

How Scripture ‘speaks’: Insights from the study of ancient media culture

Catrin H. Williams

It is unquestionably the case that most contributions to the field of OT/NT studies presuppose and work with literary models in their investigations of the composition, transmission and reception of ancient texts. The scholarly discourse, conducted by those ‘born into the Gutenberg galaxy’,¹ continues to be dominated by references to *written* texts and sources and to possible *readers* of the textual artefacts in question. John Miles Foley, one of the leading voices in twentieth-century orality studies, commented as follows on the literary presuppositions guiding what is arguably the most prevalent theoretical approach to ‘the use of the Old Testament in the New’:

Even in an age learning to prize ‘intertextuality’, we can observe that the very etymology of that critical term denominates two or more formally bounded, complete items that interact – so that their separate contexts are more or less sharply defined, and the individual text maintains an absolute status uniquely its own. Even though the field of interpretation is enlarged and deepened, textual heuristics tacitly demands that we privilege the individual document above all else.²

Intertextual perspectives on the use and reception of Israel’s Scriptures in the New Testament (NT) writings may largely be underpinned by print-based assumptions and are reliant on comparative analyses of discrete texts, but scholars are now increasingly coming to terms with the highly oral–aural environment in which those texts were produced and received by Jews and Christians in antiquity. Literacy rates were relatively low in the first-century CE Mediterranean world,³ particularly if ‘literacy’ is defined as skilful competence in reading literary documents, although the rates decrease further if

¹ Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher, *The Fourth Gospel and First-Century Media Culture* (LNTS, 296; London; New York: T&T Clark Continuum, 2011), 3.

² John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Voices in Performance and Text; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), xi.

³ See especially William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). On the degrees and distribution of literacy in Jewish Palestine, see Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ, 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 496–504.

the definition includes the writing and (scribal) copying of literary and religious texts.⁴ Moreover, the unwieldy character of ancient scrolls made it difficult for those who could read to navigate their way through texts when searching for specific passages for the purpose of consultation and comparison; and the use of *scriptio continua* in literary texts – with no spaces between words, no section divisions and no punctuation – would have further hindered the reading process.⁵ In performative contexts, such practical difficulties would undoubtedly have prompted lectors to familiarize themselves thoroughly, beforehand, with the content of texts. Whether scrolls functioned as visual aids for memorized delivery through oral acts of communication,⁶ or were the basis of word-for-word recitation directly from the written sources,⁷ texts during the Hellenistic and Roman periods were primarily, though not exclusively, read aloud for the benefit of a listening audience.⁸

NT authors and early Christian communities operated within a comparable ancient media environment and this included their reception of the Jewish Scriptures. It is, admittedly, difficult to determine whether, or when, Paul or the authors of the Gospels, for instance, were quoting directly from written scriptural sources or citing them from memory.⁹ And despite the fact that public readings of Scripture are not included in Paul's references to corporate worship (1 Cor. 11.17-34; 14.1-40; cf. Eph. 5.19-20),¹⁰ the NT writings do provide evidence that texts, including themselves (1 Thess. 5.27; Col. 4.16; Rev. 1.3) together with scriptural sources (Lk. 4.16-21; Acts 15.21; cf. Acts 8.28, 30; Justin, *1 Apol.* 67.3), were more typically read aloud in a group setting. The vocalization of scriptural readings in communal gatherings also supports the view that many Jews and early Christians would have aurally encountered and gained familiarity with the contents of Israel's sacred texts regardless of whether they were able to read the texts in question, thus acquiring what Dale Allison has labelled as 'oral literacy' as opposed to 'visual literacy'.¹¹

⁴ For example, Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE–400 CE* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 16, refers to the 'socially stratified character of literacy' in Second Temple Judaism.

⁵ On these cultural factors, see the oft-quoted study of Paul J. Achtemeier, 'Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity', *JBL* 103 (1990): 3–27. Cf. Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–14.

⁶ Alan Kirk, 'Manuscript Tradition as a *Tertium Quid*: Orality and Memory in Scribal Practices', in *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text: Beyond the Oral and the Written Gospel* (ed. Tom Thatcher; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 218: 'Memorative control of a written artefact was requisite for its practical utilization'. See also Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 16–17.

⁷ For a recent debate on this and related issues, see Larry W. Hurtado, 'Oral Fixation and New Testament Studies? "Orality", "Performance" and Reading Texts in Early Christianity', *NTS* 60 (2014): 321–40; Kelly R. Iverson, 'Oral Fixation or Oral Corrective? A Response to Larry Hurtado', *NTS* 62 (2016): 183–200; and especially Larry W. Hurtado, 'Correcting Iverson's "Correction"', *NTS* 62 (2016): 201–6.

⁸ For example, Plato, *Phaed.* 97c: ἀκούσας μὲν ποτε ἐκ βιβλίου; *Theat.* 143bc; Theon, *Progymnasmata* 61; Pliny, *Ep.* 36.

⁹ Although, see section 3.

¹⁰ See Joanna Dewey, 'Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions', in *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (ed. Joanna Dewey; Semeia, 65; Atlanta: SBL, 1995), 51–2, but this amounts to an argument from silence.

¹¹ Dale C. Allison, 'The Old Testament in the New Testament', in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From the Beginnings to 600* (ed. James Carleton Paget and Joachim Schaper; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 497.

These preliminary remarks offer no more than a snapshot of pertinent issues when OT/NT studies are brought into conversation with recent interdisciplinary developments in the field of ancient media studies. Investigating the first-century media culture in which Jews and early Christians lived, and in which their writings were produced, calls for an examination of the phenomena of orality,¹² textuality,¹³ performance and memory, and, in particular, the intricate and multilayered relationship that existed between them.

The aim of this chapter is to consider the methodological issues and interpretative insights that can emerge when the study of the use and reception of the Jewish Scriptures in NT texts is probed from the perspective of ancient media cultural dynamics. In what ways has the complex oral–textual matrix of the first-century media world left its mark on how the NT authors cite and interpretatively interact with the authoritative Scriptures of Judaism in their own writings? What was the likely impact of the widespread oral communication of texts on the ways in which Israel's Scriptures were encountered, both with reference to author-centred (composition) and audience-centred (reception) questions? And what role did memory play in how Scripture 'speaks' and how it was 'heard' when mediated through a process of 'secondary orality'?¹⁴ These questions will guide the discussion that follows, focusing on three central, often overlapping, topics: the ongoing interaction between orality and textuality in the composition and interpretation of texts; the dynamics of oral performance and audience reception; and the multifaceted processes and practices of memory. The chapter will examine how each of these three topics can inform the study of 'the use of the Old Testament in the New', highlighting some of the significant scholarly work that has already been undertaken in this area as well as seeking to identify how focusing on ancient media culture can open up other possibilities for future investigation.

1 The interface of orality and textuality

Earlier scholarship has tended to place oral and written modes of expression at opposite ends of the media spectrum, defining them as wholly distinct methods of communication belonging to 'the Great Divide'.¹⁵ More recent studies, however, recognize the close symbiotic relationship between the spoken word and the written word in the ancient world.¹⁶ Orality and textuality, as already intimated in the introduction to this study, could interact with each other in a variety of ways during

¹² For a helpful survey of the impact of orality studies on the study of the New Testament, see Kelly R. Iverson, 'Orality and the Gospels: A Survey of Recent Research', *CBR* 8 (2009): 71–106.

¹³ The term 'textuality' embraces the notion that even those who are illiterate can have direct access to textual artefacts (through recitation and performance) and also hold those artefacts in high esteem. See further Chris Keith, 'Literacy', in *The Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media* (ed. Tom Thatcher et al.; London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 209.

¹⁴ The term 'secondary orality' was first applied in New Testament studies by Werner Kelber to describe how a written text 'enters the world of hearers by being read aloud'. See *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 217.

¹⁵ See, for example, Nicholas A. Elder, 'New Testament Media Criticism', *CBR* 15 (2017): 316–17.

¹⁶ See especially Rafael Rodríguez, 'Reading and Hearing in Ancient Contexts', *JSNT* 32 (2009): 154–61.

the Hellenistic and Roman periods: written texts can offer glimpses into their intended oral–rhetorical effect within the setting of oral delivery,¹⁷ but, at the same time, they are themselves the products of oral–aural cultural dynamics. For the purpose of exploring the use of the Jewish Scriptures in the NT, I will focus on two particular aspects that exhibit this close interrelation between speech and writing, between orality and textuality.

First, NT texts frequently draw attention to the *writtenness* of ‘Scripture’ (ἡ γραφή), although the repeated formulaic references to what is ‘written’ (γέγραπται, ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον) are not necessarily intended as an indication that the scriptural citations can be accessed directly in a physical copy (rather than an orally memorized form) of the text; rather, the expression ‘it is written’ represents an appeal to the undisputed authoritative status of the text in question.¹⁸ Regardless of whether people were able to read and/or gain direct access to scriptural sources, the texts were afforded the kind of ‘authority and significance [that] are not limited to the actual words they contain’.¹⁹ This can also extend to interpretative manoeuvres emerging from what is ‘written’ in Scripture,²⁰ from conflated quotations for which there is no identical or even comparable version in a single written text (e.g. Mk 1.2–3: καθὼς γέγραπται) to the interpretative opening of ‘the scriptures’ (αἱ γραφαί) in a manner that transcends what is actually inscribed in any single passage or even collection of texts (e.g. Lk. 24.27, 32, 44–5, 46: οὕτως γέγραπται). More overt representations of oral–textual interplay are attested in numerous references to scriptural *speech* (e.g. Rom. 4.3; 9.17; 11.2; Gal. 3.8; 4.30; 1 Tim. 5.18; Jas 2.23).²¹ This is a characteristic feature of the letter to the Hebrews, whose scriptural quotations function as (predominantly divine) speech acts (e.g. Heb. 1.5–14; 2.12–13; 3.7–9; 8.8–12),²² and it is also prevalent in the Gospel of John (cf. 7.38, 42; [19.24]; 19.37) where the Scriptures are distinctively presented as both a written and speaking authority. Michael Labahn has persuasively argued in this respect that the fourth evangelist calls attention to the ‘oral enactment’ of the written Scripture(s), because ‘Scripture’ – as an active, divinely given, character within the text – testifies persuasively on Jesus’s behalf, even speaking directly to the audience of the gospel when it is recited in oral performance.²³

¹⁷ As discussed in section 2.

¹⁸ See, for example, Richard A. Horsley, ‘Oral Performance and Mark: Some Implications of *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, Twenty-Five Years Later’, in *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text*, 61–2; Holly Hearon, ‘Mapping Written and Spoken Word in the Gospel of Mark’, in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres* (ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote; Biblical Performance Criticism, 11; Eugene: Cascade Books, 2015), 382–3.

¹⁹ Rafael Rodríguez, *Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance and Text* (LNTS, 407; London: T&T Clark, 2010), 165–6.

²⁰ See further below in this section on ‘text-interpretative traditions’.

²¹ Cf. also the spoken words attributed to scriptural figures like Moses (Rom. 10.19), David (Rom. 4.6; 11.9) and Isaiah (John 1.23; 12.38–9; Rom. 10.20).

²² See, for example, Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, ‘Tradition in the Mouth of the Hero: Jesus as an Interpreter of Scripture’, in *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber* (ed. Richard A. Horsley, Jonathan A. Draper and John Miles Foley; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 102–3; cf. Philip F. Esler, ‘Collective Memory and Hebrews 11: Outlining a New Investigative Framework’, in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (ed. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher; Semeia Studies, 52; Atlanta: SBL, 2005), 164–6.

²³ Michael Labahn, ‘Scripture Talks Because Jesus Talks: The Narrative Rhetoric of Persuading and Creativity in John’s Use of Scripture’, in *The Fourth Gospel and First-Century Media Culture*, 133–54.

Secondly, the interdependence of textuality and orality in the first-century world is also manifested in and through Jewish and early Christian *scriptural interpretation*, not least in the ways in which written scriptural texts were designed to be publicly and *interpretatively performed and received*. Martin Jaffee, discussing how authoritative Scriptures were appropriated in late Second Temple Judaism, coins the term 'text-interpretive tradition' to denote the fluid, permeable and oral 'body of interpretive understandings that [arose] from multiple performances of a text (written or oral)',²⁴ some of which were eventually written down and themselves subjected to oral interpretation. Both the individual person reciting the text and the gathered audience would be actively engaged in discussing and expounding Israel's Scriptures. Given that the resource pool of text-interpretative material would exist and be nurtured in the cultural memories of those present, it would form 'an all-but-invisible environment of intertextual associations and ready-to-hand interpretive tropes',²⁵ belonging to what Werner Kelber has described as the 'biosphere' in which extra-textual traditions reside.²⁶

Jaffee proposes that significant glimpses into one specific example of Jewish Palestinian oral-performative literary activity are afforded by the textual artefacts of members of the Qumran community,²⁷ especially the following description from the *Community Rule* of their collective engagement with scriptural texts:

And in the place in which the Ten assemble there should not be missing a man to interpret the law (דורש בתורה) day and night, always, one relieving another. And the Many shall be on watch together for a third of each night of the year in order to read the book (לקרוא בספר), explain the regulation (לדרוש משפט), and bless together. (1QS 6.6-8; trans. Martínez and Tigchelaar 1:83)

This description evinces the central role played by the public recitation of authoritative written texts (which probably included the Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms) within the community, while the references to 'interpreting/explaining' (דרש) point to the orally mediated transmission of text-interpretative traditions related to those texts. Indeed, George Brooke has recently proposed that the explicit reference to 'reading' (קרא) in 1QS 6.8 implies more than the act of reciting the text aloud,²⁸ but rather – based on a study of the use of קרא in other sectarian texts²⁹ – involved 'active engagement with the text as it was performed'.³⁰ This interpretative scenario, proposes Brooke, may

²⁴ Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 8; cf. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 452.

²⁵ Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 28.

²⁶ Werner H. Kelber, 'Jesus and Tradition: Words in Time, Words in Space', in *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature*, 159: 'Tradition in this encompassing sense is a circumambient contextuality or biosphere in which speaker and hearers live. It includes texts and experiences transmitted through or derived from texts.'

²⁷ Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 31–8.

²⁸ George J. Brooke, 'Reading, Searching and Blessing: A Functional Approach to Scriptural Interpretation in the יחד', in *The Temple in Text and Tradition: A Festschrift in Honour of Robert Hayward* (ed. R. Timothy McLay; Library of Second Temple Studies, 83; London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 142–7.

²⁹ 'Reading, Searching and Blessing', 143–5 (see 1QS 7.1; 8.14–15; 1QSa 1.4; CD 5.2; 1QpHab 7.3).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

also account, at least in part, for the striking textual pluriformity among Torah scrolls in the Qumran library, in that some of the variant forms of authoritative scriptural texts could have resulted from creative readings by scribes who participated in the study sessions mentioned in IQS 6.6-8.³¹ That the two closely related activities of reading/reciting and interpretatively studying Scripture, as presented in the *Community Rule*, was a more widespread phenomenon in late Second Temple Judaism is indicated by other pieces of evidence, including the first-century Theodotus Inscription: 'Theodotus ... built the synagogue for the reading (ἀν[αγ]νῶσ[ι]ν νομῶν) of Torah and for teaching ([δ]ιδάχην ἐντολῶν) the commandments'.³²

Scriptural 'reading' as a process involving dynamic interpretative participation, as evidenced in ancient Judaism, can also shed light on some of the ways in which the early Christians engaged in the 'searching of the scriptures' (cf. Jn 5.39). The media-sensitive model or template outlined by Jaffee (and Brooke) opens up a number of possibilities as far as OT/NT studies are concerned, although it has so far only been applied to a small number of NT texts. In a number of analyses of the description of Jesus standing up to read from a scroll of Isaiah (Lk. 4.16-20),³³ Rafael Rodríguez has attempted to reconstruct the text-interpretative traditions underpinning this Lukan passage. He notes that Jesus is presented as physically handling a written scroll of Isaiah (4.17) and yet the passage in question, which is not overtly described as being read (aloud) by Jesus, is actually a composite quotation containing an interpolated line from Isa. 58.6 between Isa. 61.1 and 61.2. Hence, when Jesus proclaims to the Galilean synagogue audience that 'this scripture' (ἡ γραφή αὐτή) has been fulfilled in their midst (Lk. 4.21), the curious earlier description of 'reading' (ἀναγνῶναι) along with its contents raises the question as to whether the singular 'scripture' here refers to one or both passages from Isaiah or, as argued by Rodríguez,³⁴ presents Jesus as *performing and actualizing* the wider 'contextualizing tradition' of God's judgment and restoration of/for Israel, especially as that tradition is embodied in the Isaianic texts. Furthermore, the subsequent appeal to Elijah and Elisha as representative witnesses of how God acts on behalf of those in need and also vindicates against his enemies (Lk. 4.25-7) clarifies *how* Jesus's proclamation in Nazareth fulfils the (broader) Israelite tradition of divine promise of restoration and judgment (cf. Lk. 7.22).³⁵ Text-interpretative traditions are rooted in, but not confined to, the written corpus of Israel's Scriptures that are said to find their fulfilment in Jesus.

³¹ Ibid., 146-7, 154. See also idem., 'The Qumran Scrolls and the Demise of the Distinction between Higher and Lower Criticism', in *Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Method* (Early Judaism and its Literature, 39; Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 12.

³² See Mladen Popović, 'Reading, Writing, and Memorizing Together: Reading Culture in Ancient Judaism and the Dead Sea Scrolls in a Mediterranean Context', *DSD* 24 (2017): 455 (with references to additional relevant examples).

³³ See in particular *Structuring Early Christian Memory*, 158-63; idem., 'Textual Orientations: Jesus, Written Texts, and the Social Construction of Identity in the Gospel of Luke', in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament* (ed. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 191-210, especially 200-5.

³⁴ Rodríguez, 'Textual Orientations', 202-3.

³⁵ Rodríguez, *Structuring Early Christian Memory*, 162-3; 'Textual Orientations', 203-4.

2 The dynamics of oral performances and listening audiences

Much of the discussion so far in this chapter has centred on certain aspects of the oral-textual continuum attested in 'oral-derived texts',³⁶ a term that is frequently used for written material designed for oral communication and also for written transcripts of oral performances. Given the immense difficulties of reconstructing the original features of actual performances from the ancient past, as well as the fact that only the written remains of Jewish and early Christian oral-derived texts have survived,³⁷ the primary task must be to focus on the *written* artefacts themselves and, as far as possible, on their likely function – including their various modes of scriptural referencing – within the dynamics of an oral-performative setting.³⁸ Since these texts were commonly delivered orally and received aurally, one must enquire how this particular media environment shaped the ways in which they were composed and typically experienced by audiences in the first century CE. In other words, if oral-derived (written) texts functioned as 'sound maps intended to be heard in a rhetorical culture' to emphasize 'the persuasive power of the spoken word',³⁹ what kind of communicative techniques and strategies can be identified within the NT documents which were devised to enhance their appeals to the Jewish Scriptures?

One of the primary techniques associated with oral-derived texts as *vehicles of communication* is what John Miles Foley has termed 'metonymic referencing', that is, a technique whereby a particular saying or expression stands as shorthand for a much broader tradition with which an audience is already familiar (or where familiarity is assumed by the author and/or performer).⁴⁰ Since meaning is generated when the formulaic expression in question metonymically evokes extra-textual associations drawn from a shared cultural inheritance, the 'broader tradition' actively identified by Jewish or early Christian audiences would have included their authoritative Scriptures in addition to associated text-interpretative traditions. Extensive use of Foley's concept of metonymic referencing has been made, in this regard, by Richard Horsley (and in a co-authored volume on Q with Jonathan Draper) to argue that Mark and Q were oral-derived texts originally performed before illiterate audiences in Galilean villages.⁴¹ Through the use of key motifs drawn from Israelite tradition, such as 'the wilderness'

³⁶ The term 'oral-derived texts' was coined by John Miles Foley; see his *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

³⁷ Cf. Eric Eve, *Behind the Gospels: Understanding the Oral Tradition* (London: SPCK, 2013), 124; cf. Holly E. Hearon, 'The Implications of Orality for Studies of the Biblical Text', in *Performing the Gospel*, 4.

³⁸ For a media-critical *contextual* approach to oral-derived (New Testament) texts, see Rafael Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition and the New Testament: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 71–85, 87–118.

³⁹ Hearon, 'The Implications of Orality', 3–4.

⁴⁰ Foley, *Immanent Art*, 5–7. Cf. idem., *The Singer of Tales*, 54: 'the grand, untextualizable network of traditional associations'. See also Katherine M. Hayes, 'Metonymy', in *The Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media*, 225–6.

⁴¹ On Mark, see especially Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); idem., 'A Prophet Like Moses and Elijah: Popular Memory and Cultural Patterns in Mark', in *Performing the Gospel*, 166–90. On Q, see Richard A. Horsley and Jonathan A. Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999).

to evoke memories of desert wanderings and expectations of future renewal (e.g. Q 3.7-9),⁴² together with Moses-like and Elijah-like healings and feedings of crowds, an entire traditional script, it is claimed, is metonymically evoked to present Jesus as the prophetic leader of a new renewal movement.⁴³

‘Metonymy’ bears resemblance, in certain respects, to the concept of ‘metaleptic intertextuality’, as primarily associated in OT/NT studies with the work of Richard Hays.⁴⁴ Both theoretical concepts envisage broad(er) scriptural frames than what are overtly ‘cited’ in the alluding text, though the interpretative process associated with metonymy takes one out of immediate textual contexts in order to tap into larger traditional networks. The major difference, of course, is that metonymic referencing works specifically with a media-critical model that does not assume the interpreter’s ability to consult, quote and interpret other *written* texts but rather draws on culturally inherited memories which do not require visual access to texts. What binds together the concepts of metalepsis and metonymy is that both rely on the hermeneutical premise of scriptural competence on the part of readers and/or hearers. John Miles Foley states plainly that the oral-derived phenomenon of metonymic referencing assumes that the listening audience ‘has a deep knowledge of how to “read” the text before them, [and] how to construe the traditional signals’,⁴⁵ whereas the social and cultural context assigned by Horsley and Draper to the composition and reception of Mark and Q – that is, a rural Galilean setting – similarly presupposes that the immediate audiences of their oral performances would be deeply familiar with the wider traditional register or ‘biosphere’ in which metonymic evocations were expected to operate successfully.

The notion of orally transmitted texts having been constructed to reflect the scriptural competence of their listening audience(s) raises a number of critical issues. More scripturally literate hearers may well have been adequately equipped to appreciate oral-derived techniques such as metonymic scriptural evocations and text-interpretative traditions, but, as recent audience-centred approaches to OT/NT studies have justifiably noted, this cannot be assumed for all NT texts and their anticipated audiences. In several cases, as Christopher Stanley has proposed with reference to the letters of Paul,⁴⁶ there would have been a wide spectrum of familiarity with Israel’s Scriptures, ranging from high levels of scriptural literacy (oral and/or visual) to more limited knowledge of ‘core stories’.⁴⁷

A related issue of particular relevance to media-sensitive investigations is that hearers inevitably encounter texts differently from readers. In a study of the cognitive

⁴² Horsley and Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me*, 252–3.

⁴³ For recent assessments of Horsley’s (and Draper’s) work on Mark and Q, see Eve, *Behind the Gospels*, 115–23; Rodríguez, *Oral Tradition and the New Testament*, 50–1.

⁴⁴ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁴⁵ Foley, *Immanent Art*, 44.

⁴⁶ Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004). Cf. also James F. McGrath, ‘Orality and Intertextuality’, in *Exploring Intertextuality: Diverse Strategies for New Testament Interpretation of Texts* (ed. B. J. Oropeza and Steve Moyise; Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016), 176–86, and especially 182, for an audience-orientated approach to the use of Isa. 45.23 in Philippians 2. See further Edward H. Gerber, *The Scriptural Tale in the Fourth Gospel with Particular Reference to the Prologue and a Syncretic (Oral and Written) Poetics* (BIS, 147; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 37–8.

⁴⁷ Cf. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 502.

processes involved in the recognition and deciphering of scriptural references ('intertextual devices'),⁴⁸ Cynthia Edenburg notes the different capacities associated with short-term memory, 'a clearinghouse in which information is quickly received and processed', and long-term memory as a more permanent form of storage intended for future use.⁴⁹ A written text functions as a mnemonic device enabling readers to consult a passage repeatedly and to activate the memory of another, usually accessible, written document in the search for intertextual comparisons and associations.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, because of the immediacy of an oral-performative setting,⁵¹ hearers of a text can only recall what is retained in memory 'while searching through long term memory in order to retrieve the recollection of the other text evoked by the association.'⁵² And although the recognition of more allusive references may be facilitated through an overt marker textually signposting its 'otherness', Edenburg highlights the cognitively complex, and sometimes impossible, nature of the task of identifying and comparatively evaluating such references in an oral-aural environment.

The kind of performative milieu outlined by Edenburg focuses on the cognitive processes required for the identification of allusive scriptural elements *during a live performance*, with only limited focus given to other channels of communication that would enable hearers to tap into possible scriptural connotations in orally mediated texts.⁵³ Admittedly, only scant information is available about the ways in which audience members would be able to retrieve or deepen their scriptural knowledge, in the same way that we no longer have access to the original contexts in which oral performances were conducted. Nevertheless, several different scenarios can be envisaged, such as multiple recitations of a text within a communal framework, explanatory prompts provided by the lector, along with combined 'reading' and 'studying' activities during or after individual gatherings.⁵⁴

The detection and interpretation of more veiled scriptural references could also, in some cases, have been activated through communicative techniques already built *within* an oral-derived text, such as the disclosure of possible scriptural connotations through repetition, close-knit configuration and/or the gradual textual-rhetorical unfolding of the traditional register. Related to this is the likelihood that, in a performative context, interactive participation by audience members was expected

⁴⁸ Cynthia Edenburg, 'Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations', *JSOT* 35 (2010): 131–48. Her insights have more recently been applied to New Testament interpretation by Kelly R. Iverson, 'An Enemy of the Gospel? Anti-Paulinisms and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew', in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera* (ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson; Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 26–31.

⁴⁹ Edenburg, 'Intertextuality', 135–6.

⁵⁰ Cf. McGrath, 'Orality and Intertextuality', 178.

⁵¹ Cf. Joachim Schaper, 'Hebrew Culture at the "Interface Between Written and the Oral"', in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production* (ed. Brian B. Schmidt; Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 329: '[speech] generates the illusion of immediate comprehension of and contact with the object signified.'

⁵² Edenburg, 'Intertextuality', 137.

⁵³ Edenburg does refer to the recognition aid provided by 'density of motif recurrence' in performed material ('Intertextuality', 139), although she concludes that extensive use of (often opaque) allusions must have originated in scribal circles and assumes a 'highly literate reading audience.'

⁵⁴ See discussion above (Section 1) on IQS 6.6–8.

and indeed encouraged as texts were orally delivered and aurally received.⁵⁵ That is to say, more indirect channels of scriptural communication like metonymic evocations were deliberately aimed at encouraging audiences to seek deeper levels of meaning by filling gaps and making links, and this involved them drawing from their culturally inherited (or acquired) memory pool.⁵⁶

Such strategies could, undeniably, have been intended for readers as well as hearers,⁵⁷ but evidence from the ancient sources, including audience-orientated instructions in Graeco-Roman rhetoric on the intended persuasive force of elusiveness, strongly situates this communicative strategy within an oral–aural arena. According to ancient theorists, authors should deliberately withhold certain information to encourage their audiences to fill the gaps and draw conclusions for themselves.⁵⁸ In his treatise *On Style* (*Libro Elocutione*) Demetrius cites Theophrastus (frag. 696, third century BCE), noting that the ‘essentials of persuasiveness’ are that one ‘should not elaborate on everything in punctilious detail’ but rather omit some points so that an audience can work out the meaning. In this way, listeners are enlisted as ‘witnesses’ offering ‘testimonies’ to information otherwise withheld (*Eloc.* 222). Quintilian also underlines the rhetorical value of hinting at arguments instead of stating everything explicitly; audiences will 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’ (*Inst.* 9.2.71). Among the cluster of rhetorical figures identified as encouraging listening audiences to search for deeper levels of meaning are intentionally ambiguous arguments (*emphasis*); open-ended comparisons (such as metaphors, riddles and parables); and, most importantly for this analysis, subtle allusions which, with varying degrees of volume, were used to help people make connections with existing traditional scripts and registers that were already inscribed in textual form.⁵⁹

One NT text that particularly lends itself to an exploration of how it communicates its engagement with the Jewish Scriptures through the (rhetorical) strategy of elusiveness is the Gospel of John, not least because its allusive scriptural references frequently occur in discourses that progressively disclose the Johannine presentation of Jesus’s identity, either through appeal to familiar figures from Israel’s ancient past or by means of Jesus’s self-identification with the aid of well-known metaphors. For

⁵⁵ On the rhetorical significance of hearing/listening, see Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, 37–46.

⁵⁶ Cf. Hayes, ‘Metonymy’, 226.

⁵⁷ Interestingly, Dale Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 76, draws similar conclusions about the impact of allusions on readers: ‘Allusions, which give us more to do and so heighten our attention, invite informed imaginations to make their own contributions. Meaning is infolded not to obscure but to improve communication. The implicit allows the pleasure of discovery, and readers who are invited to fill gaps appreciate authors who respect them enough not to shout.’

⁵⁸ From a New Testament perspective, the rhetorical function of elusiveness and indeterminacy to promote audience participation has been examined by Kathy Reiko Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Workers in Luke-Acts and Its Literary Milieu* (LNTS, 425; London: T&T Clark, 2010), 27–76. See also Michael R. Whittington, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship: A Cognitive and Rhetorical Approach to the Characterization of Mark’s Jesus* (BIS, 148; Leiden: Brill, 2017), who investigates the contribution of rhetorical techniques to what he calls ‘inference generation’ in the characterization of the Markan Jesus.

⁵⁹ Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines*, 74–6; Whittington, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship*, 77–82.

example, and as I have argued elsewhere,⁶⁰ the depiction of Jesus as 'shepherd' in John 10 metonymically evokes an intricate configuration of Jewish traditional-scriptural resources; by coupling the discourse's core metaphorical images with wide-ranging scriptural evocations, both are markedly reconfigured and progressively transformed as Jesus's speech develops. The indeterminate and composite⁶¹ character of scriptural referencing in John 10 is therefore part and parcel of the discourse's rhetorical aims: as persuasive speech, it is designed to draw its audiences into a distinctively Johannine understanding of Jesus as 'shepherd'. Similarly, when Jesus calls upon his Jewish interlocutors to follow the example of their ancestor by doing 'the works of Abraham' (τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, Jn 8.39), this metonymically evocative phrase acts as a verbal signal for a wide range of deeds and attributes belonging to the traditional register (scriptural and text-interpretive) about Abraham in Second Temple Judaism: his opposition to idolatry, his status as a model of righteousness and faithfulness, and his hospitality and receptiveness to God's word. However, as the discourse develops, it becomes evident that, from a Johannine perspective, the initially open-ended appeal to 'the works of Abraham' is ultimately narrowed to denote the one paramount 'work' that should be reproduced by the children of Abraham, and that is their acceptance of Jesus's true identity and mission (Jn 8.56).⁶²

Once again, therefore, for audience members familiar with, even steeped in, the Jewish Scriptures, their distinctive themes and motifs would have been actively recalled through the process of deciphering allusive and metonymically evocative references. But if the audience's profile was marked by cultural diversity, as seems to have been the case in John's gospel and also for several other NT texts (as I have already noted above), the decipherment of an allusion for some hearers may have happened differently or not at all, at least as part of their initial reception of the text. For determining how the Jewish Scriptures could be understood to inform the message of a text, much would depend on its actual shaping and also on how communal engagement with that text could facilitate its aural reception.

3 The workings of memory

Several remarks have already been made in this study about the role of memory within the first-century media environment. Memorization was certainly highly revered in antiquity,⁶³ though memory, for the purpose of composition and delivery, was a variable and dynamic phenomenon and certainly not tantamount to word-for-word repetition from earlier texts (whether those texts were directly accessible or not). This

⁶⁰ Catrin H. Williams, 'Persuasion through Allusion: Evocations of Shepherd(s) and their Rhetorical Impact in John 10', in *Come and Read: Interpretive Approaches to the Gospel of John* (ed. Alicia Myers and Lindsey Trozzo; Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, forthcoming).

⁶¹ On composite scriptural references, see further section 3.

⁶² See further Catrin H. Williams, 'First-Century Media Culture and Abraham as a Figure of Memory in John 8:31-59', in *The Fourth Gospel and First-Century Media Culture*, 212-21.

⁶³ For the role of memorization within Greek and Roman education, see, for example, Leonard Greenspoon, 'By the Letter? Word for Word? Scriptural Citation in Paul', in *Paul and Scripture: Extending the Conversation* (ed. Christopher D. Stanley; Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 10-13.

is an important consideration for OT/NT studies given that deviations from possible sources (such as the MT or LXX) in scriptural quotations have often been regarded as examples of ‘memory lapses’ on the part of NT authors as they cited ‘fixed’ texts. The processes of memory/memorization as understood in ancient media studies shed a very different light on the likely citation practices of NT authors and, more generally, give additional support to the now widely acknowledged phenomenon of textual pluriformity, as attested especially among the Dead Sea Scrolls,⁶⁴ during the last Second Temple period.

The impact of memory on the transmission of scriptural texts and their manuscript traditions has been extensively explored by David Carr, leading him to formulate a helpful model of how scribes modified texts when using or citing them from memory.⁶⁵ Whereas the *visual* copying of written texts could lead the eye to confuse letters and to overlook certain lines/phrases, and aural variants could arise when orally delivered words were misheard, ‘memory variants’ amount to what Carr defines as non-significant modifications to texts, such as the exchange of synonymous words, changes in word order and the rearrangement of lines.⁶⁶ Categorizing variants in this manner can undoubtedly assist OT/NT scholars in the task of analysing scriptural quotations in NT texts, particularly when seeking to distinguish between media-critical variants and exegetical variants. Both kinds of modifications – ‘textual’ and redactional – can of course occur within the same scriptural quotation and the differences between them should not be blurred. In a recent article, for example, it has been proposed that the use of the verbal form συντριβήσεται in Jn 19.36 (‘Not one of his bones shall be broken’) should be classified as a (non-significant) memory variant of Exod. 12.10 LXX (δοσθὺν οὐ συντρίψετε ἅπ’ αὐτοῦ),⁶⁷ but without giving appropriate consideration to the possibility that the inclusion of συντριβήσεται, which is identical to the wording in Ps. 33.21 LXX, produces a composite citation in which the divine passive of the psalm text highlights God’s protection of the righteous, a key motif in John’s presentation of Jesus’s death.⁶⁸

It should not be ruled out, moreover, that exegetically motivated conflation and combinations of scriptural elements within individual quotations in the NT (as is probably the case in Jn 19.36) were themselves shaped by a media environment in which memory and oral-textual interaction played a decisive role. The evocation – in combined or conflated quotations – of multiple scriptural texts on the basis of their thematic and/or lexical correspondence was not necessarily the result of

⁶⁴ On memory as an important factor in the emergence of variant readings in the Scrolls, see George J. Brooke, ‘Memory, Cultural Memory, and Rewriting Scripture’, in *Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 51–65, especially 55.

⁶⁵ David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5–6; idem., *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 14–36.

⁶⁶ For these three categories, see David Carr’s more recent article: ‘Orality, Textuality, and Memory: The State of Biblical Studies’, in *Contextualizing Israel’s Sacred Writings*, 165–7.

⁶⁷ Andrew Montanaro, ‘The Use of Memory in the Old Testament Quotations in John’s Gospel’, *Novum Testamentum* 59 (2017): 152–3.

⁶⁸ Cf. Maarten J. J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form* (CBET, 15; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), 151–2. Intriguingly, Montanaro regards most of the variations from known textual sources in John’s scriptural quotations as ‘memory variants’, but makes no reference to Menken’s highly influential study on this subject.

authors' direct and visual engagement with texts in written form (given the practical difficulties of searching for 'distant' passages in literary scrolls) but the product of mnemonic processes. Various mechanisms were available to writers and orators to enable them to memorize and retrieve collections of thematically related passages drawn from disparate textual sources. Such mechanisms included the selection of various extracts to form an anthology of excerpted texts,⁶⁹ a practice for which there is strong evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁷⁰ That the gathering together of distinct passages could be driven by *mnemonic operations* is supported by a wide range of Graeco-Roman references to the cataloguing of textual excerpts in the form of complex memory maps to support oral-rhetorical compositions and performances (cf. Aristotle, *On Memory* 451^b18-452^b6; Cicero, *De Or.* 2.355).⁷¹ Spatial images were systematically constructed so that material containing analogous themes or motifs, but from different texts/passages, was mnemonically deposited and internally visualized. Memorial images could be configured and reconfigured to create new sets of lexical/thematic associations – an interpretative dynamic that is yet to be explored in OT/NT studies when it comes to analysing how composite scriptural quotations and allusions are likely to have been formulated.⁷²

What is, nevertheless, now beginning to be subjected to detailed critical scrutiny in OT/NT studies is the rich insights that social and cultural memory theories can bring to the table for investigating the use and reception of the Jewish Scriptures in the NT writings.⁷³ Building on the work of Maurice Halbwachs,⁷⁴ social memory studies consider in particular the ways in which communities and individuals interpret the past in the light of their present social realities. Halbwachs himself defined 'collective memory' as a variable and selective phenomenon relating closely to the identity of a group; that is to say, it does not entail the passive retrieval of stored or memorized data, but rather the construction of a shared past which is continuous with the present and, at the same time, serves to unite the group. Contemporary social memory theorists readily acknowledge the significance of Halbwachs's focus on the ways in which a group's representation of the past is shaped by present concerns and experiences (often labelled as the 'presentist' approach). However, many theorists also emphasize that memory should not be categorized as 'an entirely malleable construction in the present' or, alternatively, as 'the authentic residue of the past'. Rather, it entails a 'fluid

⁶⁹ See, for example, David Konstan, 'Excerpting as a Reading Practice', in *Thinking Through Excerpts: Studies on Stobaeus* (ed. Gretchen Reydam-Schils; Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 9–22.

⁷⁰ On the Qumran evidence, see, for example, Lutz Doering, 'Excerpted Texts in Second Temple Judaism: A Survey of the Evidence', in *Selecta colligere, II: Beiträge zur Technik des Sammelns und Kompilierens griechischer Texte von der Antike bis zur Humanismus* (ed. Rosa M. Piccione and Matthias Perkams; Hellenica, 18; Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2005), 1–38, especially 20–36.

⁷¹ For a discussion of these and other relevant Greek and Roman sources, see Tom Thatcher, 'John's Memory Theatre: A Study of Composition in Performance', in *The Fourth Gospel and First-Century Media Culture*, 76–84. Cf. also Greenspoon, 'By the Letter?', 18–19, 22–3.

⁷² Although see Christopher Rowland, 'Imagining the Apocalypse', *NTS* 51 (2005): 323–5, for insightful comments on how ancient and medieval perceptions of memory contributed to the process of linking together scriptural images from related texts.

⁷³ A number of the relevant studies are noted below.

⁷⁴ *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: Alcan, 1925); idem., *La Topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte: Étude de mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1941); idem., *La Mémoire collective* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1950/80).

negotiation between the desires of the present and the legacies of the past.⁷⁵ Memory can provide a conceptual framework that both mirrors the present and stands in continuity with the past. It is, in other words, a case of complex interplay and perpetual dialogue, 'at times attributing greater force to the remembered past and at times to the remembering present'.⁷⁶

The use of social memory as an analytical category is still at a relatively early stage as far as OT/NT studies are concerned, but there is much interpretative potential in the notion that, for NT authors, the authoritative Scriptures of Judaism functioned as 'sites of remembrance',⁷⁷ as figures of memory. Indeed, as Tom Thatcher has unequivocally noted, scriptural references in NT texts are not to be categorized only as quotations, allusions or echoes but as 'instances of early Christian collective memory'.⁷⁸ This points to the complementarity rather than incongruity of media-critical and intertextual approaches to OT/NT studies, although it also serves as a reminder that it is not always the (written) scriptural texts but the 'memories ... on which they are based that are "cited" for the audience's consideration'.⁷⁹ Thus, mnemonic scriptural evocations are not inevitably tied to identifiable verses or discrete passages; collective memories linked to Scriptures can be drawn from wider commemorative frameworks and are often filtered through known (textual and extra-textual), related Jewish traditions.

More specifically, social memory theorists are interested in how cultural artefacts (such as authoritative texts) use memories of the past to reflect the structures and values of the groups that produced them. In relation, therefore, to how the 'remembering present' shapes the memory of Israel's (scriptural) past, but also how existing memories of a shared past constrain new representations of it, various strategies and processes can be identified in NT texts that demonstrate this interconnectedness between group memory and identity formation/maintenance.

The mnemonic strategy of schematization, in particular, involves the structuring of memories to create a 'master commemorative narrative' that establishes and guides a group's self-understanding.⁸⁰ Since 'one of the most remarkable features of human memory is [its] ability to mentally transform essentially unstructured series of events into seemingly coherent *historical narratives*',⁸¹ schematization emerges when

⁷⁵ Jeffrey K. Olick, 'Products, Processes, and Practices: A Non-Reificatory Approach to Collective Memory', *BTB* 36 (2006): 13. Cf. Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 67–73.

⁷⁶ Werner H. Kelber, 'The Works of Memory: Christian Origins as Mnemohistory – A Response', in *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 234.

⁷⁷ Stephen C. Barton, 'Memory and Remembrance in Paul', in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity* (ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck et al.; WUNT, 212; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 326.

⁷⁸ 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): 737. He offers a helpful outline of how social memory theories bring a new interpretative lens to understanding how the New Testament authors used the scriptures for their own rhetorical purposes (749–51).

⁷⁹ Thatcher, 'Cain and Abel in Early Christian Memory', 750. See also Esler, 'Collective Memory and Hebrews 11', 158–61, 167–8.

⁸⁰ See Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6. See further Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 52–9; Gerber, *The Scriptural Tale in the Fourth Gospel*, 44–6.

⁸¹ Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 13.

harmonized elements are tied together within a newly constructed framework. The nature of the commemorative narrative emerging from the Jewish Scriptures can vary from one NT text to another, but its construction often entails the reconfiguration of earlier memories so that it can promote and legitimize a collective sense of identity. This applies to the selective reconstruction of remembered 'figures of faith' in Hebrews 11,⁸² or to the Johannine reconfiguration of significant patriarchs and prophets – drawing on both scriptural and text-interpretive memories – so that they function as paradigmatic witnesses to Jesus as the definitive revelation of God.⁸³ Differences between such mnemonic entities are minimized in the process to draw out analogous features to the exclusion of all others. Multiple figures (and events) can be mnemonically clustered together on the basis of their shared/constructed features, although it is often one landmark figure, such as Abraham, who is elevated above all others and placed on a commemorative pedestal as an exemplary model of faith.⁸⁴ The prototypical value of scriptural figures can also fulfil a host of different rhetorical-mnemonic purposes, as in diverse early Christian appeals to Cain and Abel in the face of persecution and opposition (Mt. 23.35/Lk. 11.51; Heb. 11.4; 12.24) and to affirm a community's doctrinal convictions at the same time as vilifying the beliefs of others (Jude 11; 1 Jn 3.12).⁸⁵ In all such cases, current experiences and normative expectations shape how individual or collective figures from Israel's more distant past are to be remembered.

Nevertheless, for the purpose of analysing mnemonically driven scriptural evocations in NT texts, much of the relevant scholarly work to date has been underpinned by a social memory approach known as commemorative 'keying': this strategy, primarily associated with the work of the sociologist Barry Schwartz, involves the pairing, even conflating, of current figures and events with archetypal images or symbolically meaningful patterns from the past.⁸⁶ Keying allows the past to act as a 'frame' for the present, offering coherent models for interpreting and influencing current experiences. Also, if present situations inevitably affect what is seen, and looked for, in the past, the memory of an already salient past functions as an *orienting symbol* for the present, moulding and framing collective values and goals. Commenting on the mirror- as well as lamp-like quality of memory, Schwartz thus notes that 'the past is matched to the present as a model of society and a model for society'.⁸⁷ The remembered past is a model of society because it must be framed in terms that resonate with current circumstances;

⁸² See Esler, 'Collective Memory and Hebrews 11', 159, 162–3.

⁸³ Catrin H. Williams, 'Patriarchs and Prophets Remembered: Framing Israel's Past in the Gospel of John', in *Abiding Words: The Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John* (ed. Alicia D. Myers and Bruce G. Schuchard; SBL Resources for Biblical Study; Atlanta: SBL Publications, 2015), 187–212.

⁸⁴ Cf. Philip F. Esler, 'Paul's Contestation of Israel's (Ethnic) Memory of Abraham in Galatians 3', *BTB* 36 (2006): 23–34; Jeremy Punt, 'Identity, Memory, and Scriptural Warrant: Arguing Paul's Case', in *Paul and Scripture*, 41–9; Robert L. Brawley, 'Nodes of Objective Socialization and Subjective Reflection in Identity: Galatian Identity in an Imperial Context', in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 138–42.

⁸⁵ See especially Thatcher, 'Cain and Abel in Early Christian Memory', 740–9.

⁸⁶ Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 18–20.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

the past is a model *for* society in that it provides a programmatic template for beliefs and values in the present.

As a number of NT scholars now recognize, the strategy of ‘keying’ and ‘framing’ presents an exceptionally valuable theoretical lens for interpreting how the Jewish Scriptures and related extra-textual traditions may ‘work’ within individual NT texts. In particular, it encourages scholars within the field of OT/NT studies to explore new ways of analysing how NT authors articulate the significance of the past for the present. Keying does not essentially work with a hermeneutical model of foreshadowing or fulfilment; rather, it interprets present realities in analogical terms by *enacting* elements tied to landmark figures and events. The association between two events or eras can be established in such a way that the temporal difference between them is often collapsed to strengthen the connection between them.⁸⁸ In the case of the Johannine prologue, for example, the Sinai theophany is evoked in the references to the ‘glory’ (cf. Exod. 33.18, 22) and ‘grace and truth’ (Exod. 34.6) manifested in the incarnate Word (1.14–16), but there is no explicit mention 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 λόγος made flesh and no hint that Jesus fulfils what was originally promised to Moses. The Sinai event becomes the archetypal–theophanic model for articulating the significance of the revelation of the incarnate Word, but, through mnemonic keying, the two ‘events’ are assimilated in such a way that the focus is on the fullness of the grace and truth now embodied in Jesus, not on whether these divine qualities were already manifested in the distant past. Similarly, the ‘murmuring’ of ‘the Jews’ following the miraculous feeding of the crowds (Jn 6.41, 43) provides yet another example of keying through a process of enactment, since it recalls the behaviour of their Jewish ancestors in the wilderness (Exod. 16.2).⁸⁹

Mnemonic keying also encourages NT interpreters to examine how images drawn from the remembered past have the capacity, particularly in situations of crisis, to explain and ‘make sense of things through what we already know’.⁹⁰ The impact of the traumatic nature of Jesus’s death, when viewed from a social memory perspective, provides a cogent explanation as to why so many scriptural evocations are concentrated in early Christian reflections on the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, particularly in the passion narratives of the four canonical Gospels.⁹¹ Faced with a ‘memory crisis’ threatening to dismantle their cohesion as a group, the response of Jesus’s followers was to key the events surrounding his violent death to motifs drawn from inherited scriptural traditions, particularly those associated with the suffering of the righteous. Once again, as with other mnemonic strategies, the NT texts provide

⁸⁸ Thatcher, ‘Cain and Abel in Early Christian Memory’, 750–1.

⁸⁹ Williams, ‘Patriarchs and Prophets Remembered’, 194–5.

⁹⁰ Jeffrey E. Brickle, ‘The Memory of the Beloved Disciple: A Poetics of Johannine Memory’, in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz* (ed. Tom Thatcher; Semeia Studies, 78; Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 192.

⁹¹ Chris Keith and Tom Thatcher, ‘The Scar of the Cross: The Violence Ratio and the Earliest Christian Memories of Jesus’, in *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text*, 197–214; Rafael Rodríguez, ‘“According to the Scriptures”: Suffering and the Psalms in the Speeches of Acts’, in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, 241–62. Cf. also Alan Kirk, ‘The Memory of Violence and the Death of Jesus in Q’, in *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 191–206, especially 194.

ample evidence of the ways in which commemorative frameworks, keyed to the Jewish Scriptures, enabled members of the early Christian communities to tie their beliefs and experiences to a coherently constructed and meaningful past.

Conclusions

It has been argued in this chapter that recent developments in ancient media studies have much to contribute to the study of the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of the use and reception of the Jewish Scriptures in the NT. The four overarching, and tightly interlinked, topics of orality, textuality, performance and memory bring important new interpretative dimensions to light, not least the extent to which media-critical perspectives present a fuller and arguably more accurate picture of the first-century cultural and social contexts in which early Christians actively engaged with Israel's Scriptures and also of the complex and multifaceted ways in which they did so. Media-sensitive approaches of the kind outlined in this study are not necessarily incompatible with predominantly text-orientated methods, nor do they strive to replace literary-based models, but they do open up the field of OT/NT studies to a whole host of different questions and to promising new methods of enquiry.

