INTRODUCTION

The present volume reproduces, in modified form, papers presented to the continuing Seminar on Johannine Writings of the international association of New Testament scholars, Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas. They were given at the General Meetings of the Society at Trondheim (Norway) in 1985, and at Atlanta, Georgia (USA), in 1986. The editors, who have shared the leadership of the seminar, had proposed the tenth chapter of John's gospel as the theme for both sessions, and it proved unusually successful. Indeed, that chapter of the Fourth Gospel serves as a focal point for most of the issues of current Johannine scholarship. Does the chapter belong in its present context within the gospel? Does the received text of the chapter preserve the correct order? Was it written down in a single stage or did it come into existence by stages? Could the author or authors depend on written sources, or at least oral traditions, and if so, what history of religions currents gave the impetus? To what extent can historical questions properly be asked of the text? Or must it be explained above all in itself and as part of its context within the entire work?

The papers begin with a survey of the literary and theological problems of the Shepherd Discourse as a whole (Busse), then deal with the question of background – the Biblical/Jewish (Beutler) and the Hellenistic/Gnostic (Turner). These three papers were presented in Trondheim in 1985. The discussion continued with four papers in Atlanta the following year. Painter deals with the question of the chapter's origin. Also using a historical perspective, Sabbe treats the relation of the text to the Synoptic Gospels. Then Du Rand looks at the structure of John 10 in connection with chapter 9, and Thyen the chapter in the context of the gospel as a whole.

At first glance the *variety of approaches* is surprising. They can be divided into two groups: those that consider the text in the light of

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its pre-history (*diachronically*) and those that treat it as a given unity
(*synchronically*). Busse initiates the diachronic approach with a
survey of the literary problems of the passage. In addition to textual
criticism, he discusses hypotheses of rearrangement and source, and
the literary genre of the Shepherd Discourse. Beutler and Turner scan
the history of religions horizon of the discourse; the former primarily
examines the 'Old Testament' and Jewish ideas behind the discourse,
the latter compares it to Hellenistic and Gnostic texts. Both use the
tradition-critical method to concentrate on the roots of Johannine
terminology and thought in their cultural and religious environment.

Both Painter's and Sabbe's contributions also belong to the area
of historical issues. Painter traces the possibility of stages in the
development of this passage, and of the gospel as a whole, seeking
to depict its development, whether literary or still traditional, but
always so as to recognise the theological changes that occur in the
evolution of the chapter (and gospel) into its present form.

Of the literature comparable to the Fourth Gospel, Sabbe focusses
on the Synoptic Gospels and examines them alongside the Johannine
text, using Jesus' trial as portrayed in the Synoptics for the com-
parison. But while he explicitly holds the Synoptics to be sufficient
sources of the present text of John, he does not consider stages of
development in the gospel traditions. Thus, in a way, he is the first
to interpret the text synchronically, along with the remaining con-
tributors, who altogether disregard its prior development, as well as
its later influence.

Du Rand widens the unit of text to be studied to include the healing
of the man born blind, and its ensuing dialogue, in chapter 9. He uses
the intricate 'syntactical' and 'narratological' techniques of the new
literary criticism to expose dimensions of meaning otherwise un-
noticed in the text of chapters 9–10. Thyen is primarily interested
in a still larger context, the entire gospel as a macro-text of the
Shepherd Discourse, and he definitively rejects as a 'dangerous
illusion' a diachronic approach to the text, especially the attempt to
make our interpretation conform to the original author's intention.

The fact that the more synchronically oriented contributions were
presented in the later session did not at first seem to be more than
accidental. But in retrospect its significance becomes evident: except
for Painter, who had been prevented from attending the previous year,
the seminar's interest had shifted from theories about the text's origin
to a thorough analysis of its present form. In this way the previously
elaborated historical insights reappear in a new light.

In view of the variety of approaches, the *unity of results* is also surprising. In the editors' opinion, one of the most important results of the two-year study appears to be the agreement of the authors and participants in the discussion concerning the close coherence of John 9 and 10. The Shepherd Discourse is therefore to be regarded as a continuation of Jesus' argument with the Pharisees and 'the Jews' in chapter 9. Only thus can the pervasively polemical overtones of the discourse be accounted for.

Some agreement is found also in regard to the validity of the preserved order of John 10. The only exception is Turner, who suggests as a working hypothesis that the chapter be read in the following order: verses 19–30, 1–18, 31–42.

Basic agreement is found in the view that the author of the gospel draws on the world of ideas of the Hebrew Bible, particularly on the post-exilic prophets and their texts about the coming eschatological shepherd (whether God himself or his anointed one). There is less agreement as to how far Hellenistic and early Gnostic or even proto-Gnostic thought exercised influence on the evangelist, and whether the Biblical motifs came to that author directly or were mediated by a tradition.

This raises the question of sources. That the fourth evangelist knew one or more of the three Synoptic Gospels and used them in some way was not a matter of explicit discussion; nor was the question of the nature and proportion of such dependence resolved. Sabbe's paper shows the ways such a view sheds light on the present text; alternative views of how synoptic-like material may have been conveyed to the evangelist, as by either tradition or sources, are not represented. Until just a few years ago most scholars accepted the Gospel's independence of the Synoptics. It is significant that this consensus can no longer be taken for granted.

A major consensus was reached concerning the overall structure of the Shepherd Discourse; in particular, the character of verses 7–10 and 11–19 as interpretations of the *paroimia* of verses 1–5 had wide acceptance. The same is true on a more detailed level as to the definition of both interpretative sections by means of their introductory I–AM sayings (verses 7, 11).

Viewing the Shepherd Discourse, and its elaboration in verses 22–39 and 40–2, as an expression of the dispute between the Johannine congregation and the synagogue was not a matter of controversy, nor does there appear to be difference of opinion as to the originating germ of the dispute going back somehow to the life of Jesus himself.

Finally, although the history of religions background of the ideas of John 10 is evaluated differently, the various contributors agree in characterising the main lines of the chapter's theology.

Despite these largely converging results for the interpretation of John 10 there do remain some *unanswered questions*. They have to do both with details of interpretation and the proper method of interpretation itself.

Divergence on details starts with the text of verse 7: which text is to be read – 'I am the shepherd' (Busse) or 'I am the door' (the others)? The choice has ramifications for the structure of the entire discourse of 10:1–18. And the textual order of the chapter was not entirely resolved, as we saw.

Whether and to what extent we have to assume our text to contain layers, and whether these deserve attention, is left open. Painter is clearly the strongest advocate of the view that assumes a developing tradition behind the discourse; others, like Sabbe, exclude this possibility. A further group leaves the question unresolved, or holds it to be insignificant for interpretation. Nevertheless, an answer to the question is important for the problem of assessing the discourse historically. Does it mirror primarily the dispute between church and synagogue, or does it reflect, at least in its later layers, a rank dispute within the Johannine community, so that in its present form it is to be placed on a level with the First Epistle of John (Painter)?

The question also remains unanswered how far, in addition to the Hebrew scripture and Jewish thought in general, the Shepherd Discourse was influenced by Hellenism and early Gnosticism. This cannot be resolved on the basis of a single text, of course, since it leads to the heart of present discussion about the definition, nature, and age of 'gnosis' and Gnosticism. This debate has been occasioned by extensive studies of the Nag Hammadi texts now available; surely, however, they will need more study.

Possibly the most interesting issue, in reviewing both sessions of the seminar is this: how do individual interpretative approaches relate to each other? Especially, the more and more urgent problem of the reciprocal relation between diachronic and synchronic readings of a text comes to the fore. The tendency of most of the seminar participants is to hold that both more time and greater priority need to be assigned to the synchronic reading of texts. This stands in accord with the results of recent methodological discussions on either side of the Atlantic. Not least of the benefits for all the seminar participants

is that of contributing to such dialogue on the basis of a rewarding sample of text, and of doing so in a collaborative way that both preserves the integrity of each scholar and provides the benefit of work undertaken jointly and honed by collective evaluation.

The Editors

Frankfurt a.M./Poughkeepsie, NY

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OPEN QUESTIONS ON JOHN 10*
Ulrich Busse

John 10, on the shepherd, is a passage which, while undoubtedly
attractive, is laden with all the exegetical problems characteristic of
John's gospel.[1] Not only is the beginning disputed, but also its form,
inner structure, in part its wording, and most of all its place in the
larger context and also the thrust of the chapter.

Here the task will be limited to examining in light of the text the
validity of answers given by scholars to some of the problems.
Accordingly, questions of the origin and later use of the imagery,
as well as the significance of Biblical allusions for the interpretation,
will only be dealt with in passing.[2] Our plan results from the task
before us. Literary questions will be discussed before we turn to
theological issues.

1. Literary problems

1.1 One literary problem of chapter 10 consists in what is often
felt to be a loose insertion of the shepherd speech into its present
context.[3] This 'impression' is usually substantiated by pointing to
the supposedly abrupt change of topic, and to the surprising transi-
tion to a different narrative genre[4] between 9:39 and 10:1. Yet these
observations apply only to the beginning of the speech. As the chapter
develops, verses 26b−28 are presupposed in the preceding material.
The classic solution for this supposed enigma is provided by literary
criticism. From a literary point of view two possible solutions have
been offered over the past hundred years. One explores the tradition-
historical 'growth' model, according to which various sources have
been arranged redactionally by a third party, or one piece of text has
been inserted later. The other suggestion employs the 'rearrangement'

hypothesis. It has the advantage of easing the abrupt new beginning of 10:1 by means of skillfully rearranging the text. Most adherents of this latter proposal are content to move the entire shepherd speech (10:1–18) to follow verse 28.[5] The leading exponents of the former suggestion, on the other hand, are mainly dependent on a hypothesis which arose last century[6] and which, despite the individual differences, sought to distinguish sharply between Jesus' speeches and the narrative texts in John's gospel (= JG). H. H. Wendt,[7] for instance, reconstructed an older source made up of speeches (9:4f., 49–41; 10:1–18, 24–38) which was expanded by the evangelist (9:1–3, 6–38; 10:19–22, 39–42) through narrative material. A new variant of the 'growth' model is presented by Langbrandtner and J. Becker.[8] They attempt to show that the shepherd speech was inserted subsequently into chapter 10 by the so-called 'ecclesiastical redactor'. Among other reasons, it was the observation that verse 16 is sometimes regarded as a secondary insertion[9] which led them to pursue this hint.

Each of these suggested solutions is as attractive as its presuppositions are plausible. Therefore doubts may certainly be raised. It should be noted that the chapter is firmly integrated both as to narrative and speech. The asides of verses 19–21, 31 and 39a presuppose earlier events,[10] as is clear from the introductory πάλιν.[11] In Jesus' response to the challenge (verse 24de) to say frankly and openly whether he is the Christ (this in itself is a reflection of 8:25 and 7:26), Jesus points to his deeds which can lead to faith. He thus draws on 9:4b. That verse, however, together with verses 3 and 5, forms an interpretive addition by the author. On the one hand he sheds light on the *sign* character (cf. 9:16e) of the healing of the blind man just as he points backwards to 8:12 and forwards to 11:9f. by employing the light motif. In regard to the former verse (8:12) it was already F. C. Baur's[12] judgement that it forms the chief idea of chapters 8–11. This has been recognised also by the literary critics who used it as support for their conclusion that only 10:1–18 is to be viewed as an independent text unit. But even this unit is rooted in the context. Only rarely has its dialectical structure received due attention. Throughout, contrasting persons are compared with one other. For instance, rather surprisingly, the comparison of verse 1 does not start with the 'good' shepherd but instead with the antitype, the thief and robber.[13] The reason for this is to be found in the scene's framework. Already since 9:40 the Pharisees[14] have been in view. As early as the preceding verse (39) Jesus, in taking up the interpretation of the healing of the

blind man, had drawn the conclusion from his miracle that it would
separate some from others. The blind will come to have faith (verse
38b); the ones who can see physically, however, will remain in the
continuing darkness of sin (verse 41). Thus the Pharisees have lost
the right to lead the people, the salvation community of Israel; this
right has now gone to Jesus, the stumbling stone (verse 39b).

The development of thought (which is present latently as a
metaphor already in verses 39ff.) suggests at this point the transition
to the portrayal of the everyday life of a shepherd, a picture which
was prepared for in the OT.[16] Already there the major characteristic
of the shepherd caringly guarding and securing life as part of his task
as ruler took shape, and ideals of how to rule as well. This idea is now
used as a weapon to judge the legitimacy of any claim of authority,
as well as to point to the contrast between the Pharisees and Jesus
in terms of competence.[17] The basic clarification at which the author
aims is fruitfully displayed by the mental image of the shepherd.
Verses 1−5a rather sweepingly contrast a number of individuals.
In an almost synonymous characterisation of those who illegitimately
climb over the wall to the sheep, various patterns of activity (secret−
violent) are hinted at. It is not until verse 5c that the contrast can be
further unfolded by way of the summarising plural, 'the strangers'
(parallel to thief/robber/day labourer?).

Therefore 10:1ff. cannot be separated from chapter 9, and notably
9:39−41, without difficulty.[18] Verse 39 creates a new scene, and
verse 41 (the Pharisees' blindness) together with verse 6 (the listeners'
inability to comprehend) ties the speech together even closer.[19] Apart
from this one should notice what is mentioned mostly by earlier
interpreters,[20] namely that the confrontation with Jesus' deeds (com-
pare the Sabbath healing, chapter 5, with the healing of the blind man
on the Sabbath, chapter 9), which issues in either salvation or judge-
ment, extends over a number of chapters (at least chapters 7−11).
Verbally (ῥῆμα) the peak of the argument is reached in the chapter
about the shepherd and after the Lazarus miracle (ἔργον) his death
is decided in principle by the people's leaders.[21] Thus in chapter 10
the confrontation between Jesus and the leaders of the people, which
started in chapter 5, moves towards its first climax. This takes place
after Jesus' refutation as illegitimate and wrong of the seemingly
legitimate claim of the Pharisees to lead Israel. The basis for this
is found in 9:40, where Jesus' deeds result in a separation of the
ways leading to salvation on the one hand and to disaster on the
other.

Analogous with the interlacing of the chapter about the shepherd
with preceding statements of chapter 9 there are also strong links with
the chapters which follow. Chapter 11 verses 8–10 builds not only
on the attempts to stone Jesus (10:31 and verse 39) but draws also
on the symbolism of light in 8:12 and 9:5 (cf. 11:37). The interpretive
insertion 11:4 is also patterned in analogy to 9:3–5. It sheds light
on the significance of the resurrection: the sign of the glorification
of the Son of God. Since JG refers the glorification motif to Jesus'
passion, the author here not only alludes to the final decision of the
High Priests and Pharisees to kill Jesus (11:47–53); the application
of the title of honour, Son of God, to Jesus points back also to his
confession of 10:36f. If, however, 11:47–53 replaces the synoptic
account of the trial by the Sanhedrin,[22] – which in its synoptic form
is missing from the Johannine passion account – then the proleptic
accusation of blasphemy in 10:33 is the occasion for 18:20[23] (cf.
5:18) and 19:7, where Jesus points to his public teaching in the
synagogue and temple, and where the 'Jews' stubbornly object to his
self-revelation as Son of God. Besides these rather obvious peculiar-
ities, 10:18 and 39b also include a hidden allusion to the Johannine
passion account. Not only does Jesus voluntarily and as an act of
sovereignty offer his own life (cf. 18:4–7);[24] it is also the case that
the hour which the Father had determined had not yet arrived at
10:39b, which is why Jesus could escape once more.[25] Jesus' request
in 18:8f. to let his disciples go may also have been prepared for as early
as 10:28f. Equally the statement in 18:37 that all those on the side of
truth hear Jesus' voice draws on what has been said in 10:1–5.

Thus the close interlacing of all parts of the text of chapter 10 with
the wider context renders any version of rearrangement unlikely. It
is not just Haenchen[26] who thinks that the time for 'rearrangement
hypotheses' is over. Already Jülicher suggested that

> Critics all too often use as criteria their own sense of logic,
> their attention to detail and their desire for a correct flow
> of thought. In short, they call for a gospel written the way
> they would have written it.

This is true also of Bultmann's large commentary.[27] In spite of the
recent literary-critical attempt to assign John 10:1–18 to secondary
redaction, this does not promise to emerge as a convincing solution
either. Rather, the attempt must be made to comprehend the author's
complex line of argument before assuming a subsequent interweaving
of alleged traditions.

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1.2 A clarification, of great import for the interpretation of 10:1−18, is called for in the case of the wording of verse 7. If the noun ἡ θύρα, which is regarded as a difficult variant,[28] is still the preferred reading, even though P[75] (cop[sa]) renders the variant ὁ ποιμήν possible, then an ecclesiological interpretation which takes Jesus to be the door to the sheep, through which the leaders of Christian churches enter into the church,[29] becomes compelling. Yet, it destroys the coherence of the text. 'The picture of the door breaks into the speech … The contrast between the shepherds should remain at the centre, both in terms of topic and of execution and expansion.'[30] Attempts have been made to remove in various ways the disruption in the flow of thought without having recourse to a text-critical decision.[31] Yet, a text-critically reasonable solution has to be sought. Schnackenburg[32] put the decisive question thus: How could a text which is so much more suitable disappear? The answer is found in the later use of the metaphor 'door'. In ecclesiastical apologetics it gradually came to denote a fixed idea, i.e. opposition to false church leaders.[33] Only the shepherd who appeals to Christ and who was appointed by Christ could be certain of his legitimacy. Here we find the reason for the poor attestation of the original reading ὁ ποιμήν. It now fits nicely into the context[34] since, the hearers' inability to comprehend having been declared in verse 6, there is a need to decipher the shepherd's *paroimia*. The text is formulated according-ly. The contrast between ὁ μή εἰσερόμενος διά in verse 1 and ὁ δέ εἰσερχόμενος διά in verse 2 is not drawn upon until verse 9. There the metaphor is commented on in soteriological terms by reference to Num. 27:17 (Micah 5:4). The use of διά in 3:17 and 14:6 corresponds to this. Therefore the soteriologically significant distinction between the legitimate shepherd and the illegitimate ones is made explicit a number of times. This is done by first pointing to this separation on the level of metaphor before it is transferred to the quasi-historical level of action in the second part of the chapter, i.e. verses 22−39.

1.3 A problem much debated among scholars is that of determining the genre of 10:1−18 or of 10:1−5. The definitions found in the literature are sometimes more and sometimes less well founded. These verses have been called allegory,[35] similitude,[36] parable,[37] concept[38] or simply image.[39] This uncertainty of definition testifies to the distinctive feature of this figurative language in comparison with the other gospels. Already Strauss[40] claimed a lack of development in