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THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY  
IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by  
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May 1971

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE TASK

The genuineness of four gospels has been both a blessing, providing a variety in the expression of the witness to Jesus, and also a source of seemingly endless debate, offering a plethora of ever-changing challenges to the most careful exegete. When literary criticism was applied not only

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Many studies of John 11 and 12 spend much effort to spell

Walter Dillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), p. 393. P. Gardner-Smith has been Streeter's chief challenger.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE TASK

The canonicity of four gospels has been both a blessing, providing a variety in the expression of the witness to Jesus, and also a source of seemingly endless debate, offering a plethora of cross-relationships to challenge the most artful exegete. When literary criticism was applied not only to Plato, but also to the Bible, various theories were suggested to explain the presence of multiple-tradition pericopae, divergent gospel outlines, and elements unique to the several accounts.

Countering the traditional (and still official Roman Catholic) view of Matthean priority, Streeter presented the case for Markan priority, at least in reference to the synoptists. His specific arguments have been revised from time to time; his thesis still holds majority support. When Streeter sought to link the Fourth Gospel with the others, he noted that

the case for John's knowledge of Luke depends mainly on the way in which he introduces, and the details which he connects with the names of Mary and Martha. But the probability is also high that John knew Luke's Passion story.<sup>1</sup>

Many studies of John 11 and 12 spend much effort to spell

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<sup>1</sup>Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Four Gospels (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), p. 393. P. Gardner-Smith has been Streeter's chief challenger.



out how John relates to Luke (as well as to Matthew and Mark), providing hypotheses which are applied to other pericopae in the gospels.

Although this study may present evidence in support of, or detrimental to, several theories of dependence, the primary task will be twofold. First, the unique contribution of the writer of the Fourth Gospel should be isolated. In pursuit of this goal, we will seek to define the limits of the basic tradition(s) behind the four accounts of the anointing at Bethany (this is the pericope closest to the Passion in which John names Mary and Martha); variations which apparently had taken place before the final versions were written must also be taken into account. Second, an attempt will be made to understand the intention of the writer of the Fourth Gospel as he wrote the account in this form.

Behind this study are presuppositions of faith and reason. In each instance cited below, we assume that the words and deeds of Jesus, even though unrecoverable with much precision to us, are the basis of the traditions upon which the evangelists drew.<sup>2</sup> The accounts extant today, alone, have

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<sup>2</sup>"Evangelists," "gospel," "John," and the like will be used only to identify canonical books and their authors. The isagogical questions of the identity or number of men involved in writing the accounts are beyond the scope of this study. The anointing pericope in John, for example, is thought to be the work of a redactor by Johannes Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, completed posthumously by Rudolph



authority, regardless of what forms the traditions may seemingly have taken previously.<sup>3</sup> To facilitate the study, and in consensus with current opinion, the priority of Mark (literarily among the synoptics and sequentially in regard to John) is assumed. We concur with Bultmann (with reservations on much of what else he says) in his theory of gospel formation.<sup>4</sup> The traditions may have been oral or written at various times and places.

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Knopf, translated from the German by "four friends," and edited by Frederick C. Grant (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1937), pp. 787-788, and by T. W. Manson, "The Life of Jesus: A Survey of the Available Material (5) The Fourth Gospel," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, XXX (May 1947), 321. If these theories are true, then what is said in this study refers to the intention of the final redactor(s).

<sup>3</sup>Manson, p. 329, sees at least five streams of tradition drawn on by the actual writers of the New Testament. "These traditions sometimes confirm, sometimes supplement, sometimes contradict each other. None can be treated as infallible; none can be neglected. Each has its own contribution to make to the story, a contribution which only painstaking and intelligent study can discover."

<sup>4</sup>His suggestion is summarized in Rudolph Bultmann and Kard Kundsinn, Form Criticism. Two Essays on New Testament Research, translated by Frederick C. Grant (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962). Simple individual scenes or story outlines circulated individually, with details, names, and direct discourse being added in time. In the process discernible types evolved. Bultmann's theory helps to identify the hand of each evangelist (and thereby the faith-oriented meaning he sees in the related events); the degrees of authenticity ascribed to the various story types provide more insight into Bultmann's liturgical interest than the intent of the gospels.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ACCOUNT IN MARK 14:3-9

#### Context

Perhaps the most important element of the surrounding verses is the closely-following Passion history. This is significant because of the unity that account had at an early date.<sup>1</sup> It is conjectured that a story linked to the Passion gained significance and was told more often. There is a good possibility that the anointing account in Mark 14 was so linked to the Passion. The only actual reference to the coming Passion is the proleptic element in verse 8. Stronger evidence, though, is the fluidity of reading if verses 3 through 9 are omitted.<sup>2</sup> Further, the two genitive

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<sup>1</sup>Eduard Lohse, History of the Suffering and Death of Jesus Christ, translated from the German by Martin O. Dietrich (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 16: "For all the divergence between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, however, all four evangelists are in striking agreement at many points once they come to the passion story." Lohse reasons from both this observation and the summary of the coming events at Mark 10:33-34 that a short Passion history was a unit at an early date and grew as various events in Jesus' life were linked to it. That early Passion began with the betrayal (John 18:1, cf. 1 Cor. 11:23), with the tradition eventually including Palm Sunday later.

<sup>2</sup>Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, translated from the 2nd German edition by Arnold Ehrhardt (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), pp. 65-66. Jeremias sees this as an evidence of the growth of the oral tradition, the primitive Passion starting at Mark 14:43, where chronological agreement begins.



absolutes (ὄντος αὐτοῦ and κατακειμένου αὐτοῦ) point up the hard transition from the preceding verses to this pericope.

The probability is that the story circulated separately from the Passion narrative. In the form known to Mark and his readers, it had an added reference to the burial, and was therefore placed near the beginning of the Passion.<sup>3</sup> In short, in view of the contextual and introductory elements, it is possible to conjecture the pericope's circulating in a form without the proleptic interpretation of the anointing.

#### The Pericope

Several words and phrases in Mark's account are helpful in determining the form of the pericope. οἰκία (verse 3) is used fifteen times by Mark, but only six times in the narrative, and only twice besides this verse in connection with the owner's name. Further study would be needed to determine if the other instances can be attributed to traditional material or not. At least we can say that there is no reason to assume Mark is using the term thematically.<sup>4</sup> "Simon the leper" is mentioned only here in Mark and not at all by

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<sup>3</sup>Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 533. Taylor has a qualification which it is necessary to state here: "The absence of a Passion saying in Lk. vii. 36-50 does not compromise the genuineness of Mk. xiv. 8; it may illustrate the different forms a common tradition assumes under catechetical [Bultmann would suggest "cultic"] and literary influences."

<sup>4</sup>By way of contrast, see Luke's use of οἶκος, p. 16.



the other evangelists. Apparently his name was connected to the story as Mark received it. "Bethany" is used only geographically by Mark. Unless one were to conjecture that Mark chose the location due to its proximity to Jerusalem, it must be assumed part of the tradition also.

The protagonists, ἡ γυνή and τινες, are unnamed, in spite of the fact that the woman is to be remembered (verse 9). Either the people involved were well-known by the community from which the story sprang, or there was such a stress on Jesus' words that the other characters were important only for their actions' roles as occasions for Jesus' speaking.

Matthew Black and others have uncovered many evidences of an Aramaic precedent behind Mark's Greek.<sup>5</sup> They refer specifically to the πρὸς ἑαυτούς (probably an intensive), πιστικῆς (possibly a transliteration of the Aramaic אַפְטוּתָא), and several asyndeta.

Each of these points, taken by itself, can be accounted for as Greek, but the concurrence of several leaves the impression that a story told originally in Aramaic lies not far behind the narrative.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to having a story close to the oral tradition and stressing Jesus' words, we have a single construction, at least through verse 7. The saying of Jesus about

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<sup>5</sup>Matthew Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts (3rd edition; Oxford: University Press, 1963), pp. 55, 103, 223-225. Joachim Jeremias, "Die Salbungsgeschichte Mc 14:3-9," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XXXV (1936), 75-76.

<sup>6</sup>Taylor, p. 531.



the poor cannot be understood apart from the anointing and the objection.<sup>7</sup> The allusion to LXX Deut. 15:11 (οὐ γὰρ μὴ ἐκλίπη ἐνδεῆς ἀπὸ τῆς ὀψῆς) cannot explain how the story might have been devised, for the context is the national program for the poor in Israel, while the Markan setting has an emphasis on the present individual, Jesus.<sup>8</sup> Thus we have a story which includes a central saying that has been linked to the Passion by verse 8. Form-critically verses 8 and 9 appear to be violations of the paradigm.<sup>9</sup>

Verse 9 is the more problematic. To resolve the evidence supporting a historical element here (the woman's name not being mentioned) and the formal evidence suggesting an addition (the departure from the central word of Jesus), several theories have been offered. Taylor sees verse 9 as the

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<sup>7</sup>Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, translated from the German by B. L. Woolf (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 43. Before p. 1, Dibelius lists this pericope as one of the only eight pure paradigms in the gospels; he defines a paradigm as "a short illustrative notice or story of an event, not more descriptive than is necessary to make the point for the sake of which it is introduced."

<sup>8</sup>It is more probable that the saying merely reflects the rabbinic teaching that deeds of love (including anointing the dead) were better than almsgiving (Jeremias, Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XXXV, 77-78). Weight to the less allusive interpretation is given by Rudolph Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, translated from the 2nd German edition by John Marsh (2nd edition; New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 37, as he says, in a statement remarkable for him, "Vv. 3-7 constitute an unitary composition, and certainly no imaginary scene, but one in the strictest sense biographical."

<sup>9</sup>Dibelius, pp. 60-61.



mission vocabulary of the Gentile-Christian Church.<sup>10</sup> But Jeremias points out that such an understanding would have to be post-Markan, for he does not have the faithful in all the world and εὐαγγέλιον is proclamation, not the content of the life of Jesus.<sup>11</sup> An alternative is to see the eschatological elements here. The point is whether the remembering is done by the Church or by God. Richardson opts for the former,<sup>12</sup> while Jeremias prefers the latter, agreeing with Lohmeyer.<sup>13</sup> This last view allows for an early interpretation being put on the action after it had been linked to the burial. Thus, although not part of the story in its bare oral form, verses 8 and 9 are probably both the result of genuine early recollection, employed here by Mark in his large work.

#### The Intent of Mark

For the sake of completeness in this study, one should at least suggest why Mark combined the traditions as he did.

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<sup>10</sup>Taylor, pp. 533-534.

<sup>11</sup>Joachim Jeremias, "Mc 14:9," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XLIV (1952/3), 104.

<sup>12</sup>Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 368. "The continual remembrance of her by the Church would avail like a memorial-sacrifice and be effective for her in the day of judgment."

<sup>13</sup>Jeremias, Eucharistic Words, p. 163. Seeing parallels in God's remembering in Acts 10:4 and the use of εὐαγγέλιον in Rev. 14:6, he translates verse 9, "Amen, I say to you, when the news (of victory) will be proclaimed, what this (woman) has done will be reported (before God), that (He) may remember her (at the Last Judgment)."



One likely proposal has been made by Danker, building on the prior analysis by Lohmeyer.<sup>14</sup> He suggests that Mark is directly alluding to LXX Psalm 40 in this entire chapter. Specifically, he sees Jesus as the righteous suffering poor one mentioned in several psalms. Whether Mark is directly referring to Psalm 40 is debatable; certainly, though, this pericope does paint Jesus as a righteous sufferer, and the woman as the faithful Israelite. Mark does provide a vivid picture, making the scandal of the cross bearable, by showing a continuity with God's people in the old covenant.

#### Summary

The account in Mark reflects the oral tradition of a paradigm with a saying on the poor as the central element (verses 3 through 7). Connected to it is an early eschatological interpretation of the woman's deed (verse 9). Mark's contribution was to employ this pericope as an introduction to the Passion (by its position and verse 8). He thus moves the impact beyond the central saying to verse 8b<sup>15</sup> and explains that Jesus is the most righteous sufferer, here prophetically anointed for death by the unnamed woman.

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<sup>14</sup>F. W. Danker, "The Literary Unity of Mark 14:1-25," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXV (April 1966), 467-472. Danker's contention rests on his taking the contrast in verse 7 as between "always" and "not always" rather than between Jesus and the poor.

<sup>15</sup>Jeremias, Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XXXV, 82.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE ACCOUNT IN MATTHEW 26:6-13

##### Similarities to Mark

When the accounts in Mark 14 and Matthew 26 are placed beside each other, it is apparent that they are the same story. No fewer than fifty-nine words in Matthew's account are identical to Mark in form, use in the sentence, and sequence. The outline is the same in both accounts: While reclining at a dinner in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany, Jesus is anointed by a woman who pours an ointment on his head from an alabaster vase. In response to a complaint that the money equivalent of the ointment should have been given to the poor, Jesus says she did a good work, that, unlike the poor, he will not always be with them, that she was anointing him for burial, and that her deed will be remembered as a memorial. The context is also very close, both in content and position.

Assuming Mark to be written first, we are hard pressed to see any other explanation than that Matthew relied on Mark's gospel in this pericope and the contextual verses. The possibility that they both relied on a common written source is weakened as the changes made by Matthew are examined below. Oral tradition alone would hardly explain the verbal coincidences apparent in the narrative (although the



knowledge of such a tradition cannot be ruled out as contributing to Matthew's version, especially since the longest groups of identical words occur in the words of Jesus on the poor and the memorial).

### Changes

Having decided on the literary connection between Mark and Matthew, we find the alterations by Matthew of significance, for they reflect a later understanding of the same basic story and provide a basis for studying the Johannine version.<sup>1</sup>

The first difference is apparently stylistic, as Matthew clears up the double genitive of Mark 14:3 by moving the *κατα/ἀνακειμένου* to verse 7. He omits *νάρδου πιστικῆς, συκτρίψασα τῆρ ἀλάβαστρον, πρὸς ἑαυτούς, τοῦ μύρου δέδονεν, τὸ μύρον, ὀνηταρίων τριακοσίων, καὶ ἐνεβριμῶντο αὐτῆ, ἄψετε αὐτῆρ, καὶ ὅταν... ποιῆσαι, and ὁ ἔσχεν ἐποίησεν. About the only additions by Matthew for which there are no corresponding words in Mark are *δουὸς* (verse 10) and *τοῦτο* (verse 13). He does substitute *οἱ μαθηταὶ* for *τινες*, *ετοίησεν* for *προ-έλαβεν*, and *β-λοῦσα* for *μυρίσαι*. The other changes generally*

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<sup>1</sup>W. C. Allen, Gospel According to St. Matthew, in International Critical Commentary (3rd edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1957), XXVI. As the largest part of his introduction, Allen has a long examination of Matthew's changes, listing them by type and literary preference. Most of the items in this pericope are shown to be typically Matthean.



reflect preferences for certain prepositions and sentence constructions, but offer no changes in interpretation.

The omissions of  $\epsilon\alpha\rho\delta\omicron\upsilon$   $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\eta\varsigma$  and  $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma$   $\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  can be accounted for as seeking better Greek, since the first is very rare, and the second explainable as a Semitism at best. The omission of the breaking of the alabaster eliminates a repetition of the word.<sup>2</sup> Because  $\delta\eta\rho\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  is used more often by Matthew than by Mark, the omission is either an (unexplainable) conscious omission or (more probably) an element not in the text of Mark received by Matthew.<sup>3</sup> The addition of  $\gamma\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  reflects Matthew's general tendency to portray Jesus as more aware of what is happening.<sup>4</sup>

More significant are the changes in verse 13 and the substitution of  $\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\acute{\iota}\kappa\iota$  for  $\tau\iota\tau\iota\varsigma$ . The former changes (the addition of  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron$  and the use of  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  instead of  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) represent a movement toward using "gospel" as a term referring to a book or account, rather than a proclamation. The "flavor" of Matthew's rendering suggests the retelling of the gospel account throughout the civilized world (more explicit in

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<sup>2</sup>This is typically Matthean; *ibid.* This also accounts for the omissions of  $\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\delta\iota\delta\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon$  and  $\tau\omicron$   $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ .

<sup>3</sup>C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 163.

<sup>4</sup>Used by Matthew twenty times,  $\gamma\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  is applied to Jesus four times, including 26:10. Twice it is to show his knowledge of the Pharisees' ill will, and twice of what the disciples are saying. The only parallel in Mark is at 8:17, which is his only use in reference to Jesus.



Luke's spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth in Acts 1:8). Although the distinction is subtle and cannot be pressed as the basis for further theories, it does make more tenable the suggestion that Mark's version should be interpreted eschatologically.

The use of *μαθητὰς* in verse 8 can be seen as a step in the direction usually taken by tradition, from pure apophthegm (Bultmann) or paradigm (Dibelius) to a written story with complete details.<sup>5</sup> With the objectors named, Matthew then makes other necessary changes: The disciples do not harass the woman, and Jesus does not need to tell them to leave her alone.

#### The Intent of Matthew

The above items are interesting, but reflect no uniquely Matthean intentions involving the theological understanding of the event. When he covers those phrases in Mark dealing with the proleptic burial anointing, however, there are significant variations: Matthew omits the almost apologetic *ὅτι ἔσχευ ἔποίησεν* ("she did what she could") of Mark 14:8; instead of merely proleptically anointing (*προἔλαβεν μυρίσσαι*), it is done at that moment in fact (*ἔποίησεν πρὸς τὸ ἐνταφιάσαι με*); the ointment is not smeared on (*μυρίσσαι*),

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<sup>5</sup>Rudolph Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, translated from the 2nd German edition by John Marsh (2nd edition; New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 68. See below, p. 27, for further evidence in John's account.



but is poured over his body (βαλῶσα). Taken together, these elements present a statement of de facto anointing, sufficient for proper burial. Evidently Mark's proleptic anointing was either lacking in force, or the tradition of the community had taken the interpretation to the next logical step.<sup>6</sup>

#### Summary

From a comparison of the accounts in the first two gospels, we find it likely that Matthew depended on Mark's written account as a primary source. Further, his changes reflect an attempt at a more literary presentation as well as one more consistent with developing tradition. To speak to the concerns of his day, Matthew stressed the validity of the anointing for the coming burial of Jesus.

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<sup>6</sup>David Daube, "The Anointing at Bethany and Jesus' Burial," Anglican Theological Review, XXXII (1950), 196. Daube comes to much the same conclusion, but explains that "the clue to the different versions of the anointing at Bethany lies in the recognition that the development of the narrative was determined by the wish to get rid of the shameful burial . . . the 'scandal' of Jesus' end." Perhaps there was an attempt to show a needed burial anointing to lessen what Daube sees as scandalous; his suggestion that this is the clue to the differences in the four accounts leaves much to be desired, however. At best, it would help explain only the references to the burial, leaving the Lukan parable, the Johannine introduction, and the various contexts unexplained.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE ACCOUNT IN LUKE 7:36-50

#### Context and Setting

The point at issue, even when considering only the context of Luke's account, is whether this is the same anointing or a separate one with a few similarities.<sup>1</sup> The surrounding verses certainly suggest a different event. The action takes place in the midst of the Galilee ministry, rather than near Jerusalem around the final Passover.

More profitable than a comparison with the accounts of Matthew and Mark (since there is so much divergence from them) is a study of the actual context Luke presents. In chapter 7 there is a discussion of Jesus as a prophet (verses 11 through 17), of John the Baptist as a prophet (verses 24 through 28) and the similarities between the reactions to

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<sup>1</sup>Vawter and Jeremias take opposing stances, basing their conclusions on what they claim are evident Lukan tendencies. Bruce Vawter, "The Johannine Sacramentary," Theological Studies, XVIII (1956), 156. Vawter claims that "Luke, who avoids even apparent repetitions, has omitted the story in view of his similar account of an anointing in Galilee in 7:36-50." Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, translated from the 2nd German edition by Arnold Ehrhardt (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), p. 69 note 3. Jeremias--who prefers to find Luke incorporating Markan stories into existing material (e.g. 4:16-30; 5:1-11; 10:25-28; 13:6-9) with no regard to similar context, and at the same time being opposed to rearrangement--states that "it must be assumed that the passages in question already had their fixed positions when he came to know Mark's Gospel." His position virtually assumes that the accounts have common origin in one incident.



John and Jesus (the Son of Man in verses 33 and 34). Chapter 8 begins with several parables and the sinking ship incident, all instructing the disciples about life in the Kingdom. Included also in the context are a warning word to the crowds (7:31-35) and the healing of spirits (7:2-10; 8:26-39). The actual setting is a Pharisee's house (οἶκος).

What is remarkable is that these same contextual elements surround the same setting at Luke 11:37 and 14:1. In chapter 11 Jesus eats with a Pharisee; their topic becomes the treatment of the prophets. Verse 14 starts an account of Jesus' healing of spirits; then follows a set of instructions and warnings first to the disciples, but also to the crowd, beginning at 12:1. The immediate context before the meal at the Pharisee's house at Luke 14:1-24 is the woes on Jerusalem for killing the prophets. A series of instructions to the crowd (14:25 - 15:32) includes the Pharisees (15:1-7) and has the disciples as the hearers of Kingdom talk (16:1-13). Still in the near context is a healing of a spirit in 13:10-13. In addition to similar setting and context, these two (with Luke 7:36-50) provide Luke the opportunity to relate controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees. Evidently Luke thought it helpful to see Jesus' conflicts in the light of his prophetic, healing and teaching offices. Thus, it appears not unreasonable to assume the construction of the account to be Luke's attempt at making a clearer theological point of the event as he has received it.



### The Parable in Luke 7:40-43

The host Pharisee, Simon, is not named until the introduction of the parable.<sup>2</sup> He is then carried into the conclusion of the anointing story.<sup>3</sup> Without that link the parable gives no clue to any context at all. It is simply a saying of Jesus about the response of love. As this entire scene and parable are in a Lukan structure, we may infer the two parts as being separate at one time. Because it is the action of anointing, the complaint about a true prophet, and the comparison between the woman and the Pharisee that depend on the setting and context, it is apparent that the parable was the later addition by Luke to strengthen his point about this conflict story.

### The Anointing Story

The three concluding verses (7:48-50) exhibit phrases which are typical of Lukan wording as he concludes other

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<sup>2</sup>This observation was also made by Andre Legault, "An Application of the Form-Critique Method to the Anointings in Galilee and Bethany," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XVI (1954), 131-145. He does the form-critical method an injustice by explaining the variations between Mark and Luke as only "a confused oral tradition which Lk. made use of" (p. 144). He explains John's account as amplified confusion.

<sup>3</sup>Though admittedly conjecture, one is led to surmise that the name circulated with the parable, not the anointing (at least in Luke's circle). The name "Simon" in Mark's anointing may have provided the idea to place the anointing with this parable.



pericopae.<sup>4</sup> Verse 39 is a careful link to the Lukan context of Jesus as a prophet. Verse 47 could be left out of the anointing without the reader missing the point. It is the application of the parable to the story. In the attempt we are left with a theologically embarrassing statement that the woman's love is the reason for her being forgiven (reading ὅτι as "because").<sup>5</sup> Not denying that Luke's interpretation via these verses is valid (and authoritative for us), we can at least assume that the tradition as he received it did not include them.

Left with the story itself (without context, parable, or Lukan ending) we might be inclined to see it as an amplified story based on Mark 14.<sup>6</sup> Yet, there are too many changes in the basic structure to permit that theory: Instead of anointing Jesus' head, the woman in Luke first cries over his feet, and then dries and anoints them; the

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<sup>4</sup>Faith (πίστις) is the reason for healings and is followed by the command πορεύου at 5:20; 8:48; 17:19; and 18:42. Although the phrase ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκεν σε is used at Matt. 9:22 and at Mark 5:34 (both par. Luke 8:48), and at Mark 10:52 (par. Luke 18:42), it does not exhibit any connection with πορεύου (Mark using ὑπάγε and Matthew having no departing word in the parallels).

<sup>5</sup>In an adequate translation, the New English Bible renders it "her great love proves that her many sins have been forgiven," but without footnote. Matthew Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts (3rd edition; Oxford: University Press, 1963), pp. 181-183. Black seeks to find a different sense by retranslation into Aramaic.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, translated from the German by B. L. Woolf (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 114.



complaint is not about the cost, but the woman's moral character; the interpretation is on Jesus' forgiveness, not the coming burial. In fact, the only verbal links are ἀλάβαστρον μύρου and δυνή. Even these are weak, for Luke calls her ἁμαρτωλὸς and his ointment is only ἀλάβαστρον μύρου (with Matthew), which is myrrh per se, while Mark (and John) has ἀλάβαστρον μύρου γάρδου, in which case it is nard, myrrh being only generic.<sup>7</sup>

#### Summary

The interpretation of the data and inferences must suggest a solution to the problem of how many anointing took place. Unfortunately, this cannot be done only on the basis of the one account in Mark and Matthew and the other in Luke; it must wait for an analysis of the account in John. We can discern two strands of tradition here, though. Dodd has stated it well:

On this hypothesis, each evangelist used independently a separate strand of tradition, and the strands overlapped. In the process of embodying the unit of tradition in a written composition each evangelist has, no doubt, contributed something of his own, but the substance of the pericope in each of its three forms is traditional.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash (Dritte Auflage; Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), II, 48.

<sup>8</sup>C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 172. At this point in the study, we can agree only in regard to Mark and Luke. John is another matter entirely.



From the construction of the Lukan account, Daube's contention that it reflects the burial report is hard to accept, for Luke seems more conscious of the acceptance of sinners and the dispute(s) with the Pharisees; there is no reference to the Passion, in fact. Pure historicity, the opposite of one overriding literary goal, is likewise in trouble as an explanation, for its proponents must overlook either the careful construction in the Third Gospel or the entire account of the Fourth Gospel, with elements from both traditions.<sup>9</sup> We are left with two traditions based on one or more anointings, and two interpretations for the readers' edification.

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<sup>9</sup>For example, Hans Drexler, "Die grosse Suenderin Lucas 7:36-50," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, LIX (March-April 1968), 159-173. He responds to his critics by denying the possibility of dividing the account into its literary parts. His basis for defense, though, is a personal need for historicity.



## CHAPTER V

### JOHN'S USE OF HIS SOURCES

#### Throughout the Gospel

So that we may more easily determine where and how John did or did not rely on the synoptists, a study of his use of sources is in order. In a methodical and convincing article, Goodwin has endeavored to examine all those verses in the Fourth Gospel which are traceable to the Old Testament. After noting the original forms of the references and comparing them to their appearance under John's editing, he concludes

At any rate it should be clear by now that the form in which John reproduced his sources gives us almost no trustworthy information about these sources, but it does give us considerable information about John.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, this lessens the possibility for precision in the present study. Yet, it also makes more plausible any hypothesis for the final form a pericope takes in John. With Goodwin, we can expect fidelity to, and license diverging from, the synoptics in the ensuing study.<sup>2</sup>

Elements from the three synoptics can be found in John on the levels of broad outline, individual pericope, specific

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<sup>1</sup>C. Goodwin, "How did John Treat his Sources?" Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXIII (1954), 73.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., LXXIII, 74.



detail, and especially in the Passion history. The evidence does suggest, however, a preference for Mark as a source (where traceable).<sup>3</sup> Even when only the close parallels are considered, much of the Fourth Gospel is accounted for. The few incidents not covered by Mark or Luke leave no room for another documentary source.<sup>4</sup> The question is whether John merely used Mark and Luke (or Matthew) and added commentary, or whether he reflects traditions which have been written down already, for the most part, in the synoptics. In any event, the ensuing study cannot ignore either option, although dependence on Mark in written or memorized form must certainly be accorded with more probability.<sup>5</sup>

#### In John 12:1-8

In order to separate those elements paralleling the synoptic accounts from items unique to John, we shall examine some of the words and phrases which directly agree with, or stand in conflict to, one or more of the synoptics.

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<sup>3</sup>Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Four Gospels (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), p. 393: "A survey of the evidence shows that John used Mark, and either attributed greater authority to, or was more familiar with, his story than that of either of the others. This conclusion would seem to preclude the theory that John was written in Aramaic; but it in no way weakens the case for the view that he naturally thought in that language."

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 416-417.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 397. Perhaps the strongest evidence is that "wherever either Matthew or Luke have reproduced Mark's wording exactly John agrees with them also."



Verse 1: πρὸ ἕξ ἡμερῶν τοῦ πάσχα. The Passover context here agrees with Mark, but John starts his unique chronology, which eventually has Jesus die on the eve of the feast. This naturally rules out the Lukan option.

ἡλθερ εἰς Βηθανίαν. The location likewise fits the Passion site of greater Jerusalem.

Λάζαρος. The name of the host here contradicts all three synoptics. The only reference to a Lazarus outside John 11 and 12 is in Luke's parable of 16:19-31. Whether the two are to be equated depends on the conclusions one might reach on the literary relationship between John and Luke. It would, however, be strange for Luke to include the name in the parable without any reference to the fact that Jesus did have someone "rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31), especially if Luke knew John's gospel in its present form.<sup>6</sup> The fabrication of this spectacular miracle, merely to heighten the irony of the conclusion of the parable, is equally unlikely. We have separate traditions either about the same man<sup>7</sup> or merely the same name. The latter is more probable.

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<sup>6</sup>John A. Bailey, The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John, in Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), VII, 7 note 1. Since the presence of Lazarus in the Lukan parable without a corresponding resurrection story suggests to Bailey that the name was included before Luke received the parable, he uses it as a basis for suggesting that a circle of stories existed prior to both Luke and John.

<sup>7</sup>An example of the problems posed by this option, which is basically a conflationary view, is apparent as C. F. Nesbitt, "The Bethany Traditions in the Gospel Narratives,"



Verse 2: ἡ Μάρθα διηκόρει. Here, too, our only parallel is in Luke (10:38). The two women have similar characterizations in both locations; Mary listens to Jesus in Luke and anoints him in John, while Martha serves at both occasions. What is striking is that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus have such similar treatment in both gospels, yet are never linked together by Luke. While this would suggest John used a different source (not Luke), his inclusion of the extrinsic mention of Martha argues for dependence on Luke.<sup>8</sup>

ἀνακειμένω. In this sentence on Martha and Lazarus, this verbal reflects the anointing story only (Matthew: ἀνακειμένου; Mark: κατακειμένου; Luke: κατὰκειται).

Verse 3: ἡ Μαριάμ . . . τοὺς πόδας. That Mary was at Jesus' feet listening in Luke 10 is very interesting, but since Jesus' feet are also anointed in Luke 7 by the nameless sinner, one cannot draw any conclusions as to the source.

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Journal of Bible and Religion, XXIX (1961), 119-124, similarly seeks to resolve "Simon" and "Lazarus." His conclusion is that Simon, a Pharisee and former leper, was either Martha's husband, or the father of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Yet, in order to defend his suggestion, he must also admit that the absence of a reference to Simon at the death and raising of Lazarus would need "some oversight or . . . a break in the tradition . . ." (p. 123). The fragmentation of tradition is precisely what he wants to reverse!

<sup>8</sup>Bailey, VII, 8, concludes "that John in his account of Jesus derived the anointing, the drying of the hair [to be debated below] and the note that Martha served from Luke's gospel, but that prior to both evangelists a cycle of three Mary-Martha stories existed on which both evangelists independently drew."



μύρου. This is the only word (except ὁ ἰησοῦς) common in the same form and use to all four accounts!

ῥαβδου πιστικῆς. These two words are important because they link Mark and John literarily. Although other Markan words are employed by John, they are usually also in the account of Matthew. Further, ΠΙΣΤΙΚῆς is "a word of uncertain meaning found nowhere else in Greek literature as early as this its sole use in the New Testament."<sup>9</sup> Evidently John had reason to retain this unusual phrase although both D and Matthew omitted it. The rare use even by Mark in the first place suggests that he knew it to be an integral part of the traditional account.

ἤλειψεν. This verb of anointing is the one used by Luke; we cannot infer dependence, however, since Luke uses it after the crying and wiping of Jesus' feet, while John has it as the first action of Mary. The word is the usual Septuagint translation of תָּיַב, "pour," and shares the translation of Πῶμα, "smear" (the root of "Messiah"), with χρίειν.<sup>10</sup>

ἀλείφειν has a variety of New Testament meanings, ranging from washing one's face to being "besmeared with the filth of accepting false doctrine."<sup>11</sup> Included also are

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., VII, 2.

<sup>10</sup>J. A. Thompson, "Ointment," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by G. A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), III, 593.

<sup>11</sup>W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature



anointing for illness and of the dead.<sup>12</sup> Barrett sees the possibility of  $\pi\psi\kappa$  as the intention of the word and couples it with the broad outline in John wherein Jesus is anointed first and then enters Jerusalem. His now-famous conclusion is that "It is as anointed King that Jesus rides into Jerusalem, and as anointed King that he dies."<sup>13</sup> Granting the sequence of events, one is hard pressed to explain why John did not retain the less ambiguous  $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\epsilon\upsilon$  of Mark 14:3.  $\epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\chi\epsilon\iota\upsilon$  (same root) is the verb of royal anointing in 1 Regn. 10:1. Dodd, seeking to agree with Barrett, is forced to move from John's not being based on Mark,<sup>14</sup> to not knowing Mark's account.<sup>15</sup>

$\epsilon\zeta\ \epsilon\mu\alpha\zeta\ \epsilon\upsilon\ \tau\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\rho\iota\zeta\iota\upsilon\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ . That John has Mary wiping Jesus' feet after the anointing has provided many scholars a sticky problem indeed!

$\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \pi\acute{o\delta}\alpha\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ . Although certainly at variance with Mark-Matthew, the anointing of Jesus' feet shows less a

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(Chicago: University Press, 1957), p. 34, citing Ignatius to the Ephesians.

<sup>12</sup>Thompson, III, 594. The last option supports Daube's suggestion that the burial is the key to the various traditions, but is insufficient, being the only such reference in the pericope (see the treatment of John 12:7, below).

<sup>13</sup>C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John (London: SPCK, 1967), p. 341.

<sup>14</sup>C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 169.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 173.



difference of intention on the part of the woman than her own opinion of herself. At Jewish weddings the bride sometimes anointed the heads of the attending rabbis (T. B. Keth. 17b); Egyptian festival scenes show heads anointed also. "The rabbinic commentary Siphre on Deut. 33:24 speaks of slaves' emphasis mine anointing people's feet with oil."<sup>16</sup> The sinner in Luke and Mary in John both show a humble position as they anoint Jesus, in a manner similar to Jesus' washing the disciples' feet later. Further interpretation becomes speculation, especially in view of the variations in the customs of the day. If anything, that John doesn't have a head-anointing although Mark does,<sup>17</sup> makes Barrett's royal theory seem less applicable to John than to Mark (though improbable there due to the Markan chronology).

Verse 4: ἰούδας. The retelling of stories eventually gives rise to the inclusion of names. It is not hard to see the progression from ΤΙΥΕΣ to μαθητῆς to ἰούδας. This tendency is also typical of John. He names Peter and Malchus in Gethsemane, and Philip as the source of the food for the feeding miracle at John 6:7, for example. This would be pointless unless his readers knew the names from tradition.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Thompson, III, 594.

<sup>17</sup>Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 529.

<sup>18</sup>Streeter, p. 403.



Verse 5: Τὸ μύρον and Τριακοσίωρ δηναρίωρ. These are traceable only to Mark, having been omitted by Matthew (the objection is on other grounds in Luke).

John omits Mark's ἱπάρω, once again reflecting the concretizing process of tradition.

(ἔ)πραθη(ναι) . . . καὶ (ἔ)δοθη(ναι) πτωχοῖς. The verb forms vary in John as he phrases this part of the objection in a question, having omitted the question on the waste (ἡ ἀπώλεια). Because these words are integral to the movement toward Jesus' (central) word of reply about the poor, they are evidently part of the central tradition.

Verse 7: εἶπερ οὖρ ὁ Ἰησοῦς. The δὲ of Mark and Matthew is changed to οὖρ because of the insertion of verse 6, on Judas' reason for his objection (which has its own δὲ).

Ἐφες αὐτήν. The singular replaces Mark's plural, as the objectors are limited to Judas.

Verse 8: The entire verse is found in Mark and Matthew (with Mark also having the apologetic verse 7b). John's phrases are more parallel than Mark and Matthew's, suggesting a later writing, perhaps reflecting a more easily retold oral version. The agreement between Matthew and John against Mark is singular to this pericope (except the omission of the breaking of the box, which has adjoining material which is not parallel), and no grounds for knowledge of the First Gospel by John.



## Inferences from the Data

## Markan material

The problem facing the exegete is to determine here whether parallels between gospels indicate knowledge of, or dependence on, the prior document, or merely common use of a third oral or written source. In the study of Mark 14:3-9 an attempt was made to identify those elements which probably were included in the tradition before Mark received it, and those for which there was some evidence to suggest that Mark was responsible for their inclusion. At that time we hypothesized that his contributions were the Passion-linking and the proleptic interpretation.

John alters the Passion reference by his own chronology and completely omits the proleptic element.<sup>19</sup> (He also has no memorial for the woman, thought to be a late addition to an otherwise saying-centered story.) Yet, the remaining elements of the Markan account<sup>20</sup> are taken over, the only changes<sup>21</sup> being the host's name and the part of the body

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<sup>19</sup>His "replacement" for Mark 14:8, John 12:7b, has a simpler meaning; see below, pp. 37-38.

<sup>20</sup>Viz. Bethany, the guests' reclining, *μύρου* *νάρδος* *πισ-ΤΙΚῆς*, the value of the ointment, the complaint, the response, and the saying on the poor.

<sup>21</sup>These elements are the most necessary to explain when interpreting John's account and his reason for including the pericope in the first place.



which was anointed. This is a strong argument that John had a very similar tradition to that employed by Mark, for he (intentionally or not) omits the distinctive Markan elements in that account. Whether he knew Mark in its present form can be argued only on the basis of silence at this point.

#### Matthean material

Throughout the entire pericope, John nowhere agrees with a Matthean expression against Mark. The nearest parallel is ἀνακειμέωρ (John 12:2) and ἀνακειμένου (Matt. 26:7), and then in reference to different people. There are two common omissions of Markan material: the breaking of the box and "she did what she could." The former item cannot be explained precisely;<sup>22</sup> the omission of the apologetic Mark 14:7b is a strengthening of the proleptic element on the part of Matthew. Whether John had the same intention depends on the interpretation of his verse 7b. His knowledge of Matthew would not be implied even if their reasons agreed.

#### Lukan material

The study of Luke 7:36-50 suggested that he arranged the traditional story he received by placing it in a Pharisee's house, surrounding it with typical contextual elements,

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<sup>22</sup>Alabaster jars had their lids sealed shut. When about to be used, the narrow upper neck of the jar would be broken. This would probably explain Mark's συντριψασα (Thompson, III, 594). Why Matthew and John omitted to note that the alabaster was opened is open to conjecture.



and adding a parable he also knew, so that the readers would understand how Jesus receives sinners who love him. John ignores or contradicts those elements which aid such an understanding. The context and setting, the woman as a sinner, and the parable are all omitted and/or replaced. About the only items in parallel are the specific actions of anointing the feet and drying, and these are in reverse order. These links are almost as tenuous as those to the Luke 10:38 dinner at the home of Mary and Martha or the Lazarus parable of Luke 16:20, neither of which are connected by means of the characters or Bethany.<sup>23</sup> Because both additions and omissions are necessary to explain John's use of Luke, with both needing drastic changes, we can infer no correlation between the two accounts in any dependent sense.<sup>24</sup> The

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<sup>23</sup>Luke admits he doesn't know where Mary and Martha lived in 10:38: εἰς κωμὴν Τιβρα.

<sup>24</sup>F. C. Grant, "Was the Author of John dependent upon the Gospel of Luke?", Journal of Biblical Literature, LVI (1937), 285-307. Grant attempts a correlation theory anyway. He postulates (p. 304) that John knew Q, had access to L (not Luke), and used Mark rather than the Lukan Passion. Finally, Luke was influenced by John in the later revisions. This is possible, but as improbable as the many wheels used to explain the geocentric universe. Another approach is that taken by H. Gaussen, "The Lucan and the Johannine Writings," Journal of Theological Studies, IX (1908), 562-568. He cites the subjects, concepts, discourses, and names similarly treated in Luke and John, and concludes that "the writers seem to have been brought into close contact with each other. Such a link of association would be found in the Virgin Mother of the Lord" (p. 568). Although certainly also a possibility, this theory neglects entirely the omissions and contradictions between the two gospels, as well as the possibility of traditions which might account for the same phenomenon.



question is better phrased: Was the writer of the Fourth Gospel aware Luke's gospel even existed?<sup>25</sup>

### Summary

A study of those elements in Mark's account which John employs has indicated John was in some way able to discern where Mark was shaping the tradition to make his point in his gospel. Whether John knew Matthew is not clear from a similar study. The most that can be asserted is that both evangelists sought to relate the story to the people of their day, revising Mark accordingly. Likewise, John has some parallels with Luke, but in an inconsistent way, linking separated items and reversing the order of events.

In short, although much of the account in the Fourth Gospel might have parallels in the synoptics, this evidence by itself is little help in separating the intentional editing and shift in emphasis by John from whatever traditions he knew<sup>26</sup> (whether they included one or more synoptist or

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<sup>25</sup>The tension by a decision on the answer to this question was evident in the conclusion of Bailey, supra, p. 24. Although he is seeking to show some dependence by John upon Luke's account, he must still postulate a pre-Lukan cycle of stories. Once they are granted, though, there is little case for any need of John to know Luke.

<sup>26</sup>Johannes Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, completed posthumously by Rudolph Knopf, translated from the German by "four friends," and edited by Frederick C. Grant (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1937), p. 787. Deciding on this basis alone, Weiss views the entire anointing as the insertion of a late redactor; he reveals later that his evidence



not). It is therefore in order to seek help elsewhere; specifically, we shall first outline those elements which are not traceable to the synoptists and then seek parallels within the Fourth Gospel.

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is that "the editor shows himself to be completely dependent upon the synoptic texts" (p. 789).



## CHAPTER VI

### THE NON-SYNOPTIC ELEMENTS IN JOHN'S ACCOUNT

#### Unique Data

##### Verses 1 and 2

The introduction has the beginning of John's Holy Week chronology, which draws the rest of the Passion into consideration in the interpretation of this pericope. Because this is a major alteration of the synoptists' Passion, we must assume the hand of John at work at least here. Also within the introduction is the linking of Lazarus to Mary and Martha, refreshing the readers' minds to the introduction at 11:1, which also grouped the three. Although certainly explainable from tradition alone, this grouping is well interpreted as being germane to John's theological intent as he relates the anointing, for he goes to great lengths to parallel the 11:1 and 12:1 introductions; that Lazarus is included as co-victim in the plot against Jesus continues his significance through the ensuing Passion.

##### Verse 3

We have already noted several times that the drying with Mary's hair is in a sequence different from Luke's. Inconsequential at first glance, it takes on weight when we notice that John is consistent in the sequence at 11:1, where



he mentions the anointing in summary fashion. Were the drying a side note or the sequence variable in the tradition, it is unlikely that he would have included it to identify Mary.

Because John alone has the note that the aroma of the ointment filled the house, there have been several attempts to find a meaning that goes beyond any circumstantial explanation.<sup>1</sup> One popular suggestion is that this is John's way of saying Mary's fame will spread (in place of Mark 14:9). This interpretation has been traced to Origen, but falls if Mark's reference is to be taken apocalyptically.<sup>2</sup> Vawter suggests a third alternative, that the filling of the house should be seen in the light of Is. 6:1, in which God's train fills the temple. "The anointing, then, or indeed the ointment, is a semeion of the glory of Christ. . . ."<sup>3</sup> This view is hard to accept in a book incorporating several clearly identified "signs."

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<sup>1</sup>Such an interpretation--that the aroma spread as Mary walked around the house--is mentioned by Bruce Vawter, The Four Gospels (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1967), p. 285.

<sup>2</sup>A very similar parallel is Midr. HL. 1:3 (85a) on Eccclus. 7:1, "The fragrance of a good perfume spreads from the bedroom to the dining room; so does a good name spread from one end of the world to the other," as cited by Raymond Brown, The Gospel According to John (1-xii) (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1966), p. 453. Were Mark interpreted to mean the woman would be kept in memory by the Church, this meaning of John would be possible. One wonders why he would then need to restate in such imagery what Mark had already presented clearly.

<sup>3</sup>Bruce Vawter, "The Johannine Sacramentary," Journal of Theological Studies, XVII (1956), 159.



A fourth version is that, since only kings normally could afford such luxury, the verse is included to show this was a coronation rite.<sup>4</sup> That it was a luxury may be the only needed reading, for the immediate response is Judas' complaint on the 300-denarii waste. Extravagance in regard to Jesus certainly is not limited to this pericope in the Fourth Gospel. (The burial at 19:38-42 is a good example.)

#### Verse 6

The mention of Judas here is unique to John, although his complaint is in the mouths of *Τῆς* in Mark's account. That he has no concern for the poor (echoing the description of the hireling at 10:13),<sup>5</sup> and is a thief, pilfering the money box, are mentioned only here in Scripture. This is typical of John, who has more references to Judas than any of the synoptists, as well as more information (Judas is Simon's son: 6:71; 13:2,26; he is given the significant morsel at the meal in the upper room: 13:26). Thus, we have either an oral tradition that developed after the synoptists had written, or else an entirely independent transmission.

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<sup>4</sup>J. Edgar Bruns, "A Note on Jn 12,3," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXVIII (1966), 221-222. This would naturally help Barrett and Dodd's view.

<sup>5</sup>C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John (London: SPCK, 1967), p. 344.



## Verse 7

This verse has caused scholars no end of trouble, for it is both unique to John and immediately before the central saying on the poor. Because John has no interpretation of the anointing as being proleptic (as Mark 14:8) and yet here refers to Jesus' "day of burial," the interpretation must both explain how John's wording presents an alternative to Mark while still referring to the same event. Torrey seeks a way out of the predicament by suggesting a mistranslation of an Aramaic question, "Should she keep it for the day of my burial?"<sup>6</sup> He admits, though, that the translator would have to have forgotten the intent of the Aramaic to end up with the present Greek text.

Because Hoskyns equates the odor's filling the house with Mark's breaking of the alabaster (and assuming with little support that all was then used up), he cannot admit the possibility that she would keep any ointment for a later burial day. He therefore translates the *ίρα* as an introduction to an epexegetical statement, explaining that she did not sell it; she was keeping it for this present week, the "day" of Jesus' burial.<sup>7</sup> With the support of D's omission

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<sup>6</sup>Charles C. Torrey, Our Translated Gospels (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), pp. 61-62.

<sup>7</sup>Edwin C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, published posthumously and edited by Francis Noel Davey (Revised edition; London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1947), p. 416.



of verse 8 (as the work of a harmonizing glossator), Brown agrees<sup>8</sup> that a present interpretation of the "day of embalming" is the best alternative. Some writers seek to translate *τηρήσει* as "let her observe/obey/remember." These are untenable in view of John's consistent use of the word.<sup>9</sup>

All of the above suggestions rely on unusual interpretations (of either Mark 14:3, *ἴρα*, or *τηρήσει*). This study, however, has uncovered no valid reason for rejecting the simple explanation that Jesus thought it better that Mary keep the remaining ointment for his burial.<sup>10</sup> This would also explain why John did not include a parallel to Mark 14:8; he does not intend Mary's act to be more than a pious act toward Jesus (who would soon not be with them). Naturally, this opinion must be weighed in the light of the continuing study.

#### Unique Use of Synoptic Data

Bethany and Lazarus, though mentioned by the synoptists, are treated differently by the fourth evangelist. Bethany

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<sup>8</sup>Brown, p. 454.

<sup>9</sup>Of the seventeen mentions of the word in the Fourth Gospel, twelve are to be translated "obey/observe," but always in connection with *λόγος* or *ἐντολή*. The remaining four instances (and this verse) all denote holding back or reserving something or someone.

<sup>10</sup>This is also the view of David Daube, "The Anointing at Bethany and Jesus' Burial," Anglican Theological Review, XXXII (1950), 190. The "first-glance" interpretation would explain why Jesus needed to say "leave her alone": they



is not mentioned in the first three gospels before the Palm Sunday account, when Matthew and Mark have Jesus stay there overnight (after the temple cleansing in Matthew, and before it in Mark).<sup>11</sup> Luke notes that Jesus stayed there throughout Holy Week. Bethany is the starting point of the actual entrance procession in Mark and Luke (while Matthew has Bethphage with accompanying textual problems, 21:1). The only other reference is at Luke's (singular) account of the ascension.

John apparently agrees with the pre-Passion omissions, for he qualifies the reference at 1:28 (and the recalling at 10:40) as Bethany "Transjordan." However, John has no reference to Bethany at all, except in reference to Lazarus, Mary and Martha! It is only because they live in Bethany that one could reason that the entrance-to-Jerusalem procession started there, if he were to have only the Fourth Gospel as his source (11:1,18; 12:1). While the synoptists employ Bethany as the location of some Passion scenes, John prefers to center on the people involved.

As previously mentioned, the only use of "Lazarus" is Luke 16:20-25, a parable received by Luke with the name

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were trying to get the unused ointment (conjecture, of course). Some commentators join the opposition of Barrett, p. 345, on the basis of the absence of "the remainder," but he also assumes Mark had reflected the tradition that all was used up (*supra*, p. 30 note 22), and that John would be altering the tradition under this interpretation.

<sup>11</sup>This assumes Mark 8:22 to correctly read "Bethsaida."



already an element. John's use of the name is always with a certain person in mind, the Lazarus ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν Ἰησοῦς (John 12:1,9,17 and chapter 11). When examining the raising at 11:1-44, there is a significant literary note to be made:

There is no story of the raising of Lazarus--or none that we now can recover--separable from the pregnant dialogues of Jesus with His disciples and with Martha. On the other hand, these dialogues could not stand by themselves. They need the situation in order to be intelligible. . . .<sup>12</sup>

The raising and the general dialogue are a unit in chapter 11. The one bit of conversation which could stand alone is in verses 25 through 27; the story flows very smoothly from verse 24 to verse 28, and seems odd in its present form, for, after confessing Jesus as ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, Martha calls Mary, referring to Jesus only as ὁ διδάσκαλος! It is not too speculative to see here a confessional interjection by the author. Were this questioned, we still have these verses as the "message" of chapter 11 as it now stands.

The introductory verses 1 and 2 also do not appear to be part of the traditional story; they reflect neither the raising nor the confession of Martha. Here Lazarus is linked to Bethany and Mary in a careful summary of the anointing to come in chapter 12. We infer that the introduction here (and at 12:1) is ascribable to John's hand.

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<sup>12</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), in loc.



### Summary

Many of the elements without parallel in the synoptic accounts are grouped in 12:1-2 (and the parallel introduction at 11:1-2). They reflect the author's hand as he links the pericopae to the coming entry into Jerusalem and the Passover. Likewise, the variant order of events is apparently due to the author, as it is identical in the pericope and in the earlier summary. The filling of the house by the aroma and the information on Judas reflect motifs found elsewhere in this gospel. The remaining item, verse 7, may be an attempt by John to use Markan burial language while seeking to avoid any proleptic element.

Although the last suggestion has little substantiation beyond the lavish burial recorded at 19:38-42, it is given weight by the fact that all the other unique elements can be attributed to the author of the Fourth Gospel on the basis of their use throughout the work in much the same way as they are employed in this pericope. If we tentatively grant these elements as the contribution of John as he wrote down tradition for his circle of readers, we must now seek to find his intention for writing about the anointing, primarily on the weight of these items. Procedurally working from clear to obscure, a study of John's introductions which have reference to other pericopae is in order, for John's hand is most clear at these places in chapters 11 and 12.



## CHAPTER VII

### JOHN'S USE OF REFERENCES

#### WITHIN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS

##### Data: Other References in the Fourth Gospel

In addition to the introductions at 11:1 and 12:1, there are five others which include references to other parts of the Fourth Gospel. Our purpose in reviewing them is to find a pattern which may suggest why John felt these reminders necessary, hoping thereby to find a basis for interpreting his intention as he related the anointing at Bethany. This study will be limited to references in introductions, excluding phrases which John includes here and there to add information in the midst of a pericope (for example, that Philip was from Bethsaida, 12:21).

At 10:40 John is leading into the raising of chapter 11. He places Jesus in Transjordan, "where John at first baptized." This is a reference to John 1:28, where John prophesies about the coming one while "in Bethany Transjordan." Although the 1:28 account is paralleled by all three synoptists, the location is omitted by them. John 10:40 is in the middle of a lengthy section without synoptic parallel. The author seeks to locate Jesus in 10:40 by recalling the place where John baptized, information supplied only by the Fourth Gospel.



At 4:46a John is beginning his account of the "second sign," the healing of the official's son. Matthew and Luke, who have similar accounts, state that Jesus entered Capernaum, the centurion's home town; John has Jesus come to Cana and the official come to meet him. Cana is identified as the locale of the "first sign," the changing of water to wine, written down only at John 2:1-11.

In the middle of the confusion of the several trials of Jesus, John attempts to clearly identify Annas and Caiaphas; this he does in the introduction to the first hearing. At 18:13 he notes that Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, and then recalls in verse 14 that the latter was the one who had said "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." Although all four gospels have some sort of hearing before the trial by Pilate, Mark nowhere mentions the name of the high priest, Luke (3:2) calls Annas and Caiaphas both high priests (in the tradition of John 18:19,24), and Matthew agrees with Caiaphas' holding the office (26:3, 57). But the means of identification John uses, in the final analysis, is not the name of the high priest (for Annas apparently had high-priestly duties), but that he had the prophetic powers of that office (John 11:49-52), a fact gained only through the Fourth Gospel.

The burial of Jesus is quite different from the synoptic accounts, both in its naming of Nicodemus and the lavish burial anointing provided. As John identifies the men who



were involved (19:38-39), he recalls that Nicodemus "had at first come to him by night," a fact noted only by John (3:1). In fact, he alone gives any information about the man. Thus, he is clearly identifying a man from a story about him which he alone has written down.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, as the author of the Fourth Gospel is being identified,<sup>2</sup> he is mentioned (21:20) as "the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at supper and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?'" This is a close parallel to John 13:23,25, remarkable for the reproduction of three elements at once for identification. Yet, all of them are singular to John's account of the Last Supper. Of course, there is no synoptic parallel to the last chapter of John.<sup>3</sup>

#### Interpretation of the Data

Each of the above-mentioned pairs of references have one thing in common: The specific means of identification

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<sup>1</sup>He does this also at 7:50, but then not within an introduction.

<sup>2</sup>Actually, 21:24 states that "we know that his testimony is true," suggesting John's disciples are the final editors of the work.

<sup>3</sup>This last chapter has been attacked most heavily as being unauthentic. It does reflect a summary of the work, as well as a concern for authority. C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John (London: SPCK, 1967), p. 101: "What does emerge from the evidence is, not that the gospel as it stands is a first-hand historical document, but that



is unique to the Fourth Gospel. The locations at 1:28 and 4:46a, the prophecy at 11:49-52, any knowledge of Nicodemus, and the private conversation during the Last Supper all have no synoptic parallels. Although the events at 1:28; 4:46a; 13:23,25; 19:38-42; and 18:13-14 all bear similarities to synoptic parallel accounts, the item of reference is either omitted or contradicted; further, the verses and topics surrounding 10:40; 2:1-11; 3:1-21; and 21:20 are restricted to the Fourth Gospel, even in context.

Because the occurrence of unique material is so frequent in these introductory references, we infer that John is referring to events about which he knows no written records. This explains his references; he wants to remind his readers of this new information, as he again uses it in his account. That he does not so refer to any detail of reference which is included in any of the synoptics suggests that he knows of them as written documents, or at least that the pericopae within them are in general circulation and in no need of reinforcement.<sup>4</sup>

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those responsible for it were seriously concerned about the meaning and authority of the apostolic witness to the history of Jesus." We note here that we are concerned only with the gospel as it stands today in its present form.

<sup>4</sup>John's identification of Caiaphas (already mentioned by Matthew and Luke) lends weight to the suggestion he did not know those gospels, but was acquainted only with Mark. Still strengthening that view is the fact that Matthew parallels the early (pre-trial) note that Caiaphas was at the meeting that planned to apprehend Jesus (Matt. 26:3).



Another noteworthy feature of the references is that they are all very short (except the questionable one at 21:20), yet provide a summary of the previous pericope or bit of information. Thus, by recalling them, John not only again identifies the person or place, but reinforces the new story or element he has earlier introduced, as well as often tying it to another similarly unique pericope.

#### The Introductions at John 12:1 and 11:1

The reference at 12:1 appears to follow the characteristics of those in the rest of the gospel. As John is introducing the anointing, he refers back to 11:1 (a passage without synoptic parallel, which states that Lazarus lived in Bethany with his sisters) and the raising of 11:1-44 (also unique to the Fourth Gospel). The reference is by means of the elements which are unique to John's account of the anointing, that Lazarus was present and that it was Mary who did the anointing.<sup>5</sup>

There is a significant difference in the introduction at 11:1. This is the only reference to a story which has not yet been told by John! He is assuming that his readers know Mary and Martha, as well as the anointing story in some form. Lazarus is identified by his town, the well-known

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<sup>5</sup>Raymond Brown, The Gospel According to John (1-xii) (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1966), p. 447. Brown correctly notes that there must have once been a need to identify the town; in the light of the other introductions,



Bethany. John uses the occasion to identify it as the village of the (known) Mary and Martha, which was unnamed in Luke 10:38. Then he further identifies Mary as the anointress of the (known) story. Streeter believes that this is explainable only "if both these Gospels [Mark and Luke] were standard works, read in the Church; it is not equally natural if the Martha and Mary story was merely extant in floating tradition."<sup>6</sup> In any event, we are left to explain why John here refers to stories he apparently assumes his readers know (from either the synoptics or oral tradition), when this type of introductory reference is consistently used elsewhere to review and point out new information.

If we grant that John knew and used Mark's gospel as a source for his own (on the basis of the above evidence, with the support of several scholars' opinions), we must assume that he believes his readers' knowledge of the story to be based on a different tradition than Mark's account. The

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we must also conclude that John was reinforcing his written account of the raising, as well as those elements in the anointing of which he has seen no previous written record. In fact, since Mark has used Bethany four times already, the latter elements are more probably John's point than any underlining of the location.

<sup>6</sup>Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Four Gospels (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), p. 402. Until now, on the weak basis of verbal similarities, this study has assumed John knew Mark. His reference to a story already written in the synoptics adds needed weight to the suggestion he knew them to be extant. Streeter's claim on the Mary-Martha story depends on whether or not one would grant a fixed group or circle of stories to which John could refer with confidence without needing to have Luke before him.



same would be true with respect to Luke's gospel if it were demonstrated he also knew that version.<sup>7</sup> Because John's references are usually summaries of another incident, we have at 11:2 an outline of the traditional story known to his readers. The story is that a woman "anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair." John identifies the Mary of the Mary-Martha-Lazarus family as the woman in the story. What is important is that this outline is the familiar one in spite of no mention of the hair-wiping in Mark-Matthew, and the reverse order in Luke.

Any explanation must account for John's use of Mark, the availability of Mark's gospel to John's readers, and the variance of John's outline from those of the synoptists. If John were presenting the story of another anointing (than that of Mark), he would hardly have used the very unusual *ῥάβδου πιστικῆς*. If he were only filling in the details of Mark's (or Luke's) account, he would have more likely used the same outline. We must therefore posit the hypothesis that John was writing down the story of the same anointing in the form known to his circle.

The usual objection to a unit-tradition is that some commentators see Mary's using her hair to dry Jesus' wet feet as unexplainable except by conflation of elements from

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<sup>7</sup>Matthew's gospel is usually not considered by scholars; the parallels in this pericope have been shown to be easily explained from coincidental revision of Mark.



Mark and Luke. It is amazing that they suppose John to be that clumsy a conflator! It would appear easier to explain ἐκμάσσω as meaning "wipe,"<sup>8</sup> rather than "dry," than to see such poor construction in the midst of the parallel introductions of chapters 11 and 12, and the literary use of Lazarus into the next chapter.

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<sup>8</sup>W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University Press, 1957), p. 242. ἐκμάσσω can mean "polish" (a mirror, Sir. 12:11), "dust off," or "remove tarnish" (LXX Ep. Jer. 11,23). Such an interpretation is more likely if not all the ointment was used.



## CHAPTER VIII

### AN INTERPRETATION OF JOHN 12:1-8

#### The Recoverable Strata

We are not able to infer the probable form taken by the basic tradition received by John. Our evidence is both his summary (which he assumes sufficient to identify Mary) and those items which closely parallel the synoptic accounts, primarily Mark's. Either these elements are so easily fit into the story that he feels free to use them, or (more probably) they reinforce the oral tradition. The story apparently was that while Jesus was reclining (ἔκλιον / ἀγκειμέρου), a woman with an alabaster of μύρου γάρδου πιστικῆς poured some on his feet and wiped them with her hair. Some people complained that the ointment (ἔταρον θηγαρίων τριακοσίων) should have been sold and given to the poor. Jesus told them to leave her alone, for although the poor would always be with them, he would not.

The Aramaisms in Mark suggest that the account was not altered to any great extent from its early telling. John's version has retained at least the puzzling γάρδου πιστικῆς as well as other items which support the view that this is also an early account.

The pericope in the Fourth Gospel presents the reader with some new elements not in any other extant account in



documents today. They include the grouping of Bethany, Lazarus, Mary and Martha, and the anointing into one pericope, as well as a concentration on the characters themselves: Mary's act is extravagant ("the aroma filled the house"), Judas has an evil and antagonistic nature, and Lazarus, by his presence, is in danger.

The remaining elements are not hard to explain. John naturally omits the Markan ending as he proceeds to make a point meaningful to his contemporaries in his own way. Luke's contributions of the parable and Pharisee dispute are similarly ignored.<sup>1</sup> John does, however, reflect Mark's contribution of the closeness to the Passion as well as the inclination of tradition to fill in details.

### The Intent of John

#### Context

The context includes little that could be derived from Mark, the closest synoptic account. At best, we find a general Passion motif providing parallelism, and then with a different chronology. Thus, we are able to employ the Johannean context with little reservation, especially in view of its careful construction.

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<sup>1</sup>Once again, this would be true only if he knew that gospel, a theory with extremely little support in this pericope. Mary and Martha may have been part of a block of tradition, and the hair-wiping may only reflect the common origin of the two accounts.



The preceding context (chapter 11) is the raising of Lazarus. John has Jesus explicitly state its purpose: "It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it" (verse 4). Many of the Jews did end up believing (verse 45). Thus we have a tie with many other stories in the gospel which are called "signs" (11:47; 12:18). Their total effect is stated at the end of chapter 20 (which may have been the end of the gospel at one time): "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (verse 31). There is no doubt that Lazarus had the immediate realization of those words. John, however, portrays the chief priests and Pharisees as reacting to these signs by plotting Jesus' death (with Caiaphas' ironical prophecy as part of the plot).

Immediately following the anointing pericope Lazarus is included in the plot (verse 10). In fact, the crowds are surrounding Jesus as he enters Jerusalem because of the raising (verse 18). John has linked the Lazarus raising, the anointing at Bethany, and the entry to Jerusalem in the person of Lazarus (together with his sisters).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Raymond Brown, The Gospel According to John (1-xii) (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1966), p. 428. Brown reviews all that happens and finds John's account hard to believe because of (1) the constant change of scene from Jerusalem to Transjordan, Bethany, Ephraim, Bethany, and Jerusalem, and (2) the fact that the synoptists have no knowledge of Lazarus, although John says he is the reason for Jesus' popularity and the plot (12:9-11). It is the contention



## Text

John omits the breaking of the box; although Mark probably did not intend to mean all the ointment was used up, John gives not even a hint of such an interpretation. His addition about the aroma makes his point: it was an act lavish enough to attract immediate attention. The position of the note (verse 3) in the midst of the scene makes the allegorical understanding (that it is to be read equivalent to Mark 14:9) unlikely. With some ointment left, Jesus restrains Judas; his burial day will be coming, when it might also be used.<sup>3</sup> With his several bits of information about Judas, John completes his review of the characters involved, each of whom has been portrayed in greater detail than in the synoptic accounts.

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of this study, because these pericopae are introduced by John with the assumption that the people know them although they are not in the synoptics, that John is writing down a popular tradition, not a synthesis of the synoptic accounts or a conjecture. The elements which Brown sees as so difficult are precisely those which the fourth evangelist uses to make his point.

<sup>3</sup>John does not record that the ointment actually used at Jesus' burial came from Mary. Although some might see this as an argument against the suggestion that Jesus was intending her to keep it for that actual day, we must point out that by his unique positioning of the reference to burial immediately before the saying on the poor, John lessens its emphasis. One might read verses 7 and 8, "Leave her alone so that she might keep it for the day of my burial; for although you will always have the poor with you, you will not always have me."



### A Suggested Interpretation

At this crucial time before the Passion, John presents a three-fold drama to portray the two responses to Jesus' signs. In rapid sequence, Jesus raises Lazarus (the sign), is anointed at the banquet,<sup>4</sup> and is hailed as he enters Jerusalem, while the priests and Judas react with evil plotting. As examples for the readers, Martha serves Jesus the meal (the weakest example, to be sure), Mary anoints his feet (in an otherwise unexplainably extravagant act), and Lazarus is made co-victim with Jesus (primarily for being the cause of the increase of Jesus' popularity and following). Certainly Lazarus is the prime example and stands out in his situation as potential martyr. Judas, being so evilly inclined and under the sway of Satan (who takes full control at 13:27), sees only waste and another reason for leaving the company of Jesus.

Especially in view of the plotting and Jesus' (non-proleptic) reference to his coming death, the readers see the Passion in true perspective. It is the work of those who have no faith and who refuse to believe the signs. The proper response, rather, is to glorify God by being a witness

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<sup>4</sup>H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament und Midrasch (Dritte Auflage; Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), II, 162-163. They point out that since Jesus' feet were out behind him, it was a traditional Jewish banquet meal for a guest.



to the signs in the manner of Lazarus.<sup>5</sup> The parallels between Jesus and Lazarus point past suffering to life for those who believe in Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Bruce Vawter, "The Johannine Sacramentary," Journal of Theological Studies, XVII (1956), 158. He overstates the case when he writes, "The raising of Lazarus is a sign of the divine life which comes through faith in Christ (11:25f), a manifestation of the glory of God (11:4,40). So, I believe, is the anointing at Bethany." Certainly, though, the anointing is a true response of the life in Christ.

<sup>6</sup>Although πιστεύω is a word used throughout the New Testament, it is never used with εἰς and the accusative in the synoptics for faith in Jesus! This Johannine preference is found six times in the chapters under consideration (10:42; 11:45,48; 12:11,37,42), remarkable even for the Fourth Gospel.



## CHAPTER IX

### SUMMARY

From the study before us of the anointing of Jesus, we have found that Mark probably employed a story circulating as a unit with a saying about the poor. By placing it in the Passion context and linking the anointing proleptically to Jesus' coming burial, Mark evidently intended to portray Jesus as the epitome of the righteous poor one, the obedient servant of the Psalms. In all likelihood Matthew relied on Mark's account, strengthening the proleptic element, editing poor Greek constructions, and opting for his own stylistic traits. He also reflects the development of tradition and a later understanding of "gospel."

Employing a tradition of the same event which had been handed down independently, Luke places it in a setting typical of his gospel. In a Pharisee-conflict context he emphasizes the contrast between Jesus' reception of penitent sinners to the stern encounter with the more self-respectful in this world.

John apparently knew a basic story, which he outlines at 11:2. He relied on it over any synoptic account he may have known. Although similar to Luke's account, the story proceeds in a different sequence. Mark's account was recognizable enough as a variant to warrant using some of his vocabulary. This is more probable than the solution which



would have two strands of oral tradition both coincidentally including such unusual wording.

A study of John's introductions has shown that John was refreshing his readers' minds about a story of non-synoptic origin. Therefore, although a story based on the same saying found at Mark 14:7 and with a point about the response of faith similar to Luke's account, in John it is first a story known by independent tradition with the possibility of yet another lesson for the faithful.

We cannot on the basis of this pericope alone say any more about the use of Luke than that he and John have several elements unique to their gospels. John's elaborate grouping of Lazarus, Bethany, and the sisters suggests he has a more highly developed tradition than Luke. The contribution Luke may have made would be unrecoverable, then, to the text critic.

The person of Lazarus links his raising, the anointing, and the entry to Jerusalem. John has accented the people involved and his typical use of the term "sign" to point up how the faithful should react to Jesus' gift of life, in spite of the dangers involved. He has employed the account to introduce the Passion with a resurrection and the proper response to it, as he will later emphasize the glorification and victory of Christ over the suffering of his cross, and seek a response of faith to these also.



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