Interfluential, Formative, and Dialectical - A Theory of John's Relation to the Synoptics

Paul N. Anderson

George Fox University, panderso@georgefox.edu

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"Interfluential, Formative, and Dialectical – A Theory of John’s Relation to the Synoptics"

While John’s tradition is pervasively autonomous and independent of the Synoptics, the Johannine tradition shows evidence of engagement with various aspects of the Synoptic Gospels and traditions. Multiple non-identical similarities with Mark suggest an “interfluential” set of relationships between the pre-Markan and the early Johannine tradition. At least three dozen times Luke departs from Mark and sides with John, suggesting that Luke has drawn from the Johannine tradition, probably within John’s oral stages of development. Even Q shows evidence of Johannine influence, and this fact demands investigation. Matthean and Johannine traditions appear to have engaged similar issues related to their local Jewish communities, and they also evidence an intramural set of discussions regarding the emergence of structure and matters of egalitarian and Spirit-based aspects of leadership.

Within this theory of John’s relation to the Synoptics, John’s tradition is assumed to have been both early and late. While John’s tradition appears to be finalized latest among the Gospels, it is neither derivative from alien (non-Johannine) sources nor any of the Synoptic traditions. Rather, the Fourth Gospel represents an independent reflection upon the ministry of Jesus produced in at least two editions, and these factors will be drawn together in suggesting an overall theory of Johannine-Synoptic relations.

John’s relation to the Synoptic Gospels has been a fascinating area of study over the last century or more, and yet many studies fall prey to errors that affect adversely the quality of one’s analysis. One fallacy involves the notion that John’s relation to Matthew, Mark, and Luke would have been uniform rather than tradition-specific. Whatever their degree and character, contacts between John and each of the gospel traditions probably had its own particular history, and these factors likely extended to differing traditional forms as well as content-related issues. A second fallacy is the notion that the lateness of John’s finalization implies necessarily John’s dependence upon Synoptic traditions as the primary option for consideration. John’s tradition was early as well as late, and it may be more suitable to view the Johannine tradition as having had an effect on other traditions instead of viewing Synoptic influence upon John as the only possibility. A third fallacy involves the uncritical assumption that the tradition histories and editorial processes operative between the traditions and workings of the first three evangelists are necessarily indicative of those of the fourth. John’s tradition appears not to have been transmitted or gathered in disparate formal categories or units as does the pre-Markan material, and evidence that
the Fourth Evangelist employed alien (non-Johannine) written sources, as
did the First and Third Evangelists, is virtually nonexistent.

An adequate theory of John's relation to the Synoptics must bear these
potential pitfalls in mind, seeking to move ahead on the basis of the most
plausible inferences to be drawn from the best evidence available. The
Fourth Evangelist was probably aware of written Mark and even may have
done some patterning of his written account after Mark's gospel genre. It is
less likely that the Fourth Evangelist knew Luke or Matthew in their written
forms, and yet traces of Johannine material can also be found in Acts.
This is an interesting and provocative fact. The Johannine and Matthean
traditions appear to have shared a common set of goals in reaching local
Jewish communities with the gospel of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, but
their communities apparently had also endured hardship within the process.
With the rise of further problems with Gentile Christians and issues related
to church maintenance and organization, these traditions appear to have been
engaged in dialectical sets of explorations regarding apologetics, ecclesiology,
and Christocracy— the effectual means by which the risen Lord continues to
lead the church. In these and other ways, John's relation to the Synoptic
traditions appears to have been *interjluential, formative, and dialectical*.

The present essay is necessitated, among other things, by the drastic
failure of the last century's leading critical approaches to the tradition-
history of the Fourth Gospel. As a critical scholar, one is entirely pleased to
accept and assimilate any theory of John's composition that is sound and
plausible. However, the soundness of an argument depends on the veracity
of the premises and the validity of its reasoning. In addition, the plausibility
of an overall view must be considered as it relates to other constellations of
issues. On these matters, the best of the 20th century's investigations into
the history and development of the Johannine tradition produce a dismal set
of prospects when trying to find something solid on which to build. One can
understand why the last three decades of Johannine studies has seen the near
abandonment of historical/critical investigations altogether by some scholars,
opting instead for analyses of the literary features and artistry of the Johan-
nine text. Indeed, investigations of John's rhetorical design and capacity to
elicit particular responses from the reader are worthy of consideration, and
they are genuinely helpful to interpreters regardless of what can be known
or inferred of John's authorship, composition, or tradition-history. On the
other hand, the genre of John, while it was indeed a rhetorically-oriented
composition, is not that of an imaginative fiction. While narrative features
are definitely intrinsic to the composition of John, these narratives presup-
pose actual events, claiming at times to be reflections upon them— wrongly
or rightly— and even these narrations must be considered in the light of other
traditions internal and external to the Jesus movement. Therefore, tradition-
analysis cannot be left out of the picture, even with rhetorical interests in
mind. A brief consideration of one's findings elsewhere thus provides a place from which to begin.

Findings as Beginnings.

While the present essay cannot develop fully the critical analyses of alternative options evaluated elsewhere,¹ the findings of earlier works become the foundations of further research. Not all of these issues are treated directly here, but they are indeed discussed elsewhere for those interested in considering the issues further.² As approaches are analyzed, however, even partially convincing results are nonetheless beneficial for pointing ways forward. At times, the questions themselves are still good ones, even if particular answers are insufficient, and every critical analysis done properly casts new light on familiar matters. They may also expose other issues to be explored; likewise, every set of conclusions creates its own set of headaches needing to be addressed.

a) The "Traditional" View: John's Apostolic Authorship. The traditional view, that the Fourth Gospel was written by an apostle, John the Son of Zebedee at the end of his life, bears with it considerable problems. First, the writer of John 21 claims another person is the author—the Beloved Disciple who leaned against the breast of Jesus at the supper—and this suggests at least one other hand in the composition process if one takes the text literally. Also, the "explanation" of the death of the Beloved Disciple suggests apparently that he has died by the time of the finalization of John. Further, John shows signs of editing, suggesting a redactor has indeed added his hand to the construction and/or finalization of John. This set of facts

¹ Many of these findings are extensively laid out in Paul N. Anderson, The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6 WUNT II 78. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1996 (also printed in 1997, Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International), and critical responses have been suggestive of movements within Johannine scholarship. In over thirty-five reviews, none of the reviews took serious issue with the work's critical analyses of prevalent approaches to John's tradition history—especially its critical-and-constructive analysis of Bultmann's magisterial contribution (see, for instance, the extensive engagement by five scholars in the inaugural issue of Review of Biblical Literature 1, 1999, pp.39-72). One of the most significant responses among them involves Robert Kysar's comments on his having changed his mind regarding theories of John's use of alien sources (p.40). See also the traditionsgeschichtlich implications of my dialogues with Professors Schneider, Culpepper, Stanton and Padgett in that issue.

poses serious problems with the view that a particular disciple wrote all of John on his or her own.

A second problem is that John’s material is considerably different from the Synoptics, making it difficult to imagine that “the historical Jesus” is all that well represented in the Fourth Gospel. While apostolic reflection may indeed have been a part of the Johannine tradition, the Fourth Gospel is also very different from the Synoptics, and the verdict of Bretschneider nearly two centuries ago – that in contrast to the Synoptic Gospels, John’s presentation of Jesus was concocted – has largely won the day among New Testament scholars. This suggestion has been embellished by scholars who also misappropriate Clement’s statement that the Synoptics recorded the “facts” about Jesus’ ministry (ta somatica – the bodily content) and that John conversely wrote “a spiritual gospel” (Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. 6.14.7). This conjecture by Clement of Alexandria, of course, proves nothing about Synoptic facticity or Johanneh ahistoricity. It simply reflects a conjectural attempt to reconcile the differences of approach and content between John and the Synoptics. John’s “spiritual” approach, for instance, may imply first-order connectedness to and reflections upon events rather than merely distanced theologization. Upon this fallacious conjecture many theories of Johannine composition have foundered.

Likewise, conjectural fallacies have abounded regarding how an apostolic author would or would not have operated. Do we really know, for instance, what an octogenarian would have thought and how he would have operated as a transmitter of tradition, eyewitness or otherwise? Advocates and critics of the traditional view alike have found their arguments unreflectively upon opinions of what an “eyewitness” would or would not have thought or said, and these opinions have rarely ever been rooted in psychological or anthropological research. Therefore, “scholarly” views of John’s non-authorship have become every bit as entrenched as alternative views were a century ago, but with little more than opinion backing them up. What if the redactor’s claim, “And we know his witness is true.” (Jn 19:35) was primarily making an ideological or theological claim, rather than a factual one? Have extended theories of John’s non-authorship been constructed on solid exegetical work or upon shaky foundations? “Anything but” an apostolic view of John’s authorship appears to be acceptable within the guild, but such a position appears often to be the result of working from

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4 See Christology (ch.7, esp. pp. 154f. n.21) for an empirically based analysis of such issues – a rare feature in these discussions.
implications backwards to inferences, and when criticized with sustained scrutiny, the longevity of such negative certainties may not be as long-lived as we might have imagined.

b) The "Critical" View: John’s Employment of Alien (non-Johannine) Sources. For much of the 20th Century great promise was held regarding the view that John was composed of several sources, and source-critical hypotheses served the function of explaining the origins of John’s material as well as the epistemological root of the Fourth Gospel’s theological tensions. Bultmann’s elaborate posing of three sources (a *semeia* source, a Revelation-Sayings source, and a Passion narrative), which were used by the evangelist to construct a gospel, which in turn was disordered (for “external” reasons) and then reordered by the redactor (who also added sacramental, futuristic, and Synoptic-like material) was the greatest flower of New Testament Religionsgeschichtlich speculation in the modern era. However, it could not have been written in the same way two decades later, after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, whereupon Semitic and Hellenistic distinctions have become largely obsolete. Even the extensive program of David Strauss was fabricated upon this flawed foundation, and given the demise of Jewish/Hellenistic bipartite speculation, a new paradigm must be established.

The greatest problem with Bultmann’s great scheme, however, lies not with its conception but with its evidence. It would indeed be significant, theologically and otherwise, if John *were* composed of at least five distinct sources. However, when Bultmann’s own evidence for distinguishing sources – stylistic, contextual, and theological – is applied in other parts of the gospel, they show themselves to be representative of the Fourth Gospel overall, rather than smaller components of it. This can especially be seen in John 6, when *Bultmann’s own evidence* for sources is tested throughout this chapter. The results are not only inconclusive; they are non-indicative. Likewise problematic are disordering and reordering hypotheses. For there to have been 10 disorderings of the material found in John 6 precisely in between sentences (at 80 Greek letters per sentence) would have required a ratio of $1:80^{10}$ (or 1:10 quintillion odds). A rationalist must thus balk at such proposals, even if they are theoretically conceivable. The more elaborate one’s diachronic theory of composition grows, the more tenuous it becomes. It is true, however, that such a theory allowed Bultmann to restore the “original” order of the Johannine text, thereby illuminating the poetic and supposedly Gnostic character of the distinctive sayings of Jesus in John. John’s tradition, however, is as much unitive as it is disunitive, and beyond inferring the hand of an evangelist and an editor, not much can be said in favor of Bultmann’s elaborate program.
On the other hand, Bultmann noticed subtle turns in the text and special nuances of meaning appearing to escape other interpreters, to their peril. Bultmann did indeed identify theological tensions in the text and contextual oddities that beg to be addressed by later theorists. He picked up astutely on apparent tensions between John's Christocentric soteriology and non-Johannine instrumentalistic sacramentology, high and low christological elements, and theological tensions with regards to Jesus' miracles, forcing interpreters to grapple centrally with the classic Johannine riddles. In these and other matters, Bultmann indeed points the way forward, and his work cannot afford to be neglected by worthy interpreters. For instance, his inference that the redactor may have been the author of the Johannine epistles is right on target, and his work contributes helpfully to other composition approaches as well. Stylistically, however, John is a basic unity, albeit with several aporias and rough transitions along the way. John thus betrays largely a synchronicity of authorship and a diachronicity of composition over an extended period of time.

c) Markan-Dependency Theory. In partial response to growing skepticism regarding source-analytical explanations for the origin and development of the Johannine tradition, several scholars have explored once again the theory of John's dependence upon Mark. In less nuanced ways, for instance, Thomas Brodie has assumed that all connections between John and any other traditions imply Johannine dependence on the rest. This approach is well meaning, but it fails to develop convincing criteria for assessing source dependence in either direction. It fails to account, for instance, for the possibility that John's tradition may have been early as well as late, and that other traditions may have drawn from Johannine material as well as the other way around. C. K. Barrett, while agreeing that if John has employed Mark it has been a very different utilization than Matthew's use of Mark, still seeks to explain John's similarities with Mark on the basis of Markan-dependence inferences. The Fourth Evangelist would have been far less concerned with following a written text, and he would have been more


6 The degree of perplexity between these aporias is not equal, however, and the most perplexing lend themselves most favorably to a two-edition hypothesis, as approached most fruitfully by Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, Grand Rapids and London: Eerdmans and Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972, pp.46-54.

interested in spiritualizing the meanings of events and details narrated in Mark, according to Barrett.

In my analyses of John 6 and corollaries in the Synoptics, however, the findings appear to confirm the basic directions of P. Gardner-Smith and C. H. Dodd. John's tradition appears to have its own independent origins separate from the Synoptic traditions, and yet, the contacts with Mark are intriguing. Within John 6 alone, 24 contacts exist with Mark 6, and 21 contacts exist with Mark 8. None of these contacts, however, are identical ones, absolutely disconfirming any theory of John's close dependence upon, or spiritualization of, written Mark. Consider these similar-and-yet-different details:

— Grass: grass is mentioned in both Mark and in John; but it is "green grass" in Mark and "much grass" in John (Mk 6:39, 44; Jn 6:10).
— 200 denarii: the disciples ask if they should buy 200 denarii worth of loaves for the crowd in Mark; but in John Philip exclaims that 200 denarii would not be enough for everyone to even have a little (Mk 6:37; Jn 6:7).
— The appearance of Jesus on the lake: in Mark Jesus is perceived as a phantom who was about to float by the disciples in the boat; but in John Jesus is coming toward them (Mk 6:49f.; Jn 6:19).
— The loaves: in Mark 6 and 8 loaves are produced by the disciples; in John Andrew finds a lad who has food to share (Mk 6:38; 8:5; Jn 6:8f.).
— The result of the feeding: in Mark 6 and 8 (and in all three of the other Synoptic feeding narratives) the result of the feeding is described as the crowd "ate the loaves and were satisfied," in John Jesus rebukes the crowd the next day for not having seen the signs but being interested in him because they "ate and were satisfied" (Mk 6:42; 8:8; Jn 6:26).
— Peter's confession: Peter's confession in Mark is "you are the Christ;" while in John it is "you are the Holy One of God" (Mk 8:29; Jn 6:69).

These persistent examples of similarities-and-divergences in the material closest between Mark and John, other than the Passion narratives, suggest some sort of contact, but not the Johannine borrowing from written Mark. Obviously, the sorts of contacts unique to John and Mark involve by definition the Markan material omitted by Matthew and Luke. Interestingly, though, many of these details are telling in their own way regarding the

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9 See Table 7: "Similarities and Divergences Between John 6 and Mark 6," Christology, pp. 98f.; and see Table 8: "Similarities and Divergences Between John 6 and Mark 8," ibid. pp.101f.
character of the Markan and Johannine traditions. Two primary sorts of material omitted by both Luke and Matthew include non-symbolic, illustrative details and theological asides. For whatever reason, this sort of material is most characteristic of the Markan and Johannine traditions, and whether or not these characteristics reflect oral traditions employed by the these two evangelists, they possess precisely the sorts of material left out of a written source (Mark) by its two known users: Matthew and Luke.

Implications of these issues are as follows: first, there do appear to have been contacts during the early stages of the Markan and Johannine traditions, but these do not seem to have the same sort of a derivative relationship between Mark and Matthew and Luke, that is, if the Matthean and Lukan redactions tell us anything about how gospel writers may have operated. Second, what appears likely is that the Johannine/Markan contacts occurred during the oral stages of their traditions. Third, if this were so, it cannot be claimed that the influence went in just one direction; rather, an "interfluential" set of relationships is a more likely assumption. Put otherwise, the distinctive contacts between Mark and John reflect traces of orality which were characteristic of the sorts of details preachers used in narrating their accounts of the ministry of Jesus, and this material is precisely the sort of material omitted by Matthew and Luke.

d) Midrashic-Development Approaches. According to Peder Borgen,11 at least some of the material in John originated from Midrashic developments of Old Testament motifs. In particular, Borgen argues at some length that John 6 is a unity, and that it represents a homiletical development of Exodus 16:4, where it is mentioned that God gave them bread from heaven to eat. Borgen argues that John 6:3 lff. shows the development of these biblical themes, building on a proem text and expanding the presentation to include the rest of the material in John 6. Borgen bases his work on the treatments of manna in Philo and the Babylonian Midrashim and correctly identifies similar Greek words and patterns existent in these other treatments of the manna theme. In this way Borgen demonstrates John 6:31-54 to be a basic unity against Bultmann’s inference of at least three different sources within this section, and yet his analysis falls short in two ways. First, he fails to note the fact that when the manna motif is considered in its most pervasive


11 See especially his significant monograph, Bread from Heaven; An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo NovTSup 11, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965.
use within Philo and the Midrashim, it appears most frequently as a *secondary text* drawn in as a "proof text" to support another theme or interpretation. This means that most of the Jewish uses of manna do not employ Exodus 16:4 as a proem text to be developed homiletically, but rather, they develop another text or theme primarily, drawing in the manna motif as a secondary support text. This is also the way it occurs in John 6.

The second observation follows from the first: namely, the material developed in John 6 is not a Hebrew Scripture text, exposited midrashically and christologically from verses 32-54. Rather, we have in John 6 a Christocentric development of the meaning of the feeding miracle by Jesus, employing the Jewish manna motif and its midrashic associations as part of the development. In other words, the origin of the traditional material in John 6 was *not* the Jewish Midrashim upon the manna motif, but it was an independent Johannine reflection upon the meaning of the feeding and its related discussions. More specifically, after the feeding, the crowd comes to Jesus asking for more bread, and upon his de-emphasis on the physicality of the sign they press their main point by means of employing standard Jewish manna rhetoric. Jesus overturns their exegesis, not with his own rapier skill, but by pointing to God, the eschatological source of both the earlier manna and the *present Bread, which Jesus gives and is.* In that sense, Jesus challenges exegesis with eschatology. Again, the epistemological origin of John's tradition here seems to be an independent reflection upon the feeding events that was parallel to the traditional memories of Mark 6 and 8. In fact, many of the elements disbursed between these two Markan traditions are more unified in John, suggesting the integrity of the Johannine rendering.

e) Historicized Drama Hypotheses. A common theory of accounting for the origin of the Johannine tradition involves the conjecture that John is written novelistically and that the historical-type detail has been added as a means of making the narrative more believable. Bultmann certainly claims this to have been the case, assuming it is in keeping with ancient narrative practice, and this is the explanation he poses to account for the prolific detail and geographical material in John. Two major problems, however, confront such a view. First, when Matthew's and Luke's redactions of Mark are analyzed, they appear to do the opposite of the "common practice" inferred by Bultmann and others. Rather than adding non-symbolic, illustrative detail to make a story more engaging and "realistic," this is precisely the sort of detail they -- the two closest writings to John other than Mark -- leave out! So, if

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13 See "Manna as a 'Rhetorical Trump' in Ancient Judaism and John," *Sitz Im Leben* pp.11-17.
John operated like other first-century writers, especially other gospel writers, the adding of such detail would have been uncharacteristic. Among second-century pseudepigraphal gospels and writings some of this is done, but these writings show little, if any, similarity to the Gospel of John on this and many other matters.

Also, John may be novelistic, but John is not written as an etherial fiction. John’s gospel narrative assumes an actual ministry of Jesus, including his death, burial, and resurrection. The characters and events have indeed been dramatized, but John is more of a dramatized history than a historicized drama. This judgment is all the more likely when such otherwise unmotivated details are included prolifically in John, such as the number of years it has taken to build the Temple until then (46 years), the mentions of 200 and 300 denarii, actual measurements regarding the boats’ distances from the shore (25-30 stadia), the numeration and identification of specific days (Jn 1:29, 35, 43; 2:1; 5:9; 6:22; 11:53; 12:12; 19:14, 31, 42; 20:1, 19) and the time of day (Jn 1:39), and especially the unlikely number of the great catch of fish: 153 (Jn 21:11). While much of John is highly theological in its explicit function, many of John’s details do not appear to serve intentionally symbolic functions, and many of these may indeed represent proximity to the real events being narrated rather than stabs at realism interjected by a later writer hoping to make the text more engaging. As a means of furthering this interest, the Fourth Evangelist more characteristically employs irony and the characterization of misunderstanding discussants. Thus, John is more of a dramatized history than a historicized drama.

Two Editions of John. The most convincing of all the theories of John’s composition is that of Barnabas Lindars in his posing of two editions of John.14 While not all of Lindars’ proposals are equally convincing,15 his theory makes the best sense of the continuities and discontinuities in the Johannine text with the least amount of speculation.16 Independently, John

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14 Ibid. See discussions of the composition theories of Bultmann, Brown, Schnackenburg, Barrett, and Lindars; ibid, pp. 33-47.
15 Lindars believes the evangelist himself has finalized the Fourth Gospel, adding his own material to an earlier edition, but the fact that rough transitions are left in (Jn 14:31; 6:71; ch. 21, etc.) implies the conservative hand of an editor, seeking to not disrupt the authoritative work of another. The third-person references to the ascribed author in chs. 21 and 13 suggest the hand of the editor, not the evangelist, in the finalization process. Unconvincing also is Lindars’ view that the original placement of the Temple-cleansing was at the end of Jesus’ ministry, and that it was moved early to make way for the Lazarus narrative. Chapter 11 seems to have been anticipated by the exclamation of the steward in John 2:9f., and the late ordering of the Temple cleansing by the Synoptics may be conjectural as easily as chronological in its Mark-determined location. The Johannine Temple cleansing is also reflected upon in John 4 and implied in John 5, which erodes speculations regarding its relocation or being placed where it was for “theological” reasons.
Ashton also came to accept most of Lindars’ proposals in his two-edition hypothesis, although he accepts John’s use of sources more readily than critical analysis would merit.\(^{17}\) The most perplexing aporias in John, requiring composition explanations, include the following:

\(a\) The relation of the poetic form of the Prologue to the baptismic narrative in vss. 6-8, 15, and 19ff.

\(b\) The Galilee / Jerusalem / Galilee / Jerusalem sequence between chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, in which debates over the healing on the Sabbath in John 5 are resumed again in chapter 7.

\(c\) The abrupt ending in John 14:31, which appears to have flowed directly into chapter 18 originally.

\(d\) The apparent original conclusion of the gospel at John 20:31, which is followed by further material in John 21 and concluded with another ending seeming to imitate the first.

\(e\) Third-person references to the acclaimed evangelist as the “Beloved Disciple,” or an eyewitness, added by a later hand.

In accommodating these perplexities, it may be inferred that a first edition of John was probably produced around or shortly after 80 CE, and this edition was produced to show that Jesus was the authentic Jewish Messiah (Jn 20:31). The preaching ministry of the evangelist continued, however, and after his death this material (Jn 1:1-18, chs. 6, 15-17 and 21) was added by the redactor, whose work also appears remarkably similar to the work of the Presbyter, the author of the Johannine Epistles. Finally, the Fourth Gospel was finalized and circulated around the turn of the century as the witness of the Beloved Disciple, “whose testimony is true.” This being the case, the Johannine Epistles were written before and after the Johannine Gospel.

\(g\) The History of the Johannine Situation. At least six crises, or extended sets of dialogical relations, can be inferred within a hypothetical reconstruction of Johannine Christianity.

1) North-South Tensions. While the early history of Johannine Christianity is less discernible, several aspects of it can be inferred. It apparently did develop within a northern Palestinian (either Galilean, Samaritan, or possibly even trans-Jordan) setting for some time, and ambivalent relations with Judean religious leaders are apparent. During the early period of the
Johannine tradition’s formation an independent Jesus tradition developed in its own trajectory, and parallel to the pre-Markan and Q traditions, the Johannine preaching on the works and teachings of Jesus represented the evangelist’s application of Jesus’ ministry as an extension of his own ministry. Jesus’ teachings came to be put into the evangelist’s own paraphrastic style of discourse, but the Johannine rendering also developed with an explicitly Christocentric focus, which accounts to some degree for its individualistic presentation.

2) Dialogues with Adherents of John the Baptist. Also within the early stages of the Johannine tradition, encounters with followers of John the Baptist are evident. John the Baptist’s insistence that Jesus is the Messiah, not he, served acute needs within the developing Johannine tradition, at the latest within the first three decades after the death of Jesus (consider John 3:5, for instance, in the light of issues related to the followers of Apollos in Acts 18-19). It may have been during this period that the Johannine preaching may have come into contact with oral deliveries of the pre-Markan tradition. As well as complementary parallel traditions, the Johannine and pre-Markan preaching also posed alternative presentations of Jesus’ ministry as indicative of varying emphases even between apostolic traditions. There never was a time when there was a singular Jesus tradition from which later trajectories departed. Some differences went back to the earliest stages of gospel traditions.

3) Tensions with Leaders of the Local Synagogue. During the middle stage of the Johannine tradition’s development, we see a set of crises with local Jewish authorities. Perhaps connected with the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in 67-70 CE, the Fourth Evangelist moved to one of the mission churches in Asia Minor or elsewhere to assist in the strengthening of the movement, and in the attempts to evangelize local Jews with the news that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, the evangelist forged some of the signs material, the I-Am sayings, and the controversy dialogues into more programmatic patterns. The first-edition of John is rife with these attempts to put forward a convincing view that Jesus was indeed the Prophet like Moses, anticipated in Deuteronomy 18:15-22, and the importance of his being sent from the Father is codified in Martha’s confession (Jn 11:27), "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." The concluding statement at the original ending of the first edition (Jn 20:31) confirms this evangelistic thrust, although it appears to have met only with partial success. Either before or after the Jamnia marshaling of the Birkat ha-Minim, Johannine Christians were put out of the Synagogue, several followers of Jesus remained behind cryptically, and some Johannine community members may even have been recruited back into the Synagogue by the appeals to religious certainty and ethnic identity of Judaism (I Jn 2:18-25).
4) Emerging Pressures from Rome. A second crisis during this middle stage may be inferred as pressures to offer public emperor worship arose during the reign of Domitian (81-96 CE). “Persecution” may not be the best way to describe this harassment, but having been put out of the Synagogue, followers of Jesus would have been hard pressed to argue effectively for receiving a monotheism dispensation, which members of Judaism received. Thus, they would have been expected to offer public Emperor laud, especially during the stepping up of the practice under Domitian, and as indicated by the correspondence between Pliny of Bythinia and Trajan (ca. 110 CE), the penalty for not doing so was customarily death.18 This led, then, to the later stages of the Johannine situation involving struggles with Gentile Christians and the opposing of docetizing developments.

5) Docetism as an Internal Threat. In response to Roman harassment and oppression around matters associated with the emerging Emperor Cult, opposing such a practice would have been the most difficult for Gentile Christians. Gentile members of Asia Minor were accustomed to worshiping the king or emperor as a matter of political loyalty, and they would not have seen it as a spiritual offense in quite the same way that the monotheistic Jewish-Christian leadership would have. The primary argument against assimilation would have been the suffering example of Jesus, and such was precisely the teaching to which the docetizing leaders objected. The primary attraction to the teaching was not simply that it fit into a Hellenistic worldview, but it was the implications that made it most attractive. If a non-human Jesus neither suffered nor died, his followers need not be expected to do the same. The material added to the final edition of John has within it most of the incarnational material in John (Jn 1:14; 6:51-58; 15:26-16:2; 19:34f.; 21:18-23), and this is no accident. It was preached and written to oppose docetizing inclinations among Gentile believers, and the same sequence of issues can be seen clearly in the epistles of Ignatius and the Epistles of John.19

6) Intramural Dialogues with Rising Institutionalism. A final crisis to be inferred in the Johannine material relates to dialectical tensions with institutionalizing Christianity within the late first-century church. It is doubtful, for instance, that the organizing work of Ignatius and others like him was experienced as problem-free, and tensions with Diotrephes and his kin (III Jn 9f.) may be inferred in the juxtaposition of Peter and the Beloved


19 See, for instance, the anti-docetic emphases of the second and third antichristic passages in I Jn 4:1-3 and II Jn 7. They emphasize opposing Docetist teachers versus the Jewish-Christian tensions alluded to in I Jn 2:18-25 (see Christology, Table 21: “Three Acute Intramural Crises Faced by Johannine Christianity,” pp.245-248; and see Sitz im Leben, “Four Acute Crises Faced Within Johannine Christianity As Implied by John 6” pp.24-57.
Disciple in John. Notice that the Elder has written to the *ecclesia* about Diotrephes, perhaps an institutionalizing center of the Christian movement (the only uses of *ecclesia* in the gospels are in Matt 16:17-19 and 18:15-20), whence Diotrephes is deriving his hierarchical authority. Notice that he not only refuses to welcome the Johannine *philoi*, but Diotrephes also expels members of his own fellowship who are willing to take them in. Analyses assuming the issue to be merely inhospitality overlook the larger issue, which is the infelicitous wielding of positional authority by Diotrephes, even within his own community, as the singular precipitator of the inhospitable reception of Johannine Christians. But *why* was Diotrephes threatened by Johannine Christians? While Käsemann’s view that it was incipient Docetism is overly conjectural, a more likely possibility is that he was threatened by *Johannine egalitarianism and familial ecclesiology*—and well he should have been, for their influence—especially in the name of a competing apostolic tradition, would have dismantled his very attempt to hold his church together by means of proto-Ignatian monepiscopal hierarchy with himself at the top. Thus, his “loving to be first” was not a factor of selfish ambition, but a claim to primacy, after the model of emerging Petrine hierarchical models of church organization. In response to this and other evolutions in ways structural, the Johannine Elder finalized the witness of the Beloved Disciple and circulated it as a manifesto of radical Christocracy: the effectual means by which the risen Lord continues to lead and direct the church.\(^\text{20}\)

Each of these crises was probably somewhat overlapping-yet-largely-sequential within the history of Johannine Christianity. Obviously, a fair amount of conjecture is involved in developing any theory of Johannine history, but all of the above projections are rooted in plausible evidence. A common fallacy involves assuming Johannine Christianity stayed only in one place over 60 years, or that it only struggled on one front. Living communities rarely enjoy the luxury of facing only one set of issues over several generations, and a theoretical history of Johannine Christianity must account for the apparent dialogical factors suggested by internal and external evidence. These crises and dialogues also accounted for some of the theological emphases in John, with Jewish-Christian dialogues pushing christological motifs higher and anti-docetic tensions evoking incarnational motifs, for instance. Whatever the case, John’s relations to the other gospel traditions must be considered within a plausible projection of the history of Johannine Christianity.

\(^{20}\) See Chapter 10 in *Christology* (pp.221-251), especially *Table 20: “Matthew 16:17-19 and its ‘Christocratic Correctives’ in John,”* p.240; and see “Was the Fourth Evangelist a Quaker?” op. cit.
h) Cognitive Criticism and Traditionsgeschichte. Gospel traditions were not disembodied sets of ideas floating abstractly from sector to sector within the early church. No. They were human beings who reflected upon experiences in the light of perceptions and religious understandings. The unreflective notion that religious typological ideas were simply taken over by gospel traditions, thus explaining the epistemological origin of the events narrated in the gospels, is unrealistic. Religious typologies and mythic constructs indeed were applied to interpretations of Jesus' ministry, but they were employed because they made sense to either an understanding of what Jesus said and did, to an evangelist, to audiences along the way, or any combination of the above. This being the case, quests for the historical Jesus must inevitably engage the histories of the periods between Jesus' ministry and the finalization of the gospels, and human factors in the conveyance of the material included the experiences, perceptions, hopes, frustrations, and disappointments of these human vehicles through which the traditions were passed from one setting and generation to the next. The scientific analysis of this set of reflective processes is what I call "Cognitive Criticism."

Differences between gospel traditions, and in particular Mark and John, should not be lumped too readily, therefore, into disjunctive categories of "historical" versus "theological," or "authentic" versus "concocted," as though historicity itself were unrelated to subjective determinations of value. All the gospel traditions were theological, and they were all historical, in the sense that they sought to connect meanings of important events in the past with the perceived needs of the eventual present. In these ways, Papias' view that Mark's tradition included the preaching of Peter, which was crafted, at least in part, to address the emerging needs of the church, may also be assumed for all the gospel traditions - apostolic and otherwise. What cognitive criticism allows is the scientific analysis of the dialectical relationship between perception and experience and its impact upon the emerging theological content within the various gospel traditions, and even between "apostolic" interpretations.

Some differences between Mark and John may even reflect radical differences of first impression rather than later divergences rooted in emerging understandings alone.21 Others, such as the valuation of miracles

21 See the analysis of these possibilities using the religious anthropological models of James Loader (The Transforming Moment, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981) and James Fowler (Stages of Faith, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981) in Christology (pp.137-169) and in "Cognitive Origins" (pp.1-17). In my analysis of 35 reviews of my book, by far the aspect of it drawing most interest — both affirming and questioning — is the employment of religious anthropological tools for understanding the origins and development of the Fourth Evangelist's dialectical mode of thinking. Ironically, while Bultmann was entirely capable of explaining ways dialectical theologians operate in the modern era (see the critical-and-constructive treatment of his view of dialectical theology at the 1927 Eisenach address, Christology, pp.151-165), he did not allow the Fourth Evangelist to be considered a dialectical thinker (Stage 5 in Fowler's model), but kept him
(including commentaries upon their subsequent relative dearth), betray the faith development of different formers of gospel traditions as their preaching ministries addressed the needs of the early church. One of the most promising aspects of cognitive criticism is that it examines the relation between the ministries of the purveyors of Jesus and their presentations of Jesus' ministry. Such approaches to gospel traditions help to account not only for differences between the gospels, but they also provide insights into historical developments between the ministry of Jesus and the finalization of those accounts in the written gospels to which we have access.

These findings, while argued in greater detail elsewhere, now become the starting place for further investigations of the epistemological origins of the Johannine tradition. While this tradition appears to have been finalized the latest among the gospels, it is by no means devoid of its own claims to autonomy, and even primacy. In fact, the Johannine tradition comes across as the most complete and self-assured of the four canonical traditions, and yet it probably enjoyed at least contact with the other gospel traditions along the way. Ascertaining those relationships will be the primary task to which the rest of the present essay is dedicated.

**John's Relation to Mark: Interfluential, Augmentive, and Corrective.**

Because Johannine source-critical hypotheses by and large lack sufficient evidence to convince (although the venture itself is not misguided), and because John was completed around the turn of the first century CE, many scholars have moved back toward a view of Synoptic dependence, against the previously-accepted judgment of P. Gardner-Smith that John's was a pervasively independent tradition. While many of these studies have rightly identified similarities – and therefore possible connections – between John and the Synoptics, the assumption that John simply knew one or more of the Synoptics in written form and "did his own thing" with earlier material is often wielded in unrestrained and unsubstantiated ways. John is also very different from Mark, and this fact must be accounted for. Connections identified, however, are not redactions demonstrated, and adequate judgments require more considered and examined measures. The Johannine tradition appears to have intersected with each of the Synoptic Gospels, but in different ways, suggested by the frequency and character of contacts with each. In no case are the similarities identical, so as to suggest direct dependence on a written text. In all cases, the contacts appear to have occurred on the level of a monological thinker (Stages 3 and 4 in Fowler's model), thus distorting the perception of the Fourth Evangelist's thought. Conversely, while C. K. Barrett (Christology, pp.61-69) argued correctly that the Fourth Evangelist was a dialectical thinker, no explanation is offered for how he came to think dialectically, and Cognitive Criticism seeks to provide a way forward.
during the oral stages of both Synoptic and Johannine traditions, but these contacts appear also to have developed in different ways and at different times. The following proposals reflect one's attempt to weight and explain the particular evidence adequately.

A) John and Mark: An “Interfluential Set of Relationships” during the Oral Stages of their Respective Traditions.

While Barrett and others have identified clear connections between John's and Mark's vocabulary and ordering of material, huge differences also exist. As mentioned above and in my monograph (pp. 97-104), there are at least 21 points of similarity between John 6 and Mark 8, and 24 points of similarity between John 6 and Mark 6, but none of these are identical contacts. The same sort of phenomena are found between John's and Mark's Passion narratives and at other points of contact – albeit somewhat unevenly – as John's and Mark's outlines of Jesus' ministry show many similarities, but again, no identical ones.22 This fact is extremely significant as it pertains to the issue of Johannine/Markan relations. It suggests, nay demonstrates, that the Fourth Evangelist did not use Mark as a written source, at least not in the ways Matthew and Luke did. Otherwise, there would be at least several identical connections rather than a broad similarity of some words, themes, and patterns. Conversely, due to the large numbers of Johannine/Markan similarities, contacts probably did exist between the oral renderings of John's and Mark's traditions, and yet because it is impossible to determine which direction the influence may have gone, the relationship may best be considered one of “interfluentiality.” Not only is it impossible to determine which way the influence may have gone, it is also unlikely that it only went in one direction between two formative-yet-independent traditions.

22 C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to John, 2nd Edition, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978, pp.42-66. Besides the similarities between the events of John 6 and Mark, see, for instance, parallels between Mark and the John regarding the ministry of John the Baptist (Jn 1:6-8, 15, 19-34; Mk 1:2-11), the calling of the Disciples (Jn 1:35-51; Mk 1:16-20; 3:16), the Cleansing of the Temple (Jn 2:13-22; Mk 11:15-19, 27-33; 14:57f.; 15:29), the journey into Galilee (Jn 4:1-3, 43-46; Mk 1:14f.), and the dishonoring of the home-town prophet motif (Jn 4:39-45; Mk 6:4-6). In the later periods of Jesus' ministry we have plots to kill Jesus, (Jn 11:45-57; Mk 14:1f.), the anointing of Jesus (Jn 12:1-8; Mk 14:3-9), the entry into Jerusalem (Jn 12:12-19; Mk 11:1-10), the last supper (Jn 13:1-20; Mk 14:18-25) and Jesus' prediction of Peter's betrayal (Jn 13:21-38; Mk 14:26-31), the promise of the Holy Spirit's help during times of trial (Jn14:15-31; 15:26f.; 16:1-15; Mk 13:11), the garden scene and the arrest of Jesus (Jn 18:1-12; Mk 14:26-52), the denials of Peter (Jn 18:15-18, 25-27; Mk 14:66-72), the Jewish trial (Jn 18:19-24; Mk 14:55-65) and the Roman trial (Jn 18:28-19:16; Mk 15:1-15), the crucifixion and death of Jesus (Jn 19:17-37; Mk 15:22-41), the burial of Jesus (Jn 19:38-42; Mk 15:42-47), and the resurrection and appearance narratives (Jn 20:1-21:24; Mk 16:1-8 + 9-20).
It is also a fact that the kinds of material common to John and Mark alone are often conspicuously the same types of material omitted by Matthew and Luke in their redactions of Mark: non-symbolic, illustrative detail (apparently considered superfluous by later redactors of a written narrative source), and theological asides (either omitted, perhaps as digressions, or replaced by common-sense conjecture about what Jesus intended or would have done—usually showing marks of the later evangelist's theological inclinations).23 These two sorts of material are most prevalent in John and Mark, suggesting proximity with the oral stages of their respective traditions. Luke and Matthew add their own units of material, some of which have these sorts of details and asides, but they by and large do not add details for the sake of embellishment, and when they do add theological points they reflect the commonsense conjecture of the First and Third Evangelists. For instance, Matthew might add something about the fulfilling of all righteousness, and Luke might add something about Jesus emphasizing prayer or teaching about the Kingdom of God. Neither of these moves need represent particular knowledge of traditional material which Matthew or Luke felt essential to be added. Rather, they offer narrative bridges or punctuating remarks and short commentaries as transitional asides along the way.

Another feature prevalent in Mark and John, but missing from Luke and Matthew, is the "translation" of Aramaic terms into Greek and the "explanation" of Jewish customs.24 The answer to the audience-related question here is obvious. Mark and John are intended to be understandable to Gentile members of their audiences, which is why they translate Jewish terms and customs. The tradition-related question, however, is a catalyzing one: Why do Mark and John distinctively preserve Aramaic and Jewish names of people and places if they were not connected to earlier Aramaic or Hebrew traditions? Were these details simply "concocted" (using Brettschneider's term), or do they suggest the primitivity of Markan and Johannine tradi-

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23 Particular examples can be found in Tables 10-15 Christology (pp. 170-193) and the accompanying discussion. What we appear to have between the two feedings and associated events in Mark and the feeding and associated events in John is three independent traditions which have been preserved for us in these passages.

24 See, for instance, Mark's "translation" of Aramaic terms (Mk 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22) and explanations of Jewish customs (Mk 7:2-4; 15:42). John also does the same sort of thing, but even more so. See the Aramaic/Greek words for "teacher" (Jn 1:38; 20:16), the Anointed One (Jn 1:41; 4:25), Peter (Jn 1:42), and the translation into Greek of such Hebrew names of places connected to events in the ministry of Jesus as the pool by the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem is called in Hebrew Beth-zatha (Jn 5:2), the pool of Siloam (meaning "sent," Jn 9:7), the Stone Pavement on which Pilate's judgment bench rested was called in Hebrew Gabbatha (Jn 19:13), and "the Place of the Skull" (which in Hebrew is called Golgotha, Jn 19:17). Likewise, the Fourth Evangelist "explains" Jewish customs for non-Jewish audiences (Jn 2.6, 13, 4:9; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 11:55; 19:31, 40, 42) suggesting an intentional bridging of the oral narration of events with later audiences of the written text, which would have included Gentiles.
tions? Inferring an earlier Aramaic rendering of John need not be performed here to identify an acceptable answer. Interestingly, both the Matthean and Lukan traditions omit these details, and possibly for different reasons. Matthew may have had fewer Gentile members of its audience, whereas Luke may not have felt the traditional need to pass on this sort of material from his utilization of written Mark, although Luke does indeed utilize other material with Aramaic origins. Thus, the possibility is strong that the pre-Markan material and the early Johannine tradition reflect the use of primitive material characteristic of independent oral traditions.

If this were so, insights into some of the contacts between the pre-Markan and early Johannine traditions become apparent. While the presence of apparently non-symbolic, illustrative detail is not in and of itself a sure marker of primitive orality, the particular contacts between Markan and Johannine renderings precisely on these matters of detail (the grass at the feeding, 200 and 300 denarii, for instance) suggest the sorts of catchy details preachers would have used and picked up from one another. While it may be finally impossible to know who these preachers were, the presentation of Peter and John preaching throughout Samaria (Acts 8) – especially if there is anything at all to the Papias tradition’s connecting of Peter with the production of Mark and John with the testimony of the Beloved Disciple – may legitimate regarding these early traditions “Petrine” and “Johannine.” Early Gospel “traditions” were human beings, and these human beings were firstly preachers. Then again, certainty on these matters finally evades the modern exegete, but the character of the material seems to cohere with the testimonies preserved by Irenaeus and Eusebius.

What is also conspicuous is that as well as peculiar agreements throughout the narratives, these two traditions also differ considerably at nearly every step of the way. Such a phenomenon, however, may imply the traditions’ confidence and sense of authority rather than illegitimacy. The Matthean conservative borrowing of written Mark seems less of an approach by an apostolic authority figure (although much of the M and Q traditions probably went back to Jesus) than the bold, trail-blazing path carved out by the Fourth Evangelist. His independent swath reflects the autonomy and confidence of a tradition seeking to present a bold portrait of the Master’s ministry, and even more importantly, the original intentionality of Jesus for the emerging needs of the church.

B) John’s Augmentation of Mark.

John also shows evidence of augmenting the contents of Mark, and a comparison/contrast between the first edition of John and Mark suggests something about what such an interest might have been. First, however, the two editions of John must be distinguished. While there may indeed have
been many stages in the composition of each of these "editions," a bare minimum of speculation that accounts for the major aporias\(^{25}\) in the most plausible way possible is one that infers two basic editions of John. As mentioned above, the first edition probably began with the witness of John the Baptist (Jn 1:6-8, 15, 19ff) and concluded with John 20:31. For the final edition the editor then added such passages as the worship material of the Prologue, chapters 6, 15-17, and 21 and the Beloved Disciple and eyewitness passages. What is also likely is that the author of the Johannine Epistles was the editor of the finalized Gospel (impressive stylistic convergences exist between the material in the Gospel's supplementary material and the style of the Epistles). Then I, II and III John were probably written between the gathering of the first edition (ca. 80 CE) and the finalization of the gospel around 100 CE after the death of the Beloved Disciple. This being the case, several things become apparent about the character and inclination of the first edition of John with respect to Mark.

First, John shows considerable similarity to the macro-pattern of Mark, suggesting that the Fourth Evangelist sought to do the sort of thing Mark had done, albeit in a very different sort of way. The beginning of Jesus' ministry is associated with the ministry of John the Baptist, although John's rendering sketches a more realistic presentation of their ministries being contemporary with each other, and to some degree they appear to have been in competition with each other. Jesus returns to the site where John had been baptizing several times, even after the Baptist's arrest, and this seems a more realistic portrayal than a cut-and-dried Markan sequentialism. A few other aspects of John's presentation of the beginning of Jesus' ministry also seem parallel to those in Mark, such as the calling of the disciples, Jesus' coming again into Galilee, and the rejection of the hometown prophet. Toward the end of Jesus' ministry, John and Mark follow a very similar pattern between the entry into Jerusalem, the last supper, the garden scene and arrest of Jesus, and the two trials of Jesus, followed by his death, burial, resurrection and appearances. The middle parts of John and Mark are extremely different, but their beginnings and endings show a broad similarity of pattern.

Second, from this set of similarities some scholars have argued that John copied Mark's larger pattern, if not Mark's gospel narrative; but John is also extremely different, even in terms of these closest similarities. For instance, the actual baptizing of Jesus is not narrated in John, and there are

\(^{25}\) Such "aporias" as the individuality of the Prologue (Jn 1:1-18), the positioning of chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, the odd transition of John 14:31, and the apparent first ending of John 20:31 are explained by this theory with a minimal amount of speculative reconstruction. As mentioned above, this theory builds most centrally on the two-edition hypothesis of Barnabas Lindars, and it is the most plausible and least speculative among extensive source-dependence and rearrangement hypotheses.
very few close similarities in the presentation of John the Baptist other than his being the voice crying in the wilderness from Isaiah 40:3, the Holy Spirit descending as a dove, and John’s being unworthy to unstrap the sandals of Jesus. The location of these connections, however, would likely have been the sort of thing preached and remembered from the oral stages of traditions, and given the vastly different presentation of every other aspect of John’s ministry, Johannine dependence on written Mark for the material itself seems highly unlikely. These differences are even more pronounced regarding the other aspects of the beginnings of Jesus’ ministry.

The Passion material shows a far closer pattern, at least in the outline, but even here, John’s tradition departs from Mark’s at nearly every turn. The suppers are on different days, neither John nor Peter go to prepare the supper, Jesus does not offer the words of the institution at the last supper, there is no Gethsemane anguish in John, and the Markan apocalypse, the cursing of the fig tree, and the final teachings of Jesus in Mark are completely missing in John. Further, Peter’s denials in John are far more pronounced, Pilate’s miscomprehending dialogue with Jesus and the crowd is far more detailed, and there is no Markan cry of dereliction in John. While the Fourth Evangelist may possibly be inferred here to be following the larger pattern of the Markan gospel narrative, John’s dissimilarities at every turn make a close following of Mark, let alone a Markan-dependence hypothesis, implausible in the extreme.

Nonetheless, several alternative explanations for the similarities and differences are as follows: the first is that an actual sequence of events, roughly similar to the Markan and Johannine Passion narratives, may indeed have occurred, and we may thus have two perspectives on those largely similar sets of events. In that sense, these similar-yet-different connections bolster arguments for the basic authenticity of John and Mark as the two “bi-optic gospels” producing complementary perspectives on the last week of Jesus’ ministry. A second possibility is that the early Christian narration of the Passion events may have been fairly well set, even before Mark was written, and the same source from which Mark’s material was derived could have played a role in the formation of the Johannine presentation. Conversely, the Johannine narration may have provided the backbone for other traditions, including the pre-Markan. One more fact, however, deserves consideration here. The order of the Passion material could not possibly have assumed any other order. Try placing the resurrection before the supper, or the trials after the crucifixion, or the appearances before the arrest of Jesus, or the arrest before the triumphal entry, or even reversing the two trials. None of these transpositions, nor any others, could possibly be made to work! Thus, similarities between the Johannine and Markan Passion narratives do not imply dependence, one way or another, and this is why Bultmann was forced to infer an independent Passion narrative for the Fourth
Gospel. The material appears to have been traditional rather than concocted, and while familiar with Mark, John is not dependent upon written Mark.

A third point here follows, and in several ways, John's first edition appears to augment and complement Mark's Gospel. The first two signs done in Cana of Galilee are likely included to fill out some of the early part of Jesus' ministry felt to be missing from Mark. The first two signs in John thus provide a chronological complement to Mark. It is also possible that the more public ministry of the wedding miracle and the healing of the royal official's son may seem preferable introductions to the miracle-working ministry of Jesus than the more obscure curing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law and the exorcising of a demoniac. Likewise, the signs in John 5, 9, and 11 fill out the Judean part of Jesus' ministry as a geographical complement to Mark's Galilean presentation. Most telling, however, is the fact that none of the five signs in the first edition of John are included in Mark! This fact is highly suggestive of the Fourth Evangelist's intention. He apparently wanted to fill out some of the broader material not included in Mark (as Luke and Matthew have done) but did so without duplicating Markan material proper. The five signs also may have been crafted rhetorically in the five-fold pattern of the books of Moses, as Jesus is presented to convince a Jewish audience that he is indeed the Prophet like Moses anticipated in Deuteronomy 18. The Fourth Evangelist thus drew on his own tradition as his source, which he himself may largely have been. Then again, a tacit acknowledgement of Mark's material (explaining also why he did not make fuller use of it) may be implied in the ending of the first edition: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written in order that..." (Jn 20:30 f.). Thus, in a subtle way, John 20:30 seems to defend the fact, perhaps against some criticism, of John's intentional non-inclusion of familiar Markan material.

Such a complementary intent would also account for considerable problems regarding major disagreements between Mark and John, especially the Markan material omitted by John, and at this point one must differ with some of the inferences of Gardner-Smith. While he finds it inconceivable that the Fourth Evangelist's knowledge of Mark could have resulted in omitting so much of what is in Mark, he does not allow for the possibility that John might have been written as something of a complement to Mark. Non-independence is not the same as total independence. The Transfiguration, exorcisms, Jesus' parabolic teachings on the Kingdom of God, the Markan apocalypse, and other significant works and teachings may have been omitted from John precisely because it was felt that they were already included among the "many other signs Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book" (Jn 20:30). Likewise, including controversial debates with Jewish leaders and the Johannine "I-Am" sayings, and emphasizing Jesus' divine commissioning within the Deuteronomy 18
agency schema, appear to have furthered the acutely apologetic interest of the evangelist. This interest of leading the reader to believe in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah (Jn 20:31) may thus explain the desire to include some of the Johannine traditional material that had been crafted within its own dialectical relationships with local Jewish communities. This material reflects distinctively Johannine paraphrasis of the teachings of Jesus, and the crafting of Jesus in the patterns of Elijah and Moses typologies were also integral parts of this evangelistic agenda. Therefore, the "problem" of John's omission of Markan material and inclusion of distinctively Johannine material coincides with the likelihood that the first edition was intended as an augmentation and complementation of Mark.

C) John's Correcting of Mark?

Interestingly, the first edition of John, while following the Markan macro-pattern, also seems intent upon setting the record straight regarding Mark's ordering of some of Jesus' ministry and some of Mark's theological nuance. As well as augmenting the early ministry of Jesus and adding other material as a complement to Mark, John's narrative appears at times to provide an alternative presentation of events with knowing intentionality. Does this imply a conscious correcting of Mark's presentation of Jesus, or are the differences due to Johannine "mistakes" or lack of familiarity with Mark? Contrary to many discussions of the issue, considering John as disagreeing with the presentation of Jesus' ministry in all three canonical gospels misrepresents the issue here. At the time of the production of the first edition of John, Mark was probably the only finalized gospel, and thus the Johannine target need not be construed as broader than Mark's Gospel. Further, the very fact of Matthew's and Luke's expansions of Mark suggests the likelihood that Mark may not have been regarded as the final written word on Jesus' ministry. They sought to improve on Mark, as did the second ending of Mark, and perhaps John did too. If taken in this way, some of John's departures from Mark may indeed be considered in a bit of a corrective light as well as in an augmentive light. The narrating, for instance, of the first two signs Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee may have been designed not only to fill out the earlier portrayal of Jesus' ministry, but they may also have served the function of wresting the inaugural ministry of Jesus away from the household of Simon Peter's mother-in-law and the exorcism of the demoniac. For whatever reason, these two miracles may not have seemed to the Fourth Evangelist to have been the best ways to get the

26. These differences with the Markan ordering can be seen clearly in the chart by Peter Hofrichter, "Abfolge der Parallelen: Hellenistenbuch — Markus" (Modell und Vorlage der Synoptiker Theologische Texte und Studien 6, Hildesheim/Zürich/New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1997, p.188).
gospel narration going, and the numeration devices in John 2:11 and 4:54 may have functioned as a corrective to the Markan presentation rather than a numeration device within an alien signs source. Indeed, Eusebius even preserves a tradition declaring that one of John’s interests was to present a portrayal of the early ministry of Jesus (Eccles. Hist. 3.24.7-13), and such an opinion may have some basis in reliable memory.

Another striking difference between Mark and John involves their presentations of the Temple cleansing. Mark places it at the culmination of Jesus’ ministry, of course, and most historical-Jesus scholars assume such was the correct chronology. John’s presentation at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry is thus assumed to have been motivated by “the theological interests of the evangelist,” but such inferences are often fuzzy and unsubstantiated. Several times hence, the disruptive sign in Jerusalem is commented upon as an event that caused other ripples in the Johannine narrative (Jn 4:45), and these imply reflections upon events rather than theologizations. Why, for instance, do the Jerusalem leaders already want to kill Jesus after an apparently inane healing of the paralytic? A prior Temple disturbance seems assumed. Conversely, an unlikely move to have been concocted (thus applying the criterion of dissimilarity) is the Johannine rendering of the reason for the Jewish leaders wanting to kill Jesus as being his raising Lazarus from the dead. It would be perfectly reasonable to have conjectured that the religious leaders wanted to get rid of Jesus because of his having created a demonstration in the Temple, and while Matthew and Luke follow Mark unquestioningly here, this does not imply three testimonies against one. It may simply reflect common-sense conjecture, the very procedure Mark would have followed if he had listed all the Jerusalem events at the end of the narrative, which he clearly did.

On the other hand, John 2:20 contains an odd and unmotivated clue to chronology suggesting the historical superiority of the Johannine presentation. Here the Jews claim the Temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and as it was begun around 19 BCE, this would imply a date of that saying around 27 CE — closer to the beginning of Jesus’ ministry than the end. Also, the presentation of Jesus going back and forth from Jerusalem and ministering over the length of three Passovers seems more realistic than the Synoptic view that Jesus attended Jerusalem only once during his ministry, and during that visit, he was killed. Also, some of the motif in John 2:13-22 is more unified than its counterparts in Mark 11 and 14. These and other factors, such as Jesus’ ministry in Samaria, and contemporary engagements with the followers of John the Baptist cause one to suspect John may have intended to correct some of Mark’s presentation of Jesus’ ministry, and amazingly such an opinion is echoed by a second-century witness. None other than John the Elder, according to Papias through Eusebius (Eccles. Hist. 3.39.15), is recalled to have asserted that Mark preserved
Peter's preaching accurately, but *in the wrong order!* The Elder may thus be representing an authentic Johannine opinion and motivation for producing another gospel narrative as an alternative to Mark's contribution. This possibility may seem unacceptable to scholars holding a harmonizing view of the gospels, but the textual evidence seems to support such a theory, and so does a striking second-century witness. Thus, the Johannine perspective upon the Markan project may also lend valuable insights into the sort of compilation Mark may have been — a gathering of traditional units into a progressive denouement, with some chronological knowledge present — rather than a strict chronology proper.

As well as matters of chronology, the Johannine project may have wanted to set the record straight on the meaning of miracles (they reveal *who* Jesus was as the Mosaic agent sent from God), the character of the Kingdom of God (it goes forward by means of the work of the Spirit and is associated with Truth), the compassionate and loving trademarks of authentic ministry (versus power orientations), a de-emphasis on the special place of "the Twelve" (including Nathanael, Martha and others, for instance), and the inclusion of women and Samaritans in Jesus' circle of friends. Some of these theological proclivities come into their fullest development in the supplementary material, but they were already at work in the first edition of John. In doing so, John's tradition stakes a claim right alongside the Markan tradition as an authentic interpretation of the ministry and intentionality of Jesus for his followers. It is also not inconceivable that two or more disciples of Jesus, even leading ones, may have seen things differently regarding central aspects of Jesus' ministry. What we appear to have in Mark and John is two "bi-optic" perspectives on the events and implications of Jesus' Gospel ministry. Therefore, John's relation to the Markan tradition appears to have been interfluential in their oral stages, and augmentive, complementary and corrective in their written stages.

**John's Influence upon Luke: Formative, "Orderly", and Theological.**

A terrible error among interpreters of gospel traditions is to assume that because John was finalized late, all contacts between John and the other gospel traditions must imply John's dependence upon the Synoptics. This view is nowhere coddled as sloppily as it is with regards to the relationship between the Gospels of Luke and John. Many of the great themes and passages most characteristic of Luke are not included in John, whereas at least two or three dozen times, Luke appears to depart from Mark and to side with the Johannine rendering of an event or teaching. For instance, such great Lukan passages as the Parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son are missing from John, as are such themes as concern for the poor and the presentation of Jesus as a just man. On the other hand, Luke sides with
John against Mark in significant ways, and this fact is best accounted for by assuming Luke had access to the Johannine tradition, and that he used it. Assuming there may have been a common-yet-unknown source is entirely conjectural, and it serves no purpose better than the more solid inference that a source Luke used was the early Johannine tradition. 27


Time and again Luke appears to be siding with John against Mark, and it must be concluded that John’s tradition must have been formative in the development of the Lukan Gospel. For one thing, Luke includes a variety of details that are peculiar to John but are not found in Mark. For instance, people question in their hearts regarding John the Baptist (Jn 1:20; 3:28 → Lk 3:15; Ac 13:35) who has a more extensive itinerant ministry (Jn 1:28; 3:23; 10:40 → Lk 3:3) than in Mark 1:4, double questions are asked regarding Jesus’ Messiahship and Sonship (Jn 10:24, 36 → Lk 22:67, 70), the beholding of Jesus’ glory (doxa) is added to the Transfiguration scene (Jn 1:14 → Lk 9:32), Mary and Martha are mentioned as sisters and are presented as having similar roles (Jn 11:1; 12:1-3 → Lk 10:38-42), a man named Lazarus is presented in both John and Luke and in both cases is associated with death and the testimony of after-death experiences (Jn 11:1-12:17 → Lk 16:19-31), the crowd acclaims Jesus as “King” at the triumphal entry (Jn 12:13 → Lk 19:38), Jesus extols and exemplifies the greatness of servant leadership at the table (Jn 13:1-17 → Lk 12:37; 22:24-30), the disciples question who would be the betrayer (Jn 13:22-24 → Lk 22:23), Satan enters Judas at the last supper (Jn 13:27 → Lk 22:23), Peter’s denial is predicted in the upper room (Jn 13:36-38 → Lk 22:31-34), only John and Luke mention a second Judas – not Iscariot (Jn 14:22 → Lk 6:6:16; Ac 1:13), the Holy Spirit will teach believers what they need to know and say (Jn 14:26 → Lk 12:12), the “right” ear of the servant was cut off by Peter (Jn 18:10 → Lk 22:50), the court/house of the high priest was entered by Jesus (Jn 18:15 → Lk 22:54), Jesus answers Pilate’s question (Jn 18:33-38 → Lk 23:3) whereupon Pilate claims to “find no crime in” Jesus, the crowd desires to give tribute to Caesar after three assertions of Jesus’ innocence and their double demand for his crucifixion (Jn 19:1-16 → Lk 23:20-33), the tomb is one in which no one had ever been laid (Jn 19:41 → Lk 23:53), and the day was the day of Preparation (Jn 19:42 → Lk 23:54), it is said that

Peter arrived at the tomb and that he saw the linen cloths lying there (Jn 20:5 → Lk 24:12), likewise Mary Magdalene becomes a link between the risen Lord and the Apostles (Jn 20:18 → Lk 24:10), two men/angels are mentioned at the empty tomb (Jn 20:12 → Lk 24:4), the ascension is mentioned (Jn 20:17 → Lk 24:51; Ac 1:9-11), Jesus suddenly appears to his disciples standing among them (Jn 20:19 → Lk 24:36), he invites his followers to touch his hands (Jn 20:27 → Lk 24:40), bestows peace upon his followers (Jn 20:19, 21 → Lk 24:36), and eats fish with them after the resurrection (Jn 21:9-13 → Lk 24:42f.), the Holy Spirit is presented distinctively as “wind” (Jn 3:8 → Ac 2:2), and the great catch of fish is climactically mentioned (Jn 21:1-14 → Lk 5:1-11), which in turn becomes associated with the calling of Peter.

How Luke came by this material and not other Johannine material is difficult to assess, but it does appear that Luke has had access to John’s oral tradition, and on more than one score. If Luke would have had access to written John, the placement of the great catch of fish probably would have been different, although Luke appropriately still includes it as part of the calling (and re-calling) narrative. Likewise, if Luke had access to written John, he might have moved the Temple cleansing to the early part of the narrative, included longer I-Am sayings, presented an alternative Lazarus narrative, and shown Jesus going back and forth from Jerusalem and doing other miracles not included in Mark. Both in matters of inclusion and exclusion, John’s material appears to have played a formative role in the development of Luke’s Gospel, and that influence seems to have taken place during the oral stages of the Johannine tradition.

B) Does John Provide a Basis for Luke’s “Orderly” Account?

What is meant by Luke’s declaration that he seeks to produce an “orderly” account? Does such a reference imply a penchant for historical detail, or is Luke referring to something broader in its meaning? Again, such an interest is impossible to ascertain, but it does coincide with the fact that several times in his narration of events, Luke appears to change the sequence or to alter the presentation of something in Mark precisely where Luke coincides with John. For instance, Luke only includes one sea-crossing narrative, as does John, and Luke only includes one feeding (the feeding of the 5,000) similar to John (Jn 6:1-15 → Lk 9:10-17). Luke moves the servanthood discussion to the last supper, where it is in John (Jn 13:1-17 → Lk 22:24-30), and he also performs a rather striking reordering move in that he relocates the confession of Peter after the feeding of the 5,000 as a contrast to its following the feeding of the 4,000 as it does in Mark. Notice also that Luke begins and ends Jesus’ ministry in ways reminiscent of John’s rendering: the opening of Jesus’ ministry is in the “hill country near Nazareth” (Jn 2:1-11
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→ Lk 4:14-16), and his post-resurrection appearances begin in Jerusalem (Jn 20:19 → Lk 24:13ff.). A certain explanation may elude the theorist, but one fact is clear: in all of these moves, Luke indeed departs from Mark and sides with John.

Luke also appears to conflate material between Markan and Johannine presentations, suggesting he saw his work to some degree as bridging these two traditions. For instance, the confession of Peter conflates Mark’s “You are the Christ” with John’s “You are the Holy One of God,” leading to “You are the Christ of God” (Mk 8:29 and Jn 6:69 → Lk 9:20). Most conspicuously, however, Luke departs from Mark’s presentation of the anointing of Jesus’ head, and presents the event as the anointing of Jesus’ feet – siding with John (Jn 12:1-8 → Lk 7:36-50). Movement the other direction, towards a more elevated and royal anointing, might have been imaginable, but moving to a more modest foot anointing would have been extremely unlikely without a legitimating reason. John’s rendering, however, provides a traditional basis for this unlikely move, and it also may account for Luke’s conjectural addition of the gratitude motif. In John, the anointing is performed by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, but Luke may have misunderstood the narration due to his aural access to it. Luke may have heard “Mary” and have thus associated her with another Mary (Mary Magdalene?), which would explain his conjectural addition that the motivation for the anointing was the woman’s prolific gratitude in return for the forgiveness of her prolific sinfulness. This may also suggest the oral form of the Johannine tradition to which Luke had access.

Another interesting point made by Lamar Cribbs is that many times where Luke omits a Markan narrative or presentation of something, he does so precisely where the Johannine tradition seems to go against such a narration. As an argument from silence, this is a weak form of demonstration, but it coheres with the larger pattern of Luke’s rearranging his material to fit the Johannine presentation over and against the Markan. Does all of this cast any light upon Luke’s declaration to Theophilus that he is writing an “orderly account” after having investigated everything, including the consulting of eye-witnesses and servants of the Logos (Lk 1:1-4)? Such an inference indeed is supported by the corollary facts, although certainty will be elusive. Whatever the case, the Johannine tradition appears to have influenced the Lukan at many turns.

C) Did the Johannine Tradition Contribute to Luke’s Theology?

Again, this question is finally impossible to answer with certainty, but Luke does show remarkable similarities with several Johannine theological motifs as well as details along the way. For instance, John’s favorable treatment of Samaritans comes across clearly in Luke in the Parable of the Good Sama-
ritan as well as Jesus' treatment of Samaritans in Luke's narrative. Likewise, the favorable treatment of women in both John and Luke appears to be no accident. Not only are particular women mentioned distinctively in these two gospels, but their apostolic functions are also highlighted, and this connection is impressive. Luke believes women to be included in the new work that God is doing in the world, and Luke probably acquired at least some of this perspective from the Johannine tradition. Another example of theological influence is the common importance placed upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, this theme represents Luke's own theology, but particular connections with the Johannine narrative make it likely that John's tradition may even have contributed to this development within Luke's own theology, let alone the tradition he used from John. These same connections can be seen to contribute to Luke's presentation of the growth of the church in Acts, confirming this hypothesis.

Indeed, one of the most impressive similarities between Luke and John is the way Luke presents the ministry of the post-resurrection Jesus. On the road to Emmaus in Luke we find several Johannine contacts not only suggesting traditional borrowing from John, but motifs reflecting John's theological influence upon Luke's understanding of the ministry of the resurrected Lord. The risen Christ stands among the disciples, speaking peace to them and offering courage. Likewise, the corporate fellowship of believers is enhanced by the sharing of table-fellowship with the Lord - even after the resurrection - in continuity with the historical ministry of Jesus. The evidence of spiritual encounter with Christ is declared as an experiential reality, and the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit is held to fulfill the promise of Christ's return. Luke also sides with John in emphasizing the efficacy of prayer, and this is both taught and modeled by Jesus in both Gospels. In these and other ways, Luke appears to be indebted theologically to John's theological presentation of Jesus' ongoing ministry as the risen Lord.

D) Acts 4:19-20 – A First-Century Clue to Johannine Authorship?

A further connection which raises a striking set of implications is the fact that Luke unwittingly provides a clue to Johannine authorship which all sides of New Testament studies have apparently missed until now. Scholars are entirely aware of the view represented by Pierson Parker28 several decades ago: the "one assured result of biblical criticism" is that "John, the Son of Zebedee, had nothing at all to do with the writing of this Gospel."

28 "John the Son of Zebedee and the Fourth Gospel," JBL 81, 1962, pp. 35-43, citation, p. 35. It must be said, however, that none of Parker's 21 evidences that the Fourth Evangelist could not have been John, the Son of Zebedee are compelling. The proliferation of non-compelling argumentation does not make a convincing case.
Indeed, present scholars have pervasively been taught that the earliest known connection between the son of Zebedee and the Fourth Gospel was Irenaeus, who confronted Marcion around 180 CE by citing Papias’ reference to John as the author of the gospel that now bears his name. Therefore, given John’s lateness, spiritual tone, and differences from the Synoptic Gospels, most scholars have largely agreed with Parker despite the fact that none of his 21 points are compelling, either individually or collectively. What we have in Acts 4:19f, however, may be a clue to Johannine authorship that moves the connection a full century earlier than Irenaeus. This finding could be highly significant and deserves scholarly consideration.

In Acts 4:19 Peter and John are mentioned as speaking. This, by the way, is the only time John is mentioned as speaking in the book of Acts, and he normally is presented as following in the shadow of Peter. The narration is then followed by two statements, and each of them bear a distinctively associative ring. The first statement, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right to listen to you rather than God,” is echoed by Peter in Acts 5:29 and 11:17, and it sounds like a typically Petrine leveraging of a human/divine dichotomy. On the other hand, the statement that we cannot help speaking about what we have “seen and heard” (vs. 20) is clearly a Johannine logion! A similar statement is declared by the Johannine Elder in I John 1:3, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard from the beginning,” and in John 3:32 Jesus declares what he has “seen and heard” from the Father. A fitting question to ask is whether such a reference simply betrays Luke’s conjectural way of presenting something. Certainly, Luke presents many people who have seen things or heard things, and this could quite possibly represent a Lukan convention. Upon examining the textual results, however, only a few times does Luke present hearing and seeing words together and in this sequence, and the only other time seeing and hearing verbs are used together and in the first person plural, as they are in Acts 4:20, is I John 1:3.29 The first-century connecting of John the Apostle with a Johannine saying here approximates a fact. Luke may have been misguided, or even wrong, but this identification moves the apostolic association of the Johannine tradition with the disciple John a full century before the work of Irenaeus. Given Luke’s dependence upon the Johannine oral tradition, and given the formative role John’s material apparently played upon Luke’s theological developments, this finding could be highly significant!

Contacts Between John and Q?

Could it be that there were also contacts between the Johannine tradition and the Q tradition? This exploration is the most speculative, both in terms

of the existence of Q and the question of whether similarities between Matthew, Luke and John imply some sort of contact between hypothetical Q and John. While there are several interesting connections between the Q tradition and John, the most fascinating contact is what has been called "the bolt out of the Johannine blue" – Matthew 11:25-27 and Luke 10:21f. What is fascinating is that this passage, in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark, sounds very Johannine. Explanations assuming that John has employed Q do not suffice here. The best explanation is to infer that the Q tradition included a significant saying that sounds very Johannine. Consider these similarities between Matthew, Luke, and John:

**Matt 11:25-27.** At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

**Lk 10:21f.** At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

**Jn 3:35.** The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands.

**Jn 7:28f.** Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me."

**Jn 10:14f.** "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep."

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30 See especially Jn 12:25, "Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life," and its parallels in Mt 10:39: "Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it," and Lk 17:33: "Those who try to make their life secure will lose it, but those who lose their life will keep it." See also the following connections between Q and John: a) Matt 3:11a; Lk 3:16a; Jn 1:26a; b) Matt 3:9; Lk 3:8; Jn 8:39; c) Matt 9:37f.; Lk 10:2; Jn 4:35; and d) Matt 10:17-25; Lk 12:11-12; Jn 13:16; 16:2; 14:26.
Jn 13:3f. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

Jn 17:1-3. After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

Jn 17:22-25. "The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me."

From this example it can be seen that the Q tradition shows remarkable similarities with a prevalent Johannine motif. But what are the implications of such a connection? Either Q and John have a common origin between them of tradition earlier than Q (perhaps going back to Jesus?), or we have a Johannine motif that has been apprehended and used extremely early, even by Q. The primitivity of the Johannine tradition thus is confirmed by either possibility, although the latter is the most likely. Like the Lukan tradition, the Q tradition has apparently drawn on the Johannine tradition, probably during its oral stages of development. It is not assumed, however, that the bulk of Johannine tradition was available to the Q tradition, as some of it was still in the process of formation. The passages above may suggest Johannine familiarity with some of the content represented in the Q tradition, but more likely is the hypothesis that the Q tradition has drawn from the Johannine rendering of Jesus' ministry. Of course, it is also a possibility that Q and the early Johannine tradition represent independent primitive reflections upon the ministry of Jesus and/or some sort of interfluentiality, parallel to the Johannine and pre-Markan tradition. Because these themes are more pervasively Johannine, however, it is most plausible to infer that Q has incorporated an early Johannine motif.
John's Relation to Matthew: Reinforcing, Dialectical, and Corrective.

John's relation to the Matthean tradition appears the most indirect among the canonical gospels, and it seems to have involved a history of dialogical relationships between at least two sectors of the early church on important institutional and ecclesial matters. In some ways, the Matthean and Johannine sectors of the church were partners in the growing dialogues with local Jewish communities, especially along the lines of evangelizing the Jewish nation to accept its own Messiah: Jesus. These traditions also sought to preserve their own material and to make it accessible for later generations. In doing so, they may even have engaged each other, as well as other Christian traditions, regarding key matters, such as discipleship, leadership and the ongoing work of the risen Christ within the community of faith.

A) Matthean and Johannine Sectors of Christianity: Reinforcing Each Other's Missions and Tasks.

Several of the contacts or parallels between Matthew and John reveal growing Christian communities which are trying to demonstrate that Jesus was indeed the Jewish Messiah, who is also needed in the world beyond Judaism. Particularly strong are the parallels between their uses of Scripture and showing from the Law and the Prophets ways in which Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures as the Messiah/Christ. They also had considerable pedagogical works they were involved in, and the Matthean and Johannine sectors of the church probably had within their purview the task of discipling Christians, making their communities something like a "school" or a center for discipleship and training. Teaching interests and community maintenance concerns can be inferred most extensively in these two gospels, and such communities may even have reinforced each other in their traveling ministries between fellowships and correspondence otherwise.  

A particularly important task that both communities appear to have been sharing involved the managing of outreach to and tensions with the respectively local Jewish presence. In the Matthean and Johannine settings alike, one or more Jewish Synagogues must have commanded a significant presence in the community (especially for those seeking to follow a Jewish

A particularly interesting connection is the way Matthew and John both expand the passage from Isaiah 6:9f. (Matt 13:14f.; Jn 12:37-40) as an explanation of why the Jews refuse to believe in their own Messiah. Such a passage was probably used within the worship and/or teaching settings of Matthean and Johannine Christianity. See also the similar Matthean and Johannine presentations of Jesus as one who was "sent by the Father" as a typical feature of the Jewish agency motif rooted in Deuteronomy 18: Paul N. Anderson, "The Having-Sent-Me Father – Aspects of Agency, Encounter, and Irony in the Johannine Father-Son Relationship," Semeia 85, 1999, pp.33-58.
Messiah), although such was an ambiguous presence. It may be that the *Birkat ha-Minim*, a ban excluding professing Christians from some Synagogues may have been instrumental in followers of Jesus being excluded from Synagogue life in both settings, but the tensions need not have followed from such a particular development. Nor does the fact of its uneven application imply that things were not difficult for Jewish/Christian relationships in these settings. A possibility just as likely is that these communities probably experienced a mixed reception of openness and hostility from the local Jewish communities, and this ambivalence may even have precipitated the call for an exclusion clause, which the 12th Jamnian Benediction was designed to accommodate. Whatever the case, Matthean and Johannine Christians shared a good deal of solidarity with one another. In seeking to evangelize Jewish family, friends and neighbors, they probably received mixed receptions and challenges to the authenticity of Jesus’ mission, which led to their continuing emphases upon Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, sent from God after the pattern of the Mosaic Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15-22.

B) Dialectical Relations Between Johannine Christianity and Intramural Centralizing Tendencies.

As tensions with Jewish sectors of communities grew and then subsided (they appear less acute in the supplementary Johannine material), tensions with Gentile Christians increased. In particular, debates over discipleship and what it meant to come “out of” the world were acute concerns for the early Christian movement in the later part of the first century CE. These issues were exacerbated by the stepping up of Roman Emperor worship as a broad requirement under the reign of Domitian (81-96 CE). During this era in particular, subjects of the Roman Empire were expected to declare their loyalty openly to Rome by offering public Emperor laud (either declaring “Caesar is Lord!” or by offering incense to Caesar – an act of worship – or both). This sort of practice had been the custom of Mediterranean residents for centuries, especially in Asia Minor, and it is likely that Gentile believers felt it was far less problematic than Jewish/Christian believers. A further impact of Synagogue exclusion was that those who were not deemed to be part of the Jewish faith would not have been covered by the Roman dispensation for Jews in deference to their peculiar monotheism, and they would then have been expected to show loyalty to Rome or to suffer for the consequences of refusing to offer Emperor laud.

These issues led to a variety of further tensions as some Gentile / Christian leaders began preaching that one need not suffer for one’s faith, and that it was not a problem to be a member of Roman society outwardly and still be a Christian. At this, the Johannine leadership likely responded,
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“We must be willing to follow Jesus to the cross, ourselves, if we expect to be raised with him in the afterlife. Jesus suffered and died for us; can we do any less?” to which the docetizing leaders responded, “No he did not! He was divine, not human.” In these ways, Docetism began to gain ground as a movement and as a threat to Christianity from within. It is a mistake, however, to confuse Docetism here with Gnosticism proper. The latter developed more fully into the second century, but it was not full blown in the first century situation. The great initial appeal of Docetism was simply its implications for an assimilative and less costly view of discipleship. This was the reason it was opposed so vigorously by early Christian communities, especially the Johannine ones, and this explains the emphasis on a suffering and incarnate Jesus so rife in its presentation in the second-edition material and in the Johannine Epistles.

However, not all sectors of the Christian movement responded to these tensions in exhortative ways. Some sought to stave off the threats by means of imposing hierarchical structures of leadership, calling for submission to authoritative church leadership, thereby challenging alternative claims and movements. This can be seen explicitly in the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch, who sought to stave off Docetizing defections by calling for adherence to one bishop and one worship service as expressions of one’s loyalty to one’s Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In doing so, Ignatius built upon the Petrine model of Matthew 16:17-19 and 18:15-20, and he was probably not the only one to have done so. The occasion of the Johannine Elder’s writing III John to Gaius was that Diotrephes who “loves to be first” had excluded Johannine Christians and had been willing even to expel members of his own congregation who were willing to take them in (vss. 9f.). Some scholars see the only issue here as having been hospitality, but inhospitality was a symptom of the problem, not the problem itself. The Elder describes writing to the ecclesia (the centralizing church?) about Diotrephes (whence he likely has drawn his positional authority), and he shows signs of also willing to speak with him directly (Matt 18:15-17). While this dialogue may not have been between Johannine and Matthean leadership directly, all it takes is one bad example for the Johannine leadership to feel this structural innovation may not have been an improvement after all.

On the matter of leadership, hierarchies, and the role of the present Christ in the meeting for worship, the Johannine and Matthean leadership (as well as other Christian groups in the sub-apostolic era) must have invested a good deal of discussion together. At times, however, they may also have disagreed with one another, and such dialogues can be inferred within the dialectical set of relationships between Johannine and Matthean Christianity. For instance, when asking why Diotrephes excluded Johannine Christians to begin with, it may have been due to their egalitarian and Spirit-based ecclesiology — and well he should have been threatened, because such a
position would have undermined his very approach to holding his own church together, which was what the hierarchical innovations were designed to effect.


While the Beloved Disciple was alive and ministering authoritatively, the extending of his witness to the rest of the church may not have seemed as pressing. After his death, however, the compiler of the Fourth Gospel sought to gather and disseminate his witness among the broader Christian movement. In doing so, there was obviously interest in getting his story of Jesus out there where it could do some good, but part of the “good” it was intended to effect was to outline the original intentionality of Jesus for his church. In John’s final-edition material, one can see several impressive developments that confirm such a view. First, as an antidocetic corrective, this later material emphasizes the fleshly humanity of Jesus and the importance of the way of the Cross for normative discipleship. Second, a great deal of emphasis has been placed in the accessibility and present work of the Holy Spirit as the effective means by which the risen Lord continues to lead the church. Third, the juxtaposition of Peter and the Beloved Disciple, especially clear in this supplementary material, reflects the presentation of the Beloved Disciple as the ideal model for Christian leadership in contrast to that which is represented by the miscomprehending Peter. All of this together suggests an interest in providing an apostolic corrective to rising institutionalism in the late first-century church in the name of Jesus’ last will and testament.

Most strikingly, at least seven ways can be identified in which Matthew 16:17-19 is treated in parallel ways in John, but each of these parallels is different. Do these differences suggest a corrective interest? Quite possibly. For instance, consider the following:

1) Peter’s “correct” confession is considered inspired (Matt 16:17), but in John “blessedness” is equated with serving others (13:17) and believing without having seen (20:29). The Johannine Macarisms are not all that striking a contrast to this one in Matthew 16, although the Johannine references to that which is blessed clearly call for a greater spirit of servanthood as far as Peter (and those who follow in his wake) is concerned and they include those who have not seen (beyond the

32 See chapter 10 in Christology (pp.221-251); and “The Portrayal of Peter and Johannine Christianity’s Dialectical Relationship with the Mainstream Church: Jn 6:67-70,” Sitz im Leben (pp.50-57).
apostolic band) and yet believe. These are both counter-hierarchical themes.

2) The “apostles” and leaders are not only men in John, but they also include women (4:7-42; 20:14-16; 12:1-8). John’s presentation of women ministering to and on behalf of Jesus would have gone against the grain of emerging patriarchialism as the church entered the sub-apostolic era. This move (against innovation) suggests John’s primitivity and traditional reasons for presenting women in the egalitarian ways it did. In the presentation of women as being partners with Jesus in the furthering of God’s work, John restores a set of insights – if not traditional memories – reminiscent of what may be assumed about the historical Jesus.

3) The confessions of faith in John are reserved for Nathanael (1:49) and Martha (11:27), not members of the Twelve. The co-opting of “the Twelve” in directions hierarchical may have been opposed by the Johannine tradition not because of its non-apostolicity, but precisely because of it. It is highly likely that not all members of the apostolic band felt equally enthusiastic about the emerging primacy of Peter, especially if the coinage were used to bolster the authoritarian leadership of some over others. Showing such persons as Nathanael and Martha making confessions, as well as Peter, must have functioned to broaden the base of Christian authority beyond the purview of “the Twelve,” and emerging leaders and others would have felt encouraged in such presentations.

4) “Flesh and blood” cannot recognize that kingly Messiah in Matthew, but in John, the flesh profits nothing (6:63) as discipleship leads to the cross (6:51). The connections here may not be all that close, but it is interesting to note that John’s emphasis on assimilating the flesh and blood of Jesus refers to the costly discipleship of being willing to ingest the “bread” of Jesus’ flesh given for the life of the world. The reference is to the “way of the cross” rather than the making of a correct confession, and the practical implications of such a presentation would have been significant.

5) The image of the “church” in Matthew is more “petrified,” while in John it is more fluid (“flock” – ch.10; “vine and branches” – ch. 15) and exemplified by the Beloved Disciple. Peter is not entrusted with institutional keys in John, but the Beloved Disciple is entrusted with the mother of Jesus, a symbol of familiarity and relationality as bases of authority. In both cases a particular disciple given an entrustment by
Jesus, and these actions and images must have borne with them implications for carrying forward the ongoing work of Jesus. The relationality of the Johannine image, however, strikes against the institutional character of the Matthean image, although familial images within Matthew also abound. John's egalitarian ecclesiology thus appears to be in dialogue with more hierarchical ecclesiologies emerging within the late first-century church.

6) Jesus gives Peter authority in Matthew, but in John (6:68f.) Peter gives authority to Jesus. Does John thereby present Peter as returning the Keys of the Kingdom back to Jesus, where they belonged all along? This may be overstating it a bit, but the contrast is striking. Peter is portrayed throughout John as miscomprehending Jesus' teachings about servant leadership (chs. 6, 13, 21), and yet the Beloved Disciple always does it right. The point of John's rendering, however, is to emphasize the importance of Christ, whom through the Holy Spirit continues to lead the church with his life-producing words. It is highly significant ideologically that Peter is portrayed as affirming the immediacy of the ongoing work of the resurrected Lord. Likewise, while Peter is reinstated in John 21:15-17, it is with the proviso that his service be shepherding and nurturing, a contrast to the self-serving shepherds of Ezekiel 34.

7) Authority (responsibility) to loose and bind is given to all followers of Jesus in John (20:21-23), not just a few, and Jesus' "friends" include those who know what the Master is doing, and those who do his work (Jn 15:14f.). John 20:21-23 is the passage most similar to Matthew 16:17-19 and 18:15-20, and the threefold content here is highly significant. In this passage, the Priesthood of all believers is laid out with stark clarity. Jesus first pneumatizes his disciples (plural) in ways that could not be clearer; he breathes on them and says: "Receive the Holy Spirit!" Next, he apostolizes them and emphasizes that as the Father has sent him, he also sends them (plural) as apostolic envoys in the world. Finally, Jesus sacerdotalizes his disciples (plural) by giving them the responsibility to be forgivers of sins in the world. Here we see the expansion of the apostolicity rather than its constriction, and such a movement would have been at odds with proto-Ignatian autocratic modes of governance if they were emerging by this time. Again, while similarities with Matthew 18:18-20 are striking here, it is doubtful that the Fourth Evangelist had a particular text in mind. Rather, the sort of centralizing work of some leaders, carried out by the likes of Diotrephes, "who loves his primacy" (III Jn 9f.) may have catalyzed the
Johannine corrective in the name of the original intention of Jesus for his church.

How long the Johannine and Matthean traditions may have been engaged in such dialogues is impossible to say. They may have been engaged dialogically for several decades, although the material in the M tradition engaged most directly in John appears to be the institutionalizing and organizing inclinations of the post-Markan set of Matthean concerns. It is fair to say that within Matthean Christianity there appear to have been a fair number of correctives to the sharper edges of institutionalization, as Matthew is also familial and is deconstructive – as well as bolstering – of Peter’s image. The M tradition eschews judgmentalism and calls against uprooting the tares among the wheat for the good of the community, and while Peter receives the Keys of the Kingdom, it is also Peter who is asked to forgive 7 times 70. Thus, the functionality of Matthean organization is typified by its capacity to be gracious and relational as well as structural. All it takes, however, is one strident example – such as Diotrephes and his kin – for hierarchical wieldings of Petrine authority to be experienced adversely within Johannine Christianity and beyond. These allergies to a “new and improved” approach to organizational church life would have been all that was needed to have elicited a Johannine correction to perceived innovations and departures from the more charismatic and less formal way of Jesus. And, from what we know of the historical Jesus, the Johannine corrective was indeed grounded in authentic historical insight on that matter.

Conclusion.

John’s relation to the Synoptic gospel traditions involved a very complex set of relationships, and no monofaceted theory will suffice to account for the multiplicity of evidences and perplexities that present themselves for consideration. While John’s Gospel may have been finalized last, its tradition did not originate late, and much of it represents an authentic reflection on the ministry of Jesus and its ongoing implications. But just as the Johannine tradition was not derivative from the Synoptic traditions, this does not mean its pervasive independence was the result of isolation or disengagement. Quite the contrary! The Johannine tradition engaged the pre-Markan tradition in the oral stages of their developments and sought to augment and complement the Markan written Gospel. John’s oral tradition was a formative source of Luke’s two-volume project, and Luke even has left us an unwitting clue to Johannine authorship which has hitherto been completely undiscussed in the literature. John’s relationship with the

33 See Graham Stanton’s excellent critique and my response to it in IBR 1, 1999, pp. 53-69.
Matthean tradition was a dialectical one, and it posed an alternative answer to the most pressing issue of the church, in the late first-century and always. John’s final edition points the way forward in terms of Christocracy: the effective means by which the risen Lord intended and intends to lead the church. In these ways, John’s relation to the Synoptic Gospels was independent but not isolated, connected but not derivative, individuated but not truncated. In relation to the other Gospels John’s was an engaged autonomy, and an overall theory of Johannine-Synoptic relations must include factors that were interfluential, formative, and dialectical.