


ARTICLE

The Beloved Eyewitness

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Abstract

In 1963, *New Testament Studies* published an article by Pierson Parker in which he argued that the commonalities of the Third and Fourth Gospels result from direct contact between their respective authors. This article strengthens Parker's case. It highlights additional patterns of commonality between the two Gospels. It demonstrates that these areas of commonality align with events in the Fourth Gospel allegedly experienced by the Beloved Disciple. It considers the best explanation of this phenomenon.

Keywords: Beloved Disciple; eyewitness testimony; Fourth Gospel; Gospel of Luke; ἀυτόπται

In 1963, *New Testament Studies* published an article by Pierson Parker in which he argued that the commonalities of the Third and Fourth Gospels result from direct contact between their respective authors.¹ This article will strengthen Parker's case by developing three points. First, commonalities between the Third and Fourth Gospels are more substantial and more significantly patterned than Parker suggested, indicating a consistent preference by the Third Evangelist for Johannine material over Markan material. Second, this Johannine material favoured by the Third Evangelist aligns with events in the Fourth Gospel allegedly experienced by the Beloved Disciple. Third, this pattern is least consistent with Fourth Evangelist's use of the Third Gospel as a written source, more consistent with the Third Evangelist's use of a primitive Johannine account, and most consistent with the Third Evangelist's use of the Beloved Disciple as a living source.

1. Commonalities Between the Third and Fourth Gospels

Parker highlighted that the Third and Fourth Gospels exclusively share many incidental features: a focus on several named persons (e.g. Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary the mother of Jesus); a focus on Jerusalem, Samaria, the temple, the priesthood and John the Baptist's ministry;² an allegedly historiographical interest, focusing on truth, testimony and eyewitness criteria (c.f. Luke 1.2, Acts 1.21; John 15.27). Recent publications have brought additional commonalities to the surface, especially between the Passion narratives of the two Gospels.³ Starting in 22.3, the Third Gospel states that Satan enters

1 P. Parker, 'Luke and the Fourth Evangelist', *NTS* 9 (1963) 317–36.

2 Parker, 'The Fourth Evangelist', 335.

3 These and others are listed/discussed in F. L. Cribbs, 'St. Luke and the Johannine Tradition', *JBL* 90 (1971) 422–50; H. Klein, 'Die lukanisch-johanneische Passionstradition', *ZNW* 67 (1976) 155–86; B. Shellard 'The

Judas, a comment only shared with the Fourth Gospel, almost verbatim (13.2, 27). The Third and Fourth Gospels place Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial in the Upper Room as opposed to en route to the Mount of Olives, as in the other Synoptics. Luke 22.33, like John 13.37 and unlike the other Synoptics, records Peter's declaration that he is willing to die for Jesus. Only Luke 22.32 and John 21.15–17 speak of Peter's restoration, addressing Simon with a surname in both accounts. The First and Second Gospels have Peter's second denial addressed to a servant girl, while the Third and Fourth Gospels agree together against this (Luke 22.60; John 18.25). Only the Third and Fourth Gospels record that Peter cuts off the servant's *right* ear (Luke 22.50; John 18.10). The Third and Fourth Gospels agree that Jesus frequently visited the Garden of Gethsemane. Luke 22.39 ('as was his custom') is comparable to John 18.2 ('for Jesus often met there with his disciples') and, as F. Lamar Cribbs notes, 'it is indicative of Luke's familiarity with a tradition that told of a greater acquaintance of Jesus with Jerusalem than is to be gained from the Matthean/Markan outline of Jesus' ministry'.⁴ Only the Third and Fourth Gospel record Pilate's threefold declaration of Jesus' innocence (Luke 23.4, 15, 22; John 18.38; 19.4, 6). Both John 19.1–3 and Luke 23.10–16 place Jesus' scourging and mocking prior to his death sentence by Pilate rather than afterwards as in Matt 27.24–31 and Mark 15.15–20.

This contributes to a larger pattern. According to Parker's analysis, the Fourth Gospel sides with the First Gospel only twenty-six times, with the Second Gospel only nineteen times, and with the First and Second Gospels against the Third Gospel twenty-three times. *Yet the Third and Fourth Gospels side together against the First and Second Gospels 124 times.*⁵ Cribbs, in his most suggestive article on the topic, notes several trends between the Third and Fourth Gospels that are not readily explained by the Fourth Gospel's dependence on the former but rather by the Third Evangelist's use of a Johannine tradition.⁶ First, while the Fourth Gospel contains 'innumerable disagreements, additions, subtractions, and inexplicable departures'⁷ from the Synoptics, the areas of agreement are found almost entirely in the most primitive kerygmatic portions of the traditions, especially narratives concerning John the Baptist and the passion/resurrection. Second, in respect to the forty-five pericopae that the Third Gospel shares only with the other Synoptics, the Lukan account sometimes diverges from one or the other, but it rarely disagrees with both. Yet in respect to the twenty pericopes the Third Gospel shares with all three other Gospel writers (cf. Luke 3.1–6, 15–17, 21–2; 7.36–9; 9.10–17, 18–20; 19.35–40, 45–6; 22.14–23, 31–4, 47–53, 54–62, 63–71; 23.1–5, 13–25, 26–32, 33–8, 46–9, 50–6; 24.1–11), the Third Evangelist consistently makes significant changes to the Synoptic counterparts (except for the Temple Cleansing, Luke 19.45–6). The Third Evangelist redacts these passages more severely than he does with the Markan/Matthean traditions; these redactions create frequent agreements with the Fourth Gospel against the other Synoptics but also middle positions between the Markan/Matthean and Johannine narratives. Lastly, the Third Evangelist omits details from the other Synoptics that disagree with Johannine accounts. Cribbs lists the following occasions: Matt 16.13/Mark 8.27 with John 6.24; Matt 17.9–13/Mark 9.9–13 with John 1.21; Matt 21.8/Mark 11.8 with John 12.13; Matt 21.9/Mark 11.10 with John 12.13b; Matt 26.35/Mark 14.31 with John

Relationship of Luke and John: A Fresh Look at an Old Problem', *JTS* 46 (1995) 71–98; M. Matson, *In Dialogue with Another Gospel? The Influence of the Fourth Gospel on the Passion Narrative of the Gospel of Luke* (SBL Dissertation Series 187; Atlanta: SBL, 1998).

⁴ Cribbs, 'Johannine Tradition', 443.

⁵ Parker, 'The Fourth Evangelist', 331 (emphasis original).

⁶ Cribbs, 'Johannine Tradition'; see Matson's comments, *In Dialogue*, 78.

⁷ F. L. Cribbs, 'A Reassessment of the Date of Origin and the Destination of the Gospel of John', *JBL* 89 (1970) 38–55, at 39. As an aside, J. A. T. Robinson refers to this article as 'the weightiest statement so far of the case for an early date [of John]' (*Redating the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1976) 308).

13.37–8; Matt 26.56/Mark 14.50 with John 18.15; Matt 26.65–6/Mark 14.63–5 with John 18.19–24; Matt 26.74/Mark 14.71 with John 18.26–7; and Matt 27.14/Mark 15.5 with John 18.33–8.⁸

As Marion L. Soards says, ‘The greatest differences between Luke and Mark may be the result of Luke’s strongest motives for writing his Gospel’,⁹ and, as Barbara Shellard argues, these patterns may reflect the claim of the Lukan prologue to order his account (καθεξῆς, 1.3) so as to provide certainty (ἀσφάλεια, 1.4) to Theophilus. As Perry suggests, ‘When two sources have divergent accounts ... he [the Third Evangelist] is perhaps more likely to compare and select that which seems the more reliable.’¹⁰ It is possible, indeed, that the Third Evangelist wrote his Gospel in part to parse out the Markan/Matthean and Johannine differences in the traditions, although this is only conjecture. It remains to be explained, however, why the Third Evangelist generally prefers Johannine accounts to Markan/Matthean counterparts.

Concerning the Lukan and Johannine Passion narratives, Hans Klein believes both authors rely on an independent written tradition.¹¹ Shellard and Mark A. Matson argue that Luke relies on a written Johannine template.¹² Many prefer to view the general Lukan/Johannine relationship as driven by oral traditions.¹³ Given the full scope of shared data between the two Gospels, this oral relationship would have to be particularly strong. Pierson Parker makes the following remark:

Luke and the Fourth Evangelist, then, were men of widely different personality and training; and they wrote in complete independence of each other. Yet constantly they show knowledge of the same traditions, or allude to the same concepts. Oral tradition will account for this; but it must be an oral tradition much fuller, much more definitive, than that which relates John to the other gospels. There is one way in which the Luke-John relationship could have arisen, and it is difficult to conceive of any other. We must posit two evangelists, of quite variant temperaments, working long in the same areas, hearing the same words about their Lord, perhaps participating in the same discussions; then each, remembering these things in his own way and digesting them in his own way, put his record down. In other words, the Fourth Evangelist must somewhere, some time, have been associated with Luke in the Christian missionary enterprise.¹⁴

2. Favoured Information and the Experiences of the Beloved Disciple

Most significant to Parker’s suggestion – although unnoticed by Johannine scholars to the present – is the link between pericopae wherein the Third Evangelist prefers Johannine information and the places that the Beloved Disciple is said or implied to be an eyewitness in the Fourth Gospel (1.35–40; 13.23–6; 19.25–7, 35; 20.2–10; 21.2, 7, 20–4).

⁸ Cribbs, ‘Johannine Tradition’, 447.

⁹ M. Soards, *The Passion According to Luke: The Special Material of Luke 22* (JSNTSup 14; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987) 123. Quoted by Shellard, ‘Fresh Look’, 96.

¹⁰ A. M. Perry, *The Sources of Luke’s Passion Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1919), 5.

¹¹ Klein, ‘Passionstradition’; cf. the comments by Matson, *In Dialogue*, 44–5.

¹² Shellard, ‘A Fresh Look’, 91–8; Matson, *In Dialogue*, 446–8.

¹³ E. Osty, ‘Les points de contact entre le récit de la Passion dans saint Luc et saint Jean’, *Mélanges Jules Lebreton*, vol. 1 (Recherches de Science Religieuse 39; Paris: Aux Bureaux de la Revue, 1951), 146–54, esp. 153–4; R. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982) 166–75; cf. comments of reviewers to Matson, *In Dialogue*: M. Patella, *CBQ* 64 (2002) 584–5; J. A. Trumbower, *The Journal of Religion* 82 (2002) 620–1.

¹⁴ Parker, ‘The Fourth Evangelist’, 336.

The first instance is a brief narrative that takes place in Bethany in which the Beloved Disciple is implicitly introduced as a follower of John the Baptist.¹⁵ This pericope (John 1.34–42) describes the first encounter between two of the Baptist's disciples and Jesus. One of these disciples, Andrew, is named in the text (1.40), while the other remains anonymous. Surprisingly, this early yet anonymous eyewitness to Jesus here cannot be Peter, since Peter is introduced to Jesus by Andrew in the following verse (1.41). Why should that anonymous disciple take this role of primacy alongside Andrew, a position otherwise given to Peter in the calling narratives of Mark 1.16–20 and Matt 4.18–22? The likely answer is that this character is the Beloved Disciple, one who remains anonymous throughout the Fourth Gospel and yet, according to its author, was the prime eyewitness (21.24) and one who is shown in this instance to meet the qualification of having been with Jesus 'from the beginning' (John 15.27).¹⁶

Several exclusive agreements of the Third and Fourth Gospels concern the Baptist and his ministry.¹⁷ For example, both Gospels draw attention to the Baptist's name (Luke 1.12, 60; John 1.6), both indicate his divine commission (Luke 1.5–25; John 1.6, 33), both provide more teachings from him than found in the other Synoptics (Luke 3.10, 18; John 1.19–36; 3.26), and both report concerns regarding the Baptist's potential status as messiah (Luke 3.15; Acts 8.25; John 1.19–25; 3.28). Although the other Synoptics have the Baptist receive reports about Jesus while imprisoned, both the Third and Fourth Gospel do not (John 3.26; Luke 7.17–19). Lastly, although the First and Second Gospels have Jesus identify the Baptist with Elijah (Mark 9.11–13; Matt 11.14, 17.13), the Fourth Evangelist has the Baptist deny this identification (1.21), while the Third Evangelist omits the Markan/Matthean comments concerning the incident.

After his introduction as a disciple of the Baptist, the Beloved Disciple next appears at various intervals of the passion narrative: first during the Last Supper, at which he famously reclines against Jesus (John 13.23–6), then probably as the disciple who was known to the high priest (18.15–16),¹⁸ then again at the cross with Jesus' mother (19.25–7, 35), then at the empty tomb (20.1–10) and finally during the resurrection appearance on the shore of the Lake of Galilee (21.2, 7, 20–4). These instances each parallel significant divergences that the Third Evangelist makes from the Mark/Matthean narratives in favour of the Johannine versions: the prediction of Peter's denial and Judas' betrayal; Peter's denial in the courtyard; Pilate's threefold declaration of Jesus' innocence and his indictment; the discoveries on Easter morning; and the account on the Lake of Galilee which has strong parallels to a pericope found in Luke 5.1–11.

15 Although the text only implies the identification, many scholars deem it probable: O. Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1976) 72–3; L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 136; B. J. Capper, "'With the Oldest Monks ...': Light from Essene History on the Career of the Beloved Disciple?", *JTS* 49 (1998) 1–55, at 6–8; R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017²) 127; D. Furlong, *The John Also called Mark: Reception and Transformation in Christian Tradition* (WUNT 11/518; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; 2020) 88; cf. the comment from Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 18.3 on the unnamed disciple as the Beloved Disciple.

16 These insights are derived from Bauckham's discussion in *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 127.

17 Parker, 'The Fourth Evangelist', 320.

18 Although the identification is not certain, many early commentators already assume it (e.g. Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 83.2; Theodore of Mopsuestia 233.23; Cyril of Alexandria 3.29.26–7, as cited by F. M. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960) 9). For the view among modern commentators, see D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 74–5; L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 666; A. J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004) 513; cf. the discussion in R. J. Myles and M. Kok, 'On the Implausibility of Identifying the Disciple in John 18:15–16 as a Galilean Fisherman', *NovT* 61 (2019) 367–85.

If we examine the nineteen occasions, as noted by Cribbs, in which the Third Evangelist deliberately moves away from Matthean/Markan pericopae whenever a Johannine counterpart is present, sixteen of these occur in places where the Beloved Disciple is implied to be present in the Fourth Gospel. This correspondence becomes more significant as we consider that the Beloved Disciple is only implied to be present in approximately thirty-two of the 879 verses in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁹

3. Why Favoured Information Aligns with Experiences of the Beloved Disciple

The pattern noted previously is at odds with the likelihood of the Fourth Evangelist's direct use of the Third Gospel as a written source. The Fourth Gospel shows a heavy inclination – as the Roman historians do – of associating 'truth' with 'fact/testimony'.²⁰ The passages in question (4.37; 5.31, 32; 7.18, 28; 8.13, 14, 16, 17, 26, 45, 46; 10.41; 16.7; 18.37, 37; 19.35, 35; 21.24) confirm its historical focus on the life, and especially the death, of Jesus at which the Beloved Disciple's eyewitness presence is emphasised. While Cato was the first Roman historian to make his own *veritas* the root of his credibility, the Fourth Gospel mirrors Cato in its reflections concerning the Beloved Disciple: 'This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true' (21.24).²¹ The Beloved Disciple is presented as a witness to key events (1:35–40; 13:23–26; 19:25–27, 35; 20:2–10; 21:2, 7, 20–24), and this presence corresponds to exactness of detail.²² It would be very strange, in light of this, for the Johannine author to rely on the Third Gospel almost entirely for the very events at which he places his key informant as eyewitness. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive of a method by which the Fourth Evangelist would peruse each Synoptic Gospel to find instances wherein the Lukan version differs from Markan/Matthean versions and only select those pericopae for his borrowing.

Less unusual would be a scenario whereby the Third Evangelist is culling portions of a primitive Johannine account for sections in which the Beloved Disciple is present and weighing these texts against his Markan/Matthean templates. Perhaps, in such a scenario, the Third Evangelist has reasons to believe that the Johannine text is more reliable in these instances, presumably because he believes the Beloved Disciple to be a trustworthy source; otherwise, it would be difficult to account for his consistent preference of the Beloved Disciple's testimony over his Mark/Matthean sources.

A small concern, however, is that in such a scenario the Third Evangelist does not treat the Johannine text similarly to the Markan/Matthean texts, which he incorporates at time almost verbatim. Rarely do the Third and Fourth Gospels align on syntactic or semantic levels. But, as Shellard correctly observes, Plutarch and other historians did not always treat their source materials similarly, and it is possible that the Third Evangelist used a written Johannine source for reference only while keeping a scroll of the Second Gospel (and maybe one of the First Gospel or of Q) unrolled before him.²³

19 Granted, the Beloved Disciple's presence can also be inferred in other portions (e.g. the Upper Room discourse), but the point remains that many portions of the Fourth Gospel omit the implication – and these are the very portions with which the Third Evangelist shares little material.

20 For example, truth in this juridical sense features prominently throughout the Roman historians Livy, Tacitus and Suetonius as well as the rhetorician Quintilian. As referring to fact: Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.39; Suetonius, *Cal.* 12.3; Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.7.8. Regarding testimony: Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.1; Liv. 42. 23.6; 35.8.7; 40.54.8; Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.17.29, 36; 6.1.43; Suetonius, *Jul.* 56.4, *Galb.* 7.2. Truthfulness in terms of sincerity: Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.32; Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.2.25, as sincerity (of feelings). For a fuller discussion, see L. van de Weghe and J. A. Battle, 'Truth and Semantic Change in the Gospel of John', *BBR* 31.2 (2021) 211–27, esp. 214–15, 221–2.

21 See R. Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (New York: Routledge, 1999) 19.

22 See D. Tovey, *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 140.

23 Shellard, 'New Light', 79; C. Pelling, 'Plutarch's Adaptation of his Source Material', *JHS* 20 (1980) 127–40; T. L. Brodie, 'Greco-Roman Imitation of Texts as a Partial Guide to Luke's Use of Sources', *New Perspectives from*

Yet this is the small concern. The larger concern is that this scenario hardly accounts for the significant divergences between the Third and Fourth Gospels which, as Cribbs mentions, are almost innumerable.²⁴ Brown observes: 'If one were to posit dependency on the basis of similarities alone, one would have to suppose that the fourth evangelist knew all three Gospels and chose in an eclectic manner, now from one, now from another. However, even this suggestion does not hold up when one examines the *dissimilarities*'.²⁵ The suggestion that the Third Evangelist was dependent on a primitive Johannine account faces similar difficulty. In such a case, the Third Evangelist chose to take over select narrative portions of the Beloved Disciple while rejecting, without a trace, the Disciple's witness concerning the manner of Jesus' self-identity, his key theological imagery, the chronology of the Johannine framework, large swaths of Jesus' discourses and the general circumstances of even those pericopae in which they share commonalities (Luke 5.1–10 vs John 21.1–14; Luke 9.10–20 vs John 6.1–59; Luke 7.35–50 vs John 12.1–11). It is possible that the Third Evangelist had access to a written primitive Johannine kerygma that only included those narrative portions in which the Beloved Disciple was present²⁶ – yet there are reasons to doubt this.²⁷

These points notwithstanding, the internal evidence alone supports a more tangential relationship between the Third and Fourth Evangelists in which similar oral traditions were received and applied separately to various literary contexts.²⁸ Likewise, certain themes and focal points appear to have been jointly picked up while others were left to develop independently. The Fourth Gospel as we have it is clearly the work of detailed artistry; it is a polished and highly unified theological narrative.²⁹ Given that the strongest commonalities between the Third and Fourth Gospels occur in just those portions which

the Society of Biblical Literature (ed. C. H. Talbert; New York: Crossroad, 1984) 17–46. I do not take a position on the nature of Q and its relationship to the Synoptic problem in this article.

24 Cribbs, 'Reassessment', 49. John's literary dependence on the Synoptics was the prevailing position prior to the beginning of the Second World War (see H. Windisch, *Johannes und die Synoptiker* (UNT 12; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1926); D. M. Smith, 'John and the Synoptics: Some Dimensions of the Problem', *NTS* 26 (1980) 425; E. Lee, *The Religious Thought of St. John* (London: SPCK, 1950), 23; Maddox, *Purpose*; J. Dvorak, 'The Relationship between John and the Synoptics', *JETS* 41 (1998) 201–13). That position shifted to an eclecticism of perspectives in light of these issues (e.g. J. Schniewind, *Die Parallel-Perikopen bei Lukas und Johannes* (Leipzig: O. Brandstetter, 1914; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1958); P. Gardner-Smith, *St. John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938) 425–44; C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); L. Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 15–17; F. Neiryck, 'John and the Synoptics', *L'Evangile de Jean* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1977) 103–6; R. Kysar, 'The Gospel of John in Current Research', *RelSRev* 9 (1983) 314–23; etc.

25 R. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966) xlv (emphasis original).

26 P. Parker, 'Two Editions of John', *JBL* 75 (1956) 303–14; Cribbs, 'Johannine Tradition', 449–50; Matson, *In Dialogue*, 446–8; M. E. Boismard and A. Lamouille, *L'Evangile de Jean. Synopse de quatre evangiles en français* (Paris: Cerf, 1977); cf. D. Smith's comments in 'John and the Synoptics', *Bib* 63 (1982) 102–13.

27 Prior to the printing press, early drafts/editions to compositions were not generally circulated. Keener writes: 'In our view, if the Gospel had an earlier form (aside from its early draft stage, which was probably not circulated), it may have been the oral form in which the beloved disciple and/or the Fourth Evangelist preached it' (C. Keener, *The Gospel of John* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003) 38. Clement of Alexandria's comment (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.24.1–13) also supports a prior oral stage. It is further possible that the Fourth Evangelist based his narrative on earlier memoirs from the Beloved Disciple but was distinct from him (cf. R. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983)), yet Bauckham's arguments for the work's unity and the author's direct claim to eyewitness testimony are compelling ('The 153 Fish and the Unity of the Fourth Gospel', *Neotestamentica* 36 (2002) 77–88).

28 This is congruent with the 'mediating view' of John's interlocking relationship with the Synoptics in which the author's knowledge of them (and/or knowledge of pre-synoptic traditions) is assumed on some level, but is not directly dependent upon the Synoptics literarily, sometime conflicting with but also incidentally corroborating/explaining synoptic details. See Dvorak, 'Relationship', 211–13.

29 See Bauckham, '153 Fish'.

focus on eyewitness detail and within the earliest kerygmatic portions of this work, it is much more likely the Third Evangelist acquired these at an early stage as one who had ‘an informed familiarity with all things for a long time’ and received the Johannine accounts as coming from οἱ ἅπ’ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρεταὶ γινόμενοι τοῦ λόγου (Luke 1.2–3).³⁰ If we assume a general historiographical interest on the part of the Third Evangelist – which is difficult to avoid³¹ – the widespread preference in historiography for living informants versus written accounts could explain why the Third Evangelist consistently prefers Johannine versions of accounts to the Markan/Matthean counterparts as well as the correlation between these pericopae and sections in the Fourth Gospel wherein the Beloved Disciple is present.³² As time went on, both authors internalised and developed their shared narrativities and, influenced by unique temperaments and experiences, drafted versions of their Gospels much closer to what we have today.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

30 See D. Moessner, ‘Luke as Tradent and Hermeneut: “As one who has a thoroughly informed familiarity with all the events from the top” (παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς, Luke 1:3)’, *NovT* 58 (2016) 259–300; J. J. Peters, ‘Luke’s Source Claims in the Context of Ancient Historiography’, *JSHJ* 18 (2020) 35–60.

31 This is already implied by the near-consensus position that the genre of the Gospel is a type of ancient βίος, but see also C. K. Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History: An Investigation of Early Christian Historiography* (WUNT 175; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); J. Moles, ‘Luke’s Preface: The Greek Decree, Classical Historiography and Christian Redefinitions’, *NTS* 57 (2011) 461–82; Z. Dawson, ‘Does Luke’s Preface Resemble a Greek Decree? Comparing the Epigraphical and Papyrological Evidence of Greek Decrees with Ancient Preface Formulae’, *NTS* 65 (2019) 552–71; Peters, ‘Source Claims’. These are but a sampling; examples of the position that the Third Evangelist had a broadly historiographical interest could be expanded vastly but unnecessarily; even Pitts, who questions Burridge and subsequent scholars for assigning the genre of βίος to Luke, still considers it to be under the umbrella of historiography (A. Pitts, ‘The Fowler Fallacy: Biography, History, and the Genre of Luke-Acts’, *JBL* 139 (2020) 341–59).

32 For this preference among ancient historians, see J. Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) (Marincola comments, on p. 78: ‘the Roman recognition of the value of inquiry is suggested by A. Hirtius who, in the preface of Book VIII of the *Gallic War* of Caesar, apologizes for daring to complete Caesar’s work, since Hirtius was not present at the events’); S. Byrskog, *Story as History, History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 49–91; G. Schepens, ‘History and *Historia*: Inquiry in the Greek Historians’, *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (ed. J. Marincola; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 39–55; Peters, ‘Source Claims’.

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