

What's Form Got to Do with It?

Preliminaries on the Impact of Social Memory Theory for the Study of Biblical Intertextuality

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After the writer has collected everything, or nearly everything, let the writer first weave together from them a rough draft and make a text that is still unadorned and disjointed. Then, after the writer has put it in proper arrangement, let the writer bring in beauty, give it a touch of style, shape it and bring it to order.¹ Lucian of Samosata, *Hist. conscr.* 48

Lucian's ideas about writing history, used in Mathew D. C. Larsen's inspiring study *Gospels before the Book*, display a process quite familiar to the work of researchers. Our work, too, is an ongoing process that comes with lots of unfinished notes and unpolished ideas which are, however, necessary to stimulate the scholarly discussion and advance scientific progress. Research conferences mainly consist of presentations of work-in-progress exhibiting both of these characteristics: unfinished and unpolished. In a way, this is unavoidable given the fact that scholarly research is rarely about final results, but all the more about processes and thinking together. Since one never walks alone on these paths, I feel encouraged to share some of my preliminary thoughts and unfinished notes on the impact of social memory theory for the study of biblical intertextuality, and to invite my scholarly travel companions to think together.

In recent years of intensive research in the area of a social memory theoretical framework for reading biblical texts, my impression has become stronger that two areas which are researched independently, i. e., (biblical) intertextuality and social memory theory, are indeed closely connected: intertextuality can be understood as a phenomenon of cultural memory and should hence be investigated in a wider context of oral culture. Although references to cultural memory usually surface as text-text-relations and are thus investigated by biblical scholars

¹ Καὶ ἐπειδὴν ἀθροίσῃ ἅπαντα ἢ τὰ πλεῖστα, πρῶτα μὲν ὑπόμνημά τι συνυφαινέτω αὐτῶν καὶ σῶμα ποιεῖτω ἀκαλλῆς ἔτι καὶ ἀδιάρθρωτον· εἶτα ἐπιθείς τὴν τάξιν ἐπαγέτω τὸ κάλλος καὶ χρωρνύτω τῇ λέξει καὶ σχηματίζειτω καὶ ῥυθμίζειτω (text K. Kilburn, *Lucian*, vol. 6, LCL 430 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959], 60; trans. M. D. C. Larsen, *Gospels before the Book* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2018], 107).

as a feature of text, insights of social memory theory and media history force us to look closer and dig deeper.

In the following preliminaries, I will share first ideas of what is designed to be a larger project aimed at a new perspective on the field. My starting point is the question what intertextuality is actually about (§A), how it is typically researched in NT exegesis and what can be said about this approach on the basis of the insights of social memory theory and media history (§B). I will then draft a first outline of a different approach to intertextuality and what this new perspective might imply for reading early Christian texts (§C). The test drills and probing will be undertaken with the example of Isaiah in the different strands of NT traditions and I will close my notes with a brief outlook on possible next steps to continue the research (§D).

A. Approaching the Issue: Intertextuality and Its Application in Biblical Scholarship

A simple definition of intertextuality is that it describes and reflects the occurrence of texts in other texts. This broad definition covers all kinds of occurrences like (a) materialistic occurrence (a book or scroll itself is mentioned; e.g., Luke 4:17; Acts 8:28), (b) motifs (a motif from another text emerges in a text; e.g., Luke 4:25–27; Rev 14:5; Mark 12:1–12), (c) the structure of a text (a text is structured with recourse to another; e.g., John 1:1), or (d) a particular genre (particular genre is used; e.g., Matt 1:1–18). The most common form of intertextuality is, however, the occurrence of a clearly recognizable sequence or passage of one text in another (e.g., Luke 4:18–19; Acts 8:32–33). Usually the length and recognizability of the character string in question is essential for determining whether this occurrence is manifest, latent, or diffuse, and the intertextual disposition is called quotation (= manifest), allusion (= latent) or echo (= diffuse) as it is illustrated in Figure 1.²

In biblical scholarship most intertextual analyses address the occurrence of such clearly recognizable sequences of one text in another. Biblical scholarship in general and NT exegesis in particular is – or at least has been for quite some time – mostly interested in unambiguous allusions and quotations. There is a more refined taxonomy for quotations that distinguishes quotations with or without reference (mentioning the source of the quotation) and with or without fulfillment formula. These differences, too, can be laid out in a chart (Figure 2).

The categories of the table do not imply, however, that things are so clear-cut and easy in the texts themselves. Quite the contrary, very often not all the details

² Cf. S. Huebenthal, *Transformation und Aktualisierung: Zur Rezeption von Sach 9–14 im Neuen Testament*, SBB 57 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2006), 51.

might have used. Flawed quotations like Mark 1:2–3 could be explained either by a flawed *Vorlage*, by an early Christian *testimonium* (a collection of quotations with a particular purpose), or simply by the author quoting from memory.

This approach also explains another trend in intertextual studies of the historical-critical type: they usually only deal with individual quotations and tend to treat them as singularities, not as windows from one text into the other. In practice this means that researchers very often do not take into account the context of the intertextual reference in question and investigate how this context might add to its meaning, but simply regard the quote as it occurs.

When one starts with the assumptions that quoting more or less equals proof-texting and that quotations were mainly used to defend particular dogmatic positions, this does indeed make sense. It makes even more sense when one assumes the existence of *testimonia* consisting of a selection of quotations for exactly this purpose. Here we encounter one of the major trends in a particular type of intertextual investigation: it focuses on production and is interested in a quotation's *Vorlage* and the purpose of its use in a particular situation – very often thought of as a defensive one that required a certain theological proof text.

Having this in mind, it is not surprising that in many cases, intertextuality ran the risk of becoming a new guise for old questions about tradition, motifs, and influence. The direction of the investigation remains, as Thomas R. Hatina has already put it twenty years ago,³ diachronic and primarily concerned with influence. What texts and traditions did the author know? What theological concepts did he use? When did particular concepts and ideas come into existence and how were they handed down? An intertextual study of that type can explain whether a particular author did or did not, maybe even could not yet know a particular tradition. Mark, for instance, has for a long time been considered to be either unaware of post-resurrection appearance narratives or to have deliberately suppressed them. Other authors like Polycarp some generations later who did not quote from the OT were considered insufficiently familiar with it.⁴

The attempt to reconstruct a particular author's knowledge of a particular text or tradition is not problematic as such, since intertextuality is also an indicator of the distribution of traditions and texts. It should not, however, be the only indicator of an early Christian author's fluency in the biblical tradition, or used for speculations about whether he came from a Jewish or Gentile background. The example of Polycarp's allegedly limited knowledge of the OT tends to ignore the context and pragmatics of the letter in question. Even though some things had changed in Philippi since Paul's times, it still was a predominantly Gentile group and hence there was little benefit from quoting the OT. The common

³ T. R. Hatina, "Intertextuality and Historical Criticism in New Testament Studies: Is There a Relationship?," *BibInt* 7 (1999): 28–43.

⁴ See, e. g. C. Nielsen, "Polycarp, Paul and the Scriptures," *ATHR* 27 (1965): 199–215.

frame of reference for Polycarp and the Philippians was the Apostle Paul as the founder of the communities and their collective memory about him and that time. Referring to those days, Polycarp reminds the Philippians of their history and shared roots, which is much more useful for his argument than a chain of OT quotations.

The historical-critical or production-oriented approach to the occurrence of texts in other texts is not the only way to investigate intertextual relations. The fact that it has been the most common way in biblical scholarship does not mean that it is the only or the best way to do it. In fact, it does not reflect what intertextuality, a literary concept formed in post-structuralism, really is about. "The historical critic, especially," Hatina argues, "is primarily concerned with the task of identifying written pre-texts and describing their function in new literary contexts. The propensity toward cause and effect structures and investigation is clearly contrary to the poststructuralist notion of 'text' and 'intertext.'"⁵ Taken seriously, intertextuality is not a game of detecting sources and investigating past traditions, but the recipient himself becomes a participant in the tradition. Seen this way, intertextuality is less a diachronic concept to track down influence, but a rather a synchronic enterprise that investigates relations between texts.

Since the literary turn and its shift in attention from production to reception, reader- or reception-oriented studies focusing on the receiving end and investigating how a particular text is or could be received by real or potential readers became more widespread in biblical scholarship. This approach is less about intention than about impact, and the whole range of *wirkungsgeschichtliche* and *rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studien* adds to this field. A third approach to intertextuality finally focuses on the text itself and investigates text-text-relations synchronically with regard to their literary and social context and domains. This approach does usually not construct authors and readers, but rather focuses on texts, how intertextual references change their meaning (which works both for hyper- and hypotext) and how this affects the understanding and interpretation of biblical texts.⁶ My own work the area of social memory theory and its contribution to the understanding of early Christian identity formation processes also falls into that category.

The introduction of intertextuality to biblical studies is to be welcomed, but nevertheless has some dangers. Like all new hermeneutical and methodological approaches, intertextuality, too, has been developed further when it was introduced to biblical scholarship and not all the developments were steps forward. In fact, in many contributions to the field, "intertextuality" was adopted as a fancy buzzword to resell old ideas. Very often, what is termed "intertextuality"

⁵ Hatina, "Intertextuality and Historical Criticism," 35.

⁶ Which does not mean that Umberto Eco's *model reader* or Wolfgang Iser's *implied reader* or something alike will not be constructed in these approaches. They do, however, remain within the boundaries of the text and are not projected into the extra-textual world.

is nothing else than traditional and old-fashioned *Motivkritik* or *Traditionskritik* dealing with dependence and influence. It is easy to see that this is not what the post-structuralist idea of intertextuality is about.

The criticism could even go a step further; perhaps historical-critical scholarship with its focus on production is not solely to blame. Intertextuality itself is a concept from the post-Gutenberg era, for it investigates relations of *written* texts, and this rings especially with historical-critical presuppositions. To put it with Werner H. Kelber, “Print was the medium in which modern biblical scholarship was born and from which it has acquired its formative methodological tools, exegetical conventions, and intellectual posture.”⁷ On average, historical-critical scholarship does not sufficiently consider orality, performance, and the pluriformity of manuscripts before the invention of Gutenberg’s press. Identical manuscripts did not exist prior to the 15th century, thus investigating which version of the text a NT author has used is not only very speculative but also hermeneutically highly problematic: intertextuality as used by many NT scholars does not correct for biases about text that can only exist in the wake of Gutenberg’s revolution. The bias extends not only to the tendency to dismiss orality (or to distort it by “textualizing” it), but also to the tendency to treat written texts as if they were stereographically printed copies, instead of hand-copied and unique items that capture hermeneutical and transmissional moments.⁸ In other words: “the typographic medium that has been a constitutive factor in the formation of modern biblical scholarship ... has largely remained unacknowledged.”⁹

This problem has to be seen in its greater context. The criticism that historical-critical scholarship has – or at least had – a tendency to focus one-sidedly on written manuscripts and to neglect the oral culture from which the biblical texts originate, is not new. It has been directed to historical Jesus research for quite some time,¹⁰ but it is also an issue for intertextuality in its different modes of investigating text-text-relationships. Regardless which of the approaches is used, historical-critical methods tend to focus on written texts, written pre-stages or sources and often even treat presumed oral sources like stable written texts,

⁷ W.H. Kelber, “The ‘Gutenberg Galaxy’ and the Historical Study of the New Testament,” *Oral History Journal of South Africa* 5/2 (2017): 1–16, 3.

⁸ A good counter-example to this trend is G. V. Allen’s doctoral thesis, *The Book of Revelation and Early Jewish Textual Culture*, SNTSMS 168 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁹ Kelber, “Gutenberg Galaxy” 6.

¹⁰ A broader discussion of this problem was initiated by C. Keith, “Memory and Authenticity: Jesus Tradition and What Really Happened,” *ZNW* 102 (2011): 155–77. For a more detailed exchange of arguments cf. the contributions in C. Keith and A. Le Donne, eds., *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity* (London: T&T Clark, 2012). A helpful brief overview of the arguments is provided in the first chapter of M. J. Kok, *The Gospel on the Margins: The Reception of Mark in the Second Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 25–26.

underestimating their oral environment, the fluidity of manuscripts and of the general idea of originality and the *equiprimordiality* of speech acts.¹¹

It is only after the invention of the printing press that identical copies of texts were available and soon became the standard – with profound consequences for the study of the Bible:

As more and more texts were standardized, something suggested itself which in that form had never existed before: *the standard text*. ... As the print edition of the Greek New Testament, mechanically constructed and copied in steadily growing numbers, flourished in terms of prestige and influence, it came to convey the impression that it was the one and only text.¹²

The consequences of this development still govern much of the scholarly reading:

Based on this concept of the *textual archetype*, a categorical thinking in terms of originality versus derivativeness, and primary versus secondary textual status penetrated the scholarly thinking of New Testament studies. To this day it provided the rationale for the construction of the critical editions, the stemmatological model of text criticism, the concept of early Jesus tradition, and the Quest of the historical Jesus sayings.¹³

The quest for a quote's *Vorlage* links up with this problem, as it tends to operate within the same mindset. The not-infrequent line of argument is that a faulty quotation is the result of a flawed *Vorlage* or the author's poor recollection. In a recent contribution, Andrew Montanaro "proposes that the peculiarities of the OT quotations in John's Gospel can be described in terms of memory variants, ultimately showing that John was recalling the OT from memory."¹⁴ His paper is a typical example of the attempt to apply memory theory to the area of intertextuality, production of Gospels, and handing down of traditions, whilst work-

¹¹ The term "equiprimordial" is the literal translation of Heidegger's *gleichursprünglich* and has been introduced to biblical scholarship by W. H. Kelber. In his essay "Die Anfangsprozesse der Verschriftlichung im Frühchristentum," *ANRW* 2/26.1 (1992): 1–63, he says with reference to A. B. Lord, *Singer of Tales*, ed. S. A. Mitchell and G. Nagy, 2nd ed., *Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature* 25 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), "that concepts such as 'Urtext' or 'Urwort' do not conform to the reality of oral composition" (16), and concludes: "we, as the ones used to assuming one unique origin, in case we seriously want to put ourselves in the position of Jesus's linguistic reality, have to think through Heidegger's concept of 'equiprimordiality.' Each of Jesus's spoken words was 'equiprimordial' to his other spoken words. If one word was proclaimed three times, these words were not three versions of the one 'Urwort,' but three 'primordial' proclamations. Only scribality provided the opportunity to distinguish between a primary text and secondary versions" (17, my translation). See also W. H. Kelber, "The Works of Memory: Christian Origins and MnemoHistory – A Response," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, ed. A. Kirk and T. Thatcher, *Semeia* 52 (Atlanta: SBL, 2005), 221–48, 237.

¹² Kelber, "Gutenberg Galaxy," 9 (emphasis original).

¹³ Kelber, "Gutenberg Galaxy," 10 (emphasis original).

¹⁴ A. Montanaro, "The Use of Memory in the Old Testament Quotations in John's Gospel," *NovT* 59 (2017): 147–70, 148.

ing with the assumption of stable OT traditions that one can sharply differentiate from NT usages. Stating that “half of the Old Testament quotations in John’s Gospel vary from their source texts,”¹⁵ Montanaro insinuates that these source texts are available for comparison, which is not the case. The idea of assigning the differences between the source and the quotation to the NT author and his mental capacity (within the average fault tolerance of human memory that is widely researched) is missing the point, because it works from the wrong assumptions. It is not only human memory that is fluid, but also the textual tradition from the OT.¹⁶ The possibility that the quote has been deliberately altered is usually not even considered, although this scenario is much more likely than the other two, when one accepts that different rules apply in oral societies: “Scripture” (γραφῆ) or “written” (γέγραπται) indicates neither “carved in stone,” nor that the written sources are completely stable.

What makes things even more difficult is the fact that the NT traditions – be they oral or written – are not stable either, as the discipline has recently been reminded of by Matthew Larsen in his study *Gospels before the Book*. On the background of a profound knowledge of text production and reception in antiquity, especially the 1st c. CE, Larsen shows that even what we receive as published *books* due to our own standards must be understood differently in their original first- and second-century contexts: “One cannot distinguish between the fundamental tools of traditional historical criticism of the Gospels such as redaction, source, and textual criticism without ideas like book, author, and publication. Yet all such ideas are foreign to the earliest centuries of the Common Era.”¹⁷ The result of his study is a confirmation of what recent textual criticism has been preaching to the scholarly congregation for quite some time now: oral and written texts are subject to much greater variety than the standard historical-critical position would tolerate, and this is not the exception, but the rule. Larsen’s focus on *hypomnēmata* as a rather fluid genre on the transition from oral to written bearing more the characteristics of the former than the latter takes the issue one step further.¹⁸ The discussion of what it might imply to understand Mark’s Gospel along with the patristic descriptions of it as *hypomnēma* is only beginning and has the potential to shatter the historical-critical consensus about Mark from a quite unexpected angle.

¹⁵ Montanaro, “Use of Memory,” 147.

¹⁶ This point has already been driven home for the Qumran texts by E. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*, SDSSRL (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

¹⁷ Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 149.

¹⁸ For an initial idea of *hypomnēmata* as a particular textual form, cf. Larsen, *Gospel before the Book*, 107: “*Hypomnēmata* lack ‘order’ (*taxis*) and are unfinished, unpolished, and uncorrected. It is one of their characteristics, and not a flaw. Adding order to notes is an integral part of turning them into polished pieces of writing.” Further, *ibid.*, 112: “*Hypomnēmata* were textual objects with a specific purpose. At their root, they are about remembering the already known, not informing about the not yet known.”

The idea of a “second orality” was a first step into the right direction but it is not enough for investigating what goes on behind the scenes of intertextual references. Our concepts need to be revised as well. *Testimonia*, one of the suggested solutions for seemingly flawed quotations like the one in Mark 1:2–3, is one of them. Even if *testimonia* existed in Mark’s days, we would not know what purpose they served in an oral culture. The assumption that they were collections of proof-texts or arguments may indeed reflect the ideas of later generations and their theological issues which were projected back in time. In addition, we might once more be dealing with the problem of applying the standards of the Gutenberg era to antiquity. In the early days, *testimonia* – if they existed – might have been nothing more than *aide-mémoire* and could have played a variety of different roles in oral discourses. Whether they indeed existed in NT times is highly debatable. The first *testimonia* we can safely lay our hands on are as late as Cyprian of Carthage which brings us into the first half of the third century and at least one hundred years away from the NT authors. From a social memory point of view, inventory-taking and methodical presentation of important traditions – key pieces of what the early Christians have established as new frames for identity construction – of a manageable size is not surprising, thus the genre of *testimonia* fits very well into that later period.¹⁹

B. Theorizing about a Social Memory Theoretical Approach to Intertextuality

My suggestion is to broaden the scope and perceive intertextuality in the greater picture of cultural memory where it is one particular way of interacting with given cultural frames. With regard to media-theoretical or media-historical considerations this might be a more precise way to handle the concept and avoid the assumption of stable and unalterable traditions and texts prior to the Gutenberg Bible.

Let me present a first set of ideas of what changes when intertextuality is seen and used in the broader framework of social memory theory (*kulturwis-*

¹⁹ Cf. P. Jay, “Jesaja,” *RAC* 17 (1996): 764–821. Jay terms the *testimonia* “eine Art Bestandsaufnahme u. methodische Darstellung der Schriftzitate ..., die im 3. Jh. im Dienste des christl. Glaubens klassisch geworden waren. ... Cyprians Testimonia bestätigen, daß J. in der Zeit, in der systematische J.kommentare aufzutreten beginnen, als messianische Prophet par excellence galt, der Christus ebenso wie die Verwerfung Israels und das Heil der Heidenvölker vorausgesagt hat” (803–5). H. Haag (“Der Gottesknecht bei Deuterijosaja im Verständnis der Alten Kirche,” *FZPhTh* 31 [1984]: 343–77), however, concludes that it is Cyprian who compiles “jene Blütenlese von Bibelstellen, die er für die Auseinandersetzung mit den Juden und für die Christologie” (368), which seems to imply a creative act on part of Cyprian, not simply a putting together of traditions handed down to him.

senschaftliche Gedächtnistheorie).²⁰ I begin with Tom Hatina's insight that by taking intertextuality seriously, the recipient himself becomes a participant in the tradition. Individuals or groups make use of intertextuality with the purpose of orientation, expression or creating a sense of familiarity and belonging. That is fairly close to what social memory theory is about.

The overall goals of investigating intertextual references from a social memory perspective are: (a) to analyze how tradition and identity are negotiated and adapted to new situations, (b) to investigate how *cultural memory* (or in a more Halbwachsian way of phrasing it: social and cultural *frames*) is used to create meaning, and (c) to ascertain how both change in the course of time (by taking intertextual dispositions as uses of cultural frames as indicators for these processes). In short: the goal of the inquiry is to find out more about early Christian identity formation.

Intertextuality from a social memory perspective does not wonder about the fluency of particular NT and early Christian authors in their tradition (no mirror-reading), but analyzes the presence (and absence!) of intertextual dispositions with regard to the pragmatics of the book in question. The alleged lack of particular references very often turns out to be due to the genre, target audience or pragmatics of a given text. There is little point for someone like Paul to use the OT for making a point to a Gentile audience, as long he is not confronted with an argument building upon Scripture, as is the case, e. g., in Galatians.

In general, intertextuality seen from a social memory perspective broadens the scope and moves from mere *text-text-relations* to the *reception of antecedent traditions which are in a broader sense related to the medium "text."* We are still dealing with text, but with texts seen in a broader cultural context. The main difference is that a social memory perspective on intertextuality does not look at isolated incidents or occurrences of Scripture in individual NT pericopae, but at larger portions of both hyper- and hypotext. One of the basic assumptions both for hermeneutics and method is that no text and no intertextual disposition is an island, but has to be considered both in its socio-cultural and literary context. Thus the quotes of Isaiah in Mark 1:2–3, 4:12, 7:6–7, and 11:17 are not treated individually, but as connected phenomena within the use of Isaiah as a cultural frame in Mark.

For the socio-cultural context this implies awareness of an extended universe of texts and contexts in the background. Each cultural utterance, whether oral, textual, or materialistic, has to be seen in relation to its cultural context and engages with its religious and socio-cultural framework. In social memory

²⁰ For a brief survey of the differences in terminology and theoretical background of the two, see S. Huebenthal, "Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis: The Quest for an Adequate Application," in *Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis*, ed. P. Carstens, T. B. Hasselbalch, and N. P. Lemche, PHSC 17 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 171–216, 177–79.

theory this is called “cultural memory.” Although cultural memory *also* consists of texts, it is never *only* a textual entity, but the whole of tradition, ritual, text, etc. referred to in a given social context. It is important to keep in mind that first-century cultural memory and socio-cultural frames change *and* differ from those of our own times. It might seem to be a commonplace, but the danger that the frames and questions of the researcher are injected into the texts is disturbingly real.²¹

For the literary context this implies that entire books have to be considered both as hyper- and hypotexts when investigating intertextual relationships. The literary context of the entire biblical book is a text's context, not just the pericope or a reconstructed pre-stage of a particular text. The tendency to neglect literary contexts has been one of the blind spots of historical-critical exegesis. On the working level this means a thorough synchronic analysis of the entire text. Intertextuality is not about counting the quotes and allusions, but about how a text engages with another text. This means moving beyond the investigation of the individual reference the individual verse from Scripture, and broadening the focus to further points of connectivity between the two texts in question, e. g., further allusions, motifs, etc.²²

The fluidity of tradition in an oral setting also affects the “form” of intertextual relations. While form-critical analyses are keen on tracing the sources of intertextual relations in order to find out more about the route a tradition has taken, they have difficulties with altered traditions and quotes that cannot be safely traced back to a clear source or are significantly different from it. While the standard assumption of form-critical approaches to this phenomenon is a flawed *Vorlage*, the use of a (equally flawed or altered) *testimonium*, or the author quoting for memory, the social memory theoretical approach to intertextuality takes a different turn. Understanding intertextuality as a phenomenon of making

²¹ This danger is lurking in almost all contexts of reading the Bible and all areas of exegetical research. Cf. the general observations of J. S. Kloppenborg, “Disciplined Exaggeration: The Heuristics of Comparison in Biblical Studies,” *NovT* 59 (2017): 390–414; cf. also the assumption of M. W. Holmes, “Dating the Martyrdom of Polcarp,” *EC* 9 (2018): 181–200, 196: “Many (probably most) histories of the New Testament canon share a common weakness, namely a teleological perspective. They conceptualize the story of the New Testament canon from the perspective of its outcome: they know how the story ends and work from there back to its beginning. This leads to the tracing of a single line of development as though it were somehow ‘natural’ and inevitable, and no notice is taken of the other possible directions in which the whole process might have gone”; or the conclusion of T. R. Hatina, “Memory and Method: Theorizing John’s Mnemonic Use of Scripture,” in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels*, vol. 4: *The Gospel of John*, ed. idem, LNTS 613 (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 219–36: “In many cases, practitioners of diachronic approaches fail to advance a theory of transmission or simply assume one that is consistent with their emic framework.”

²² Cf. S. Huebenthal, “Wie kommen Schafe und Rinder in den Tempel? Die ‘Tempelaktion’ (Joh 2,13–22) in kanonisch-intertextueller Lektüre,” in *Intertextualität: Perspektiven auf ein interdisziplinäres Arbeitsfeld*, ed. K. Herrmann and S. Huebenthal (Aachen: Shaker, 2007), 69–81.

sense within given cultural frames, it expects a creative use of this tradition and can thus account for changes. This creative approach is an important part of the formation of identity by means of dealing with cultural frames. If the cultural frames and pattern are used to make sense of new experiences, these new experiences will over time become part of a group's tradition – and in turn change the initial frame. It is not surprising that a change in understanding affects the wording of the frame – in our case a quote from Scripture. Such a change of wording is especially to be expected in oral societies with a less closed concept even of written texts, and is of great heuristic value.

Approaching intertextuality from a social memory perspective, it could further be expected that alterations of the tradition in quotes from Israel's Scriptures (i. e., changes in wording, conflation of quotes, reading motives against the grain or creative new combinations of different motifs) happen more frequently in externalizations from collective memories than remnants from social memory. Building on the findings of Maurice Halbwachs, it makes sense to assume that the fabrication of new frames for understanding in collective memory also alters the tradition to which they refer. Thus the question about the form of a particular intertextual reference and whether it deviates from its source is only the beginning and calls for further explanations. Determining the form of an intertextual relation says as little about its meaning as determining the genre of a particular text. It can, however, be a point of departure for further explanations.

Intertextuality from a social memory perspective finally assumes a different pragmatics. It does not think in categories of promise/fulfillment, but sees the use of the fulfillment-language as a strategy to inscribe or locate a particular interpretation in an existing tradition, and thus as a strategy to become part of this tradition. This refers both to traditions with canonical or quasi-canonical status (as it is the case for Israel's Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism) and later to early Christian texts referring back to NT text (as it is the case for some of the later apocrypha). Tobias Nicklas has recently demonstrated this strategy convincingly for the Acts of Titus.²³ The formula "this happened to fulfill the Scripture" is thus an attempt to place or locate one's experience and ideas in the existing tradition. Depending on the medium of communication, the temporal distance to the events or experience or the pragmatics of a particular text, this dealing with traditions has different phases and faces.

The huge benefit of analyzing intertextuality from a social memory perspective is that, because of its hermeneutical foundations which include sensitivity to both orality and changing contexts, it is much more flexible than other concepts. The recourse to previous traditions necessarily changes over time and this change

²³ T. Nicklas, "Die Akten des Titus: Rezeption 'apostolischer' Schriften und Entwicklung antik-christlicher 'Erinnerungslandschaften,'" *EC* 8 (2017): 458–80.

must be taken into consideration. In social memory theory, the ever-changing *temporal horizon* of the group is accounted for: the temporal (and local) distance of early Christian groups to the foundational events of Christianity almost necessarily implies alterations of terms, concepts, and contexts. *Εὐαγγέλιον*, to use an obvious example, has a different meaning in the times of Paul, Mark, John, Justin, Marcion, and Origen. While Paul would have understood it as the living proclamation (and rather used it as a verb), Mark with his written *εὐαγγέλιον* paves the way for a religious textual genre, and the reception of Mark by the later Synoptics as well as the Gospel-titles in the second century bear witness to this development.

This also means that the same text-text-relation, to use intertextual terminology, might denote different things in different texts and times. As all cats look alike in the dark, from the temporal distance of roughly two thousand years the use of the Old Testament in the New looks very much alike for the different books. A closer look at the texts, however, reveals that this is not the case and that there were significant changes of meaning within a span of only a few decades. Especially with a growing temporal distance from the foundational events and texts reflecting their meaning for the early groups of Jesus followers, some ideas have already become traditions themselves. This means that what Paul or Mark were still struggling with might have become consensus and be referred to as *tradition* only a few decades later. Traces of this development can be found in the latest writings of the NT, and will become manifest in post-NT times.

C. Before the Floating Gap:

Isaiah as a Cultural Frame in New Testament Texts

My first case for testing these theoretical assumptions was Isaiah and I began my research with an analysis how the prophet and his book feature in Mark's Gospel.²⁴ Does Mark use Isaiah for proof-texting?²⁵ Does he use Isaiah's theological themes and schemes? How much of Isaiah does he use at all? And, finally, how does Isaiah emerge on the surface of his Gospel?

²⁴ S. Huebenthal, "The Gospel of Mark," in *Jesus Traditions in the First Three Centuries*, vol. 1: *Gospel Literature and Additions to Gospel Literature*, ed. C. Keith, H. K. Bond, C. Jacobi, and J. Schröter (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 41–72; S. Huebenthal, "Kollektives Gedächtnis, Kulturelle Rahmen und das Markusevangelium," in *Reading the Gospel of Mark in the Twenty-First Century: Method and Meaning*, ed. G. Van Oyen, BETL 301 (Leuven: Peeters 2019), 217–50; S. Huebenthal, "Framing Jesus and Understanding Ourselves: Isaiah in Mark's Gospel and Beyond," in *Creative Fidelity, Faithful Creativity: The Reception of Jewish Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. M. A. Daise and D. Hartmann (Leiden: Brill [forthcoming]).

²⁵ For reasons of convenience, I continue to use the traditional view of a one tangible author behind this text without making a claim that this is what happened behind the scenes of this text.

1. The Reception of Isaiah in Mark

A thorough investigation of the occurrence of Isaiah in Mark has brought me to the conclusion that the *beginning of the Gospel of Jesus anointed Son of God*,²⁶ as it is written in Isaiah, the prophet is not just a falsely ascribed quotation or a composition principle, but the most important frame the Gospel offers to understand Jesus. The text depicts Jesus as the *anointed Son of God*, God's final eschatological messenger who proclaims the arrival of God's reign as it was already prophesied in Isaiah and accompanied by the circumstances anticipated there: the eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf are first stopped, then unstopped, the lame walk and there is shouting for joy, because the tongue of the dumb is loosened. The two most prominent categories or titles for understanding Jesus in the Gospel's opening, *χριστός* and *υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*, are also the two categories of reception that offer most connectivity for non-Jewish audiences. The Gospel leaves no doubt, however, that they must be read in the light of and through the prophecy of Isaiah. Mark's proclamation of Jesus is framed in categories of and with regard to the prophet Isaiah.

Making visible the Isaian frames in Mark's Gospel helps to understand how the text itself provides frames for understanding Jesus. Read as an externalization of collective memory and thus placed between the *generational gap* and the *floating gap*, the Gospel according to Mark not only negotiates different frames, but by suggesting a particular way to make sense of the Jesus event it allows for collective identity constructions on that basis.²⁷ This does not exclude the possibility of a *different* perception of Jesus, e.g., as a returned Moses or Elijah (*redivivus*). It is indeed possible to understand Jesus as a prophet, Son of David or royal aspirant, but the people behind Mark's Gospel express a different perception: at this time, in this place and in this text Jesus is understood to be *the anointed Son of God according to Isaiah's prophecy*.

²⁶ The text-critical question whether *υἱὸς θεοῦ* was part of the original text is debated as the witnesses allow for both scenarios. C. C. Black ("Mark as Historian of God's Kingdom," *CBQ* 71 [2009]: 64–83) notes: "Adjudicating the text-critical problem in Mark 1:1, the jury remains out. When it will return with a generally acceptable verdict is anyone's guess" (65). In one of the most recent contributions to the question, T. Wasserman ("The 'Son of God' Was in the Beginning [Mark 1:1]," *JTS* 62 [2011]: 20–50) summarizes once more the arguments of both sides and votes on the basis of the manuscripts ("earliest and strongest support," 50), the inner logic, and the likelihood of the title's omission in the copying process in favor of the longer reading. D. B. Deppe ("Markan Christology and the Omission of *υἱὸς θεοῦ* in Mark 1:1," *Filologia Neotestamentica* 21 [2008]: 45–64, 45) also puts into question the "new consensus ... in textual critical circles that favors the omission" and concludes after evaluating the arguments that: "both external evidence and Markan Christology argue in favor of the inclusion of 'Son of God' in the first sentence of Mark's Gospel" (64). This contribution follows their argument.

²⁷ For a detailed discussion of this concept and its theoretical foundation in the work of M. Halbwachs, J. Assmann and A. Assmann, see S. Huebenthal, *Das Markusevangelium als kollektives Gedächtnis*, 2nd ed., FRLANT 253 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018); Eng. trans., *Reading Mark's Gospel as a Text from Collective Memory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020).

As regards methodology, the investigation of Isaiah in Mark also shows that the connection of narrative and intertextual analyses for reading an entire biblical book in a social/cultural memory theoretical perspective not only helps to uncover the book's theological profile, but also discloses which cultural frames are used to structure and organize memories of Jesus, and which cultural frames are not (or no longer) used. For those standing behind the text, Mark's Gospel does not say who Jesus *was*, but with the help of an Isaiah framework discloses who Jesus *is*. I would not be surprised if understanding Jesus as *God's anointed son* in terms of Isaiah was an identity marker of the group that gathered around the Gospel according to Mark.

The clear result of my investigation is that Mark's use of Isaiah is not about theological schemes or about naïve proof-texting, but rather about making sense of what happened on the basis his own cultural tradition or framework. The way Isaiah features in Mark rules out the idea that Mark has worked off particular topics and used a *testimonium* of proof-texts to get his message across.

With this in mind, an intriguing set of subsequent questions arose almost instantly. How does the story of Isaiah as a cultural frame continue in early Christianity? Do other NT writings exhibit a similar importance for and use of this particular text? Do they use the same parts of Isaiah in the same way? How does the reception of Isaiah and of the Christ event framed in terms of Isaiah change in the first generations of Jesus followers?

2. Isaiah as a Cultural Frame

Biblical scholarship has convincingly shown that in Second Temple Judaism in general Isaiah was widely used as a lens or a frame to understand one's own situation. The first generations of Jesus followers are part of this bigger picture, and their handling of Isaiah is no exception. Knowledge of Isaiah and Isaian frames were current among the first generations of Jesus followers and they would have discussed their experiences with the help of these traditions. Some parts of Isaiah might have been introduced into the discourse of the first generations of Jesus followers already by Paul,²⁸ and not only Mark will have picked up current traditions and developed them further.

The process might have been different from the way it is often envisioned: if we mentally move from the authorial mastermind to a vital group, it becomes more plausible that debates have taken place among Jesus followers in different groups in the first generations of Christianity before the ideas were finally put to page. One key to a better understanding is to think less in terms of academic

²⁸ Cf. D.-A. Koch, "The Quotations of Isaiah 8,14 and 28,16 in Romans 9,33 and 1Peter 2,6,8 as Test Case for Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament," *ZNW* 101 (2010): 223–40, 240.

writing than in oral or even pastoral terms.²⁹ Mark then ceases to be a one-man-show and a lone genius author who gathered traditions quietly in his study, or who met other early Christian missionaries and preachers with whom he shared his knowledge, before he wrote the book to instruct his community.

The Pauline letters vividly portray smaller groups who were deeply engaged in worship, discussion, and (missionary) work. Making sense of what they experienced and how it informed their understanding of both themselves and the world was not left to the leaders of the group who informed the others about their decision. It was rather a mutual and open process in which everyone was involved. In the end, the house group (*Hauskreis*) or Bible study groups we know from our own times may prove more helpful for envisioning how texts like Mark's Gospel came about and made use of socio-religious and cultural frames for understanding than the common idea of the community leader or evangelist acting all by himself.³⁰

A plausible scenario for the development in the next generation might unfold thus. Over time, the composition of the groups of Jesus followers changes, not only because of a larger temporal and, in most cases, spatial distance from the Christ event, but also because the groups become more variegated over time as more non-Jews join them. Another area of influence is the modified social environment of these groups, including different locations within the Roman empire. We also have to take into account incidents like the Jewish-Roman War, the destruction of the Second Temple and the death of the first generation of Jesus followers.

A typical response to all of these changes would be adjustments of the founding stories and identity-forming patterns of the groups. In the case of references to Isaiah it could be expected that the influence of this particular *frame* diminishes with more non-Jews joining and dominating the groups. As Isaiah is not part of their own cultural memory, we would not expect to find a network of mostly unflagged references to an important text from the Jewish tradition in writings of the third generation of Jesus followers. It seems more likely that the groups retain references to Isaiah in a modified form which on the one hand respects the impact Isaiah's prophecy had for the first generations of Jewish Jesus-followers, and on the other hand takes into account that most of the members of

²⁹ In his *Forschungsüberblick* to the Gospel of Matthew, M. Konradt has proposed a related scenario regarding the formation of Matthew. He proposes a longer reflection process of the group behind the Gospel together with the evangelist. This process reflected both (oral) traditions and Scripture and was only eventually textualized ("Die Rezeption der Schrift im Matthäusevangelium in der neueren Forschung," *TLZ* 135 [2010]: 919–32).

³⁰ This parallel only works by approximation. In the first groups of Jesus followers, members would, of course, not have had their own Bibles which they brought to the meetings. Here, the parallel might rather ring with the experiences of smaller communities with Bible-sharing in Latin America or South Africa or the communities in the context of liberation theology.

the group(s) do not have a living connection to this tradition and will thus not be able to detect even the most obvious allusion.

One scenario could thus be that only a few “typical” points of reference from the book of Isaiah will be quoted in later texts and that they will over time turn into genuine “Christian” points of reference which are used and quoted without regard to their original context. Candidates for this scenario are Isa 6:9–10, 40:3, 61:1, or ch. 53, given that these quotations seem to feature prominently in the NT. It is easy to see that this scenario could also embrace the idea of *testimonia*. The idea behind this scenario still rings with form-critical investigations which consider the individual quote without assuming the entire book of Isaiah to be the larger frame. A second scenario could be that the Isaian frame is retained, but has to be explained to those who are not familiar with it. In this case one could expect a similar amount of references to Isaiah, but with marking and explanation why it is important.

It is easy to visualize the scenarios: a survey of quotations and allusions to Isaiah reveals whether the use of the book decreases on average, and it is more or less the same quotations or clusters of references that occur to address the same questions, and they all exhibit a similar (proto-) Christian connotation. The first insight from a survey of the use of Isaiah in the NT is that Isaiah seems to retain its significance. A cumulative visualization of the quotes of Isaiah in the NT emphasizes this notion, as it is shown in Figure 3.³¹

Although the exact number for the amount of identified references varies from source to source, Isaiah is undoubtedly the most frequently quoted text and text alluded to from Israel's Scriptures after the Psalms.³² A survey of the quotations from Isaiah in the NT indicates that the name “Isaiah” is only mentioned in the narrative texts and in Paul's letter to the Romans. Although Paul makes use of Isaiah in all of his letters, he only mentions the name of the prophet in Romans, and with one exception (Rom 15:12) all of the quotations directly assigned to Isaiah occur in Romans 9–10 (9:27, 28; 10:16, 20, 21).³³

³¹ This visualization is built on data from the “Loci citati vel allegati” in NA²⁸; see also S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken, eds., *Isaiah in the New Testament*, NTSI (London: T&T Clark, 2005); and F. Wilk, “Die Geschichte des Gottesvolkes im Licht jesajanischer Prophetie: Neutestamentliche Perspektiven,” in *Josephus und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen, II. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaico-Hellenisticum, 25.–28. Mai 2006, Greifswald*, ed. C. Böttrich und J. Herzer, WUNT 209 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2007), 245–64.

³² See, e.g. Wilk, “Geschichte des Gottesvolkes,” 248; or, C. A. Evans, “From Gospel to Gospel: The Function of Isaiah in the New Testament,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretative Tradition*, ed. C. C. Broyles and C. A. Evans, 2 vols., VTSup 70, FIOTL 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 2:651–91, 651.

³³ Even though Paul has quoted Isaiah already in his earlier letters, he only mentions the name in Romans, distinguishing him from other voices in Israel's Scriptures like Moses and David; cf. F. Wilk, “Paulus als Nutzer, Interpret und Leser des Jesajabuches,” in *Die Bibel im Dialog der Schriften: Konzepte intertextueller Bibellektüre*, ed. S. Alkier and R. B. Hays, NET 10 (Tübingen: Francke, 2005), 93–116, 96.

Quotations and Allusions to Isaiah in the New Testament
(according to Nestle-Aland²⁷)

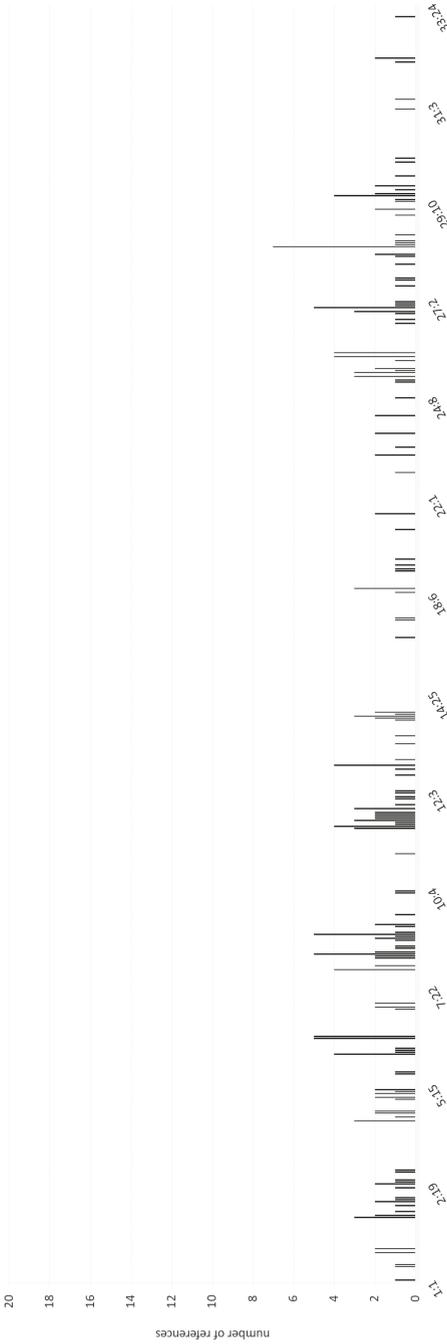


Figure 3a

Quotations and Allusions to Isaiah in the New Testament
(according to Nestle-Aland²⁷)

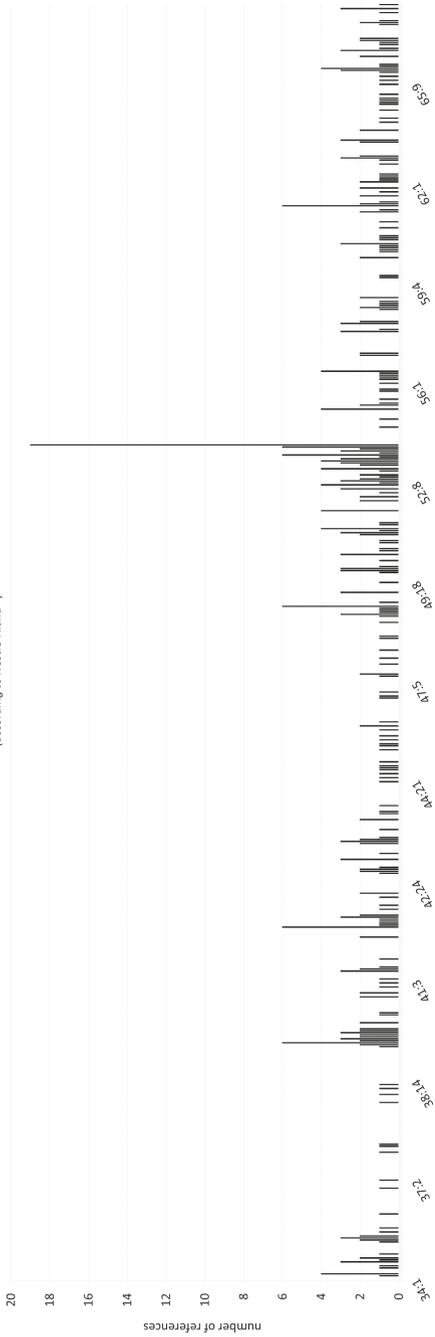


Figure 3b

A visualization of the estimated quotations and allusions to Isaiah in the NT, broken down to the book and going beyond the direct quotes indicates as it is carried out in Figure 4, however, that things are not as easy as initially thought.³⁴

The impact of Israel's Scriptures does not diminish with more non-Jews joining the early groups of Jesus followers, nor do references to Isaiah generally decrease. It also does not imply that they are marked more clearly and/or are reduced to a set of "typical" references which are used to address particular topics. Once one goes beyond mere scratching the surface, it becomes clear that for the groups behind the NT texts Isaiah remains an important frame of reference. The trend might rather be that *if* Isaiah is mentioned and directly referred to, the book serves as a hermeneutical frame beyond the actual quotations and there is usually more of Isaiah to be found than the quotation (esp. Paul, Mark, Matthew, Luke/Acts, John, and 1 Peter). At least in one point the prediction proves to be correct: In cases where Isaiah is not directly referred to, no Isaian frame is found either (Deutero-Pauline letters, 1–3 John, Jude, 2 Peter). Hebrews and Revelation are special cases as they use the whole body of Israel's Scriptures as a frame of reference.

A closer look at the Gospel of Luke as a second test case also shows that the Isaian framework does not become less important or less visible.³⁵ Quite the contrary: a closer reading reveals that the Isaian frame in Luke is not less prominent than in Mark, but only different in character. Luke's Isaian frame is not only much more visible also to non-Jews. It is also explained much better. Even those who do not know Isaiah will learn something about the prophet's message and why it is and will remain important for the groups of Jesus followers. Those who are from a Jewish tradition will find Isaiah to be not only one of the main points of reference when it comes to a proper understanding of Jesus, but also the main point of reference to explain their own situation. Both the mixed communities of Jews and Gentiles and the rejection of this project by many members of Israel, seem to be predicted in Isaiah, up the fact that the anointed Son of God and eschatological messenger of God's kingdom is "numbered with transgressors" (Luke 22:37, quoting Isa 53:12). Contrary to initial expectations, Isaiah remains important for the groups of Jesus followers, whom we might now call "Christians" according to Acts 11:26. In both Luke and Acts the message to the Gentile newcomers seems to be: The prophet Isaiah and his message might not have been part of your cultural heritage and tradition before you encountered Jesus, but *now* that you *are* Jesus followers, it has become part of your tradition

³⁴ This visualization based on the "Loci citati vel allegati" of NA²⁸ can only provide a first and very coarse sketch and needs a much more thorough investigation.

³⁵ Cf. S. Huebenthal, "Another Frozen Moment: Reading Luke in Social Memory Theoretical Framework," *PIBA* 41/42 (2019): 23–43; eadem, "Canon or Cultural Frame? Identity-Construction according to Luke," in *Relationships of the Two Parts of the Christian Bible*, ed. G. Steins, P. Sumpter, and J. Taschner, OSJCB (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, [forthcoming]).

for otherwise it is impossible to understand both Jesus *and* the situation of the groups of Jesus followers.

3. Further Questions and More Probes: *Isa 52:13–53:12 in New Testament Traditions*

It is obvious that the assumption that references to Isaiah decrease in number and range and/or become more stereotypical because the groups of Jesus followers have more non-Jewish members is wrong – at least for NT times. A survey of references to Isaiah in the NT combined with a very preliminary analysis of the texts is sufficient to prove that this is not the case. It becomes likewise clear that the investigation of Isaian frames in NT requires more than counting and listing quotations, allusions, and echoes, and asking whether they have been quoted correctly. The use of different parts of Isaiah further exhibits a deep knowledge and living connection to the book of Isaiah on part of those who stand behind the NT. They turn to Isaiah to find answers to their situations and these answers differ over time.

The solution to this riddle might be found elsewhere and, again, social memory theory can prove helpful. It might turn out that the initial ideas – both the change in composition of the groups that must somehow bring about changes and the emergence of *testimonia* – are correct, just the temporal framework did not fit. As the discussion about the “Parting of the Ways,” which has recently become rather a “party of the ways,”³⁶ has shown, the date of the estimated break around 70 or 130 CE was way too early, and the same applies to our question, too. The solution seems to be that the shift is both a matter of genre *and* time. From a social memory perspective, the assumption that things would change already in the second and third generation is too early. Greater changes should rather be expected beyond than before the *floating gap* (80–120 years after the founding event) than beyond the *generational gap* (30–50 years after the founding events).³⁷

³⁶ The concept has been introduced by W. Grünstäudl in his “Ertragene Alterität: Anmerkungen zur theologischen Differenzkonstruktion in frühchristlicher Literatur,” in *Konstruktionen individueller und kollektiver Identität*, vol. 2: *Alter Orient, hellenistisches Judentum, römische Antike, Alte Kirche*, ed. E. Bons and K. Finsterbusch, BThSt 168 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2017), 217–40; and it was subsequently used by T. Nicklas, “Parting of the Ways? Probleme eines Konzepts,” in *Juden, Christen, Heiden? Religiöse Inklusion und Exklusion in Kleinasien bis Decius*, ed. S. Alkier and H. Leppin, WUNT 400 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 21–41, 37–38.

³⁷ For a more nuanced introduction to the different epochs of early Christianity in a social memory theoretical framework cf. S. Huebenthal, “‘Frozen Moments’ – Early Christianity through the Lens of *Social Memory Theory*,” in *Memory and Memories in Early Christianity: Proceedings of the International Conference Held at the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne (June 2–3, 2016)*, ed. S. Buttica and E. Norelli, WUNT 398 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 17–43.

A third and more specific test dealing with Isa 52:13–53:12 can illustrate the idea. The direct quotations of the fourth servant song demonstrate how different cultural framing in form of intertextual disposition operates before and after the *generational gap* as well as the *floating gap*.

Paul and his use of Israel's Scriptures as a cultural frame take place before the *generational gap*. The expectation is that he will use cultural frames like Israel's Scriptures to understand his own situation. This is exactly what we witness in his references to the fourth servant song in Rom 10:16 (Isa 53:1) and 15:21 (Isa 52:15). These references to Isaiah are not used to make sense of Jesus and his fate, but of Paul's own situation, in which Gentiles turn to Christ and receive the Gospel he proclaims while Jews do so less.³⁸

The context of Rom 10:14–18 should be taken into account for the evaluation of the quotation: Isa 53:1 is used here in order to analyze and understand Paul's own situation of preaching the good news about Jesus and not the situation and destiny of Jesus himself. The point is that in Paul's days the message of the gospel is not embraced by everyone. In the previous verses we read a more general reflection about faith and the acceptance of the gospel, flanked by quotations from, i. e., Isa 28:16 and 52:7. As the argument continues, Isa 65:1 and 65:2 LXX will follow in short sequence. It is obvious that this passage does not serve to depict Jesus as Isaiah's suffering servant. The same holds true for Rom 15:21. The quotation from Isa 52:15 LXX here, too, does not say anything about Jesus, neither as a person nor about his fate, but is used once more to analyze the current state of the proclamation of the gospel and explain his decision within the common frame of reference. In short: Paul makes use of Isaiah as a cultural frame to understand and explain his own situation.

This is not to say that we do not also see the attempts of Paul trying to make more general statements about the Jesus event and its impact on groups of Jesus followers in his days as well. The approach is, however, still in the medium of everyday conversation. Paul uses Israel's Scripture to make sense of his situation but he does not, on average, try to make his own experience part of this tradition (no *Fortschreibung der Tradition*) and he does not use fulfillment quotations in the same way as we find them in the Gospels.³⁹ Or, as Rafael Rodríguez has re-

³⁸ Paul uses the same quotes, Isa 53:1 (Rom 10:16) and Isa 6:9–10 (Rom 11:8) as John 12:38–40, but in a completely different way. They are not used to understand Jesus, but the situation Paul himself is in. Cf. Wilk, "Paulus als Nutzer," 93–116; and J. R. Wagner, "Isaiah in Romans and Galatians," in Moyise and Menken, *Isaiah in the New Testament*, 117–32, 118. We are seeing a textbook example of the difference between social memory (making sense of experiences by using existent frames: Paul) and collective memory (fabrication of new frames: John).

³⁹ M. J. J. Menken begins his study about the use of Scripture in Matthew with an instructive survey of the fulfillment quotations in the whole of the NT; see *Matthew's Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist*, BETL 173 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), 1–10. In the Gospel according to Mark, the name "Isaiah" is mentioned twice

cently put it: "Alignment rather than replacement characterizes how Paul relates to Moses's Torah and Israel's Messiah."⁴⁰ Rom 1:2–4:17 serves as Paul's attempt to make sense of what he encounters and does so in the light of the Jewish tradition without inscribing himself and his situation into this tradition. If we stick with Maurice Halbwachs's distinction between *social* and *collective* memory, we see a textbook example: social memory is described as localization within given (cultural) frames while collective memory is the fabrication of new frames for identity construction. Both can happen at the same time – which is also visible in Paul. The latter is, however, all the more likely beyond the *generational gap*.

The use of the fourth servant song in the time between the *generational* and the *floating gap* – the time we would expect externalizations of collective rather than social memory – exhibits exactly that: we are dealing with memory literature remembering both Jesus's and Paul's heritage, i. e., texts that extrapolate traditions. Other than Romans, the narrative tradition of the NT does not use Isaiah 53 to understand their own situation, but rather that of Jesus and his fate – the founding events of the groups of Jesus followers. The texts do indeed go a step further than Paul: Israel's Scriptures are not only the frame of reference to understand Jesus and what happened to him but the Christ event is framed as part of this tradition. We are encountering the inscription of the foundational experience of Jesus followers into the existing frames as *Fortschreibung der biblischen Tradition*. Jesus has been foretold and announced in the biblical prophecy and the NT narrative tradition shows how the story continues. It is in these texts that Jesus gradually becomes identified with the suffering servant, until Luke/Acts and John also paint Jesus's passion in these colors.

Paul might have marveled at John's use of Isa 53:1.⁴¹ While he used the same verse in Rom 10:16 to address the problem that parts of Israel rejected the Gos-

and is each time preceding a direct quotation, thus two of the five quotations from Isaiah are directly ascribed to Isaiah (Mark 1:2–3; 7:6, 7). The trend continues in the other narrative texts of the NT. In Matthew six of the ten quotations from Isaiah are directly assigned to the prophet (Matt 3:3; 4:15–16; 8:17; 12:18; 13:13–15; 15:8–9) and three of them are flagged as fulfillment quotations (4:15–16; 8:17; 12:18). In Luke two of the six quotations from Isaiah are directly assigned (Luke 3:4–6; 4:18–19), one of them can be regarded as a fulfillment quotation (4:18–19); in Acts two of five quotations are directly assigned (Acts 8:32–33; 28:26). In John, finally, three of the four quotations are directly assigned (John 1:23; 12:38, 40, the fourth, 6:45 is assigned to a prophet), two of them are flagged as fulfillment quotations (12:38, 40). None of the quotations in the narrative texts is marked as a fulfillment quotation more than once and the only two passages from Isaiah that are quoted in all of the Gospels are Isa 6:9–10 (Mark 4:12; Matt 13:13–15; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; and Acts 28:16) and Isa 40:3–5 (Mark 1:2–3; Matt 3:3; Luke 3:4–6; John 1:23). Both quotations serve as fulfillment quotations in one of the Gospels and the latter quotation is in all the Gospels directly assigned to Isaiah. In the other books of the NT, the references to Isaiah go entirely unflagged, but not necessarily unnoticed.

⁴⁰ R. Rodríguez, *Jesus Darkly: Remembering Jesus with the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2018), 10 (emphasis original).

⁴¹ Paul uses Isaiah 53 neither in a Christological nor in a soteriological way but in order to understand his own mission, cf. W. Kraus, "Jesaja 53 LXX im frühen Christentum – eine

pel, John connects the idea in 12:38 with the application of the servant tradition to Jesus.⁴² To put it differently: while references to Isaiah 53 in earlier texts do not transport the notion of substitution in suffering,⁴³ in John the allusions and echoes around the “typical quotations from Isaiah” in John 12 provide a stable Isaian frame and speaks much more clearly about Jesus as Isaiah’s servant as it is the case in Mark and Matthew.

The NT narrative tradition (and Deutero-Pauline letters as the extended Pauline tradition) set the course for Christian identity constructions with their fabrication of new frames for understanding. While Mark could be read as a first attempt, still very much indebted to social memory, Matthew, Luke, and John provide foundational stories that work existing tradition into a new model. Using the terminology of Kenneth Gergen, they are *stabilizing* narratives, while Mark with his open end must be seen as a *regressive* narrative.⁴⁴ As externalizations from collective memory make use of existing tradition, those standing behind the Gospels have to be fluent in this tradition in order to capture and preserve it for the future. Recent studies about the use of Isaiah in the NT assume that the authors of the NT had knowledge of the entire text of Isaiah, not only individual passages. This assumption goes hand in hand with a tendency of moving away

Überprüfung,” in *Beiträge zur urchristlichen Theologiegeschichte*, ed. idem, BZNW 163 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 149–82, 167; and D.-A. Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus*, BHT 69 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 232–39.

⁴² Cf. S. Huebenthal, “Proclamation Rejected, Truth Confirmed: Reading John 12:37–44 in a Social Memory Theoretical Framework,” in Hatina, *Gospel of John*, 183–200, 198–200..

⁴³ That also applies to the quotations of Isa 53:4 in Matt 8:17, Isa 53:7 in Acts 8:32–33, and Isa 53:12 in Luke 22:3, as Kraus, “Jesaja 53 LXX,” has demonstrated. The problem with Isaiah 53 and the servant tradition in general might be that later readers who know the Songs of God’s suffering servant as a hermeneutical frame for Jesus from their own times, sometimes run the risk of “finding” it already in early traditions of the NT. The application of the servant tradition to Jesus seems to be, in fact, a later tradition. The assumption that Isaiah 53 as a hermeneutical lens to understand Jesus’s death is also supported by J. Woyke, “Der leidende Gottesknecht (Jes 53),” in *Die Verheißung des Neuen Bundes: Wie alttestamentliche Texte im Neuen Testament fortwirken*, ed. B. Kollmann, BThS 35 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 200–25.

⁴⁴ Formation and negotiation of identity seems to play an important role for narrative organization, especially for groups. Gergen accentuated the basic narrative forms *stabilizing*, *progressive* and *regressive* as regards their interplay with human relations. While *stabilizing* narrative are an important means to achieve certitude, that the others are indeed what or who they seem to be, people in the initial stages of relationships rather tell *progressive* stories, to elevate the value of the relationship and establish larger promises for the future. *Regressive* stories, finally, usually fulfill a compensatory function. They either canvass for empathy or serve the purpose to (newly) raise the force and motivation to reach a certain end (after all). In each of these cases the story is not only told for its own sake, but to establish a particular self-perception (of an individual or a group). In the end these stories are also identity-forming; identity formation is though and through a discursive trait. Cf. K. Gergen, “Erzählung, Moralische Identität und historisches Bewusstsein,” in *Erzählung, Identität, und historisches Bewusstsein: Die psychologische Konstruktion von Zeit und Geschichte, Identität 1*, ed. J. Straub (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), 170–202, 177–81.

from a simple scheme of promise and fulfillment when it comes to investigate the Old Testament in the New.

Florian Wilk has convincingly shown not only that Paul knew the whole book of Isaiah but also demonstrates a chronological (and theological) development of the apostle's use of the scroll.⁴⁵ Maarten J. J. Menken has shown the same for Matthew,⁴⁶ and Rouven Genz presents in his study the state of research for Luke-Acts which he supports.⁴⁷ Given the range of different quotations and allusions as they are also displayed in Figure 4, I would assume the same for Mark and John. This also means that the first generations of Jesus followers retained a living connection to the Jewish tradition. Obviously, they did not work with testimonies but used the whole of Isaiah's prophecy.

D. Beyond the Floating Gap: Hypothesizing about the Next Steps

The million dollar question is thus: what happens in early Christianity after the time of the NT – or, in the terminology of social memory theory: what happens beyond the *floating gap*? On the way there we encounter 1 Peter, a letter that also makes direct use of Isaiah 53. Its change in argument and tone compared to Paul and the narrative tradition is remarkable. The larger context of the quotation in 1 Pet 2:22–25 is 2:18–25. This passage provides the part of a *Haustafel* that addresses slaves and suggests that their behavior should be oriented towards Christ himself. The passage contains for the first time a connection of several references to Isaiah 53 applied to Jesus's fate and death.⁴⁸ One could say that in 1 Peter we finally we find something like a first "Christian" tradition which

⁴⁵ Wilk has carried out extensive research in this area, in *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*, FRLANT 179 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998); idem, "Geschichte des Gottesvolkes"; idem, "Jesajanische Prophetie im Spiegel exegetischer Tradition: Zu Hintergrund und Sinngehalt des Schriftzitats in 1 Kor 2,9," in *Die Septuaginta – Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte: 3. internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 22.–25. Juli 2010*, ed. S. Kreuzer, M. Meiser, and M. Sigismund, WUNT 286 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 480–504; Wilk, "Paulus als Nutzer," 115.

⁴⁶ Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 279–83.

⁴⁷ R. Genz, *Jesaja 53 als theologische Mitte der Apostelgeschichte: Studien zu ihrer Christologie und Ekklesiologie im Anschluss an Apg 8,26–40*, WUNT 2/389 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 1–16.

⁴⁸ 1 Peter is an especially intriguing case, as quotations in 2:6, 8 (the only instances where quotations from Isaiah are introduced as Scripture) seem to be dependent on Rom 9:33, as Koch, "Quotations of Isaiah," has shown. The references to Isa 65:17 and 66:22 in 1 Pet 3:13 might as well be referring to or coming from Rev 21:1. In 1 Pet 2:22–25, the author indeed seems to use a Christian tradition based on Isaiah 53; cf. C. Breytenbach, "Christus litt eurentwegen: Zur Rezeption von Jes 53 im 1. Petrusbrief," in *Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament*, ed. J. Frey and J. Schröter, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 437–54; Kraus, "Jesaja 53 LXX," 172–74.

draws from Christian, not Jewish frames.⁴⁹ The difference between 1 Peter and the Gospels seems to be not only due to genre but also to the question where the text originates in terms of temporal distance to the foundational event. Is it before or after the generational gap and before or after the floating gap?

Similar observations can be made for Justin and his *1 Apology* (officially directed to the emperor Antonius Pius but actually speaking *ad intra*) which was composed around 150/155 CE. As regards the temporal distance from the foundational events, this text, too, is located somewhere around the *floating gap*. Without going into detail here, it can be safely said that Justin displays a remarkable reading of Isa 53:12 in *1 Apol.* 50.2 which is not in line with either the Hebrew or the LXX version. Here, too, the question is where the seemingly distorted quote comes from, and the suspicion arises again that Justin made use of a *testimonium*, than that he creatively interacted with the cultural frame applying it to his own situation and modelling it according to his needs.⁵⁰ As noted earlier, this is exactly what could be expected in the times of *collective memory*, especially when it comes to an identity constituting text for an audience with presumably no Jewish heritage. As already suspected for 1 Peter, we might be witnessing the beginning of a “Christian” tradition.

Regarding the questions of intertextuality and the formation of traditions, research beyond the floating gap has not yet been carried out with a social memory theoretical approach to intertextuality. NT research in this area heavily relies on the findings of patristic scholarship in order establish a first understanding and to chart some of the texts and discourses. This field requires a thorough

⁴⁹ This is not to claim that 1 Peter is no longer familiar with Isaiah, but that an intra-Christian discussion and tradition of Isaiah might be in operation. Whether this has led to the conclusion that “the author of 1 Peter seldom strays from the church’s standard proof texts (Isa. 8, 11, 28, 40, 53) and is clearly indebted to much traditional exegesis” (S. Moyise, “Isaiah in 1 Peter,” in idem and Menken, *Isaiah in the New Testament*, 175–88, 188) is, however, debatable. A detailed investigation of Isaiah in 1 Peter with regard to interpretative frames might prove to be quite fruitful and support that the author’s “indebtedness to Isaiah is clear and goes beyond mere proof-texting” (ibid.).

⁵⁰ Cf. C. Marksches, “Der Mensch Jesus Christus im Angesicht Gottes: Zwei Modelle des Verständnisses von Jesaja 52,13–53,12 in der patristischen Literatur und deren Entwicklung,” in *Der leidende Gottesknecht: Jesaja 53 und seine Wirkungsgeschichte, mit einer Bibliographie zu Jes 53*, ed. B. Janowski and P. Stuhlmacher, FAT 14 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 197–249. Marksches argues: “Einige Beobachtungen am Text deuten darauf hin, daß Justin diesen Vers einem *christlichen Testimonium* entnahm und als Überschrift dem ganzen Abschnitt voranstellte, den er aus der LXX zitierte: Der letzte Vers von Jes 53,12 = 1Apol. 50,2 ist gegenüber der LXX bemerkenswert verändert und ähnelt der späteren Formulierung des Targum Onkelos; am besten erklärt er sich als ein vorjustinianischer Versuch der Übersetzung des *masoretischen* Textes. Die übrigen Zitate aus Jes 52/53 entsprechen allerdings bis Kap. 51,5 vollkommen korrekt der LXX-Version. Obwohl Justin also wohl ein *Testimonium* verwendete, hat er trotzdem den Textabschnitt sehr selbständig und bewusst theologisch gestaltet” (211). The intriguing question is once more whether it is indeed necessary to assume a *testimonium* here instead of a creative dealing with the tradition or if this assumption simply mirrors a default research paradigm.

investigation and will be the subject of one of my next research projects. From what I have read and analyzed so far, first conclusions can be drawn.

The narrative tradition of the NT plays a crucial role, and it is first and foremost the Gospels as *foundational texts* with their still-debated literary genre that are the *game changers*. Beyond the floating gap, the texts we now consider to fall into the literary genre “Gospel” (i. e., narrative texts about the founding events of Christianity) quickly obtain some kind of proto-canonical status. This can be gathered from the addition of *Evangelienüberschriften* in the mid-second century and their reception as religious genre that is best compared to *Scripture*. Or, phrased differently: regardless of their literary genre, their status as foundational literature of early Christianity sets the course for their further use. The moment they are received as normative and formative foundational texts – *Scripture* or a cultural frame – it is no longer important whether their literary genre is *bios*, historiography, *hypomnēmata* or something else.

In the second half of the second century, the Gospels gradually became normative and formative foundational texts and parts of Christian cultural memory. They provide stable frames for Christian identity construction(s). In doing so they have also preserved Israel’s Scripture as part of Christian cultural memory. The ever increasing authoritative character of the Gospels is a clear indicator for this process, as testified by the Gospel titles and the debates with Marcion. The preservation of Israel’s Scriptures as part of the Christian cultural memory did not go without debates. The patristic commentaries on Israel’s Scriptures, however, bear witness in their own way to the success of the Gospels in this regard.

Later generations who are no longer rooted in the cultural framework of Second Temple Judaism or have no Jewish heritage at all use the Gospels as frames of reference for their own identity construction and its defense both *ad intra* and *ad extra*. As Isaiah and his prophecy have been preserved in these foundational texts, the question is whether authors beyond the floating gap use and quote Isaiah in its original context or as part of an emerging *Christian* tradition. Here, again, there will be no one-size-fits-all model, as Christoph Marksches already has pointed out,⁵¹ and his thoughts are a good starting point for a more thorough investigation. The recourse to the fourth servant song will be dependent on the situation, the subject and genre of the individual text, and its target audience. Apologetic writings directed to or using Jewish dialogue partners will look different than those with or for a Gentile target audience.

As Christianity proceeds through time, there is less use of Israel’s Scriptures alone to explain and understand the Christ event. Jesus and the Gospels eventually become the new frame to understand Israel’s Scriptures. The inscription of the Jesus followers into the cultural frame of Second Temple Judaism is followed by the *Vereinnahmung* of the frame, up the point where it is no longer possible to

⁵¹ Marksches, “Der Mensch Jesus Christus.”

understand it on its own. After Israel's Scriptures had become the indispensable frame to understand Jesus, for Jesus followers Jesus, in turn, becomes the indispensable frame for reading Israel's Scriptures. This group is quickly growing out of Second Temple Judaism and will eventually become a distinguishable social and religious entity.

From a social memory point of view, this process is comprehensible and mirrors typical patterns of emerging social groups or emerging religions. It is no surprise that the debate about what stance to take to the Jewish heritage became more pressing after the third generation and beyond the floating gap. The groups of Jesus followers are leaving the times of collective memories and need to find a clear stance to their own self-perception and identity. The downside of this – very successful – process only becomes visible in hindsight. With Jesus being indispensable for understanding Israel's Scripture, the way was paved for the Christian substitution of Judaism, a development with most devastating results. It needed the catastrophe of the twentieth century to realize that there is something deeply flawed in the Christian texture and to initiate the process of a critical re-evaluation of our construction of Christian origins on a larger scale.

Biblical scholarship has the duty to move beyond these biases and limitations. Intertextuality in *social*, *collective*, and *cultural memory* has different goals and objectives. It is crucial not to confuse them. How urgent this task is, can be gathered from a last example tracing the interpretation of Isa 53:1/6:10 in John 12:37–43.⁵² The standard assumption in this case, too, is that “both passages were widely known and used as early Christian proof-texts concerning Jewish unbelief (Isa. 53:1 in Rom. 10:16; Isa. 6:9–10 in Matt. 13:14–15; Acts 28:26–27; cf. Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Rom. 11:18).”⁵³ Hans Förster has recently asked whether we “are indeed dealing with a problematic text or whether the anti-Judaic translations and interpretations are caused by a problematic handling of the text.”⁵⁴ To put it differently: is the idea of “proof” and an apologetic interest present in the text itself, or reflective of later interpretive priorities?

One crucial point for the understanding of John 12:40 is the notoriously difficult part *καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς*. Will the people be healed by God or not?⁵⁵ In many scholarly contributions, the answer is a blunt “no.” In his work on the use of Isaiah 52–53 in John, Daniel J. Brendsel states:

⁵² For an exhaustive investigation of this quote, see Huebenthal, “Proclamation Rejected.”

⁵³ C. H. Williams, “Isaiah in John's Gospel,” in Moyses and Menken, *Isaiah in the New Testament*, 106–16, 108.

⁵⁴ H. Förster, “Ein Vorschlag für ein neues Verständnis von Joh 12,39–40,” *ZNW* 109 (2018): 51–75, 72 (my translation).

⁵⁵ For the typical reading, see M. J. J. Menken, “Die Form des Zitats aus Jes 6,10 in Joh 12,40: Ein Beitrag zum Schriftgebrauch des vierten Evangelisten,” *BZ* 32 (1988): 189–209, 204: “Wer das finale Verständnis der Stelle sicherstellen will, muß mit ἴνα μή übersetzen. Und wer die Stelle anführt als ‘Beweis’ dafür, daß ‘sie nicht glauben konnten’ (Joh 12,39), kann sie nur final verstehen.”

Therefore, John concludes the public ministry of Jesus with summary comments concerning the salvation-historical necessity of Jesus's rejection by many in Israel (John 12:37–43). Jesus's rejection by his own people is the fulfilment of the Servant's experience of rejection (Isa 53:1 in John 12:38). Moreover, it is the climactic fulfillment of the obduracy judgment proclaimed at Isaiah's commissioning (Isa 6:10 in John 12:40).⁵⁶

The assumption of a "salvation-historical necessity" is stunning. The wording reveals a Christian perspective in which the new frame for understanding, as it was introduced in John's Gospel, has become canonized as a *Christian* frame of interpretation: Isaiah no longer stands for himself, but is in the interpreted version part of Christian *cultural memory*. This is not what the Fourth Gospel is about, but in fact is an interpretation from a later theological perspective. In the same way, John 1:11 is not a promise that has to be fulfilled, but an evaluation of what has happened on part of the Johannine "we-group." This evaluation serves the needs of the Johannine group in order to stabilize their frail identity in a situation of crisis, but backfires when seen as the only way of understanding both Isaiah's prophecy and the recourse to it in John's Gospel, where it is prone to pave a very problematic theological road. The moment when the rejection of God's people is seen as necessary prerequisite of Christian salvation-history, the intertextual reference discussed here almost naturally becomes one of the key texts to "prove" that.

The discussion of the double quote from Isaiah in John 12 exhibits once more the problematic features of a particular approach to biblical intertextuality: (a) the treatment of individual intertextual references instead of the whole contexts of both hypo- and hypertext; (b) the assumption of an apologetic intention of the text (or at least the quote) in a Christological debate; (c) the suspicion of the existence of collections of Christian or Christological proof-texts in NT times; and (d) the stability of the OT textual tradition; as well as (e) the invariability of its use in early Christianity.

It will take some time to overcome these biases, but the first steps have already been taken. Hans Förster, by reversing the causal connection has rightly pointed out that "the disrespect for the original context of Isa 6:10 in the modern translations has laid the basis that the assumption of a change of subject in Isa 6:10 could become exegetical consensus and the *locus classicus* of Israel's obduracy."⁵⁷ The danger of projecting later dogmatic decisions back into biblical texts will remain as long as the notion of the stability of texts, traditions, and their use

⁵⁶ D. J. Brendsel, "Isaiah Saw his Glory": *The Use of Isaiah 52–53 in John 12*, BZNW 208 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 213.

⁵⁷ Förster, "Ein Vorschlag," 74–75 (my translation, emphasis original). In this perspective the text ceases to be a statement about those outside and instead becomes but a confirmation for those inside. As an identity-forming text it is necessarily much more concerned with stabilizing the portrait of the group than with ideas who the others are. For a more detailed theological investigation of the use of Isaiah 53 in Early Christianity and the danger of projecting back later dogmatic decisions into the biblical text, see Kraus, "Jesaja 53 LXX."

prevails. The default historical-critical use of *intertexts* does not allow for the fluidity of traditions. That is why their form is so important.

The very moment when an intertextual reference is liberated from the straightjacket of historical-critical limitations, whole books are considered instead of putative collections of apologetic quotes, the heuristic value of the creative use of tradition in identity formation is acknowledged instead of mere source tracking and there is an allowance for change in the use of traditions over time, intertextual references can unfold their real potential. The form of the reference might then become an indicator for the larger context in which it is used and can lead to deeper understanding of its pragmatics. Determining the form of a text or an intertextual reference can only be the starting point for fascinating journeys to unexpected places in early Christian identity formation processes.