Article

Samaritan Israelites and Jews under the Shadow of Rome: Reading John 4:4–45 in Ephesus

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Abstract: Genealogies, knowledge, and purity all can provide separate identities with the means for competing self-definition. This article assumes a social location near Ephesus with Samaritan Israelites and Judeans in a Jesus-believing network. Rather than providing an analysis in which divisions are transcended, this reading suggests that a negotiation in John 4:4–45 of these three characteristics navigates divisions to create a complex, merged superordinate identity.

Keywords: Samaritan woman; John 4; Photini; Bayes' theorem; social identity theory; ingroup projection; social identity complexity; heterarchy; Gospel of John; New Testament

1. Introduction: Moving around the Boundaries of John 4:4–45

The section of the Gospel of John that tells the story often called "The Woman at the Well", or "The Samaritan Woman" begins with a declaration: "And it became necessary for him to go through Samaria" (John 4:4). This reference to place sets up territorial boundaries as the initial structure for the story. However, other boundaries come up quickly: boundaries of identity and gender and, as is often noted, these boundaries are just as quickly transgressed (Keener 2003, p. 1.585). Under the umbrella of giving various people "the right to become children of God" (John 1:12), identities are negotiated, and themes of genealogy, knowledge, and purity are used to incorporate the diversity of an impure woman, Samaritan Israelites, with a nod to gentiles, into the family of God.[1]

This analysis will proceed in six steps. First, Bayes' theorem will structure an approach that bypasses reading a Johannine community from the text, except to note the presence of Samaritan Israelites in this pericope.[2] Instead, a historically possible audience will be asserted as a point of departure, and the reading will proceed on that basis. Step 2 will highlight the negotiation of Judean and Samaritan Israelite identities through John 4:4–27, particularly their genealogies, using ingroup projection as a useful heuristic. I will focus my remarks throughout this article principally on the discourse elements introduced by historical present verbs, suggesting that these elements of the dialogue are amplified by that authorial choice.[3]

Step 3 will highlight the theme of knowledge in John 4:4–27 as it functions in Samaritan Israelite and Judean identities, particularly with regard to their eschatologies. Step 4 examines the same passage for issues of purity important in the diaspora. Boundaries between pure and impure people must be overcome with water cleansings. Step 5 looks at all three themes again as they are drawn to a close in John 4:28–30. And step 6 summarizes these findings by highlighting the process of identity merging in John 4:4–42, as described by social identity complexity. A return to Bayes theorem conclusions draws the article to a close.

One more boundary must be mentioned, the boundary between language appropriate in the past and language appropriate in the present. Samaritans have often been categorized as outsiders and idolaters, while they name themselves the "'keepers', or 'guardians' [of Torah]" (Chalmers 2021, p. 47).[4] Archaeology, furthermore, has not furnished evidence for

the kind of foreign repopulation described in 2 Kings 17 (Chalmers 2021, p. 39). The term "Samaritan Israelite" will be used in this article to encourage recognition of Israelite identity as a socially complex phenomenon with various subgroups, and the self-understanding of the Samaritans as part of Israel (Chalmers 2021, p. 47).

The question of the term to be used for inhabitants of Judea has generated much productive debate (Horrell 2020, p. 51; Reinhartz 2018, pp. 98–103; Hunt 2019, p. 65). It should by now be clear that the names for geographical–religious identities cannot simply be transliterated into another language where they may already have different referents. In this study, I will use "Judeans" for people who lived in Judea, or whose ancestors were believed to have lived in Judea, and who worshipped YHWH in a cult focused on the Jerusalem temple, even if they were living elsewhere across the Mediterranean world. 'The Jews' (or 'Jewish') in single quotes will refer to the characters (or identity) in the Fourth Gospel reflecting into the story world a prototype of historical Judeans as the author/s understand them (Hunt 2019, p. 65).

The woman in John 4 is not named, and although it was not unusual in the ancient world to refer to women without naming them, certainly her name is not "sinful Samaritan woman" (Keener 2003, pp. 1.584 n. 4, 584, 586). The indignities that have been laid on her in interpretations through the years lead me to honor her with the name given to her by church tradition, Photini, the enlightened one (from φῶς) (O'Regan 2020).[5] My goal in so doing is to help my readers and myself look at her character in a fresh way, but I also recognize that by leaving her anonymous, John may be drawing attention to the difference between readers' expectations of the way such a woman might act and her behavior in the narrative; he may be emphasizing her symbolic connections (such as to other women at wells; see below), and he may be inviting all readers to read themselves in relation to her (Reinhartz 1998, pp. 188–89). Nevertheless, while I recognize the operation of some or all of these effects in the space between text and reader, in this article I will show this oft-maligned character the respect of naming her.

2. Preliminary Assumptions: Ephesus, Samaritan Israelites, and Jews

Bayes' theorem, brought to Biblical Studies primarily by Christoph Heilig, helpfully reminds interpreters of the importance of questions often otherwise overlooked in interpretation. Designed to be used in technical analyses on models with mathematically calculable probabilities, Bayes allows an analyst to calculate the probability of an earlier event given the evidence of a later event that could be its consequent. For example, if my grass is wet, what is the probability that it has rained recently? Bayes suggests that rather than looking at my grass and wondering about previous rainfall, I might instead ask about the probability that it rained today, the probability that rain would result in wet grass, and divide the product of the two by the probability that the grass might have gotten wet by some other means (Donovan and Mickey 2019).

Similarly, it seems to me that scholars often look at the text of the Gospel of John and wonder what community might have produced it. Setting aside the confusion between author and audience that this question sometimes entails (Wisse 1992, p. 40), I will ask instead about the historical evidence for a proposed Johannine audience and the effect this Gospel might have had on them, the latter in order to suggest that the postulated audience might have prompted such a communication (Heilig 2018, p. 465).[6] This article thus begins with the historical evidence for a proposed audience. The majority of the article then examines the effect of the text on that given social location, testing whether John 4:4–42 might answer the exigencies of that audience, engaging with the other interpretations as Bayes demands. Finally, the utility for that audience that the analysis uncovered, along with the historical evidence for the audience's existence will suggest that the postulated audience could have been intended by the author/s, at least of John 4:4–42.

The postulated audience, then, based both on tradition and on my work on the Latin and Roman references of the trial narrative, are hypothesized to have been a variety of Jesus-believers in the area of Ephesus.[7] Samaritan Israelites left evidence on the island

of Delos, about 200 km from Ephesus, from the early second century BCE (Kartveit 2014, p. 450).[8] Three centuries later, early in the second century CE, two representatives of Neapolis in Samaria erected a monument in Ephesus in honor of their former governor (from about 15 years earlier), calling him savior and benefactor (σωτῆρα καὶ εὐεργέτην) (Birley 1977, p. 364; Gagé et al. 1975, #577). This evidence is rather spotty, made even more so because σωτήρ was only used in Ephesus in inscriptions at the time of Julius Caesar and the very early Empire, and then not again until Hadrian (Tilborg 1996, p. 47). However, Justin Martyr, born in Samaria and having taught in Ephesus and Rome, wrote in the mid-second century CE that there were more gentile Christians than Jews or Samaritans (*1 Apol.* 53), demonstrating that those identities were still recognized at that later date (Cross and Livingstone 2005, p. 920). Therefore, although there is much we do not know and much that has been misunderstood, the evidence for the Samaritan diaspora "maakt duidelijk dat vanaf de 3e eeuw v.Chr. tot de 7e eeuw n.Chr. zich in de gehele antieke wereld leden van de Samaritaanse geloofsgemeenschap hebben gevestigd".[9]

Evidence for Ephesian Judeans comes from several centuries before the common era, in texts that record their consistent application to Roman rulers for recognition of their traditional rights (the right to avoid military service and the right to support the Temple in Jerusalem) (Tellbe 2009, p. 68). Josephus also records Judeans from Asia Minor who petitioned in Ephesus for a continuation of the rights and privileges granted to them by Augustus and Agrippa. It is worth noting that he does not refer to "the Jews of Ephesus", but to "the Jews of Asia" (*Ant.* 16.167, 172), suggesting that (as with the Samaritans) the Judeans around Ephesus were not necessarily local to one spot but rather part of a larger, interconnected network (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.172; Tilborg 1996, p. 38).[10] I am not, however, thereby suggesting that the audience of the Fourth Gospel consisted of "an indefinite readership", but rather an extended network of interrelating well-defined readerships (*pace* Bauckham 1998, pp. 45–46). A few inscriptions from the second century CE shows that by then at least some Judeans were integrated into urban Ephesus (Tellbe 2009, pp. 73–74).[11]

Given, then, the presence of Samaritan Israelites and Judeans in proximity to Ephesus, the hypothesis that John retells the stories of Jesus for the sake of communities that contain people from both groups is possible (Lincoln 2005, pp. 181–82; Keener 2003, p. 1.588). But their relative status is complex. In the fifth century BCE, Judeans in Elephantine (an island in the Nile, part of modern-day Aswan) wrote to both Samaritan and Jerusalem leaders, asking for help, an act which suggests relative harmony between the groups (Knoppers 2013, pp. 110, 119–20). Under the Persians, numismatic evidence shows a relative prosperity for Samaria (perhaps because of their connections to Phoenicia) that the Judeans did not enjoy (Knoppers 2013, pp. 118–19).[12] By contrast, the rise of the Hasmoneans started the development of a relationship in which the Judeans prospered at the expense of the Samaritan Israelites (e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 13.284; Knoppers 2013, pp. 169–76). These changing fortunes allowed for Judean–Samaritan communication (they were using almost identical languages and scripts) but also created social barriers that began to solidify by the late second or early first century BCE (Knoppers 2013, p. 110). Before then, the Pentateuch had circulated in various recensions between Judeans and Samaritan Israelites, but after the destruction of the Samaritan worship center in ca. 111 BCE by John Hyrcanus (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.255–56), Samaritan and Judean versions became more fixed (Knoppers 2013, pp. 177–88; Penwell 2019, pp. 60–64; Hjelm 2004, p. 29). During the period of Judean revolts against Rome, and as the Tannaim worked to define Judean identity, Judean separation from the Samaritans (who may have supported Rome) became increasingly more established (Schiffman 1985, esp. 349–50).

A simple and complete division between Judeans and Samaritans cannot be maintained, and Josephus should not be read as objective (Chalmers 2021, esp. 40). The vagaries of this historic past, however, would likely create tensions within a Christ-following network with both Judean and Samaritan Israelite subgroups. Perhaps Samaritans remembered the history of their primacy but carried animosity because of the destruction of their temple and their decline. Judeans may have had memories of their more recent ascendency, while

also resenting the support of the Samaritans for Rome during their recent defeat. Furthermore, Judeans among the Christ-followers were using LXX texts beyond the Pentateuch, laying claim, perhaps, to superior sources of knowledge in their retellings of Christ.[13] Both groups lived under Roman rule, which was quite visible in Latin inscriptions in Ephesus (Hunt 2019, pp. 94–102). The particulars of this reconstruction are somewhat imaginary, but some conflict between these two groups is likely even in the diaspora, especially since the frequent travel of anyone associated with Mediterranean commerce and the *fiscus Judaicus* (whether one paid it or not) would regularly reinforce their separate identities and the ties of each to their homelands.[14]

Given such a social location, then, it is not impossible that Samaritan Israelites and Judeans were attempting to follow Jesus in an extended network across the region of Greece and Asia Minor (Estrada 2019, p. 13). While stories of Jesus might be retold in a variety of ways in such a situation, it seems likely that a text might address conflicts between these two identities.[15] The way John 4 does so will be tested in the rest of the article, with a return to Bayes' theorem probabilities at the end.

3. Genealogy: Samaritan Israelite and Judean Subgroup Identity Negotiations

Before turning to the first theme of this analysis, genealogy, the ingroup projection model related to social identity theory (SIT) needs to be set out. Ingroup projection often disrupts or prevents peace among subgroups within a larger (superordinate) group (Wenzel et al. 2008). If subgroups agree about the prototypical member of the superordinate group, and if they believe other subgroups adequately represent that prototype, then they evaluate all subgroups as legitimate members of the larger group, even if in some cases they are hierarchically ranked. However, if the superordinate group does not sufficiently emphasize its prototype in a way that includes the characteristics most important to all subgroups, ingroup projection can occur. In that case, each subgroup will project its own typicality onto the superordinate group and will evaluate itself as more valuable and as the appropriate representative of the larger group (Wenzel et al. 2008). In the social location postulated above, Judean followers of Christ and Samaritan Israelites might each have had reasons to see themselves as the best prototype of a Christ-follower.

The answer, according to developments in SIT theory, is to strengthen the correlation between the rival subgroup and the superordinate identity creating "a more complex representation of the superordinate category, which implies that neither group can singularly represent the essence of the superordinate category and both groups acknowledge their mutual superiorities and inferiorities" (Wenzel et al. 2008, p. 43; Noor et al. 2010). The ancient world, of course, had no access to this theory. There is no warrant to discern authorial intent towards this purpose. Yet John 4 seems to negotiate its two primary subgroups, Judean and Samaritan, in a way that could have a similar effect, recognizing differences while validating both identities.

The present essay should not be taken to promote Christian exceptionalism in this regard, however (Horrell 2020, pp. 21–46, 308–9; *pace* Kot 2020, p. 632). The focus on belief in Christ as a superordinate identity is related specifically to the assumption that the author of the Fourth Gospel is writing to followers of Christ. A Judean superordinate identity in Jerusalem during festivals would also need to address disunity among its subgroups, as diaspora pilgrims mixed with more local expressions of Judaism. Leaders might therefore have approached its subgroups with similar concerns. Furthermore, in John 4, the superordinate identity read from the text must avoid being constituted by any present-day Christian identity (Horrell 2020, pp. 294–95).[16] It is, rather, a gathering of subgroups of YHWH worshippers, with a common (at least rhetorical) genealogy going back to Jacob, who are now also loyal to Jesus.[17]

As groups develop their belief systems, "*identity precedes theology and ... theological constructions emerge to solve the problem of identity rather than to create it*" (Campbell 2008, p. 52, emphasis original).[18] In John 4, markers of Judean and Samaritan Israelite identities are woven through the story, and in the following analysis, even theological statements

will be discussed through the lens of identity. Penwell's definition of a marker of identity is helpful here: markers are "attributes . . . used situationally to differentiate their group from others" (Penwell 2019, p. 69; Williams 2019, p. 118). These markers can be rhetorically deployed differently according to their salience in any given situation. This article looks at three markers in the construction of cross-cutting identities in John 4 from the perspective of a group of (at least) Judeans and Samaritan Israelites who believe in Christ: genealogy, knowledge, and purity.

By setting a story in Samaria and noting that Jesus was divinely required to go there (John 4:4), the author immediately highlights the importance of Samaritan Israelites.[19] In the next two verses, Jacob is mentioned twice (vv. 5, 6) and Joseph once (v. 5), and the dialogue has not yet even begun. These ancestors are important markers for Samaritan Israelite identity (Botha 1991, p. 106). References to Samaria are repeated as well: Σαμάρεια in vv. 4, 5 and 7; Σαμαρῖτις in v. 9 (2x); Σαμαρίτης in vv. 9, 39, 40. Thus, words referencing Samaria occur six times within the first six verses. This marker overlaps with Judean identity as well, since Judeans, too, trace their ancestry through Joseph and Jacob (Theobald 2009, p. 309; Kot 2020, p. 626). The setting, then, immediately raises the question of the nature of Judean and Samaritan identities. If Jesus followers in Ephesus consider overlapping Jesus and Samaritan *or* Jesus and Judean identities as mutually exclusive, their shared genealogy pushes readers towards more complex thinking. Jesus's trip to Samaria raises the status of the Samaritan Israelite subgroup. At the same time, references to Jacob and Joseph remind each group of the other's belonging under, in this case, an Israelite past.

Jacob comes up again in verse 12, but the woman's meaning is somewhat ambiguous. Photini asks whether Jesus is greater than "our father, Jacob" (v. 12). Does the "our" include Jesus, 'a Jew' (v. 9), or not? The mention in the same verse of Jacob's children and livestock who also drank from the well emphasizes the inclusion of all of Jacob's children (Förster 2015, p. 210). However, Photini's focus on the location of Jacob's well in Samaria suggests an emphasis on Samaritan Israelite identity. The author, through Photini, could be asserting a Samaritan claim to Jacob as father in the face of attempted erasure by Judean narratives that construct Samaritan Israelites as foreigners, even as gentiles (Förster 2015, p. 212).[20] This is not quite the same as inclusion; the narrative strongly asserts Samaritan claims to belonging.

References to "father" (πατήρ) prompt a similar complexity. In v. 20, Photini uses "fathers who worshiped on this mountain" to distinguish Samaritan Israelite ancestors from 'Jews' who worship in Jerusalem. But Jesus (vv. 21, 23) shifts the referent to the one father, God, and since both groups (note plural pronouns in vv. 21 and 23) called themselves "Son/s of the Lord" or call God "father" (e.g., Exod 4:22; Deut 32: 6, 18; in both LXX and SP), their kinship is emphasized (Botha 1991, p. 152; Theobald 2009, p. 320; Penwell 2019, p. 5; Horrell 2020, p. 99). While Photini asserts her Samaritan Israelite identity, Jesus adds that identity to the superordinate group to which they both belong. Photini has rhetorically become Jesus's sister, and Samaritan Israelites and Judeans among the auditors are reminded from within their own separate identities of their kinship under the fatherhood of God.[21]

While the spotlight at the beginning of the narrative is on Jesus and Photini, v. 8 points to an important cross-cultural encounter happening in the background: the disciples have gone to buy various foodstuffs from the Samaritan Israelites. While Jesus asks a Samaritan for water (which will be discussed further below), his disciples ask Samaritans for food. Neither Jesus nor his disciples seem averse to accepting food and water from Samaritan Israelites, at least at this point in the narrative. But in v. 9, the character of Photini objects, and the narrator step in with an explanation: "Jews do not share vessels with Samaritans" (Daube 1950). It is interesting that the Samaritan character raises the 'Jewish' objection. If, as we have assumed, there are Judean and Samaritan identities among the audience, their separate prototypes have found expression in the text in unexpected ways as Jesus has emphasized their connection, and Photini has brought up divisions. Jesus and his disciples provide a model for Jesus-following Judeans to share table fellowship with Jesus-following

Samaritan Israelites across divisions.[22] While commentaries analyze the text and often note the competing identities, they may draw conclusions (in this case related to John 4:21–22) about "Jesus . . . calling for a higher worship that transcends geographical (hence also, in this context, ethnic) particularities" (e.g., Keener 2003, p. 1.611). This approach to subgroup integration is called "dominance", a superordinate identity that attempts to reduce subgroup differentiation and, as a result, fails to integrate the subgroups at all (Brewer 2010, p. 15). This approach has been rightly critiqued, especially in postcolonial studies (Dube 2002, p. 65). What the present analysis has raised so far, however, is the possibility for a reading somewhat more complex.

Photini's question in v. 12 is particularly intriguing, "You're not greater than our father Jacob, are you?" Similar to her question in v. 29, which uses the more emphatic μήτι ("This couldn't possibly be the Christ, could he?") and the disciples' question in v. 33 ("Someone didn't bring him food, did they?"), she poses her yes-or-no question in v. 12 using μή, a particle that anticipates a negative response.[23] Ulrike Swoboda, building on Jaroslav Konopásek's work, divides μή questions in John into those that can be understood as strong assertions (e.g., 3:4) and those (e.g., 6:67) that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no (Swoboda 2016, pp. 138–42). For Konopásek, the latter "expriment l'*étonnement*, la *surprise*, l'*incertitude*, le *doute*" (Konopásek 1932, p. 143). Swoboda demonstrates clearly the doubt surrounding the question about where Jesus might be going in 7:35 (Swoboda 2016, pp. 150–52). But I want to suggest that all of the Fourth Gospel's μή questions imply a similarly doubtful answer. In particular, the answer given in the text contrasts with the answer suggested by the narrator and demanded of the auditors. Even the questions Konopásek categorizes as objective affirmations have some double answers attached to them (Konopásek 1932, p. 143).

In John 3:4, while it is not possible to re-enter one's mother's womb, Jesus demonstrates that it is possible to be born again/from on high. While in John 7:31 many people believe that the true Christ could not do more signs that Jesus is doing, narrator and audience know that there is at least one more great sign to come (John 20, esp. 30). While some in the crowd in 7:41 suggest that Jesus could not be the Christ because he comes from Galilee, narrator and audience know that Jesus is the Christ and does not come from Galilee. While the Pharisees do not believe that any Pharisee has believed in Jesus, the auditors know that Nicodemus has (7:48; 3:1). While Nicodemus does not believe that Torah allows for judging anyone without listening to them (7:51), narrator and auditors know that Jesus will be condemned by 'the Jews' apart from his testimony (18:29–24). And while some 'Jews' believe that Jesus is demon-possessed and therefore could not truly have healed blindness (10:21), narrator and auditors know that Jesus did heal the blind man and is not demon-possessed. While these analyses are, for now, asserted rather than argued, they cast doubt on the existence of *any* use in John of μή for strong assertions, and therefore they legitimize not only an analysis of John 4:12, 29, 33 as questions with doubtful answers, but also as questions with different answers at the level of the story and at the level of the performance of the text.[24] When Photini asks, "*You* are not greater than our father Jacob. . ., are you?" (4:12), she, as a character, asserts her own identity and doubts that Jesus could rise to her level, but the audience, Judean and Samaritan Israelites, are reminded of their belief that Jesus *is* greater than their mutual ancestor (Duke 1985, p. 70; Sechrest 2022, p. 140).[25] And in the context of this unusual betrothal, Jacob, as the father of twelve, has a vigor that is exceeded by Jesus, which will be demonstrated when the product of his union with Photini results in the birth from above of a whole town of Samaritans.[26] Some could hear in this question dominance, the reminder that Jesus is greater than Jacob and therefore, perhaps, absorbs all Jacob's descendants into a dominating identity. However, the union of a 'Jewish' Messiah (see below) with a Samaritan woman that produces Samaritan Israelites proclaiming loyalty to Jesus suggests a more complex and inclusive merger of the subgroups. Unity has been encouraged, but Samaritan Israelite identity has also been affirmed.

4. Knowledge: Affirming Samaritan Israelite and Judean Knowledge

The next topic in which a similar negotiation of Judean and Samaritan identities occurs is that of knowledge (v. 19). In Samaritan Israelite belief, the *Taheb* (cf. Deut 18:18) will come and bring knowledge (Dexinger 1989).[27] We have no evidence for the use of the word *Taheb* until the fourth century CE, but the concept developed much earlier (Pummer 2015, p. 63; Williams 2019, pp. 124–26). Because it is part of Samaritan eschatology that they await knowledge, it is not necessary to interpret v. 22a (ὑμεῖς προσκυνεῖτε ὃ οὐκ οἴδατε) as an insult (Benko 2019, pp. 105–6). After all, Paul says the same thing on Mars Hill (Acts 17:23b: "What you are worshipping unknowingly, that is what I am announcing to you") (Theobald 2009, p. 322; Paul 2021, 207 n. 77). Photini recognizes by his knowledge of her marital status (to be discussed below) that Jesus might be considered *a* prophet (Williams 2019, pp. 122–23), but she then tests him to see if he might be *the* prophet, the only one the Samaritan Israelites await, the one who will find the ark and restore the Tabernacle, enabling proper worship (Dexinger 1989, pp. 273–74; Pummer 2020, pp. 93–95; Meeks 1967, p. 223; Schneiders 1999, p. 189; Miller 2009, p. 76).[28] And Jesus, in his response (vv. 21–24), picks up the thread of divine necessity: it was necessary for Jesus to go through Samaria (v. 4); 'the Jews' believe it is necessary to worship in Jerusalem (v. 20); but Jesus points out the necessity of worshipping a spiritual God in spirit and truth (v. 21–24) (Keener 2003, p. 1.590; Lincoln 2005, p. 171).[29] With this statement, Jesus not only moves the location of worship, but by noting past differences and emphasizing future unity in worship, he also moves the locus of identity from the past to the future (Botha 1991, pp. 145, 147, 148). Judean and Samaritan Israelite identities have been focused on their different places of worship, but, while acknowledging those differences, John's Jesus invites a shift towards a new reality, validating Photini's identification of him as a prophet, while also offering both subgroups an answer for their current lack of temples (Estrada 2019, pp. 166–67).

The alternating declarations the text makes about knowing (οἶδα) are particularly striking in this regard. At the beginning Photini does not know who this 'Jewish' man is (v. 10), and neither do the Samaritans know what they worship (v. 22) (Fehribach 1998, p. 63). However, Photini quickly declares that she knows that it is Messiah who will complete their knowledge (v. 25), something that Jesus is in the process of doing (vv. 22–24, 26) (Lincoln 2005, p. 178). The declaration in v. 22 that "salvation is from the Jews", may refer to the superior knowledge of 'the Jews', perhaps particularly their texts beyond the Pentateuch, giving them more knowledge about Messiah, and about the new temple as the source of living water (Ezek. 47:1–12), both relevant to John 4 (Brant 2011, pp. 85–86).[30] But among the auditors for whom both the temple on Mt. Gerizim and the temple in Jerusalem have been destroyed, any necessity for worshipping in either place (although only Jerusalem is given necessity in Photini's words) has been made impossible (Brant 2011, p. 68).[31]

So, while Judeans are affirmed in their knowledge, the 'Jewish' disciples, later in the narrative, demonstrate their lack of knowledge about doing God's will (v. 32). And by the end of the story, the Samaritan Israelites declare that they now know for themselves that Jesus is the savior of the world (v. 42) (Keener 2003, p. 1.624).[32] Overall, then, the Samaritan Israelite expectation of a returning prophet who brings knowledge is affirmed, alongside Judean knowledge about Messiah from the *Tanakh* (Williams 2019, p. 135). The new knowledge that Jesus brings is that all can worship together, a belief already attempted in practice among Samaritan Israelites and Judeans in the Jesus-believing networks of Asia Minor (Paul 2021, p. 207).

This affirmation of both groups' pasts—the Samaritan Israelite knowledge of a coming one who knows, and Judean knowledge of Messiah—heads off ingroup projection. John's Jesus presents an inclusive superordinate group of worshippers in spirit and truth, who still carry the identity-defining memories from different subgroups.[33] It continues to be true that in the past Samaritan Israelites worshipped with the consciousness that they were awaiting further knowledge, and they believed that "this mountain" was the proper place

for worship for all (Thatcher 2000, pp. 219–20). Judeans worshipped a God in Jerusalem, one defined by the Torah *and* the prophets. Those previous identities remain salient. Jesus does not need to demean either group to integrate them into a complex identity that values both (*pace* Keener 2003, p. 1.602).[34]

This integration continues as Photini, whose declaration has affirmed the 'Jewish' Messiah and the Samaritan one-who-brings-knowledge, prompts the self-revelation of Jesus, "I am the one speaking to you" (4:26) (Pummer 2020, p. 89). This pronouncement has a referent in the Pentateuch (Deut 32:39), connecting Jesus to a poem describing the Lord, recited by Moses, and therefore recognizable to Samaritan Israelites and Judeans alike (Schneiders 1999, p. 189).[35] However, Isa 52:5 LXX provides extensive echoes to John 4 and, like the shift from past to future worship centers, focuses on the unique God's future revelation and deliverance (Williams 2000, pp. 262–66; Lincoln 2005, p. 178).[36] Thus, throughout John 4:4–30, Samaritan identity is especially validated, but Judean identity is as well, and the author constructs a complex scene in which the characters of Photini and Jesus are able to interact together, revealing Jesus' identity in both 'Jewish' and Samaritan terms.

From the return of the disciples on (v. 27), however, the narrative no longer distinguishes between Photini's Samaritan identity and the Judean identities of Jesus and the disciples. The disciples, in fact, only mention Photini's gender in their surprise at finding her speaking with Jesus.

Before turning to purity as an issue often connected to gender, a brief analysis of power dynamics within and outside of the text can helpfully summarize the analysis provided so far. I have theorized people with competing hereditary identities now worship the same God in a networked relationship across Asia Minor. Individuals assess their own status based on their understanding of the shifting status of Samaritan Israelite and Judean identities, their own status within each community, but also the renegotiation of status within the new Jesus communities connected with Ephesus.[37] Thus, multiple people participating in divided systems (each with some hierarchy) are now participating together in a situation of, perhaps, equal power between the subsystems.

In fact, the power dynamics between Jesus's disciples and the inhabitants of Sychar in the text supports a situation within the text of equal power. Since the inhabitants are not mentioned until v. 28, they are initially invisible behind the metonymy in v. 8: "For his disciples had gone into the town to buy provisions".[38] That economic relationship constructs a hierarchy in which the townspeople have the food, and the disciples are dependent on their willingness to sell to them. In the narrative world of the Fourth Gospel, however, the hierarchy may be expected to go the other way. Jesus asserts that "Salvation is from the Jews" (v. 22), and with this pronouncement the needy ones become the Samaritan Israelites, with Jesus and Photini as the providers.[39]

Such balanced power dynamics in the text cannot be naively applied to the social situation in and around Ephesus, however. What has been brought out in the analysis so far, is a story that validates Samaritan identity by Jesus's necessity to travel there, the provisions of Jacob, and the longing for knowledge, but that also validates 'Jewish' identity through the greater witness of the LXX and their concerns for purity in eating practices. A superordinate identity is created in which both groups have Jacob as father, the Jewish characters seem willing to share food and drink with Samaritan Israelites, and Jesus offers knowledge that allows both to worship together. And while the mutual dependence of the power relationships in the text cannot be imposed on the world outside the text, they do ensure that any imbalances in that world are not reified for the audience.

5. Purity as Another Cross-Cutting Characteristic

Discussions of John 4 usually assume that Jesus and Photini are alone. Much has been made, in fact, of Photini coming to the well alone at noon (Keener 2003, pp. 1.591–93, 595; Lincoln 2005, p. 176). Certainly, noon is the proper gloss for "it was the sixth hour" (ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη).[40] However, noon was not an unusual time to draw water, as can be verified

by other well scenes, with women whose purity is not in question (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.257; Gen 29:7 in both the MT and the SP) (Day 2002, p. 161).[41] Furthermore, in the narrative of the trial before Pilate (John 18:28–19:22), when Pilate goes into the *praetorium* and summons Jesus, and also each time he goes back in to speak with him again, one does not assume that they are alone. Slaves and guards must be imagined in the scene despite not being mentioned in the text.[42] Similarly, the approach of a woman from Samaria to draw water at noon does not require the well to be void of people (Moore 1993, p. 207). Even the narrator's inserted remark (4:8) that the disciples had left may only explain why it was necessary for Jesus ask a Samaritan rather than one of the disciples for a drink, and perhaps emphasize the oddness of his choosing a woman. It does not necessarily entail that he and Photini are alone (*pace* Paul 2021, p. 116).[43] The narrative lens zooms in on the two of them, just as it does with Jesus and Pilate, but that does not require that out-of-frame people be absent.

In ancient characterizations, actions do not reveal internal motivations but reflect on the character's virtue and that of the group the character represents (Brant 2011, p. 95). Stephen Moore has critiqued scholars who shame Photini for not recognizing Jesus's metaphorical language, but then fall into the same trap themselves by interpreting her five husbands literally (Moore 1993, pp. 210–12). Instead, I recognize a double entendre for running/living water (4:10) that may seem to confuse Photini (Ashton 2021, p. 88). And I reach beyond the literal in a different direction, not towards a spiritualized interpretation of husbands, as towards living water as embodied purity (Van Deventer and Domeris 2021, p. 148 n. 18).[44]

The first reference to purity in John 4 comes in v. 6 when the well is described as a spring (πηγή; also in v. 14), the kind of water used for purification.[45] This contrasts with later references to the constructed conduit of the well (φρέαρ; vv. 11–12) (Brant 2011, p. 82). When Jesus, 'the Jew,' shows an apparent disregard for purity by asking for a drink (but see below), Photini sets him straight; she points out the purity difference that lies between them (v. 9) (Botha 1991, pp. 118–19). That gulf will be widened in the later discussion about her husbands, but even this early in the narrative, it is she, the Samaritan Israelite, who shows the greater attention to halakha (Botha 1991, pp. 119–20). And she does so by emphasizing both her gender and her cultural identity equally.[46] Although current scholarship has shown that the charge of Samaritan idolatry is likely rhetorical, that does not mean it did not have currency and effects in the diaspora (Van Deventer and Domeris 2021).

Jesus, on the other hand, identifies himself as the source of living/running water (Brant 2011, p. 84; Keener 2003, p. 1.598).[47] Jesus as a source of purity in himself, without need of a river, may have been anticipated in John 4:2 where the narrator corrects himself: "although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but only his disciples".[48] Spring water, living/running water (ὕδωρ ζῶν), "water that has issued directly from God—that is, from rain, a natural pool, or a stream", was necessary for some purification rituals, and Judeans and Samaritan Israelites would recognize it as such (Harrington 2011, p. 123; Magen 1993, pp. 182, 184; Milgrom 1991, pp. 836–39). Drawn water might suffice in some cases, but such water could also be made living by contact with at least 40 *se'ahs* (almost 300 L) of water "from God" (Miller 2020, p. 503). Thus, the woman's water jar might not maintain the purity of the spring water unless it was made of stone, at least in some halakahs, but that seems prohibitively heavy for trips to the well (Regev 2000, p. 181).[49] Thus, when Jesus suggests Photini ask him for his water (v. 10), he is offering to cleanse Photini from any impurity thought to adhere to her Samaritan identity, before any further reason for uncleanness has been discussed.[50] Furthermore, access to running water is not restricted to Jesus himself. His offer of water brings with it, in v. 14, a personal *bubbling* spring, in other words, constant access to purity within oneself.[51] While Wally Cirafesi argues that the Gospel highlights diaspora purity practices in which only parts of the body are washed rather than immersion

that is "priestly-oriented", it seems to me that a personal spring of living water within each person could cover both (Cirafesi 2022, p. 150).

Photini herself seems unconcerned with purity; she speaks of her thirst and her workload (v. 15).[52] But Jesus's turn to the topic of her many husbands brings up a second set of purity concerns. How does Photini's marital situation relate to the realities of the ancient world?

Ancient texts that describe women according to an author's ideal may render actual women invisible (e.g., 1 Tim 2:12 *versus* Rom 16), which makes ancient realities sometimes hard to discern. But at least one widowed woman, Babatha, chose to marry a man who already had a living wife (Parks et al. 2022, pp. 145–47). Babatha's wealth gave her the means to make independent decisions, but she regularly had to go through courts to have them enforced. She demonstrates that people adapted to the vicissitudes of life, and that realities did not necessarily match up to ideals. Photini, in particular, mirrors such women in the ancient world. Her circumstances dictated, after five husbands, living with a man to whom she was not the primary wife, perhaps even as a concubine or a slave (Monro 1995, p. 718). Yet the existence of Babatha demonstrates that independent wealth or religious education would not automatically be precluded for her.

The acknowledgment of the presence of real women behind the projections of the text means that, in discussing Photini's purity, I want to carefully distinguish the realities of the ancient world, the perceptions of her community, and our understanding of such realities today. No matter what circumstances have put Photini in her position, John says nothing about any supposed sinfulness, and I, from a 21st century perspective, will not either. I will assume that such a woman would be doing the best she can for herself, and I have given her the respect of giving her character a name. None of this erases the probability, however, that Photini would have been seen as impure by many of her contemporaries.[53] Women throughout history have often been blamed for the tragic circumstances that befall them (see the Calvin passage cited in n. 10), so it is not a stretch to imagine that people would have assumed that some impurity, such as an abnormal discharge, caused her divorces.[54] This kind of impurity (as well as skin disease and corpse impurity) requires running water for purification (Milgrom 1991, p. 837). The judgment of others, furthermore, suggests that the lens through which to view her character is that of shame and impurity, not sinfulness (Brant 2011, p. 82).[55]

Photini's perceived impurities could be cleansed, then, through Jesus's running/living water, and this water is already available to the network of Jesus followers listening to the Gospel. However, each person in the Jesus network carries the knowledge of their own level of purity as it would be understood within their ancestral identities. Although, for example, "by biblical law, all Diaspora Jews were impure all the time", they enacted purity rituals such as hand washing before meals and before prayer.[56] If Photini could become an evangelist, sharing metaphorically the running water of Jesus and the food of God (John 4:34), then the network is invited to recognize that Jesus offers them the resources for a source of purification that they carry within themselves (Van Deventer and Domeris 2021, p. 154).

Such a view of purity does not erase purity concerns, nor does living water exist in an "antithesis" with well water, since this well is a spring, and therefore living, too (*pace* Kot 2020, p. 632). In fact, Harrington points out that purity precedes the work of the Spirit:

> In light of the foregoing analysis, the use of water for purification in the Fourth Gospel does not seem unusual or innovative in Second Temple Judaism. It is simply inaccurate to say that the author is only using water as a symbol to renounce the past, which will be replaced by Jesus. Rather, the writer uses water ablutions as they would have been understood in contemporary Judaism—not just a doing away with impurity and the past, but a way in which the purifier was asked to prepare for and focus on the activity of the Spirit of God. (Harrington 2011, p. 137)

The interest in purity is even more relevant when seen in light of Jesus and Photini's discussion about the locus of worship (vv. 20–24) (Keener 2003, p. 1.617).[57] Paul and the Qumran community continued to emphasize purity while shifting their worship from physical temple to metaphorical temple defined as the community itself (e.g., Wassen 2013, p. 82). Among Jesus-believers, if ritual purity was established through baptism, John 4 suggests it could be maintained by a source of running water understood to be carried within (v. 14). Such a belief has the effect of making ritual purity concerns invisible, which may have helped to shift communal concerns to moral purity (Wassen 2013, pp. 67–68, 70, 76–77, 79–82).[58] Thomas Kazen, for example, looks at the Gospel reports of Jesus's attitude towards skin diseases, bodily discharges, and corpse impurity and suggests that he was "careless or indifferent" to ritual purification from these contaminants (Kazen 2010, p. 198).[59] But this conclusion can be countered in two possible ways. First, Paula Fredriksen points out that purity rituals were so embedded in daily life that they may not have always merited mention (Fredriksen 1995, pp. 42–43). An audience embedded in purity paradigms would simply assume that one would bathe after touching a corpse. However, one might similarly seem unconcerned with purity if one carried inside oneself a mobile miqveh that constantly rendered one pure (Moore 1993, p. 216). If Jesus is a source of running water, then any impurity contracted from potentially drinking from a Samaritan woman's cup would immediately be reversed (although Wally Cirafesi is correct to point out that John never has Jesus actually touch Photini or her jar) (Cirafesi 2022, pp. 148–49). A continual purification (instead of erasure of purity as a valid category) means that diaspora subgroup identities with all of their diversity of purity practices have been affirmed and included. But a hierarchy of purity can no longer be used for status evaluations. There may or may not be other hierarchies among those loyal to Christ in the environs of Ephesus, but, according to John 4, purity concerns have been attended to.

6. Tying up Loose Ends: Identity, Knowledge, and Purity

Photini, like Mary Magdalene at the other end of this Gospel, leaves Jesus and tells what she has seen (4:28–29; 20:18) (Schneiders 2003, p. 216). Although some commentaries discount the content of Photini's message, and ask whether or not it sufficiently recognizes the identity of Jesus, it seems that for John, in both cases, a description of what the witness saw is all that is required (Coloe 2013, p. 192 n. 41). Then, the lens shifts back (in verses 35–38) to a discussion between Jesus and the disciples. In v. 36, harvester and sower rejoice together at the harvest. And since the harvester is already gathering fruit, he most clearly references Photini who is testifying in the narrative present, although Jesus and perhaps God, too, may be included (Thompson 2015, p. 108; Lincoln 2005, p. 180).[60]

Since the Samaritans have left their town and are already on their way to see Jesus (v. 30), they are likely the harvest Jesus points to in v. 35 (Botha 1991, p. 174; Lincoln 2005, p. 180). If God is the sower who has sown his Son into the world (John 3:16–17), Jesus harvests Photini; she then shares in harvesting, and v. 38 suggests that the disciples (both within and without the story world) are called to harvest as well.[61] Oddly, though, where one might have expected harvesters who harvest what they have not toiled for to receive a share in the fruit (as in v. 36), v. 38 suggests that what the harvesters share in is not the fruit but the toil of the sower.

This awkwardness becomes clearer with the "catchword" connection with Joshua 24:13 LXX: "And he gave you land on which you did not toil (ἐκοπιάσατε), and cities which you did not build, and which you settled in, and vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant, from which you will feed yourself".[62] Although κεκοπιάκατε and κεκοπιάκασιν (John 4:38) are not in the same form as ἐκοπιάσατε in Joshua 24:13 LXX, this double use of the same verb could be a catchword that signals a reference. Wendy North has observed eight elements in John's patterns of referencing the LXX, of which five can be seen here: the verb κοπιάω signals the connection and the signal is reinforced with the description of taking over a harvest; this harvest is summarized more than in the original; the reference causes awkwardness as the mutual dwelling of northern and southern tribes in the land of

Canaan is mapped onto the toil of their mutual participation in mission—free, unearned food does not quite match with shared work—but John is using this reference for his own purposes (North 2020, pp. 52–53).[63]

However, this allusion does not depend specifically on Joshua 24:13. The same argument could be made regarding a reference to Psalm 104:44 LXX where the repeated vocabulary would be χώρα and the repeated concept would be the references to hard work, κόπος in John and πόνος in the Psalm, two almost synonymous words (Louw and Nida 1996, p. 514). Deut 6:10–11, within the Samaritan Scriptures, might also provide a source for the allusion, although the only possible catchword is Ιακωβ in Deut 6:10, but that connects to John 4:4–5, 12, but not to the verses describing the shared harvest (vv. 35–38). Perhaps the concept of taking over the fields of the Canaanites was sufficiently common in Scripture to not require one specific source.[64]

The reference to the entrance into the land of Canaan, if accepted, reinforces the mutual participation of *all* the tribes of Israel in one task and purpose, sharing then in the toil of conquest as well as the fruit of the land, sharing here in the toil of mission as well as the fruit of the multiplication of disciples.[65] In this sense, then vv. 34–38 bring together Samaritan Israelites and Jewish disciples as inheritors of ripe fields, and Jesus, Photini, and all the others as men and women harvesting by turn, without purity exclusions.[66] Photini serves as a model of an ideal disciple as the Samaritan Israelites go from believing through *her* word (λόγος), to believing through Jesus's word, demoting Photini's words to simple talk (λαλιά). This model, validated as it is in John 17:20; 20:29, serves throughout the gospel as people report to others about Jesus, and then bring them into contact with him to decide for themselves (Schneiders 1999, pp. 186–87, 192–93; Lincoln 2005, p. 181). However, it is also possible that John uses these words synonymously since in v. 9 Jesus is "the one speaking to you" (ὁ λέγων σοι) and in v. 26 he is "the one talking to you" (ὁ λαλῶν σοι).[67] The repeated reference to Samaritans in vv. 39, 40 makes Judean and Samaritan Israelite identities salient again, but only to emphasize the unity between the two groups as they offer and receive hospitality in exchange for Jesus's teaching.[68]

The theme of knowing, too, has been brought to a close as Photini testifies to Jesus's knowledge (v. 29), and that knowledge has now been adopted by the Samaritan Israelites (v. 42), who are the necessary spiritual worshippers (v. 23–24) (Botha 1991, p. 185).[69] And when they declare their loyalty, they do so with reference to a new identity. Rather than an identification that fixes Jesus within either Judean or Samaritan Israelite identity, the author unites the two groups in a declaration that defines them as followers of a Jesus who has been given new title (Brant 2011, pp. 88–89). Jesus as "savior of the world" defines an empire not Judean or Samaritan, but in opposition to that of Rome (Koester 1990).[70] A rejection of Rome is not univocal in the Fourth Gospel, and "savior of the world" should be unpacked in further research in a nuanced way (Horrell 2020, pp. 319–25).[71] I mention it now only as a shadow, barely present and yet looming.

The theme of purity has been brought to a close as well. The running water of Jesus purifies, and the need for and gift of purification provides continuity between Judean and Samaritan Israelite past purity rituals and the network's present practices. Old identities are not erased but developed, and developed in more than one way. Running water, itself a gift from God, was used for purification rituals that prepared for sacrifices (e.g., Lev 14:1–7)—gifts offered to God (Miller 2015, p. 125).[72] Purification was often expected to prepare for the spirit, too (Harrington 2011, p. 119). So it seems that within John 4, Jesus offers running water to purify, declares himself to be the sacrifice of God, and prepares for the expected arrival of the Spirit. In all these ways, Jesus enacts in himself the rituals common to both Samaritan Israelite and Judean followers of YHWH.

7. Summary: A New Family

John 4 is often categorized as a betrothal because of the resonances especially with Gen 29:1–14, because of the mention of Jacob, the reference to the middle of the day (v. 7),

and Rachel running away to talk to her kinsman (v. 12), all details mirrored in John 4 (Botha 1991, pp. 111, 118; Fehribach 1998, pp. 49–52; Sechrest 2022, pp. 136–38; Lincoln 2005, pp. 170–82, esp. 170; Coloe 2013, p. 186; Keener 2003, pp. 1.586, 595, 597, 598, 605–608).[73] But the expectation of a 'Jewish' betrothal is immediately frustrated by the appearance of a Samaritan woman (v. 9). While marriages between Judeans and Samaritan women did occur, these unions generally required the family to leave Judea (Schiffman 1985, p. 328).

The woman's answer that she has no husband is again, quite expected for a betrothal (Duke 1985, p. 102). But that the woman had five husbands and is now a secondary wife, a slave, or an adulteress (taking the σύ in v. 18 as emphatic since it is the only personal pronoun in the pericope set *before* rather than after its noun), suggests that she would have been socially outcast even in Samaria.[74] Jesus, however, neither rebukes nor rejects her as unfit to spread his message; instead, he praises her honesty (v. 17) (Brant 2011, p. 85).

Another well-scene from the Septuagint (LXX) and the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) might be in view, as well. Hagar, too, is driven away from the man who is not *her* husband and meets God at a well (Gen 16). After she tells her troubles to the messenger of God, he promises her more children than she can count. Photini, like Hagar, becomes "a mother of an Israel that extends beyond the boundaries of both the Judeans and the Samaritans", from the perspective of an Ephesian network that could have included gentiles (Monro 1995, pp. 719–22; Williams 2019, pp. 134–35).

In this analysis, ingroup projection shaped the initial approach to Samaritan Israelite–Judean relations. The superordinate identity developed in John 4, however, does not immediately relegate either identity to marginalized status but recognizes a history in which each group has succeeded the other in ascendency, and a narrative in which both subgroup identities are affirmed in their genealogy, knowledge, and access to purity. Social identity complexity suggests that a superordinate identity can be built in such a case in one of three ways: only those who are members of certain categories belong (intersection); all are expected to have a common category that is of primary importance (dominance); all categories are separately expressed (compartmentalization); and various expressions of diversity are recognized as belonging (merger) (Brewer 2010, p. 16). Multiple branches of Abrahamic genealogies have been affirmed in John 4. Multiple sources of knowledge have as well. Purity remains of high value, but the living/running water carried within believers, combined with the gift/sacrifice of Jesus removes that category as a marker of difference. Furthermore, the destruction of both temples, which both groups now have in common, invites the creation of a new locus of worship in Ephesian assemblies. The discourse of John 4 could thus, in the postulated Jesus network, have the effect of creating a merged complex identity for the Samaritan Israelites and Judeans worshipping Jesus in proximity to Ephesus.

Bayes' theorem requires that a hypothetical reconstruction of an audience for the Fourth Gospel be tested by examining the likelihood of that audience apart from any text, and the probability that such an audience would require a text such as the Fourth Gospel, comparing the analysis with other studies along the way. Historical evidence shows that Samaritan Israelites and diaspora Judeans were around Ephesus and possibly among the Jesus-believers in the first and second centuries CE. And given the unifying effects of the themes of genealogy, knowledge, and purity in John 4, it seems not unreasonable that such a network might have needed such a text. Thus, I conclude that the postulated network could have been part of the audience at least for the John 4:4–42 portion of the Fourth Gospel.

Notes

1   For the importance of John 1:12, see (Cirafesi 2022, pp. 109–10). However, the generation of new believers by the Samaritan woman (along with other feminine metaphors in John) argues against a purely paternal metaphor. See, e.g., (Van Deventer and Domeris 2021).

2   The term "Samaritan Israelite" is used in this chapter to encourage recognition of Israelite identity as a socially complex phenomenon that merges various expressions of its subgroups (Chalmers 2021, p. 47). Merger identities and social identity complexity is discussed below.

3   In the pericope as a whole, there are present tense verbs in the main clauses in vv. 1, 4–5, 7, 9, 11–12, 15, 17b–26, 28b–29, 34–38. Jo-Ann Brant, too, recognizes the frequent use of the historic present in this passage (Brant 2011, p. 82). Piotr Kot offers a different analysis which centers 4:10, but does not take into account the tenses of the verbs (Kot 2020, pp. 618–19).

4   On Samaritans as idolaters, see (Kartveit 2009, p. 228). For an example of the way this stereotype of idolatry can unaccountably bleed into offhand characterizations of the woman, see (Kot 2020, p. 633).

5   For a particularly egregious interpretation, see John Calvin who calls Samaritans "the scum of a people", accuses Jews of using the law as a cover for their "carnal hatred", and calls Photini a "prostitute", suggesting that she occasioned her own multiple divorces by her contrariness (Calvin 2010, pp. 146, 148, 153). For a modern-day example, we have the suggestion that the "woman speaking to Jesus believed in YHWH, but she also lived a life of idolatry (she had many husbands)" (Kot 2020, p. 633). Note in Kot's bibliography the almost nonexistent engagement with women scholars. For the effects of such characterizations, see (Warren 2021).

6   Note my usual caveat: Bayes is not immediately transferrable to Biblical Studies where probabilities are often subjective. Additionally, it produces self-contradicting results when applied to extremely improbable events. However, Heilig has demonstrated that it offers helpful ways to conceptualize less traditional questions about the text. Thank you to Prof. Samuel Cohen from the Mathematical Institute at Oxford University, and to the Bayes and Bible group led by Christoph Heilig and funded by the Cogito Foundation, for these warnings.

7   While the vagaries of preservation cannot be relied upon for definitive assertions, archaeology has preserved more public use of Latin in Ephesus than in other cities often associated with John's Gospel (Hunt 2019, pp. 91–119).

8   For cautions and corrections regarding B/CE terminology, see (Horrell 2020, pp. 16–18).

9   "make it likely that from the third century BCE to the seventh century CE members of the Samaritan faith community settled across the whole ancient world" (Van der Horst 1988, p. 144).

10   For more on early Christians as networks, see (Alexander 2003).

11   On Jews in Ephesus more generally, see (Tellbe 2009, pp. 65–75).

12   For an analysis of the social groups interacting during this period, see (Penwell 2019, pp. 53–54 and n. 31).

13   For example, in one reckoning, Isaiah is Paul's most cited source in Romans (20 times); (Philipps 2009).

14   See, somewhat similarly, (Dube 2002, pp. 61–62). *Pace* Keener (2003, p. 1.587) who does not think that Samaritan–Judean relations would be relevant in the diaspora. On commerce, see (Hingley 2005, pp. 107, 115–16). On the connection between the *fiscus Judaicus* and Jewish identity, see (Goodman 1989).

15   Although John 4 does not contain a long monologue such as those Boomershine discusses and performance criticism cannot be brought in here, both of the following articles were helpful to my thinking on oral communication in the first and second centuries CE (Boomershine 2011; Perry 2019).

16   Note that this often happens when scholars themselves engage in ingroup projection, assuming that it would be possible for ancient people to abandon what we may label "ethnic" identities to adopt a Christian "universalism" that in the end looks suspiciously like some version of present-day Christianity.

17   It is important not to construct in our scholarship a totalizing Christian identity that absorbs all others (Horrell 2020, p. 326; e.g., Jennings 2010, pp. 166–67, 252–53).

18   (Jennings 2010, esp. 65–116; cf. Penwell 2019, 30 n. 45).

19   In Luke, Jesus only travels along the border between Samaria and Galilee (Luke 17:11), and in Matthew, Jesus warns his disciples away from both gentiles and Samaritan Israelites (Matt 10:5).

20   On the recognition of common ancestry combined with a desire to reject the Samaritans from a Jewish point of view, see (Paul 2021, p. 130).

21   For the fatherhood of God in Judaism in particular, see (Girsch 2015, pp. 58–61).

22   Horrell points out that even kinship that we might call fictive because it is not based on genetic relations nevertheless, when constructed, results in this-world behaviors (Horrell 2020, p. 111). Keener brings this transcendent worship up again and equates it with worship in Revelation, citing, i.a., 7:9. However, besides there being no necessary connection with the Fourth Gospel, worship in Rev. 7:9 is specifically *not* transcendent of ethnicity. It is not that the barriers of impurity, gender, and traditions have been overcome, but that they have been incorporated (*pace* Keener 2003, p. 1.619).

23   BDAG, 646 (3), 649.

24   Tom Thatcher locates quite of few of the μή questions within passages identified as riddles on other grounds (Thatcher 2000, pp. 278–80, 219–21, 238).

25   Although there is no space to discuss it here, Jesus as God's gift may reference the living water from the well of wisdom, the wandering Israelites' traveling well, and God's gift of Torah through Moses (Neyrey 1979, pp. 421–23; Keener 2003, pp. 1.602–604; Lincoln 2005, pp. 173–74; Coloe 2013, pp. 187–88). For further connections between water and Jacob's well, see (Kot 2020, p. 630). However, note the dating issues mentioned in n. 5. Furthermore, the question for targumim as background to John 4 is not whether "the woman of Samaria who comes to the well must have known the non-Biblical texts", but whether authors and audiences might have known them. In this article, however, I focus on living water as running water (both described as ὕδωρ ζῶν) used for purification.

26   This thinking was suggested to me by (Lincoln 2005, p. 174), but the application of the metaphor to the betrothal is my own. Cf. also (Fehribach 1998, p. 47; Ashton 2021, p. 99).

27   A full discussion of the *Taheb* cannot be entered into here.

28   For a roundup of sources on the debate about whether προφήτης is definite or not in v. 19, see (Paul 2021, pp. 181–84).

29   For an extended discussion of δεῖ generally and in John 4:4, specifically, see (Paul 2021, pp. 98–102). For truth as "the revelation of God in Jesus", which is not further discussed in this article, see (Lincoln 2005, p. 177).

30   On Messiah language in Second Temple Judaism, see (Novenson 2016, pp. 57–63).

31   Paul suggests something similar as well; (Paul 2021, pp. 200, 202).

32   On some of these contrasts, see (Paul 2021, pp. 118, 120). For a similar twist on Jesus's identity as a Jew or a Samaritan, see (Penwell 2019, p. 146).

33   Keener suggests something similar but sees them both as superseded (Keener 2003, p. 1.615).

34   For a discussion of the use of pronouns in a way that initially recognizes and eventually overcomes division, see (Fehribach 1998, pp. 58–61). For complex identities, see (Brewer 2010).

35   On Deut 32:1–43 and its relation to Deutero-Isaiah, see (Williams 2000, pp. 42–50). And on the connection to Samaritan belief, see (Williams 2000, pp. 74–85, 258–59). Note that Williams does not assume that later eschatology was current at the time of composition but does suggest an early belief in a returning Moses-like prophet, p. 259.

36   Those who connect Jesus's self-revelation specifically to Isa 52:6 LXX include (Brant 2011, p. 86; Keener 2003, p. 1.620).

37   The term "heterarchy" is useful for multiple centers of identity that interact without clear hierarchy (Crumley 1987).

38   Sychar was likely a small town; (Zangenberg 2006, p. 418).

39   Power relations exist between Jesus and Photini, as well; however, the relative power of a 'Jewish' man and a Samaritan Israelite woman when they are sitting by a well in Samaria is difficult to gauge. It would be interesting to look at the ways the Fourth Gospel claims superiority for Jesus (1:30; 8:23) and yet also gives authority away (1:12; 20:23), but that will not be attempted in this article.

40   Kubiś clearly makes this case, despite his relative lack of interaction with 21st century or women scholars. His citations of Aulus Gellius demonstrate that even in Rome, although the day begins at midnight, the hours of the night are counted starting at sunset, such that "the sixth hour of the night" is midnight (Kubiś 2021, p. 254).

41   See also Keener's note that the Ankore of Uganda "rest at noon and draw water about 1pm" (Keener 2003, p. 1.593 n. 86). The one-hour time difference does not seem enough to distinguish clearly between proper and shameful visits to a well, however.

42   On the difficulties of private versus public spaces, see (Hunt 2019, pp. 26, 263). A prefiguring of Pilate's noontime presentation of Jesus (19:14) might also be read into John 4:6, but that is less certain (Keener 2003, p. 1.592).

43   My point is not so much to argue that Jesus is *not* alone, but to recognize that a private space is not a *necessary* interpretation of this scene.

44   Embodied purity is not unrelated to Moore's "spiritual material" water (Moore 1993, p. 222).

45   *Pace* Paul who sees no references to purity in this passage (Paul 2021, p. 145). However, she does not seem to be aware of the double meaning of ὕδωρ ζῶν. For Paul, the rift between Jews and Samaritans expressed in vv. 1–9 is specifically grounded in the two opposing places of worship (Paul 2021, p. 148).

46   Although Σαμαρῖτις may be an adjective in the second attributive position, the word may also be taken as an appositional noun, giving equal weight to both identities. Although Fehribach analyzes the Greek somewhat differently, she also concludes that both Photini's gender and ethnicity are emphasized (Fehribach 1998, pp. 71–72).

47   Paul does not recognize the importance of this double meaning, but does list the verses in the LXX and the SP that refer to running water for purification: Lev 14:5, 6, 50, 51, 52; 15:13 (that last only in the SP) and Num 19:17 (Paul 2021, p. 160 n. 55).

48   Purity concerns are foreshadowed in John 3:25, too.

49   On purity, see (Brant 2011, p. 68; Miller 2009, p. 75). It is possible, in fact, that a shared revulsion among the audience to the idea of Jesus requesting to drink from Photini's jar (v. 7–9) would have decreased the social distance between Judeans and Samaritans. Although not discussed further in this article, there could be many interpretations of the reason for Photini to leave her jar behind (v. 28). It could characterize her as a disciple, meaning that she will return; it could provide a means for Jesus and the disciples to

drink in her absence; it could demonstrate that she has no more need of well water now that she has Jesus's water, or that she has left her symbol of servitude or a specific view of purity behind (Brant 2011, p. 87; Monro 1995, p. 719; Schneiders 2003, p. 141; Botha 1991, pp. 163–64; Lincoln 2005, p. 179).

50   Photini's desire for purity seems closer to hand in the text than a more existential "thirst for God", for human fulfillment (*pace* Paul 2021, pp. 156–57). See, however, Moore's point that Jesus' thirst is for the thirst of believers (Moore 1993, p. 219).

51   See Kot, who relates the verb used here, ἄλλομαι, το סלק in Targum Neofiti (Kot 2020, p. 629). However, the dating of this targum to the second or third century CE makes this connection less relevant (Flesher and Chilton 2011, pp. 151–66, esp. 156–58).

52   For this reason, Wil Rogan omits John 4 in his analysis (Rogan 2023, p. 43).

53   Lincoln, too, notes the shame she would have carried (Lincoln 2005, p. 175).

54   For a discussion of the varieties of Levitical, Qumranic, and rabbinic responses to bodily discharges, see (Harrington 2004, pp. 94–99; Haber 2008a, pp. 128–30).

55   Botha also deems any accusation against the woman irrelevant within the dialogue (Botha 1991, pp. 142–43; *pace* Keener 2003, p. 1.584).

56   For first-century purity concerns in the Jewish diaspora, see (Haber 2008b, pp. 170–78; Sanders 1990, pp. 258–71).

57   See, similarly, the construction of "the community as a living temple" in 1 Peter; (Horrell 2020, p. 206). The tension between individual and communal purity and worship deserves further discussion.

58   For connections between metaphorical temples, gardens, and living water, see (Wassen 2013, pp. 62, 65, 73–74).

59   See, similarly, Holmén who argues that Jesus demonstrates an "*inverse strategy of ritual (im)purity*" (Holmén 2011, p. 2723).

60   For other options, see (Keener 2003, p. 1.626).

61   This is an elaboration of Botha's discussion (Botha 1991, p. 174). It is also possible, based on the sexual overtones of the dialog between Jesus and Photini, that Jesus, as the groom, is the sower (Fehribach 1998, pp. 53–58; Lincoln 2005, p. 173). However, because of Photini's active testimony (λόγος; v. 39), I see her role shifting immediately to fellow harvester (*pace* Fehribach 1998, pp. 72–73). Fehribach's critiques, particularly regarding the author's emphasis on Photini's function over any valorizing of her character, deserve further discussion (Fehribach 1998, pp. 75–79).

62   Menken does not list this connection; (Menken 1996). It is briefly mentioned in (Theobald 2009, p. 336). On "catchword associations", see (Williams 2018, pp. 96–97, 104).

63   Many have noted the awkwardness of vv. 34–38, including (Botha 1991, p. 171).

64   L&N, s.v. On linking more than one text, see (North 2020, e.g., p. 81).

65   It is quite possible, as well, that some would read this reference as a warrant for conquest, ideological or otherwise (Dube 2002, p. 65).

66   Some of this is described in (Botha 1991, p. 178). See also (Keener 2003, p. 1.623).

67   See also v. 27. Of course, these are the related verbal forms and not the nouns.

68   Developed, in part, in (Botha 1991, pp. 184–85). On the importance of dwelling for true belief, see (Coloe 2013, p. 195; Schneiders 1999, p. 193).

69   The belief of the Samaritans thus fulfills the divine necessity from the beginning of the pericope (v. 4) (Lincoln 2005, pp. 177–78).

70   However, I disagree on Koester's characterization of the scene as an *adventus* (Hunt 2019, pp. 166–67).

71   My own conclusions regarding the Johannine trial narrative establish the necessity (for John) of loyalty to Jesus but discover a Jesus constructed along very Roman lines (Hunt 2019, pp. 299–300; *pace* Dube 2002, pp. 65–66).

72   Jesus in John 4 calls himself ἡ δωρεά and throughout Leviticus a sacrifice is τό δῶρον, the neuter noun of the same root.

73   It is interesting to me the way Photini can, in certain cases, be characterized as both promiscuous *and* inhospitable, criticized both for her perceived openness to Jesus and for her perceived rejection of him.

74   Personal pronouns always follow the noun they modify in this pericope, except here and in v. 34 where the pronoun is also emphasized (Brant 2011, p. 85). On the theory that Photini's husbands represent idols, see (Penwell 2019, p. 113).

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