John's use of the synoptic gospels and Jesus' farewell prayer (Jn 17)

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Since the very early days of Christianity, the distinctive nature of John's gospel has been recognised. During the era of critical biblical studies, great attention has been given to the question of how it is connected to the other three canonical gospels. Is it a completely independent gospel, providing a second viewpoint of the historical Jesus?

I shall begin this essay by briefly reviewing the different ways in which the John - synoptic relationship has been viewed over recent decades. This question is closely linked to the more general one of how John uses all his sources. In this light, I shall look at two recent works addressing this question, North (2020) and Boyarin (2001) which attempt to discern the interpretive strategies utilised by John in making use of his sources.

These insights will then be applied to a specific text in John, the Farewell Prayer (John 17). There have been suggestions that this is linked to the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4), despite clear differences in form, length and vocabulary, but no consensus on the nature of this connection. I shall argue that there is indeed a connection, and that the same interpretative strategies and characteristic theological thinking are also present in the relationship between these texts.

John and the synoptics: similarities and differences

There is currently no scholarly consensus over the relationship between John and the synoptics. There are obvious similarities between them, suggesting a close connection: in the Passion and resurrection narratives; the overall structure of the gospel, which resembles Mark in many ways; and many other smaller correspondences.

There are also significant differences. Events in the gospel take place over a different timescale (3 years versus the synoptic 1), sometimes in a different order. Exorcisms are frequent features of the synoptics, giving way to smaller number of 'signs' in John. Most importantly, there is a different presentation of Jesus, indicated by the Λόγος-Christology with which John prefaces his narrative. Jesus' style of speech is very different. John's Jesus tends to use long complex speeches, typically only understood simplistically by his listeners. The major synoptic theme of the Kingdom is almost completely absent, much more attention being given to Jesus' self-understanding.

Given this situation, scholarly attention to the matter became centred around the following two options (eg. Barrett 1974):

(i) The Johannine and synoptic traditions are largely independent of each other. This requires an explanation of the similarities between them.

(ii) John's gospel is dependent on the synoptics. This requires an attempt to explain the differences.

In support of (i), many ideas have been put forward based on the idea of a common oral heritage in the early church, known to both Johannine and synoptic traditions. These ideas can become quite detailed, arguing that particular elements common to John and to the synoptics are precisely those which would be most memorable in a largely non-literary society, such as that in which the gospels were composed. These ideas can be taken too far: the Pauline corpus in the New Testament shows a sufficient number of literate and engaged

people in Paul's circle for the development of a thriving literary culture in the very early Christian movement. The number of non- canonical, gospel-like texts which have survived in whole or in part also points to the frequent urge to set out the faith on papyrus.

The relative independence of John and the synoptics was supported by Rudolf Bultmann in his commentary (Bultmann 1971[1941]). He saw John's gospel as having undergone a prolonged period of development, the present text being based on at least three separate sources: a passion narrative, originating in parallel those of the synoptics, but independently of them, a signs source focussed on the miracle stories that are present in John, and a discourse source. These were combined by a series of redactors. An emphasis on redaction was also followed by Raymond E. Brown in both his comment- ary and later works (Brown 1966; 1979). He saw great importance in the community from which John's gospel arose. Reflecting Lonergan's idea of theology as a critical mediation between faith and a cultural matrix (Loner- gan 1971, xi), he viewed the characteristic way of expressing theology present in John as the indication of a distinctive, closed off community. He recon- structed a community fairly isolated from the rest of the Jesus-movement, with a specific history. This isolation leads to the idea of independence between John and the synoptics, shared elements arising from the separate oral transmission of material in parallel streams.

Both these views of the gospel's history were influential but over the last few decades scholarly confidence in this picture has diminished. The possibility of detailed reconstructions of textual (Bultmann) or community (Brown) history has been questioned (Cirafesi, 2014). This has taken place not just through reassessment of the textual evidence, but also due to changing epi- stemological attitudes.

This shift has been accompanied by a reassessment of the criteria used to establish literary dependence. In many articles discussing this question, the normative picture of a literary dependence is taken to be the way in which Matthew and Luke treated their sources, Mark and the hypothetical Q.[1] In these, there is very high degree of verbal agreement between a source and its precursor, and reasons for the differences can be discerned based on an authors redactional strategy and theological interests. However, from the 1990s onwards there was a recognition that this style of writing was unusual among ancient authors, who were generally more inclined to use paraphrase (eg. Mattila 1995). This has led to a greater appreciation of the similarities between John and the synoptics and a resurgence in the idea of a literary dependence. For example Richard Bauckham (1998) has proposed that there are points in John's gospel that presuppose the reader's familiarity with Mark.

In the introduction to Andrew Lincoln's commentary, he outlines a rough set of criteria that could be used to establish literary dependence between two texts. These include the presence of similarities in "content, sequence, vocabulary or style" (Lincoln 2005, 32), by analogy with how the question of inter-synoptic relationships has been addressed. But he adds a further criterion: a plausible reason why the earlier material could have been re- written into the later. We have to be able to imagine a writing strategy starting with the source and producing the text we have before us (see also Mattila 1995). This exercise of attempting to understand the creative way in which an author works can result in great insight into both his technical ways of working and his theological understanding. We shall now examine two complementary ways in which recent scholars have attempted to do this.

John's use of his sources

As we have seen, approaches based on the interrelationships between the synoptic Gospels have not been conclusive in understanding how John used his synoptic sources. In fact, the question of how John used the synoptics cannot be separated from that of how John used his sources more generally. In her recent book, Wendy North looked.

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[1] For example, the four-column synopsis that dominates the first page of Lindars (1981).

putative literary sources for John's gospel, examining John's handling of them (North 2020). She begins with how John reworks his own material, already encountered by the reader and identifies three ways in which he does this: (i) reintroduction of characters we have previously en- countered;[2] (ii) summary statements get repeated and become 'threads' in the gospel[3] (iii) previous discourse material is reworked much more extens- ively: she discusses how the cure of the man born blind (John 9) is based on John 3:16-21, where themes of light, darkness and seeing are used in a more abstract way. She then lists ten characteristic features of how John reworks his own material.[4]

North also examines how John alludes to the Hebrew Bible in his Gospel. This is a potentially endless task: "John not only quotes Scripture, he also lives and breathes it—in themes, allusions, echoes and whispers" (North 2020, 43). Because she aims at a picture of John's typical ways of thinking in how he takes his scriptural sources, reworking and transforming them in the process of incorporating them into his gospel, she can concentrate on points where his use of scripture is most easily visible, and the quoted text easily identifiable. She examines ten different instances of this, and finds they share certain characteristics. Firstly, what she refers to as a 'signal': a clear reference to the scriptural text, where distinctive shared vocabulary immediately brings it to the the reader's mind. For example, in John 3:14-15 the combination of "Moses" and "serpent" instantly calls to mind the situation of the Israelites attacked by snakes in the desert (Num. 21:6-9). Secondly, North identifies 'echoes' of the allusion, nearby instances of vocabulary from the vicinity of the original allusion. In these cases, the words are sometimes changed for related terms, or used in a different sense. These features are evident in the same passage: "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (LXX: ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ)" (John 3.14). Here, there is no direct reference to the wilderness in Num. 21:6-9, but the pericope is sandwiched between Num. 21:5, where the people complain about life in the wilderness (ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ), and Num. 21.10-20, an itinerary of the travels east of the Dead Sea, where the word ἔρημος occurs three times in the LXX.[5] John also changes the verb describing the placement of the serpent on the pole, to "lifted up", which always in his gospel bears overtones of Jesus' crucifixion.[6] Finally, there is a shift in the meaning of "life": in Numbers, it refers to literal, physical life: the people are in danger of dying from snakebites. In John, though, the word now refers to eternal life, as consistently throughout the gospel (North 2020, 47-8).

(Mark 15:29; North 2020, 53). Here there is a clear reference to Mark's text in Jesus' words, functioning as what North calls a 'signal'. This is not a direct quotation from Mark, but has been transformed to suit its new setting. In both instances in Mark, it is rendered as reported speech, where others are relaying words (allegedly) said by Jesus during the course of his ministry: John places the words on Jesus' own lips, during the incident of the cleansing of the temple. To examine in detail how John transforms the two Markan sentences, we must compare the three instances of speech:

John 2:19 …εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν. (…He said to them "Break up this temple and in three days I will raise up another")

Mark 14:58 …λέγοντος ὅτι ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω. (…saying that I will destroy this temple made by hands and in three days I will build another not made by hands)

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[2] eg. Nicodemus, who first appears in chapter 3, recurring in chapters 7 and 19.

[3] eg. the repeated motif of "laying down one's life"; (τιθέναι ψυχήν) and its connection to love (e.g. John 10:18; 13:37-8; 15:13).

[4] Note that North sees the gospel as being (at least predominantly) a unified composition by a single author.

[5] There is a fourth instance in the MT, at Num. 21:18: the Hebrew reads "from the wilderness (רבמדָ) to Mattanah", in contrast to the LXX "from the well (ἀπὸ φρέατος)…".

[6] ὑψόω, ("lift up, exalt") instead of the LXX στηρίζω ("set up, establish") and the MT שׂם ("place, put").

Mark 15:29 *...λέγοντες· οὐὰ ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ οἰκοδομῶν ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις,* (...saying Aha! One destroying this temple and building it in three days)

Firstly, we note that both verbs attributed to Jesus are changed from the Markan version. Mark's *καταλύω* has been replaced by the simpler, less dramatic *λύω*. Both times, Mark uses a fairly literal verb related to the construction of a building, *οἰκοδομέω*, while John makes the theological in- terpretation explicit with *ἐγείρω*, which has a much wider range of meaning and he regularly uses in connection with Jesus raised from the dead (eg. John 2:22). Secondly, there are also strings of three identical words in com- mon with each of the Markan exemplars: *τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον* is shared with Mark 14:58,[7] and *ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις* with 15:29. There are also lesser connec- tions between the texts, that North refers to as 'echoes'. Here they include how John places the verb *οἰκοδομέω*, as used in Mark, in the mouths of the Ἰουδαιοι (v.20).[8]

North gives several similar examples, showing synoptic material being in- cluded in John but transformed to fit seamlessly into John's theological vision. She concludes her book with some specific points on how she sees John as engaging with his synoptic sources (North 2020, 111-116). Firstly, John feels confident in creatively rewriting the material he is using, but only within certain limits; he usually retains connections of vocabulary and basic structure. Secondly, he is quite happy to change the order of the ma- terial present in his sources. Most famously, he does this by presenting the cleansing of the Temple (John 2:13-22) as a programmatic incident at the be- ginning of Jesus' public ministry, rather than at the end (Mark 11:15-17 and parallels). He will also occasionally take elements of the synop- tic account of an incident, and use them in a preparatory way, well in advance. For exam- ple, the anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany (John 12:1-8) makes no mention of the tears shed by the anonymous woman in Luke 7:38, anointing Jesus' feet. Instead, they are at- tributed to Mary at 11.32, kneeling at Jesus' feet, weeping over the death of her brother.

Overall, the picture shown by North is that John's engagement with his sources is a cre- ative one, varying the phrasing and redistributing elements in a way that is quite unlike that employed by Matthew and Luke in their use of Mark's gospel. In fact, this use of para- phrase and rewriting source materials appears to be closer to the techniques typically used by comparable ancient authors, than does the line-by-line conflation that we observe in Matthew and Luke (North 2020, 113; Mattila 1995).

John 1 and Genesis

It has been widely recognised that the prologue to John's gospel alludes to the creation story at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible in Genesis 1. John's reuse of the opening two words of Gen. 1:1 LXX, *ἐν ἀρχῇ* makes this unmis- takable: although the quotation is only two words long, the significance is amplified by its matching locations in the two works (Hays 2014, 82), and the fact that the name for Genesis in the Hebrew Bible, יתשראֶבּ is provided by the opening words of the book (Brown 1966, 4). However, the connec- tions are generally recognised as being far more extensive than this: in the first five verses, Brown sees connections in (i) v.3, the use of *ἐγενετο* ("came into being"), consistently used by the LXX to describe the acts of creation in Gen.1 (ii) in vv.4-5, the terminology of light/darkness (*φως/σκοτία*) and life (*ζωὴ*) and (iii) he connects v.5b ("the darkness did not overcome [the light]") to the account of the fall in Gen. 3 (Brown 1966, 26-7).

Richard Hays, discussing the use of Hebrew Bible texts within the New Testament,

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[7] This is not simply coincidental similarity where John uses the only available language to describe a situation: his usual designation for the temple is *ἱερόν* (11×). This pericope (John 2.13-22) is the only point in the gospel where it is described otherwise: *ναός* (3×), *ἱερόν* (2×), *οἶκος τοῦ πάτρος* and *οἶκος σοῦ* (once each).

[8] The way in which Jesus speaks on two levels in a theologically sophisticated way, while his interlocutors are restricted to an earth-bound literalism is typically Johannine, as with the different levels of understanding in Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus in the following chapter. See, for example Brown (2003), pp. 288-290.

reads the prologue as a "midrash on Genesis 1", which links the Johannine idea of a Λόγος, preexisting and active in the events of creation, to the idea in the biblical and extra-biblical Wisdom literature of σοφία, searching for a dwelling-place in the world. (Hays 2014, 84).

The idea that the structure of John's Λόγος-theology could already be found within the Jewish cultural matrix has been opposed by a number of scholars. Bultmann, for example, sees it as deriving from extra-Judaic sources, such as gnostic speculations (Bultmann 1971[1941], 13-83). As well as the general neglect of the Wisdom literature in his era,Bultmann's commentary on the prologue minimises the Jewish influence throughout: of the allusions to Genesis above, only the fact that the two books share their initial words is developed as a significant element: elements of theological creativity in the passage are consistently attributed to a pagan background. However, since Bultmann, the pendulum has swung in the other direction, and there have been a number of studies published considering the prologue within different aspects of its Jewish context.

In 1970, Peder Borgen published a brief article linking John's prologue to the early tradition of translations of Genesis into Aramaic. Here, he reads the whole prologue as an interpretation of Gen. 1, vocabulary from Genesis being reused, directly, "in an expository paraphrase, or replaced by inter- pretative terms" (Borgen 1970, 289). He shows that this deliberate and careful use of paraphrase is characteristic of the style of interpretation used in the Targumim, Aramaic versions of the Biblical text produced for use in a synagogue setting.

In his 2001 article, Daniel Boyarin takes this approach to reading the pro- logue much further, and this deserves close attention. He wishes to avoid binary oppositions between Judaism and Christianity, and even within Juda- ism between its Hellenistic and Palestinian versions. Instead, he sees the picture as being much more complex and dynamic, both in terms of re- ligious belonging, and of the exchange of ideas and the language used to express them between the various cultural contexts. For him, the use of later categories that assume Judaism and Christianity to be separate reli- gions, functioning as (usually) exclusive markers of self identity, and with belief systems that are abstractable from other cultural practices and means of social identification proves to be misleading and effectively suppresses the varied theological thought system of those who identified as being ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαιων (Boyarin 2009, 12-13). He then identifies the Λόγος christology of the prologues as having arisen within the existing Jewish religious situation. The main difficulty in arguing that the Λόγος has a Jewish background is in accounting for the vocabulary used. If it really is based on the figure of personified σοφία, then why isn't this the term that is used? Boyarin sug- gests that John is using a Targumic (Aramaic) version of Genesis, not either Hebrew or Greek. In these traditions, Memra, the Aramaic for 'word', plays an important role in understanding divine speech. The transcendence of God is preserved by attributing the speech not to God directly, but instead to the personified or hypostasised Memra (Boyarin 2001, 252-261): in this particular instance, he quotes Gen. 1.3 as "And the Memra of H' said Let there be light and there was light by his Memra" (p.256). On the theological level, we can see here the origins of the personified Word/Λόγος engaged in the act of creation. Furthermore, this explains the use of Λόγος, as simply a direct translation of Memra.

On this basis, Boyarin views the prologue as being "a homiletic retelling of the beginning of Genesis". He follows Borgen (1970) in seeing the first five verses as a paraphrase of the first five verses of Genesis, in which the elements appear in the same order as in the original text. The following verses, 6-18, are then an expansion of this, making clear that the midrash of the Logos is to be applied to the appearance of Jesus Christ" (p.267). One of the forms that midrash frequently takes, is the interpretation of one text in the light of another, where in this instance the primary text being explained is from Genesis, and the "hermeneutic intertext" is the wisdom hymn from Proverbs 8. In situations like this, Boyarin claims, the main vocabulary ("controlling language") of the midrash is driven by the first text, while "imagery and language" are taken from the second (p.269).

Thinking about the prologue like this demonstrates an instance of John creatively engaging his sources in the Hebrew Bible, and making theological connections between them and the story about Jesus that he wishes to tell. This is significant in connection with the John-synoptic relationship, since the same theological mind is active in both cases: an understanding of how John reinterprets one type of source will help us to follow his use of another.

John 17 and the Lord's Prayer

We shall now examine John 17, the so-called farewell prayer of Jesus (Bult- mann 1971 [1941], 490). This is one of the points at which John's style of writing diverges most markedly from that of the synoptics. There is a total absence of narrative material, but instead Jesus is speaking at length, with no response required from those around him. There are also clear difference in vocabulary from the synoptics, with this chapter beig rich in such Johan- nine favourite words as κόσμος, γινώσκω, δοξάζω/δοξα, ἀληθεία, ἀποστελλω and ἀγαπάω. Although these terms are not unknown in the synoptics, John uses them in a characteristic way, which is clearly evident at this point.

There has been little agreement in the commentary tradition on the origins of this passage. For Bultmann, it is a farewell prayer for Jesus' disciples, redactionally shifted from its original location between John 13:30 and 13:31 (Bultmann 1971 [1941], 490-523). Brown (1966, 744-745) also sees it as a farewell discourse, comparing it to Moses' farewell speeches in Deut. 32- 33, and with content derived from "elaborating upon traditional sayings of Jesus, some of which were original in the setting of the Last Supper" (p. 745). Barnabas Lindars (1972, 515-533) considers it "an afterthought", which was not part of the author's original plan for the gospel. For him, its details cannot be reliably traced back to Jesus, but are instead an imaginative reconstruction by the Evangelist, with the style of prayer having distant sources in the Gethsemane account in the synoptics, and in the Lord's prayer, to which he notes a "probable allusion" (p. 517) in John 17:15. Rudolf Schnackenburg (1982 [1975], 3:167-202) also sees the prayer as having arisen at a late stage in the gospel's compositional history. He attributes its origins to either the pupils of the evangelist (as he does with chapters 15-16), or to some other prominent member of the Johannine community. However Andrew Lincoln, writing in 2005, has a different view. He sees the chapter as much more closely integrated into the structure of the gospel, providing a restatement and summary of its themes, immediately prior to the climactic events of the Passion (Lincoln 2005, 440). He doesn't speculate on the prayer's redactional history as part of the gospel, reflecting the general loss of epistemological confidence in such questions over recent decades.[9] Instead, he attempts to understand how the prayer functions as a part of John's gospel, and to identify parts of the synoptic gospels working in comparable ways. He concludes that it is arguable that "this is John's equivalent to the Lord's prayer, and closest to the Matthean version", although he admits that this is not immediately obvious (Lincoln 2005, p.432).

In fact, there have been a number of suggestions of a relationship between John 17 and the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4), although to the best of my knowledge, there has not been a detailed study of this in the light of how John normally uses his synoptic sources. In this section I shall briefly review some of these suggestions, before considering the possibility taking account of the insights we have already seen into John's method of working with his sources.

The connection was suggested in the late nineteenth century by Frederic Chase (Chase 1891, 110-112), in his book on the Lord's Prayer (hereafter LP). His starting point is the close resemblance between the petition for deliverance from evil in the Matthean version of the LP, ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ (Matt. 6:13) and Jesus' request that his disciples be protected "from the evil one" (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ (John 17:15)).From this insight, Chase identified re-

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[9] Compare, for example Smith (1964) with Cirafesi (2014, especially pp.188-189).

semblances between parts of John 17 and each of the major elements of the LP, although these were not in the same order in the two texts.

Walker (1982) begins from the Matthean version of the LP, and systematic- ally works through the seven individual elements to find corresponding ideas in John 17. For reasons of space, I shall examine only the three elements that Walker develops in the most convinc- ing way, discussing them with ref- erence to what we have learnt so far about John's meth- ods of working with his sources.

Firstly, there is the opening of the prayer, where Matthew reads "Our Father, who is in the heavens". In John (as in Luke), Jesus begins the prayer with the simple vocative πάτερ. However, the heavens are not absent: in the brief narratorial introduction to the Farewell Prayer, we learn that before speak- ing Jesus "raised his eyes toward heaven" (v.1a), which Walker plausibly sees as an allusion to the Matthean phrase. This is another instance of how material integral to the synoptic story can often be found within the setting of the Johannine version as an 'echo' (North 2020, 52).

The second element of Matthew's text, "hallowed [ἁγιασθήτω] be your name" also finds echoes in John 17. The verb ἁγιάζω occurs three times in the chapter (v.17 and twice in v.19),[10] and Walker claims that these are re- miniscent of the LP (Walker 1982, 241). How- ever the situation is not as straightforward as this: in Matt. 6:9, it is the Father's name that is to be sanctified. In John though, the object of the sanctification is either Jesus himself, or the disciples. A more probable reflection of the LP lies in v.11, "Holy Father, protect them in your name…", where the adjective ἅγιος is at- tributed to the Father, as though Mat- thew's petition were already fulfilled and is combined with the interest in the Father's name.

Finally, Matthew's LP finishes by asking the Father to protect those praying it from evil. This is, as we have seen above, the clearest connection between John 17 and the LP. Walker describes this point as "a type of midrashic expansion and interpretation" of Matthew's LP.

Before drawing conclusions here, it is worth setting out the connections of vocabulary between John 17 and the LP. Looking at the text of the two passages, it is straightforward to identify the key words, and divide them into three lists: those common between the two, those present in Matthew's LP only, and those in John only.

(i)   Matthew and John: ἁγιαζέω/ἅγιος, δίδωμι,[11] ἐπι (τῆς) γῆς, ὄνομα, οὐρανός.

(ii) LP only: ἄρτος, βασιλεία, ὀφείλημα, ῥύομαι, σήμερον.

(iii) John 17 only: ἀγαπάω, ἀλήθεια, ἀποστέλλω, γινώσκω, δοξάζω/δόξα, κόσμος.

It is immediately striking that this latter list consists entirely of Johannine 'favourites': words frequently used in his gospel and acquiring a theolo- gical meaning above their usual one. As we saw above, in the discussion of Boyarin's reading of the prologue of John, one technical feature of John's 'midrashic' style of rereading his sources involves reading one text in the light of another: one text controls the vocabulary, while the other predominantly provides "imagery and language" (Boyarin 2001, 269). This is exactly what can be seen here: all the key vocabulary either derives from the LP, or is characteristic of John's theo- logical vision throughout his gospel.

Secondly, we can look at list (ii), and attempt to identify instances where the idea is pre- sent in John 17, but using synonyms or paraphrase. For example, in the Bread of life dis- course (John 6:35-58), Jesus identifies himself as the bread which will give eternal life. Walker (1982, 243-5) suggests that when John 17 is read with this in mind, the references to eternal life (eg. 17:2,3) and to Jesus himself function in the same way as the bread petition

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[10] But only once in the rest of the gospel, at John 10:36. John's preferred term within this semantic range is δοξάζω (to glorify, 23×).

[11] Although this verb (to give) is very common in general, it occurs an exceptional 17 times in this chapter of John and is one of the key ideas of the LP.

in the LP. Between them, Walker (1982) and Chase (1891) have provided suggestions for how each of these elements might be reflected in paraphrase in John 17, some of which are more convincing than others. However, the process of identifying paraphrase and allusion need not be carried out in exhaustive detail: as we have seen, John's typical handling of his sources does not involve the introduction of every detail from the original. Instead he makes use of and develops those most relevant to his theological purposes, and most attractive to his theological imagination (North 2020, 52-53). John appears to have done exactly this here, where the Farewell Prayer in John 17 closely resembles a theologically conscious re-reading of the Matthean text of the Lord's prayer. The style of this rereading resembles the two complementary ways of viewing John's habits developed by North (2020) and Boyarin (2001).

Conclusions

This essay has examined the ways in which John's gospel can be understood as a theological reworking of material originating in the synoptic gospels. First, we briefly looked at the history of how the John-synoptic relationship has been viewed. Then, working on the assumption that John's treatment of his synoptic sources is inseparable from the question of his use of sources more generally, we looked at two recent works in more detail. Wendy North's 2020 book studies exactly this question, and proposes a typical way in which John transforms elements of his own gospel, the Hebrew Bible and the syn- optics. Boyarin (2001) does not treat the synoptic gospels at all, but looks at how John uses the opening of Genesis in the prologue to his gospel, and argues that his style of rereading the text involves elements characteristic to the practice of midrash. Finally, we applied these ways of viewing the problem to a specific text, the so-called Farewell Prayer in John 17. This was found to have significant elements in common with a putative synoptic source, Matthew's version of the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:9-13).

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