

Scripture

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While the exact scope and depth of engagement may be difficult to determine, there are numerous indicators in the Gospel of John that the Jewish Scriptures were an important source for and probably formed much of the scaffolding underpinning the cultural encyclopaedia of its author. In contrast, therefore, to many of the other topics examined in this collection of essays, ‘Scripture’ is overtly and methodically signposted within the text as having played a pivotal role in relation to *what John knows*. At regular intervals, attention is drawn to the content of Israel’s Scriptures and, invariably, to how they bear witness to Jesus’ identity, mission and significance. An assortment of vocabulary is used for this purpose.¹ ‘The scripture’ (ἡ γραφή) is the designation that features most prominently in the narrative, often in relation to a quotation (Jn 7:38; 10:35; 13:18; 19:24, 28, 36, 37; cf. 17:12) or paraphrastic allusion (7:42); sometimes it occurs without reference to specific passages (2:22; 20:9), pointing in all likelihood, as in the case of the plural ‘the scriptures’ (αἱ γραφαί; 5:39), to Scripture in its entirety.² Reference is also made to τὰ γράμματα (‘the writings’) to denote the Pentateuch (5:47) and an unnamed collection of scriptural texts (7:15), as well as to ‘the prophets’ (οἱ προφῆται) in connection with a direct quotation (6:45) and the prophetic books more widely understood (1:45). In the latter case, the Jesus-witness provided by ‘the prophets’ is tied to the testimony of ‘the law’ (ὁ νόμος), a term used by John on various occasions and with numerous possible connotations, either to refer to the Torah given by Moses on Sinai (1:17, 45; 7:19 [x2], 49; 18:31), its individual commandments (7:23, 51; 8:17; 19:7[x2]) or, once again, as a synonym for Scripture (10:34; 12:34; 15:25). To be noted also are the many cases in which ‘the

¹ For a helpful discussion of John’s application of the relevant terminology, see Andreas Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift im Johannesevangelium: Eine Untersuchung zur johanneischen Hermeneutik anhand der Schriftzitate*, WUNT 2/83 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 38-63. See also Wolfgang Kraus, ‘Johannes und das Alte Testament: Überlegungen zum Umgang mit der Schrift im Johannesevangelium im Horizont Biblischer Theologie’, *ZNW* 88 (1997): 2-3.

² In Jn 10:35 and 19:24 ‘the scripture’ (ἡ γραφή) may be used to denote a particular quotation and the whole of Scripture at the same time.

law' is explicitly attributed to Moses as writer and/or mediator,³ while the spoken witness of the prophet Isaiah is strikingly adduced to frame the account of Jesus' public ministry (1:23; 12:38-41).

Both individually and collectively, these numerous references to the Jewish Scriptures and their content afford more than ample confirmation *that* John knows Scripture and repeatedly highlights its recognized authoritative significance. Drawing attention to this particular set of data, however, represents only one of several possible approaches to the subject of John's knowledge of and engagement with scriptural resources. In fact, it does no more than skim the surface of any attempt at probing the *extent* and *implications* of such an undertaking. As is widely acknowledged, the Gospel of John also appears to be steeped in a rich and often deeply embedded deposit of references to a range of scriptural themes and motifs, many of which play an integral role in John's shaping and (re)telling of the Jesus story. To cite one well-known example: it is evident, from the choice of ἐν ἀρχῇ as the opening words of the prologue (Jn 1:1; cf. Gen. 1:1 LXX) and also the evocative reference to the risen Jesus breathing (ἐνεφύσησεν) life-giving spirit into his disciples (Jn 20:22; cf. Gen. 2:7 LXX),⁴ that the gospel narrative is structured in such a way that it begins with first creation and draws to an end with images of new creation and eschatological life and that it also alerts readers/hearers from the outset to how, 'starting with the Old Testament, they should read the story of Jesus'.⁵ This immediately raises expectations that Israel's Scriptures contribute in significant ways to the emplotment of that story.

³ All occurrences are to be found in John 1-9, and in relation to the question of Jesus' authority (1:17, 45; 3:14; 5:45, 46; 6:32; 7:19, 22, 23; 9:28, 29).

⁴ That other scriptural evocations may also be at work is suggested by the fact that the precise verbal form ἐνεφύσησεν is also used to describe Elijah's raising of the son of the widow of Sarepta (3 Kgdms 17:21); cf. also the divine command for life to be breathed (ἐμφύσησον) into the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek. 37:9 LXX). See further Martin Hengel, 'Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums auf dem Hintergrund der urchristlichen Exegese', *JBT* 4 (1989): 273-74; Carlos R. Sosa Siliezar, *Creation Imagery in the Gospel of John*, LNTS 546 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015).

⁵ Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 50. Cf. also Alicia D. Myers, *Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Fourth Gospel's Use of Scripture in its Presentation of Jesus*, LNTS 458 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 173-74.

The aim of this essay is to examine how and, to some extent, why the Jewish Scriptures inform the composition of John's Gospel. To carry out that task, three questions will guide the ensuing discussion. First, what can be learned from John's Gospel as to what the author knew of Israel's Scriptures? Secondly, how could that knowledge have been acquired and also how was it fashioned by John for the purpose of communication to others? Thirdly, how does Scripture 'work' within the narrative and contribute to the design and message of John's Gospel?

What John Knows of Scripture

To enquire about John's familiarity with, and access, to the Jewish Scriptures, one must inevitably begin with the gospel's explicit quotations. To establish, for this purpose, what qualifies as a direct scriptural quotation, two criteria must be tested: a) readers/ hearers need to be alerted to the presence of a quotation by the author's use of a citation formula, although—as we shall see—this is not invariably the case in John; b) one must search for evidence of the use of word combinations that are clearly recognizable from their occurrence in an antecedent text or texts.⁶ If these criteria are applied fairly rigidly, it is possible to isolate fourteen explicit quotations in John's Gospel,⁷ all of which are accompanied by a citation formula (1:23; 2:17; 6:31; 6:45; 7:38; 10:34; 12:15; 12:38; 12:39-40; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24; 19:36; 19:37).⁸ In addition, the quotation of Ps. 118(117):25-26 in John 12:13 belongs to the category of direct quotation, and this despite the absence of a citation formula; it bears striking resemblance to its psalm source, and its presentation in direct speech—as the content of the crowd's spontaneous acclamation—is dictated by the narrative setting.

⁶ On these criteria, see further Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 70-76; cf. Margaret Daly-Denton, 'Going Beyond the Genially Open "Cf.": Intertextual Reference to the Old Testament in the New', *Milltown Studies* 44 (1999): 48-60.

⁷ The combination of both criteria rules out passages which are introduced by a citation formula but have no identifiable reference(s) in the Scriptures (Jn 17:12; 19:28). On those passages which qualify as composite allusions or scriptural paraphrases rather than citations, and this despite the presence of a citation formula and some recognizable words/themes from scriptural sources (Jn 7:42; 8:17; 12:34), see Maarten J.J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form*, CBET 15 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), 16-17; Ruth Sheridan, *Retelling Scripture: 'The Jews' and the Scriptural Citations in John 1:19-12:15*, BIS 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 106.

⁸ In the case of John 12:40 and 19:37, both quotations are tied to the immediately preceding citation (in 12:38 and 19:36 respectively) through the use of the words *πάντες*.

As to what these fifteen quotations disclose about John's knowledge of Scripture, it is first to be noted that the Fourth Gospel, like many of its ancient Jewish and early Christian counterparts, draws above all from three scriptural sources that, albeit anachronistically, can be described as belonging to a 'canon within the canon': eight of the citations are taken from the Psalms,⁹ though sometimes in combination with other scriptural sources;¹⁰ four are drawn from the prophecies of Isaiah,¹¹ and two from Zechariah.¹² Somewhat surprisingly, given the emphasis in the first half of the narrative on what Moses has written in 'the scripture' or 'the law',¹³ there are no marked quotations from Genesis in John,¹⁴ and explicit citations from elsewhere in the Pentateuch are limited to the description of Jesus' unbroken bones as scriptural fulfilment (Jn 19:36; cf. Exod. 12:10, 46; Num. 9:12 LXX).¹⁵ One important factor in this regard is that the retelling of the exodus events in the Psalms, rather than the originating narratives, often form the basis of John's portrayal of Jesus' life-giving significance (e.g., Jn 6:31; 7:38).

⁹ Jn 2:17 (Ps. 69:9 [68:10]); 6:31 (Ps. 78[77]:24); 7:38 (Ps. 78[77]:16, 20); 10:34 (Ps. 82[81]:6); 12:13 (Ps. 118[117]:26); 13:18 (Ps. 41:9 [40:10]); 15:25 (Ps. 69:4 [68:5] and/or possibly Ps. 35[34]:19); 19:24 (Ps. 22:18 [21:19]). To these occurrences one may add Jesus' pronouncement, 'I thirst', in Jn 19:28 (Ps. 69:21 [68:22]). See Margaret Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Interpretation of the Psalms*, AGJU 47 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 115-242; Andrew C. Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John: An Intertextual Study on the New Exodus Pattern in the Theology of John*, WUNT 2/158 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 180-239.

¹⁰ See further below on John's use of composite citations.

¹¹ Jn 1:23 (Isa. 40:3); 6:45 (Isa. 54:13); 12:38 (Isa. 53:1); 12:40 (Isa. 6:10). See Catrin H. Williams, 'Isaiah in John's Gospel', in Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken (eds), *Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 101-17; Daniel J. Brendsel, "Isaiah Saw His Glory": The Use of Isaiah 52-53 in John 12, BZNW 208 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014).

¹² Jn 12:15 (Zech. 9:9); 19:37 (Zech. 12:10). See Adam Kubiš, *The Book of Zechariah in the Gospel of John* (Pendé: Gabalda, 2012), 27-218; William Randolph Bynum, 'Quotations of Zechariah in the Fourth Gospel', in Alicia D. Myers and Bruce G. Schuchard (eds), *Abiding Words: The Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John*, SBLRBS 81 (Atlanta SBL Press, 2015), 47-74.

¹³ Cf. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 287.

¹⁴ On Jn 1:51 as an 'unmarked' quotation from Gen. 28:12 and on various Genesis allusions in John's Gospel, see Maarten J.J. Menken, 'Genesis in John's Gospel and I John', in Maarten J.J. Menken and Steve Moyise (eds), *Genesis in the New Testament*, LNTS 466 (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 84-95.

¹⁵ An indirect quotation evoking Deut. 17:6, 19:15 and Num. 35:30 is widely detected in Jn 8:17. See especially Michael Labahn, 'Deuteronomy in John's Gospel', in Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken (eds), *Deuteronomy in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel*, LNTS 358 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 84-87; Ruth Sheridan, 'The Testimony of Two Witnesses: John 8:17', in Myers and Schuchard (eds), *Abiding Words*, 161-84.

Exact identification of the source(s) behind John's citations is no easy task. The fact that so many of them do not correspond precisely to known Hebrew (MT) or Greek (LXX) versions of the passages in question has led many scholars, particularly in earlier generations, to argue that John was citing texts imprecisely from memory,¹⁶ or may even have been influenced by targumic traditions.¹⁷ Having said that, in more recent decades scholars have been adopting a variety of new perspectives and applying a range of different methodological tools to come to terms with the challenges posed by the question of John's acquaintance with and use of Scripture. By focusing not only on the question of sources and textual form but also on *the function* of John's marked citations, Maarten Menken and others have painstakingly applied source- and redaction-critical methods to argue that the distinctive wording of the majority of these quotations is the result of Johannine redaction,¹⁸ motivated by christological factors and legitimated on exegetical grounds because they remain within the boundaries of known Jewish interpretative techniques. As well as only retaining those elements of direct relevance to the surrounding Johannine context, redactional features identified in John's quotations—and analogous to widely attested Jewish exegetical devices—include the addition, omission and substitution of words/phrases, the inclusion of composite expressions (see further below), and the changing of verbal tenses and line sequences.¹⁹

Some caution must, admittedly, be displayed when seeking to reconstruct the precise source-texts and modifications made to John's scriptural quotations.²⁰

¹⁶ E.g., Charles Goodwin, 'How Did John Treat His Sources?', *JBL* 73 (1954): 61-75. See the third section of this essay on how the processes of memory/memorization as understood in ancient media studies can shed a different light on the likely citation practices of John and other New Testament writers.

¹⁷ E.g., Edwin D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, NovTSup 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 127-30.

¹⁸ In addition to Menken's *Old Testament Quotations*, see Bruce G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John*, SBLDS 133 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), and, more recently, Michael A. Daise, *Quotations in John: Studies on Jewish Scripture in the Fourth Gospel*, LNTS 610 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2020).

¹⁹ Some of these devices also resemble ancient rhetorical techniques of *paraphrasis*, such as those outlined by Theon (*Prog.* 62, 108). See further Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 72, 84.

²⁰ For example, Sheridan, *Retelling Scripture*, 22-25, argues that the search for the 'original' version of John's quotations is problematic given the pluriformity of ancient Hebrew and Greek text versions. See, however, Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 14; Daise, *Quotations in John*,

Nevertheless, significant inroads have been made by Menken and others into understanding John's handling of quotations, insofar as they can be delineated from known versions of the underlying scriptural sources, and also into what can be gleaned from such redactional activity about the profile of John's scriptural literacy. Most of John's quotations draw on Septuagintal versions of the passages in question, although some cases point to engagement with the Hebrew versions of those sources (cf. Jn 12:40; 13:18; 19:37).²¹ Furthermore, and particularly important for exploring the possible depth of John's scriptural acquaintance, the exegetical techniques identifiable in the explicit quotations militate against a rigid form of proof-texting but rather lend support to the view that John frequently takes into account the wider context of those quotations. Contextual appropriation occasionally comes to light in an overt fashion, as in the explanatory comment in 12:41 that Isaiah spoke the words of 53:1 (Jn 12:38) and 6:10 (Jn 12:40) because 'he saw his [Jesus'] glory', with reference to the glorious divine manifestation experienced by the prophet in his temple-vision (Isa. 6:2 LXX: 'and the house was full of his glory' [δόξα]), which is the setting for the second Isaianic quotation (6:10).²² In response, moreover, to the scriptural quotation cited by the crowds in John 6:31, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat' (cf. Ps. 78[77]:24; Exod. 16:4, 15), Jesus evokes the broader exodus context by noting that the Israelites died after eating the manna (Jn 6:49; cf. Num. 14:23), while the influence of Exodus 16 is evident in the reference to the 'murmuring' (γογγύζω) of 'the Jews' (Jn 6:41, 43), like that of their ancestors in the desert (Exod. 16:2, 8 LXX; cf. 15:24; 17:3).²³ Such

4-12, also 26: 'a hypothesis which traces an anomaly [in John's quotations] to an extant source is to be preferred over one that traces it to a putative one; and ... an anomaly which cannot be traced to any extant source is best ascribed to the style or exegetical methods (and thereby *Tendenz*) of the fourth evangelist (or redactor)'.

²¹ Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 132, 154-56, further proposes that reliance on the Hebrew text best accounts for some of the exegetical connections attested in John's indirect scriptural references, including the linking together of Exod. 12:3 and Isa. 53:7 in John 1:29, based on their shared use of the Hebrew term for lamb (*šeh*).

²² Cf. also the references to the Servant's glorification in Isa. 52:13 LXX (δοξασθήσεται), which occur in the immediate vicinity of the words cited by John in 12:38. See further Catrin H. Williams, "'Seeing the Glory': The Reception of Isaiah's Call-Vision in John 12:41", in James Crossley (ed.), *Judaism, Jewish Identities and the Gospel Tradition: Festschrift for Professor Maurice Casey* (London: Equinox Press, 2010), 245-72.

²³ See Judith Lieu, 'Narrative Analysis and Scripture in John', in Steve Moyise (ed.), *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J.L. North*, JSNTSup 189 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 148.

examples, some overt and others more veiled, demonstrate how scriptural quotations operate integrally as part of John's narrative design,²⁴ also confirming their christological and rhetorical functions within the text.

Additional evidence of John's scriptural-contextual awareness is afforded by the exegetical manoeuvres undergirding those citations in which 'literary borrowing occurs in a manner that includes two or more passages (from the same or different authors) fused together and conveyed as though they are only one'.²⁵ Over half of the fifteen quotations in John fit this definition, in that discrete words or phrases from other scriptural source texts are inserted into the (primary) text to form what amounts to a single *composite citation*.²⁶ In similar fashion to the Jewish exegetical device later described by the rabbis as *gezerah shawah*, and already commonly attested in late Second Temple Jewish texts,²⁷ redactional activity in John's explicit quotations includes the bringing together of two or more 'distant' texts on the basis of the shared vocabulary (catchword links) and/or analogous themes to be found in the wider contexts of those texts.²⁸ Thus, even if some of John's explicit citations

²⁴ See now R. Alan Culpepper, 'Quotation as Commentary: The Good News of a King on a Donkey (John 12:12-15)', in Thomas R. Hatina (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, Volume 4: The Gospel of John*, LNTS 613 (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 139-54.

²⁵ Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn, 'What is a Composite Citation? An Introduction', in Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn (eds.), *Composite Citations in Antiquity: Volume One: Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Early Christian Uses*, LNTS 525 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 4.

²⁶ Jn 6:31; 7:38; 12:13; 12:15; 12:40; 13:18; 19:36; 19:37. For discussion of the composite features in these quotations, see Catrin H. Williams, 'Composite Citations in the Gospel of John', in Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn (eds.), *Composite Citations in Antiquity. Volume Two: New Testament Uses*, LNTS, 593 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 94-127. John's fondness for bringing together disparate scriptural sources in explicit quotations was already recognized by C.K. Barrett, 'The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel', *JTS* 48 (1947): 157.

²⁷ For examples in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the writings of Philo, and various Septuagint translations, see Catrin H. Williams, 'John, Judaism, and "Searching the Scriptures"', in R. Alan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson (eds.), *John and Judaism: A Contested Relationship in Context*, SBLRBS 87 (Atlanta: SBL, 2017), 77-100.

²⁸ For example, the crowd's appeal to the past provision of manna in Jn 6:31, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat' (ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν), does not correspond exactly to any single source. Ps. 77:24 LXX most closely resembles Jn 6:31, but with the exception of two features: it lacks ἐκ τοῦ (before οὐρανοῦ) and φαγεῖν. However, the exact phrase ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ—required to highlight Jesus' identity as the one who *descended from* heaven (Jn 6:32-33, 38) rather than simply as 'heavenly bread' (ἄρτον οὐρανοῦ)—occurs in the analogously worded Exod. 16:4 LXX, and the verbal form φαγεῖν is used specifically for eating bread in Exod. 16:15 LXX. See further Williams, 'Composite Citations', 97-100.

were already firmly anchored in early Christian tradition,²⁹ prompting some scholars to propose that John had access to an existing collection of *testimonia*,³⁰ there is no evidence to indicate that the additional scriptural elements had already been built into John's composite citations and that those citations were in circulation during a pre-Johannine stage of composition. The composite material in these quotations is too closely aligned with John's distinctive portrayal of Jesus for this to have been the case. Similar to the ripple-effect of the wider context of scriptural quotations that is visible in their new Johannine setting (in Jn 6, 12, and indeed several other chapters), the composite citations affirm the evangelist's much broader, and deeper, familiarity with Israel's Scriptures and point to a profoundly literate scriptural exegete. John's meticulous reworking of certain quotations also implies much more than a passing acquaintance with first-century Jewish exegetical principles and practices.³¹

Deciphering the interpretative mechanisms at work in John's composite quotations also serves as a valuable transition point from the relative comfort zone of direct—and largely identifiable—quotations to the exploration of other, more implicit, modes of scriptural reference. It cannot be denied, of course, that the particularly broad span of scriptural allusiveness in John's Gospel makes it difficult to tap into, delineate and explain the likely extent of its scriptural associations.³² Some measure of 'what John knows', certainly beyond the content of its scriptural quotations, is indicated by the prominence of references to John's Gospel among

²⁹ Isa. 40:3 (Jn 1:23; Mk 1:3 par.); Zech. 9:9 (Jn 12:15; Mt. 21:5; cf. Mk 11:1-10). Other explicit quotations in John are embedded as allusions within the narrative in the Synoptic Gospels: Isa. 6:9-10 (Jn 12:40; cf. Mk 4:12); Ps. 41:9 [40:10] (Jn 13:18; cf. Mk 14:18 par.); Ps. 22:18 [21:19] (Jn 19:24; cf. Mk 15:24 par.).

³⁰ Martin C. Albl, *'And Scripture Cannot Be Broken': The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections*, NovTSup 96 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Alessandro Falcetta, 'The Testimony Research of James Rendel Harris', *NovT* 45 (2003): 280-99.

³¹ On John's familiarity with and indebtedness to ancient Jewish exegetical techniques and strategies, see, e.g., Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo*, NovTSup 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1965); Gary T. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet: The Use of Ezekiel in the Gospel of John and in the Literature of the Second Temple Period*, JSNTSup 270 (London: T&T Clark, 2004); Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer, 'The Johannine Literature and Contemporary Jewish Literature', in Judith M. Lieu and Martinus C. de Boer (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Johannine Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 155-70.

³² The interpretative challenges posed by John's frequently indirect use of Scripture is articulated by Lieu, 'Narrative Analysis and Scripture in John', 144-45.

the thirty-four pages of NA²⁸ dedicated to possible scriptural citations and allusions in the New Testament writings.³³ Even if not all of them are equally convincing and verifiable, the large number of scriptural references proposed for John suggests that the author is thoroughly immersed in Israel's Scriptures, and that the gospel's narratives and discourses are deliberately designed to evoke a whole host of multi-layered scriptural associations. On the high end of the scripture-spectrum, and inspiring strong levels of exegetical certainty, are John's unmissable references to key events and figures from Israel's past (e.g., Jn 1:51; 3:14; 4:5-6; 6:30-33; 12:41), as well as distinctive verbal parallels intended to act as interpretative keys with the capacity to unlock the meaning of their immediate (and wider) context (e.g., 1:1, 17; 6:41, 43; 10:16; 20:22). At the other end of the scale are those fleeting scriptural 'echoes' that may (or may not) be intended for activation and consumption by John's audiences.³⁴ The possibility must also be entertained that one of John's characteristic rhetorical strategies is to engage in deliberate allusiveness, evoking scriptural themes, motifs and symbols in a consciously indirect, even paraphrastic, manner in order to encourage direct participation by the gospel's audiences in the task of 'searching the Scriptures' (cf. Jn 5:39). This possibility will be examined more fully in the next section of this essay. Certainly, the recognition that the evangelist works with a wide compass of scriptural evocations raises important questions not only about John's access to Israel's Scriptures but also how that accessed knowledge and its distinctive Johannine interpretation is intended to be passed on to readers and hearers.

How John Knows (and Communicates) Scripture

To examine these issues further, it is necessary to consider which medium or media would have been at John's disposal for the purpose of receiving and citing Israel's Scriptures and also for conveying the importance of Scripture for formulating the Johannine presentation of Jesus. Intertextuality in various guises has, to a great extent, functioned in recent decades as the overarching framework for the study of

³³ This extends to a 581-page list of John's likely scriptural parallels in Hans Hübner, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo: Vol 1.2: Evangelium secundum Iohannem* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

³⁴ For a helpful discussion of various categories of 'allusion' (proper naming [including citation], definite description, paraphrase, self-echo, and literary conventions), see Susan E. Hylen, *Allusion and Meaning in John 6*, BZNW 137 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 53-59, 152-56.

‘the use of the Old Testament in the New’, including John’s familiarity with and use of Scripture. The emphasis, then, falls on the literary relationship between texts as *written* compositions and on the reception of those writings by audiences in their capacity as *readers*. However, it is increasingly being acknowledged that first-century texts like John’s Gospel emerged from a cultural (or ancient media) environment in which textuality and orality, and the interactive dynamics between them, were key factors in the composition, transmission and reception of texts.³⁵ This is not to deny that John betrays close familiarity with scriptural traditions that circulated in written form, and that—as we shall see—the evangelist repeatedly highlights the *writtenness* of Scripture. However, the likely impact of the contexts in which such scriptural texts were ‘heard’ by a listening audience should also be taken into account, as well as how the transmission of those texts in new compositions were often filtered through the oral-textual matrix of Jewish exegetical traditions current in the first century CE.

It is undoubtedly true that John places great emphasis on the *written* testimony of Scripture, including repeated use of the formula ‘it is written’ (ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον) to introduce a number of scriptural quotations in the first half of the gospel (2:17; 6:31, 45; 10:34; 12:14). Similarly, attention is drawn by John to what Moses (1:45; 5:46) and the prophets (1:45; cf. 6:45) *wrote* about Jesus, while the writtenness of Scripture is of course also encapsulated in the word itself: ἡ γραφή, ‘the writing’. It does not necessarily follow that the highlighting of scriptural textuality in John acts as a prompt or marker that the author has been able to consult written texts directly, or that the texts can, or should, be accessed visually by the intended audiences. John’s use of the expression ‘as it is written’ serves primarily as a rhetorically motivated appeal to the undisputed authoritative status of Scripture³⁶

³⁵ See further the essays in Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher (eds), *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture*, LNTS 426 (London: T&T Clark International, 2011); and, with specific reference to the ‘use’ of the Jewish Scriptures in New Testament writings, see Catrin H. Williams, ‘How Scripture “Speaks”: Insights from the Study of Ancient Media Culture’, in David Allen and Steve Smith (eds), *Methodology in the Use of the Old Testament in the New: Context and Criteria*, LNTS 579 (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 53-69.

³⁶ Holly Hearon, ‘Mapping Written and Spoken Word in the Gospel of Mark’, in Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote (eds), *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres*, Biblical Performance Criticism 11 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 382-83.

—an authority that is ‘not limited to the actual words they contain’.³⁷ Having said that, the actualization of *written Scripture* is also expressed through *verbal speech* in John’s narrative, as when the spoken prophecy of Isaiah (Jn 1:23: ‘the prophet Isaiah said’, quoting Isa. 40:3) is presently enacted in the witnessing utterance of John the Baptist (‘he said’). Scripture, as a result, is distinctively presented by John as both a written and speaking authority (ἡ γραφὴ εἶπεν; cf. 7:38, 42; 19:24, 37), whose true meaning as testimony to Jesus is activated through its divinely given ‘oral enactment’ in the Johannine present.³⁸

In light, moreover, of increasingly audience-orientated approaches to the interpretation of New Testament texts, the *dialogical* function of John’s knowledge of Scripture demands closer scrutiny, particularly since the author frequently intervenes to address anticipated audiences directly (e.g., 19:35; 20:31; 21:24). How do the frequent explicit, and implicit, references to Israel’s Scriptures in John’s Gospel relate to its communicative aims? Or, phrased differently, what are hearers and readers expected to know of, and about, Scripture, and how is that knowledge meant to deepen or evolve in and through interaction with John’s story of Jesus?

As proposed earlier in this study, John can at times engage in intricate textual and exegetical manoeuvres in the citation of Scripture, particularly in composite quotations formulated to serve the gospel’s narrative and christology. It is quite possible, of course, that what underpins those manoeuvres compositionally was not intended to be identified and dissected, at least initially, by the gospel’s audiences; the focus, rather, could be upon the rhetorical impact of the finished ‘product’ of the explicitly signaled scriptural quotations. Nevertheless, the varying degrees of allusiveness in John’s scriptural references does raise the question of how many echoes would need to be heard and recognized by audiences for them to be kept on the Johannine track. These are not unimportant issues if, as often proposed, the gospel’s originally envisaged audiences were not limited to those of Jewish heritage but also included actual or potential believers from a Gentile background. Multilayered engagement with the Jewish Scriptures in John, much like its polyvalent vocabulary, suggests that the text has been shaped to appeal of

³⁷ Rafael Rodríguez, *Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance and Text*, LNTS 407 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 165-66.

³⁸ Michael Labahn, ‘Scripture *Talks* Because Jesus *Talks*: The Narrative Rhetoric of Persuading and Creativity in John’s Use of Scripture’, in Le Donne and Thatcher (eds), *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture*, 133-54.

a wide spectrum of hearers/readers,³⁹ ranging from those with high levels of scriptural literacy—visual and/or aural—to those with perhaps only limited acquaintance of Israel’s principal stories.⁴⁰ Certainly, a variety of scenarios can be envisaged as to how John’s audience(s) would have been able to acquire or retrieve scriptural knowledge; it could include multiple recitations of the gospel within communal settings, prompting scripturally competent believers to provide explanatory comments to others less well-versed in Jewish texts and traditions, that is, by offering reflections on the content of John’s Gospel in combination with a ‘searching’ of the Jewish Scriptures.

Given that first-century texts were commonly delivered orally and received aurally by their audiences, a range of communicative strategies and techniques can be identified in John’s text that have been built into the narrative to illuminate and enhance its appeals to scriptural testimony. The rhetorical impact of John’s ‘reading’ of the Jewish Scriptures should not be limited to its overt signaling of Scripture and its content, because it also encourages the evocation and elucidation of more veiled scriptural references through repetition, close-knit configuration and their gradual unfolding within the Johannine text. In line with the guidance provided by ancient rhetorical theorists like Quintilian,⁴¹ John’s Gospel can also use intentionally ambiguous arguments, metaphors, riddles as well as *subtle allusions to other texts* to encourage readers and hearers to seek deeper levels of resonance and meaning;⁴² John’s audiences are invited to fill gaps and to make new links by drawing from their culturally, including scripturally, inherited (or more

³⁹ See especially Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003, 2nd edition), 18-24.

⁴⁰ Cf. Jörg Frey, ‘Heil und Geschichte im Johannesevangelium: Zum Problem der “Heilsgeschichte” und zum fundamentalen Geschichtsbezug des Heilsgeschehens im vierten Evangelium’, in Jörg Frey, Stefan Krauter and Hermann Lichtenberger (eds), *Heil und Geschichte: Die Geschichtsbezogenheit des Heils und das Problem der Heilsgeschichte in der biblischen Tradition und in der theologischen Deutung*, WUNT 248 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 483-84.

⁴¹ Quintilian (*Inst.* 9.2.71) states, for example, that textual elusiveness and allusiveness challenge audiences to be ‘led to seek out the secret which they would not believe if they heard it openly stated, and to believe in that which they have found out for themselves’.

⁴² Dale C. Allison, ‘The Old Testament in the New Testament’, in James Carleton Paget and Joachim Schaper (eds), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From the Beginnings to 600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 487: the ‘regular effect’ of scriptural allusions is ‘to move hearers to become more active’.

recently acquired) memory pool.⁴³ It is striking in this respect that John's allusive scriptural references often occur in discourses that disclose various facets of Jesus' identity. Thus, the identification of Jesus as bread (Jn 6:25-59), shepherd (10:1-21, 22-30) or vine (15:1-11) draw on multilayered metaphors that, at the same time, progressively and innovatively recall a rich reserve of scriptural resources.⁴⁴ It often appears unnecessary to pin down John's scriptural deposit to individual references and single meanings (or indeed to identifiable verses or discrete passages), since they can evoke not one but a network of associations drawn from Israel's Scriptures and also the broader interpretative frames associated with those texts and traditions. Audiences, as a result, are encouraged through such strategies to be drawn into a distinctively Johannine understanding of culturally resonant, and scripturally rooted, multifaceted images.

How John Shapes What John Knows

Some attention has already been paid in this essay to the ways in which John's diverse modes of scriptural reference—along the sliding scale of direct quotations to varyingly visible allusions—operate as part of John's narrative design. This relates specifically to the rhetorical function of Scripture in the Johannine portrayal of Jesus,⁴⁵ although the identification of other rhetorical techniques and related strategies within the gospel prompts one to delve deeper in relation to 'what John knows' and to ask: what does the shaping of scriptural references within the narrative ('how') disclose about John's aims ('why') with regard to the meaning and significance attributed to the Jewish Scriptures in light of John's story of Jesus?

⁴³ On the role played by memory in the reception of the Jewish Scriptures in New Testament writings and in how they were 'heard' by audiences, see, e.g., Tom Thatcher, 'Cain and Abel in Early Christian Memory: A Case Study in "The Use of the Old Testament in the New"', *CBQ* 72 (2010): 732-51; Williams, 'How Scripture "Speaks"', 63-69. For insights from contemporary social memory studies, see the next section of this essay.

⁴⁴ For an attempt at investigating how John engages rhetorically with the notion of scriptural allusiveness for the purpose of audience participation, see Catrin H. Williams, 'Persuasion through Allusion: Evocations of "Shepherd(s)" and their Rhetorical Impact in John 10', in Alicia D. Myers and Lindsey S. Jodrey (eds), *Come and Read: Interpretive Approaches to the Gospel of John* (Lanham: Fortress Academic, 2020), 111-24.

⁴⁵ On how John's appeals to the authority of Israel's Scriptures work to bolster the persuasive force of its message, see especially Myers, *Characterizing Jesus* (with the aid of classical Greek and Roman rhetorical categories) and Sheridan, *Retelling Scripture* (using contemporary rhetorical theory).

There is no doubt that John's Gospel seeks to maintain a fine balance between two key hermeneutical principles, namely, that Israel's Scriptures repeatedly provide the backdrop or 'screen' for the telling of the gospel narrative, but also that Jesus is to be understood as the interpretative key to those Scriptures. The centrality of these two principles for John becomes evident from the outset of the narrative, both allusively, through the positioning of the story's origins 'in the beginning' (Jn 1:1; cf. Gen. 1:1 LXX), and overtly, in the programmatic statement attributed to Philip in one of the gospel's earliest scenes, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth' (1:45; cf. 5:39, 46-47). These hermeneutical 'keys' set out clearly, for John's audiences, that the Jewish Scriptures in their entirety are deemed to be essential to the gospel's interpretative framework in that they point forward and bear witness to Jesus. As far as literary structures are concerned, the characteristically Johannine understanding of the witnessing role of Scripture is further signposted at decisive points elsewhere in the narrative, such as the *framing* of the beginning and end of Jesus' public ministry so that they are in alignment with what 'Isaiah said' (Jn 1:23; 12:38-41) and also with the post-glorification elucidation of Jesus' words and deeds when they, in conjunction with what Scripture has written about him, are 'remembered' (2:17, 22; 12:13-16).⁴⁶

It could be argued that these structural markers or *inclusios* fulfil the hermeneutical function that should be accomplished by *individual* enactments of scriptural testimony to Jesus, though the latter are limited to a relatively small and diverse cluster of citations in the gospel narrative.⁴⁷ Once again, however, John's carefully conceived schema comes to light in the methodical distribution of citation formulas attached to these fifteen quotations. There is a conscious clustering of two distinct citation patterns, marked by a shift from what 'is written' (ἐστὶν

⁴⁶ On the ways in which John projects the christological significance of Israel's Scriptures through the use of *inclusio*, see, e.g., Alicia D. Myers, 'A Voice in the Wilderness: Classical Rhetoric and the Testimony of John (the Baptist) in John 1:19-34', in Myers and Schuchard (eds), *Abiding Words*, 131-38; Bynum, 'Quotations of Zechariah in the Fourth Gospel', 47-49, 72-74; and, in particular, Daise, *Quotations in John*, 9-1, 124, 198-99.

⁴⁷ For the view that the witnessing function of Scripture may be stated (e.g., Jn 1:45) but remains largely undemonstrated in John, see Lieu, 'Narrative Analysis and Scripture in John', 160. She also makes the highly plausible suggestion (p. 162) that the fact that 'so much scriptural imagery lies below the surface of the narrative perhaps reinforces the reader's awareness that this belongs not to the level of the events of Jesus' ministry but to that of a believing remembering'.

γεγραμμένον) in the account of Jesus' public ministry (Jn 2:17; 6:31, 45; 10:34; 12:14), in the first main part of the gospel (1:19-12:36), to how Scripture is 'fulfilled' (ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῇ) in the second part (12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24, 36), following the announcement of the arrival of Jesus' hour (12:23).⁴⁸ In the first half of the gospel, where the focus is on debate about Jesus' identity and authority, Scripture serves as a written (and speaking) witness to Jesus; in the second half, particular emphasis is placed on how Jesus' death and departure amount to the explicit *fulfilment* of Scripture. Furthermore, in the context of the scriptural allusion embedded in Jesus' utterance, 'I thirst', in Jn 19:28 (cf. Ps. 69:21 [68:22]), Scripture is described as being brought to its ultimate *completion* (ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή) through Jesus' death,⁴⁹ echoing Jesus' earlier declarations that the purpose of his earthly mission is to complete his Father's work (4:34; 5:36; 17:4; cf. 19:30: τετέλεσται).

What does it mean, then, for John to claim, in 19:28, that Scripture is not only fulfilled (πληρώω) in and through Jesus but has now reached its goal (τελειόω)? Does it point to Israel's Scriptures as having reached their all-encompassing conclusion, albeit without necessarily devaluing Israel's past or claiming that 'scripture' is now redundant (cf. Jn 10:35)? Or does the emphasis fall on Scripture as a written 'prophecy' that remains empty until filled with Jesus' revelation?⁵⁰ There has been much debate in recent Johannine scholarship as to whether the emphasis in John's christology on Jesus as the exclusive revealer of God (cf. 1:18) diminishes or even annuls the salvific-historical value of Israel's scriptures, that is, if they are interpreted solely as testimonies to Jesus.⁵¹ A central hermeneutical challenge in

⁴⁸ See Craig A. Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue*, JSNTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 174-77; Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 78-89, 348-50.

⁴⁹ Cf. Hans Hübner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments. Band 3: Hebräerbrieff, Evangelien und Offenbarung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 199: 'Mit Jesu Tod ist das τέλος des Offenbarungs- und Erlösungsgeschehens gegeben. Jesus selbst erkennt, daß nun alles zu seinem Ziel gekommen ist'. See also Hengel, 'Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums', 278-79.

⁵⁰ Maarten J.J. Menken, 'Observations on the Significance of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel', *Neotestamentica* 33 (1999): 125-43.

⁵¹ Among those who argue that the salvific-revelatory significance of Israel's history as expressed in the Jewish Scriptures is significantly played down through John's handling of Scripture are: Kraus, 'Johannes und das Alte Testament', 1-23; Michael Theobald, 'Schriftzitate im "Lebensbrot"-Dialog Jesu (Joh 6): Ein Paradigma für den Schriftgebrauch des vierten Evangelisten', in Christopher M. Tuckett (ed.), *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, BETL 131 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 355-56, 361-65 (arguing that Scripture, for John, is a christological text separable from Israel's

this regard is determining the Johannine stance on the precise relationship between the past and present. It is a stance that does not articulate clearly, for example, why the prologue offers such a highly compressed understanding of how the past revelation of the Logos relates to salvation history (1:1-5 [or 1:1-12?]), and whether figures like Abraham, Moses and Isaiah are presented as paradigms for the witness of God's Word in Israel (e.g., 5:46; 8:56; 12:41; cf. 1:12)⁵² or, alternatively, only as looking forward to the coming of Jesus as the Word incarnate?

Some light may possibly be shed on these questions if John's understanding of the past is examined through the lens of commemorative 'keying' and 'framing'. This approach, as applied in social memory theories, involves the pairing, even conflating, of events and figures from the remembering present with images or symbolically meaningful patterns from the remembered past,⁵³ which, in John's case, involves the memory of Israel's (scriptural) past. Keying does not, essentially, work with a hermeneutical model of foreshadowing, typology or fulfilment; rather it interprets present realities in analogical terms by *enacting* elements tied to landmark figures and events from the past.⁵⁴ Hence, in the case of John's prologue, the Sinai theophany is evoked in the references to 'glory' (cf. Exod. 33:18, 22) and 'grace and truth' (34:6) being manifested in Jesus (Jn 1:14-17). The exact force of the comparison is notoriously difficult to establish, since there is no explicit mention in the prologue of the actual revelation of God's glory in Israel's past, no indication that the Sinai revelation foreshadows or is a type of that which has come through the Logos, and no hint that Jesus fulfils what was originally promised to Moses. The Sinai event certainly functions as the theophanic model for articulating

history) ; cf. also Christian Dietzfelbinger, 'Aspekte des Alten Testaments im Johannesevangelium', in Hermann Lichtenberger (ed.), *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag: Band III: Frühes Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 203-18. Others argue that John attaches importance to Israel's salvation history in the past; see especially Hengel, 'Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums', 260-71; Frey, 'Heil und Geschichte im Johannesevangelium', 488-89.

⁵² Hengel, 'Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums', 263-68.

⁵³ See especially Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 18-20. See Thatcher, 'Cain and Abel in Early Christian Memory', 732-51; and, with reference to John's Gospel, see Catrin H. Williams, 'Patriarchs and Prophets Remembered: Framing Israel's Past in the Gospel of John', in Myers and Schuchard (eds), *Abiding Words*, 187-212.

⁵⁴ Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 182, discusses the function of the rhetorical technique of *synkrisis* in similar terms; John seeks to clarify Jesus' identity by 'placing him alongside' scriptural events and figures, with Jesus held to be 'greater than what is already acknowledged as great'.

the significance of the revelation of the incarnate Word, but, with the aid of mnemonic keying, the two ‘events’ are assimilated in such a way that the focus is not on whether these divine qualities were already manifested in the distant past, but on the fullness of the grace and truth embodied in Jesus. A related strategy can be identified when Jesus corrects the crowd’s use of Scripture to support their request for bread to form a Moses-like sign, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat’ (Jn 6:30-31). The contrast highlighted by Jesus between the two God-given ‘events’ to accentuate the superiority of the present gift (6:32) again functions like a form of ‘keying’, because, in order for this scriptural correlation to be effective, God has to be recognized as the giver of ‘bread from heaven’ in the past as well as the present. Thus, operating on the principle of integration, it is striking that in Jesus’ response the crowds are projected as the recipients of bread in the past—‘who gave you’ (δέδωκεν ὑμῖν)—and the present—‘who gives you’ (δίδωσιν ὑμῖν). As in the case of the Moses-Jesus comparison in the prologue, interpreting the highly enigmatic declarations in John 6:30-32 in analogical terms need not negate the connection and degree of continuity between them, although it does, at the same time, involve acknowledging that John asserts the superiority of the salvific gift offered by Jesus.

The evidence surveyed in this brief study enables one, finally, to draw the following conclusion as far as John’s shaping of Scripture is concerned: through its close and frequent interaction with the Jewish Scriptures, the Johannine text in fact sets itself up as belonging to the category of γραφή - new ‘Scripture’.⁵⁵ There are numerous textual indicators that this is the case, though not in the sense that John’s Gospel becomes a replacement for Israel’s Scriptures. To the contrary, the continued relevance of the Jewish Scriptures for the Johannine presentation of Jesus is maintained at key points in the narrative (1:45; 5:39; 20:9).

At one level, the relationship between the Scriptures and John’s text is presented in symbiotic terms, as already indicated by the unmissable connection between the

⁵⁵ Cf. Francis J. Moloney, ‘The Gospel of John as Scripture’, *CBQ* 67 (2005): 454-68; Klaus Scholtissek, “Geschrieben in diesem Buch” (Joh 20,30): Beobachtungen zum kanonischen Anspruch des Johannesevangeliums’, in Michael Labahn, Klaus Scholtissek and Angelika Strotmann (eds), *Israel und seine Heilstraditionen im Johannesevangelium: Festgabe für Johannes Beutler SJ zum 70. Geburtstag* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), 219-24; Susanne Luther, ‘The Authentication of the Narrative: The Function of Scripture Quotations in John 19’, in Thomas R. Hatina (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, Volume 4: The Gospel of John*, LNTS 613 (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 155-66.

first words of the gospel (Jn 1:1) and the opening words of Scripture (Gen. 1:1). Their close association is also intimated by the emphasis on the importance of post-Easter believing in and remembering of both Scripture and Jesus' word (Jn 2:22; cf. 2:17; 12:16; see also 15:20; 16:4), as well as on the fulfilment of one, like the other (18:9, 32). This connection is encapsulated, most strikingly, in the emphasis placed upon the gospel text, like Scripture, as bearing written testimony to Jesus.⁵⁶ The distribution of references to their *writtenness* is no mere coincidence in this respect. Up until John 19 all occurrences of γράφω refer exclusively to the decisive testimony of Scripture, while its use to denote the inscription on the cross (19:19-22) again perpetuates, albeit inadvertently, the witnessing function of *writing*. Accordingly, the preponderance of references to γράφω in the descriptions of the gospel's aims (20:30-31; 21:24-25) highlights the authoritative quality of John's witness to Jesus⁵⁷—from the assertion that 'these things are written' (20:31: γέγραπται) to bring about or strengthen belief, to the confirmation that what has been written (ὁ γράψας) is tantamount to true testimony (μαρτυρία; 21:24).

John undoubtedly signals a close connection between Scripture and the gospel text, but they are not presented as identical nor is one wholly subsumed under the other. This may well have prompted John to describe the gospel text not as 'writing/scripture' (γραφή) but rather as 'book' (βιβλίον; 20:30-31; cf. 21:25), with a marked shift from one to the other: from signposting the enduring witness of the written Scriptures to Jesus (Jn 1:45-20:9) to highlighting what, for John, amounts to the incomparable, and life-giving,⁵⁸ testimony of the written gospel. What follows from this, and different from its Synoptic counterparts (especially Luke

⁵⁶ See Johannes Beutler, 'The Use of "Scripture" in the Gospel of John', in R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (eds), *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 153-54. Cf. also Labahn, 'Scripture Talks Because Jesus Talks', 135-40.

⁵⁷ On John's 'textual self-consciousness', with particular reference to 20:30-31 and 21:24-25, see Chris Keith, *The Gospel as Manuscript: An Early History of the Jesus Tradition as Material Artifact* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 134-36.

⁵⁸ The Johannine emphasis on receiving the gift of life through believing in Jesus via the gospel's written testimony to him (20:30-31) contrasts with the position attributed to Jesus' opponents that life is available in the Scriptures, that is, in isolation from its witness to Jesus (5:39-40). See further Maarten J.J. Menken, 'What Authority Does the Fourth Evangelist Claim for His Book', in Jan Krans, Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, Peter-Ben Smit, Arie Zwiep (eds), *Paul, John, and Apocalyptic Eschatology: Studies in Honour of Martinus C. de Boer*, NovTSup 149 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 194; cf. Keith, *The Gospel as Manuscript*, 138-39.

1:1-4), is that the authority claimed for John's Gospel is stated at the end rather than the beginning of the book. Hand in hand, therefore, with the assertion that Scripture reaches its ultimate goal when Jesus completes his earthly mission (19:28), John presents 'the words of God' recorded in Israel's Scriptures as finding their interpretative key and eschatological fulfilment in the Word made flesh,⁵⁹ whose voice is said to be inscribed and definitively elucidated within the Johannine text itself.

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⁵⁹ Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 380-87. See also Deborah Forger, 'Jesus as God's Word(s): Auralty, Epistemology and Embodiment in the Gospel of John', *JSNT* 42 (2020), 283.

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