

**THE
DIONYSIAN
GOSPEL**

**THE FOURTH GOSPEL
AND EURIPIDES**

DENNIS R. MACDONALD

The Dionysian Gospel

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Cover image: ART377804 © DeA Picture Library / Art Resource, NY: Dionysus finds the sleeping Ariadne, detail of Dionysus' head with an ivy crown. Mosaic from the House of the Cavalier, ancient city of Volubilis, settled by Romans since the 1st–3rd centuries CE. Photo: G. Dagli Orti

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The Fourth Gospel and Euripides

Dennis R. MacDonald

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*To my Doctoral Students
in Claremont and Tallahassee*

Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Abbreviations	xi
Introduction	xv
1. The Beginning of the Johannine Tradition	1
2. The Earliest Gospel Stratum and Euripides' <i>Bacchae</i> : An Intertextual Commentary	23
3. Rewriting the Gospel	125
4. The Final Gospel Stratum and a Johannine Corpus	137
Appendix 1: A Conjectural Reconstruction of the Dionysian Gospel	173
Appendix 2: Euripides' <i>Bacchae</i>	203
Appendix 3: The Sinful Woman (John 7:53–8:11)	219
Bibliography	223
Author Index	235
Ancient Sources Index	239

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BTSt	Biblical Tools and Studies
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CSCOSyr	Corpus Christianorum. Christianorum orientalium, Syriac
ECC	Eerdman's Critical Commentary
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FCNT	Feminist Commentary on the New Testament and Early Christian Writings
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>Gn</i>	<i>Gnomon</i>
<i>Herm</i>	<i>Hermathena</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

IACOP	Institute for Antiquity and Christianity Occasional Papers
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>ITQ</i>	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism, Supplements
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>JTSA</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for South Africa</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MEP	MythosEikonPoiesis
MP	Myth and Poetics
MTS	Marburger theologische Studien
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentaries
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NTG	New Testament Guides
NTGL	The New Testament and Greek Literature
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
<i>Phil</i>	<i>Philologus</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLECL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Christianity and Its Literature
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
TENTS	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study

THNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

Introduction

The New Testament attributes five books to an author named John—one Gospel, three Epistles, and one Apocalypse—but as we shall see, the Gospel as we have it likely is the final redaction of two earlier editions, and the Book of Revelation likewise once appeared in an earlier form. In other words, a comprehensive history of Johannine literature must take into account as many as eight compositional stages—three Gospels, three Epistles, and two Apocalypses—and scholars have advanced competing proposals about their intertextual connections, compositional stratigraphy, and historical sequence. The work at hand argues for the following evolution:

1. 2 John
2. 3 John
3. 1 John
4. The first edition of the Apocalypse by a now anonymous Johannine seer
5. The first edition of the Gospel
6. The second edition of the Gospel
7. The final edition of the Gospel and
8. The creation of a Johannine corpus, including the final redaction of the Apocalypse

This assessment is not entirely new insofar as many scholars have located the Epistles before the Gospel, and others have argued for

two (or more) editions of the Apocalypse and multiple stages of composition for the Gospel. A few also have proposed a primitive collection of all of these Johannine texts. What makes this book unique is its assessment of the first edition of the Gospel, which I also will call the Dionysian Gospel, as an imitation of Euripides' *Bacchae*. After a discussion in part one of "The Beginning of the Johannine Tradition" one will find the longest and most original contribution of the book, part two, "The Earliest Gospel Stratum and Euripides' *Bacchae*: An Intertextual Commentary." Part three, "Rewriting the Gospel," shows how a later hand rewrote this Dionysian Gospel as a response to the expulsion of Johannine believers from Jewish Synagogues. Part four, "The Final Gospel Stratum and a Johannine Corpus," analyzes how the Johannine Gospel and the Apocalypse achieved their present, canonical, forms.

This book also contains three appendices, the first of which, "A Conjectural Reconstruction of the Dionysian Gospel," delineates criteria used to eliminate later accretions and offers a reconstruction of the Greek text with notes justifying the omissions. English translations of this text appear sequentially in the commentary in part two. I have no delusions precisely to have reconstructed the earliest Johannine Gospel; on the other hand, the Dionysian character of the Gospel comes into clearer focus when one eliminates likely later redactions.

Appendix 2, "Euripides' *Bacchae*," provides an extensive paraphrase of the tragedy with my English translations of lines most relevant to the earliest Johannine Gospel. Readers unfamiliar with this amazing play will benefit from reading this appendix before tackling the extensive commentary in part two. Appendix 3, "The Sinful Woman (John 7:53–8:11)," discusses the later interpolation of Jesus forgiving a sexually promiscuous woman.

The Gospel of John and Imitations of the *Bacchae*

John	<i>Bacchae</i>
1:1-5. The origin of the Logos	1-9
1:6-8. John, the faithful witness	10-12
1:9-11. The rejection of the Logos	13-34
1:14, 16. The Logos assumes a human body	43-63
1:18. The one in the lap of the Father	63-113
1:32-51. The Son of God with many names	64-113
2:1-11. Changing water into wine	266-85
2:13-17. Avenging the Father's house	35-42
3:1-4, 10, 16. An old man seeks rejuvenation	170-209
3:29-31. The Son of God must increase	170-209, esp. 181-83
4:4-29, 40-42. The donor of living water	114-66
4:46-54. The healing of the royal official's son	519-603
5:2-9. An old cripple walks again	170-209
6:35, 53-58. Eating the flesh of the Son of God	114-66
7:31-52. Jesus escapes arrest	657-777
8:2-19. Interrogating the Son of God	451-518
8:32-36. The true liberator	519-642
8:58-59. The escape artist	519-642
9:1-41. The blind seer	286-342
11:3-5, 35-36. The love God	210-65
11:37-46. The life-giver	519-642
11:47-57. The God-fighters	343-430, esp. 352-66
15:1-2, 4. The true grapevine	266-85
18:1-12. Arresting the Son of God	431-50
18:13-19:16. Interrogating the Son of God, again	451-518
19:25-30. Violent death and attending women	738-1167, esp. 1115-21

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

20:11-18. A woman's recognition	1168-1329
20:19-23. Exit stage up	1330-87
20:30-31. Postscript	1388-92

The Beginning of the Johannine Tradition

Papias's Witness to Johannine Literature

Around the year 110 CE, Papias of Hierapolis, Phrygia, composed a five-volume work entitled *Exposition of Logia about the Lord*.¹ All that remains of the bishop's massive tome is a handful of references and citations, many of which come from Eusebius of Caesarea (early fourth century), who claimed that Papias "used testimonia from the first Epistle of John" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.17). If one can trust Eusebius, Papias's lost work would be the earliest external witness to Johannine writings and the *terminus ad quem* for 1 John. Unfortunately, one no longer can determine what the Church historian had seen in the *Exposition* to give him this impression.² In any case, Papias was oblivious to the Gospel

1. A previous generation of scholars favored dating the *Exposition* to 125–140 CE. In favor of the earlier date, see especially Ulrich H. J. Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des frühen Christentums* (FRLANT 133; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 86–94 and 173–76; and Enrico Norelli, *Papia di Hierapoli, Esposizione degli oracoli del Signore. I frammenti* (Lecture cristiane del primo millennio 36; Milan: Paoline, 2005). See also J. Vernon Bartlet, "Papias's 'Exposition': Its Date and Contents," in *Amicitiae Corolla* (ed. H. G. Wood; London: University of London Press, 1933), 15–44; Engelbert Gutwenger, "Papias: Eine chronologische Studie," *ZKT* 69 (1947): 385–416; Robert W. Yarbrough, "The Date of Papias: A Reassessment," *JETS* 26 (1983): 181–91; and William R. Schoedel, "Papias," *ANRW* 27.1, 235–70.

2. Norelli, *Papia di Hierapoli*, 329–30.

of John, which likely had not yet been written. Had Eusebius seen evidence of it, he surely would have mentioned it inasmuch as his primary reason for citing Papias was to locate several New Testament books no later than the reign of Trajan, that is, before 117 CE.³

The book at hand proposes that all three Epistles were written before the Gospel. Furthermore, they likely were composed in this order: 2 John and 3 John (v. 9: “I wrote something to the church”) and then 1 John, all by the same author. The majority of interpreters, however, hold that the Gospel, at least in its first edition, predates the Epistles.⁴ Udo Schnelle’s commentary on the Johannine Epistles, on the other hand, demonstrates that the numerous examples of intertextuality between the Epistles and the Gospels consistently move from letter to narrative and not in the other direction.⁵ The history of Johannine literature thus develops more linearly from the Epistles to the multiple editions of the Gospel (see part three). Part one thus begins monitoring the growth of Johannine literature with the Epistles, and then proposes that two authors marginally associated with this tradition composed books: the first was a prophet responsible for the visions in Revelation 1:9b–22:7, and the second was Papias himself.

Papias’s primary value for Johannine tradition are the clues he provides concerning the author of the Epistles.⁶ The author of 2 and

3. Norelli, *Papia di Hierapoli*, 116–17. Papias’s knowledge of the Gospel of John is defended by Martin Hengel (*The Johannine Question* [trans. John Bowden; London: SCM, 1989]), Charles E. Hill (“What Papias Said about John [and Luke]: A ‘New’ Papian Fragment,” *JTS* 49 [1998]: 582–629), and most recently by Richard Bauchkam (*The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007]). For arguments denying Papias’s awareness of John, see Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis*, 34–35 and 173–76; Norelli, *Papia di Hierapoli*, 116–17; and Dennis R. MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels: The Logoi of Jesus and Papias’s Exposition of Logia about the Lord* (SBLECL 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 17. Still useful is Benjamin Wisner Bacon’s “Papias, Eusebius, and the Argument from Silence,” in *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate: A Series of Essays on Problems Concerning the Origin and Value of Anonymous Writings Attributed to the Apostle John* (London: Unwin, 1920), 73–100.

4. See the excellent survey of scholarship by R. Alan Culpepper, “The Relationship between the Gospel of John and 1 John,” in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson; SBLECL 13; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 95–118. Nowhere in his discussion does Culpepper mention the testimony of Papias or the possible connections between the Gospel of John and the Synoptics. As he recognizes (115), most interpreters focus on the theological development of Johannine literature in isolation from other writings.

5. *Die Johannesbriefe* (THNT 17; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2010), 9–19. See also *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), and Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

3 John identified himself with the title ὁ πρεσβύτερος, “the elder”; he quite likely was the same person whom Papias called ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης, and who, with a certain Aristion, was a disciple (μαθητής) of Jesus, though not one of the inner circle (*Expos.* 1:5; Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.3–4).⁷ “By about 392, when Jerome wrote *De viris illustribus*, the coincidence of the title ‘Elder’ used both of Papias’ second John and the author of the second and third Johannine Epistles had been fully realized. . . . [M]any opined ‘that the two later Epistles of John are not (the work) of the Apostle, but of the Elder.’”⁸

It is unclear to what extent “elder” was a title in the first century CE. Originally it meant simply “older man,” and for Papias it designated someone old enough to have been a firsthand witness to Jesus and his most intimate disciples, including Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, and Matthew (*Expos.* 1:5). The author of the Epistles “is to be regarded, not as an office-bearer, but as a specially valued teacher or as a prophet of the older period, and his title is to be understood in the sense in which Papias and some later fathers use it for pupils of the apostles and guarantors of the tradition which goes back to them.”⁹ It probably is wisest to use the lower case “e,” even though the author of 2 and 3 John claimed “elder” as a title to establish his authority over his audience and opponents.

The elder John and Aristion apparently were still alive when Papias composed, or at least when he collected information about them. Eusebius claimed that Papias “was a personal auditor of Aristion and

6. On the authorship of the Epistles, see Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 1–8.

7. The numbering of the Papias fragments conforms to my reconstruction in *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 675–85. On the connections between Papias’s “the elder John” and the author of the Epistles, see the superb discussion by Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 24–45. Schnelle identifies Papias’s John the elder with the author of 2 and 3 John but not with the author of the first Epistle (*Johannesbriefe*, 6–7). I would note, however, that two of the allusions to Synoptic content discussed in this chapter appear both in 1 and 2 John and are consistent with Papias’s testimony about the elder. See also Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 26–29, 39–42, and 46–73. “There is no justification for tearing the Johannine letters apart. Both the title and the history of the tradition tell against that, and their inner connection does so even more. . . . John the ‘elder’ speaks from all three letters in an authoritative way, as the head of a quite extended school” (46; see also 40–45).

8. Charles E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 463; citing *Vir. ill.* 9 and 18.

9. Günther Bornkamm, Πρέσβυς, κτλ., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 6 (ed. Gerhard Friedrich; trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 671; see also 676–80.

the elder John” and collected traditions related to John from “a living and enduring voice,” one or more “followers” of “the elders” who passed through Hierapolis (*Expos.* 1:5).

Although the author of 1 John does not dub himself an elder as in 2 and 3 John, his preface invokes this status indirectly by identifying himself as one of an esteemed few who had heard and seen Jesus and who reliably handed on traditions about him.¹⁰ This conforms to what one finds in Papias, who said that the elder was a disciple and an eyewitness whose testimony to Jesus was credible. Here are the opening verses of 1 John:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and our hands have handled with regard to the logos of life—² and the life was made manifest, and we have seen, give witness, and proclaim to you as the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—³ what we have seen and heard, we also announce to you, so that you, too, may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we ourselves are writing these things, so that your joy may be filled. ⁵ And this is the message that we have heard from him, and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness whatsoever. (1 John 1:1-5)

Here the author claims his authority as an elder, as a member of a group of authenticating witnesses, the term he used in his previous two letters (2 and 3 John).

This John likely composed all three letters between 90 and 100.¹¹ Scholarly consensus locates their origins in western Asia Minor, in agreement with ancient testimony.¹² Although commentators often use the terms “Johannine tradition” and “Johannine community” interchangeably, the first designation is preferable insofar as the

10. See also Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 29.

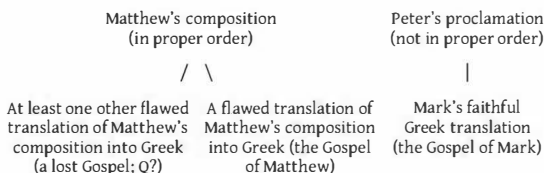
11. Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 15–17.

12. Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 4–5, 25–26, and esp. 30–32, and Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 4. See also Richard Bauckham’s insightful treatment of the letter of Polycrates preserved in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.2–7 (*Testimony*, 38–50). Especially noteworthy is Polycrates’ insistence that the author of the Gospel was not the son of Zebedee: “The Ephesian church’s own tradition about their own John evidently made them quite sure that he could not be John the son of Zebedee and obliged them, even at the end of the second century, to resist this identification, which was already proving irresistible elsewhere and seems to have become universal in the next century” (*Testimony*, 50).

elder's addressees lived in at least two communities; he wrote from one location to deal with a problem in another, even though he would rather have traveled there to speak with them "mouth to mouth" (2 John 12-13 and 3 John 12-15). Despite such distances, travel between—or among—these locations clearly took place (2 John 7-11, 3 John 9-10, and 1 John 4:1).

According to Eusebius, Papias frequently incorporated the elder's "traditions" throughout his five volumes (*Expos.* 1:1-2; *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.14 and 3.39.7). The only teachings explicitly from the elder John preserved in the surviving fragments of the *Exposition* pertain to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew:

The elder used to say this too: "Mark became Peter's translator; whatever Peter recalled of what was said or done by the Lord Mark wrote down accurately, though not in proper sequence. For Mark himself neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but as I said, he later followed Peter, who used to craft teachings for the needs [of the occasion], not as though he were crafting a sequential arrangement of the logia [textual units of what Jesus said and did] about the Lord; so Mark was not in error by thus writing a few things as he remembered them, for he made it his one purpose to omit nothing that he had heard or falsely to present anything pertaining to them. . . . Matthew, for his part, set in order the logia in the Hebrew language, but each translated them as he was able." (*Expos.* 1:3 and 4; *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15 and 16)



The solution to the Synoptic Problem according to the Elder John and Papias

If "the elder" of the Epistles was indeed the same person whom Papias called "the elder John," one might expect to find evidence of one or more versions of Matthew ("each translated" the logia in Matthew's

Hebrew composition “as he was able”) and perhaps also of Mark—but not of Luke or John. Despite extensive parallels in language and theology, “one finds [in the Epistles] not a single citation from the Gospel” of John.¹³ The same observation applies to the Gospel of Luke; in fact, Luke-Acts likely knew Papias’s five-volume work.¹⁴

From Papias one can create the following profile of the elder. He was Jewish (as the name John requires), likely was Galilean, and was esteemed as a disciple of Jesus, though not of the original circle. He relocated to western Asia Minor either as a missionary or, perhaps more likely, as a refugee after the Jewish War. In his new location he founded religious communities and was so highly regarded that Papias relied on him for traditions about Jesus and the disciples not in the Gospel of Mark or the two Gospels of Matthew. As we shall see, Papias’s statements about him are congruent with what one can determine about the author of the Johannine Epistles.

Nowhere in Papias’s statements about the elder or in the Epistles does one find polemic with other Jews; the polemic pertains solely to schismatics within his communities, some of whom were Gentiles (such as Diotrephes in 3 John 9). Only later did the Johannine tradition break with other varieties of post-70 Judaism (see part three).

The Epistles and the Gospels of Mark and Matthew

Papias’s claim that the elder John was familiar with books about Jesus attributable to Mark and Matthew finds confirmation in the Johannine Epistles insofar as all three provide evidence that the author knew them. If so, the Johannine tradition was intimately familiar with Synoptic tradition even before the composition of the Gospel.

13. Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 15. See also Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 33: “The letters nowhere ‘quote’ the written Gospel.” 49: “We have no indication that the Gospel was already in circulation when the letters were written. . . . Nor can one say that the prologue of the Gospel is already cited in 1 John 1:1–3.”

14. See MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 43–67. On the dating of Luke-Acts to the second century see especially Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2006).

The Love Commandment

The elder's preoccupation with the command to his "children" to love each other provides the most significant evidence of Mark and Matthew in the Epistles. In the following excerpts references to "hearing" are highlighted because of what they imply about the saying's origin.

And now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but *what we have heard from the beginning*, that we should love each other. ⁶And this is love: that we should walk in his commandments. This is the commandment, *just as you have heard from the beginning*, that we should walk in it. (2 John 5-6)

I am not writing a new commandment for you, but an old commandment *that you heard from the beginning*. The old commandment is the word *that you have heard*. (1 John 2:7)

This is the message *that you have heard from the beginning*: that we should love each other. (1 John 3:11)

And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and that we should love each other, just as he gave us the commandment. (1 John 3:23)

Although the emphasis on hearing might suggest that the elder is referring to oral/aural traditions, one cannot rule out his evocation of writings. Frequently in ancient texts hearing is related to reading, and not only in cases of public readings, as in Revelation 1:3: "Blessed is one who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and hold to what is written in it." A private reading too may be called listening (e.g., Mark 13:14; Luke 16:31; Rev 2:7; 22:18).¹⁵ Every reference in the Epistles to what the readers "have heard" parallels content in Mark or Matthew, where Jesus presents the commandment to hearers.

The version of the love command closest to the Synoptics appears in 1 John 4:21; it most resembles Matthew, though it is not a citation.

15. All three Synoptics contain commands to their readers to "hear" the text: "Let one with ears hear" what had been written (Mark 4:9, Matt 11:15, and Luke 14:35; cf. Matt 6:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43; Luke 16:31; cf. John 12:34; Gal 4:21-22; Rev 1:3; 2:7; 22:18).

Matt 22:36–39 (cf. Lev 19:18)

“Teacher, which *is the greatest commandment in the law?*”

³⁷ He said to him,

“You will *love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,*

³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.

³⁹ The second is like it: you will *love your neighbor as yourself.*”

1 John 4:21

And this *is the commandment*

that we have from him,

that one who *loves God*

should also *love his brother.*

Although scholars usually assume that the author of the epistles adapted the love command from oral tradition, the earliest written version attributes it only indirectly to Jesus insofar as he merely agreed with a combination of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 by “an exegete of the law,” as in Luke 10:25–29.¹⁶ Mark likely transformed the saying in *Logoi* 6:18–21 so that Jesus himself first cites the commandment; Matthew followed Mark, as did the elder.

The love command also appears in the Fourth Gospel in a passage routinely used to show that the Epistles came later than the Gospel: “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love each other, as I loved you, so that you too may love each other” (13:34). In the Gospel, Jesus thus claims that he is giving a new command, and the elder simply reminds his readers of what they knew from the Fourth Gospel. So the matter seems cut and dried.

Or is it? “*Relecture and the Epistles*” in part three will show that parallels between the Johannine Epistles and the Gospel consistently move *from the Epistles to the Gospel*; especially telling is the attribution of the elder’s theological statements to Jesus himself in the Gospel. It therefore is more likely that a redactor viewed the elder’s references to “no new commandment” as an opportunity to place “the new commandment” on the lips of Jesus.¹⁷ If so, the recipients of his letters

16. MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 279–80. See also Christopher M. Tuckett, *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis: An Analysis and Appraisal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 125–39; and Jan Lambrecht, “The Great Commandment Pericope and Q,” in *The Gospel behind the Gospels: Current Studies in Q* (ed. Ronald A. Piper, NovTSup 75; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 73–96.

17. “[I]n the third edition of the Gospel the commandment of mutual love is described as a ‘new’ commandment. This is said only once (13:34), and no explanation is given why it should be called ‘new.’ However, in 1 John 2:8, there is a discussion of the notions of ‘new’ and ‘old’ as they apply to the commandments” (Urban C. von Wahlde, *A Commentary on the Gospel and Letters of John* [ECC;

had heard about the old commandment not by having read it in the Fourth Gospel, but they could have read it in Mark or Matthew.

Even more decisive is the unusual and seldom detected transformation in the rhetorical function of love from the Epistles to the Gospel. The verse following the command in 2 John begins, rather strangely, with *ὅτι*. It indicates that the elder wrote that his recipients should “love one another . . . *because* many deceivers have gone out into the world” (5 and 7).¹⁸ These “deceivers” appear again in vv. 9–11 and 3 John 9–10 in connection with a certain Diotrephes, “raised by Zeus,” clearly a Gentile and likely among those who denied that Jesus “came in the flesh” (2 John 7).

The first reference to the love command in 1 John likewise precedes a broadside against opponents (1 John 2:7–11). Similarly, 1 John 2:24 almost certainly refers to the love command, and vv. 25–26 say explicitly why the elder referred to it again: “Let what you have heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you have heard from the beginning abides in you, abide in the Son and in the Father. . . .²⁶ I wrote these things to you with regard to those who are deceiving you.” Later, in 3:11, one reads: “This is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love each other,” which is followed by an identification of the opponents with Cain, who killed his brother (3:12). Finally—and predictably—the last reference to the love command precedes a rebuttal of opponents:

And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and that we should love each other, just as he gave us the commandment. . . .⁴¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but examine the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 3:23–4:1)

The elder held that his opponents had violated the command to love by dissenting from his authority over his addressees, “the brothers.”

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 1:378). Schnelle, too, argues that the author of 1 John did not allude to John 13:34, but for a different reason. He takes “from the beginning” to refer not to the career of Jesus but to the command to love in Jewish Scriptures (e.g., Lev 19:18 and Deut 6:5).

18. Verse 7 “has a close connection to what precedes it as is indicated by the fact that v. 7 begins with ‘because’ (*hoti*)” (von Wahlde, *Gospels and Letters*, 3:240).

If they truly loved others, they would not propagate rival theological views. More significantly, if the recipients of the Epistles love each other—including the elder—they will stand united against such dissidents. The love command in the Gospel, by contrast, carries no such polemical freight; rather, Jesus issues it to unify his followers after his death.

In the Epistles the elder polemically exploited the love command—apparently known to his readers from Matthew—to promote solidarity against theological dissidents. Later, another Johannine author placed the “new commandment” on Jesus’s lips, not to denounce schismatics but to unify the disciples and those who were to follow them.

The Coming Antichrists

The elder once again implies his awareness of Mark, Matthew, or perhaps the lost Gospel in 2 John 7–8, which immediately follows the love command. “Many deceivers [πολλοὶ πλάνοι] have gone out into the world. . . . This is the deceiver [ὁ πλάνος] and the antichrist. Watch out for yourselves [βλέπετε ἑαυτοὺς].” Two passages in 1 John give similar warnings:

Children, it is the final hour, and *just as you heard* that an antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arrived from which we know that it is the final hour.¹⁹ . . . ²¹ No liar [ψεύδης] is from the truth.²² Who is the liar [ψεύδης] other than the one who states that “Jesus is not the Christ”? This is the antichrist. (1 John 2:18, 21–22)²⁰

Many false prophets [ψευδοπροφῆται] have gone out into the world. . . .
^{3b} This is the spirit of the antichrist *that you heard* was coming and now already is in the world. (1 John 4:1, 3b)

In the entire New Testament the terms “antichrist” and “antichrists”

19. Compare this with Mark 13:32 (para. Matt 24:36): “Concerning that day or hour no one knows.”

20. On various interpretive possibilities for the claim that “Jesus is not the Christ,” see Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 107–8. He prefers the view that “for the opponents only the Father and the heavenly Christ are relevant to salvation, not, however, the life and death of the historical Jesus of Nazareth,” which is nothing more than “an unessential apparition” (108).

appear only in these passages; it seems to be “an ad-hoc creation of the elder.”²¹

The elder’s readers already had heard about such eschatological deceivers, but they could not have known about them from reading the Fourth Gospel. On the other hand, they could have heard about them from the Synoptics. Matthew contains a doublet that warns against such messianic pretenders; one warning comes from Mark (cf. Mark 13:21 and Matt 24:23), and the other likely comes from the lost Gospel. Both refer to the coming of false messiahs and prophets.²²

Logoi 9:1 (= Q 17:23)

“If they say to you, ‘Look, there!’ do not go out;

‘Look, here!’ do not believe it.”

Mark 13:21 (cf. Matt 24:23a)

“If anyone then says to you, ‘Look! Here is the Messiah!’

or ‘Look, there!’ do not believe it.”

What follows in Mark evokes a warning in Deuteronomy:²³

Deut 13:2-4 (LXX)

“And if there rises up [ἀναστῆ] among you a prophet [προφήτης]

or a dreamer of dreams who gives [δῶ] you a sign or a wonder [σημεῖον ἢ τέρας],³ and the sign or wonder [τὸ σημεῖον ἢ τὸ τέρας]

occurs which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let’s go and worship other gods’— gods whom you do not know—⁴ you must not listen to the words of that prophet.”

Mark 13:22-23a (cf. Matt 24:24b-25)

“For false messiahs [ψευδόχριστοι] and false prophets [ψευδοπροφήται] will rise up [ἐγερθήσονται]

and give [δώσουσιν] signs and wonders [σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα] to deceive, if possible, the elect.

²³ But you watch out.”

Mark’s dependence here on Deuteronomy suggests that the parallels in 2 and 1 John come not from independent oral tradition but from knowledge of Mark, or more likely Matthew 24:22–23. Both in the Epistles and in the Synoptics one finds references to the final “hour”

21. Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 28; cf. 102.

22. See Harry T. Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary* (BTSt 1; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 815–16 and 827–29; and MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 114.

23. See, for example, Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (ed. Harold W. Attridge; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 613.

(Mark 13:32 and Matt 24:36), to the emergence of “false prophets,” “deceivers,” and false Christs or antichrists. Mark 13:23 and 2 John 8 both end with warnings to “watch out [βλέπετε].” Compare the following:

Mark 13:22-23a (cf. Matt 24:24b-25)	2 John 7-8 (cf. 1 John 4:1)
“For false messiahs [ψευδόχριστοι]	“Many deceivers [πλάνοι]
and false prophets [ψευδοπροφήται]	[1 John 4:1: ψευδοπροφήται]
will rise up . . .	have gone out into the world. . . .
to deceive [ἀποπλανᾶν], if possible,	This is the deceiver [πλάνος] and the
the elect.	antichrist [ἀντίχριστος].
²³ But you watch out [ὁμείψ βλέπετε].”	Watch out for yourselves [βλέπετε ἑαυτοὺς].”

The Unforgivable Sin

Near the end of 1 John one finds an additional passage that suggests the elder’s awareness of the Gospel of Matthew.

If someone sees his brother sinning a sin that is not to death, he will ask and will give him life, [this applies] for sins not to death. There is a sin to death—I do not mean that you should ask about that sin. Every injustice is sin, but it is a sin not to death. (1 John 5:16-17)

The “sin to death” apparently was not an act of “injustice” against another human being, which suggests that the offense was rather against the divine.

Each of the Synoptics contains a saying about a mortal sin. Scholars generally regard Luke’s version (12:10) as more primitive than those in Mark 3:29 and Matthew 12:32.²⁴ *Two Shipwrecked Gospels* (312) reconstructs the saying like this:

And whoever says a word against the Son of Man,
it will be forgiven him;
but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit,
it will not be forgiven him. (*Logoi* 8:10 [= CEQ 12:10])

Mark 3:28-29 makes the permanence of guilt more explicit (“an eternal

24. For arguments favoring this reconstruction, see Fleddermann, Q, 571-75.

sin”), and Matthew 12:32 even more so (“it will not be forgiven him in this age or the one to come”).

No evidence exists prior to Q (or the *Logoi of Jesus*) for the title δ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with both articles; all previous instances read υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου.²⁵ This would suggest that the saying about a mortal sin was created by the author of the lost Gospel. Furthermore, the verse in question concludes a cluster of sayings about the Son of Man. In *Logoi* 8:8–9 (= Q 12:8–9) Jesus declares that he, as the Son of Man, will denounce his deniers before the angels of God. The scene is juridical with Jesus as both prosecutor and advocate and with the angels and God as judges who ultimately will determine whether someone simply maligned the Son of Man, which is forgivable, or the Holy Spirit, which is not.²⁶ If this saying indeed were created by the author of the lost Gospel, the reference to the “sin to death” in 1 John may reflect a Synoptic version of it.²⁷

In any case, the elder discourages his readers from inquiring about the sin to death but does not say why: “I do not mean that you should ask about that sin” (1 John 5:17). The reader is told only that no act of injustice qualifies as a “sin to death.” A comparison of the sayings in Mark and Matthew suggests why the elder discouraged such questions. Matthew’s version (and that in the lost Gospel) states that blaspheming the Son of Man is forgivable, which Mark found problematic and thus altered the saying from Son of Man to “sons of men”: “everything will be forgiven the sons of men—their sins and whatever blasphemies they might utter” (3:29).²⁸ It is reasonable to speculate that the elder shared Mark’s misgiving about impunity for maligning Jesus and for this reason discouraged his readers from being too curious about it.

The three examples proposed here by no means exhaust the possible connections between the Johannine Epistles and the Synoptics, but

25. MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 512–19.

26. Compare 1 John 2:23–24.

27. 1 John similarly places Jesus in the role of a legal advocate: “If someone should sin, we have an advocate [παράκλητον] to the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (2:1). See Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 179, for an insightful discussion of various options for interpreting “the sin to death.”

28. “Mark’s plural [sons of men] looks like an obvious attempt to remove a difficulty from the Q saying which appears to excuse speaking against the Son of Man” (Fleddermann, Q, 581).

others are impossible to attribute to a literary connection. Whereas the majority of scholars hold that the Gospel known to the elder was the Gospel of John, it would appear more likely that he knew Mark and one or two Matthews, which conforms to what Papias recorded about the elder John, who knew nothing about Luke-Acts or the Fourth Gospel. The author of all three Johannine Epistles likely was the man Papias referred to as the elder John. The Johannine Epistles are indeed Johannine, but not because of their association with John son of Zebedee.

Although many interpreters hold that the Fourth Gospel is independent of the Synoptics, the book at hand argues that from the earliest writings of the Johannine communities to the final redaction of the Gospel these followers of Jesus were familiar with the Gospel of Mark and at least one version of the Gospel of Matthew. As we shall see in part two, the earliest Johannine Gospel likely was composed to supplement them, and by this time Luke as well.

Excursus 1. The Apocalypse of John 1:9b–22:7 and the Synoptics

The last book in the New Testament not only is traditionally attributed to an author named John; the name appears four times in the text itself: three times at the beginning (1:1, 4, 9) and once near the end (22:8). The relationship of the Apocalypse to other Johannine writings sparked controversy already among ancient Christians and continues to smolder to the present. The most balanced and compelling treatment, in my opinion, is that by Jörg Frey, who concluded his analysis with ten tentative conclusions, the first three of which are relevant to the origins of the Johannine tradition. Part four of this book will take up the other seven.²⁹

1. The Gospel and the Apocalypse share “a series of striking phraseological connections” as well as “central Christological

29. “Erwägungen zum Verhältnis der Johannesapokalypse zu den übrigen Schriften des Corpus Johanneum,” in Martin Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage* (WUNT 67; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 328–429.

- motifs” that appear nowhere else in early Christian literature. These data strongly suggest that both works issued from the same religious environment (415).
2. Any proposal for describing these connections must take into account the complex compositional history of both works. The Gospel displays evidence of three stages (see part two), and the beginning and ending of the Book of Revelation almost certainly were later additions; significantly, only here does one find the name John. In addition to these five compositional moments—two apocalypses and three Gospels—one must consider how they relate to the three Johannine Epistles (416–18).
 3. The earliest compositional stage of the Apocalypse issues from a stage of Johannine literature earlier than one finds in the Gospel, which displays a more developed theological reflection and sophistication. The visions of the seer share more with the Epistles (418–19).

In other words, the Book of Revelation belongs to the Johannine tradition, resembles the theology of the Epistles, and likely predates the Gospel.

Frey extends “the epistolary framework” to include all of 1:1–3:22 and 22:1–21; I suspect, however, that the earlier version began with 1:9b–11a: “I was on the island called Patmos for the word of God and the witness of Jesus. I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day and heard behind me a loud voice, like that of a trumpet, that said, ‘Write into a book [βιβλίον] what you see and send it to the seven churches.’”

The earlier version apparently ended with 22:7: “See, I [Jesus] am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book [βιβλίου],” a fitting end to the vision report in the earlier chapters. In favor of this position are the striking similarities between the verses that would have immediately preceded 1:9b and followed 22:7.

1:9a:1, John, your brother [Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν] and sharer in the affliction, kingdom, and endurance in Jesus.

22:8a: I, John, am the one who hears and sees these things [καὶ γὰρ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων ταῦτα]. (Here the redactor repeated his identification of the author with the references to hearing and seeing that appeared originally at the beginning of book: 1:10 [ἤκουσα] and to seeing in 1:11 and 12 [βλέπεις, βλέπειν, and εἶδον].)

If one omits 1:1–9a and 22:8 to the end, all references to John as the seer disappear. It therefore would appear that a later redactor attributed the seven letters and vision report of a Johannine prophet to a John; part four will argue that this John is none other than the elder John known to Papias.

As was the case with the elder's three Epistles, in the Apocalypse one finds no evidence of the Gospels of Luke or John, but one does find many parallels with Matthew and perhaps the lost Gospel. Here I present the most convincing evidence. Some of the columns compare texts of the Apocalypse with my reconstruction of the *Logoi of Jesus*. Readers skeptical of this reconstruction are encouraged to substitute the wording of Matthew.

Matt 17:2

His face shone like the sun.

Matt 11:15 (and two more times; cf. *Logoi* 5:27 and Mark 4:9, 23)

"The one who has ears, let him hear."

***Logoi* 8:4 (= Matt 10:28)**

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."

Rev 1:16

His face shines like the sun.

Rev 2:10 (and six more times)

The one who has ears, let him hear.

Rev 2:11

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. . . . Be faithful unto death.

These examples, though suggestive, do not require direct influence, but the following parallels are more decisive.

Logoi 8:17–18, 20 (cf. Matt 24:43–46)

“But know this: If the household had known in which watch the robber was coming, he would not have let his house be dug into.¹⁸ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

²⁰ Blessed is that slave whose master, on coming, will find (him) so doing.”

Rev 3:3b; 16:15a

“So if you do not keep vigilant, I will come like a robber, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.”

16:15a “Look, I am coming like a robber. Blessed is one who keeps vigil.”

“The dependence of [Rev] 3:3 [and] 16:15 on Matthew 24:42, 43, [and] 46 is obvious.”³⁰

Logoi 8:8 (cf. Matt 10:32)

“Anyone who may speak out for me in public,

the Son of Man will also speak out for him before the angels of God.”

Rev 3:5

“As for the one who conquers—I will wrap him in white garments, and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and

I will speak out for his name before my Father and before his angels.”

In the examples given thus far it would be reasonable to assume that the seer was indebted only to Matthew, but in the following example the parallels apply only to the lost Gospel (see also Luke 12:35–37).

Logoi 8:14–15 (cf. Matt 25:1–10)

“Be like people who were expecting their master when he returned from the wedding feast,

so that when he arrived and knocked, they would open the door to him at once.

¹⁵ Blessed are those slaves whose master, on arriving, finds (them) watching.

Truly I tell you that he will tie up his loose clothing, make them recline, come, and serve them.”

Rev 3:20

“Look I stand at the door and am knocking.

If someone should hear my voice and open the door,

I will go into his home and dine with him, and he with me.”

The lost Gospel and Matthew both refer to Jesus’s receiving of his kingdom from his Father and the granting of thrones to the Twelve for

30. R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), lxxxivn6.

issuing judgment. The author of the Apocalypse transfers the promise to martyrs and narrates visions of the scene:

Logoi 10:61–63 (cf. Matt 19:28)

“Truly I tell you that you are the ones who followed me;⁶² my Father will give you the kingdom, and when the Son of Man sits on the throne of his glory,

⁶³ you too will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Rev 3:21; 4:4; 20:4a

“As for the one who conquers—I will give him to sit with me on my throne, as I have conquered and sat with my Father on his throne.”

^{4:4} And around the throne were twenty thrones, and on the thrones sat . . .

^{20:4a} And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them.

Eschatological woes are predicted in the lost Gospel and Matthew, predictions echoed in John’s Revelation:

Logoi 8:25 (cf. Matt 10:34)

“Do you think I have come to hurl peace on earth? I did not come to hurl peace, but a sword.”

Matt 24:29 (cf. Isa 13:10)

“The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.”

Rev 6:4b

. . . to take peace from the earth, so that people slay each other, and a great sword was given to him.

Rev 6:12b–13

And there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, and the entire moon was like blood,¹³ and the stars of heaven fell to the earth.

Matthew has no parallel to Revelation 12:9, but my reconstruction of the *Logoi of Jesus* does, based on Luke 10:18–19 and Papias *Expos.* 4:7.³¹

Logoi 10:24–25

“I saw Satan falling from the sky like lightning.²⁵ Look, I am giving you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and on every power of the enemy, and nothing will harm you.”

Rev 12:9

He was cast down—the great dragon, the serpent, the ancient one, the one called Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole inhabited world—he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.

Compare also the following:

31. See *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 35–38, 41, 43, 367–71, and 390–91.

Matt 26:52

“All who take up the sword by the sword will perish.”

Matt 24:24 (cf. Mark 13:22)

“False messiahs and false prophets will rise up, and they will give great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the elect.”

Logoi 3:7 (cf. Matt 8:19)

“I will follow you wherever you go.”

Rev 13:10

“If someone kills by the sword, by the sword he will be killed.”

Rev 13:13–14

And he produces great signs, . . . ¹⁴ and he deceives the inhabitants of the earth by the signs given to him to do.

Rev 14:4b

“. . . those who followed the lamb wherever he goes.”

The lost Gospel and Matthew both mention “the blood of all the prophets” for which Jesus’s enemies will be held accountable. The same judgment appears in the Book of Revelation:

Logoi 7:17–18 (cf. Matt 23:34–35)

“Therefore also Wisdom said, ‘I will send them prophets and sages, and some of them they will kill and persecute,¹⁸ so that the blood of all the prophets poured out on the earth may come upon them.’”

Rev 16:5-6; 6:10b; 18:24.

“You are just, the one who is and was, the holy one, because you judged these things,⁶ for they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink.”

^{6:10b} “How long, O holy and true master, will you not judge and avenge our blood from those who dwell upon the earth?”

^{18:24} And in it was found the blood of all the prophets and saints, and all who had been slain on the earth.”

The conclusion of the Beatitudes in both *Logoi* and Matthew finds a potential echo near the end of the Apocalypse:

Logoi 4:4a (cf. Matt 5:12a)

“Be glad and exult, for vast is your reward in heaven.”

Rev 19:7a

“Let us be glad and exult and give glory to him, for the wedding of the lamb has come, and his wife prepared herself.”

“The words in Matthew come in at the close of the Beatitudes, which promise that the righteous shall inherit the earth. 19:7 in our author [of the Apocalypse] represents in vision the fulfilment of this promise.”³²

Matt 22:2–3 (cf. *Logoi* 8:43–44)

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son.
³ And he sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast.”

***Logoi* 2:11 (cf. Matt 4:8)**

And the devil took him along to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world.

Rev 19:9

“Blessed are those who were invited to the wedding of the lamb.”

Rev 21:10

And he brought me by spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God.

At Jesus’s temptations he rejected the devil’s offer of the kingdoms of the world, but John the seer witnesses the descent from heaven of the new Jerusalem.

The Apocalypse of John likely came from the Johannine communities, and these parallels suggest that the author, like the elder, knew the Gospel of Matthew, and perhaps the lost Gospel as well. That is, like the Epistles, the Johannine apocalypse is indebted more to Matthew than to any other Gospel. This also was the case with Papias of Hierapolis.

Papias as a Johannine Christian

The bishop of Hierapolis, too, belonged to the wider sphere of Johannine influence; Papias apparently knew 1 John and the Apocalypse; according to Eusebius he not only often recorded traditions of the elder in the *Exposition* but had met him personally (*Expos.* 1:2 and Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.3); Papias, like the author of the Book of Revelation, was a chiliast and showed no awareness of a Pauline mission in the region; and Hierapolis lay 100 miles east of Ephesus on a well-traveled Roman road. Nearby Laodicea was one of the churches addressed at the beginning of the Book of Revelation.

One might even say that Papias understood his literary enterprise as a solution to the elder’s discomfort with the sequential disagreements between the Gospel of Mark and two Gospels of Matthew. According

32. Charles, *Revelation*, lxxxviii.3.

to Papias's elder, Mark recorded Peter's random memories of Jesus without regard to historical order; Matthew's Hebrew Gospel, on the other hand, organized the *logia* in proper sequence (*συνετάξατο*), but his translators garbled them. Papias therefore wanted to put the *logia* back into Matthew's original order (*συνκατατάξαι*), supplemented with other traditions, including those from the elder himself (*Expos.* 1:4-5).³³

Be that as it may, based on the evidence presented here in part one it appears that the Johannine tradition from its origins until the composition of Papias's *Exposition*—including all three Epistles and an earlier version of the Apocalypse of John—not only had access to the Gospel of Mark and at least one version of the Gospel of Matthew but regarded them as authoritative.

The next stratum of the Johannine literary tradition pertains to the Gospel, which seems to have been composed in three distinctive editions, each of which is consistent with the view of the Synoptics promoted by the elder John and Papias. Here is a comparison of the two authors with respect to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew.

1. According to the elder and Papias, Matthew's original Gospel "in the Hebrew language" had arranged events of Jesus's life in correct historical sequence, but two Greek translators inadvertently corrupted it (*Expos.* 1:4). Insofar as Mark merely recorded Peter's occasional preaching, his sequence also was deficient (*Expos.* 1:3). Papias thus set out to restore Matthew's original sequence (*Expos.* 1:5). Similarly, the Johannine Evangelists rearranged several episodes, such as the cleansing of the temple.
2. Papias replaced Matthew's account of the death of Judas with one that he considered more appropriate (*Expos.* 4:6). Similarly, the Evangelists frequently substituted their own tales for those in the Synoptics, most obviously Jesus's trial before Pilate, death, and resurrection appearances.
3. Finally, the elder and Papias both held that Mark and Matthew failed to include important episodes from the life of Jesus. In his

33. MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 12-17.

Exposition Papias added many other tales that derived from the memories of Jesus' earliest followers, including "traditions" from the elder John himself (*Expos.* 1:1-2). The Johannine Evangelists, too, did not hesitate to add several lengthy stories to those in the Synoptics.

It thus would appear that Papias and the authors of the Johannine first Gospel were heirs to the elder's high regard for at least two of the Synoptics and his dissatisfaction with their arrangements of *logia*, their deficient versions of certain episodes, and especially their omissions of many events of Jesus's life. As we shall now see, at least one Johannine author freely created episodes to present Jesus as a rival to Dionysus.

The Earliest Gospel Stratum and Euripides’ *Bacchae*: An Intertextual Commentary

Introduction

Excavating for the Earliest Johannine Gospel

No doubt the Gospel of John once ended with the following postscript: “Many other signs Jesus performed in the presence of his disciples that have not been written in this book.”³¹ These things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (20:30–31). But the textual witnesses to John continue for another twenty-five verses and conclude with yet another postscript: “This is the disciple who gives witness about these things and who wrote them down, and we know that his witness is true.”²⁵ There are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if each one were written, I suppose not even the world could contain the books written” (21:24–25). The Epilogue thus validates the Gospel as a whole by evoking the authority of this witness, almost certainly the elder John. As we shall see in part four,

“The Final Gospel Stratum and a Johannine Corpus,” the distinctive concerns of the Epilogue repeatedly appear also in chs. 1–20 and likely issue from the same hand. Part three, “Rewriting the Gospel,” will argue for extensive additions even before this final, canonical version. Appendix 1 presents a conjectural Greek reconstruction of the earliest edition with footnotes explaining every omission of content that likely was added by later editors. English translations of this reconstruction appear sequentially here in part two, followed by commentary.

Although most commentators acknowledge that the Gospel underwent such an evolution, it is fashionable to downplay its importance and to interpret the book in its final form.¹ To do so, however, unduly privileges canonical John at the expense of its most primitive and most adventuresome compositional moment insofar as only the most primitive edition displays evidence that a Johannine author supplemented the Synoptics to portray Jesus as a rival to Dionysus, the Greek god of wine.

Jesus and Dionysus

In a recent and important study of ancient imitations of Euripides' *Bacchae*, Courtney J. P. Friesen provides the following general comparison:

[B]oth Jesus and Dionysus are the offspring of a divine father and human mother (which was subsequently suspected as a cover-up for illegitimacy); both are from the east and transfer their cult into Greece as part of its universal expansion; both bestow wine to their devotees and have wine as a sacred element in their ritual observances; both had private cults; both were known for close association with women devotees; and both were subjected to violent deaths and subsequently came back to life. By the middle of the second century, observations of such relationships are explicitly made and would later be developed in various directions. . . .

A juxtaposition of Jesus and Dionysus is also invited in the New Testament Gospel of John, in which the former is credited with a distinctively Dionysiac miracle in the wedding at Cana: the transformation of water into wine (2:1–11). In the Hellenistic world, there were many myths of Dionysus' miraculous production of wine, and thus,

1. A noteworthy exception is Urban C. von Wahlde.

for a polytheistic Greek audience, a Dionysiac resonance in Jesus' wine miracle would have been unmistakable. . . . John's Gospel employs further Dionysiac imagery when Jesus later declares, "I am the true vine" ('Εγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή, 15:1). John's Jesus, thus, presents himself not merely as a "New Dionysus," but one who supplants and replaces him.²

Furthermore, the Gospel of John bears a remarkable similarity in plot structure to Euripides' *Bacchae*. In both books the protagonist is a god who dons flesh, lives among mortals, and is rejected by his own people. This antagonism drives the plots of both works, but the outcomes are significantly and strategically different. The *Bacchae* is a tragedy that leaves its main characters either dead or devastated and culminates in the downfall of the Theban ruling family. In the bitter ending, King Cadmus, who earlier appeared as a figure of piety through his belief in the god, complains to Dionysus, "It is not right that gods resemble mortals in their outrages" (1348), explicitly calling into question the morality of Dionysus's vengeance. Whereas Dionysus, a god in the flesh, destroys and punishes unbelievers, the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, the Son of God, offers eternal life. Euripides' violent depiction of Dionysus thus provides a contrast to John's Jesus as an altruistic savior of the world.

Even though these similarities apply to the final redaction of the Gospel, the authors of the second and third editions add no further Dionysian elements. That is, the comparisons between Jesus and Dionysus are unique to the project only of the original Johannine Evangelist.

Several scholars have compared the Gospel of John with Euripides' tragedy, though none has argued for a direct mimetic connection. For example, Mark W. G. Stibbe lists eleven "very general parallels" between the works but stops short of literary imitation.

I am not arguing that John necessarily knew the *Bacchae* by heart and that

2. Courtney J. P. Friesen, *Reading Dionysus: Euripides' Bacchae and the Cultural Contestations of Greeks, Jews, Romans, and Christians* (STAC 95; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 19–22. James M. Scott surveyed how Hellenistic and Roman generals, kings, and emperors advertised themselves as new Dionysuses (*Bacchius Iudaeus: A Denarius Commemorating Pompey's Victory over Judea* [NTOA 104; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015], 34–41). Scott also makes a strong case that Pompey interpreted the god of the Jews as none other than an eastern Dionysus (126–27).

he consciously set up a number of literary echoes. . . . What I am arguing is that John unconsciously chose the *mythos* of tragedy when he set about rewriting his tradition about Jesus and that general echoes with Euripides' story of Dionysus are therefore, in a sense, inevitable. . . . It is important to repeat at this stage that I have nowhere put forward the argument for a direct literary dependence of John on Euripides. That, in fact, would be the simplest but the least likely solution.³

Stibbe does not explain why it is "the least likely." Similarly, Peter Wick, after a compelling comparison of the *Bacchae* and John, gets cold feet about imitation and prefers to speak of a Dionysian "contextualization."⁴

Other interpreters have proposed that the Fourth Evangelist modeled the Gospel after Greek tragedy more generally; Jo-Ann A. Brant's study merits mention: "My goal is to unmask the skilled artistry of the gospel, designed to produce a compelling rendition of the story of Jesus capable of finding an audience in a world where Homeric epics and Greek tragedies were still read."⁵ But Brant, too, hesitates to postulate a direct literary connection with any particular play. The vast majority of commentators are entirely mute on John's similarities to the *Bacchae*, even those that otherwise show an interest in Greek and Roman literature.⁶

3. Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 73; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 137 and 139.

4. Peter Wick, "Jesus gegen Dionysos? Ein Kontextualisierung des Johannesevangeliums," *Bib* (2004): 197–98. One might say the same of the brief but superb treatment of Dionysian religion and the Fourth Gospel by Esther Kobel in *Dining with John: Communal Meals and Identity Formation in the Fourth Gospel and its Historical and Cultural Context* (BIS 109; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 221–49. See also Julius Grill, *Untersuchungen über die Entstehung des vierten Evangeliums*: Part 2. *Das Mysterienevangelium des hellenisierten Kleinasiatischen Christentums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1923); and Ekkehard W. Stegemann, *Christus und Dionysos: Die Suche nach der Figur im Teppich des Johannesevangeliums* (Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät, Lehrstuhl für Exegese und Theologie; Bochum: Ruhr Universität Bochum, 2009).

5. Jo-Ann A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 6–7. See also George L. Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif* (WUNT 258; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), who compares the trials in John with Athenian tragedy, most notably Euripides. I cannot explain the astonishing absence of a single reference to the *Bacchae* or Dionysus, even in his discussion of the wedding at Cana. Ludger Schenke similarly has argued for John's debt to tragedy in "Joh 7–10: Eine dramatische Szene," *ZNW* 80 (1989): 172–92, in *Das Johannesevangelium: Einführung, Text, dramatische Gestalt* (Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 1992), and in *Johannes: Kommentar* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1998). See also C. Milo Connick, "The Dramatic Character of the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 67 (1948): 159–70; and William Domeris, "The Johannine Drama," *JTSA* 21 (1983): 29–35.

6. This is the case, for example in C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with*

In two earlier and related books, *The Gospels and Homer: Imitations of Greek Epic in Mark and Luke-Acts* (NTGL 1; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) and *Luke and Vergil: Imitations of Classical Greek Literature* (NTGL 2; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), I employed a methodology that has come to be known as Mimesis Criticism.⁷ The conclusion to part two will apply the criteria of such an analysis to the parallels between John and the *Bacchae* to demonstrate that the Johannine Evangelist not only imitated Euripides, he expected his readers to esteem Jesus as greater than Dionysus.

Imitations of the *Bacchae* suggest why the Fourth Gospel departs so dramatically from the Synoptics. Whereas Mark focused on the unfolding of the Messianic Secret, and Matthew developed his story around the continuity of the Jewish tradition and the new revelation of Jesus, and while Luke focused upon the emergence of the new religious movement and its eventual spread to the ends of the earth, the first Johannine Evangelist crafted his plot to focus squarely upon Jesus's heavenly origin and the ensuing conflict between acceptance and rejection of his overtly expressed divine identity. This, as we shall see, resembles Euripides' depiction of Dionysus.

Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text (London: SPCK, 1958); Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Oxford: Blackwell, 1971); Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; AB 29, 29A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966–1970); Ernst Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (trans. Robert W. Funk; ed. Robert W. Funk with Ulrich Busse; 2 vols.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John* (3 vols.; vol. 1: trans. Kevin Smyth; New York Herder & Herder, 1968; vol. 2: New York: Seabury, 1980; vol. 3: New York: Crossroad, 1982); Barnabas Lindars, *John* (NTG; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990); Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998); D. Moody Smith, Jr. *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999); Herman C. Waetjen, *The Gospel of the Beloved Disciple: A Work in Two Editions* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005); and Urban C. von Wahlde, *A Commentary on the Gospel and Letters of John* (3 vols.; ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). Perhaps the most lamentable failure to recognize Euripidean influence on John is the volume devoted to the Gospel in *Neuer Wettstein: Texte zum Neuen Testament aus Griechentum und Hellenismus*, vol. 1.2: *Texte zum Johannesevangelium* (ed. Udo Schnelle with Michael Lebahn and Manfred Lang; Berlin: de Gruyter; 2001). This valuable volume presents nearly a thousand parallels between the Gospel of John and ancient Greek and Latin literature, but only three from the *Bacchae*, one of which pertains to the epilogue (*Bacch.* 963–66 and John 21:19); furthermore, the comparison of *Bacch.* 925–27 to John 12:45 is forced. Only the comparison of *Bacch.* 704–10, Dionysus's miraculous production of wine, and John 2:9 remains. Absent entirely is any awareness of the affinities in characterization and plot.

7. For a more popular and synthetic presentation of mimetic debts to Homer, see Dennis R. MacDonald, *Mythologizing Jesus: From Jewish Teacher to Epic Hero* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

Many of these similarities between the *Bacchae* and John pertain to analogous characterizations, their dramatis personae:

<i>Bacchae</i>	The Gospel of John
Dionysus	Narrator and Jesus
Chorus	Narrator and the crowds
Theban women	Samaritan woman
Tiresias, the blind seer	Man born blind
Cadmus, Pentheus's grandfather	The Baptist, the old cripple, and Nicodemus
Pentheus, king of Thebes	Jewish authorities and Pilate
Assistants of Pentheus	Assistants of Jewish authorities
Agave, Pentheus's mother	Mary, Jesus's mother

1:1-5. The Origin of the Logos

The Fourth Gospel begins by identifying its protagonist as a god.

^{1:1} In the beginning was the Logos,
and the Logos was with God,
and the Logos was a god.

² This one at the beginning was with God.

³ Everything came into being through him,
and without him nothing came into being.
What came into being ⁴ through him was life,
and the life was the light of humans.

⁵ And the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.

The *Bacchae* begins with the god declaring his identity.

I, the child of Zeus, have come to the land of Thebes—
Dionysus, whom Semele daughter of Cadmus once bore,
induced to do so by a lightning bolt—
after having changed myself into human form from that of a god [θεοῦ].
(*Bacch.* 1–4)

Like Dionysus, “the child of Zeus,” on Mt. Olympus, the Logos was a god [θεός] with God, later called his Father. Zeus was not only Dionysus’s

father but also his birth mother. After slaying Semele with lightning for boasting that she had slept with the king of gods, Zeus rescued the fetus, sewed it into his thigh, and brought it to term.

1:6-8. John, the Faithful Witness

Quite unexpectedly, the Johannine narrator shifts attention from the light to the sole witness to it:

⁶ There was a person sent from God whose name was John.

⁷ This one came as a witness to bear witness about the light, so that all might believe through him.

⁸ He was not the light, but was to bear witness about the light.

Surely it is not by accident that early in his opening speech Dionysus similarly singles out Cadmus, his grandfather, for praise.⁸

I praise Cadmus, who established this plot untrodden,
a sacred precinct for his daughter. With clustering foliage of the grapevine
I myself have shrouded it. (*Bacch.* 10–12)

Later in the Gospel the Baptist again will play the role of Cadmus. As many interpreters have noted, the sudden naming of John without a notification of who he was likely presupposes that his readers already would have known of him from having read the Synoptics.⁹

1:9-12. The Rejection of the Logos

After praising John, the Prologue returns to extolling the light itself:

⁹ The true light that enlightens every person, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him,

8. Stibbe: "In both prologues a man is singled out for praise on account of his public recognition of the deity" (*John as Storyteller*, 136).

9. For example, Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 76: "Natürlich weiß jeder Leser/Hörer des Prologs, daß es sich um Johannes den Täufer handelt und daß er auch der Täufer Jesu ist. . . . Die weitere Interpretation unseres Evangeliums wird zeigen, daß es sich dabei nicht nur um ein allgemein verbreitetes Wissen um Jesus handelt, sondern um die konkrete Kenntnis unserer synoptischen Evangelien—und zwar aller drei."

and the world did not know him.

¹¹ He came to his own regions [τὰ ἴδια],
and his own people [οἱ ἴδιοι] did not receive him.

¹² But as many as receive him,
to them he gave authority to become children of God,
to those who believe in his name.

[13]

Dionysus disguised himself as a mortal to punish Thebes, his birthplace, and his mother's family.

Since my mother's sisters—whom one might least expect—
were saying that Dionysus was not born from Zeus,
but that Semele had been seduced by some mortal man,
and that she had attributed to Zeus her own sexual sin. (*Bacch.* 26–30)

The Logos and Dionysus both came to their own regions, and their own people did not receive them.

In the Prologue, the Logos's "own people" are those whom he had created, but in in light of the Gospel as a whole one might take them to be fellow Jews, in which case the parallels with the *Bacchae* would be closer insofar as those who rejected Dionysus were his family and other citizens of Thebes.¹⁰ (Here and following, verses that were added in later versions of the Gospel are identified in square brackets.)

1:14, 16. The Logos Assumes a Human Body

¹⁴ And the Logos became flesh
and pitched tent among us,
and we observed his glory,
glory of the one-of-a-kind child from the Father,
full of grace and truth.

[15]

¹⁶ For we all have received of his fullness,
gift after gift.

[17]

In his opening speech Dionysus declared that he "changed into this mortal / appearance" (53) in order to reveal his power to unbelieving

10. Becoming a child of God is distinctively Johannine (cf. 1 John 3:1 and 5:13).

Thebans and to punish Pentheus, their king. “For this reason I will show him that I am a god” (47; cf. 20–22). The Logos, on the other hand, “became flesh” to offer “grace and truth. . . . We all have received of his fullness, gift after gift” (1:16).

The word translated here as “fullness” is *πλήρωμα*, which was to carry heavy theological freight in later Christian discourse. It appears only here in Johannine literature and symbolizes the Logos as a vessel full of “gift after gift.” Dionysus, too, was a donor god and source of wealth. Of course, he was also associated with full kraters and wine cups.

1:18. The One in the Lap of the Father

¹⁸ No one ever has seen God;
a one-of-a-kind God, the one in the lap of the Father,
that one revealed him.

Twice in the Prologue one finds the word *μονογενής* (1:14 and 18), which I have translated as “one-of-a-kind”; the author employed it to exclude the possibility that God had other such offspring, such as Dionysus, whom the *Bacchae* twice calls “Zeus’s offspring [*Διὸς γόνος*]” (603 and 1038; cf. 84 and 1340–41).¹¹

I translated the word *κόλπος* as “lap” in the phrase “the one in the lap of the Father.” It is “the region of the body extending from the breast to the legs, especially when a person is in a seated position—‘bosom, lap.’”¹² One will recall that after Zeus destroyed Semele he sewed the fetus into his thigh, which served as a womb (*Bacch.* 96; cf. 243, 286–95, and 522–25). Dionysus and Jesus both have an unusually intimate bond with their divine fathers.

The opening speech of Dionysus and the Prologue of the Gospel share a brilliant literary strategy, admirably described by Brant:

11. The term appears also in 1 John 4:9; it seems to have been a distinctive fixture of Johannine theology.
12. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1: *Introduction and Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 99 (entry 8.39).

The revelations of the prologue . . . stand outside the knowledge of the actors or participants in that action. The audience then joins in a sort of collusion with the narrator by sharing privileged knowledge and transcending the finite reality of normal human experience to view what normally cannot be seen: the workings of the cosmic order. The vantage point or “discrepant awareness” between fictional characters and the audience afforded by the prologue allows the audience to enjoy the irony offered by the action of the drama. . . .

As in the prologue to Euripides’ *Bacchae*, in which Dionysus gives an account of how he came to be in Thebes, the gospel’s prologue explains how the divine came to be striding about Judea and the Galilee. This explanation then provides the conditions for the antagonism that greets Jesus. The bold claims of Jesus to possess an authority that goes beyond that of a prophet and an ancestry that is other than human will clash with what is known of Jesus’ parentage and birthplace by those who inhabit the story. In *Bacchae*, Dionysus lays out the tension of claims about his status more baldly. . . . His incarnation is necessitated by the refusal of some to believe, among them his mother’s sisters, who deny that he is the son of Zeus and accuse Semele of using Zeus to hide her seduction by a mortal (27–29).¹³

Harold W. Attridge suggests that the “quasi-poetic form” of John’s Prologue is “not a secondary and casual addition to the Gospel. It belongs where it sits, at the beginning of the complex Gospel. . . . Unlike any of the other Gospels, the Fourth Gospel begins as a drama. . . . If one wants to understand the narrative rhetoric of the Gospel it is important to attend to the drama of the Gospel.”¹⁴

Excursus 2. John 1:1–18 and 1 John 1:1–5

The similarities between the opening verses of 1 John and John 1 are unmistakable. Although most scholars hold that the Prologue to the

13. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 18 and 20; Brant shies away from a direct literary connection with the *Bacchae* (21).

14. “The Gospel of John: Genre Matters?” in *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic* (ed. Kasper Bro Larsen; Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 35. Parsenius states that the Prologue “represents a creative union of Greek tragic elements and the theological and linguistic world of the Old Testament. It sounds like Genesis 1, but it operates like the prologue of a Greek play” (*Rhetoric and Drama*, 47). One will find a similar assessment by Peter M. Phillips in *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel: A Sequential Reading* (LNTS 294; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 37–54.

Gospel informed the epistle, the following columns support the priority of the epistle (as advocated in part one):

1 John 1:1

[Elder:] What was *from the beginning*, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and our hands have handled with regard to the *logos* of life.

John 1:1-3a

[Narrator:] *In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was a god.*² This one *at the beginning* was with God.³ Everything came into being through him.

Both works begin in “the beginning,” but they refer to different events. In the epistle it designates the beginning of the Christian movement, indicated by the neuter singular “what [ὅ]”; in the Gospel, on the other hand, it designates the creation of the world by the personified Logos.¹⁵ Surely it is more likely that the Evangelist magnified the “what” of the epistle into the creating Logos than that the elder depersonalized the Logos into a faceless “what.” Both prologues refer to witnesses. In the epistle several firsthand observers, including the elder, “give witness” (1:2-3), but the Gospel mentions only one: John the Baptist (1:7).¹⁶

1 John refers to “the logos of life,” that is, the life-giving message of Jesus, but in the Gospel the logos becomes the Logos; “what came into being” through him “was life” (1:3b-4a). In the epistle the message of Jesus, mediated by the elder, was “that God is light, and in him is no darkness whatsoever” (1:5). In the Gospel, however, Jesus himself is the light that “the darkness” cannot comprehend (1:5). Theology has become Christology, an evolution observable often in the Gospel’s evoking of 1 John.¹⁷

Although the elder emphasizes that he and the other witnesses heard, saw, and handled things “concerning the logos of life,” there is no explicit reference to an incarnation, which dominates the Prologue in the Fourth Gospel. Especially noteworthy is the Evangelist’s repeated references to the Logos “coming”: “The light . . . was *coming into the world*. . . .¹¹ He *came to his own regions*, and his own people did

15. Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 59–69, esp. 60–61.

16. See Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 95–98 and 102–3.

17. Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 65–67.

not receive him. . . .¹⁴ And the Logos *became flesh and pitched tent among us*" (John 1:9, 11, 14).

The elder claimed that he wrote so that his readers' "joy may be filled [πεπληρωμένη]" (1:4); the Evangelist expands the "fullness [πληρώματος]" of the light to include "gift after gift," most explicitly "grace and truth" (1:14 and 16). The expansion from "joy" to "grace and truth" seems to be secondary.

If one were to argue that the Prologue of the Gospel came first, one would have to defend the following propositions:

1. The elder substituted prose for poetry.
2. He substituted the coming of the personified Logos with the neuter "what."
3. He used the phrase "in the beginning" not to refer to the preexistence of the Logos with God but to the career of Jesus.
4. He omitted all references to Jesus's "coming."
5. He omitted Jesus's taking on a human appearance.
6. He omitted the witness of John the Baptist.
7. He omitted Jesus's rejection by his own people.

In other words, the author of 1 John would have removed every affinity with Euripides that made the two opening addresses most similar!

Excursus 3. The Dionysian Jesus of Clement and *Christus patiens*

These similarities between the Johannine Prologue and the Dionysian speech did not escape notice by Clement of Alexandria. In the following quotation he invites Dionysus to convert. Here the line numbers from Dionysus's opening speech in the *Bacchae* appear in square brackets.

Come [ἄχε; 1], O madman, not propped up by a thyrsus [25], not wreathed with ivy [25]! Throw off your headband! Throw off your fawn-skin [24]! Get sober! I will show you the Logos and the mysteries of the Logos, and I will describe them with your own imagery. This mountain [33] is beloved of God and is not subject to tragedies, like Cithaeron [a bacchic mountain prominent in the *Bacchae*], but exalted by dramas of truth, a sober mountain and shaded by chaste woods [cf. 38]. Reveling here are no

maenads [52], daughters of “thunder-stricken” Semele [6], initiates in the disgusting distribution of raw flesh [139]; instead, they are the daughters of God, the beautiful lambs [ἄμνάδες, a pun on μαινάδες], who utter the solemn rites [δρῦα; 34] of the Logos and gather together a sober chorus. This chorus consists of the righteous, and their song is a hymn to the King of all. Young girls pluck their instruments [cf. 58–59], angels sing praises, prophets speak, the sound of music carries. Quickly they follow the thiasos [56]; those who were called scurry off, longing to welcome the Father. (*Protrepticus* 12.119.1–2)

Even more impressive is a twelfth-century poem of Jesus's passion called *Christus patiens*, which begins with an appeal both to the Gospel of John and Euripides!¹⁸

Since you have listened to poems with a pious ear,
 And seek to hear now pious things but in a poet's way,
 Give heed: for now, as would Euripides,
 I shall tell of a passion that redeemed the world.
 Here you will find the mysteries fully told,
 For they come from the mouth of a maid and virgin mother,
 And the initiate beloved of his teacher.

* * * * *

And these then are my drama's roles:
 The Ever Holy Mother, the chaste initiate [John the Evangelist],
 And the attendant maidens of the Mother of the Lord. (*Chr. pat.* 1–7, 28–30)

The translator, Arthur Evans, captures the poet's mimetic method: he “makes Christ, the Virgin Mary, and John (the so-called ‘Beloved Disciple’) the three main characters, putting into their mouths lines once spoken by Dionysos, Agave, and others in Euripides' *Bakkhai*.”¹⁹ Not only does Mary play the part of the grieving Agave, her female entourage resembles maenads, the Jews are Penthean god-fighters, Jesus is a god who took mortal form, and the Johannine Evangelist himself appears as the Beloved Disciple and quotes Euripides, including the *Bacchae*.

Near the end of the poem one finds a remarkable imitation of the

18. Scholars continue to debate the authorship of *Christus patiens*. See the discussion in Domenico Accorinti's review of *The Saurus pseudo-Nonni quondam Panopolitani* in *Gn* 71 (1999): 493.

19. Arthur Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-Roles and the Madness of Dionysus* (New York: St. Martin's, 1988), 151; see also 152.

opening lines of the *Bacchae* placed on the lips of Jesus's lamenting mother at his tomb.

Although you remained God,
(= *Bacch.* 52, 54) you joined the nature of a man to your own form.

* * * * *

(= *Bacch.* 4, 52, 54) You joined the nature of mortals to the form of God.²⁰

* * * * *

(= *Bacch.* 2) I gave you birth but still was pure [i.e., a virgin];
(= *Bacch.* 4) having come from God, you took on human form.
(= *Bacch.* 26) But your mother's kindred—whom one might least expect,
since you performed many amazing feats for them
(= *Bacch.* 472) to make known unspeakable things to uninitiated mortals—
(= *Bacch.* 27) these people were saying that you were not a savior born
from God,
(= *Bacch.* 28) but that I had been seduced by a mortal man,
(= *Bacch.* 31) bore you out of wedlock, lied about the marriage,
(= *Bacch.* 29) and foisted my sexual sins onto God.
And now they have lawlessly sped to kill you out of jealousy
(= *Bacch.* 30) and by a stratagem of the enemy through those murderers
(= *Bacch.* 489) and all the other stratagems of evil.
(= *Bacch.* 232) You will put a stop to a world twirling with sophistries
(= *Bacch.* 231) by catching them in iron nets
(= *Bacch.* 232) and will stay the evildoer from doing evil, O child.

* * * * *

(= *Bacch.* 21) You will make your friends dance and establish your
(= *Bacch.* 22) mysteries so that you might be revealed to mortals,
(= *Bacch.* 48) as it is revealed to all in heaven. And into some other land,
(= *Bacch.* 49) once you have revealed yourself here, you will lift up your
might.
(= *Bacch.* 39) Whether it wants to or not, this city must learn the truth,
(= *Bacch.* 40) though now it is ignorant of your mysteries,
so also in every other habitation of earth-born people
(= *Bacch.* 45) that god-fights against you, bars you from libations,
(= *Bacch.* 46) and never remembers you in prayers.
(= *Medea* 59) For the wretches do not know that you are offspring
that came from the Father, from heaven down to earth.
(= *Bacch.* 47) For this reason, reveal to them that you are God.

20. "This use of the language of Euripides clearly reveals a conceptual analogy between the incarnation and the disguised presence of Dionysus in the *Bacchae*" (Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 257).

(= *Bacch.* 50) And reveal yourself everywhere. And if
 (= *Bacch.* 51) you want in wrath to expel the race of Jews from this land
 with arms
 you will strike them with the blows of Ausonian [i.e., Roman]
 military commanders,
 whom they chose, in their folly, to rule over them,
 when they refused your lordship
 and affirmed Caesar as lord.

For I see the punishment for your life-producing fate [i.e., death]:

(= *Bacch.* 7) fire near their houses and ruins of their mansions
 (= *Bacch.* 8) already burning, an unquenchable flame of fire—
 (= *Bacch.* 9) the immortal city of God [punished] for its hubris.
 (= *Bacch.* 10) I praise this judgment that makes this land untrodden
 (= *Bacch.* 11) by all those who murdered you, O child,
 (= *Bacch.* 13) who left the cities in Lydia, praised by all,
 (= *Bacch.* 14) and Phrygia, the sunlit plains of Persia,
 (= *Bacch.* 15) Bactrian walled cities and the hard to conquer lands
 (= *Bacch.* 16) of Media, by-passing prosperous Arabia,
 peoples far away and plunged in darkness,
 (= *Bacch.* 17) and all of Asia that lies by the briny sea,
 (= *Bacch.* 18) that has cities with beautiful towers filled
 (= *Bacch.* 19) with a mixture of Greeks and barbarians together.²¹
 (= *Bacch.* 20) You came at first to the land of the Hebrews
 that placed you in a tomb, a corpse from slaughter.
 (= *Troad.* 1315) Io, temple of God, beloved city,
 (= *Bacch.* 1202) lovely-towered city of the land of David,
 (= *Bacch.* 120) O refuge of the prophets of old,
 you now are a cave of god-killers!
 (= *Bacch.* 1027) How will I lament you? How will I mourn your murder?
 (= *Bacch.* 55) But you women who have left the land of Galilee,
 (= *Bacch.* 56–57) my thiasos, who traveled with me
 from there, initiates of the mysteries of the wound,
 alas, the corpse now is placed in the tomb.
 (= *Bacch.* 58) Let there be chants customary for the dead.
 (= *Bacch.* 71) Now raise hymns to him with fine laments,
 (= *Bacch.* 69–70) then praise the living king.

* * * * *

(= *Oresteia* 136) Come, come, let us go in quiet procession
 (= *Bacch.* 116–17) to the home where the women folk are staying,
 especially Mary, the mother of Mark,

21. The translation reverses lines 1593 and 1594 to make sense of them in English. "Mary recounts a journey of Jesus from Lydia with precisely the same itinerary as that described by Dionysus in *Bacchae* 13–20" (Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 258).

where, I think, the mystic thiasos gathers.”
 (*Christ. pat.* 1535–36, 1543, 1545–59, 1563–1608, and 1613–16)

1:19–51. The Son of God with Many Names

Immediately after the Prologue one reads:

¹⁹ This is the witness of John when Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, “Who are you, [20–22a] ^{22b} so that we may give a response to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

²³ He said, “I am a voice crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord.’ As Isaiah the prophet said. [24–26a] ^{26b} I baptize with water, among you stands one whom you do not know: ²⁷ the one who comes after me, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. [28–32a] ^{32b} I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and abiding on him. [33–34a] ^{34b} This is the chosen one of God.” [35–36]

The Evangelist already had designated Jesus as “the Logos,” “the light,” and “the one-of-a-kind God.” Here the Baptist calls him “the chosen one of God.”²²

Instead of narrating Jesus’s baptism, as in the Synoptics, the Fourth Evangelist has woven it into John’s witness; after all, Jesus needed no diving bird or heavenly voice to notify him that he was God’s Son. He was as aware of this divine status as Euripides’ Dionysus was. For this reason, too, the Fourth Evangelist had no use for an extended genealogy tracing Jesus’s ancestry back to Abraham, as in Matthew, or to Adam and God, as in Luke.

The titles for Jesus proliferate in the verses that follow:

³⁷ And his two disciples heard him speaking and followed Jesus. [38–39]

⁴⁰ There was Andrew; [40b] ⁴¹ this one first finds his own brother Simon

22. Jesus’s baptism by John already appeared in the lost Gospel, though probably without the reference to the Spirit flying like a dove. See MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 120–24. MacDonald, *Gospels and Homer* (135–36), proposed that it was the Markan Evangelist who invented the avian imagery under the influence of Homer’s depiction of Athena flying to and from Odysseus’s son Telemachus to empower him in *Od.* 1 and 3. If so, the trope in the Fourth Gospel displays Markan influence, probably through Luke. See also MacDonald, “The Spirit as a Dove and Homeric Bird Similes,” in *Early Christian Voices: In Texts, Traditions, and Symbols* (FS François Bovon; ed. David H. Warren, Ann Graham Brock, and David W. Pao; Boston: Brill, 2003), 333–39; and Edward P. Dixon, “Descending Spirit and Descending Gods: An Interpretation of the Spirit’s ‘Descent as a Dove’ in Mark 1:10,” *JBL* 128 (2009): 759–80.

and says to him, "We have found the Messiah," which is translated as Christ.⁴² He brought him to Jesus.

Once Jesus looked at him he said, "You are Simon, the son of John; you will be called Cephas," which is translated as Peter. [43]

⁴⁴ And there was Philip from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
⁴⁵ Philip finds Nathanael and tells him, "We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law and also the prophets: Jesus from Nazareth, the son of Joseph!"

⁴⁶ And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good be from Nazareth?"

Philip said to him, "Come and see."

⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him and said about him, "Look, truly an Israelite in whom is no deceit."

⁴⁸ Nathanael says to him, "Whence do you know me?"

Jesus replied and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

⁴⁹ Nathanael replied to him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

⁵⁰ Jesus replied and said to him, [50b-51a] ^{51b} "Truly, truly I tell you, you will see the sky opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Dionysus was notorious for his multiple titles. In the *Bacchae* he not only is Dionysus, but also Bacchus, Bromios (Clamor), Iacchos, Dithyrambos, "the god," and "the child of Zeus."²³ In the first chapter of the Gospel the reader learns that Jesus is "the Logos," "the light," "the one-of-a-kind God," "the chosen one of God" (34), "Messiah . . . Christ" (41), "son of Joseph" (45), "rabbi, . . . Son of God, . . . king of Israel" (49), and "Son of Man" (51).

Furthermore, the Evangelist used the calling of the disciples to underscore Jesus's supernatural powers. Without having met him earlier, he knows Simon's name and nicknames him Cephas (42). On meeting Nathanael for the first time he praises him as "a true Israelite" and notifies him that clairvoyantly he had seen him earlier (47-48).

The unique calling of the disciples in John also cleverly transforms Luke's account of Jesus's third temptation (the second in Matthew). In both Gospels, immediately after Jesus's baptism one finds a reference

23. See M. Carmen Encinas Reguero, "The Names of Dionysos in Euripides' *Bacchae* and the Rhetorical Language of Teiresias," in *Redefining Dionysus* (ed. Alberto Bernabé et al.; MEP 5; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 349-65.

to his status as the Son of God and the protection of angels. Compare the following:

Luke 4:9b-10 (cf. Matt 4:5-7)

[Devil] "If you are the Son of God [υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ], throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written: 'He will command his angels [τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ] about you to protect you.'" [Jesus refuses to do so.]

John 1:49 and 51b

[Nathanael:] "Rabbi, you are the Son of God [εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ]; you are a king of Israel." . . . ^{51b} [Jesus:] "Truly, truly I tell you, you will see the sky opened and the angels of God [τοῦς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ] ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (cf. Gen 28:12)

The prerogative that Jesus refused in the Synoptics he proclaims in John!

2:1-11. Changing Water into Wine

Surely it is not by chance that Jesus's first miracle in the Gospel of John was a Dionysian feat.

^{2:1} And on the third day, a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples, too, were invited to the wedding. ³ And when the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

⁴ And Jesus said to her, "What to me and to you, woman? My hour has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Six stone water jars were standing there for the purification of the Jews, each containing two or three liquid measures. ⁷ Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, "Now draw it out and take it to the chief steward." And they took it.

⁹ And when the chief steward tasted it, the water had become wine, and he did not know where it came from. The servers who had drawn it knew, and the chief steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and told him, "Everyone first presents the good wine, and then, when people are drunk, the inferior. But you have reserved the good wine until now."

¹¹ Jesus did this beginning of his signs in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. [12]

Jesus not only turns water into wine, he produces over a hundred gallons of it, and of superior vintage; he not only produces a massive amount of *vin de marque*, but he does so after the guests are smashed.

The changing of water into wine was Dionysus's signature miracle.²⁴

According to Rudolf Bultmann, "Every year on the day of the Dionysus feast the temple springs in Andros and Teos were said to have poured out wine instead of water. In Elis on the eve of the feast three empty jars were set up in the temple, which were then found full of wine on the next morning."²⁵ Euripides twice mentions the god's miraculous production of wine in the *Bacchae*. The first is this: "The ground flows with milk, flows with wine" (142). Here is the second:

One of them took a thyrsus and struck a rock
 from which gushed a wet spurt of water.
 Another woman stuck the fennel wand into a plot of earth,
 and on that spot the god produced a fountain of wine.

* * * * *

Had you been there, the god you now censure
 you would approach with prayers on seeing such things.
 (704-7 and 712-13)

According to Bultmann, Dionysus's changing water into wine was an epiphany celebrated at "the Dionysus Feast, that is on the night of the 5th to the 6th of January. . . . The Early Church . . . saw the Feast of Christ's Baptism as his epiphany and celebrated it on the 6th of January. Equally it held that the 6th of January was the date of the marriage at Cana," as narrated in John 2:1-11.²⁶

Jesus's first miracle in Mark was an exorcism at which a demon recognized him as "the holy one of God" (1:24). The exorcism produced astonishment (1:27). The Johannine author apparently substituted the

24. For a detailed assessment of the evidence, see Ingo Broer, "Das Weinwunder zu Kana (Joh 2.1-11) und die Weinwunder der Antike," in *Das Urchristentum in seiner literarischen Geschichte* (ed. Ulrich Mell and Ulrich B. Müller; BZNW 100; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 91-308. Walter Lütgehetmann provides an extensive study of the wedding at Cana and concludes that it must have originated in a region where Dionysian religion rivaled the early Church (*Die Hochzeit von Kana [Joh 2,1-11]: Zu Ursprung und Deutung einer Wundererzählung im Rahmen johanneischer Redaktionsgeschichte* [Regensburg: Pustet, 1990]). The Fourth Evangelist, in his view, did not create the story but inherited it. Thus Lütgehetmann does not detect the direct influence of Dionysus or Euripides anywhere in the Gospel. Particularly insightful, however, is his linkage of the term ἀρχιτερίκλινος with the person ritually responsible for mixing water and wine at Dionysiac symposia (278-80).

25. Bultmann, *John*, 119n1. See esp. Pausanias, *Desc. Elis* 2.26,1-2. Wilfried Eisele carefully investigated the so-called Dionysus mosaic at Sepphoris and used it to illustrate visually the Dionysian imagery of John 2:1-11 ("Jesus und Dionysos: Göttliche Konkurrenz bei der Hochzeit zu Kana [Joh 2,1-11]," *ZNW* 100 [2009]: 1-28).

26. *John*, 119.

changing of water into wine for Mark's exorcism. In favor of this transformation are similarities in what Mark's demon says to Jesus and what John's Jesus says to his mother.

Mark 1:24

"What to us and to you, Jesus of Nazareth
[τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρηνέ]?"

John 2:4

"What to me and to you, woman
[τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι]?"

The narrator points out that "Jesus did this, the beginning of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him" (2:11). The first revelation of Jesus's glory thus was an abundance of fine wine. Furthermore, the Cana miracle anticipates Jesus's death insofar as 2:4 is the first occurrence of the expression his "hour had not yet come." Jesus's "hour" will be his death and glorification.²⁷

One might note that in the Acts of the Apostles the first public miracle is xenolalia, speaking in foreign languages, which some onlookers interpreted as a symptom of drunkenness. Several modern interpreters have heard in Acts 2 echoes of Pentheus's accusation of maenad intoxication in the *Bacchae*.²⁸

By making Jesus's first miracle the production of wine, the Johannine Evangelist notifies the reader that Jesus will rival Dionysus. Michael Labahn admirably emphasizes its significance not only for the Gospel but for understanding the development of the entire Johannine corpus.²⁹

By adopting the Dionysian epiphany motifs, it was feasible to convey the god-being in a way that the human side only virtually adhered to the miracle worker. The Dionysian motifs provide the possibility to tell the problem of Jesus's humanity in a way that the revealer manifested itself in

27. Wick uses this observation as proof of Dionysian influence throughout the Gospel; the wedding at Cana merely introduces the theme ("Jesus gegen Dionysos?" 193–94). Although the following two interpreters do not mention Dionysus, they recognize the programmatic importance of the Cana miracle to the Gospel as a whole: Raymond F. Collins, "Cana (Jn. 2:1–12): The First of His Signs or the Key to His Signs?," *JTQ* 17 (1980): 79–95; and Hans Förster, "Die johanneischen Zeichen und Joh 2:11 als möglicher hermeneutischer Schlüssel," *NovT* 56 (2014): 1–23.

28. E.g., Detlef Ziegler, *Dionysos in der Apostelgeschichte—eine intertextuelle Lektüre* (Religion und Biographie 18; Berlin: Lit, 2008), 156–57; Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*; and MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*, 33–35.

29. Michael Labahn, *Jesus als Lebensspender: Untersuchungen zu einer Geschichte der johanneischen Tradition anhand ihre Wundergeschichten* (BZNW 98; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999).

human form just like the god Dionysus, an appearance that happened at various places. . . . According to this background, John 2:1–11 is to be read as an epiphany miracle. The supernatural, miraculous transformation denotes the epiphany of Jesus according to the pattern of Dionysus. . . . The juxtaposition of Jesus and Dionysus depicts Jesus as a god.³⁰

Excursus 4. Dionysus Changes Water into Wine in Achilles Tatius

The wedding at Cana may have informed a passage of *Leucippe and Clitophon* by Achilles Tatius (second half of the second century CE). Friesen argues that Dionysus's introduction of wine evokes the Christian Eucharist on the basis of the following similarities:³¹

And Dionysus said, "This is water of harvest, this is blood of a grape." The god led the herdsman to the vine and, after taking from the clusters and at the same time crushing [them] and showing the vine, he said, "This is the water; that is the spring." In this way, therefore, wine came to be among humans, so goes the story of the Tyrians. They continue to observe that day as a feast to that god. (2.2.5–2.3.1)

. . . And while they were eating, after taking bread and blessing [it], he broke [it], and gave [it] to them and said, "Take [it]; this is my body." And, after taking a cup and giving thanks, he gave [it] to them, and they all drank from it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many." (Mark 14:22–24a)

Friesen then identifies four striking similarities:

1. As in Mark and Matthew, Achilles Tatius has Dionysus repeat the phrase τοῦτό ἐστιν. Dionysus's words, "this is blood of a grape" (τοῦτ' ἔστιν αἷμα βότρυος), are nearly identical with Jesus's words, "this is my blood of the covenant" (τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης).
2. As in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and 1 Corinthians, in Achilles Tatius's myth, too, the wine is associated with blood. First the herdsman identifies the wine as "sweet blood" (αἷμα γλυκύ; 2.2.4), and the

30. *Jesus als Lebensspender*, 158–59; I am grateful to Gesine Robinson for this translation.

31. "Dionysus as Jesus: The Incongruity of a Love Feast in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.2," *HTR* 107 (2014): 222–40.

- god later modifies this declaration to “blood of a grape” (αἷμα βότρυος; 2.2.5).
3. Dionysus’s actions (λαβῶν ἄμα καὶ θλίβων καὶ δεικνύς; 2.2.6) resemble those of Jesus at the Last Supper (λαβῶν ἄρτον εὐλόγησας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν; Mark 14:22).
 4. Both divine benefactions are understood as part of a formal relationship—“a cup of friendship . . . and a sign of the covenant” . . . in the eucharistic narratives—and both result subsequently in ritual commemorations.

These shared elements are too strong to be accidental and certainly could not have gone unnoticed by a reader with knowledge of Christianity.³²

Friesen argues that the Greek novelist parodied the Christian Eucharist: “the effect of the parody depends on the recognition of the incongruity between Christian professions of sexual renunciation, on the one hand, and the erotic effects of wine, on the other.”³³

One might augment Friesen’s observation. The right-hand column in the following table summarizes Achilles Tatius’s story; parallels to John 2 appear in the left.

32. “Dionysus as Jesus,” 226 and 234–35.

33. “Dionysus as Jesus,” 235.

John 2:1-11

Jesus and his disciples are invited to a wedding.

The wedding guests get drunk.

The wine runs out.

Jesus orders the stone jars to be filled and a cup of it drawn for the chief steward.

⁹ "And when the chief steward tasted it, the water had become wine, and he did not know where [πόθεν] it came from. The servers who had drawn it knew, and the chief steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and told him, 'Everyone first presents the good wine, and then, when people are drunk, the inferior. But you have reserved the good wine until now.'"

Leuc. Clit. 2.2-3

Clitophon narrates his stay in Tyre, where beautiful Leucippe sang him a love song, filling him with desire. Later, the couple marry.

Then came dinner accompanied by wine, which fanned the flames of passion as the two young people became tipsy. The gift of Dionysus "is the food of eros."

Clitophon narrates how the Tyrians first discovered wine. A humble farmer invited Dionysus to a feast of roast meat and water.

Dionysus turned the water into wine.

"When he [the farmer] drank it, he was bacchic with pleasure and said to the god, 'O stranger, where [πόθεν] did you get this purple water?"

Where [πόθεν] did you find such sweet blood?" Dionysus then instructs him in the art of viticulture.

What makes these stories most similar is the changing of water into wine and the ignorance of its source: "he did not know where [πόθεν] it came from"; "'O stranger, where [πόθεν] did you get this purple water? Where [πόθεν] did you find such sweet blood?'" If these similarities point to mimesis, Achilles Tatius apparently interpreted Jesus's changing of water into wine as a miracle evocative of the Greek god of wine.

2:14–16. Avenging the Father's House

The Johannine Evangelist transplanted the purging of the Jerusalem temple of merchants from its Synoptic location (cf. Mark 11:15–17 and Luke 19:45–46) to early in his narrative, apparently to demonstrate Jesus's awareness that as God's Son he must purify his Father's house.³⁴ His determination to protect the house of his Father resembles Dionysus's intention to vindicate his mother in the place of his birth. Here is John's account:

¹³ And the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

¹⁴ And in the temple he found people selling oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as money changers seated there. ¹⁵ After fashioning a whip from some ropes, he cast them all out of the temple, together with the sheep and oxen, poured out the coins of the money changers, and upended their tables. ¹⁶ And to those who sold the doves he said, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a house of commerce!"

[17–22]

²³ And while he was in Jerusalem during the Passover, at the festival, many believed in his name when they observed the signs that he performed. ²⁴ But Jesus himself did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all about people. [25]

The Synoptic accounts of this event are silent about the temple as God's house.

John 5:2–9, 2:23–24. An Old Cripple Walks Again

The introduction to appendix 1 proposes that 5:2–9 originally appeared between 2:16 and 23. The resulting reconstruction reads as follows:

^{5:2} In Jerusalem, at the Sheep Gate, there is a pool called Bethzatha in Hebrew, which has five porticos. ³ Among them lay a multitude of people who were ill, blind, lame, and paralyzed. ⁵ And a certain person was there who, for thirty-eight years was afflicted with his ailment. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there, and recognizing that he had this condition already for a long time, says to him, "Do you want to be well?"

34. The Evangelist must have known the Synoptic account insofar as Mark likely created Jesus's expelling the merchants from the temple after Odysseus's slaying of the suitors in *Od.* 22 (see MacDonald, *Gospels and Homer*, 312–14). On the Evangelist's motivation for relocating the episode at the beginning of Jesus's career, see especially Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 165–66.

⁷ And the sick man replied, "Sir, I have no one to throw me into the pool when the water is disturbed, and while I am coming, someone else descends into it before me."

⁸ Jesus told him, "Arise, take up your mat and walk."⁹ And immediately the man became well, took up his mat and walked.

[9b-47]

^{2:23} And because he was in Jerusalem during the Passover, at the festival, many believed in his name when they observed the signs that he performed.²⁴ But Jesus himself did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all about people. [25]

The man had been lame for thirty-eight years, but apparently not from birth. Even if he were crippled as a child, he was an old man by ancient standards.

Early in the *Bacchae* two old men, Cadmus and Tiresias, gain the strength to dance with the worshipping women in the wild.

[Cadmus:] I have come prepared, wearing this outfit of the god.
For it is now necessary—with respect to the child of my daughter,
Dionysus, a god manifest to people—
to magnify him as much as we are able.
Where should we dance; where should we place our feet
and shake our gray heads? You yourself guide me,
Tiresias—an old man guiding an old man—for you are wise.
I would not tucker out night or day
hammering the ground with this thyrsus. Quite happily we have forgotten
that we are old men.

[Tiresias:] So you experience the same things as I,
for I too am young and will take a stab at the dances.

* * * * *

[Cadmus:] Though I am an old man, I will lead you, an old man, as one
leads a child.

* * * * *

Of those men in the city, we alone will dance in the Bacchic rite.

* * * * *

Take my hand.

[Tiresias:] Look, grab it and join our hands.

* * * * *

Will someone say that I am not respectful of my old age

if I prepare to dance by wreathing my head with ivy?
 No, for the god does not separate the young
 and the old when it comes to dancing,
 but wants to have equal honors from all
 and to be magnified by all, excluding no one. (*Bacch.* 180–90, 193, 195,
 197–98, 204–9)

In the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, a character invokes Dionysus to make him young: “The knees of the old [γερόντων] jump up / and shake off sorrows” (346–47). A speaker in Plato’s *Laws* states that men older than forty should be allowed to enjoy the gifts of Dionysus in the drinking of wine, “a strong drug against the harshness of old age [γήρωσ], so that we may again become young” (666B). John’s Jesus does Dionysus one better: he permanently cures an old paralytic.

3:1–24. Another Old Man Seeks Rejuvenation

The Evangelist introduces a new character to the Gospel tradition at the beginning of chapter 3:

¹ There was a person of the Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, a ruler of the Jews. ² This fellow came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you come from God, a teacher, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”

Like Cadmus, this man is a ruler; in fact, his name in Greek means “Conqueror-of-the-people,” surprising for a Pharisee, but apt for Cadmus, who was famous for slaying a dragon and sowing its teeth to produce soldiers (see *Bacch.* 1314–15; cf. 1274). Dionysus’s curse at the end of the play dooms him, despite his advanced years, to lead a barbarian army in sacking Greek cities (1333–37; cf. 1355–56).

Nicodemus, like Cadmus, was old and rich: he provided the supplies to bury Jesus, an extravagant seventy-five pounds of prepared myrrh and aloes (19:39). He came to Jesus under cover of night likely to avoid detection by other Pharisees who might be displeased with his recognition that Jesus’s “signs” demonstrated that he “came from God.” Only Nicodemus among the Pharisees recognized Jesus’s divine

agency. In the *Bacchae* only Cadmus and Tiresias among the men of Thebes regarded Dionysus's miracles as evidence of his divinity.

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly truly I tell you, unless someone is born from above, he is not able to see the kingdom of God."

⁴ Nicodemus says to him, "How can a person be born when he is old? Is he able to enter the womb of his mother a second time and be born?" [5-9]

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, [10b-15] ¹⁶ "God so loved the world that he gave his one-of-a-kind Son, so that everyone who believes in him not perish but have eternal life.³⁵ [17-19a] ^{19b} The light came into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil." [20-21]

²² After these things, Jesus and his disciples went into the area of Judea, and he stayed there with them and was baptizing. ²³ And John too was baptizing at Aion near Salim, where there was lots of water, and people came and were baptized, ²⁴ for John had not yet been thrown into the prison.

Being "born from God" appears also in the Johannine Epistles (e.g., 1 John 5:1), as do references to "eternal life." Even so, one again may suspect the influence of the *Bacchae* and Cadmus's recovery of the strength of his youth:

[Cadmus] I would not tucker out night or day
hammering the ground with this thyrsus. Quite happily we have forgotten
that we are old men [γέροντες ὄντες].

* * * * *

Though I am an old man [γέρων], I will lead you, an old man [γέροντα], as
one leads a child [παιδαγωγῆσω]. (*Bacch.* 187-89, 193)

Compare this with Nicodemus's statement that he is old: γέρων ὢν. The word γέρων appears nowhere else in the New Testament, and both here and in *Bacch.* 189 it is followed by a present participle of the verb "to be."³⁶ Although Cadmus was old, the god made him dance; although Nicodemus was old, he could be born from above.

35. Zeus proclaimed that after Cadmus and his wife died, Ares "will set up your [after]life in the Land of the Blessed" (*Bacch.* 1338-39).

36. This construction appears in the LXX only at 4 Macc 7:10.

3:25–30. The Son of God Must Increase

According to the Dionysian Gospel, Jesus and John were in the wilderness baptizing at the River Jordan and crowds thronged to Jesus. His popularity caused resentment from John's disciples:

²⁵ Then a dispute arose among the disciples of John. [25b] ²⁶ They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he himself is baptizing and everyone is going to him!"

²⁷ John replied and said, [27b–28] ²⁹ "The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom, the one who stands by and hears him, rejoices with joy at the voice of the bridegroom. Thus my joy has been filled. ³⁰ It is necessary that he increase and I decrease." [31–36]

Both in the tragedy and in the Gospel crowds leave the city to worship in the wild, so many that it causes resentment. Pentheus suspects that the women in the hills are having sex, and John's response to his disciples has sexual overtones: the bridegroom's utterances of delight can be heard even outside the bridal chamber.

Be that as it may, the continuation of John's response resembles Cadmus's witness to Dionysus:

Bacch. 181–83

"For it is now necessary [δεῖ]—with respect to the child of my daughter, / Dionysus, a god manifest to people— /

to increase [αὐξῆσθαι μέγαν] him as much as we are able." (Cf. 209)

John 3:30

"It is necessary [δεῖ]

that he increase [αὐξάνειν] and I decrease."

This is the only instance of the verb αὐξάνω in the Johannine corpus and the only time any Gospel uses it with Jesus as the one who is to "increase." Particularly impressive is the use of the infinitive with "it is necessary" in both books (δεῖ . . . αὐξῆσθαι / δεῖ αὐξάνειν). The combination of these two words appears only here in the New Testament; it never appears in the LXX. It appears in John by dint of mimesis.

4:1-42. The Donor of Living Water

Early in the Gospel Jesus establishes his cult in Samaria thanks to an encounter with a woman outside the city to whom he offers living water.

¹ When Jesus knew that the Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, [2] ³ he left Judea and returned again to Galilee.

⁴ He had to travel through Samaria, ⁵ so he comes to a city of the Samaritans called Sychar, contiguous to the area that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; ⁶ the well of Jacob was there. Then Jesus, exhausted from the trip, sat at the well; it was about noon.

⁷ A woman comes from Samaria to draw water. Jesus says to her, "Give me something to drink"—⁸ for his disciples had left for the city to buy food.

⁹ Then the Samaritan woman says to him, "How is it that you, who are a Jew, ask for something to drink from me, a Samaritan woman, for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans?"

Similar traveling-stranger-meets-water-carrying-woman episodes appear frequently in ancient literature, and examples appear both in the Bible and in Homer. Such tales often involve romance; even in the Gospel of John the encounter between the Samaritan and Jesus has sexual undertones. After Jesus offers the woman "living water" he says, "'Go, tell your husband and return.' The woman responds to him, 'I have no husband'" (4:16b-17a); that is, I am single. Jesus's clairvoyant comeback demonstrates that he knows otherwise: "Quite rightly you said, 'I have no husband,' for you've had five husbands, and you now have a sexual partner who is not your husband" (4:17b-18a). The Evangelist thus identifies the woman as promiscuous. Recognizing in Jesus's response that he must be a prophet, she asks him where it was most fitting to worship, in Jerusalem or "in this mountain" (4:20).

This scene modestly resembles Dionysus and the maenads. Euripides' god and the women from Lydia came to a city hostile to the foreign cult, and he drove the Theban women into the mountains to worship him. "While men escaped into the dreamland of Dionysiac intoxication, women sought Dionysus and 'the blessings of madness' outside the secure confines of the Greek polis."³⁷ King Pentheus

unfairly suspected that in the hills they were promiscuous: “Here and there, into private spaces, / they sneak off to serve the beds of men” (*Bacch.* 222–23).

The next verbal exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman concerns access to water.

¹⁰ Jesus replied and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me something to drink,’ you yourself would ask him, and he would have given you living water.”

¹¹ The woman says to him, “Sir, you have no bucket and the well is deep, so where did you get living water?” [12]

¹³ In response Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but anyone who drinks from the water that I will give him will never thirst eternally, but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life.”

¹⁵ The woman says to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty and need not come here to draw water.”

¹⁶ He says to her, “Go, tell your husband and return.”

¹⁷ The woman responded and said to him, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, “Quite rightly you said, ‘I have no husband;’ ¹⁸ for you’ve had five husbands, and you now have a sexual partner who is not your husband. This you have spoken truthfully.”

¹⁹ The woman says to him, “Sir, I observe that you are a prophet.”

Jesus, like Dionysus, is a donor deity. Furthermore, his first admirer among the Samaritans was a woman, the same gender as most of Dionysus’s first Theban worshipers.

Although Dionysus was most famous as a donor of wine, he actually was the lord of all liquids. Euripides attributes to the god the miraculous production of milk, wine, and honey (*Bacch.* 142–43). Later, a messenger tells King Pentheus that “one of the maenads took a thyrsus and struck a rock / from which gushed a wet spurt of water” (*Bacch.* 704–5). Plutarch:

That the Greeks consider Dionysus to be the lord and originator [χύριον καὶ ἀρχηγόν] not only of wine but also of every type of liquid, Pindar suffices for a witness by saying:

37. Albert Henrichs, “Changing Dionysiac Identities,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vol. 3 (ed. Ben F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders; London: SCM, 1982), 143. See also his “Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messaline,” *HSCP* 82 (1978): 121–60.

May cheery Dionysus increase the fruit of trees,
the holy flame of harvest.

For this reason it is forbidden to worshippers of Osiris to destroy a cultivated tree and to stuff up a spring of water [πηγήν ὕδατος].³⁸

According to Pausanias, several springs throughout Greece were dedicated to the god of wine. At Cyparissae "there is a πηγή below the city. . . . They say that the water gushed for Dionysus when he struck the ground with a thyrsus. For this reason they name the πηγή Dionysias" (*Descr.* 4 [Messenia] 36.7). In Arcadia, at a sanctuary to Dionysus, one finds "a πηγή of cold water" with magical properties for curing madness. "On account of which they name the πηγή Alysson," that is "curing madness" (8.37.3). See also *Descr.* 2 (Corinth) 24.6 where Pausanias discusses the surging of the River Erasinus at Eleusis, where they celebrated a feast to Dionysus called Τύρβη, "mayhem." It is reasonable to suggest that such traditions informed Jesus's statement "the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water [πηγή ὕδατος] welling up into eternal life" (4:14).

Because the Samaritan woman recognizes that Jesus is a prophet, she asks him a question about religion and a mountain:³⁹

²⁰ "Our ancestors worshiped in this mountain, and you [Jews] say that the place where one should worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ Jesus says to her, "Woman, believe me: an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem."

[22-24]

²⁵ The woman says to him, "I know that a messiah is coming, who is called the Christ. When that person comes, he will tell us everything."

²⁶ Jesus says to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Only after this exchange does the narrator introduce the Samaritan men into the narrative:

²⁷ At this point his disciples came and were amazed that he was

38. *Isis et Osiris* 465A-B.

39. "The most memorable articulation of maenadic ritual is the exhortation *eis oros* ('to the mountain'), which can be found both in Euripides's *Bacchae* and in two cult inscriptions of much later date" (Henrichs, "Changing Dionysiac Identities," 156).

conversing with a woman; even so, no one said, "What are you seeking?" or "Why are you speaking with her?"

²⁸ The woman abandoned her water jar, went off to the city, and spoke with the people: ²⁹ "Come and see a person who told me everything that I had done! Is this person not the Christ?"

[30-39]

⁴⁰ Then the Samaritans came to him [40b] ⁴¹ and believed even more strongly because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, "No longer do we believe because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard and know that this person truly is the savior of the world."

Note the following similarities:⁴⁰

Bacchae

Dionysus arrives in Thebes and drives the women into the hills to worship him at Mount Cithaeron. (216-23)

Pentheus supposes that the women are conducting orgies in the wild. (222-23)

Dionysus miraculously provides water to the maenads outside the city. (704-5)

Dionysus promises his initiates eternal life.

After the punishment of Pentheus, even the men of Thebes recognize the power of the god. Dionysus is a σωτήρ.⁴¹

John 4:1-42

Jesus arrives in Samaria and meets a woman at a well outside the city near Mount Gerazim, where Samaritans worshiped.

The woman has been sexually promiscuous.

Jesus offers the woman living water, though he has no bucket.

Jesus: "The water I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life." (14)

After Jesus teaches the Samaritans who come out to him, they praise him as "the savior of the world." (42)

Although the Dionysian Evangelist likely knew the Gospel of Luke, his knowledge of the Acts of the Apostles is less certain. Whatever the case, one should note that Dionysus arrived in Thebes from Lydia with his throng of Lydian women; in Acts, when Paul first sets foot on European soil, his first convert was a woman outside the city worshipping with other women. Significantly, her name is Lydia, from Thyatira, a city in Lydia, and a merchant of purple cloth; purple, of course, was the color distinctive to the Greek god of wine.⁴²

40. Wick provides an insightful discussion of "Jesus—Dionysos und die Frauen" in "Jesus gegen Dionysos?," 194-97.

41. E.g., Pausanias *Descr.* 2.23.1.

42. See MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*, 28-29.



Fig. 2.1. Dionysus, with signature ivy wreath and *himation*, with maenads. Attic red-figure pointed amphora by the Kleophrades Painter, from Vulci. 500–490 BCE. Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich.

On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate, near the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; we sat and spoke with the women who had gathered there.¹⁴ A certain woman named Lydia—a merchant in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, a worshiper of God—was listening to us. The Lord opened her heart to accept what was said by Paul.¹⁵ When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed on us. (16:13–15)

The next story in Acts involves a crazed woman who rightly identifies Paul and Silas as “slaves of the Most High God,” another nod perhaps to Euripides’ maenads, “crazed women,” who recognize the stranger’s divinity. Her owners brought charges to the Roman authorities, charges similar to Pentheus’s: “these men are troubling our city . . . and are promoting customs foreign to Romans” (16:20–21). Here is Pentheus:

I hear of a new evil in the city.
 Our women abandon their homes
 in fake bacchic ecstasy, scurry about in the wooded
 hills, and honor in dances some new daemon. (*Bacch.* 216-19)

The story that follows in Acts is Paul's prison break caused by an earthquake, which surely imitates Dionysus's prison break in the *Bacchae*.⁴³

4:46-54. The Healing of the Royal Official's Son

"Dionysus was a god whose myths about a double birth, death and rebirth, and a journey to the underworld made him a figure attractive to those who wished to find a way to escape the anxieties of death."⁴⁴

"The adherents of Bacchic mysteries . . . believed that they would lead a life of eternal bliss and joy in the Other World."⁴⁵ *Bacch.* 498 was widely cited to encourage bravery before death: "the god himself will free [λύσει] me whenever I want."⁴⁶ Friesen:

Of particular importance for their close verbal parallel to the *Bacchae* are two late-fourth-century BCE gold leaves from a woman's sarcophagus in Pelinna. These are inscribed with a ritual formula:

. . . Now you have died and now you have come to be, O Thrice-born one, on this very day. Tell Persephone that the Bacchic one himself has set you free [B-άκ>χιος αὐτός ἔλυσε]. (*Orph. Frag.* 485 = Edmonds D1-2)

. . . This ritual formula . . . bears striking resemblance to the ironic words spoken by Dionysus with prescient reference to his self-deliverance from his imprisonment by Pentheus: "The god himself will set me free whenever I wish it" (λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω, *Bacch.* 498).⁴⁷

43. MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*, 44-49.

44. Susan Guettel Cole, "Voices from beyond the Grave: Dionysus and the Dead," in *Masks of Dionysus* (ed. Thomas H. Carpenter and Christopher A. Taraone; MP; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 279-80. See also Jae Hyung Cho, "Johannine Eucharist in the Light of Greco-Roman Religion," PhD dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, 2010, 51-54.

45. Martin P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age* (Lund: Gleerup, 1957), 130-31.

46. Plutarch *Mor.* 476B-C and Horace *Ep.* 1.16.78-79.

47. *Reading Dionysus*, 11. See also Richard Seaford, *Dionysos (Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World* London: Routledge, 2006), 64-65, 72-75, and 81-86.

From the beginning of the Gospel the reader learns that Jesus is the giver of life.

^{1:3} Everything came into being through him,
and without him nothing came into being.
What came into being ⁴ through him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.

As we have seen, in chapter 4 Jesus offers the Samaritan woman living water, and in chapter 6 he will offer the crowds the bread of life. In chapter 11 he will raise Lazarus from the dead, and in chapter 14 he will declare, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6).

Jesus's healing of a royal official's son at the end of chapter 4 illustrates the point:

⁴³ And after two days he went from there into Galilee. [44-45a] ^{45b} The Galileans received him because they had seen everything that he did in Jerusalem at the festival, for they too went to the festival.

⁴⁶ Then he came again into Cana of Galilee, where he had made water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When this fellow heard that Jesus arrived from Judea into Galilee, he went off to him and asked him to go down and heal his son, for he was about to die.

[48-49]

The narrator describes Jesus's arrival in v. 47 with the verb ἦκει; ἦκω is the first word of the *Bacchae*: "I, the child of Zeus, have come [ἦκω] to the land of Thebes"). Dionysus came to Thebes, of course, to punish the entire house of King Cadmus for the sins of his grandson, Pentheus. Jesus's coming to Cana had the opposite effect in Capernaum:

⁵⁰ Jesus says to him, "Go, your son lives!"

The man believed the word that Jesus told him and went away. ⁵¹ And while he was still on his way, his slaves met him and said that his son lives.

⁵² He then inquired from them the hour when he improved, and they told him: "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."

⁵³ The father then knew that Jesus had told him at that very hour, "Your son lives." And he and his entire household believed. ⁵⁴ This again was the second sign that Jesus performed after coming from Judea into Galilee.

Dionysus's arrival in Thebes resulted in ruin for the house of Cadmus. Agave: "Dreadful the brutality / that lord Dionysus / brought on your house [οἴκου], father" (*Bacch.* 1374–76, cf. 1304–5). Jesus's arrival, on the other hand, brought life to the royal official's son and faith to his house: "he and his entire household [οἰκία] believed" (4:53).

Even in antiquity readers viewed John's tale as an alternative account of the healing of the Centurion's son in Matthew 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10. The tale likely was created by the author of the lost Gospel to contrast the Centurion's faith with his rejection by Jews.⁴⁸

In any case, John's account is distinctive insofar as it focuses so emphatically on Jesus as the giver of life. Only in the Fourth Gospel does one read that the lad "was about to die" (4:47), and only here does one find, "Go, your son lives" (50), a phrase repeated in vv. 51 and 53. At the precise moment when Jesus said "your son lives" his fever broke some twenty miles away—and at 1:00 p.m., in the heat of the day. Labahn notes that unlike most such healing stories Jesus neither was present with the afflicted nor prayed to God for a cure. Rather, he possessed in himself the power to bestow life at another location instantaneously. "The divine power for granting life was appointed to the Johannine Jesus himself."⁴⁹

The reminder that the encounter with the royal official took place in Cana, "where he had made water into wine" (46), and the statement that this was the second sign that Jesus performed there (54) glue the two miracles together; both the making of wine and the giving of life were Dionysian commonplaces. Furthermore, the story demonstrates that Jesus could make good on his offer to the Samaritan woman that he would give her living water (4:10–14).

Excursus 5. John 1–4 and the Synoptics

For more than a century scholars have speculated over the numbering of two miracle stories early in the Gospel (2:11 and 4:54). Some have taken these references to imply that they derived from a primitive

48. See MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 226 and 240–44.

49. Labahn, *Lebensspender*, 202.

collection of Jesus's "signs"; when later redactors added to this hypothetical collection of miracle stories they abandoned numbering them.⁵⁰

It is more likely, however, that the numbering of the first two signs appeared in the Dionysian Gospel as instructions to readers on how to integrate his initial stories with the Synoptics, especially Luke, which alludes to Jesus's performance of miracles before his inaugural sermon, miracles that had not been narrated earlier: "Here in your homeland perform those deeds that we heard took place in Capernaum" (4:23). If John 2:11 and 4:54 indeed were notifications to readers familiar with the Synoptics, it would imply that the transformation of water into wine and the healing of the royal official's son took place prior to Jesus's initial sermon in Luke 4:14–30!

Similarly, Richard Bauckham has argued that in John 3:22–24 the Fourth Evangelist notified his readers how to integrate his innovations into the sequence of events in Mark.⁵¹

After these things, Jesus and his disciples went into the area of Judea, and he stayed there with them and was baptizing.²³ And John too was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, where there was lots of water, and people came and were baptized,²⁴ for John had not yet been thrown into the prison.

Bauckham's treatment merits the following extended quotation:

As an explanation purely of what the text of the Gospel has said, this explanation seems ludicrously redundant. If John was still baptizing, of course he could not yet have been imprisoned. . . . It refers to John's imprisonment as though it were something already known to the readers/hearers and as though a chronological point were at issue.

To understand the reason for the explanation, we are obliged to postulate implied readers/hearers who know more than the Gospel itself

50. For a detailed history of scholarship on this hypothetical source see Hartwig Thyen, "Liegt dem Johannesevangelium eine Semeia-Quelle zugrunde?" in his *Studien*, 443–52. Thyen doubts any such source existed largely because of the meticulous and balanced assessment by Gilbert Van Belle in *The Signs Source in the Fourth Gospel: Historical Survey and Critical Evaluation of the Semeia Hypothesis* (BETL 116; Leuven: Peeters, 1994). For a concise treatment of scholarship that advocates the hypothesis, see Robert Fortna, "Signs/Semeia Source," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:18–22.

51. "John for Readers of Mark," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 147–71.

has told them. . . . It serves, not to make a point about the ministry and fate of John the Baptist for their own sake, but to make a point about the chronological relationship of Jesus' ministry to John's. The evangelist is pointing out that this period of Jesus' ministry in Judea preceded the beginning of the Galilean imprisonment, while the latter, as Mark 1:14 states, succeeded it. . . . [H]is intention is to relate the whole of the first part of his Gospel narrative to the sequence of events in Mark's account of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. . . . John 3:24 enables readers/hearers familiar with Mark's narrative to continue to place John's narrative in correct relationship to it, but indicating that they are still in the period between Mark 1:13 and Mark 1:14. . . .

In the light of 3:24 there can be no doubt that the other evidence of the complementary relationship of John's narrative to Mark's belongs to the deliberate design of the Fourth Gospel, and that the Gospel presupposes that many of its readers/hearers will know Mark and will expect to be able to relate John's narrative to Mark's.⁵²

If Bauckham is correct, not only did Mark's Gospel inform the Johannine author, it also was familiar to his intended readers.

What Bauckham here says about Mark applies also to Luke 3:20, where one similarly finds references to John's imprisonment. Mark 1:14 says nothing about John's prison, though he does so later in 6:17 and 27. Compare the following:

Luke 3:20b

[Herod] locked John in prison [έν φυλακῇ].

John 3:24

John had not yet been thrown into the prison [εις τὴν φυλακὴν].

If the Johannine Evangelist had Luke in mind, all of his Gospel from 2:1–3:22 took place before Jesus's inaugural sermon in Luke 4, immediately after his temptations! More significantly, the author did not intend his Gospel to replace the Synoptics but to augment them.

This solution has an amazing ancient antecedent. In his arguments against the Alogoi (Christian intellectuals who rejected the Fourth Gospel largely because of its disagreements with the Synoptics), Eusebius of Caesarea proposed that the Johannine Evangelist coached his readers concerning how to synchronize it with previous Gospels.

52. "John for Readers of Mark," 153–54 and 159.

The Christian historian appealed to earlier interpreters who had insisted that the Johannine Evangelist

welcomed [the three Gospels that had been composed earlier] and confirmed their truth; their only omission was the narrative of the things that first were done by Christ at the beginning of his preaching. And this report is true. . . . They say that because of these things [i.e., omissions of episodes between Jesus's temptations and John's arrest in the earlier three Gospels] the apostle John was encouraged to transmit in the Gospel according to him the period passed over in silence by the previous evangelists as well as the things done by the savior during this period, those things that took place prior to the imprisonment of the Baptist. And they say that he signified as much when he said, "Jesus did the first of his wonders" [John 2:11], and then when he recalled in the middle of Jesus' deeds that John was still baptizing at Aïnon near Salim, which he makes perfectly clear by saying "For John had not yet been thrown into prison" [3:24]. Therefore, John in the text of the Gospel according to him, transmits the events pertaining to Christ before the Baptist was thrown into prison, but the other three evangelists recall the events after the imprisonment of the Baptist. (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.24.7-8 and 11-12)

The interpreters whom Eusebius cites—and the historian himself—read John 1-3 (and perhaps 4) as I have suggested one should read them in the Dionysian Gospel: these chapters narrate events at the beginning of Jesus's mission. It is in these episodes that one finds the Prologue, the changing of water into wine, Jesus's curing the lame man, his promise to Nicodemus that even an old man can be rejuvenated, his encounter with the Samaritan woman during which he promised living water, and his giving of life to the royal official's son. The reader is to locate all of these episodes—each of which rivals the Greek god of wine—before the Synoptic accounts of Jesus's mission in Galilee.

The Johannine author apparently thought that the Jesus depicted in the Synoptics could not compete with Dionysus as a benefactor to his followers, who, according to Euripides, provided wine, rejuvenation, water, and eternal life. By imitating—rather, by emulating or rivaling the god of the *Bacchae*—the Evangelist supplemented the earlier Gospels with a god who offered "gift after gift." As we shall now see, he offered bread for thousands and himself as the bread of life.

6:1–14, 35. Feeding Five Thousand

The story of the feeding of five thousand appears in all three Synoptics and John; the earliest account appears in Mark 6:30–44, which the Evangelist likely modeled after Homer's account of Nestor's feast for four thousand five hundred men at Pylos at the beginning of Book 2 of the *Odyssey*.⁵³ If so, the Johannine Evangelist must have known the episode from at least one of the earlier Gospels.

Here is John's version:

¹ After these things, Jesus left for the other side of the Sea of Galilee, [that is] of Tiberias. ² And a great crowd followed him because they saw the signs that he performed for the infirm. ³ And Jesus ascended the mountain and sat there with his disciples. ⁴ The Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵ Then lifting his eyes and observing the large crowd coming to him, he says to Philip, "Where should we buy bread so these people can eat?" [6]

⁷ Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii of bread would not be enough for them even if each person took just a little."

⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, says to him, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five loaves of barley bread and two fish, but what are these for so many people?"

¹⁰ Jesus said, "Make the people recline," for lots of grass was at the spot. Then the men reclined, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ Jesus took the bread and after giving thanks, distributed it to those who reclined. In the same way also the fish, as much as they wanted.

¹² And when they were satisfied, he says to his disciples, "Gather the excess scraps so that nothing is lost." ¹³ Then they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets of scraps of the five barley loaves that were left over by the diners.

Although each of the Synoptics tells this tale, only John states that the bread was made from barley, and he does so not only in 6:9 but again in v. 13. This addition may be nothing more than the Evangelist's awareness that Elisha, too, multiplied barley loaves to feed one hundred soldiers (2 Kings 4:42–44, LXX). In favor of this interpretation is the interpretation given to the miracle by the crowds:

53. See MacDonald, *Gospels and Homer*, 147–51 and 159–62.

¹⁴ After people saw the sign that he performed, they were saying, "Truly this person is the prophet coming into the world."

[15-34]

But Jesus himself rejects this interpretation: he is not the promised prophet but the barley bread.

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. One who comes to me will never hunger, and one who believes in me will never thirst."

[36-53a]

Jesus's self-representation as the barley loaf may point to Greek religion, not to Dionysus but to Demeter, whose Eleusinian rites included fasting followed by drinking the *kykeon*, a potion of roasted barley groats, mint, and water, perhaps fermented. The rites also included cakes of wheat and barley, *pelanoi*, offered to the goddess. Euripides attributes grains to Demeter but wine to Dionysus (*Bacch.* 274-81). In fact, the name Demeter "was explained by some as derived from the Cretan word for barley, so that Demeter would be the mother or giver of barley or food generally."⁵⁴

The Eleusinian initiations, including the barley potion, promised eternal life. According to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*,

blessed is he who has seen this [the Eleusinian mysteries] among earthly men; but he who is uninitiated in the sacred rites and who has no portion, never has the same lot once dead in the murky dark" [280-82]. Pindar says "Blessed is he who has seen this and thus goes beneath the earth; he knows the end of life, he knows the beginning given by Zeus" [frag. 137a], and Sophocles: "Thrice blessed are those mortals who have seen these rites and thus enter into Hades: for them alone is there life, for the others all is misery" [frag. 837]. In the prose of Isocrates, this becomes the statement that the *mystai* "have more pleasing hopes for the end of life and for all eternity [Or. 4.28]."⁵⁵

If one grants an interpretation of the barley loaves in John as a nod to

54. Robert E. Bell, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology: Symbols, Attributes, and Associations* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clío, 1982), 104.

55. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (trans. John Raffan; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 289.

Demeter, Jesus not only is lord of liquids, including wine and water, but also of the bread that truly gives eternal life.

6:53b–66. Eating the Flesh of the Son of God

If my reconstruction of the Dionysian Gospel is correct, what immediately followed Jesus's declaration that he was the bread of life was his explanation why "the one who comes to me will never hunger, and one who believes in me will never thirst":

^{6:53b} 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. ⁵⁴ The one who chews my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. [54b] ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ The one chewing my flesh and drinking my blood abides in me, and I in him. [57-58a] ^{58b} The one chewing this bread will live forever." [59]

⁶⁰ Then, when many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This saying is hard! Who can listen to it?" [61-65] ⁶⁶ From this point on, many of his disciples went back and no longer traveled with him.

[67-71]

This grotesque passage departs significantly from the Eucharistic passages in 1 Corinthians and the Synoptic Gospels.⁵⁶ In those texts the elements are metaphorical: the breaking of bread symbolizes the breaking of Jesus's body, and the drinking of the wine symbolizes the "new covenant" sealed in his blood (1 Cor 11:25). The participants perform these actions in remembrance of Jesus, and the rite symbolizes a legal contract binding the drinker of the wine/blood into a new relationship with God.⁵⁷

In John's bread of life discourse, however, the situation is different.

There is no Passover, no inner room, no ritual setting, no meal, no loaf of bread being broken for anyone, no cup to drink and no wine at all, no mention of a substitutionary death, no new covenant, and nothing to remember. The setting is outdoors during the day, before a large and mixed multitude of outsiders and disciples, in the midst of a difficult

56. See Gregory J. Riley, "I Was Thought to Be What I Am Not: Docetic Tradition and the Johannine Jesus" (IACOP 31; Claremont: Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, 1994), 19-22; Kobel, *Dining with John*, 221-49; and especially Cho, "Johannine Eucharist," passim.

57. Riley, "I Was Thought," 20.

controversy in which Jesus seems to offend purposely as many people as possible.⁵⁸

The Johannine Evangelist creates a radically new soteriology, namely, that by eating Jesus's flesh (σάρξ) and drinking his blood (αἷμα) his followers will gain eternal life. These two motifs are distinctive to this Gospel and appear nowhere else in the New Testament. They point to Dionysian cult imagery, specifically the eating of the flesh and blood of the god and the immortality that initiates gain by such activity.⁵⁹ A song of Euripides' maenads refers to this rite as "the sheer joy of eating raw flesh [ὠμοφάγον χάριν]" (*Bacch.* 139).

The cult of Dionysus famously involved two related rites, *sparagmos* and *omophagia*.⁶⁰ The first, "dismembering," was the ripping apart of living beasts (see *Bacch.* 735, 739, and 1133–36); the second, "eating raw flesh," was the placing of the fresh and bleeding meat to the lips, which some ancient interpreters took to be a reenactment of the eating of young Dionysus by the Titans.⁶¹ Clement of Alexandria (*Protrep.* 2.12.2): "Bacchants celebrate with orgies a crazed Dionysus by conducting their holy madness with *omophagia*." The participants celebrated Dionysus as one who had survived death and thus granted immortality as the Lord of Souls.⁶² "This symbolic act brought union with Dionysus, Dionysus within the celebrant, who granted eternal life."⁶³

Such mystical union is not articulated in the *Bacchae*—indeed, the god refuses to disclose the sacred rites to Pentheus or the audience—but in the fragments of another tragedy (*Cretans*) the chorus, speaking as one, refer to *omophagia* and their identification with the god: "I became an initiate of Idaean Zeus / and a herdsman

58. "I Was Thought," 20.

59. Cho, "Johannine Eucharist," 72.

60. For an insightful discussion of these rites, especially in the *Bacchae*, see E. R. Dodds, *Euripides: Bacchae* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), xvi–xx.

61. See Riley, "I Was Thought," 22. This interpretation is later than the origin of the rite, which likely involved the initiate's mystical absorption of the life-force of the slain victim (Dodds, *Bacchae*, xvii–xviii).

62. Riley, "I Was Thought," 22.

63. "I Was Thought," 22. According to Plutarch, the Titans' tasting of Dionysus's blood after dismembering him "is a myth of rebirth [παλιγγενεσίαν]" (*De esu* 1.996C).

of night-roaming Zagreus [an epithet for Dionysus], / performing his feasts of raw flesh [τὰς ὠμοφάγους διαΐτας]; . . . having been purified, I was called Bacchus,” the very name of the god (frag. 472.10–12 and 15).⁶⁴ Kobel:

By consuming the animal’s raw flesh along with wine, both of which represent the deity, followers shared in the vital forces of their god. They substantially ingested the god. . . .

Reading John 6:56–58, which contains strikingly peculiar and graphic vocabulary, in light of these traditions proves to be allusive of these motifs. Whoever chews Jesus’s flesh and drinks his blood and therein demonstrates belief in Jesus, is said to attain eternal life. . . . The allusions of theophagy as known from Dionysian tradition may well function as a means of reasserting to believers that Jesus is present among them, even within them, and provides life for them even after his own death.⁶⁵

Jesus’s final words to his disciples, the discourse on the true vine, again emphasizes his intimacy with his followers. “I am the true [ἡ ἀληθινή] grapevine. . . .⁴ Abide in me, as I abide in you [μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί, κάγω ἐν ὑμῖν]” (15:1a and 4a). The same sentiment appears here in chapter 6: “For my flesh is true [ἀληθής] food, and my blood is true [ἀληθής] drink.⁵⁶ The one chewing [τρώγων] my flesh and drinking my blood abides in me, and I in him [ἐν ἐμοί μένει κάγω ἐν αὐτῷ]” (55–56). The emphasis on the “true grapevine,” the “true food,” and the “true drink” rivals claims made by Dionysian religion, according to which *omophagia* resulted in intimacy with the god.

“[T]he Johannine use of τρώγειν here is not just a variant [word for ingesting food], but a deliberate emphasis on the reality of physical eating.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, the notion of drinking Jesus’s blood would have horrified any observant Jew, and for this reason the discourse gains its rhetorical power. “Then, when many of his disciples heard it, they said, ‘This saying is hard! Who can listen to it?’ . . .⁶⁶ From this point

64. Albert Henrichs: “the ritual affinity between Dionysus and the members of his thiasos is so close that the god bears the same name as his worshippers: they are *bakkhai* or *bakkhoi*, while he is *bakkhos* par excellence” (“He Has a God in Him”: Human and Divine in the Modern Perception of Dionysus,” in *Masks of Dionysus* [ed. Thomas H. Carpenter and Christopher A. Taraone; MP; Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1993], 20).

65. *Dining with John*, 247.

66. Kobel, *Dining with John*, 226.

on, many of his disciples went back and no longer traveled with him" (6:60 and 66). The distinctive qualities of the bread of life discourse make it difficult to interpret it in any light other than its reference to Dionysian religious imagery and practice.

7:31–52. Jesus Escapes Arrest

[7:1–30]

³¹ Many of the crowd believed in him. [31b] ³² The Pharisees heard the crowd grumbling about him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees dispatched subordinates to arrest him, [33–44a] ^{44b} but no one laid his hands on him.

⁴⁵ Then the subordinates came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and [the authorities] said to them, "Why did you not bring him?"

⁴⁶ The subordinates replied, "No person ever spoke like this man!"

⁴⁷ Then the Pharisees responded to them, "You too have not been deceived, have you? ⁴⁸ None of the rulers or any the Pharisees has believed in him, has he? ⁴⁹ But this crowd is cursed for not knowing the law."

⁵⁰ Nicodemus—the one who earlier had come to him, one of their own—said to them, ⁵¹ "Our law does not judge the person unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, right?"

⁵² They responded and said to him, "You too are not from Galilee, are you? Study and observe that a prophet is not raised up from Galilee."

[7:53–8:11]

Throughout the Gospel, miracles are signs of Jesus's identity as the Son of God and provide sufficient reason to believe in him; the final two verses in the earliest version state that such extraordinary events were central to the author's entire literary enterprise: "Many other signs Jesus performed in the presence of his disciples that have not been written in this book. ³¹ These things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:30–31).

Similarly in the *Bacchae*: "the god produced a fountain of wine" (707) and Pentheus's informant insists that because of such wonders the king should accept the god. "Had you been there, the god you now censure / you would approach with prayers on seeing such things" (712–13).

In the *Bacchae* and the Fourth Gospel messengers futilely warn

authorities about the preternatural powers of the protagonist. In the tragedy it is the herder who advises: "This god—whoever he may be— / O master, receive him into this city!" (769–70). Pentheus remains unmoved. In John, when lackeys return to the Pharisees having failed to seize Jesus, they witness to his remarkable teachings. "Then the Pharisees responded to them, 'You too have not been deceived, have you? None of the rulers of the Pharisees has believed in him, have they?'" (7:45). Compare the following:

Bacch. 777

"Dionysus is inferior to none of the gods [οὐδένας θεῶν]."

Pentheus persisted in his murderous hostility.

John 7:46

"No person ever [οὐδέποτε . . . ἄνθρωπος] spoke like this man."

The Pharisees persisted in their murderous hostility.

8:12–19. Interrogating the Son of God

Two passages in the first Johannine Gospel imitate Pentheus's interrogation of Dionysus. In the first, it is the Pharisees who question Jesus; in the second, it is Pilate. The first such episode has no equivalent in the Synoptics; the second does, but the Johannine version deviates so dramatically from earlier Gospels that interpreters have suspected the influence of a lost source. The density of affinities with *Bacch.* 451–518, however, requires mimesis of Euripides.⁶⁷

The story of the woman caught in adultery in some manuscripts of John 7:53–8:11 is a much later addition (see appendix 3), but the transition from 7:52 to 8:12 is notoriously awkward. Verse 12 begins, "Again Jesus spoke to them," but it is by no means obvious to whom "them" refers. The immediately preceding episode was a private discussion among "the chief priests and Pharisees" when Jesus is absent (7:45–52). According to 7:40 Jesus last had been speaking to "the crowd," but according to 8:12–19 he defends himself before the

67. Quintilian: "Euripides will be found of far greater service [than Sophocles] to those who are training themselves for pleading in court" (*Inst.* 10.1.67). Winfried Verburg has proposed the influence of Sophoclean tragedy (*Passion als Tragödie? Die literarische Gattung der antiken Tragödie als Gestaltungsprinzip der Johannespassion* [SBS 182; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1999]).

Pharisees. This and other infelicities in John 8 have led to speculation about Jesus's audience but have not produced a scholarly consensus. A comparison with the *Bacchae*, however, suggests a solution.

In 7:51 Nicodemus challenges other Pharisees: "Surely our law does not judge the person unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing." It is just such a legal inquiry that one finds in chapter 8! One might expect a transitional notice between 7:52 and 8:12 that brought Jesus before his Jewish accusers. In any case, here is the interrogation:

^{8:12} Jesus then spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world."⁶⁸ [12b]

¹³ The Pharisees then said to him, "You are giving testimony about yourself; your witness is not true."

¹⁴ Jesus replied and said to them, [14b] ^{14c} "You do not know where I came from or where I am going. [15-16a] ^{16b} My judgment is true, because I am not alone—I and [with me] the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ And in your own law it is written that the testimony of two people is true." [18]

¹⁹ Then they were saying to him, "Where is your Father?"

Jesus replied, "You know neither me nor the Father; if you had known me, you also would have known my Father."

[20-31]

The verdict comes down against Jesus in 8:59, as we shall see.

The parallels between these exchanges and *Bacch.* 460-506 are stunning.

[Pentheus:] So first tell me, who are your people?

* * * * *

[Dionysus:] I am from here: Lydia is my country.

[Pentheus:] From where did you bring these rites to Greece?

[Dionysus:] Dionysus, the son of Zeus, himself initiated me.

[Pentheus:] So is there some Zeus there who sires new gods? (*Bacch.* 460 and 464-67)

The king vows to imprison him, but the "priest" predicts that

the god himself will free me whenever I want.

* * * * *

68. Jesus now declares to the Pharisees what the reader has known from the prologue (1:4-5).

Even now he is near and sees what I am suffering.

[Pentheus:] Where is he? He is not visible to my eyes.

[Dionysus:] He is here with me; because you are impious, you do not see him.

* * * * *

[Pentheus:] I am more powerful than you—to tie you up.

[Dionysus:] You do not know what life you live, what you are doing, or what you are. (*Bacch.* 498, 500–502, and 505–6)

Pentheus asks “from where” the stranger derived these rites (465); Jesus states that the Pharisees do not know where he came from (8:14b). Dionysus states that he derived his rites from “Dionysus, the son of Zeus” at which the king scoffs, “So is there some Zeus there who sires new gods?” (465–67). Jesus tells the Pharisees that he came from his Father (8:18–19).

What links Jesus’s interrogation with Dionysus’s most closely is that both state that the god is present but is invisible to the wicked accusers. In the *Bacchae* the god, disguised as a mortal priest, claims that Dionysus is present. Pentheus, however, cannot see him because of his hubris. Similarly in John, Jesus states that God joins him in giving testimony in his defense, but the Pharisees cannot see him because they are sinful and of this world. Mimesis alone can account for this strange and shared motif.

Here is a summary of the similarities between the two episodes:

Bacchae

John 8:12–19

Pentheus interrogates the priest/god in disguise.

The Pharisees interrogate Jesus, who claims to be the light of the world.

Pentheus asks “from where [πόθεν]” the stranger brought the new cult. (465)

The Pharisees do not know “from where [πόθεν]” Jesus came. (14b)

Dionysus states that the sacred rites come from “the son of Zeus.” (466–67)

Jesus states that he comes from his Father. (16b)

“You do not know [οὐκ οἴσθη] what life you live, or what you are doing, or what you are.” (506)

“You do not know [οὐκ οἴδατε] where I came from.” (8:14)

[Dionysus:] Even now he is near and sees what I am suffering. / [Pentheus:] Where is [ποῦ ἐστίν] he? He is not visible to my eyes. / [Dionysus:] He is here with me; because you are impious, you do not see him. (500–502)

[Jesus:] “I am not alone—I and [with me] the Father who sent me.”

[Pharisees:] “Where is [ποῦ ἐστίν] your Father?”

[Jesus:] “You know neither me nor the Father [οὔτε ἐμέ οἶδατε οὔτε τὸν πατέρα]; if you had known [ᾗδειτε] me, you also would have known [ᾗδειτε] my Father.” (8:19)

Pentheus remains defiant and decides to kill the god by stoning or decapitation.

The Pharisees remain defiant and try to stone Jesus.

Attridge: “The characters who interact with Jesus in the pages of the Fourth Gospel bear a strong resemblance to Pentheus in the *Bacchae*. They resist the presence of the divine in their midst; they deny truths that the audience knows. . . . [I]rony is not a casual literary device embellishing the pervasive dramatic encounters, it is a conceptual device at the heart of the dramatic narrative.”⁶⁹

8:32–37a, 58b–59a. The True Liberator

³² “Know the truth, and the truth will liberate [ἐλευθερώσει] you.”⁷⁰

³³ They replied to him, “We are seed of Abraham, and we have never been enslaved by anyone. How can you say, ‘You will be liberated?’”

³⁴ Jesus replied to them, “Truly, truly I tell you, that everyone who commits a sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ The slave does not stay in the house forever; the son stays forever. ³⁶ If the Son liberates [ἐλευθερώσῃ] you, you really are liberated [ἐλευθεροί]. ³⁷ I know that you are seed of Abraham.

[37b–58a]

^{58b} Truly, truly I say to you before Abraham existed, I am.”

⁵⁹ They took stones to throw at him, but Jesus was hidden and left. [59b]

The promise of “the son” residing “in the house” of his father “forever” implies the giving of eternal life.

In the *Bacchae* Dionysus frees himself from Pentheus’s imprisonment, thus fulfilling his prediction to the king, “the god himself will free [λύσει] me whenever I want” (498). He reminds

69. Attridge, “Gospel of John,” 36.

70. Γνώσθε is the future tense, which I take as a jussive, a morphological future that functions as an imperative.

Pentheus of this prediction after the escape: "Did I not say, or did you not listen: someone will free [λύσει] me?" (641).

The god's escape from Pentheus became one of the most memorable and imitated episodes of the play, and at least one imitation appears in the New Testament (in Acts 16:16–40; see MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*, 44–48). Dionysus also liberates maenads from prison according to *Bacch.* 432–518. He was "a liberator, as evidenced in his various cult titles," such as Ἐλευθερεύς, Λύσιος, Λυαῖος, and σωτήρ.

At the City Dionysia, at the theater, Athenians announced the manumission of their slaves (Aeschines 3.41). According to Pausanias, Thebes was home not only to Semele's tomb but also to a temple to Dionysus Lysios, constructed to celebrate the god's freeing of captives from Thracians (ἔλυσεν ὁ θεός; *Desc.* 9.16.6). The hypochondriac Artemidorus proposed that dreams of bacchic rites portend liberation for slaves:

Dancing in honor of Dionysus, waving a thyrsus, carrying trees in a procession, or doing anything else that is pleasing to the god is inauspicious for all but slaves. For most men it foretells folly and harm because of the *ecstasis* of the mental processes and the frenzy, but for slaves, it is a symbol of freedom because of the indifferent attitude of the chance participants and because of the god's nickname [Ἐλευθερεύς] and his pleasant behavior. (*Onir.* 2.37)⁷¹

According to Plutarch, "Dionysus was Lysios and Lyaios of all things" (*Mor.* 613). Dionysus was

a liberator, as evidenced in his various cult titles. . . . This entailed his power to free people from pain and anxiety in the mysteries, it included the ultimate release from the vicissitudes of the mortal experience with the offer of immortality. Dionysiac liberation could also be more immediately tangible, as he delivered from imprisonment and overthrew tyranny and could thus be claimed as a champion of democracy.⁷²

71. Translation by Robert J. White, *Artemidorus: The Interpretation of Dreams* (Noyes Classical Studies; Park Ridge: Noyes, 1975), 120. See also Richard Seaford, *Dionysos* (Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World; London:Rutledge, 2006), 29.

72. Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 6.

Of the Gospels, only John uses the root *ἐλευθερ-* of Jesus; he does so under the influence of Dionysian religion.

9:1–41. The Blind Seer

^{9:1} And as he traveled along he saw a person blind from birth, [2–6a]
^{6b} he spat on the ground, made a poultice from the spit, and smeared the poultice on his eyes. ⁷ And he said to him, “Go and wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated “Sent-one”). Then he left, washed, and returned—seeing.⁷³

⁸ Then his neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the person who was sitting and begging?”

⁹ Others were saying, “This is he”; others were saying, “No, but he resembles him.”

He said, “I am he.”

¹⁰ Then they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”

¹¹ He replied, “The person called Jesus made a poultice, anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ After I went and washed myself, I regained my sight.”

¹² And they said to him, “Where is he?”

He says, “I don’t know.”

¹³ They brought the former blind man to the Pharisees.

¹⁴ The day that Jesus had made the poultice and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Again the Pharisees asked him how he recovered his sight.

He told them, “He placed a poultice on my eyes, I washed myself, and I see.”

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees were saying, “That person is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath.”

But others were saying, “How can a sinful man perform such signs?” And there was a schism among them. ¹⁷ Then they say to the blind man, “What do you say about him, how he opened your eyes?”

He said, “He is a prophet.”

[18–24a]

^{24b} Then they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”

73. Jesus uses an unusual method of healing blind men in both Mark 8:23–25 and John 9:6–7. In both stories Jesus heals by means of magical spit, and in both cases the healing does not take place immediately: only when Mark’s Jesus places his hand on the man’s eyes does he see; only when John’s blind man washes at Siloam does he see. Commentators often attribute these similarities to shared traditions of a historical event, but MacDonald, in *Gospels and Homer* (189–90), argues that Mark targeted a Homeric blind man for imitation: Demodocus, the famed Phaeacian bard. The Markan Evangelist thus seems to have created the story of Jesus healing this blind man, and if so, the parallels with John point to a literary connection.

²⁵ Then he replied, "I do not know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: although I was blind, I now see.

[26–30a]

^{30b} He opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not hear sinners, but if someone is devout and does God's will, he hears him. ³² Never before has it been heard that someone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this person were not from God, he would be incapable of doing anything."

[34–41]

John 9:34–41 probably did not appear in the earliest version of the Gospel, but whoever added these verses rightly grasped the ironic reassignment of blindness to the Pharisees:

³⁹ Jesus said [to the blind man], "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see become blind."

⁴⁰ Those of the Pharisees who were with Jesus overheard these things and said to him, "So we too are blind, are we?"

⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind you would have no sin, but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains."

The man born blind is John's Tiresias.⁷⁴ According to one version of the Tiresias legend, because he once offended Hera, she blinded him. To compensate him for his loss of sight, Zeus granted him clairvoyance. Athenian tragedians, including Euripides, found his ironically clear vision of the truth a valuable virtue for the stage. Furthermore, several aspects of 9:1–33 suggest the influence of the *Bacchae*, most obviously the metaphorical blindness of Pentheus and the Pharisees when compared to the acceptance of the god by Tiresias and the cured blind man. Though blind, Tiresias can see and asks Pentheus to open his eyes to what is happening in Thebes: "Can't you see?" (*Bacch.* 319).⁷⁵

Furthermore, in both the *Bacchae* and John one finds miracles as demonstrations of divine identity and controversies concerning the origins of the miracle worker. Dionysus's inciting of mania and miracles demonstrated that he was the son of Zeus; Jesus's healing

74. Brant compares John 9 not with the Tiresias of Euripides but with that of Sophocles in *Oedipus tyrannus* (*Dialogue and Drama*, 47–49 and 123). Here blind Tiresias scolds Oedipus before he blinds himself: "You have sight but cannot see" (*Oed. Tyr.* 413 [LCL]). See also Claude Calame, "Vision, Blindness, and Mark: The Radicalization of the Emotions in Sophocles," in *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theater and Beyond* (ed. M. S. Silk; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17–37.

75. On the importance of sight and blindness in the *Bacchae*, see Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 41–46.

powers demonstrated that he came from God. In both cases the preternatural feats are scorned with insults against those who received the god. Jesus proves through his healing powers that he is not crazed.

Clement of Alexandria contrasted the blindness of Tiresias in this section of the *Bacchae* with the sight that Christ offers the blind. In the following quotation Christ himself invites Euripides' blind man to convert; relevant lines from the *Bacchae* appear in square brackets:

Come [178 and 180] to me, old man, you too. Leaving Thebes and throwing away prophecy [298–301] and Bacchic revelry, be led by the hand [193] to truth. Look, I give you the wood [of the cross] to lean on [193]. Hurry [212], Tiresias, believe! You will see! Christ, through whom the eyes of the blind receive their sight, shines more brightly than the sun. Night will flee from you; fire will fear you; death will leave you. Though you cannot now see [210] Thebes, old man, you will see heaven. . . . These are the bacchic rites of my mysteries. If you want, be initiated yourself, and you will dance [205–7] with angels around the only true god, not begotten and imperishable, singing with us the praises of God's Logos. (*Protr.* 12.119.3–4)

10:39–42. The Escape Artist

As we have seen, various Jewish groups attempt to seize Jesus and kill him, but he miraculously escapes. For example, at 7:44 one reads “no one laid his hands on him.” Again at 8:58b–59: “‘Before Abraham was, I am.’ They took stones to throw at him, but Jesus was hidden [ἐκρύβη] and left [ἐξῆλθεν].” Another attempt appears in chapter 10:

[10:1–38]

³⁹ Then they sought to nab him again, and he left their grasp. ⁴⁰ And again he traveled beyond the Jordan to the place where John first used to baptize and was staying there. ⁴¹ And many came to him and were saying, “Even though John performed no sign, everything he said about this man was true.” ⁴² And many believed in him there.

The passive verb ἐκρύβη, “was hidden,” does not express the agent responsible for Jesus's invisibility, but the reader surely is to see here God's protection of his Son.⁷⁶ Similarly in the *Bacchae*, despite

76. See also Luke 4:29–30, where Jesus mysteriously passes through a crowd ready to toss him over a cliff.

Pentheus's attempt to "wage war on a god," Dionysus quietly "left [ἐκβάζ] / the house" thanks to a deceptive phantom and his invisibility (636–37), the perks of a divine stranger.

Excursus 6. John 11:1–2 and the Synoptics

^{11:1} And there was a certain sick man, Lazarus from the village of Mary and Martha, her sister. ² And it was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

Richard Bauckham: "Most commentators have found the reference to Mary's anointing of Jesus awkward, since John does not narrate this event until 12:1–8."⁷⁷ Although several scholars have proposed that 11:1–2 was a scribal gloss, Bauckham argues that this is another notification to the reader where to locate the raising of Lazarus within the Markan narrative.⁷⁸

The narrative functions performed by verses 1–2 together are two: (1) They introduce three important characters, who enter the Gospel's narrative at this point, by identifying one of them, Mary, as the woman about whom the hearers/readers already know the story of her anointing of Jesus, and the others as her siblings. (2) They distinguish the Bethany where the three reside from the other Bethany in the Fourth Gospel, "Bethany beyond the Jordan" (1:28), where Jesus is at this point in the narrative (10:40–42). The knowledge presupposed in the implied readers/hearers by these two functions is knowledge that readers/hearers of Mark have: they know of a woman who anointed Jesus in the Bethany that is near Jerusalem (Mark 14:3–9; cf. 11:1, 11). . . .

[I]t is only in 11:2 that the Fourth Gospel introduces a character in a way that is unequivocally addressed to readers/hearers who already know Mark. . . . [I]n no case does the Fourth Gospel appear to presuppose prior knowledge of a character who could not have been known from Mark's Gospel. Such peculiarly Johannine characters as Nicodemus, Lazarus, Annas, and the beloved disciple are introduced as fully as any readers/hearers who had never heard of them could wish.⁷⁹

77. "John for Readers of Mark," 161.

78. The Johannine Evangelist surely knew the famous story from the Synoptics and not from oral tradition insofar as Mark created the episode from Homer's account of Eurycleia's recognition of Odysseus while washing his feet in *Od.* 19 (see MacDonald, *Gospels and Homer*, 303–11, and MacDonald, *Mythologizing Jesus*, 89–96).

79. "John for Readers of Mark," 163 and 168.

One could press Bauckham's analysis further. John's story of the anointing has more in common with Luke than it does with Mark! The Lukan Evangelist narrated a conversation between Lazarus and a rich man in Hades that is widely regarded as the Evangelist's creation (16:19–31); John introduces Lazarus in a similar manner.

Luke 16:20a

And a certain poor man, Lazarus by name
[πτωχὸς δὲ τις ὀνόματι Λάζαρος] . . .

John 11:1a

And there was a certain sick man,
Lazarus [ἦν δὲ τις ἀθενών, Λάζαρος] . . .

Clearly these meager correspondences are insufficient to establish a literary connection, but one should note that both Lazaruses die. It is tempting to suggest that John's tale enhances Jesus's powers by having him raise Luke's Lazarus.⁸⁰

Be that as it may, immediately after introducing Lazarus John gives him a village and a family. Compare the following:

Luke 10:38–39

And while they were traveling, he entered a village [χώμην], and a woman named Martha [Μάρθα] showed him hospitality.

³⁹ Her sister, named Mary [ἀδελφή καλουμένη Μαρίαμ], sat at his feet and was listening to his message.

John 11:1b

. . . from the village [χώμης] of Mary and Martha, her sister [Μαρίας καὶ Μάρθα τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτῆς].

Here again one might account for the similarities without an appeal to a literary connection, but not so with what one reads next in John. Luke's account of Jesus's anointing likely is a free redaction of Mark 14:2–9 to which he added, among other things, a reference to the woman wetting his feet and drying them with her hair. The verbal affinities with John are striking:

80. See the observations of Keith Pearce, "The Lukan Origins of the Raising of Lazarus," *ExpTim* 96 (1984–1985): 359–61, and especially Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 511. Luke ends his story with Abraham denying the rich man's request that one of the dead return to the living to notify his five Jewish brothers of the punishments awaiting them. Abraham: "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead" (16:31). Similarly in John, the raising of Lazarus does not persuade the Jewish authorities; *au contraire*, they intensify their plans to kill Jesus (11:47–50 and 53).

Luke 7:37–38

And a woman, who was a sinner in the city, learned that he was reclining in the house of the Pharisee, brought an alabaster jar of ointment [μύρου],

³⁸ stood behind his feet, wept, with her tears began to wet his feet, wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed his feet [τούς πόδας αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς θριξίν τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς ἐξέμασεν καὶ κατεφίλει τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ], and anointed them with the ointment [μύρω].

John 11:2

And it was Mary who anointed the Lord

with ointment [μύρω]

and wiped his feet with her hair

[ἐμάλασα τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ταῖς θριξίν αὐτῆς].

The verb ἐμάλασω appears only five times in the New Testament: twice in Luke 7 in connection with the repenting woman; twice in John in connection with Mary (here and in the narration of the anointing in 12:3), and once in John's account of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples in 13:5. If the Fourth Evangelist intended to notify his readers of a connection with the Synoptics, it likely was Luke, not Mark, that he had in mind.

11:1–5. The Love God

^{11:1} And there was a certain sick man, Lazarus from the village of Mary and Martha, her sister. ² And it was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³ The sisters sent to him, saying, "Look Lord! The one you love is ill." [4]

⁵ Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus.

Love in the Johannine Gospel is not sexual love; even so, Jesus's strong association with love may be considered yet another similarity with Dionysus. Jesus's first miracle was providing abundant and high quality wine at a wedding (2:1–11), instead of exorcizing a demon in a synagogue, as in Mark. Jesus is called a bridegroom in the Synoptics (Mark 2:19–20, Matt 9:15, and Luke 5:34–35; cf. *Logoi* 3:20–21), but John enhances the sexuality of the metaphor: "The one who has the bride [sexually] is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom, the one who stands by and hears him, rejoices with joy at the voice of the

bridegroom" (3:29). In light of the other imitations of the *Bacchae* in the Fourth Gospel, it is reasonable to propose that the Evangelist presented his protagonist as a different kind of lover from Dionysus.

In the *Bacchae* Euripides downplays the role of the god of wine as a god also of sex and fertility; nonetheless they are present. Later in the tragedy a messenger advises Pentheus to accept Dionysus:

They say, so I hear, that this man is the one
who gives to mortals the sorrow-stopping grapevine.
And when wine runs out, there is no Cypris [i.e., Aphrodite or sex]
or any other pleasure for people. (771–74)

Although Euripides' god of wine does not force women to promiscuity, his nectar enables sexual delights.

The religion of Dionysus in the Roman world, however, was more closely identified with wild decadence.⁸¹ In 186 BCE Rome was so overrun with Bacchic sex that the Roman Senate passed laws against it.

In Livy's narrative, the cult of Bacchus represents disorder and madness while the state represented by the Senate stands for order and sanity. The account stresses moral and even sexual debaucheries committed by Bacchantes. If we had only Livy's narrative we would conclude that the Roman Senate feared and reacted against the cult for the same reasons as Euripides' Pentheus.⁸²

11:6–44. The Life-Giver

^{11:6} When he [Jesus] heard that he [Lazarus] was sick, he then stayed in the place where he was for two days.

[7–11a]

^{11b} He later tells them, "Lazarus our friend has fallen asleep; but I am leaving to wake him up."

¹² The disciples then said to him, "Lord if he has fallen asleep, he will be healed."

¹³ But Jesus spoke about his death, while they supposed that he was speaking about the sleep of actual sleep.

81. Friesen: Clement of Alexandria "understood that he [Dionysus] was a god of sensuality and licentiousness, and these were, in his view, the defining characteristics of the Dionysian mysteries" (*Reading Dionysus*, 125). See esp. *Protrep.* 2.34.2–5.

82. Sarolta A. Takács, "Politics and Religion in the Bacchanalian Affair 186 B.C.E.," *HSCP* 100 (2000): 310.

¹⁴ Then Jesus spoke to them boldly: "Lazarus has died. [15a] ^{15b} But let's now go to him." [16-17]

¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia. ¹⁹ Many of the Jews went to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ Then, when Martha heard that Jesus was on his way, she went to meet him, but Mary stayed home. ²¹ Then †Martha†, [21-31] ³² on seeing him, fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³ Jesus, when he saw her weeping and the Jews who had gathered there weeping, was deeply moved in spirit and quite upset. ³⁴ And he said, "Where did you place him?"

They said, "Sir, come and see."

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, "Look how much he loved him!"

³⁷ And some of them said, "This fellow who opens the eyes of the blind, he could have prevented this man from dying, right?"

³⁸ Jesus, again deeply moved in himself, went to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone set against it. ³⁹ Jesus says, "Remove the stone."

Martha, the deceased's sister, told him, "Lord, he already stinks, for it is the fourth day!" [40]

⁴¹ Then they removed the stone. [41b-43a]

^{43b} Then he shouted out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

⁴⁴ The dead man came out, with his feet and hands bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a facecloth.

Jesus tells them, "Free him and let him go."

Jesus raises the dead back to life in each of the Gospels, but John 11 shares most with Mark 5:22-24 and 35-43 (cf. Matt 9:18-26 and Luke 8:40-56).⁸³ In John's account, however, Jesus not only can raise the dead, death itself is impossible in his presence. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (32). Others too said, "This fellow who opens the eyes of the blind, he could have prevented this man from dying, right?" (37). In the tale that follows, the narrator shows that Jesus not only could prevent people from dying but even raise them up after they had died (43b-44). In Jesus's presence death

83. MacDonald, *Gospels and Homer* (71-74), argued that Mark likely did not receive his tale from tradition but created it in imitation of 1 Kings 17 (the revival of the widow's son) and *Il.* 16 (the healing of Glaucus's bleeding wound). Both in the epic and in the Gospel the staunching of the flow appears in a larger narrative concerning the death of a beloved youth: Zeus's son Sarpedon and Jairus's daughter. Zeus refused to save his παῖς from death, but Jesus rescued Jairus's παιδίον from the grave.

is but sleep; like Dionysus he is a liberator from death (see the commentary on John 4:46–54).⁸⁴

11:45–50, 53–57. God-Fighters

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews who had come to Mary and observed what he did believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went off to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

Euripides similarly uses a messenger to notify Pentheus of the maenad miracles in the mountains (*Bacch.* 677–774). Instead of receiving the god into Thebes, the king declares war on the women to protect the reputation of the city.

Already, like fire, the insolence of the bacchantes is near,
a huge failing in the eyes of [other] Greeks.
One must not delay.

* * * * *

We will go to war
with the bacchantes! (*Bacch.* 778–80, 784–85)

In the Dionysian Gospel the chief priest responded to news of the reviving of Lazarus with increased hostility. Such miracle working will enflame Romans against Jews.

⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council and were saying, “What should we do since this person is performing many signs?

⁴⁸ If we permit him to carry on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy us, this place, and the [Jewish] people.”

⁴⁹ One of them, Caiaphas, who was a chief priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing! ⁵⁰ Do you not realize that it would be better for us that one person die for the people than that the entire people be obliterated?” [51–52] ⁵³ From that day on they plotted to kill him.

Pentheus wages war on the bacchantes to avoid censure “in the eyes of

84. Konstantinos Spanoudakis makes a compelling case for intentional parallels between Nonnus's poetic treatment of the raising of Lazarus and several resurrections of dead men in his *Dionysiaca* (*Nonnus of Panopolis: Paraphrasis of the Gospel of John XI* [OECT; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014], 41–52). He suggests that the parallels with the raising of Tylus in 25.451–552 with the raising of Lazarus “are so thick and so blatant that the poet may be thought to invite the hearer or reader to appreciate one passage in the light of the other” (49). Both gods are life-givers.

[other] Greeks”; Caiaphas decides to kill Jesus to avoid destruction by Romans.

⁵⁴ Then Jesus stopped roaming about openly among the Jews, but he left there for the region near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

⁵⁵ The Passover of the Jews was approaching and many went up to Jerusalem from the area before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ Then they were seeking Jesus and were saying to each other as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? Might he not come to the festival?” ⁵⁷ And the chief priests and the Pharisees issued orders that if someone knew where he was, he should report it, so that they might arrest him.

Here authorities again play the role of Pentheus. Compare the following:

Bacch. 352-56

[Pentheus:] “Scurry about the area and track down / the effeminate stranger who introduces / a new disease among the women and ruins their marriage beds. / If you seize him, bring / him here chained, so that by a judgment of stoning / he may die.”

John 11:57

The chief priests and the Pharisees issued orders that if someone knew where he was, he should report it so that they might arrest him. [cf. 8:59: They took stones to throw at him.]

12:12-15, 17-19. The Triumphal Entry

The hostility of “the chief priests and the Pharisees,” however, was not shared by the crowds, who celebrated the raising of Lazarus by acclaiming Jesus as a king:

[12:1-11]

¹² On the following day, a great crowd going to the festival, on hearing that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³ took branches of palms, went out to meet him, and cried out, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel.” ¹⁴ And Jesus, after finding a young donkey, sat on it, as it has been written, ¹⁵ “Do not fear, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a colt of a donkey.” [16]

¹⁷ Then the crowd that was with him gave witness to his calling Lazarus from the grave and raising him from the dead. ¹⁸ For this reason the crowd met him, because they heard that he had performed this sign. ¹⁹ Then the Pharisees said among themselves, “Look, you are accomplishing nothing! Pay attention: the world goes off after him!”

[20-50]

Similarly in the *Bacchae*, Pentheus is furious that throngs of Theban women left their homes to worship the god in the wild (216–20). Better that the priest (i.e., Dionysus in disguise) be eliminated than that the city be troubled.

All three Synoptic Gospels narrate the so-called Triumphal Entry; Mark's version surely was the earliest, modeled after Odysseus's picaresque entry into the city of the Phaeacians in *Od.* 6–7.⁸⁵ His account is saturated in irony: the reader knows that Jesus is by no means a king such as the crowds opine; as an assumed royal pretender he will be crucified by the Romans. Matthew and Luke transform Mark's tale into a legitimate, non-ironic acclamation (Matt 21:1–9 and Luke 19:28–38). The Dionysian Evangelist likewise justifies the acclamation as an appropriate response to the raising of Lazarus. By so doing he establishes polarized reactions to Jesus's miracle working: acceptance by the crowds and rejection by the authorities. This, of course, resembles Euripides' depiction of the acceptance of Dionysus by the maenads, the chorus, Tiresias, Cadmus, and the messenger, on the one hand, and the violent rejection of his miracle working by the king, on the other.

13:1a, 31–35; 14:4, 6, 31b; 15:1–2, 4. The True Grapevine

13:1 Before the Feast of the Passover, because Jesus knew that his hour had come to be translated from this world to the Father,

[1b–31a] ^{31b} [He] said, [31c–32] ³³ “Children, I am still with you for a short time. [33b] You will seek me, [but] where I am going you are unable to go.” [33c–35]

³⁶ Simon Peter says to him, “Lord, where are you going? [36b–37a] Why am I not able to follow you now? I would lay down my life for you.”

³⁸ Jesus replies, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly truly I tell you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times. [14:1–3] ⁴ And where I am going, you know the way. [5–6a] ^{6b} I am the way, the truth, and the life.

[6c–31a] ^{31b} Arise, let's leave here.⁸⁶ ^{15:1} I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the farmer. ² He chops off every branch on me that does not bear

85. MacDonald, *Gospels and Homer*, 178–85.

86. Most interpreters who argue for chs. 15–17 as later additions thus also exclude 15:1–4, thereby linking 14:31b “Arise, let's leave here” directly with 18:1: “After Jesus said this, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron stream, where there was a garden.” I would propose, however, that

fruit, and he prunes every branch that bears fruit so that it bears more fruit. [3]

⁴ Abide in me, as I abide in you, just as the branch is not able to bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the grapevine, so you cannot [bear fruit] unless you remain in me.”

[15:5–17:26]

Grapes and grapevines were distinctive Dionysian markers in ancient art and literature. For example, the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* presents the following as the god’s initial manifestation of his identity: “And at once along the top of the sail spread / a grapevine [ἄμπελος] in both directions” (38–39). Lucian presents a tongue-in-cheek adventure in which he comes upon a river of wine that issued from “many huge grapevines [ἄμπέλους].” This miraculous abundance of wine he called “the signs [τὰ σημεῖα]” of Dionysus’s visit to the spot long before (*True Story* 1.7).

Although Dionysus is the god of the grapevine and viticulture, Jesus is the *true* grapevine [ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή] and thus is superior to Dionysus; because of this, his disciples ought to abide in him. The organic description of this abiding creates a heightened level of vividness to the grapevine metaphor, where the disciples are branches that produce grapes if healthy and connected to the true grapevine. “When Christ claims, ‘I am the true vine,’ . . . [t]he allusion to Dionysus (‘the false vine,’ we would say) was obvious for any reader of that time.”⁸⁷

Jesus’s first miracle was changing water into wine (2:1–10), and it was then that “he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him” (11). Surely it is not by accident that in his final words to these disciples he declares himself to be the true grapevine. Even after his death, the vine will provide spiritual grapes, if his followers remain connected to him.

the metaphor of Jesus as the true vine ended Jesus’s address to the Twelve, primarily because of its potential evocation of Dionysus, which typifies only the first edition.

87. David Hernández de la Fuente, “Parallels between Dionysos and Christ in Late Antiquity: Miraculous Healings in Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*” (eds. Alberto Bernabé et al.; MEP 5; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 468.



Fig. 2.2. Dionysus, with signature ivy wreath and *himation*, and youth pouring wine. Triptolemos Painter; tondo from an Attic red-figure kylix, c. 480 BCE. The Louvre.

18:1-13a. Arresting the Son of God

John's account of Jesus's arrest redacts the Synoptic accounts, but the Evangelist departs from them significantly:

¹ After Jesus said this, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron stream, where there was a garden. He himself entered it, as well as his disciples. ² And Judas, his betrayer, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ Then Judas, who received a cohort of soldiers and assistants from the chief priests and Pharisees, went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

⁴ Even though Jesus knew everything that was about to come at him, he went out and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

⁵ They replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

He tells them, “I am he. [5b–8a] ^{8b} If you are looking for me, let these men go.” [9]

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the slave of the chief priest, and lopped off his right ear. The name of the slave was Malchus.

¹¹ Jesus then said to Peter, “Put that sword into its scabbard! The cup that the Father has given me, should I not drink it?”

¹² Then the cohort, the officer, and the subordinates of the Jews arrested Jesus, bound him, ¹³ and brought him to [Caiaphas]. ⁸⁸
[13b–18]

Of the four Gospels, only in the Fourth does Jesus intentionally “go out” from the garden, “even though he knew everything that was to come at him” (18:4). He, not Judas, initiates the encounter by asking the soldiers whom they are seeking. He volunteers that he is Jesus of Nazareth whom they seek and asks them to free his disciples (8b). When Peter strikes off the ear of the chief priest’s slave, Jesus rebukes him with a declaration of his willingness to die, using a trope befitting the god of wine: “The cup that the Father has given me, should I not drink it?” (18:11). As one commentator has noted: “It is important at this point to notice that only John of all the evangelists, mentions that Jesus was bound [ἔδησαν]. . . . It stresses the voluntary passivity of a most powerful divinity.”⁸⁹

Here is a comparison of the two accounts:

Bacch. 434–46

Pentheus, we have brought the prey / you sent us to hunt down. . . . /

This is the animal who was gentle to us, who did not take / flight by foot but willingly gave us his hands, . . . /

John 18:1–12

[The “chief priests and Pharisees” sent Judas and a cohort of soldiers to arrest Jesus.]

[Jesus went out to meet those sent to arrest him and willingly identified himself.]

88. See 18:28.

89. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 139–40.

Laughing, he even told me to tie him up and to lead him away [δὲ τὴν κάπ'άγειν] / and was waiting for me to do so, making my job easy. / And out of shame I said, "O stranger, it is not gladly / that I lead you away [ἄγω],

but I do so with letters from Pentheus, who sent me." /

But the Bacchant women you shut up—those you arrested / and bound [κἀδθησας] in chains at the public prison—/ they have fled, freed [λελυμέναι]!

Then the cohort, the officer, and the subordinates of the Jews arrested Jesus, bound him [ἔδησαν], and brought [ἤγαγον] him to [the chief priest].

The "chief priests and Pharisees" had dispatched the cohort.

[Jesus:] "If you are looking for me, let these men go."

[Jesus's eleven disciples thus escaped arrest.]

Surely it is not by accident that the most impressive parallels between these two arrest scenes are missing in the Synoptics: Jesus's initiative, his bonds, and his protection of his devotees.

18:19–27. Defying the God-Fighters

There should be no doubt that the Johannine Evangelist knew the narratives of Jesus's death from the Synoptics, but even a cursory comparison of the Passion Narratives reveals that John's Gospel lacks many of the elements that created pathos, irony, and complexity in the Synoptics. Here one finds no accusation that Jesus vowed to destroy the temple, no declaration to the Sanhedrin that he was the Son of God, no prediction that he would return in judgment as the Son of Man, no beating after the Jewish trial, no statement of Peter's remorse for having denied Jesus, no appearance before Herod or address to "daughters of Jerusalem," no Simon of Cyrene, no offer of mixed wine, no mockery at the cross, no prayer of forgiveness or speaking thieves, no portents of darkness or the ripping of the temple veil, no cry for Elijah, and no commentary on Jesus's death by the executing centurion. On the other hand, the Fourth Evangelist added content, in large measure to portray the religious authorities as god-fighters. They would have killed Jesus for making "himself a son of a god" (19:7) had they been permitted to do so.

^{18:19} Then the chief priest interrogated Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰ Jesus replied to him, "I have spoken boldly in the world;

often taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews gather. I spoke nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you interrogate me? Interrogate those who heard what I told them. Look, they know what I said."

²² After he said these things, one of the subordinates standing by gave him a punch and said, "Will you reply like this to the chief priest?"

²³ Jesus replied to him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify against the wrong. But if I spoke rightly, why do you strike me?" [24]

Here again the Jewish authorities play the role of Euripides' Pentheus, the god-fighter, but more promising models may again come from the Acts of the Apostles. Compare the following:

Acts 24:19–21⁹⁰

[Paul:] "Some of the Jews from Asia needed to be here before you, if they have anything against me. ²⁰ Or let these people [who are here] state what crime they discovered when I stood before the Sanhedrin, ²¹ or about this one statement that I shouted out when I stood among them: 'I am on trial today before you because of the resurrection of the dead.'"

John 18:20–21

Jesus replied to him, "I have spoken boldly in the world; often taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews gather. I spoke nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you interrogate me? Interrogate those who heard what I told them. Look, they know what I said."

In Acts 23 Paul appears before Ananias and is punched, as Jesus is in the Dionysian Gospel.

Acts 23:2–4

The chief priest Ananias ordered those standing by to strike his mouth.

³ Peter then said to him, "God is about to strike you, you whitewashed wall, and you sit there judging me according to the law and illegally command me to be struck?"

⁴ The bystanders said, "Will you revile the chief priest?"

John 18:22–23

After he said these things, one of the subordinates standing by gave him a punch and said, "Will you reply like this to the chief priest?"

²³ Jesus replied to him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify against the wrong. But if I spoke rightly, why do you strike me?"

[Verse 22b:] "Will you reply like this to the chief priest?"

90. Socrates makes a similar argument in Plato's *Apology*, which likely was Luke's model for Acts 24:19–21 (see MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*, 99–100). Socrates:

If I corrupted some of the young men and did so also in the past, and if some of them who have grown old know that I ever gave them bad advice when they were young, surely they should now step up to accuse and punish me. Or if they do not want to do so themselves, some of their relatives . . . should now recall what happened. Many of them are here." (*Apol.* 33C–D)

While Jesus was interrogated, Peter was interrogated, too, but denied knowing Jesus:

^{18:25} And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. Then they said to him, "You too are not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it and said, "I am not."

²⁶ One of the slaves of the chief priest, a relative of the person whose ear Peter chopped off, says, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?"

²⁷ Again Peter denied it. And immediately a cock crowed.

In all of the Synoptics, after the crowing of the cock Peter weeps, but not in John; the omission of his remorse surely was not a mere oversight. The Dionysian Gospel repeatedly places Peter in a subordinate or even negative role, which seems to be the case here.

18:28–19:16. Interrogating the Son of God, Again

The Fourth Evangelist took special interest in Jesus's trial before Pilate and skillfully set the scene so that the governor could question Jesus in private. Here again John deviates from earlier Gospels. "And they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the praetorium lest they be defiled, so that they might eat the Passover meal" (18:28).

The interrogation of Jesus before Pilate is a dramatic dialogue evocative of the interrogation of Dionysus before Pentheus. Here is the account in the Dionysian Gospel:

^{18:29} Then Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this person?"

³⁰ They replied and said to him, "If he were not a doer of a crime, we would not have brought him up before you." [31–32]

³³ Pilate again entered the praetorium, called for Jesus, and said to him, "Are you king of the Jews?"

³⁴ Jesus replied, "Do you say this on your own, or did others say this about me?"

³⁵ Pilate replied, "I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own people and the chief priests delivered you to me. What have you done?"

³⁶ Jesus replied, "My kingdom [36b] is not from here."

³⁷ Pilate then said to him, "So then are you a king?"

Jesus replied, "You say that I am a king. For this reason I was born and

came into the world: to witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.”

³⁸ Pilate says to him, “What is truth?”

Surely the following parallels with the *Bacchae* are mimetic:

Bacch. 460–76

[Pentheus:] So first tell me, who are your people [γένους]? (460)

[Dionysus:] I am from here [ἐν τεῦθ ἐν εἰμι]: Lydia is my country. [His true home is Mount Olympus.] (464)

[Dionysus:] They [the Dionysiac mysteries] are ineffable for the understanding of uninitiated mortals. . . . /

It is not permitted for you to hear [ἀκοῦσαι] them, but they are worth knowing. . . . /

The rites of the god are inimical to one who exercises impiety. (472, 474, 476)

John 18:35–38

[Pilate:] Your own people [ἔθνος] and the chief priests delivered you to me. (18:35b)

[Jesus:] My kingdom . . . is not from here [οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τεῦθ ἐν]. [His true home is with the Father.] (18:36)

[Jesus:] For this reason I was born and came into the world: to witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth hears [ἀκούει] my voice.

³⁸ [Pilate] What is truth? (18:37b–38)

Pilate’s famous question, “What is truth?,” indicates that he is incapable of understanding what Jesus said. Similarly, Pentheus was unworthy to hear about Dionysian mysteries because of his wickedness.

^{18:38b} Having said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them, “I find no crime in him. ³⁹ You have a custom that I release one person to you at Passover, so decide: should I release to you the king of the Jews?”

⁴⁰ Then again they shouted, saying, “Not this man but Barabbas.” Now Barabbas was a robber.

^{19:1} Pilate then took Jesus and whipped him. ² And the soldiers wove a crown from thorns, placed it on his head, dressed him in a purple *himation*, ³ came up to him, and said, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they gave him beatings.

This scene redacts Mark 15:16–18 (or Matt 27:15–29), but earlier Gospels have no equivalent to the following:

^{19:4} And Pilate again went outside and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you so that you know that I find no crime in him." ⁵ Then Jesus went outside, wearing the thorny crown and the purple *himation*, and Pilate says, "Behold, the man!"

Already in Mark, soldiers mock Jesus as a king with a crown of thorns and purple garments; the Fourth Evangelist clearly did not invent these details, but he most certainly made the most of them. In the first place, in Mark only the soldiers saw Jesus in purple; in John Pilate parades him before the crowds and tells them to look at him: "Behold!"

Second and more significantly, the Evangelist changed τὰ ἱμάτια, "clothing," in Mark, to the singular ἱμάτιον, a draping mantle. In artistic representations, Dionysus typically wears a crown of ivy and, when he is not nude, most often a long chiton and a *himation*. The color purple naturally was associated with the god of wine. The *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* begins with his physical description of the god disguised as a youth.

I will speak of Dionysus, son of radiant Semele,
 how he appeared by the shore of the barren sea
 at a jutting headland, looking like a young man
 who was sprouting his first beard,
 and his handsome hair shook about him,
 black, and around his powerful shoulders he wore
 a purple cloak. (1–6)

The word translated here as "cloak," φᾶρος, is archaic; Apollonius Sophista translated it into koinē as ἱμάτιον.⁹¹ When pirates saw Dionysus in such splendor, they took him to be "a son of heaven-bred kings" (*Hom. Hymn Dion.* 11–12). Pilate's presentation of Jesus in John can thus be interpreted in two different ways: he is both a king about to die, like Pentheus, and he also wears a wreath and a purple *himation*, like Dionysus.

91. Apollonius's *Lexicon Homericum* is an invaluable dictionary of words sufficiently unfamiliar to Greek readers of the first century CE to require a Koinē equivalent. As such it is indispensable for identifying imitations of archaic poetry in the Greek prose of the Roman Empire. See Immanuel Bekker, ed., *Apollonii sophistae Lexicon Homericum* (Berlin: Reimer, 1833).



Fig. 2.3. Dionysus, with signature ivy wreath and a long chiton and *himation*, and Silenus. 490 BCE. Taken from Arthur Elam Haigh, *the Tragic Drama of the Greeks* (1896).

^{19:6} When the chief priests and the subordinates saw him, they shouted out, saying, "Crucify! Crucify!"

Pilate says to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him."

⁷ The Jews reacted to him, "We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself a son of a god."

In the *Bacchae*, too, one finds a rejection of divine paternity:

Bacch. 466–67

[Dionysus] Dionysus, the son of Zeus, himself initiated me. /

[Pentheus] So is there some Zeus there who sires new gods [θεούς]?

John 19:7

[Jews] He made himself a son of a god [θεοῦ].

Pilate now has learned, for the first time, that Jesus claims to be the son of a god, which prompts him to ask him another series of questions.

^{19:8} Then, when Pilate heard this statement, he was more afraid. ⁹ And he entered the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, “From where do you come?”

But Jesus gave him no answer.

¹⁰ Pilate then says to him, “Will you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?”

¹¹ Jesus answered him, “You have no authority over me whatsoever, except what was given to you from above.”

[11b–12]

¹³ Then, after hearing these words, Pilate brought Jesus outside and sat on the tribunal at the place called “Stone Pavement,” but in Hebrew, “Gabbatha.” ¹⁴ It was the Day of Preparation for the Passover, about noon. And he says to the Jews, “Behold, your king.”

Whereas in v. 5 Pilate presented Jesus to the crowds with the statement, “Behold, the man,” here he does so with “Behold, your king”; Jesus is still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple *himation* evocative of Dionysus.⁹²

^{19:15} Then they cried out, “Kill him! Kill him! Crucify him!”

Pilate says to them, “Should I crucify your king?”

The chief priests replied, “We have no king but Caesar.”

¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified; so they took Jesus away.

92. This declaration of Jesus's royalty would be even more striking if, as some scholars have proposed, one takes the verb ἐκάθισεν as transitive, in which case Pilate does not sit at the tribunal but seats Jesus on it! “In this reading, Pilate led Jesus out and sat Jesus on the bema. This is Jesus' enthronement as king” (Parzenios, *Rhetoric and Drama*, 38). Wayne Meeks discusses the matter in *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 73–76.

Again the parallels with the *Bacchae* are striking. Compare the following:

Bacch. 465, 479, 498, 505–6

[Pentheus:] From where [πόθεν] did you bring these rites to Greece? (465)

[Pentheus:] You say nothing so very well! (479)

[Pentheus:] I am more powerful than you—to tie you up. /

[Dionysus:] You do not know [οὐκ οἶσθ'] what life you live, what you are doing, or what you are. (505–6)

[Dionysus:] The god himself will free me [λύσει με] whenever I want. (498)

[Pentheus shuts Dionysus in his granary, but he soon will escape his prison.]

John 19:9–11

⁹ [Pilate:] From where [πόθεν] do you come?

Jesus gave him no answer. . . .

¹⁰ [Pilate:] Will you not speak to me? Do you not know [οὐκ οἶδας] that I have authority to release [ἀπολύσαι σε] you and authority to crucify you?

¹¹ [Jesus:] You have no authority over me whatsoever, except what was given to you from above.

[God will free Jesus from death.]

[Pilate commands Jesus to be crucified, but he soon will escape his tomb.]

Just as Dionysus refused to disclose the nature of his rights to uninitiated Pentheus (471–74), Jesus refuses to answer Pilate's question concerning whence he comes. Pentheus and Pilate both boast of their political authority; Dionysus and Jesus both scoff at such hubris; their escapes will demonstrate their superior power. In the *Bacchae* Pentheus considers himself the righteous guardian of law and order, but in opposing the god he actually is the law-breaker (*ἀνομος* in 993 and 997; *παράνομος* in 1014). Kasper Bro Larsen: "Dionysus is enforcing a new ideological value-system, according to which the holders of thematic roles interchange. The king becomes a criminal, and the 'blasphemer' a god."⁹³ According to Larsen, Pilate is a reluctant enforcer of Jewish law. Thus, by crucifying Jesus, Pilate and especially the religious authorities become the criminals because the blasphemer is a god.⁹⁴

George L. Parsenius notes that frequently in the Fourth Gospel the

93. *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John* (BIS 93; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 176–77.

94. *Recognizing the Stranger*, 177–80.

narrator recedes, and the story line advances through dialogue, as here in Jesus's trial. "Ancient readers and critics regularly recognized that the retreat of the narrator within a text would give that text a more dramatic character. The fact that the narrator's voice of the Evangelist is often silenced in the Gospel of John causes the biography of Jesus to seem much more like a drama."⁹⁵

Stibbe summarizes the similarities between the two interrogations:

In both, the one on trial is an unacknowledged deity. . . . Secondly, in both cases, the interrogator is a ruling figure in the city where the deity should be worshiped. . . . Thirdly, in both cases the one on trial is really the judge. . . . Fourthly, in both interrogation scenes the deity proves extremely elusive, so that the interrogator finds him hard to understand. . . . In both scenes, the deity uses language evasively.⁹⁶

But Stibbe also observes a significant difference: "In the *Bacchae*, we are not allowed to entertain the notion that Dionysus is in any danger for one moment," but in the Gospel the interrogation issues in Jesus's death. "In other words, at the moment when Jesus's predicament seems most Dionysian, his behaviour becomes truly anti-Dionysian. . . . The Dionysiac paradigm is seemingly subverted."⁹⁷

Clement of Alexandria used a few lines from Pentheus's interrogation to allow Christ to cite a line from Euripides' Dionysus!⁹⁸

The savior himself plainly initiates us in accord with the tragedy:
On seeing those who see, he also gives the rites. (= *Bacch.* 470)

Clement added a single letter to the citation that radically altered its meaning. In response to a question about how the god transmitted his rites to him, Euripides' Dionysus uses the cryptic expression ὀρῶν

95. George L. Parsenius, "The Silent Spaces between Narrative and Drama: *Mimesis* and *Diegesis* in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic* (ed. Kasper Bro Larsen; Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 96.

96. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 143. See also Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 132–34. "Pentheus appears to prevail because he succeeds in arresting his opponent, but in the broader context of the play, Dionysus has baited Pentheus into performing the act of injury for which Dionysus can seek revenge. Jesus participates in a similar sort of baiting designed to goad the Jews into requesting the act, crucifixion, by which Jesus can demonstrate his glory" (134).

97. *John as Storyteller*, 141–42.

98. Clement, *Strom.* 4.25.162.3–4. See the discussion in Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 118–33.

ὁρῶντα, “On seeing [the] one who sees, he also gives him the rites” i.e., the god saw himself because he had disguised himself as a mortal. Clement, however, cleverly changed ὁρῶντα to the plural ὁρῶντας, transforming the line to mean that God “on seeing those who see,” that is, who have spiritual insight, “also gives the rites” to them.

The Alexandrian then put a line from Pentheus on the lips of an imaginary unbeliever, with Christ responding with another two lines from Dionysus.

And if you should ask:

And these rites, what form do they have for you? (= *Bacch.* 471)

You again will hear:

It is not permitted for you to hear them, but they are worth knowing.

(= *Bacch.* 474)

The rites of the god are inimical to one who exercises impiety.

(= *Bacch.* 475)

The word here translated “exercises” is ἀσχοῦντα, from ἀσκέω, from which comes the English word asceticism. That is, the unbeliever practices impiety, unlike the true Gnostic, who practices sexual restraint. Friesen:

By employing the words of Dionysus and explicitly identifying his source as a well-known tragedy (κατὰ τὴν τραγωδίαν), Clement invites the reader to reexamine the power of pleasure associated not only with the god but also the god’s artistic medium, tragic poetry itself. The effect of the citation, therefore, is the subversion of the claims of both Dionysiac rites and tragic poetry upon human pleasure, which Clement achieves paradoxically through the very words of the tragic poet and of the god in support of his own program of Christian morality.⁹⁹

19:17–30. Violent Death and Attending Women

In Mark and Matthew Jesus expresses a desire to avoid a violent death, is silent at his trials, and is powerless on the cross. His disciples, including Peter, fail to suffer with him, the criminals crucified with him revile him, and he perceives that his God has abandoned him (Mark

99. Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 133.

15:34 and Matt 23:46). Luke made the scene less pathetic by replacing the cry of dereliction with the more confident "Into your hands I commend my spirit" (23:46).

Ancient opponents of Christianity contrasted Jesus's dying impotence with the power of Dionysus in the *Bacchae*! A second-century philosopher named Celsus noted that in the play, Dionysus claims "the god himself will free me whenever I want" (*Bacch.* 498), and contrasted it with Jesus, who could not liberate himself. According to Origen, Celsus also wrote this: "But the one who condemned him did not even suffer any such fate as that of Pentheus by going mad or being torn in pieces" (*C. Cels.* 2.34). He continued his critique of John's Jesus, asking "Why, if not before, does he not at any rate now show forth something divine, and deliver himself from this shame, and take his revenge on those who insult both him and his Father?" (2.35).¹⁰⁰ Celsus returned to this criticism later: "You pour abuse on the images of these gods and ridicule them, although if you did that to Dionysus himself or to Heracles in person, perhaps you would not escape lightly. But the men who tortured and punished your God in person suffered nothing for doing it, not even afterwards as long as they lived" (8.41). Whereas Pentheus avenged himself, Christ passively suffered, which for Celsus was risible for a god.¹⁰¹

As Celsus recognized, Dionysus and Jesus are most dissimilar with respect to the ending of the *Bacchae* and the endings of the Gospels. Stibbe proposes that the Johannine Evangelist strategically shifted Jesus's characterization from that of a new Dionysus to that of a dying Pentheus!

In both [books], a king [Pentheus or Jesus] is led out of the city. In both, a king is led out to a hill/mountain. . . . In both stories a king is lifted up. In both stories, women play an important role at the site of the *pathos*. However, the differences are just as striking as the similarities. . . . [W]hilst

100. Celsus likely was indebted to the Gospel of John; see Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 131. All translations of the *Contra Celsum* are from Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

101. See the excellent treatment of Celsus and Origen in Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 149–73. This ancient debate "highlights the *Bacchae*'s continuing popularity and the potentiality of its meanings in the second and third centuries" (149).

the women in John 19.25f. are merely witnesses of Jesus' death, in the *Bacchae* the women are the instruments of death. Even worse still is the fact that Pentheus' mother actually dismembers her son, whilst Jesus' mother merely functions as a by-stander. . . . What this reveals is the striking fact that, even though John's story is a manifestation of tragedy, it is also the subversion of it.¹⁰²

As we have seen, Celsus ridiculed Jesus for impotence at the cross. "Origen's rebuttal radically reframes the problem posed by Celsus. Within his Christian framework, the willing deaths, both of Jesus and of the martyrs, are ultimately acts of triumph not defeat, and consequently, Dionysus in the *Bacchae* cannot function as a paradigm by which to measure Jesus's divine status."¹⁰³ The Dionysian Evangelist would have agreed.¹⁰⁴

Here is John's account of Jesus's death:

^{19:17} And carrying his own cross, he went out to a place called "Place of a Skull," in Hebrew called "Golgotha,"¹⁸ where they crucified him, and two others with him, one on either side, and Jesus in the middle.

¹⁹ Pilate wrote a notice and attached it to the cross. It was inscribed: "Jesus. The Nazarene. The King of the Jews."²⁰ Many of the Jews read this notice, because the place where they crucified Jesus was near the city. And it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

²¹ Then the chief priests of the Jews began saying to Pilate, "Do not write 'The king of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am king of the Jews.'"

²² Pilate replied, "I have written what I have written."

[23–24]

²⁵ And women stood near Jesus's cross: his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother, [26b] he said to her, "Woman, behold your son." [27]

²⁸ After this, knowing that everything already had been completed, [28b] ^{28c} Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

²⁹ A bowl was lying there full of sour wine. After they attached to a stalk of hyssop a sponge full of sour wine, they brought it to his mouth. ³⁰ Then, when Jesus had taken the sour wine, he said, "It has been completed." He dropped his head and handed over his spirit.

[31–37]

102. *John as Storyteller*, 146–47.

103. Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 172.

104. The shift in Jesus's characterization from a Dionysus to a Pentheus reverses the characterization of Paul in Acts. In chs. 8–9 he is a theomachus who persecuted followers of Jesus, but later he resembles Dionysus in Acts 13 and especially in 16, where he escapes from prison thanks to an earthquake. See MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*, 44–48 and 52–58.

Jesus's mother has appeared in the Gospel elsewhere only once: at Jesus's first miracle, the changing of water into wine, where she notified him of the shortage of drinks. He harshly replied, "Woman [γύναι], what to me and to you? My hour has not yet come" (2:4). Surely is not by accident that at the crucifixion, when Jesus's "hour" has finally come, he says, "Woman [γύναι], behold your son" (19:26). At the beginning of Jesus's career he lavishly supplied good wine for a wedding, but at the end of his career his penultimate word was διψῶ, "I am thirsty" (19:28). He then was offered cheap wine, drank it, and died (19:29–30). The hero who had offered the Samaritan woman living water now himself thirsts—and dies.

Instead of a cry of dereliction, as in Mark and Matthew, or a return of Jesus's spirit to his Father, as in Luke (which the Fourth Evangelist surely knew; compare Luke 23:46 with John 19:30), his last utterance in John is an elegant and pregnant single word: τετέλεσθαι, "it has been completed" (30). This is no cry of despair or anguish but one of gratified accomplishment. According to 19:28, Jesus knew "that everything had been completed [τετέλεσθαι]." At least to some extent, this substitution for the cry of dereliction makes Jesus's death less pathetic and more victorious.

Jesus's address to his mother eerily resembles Pentheus's appearance to Agave:

Bacch. 1115–21

[Agave, Pentheus's mother, has several sisters among the maenads.]

He threw his headdress from his hair, / so that pitiable Agave, on recognizing him, might not kill

him. / And he says [λέγει], touching her cheek, /

"Mother [μῆτερ], it is I, your son [παῖς σέθεν] / Pentheus, whom you bore in the house of Echion. / O mother [μῆτερ], have pity on me! Do not kill me for my /sins—your own child [παῖδαςόν]!"

John 19:25–26

And women stood near Jesus's cross: his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

²⁶When Jesus saw his mother

[μητέρα] . . . , he says [λέγει] to her,

"Woman [γύναι], behold your son [ὁ υἱός σου]."

One of my students, Chris Crawford, proposed that the Dionysian Evangelist skillfully crafted Jesus's extended trial before Pilate to prepare the reader for the radical shift in the characterization of Jesus from the interrogated god to the murdered king. Far more than in the Synoptics, the Fourth Gospel emphasizes Jesus's royalty. According to my reconstruction of the Passion Narrative, the words for Jesus's kingship or kingdom appear twelve times, and Jesus himself accepts the title. Here are the relevant verses:

^{18:33} Pilate . . . said to him, "Are you king of the Jews?" . . .

³⁶ Jesus replied, "My kingdom . . . is not from here."

³⁷ Pilate then said to him, "So then are you a king?"

Jesus replied, "You say that I am a king. For this reason I was born and came into the world: to witness to the truth. . . ."

[Pilate:] ^{39b} "Should I release to you the king of the Jews?" . . .

^{19:2} And the soldiers wove a crown from thorns, placed it on his head, dressed him in a purple *himation*, ³ came up to him, and said, "Hail, king of the Jews!" . . .

⁵ Then Jesus went outside, wearing the thorny crown and the purple *himation*.

This presentation of Jesus in royal attire also exceeds what one finds in the Synoptics (cf. Mark 15:17–20). Crawford notes that Pentheus changed his costume and headdress to that of a woman to escape detection by the maenads. In both cases the change of attire results in mockery and tragedy.

^{19:14b} He says to the Jews, "Behold your king." . . .

¹⁵ "Should I crucify your king?"

The chief priests replied, "We have no king but Caesar." . . .

¹⁹ Pilate wrote a notice and attached it to the cross. It was inscribed: "Jesus. The Nazarene. The King of the Jews." . . .

²¹ Then the chief priests of the Jews began saying to Pilate, "Do not write 'The king of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am king of the Jews.'"

According to Crawford, this focus on Jesus as a king alerts the reader to view his death as an emulation of the death of the king of Thebes.¹⁰⁵

105. MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil* (51–52 and 59–66), proposed that the Lukan Evangelist emulated the death of Pentheus in his tale of Zacchaeus. Like Pentheus, Zacchaeus was a rich man of questionable morality who, out of curiosity, climbed a tree for a better view. Not only did he see

19:38–40. Burial in a Garden

The burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea conservatively redacts similar tales in the Synoptics, but adds Nicodemus's provision of a lavish quantity of spices and the location of the tomb in a garden.

^{19:38} After this, Joseph of Arimathea, because he was a secret disciple of Jesus, [38b] asked Pilate that he might take the body of Jesus.¹⁰⁶ Pilate gave permission; then he went and took his body.³⁹ And Nicodemus came too, the one who first came to him at night, bringing about a hundred Roman pounds of a mixture of myrrh and aloes.⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, wrapped it in a linen cloth with the aromatic mixture, as is the burial custom of the Jews.⁴¹ In the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden was a new tomb in which no one ever had been laid.⁴² It was there, because of the Day of Preparation of the Jews and the proximity to the tomb, that they placed Jesus.

Ruben Zimmermann's discussion of gardens in the final chapters of the Gospel rightly calls attention to their significance.

After his farewell speeches, Jesus goes to a garden across the Kidron (John 18:1). . . . Not until after the crucifixion does the garden motif appear again. Jesus' tomb is located in a garden near the site of crucifixion (19:41), and the first narrative of the resurrection in the Gospel of John also occurs in this garden. Mary (Magdalene; 20:1) . . . sees Jesus, whom at first she does not recognize but rather takes to be the gardener (20:15). . . . It is striking that the Synoptic reports of the passion and resurrection, which show, in the location of the tomb, a relatively close parallel to John, do not mention anything about a garden.¹⁰⁷

Jesus; Jesus saw him. Whereas Pentheus was killed and his family exiled from Thebes, "salvation has come to" Zacchaeus's "house" (Luke 19:9). One might also note the similarities between the name Ζακχαῖος and the name of Euripides' tragedy Βάκχαι.

106. The earliest reference to Joseph of Arimathea appears in Mark 15; the Evangelist's model likely was the last book of the *Iliad*, where Hector's father Priam set out at night with an enormous ransom, accompanied only by a driver for the wagon, to rescue the body of his son from Achilles. This tale was one of Homer's greatest hits, and imitators of it were many, including the Markan Evangelist (see MacDonald, *Gospels and Homer*, 107–10). Mark's use of the word Arimathea (Ἀριμαθαία) is its earliest appearance in Greek literature; there exists no example of it that is independent—directly or indirectly—of Markan influence. To a Greek ear it would have been a compound consisting of the inseparable prefix ἀρι-, "excellent" and the word μάθη, "learning," whence Mark's word for disciple, μαθητής. That is, Arimathea means "Excellent learning," or "Excellent discipleship," a fitting description of his role in the Gospel. Furthermore, it would appear that the word play did not escape the Johannine Evangelist: "Joseph of Arimathea, because he was a secret disciple [Ἀριμαθαίας ὄν μαθητής] of Jesus . . ." (19:38).

107. "Symbolic Communication between John and his Reader: The Garden Symbolism in John 19–20," in *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature* (ed.

Zimmermann argues that these distinctively Johannine additions should be interpreted in light of garden imagery in Genesis 2–3 and later Jewish interpretations of paradise.

But one might more profitably see here again the influence of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Greeks identified two Olympians above the others with horticulture: Demeter and Dionysus.

As the male god of vegetation, Dionysus was, as we should expect, associated with a fertility goddess; his mother, Semele, was a full-fledged earth deity in her own right. . . . Dionysus represents the sap of life, the coursing of the blood through the veins, the throbbing excitement and mystery of sex and of nature.¹⁰⁸

In the *Bacchae*, Euripides repeatedly links the god of fecundity to the grapevine, ivy, berries, honey, and trees. In John even God is a gardener: "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the farmer. He chops off every branch on me that does not bear fruit, and he prunes every branch that bears fruit so that it bears more fruit" (15:1–2).

In the Fourth Gospel gardens appear exclusively in the context of life and death: at 18:1–11, where Judas betrays his Lord, and at 19:41, "at the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden was a new tomb." In John such gardens are places of death—more significantly, of life insofar as Jesus was liberated from this garden tomb.¹⁰⁹

20:1, 11b–18. A Woman's Recognition

Mary Magdalene is a character in all of the Synoptics, but in John she plays a far more significant role as the first person to see the risen Jesus.

Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore; SBLRBS 55; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 226–27.

108. Mark P. O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology* (6th ed.; New York: Longman, 1998), 222–23.

109. One of my students, Young Kang, insightfully observed that Odysseus revealed his true identity to his father Laertes—who had considered him dead—in his "garden [κῆπος]" and vineyard (*Od.* 24.205–349; see esp. 247 and 338).

^{20:1} On the first day of the week, early, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. [2–11a] ^{11b} As she wept, she stooped into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white garments sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ And they say to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

She said to them, “They have removed my Lord, and I do not know where they placed him.” ¹⁴ Once she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there and did not know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ Jesus says to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?”

She, supposing that he was a gardener, says to him, “Sir, if you have carried him off, tell me where you have placed him, and I will fetch him.”

¹⁶ Jesus says to her, “Mary.”

On turning she says to him in Hebrew, “Rabboni” (i.e., teacher).

¹⁷ Jesus says to her, “Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father.” [17b]

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” and that he had said these things to her.

Several scholars have argued that Jesus’s post-resurrection appearances in John redact corresponding episodes in Luke.¹¹⁰ Luke 24 and John 20 both begin with women, including the Magdalene, arriving at Jesus’s tomb.¹¹¹

110. See especially Hartwig Thyen, “Johannes und die Synoptiker. Auf der Suche nach einem neuen Paradigma zur Beschreibung ihrer Beziehungen anhand von Beobachtungen an ihren Passions- und Osterzählungen,” in *John and the Synoptics* (ed. Adalbert Denaux; BETL 101; Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 81–107, esp. 104–7 (reprinted in his *Studien*, 155–81); Manfred Lang, *Johannes und die Synoptiker: eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Analyse von Joh 18–20 vor dem markinischen und lukanischen Hintergrund* (FRLANT 182; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999; and Gilbert Van Belle, “Lukan Style in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Luke and his Readers* (ed. Reimund Bieringer, Gilbert Van Belle, and Joseph Verheyden; BETL 182; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 351–72.

111. MacDonald, *Gospels and Homer* (320–26), argued that Luke created Jesus’s appearances on the road to Emmaus and then to the eleven by imitating Homer’s depiction of Odysseus’s revelation of his identity to his father Laertes and his slaves.

Luke 24

¹ On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they [three women] went to the tomb bringing aromatic lotions that they had prepared. . . .

⁹ When they returned from the tomb, they announced all these things [ταῦτα] to the eleven and all the others.

¹⁰ They were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them.

They were telling these things [ταῦτα] to the apostles.

³ When they entered it, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ It happened that while they were at a loss about this situation, suddenly two men in radiant clothing stood before them.

John 20

¹ On the first day of the week, early, while it was still dark,

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, [Cf. v. 18: "Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord!' and that he had said these things [ταῦτα] to her."]

And saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. . . .

^{11b} As she wept, she stooped into the tomb

¹² and saw two angels in white garments sitting there.

In Luke, the men/angels declare that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Luke 24

[cf. v. 17]

¹⁵ And it so happened while they were talking and looking for answers Jesus himself was approaching and joined them in their journey.

¹⁶ Their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷ Jesus said to them, "What are you discussing with each other as you walk? And why have you stopped momentarily full of gloom?"

John 20

¹³ And they say to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She says to them, "They have removed my Lord, and I do not know where they placed him."

¹⁴ Once she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there

and did not know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ Jesus says to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?"

³⁷ They were startled and terrified—they supposed [ἐδόκουν] they were seeing a spirit.

[In vv. 19–20 the two disciples told the stranger about the death of Jesus.]

³⁰ While he was reclining with them he took the bread and blessed it; having broken it, he gave it to them.

³¹ And their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

³⁸ And he said to them, ³⁹ “. . . Touch me and look: a mere spirit does not have flesh and bone as you see that I have.”

³⁴ They were saying that the Lord truly was raised and appeared to Simon.

³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread (cf. 22–23).

She, supposing [δοκούσα] that he was a gardener, says to him, “Sir, if you have carried him off, tell me where you have placed him, and I will fetch him.”

¹⁶ Jesus says to her, “Mary.”

On turning she says to him in Hebrew, “Rabboni” (i.e. teacher).¹¹²

¹⁷ Jesus says to her,

“Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

But go to my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father. . . .”

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” and that he had said these things to her.

Two differences between Luke and John are most striking. In the first place, whereas Jesus in Luke invites the disciples to touch him, in John he insists that Mary not do so. Scholars have proposed a wide variety of interpretations for this prohibition.¹¹³ Mary Rose D’Angelo cites as an illustrative parallel the following passage from the *Apocalypse of Moses* (= *Life of Adam and Eve*) 31:3–4. On his deathbed Adam told Eve,

[W]hen I die, leave me alone and let no one touch me [μηδείς μου ἅψηται] until the angel of the Lord shall say something about me; for God will not forget me, but will seek his own vessel which he has formed. But rather rise to pray to God until I shall give back my spirit into the hand of the one who has given it.¹¹⁴

112. Both in Luke 24 and John 20 one finds *anagnōrisis*, or recognition, so important in ancient Greek tragedy. Brant: “The act of recognition [by the Magdalene] in the Gospel [of John] ends, as do many such scenes, with an embrace” (*Dialogue and Drama*, 56).

113. “A Critical Note: John 20:17 and *Apocalypse of Moses* 31,” *JTS* ns 41 (1990): 529–36. See also the judicious treatment by Harold W. Attridge, “Don’t Be Touching Me’: Recent Feminist Scholarship on Mary Magdalene,” in vol. 2 of *A Feminist Companion to John* (ed. Amy-Jill Levine; Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2003), 140–66.

D'Angelo argues that, shortly after his death, Adam was undergoing an ontological transformation; only after his soul had escaped could his body be buried. Similarly in John 20:17, Jesus may have prohibited Mary from touching him because his soul had not yet separated from the body.

This clearly differs from Luke's view of Jesus's post-resurrection ontology insofar as his entire body was revived, flesh and bone. Even though the Dionysian Evangelist stated in the prologue that the Logos became flesh, after Jesus's death, when his task on earth was complete, he would ascend incorporeally back to his Father. But because he had "not yet ascended," he told Mary not to touch him. Jesus wore human flesh to reveal his glory to the world, but after his resurrection abandoned it, much as Dionysus disguised himself as a mortal to punish Pentheus but abandoned his disguise by the end of the *Bacchae*. In both cases, embodiment was disposable once the mission ended.

But the Johannine author also made a second significant transformation: he substituted Mary to play the role that Luke had awarded to Cleopas and his companion. Once again he may have done so under the influence of the *Bacchae*: in this case the tragic recognition of Agave.

- After Pentheus's death his mother appears alone on stage unaware that she is carrying the head of her son, mistaking it as the head of a lion. Similarly, after Jesus's death Mary appears in the garden alone, sees Jesus's empty tomb, and is unaware what had happened to his body. Later she fails to recognize him, mistaking him for a gardener.
- Agave asks the chorus, "Where [ποῦ] is my son Pentheus?" (1212); later she asks Cadmus, "Where [ποῦ] is the body of my dear son?" (1298). Mary tells the angels why she wept: "They have removed my Lord, and I do not know where [ποῦ] they placed him" (20:13). To "the gardener" she says, "Sir, if you have carried him off, tell me where [ποῦ] you have placed him, and I will fetch him" (20:15).

114. Translated by Marshall D. Johnson in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983 and 1985), 2:287.

- In the end, Agave recognizes the head atop her thyrsus to be that of her beloved son. When Jesus addresses Mary by name, she recognizes him.
- More striking than the similarities are the differences: Agave's jubilation turns to tears when she recognizes the head of her son; Mary's tears turn to jubilation when she recognizes the gardener to be her teacher. Here one finds a spectacular emulation, an emotional inversion.

In sum, it would appear that the Johannine author skillfully borrowed from two models for the composition of Jesus's appearance to Mary. He redacted Luke's story of the road to Emmaus but transformed the two disciples into one woman, who replaces Agave's tears at the death of her son with joy at Jesus's resurrection.

One again might object that the Evangelist dared to compare Jesus not only with Dionysus but also with Pentheus, but one finds a similar switch in *Christus patiens*. Toward the end of the poem the Theotokos uses lines from Dionysus's opening speech to praise her son (a translation of much of the speech appears in excursus 3), but earlier, at the cross, she and Joseph of Arimathea mourned his death by borrowing lines from Euripides' Agave! In his resurrection Jesus resembles Dionysus, but in his death he resembles Pentheus (if scholars have rightly identified the dependence of this speech on the *Bacchae*). Again Friesen:

Joseph, holding Jesus' dead body, addresses the bloodied corpse with words spoken by Agave to describe Pentheus:

ᾧ φίλτατον πρόσωπον, ᾧ νέα γένυς,
ἰδοῦ καλύπτρα τῆδε σὴν κρύπτω κάραν.

O dearest face, O youthful cheek, behold I conceal your head in this veil.
(*Chr. pat.* 1469–70)

The terms πρόσωπον and κάρα also occur elsewhere in the final scene of the *Bacchae* with reference to the severed head of Pentheus held by Agave. Cadmus asks here, “whose face then do you hold in your arm?” (τίνος πρόσωπον δῆτ' ἐν ἀγκάλαις ἔχεις; 1277), and she subsequently realized, “I,

the miserable one, hold the head of Pentheus” (Πενθέως ἡ τάλαιν’ ἔχω κάρα, 1284).¹¹⁵

Friesen then notes that “Christ is identified with both Pentheus and Dionysus, the former in his mother’s lament over her child’s mutilated corpse, the latter in the paradoxical confluence of divine and human natures.”¹¹⁶ One might say the same of the Dionysian Gospel where “Christ is identified with both Pentheus and Dionysus.”

20:19, 21b-23. Exit Stage Up

¹⁹ When it was evening on that very day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were locked [19b] at the place where the disciples were, Jesus himself stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace to you. [20–21a] ^{21b} As the Father sent me, I too send you.” ²² And having said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive someone’s sins, they will be forgiven them, and if you retain the sins of any, they will be retained.”
[24–29]

Although here again the Dionysian Evangelist redacts Luke 24, it is striking that entirely absent is Jesus’s demonstration of his identity by exposing his wounds. In fact, Jesus tells Mary not to touch him. Compare the following:

Luke 24:36–39

³⁸ And he said to them, ³⁹ “. . . Touch me and look: a mere spirit does not have flesh and bone as you see that I have.”

³⁶ As they were saying these things, Jesus himself stood in their midst and said to them,

“Peace to you.”

John 20:17, 19

¹⁷ Jesus says to her, “Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

¹⁹ When it was evening on that very day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were locked [19b] at the place where the disciples were, Jesus himself stood in their midst and said to them,

“Peace to you.”

In the earliest Johannine Gospel, Jesus appeared to the eleven exclusively to breathe on them the Holy Spirit, not to reveal the

115. Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 255–56.

116. *Ibid.*, 260.

physicality of his resurrection body. Indeed, Jesus's ability to pass through a locked door suggests that his process of ontological transformation now was complete.

At the end of the *Bacchae*, the god descends into view in his divine, disembodied splendor—thanks to an ingenious stage crane—and makes a point of his divine parentage: “I, Dionysus, speak these things, the one sired not by an earthly father [πατρός] / but by Zeus” (*Bacch.* 1340–41). After passing through a locked door, Jesus tells the eleven, “As the Father [πατήρ] sent me, I too send you” (John 20:21). Similarly, Dionysus, the son of Zeus, had travel plans for the Theban royal family. Cadmus and his wife Harmonia would become snakes and “go to the barbarians” as exiles (1354–56). Agave and her sisters, too, must leave Thebes and Greece for foreign lands. After line 1351, the *machina* lifts the *deus* out of sight. Exit stage up.

20:30-31. Postscript

^{20:30} Many other signs Jesus performed in the presence of his disciples that have not been written in this book. ³¹ These things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. [21:1–25]

The Evangelist dwells not on punishments for Jesus's enemies but on salvation for those who believe; he articulates this in his epilogue, which modestly resembles the epilogue of the *Bacchae*.

Bacch. 1388–92

Many [πολλὰι] the shapes of things divine, / and many things [πολλά] the gods [θεοί] perform contrary to our hopes. /

The things [τά] expected are not fulfilled, / but a god [θεός] finds a path for events not expected. / This [τόδε] tale turned out in just such a manner.

John 20:30–31

Many [πολλά] other signs Jesus performed in the presence of his disciples that have not been written in this book.

³¹ These things [ταῦτα] have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God [τοῦ θεοῦ], and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Both epilogues comment on the theological significance of the books they conclude; both use the word *πολλά* to describe the “many” things

narrated earlier; both refer to extraordinary deeds that the gods performed, and both speak to the audience about their expectations or beliefs. If ancient readers were sensitive to a connection between the two conclusions, they surely would have noted that whereas Euripides told a tale of death due to unbelief in a son of Zeus, John told one of eternal life as a reward for belief in the Son of God.¹¹⁷

Conclusion to Part Two

The parallels between the *Bacchae* and the Fourth Gospel discussed in this second major section of the book amply satisfy the seven criteria of Mimesis Criticism that I employed in *The Gospels and Homer* and *Luke and Vergil*.¹¹⁸ The first criterion assesses the availability and popularity of any proposed literary model.

Criterion 1. The criterion of *accessibility* pertains to the likelihood that the author of the later text had access to the proposed antetext.

Friesen:

The popularity and influence of the *Bacchae* throughout antiquity are extensive, and thus its reception involves a vast cross-section of readers and audiences who span divisions of class, language and region, religion and ideology. . . . [A]ncient interest in the *Bacchae* extends well beyond circles of the educated elite within the "pagan" Greco-Roman world.¹¹⁹

Most interpreters of the Gospel of John locate it in western Asia Minor, in or near Ephesus. The plays of Euripides presumably were among those performed at its famous theater, and texts, art, and architecture witness to the popularity there of Dionysian religion. Sjöf van Tilborg has conveniently collected the evidence and proposes that one read

117. See also the comparison of John 20:30–31 with Euripides' distinctive *exodos* in Brant, *Dialogue and Drama*, 64–70.

118. I defend this methodology in *My Turn: A Critique of Critics of "Mimesis Criticism"* (IACOP 53; Claremont: Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, 2009).

119. *Reading Dionysus*, 2. For the evidence, see Dodds, *Bacchae*, li–lix, Jeanne Roux, *Euripide: Les Bacchantes* (2 vols.; Bibliothèque de la faculté des lettres de Lyon 21; Paris: Société d'édition "les belles lettres," 1970–1972), 1.72–77, and Günther Zuntz, *An Inquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 110–25, and more recently, Ziegler, *Dionysos in der Apostelgeschichte*, 93–94.

the Gospel of John attentive to this cultural context.¹²⁰ Surely the *Bacchae* was available in the Johannine *Umwelt*.

In fact, not all readers of the Gospel were Jewish. Von Wahlde among others has noted that the earliest Johannine Evangelist felt obligated to translate Hebrew and Aramaic names into Greek (each of the following examples appears in the earliest stratum of the Gospel):

1:38 (“‘Rabbi’ [which, translated, means, Teacher]”); 1:41 (“‘We have found the Messiah’ [which is translated Christ]”); 1:42 (“‘You will be called Cephas’ [which, translated, means Peter]”); 4:25 (“‘I know the Messiah is coming, the one called Christ’”), 20:16 (“ . . . she said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni’ [which is translated Teacher]”).¹²¹

Even more telling

are explanations of Jewish customs. Thus, in 2:6 we hear of water jugs used “for the purification ritual of the Jews.” In 19:40, we hear of Nicodemus binding the body of Jesus with burial cloths together with spices, “as is the burial custom of the Jews.” A large number of references identify feasts as being “of the Jews”: 2:13 (“the Passover of the Jews”); 5:1 (“a feast of the Jews”); 6:4 (“Passover, the feast of the Jews”) . . . 11:55 (“the Passover of the Jews”); 19:42 (“the Preparation Day of the Jews”). Twice this expression is used to identify religious authorities as being *Jewish*. In 3:1, Nicodemus is identified as a ruler “of the Jews”; in 19:21a, the chief priests are identified as “of the Jews.” . . .

Therefore, it seems that while the author was quite familiar with Jewish customs . . . , it may be that his audience was not so familiar and that the first author sought to explain elements of this knowledge for those individuals. . . . [T]he explanations, while not exhaustive, are fairly extensive and so could prove genuinely helpful to a [Gentile] reader.¹²²

One may recall from part one that at least some members of the elder's communities were Gentiles (such as Diotrefes, Demetrius, and perhaps Gaius). The Johannine Evangelist likely intended his work to

120. Sjef van Tilborg, *Reading John in Ephesus* (NovTSup 83; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 95–98. “Considering the strong presence of the Dionysus-cult in Ephesus, [such a reading] is not only possible but it seems self-evident. Add to this that precisely the most significant Dionysus-stories—the stories in which it is related that water is changed into wine—are situated in an Ephesus-related place: in Andros but also in Teos, a place near Ephesus, and a place with which Ephesus has a fight in relation to Dionysus” (97).

121. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 1:74 (author's emphasis).

122. *Gospels and Letters*, 1:118–19.

be compelling also to Gentile devotees of Dionysus, for whom such explanations of Jewish names and customs would have been necessary.

Criterion 2. *Analogy* likewise pertains to the popularity of the target. It seeks to know if other authors imitated the same mimetic model.

The *Bacchae* inspired lost plays on the same subject by two Latin poets (Pacuvius and Accius), as well as Book 3 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Friesen argues for imitations also in Theocritus, *Idyll* 26, Dio Chrysostom, *Alexandrian Oration* (*Or.* 32), and Horace, *Ep.* 1.16. The Jewish historian Josephus likely used the fall of Thebes to depict the fall of Jerusalem.¹²³

Of more immediate relevance to the Fourth Gospel are imitations in 3 Maccabees, the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, the *Acts of John*, the *Acts of Andrew*, and especially in the Acts of the Apostles. In *Luke and Vergil*, I argued that the following episodes imitated this Euripidean tragedy:¹²⁴

- Luke 8:1–3. Women followers of Jesus (the maenads)¹²⁵
- Luke 19:1–10. Zacchaeus up a tree (the punishment of Pentheus)¹²⁶
- Acts 2:1–11. Pentecost (divine madness at Thebes)¹²⁷

123. Honora Howell Chapman, "By the Waters of Babylon': Josephus and Greek Poetry," in *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (ed. Joseph Sievers and Gaia Lembi; JSJSup 104; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 144. See also Louis H. Feldman, "The Influence of the Greek Tragedians on Josephus," in *Hellenistic and Jewish Arts: Interaction, Tradition and Renewal* (ed. A. Ovadiah; Howard Gilman International Conferences 1; Tel Aviv University, 1998), 51–80.

124. See also MacDonald, "Classical Greek Poetry and the Acts of the Apostles: Imitations of Euripides' *Bacchae*," in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, vol. 1, *Early Christianity in its Hellenistic Context* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts; TENTS 19; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 463–96; and "Lydia and her Sisters as Lukan Fictions," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles* (ed. Amy-Jill Levine; FCNT 9; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 105–10. Euripidean influence on the canonical Acts enjoys a noble but controversial history of scholarship. Among those who affirm it are Wilhelm Nestle, "Anklänge an Euripides in der Apostelgeschichte," *Phil* 59 (1900): 46–57; Friedrich Smend, "Untersuchungen zu den Acta-Darstellungen von der Bekehrung des Paulus," *Angelos* 1 (1925): 34–45; Otto Weinreich, *Gebet und Wunder: Zwei Abhandlungen zur Religions- und Literaturgeschichte*, in his *Religionsgeschichtliche Studien* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), 1–198; and Jan Schäfer, "Zur Funktion der Dionysosmysterien in der Apostelgeschichte: Eine intertextuelle Betrachtung der Berufungs- und Befreiungserzählungen in der Apostelgeschichte und der Bakchen des Euripides," *TZ* 66 (2010): 199–222. See also John Moles, "Jesus and Dionysus in the Acts of the Apostles and Early Christianity," *Herm* 180 (2006): 65–104, Ziegler, *Dionysos in der Apostelgeschichte*, and Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 207–35.

125. MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*, 23–24.

126. *Ibid.*, 51–52.

127. *Ibid.*, 24–28 and 33.

- Acts 2:14–40. Peter's defense (Tiresias's defense of Dionysian madness)¹²⁸
- Acts 3:1–10. A dancing old cripple (Cadmus and Tiresias)¹²⁹
- Acts 4:1–7. Religious rulers as theomachoi (Pentheus the theomachos)¹³⁰
- Acts 4:13–14, 5:29. "One must obey God rather than mortals" (Cadmus's faithfulness)¹³¹
- Acts 4:24–31. Prayer and earthquake (maenads' prayer and earthquake)¹³²
- Acts 5:17–32. Apostles' prison break (maenads' prison break)¹³³
- Acts 5:33–39. Gamaliel's warning (Tiresias's warning)¹³⁴
- Acts 8:1–3, 9:1–2. Saul the theomachos (Pentheus the theomachos)¹³⁵
- Acts 9:3–19a. Saul's encounter with Jesus (Pentheus and Dionysus)¹³⁶
- Acts 12:24–13:12. Elymas and Sergius Paulus (Tiresias and Pentheus)¹³⁷
- Acts 16:13–15. Lydia from Lydia (the Lydian chorus)¹³⁸
- Acts 16:16–40. Paul's prison break (Dionysus's prison break)¹³⁹

As we have seen, the first Johannine Evangelist knew the Gospel of Luke, perhaps when it was still volume one of a two-volume work: Luke-Acts.¹⁴⁰ If so, it would be tempting to postulate that Luke's

128. *Ibid.*, 33–35.

129. *Ibid.*, 30–31.

130. *Ibid.*, 35–37.

131. *Ibid.*, 37.

132. *Ibid.*, 42.

133. *Ibid.*, 39–41.

134. *Ibid.*, 37–38.

135. *Ibid.*, 44.

136. *Ibid.*, 52–57.

137. *Ibid.*, 57–58.

138. *Ibid.*, 28–29.

139. *Ibid.*, 44–48.

140. For imitations in 3 Maccabees, see J. R. C. Cousland, "Dionysus Theomachos? Echoes of the *Bacchae* in 3 Maccabees," *Bib* 82 (2001), 539–48. "I assume either that the author [of 3 Maccabees] was familiar with the work or had attended some performances of the play" (541). See also Clayton

imitations of the *Bacchae* inspired additional imitations in the earliest Johannine Gospel.

It is one thing to demonstrate the popularity of an ancient work but quite another to prove that any specific author targeted it for imitation; criteria 3–7 are designed to do just that.

Criterion 3. *Density*: simply stated, the more parallels one can posit between two texts, the stronger the case that they issue from a literary connection.

Inevitably in the comparison of any two texts, some parallels will be more compelling than others, and this certainly is the case when comparing the *Bacchae* with John. Even so, the density of possible correspondences, some of which are quite striking, makes a conscious literary connection highly likely.

Criterion 4. The criterion of *order* examines the relative sequencing of similarities in two works. If parallels appear in the same order, the case strengthens for a genetic connection.

Because the first Johannine Evangelist patterned his story of Jesus largely after the Synoptics, the order of his imitations of the *Bacchae* is not consistently sequential. On the other hand, passages that are unique to the Fourth Gospel often are, especially at the beginning, where one finds a statement about the identity of the Logos, the witness of John the Baptist, the rejection of the Logos, the wedding at Cana, the curing of the old cripple, the promise to Nicodemus that he could become young, and the Samaritan woman; all this takes place prior to the hostility of the religious authorities. Similarly in the *Bacchae*, the audience learns of Dionysus's Olympian home and his

N. Croy, "Disrespecting Dionysus: 3 Maccabees as Narrative Satire of the God of Wine" in *Scripture and Tradition: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay* (ed. Gail R. O'Day, Patrick Gray, and Carl R. Holladay; NovTSup 129; Boston: Brill, 2008), 3–19. Croy nearly ignores the *Bacchae* but notes that the punishment of the villain Philopater with sleep, amnesia, and madness characterizes the effects of the Greek god of wine.

For imitations in the *Acts of Paul* and the *Acts of Andrew*, see MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*, part one and appendix 1. For the *Acts of John*, see MacDonald, "Jesus and Dionysian Polymorphism in the *Acts of John*," in *Early Christian and Jewish Narratives: The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms* (ed. Ilaria Ramelli and Judith Perkins; WUNT 348; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 97–104.

coming to Thebes, venerable Cadmus, the rejection of the god by his own city and his mother's family, his miraculous gifts of water and wine, his driving women into the mountains to worship him, and rejuvenated Cadmus and Tiresias, all of whom make appearances prior to the entrance of Pentheus. There is no more compelling explanation for these similar sequences than literary imitation.

Furthermore, many of the similarities are distinctive.

Criterion 5. A *distinctive trait* is anything unusual in the targeted antetext and the proposed borrower that links the two into a special relationship.

The changing of water into wine as the first of Jesus's miracles alerts the reader to view him as Dionysian, as does his last speech to his disciples: "I am the true grapevine." Only in the Fourth Gospel does one read that one must eat Jesus's flesh and drink his blood to obtain eternal life, which evokes similar claims for Dionysian *omophagia*. Perhaps most distinctive, though subtle, is Jesus's claim that God is his witness and the response of the Pharisees, "where is your Father?" (8:18–19). Dionysus told Pentheus that the god was present, and the king asked, "Where is he?" (*Bacch.* 501). Both the Pharisees and the king cannot see the god because of their spiritual ignorance. Although Dionysus does not wear a purple *himation* or an ivy wreath in the *Bacchae*—after all, he appears on stage disguised as a mortal—this is how ancient artists often depicted him. Pilate's presentation of Jesus in a purple *himation* and a crown of thorns evokes the god of wine with his purple *himation* and crown of ivy or grapevines.

Criterion 6. *Interpretability* asks what might be gained by viewing one text as a debtor to another. As often as not, ancient authors emulated their antecedents to rival them, whether in style, philosophical adequacy, persuasiveness, or religious perspective.

The mimetic indebtedness to the *Bacchae* would largely explain why the Fourth Gospel differs so dramatically from the Synoptics. The differences issue not from deviating oral traditions of the life and teachings of Jesus but from imitations of Euripides. Furthermore, the Evangelist notified his reader that Jesus was a rival to Dionysus insofar

as he was the *true* grapevine. Whereas Dionysus took human form to punish Thebes, the Logos took human form to offer life to those who received him. Euripides' story, after all, is a tragedy; the Evangelist's story came to be called "the Good News According to John."

The Evangelist's literary debt to Euripides may also explain the significant role of his female characters.

Throughout the Fourth Gospel women are presented in incomparably positive ways as persons who are closely linked to the self-revelation of Jesus and to the coming of his hour. . . . This suggests that being female is not coincidental, but a key element in the construction of their characters and in the composition of the Gospel narrative.¹⁴¹

This quotation comes from the conclusion to Colleen M. Conway's study of *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel*. She bases this judgment on her investigation of Jesus's mother, the Samaritan woman, Martha and Mary of Bethany, and Mary Magdalene; each of these women, as we have seen, appears in the Dionysian Gospel.

The Gospel clearly indicates that Jesus's intimate connections with women were exceptional: "His disciples came and were amazed that he was conversing with a woman; even so, no one said, 'What are you seeking?' Or 'Why are you speaking with her?'"(4:27). In other words, Jesus's speaking privately with a woman was objectionable; even so, no one challenged his authority to violate social mores.¹⁴²

Adeline Fehribach's study of women in John concludes that the Evangelist was not interested in the virtues of women per se but only as they contributed to the development of Jesus's stature. "[T]he primary function of women in the Fourth Gospel is to put emphasis on the male hero, further the career or [sic] the hero, and/or support androcentric or patriarchal principles. . . . [A]ll the women in the Fourth Gospel are marginalized once they have fulfilled their role."¹⁴³

141. Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization* (SBLDS 167; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 293.

142. See the insightful treatment by Turid Karlsen Seim, "Roles of Women in the Gospel of John," in *Aspects on the Johannine Literature* (eds. Lars Hartman and Birger Olsson; ConBNT 18; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), 59.

143. *Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998), 175 and 178.

No doubt one might explain the Dionysian Evangelist's preoccupation with women in several ways, but it merits reminding that Euripides' *Bacchae* similarly presents women as more receptive to the cult of Dionysus than men. Here, as in John, "the primary function of women . . . is to put emphasis on the male hero."

As we have seen, Jesus's mother modestly resembles Pentheus's mother; the Samaritan woman plays the role of a maenad outside the city to whom Jesus offers living water, and Mary Magdalene's recognition of Jesus resembles Agave's recognition of her son's head. Although Martha and Mary have no sisters in the tragedy, they, more than their neighbors, loved Jesus and longed for him. Later Johannine authors, not invested in the *Bacchae*, are also less interested in Jesus's female admirers.¹⁴⁴

The Dionysian Gospel's debt to Euripides also sheds light on contemporary disputes about Docetism; can one find in the Gospel a denial that Jesus possessed a physical body? The elder John condemned as liars and antichrists anyone who denied that Jesus came "in the flesh" (1 John 2:18–22; cf. 1:1–2; 4:2–3; 2 John 7). On the other hand, the elder held that at his resurrection his ontology had changed, as would that of those who would greet him at his return: "We know that when he appears, we will be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2b).

The textual reconstruction of the earliest Johannine Gospel displays the same view of the incarnation, one similar to Euripides' depiction of Dionysus. Euripides' god arrived in Thebes after having altered his form from that of a god to that of a mortal (*Bacch.* 4). "I have changed into this mortal / appearance and transformed my shape [μορφήν] into the form of a man" (53–54). Compare the following:

144. There are two possible exceptions. First, in chapter 11 an early rewriting of the Gospel expands on the responses to the death of Lazarus by his sisters. Second, my reconstruction of chapter 12 does not include Jesus's anointing by Mary of Bethany, which a later Johannine author apparently redacted from the Synoptics. All other references to women in the Fourth Gospel appear in the first edition and have analogies in the *Bacchae*.

Bacch. 20, 22

I have now come to the land of the Greeks / . . .

so that a god might be revealed to mortals.

John 1:14

The Logos became flesh and pitched tent among us, and we observed his glory, glory of a one-of-a-kind child from the Father.

Jesus's status in the earliest edition of the Gospel, as in the *Bacchae*, is that of a divine visitor who willingly adopted human form to reveal his divinity. The transformations of Dionysus and the Logos differ, however, insofar as Jesus not only appeared to be mortal but actually "became flesh."

At the end of the epic Dionysus descends *deus ex machina* in his divine splendor, having abandoned this human disguise. The same applies to the Dionysian Gospel. The Evangelist's model for Jesus's appearance to the Magdalene likely was Luke's account of his appearances to the disciples, but John's Jesus forbids Mary to touch him:

Luke 24:38-39

And he said to them,

³⁹ ". . . Touch me and look: a mere spirit does not have flesh and bone as you see that I have." [Jesus later ascends.]

John 20:17

¹⁷ Jesus says to her,

"Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father."

For the Dionysian Evangelist, Jesus's ontology had changed such that touching him after his resurrection was forbidden. Jesus adopted a bodily tent and lived among mortals, but abandoned flesh to return to his Father.

Furthermore, when the risen Jesus appears to the eleven, the Evangelist removes the Lukan invitation to touch him. Like Euripides' Dionysus, the Logos was transformed temporarily into Jesus of Nazareth, but he abandoned his flesh at the end of the book. As we shall see in part four, later redactors favored the Lukan view that even after his resurrection Jesus's body was palpable.

The final criterion of Mimesis Criticism investigates the reception history of the proposed imitating text.

Criterion 7. Often Greek readers prior to 1000 CE were aware of affinities between biblical narratives and their classical Greek models. Such *ancient and Byzantine recognitions* are useful for identifying mimesis in the original composition of the Gospels.

Imitations of the *Bacchae* pertain only to the earliest edition of the Gospel; on the other hand, the only version of John that survived beyond the mid-second century displays no independent interest in Euripides. Even so, Christian intellectuals undoubtedly saw similarities between Dionysus and the Johannine Jesus. For example, Justin Martyr attributed similarities between the Logos and the god of wine to demonic anticipations of the incarnation:

When we say that the Logos, who is the first offspring of God, was born without sexual intercourse, namely Jesus Christ our teacher, and that he was crucified, died, and after rising again ascended into heaven we are introducing nothing new beyond the sons of Zeus so called by you. You are well aware of how many sons of Zeus writers esteemed among you speak of: Hermes, the interpreting logos and teacher of all, and Asclepius, also a healer, who, when struck by lightning, ascended into heaven, and Dionysus who was ripped apart. (1 *Apol.* 21)

Later in the same work Justin argues that demons had read Genesis 49:11 as a prediction of Jesus Christ: “hitching his colt to a grapevine [ἄμπελον], . . . he will wash his robe in wine, and his wrap in the blood of a grape cluster.” He then blamed the similarities between Jesus and Dionysus on demonic mimesis. “On hearing these prophetic words, the demons said that Dionysus was a son of Zeus, handed down that he was the discoverer of the grapevine, incorporated wine into his mysteries, and taught that after being torn to pieces he ascended into heaven” (1 *Apol.* 54; cf. *Dial.* 64). It is reasonable to suspect that it was the Johannine Jesus that Justin had in mind in his comparison of the Logos with Dionysus.¹⁴⁵

A few decades later, Clement of Alexandria expressed his contempt for Dionysian religion by quoting two lines from the *Bacchae* in which

145. Charles Hill: “Despite his lack of formal citation, despite his tendency to paraphrase or summarize, and despite his habit of conflating texts, Justin’s knowledge of the Fourth Gospel has to be considered quite secure and really quite comprehensive” (*Johannine Corpus*, 337).

Pentheus indicates that he had lost his mind, “drunk with undiluted ignorance.” Clement: “I would pity his intoxication; I would call this man who was so crazed to sober salvation, for the Lord does not welcome the death of the sinner but his repentance” (*Protr.* 12.118.5). Clement then contrasts Christ’s clemency with Dionysus, who slew Pentheus despite his repentance for “sins” just before he died. Clement’s appeal to the god himself to convert appears in excursus 3. The text of Clement’s appeal to blind Tiresias to come to Christ for healing appears at the end of the commentary to 9:1–41 and evokes the Fourth Gospel. Excursus 4 discusses comparisons between Dionysus and Jesus’s changing water into wine in *Leucippe and Clitophon* by Achilles Tatius (second half of the second century CE).

Here again are the opening lines of *Christus patiens*:

Since you have listened to poems with a pious ear,
 And seek to hear now pious things but in a poet’s way,
 Give heed: for now, as would Euripides,
 I shall tell of a passion that redeemed the world.
 Here you will find the mysteries fully told,
 For they come from the mouth of a maid and virgin mother,
 And the initiate beloved of his teacher.

* * * * *

And these then are my drama’s roles:
 The Ever Holy Mother, the chaste initiate [John the Evangelist],
 And the attendant maidens of the Mother of the Lord. (*Chr. Pat.* 1–7 and
 28–30)¹⁴⁶

Excursus 3 provided a translation of the final speech of the Theotokos where she utters lines from Dionysus’s opening speech in the *Bacchae*.

In the fifth century, Nonnus of Panopolis wrote a short epic about Jesus, the so-called *Paraphrasis sancti evangelii Joannei*. Later he composed the longest of all Greek epics narrating the career of the god of wine: the *Dionysiaca*.¹⁴⁷ The *Paraphrasis* vividly demonstrates how the

146. Evans, *God of Ecstasy*, 151.

147. On the chronological priority of the *Paraphrasis* to the *Dionysiaca*, see especially Francis Vian, “Martys chez Nonnos de Panopolis: Étude de sémantique et de chronologie,” in *L’épopée posthomérique: Recueil d’études* (ed. Domenico Accorinti; Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2005), 565–84.

author embellished the hero of the Fourth Gospel with Dionysian traits. "John's Gospel is suited to a comparison of Christ with Dionysus, and some points of comparison were probably intended by the Evangelist himself."¹⁴⁸

According to David Hernández de la Fuente, not only does John's Jesus become more like Dionysus, Dionysus in the *Dionysiaca* becomes more like Jesus! In the first place, he notes the parallels between the Fourth Gospel and Nonnus's enormous epic about the Greek god of wine:

The central miracle of both gods of transforming water into wine, attested in both characters [Jesus and Dionysus], i[s] a key moment in their respective epiphanies. In the case of Christ, the episode of the marriage at Cana in Galilee is a key moment, conceptually speaking, for the incarnation of the Logos, as well as for the public revelation of the glory of the Son of Man. In the case of Dionysos, the episode of transforming the water into wine [in 14.323–37] is also fundamental in order to reveal his divinity and smooth his triumphant path.¹⁴⁹

Hernández de la Fuente then notes that the poet of both epic poems presents his heroes similarly: "The parallels between Dionysos and Christ as regards the theme of miraculous healings and resurrections are particularly noteworthy both in the *Dionysiaca* and in the *Paraphrase*."¹⁵⁰ In Nonnus's *Dionysiaca*,

stress is laid on the return to life thanks to a compassionate god. It is a unique divinity, son of the Father, made word, flesh and vine, a healer and healing god through his redeeming gift, who promises certain happiness to human beings in coming to this world. . . . It is, ultimately, a Dionysos influenced by the great divinity who would eventually impose himself throughout the East of the Mediterranean and, later, all over the Ancient world: Jesus Christ. Otherwise, without this mutual influence—since the Late Antiquity Dionysos will have influence on Christ as well—it would

148. Lee Francis Sherry, "The Hexameter Paraphrase of St. John attributed to Nonnus of Panopolis: Prolegomenon and Translation," PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1991, 58–59. Sherry attributes the *Paraphrasis* to a fifth-century poet other than Nonnus, but most experts now attribute it to Nonnus himself (see especially David Hernández de la Fuente, *Bakkhos Anax: Un estudio sobre Nono de Panópolis* [Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2008], and "Parallels between Dionysos and Christ," 464–87).

149. "Parallels between Dionysos and Christ," 467.

150. Hernández de la Fuente, "Parallels between Dionysos and Christ," 480.

not be possible to explain this new vision of the cruel god described in Euripides' *Bacchae* and of the ritual *σπαραγμός* and his sudden transformation in a god son of the father Zeus, with a mission before humankind, who weeps before the sufferings of men, pities them and heals their pains using his miraculous gifts. And it is not that Dionysos was a rival to Christ in Nonnus, it rather seems to appear as a parallel, complementary figure, almost another vision of the same redemptive divinity.¹⁵¹

According to Courtney Friesen,

Whereas in the *Bacchae* there is no hint of divine compassion, Nonnus's Dionysus is clearly moved by the family's grief and responds to the lamentation of Cadmus (46.242–64) thus:

Πολιὴν δὲ κόμην ἠδέσσατο Κάδμου
καὶ στοναχὴν Διόνυσος ἀπενθήτου δὲ προσώπου
μίξας δάκρυ γέλωτι νόον μετέθηκεν Ἀγαύης.
Dionysus had respect for the greyhead and groaning of Cadmus; after mixing
a tear with a smile on his griefless face, he reinstated Agave's mind.
(46.268–70)

This depiction is clearly reminiscent of the god's response to the death of Ampelos in book 12, where Nonnus employed similarly paradoxical language. There, Dionysus was said to be without tear (*ἀδακρύτου*, 12.138) and without grief (*ἀπενθήτω*, 12.167), yet he nevertheless “wept in order to release the tears of mortals” (*δάκρυσε, βροτῶν ἵνα δάκρυα λύσῃ*, 12.171). . . . [T]his formulation is indebted to Christian interpretation of Jesus' tears at the death of Lazarus in the Gospel of John, and thus, the rebirth of Ampelos as a vine functions as a Dionysiac analogue to the resurrection of Lazarus.¹⁵²

Hernández de la Fuente especially commends comparisons of the following texts (among several others) that suggest how the poet of the *Paraphrase* retold stories from the Gospel of John in a manner that parallels his later narration of episodes in the *Dionysiaca*.

John 2:1–10 (the wedding at Cana), *Par.* 2.35–38, and *Dionys.* 14.411–37
John 9:1–11 (the healing of a blind man), *Par.* 9.70–77, and *Dionys.*
25.281–91
John 11:1–44 (the raising of Lazarus), *Par.* 11.1–185, and *Dionys.* 25.529–52

151. *Ibid.*, 483.

152. Friesen, *Reading Dionysus*, 247–48.

John 18:2–11 (the arrest and binding of Jesus), *Par.* 18.8–42, and *Dionys.* 45.228–72

He concludes:

Nonnus of Panopolis' *Dionysiaca* contains clear literary parallels between the figures of Dionysos and Christ as evidence of the evolution of the pagan divinity in parallel to the Christian towards salvation and redemption beyond death. . . . In short, for Nonnus, Dionysos is a character partly modelled upon the biographic-mythical pattern of Christ, and not only upon stories characteristic of pagan mythology. The fact that he composed as well a theologically learned *Paraphrase* of the Gospel of John, added to the parallel treatment and descriptions of the mythical heroes Dionysos and Christ and of their miraculous deeds, seems to equate both divinities.¹⁵³

A common criticism of Mimesis Criticism is the alleged failure of the history of interpretation to recognize the influence of the proposed antetext.¹⁵⁴ This objection surely does not apply to the imitation of the *Bacchae* in the Fourth Gospel. Unfortunately, the influence of Euripides on the Gospel remains undetectable to the vast majority of modern interpreters. No doubt a major cause of its invisibility is the limitation of the imitations to the earliest stratum of the Gospel. Subsequent redactions display no interest in Jesus as a rival to Dionysus, as we shall see in parts three and four.

153. Hernández de la Fuente, "Parallels between Dionysos and Christ," 484.

154. Margaret M. Mitchell, "Homer in the New Testament?" *JR* 83 (2003): 251–52.

Rewriting the Gospel

The most obvious evidence of later textual tampering with the earliest Johannine Gospel are the many aporiae. Urban von Wahlde: “These various inconsistencies, disjunctures, and breaks in sequence . . . identify literary seams. These seams indicate where the material from one author ends and another begins.”¹ The Gospel of John is notorious for its non sequiturs, such as someone asking Jesus a question to which he replies by changing the subject. Von Wahlde also calls attention to awkward and unnecessary repetitions. “The editorial device known as the ‘repetitive resumptive’ (*Wiederaufnahme*) . . . is a valuable tool to identify breaks in sequence caused by editing. After making an insertion, the editor repeats some of the material from before the insertion as a way of attempting to resume the original sequence.”² For example, one often will read something like “Jesus said,” followed by a speech that later is interrupted by an unnecessary reminder that Jesus was speaking, such as “After this, Jesus again said,” followed by a

1. Urban von Wahlde, *A Commentary on the Gospel and Letters of John* (3 vols.; ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 1:23.

2. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 1:24–25.

continuation of the discourse. Such duplications alert the reader that one of the speeches is secondary.

The reader also should be alert to secondary explanations or corrections. Frequently one finds additions designed to interpret potentially ambiguous statements or to correct mistakes. Occasionally one also finds detailed information about geography or the time of day that has little bearing on the narrative and may issue from an attempt at verisimilitude, to give the book the appearance of eyewitness testimony.

The frequency and extent of such rewriting of the earliest Johannine Gospel is extraordinary; some of the insertions span several chapters, making the final redaction nearly twice as long as the original! Part three will discuss the first such editorial stage, and part four will do so for the final stage.

Von Wahlde characterizes the second edition as follows:³

- In the second edition of the Gospel, those who represent the authoritative religious position of the Jewish religion are referred to exclusively by the term *Ioudaioi*. This contrasts with the use of “Pharisees” (*Pharisaioi*), “chief priests” (*archiereis*), and “rulers” (*archontes*) for religious authorities in the first edition.
- In the second edition, the religious authorities exhibit an intense level of hostility toward Jesus throughout his ministry, rather than the increasing hostility found in the first edition.
- The second edition is framed in the worldview typical of canonical Jewish Scriptures.
- The second edition manifests an awareness, and use, of sophisticated rabbinic argument that is not found in the first or third editions.
- Questions that are posed in the first edition are regularly answered by material of the second edition.

3. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 1:xv–ix. His list of characteristics is much longer than this selection.

The second edition displays no independent interest in Dionysus and no indebtedness to Euripides. Its antetexts are the Synoptics and Jewish Scriptures.

Part three will not attempt a comprehensive treatment of this important intermediate stage of composition, but two aspects of it cast light on the early reception of the Dionysian Gospel: (1) the theological justification of such extensive rewriting, and (2) the remarkable verbal similarities between this stratum and the elder John's three Epistles.

Theology of *Relecture*

In a short but groundbreaking article, Jean Zumstein argued that to understand the composition of the Fourth Gospel one must be attentive to how the Johannine school rewrote it before it achieved its final form.⁴ Although some of his examples are contestable, there can be little doubt that he correctly identified a major cause of lapses in logic, intrusive interpolations, and duplications. Especially insightful is his identification of "the theological grounding of *relecture*."

Zumstein begins by identifying three anachronistic "prolepses":

2:22: When he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus said.

12:16: At first his disciples did not understand these things, but when he was glorified, they remembered that these things had been written about him and that they happened to him.

20:9: For they did not yet know the text that it was necessary for him to rise from the dead.

In each case, the narrator directs attention to the enriched comprehension of the disciples after Jesus's resurrection.

Zumstein then deftly notes that the narrator repeatedly states that

4. Jean Zumstein, "Der Prozess der *Relecture* in der johanneischen Literatur," *ZNW* 42 (1996): 394–411. On *relecture*, see also A. Dettwiler, *Die Gegenwart des Erhöhten. Eine exegetische Studie zu den johanneischen Abschiedsreden (Joh 13:33–16:33) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Relecture-Charakters* (FRLANT 169; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); and Jean Zumstein, *Kreative Erinnerung. Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium* (2nd ed.; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2004).

after Jesus's death he would send "another Paraclete" who would continue to instruct his followers:

7:39: He said this about the spirit whom those who believed in him were about to receive, for there was not yet a spirit, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

13:7: Jesus answered and said to him, "You do not now know what I am doing, but after this you will know."

14:16, 20: "And I will ask the Father, and he will send you another Paraclete to be with you forever. . . .²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you are in me, and I in you."

14:26: "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and will remind you of everything that I said to you."

15:26: "When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the spirit of truth that issues from the Father, that one will bear witness concerning me."

16:4: "But I have spoken these things to you so that when their hour comes, you will remember that I spoke them to you. I did not tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you."

16:12-13: "I still have many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them now.¹³ But when he comes, the spirit of truth, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own, but whatever he will hear he will speak and will announce for you things that are coming."

Zumstein suggests that it was this conviction that the Paraclete would give the Johannine community additional teachings that encouraged such *relecture*.

Relecture and the Epistles

An important but seldom recognized characteristic of the second edition is its debt to the three Johannine Epistles, 1 John above all. The first edition, too, displays occasional parallels to these letters, as in the last verse.

1 John 5:13 (cf. 11)

[Elder:] *I have written these things to you so that you might know that you have eternal life, to those who believe in the name of the Son of God.*

John 20:31

[Narrator:] *These things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Such parallels are far more common in the second edition. For example, compare the following:

1 John 4:7b

[Elder:] *Everyone who loves has been given birth by God.*

John 1:13

[Narrator: Those who receive the Logos] *have been given birth by God.*

In two cases one finds the elder's language on the lips of the Baptist:

1 John 3:5

[Elder:] *And you know that he was made manifest to take away sins,*

and sin is not in him.

John 1:29b

[The Baptist:] *"Look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

[Cf. 8:46b (Jesus): *"Who of you proves me guilty of sin?"*]

The expression "take away sin(s)" appears nowhere else in the New Testament.

1 John 4:5

[Elder:] *These are of the world, for this reason they speak from the world.*

John 3:31b

[The Baptist:] *"The one who is from the earth is from the earth and speaks from the earth."*

For the elder, the false teachers were "of the world" insofar as they were not children of God; the witness of the Baptist, however, distinguishes Jesus, "the one from above," from all mortals who are "from the earth."

The majority of parallels between the Epistles and the second edition shift the elder's teachings to Jesus. Each of the Epistles addresses threats caused by theological dissidents. No such schismatics appear in the Fourth Gospel; instead, the Gospel redirects the polemic against Jews as in the following examples:

1 John 1:1-3

[Elder:] What was from the beginning, what we have heard, *what we have seen with our eyes*, . . . the life was made manifest, and *we have seen, give witness, and proclaim to you* . . .

1 John 5:13

[Elder:] I have written these things to you so that you might know that you *have eternal life*, that you *believe in the name of the Son of God*.

1 John 5:9b

[Elder:] This is the *witness of God that he witnessed about his Son*.

1 John 2:14b

[Elder:] I wrote to you, young men, because you are strong, and *the word of God abides in you*.

1 John 2:15b

[Elder:] Whoever loves the world, *the love of the Father is not in him*.

1 John 3:23

[Elder:] *This is the commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ*.

1 John 1:6 (cf. 2:8)

[Elder:] If we say that he have fellowship with him and *walk in the darkness*, we lie. . . .

John 3:11

[Jesus:] "Truly, truly I tell you, that what we know we speak, and *what we have seen we witness to*, and you do not receive our witness."

John 3:36a

[Jesus to Nicodemus the Pharisee:] "The one who *believes in the Son has eternal life*."

John 5:32b

[Jesus to the Jews:] "I know that the witness that he [the Baptist] *witnesses about me is true*."

John 5:38a

[Jesus:] "You do not possess *his word abiding in you*."

John 5:42

[Jesus:] "But I knew that you do not *have the love of God in yourselves*."

John 6:29

[Jesus:] "The work of God *is this: that you believe in the one whom he sent*."

John 8:12b

[Jesus:] "The one who follows me will not *walk in darkness* but have the light of life."

The expression "walk in darkness" appears in the New Testament only in the Johannine Epistles and Gospel.

1 John 3:22b

[Elder:] . . . because we . . . *do what is pleasing before him*.

John 8:29b

[Jesus:] "I always *do what is pleasing to him*."

The expression τὰ ἀρεστά ποιεῖν, "to do what is pleasing," appears nowhere else in the New Testament.

1 John 3:8a, 15

[Elder:] The one who commits sin is *from the devil*, because *the devil sins from the beginning*. . . .

¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a *manslayer*, and you know that no *manslayer* has eternal life abiding in him.

John 8:44a

[Jesus:] “You are *from your father the devil*, and you want to perform the desires of your father. That one was a *manslayer from the beginning*.”

The word for “manslayer” in both columns is ἀνθρωποκτόνος, which appears nowhere else in the New Testament. The squabble with the schismatics who do not sufficiently love “the brothers” becomes in the Gospel Jesus’s denunciation of “the Jews,” whom he accuses of being children of the devil. Once again the literary connections and the direction of dependence should be transparent.

1 John 4:3, 5:19a

[Elder:] Every spirit *not confessing Jesus is not from God*. . . . ^{5:19b} We know that *we are from God*.

John 8:47

[Jesus:] “*The one who is from God* hears God’s utterances. This is why you do not hear me, because *you are not from God*.”

1 John 2:11

[Elder:] *The one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in darkness and does not know where he is going*, because the darkness blinded his eyes.

John 12:35b

[Jesus:] “*Walk as though you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. And the one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going*.”

Here the elder’s polemic against false teachers becomes Jesus’s challenge to a hostile crowd. The statement that someone “does not know where he is going” appears in the New Testament only in the Johannine Epistles and Gospel, and only in these two verses does it appear in connection with walking in darkness.

An even more common strategy by early redactors was to reuse statements by the elder for Jesus’s address to his disciples, including the love commandment. Here again, no trace of a polemic with the schismatics remains. Several of these parallels cannot be attributed to a shared oral tradition; the editor evokes the Epistles. For example, a redactor apparently saw in the elder’s references to “no new commandment” an invitation to place the origin of the commandment on the lips of Jesus.

1 John 2:6

[Elder:] The one who says that he abides in him should walk as he himself walked.

2 John 5 (cf. 1 John 2:7; 3:23; 4:11-12)

And now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but what we have heard from the beginning, that we should love each other.

1 John 2:5b; 3:24

[Elder:] In this the love of God is truly fulfilled, in this we know that we are in him. . . .^{3:24} [After the love commandment:] The one who keeps his commandments abides in him and he [the Son] abides in him. In this we know that we abide in him.

John 13:15b

[Jesus:] "As I have done to you, you too should do."

John 13:34

"I am giving you a new commandment, so that you love each other, as I loved you, so that you too might love each other."

John 13:35

[Jesus:] "In this way, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for each other."

Other examples appear throughout Jesus's farewell address to the disciples.

1 John 5:14b (cf. 3:22)

[Elder:] If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

1 John 5:3a (cf. 2:5a)

[Elder:] For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.

1 John 4:6b; 5:6b

[Elder:] We know the spirit of truth. . . .^{5:6b} The Spirit is the truth.

John 14:13a

[Jesus:] "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it."

John 14:15

[Jesus:] "If you love me, keep my commandments."

John 14:17a

[Jesus:] ". . . the spirit of truth, which the world is unable to receive, because it does not observe or know it. You know it."

"Spirit of truth" is distinctively Johannine. In the Epistle it contrasts with "the spirit of the lie" in the heat of controversy (4:6), but in John 14 it is simply a predicate for the Paraclete. "While this term [Spirit of Truth] appears three times in the Gospel (14:17; 15:26; 16:13), its full significance and the worldview within which it is conceptualized are not fully evident until one reads 1 John 4:1-6."⁵

5. Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 1:378.

Compare also the following:

1 John 2:5a

[Elder:] And *whoever keeps his word, truly the love of God is perfected in him.*

John 14:21a

[Jesus:] "*The one who has my commandments and keeps them, that is the one who loves me.*"

In the following case once again, a word of the elder, likely directed against dissidents, becomes Jesus's promise to the faithful.

1 John 2:1

[Elder:] My children, *I write these things to you so that you might not sin. And if someone sins, we have a Paraclete to the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

John 14:16

[Jesus:] "*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you forever.*"

In John 14:26 the Paraclete plays a role that the elder gave to "the anointing," presumably the anointing as part of baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Compare the following:

1 John 2:27b

[Elder:] You have no need for someone to teach you, because his anointing *teaches you about all things*; it is true and is no liar. And as it taught you, abide in it.

John 14:26

[Jesus:] "*The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and will remind you of everything that I said to you.*"

The expression "teach all things" appears in the New Testament only here. The elder introduced this statement to refute his opponents, "those who deceive" his addressees by false teaching. The parallel in the Gospel, however, is not polemical but prophetic.

Perhaps nowhere is the direction of dependence from the Epistles to the Gospel more apparent than here. In 1 John, Jesus himself is the Paraclete, an advocate for sinners, presumably at the final judgment. Not so in the Fourth Gospel, where "*another Paraclete*" replaces him, not to be an advocate but to be an avatar, "so that he may be with you forever" and "bear witness" that he will never abandon his followers. Hengel: "This is one of the points where the language of the first letter is 'more original' than that of the Gospel."⁶

Schnelle: “The Paraclete takes on, above all, a hermeneutical function: he becomes a teacher, witness, and interpreter for the community of the meaning of the person of Jesus Christ and will lead the believers in the future.”⁷ Finally, the reader of John 14:16 should assume in the use of “another” that Jesus himself was the first Paraclete, as in the Epistle and nowhere else in the New Testament!

1 John 1:4; 2 John 12b

[Elder:] And we ourselves are writing *these things*, so that your joy may be filled. . . . I hope to be with you and to speak mouth to mouth, so that our joy may be filled.

John 15:11

[Jesus:] “I have spoken *these things* to you so that . . . your joy may be filled.”

1 John 3:16

[Elder:] In this we knew *love*, because that one *laid down his life for us*, and we should lay down our lives for the brothers.

John 15:13

[Jesus:] “No one has greater *love* than this: that someone *lay down one’s life for his friends*.”

The expression “lay down one’s life” is uniquely Johannine.

1 John 3:13, 23; 4:5

[Elder:] Do not be amazed, brothers, *if the world hates you*. . . .²³ And this is his command, that . . . we love one another. . . .^{4:5} These people *are of the world*, and for this reason they speak *of the world*, and the world hears them.

John 15:17–19

[Jesus:] “I have commanded these things to you, so that you *love one another*.¹⁸ *If the world hates you*, know that it has hated me before you.¹⁹ And if you *were of the world*, the world loves its own (sing.). But because you *are not of the world*—I have chosen you from the world—for this reason *the world hates you*.”

The hatred of the world for believers appears in the New Testament only in the Johannine Epistles and Gospel.

1 John 5:4b–5

[Elder:] This is *the victory that conquers the world*, our faith.⁵ Who is the one who *conquers the world*?

John 16:33b

[Jesus:] “I have *conquered the world*.”

6. Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 55. “[T]he statement in John 14:16 can only be understood once one reads 1 John to discover that the community also looked upon Jesus as a Paraclete. Thus, while 1 John 2:1 does not need John 14:16 in order to be understood, John 14:16 presupposes the existence of the material in 1 John 2:1 for full intelligibility” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 1:377–78).

7. Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 82.

For the elder, faith “conquers the world”; in the Gospel, Jesus states that he already has done so.

1 John 5:20b (cf. 4:7)

[Elder:] . . . so that *we are in the true one*, in his Son, *Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

1 John 5:18b–19

[Elder:] The one who was begotten from God *guards himself and the evil one* does not touch him.¹⁹ We know that we are from God, and the *whole world is held by the evil one.*

John 17:3

[Jesus:] “*This is eternal life*, that they know you, *the only true God and Jesus Christ*, whom you have sent.”

John 17:15–16

[Jesus:] “I do not ask that you take them from *the world*, but that you *guard them from the evil one*.¹⁶ They are not *from the world*, just as I am not *from the world*.”

The parallels between the Epistles and the second edition presented here are all the more impressive in light of the brevity of the Epistles, a mere 133 verses; of the 105 verses in 1 John more than one third have analogies in John 1–20! Even so, many scholars are reluctant to ascribe them to literary dependence, preferring to view them as witnesses to a vibrant but relatively stable oral tradition or compositional commonplaces.⁸

For example, according to Martin Hengel, the Johannine “school,” under the influence of the elder, developed a distinctive theological dialect or sociolect. This position is plausible, but it is not the most compelling option. Hengel and others hold that the Epistles and Gospel were composed at about the same time and that the elder’s theological inclination thus informed the composition of the Gospel, but this position becomes difficult to sustain if the Gospel were written twenty or more years later, which likely was the case.

It is more likely that the early redactors consciously imitated the elder’s idiolect, or distinctive language, according to the rhetorical practice of *ethopoeia*, or “character-making,” speaking in character. According to one first-century rhetor, students should practice giving voice to characters by imagining “what is appropriate to each subject,

8. Hengel attributes the parallels to composition by the same author: “The manifold and in some respects close links between the two short letters and the Gospel, and even more the first letter, are really astonishing” (*Johannine Question*, 33).

aiming at what fits the speaker and his manner of speech and the time and his lot in life.”⁹ Among Theon’s examples is Herodotus, who “often speaks like barbarians although writing in Greek, because he imitates their ways of speaking.”¹⁰ According to Quintilian some instructors referred to “imitation of the characteristics of others” as “ἠθοποιία or, as others prefer, μίμησις.”¹¹ Some such imitations were so clever that classicists continue to debate, for example, the authenticity of texts ascribed to the likes of Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Paul, Lucian, or Galen.

Those who composed John 1–20 mined the Epistles to create a Johannine *ēthos* for their *poiēseis* and by so doing created the impression that the Gospel relied on his witness. On the other hand, we would be ill-advised to view this evocation of the Epistles too woodenly, as though these authors had copies of the Epistles at the ready so that they could scroll through them for *les mots justes*. It is more likely that they were so thoroughly saturated with the letters, 1 John in particular, that such expressions came rather easily to mind and quill.

9. Aelius Theon, *Progymn.* 8, as translated by George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition* (WGRW 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 48.

10. *Progymn.* 8 (Kennedy).

11. *Inst.* 9.2.58.

The Final Gospel Stratum and a Johannine Corpus

The Epilogue

Scholars almost universally consider John 21 an addition to an earlier edition of the Gospel.¹ It begins as follows: “After these things, Jesus again revealed himself to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberius; he revealed himself like this:² Simon Peter and Thomas, called Twin, and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.³ Simon Peter says to them, ‘I’m going fishing’” (21:1–3). Peter, Thomas, and Nathanael appear in chs. 1–20, but not the “sons of Zebedee.” Here the Epilogist assumes that his readers know of James and John from the Synoptics, where they and Peter are

1. Several scholars have argued that ch. 21 belongs to the same compositional stratum as the rest of the Gospel, but C. K. Barrett admirably summarizes the philological evidence that the Evangelist was not the author of ch. 21 (*The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* [London: SPCK, 1958], 479–80). See also Hartwig Thyen, “Johannes 13 und die ‘Kirchliche Redaktion’ des vierten Evangeliums,” in his *Studien zum Corpus Johanneum* (WUNT 214; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 30–31, esp. n4. For a judicious treatment of the topic and a defense of two compositional strata see especially Francis J. Moloney, “John 21 and the Johannine Story,” in *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature* (ed. Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore; SBLRBS 55; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 237–51.

fishermen; no disciple is an angler in John 1–20. Furthermore, for some reason the Epilogist does not name the “two other disciples,” one of whom is the Beloved Disciple, who appears prominently later in the chapter. In any case, one need not take the “two other disciples” in John 21:2 to be members of the Twelve.

Thomas the Twin

The descriptor “the Twin” for Thomas appears in the canonical Gospels only in John, but this sobriquet appears in several so-called apocryphal texts from the second and third centuries, most significantly the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Acts of Thomas*. All references to him in the Fourth Gospel are suspect and suggest that the Epilogist (i.e., the final redactor) inserted his name in a polemic with traditions about him.²

The earliest reference anywhere to the Twin appears in John 11:16, and in a suspicious context. In the second edition Jesus told his disciples that Lazarus had died and then said: “For your sakes, I am glad I was not there, so that you might believe. But let’s now go off [ἄγωμεν] to him” (11:15). Then one reads of Thomas’s response, which repeats Jesus’s invitation to “go off [ἄγωμεν]” and resembles Peter’s response to Jesus’s anticipation of abandonment in Mark:

Mark 14:31

But he [Peter] was insisting, “Even if I must die with [συναποθανεῖν] you, I will never deny you.” And all the rest, too, were saying the same thing.

John 11:16

Then Thomas called the Twin said to his fellow-disciples, “Let us too go off so that we might die [ἀποθάνωμεν] with him.”

Mark’s Peter and John’s Thomas both later fail to suffer with their Lord.

The next earliest reference to the Twin appears in John 14:5, again in an awkward setting: “Thomas says to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going [οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ὑπάγεις]; how can we know the way [τὴν ὁδόν]?’” This repeats Peter’s question a few verses earlier: “Where are you going [ποῦ ὑπάγεις]?” (13:36). Verse 5 creates a non sequitur;

2. This view is not new. See, for example, Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

notice how smoothly v. 4 segues into v. 6b without the verse about Thomas: “where I am going you know the way [ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω οἴδατε τὴν ὁδόν]:^{6b} I am the way, the truth, and the life.” But in v. 5 Thomas directly contradicts Jesus by claiming that the disciples “do not know the way,” using nearly the same language to do so! In both of his initial appearances, Thomas the Twin plays a negative role similar to Peter’s in the Synoptics.

The most extensive episode about Thomas appears near the end of the Gospel. “Thomas, one of the twelve, the one called Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. Then the other disciples were telling him, ‘We have seen the Lord!’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the place of the nails, thrust my finger into the place of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side I will not believe!’” (20:24–25). Jesus then appeared to the disciples once again, a doublet to reassure doubting Thomas.³

Then he says to Thomas, “Bring your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and thrust it into my side, and do not be disbelieving but believing.”

Thomas responded and said, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus says to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are they who have not seen and believe.” (20:27–29)

The interpolation of vv. 24–29 likely was directed, ironically, against Thomas Christians whose theology held to a dogmatic dualism between soul and body (see, for example, *GThom.* 21–22, 28–29, 36–37, 87, and 112). Be that as it may, every reference to Thomas the Twin in the Fourth Gospel likely is secondary.

The Fishing Trip

The story of the miraculous catch of fish is a free redaction of a similar catch in Luke 5:1–11, Jesus’s calling for four fishermen to follow him.

3. The final redactor refers to both of Jesus’s appearances earlier in ch. 20. At the conclusion of the miraculous catch of fish one finds “This already was the third time that Jesus, after being raised from the dead, appeared to the disciples” (21:14).

^{21:3} Simon Peter says to them [the six other disciples], “I’m going fishing.”
They said to him, “We too are going with you.”

They went and boarded the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

⁴ Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Then Jesus says to them, “Young fellows, do you have any fish?”

They answered him, “No.”

⁶ And he told them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”

Then they cast, and because of the great number of fish they no longer were able to drag up the net. ⁷ Then that disciple whom Jesus loved says to Peter, “It is the Lord!”

Then, when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tore off his clothing—for he was naked—and threw himself into the sea. ⁸ But the other disciples came by boat, for they were not far from land but about two hundred cubits [about 300 feet], dragging the net of fish.

⁹ When they all disembarked on land, they saw a charcoal fire and fish and bread lying there. ¹⁰ Jesus says to them, “Bring here some of the fish that you now have caught.”

¹¹ Then Simon Peter rose up and dragged on land the net stuffed with large fish, one hundred and fifty three of them. Despite their number, the net did not rip.

The parallels between this story and Luke 5:1–11 are as controversial as they are undeniable. Many interpreters have proposed that, even though John 21 is a later addition to the Gospel, it preserves a tradition more primitive than Luke’s account, possibly a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus. It was Luke who relocated the episode to the beginning of Jesus’s ministry.⁴ In *Luke and Vergil*, however, I presented arguments for Luke’s imitation of the so-called *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* in the creation of the episode; on that premise the Johannine Epilogist must have known of the miraculous catch from Luke and not from independent tradition.⁵

4. See for example, John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, Vol. 2: *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 896–904. “I think that the preponderance of evidence favors the view that in the miraculous catch of fish we have a story of a post-resurrection appearance that in the Lukan tradition has been turned into a call story at the beginnings of Jesus’ public ministry” (904).

5. See the discussion in MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil: Imitations of Classical Greek Literature* (NTGL 2; Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 14–20.

The Restoration of Simon Peter

The fishing trip gives prominence to Peter, but this was not the case earlier in the Gospel. In every Synoptic list of the Twelve, the name Peter appears first, but there is no such list in the Fourth Gospel. One also will find no equivalents to several Synoptic passages favorable to Peter (e.g., Mark 1:29–31; 8:29; 9:2–13; 13:3–4; Matt 15:17–19; 17:24–27). The unnamed swordsman at Jesus's arrest in the Synoptics becomes none other than Peter, whose violence against Malchus shows that he did not understand Jesus's mission or fate (18:10–11). Perhaps most striking is John's account of Peter's denial, which says nothing about his remorse after the cock crowed (18:27; cf. Mark 14:72; Luke 22:62). From this episode to the end of ch. 20, Peter never reappears in the narrative by name, unlike in the Synoptics.

But in the Epilogue, immediately after the account of the miraculous haul of fish, one reads:

While they were eating breakfast, Jesus says to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love [ἀγαπᾷς] me more than these?"

He says to him, "Yes Lord, you know that I love [φιλέω] you."

He says to him, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶ Again, a second time, he says to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love [ἀγαπᾷς] me?"

He says to him, "Yes Lord, you know that I love [φιλέω] you."

He says to him, "Shepherd my sheep."

¹⁷ A third time he says to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love [φιλεῖς] me?"

Peter was grieved that the third time he said to him, "Do you love [φιλεῖς] me?" And he says to him, "Yes Lord, you know that I love [φιλέω] you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." (21:15–17)

The alternation of the two words for love surely is significant. Peter never responds to Jesus's question with the verb ἀγαπάω, only with φιλέω. In Jesus's third question he switches to Peter's verb: φιλεῖς με.

Jesus then predicts Peter's martyrdom: "When you were young you would dress yourself and walk wherever you wished. But when you become old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will

dress you and take you where you do not wish.' He said this to signify with what type of death he would glorify God. And having said this, he said to him, 'Follow me'" (21:18–19).

The Epilogist's refusal to grant to Peter the verb *ἀγαπάω* in vv. 15–17 strategically contrasts with v. 20: "Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved [*ἡγάπα*], who had reclined at dinner on his breast." In other words, even though Jesus commissioned Peter to feed his sheep, it was the unnamed disciple whom he loved.

Clearly one of the goals of the Epilogist was to redeem Simon Peter despite his denials. He, more than the other disciples, demonstrated his love for Jesus by swimming to him, was crushed that Jesus asked him three times if he loved him, was commanded by Jesus to shepherd his sheep, and would die as a martyr.⁶ Even so, it was an unnamed disciple who enjoyed Jesus's deepest affections. As we shall now see, vindications of Simon Peter appear elsewhere in the final redaction.

6:67–69. The Johannine Version of Peter's Confession

Mark 8:29 reads: "He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said to him, 'You are the Messiah!'" (cf. Matt 16:15–16 and Luke 9:20). There seems to have been no equivalent to these verses in the two earlier versions of the Gospel of John, and the final redactor added the following after the statement that some of Jesus's disciples abandoned him:

Then Jesus said to the twelve, "You too do not want to go, do you?"

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have sayings of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed and known that you are the holy one of God." (6:67–69)

Here Simon Peter speaks for the twelve and gives testimony to Jesus's identity. It may be worth noting that a few verses later, in Mark 8:33, Jesus calls Peter "Satan." Similarly in John, Jesus says "'Did I not choose twelve of you? Yet one of you is a devil.' ⁷¹ He was referring to Judas,

6. This redemption is similar to what one finds in Luke-Acts where Jesus predicts that Peter will "turn about and strengthen the brothers" (Luke 22:32), which he does in Acts 1–5.

son of Simon Iscariot, for this man was about to betray him, one of the twelve” (6:70b–71).

10:1–18. The Hired Hand and the Good Shepherd

Earlier in the Gospel only in 10:1–18 and 26–29 does Jesus refer to his followers as sheep, and the Epilogist likely evokes these passages in 21:15–17, where Jesus transfers pastoral responsibility for the flock to Simon Peter. John 10 is infamous for its compositional complexity, and scholars rightly have suspected that vv. 1–18, the Good Shepherd Discourse, did not originally appear in the Gospel.

These verses likely are an allegory of the entire span of the Gospel, from the Prologue to the Epilogue! The tale begins with Jesus declaring who he is, somewhat as the narrator did in the Prologue.

John 1:9

The true light . . . was coming [ἐρχόμενον] into the world.

John 10:2

“The one who comes [ὁ . . . ἐρχόμενος] through the door is the shepherd of the sheep.”

The gatekeeper who permits the shepherd to enter is probably John the Baptist.⁷ When two of his disciples “heard [ἤκουσαν]” him say that Jesus was the lamb of God, they left him and “followed Jesus [ἠκολούθησεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ]” (1:37; cf. 40). Compare this with John 10:3: “To this one [the shepherd] the gatekeeper opens [the gate]; and the sheep hear his voice [τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούει; cf. 10:27: τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούουσιν], and he calls his own sheep individually by name, and leads them.” The redactor probably is referring to Jesus’s calling Simon Peter by his name without having met him before (1:42). Similarly, when Jesus first sees Nathanael, he says, “Look, truly an Israelite in whom is no deceit.” To which Nathanael replies, “Whence do you know me?” (1:48). One might say that Jesus knew his own even before he met them.⁸

7. So also John Painter, “Tradition, History and Interpretation in John 10,” in *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and its Context* (ed. Johannes Beutler and Robert T. Fortna; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 73.

8. See the fascinating treatment by Kasper Bro Larsen, “The Recognition Scenes and Epistemological

John 10:4–6:

And when he drives out all his own, he goes before them, and his sheep follow him [αὐτῷ ἀκολουθεῖ; cf. 10:27: ἀκολουθοῦσίν μοι], because they know his voice. ⁵ They do not follow [ἀκολουθήσουσιν] another, but they flee from him, because they do not know the voice of others.” ⁶ Jesus spoke this riddle to them, and they did not know what it was that he was telling them.

The “others” whose voice Jesus’s sheep did not know are surely the hostile religious authorities.

The allegory continues with the shepherd no longer leading his sheep out of the fold but now protecting them while they are inside it. The imagery derives from Ezekiel, where Israel is presented as God’s flock whose shepherds exploit it for food and wool but fail to protect it from wild beasts (34:2–9).

Again Jesus said, “Truly, truly I tell you, that I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All those who came [before me] are thieves and bandits [cf. 10:1], but the sheep do not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If someone enters [the fold] through me, he will be saved and will travel in and out and find pasturage. ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, slay, and destroy.” (10:7–10)

These verses summarize Jesus’s controversies with religious authorities throughout the Gospel.

In what follows, Jesus no longer is the door to the fold but once again the shepherd, who, one now learns, is willing to offer his life for his sheep; in other words, the redactor continues his allegory of the Gospel by referring to Jesus’s resolution to die. “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (10:11), unlike the cowardly shepherds in Ezekiel 34.

At this point one finds two new characters: “the hired hand” and “the wolf.” It would appear that the first allegorizes Peter and the second Judas. The following columns compare John 10:12–13 not with Jesus’s arrest in John 18, where the disciples do not flee, but with Mark, where they do.⁹

Reciprocity in the Fourth Gospel,” in *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic* (ed. Kasper Bro Larsen; Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 341–56.

Mark 14:45, 50, 27, 29

Judas “having come [ἐλθὼν] . . . says to him, . . .⁵⁰ And they all abandoned him and fled [ἀφέντε . . . ἔφυγον] (cf. 52: ἔφυγεν). . . .²⁷ “I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep will be scattered [πατάξω τὸν ποιμένα, καὶ τὰ πρόβατα διασκορπισθήσονται]. . . .” In v. 29 Peter insists that he would die with Jesus, but later denies knowing him.

John 10:12–13

“Insofar as the hired hand is not the shepherd [ποιμὴν], the sheep [τὰ πρόβατα] are not his

own; when he sees the wolf coming [ἐρχόμενον] he abandons [ἀφήσειν] the sheep [τὰ πρόβατα] and flees [φεύγει]

—and the wolf ravages and scatters [ἄρπάξει αὐτὰ καὶ σκορπίζει; cf. 10:28 and 29: ἄρπάσει . . . ἄρπάξιν]¹³ because he is a hired hand and does not look out for the sheep.”

Verses 14–15 allegorize the crucifixion: “I am the good shepherd, and I know my own [sheep], and my own know me; just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for my sheep,” unlike the hired hand who abandons them. Surely the following parallels suggest that Peter is the hired hand:

John 13:37b–38

Peter: “I would lay down my life for you [τὴν ψυχὴν μου ὑπὲρ σοῦ θήσω].”³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me [τὴν ψυχὴν σου ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ θήσεις]?”

“Truly, truly I tell you, the cock will not crow until you have denied me three times.” Jesus will lay down his life.

John 10:12, 14–15

“When he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and flees. . . .¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, . . .

¹⁵ and I lay down my life for my sheep [τὴν ψυχὴν μου τίθμι ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων].”

Verse 16: “But I have other sheep that are not of this fold, and these too I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd [εἷς ποιμὴν].” The most important antetext to v. 16 again is Ezekiel 34, where God promises to gather the sheep that had scattered because of the carelessness of Israel’s shepherds (34:11–16)

9. John 16:32 reveals that the flight of the disciples was known in the Johannine School: “Look, the hour is coming and has arrived so that each of you will be scattered [σκορπισθήτε] to his own home, and you will leave me [ἀφήτε] alone.”

and establish “over them one shepherd [LXX ποιμένα ἕνα], and he will shepherd them, namely my slave David, and he will be their shepherd [ποιμήν]” (34:23).

The final two verses of the riddle of the shepherd allegorize Jesus’s death and resurrection:

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I might again receive it.¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I myself lay it down. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to receive it again (10:17–18a).

What did the final redactor mean by “other sheep that are not of this fold” (10:16a)? As we have seen, the Epilogist restores the authority of Simon Peter to become the shepherd of the flock and to feed Jesus’s sheep after his departure. He may have intended this authority to include Johannine communities. Stated allegorically, the two flocks—and perhaps more—are to become a single flock under a single shepherd: Simon Peter, who one day would lay down his life as Jesus had (21:18–19).¹⁰ The Good Shepherd Discourse thus presupposes the narrative arc of the entire Gospel from the Prologue to the Epilogue.

13:6-11 and 36b-37a. Peter and Jesus’s Final Farewell

Interpreters have suspected that the Epilogist also tampered with ch. 13.¹¹ Verse 2 reads, “and during dinner, the devil already having cast into his heart that Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, should betray him . . .”; this stands in tension with v. 27: “After the sop, Satan then entered into him.” This second reference to Judas shares more with its likely model, Luke 22:3a: “Satan entered into Judas, the one called Iscariot.” Furthermore, v. 3 awkwardly repeats that Jesus knew that his end had arrived. The text would read more smoothly as follows:

Before the feast of the Passover, because Jesus knew that his hour had come to be translated from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 And during dinner

10. Cf. John 11:52 (which also is secondary; vW 3): Jesus would die “not only on behalf of the [Jewish] people, but also so that the children of God scattered would gather together into one.”

11. For example, Thyen, “Johannes 13,” 29–41.

[omitting 2b-3], ⁴ he rose up [omitting the repetitive “from the dinner”], put aside his garments, and taking a towel he girded himself. (13:1-2a, 4)

By omitting 2b-3 one removes the premature introduction of the devil and unnecessary repetitions of Jesus’s awareness of his fate.¹²

The foot washing itself likely was inspired by Luke 12:37-38. Compare the following:

Luke 12:37-38 (cf. *Logoi* 8:15-16)

“Blessed [μακάριοι] are those slaves whose Lord [ὁ κύριος], on arriving, finds (them) watching. Truly I tell you that he will tie up his loose clothing [περιζώσῃται],

make them recline [ἀνακλινεῖ], and come and serve them.

[cf. Matt 10:24-25]

³⁸ And if he should come at the second or at the third watch of the night and find them [καὶν . . . εὐρηγούτως] awake, they are blessed [μακάριοί εἰσιν ἐκεῖνοι].”

John 13:4-5, 12-17

[Jesus]

put aside his garments, and taking a towel he girded himself [διέζωσεν].

⁵ Then he poured water into the washbasin and began to wash the feet of his disciples and to dry them with the towel that he was wearing [διεζωσμένος]. [vv. 6-11 omitted]

¹² When he had washed their feet, taken back his garments, and reclined [ἀνέπεσεν] with them again, he said to them, “Do you know why I did this? ¹³ You call me teacher and Lord, and you speak well, for I am. ¹⁴ If I, the Lord [ὁ κύριος] and teacher, wash your feet, you too should wash each other’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you a model so that as I have done to you, you too should do.

¹⁶ Truly, truly I tell you, a slave is not greater than his Lord, nor the one sent greater than the one who sent him.

¹⁷ If you know these things,

you are blessed if you do them [μακάριοί ἐστε ἂν ποιῆτε αὐτά].”

Whereas in Luke Jesus’s followers are blessed if they faithfully await the return of their Lord, in John they are blessed if they lovingly care for each other. Despite these differences, the parallels are striking: “the

12. For a discussion of the literary problems, see Johannes Beutler, *Neue Studien zu den johanneischen Schriften* (BBB 167; Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2012), 239-50.

Lord” in Luke serves his reclining inferiors at a meal and adjusts his garments to do so (“he will tie up his loose clothing [περιζώσῃται]”; John’s Jesus “put aside his garments” and “girded himself [διέζωσεν]”).

The column on the right intentionally omitted vv. 6–11, which concern Peter and offer an altogether different interpretation of what Jesus did; now it is a ritual cleansing for sin.

Then he comes to Simon Peter. He [Peter] says to him, “Lord, are you really going to wash my feet?”

⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “You do not now know what I am doing, but after this you will know.”

⁸ Peter says to him, “You should never wash my feet!”

Jesus replied to him, “Unless I wash you, you will have no part with me.”

⁹ Simon Peter says to him, “Lord, not just my feet but also my hands and head.”

¹⁰ Jesus says to him, “The one who has bathed has no need to be washed except for his feet, but is entirely pure, and you [plural] are pure, but not all of you.” ¹¹ For he knew who would betray him, which is why he said, “Not all of you are clean.” (13:6–11a)

Peter here demonstrates his concern for Jesus by refusing to let him play the role of a slave. When he learns that unless Jesus washes him he “will have no part with” him, he asks to be washed—feet, hands, and head. Jesus refuses to wash his hands and head and declares all the disciples clean, except for Judas, whom Satan later enters in v. 27.

Although scholars recognize these conflicting interpretations of the foot washing, many consider vv. 6–11 to have been prior, and vv. 12–17 to be later. Surely this is not the case; several considerations strongly suggest that the exchange with Peter is a later interpolation. In the first place, the shift of attention to this disciple seems abrupt. Second, as we have seen in the Epilogue, Peter distinguishes himself from the other disciples by his impetuosity by diving into the sea to swim to Jesus (21:7); here he does so by refusing to let Jesus wash his feet. The verb διαζώννυμι, “I put on a garment,” appears in the entire New Testament only here in 13:4 and 5 and 21:7 (and only once in the LXX/OG), which may suggest that the Epilogist was influenced by the foot washing episode. The most powerful argument in favor of viewing

vv. 6–11 as secondary are the striking parallels between 13:4–5 and 12–17—without the suspicious insertion—and Luke 12:37–38, as we have seen.

There is, however, one other Lukan parallel that should close the deal. The scene of Jesus giving instructions at a meal in John 13 strongly resembles Luke 22, when he gives the following instruction to the disciples:

^{22:24} A controversy also arose among them: which of them seemed to be the greatest [μείζων]. ²⁵ He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you; but let the greatest [μείζων] among you become like the youngest, and let the leader be like one who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater [μείζων], the one reclining or the one serving? Is it not the one reclining? I am among you as one who serves.”

The preoccupation with who is “the greatest [μείζων]” applies also to John 13: “For I have given you a model so that as I have done to you, you too should do. Truly, truly I tell you, a slave is not greater [μείζων] than his Lord, nor the one sent greater [μείζων] than the one who sent him” (13:16). In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus dramatizes his instructions in Luke.

Later in ch. 13 one finds yet another likely addition to the second edition intended to redeem Simon Peter. Verse 36a segues smoothly into 37b if one removes 36b–37a: “Simon Peter says to him, ‘Lord, where are you going? [36b–37a] ^{37b} Why can I not follow you now? I would lay down my soul for you.’ ³⁸ Jesus answered, ‘Will you lay down your soul for me? Truly, truly I tell you, the cock will not crow until you have denied me three times.’” Here is the interpolated content: “Jesus replied [to him], ‘Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later.’ ^{37a} Peter said to him, ‘Lord, . . .’” (36b–37a).

Several observations suggest that these verses are a later addition to the second edition. Jesus’s response repeats his statement in v. 33, but more significantly, his statement that Peter would “follow” his Lord in martyrdom reflects the interest of the Epilogist. Compare the following:

John 13:36

Jesus replied [to him], “Where I am going you cannot follow [ἀκολουθήσει] me now, but you will follow [ἀκολουθήσεις] later.”

John 21:19

[Jesus predicted Peter’s crucifixion.] And having said this, he said to him, “Follow me [ἀκολουθεῖ μοι].”

The Beloved Disciple

Despite Simon Peter’s exceptional enthusiasm in the Epilogue, it was not he but “that disciple whom Jesus loved” who first recognized the stranger on shore. After Jesus’s prediction of Peter’s death, one finds an even more explicit comparison with the Beloved Disciple:

21:20 Peter turned around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, the one who also had reclined on Jesus’s breast at dinner and said, “Lord who is your betrayer?”²¹ When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, and what about this fellow?”

²² Jesus said to him, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You are to follow me.”²³ This saying thus circulated among the brothers that this disciple will not die. But Jesus did not tell him “he will not die,” but “if I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?”

Although the Epilogue never names the Beloved Disciple, his identity surely was known to the first readers as the old man who died, contrary to the expectations of his community, “the brothers.”

What follows is the second postscript to the Gospel, which ascribes all twenty-one chapters to Jesus’s beloved: “This is the disciple who gives witness about these things and who wrote them down, and we know that his witness is true.”²⁵ There are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if each one were written, I suppose not even the world could contain the books written” (21:24–25). As was the case with Thomas the Twin, every appearance of the Beloved Disciple in John likely is an addition to the second edition.

1:35-42. The Unnamed Disciple of the Baptist

This enigmatic character first appears in the Gospel—and in literary history—in John 1:35–40, but only if one includes vv. 35–36, 38–39, 40b, and 43. Without these additions the text identifies John’s two disciples

as Andrew and Philip. Here is the end of the Baptist's testimony to Jesus and what likely followed it in the Dionysian Gospel.

^{1:34} "I have seen [the Spirit descending on Jesus like a dove] and bore witness that this is the chosen one of God." [35–36]³⁷ And his two disciples heard him speaking and followed Jesus. [38–39]^{40a} There was Andrew [40b]; ^{40c} this one first finds his own brother Simon and says to him, ⁴¹ "We have found the Messiah," which is translated as Christ. ⁴² He brought him to Jesus.

Once Jesus looked at him he said, "You are Simon, the son of John; you will be called Cephas," which is translated as Peter. [43]

⁴⁴ And there was Philip from Bethsaida, from the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip finds Nathanael and tells him, "We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law and also the prophets: Jesus from Nazareth, the son of Joseph!"

The verses omitted here (identified by brackets) are suspect. For example, vv. 35–36 unnecessarily repeat v. 29 and emphasize the presence of John's two disciples:

John 1:29

On the next day he sees Jesus coming to him and says,

"Look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

John 1:35–36

On the next day again John stopped, with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and when he saw Jesus walking about he says,

"Behold the lamb of God."

Furthermore, vv. 38–39 strongly resemble the following passage from the Epilogue, which likewise involves the Beloved Disciple, suggesting that they came from the same hand:

John 1:38–39

And Jesus turned, and when he saw them following,

he said to them,

“For what are you looking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi, . . . where you are abiding.”

³⁹ He said to them, “Come and you will see.”

Then they went and saw where he was abiding, and they abided with him that day. It was about 4:00 p.m.

John 21:20–22

Peter turned around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, . . .

²¹ he said to Jesus,

“Lord, and what about this fellow?”

²² Jesus said to him, “If I want him to abide until I come, what is that to you? You are to follow me.”

The apparently gratuitous reference to the time of day has significance if the author wanted to make the case that the episode was based on an eyewitness; viz. the Beloved Disciple.

But it is v. 43 that is most suspicious: “On the next day, he wanted to go into Galilee. He finds Philip, and Jesus says to him, ‘follow me.’” If one includes this verse, Philip was not the second of John’s disciples. But if one removes it, John’s disciples would be Andrew and Philip. Notice the following similarities.

Andrew (1:40–41)

“There was Andrew [ἦν Ἀνδρέας]; [40b] this one finds his brother Simon.”

Andrew notifies Simon that he had found the Messiah. Jesus then renames him Peter.

Philip (1:44)

“And there was Philip [ἦν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος] from Bethsaida, from the city of Andrew and Peter.”

Philip notifies Nathanael that he had found the promised one.

Andrew and Philip also appear together in John 6:6–9 (cf. 12:20–22, which likely is secondary).

Hartwig Thyen: “It seems to me altogether *certain* that this verse 43 was interpolated for this reason, to make one of the two first-called [disciples] the anonymous one. Without verse 43 Andrew and Philip are the two first disciples of John to be notified of Jesus.”¹³ On the

13. Hartwig Thyen, “Entwicklungen innerhalb der johanneischen Theologie und Kirche im Spiegel von Joh 21 und der Lieblingsjüngertexte des Evangeliums,” in *L’Évangile de Jean: Sources, rédaction,*

other hand, if one includes the verse, the reader is teased to speculate concerning the identity of Andrew's mysterious companion. Whoever he was, it was he, not Peter, whose memory of Jesus began already with John the Baptist and whose witness thus would be more complete (cf. Luke 1:2 and Acts 1:21–22). The insertion of this single verse thus subordinates Peter to the Beloved Disciple as in the Epilogue!

13:23–25. The Unnamed Disciple at Jesus's Final Farewell

This mysterious disciple immediately peters out of the Fourth Gospel, only to pop up in ch. 13, just as mysteriously, again with Peter. The following columns compare the two accounts of Jesus's cryptic identification of his betrayer but omit the reference to the Beloved Disciple in John 13:23–25.

Mark 14:18–20

As they were reclining and eating, Jesus said,

*"Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who eats with me."*¹⁹ They began to be sorrowful and say to him one by one, "It is not I, is it?"

²⁰ He said to them, "One of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me!"

John 13:21–22, 26

When Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in his spirit, gave witness, and said,

*"Truly I tell you that one of you will betray me."*²² The disciples looked at each other at a loss about what he was saying. [23–25]

²⁶ Jesus replied, "That one is the one with whom I will dip the sop and give it to him."

The absence of vv. 23–25 in no way disturbs the meaning; the final redactor likely inserted them to place Simon Peter in a subordinate role to the Beloved Disciple, as in the Epilogue, which explicitly refers to this episode (21:20). "One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining on his chest. Simon Peter signaled to him to ask about whom he spoke. Then that fellow, sitting at Jesus chest, says to him, 'Lord, who is it?'" (13:23–25). Here, as in ch. 21, Peter and the Beloved Disciple are juxtaposed, and the latter again takes priority; Peter must

théologie (ed. Martinus de Jonge; BETL 44; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1977), 275 (emphasis Thyen). Reprinted in his *Studien*, 42–88. He defends his views on the Beloved Disciple in "Noch einmal: Johannes 21 und 'der Jünger, den Jesus liebte,'" in his *Studien*, 252–93.

ask his question to Jesus indirectly.¹⁴ Furthermore, “the parallelism of his relationship to Jesus with that of the revealer to the Father (John 1:18 [ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς]) is no accident but a fully intentional construction.”¹⁵

18:15–17. The Unnamed Disciple at Peter’s Denial

The model for Peter’s denial (which likely did not appear in the Dionysian Gospel) seems to have been Mark 14:54 and 66–67, but only the Fourth Gospel contains an intrusive reference to “another disciple.”

Simon Peter followed Jesus, as well as another disciple. That other disciple was an acquaintance of the chief priest and accompanied Jesus into the courtyard of the chief priest.¹⁶ Peter, however, stood outside at the gate. Then the other disciple, an acquaintance of the chief priest, came out and spoke to the gate keeper, who brought Peter inside.¹⁷ Then, the woman guarding the gate said to Peter. . . . (18:15–17a)

It is not Peter, but this “other disciple” who accompanies Jesus to his trial. Furthermore, he was a familiar to Jerusalem’s religious elite, and without his intervention with the gate keeper, Peter might not have been able to accompany Jesus as far as he did. Most significantly, of course, the unnamed disciple made no secret of his association with Jesus, whereas Peter did so three times.¹⁶

19:26–27. The Unnamed Disciple at the Cross

The next appearance of this enigmatic character occurs at the crucifixion. The Evangelist’s model for the women at the cross probably was Mark.

14. The verb *νεύω*, here translated “signaled,” appears only once elsewhere in the New Testament, and the cognate verb *κατανεύω* appears only once; in Luke 5:7 the disciples in one boat signal to those in the other to help them net the fish.

15. Thyen, “Entwicklungen,” 280.

16. Thyen, “Entwicklungen,” 281.

Mark 15:40–41

Women were watching from a distance among them were

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the short and Joses, and Salome.

John 19:25–26

Women stood near Jesus's cross:

his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son."

Conspicuously absent in both columns are Jesus's disciples, with one exception: the Beloved Disciple. My reconstruction of the Dionysian Gospel omits the reference to him, and von Wahlde likewise attributes it to the final redaction. After Jesus addressed his mother, "he said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her in at his home" (19:27). The only male at the cross thus was the Beloved Disciple, and it was to him that Jesus entrusted his mother. Furthermore, the Beloved Disciple is "exemplary as the true witness under the cross."¹⁷ John 19:27 likely is an insertion to endorse the Beloved Disciple at the expense of the Twelve.

19:34b–35. The Unnamed Witness at the Cross

The account of Jesus's death in the second edition reads more coherently if one omits vv. 34b–35:

But on coming to Jesus, they [the soldiers] saw that he already had died, and did not break his legs,³⁴ but one of the soldiers pierced his side with his spear. [34b–35]³⁶ For these things took place so that the writing might be fulfilled: "His bones will not be broken";³⁷ again another writing says, "They will look on the one whom they have stabbed."

The verse and a half omitted here resonate with the Epilogist's postscript.

17. Thyen, "Entwicklungen," 285. According to Thyen, the Epilogist also was responsible for the reference to Jesus's mother at the cross (283–86).

John 19:34b–35

Immediately out poured blood and water.³⁵ And the one who observed it witnessed [μεμαρτύρηκεν] to it, and his witness is true [ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία], that he knew that he was speaking the truth [ἀληθῆ], so that you too might believe.

John 21:24

This is the disciple who gives witness [ὁ μαρτυρῶν] about these things and who wrote them down, and we know that his witness is true [οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν].

The interruption of the passion narrative to address the reader concerning the veracity of this account of Jesus's crucifixion is widely viewed as the work of the final redactor.

20:2–11a. The Unnamed Runner to the Tomb

Only one other passage in John pertains explicitly to the Beloved Disciple; it is both the most extensive and the most intriguing. John's narration of the Magdalene's arrival at Jesus's tomb in ch. 20 begins much as Mark's does, especially if one omits vv. 2–11a.¹⁸

Mark 16:2–6

Quite *early on the first day of the week*, they [three women, including *Mary Magdalene*; v. 1] went to the tomb after the sun rose.³ They were saying to each other, "Who will roll the stone from the door of the tomb for us?"

⁴ When they looked up they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled back.

⁵ When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man seated on the right side, wearing a white robe,

and they were amazed.⁶ He says to them, "Do not be amazed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He was raised! He is not here! Look at the place where the *you placed him*."

John 20:1, 11b–13

On the first day of the week, early, while it was still dark, *Mary Magdalene went to the tomb*

and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. [2–11a]

^{11b} As she wept, she stooped into the tomb¹² and saw two angels in white garments, sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

¹³ And they say to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have removed my Lord, and I do not know where they placed him."

The narrative suffers not in the least from the omission of vv. 2–11a;

18. As we have seen, the appearance of Jesus to the Magdalene also redacts his appearance on the road to Emmaus.

they are intrusive and once again pit the Beloved Disciple against Peter. One might call this insertion the apostolic footrace.

Then she [the Magdalene] ran and came to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they placed him."

³ Then Peter and the other disciple left and were going to the tomb; ⁴ the two ran together. And the other disciple ran more quickly than Peter and arrived first at the tomb, ⁵ and after stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying, but did not enter. ⁶ Then Simon Peter, following behind, also came and entered the tomb, and observed the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ as well as the facecloth which had been over his head, not lying with the linen cloths but off by itself, rolled up in another place. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who had arrived first at the tomb, entered and saw and believed. ⁹ For they did not yet know the text that it was necessary for him to rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned home. ¹¹ And Mary stood at the tomb, weeping outside.

This tale curiously inverts the sequence of arrivals from the Epilogue, where Peter swam to Jesus while the Beloved Disciple and others followed by boat. Whereas in the Epilogue it is the Beloved Disciple who first recognized Jesus on shore, in this passage it is Peter who first sees that Jesus had abandoned his shrouding. Despite these differences, both stories give credit to these two men above the other disciples—and Mary! Several interpreters, therefore, have viewed 20:2–11a as a later interpolation with suspicious affinities to the Epilogue.¹⁹

Martin Hengel admirably summarizes the Epilogist's view of the Beloved Disciple:

He . . . embodies the ideal of the disciple who stands closest to Jesus, who therefore can ask him direct questions, who is the only one to stand under the cross where the dying Jesus entrusts his own mother to him, who is witness to the spear thrust, the first to reach the empty tomb, look in, "see and believe," and the first to recognize Jesus by the Lake Gennesaret. In this way he is quite specially close to Jesus, particularly at critical moments.²⁰

19. Rudolf Bultmann, for example, argued that John 20:2–10 was the work of the Johannine Evangelist, but for 3–10 he relied on a source (*The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Oxford: Blackwell, 1971], 681–82). Thyen, however, attributed the entire chapter to a pre-Johannine source that the Epilogist redacted for his own purposes ("Entwicklungen," 288–92).

Every appearance of the Beloved Disciple in the Fourth Gospel, as we now have seen, is intrusive and betrays the hand of the Epilogist. Sometime after the composition of chs. 1–20 in the second edition, someone not only composed a supplementary ending to the Gospel but attempted to establish the reliability of the Gospel by exalting the Beloved Disciple above both Thomas the Twin and Simon Peter. Several scholars have proposed, in my view reasonably, that the redactor's interest in Thomas reflects a rivalry with a branch of the Christian movement that claimed his spiritual ancestry.²¹ The Epilogist's interest in Peter may reflect a rivalry with the Synoptics, perhaps especially with Matthew, where that disciple is most prominent.²² Surely it is worth noting that the postscript to the Epilogue acknowledges the existence of other Gospels: "There are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if each one were written, I suppose not even the world could contain the books written" (21:25).

By the end of the second century readers of the Fourth Gospel identified the unnamed disciple as John the son of Zebedee. The first twenty chapters of the Gospel of John name several disciples, but conspicuously missing are both sons of Zebedee: James and John. It thus is ironic that the Gospel came to be associated with John the brother of James, even though the Evangelist showed not the slightest interest in either of them! Although the "sons of Zebedee" appear in the Epilogue, the Beloved Disciple almost certainly was one of the two unnamed disciples in 21:2, whose identity was known to the Epilogist's readers.

The Beloved Disciple is the elder John, the author of the epistles known to Papias. The last two verses of the Epilogue that praise the Beloved Disciple paraphrase the elder's own words at the end of 3 John!

20. Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 78.

21. For example, Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, and April O. DeConick, *Voices of the Mystics: Early Christian Discourse in the Gospels of John and Thomas and Other Christian Literature* (JSNTSup 157; Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 77–85.

22. Thyen, however, attributed the rivalry with Peter to a squabble within the Johannine school concerning whether Jesus came "in the flesh," as in the Johannine epistles, which he dates later than the earliest version of the Fourth Gospel ("Entwicklungen," 292–99).

3 John 12b-13

We [the elder and his adherents] give witness [μαρτυροῦμεν] and you know that our witness is true [οἶδας ὅτι ἡ μαρτυρία ἡμῶν ἀληθῆς ἐστίν].

¹³ I have many things to write to you [πολλά . . . γράφειν], but I do not want to write [γράφειν] to you with ink and pen.

John 21:24-25

This is the disciple [μαθητῆς] who gives witness [ὁ μαρτυρῶν] about these things and who wrote them down, and we know that his witness is true [οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν].

²⁵ There are also many other things [πολλά] that Jesus did, which, if each one were written [γράφηται], I suppose not even the world could contain the books written [γραφομένα].

Udo Schnelle notes that here in 3 John “the presbyter switches from ‘we’ to ‘I’ and thus emphasizes the personal relationship to Gaius.”²³ The same switch appears at the end of the Epilogue, but the reader is provided no clue about who is referred to as “we” or “I.”²⁴

John 21:24-25 resembles another passage in the Gospel that seems suspiciously secondary. As we have seen, the account of Jesus’s death reads more coherently if one omits vv. 34b-35, which not only resonate with the Epilogist’s postscript, but also evoke another passage from the epistles!

1 John 5:6-8

[Elder:] This is the one who comes through water and blood [ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος], Jesus Christ; not in water only but in the water and the blood [τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι]. And the Spirit is the

one who gives witness [μαρτυροῦν], because the Spirit is the truth [ἐστίν ἡ ἀλήθεια].

⁷ For my witnesses [μαρτυροῦντες] are three: ⁶ the Spirit, the water, and the blood [τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἶμα]. The three are one.

John 19:34b-35

[Narrator:] Immediately out poured blood and water [αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ].

³⁵ And the one who observed it witnessed [μεμαρτύρηκεν] to it, and his witness is true [ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν ἡ μαρτυρία], that he knew that he was speaking the truth [ἀληθῆ], so that you too might believe.

For the elder, the two elements consistently are “water” and then “blood,” presumably as metaphors for baptism and the Eucharist. The order in the Gospel, however, is “blood and water”; these liquids no longer pertain to rituals but to the physicality of Jesus’s death, which

23. Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 3.

24. As observed by Barrett (*John*, 100). Hengel probably is on the mark by attributing the “I” to the Epilogist, who speaks for the entire Johannine school “as a plurality of witnesses who guarantee the truth of the work attributed to the beloved disciple; given vv. 20-23, we are to suppose that he has died” (*Johannine Question*, 84).

corresponds with the risen Jesus's invitation to Thomas to touch his wounds in what we have seen is another likely redactional insertion. "[T]he best explanation of 19:34 is that it is later than 1 John 5:6-7 since the author of 1 John could not be referring to the text of 19:34 as the explanation of 'comes in water.' Rather, 19:34 is included by the author of the third edition as an affirmation within the narrative of the Gospel of what was expressed theologically in 1 John."²⁵

John 19:35 directly addresses the reader "so that you too might believe [ἵνα . . . πιστεύητε]," which evokes the first Johannine postscript: "These things have been written that you may believe [ἵνα πιστεύσητε] that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20:31). The unexpected engagement with the readers—"you"—surely is a secondary addition. It would appear that the hand that composed the Epilogue also composed the laudatory reference to the Beloved Disciple as the witness at the cross. He apparently held that the Evangelist was none other than the elder, whom he nearly quotes!²⁶

Finally, the postscript to the Epilogue—and thus to the entire Gospel as we now have it—resonates with the opening verses of 1 John and Papias's statement about the elder. 1 John 1:1-2: "What was from the beginning, what we have seen with our eyes . . . [is that to which] we give witness [μαρτυροῦμεν]." Papias: "the elder John," a disciple (μαθητής) of Jesus, was one of the transmitters of ancient traditions whose testimony he incorporated into this own work, "with interpretations to confirm their truth [ἀλήθειαν]," one of those who "taught the truth [τάλειθῆ]," that derived from "the Truth [τῆς ἀληθείας] itself" (Echros. 1:5).

This identification requires a reassessment of Jesus's statement to Peter: "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You are to follow me."²³ Then this saying circulated among the brothers that this disciple will not die. But Jesus did not tell him 'he will not

25. Von Wahlde, *A Commentary on the Gospel and Letters of John* (3 vols.; ECC Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 1:380.

26. Thyen similarly identifies this witness as the Beloved Disciple of the Epilogist ("Entwicklungen," 286-88). See also his detailed discussion of debates over the role of the Beloved Disciple to the writing of the Gospel in "Der Jünger, den Jesus liebte," in his *Studien*, 603-22. On the competition between the Beloved Disciple and Peter, see also his discussion in "Noch Einmal," 261-73.

die,' but 'If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?'" (21:22-23). Scholars often attach this statement to an alleged longevity of the son of Zebedee, but Papias (and perhaps even Mark) knew of the deaths of both James and John (*Expos.* 2:3; cf. Mark 10:39).²⁷ It is unlikely that the death of this John would still have been an issue when the Epilogist wrote, perhaps as late as 130 CE.

On the other hand, the elder's long life conforms to the testimony of Papias, who claims that John—and Aristion—were still alive when he collected their traditions from informants. The very term *πρεσβύτερος* means "old man." Apparently some members of the Johannine communities believed that the elder would not die before Jesus returned, perhaps encouraged to so do by reading 1 John: "And now, children, abide in him, so that if he is revealed we might have boldness, and we not be shamed before him at his coming. . . .^{3:2b} Not yet has it been revealed what we shall be, but we know that if he should appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he really is" (2:28, 3:2b; see also Mark 9:1; 13:30; and parallels).²⁸

If this discussion of the final redaction of the Fourth Gospel is correct, its implications are profound. The Epilogist ascribed the entire work to the witness of the elder John. If this is the case, later tradition juggled their Johns and wrongly judged the Gospel (and often also the epistles) to be the work of the son of Zebedee.²⁹

My identification of Jesus's beloved with the elder John is by no means novel; its most ardent proponent has been Martin Hengel in *Die johanneische Frage*, an expanded and more scholarly presentation of *The Johannine Question*. But one must not mistake Hengel's views for those advocated here. On the basis of shared vocabulary and theology, Hengel argued that the epistles and the Gospel must be the products

27. See Hengel's presentation of the evidence concerning John's death in *Johannine Question*, 158n212.

28. Hengel: "Whereas . . . Mark 9:1 still says that 'some of these standing here' 'will not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God coming in power,' a generation later this privilege . . . was to be attributed to only one outsider, the mysterious beloved disciple" (*Johannine Question*, 76-77). See Tertullian, *De anima* 50.5: "Even John [i.e., the son of Zebedee] died, although there was a misguided hope that he would remain [living] at the coming of the Lord."

29. "It was doubtless inevitable that this relatively unknown John [the elder] should come to be identified with the famous John the son of Zebedee" (Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 15).

of the same individual, but these shared features more likely are due to a later author's successful portrayal of Jesus as the fountain from which the elder drank. In other words, the epistles and the Gospel resemble each other not because the elder was somehow involved in the composition of the Gospel but because later Johannine Evangelists evoked the elder to create a tale congenial to his witness (see the discussion of the Johannine theological dialect in part three).³⁰

The Canonical Apocalypse of John

Excursus 1 presented the first three of Jörg Frey's ten conclusions regarding the relationship of the Apocalypse of John to other Johannine writings. (1) The Apocalypse emerged from Johannine tradition. (2) The interpreter must distinguish between two versions of the book: Revelation 4–21, the earlier version, and the epistolary framework, chs. 1–3 and 22; I prefer limiting the secondary framework to 1:9a and 22:8–21. (3) The vision account in chs. 4–21—or in my view, from 1:9b to 22:7—is earlier than the Gospel.

Here are Frey's last seven conclusions:

4. Only in the opening verses and in the final chapter of the Apocalypse does one find the name John. "The . . . attachment to the Johannine school thus may be attributed to the final redactor, to 'the last hand of the Apocalypticist'" (420).
5. The final editor of the Book of Revelation had in mind "the Ephesian John" the elder, who influenced his theology and language. "The connection to the Johannine circle is clear" (421).
6. Despite many striking connections with other Johannine writings, neither the author of the original vision nor its final redactor was the author of the epistles or the Gospel (421).
7. The secondary framework—and thus the final publication of the Apocalypse—is pseudonymous; it was composed by someone late

30. More recently Richard Bauckham has adopted and adapted Hengel's identification of the Beloved Disciple with Papias's elder and has gone so far as to state that the elder/Evangelist presented himself as the Beloved Disciple (*Testimony*, 12).

in the Johannine literary tradition who linked his book back to the founder of the school (425–26).

8. The occurrence of the name John exclusively in the secondary framework confirms that this connection with the elder first appeared in the final publication of the Apocalypse, quite likely much later than the epistles (426).
9. The publication of the Apocalypse surely took place after the elder's death (427). Frey proposed a date during the reign of Trajan, who died in 117 CE.
10. Although it evokes the elder John, the Book of Revelation never appeals to his authority as a witness to the historical Jesus or Christian origins, as had Papias and the final redactor of the Gospel. He is not called "the elder" but "the seer," and his authority derives exclusively from his visions of Christ and the heavenly throne.

Much of what Frey concludes about the final redaction of the Book of Revelation resembles what one might say of the final redaction of the Gospel: both were written after the elder's death, and both attributed the composition of earlier books to his pen. It therefore is reasonable to suspect that the final redactions of both works witness to the same editorial project: the creation of a corpus of Johannine writings.

A Johannine Corpus?

As Charles E. Hill has noted, an early collection might help to explain how tiny and personal 2 and 3 John have come down to us intact, even though many writings of the early Church have vanished. "If 2 and 3 John circulated . . . bound with 1 John and the Gospel, or with these plus the Apocalypse, they would have been preserved in at least one form in all the churches which received an early copy. But as we know, if this form of publication existed, it never became dominant."³¹ Central to his argument is evidence that early Christian authors familiar with the Gospel also knew the Apocalypse and 1

31. Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 460.

John.³² He thus proposes a collection consisting of the Gospel, the Apocalypse, and then 1, 2, and 3 John. I would propose instead that the Apocalypse appeared at the end. I do so exclusively on the basis of literary links that create a chain of Johannine writings in this order.

Linking the Gospel to the First Epistle

The last two verses of the Gospel's epilogue segue smoothly into the beginning of the first epistle.

This is the disciple who gives witness [μαρτυρῶν] about these things and who wrote them down [γράψας ταῦτα], and we know that his witness [μαρτυρία] is true [ἀληθής].²⁵ There are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if each one were written [ἅτινα γράφηται], I suppose not even the world could contain the books written [γραφόμενα]. (John 21:24–25)

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and our hands have handled with regard to the logos of life—² and the life was made manifest, and we have seen, give witness [μαρτυροῦμεν], and proclaim to you as the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—³ what we have seen and heard, we also announce to you, so that you, too, may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.⁴ And we ourselves are writing these things [ταῦτα γράφομεν], so that your joy may be filled. . . .⁶ If we should say that we have fellowship with him and we walk in darkness, we lie and do not do the truth [ἀλήθειαν]. (1 John 1:1–4, 6)

If these two passages appeared in this sequence, the “what” to which the elder and others were eyewitnesses would refer to what he had written in his Gospel! As Hill notes, the author of the Muratorian Canon “perceives John in the first verses of 1 John to be talking not about the letter he was writing at the time, but about what he had already ‘written’ in the Gospel!”³³ Clement of Alexandria likewise suggested that 1 John appeared in his text after the Gospel.³⁴

32. *Ibid.*, 449–64. See especially his diagram on 450. “We can see a tendency to use not just the Fourth Gospel but other members of the Johannine corpus throughout the second century” (451).

33. *Ibid.*, 453.

34. *Ibid.*, 452. Citing Latin fragment 3 of Cassiodorus, which likely refers to Clement’s exegetical notes in his hypothesis.

Sequencing the Epistles

As we have seen, the redactor apparently located 1 John as the first of the epistles to segue from the epilogue of the Gospel, but what about the sequence 2 and 3 John? 3 John 9 suggests a partial answer: “I [the elder] wrote something to the church” earlier; the reader may take this as a reference to 2 John (which it likely was). Notice also the link between the last verse of 1 John and the first of 2 John:

Little children [τεκνία], keep yourselves from idols. (1 John 5:21)

The elder to the elect lady and her children [τέκνοις]. (2 John 1)

Furthermore, the last verses in 3 John—and thus the last in this sequence of all three—state that the elder had more to communicate to his “children”:

I have many things to write to you, but I do not want to write to you with ink and pen. ¹⁴ I hope to see you at once, and we will speak mouth to mouth. ¹⁵ Peace to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name. (3 John 12b–15)

If the reader next read the Book of Revelation, she would learn that John, in exile on Patmos, was no longer able to “speak mouth to mouth” and thus had to write seven epistles to his churches (chs. 2 and 3).

Perhaps even more striking is the implied history of the Johannine tradition from the Gospel, then to 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and the Apocalypse. In the final redaction of the Gospel one reads: “I am giving you a new commandment, so that you love each other, as I loved you, so that you too might love each other. ³⁵ In this way, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for each other” (13:33–34). In his famous prayer in ch. 17 one finds this: “I am making a request not for them alone, but also for those who believe in me through their message, ²¹ so that all may be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so that they may be one with us, so that the world might believe that you sent me” (17:20–21; cf. 11). The epilogue to the Gospel implies a unity between Simon Peter, the Beloved Disciple, and

“the brothers” (21:23), but dissension in the communities would soon follow.

If one next read 1 John one would find the elder reminding his followers—and all readers ever since—of the love commandment as part of an argument against those who denied that Jesus had come in the flesh (2:18–25 and 4:1–6). “I am not writing a new commandment for you, but an old commandment that you heard from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard” (1 John 2:7; cf. 3:23–24). Similarly, 2:24 refers to the love command to denounce false teachers: “Let what you have heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you have heard from the beginning abides in you, abide in the Son and in the Father. . . .²⁶ I wrote these things to you with regard to those who are deceiving you” (2:24 and 26).

In 2 John, the reader next would encounter the elder’s exclusion of rivals: “If someone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into a house or welcome him; for the one who welcomes him shares in his evil deeds” (10–11). 3 John then indicates that Diotrephes, one of the dissidents, had established himself as a rival teacher and refused to welcome those under the elder’s authority (9–10). The seven letters near the beginning of the Apocalypse savage other Jewish and Christian communities (see, for example, Rev 2:2–4 [“those who claim to be apostles”], 6 [“the Nicolaitans”; cf. 15], 9 [the “synagogue of Satan”; cf. 3:9], and 20–21 [adherents to the prophet “Jezebel”]).

Readers of such a corpus of Johannine writings would have identified with this progression from the unity of Jesus’s first followers to a theological controversy in 1 John, to a schism in 2 John, to a splinter group led by an adversary in 3 John, and finally to open hostility in the letters to the seven churches. In reality, from the beginning the followers of Jesus were theologically diverse, as one can see from the Pauline letters, but so-called proto-orthodoxy romanticized the past as a golden age of unity and denounced later rival movements, whom they accused of splintering off to follow heretical teachers.

Linking the Third Epistle to the Apocalypse

Notice also the remarkable correlation between the ending of the Gospel and the ending of 3 John:

John 21:24–25

This is the disciple [μαθητής] who gives witness [ὁ μαρτυρῶν] about these things and who wrote them down, and we know that his witness is true [οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν].

²⁵ There are also many other things [πολλά] that Jesus did, which, if each one were written [γράφεται], I suppose not even the world could contain the books written [γραφόμενα].

3 John 12b–13

We [the elder and his adherents] give witness [μαρτυροῦμεν] and you know that our witness is true [οἴδας ὅτι ἡ μαρτυρία ἡμῶν ἀληθὴς ἐστίν].

¹³ I have many things to write to you [πολλὰ . . . γράφειν], but I do not want to write [γράφειν] to you with ink and pen.

These similarities suggest that the epilogist modeled the second postscript of the Gospel after the ending of 3 John!

Even more amazing is the transition between the end of 3 John and the beginning of the Apocalypse, if they indeed appeared in this sequence. Here again is the last section of the epistles:

We give witness [μαρτυροῦμεν], and you know that our witness is true [οἴδας ὅτι ἡ μαρτυρία ἡμῶν ἀληθὴς ἐστίν]. ¹³ I have many things to write to you [πολλὰ . . . γράφειν], but I do not want to write [γράφειν] to you with ink and pen. ¹⁴ I hope to see you at once, and we will speak mouth to mouth. ¹⁵ Peace to you [εἰρήνη σοι]. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name. (3 John 12b–15)

^{1:1} Apocalypse of Jesus Christ that God gave to him to show to his slaves what soon must take place and to signify by sending it through his angel to his slave John, ² who gave witness to [ἐμαρτύρησεν] the word of God and the witness [τὴν μαρτυρίαν] of Jesus Christ, whatever he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things that were written [γεγραμμένα] in it, for the time is near.

³ John to the seven churches in Asia; grace and peace to you [χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη]. (Rev 1:1–4a)

What follows in 1:9b–3:22 are seven more epistles.

Equally impressive are the last four verses of the Book of Revelation

that seem to imitate the last two verses of the epilogue (which in turn had imitated the end of 3 John!).

John 21:24–25

This is the disciple who gives witness [ὁ μαρτυρῶν] about these things and who wrote them down [γράψας], and we know that his witness [ἡ μαρτυρία] is true.

²⁵ There are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if each one were written [γράφηται], I suppose not even the world could contain the books written [γραφομένα βιβλία].

Rev 22:18–21

I [Jesus] give witness to [μαρτυρῶ ἐγώ] the one who hears the words of

the prophecy of this book [τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου]. If someone should add to these things, God will add to him the afflictions that are written in the book [τάς γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ],¹⁹ and if someone should delete from the words of the book [τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου] of this prophecy, God will delete his lot from the tree of life and the Holy City that are written in this book [τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ].²⁰ The one who gives witness to [μαρτυρῶν] these things says, "Yes; I am coming quickly." Amen. Come Lord Jesus.²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone.

Whereas at the end of the epilogue it is the Beloved Disciple who witnesses to the veracity of the contents of the Gospel, at the end of the Apocalypse Jesus himself ratifies the prophecies of the book.

If there ever were such a Johannine corpus, it did not long survive. Early papyri witness to the independent circulation of the final edition of the Gospel, but by the end of the second century it was added to the Synoptics to form a four-Gospel codex, which was its most common physical state prior to the fourth century. Analogously, soon after its composition, the Gospel of Luke was detached from the Acts of the Apostles to form the four-Gospel codex. According to François Bovon, the reception of the Gospel of Luke

led to the division of the two volumes ... presumably against Luke's intentions. From that point on, the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts ceased to be two volumes of a single work circulating at the book markets. No single manuscript, not even the oldest, transmits Luke's two volumes according to their original form and intention.³⁵

One can imagine the same fate for the textual detachment of the Gospel of John from other Johannine writings. It may be worth noting that the proposed sequence of the Johannine corpus—Gospel, epistles, Apocalypse—broadly anticipates the canonical order of the New Testament as a whole. In the third century the Johannine letters found their way into a collection of so-called “Catholic epistles,” often preceded by the Acts of the Apostles. Unfortunately, the status of our evidence requires that a second-century Johannine physical corpus remain a chimera, even though its existence would provide compelling answers to several difficulties.

The following diagram presents the history of the Synoptic and Johannine traditions presupposed in this book.

Roman Emperors	The Synoptics	Johannine Literature
Nero (54–68)	Q (or the <i>Logoi of Jesus</i> ; c. 60–66)	
The Flavians (69–98)	Mark (c. 75–80) Matthew (c. 80–90)	2, 3, and 1 John and Rev 1:10–22:7 (c. 90–100)
Trajan (98–117)	Papias’s <i>Exposition</i> (c. 110) Luke-Acts (c. 115)	John 1–20 (first edition; c. 117)
Hadrian (117–138)		editions 2 and 3 of John (including ch. 21), the final redaction of the Apocalypse, and the creation of the Johannine corpus (c. 120–130)

The Literary Life of the Elder John from the Baptist to Patmos

According to Bauckham, the Fourth Gospel suggests a biography of

the beloved disciple [who] is present at key points in the story of Jesus. [H]is initial appearance at 1:35 is more significant than is usually noticed. It makes the beloved disciple a witness of John’s testimony to Jesus, as well as to the beginning of Jesus’s ministry, and it is certainly not accidental that the beloved disciple on his first appearance in the Gospel hears John the Baptist’s testimony to Jesus as the sacrificial lamb of God (1:35, cf. 29). When the beloved disciple’s own witness is explicitly highlighted at 19:35, it is his eyewitness testimony to the fulfillment of precisely these

35. François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50* (trans. Christine M. Thomas; ed. Helmut Koester; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 1.

words of John the Baptist: he sees the flow of blood and water, along with the fact that no bone is broken, that show Jesus to be the true Passover lamb (19:31-37). The fact that the beloved disciple is present at the cross makes him superior to Peter, not simply as a disciple, but precisely as that disciple—the only male disciple—who witnesses the key salvific event of the whole Gospel story, the hour of Jesus' exaltation, toward which the whole story from John the Baptist's testimony onward has pointed.³⁶

It was to him that the dying Jesus entrusted his mother.

The narrative of the Beloved Disciple extends beyond the cross. He arrived at the empty tomb before Simon Peter and was the first disciple to recognize that the stranger on the shore of the Sea of Galilee was their Lord. The "brothers" misinterpreted Jesus's statement to Peter, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" (21:22a) to imply that he would not die before Jesus's return. Before he died he gave witness to Jesus's career by committing his memories to writing (21:24).

All of this information derives from the Gospel in its final and canonical form. If it stood at the beginning of a collection of Johannine writings, readers of the resulting corpus that I have described would have been led to fill in the ministry of the elder from after his composition of the Gospel to his death. After writing the Gospel, he also wrote three Epistles (1, 2, and 3 John) and a collection of seven letters to the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. This collection introduced his vision of the heavenly throne during his captivity on the island of Patmos "for the word of God and the witness of Jesus." Although he was not technically a *μάρτυς*, like Peter, he nevertheless gave his *μαρτύριον* in Roman captivity.

Such a reconstruction of the elder's biography, though theologically compelling, is fictionally contrived. Once again, Papias provides the most reliable, if sketchy, information about him. He, along with Aristion, was a disciple of Jesus outside the innermost circle. He was highly regarded as an independent witness to Jesus's teachings and was intimately familiar with the Gospel of Mark and two Gospels of

36. Bauckham, *Testimony*, 85–86.

Matthew, one of which seems to have been what scholars now call Q or the *Logoi of Jesus*. He likely was the author of all three Johannine Epistles and became venerated for his witness by a succession of later Johannine authors.

Appendix 1: A Conjectural Reconstruction of the Dionysian Gospel

Introduction

This appendix suggests a textual reconstruction of what seems to be the earliest stratum of the Gospel by removing secondary additions, many of which were discussed in parts three and four. The translation (based on Michael W. Holmes, *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010]) identifies these omissions by placing the verse numbers in [square brackets] with justifications of the omissions in footnotes. In many respects this assessment agrees with that of Urban C. von Wahlde, and the notes indicate where we concur. Throughout, one should keep in mind that, unlike von Wahlde, my goal is to isolate only the earliest discernible Johannine Gospel.

The following criteria inform all proposed omissions.

Criterion A: Coherence with the Epilogue. The most important criterion is coherence with John 21. Part four discussed every such instance.

Criterion B: *Relecture*. Several scholars (e.g., Jean Zumstein) have identified in the Fourth Gospel evidence of extensive rewritings of the foundational edition. The most obvious example of such *relecture* is the extended farewell discourse in 15:5–17:26, which elaborates themes introduced in 13:1–15:4 (see part three).

Criterion C: Explanations or Corrections. Frequently one finds additions designed to interpret potentially ambiguous statements or to correct mistakes.

Criterion D: Aporiae. These non sequiturs “indicate where the material from one author ends and another begins.”¹

Criterion E: Repetitions (*Wiederaufnahme*). “After making an insertion, the editor repeats some of the material from before the insertion as a way of attempting to resume the original sequence.”²

Criterion F: Adiphora. One occasionally finds detailed information about geography or the time of day that has little bearing on the narrative and may issue from an attempt at verisimilitude, to give the book the appearance of eyewitness testimony.

Criterion G: References to Religious Authorities as *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*. The first edition prefers Pharisees, chief priests, and rulers. The second and third editions prefer “the Jews”.

Occasionally these omissions require conjectural adjustments to the text, which are flagged with obelisks († . . . †).

Once, the reconstruction relocates a story. The healing of the old paralytic in ch. 5 surely did not originally appear at that point in the Gospel. “At the end of chapter 4, Jesus is in Cana of Galilee. At the beginning of chapter 5, he suddenly goes to Jerusalem for a feast. . . . All of chapter 5 deals with events . . . in Jerusalem. At the beginning of chapter 6, without any mention of a return trip to Galilee, Jesus is suddenly reported to have ‘crossed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.’”³ Many scholars thus reverse the sequence of chs. 5 and 6. Von Wahlde relocates the healing story between 6:4 and 5. Others skirt the difficulty simply by interpreting the order as it now appears in the manuscripts.

The literary locus of the tale only modestly reflects the Evangelist’s imitations of the *Bacchae*, but it profoundly contributes to the integrity

1. Urban C. von Wahlde, *A Commentary on the Gospel and Letters of John* (3 vols; ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 1:23.

2. *Ibid.*, 1:24–25.

3. *Ibid.*, 2:251.

of the Gospel as a whole. The following arguments favor locating 5:2–9 between 2:16 and 23.

1. Verses 2:17–22 probably are secondary. Verse 17 likely is a secondary addition to link Jesus's temple action to Jewish Scriptures. His dispute with οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 18–21 is the first of several insertions in which the Jewish authorities are so designated, and not as Pharisees, chief priests, and rulers (G: οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι; vW 2). Furthermore, v. 22 is the first of several instances where a redactor states that the disciples understood events in the narrative only after Jesus's resurrection (B: *relecture*; see part three).
2. 5:9b–47 also comes from the second edition. "The aftermath of the miracle [of the healing of the lame man] comes entirely from the second edition" (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:224). The primary reason for this assessment of vv. 10–18 is the identification of the hostile Jewish leaders again as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (criterion G). "The discourse of 5:19–30 presents the essential Christology of the Gospel for both the second and third authors. Moreover, the larger discourse of 5:19–47 forms what can be rightly called the architectonic discourse of the Gospel" in its later two editions (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:243). It is also a continuation of the controversy with οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 5:10–18.
3. The end of the purging of the temple (2:15–16) segues comfortably to 5:2. Notice the word play between the πρόβατα in 2:15 and προβατικῆ in 5:2. (See also the orthographic similarities between κολλυβιστῶν in 2:15 and κολυμβήθρα in 5:2.)
4. Without the healing story the references to "signs" that Jesus performed in Jerusalem in 2:23 and 3:2 are risible insofar as Jesus had not performed a single miracle in Jerusalem!
5. John 2:23 provides the expected favorable reaction of the crowd to the "signs," which even impressed the Pharisee Nicodemus (3:2).
6. The story of the healing of the paralytic per se strongly resembles Mark 2:1–12, which similarly takes place early in that Gospel. One

also might propose the influence of Acts 3:1–10, where Peter and John heal a cripple at the Jerusalem temple.

7. John 5:1 and 46–47 are parade examples of *Wiederaufnahme*. Compare the following:

2:13

Καὶ ἐγγύς ἦν τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

5:1

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα.

Here the redactor repeats the earlier verse to introduce his relocated version of the healing of the paralytic. With the relocation of 5:2–9, “the feast in 5:1 could no longer be the Passover and so in the second edition it has become an unnamed feast.”⁴

Less obvious but no less significant is the redactor’s return to the question of faith that likely followed the healing of the paralytic. Now it concludes Jesus’s—secondary!—controversy with his opponents about the meaning of the healing.

2:23b

πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, θεωροῦντες αὐτοῦ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει·

5:46–47

εἰ γὰρ ἐπιστεύετε Μωϋσεῖ, ἐπιστεύετε ἂν ἐμοί, περὶ γὰρ ἐμοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν.⁴⁷ εἰ δὲ τοῖς ἐκείνου γράμμασιν οὐ πιστεύετε, πῶς τοῖς ἐμοῖς ῥήμασιν πιστεύσετε;

There is, however, one potential problem with the proposed textual reconstruction that for many scholars will be decisive against it. John 4:54 reads, “This again was the second sign that Jesus performed after coming from Judea into Galilee.” Most interpreters have read this notice to mean that the raising of the royal official’s son was the second of Jesus’s signs. If one inserts the healing in 5:2–9 where I propose, the raising of the lad at the end of ch. 4 would be number three.

But one reasonably can understand 4:54 to mean that the phrase “after having come from Judea into Galilee” says that this is the second miracle *in Galilee*, not the second miracle in general. In order to avoid confusion, the redactor of the second edition relocated the healing

4. *Ibid.*, 2:251.

of the Jerusalem paralytic later to ch. 5, even though by doing so he created a geographical infelicity.

I have no delusions that I precisely restored the content of the Dionysian Gospel; the primary goal of the reconstruction is to demonstrate that those sections with possible imitations of the *Bacchae* create a coherent Gospel and lack the most obvious traits of the later rewritings as described by many Johannine interpreters, including von Wahlde.

ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ

1

¹ Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος,

καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν,

καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

² οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

³ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο,

καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν.

ὃ γέγονεν ⁴ ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν,

καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων·

⁵ καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει,

καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

⁶ Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης·

⁷ οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός,

ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ.

⁸ οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς,

ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.

⁹ ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

¹⁰ Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν,

καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο,

καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω.

¹¹ εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν,

καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον.

¹² ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν,
ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι,
τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. [13]⁵

¹⁴ Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο
καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν,
καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ,
δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός,
πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. [15]⁶

¹⁶ ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν,
καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος. [17]⁷

¹⁸ θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε·
μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

¹⁹ Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰωάννου ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν· Σὺ τίς εἶ, [20–22a]⁸
^{22b} ἵνα ἀποκρίσιν δώμιεν τοῖς ἐπεμψασιν ἡμᾶς· τί λέγεις περὶ σεαυτοῦ;

²³ ἔφη· Ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Εὐθύνατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, καθὼς
εἶπεν Ἡσαΐας ὁ προφήτης. [24–26a]⁹ ^{26b} Ἐγὼ βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι μέσος ὑμῶν
ἕστηκεν ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε, ²⁷ ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος, οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἄξιος ἵνα
λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος. [28–32a]¹⁰ ^{32b} Τεθεάμαι τὸ πνεῦμα
καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ’ αὐτόν. [33–34a]¹¹

^{34b} Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐκλεκτὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. [35–36]¹²

5. 1:13. “Verse 13 is almost universally thought to be an addition,” likely an attempt to interpret 12b, what it means to become a child of God (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:22; C: explanation).
6. 1:15 likely is secondary. It not only disturbs the flow of the prologue (D: aporia), it duplicates v. 30, where John states that earlier he had made this statement (C: correction, and E: repetition).
7. 1:17. “[T]he verse appears to be a more specific expansion of the thought of v. 16. As such it appears to be a later addition” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:23; C: explanation).
8. 1:20–22a. These verses are suspicious primarily for the unnecessary repetition of τὶς εἶ (cf. 1:19 and 22a; E: repetition). “Often such repetition is an indication either of a duplicate version of material or that an insertion has taken place” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:45).
9. 1:24–26a. The introduction of a second set of interrogators likely is secondary, and their question is surprising if one omits 1:20–22a (E: repetition; vW 2).
10. 1:28–32a. Without these verses John’s testimony is more coherent. The reference to the location in v. 28 seems to be tagged on, perhaps to give the impression of eyewitness memory (F: adiphoron). There is no confirming evidence of this Bethany, and early exegetes scrambled in vain to identify it. As von Wahlde notes, vv. 29–34 “are inconsistent with the viewpoint of what surrounds them” (*Gospel and Letters*, 2:47–49; D: aporia).
11. 1:33–34a. These verses largely repeat information provided in 32a but add οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (cf. Mark 1:8 and para.; E: repetition). The motif of bearing witness characterizes the second and third editions (vW 2 and 3).
12. 1:35–36. Verse 35 is a doublet to the reference to οἱ δὲ ὅσοι μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ in v. 37 (E: repetition). Verse 36 repeats the proclamation in the second edition that Jesus is ὁ ἀμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (cf. 1:29; vW 3).

³⁷ καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ δύο μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος καὶ ἠκολούθησαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ. [38–39]¹³ ⁴⁰ ἦν Ἀνδρέας [40b]¹⁴ ⁴¹ εὕρισκει οὗτος πρῶτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἴδιον Σίμωνα καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Εὐρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον χριστός). ⁴² ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

ἐμβλέψας αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· Σὺ εἶ Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου, σὺ κληθήσῃς Κηφᾶς (ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος). [43]¹⁵

⁴⁴ ἦν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος ἀπὸ Βηθσαιῶν, ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου· ⁴⁵ εὕρισκει Φίλιππος τὸν Ναθαναὴλ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Ὁν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφῆται εὐρήκαμεν, Ἰησοῦν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ.

⁴⁶ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ναθαναὴλ· Ἐκ Ναζαρέτ δύναται τι ἀγαθὸν εἶναι;

λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Φίλιππος· Ἐρχομαι καὶ ἴδε.

⁴⁷ εἶδεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Ναθαναὴλ ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει περὶ αὐτοῦ· Ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν.

⁴⁸ λέγει αὐτῷ Ναθαναὴλ· Πόθεν με γινώσκεις;

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Πρὸ τοῦ σε Φίλιππον φωνῆσαι ὄντα ὑπὸ τὴν συκῆν εἶδόν σε.

⁴⁹ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ναθαναὴλ· Ῥαββί, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.

⁵⁰ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· [50b–51a]¹⁶ ^{51b} Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεμφοτά καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

13. 1:38–39. The apparently gratuitous reference to the time of day enhances the reliability of the narrator (F: adiphoron). The theme of “abiding” particularly characterizes the later editions. Notice also the verbal similarities to 21:20–22 (A: coherence with the epilogue).
14. 1:40b. The reference to “Simon Peter” here surely is secondary. Verse 41 introduces him again as “Simon,” and he does not receive the name Peter until v. 42 (E: repetition). The final redaction displays special interest in Peter (see part four).
15. 1:43. If one omits this verse, Philip is the second of John’s disciples to follow Jesus. The final redactor likely added it to suggest that the second disciple mentioned in vv. 35 and 37 was the disciple whom Jesus loved (A: coherence with the epilogue; vW 2).
16. 1:50b–51a. The narrator had introduced Jesus’s speech at the beginning of v. 50, so ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν in v. 51 is awkward and unnecessary (vW 2 and 3; E: repetition). Furthermore, elsewhere among the additions of the redactors one finds a criticism of faith built on signs: 4:48–49 and most spectacularly in 20:24–29, the episode of doubting Thomas: “Have you believed because you saw me [ἐώρακάς με πεπιστευκάς]? Blessed are those who believed though they have not seen [οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες].” Doubting Thomas no doubt belongs to the final redaction (see part four).

¹ Καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ γάμος ἐγένετο ἐν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ ἦν ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐκεῖ· ² ἐκλήθη δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν γάμον. ³ καὶ ὑστερήσαντος οἴνου λέγει ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ πρὸς αὐτόν· Οἶνον οὐκ ἔχουσιν.

⁴ καὶ λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; οὐπω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου.

⁵ λέγει ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ τοῖς διακόνοις· Ὅ τι ἂν λέγῃ ὑμῖν ποιήσατε.

⁶ ἦσαν δὲ ἐκεῖ λίθιναι ὑδρίαὶ ἕξ κατὰ τὸν καθαρισμὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων κείμεναι, χωροῦσαι ἀνά μετρητὰς δύο ἢ τρεῖς. ⁷ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Γεμίσατε τὰς ὑδρίας ὕδατος καὶ ἐγέμισαν αὐτὰς ἕως ἄνω. ⁸ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Ἀντλήσατε νῦν καὶ φέρετε τῷ ἀρχιτρικλίνῳ· οἱ δὲ ἤνεγκαν.

⁹ ὡς δὲ ἐγεύσατο ὁ ἀρχιτρικλινὸς τὸ ὕδωρ οἶνον γεγεννημένον, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει πόθεν ἐστίν, οἱ δὲ διάκονοι ᾔδεισαν οἱ ἠντληκότες τὸ ὕδωρ, φωνεῖ τὸν νυμφίον ὁ ἀρχιτρικλινὸς ¹⁰ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Πᾶς ἄνθρωπος πρῶτον τὸν καλὸν οἶνον τίθησιν, καὶ ὅταν μεθυσθῶσιν τὸν ἐλάσσω σὺ τετῆρηκας τὸν καλὸν οἶνον ἕως ἄρτι.

¹¹ ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἐφάνερωσεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ. [12]¹⁷

¹³ Καὶ ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ὁ Ἰησοῦς. ¹⁴ καὶ εὔρεν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοὺς πωλοῦντας βόας καὶ πρόβατα καὶ περιστεράς καὶ τοὺς κερματιστὰς καθημένους, ¹⁵ καὶ ποιήσας φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων πάντα ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὰ τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας, καὶ τῶν κολλυβιστῶν ἐξέχεεν τὰ κέρματα καὶ τὰς τραπέζας ἀνέστρεψε, ¹⁶ καὶ τοῖς τὰς περιστεράς πωλοῦσιν εἶπεν Ἄρατε ταῦτα ἐντεῦθεν, μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρός μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου. [17–22]¹⁸

17. 2:12. This verse inexplicably sends Jesus and retinue to Capernaum for a brief stay during which nothing happens. The statement οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας implies an eyewitness (F: adiaiphoron). Furthermore, the reader of the final edition is to assume at this point that only the following were Jesus's disciples: Andrew, the unnamed disciple of John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. The inclusion of v. 12 thus places the Beloved Disciple in the company of Jesus's mother and Peter. In the final redaction Jesus entrusts his mother to his beloved and often links this disciple with Peter (A: coherence with the epilogue).

18. 2:17–22. See the introduction to this appendix.

5

[5:1]¹⁹ ² Ἔστιν δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρα ἢ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδά, πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα· ³ ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος τῶν ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν. [4]²⁰ ⁵ ἦν δὲ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα ὀκτῶ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ αὐτοῦ· ⁶ τοῦτον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατακείμενον, καὶ γνοὺς ὅτι πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει, λέγει αὐτῷ· Θέλεις ὑγιῆς γενέσθαι;

⁷ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενῶν Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα ὅταν ταραχθῆ τοῦ ὕδαρ 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 ὑγιῆς ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἦρε τὸν κράβαττον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιεπάτει. [9b–47]²¹

²³ Ὡς δὲ ἦν ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐν τῷ πάσχα ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, θεωροῦντες αὐτοῦ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει· ²⁴ αὐτὸς δὲ Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἐπίστευεν αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν γινώσκειν πάντας. [25]²²

3

¹ Ἦν δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων, Νικόδημος ὄνομα αὐτῷ, ἀρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων· ² οὗτος ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ῥαββί, οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐλήλυθας διδάσκαλος· οὐδεὶς γὰρ δύναται ταῦτα τὰ σημεῖα ποιεῖν ἃ σὺ ποιεῖς, ἐὰν μὴ ᾗ ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτοῦ.

³ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

⁴ λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Νικόδημος· Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὦν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δευτέρου εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι; [5–9]²³

19. 5:1 provides the setting for the relocated story that follows (cf. 2:13, on which it was modeled). See the introduction to this appendix.

20. 5:4 is weakly attested and is omitted by all modern editions.

21. 5:9b–47. See the introduction to this appendix.

22. 2:25 seems to be a repetitive indication of Jesus's omniscience (E: repetition; vW 2).

23. 3:5–9 seem to be a secondary addition to unpack the meaning of being born from above in vv.

¹⁰ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῶ· [10b–15]²⁴ ¹⁶ οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστευὼν εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλὰ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. [17–19a]²⁵ ^{19b} Τὸ φῶς ἐλήλυθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς, ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. [20–21]²⁶

²² Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν, καὶ ἐκεῖ διέτριβεν μετ’ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐβάπτιζεν. ²³ ἦν δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων ἐν Αἰνῶν ἐγγύς τοῦ Σαλείμ, ὅτι ὕδατα πολλὰ ἦν ἐκεῖ, καὶ παρεγίνοντο καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο· ²⁴ οὐπω γὰρ ἦν βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν ὁ Ἰωάννης.

²⁵ Ἐγένετο οὖν ζήτησις ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν Ἰωάννου. [25b]²⁷ ²⁶ καὶ ἦλθον πρὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῶ· Ῥαββί, ὃς ἦν μετὰ σοῦ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, ὃ σὺ μεμαρτύρηκας, ἴδε οὗτος βαπτίζει καὶ πάντες ἔρχονται πρὸς αὐτόν.

²⁷ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰωάννης καὶ εἶπεν· [27b–28]²⁸ ²⁹ ὁ ἔχων τὴν νύμφην νυμφίος ἐστίν· ὁ δὲ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου ὁ ἐστηκὼς καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ, χαρᾷ χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου. αὕτη οὖν ἡ χαρὰ ἢ ἐμὴ πεπλήρωται. ³⁰ ἐκεῖνον δεῖ αὐξάνειν, ἐμὲ δὲ ἐλαττοῦσθαι. [31–36]²⁹

3–4 (C: explanation; vW 2 and 3). Note the similarities between v. 6 and 1:13, which also was a secondary addition.

24. 3:10b–15. Von Wahlde attributes all of 3:11–21 to the final redactor: “These verses appear to continue the words of Jesus with Nicodemus although the figure of Nicodemus himself now drops out of the picture. It is a passage that many commentators feel is without real relationship to its context” (*Gospel and Letters*, 2:139–40; D: aporia). Verses 16 and 19b, *pace* von Wahlde, seem to be compatible with the context and with other content from the first edition (cf. 1:9–11, 14, 18). Certainty here is impossible.
25. 3:17–19a. Von Wahlde makes a compelling case that the theme of judgment treated in these verses is at odds with treatments in the first edition and more characteristic of the final redaction (*Gospel and Letters*, 2:136–38). It would appear that they were added to explain the relationship between disbelief and judgment implied by v. 16 (C: explanation).
26. 3:20–21 likely were added to interpret v. 19b (C: explanation); people not only loved the darkness, they hated the light (vW 3).
27. 3:25b. μετὰ Ἰουδαίου περι καθαρισμοῦ. John’s instructions that follow have nothing whatever to do with purification or a Jew. It would appear that the redactor wanted to avoid giving the impression that the disciples of John were at odds with each other (C: explanation). Without this half verse the disputants ask John to account for the crowds who flocked to Jesus for baptism.
28. 3:27b–28. “There is a literary seam following v. 26 that is indicated by the sudden shift in the orientation of the material” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:158). Without these verses the discourse makes better sense (D: aporia).
29. Verses 3:31–36 “seem intended by the third edition to be placed on the lips of John the Baptist and to be his final, extended witness to Jesus” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:163). The final redactor was obsessed with the importance of bearing witness, as in vv. 32 and 33. Not only is Jesus

4

¹Ὡς οὖν ἔγνω ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤκουσαν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ὅτι Ἰησοῦς πλείονας μαθητὰς ποιεῖ καὶ βαπτίζει ἢ Ἰωάννης [2]³⁰ ³ ἀφῆκεν τὴν Ἰουδαίαν καὶ ἀπῆλθεν πάλιν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. ⁴ ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχασθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας. ⁵ ἔρχεται οὖν εἰς πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας λεγομένην Συχαρ πλησίον τοῦ χωρίου ὃ ἔδωκεν Ἰακώβ τῷ Ἰωσήφ τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ. ⁶ ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ πηγὴ τοῦ Ἰακώβ. ὁ οὖν Ἰησοῦς κεκοπιακῶς ἐκ τῆς ὁδοπορίας ἐκαθέζετο οὕτως ἐπὶ τῇ πηγῇ· ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη.

⁷ Ἐρχεται γυνὴ ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας ἀντληῆσαι ὕδωρ. λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Δός μοι πεῖν.⁸ οἱ γὰρ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπεληλύθεισαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, ἵνα τροφὰς ἀγοράσωσιν.

⁹ λέγει οὖν αὐτῷ ἡ γυνὴ ἡ Σαμαρίτις· Πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν παρ' ἐμοῦ πεῖν αἰτεῖς γυναικὸς Σαμαρίτιδος οὔσης; οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίταις.

¹⁰ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· Εἰ ἤδεις τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ λέγων σοι· Δός μοι πεῖν, σὺ ἂν ἤτησας αὐτὸν καὶ ἔδωκεν ἂν σοι ὕδωρ ζῶν.

¹¹ λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνὴ· Κύριε, οὔτε ἀντλημα ἔχεις καὶ τὸ φρέαρ ἐστὶν βαθύ· πόθεν οὖν ἔχεις τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν; [12]³¹

¹³ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· Πᾶς ὁ πίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος τούτου διψήσει πάλιν. ¹⁴ ὃς δ' ἂν πίη ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζῶν αἰῶνιον.

¹⁵ λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ γυνὴ· Κύριε, δός μοι τοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ, ἵνα μὴ διψῶ μηδὲ διέρχωμαι ἐνθάδε ἀντλεῖν.

¹⁶ Λέγει αὐτῇ· Ὑπαγε φώνησον τὸν ἄνδρα σου καὶ ἐλθέ ἐνθάδε.

superior to the Baptist, he "is above all" insofar as he alone came "from heaven" (C: explanation of vv. 29-30).

30. 4:2. John 4 begins with the following traveling notice, which reads most smoothly by omitting v. 2, which surely came from a second hand and distances Jesus from the Baptist (C: correction): καίτοιγε Ἰησοῦς αὐτὸς οὐκ ἐβάπτισεν ἀλλ' οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ. The word καίτοιγε appears nowhere else in the New Testament. It is a strengthened form of καίτοι, "although," which is more common, but it too appears nowhere else in the Fourth Gospel. Surely it is unlikely that the author himself used the intensive form to correct herself (vW 3).

31. 4:12. This question immediately follows the woman's earlier question which Jesus answers in v. 13; v. 12, which Jesus never answers, thus seems to be secondary (E: repetition; vW 2).

¹⁷ ἀπεκρίθη ἡ γυνὴ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Οὐκ ἔχω ἄνδρα.

λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Καλῶς εἶπας ὅτι· Ἄνδρα οὐκ ἔχω ¹⁸ πέντε γὰρ ἄνδρας ἔσχες, καὶ νῦν ὃν ἔχεις οὐκ ἔστιν σου ἀνὴρ· τοῦτο ἀληθὲς εἶρηκας.

¹⁹ λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνὴ· Κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ. ²⁰ οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν· καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ.

²¹ λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Πίστευέ μοι, γύναι, ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὔτε ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ οὔτε ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις προσκυνήσετε τῷ πατρί. [22–24]³²

²⁵ λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνὴ· Οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται, ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός· ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν ἅπαντα.

²⁶ λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι.

²⁷ Καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἦλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐθαύμαζον ὅτι μετὰ γυναικὸς ἐλάλει· οὐδεὶς μέντοι εἶπεν· Τί ζητεῖς; ἢ τί λαλεῖς μετ' αὐτῆς;

²⁸ ἀφῆκεν οὖν τὴν ὑδρίαν αὐτῆς ἡ γυνὴ καὶ ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ λέγει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· ²⁹ Δεῦτε ἴδετε ἄνθρωπον ὃς εἶπέ μοι πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησα· μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός; [30–39]³³

⁴⁰ ὡς οὖν ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Σαμαριῖται [40b],³⁴ ⁴¹ καὶ πολλῶ πλείους ἐπίστευσαν διὰ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ, ⁴² τῇ τε γυναικὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὐκέτι διὰ τὴν σὴν λαλίαν πιστεύομεν· αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου.

⁴³ Μετὰ δὲ τὰς δύο ἡμέρας ἐξῆλθεν ἐκεῖθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. [44–45a]³⁵
^{45b} ἐδέξαντο οὖν αὐτὸν οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι, πάντα ἐωρακότες ὅσα ἐποίησεν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, καὶ αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἦλθον εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν.

⁴⁶ Ἦλθεν οὖν πάλιν εἰς τὴν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, ὅπου ἐποίησεν τὸ ὕδωρ οἴνου. καὶ ἦν τις βασιλικὸς οὗ ὁ υἱὸς ἡσθένει ἐν Καφαρναούμ. ⁴⁷ οὗτος

32. 4:22–24 seem to interrupt the flow of the conversation insofar as Jesus speaks about an hour that “is coming [ἔρχεται]” when people will worship correctly, and the woman responds that she knows that “a messiah is coming [ἔρχεται]” who will disclose all (D: aporia; vW 2). The intervening verses explain v. 21: true worship will be “in spirit and truth” (C: explanation).

33. 4:30–39. According to v. 30, the Samaritans left the city, but they do not arrive until v. 40. Furthermore, “vv. 31–38 contrast sharply with the surrounding material” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:191; D: aporia).

34. 4:40b. Abiding with Jesus is especially common in the secondary redactions. Notice also the unnecessary repetition of *δύο ἡμέρας* which appears again in v. 43 (E: repetition; vW 3).

35. 4:44–45a. “[T]hat the verse [44] is an insertion is evident both from the presence of the framing repetition that brackets the verse [see 4:43 and 45a] and from the difficulty commentators have understanding its meaning” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:202; E: repetition). According to v. 44 Jesus seems to be rejected by those at home, but according to v. 45b “the Galileans received him” (D: aporia).

ἀκούσας ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἦκει ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ἀπῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἠρώτα ἵνα καταβῆ καὶ ἰάσῃται αὐτοῦ τὸν υἱόν, ἤμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν. [48–49]³⁶

⁵⁰ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Πορεύου· ὁ υἱός σου ζῆ.

ἐπίστευσεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐπορεύετο.

⁵¹ ἤδη δὲ αὐτοῦ καταβαίνοντος οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ υἱήνητησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες ὅτι ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ζῆ.

⁵² ἐπύθετο οὖν τὴν ὥραν παρ' αὐτῶν ἐν ἧ κομψότερον ἔσχεν· εἶπαν οὖν αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐχθὲς ὥραν ἐβδόμην ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ὁ πυρετός.

⁵³ ἔγνω οὖν ὁ πατὴρ ὅτι ἐκείνη τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐν ἧ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ὁ υἱός σου ζῆ, καὶ ἐπίστευσεν αὐτός καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη. ⁵⁴ τοῦτο δὲ πάλιν δευτέρον σημεῖον ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλθὼν ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. [5:1–47]³⁷

6

¹ Μετὰ ταῦτα ἀπῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς Γαλιλαίας τῆς Τιβεριάδος. ² ἠκολούθει δὲ αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὅτι ἐθεώρουν τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσθενούντων. ³ ἀνῆλθεν δὲ εἰς τὸ ὄρος Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἐκεῖ ἐκάθητο μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ. ⁴ ἦν δὲ ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα, ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων. ⁵ ἐπάρας οὖν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ θεασάμενος ὅτι πολὺς ὄχλος ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγει πρὸς Φίλιππον· Πόθεν ἀγοράσωμεν ἄρτους ἵνα φάγωσιν οὗτοι; [6]³⁸

⁷ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Φίλιππος· Διακοσίων δηναρίων ἄρτοι οὐκ ἀρκοῦσιν αὐτοῖς ἵνα ἕκαστος βραχὺ τι λάβῃ.

⁸ λέγει αὐτῷ εἷς ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς Σίμωνος

36. 4:48–49. “[Verse] 48 is one of the verses most widely acknowledged to be an editorial addition to the Gospel. The verse is identified as an addition first by the way it is bracketed by the extensive repetition of v. 47 in v. 49. Furthermore, the content of the verse is so jarring when compared with that of the remainder of the passage that there can be little doubt it is an addition. It is intended to call into question the appropriateness of faith based exclusively on miracles” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:203–4; D: aporia, and E: repetition).

37. 5:1–47. The introduction to this appendix discussed the relocation of 5:2–9a between 2:16 and 23 and the attribution of 5:1 and 9b–47 to a later redactor.

38. 66. “This striking assertion [‘for he knew what he was about to do’] is identified as the work of the author of the second edition by the way Jesus’ foreknowledge functions to show his superiority to human events” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:76; C: explanation).

Πέτρου.⁹ Ἔστιν παιδάριον ᾧδε ὃς ἔχει πέντε ἄρτους κριθίνους καὶ δύο ὀψάρια· ἀλλὰ ταῦτα τί ἐστὶν εἰς τοσούτους;

¹⁰ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ποιήσατε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀναπεσεῖν. ἦν δὲ χόρτος πολὺς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. ἀνέπεσαν οὖν οἱ ἄνδρες τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὡς πεντακισχίλιοι. ¹¹ ἔλαβεν οὖν τοὺς ἄρτους ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εὐχαριστήσας διέδωκεν τοῖς ἀνακειμένοις, ὁμοίως καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀψαρίων ὅσον ἤθελον.

¹² ὡς δὲ ἐνεπλήσθησαν λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· Συναγάγετε τὰ περισσεύσαντα κλάσματα, ἵνα μὴ τι ἀπόληται. ¹³ συνήγαγον οὖν, καὶ ἐγέμισαν δώδεκα κοφίνους κλασμάτων ἐκ τῶν πέντε ἄρτων τῶν κριθίνων ἃ ἐπερίσσευσαν τοῖς βεβρωκόσιν.

¹⁴ οἱ οὖν ἄνθρωποι ἰδόντες ὃ ἐποίησεν σημεῖον ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον. [15–34]³⁹

³⁵ Εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ πεινάσῃ, καὶ ὁ πιστευὼν εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ διψήσῃ πώποτε. [36–53a]⁴⁰
^{53b} Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ φάγητε τὴν σάρκα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πῖνῃτε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα, οὐκ ἔχετε ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. ⁵⁴ ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον. [54b]⁴¹ ⁵⁵ ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ μου ἀληθὴς ἐστὶ βρῶσις, καὶ τὸ αἷμά μου ἀληθὴς ἐστὶ πόσις. ⁵⁶ ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἐν ἐμοὶ μένει καὶ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ. [57–58a]⁴² ^{58b} ὁ τρώγων τοῦτον τὸν ἄρτον ζῆσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. [59]⁴³

39. 6:15–34. Verse 15, the attempt to make Jesus king, “is meant as a mark of respect for the divinity of Jesus and is one of the indirect reinforcements for the high Christology of the second edition” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:281). John’s version of Jesus walking on water appears in 6:15–21; von Wahlde and most scholars may be correct in attributing it, together with the feeding of the five thousand, to the earliest compositional stratum. It is worth noting, however, that 6:22–34 also seem to be secondary (vW 2 and 3; note references to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in v. 41; criterion G). If one omits all of 6:15–34 the narrative moves seamlessly from the feeding of the five thousand and acclamation of Jesus as a prophet (6:14) to his correction of it in 6:35b: ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς. He does not simply supply bread, like Moses in the wilderness or Elisha in 2 Kings 4; he himself is the bread of life.

40. 6:36–53a. These verses create an extended discourse on the meaning of Jesus as ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς in contrast to Moses’s provision of manna in the wilderness. Notice again the references to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in v. 52 (G; vW 2 and 3). This interpretation surely is secondary to Jesus’s body as bread in vv. 53–58.

41. 6:54b. The phrase κατὰ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ characterizes the secondary redactions (vW 3).

42. 6:57–58a. These verses explain the notion of abiding in v. 56 and continue the debate with the Jews in vv. 36–53, which bear traces of the later editors (C: explanation; vW 3). The original explanation appears in 58b.

43. 6:59. ταῦτα εἶπεν ἐν συναγωγῇ διδασκων ἐν Καφαρναούμ. It is not said at the beginning of the bread of life discourse that it took place in a synagogue. According to 6:10 Jesus fed the crowds outside, at a grassy plot of ground. It would appear that the later redactor who transformed the bread of

⁶⁰ Πολλοὶ οὖν ἀκούσαντες ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ εἶπαν Σκληρός ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος οὗτος· τίς δύναται αὐτοῦ ἀκούειν; [61–65]⁴⁴ ⁶⁶ Ἐκ τούτου πολλοὶ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἀπήλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω καὶ οὐκέτι μετ’ αὐτοῦ περιεπάτουν. [67–71]⁴⁵

7

[7:1–30]⁴⁶ ³¹ ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου δὲ πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν. [31b]⁴⁷ ³² Ἦκουσαν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τοῦ ὄχλου γογγύζοντος περὶ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα, καὶ ἀπέστειλαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ὑπηρέτας ἵνα πιάσωιν αὐτόν, [33–44a]⁴⁸ ^{44b} ἀλλ’ οὐδεὶς ἐπέβαλεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας.

⁴⁵ Ἦλθον οὖν οἱ ὑπηρέται πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ Φαρισαίους, καὶ εἶπον αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖνοι· Διὰ τί οὐκ ἠγάγετε αὐτόν;

⁴⁶ ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ ὑπηρέται· Οὐδέποτε ἐλάλησεν οὕτως ἄνθρωπος.

⁴⁷ ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν αὐτοῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι· Μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς πεπλάνησθε; ⁴⁸ μὴ τις ἐκ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἐπίστευσεν εἰς αὐτόν ἢ ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων; ⁴⁹ ἀλλὰ ὁ ὄχλος οὗτος ὁ μὴ γινώσκων τὸν νόμον ἐπάρατοί εἰσιν.

life discourse into a controversy with οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι was responsible for the tag that the dispute took place in a synagogue (D: aporia).

44. 6:61–65. “These verses [60–61b and 63–65] exhibit several characteristics that identify them with the second edition. First, there is (v. 61ab) Jesus’ foreknowledge. . . . Second, in stark contrast with 6:51–58 [the eating of Jesus’s ‘flesh’], v. 63 presents the need for the ‘Spirit’ and opposes it to the uselessness of the ‘flesh’. . . . Third, in v. 64 there is yet another mention of Jesus’ foreknowledge” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:330). Without vv. 61–65 the text reads smoothly from the complaint of the disciples (in v. 60) to the departure of many of them in v. 66 (D: aporia).
45. 6:67–71. “These verses contain a number of idiosyncrasies, features that when taken singly appear minor and inconclusive but when taken together indicate with considerable certainty that the material is from the last edition” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:331). For example, the Epilogist repeatedly rescued Peter’s reputation with echoes of his depiction in the Synoptics, in this case with Mark 8:29 and parr. (see part four; A: coherence with the epilogue; vW 3).
46. 7:1–30. The only verses in this large section of the Gospel that von Wahlde is willing to attribute to the earliest stratum are 7:2 and 26b–27. He omits everything else in large measure because of the use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι to refer to the Jewish authorities (vv. 1, 2, 11, 13, and 15). When one omits the entire section, the faith of the crowd in 7:31 creates a contrast with the negative response of “many of the disciples” in 6:66 and sets the stage for the hostility of the Pharisees that follows (D: aporia).
47. 7:31b. This half-verse seems to fault the expectations of the crowds that the messiah will perform greater miracles than the healing of the lame man. Such suspicions of miracle working characterize the second edition more than the first. It may have been added to explain the “grumbling” of the crowd in the next verse (C: explanation).
48. 7:33–44a. Here again one learns that Jesus’s opponents are οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (v. 35; G). If one omits these verses, 7:32, “the chief priests and the Pharisees dispatched subordinates to arrest him,” segues into their failure in 7:44a: “but no one laid his hands on him” (D: aporia). Notice also the prolepsis of understanding in 7:39 (B: *relecture*) and the repetition of the last two words in v. 32, πιάσωιν αὐτόν, in 44a, πιάσαι αὐτόν (E).

⁵⁰ λέγει Νικόδημος πρὸς αὐτούς, ὁ ἐλθὼν πρὸς αὐτὸν πρότερον, εἷς ὢν ἐξ αὐτῶν ⁵¹ Μὴ ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν κρίνει τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐὰν μὴ ἀκούσῃ πρῶτον παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ γινῶ τί ποιεῖ;

⁵² ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῶ· Μὴ καὶ σὺ ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἶ; ἐραύνησον καὶ ἴδε ὅτι ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας προφήτης οὐκ ἐγείρεται. [7:53–8:11]⁴⁹

8

¹² ταῦτοῖς οὖν⁵⁰ ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου. [8:12b]⁵¹

¹³ εἶπον οὖν αὐτῶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι· Σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς ἢ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής.

¹⁴ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς [14b]⁵² ὑμεῖς . . . οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἔρχομαι ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω. [15–16a]⁵³ ^{16b} ἢ κρίσις ἢ ἐμὴ ἀληθινή ἐστιν, ὅτι μόνος οὐκ εἰμί, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ. ¹⁷ καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ δὲ τῶ ὑμετέρῳ γέγραπται ὅτι δύο ἀνθρώπων ἢ μαρτυρία ἀληθής ἐστιν. [18]⁵⁴

¹⁹ ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῶ· Ποῦ ἐστιν ὁ πατήρ σου;

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Οὔτε ἐμὲ οἴδατε οὔτε τὸν πατέρα μου· εἰ ἐμὲ ᾗδετε, καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου ἂν ᾗδετε. [20–31]⁵⁵ ³² γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς.

³³ ἀπεκρίθησαν πρὸς αὐτόν· Σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐσμεν καὶ οὐδενὶ δεδουλεύκαμεν πώποτε· πῶς σὺ λέγεις ὅτι Ἐλευθεροὶ γενήσεσθε;

49. 7:53–8:11. The *pericope adulterae* is a late textual addition. See appendix 3, “The Sinful Woman.”

50. 7:53–8:11 no doubt are a later addition, which may have been added to correct an obvious aporia in the more trustworthy textual witnesses. In the preceding verses Nicodemus addresses the Jewish elites when Jesus is absent, but 8:12 reads that Jesus “again” spoke to them, which requires that he was there with them! The commentary in part two conjectured that in the earliest edition the council took Nicodemus’s advise and summoned Jesus to appear before them. If so, 8:12a must be revised.

51. 8:12b seems to be a secondary addition to explain in what way Jesus is “the light of the world.”

52. 8:14b. “[T]he theme of witness of the word of Jesus . . . is an explicit statement of the major theme of the discourse and constitutes one of the major themes of the second edition” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:384).

53. 8:15–16a. These verses are illogical and awkward: unlike his opponents, Jesus judges no one; nevertheless, his judgment is true in 16b (D: aporia; vW 3).

54. 8:18. The addition of this verse explains the two witnesses to Jesus; his own witness and that of the Father. Such a preoccupation with witnesses characterizes the later redactions (vW 2).

55. 8:20–31. Von Wahlde attributes these verses to the second and third editions, in part because the opponents are designated as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (v. 22; G). Without these verses the text segues beautifully between not knowing—οὔτε ἐμὲ οἴδατε οὔτε τὸν πατέρα μου· εἰ ἐμὲ ᾗδετε, καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου—and knowing—γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

³⁴ Ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν δοῦλός ἐστιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας· 35 ὁ δὲ δοῦλος οὐ μένει ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· ὁ υἱὸς μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. 36 ἐὰν οὖν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλευθερώσῃ, ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι ἔσεσθε. 37 οἶδα ὅτι σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐστε. [37b–58a]⁵⁶
^{58b} Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμί.

⁵⁹ ἦραν οὖν λίθους ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπ’ αὐτόν· Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐκρύβη καὶ ἐξῆλθεν. [59b]⁵⁷

9

¹ Καὶ παράγων εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς. [2–6a]⁵⁸ ^{6b} ἔπτυσεν χαμαὶ καὶ ἐποίησεν πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσματος, καὶ ἐπέχρισεν αὐτοῦ τὸν πηλὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, ⁷ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ὑπαγε νίψαι εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ (δὲ ἐρμηνεύεται Ἀπεσταλμένος). ἀπήλθεν οὖν καὶ ἐνίψατο, καὶ ἤλθεν βλέπων.

⁸ οἱ οὖν γείτονες καὶ οἱ θεωροῦντες αὐτόν τὸ πρότερον ὅτι προσαίτης ἦν ἔλεγον· Οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ καθήμενος καὶ προσαϊτῶν; ⁹ ἄλλοι ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὗτός ἐστιν· ἄλλοι ἔλεγον· Οὐχί, ἀλλὰ ὅμοιος αὐτῷ ἐστίν.

ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγε ὅτι Ἐγὼ εἰμι.

¹⁰ ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ· Πῶς ἠνεώχθησάν σου οἱ ὀφθαλμοί;

¹¹ ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος· Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰησοῦς πηλὸν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἐπέχρισέν μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὅτι· Ὑπαγε εἰς τὸν Σιλωάμ καὶ νίψαι· ἀπελθὼν οὖν καὶ νιψάμενος ἀνέβλεψα.

¹² καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Ποῦ ἐστίν ἐκεῖνος;

λέγει· Οὐκ οἶδα.

¹³ Ἄγουσιν αὐτόν πρὸς τοὺς Φαρισαίους τὸν ποτε τυφλόν.

56. 8:37b–58a. Von Wahlde attributes these verses to the second and final redactions. Again, the Jewish authorities are identified as οἱ Ἰουδαῖα (vv. 52 and 57; G). If one omits these verses, the text segues from Jesus’s concession that his opponents are children of Abraham—“I know that you are seed of Abraham”—to his claim that he is older than Abraham—“before Abraham existed, I am” (D: aporia).

57. 8:59b. From the controversy that precedes this verse one would never have thought that it took place in the temple. More likely it took place in an assembly of Pharisees, as requested by Nicodemus in 7:51 (D: aporia). Certainty, once again, is illusory.

58. 9:2–6a. “[Verses] 2–3 . . . come from the second edition, and vv. 4–6a . . . come from the third” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:428). A major reason for excluding these verses is the concern for the blind man’s parents, who surely are a later addition to the narrative. The insertion of vv. 9:2–6a also breaks the flow of the narrative (D: aporia).

¹⁴ ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἧ ἡμέρᾳ τὸν πηλὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἀνέωξεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς. ¹⁵ πάλιν οὖν ἠρώτων αὐτὸν καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι πῶς ἀνέβλεψεν.

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰηλὸν ἐπέθηκέν μου ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, καὶ ἐνιψάμην, καὶ βλέπω.

¹⁶ ἔλεγον οὖν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων τινές· Οὐκ ἔστιν οὗτος παρά θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι τὸ σάββατον οὐ τηρεῖ.

ἄλλοι ἔλεγον· Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλὸς τοιαῦτα σημεῖα ποιεῖν; καὶ σχίσμα ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς. ¹⁷ λέγουσιν οὖν τῷ τυφλῷ πάλιν· Τί σύ λέγεις περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἠνέωξέν σου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς;

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν ὅτι Προφήτης ἐστίν. [18–24a]⁵⁹

^{24b} καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Δὸς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ· ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλὸς ἐστίν.

²⁵ ἀπεκρίθη οὖν ἐκεῖνος· Εἰ ἁμαρτωλὸς ἐστίν οὐκ οἶδα· ἐν οἶδα ὅτι τυφλὸς ὦν ἄρτι βλέπω. [26–30a]⁶⁰ ^{30b} καὶ ἠνοιξέν μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς. ³¹ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἀκούει, ἀλλ' ἐάν τις θεοσεβῆς ἦ καὶ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιῇ τοῦτου ἀκούει. ³² ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἠκούσθη ὅτι ἠνέωξέν τις ὀφθαλμούς τυφλοῦ γεγεννημένου. ³³ εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος παρά θεοῦ, οὐκ ἠδύνατο ποιεῖν οὕδέν. [34–41]⁶¹

59. 9:18–24a. This section clearly interrupts the interrogation of the blind man in the preceding verses, as the interpolator surely recognized: ἐφώνησαν οὖν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκ δευτέρου (24a; D: aporia; vW 2). Whoever inserted these verses did so to explain expulsions of believers in Jesus from Jewish synagogues. Notice also that whereas the confession of the blind man himself was that Jesus was a prophet (v. 17), in the interpolation the title becomes Christ (22). By omitting these verses, v. 24b makes better sense. Although the blind man considered Jesus a prophet in v. 18, in 24b the authorities command him instead to credit heaven: Δὸς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ (D: aporia).

60. 9:26–30a are tortuously repetitious, as the use of ἦδη and πάλιν in v. 27 admits. Note especially the echo of 27b (ἠνωξέν σου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς) in 30b (ἠνωξέν μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς), which likely appeared in the first edition (E: repetition). Disputes over Moses characterize the second edition.

61. 9:34–41. If one omits 9:2–6a (the disciples' question about whether the man's parents had sinned), the reference to being born in sin in 34a looks to be secondary. Furthermore, the reference in 34b to his being cast out recalls the fear of excommunication in v. 22, another secondary addition. Finally, the confession of the blind man concerning Jesus' identity is merely that he is a prophet with divine agency, but in vv. 35–38 Jesus declares himself to be the Son of Man (vW 3).

10

[10:1–38]⁶² ³⁹ ἐξήτουν οὖν πάλιν αὐτὸν πιάσαι· καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν. ⁴⁰ Καὶ ἀπῆλθεν πάλιν πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου εἰς τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἦν Ἰωάννης τὸ πρῶτον βαπτίζων, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ. ⁴¹ καὶ πολλοὶ ἤλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν σημεῖον ἐποίησεν οὐδέν, πάντα δὲ ὅσα εἶπεν Ἰωάννης περὶ τούτου ἀληθῆ ἦν. ⁴² καὶ πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ.

11

¹ Ἦν δὲ τις ἀσθενῶν, Λάζαρος ἀπὸ Βηθανίας ἐκ τῆς κώμης Μαρίας καὶ Μάρθας τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτῆς. ² ἦν δὲ Μαριάμ ἡ ἀλείψασα τὸν κύριον μύρω καὶ ἐκμάξασα τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ταῖς θριξίν αὐτῆς, ἧς ὁ ἀδελφὸς Λάζαρος ἠσθένει. ³ ἀπέστειλαν οὖν αἱ ἀδελφαὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγουσαι· Κύριε, ἴδε ὃν φιλεῖς ἀσθeneῖ. [4]⁶³ ⁵ ἡγάπα δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν Μάρθαν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸν Λάζαρον.

⁶ ὡς οὖν ἤκουσεν ὅτι ἀσθeneῖ, τότε μὲν ἔμεινεν ἐν ᾧ ἦν τόπω δύο ἡμέρας. [7–11a]⁶⁴ ^{11b} καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν κεκοίμηται, ἀλλὰ πορεύομαι ἵνα ἐξυπνίσω αὐτόν.

¹² εἶπαν οὖν αἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτῶ· Κύριε, εἰ κεκοίμηται σωθήσεται.

¹³ εἰρήκει δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς περὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ. ἐκέينو δὲ ἔδοξαν ὅτι περὶ τῆς κοιμήσεως τοῦ ὕπνου λέγει.

62. 10:1–38. Only in the epilogue and in the good shepherd discourse are Jesus's followers called sheep. In 21:15–17 he entrusts his flock to Simon Peter, who likely was the hired hand mentioned in 10:12–13. The extended metaphor of the shepherd is probably an allegory for the Gospel as a whole (see part four; A: coherence with the epilogue; vW 2 and 3).

63. 11:4. “The key here [to determining the origin of the verse] is the use of ‘glory,’ for it is this concept that is a major theme of the second edition. In spite of the extreme power of Jesus (evident in the first edition), the second author indicates that this power is intended to demonstrate the greatness of the Father (i.e., his glory)” (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:496; C: explanation).

64. 11:7–11a. “The next addition by the second author is a brief one [vv. 7–8] and is intended to emphasize the hostility of the religious authorities” who are called αἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:497; criterion G). What makes vv. 9–11 suspicious is the repeated and unnecessary introductory formula in v. 11: ταῦτα εἶπεν, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο λέγει αὐτοῖς (E: repetition; vW 3). The cryptic statement about light and day may have been influenced by the reference to light in 9:4, which also is secondary. In any case, without this verse Jesus's motivation to risk death is the love of his friend.

¹⁴ τότε οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς παρρησίᾳ· Λάζαρος ἀπέθανεν, [15a]⁶⁵
^{15b} ἀλλὰ ἄγωμεν πρὸς αὐτόν. [16–17]⁶⁶

¹⁸ ἦν δὲ ἡ Βηθανία ἐγγὺς τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ὡς ἀπὸ σταδίων δεκαπέντε.

¹⁹ πολλοὶ δὲ ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐηλύθεισαν πρὸς τὴν Μάρθαν καὶ Μαριάμ ἵνα παραμυθῆσονται αὐτὰς περὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ. ²⁰ ἡ οὖν Μάρθα ὡς ἤκουσεν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἔρχεται ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ· Μαρία δὲ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ ἐκαθέζετο. [21–31]⁶⁷

³² ἡ οὖν ἡ Μάρθα ὡς ἦλθεν ὅπου ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἰδοῦσα αὐτόν ἔπεσεν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς πόδας, λέγουσα αὐτῷ· Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ἄθε οὐκ ἂν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός.

³³ Ἰησοῦς οὖν ὡς εἶδεν αὐτὴν κλαίουσαν καὶ τοὺς συνελθόντας αὐτῇ Ἰουδαίους κλαίοντας ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν, ³⁴ καὶ εἶπεν· Ποῦ θεεῖκατε αὐτόν;

λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· Κύριε, ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε.

³⁵ ἐδάκρυσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

³⁶ ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· Ἴδε πῶς ἐφίλει αὐτόν.

³⁷ τινὲς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶπαν· Οὐκ ἐδύνατο οὗτος ὁ ἀνοίξας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τοῦ τυφλοῦ παιῆσαι ἵνα καὶ οὗτος μὴ ἀποθάνῃ;

³⁸ Ἰησοῦς οὖν ἀπάλιν ἐμβριμώμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἔρχεται εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον ἦν δὲ σπήλαιον, καὶ λίθος ἐπέκειτο ἐπ' αὐτῷ. ³⁹ λέγει ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἄρατε τὸν λίθον.

λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τοῦ τετελευτηκότος Μάρθα· Κύριε, ἤδη ὄζει, τεταρταῖος γάρ ἐστιν. [40]⁶⁸

⁴¹ ἤραν οὖν τὸν λίθον. [41b–43a]⁶⁹

^{43b} φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ἐκραύγασεν· Λάζαρε, δεῦρο ἔξω.

65. 11:15a. This half-verse provides an awkward justification of Jesus's four-day delay (v. 39; E: explanation; vW 2).

66. 11:16–17. All references to Thomas the Twin issue from the final redaction (A: coherence with the epilogue). 11:17 anachronistically anticipates Jesus's arrival in Bethany, even though it does not actually take place until more than twenty verses later (11:38). The reference to "four days" anticipates v. 39.

67. 11:21–31. The text of the final redaction contains doublets of Lazarus's sisters going to meet Jesus; Martha does so first (11:20–27) and Mary second (11:32–37). The earliest version of the Gospel likely had only one such encounter, but scholars disagree over which of the two came first. I agree with von Wahlde that the second appeared in the first edition (*Gospel and Letters*, 2:488–515). Note the titles ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 27; the earlier version spoke only of κύριε in v. 32.

68. 11:40: λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Οὐκ εἶπὸν σοι ὅτι ἐὰν πιστεύσῃς ὁ ψῆ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ; Jesus had not made this statement to Martha, even if one attributes vv. 21b–32a to the first edition (D: aporia). Of course, if vv. 21–31 are indeed a later interpolation, vv. 40 is even more suspicious (vW 3).

69. 11:41b–43a. Surely this is a secondary addition intended to clarify that v. 41 did not imply that the raising of Lazarus was an exception: God always heard Jesus (C: explanation; vW 2). Martha in v. 22, another interpolation, similarly states καὶ νῦν οἶδα ὅτι ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσῃ τὸν θεὸν δώσει σοι ὁ θεός.

⁴⁴ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ τεθνηκώς δεδεμένος τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας κειρίαις, καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ σουδαρίῳ περιεδέδετο.

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Λύσατε αὐτὸν καὶ ἄφετε αὐτὸν ὑπάγειν.

⁴⁵ Πολλοὶ οὖν ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, οἱ ἐλθόντες πρὸς τὴν Μαριάμ καὶ θεασάμενοι ἃ ἐποίησεν, ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν· ⁴⁶ τινὲς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπῆλθον πρὸς τοὺς Φαρισαίους καὶ εἶπαν αὐτοῖς ἃ ἐποίησεν Ἰησοῦς.

⁴⁷ συνήγαγον οὖν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συνέδριον, καὶ ἔλεγον· Τί ποιούμεν ὅτι οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος πολλὰ ποιεῖ σημεῖα; ⁴⁸ ἐὰν ἀφῶμεν αὐτὸν οὕτως, πάντες πιστεύσουσιν εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ ἐλεύσονται οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ ἀροῦσιν ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν τόπον καὶ τὸ ἔθνος.

⁴⁹ εἷς δὲ τις ἐξ αὐτῶν Καϊάφας, ἀρχιερεὺς ὧν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου, εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε οὐδέν, ⁵⁰ οὐδὲ λογίζεσθε ὅτι συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα εἷς ἄνθρωπος ἀποθάνῃ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος ἀπόληται. [51–52]⁷⁰ ⁵³ ἀπ' ἐκείνης οὖν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐβουλεύσαντο ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτόν.

⁵⁴ Ὁ οὖν Ἰησοῦς οὐκέτι παρηρησία περιεπάτει ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, ἀλλὰ ἀπῆλθεν ἐκεῖθεν εἰς τὴν χώραν ἐγγὺς τῆς ἐρήμου, εἰς Ἐφραῖμ λεγομένην πόλιν, κάκει ἔμεινεν μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν.

⁵⁵ Ἦν δὲ ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβησαν πολλοὶ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐκ τῆς χώρας πρὸ τοῦ πάσχα ἵνα ἀγνίσωσιν ἑαυτούς. ⁵⁶ ἐζήτουν οὖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἔλεγον μετ' ἀλλήλων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐστηκότες· Τί δοκεῖ ὑμῖν; ὅτι οὐ μὴ ἔλθῃ εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν; ⁵⁷ δεδώκεισαν δὲ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἐντολὰς ἵνα ἐὰν τις γινῶ ποῦ ἐστὶν μνηύσῃ, ὅπως πιάσωσιν αὐτόν.

12

[12:1–11]⁷¹ ¹² Τῆ ἑπαύριον ὁ ὄχλος πολὺς ὁ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν, ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ἔρχεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, ¹³ ἔλαβον τὰ βαῖτα τῶν φοινίκων καὶ

70. 11:51–52. According to von Wahlde, these verses represent an aside by the narrator to “explain the hidden meaning of Caiaphas’s words in the theological perspective of the third edition and become an important interpretation of the meaning of Jesus’ approaching death. Jesus will die ‘for the nation’” (*Gospel and Letters*, 2:521). Furthermore, the gathering of God’s children into one flock is a theme shared with other secondary additions to the Gospel (e.g., 10:16 and 17:20).

71. 12:1–11 narrate Jesus’s anointing at Bethany. Von Wahlde attributes vv. 1–2 and 9–11 to the earliest Gospel, but 3–8 to the final redactor (*Gospel and Letters*, 2:532–42). He may be correct, but if one omits all of 12:1–11 the triumphal entry into Jerusalem for the festival flows naturally from the reference to Passover at the end of ch. 11. Furthermore, vv. 1–2 and 9–11 expand the murderous intentions of the authorities to include targeting Lazarus, likely an embellishment.

ἐξήλθον εἰς ὑπάντησιν αὐτῶ, καὶ ἐκραύαζον· Ὡσαννά, εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου, καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.¹⁴ εὐρῶν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὀνάριον ἐκάθισεν ἐπ' αὐτό, καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον·¹⁵ Μὴ φοβοῦ, θυγάτηρ Σιών· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται, καθήμενος ἐπὶ πῶλον ὄνου. [16]⁷²

¹⁷ ἔμαρτύρει οὖν ὁ ὄχλος ὁ ὢν μετ' αὐτοῦ ὅτε τὸν Λάζαρον ἐφώνησεν ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου καὶ ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν.¹⁸ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὑπήντησεν αὐτῶ ὁ ὄχλος ὅτι ἤκουσαν τοῦτο αὐτὸν πεποιηκέναι τὸ σημεῖον.¹⁹ αἱ οὖν Φαρισαῖοι εἶπαν πρὸς ἑαυτούς· Θεωρεῖτε ὅτι οὐκ ὠφελεῖτε οὐδὲν ἴδε ὁ κόσμος ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ ἀπῆλθεν. [20–50]⁷³

13

¹ Πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἐορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα ἵνα μεταβῇ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. [1b–31a]⁷⁴ ^{31b} λέγει [οὖν] Ἰησοῦς [31c–32]⁷⁵ ³³ τεκνία, ἔτι μικρὸν μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι. [33b] ζητήσετέ με, [33d]⁷⁶ ^{33e} [ἀλλὰ] ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν. [34–35]⁷⁷

³⁶ Λέγει αὐτῶ Σίμων Πέτρος· Κύριε, ποῦ ὑπάγεις; [36b–37a]⁷⁸ διὰ τί οὐ δύναμαί σοι ἀκολουθῆσαι ἄρτι; τὴν ψυχὴν μου ὑπὲρ σοῦ θήσω.

³⁸ ἀποκρίνεται Ἰησοῦς· Τὴν ψυχὴν σου ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ θήσεις; ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, οὐ μὴ ἀλέκτωρ φωνήσῃ ἕως οὗ ἀρνήσῃ με τρίς.

72. 12:16. This verse is one of several in the Gospel that state that the disciples did not understand the meaning of events until after Jesus's resurrection (B: *relecture*; vW 2).

73. 12:20–50. Von Wahlde attributes only four verses in this span of text to the earliest edition: 20–22 and 37 (*Gospel and Letters*, 2:543–74), but even these verses are suspect. The introduction of Ἑλληνές in v. 20 seems to be a gloss on the statement in v. 19 that ὁ κόσμος went after Jesus, viz. not just Jews but also Greek converts to Judaism (C: explanation). Verse 37, when isolated from its context, makes little sense and contradicts Jesus's success in v. 19. If one eliminates all of 20–50 the narrative segues smoothly from Jesus's entry into Jerusalem for the Passover (12:12–19) to Passover eve (13:1).

74. 13:1b–31a. Von Wahlde attributes all of chs. 13–17 to the second and third editions. By so doing, he omits every trace of Jesus's final instructions to the Twelve. My reconstruction proposes that Jesus alerts them that he soon will die and gives them encouragement.

75. 13:31c–32. The glorification of the Son of Man surely issues from the third edition to explain why Jesus needed to depart (C: explanation; vW 3).

76. 13:33b and 33d likely issue from the second edition. Note the use of Ἰουδαῖοι in 33b (G).

77. 13:33e–35 interrupt the flow of the dialogue (D: *aporia*; vW 2 and 3).

78. 13:36b–37a. These verses resemble Jesus's prediction of Peter's martyrdom in the epilogue (see 21:18–19 and the discussion in part four; A: coherence with the epilogue; vW 2 and 3).

14

[1–3]⁷⁹ 4 και ὅπου ἐγὼ υπάγω οἴδατε τὴν ὁδόν. [5–6a]⁸⁰ 6b Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς και ἡ ἀλήθεια και ἡ ζωή. [6c–31a]⁸¹ 31b Ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν.

15

¹ Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή, και ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ γεωργὸς ἐστίν. ² πᾶν κλῆμα ἐν ἐμοί μὴ φέρον καρπὸν αἶρει αὐτό, και πᾶν τὸ καρπὸν φέρον καθαίρει αὐτὸ ἵνα καρπὸν πλείονα φέρῃ. [3]⁸² 4 μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί, κἀγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν. καθὼς τὸ κλῆμα οὐ δύναται καρπὸν φέρειν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐὰν μὴ μένη ἐν τῇ ἀμπέλῳ, οὕτως οὐδὲ ὑμεῖς ἐὰν μὴ ἐν ἐμοί μένητε. [15:5–17:26]⁸³

18

¹ Ταῦτα εἰπὼν Ἰησοῦς ἐξῆλθεν σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ πέραν τοῦ χειμάρρου τοῦ Κεδρὼν ὅπου ἦν κῆπος, εἰς ὃν εἰσῆλθεν αὐτὸς και οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ. ² ἤδει δὲ και Ἰούδας ὁ παραδιδούς αὐτὸν τὸν τόπον, ὅτι πολλάκις συνήχθη Ἰησοῦς ἐκεῖ μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ. ³ ὁ οὖν Ἰούδας λαβὼν τὴν σπεῖραν και ἐκ τῶν ἀρχιερέων και ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων ὑπηρέτας ἔρχεται ἐκεῖ μετὰ φανῶν και λαμπάδων και ὄπλων.

⁴ Ἰησοῦς οὖν εἰδὼς πάντα τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐξῆλθεν, και λέγει αὐτοῖς Τίνα ζητεῖτε;

⁵ ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον.

79. 14:1–3. Von Wahlde attributes all of chs. 13–17 to the second and third editions. But by removing only vv. 14:1–3 the exchange between Jesus and Peter segues easily from 36a, where Peter asks ποῦ υπάγεις, to 14:4, ὅπου ἐγὼ υπάγω οἴδατε τὴν ὁδόν (D: aporia).

80. 14:5–6a. All references to Thomas the Twin issue from the final redaction (see part four; A: coherence with the epilogue). By removing these verses, Jesus's statement that his disciples "know the way [οἴδατε τὴν ὁδόν]" is explained: Jesus, whom they know, is ὁ ὁδός.

81. 14:6c–31a. Von Wahlde surely is right in attributing these verses to later redactions (editions 2 and 3). If these verses are omitted, Jesus concludes his farewell discourse with reassurance to the Twelve in 15:1–4.

82. 15:3 seems to have been added to correct any impression that the disciples needed pruning (C: explanation; vW 2).

83. 15:5–17:26. These verses surely issue from the second and third editions. One can imagine 15:1–4 as part of Jesus's statement to the disciples as they leave, but surely not all of 15:5–17:26 prior to their arrival at the garden where Jesus will be arrested (vW 2 and 3).

λέγει αὐτοῖς Ἐγώ εἰμι. [5b–8a]⁸⁴ 8b εἰ οὖν ἐμέ ζητεῖτε, ἄφετε τούτους ὑπάγειν. [9]⁸⁵

¹⁰ Σίμων οὖν Πέτρος ἔχων μάχαιραν εἴλκυσεν αὐτήν καὶ ἔπαισεν τὸν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως δούλον καὶ ἀπέκοιψεν αὐτοῦ τὸ ῥάτῳ τὸ δεξιόν. ἦν δὲ ὄνομα τῷ δούλῳ Μάλχος.

¹¹ εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ· Βάλε τὴν μάχαιραν εἰς τὴν θήκην· τὸ ποτήριον ὃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ οὐ μὴ πῖω αὐτό;

¹² Ἡ οὖν σπεῖρα καὶ ὁ χιλίαρχος καὶ οἱ ὑπηρέται τῶν Ἰουδαίων συνέλαβον τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸν ¹³ καὶ ἤγαγον πρὸς [Καϊάφαν] [13b–18]⁸⁶ ¹⁹ Ὁ οὖν ἀρχιερεὺς ἠρώτησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν περὶ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ τῆς διδασχῆς αὐτοῦ. ²⁰ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐγὼ παρρησία λελάληκα τῷ κόσμῳ· ἐγὼ πάντοτε ἐδίδαξα ἐν συναγωγῇ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, ὅπου πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι συνέρχονται, καὶ ἐν κρυπτῷ ἐλάλησα οὐδέν· ²¹ τί με ἐρωτᾷς; ἐρώτησον τοὺς ἀκηκόοντας τί ἐλάλησα αὐτοῖς· ἴδε οὗτοι οἶδασιν ἅ εἶπον ἐγώ.

²² ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος εἰς παρεστηκώς τῶν ὑπηρετῶν ἔδωκεν ῥάπισμα τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰπών· Οὕτως ἀποκρίνη τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ;

²³ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς· Εἰ κακῶς ἐλάλησα, μαρτύρησον περὶ τοῦ κακοῦ· εἰ δὲ καλῶς, τί με δέρεις; [24]⁸⁷

²⁵ Ἦν δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος ἐστῶς καὶ θερμαινόμενος. εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ· Μὴ καὶ σὺ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ εἶ;

ἠρνήσατο ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν· Οὐκ εἰμί.

²⁶ λέγει εἷς ἐκ τῶν δούλων τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, συγγενῆς ὧν οὗ ἀπέκοιψεν Πέτρος τὸ ῥάτῳ· Οὐκ ἐγὼ σε εἶδον ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μετ' αὐτοῦ;

84. 18:5b–8a. The interpolator of this exchange apparently thought that the epiphanic implications of Jesus identifying himself as ἐγὼ εἰμι needed highlighting (C: explanation). To do so, he twice repeated ἐγὼ εἰμι, unnecessarily reminding the reader that Judas was on hand (cf. v. 2), and made Jesus repeat his question and the soldiers' reply (vW 3; E: repetition).

85. 18:9 clearly is secondary: it evokes a statement in 6:39 that likewise is secondary (vW 3).

86. 18:13b–18. The reference to ἄλλος μαθητῆς in vv. 15–16 likely evokes the shadowy disciple whom Jesus loved (see part four; A: coherence with the epilogue). Verses 17–18 duplicate information and expand on information provided in v. 22 (vW 3). More problematic are verses 13b–14. The account of Jesus's interrogation by Jewish authorities in the final redaction clearly is corrupt. According to v. 13 Jesus is taken to Annas, who is called ἀρχιερεὺς in 19, even though he is not the high priest that year (13). Verse 24 states that Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas, and, without a second interrogation, v. 28 states "they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium." I propose a simple solution: in the first edition Jesus goes to Caiaphas (13a), who is the current high priest, and not to Annas; if so, the extradition of Jesus to Caiaphas in v. 24 must also be secondary. Once again, certainty regarding the reconstruction is illusive.

87. 18:24. If the earliest edition did not mention Annas in vv. 13–14, this verse too must be secondary.

²⁷ πάλιν οὖν ἤρνήσατο Πέτρος· καὶ εὐθέως ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν.

²⁸ Ἄγουσιν οὖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ Καϊάφα εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον ἦν δὲ πρῶτῃ· καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον, ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν ἀλλὰ φάγωσιν τὸ πάσχα.

²⁹ ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Πιλάτος ἔξω πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ φησίν· Τίνα κατηγορίαν φέρετε κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου;

³⁰ ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος κακὸν ποιῶν, οὐκ ἂν σοι παρεδώκαμεν αὐτόν. [31–32]⁸⁸

³³ Εἰσῆλθεν οὖν πάλιν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον ὁ Πιλάτος καὶ ἐφώνησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων;

³⁴ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ σὺ τοῦτο λέγεις ἢ ἄλλοι εἶπόν σοι περὶ ἐμοῦ;

³⁵ ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Πιλάτος· Μήτι ἐγὼ Ἰουδαῖός εἰμι; τὸ ἔθνος τὸ σὸν καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς παρέδωκάν σε ἐμοί· τί ἐποίησας;

³⁶ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ [36b]⁸⁹ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐντεῦθεν.

³⁷ εἶπεν οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Πιλάτος· Οὐκοῦν βασιλεὺς εἶ σὺ;

ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Σὺ λέγεις ὅτι βασιλεὺς εἰμι. ἐγὼ εἰς τοῦτο γεγέννημαι καὶ εἰς τοῦτο ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα μαρτυρήσω τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· πᾶς ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκούει μου τῆς φωνῆς.

³⁸ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Πιλάτος· Τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια;

Καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν πάλιν ἐξῆλθεν πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Ἐγὼ οὐδεμίαν εὐρίσκω ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτίαν· ³⁹ ἔστιν δὲ συνήθεια ὑμῖν ἵνα ἕνα ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ πάσχα· βούλεσθε οὖν ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἰουδαίων;

⁴⁰ ἐκραύγασαν οὖν πάλιν λέγοντες· Μὴ τοῦτον ἀλλὰ τὸν Βαραββᾶν. ἦν δὲ ὁ Βαραββᾶς ληστής.

88. 18:31–32. These verses clearly are a secondary explanation of why Jesus was not stoned but crucified (C: explanation). Von Wahlde attributes them to the final redaction: “the purpose of the verses is not to describe the charge being brought but rather to describe an event in which the word of Jesus [in 3:14] will be shown to be fulfilled” (*Gospel and Letters*, 2:774). 3:14 itself seems to be secondary (vW 3).

89. 18:36b. Here one finds both a reference to Jesus’s enemies as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (criterion G) and a duplication of 36b: ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν (E: repetition; vW 3).

¹ Τότε οὖν ἔλαβεν ὁ Πιλάτος τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἐμαστίγωσεν. ² καὶ οἱ στρατιῶται πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῦ τῇ κεφαλῇ, καὶ ἰμάτιον πορφυροῦν περιέβαλον αὐτόν, ³ καὶ ἤρχοντο πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ ἔλεγον· Χαῖρε, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων· καὶ ἐδίδοσαν αὐτῷ ῥαπίσματα.

⁴ καὶ ἐξῆλθεν πάλιν ἔξω ὁ Πιλάτος καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Ἴδε ἄγω ὑμῖν αὐτὸν ἔξω, ἵνα γνῶτε ὅτι οὐδεμίαν αἰτίαν εὐρίσκω ἐν αὐτῷ. ⁵ ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔξω, φορῶν τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον καὶ τὸ πορφυροῦν ἰμάτιον. καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Ἴδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος.

⁶ ὅτε οὖν εἶδον αὐτὸν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ ὑπηρέται ἐκραύγασαν λέγοντες· Σταύρωσον σταύρωσον.

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· Λάβετε αὐτὸν ὑμεῖς καὶ σταυρώσατε, ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ εὐρίσκω ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτίαν.

⁷ ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· Ἡμεῖς νόμον ἔχομεν, καὶ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὀφείλει ἀποθανεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸν θεοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐποίησεν.

⁸ Ὅτε οὖν ἤκουσεν ὁ Πιλάτος τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη.

⁹ καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον πάλιν καὶ λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ· Πόθεν εἶ σὺ; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀπόκρισιν οὐκ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ.

¹⁰ λέγει οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Πιλάτος· Ἐμοὶ οὐ λαλεῖς; οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχω ἀπολύσαι σε καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω σταυρῶσαί σε;

¹¹ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς· Οὐκ εἶχες ἐξουσίαν κατ' ἐμοῦ οὐδεμίαν εἰ μὴ ἦν δεδομένον σοι ἄνωθεν. [11b–12]⁹⁰

¹³ Ὁ οὖν Πιλάτος ἀκούσας τῶν λόγων τούτων ἤγαγεν ἔξω τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ βήματος εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Λιθόστρωτον, Ἐβραϊστὶ δὲ Γαββαθα. ¹⁴ ἦν δὲ παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα, ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη. καὶ λέγει τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις· Ἴδε ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑμῶν.

¹⁵ ἐκραύγασαν οὖν ἐκεῖνοι· Ἄρον ἄρον, σταύρωσον αὐτόν.

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· Τὸν βασιλέα ὑμῶν σταυρώσω;

ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς· Οὐκ ἔχομεν βασιλέα εἰ μὴ Καίσαρα.

90. 19:11b–12. Once again one reads that Jesus's opponents are οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (G). Such vitriol against Jews is most typical of the second edition (vW 2). This is the only place where the Jews interrupt what otherwise is Pilate's private interrogation of Jesus.

¹⁶ τότε οὖν παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς ἵνα σταυρωθῆ. Παρέλαβον οὖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν·

¹⁷ καὶ βαστάζων αὐτῷ τὸν σταυρὸν ἐξῆλθεν εἰς τὸν λεγόμενον Κρανίου Τόπον, ὃ λέγεται Ἑβραϊστὶ Γολγοθα, ¹⁸ ὅπου αὐτὸν ἐσταύρωσαν, καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἄλλους δύο ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν, μέσον δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

¹⁹ ἔγραψεν δὲ καὶ τίτλον ὁ Πιλάτος καὶ ἔθηκεν ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἣν δὲ γεγραμμένον· Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων. ²⁰ τοῦτον οὖν τὸν τίτλον πολλοὶ ἀνέγνωσαν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἦν ὁ τόπος τῆς πόλεως ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· καὶ ἦν γεγραμμένον Ἑβραϊστὶ, Ῥωμαϊστὶ, Ἑλληνιστὶ.

²¹ ἔλεγον οὖν τῷ Πιλάτῳ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων· Μὴ γράφῃ· Ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν Βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων εἰμί.

²² ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Πιλάτος· Ὁ γέγραφα γέγραφα. [23–24]⁹¹

²⁵ Εἰστήκεισαν δὲ παρὰ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Κλωπᾶ καὶ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνῆ.

²⁶ Ἰησοῦς οὖν ἰδὼν τὴν μητέρα [26b]⁹² λέγει τῇ μητρὶ· Γυναί, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου. [27]

²⁸ Μετὰ τοῦτο εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤδη πάντα τετέλεστοι [28b]⁹³ 28c λέγει· Διψῶ.

²⁹ σκεῦος ἔκειτο ὄξους μεστὸν· σπόγγον οὖν μεστὸν τοῦ ὄξους ὑσώπῳ περιθέντες προσήνεγκαν αὐτοῦ τῷ στόματι. ³⁰ ὅτε οὖν ἔλαβεν τὸ ὄξος ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· Τετέλεστοι, καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα. [31–37]⁹⁴

³⁸ Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἠρώτησεν τὸν Πιλάτον Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας, ὦν μαθητὴς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κεκρυμμένος, [38b]⁹⁵ ^{38c} ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ· καὶ ἐπέτρεψεν ὁ Πιλάτος. ἦλθεν οὖν καὶ ἦρεν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ. ³⁹ ἦλθεν δὲ καὶ

91. 19:23–24. There can be little doubt that a later redactor, influenced by Mark 15:24–25, added these verses to remind “the reader that Jesus’ crucifixion can be interpreted as the death of one who is faithful to the end, as described in” Ps 22 (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:813).

92. 19:26b. All references to the Beloved Disciple come from the final redaction; see part four (A: coherence with the epilogue).

93. 19:28b. The same hand that inserted vv. 23–24 likely also inserted ἵνα τελειωθῆ ἡ γραφὴ (vW 3).

94. 19:31–37. Concern for Jesus’s death fulfilling Scripture characterizes the later redactions of the Gospel; according to von Wahlde, especially the third. Be that as it may, the insertion of the witness of the blood and water flowing from Jesus’ wound clearly comes from the final redaction (A: coherence with the epilogue).

95. 19:38b. The phrase διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων especially characterizes the second edition (vW 2; G).

Νικόδημος, ὁ ἐλθὼν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς τὸ πρῶτον, φέρων μίγμα σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης ὡς λίτρας ἑκατόν.⁴⁰ ἔλαβον οὖν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις μετὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνταφιάζειν.
⁴¹ ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη κήπος, καὶ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μνημεῖον καινόν, ἐν ᾧ οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς ἦν τεθειμένος.⁴² ἐκεῖ οὖν διὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ μνημεῖον, ἔθηκαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

20

¹ Τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔρχεται πρωτὶ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ βλέπει τὸν λίθον ἠρμένον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου. [2-11a]⁹⁶ ^{11b} ὡς οὖν ἔκλαιεν παρέκυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον,¹² καὶ θεωρεῖ δύο ἀγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, ἓνα πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ ἓνα πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ὅπου ἔκειτο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.¹³ καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῇ ἐκεῖνοι: Γύναι, τί κλαίεις;

λέγει αὐτοῖς ὅτι Ἔηραν τὸν κύριόν μου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν.
¹⁴ ταῦτα εἰπούσα ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, καὶ θεωρεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστίν.

¹⁵ λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς: Γύναι, τί κλαίεις; τίνα ζητεῖς; ἐκείνη δοκοῦσα ὅτι ὁ κηπουρὸς ἐστίν λέγει αὐτῷ Κύριε, εἰ σὺ ἐβάστασας αὐτόν, εἰπέ μοι ποῦ ἔθηκας αὐτόν, κάγω αὐτόν ἀρῶ.

¹⁶ λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς: Μαριάμ.

στραφεῖσα ἐκείνη λέγει αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστί: Ραββουни (δ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε).

¹⁷ λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς: Μὴ μου ἄπτου, οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα· πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπέ αὐτοῖς: Ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου. [17b]⁹⁷

¹⁸ ἔρχεται Μαριάμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἀγγέλλουσα τοῖς μαθηταῖς ὅτι Ἐώρακα τὸν κύριον καὶ ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῇ.

¹⁹ Οὔσης οὖν ὀψίας τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ τῇ μιᾷ σαββάτων, καὶ τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισμένων ὅπου ἦσαν οἱ μαθηταὶ [19b],⁹⁸ ^{19c} ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔστη εἰς

96. 20:2-11a. The apostolic footrace and the prominence of the Beloved Disciple point decisively to the final redactor (see part four).

97. 20:17b is "marked as coming from the third edition by the use of 'brothers' to refer to the disciples. . . . There is also the theological orientation of the dialogue with Jesus that he is to ascend 'to my Father and to your Father and my God and your God.' This ascent motif is also characteristic of the third edition throughout" (von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 2:848).

τὸ μέσον, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν. [20–21a]⁹⁹ 21^b καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς.²² καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον.²³ ἂν τινῶν ἀφήτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς ἂν τινῶν κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται. [24–29]¹⁰⁰

³⁰ Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν, ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.³¹ ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζῶν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. [21:1–25]¹⁰¹

98. 20:19b. Once again the expression διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων points to the second edition (vW 2).

99. 20:20–21a. John 20:19 likely redacts Luke 24:36, Jesus's post-resurrection appearance to the eleven, but without his invitation to touch him, as in Luke. The awkward repetition of Jesus's greeting in 21a, εἰρήνη ὑμῖν, likely indicates that someone inserted v. 20 under the influence of Luke 24 (D: aporia, and E: repetition). That is, in the first edition Jesus tells Mary not to touch him, but in the final redaction he invites Thomas to do this very thing (see part four; vW 3).

100. 20:24–29. All references to Thomas the Twin issue from the final redaction; cf. 21:2 (see part four; vW 3).

101. 21:1–25. Ch. 21 is a secondary epilogue (see part four; vW 3).

Appendix 2: Euripides' *Bacchae*

This appendix is an overview of the *Bacchae* with an original translation of sections most germane to the Fourth Gospel. It also includes occasional commentary on matters of textual criticism or interpretation. This translation informed the comparison of the tragedy with the earliest Johannine Gospel in part two.

The *Bacchae* begins with Dionysus alone on stage declaring why he has come to Thebes, the city of his birth.

I, the child of Zeus, have come to the land of Thebes—
Dionysus, whom Semele daughter of Cadmus once bore,
induced to do so by a lightning bolt—
after having changed myself into human form from that of a god.
(*Bacch.* 1–4)

Dionysus, of course, was only one of many sons—and daughters—of Zeus, but his connection with the king of gods was particularly intimate. Behind Hera's back, Zeus slept with Semele, the daughter of King Cadmus of Thebes, but he zapped her with a lightning bolt for boasting that she had conceived by him. He then saved the fetus, sewed it into his thigh, and brought it to term; one might say that Zeus was both father and mother to baby Bacchus.

The god of wine next tells the audience that he had transformed himself “into human form” as a disguise to vindicate his mother against those who refused to believe that she had slept with Zeus;

these deniers included Semele's own sisters. Of the Olympians, none was as notorious as Dionysus for his polymorphism; one of his most enduring symbols was the actor's mask, which permitted a single male performer to play multiple roles. Later in the *Bacchae*, for example, the chorus invites Dionysus to assume the appearance of a bull, a multi-headed snake, or a ferocious lion (1017–1019). At the end of the play, as *deus ex machina*, he appears in his divine glory (sometime before line 1330).

Although most Thebans mocked Semele's claim that she had conceived by Zeus, Dionysus's opening speech notes one important exception:

I praise Cadmus, who established this plot untrodden,
a sacred precinct for his daughter. With clustering foliage of the grapevine
I myself have shrouded it. (*Bacch.* 10–12)

Euripides' Dionysus then tells the audience why he came to Thebes.

On leaving the gold-rich fields of the Lydians,
and the Phrygians, the sunlit plains of the Persians,
Bactrian walled cities, and the dangerous lands
of the Medes, arriving at prosperous Arabia
and all of Asia that lies by the briny sea,
that has cities with beautiful towers filled
with a mixture of Greeks and barbarians together,
I have now come to the land of the Greeks for the first time,
after having made those regions dance and having established my
rites, so that a god might be revealed to mortals.
Of the cities of Greece Thebes was the first one
that I stirred to ululate, having clothed the women in fawnskin
and placed the thyrsus in their hands, my ivied spear.
Since my mother's sisters—whom one might least expect—
were saying that Dionysus was not born from Zeus,
but that Semele had been seduced by some mortal man,
and that she had attributed to Zeus her own sexual sin,
[her pregnancy by Zeus being] a sophistry by Cadmus—on account of this
they gloated publicly that Zeus killed her,
because she lied about the marriage.
For this reason I drove them [the women] from their homes.
They dwell in the mountains frenzied in mind.
I forced them to take the tokens of my revelry. (*Bacch.* 13–34)

The tokens mentioned here include robes made of animal skins, tambourines, pine torches, and thyrsi (fennel stalks wound with ivy and topped with pinecones). The poet describes bacchants letting down their hair, rolling their eyes, dancing about wildly, and invoking the god with cries of “*evohé*” and “*io*.”

Dionysus then boasts of driving women into the wild:

All the Cadmean female seed, as many
 women as there were, I drove from their houses in madness.
 Mingling together with the daughters of Cadmus,
 they sit on rocks under open sky and under green firs.
 Whether it wants to or not, this city must learn the truth,
 though now it is ignorant of my bacchic rites;
 I will give a defense on behalf of my mother Semele
 by appearing to mortals as the god she bore to Zeus. (*Bacch.* 35–42)

Next he notifies the audience why he assumed the guise of a mortal:
 the king of Thebes, Pentheus,

god-fights against me, bars me from libations,
 and never remembers me in his prayers.
 For this reason I will show him that I am a god,
 and all the Thebans, too. And into some other land,
 once I have set things right here, I will travel by foot
 and reveal myself.

* * * * *

To this end I have changed into this mortal
 appearance and transformed my shape into the form of a man.
 (*Bacch.* 45–50, 53–54)

At the end of his speech, Dionysus addresses the chorus, the Lydian women, or maenads (crazed women), whom he calls his *θίασος*, or band of female groupies.

You who have left Mount Tmolus, defender of Lydia,
 my thiasos, women whom from the barbarians
 I have brought here as my comrades in camp and march,
 take up the instrument native to the region of the Phrygians,
 the tambourine. (*Bacch.* 55–59)

The god then leaves the stage.

At this point the chorus of Lydian women, maenads, enters the stage and sings:

O blessed is the person, who,
happy to know the rites of the gods,
conducts his life purely
and brings his soul to the thiasos,
in the mountains performing bacchic rites
with sacred purifications.

* * * * *

Go bacchants! Go bacchants!
Clamor, a god and a child of a god,
bring him, Dionysus,
from Phrygian mountains to
the spacious streets of Hellas.

* * * * *

[After severe labor pains, Semele] gave birth, as she abandoned life
at the strike of lightning.
Immediately, as into a child's bed,
Zeus, son of Cronos,
hid him in his thigh and
closed it up with golden
pins, hidden from Hera.
And he birthed him as soon as the Fates
had brought him to term.

* * * * *

Soon all the land will dance,
when Clamor leads his thiasos
to the mountain, to the mountain, where are staying
the throng of womankind;
from their looms and shuttles
they were smitten mad by Dionysus.

* * * * *

He [Dionysus] is delighted in the mountains, when,
apart from the scurrying thiasoi,

he falls to the ground, wearing his fawnskin,
 a sacred garment, as he hunts for
 the blood of slain goats, the sheer joy of eating raw flesh,
 going to the mountains
 of Lydia, Clamor our leader. Evoi!
 The ground flows with milk, flows with wine,
 and flows with the nectar of bees.

* * * * *

Like a colt with its grazing mother,
 the bacchant woman skips about on nimble legs.
 (*Bacch.* 72–77, 83–87, 92–100, 114–19, 135–43, 165–66)

The next character on Euripides' stage is blind Tiresias, led by the hand of a young lad, bearded but decked out like a maenad, draped with a fawnskin, with ivy in his hair and leaning on a thyrsus for a cane (176–77). Ancient Cadmus, legendary king of Thebes, soon arrives, also in Bacchic drag, and tells Tiresias:

I have come prepared, wearing this outfit of the god.
 For it is now necessary—with respect to the child of my daughter,
 Dionysus, a god manifest to people—
 to magnify him as much as we are able.
 Where should we dance; where should we place our feet
 and shake our gray heads? You yourself guide me,
 Tiresias—an old man guiding an old man—for you are wise.
 I would not tucker out night or day
 hammering the ground with this thyrsus.
 Quite happily we have forgotten
 that we are old men.
 [Tiresias:] So you experience the same things as I,
 for I too am young and will take a stab at the dances.

* * * * *

[Cadmus:] Though I am an old man, I will lead you, an old man, as one leads a child.

* * * * *

Of those men in the city, we alone will dance in the Bacchic rite.

* * * * *

Take my hand.
[Tiresias:] Look, grab it and join our hands.

* * * * *

Will someone say that I am not respectful of my old age
if I prepare to dance by wreathing my head with ivy?
No, for the god does not separate the young
and the old when it comes to dancing,
but wants to have equal honors from all
and to be magnified by all, excluding no one.
(*Bacch.* 180–90, 193, 195, 197–98, 204–9)

Dramatic tension begins with the entrance of Euripides' villain, King Pentheus, son of Agave, grandson of Cadmus.

I hear of a new evil in the city.
Our women abandon their homes
in fake Bacchic ecstasy, scurry about in the wooded
hills, and honor in dances some new daemon,
Dionysus—whoever he is.
At the center of their thiasoi stand full
wine bowls. Here and there, into private spaces,
they sneak off to serve the beds of men. (*Bacch.* 216–23)

Pentheus already has used his authority to put an end to the madness of the maenads:

Those whom I have seized, with their hands bound,
my servants hold safely in the public jail;
those still on the loose I will hunt from the hills.

* * * * *

By securing them in iron nets,
I will soon put a stop to this pernicious bacchic activity.
They say that some stranger has come,
a beguiling wizard from the land of Lydia.

* * * * *

I'll chop his neck from this body,
that one who says Dionysus is a god,
that one who says he once had been sewn into Zeus's thigh.

* * * * *

When the joy of the grape comes to women's feasts,
I say that nothing wholesome remains in their rites.
(*Bacch.* 226–28, 231–34, 241–43, 261–62)

Tiresias then rebukes the king: he may think that he is intelligent, but there is nothing prudent in what he says (266–69). In fact, Dionysus is one of the greatest benefactors among the Olympians.

Young man, two things
are primary among human beings: the goddess Demeter—
that is, Earth, but call her by either name as you wish—
she feeds mortals with dry food;
but then came the offspring of Semele, who
discovered its complement, the drink of the grape cluster, and
introduced
it to mortals, which stops woeful mortals from feeling
sorrow when they fill themselves with the juice of the grapevine.

* * * * *

Though he himself is a god, he is poured out in libations to the gods,
so that through him mortals may receive good things.
(*Bacch.* 274–81, 284–85)

Here Tiresias indicates that Dionysus is envisioned as inhabiting the wine. Similarly, Bacchus is present within the wine, and he gets poured into a cup (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.488–489) and drunk. Odysseus gives the Cyclops the god to drink (Euripides, *Cyclops*, 519–20). The idea that this god inhabits the wine and gets poured out in libations is obviously widespread.¹

Tiresias continues his tirade with a scolding for Pentheus's obstinate opposition to the god of wine:

Do not boast that political power is the supreme force among humans,
as you suppose. Your supposition is sick;
do not suppose that it is prudent. Receive the god into the land,
pour libations, play the bacchant, and wreath the head!
Dionysus does not force

1. Esther Kobel, *Dining with John: Communal Meals and Identity Formation in the Fourth Gospel and its Historical and Cultural Context* (BIS 109; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 228.

women into Cypris [Aphrodite as a personification of sex];
rather this resides in their nature.

* * * * *

One should observe this: even in bacchic worship,
a chaste woman will not be corrupted.
Can't you see? You rejoice when many people stand at the gates,
and the city acclaim the name Pentheus.
That man [Dionysus] too, I would think, enjoys being honored.

* * * * *

I will not be convinced by your words and fight against the god.
For your own madness is the most tragic of all!
(*Bacch.* 310–15, 317–21, 325–26)

Blind Tiresias can see the truth; the king, however, remains blind.

Despite Tiresias's warning, Pentheus then gives these orders to his soldiers:

Scurry about the area and track down
the effeminate stranger who introduces
a new disease among the women and ruins their marriage beds.
If you seize him, bring
him here chained, so that by a judgment of stoning
he may die. (*Bacch.* 352–57)

The chorus of Lydian women then pines for the quiet delights of the land of love:

May I go to Cyprus,
island of Aphrodite,
where the Erotes [lesser love deities] who charm the hearts
of mortals hold sway
at Paphos.

* * * * *

There live the Graces, there is Desire, there
it is permitted the bacchantes to conduct their orgies [ὄργιαζειν].
(*Bacch.* 402–6, 415–16; see also 236)

As instructed, Theban soldiers bring the god in shackles—and with him bad news.

Pentheus, we have brought the prey
 you sent us to hunt down; we did not rush about in vain.
 This is the animal who was gentle to us, who did not take
 flight by foot but willingly gave us his hands,
 nor did his wine-hued cheeks turn ashen.
 Laughing, he even told me to tie him up and to lead him away
 and was waiting for me to do so, making my job easy.
 And out of shame I said, "O stranger, it is not gladly
 that I lead you away, but I do so with letters from Pentheus, who sent me."
 But the bacchant women you shut up—those you arrested
 and bound in chains at the public prison—
 they have fled, freed!
 They are leaping around the meadows calling on their god, Clamor.
 The chains loosened themselves from their feet,
 without a mortal hand, the bars of the door were undone.
 This man has arrived full of many wonders! (*Bacch.* 434-49)

Once the priest of Dionysus—the god himself—is in Pentheus's
 clutches, the king interrogates him:

[Pentheus:] So first tell me, who are your people?

* * * * *

[Dionysus:] I am from here: Lydia is my country.

[Pentheus:] From where did you bring these rites to Greece?

[Dionysus:] Dionysus, the son of Zeus, himself initiated me.

[Pentheus:] So is there some Zeus there who sires new gods? (*Bacch.* 460,
 464-67)

The king then inquires about the nature of Dionysian revelries:

[Pentheus:] And these rites, what form do they have for you?

[Dionysus:] They are ineffable for the understanding of uninitiated
 mortals.

[Pentheus:] And what gain comes to those who perform the rites?

[Dionysus:] It is not permitted for you to hear them, but they are worth
 knowing.

[Pentheus:] How well you spin this, so that I want to hear about them!

[Dionysus:] The rites of the god are inimical to one who exercises
 impiety.

* * * * *

[Pentheus:] You say nothing so very well!

[Dionysus:] Whoever speaks wise things to a fool will seem not to think
 clearly. (*Bacch.* 471-76, 479-80)

The king vows to imprison him, but the “priest” predicts that

the god himself will free me whenever I want.

* * * * *

Even now he is near and sees what I am suffering.

[Pentheus:] Where is he? He is not visible to my eyes.

[Dionysus:] He is here with me; because you are impious, you do not see him.

* * * * *

[Pentheus:] I am more powerful than you—to tie you up.

[Dionysus:] You do not know what life you live, what you are doing, or what you are.

* * * * *

Be assured, for these acts of insolence,

Dionysus will mete out retribution against you, the very one you say does not exist.

For even though you wrong me, he is the one you are leading to prison.

(*Bacch.* 498, 500–502, 505–6, 516–18)

Ever defiant, the king shuts him up—not in a prison, but in his dark granary.

After Pentheus incarcerates Dionysus, all male characters exit, leaving the stage to the Lydian chorus, who pray for their god’s rescue.

Do you see, O child of Zeus,

Dionysus, that your advocates
are constrained by oppression?

Lord, waving your gold-gleaming
thyrsus, come down from Olympus

and restrain the hubris of a murderous man! (*Bacch.* 550–55)

Euripides’ audience then would have heard Dionysus calling out from Pentheus’s palace and the chorus responding to him.

[Dionysus:] Io! Listen! Listen to my voice!

Io! Bacchae! Io! Bacchae!

[Chorus:] What was that? Whence comes that cry
of the god of evohé calling me?

[Dionysus:] Again I shout out: Io! Io!
I Semele’s son, the child of Zeus!

[Chorus:] Io! Io! Master, master!

Come now to our
thiasos, O Clamor, Clamor!

[Dionysus:] Shake, O surface of the ground! Tremble, Lady Earth!

* * * * *

[Chorus:] Ignite the thunderbolt, a fiery torch!

Consume, consume Pentheus's halls! (*Bacch.* 576–85, 594–95)

Euripides' audience then would have seen Pentheus's palace light up.

[Chorus:] Aha! Do you not see the fire? Do you not see,

around the holy tomb of Semele,
the flame that she left behind
when Zeus hurled his thunderbolt?

Throw yourselves to the ground,
maenads! Throw your quaking bodies down!
For the lord is coming to overturn
these halls, the son of Zeus! (*Bacch.* 596–603)

Dionysus then emerges from the ruins of Pentheus's palace and comforts the chorus of maenads:

Barbarian women, dumbfounded by fear,
have you fallen to the ground? It would appear that you observed Bacchus
shaking the house of Pentheus. But raise
your bodies, take courage, and dispel fear from your flesh!

[Chorus:] O light supreme for us in the joyful worship,
How delighted I am to see you, for I was alone and abandoned.

[Dionysus:] Did you come to despair when I was sent inside,
thrown into Pentheus's dark prison?

[Chorus:] How could I not be? Who would be my protector if you
encountered misfortunes?

How were you freed even though you dealt with an unholy man?

[Dionysus:] I easily saved myself, without effort. (*Bacch.* 604–14)

The god then informs the chorus what had taken place inside. Instead of chaining him, Pentheus, “breathing fury,” chained instead a bull (618–20). “Bacchus came and shook the house, at the tomb of his mother / he lit a fire” (623–24). When the prison doors flew open, the king feared that his prisoner might escape, so he drew his sword to

slay him; but he could do no harm, for he was stabbing a look-alike phantom. He dropped his sword in exhaustion; “though he was a man, / he dared to wage war on a god” (635–36). This scene thus fulfills Dionysus’s prediction to the king, “the god himself will free [λύσει] me whenever I want” (498). He reminds Pentheus of this prediction after the escape: “Did I not say, or did you not listen: someone will free [λύσει] me?” (641).

After Dionysus emerges from Pentheus’s granary, he tells the king to listen to a herder who had just arrived from the hills: “We will wait for you. We will not flee” (659). The messenger reports what he had seen: at dawn the women were in the wild asleep, “soberly—not as you say, / drunk from the wine-bowl” (686–87). When they awoke, they performed the most amazing miracles, such as producing fountains of water and wine.

One of them took a thyrsus and struck a rock
 from which gushed a wet spurt of water.
 Another woman stuck the fennel wand into a plot of earth,
 and on that spot the god produced a fountain of wine.

* * * * *

Had you been there, the god you now censure
 you would approach with prayers on seeing such things.
 (*Bacch.* 704–7, 712–13)

They also dismembered cattle with their own hands (734–47; cf. 704–7, 712–13). They even “in their curls / carry fire, and it does not burn them” (757–58). The herder thus advises:

This god—whoever he may be—
 O master, receive him into this city. . . .
 They say, so I hear, that this man is the one
 who gives to mortals the sorrow-stopping grapevine.
 And when wine runs out, there is no Cypris [= Aphrodite, the goddess of
 love]
 or any other pleasure for people. (*Bacch.* 769–74)

And the chorus chimes in: “Dionysus is inferior to none of the gods” (777).

Despite the messenger’s report, Pentheus remains intent on ridding Thebes of this foreign scourge and threatens to muster his troops against the reveling women in the wild.

Already, like fire, the insolence of the bacchantes is near,
a huge failing in the eyes of [other] Greeks.
One must not delay.

* * * * *

We will go to war
with the bacchantes! (*Bacch.* 778–80, 784–85)

The god, however, warns: “I would rather sacrifice to him than kick against the goads, / a mortal raging against a god” (794–95).

Because Pentheus still does not take this advice, the god drives him mad. “Do you want to see them [the maenads] sitting together in the mountains?” (811). He says, “I would give a fortune in gold to do so” (812). The god then convinces him to disguise himself as a woman and to investigate their behavior in the hills for himself. Both men leave the stage for the last time: Pentheus will die, and Dionysus will abandon his mortal disguise. Later, he will descend into view in his divine splendor.

Later, another messenger reports to the chorus (and the audience) the events that followed. He had accompanied Pentheus and Dionysus to the piedmont of Mount Cithaeron, in silence, “so that we might see but not be seen” (1050).

When wretched Pentheus could not see the crowd of women,
he said [to Dionysus]: “O stranger, from where I stand
I cannot track with my eyes their mad revelries.
But if I climbed into that tall-necked fir tree on the banks,
I would be able to see clearly the shameful doings of the maenads.”
(*Bacch.* 1058–62)

To accommodate this request, Dionysus bends the top of a tree to earth, places Pentheus on it, and returns it to upright. Pentheus “was seen more than he saw” (1075).

When the maenads spotted him, they uprooted the tree and attacked.
 And a voice from the aether—it seemed to be
 Dionysus—cried out, “Young women,
 I deliver to you the one who ridicules
 you, me, and my rites. But now punish him!”
 As he was speaking these things, in the sky
 and earth was set alight of holy fire.

* * * * *

While sitting on high from on high
 Pentheus falls to the ground with much howling,
 for he now learned that harm was at hand. (*Bacch.* 1078–83, 1111–13)

The king tries desperately to reveal to his mother Agave who he is.

He threw his [female] headdress from his hair,
 so that pitiable Agave, on recognizing him, might not kill him.
 And he says, touching her cheek,
 “Mother, it is I, your son
 Pentheus, whom you bore in the house of Echion.
 O mother, have pity on me! Do not kill me for my
 sins—your own child!”
 Frothing at the mouth and
 rolling her distorted eyes, she was not thinking as she should,
 but was possessed by the bacchic god, so she was not convinced.
 She grabbed his left hand with a strong grip,
 planted her foot against the doomed man’s ribs,
 and wrenched out the shoulder.

* * * * *

One woman carried an arm,
 another a foot in its boot, and his ribs were bare
 from the tearing of the flesh; every woman with bloody
 hands played catch with Pentheus’s flesh. (*Bacch.* 1115–27, 1133–36)

Agave then triumphantly carries his head back to Thebes atop her
 thyrsus, thinking that it is the head of a young lion. Dionysus “the wise
 hunter” helped her catch it (1189–92). The messenger concludes his
 speech to the female chorus with a word of pious advice: “Treating
 things pertaining to the gods with prudence and worship / is what
 is best. I think that this is the wisest / strategy mortals can employ”

(1150–52). Eager to share her splendid news, Agave asks the chorus, “Where [ποῦ] is my old father? Let him come here. / And where [ποῦ] is my son Pentheus?” (1211–12).

Cadmus then arrives with slaves carrying a stretcher with the decapitated and dismembered body of her son. Agave proudly shows him the head of her quarry—to his horror. Still oblivious, she calls again for her son, gradually returns to her senses, recognizes the bloody head as that of Pentheus, and asks her father, “Where is the body of my dear son?” (1298). Cadmus then shows her what he was able to scavenge at the location of the murder. “If there is anyone who disdains supernatural beings, / on gazing at the death of this man, let him esteem the gods” (1325–26). Unfortunately, only the first line of Agave’s lament survives (1329).

Textual witnesses have failed to preserve an important and substantial section near the end of the *Bacchae*, which almost certainly included (1) Agave’s lamentation for Pentheus, (2) Dionysus, now in his resplendent glory, descending into view—he becomes *deus ex machina*—and (3) the beginning of his command that Cadmus and his family abandon Thebes, even though it was the old king whom the god had singled out for praise in his opening speech. What survives includes this:

I, Dionysus, speak these things, the one sired not by an earthly father
[πατρός] but by Zeus.

* * * * *

Long ago, Zeus, my father [πατήρ], gave the nod to these things. (*Bacch.*
1340–41, 1349)

Cadmus’s complaint likely spoke for many an ancient audience: “It is not right that the gods resemble mortals in their outrages” (1348). After line 1351 the stage machine would have lifted the god up and out of sight; Cadmus and his family then go into exile.

The play ends with a common Euripidean tailpiece spoken by the chorus as all characters exit:

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

Many the shapes of things divine,
and many things the gods perform contrary to our hopes.
The things expected are not fulfilled,
but a god finds a path for events not expected.
This tale turned out in just such a manner. (*Bacch.* 1388–92)

Appendix 3: The Sinful Woman (John 7:53—8:11)

The famous story of Jesus forgiving an adulterous woman that appears in 7:53—8:11 was not original to the ancient Gospel; it does not appear in the earliest manuscripts and clearly was a later interpolation. On the other hand, the story *per se* was ancient. Its earliest attestation seems to be a reference in Papias's *Exposition* (ca. 110 CE) paraphrased by Eusebius of Caesarea: "He also presented another tale about a woman who had been accused before the Lord of many sins, a tale that the *Gospel of the Hebrews* contains" (frag. 2:1 [*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.17]). Eusebius apparently did not know the story from copies of the Gospel of John known to him. This section of the *Gospel of the Hebrews* no longer survives.

The next earliest survival of the tale appears in a truncated version in the *Didascalia apostolorum* (early third century) that urges its readers to receive those who repent as Jesus "did with her who had sinned, whom the elders placed before him, leaving the judgment in his hands, and departed. But he, the searcher of hearts, asked her and said to her: 'Have the elders condemned you, my daughter?' She says to him: 'No, Lord.' And he said to her: 'Go, I do not condemn you either.'"¹

1. *Did. apost.* 8.2.24; translation altered from Arthur Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* (CSCOSyr 177; Leuven: Secrétariat du CSCO, 1979).

Nearly two centuries later, Didymus of Alexandria (“the Blind”; d. 398) reported that he had seen multiple versions of the tale.

We report that in some Gospels [a story] says that a woman was condemned by the Jews for a sin and was taken to be stoned at the place where this customarily happened. It says that when the Savior saw her and observed that they were ready to stone her, he said to those who were about to throw stones at her: “Whoever has not sinned, let him lift a stone and throw it; if someone is certain that he has not sinned, let him take a stone and strike her.” And no one dared to do so. When they knew in themselves and recognized that they were guilty in some respects, they did not dare [to strike] her.²

In *Two Shipwrecked Gospels* (18–24 and 246–53), I argued that Papias had seen the story in the lost Gospel and thus it was known by all three Synoptic Evangelists. The following columns compare my textual reconstruction with John’s version, but one must use them with caution. Whereas the reconstruction of the *Logoi of Jesus* always is difficult, this reconstruction is particularly so. On the other hand, the structure of the controversy and criticism of Jewish law are consistent with the lost Gospel elsewhere.

Logoi 5:17–23

The elders brought in a woman who had been accused of many sins,

¹⁸ and standing her in the center
¹⁹ said to him,

“Teacher,

Moses commanded us in the law to stone such women. So what do you say?” But they were saying this to test him.

John 8:3–11

The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and standing her in the center⁴ spoke to him, saying,

“Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of adultery.

⁵ Moses commanded us in the law to stone such women. So what do you say?”⁶ They were saying this to test him, in order to have an accusation against him.

2. For the Greek text of this fragment see Bart D. Ehrman, “Jesus and the Adulteress,” *NTS* 34 (1988): 24–44, at 25, and Dieter Lührmann, “Die Geschichte von einer Sünderin und andere apokryphe Jesuüberlieferungen bei Didymos von Alexandrien,” *NovT* 32 (1990): 289–316, at 290, and *Fragmente apokryph gewordener Evangelien in griechischer und lateinischer Sprache* (MTS 59; Marburg: Elwert, 2000), 51.

²⁰ But Jesus stooped down and was writing in the ground with his finger.

And as they continued interrogating him, he straightened up and said to

them, ²¹ "Whoever has not sinned, let him lift a stone and throw it."

And he stooped down again and was writing in the ground. ²² And no one dared to do it, and they left one by one.

²³ And Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? No one is condemning you, are they?"

She said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you either. Go."

But Jesus stooped down and was writing in the ground with his finger.

⁷ And as they continued interrogating him, he straightened up and said to

them, "Let the one among you without sin be the first to cast a stone at her."

⁸ And he stooped down again and was writing in the ground. ⁹ But when they heard his reply, one by one, beginning with the elders, they left, and only he and the woman who had been in the middle remained.

¹⁰ And Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? No one is condemning you, are they?"

¹¹ She said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you either. Go, and from now on sin no longer."

Jesus's enigmatic writing with his finger on the ground likely contrasts his compassion with the rigidity of Mosaic law, which, according to Deuteronomy, God wrote in stone with his finger (9:10 LXX). In both columns Jesus forgives the woman, even though she does not repent, which likely is why the story does not appear in Mark, Matthew, or Luke.³ The interpolator apparently sought to compensate by adding Jesus's final instructions, "from now on sin no longer."

Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine the *Vorlage* used by the Johannine interpolator; it could have been the lost Gospel, or Papias's *Exposition*, the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, or another of the Gospels that Didymus consulted.

3. Although the story does not appear in Luke, it likely influenced the episode of the repentant street woman in Luke 7:36–50; see Dennis R. MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels: The Logoi of Jesus and Papias's Exposition of Logia about the Lord* (SBLECL 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 249–51.

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Author Index

- Accorinti, Domenico, 35
Attridge, Harold W., 32, 71, 105
- Bacon, Benjamin Wisner, 2
Barrett, C. K., 26, 137, 159
Bartlet, J. Vernon, 1
Bauckham, Richard, 2, 4, 59–60, 76,
161–62, 169–70
Bekker, Immanuel, 91
Bell, Robert E., 63
Beutler, Johannes, 147
Bornkamm, Günther, 3
Bovon, François, 168–69
Brant, Jo-Ann, 26, 31–32, 74, 105,
110
Broer, Ingo, 41
Brown, Raymond E., 27
Bultmann, Rudolf, 27, 41, 157
Burkert, Walter, 63
- Calame, Claude, 74
Chadwick, Henry, 97
Chapman, Honora Howell, 112
Charles, R. H., 17, 19–20
- Cho, Jae Hyung, 56, 64, 65
Cole, Susan Guettel, 56
Collins, Raymond F., 42
Connick, C. Milo, 26
Conway, Colleen M., 116
Cousland, J. R. C., 113
Croy, N. Clayton, 114
Culpepper, R. Alan, 2
- D'Angelo, Mary Rose, 105–6
DeConick, April O.
Dettwiler, A., 127
Dixon, Edward P., 38
Dodds, E. R., 65, 110
Domeris, William, 26
- Ehrman, Bart D., 220
Eisele, Wilfried, 41
Evans, Arthur, 35, 120–21
Fehriback, Adeline, 116
Feldman, Louis H., 112
Förster, Hans, 42
Fleddermann, Harry T., 11, 12, 13
Fortna, Robert, 59

- Frey, Jörg, 14–15, 162–63
- Friesen, Courtney J. P., 24–25, 36, 37, 42, 43–44, 56, 72, 74, 79, 96, 97, 98, 107–8, 110–14, 122
- Grill, Julius, 26
- Gutwenger, E., 1
- Haenchen, Ernst, 27
- Hengel, Martin, 2, 3, 4, 6, 133–35, 157, 159, 161–62
- Henrichs, Albert, 51–52, 53, 66
- Hernández de la Fuente, David, 84, 121–23
- Hill, Charles E., 2, 3, 119, 163–64
- Holmes, Michael W., 173
- Johnson, Marshall, 106
- Kennedy, George A., 136
- Kobel, Esther, 26, 64, 66, 209
- Körtner, Ulrich H. J., 1, 2
- Labahn, Michael, 42, 58
- Lambrecht, Jan, 8
- Lang, Manfred, 103
- Larsen, Kasper Bro, 94, 143
- Lenardon, Robert J., 102
- Lindars, Barnabas, 27
- Louw, Johannes P., 31
- Lührmann, Dieter, 220
- Lütgehetmann, Walter, 41
- MacDonald, Dennis R., 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 21, 27, 38, 42, 46, 54, 56, 58, 62, 72, 73, 76, 80, 83, 88, 98, 100–01, 103, 110, 112, 140, 221
- Meeks, Wayne, 93
- Meier, John P., 140
- Mitchell, Margaret M.
- Moles, John, 112
- Moloney, Francis J., 27, 137
- Morford, Mark P. O., 102
- Nestle, Wilhelm, 112
- Nida, Eugene A., 31
- Nilsson, Martin P., 56
- Norelli, Enrico, 1, 2
- Painter, John, 143
- Parsenios, George L., 26, 32, 93, 94–95
- Pearce, Keith, 77
- Pervo, Richard I., 6
- Phillips, Peter M., 32
- Reguero, M. Carmen Encinas, 39
- Riley, Gregory J., 64–65, 138
- Roux, Jeanne, 110
- Schäfer, J.
- Schenke, Ludger, 26
- Schnackenburg, Rudolf, 27
- Schnelle, Udo, 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 13, 27, 33, 134, 159
- Schoedel, William R., 1
- Scott, James M., 25
- Seaford, Richard, 56, 72

- Seim, Turid Karlsen, 116
- Sherry, Lee Francis, 121
- Smend, Friedrich, 113
- Smith, D. Moody, Jr., 27
- Spanoudakis, Konstantinos, 81
- Stegemann, Ekkehard W., 26
- Stibbe, Mark W. G., 25–26, 29, 86, 95,
97–98
- Takács, Sarolta A., 79
- Talbert, Charles H.
- Thyen, Hartwig, 20, 33, 46, 59, 77,
103, 137, 146, 152–55, 157, 160
- Tilborg, Sjef van, 111
- Tuckett, Christopher M., 8
- Van Belle, Gilbert, 59, 103
- Verburg, Winfried, 68
- Vian, Francis, 120
- von Wahlde, Urban C., 8, 9, 24, 27,
111–12, 125–27, 132, 134, 155,
160, 173–75, 177–78, 182, 184–89,
191–95, 197, 199, 200
- Vööbus, Arthur, 219
- Waetjen, Herman C., 27
- Weinreich, Otto, 112
- White, Robert J., 72
- Wick, Peter, 26, 42, 54
- Yarbro Collins, Adela, 11
- Yarbrough, Robert W., 1
- Ziegler, Detlef, 42, 110, 112
- Zimmermann, Ruben, 101–02
- Zumstein, Jean, 127–28, 173
- Züntz, Günther, 110

Ancient Sources Index

Greco-Roman Literature	4 117
Achilles Tatius	10–12 29
Leucippe et Clitophon	20 118
2.2–3 43–45	22 118
	26–30 30
Aelius Theon	47 31
Progymnasmata	53–54 117
8 135–36	53 30–31
	96 31
Aeschines	139 65
3:41 72	142–43 52
	142 41
Aristophanes	180–90 47
Frogs	181–83 50
346–47 48	187–89 49
	193 47, 49
Artemidorus	195 47
Onirocritica	197–98 47
2.37 72	204–9 47–48
	216–23 54
Euripides	216–20 83
Bacchae, see Appendix 2	216–19 56
1–4 28–29	222–23 52, 54
1 57	274–81 63

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

319.....	74	771-74.....	79
346-47.....	46	777.....	68
352-56.....	82	778-80.....	81
432-518.....	72	784-85.....	81
434-46.....	86	992.....	
451-518.....	68	993.....	94
460-76.....	69-70, 90	997.....	94
460.....	69	1014.....	94
464-67.....	69, 93	1038.....	31
465-67.....	70	1115-21.....	99
465.....	70, 94	1133-36.....	65
466-67.....	70	1212.....	107
470.....	95	1277.....	107
471-74.....	94	1284.....	108
471.....	96	1298.....	106
474-75.....	96	1314-15.....	48
479.....	94	1333-37.....	48
498.....	56, 69, 71, 94, 97	1338-39.....	49
500-502.....	69-71	1340-41.....	109
501.....	115	1348.....	25
505-6.....	70, 94	1354-56.....	48, 109
506.....	70	1374-76.....	58
603.....	31	1388-92.....	109
636-37.....	76		
641.....	72	Cretans	
677-774.....	81	Fragment 472.10-15.....	65-66
704-10.....	27		
704-7.....	41	Homer	
704-5.....	52, 54	Odyssey	
707.....	67	6-7.....	83
712-13.....	41, 67	24.205-349.....	102
735.....	65		
739.....	65	Homeric Hymn to Demeter	
769-70.....	68	280-82.....	63

Homeric Hymn to Dionysus, 140

1–6 91

11–12 91

38–39 84

Horace

Epodes

1.16.78–79 56

Isocrates

Oratio 4.28 63

Lucian

True Story

1.7 84

Orphic Fragment 485 56

Pausanias

Descriptio

2.23.1 54

2.24.6 53

4.36.7 53

8.37.3 53

9.16.6 72

Pindar

Fragment 137a 63

Plato

Apology

33C–D 88

Laws

666B 48

Plutarch

De Iside et Osiride

465A–B 52–53

Moralia

476B–C 56

613 72

Quintilian

Institutio oratoria

9.2.58 136

10.1.67 68

Sophocles

Oedipus tyrannus

413 74

Fragment 837 63

Septugint/Old Greek

Deuteronomy

9:10 221

13:2–4 11

2 Kings

4:42–44 62

Isaiah

13:10 18

Ezekiel

34:2–9 144

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

34:11–16 145

34:23 145–46

Other Jewish Literature

Apocalypse of Moses

31:3–4 105

The Lost Gospel (The Logoi of Jesus or Q/Q+)

2:11 20

3:7 19

4:4 19

5:17–23 220–21

6:18–21 8

7:17–18 19

8:4 16

8:8–9 13

8:8 17

8:10 12

8:14–15 17

8:17–20 17

8:25 18

8:43–44 20

9:1 11

10:24–25 18

10:61–63 18

New Testament

Matthew

4:8 20

5:12 19

8:5–13 58

8:19 19

10:32 17

10:34 18

11:15 6

12:32 12, 13

17:2 16

19:28 18

22:2–3 20

22:36–39 8

23:34–35

24:22–23 11

24:23 11

24:24–25 11, 12

24:24 19

24:29 18

24:42–46 17

25:1–10 17

26:52 19

Mark

1:24 41

1:27 41

2:1–12 175

2:19–20 78

3:28–29 12

3:29 12, 13

6:30–44 62

8:29 142

13:21 11

13:22–23 11, 12, 19

13:22 17

13:23 12

14:3–9 76–77

14:18–20 153

14:22–24 43–44

14:27 145

14:29 145
 14:31 138
 14:45 145
 14:50 145
 15:16–18 90, 99
 15:40–41 155
 16:2–6 156

Luke-Acts

The Gospel of Luke

3:20 60
 4:9–10 40
 4:14–30 59
 4:23 59
 5:1–11 130–40
 7:1–10 58
 7:36–50 221
 7:37–38 78
 8:1–3 112
 10:18–19 18
 10:25–29 8
 10:38–39 77
 12:10 12
 12:35–37 17
 12:37–38 147, 149
 16:20 77
 19:1–10 101, 112
 22:3 146
 22:24–27 149
 24:1 104
 24:3–4 104
 24:9–10 104
 24:15–17 104
 24:30–39 105

24:36–39 108
 24:38–39 118

The Acts of the Apostles

2 42
 2:1–11 112
 2:14–40 113
 3:1–10 113
 3:10 176
 4:1–7 113
 4:13–14 113
 4:24–31 113
 5:17–32 113
 5:29 113
 5:33–39 113
 8:1–3 113
 9:1–2 113
 9:3–19 113
 12:24–13:12 113
 16:13–15 54–55, 113
 16:16–40 72, 113
 16:20–21 55
 23:2–4 88
 24:19–21 88

John, see Appendix 1

1–4 58–61
 1:1–18 32–34
 1:1–5 28–9
 1:1–3 33
 1:3–4 33, 57
 1:6–8 29
 1:7 33
 1:9 33–34, 143

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

1:11 33-34	2:23-24 46-48
1:13 129	2:23 175-76
1:14 30-31, 34, 118	3:1-24 48-49
1:16 30-31, 34	3:2 175
1:18 31-32, 154	3:11 130
1:19-51 38-40	3:22-24 59-61
1:28 76	3:24 60
1:29 129, 151	3:25-30 50
1:35-42 150-53	3:29 78-79
1:35-36 150-51	3:31 129
1:35 169	3:36 130
1:37 143	4:1-42 51-56
1:38-39 150-52	4:10-14 58
1:40-41 150, 152	4:46-54 56-58, 81
1:42 39, 143	4:54 58-61, 176
1:43 150, 152	5:1 176
1:44 152	5:2-9 46-48, 174-76
1:48 143	5:2 175
1:49 40	5:9-47 175
1:51 40	5:10-18 175
2:1-3:22 60	5:19-30 175
2:1-11 24, 40-43, 45, 78	5:32 130
2:1-10 84, 122	5:38 130
2:4 42, 99	5:42 130
2:11 42, 58-61, 84	5:46-47 176
2:13 176	6:1-14 62-64
2:14-16 46	6:6-9 152
2:15-16 175	6:29 130
2:15 175	6:35 63
2:16 175	6:53-66 64-67
2:17-22 175	6:67-69 142-43
2:17 175	6:70-71 142-43
2:18-21 175	7:31-52 67-68
2:22 127, 175	7:39 128

- 7:44 75
 7:45-52 68
 7:53-8:11 68, 220-21
 8:12-19 68-71
 8:12 68-69, 130
 8:18-19 115
 8:29 130
 8:32-37 71-73
 8:44 131
 8:47 131
 8:58-59 75
 9:1-41 73-75
 9:1-33 74
 9:1-11 122
 9:34-41 74
 10:1-18 143-46
 10:2 143
 10:3 143
 10:4-6 144
 10:7-10 144
 10:11 144
 10:12-13 144-45
 10:12 145
 10:14-15 145
 10:16 145-46
 10:17-18 146
 10:26-29 143
 10:39-42 75-76
 10:40-42 76
 11:1-44 122
 11:1-5 78-79
 11:1-2 76-78
 11:1 77
 11:2 76-78
 11:6-44 79-81
 11:15 138
 11:16 138
 11:45-50 81-82
 11:53-57 81-82
 11:57 82
 12:1-8 76
 12:12-15 82-83
 12:16 127
 12:17-19 82-83
 12:35 131
 13:1-2 146-47
 13:1 83
 13:2 146
 13:3 78
 13:4-5 147-48
 13:4 147
 13:6-11 146, 148
 13:7 128
 13:12-17 147-48
 13:15 132
 13:16 149
 13:21-22 153
 13:23-25 153-54
 13:26 153
 13:27 46, 148
 13:31-35 83
 13:33-34 165
 13:33 149
 13:34 8, 9, 132
 13:35 132
 13:36-37 146, 149
 13:36 138, 150
 13:37-38 145, 149

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

14:4	83, 138-39	18:28-19:16	89-96
14:5	138-39	18:33	100
14:6	7, 83, 139	18:35-38	90
14:13	132	18:36	100
14:15	132	18:37	100
14:16	128, 133-34	18:39	100
14:17	132	19:2-3	100
14:20	128	19:5	100
14:21	133	19:7	87, 92
14:26	128, 133	19:9-11	94
14:31	83	19:17-30	96-101
15:1-2	83, 102	19:21	111
15:1	25, 66	19:25-26	98, 100, 155
15:4	66, 83	19:26-27	154-55
15:11	134	19:26	99
15:13	134	19:27	155
15:17-19	134	19:28	99
15:26	128	19:31-37	170
16:4	128	19:34-35	155-56
16:12-13		19:34	160
16:32	128, 144	19:35	160
16:33	134	19:38-40	101-2
17:3	135	19:39	48
17:15-16	135	19:41	101
17:20-21	165	20:1	102-4, 156
18:1-13	85-87, 102	20:2-11	156-157
18:1	101	20:9	127
18:2-11	123	20:11-18	103-8
18:10-11	141	20:13	106
18:15-17	54	20:15	101, 106
18:19-27	87-89	20:17	105, 108, 118
18:20-21	88	20:19-23	108-9
18:22-23	88	20:19	108
18:27	141	20:24-29	179

- 20:24–25 139
 20:27–29 139
 20:30–31 23, 67, 109
 20:31 129, 160
 21:1–3 137–38
 21:2 138, 158
 21:7 148
 21:14 139
 21:15–17 141–44
 21:18–19 141–42, 146
 21:19 150
 21:20–23 150
 21:20–22 152
 21:20 142, 153
 21:22–23 169–61
 21:22 170
 21:23 166
 21:24–25 23, 150, 159, 164,
 167
 21:24 156, 170
 21:25 158

 1 John
 1:1–5 4, 32–34
 1:1–4 164
 1:1–3 6, 130
 1:1–2 160
 1:1 33
 1:2–3 33
 1:4 4, 134
 1:5 33
 1:6 130, 164
 2:1 133
 2:5 132

 2:6 132
 2:7–11 9
 2:7 7, 166
 2:8 8
 2:11 131
 2:14 130
 2:15 130
 2:18–25 166
 2:18–22 117
 2:18 10
 2:21–22 10
 2:24 9, 166
 2:25–26 9
 2:26 166
 2:27 132
 2:28 161
 3:2 117, 161
 3:5 129
 3:8 131
 3:11 7, 9
 3:12 9
 3:13 134
 3:15 131
 3:16 134
 3:22 132
 3:23 7, 9, 130, 134
 3:24 132
 4:1–6 132, 166
 4:1 5, 9, 10, 12
 4:3 10, 131
 4:5 129, 134
 4:6 129, 132
 4:7 135
 4:21 7–8

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

5:1 49
 5:3 132
 5:4-5 134
 5:6-8 159-60
 5:6-7 132
 5:6 132
 5:9 130
 5:13 129, 130
 5:14 132
 5:16-17 12
 5:17 13
 5:18-19 135
 5:19 131
 5:20 135
 5:21 165

2 John

1 165
 5-6 7, 9
 5 132
 7-11 5
 7-8 10, 12
 7 9,
 8 12
 9-11 9
 10-11 166
 12-13 5
 12 134

3 John

9-10 5, 9, 166
 9 2, 6, 165
 12-15 5, 165, 167
 12-13 159, 167

Revelation

1:1-3:22 5
 1:1-9 16
 1:1-4 167
 1:1 14
 1:3 7, 17
 1:4 14
 1:9-22:7 2, 14-21
 1:9-3:22 167
 1:9-11 15
 1:9 14, 15, 162
 1:10-12 16
 1:10 16
 1:16 16
 2:2-4 166
 2:6 166
 2:9 166
 2:10 16
 2:11 16
 2:20-21 16
 3:3 17
 3:5 17
 3:20 17
 3:21 18
 4:4 18
 6:4 18
 6:10 19
 6:12-13 18
 6:14 186
 12:9 18
 13:10 19
 13:13-14 19
 14:4 19
 16:5-6 19

- 16:15 17
 18:24 19
 19:7 19
 19:9 20
 19:31–37 170
 20:4 18
 21:10 20
 22:1–21 15
 22:7 15, 162
 22:8 14, 16
 22:18–21 162
- Other Christian Literature**
 Christus patiens 35–38, 107–8
 1–7 120
 28–30 120
 1469–70 107
 1535–616
- Clement of Alexandria 164
- Protrepticus
 2.12.2 65
 2.34.2–5 79
 12.118.5 120
 12.119.1–2 34–35
 12.119.3–4 75
- Stromata
 4.25.162.3–4 95
- Didascalia Apostolorum
 8.2.24 219
- Didymus of Alexandria, 220
- Eusebius
 Historia ecclesiastica.
 3.24.7–8 60–61
 3.24.11–12 60–61
 3.39.3–4 3
 3.39.3 20
 3.39.7 5
 3.39.14 5
 3.39.15–16 5
 3.39.17 1–2, 219
 5.24.2–7 4
- Justin Martyr
 First Apology
 21 119
 54 119
- Muratorian Canon 164
- Nonnus of Panopolis
 Dionysiaca and
 Paraphrasis 121–23
- Origen
 Contra Celsum
 2.34–35 97
- Papias
 Exposition of Logia about the
 Lord 1–6, 20–22, 219–21
 1:1–2 5, 22
 1:2 20

THE DIONYSIAN GOSPEL

1:3 5, 21

1:4-5 21

1:4 5, 21

1:5 3, 4, 21, 160

2:1 219

2:3 61

4:6 21

4:7 18

Echoes of a tragic myth

"Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them." Dennis R. MacDonald offers a provocative explanation of those scandalous words of Christ from the Fourth Gospel—an explanation that he argues would hardly have surprised some of the Gospel's early readers. John sounds themes that would have instantly been recognized as proper to the Greek god Dionysos (the Roman Bacchus), not least as he was depicted in Euripides's play *The Bacchae*. A divine figure, the offspring of a divine father and human mother, takes on flesh to live among mortals but is rejected by his own. He miraculously provides wine and offers it as a sacred gift to his devotees, women prominent among them, dies a violent death—and returns to life. Yet, John takes his drama in a dramatically different direction: while Euripides's Dionysos exacts vengeance on the Theban throne, the Johannine Christ offers life to his followers. MacDonald employs mimesis criticism to argue that the earliest evangelist not only imitated Euripides but expected his readers to recognize Jesus as greater than Dionysos.

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Dennis R. MacDonald is John Wesley Professor of New Testament and Christian origins at Claremont School of Theology and the author of numerous books, including *Mythologizing Jesus: From Jewish Teacher to Epic Hero* (2015), *The Gospels and Homer* (2015), and *Luke and Vergil* (2014).

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