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Direct Internal Quotation in the Gospel of John

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The direct quote is in the mode of an imputed accusation, and there is additional Johannine resonance. So far the Jews have disputed with Jesus when he claimed, "I am the bread" (6:41–42), "...the light" (8:12), "...the gate" (10:9), "...the good shepherd" (10:11, 14; cf. 10:20), and "...God's Son" (10:36). Although the reactions to his declarations of "I am" without a predicate have been mixed (see the reactions to 8:24 and 8:28),⁷³ the last of these inspired an attempted lynching (8:58). "I am the Jews' king" sounds like something Jesus would say, making the imputation more believable. To be more specific, "I am the Jews' king" sounds like something Jesus would say in the *Gospel of John*. The original statements with this title are phrased in traditional language; the quotation is Johannine and serves to further characterize the Jews (through their chief priests) as those who attempt to bring evidence against Jesus. The Fourth Gospel is evidently keen to emphasize the title, King of the Jews,⁷⁴ and DIQ allows John to repeat it twice more while slipping in an additional (and ironically true) "I am," even if Pilate will not concede to modify the *titulus*.

2.4 I Am (John 18:5, 6, 8)

We may also take a brief moment on the double-quotation of Jesus' seemingly banal response at his arrest, an unpredicated "I am." It is dangerous to load too much onto just two words that serve as a self-identification, yet there is tradition pre-dating John of having Jesus boldly declare who he is using these two words. The declaration appears in all accounts of Jesus walking on the water (Mark 6:50; Matt 14:27; John 6:20), where there are perhaps some echoes of the divine use of "I am" in Exodus and deuterio-Isaiah.⁷⁵ An even more relevant case is found in Mark's trial before the Sanhedrin where, unlike in Matthew and Luke, Jesus answers the question of whether he is the Messiah quite plainly (14:62): "I am."⁷⁶ The cluster of Synoptic parallels in John 10 is connected to precisely this scene, so that John seems to be aware of either the Synoptic trial material or the traditions behind it. Like Mark, the Fourth Gospel has Jesus

⁷³ In chapter 8 alone Jesus makes six bold declarations using ἐγώ εἰμι (8:12, 23 [2x], 24, 28, 58) while under the watching eye of the chief priests (cf. 7:32, 45).

⁷⁴ Chrys C. Caragounis ("The Kingdom of God: Common and Distinct Elements Between John and the Synoptics," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* [R.T. Fortna and T. Thatcher, eds.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001], 125–34, here 125) points out that John presents Jesus as "king" 14 times, while Matthew comes closest to John with eight.

⁷⁵ These echoes are perhaps louder in Mark, where Jesus intends to "pass them by" (6:48), a possible allusion to God's activity on Sinai (Morna D. Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* [BNTC 2; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991], 170). They are still heard in John's version, however.

⁷⁶ Jesus does follow this up with a declaration about seeing the Son of Man. Luke has Jesus answer, "You say that I am" (22:70; see the same indirect quotation in John 18:37), which is found in a few manuscripts of Mark beginning in the 9th century most likely by assimilation to Luke (Hooker, *Mark*, 361). Matt 26:64 has, "You said [so]."

boldly declare his identity to his enemies at his arrest. However in John where Jesus has already admitted publically to claiming he is God's Son (cf. 5:17; 10:22–39), instead of a deceptive kiss by Judas to signify who he is, *Jesus* asks the arresting officers whom they seek and confesses it without provocation.

The echoes of deutero-Isaiah, particularly its use of the divine "I am," are significantly louder in the Fourth Gospel.⁷⁷ There are signs of insertion in the arrest scene just at the point that Jesus identifies himself as Jesus the Nazorean with ἐγὼ εἶμι (18:5).⁷⁸ It is possible that one might hear the divine title here, but the narrator takes no chances: a note intrudes that when Jesus said, "I am," he knocked a large crowd of soldiers to the ground (18:6), turning a simple identification into a demonstration of the power of the divine epithet when Jesus speaks it. Finally Jesus quotes himself, creating a triple affirmation of "I am" in the arrest scene.⁷⁹

2.5 It Is Better for One Person to Die for the People (John 11:50–52; 18:14)

One more quotation tied to the passion narrative seems to modify a pre-gospel saying, although perhaps only traditional among the Johannine group. Von Wahlde argues for a development in the prophetic saying given by Caiaphas from within the Johannine context in redactional stages:⁸⁰

Initial saying (1E, 11:50): "It is better for you that one person should die for the people (ὕπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ) so that the whole nation should not perish."

First development (2E, 18:14): "It is better that one person dies for the people (ὕπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ)."

Second development (3E, 11:51–52): "Jesus was about to die for the nation (ὕπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους), and not for the nation alone (οὐχ ὕπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους μόνον), but also so the scattered children of God might be gathered into one."

John 18:14 is simpler and almost proverbial, while the modifications in 11:51–52 incorporate more of the specific Johannine context and language, particularly "children of God" (cf. John 1:12; 1 John 3:1, 10; 5:2). But does the original show signs of being traditional outside of its possible development within John?

⁷⁷ See Ball, 'I Am' in John's Gospel.

⁷⁸ See the survey by Frans Neirynck, "L'epanalepsis et la critique littéraire: À propos de l'évangile de Jean," *ETL* 56/4 (1980): 303–38; also, Lincoln, *John*, 68.

⁷⁹ Note also the triple repetition, twice through DIQ, of the phrase spoken to Paul in his inaugural vision, "I am Jesus (the Nazorean), whom you are persecuting/prosecuting" (ἐγὼ εἶμι Ἰησοῦς [ὁ Ναζωραῖος] ὃν σὺ διώκεις, Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15).

⁸⁰ 1E refers to the "first edition" of John, etc.