

BIBLIOTHECA EPHEMERIDUM THEOLOGICARUM LOVANIENSIIUM

CCXVIII

MIRACLES AND IMAGERY IN LUKE AND JOHN

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ISBN 978-90-02-11111-1
DISTRIBUTION

UITGEVERIJ PEETERS
LEUVEN – PARIS – DUDLEY, MA

2008

JESUS, JUDAS AND A MORSEL

INTERPRETING A GESTURE IN JOHN 13,21-30

I. THE PROBLEM

In the Fourth Gospel Jesus identifies Judas as the traitor in a highly dramatic fashion by handing him a morsel. Johannine scholars do not often comment on the gesture as such, but in cases where they do, one finds a surprisingly wide range of interpretations. Consider the following:

According to *Emanuel Hirsch*¹, Jesus uses the gesture to indicate that Judas is an outsider:

Jesus taucht ein Brotstück in die Schüttel und gibts Judas. Der Hausgenosse taucht sein Brot selber ein. Jesu Handlung kennzeichnet Judas also höflich als den Fremden, der an der Schüttel nur Gastrecht hat.

Raymond Brown's² interpretation focuses on the notion of hospitality³:

What John describes is a basic gesture of Oriental hospitality, as can be seen from Ruth ii 14. Indeed, Jesus may be extending to Judas a special act of esteem whereby a host singles out a guest whom he wishes to honor and picks out for him from the common plate a choice morsel of food. But this sign of Jesus' affection, like the act of love that brought him into the world, brings Judas to the decisive moment of judgement.

In his interpretation, *Thomas Brodie*⁴ does not only refer to the nature of the gesture, but also to what he believes Jesus intended to achieve by it:

1. E. HIRSCH, *Das vierte Evangelium, in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt verdeutscht und erklärt*, Tübingen, Mohr, 1936, pp. 338-339.

2. R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*. Volume 2 (xiii-xxi), London, Geoffrey Chapman, Repr 1984, p. 578.

3. For similar interpretations, see, amongst others, A. LOISY, *Le Quatrième Évangile. Les Épitres Dites de Jean*, Paris, Émile Nourry, 1921, p. 397; H.-J. KLAUCK, *Judas – Ein Jünger des Herrn*, Freiburg – Basel – Wien, Herder, 1987, p. 85; D.A. CARSON, *The Gospel According to John*, Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1991, p. 239; C.R. KOESTER, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 1995, p. 207; and B. WITHERINGTON, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*, Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 1995, p. 235.

4. T.L. BRODIE, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, New York – Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 453.

[T]he morsel did not destroy Judas' freedom, did not push him into the grip of Satan. On the contrary, since it was about as gentle and affectionate a gesture as one could imagine – like something a parent would do for a child or one lover for another – it was an effort to recall Judas from his developing entanglement with Satan.

A further possibility is to interpret Jesus' gesture sacramentally, as referring to either baptism or the eucharist. Wes Howard-Brook⁵ links it to baptism⁶:

It is an ironic "baptism," for Jesus' act of dipping will lead the recipient to be entered by Satan, not God.

Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley⁷ interprets the events in 13:26 as having a double message. On the one hand, the passage describes a scene of poisoning, but, on the other hand, it also depicts a scene of feeding, in the sense that Jesus feeds Judas with his own body, which is a "baptized body":

As a result of the food, "after the morsel" (John 13:27), Satan enters Judas, which I take as a direct poisoning. Recall that Satan had already influenced Judas' heart (John 13:2). Now, Jesus ensures that Satan also enters Judas on a deeper level, into his guts, his digestive system⁸. Not only is Jesus the bread, but the dipped bread presented to Judas is essentially a baptized body. For the verb "to dip" is the same as the verb "to baptize." In my opinion, then, Judas, obtains a "baptized Jesus," ...⁹.

Francis Moloney¹⁰ focuses on the eucharistic setting:

There is intertextuality between the gift of the morsel and Eucharistic traditions in the Johannine community held in common with the early church. Eucharist is a subtheme to the morsel, just as baptism is a subtheme to the footwashing. Within the context of a meal indicated as eucharistic, Jesus gives the morsel to the most despised character in the Gospel's narrative: Judas. ... Jesus' never-failing love for such disciples, a love that reached out even to the archetype of the evil disciple, reveals a unique God.

5. W. HOWARD-BROOK, *Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship* (The Bible & Liberation Series), Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1994, p. 304.

6. See also J. BOHNEN, 'Watch How You're Eating': Judas and Jesus and Table Manners. *An Intertextual Reading of John 13:26; Matthew 26:23 and Sirach 31:12-32:13*, in *Scriptura* 74 (2000) 272.

7. J.J. BUCKLEY, *Presenting the Poison in the Gospel of John*, in T. PIPPIN – G. AICHELE (eds.), *Violence, Utopia, and the Kingdom of God: Fantasy and Ideology in the Bible*, London – New York, Routledge, 1998, 60-71.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

10. F.J. MOLONEY, *Glory Not Dishonor: Reading John 13-21*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 1998, pp. 22-23.

Charles H. Talbert¹¹ takes the emphasis on the eucharistic setting a step further:

The meal has become for Judas not communion with Jesus but with the devil. There is a warning in these words. Judas has eaten with Jesus (vv. 18, 26-27, 30), yet he is the possession of Satan ... This would seem to imply that eating with Jesus does not guarantee one's discipleship, as Judas' example shows.

A eucharistic interpretation can be taken even further, as the following quotation from William Wrede¹² shows:

Der Bissen scheint eine magische Wirkung auf den Jünger zu üben. Es ist eine Art satanisches Sakrament, das Judas genießt.

As the above examples indicate, it is not so easy to interpret Jesus' gesture. Was it meant to assign to Judas the role of an outsider? Was it a gesture indicating hospitality or love? Was it meant to recall Judas from what he was about to do? How important are the baptismal or eucharistic overtones – if they are relevant at all? These are the questions that I will consider in this study, in the hope that it will be possible to indicate which interpretation most effectively makes sense of the gesture in terms of the narrative, and, possibly, with a view to taking the interpretation a modest step further. In order to achieve this, the characterisation of Judas in the Fourth Gospel will be discussed first (Section II), after which the interpretation of Jesus' gesture will be considered.

II. THE CHARACTERISATION OF JUDAS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

We do not hear of Judas often in the Fourth Gospel; in total there are only eight references to him (6,70-71; 12,4-6; 13,2; 13,11; 13,26-30; 17,12; 18,2-6 and 21,20), all of which point more or less in the same direction. Indeed, one could classify Judas as a "flat character" – in more than one sense of the term¹³.

11. C.H. TALBERT, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*, New York, Crossroad, 1992, p. 198.

12. W. WREDE, *Vorträge und Studien*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Siebeck), 1907, p. 136. K. LÜTHI, *Das Problem des Judas Iskariot – neu untersucht*, in *Evangelische Theologie* 16 (1956), p. 110, agrees with Wrede.

13. The concepts of "flat" and "round" characters were introduced by E.M. FORSTER, *Aspects of the Novel*, London, Edward Arnold, 1944, pp. 93-106. These concepts can be applied in various ways when characterisation in Biblical texts is being analysed. (For a more detailed discussion, see D.F. TOLMIE, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, San Francisco, CA – London – Bethesda, International Scholars Publications, 1999, pp. 54-55). If one defines a "flat" character as one who is depicted in terms of only

The implied author¹⁴ introduces this character in 6,60-71 – in a scene aptly summarised by Alan Culpepper¹⁵ as a “context of mass defection”: Many of Jesus’ disciples find his teaching too difficult to accept. Aware of this, Jesus responds by continuing his difficult teaching, which results in many disciples turning back. In response to Jesus’ question to the twelve as to whether they also wish to go away, Peter expresses their belief that Jesus has the words of eternal life, and that he is the “Holy One of God”. Jesus’ answer is not encouraging: “Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!”. In an aside, the implied reader is then told that Jesus is speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, who is one of the twelve, but who is going to betray him.

If we consider the characterisation of Judas in this passage, it should be noted that the disciples, as characters in the narrative world, do not yet know the identity of the “devil” in their midst or exactly what he will do. All that they know at this stage is that one of them is a devil. The identity of the “devil,” as well as what he will do, is only made known to the implied reader by means of an aside in which Jesus is focalised internally¹⁶.

a small number of character traits, Judas fits the description. A “flat” character may also be defined as one who does not undergo any/much character development. According to the latter definition, Judas can still be termed a “flat” character, since one cannot detect any development in his character.

14. Following J.L. STALEY, *The Print’s First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel*, Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, 1988, p. 34, I use the concept “implied author” to refer to the organising principle in the text, responsible for the total arrangement thereof. The concept “implied reader” is used to refer to the intratextual literary construct that functions as the counterpart of the implied author. The difference between the implied author and the implied reader is based upon the difference between the *linearity* and the *temporality* of the text. Whereas the implied author is defined in terms of the static overarching view of the text, the implied reader is defined in terms of the temporal quality of the text. STALEY, *Print’s First Kiss*, p. 34, explains the difference between the two as follows:

While the implied author knows the text forward and backward, the implied reader only has knowledge of what has been read up to the given moment. It is thus encoded in the unidirectional, forward movement of the text, and as such, does not know what word comes next in the text, nor does it stop reading until the narrative is ended. Although the implied reader has a perfect knowledge and memory of what has been read, it is nevertheless limited by its temporal status.

15. R.A. CULPEPPER, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, Philadelphia, PA, Fortress, 1983, p. 125.

16. Whereas the concepts “narrator” and “narrate” focus on the “voice” relating the narrative, the concept “focalisation” focuses on the viewing, i.e., the “eyes” through which events are viewed and the extent to which the inner thoughts of characters are portrayed. See TOLMIE, *Narratology* (n. 13), pp. 29-38, for more details. Technically, what happens in verse 71 can be classified as internal focalisation of the focalised character (Jesus).

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Furthermore, it is evident that Judas is characterised in an extremely negative way in verse 70. To be called a "devil" was one of the worst ways in which one could be labelled in those days¹⁷. In this instance we have an example of "direct characterisation"¹⁸ – performed by the protagonist who has been proved thus far in the narrative to be absolutely reliable. Accordingly, the implied reader will have no reason to doubt the reliability of this characterisation. The additional information provided by the implied author in verse 71 (which is thus not available to the characters in the narrative world) will also be regarded as reliable, since the implied reader will have no reason to doubt the reliability of the implied author.

It should also be noted that the additional information provided by the implied author is worded in such a way that the treacherous nature of Judas' future act is highlighted. His deed of betrayal is noticeably contrasted with his being part of the twelve: οὗτος γὰρ ἐμελλεν παραδιδόναι αὐτόν, εἷς ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα. Thus, already on the first occasion on which Judas is introduced into the narrative, the most vital information is made available to the implied reader: this character, one of the twelve(!), will betray Jesus. In the mind of the implied reader there can be no doubt that this is indeed what will happen. (This aspect is important for the subsequent interpretation of the events in Chapter 13.)

Judas appears again in Chapter 12, when Mary anoints Jesus' feet and Judas protests that the perfume used by Mary could have been sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor. In terms of the characterisation of Judas the following points are important: First, the implied author introduces this character into the scene in a similar way to the method used in 6,71, i.e., by contrasting his deed of betrayal with his being part of the twelve: Ἰούδας ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης εἷς [ἐκ] τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, ὁ μέλλων αὐτὸν παραδιδόναι (12,4). Secondly, Judas' remark is used as a basis for characterising him. It is interpreted by the implied author in an aside in which Judas is focalised internally¹⁹ and his true motive for making the remark is revealed, i.e., the fact that

17. From a sociological perspective, this is called "deviance labelling". See B.J. MALINA – R.L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 1998, pp. 151-152, for a discussion of this aspect.

18. In the case of "direct characterisation," a particular trait is mentioned directly, for example, "She is a loving person". In the case of "indirect characterisation," a particular trait is illustrated and the implied reader has to infer the trait from the illustration. Indirect characterisation is usually achieved by narrating a character's actions, speech and external appearance and by portraying the environment within which the character is depicted. See TOLMIE, *Narratology* (n. 13), pp. 42-53.

19. In 6,71 Jesus was focalised internally; in this instance it is Judas who is focalised internally.

he was a thief who was in the habit of stealing from the common purse which he kept. This characterisation is not used to introduce a new character trait, but rather to help to indicate *a pattern of behaviour*: stealing from the common purse, pretending to be concerned about the poor, but actually having something else in mind, as well as the (future) betrayal of Jesus, all form part of a similar pattern of behaviour. Thirdly, as Margaret Beirne²⁰ has pointed out, Judas' behaviour is contrasted in this scene with that of Mary, in that we have two totally different responses to Jesus: the "goodness, openness and generosity of spirit of Mary of Bethany" versus the "secretiveness, venality and avarice of Judas"²¹.

In 13,2 the attention of the implied reader is again drawn to this character when he is (again) focalised internally: As the meal begins, the devil has already put it into Judas'²² heart to betray Jesus. What is new here, in terms of the characterisation of Judas, is the explicit link between Judas and "the" devil. In 6,71 Judas was already characterised as *a* devil. Now his intended action is linked explicitly to *the* devil, thus adding a new cosmic dimension, in terms of which his intended act is not to be viewed as his own initiative only, but rather as an indication that he was actually used as an instrument by the devil²³, who, at that stage, had already induced²⁴ him to betray Jesus. Exactly when the devil

20. M.M. BEIRNE, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: A Genuine Discipleship of Equals* (JSNT SS, 242), Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2003, pp. 152-166.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

22. The reading τοῦ διαβόλου ἤδη βεβληκότος εἰς τὴν καρδίαν ἵνα παραδοῖ αὐτὸν Ἰούδας Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου (i.e., with Ἰούδας in the nominative and not following directly upon καρδίαν) is the more difficult reading, and is therefore the one to be accepted. See B.M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Third Edition)*, Stuttgart, United Bible Societies, 1971, pp. 239-240. The sentence structure is awkward and may be the result of an attempt at emphasis. See R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium*. III. Teil (HTKNT, IV/I), Freiburg – Basel – Wien, Herder, ³1979, p. 27. This reading can be translated in two ways: 1. The devil put it in his own heart to betray Jesus. See, for example, C.K. BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, London, SPCK, ²1978, p. 439; 2. The devil put it into Judas' heart to betray Jesus. This interpretation is accepted by most scholars. See, for example, E. HAENCHEN, *Das Johannesevangelium: Ein Kommentar aus den nachgelassenen Manuskripten herausgegeben von Ulrich Busse mit einem Vorwort von James M. Robinson*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1980, p. 455. The fact that βεβληκότος is in the active, makes the first possibility unlikely. See H.G. LIDDELL: ¹1996, βάλω A6, B (p. 305).

23. Thus, correctly, U. BUSSE, *Das Johannesevangelium: Bildlichkeit, Diskurs und Ritual. Mit einer Bibliographie über den Zeitraum 1986-1998* (BETL, 162), Leuven – Paris – Sterling, VA, Peeters, 2002, p. 204.

24. J.P. LOUW – E.A. NIDA, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. Volume 1: *Introduction and Domains*, New York, United Bible Societies, 1988, §30.29, explain the idiom as follows: "[T]o cause someone to think in a par-

did this, is not indicated; it could have happened anywhere in the narrative after, or even before, 6,71. Apparently, exactly when it happened is not important to the implied author; the emphasis now falls on the link between Judas and the devil²⁵.

In 13,11 there is another reference to Judas when the implied author recounts Jesus' words, "You are clean, though not all of you," and then by means of an aside explains that Jesus knew who was to betray him. In terms of the characterisation of Judas, nothing new is added; the emphasis falls on Jesus' foreknowledge.

In 13,18 Judas is not mentioned explicitly, but the reference is clearly to him: Jesus knew whom he had chosen; it was that Scripture might be fulfilled. This is followed by a quotation from Ps 41(40),10²⁶: "He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me." No new information is made available to the implied reader, but the despicable nature of Judas' act is highlighted in a striking way.

In 13,27 the relationship between Judas and the devil (now called "Satan") is once again highlighted. The implied author again focalises Judas internally, in this instance revealing that Satan entered Judas after he had taken the morsel. Compared to verse 2, there is a definite development²⁷: from being induced to betray Jesus to being fully mas-

ticular manner, often as a means of inducing some behavior – 'to make think, to fill the heart, to cause to decide'". H. THYEN, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT, 6), Tübingen, Mohr-Siebeck, 2005, p. 585, describes what the devil has done as "eingeflüstert [hat]".

25. In 8,44 the link between οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and the devil is made, which leaves room for interpreting Judas as a representative figure as argued by R.F. COLLINS, *These Things Have Been Written: Studies on the Fourth Gospel*, Louvain, Peeters; Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1990, p. 30, and J.V. BROWNSON, *Neutralizing the Intimate Enemy: The Portrayal of Judas in the Fourth Gospel*, in E.H. LOVERING (ed.), *Society of Biblical Literature 1992 Seminar Papers*, Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, 1992, 49-60. See also W. BOUSSET, *Das Johannes-Evangelium, die Johannes-Briefe und die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments, 4), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1920, p. 146.

26. The author of the Fourth Gospel does not quote from the LXX in this case. M.J.J. MENKEN, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form*, Kampen, Kok Pharos, 1996, pp. 123-138, suggests that he did not use the LXX version, because it could create the impression that Jesus was "beguiled", which would not fit the emphasis on Jesus' omniscience. Instead, he made his own translation, which was influenced by 2 Sam 18,28.

27. 13,27 is sometimes interpreted as contradicting 13,2. See, for example, the discussion of the issue by SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium III* (n. 22), pp. 17-18, and BROWN, *John II* (n. 2), pp. 563-564. However, this is not necessarily the case. I agree with KLAUCK, *Judas* (n. 3), p. 81:

Nun ist der vorhandene Gegensatz nur relativ, nicht absolut. Zwischen Eingeben eines Planes und Besitzergreifen besteht ein Unterschied.

See also THYEN, *Johannesevangelium* (n. 24), p. 563. Note, also, that if one interprets verse 2 as referring to Satan's heart (note 22), any possibility of a contradiction between 13,27 and 13,2 disappears totally. However, I have opted for the other interpretation.

tered²⁸ by Satan. Judas is now portrayed as being completely in the power of Satan. This is also symbolically indicated, in that he is depicted as moving out into "the night" (13,30) – symbolic of the evil by which he has been engulfed.

In this context we again find a reference to the "common purse" carried by Judas: some of the disciples thought that Jesus was telling him to go and buy something for the festival or that he should give something to the poor, because he had the common purse (13,29). This could serve as a reminder to the implied reader of the earlier scene (12,6) in which some negative character traits of Judas were highlighted. In any case, the implied reader, who knows what Judas was really up to, will not miss the irony. Judas did not have anything positive in mind; on the contrary!

In 17,12 Jesus again mentions Judas. In his prayer he refers to the fact that he protected the disciples and not one of them was lost, εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ. Although Judas is not mentioned by name, the implied reader will realise that Jesus is referring to him²⁹. This phrase adds two further dimensions to the characterisation of Judas. First, this is surely the harshest characterisation of Judas in the Fourth Gospel. The expression ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, used in 2 Thessalonians 2,3 to refer to the Antichrist, is used here to refer to Judas. This expression carries the connotation of condemnation and exclusion from salvation³⁰. In this context it functions as a means of highlighting the eschatological role³¹ that Judas fulfils: in this narrative he acts as the eschatological figure who has to appear before the glory of Jesus will be manifested³². Secondly, Judas' fate is again linked to God's will (see 13,18). What happened to him, happened according to God's will³³ – ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ³⁴.

Judas appears for the last time in the Fourth Gospel in 18,2-6³⁵. He is

28. See SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium III* (n. 22), p. 37, ("völlige Beherrschung durch den Satan").

29. According to most scholars. For a different opinion, see MOLONEY, *Glory Not Dishonor* (n. 10), p. 115, who is of the opinion that this is actually an allusion to Satan and that Judas cannot be judged as lost.

30. See SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium III* (n. 22), p. 207 and KLAUCK, *Judas* (n. 3), p. 87.

31. THYEN, *Johannesevangelium* (n. 24), p. 695.

32. BARRETT, *John* (n. 22), p. 508.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 509, correctly refers to this as "teleological thinking".

34. The text that is referred to seems to be the one quoted in 13,18, i.e., Psalm 41(40),10. See SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium III* (n. 22), p. 207.

35. Judas is referred to again in 21,20 when the Beloved Disciple is identified as the one who asked Jesus "κύριε, τίς ἐστὶν ὁ παραδιδούς σε;" but Judas appears in 18,2-6 as a character in the narrative world for the last time.

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twice identified as "Judas who betrayed him" (Ἰούδας ὁ παραδίδους αὐτόν; verses 2 and 5); and the reason for his knowing where to find Jesus is explained. However, the most significant aspect is that Judas has now openly moved over to the other side: he has brought the forces of darkness (ironically carrying "light" – lanterns and torches) to the place where he knew Jesus and the disciples would be found. In fact, the last occasion on which he appears as a character in the narrative world, he is said to be "with them": εἰστήκει δὲ καὶ Ἰούδας ὁ παραδίδους αὐτόν μετ' αὐτῶν (18,5). As James Resseguie³⁶ points out, the circle is now complete: the first time Judas appeared as a character in the narrative world, he was with the twelve (6,71: εἶς ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα); and the last time he appears, he is "with them".

To summarise: the characterisation of Judas in the Fourth Gospel is basically one-dimensional: he is the disciple who betrayed his master, a treacherous thief who stole from the common purse with which he was entrusted, "a" devil who was induced by "the" devil, the one who – when he was identified as the traitor – took the morsel and was then taken over totally by Satan³⁷; he disappeared into the night to reappear with the forces of darkness; he was the eschatological "son of perdition", destined to be lost so that Scripture might be fulfilled.

III. THE IDENTIFICATION OF JUDAS AS THE TRAITOR IN JOHN 13,21-30

What is the purpose of this part of the Gospel? In general it could be said that the events narrated here constitute a vital part³⁸ of the development of the narrative. As is mostly the case in this Gospel, the emphasis is Christological. In this instance, the fact that Jesus knows the future is illustrated, thus underlining his identity. That he knows beforehand what is going to happen – in particular what Judas will do – has been mentioned a few times before (e.g., 6,70-71; 13,3; 13,11 and 13,18), but this

36. J.L. RESSEGUIE, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John* (Biblical Interpretation Series, 56), Leiden – Boston – Köln, Brill, 2001, p. 164.

37. CULPEPPER, *Anatomy* (n. 15), p. 124, draws attention to the fact that there is no attempt in the Fourth Gospel to explain Judas' decision to betray Jesus – either from a psychological or even from a political point of view. Although he stole from the common purse, he did not betray Jesus for money. He was "the representative defector, and such people are of the devil" (p. 124).

38. In terms of the distinction made by S. CHATMAN, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1978, pp. 53-53, what happens in 13,21-30 may be classified as a "kernel", i.e., a narrative moment giving rise to a crux in the direction taken by events. (Events not classified as "kernels" are identified as "satellites", i.e., events that fill in, elaborate or complete a kernel).

foreknowledge is illustrated vividly in this scene. In line with the Christological emphasis, Jesus is not only portrayed as revealing his knowledge of the traitor, but also as actively steering events in a certain direction, in particular by his words to Judas: "Do quickly what you are going to do"³⁹. Jesus is not the victim, but the one who is in control of events. Neither Judas, nor even Satan is really in control here (See also 13,3).

Apart from the Christological emphasis, one can also detect secondary objectives in this section. One such objective is to underline the despicability of Judas' deed once again. This is done by portraying Jesus as becoming "troubled in spirit"⁴⁰ when he makes the announcement (13,21) – one of a few instances in the Gospel where he shows emotion⁴¹. A further interesting aspect is that it is precisely this tense scene that is chosen to introduce the Beloved Disciple into the narrative. Is this perhaps done, because this scene provides a superb opportunity for contrasting this ideal disciple with the other disciples, in particular with Peter (who has been portrayed as spokesperson of the disciples thus far⁴²) and Judas?

Before I investigate the meaning of the gesture that Jesus uses to identify the traitor, one further issue should be discussed, namely that of whether the events narrated in 13,21-30 can be considered as a realistic portrayal, i.e., if things normally happen in the way they are narrated here. The problem is caused by verse 28, in which it is stated that the disciples did not understand (literally "no one" – οὐδείς – understood) why Jesus told Judas to do quickly what he was going to do. Some scholars try to make sense of this by assuming that the Beloved Disciple

39. See J. BECKER, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes. Kapitel 11–21* (ÖTK, 4/2), Gütersloh, Echter Verlag, 1981, pp. 433-434; H.C. ORCHARD, *Courting Betrayal: Jesus as Victim in the Gospel of John* (JSNT SS, 161), Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, pp. 175-178, and THYEN, *Johannesevangelium* (n. 24), p. 602. J. WELLHAUSEN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Berlin, Georg Reim, 1908, pp. 60-61, interprets 13,26 as indicating that Jesus caused Satan to enter Judas, but such a causal link is not indicated in the text, since μετά denotes a temporal and not necessarily a causal relationship.

40. LOUW – NIDA, *Greek-English Lexicon* (n. 24), §25.244, explain the expression as indicating "acute emotional distress or turbulence".

41. For other instances in which Jesus shows emotion in the Fourth Gospel, see 11,33 and 12,27.

42. See D.F. TOLMIE, *The (Not So) Good Shepherd: The Use of Shepherd Imagery in the Characterisation of Peter in the Fourth Gospel*, in J. FREY – J.G. VAN DER WATT – R. ZIMMERMANN (eds.), *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and the Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (WUNT, 200), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2006, pp. 356-363. To assert that the scene in 13,21-30 is all about Peter, as BRODIE, *John* (n. 4), p. 453, claims, is not correct. It would be better to say that the scene is all about Jesus, and also about the Beloved Disciple, Peter and Judas (in that order).

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whispered to Jesus and that Jesus whispered back to him, so that the other disciples were not aware of what they were saying to one another⁴³. (One must then also assume that none of the other disciples noticed Peter motioning to the Beloved Disciple to ask Jesus about the identity of the disciple.) However, even if the other disciples did not hear what the Beloved Disciple and Jesus said to one another, at least the Beloved Disciple (and perhaps also Peter) must have understood what Jesus was saying to Judas. To explain this inconsistency, several suggestions have been made: That, although some of the disciples realised that it was Judas who was going to betray Jesus, they found it unbelievable that Jesus would call upon him to do it quickly⁴⁴; that the Beloved Disciple understood the significance of Jesus' act, but was "temporarily paralysed" by the news⁴⁵; that the Beloved Disciple understood the act of Jesus but not his words⁴⁶; or that verse 28 should be understood as excluding the Beloved Disciple and Peter⁴⁷. Others reject the plausibility of the scene outright⁴⁸ or explain it as the result of editorial activities⁴⁹. However, it seems best to interpret the words in verse 28 in terms of their obvious sense, namely that no one (including the Beloved Disciple and Peter) understood what was going on. This does seem unrealistic, but one should realise that this is due to the particular narrative technique, misunderstanding⁵⁰, that is used in this instance. This technique inevitably has an effect on the realism of the scene. As Rudolf Schnackenburg⁵¹ puts it:

[Dann] wird es auch begreiflich, warum weder Petrus noch jener Jünger etwas unternimmt. Darüber reflektiert der Evangelist nicht, sie haben ihre Funktion erfüllt. Freilich verliert die Szene dadurch ihre historische Glaubwürdigkeit, aber diese Art, theologische Gedanken in einem Geschehen darzustellen, lebendig-dramatisch vor Augen zu führen, muß man als Stilmittel des Evangelisten anerkennen.

43. See, for example, CARSON, *John* (n. 3), p. 474.

44. For example, T. ZAHN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Wuppertal, R. Brockhaus, 1986, p. 545.

45. CARSON, *John* (n. 3), p. 474.

46. For example, BARRETT, *John* (n. 22), p. 448, who believes that the weakness of the narrative indicates its secondary value.

47. For example, BROWN, *John II* (n. 2), p. 575.

48. For example, HAENCHEN, *Johannesevangelium* (n. 22), pp. 465-466.

49. For example, R. BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (KEK, 19), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978, pp. 366-367 and BECKER, *Evangelium nach Johannes* 11-21 (n. 39), p. 434.

50. See CULPEPPER, *Anatomy* (n. 15), pp. 152-165, for a good overview of the technique of misunderstanding in the Fourth Gospel. Culpepper views this passage as a variation of the typical pattern. See also KLAUCK, *Judas* (n. 3), p. 86.

51. SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium III* (n. 22), p. 36.

Now let us consider the gesture by which Jesus identifies Judas. As is well-known, gestures are culturally specific and the same gesture may be interpreted in totally different ways by people from different backgrounds. A modern example illustrates this. In a study based on the responses of 1200 informants at 40 different locations in Europe⁵², it was found that most people understood the sign called a "fingers cross" as indicating protection, but that it was also interpreted as indicating "OK", the breaking of friendship, friendship, swearing an oath and copulation.

What is the cultural significance of dipping a morsel into a dish and giving it to one of the guests at table? Let us begin with the most popular interpretation, i.e., that it is a gesture of hospitality. According to Brown⁵³, "What John describes is a basic gesture of Oriental hospitality, as can be seen from Ruth ii 14". However, the evidence that he provides for this is not conclusive, because what happens in Ruth 2,14 is not exactly the same as what happens in John 13,26. In the Book of Ruth, Boaz invites Ruth at mealtime, "Come here, and eat some of this bread, and dip your morsel in the sour wine". In the LXX, Boaz's words to Ruth are: Ἦδη ὥρα τοῦ φαγεῖν πρόσελθε ὧδε καὶ φάγεσαι τῶν ἄρτων καὶ βάψεις τὸν ψωμόν σου ἐν τῷ ὀξεί. Although there are similarities between Ruth 2,14 and John 13,26, namely the use of βάπτω in both instances and the use of almost the same word for "morsel" (ψωμός in Ruth 2,14 and ψωμίον⁵⁴ in John 13,26), the gesture portrayed in the Book of Ruth is definitely not the same as the gesture described in John 13,26. Boaz does not dip a morsel and give it to Ruth, but invites her to come and dip her morsel in his sour wine. In the Book of Ruth the

52. D. MORRIS, et al., *Gestures – Their Origins and Distributions*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1982, pp. 16-24. On the importance of gestures in ancient society, see, inter alia, J. BREMMER, *Walking, Standing, and Sitting in Ancient Greek Culture*, in J. BREMMER – H. ROODENBURG (eds.), *A Cultural History of Gesture (with an Introduction by Sir Keith Thomas)*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991, 15-35; J.E. BOTHA, *Exploring Gesture and Nonverbal Communication in the Bible and the Ancient World: Some Initial Observations*, in *Neotestamentica* 30 (1996) 1-19; A.L. BOEGEHOLD, *When a Gesture Was Expected: A Selection of Examples from Archaic and Classical Greek Literature*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1999; and A. CORBEILL, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, Princeton, NJ – Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2004.

53. BROWN, *John II* (n. 2), p. 578.

54. Ψωμίον, the diminutive form of ψωμός, occurs in the New Testament only in John 13; never in the LXX. It is found in some papyri (cf. BDAG ψωμίον). In the LXX, ψωμός is used several times; see J. LUST – E. EYNIKEL – K. HAUSPIE, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996, p. 525. See LIDDELL – SCOTT, *Greek-English Lexicon* (n. 22), p. 318 (Supplement), for other instances in which it is also used to refer to a piece of bread.

emphasis falls on Boaz's generosity⁵⁵. The incident also illustrates the importance of sharing food in a context of friendship⁵⁶ – which may serve as a general background for what happens during the Footwashing and the Farewell Discourses, in particular if one keeps John 13,15 in mind. It does not, however, provide information from the ancient world that helps us in interpreting the gesture in 13,26.

Brown does not provide any further evidence for his claim that Jesus' gesture is a gesture of Oriental hospitality. It is possible that he obtained his information from earlier commentaries and therefore did not find it necessary to provide any reasons. The earliest interpretation of this gesture in a commentary on the Fourth Gospel that is similar to that of Brown that I was able to trace is that of *Brooke Foss Westcott*⁵⁷. However, the latter does not link Jesus' gesture directly to Ruth 2,14; he merely notes "cf. Ruth 2,14" and then refers only to a *contemporary custom*:

It is an Eastern custom *at present* for the host to give a small ball of meat to the guest whom he wishes to honour. The reference may be to this custom. (Emphasis added DFT.)

Some decades later Bernard⁵⁸ confidently asserted:

It was a token of intimacy, to allow a guest to dip his bread in the common dish or τρύβλιον: thus Boaz says to Ruth βάψεις τὸν ψωμὸν τῷ ὄξει (Ruth 2¹⁴). And it is still a favour of Eastern hospitality for the host to dip a choice morsel in the central dish and hand it to a guest. This is what Jesus did for Judas, who was probably reclining at table next to Him...; but it was so usual a courtesy that it escaped the notice of the others...

It seems as if Westcott's "may be" had in the meantime become a "fact" in Johannine scholarship; and this might have influenced Brown.

55. F.W. BUSH, *Ruth, Esther* (WBC, 9), Dallas, TX, Word Books, 1996, pp. 128-129; and R.L. HUBBARD, *The Book of Ruth* (NICOT), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1988, pp. 172-173.

56. For a discussion of the importance of meals in ancient society, see J.H. NEYREY, *Meals, Food and Table Fellowship*, in R.L. ROHRBAUGH (ed.), *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1996, pp. 159-182; D.E. SMITH, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 2003, pp. 9-11; and J.M. WILKINS – S. HILL, *Food in the Ancient World*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2006, pp. 41-78.

57. B.F. WESTCOTT, *The Gospel According to St. John: The Authorized Version with Introduction and Notes*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, Repr 1971, p. 194. Westcott's commentary was originally published in 1881. See also M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Jean* (EB, 5), Paris, Gabalda, 1936, p. 302, who refers to a contemporary custom among the Bedouins.

58. J.H. BERNARD, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (ICC, 2), Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1949, pp. 473-474. Bernard's commentary was originally published in 1928.

Of course, this does not mean that such an interpretation of Jesus' gesture is necessarily wrong; merely that I was unable to trace any evidence from the ancient world to corroborate it⁵⁹. Westcott's claim that the gesture is regarded as indicating hospitality in the modern world can be verified easily, as this gesture still has such a significance in various cultures of our times⁶⁰. Although I could not find evidence from the ancient world to confirm this, it does make sense to interpret the giving of a piece of bread⁶¹ by Jesus, the host, to Judas, one of the guests, as a gesture with a positive meaning, since it is essentially a gesture signifying feeding – which in itself indicates care and nourishment⁶². The following examples from the Biblical world confirm the positive notions associated with the concept of feeding: the Lord feeding his people in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8,14 – ψωμίζω) or promising to feed them “with the heritage of their ancestor Jacob” (Isaiah 58,14 – ψωμίζω); Wisdom feeding those who fear the Lord and who keep the law (Sirach 15,13 – ψωμίζω); a father-in-law offering his son in law something to

59. John 13,26 is discussed or referred to by some of the Church Fathers, but as far as I could determine, the gesture as such is not interpreted. Two examples to illustrate this: According to Origen *Comlo* 32,22, Jesus used the gesture to take away “peace” from Judas, but this interpretation does not seem to be based on the significance of the gesture itself; rather on the fact that Judas' attitude did not make him fit for receiving the sacrament. (See R. GÖGLER, *Origenes: Das Evangelium nach Johannes. Übersetzt und eingeführt*, Zürich – Köln, Benziger, 1959, p. 386.) According to John Chrysostom *Homlo* 72,2, the manner in which Judas was identified was one “fit to put someone to shame” (ἐντροπικός), but he does not refer to the meaning of the gesture itself. See also Jerome *Ep* 125,1, and Augustine *Harm* 3,1,3; *Traclo* 61,6, 62,1. H.L. STRACK – P. BILLERBECK, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament. Zweiter Band. Das Evangelium nach Markus, Lukas und Johannes und die Apostelgeschichte*, München, C.H. Beck, 81983, p. 559, do not discuss this verse.

60. On the Internet one can easily find evidence that this gesture indicates hospitality among various cultures in the modern world. See the following websites which indicate that this gesture still functions in this way in various cultures in the modern world (accessed March 1, 2007): the Middle East (<http://ismaili.net/timeline/95.html>), Ethiopia (<http://www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/07.23.98/dining-9829.html>), the Muslim world (<http://www.global-prayer-digest.org/monthdetails/2005/md-May-2005.asp>) and even China (<http://www.bosstops.com/asp/news/ShowLeft.asp?Cid=94&Id=459>).

61. Strictly speaking, ψωμίον does not mean “bread”, but may indicate any piece of food. However, as SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium III* (n. 22), p. 35, correctly points out, one may assume that the evangelist thought of it as a piece of bread, because he had the Scriptural quotation of verse 18 (μου τὸν ἄρτον) in mind. On bread as the most appreciated staple food and on different varieties of bread used in antiquity, see A. DALBY, *Food in the Ancient World from A to Z*, London – New York, Routledge, 2003, pp. 27-30.

62. Bread was usually associated positively, for example, with nourishment. See J. CHEVALIER – A. GHEERBRANDT, *A Dictionary of Symbols: Translated from the French by John Buchanan-Brown*, London, Penguin Books, 1996, p. 118; M. LURKER, *Wörterbuch der Symbolik*, Stuttgart, Alfred Kröner, 21983, pp. 105-106; and M. LURKER, *Wörterbuch biblischer Bilder und Symbole*, München, Kösel, 41990, p. 69.

eat (Judges 19,5 – ψωμὸς ἄρτου); a woman who is a medium offering Saul food (1 Samuel 28,22 – ψωμὸς ἄρτου); Tamar feeding Amnon (2 Samuel 13,5; ψωμίζω); and willingness to feed one's enemies (Romans 12,20 – ψωμίζω).

Apart from the positive notions that could be associated with a gesture of feeding, the importance of the notion of feeding in the Fourth Gospel should also be borne in mind. As Jan van der Watt⁶³ has shown in his detailed study of metaphor in the Fourth Gospel, references to food and drink are used in this Gospel to convey the idea of "sustaining life" – which in itself constitutes a vital element in the network of metaphors in this Gospel. Metaphors such as water, bread and wine are all used to depict Jesus as the *provider of life*. The fact that Jesus gives Judas a piece of bread should be interpreted against the background of this metaphorical network in the Gospel – which suggests that Jesus' gesture should be viewed as indicating something positive. If one keeps in mind the positive way in which bread and the provision of bread are depicted in John 6, it is difficult to accept that a gesture whereby Jesus, the Bread of Life, hands one of his disciples a piece of bread, should be viewed as a gesture with a decidedly negative intention, as Hirsch⁶⁴ believes. Such an interpretation is at odds with the way in which metaphors based on the notion of feeding are used in the rest of this Gospel. That the gesture in a sense has a negative effect on Judas might be true; but this does not mean that its primary intention is negative. In the light of the positive way in which metaphors such as those denoting the provision of water and wine function within the Fourth Gospel⁶⁵, and in the light of the fact that Jesus is depicted as the host at the meal (δείπνον; 13,2), the handing of a piece of bread to one of the other people at the meal, should probably be viewed as a gesture with a positive meaning.

To interpret Jesus' gesture, one should not only keep the broad metaphorical network in the Gospel as a whole in mind, but also the

63. J.G. VAN DER WATT, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John* (Biblical Interpretation Series, 47), Leiden, Brill, 2000. See, in particular, pages 216-235. See also A.C. ENGLISH, *Feeding Imagery in the Gospel of John: Uniting the Physical and the Spiritual*, in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 28 (2001) 203-214.

64. HIRSCH, *Das vierte Evangelium* (n. 1), pp. 338-339. Take note that Hirsch does not provide any evidence for his interpretation of Jesus' gesture. I could not find any evidence from the ancient world indicating that Jesus' gesture should be interpreted in this way.

65. VAN DER WATT, *Family of the King* (n. 63), p. 411, classifies these metaphors under the heading of "protection and care", with the basic notion that the Father, Son and the Paraclete provide food, drink and protection. These metaphors function in a positive way and form an important part of the metaphorical network focusing on life.

immediate context within which the gesture is introduced. In this particular instance, verse 18 needs to be brought into the picture. In this verse Jesus refers to the fact that Scripture must be fulfilled and then quotes a particular verse: ὁ τρώγων μου τὸν ἄρτον ἐπῆρεν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τὴν πτέρυν αὐτοῦ. As pointed out in the previous section, the emphasis falls on the notion of *treacherousness*, in particular "eating my bread" versus "lifting his heel against me." Jesus' gesture vividly illustrates the first part of this quotation. Through this act of giving Judas the piece of the bread that he has in his hand⁶⁶ – in other words, a piece of "my bread" – which is then *eaten*⁶⁷ by Judas, the "eating of Jesus' bread", referred to in verse 18, occurs before the eyes of the other disciples and – so to speak – before the eyes of the implied reader. Of course, one can assume that Judas and the other disciples have often eaten together with Jesus; this is not the first time. However, this is the first time that someone is specifically depicted as eating together with Jesus after the pronouncement in verse 18. In fact, Jesus does not wait for this to happen, but initiates it by handing Judas a piece of his bread.

Should we pursue this interpretation a little further? Is Jesus' gesture *more* than a gesture indicating care and nourishment? Is it, as Brodie⁶⁸ claims, "an effort to recall Judas from his developing entanglement with Satan"? In other words, does the gesture comprise an attempt to convince Judas *not* to continue with what he is contemplating? Such an interpretation may be very attractive, but unfortunately it seems to be contrary to the narrative logic of the Fourth Gospel. As I have indicated above, Jesus is portrayed as having been fully aware in advance of what was going to happen to him, not only in the sense of his "departing out of this world to the Father" (13,1), but also in the sense that he knew in advance that Judas was going to betray him. This is indicated several times before the scene in John 13,21-30. In fact, according to 13,18 (repeated in 17,9), what happened to Judas was a fulfilment of a divine plan (ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ). If Jesus had tried to convince Judas not to continue with what he was contemplating, he would not only have

66. ZAHN, *Evangelium des Johannes* (n. 44), p. 544, points out that the fact that the article is used with ψωμίον could indicate that Jesus already had the piece of bread in his hand when he responded to the Beloved Disciple's question.

67. It is not specifically stated that Judas took the morsel and ate it, but this is implied by μετὰ τὸ ψωμίον. The hypothesis that Judas did not eat the morsel, but took it to the religious authorities as evidence that an illegal feast had been celebrated, as M. BLACK, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins: Studies in the Jewish Background of the New Testament*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961, p. 201, suggests, is a flight of the imagination.

68. BRODIE, *John* (n. 4), p. 453. See also F.F. BRUCE, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1983, p. 290.

been acting against what he himself knew in advance was going to happen, but he would also have been acting against the divine plan. In fact, his own behaviour would have been hypocritical, because he would have been trying to convince Judas to do something that was, in terms of what has already been revealed to the implied reader, impossible. If Judas could be stopped in Chapter 13, what has been said about him in Chapters 1–12 would no longer be true. In terms of the narrative logic of the first thirteen chapters, it would thus be wrong to interpret the gesture as an attempt by Jesus to stop Judas from doing what both Jesus and the implied reader already know he is going to do.

If the text does not permit us to interpret Jesus' gesture as an attempt to stop Judas, does it permit us to interpret it sacramentally? This is not an easy question to answer. One's answer will be influenced to a great extent by one's view of the importance of the sacraments in the Fourth Gospel – an issue on which opinions differ quite extensively. To my mind, it could be said that, in general, the sacraments function only in “an indirect manner”⁶⁹ in this Gospel; they are lurking in the background⁷⁰, so to speak.

Are there any indications in John 13 that we should read this chapter sacramentally? Let us first consider the eucharistic interpretation. The biggest obstacle in this regard is the fact that the institution of the eucharist is not narrated in this chapter. In spite of this, one could use the following arguments to advocate a sacramental reading of John 13, 21–30: Firstly, one could argue that the previous scene (the footwashing) is linked to baptism in verse 10. Secondly, Moloney⁷¹ points out that the word τρώγων that is used in verse 18 is not the normal word used for eating in this Gospel and that it is used in only one other part of the Gospel, namely in 6, 51c–58, a section in which one can definitely find allusions to the eucharist. The third argument is also advanced by Moloney⁷². Verse 26 contains the words “and he takes” (βάψας οὖν τὸ ψωμίον λαμβάνει καὶ δίδωσιν Ἰούδᾳ Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου) – words that are used in the bread miracles in all four of the Gospels, apparently reflecting eucharistic practices in early Christianity. This argument is not as strong as it might seem, since there is no certainty as to whether these words should actually be part of the text or not⁷³. I find it easier to

69. G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *Gospel of Life: Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1991, p. 87.

70. See the discussion by KOESTER, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (n. 3), pp. 257–262.

71. MOLONEY, *Glory Not Dishonor* (n. 10), pp. 21–22.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

73. The words are enclosed in square brackets in UBS⁴Rev and Nestle-Aland²⁷. Accord-

explain why they may have been added later, than why they would have been omitted. In any case, even if we consider these words to be part of the text, we still have *only three words* in John 13 which could serve as a signal to the implied reader that the bread Jesus gives to Judas in verse 26 is meant to be interpreted as the sacrament of the eucharist: τρώγων in verse 18 and λαμβάνει καί in verse 26. Of course, this is not impossible; but we have to ask the critical question as to whether this is enough evidence to justify calling verse 26 a "eucharistic text". In my opinion, this is doubtful. *At most*, we could say that the eucharist forms the *background* of the events depicted in Chapter 13, but to view it as the *primary* reference of the gesture of Jesus cannot be substantiated. To view the gesture as an indication that Jesus is inviting Judas to share eucharist⁷⁴, or to go one step further and view it as "not communion with Jesus but with the devil"⁷⁵ or as "eine Art satanisches Sakrament"⁷⁶, is to promote what can, at most, be considered as the background of the events depicted in John 13 to the primary reference of the gesture.

The evidence for a baptismal interpretation is even smaller in extent. Howard-Brook⁷⁷, who links the gesture to baptism, does not provide any reasons for such an interpretation, but he does refer to "Jesus' act of dipping" and the fact that it leads to Judas being entered by Satan. Buckley⁷⁸ bases his baptismal interpretation on the premise that the word "dip" is the same word as "baptise". However, this is not true. The word used for dipping in 13,26 (βάπτω) is never used in the New Testament for baptism. This leaves us with only the *act of dipping* as a possible sign to the implied author that Jesus' gesture should be interpreted as referring to baptism. This is a rather weak textual basis for arguing in favour of a baptismal interpretation. Furthermore, Howard-Brook (implicitly) and Buckley (explicitly) link the eating of the morsel to Satan entering Judas. However, as I have pointed out earlier⁷⁹, it is

ing to METZGER, *Textual Commentary* (n. 22), p. 241, the committee found it difficult to decide whether the words had been added by copyists to recall Jesus' taking of the bread, or whether they had been omitted, because they were considered unnecessary. Therefore, the majority of the committee decided to place the words in square brackets.

74. The issue is not whether Judas, an unbeliever, was allowed to share communion or not. As KLAUCK, *Judas* (n. 3), pp. 61-63, points out, this is more a dogmatic than an exegetical problem. The issue is whether the aim of verses 26-27 is to depict Judas as sharing communion.

75. TALBERT, *Reading John* (n. 11), p. 198.

76. WREDE, *Vorträge und Studien* (n. 12), p. 136.

77. HOWARD-BROOK, *Becoming Children of God* (n. 5), p. 304.

78. BUCKLEY, *Presenting the Poison* (n. 7), pp. 62, 67.

79. See note 39.

wrong to place a causal link between the taking of the bread and Satan entering Judas, because μετὰ τὸ ψωμίον indicates a temporal ("after") and not a causal link. The absence of such a causal link also implies that Buckley's interpretation of the scene as a poisoning scene lacks a textual basis.

Thus, an interpretation of 13,26 as having a primarily sacramental significance (be it baptismal or eucharistic) cannot be substantiated from the text. What can be substantiated on the basis of the text is an interpretation which takes into account the metaphorical network functioning in the Gospel. Against this background, the gesture can be interpreted as one of feeding (with all its metaphorical overtones). Within its specific context, the incident serves as a vivid display of Judas eating "Jesus' bread". If we keep in mind that the context is one of friendship (as I pointed out above), the treacherousness of Judas' act would be further underlined by the gesture used by Jesus.

A last suggestion: Perhaps we should also investigate one further possibility. Could the fact that it is specifically a gesture of feeding that is used by the Johannine Jesus to expose the traitor not perhaps be viewed as a further example of *Johannine irony*? If we define irony as an incongruity between appearance and reality of which the victim (in this instance, Judas) is not aware⁸⁰, the incident in question can be described in terms of this definition, as follows: Jesus, the Bread of Life, the one who provides spiritual life, hands a piece of physical bread to someone who is physically alive, but spiritually dead. This person takes and eats the physical bread, i.e., he obtains physical nourishment, without receiving spiritual bread⁸¹. He thus receives bread, but not life. Viewed in this way, Jesus' gesture could thus be described as an *ironical act*. Together with the other typical Johannine technique pointed out above, namely that of misunderstanding (13,29), which – as pointed out in the previous section – also functions in an ironic way⁸², the irony implicit in the act

80. CULPEPPER, *Anatomy* (n. 15), pp. 166-167 and RESSEGUIE, *The Strange Gospel* (n. 36), pp. 28-30. See also P.D. DUKE, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, Atlanta, GA, John Knox, 1985, pp. 13-18. For a good overview of scholarly research on Johannine irony, see R.A. CULPEPPER, *Reading Johannine Irony*, in R.A. CULPEPPER – C.C. BLACK (eds.), *Exploring the Gospel of John. In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox, 1996, 193-207.

81. The same is true of the footwashing: Judas' feet were physically washed, but he remained "unclean" (13,10).

82. On the relationship between misunderstandings and irony, see DUKE, *Irony* (n. 80), pp. 145-147. Duke points out that some misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel function without irony. To my mind, this is not true of the misunderstanding in 13,29; it should also be viewed as ironical. See also CULPEPPER, *Anatomy* (n. 15), p. 177, who correctly describes this instance as a case where the evangelist "leaves the irony of events for the reader to discover".

of handing Judas a piece of bread will have a definite effect on the implied reader: it highlights the upsetting reality that some of those close to Jesus did *not* understand, and that one of them even did *not* obtain life – thus urging the implied reader not only to be close to Jesus, but also to understand and to obtain life. Indeed, what our distinguished colleague, Ulrich Busse⁸³, points out with regard to the use of misunderstanding in this chapter, also holds true for Jesus' ironic gesture in verse 26. It becomes a "literary instrument"

... mit dessen Hilfe der Erzähler immer erneut den Erfahrungshorizont des Lesers ins Visier nimmt, theologisch weitert und ihm Orientierung für die eigene Gegenwart anbietet.

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83. BUSSE, *Johannesevangelium* (n. 23), p. 211.