

RAYAN J. LOBO SJ

A Johannine Reading of the Pericope Adulterae

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe
661*

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe

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A Johannine Reading of the Pericope Adulterae

A Narrative-Intertextual Reading
of John 7,53–8,11

Mohr Siebeck

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ISBN 978-3-16-200339-3 / eISBN 978-3-16-200340-9
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-200340-9

ISSN 0340-9570 / eISSN 2568-7484
(Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at <https://dnb.dnb.de>.

Published by Mohr Siebeck Tübingen 2026

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Printed on non-aging paper. Typesetting: SatzWeise in Bad Wünnenberg

Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. KG, Wilhelmstraße 18, 72074 Tübingen, Deutschland
www.mohrsiebeck.com, info@mohrsiebeck.com

For

The Society of Jesus

Jesuit Formation Centre for Theology, Anekal

Jnana Deepa, Pune

Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome

PTH Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt am Main

Acknowledgements

“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name” (Jn 20,31). At the end of my doctoral project, I thank God, first and foremost, for this opportunity to study his living and life-giving word.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Ansgar Wucherpfennig, my *Doctorvater*. His valuable insights and selfless dedication have helped me immensely in bringing this project to completion. My sincere appreciation goes to the Rector, Prof. Wolfgang Beck, and to all the teaching and non-teaching staff of PTH Sankt-Georgen, Frankfurt. I am grateful to Fr. Thomas Carroll, S.J., and Fr. Jerome D’Souza, S.J., for carefully reading this work and suggesting necessary corrections. This work was chosen and awarded as the outstanding doctoral work of the year 2025 by *Freundeskreis-Sankt Georgen*.

The Jesuit community at Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt, was my home during my doctoral studies. I also had the privilege of residing at the *Priesterseminar Sankt Georgen* and working with seminarians from various German dioceses. I place on record my gratitude to all my Jesuit brothers and my other friends from *PTH Sankt Georgen*. My studies were financially supported by the *Missionsprokur* and the *Jesuiten Weltweit*, Nürnberg. I am eternally grateful for this support.

A doctoral study in *Exegesis and Biblical Theology* is a result of long years of academic formation. I am grateful to the then *Regional Theology Centre in Anekal* and the *Jnana Deepa in Pune*, which laid the foundations for my theological studies. I recall with gratitude my time at the *Pontifical Biblical Institute* in Rome, where I studied biblical languages and completed the SSL. This book is a fruit of my doctoral studies at *PTH Sankt Georgen*, which further formed me as an exegete and as a theological thinker. I am grateful.

Publishing this work in both print and open access formats was made possible by the generous financial help provided by these contributors: a. *Pastoral und Bildung, Bischöfliches Ordinariat/Weltkirche-Bistum Limburg*; b. *Jesuiten Weltweit, Nürnberg*; c. *Freundeskreis-Sankt Georgen*; d. *Neutestamentlicher Lehrstuhl-PTH Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt*; e. *Jesuitenkommunität-Upsala, Stockholm*; f. *Jesuitenkommunität, Innsbruck*; g. *P. Michael Sievernich, S.J., und Freunde*; h. *Generalvikar-Bistum Limburg*. I place on record my sincere appreciation and deepest gratitude to each one of them.

Last but not least, I remember with gratefulness those in India on whose care I have always been able to rely: my parents, my siblings, and my nephew and niece, as well as my Jesuit brothers and my friends. They have supported and encouraged me at every stage during the past four years. Thank you.

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Abbreviations

ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
ANLEX	Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament
AYB	The Anchor Yale Bible
BETS	<i>Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
BHGNT	Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament
BTNT	Biblical Theology of the New Testament
BSR	Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CIM	Christianity in the Making
DLT	SHAW, H., <i>Dictionary of Literary Terms</i> (New York 1972).
EBS	Essentials of Biblical Studies
ECHC	Early Christianity in its Hellenistic Context
EEC	An Exegetical and Expository Commentary
EHJ	EVANS, C. A. (ed.), <i>Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus</i> (New York – London 2008).
Explor. Bib. Theol.	Explorations in Biblical Theology
FTS	Frankfurter Theologische Studien
FNT	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
FThSt.	Freiburger Theologische Studien
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
HfT	Help for Translators
Hist. Appr.	Historical Approaches
HTCNT	Herder's Theological Commentary of the New Testament
ITL	The International Theological Library
JMS	The Johannine Monograph Series
KNT	Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LeCL	Leopold Classic Library
LSJ	LIDDELL, H. G. – SCOTT, R. – JONES, H. S., <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (ed. H. S. JONES – R. MCKENZIE) (Revised and Augmented) (Oxford 1940, 1961).
LSV	Literal Standard Version
Lublin Theol. Stud.	Lublin Theological Studies
NBBC	New Beacon Bible Commentary
NCBC	The New Century Bible Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NTA NF	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen Neue Folge
OCPHS	Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies
ODLT	BALDICK, C., <i>Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms</i> (Oxford 2015).

Orb. Acad.	Orbis Academicus
OTT	Old Testament Theology
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
RNTS	Reading the New Testament Series
SB	Subsidia Biblica
SBA NT	Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände – Neues Testament
SCJ	<i>Stone-Campbell Journal</i>
SDSSRL	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
SLGNT ²	GINGRICH, F. W. – DANKER, F. W. (ed.), <i>Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament</i> (London – Chicago ² 1983).
TBS	Themes in the Biblical Sciences
TCGG	A Textual Commentary on the Greek Gospels
TCNT	Text and Canon of the New Testament
THNTC	Two Horizons New Testament Commentary
ThKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
VC Supp.	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
VE	<i>Verbum et Ecclesia</i>
WC	Wisdom Commentary
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

General Introduction

John 7,53–8,11, known as the *Pericope Adulterae* (PA), is famous for its problematic textual history, which includes questions about its authenticity and its place within the Gospel of John. The ongoing discussions raise questions about whether PA should be treated as any other Johannine pericope or should be ignored. The textual apparatus of Nestle Aland (NA²⁸) presents PA within double brackets, suggesting that this text is not original to the Gospel of John. The words of R. Gregory summarize the status of PA well: “It is a section that, in reference to its textual history and textual character, stands totally alone.”¹

There are a few stories in the Gospels that capture the attention of the readers instantly, generation after generation. When one looks at PA, keeping aside its textual history, it is one of the stories that connects easily to the reader and believers’ lives. It is truly “a lost pearl of ancient tradition,”² struggling to find its place within the scholarly world, which treats it like a stranger.

1. *Status Quaestionis*

Given its problematic textual history and the questions related to its place in the Gospel of John, PA should interest scholars and exegetes for extensive study. Surprisingly, though, as Chris Keith puts it, “The academic discussion of this pericope primarily dwells in articles and appendices rather than textbooks and monographs.”³ There are only four doctoral dissertations on PA, those by U. Becker, A. Johnson, H. J. Toensing, and more recently by C. Keith. The studies by A. Johnson⁴ and H. J. Toensing⁵ are unpublished.⁶ The study by Becker⁷

¹ C. R. GREGORY, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (ITL; Edinburgh 1907) 514.

² R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel according to St. John II. Commentary on Chapters 5–12* (HTCNT; Freiburg 1971; Tunbridge Wells 1993) 162.

³ C. KEITH, “Recent and Previous Research on the Pericope Adulterae (John 7,53–8,11)”, *CBR* 6/3 (2008) 377.

⁴ A. F. JOHNSON, *A Re-examination of the Pericope Adulterae, John 7,53–8,11* (Diss.; Dallas Theological Seminary 1964).

⁵ H. J. TOENSING, *The Politics of Insertion. The Pericope of the Adulterous Woman and Its Textual History* (Diss.; University of Vanderbilt 1998).

⁶ KEITH, “Recent and Previous Research on the Pericope Adulterae”, 377.

⁷ U. BECKER, *Jesus und Ehebrecherin. Untersuchungen zur Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte von John 7,53–8,11* (BNZW 28; Berlin 1963).

focuses on the linguistic nuances and textual problems related to PA and is an excellent foundation for further studies on PA. The more recent study by Chris Keith⁸ focuses mainly on two verses from PA (Jn 8,6.8) as he argues that the purpose of PA's presence in Jn 7–8 is to highlight the literacy of Jesus (as a response to the pagan criticism of early Christians as not being literate). The recent work, "To Cast the First Stone,"⁹ focuses more on the transmission history of PA; the collection of articles in "The Pericope of the Adulteress in Contemporary Research" and "Ciphers in the Sand" are valuable resources for the study of PA. As in the work of Becker and Keith, the scholarly treatment of PA is often restricted to particular aspects of PA, rather than offering a holistic approach to understanding it in its present location in the Gospel of John. I therefore agree with J. D. Crossan's statement that PA "still awaits the treatment it deserves."¹⁰

2. The Objective and Scope

Until now the research on PA has been one-sidedly focused on the questions about the textual status of PA, its authenticity, and its place within the Gospel of John. An examination of PA in its present textual position within the Gospel of John and a closer analysis of its nuances is therefore an important step to overcoming the one-sidedness of the research on *Pericope Adulterae*. Chris Keith's study is a brave attempt to understand PA within the broader framework of the Gospel, but his focus (merely on two verses of PA) is still too limited. A thorough interpretation of PA has to take PA's context, major themes, and intertextual dynamics at play into account and must reflect on PA's role within the entirety of the Gospel.

The task of this study is to build on the work of prior scholars and to take a step forward to understand PA in its present location, in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles, within John 7–8. The following questions provide a framework for the research of PA in John:

1. If PA was not present in early manuscripts of the Gospel of John, where did PA come from? Are there features in the text and in its transmission history that can guide the research in unearthing the mystery behind its origins?

⁸ C. KEITH, *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus* (NTTSD 38; Leiden – Boston 2014).

⁹ J. KNUST – T. WASSERMAN, *To Cast the First Stone. The Transmission of a Gospel Story* (Princeton – Oxford 2019).

¹⁰ J. D. CROSSAN, *Finding is the First Act. Trove Folktales and Jesus' Treasure* (Eugene, OR 1979) 100; Wengst stresses the point of better treatment of PA, as it has been in ecclesiastical use as a biblical text for many centuries (K. WENGST, *Das Johannesevangelium. Neuausgabe* [ed. E. W. STEGEMANN – A. STROTMANN – K. WENGST] [ThKNT 4; Stuttgart 2019] 253).

2. Are there any indications in terms of language and plot in Jn 7–8, that can guide the research on how PA is to be interpreted?
3. Does PA show characteristics of any particular *Gattung*? And if so, what conclusions can be drawn from it for the interpretation of the pericope?
4. What is a *Johannine reading of PA*, and how do the insights emerging from this reading enhance the understanding of Jn 7–8?
5. What is the role of PA in Jn 7–8?
6. Is PA a well-thought-of interpolation in its present location or just an awkward insertion that breaks the narrative flow in Jn 7–8?

3. Methodological Considerations

Since this study deals with a problematic pericope and since it attempts to understand it in the Johannine context, it employs both diachronic and synchronic readings of PA.

- a. The diachronic¹¹ reading of PA focuses mainly on the history of its transmission, its presence in or absence from early Gospel manuscripts and the fact that from the second to the fourth centuries the pericope was known in various versions within the early church. Apart from the Johannine features found in PA, this study analyses non-Johannine and Lukan characteristics of the pericope. Through careful attention to the features the text exhibits reflecting its different stages of transmission, a diachronic reading of PA provides valuable guidelines for understanding its origins.
- b. The synchronic¹² reading of PA in its context (Jn 7–8) is done by employing narrative analysis coupled with intertextual reading. To understand PA in its present location, it is necessary to read it as part of the Gospel of John and as a link in the narrative chain of Jn 7–8. This study employs narrative analysis to unearth the hidden dynamics of Jn 7–8, the plot, the characters, important themes, literary techniques used, and internal structures. A Johannine reading of PA cannot be done without paying attention to the echoes and allusions found in the text. The intertextual reading employed in this study, alongside a narrative analysis, helps to uncover the hidden, deeper meaning of PA and its relevance to Johannine theology.

¹¹ Cf. ODLT, 92.

¹² Cf. ODLT, 353.

4. General Outline of the Study

This study is divided into six chapters. Whereas the first two chapters prepare the ground to understand PA in John, along with the attempts to answer the questions of its origins, the third and the fourth chapters are the central chapters of this study. They deal with the *Gattung* of PA and its Johannine reading. Chapters five and six deal with the theological nuances associated with and emerging out of PA in its context.

Chapter One

The first chapter of this study begins by examining the external evidence and transmission history of PA, which includes PA's various locations within the canonical Gospels and its existence in various versions. The study of internal evidence focuses on Lukanisms, non-Johannine language, Johannine style, and patterns found in PA. Examining the internal and external evidence also involves a glance at the theories of "suppression" and "attentive insertion" of PA. While this study accepts the popular view that PA was a later addition¹³ to the Gospel of John, it looks beyond the documentary evidence towards the oral traditions and the features visible within PA and its transmission history. This chapter presents evidence that PA was transmitted orally for a long time and thereby avoids falling into the trap of looking at it only with concern for its historical exactness. It should be approached from the theological point of view of the Gospel of John.

Chapter Two

The present study is preparation for a Johannine reading of PA. The narrative analysis of the context in which PA is placed (Jn 7–8) is essential in order to understand PA's connectedness or lack of it in its present location. Chapter 2 of this study begins with the delimitation and the examination of the kind of plot presented in Jn 7–8, followed by a detailed plot analysis. The character studies, an integral part of narrative analysis, help to understand the dynamics and nuances attached to key characters present in and around PA. This chapter also highlights other narrative elements (movement, temporal changes, inclusion, sandwich technique, and legal language) found in Jn 7–8. Recognizing dominant themes present in PA (identity and recognition) and understanding the plot behind the plot is essential in order to interpret PA in its present location.

¹³ R. B. HAYS, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX 2016) 434.

Chapter Three

Being one of the two central chapters of this study, chapter three shifts its focus to the wisdom features present in Jn 7–8. The identity of Jesus is one of the primary concerns in Jn 7–8; chapter three of this study explores the portrayal of Jesus by the evangelist using wisdom categories. It also analyzes the imageries between which PA is placed as though in a sandwich, the imageries of “the living water” and “the light of the world.”

One of the main focuses of this chapter is the literary form of PA. The studies of Nickelsburg and Cory on “wisdom tales” open the path to understanding the *Gattung* behind PA. This study recognizes PA as a wisdom tale and highlights its wisdom tale characteristics. Recognition of the literary form¹⁴ paves the way to a Johannine reading of PA; reading PA as a scene of trial is important as a trial is a key feature of wisdom tales.

Chapter Four

This chapter, the central chapter of this study, deals with a Johannine reading of PA. The first part of this chapter examines the possibility of reading the Gospel of John as a lawsuit, followed by the possibility of reading Jn 7–8, in particular, as a lawsuit. It also discusses the Jewish judicial process and the Old Testament lawsuit patterns in John. The language used in Jn 7–8, the setting, the accusations against Jesus, and the style of narrative presentation in Jn 7–8 permit reading it (chapters 7–8) as a lawsuit. The crucial intervention of Nicodemus in Jn 7,51 demands for Jesus the possibility of a fair hearing. When this request is taken together with the other dynamics within Jn 7–8, it requires reading the section following Nicodemus’s request, that is, PA, as a trial, as a legal hearing process. At a point when the reader expects a trial of Jesus, PA appears to present the trial of the woman caught in adultery, which many scholars consider breaking the narrative. Given the expectation of the trial of Jesus, the presence of the trial of a woman raises the question, who really is on trial?

In the carefully crafted wisdom tale, that is PA, the answer to the central question of Jn 7–8, the identity of Jesus, is revealed, and this has a bearing on the ongoing trial in PA.

¹⁴ For the study on literary forms, look at: E. V. MCKNIGHT, *What is Form Criticism?* (Philadelphia, PA 1969); G. M. TUCKER, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, PA 1971); M. REISER, *Sprache und Literarische Formen des Neuen Testaments* (Paderborn – Munich – Vienna – Zurich 2001).

Chapter Five

The fifth chapter of this study continues to focus on the identity of Jesus. As said above, the trial process in PA reveals the identity of Jesus but in Old Testament categories. This chapter discusses the Christological presentation of the identity of Jesus revealed in PA, not only in its immediate context (Jn 7–8) but in the entire Gospel of John.

Chapter Six

As its title suggests, the final chapter of this study focuses on the role and placement of PA in Jn 7–8 and continues the discussion on the identity of Jesus. Being the concluding chapter, it raises some essential questions. Does PA have any role to play at all in Jn 7–8? Does PA fit into its new home (Jn 7,53–8,11) in terms of its literary style and theological emphasis, or does it interrupt the narrative flow in Jn 7–8? How are the imageries of “the living water” and “the light of the world” linked to PA? Furthermore, what is the relationship between the identity of Jesus as found in Jn 7–8 with the λόγος of the Prologue?

Chapter I

The Textual Status and the Origins of PA

1.1 Introduction

The first chapter of the present study focuses primarily on the textual status, and the transmission history of PA. Scholarly investigations on PA frequently confine themselves to issues regarding its authenticity and its textual status; however, such concerns constitute only a subsidiary consideration rather than the primary focus of the present study. This chapter offers a critical examination of both the internal and the external evidence pertaining to the passage, considers possible explanations for its omission from the canonical Gospels, and advances a hypothesis regarding its origins.

The external evidence focuses on the absence of PA in the early manuscripts and thus makes a strong case for non-Johannine origins of PA. A look at the different locations of PA in canonical Gospels and the study of its historical emergence prepares the ground for a more critical and informed understanding of PA. Examining the internal evidence on PA deals with five aspects: 1. The question of PA being a Lukan story; 2. Lukanisms found in PA; 3. Non-Johannine vocabulary in PA; 4. Johannine style in PA; and 5. The question of the narrative suitability of PA in Jn 7,53–8,11.

A critical examination of two prominent theories, “the suppression theory” and “the theory of attentive insertion,” offers insight into the factors that may account for the absence or presence of PA in the canonical Gospels.

The final section of this chapter attempts to understand the possible origins of PA based on the gradual emergence of one story (i.e., PA as we read today) from diverse stories. To answer the question, how a story that possibly developed in the oral tradition finally entered the Gospel of John, it is necessary to reexamine the criteria employed in the formation of the canon, the underlying purpose in writing the Gospel of John, and the appropriate hermeneutical approach to its interpretation.

A lost pearl of ancient tradition, the story of the woman caught in adultery, though late, found a safe home in the Gospel of John. Does it enhance this home, contributing to the achievement of the purpose of the Gospel of John?

1.2 External Evidence

As Bruce M. Metzger states, there is overwhelming evidence for the non-Johannine origin of PA.¹ As the critical apparatus in the Greek text of Nestle-Aland (NA²⁸) highlights, PA is absent from several early and important manuscripts, such as $\mathfrak{P}^{66,75}$ $\aleph$ A^{vid} B C^{vid} L^c N T W Δ^c Θ Ψ 0141. 0211. 33. 131. 565. 1241. 1333. 1424^{txt}. 2768 a f l q sy sa ly pbo bo^{pt}; Or Hier^{mss}.

A near complete codex of the Gospel of John, $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$ and $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$, which contains major part of John, the two most significant papyri from the II and III centuries respectively omit PA. Codex Sinaiticus ($\aleph$) and Vaticanus (B)², from the IV century, and the virtual readings of Alexandrinus (A^{vid}) and Ephraemi Rescriptus (C^{vid}), from the V century, also omit PA. According to Bruce Metzger, “codices A and C are defective in this part of John, but it is highly probable that neither contained the pericope, for careful measurement discloses that there would not have been space enough on the missing leaves to include the section (PA) along with the rest of the text.”³

PA is absent even from T₀₂₉ and from codex Washingtonianus (W), both from the V century and contain the Gospels, from N₀₂₂ of the VI century, from the corrected L₀₁₉ of the VIII century, from the corrected codex Sangallensis (Δ^c) and codex Coridethianus (Θ), both of the IX century and both containing the Gospels. PA also fails to find a place in Athous Lavrensis (Ψ) of the IX/X century and is absent from miniscules and lectionaries 0141(X), 0211(IX), 33 (IX), 131. 565 (IX), 1241(XII), 1333 (XIII), 1424^{txt} (IX/X), 2768 (978).

PA is omitted from the oldest form of the Syriac version (syr^{cs} and the best manuscripts of syr^p). It is absent from the Sahidic and the sub-Achmimic versions and the older Bohairic manuscripts. Some of the Armenian manuscripts⁴ and old Georgian versions also omit it.

¹ Cf. B. M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament* (London – New York 1971) 219.

² In Vaticanus PA does not appear, but the presence of a marginal umlaut at 7,52 seem to suggest that original scribe of that MS had some knowledge of the pericope variant (M. A. ROBINSON, “Preliminary Observations Regarding the Pericope Adulterae Based upon Fresh Collations of Nearly All Continuous-Text Manuscripts and All Lectionary Manuscripts Containing the Passage”, *FNT* 13 [2000] 40). Chris Keith suggests that Robinson (M. A. ROBINSON, “The Byzantine Portions of Codex Washingtonianus: A Centenary Retrospective” [A Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Society; Washington, DC 2006]) later changed his point of view in this regard and believed that the umlaut more likely attests to a textual variant at 7,52. He believes that the blank leaf between the end of the Gospel of John and the beginning of the Gospel of Luke in W may attest to the knowledge of PA following Jn 21,25, as it does in some f^l manuscripts (KEITH, “Recent and Previous Research on the Pericope Adulterae”, 378).

³ METZGER, *A Textual Commentary*, 187.

⁴ Metzger refers to the note in Zohrab’s edition of the Armenian version that says, “only five of the thirty manuscripts we used preserve here the addition (PA) found in Latin Manuscripts (METZGER, *A Textual Commentary*, 188).

There is also no comment on the text by the Greek Fathers until the twelfth century.⁵ The first one to comment on PA among the Greek Church Fathers is Euthymius Zigabenus from the twelfth century, and he declares that the accurate copies of the Gospel do not contain PA.⁶ It fails to find place in the manuscripts from Origenes (254) and in the individual manuscripts from Jerome (420).

In short of the 10 earliest Manuscripts (℘⁶⁶, ℘⁷⁵, Sinaiticus (Ⲱ), Vaticanus (B), Alexandrinus (A), Ephraemi (C), Bezae (D), Borgianus (T), Washingtonianus (W) and Purpureus Petropolitanus (N) only one includes PA. The majuscules that include the pericope can be dated from the seventh century to the fifteenth century, with the vast majority of these dating closer to twelfth century.⁷ In the face of overwhelming evidence, it seems obvious that PA is not original to John.⁸ Chris Keith suggests that one should resist describing this as “consensus,” “unanimous,” or “universal agreement,” due to frequent attempts to prove or support the Johannine authenticity of the material.⁹

1.3 Different Locations of PA

The critical apparatus in NA²⁸ cites five different locations of PA, whereas Chris Keith, the recent scholar to study PA says, that “there are at least twelve different manuscript locations of PA within the canonical Gospels.”¹⁰

1.3.1 PA after Jn 7,52

PA is added (NA²⁸) in Jn 7,53–8,11 in D K L^{*vid} Γ Δ^{*vid} 118.174.209. 579. 700. 892. m lat bo^{pt}; Hier^{mss} (c. obel. 230. 1424^{mg}). Standing out from the host of other manuscripts that omit PA,¹¹ the diglot Bezae (D), dated to ca. 400 CE,¹²

⁵ Cf. D. B. UTLEY, *The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters. The Gospel of John, 1, 2 and 3* (Marshall, TX 1999) 122.

⁶ Cf. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary*, 188.

⁷ Cf. KEITH, “Recent and Previous Research”, 379.

⁸ D. B. WALLACE (ed.), *Revisiting the Corruption of the New Testament. Manuscript, Patristic, and Apocryphal Evidence* (TCNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2011) 21.

⁹ Cf. KEITH, “Recent and Previous Research”, 379; for more on this topic, look at: A. F. JOHNSON, “A Stylistic Trait of the Fourth Gospel in the Pericope Adulterae”, *BETS* 9 (1966) 91–96; A. A. TRITES, “The Woman Taken in Adultery”, *BSac* 136 (1974) 137–146; Z. C. HODGES, “The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7,53–8,11): Text”, *BSac* 136 (1979) 318–332; Z. C. HODGES, “The Woman Taken in Adultery (Jn 7,53–8,11): Exposition”, *BSac* 137 (1980) 41–53; C. P. BAYLIS, “The Woman Caught in Adultery: A Test of Jesus as the Greater Prophet”, *BSac* 146 (1989) 171–84; J. P. HEIL, “The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress (Jn 7,53–8,11) Reconsidered”, *Bib* 72/2 (1991) 182–191.

¹⁰ KEITH, *The Literacy of Jesus*, 119.

¹¹ Cf. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary*, 187–188.

¹² Cf. D. C. PARKER, *Codex Bezae. An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text* (Cambridge 1992) 281.

is the earliest Greek Gospel text to include PA. Augustine, a contemporary to Bezae, is one of the earliest extra-biblical commentators to know PA in the Gospel of John. He twice discusses the story in his Gospel commentary, clearly demonstrating that his manuscript contained PA at Jn 7,53–8,11 (Cons. 4.10.17; Tract. Ev. Jo. 33.5).¹³ Hence, by the late fourth century, Christians were reading the story of the Adulteress in John's Gospel at Jn 7,53–8,11.

Between the sixth and the ninth centuries, PA was included in more manuscripts. According to Chris Keith, manuscripts that included PA in one form or another number a total of 1427 manuscripts, of which 58 manuscripts contain PA at other locations than Jn 7,53–8,11. This means that 95.9% of the Greek manuscripts placed PA at Jn 7,53–8,11.¹⁴

The comments by Ambrose¹⁵ and Jerome suggest that they read PA in the Gospel of John. Ambrose's mention of PA points to the fact that the story was quite popular among the people by then. The widespread acceptance is that Jerome, in his Vulgate, which he presented to Pope Damasus in 384 CE, placed PA at Jn 7,53–8,11, though the source manuscripts are no longer accessible. Jerome's note saying that PA is found in "many" of the Greek and Latin manuscripts implies also that it was not present in some of the manuscripts that he had come across.¹⁶ In Tractate¹⁷ 33.2 Augustine discusses Jn 7,50–52, involving Nicodemus and the Pharisees, and in 33.3 he cites Jn 7,53–8,2, highlighting Jesus going to the Mount of Olives and the aspect of anointing, and in 33.4 he speaks about the woman who, having been caught in adultery, was brought to Jesus. Tractate 34 speaks about Jesus, the light of the world, as found in Jn 8,12. There is also a Pseudo-Athanasius text (attributed dubiously to the fourth century Athanasius) that stands as a witness to PA at Jn 7,53–8,11.¹⁸

Apart from the Church Fathers, as mentioned above, as mentioned already, the earliest available certain manuscript is Codex Bezae (D), which places PA in Jn 7,53–8,11. The Philoxenian manuscript tradition, which also confirms the presence of PA in Greek manuscripts from which Syriac translations were derived, had PA at 7,53–8,11, but manuscripts of omission were also known.¹⁹ Hence, one can boldly say that from late fourth century the Latin speaking world read PA at Jn 7,53–8,11.

In other words, from the fourth to the ninth century CE, Jn 7,53–8,11 is the only attested manuscript location for PA in the canonical tradition. Chris Keith

¹³ Cf. KEITH, "Recent and Previous Research", 383.

¹⁴ KEITH, *The Literacy of Jesus*, 121.

¹⁵ In Epistle XXVI, written around 385–387 CE, Ambrose speaks of "the acquittal of the woman who in the Gospel according to John was brought to Christ accused of adultery" (AMBROSE, *Epistle*. 26.2); cf. KEITH, *The Literacy of Jesus*, 120.

¹⁶ Cf. KEITH, *The Literacy of Jesus*, 131.

¹⁷ Cf. AUGUSTINE, *Tract. Ev. Joh.* 33.2–4.

¹⁸ Cf. KEITH, *The Literacy of Jesus*, 129.

¹⁹ Cf. KEITH, *The Literacy of Jesus*, 131.

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