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THE JEWS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Professor J. C. O'Neill

Ted Russell, the first editor of this journal, had a sharp eye for the significant, and it was no accident that Issue 2 of January 1980 contained George Appleton's lecture on the Jewishness of Jesus,¹ and that in Volume 3 for April 1983 we find the editor himself labelling as wishful thinking the Living Bible translation of John 1.17: "For Moses gave us only the Law with its rigid demands and merciless justice, while Jesus Christ brought us loving forgiveness as well."²

I offer in his honour an argument designed to rescue the originally published Fourth Gospel from the charge of being anti-Jewish, a charge to which it seems so obviously liable. The argument is simple. Most of the incidents of the words *the Jews* in John's Gospel are pointless additions to the narratives; the story itself makes no use of the expressions and in no way calls for the additions. The only point of the words derives from the supposed needs of later readers: but not the polemical needs of the later readers so much as their natural assumption that they are reading of some exotic culture now existing only as a marginal phenomenon in their society. I do not deny that the attempt to meet these needs of the readers is anti-Jewish, but I do not think it is an organized polemic, the "technical term" of an imagined author. In short, I reject the notion that the words *the Jews* (at least in the majority of cases) belong to the fabric of the Fourth Gospel, and I also reject the notion that they represent the conscious device of an author.

The evidence for this hypothesis consists of two different sorts. Each sort supports the conclusion suggested by the other sort, which naturally raises the probability that the argument as a whole is likely to be true. The first sort is an argument from the demands of the narrative itself whereby I shall try to show that the words *the Jews* are in no way intrinsic to the story; they are redundant. The second sort is an argument from the state of the textual tradition. The

¹ *IBS* 2 (1980) 27-39

² E. A. Russell, "Fidelity or Wishful Thinking in recent New Testament Translation?", *IBS* 3 (1981) 93-105.

textual tradition often throws up examples of (a) manuscripts that read the words *the Jews* where the better manuscripts do not have them—a powerful support for the hypothesis that scribes had a tendency to put in the words; (b) manuscripts that omit the words *the Jews* where the presumed better manuscripts offer us the words—and this, in view of what we know of the history of the church from Marcion onwards, is not likely to be a scribal tendency to omit but rather a scribal tendency to add which has captured the tradition in most of its branches; and (c) manuscripts that show that the position of the words *the Jews* in their context is uncertain—the frequent sign that we should suspect the words of being a gloss.

1. A Feast of the Jews &c.

The information that a certain feast was a feast of the Jews is entirely unnecessary in a Gospel that refers naturally to Moses lifting up a serpent in the wilderness, or to chief priests, or to Jerusalem as where feasts are celebrated. The reader needed to know that it was feast time and not some other time or what feast it was, but the note of *the Jews* is quite unnecessary. Take away the words of *the Jews* and the like in the following cases, and nothing at all is lost: 2.6,13; 3.1; 5.1; 6.4; 7.2; 11.55. The textual evidence that the words were added by scribes is strong.

2.6 (c) Transposition: standing according to the cleansing of the Jews] p⁶⁶ p⁷⁵ according to the cleansing of the Jews standing; \aleph * omits *standing*. The pertinent information is that the jars were standing there for the purification ceremonies. That the Jews had these ceremonies is irrelevant to the story. The transposition in the papyri probably shows that an original gloss got into the text in two different positions. The omission in \aleph is perhaps a sign that the words of *the Jews* were added, forcing the dropping of *standing*.

2.13: And near was the Passover of the Jews. Simply, passover was near. A reader who knew what pascha was would not need *of the Jews*; 579 felt the difficulty and added *the feast of the Jews*, following the example of 6.4.

3.1: Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus has already been identified as one of the Pharisees. In the story, he is called *a teacher of Israel* (3.10; the article is indefinite, as the AV knew) and nothing

is said about his position of ruler. The information seems derived from John 7.50. Omit *a ruler of the Jews*.

5.1 (b) Omission. a feast of the Jews] A feast of unleavened bread; 131 adds: the [feast of] tabernacles, following 7.2. The Synoptic tradition that Jesus only went to Jerusalem once during his ministry, at Passover, would have helped produce the majority reading. It was bad enough that Jesus went up to another Passover apart from the one at which he was crucified (John 2.13; cf. 6.4). Λ is probably right.

6.4 (b) Omission: Passover was near, a feast of the Jews. See 2.13; the explanatory words after *pascha* are unnecessary. The verse is not in 472.

7.2: there was near the feast of the Jews, Tabernacles. The nominative *Tabernacles* could stand alone (Josephus, *Antiquities* 8.123; 11.154; 13.372; 15.50). The more common expression would have been *the feast of Tabernacles* with *Tabernacles* a dependent genitive (LXX). Take *the feast of the Jews* as an unnecessary gloss, and translate: Tabernacles was near.

11.55 (b) Omission: There was near the Passover of the Jews] Syriac Sinaiticus omits *of the Jews*. Translate: Passover was near.

18.12: and the servants of the Jews. Clearly *of the Jews* is a gloss. A scribe thought $\chi\iota\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha\rho\chi\omicron\varsigma$ might be mistaken for a Roman centurion so he explained that the assistants were of the Jews.

18.20 (c) Transposition. The words of Jesus: I always taught in the synagogue and in the temple where all [*or always*] the Jews come together, and in secret I said nothing] 1093 transposes the words *the Jews* to a position after *come together*. The present text is ludicrous, the point being, not that Jews come together but that all gather.

19.6 (a) Addition. Family 13 adds the unnecessary information that the high priests were high priests of the Jews, a patent gloss.

19.20 (c) Transposition. The superscription many read of the Jews] D: many of the Jews read. There is no point in specifying the nationality of the readers of the superscription on the cross; the point is that *many* read it because the place where they crucified Jesus was near the city. Omit *of the Jews*.

19.21a (b) Omission. so spoke to Pilate the chief priest of the Jews] 477 473 ff² Syriac Tatian omit *of the Jews*. Unnecessary information.

19.40: as is the custom with the Jews to prepare for entombment. There is no point in labelling it a Jewish custom; the point is that the body was properly prepared for placing in a tomb.

19.42 (b) Omission: because of the day of preparation of the Jews] Old Latin b ff² n r Syriac Sinaiticus and Peshitta omit *of the Jews*. The story only requires the reference to the Friday and a reader who knew the term would not need a note that this was a Jewish term. The readers a scribe had in mind might.

2 For fear of the Jews

There are three references to people acting in a defensive way for fear of the Jews; some people hold back from following Jesus (7.13; 19.38) and the disciples in Jerusalem after the crucifixion keep the doors shut for fear of the Jews. The actual phrase *for fear of the Jews* is found in Esther 8.17, as Walter Bauer pointed out.³ In Esther, many of the citizens of the empire of Ahasuerus, which stretched from India to Ethiopia, became Jews for fear of the Jews, when Esther won light and gladness and joy and honour for her people. But that was a situation where the Jews were living in a foreign setting and the fear in John's Gospel was simply fear of the dominant people, who, like those who were afraid, were all Jews. Nothing is added to the narrative by saying that those who were afraid were afraid of Jews. It looks as though a scribe noted the parallel in Esther 8.17 and inserted the words required to make up a stock phrase.

7.12-13 The people were divided but no one dared to speak openly about him for fear.

9.22 (see below)

19.38 Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Jesus, but in secret because of fear.

20.19 The doors were shut because of fear.

³ *Das Johannesevangelium*, Handbuch zum NT 6, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1925) at John 7.13. p. 105.

3. Jerusalemites become Jews

There are two places where the actors in the story are from Jerusalem, which is important; scribes have turned that reference into a reference to their being Jews.

1.19 (c) Transposition. when they sent to him, the Jews from Jerusalem, priests and Levites] 124 Syriac Sinaiticus and Curetonian transpose and read: when they sent to him, from Jerusalem, the Jews [sent] priests and Levites. There was no need to specify who did the sending; the important issue is that the ones who were sent to John the Baptist came from Jerusalem. The scribe who added the words in the margin (that have come to be lodged in two different places in the text) meant to indicate the ruling Jews, but that is quite unnecessary in the story, where Jerusalem carries all the menace required. Translate: when they sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites.

11.19 (b) Omission. Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them for their brother] D reads: many of Jerusalem. The point of the story is that it occurred near Jerusalem and that the return of mourners, some of whom believed in Jesus, roused the leaders to take action against him. A reference here to Jews is senseless and only came about because scribes were accustomed to varnish the story with a certain quaintness of distance in which all the actors were labelled Jews.

The subsequent references to those who had come from Jerusalem to comfort the sisters as Jews are all glosses.

11.31 (b) Omission. The Jews who were with her in the house and were comforting her] Syriac Sinaiticus omits: the Jews who were with her in the house. The point is not that they were Jews but that they were comforting her.

11.33: Jesus therefore when he saw her crying and those who had come with her, Jews, crying... The point is not that they were Jews but that they had come with Mary as fellow mourners. Omit *Jews*.

11.36: Then said the Jews, See how he was loving him. The point is that some of the onlookers said this; others were to ask a sharp question in the next verse. The original subject of the verb *they said* was left open, and a scribal glossator has spoilt the story. Translate: Then they said.

11.45: Many therefore of the Jews who came to Mary and saw what he did believed in him. Some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. The fact that they were all Jews is irrelevant to the story; the true point is that many believed and others went back to Jerusalem to the authorities. Omit *of the Jews*.

11.54 (a) Omission. So Jesus no longer went about openly among the Jews] V reads: among them. The reference to the Jews is pointless since he continues to live among Jews, going no farther than Ephraim in Judaea; the true stress falls on the word *openly* and the reading of V fits very well: openly among them.

12.11 (c) Transposition. For many because of him [Lazarus] went off, of the Jews, and believed in Jesus] D reads: For many of the Jews because of him went off and believed in him; p⁶⁶ reads: For many of the Jews because of him believed in Jesus. The two positions of *of the Jews* in the tradition betray the fact that the words were originally a gloss. They add nothing to the story, being the work of a scribe who wanted to remind the readers that these events occurred long ago when the Jews inhabited their own land.

4. Jews as Ruling Jews

A great deal has been made of an alleged Johannine usage whereby *the Jews* is regarded as "almost a technical title for *the religious authorities, particularly those in Jerusalem, who are hostile to Jesus*."⁴ There is little doubt that a later scribe could have used the term to refer particularly to the religious leaders, quite conscious of the fact that everyone involved in the story was also ethnically a Jew. By convention in Hellenistic Greek a narrator can refer, for example, to the rulers as Romans in a narrative where all who dwell in Rome, patricians and plebians, are also called Romans (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ant 7.12.4,5; 13.1,5), but all is patently obvious in such a narrative. It is quite otherwise in the Fourth Gospel where the words *the Jews* are simply inserted without any narrative explanation. In chapter 7, for instance, the Jews of verse 11 are just anyone; the Jews of verse 13 are the rulers; and the Jews of verse 15 are those who marvel that an untaught man is learned. I find it

⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i-xii)*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. lxxi.

difficult to attribute this usage to the author of the story. An author would have made something of the play of forces, not using the one term *the Jews* to blur the differences of opinion between rulers and plebs, between some of the people and others. What we have in the Fourth Gospel is a patina of antiquarian scribal corruption laid over an original text which was perfectly clear without it. The scribes are describing the authorities as Jews and the people as Jews to remind the reader that this is a long past situation when the Jewish people had a homeland and a measure of self-government; but the gloss obscures the original narratives that require no such embellishment. The suggestion that the alleged author of the Gospel identified himself and his readers with the underdogs in the story because the author and his readers were up against a dominant Judaism is not likely because the stories often also receive the embellishment that many of the participants, both for and against Jesus, are labelled Jews too (for which see 5 below).

2.18: The Jews therefore answered and said to him, What sign do you show us that you do these things? The insertion of verse 17 has led a scribe to suggest a new subject since verse 17 was about the disciples. But verse 17 is an editorial insertion and the narrative used the link word οὖν to take the reader back to verse 16 and to those who were involved in the cleansing of the temple.⁵ There is no point in saying they were Jews. Translate: These [victims] therefore answered and said to him.

2.20: So the Jews said, Forty and six years was this temple a building. Again the reference to the Jews is pointless. It is Jesus' interlocutors who are questioning him, and that is all we need to know. Translate: So they said.

3.25: There arose therefore a dispute of the disciples of John with a Jew concerning cleansing and they came to John and said to him] p⁶⁶
ⲛⲥⲁ ⲑ family 1 family 13 565 the Latin Syriac Curetonian Bohairic
Origen read the plural: with Jews. Both the singular and the plural look like inept glosses. The glossator thought of the Jews as always arguing about ritual matters and introduced them here. The original story was surely about a dispute among the disciples of John about

⁵ W. Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*, on John 2.18, p. 45. Cf. John 11.3,14.

Jesus. Read: There arose therefore a dispute of the disciples of John and they came to John and said to him.

5.10: So the Jews said to the man healed. For a scribe any issue of the Sabbath involved Jews, but the specifying is beside the point to the original storyteller.

5.12 (a) Addition. The Old Latin adds that the Jews asked him, Who is the man who said to you, Arise and walk? An obvious gloss, but an example of a process that has also affected our better manuscripts, too.

5.15: The man went away and reported to the Jews that Jesus was the one who had made him whole. *W* adds after *to the Jews* the words *and he said to them*. I suspect that the longer text of *W* reveals the existence of an early gloss: *and he reported to the Jews*. Translate: The man went away and said to them that Jesus was the one who had made him whole.

5.16 (c) Transposition. And for this reason they began to persecute, the Jews, Jesus because he was doing these things on the sabbath] A Θ Ψ Textus Receptus e q Syriac Sinaiticus Harclean read: they began to persecute Jesus, the Jews, and they were seeking to kill him (cf. 5.18) because... This longer gloss shows that a shorter gloss consisting of the words *the Jews* was embedded in the text of all manuscripts.

5.18a (a) Addition. 579 reads: For this reason therefore the more persecuted the Jews Jesus; 1241 reads: For this reason therefore did they persecute Jesus, the Jews. The words *persecuted the Jews Jesus* make up another gloss, like 5.16.

5.18b (c) Transposition. For this reason therefore the more did they seek him, the Jews, to kill] p⁶⁶ D Tertullian Hilary: For this reason the more the Jews sought him to kill; W 1: For this reason the more sought him to kill, the Jews. The three positions of *the Jews* shows that originally it was a gloss. Translate: For this reason they sought the more to kill him.

7.1 (c) Transposition. for he did not wish in Judaea to walk, because they sought him, the Jews, to kill] 1093 reads: because they sought, the Jews, him to kill; 477 reads: because him the Jews sought to kill. The various positions of *the Jews* show that the words were originally a gloss; they add nothing to the story. It is very unlikely

that here *the Jews* means *the Judaeans* because the glossator goes on to speak of *the feast of the Jews* in 7.2.⁶

9.18: They did not believe, therefore, the Jews, about him, that he was blind. The story so far has made the Pharisees the inquisitors (8.13,16), but a scribe wanted to point out that they were powerful Jews; quite unnecessary, and contributing nothing to the narrative.

9.22a: These things said his parents because they were afraid of the Jews. See the discussion of *for fear of the Jews* above. The whole verse has suffered scribal contamination from a general belief that the Jews were the exotic people the story was about.

9.22b (b) Omission. For already had agreed the Jews that if anyone him should confess to be Messiah...] X 213 omit *the Jews*; instead of *the Jews* r and Syriac Sinaiticus have: the Pharisees and the scribes. It is obvious from the narrative that the alleged punishment of anyone who said Jesus was the messiah is a Jewish business; only a later scribe would feel the need to say so.

18.14: It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it was fitting that one man should die for the people. A curiously pointless addition by a scribe who wanted to remind the readers that the Jews, long ago, had their own council in Jerusalem. Who else would he have advised? Translate: It was Caiaphas who had advised that it was fitting that one man should die for the people.

18.31: There said to him, the Jews. Pilate has already been in dialogue with Jesus' accusers. This looks very like a scribal addition of a reference to the Jews because they are about to cite their own law.

18.36: My assistants would have fought so that I would not be given up to the Jews. The reference to the Jews looks very like a pedantic gloss. The only opportunity the disciples had, a scribe would reflect, was in the garden where Jesus was seized by the Temple police, so Jesus must have said they did not fight against the Jews (not the Romans). The reference is pointless and adds nothing to the narrative.

⁶ The theory that *the Jews* meant Judeans was argued by C. Dekker, "Grundschrift und Redaktion im Johannesevangelium", *NTS* 13 (1966-67), 66-80.

18.38 (b) Omission. And saying this [Pilate] again went out to the Jews and said to them] 71 omits *to the Jews*. The reference to the Jews is pointless, but the sentence would have been seen by a scribe as another opportunity to remind the reader that the death of Jesus was the work of the Jews, and not due to Pilate's hostility.

19.7 There answered him the Jews, We have a law. The reference to the law prompted a scribal gloss that the speakers were the leading Jews, the guardians of the law. Translate: They answered him, We have a law.

19.12b: But the Jews cried out saying, If this one you release you are not a friend of Caesar. There is no point in a reference to the Jews. The article can stand by itself at the beginning of a sentence; omit the one word *Jews*, and translate: And they cried out saying &c.

19.14: And he said to the Jews, Behold your king. The reference to the Jews as the audience is without point; a scribe has inserted the words because the original text contained the formula *The King of the Jews*.

19.31: So the Jews, since it was the day of preparation, in order that no bodies should remain on the cross on the sabbath...asked Pilate. To our mind, a change of subject would require a new noun to signify of whom the author was speaking; on that line of reasoning, *the Jews*, or something similar, was needed. Greek, however, can indicate a change of subject by beginning with a simple article: οἱ οὖν, those then. There is curious evidence that *the Jews* is a gloss in that minuscule 660 repeats the article before the noun: οἱ οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. That scribe seems to have taken a marginal reference to the Jews into the text without adjusting the grammar (cf. 7.11).

5. Jews as naturally disputatious

6.41: So murmured the Jew about him. The narrative from 6.22 onwards is about the crowd, and there is no reason to add any further information about them; the words *the Jews* have no point, except that the verb to murmur has appeared which, to a scribe, would suggest the well-known disputatious character of the Jews. The minuscule 69 omits *about him*, perhaps a sign that a gloss, *the Jews*, was allowed to displace part of the original text.

6.52 (c) Transposition. So they disputed with one another, the Jews, saying] p⁷⁵ C D Q family 1 family 13 33 565 1241 read: So they disputed, the Jews, with one another. Again, there is no point in the mention of *the Jews*, except that the glossator has noticed that here is another example of love of argument.

7.11: So the Jews were seeking him in the feast. There is a curious variant reading: οὐ οὐν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the minuscule 489 and the lectionary 185 (cf. 19.11) which suggests that the original did not have the words *the Jews*. The variant reading is the work of a scribe who copied the gloss wholesale into the text without making the grammatical adjustment of removing the second article. The addition of the words *the Jews* is pointless, except to a glossator who has detected the characteristic curiosity of the Jewish people.

7.15 (b) Variant. So they marvelled, the Jews, saying] 047 reads: So they marvelled, the crowds, saying. The variant is likely to be the original; there is no point in saying that the Jews did the marvelling, except to a scribe who thought the Jews were always disputing.

7.20 (a) Insertion. There answered the crowd, A demon you have] 489 reads: So they answered, the Jews, and said to him, A demon you have. A glossator has made a reference to the contentious crowd as Jews.

7.35: So there said the Jews to themselves, Where is this one about to go? & Old Latin omit *to themselves*. The reference to the Jews is pointless, except to a scribe who thought of them as argumentative.

8.9 (a) Insertion. But those who heard went away one by one] D reads: But each of the Jews went away. A pointless addition showing the scribal tendency to drag in the word *Jews*.

8.13 (a) Insertion. There said therefore to him the Pharisees] 938 1689 read *Jews* for *Pharisees*. The scribes had a tendency in this Gospel to generalize all opponents as Jews.

8.19 (a) Insertion. The minuscule 1200 reads: They said therefore to him, the Jews. Another pointless gloss by a scribe who knew Jews were argumentative.

8.22: They said therefore, the Jews, Will not he kill himself, because he says, Where I go you are not able to come? The reference to the Jews is pointless, except to a scribe who has already made them ask a similar question in John 7.35.

8.25 (a) Insertion. Tatian and the Syriac Peshitta read: They said therefore, the Jews (omitting *to him*). An obvious gloss.

8.31 So spoke Jesus to those believing in him, Jews. At first sight this is a surprisingly favourable reference to Jews: they believed in Jesus. However, the addition of the word *Jews* is the usual pointless reference, and a scribe only thought to add it because he had observed that the same people are accused, in verse 37, of seeking to kill Jesus. He could not resist putting in a hostile marker of what is yet to come: these believers won't last. The true narration read: So spoke Jesus to those believing in him.

8.33 (a) Insertion. They answered him] N Λ 4 33 69 124 213 262 1071 1093 1555 add *the Jews* after *him*; 579 has just *Jews* in the same place; 1241 has *the Jews* after *answered*. Another pointless gloss—except to scribes who have an interest in reminding the readers that they are reading about an exotic folk, the Jews.

8.41 (a) Insertion. They said to him] 1188 adds *the Jews*.

8.48: There answered the Jews and said to him, Do we not well say that you are a Samaritan. The scribe who inserted *the Jews* was prompted by the following reference to the accusation that Jesus was the illegitimate offspring of a Samaritan soldier; such a reference was not required by the narrative and really adds nothing.

8.52: There said to him the Jews, Now we know that you have a demon; Abraham died... The long dispute is of course a Jewish dispute; only a scribe would feel the need to add a reference to the speakers as Jews.

8.57: There said therefore the Jews to him. Again *the Jews* are named the speakers because the dialogue is about Abraham. The words are pointless, except to a later scribe.

10.19 (b) Omission; (c) Transposition. A division again arose among the Jews because of these words] 213 X read: A division again arose among the crowd; D 33 1241 r Bohairic Syriac Sinaiticus transpose: A division (again) among the Jews arose. The discourse had got on well enough without any specification of the nature of the people in the audience. Only a scribe, who thought of the Jews as a disputatious race would want to add a note that they were Jews. The evidence of both omission and transposition shows that the reference to the Jews was originally a gloss.

10.24: They therefore surrounded him, the Jews, and said to him. Jesus was in Jerusalem, and a scribe thought it nice for his readers to be reminded that the disputatious Jews are again the subject of the story; the original story needed only a crowd.

10.31 (b) Omission. They took up again stones, the Jews, to stone him] W 1242 Syriac Sinaiticus omit *the Jews*. The story required no specification of who wanted to stone Jesus; in a scribe's eyes, the behaviour was typical.

10.33: There answered him the Jews, For a good work we do not stone you but for blasphemy. Nothing is added by the reference to the Jews. A scribe noted the charge of blasphemy and reminded the reader that the action was taking place long ago among the Jews, for whom such a charge was typical.

10.39 (a) Addition. 69 reads: They sought therefore him again, the Jews, to seize; the Old Latin c adds *the Jews* after *to seize*. Both are the common stylized gloss.

11.8 (c) Transposition. Rabbi, now seek they you to stone, the Jews] Θ U family 1 4 22 477 565 579 1241 put *the Jews* before *to stone*, a sure sign that a gloss has become embedded in the text. The reference to the Jews adds nothing to the narrative.

12.9 (c) Transposition. There knew, therefore, the great crowd of the Jews that there he was] 700 transposes *great crowd* after *of the Jews*. The reference to the crowd's being made up of Jews is the work of a glossator, betrayed by the two positions the gloss has found in the text.

13.1 (a) Insertion. The first hand of ✠ offers the surprising information: Having loved the Jews who are in the world. A sheer slip.

13.33 (c) Transposition. You sought me, and as I said to the Jews, Where I go] 348 1093 1241 1279 read: And as I said to the Jews, you sought me because where I go. The reference back to 7.33-34; 8.21 is scarcely the work of an evangelist who puts in knowing asides for the Christian reader of the Gospel.⁷ This is the construction of a marginal annotator who adds nothing to the story

⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (xiii-xxi)*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1966, on John 13.33 at p. 607.

except a certain learned polish. The fact that the note is lodged in two positions confirms the decision to take *the Jews* as a gloss.

6. Genuine references to the Jews

There are a number of genuine references to the Jews. The dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman depends on the distinction, and the word *Jew* occurs at 4.9 (twice) and 4.22. The statement that salvation is of the Jews (4.22) stands like a rock in the sea of secondary scribal glosses referring to the Jews. Pilate is reported as saying to Jesus, who dared to question him about the charge brought against him, "Am I a Jew?" The implication is that Jesus is a Jew.

The formula *The King of the Jews*, which occurs in 18.33,39; 19.3,19,21b is genuine. There is one reference, however, in which the textual evidence shows that even here there was a tendency to add.

19.21c (b) Omission. but that that one said, King am I of the Jews] 477 reads the emphatic *I* in place of *of the Jews*; B L Ψ 33 transpose *of the Jews* after the verb. The original probably just put emphasis on the self-claim. The reading of 477 and the different position of the reference to the Jews in B and the others indicates that the reference to the Jews was a gloss.

7. The Fourth Gospel assumes Jesus was a faithful Jew

Jesus and his disciples quite naturally keep the statutory feasts in the appropriate manner (2.23; 4.45; 7.8,10,11,14,37; 11.56; 12.12,20; 13.1,29). Jesus' disciples and others call him Rabbi (1.38,49; 3.2, cf. 26; 4.31; 6.25; 9.2; 11.8; 20.16). Jesus speaks of the patriarchs as *our fathers* (4.20; 6.31) or *the fathers* (7.22). He argues from the Law, assuming the Law to be the common authority accepted by him and his opponents (5.39,45-47; 7.19, 22-23; 10.34-36).

Nevertheless, here too, we find a scribal tendency to make the fathers and the Law the possessions of the enemies of Christianity by adding words like *their* and *your*.

6.31 (b) Omission. our fathers] 69* 489 read: your fathers; 047 omits *our*.

6.49 (b) Omission. your fathers] 69 lectionary 181 reads: our fathers.

O'Neill, *The Jews in the Fourth Gospel*, *IBS* 18, April 1996

6.58 (b) Omission. not as the fathers ate] D Θ Ψ 1250 family 1 family 13 e Majority read: your fathers; 69? lectionary 181 read: our fathers.

8.17: and it is written in your law. There is no textual variant here, but the argument requires that Jesus be appealing to a standard accepted by both him and his opponents. The word *your* looks very like a scribal gloss that has captured the manuscript tradition. Conjecture: our law.

10.34 (b) Omission. is not written in your law] 245 reads: is not written in the law of Moses; p⁴⁵ ⋈* D Θ 1170 1242 Old Latin Syriac Sinaiticus Cyprian read: is not written in the law.

15.25 (b) Omission. the word which in their law is written] p^{66*vid} reads: the word which is written; A Θ 065 family 13 and the majority transpose the words, which suggests that they were originally a gloss: the word which is written in their law. Translate: the word that is written.

19.7 (b) Omission. according to our law] p^{66*} ⋈ B D^s L N W Δ Ψ Old Latin read: according to the law.

8. But is not the absence of such references to the Jews in the Synoptics a sign of a Johannine editorial tendency?

Acts and John's Gospel are both marked by a tendency to use the expression *The Jews*. Is that not a sign that an editorial hand has been at work? Acts is a separate question, but the contrast between the Fourth Gospel and the other three may have another and a simpler explanation. In the Synoptic Gospels there is relatively little dialectic. When there is controversy, the Synoptic Gospels almost always specify who Jesus' opponents are, using terms like Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, High Priests, Elders, Scribes and the like. It is certain of the scribes who wonder whether Jesus is not blaspheming when he forgives the paralytic (Matt 9.3; Mark 2.6; Luke 5.21); it is Pharisees who raise the question about plucking corn on the sabbath (Matt 12.2; Mark 2.24; Luke 3 6.2); it is Pharisees and scribes who raise the issue of defilement (Matt 15.1; Mark 7.1; Luke 11.37); it is the Pharisees and the Herodians who raise the question of tribute money (Matt 22.15; Mark 12.13; cf. Luke 20.20); and it is the Chief Priests, the Elders and the scribes who hand Jesus over to Pilate

(Matt 27.1; Mark 15.1; Luke 23.1). These specific terms are largely absent from John. John also has a far higher proportion of dialogue, cut and thrust, with plenty of opportunities for a scribe to put in a reference to the Jews because most of the opponents are simply *They*. It is worth noting that in the one reference in Luke to the Jews, Luke 7.3: They sent to him elders of the Jews, Chrysostom does not read *of the Jews*. Even this one reference may well have been a gloss.

However, if the Synoptic Gospels do not provide much scope for a scribe who wanted to insert an antiquarian reference to the Jews, their textual tradition is subject to similar forces. In references to scribes, synagogues, the law and the fathers the little word *their* is often added, suggesting that scribes, synagogues, law and fathers were not the possession also of the first disciples. There is one case in Luke where our better printed texts do not have *their*, but the tendency to add is illustrated by a variant reading 5:21 (their scribes: Γ 16 477 1216 1579).

The evidence for the omission of *their* is as follows:

Matt 7.29 (C* L 265 565 700 1010 1424 Majority); 10.17 (W aur).

Mark 1.23 (L 579 Bohairic); 1.39 (D 4 245 b c ff² t; of the Jews 713 1082 1391).

Luke 4.15 (D a b d l Sahidic^{ms}); 4.29 (579 Bohairic^{mss}); 5.30 (⋈ D F X 118 1215 e d f ff² l Syriac Peshitta Sahidic Bohairic); 6.23 (your: 713 1424 2643 lectionary 158); 6.26 (p^{75vid} B 700* 1241 Syriac Sinaiticus Sahidic; your: 69 472 1009 1192); 22.66 (475 577 1342 lectionary 184); 23.1 (D 063 69 713 903 1242 1424 lectionaries 48 211 292 e Syriac Sinaiticus and Curetonian).

9. Conclusion

All we know of the history of the church would lead us to suppose that anti-Jewish feeling would grow rather than diminish. The synagogue expelled Christians, and Christians became more and more of Gentile origin, liable to share the anti-Jewish sentiments of their compatriots. Marcion formalised tendencies that were already at work.

I have been arguing that the Fourth Gospel was originally a collection of episodes that assumed Jesus and the disciples were faithful Jews caught up in sharp dialogue with their fellow Jews. The

hostile references to Jews, largely encapsulated in the term *The Jews*, for the most part look like scribal glosses rather than integral parts of the original narratives. This exegetical argument is buttressed by an argument drawn from the history of the text of the Fourth Gospel. There are eleven cases above where our printed texts do not give *The Jews*, but where some scribes added the expression. In our printed texts, there are thirteen cases above where there is some manuscript evidence for the omission of the term, and another thirteen cases where the transposition of the term suggests that originally it was a gloss, nearly one third of all examples in our printed texts. The history of the church would not lend much support to the hypothesis that the scribal tendency was to omit hostile references to the Jews, so that we must read the evidence the other way: the scribes tended to add the expression. That conclusion raises the probability that, in the cases where the majority of manuscripts offer us the reading, we are justified in conjecturing that the reading was the result of scribal contamination and that the words did not belong in the earliest copies of the Fourth Gospel. Any theories about John's Gospel that start from a supposed hostility in that Gospel to the Jews as an organised body over against the church are probably based on a series of unfortunate late scribal corruptions.

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