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³⁹Ibid., 97.

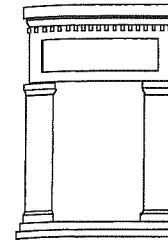
⁴⁰Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: University Press, 1991), 246.

⁴¹Ibid., 252.

⁴²Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. Payne, in Larrimore, 264.

⁴³Ibid., 268.

An Analysis of the Arguments for the Dating of the Fourth Gospel



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Introduction

There are various arguments for the date of composition of the Fourth Gospel. Forty-one lines of argument will be discussed below. The date of the Fourth Gospel will have significance for how one views the purpose statement, the occasion for writing, the author, and the location of origin (providence). At times one's interpretation may be influenced by how one decides on a date and vice-versa.

The discussion will be broken into four sections: the argument for a pre-A.D. 70 date, post-A.D. 70 date, pre-A.D. 100 date, and post-A.D. 100 date. In each section, the discussion will move from the external to the internal evidence and will be placed in the order of least persuasive to most persuasive.¹ The conclusion will determine the most compelling evidence for each category and decide on a date of composition for the Fourth Gospel (FG) which appears to be most supported by the evidence.

The Argument for Dating the Fourth Gospel before A.D. 70

A pre-A.D. 70 date for the composition of the FG has not found many supporters.² Precritical scholars tended to trust the external evidence, which suggested a late-first-century date. Accepting a date of pre-A.D. 70 would lead to the denial of the validity of the external evidence and give the possibility of an earlier date more legitimacy.

The External Evidence

The Pre-A.D. 70 Death of the Apostle John

The view that proposes that the Apostle John died before A.D. 70 finds its chief supporter in B. P. W. Stather. While claiming that this tradition cannot be discounted, he does not provide reasons as to why it should be given more weight than other external evidence. He rejects the tradition that the Apostle John wrote the FG, lived to an old age, and wrote in Ephesus. His reason is that the tradition confused the Apostle John with John Mark in Alexandria (who he says wrote the FG) and John the Elder in Ephesus (who he says wrote the Apocalypse).³

Such a hypothesis based upon the confusion of one of the twelve disciples of Jesus is interesting but is lacking real evidence. This is highly speculative, as is the suggestion that the Apostle John died before A.D. 70. The document existing today that supports this is a summary of Philip of Side. Philip of Side claimed to have Papias's work, but all the evidence suggests he had Eusebius's writings. "All that can . . . be said with confidence is that the sentence . . . is corrupt, and that no historical inference can be drawn from a corrupt sentence in a late epitome of the work of a careless and blundering historian."⁴

Hendriksen is devastating in his critique of this tradition.⁵ He indicates that even though Philip of Side claims to cite Papias for proof of John's pre-A.D. 70 death, we have documents of Eusebius quoting Papias and never mentioning this. Furthermore, in these documents Papias says: (1) that John rested *in peace*; (2) that John lived in Ephesus after returning from Patmos; (3) John died there; and (4) John wrote the FG. He also mentions that the evidence does not say James and John were martyred at the same time.⁶ Dodd notes that Papias is not being cited for evidence. What is being cited is "what the eighth-century epitomator said that Philip said that Papias said."⁷

Regarding the evidence in church calendars, Bernard demonstrates that they included the names of great leaders, not just martyrs.⁸ Also, Hendriksen reminds us that "martyr" in the Church calendars could refer to "witness," not just one who had sealed his testimony with blood.⁹ Barrett concludes that even though this speculative hypothesis would solve some problems, "We cannot martyr the apostle for our convenience in handling critical problems."¹⁰ Robinson, who himself dates the FG before A.D. 70, calls this evidence "notoriously doubtful" and says it "has ceased to be considered seriously as a factor in assessing the authorship or date" of the FG.¹¹

The Muratorian Fragment Evidence

The Muratorian Fragment refers to a vision of John's "fellow-disciples," especially Andrew, which encouraged him to write a gospel. Morris believes that

the writing must have been early for many disciples to still be alive.¹² Morris's mistake is similar to Hunt's above. He assumes the validity of this piece of external evidence and brings it to the forefront while downplaying other pieces of external evidence for no *given* reason. Morris also does not establish "disciple" as being a technical term referring to the Twelve, as it could refer to disciples in general. As far as the references to Andrew goes, that one disciple was alive when the FG was written does not make a late date harder to accept. However, the idea that Andrew was alive is not consistent with all the other evidence.¹³ Regarding this whole account, Bernard concludes: "The circumstantial story about the composition of the Fourth Gospel cannot be historically exact."¹⁴

Qumran

There are two ways in which Qumran is utilized as evidence for an early date. The first is that a man born in Judea in the first half of the first century could have written the ideas and language of the FG. Morris says that this suggests an early date rather than a late one, but he balances the discussion: "This does not prove an early date for the Gospel, but it is more consistent with an early date than with a late one."¹⁵ These indications are "too slight in themselves to be decisive" of the primitive nature and character for the FG.¹⁶

The second argument is that since similar ideas were contained within the scrolls and the FG that scholars no longer had to search for "influences outside of the Palestinian milieu, even though Bultmann and others continued to do so."¹⁷ This does not, however, necessitate a pre-A.D. 70 date. It does remove the *need* for dating the FG into the second century.¹⁸

Internal Evidence

Presentation of the Jews as Powerful

The Jews are presented as a group with power. Morris sees this as evidence for an early date.¹⁹ Turner and Mantey argue that Christianity in the FG is portrayed as being defensive toward Judaism; this resembles the pre-A.D. 70 situation. "It is difficult to imagine a situation in the Diaspora after the Jewish Revolt in which the central conflict would be between church and synagogue."²⁰

There are two arguments against this. First, as Carson responds, this could be what happened historically.²¹ It is difficult to see this as being evidence of an early date for Morris because he accepts apostolic authorship,²² which may indicate that John recorded the events accurately. Second, there is evidence of conflict between the church and synagogue after A.D. 70. Whether or not the Johannine

Community Hypothesis is deemed as plausible,²³ the document it is based upon, which is dated between A.D. 85–90, demonstrates that tensions between church and synagogue must have still been high since the grounds for excommunication was put in writing. Beasley-Murray agreed saying that this could be used to indicate “tensions between the Jewish Christians and their non-Christian compatriots” around A.D. 85–90.²⁴

Precision of Facts

Morris presents the historical accuracy of the FG as evidence for early dating. In John 2:20, the detail of forty-six years seems to convince Morris: “How would a late writer have fixed the date so accurately?”²⁵ A few options present themselves to us besides an early date. First, Morris points to the accuracy of the date²⁶ while others say it is a mistake.²⁷ Second, since Morris subscribes to apostolic authorship, it is difficult to understand why this precision would elude an eyewitness almost forty years later (pre-A.D. 70) as compared to sixty years later (around A.D. 90). The difference is simply not significant enough to compel a date after A.D. 70.

The FG's Independence from the Synoptics

Many scholars have decided that there is no dependence of the FG upon any of the Synoptics.²⁸ Gardner-Smith's work is the classic treatment of this subject, and he has convinced many of independence.²⁹ However, his conclusions have lately been challenged.³⁰ The date of composition of the FG should not be heavily based upon the dating of other books,³¹ especially when the dating of those books is contested.³² If nearly all of scholarship (liberal to conservative) has agreed upon a certain date for a book, then using that book as evidence is tentatively acceptable.

Even so, a lack of information in the Synoptics would not necessarily prove an early date. Smalley says the FG was independent of the Synoptics, and this frees us to search for *any* date.³³ However, based upon Bauckham's understanding of the interconnectedness of Christian communities,³⁴ it would be unlikely for twenty or thirty years to pass and for the author of the FG to not have any knowledge of at least one of the Synoptics. Curiously, Kysar accepts independence but only moves the date of the FG earlier by one decade into the 80s.³⁵

The Use of Early Expressions

Morris views certain expressions in the FG as being “early.” For example, he cites the FG's use of “disciples” rather than “apostles,” and “his disciples” rather than “the disciples.”³⁶ However, the use of language that would appear early could just as likely be the result of eyewitness testimony or apostolic authorship, which Morris himself affirms.³⁷ Even if an apostle or an eyewitness did not write the FG, this evidence may point to early tradition but need not necessitate an early date.

There Is No Passage Clearly Written after A.D. 50

C. C. Torrey provides an argument that is not based upon evidence proving an early date. Rather, he says:

At the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis in New York City, in December, 1934, I challenged my New Testament colleagues to designate even *one* passage, from any of the Four Gospels, giving clear evidence of a date later than 50 A.D., or of origin outside Palestine. The challenge was not met, nor will it be, for there is no such passage.³⁸

Torrey just seems to be trying to place the burden of proof on the other side.³⁹ Therefore, his argument is ultimately unconvincing. Also, since Torrey's challenge some scholars have indeed presented passages that they believe clearly demonstrate a post-A.D. 50 date.⁴⁰

The FG Was Originally Written in a Semitic Language

As evidence, Torrey made the suggestion that all of the Gospels were translated from Semitic languages.⁴¹ This one piece of evidence suggests to Torrey that the FG was written before A.D. 70. His thesis is far from conclusive. Burney's work has also proved to be far from convincing, and current scholars doubt his thesis, which has not been widely accepted.⁴² Bruce, bringing forth an argument against this, says that there is no textual evidence for the FG originally being written in Aramaic. Therefore, there are no grounds for this theory.⁴³

The Focus on John the Baptist

The FG's concern about John the Baptist's followers is cited by Morris as evidence for an early date. Morris believes this was not a large concern later on

in the church.⁴⁴ However, that is not altogether clear. Wenham, arguing against the Johannine Community Hypothesis, says we have direct evidence of those in the third-century A.D. who regarded the Baptist as Messiah and indirect evidence in the New Testament of "a Baptist movement."⁴⁵

Notice also that *if* the Beloved Disciple were a disciple of John the Baptist, it would be apparent why he was concerned for John the Baptist.⁴⁶ It is far from certain, however, that the author was a disciple of John the Baptist. It would be inappropriate to brush aside this argument based upon that speculation alone. However, this argument still does not serve as proof, but as a concept which, if developed further, could provide data which *might* help one lean toward an earlier date.

There Is No Mention of the Temple's Destruction

J. A. T. Robinson's task of redating all the books of the New Testament began when it was suggested to him that since the destruction of the temple was not mentioned in the New Testament, maybe the entire New Testament was composed before A.D. 70. His project "began as a joke."⁴⁷ His hypothesis first developed while he was considering the FG.

Robinson understands that "arguments from silence can, of course, never be conclusive."⁴⁸ Ellis insightfully adds that an argument from silence only becomes significant "if the silence itself is contrary to all reasonable expectation."⁴⁹ Robinson offers two pieces of evidence to demonstrate that the temple is still standing. This is the foundation for his argument, for the rest of his reasoning is based on these two ideas being accepted and then tested. All the other evidence he will offer is simply "test[ing] out the hypothesis," not proof.⁵⁰

His first piece of evidence is John 2:20. He says that the context cries out for the destruction of the temple to be mentioned. However, he follows this with the realization that there is no reason the destruction *had* to be mentioned.⁵¹ An analysis of this passage reveals that had the FG mentioned the temple's destruction then the main thrust of the passage would have been made less clear. The text pushes to the forefront that Jesus was predicting his own death. Therefore, not only is it an overstatement to say the context cries out for it, but Robinson himself realizes that the context does not demand it. Half of Robinson's argument is, even by his own admission, not strong evidence.

This raises another question: why would the lack of any reference to the destruction of the temple in the Synoptic Gospels justify a pre-A.D. 70 date but not so in the FG? First, the Synoptic Gospels predict the fall of Jerusalem in Mt. 24:1-2, Mk. 13:1-2, and Lk. 21:5-7. Therefore, had the prophecy been fulfilled, one might expect the fulfillment to be mentioned.⁵² However, that expectation would not have been true for a post-A.D. 70 FG. There was no reason to include

its fulfillment. Since the Evangelist did not include the prophecy, he did not include the fulfillment. The main fulfillments mentioned in the FG are in relation to his own prediction of his death (2:19-22), the method by which this would happen (3:14-15), and in relation to Old Testament prophecy.⁵³ Not mentioning the destruction of the temple in the FG is not that large of an obstacle to overcome.⁵⁴

Εἰμί Cannot be a Historical Present

Robinson's second piece of evidence (referred to above) is John 5:2. He has two lines of argument. First, the details of the account show a precise knowledge of Jerusalem. However, if the author was an eyewitness then this is not much evidence.⁵⁵ Second, he focuses on the present tense of the verb εἰμί: "There is a place," not "there was a place." He then says: "Too much weight must not be put on this—though it is the only present tense in the context, and elsewhere (4:6; 11:18; 18:1; 19:41) he assimilates his topographical descriptions to the tense of the narrative."⁵⁶ Robinson never considers that this could be a historical present. He warns about "too much weight," but in essence, he is resting his entire hypothesis upon this idea.⁵⁷ Robinson presents two lines of evidence for his entire thesis and when presenting each he downplays the weight to give them while basing his whole argument upon them.

It is far from convincing to many scholars that this cannot be a historical present.⁵⁸ Bultmann says that 5:2 does not prove that Bethany had been destroyed.⁵⁹ Westcott, while similarly not calling it a historical present, says that it "is quite natural that St John in recalling the event should speak of the place as he knew it."⁶⁰ Hoskyns notes that "Josephus refers to the city as though it were still existing."⁶¹ Wallace's main contention is that commentators have not said "point blank" that εἰμί in 5:2 is a historical present. Wallace goes to great pains to demonstrate that most give the definition of a historical present, while not employing that term.⁶²

In fact, the present active indicative of εἰμί occurs 283 times in 233 verses of the FG. Of these, nineteen have been isolated in appendix 5 for consideration as historical presents, and six of these (including 5:2) seem probable for inclusion in this category.

The Conclusion to Dating the Fourth Gospel before A.D. 70

Borchert said it well: "To switch to such an early date based on internal evidence . . . is as subjectively oriented as the earlier attempt to date the Gospel in the late second century."⁶³

The Argument for Dating the FG After A.D. 70

External Evidence

John 9:22 and the Johannine Community Hypothesis

A popular argument, made so by Martyn,⁶⁴ is called the Johannine Community Hypothesis. This theory finds evidence in John 9:22 that the excommunication mentioned in the 'Test Benediction,' which was written by Rabbi Simeon the Less when requested by Rabbi Gamaliel II around A.D. 85–90⁶⁵ had now begun. In fact, supporters of this theory think this demonstrates an occasion for the writing of the FG. Brown finds evidence in John 9:22 and the Johannine Community Hypothesis for a post-A.D. 70 dating.⁶⁶

The 'evidence' has been contested.⁶⁷ Wenham has shown that all the concepts proposed as evidence (polemic against 'the Jews,' dualistic outlook, and the emphasis on loving one another) "have significant parallels in Christian traditions that can be traced back to the time of Paul and perhaps earlier."⁶⁸ Second, all this evidence can say at most is that by A.D. 80 this kind of action was taking place, but it cannot establish that it was not happening before then. Finally, there is evidence within Scripture itself that events such as that of 9:22 happened before A.D. 85–90.⁶⁹

Church Fathers

Much sound research has been done on the writings by the Church Fathers, and the conclusions are varied. The majority of this external evidence places the date late—into the late 90s. Carson, agreeing with Robinson, says that this evidence is itself "late," "secondary," and "unreliable."⁷⁰ Smalley concludes that this early external evidence is not consistent and not completely reliable.⁷¹ However, many commentators disagree.⁷² Tasker believes that because of the Rylands Papyrus there is no reason to question the tradition passed down to us.⁷³ He analyzes the external evidence in regard to authorship and finds it reliable enough to form a foundation for his conclusions regarding authorship and dating.⁷⁴ Westcott concludes that his detailed examination of internal evidence is "completely [in] accord with the historical tradition."⁷⁵ However, Carson, after characterizing this external evidence as "late," "secondary," and "unreliable," says that it encourages us to push the date back to A.D. 80.⁷⁶ In the end, one must admit that this evidence is not completely consistent within itself, but even so it is a relatively strong argument for dating the Gospel later rather than earlier.

John 6:1 and 21:1 and the Sea of Galilee/Tiberias

About A.D. 17–18, Herod Antipas founded the city of Tiberias along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Over a period of time the name of the city overtook the name of the sea and it was renamed the Sea of Tiberias. John 6:1 and 21:1 make reference to the sea by this name. Some commentators say that the name change did not occur until "later in the century."⁷⁷ Various scholars have referred to different sources for the origination of the phrase "Sea of Tiberias." The different sources pointed to are Pausanias, the *Sibyllene Oracles*, Josephus, and Strabo.⁷⁸

Dodd raises a concern against accepting this as evidence. He mentions the possibility, though it is far from certain, that the author of chapter 21 redacted "Tiberias" into 6:1.⁷⁹ If this were proven, then the argument would be useless. However, the argument contending for a different author of chapter 21 is not universally accepted.⁸⁰

John 20:28 and the Imperial Cult

In John 20:28, Thomas exclaims, "My Lord, and my God." This is one of the highest Christological claims in all of Scripture. It may have a background in the worship of Domitian (A.D. 81–96).⁸¹ Moloney, though conceding that emperor worship may have been in the background, warns us against overemphasizing this in interpretation: "The confession is not primarily against something, but the final affirmation of the Christology of the Gospel."⁸² However, it is helpful in understanding the text to view it as a "defiance of that cult and the determination to make it clear that Jesus alone is both 'Lord and God.'"⁸³ Sanders refers to Suetonius as saying that this was the only way one could address Domitian, whether in conversation or writing.⁸⁴ On that basis we could suppose that a Christian proclaiming anyone else as 'Lord and God' might come under persecution; at the very least there would have been a negative reaction to it.⁸⁵ Hoskyns appears to oppose this when he says, "It is unnecessary, with Bauer, to seek further comparisons in the terminology of Caesar worship."⁸⁶ This is not so much a polemic against using it as background for dating as against using it for interpreting the text. The claim, made by Domitian, did not occur until at least A.D. 81 and likely accounts for why the Evangelist chose to include Thomas's words in the FG.

Internal Evidence

The Death of Paul

One of Hendriksen's main reasons for dating the FG after A.D. 80 is the death of Paul. His only evidence is that Paul never "mentions the work of the apostle John in Asia Minor."⁸⁷ This argument from silence does not prove convincing since Paul never directly mentions the Synoptic Gospels either.

The Jews Presented as Enemies of the Church

Moloney says the conflict and level of hostility in the FG seems to represent a period when relations between Christianity and post-A.D. 70 Judaism were breaking down.⁸⁸ It is proposed that the manner in which the Evangelist uses the phrase "the Jews" and the separation he puts between himself and "the Jews" would have taken years to develop. However, how long would this take?

There is evidence in the New Testament of a high level of hostility between Jews and Christians.⁸⁹ Morris is correct when he argues that this does not require a prolonged period.⁹⁰ In fact, the period between Jesus' death and A.D. 70 was about forty years. Surely this hostile mindset could have developed over twenty or thirty years; there is not much evidence to suggest otherwise.

Evolution of Tradition

The argument that the evolution of tradition can assist in dating the FG after A.D. 70 is not very convincing to the present writer. Martin, Fuller, and Brown all see stages in the editorial process that lead them to this conclusion.⁹¹ However, the specifics over which passages show evidence of redaction is the 'Achilles's heel' to this argument since it is difficult to find two scholars who agree. Morris rejects the idea that there has been an evolution of tradition. Though some have attempted to prove this, Morris feels that they fall short of being convincing.⁹² This evidence is too speculative to hold much weight in the date of composition of the FG.

The Theology of the FG Is Too Developed

Jülicher believes that John's overall theology shows it could not have been written prior to A.D. 70.⁹³ Brown's argument for a *terminus post quem* (earliest date possible) is based upon comparing the theology within the Gospels, with

the FG being written last and with Matthew being dated around A.D. 85.⁹⁴ However, in his previous criticism Brown called this line of reasoning precarious because the Pauline writings have such a highly developed theology.⁹⁵ Hence, Brown's argument against himself is more convincing. Carson agrees that the theological language at least encourages us to push the date back.⁹⁶ However, a reading of Rom. 9:5 and Phil. 2:5-6 reveals that the date should not be pushed back past the mid-60s for theological development.⁹⁷ Carson argues that this would push the date back about ten years, but not twenty. Smalley agrees that this leads to a later date, but realizes that this evidence is unreliable and subjective.⁹⁸ Many scholars reject this line of reasoning all together.⁹⁹ If this argument is denied it *allows* a pre-A.D. 70 date but does *not demand* it.

The FG's Dependence upon the Synoptics

If the FG's author used the Synoptics, and they are dated after A.D. 70, then the FG would have been written after A.D. 70. Barrett says that the author of the FG had "thoroughly mastered (the) contents" of Mark, which was written right before or after A.D. 70.¹⁰⁰ As discussed above, this issue has scholars on each side, and Morris finds this unconvincing.¹⁰¹ There is a more nuanced version of this argument that seems more reasonable.

Hendriksen argues that the FG's author knew the Synoptics.¹⁰² He does not say that the FG's author used or had the Synoptics in front of him while composing the FG, but that he knew them. Based upon recent scholarly conclusions, and evidence from the FG, this does not seem unreasonable.¹⁰³ However, this still depends upon when one dates the Synoptics.

The Death of the Beloved Disciple in John 21:22-23

There are two aspects that need to be considered in this category. First, does 21:22-23 refer to the death of the Beloved Disciple? Brown answers in the affirmative and says that this hints at a date later than A.D. 90.¹⁰⁴ Moloney says that this passage clearly refers to the Beloved Disciple being dead and is written so that the community that receives it does not wonder about his death.¹⁰⁵ If one links the Beloved Disciple with the Apostle John, and one accepts the external evidence that John lived until the late 90s, one still does not have to agree with Brown. The text in question may hint at the Apostle's death, but it is entirely possible that he is still alive and wanting to correct a rumor about himself. In fact, Hoskyns argues that verse 24 says that the Beloved Disciple wrote "these things," referring to the entire Gospel before it.¹⁰⁶ Carson puts forth a persuasive interpretation:

If the rumor is based on a false interpretation of Jesus that is circulating round the churches, it seems reasonable to suppose that, if the beloved disciple were already dead, the falsity of that interpretation could instantly be established by pointing out the disciple's grave. The silence on this point supports the view that the beloved disciple was still alive at the time of writing.¹⁰⁷

A second question arises: how long after Peter's death would the author of the FG wait before correcting the error? Morris interprets John 21:17-19 as referring to Peter's death having already taken place.¹⁰⁸ Peter died around A.D. 65, and Morris wonders how long someone would wait to correct the error.¹⁰⁹ However, why is it that the error was necessarily circulating immediately after Peter's death? Could it have started circulating in John's old age? Do we have any evidence that this error circulated upon Peter's death? Could it have started circulating a generation later, farther removed from the event, when more people were likely to misunderstand? Morris does not answer any of these questions and provides no compelling evidence.

The Lack of the Temple's Destruction Used for a Post-A.D. 80 Date

Hendriksen adds more data to try and sway opinion: the lack of mention of the fall of Jerusalem.¹¹⁰ This evidence can only be used to place the date out of the 70s and into the 80s. Carson says that we must allow sufficient time for the shock of the destruction of the temple to pass. He then says, "The fall of the temple did not have as much impact in the diaspora as in Palestinian Judaism."¹¹¹ This point is conceded if a post-A.D. 70 date is proven. Interest would probably have waned after a period of ten years or so.

Morris finds this unconvincing for a post-A.D. 70 date.¹¹² However, it appears that he is misunderstanding the argument presented. Those arguing that a period of time has passed between the destruction of the temple and the writing of the FG are not using it as evidence for a post-A.D. 70 date. Rather, after they feel they have established a post-A.D. 70 date, they are attempting to explain the earliest date possible for the FG.

Remoteness of Record

This argument rests upon the concept that the author was writing as if he was looking back on events from a distance.¹¹³ Westcott points to John 4:21; 7:39; 10:16; 11:51; 12:33; 18:9, 32; 19:36, and 21:19 for proof. However, it could be argued that this viewpoint of the author could have sufficiently developed by A.D. 65-68. Most of the verses cited are unconvincing as support.

The Sadducees Are Not Mentioned

An argument that may carry some weight is the FG not mentioning the Sadducees. It was only after A.D. 70 that this group faded out of the picture. This would be more convincing were it not for the FG's lack of mentioning the scribes, who increased in prominence after A.D. 70.¹¹⁴ However, this data falls more in line with a post-A.D. 70 dating because if the FG was written after A.D. 70 and the author was an eyewitness (or had early tradition), it would be understandable not to mention a group¹¹⁵ that had lost prestige. Because his audience may not have had much knowledge of them, the author might have wished not to emphasize such an obscure group.

Peter's Death in John 21:18-19

Tradition has Peter dying during A.D. 65-67 under Nero in Rome.¹¹⁶ Hendriksen finds this a reason for believing a post-A.D. 70 date.¹¹⁷ It could be possible that the FG was written immediately after his death, but this option seems unlikely. Fuller says this only tells us that chapter 21 was written late, but not chapters 1-20.¹¹⁸ However, Tasker views only verse 25 as an addition, with the "we" of verse 24 being consistent with 1:14.¹¹⁹ Westcott views verses 24-25 as additions, but none before.¹²⁰ Carson finds sufficient grounds for all of chapter 21 being original.¹²¹ Thus, this evidence is not weakened much by the conjecture that an editor was responsible for the final form of chapter 21.

The Argument for Dating the FG before A.D. 100

External Evidence

Bodmer Papyri 2, 15 and Tatian's Diatessaron

Brown makes mention of the Bodmer Papyri 2 and 15 which are dated from the late second century to the early third century.¹²² However, these documents are dated too late to be of much help. Brown also mentions Tatian's *Diatessaron*, dated around A.D. 170.¹²³ Bernard says that this shows that the FG had equal authority to the Synoptics at this time. He also draws from this that it therefore probably had equal authority in Justin's mind, also.¹²⁴ However, because it is dated A.D. 170 and the following evidence is dated earlier, this evidence is not as helpful.

Ignatius's Use of the FG

Hendriksen is convinced that Ignatius's references to the FG places the latest possible date at A.D. 110.¹²⁵ Bernard finds it probable that Ignatius had read the FG.¹²⁶ However, Smalley and Sanders disagree.¹²⁷ This argument has raged for years, and the evidence will not be reexamined since the following two pieces of evidence have convinced nearly all modern commentators of a pre-A.D. 100 date.

The John Rylands Papyrus

In 1935, C. H. Roberts published a book that changed the boundaries of dating the FG forever. In 1920, Bernard P. Grenfeld acquired what is now called the Rylands Papyrus in Egypt.¹²⁸ This fragment is the earliest known fragment of any part of the New Testament.¹²⁹ Brown dates the Rylands Papyrus between A.D. 135–150.¹³⁰ Hendriksen estimates that thirty years would have to pass for the fragment to travel to Egypt.¹³¹ Therefore, he sets the latest date possible as A.D. 100.¹³² But recent writings have shown that the Christian community was much more interconnected than previously thought.¹³³ This may significantly reduce Hendriksen's "thirty years."¹³⁴

Papyrus Egerton 2

The discovery of the Rylands Papyrus was soon followed by the discovery of Papyrus Egerton 2.¹³⁵ Papyrus Egerton 2 quotes John 3:2; 5:39, 45; 9:29; and 10:25.¹³⁶ "The importance of the fragment is that it provides an indication that by the time of its writing the FG was regarded as equally authoritative as the Synoptics."¹³⁷ The way the FG is used in P. Egerton "clearly indicates that John had not just been written."¹³⁸ It has generally been dated in the first half of the second century.¹³⁹

Based upon Bauckham's research, it may not have taken thirty years for a document to travel from Ephesus to Egypt. However, more than travel time needs to be considered with P. Egerton 2. The manner in which the author of P. Egerton 2 incorporates the teaching of the FG into his own teaching is reflective of someone who is very familiar with the content of the FG.¹⁴⁰

Internal Evidence

The Relationship of the FG to 1 John

Carson proposes that the relationship between the FG and First John provides evidence that the FG was written about one decade before the letter. He says: (1) If we accept that the FG is not an anti-Gnostic writing (though not pro-Gnostic either), and (2) we accept that First John is an anti-Gnostic writing, and (3) we accept the authorship of both to be the same person, then (4) the difference in disposition demands some time distance.¹⁴¹ This argument contains many details and is highly nuanced. In fact, one could find a significant number of scholars who disagree with the first three statements. In the end, this argument will remain unconvincing to many due to its detailed nature. Beasley-Murray, writing before Carson, says, "When one considers the other companions of the FG, namely, the three epistles of John and their authors, it is clear that unusual care is required in our estimates, or the whole lot will fall down!"¹⁴² However, none of the details seem highly speculative or improbable to this researcher. Carson appears to have given the care required by Beasley-Murray.

The Argument for Dating the FG after A.D. 100

Many scholars of the past have held the late date view. As early as 1904, these scholars' presuppositions were being exposed:

Baur and his school had thought themselves compelled, in order to give an intelligible account of the rise of Christianity, to throw over both the statements in the writings themselves and those of tradition about them, and to post-date their composition by several decades.¹⁴³

One mistake that Sanday pointed out, and still needs to be pointed out today to the Johannine Community Hypothesis followers, is the errant premise that "all these writings were composed with a definite purpose . . . and they found them in the most unexpected places."¹⁴⁴ It was popular to date the FG in the mid-second century during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, with the discovery of P. Egerton 2 and the Rylands Papyrus, these second-century projections have ceased.

External Evidence

The FG Is Not Cited until A.D. 170

Keim notes that early usage of the FG was "more cautious" and it was not until A.D. 170-180, referring to Tatian and the Muratorian fragment, that it was generally accepted.¹⁴⁵ Lightfoot says that it was used sparingly because it is so different from the Synoptics.¹⁴⁶ Regardless, the Rylands Papyrus and P. Egerton 2 leave this argument sounding somewhat empty.

The FG Contributed to the Easter Controversy

Keim asserts that the FG was not a response to the Easter controversy in Asia Minor (about A.D. 190) rather, it nourished it along and was part of its source.¹⁴⁷ However, Keim gives no proof of its connection. Since no evidence was presented, this argument is left wanting.

John 5:43 Is Based upon the Simon Bar Kochba Incident of A.D. 132-135

Schmiedel's main reason for a dating of A.D. 132-140 is that he views John 5:43 as referring to the Simon Bar Kochba incident of A.D. 132-135.¹⁴⁸ However, most modern commentators do not interpret the verse this way and say that it is a general reference rather than referring to someone specific.¹⁴⁹ For example, Kysar says that it refers not "to a specific figure or to the false messiahs but as a reference to the general blindness of the religious leaders."¹⁵⁰ Hendriksen lists many who have fulfilled this prophecy: Theudas, Judas of Galilee, and Bar Kochba, and thus takes it as a general reference.¹⁵¹ Also, the Rylands Papyrus and P. Egerton 2 render this extremely unlikely.

The Gnostic School of Valentine Was Dependent upon John

Jülicher sets the latest date possible at A.D. 125 because the Gnostic School of Valentine (about A.D. 130) was dependent upon John.¹⁵² However, Barrett says that we cannot be sure that Valentinus used the FG.¹⁵³ Beasley-Murray, agreeing with Jülicher that Valentinus used the FG, disregards the evidence because of the Rylands Papyrus and P. Egerton 2.¹⁵⁴

Justin's Tentative Use of the FG

Schmiedel cites Justin as using the FG tentatively, but not using the Synoptics in the same way, as evidence for a late date. He concludes that Justin must have regarded the FG as non-apostolic and fairly recently written.¹⁵⁵ However, Tatian's use shows this as nearly worthless evidence. Lightfoot suggests his tentative use was because the FG is so different from the Synoptics.¹⁵⁶ Hendriksen says, "Justin Martyr (*Apology* I, 61) quotes from John 3:3-5."¹⁵⁷ Again, the archaeological finds in 1925 render this argument unhelpful.

Internal Evidence

The Evangelist Was a Gnostic

Can it be shown that the Evangelist was a second-century Gnostic? Keim states: "The Evangelist also 'knows' and is a 'Gnostic' who is quite ready to confess to the highest and boldest speculations concerning the Christ from above."¹⁵⁸ Smalley says, "It is difficult to regard John as a 'gnostic' in any real sense. His basic Christian outlook differs from the mythical, philosophical approach of Gnosticism and its earlier (oriental or other) manifestations."¹⁵⁹ John has a theology of salvation, something Gnosticism does not embrace.¹⁶⁰

The FG's Knowledge of Developed Gnosticism

Schmiedel believes that the FG's author was well acquainted with a developed form of Gnosticism, but not post-A.D. 140 Gnosticism.¹⁶¹ The arguments mentioned above and the archaeological discoveries contradict this argument.¹⁶²

Nondependence and Differences with Paul

Jülicher does not believe that dependence upon Paul can be proven.¹⁶³ After analyzing the differences, he says, "Such a transformation of the Gospel as understood by Paul would only have been possible a considerable time after Paul's death, and the fact that it was produced under the unmistakable influence of Greek philosophising speaks still more strongly for the relatively late composition of the FG."¹⁶⁴

Seeing such a stark contrast between Pauline and Johannine thought is not only speculative but has been challenged of late.¹⁶⁵ In fact, Scott says, "The evangelist is everywhere indebted to Paul."¹⁶⁶ Westcott provides two doctrines of Paul

that the FG contains: sovereignty of the divine will and the union of the believer with Christ.¹⁶⁷ This evidence should not affect the dating of the FG.

The FG's Dependence upon the Synoptics

Jülicher's conclusion of A.D. 100–110, which was actually rather conservative for his time, was mainly based upon the FG's dependence upon the Synoptics.¹⁶⁸ He gives, for example, John's dependence upon Matt. 26:11 in John 12:8.¹⁶⁹ The anointing account shows John's dependence on Luke as he strays from Matthew and Mark and sides with Luke on the pouring of the ointment on Jesus' head.¹⁷⁰ Large parts of the Passion narrative demonstrate similar ideas.¹⁷¹ Because of this dependence, John cannot be dated prior to A.D. 100. However, dating the Synoptics this late is neither necessary nor proven. Jülicher actually dates Matthew at A.D. 100, Mark at A.D. 70–100, and Luke at A.D. 80–120.¹⁷² All of this is presupposed because of his ant-supernatural bias. Thus, his dating of John being no earlier than A.D. 100 has presuppositions that inhibit an unbiased analysis. As stated before, basing one's dating of the FG upon another tentative dating scheme is precarious. The Rylands Papyrus and P. Egerton 2 refute this convincingly.

Conclusion

In appendix 2, the evidence that has shown itself to be more convincing is presented. None of the arguments for a pre-A.D. 70 date are strong arguments. However, evidence from John 20:28, the church fathers, Peter's death, and John 6:1 has proven decidedly more convincing. Based upon this, a date after A.D. 70 is more acceptable. The fact that the destruction of the temple was not mentioned, which leads one to think that a certain amount of time has lapsed, and the FG's relationship to First John, have led us to conclude that the FG was written between A.D. 80–100, with the most likely time being toward the earlier side of that range. Hendriksen tries to narrow down the date from A.D. 80–98, but is admittedly unable to do so.¹⁷³ One should not push the evidence further than it can go.

Appendix 1

Chart of the Evidence with Response

Pre-70

External Evidence

Pre-70 apostolic death
Muratorian fragment evidence

Qumran evidence

Internal Evidence

Presentation of Jews as powerful

Precision of facts (John 2:20)
Independent from Synoptics

Use of Early Expressions
No passage post-50
Originally Semitic
Focus on John the Baptist
No mention of temple's destruction

John 5:2: 'there is'

Response

Based upon speculative external evidence
Ignores other external evidence with no given reason; does not establish "disciple" as a technical term; historically inexact
Not proof, but lends to/allows for an early dating

Response

No reason this could not be historical, esp. if apostolic authorship accepted
Apostolic authorship; 40 years versus 60 years
Very far from proven and unconvincing to some; doesn't necessitate a pre-70 date
Apostolic authorship or early tradition
John 20:28; John 9:22; Tiberias
Though possible, far from proven
Not proof, but leans toward an early date
Arguments from silence are inconclusive by themselves
Could εἶμι be a historical present which are more common in the FG than any other NT book?

Post-70

External Evidence

John 9:22/Johannine Community Hypothesis
Church Fathers
John 6:1—Sea of Galilee/Tiberias

John 20:28 and the Imperial Cult

Internal Evidence

Death of Paul
Jews as enemies

Evolution of tradition
Theology of FG too developed
Death of the Beloved Disciple
Dependency upon/knowledge of Syn. (post-70)
Lack of temple's destruction for post-80 date
Remoteness of Record
Sadducees not mentioned

Peter's death in Jn. 21

Response

Satisfactorily refuted
At least pushes a later date
Points to a late first-century date, the time when the names were in transition
Seems to be included to respond to Domitian worship

Response

No proof he died before FG written
No reason could not have happened in 20–30 years
Falls short of being demonstrated
Pauline writings are as developed; inconclusive
Not likely interpretation, but possible
Maybe FG knew Synoptics, but still tentative
Only good if post-70 date demonstrated
Leans toward a later date, not proof
Lack of scribes being mentioned weakens argument
Pushes date back past 65, most likely past 70

Pre-100External Evidence

Bodmer Papyri II and XV
Tatian's *Diatessaron*
Ignatius's use
John Rylands Papyrus
Papyrus Egerton 2

Internal Evidence

Relationship to 1 John

Response

Dated late 2nd to early 3rd century; not helpful
Dated 170; not helpful
Many scholars are divided
Dated between 130–150; FG written by 100
Dated between 130–150; FG written by 100

Response

Many details; somewhat speculative, but very possible; pushes FG into 80s

Post-100¹⁷⁴External Evidence

Not cited until 170

FG is part of the Easter controversy

John 5:43 based upon Simon Bar Kochba

Gnostic school of Valentine
Justin's tentative use of FG

Internal Evidence

Evangelist was a Gnostic
FG's knowledge of developed Gnosticism

Non-dependence upon Paul

Dependence upon the Synoptics (post-100)

Response

Disputed; P. Egerton 2 and Rylands fragment renders this argument useless
No proof given and its connection to dating is never made
P. Egerton 2 and Rylands fragment renders this argument useless; modern scholars disagree with interpretation
This sets a late date, but does not necessitate one
Debatable; Rylands Papyrus and P. Egerton 2 render useless

Response

Shown to be highly unlikely
This has been discounted by post-Bultmannian scholars
Non-dependence not proven; the size of the time gap is highly subjective
This kind of reasoning is dangerous (basing the dating of one book on the contested dating of another) and unconvincing

Appendix 2**Chart of Compelling Evidence****Pre-70**

Focus on John the Baptist
No mention of temple's destruction

John 5:2: 'there is'

Not proof, but leans toward an early date
Arguments from silence are inconclusive by themselves
Could εἶμι be a historical present, more common in the FG than any other NT book?

Post-70

Death of the Beloved Disciple
Dependency upon/knowledge of Syn. (post-70)
Lack of temple's destruction for post-80 date
Remoteness of Record
Sadducees not mentioned

Church Fathers
John 6:1 – Sea of Galilee/Tiberias

John 20:28 and the Imperial Cult

Peter's death in Jn. 21

Not likely interpretation, but possible
Maybe FG knew Synoptics, but still tentative
Only good if post-70 date demonstrated
Leans toward a later date, not proof
Lack of scribes being mentioned weakens argument
At least pushes a later date
Points to a late first century date, the time when the names were in transition
Seems to be included to respond to Domitian worship
Pushes date back past 65, most likely past 70

Pre-100

Relationship to 1 John

John Rylands Papyrus
Papyrus Egerton 2

Many details; somewhat speculative, but very possible; pushes FG into 80s
Dated between 130–150; FG written by 100
Dated between 130–150; FG written by 100

Post-100

None

Appendix 3

The Evidence with Supporters and Detractors

Pre-70

<u>External Evidence</u>	<u>Supporter</u>	<u>Detractor</u>
Pre-70 apostolic death	Hunt	Lightfoot, Bernard, Sanders, Hendriksen
Muratorian fragment evidence	Morris	
Qumran	Morris, Borchert ¹⁷⁵	

<u>Internal Evidence</u>	<u>Supporter</u>	<u>Detractor</u>
Presentation of Jews as powerful	Morris, Turner and Mantey ¹⁷⁶	Carson
Precision of facts (John 2:20)	Morris	Barret, Moloney
Independent from Synoptics	Hunt, Morris, Moloney, Kysar, ¹⁷⁷ Smalley, ¹⁷⁸ Fuller ¹⁷⁹	Grant
Use of Early Expressions	Morris	
No passage post-50	Torrey, Morris	Carson, Morris, Colwell, Grant, Bruce
Originally Semitic	Torrey	
Focus on John the Baptist	Morris, Grant, Albright	
No mention of temple's destruction	Robinson	Carson, Westcott
John 5:2: 'there is'	Robinson, Wallace, Morris	Schnackenburg, Carson, Bultmann, Westcott, Hoskyns

Post-70

<u>External Evidence</u>	<u>Supporter</u>	<u>Detractor</u>
John 9:22/Johannine Comm. Hypothesis	Brown, Martyn, Smalley, Barrett, Moloney, Bruce	Morris, Carson, Kimelman, Horbury, Kysar, Robinson, Beasley-Murray, ¹⁸⁰ Witherington
Church Fathers	Hendriksen, Tasker, Turner and Mantey, Westcott	Carson, ¹⁸¹ Robinson, Barrett, Smalley
John 6:1-Sea of Galilee/Tiberias	Sanday, Carson	
John 20:28 and Imperial Cult	Moloney, Turner and Mantey, Köstenberger	

<u>Internal Evidence</u>	<u>Supporter</u>	<u>Detractor</u>
Death of Paul	Hendriksen	
Jews as enemies	Moloney, Hendriksen	Morris
Evolution of tradition	Fuller, Martin, Brown	Morris
Theology of FG too developed	Jülicher, Smalley, Brown, ¹⁸² Carson ¹⁸⁴	Hunt, Grant, Hendriksen, Morris ¹⁸³
Sadducees not mentioned		Carson
Death of the Beloved Disciple	Brown, Smalley, Sanders, Moloney, Hunter	Carson, Morris, ¹⁸⁵ Westcott, Turner and Mantey, ¹⁸⁶ Hoskyns, Bruce, Hendriksen

Lack of temple's destruction (post-80 date)	Hendriksen, Carson	Morris
Dependency upon Syn. (post-70)	Hendriksen, Barrett, Godet	Hunt, Morris, Grant
Remoteness of Record	Westcott	
Peter's death in Jn. 21	Hendriksen, Brown, Carson Köstenberger	Fuller

Pre-100

<u>External Evidence</u>	<u>Supporter</u>	<u>Detractor</u>
Bodmer Papyri 2 and 15		Brown
Tatian's <i>Diatessaron</i>	Brown, Bernard ¹⁸⁷	
Ignatius's use	Hendriksen, Bernard	Smalley
John Rylands Papyrus	Barrett, Hendriksen, Brown, Lightfoot, Borchert, Hunter, Beasley-Murray, Fuller, Turner and Mantey	
Papyrus Egerton 2	Hendriksen, Brown, Barrett, Lightfoot, Borchert, Tasker, Beasley-Murray, Turner and Mantey	
<u>Internal Evidence</u> Relationship to 1 John	<u>Supporter</u> Carson	<u>Detractor</u> Beasley-Murray, ¹⁸⁸ Smalley, Witherington

Post-100¹⁸⁹

<u>External Evidence</u>	<u>Supporter</u>	<u>Detractor</u>
Not cited until 170	Keim	Brown, Sanday, Lightfoot, Tasker
FG is part of the Easter controversy	Keim	
John 5:43 based upon Simon Bar Kochba	Schmiedel	Carson, Ridderbos, Beasley-Murray, Kysar, Sanders, Hendriksen, Bruce
Gnostic school of Valentine	Jülicher	Brown, Barrett
Justin's tentative use of FG	Schmiedel	Lightfoot

<u>Internal Evidence</u>	<u>Supporter</u>	<u>Detractor</u>
Evangelist was a Gnostic	Keim	Smalley
FG's knowledge of developed Gnosticism	Schmiedel	Smalley
Non-dependence upon Paul	Jülicher	Morris, Scott, Moffatt, Westcott
Dependence upon the Synoptics (post-100)	Jülicher, Schmiedel	

Appendix 4

Who Dated Where

<u>Year</u>	<u>Author</u>
Pre-50	Torrey
57-72	Cribbs
65-70	Robinson, Morris, Hunt, Grant, Lange
Not long after 70	Grant
Late 70s-early 80s	Albright
Pre-80	Hunter, Mitton
80-85	Carson, Beasley-Murray, Kysar, Köstenberger
80-90	Godet
80-100	Hendriksen, Hunter
85-100	Smalley
90-100 ¹⁹⁰	Brown, Moloney, Barrett, Borchert, ¹⁹¹ Turner and Mantey, Fuller, Tasker, Westcott, Bruce, ¹⁹² Witherington
95-115	Moffatt, Scott
by 100	Lightfoot, Dodd
100	Bultmann, Martin
100-110	Jülicher
100-125	Holtzmann
110-115	Keim
132-140	Schmiedel
Post-140	Zeller, Volmar, Baur, Loisy
Pre-150	Sanders

Appendix 5

Historical Present of εἰμί in the Fourth Gospel

Present Active Indicatives of εἰμί in FG-233 verses, 283 occurrences, and 19 possibilities for a historical present. Many occurrences were indirect statements (for example, see 2:9, 17; 5:13, 15; 6:64; 11:57; 12:9; 20:14; 21:4, 7, 12). The most likely candidates (six) are listed below with the Greek and New American Standard (1995) translation:

1:19-(Notice that the context has all past tense verbs: two aorists.) This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" Καὶ αὐτῆ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰωάννου, ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν, Σὺ τίς εἶ;

5:2-Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. Ἔστιν δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρα ἡ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθζαθα πέντε στοᾶς ἔχουσα.

6:24-So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. Ὅτε οὖν εἶδεν ὁ ὄχλος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκεῖ οὐδὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, ἐνέβησαν αὐτοὶ εἰς τὰ πλοιάρια καὶ ἦλθον εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ ζητοῦντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

11:39-Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days." Λέγει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἄρατε τὸν λίθον. λέγει αὐτῇ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τοῦ τετελευτηκότος Μάρθα, κύριε, ἤδη ὄζει, τεταρταῖος γὰρ ἐστιν.

14:9-Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Τοσοῦτον χρόνον μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκας με, Φίλιππε; ὁ ἑώρακώς ἐμέ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα· πῶς σὺ λέγεις, Δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα;

19:40-So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ἔλαβον οὖν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις μετὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνταφιάζειν.

Notes

¹Internal evidence will be distinguished from external evidence on the following basis: any piece of evidence that relies significantly upon extratextual (outside the New Testament) data will be deemed external evidence. Admittedly, what this researcher finds more persuasive or less persuasive will have an element of subjection. These decisions will hopefully be substantiated in the research.

²Some supporting a pre-A.D. 70 date are: John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976); Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995); B. P. W. Stather Hunt, *Some Johannine Problems* (London: Skiffington, 1958); Robert M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 148-59; F. Lamar Cribbs, "Reassessment of the date

of origin and the destination of the Gospel of John," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (1970): 38-55; Charles C. Torrey, *Our Translated Gospels: Some of the Evidence* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), x-xi.

³See Hunt, *Problems*, 95-105.

⁴John H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols., ed. by Alan H. MacNeile. The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 1. xlii. Joseph N. Sanders, and B. A. Mastin, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, Black's New Testament Commentary (London: A. & C. Black, 1968), 37, who says this evidence is "dubious information" and Charles H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 12, who says this is "the flimsiest evidence."

⁵William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1953-1954), 6-7.

⁶See Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 7.

⁷Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 12-13, n. 2.

⁸See Bernard, *John*, 1. xlv.

⁹Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 7.

¹⁰Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 104.

¹¹Robinson, *Redating*, 258.

¹²Morris, *John*, 28.

¹³See Bernard, *John*, 1. lvi.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Morris, *John*, 28.

¹⁶Sanders, *John*, 50.

¹⁷Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, New American Commentary, vol. 25a (Nashville: Broadman, 1996), 92.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Morris, *John*, 28.

²⁰George A. Turner and Julius R. Mantey, *The Gospel According to John*, The Evangelical Commentary on the Bible, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 18. See also George A. Turner, "The Date and Purpose of the Gospel by John," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 6 (1963): 84.

²¹See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 82.

²²See Morris, *John*, 24. Turner, "Date and Purpose," 82.

²³See below for an analysis of this hypothesis.

²⁴George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2d ed., Word Biblical Commentary 36 (Waco: Word, 1999), lxxvii.

²⁵Morris, *John*, 28.

²⁶See also Rudolph Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3 vols., trans. by Kevin Smyth, Cecily Hastings, et al. (London: Burns & Oates, 1968, 1980, 1982), 1.351; Carson, *John*, 184; Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. by John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 117; Borchert, *John*, 166; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1966-1970), 1.116; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 560.

²⁷See Barrett, *John*, 200; Francis J. Moloney, *John*, Sacra Pagina 4 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 82.

²⁸Hunt, *Problems*, 105; Morris, *John*, 27; Reginald H. Fuller, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Duckworth, 1966), 177; Robert Kysar, *John*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 15-16; Stephen S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (Devon: Paternoster, 1978), 83; Cribbs, "Reassessment," 39-41.

²⁹See P. Gardner Smith, *Saint John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938); see also Dodd, *Historical Tradition*.

³⁰See James D. Dvorak, "The Relationship between John and the Synoptic Gospels," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41 (June 1998): 201-13; Barrett, *John*, 127.

³¹Robinson, *Redating*, 9, was unsettled by the "circular" and "relative" datings, and how if "one major piece" was disturbed, then "the pattern starts disconcertingly to dissolve."

³²See, for example, Hunt, *Problems*, 105, who argues for a post-A.D. 70 date for the Synoptics, while D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 77, 99, 117, argues for a pre-A.D. 70 date.

³³See Smalley, *John*, 83.

³⁴Richard Bauckham, "For Whom Were Gospels Written?" in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 9-48.

³⁵See Kysar, *John*, 15-16.

³⁶See Morris, *John*, 27. Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxvi, lists Jesus being called Rabbi and teacher, and the focus on his prophetic role akin to Moses. For a more detailed analysis with an addition of a discussion on the absence of terms considered late (for

example, "church"), see Cribbs, "Reassessment," 41-43, 48.

³⁷See Morris, *John*, 24.

³⁸Torrey, *Translated*, x (italics in original).

³⁹One could just as easily ask for a passage that demands a pre-A.D. 50 date. This would not be proof, however.

⁴⁰Passages such as Jn. 5:43; 6:1 (with 21:1); 9:22; and 20:28 are some that will be analyzed below.

⁴¹See Torrey, *Translated*, xi. See also C. F. Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1922).

⁴²See Carson, *John*, 75; Morris, *John*, 19, who remarks that "few have accepted this view." E. C. Colwell, *The Greek of the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Its Aramaisms in the Light of Hellenistic Greek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 130-31; Grant, *Introduction*, 150; F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 2.

⁴³See Bruce, *John*, 2.

⁴⁴See Cribbs, "Reassessment," 53, for a more concentrated discussion.

⁴⁵David Wenham, "The Enigma of the Fourth Gospel: Another Look," *Tyndale Bulletin* 48.1 (1997): 172. Grant, *Introduction*, 153, cites this evidence, the *Clementine Recognitions*, dates it in the fourth-century, and says it points to an early date.

⁴⁶Morris, *John*, 6, mentions this as a possibility, though he concedes it is not certain.

⁴⁷Robinson, *Redating*, 10.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 277.

⁴⁹E. Earle Ellis, "Dating the New Testament," *New Testament Studies* 26 (1980): 488.

⁵⁰His second piece of evidence, the present active indicative of εἰμί, in John 5:2, will be examined below.

⁵¹See Robinson, *Redating*, 277.

⁵²For examples of prophecy fulfilled in the Synoptics, see: Mt. 1:22-23; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54-56; 27:9, 35; Mk. 14:49; and in Lk., Jesus consistently brings up the theme of fulfillment: 4:21; 21:22, 24; 22:16, 37; 24:44.

⁵³Fulfillment is a considerable theme in the FG, see: 12:38; 15:25; 18:9, 32; 19:24, 28, 36. However, they seem to have a consistent apologetic reason for inclusion that would have been blurred had the temple destruction been included.

⁵⁴See Brooke F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St John* (London: John Murray, 1887), xxxviii, gives an alternate possibility, which is that the destruction of the temple is actually part of the occasion for writing the FG: "So far the fourth Gospel met difficulties which had not been and could not be realised till after the fall of Jerusalem."

⁵⁵See argument above.

⁵⁶Robinson, *Redating*, 278.

⁵⁷Similarly, Morris, *John*, 265, who is arguing the same point, says that "this cannot be pressed." However, he follows that statement by "pressing it."

⁵⁸See Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:460, n. 9; Carson, *John*, 241; Rudolph K. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, ed. by R. W. N. Hoare and J. K. Riches, trans. by George R. Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 240, n. 4; Westcott, *John*, 81; *contra* Daniel B. Wallace, "John 5, 2 and the Date of the Fourth Gospel," *Biblica* 71, no. 2 (1990): 177-205.

⁵⁹Bultmann, *John*, 240. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. by Francis Noel Davey (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 264. A grammatical response is given by Wallace, "John 5, 2," 199-200.

⁶⁰Westcott, *John*, 81.

⁶¹Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 264.

⁶²Wallace, "John 5, 2," 198-203. He does provide an argument: historical presents only occur with verbs of action, not copulas. However, he does not interact with many verses from the FG (he does interact with 1:19) that contain a present active indicative of εἰμί.

⁶³Borchert, *John*, 93.

⁶⁴J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979).

⁶⁵See Barrett, *John*, 127.

⁶⁶See Brown, *John*, 1:lxv. Also agreeing with this is Barrett, *John*, 127; Smalley, *John*, 83; Bruce, *John*, 13.

⁶⁷See Carson, *John*, 83. Other refutations include: Wenham, "Enigma," 149-78; Reuven Kimelman, "Birkat Ha-Minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vol. 2, *Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period*, eds. E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and Alan Mendelson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 226-44, 391-403; William Horbury, "The Benediction of the Minim and Early Jewish-Christian Controversy," *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (April 1982): 19-61; John A. T. Robinson, *The Priority of John*, ed. by J. E. Coakley (Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1985), 72-74; Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxvi-lxxviii; Morris, *John*, 27; Ben Witherington III, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1995), 29.

⁶⁸Wenham, "Enigma," 149.

⁶⁹See the following verses for examples of hostility between Jews and Christians: Acts 7:58; 9:29; 13:45-50; 14:2-6, 19; 17:5-9, 13; 18:6-7, 12-17; 1 Thes. 2:14-16, from Robinson, *Redating*, 273.

⁷⁰Carson, *John*, 83; Robinson, *Redating*, 257.

⁷¹See Smalley, *John*, 70.

⁷²For example, Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 30; Westcott, *John*, xl; R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 17-20; Turner and Mantey, *John*, 16-17. See also Robert W. Yarbrough, "The Date of Papias: A Reassessment," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 26, no. 2 (June 1983): 191, who concludes that by dating Papias earlier than previously thought, Robinson's argument is strengthened, and an earlier dating of New Testament books may result.

⁷³See Tasker, *John*, 24. The Rylands Papyrus will be discussed more below. It is also known as P⁵², Papyrus 457, the Roberts Fragment, and the Rylands Fragment.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 17, 20.

⁷⁵Westcott, *John*, xl.

⁷⁶Carson, *John*, 83, 85.

⁷⁷Carson, *John*, 268. William Sanday, *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel: eight lectures on the Morse foundation, delivered in the Union Seminary, New York, in October and November, 1904* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), 113-14, says the way it is used in Jn. 6:1 points to the transition period between the first and second centuries.

⁷⁸Sanday, *Criticism*, 114, points to Pausanias and dates him in the mid-second-century. The *Sibyllene Oracles* are very hard to date (so Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, rev. ed. vol. 2, trans. by R. McL. Wilson [Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1989], 654) and *Sib. Or.* 12. 104 appears to be toward the latter part of the span of 180 B.C. to A.D. 350 (so Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, trans. by R. McL. Wilson [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964], 707). Morris, *John*, 320, n. 10, points to Josephus 3.57, which is dated about A.D. 93 (so Carson, et al. *Introduction*, 117). Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 244, n. 1, says unequivocally that Strabo mentions it first.

⁷⁹See Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 244, n. 1. Westcott, *John*, 95, mentions that the Sea of Tiberias is the only name given in 21:1. This leads some to see a different author for all of chapter 21.

⁸⁰See comments below in section on the Beloved Disciple in chapter 21.

⁸¹See Moloney, *John*, 539; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999), 26.

⁸²Moloney, *John*, 540.

⁸³Turner and Mantey, *John*, 400; similar to Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 188, who calls it a "counter-cultural message."

⁸⁴See Sanders, *John*, 438, n. 1, from Suetonius, *Domitian* 13.

⁸⁵See Turner and Mantey, *John*, 400.

⁸⁶Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 548.

⁸⁷Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 30.

⁸⁸See Moloney, *John*, 2. See also Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 30.

⁸⁹See verses mentioned to dispute the Johannine community hypothesis in n. 69.

⁹⁰See Morris, *John*, 25. See also Grant, *Introduction*, 155.

⁹¹Ralph P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 276-82; Fuller, *Critical Introduction*, 175-76; Brown, *John*, lxxxvi.

⁹²See Morris, *John*, 27.

⁹³Adolf Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Janet Penrose Ward (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1904), 400-401.

⁹⁴See Brown, *John*, lxxxiv. He dates Mark and Luke earlier.

⁹⁵See *ibid.*, lxxx.

⁹⁶See Carson, *John*, 85.

⁹⁷The New Testament introduction that Carson co-wrote dates Romans around A.D. 57 and Philippians in the late 50s to early 60s. It is understood that he *co-wrote* this book, but he surely would not push the dates of either of these back far enough to affect the argument. See Carson, et al. *Introduction*, 242, 322.

⁹⁸To demonstrate the subjectivity, I will summarize: Brown says it does not push it back to post-100 but to post-85. While Carson says it does not push it back to post-85 but post-70. For an excellent history of this topic and a refutation see Ellis, "Dating," 492-96.

⁹⁹See Hunt, *Problems*, 105; Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 10 (he cites Col. 2:9; Phil. 2:6; Rom. 9:5; and Mt. 11:27-28). Morris, *John*, 26-27, finds this inconclusive.

¹⁰⁰Barrett, *John*, 127. Similar to the argument by F. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John with an Historical and Critical Introduction*, 3d ed., vol. 1, trans. Timothy Dwight (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890), 167.

¹⁰¹See Morris, *John*, 26.

¹⁰²See Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 30.

¹⁰³Dvorak, "Relationship," 212-13.

¹⁰⁴See Brown, *John*, lxxxv; so Smalley, *John*, 81.

¹⁰⁵See Moloney, *John*, 557; similar to the argument by Sanders, *John*, 457, and A. M. Hunter, *The Gospel According to John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 197; see also Beasley-Murray, *John*, 413, who says that the Beloved Disciple is now dead and that this resulted in "bitter disappointment and was a blow to faith." He adds that history shows that when a leader/prophet dies the faith of his followers is effected negatively.

¹⁰⁶See Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 559. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 12, argues that the antecedent of "these things" is the preceding periscope, thus only referring to chapter 21.

¹⁰⁷Carson, *John*, 682; similar to the argument by Westcott, *John*, 305; Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 492; and Bruce, *John*, 408; see also Morris, *John*, 775, who says this verse makes him think that John is "possibly quite old," even though he dates the FG pre-A.D. 70.

¹⁰⁸See Morris, *John*, 28. Nearly all commentaries agree.

¹⁰⁹See also Robinson, *Redating*, 280-82.

¹¹⁰See Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 30.

¹¹¹Carson, *John*, 85.

¹¹²See Morris, *John*, 26.

¹¹³See Westcott, *John*, xxxvi.

¹¹⁴See Carson, *John*, 84.

¹¹⁵Though it could be suggested that Sadducees are assumed in the phrase "the Jews."

¹¹⁶See Turner and Mantey, *John*, 412.

¹¹⁷See Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 30; Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 25.

¹¹⁸See Fuller, *Critical Introduction*, 177.

¹¹⁹See Tasker, *John*, 12-14.

¹²⁰See Westcott, *John*, 306.

¹²¹See Carson, *John*, 682-86.

¹²²See Brown, *John*, lxxxiii.

¹²³*Ibid.*

¹²⁴See Bernard, *John*, lxxvi.

¹²⁵See Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 27.

¹²⁶See Bernard, *John*, lxxi.

¹²⁷See Smalley, *John*, 83, n. 203; Joseph N. Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church: Its Origin and Influence on Christian Theology up to Irenaeus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 39, 86.

¹²⁸See C. H. Roberts, ed., *An Unpublished Fragment of the Fourth Gospel in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester: The Manchester University Press, 1935), 5. This fragment contains John 18:31-33, 37-38.

¹²⁹See Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxv.

¹³⁰See Brown, *John*, lxxxiii. Barrett, *John*, 128, says it cannot be dated any more exact than the middle of the second century. Sanders, *John*, 32, dates it at A.D. 125.

¹³¹See Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 27.

¹³²See *ibid.*, 27-28, and Hunter, *John*, 1-2. However, Bultmann, *John*, 270, n. 4, says that this fragment shows that the FG was *known* in Egypt around A.D. 100.

¹³³See Bauckham, "Gospels."

¹³⁴More will be said about this in the conclusion.

¹³⁵See Roberts, *Unpublished Fragment*, 11.

¹³⁶See Borchert, *John*, 92. Tasker, *John*, 23, says it alludes to 5:39, 45; 9:30; 10:39, and calls them obvious allusions, rather than quotes. Bultmann, *John*, 267-8, n. 4, mentions that a few scholars conjecture that P. Egerton 2 does not come from the FG but that both the FG and P. Egerton 2 come from the same source. Bultmann considers this disproven.

¹³⁷Borchert, *John*, 92.

¹³⁸Smalley, *John*, 83.

¹³⁹See Borchert, *John*, 92; Tasker, *John*, 23.

¹⁴⁰See Tasker, *John*, 23.

¹⁴¹See Carson, *John*, 85-86.

¹⁴²Beasley-Murray, *John*, xxviii.

¹⁴³Sanday, *Criticism*, 43.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁴⁵Theodor Keim, *The History of Jesus of Nazara, Freely Investigated in Its Connection with the National Life of Israel, and Related in Detail*, vol. 1, trans. Arthur Ransom (London: Williams and Norgate, 1876), 197-98.

¹⁴⁶See R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel: A Commentary*, ed. C. F. Evans (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), 1.

¹⁴⁷See Keim, *History of Jesus*, 210-11.

¹⁴⁸See Paul W. Schmiedel, *The Johannine Writings*, trans. Maurice A. Canney (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1908), 199.

¹⁴⁹See Carson, *John*, 265; Ridderbos, *John*, 206; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 79; Sanders, *John*, 173; Bruce, *John*, 138.

¹⁵⁰Kysar, *John*, 87.

¹⁵¹See Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 210.

¹⁵²See Jülicher, *Introduction*, 401.

¹⁵³See Barrett, *John*, 128.

¹⁵⁴See Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxv.

¹⁵⁵See Schmiedel, *Johannine Writings*, 199.

¹⁵⁶See Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 1.

¹⁵⁷Hendriksen, *Commentary*, 25.

¹⁵⁸Keim, *History of Jesus*, 205.

¹⁵⁹Smalley, *John*, 53.

¹⁶⁰See *ibid.*

¹⁶¹See Schmiedel, *Johannine Writings*, 192.

¹⁶²See Smalley, *John*, 51–55, for a detailed refutation of the FG's connection with Gnosticism.

¹⁶³See Jülicher, *Introduction*, 397.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 400.

¹⁶⁵See Morris, *John*, 59; Ernest F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), 46; James Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (New York: Scribners, 1911), 522.

¹⁶⁶Scott, *Fourth Gospel*, 46.

¹⁶⁷See Westcott, *John*, xxxix.

¹⁶⁸See Jülicher, *Introduction*, 396–97.

¹⁶⁹See *ibid.*, 396.

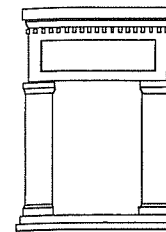
¹⁷⁰See *ibid.*, 397. However, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, "A Comparison of the Pericopae of Jesus' Anointing," in *Studies on John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 49–64.

¹⁹⁰Many lean toward the end of this period (for example, Tasker, Brown, and Westcott), though some lean toward the beginning (Witherington).

¹⁹¹Borchert says he holds to the "traditional dating."

¹⁹²This is not explicitly stated but is inferred from the text.

Who Wrote the Fourth Gospel? The Authorship and Occasion of the Fourth Gospel According to Patristic Evidence from the First Three Centuries



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Who wrote the Fourth Gospel? This question received little attention for nearly eighteen hundred years of church history. Christian scholars held to a nearly unanimous consensus that it was the work of the Apostle John. One, however, can no longer make this assumption. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, scholars began to question it, and today one can find several different theories concerning the authorship and origin of the Fourth Gospel among New Testament scholars.¹ It is not the purpose of this paper to identify and describe these "modern" positions. Rather the purpose of this paper is purely descriptive, as it seeks to provide the patristic evidence for the authorship and occasion of the Fourth Gospel. It will compile the relevant primary data and organize it in chronological order. This data will be limited to orthodox writings from the first three centuries of church history,² and will be divided into two sections. The first section presents implicit evidence for the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The second section introduces the explicit evidence of the same Gospel.

Implicit Evidence

First, one must define what constitutes implicit evidence. For the purpose of this paper, implicit evidence will refer to data that points to knowledge of the Fourth Gospel in the early church. Explicit evidence refers to passages that explicitly name the writer of the Fourth Gospel or state a theory of its origin. Implicit evidence is found in at least six writers of the second century.