Mendner 1957, 58). Another pericope, the Anointing at Bethany (John 12:1–8), has such a striking combination of agreements with the Synoptics that dependence is the almost necessary conclusion. Thus, E. K. Lee (Lee 1956, 57, 55) finds that John is dependent on Mark (and maybe Luke). Daube (1956, 313–20) thinks that John is dependent on a "Proto-Mark-version." Barrett (1955, 340ff.) reaches the conclusion that John is dependent on Mark and Luke. Among John's numerous agreements with the Synoptics, two point decisively to dependence: (a) The unique word *πιστικῆς* which occurs only in John 12:3 and Mark 14:3, and (b) The feature of Mary wiping the ointment from Jesus' feet with her hair. Cf. Certain fragments of the Lukan narrative are used in this awkward way in John. See Luke 7:37–38 where ointment and the wiping of Jesus' feet with her hair are mentioned. Thus John has an account where Synoptic-like elements are fused together. In his article, "Die Passionsgeschichte bei Matthäus," N. A. Dahl concluded that oral and written tradition were intertwined in Matthew's use of Mark (Dahl 1955, 56, 17ff.). He also considers the possibility of a similar relationship between John and Matthew.

Köster supports this thesis by showing that, even after the Gospels were written, the apostolic Fathers were dependent upon oral tradition (Köster 1957).

In the light of this, the following thesis is proposed: John is based essentially on an independent tradition. Some Synoptic pericopes or parts of pericopes have been assimilated into this tradition. Within these pericopes, or fragments, various elements from the several Synoptic accounts have been fused together. When John appears dependent on the Synoptics only for certain pericopes, it is probable that oral tradition brought this material to John already fused. This explains the relative freedom with which John has reproduced the Synoptic material. This thesis has been advanced by Dahl (Dahl 1955/56, 22, and 32), with reference to my investigation of which the present chapter is a part. B. Noack (Noack 1954,

134, n. 294) indicates the possibility of such an understanding (cf. Borgen 1956, 250ff.).

We can now proceed to test this thesis in the Johannine Passion Narrative. First we will examine those passages in which the combination of Synoptic agreements indicates dependence. Then we will analyze those agreements which can be understood as points of contact between mutually independent traditions.

Passages Dependent on the Synoptics: The Burial of Jesus

Agreements with all the Synoptics:

John 19:38 ἠρώτησεν τὸν Πιλάτον . . . ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ~ Mark 15:43 ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Πιλάτον καὶ ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, cf. Matt 27:58; Luke 23:52.

Agreements with Matthew (see Dahl 1955/56, 32; cf. Bultmann 1950, 516f. and 527):

John 19:38 ὡν μαθητῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ~ Matt 27:57 ὃς . . . ἐμαθητεύθη τῷ Ἰησοῦ
 John 19:40 ἔλαβον οὖν τὸ σῶμα
 John 19:41–42 μνημεῖον καινόν . . . ἔθηκαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν

Agreements with Matthew (Schniewind 1914, 80; Barrett 1955, 465):

John 19:38 ὡν μαθητῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ~ Matt 27:57 ὃς . . . ἐμαθητεύθη τῷ Ἰησοῦ.
 John 19:40 ἔλαβον τὸ σῶμα ~ Matt 27:59 λαβῶν . . .
 John 19:41–2 μνημεῖον καινόν . . . ἔθηκαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ~ Matt 27:60 ἔθηκεν
 (Mark 15:46 κατέθηκεν) αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ καινῷ αὐτοῦ μνημείῳ.

Agreements with Luke:

John 19:41 ἐν ᾧ οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς ἦν τεθειμένος ~ Luke 23:53 οὐ οὐκ ἦν οὐδεὶς οὐπω κείμενος. According to Barrett (1955, 465)

The ugly collocation of sounds in both gospels suggests that John was dependent on Luke (cf. Schniewind 1914, 80).

Agreements with Mark:

John 19:31 ἐπεὶ παρασκευῆ ἦν ~ Mark 15:42 ἐπεὶ ἦν παρασκευῆ cf. John 19:42 Διὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν . . . ~ Luke 23:54 ἡμέρα ἦν παρασκευῆς (cf. Matt 27:62).
 John 19:38 Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας ~ Mark 15:43 . . . ὁ ἀπὸ . . .

There are several irregularities in John 19:38–42. For example, the narrative clearly has a double set of sequences. In verse 38 we are told that Joseph of

Arimathea took the body of Jesus down. Therefore one is surprised when Nicodemus enters the picture in v. 39 and the removal of Jesus' body is mentioned again. Bultmann (1950, 516f. and 527, n. 1) supposes that Nicodemus was added to the account by the evangelist. The codices S N it sa have a striking grammatical roughness in John 19:38: the verbs, ἦλθον and ἦρᾶν, are in the plural even though Joseph is still the subject. This is undoubtedly the *lectio difficilior* and therefore probably the original.

Barrett (1955, 464–65) points to the agreements between John 19:38 and Mark 15:43, and thinks that the section in John is taken from Mark. But what of the agreements with Matthew and Luke? John 19:38ff. competes to a certain extent with John 19:31ff. In John 19:31ff. the Jews request two things of Pilate: that the legs of those crucified might be broken and that their bodies might be taken away. The breaking of their legs is indeed described, but nothing more is heard of the removal of the bodies. Instead, in v. 38, Joseph comes before Pilate with the same inquiry, and then the body of Jesus is taken down.

These inner irregularities in John indicate that doublets have been joined together. Thus, if one assembles those elements which are similar to the Synoptic parallels, it becomes apparent that they form the main points of a burial narrative (a) The disciple Joseph makes his inquiry before Pilate; (b) The body of Jesus is taken down; (c) The burial in a new and unused grave; (d) There is an indication of time, that is, the day of preparation.

It stands to reason then that those elements unique to John also form their own version: (a) The Jews inquire of Pilate whether the bodies might be taken away (v. 31); (b) They came and took (codices S N it sa in v. 39. have the word ἦλθον both in v. 39 and v. 32) the body of Jesus; (c) Nicodemus came with the burial supplies; (d) The burial takes place in a nearby garden. It is of decisive importance that we find in the kerygmatic summary of Acts 13:29 a trace of the same tradition that the Jews undertook the burial of Jesus (G. H. Dodd 1951: "They [those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, v. 27] took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb"). E. Haenchen (1956, 358) maintains that Luke has an abridged form: "Hier wird anscheinend den Juden Kreuzabnahme und Bestattung Jesu in Wirklichkeit hat Lukas nur den Bericht äussert verkürzt." We can conclude then that, in the description of the breaking of the legs and the burial of Jesus, the Synoptic version has been assimilated to an account otherwise unique to John.

The Synoptic doublet which John used is based on Matthew, Luke, and possibly Mark, though the particular agreements with Mark are the least

essential. In the light of this, it is striking that, in his characterization of the grave, John uses a pleonasm: it is new (like in Matthew) and unused (like in Luke). This combination negates any possibility that the agreements indicate only a parallel tendency in John, Matthew, and Luke. It would be more reasonable to consider it a parallel tendency when John and Matthew call Joseph a disciple. But this explanation does not really suffice when one takes into consideration all the other similarities.

This combination of Synoptic agreements also indicates the inadequacy of comparing the Passion narrative of John with just one of the Synoptics, without likewise examining the others. Lee (1956/57, 56) and S. I. Buse (1957/58, 215ff.) do not look into the agreements with Matthew and Luke.

On the other hand, the Synoptic agreements hardly indicate a Synoptic re-editing of a Johannine *Grundschrift* (Against Mendner 1957, 58). Taken as a whole, John's account (in its present form) is still quite different from the Synoptics. John does, like Matthew, call Joseph of Arimathea a disciple. But when he adds that he was an unknown disciple, clearly the evangelist wants to characterize Joseph in harmony with John 12:42 and not in harmony with the Synoptics.

Peter's Use of the Sword

Agreements with Matthew 24 (Dahl, 1955/56, 32):

John 18:11 Βάλε τὴν μάχαιραν εἰς τὴν θήκην ~ Matt 26:52 Ἀπόστρεψον τὴν μάχαιράν σου εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς

John 18:26 τὸ ὠτίον ~ Matt 26:51

John 18:11—τὸ ποτήριον ὃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ οὐ μὴ πῖω αὐτό

~ Matt 26:42 Πάτερ μου, εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἐάν

μὴ αὐτὸ πῖω, γενηθῆτω τὸ θέλημά σου, cf. Matt 26:39 par τὸ ποτήριον

Agreements with Mark:

John 18:10—ἔπαισεν τὸν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως δούλον ~ Mark 14:47 ἔπαισεν (Matt 26:51 πατάξας Luke 22:50 ἐπάταξεν) τὸν δούλον τοῦ ἀρχιερέως

John 18:10 τὸ ὠτάριον ~ Mark 14:47

Agreements with Luke:

John 18:10 (τὸ ὠτάριον) τὸ δεξιόν ~ Luke 22:50 (τὸ οὖς) τὸ δεξιόν

John 18:10f., must be composed of the narrative of Peter's use of the sword and a fragment of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (v. 11b). The reworked sections concerning the anxiety of Jesus (John 12:27–30) and his arrest

(John 18:1–9) give no reason for supposing that Synoptic material has been used (see Gardner-Smith 1938, 56f.). Therefore it is probable that John 18:11b, which seems to belong to the same tradition as John 12:27–30, 18:1–9, is also independent of the Synoptics (Barrett 1955, 431 and 436).

Barrett seems to think that John knows the Synoptics's report of the Prayer in Gethsemane. Bultmann (1950, 493) thinks that a source corresponding to the Synoptics was used. Dodd (1953, 426) maintains a similarity between the parallel traditions in John and the Synoptics. Gardner-Smith (1938, 59) goes so far as to say that John shows here a general knowledge of the tradition which was used in the Synoptics (cf. J. Jeremias, 1955, 62). Noack (1954, 106) finds it most likely that John is independent of the Synoptics in its use of the Gethsemane tradition. John and Matthew share a parallel tendency at this point: both stress that Jesus yielded to the will of God (see Dahl 1955/1956, 25, concerning Matt 26:42. Concerning John, see Dodd, 1953, 426, and Bultmann, 1950, 496, n. 4). The agreement between Matt 26:52 and John 18:11a is very striking and can hardly be due to a parallel tendency. Still the variations in vocabulary weaken the case for a direct literary dependency on Matthew. G. D. Kilpatrick (1946, 44) emphasizes the different vocabulary in John and Matthew, saying: "The partial resemblance to John may be due to the fact that both evangelists felt this need for an explanation." Kilpatrick, however, evaluates the differences too literally. This element from Matthew *could* have been used orally. Noack (1954, 99f.) thinks that John took the saying from an oral source.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that John and Matthew have used a common tradition. Other agreements which can best be explained in this fashion will be pointed out later in this study. But here in the account of v. 10f. the combination of Synoptic agreements refutes this solution. The conclusion, therefore, must be that a Synoptic account of Peter's use of the sword has been assimilated into the Johannine passion narrative. Buse 1957/58, 217) does not go into the agreements with Matthew and Luke here either. But these must be discussed with the John/Mark agreements if Buse's theory is to be feasible (cf. his discussion of "The Cleansing of the Temple in the Synoptics and in John," *The Expository Times*, 70 (October 1958), 22ff., where he also considers the John/Matthew and the John/Luke agreements, but develops quite a complicated conclusion).

The juxtaposition of agreements from all the Synoptics refutes the theory that the agreement with Luke might be due to a common tendency to expand a text. On the other hand, as far as the names Peter and Malchus are concerned, we do find in John the tendency to expand (cf. the remarks in John 19:26b). Gardner-Smith 1938, 59 says that different accounts of the

same subject must contain points of similarity. He does not, however, take into consideration the striking number of times John agrees with the Synoptics.

Individual words in John's account differ from the Synoptics (εἴλκυσεν, ἀπέκοψεν κτλ.), but there is a strong similarity in content. The variations in vocabulary along with close agreements indicate that elements of the several Synoptic accounts were fused together orally and assimilated into the Johannine tradition as a unit. This oral use would also explain the variations between τὸ ὄτιον and τὸ ὠτάριον. It is unlikely that the similarities are due to a Synoptic re-editing of a Johannine *Grundschrift*, since the wider context as a whole (John 18:1–11) is very different from the Synoptics, regardless of the dependence found in John 18:10–11a.

The Scouring and Mocking of Christ

Agreements with Mark and Matthew:

John 19:3 Χαίρε, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ~ Mark 15:18 (~ Matt 27:29) βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

John 19:2 οἱ στρατιῶται πλέξαντες ~ Mark 15:16–17; Matt 27:27–29.

Agreements in content but not vocabulary:

John 19:2 περιέβαλον ~ Mark 15:17 περιτιθέασιν ~ Matt 27:28 περιέθηκαν.

Agreements with Matthew:

John 19:2 στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῦ τῇ κεφαλῇ ~ Matt 27:29 ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ.

John 19:1 Τότε ~ Matt 27:27.

Agreements with Mark:

John 19:5 τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον ~ Mark 15:17.

John 19:2, 5 πορφυροῦν ~ Mark 15:17 πορφύραν.

John 19:3 ἐδίδοσαν αὐτῷ ῥαπίσματα ~ Mark 14:65 ῥαπίσμασιν αὐτὸν ἔλαβον cf. John 18:22.

The context of John 19:1–3 clearly is the composition of the evangelist. The repeated declaration of Jesus' innocence (19:4, 6 and 18:28) and the repeated demand for crucifixion (19:6, 15) indicate this.

In the same way the striking use of πάλιν in 18:40 points to a disruption in the narrative. Besides, the placing of the scourging and mocking before the condemnation is unique to John. Obviously, it was inserted simply

as in anticipation of the *Ecce homo* scene (19:4ff., Barrett, 443 and 449 maintains that *πάλιν* comes from Mark 15:13). Bultmann, 503 suggests that the verses contain remnants of a source which was parallel to the Synoptics. Gardner-Smith, 65ff., emphasizes all the independent features in John 19:1ff., but does not discuss whether or not the Evangelist has reworked his sources and overlooks the agreements with the Synoptics.

One would expect to find agreements between two parallel accounts of the same event, particularly in fixed expressions, such as the formalized cry of homage in John 19:3 and Mark 15:18 (cf. Gardner-Smith, 65). But when John 19:1–3 consists almost exclusively of combinations of agreements with Matthew and Mark, then clearly the origin of the pericope is in Matthew and Mark which were fused before reaching the Fourth Evangelist (Buse, 218, again supplements with Matthew and Luke).

Several features of the narrative as found in Mark and Matthew are absent in John. However, one could expect such omissions, especially if the entire section in John has been reworked.

Besides, since it only presages the *Ecce homo* scene, the Scourging and the Mocking of Christ loses some of its importance. Thus the evangelist took only those parts of the Mocking scene which were of interest for the subsequent narrative.

The expression *ἐδίδοσαν αὐτῷ ῥαπίσματα* (19:3) was probably stylized so as to effect symmetry with John 18:22. Therefore the agreement in vocabulary with Mark must be considered in that connection (Barrett, 441 and 449).

In the investigation to this point we have found sections with strong and often striking combinations of agreements with the Synoptics. We could conclude by stating that in those sections fused Synoptic material has been added to the Johannine tradition.

Mutually Independent Tradition

Our analysis of the Burial of Jesus gave us clear indications that its basis was a Passion narrative unique to John and that smaller elements had been assimilated from the Synoptics. We also found two other sections which originated from the Synoptics, for example, Peter's use of the sword and the Scourging and Mocking of Jesus.

The next task is to describe all the agreements between John and the Synoptics that one could expect to find in mutually independent traditions. It is, of course, reasonable to expect that two independent tra-

ditions concerning the same subject would have numerous agreements both in fixed expressions and in features which necessarily belong to the narrative. One would especially expect to find such parallel agreements in the Passion narrative. The Passion narrative, of course, was a relatively fixed composition quite early in the history of tradition (see especially R. Bultmann, 1931, 297f., and id. 1968, 502. C. H. Dodd, 1953, 424, and J. Jeremias, 1953, 66, 61ff.).

The Crucifixion

Agreements with the Synoptics:

John 19:17 τὸν . . . Κρανίου Τόπον ~ Mark 15. 22; Matt. 27:33 Κρανίου Τόπος
 Luke 23:33 τὸν Τόπον . . . Κρανίον.
 John 19:23 τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ~ Mark 15:24 par.

Agreements with Mark and Matthew:

John 19:17 Γολγοθά (B sa Γολγοθ) ~ Mark 15:22; Matt 27:33
 John 19:18 μετ' αὐτοῦ ἄλλους δύο ~ Mark 15:27 σὺν αὐτῷ δύο ~
 Matt 27:38, cf. Luke 23:33.
 John 19:24 κλῆρον ~ Mark 15:24; Matt 27:56.
 John 19:25 Μαρία Μαγδαληνή ~ Mark 15:40; Matt 27:56.
 John 19:29 σπόγγον μεστὸν τοῦ ὄξους ὑσώπω περιθέντες ~ Mark 15:36 γεμίσας
 σπόγγον ὄξους (Matt 27:48 σπόγγον πλήσας ὄξους και) περιθειείς.

Agreements with Matthew:

John 19:19 ἔθηκεν . . . Ἰησοῦς . . . ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ~ Matt 27:37
 ἐπέθηκεν . . .
 John 19:24 διεμερίσαντο ~ Matt 27:35 (Mark 15:24 διαμερίζονται, Luke 23:34
 διαμεριζόμενοι).
 John 19:30 παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα ~ Matt 27:50 ἀφῆκεν . . .

Agreements with Mark:

John 19:21 ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ~ Mark 15:26 (cf. Matt 27:37; Luke 23:38).

Agreements with Luke:

John 19:18, 23 ἐσταύρωσαν ~ Luke 23:33 (Mark 15:24 σταυροῦσιν, Matt 27:35
 σταυρώσαντες).
 John 19:24 ἔβαλον ~ Luke 23:34 (Mark 15:24; Matt 27:35 βάλλοντες).

In the accounts of Peter's use of the sword, the Mockery, and the Burial of Jesus close agreements with the Synoptics were found in close proximity

to each other. In the crucifixion narrative agreements are spread out through a larger section.

Agreements with the Synoptics in John 19:24 are not due to a fusion of Synoptic material. The verse contains a quotation from the OT in which John follows the LXX (see C. K. Barrett 1955, 56, 58, 458; K. Stendahl 1954, 131, and B. Noack, 1954, 82). The agreements with the Synoptics in 19:23 are also due to the LXX quotation in 19:24.

Agreements with Matthew in John 19:19 and with Mark in John 19:21 are in the context of basic and fixed pronouncements that one could well expect to be similar, even in mutually independent traditions. It is also natural that some of the names would be held in common: "the place of the skull," Golgotha, and Mary Magdalene. But with these parallel names, there are also names reported which are unique to John: the mother of Jesus, and Mary the wife of Clopas (19:25).

There are no striking agreements in the course of the narrative. The mention of the two crucified with Jesus in John 19:18 is done independently. The word for "crucifying" (19:18, 23) belongs, of course, to an account of the crucifixion. The agreements with Matthew at the moment of Jesus' death (19:30) do not speak against John's independence, although there may be a parallel tendency at work here.

S. I. Buse (1957, 218) clarifies the independent features in John's presentation by comparing them with Mark (see also P. Gardner-Smith 1938, 68ff.). R. Bultmann (1950, 516) notes features from the Synoptics that are lacking in John. E. K. Lee (1956–57, 56) simply takes all the agreements as proof of dependence on Mark, without asking about possible agreements between independent traditions. Concerning the common tendency in John and Matthew to emphasize the voluntary character of Jesus' suffering, see C. H. Dodd 1953, 426, with reference to John 19:30, and N. A. Dahl 1955/56, 25.

Based on the quotation from Ps 68(69):22 (LXX), the expression describing Jesus' thirst (John 19:28, 29) is also independently formed (Barrett 1978, 553). Yet the use of the word δ $\sigma\pi\acute{o}\gamma\gamma\omicron\nu$, which Mark and Matthew use, is quite striking since it is used only in this context in the New Testament. But this one striking agreement does not have enough weight to make John's dependence on the Synoptics in the narrative of the crucifixion likely (against Lee 1956, 1957, 56).

Jesus before Pilate

Agreements with the Synoptics:

John 18:40 ὁ Βαραββᾶς ~ Mark 15:6 ff. par.

John 18:33 ὁ Πιλάτος . . . εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ~ Mark xv. 2 (ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν ὁ Πιλάτος), Matt 27:11 (ὁ ἡγεμῶν); Luke 23:3 (ὁ Πιλάτος ἠρώτησεν αὐτόν).

John 28:34 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς . . . σὺ τοῦτο λέγεις . . . ~ Mark 15:2
par ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς . . . σὺ λέγεις.

Agreements with Mark:

John 18:28 πρῶτῃ ~ Mark 15:1 (Matt 27: πρῶτας).

John 18:39 βούλεσθε . . . ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἰουδαίων ~ Mark 15:9
θέλετε . . .

John 18: 40 ἐκραύγασαν πάλιν (G k 33 it πάντες) ~ Mark 15:13 οἱ πάλιν
ἔκραξαν.

John 19:15 σταύρωσον αὐτόν ~ Mark xv. 14, cf. John 19:6.

Agreements with Luke:

John 18:28 Ἄγουσιν τὸν Ἰησοῦν . . . εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον ~ Luke 23:1 ἤγαγον αὐτόν
ἐπὶ τὸν Πιλάτου.

John: 38 ἐγὼ οὐδεμίαν εὕρισκω ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτίαν ~ (John 19:4, 6), Luke 23:4 οὐδὲν
εὕρισκω αἴτιον ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ.

John 19:16 αὐτοῖς ~ Luke 23:24 τῷ θελήματι αὐτῶν.

Agreements with Matthew:

John 18:39 συνήθεια . . . ἀπολύσω ~ Matt 27:15 ζέῳθει . . . ἀπολύειν.

John 19: 6 ἐκραύγασαν λέγοντες ~ Matt 27:23 ἔκραζον . . .

John 19:13 ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ βήματος ~ Matt 27:19 καθημένου . . . ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος.

Agreements with Mark and Matthew:

John 19:16 τότε παρέδωκεν αὐτόν . . . ἵνα σταυρωθῇ ~ Mark 15:15;

Matt 27:26 (. . . τὸν Ἰησοῦν) Mark lacks τότε.

The question whether John used Synoptic material is especially acute in the Barabbas story (John 18:38–40). The rest of the agreements are in fixed expressions such as the question whether Jesus is the king of the Jews (18:33), the call of the Jews for his crucifixion (19:6, 15) and the concluding statement that Jesus had been given over to be crucified (19:16). It is unfortunate that Barrett (1978a, 536, 538, 546) and Buse (1957/1958, 217f.) do not discuss the types of agreements with the Synoptics, that is, whether they are in fixed expressions, etc.

It is reasonable to assume that the other agreements with the Synoptics in John 18:28, 34 and 19:13 are due to parallel traditions on which the written gospels draw. The judgment seat motif is used quite differently in John 19:13 and Matthew 27:19 (see Barrett 1978a, 544 and Buse 1957/1958, 218). Nor do the agreements in John 18:38–40 alter this conclusion of mutually independent traditions. Here the evangelist has reworked the source in such a way as to use only part of it. It is for this reason that Barabbas enters the narrative in such an abrupt fashion (see Barrett 1978, 539 and other commentaries).

Barrett and Buse are of the opinion that the surprising *πάλιν* of 18:40 (which has no preceding point of reference) comes from Mark 15:13. This irregularity in John indicates quite strongly that the Gospel contains a fragment of a narrative independent of the Synoptics. To be specific it shows that the Johannine source must have contained two calls for the release of Barabbas. Mark, on the other hand, uses *πάλιν* in the repeated call for Jesus' crucifixion (Barrett 1978, 539; Buse 1957/1958, 218). Bultmann (1968, 502) has seen that *πάλιν* must refer to a source independent of the Synoptics.

The agreements with Luke in John 18:38 and 19:16 could point either to a Lukan influence or to traditions common to John and Luke. However, the agreements can be entirely understood as a common tendency to stress the innocence of Jesus (correctly seen by Schniewind 1914, 66 and 69f. Cf. Acts 3:14, John 8:46, 1 Pet 2:22f., and 2 Cor 5:21) and the guilt of the Jews. Less important is the agreement with Matthew in 18:39. On the other hand, the agreement with Mark in 18:39 is almost word for word. But again it involves a central and fixed pronouncement where one might expect great similarities even among different traditions. This view is maintained by P. Gardner-Smith (1938, 62ff.) but the analysis is rather sketchy. He does not take into consideration the striking combination of agreements with the Synoptic Gospels in John.

From Annas to Caiaphas

Agreements with the Synoptics:

John 18:14 Ἠκολούθει τῷ Ἰησοῦ Σίμων ~ Matt 26:58 ὁ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει (Mark ἠκολούθησεν) αὐτῷ ~ Mark 14:54, cf. Luke 22:54.

John 18:16 παιδίσκη ~ Matt 26:69 ~ Luke 22:56, cf. Mark 14:66 (μία τῶν παιδισκῶν).

John 18:25 ἤρνήσατο ~ Mark 14:68 *par.*

Agreements with Mark:

John 18:15 εἰς τὴν αὐλήν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως ~ Mark 14:54, cf. Matt 26:58.

John 18:18, 25 θερμαινόμενος ~ Mark 14:67.

John 18:22 τῶν ὑπηρετῶν ἔδωκεν ῥάπισμα τῷ Ἰησοῦ ~ Mark 14:65 οἱ ὑπηρέται ῥάπισμασιν αὐτὸν ἔλαβον cf. Matt 26:67, 67.

Agreements with Matthew:

John 18:24 πρὸς Καϊαφᾶν τὸν ἀρχιερέα ~ Matt 26:57, cf. John 18:28.

John 18:13 f. τοῦ Καϊαφᾶ . . . ἀρχιερεὺς . . . Καϊαφᾶς ὁ συμβουλευέσας ~ Matt 26:3 τοῦ ἀρχιερέως Καϊαφᾶ . . . συνεβουλεύσαντο, cf.

John 20: 49, 53.

John 18: 27 πάλιν ἠρνήσατο . . . ~ Matt 26:72.

John 18:27 καὶ εὐθewis ἀλέκτωρ ἐρώνησεν ~ Matt 26:74 (εὐθύς), cf. Mark 14:72 (ἐκ δευτέρου).

Agreements with Luke:

John xviii. 12 συνέλαβον τὸν Ἰησοῦν . . . ἡγάγον ~ Luke xxii. 54 Συλλαβόντες αὐτὸν ἡγάγον.

John 15:25 καὶ σὺ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ εἶ . . . οὐκ εἰμί (cf John xviii. 17) ~ Luke xxii. 58 καὶ σὺ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ . . .

Agreements 18:18 οἱ ὑπηρέται ~ Matt 26:58; Mark 14:54 μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν.

John 18: 20 πάντοτε ἐδίδαξα . . . ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ~ Mark 14:49 καθ' ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ διδάσκων cf. Matt 26: 55.

John's account of Peter's denial has an independent stamp to it—something Barrett must concede (1978, 523–24), even though here he considers John dependent on Mark. John, however, breaks off the narrative by inserting the “hearing before the high priest” between Peter's first denial and subsequent denials. There are also some features found only in John, and at the same time some Synoptic elements are lacking, for example, John does not mention Peter's dialect nor anything of his weeping. Barrett reaches the conclusion that John has reworked the Synoptic material. However, none of the agreements with the Synoptics are so pronounced or so striking as to be convincing (cf. Bultmann 1968, 496f.). As one might expect, similarities can be found in the fixed expressions concerning the cock's crow (John 18:27). Apart from this there are verbal agreements which would occur quite naturally in independent accounts of the same affair: the words “maid,” “servants,” “warming themselves,” “deny,” “court of the high priest,” and that “Peter followed after Jesus.” The similarities in the question to Peter (18:25) are not very striking (Gardner-Smith 1938, 60f.).

Buse (1957/1958, 217) stresses that John echoes Mark. However, one can find a similar echo, to take just one example, in the crucifixion narrative, but Buse does not consider there to be any dependence on Mark there.

John's account of the "hearing before the high priest" contains many irregularities. The main outline is clear: first they go before Annas (18:12), from Annas to Caiaphas (18:24), and from Caiaphas to the praetorium (18:28). One notices most clearly the evangelist's own hand in the parenthetical notes which are attached to Annas (18:13f). This parenthesis refers back to John 11:49 ff. and indicates a basic Johannine theological theme: Jesus should die for the people. So it is probable that the evangelist knew a tradition in which Jesus was led to Annas and then to Caiaphas, but out of his theological interest he has connected Annas and Caiaphas in 18:13f in such a way as to mar the order of the narrative. Barrett (1978a, 523–24) thinks that John has built on the suggestion of two hearings in Mark. Bultmann (1950, 497) maintains that the addition of Caiaphas is secondary, conferred by the attempt to smooth over the textual variants.

It is natural to suppose that the account of Caiaphas and his pronouncement in John 11:47ff. (cf. the note in 18:13f.) was based on tradition and was not constructed by the evangelist on the basis of Matt 26:3. The traditional aspect of the episode is underlined only by the addition of the evangelist's commentary (11:51f.) (see A. Fridrichsen 1937, 139). Thus John and Matthew give two independent witnesses for a Passion tradition in which Caiaphas is connected with a council meeting.

The "hearing before the high priest" in John is clearly reworked. There is no accusation and nothing is determined, except a declaration by Jesus that the people as well as the high priest should know what had happened (Barrett 1978a, 523–24; Bultmann 1950, 498). The agreement with Mark in John 18:22 is clear, but the context offers no reason for supposing that John used Mark. The presentation in John 18:20 is so different from Mark 14:49 and Matt 26:55 that the agreements here advance no proof for dependence on the Synoptics (against Barrett 1978, 528).

The Resurrection

Agreements with the Synoptics:

John 20:1 Μαρία ἢ Μαγδαληνή John 20:18 (Μαριάμ) ~ Mark 15:9,

Matt 28:1 (Μαριάμ), cf Luke 24:10.

John 20:15 τίνα ζητεῖς ~ Luke 24:5 τί ζητεῖτε . . . ; Matt 28:5.

Agreements with Mark:

John 20:11 ἔρχεται πρωτῆ... εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον ~ Mark 16:2 πρωτῆ... ἔρχομαι ἐπὶ τὸ μνήμα.

John 20:1 τὸν λίθον... ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου ~ Mark 16:3.

John 20:6 εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον ~ Mark 16:5 Εἰσελθοῦσαι...

John 20:12 ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους ~ Mark 16:5 καθήμενον... στολὴν λευκὴν... cf. Matt xxviii. 2 f.

John 20:13 ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν ~ Mark 16:6 ὅπου..., cf. John 20:15.

Agreements with Matthew:

John 20:12 ἀγγέλους ~ Matt 28: 2, 5 ἄγγελος.

John 20:12 ὅπου ἔκειτο ~ Matt 28:6.

John 20:17 μή μου ἄπτου ~ Matt 28:9 αἱ... ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας.

John 20:17 πορεύου πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπέ αὐτοῖς ~ Matt 28:10 ὑπάγετε ἀπαγγείλατε τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου.

John 20:18 ἀγγέλλουσα τοῖς μαθηταῖς ~ Matt 28:8 ἀπαγγεῖλαι.

Agreement in content: neither John 20:1ff. nor Matt 28:1ff. mention the anointing at the grave (cf. however John 19:39f).

Agreements with Luke:

John 20:1 τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ~ Luke 24:1.

John 20:12 δύο (ἀγγέλους) ~ Luke 24:4 (ἄνδρες).

John 20:12 τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ~ Luke 24:3.

John 20:1 ff. is to be added to the list of passages which belong to an independent Johannine tradition yet still contain similarities with the Synoptics—especially in fixed pronouncements, expressions, and necessary verbal agreements due to the common subject matter. The expressions of time in 20:1f. are fixed specifications which have parallels in Mark and Luke. The name Mary Magdalene is a common tradition. Further, there are agreements in some words and modes of expression such as “went into the tomb” (20:6), “where they have laid him” (20:12f.), “the body of Jesus” (20:12), “said to the disciples” (20:18). In John’s account these expressions are distributed quite differently from how they appear in the Synoptics. See the analysis in Bultmann (1950, 528) who maintains that the narrative of the disciples going to the grave is secondary, and Barrett (1978a, 560–62) who thinks that John is independent, but is also influenced by Mark.

The Gospel of John tells us that the stone was removed (20:1), although nothing had been said of a stone being laid before the tomb. The Synoptic account might lie behind this. Barrett (1978a, 562) indicates this

understanding. However, the stone is probably mentioned seemingly out of nowhere in John because the evangelist and the readers were so well acquainted with this feature that further explanation was unnecessary (cf. the discussion above concerning the abrupt introduction of Barabbas).

The description of the angels in John 20:12 touches on several similarities with the Synoptics. White clothing traditionally belongs in such a context and *das Gesetz der Zweizahl* explains the agreement between John and Luke (see Bultmann 1950, 531, n. 6, with references). It is interesting to note that only John and Matthew tell of a Christophany before a woman (John) or women (Matthew) (Dahl 1955–1956, 32). In both stories one finds intimate expressions, as in the embracing of Jesus feet (Matthew) or at least the attempt (John) and in the statement to “my brethren.” But, taking the stories as a whole, one can hardly suppose dependence in two such vastly different accounts. Thus John and Matthew give independent witness to the tradition of this Christophany. So Matt 18:9f. is most likely not a fabrication produced by the author himself. Neither John nor Matthew has the anointing at the grave either. The explanation of this might well be the same as for the agreements in the Christophany. A more thorough discussion is given by Dahl (1955–1956, 32).

Conclusions

A direct literary relationship between John and the Synoptics cannot be countenanced, and yet units of Synoptic material have been added to the Johannine tradition.

In considering the Passion narrative of John, we examined three sections in which Synoptic elements seemed melded together: (a) The burial, with elements from Matthew, Luke, and possibly Mark; (b) Peter’s use of the sword, with elements from Matthew, Mark, and probably Luke; (c) The mocking scene, with elements from Mark and Matthew. The analysis of both the breaking of the legs and the burial gave clear indications of a Passion tradition unique to John. Acts 13:29 supported this interpretation. In the account of the Passion and in the Resurrection narrative, our discussion of agreements between John and the Synoptics showed that they can be understood as similarities between independent traditions dealing with the same subject. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the Passion narratives were more fixed than other parts of the tradition.

The parallels between John and Matthew are especially interesting. Both witness to traditions about Caiaphas and the decision in the coun-

cil, to a Christophany to the women (woman) after the resurrection, and perhaps to an account which lacked an anointing after the burial. Consequently, it is clear that John must be studied and compared with the Synoptics not only collectively, but also individually.¹

¹ We have pointed to only a few parallel tendencies in connection with particular verbal agreements, since a fuller treatment would have necessitated a broader discussion of John's theology as well as the theology of each Synoptic Gospel individually. It was for this reason that John 18:1–9 was not discussed in detail, even though the section stressed the majesty of Jesus in a way comparable to Matthew 26:47–56.

CHAPTER SEVEN

JOHN AND THE SYNOPTICS

The conclusion drawn from the preceding detailed analysis was that a direct literary relationship between John and the Synoptics cannot be countenanced, and yet units of Synoptic material have been added to the Johannine tradition. My journey in this area of study continued, however. I looked at the material in detail once again.

An Independent Oral and/or Written Tradition?

The relationship of John to the Synoptic Gospels is a problem yet to be solved in New Testament research. Until World War II the predominant view was that John had used one, two or all Synoptic Gospels. After P. Gardner-Smith's (1938) research on this material shortly before the outbreak of the War, a trend away from that position gained momentum. A new consensus seemed to emerge: John was independent of the Synoptics (cf. D. Moody Smith 1980, 425–26; F. Neirynck 1977, 73–106).

Many scholars who followed this trend assume that John utilizes an ancient oral tradition independent of the other Gospels. A major work along this line was C. H. Dodd's book *Historical Traditions in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge 1963, reprint 1965). Dodd attempts to uncover the traditional material in John by comparing it with what is most obviously related to the Synoptic Gospels, namely, the passion narratives. He then proceeds to analyze the material where there are fewer and fewer apparent Synoptic contacts: the narratives of Jesus' ministry, those regarding John the Baptist and the first disciples, and, finally, the discourse material.

Among the scholars who more or less accept the theory that John builds on oral tradition which is wholly, or mainly, independent of the Synoptics are: R. Bultmann (1955, etc.), P. Borgen (1959), D. M. Smith (1963 etc.), R. Schnackenburg (1965), C. H. Dodd (1965), and A. Dauer (1972).

In his survey of Dodd and others, R. Kysar makes the following observations: "...Dodd's proposal along with others like it raises anew the persistent questions about the nature of the early Christian traditions—questions which must be answered before proposals such as Dodd's can prove very helpful. For example, exactly how rich and creative was the

pre-literary history of the gospel materials? . . . What is needed, it seems to me, is a more highly developed method of johannine form criticism; and until such methodology can be developed, our efforts in this regard may satisfy little more than the fancy. Dodd began our effort toward the development of a johannine form critical method but that method still remains essentially primitive and crude years after his initial endeavours" (Kysar 1975, 66–67).

In recent years the view that John is dependent upon the Synoptic Gospels has gained new impetus. For example, F. Neiryck and M. Sabbe reject theories of "unknown" and "hypothetical" sources behind John, whether they are supposed to be written or oral (F. Neiryck 1977, 103–6; *ibid.*, 1979; M. Sabbe 1977, 205–34). Neiryck writes that there are ". . . not traditions lying behind the Synoptic Gospels but the Synoptic Gospels themselves are the sources of the Fourth Evangelist" (F. Neiryck, 1977, 106). Similarly M. Sabbe concludes his study of John 18:1–11 in this way: "For better understanding of the relation between John and the Synoptic Gospels and for a more homogeneous explanation of John's text as a whole, the awareness of the redactional creativeness of John combined with a direct dependence upon the Synoptics, is more promising" (M. Sabbe 1977, 233). For surveys, see F. Neiryck 1977, 82–93 and D. Moody Smith 1982, 106–111.

A complex hypothesis has been suggested by M.-É. Boismard (1977). In agreement with Neiryck, he believes that the author of the Fourth Gospel knew all three Synoptic Gospels. While Neiryck explains the differences between John and the Synoptics as the work of the evangelist himself, Boismard attributes these differences, as well as the similarities, to various types of sources. According to Boismard, the author of the Gospel of John, whom he calls John II-B (ca. 90–100 C.E.), revised his own first edition of the Gospel which Boismard calls John II-A. The primary source behind John II-A is Document C (John I, ca. 50 C.E.), which is also one of the sources behind the Synoptic Gospels. Finally, a later redactor (John III) worked over the finished Gospel, making some changes and additions (cf. F. Neiryck 1979, 9–16).

Against this background it seems pertinent to look afresh at Paul's letters in order to gain insight into pre-Synoptic usage of Gospel material. In doing so, we may find evidence as to the form and the method employed in the transmission of tradition and thus make the hypothesis of oral tradition less hypothetical.

Among the passages containing traditional Gospel material in Paul's letters, the passages on the Lord's supper in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16, 17, 21 and

11:23–29 (34) stand out. Only here does Paul use a unit of Gospel tradition of some length.¹

What can we learn from these passages about agreements with the Synoptics and about the nature of the pre-Synoptic use of Gospel material?

1. A comparison between 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16, 17, 21; 11:23–29 and Mark 14:22–25 makes possible the following generalizations: Between mutually independent versions (units of oral/written tradition) there may be close verbal agreement in sentences, word pairs and set-phrases, single words and/or corresponding variant terms.

The agreement between John 2:13–22; 6:51–58 and the Synoptics are not closer, or more striking, than those between the above-mentioned Pauline passages and Mark, and, in the case of John 5:1–18, the agreements with the Synoptics are even fewer. Thus, our analysis of these three Johannine passages supports the hypothesis that John and the Synoptics are mutually independent.

2. What is the nature of the tradition behind the Gospels? The passages examined in 1 Cor 10 and 11 show that units of tradition were received and handed on and that they were actively used in Christian communities (1 Cor 11:23–25 [26]). Some modifications took place in the process, but the formulations were quite stable even during decades of transmission (cf. 1 Cor 11:23–26 with Mark 14:22–25).

Interpretative activity is also evident. The expositions often take the form of a commentary attached to a cited unit of tradition. The text 1 Cor 11:(26)27–34 is attached to the quoted institution of the Lord's Supper in vv. 23–25 (26), and John 5:10–18 is attached to the story in vv. 19. In the same manner, John 2:17–22 is attached as an exposition of the cleansing of the temple in vv. 13–16. The unit of tradition may also be presupposed, and not quoted, as is the case in the discussion of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21 and John 6:51–58.

3. The expositions are usually paraphrases of sentences, phrases, word sets, and words from the given tradition. Synonyms may be used, and expressions may be rephrased. In the expository paraphrase words and fragments from received tradition may be moulded into another form.

4. The transmission and exposition of tradition can take both a written and oral form. The written form is found in written documents, as

¹ Concerning Paul and the Gospel tradition in general, see the works by D. L. Dungan, 1971; B. Fjärstedt, 1974; Dale C. Allison, Jr., 1982, 1–32; P. Stuhlmacher, 1983a, 240–50; id. 1983b, 16–20; 157–82.

1 Corinthians, John, and the Synoptics. The oral form seems primary, however, for the following reasons: (a) Paul states explicitly that 1 Cor 11:23ff. was brought orally to the church in Corinth. Thus, there is a basis for assuming that the material as recorded in the Gospels was also transmitted primarily as oral tradition; (b) Paul gives his expositions of the Gospel tradition in written form because he is not present himself and thus cannot interpret the tradition in person (i.e. orally). This evidence suggests that similar kinds of exposition in the four Gospels originated most often in oral settings; (c) The material discussed in 1 Cor 10 and 11 and in the Gospels belong to identifiable pericopes. Among the passages discussed in John, John 2:13–22 and 5:1–18 are easily delimited from their contexts, while 6:51–58 is part of the more complex entity of John 6 understood as a whole. In all of the following texts, 1 Cor 10 and 11 and in John 2:13–22; 5:1–18 and 6:51–58, the tradition is interpreted in order to meet the concerns and needs of the Christian communities that are being addressed. This observation also supports the view that the oral form was primary, although written form was also used.

Paul and Mark

Paul, in 1 Cor 11:23ff., and Luke 22:15–20 present a version of the institution different from Mark 14:22–25 and Matt 26:26–28 (Bornkamm, G. 1959, 152. H. Schürmann. 1955, 1). Luke 22:19–20 is halfway between Mark/Matt and Paul. A comparison between Paul and Mark-Matthew is important since it will allow us to see what kind of agreement might exist between two mutually independent versions of the same tradition. (About Mark's independence from Paul, see Schürmann 1955, 8.)

Since there is hardly any specific agreement between Paul's eucharistic passages and Matthew's, the comparison will be limited to Mark. The correspondences between eucharistic traditions in 1 Corinthians and Mark 14:22–25 are:

Sentences (almost verbatim agreement):

1 Cor 11:24: τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ Mark 14:22 τοῦτό ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμά μου

Scattered parts of sentences (phrases):

1 Cor 11:25 τοῦτο . . . ἢ . . . διαθήκη . . . ἐν Mark 14:24 τοῦτο . . . τὸ . . . αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης

1 Cor 11:23 ἔλαβεν ἄρτον Mark 14:22 λαβὼν ἄρτον

1 Cor 11:24 ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν Mark 14:22 ἔκλασεν . . . καὶ εἶπεν

Word sets:

- 1 Cor 11:26 ἐσθίητε . . . τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε
 1 Cor 11:27 ἐσθίη τὸν ἄρτον . . . πίνη τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο σώματος . . . τοῦ αἵματος
 1 Cor 11:28 . . . τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω . . . τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω
 1 Cor 11:29 . . . ἐσθίων . . . πίνων . . . ἐσθίει . . . πίνει . . . τὸ σῶμα
 1 Cor 11:25 . . . ποτήριον . . . πίνητε
 Mark 14:22–24 ἐσθιόντων . . . ἄρτον τὸ σῶμα . . . ποτήριον . . . ἔπιον . . . τὸ αἶμα
 1 Cor 10:3–4 . . . ἔφαγον . . . ἔπιον . . .
 1 Cor 10:16 τὸ ποτήριον . . . τοῦ . . . σώματος . . . τὸν ἄρτον . . . κλῶμεν . . . τοῦ σώματος . . .
 1 Cor 10:17 ἄρτος . . . σῶμα . . . ἄρτου
 1 Cor 10:21 . . . ποτήριον . . . πίνειν . . . ποτήριον

Single words:

- 1 Cor 11:24 εὐχαριστήσας Mark 14:23 εὐχαριστήσας
 1 Cor 11:24 ὑπέρ . . . Mark 14:24 ὑπέρ . . .
 1 Cor 11:23 παρεδίδοτο Mark 14:21 παραδίδοται
 1 Cor 10:16 εὐλογίας εὐλοῦμεν Mark 14:22 εὐλογήσας
 1 Cor 10:17 οἱ πολλοί . . . πάντες Mark 14:23–24 πάντες . . . πολλῶν

Variant words (corresponding in meaning):

- 1 Cor 11:24 εὐχαιστήσας Mark 14:22 εὐλογήσας
 1 Cor 11:25 ἐμῷ Mark 14:24 μου
 1 Cor 11:23 ἐν τῇ νυκτί Mark 14:17 ὀψίας
 1 Cor 11:26 ἄχρι οὗ Mark 14:25 ἕως τῆς ἑμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν

There are sixty-eight words in 1 Cor 11:23b–26. Of those, twenty-five words are also used in Mark 14:22–25. Out of forty-nine words in 1 Cor 11:23b–25, twenty-one are found in Mark 14:22–25. Thus, a third to almost a half of the words used here come from two mutually independent versions of this unit of tradition.

This comparison makes possible the following generalization: Between mutually independent versions of oral and/or written traditions there may be close verbal agreements in the form of sentences, word pairs and sets, single words, and corresponding variant terms. At the same time there are differences which give each version its distinctive character. There are no specific agreements found in the contexts of the passages in Paul and the passage in Mark, apart from the fact that Paul seems to presuppose a passion narrative, corresponding to the passion narratives in the Gospels.

After having examined the agreements between the eucharistic traditions in 1 Corinthians and Mark, our analysis also raises the question: What insights can these passages in 1 Cor 10 and 11 give us into the nature of the pre-Synoptic traditions?

Tradition Received and Handed On: 1 Cor 11:23–25(26)

It is commonly recognized that Paul in 1 Cor 11:23ff. cites the institution of the Lord's supper as a unit of tradition. This is made clear by Paul's introductory sentence: "I have received (παρέλαβον) from the Lord that which I have given (παρέδωκα) to you." The two verbs are equivalents of two rabbinical technical terms for the transmitting of tradition, קבל מן and מסר ל.²

Although Paul cites this unit of tradition about the Lord's Supper, at the same time he brings interpretative elements into his rendering. This interpretative element is especially evident in v. 26. Paul formulates a sentence parallel to v. 25b, so that at first Jesus seems to be still speaking:

25 ὁσάκις ἐάν πίνητε . . .

26 ὁσάκις γὰρ ἐάν ἐσθίητε . . . καὶ . . . πίνητε

In spite of the similarity, v. 26 is Paul's own formulation of the traditional phrase, since in this sentence he refers to Jesus in the third person as the Lord: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." In this formulation Paul moreover draws on words about the eschaton (ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ), which in varied formulations also occur in the Synoptic accounts.

The First Letter to the Corinthians 11:23, "I received from the Lord what I also delivered you," then indicates that the chain of tradition goes back to the words of Jesus, and that since he (Jesus) is the Lord, his institution of the Supper had juridical (binding) authority for the congregation in Corinth. (cf. H. Conzelmann 1969, 230–31; B. Gerhardsson 1961, 322; P. Stuhlmacher (ed.) 1983b), 19; G. Bornkamm 1959, 146–48; E. Käsemann 1964, 120–32).

Fragments: Eucharist and Manna

After we have analyzed 1 Cor 11:23–34, some remarks should be added on 1 Cor 10:3, 4, 16, 17, and 21. It is significant that Paul here uses an expository paraphrase of fragments from the eucharistic tradition without first quot-

² Cf. J. Jeremias 1955, 128f.; H. Riesenfeld 1970, 15–18; B. Gerhardsson 1961, 288ff.; 305; 321f.; id. 1977, 27.

ing the tradition itself (cf. H. Schürmann 1970, 86; H. Conzelmann 1969, 201f.; J. Héring 1959; J. Jeremias 1953, 131).

1 Cor 10:16–17, 21 (M. W. Holmes, 2010, 1 Cor 10:16–21):

v. 16 τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν; 17 ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σώμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν. 21 οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων·.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf. . . . You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.

The underscored words are taken from the eucharistic tradition, as quoted in 1 Cor 11:23ff. The words . . . τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν in 10:16 raise the question about whether Paul also draws on other versions of the tradition since the corresponding term in 1 Cor 11:24 εὐχαριστήσας is identical to Luke 22:17, 19, while Matt 26:26 and Mark 14:22 have εὐλογήσας . . . This eucharistic tradition draws on the Jewish technical terms for the cup of wine over which the thanksgiving after the meal has been said (cf. *Str-B.* 4:72; 628; 630f.; Conzelmann 1969, 202; C. K. Barrett 1971, 231).

In 1 Cor 10:16–17, 21 the fragments from the eucharistic tradition occur within the context of 1 Cor 10:14–22. The heading of the passage is Paul's paraenetic imperative in v. 14: "Flee from idolatry." The reference to the Lord's Supper (vv. 16–17, 21) and to the Law of Moses (Lev 7:6.15; Deut 18:1–4) in v. 18 serve to ground the warning against idolatry. The conclusion in vv. 21–22 seems to be a rule for mutually exclusive alternatives: v. 21 οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων. οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων. "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons."

The same form of mutually exclusive alternatives is found in Matt 6:24 (Luke 16:13):

v. 24 οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ.

"You cannot serve God and Mammon" (See also The Gospel of Thomas 47. See M. Carrez 1992, 2266).

Thus, in 1 Cor 10:21a Paul's paraphrase of a fragment from the eucharistic tradition has been given a traditional form, a form which also occurs in the Gospels in Matt 6:24 par. (cf. A. Resch 1904, 53). The passage from

1 Cor 10:14–22 reflects its oral nature. Paul exhorts the Corinthian church by means of a letter in lieu of appearing in person. The oral style is especially evident when Paul in v. 15 addresses the church as if he was speaking to them: “I speak (λέγω) as to sensible men; judge for yourselves what I say (ὃ φημι).”

Formulations from the eucharistic tradition are also reflected in the haggadic reference to the manna and the well in the desert, 1 Cor 10:3–4, when he says: “. . . they all ate the same spiritual food, and they all drank the same spiritual drink.” In this passage Israel symbolizes the Christian people of God. As the typology unfolds, the journey through sea and desert are applied to baptism (v. 2) and the Lord’s Supper (vv. 3–4). The formulation in 1 Cor 10:3–4 even seems to reflect eucharistic phrases, as can be seen from the similarity to the wording in 1 Cor 11:26.

1 Cor 10:3 . . . τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον . . . (“ate the same spiritual food”)

4 . . . τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα, ἔπινον . . . (“drank the same spiritual drink”)

1 Cor 11:26 . . . ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον . . . (“eat the bread”) . . . τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, (“drink the cup”)

As can be seen from these observations, already in the mid-fifties the biblical stories about the manna and the well are being applied to the Lord’s Supper (cf. E. Käsemann 1964, 114; H. Schürmann 1970, 173). By comparing the eucharistic traditions recorded in 1 Cor 10 and 11 with Mark 14:22–25, we thus have shown that close agreement may exist between two mutually independent versions of the same unit of tradition.

Furthermore, the analysis of 1 Cor 10 and 11 has given us insight both into the tradition as it is received and handed on, and into the expository use of the tradition. Although the passages are part of a written document, its oral form seems to be primary.

Eucharistic Traditions in John, Paul, and the Synoptics

Paul’s usage of eucharistic Gospel traditions in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21 and 11:23–34 can further our understanding of John’s use of tradition. It can strengthen the hypothesis that John draws on oral traditions and is independent of the Synoptic Gospels. Such a theory does more than just allude to unknown and hypothetical sources behind John. Paul makes it possible to provide dated evidence for analogous use of Gospel traditions independent of the Synoptics.

The best starting point for the examination of the hypothesis is found in John 6:51b–58, since John here draws on eucharistic tradition in a way very close to Paul’s method. John has closer agreements with Paul than with the Synoptics.

The agreements between John and Paul are:

John 6:51–58 and 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21; 11:23–29.

Word sets:

John 6:53 φαγήτε τὴν σάρκα πῖντε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα
 1 Cor 11:24–25 τὸ σῶμα . . . ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἷμα
 John 6:54 ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα
 1 Cor 11:27 τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος
 John 6:55 ἡ . . . σὰρξ μου καὶ τὸ αἷμά μου
 1 Cor 10:16 τοῦ αἵματος . . . τοῦ σώματος
 John 6:56 ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα
 1 Cor 11:26 ἐσθίητε . . . πίνητε
 1 Cor 11:27 ἐσθίη . . . πίνη
 John 6:57 ὁ τρώγων με
 1 Cor 11:28 ἐσθιέτω . . . πινέτω
 John 6:52 τὴν σάρκα . . . φαγεῖν
 1 Cor 11:29 ὁ ἐσθίων . . . πίνων . . . ὁ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει
 John 6:58 ὁ τρώγων τοῦτον τὸν ἄρτον
 1 Cor 10:3–4 ἔφαγον . . . ἔπιον
 John 6:55 βρώσις . . . πόσις
 1 Cor 10:3–4 . . . βρώμα . . . πόμα

Sentences (in parts):

John 6:51b ὁ ἄρτος . . . ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ
 1 Cor 11:23–4 . . . ἄρτον . . . τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ
 Luke 22:19 . . . ἄρτον . . . ἔδωκεν . . . τοῦτό ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπερ

Subject matter, not words:

John 6:53 . . . οὐκ ἔχετε ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς
 1 Cor 11:29 . . . κρίμα
 John 6:54 . . . ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ γὰρ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ
 1 Cor 11:34 . . . μὴ εἰς κρίμα
 1 Cor 11:32 . . . μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν

M.-É. Boismard (1977, 204–5) emphasizes the agreements between John 6:51b and 1 Cor 11:24. He sees John as reflecting a liturgical tradition which is represented by Paul’s version of the institution of the Lord’s Supper. (Boismard thinks that Luke 22:19b is probably an addition by a scribe.) Moreover, Boismard suggests that John’s term “my flesh” instead of

“my body” in the Synoptic and Pauline versions of the institution, translates Jesus’ own words in Aramaic. Thus, John here uses a tradition which is independent of the Synoptics, in spite of the verbal similarities which exist. Boismard’s view that John has a stronger kinship with Paul than with the Synoptics should be more thoroughly investigated.

1. John presupposes the institution of the Lord’s Supper and paraphrases parts from it, without quoting the story of the institution itself. Similarly, Paul in 1 Cor 10:16–17, 21 selects words from the eucharistic tradition without quoting it. The story of the institution is presupposed as known, so that the commentary in 1 Cor 11:(26)27ff. is also a close parallel, although the institution is quoted in 11:23–25(26).

2. John and Paul use tradition in the same way. They make expository paraphrases of fragments. The fragments consist of word sets. The sets in John 6:51b–58 are ὁ ἄρτος/βρώσις—ἡ σάρξ, πόσις—τὸ αἷμα, and φαγεῖν (τρῶγειν)—πίνειν. Correspondingly, the Pauline word sets in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21 and 11:27–29 are: ὁ ἄρτος/βρώμα—τὸ σῶμα, ποτήριον/πόμα—τὸ αἷμα, and ἐσθίειν/φαγεῖν—πίνειν.

3. There are similarities between John and Paul with regard to the form given to the expository paraphrases. In John 6:53 the eucharistic fragments are built into a sentence where a conditional clause (ἐάν) is followed by the main clause. Correspondingly, in 1 Cor 11:27 Paul paraphrases words from the tradition in a sentence where a conditional relative clause (ὅς ἄν) is followed by a main clause. In John 6:54, 56, 57, 58 a participial phrase tied to the subject takes the place of the subordinate clause, as also is the case in 1 Cor 11:29 (... ὁ ... ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων). In both places there are changes between the second and third person. Moreover, both John and Paul use an argumentative style. For example, negative and positive alternatives are presented to the readers (John 6:53–54; 1 Cor 11:27–28), and then the rationale (γάρ) is given (John 6:55; 1 Cor 11:29). Then a conclusion is drawn (John 6:58; 1 Cor 11:33).

4. Both John and Paul apply the biblical story of the manna and the well to the eating and drinking in the Lord’s Supper. In John 6:(31)51b–58 words from the eucharistic tradition are made part of the midrashic exposition of the Old Testament text on the manna, cited in v. 31. In 1 Cor 10:3–4 the Israelites’ eating and drinking in the desert becomes symbols for or types of the Lord’s Supper. Against this background, it is probable that John 6:55 (“For my flesh is food (βρώσις) indeed, and my blood is drink (πόσις) indeed”) refers to the manna and the well, just as do the corresponding terms (βρώμα-πόμα) in 1 Cor 10:3–4 (cf. P. Borgen 1965/81, 91–92, where reasons are given for reading ἀληθῶς instead of ἀληθής).

5. Moreover, both John 6:41, 43 and 1 Cor 10:10 refer to murmurs by the Israelites in the desert.

6. The formulation in John 6:51b *καὶ ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω ἢ σὰρξ μου ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς*, is similar to 1 Cor 11:24 *Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* and Luke 22:19 *Τοῦτό ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον*, and reflects wording in the presupposed institution story in the Johannine community.

The fact that the verb *δίδωμι* is used in John 6:51b–52 and Luke 22:19, but not in 1 Cor 11:23ff., cannot undermine the view that John 6:51b–58 is in closest agreement with 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21; 11:23–34, especially since the term in John 6:51–52 is a repetition of the word *ἔδωκεν* from the Old Testament quotation in John 6:31 (P.Borgen 1965/1981, 86–90).

Finally the form of the larger passage from John 6:31–58 should be sketched out, and the discussion of oral tradition pursued further. In my book *Bread from Heaven* I examined material exemplifying the midrashic character of John 6:31–58. The quotation from the Old Testament, “Bread from heaven he gave them to eat” (v. 31), is paraphrased throughout vv. 32–58. The systematic structure of this paraphrasing method becomes evident from the fact that the quotation’s final word “to eat” (*φαγεῖν*) does not occur in vv. 32–48. In verse 49, however, this word from the Old Testament quotation is introduced and (along with its synonym *τρῶγειν*) has a central position in the remaining part of the discourse (Borgen 1965/81, 33–35).

In each part of the exposition the interpretation presented is questioned by “the Jews.” In the first part, vv. 32–48, objection is raised against the identification of Jesus with the “bread from heaven” (v. 31). The basis for this objection is the Gospel tradition about Jesus as the son of Joseph: “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know? How does he now say ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (John 6:42) (Borgen 1965/85, 80–83).

Correspondingly, in the second part, vv. 49–58, the use of the term “to eat” (v. 31) in connection with Jesus is questioned. This time Gospel traditions about the eucharist are used: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” (vv. 52–58) (P. Borgen 1965/1981, 87ff.). In our analysis, what indicates that John draws on oral tradition? First, the close agreement between John 6:51–58 and Paul in parts of 1 Cor 10 and 11 make it probable that John is not dependent upon the Synoptics. Neither can it be maintained that John is dependent upon Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians. Thus, Paul and John most probably draw on oral eucharistic traditions, combined with the biblical/haggadic stories about the manna and the

well. Second, the common celebration of the eucharist supports the view that not only Paul, but also John, use liturgical traditions. Third, 1 Cor 10:17, 21 shows that the story of the institution was already known to readers in the Corinthian church by the mid-fifties, and expository elaboration could therefore presuppose this story of institution. John 6:51–58 has the same usage of word sets, etc. from the institution of the Lord's Supper, the same form, argumentative style, etc. There are, therefore, strong arguments in favor of drawing the conclusion that John 6:51–58, like 1 Cor 10:16–17, 21, presupposes the oral tradition about the Lord's Supper and develops an expository paraphrase on it.

John's use of the term ἡ σάρξ, and not τὸ σῶμα which is found in the Synoptic and Pauline versions is consistent with this conclusion. The Johannine version of the institution is also documented by Ignatius' use of the term ἡ σάρξ, in *Ign. Rom.* 7:3; *Ign. Phld.* 4:1; *Ign. Smyrn.* 7:1, and also by Justin in *1 Apol.* 66:2.29 (Brown 1966, 285. In *1 Apol.* 66:3 Justin has τὸ σῶμα).

This understanding agrees generally with that of Boismard, when he suggests that John here reflects a liturgical and oral tradition which is also represented by Paul. Boismard fails to connect this conclusions to his analysis of other parts of John, where he employs literary source criticism instead. With reference to the background supplied by John 6:51–58 the following question is pertinent: Are there other passages in John which have a connection with the life of the Johannine community, its activity of transmitting and interpreting tradition?

"Text" and Commentary

In the preceding sections we discussed the expository use of traditional fragments in John 6:51b–58 where the unit of tradition was presupposed and not stated. Using 1 Cor 11:23–34 as a model we shall now examine some of the passages in John where a similar unit is followed by an expository commentary. Passages such as John 2:13–22; 5:1–18; 9:1–41, and 12:44–50 fall into this category. In this chapter, John 5:1–18, and 2:13–22 will be at the center of the discussion. John 9:1–41 cannot be included since the analysis would then expand beyond the limits of this chapter. The author has, however, analyzed John 12:44–50 in a publication. (P. Borgen, 1983a, 49–66; first published in *NTS* 26, 1979: 18–35).

Matt 12:7–8: (M. W. Holmes, 2010, Mt 12).

The case, v. 1

12:1 Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἐπορεύθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοῖς σάββασιν διὰ τῶν σποριμῶν· οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπέπεισαν καὶ ἤρξαντο τίλλειν στάχους καὶ ἐσθίειν.

Expository dialogue, vv. 2–8

2 οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἰδόντες εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Ἴδου οἱ μαθηταὶ σου ποιοῦσιν ὃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ποιεῖν ἐν σαββάτῳ. 3 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε ἐπέπεισεν καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ; 4 πῶς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως ἔφαγον, ὃ οὐκ ἔξον ἦν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν οὐδὲ τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ, εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν μόνοις; 5 ἢ οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι τοῖς σάββασιν οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τὸ σάββατον βεβηλοῦσιν καὶ ἀναίτιοί εἰσιν; 6 λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μεῖζόν ἐστιν ὧδε. 7 εἰ δὲ ἐγνώκειτε τί ἐστίν· Ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, οὐκ ἂν καταδικάσατε τοὺς ἀναίτιους. 8 κύριος γάρ ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Mark 2:23–28 (M. W. Holmes 2010, Mk 2:23–28)

The case, v. 23

23 Καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς σάββασιν παραπορεύεσθαι διὰ τῶν σποριμῶν, καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἤρξαντο ὁδοῦ ποιεῖν τίλλοντες τοὺς στάχους.

Expository dialogue, vv. 24–28

24 καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον αὐτῷ· Ἴδε τί ποιοῦσιν τοῖς σάββασιν ὃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν; 25 καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε χρεῖαν ἔσχεν καὶ ἐπέπεισεν αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ; 26 πῶς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἀβιαθάρ ἀρχιερέως καὶ τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως ἔφαγεν, οὓς οὐκ ἔξεστιν φαγεῖν εἰ μὴ τοὺς ἱερεῖς, καὶ ἔδωκεν καὶ τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ οὖσιν; 27 καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· Τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο καὶ οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ σάββατον· 28 ὥστε κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου.

Luke 13:10–17 (M. W. Holmes 2010, Lk 13:10–17)

The case, v. 10–13

10 Ἦν δὲ διδάσκων ἐν μιᾷ τῶν συναγωγῶν ἐν τοῖς σάββασιν. 11 καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ πνεύμα ἔχουσα ἀσθενείας ἔτη δεκαοκτώ, καὶ ἦν συγκύπτουσα καὶ μὴ δυναμένη ἀνακύψαι εἰς τὸ παντελές. 12 ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτὴν ὁ Ἰησοῦς προσεφώνησεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· Γύναι, ἀπολύσου τῆς ἀσθενείας σου, 13 καὶ ἐπέθηκεν αὐτῇ τὰς χεῖρας· καὶ παραχρῆμα ἀνωρθώθη, καὶ ἐδόξαζεν τὸν θεόν.

Expository dialogue, vv. 14–17

14 ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος, ἀγανακτῶν ὅτι τῷ σαββάτῳ ἐθεράπευσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἔλεγεν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὅτι Ἐξ ἡμέραι εἰσὶν ἐν αἷς δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι· ἐν αὐταῖς οὖν ἐρχόμενοι θεραπεύεσθε καὶ μὴ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ σαββάτου. 15 ἀπεκρίθη δὲ αὐτῷ

ὁ κύριος καὶ εἶπεν· Ὑποκριταί, ἕκαστος ὑμῶν τῷ σαββάτῳ οὐ λύει τὸν βούν αὐτοῦ ἢ τὸν ὄνον ἀπὸ τῆς φάτνης καὶ ἀπαγαγὼν ποτίζει; 16 ταύτην δὲ θυγατέρα Ἀβραάμ οὖσαν, ἣν ἔδησεν ὁ Σατανᾶς ἰδοὺ δέκα καὶ ὀκτῶ ἔτη, οὐκ ἔδει λυθῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ δεσμοῦ τούτου τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ σαββάτου; 17 καὶ ταῦτα λέγοντος αὐτοῦ κατασχύνοντο πάντες οἱ ἀντικείμενοι αὐτῷ, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἔχαιρεν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐνδόξοις τοῖς γινομένοις ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. 5

John 5:1–18

The case, vv. 1–9

5: 1 Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. 2 ἔστιν δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρα ἡ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἐβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδα, πέντε στοᾶς ἔχουσα· 3 ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος τῶν ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν. 5 ἦν δὲ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα ὀκτῶ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ αὐτοῦ· 6 τούτον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατακείμενον, καὶ γνοὺς ὅτι πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει, λέγει αὐτῷ· Θέλεις ὑγίης γενέσθαι; 7 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενῶν· Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα ὅταν παραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν ᾧ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγὼ ἄλλος πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει. 8 λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. 9 καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγίης ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἦρε τὸν κράβαττον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιεπάτει. Ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ.

Expository dialogue, vv. 10–18

10 ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ· Σάββατόν ἐστιν, καὶ οὐκ ἔξεστίν σοι ἄραι τὸν κράβαττον. 11 ὃς δὲ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς· Ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιῆ ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν Ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. 12 ἠρώτησαν οὖν αὐτόν· Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ εἰπὼν σοι Ἄρον καὶ περιπάτει; 13 ὁ δὲ ἰαθεὶς οὐκ ᾔδει τίς ἐστίν, ὁ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐξένευσεν ὄχλου ὄντος ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. 14 μετὰ ταῦτα εὗρίσκει αὐτόν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἴδε ὑγίης γέγονας· μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε, ἵνα μὴ χειρόν σοί τι γένηται. 15 ἀπήλθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἀνήγγειλεν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ποιήσας αὐτόν ὑγιῆ. 16 καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίδωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ. 17 ὁ δὲ ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτοῖς· Ὁ πατήρ μου ἔως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται καὶ ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι. 18 διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτόν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτείνειν ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυε τὸ σάββατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγε τὸν θεόν, ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ. 6

John 5:1–18 and the Synoptics. Sentences (almost verbatim agreement)

John 5:8 Ἐγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει

John 5:9 εὐθέως . . . ἦρεν τὸν κράβαττον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιεπάτει.

John 5:10 ἄραι τὸν κράβαττον

John 5:11 Ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει.

John 5:12 Ἄρον καὶ περιπάτει

John 5:14 μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

Mark 2:9 ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράβατον σου καὶ περιπάτει

Mark 2:11 ἔγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβατόν σου καὶ

Mark 2:12 ἐγέρθη καὶ εὐθὺς ἄρας τὸν κράβατον

(John 8:11 μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε)

Part of sentences:

John 5:10 *σάββατον . . . οὐκ ἔξεστίν σοι (ἄραι)*
 Matt 12:2 (cf. Mark 2:24) *ὁ οὐκ ἔξεστιν (ποιεῖν) ἐν σαββάτῳ*

Words:

John 5:6 . . . *ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς . . . λέγει*
 John 5:10 . . . *ἔλεγον . . . (Ἰουδαῖοι) . . .*
 (John 5:3D *παραλυτικῶν*)
 Mark 2:5 *ἰδὼν Ἰησοῦς . . . λέγει*
 Mark 2:24 *οἱ (Φαρισαῖοι) ἔλεγον*
 Mark 2:3 *παραλυτικόν*

Subject matter, not words:

John 5:18 making himself equal with God
 Matt 2:7 It is blasphemy. Who can forgive sins but God alone?
 John 5:14 Sin no more
 John 5:16 The Jews persecuted Jesus
 Mark 3:6 The Pharisees went out, and immediately held council with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.
 John 5:18 the Jews sought all the more to kill him.
 John 5:17 My Father is working still, and I am working.
 Matt 12:8 (cf. Mark 2:27, Luke 6:5) For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.

The views of Boismard, Sabbe, Neiryneck, Lindars, and Brown will be given in outline as the basis for analyzing the agreements between John and the Synoptics.

Boismard finds three levels in John 5:1–18. The original part of John 5:1–18 ran like this: “After this there was a feast and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And a certain man was there who had been ill. When Jesus saw him, he said to him: ‘Rise, and take your pallet and walk’. And at once the man (rose) and took up his pallet and walked.” This story was part of the first stage (John II-A) of the evangelist’s Gospel. In his final version (John II-B) he added all the rest of John 5:1–18, except for parts of v. 16 and all of v. 17–18 which were added by the later redactor (John III). Boismard therefore thinks that John II-B transformed the original story of healing into a controversy about the Sabbath (M.-É. Boismard 1977, 156–65).

M. Sabbe is right when he objects to Boismard’s reconstruction of the original story of healing, that it (John II-A as a whole) has no theological significance. This in itself makes one want to question just the very probability (M. Sabbe 1980, 125–30).

In his comments on Boismard’s analysis, Neiryneck maintains that there is no need for distinguishing between stages John II-A and II-B. Since,

according to Boismard, an expansion and reworking of the material took place in John II-B, why would not then John II-B also have extensively reworked the story of healing itself on the basis of Mark 2:1–12 (the healing of the paralytic) illuminated by the Sabbath controversy in Mark 3:1–6 (F. Neiryck. 1979, 177–80)?

An alternative hypothesis is suggested by Lindars (1972, 209). The verbal similarities between John 5:8–9a and Mark 2:9,11–12a are so close that it can scarcely be doubted that an almost identical source lies behind them both. It is also possible that John's reference to the Sabbath (John 5:9b) emerges from material that is the background for Mark 2:1–3:6, since the Sabbath is discussed in Mark 2:23–28 and 3:1–6.

The agreements listed above should be discussed against this background. Do the agreements between John 5:1–18 on the one hand and Matt 12:1–8 and Luke 13:10–17 on the other hand indicate that John is dependent upon the Synoptic Gospels? An argument in favor of dependency must take cognizance of the fact that all three pericopes have the same structure: A case of Sabbath violation is followed by a legal dispute. In addition, it might be argued that Matthew's interpretative expansion of Mark 2:23–28 in Matt 12:1–8 could suggest that John 5:1–18 is a product based on Markan material. G. Stanton's analysis of Matt 12:5–8 can be quoted here (G. Stanton 1983, 275): "... verse 7 is almost certainly part of the evangelist's own addition to and interpretation of Mark 2:23–28. Matthew is stressing that God is merciful and that Sabbath commandment should be considered in the light of his kindness. The Sabbath commandment is not abolished; it is subordinated to the kindness and mercy of God. In this way the conduct of the disciples is defended."

Matthew understood the exposition as enhancing the meaning of the received word of Jesus and therefore as also having the form of a saying of Jesus. John has the same understanding of the expository elaborations of the Gospel tradition in the dialogue in John 5:10–18. It should be added here that in the juridical debates in John and Matthew, Jesus refers to scriptural passages. Matthew 12:3–7 refers to 1 Sam 21:1–6; Lev 24:5–9; Num 28:9–10; and Hos 6:6. The words of Jesus in John 5:17 draw on Jewish exegetical traditions tied to Gen 2:2f. and Exod 20:11 (cf. R. E. Brown, 1966, 216–17; P. Borgen 1987c), 88–92.

Finally, the strongest argument in favor of John's dependence is the verbatim agreement between John 5:8 etc. ("Ἐγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει) and Mark 2:9 ("Ἐγειρε καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει). As for the phrase, "take up your mat and walk" etc. (John 5:8, etc. and Mark 2:9, etc.), it should be noted that another set or stock phrase from the Gospel tradition has also been worked into the commentary, namely

μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε (v. 14) which also occurs in the non-Johannine pericope of John 7:53–8:11. Lindars (1972, 312), seems to think that the phrase in John 8:11 is taken from 5:14. If Lindars is right, it shows how a set phrase may be extracted from a story, leaving the rest of it intact. Against Lindars it may be said that the phrase has a more natural place in the context of 8:11, while it is used rather jarringly in 5:14.

By analogy, the use of this stock phrase in these two mutually independent stories also suggests that “take up your pallet and walk” (John 5:8, etc., Mark 2:9, etc.) might also be such a phrase and could occur in various contexts in stories which are independent of each other (cf. E. Haenchen 1980, 269: “wandernde Einzelzüge”). Apart from this phrase, the two stories of healing, John 5:1–9 and Mark 2:1–12, are very different with hardly any further verbal agreement.

Thus, the stories are much more different than are the Pauline (1 Cor 11:23–26) and Markan (Mark 14:22–25) stories of the Lord’s Supper, where there is close agreement between sentences, phrases, and words, although they are mutually independent. The other agreements listed in the survey also call for comment. The agreement between John 5:10 . . . οὐκ ἔξεστιν . . . and Matt 12:2 is due to the fact that a traditional form, corresponding to Paul’s use of traditional (Gospel) forms in 1 Cor 10:21 and 11:27ff., appears in John’s paraphrase.

The references to Jesus’ persecution (John 5:16) and those seeking to kill him (v. 18) are all features based in the Gospel tradition. The persecution of Jesus and the search to find and kill him are elements which are central in John, as can be seen from 5:16, 18; 15:20; 7:19–20, 25; 8:37, 40; 11:53. They are also central to the Johannine community since a direct correlation is made between the persecution of Jesus and attempts to kill him, with the persecution of Christians and attempts to kill them, John 15:20; 16:2 (cf. S. Pancaro 1975, 45f.). The passion narratives and the killing of Jesus show that these elements have a firm basis in the Gospel tradition and in history. John 5:16, 18 and Mark 3:6 par., connect this motif in the Gospel tradition with Jesus’ apparent violation of the Sabbath in different ways.

There is no verbal agreement between Mark 3:6 and John 5:16, 18, and thus it seems arbitrary to conclude, as Neiryneck does, that John here is dependent on Mark. John’s independence is supported by the observation that the expository commentary in John 5:10–18 is attached to the story (the legal case) like in Matt 12:1–8 and Luke 13:10–17, while the corresponding discussion in Mark 3:1–6 precedes the story of healing.

The motif of blasphemy in John 5:18 (“making himself equal with God”) has a distinctive use differing from its use and context in Mark 2:7 par. and 14:64 par. Thus, these parallels do not prove that John is dependent upon

the Synoptics. Arguments based on form can also be advanced against John's dependency on the Synoptics. In spite of the similarity of form between John 5:1–18 with Matt 12:1–8 and Luke 13:10–17, John has a distinctive use of this common form, which can hardly be said to be taken from the Synoptic passages: Only in John 5:10–18 does the legal debate function to refocus parts of the scene (vv. 10–13 the Jews and the person healed; vv. 14 Jesus and the healed person; vv. 15–18 the healed person, the Jews, and Jesus). Moreover, only in John 5:10–18 are phrases from the story (the case) repeated quite mechanically in the subsequent legal debate. Only John has, therefore, an extensive paraphrase of parts of the case-story used as a "text."

The question still remains as to whether the passage comes from an oral tradition or whether it is based on a written document. Three points suggest that John 5:1–18 not only draws on oral tradition, but is itself an oral unit which has been written down.

1. The story of healing, (John 5:1–9), has the same form as Synoptic healing stories. Consequently, John here seems to transmit tradition in a way analogous to Paul's rendering of the eucharistic tradition in 1 Cor 11:23–25(26). The expository commentary in John 5:10–18 corresponds to Paul's commentary in 1 Cor 11:(26)27ff. John 5:1–18, as a whole, is therefore parallel to 1 Cor 11:23–34 and results from a corresponding expository activity in the Johannine community.

2. This hypothesis is supported by a consideration of the *Sitz im Leben* of John 5:1–18, focusing on the controversy between the church and the synagogue, in which Christology, the Sabbath, and the Law of Moses were central issues. The importance of these questions for understanding the actual situation of the Johannine community is evident from John 9:1–41. The studies of J. L. Martyn and S. Pancaro have shown that the history of the Johannine community is reflected in these two passages (J. L. Martyn 1968, 2nd rev. ed. 1979; S. Pancaro 1975, 497–512).

3. The evangelist is more interested in the Christological issue than in the Sabbath question. Accordingly, in the discourse which follows in John 5:19ff., phrases and terms about the Sabbath and the Sabbath controversy are no longer repeated, whereas the Christological idea in John 5:17, ("My Father is at work even till now, and so I am at work too,") is developed.

Additional Note on John 5:9

Did the point about the Sabbath belong to the story of the healing in the oral transmission, or was it added to create the expository dialogue found

in John 5:10–18? This question has been much debated since the reference to the Sabbath in v. 9b seems to be an addition to the story about healing. R. E. Brown, in discussing E. Haenchen's view that the reference to the Sabbath and the Sabbath controversy in vv. 9b–13 constitutes a secondary addition to the healing narrative, says: "One almost needs the Sabbath motif to give this story significance" (R. E. Brown 1966, 1: 210). Two further observations support Brown's view. The story of healing, (John 5:1–9), is a tradition with legal authority (cf. 1 Cor 11:23–25/6) which legitimates the attitude of the Johannine community towards the Sabbath (the Law of Moses). Consequently the commentary given in vv. 10–18 presupposes that the story of the healing was already connected with the Sabbath. The expositor therefore does not need to prove to his readers that the healing story raises the problem of Sabbath observance.

Furthermore, the reference to the Sabbath in v. 9b at the end of the story of the healing corresponds to Paul's formulation of 1 Cor 11:26, where his extracts from the quoted tradition are closely tied to the theme in the commentary.

Thus, the Sabbath motif is placed in John 5:9b as a topical heading for the succeeding commentary and is based on the meaning of the healing story. This use of the Sabbath reference in v. 9b as a topical heading is in accordance with the well-educated or nuanced form of commentary found in vv. 10–18, with its repetition of phrases and allusions to midrashic exegesis.

Our analysis has shown that John 5:1–18 follows a traditional structure in which a controversial state of affairs concerning the Sabbath is followed by juridical dialogue. In 1 Cor 11:23–34, Paul uses the same basic form from the Gospel tradition followed by an expository commentary of a legal nature. Since the similarities between the two mutually independent traditions of 1 Cor 11:23–25(26) and Mark 14:22–25 are much more extensive and clearer than they are between John 5:1–18 and the Synoptics, the Johannine passage is certainly independent of the Synoptic Gospels.

John 5:1–18 is probably an oral unit transmitted through the Johannine community. This view is supported by the parallel structure of "text" and "commentary" in 1 Cor 11:23–34 and by the life setting of John 5:1–18 where we find conflicts between church and synagogue about the Sabbath and the Law of Moses in relation to Christology. By adding John 5:19ff. to the Sabbath controversy, the evangelist seems to want to develop the Christological aspect more independently of the Sabbath controversy (cf. C. K. Barrett 1978a, 257ff.).

John 2:13–22

Before we analyze the way in which Gospel material has been used in John 2:13–22, the similarities to the Synoptic Gospels and Acts should be noted. The similarities are: John 2:13–22 and the Synoptics

The case:

13 Καὶ ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ὁ Ἰησοῦς. 14 καὶ εὗρεν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοὺς πωλοῦντας βόας καὶ πρόβατα καὶ περιστερὰς καὶ τοὺς κερματιστάς καθήμενους, 15 καὶ ποιήσας φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων πάντας ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὰ τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας, καὶ τῶν κολλυβιστῶν ἐξέχεεν τὰ κέρματα καὶ τὰς τραπέζας ἀνέστρεψε, 16 καὶ τοῖς τὰς περιστερὰς πωλοῦσιν εἶπεν· Ἄρατε ταῦτα ἐντεῦθεν, μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου.

Expository comments:

17 ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἐστίν· Ὁ ζῆλος τοῦ οἴκου σου καταφάγεταί με. 18 ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Τί σημεῖον δεῖκνύεις ἡμῖν, ὅτι ταῦτα ποιεῖς; 19 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν. 20 εἶπαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· Τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἕξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος, καὶ σὺ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερεῖς αὐτόν; 21 ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. 22 ὅτε οὖν ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι τοῦτο ἔλεγεν, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. (M. W. Holmes 2010, Jn 2:13–22).

A) Agreements with all the Synoptics:

Parts of sentences:

John 2:14 ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοὺς πωλοῦντας
Matt 21:12 / Mark 11:15 / Luke 19:45 εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν . . . τοὺς πωλοῦντας

Words:

John 2:16 μὴ ποιεῖτε
John 2:16 τὸν οἶκον . . . οἶκον 17 τοῦ οἴκου
Matt 21:13 ποιεῖτε Mark 11:17 πεποιήκατε Luke 19:46 ἐποιήσατε
Matt 21:13 / Mark 11:17 / Luke 19:46 ὁ οἶκος . . .

B) Agreements with Matt and Mark

Parts of sentences:

John 2:15 τὰς τραπέζας ἀνέστρεψεν
John 2:16 τοῖς τὰς περιστερὰς πωλοῦσιν
Matt 21:12 / Mark 11:15 τὰς τραπέζας . . . κατέστρεψεν
Matt 21:12 / Mark 11:15 τῶν πωλούντων τὰς περιστερὰς

Words:

John 2:14 ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ
John 2:14 περιστερὰς

John 2:15 τῶν κολλυβιστῶν
 Matt 21:12 / Mark 11:15 ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ
 Matt 21:12 / Mark 11:15 τὰς περιστεράς
 Matt 21:12 / Mark 11:15 τῶν κολλυβιστῶν

C) Agreement with Matt

Part of sentences:

John 2:15 πάντας ἐξέβαλεν
 Matt 21:12 ἐξέβαλεν πάντας

2:18, etc.

Parts of sentences:

John 2:18 ταῦτα ποιεῖς
 Matt 21:23/Mark 11:28/Luke 20:2 ταῦτα ποιεῖς

Words:

John 2:13 εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα
 John 2:14 ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ
 John 2:18 σημεῖον (question)
 Mark 11:27 εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα
 Mark 11:27/Luke 20:1 ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ (Matt 21:23 εἰς τὸν ἱερόν)
 Matt 12:38–39 / Mark 8:12; 16:2 / Luke 11:29 σημεῖον (question)

Subject matter, not words:

John 2:18 Τί σημεῖον δεικνύεις ἡμῖν
 Matt 21:23/Mark 11:28/Luke 20:2 ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ

2:19–20

Parts of sentences:

John 2:19 λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον
 John 2:19–20 ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις
 John 2:19 λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον
 John 2:19 ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις
 John 2:19 λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον
 Mark 14:58 κατελύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον (Matt 26:61 καταλύσαι τὸν ναόν)
 Matt 26:61/Mark 14:58 διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν
 Matt 27:40/Mark 15:29 ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναόν
 Matt 27:40/Mark 15:29 ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις
 Acts 6:14 καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτον

Words:

John 2:20 οἰκοδομήθη
 John 2:20 ὁ ναὸς οὗτος
 John 2:21 τοῦ ναοῦ

Matt 26:61 οἰκοδομήσαι
 Mark 14:58 οἰκοδομήσω
 Mark 14:58 τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον
 Mark 14:58/15:29/Matt 26:61/27:40 τὸν ναὸν

Variant words:

John 2:19 ἐγερῶ 20 ἐγερεῖς
 Matt 26:61 οἰκοδομήσαι
 Mark 14:58 οἰκοδομήσω

Boismard (1977, 177ff.) distinguishes between three stages: C, John II-A and II-B. The first stage, C, reads: (verse 14) “and he found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the mon eychangers (15) and . . . he drove all out of the temple (16b) and he said (:). . . ‘Take these things away. Do not make my Father’s house a house of trade’”. In the next stage, John II-A, verse 18 is added: “The Jews then said to him, ‘What sign have you to show us for doing this?’”

Finally, the remaining parts of John 2:13–22 are expansions attributed to John II-B, much of which comes from the Synoptics. And at this stage the story of the Temple cleansing finds its present place in the Gospel.

Neiryneck (1979, 86–90) agrees with Boismard about the dependence on the Synoptics but disagrees with him when a distinction is made between John II-A and II-B. Neiryneck objects to the classification of the request for a sign (v. 18) to John II-A. He rightly refers to the parallel request for a sign in John 6:30, which Boismard assigns to John II-B, not to John II-A.

Neiryneck also points to weaknesses and inconsistencies in Boismard’s distinction between different levels in II-B and II-A: Since Boismard thinks that 2:13–15 in parts, 16a, 17, 18, 19–22 resulted from the redactional activity of the evangelist (John II-B), he must give a very strong justification for separating v. 14, v. 15 in parts and v. 16b into a source of its own. Neiryneck does not find that Boismard has proven the case sufficiently. For example, Boismard states that the expression “my Father’s house” (v. 16b) is typical for level C. The phrase, however, only occurs once more in John, (in John 14:2), and there “house” is the rendering of οἰκία, whereas the form οἶκος is used in 2:16b. Two occurrences of a phrase, even in variant forms, do not provide a sufficient basis for calling the phrase “typical.”

Furthermore, it is hardly defensible to assign the words πρόβατον, βοῦς (sheep, oxen) to John II-B in v. 15, while the same words are ascribed to source C in v. 14. Neiryneck points to the fact that the cleansing of the temple in Mark 11:15–19 is followed by the controversy concerning Jesus’ authority in Mark 11:28. He maintains that the similarity here with John

2:13–18 (the cleansing and the request for a sign) cannot be denied. This observation is important, and we have also noted some verbal agreements between John 2:13–18 and Mark 11:27–28 par. Thus it seems that Neiryneck's view finds good support here. In addition to verbal agreements between John's account of the cleansing of the temple and Mark's, there is significant agreement in the sequence of the cleansing, the request for a sign (John), and the question about authority (Mark).

Nevertheless, these similarities speak rather in favor of the views of Dodd, Brown, and others who claim that the material in John 2:13–22 is not taken from the Synoptic Gospels, but represents an independent tradition running parallel to the Synoptic tradition:

1. The verbal agreements between John 2:13–22 and one or more of the Synoptic Gospels are no stronger than between the Pauline version of the institution of the Lord's supper, 1 Cor 11:23–26, and the Marcan version in Mark 14:22–25. There are, for example, sixty words in John 2:14–16. Of these, nineteen words are used when the occurrences between Mark and Matthew are added together. The corresponding figures for 1 Cor 11:23b–26 and Mark 14:22–25 are sixty eight and twenty five. Besides phrases and words, there is agreement with one complete sentence in 1 Cor 11:23–26 and Mark 14:22–25, while only agreements of phrase and word are present between John 2:13–16 and the Synoptic parallels.
2. The challenge to Jesus in Mark 11:27–28 is separated from the cleansing in Mark 11:15–17; yet the challenge seems to refer to the cleansing of the temple. As suggested by Dodd, Brown, and others, it is probable that Mark split up what belonged together in the pre-Markan stage of the tradition, a tradition testified to by John's independent witness (C. H. Dodd 1953, 300–3; 450–51; id. 1965, 89–91; R. E. Brown, 1966, 1:118–21).
3. Jesus' saying about the destruction and rebuilding of the temple in John 2:19ff. does not weaken the theory of John and the Synoptics' mutual independence concerning in John 2:13–22, although the saying does have close verbal agreements with the Synoptics. One important difference, however, is that John is the only one to use ἐγείρειν (to raise up) (Synoptics: οἰκοδομεῖν). John's term is a proper word for construction but may also refer to the resurrection of the body. Another difference is John's use of the imperative, λύσατε, which puts the burden of the destruction on "the Jews" (John 2:17). These distinctive features fit well with the theological tendencies in John. They might seem, therefore, to

be due to modifications of the Markan or Matthean texts. This is hardly the case, however. John 2:19ff. reflects nothing specific from the saying in Matt and Mark. The forms of the saying in Mk and Mt themselves, show that interpretative adaptations also have been at work in those Gospels. This is most clearly seen in Mark 14:58 where accusers quote Jesus' saying that contrasts the temple made with hands and the one not made with hands. The saying functions here as prophecy of a new temple of an entirely different nature than the then extant Jerusalem temple.

The saying does not occur in Luke, although it is used in Acts, the second volume of the same work. Its use in the story about Stephen in Acts 6:14 indicates that it was used in the debates and controversies between the early church and the Jewish authorities. This was also probably the *Sitz im Leben* of John 2:13–22. The passage suggests that the church, from a Christological foundation, was attempting to emancipate herself from the Jerusalem temple and its worship. Although there is not extensive use of words from the story of the cleansing (John 2:13–16) in the subsequent section of vv. 17–22, several features suggest that John 2:17–22 is an expository commentary on the temple incident in vv. 13–16:

1. The terms ἱερόν (vv. 14–15) and ὁ οἶκος (v. 16) are interpreted in vv. 17–22. In the Old Testament quotation from Ps 69:9 in John 2:17 the term ὁ οἶκος (from v. 16) is repeated, and in vv. 18–21 Jesus uses the synonym ὁ ναός when discussing the destruction of the temple and in the elaboration which follows.
2. The concluding remark in v. 22 “. . . and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken,” ties together the quotation of Ps 69:9 (“Zeal for thy house will consume me”) in John 2:17 and the subsequent word of Jesus (“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”). Here the Christological meaning of the temple incident is hinted at: Jesus “spoke of the temple of his body,” v. 21.

As for the reference to Ps 69:9 in John 2:17, Lindars observed that “. . . it is a fragment of a whole psalm which is known to be a Passion proof text in the primitive Church.” (B. Lindars 1972, 144; cf. R. Schnackenburg 1965. 1:367; E. Haenchen 1980, 203). Barrett (1978a, 201) thinks that v. 22 probably means that the Old Testament predicts the vindication of the Messiah in a general way.

3. It is clear that v. 17 introduces the interpretation of the cleansing, since it is said that the disciples, against the background of the temple incident, remembered the Old Testament word from Ps 69:9.
4. The request for a sign in v. 18 refers back to the cleansing with the words “these things” (ταῦτα).

From this analysis we can see that in John 2:13–22 the evangelist has brought in a unit from the expository activity of the Johannine community, a unit corresponding to Paul’s expository interpretation of the institution of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Cor 11:23–34 and the exposition of the healing story in John 5:1–18. In the Johannine community, the story of the temple cleansing had already been used separately from the Passion narrative to throw light upon the community’s attitude towards the temple (cf. C. H. Dodd 1965, 91; id. 1953, 300–302; E. Haenchen 1980, 201–3; P. Borgen 1983b, 136–38; R. E. Brown 1979, 49).

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been twofold:

1. to discuss the agreements between John 2:13–22; 5:1–18; 6:51–58 and the Synoptics against the background of the two mutually independent traditions recorded in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16, 17, 21; 11:23–34, and Mark 14:22–25. The conclusion is that the agreements between John 2:13–22; 6:51–58 and the Synoptics are neither closer, nor more striking, than those between the above-mentioned Pauline passages and Mark, and in the case of John 5:1–18 there are even fewer agreements with the Synoptics. To this extent the analysis of these three Johannine passages supports the hypothesis that John and the Synoptics are mutually independent.
2. to throw light upon the transmission of tradition and the expository and paraphrasal usage of it in the Gospel. Here the transmission and expository use of the eucharistic tradition in 1 Cor 10 and 11 have proved to be relevant and parallel.

Although written documents have been examined, the oral tradition seems to be the primary source behind the documents. Also here the parallels between the passages discussed in John and those in 1 Cor 10 and

11 give support to this interpretation. In both 1 Cor 10 and 11 and John 2:13–22; 5:1–18 and 6:51–58 the traditions are interpreted to meet the challenges which existed in Christian communities.

Added Note

In 1992 D. Moody Smith published a survey of research on John and the Synoptics, *John among the Gospels: The Relationship in Twentieth-Century Research*. Moody Smith reaches the following conclusion: “At the beginning of the century, the exegete or commentator could safely assume John’s knowledge of the Synoptics. We then passed through a period of a quarter of a century or more (1955–80) in which the opposite assumption was the safer one: John was perhaps ignorant of the Synoptics, certainly independent of them. We have now reached the point at which neither assumption is safe, that is, neither can be taken for granted. Any exegete must argue the case afresh on its merits . . .” (1992, 189).

After Moody Smith’s book was in the hands of the publishers he was able to read the articles by F. Neiryneck and myself. In a footnote, Smith refers briefly to points in our debate and states: “Their interchange represents quite well the present divided state of opinion, in which the once-reigning consensus of John’s independence has been challenged on the basis of putative points of contact with the texts, while its defenders object that John’s redactional use of Mark (or other synoptics) cannot be explained adequately, and other possibilities for understanding the relationship are not explored . . .” (1992, 186, n. 5).

Raymond E. Brown’s magisterial two-volume commentary on the passion narratives in the four Gospels, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave*, appeared in 1994 ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1994). In § 2, volume 1 pages 36–93, he deals with Gospel issues pertinent to the passion narratives, including the question of John and the Synoptics. His conclusion is: “John did not use any of the Synoptic PNs [passion narratives] in writing his own account, even though some of the pre-Gospel tradition on which he drew resembled material on which Mark and Luke drew” (p. 92). Brown expresses general agreement with the observations and views presented by the present author in the interchange with Neiryneck: “. . . an important debate between P. Borgen and F. Neiryneck on ‘John and the Synoptics’ . . . In his defence of Johannine independence of Mark, Borgen offers a theory of development of John and Mark from oral tradition very close to the one I espouse in this section” (p. 78, n. 96).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SOME OBSERVATIONS

It is important that an indisputable example can be given of two mutually independent uses of Gospel traditions: Paul's use of eucharistic traditions in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16, 17, 21; 11:23–34 and the parallel in Mark 14:22–25. In this way it is seen that the agreements between John 2:13–22; 6:51–58 and the Synoptics are neither closer, nor more striking, than those between the above-mentioned Pauline passages and Mark. In the case of John 5:1–18 there are even fewer agreements with the Synoptics. Moreover, both Paul in 1 Cor 10 and John in ch. 6 identifies eucharistic bread with the biblical manna. These observations have strengthened the hypothesis that John and the Synoptics are mutually independent.

In the present chapter the attempt is to look further at John's independence in a broader scale.

Methodological Considerations

It has been my privilege to enter into a dialogue on John and the Synoptics with the scholar Frans Neiryck.¹

There is some common ground between Neiryck and me, although our conclusions differ. Neiryck formulates his agreement with me in this way: "The 'form' of expository interpretation and paraphrasing commentary can be employed in the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel . . . And if any conclusion can be drawn from the 'model' of 1 Cor 11:23–25,(26) and 27–34, it would be that a 'tradition' (saying or narrative) can be used by John as a starting point for further elaboration . . ." (Neiryck 1990, 450).

¹ In the present study I wish to honour him by continuing this dialogue at some points. The dialogue which we have had so far, has been published in D. Dungan (ed.) 1990, *The Interrelations of the Gospels*, Leuven: Leuven UP and Peeters, 408–58. My contribution, "John and the Synoptics," covers pages 408–37. Neiryck's "John and the Synoptics. Response to P. Borgen" follows on pages 438–50, and finally my "John and the Synoptics. A Reply" is found on pages 451–58. F. Neiryck has also published his response in a collection of essays, Neiryck, F. 1991a), *Evangelica*, II, Leiden, 1991, pp. 699–711, together with an additional note on pages 711–12.

Nevertheless Neiryneck maintains that my analysis of the form of expository interpretation has no relevance for the discussion about John's dependence on the Synoptics. He claims that the presence of the structure "text and commentary" allows for no conclusion about the pre-Johannine or Synoptic origin of this tradition (*ibid.*).

In his "Additional Note" in Neiryneck, F. 1991, *Evangelica*, II, 711–12, he presents two viewpoints which are of importance for further dialogue: (a) He does not "exclude John's use of oral-tradition or source material . . . direct dependence on the Synoptic Gospels does not preclude the possibility of supplementary information"; (b) "If the fourth evangelist was a teacher and preacher in his community who knew the earlier gospels, conflation and harmonization may have been quite natural to him."

Neiryneck also quotes E. Simons, *Hat der dritte Evangelist den kanonischen Matthäus benutzt?* (Bonn, 1880, 107–8):

... man hat sich eine gedächtnismässige Aneignung vieler Parteen der Quellen zu denken, welche bei häufiger, konzentrierter und aus wenige Schriften beschränkter Lektüre, bei öffentlicher Verlesung derselben und Benutzung zum Unterricht fast von selbst zu Stande kommt, eine solche, wie wir theilweise für das Verhältniss neutestamentlicher Schriftsteller zu LXX, patristischer zum N.T., speciell zu den Evangelien, wegen der Freiheit der Citate, voraussetzen müssen.

These points made by Neiryneck and Simons call for further analysis of methods and forms used by teachers or preachers in the transmission and interpretation of the oral/written sources. They also point to the relevance of examining the degree of agreements and differences which may exist between mutually independent versions of the same units of tradition. Moreover, since the teacher's or preacher's activities take place within the context of a community, the needs and functions of the community should be brought into the discussion.

When teaching activity takes place in the community, then various stages and layers in the community's use of the Gospel traditions may be reflected. There seem to be three main possibilities: (a) the exposition of an oral or written tradition may have received its form in the pre-Synoptic and pre-Johannine stages; the evangelist has brought this layer of the tradition into his Gospel; (b) it may result from the evangelist's own interpretation of some oral or written traditions which do not come from the present Synoptic Gospels; and (c) the exposition may take place when one or more sections of one, two or all three Synoptic Gospels were subject to expository use by the evangelist. The Evangelist may have had direct

access to one or more of the Synoptic Gospels, or the unit(s) of tradition may have been brought to him by travelling Christians.

One difference between Neiryneck and myself seems to be that he is more hesitant to consider the relevance of the points (a) and (b). Since Neiryneck in the "Additional Note" mentioned above makes clear that he is open to the possibility that the evangelist is a teacher in a community setting, and he does not exclude the possibility of the evangelist's use of oral tradition or source material. So there seems to be a possibility for having a dialogue about all three stages. The challenge is then to identify features which may indicate that a certain stage or stages can be identified in the text. The present examination will concentrate on the analysis of specific passages assuming that the transmission/exposition was an ongoing process within the Johannine community. The notion of a Johannine community has been presupposed and even outlined in various ways by scholars such as Martyn 1979; Brown 1979; confer also Dodd 1963/1979; Lindars 1971, and Ashton 1991, 2nd ed. 2007.

The study will not be based on any theory of one or more comprehensive written source(s) behind the Fourth Gospel, such as the theories of *Grundschrift*, *Offenbarungsreden*, "Gospel of Signs", etc. (see D. Moody Smith 1984, 37–93).

Neiryneck's citation of Simons also makes evident that one should also search for comparative material. By identifying method, form, historical situations etc. with the assistance of observations made in sources from outside of John, the analysis can be more precise and less subject to the danger of arbitrariness in objectifying one's own standards of consistency and one's own opinion on the nature and degree of editorial freedom, quotations and allusions from memory, etc. (Smith 1984, 14–15). Simons suggests that such comparative examples might be found in the New Testament writers's use of the LXX, and in the Patristic use of the New Testament in general, and the Gospels in particular.

The transmission and interpretation of tradition and Scripture in Judaism should also be included, however. The glimpses we get of this through Paul's writings from the middle of the first century C.E. are of special importance since he wrote his letters before the four Gospels had come into existence. Accordingly this chapter will concentrate on examining some passages in the Fourth Gospel and parallel material in the Synoptic Gospels. In this investigation, material from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians will be used for comparison. I have already to some extent used this approach in comparing Paul's transmission and exposition of

the Eucharistic traditions in 1 Cor 10 and 11 with the same in John 12:44–50; 6:51–58; 5:1–18, and 2:13–22. In this essay I shall attempt to take such a comparison with 1 Corinthians one step further by bringing in the sayings of Jesus in 1 Cor 7:10ff. and in 1 Cor 9:14. At certain points, insights from Jewish sources will also be used.

The thesis is as follows: (a) The similarities between Paul's way of transmitting and interpreting Jesus logia in the fifties C.E. and the transmission and exposition of tradition in John, strengthen the probability that the Fourth Gospel draws on a stream of traditions which was transmitted and elaborated upon in the history of the Johannine community, independently of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. (b) The probability of independence from the Synoptics is strengthened insofar as some of the passages of John reflect their setting in the life of the community. (c) The investigation may also reveal other indications which support the thesis of John's independence, at least in the passages concerned.

1 Cor 7:10–16: Paul's Use of the Logion on Divorce

Scholars such as D. L. Dungan (1971), B. Fjärstedt (1974), D. C. Allison (1982), and N. Walter (1985) have examined Paul and the sayings of Jesus. These scholars concentrate on matters of content and compare Paul and the Synoptics. In his essay "Paul and the Sayings of Jesus, (1991, 511–68) F. Neiryneck gives a critical survey of these and other works and reaches the following conclusion: "In the Pauline Epistles there are two instances of an explicit reference to a command of the Lord, in 1 Cor 7:10–11 and 9:4, but there is no 'quotation' of the saying" (Neiryneck 1991, 566). These two sayings, as rendered in 1 Cor 7:10–11 and 9:4, are then to be examined, to see if they might in turn illuminate Jesus' sayings as rendered by John. In 1 Cor 7:10–11 Paul refers to a saying of Jesus on divorce and in vv. 12ff. adds his own situational commentary:

The Logion

10 Τοῖς δὲ γεγαμηκόσιν παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλὰ ὁ κύριος, γυναῖκα ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς μὴ χωρισθῆναι—11 ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῆ, μενέτω ἄγαμος ἢ τῷ ἀνδρὶ καταλλαγήτω—καὶ ἄνδρα γυναῖκα μὴ ἀφιέναι.

The Commentary

12 Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς λέγω ἐγὼ, οὐκ ὁ κύριος· εἴ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον, καὶ αὕτη συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτοῦ, μὴ ἀφιέτω αὐτήν· 13 καὶ γυνὴ εἴ τις ἔχει ἄνδρα ἄπιστον, καὶ οὗτος συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτῆς, μὴ ἀφιέτω τὸν ἄνδρα. 14 ἡγιασται γὰρ ὁ ἀνήρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἡγιασται ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ·

ἐπει ἄρα τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἀκάθαρτά ἐστιν, νῦν δὲ ἅγια ἐστίν. 15 εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται, χωρίζεσθω· οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφή ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις, ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός. 16 τί γὰρ οἶδας, γύναι, εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σώσεις; ἢ τί οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σώσεις;

Jesus' words as rendered in vv. 10–11 and Paul's use of them in his formulations in vv. 11–16 are in italics. The logion and its elaboration form part of Paul's advice regarding marriage and related matters. In 1 Cor 7:1–7 Paul deals with behavior within marriage, in vv. 8–9 with questions concerning the unmarried and widows, in vv. 10–16 with divorce and mixed marriages, and in vv. 17–24 with much advice from the perspective of eschatological freedom.

The Jesus logion in 1 Cor 7:10–11 is to be compared with the parallels in Mark 10:11–12, Matt 19:9, Matt 5:32, and Luke 16:18. The saying occurs in Mark 10:11/Matt 19:9 at the conclusion of Jesus' debate with the Pharisees regarding divorce, Mark 10:1–12 and Matt 19:1–12. Matthew 5:32 is one of the antitheses, Matt 5:21–48, which in turn is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Finally, in Luke 16:18 the saying on divorce is placed between Jesus' word about the law and the prophets relative to John the Baptist and the kingdom of God, Luke 16:16–17, and the parable about the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19–31.

There are several agreements and differences among the Synoptic versions, but for our purpose it suffices to quote two of them, Matt 5:32 and Mark 10:11–12:

Matt 5:32 reads: *πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ παρεκτὸς λόγου πορνείας ποιεῖ αὐτὴν μοιχευθῆναι, καὶ ὃς ἐὰν ἀπολελυμένην γαμήσῃ μοιχᾶται.*

Mark 10:11–12 reads: *Ὅς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην μοιχᾶται ἐπ' αὐτήν, 12 καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὴ ἀπολύσασα τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς γαμήσῃ ἄλλον μοιχᾶται.*

Paul's formulation differs from the Synoptic parallels. He uses common Greek terms for divorce, the verbs *χωρισθῆναι* (1 Cor 7:10; cf Mark 10:9) and *ἀφιέναι* (1 Cor 7:11) while another common term, *ἀπολύειν*, is used in the Synoptic parallels (See Liddell and Scott 1940/1958 on the respective verbs; see further Lietzmann–Kümmel 1949, 31). Thus Paul and the Synoptic Gospels here illustrate how one of Jesus' sayings could receive varied wordings. It is of interest to note that Paul, like Mark, applies the logion in a non-Jewish way to both sexes (Dungan 1971, 133). There are no convincing reasons for regarding the verbs *χωρισθῆναι* and *ἀφιέναι* as a Pauline rewording, such as indicated by Neiryneck, 1991, 561.

For the present investigation the question of content as such is not of interest. The aspect of importance is how 1 Cor 7:10ff. can give us insight

into the way a saying of Jesus might be referred to and be interpreted, both with regard to method and form. As to form, the Synoptic logion is preserved as a traditional casuistic rule (*πάς ὁ . . .* and *ὃς ἐάν . . .* in Matt 5:32, and *ὃς . . . ἐάν . . .* in Mark 10:11–12). Paul has a corresponding casuistic form in the parenthetical clause which is formulated as a condition, *ἐάν δέ . . .* in 1 Cor 7:11, and in the subsequent commentary, *εἴ τις . . .* v. 12 and *εἰ δέ . . .* in v. 15. In v. 13 the case is expressed in a relative clause, *ἥ τις . . .* As for the Jesus logion itself, Paul just uses it in indirect speech as a halakhic rule, without using conditional or relative clauses or participial formulations. The parallelism reflects, however, that Paul draws on a tradition which had a relatively fixed form (see G. Schneider 1992, 194–95). The Synoptic versions have this parallelism. As for Matt 5:32, see U. Luz 1989, 299–300. In the parenthetical phrase inserted into 1 Cor 7, v. 11a, and in his commentary, vv. 12ff., Paul repeats and paraphrases Jesus' words as cited in vv. 10 and 11. As indicated by the words in *italic* in the Greek text above, Paul draws on words from the logion in his own commentary. Thus, he develops an expository application (and modification) of the Jesus logion.

John 13:20 and Other Occurrences of a Jesus Logion on Agency

Paul's quotation and exposition of the Jesus logion on divorce, and its Synoptic parallels, can give us a better understanding of John's use of tradition and also throw some light on the question of John and the Synoptics. These parallels might give us insight into some of the ways in which a saying might be transmitted.

In my study "The Use of Tradition in Jn 12:46–50," (1979, 18–35), I made a survey of the Gospels' varied use of a Jesus logion on agency.

The versions contained some or all of the following sequence: (a) he who receives. . . the agent who is sent by a sender, (b) receives. . . the sender; (c) he who (in this way) receives. . . the sender, (who himself is also one who is sent), ((d) someone does not receive the sender/agent), (e) he receives the one who sent him. The logion in John 13:20 covers the following points:² (a) he who receives any one whom I send (*ὁ λαμβάνων ἄν τινα πέμψω*) (b) receives me (*ἐμὲ λάμβανει*), (c) and he who receives me (*ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ λαμβάνων*) (d)—(e) receives him who sent me (*λαμβάνει τὸν πέμψαντά με*). The same points are found in the parallels in Matt 10:40

² See Ign. *Eph.* 6:1; *Did.* 11:4; and *1 Clem.* 42:1–2.

and Luke 10:16, and in the different parallels in Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:48. In Mark 9:37 all the points from (a) to (e) are covered.

Matt 10:40 is a close parallel to John 13:20. Matt 10:40 reads: (a) ὁ δεχόμενος ὑμᾶς (b) ἐμὲ δέχεται (c) καὶ ὁ ἐμὲ δεχόμενος (d)—(e) δέχεται τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με.

The context in John 13:20 is the Last Supper and the Footwashing, John 13:1–20. The context of Matt 10:40 is the Missionary Discourse, Matt 9:36–11:1, and the context of Luke 10:16 is the Mission of the Seventy Two, Luke 10:1–16. Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:37 conclude the Dispute about Greatness with this as well, Mark 9:33–37 and Luke 9:46–48.

By comparing the Jesus logion on divorce in 1 Cor 7:10–11 and parallels in the Synoptic Gospels with the Jesus logion on agency in John 13:20 and parallels in the Synoptic Gospels, the following observation is apparent: The Synoptic versions' of the logion on divorce (ἀπολύειν) differs from Paul's terms (χωρισθῆαι ἀφιέναι). This is a phenomenon parallel to the versions of the logion on agency. The logion's basic form in John 13:20 has the verb λαμβάνειν (cf. 12:48) and πέμπειν, while Matt 10:40, Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:48 have the synonymous words δέχεσθαι and ἀποστέλλειν.

From Paul's version in 1 Cor 7:10–11 another observation can be made. The Synoptic Gospels' more extensive parallels suggest that Paul in 1 Cor 7:10–11 only cites parts of the Jesus logion on divorce, as noticed by B. Gerhardsson (1961/1998, 312): "Paul does not quote the saying in its entirety, but draws from it a short halakhic statement (with interpretation inserted)." Correspondingly, in Luke 10:16a only two points of the logion on agency are used: (a) ὁ ἀκούων ὑμῶν (b) ἐμοῦ ἀκούει (c)—(d)—(e)—. Similarly, in John 5:23, 8:19, 12:44–45, 14:9, and 15:23 only some of the points are presented (cf. *Mek. Exod.* 14:31). For example, John 14:9 may be cited: (a)—(b)—(c) ὁ ἔωρακώς ἐμὲ (d)—(e) ἔώρακεν τὸν πατέρα.

We conclude that in his varied use of the Jesus logion on agency, John continues a method of transmission and interpretation which is demonstrated already by Paul in the fifties C.E. as seen in 1 Cor 7:10–11. In mutually independent versions of the same logion different synonymous words can be used, and only parts of a logion may be cited.

A comparison between several occurrences in John and Luke 10:16 shows that the word choice and variations emerge from how agency is being interpreted. Thus, John's varied renderings of the logion on agency is the result of an independent process of transmission and interpretation like those used in 1 Cor 7:10–11 and Luke 10:16.

In the study "The Use of Tradition in John 12:44–50" (Borgen 1979, 18–35), I also substantiated the hypothesis that John 12:44–45 quotes a traditional

Jesus logion in a way which corresponds to Paul's quotation of the eucharistic tradition in 1 Cor 11:23ff.¹¹ Like in 1 Cor 11:27ff. the quotation in John 12:44–45, is in verses 46–50 followed by an expository elaboration. (Dodd 1963, 355; Borgen 1979, 30–31; id. 1987, 197–98). For terminology typically used by a commissioned agent see Bühner 1977, 138–52.

It should be mentioned that Theo Preiss in his study *Life in Christ* (1954, 25) has shown that in some contexts, commissioned agency signals a mystical relationship: in that case the agent carries degrees of the same nature as the sender. Thus Preiss calls this relationship a form of judicial mysticism.

As shown above, the logion on divorce is cited by Paul in 1 Cor 7:10–11, and it is followed in vv. 12–16 by a subsequent expository paraphrase of the words. In v. 11 a parenthetical expository comment is inserted. In parts of the exposition, traditional (casuistic) forms are used (cf. Ashton 1991, 541–45). Paul's use of casuistic forms in 1 Cor 7:10–16 are in conditional or relative clauses or participial phrase, while John has participial phrases of the logion, ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ in vv. 44 and 46, ὁ θεωρῶν in v. 45, and from other versions of the logion, ὁ ἀθετῶν καὶ μὴ λαμβάνων in v. 48. In verse 47 there is the casuistic form in which the case is described in a conditional clause, ἐάν—. While the whole pericope in John 12:44–50 is formulated as words of Jesus, Paul distinguishes between the cited Jesus logion and his own expository applications, as he himself writes in 1 Cor 7:12 "... but to the others I say, 'not the Lord!...'". P. Stuhlmacher stresses the importance of this distinction: "Erstens lässt sich aus einem Vergleich von 1 Kor 7:10 und 2 Kor 12:8f. leicht ersehen, wie genau Paulus zwischen seiner eigenen Anweisung und Herrenworten unterscheidet..." (Stuhlmacher 1983, 243). At other points Paul does not draw such a distinction, however. Thus in 1 Cor 7:10–11 he inserts a parenthetical specification into the Jesus logion ("but if she is divorced, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband"), as if it were part of the logion. And when he cites the institution of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11:23–25, he elaborates on Jesus' words in v. 26, referring to Jesus in the third person as the Lord, without drawing a distinction between Jesus' words proper and his (Paul's) own elaboration. Thus, C. K. Barrett² 1971, 163–64 rightly sees that Paul in 1 Cor 7:12 makes clear that the halakhic *application* of the Jesus logion about divorce (vv. 10–11) to the case of mixed marriages (vv. 12–16) was his own, the reason being that Jesus had not dealt with this specific case.

The passage in John 12:44–50 is presented as Jesus' direct speech because the traditional sayings and their exposition are woven together

through revelatory inspiration (Ashton 1991, 541–45). It should be added, however, that John nevertheless deals with halakhic interpretation, corresponding to Paul's halakhic discussion. The themes discussed are very different, however. While Paul develops halakhic rules for marriage and divorce, John elaborates on halakhic rules of agency to describe the role of Jesus as the commissioned agent of the Father (see Borgen 1968, 137–48; Bühner 1977).

The question should be raised if John in his extensive and varied use of the Jesus logion on agency reflects its contexts in the Synoptic Gospels. The answer is on the whole negative. Nevertheless, certain observations related to John 13:20 should be made. The context of the Last Supper and the Footwashing has no parallel in the Synoptic Gospels. Nevertheless, the saying in Jn 13:16, “a servant is not greater than his master; nor is an *apostolos* greater than he who sent him,” has a parallel in Matt 10:24–25 (cf. Luke 6:40). Since the logion in John 13:20 has a parallel in the same Matthean chapter, Matt 10:40, the two gospels probably drew on sayings of Jesus which were clustered together in the tradition.

The two Johannine sayings and the Synoptic parallels differ in terminology. Since they both deal with rules about agency, it was natural that they be brought together in the transmission. Dodd argues convincingly that if John was copying Matthew, there is no logical explanation for John's omissions of parts of Matt 10:24–25, nor for the wording changes (C. H. Dodd, 1963/1979, 335–38; see also R. E. Brown, 1970, 569–70). Neither John 13:20 nor the extensive use of parts of this logion throughout the Gospel reflects the contexts where it occurs in the Synoptic Gospels, Matt 10:40; Luke 9:48; 10:16; Mark 9:37. This observation and Paul's formal parallel usage of another Jesus logion, the one on divorce, support the view that John draws on a Jesus logion which was transmitted and interpreted in the community, independently of the Synoptic Gospels.

John 3:3–8: An Exposition of a Logion in a Question and Answer Form

In John 3:3–8 another logion is used and interpreted, this time in a question and answer form:

The Logion:

ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Exposition:

Question (=objection): λέγει πρὸς αὐτόν ὁ Νικόδημος· Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὢν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι;

Answer: 5 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῆ ἔξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 6 τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστίν. 7 μὴ θαυμάσης ὅτι εἶπόν σοι Δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν. 8 τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ, καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις, ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει· οὕτως ἐστὶν πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος.

As seen by the words in italics, words from the logion in John 3:3 are being paraphrased and interpreted in vv. 4–8. Thus the logion receives an exposition similar to the expository elaboration on divorce in 1 Cor 7:10–18. The exposition in John 3:4–8 has the form of a dialogue, however.

At this point the suggestion made by E. Simons in 1880 can be of some assistance. He says that the way in which the New Testament uses the LXX may illuminate John's use of Gospel material. In the case of John 3:3–8 relevant insights can even be gained from a comparison with the midrashic interpretation of the Old Testament quotation in John 6:31–58 on “bread from heaven . . .”

More specifically, a comparison with John 6:31.51ff. demonstrates that John here interprets the Jesus logion in 3:3 in the same way as he interprets the Old Testament quotation in John 6:31. The Old Testament quotation is given in 6:31, and its interpretation in v 51. Then the objection in 6:52, like in John 3:4, is raised with the words πῶς δύναται:³

John 6:31.51ff. reads:

Old Testament quotation and the interpretation:

v. 31 . . . as it is written,

‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’

v. 51 . . . and the bread . . . is my flesh.

³ See P. Borgen 1965/81, 89–90. On pages 80–83 a slightly more developed form of exposition by means of question and answer (John 6:41–48) is analyzed. *Mek. Exod. 12:2* and Philo, *Mut. 141a.142b–44* are referred to as comparative material. It is to be noted that the words πῶς δύναται in John 3:4 and 6:52 correspond to the exegetical Hebrew term in *Mek. Exod. 12:2*. See W. Bacher 1899/1965, 77.

Question (=objection):

v. 52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can (πῶς δύναται) this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Answer:

v. 53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you..."

v. 55 "for my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink..."

A parallel use of question and answer is found in Philo's interpretation of Gen 17:16 in *Mut.* 141.142b-44:

The Old Testament quotation together with the interpretation reads:

... we must now explain "from her" (Gen 17:16).

142b)...virtue is "the mother" of any good thing that has come into being...

Question (=objection):

143 Some ask, however, whether the barren can bear children, since the oracles earlier described Sarah as barren, and now admit that she will become "a mother."

Answer:

It is to be said to this that it is not in the nature of a barren woman to bear, any more than of the blind to see or of the deaf to hear.

But as for the soul which is sterilized to wickedness and unfruitful of the endless host of passions and vices, scarce any prosper in childbirth as she.....

Both in John 3:3-8, 6:31, 51-58 and in *Mut.* 141.142-44 the same kind of objections are raised, that of a contradiction between a Jesus logion or a scriptural interpretation and empirical experience. In John 3:3-8 and *Mut.* 141.142-44 the problems have been formulated within the context of biological and spiritual births. In John 6:31.51-58 the problem is the distinction between eucharistic and "cannibalistic" eating of the flesh of Jesus. The similarities in John 3:3-8, 6:31.51-58 and Philo *Mut.* 141a.142b-44 with regard to expository methods and forms, and also the kinship as to the problems discussed, show that the Johannine material has been subject to traditional exegetical approaches.

Parallels to the Jesus logion in John 3:3 (and 5) are found in Matt 18:3 and Mark 10:15=Luke 18:17. Matt 18:3 reads:

Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε ὡς τὰ παιδιά, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Mark 10:15 reads exactly like Luke 18:17:

ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅς ἂν μὴ δέξηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς παιδίον, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν.

The context of Matt 18:3 is the Dispute about Greatness, Matt 18:1–5. The logion is not found in the parallel sections in Mark 9:33–37 and Luke 9:46–48. The context of Mark 10:15 and Luke 18:17 is the story the Blessing of the children, Mark 10:13–16 and Luke 18:15–17. The logion is omitted from the parallel section in Matt 19:13–15.

The agreements between John and Matthew/Mark/Luke are: John 3:3 and 5; Matthew/Mark/Luke: Ἀμὴν λέγω. John 3:3: Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι; John 3:5 εἰσελθεῖν (Matt 18:3: εἰσέλθητε, Mark 10:15: εἰσέλθη) εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν. The agreement between John and Mark/Luke is: John 3:3 and 5; Mark/Luke: τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, Mark/Luke in the protasis, John in apodosis. Agreement between John and Matthew: John 3:3,5; Matt: ἐὰν μή (Mark/Luke: ὅς ἂν). Differences: Only John has a double ἀμὴν. John has σοι, Matthew/Mark/Luke ὑμῖν. John 3:3 reads τις γεννηθῆ ἀνωθεν and John 3:5 τις γεννηθῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος while Matthew has στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε ὡς τὰ παιδιά, and Mark/Luke δέξεται τ. β. τ. θ. ὡς παιδίον. Only John 3:3 has ἰδεῖν τ.β. Only Mark and Luke have αὐτήν (referring to the kingdom of God). Only Matthew has τ. β. τῶν οὐρανῶν. John has οὐ δύναται while Matthew/Mark/Luke have οὐ μὴ. The agreements between John and the Synoptic Gospels, and the fact that John here does not use his regular term “eternal life” but the “Synoptic” term “kingdom of God,” show that John uses a traditional logion.

B. Lindars regards the phrase γεννηθῆ ἀνωθεν, John 3:3, to be the more original and the phrase “by water and spirit” in v. 5 to be an explication of it. He then refers to the observation made by J. Jeremias that στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε in Matt 18:3 is a Semitism and means to “become again.” Since ἀνωθεν may mean “again,” Lindars suggests that the Greek form of the logion as it came to John independently of the Synoptic Gospels was formulated with . . . γένηται ἀνωθεν ὡς παιδίον . . . According to Lindars John’s γεννηθῆ is a deliberate change, and the evangelist probably understood ἀνωθεν to mean “from above” (Lindars 1981, 289–92). The problem with Lindars’ interpretation is that the reconstruction seems somewhat forced, especially the change from γένηται to γεννηθῆ.

Thus, the problem as formulated by R. Schnackenburg still remains. He compares the Johannine and the Matthean versions and rightly states

that they express two different principles: “Die Annahme, das es aus MT 18:3 bzw. Mk 10:15 umgeformt sei, bleibt schwierig, da der 4. Evangelist den Gedanken stark umgebogen hätte: Aus dem ‘werden (wieder) wie die Kinder bzw wie ein Kind’ hätte er ein direktes ‘Kind-Werden’ gemacht, das er sehr real als Neugeburt, Neuschöpfung oder ‘Zeugung von oben’ verstand. Jenes ὡς gehört unlösbar zu beiden Gestalten des syn. Logions, wie umgekehrt das joh. Logion nicht auf die Umkehr des Menschen, sondern auf die Tat Gottes am Menschen abzielt” (Schnackenburg 1972, 381).

Although Schnackenburg’s remark is true, the Johannine and Synoptic formulations probably still had their origin in the same logion. The two aspects of man’s conversion and the act of God suggest that the various formulations have developed from the same life-setting, that of the practice of baptism, cf. Acts 2:38, 1 Cor 6:9–11, and Titus 3:3–7. It is commonly held by exegetes that John 3:5 refers to baptism. For example C. K. Barrett interprets the meaning in this way: “. . . Christian baptism so far as it was a washing with water was no more significant than John’s [the Baptist’s] . . . Only if washing with water signified and was accompanied by the action of the Spirit could Christian baptism introduce one into the kingdom of God” (Barrett 1978a, 209). Thus, the logion had its *Sitz im Leben* in the performance of baptism in the Johannine community. Also in Mark and Luke the *Sitz im Leben* of the story on the blessing of the children, Mark 10:13–16 and Luke 18:15–17, was probably baptism (Cullmann 1950/1952, 71–80).

It has been noted that Matthew has the logion in a different pericope, the Dispute on greatness, 18:1–5 and not like Mark and Luke in the story of the Blessing of the children. Matthew has in 18:1–5 inserted the logion, since it does not occur in the parallel sections in Mark 9:33–37 and Luke 9:46–48. Although Matthew has the logion in this dispute about greatness, the verb στραφῆτε in Matt 18:3 refers to conversion since it occurs in an “admission-logion”: “. . . unless you turn (στραφῆτε) and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” A similar meaning of the verb is found in John 12:40 and in the *Sib. Or.* 3:625. Since conversion and baptism belong together both in the work of John the Baptist, Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3, and in early Christianity, Acts 2:38, etc., the wording of the Matthean version of the logion is easily also associated with baptism.

There are observations which suggest that the formulation of the logion in John 3:5 is primary rather than the version in 3:3. The phrase εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, John 3:5 and parallel phrases in Matt 18:3 and Mark 10:15/Luke 18:17 support this view. The use in John 3:3 of ἰδεῖν instead of εἰσελθεῖν in v. 5 seems to be a Johannine interpretation (Lindars 1981, 289). Although the idea of “seeing” is Johannine, the background is probably Jewish mystical traditions about seeing God’s kingdom, as can be

seen in Wis 10:10 (Dahl 1962, 124–42) and Luke 9:27. Moreover, the possibility to misunderstand ἀνωθεν as either “again” or “from above” occurs only in Greek, which indicates that the version of the logion in John 3:3 is secondary to the one in v. 5. Thus, the logion had its primary setting in the baptismal activity of the Johannine community. Thus the evangelist has placed the main version of the logion in Jesus’ answer to Nicodemus’ objection.

1 Cor 9:14: The Logion on the Support of Apostles

In 1 Cor 9:14 Paul uses another Jesus logion: “. . . the Lord commanded that ‘those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.’” The basis for Paul’s argument in 1 Cor 9 is his experience of seeing the risen Lord and being commissioned by him as an apostle, i.e. as the Lord’s commissioned agent: “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?” (1 Cor 9:1; cf 15:6–10; Gal 1:15–16; Act 1:22). The presupposition is that it was constitutive for the apostles to have seen the risen Lord (Tomson 1990, 146–47; Barrett 1971/1979, 200–201).

In order to defend his claim to apostleship Paul makes it emphatically clear that he has the same right to receive support, as the other apostles do, although he has not made use of this right. In 1 Cor 9:13–14 he argues by drawing an analogy between the temple staff and those who proclaim the Gospel. As the rule for those who proclaim the Gospel, the Jesus logion is cited in v 14: τοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν. The same meaning is expressed in Luke 10:7 and Matt 10:10. Luke 10:7 reads: ἄξιος γὰρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ (Matt τῆς τροφῆς αὐτοῦ).

There is no agreement at all between 1 Cor 9:14 and Luke 10:7 as far as vocabulary goes, but both sayings formulate the same principle. Since Paul refers to a specific function, that of proclaiming the Gospel, his formulation may be a halakhic application and specification of a more general Jesus logion like the one in Luke 10:7 and Matt 10:10 (Gerhardsson 1961/1998, 318). It is worth noting that Paul applies this Jesus logion to his own commission as apostle, a commission given him through the appearance of the risen Lord.⁴

⁴ There is much discussion among scholars on the question whether Paul knew some version of the missionary discourse. The following scholars are inclined to answer in the affirmative: D. Dungan 1971, 140; B. Fjärstedt 1974, 99; D. C. Allison, Jr. 1982, 12–13. Allison, 1985, 369–75 has refined his position; C. M. Tuckett 1983, 612, and with more reservation in id. 1984, 376–81.

A corresponding phenomenon is seen when comparing Jesus' saying in John 20:23 with the parallels in Matt 18:18 and 16:19. John 20:23 reads: ἄν τινων ἀφήτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας, ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς. ἄν τινων κρατῆτε, κεκράτηνται.

Matt 16:19 reads: καὶ ὁ ἐὰν δῆσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὁ ἐὰν λύσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Matt 18:18 reads: ὅσα ἐὰν δῆσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένα ἐν οὐρανῶ καὶ ὅσα ἐὰν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἐν οὐρανῶ.

The contexts in which the sayings occur differ. The saying in John 20:23 concludes one of the appearances of the risen Jesus, when he commissions his disciples on the basis of the halakhic rule of agency, here more precisely the rule of substitution, John 20:19–23. In Matt 16:19 Jesus commissions Peter after Peter has confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, Matt 16:13–20. Matt 18:18 is part of the pericope on Reproving One's Brother, Matt 18:15–19. It is then evident that the setting in Jn 20:19–23 is quite different from the settings of Matthew's parallels.

When comparing John 20:23 with 1 Cor 9:14, the following observations are of interest for the present discussion: Both John 20:19–23 and 1 Cor 9:14 deal with the risen Jesus commissioning the disciples and then Paul and the other apostles respectively. In 1 Cor 9:1 Paul uses rhetorical questions to refer to the commission: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus the Lord?" Correspondingly, John 20:20–21 reads "...the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said ... 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you'..." These words form a commissioning formula based on the logion on agency, John 13:20 (Bühner 1977, 252).

Within these parallel contexts Paul has in 1 Cor 9:14 a logion concerning the support of the agents (apostles) commissioned by Jesus, while John in Jn 20:20–21 reports the commission itself. As already mentioned, there is no agreement at all between the Jesus logion in 1 Cor 9:14 and the parallel in Luke 10:7 in terms of vocabulary, but both sayings formulate the same principle in support of Jesus' commissioned agents. Likewise, there is no agreement between the Jesus logion in John 20:23 and the parallels in Matt 16:19 and 18:18 as far as vocabulary goes, but the sayings formulate the same principle about the charge given to Jesus' commissioned agents. Thus Paul in 1 Cor 9:14, Matthew in 10:10, and Luke in 10:7 demonstrate how a Jesus logion about support may be given entirely different wordings in the process of transmission, like with the logion on the commission, as seen in John 20:23 and Matt 16:19; 18:18.

Yet another correspondence can be mentioned: Just as Paul's version of the logion on support in 1 Cor 9:14 seems to be a halakhic specification of a more generally formulated rule as exemplified by the parallels

in Matthew and Luke, so also John in 20:23 renders a more specified form than the parallels in Matthew, since only here the commission is defined as the authority to forgive or retain sins. This specification is not made by the evangelist himself, however, since ἀφιέναι τὰς ἁμαρτίας and κρατεῖν are never found in John, apart from this one place (Dodd 1963/1979, 348. See also Vögtle 1971b, 251).

In his discussion of Jn 20:23 Dodd's conclusion is: "We seem driven to postulate an alternative form of tradition regarding the authority committed to the apostles by the Lord, akin to, though not identical with, the tradition followed by Matthew, an alternative form which the Fourth Evangelist has independently followed" (Dodd 1963/1979, 349. See also Barrett 1978a), 570–71; Brown 1970, 2: 1023–24 and 1030–31).

John 2:13–22, 5:1–18, and 6:51–58

It remains to connect the present study to some points in my previous research on John relative to the Synoptic Gospels. In my book *Bread from Heaven*, the institution of the Lord's supper in 1 Cor 11:23–25 was brought into the investigation of John 6:51–58. Parts of this eucharistic tradition are also used by Paul in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16, 17, 21 and 11:26–29(39). In the study "The Use of Tradition in John 12:44–50" and in "John and the Synoptics," this approach was further developed. The insights gained were the following (Borgen 1990a, 410–11):

1. A comparison between 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16, 17, 21; 11:23–29 and Mark 14:22–25 makes possible the following generalizations: Between mutually independent versions (units of oral/written tradition) there may be close verbal agreements in the form of sentences, word pairs and set-phrases, single words and/or corresponding variant terms.

The agreements between John 2:13–22; 6:51–58 and the Synoptics are not closer, nor more striking, than those between the above mentioned Pauline passages and Mark, and, in the case of John 5:1–18, the agreements are even fewer.

Thus, our analysis of these three Johannine passages supports the hypothesis that John and the Synoptics here are mutually independent.

2. What is the nature of the tradition behind the Gospels? The passages examined in 1 Cor 10 and 11 show that units of tradition were received and handed on and that they were used in Christian communities (1 Cor 11:23–25(26)). Some modifications took place in

the process, but the formulations were quite stable even during decades of transmission (cf. 1 Cor 11:23–26 with Mark 14:22–25). Interpretative activity is also evident. The exposition could have the form of a commentary attached to a cited unit of tradition. In this way 1 Cor 11:(26)27–34 is attached to the quoted institution of the Lord's Supper in vv. 23–25(26), and John 5:10–18 is attached to the story in vv. 1–9. In the same manner John 2:17–22 is attached as an exposition of the cleansing of the temple in vv. 13–16. The unit of tradition may also be presupposed, and not quoted, as is the case in the discussion of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 10:3–4, 16–17, 21 and in John 6:51–58.

3. The expositions often take the form of paraphrases of sentences, phrases, word sets, and words from the given tradition. Synonyms may be used, and expressions may be rephrased. In the expository paraphrase, words and fragments from the tradition may be moulded into a new traditional form. As for the placement of the passages in the various stages within transmission, some observations were made:
 - (a) There is a similarity of sequence in John 2:13–18, where the cleansing of the temple is followed by the request for a sign, and Mark 11:15–19, the cleansing, which is followed in 11:26 by the controversy concerning Jesus' authority. As suggested by Dodd, Brown, and others, it is probable that Mark has split up what belonged together in the pre-Markan stage of the tradition. This observation speaks in favor of placing John 2:13–18 in the first stage mentioned above, the pre-Synoptic and pre-Johannine stage (Borgen 1990, 434–35).
 - (b) As already suggested, John 5:1–18 should be placed in the pre-Johannine stage (Borgen 1990a, 431) since the controversy pictured in John 5:1–18 seems to belong to the past.

Some further observations were also made with regard to John 6:51–58. The agreements in wording, style, and content between John 6:51–58 and 1 Cor 10:3–4; 10:16–17, 21 and 11:23–29 show that John draws on eucharistic and manna traditions in a way similar to Paul: These similarities show that John is here closer to Paul than to the Synoptics, without, however, being dependent on 1 Corinthians. Thus, John utilizes an independent tradition for the institution of the Lord's Supper and presupposes that the eucharistic tradition was already associated with the biblical stories on the manna and the well. The Johannine version of the institution, in which the term ἡ σάρξ and not τὸ σῶμα was used, is also documented by Ignatius' and Justin's eucharistic use of the term ἡ σάρξ (Borgen 1990a, 422 and 454). The conclusion is that John 6:51–58

belongs to the second stage as outlined above: the passage results from the evangelist's own interpretation of oral or written traditions which do not come from the present Synoptic Gospels. These observations and this conclusion show that Neiryneck's view is inadequate when he only allows for supplementary use of oral tradition or source material in addition to John's direct dependence on the Synoptic Gospels. John 6:51–58 together with its context demonstrates that in John traditions not taken from the Synoptic Gospels play a central role.

Conclusion

1. It is probable that John 2:13–18 basically comes from the first stage mentioned at the outset, the pre-Synoptic and pre-Johannine stage. The controversies of John 5:1–18 seem to belong to the past, and the pericope therefore is to be placed in the pre-Johannine stage.
2. All the other Johannine texts examined in this chapter, including John 6:51–58, belong in their present form to the second layer: The evangelist has by means of conventional expository methods and forms interpreted some oral (or written) traditions which do not come from the present Synoptic Gospels. In substance they are based on pre-Synoptic Gospel traditions (stage 1), and reflect the process of transmission and exposition in the Johannine community. This understanding receives support from the fact that John 3:5 has its setting in the practice of baptism in the community, John 6:51–58 draws on traditions from its eucharistic celebration, and finally, John 20:19–23 expresses the self-understanding of the community as to its mission.
3. In the transmission and exposition of sections studied in this chapter, the relationship between the Johannine tradition and the parallel Synoptic tradition echoes the relationship between Pauline Gospel traditions, as in 1 Cor 7:10–16; 9:14; 10:3–4, 16, 17, 20–21, and 11:23–29, and the pre-Synoptic tradition.

PART D

GOD'S AGENT IN JOHANNINE EXPOSITION

As seen above, my contributions on the much debated question of John and the Synoptics has led me to the following understanding: The Gospel of John represents a branch of Gospel traditions which is independent of the other three written gospels. Paul's letters, especially 1 Cor, shows that already Paul had received traditions which were transmitted, had authority and gave basis for expository comments and elaborations. This usage of traditions comes closer to John's expository character, than do the synoptic gospels and it gives support to the view that John is independent.

Philo provides us with important insights into expository elaborations of the Scriptures and traditions. The present task is to combine this analytical tool with a study of concepts and ideas. Among the many concepts and topics possible, in my research here the attention is focused on the judicial concept of agency.

CHAPTER NINE

GOD'S AGENT IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The present essay was written in 1963–1964 and appeared in 1968 in the E. R. Goodenough Memorial Volume edited by J. Neusner and published by E. J. Brill Publishers. It has been republished in other places, but since it plays an important role in my studies on John, I include it also in the present book.

The State of Research

In his discussion of Christological ideas in the Fourth Gospel, C. H. Dodd finds that the status and function of the Son as God's delegated representative recalls the language of the Old Testament prophets. Certain peculiarities, such as the Son's complete and uninterrupted dependence on the Father and the dualism between higher and lower spheres, suggest to him that this aspect of Jesus' human path is a projection of the eternal relation of the Son and the Father upon the field of time (C. H. Dodd 1953, 254–62).

This interpretation does not take the idea of the Son being commissioned and sent seriously, but rather dissolves the idea of agency into an eternal and Platonic idea of relationship. R. Bultmann, on the other hand, rightly places the commissioning and sending of the Son at the very center of Gospel's message. He also finds certain points of contact between the Johannine ideas and the prophets of the Old Testament. But John, according to Bultmann, goes beyond prophetic thought and uses gnostic mythology about divine and pre-existent agents, commissioned by the Father and sent into the world. Mandaean literature is Bultmann's main source for his hypothesis (R. Bultmann 1950, 187–88; id. 1925, 104–9). Close parallels found in the halakah encourage the investigation of the extent to which John's Christology and soteriology are moulded on Jewish rules for agency. K. H. Rengstorf (1933, 403–5; 421–22; 435–36) has made a promising initial study, although he does not think that the idea of agency plays a central role in the Johannine idea of Jesus as the Son of God. Also Théo Preiss and C. K. Barrett draw attention to the similarities

between John and the halakah at certain places. Preiss does discuss the idea of the Son as commissioned by the Father within the wider framework of the juridical aspects of Johannine thought. The importance of judicial ideas in John has been stressed by N. A. Dahl as well (Théo Preiss 1954, 9–31; C. K. Barrett 1958, 216, 474; N. A. Dahl, 1962, 137–42; also P. Borgen 1965/81, 158–64). Despite this work, there is still much to do to examine the degree to which halakhic principles of agency are reflected in the Fourth Gospel.

Principles of Agency

1. The basic principle of the Jewish institution of agency is that “an agent is like the one who sent him” (*Mek. Exod.* 12:3, 12:6; *m. Ber.* 5:5; *b. Metzia* 96a; *Hag.* 10b; *Qidd.* 42b, 43a; *Menah.* 93b; *Naz.* 12b, etc.). This relationship applied regardless of who the sender was. Thus, for example “the agent of the ruler is like the ruler himself” (*b. Qam.* 113b.). Therefore, to deal with the agent was the same as dealing with the sender himself: “With what is the matter to be compared? With a king of flesh and blood who has a consul (agent) in the country. The inhabitants spoke before him. Then said the king to them, you have not spoken concerning my servant but concerning me” (*Sipre* on Numbers 12:9, cited in K. H. Rengstorf 1952, 16).

The saying in John 12:44 is a very close to the saying in the *Sipre* quotation: John: “he who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me.” *Sipre*: “you have not spoken concerning my servant but concerning me.” Another saying which expresses the same idea, that dealing with the agent is the same as dealing with the sender himself, is found in all four Gospels (see Matt 10:40; cf. Matt 18:5; Mark 9:37, and Luke 9:48).

The parallels are discussed in C. H. Dodd (1955/56, 81–85). The Johannine version occurs in 13:20: “. . . he who receives any one whom I send receives me; he who receives me receives him who sent me.”

God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel

There are other similar sayings scattered throughout John:

5:23: “he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him;”

12:45: “he who sees me sees him who sent me;”

14:9: “he who has seen me has seen the Father;”

15:23: “he who hates me hates my Father also.”

The halakhic principle that “an agent is like the one who sent him” usually meant that the agent was like his sender as far as the judicial function and effects were concerned. There were, however, rabbis who developed it into a judicial mysticism saying that the agent is a person identical with the sender. The view that judicial mysticism is clue to central Johannine ideas has been suggested by Théo Preiss (1954, 25). Thus not only do his authority and his function derive from the sender, but his qualities. *Qidd.* 43a formulates this mysticism in the following way: the agent ranks as his master's own person: “He ranks as his own person” הוה ליה כגופיה (translation from I. Epstein 1935, 216; Hebrew text from L. Goldschmidt 1906, 5:845).

In the Fourth Gospel the personal identity between the Son and the Father is stated in several different ways. One formula is “I and the Father are one” (10:30) and another formula is “the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (10:38; cf. 14:10–11 and 17:21–23). In 10:36–38 it is explicitly stated that it is the agent, the Son in the capacity of being sent into the world, who is one with the sender. Similarly, in 17:20–23, the unity between the Son and the Father shall make it possible for the world to recognize the Son as the agent of the Father, “so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” Moreover, in 10:37–38 and in 14:10–11 the oneness between the Son and the Father is made manifest in Jesus' words and works which also are said to be the works of the Father.

2. Although John interprets the relationship between the Father and the Son in legalistic terms, this legalism is not mutually exclusive with personal “mysticism.” Thus Preiss' term “judicial mysticism” is a very apt one, and the personal element is further deepened by the fact that it was the *Son* who was the agent of the *Father*. Preiss (1954, 24–25) writes: “the formulae suggestive of mystical immanence so typical of Johannine language are regularly intermixed with juridical formulae... Jesus reveals himself to be one with the Father as a result of the strict fidelity with which he waits upon him and utters his words and performs his task as ambassador and witness.” The bond between the Father and the Son coincides with the bond formed by the obedience of a witness... Jesus is in the Father and the Father in him because he does the work of the Father (10:30, 37, 38). Inasmuch as he is the Son of Man sent as a witness from the heights of heaven, ... Jesus is, according to rabbinic law, “as [the] one who sent him”.

Thus the idea of the Son-Father relationship also implies that the Son is subordinate to the Father. This subordination fits very well with the

principles of agency, since here the thoughts of unity and identity between agent and sender are modified by an emphasis on the superiority of the sender. The principle is stated in John 13:16 and *Gen. Rab.* 78:

John: "a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than him who sent him." *Gen. Rab.*: "the sender is greater than the sent."

Matt 10:24, cf. Luke 6:40, offers a parallel to the first part of John 13:16: "nor [is] a servant above his master." What in Matthew and Luke is said about pupil-teacher and servant-master relationship is in John applied specifically to agency (see also John 15:20).

3. Another important area of agency centers around the specific mission of an agent. It was a legal presumption that an agent would carry out his mission in obedience to the one who sent him (K. H. Rengstorf 1933, in G. Kittel 1933: 1, 415). This principle can be seen from *b. Erub.* 31b–32a, *m. Qidd.* 2:4 and *Ter.* 4:4: "It is a legal presumption that an agent will carry out his mission" (*b. Erub.* 31–32 a; cf. *Ketub.* 99b; *Naz.* 12a).

"I appointed you for my advantage, and not for my disadvantage. (*Qidd.* 42b; cf. *b. Bat.* 169b; *Ketub.* 85a; *Bek.* 61b). "If a householder said to his agent 'Go and give heave-offering', the agent should give heave-offering according to the householder's Mind." See also the Medieval collection *Shulhan Aruq, Hoshen Mishpat*, 188:5: "Stets wenn der Vertreter von dem Willen des Vertretenen abweicht, ist das Vertretungsverhältnis gänzlich aufgelöst" (Cohn 1920, 206).

In accordance with this principle, Christ was an obedient agent who did as the Father had commanded. He said, "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38). Likewise, the Christ always did what was pleasing to the one who sent him (8:29).

The Johannine idea of the mission of Christ as God's agent is seen within the context of a lawsuit. The statement in *b. Qam.* 70a is of special interest for this question:

Go forth and take legal action so that you may acquire title to it and secure the claim for yourself.

The principles reflected in this rule are also found in the Fourth Gospel. Although there is no scene of commissioning as pictured in the halakhic statement ("go forth," etc.), the commissioning itself is referred to in these words: "I came not of my own accord, but he sent me" (John 8:42); "For I have not spoken of my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak" (John 12:49); "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God" (3:34); "My teaching is

not mine, but his who sent me" (7:16); "...he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him" (8:26); "...I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me..." (8:28–29); "...the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me" (14:24).

According to the *halakah*, the sender transfers his own rights and the property concerned to the agent (see Cohn 1920, 165–167 and L. Auerbach 1, 1870, 567–69). On this basis the agent might acquire the title in court and secure the claim for himself. The will of the sender, the Father, in John 6:39 makes just this transfer clear: "This is the will of him who sent me, that all that he has given me (πάν ὃ δέδωκέν μοι)..." The transfer is even more pointedly stated in 17:6: "thine they were, and thou gavest them to me" (σοὶ ἦσαν κάμοι αὐτοὺς ἔδωκας). Variants of the phrase occur in John 17:2, 6, 7; cf. 13:3.

The next step is the actual acquiring of the title in court and the agent's securing of the claim for himself. John 12:31–32 pictures such a court scene:

Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw (ἐλκύσω) all men unto myself (πρὸς ἑμαυτόν).

There is close resemblance between the two phrases "I will draw all men to myself" (John) and "secure the claim for yourself" (*halakah*). In both cases the agent himself is to take possession of the property since the ownership has been transferred to him. John uses a different verb, "draw" (ἐλκύσω) and not "secure" קַיְפֵּי, but the Johannine term comes from a judicial context. The verb renders with all probability the Hebrew קָשַׁב, to draw, pull, seize. This is the understanding of Schlatter (1930, 176) and Bultmann (1950, 171, n. 7). These scholars have not, however, focused the attention upon קָשַׁב as a judicial term. Thus the Septuagint frequently translates קָשַׁב by ἐλκύειν (Deut 21:3; Neh 9:30; Ps 9:30 [10:9]; Eccl 2:3; Cant 1:4, etc.) And in the *halakah* of Judaism קָשַׁב has received the technical meaning of "to take possession of" by drawing or seizing an object (*b. Metzia* 4:2; 47a; 48a; 49a).

Thus the meaning of the phrase in John 12:32 and *b. Qam.* 70a is the same. Moreover, the legal acquisition of the title can be seen in John 12:31–32, although pictured in a negative way. The world and the ruler of this world are judged and cast out from the heavenly court. C. K. Barrett (1978a, 427) addresses this point: "The devil will be put out of office, out of authority. He will no longer be ἀρχων; men will be freed from his power" (see also Dahl 1962, 139). The ruler of this world is judged not to have any

just title to or claim upon God's people. Thus it is implied that God's agent has the title and therefore can secure the claim for himself.

Although the ownership, for sake of the lawsuit, is transferred from the sender to his agent, the agent is, of course, still an agent of the sender. Thus, the sender takes possession of the property when the agent does.

The meaning of John 6:44 is to be understood along this line: "No one can come to me [i.e. the agent] unless the Father who sent me [ὁ πέμψας με, i.e. the sender] draws [ἔλκυσθη] him." In other words, coming to the agent, Christ, is the same as being in the possession of the Father, and only those who are included in the Father's claim come to His agent. Note that the (true) children of Abraham have as Father God and not the devil, John 8:39–47.

Against this background it is logical that the rabbis discussed whether an agent in such cases is to be characterized as a partner to his sender. *b. Qam. 70a*, from which the above quotation was taken, discusses this very question: "He was surely appointed but a shaliach. Some, however, say that he is made a partner . . ."

As Jesus completed his mission (John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4; 19:30) he was to report to his sender. John 13ff. is dominated by this theme of Jesus' return to his Father: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that he had come from God and was going to God . . . , etc." (13:3). And just as the judgment scene in John 12:31–32 was pictured in a proleptic way before its completion on the cross (19:30), so also is the Son's report given ahead of time in the form of the prayer found in John 17: "I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do" (17:4). It is in accordance with the halakah that an agent who is sent on a mission is to return and report to the sender. The return is mentioned in *p. Hag. 76d*: "Behold we send to you a great man as our 'shaliach', and he is equivalent to us until such time as he returns to us."

Although a contrast between human and divine agency is drawn in *Mek. Exod. 12:1*, the passage illustrates the point of return and report by an agent to his sender: "Thy messengers, O God, are not like the messengers of human beings; for the messengers of human beings must needs return to those who send them before they can report. With thy messengers, however, it is not so, . . . withersoever they go they are in thy presence and can report: we have executed thy commission." John does not draw on this contrast between human and divine agents but applies rather the human principle of return and report to God's agent, Jesus Christ.

5. One question remains, namely, the actual effectuation of Jesus' mission after his return to his Father and beyond the limitation of his work in Israel. Although the question was debated among the rabbis (*m. Git.* 3:5–6; *b. Git.* 29b), it is important that it is distinctly documented that "an agent can appoint an agent" (*b. Qidd.* 41a). Consequently at the completion of his own mission, Jesus said: "As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:16).

At the last evening before his departure, Jesus therefore first made clear to the disciples the principles of agency, John 13:16, 20, and then in his prayer reported to the Father about the sending (John 17), and then after his resurrection the actual commissioning of the disciples took place: "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). Accordingly, the unity between the Father and His agent, the Son, is extended to these agents of the agent: "... as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

Thus there are striking similarities between the halakhic principles of agency and ideas in the Fourth Gospel: (a) the unity between the agent and his sender, (b) although the agent is subordinate, (c) the obedience of the agent to the will of the sender, (d) the task of the agent in the lawsuit, (e) his return and reporting back to the sender, and (f) his appointing of other agents as an extension of his own mission in time and space.

Heavenly Agent

Based on this analysis of agency in John, one might be tempted to conclude that the Fourth Gospel represents the so-called normative and rabbinic Judaism as suggested by G. F. Moore (1927–30: 1–3) and not mystical Judaism which E. R. Goodenough so forcefully championed (see especially E. R. Goodenough 1953: 1, 3–58).

Such a conclusion would be premature.

The study so far has not explained the fact that Jesus according to John is not just a human and earthly agent but a divine and heavenly agent who has come down among men. Bultmann's hypothesis of gnostic mythology offers an explanation, since the gnostic agents were divine figures who were sent down to earth. (Bultmann 1925, 104–9; id. 1950, 187–88).

The close similarities between agency in John and the halakhic principles point in another direction. The question can be formulated in this

way: Where do we find halakah applied to the heavenly world and man's relation to it? G. D. Scholem deserves the credit for having brought forward Merkabah mysticism and to have made manifest its halakhic character. Here we find a combination of halakah, heavenly figures and the heavenly world as is the case with the idea of agency in the Fourth Gospel (Scholem 1960, 9–19; id. 1961).

H. Odeberg (1929), G. Quispel (1958, 197–208), N. A. Dahl (1962, 124–42), and P. Borgen (1965/1981), have suggested that the Fourth Gospel reflects early stages of Merkabah mysticism. Since Philo also is influenced by early Merkabah mysticism, his writings can shed some light upon ideas in John. K. Kohler discusses elements of Merkabah traditions in Philo (1947, 500). In connection with the concept of agency, the Johannine idea of the vision of God can serve as a good point of departure for a comparison with Philo. According to John 12:45 God's agent mediates the vision of God: "he who sees me sees him who sent me." Moreover, in John the agent from God is a heavenly figure and the only one who has seen God:

Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God: he has seen the Father (John 6:46).

John 6:46 as well as 1:18 ("No one has ever seen God; the only God [Son], who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known") are an interpretation of the theophany at Sinai. According to Exod 33:20 there was a significant modification made to this theophany. Moses was not allowed to see the face of God; for no man can see God and live. John adds that one heavenly figure has had this full vision of God, namely the divine Son, the one who is from God (M.-É. Boismard 1957, 136–40; S. Schulz 1960, 40f.; N. A. Dahl 1962, 132; P. Borgen 1965/1981, 150f.).

The closest parallel to this heavenly figure is the idea of the heavenly Israel, "he who sees God." The idea is found in Philo, *Conf.* 146 and *Leg.* 1:43. De confusione linguarum 146 reads:

But if there be any as yet unfit to be called a Son of God, let him press to take his place under God's First-born, the Word, who holds the eldership among the angels, their ruler as it were. And many names are his, for he is called, 'the Beginning', and the Name of God, and His Word, and the Man after His image, and 'he that sees', that is Israel.

From *Leg.* 1:43 a brief quotation will do:

... the sublime and heavenly wisdom is of many names; for he calls it 'beginning' and 'image' and 'vision of God' ...

Two observations support the theory that there is a connection between the Christ of the Fourth Gospel and the angel Israel. First, although there is no explicit etymological interpretation of the word Israel ("he who sees God") in John, the idea of Israel is tied together with the idea of vision in the interpretation of Jacob's vision, John 1:47–51. Nathanael, the true Israelite is to see what his ancestor, Jacob/Israel saw. The reference to the Son of Man (John 1:51) probably presupposes the idea of the heavenly model of Jacob/Israel (Dahl 1962 1962, 136–37 and footnotes with references. Cf. Borgen 1965/1981, 175–77). Concerning other places in which the idea of Israel and the vision of God are associated in John, see P. Borgen 1965/81, 175.

Secondly, important parallels can be seen between John and Philo as to the many other names of the heavenly figure. Both John and Philo identify him who sees with the Logos (John 1:1, 14 and *Conf.* 146, cf. the heavenly wisdom in *Leg.* 1:43). He is furthermore called the Son, in John, the only Son (*μονογενής* John 1:14; 3:16, 18) and in Philo the firstborn Son (*πρωτόγονος*, *Conf.* 146). It should be added that both John and Philo at times characterize the Logos and the Son as God. (John 1:1, 18; *Somn.* 1:228–230 and *QG* 1:162).

Two other parallel terms for the heavenly figure are Philo's "the Man after God's image," *Conf.* 146 and *Leg.* 1:43, and John's "the Son of Man." The kinship between these two terms can be seen from the fact that both John and Philo associate this heavenly man with vision, with ascent into heaven, and with the second birth in contrast to the first.

At this point the ideas found in *QE* 2:46 are of particular interest. Philo here says that when Moses, at the theophany at Sinai, was called above on the seventh day (Exod 24:16), he was changed from an earthly man into a heavenly man, and the change was a second birth contrasted to the first. John's ideas in 3:3–13 seem to be a polemic against the very idea expressed by Philo. John says that the vision of God's kingdom (cf. Wis 10:10) and the second birth from above are not brought about by ascent into heaven to the Son of Man. It is rather the heavenly man's descent which brings about the second birth. This analysis of John 3:3–13 has given support to the interpretation suggested by H. Odeberg (1929 ad loc.) that v. 13 is a polemic against the idea of visionary ascent among Merkabah mystics (cf. Dahl 1962, 141; E. M. Sidebottom 1961, 120–21).

The conclusion is that John and Philo have in common the idea of a heavenly figure as the one who sees God, and who they associate with Israel. They also have in common several other terms. Commentators

have thus overlooked the importance of *QE* 2:46 for the interpretation of John 3:3ff. and concepts that crystalize around the same heavenly figure.

Although Philo in *Conf.* 146 says of Israel that “he that sees God” and so mediates the vision of God, he (Philo) does not apply the halakhic principles of agency to the concept. At this point John differs and says that the heavenly figure, the only one who has seen God, is sent as God’s agent to mediate the vision. It is interesting to note that John in 8:16–18 applies yet another judicial principle to Christ and his mission. Here the Old Testament and halakhic rule of two witnesses has been applied to the idea of Jesus as the Son of the (heavenly) Father: the Father and the Son both witness (*Str. Bill.* 2, 1924, ad loc.).

Conclusion and Perspective

Thus the ideas of the heavenly figure who sees God (Israel) and ascent/descent are found in both Philo and John. Similarities on the subject of agency have also been found between John and the rabbinic halakah. The Fourth Gospel, therefore, shows that no sharp distinction can be drawn between rabbinic and Hellenistic Judaism. E. R. Goodenough (1945, 145–82) rightly stresses the Jewish background of John. However, he draws too sharp a distinction between legalistic rabbinism and Hellenistic mystical Judaism.

It has been suggested above that the Jewish background reflected in John should be characterized as early stages of Merkabah mysticism, in which we find a similar combination of halakah, heavenly figures and the strong support for this conclusion is found in Codex II:5, “The Origin of the World”, in *The Nag Hammadi Library*. The text runs as follows:

But when Sebaoth received the place of repose because of his repentance, Pistis moreover gave him her daughter Zoe with a great authority so that she might inform him about everything that exists in the eighth (heaven). And since he had an authority, he first created a dwelling place for himself. It is a large place which is very excellent, sevenfold (greater) than all those which exist in the seven heavens.

Then in the front of his dwelling place he created a great throne on a four-faced chariot called ‘Cherubin’. And the cherubin has eight forms for each of the four corners—lion forms, and human forms, and eagle forms—so that all of the forms total sixty-four forms. And seven archangels stand before him. He is the eighth having authority. All of the forms total seventy-two. For from this chariot the seventy-two gods receive a pattern; and they receive a pattern so that they might rule over the seventy two languages

of the nations. And on that throne he created some other dragon-shaped angels called 'Seraphin', who glorify him continually. Afterwards he created an angelic church—thousands and myriads, without number, (belong to her)—being like the church which is in the eighth. And a first-born called 'Israel', i.e. 'the man who sees god', and (also) having another name, 'Jesus the Christ', who is like the Savior who is above the eighth, sits at his right upon an excellent throne.¹

This text parallels ideas from Philo and John, such as the heavenly Son, the firstborn who is the same as the heavenly Israel, the man who sees God (cf. Dahl 1962, 136, nn. 21 and 22; H. Jonas 1962, 264). It is significant that this heavenly figure has its place in the heavenly palace near the throne erected upon a chariot, which clearly signals the influence of Jewish Merkabah traditions. This leads us to consider that they also play a role in John and Philo.

Thus, the text from Nag Hammadi gives evidence for the influence of Jewish Merkabah traditions on the gnostic movement. It is therefore quite probable that the ideas of heavenly agents in gnostic/Mandean literature have been influenced by Jewish principles of agency and Jewish ideas of heavenly figures. If this is so, the gnostic agents do not explain the background of God's agent in the Fourth Gospel, as Bultmann thinks (Bultmann 1925, 104–9; *ibid.* 1950, 187–88). The Fourth Gospel rather gives a clue to the Jewish background of the gnostic/Mandean mythology.

Not very long before the death of E. R. Goodenough, I had the privilege of conversing with him about Philo of Alexandria. In the course of the conversation he said that it was the task of the younger generation of scholars to explore what light Merkabah mysticism could throw on Philo (E. R. Goodenough 1953:1, 8 and n. 6).

Additional Note

In the second edition of a collection of essays on the interpretation of the Gospel of John, J. Ashton (ed. 1986, 14) wrote: "For Bultmann, of course, the concept of a divine emissary is derived from gnostic mythology and must be discarded if one is to arrive at the heart of the evangelist's message, which consists, according to him, of *ein blosses Dass*, a bare and unadorned

¹ (H.-G. Bethge and O. S. Wintermute (trans.) 1977, in J. M. Robinson (ed.) 1977, 166. Cf. J. Doresse 1960, 167, 176ff.).

'that'. Here is where the article of Peder Borgen . . . offers genuine illumination. There is no need, when investigating the theology of Jesus' role as the agent or special representative of God, to turn to Mandeism or other Gnostic systems for the source of the evangelist's idea—it is to be found ready at hand in the Jewish tradition. In fact Borgen's article could equally well have been placed under the rubric of history and origin, since although primarily intended as a contribution to exegesis, i.e. the understanding of the *text*, it also shed considerable light on the question of the source of the evangelist's central ideas."

Similarly, Jan-A. Bühner (1977, 59–60) wrote: "Borgen stellt die richtige Frage . . . : Wo finden wir halachische Regeln in Bezug auf die himmlische Welt und die menschliche Beziehung zum Himmel?"

And later: ". . . so tritt hier eine entscheidende forschungsgeschichtliche Wende mit den Arbeiten von P. Borgen und W. A. Meeks ein" (71–72).

CHAPTER TEN

THE SABBATH CONTROVERSY IN JOHN 5:1–18 AND THE ANALOGOUS CONTROVERSY REFLECTED IN PHILO'S WRITINGS

In all four gospels it is evident that the Sabbath observances caused conflicts between Jesus and others, and in all four there are examples of passages where a case story is followed by a subsequent unit of juridical exchange. Moreover, this dual structure is also seen in Philo. Philo also testifies to the fact that the Sabbath observances caused tension and conflict in society.

Philo and John

Scholars refer, of course, to Philo in their discussion of the Logos, ὁ Λόγος, in the Prologue of John.¹ Also at several other points scholars have utilized Philonic material in their interpretation of John, as in their analysis of terms such as “light,” “darkness,” “water,” and “bread,” often emphasizing their symbolic use (C. H. Dodd 1953/65, 54–73).

Philo's exegetical method and some of his exegetical ideas/traditions have been used to illuminate John's interpretation of the Old Testament, for example in the analysis of the Discourse on bread from heaven in John 6:31–58, and also in the analysis of John 5:17 where Jewish exegetical debates on Gen 2:2–3 are reflected (P. Borgen 1965/81; B. Lindars 1972, 218–19; C. K. Barrett 1978, 255–56, and P. Borgen 1987a, 12, 70, 85). The present study will demonstrate that Philo's exegesis of Gen 2:2–3 is of special interest also because it plays a role in a controversy about Sabbath observance within the Alexandrian Jewish community. This controversy, moreover, provides an important parallel to the situation of the Johannine community reflected in John 5:1–18.

Before we compare John and Philo, it is necessary to investigate how John uses traditional material and how it reflects the Sabbath controversy in which the Johannine community was involved. Among the relevant

¹ See C. H. Dodd 1953/65, 65–73; 276–81; R. Bultmann 1968, 9; R. E. Brown 1966:1, 519–20; C. K. Barrett 1978a, 153–54; B. Lindars 1972, 39–40; 82–83; P. Borgen 1987a, 77 and 84.

texts in Philo's writings, *Migr.* 89–93 is central for such a comparison. The insights into the situation gained from Philo and reflected in John 5:1–18 contribute to the scholarly discussion on the history of the Johannine community.

The Use of Tradition

In his book *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, C. H. Dodd demonstrates that John 5:1–9, the healing of the paralytic at Bethsatha, follows the same general pattern as that of several healing stories in the Synoptic Gospels (C. H. Dodd 1963, 174–80). The structure is as follows:

The scene:

Vv. 1-3: . . . there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethsatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed.

The patient and his condition:

V. 5: One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

Intervention by Jesus, leading up to word of healing:

Vv. 6-8: When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk."

Recovery of the patient:

V. 9: And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked.

Like some of the healing stories in the Synoptics, this story in John is set on a Sabbath day, "Now that day was the sabbath" (John 5:9. See Mark 3:1–6; Luke 13:10–17).

According to Dodd, the subsequent controversial dialogue, vv. 10 ff., is connected somewhat artificially with the miracle through the reference to the Sabbath in v. 9 (C. H. Dodd 1963, 118). In this way vv. 10–18 serve as the transition from the narrative of the healing at Bethsatha to the discourse which follows in vv. 19 ff. (C. H. Dodd I 1953/65, 320. So also B. Lindars 1972, 52 "a transitional dialogue").

Dodd's discussion of vv. 10-18 is sketchy and needs to be taken further. He refers to Luke 13:10-17, the healing of the crippled woman on the Sabbath, as a story parallel to John 5:1-18. He mentions that in both places a controversy follows upon the story of healing. We can then classify Luke 13:10-17 and John 5:1-18 as case stories (John 5:1-9/Luke 13:10-13) followed by halakhic exchanges (John 5:10-18/Luke 13:14-17). The same form of a case-incident followed by a halakhic controversy dialogue/action occurs in Matt 12:1-18/Mark 2:23-28, the plucking corn on the Sabbath. In John 9:1-41, the healing of the blind man on the Sabbath, vv. 1-7, (the case story), the controversy dialogue/action, vv. 8-41, is developed into a lengthy judicial hearing. A fragment of a controversy dialogue is found in John 7:21-23, based on the same healing story as the one in John 5:1-9.

The objections by Jesus' critics and his answer can be listed in the following way:

The objections raised:

John 5:10: So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, it is not permitted for you to carry your pallet."

John 5:15-16: The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the Sabbath.

John 9:16: Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

John 9:24: For the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner."

Luke 13:14: But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

Matt 12:2 (cf. Mark 2:24): But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not permitted on the Sabbath."

Jesus' answer:

John 5:17: But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working still, and I am working."

John 7:21-23: Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you marveled at it. Moses gave you circumcision. . . . and you circumcise a man upon the Sabbath. If on the sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a whole man well?"

John 9:25: He [the man] answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see."

Luke 13:15–16: Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Matt 12:3–6: He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not permitted for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here."

As one would expect, these controversies refer back to the case stories both in a more general way as well as by repeating some of the words in the stories. In Matt 12:2–6 the words "Sabbath" and "the disciples" from the case story are repeated, while the actual objectionable action of plucking corn on the Sabbath is referred to in an implicit way: "Look, your disciples are doing what is not permitted on the sabbath" (12:2). In Luke 13:14–17, the "crime" of healing on the Sabbath is referred back to in a general way as the healing, and the word "Sabbath" is repeated. Other words are repeated with some variations: "the ruler of the synagogue," v. 14, refers back to "in the synagogues" in v. 10, and "eighteen years" occurs both in v. 10 and in v. 16. The words "free/loose from" (v. 12 ἀπολέλυσαι and v. 16 λυθῆναι) also belong together.

This method of repeating words from the case story in the controversy dialogue is much developed in John 5:10–18, and it has a systematic outline. In vv. 10–13 the sentence ἄρον κράβατόν σου καὶ περιπάτει from v. 8 (also in v. 9) is repeated and paraphrased. In vv. 14–16 the phrase ὑγιῆς γένεσθαι—ἐγένετο ὑγιῆς (vv. 6 and 9) is repeated and paraphrased. (The word ὑγιῆς was referred to in passing already in v. 11.) The term σάββατον from v. 9 is repeated in each section, in v. 10 and v. 16. This word also occurs in the final section, vv. 17–18, where the main speaking and acting person in the case story, Jesus, is at the center.

Thus in vv. 10–16 there is a mechanical and systematic use of phrases from the case story, vv. 1–9. This fact indicates that the case story is the more stable and authoritative element in the tradition, while the subsequent controversy dialogue/action is the more flexible part of tradition.

Therefore, the controversy section in John 5:10-18 has the nature of an expository commentary to the case story, vv. 1-9 (P. Borgen 1987, in G. F. Hawthorne and O. Betz (eds) 1987, 80-94).

This expository flexibility accounts for John 7:21-23 having a halakhic answer different from the one in 5:17-18. In 7:21 the sentence "I did one deed and you all marvelled at it" presents in summary fashion the case story of the healing told in 5:1-9. Although the verb "marvel" ($\theta\alpha\upsilon\mu\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$) has a somewhat negative sound here, it is important to notice that in the Synoptics this word often characterizes the impression a miracle has made, Matt 8:27; 9:33; 15:31; 21:20; Luke 8:25; 11:18; cf. Acts 2:7 (R. Bultmann 1976, 226). John 7:22-23 follows a halakhic reasoning but one parallel to those used in Matt 12:1-8 and Luke 13:10-17. In all three passages the argument moves from the lesser to the greater. In Matt 12:3-5 the incident in 1 Sam 21:1-6 (David eating the bread of the Presence in the Temple) and the lawful breaking of the Sabbath laws by the priests in the Temple (cf. Num 28:9-10) are the lesser cases which tell about modifications of the Law of Moses. In Jesus' situation there is even more reason for freedom of observance: "I tell you, something greater than the temple is here" (Matt 12:6). In Luke 13:15 the lesser case is the work done on the Sabbath in order to tend to the needs of animals. The greater case is Jesus' healing of "a daughter of Abraham" (Luke 13:16). Similarly, in John 7:22-23 the lesser case is the performing of circumcision, i.e. on one member of the body, on the Sabbath, and the greater is Jesus' healing of the whole man (S. Pancaro 1975, 158-68, and commentaries). Thus there is a similar method of arguing from the Scriptures and practice in John 7:21-23, Matt 12:1-8, and Luke 13:10-17.

In John 7:22-23 Jesus' defense of the healing on the Sabbath is different from the one given in 5:17 ("My Father is working still, and I am working"). Nevertheless, in both places there is a direct usage of halakhic exposition documented in Jewish sources. The parallel to John 7:22-23 is found in rabbinic sources, such as in *t. Sabb.* 15:16: "He supersedes the sabbath for one of his members, and shall he not supersede the sabbath for his whole self?" (See also *b. Yoma* 85b. See C. K. Barrett 1978a, 134-35, etc.).

In John 5:17 too Jewish exegesis is utilized. When it is said in v. 17 that God works up to now, that is, including the Sabbath, a widespread exegetical debate on Gen 2:2-3 is presupposed and used (for the following, see P. Borgen 1987c, 89-92). The problem was the conviction that God cannot stop working. Consequently, the notion of God's Sabbath rest, as stated in Gen 2:2-3, creates tension. Evidence for such exegetical debates about God's Sabbath rest is found as early as the second century B.C.E.,

in Aristobulus (N. Walter 1964, 170–71; P. Borgen 1984, in M. Stone [ed.] 1984, 277; id. 1987a, 12), and more material is found in Philo and in rabbinic writings.

According to rabbinic exegesis, the commandment does not forbid one to carry something about in one's house on the Sabbath. God's dwelling is the upper and lower worlds. He may thus be active without coming into conflict with the Sabbath (*Gen. Rab.* 30:6). Philo, relying on the Septuagint rendering, notices that Gen 2:2–3 reads κατέπαυσεν, not ἐπαύσατο. Thus the text means “caused to rest, not ‘rested,’ for He causes to rest that which, though actually not in operation, is apparently making, but He himself never ceases making” (*Leg.* 1:5–6). Thus, for Philo, the meaning of the Seventh Day is that God, who has no origin, is always active. “He is not a mere artificer, but also Father of the things that are coming into being” (*Leg.* 1:18). All created beings are dependent and really inactive in all their doings: “... the number seven... Its purpose is that creation, observing the inaction which it brings, should call to mind him who does all things invisibly” (*Her.* 170).

An interpretation of Gen 2:2–3 similar to that of Philo seems to be presupposed in John 5:1–18. The Son of God brings the Father's upholding and providential activity to bear upon the case of healing on the Sabbath. The healed person is dependent and not to be accused, even of carrying the mat on the Sabbath, because the Son of God told him to do so.

According to John 5:1–18, God's providential activity was made manifest in the Son's healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath. Based on God's/the Son's work on the Sabbath, the sabbath observance could be abrogated. Thus John 5:1–18 addresses itself both to Christology and the end of Sabbath observance. We should note that even in Philo's time Gen 2:2–3 was used as argument for the abrogation of the Sabbath observance (P. Borgen 1987a, 65–68, and id. 1987c, 90–91).

In *Migr.* 89–93 Philo refers to certain fellow Jews who search for the inner meaning of the laws to the extent that they ignore the external and specific observances. They are taught by the sacred word to let go nothing that is part of the customs fixed by divinely empowered men (89–90). Against this background Philo gives the following advice and warning against those who draw erroneous conclusions from God's activity on the Seventh Day, as stated in Gen 2:2–3 according to Jewish exegesis:

It is quite true that the Seventh day is meant to teach the power of the Unoriginate and the non-action of created beings [cf. Gen 2:2–3]. But let us not for this reason abrogate (λύομεν) the enactments laid down for its

observance, and light fires or till the ground or carry loads or demand the restoration of deposits or recover loans, or do all else that we are permitted to do as well on days that are not festival seasons. Why, we shall be ignoring the sanctity of the Temple and a thousand other things, if we are going to pay heed to nothing except what is shown us by the inner meaning of things. Nay, we should look on all these outward observances as resembling the body, and their inner meaning as resembling the soul, so we must pay heed to the letter of the Laws. If we keep and observe these, we shall gain a clearer conception of those things of which these are the symbols; and besides that we shall not incur the censure of the many and the charges they are sure to bring against us.

Here we find a conflict between two ways of reasoning, both relying upon the Law of Moses. Philo's view might be characterized in this way: the universal principles and activity of the Creator are tied to the external observances of a particular people, the Jewish nation. Thus this particular nation has a universal function. The view which Philo criticizes seems to be: The Law of Moses and the specific observances give witness to the universal principles and activity of the Creator. The universal principles can then be followed apart from the particular external laws and observances of the Jewish nation. Consequently, God's activity and universal principles can be present even when one works on the Sabbath like on other days.

Migr. 91 has striking points of similarity with John 5:1-18. Both texts deal with the Sabbath. In both, the exegesis of Gen 2:2-3 is presupposed and utilized, although this it is not quoted and therefore not interpreted in an explicit way. And in both, the understanding that God is always active is witnessed to by the Sabbath in such a way as to give freedom from the specific observances, such as the prohibition against carrying things.

In John 5:10ff. the load is the mat carried by the one healed. The criticism of Jesus' healing on the Sabbath is in accordance with *Migr.* 91, when Philo prohibits actions that are permitted on other days. The same rule applies to the criticism of Jesus' healing of the crippled woman on the Sabbath, Luke 13:10-17: "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day" (v. 14). Philo warns that those who hold the views he criticizes will be subject to censure by the community which will bring charges against them. Correspondingly, John 5:16 and 18 tell that Jesus' fellow Jews persecuted and sought to kill him. Thus John 5:1-18 has interpreted the Jesus tradition under the influence of Jewish controversies on Sabbath observance as can be seen in the conflicting views and practices documented in Philo, *Migr.* 86-91.

There is a basic difference, however, between the spiritualizing Jews whom Philo criticizes, and the views expressed in John. According to John, the activity of the Creator grounds the Son's activity on the Sabbath, and the Son is the historical person Jesus of Nazareth. This suggests that the Sabbath observance is to be abrogated. The spiritualists in Alexandria, on the other hand, referred to an abstract doctrine of God's providential activity in defense of their freedom from Sabbath observances.

Interpretation

The preceding analysis of John 5:1–18's use of tradition has dealt with both content and interpretation. Further discussion is needed, however, on the life-setting of the passage and John's interpretation of it within his Gospel.

Within the Gospel the discussion about the Sabbath observances, John 5:1–18, 7:21–24 and 9:13–16 are but the starting point for debates on Christology (See N. A. Dahl 1962, 124–42). John 5:1–18 and 7:21–24 keep the themes of Sabbath and Christology closely linked. In John 7:21–24 the Christological aspect is not explicit, like in the stories about Sabbath observance in the Synoptic Gospels. In John 5:17–18 Jesus is explicitly identified as the Son of God, and this claim causes the controversy together with the conflict about the Sabbath observance. Both aspects of the controversy are based on Jewish exegesis of Gen 2:2–3, however, and tie in with the corresponding controversy already present in Judaism.

The conclusion is that the life-setting for John 5:1–18 and 7:21–24 is in the Johannine community but prior to the writing of the Gospel. The community freed itself from the Sabbath observance by referring to the authority and the Sabbath work of Jesus. In this controversy the Johannine Christians drew on exegetical and halakhic debates on Sabbath observance in contemporary Judaism and applied the Jesus tradition to these debates.

Two previous observations support this understanding. First, the form of a case-story followed by a controversial exchange has parallels in the Synoptics and has then a firm place in the Gospel tradition. John has thus received such a unit and built it into his Gospel. Second, John 7:21–24 is best understood as a fragment of another version of the same unit. This unit contained the same healing story and is likewise followed by a controversy which draws from other Jewish debate points on the question of Sabbath observance. The reaction of marvel to the healing miracle, 7:21,

is, as has been shown, a traditional feature in the miracle stories and indicates that a version of the healing story slightly different from the one in 5:1-9 is presupposed.

What was the function of John 5:1-18 in its life-setting? J. L. Martyn thinks that the passage reflects a certain historical incident in the life of the Johannine Church: A member of John's Church wants to make the healing power of Jesus a real for another Jewish man. At that, the Jewish authorities step in and question this man. The Christian finds and talks with him, but does not lead him to full Christian confession. Rather he gives him a solemn warning: "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you." The man represents the Jew who, though presumably thankful to be healed, nevertheless remains wholly loyal to the synagogue and even might become an informer against his healer (J. L. Martyn 1979, 70-71). In support of his interpretation Martyn points to the parallelism between John 5:15 and 11:46. John 5:15 reads: "the man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him." Correspondingly John 11:46 says: "But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done" (J. L. Martyn 1986, 113 in J. Ashton (ed.) 1986, 113).

Against Martyn's understanding I must stress that there is a basic difference between the two statements. In John 5:15 it is *the man healed* by Jesus (and not some spectators) who tells the Jewish authorities who healed him. In John 11:46 *the spectators* to Jesus' calling Lazarus back from the grave report it to the Pharisees. Thus the healing story in John 5:1-18 is an initiation story which served as paradigm for the entry into the Johannine community. The healing then represents salvation as a whole, and the word in v. 14, "See you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you," does not mean that the illness was caused by sin (cf. C.K. Barrett 1978a, 255).

The word is rather an admonition to a convert to a new life.

When the man went away and told the Jewish authorities that Jesus had healed him (John 5:15), he gave his witness to them about Jesus as his healer. This information freely given to the Jewish authorities about the healing incident is presupposed in John 7:21-4, and it is in general agreement with the point made in John 18:20 that Jesus said nothing secretly. The point in John 5:1-18 is then to offer guidelines to a convert: he is set free from the observance of the Sabbath laws (and from keeping the other Jewish feasts) based on Jesus' divine authority, his non-conformity to the observance, and his resulting death.

The Synoptic Gospels give evidence that the Sabbath observance was a controversial issue for the emerging church in its relationship to the synagogal communities, Matt 12:1–14 and parallels and Luke 13:10–17; 14:1–6, etc. Further evidence is seen in Gal 4:10–11 where Paul criticizes the Galatian Christians for accepting and conforming to the Jewish cultic calendar: “You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years! I am afraid I have labored over you in vain.” In Col 2:16 there is even an explicit reference to Sabbath observance: “Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath.”

Although our analysis of John 5:1–18, together with 7:21–4, does not provide sufficient material to reconstruct the history of the Johannine community, it nevertheless contributes to such attempts. One such reconstruction is suggested by J. L. Martyn (1977, in M. de Jonge (ed.) 1977, 149–75). He distinguishes between I. The Early Period (the time before the Jewish war and beyond the war until the 80s); II. The Middle Period (the late 80s?), and III. The Late Period (the time when the Gospel was written). Martyn’s middle period is of primary interest for the present discussion. In this period, some in the synagogue demanded exegetical proof for what the Johannine Christians proclaimed about Jesus. This led to midrashic debates. The synagogue authorities introduced the reworded *Birkat ha-Minim* (curse on the deviators) into the liturgical services in order to be able to identify and eject those who confessed Jesus as the Messiah (John 9:22).

Our analysis is in agreement with Martyn’s point that midrashic exegesis and debates became important in this middle period. In disagreement with Martyn there are reasons for distinguishing between the period indicated by John 5:1–18 and 7:21–24 and a subsequent period suggested by John 9:22. At the time of John 5:1–18 and 7:21–24 the Sabbath observance as such was a burning and controversial issue and Jewish halakhic exegesis and reasoning were utilized by the Johannine Christians. Since they referred to Jesus’ authority in this controversy, the Sabbath issue contributed to the formulation of a “high” Christology. Jesus was understood to have a higher authority than the written and practiced Torah.

Considering that some Jews had already championed abrogating external Sabbath observances based on God’s activity on the Sabbath (Gen 2:2–3), Jesus’ authority was interpreted correspondingly: as the Son of the Creator and Upholder he also works on the Sabbath and thereby puts an end to the external observances. This conflict with(in) the synagogal community should be dated to the 50s and 60s, rather than to the late 80s as indicated by Martyn. Gal 4:10–11 and Col 2:16 support this dating,

as does Philo, *Migr.* 86-91. Philo shows that Gen 2:2-3 was used in the same way in Sabbath controversies even earlier than the 50s. Moreover, he states that those who do away with the external Sabbath observance will be censured by the community. In the treatise *Mos.* 2:209-20, Philo retells the story of a Sabbath breaker who suffered the death penalty by stoning, in accordance with Exod 31:14 and 35:2. Philo also refers to the keeping of the Sabbath in his own days (2:216). Thus, it is in accordance with the Sabbath laws that the Jewish authorities sought to kill Jesus as a Sabbath breaker, John 5:15 and 18.

Our dating is in general agreement with Brown's reconstruction of the history of the Johannine community (R. E. Brown 1979b, with a summary chart on pp. 166-67). In what he calls phase one (mid 50s to late 80s) a high Christology developed, such as stated in John 5:18, which led to debates with Jews who thought the Johannine community was abandoning Jewish monotheism by making a second God out of Jesus. Our analysis suggests two changes in Brown's scheme. First, more stress should be placed on the controversies about the Sabbath observances and how these controversies contributed to the formulation of a high Christology, as when John 5:1-18 is seen against the background of Philo, *Migr.* 86-91. Second, a distinction should be drawn between the period of such Sabbath controversies and the subsequent period when traditions from this earlier period were (just) starting points for debates on Christology as such.

Many scholars maintain that the original healing story, John 5:1-9, had no reference to the Sabbath. This point was added by John in v. 9b as an afterthought, and not stated at the outset of the story as in the Synoptics. John then added the reference to the Sabbath in 9:14, since the Sabbath is not mentioned in the healing story itself, vv. 1-7.²

Some observations speak against this view:

1. Synoptic material should be used as comparative material, but not to such an extent that it is a standard blueprint for details, such as whether a Sabbath reference must come at the outset or at the end of a story.
2. When the Johannine Christians saw the freedom from Sabbath observance to be so important that it became a controversy with the Jewish leaders, the most natural explanation is that it was part of the

² See E. Haenchen 1959, 46-50. Haenchen seems to have modified his views in id. 1984, 243-60; R. Bultmann 1971, 239, n. 2, and p. 242; C. H. Dodd 1963, 174-80; R. Fortna 1970, 48-54; L. Martyn 1968, 69; S. Pancaro 1975, 10-4; B. Lindars 1972/1981, 215; R. Schnackenburg 1980:2, 92.

- authoritative Jesus tradition which they had received and not as just a new idea added to this tradition.
3. The fact that both John 5:1–18 and 7:21–3 have formed this Sabbath controversy tradition in the encounter with current Jewish halakhic debates on the Sabbath supports the view that John 5:1–18 presupposes a real encounter in the history of the Johannine community, an encounter caused by the Jesus tradition in word and practice.
 4. The form of a legal case followed by a subsequent halakhic exchange belonged to the forms handed on in the Jesus tradition, as can be seen from its occurrences in all Gospels. Thus, in John 5 the whole of vv. 1–18 is based on this traditional form, and the Sabbath motif was part of this form. Thus, the reference to the Sabbath in v. 9b is not an afterthought to the preceding traditional story of healing. As a motif which already belonged to this tradition of a case incident followed by a halakhic exchange, the placement of the Sabbath reference emphasizes that it was the central issue for both parts of the form.
 5. Finally, in John 7:21–3 the Sabbath question is stressed as the crucial issue for both the healing story and the halakhic exchange. The incident is dated to the Sabbath: “...are you angry with me because on the sabbath I made a whole man well?” As already stated, the halakhic exchange draws on arguments about the Sabbath observance also found in rabbinic writings. As for John 9:14, the Sabbath reference probably comes from a tradition which had the form of a case-incident followed by a halakhic exchange. The chapter in its present form is then an expository elaboration of such a unit of tradition. In this elaboration the reference to the Sabbath serves as stepping stone for a more independent presentation of a Christological debate.

Conclusion

The story of the healing of the paralytic, as a controversial case followed by a subsequent halakhic exchange, is a traditional form, parallels of which are found in Matt 12:1–18/Mark 2:23–28 and Luke 13:10–17. The Sabbath question was part of the received Jesus tradition. These and other similar traditions contributed to the conflicts between Christians and the Jewish authorities on the question of Sabbath observance. The tradition behind John 5:1–18 was adapted to the specific arguments employed in the conflict, the exegesis of Gen 2:2–3 about God working on the Sabbath in particular. Hence the conflict contributed to the way in which a “high Christology” was formulated. In the present context of the Gospel, John 5:1–18 serves as

point of departure for a general Christological debate, 5:19ff. The parallel material in Philo's writings makes evident that the Sabbath controversy reflected in John 5:1-18 is to be seen as a specifically Christian version of a conflict that already existed in the Jewish community in Alexandria, a tension and a conflict which probably existed in most Jewish communities. Some Jews interpreted the Law of Moses in such a way that they could claim to be faithful to their basic tenets and at the same time ignore the external observances. In a distinct way, John in 5:1-18 bases the abrogation of the Sabbath observance on Christology. Nevertheless, in both John and Philo, exegetical interpretations of Gen 2:2-3 play a central role in these controversies. The present study has shown that Philo not only sheds light on ideas in John, but even on Johannine exegetical methods and traditions. Philo's writings illustrate how exegesis of the Law of Moses played a central role in controversies in the Jewish community. Thus, he provides parallel and comparative material to how exegesis of the Law of Moses (*in casu* Gen 2:2-3) was a basic factor in the controversy between the synagogue and the emerging Christian community.

Additional Note

Some additional comments and modifications need to be made:

1. With regard to the high Christology in John, I now focus more on the challenge of Jesus being crucified as a criminal. High Christology seems to contrast with, if not contradict, this fact. Moreover, seen from one perspective, the Gospel is a crime report where the healing on the Sabbath, the command given that the healed person should carry his mat on the Sabbath, and the blasphemous claim of acting with divine authority, are the crimes.

Paul's words that Jesus, God's Son, came in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom 8:3, and that God made Jesus to be sin (2 Cor 5:21), document that Jesus' life and death as a criminal were still a challenging issue in Paul's time.

2. Philo does more than document that the breaking of the Sabbath was a live and volatile issue. He had to warn others and himself against abrogating the law of its observance. He states that "we" should avoid doing on the Sabbath what is permitted on all other days. Moreover, it is worth noting that Philo reports this from the first half of the first century C.E.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

OBSERVATIONS ON GOD'S AGENT AND AGENCY IN JOHN'S GOSPEL, CHAPTERS 5–10: AGENCY AND THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS¹

The examination of possible received tradition and expository elaborations should as a next step go beyond John 5:1–18 and deal with the chapters 5–10, which seems to be a structural unit.

The "Biology" of the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John is the outcome of expository activity. The most important components are the life of Jesus and the Scriptures, transmitted as traditions and subject to applications and other forms of interpretation. The expository activity followed certain methods. Thus a dynamic process was at work so that the metaphor of "biology" seems more adequate than the metaphor of "anatomy" that has been used (R. A. Culpepper 1983).

In my book *Bread from Heaven*, published in 1965 (reprinted 1981) I studied the Old Testament text quoted in John 6:31b, "as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat,'" and the subsequent exegetical exposition. Based on this analysis I have raised a further question about Jesus' words and works in the Johannine tradition. In my essay "The Scriptures and the Words and Works of Jesus," published in 2007, I stated: "In early Christian tradition, the Scriptures had authority and were subject to exegetical exposition. One might ask whether the works and words of Jesus were in the process of being treated in the same or similar way. The answer is 'yes.' For example, a 'Jesus logion' may serve as the basis for various forms of interpretation." (P. Borgen 2007, 49) The expository uses of the logion on agency in John 13:20, 5:23; 12:44, etc. may serve as examples

Units of tradition and related exposition and context are examined in the present study of John 5–10. I examine the use and meaning of the

¹ A paper presented at the Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Atlanta 2010. I am pleased to note that R. Alan Culpepper is in agreement with this guideline of mine, as seen in his study presented at this Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Atlanta in 2010. Hopefully, our initiatives will lead to more studies which can give us increased insights in the gospel tradition found in The Gospel of John. Cf. P. Borgen, 1992b, 1815–33.

concept of agent and agency primarily within these chapters, since they form a structural unit. Finally, the question is asked whether these insights, together with relevant points from elsewhere, are of value in the quest for the historical Jesus.

The Structure of John 5–10

In the book *Bread from Heaven* I formulated the following principle: “The exegetical paraphrase . . . fuses together words and fragments from different traditions into traditional forms and patterns. This method of exegetical paraphrase, then, leads to a dynamic process of new combinations within the framework of tradition” (P. Borgen, 1965/1981, 59). Is there a traditional structural form which holds all of John 5–10 together? It appears so. The basic structure is a case story with subsequent judicial exchanges of views. John has increased the number of the exchanges into a series and added two units of documentation, chapter 6 and chapter 9. The structure runs as follows: The basic unit of tradition is the story of Jesus healing the paralytic, 5:1–10. The subsequent judicial exchanges cover the rest of chapter 5, vv. 11–47, chapter 7, 8:12–59, and chapter 10.

In 5:11–18 words from the case story are repeated and explained. Jesus’ explanation is, “My Father is working still and I am working” (Ὁ πατήρ μου ἔως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται καὶ γὰρ ἐργάζομαι), v. 17. Jesus clarifies this statement in vv. 19–47, where the main terms are ὁ υἱός/“the Son” and ὁ πατήρ/“the Father.” Three witnesses testify to the Son: (a) the works given to the Son by the Father, (b) God, the Father himself, and (c) the Scriptures. The documentation of these witnessing functions is given in John 6.

The comment made by the evangelist in John 5:18 that “the Jews” sought to kill Jesus, ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτείνειν, is not repeated in chapter 5, nor in chapter 6. The chapters 7 and 8 and 10 pick up and explicate this theme in an introductory section in 7:1–13 and then in a series of judicial exchanges in 7:14–51 and 8:12–59, and 10:1–42. Documentations are given in chapter 6 and in chapter 9 respectively. Building on the documentation in chapter 9, Jesus presents a speech on the theme of the shepherd in chapter 10. Again he faces the threat of being stoned.

The list of such phrases, and their contexts, about the wish and attempt to kill Jesus are:

7:1 ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτείνειν (7:1–13).

7:19 τί με ζητεῖτε ἀποκτείνειν; 20 τίς σε ζητεῖ ἀποκτείνειν; (7:14–24).

7:25 Οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὃν ζητοῦσιν ἀποκτείνειν and 7:30 ἐζήτουν οὖν αὐτὸν πιάσαι (7:25–31).

7:32 ἵνα πιάσωσιν αὐτόν (7:32–36)

7:44 τινὲς δὲ ἤθελον ἐξ αὐτῶν πιάσαι αὐτόν (7:37–44).

7:45 Διὰ τί οὐκ ἠγάγετε αὐτόν (7:45–52).

8:20 οὐδεὶς ἐπίασεν αὐτόν (8:12–20).

8:22 μήτι ἀποκτενεῖ ἑαυτόν (8:21–30).

8:37 ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτείνειν (8:31–38).

8:40 νῦν δὲ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτείνειν (8:39–47).

8:59 ἦραν οὖν λίθους ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπ' αὐτόν (8:48–59).

10:31 Ἐβάστασαν πάλιν λίθους οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἵνα λιθάσωσιν αὐτόν (10:1–31).

10:39 Ἐζήτουν [οὖν] πάλιν αὐτόν πιάσαι (10:31–10:39)

These references show that the attempts to arrest and kill Jesus, or speculation about Jesus committing suicide, 8:22, are the central theme in the series of exchanges which are located in the temple precinct. A brief report about the healing of the paralytic is given in 7:19–24. Corresponding to the function of chapter 6 as documentation of the point about witnesses, John 5:19–47 and the story of the healing of the blind man in chapters 9:1–10:21 the location is outside of the Temple. Here there is a documentation of the main point of the exchanges in chapters 7 and 8: the reversal of who the sinners (criminals) are. At the same time this section builds a bridge into the subsequent verses, where the location again is the Temple precinct, 10:22–39 (42).

Reflections

In this way, words and fragments from different traditions are fused into new traditional forms and structures. As already stated, this expository method leads to a dynamic process of new combinations within the framework of tradition.

As already shown, the form of case story and a subsequent exchange unit is used in all the Gospels. Synoptic examples are Mark 2:23–28 and Matt 12:1–8 (plucking of grain on the Sabbath) and Luke 13:10–17 (woman with a spirit of infirmity). There are also examples of cases in which the controversies are included in the case stories themselves. Examples are Mark 2:1–12, Matt 9:2–8, Luke 5:18–26 (healing of the paralytic man) and John 9. As to the quest for the historical Jesus, actions and words which caused controversies may be part of Jesus' life so as to result in his execution as a criminal. Such elements were stylised into traditional forms and

then transmitted albeit after undergoing different levels of modifications or interpretations.

In John 5 and 7–8, the case story of John 5:1–10 is followed by a series of subsequent traditional exchanges. In accordance with the method of expository paraphrase, a dynamic process of new combinations within the framework of a traditional form can be observed. It should be added that John 6 has the form of a cycle of transmitted traditions which have been subject to expository activity (P. Borgen, 1965/1981, 45). As stated above, chapter 9:1–10:21 consists of a healing story into which controversial exchanges are integrated and added, and chapter 10:22–39 brings the elaborating exposition of John 5:18, about the attempt to kill Jesus, to a close.

A Main Theme: Agency

The Jewish understanding of the concept of agent/agency is broader than just that of the actual sending of an emissary. It comprises other forms of authorized activity. It may refer to a permanent commissioning, transfer of authority and profession from father to son, transfer to the agent of the ownership of property which is to be claimed in court, the aspect of authorization of various professions and functions, etc. . . . Agent and agency can be a profession of its own, such as an ambassador, commissioner or other forms of fulltime representation (J.-A. Bühner 1977, 189–98).

Method, Sources and Pragmatic Concerns

In examining the concept of agent and agency the method of history of ideas seems inadequate, because it easily leads to words and phrases being collected apart from their immediate contexts. Focus should be placed on the literary contexts and on the impact made by cases and events conceived as historical. Moreover, a primary context for the terminology of father and son is to be found in the views on and practices of family as a social institution.

Focus needs also be given to the Old Testament both as it belongs to the pre-history of rules and practices and as it is continuously involved in an interplay with the halakah.²

² It is important that Paul Andersen has pointed to the Johannine idea of God as the sender and Jesus as the one sent, and that it has also brought in traditions about Moses as the one sent by God. Although my methods are different, he generously has encouraged me to do more research on the topic. See P. Anderson 1999.

A brief comment should be made on my understanding of John's sources. The present study presupposes that John uses forms, methods, and traditions which are independent of the other written Gospels, but which are in part traditions that are used in one or more of the other three Gospels. Significantly, some methods, structures, and elements of traditions and ideas present in letters of Paul are also relevant (P. Borgen 1996b, 121–22; J.D.G. Dunn 2003, 165–66).

In my book *Bread from Heaven*, I joined those scholars who saw an anti-docetic motif at work in John. I maintained that an aim of the Gospel was to criticize a docetic tendency that drew a sharp distinction between the spiritual sphere and the external sphere. This anti-docetic motif has been criticized by scholars such as John Painter and Maarten Menken (Painter 1997, 80. Menken 1997, 199, n. 61). Menken makes the following point: “Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, pp. 183–92 rightly stresses that the ‘Jews’ of John 6:41, 52 sharply distinguishes between the spiritual bread from heaven and the man Jesus, but his identification of these Jews with the Docetists does not seem to be justified: the Johannine Jews deny Jesus’ heavenly provenance, the Docetists deny his humanity that culminates in his death.” I admit that Menken is right. The “Jews” were people who knew Jesus’ human family and questioned the claim that he came down from heaven (John 6:42). They questioned whether this criminal who broke the Sabbath laws and who had an earthly father had the right to call God his Father (John 5).

Agency: Son and Father, and Familial Relations as Background

The structure of John 5 has already been outlined. Now we will examine ideas and meanings against that background.

In what way is Jesus’ answer in 5:19–47 tied to the preceding verses 1–18? According to John 5:17 Jesus said: “My father is working still, and I am working.” From John 1:45 and 6:42 Jesus is known as the son of Joseph. The problem is whether Jesus refers to Joseph as his father. If so, Joseph was also a law-breaker. On the other hand, if Jesus speaks on the divine level, then he claims equality with God as Father: like God he can work on the Sabbath (P. Borgen, 1991, 213–14). In his discourse, Jesus clarifies the relationship between the Son and the Father.

Our analysis will concentrate on John 5:19–30 which has the idea of commissioning and the role of agency within family law as background. Different suggestions have been made by scholars as to its structure (for example X. Léon-Dufour 1961; Gaechter 1963; Vanhoye 1970; O’Donell 2008; cf. Dodd 1953, 320–28). The present analysis is based on the

understanding that it has an expository character. One method used is the repetition of words from the initial text in a subsequent exposition (P. Borgen, 1965/1981, 29, 59, etc.). They are thereby in various ways interpreted. A word or words may then be supplemented by or replaced by another interpretative word or be interpreted by more extensive elaborations. Such expository activity is not only tracable in the exegesis of the Scriptures, but also in the exposition of units from tradition, as can be seen in John 5:19–30.

Verse 19 serves as a startingpoint, as a “base unit” or “text”: οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν ἕαν μὴ τι βλέπη τὸν πατέρα ποιούντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ (... the Son can do nothing by himself [my trans.] but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise.)

The opening phrase in v. 19, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν, is repeated in v. 30 closing the section and bridging to what follows. In the closing repetition, the phrase is applied to Jesus himself in the first person, Οὐ δύναμαι ἐγὼ ποιεῖν ἄπ’ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐδέν.

The terms “son,” ὁ υἱὸς, and “father,” ὁ πατήρ, and different forms of the verb “to do,” ποιεῖν, are in focus and repeated, supplemented, or replaced by interpretative words in the subsequent verses, vv. 20–30. J.-A. Bühner (1977, 195–99) and J. Ashton (2007², 225–28) refer to the role of “the Son of the House” as background for the Johannine ideas.

In v. 23 a logion on agency has been woven into the exposition, in a positive and negative form. The positive formulation is part of a period: ἵνα πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱὸν καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα. (“That all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.”) The negative formulation reads: ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν υἱὸν οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν. (“He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.”) From then on words for sending, πέμπω, synonyms and related terms, are used until v. 44. The words ὁ πέμψας με in John 5:23 are repeated in v. 30. It is a formula-like phrase which occurs twenty-five times in the Gospel (cf. P. Borgen 1979).

The negatively formulated logion in v. 23 is an alternative and partial version of the logion cited in John 13:20, where it is applied to Jesus in first person: ὁ λαμβάνων ἄν τινα πέμψω ἐμὲ λαμβάνει, ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ λαμβάνων λαμβάνει τὸν πέμψαντά με. (“He who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me.”) Moreover, there is an application and paraphrase of the term “receive,” λαμβάνειν, in John 5:41–44, which is probably taken from the logion as rendered in 13:20.

Variations are also seen in the other Gospels. In Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:48 the logion deals with the relation to children, in Luke 10:16 the focus is on hearing and rejection.

Philo, in *Decal.* 118–120, has ideas which need to be taken into account in connection with John 5:23. In the exposition of the commandment on the honor due to parents, Philo's formulation parallels John 5:23. Philo's formulation reads: ὁ δ' ὑπηρέτην ἀτιμάζων συνατιμάζει καὶ τὸν ἄρχοντα, "he who dishonors the servant [i.e. the parents] dishonors also the lord [i.e. God]." John seems to be correspondingly influenced by the Old Testament commandment on children honoring their parents (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16; Matt 15:4; Mark 7:10).

In John 5:20–22 the son is seen as his father's apprentice. The father shows his son all that he himself is doing. It was common practice both among Jews and non-Jews that the father taught his trade to his son (C. H. Dodd, 1962). The already existing relationship between the Father and the Son is in John the given presupposition and basis for the Father's professional training of the Son and his transfer of functions to him. No birth of the Son is indicated.

In John 5:20–22 the functions of the son are specified by the exegetical interpretation of the word ποιεῖν in "the text," v. 19. This verb is repeated in v. 20 and is built into the term ζωοποιεῖ in v. 21. As for the professional functions, they are twofold: on the one hand, the raising of the dead and the giving of life and, on the other hand, the role of judge. The first function, the giving of life, is learned by means of imitation, expressed by ὡσπερ . . . οὕτως. Here both the Father and the Son exercise the function. One practical aspect of the Son's imitation is the healing done by Jesus on the Sabbath. It is the prerogative of God, the Father, that he cannot cease working on the Sabbath (P. Borgen, 1987c, 89–90; id., 1991, 213–14).

The other function, serving as the judge, is given to the Son by means of authorization and transfer: the Father has given all judgment to the Son, τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ, v. 22.

So far the authorization and the functions concerned are a commissioning with no known time limit. Then in v. 23b it is made clear that this general authorization and transfer are made manifest in a sending of the Son on a time-limited mission. Jesus is this envoy, v. 24: "Truly truly I say to you: 'he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life.'"

Some similar ideas are found in Philo's writings:

In *Conf.* 62–63 Philo applies the relationship between son and father to the relationship between "the Incorporeal Son" (= the Logos) and "the

Father of All": "I have heard also an oracle from the lips of one of the disciples of Moses," which runs thus: "Behold a man whose name is 'the rising', ἀνατολή, [Zech 6:12], strangest of titles, surely, if you suppose that a being of soul and body is here described. But if you suppose that it is that Incorporeal one, who differs not a whit from the divine image, you will agree that the name of 'rising' assigned to him quite truly describes him. For that man is the eldest son, whom the Father of all raised up, and elsewhere calls him His firstborn, and indeed the Son thus begotten followed the ways of his Father, and shaped the different kinds, looking to the archetypal patterns which the Father supplied." Applying Philo's terminology, one would say that in John 5 the "Incorporeal one," "the eldest son, whom the Father of all raised up," is at the same time "a being of soul and body," Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph (John 1:45 and 6:42). This son of Joseph is no merely mortal person, he is the Son of God, the (heavenly) Son of Man on earth. Just as God, the Father, has life in himself, so also the Son has life in himself (H. Thyen, 2007: 194; J. H. Neyrey, 1989, 661). Philo also sees the Logos as god, *Somn.* 1:228ff.

It should also be noted that Philo sees the Son and the Logos/Word closely together, such as in *Conf.* 146 where we read about God's First-born, the Logos, the archangel. Other names are "the Beginning," the Name of God, the Logos, and the "Man after his image," and "he that sees," that is Israel (Th. H. Tobin, 2006, 100–102). Thus the Son in John 5:19–30 has a kinship with the concept of the Logos in John 1:1–18.

As for the concept of agent and the principle that the agent is like the one who sent him, Philo refers in *Decal.* 120 to "some bolder spirits" who go so far as to "say that a father and a mother are in fact gods revealed to sight, ἐμφανείς . . . θεοί, who copy, μιμούμενοι, the Uncreated in His work as the Framers of life. He, they say, is the God or Maker of the world, they of those only whom they have begotten, and how can reverence be rendered to the invisible God by those who show irreverence to the gods who are near at hand and seen by the eye?" (*Decal.* 120). F. H. Colson (1958, note on p. 612) and I. Heinemann (1962, 253–54) refer to non-Jewish sources for this view. Even if this holds true, it still is present in a Jewish setting. Philo tells us that the view is maintained by some, without indicating that they were non-Jews. E. R. Goodenough (1968, 67–68) incorrectly states that Philo himself maintained that the parents were gods. Thus Goodenough is mistaken when he writes: "So it is on the grounds of gentile conceptions alone that Philo has justified the commandment to honor one's parents" (68).

The concept of agency may express different degrees of unity between the authorizer/the sender and the one who has been authorized and sent, from the relationship between parents as servants and God as their Lord, to the parents being seen as divine beings, as revealed gods. It should be added that in rabbinic sources, parents can be seen as partners with God in bringing a child to life (G. F. Moore, 1927, 2:132, n. 1).

As for John, in his exposition of "the Son" in the "text" of John 5:19–20, he weaves together the concepts that Jesus, who is the son of human parents (6:42), is identical with the Son of Man and the Son of God (5:25–27). Jesus, the Son who is sent by the Father, executes judgment as "the Son of Man," 5:27–29. Jesus' commission comprises both the legal foundation of judgment and life, 5:24, and the subsequent effectuation of it, 5:27–29 (B. E. Reynolds, 2008, 130–46. Cf. J. Ashton, 2007, "The heavenly judge, John 5:27").

The exposition starts with the father-son relationship as stated by Jesus in John 5:17: "My father is working still, and I am working," and the exposition in vv. 19–30 explicates this relationship between the father and son by applying familial *halakah* to Jesus, the son of Joseph, identified as the Son of God. His role is to serve as "the Son of Man," that is, as judge of resurrection to life and to punishment. It should be noted that different degrees of unity between the authorizer/the sender and the one who has been authorized and sent, are documented.

It remains only to comment on John 5:19, "... the Son can do nothing of his own, etc..." relative to the history of tradition and the quest for the historical Jesus. Since the verse serves as a "base unit," a "text," for a subsequent exposition, it has the authority that belongs to received tradition. With regard to its place in the history of tradition, it is important that already in 1 Cor 7:10–16 Paul uses the traditional Jesus logion on divorce, with a subsequent exposition. In the exposition, words from the logion are repeated and interpreted. The same method is used in John 5:19–30, where words from v. 19 are again built into the subsequent exposition. Thus, this expository method and use of John 5:19 as a unit of tradition could have existed during Paul's time and possibly earlier.

What can be advanced in favor of seeing this Johannine unit of tradition within the life of Jesus? C. H. Dodd has suggested that John 5:19 is a parable (C. H. Dodd, 1962). It had the following form: *Negation*: "The son can do nothing by himself—only what he sees his father doing." *Affirmation*: "Whatever the father does, the son does likewise." *Explanation*: "For the father shows his son everything he is doing." Dodd finds a similar form

in the parables of Matt 5:15 and Luke 8:16 (C. H. Dodd 1962, 114–15). Seen as a parable it is possible to locate it in the life of Jesus prior to his death. If it is not built on a parable from Jesus, John 5:19 still belongs to the Johannine tradition, since it was used as a fundamental unit for subsequent exposition. This conclusion receives support from the observation that the content shows kinship with what is said in Matt 11:27: “All things have been delivered to me by my Father, etc.” (U. Luz, 1990, 207–16).

Judicial Formalization of Traditions: The Witnesses

John 5:23 and 30–40. As seen above, John 5:23, “He who does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father who sent him,” is a negative variant of a part of the logion in John 13:20: “... he who receives me receives him who sent me.” In the context of John 5, the logion is applied to the son-father setting in vv. 19–30. Moreover the logion serves as a base unit for vv. 30–40: The phrase *ὁ πέμψας με* is repeated in vv. 30 and 37, and the synonymous verb *ἀποστέλλω* is used in similar phrases in v. 36, *ὁ πατήρ με ἀπέσταλκεν*, and in v. 38 *ὃν ἀπέστειλεν ἐκεῖνος*.

Moreover, two known principles which are embedded in this word of agency are made explicit: One principle is stated in v. 30 “I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.” It is not subject to further exposition. This is a central principle of agency (J.-A. Bühner, 1977, 207–9; P. Borgen, 1965/1981, 158–60). The other principle follows in v. 31: “If I bear witness to myself, my witness is not true etc. . . .” This latter principle serves as a subsidiary “text,” since the words *μαρτυρεῖν* and *μαρτυρία* are subsequently repeated together with words from the main unit of tradition in v. 23. This principle against self-witness is a generally accepted rule connected with agency, and John uses it in order to formalize the role of the witnesses in providing validation. The elements taken from tradition are: the reference to John the Baptist, v. 33 and the reference to “works” as a summary of Jesus’ actions and words; they illustrate and document Jesus’ healing activity and the story of the feeding, John 6:1–15. “The works” are referred to as a validation. See John 10:25, Matt 11:2–6, 1 Cor 9:1–2, 2 Cor 12:12 and John 10:34–36 concerning such validation (J. Beutler, 1972, 272–73, J.-A. Bühner, 1977, 135–36; 202–3). Validation by the Scriptures (v. 39) is an obvious function. It was widespread in Jewish society, and it had been used in the time and life of Jesus as well as afterwards, especially since the Scriptures contained the laws of Jewish society. Accordingly, John addresses the “Jews” in a more formal and hermeneutical way: “You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life,” v. 39. The parallel in *Pirque Abot* 2:8 is worth quoting:

"He who has acquired the words of the Law has acquired for himself life of the world to come."

The conclusion is: John has in 5:30–40 drawn on received tradition about the validation of Jesus' role as God's agent and formalized it in a more professional way.

In John 5:31–47 Jesus refers to those who bear witness to him. The core saying is Ἐὰν ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ, ἡ μαρτυρία μου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής· 32 ἄλλος ἐστὶν ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ ἐμοῦ, καὶ οἶδα ὅτι ἀληθής ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία ἣν μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ (M. W. Holmes 2010, Jn 5:31–32). ("If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears to me is true.") In the subsequent exposition, vv. 33–40, the terms μαρτυρία and μαρτυρεῖν from this "text" are repeated and interpreted and addressed to the "Jews" present. The three witnesses are listed: (a) the works given to Jesus, (b) the Father, and (c) the Scriptures.

Jesus criticizes his audience for their disbelief in him. Moses, on whom the "Jews" set their hope, accuses them. Moses wrote of Jesus.

Documentation: Chapter 6³

a) *The witness of the works* is experienced by the crowd through Jesus' healing activity and his feeding them, 6:1–15. The summary statement in 6:2 reports on the signs which Jesus did for those who were diseased. In a general way it refers to the traditional view that Jesus healed the sick (Matt 4:23–25; Mark 1:32–34; Luke 6:1; Acts 10:38).

This healing activity is seen as a sign. The crowd followed Jesus because they saw the signs which he did, and they came to him and were fed by him.

The feeding of the 5000 in John 6:5–15 uses one version of a tradition from all four Gospels, Matt 14:13–21; Mark 6:32–44; Luke 9:10–17. But the brief reaction of the crowd and of Jesus, vv. 14–15, has no parallel in the Synoptic Gospels: "When the people saw the signs which he had done, they said, 'This is the prophet who is to come into the world!'" The common exegetical understanding is that John 6:14 refers to a prophet

³ P. N. Anderson (1999) refers to the bread from heaven in John 6:31–58. It would have been helpful if he had discussed further the idea that Jesus is the Bread that came down from heaven as distinct from the bread which the fathers ate in the wilderness.

like Moses (so recently, P. Anderson, 1999). Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the hills by himself. . . .”

The strong manuscripts, P₇₅ and *Vaticanus*, support the reading of plural, *σημεία*, signs, in v. 14. Scholars should emphasize that this support helps to explain why the brief summary reference to the signs of healing in vv. 1–2 is included in the text together with the feeding⁴ (cp. the vague conclusions drawn in R. E. Brown, 1966, 234, and C. K. Barrett, 1978a, 277).

The crowd understood these signs to be evidence that Jesus was the prophet who was coming into the world. How could they draw this conclusion? Was Jesus understood to be an eschatological prophet like Moses in accordance with Deut 18:15–18, “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you”? There are observations which speak in favor of such an understanding: (a) The form “The Prophet,” John 6:14, may refer to the expectation that a Mosaic prophet was to come, this identification is not made explicit.

In 4QTest 5–8 (see P. Bilde, 2008, 67) and in Philo, *Spec.* 1:64–65, there are references to Deut 18:15–19, which show that the expectation of a Mosaic Prophet was alive and well known (D. Aune, 1983, 124–26; S. Cho 2006, 89).

The information given in 6:4, “Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand,” is puzzling, but may be important: By celebrating the Passover the Jews remembered the Exodus, how Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt (cf. J. Ashton, 2007², 75, n. 32). Within this context it may be important that the feeding took place in the desert. Moses performed wonders and signs, Acts 7:36. Jesus was expected to do wonders and signs, John 4:48.⁵ The conclusion is: The crowd saw him as the eschatological prophet, a “signs-prophet” who performed many signs (C. S. Keener 2009, 239–41).

The meal was another mighty work of Jesus, another sign in continuation with the signs done for those who were diseased. This understanding receives support from John 9:17, where Jesus is called a prophet with reference to his healing of a blind person. There are features in 6:1–21 which point to traditions which relate to Moses, but there is insufficient

⁴ As for views on healing and approaches to healing activities, cf. the view and treatment of diseases by the Essenes. They “... make investigations into medical roots.” Josephus, *B.J.* 2:136; See also S. S. Kottek, 1994, 161–70.

⁵ See W. Meeks, 1967, 108–11 and 192–95, with reference to *Tanchuma*, ed. Buber, 4: 5f. It may be added that in 4QTest. 9–13, Num 24:15–17, the oracle of Bileam (“a star shall come forth”), is referred to. Philo draws on Num 24 in *Mos.* 1:289–29 and *Praem.* 93–97. See P. Borgen, 1992a.

reason for separating the feeding of the 5000 from the other signs referred to in John 6:2.

More needs be said about Jesus seen as King. It is relevant to note that Philo in *Mos.* 1:148–159 sees Moses as a king and as a model to be imitated. Was he a prophet-king?⁶ The answer is that the people associated healing and feeding with an ideal king's care for his people. This characteristic can in a more general way be found in similar statements on kings. See *Decal.* 40–43, etc. . . . Moses was appointed (ἐχειροτονεῖτο) leader (ἡγεμῶν) “. . . invested with this office (τὴν ἀρχήν) and kingship (βασιλείαν), not like some of those who thrust themselves into positions of power by means of arms and engines of war and strength of infantry, cavalry and navy, but on account of his goodness and his nobility of conduct and the universal benevolence which he never failed to shew” (*Mos.* 1:148). The ideal king is pictured in *Spec.* 4:(157) 176–188. The characterizations of the relationship between the king and his people include that of a physician to his patients (*Spec.* 4:186).

Such an idealized picture may reflect the actual longings and hopes that existed in some segments of the population. If so, then a person who combines strong authority, “nobility of conduct,” “goodness,” and “benevolence” could be regarded by some as a candidate for leadership and kingship. John 6:15 fits into this picture: “Perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king . . .” As pictured in John, there was no political or military activity in the background. The multitude that followed Jesus had seen the signs which he had done for those who were sick, and he had arranged a meal for them. They worked for their food, v. 27. Knowing himself to be a person who showed goodness and benevolence, Jesus also perceived that they were about to make him king.

The Witness of God, the Father

“This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent” (John 6: 29). This next documentation is seen in vv. 22–29. The thought moves from working for the food that perishes to being given the food which endures to eternal life, by the Son of Man. God, the Father, set his seal on

⁶ W. Meeks (1967) has mapped out the varied traditions of Moses which existed in different settings in antiquity. See especially W. Meeks, 1967, 87–91. R. Schnackenburg (1995, 72–73) and M. de Jonge (1977a) hold that John 6:14 and 15 should not be seen together in this way. The two titles are to be kept distinct.

him, i.e. has Himself authorized him to give eternal life.⁷ Moreover, the work of God is that they believe in him whom he has sent, v. 29. Thus the Father himself has borne witness to Jesus as His messenger in accordance with the information given in 5:37a, “And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me.”

The witness of the Scriptures, 6:30–58, is: Jesus, the son of Joseph is the bread from heaven. The quotation in v. 31, “Bread from heaven he gave them to eat,” (ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν) serves as the text and is followed by an exposition. The first half, vv. 32–48, repeats the words ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν “bread from heaven he gave,” and in vv. 49–58 the term φαγεῖν, “to eat,” (or the synonym, τρώγειν, see John 13:18) is added and takes on a central role.

Ideas about agency are woven together with these words from the Old Testament text. Some phrases about the sending in chapter 6 are: v. 38 and v. 39 τοῦ πέμψαντός με, of him who sent me, v. 44 ὁ πέμψας με, he who sent me, v. 46 ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, he who is from God, and v. 57 ἀπέστειλέν με ὁ ζῶν πατήρ, the living Father sent me.

Is then Jesus seen to be a prophet like Moses, or even greater than Moses? Actually, the only explicit reference to Moses in chapter 6 is one of reservation: “... it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven...” The distinction made in John 6:31–58 is not between Moses and a prophet like him:⁸ Jesus is the Bread, and the distinction made is the contrast between the bread which *the fathers* ate in the past and the true bread which God gives in the present. The fathers ate manna in the wilderness and died, v. 49. Jesus is the living Bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this Bread, he will live forever; v. 50. Since the formulation in v. 51, “... the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh,” utilizes a eucharistic phrase, it reflects a Christian tradition of the Last Supper and Jesus’ death (P. Borgen 1965/1981, 89–92; id. 1992b, 1820–23).

A few words on 6:60–71 should be added. The meaning of the “hard saying” (Σκληρός ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος οὗτος) 6:60, may be that Jesus, the son of Joseph, claimed that he had come down from heaven, 6:42. Verse 62 supports this understanding: “Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before?” Simon Peter’s positive answer in 6:68–69 is

⁷ R. Schnackenburg 1965–1971, 2:50; H. G. Liddell and R. Scott 1958, 1742; P. Borgen, 1993a), 272–74, 287–90; id. 2007, 41.

⁸ F. Hahn, 1964, 291, fn. 4, wrote: “nicht Mose, sondern Jesus, der selbst vom Himmel herabkommen ist, gibt das wahre Himmelsbrot.” This formulation does not give a precise summary of John 6:30ff.

central: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy one of God."

How should John 6 be understood within the context of the history of tradition? Referring to R. E. Brown and other scholars I have in my book *Bread from Heaven* been convinced of the view that John 6 draws on a cycle of traditions which is independent of the Synoptics, but which shares points of similarity with Mark and Matthew (P. Borgen, 1965/1981, 45; R. E. Brown, 1966, 238–39). This Johannine version of the cycle of traditions has been subject to expository activity, as is evident in John 6.

*The Son of Joseph does not Meet the Criteria and Is a Deceiver:
John 7–8 (10)*

They Sought to Kill Him

The controversy-units in these two chapters build on the case-story in 5:1–10 and the comment given in 5:18, that the "Jews" sought to kill him, ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι. This phrase is not repeated in the remaining part of John 5, nor in John 6. Then in 7:1 one meets again the phrase from 5:18, that the Jews sought to kill Jesus: ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι. This phrase and related formulations are repeated throughout chapters 7–10.

A survey of this thread has been given above, but needs be repeated here:

- 7:1 ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι (7:1–13).
 7:19 τί με ζητεῖτε ἀποκτεῖναι; 20 τίς σε ζητεῖ ἀποκτεῖναι; (7:14–24).
 7:25 Οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὃν ζητοῦσιν ἀποκτεῖναι 7:30 ἐζήτουν οὖν αὐτὸν πιάσαι (7:25–31).
 7:32 ἵνα πιάσωσιν αὐτόν (7:32–36).
 7:44 τινὲς δὲ ἤθελον ἐξ αὐτῶν πιάσαι αὐτόν (7:37–44).
 7:45 Διὰ τί οὐκ ἠγάγετε αὐτόν (7:45–52).
 8:20 οὐδεὶς ἐπίασεν αὐτόν (8:12–20).
 8:22 μήτι ἀποκτενεῖ ἑαυτόν (8:21–30).
 8:37 ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι (8:31–38).
 8:40 νῦν δὲ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι (8:39–47).
 8:59 ἦραν οὖν λίθους ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπ' αὐτόν (8:48–59).
 10:31 Ἐβάστασαν πάλιν λίθους οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἵνα λιθάσωσιν αὐτόν (9:1–10:31).
 10:39 Ἐζήτουν πάλιν αὐτόν πιάσαι (10:31–10:39)

The various groups οὖν referred to may supply some contexts for these exchanges, but their identities are not clear, nor do the exchanges have the character of living encounters. The problem is that Jesus, who was a known human being, the son of Joseph, claimed divine prerogatives although he broke the Sabbath laws, lacked proper education in the Law, and was executed as a criminal. These conflicting aspects were a challenge for his followers. Thus, the pragmatic concern was: How did Jesus—this earthly son of Joseph, a lawbreaker and sinner, a person of low status who did not meet the criteria for being the Christ, the prophet, Son of God, etc.—prove that the accusations were wrong? Only a few points from these two chapters in John can be examined within the limits of this chapter.

John 7:25–31: The Emissary and the Christ

The view that the Messiah/Christ would be hidden until he comes is attested to in Justin, *Dial.* 8:4 and 49:1 (J. C. Salzmänn 2009, 249, 263–64). A similar understanding is presupposed in rabbinic sources when it is said that Messiah will appear (*Str.-B.* . . . 1961, 2:489). According to the Jerusalemites Jesus does not meet this requirement. They know where he comes from. Thus, he is not the Christ. Jewish ideas presuppose that the Messiah will be known when he comes, while the Messiah in John is unknown although present, according to C. K. Barrett (1978a, 322). Barrett's understanding needs be more clearly understood within the context of the two levels, the earthly and the divine. Jesus is a human being who claims to be God's emissary: "You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come on my own accord; he who sent me is true, and him you do not know. I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me" John 7:28–29. As seen within the divine jurisdiction with its perspective from above, Jesus' words receive a new meaning: The Christ comes from God and was sent by God.

The phrase used, ὁ πέμψας με, "he who sent me," does not as such identify who the sender is. One needs to have inside information to do so. Note that Moses prays to God that he should be told the name of him who sent him, Exod 3 (cf. Philo, *Mos.* 1:74).

Since the Jerusalemites do not know the sender, they do not know where Jesus comes from, 7:28b. In this way Jesus makes it clear that he meets the criterion of being a hidden Messiah, 7:27.

The Jerusalemites sought to arrest him as a deceiver. Many of the people believed in him: they said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?" (7:31).

Scholars have observed that in Jewish sources the evidence for an association between miracles and messiahship is very scanty (J. L. Martyn, 1968, 81–88. M. de Jonge 1977a, 91). This observation seems to be true, but is inadequate as a comment on John 7:31.

The title of the Christ was absorbed into the concept of agency and was accordingly modified. In the role of an agent/emissary, Christ Jesus' works were signs of validation. In this context the quantity of signs could be intended to convince people that Jesus was the God-sent Christ.

8:12–20: Self-Presentation and Judicial Exchange

There is a broad range of literary self-presentations made by human emissaries and agents, prophets, heavenly emissaries, angels, etc. . . . (A. Bühner, 1977, 153–80). As for John the usual form is: ἐγώ εἰμι + predicate + a judicial rule. See for example John 6:35, ἐγώ εἰμι (predicate noun:) ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς, (judicial rule:) ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς με οὐ μὴ πεινάσῃ See John 6:41, 48, 51; 8:12, etc. (J.-A. Bühner, 1977, 166).⁹ As background for such self-presentations in John, I have referred to the self-predication of the personified Wisdom (P. Borgen, 1965/1981, 156–58). It is also to be noted that Philo (*Her.* 205–206) says that the Logos, the Archangel, acts as ambassador (πρεσβευτής). The Logos communicates between God, the Father, and mortals, as a ruler to his subjects. The formulation of the self-presentation differs from this Johannine form: (a) a predicate verb is used, (b) the addressee is identified, (c) and the emissary communicates the will and role of the sender:

1. ἐγώ γὰρ ἐπικηρυκεύομαι τὰ εἰρηναία
 2. γενέσει
 3. παρὰ τοῦ καθαιρεῖν πολέμους ἐγνωκότος εἰρηνοφύλακος αἰεὶ θεοῦ,
1. I am the herald of peace
 2. to creation
 3. from that God whose will is to bring wars to an end, who is ever the guardian of peace.¹⁰

According to John 8:12 Jesus said: “I am the light of the world . . .” The Pharisees made a judicial objection, “You are bearing witness to yourself: your testimony is not true” (8:13). One may say, as P. N. Anderson (1999, 49) does, that the Pharisees here accuse Jesus of having spoken presumptuously

⁹ See also John 6:35, 41, 48.51; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5.

¹⁰ Translation by F. H. Colson is modified by me.

about himself. A more precise formulation would be that here a specific judicial question about bearing valid witness is raised. This criticism is in agreement with Jesus' own words in John 5:31: Ἐάν ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ἡ μαρτυρία μου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής: "If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true." Nevertheless, Jesus' answer in John 8:14 is, "Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true, for I know whence I have come or whither I am going."

Philo gives a solution to such a problem. In *Leg.* 3:205–207 he quotes from Gen 22:16f., where God is reported to say to Abraham: "By Myself I have sworn, saith the Lord..." Philo refers to some whose objection is: "... if it is God who swears, He bears witness to Himself, which is absurd, for he that bears the witness must be a different person from him on whose behalf it is borne." According to Philo, this is not in conflict with the rule of two witnesses, however. Only God is capable of giving witness to Himself for who else would be capable of bearing witness to Him? John correspondingly states that Jesus can bear witness to himself. He speaks as the Son of God who is sent by his Father. As Son he is as divine as God, his Father. Accordingly, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "if you knew me, you would know my Father also." As God's Son, Jesus has a divine nature. He is one with the Father and can bear witness to himself. Thus, John presupposes a Jewish debate on the legal rule against self-witness and the problem that arises when it is applied to God (Borgen 1974, 583). This observation has been subject to further analysis by P. J. Bekken (2008). He reaches the following conclusion (p. 42): "The parallel material in Philo, *Leg.* 3:205–208, provides documentation for the view that the controversy of self-testimony reflected in John 5:31–40 and 8:12–20 is a specifically 'Christian' version of a discussion, which also has existed among Jews in Alexandria."

The man Jesus, as the Son of God, belongs to both jurisdictions, the divine and the human. He also follows the rules for human jurisdiction, as it is stated in v. 17: "In your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true; I bear witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me." Here the Son and the Father are seen as equal partners who, for that reason, both can bear witness together. As did Philo, so does John operate within two jurisdictions, the divine context of law and the other, the law on the earthly level of human beings. The formulation "in your law" is hardly to be understood as referring to the Jewish law seen from a non-Jewish perspective. The phrase rather refers to (the Jewish)

law as it functioned within the human jurisdiction as distinct from the divine jurisdiction.

Who Are the Criminals?

In the remaining paragraphs of John 8, only one topic will be selected, that of being a sinner, a criminal, or being in danger of becoming a criminal. Throughout chapter 7 and 8:12–47 Jesus is treated as a criminal, who was to be arrested or killed. At the close in John 8:59 the “Jews” took up stones to throw at him, and thereby attempted to execute him on the spot in the temple precincts. Concerning spontaneous vigilante executions see T. Seland 1995. Seland also refers to John 8:59 (236). In contrast to this action against Jesus as a criminal, Jesus asks: “Which of you convicts me of sin?” (8:46).

Reporting Back and Returning to the Sender

When a commissioned person had completed his mission he/she would return to the sender and report what had happened. M. M. Mitchell, (1966, 199–210) who has studied envoys in the Greco-Roman context, shows how the report to the sender is one element in the concept of agency as a whole: She summarized the characteristics of agency and found that there were striking similarities between the halakhic principle of agency and ideas in the Fourth Gospel. These include (a) the unity between the agent and his sender, (b) even though the agent is subordinate; (c) the obedience of the agent to the will of the sender; (d) the task of the agent in the lawsuit; (e) his return and report to the sender; and (f) his appointing of other agents as an extension of his own mission in time and space.

Philo discusses the envoy's report in *QG* 4:144 the servant reported back to the son's father as the one who had sent him (Gen 24:66). When Jesus as the Son has completed his mission he is to return to the sender. John 13ff. is dominated by this theme of Jesus' return to his Father: “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that he had come from God and was going to God . . .” (13:3).

When Jesus told “the Jews” that he was about to leave and be lifted up, they were bewildered, because they were from below, and thus their perspective was limited to an earthly realm, 8:21–29 (cf. *Mek. Exod.* 12:1; *p. Hag.* 76d; *Str.-B.* 1961, 2, 656–57; J.-A. Bühner 1977, 335–41). As for the Son, he returned from his authorized mission to his previous state “before the world was made” (17:5).

John 9:1–10:39 as Documentation: Controversial Healing and Prostration, Its Reversal, Christology, Community and Mission (P. Borgen 2006, 19–22)

In the story of healing the blind person, the healing event and judicial exchanges are woven together. This combination is also seen in a less developed form in the healing of the paralytic man, Matt 9:1–8. The story in John 9 has an expanded form of such a controversy.

Following the judicial controversy in John 5, chapter 6 documents the activities of the three witnesses listed: the works, the Father, and the Scriptures. The confession by Peter, and its contrast, the betrayal of Judas, conclude the documentation.

The units of judicial exchanges grow into a series in John 7:(1)14–52 and 8:12–59. Then chapter 9 continues to document through the story of the healing of the blind man. The concluding scene is that of the healed person worshipping Jesus and a characterization of the reversal taking place: those who do not see are to see, and those who see may become blind, 9:35–41. The documentation receives further explication in John 10, which brings together ideas about Christology, community, and mission. “The Jews” prepared to stone Jesus (10:31). An exchange followed, which led to an attempt to arrest him in 10:39.

Historical Considerations

Since Paul and Philo provide important information on this topic, we must first mention that it is important that their works can be dated.

Paul’s letters can be dated to the mid-fifties and earlier, and Philo’s writings were written before the year 50. Paul gives glimpses into some of the ways in which Gospel traditions were transmitted and interpreted. One such glimpse is the observation that in 1 Cor 7:10–16 part of the Jesus logion on divorce was used together with a subsequent exposition. In the exposition, some words from the tradition were repeated and interpreted. A similar approach has been seen in John 5 where the saying in v. 19 (“The Son can do nothing of his own etc.” and the logion in v. 23 (“He who does not honor the Son etc.”) have been subject to the same form of exposition. Thus units from the Johannine tradition have been interpreted in the same way that Paul interpreted a Jesus logion in the mid-fifties C.E.

What about the Quest for the Historical Jesus?

C. H. Dodd has suggested that John 5:19 is a parable (C. H. Dodd 1962).

It had the following form:

Negation:

The son can do nothing by himself—only what he sees his father doing.

Affirmation: Whatever the father does, the son does likewise.

Explanation: For the father [loves his son and] shows his son everything he is doing.

Seen as a parable, the saying fits well into Jesus' life and indirectly reflects his appearance as one who had a unique (filial) relationship to God. Parables were a central element in his teaching. A similar understanding of Jesus' divine authority in John 5:19 and Matt 11:27—"All things have been delivered to me by my Father, etc."—, speaks in favor of understanding John 5:19 as a received unit of tradition (U. Luz 1990, 207–16).

The Central Logion of Agency

As for the saying on agency which here is called a logion, John 5:23, it deserves a broader analysis and consideration: It is a version of a logion which has been extensively used in the Gospel and has parallels in the other Gospels. It is a central logion about agent and agency and should also be analyzed together with other Christological phrases and titles. Several Christological titles are associated with Jesus in John, among them The Prophet, the royal Messiah, Teacher, and God's Agent. There may be influence from Old Testament figures who were sent as agents and emissaries of God, in particular Moses, who play an important role in the Gospels. One challenge will be to relate Moses to Jesus as a lawbreaker and a criminal who suffered capital punishment.

More detailed research on the complex role of Moses in John seems needed. On a broader level, a thorough study has been made by W. Meeks (1967). The accusations against Jesus for breaking the law and thus being crucified as a criminal should be taken fully into consideration.

Above it has been shown that in John 5:23, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him," is part of the fuller logion of agency used in 13:20. Different versions of this logion are also present in John 14:9; 15:23; 14:7, and 8:19.

There are other variations seen in the other Gospels. For example, in Mark 9:48 and Luke 9:48 the logion is applied to a person's relation to Jesus through his/her relation to a child. There are several variations as to the main verbs used to characterize different forms of relationships and communication, such as *to receive*, John 13:20; Matt 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke

9:48, *reject*, Luke 10:16 *hear*, Luke 10:16; *believe in*, John 12:44; *see*, John 12:45 and 14:9; *hate*, John 15:23; *honor*, John 5:23; and *know*, John 8:19 and 14:7.¹¹

The closest parallel to John 13:20 is in Matt 10:40: John 13:20, ὁ λαμβάνων ἄν τινα πέμψω ἐμὲ λαμβάνει, ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ λαμβάνων λαμβάνει τὸν πέμψαντά με (M. W. Holmes 2010, Jn 13:20). Matt 10:40 Ὁ δεχόμενος ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ δέχεται, καὶ ὁ ἐμὲ δεχόμενος δέχεται τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με.

To discover whether these two versions are mutually independent, I have compared similarities and differences between the logion on divorce in 1 Cor 7:10–11 and the parallels in the Synoptic Gospels. I have concluded that the verb used in the Synoptic version (Matt 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11–12; Luke 16:18) of the logion on divorce, (ἀπολύειν), differs from Paul's terms (χωρισθῆναι and ἀφιέναι). This phenomenon parallels the use of the logion on agency. John 13:20 has the verb λαμβάνειν and πέμπειν, while Matt 10:40 has δέχεσθαι and ἀποστέλλειν. These versions of the same logion are mutually independent (P. Borgen 1992b, 1820–23. Cf. C. H. Dodd 1965, 343–47).

The Role of Jesus as God's Agent/Envoy/Ambassador

Since the logion on agency is central in John, and it occurs in all the Gospels, it is natural to study it further to see if and how far the concept of agency and related ideas can give fruitful guidelines in the search for the historical Jesus. Can it be related to both his life from before his crucifixion and also part of the tradition which was transmitted and interpreted after his crucifixion and resurrection?

It is difficult to find one title which can be used to identify Jesus as a person. Thus N. A. Dahl gives this picture of Jesus, based mainly on the Gospels: "Jesus acted as a teacher, prophet, exorcist, and healer, but the role of king and prophet may overlap. He acted as an agent of God, with an authority which did not quite fit any category. Both followers and opponents may have thought of him as a potential messiah, even though he himself did not claim to be *the* prophet or the Messiah" (N. A. Dahl, 1992, 402). Martin Hengel comes close to using the title of agent as an adequate characterization of Jesus when he writes of "... his [Jesus'] claim to be God's eschatological messianic ambassador" (M. Hengel, 1976, 90).

¹¹ See further Philo, *Decal.* 119; *Legat.* 369; *Sipre on Numbers* and *Mek. Exod.* 14:31. P. Borgen, 1987a, 191–94. Cf. Gal 4:14; *Did.* 11:2; *Ign. Eph.* 6:1, etc.

The task is to make some observations on the concept of agent/agency when seen within the context of Jesus' life and death. Jesus' role as God's agent/envoy/ambassador can explain others' understanding of him as an integrated individual, whose impact can, nevertheless, be interpreted differently by different people.

1. Since Jesus spoke the word of God, and since he gave predictions about the future, some considered him to be a prophet, even the eschatological prophet, and, maybe, a prophet like Moses.

2. Since Jesus gathered a group of disciples and combined authoritative teaching and action, some saw him as a teacher, even as the eschatological teacher. Those who disagreed with him accused him of leading people astray.

3. The authority expressed by Jesus made some wonder if he had social and political ambitions as a royal pretender (cf. R. L. Webb, 2009: 748: "if the Romans wished to use this crucifixion as warning"). This last point is of special importance for historical studies. Among those who have discussed the designation of Jesus as king and Messiah, N. A. Dahl's research is worth being mentioned, although he does not limit himself to the Gospel of John. Dahl writes: "There is a point in the life of Jesus which is unconditionally established. That is his death. A historically tenable description of the life of Jesus would only be possible in the form of a description of his death, its historical presuppositions, and events preceding and following it."¹²

Using this as a key, it may be possible to search for insights into Jesus' life. He was crucified as a criminal. Why? As mentioned, according to R. Bultmann, Jesus was crucified as a messianic prophet. N. A. Dahl maintains that this understanding does not account for the title Messiah/the Christ being inextricably bound up with the name Jesus after his death. This fact can only be explained by presupposing that Jesus was actually crucified as the Messianic king.

This Christian use of the term cannot be explained by the resurrection belief as such (N. A. Dahl, 1974: 26). It was not part of Jewish Messianic

¹² N. A. Dahl 1974: 72; So also E. P. Sanders 1985, 294: "We should begin our study with two firm facts before us: Jesus was executed by the Romans as would-be-'king of the Jews', and his disciples subsequently formed a messianic movement which was not based on the hope of military victory." Sanders refers to P. Fredriksen, 1999: 8: "He was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrections, namely crucifixion." See also M. J. Wilkins 2009, 343; P. Bilde 2008, 23-24; R. L. Webb 2009, 669-760.

expectations that the Messiah should die (and be executed as a criminal) and rise again from the dead. The resurrection does mean, however, that Jesus was vindicated by God *vis-à-vis* his adversaries. If he was crucified as an alleged Messianic king, then—and only then—does faith in his resurrection necessarily become the faith in the resurrected Messiah/Christ. Hence the distinctiveness of the Christian idea of the Messiah in contrast to the Jewish one was born. Gradually the royal title Messiah/Christ became widely used and became another name for Jesus. Paul's letters provide early documentation for this usage (N. A. Dahl 1974, 37–47).

R. Bultmann changed his mind on this point and accepted Dahl's understanding (which was confirmed in a letter). He wrote a letter to Dahl dated Nov. 26, 1964, translated by Dahl and cited by him in N. A. Dahl, 1974, 161. Bultmann wrote: "I regard it as a special merit that you have emphasized the way in which the historical fact of the execution of Jesus as 'King of the Jews' led to a Christological reinterpretation of the messianic texts and concepts and how the 'fulfilment' of prophecy is at the same time always a new interpretation."

For the present study it is important that Jesus is seen as King/Messiah in John. This concept represents an important motif in the Gospel and is emphasized in the passion narrative, John 18:33ff.; 19:1–3, 12–15, 19–22. The title written on the cross was: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The Gospel uses here a reliable historical memory which goes back to the event of Jesus' crucifixion and before.

Conclusion: As stated above, the title of an agent as such may be a profession and an office as an envoy, commissioner and/or ambassador. Martin Hengel has this latter usage in mind when he refers to Jesus' "claim to be God's eschatological messianic ambassador" (M. Hengel, 1976, 90). Therefore the understanding of God's agent as one holding the profession and office of a messenger and ambassador accords well with the life of Jesus. It allowed people to associate him with various figures and offices. It also made way for officials to find reasons for accusing him of being a royal pretender, and thus to execute him as the king of the Jews. He was arrested as an individual and not together with his followers; and he was crucified as a criminal together with two criminals. Crucifixion was a public penalty and served as a warning to others.

Thus, there are weighty reasons to understand the logion cited in John 13:20 and other places as a saying from the Jesus of history, that is from his life as he approached his trial and execution by means of crucifixion.

Further Observations

There are further observations which favor such an understanding:

1. The role of Jesus as God's agent/envoy/ambassador can explain the combination of his lowly background and status with his appearance as a person of authority and self consciousness or awareness. Both extremes are present in John's Gospel.

2. One should not forget that Jesus encountered negative reactions as a person from a dubious town in Galilee, as one who acted violently in the Temple, as a lawbreaker, and as the son of Joseph, of known parents, an unrecognized teacher, etc. . . . These points need to be analyzed and evaluated. Some of them are Johannine developments, but together with features from the other Gospels they suggest that it is historical relevant to examine Jesus' earthly and socially low background. Some studies in this area, for example on geography, archaeology and social elements, have been done, see S. Freyne 2009, 139–54; U. C. von Wahlde 2009, 155–73; etc. Cf. H. Moxnes, 2003, 2, 31, 51–53, 138–40.

With this background, Jesus' exalted claims and authority as God's agent/envoy/ambassador would produce tension with circles of society. It is crucial to note that John does not have just a high Christology. A low, and even negative "Christology" is present in the Gospel. Other relevant aspects should also be considered.

3. The role of Jesus as God's agent/envoy/ambassador accords well with his (Jesus) combined loyalty and freedom relative to the Law of Moses and to biblical figures. Within this context some persons and groups would see him as a lawbreaker, as illustrated by some of his activities on the Sabbath. As seen above, Jesus' healing of the paralytic at Bethesda was so important that it led to extensive deliberations in John 5–10. In John's rendering of this story, two crimes were committed: a healing that could have been done on another day was done on the Sabbath and Jesus told the healed person to carry the pallet, again and obviously on the Sabbath. The deviate aspect of these actions can be illustrated by Philo's concern for the faithful keeping of the Sabbath. The lack of observance disturbs the community order. Philo, *Migr.* 88: "... fair fame is won as a rule by all who cheerfully take things as they find them and interfere with no established customs, but maintain with care the constitution of their country." As seen from the context in §§ 91–99, there Philo refers to people who, unlike those mentioned in §88, accept Jewish teachings about the

Sabbath, festivals and circumcision, but do not take them to be laws to be practiced. On the Sabbath, they would do all that they are permitted to do on other days, such as till the ground, light fires, or carry things, etc. According to Philo, those who do not keep these ordinances will incur the censure of the many and charges will be brought against them.

4. The judicial role of an ambassador goes beyond that of being a prophet. John ties it closely to that of being the son of the father: God's Son is God's ambassador. This theme calls for further investigation.

Since the present quest for the historical Jesus is centered on the death of Jesus as the only certain historical event, focus should be given to the elements of crime-reports given in the Gospels, John included, which reflected his conflicts with the leaders in the society. Such crime reports should be seen together with his trial and execution (P. Borgen, 2007: 55–56). His crucifixion as a criminal must be taken seriously, as already documented in Paul's letters: See the emphatic words in Gal 3:1, and references in 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2; Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21.

Epilogue

In closing, I would like to look back at the principles mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The first principle ran as follows: "In early Christian tradition, the Scriptures had authority, and small units of the Hebrew Bible ('verses') were quoted and subject to exegetical exposition. One might ask whether the works and words of Jesus were in the process of being treated in the same or similar way. The answer is 'yes.' For example, a 'Jesus logion' may serve as the basis for various forms of interpretation."

The other principle indicated how tradition and interpretation were brought into a dynamic interaction: "The exegetical paraphrase... fuses together words and fragments from different traditions into traditional forms and patterns. This method of exegetical paraphrase, then, leads to a dynamic process of new combinations within the framework of traditon."

Both principles have proved to be helpful for the analysis of the Gospel of John. Moreover, the concept of agency and related rules, taken from family life as well as from the official sector, are so central in the Gospel that I have only been able to make a limited contribution, which, I hope, can serve as encouragement to further studies.

CHAPTER TWELVE

'JOHN THE WITNESS' AND THE PROLOGUE: JOHN 1:1–34(37)

Observations have been made above on the structure of John 5:1–10:39 and how the judicial concept of God's Agent/The One Sent by the Father is a main designation of Jesus, but, as seen in 5:18 and 7:1–10:39, simultaneously under the threat of being seen as a criminal to be punished. These threatening initiatives were then later successfully executed as is narrated in the passion narrative, John 18–19. On the other hand, John 5:30–37 lists witnesses who testify to the claim that Jesus is God's emissary. Both in this paragraph as elsewhere, for example, in 10:41, 3:22–30, and in 1:6–9, 15, 19–37, the testimony of John the Baptist is outlined in various ways. In the present study, the testimony of John the Baptist/Witness in John 1 will be analyzed, in particular to throw more light on the connection between the Prologue and the immediate context in the Gospel and to the Gospel as a whole.

In Johannine research, the unit of John 1:1–18 is called the Prologue (see for example Barrett 1978a, 149–70; Brown 1966, 3–37). What is the relationship between the Prologue and the Gospel as a whole?

A. Harnack raised this question in a pointed way in his study "Über das Verhältnis des Prologs des Vierten *Evangeliums* zum ganzen Werke," *ZTK* 2 (1892), 189–231. In her survey of research on this subject E. Harris (Harris 1994, 24) concludes: "The foregoing brief account of the approaches to the question of the relation of the prologue to the rest of the gospel shows some agreement, but also a wide range of disagreement."

The usual approach has been to compare the opening of John's Gospel with the other Gospels. Two examples may be given. According to C. K. Barrett (1978, 149), "each of the evangelists begins his work by tracing back the activity of Jesus to its origin." John sets it into a theological framework. Although he alludes to the starting points used by Mark, Matthew, and Luke, he has regarded them as inadequate, and as possibly misleading: The baptism of Jesus in Mark's Gospel might be given an adoptionist interpretation, and the idea of the virgin birth in Matthew and Luke recalled pagan myth. John's alternative was to see the work of Jesus within the context of eternity. John's use of a cosmogony is paralleled in Hellenistic literature, e.g. as seen in *Corpus hermeticum* (*Corp. herm.* 1:4–11).

R. E. Brown (1966, pages XXXVIII, 21, 27, 45) suggests that the Gospel proper begins with the testimony of the Baptist and his activity. Before the poetic prologue was affixed, the section with the Baptist, John 1:19ff., may have opened the Gospel, although a more likely possibility is that vv. 6–7(8?) about the Baptist served as the original opening. He understands the Gospel of John to be the end result of a process which on the whole is independent of the other written Gospels.

It should be added that in the Gospel of John it is more accurate to use the designation “John the Witness” than “John the Baptist,” hence, as far as possible I will use the former term in this chapter.

Crucially, Barrett emphasizes that John sets the activity of Jesus in a theological framework. The suggestion that he alludes to the starting points used by Mark, Matthew, and Luke and regards them as inadequate is a view that has not been substantiated in a convincing way.

Brown follows those who focus on a poetical core of the Prologue, and he thinks that this poetic unit may have been added to a Gospel in which the references to John the Witness served as opening.

M. Hooker suggests that John 1:6–9, 15 is a real part of the Prologue (Hooker 1970, 354–58; id. 1974, 40–58). Hooker’s approach shall be pursued further below.

This aspect was touched on by C. H. Dodd. He examined the relationship between the Prologue and its subsequent context. He tied together John 1:1–51 under the term “the proem”: “Chapter 1 forms a proem to the whole Gospel. It falls into two parts: 1–18, commonly designed as the Prologue, and 19–51, which we may, from the nature of its contents, conveniently call the Testimony” (Dodd 1953, 292).

The present study will maintain that the Prologue, vv. 1–18, is closely woven together with the testimony of the Baptist/John the Witness, John 1:19–34(37). Thus, the detailed analysis will be limited to these two entities of the Prologue and the testimonies. It should be noted, however, that a wider context could have been included. In general I agree with Dodd who maintains that the effect of the witness is seen in the recruiting of Jesus’ disciples, vv. 35–51. Also Jesus’ father, Joseph, and his mother are introduced. It would even be defensible to go further than Dodd and include in the introductory section the manifestation of Jesus’ glory at the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, and the disciples’ belief in him, 2:1–11. This manifestation of Jesus’ glory points back to John 1:14: “We have beheld his glory . . .”

The present study will take as a point of departure my analysis of John 1:1–18 where I concluded that it is a targumic exposition of Gen 1:1–5. My

study was originally delivered at the University of Uppsala, upon invitation extended to me by Professor Harald Riesenfeld, and published as “Logos var det sanne lys,” *Svensk exegetisk Arsbok*, 35 (1970) 79–95. It was later published in English. See Borgen 1970, 288–95, and id. 1972, 115–30. The topic makes it necessary to repeat main points from these essays. My observations suggest that John 1:1–18 basically is a targumic exposition of parts of Gen 1, as suggested by the initial words in John 1:1: Ἐν ἀρχῇ, “In the beginning,” which are taken from the Septuagint, LXX Gen 1:1. Further analysis shows that the exposition more precisely draws on LXX Gen 1:1–5 from where central terms are drawn. The terms are marked by bold type.

LXX Gen 1:1–5 reads:

- 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν.
 2 ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο τοῦ ὕδατος.
 3 Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς *Γενηθήτω φῶς*. Καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς.
 4 Καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλόν.
 Καὶ δι εὐχάρισεν ὁ θεὸς ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ φωτός καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σκοτούς.
 5 Καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ φῶς ἡμέραν καὶ τὸ σκότος ἐκάλεσεν νύκτα. Καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα καὶ ἐγένετο πρωί, ἡμέρα μία.

The words marked by bold letters are used and built into the targumic exposition in John 1:1–5. The words written in Italics, τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν, (“the heaven and the earth”) are rendered by John as πάντα (“all”), John 1:3, and as ὁ κόσμος (“the world”) in vv. 9–10. The words ἐποίησεν... εἶπεν... Γενηθήτω are in John 1:10 rephrased as δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, which is also the case in John 1:3... The prepositional phrase δι’ αὐτοῦ in John 1:3 refers back to the Word, ὁ λόγος which is a term based on LXX εἶπεν ὁ θεός, “God said.”

John 1:1–2 speaks of the pre-creational time, v. 3 refers to the creation, and vv. 4–5 characterize the pre-incarnational “time” with its tension between “light,” τὸ φῶς, and “darkness,” ἡ σκοτία.

The introduction of John the Witness in v. 6 introduces the application of these words and phrases from Genesis into history, with a focus on the appearance of Jesus Christ. In vv. 6–9 we read of the man whose name was John and the coming of the light into the world.

Then in vv. 9–13, where the phrase about creation, δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, repeats ἐποίησεν... εἶπεν... Γενηθήτω and the word πάντα from v. 3 is replaced by ὁ κόσμος, the reference to history is clear: he was “in the cosmos”; the cosmos did not recognize him; he came to his own and was rejected.

Finally, the terms ὁ λόγος, “the Word” and θεός “God” are repeated in vv. 14 and 18. The Logos’ appearance in history is expressed in v. 14 as

“became flesh”, σὰρξ ἐγένετο, and is in various ways implied in vv. 14–18. For example, John and his witness are mentioned in v. 15, the name Jesus Christ occurs in v. 17 and in v. 18 one reads that God’s Son has made God known, ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

Thus as mentioned in chapter one of this book, John 1:1–18, seen as a unit, has the following structure (words and phrases which refer to Gen 1:1–5 are also printed in Greek):

a) vv. 1–2: the Logos (ὁ λόγος) and God (θεός) in the beginning (Ἐν ἀρχῇ) before creation.

b) v. 3: Creation (πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο).

c) vv. 4–5: Light and darkness (τὸ φῶς and ἡ σκοτία) in the pre-incarnational time; darkness has not overcome the light.

c’) vv. 6–9: the coming of light (φῶς) with Jesus’ coming and with John as the witness.

b’) vv. 10–13: the Creator (δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο) present in the cosmos. He is not recognized nor received. John the Witness’ identification of Jesus as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, John 1:29, and his presentation of Jesus to Israel refer back to vv. 10–13.

a’) vv. 14–18: The epiphany of the coming of Jesus. The terms the Logos (ὁ λόγος) and God (θεός) are repeated. John the Witness serves as the herald (v. 15).

As stated, I will focus my attention on the expository use of central words and phrases which are taken from or which refer to Gen 1:1–5. This analysis does not exclude the influence from other traditions related to protology and subsequent revelation in history or/ and in eschatology. Thus, concepts such as Wisdom, the Law, the heavenly man, and other concepts are relevant background ideas to be considered.

An example of targumic exposition in which the perspective of protology, history, and eschatology is found in the *Jerusalem Targum* on Gen 3:24. Moreover, this unit has also a structure of a, b, c, and c’, b’, a’.: “Two thousand years before He had created the world,

a) He created the Law; b) and prepared Gehinnom; c) and the garden of Eden.

c’) He prepared the garden of Eden for the righteous that they should eat and delight themselves with the fruit of the tree, because they had kept the commandments of the Law in this world.

b’) He prepared Gehinnom, for the wicked, which is like the sharp, consuming sword with two edges. He prepared in the depth of it flakes of fire and burning coals for the wicked for their punishment for ever in the world to come, who have not kept the commandments of the Law in this world.

a') For the Law is the tree of life; whoever keepeth it in this life, liveth and subsideth as the tree of life. The Law is good to keep in this world as the fruit of the tree of life in the world that cometh" (English translation in Etheridge 1862, ad loc.).¹ My study on the Prologue of John was originally published as an essay in a journal. Within that limit it was necessary to make a selection of aspects covered. Thus J. Painter was correct by stating that I gave insufficient attention to the parallels found in Wisdom traditions. Painter notes that R. Bultmann stresses the importance of this background but without adequate attention paid to the role of Gen 1 (Painter 2003, 183–85; Bultmann 1923, 3–26; cf. Tobin 1990, 252–69; Barrett 1978, 153–54; Dunn 1983, 330–39, etc.). It should be made clear that Wisdom traditions are an important background both for John's Prologue as well as for the Gospel as a whole.

Wisdom as a personified concept is close to God before and at the creation; and Wisdom comes into the world and is either rejected or received. Wisdom is also at times portrayed as returning to the heavenly realm. Among the sources for such ideas Prov 8:22–31 and Sir 24:8–12 may be mentioned. In some Jewish sources, concepts like Wisdom, the Law, and other ideas, are understood to be created before the creation of heaven and earth and to be revealed in historical events, and/or in the age to come. One example is from the *Jerusalem Targum* on Gen 3:24 as cited above. There, the Law, Gehinnom, and Eden are created before creation in order to be revealed in history and/or eschatology. John's Prologue is built on a similar model: protological and pre-incarnational notions are in vv. 1–5, and the revelation in history, of Jesus, vv. 6–18, and subsequently in an unfolding history including his death and return. It is here relevant to mention that Paul in Philippians 2:6–11 provides a traditional unit which reflects a similar model, with protological ideas, the revelation in history of Jesus Christ's life and death, and his exaltation.

The conclusion of this examination of John 1:1–18 is that it is a targumic exposition of Gen 1:1–5 and that it has a chiastic structure. Point (a) deals with the pre-creational beginning of the Logos and God and (a') with the revelation of the Logos in history, by which God, the Father, is made known. Point (b) deals with the creation and (b') with the presence in the world of the creator when he came to his own, i.e. to (Israel) the center of the created world. Point (c) deals with light and darkness in

¹ J. W. Etheridge (trans. and ed.) 1862–1865; J. Painter, 2003, 183–85; Bultmann 1923, 3–26; cf. Th. H. Tobin, 1990, 252–69; Barrett 1978, 153–54; J. D. G. Dunn, 1983, 330–39, etc.

the created world and (c') with the coming of the light to the world, and John bearing witness to the light.

With these observations on John 1:1–18 as background, the structure and content of John 1:19–34 will be analyzed, and some further comments will be made on John 1:35–2:11.

At this point I would like to comment on a subtle concern behind the Prologue and first chapter, which then runs throughout the Gospel as a whole. I previously agreed with those scholars who see an anti-docetic motif at work in John: this meant a protest against the Docetists who denied the humanity of God's Son that culminated in his death. Now this does not seem to be quite accurate. The concern at work is the opposite: How can a historical person be divine? The key is formulated in John 6:42:

They said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?' How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'

How can Jesus, a specific human being, be divine? How can the divine dimension be present in specific events and contexts? Jesus' claim to be the Son of God caused him to be accused of blasphemy. This culminated in his crucifixion as a criminal. The accusation of blasphemy was a challenge to be answered during Jesus' ministry as well as in his death and resurrection and in the early Church.

The claim of the Prologue, and the whole Gospel, is that Jesus' claim was not blasphemy, but the truth. Jesus, the son of Joseph, comes from heaven (cf. 6:41–46). He unites the divine and human realms, as stated in John 8:14 and 17: "Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true, for I know whence I have come and whither I am going. . . . In your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true; I bear witness to myself and the Father who sent me bears witness to me." Rightly understood, he is like God as outlined in John 1:1–18.

As already shown, in the Prologue there are three references to the incarnational revelation in history: In vv. 1: 6–9 the focus is on the function of John (the Baptist) as a witness to the coming of the light into history. In vv. 10–13 the focus is on the created cosmos, and the two responses of rejection or acceptance. He came to his own and His own people did not receive him. Finally, the epiphanic and theophanic manifestation of the Logos as a historical person, Jesus Christ, God's Son, is presented in 1:14–18.

As the author moves into the narrative about historical persons and events—as they were presented in the traditions received and in expositions developed by him—the challenge and meaning of the specifics of

history have to be grappled with. The specifics of history begin with the appearance of John the Witness within the Prologue itself, in vv. 6–9 and v. 15, and which is further developed in 1:19–34. Since the specifics of history are challenging for Jesus’ claim, it is understandable that information about events and locations are kept and mixed with the interpretative response, *in casu* with halakhic expansions and other elaborations of a high Christology. In this way both a historical consciousness and a theological and interpretative consciousness are present in the transmitted tradition.

Documentation

An element relevant to the Prologue is found in John 1:19–2:11. Verses 19–34(36) report on the testimonies to Jesus made by the John the Witness. In the heading in v. 19, “And this (Καὶ αὕτη) is the testimony of John” the word Καὶ connects what follows with the preceding Prologue (Beutler 1972, 250). This is now the case, even if one thinks that v. 19 may have been the Gospel’s original opening and that the Prologue was added later (Brown 1966, 42). Similarly, the word “this,” αὕτη, points both back to the Prologue and forward to what follows (Beutler 1972, 250). Bultmann (1968, 58, fn. 2) also states that it is typical for John’s Gospel that this demonstrative pronoun explicates a previous concept.

The present study will concentrate on 1:19–34(36) where the witness of John is presented in a direct way. I would however like to make a brief comment on vv. 35–51 and 2:1–11. In 1:35–51 the Christological designation “Lamb of God,” v. 29, is repeated by John the Witness in v. 35. This testimony made two of his disciples follow Jesus: “The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’ These two disciples heard John say this, and they followed Jesus” (vv. 36–37). One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. The following day, the geographical scene changes from that of John the Witness at the Jordan to Jesus’ activities in Galilee. Philip and Nathanael join him, and Jesus’ father and mother are mentioned. Nazareth is referred to as his Jesus’ home town. At the wedding in Cana in Galilee, a manifestation of Jesus’ glory was given, in 2:11, in accordance with the glory referred to in the Prologue, 1:14, “We have beheld his glory.”

In this section the Christological titles Messiah, Son of God, king of Israel, and Son of Man are mentioned. We must therefore ask how these titles are related to the designation Lamb of God mentioned in vv. 29 and 36.

A Judicial Hearing, vv. 19–28

In John 1:19–28 John the Witness gives his testimony by characterizing himself, negatively and positively, and referring to his activity as a baptizer. While he was baptizing in Bethany beyond the Jordan, emissaries were sent to him from Jerusalem. They interrogated him. The setting in John 1:19–28 is judicial: the priests and Levites from Jerusalem were sent as commissioned emissaries to interrogate him and report back to those who sent them. In v. 24 it is said that the emissaries were Pharisees. (Concerning this reference to the Pharisees, see Brown 1966, 24.) These emissaries (and those who sent them) were understood to belong to well-recognized official segments of Jerusalem. The priests and Levites belonged to the staff of the Temple. All the Gospels cite Isa 40:3. John 1:23 reads: “He [John the Witness] said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord’, as the prophet Isaiah said.” There are some distinctive aspects of its interpretation in John 1:23. Dodd (1965, 40) notes that the other evangelists introduce the quotation in their comments about John the Baptist. In the Gospel of John, John, as the Witness, applies the Old Testament quotation to himself: Ἐγὼ φωνῆ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. Εὐθύνατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου (M. W. Holmes 2010, Jn 1:23). “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’” A similar exegetical application in the first person singular is seen in John 6:35, where the word bread (ἄρτος) in the Old Testament quotation in 6:31 is identified with Jesus: “I am the bread,” ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος. The same method is used in *Lam. Rab.* 1:16 where Deut 28:49, “The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar . . . as swift as the eagle flies . . .”, is applied to the Emperor Trajan. Trajan said: “I am the eagle . . .” אָנָּא הוּא נִשְׂרָא (Borgen 1965/1981, 72–73).

In the Dead Sea Scrolls text 1QS 8:13–16, Isa 40:3 is applied to the community. They were to be the voice of the community through studying the Law. Thus, the application of the text to John the Baptist was analogous to the application applied in the Qumran community. In examining the quotation from Isa 40:3, Menken (1966, 21–35) concluded that it was drawn from the LXX or from a pre-Aquila edition of it. The verb ἐτοιμάσατε, “prepare,” was replaced by εὐθύνατε, “make straight,” however. Menken (1966, 35) gives the reason for this change: “the Baptist was not so much Jesus’ precursor as a witness to Jesus contemporaneous with him.” The text in John 1:19ff. suggests that another aspect was even more prominent. Since John the Witness himself pointedly referred to the Messiah and said:

"I am not the Messiah," he made clear that he was not the royal Messiah. He was "the voice." Luke 3:15 raises a similar question ("all men questioned . . . whether perhaps he were the Christ"), and Acts 13:25 alludes to this ("What do you suppose that I am? I am not he"). The denial made by John the Witness suggests that *Jesus* was the Messiah, and that John the Witness made no claim for taking his role. Correspondingly, in v. 8 it is said that he was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. Thus, when the emissaries asked John the Witness whether he was Elijah or the Prophet, his answer was also "no."

There is an exegetical basis for this change of the verb from Isa 40:3. The subsequent line reads "make straight (εὐθείας ποιεῖ) the paths of our Lord." This parallelism may be used to support the replacement of the verb ἐτοιμάσατε, "prepare," with εὐθύνατε, "make straight."

In my review (Borgen 1974, 583) of J. Beutler's rich and important monograph *Martyria, Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Zeugnisthema bei Johannes*, I looked into the works of Josephus and discovered that the setting of John 1:19–28 has the form of a legal interrogation similar to that which Jesus, the son of Ananias, had to face according to Josephus, *B.J.* 6:305. Jesus, the son of Ananias, had repeatedly and publicly cried out a sinister message (Josephus, *B.J.* 6:300–301). The magistrates brought him before the Roman governor. He was asked about his identity, *who* he was, and about his conduct, *why* he acted as he did. Then he was expected to give an *answer*. "When Albinus, the governor asked him who he was and whence he was (τίς τ' εἶη καὶ πόθεν) and why (διὰ τί) he uttered these cries, he answered (ἀπεκρίνατο) him never a word" (§ 305).

The same structure is seen in a more developed form in the interrogation of John by the officials who were sent from Jerusalem. The report of the interrogation in John has the form of a protocol. As an example of a protocol from a judicial hearing, see Eitrem, S. and Amundsen, L. 1931, 39–43. There the questions asked by the official person have a brief form. The answers given by the one who was examined are also relatively brief, but nevertheless of variable length.

In John 1:19–23 the priests and the Levites asked "*who*" he was. In the list of possible figures for identification, John the Witness himself mentioned the Christ first. The envoys added Elijah and the prophet. John the Witness denied that any one of them was his identity: "And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, '*Who* are you (Σὺ τίς εἶ)?': He confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.'

And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?'

He said, 'I am not.'

'Are you the prophet?'

And he answered, 'No'.

They said to him then, 'Who are you (Τίς εἶ)? Let us have and answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' (Τίς εἶ; . . . τί λέγεις περὶ σεαυτοῦ;).

Then a positive answer was given:

He said (ἔφη), 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said.

Then in vv. 24–28 it is said that emissaries came from the Pharisees and asked "*why*," and John the Witness explained:

'Then *why* (Τί οὖν) are you baptizing if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water; but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.'

Here John the Witness gives a clue: an unknown person of higher rank is in their midst. The words Ἐγὼ βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι . . . ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος, οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἄξιος ἵνα λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἰμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος ("I baptize with water . . . he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie") have, with variations, parallels in the other Gospels and in Acts: Mark 1:7–8; Luke 3:16; Matt 3:11, and Acts 11:16 and 13:25. Dodd (1965, 253–56) recognizes in the Johannine account a general similarity to the Synoptics, but John does not follow any of the Synoptic versions consistently. There are also some agreements with the formulations in Acts. Dodd concludes: "The simplest, and surely most probable, hypothesis is that this part of the Baptist's preaching, which was evidently regarded in the early Church as of crucial importance, was preserved in several branches of the tradition, and that variations arose in the process of oral transmission" (Dodd 1965, 256). Dodd's analysis is presupposed in the present exegetical investigation.

What is the relationship between this interrogation of John the Witness and the Prologue? At the outset it is important to note that there are two places in the Prologue itself where John the Witness is mentioned in an explicit way, in John 1:6–8(9) and in v. 15. In vv. 6–9 we read that the pre-incarnational light is coming to the world. John the Witness was not the light, but he bore witness to the light. An example of his witness is seen in v. 15 where he bore witness to the incarnate one: "He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me." M. Hooker (1970, 354–58; id.

1974, 41) has seen that these references to John the Witness are not intrusions into the Prologue. These brief statements in vv. 6–9 and v. 15 about his witnessing functions point forward to the subsequent section on John the Witness in vv. 19ff. This establishes a positive link between the more philosophical parts of the Prologue and the rest of John 1.

This connection should be examined in more detail. It is obvious that the testimony by John the Witness in John 1:19–28 points back to vv. 6–9 where it is stated that he came to give testimony. In both places it is made clear what John the Witness is not: in v. 8, οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, “he was not the light. . .”, and correspondingly in vv. 19ff., “Ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμι ὁ χριστός, κτλ (“I am not the Christ,” etc.), in vv. 19ff. Then in v. 8 it is told what John the Witness is: ἀλλ’ ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, “he came to bear witness to the light.” Similarly in v. 23 he identifies himself with the quotation from the prophet Isaiah and refers thereby also to his superior, “the Lord”: “I am the voice (Ἐγὼ φωνή . . .) of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord (κυρίου).’” A further characterization of John the Witness and his superior, to whom he bears witness, is seen in vv. 26–27: “I baptize with water (Ἐγὼ βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι), but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me (ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος), the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy (οὐδ’ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἄξιος) to untie.”

Thus, there are sufficient agreements and similarities between the first testimonial section in John 1:19–28, and the targumic interpretation of the “light” in vv. 6–9 and vv. 4–5, to suggest that the interrogation of John the Witness in vv. 19–28 is connected to the targumic exposition in the Prologue. This means that the light revealed in history is understood to be the same light as the pre-incarnational light in vv. 4–5. Moreover, John the Witness bearing witness to the light, v. 7, has the function as “the voice,” v. 23.

Encounter, Identification and Further Information

The theme of the hidden Messiah is mentioned in John 1:26, 31 and 33. In v. 26 John the Witness addresses the Pharisaic envoys and says: . . . among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me . . .” According to John 1:31 and 33 the Baptist himself lacked this knowledge. He said: “I myself did not know him. . .” It should be added that the idea of the hidden Messiah is debated in 7:27: “. . . when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”

What is the relationship between the hidden status and the revealed status? In the case of a king or the Messiah, it may mean that the person concerned becomes king and/or that he assumes his office. In that case John the Witness would have mediated God's appointment of Jesus to kingship/Messiahship, as Elijah could have been expected to do. This was a Jewish expectation according to Trypho in Justin's *Dial.* 8:4: "If the Messiah has been born and exists anywhere, he is not known, nor is he conscious of his own existence, nor has he any power until Elijah comes to anoint him and make him manifest to all" (Falls 2003, 135–36...).

As shown above, this is not the view here in John. It must be kept in mind that it is not said that Jesus lacked knowledge of his own Messianic role or John the Witness is not seen as a precursor, but he was one who bore witness to Jesus (cf. M. de Jonge 1990, 299–308). Thus, Jesus' status and role are of a unique nature due to his pre-existence, a uniqueness to which John the Witness testifies.

It is relevant, nevertheless, to look into features associated with the choice of a king, to discover any similarities and differences and how the procedure is modified. An interesting example is God's choice of David as king, mediated by the prophet Samuel, 1 Samuel 15:34–16:12. Josephus' version of the choice of David as king in *A.J.* 6:156–165 sets the biblical story in approximately the same time as John. Against this background John 1:29–33 is to be examined. "The next day," vv. 29–33(34), provides documentation and testimony for various themes and interprets various traditions. A central feature is John the Witness' encounter with Jesus and his identification of him (v. 29–31). Verse 29 reads: "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!'" A similar encounter is pictured by Josephus, *A.J.* 6:164–165, when David was presented to the prophet Samuel: "Now as soon as David appeared... 'This', said Samuel softly to himself, 'is he whom it has pleased God to make king'" οὗτος ἐστὶν... ὁ βασιλεύειν ἀρέσας τῷ θεῷ. Then, according to Josephus, in the sight of David, Samuel "took the oil and anointed him and spoke low into his ear, explaining that God had chosen him to be king."

One might have expected that in John 1:29 the term Christ/Messiah would have been employed. Since John the Witness explicitly said "I am not the Christ," v. 20, he seems to imply Jesus was the Christ. Moreover, although of the two disciples who, on the next day (v. 36), heard John again identify Jesus as "the Lamb of God" in v. 41, one of the two, Andrew, said, "We have found the Messiah (which means Christ)." Then, in v. 49

we read that Nathanael confessed: "You are the King of Israel!" These observations support Dodd's suggestion (Dodd 1953, 230–38; and 1965, 269; cf. Aune 1997, 1:367–73) that "God's Lamb" is a royal and Messianic title. The words "who takes away the sin of the world" indicate that the royal designation has been combined with sacrificial ideas or other ideas for removing sins, for example by overcoming the power of evil by winning the lawsuit (Dodd 1953, 232; Aune 1997, 1:368. Cf. Borgen 1965, 160–61; id. 1968, 137–48; Boyer 1965, 64–69, and 75).

Furthermore, John the Witness clarifies the purpose of his own calling, namely to reveal Jesus to Israel: "...but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." This point seems also to reflect ideas connected with the choice and inauguration of the king or the Messiah. For example in Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho* 8:4, it is stated that Elijah makes the Messiah manifest to all: "... he is not known ... until Elijah will come to anoint him and to make him manifest to all" (Skarsaune 2007, 390). In special political situations, public manifestations may not be feasible, like in the case of David, according to Josephus, *A. J.* 6:165: The prophet Samuel "anointed him and spoke low into his ear ..." According to 1 Sam 16:13 Samuel anointed David in the midst of his brothers.

The saying by John the Witness in John 1:30, "This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me,'" (οὐτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον· Ὁπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν) calls for some comment. "The man" is Jesus who came toward John the Witness on "the next day," v. 29. In the final phrase, John the Witness says that Jesus was before him. The context suggests that here he refers to the pre-existence and his coming in history, vv. 9–13.

Actually there are important similarities between the points in vv. 29–33, and vv. 9–13 in the Prologue:

1. In the targumic prologue, the term "the world," ὁ κόσμος, occurs in the transitional verse 9, "The true light... was coming to the world" (εἰς τὸν κόσμον), and in v. 10, "He was in the world (Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν), and the world (ὁ κόσμος) was made through him, yet the world (ὁ κόσμος) knew him not." Then in the encounter with Jesus in v. 29, the perspective is also "the world," ... "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (τοῦ κοσμοῦ).
2. In the targumic prologue, ideas from private life and family life are applied: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not (εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον)." The word τὰ ἴδια, neuter and plural, "one's own [things]" is in John 19:27 used about the

disciple who takes Mary to his own, meaning into his home, into his care. In the same verse the term occurs in masculine plural, οἱ ἴδιοι, as his own people. In both places the term refers to Israel as his home and his own people (see Lindars 1972, 90; Brown 1966, 10). In the documentation by John the Witness, the national idea of Israel is referred to in v. 31, "... for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."

3. The reference to the cosmos in vv. 9–10 leads to the understanding that Israel is the center of *cosmos*.
4. Another similarity is that the sin of the world is emphasized in both texts: In the targumic exposition, John 1:10, we read: "... the world (ὁ κόσμος) was made through him, yet the world (ὁ κόσμος) knew him not;" and in the documentation by John the Witness in v. 29 the corresponding idea is expressed by the phrase "the sin of the world (τοῦ κοσμοῦ)." The singular form of the word "sin," ἡ ἁμαρτία, used in John 1:29, fits well with the view of sin presented in 1:10 and 11. For example, in v. 10 the thought-form is that of a craftsman, "the world, ὁ κόσμος, was made through him." He is the owner of the product he made. His ownership is not recognized, however: he was in the *cosmos*, and the sin was the fact that the *cosmos* did not recognize him, its maker.

These observations make it possible to return to the analysis of John 1:29–31 made above. There were ideas which seemed to suggest that traditions about John the Witness were interpreted under the influence of ideas related to the appointment of a king/the Messiah: Jesus is identified as the royal lamb of God; John the Witness made him known to Israel and characterized Jesus' mission. He was present, but unknown to officials (the Pharisees) who came as emissaries from Jerusalem (vv. 26–27), and also unknown to John the Witness, until he encountered Jesus and identified him as the One who fulfilled the criteria.

John the Witness did not mediate the appointment of Jesus to this royal office, however. He testified to the role Jesus was to play in history and traced the line back even into pre-existence.

Testimony and the Character of Jesus' Ministry

A. John 1:15

In John 1:15, John's bearing witness is included in the Prologue itself, in direct connection with the revelation in history. What are the connections between the Baptist as eyewitness and the last part of the Prologue, John

1:14–18? The connections are close (cf. Barrett 1978, 167–68; against Brown 1966, 15 and others). He bears witness to the incarnate person referred to in v. 14: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father . . .”

John 1:15 renders a cry by John the Witness: “John bore witness to him, and cried, ‘This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me. For he was before me.’” Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· Οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· Ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν· It is worth noting that there are three testimonies in which John the Witness characterizes his own relationship to his successor, he who comes after him. In v. 27 the first clause of the sayings is ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος . . . (“he who comes after me”), in v. 30, Ὁπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ ὃς . . . (“After me comes a man who”), and in v. 15, Ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος . . . (“he who comes after me”). These three parallel sayings by John the Witness agree with the threefold structure of the targumic exposition:

The version in v. 27 reads: “. . . he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” As already seen, this is a version of a traditional saying with parallels in Matt 3:11, Mark 1:7, Luke 3:16, Acts 13:25. John the Witness confesses that although he is Jesus’ predecessor he has an inferior status relative to the one to follow. This focus corresponds well with the targumic exposition, John 1:8, “He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.”

The parallel saying in v. 30 defines the relationship differently: “After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.” “A man” is identified as Jesus, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου).” Looking back to vv. 9–13, the one who was before John the Witness, was him through whom the *cosmos* was made. Thus, the reference to “before me” refers to the pre-existence as formulated in vv. 9–13.

The version in v. 15 reads: “He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.” It is a close parallel to the version in v. 30. The context is different, however. Here John the Witness cried out, heralding that the incarnate one had come: “The Word became flesh,” v. 14. The phrase “before me” (v. 15) refers to “the Word became flesh” in v. 14, and even further back to time before creation: the Word (ὁ λόγος), God, θεός, and the only God/Son, μονογενῆς θεός/ υἱός, in vv. 14 and 18, point back to v. 1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John the Witness' inferior status meant that he was not an eyewitness to the pre-existence when the Logos-God was commissioned to appear in history. John the Witness had the specific task of making Jesus' unknown status known (cf. John 5:32–36a. Bühner 1977, 191–92).

One detail calls for a brief comment. In both 1:15 and v. 30 John the Witness says that he is repeating a statement he has made before: “This was he of whom I said . . .” (Οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον . . .) in v. 15, and “This is he of whom I said . . .” (οὗτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον . . .) in v. 30. No past event is found at which this statement has been made. Thus, the reference is probably made to avoid the misunderstanding that John the Witness' activity was an exclusively post-incarnational phenomenon.

It should be added that there are allusions to biblical history in John 1:14–18. The words “full of grace and truth,” v. 14, probably refer to Exod 34:6 “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness . . .” Likewise the Old Testament background of the phrase in v. 18, “No one has ever seen God . . .”, is found in Exod 33:18 where Moses addressed God and said: “I pray thee, show me thy glory.” In v. 20 the answer reads: “. . . you cannot see my face . . .”

B. John 1:32–34

How does the remaining section about John the Witness, John 1:32–34, fit into the interpretation explicated so far? John the Witness presents a report as a witness. It begins in v. 32 with the words “And John bore witness.” Moreover, it is his eyewitness report: In v. 32 we read, Τεθέαμαι, “I have seen/I saw . . .”, and v. 34 reads, κἀγὼ ἐώρακα, “And I have seen . . .” Then he reports on what he saw: τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ’ αὐτόν “I saw the spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him.”

It is explicitly stated that John the Witness is a commissioned emissary. The sender is introduced by the participial phrase ὁ πέμψας με, “he who sent me.”² This phrase does not in itself reveal the identity of the sender. It can be gleaned mostly from the context. In the plural it occurs in 1:22 as τοῖς πέμψασιν ἡμᾶς, “for those who sent us.” The context shows that the senders were Jerusalemite Jews, v. 19. In the case of John the Witness, the identity of the sender is explicitly given in v. 6, “There was a man sent from God (ἀποσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ), whose name was John.” Accordingly,

² The phrase is commonly used as a designation of God as the sender of Jesus, who is His *shaliach*. See the list of occurrences in Meeks 1967, 301, n. 3.

all the activity of John the Witness is that of a *shaliach* from God. Focus is on a specific point in vv. 32–34: John the Witness admits his lack of knowledge. His sender has given him a criterion for revealing Jesus and the character of Jesus' ministry: "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (v. 33). Since Jesus' true identity and ministry has been revealed to John the Witness in this way, he can serve as an eyewitness and testify: *καὶ γὰρ ἑώρακα, καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς /ἐκλεκτός τοῦ θεοῦ*. "And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God/God's chosen one." Both of these readings (Barrett 1978, 178) are related to the Christological ideas present in v. 18, where some manuscripts read "the Son" while others read "God" (ibid., 169). This saying also concludes the section about John bearing witness, John 1:19–34. How is vv. 32–34 to be related to the last section of the Prologue, vv. 14–18?

For the comparison we must comment on the parallels in the other Gospels. One point made in the other Gospels is that there were two kinds of baptism, the baptism with water and the baptism of the Spirit (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8, and Luke 3:16–17). In John 1:33 there are also two kinds of baptisms, John's baptism with water and the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit. There are also two different receptions of the Spirit pictured: the descent of and remaining of the Spirit on a person (Jesus) and on the other hand Jesus' activity of baptizing with the Holy Spirit.

It is stated that John the Witness does not know the person concerned, v. 33, but this is a bit surprising as one might have expected that the identity and qualifications of a royal person would be presented. One feature would equip the king with power. According to 1 Sam 16:13 the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Seemingly the tradition that the spirit came down as a dove upon Jesus might be a parallel, John 1:33: "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." It is not said that Jesus received the Spirit as a new power conferred upon him at his appointment as king, however. The descent of the Spirit was a sign for John the Witness so that he could recognize that Jesus was the one baptizing with the Spirit. This point does not have a parallel in the other Gospels. By the help of this criterion John the Witness can identify the one who is baptizing with the Holy Spirit. In the Synoptics, Jesus' identity as the Son of God is announced by means of a *bat qol* and oral message spoken by God accompanying the descent of the dove.

As for the view that Jesus, who receives the Spirit, is baptizing with the Spirit, interesting parallels are found in Justin, *Dial.* 87 and *T. Levi* 18 (Skarsaune 2007, 391). In *Dial.* 87 Justin makes the point that Jesus did not

himself stand in need of receiving the Spirit, but he imparted the gifts on those who believed in him. *T. Levi* 18 reads: “And the Spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him [in the water] . . . The spirit of holiness shall be upon them” (Kee, H. C. 1983, in Charlesworth, J. H. 1983. OTP 1:795. See his footnote “c” concerning probable interpolation in the brackets).

John the Witness’ vision of the dove as reported in John 1:32–33 was an identity marker which enabled John the Witness to recognize Jesus’ identity and function. He did not come as an eyewitness, but he became one. He saw the Spirit descend as a dove and remain on Jesus, and he recognized him as the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. In this way John the Witness recognized Jesus as the Son of God/the Chosen One, John 1:34. “And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

The heraldic role of John the Witness, v. 15, and his testimony as eyewitness, vv. 32–34 go very well together to substantiate that “the Word became flesh and we saw his glory” vv. 14, and in vv. 16–18 to lift up points and perspectives of Jesus’ ministry as the one who baptizes with the Spirit. Corresponding characteristics of Jesus ministry are indicated in v. 14: “we have beheld his glory,” v. 16, “from his fullness have we all received,” v. 17, “grace and truth came with Jesus Christ,” and v. 18, “the only Son/God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made him [God] known.” More direct connections can be seen between v. 18, “the only Son/God”, and v. 34, where the Baptist says: “. . . this is the Son of God/the chosen one of God.”

This eyewitness report concludes the opening of the Gospel of John, where John the Witness testifies to the coming of the light and serves as a “Voice.” Moreover, he recognizes that Jesus is the (royal) Lamb of God “who takes away the sin of the world,” and bears witness to his preexistence as the maker of the *cosmos*, whom the *cosmos* did not know and who came to his own, and was not received by his own people, Israel (i.e. the center of the *cosmos*), vv. 9–13. Finally, he testifies that God and the Logos who was with God and was God became flesh and was identical with the person Jesus, whose ministry was characterized in various ways in vv. 14–18, and who was the one to baptize with the Holy Spirit.

As a concluding testimony John the Witness states: “I have seen and I have borne witness that he is the Son of God.” (v. 34).

Conclusion

The three chiasmic, targumic expositions of Gen 1:1–5 (Logos, creation, and light and darkness) are woven together with three corresponding testimonies by John the Witness:

1. The verses on John, both who he is not and his positive role as “the Voice,” vv. 19–28, relate to his not being the light, but bearing witness to the light which is coming to the world, vv. 6–9. This preexistence of the light goes back to pre-incarnational time, vv. 4–5.
2. The verses on Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the *cosmos*, and on John the Witness who makes him known to Israel, vv. 29–31, relate to vv. 9–13 where we learn that he who created the *cosmos* was nevertheless not recognized by it nor received by his people (Israel). This preexistence goes back to creation, v. 3.
3. The role of John the Witness as herald, his identification of Jesus as the one who baptizes with the Spirit, and his testimony as an eyewitness testifying that Jesus was the Son of God, vv. 32–33, relate to vv. 14–18, where we learn about the Logos who became flesh, with glimpses of his ministry and his revelatory function as the Son of God. This preexistence goes back to God, the Logos who is with God and is God, “in the beginning” before creation, vv. 1–2.

This targumic exposition of Gen 1:1–5 follows the Jewish thought categories of creation and/or before creation and revelation in the world, in history (and/or eschatology). The concept of creation, with its before and after, is seen in John 1:1–5, and the threefold revelation as the light (vv. 6–9), as the presence of the Logos/creator in the world (vv. 9–13), and as the Logos, who became flesh, identified as Jesus (vv. 14–18). Partly in the Prologue itself and partly in the subsequent section, the testimonies of John the Witness are given. He bore witness

- to the Light and served as “the Voice,”
- to the creator of the *cosmos* who, as the royal Lamb, takes away the sin of the *cosmos*, and
- to the incarnate one, Jesus, who made God known and baptized with the Spirit.

In these testimonies, traditions about the Baptist/John the Witness are used and interpreted. One aspect of this interpretation centers around the inauguration of Jesus in his royal ministry. This topic is further modified and defined by his preexistent status. John the Witness did not appoint Jesus to royalty. He bore witness to Jesus' royal status, a status which already existed.

PART E

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CAN PHILO'S *IN FLACCUM* AND *LEGATIO AD GAIUM* BE OF HELP?

At this point in the journey, I reached the conclusion that the Gospel of John is independent of the three other written Gospels. I have also hinted at the likelihood that Paul's transmission of and expository use of Gospel tradition give insights into John's corresponding expository use of received traditions. However, Paul does not provide us with parallels to the form and structure of a Gospel, where events and words in the life of Jesus lead up to his death, resurrection and appearances. Thus, it is pertinent to ask if Philo might have material which could be of help in this respect. Recent studies of the treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* suggest that this approach is possible and promising. (See D. Runia 2003, 349–70, especially page 351 and note 6, and P. Borgen 1997, 182–83; id. 2000, 41–57.)

The Gospel of Mark as a Model?

The question of literary form plays a role in understanding the Gospel of John. In the essay "Let John be John" (Dunn 1983, 338–39), J. Dunn illustrates this point:

Another striking fact is that the Fourth Evangelist obviously felt it necessary to retain the format of a *Gospel*. For all its differences from the Synoptics, John is far closer to them than to any other ancient writing. . . . Although it is the discourses of Jesus which are the most elaborate feature of John's Gospel, the Evangelist did not elect to present a document consisting solely of the discourses or sayings of the redeemer (we may contrast Gnostic equivalents like the *Gospel of Thomas*, *Thomas the Contender* and *Pistis Sophia*). Rather he chose, and chose deliberately, to retain the developed discourse material within the framework of a Gospel as laid down by Mark—traditions of Jesus' miracles and teaching building up all the while to the climax of the cross.

Similarly J. Beutler maintains that "The overall structure of the Gospel of John follows the broad outline shaped by Mark" (Beutler, J. 2007, 31–32). For these and other reasons it is claimed that the Gospel of John in one way or another is dependent on the Gospel of Mark. The dependence on the Gospels of Luke and Matthew may not be excluded either.

The view of J. Dunn and others also means that John must be dated to sometime after the Gospel of Mark, such as towards the end of the first century C.E. (Kysar 1992, 918–19).

In the present chapter the following question will be raised: Are there other texts which suggest that Mark and John have a structure, form, and content within a broader setting? Does this broader setting support a view that John is independent of the other three written Gospels? Can some of the Philo's writings be of help in this context? If one looks at the indexes of R. A. Burridge's book *What are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, second edition 2004, one finds that there are references made to Philo of Alexandria's two treatises on Moses, *De Vita Mosis* 1–2 (Burridge 2004², 213–51). Scholars have been looking into Philo's rewriting of the biblical narrative on Moses to illuminate the structure and literary form of the Gospels as biographies.

The question to be raised is are there other treatises which may be of even more help in illuminating aspects of the Gospels, primarily the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John? Philo's two treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* prove to be of interest in this connection, since they, like the Gospels, contain interpretations of contemporary history. Philo deals with events related to the pogrom against the Alexandrian Jews in 38 C.E. and the immediate aftermath. There seems to be basis for suggesting that Philo's two treatises should be considered in the discussion of the Gospels literary forms and of aspects of content, especially with regard to John and Mark. This chapter will examine some observations on these sources.

1. *Observations Relative to Opening Sections*

The first observation is that each of Philo's treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* begins when the main person enters professional life as an adult man. In *Flacc.* 2 Flaccus is introduced as the successor of Iberus, prefect of Alexandria and the surrounding country. Also in Philo's *Legatio* the main person, the emperor Gaius, is introduced when he begins his professional life. Philo explains that after the death of Tiberius, Gaius inherited sovereignty over the whole world, *Legat.* 8.

In Mark 1:9, Jesus is similarly introduced when he begins his official ministry. He is presented as one who is mightier than John the Baptist and who was baptized by him. After the Baptist was arrested, Jesus began his ministry and came to Galilee preaching the Gospel of God, Mark 1:14. The Gospel of John begins with the "professional" activities of Jesus after he had been identified by John (the Baptist), John 1:19–35.

It is to be noted that Mark and *In Flaccum* begin with the narrative from the beginning of the documents, while John and *Legatio* each has

an introduction, a prologue. These prologues have a cosmic perspective and draw on biblical traditions, *Legatio* begins with Jacob who receives the name Israel and John with the creation story. The prologues serve as interpretative references for the historical narratives of the two books. Philo sets the visionary Jewish people in the center. They are “soul-people” that soar above the created world. Correspondingly John has a cosmic framework in that he focuses on Jesus as God’s Son and ambassador and connects him to creation and even to the beginning before creation.

As can be seen, John is closer to Philo’s *Legatio* than to Mark at this point. Both begin their book with cosmic and biblical introductions.

2. *The Scope*

As for the Gospel of Mark, its scope corresponds to that of Philo’s *In Flaccum*. Philo covers Flaccus’ professional life from his initial work in office up to his arrest, trial and, finally, the execution, as ordered by Gaius. Similarly, John covers the ministry of Jesus from its beginning to his arrest, trial, and execution.

Philo’s *Legatio* narrates the professional activity of Gaius, but leaves out his death. The reason seems to be that Philo here focuses on the Jewish commitment to the law of Moses, their stamina in the midst of trying conflict—even the suffering of a pogrom—and on the disappointing judicial and political negotiations with Gaius, including the subsequent events.

3. *The Law of Moses*

In all of these four books, the law of Moses plays a central role both as an integral part of the texture of society and as a lens through which the events have been interpreted. Only a few examples can be mentioned in the present survey.

In Philo’s treatise *In Flaccum*, the law of Moses are especially seen as the community laws of the Jews (P. Borgen 2000, 50–52; P. W. van der Horst 2003, 46–47). When Flaccus declared that the Jews were aliens in Alexandria, he withdrew their right to live in accordance with their own laws and ancestral customs. Flaccus also breached Jewish laws about synagogues when he permitted the installation of images of the emperor Gaius in them (*Flacc.* 41–53). This action went against laws such as Exod 20:4f., Deut 4:16, and 27:15, and also against earlier practice, as followed by the emperor Augustus (*Legat.* 152–57).

According to *Virt.* 171, men of “windy pride,” i.e. of arrogance without cure, are to be handed over “to the divine tribunal”, for it says, “Whosoever

sets his hand to do anything with presumptuousness provokes God," Num 15:30. In his windy pride, Flaccus thought that his actions against the Jewish community would bring him honor, but he was instead arrested by Gaius' military envoy, Bassus and his soldiers (*Flacc.* 109–24).

Within the context of the Roman political and judicial system, Flaccus had to face trial in Rome (*Flacc.* 108–15, 125–27 and 146–51). He was denounced by his Alexandrian enemies, Isidore and Lampo. As his penalty, Flaccus lost his property and was banished. The description of his crimes as presented in this trial cannot be found, however. Philo maintains that the reason for this is that Flaccus' punishment was for his actions against the Jews and their laws, as stated by Philo when he reported on the "execution" of Flaccus by the assassins sent by Gaius: "... it was the will of justice that the butcheries which she wrought on his single body should be as numerous as the number of the Jews whom he unlawfully put to death" (*Flacc.* 189). In this way the law of Moses functioned as the "lens" through which non-Jewish phenomena of a judicial nature might be interpreted.

We can also see the role of the law of Moses in community life in Mark. Here the focus rests on the observance of the Sabbath, and Jesus is seen as a lawbreaker (P. J. Achtmeyer, 1992, 555). A serious accusation against Jesus is that of blasphemy, based on his actions against the Sabbath laws and his claim to possess divine authority (Mark 2:5–12; 14:61–64).

In Philo's *Legatio* there is an extensive use of and reference to the law of Moses. The prologue reinterprets the biblical story of Jacob's wrestling with a man at a place which he named Peniel. In the biblical story Jacob was given the name "Israel," Gen 32:24–32. Philo uses the etymological meaning of the name, "he that sees God." Thus the "people of Israel" are understood to mean the people that see God, the visionary people that soars above the created world and sees into the divine. A related cosmic motif also appears, that of providence related to all men, but in particular to the Jewish people (*Legat.* 3–4).

Correspondingly, in John's Prologue another section of the law of Moses is interpreted, Gen 1:1–5. It is interpreted within the framework of before creation, then within creation, with light and darkness in a dualistic struggle, and finally the fundamental revelation in history. Jesus of Nazareth is understood to be the incarnate one who gives those who believe in him the right to be children of God (John 1:1–18).

4. *Crime Reports*

Both Philo's *In Flaccum* and the Gospel of Mark may be classified as crime reports documenting legal violations of the Mosaic law committed during

the protagonists' professional life as well as the trials and finally their executions. Flaccus himself provided a list of his misdeeds: He allowed the Jews to be robbed; he cast a slur on them of being foreigners without civil rights; some he marched into the theater to be maltreated; some he killed, etc. (cf. *Flacc.* 170–74).

In Mark, Jesus was accused of blasphemy, Mark 2:7 and 14:61–64; he violated the Jewish observances (2:16, 18, 24); he disrupted the temple cult (Mark 11:15–18), etc. Moreover, Jesus' numerous followers were felt to be a threat, 11:18.

In John, Jesus violated the Sabbath laws, John 5:1–18; 9:14–16.24; blasphemed, 5:17; 8:58; 10:24–38; 19:7; disseminated false teaching, 7:12.45–49; 18:19–24; and finally was seen as a threat to the Jewish nation, John 11:45–53.

Philo spends much of his treatise *Legatio* in accusing the emperor Gaius of committing great crimes: he arranged for advisers and contenders to loose their lives, *Legat.* 22–73; he committed blasphemy by claiming divinity, *Legat.* 74–113; he showed hostility towards the Jews, allowing for the pogrom to take place in Alexandria, *Legat.* 120–31, and he ordered a statue of Zeus to be erected in Jerusalem Temple, *Legat.* 184–348.

An important feature common to the Gospel of John and *Legatio ad Gaium* is the emphasis on the crime of blasphemy: a human being claiming to be god. See for example John 10:33 and *Legat.* 75, 118, and 218.

There is no report on Gaius' death in *Legatio*, however. Philo seems rather to want to focus on Israel. As the visionary people, the Jews were the ones who soared above the created world for a vision of the divine, while Gaius was a counterfeit god in his claim to divinity.

5. *Positive Interpretations*

This observation leads to the final agreements listed here between on the one hand the Gospels of Mark and John and on the other hand Philo's treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*. Seen from another perspective, they might be broadly called stories of their protagonists' professional lives from beginning to end. Thus, positive activities and responses are also included, or the tragic events are given a positive evaluation. In the case of *In Flaccum*, Philo regards the killing of Flaccus to be proof that God has not forsaken his people: "the help which God can give was not withdrawn from the nation of the Jews" (*Flacc.* 191). In the Gospel of Mark, the appearances of the risen Jesus proved that he was not a criminal, and the book begins with a paradoxical statement: "the beginning of the gospel [= the good news] of Jesus Christ." (Mark 1:1).

Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium* and the Gospel of John should be included more fully in this analysis. In *Legatio*, Philo reports on disappointing and depressing setbacks experienced by the Jewish delegation in Rome after learning that Gaius threatened to profane the Temple in Jerusalem. In the closing section, he reports on the fear that the emperor would decide in favor of the enemies of the Alexandrian Jewish delegation. If this happened, he thought it would have a tragic impact upon the fate of the Jews everywhere. "Waterlogged by such considerations we were dragged down and submerged into the depths." (*Legat.* 372).

In spite of the narrated conflicts, such as crises, fears, blasphemy, and profanation, the main aim of Philo's two treatises were to communicate messages of encouragement and hope. It is notable that Philo's treatise *Legatio* received the positive name "The Treatise on Virtues" (cf. P. Borgen 1997, 179–81). As already indicated, Philo's purpose was to show that the heaven-oriented Jewish people had the strength and stamina to affirm and uphold the laws of Moses even amidst the pogrom and in other hostile encounters (see E. M. Smallwood 1970, 39–40 with references):

The truly noble are always hopeful and the laws create good hopes for those who take more than a sip of their study. Perhaps these things are sent to try the present generation, to test the state of their virtue, and whether they are schooled to bear dire misfortunes with a resolution which is fortified by reason and does not collapse at once (*Legat.* 195–196).

Both John and Mark emphasize Jesus' passion, that is, his trial and execution as a criminal. Correspondingly the stories from Jesus' ministry included elements of crime reports. Nevertheless, these books were called "Gospels," "good news." The appearances of the risen Jesus testify to his vindication:

John 20:28: "Thomas answered him: 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'" (Trans. R. E. Brown, 1970:2, 1019).

Mark 16:7: "But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." Mark 1:1: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Conclusion: The four writings, John, Mark, Philo's *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* deal with certain people's professional lives to their end, like death (*In Flaccum*), interpreted from the context of the laws of Moses, or up to the close of the conflict with the Jews (*Legatio*). They contained reports of crimes that were positively evaluated. The literary form of such writings did not originate with the Gospel of Mark. It seems that the main

force that created these treatises was that the challenge of radically tragic events were reinterpreted.

The Prologue of Philo's Legatio ad Gaium

Since John has a cosmic and biblical Prologue, it is of interest to give a detailed look at the parallel prologue in Philo's *Legatio*.

While Philo begins *In Flaccum* with Flaccus' entry into office, just as the Gospel of Mark begins with Jesus' entry into his ministry, he also wrote the parallel treatise *Legatio ad Gaium*, where a prologue leads into the narrative about the professional person, the emperor Gaius, and his blasphemy and other crimes. Correspondingly, John has a prologue that leads into the narrative about Jesus' ministry, in which he is accused of blasphemy and other crimes. Yet it is understood basically as a Gospel. The task is to learn more about Philo's prologue for comparison.

The outline of *Legat.* 1–7 is:

§§ 1–2: Lamentation: “we” are in a bewildering situation, overcome by puerility, instability, and licentiousness.

§§ 3–5: The main body of the prologue: doubt and trust.

§ 3: from doubt to Philo's trust based on the biblical “text” about the patriarch Jacob, the supplicant's race, named as Israel

§ 4: the etymological exposition of the name “Israel” meaning “he who sees god.”

§ 5: two levels of visions: the human level and the supramundane level.

§§ 6–7: The functions of God's attendants in the world.

Thus the introduction of Philo's treatise *Legatio ad Gaium* is a brief presentation of philosophical, biblical, and theological motifs of lamentation, affirmation and exhortation connected with the tragic events which the Jewish nation suffered in Alexandria and Jerusalem during the reign of Gaius Caligula. This introduction does not have the formal characteristics of an “exordium” (see Runia 2001, 98–99, with reference to Loveday Alexander 1993, 157–60; See Runia 2003, 369). Still, how closely might it parallel John's prologue?

Philo opens the prologue with an epistemological and existential lament in a we-form:

Legat. 1–2a

1. “How long shall we the aged continue to be children grown grey in our bodies through length of years, but infants in our souls through want of sense, holding fortune, the most unstable of things, to be the most unchangeable, nature, the most constant to be the most insecure? For we change our actions about from place to place as on a draught board, and fortune’s gifts seem to us more permanent than nature’s, nature’s more insecure than fortune’s.

2. The reason is that, having no forethought for the future, we are ruled by the present, following erratic sense-perception rather than unerring intelligence. For the eyes of the body discern what is manifest and close at hand, but reason reaches to the unseen and the future. Reason’s vision, which is keener than the vision of the bodily eyes, we bedim and confuse, some with strong drink and surfeiting, others with that worst of evils, ignorance.”

The point made in §§ 1–2a may be formulated in this way: Lamenting, by asking “how long,” Philo identifies himself with his readers and pictures the situation as follows: we are unable to get a true picture of the world and events because we depend on our senses and give all our attention to Chance, which is utterly unreliable, instead of using our intellects in an attempt to grasp the reliable facts of Nature; for some, ignorance or preoccupation with sensual pleasure are the result. The view of the world is empirical rather than teleological (cf. Smallwood 1970, 151).

The text reflects influence from biblical perspectives as well as from Hellenistic ideas. First, a comment should be made on the text’s kinship with the Jewish traditions of lament. Philo begins with the phrase ἄχρι τίνος, “How long.” This phrase is typical in Psalms of lament, mostly addressed to God. An example is found in Ps 74:10: “How long, O God, is the foe to scoff?”

The prophet Jeremiah utilizes several motifs from psalms of Lament (cf. Mowinckel and Messel 1944, 310, fn.). In Jer 4:19–22 he asks how long the war will last, without explicitly addressing God. Besides referring to the prophet’s anguish, the context tells of disaster, and characterizes the people as stupid children with no understanding:

“... I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Disaster follows hard on disaster... How long must I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? For my people are foolish, they know me not; they are stupid children, they have no understanding...” In Sirach 51:24 (ms S) the uneducated are asked how long they will stay away from the house of instruction (Ludin Jansen 1937, 73).

Philo applies the question to himself and his fellow Jews, and uses the first person plural. At the same time he has an educational bent, referring to philosophical categories. This aspect is illuminated by D. Runia (Runia 2003, 356–60).

For a parallel to Philo describing his readers and himself as behaving like children, Runia quotes a similar expression in Plato, *Tim.* 22b, “You Greeks always remain children” (Kohnke 1964, 174, nn. 2–3; Runia 1986, 74 and 77; 2003, 356; Pelletier 1972, 60–61). As mentioned above, a similar idea is found in Jeremiah 4:22.

Such a characterization of adults being like children builds on the basic human experience of growth. Philo contrasts ideas with a philosophical bent, like fortune (τύχη) and nature (φύσις), and, on the one hand, having an eye for what is unseen and waiting in the future and, on the other hand, relying on sense-perception (*Legat.* 1–2).

In *Legat.* 3 the situation is pictured in a new way: “And yet the present time and the many important cases decided in it are strong enough to carry conviction—even if some have come to disbelieve that the Deity takes thought for men and particularly for the suppliants’ race which the Father and King of the universe and the Source of all things has taken for his portion.” In her comments on this paragraph, Smallwood (1970, 152) characterizes the situation in this way: ὁ “παρῶν καιρός... ὑποθέσεις. In view of *Legatio*’s apparent date of composition, presumably this refers to Claudius’ attempt to settle the Jewish problem in Alexandria during the first year of his principate... The present participle παρῶν and the phrase κατ’ αὐτόν suggest that Philo was writing while tension was still high, perhaps before Claudius’ final decision was made known by his *Letter* in November, 41.”

Colson and Runia translate ὑποθέσεις as “questions.” Friedrich Wilhelm Kohnke (1964, 175, n. 2) offers further details about the situation and makes explicit that the term, ὑπόθεσις, question, refers to the judicial case:

Nach Gaius’ Ermordung am 24. Januar 41 n. Chr. greift Claudius schlichtend in die alexandrinischen Streitigkeiten ein (Ioseph. Ant. Iud. 19:280–291). Die Stelle erlaubt also, die Abfassung der Schrift in das Jahr 41 zu datieren (vgl. F. M. Smallwood, *Philonis legatio* 1961, 27–31)... Die ὑπόθεσις ist das Streitobjekt vor dem kaiserlichen Gericht (Ges. 181, 186, 195, 370).

According to Philo there are two main reactions in this situation. Some Jews have reacted with doubt and resignation. They have come to disbelieve in providence, that the Deity cares for man, and particularly for the Jewish community who sees themselves as “the suppliants’ race which

the Father and King of the Universe and the Source of all things has taken for his portion.” The disbelievers understand the trials of the Jews in Alexandria, Jerusalem (and implicitly of Jews everywhere) as the catalyst for doubting whether they are under God’s care.

It should be mentioned that Philo in *Legat.* 372 also reports on persons who react negatively towards the end of the conflict:

... those who hitherto seemed to be acting with us gave up. At least when we were summoned they did not stay in and hold their ground but slunk away in fear, knowing full well the longing which he [Gaius] cherished for being acknowledged as a god.

In this situation, and after Gaius’ successor, Claudius, started settling the conflict in Alexandria, Philo encountered an existential challenge: How to give a meaningful interpretation of the sufferings experienced by the Alexandrian and Jerusalemite Jews during the reign of Emperor Gaius Caligulas?

It is in response to this challenge that he wrote the two treatises *Legatio ad Gaium* and *In Flaccum*.

This dilemma seems akin to the challenge reflected in the Gospel of John: How to meaningfully interpret the controversial life, passion, and execution of Jesus of Nazareth as a criminal when Pilate (26/27–37 C.E.?) was governor of Judea?

Against the doubt of some, Philo, in accordance with the style of lament, still affirms trust in God’s care (cf. Birnbaum 1996, 105–107). Philo writes that “... the present time and many important questions [=cases] decided in it are strong enough to carry conviction... that the Deity takes thought for men, and particularly for the suppliants’ race (τοῦ ἰκετικοῦ γένους) which the Father and King of the Universe and the Source of all things has taken for his portion.” (*Legat.* 3).

Here the phrase “the suppliants’s race” does not mean supplicating on behalf of others. The suppliants are the Jews who beseech God for their own sake. It begins with a characterization of Jacob, and then Philo moves on to his characterization of “the suppliants’ race.” He gives an etymological exegesis which is based on the Hebrew name, **יִשְׂרָאֵל**, Israel, a name which to Philo has central importance in *Legat.* 3–4: “... the race of suppliants... This race is called Israel in the Chaldean language Israel, or if the name is translated into Greek ‘seeing God’ (ὁρῶν θεόν)” (Borgen 1965/81, 115–18; Grabbe 1988, 172–73; Delling 1984, 27–41; Birnbaum 1996, 94–98; Borgen 1996a, 294–97). The expository structure is as follows: The term

“the race of suppliants” (τὸ ἱκετικὸν γένος) is referred to in this clause: καὶ εἰ ἄπιστοι γεγόνασι τινες τοῦ προνοεῖν τὸ θεῖον ἀνθρώπων, καὶ μάλιστα τοῦ ἱκετικοῦ γένους, “even if some have come to disbelieve that the Deity takes thought for men, and particularly for *the suppliants’ race* . . .” (Cf. *Legat.* 366). The word γένος, race, is then repeated (τοῦτο δὲ τὸ γένος) in a philological and etymological exposition: “expressed in Greek tongue, the word is ‘he that sees God’ (ὄρων θεόν), and to see him seems to me of all possessions, public or private, the most precious.”

In the treatise *Praem.* 36 Philo makes clear that “Israel,” interpreted to mean “seeing God,” is the given name of Jacob, the Man of Practice: “The Man of Practice who receives for his special reward the vision of God (ὄρασιν θεοῦ).” In *Praem.* 36–40 Philo seems to combine Jacob’s name, etymologically interpreted, with Jacob’s dream vision in Gen 28. Here, as in *Legat.* 5, God is pictured as being “beyond,” as “better than the good,” etc.: “. . . the Man of Practice [Jacob] who receives for his special reward the vision of God (ὄρασιν θεοῦ)” (*Praem.* 36). “The Father and Saviour . . . did not grudge to grant him the vision of Himself (τῆς ὄψεως . . . τῆς ἑαυτοῦ θέας) in so far as it was possible for mortal and created nature to contain it” (§ 39). The phrase ὄρασις θεοῦ is a variant of ὄρων θεόν discussed above.

Although there are differences in detail between *Legat.* 3–5 and *Praem.* 36–39, they are variants of the same tradition related to the Patriarch Jacob.

The “seeing God” receives further characterization in *Legat.* 5: “. . . in souls whose vision has soared above all created things and schooled itself to behold the uncreated and divine . . .”

The context is cosmic, “all created things (τὸ γενητόν πάν) . . . to behold (‘peep over’, ‘put one’s head over’, ‘transcend’: ὑπερκύψασαι) the uncreated and divine (τὸ ἀγήγητον καὶ θεῖον) . . .” God is further beyond, “God who nowhere can be touched or handled” (§ 6). Thus, Philo sees his historical treatise within the cosmic context of the created world and the uncreated and divine beyond.

Replacing “seeing” with the word ὄψις, “sight,” Philo then argues from the lesser to the greater and/or from the more general to the more specific:

For if the sight (ὄψις) of seniors or instructors or rulers or parents stirs the beholders to respect for them and decent behaviour and the desire to live a life of self-control, how firmly based is the virtue and nobility of conduct which we may expect to find in souls whose vision (ὄψις) has soared above all created things and schooled itself to behold the uncreated and

divine, the primal good, the excellent, the happy, the blessed, which may truly be called better than good, more excellent than the excellent, more blessed than blessedness, more happy than happiness itself, and any perfection that may be greater than these (*Legat.* 3–5).

Philo weaves together the vision of the divine with education, and he points to its intended influence toward nobility of conduct. The lesser point is the broad learning and insight which can be gained by teachers, rulers, and parents in general. The essence has to do with a specified group, the souls ($\psi\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota$), that have educated themselves to behold the uncreated and divine. The context shows that the word “souls” here refers to the Jewish race (Runia 2003, 354). This race brings “earth and heaven” together, as souls that soar above all created things and behold the uncreated and divine.

These visions move those who see them to good conduct: on the lesser level to modesty and good behavior and eagerness to live a life of self-control, and on the next level a greater support for excellence and goodness. This exhortation was in particular relevant in a situation where some Jews were confused and had come to disbelieve in God’s providence (*Legat.* 3).

Some further words on education are needed. In Philo’s context, education had its setting in the synagogal gatherings as well as in families, as seen in *Legat.* 115, *Spec.* 2:229–30 etc. Philo sees the synagoge like a school of philosophy (cf. Borgen 1965/1981, 56 and 112–13; Borgen 2001, 61–71).

Thus, corresponding to the cosmic and theological introduction of John in 1:1–18, so the treatise of Philo has a theological and cosmic introduction. In John 1 the cosmic aspect is comprehensive, dealing with the dualism of light and darkness, creation, and a vision of the beginning before creation. In this way John sets the stage for the claim that the human person Jesus was divine in his albeit controversial life and even in his death as a criminal. In *Legatio*, we read about providence, the Father and King of the Universe, and a vision of God by souls (= the Jews) which soar above all created things and see the uncreated and divine against the background of persecutions and sufferings. Philo has formulated the model for evaluating and rejecting the claims of divinity by the Emperor.

In the remaining part of Philo’s introduction in *Legat.* 6–7 the language is difficult to translate. Runia (2003, 364–66) discusses the meaning of $\acute{\omicron}\ \lambda\acute{\omicron}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, “the Word,” and concludes that the word “language” seems to have been meant by Philo. Language cannot attain to ascending “to God—who nowhere can be touched or handled—but subsides and ebbs away unable

to find the proper words by which it may approach and expound. . . . even for God's attendant powers."¹ Philo explains that God's attendant powers, the creative, the kingly, and the providential, have both beneficial and punitive functions.

The Prologue and the Treatise: Some Observations

It seems to be an uneven transition between the §§ 7 and 8. D. Runia rightly draws the line from the prologue (*Legat.* 1–7) to points and themes in the treatise as a whole. He discusses the uneven transition from the prologue into the historical narrative in *Legat.* 8 which reads:

“For who, seeing Gaius (τίς γὰρ ἰδὼν Γάιον) . . . was not filled with admiration . . .” The γὰρ refers back to the preceding, but how? Are words missing? Runia (2003, 351–56) discusses various suggestions made by scholars. He admits that the text as a whole is difficult, but he prefers to interpret as it stands. He rightly makes the comment that “Devotion to God and observance of his commands do not automatically mean recognition and comprehension of his acts” (Runia 2003, 370). Philo's words “For who, seeing Gaius . . . was not filled with admiration,” acquire meaning when as a reference back to the understanding “that language has difficulties in finding adequate words for interpreting the powers at work in society and history.” The subsequent events proved that there was no substance behind the admiration. It was a misunderstanding.

Such restrictions of language and understanding are expressed in the narrative in different ways, for example it is explicitly stated in *Legat.* 21: “The human mind in its blindness does not perceive its real interest and all it can do is to take conjecture and guesswork for its guide instead of knowledge.”

Misconceptions were wide-spread. One example is: (67) “. . . men, disbelieving that one who but a little while before was merciful and humane could have become altered so entirely, for Gaius had been looked upon

¹ The phrase “Reason cannot attain to ascend to God, who nowhere can be touched or handled” has a parallel in *QE* 2:45 where it is applied to the restrictions for the ascent at Sinai. “Now the divine place is truly inaccessible and unapproachable. For not even the holiest mind is able to ascend such a height to it so as merely to approach and touch it.” Οὐδὲ τῆς καθαρωτάτης διανοίας τοσοῦτον ὕψος προσαναβῆναι δυναμένης ὡς θίξει μόνον ἐπιψαύσαι.

as affable, and sociable, and friendly, began to seek for excuses for him, and after some search they found such, saying with regard to his cousin and co-heir in the kingdom things such as these: (68) ‘The unchangeable law of nature has ordained that there should be no partnership in the sovereign power . . . This is not murder. Perhaps, indeed, the putting that youth to death was done providentially for the advantage of the whole human race . . . And no government can be good but that which is free from all contentions and from all disputes, and then everything else is made right by it.’”

Such misconceptions illustrate the limitations of human language (*Legat.* 6). One of Philo’s aims in writing *Legatio* is to show how these limitations of human understanding and human language can be seen in the flow of seemingly glorious and tragic events.

As stated above, just as in the Gospels of Mark and John, so also in Philo’s two treatises, the protagonists enter the scene when they assume the duties of their professional life. Philo’s *Legatio* begins by recounting that after the death of the Emperor Tiberius, Gaius succeeded him (*Legat.* 8). In *Flacc.* 1–2, Flaccus, a friend of the Emperor Tiberius, comes into focus when, after the prefect Iberus, he is made prefect of Alexandria and the surrounding country. Correspondingly, the Gospels of John and Mark begin their stories of Jesus’ life with his ministry. This is a natural way of presenting someone when the focus is on events from the person’s professional activity and life.

Against this background, it is relevant to ask if the Gospel form is unique. It is hardly created by Mark or by John. Accordingly, there is no reason to assume that John is somehow dependent on Mark for beginning the Gospel with Jesus’ ministry, his professional life. This understanding receives further support from analyses of these books as a whole.

The Counterfeit God

According to the prologue, Philo will influence his readers by presenting an alternative to the views of those who disbelieve. His alternative is that the Deity cares for humanity and particularly for the Jewish. As already shown, the visionary ascent by those who “see God” is formulated in *Legat.* 5: “. . . how firmly based is the virtue and nobility of conduct which we may expect to find in souls whose vision has soared above all created things and schooled itself to behold the uncreated and divine . . .”

Against this background Gaius' claim to divinity should be examined:

... he [Gaius] no longer considered it worthy of him to abide within human nature but overstepped them in his eagerness to be thought a god (*Legat.* 75).

[The Jewish people] was suspected of intending opposition, since it was accustomed to accept death as willingly as if it were immortality, to save them from submitting to the destruction of any of their ancestral traditions... (*Legat.* 117).

Gaius' crime was: "But that displacement was of nothing petty, but of the greatest of all that exists, when the created and corruptible nature of man was made to appear uncreated and incorruptible by a deification which our nation judged to be the most grievous impiety, since sooner could God change into man than a man into God" (*Legat.* 118).

If one compares these claims and texts with the Gospels, it is evident that all four testify to the existence of a tradition where Jesus was accused of blasphemy (Mark 2:7; 14:61–64; Matt 9:3; 26:65; Luke 5:21). John 10:33: "We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself god."

I must draw attention here to the kinship between this accusation in John 10:33 and Philo's report on Gaius in *Legat.* 75 and 118, both cited above. Both in John and in *Legatio* the point is that a man makes himself god. John has explicitly stated the crime: it is "making himself God." This view is also found where the term "blasphemy" is not used, like in John 5:18: "This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he... called God his Father, making himself equal with God." This topic was central in the trial of Jesus (see John 19:7; Mark 14:61–64. Matt 26:63–65, Luke 22:70–71; W. Meeks 1976, 43–67).

According to *Legat.* 5–6, the Jewish people are the souls whose vision soars above all created things to behold the uncreated and divine. God himself cannot be touched or handled, however. Building on this, Philo pointedly rejects that Gaius, as a human person, can claim to be god. In this enterprise, he bases his conviction on the understanding that the Jews, as Israel, are the ones who "see God" and have soared above all created things and schooled themselves to behold the uncreated and divine (*Legat.* 5).

Thus, Runia rightly relates the prologue's theme of an ascent by Israelites who "see God" to Philo's sharp denunciation of Gaius' blasphemous claim of transhuman deification.

Education

It is to be noted that in the prologue Philo stresses the importance of education. He even weaves the notion of education into his description of the visionary ascent: “souls whose vision has soared above all created things and schooled itself to behold the uncreated and divine...” (*Legat.* 5).

D. Runia rightly stresses that the introduction of *Legatio* must be related to the rest of the treatise (Runia 2003, 356, 369–70). The words about the souls/the Jewish people and their ascent and vision of the divine is a model against which the claim of the emperor Gaius is to be tested and rejected. This comparison proves that Gaius’ claim is blasphemous: he overstepped human bounds when he claimed to be god.

The task therefore is now to look into the role which the Law of Moses and Jewish tradition played in the conflict between the Jews and Gaius (Borgen 2001, 86–101). Philo gives an ideological presentation in *Legat.* 114–15 (114):

Need we more than these proofs to teach us that Gaius has no right to be likened to any of the gods or the demigods either, for his nature, his substance, his purpose in life, is different from theirs? But passion we see to be a blind thing, particularly when it is reinforced by vanity and ambition, combined with possession of the supreme dominion which made havoc of our former prosperity. (115) For he looked with disfavour on the Jews alone, because they alone opposed him on principle, trained as they were we may say even from the cradle, by parents and tutors and instructors and by the far higher authority of the sacred laws and also the unwritten customs, to acknowledge one God who is the Father and Maker of the world. (cf. Runia 2003, 364)

According to *Legat.* 115, the aim of education in the Law of Moses is to make the Jews acknowledge “one God who is the Father and Maker of the world.” A corresponding exclusive understanding of God is found in *Legat.* 347: “the honour and reverence due to the true and living God.” In these formulations Philo renders convictions which are a central theme in his writings and in his understanding of Judaism (see *Opif.* 171; *Decal.* 52–65 and 66–81; *Leg.* 3:82; also *Legat.* 5). This conviction meant a sharp protest against Gaius’ claim to be a god. It should be added, however, that Philo’s monotheism is a form of monolatry which allows for a number of intermediaries.

Philo and John agree that there is one God. When Philo’s *Legatio* is seen together with his other treatises, it is evident that this view does

not exclude the existence of intermediary figures. This observation offers interesting points of contact with Johannine Christology, as expressed in the Prologue as well as elsewhere in the Gospel (see for example studies by Siegert 2004, 277–93, and Leonhardt-Balzer 2004, 295–319).

The Palinode

The last sentence of the treatise is brief, and for that reason it is difficult to know what the actual reference is. My own literal translation comes from *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1990, 857) which has the following definition of the term palinode: “a poem in which the writer retracts a view or sentiment expressed in a former poem.” Philo’s use of the term shows that it is not only used with reference to poems. In *Somn.* 2:292 Philo relates the term to repentance from human pride and presumptuousness: “If they take repentance for their counsellor, . . .; if they propitiate the merciful power of Him that Is by recantations (παλινωδίας) in which holiness replaces profanity, they will obtain full pardon.” In *Post.* 179, Philo recounts the biblical story of Rachel. According to Philo, her prayer “Let God add to me another son” (Gen 30:24) was a recantation (παλινωδίαν). She contradicted the view that birth is solely of a human being’s own making.

The treatise *In Flaccum* closes with the death of Flaccus. One might then think that the subject of *Legatio* should have been death of Gaius, seen as divine retribution for his attacks on the Jews (Smallwood 1970, 325. Cf. Bilde 1978, 71; Van Horst 2003, 5, n. 9. Cf. Krauss Reggiani 1984, 575–76). An important difference between *Legatio* and *In Flaccum* emerges here, however. As noted by Krauss Reggiani (1984, 575–76), divine retribution was already at work as part of the running narrative of *In Flaccum* before the execution of Flaccus actually took place. Flaccus even repented. Krauss Reggiani then assumes that in the book which according to *Legat.* 373 was to follow, Philo would have included a story of Gaius’ repentance.

Instead of making such a hypothetical conjecture, a more probable alternative may be found in the treatise *Legatio* itself, namely the contrast between the concluding paragraphs, §§ 370–372 and § 3 in the prologue. Philo wrote:

370 . . . the other circumstances alarmed us in our trepidation and suspense as to what he would decide, what verdict he would declare, on what grounds the verdict would be given. For had a hearing been given to our case (τῆς

ὑποθέσεως) by him who heard some points only to misunderstand? Surely it was a cruel situation that the fate of all the Jews everywhere should rest precariously on us five envoys.

371 For if he should decide in favor of our enemies, what other cities will keep tranquil or refrain from attacking its fellow inhabitants, what house of prayer would will be left unscathed, what kind of civic rights will not be upset for those whose lot is cast under the ancient institutions of the Jews? First upset, then shipwrecked, the sunk to the very bottom will be both their peculiar laws and the rights which they enjoy in common in every city.

372 Waterlogged by such considerations we were dragged down and submerged in the depths, for those who hitherto seemed to be acting with us gave up. At least when we were summoned they did not stay in and hold their ground. But slunk away in fear, knowing full well the longing which he cherished for being acknowledged as a god.

Philo tells that at the time of writing the treatise, a more promising situation had emerged, however. This was indicated in *Legat.* 3: “yet present time and the many important cases [my trans. Greek: ὑποθέσεις] decided in it are strong enough to carry conviction . . . that the Deity takes thought for men, and particularly for the suppliants race which the Father and King of the universe and the Source of all things has taken for his portion. Now this race is called in Hebrew Israel . . .” This statement could be a starting point for a contrasting recantation, a palinode. Moreover, Philo prepares for the recantation by pointing to the nature of the Jewish people. They were the visionary soul-people who see the divine world, and who are trained in and committed to the law of Moses and who worship the one God, “who takes thought for men, and particularly for the suppliants race.” Goodenough (1938, 19) has tentatively agreed to such an understanding with the difference that he thinks that Philo also would report on the fall of Gaius: “It is likely that it was some sort of conclusion which told of the fall of Gaius, and which went back to the theme of the introduction, the protecting providence of God for the mystic suppliants and intercessors of humanity, the Jewish race.”

Conclusion

We asked the question if the two treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* could help to illuminate aspects of the Gospels, primarily with reference to John. They, like the Gospels, contain interpretations of contemporary history. Philo deals with events related to the pogrom against the Alexandrian Jews in 38 C.E. The present study focused on the treatise *Legatio ad Gaium* to explore if any of its insights could shed light on

the Gospel of John. Both Philo's *Legatio* and John faced the challenge of tragic and critical events by interpreting them within a cosmic setting. In each, a cosmic-oriented prologue sets the stage. In Philo's case, the treatise was written right when the judicial hearing about the tragic events was brought to an end, and the Emperor Claudius was in the process of working out a settlement. The treatise's title *De virtutibus* is appropriate. It deals with how the training in the Law gave the Jews courage and strength to protest and endure adversity. In this respect, the treatise contains an element of hope and "good news," even in times of crisis.

The Law, *in casu* the story of the patriarch Jacob being named Israel, revealed that the Jews were souls who soared above created things and saw the uncreated and divine. With this vision as a model Philo demonstrates that the Emperor Gaius was a counterfeit god, and in fact not a god at all. Philo reminded his readers of their ideology and identity which enabled them to respond with stamina and hope right when a new situation was emerging.

In John, the Prologue traces the line back to creation and before to show that Jesus' life was the meeting place between earthly history and the divine, even beyond the created world. In this way John demonstrated that it was not blasphemy when Jesus acted like God. It was the truth: Jesus, who was crucified as a criminal and who rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples, was God.

In this situation of challenge and response, Philo wrote two interpretative treatises, one without a theological and cosmic-biblical prologue, the treatise *In Flaccum*, and one with a cosmic-biblical prologue, *Legatio ad Gaium*. In both cases the biographical perspectives are of the protagonists' professional lives. Correspondingly, there are two treatises or Gospels that are limited to Jesus' official ministry, his professional life, the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John, Mark without a cosmic-biblical Prologue and John with one.

Taking all this into consideration, there is no reason for understanding the Gospel of Mark as a model or frame for the form and structure of the Gospel of John. Thus, there is no need for understanding their relationship along a linear, historical time line.

Neither the Gospel of Mark nor the Gospel of John was written at the time when the story they are narrating ends, at the appearances of the risen Jesus. John agrees with several important points in Paul's letters: they interpret authoritative (oral) Gospel traditions in a similar manner; they combine eucharistic traditions with Old Testament traditions about the manna (and the well). As will be shown in the next chapter,

John in the Prologue and Paul in the “hymn” (Phil 2:5–11) see Jesus before creation, within it, and as a person in history; both refer to the appearance of the risen Jesus as the context for his commissioning people to continue his work. At times, Paul has a “high Christology” which approaches that of John. Thus, a time close to Paul seems a natural context for at least some of the central ideas and concerns of John.

Several other relevant points will be taken up in the next chapter, especially the statement made by Thomas, “My Lord and my God,” John 20:28.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE APPEARANCE TO THOMAS: NOT A BLASPHEMOUS CLAIM, BUT THE TRUTH

The structures of the Gospels of Mark and John seem to be built on the model of a professional person whose views lead to extreme crisis for himself and for others, but which nevertheless proves to be decisively beneficial. In John, some features suggest that it has its place within what may be vaguely called the time of church history. Scholars like M. Hengel, Frey and many others defend such a view. I will propose another understanding here, based on the response to the accusation that Jesus blasphemously claimed to be like God.

Can a Crucified Criminal Be Divine?

The appearance of the risen Jesus to Thomas, John 20:26–29, plays a role in John’s “theology” as well as the dating of the Gospel. Thomas’ words “My Lord and My God” are, by M. Hengel and others, understood to express Thomas’ personal faith and his confession of Jesus as God (Hengel 1992, 430–31). According to Hengel this designation of Jesus as God points back to the Prologue, John 1:1, where it is stated that “the Logos was God.” Thus, personal faith and its confession are shown to be the goal of the whole Gospel. With this title the Gospel of John provides the most important basis for the further Christological reflection of the ancient Church.

Hegel draws the following conclusion: “The confession of the divinity of Christ stands thus at the beginning and end of the Fourth Gospel. . . . The christological statements of the earliest church thus reach their climax in the Fourth Gospel” (Hengel 1992, 430–31).

Hengel relates this confession to the letter to the Emperor Trajan from Pliny the Younger, the governor of Bithynia. The letter was written between 110 and 112 C.E. Pliny describes a worship service where Christians sing an antiphonic hymn to Christ, as “though he were their God (*quasi deo*)” (Hengel 1992, 425). Hengel writes: “This *quasi deo* appears in its fullest

form in the Prologue of John, likely written a bit earlier (between ten and twenty years) than Pliny's letter" (1992, 430).

In his essay "Christological Titles in Early Christianity," Hengel does an interesting comparison between John 1:1–18, the opening verses in Hebr 1:1–3, and the so-called hymn in Phil 2:6–11" (Hengel 1992, 425–48). Hengel reached the following conclusion: "The comparison of the three hymns in the Johannine prologue, the Letter to the Hebrews and the Letter to the Philippians shows, first of all, that christological thinking between 50 and 100 C.E. *was much more unified in its basic structure* than New Testament research, in part at least, has maintained. Basically, the later developments are already there in a nutshell in the Philippian hymn. This means, however, with regard to the development of *all* the early Church's christology, that more happened in the first twenty years than in the entire later, century-long development of dogma.

Secondly, it is clear that the glorification of Christ, the doctrine of his preexistence, creation mediation and exaltation, did not remove the scandal of his shameful death, but rather deepened it" (Hengel 1992, 443).

Thus, the hymn included by Paul in Phil 2:6–11 is important for the question of dating. Paul's Letter to the Philippians can be dated to the fifties or early sixties C.E. (Kümmel 1965, 229–35; Fitzgerald 1992, 322–23; Brown 1997, 493–96).

Hengel translates the hymn in Phil 2:5–11 as follows (Hengel 1992, 440):

Who, though he was in the form of God,
 Did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped,
 But emptied himself,
 Have this mind among yourselves, which also was in Christ Jesus,
 Taking the form as a servant,
 Being born in the likeness of men.
 And being found in human form
 He humbled himself
 And became obedient unto death,
 Even death on a cross.
 Therefore God has highly exalted him
 And bestowed on him the name which is above every name,
 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
 In heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 And every tongue confess
 That Jesus Christ is lord,
 To the glory of God the Father!

According to Hengel, when the Philippian hymn speaks of Christ Jesus' preexistent "form of God," it is a concept which is closely related to the idea of the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, "the image of God," a metaphor taken from Jewish Wisdom theology (Hengel 1992, 442). He does not regard his divine form of existence as a thing to be "snatched," but empties himself, becomes human, and dies the shameful death of a slave on the cross. "Therefore God has exalted him above every comparable power, and given him his own name of majesty, 'Kyrios', that he might be Lord over all Creation, the heavenly (i.e. the angels), the earthly (i.e. humanity), and the underworld (i.e. the dead—or the demons?), in order that they all call him as 'Kyrios'—not to his own glory, but to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9–11; Hengel 1992, 441). Hengel finds the same general perspective in John's Gospel. The preexistence paradox happened. The Logos became a mortal man (v. 14; Hengel 1992, 430).

To Hengel, Thomas' words in John 20:28 "My Lord and my God" point decisively to a late dating of the Gospel of John. He (Hengel 1992, 430–33) understands these words uttered by Thomas to be a confession, expressing the early church's confession of the divinity of Jesus. He states that this confession completes the tradition within the early church of the person and work of Christ. Frey (2002, 233–36) has developed this understanding further. He rightly keeps the divine and human aspects more closely together in the story of the appearance in John 20:19–29. Frey regards this appearance of the risen Jesus as the foundation of Christian beliefs and preaching, as it looks back to the constitutive function of the first witnesses, who saw and believed in the crucified and resurrected Jesus. This vision took place prior to when people in the church could not see, and yet believed.

Frey, nevertheless, thinks that Thomas' confession is a late development. On the one hand its emphasis on the concrete manifestation of Jesus is stronger than that found in the Gospel of Luke. In Luke 24:36–43 there is an emphasis on the physical and real presence of the crucified Jesus at this appearance after his resurrection. On the other hand, John's high Christology, expressed in Thomas' confession of Jesus as Lord and God, goes beyond other Christological statements in the New Testament and beyond what was acceptable thinking within a Jewish context (Frey 2010, 460–66).

Frey also refers to the Philippian hymn as evidence for the early existence of a "high Christology." Moreover, he points to 1 Cor 8:6 where "Lord" (κύριος) is characterized with God the Father as preexistent: "and

one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (Frey 2010, 461).

When Hengel concludes that Christological thinking between 50 and 100 C.E. was quite unified in its basic structure and maintains that the later developments are already in essence in the Philippian hymn, the question must be raised: why should the Gospel of John be dated towards the end of the first century with reference to Pliny's Letter to Trajan? Why should it not be dated closer to the time of Paul's Letter to the Philippians? If more happened in the first twenty years than in the entire, later centuries-long development of dogma, why should not their climax in the Johannine Christology have been reached closer to those very creative twenty years? During these years, Jesus' followers even elevated Jesus to a dignity which left every form of pagan-polytheistic apotheosis far behind (Hengel 1992, 443). Moreover, Frey has a similar comment in connection with Thomas' words, "My Lord and My God": this confession goes beyond what was acceptable within a Jewish context. Thus, Frey's view fits together well with Hengel's characterization of the development of the Christological thinking during the first twenty years.

The choice between these two alternatives depends largely on the more general picture one entertains about the development of early Christianity: it could be either a primarily linear development, or one where parallel interpretations and movements were simultaneously active (Cf. Becker 2006, 474–75).

Seeing and Believing—Distinctly Different from Believing without Seeing

C. H. Dodd (1953, 443) rightly places the story of Thomas (John 20:24–29) at the boundary between the empirical and spiritual worlds. It is seen in the setting where Jesus still reveals himself at a particular moment of time, at a particular place, and to certain historical individuals, who are to attest to succeeding generations that he rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples in this world. Thus, Thomas encounters Jesus in a context which is distinct from the later situation of the church.

At the outset, some observations should be made about the structure and the form of John 20:19–29. It is commonly recognized that the section consists of two interrelated appearances of the risen Jesus, the appearance to the disciples on the first day, with Thomas absent, vv. 19–23, and another appearance to the disciples eight days later with the focus on Thomas, one of the twelve, who was present, vv. 26–29. The two appearances are linked

together by vv. 24–25 which is a report on Thomas's critical reaction when the other disciples told him that they had seen the Lord.

What is the traditional form of John 20:19–29? Here the research done by C. H. Dodd is of help. He distinguishes between concise narratives and circumstantial narratives. He states that they form different “patterns.” The concise pericope of vv. 19–21 is constructed on a common pattern, which may be represented as follows.

1. The situation: Christ's followers bereft of their Lord
2. The appearance of Christ
3. His greeting
4. The recognition
5. His word of command

Dodd provides a list of such concise narratives: the appearances to the women in Matt 28:8–10; the appearance to the disciples in Matt 28:16–20; Mark 16:14–15; and the appearance to the disciples here in John 20:19–21. The concise narrative in Luke 24:36–49 is an “impure” example. It elaborates on the disbelief of the disciples, who thought they saw a spirit.

Omitting for time being the elements on Thomas, John 20:24–29, the unit of commission and mission fits into the structure of a concise narrative, John 20:19–29:

1. The situation

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews,”
2. The appearance of Christ: “Jesus came and stood among them”
3. His greeting: “And he said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”
4. The recognition: (v. 20) *καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἔδειξεν τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτοῖς. ἐχάρησαν οὖν οἱ μαθηταί.* “When he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.” (*ἰδόντες τὸν κύριον.*)
5. His word of command: “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you’. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. (*καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς.*) And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

Paul's reports in 1 Cor 9 and 15:8–9 contain some features which illuminate this command by the risen Jesus, vv. 21–23. In 1 Cor 9 Paul encounters questions raised concerning his apostleship, and he refers to the event when he received the call and commission. The similarities with John may be stated thus:

1. The seeing of the Lord:

Paul: 1 Cor 9:1 "Have I not seen our Lord?" οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα;

Confer 15:8–9: "Last of all . . . he appeared also to me. For I am the least of all the apostles . . ."

John 20:20b: "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." ἐχάρησαν οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες τὸν κύριον. Verse 25: "We have seen the Lord." Ἐώρακαμεν τὸν κύριον.

2. The commissioning:

Paul: 1 Cor 9:1 "Am I not an apostle?" οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος; Verse 17 "... I am entrusted with a commission." οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι (Holmes, M. W. 2010, 1 Cor 9).

John 20:21–22, "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.'" καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς.¹ "And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" Confer verse 29: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Both Paul and John refer to those to whom they are sent, but in different ways:

Paul reports the response by the Corinthians in 9:1b–2: "Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." Confer 1 Cor 15:10–11 where Paul writes: "I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed."

John 20:23 reports on the authority of those sent relative to those to whom they go: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (see Barrett 1978a, 571. Brown 1970, 1039–45).²

¹ It is significant that this commissioning of the disciples plays a central role in the farewell section, John 13:12–John 20, including the Prayer of Jesus, 17:18. The commissioning is then being effectuated in the appearance of the risen Lord, John 20:20–23 and 29.

² No sharp distinction should be drawn between missionary outreach and activities related to church order.

Some relevant insights can be learned from this comparison: In 1 Cor 15:7–11 and 9:1–9:1–23 Paul refers to his own vision of the risen Lord. Here the authority received through the commissioning dominates the story. John 20:19–23 follows the structure of a concise appearance story. The word of commissioning has been developed into a semi-unit of its own: “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

Thus this elaboration of the concise appearance story in John 20:19–23 about the commissioning comes close to Paul’s description in 1 Cor 9, where the commissioning plays a central role in the appearance.

According to both Paul and John, it is the risen Lord himself who commissions and sends within the setting of an appearance. But it is made clear that such appearances happened only during a specific time, an interim period. Paul claims that he was the last one to encounter the risen Lord in this way: “Last of all . . . he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles . . .” Correspondingly, the definitive distinction is made in John 20:29 between “seeing” and “not seeing.” Jesus said to Thomas: “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

Jesus’ appearance to his disciples “eight days later,” with Thomas present, John 20:26–29, needs further examination.

The interlude in vv. 24–25 serves as a necessary introduction: Thomas, one of the twelve, had been absent. The disciples who had been present, reported to him “We have seen the Lord.”³ Thomas formulated a pointed condition for believing: “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

In his broad, thorough and important study, “Die ‘theologia crucifixi’ des Johannesevangeliums,” J. Frey (2002, 225–338) observes that seeing the nail marks in Jesus’ hands and the lance wound in his side were more important than touching the physical reality: The identity of the risen one as being the crucified one is recognized by these marks. This cognition enables the disciples to believe and to preach and continue Jesus’ work (232).

³ Cf. Paul’s rhetorically formulated questions in 1 Cor 9:1: “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”

Another element needs be discussed, however. Since this identity was tied to Jesus as crucified, it meant that it was the identity of a criminal. He was executed as a blasphemer, John 18:30 and 19:7, and as a Messianic pretender, John 19:15. So the burning question was then how could an executed criminal be divine? In a pointed way Thomas faced the same question asked by the Jews in John 6:42: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" In John 10:31–33, a corresponding view is given to justify the attempt to execute Jesus on the spot: "The Jews took up stones again to stone him . . . We stone you . . . for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God" (σὺ ἄνθρωπος ὧν ποιεῖς σεαυτὸν θεόν). This accusation parallels the one given by Philo against the Emperor Gaius.

If Jesus was crucified as a criminal, how could he be in any way divine? When Thomas saw that Jesus, the crucified criminal, had risen from the dead, he realized that Jesus was vindicated; Jesus was innocent of the criminal charges that led to his execution. Thomas believed that this criminal was his Lord and God. He exclaimed: "My Lord and My God." Within the earthly human jurisdiction he was condemned for blasphemy. On the basis of the divine jurisdiction the verdict was not blasphemy, but the truth. He is the Lord and (the Son of) God. The distinction between the two jurisdictions is demonstrated in John 8:12–18.

It is a decisive feature that this appearance of the risen Jesus and these words by Thomas belong to the interim period during which the disciples *saw* and believed. This period is distinctly different from the period of the church when they have *not seen* and yet believe: "Jesus said to him [Thomas], 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'"

Thus, in this section the concept of crucifying a criminal is emphasized, right down to the list of specifics marks from the execution. What is the pragmatic concern behind this notion? J. Frey rightly suggests that the evangelist wishes to communicate the basic message that the readers and the future generations have to rely on the first witnesses.

An extensive quotation from Frey's study should be included here (2002, 235–36):

Deshalb geht es in dieser Erzählung weder um die Gestalt des Thomas als Einzelperson oder gar Repräsentanten einer späteren Traditionslinie, es geht auch nicht eigentlich um ihn als Typ des ‚Unglaubigen‘ oder ‚Glaubenschwachen‘, noch um einen prinzipiellen Gegensatz von Glauben und Sehen, sondern um ein für die Spätere Verkündigung wesentliches Urdatum des christlichen Zeugnisses, die Konstitution der Osterbotschaft und das heist

konkret: auch die Leser des Evangeliums, denen eine unmittelbare Augenzeugenschaft nicht mehr möglich ist, sind „für ‚ihr Sehen‘ und ‚Glauben‘ auf die konstitutive Bedeutung und Funktion der ersten Zeugen angewiesen.“

In diesem Sinne ist auch der Makarismus in Joh 20:29b nicht primär als Tadel des ‚ungläubigen Thomas‘ zu verstehen, sondern als seine Zusage an die Glaubenden späterer Generationen, deren Situation nach johanneischer Überzeugung nicht ungünstiger ist als die der ersten Zeugen, auch wenn Christus für sich nicht mehr unmittelbar zu sehen (Joh 16:10.17) und physisch zu betasten ist und ihr Glaube auf das Zeugnis der ersten Zeugen angewiesen ist.

On the whole these points are well taken, and the distinction drawn between the original witnesses and the later generations is correctly made by Frey. Other perspectives need to be analysed further, however. Since Thomas was absent at the gathering when the other disciples saw the Lord and were commissioned by him as his emissaries, Thomas' encounter with the risen Lord meant that he was brought together with the other disciples in having seen the risen Lord, and, only by implication, commissioned and sent. This point is expressed in Thomas' statement of allegiance to Jesus by addressing Jesus as "my Lord and my God."

As shown, these words do not stand in isolation. It is related to the report extended to Thomas by the other disciples (John 20:25): "We have seen the Lord," and to a phrase used by Paul: "Have I not seen Jesus, our Lord?" (1 Cor 9:1). Like Paul, Thomas addresses Jesus, saying "My Lord..." (John 20:28). Moreover, in John 20:21 Jesus, as son, refers to his father and addresses his disciples: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." Here a formula-like phrase of transfer of agency from father to son is used, and it is not explicitly said that the Father is God or the Son is God ('s Son). Concerning the transfer of a commission, see *Qidd.* 41a: "an agent can appoint an agent" (Borgen 1968, 143–44; 1997, 88–89).

Strictly speaking, the whole transfer could at the outset be understood to have been a transfer of agency among human persons, the father, his *son*, and *the son's disciples*. Earlier in John it is said that the raising of Lazarus from the dead meant that he returned to daily life (on earth), John 11:44 (see Bultmann 1968, 312–13). C. H. Dodd 1953, 365–66 rightly wrote: "But Lazarus (upon the level of events in time on which the story moves) will die again when his time comes."

The situation is similar to John 6:42, where Jesus is identified as the son of Joseph, and to 5:17, where Jesus says that his father is working still,

and Jesus is working likewise. In all of these cases the formulations refer to a regular relationship between son and father. Further formulations in the context make clear that Jesus comes from above (6:38–42), and that he is working on the Sabbath as God, his Father, does (5:17–18). However, Thomas' words of identification and allegiance make explicit that Jesus, who is the Son of Joseph and a criminal, is also God, implying that the Father mentioned in John 20:28, is God.

Hence the accusation against Jesus for blasphemy actually formulated Jesus' true nature. The accusation stated in John 10:33 told the truth: "We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God." In the same way Jesus was accused before Pilate: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). Thus, the received tradition about blasphemy, found in all four Gospels, is in this way explicated by John: Thomas recognized that Jesus' claim was not blasphemy, but the truth.

Conclusion

The story about Jesus' appearance to Thomas contributes to the debate in the Gospel on how Jesus, as a human person who was crucified as a criminal, can come from above and be divine, be God. In John 6:41 "the Jews" raised this question: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven.'" Thomas' words "My Lord and My God" make clear that he believed that Jesus, the executed criminal, a human person, was from above and was present in time and space before his return to the Father.

This analysis of the appearance of the risen Jesus, the commissioning of the disciples, and the appearance to Thomas has shown that the risen Jesus appeared as a person to the disciples in time and space. In accordance with a halakhic view, Jesus transfers his commission from God, the Father, to his disciples. By his appearance to the disciples and to Thomas, he is vindicated, he was not a criminal who should have been crucified. He is Lord and God. Thomas responds with faith in this risen Jesus, crucified as a criminal, and expresses his allegiance in the statement, "My Lord and my God."⁴

⁴ A final comment on the appearance story in John 20:19–29 and a parallel story in Luke 24:36–49 must be made. Scholars have examined the agreements and differences between these passages in John and Luke and have reached different conclusions. Frey (2002, 432) draws on the study by Lang (1999, 279–281) and supposes that John has taken

The challenge was how to find meaning in the extreme fact that Jesus was crucified as a criminal. This challenge had to be faced from the time of the execution. The expository nature of John shows that the book was not written immediately after the execution and the appearances had taken place. A period of time had passed.

Paul can offer help at this point. He too faced the challenge that Jesus was executed as a criminal. His interpretative answer to the challenge was: God "...made him [Jesus] to be sin," 2 Cor 5:21, and God "...sending his son in the likeness of sinful flesh..." Rom 8:3. Previously, as Saul, Paul had regarded Jesus as a criminal. Paul's transformation meant that he interpreted the death of Jesus differently: Paul thought it was God's making that Jesus was a criminal. It was our penalty, vicariously 'for us', 1 Cor 15:3; Gal 3:13.

It is then evident that Paul, in the fifties C.E., struggled with this dilemma. He received traditions from and about Jesus and expanded on and elaborated them, including the tradition that Jesus died as a criminal.

John too received traditions about Jesus and made expository elaborations on them. The challenge of Jesus' death as a criminal was still a live issue. John faced the challenge and gave it a positive interpretation independently of Paul. Paul's and John's interpretations existed as parallel phenomena. This would still be the case even if their works were not written at the same time. John is not to be understood as following Paul in a "before and after" linear line of dependence.

Since Philo's treatises *Legatio ad Gaium* and *In Flaccum* were also responses to the challenge of tragic events, I should remark on them here. The focus will be on *Legatio*. The most interesting observation is that Philo, with his own involvement in the events, wove together the historical data and his developed interpretations so seamlessly that it is difficult to unravel the various components.

Per Bilde's investigation of the sources available on the Emperor Gaius' attempt to erect a statue in the Temple of Jerusalem can be brought to bear on this subject (1978, 67–93). He examines various sources, including Philo's *Legatio*. Bilde rightly stresses the importance of careful and comprehensive analysis of the sources' leanings and literary forms. He

up the Lukan tradition and recast it. The present writer finds the conclusions drawn by Dodd (1965, 143–45) and Brown (1970, 2: 1028–29) to be the more probable ones. Their general conclusion is that Luke and John have independently utilized the same tradition about the appearance of the risen Jesus in Jerusalem. If the possibility of dependence is raised, certain elements suggest that Luke's version(s) is in one way or another dependent on the Johannine version rather than vice versa.

maintains that we must grapple with how Philo shapes his figures and embeds his descriptions in a theological schematization. "Josephus' account is closer to the historical course of events than Philo's, which to a large extent gives the impression of being an ideological construction" (Bilde 1978, 86). Bilde concludes that the picture of Gaius' general hatred for the Jews in *Legatio* ought to be conceived as part of a literary pattern created by Philo (1978, 71).

Although Bilde's analysis largely is correct, the hypothesis that Philo's approach is just an ideological and a literary construction is not satisfactory. We must then ask: Were the effects of the tragic historical events such an existential challenge that they called for an ideological and religious response which could give meaning to a situation of despair and hope when facing the future? The answer is to the affirmative. Philo, as head delegate to Rome, wrote this when the Emperor Claudius was dealing with the conflict. Philo emphasized the supermundane foundation of the Jewish identity, the strength and virtue of the Jews when facing hardships, their trust in God for providing help, and the strength provided by the God-given Jewish Laws.

These historical events catalyzed Philo into writing the *Legatio*. His concern was to narrate and explain the events in such a way that their destructive force was overcome. The treatise offers a mixture and interplay between historical events and meaningful theology and ideology.

Thus Philo's treatise *Legatio* can to some extent illuminate John. Both writings were responses to pressing, current challenges. While *Legatio* was written by someone involved in the events narrated, and who responded immediately at the close of the conflict, John's response to the challenge came in the form of vindicating appearances by the risen "culprit."

The similarity between Philo and John was that certain historical events were experienced as challenges which called for responses. In both cases, the response meant that the events were interpreted within cosmic contexts, in Philo's case that the Jews were souls that soared above created things to behold the uncreated and divine, and in John's that the person concerned, Jesus, was understood to be the preexistent God/Son of God, incarnated as Jesus from Nazareth, executed as a criminal, and vindicated by making his post-crucifixion existence manifest to his disciples.

From all this, an answer to Martin Hengel's question emerges: "Zu den ungelösten, ja wohl unlösbaren Rätseln des 4. Evangeliums gehört diese in der urchristlichen Erzählliteratur wohl einzigartige Kombination von präzisiertem historischem Detail und schöpferischer theologischer Gestaltung des Stoffes." (M. Hengel 1999b), 334. Tragic historical events were

overcome and became a dynamic force for Jesus' followers. In this way historical events and interpretations were woven together.

With some slight adjustments, similar formulations apply to Philo's *Legatio*: Specific historical data contained tragic and heroic elements. The end result for Philo and other Jews was the experience of disappointing setbacks and concomitant fears. A glimmer of hope did exist, however, so Philo interpreted the events in such a way that he theologically and ideologically outlined an all-encompassing perspective, strengthened Jewish identity, and enhanced their allegiance to the Law of the Moses.

A major difference though is that Philo interprets the conflict as that of Jewish monolatry against pagan polytheism, a threat against the Jewish community from the outside. In John, the conflict was mainly seen as a struggle within the Jewish community, with a decisive involvement of the Roman authorities who permitted and thereby authorized Jesus' crucifixion. In John, a central issue was the historical person Jesus, who claimed to be like God, thus committing blasphemy.

The concluding remarks will sum up some of the main points of the present chapter: The story of the appearance of the risen Jesus to Thomas plays a role in the "theology" of John as well as its dating. Hengel, Frey, and others maintain that Thomas' words "My Lord and My God" are a late confession at the threshold of the Christological thinking in the history of the Church. The next question is whether one is to think of New Testament Christology mainly along a linear historical line or as a complex pool of thoughts which co-existed. The present author has long followed those who see a linear development as the key to the understanding of John.

But discovering similarities between John and Paul has brought me to think more in the direction of the second alternative. For example, the Christological "hymn" in Paul's Letter to the Philippians 2:5-11 is a closer parallel to the Prologue of John than any text in the Synoptics. As for Thomas' words of faith in the risen Jesus, Hengel finds it important that this use of "God" as a Christological designation by Thomas as stated in the end of John refers back to the use of God as the designation of the pre-existent One in the Prologue. This connection is understood to be an *inclusio*.

In the present study, the designation God has been seen against the background of Jesus' execution. Thomas' detailed description of the marks from the execution is not just a documentation of the physical aspect or marks of identity. They were a documentation of the fact that Jesus was crucified as a criminal. A central accusation was that of blasphemy, that Jesus as a man made himself to be God. To Thomas, Jesus' resurrection

vindicated him and documented that the accusation actually was true in the sense that as a man he was God incarnate, within the perspective of pre- and post-existence.

As God's commissioned Son Jesus was a totally righteous person. He belonged to the divine jurisdiction in his ministry, death, and resurrection, and could pass on his commission to his disciples. Encountering the risen Jesus, Thomas expressed his faith in Jesus, the blasphemous criminal, as God. Thomas, one of the twelve, exclaimed: "My Lord and My God."

As for the context of Thomas' expression of allegiance, it is important that Paul provides documentation for Gospel traditions being received and being subject to exposition and that he testifies to the fact that Jesus' death as a condemned, crucified criminal was a challenge to be faced. Paul's answer was: God made Jesus to be sin (a criminal). He functioned as a substitute "for us." John also witnesses that Gospel traditions were subject to exposition, in a similar manner to that of Paul. This observation supports the view that John and Paul should be seen as parallel phenomena. Other relevant points have been analyzed in the present book, such as the format of John and Mark, the reception and exposition of the Scriptures, and, correspondingly, the reception and exposition of Jesus traditions.

Here the writings of Philo of Alexandria have helped, as have the letters of Paul. Paul provides examples of received pre-Synoptic traditions and their exposition. Josephus and rabbinic writings can contribute as well.

Another question is: In what ways can the other three Gospels, seen as parallel to John, give important and helpful insights? These and other points will be summed up in the final chapter.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SUMMARY: JOHN, ARCHAEOLOGY, PHILO, PAUL, OTHER JEWISH SOURCES. JOHN'S INDEPENDENCE OF THE SYNOPTICS. WHERE MY JOURNEY OF RESEARCH HAS LED ME

The summary of the present book has grown into a final chapter. As a summary it will of necessity contain repetitions. The main theme is the question of John's independence of the other written Gospels. The task is then to bring together observations from John's Gospel itself, from archaeology, from Paul's Letters and Philo's treatises, and possibly from other sources. The aim is to give a better characterization of the place and setting of John.

The Question of Independence

To a large extent this chapter will build on research presented in the previous chapters. It will serve as a concluding summary, but a summary which has the chief aim of illuminating the question of John's independence and setting. The studies done in the previous chapters are presupposed and some of the most relevant observations will be summed up here. At certain points, more material will be brought into the presentation.

In 1976 John A. T. Robinson published his book *Redating the New Testament*, based on his judgment that there is little textual evidence that the New Testament reflects knowledge of the destruction of Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E. Accordingly, Robinson dated the four Gospels to the period prior to 70 C.E. As for the Gospel of John he placed it to sometime between 40 and 65. His early date for John has received little positive response from scholars.

Robinson misses a crucial point which could have led to further analysis: regardless of when the Gospel of John was written, did it build on transmitted oral and/or written traditions which were independent of the other three written Gospels or not? This question calls for a broad investigation of relevant aspects. The task is to bring together observations from the Gospel itself, archaeology, Paul's Letters and Philo's treatises, and other sources. Within this context the aim is to give a better characterization of the place and context of John.

As for archaeology, the present study will draw on publications by other scholars. No new contribution will be made. Nevertheless, this area of research is important because there are interesting agreements between archaeology and geographical and social information in John. Thus one question we will ask is: how far does available archaeological, geographical, and other factual information illuminate the study of John, and, correspondingly, how far does John illuminate archaeology and the historical context?

Briefly, some points from surveys and reports made by U. C. von Wahlde make clear the importance of this question. He discusses one of his surveys in his essay "The Gospel of John and Archaeology," published in James H. Charlesworth (ed.) 2006, *Jesus and Archaeology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 523–86. In the essay "The Road Ahead. Three Aspects of Johannine Scholarship" (in T. Thatcher (ed.) 2007, 343–53), Von Wahlde writes on page 351: "In the Gospel of John, there are thirteen geographical references not mentioned in the other Gospels. If we include in our list those places about which we learn details not mentioned in the other Gospels, the number increases to twenty. From what we know from archaeological and literary sources, these references are not symbolic creations, as once thought, but are accurate and detailed references that reveal aspects of Jesus' ministry not otherwise known." In the same survey, page 352, Von Wahlde refers to further knowledge gained on the pools of Bethesda and Siloam. At both places large *miqveot* have been found.

He gives a detailed report on the excavations of the Pool of Siloam in the chapter "The Pool of Siloam: The Importance of the New Discoveries for Our Understanding of Ritual Immersion in Late Second Temple Judaism and the Gospel of John," in P. N. Anderson, F. Just, and T. Thatcher (eds.) 2009, *John, Jesus and History*, Volume 2, Atlanta; SBL, 155–73. J. H. Charlesworth has emphasized the importance of archaeology for "Jesus Research" in general and also more specifically on research in John. (J. H. Charlesworth 1988; 2003, 37–70). In a pointed way he maintains that a marked change has taken place, as seen in the title of his essay "From Old to New: Paradigm Shifts concerning Judaism, the Gospel of John, Jesus, and the Advent of 'Christianity'" (2009, 56–72). He claims that "the Fourth Evangelist is exceptional among the four evangelists for his knowledge of pre-70 religious customs and especially of the topography and architecture of Jerusalem" (page 61). He lists five examples which support this view: (a) The Pool of Bethzatha (Bethesda) "does exist although only the Fourth Evangelist mentions it. Archaeologists have unearthed

this pool” (page 62); (b) The second example is the Pool of Siloam. Recent excavations have shown that this pool is “the largest *mikveh* discovered in ancient Palestine or anywhere. . . . The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. buried the ancient *mikveh* . . .” (page 63); (c) The third example concerns Herod’s expanded Temple area and oxen within it. This agrees with the statement in John 2:14–15 that there were people who were selling oxen and sheep, etc. (pages 64–65); (d) The fourth example is the exceptional knowledge of Jerusalem pertaining to the different locales in which Jesus is interrogated (page 64); (e) The fifth example concerns Pilate’s Judgment Seat. Only John refers to this public area as *Lithóstroton* (the Pavement) in Greek and *Gabbatha* in Hebrew.

Although Martin Hengel’s essay “Das Johannesevangelium als Quelle für die Geschichte des antiken Judentums” (1999, 293–334) was published in 1999, his observations and views seem even more relevant as seen against these new insights. He finds that John and archaeology illuminate ancient Judaism especially with regard to historical geography and religious feasts. He states that it is a riddle not yet solved that John combines precise historical details for the period between Herod the Great and to the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E.—as also confirmed by archaeology—with a creative theological elaboration: “Zu den ungelösten, ja wohl unlösbaren Rätsel des 4. Evangeliums gehört diese in der urchristlichen Erzählliteratur wohl einzigartige Kombination von präzisiertem historischem Detail und schöpferischer theologischer Gestaltung des Stoffes. . . . Durch seine auffallenden und z.T. sehr genauen Angaben zu Orten, Gebräuchen und Personen bereichert sein Werk auch unsere Kenntnis des palästinischen Judentums in der Zeit zwischen Herodes und der Zerstörung Jerusalems” (Hengel 1999, 334; cf. Von Wahlde 2007, 351–53).

As stated by Hengel, archaeological findings seen together with Johannine information suggest that the historical period concerned is the time from king Herod to the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in the year 70 C.E. Regardless of identifying this span of time, Hengel and other scholars still date the written Gospel of John towards the end of the first century C.E. They maintain that both the “archaeological time” from before the year 70 C.E. and the later time when the Gospel was written some decades after the year 70 are reflected in the text.

Again the alternative question might be: Regardless of when the Gospel of John was written, does it use traditions and historical information independently of the other three written Gospels? If the author of John lived in Jerusalem prior to 70 C.E. and went to Ephesus to write the

Gospel towards the end of the century, he would have probably brought with him Gospel traditions as well.

Seen in this light, the question of John's independence is relevant and intriguing. With this in mind, insights gained in the preceding chapters of the present book will be utilized to see if they can provide answers, perspectives, and contexts for understanding the Gospel of John.

One point which has been discussed above is the view held by scholars that the Gospel of Mark was the historical model for the literary form of John. The present author has expressed doubt that Mark had such a new and unique role since other writings possess many of the same features. It is important that a Jew, Philo of Alexandria, wrote two treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, which suggest that under certain critical situations such writings were written.

These two treatises were analyzed above in the chapter "Can Philo's *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* Offer Help?"

The following features were of interest and may be summed up here: Just as in *In Flaccum*, so too does the Gospel of Mark begin with the protagonist's professional life as an adult man. In *Flacc.* 2, Flaccus is introduced as succeeding Iberus as prefect of Alexandria and the surrounding country, and in Mark 1:9 Jesus is introduced as one who is mightier than John the Baptist and who, after the Baptist was arrested, began his ministry.

Likewise in Philo's *Legatio* and in the Gospel of John the main persons are introduced when they begin their professional lives. Philo tells us that Gaius, after the death of Tiberius, succeeded to the throne over the whole world, *Legat.* 8. Similarly, John begins with the "professional" activities of Jesus after he had been identified by John (the Baptist).

Significantly, both of these two books have cosmic and biblical introductions which set the stage for the narratives which follow. Philo sets the visionary Jewish people at the center, and John focuses on Jesus as God's Son and ambassador.

In all of these four books, the law of Moses play a central role both as an integral part of the texture of society and as a lens through which the events have been interpreted. Of course influences from the Greco-Roman contexts are also evident.

These four books deal with contemporary events and matters. They report tragic events and conflicts, accusations of criminal activities, and political manoeuvres.

In the treatise *In Flaccum*, Philo focuses on the Jews in Alexandria losing their right to live in accordance with the law of Moses and suffering a pogrom. For this evil, Flaccus suffered the heavy penalties of exile and

death. Philo's *Legatio* recounts the same pogrom with the added threat of Gaius' profanation of the Jerusalem Temple. Philo tells us that the members of the Jewish delegation felt dragged down and submerged in the depths.

All four texts were written retrospectively and gave "theological" interpretations of specific tragic events. The emphasis is on the strength gained from education and the laws, and on the care the people experience from God's providence.

It is worth noting that Philo himself lived through the events he recorded and interpreted. Thus there is no need to think that writing a cosmic and biblical prologue requires a great distance in time and space from the events narrated.

In spite of such conflicts and crises, the main aim of these passion narratives in Philo's two treatises and in Mark and John was to communicate encouragement and strength, and even messages of victory.

Philo's aim with the treatise *In Flaccum* was to show that "the help which God can give was not withdrawn from the nation of the Jews." (*Flacc.* 191). Philo's treatise *Legatio* received the positive name *De virtutibus*. Philo's purpose was to show that the heaven-based Jewish people had strength and stamina to defend the law of Moses in face of pogroms and other hostile encounters (see E. M. Smallwood 1970, 39–40 with references). Both John and Mark stress the passion story of Jesus, that is, Jesus' trial and execution as a criminal. To some extent crime reports are also given. Nevertheless, these books were called "Gospels," "good news" (see D. E. Aune 2003, 204–6, with references). Jesus' teaching and actions ultimately received positive evaluations and were claimed to be in accordance with the laws and the prophets. He was vindicated by his resurrection, as demonstrated by his appearances.¹

It should be mentioned that one of the topics which plays an important role in Mark and John, the topic of blasphemy, is also an important notion in Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*. The blasphemy in Mark 14:61–64 is seen in Jesus' affirmative answer "I am" to the question asked by the high priest, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" The corresponding formulation in John 19:7 reads: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God."

Also in other places, such as in John 10:33, blasphemy is the central topic. It should be noted that the formulation here, "You, being a man,

¹ As translated by R. E. Brown 1970: 2, 1019.

make yourself God” (σὺ ἄνθρωπος ὧν ποιεῖς σεαυτὸν θεόν), is akin to a point made by Philo in *Legatio* 75, Gaius “no longer considered it worthy of him to abide within the bounds of human nature but overstepped them in his eagerness to be thought a god” (οὐκέτι ἤξιου μένειν ἐν τοῖς τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ὄροις ἀλλ’ ὑπερέκυπτε σπουδάζων θεὸς νομίζεσθαι).² In *Legatio* 118, Philo wrote further on the same topic:

... the created and corruptible nature of man was made to appear uncreated and incorruptible by a deification which our nation judged to be the most grievous impiety, since sooner could God change into a man than a man into God.

These four books resolved the tragedy and struggle they recount with meaningful responses which served as bridges between the events narrated and the new situations to be faced. This understanding is strengthened by the fact that Philo’s *Legatio ad Gaium* and the Gospel of John have theological statements with cosmic perspectives as introductions and frameworks for their historical narratives.

Legatio and *In Flaccum* contain events from the emperor Gaius’ and the prefect Flaccus’ professional work in office, and Philo’s and other Alexandrian Jews’ interpretations of and response to those events in words and deeds. Correspondingly, the Gospels of Mark and John cover the period of Jesus’ professional activities and teachings. Thus, the form of a Gospel is not unique and is neither created by Mark nor by John. Therefore, there is no need to assume that John is dependent on Mark as a model. This limited and distinct form of biography is a natural way of presenting a person when focus is on his professional activities. And all four books deal with tragic events and challenges which need be faced and overcome.

One aspect in Philo’s writings is of special interest for the study of John. Although Philo in a pointed way attacks polytheism in *Legatio*, we have seen that, in other treatises, he presents a wide range of intermediaries. Of special interest is the understanding of the term *logos*, interpreted as a hypostasis, and of Moses being made god. The *Logos* is called a “Second God” in *QG* 2:62: “the second God, who is His *Logos*” (Siegert, F. 2004, 282–83). In *Mos.* 1:158, Philo gives a further definition of Moses’ partnership with God. As “God’s friend” Moses was deemed worthy of bearing God’s title, and he was named “God.” Here Philo draws on Exod 7:1 and 20:21.

² P. Borgen, K. Fuglseth, & R. Skarsten (2005). *The Works of Philo: Greek Text with Morphology*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Exodus 7:1 (LXX) reads: "... Behold, I have given you as god to Pharaoh ...", and Exod 20:21 (LXX) reads: "And the people stood afar off, and Moses went into the darkness where God was." Philo uses these two Scripture references frequently.³ In this way his writings provide important background sources for Johannine Christology. Both Philo and John had to face the challenge of holding monotheism, or monolatry, together with notions of one or several intermediary figures.

The events were interpreted retrospectively after the conflicts and the passions had come to a close, and new situations were appearing. In the case of John and Mark, this meant after Jesus' crucifixion, when the risen Jesus appeared, and in *Legatio* when Gaius's successor, the Emperor Claudius, was about to settle the conflict in Alexandria. Philo wrote *In Flaccum* after Flaccus' death. The retrospective interpretations were not radically new. They reflected that the interplay with past events still was alive.

As already stated, there is no need to assume that the Gospel of John relies on the Gospel of Mark as model in any way (Borgen 1992a, 335–36). This conclusion is strengthened by the observation that at one important point the similarity between John and *Legatio* is closer than between John and Mark: In both John and *Legatio* contemporary events are interpreted within a cosmic biblical context, with the respective prologues setting the stage. A similar resonance with a Pauline text, Phil 2:9–11 and John's Prologue, should also to be taken into consideration. This will be done below.

Since *Legatio* contains events from Gaius' time in office, and the Gospels of Mark and John cover the period of Jesus' official activities and teachings, these and similar observations need be given much more consideration in the discussion of the Gospels as a genre (Burrige 2004).

John's kinship with aspects of Philo's treatise *Legatio* supports the understanding that John draws on form and traditions which are independent of Mark. It is still obvious that John and Mark share content: they deal with the "professional" life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. At this point Paul can make an important contribution since he also concentrates on Jesus in his letters.

³ Besides in *Mos.* 1:158, Exod 7:1 is drawn on in *Leg.* 1:40; *Sacr.* 9; *Det.* 39–40; 161–162; *Migr.* 84; *Mut.* 19–20; 125; 128–129; *Somn.* 2:189; *Prob.* 43–44. Exod 20:21 is used in *Post.* 14; *Gig.* 54; *Mut.* 7; *Somn.* 1:143; *QE* 2:28, and here in *Mos.* 1:158. As seen from this survey, the two Pentateuchal passages are brought together in *Mos.* 1:158.

Agreements between John and Paul can be summarized thus:

1. It has already been mentioned that Paul's Christological "hymn" in Phil 2:5–11 is an important parallel to the Prologue of John and also to the prologue of Philo's *Legatio*. All three writings interpret historical events within cosmic contexts. In John and Paul, the life and death of Jesus are interpreted in this way.

In Phil 2:5–11 Jesus is seen within the Jewish thought category of creation, history, and heavenly eschatology. Jesus had a divine form, was a human person in history, and is exalted, being named with the Tetragrammaton (=Yahweh) and other divine names, and is commissioned as a cosmic ruler to receive veneration by all.

The only Gospel which has a corresponding section is John, in the Prologue, John 1:1–18. It deals with the categories of creation—before and after—and revelation in history. Within this biblical framework, Christology is developed. Then the return, ascent to the sphere above, is stated in John 13:1, "depart out of this world to the Father", and in 17:5: "... glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made."

Phil 2:5–11 and other passages, such as 1 Cor 8:5–6, show that Paul's high Christology is not so different from John's high Christology that they should be placed decades apart on a time line. One should rather think of parallel streams of tradition, which are characterized by independence and some interchange at the same time.

2. Other points of similarities and differences between John and Paul are of importance for the discussion of John. Philo provides fruitful insights: In *Legatio*, Philo developed his retrospective and cosmo-theological interpretation at the exact moment when all hope seemed lost. Philo responded immediately to the challenge. Thus, there is no need to think that a long period of time is needed for such a retrospective interpretation to develop.

In the case of John a certain span of time can be observed, however. In the chapter on "Gospel Traditions in Paul and John: Methods and Structures," it was shown that both John and Paul had received authoritative Jesus traditions which in turn were subject to expository interpretations. Thus, John's retrospective and written interpretation of Jesus traditions is independent of the Synoptic Gospels, and Paul is the one who provides documentation of such handling of the Jesus tradition. Accordingly, it is important to note that the expository nature of John cannot in itself be used as an argument for a late dating, since it was an accepted approach even during Paul's time.

3. Another central point is that the fusion of the eucharistic traditions with the Old Testament traditions about the manna in John 6:51–58 has a parallel in 1 Cor 10:3–4, where the reference to the eucharist is woven together with the Old Testament tradition of the manna and the well. There is also probably a reference to the tradition of the well in John 6:53–55: “For my flesh is food (βρῶσις) indeed and my blood is drink (πόσις) indeed.”

It seems strange that scholars have suggested that these verses in John are added by a later ecclesial editor. They have overlooked that the fusion of manna and the eucharistic bread already existed in church life in the fifties C.E. Thus, as far as this point is concerned, John’s thought in vv. 6:51–58 resonates with thought in Paul’s time and gives support for the independence of John relative to the Synoptic Gospels.

4. Yet another similarity between John and Paul should be mentioned: According to both, the commissioning is extended by the risen Jesus, to Paul as reported in 1 Cor 9, and to the disciples according to John 20:21–23. Thus, this passage in John cannot be used to support a theory of a later development of John.

A difference between John and Paul should be noted as well. Paul explicitly distinguishes between the Jesus logion cited in 1 Cor 7:10–11 about divorce and his own expository application in vv. 12–16. He writes in v. 12: “. . . but to the others I say, not the Lord . . .” In John’s Gospel 12:44–50 both the units of tradition and the expositions are seen as coming from the mouth of Jesus. This difference is not of general importance, however. Paul does not always make such a distinction. He can build his exposition into the cited logion, as is the case in 1 Cor 7:10–11 where the following comment is included as part of the logion: “but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband.”

Moreover, Paul adds an expository elaboration to Jesus’ words of institution for the Lord’s Supper in 11:26, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” Paul then gives a paraphrasing application in 11:27–29 without marking any explicit distinction between received tradition and interpretation.

5. M. Labahn and M. Lang recognize that the fusion of manna and eucharistic traditions as seen both in 1 Cor 10 and John 6 show that the Eucharistic formulations in John 6:51–58 are not a late ecclesial interpolation. They also support comparing phenomena and texts which use oral tradition with the written Gospels to see if they also may be classified as oral traditions. They refer to works by J. Becker and the present author in this connection (Labahn and Lang 2004, 455–56, and 462).

They make some general remarks, however: "Bei liturgischer Tradition ist in besonderer Weise mit Stabilität im Überlieferungsprozess zu rechnen, so dass eher den Differenzen Bedeutung zukommt. Als Problem bleibt also weiter der Klärung aufgegeben, wie Parallelen und Differenzen zwischen Texten zu bewerten sind und welche Kriterien sich für literarische Abhängigkeit/mündliche Tradierung finden lassen" (Ibid., 456).

This comment made by Labahn and Lang should encourage scholars to do further research in this area.

It is fortunate that Paul draws on some orally transmitted Gospel traditions which have parallels in the written Gospels. This fact makes comparison possible. We can analyze aspects of oral transmission and aspects of the methods and structures of the expository elaborations used. Thus, the examples of Gospel traditions in Paul give us glimpses into pre-Synoptic-like and also Johannine-like material from an oral stage and into its place in the community's life (cf. Becker 2002, 218–19).

Further comments need be made on John 20:19–28 in light of Paul's "hymn" in Phil 2:5–11. Thomas' statement in John 20:28 "My Lord and My God" is addressed first to Jesus in his bodily appearance with the marks from the execution and then to the interim-period prior to the time when he was no longer to be seen. Paul does not include the interim period with the bodily presence of the risen Jesus in Phil 2:5–11. Thus Paul in this passage has the higher cosmic Christology since Jesus' cosmic exaltation follows directly after his crucifixion and has more specific details on the aspect of cosmic veneration.

7. In John 20:19–29 it is stressed that Jesus is vindicated as being more than, and different from, an executed human criminal: Thomas called Jesus – who had suffered capital punishment as a criminal, was crucified, and had risen – "My Lord and My God," John 20:28.

The designation of Jesus as God alternates with the designation of him as the Son of God: In this same context where Jesus was designated as God, he was also seen as the commissioned Son of God who passed on the commission to the disciples. When Thomas addressed Jesus as God, he demonstrated that the blasphemy accusation against Jesus that he was claiming to be God (John 5:18; 10:33; 19:7, etc.), actually was the truth.

The conclusion is: According to human jurisdiction (cf. "your law" in John 8:17 and "We have a law" in 19:7), Jesus was executed by means of crucifixion as a criminal. His crime was stated thus in John 10:33: "you, being a man, make yourself God."

According to the divine jurisdiction (cf. John 8:14), however, Jesus was the commissioned agent/ambassador from above, who fulfilled his divine mission precisely in this worldly event of crucifixion and resurrection, and who passed on the mission of agency to his disciples. This dual aspect of above and below is made explicit in the second appearance, when Thomas was present. Thomas turned the criminal charge against Jesus inside out: the crucified and risen Jesus was not a criminal making himself God: He was Lord and God, from now on testified to by Thomas, one of the twelve. Similarly, in John 5:18 Jesus was accused of making himself like God, which was in fact the truth: he was like God, as outlined in the subsequent context. John has in this way explicated the common Jesus tradition that Jesus was accused of blasphemy.

- It is important to note that Paul, like John, had to deal with the fact that Jesus was crucified as a criminal. Thus it is evident that this was still a challenging problem more than twenty years after Jesus' crucifixion, that is, at a time when transmitted Gospel traditions were received and interpreted. Paul's response to the challenge was that God made Jesus to be sin, "a criminal," he who knew no sin, 2 Cor 5:21. Paul's retrospective understanding was that Jesus suffered the penalty for us.
8. Moreover, Jesus' rejection and suffering under the Jewish authorities were in different ways tied to the rejection and sufferings experienced by his followers. Here John 9–10 and 1 Thess 2:13–16 are important texts.

In his recent commentary on the Gospel of John, Urban C. von Wahlde lists occurrences where John uses the term "the Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) in a hostile sense. He states that Paul in 1 Thess 2:14 is close in meaning to John's use, and that this passage is often referred to as the "Johannine" interpolation (Von Wahlde 2010, I: 145).

I will make a few comments on this similarity between John and Paul. Some observations on John 9–10 and 1 Thess 2:13–16 will demonstrate the relevance of this suggestion. In both passages the perspective is Israel and Gentiles. The sheepfold (αὐλή) in John 10:1 and 11, is Israel, and it contains some who are Jesus' sheep and some who are not. Those who are not of this sheepfold are gentiles. Here the gentile mission is presupposed (Barrett 1978a, 368 and 376).

In 1 Thess 2:13–16, Paul refers to, on the one hand, the churches of God in Judea and their relation to "the Jews," and, on the other hand, the Gentile church in Thessalonica and their non-Christian countrymen.

In John the healed person becomes a disciple of Jesus and was thrown out. He expressed belief in Jesus as the Son of Man and venerated him, John 9:34–38. The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy because he had made himself god, and they took up stones to stone him, John 10:31–39. This attempt to execute Jesus on the spot points to the passion narrative and Jesus' execution. Correspondingly, according to Paul, the churches suffered under the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus, 1 Thess 2:14–15.

The tension and conflict between “the Jews” and the disciple(s)/the sheep who had Jesus as shepherd, are located in Jerusalem in John 9–10.

Correspondingly, in 1 Thess 2:13–16 there were tensions and conflicts between “the Jews” and the Churches of God in Christ Jesus which were located in Judea, including Jerusalem.

The tension and conflict were an internal conflict among Israelites in Judea. This understanding is supported by the reference to biblical tradition about the killing of the prophets, which was a tradition about events which had taken place among the *Israelites* in the past. Parallel statements are found in Matt 23:31–36 and Luke 11:49–50 and 13:34. See further 1 Kings 19:10 and 14; Acts 7:52; Heb 11:36–37 (Schippers 1966, 231). Paul tells us that there was a parallel tension and conflict among (gentile) countrymen in Thessalonica, 1 Thess 2:13–16.

9. In John 9–10, Gospel traditions are subject to exposition. Correspondingly in 1 Thess 2:13–16 Paul draws on Gospel traditions about Jesus and the prophets, as seen above.
10. It is of special interest that the term “the Jews” (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) in 1 Thess 2:14 is not an ethnic designation of a people, a nation, but refers to the religious and legal authorities in so far as they were involved in tension and conflicts with the Churches in Judea.

As for John, Von Wahlde (2010:1,145) provides a list of passages where John's use of the term *Ioudaioi* similarly refers to religious authorities that act with hostility. Furthermore, Von Wahlde refers to Josephus, *Vita* 113, where Josephus wrote that “the Jews would have forced them to be circumcised if they decided to reside among them.” Josephus, a Jew himself, “speaks of ‘the Jews’ as a quasi-authoritative group within the nation and representative of a particular religious viewpoint.”

11. Still another comment needs to be made about Paul's focus in Phil 2:5–11 that Christ Jesus, as God, experienced humiliation as a slave. John, on the other hand, reports on Jesus' triumphant exclamation on the cross: “it is finished,” τετέλεσται (John 19:28–30). Despite this

difference, John does also focus on the fact that Jesus was crucified as a criminal, marred with the marks of the execution even on his resurrected body. John's words "it is finished," (John 19:30), primarily meant that Jesus had completed the commission given him by God, the Father.

12. Some further comments should be made on Paul's Christology, especially as seen in Phil 2:9–11 and 1 Cor 8:5–6. In contrast to polytheism, the Jewish confession in 1 Cor 8:5–6 "[there is] one God" (Deut 6:4 in the LXX) is developed in a twofold statement, "one God – one Lord": "...for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" 1 Cor 8:6. Jesus Christ is seen as pre-existent and related to creation together with God, the Father. In this connection it should be mentioned that the much discussed Greek text of Rom 9:5, may be read in such a way that Jesus is called God: "...comes the Messiah, who is God over all blest forever." Different readings are possible, however (see Fitzmyer 1993, 548–49).

Some comments are to be made in light of this analysis: It seems right to agree with Hengel's expression of surprise (1992, 442) that in the short space of twenty years, the crucified Galilean Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, was elevated by his followers to a dignity which surpassed every possible form even of pagan-polytheistic apotheosis. Jesus was seen as having been preexistent, as an agent of creation, and revealed as Jesus of Nazareth, who shared his identity with the One God. Hengel's statement does indeed seem to support the understanding that John's high Christology had its place already at this initial stage of the traditions of high Christology.

A comment made by C. K. Barrett should be included in the present discussion of John and Paul. Barrett (1978a, 58) writes: "Paul had fought for the freedom of the Gospel, and in John's day it was no longer necessary to discuss whether Gentiles might be admitted to the church, and if so, on what terms. The Jews remained, but as an enemy." Barrett's linear understanding of the history from Paul to John does not do justice to the complexity of the early church (Becker 2006, 476–78).

Paul's letters suggest that a broader understanding is more adequate. Even the Letter to the Galatians reflects a complex situation. At first the Galatians accepted Paul's preaching that circumcision was not an entry requirement, and the churches functioned on that basis. But Paul entered into a basic struggle, however, because of the intruders,

Gal 1:6–9. Bodily circumcision became a critical question. In the Letter to the Romans there is a more extensive treatment of these same topics than in Galatians.

It should be added that in others of Paul's letters, such as for example in the First Letter to the Corinthians, Philippians, and Thessalonians, various other practical and theological topics are discussed.

Points from John and various Jewish Sources should be repeated. Here again we will summarize the points relevant to defining the place of the Gospel of John. The rabbinic writings are voluminous and valuable collections of Jewish traditions. One must be cautious in using them as sources for the study of early Christianity, however, since it is difficult to know how far back the preserved traditions go. I have, nevertheless, utilized these sources extensively for identifying concepts and rules of agency, which are quite central ideas and functions in John. Thus, my study "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel" (Borgen 1968, 137–48 and the chapter 9 in the present book) brought together the many agreements between John and Jewish halakah, as found in rabbinic writings. Scholars, such as John Ashton, favor this material and see it as a better alternative than R. Bultmann's view that the Mandaean and other Gnostic systems were the source for Johannine ideas. "There is no need, when investigating the theology of Jesus' role as the agent or special representative of God, to turn to Mandaeism or other Gnostic systems for the source of the evangelist's idea – it is to be found ready to hand in the Jewish tradition" (Ashton 1997, 14).

As for the problematic possibility that the rabbinic writings come from a much later time than the year 70 C.E. (cf. Barrett 1978a, 569), Philo's treatises provide help. Philo drew on the basic rule that "an agent is like the one who sent him" (see *Mek. Exod.* 12:3 and 6; *Ber.* 5:5; *B. Metzia* 96a, etc.) when in *Legatio* 369 he wrote: "For whatever ambassadors suffer recoils upon those who sent them." This echoes Paul's experience when he began his work among the Galatians. He wrote in Gal 4:14: "...you ... received me as an angel of god, as Christ Jesus." Moreover, as shown in the present book, Philo gives numerous examples of the principles of agency with intermediaries working between God and human beings, such as the Logos, Wisdom, angels, and even Moses himself.

Philo also gives us glimpses of the political and judicial practices at work in broader contexts. See for example *Legatio* 192: "...as we are supposed to act as ambassadors, so that the disaster would fall more on those who sent us than on the actual sufferers." Philo's testimony affirms that

the basic rabbinic principles of agency are sources relevant to illustrating John's texts of the first century C.E. These ideas and rules are at work within the context of the many commissioned agents and ambassadors officially in political life as well as in the civil life of various groups in society. Especially in Rome there were always large numbers of ambassadors and other commissioned representatives, some with a more lasting charge, others, like Philo himself, with a specific and time-limited mission.

While the Johannine concept and function of a commissioned agent and ambassador has much in common with rabbinic material, it does not by definition imply a late date for the Gospel of John. These concepts are widely used in many areas, and the combination of earthly and heavenly agents/messengers/ambassadors, etc. is well documented in Philo's writings prior to 50 C.E.

Weight has been given in the present study to the fact that descriptions of agency are found in all four Gospels. Thus the Jesus logion in John 13:20: "... he who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me," has parallels in Matt 10:40, Luke 10:16, and Mark 9:37.

The relationship between John and the other Gospels has been touched on earlier in this summary chapter. It has been shown that there is no need to regard Mark as the model for John with regard to form and structure. This implies that neither Matthew nor Luke are models, but they have some traditions in common with John.

The theme John and the Synoptics is much discussed.

My studies on the topic have been a journey from thinking of John's varying, partial dependence on the Synoptic Gospels to an increasing weight placed on John's independence. In my essay "John and the Synoptics in the Passion Narrative," published in 1959 (see the chapter in the present book), I concluded that three Johannine sections might consist of Synoptic elements fused together: The burial of Jesus had elements from Matthew, Luke, and possibly Mark. Peter's use of the sword had elements from Matthew, Mark, and probably Luke. The mocking scene had elements from Mark and Matthew. These sections suggest that John may have been influenced by the other three Gospels.

This impact was neither comprehensive nor decisively central, however. In the Passion and the resurrection narratives in general, agreements between John and the Synoptics can be understood as similarities between mutually independent traditions dealing with the same subject.

This conclusion could mean that most of John's account of the passion could be dated before the year 70 C.E., but not necessarily so. My view at that time was that some of John's material originated some time after the Synoptic Gospels were written.

Without entering into an extensive discussion, some comments should be made. Firstly, in the study referred to, I did not pay sufficient attention to the probable time needed for elements from all the written Synoptic Gospels to have been known and fused together. Although it is difficult to date the written Synoptic Gospels with certainty, Mark may be dated to around the year 70 C.E., probably before the destruction of Jerusalem (Achtemeier 1992, *ABD* 4:543). Matthew should be dated some time later during the second half of the first century C.E. (Meier 1992, *ABD* 4:623–24), and so too Luke-Acts (Johnson 1992, *ABD* 4:404). John has most often been seen as the last of the four Gospels to be written. It has been dated to some time between 80 and 95 C.E. (cf. Kysar 1992, *ADB* 4:918–19).

Since there are agreements, albeit with variations, between John and all three Gospels and since there are Johannine interpretative elaborations, it seems more probable that these agreements and variations have appeared in the transmission and exposition of traditions independently of the Synoptic Gospels. These agreements point rather closer to the time of Paul than toward the end of the century.

Moreover, as emphasized by C. H. Dodd (1965, 248–78; cf. Lindars 1969, 25–30), John does not follow any of the Gospels or particular traditions with in them consistently (Dodd 1953, 447–49 and 1965, 423–32).

Furthermore, when I wrote the essay "John and the Synoptics in the Passion Narrative" in 1959, I did not take the Gospel traditions in Paul's letters into consideration. But the examples of pre-Synoptic traditions used by Paul should have been included.

Oral tradition was included in my hypothesis, seen as part of the process by which elements of one or more of the other Gospels had reached John. Paul reminds us, however, that Synoptic-like Gospel traditions were transmitted and used even in his time.

A text which indirectly influences the question of John's independence is found in John 11:45–53, especially in vv. 47–48: "So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council, and said, 'What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on doing thus, every one will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our place (τὸν τόπον) and our nation (τὸ ἔθνος).'" J. Frey states that here John pre-

supposes the destruction of the Temple: “Deutlich scheint jedoch, dass Johannes . . . die Tempelstörung (Joh 11:47f.) als bekannt voraussetzt und in subtiler Weise verarbeitet, so dass sich daraus eindeutig eine Datierung deutlich nach dem Jahr 70 ergibt” (Frey 2003, 112; Cf. J. Frey 1994, 238–45). Frey (2003, 112, n. 189) refers to *A.J.* 20:123 where Josephus looks back upon the time of the Roman procurator Cumanus (48–52 C.E.) when there was a conflict between Jews and the Samaritans. During the unrest, leading persons in Jerusalem urged the rebellious Jews to throw down their arms and return to their homes: “They urged them to picture to themselves that their country would be rased to the ground, their temple consigned to the flames, and they themselves with their wives and children reduced to slavery.”

C. K. Barrett (1978a, 406) understands John 11:47–48 in its present form to be *vaticinium ex eventu*. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple during the Jewish War has an impact on the formulation of this text. In the generation before 70 C.E., however, it would still have been apparent that undue provocations, such as messianic claims, would result in action by the Romans. Accordingly, Jesus could have been seen as a danger to the political establishment.

Thus, some scholars, exemplified by Frey, state that John 11:48 shows that the destruction of the Temple was a known event, and shows that John was written after the year 70 C.E. C. K. Barrett agrees that the destruction of the Temple is presupposed. In substance, however, John simply here formulates what could have been known as a threat earlier, even in Jesus’ time.

In connection with Barrett’s perspective, it should be emphasized that there were many situations of unrest in the Roman period. The threat of Roman intervention was real at the time of the procurator Cumanus, but there were decades of unrest both before and after him. For example, at the time of the Emperor Gaius, tension was high when the Emperor had decided to place a statue of Zeus in the Jerusalem Temple. Jews felt that if they objected or resisted, they risked Roman troops wreaking havoc or somehow destroying their culture. The Roman legate, Petronius, gathered the Jewish leaders and advised them to accept the orders of the Emperor and keep before their eyes the dire consequences of doing otherwise. The armed forces in Syria would strew the land with dead (*Legatio*, 222, cf. 334–335).

Thus, it is not obvious that the formulation in John 11:47 refers to the destruction of the Temple during the Jewish War of 66–70 C.E. The context may have been an earlier threatening situation. Thus, the Gospel of John need not necessarily have been written towards the end of the first century C.E.

Presupposed Traditions Are to Be Considered

A different set of observations should be included at this point. There are indications that a deposit of traditions is presupposed but not explicitly used by John. Such traditions and events are: the baptism of Jesus seems presupposed in John 1:33, but is not explicitly mentioned (Cf. Lindars 1972, 100). The imprisonment of John the Baptist is referred to in John 3:24 (Ibid., 165). The institution of the eucharist is implied and presupposed in John 6:51–58 but not explicitly mentioned (cf. 13:1–38), and Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is alluded to in John 12:27–30 especially by referring to Jesus' troubled soul. Another allusion to the same is seen in 18:11b, since the phrase "drink the cup" is mentioned (Borgen 1983, 86). One might then assume that the Synoptic Gospels are presupposed, or, that these points were (broadly) known among early Christians in the social (community) contexts of John. J. Frey, in his study "Das Vierte Evangelium auf dem Hintergrund der älteren Evangelientradition. Zum Problem: Johannes und die Synoptiker" (Frey 2003, 60–118), observes that John presupposes the readers' knowledge. According to Frey this meant that John presupposes that they had knowledge of the Synoptic picture of Jesus, or even just the picture of Jesus in Mark. He mentions one example, the story of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples in John 13. Frey rightly states that the readers must have known about the institution of eucharist, although it is not recounted. He also rightly observes that John chapter 6 alludes to the eucharist.

Frey does not refer to Paul here, however, who in 1 Cor 10: 3–4 (spiritual food – spiritual drink) and v. 16 (cup of blessing – blood), v. 17 (bread – body), v. 21 (drink the cup) uses terms for the eucharist and alludes to the eating and drinking without quoting the institution story. But he assumes knowledge of it. Paul's knowledge is evident in his citation of the institution of the eucharist and the comments made in the context of 1 Cor 11:17–34. The Corinthian community's knowledge came from the tradition transmitted to them, from the celebration of the eucharist, and from the

employment of the Gospel tradition in community life. Likewise, in the background of John 6 is the Christian communities' handing on of Gospel traditions and in particular the practice of celebrating the eucharist. As I have shown above, Paul provides clear support of the understanding that John 6 reflects the use of Eucharistic traditions in community life.

Conclusion

In the present chapter, archaeological findings and sources from Philo's writings and Paul's letters have strengthened the understanding that John was independent of the Synoptic Gospels. Actually, archaeology, Paul, and Philo provide insight into settings which fit the format, ideas, and concerns seen in John. The challenge of producing examples which support the transmission of oral Gospel tradition has been faced through Paul's use of Gospel traditions. These traditions had such degree of authority that they were subject to expository interpretations. Thus the expository elaboration of tradition in John does not require a late dating of the Gospel.

Philo's treatises *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* have a structure and format in common with Mark and John. This suggests that John does not rely on the structure and format of Mark as model. This conclusion receives support from the observation that both John and *Legatio*, as opposed to Mark, present historical events within cosmic categories which are outlined in their respective prologues.

The interpretations of the events are seen in retrospect at the culminating critical turning-points. Philo demonstrates that such a cosmic interpretation can be produced at the very turning point itself. In the case of John, the exposition of authoritative Gospel tradition suggests any time from Paul's time and onwards.

For Paul, Jesus' crucifixion as a criminal was a challenging problem, as it was for John. In his letters, Paul illustrates that Gospel units, words and events, could be rendered independently yet with expositions, and within a broader community context where the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus were central notions. Moreover, in 1 Thess 2:13-16 Paul reports on parallel problems in the gentile churches in Thessalonica and in the Judean Churches. He does it in such a way that some parallel observations can be made in John 9-10. Moreover, Paul here understands the term "the Jews" to mean hostile Jewish authorities like many of the uses of the term in John.

The relationship between John, Paul, and Philo should not be thought of as a linear line of history, but as similarities and variations among parallel phenomena which have been written down at different times and are documented by Paul in his letters.

Philo's treatises *Legatio ad Gaium* and *In Flaccum* demonstrate that the format as such, and as employed in John and Mark, was in use in the early forties C.E. Moreover, *Legatio* exemplifies how historical words and events could be interpreted within a biblical cosmic background, and how this perspective could be introduced in a prologue, corresponding to the Prologue of John.

This study has brought in new material and perspectives which strengthen the view that John was independent of the other three Gospels. The agreements between John and the Synoptic Gospels are better understood as agreements between John and synoptic-like traditions transmitted and interpreted independently of those three written gospels. Paul provides examples of such transmission and use.

Thus, the present study opens anew the question of the dating of John's Gospel. One should not think of linear developments, but more broadly in terms of several parallel oral and written transmissions and usages.⁴

John is a witness to Gospel traditions from and about Jesus which are independent of the other written Gospels, and a witness to how such traditions had such an authority that they were subject to expository interpretations.

⁴ Among the Synoptic Gospels themselves, degrees of direct linear relationships can be seen and investigated. It is to be noted, however, that the additions to Mark in Matthew and Luke suggest that these Gospels were themselves manifestations of written and oral transmissions and uses of traditions. Cf. C. M. Tuckett 1992, 268–70. On the many aspects of tradition and transmission and applications, see B. Gerhardsson 1990, 497–545.

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