

THE IDENTITY AND COMPOSITION OF *ΟΙ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ* IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Cornelis Bennema

Summary

This article examines the referent of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John. The debate is whether the term refers exclusively to the religious authorities, to a religious party, to the religious authorities and common people, or simply to the Jews in general. This article makes three contributions to the debate. First, Second Temple Judaism already knew of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as a broad reference to the adherents of the Judaeian religion transcending the earlier ethnic-geographic sense, and John had this particular religious group in mind. Second, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is a composite group with the chief priests rather than the Pharisees as its leaders. Third, within οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, John portrays a shift in hostility from a religious-theological conflict with the Pharisees in the middle of Jesus' ministry, towards a religious-political conflict with the chief priests later in Jesus' ministry.

1. Introduction

Any study on οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John today needs to be justified as there exists a plethora of material on this subject.¹

¹ Urban C. von Wahlde provides an extensive survey of the period 1948–1998 in two articles: ‘The Johannine “Jews”: A Critical Survey’, *NTS* 28 (1982): 33-60; ‘“The Jews” in the Gospel of John: Fifteen Years of Research (1983–1998)’, *ETL* 76 (2000): 30-55. Other studies since 1998 are David Rensberger, ‘Anti-Judaism and the Gospel of John’ in *Anti-Judaism and the Gospels*, ed. William R. Farmer (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999): 120-57; the collection of essays in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer et al. (Louisville: WJKP, 2001) (hereafter we will use the shortened form *Anti-Judaism*); Francis J. Moloney, ‘“The Jews” in the Fourth Gospel: Another Perspective’, *Pacifica* 15 (2002): 16-36; Daniel Boyarin, ‘The Ioudaioi in John and the Prehistory of “Judaism”’ in *Pauline Conversations in Context: Essays in Honor of Calvin J. Roetzel*, ed. J. C. Anderson et al. (JSNTSup 221; Sheffield: SAP,

Undoubtedly Rudolf Bultmann's commentary *The Gospel of John*² and James Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*³ have had most influence on Johannine studies (including our subject) in the Twentieth Century. Bultmann saw οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as theological symbols, representing the unbelieving world in general in its hostility towards Jesus.⁴ Martyn's contribution was to give οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι flesh, i.e. a historical context, by identifying them as the Pharisaic rabbis of Yavneh.⁵ As D. Moody Smith puts it, 'Whereas Bultmann's John hung in the air and its Jews were ciphers for unbelief, Martyn gave the Gospel a home and identified its Jews as real people.'⁶ Therefore, while Bultmann defined the 'sense' of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, Martyn focused on its 'referent'.

As John Ashton has stressed, the distinction between 'reference' and 'sense' is important. The 'referent' of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι relates to the identity of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, to real people in Jesus' or John's time; the 'sense' of the term relates to the function of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι within the Johannine narrative.⁷ Recently, Urban von Wahlde concluded that Johannine scholarship has reached a consensus regarding the 'sense' of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι—it represents the Jewish authorities' attitude of hostility and rejection towards Jesus—but that the question of 'reference' remains the most important element of the issue.⁸ Since there seems to be a consensus on Bultmann's description of the 'sense' of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, the focus of this study shall be on the referent of the term.⁹

2002): 216-39; Raimo Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews and Jewishness* (NovTSup 118; Leiden: Brill, 2005).

² Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971).

³ James Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (3rd edn; Louisville: WJKP, 2003 [1968¹, 1979²]).

⁴ Bultmann, *John*, 86-87.

⁵ Martyn arrived at this conclusion viewing the gospel as a 'two-level' drama, in which the story of Jesus is really the story of the Johannine community. Cf. a similar scenario in Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979): 40-43.

⁶ D. Moody Smith, postscript for the third edition of Martyn, *History*, 19-20.

⁷ John Ashton, 'The Identity and Function of the Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel', *NovT* 27 (1985): 40-75, esp. 57-59.

⁸ Von Wahlde, "'The Jews'", 53. Cf. Ashton, 'Identity', 75; idem, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991): 134-35.

⁹ Yet, *contra* Bultmann, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are not homogeneous in their response to Jesus (see section 5).

Regarding the referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, the debate centres on whether the term refers exclusively to the religious authorities (whether Judaeans or Jewish in general),¹⁰ to a religious group within Judaism,¹¹ to the religious authorities and common people,¹² or simply to the Jews in general.¹³ While the majority of scholars agree that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι at least includes the religious authorities, hardly anyone specifies *which* authorities are in view.¹⁴ Others, influenced by Martyn's hypothesis, argue (but sometimes simply assume) that the authorities are primarily the Pharisees—whether the Pharisees in Jesus' time or the Pharisaic

¹⁰ Martyn, *History*, 41, 65-66, 84-89; von Wahlde, 'The Johannine "Jews"', 33-60; idem, "'The Jews'", 52-54 (he calls this the hostile 'Johannine use' of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι); D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995): 34, 48-50, 171; Rensberger, 'Anti-Judaism', 122-25; Martinus C. de Boer, 'The Depiction of "the Jews" in John's Gospel: Matters of Behavior and Identity' in *Anti-Judaism*, 141-57, esp. 149-57; Peter J. Tomson, "'Jews" in the Gospel of John as Compared with the Palestinian Talmud, the Synoptics, and Some New Testament Apocrypha' in *Anti-Judaism*, 176-212, esp. 195-98. Cf. Ashton, *Understanding*, 152-58.

¹¹ Stephen Motyer, *Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and 'the Jews'* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997): 54-56, 213; Boyarin, 'Ioudaioi', *passim*. Although Motyer sees οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as a party within Judaism—the adherents of the particularly strict Torah- and temple-centred religion found especially, but not exclusively, in Judaea and Jerusalem—he contends that this party essentially consists of the Pharisees and their heirs, the sages of Yavneh, and thus virtually views οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the religious authorities.

¹² Malcolm Lowe, 'Who Were the Ἰουδαῖοι?', *NovT* 18 (1976): 101-130 (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι refers to Judaeans people); Reginald Fuller, 'The "Jews" in the Fourth Gospel', *Dialog* 16 (1977): 31-37; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983): 129-30; James D. G. Dunn, 'The Question of Anti-Semitism in the New Testament' in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (WUNT 66; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992): 177-211, esp. 195-203; idem, 'The Embarrassment of History: Reflections on the Problem of "Anti-Judaism" in the Fourth Gospel' in *Anti-Judaism*, 41-60, esp. 49-50.

¹³ Janis E. Leibig, 'John and "the Jews": Theological Antisemitism in the Fourth Gospel', *JES* 20 (1983): 209-234, esp. 214-16; Adele Reinhartz, "'Jews" and Jews in the Fourth Gospel' in *Anti-Judaism*, 213-27, esp. 217-21; Hakola, *Identity*, 225-31. Cf. Moloney, "'The Jews'", 29-35. Henk Jan de Jonge presents the extreme view that the Johannine Ἰουδαῖοι are actually not Jews (in a religious sense) but non-Johannine Christians with an inadequate Christology ("The Jews" in the Gospel of John' in *Anti-Judaism*: 121-40).

¹⁴ E.g. von Wahlde, 'The Johannine "Jews"', *passim*; "'The Jews'", 54. This is perhaps because he had argued earlier that the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι comes from a later literary stratum, which *parallels* the terms 'Pharisee', 'chief priest', and 'ruler' from an earlier stratum ('The Terms for Religious Authorities in the Fourth Gospel: A Key to Literary-Strata?', *JBL* 98 [1979]: 231-53). In his 1985 article, Ashton remains equivocal, torn between the positions of Lowe (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as Judaeans) and von Wahlde (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the religious authorities) ('Identity', 56-57, 68-69), a position he retains in his 1991 book, but eventually choosing a referent to the chief priests and Pharisees (albeit post-AD 70) (*Understanding*, 132-34, 152, 158).

rabbis who were (presumably) the synagogue officials in John's time.¹⁵ This calls for further examination of the true identity and composition of the Johannine Ἰουδαῖοι.

Our study will be dominated by two questions: Who are οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John? Who are the constituents of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and how do they relate to one another? We will demonstrate that during the Second Temple period the referent of Ἰουδαῖος was extended from an ethno-geographic term for Judaeans to a geo-religious term for those who adhered to the Judaeans religion (whether or not residing in Judaea). We will then argue that John had this extended referent in mind with the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι referring to a particular religious group of Torah- and temple-loyalists found especially, but not exclusively, in Judaea. At the core of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are the chief priests, with the Pharisees having an influential role. Regarding the hostility of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, John depicts a shift from a religious-theological conflict with the Pharisees in the middle of Jesus' ministry, towards a religious-political conflict with the chief priests later in Jesus' ministry. Although the Gospel of John records Jesus' clashes with the Pharisees, John primarily holds the chief priests and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι responsible for Jesus' death.

Regarding definitions, since both 'the power to control' and 'the power to influence' are part of the semantic domain of the English word 'authority', I will use the terms 'authorities' and 'leaders' to refer to the people with control and influence. This study has two limitations. First, it occupies itself primarily with the referent of οἱ

¹⁵ E.g. Smith, *Theology*, 48-50, 171; de Boer, 'Depiction', 152, 156; Tomson, "'Jews'", 195-98. Even those who are critical of Martyn, identify the Pharisees as the leaders or core of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (e.g. Motyer, *Father*, 56; Boyarin, 'Ioudaioi', 233-36; cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 130-31; Rensberger, 'Anti-Judaism', 125-30). Motyer fails to mention the chief priests and virtually treats οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as a homogeneous group. Besides, for any interpretation that equates οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι with the Pharisees, or sees them as being spearheaded by the Pharisees, the phrase οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων in 19:21 is problematic. In fact, recent studies have shown that views which equate the synagogue officials with the Pharisees and consider the rabbis as the descendants of the Pharisees can no longer be sustained: Shaye J. D. Cohen, 'The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism', *HUCA* 55 (1984): 27-53; Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997): 161-62; Catherine Hezser, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997): 480; Hakola, *Identity*, 61-65.

Ἰουδαῖοι rather than its sense.¹⁶ The second limitation is that it will not investigate whether John is anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic.¹⁷

2. The Referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in Second Temple Judaism

From our brief outline of the main positions on the referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John, it appears that the debate has reached an impasse. Scholars seem to arrive at their views either exclusively on the basis of the Johannine narrative or in reference to the world of the First Century AD. I contend, however, that this Johannine conundrum cannot be resolved entirely narratologically nor by a historical approach limited to the First Century AD. Johannine scholarship at large has not assimilated the findings of prominent scholars such as Shaye Cohen, Seán Freyne and Daniel Boyarin, who have traced the referent of the term Ἰουδαῖος in history. I suggest that examining when the term Ἰουδαῖος came into being and what its original referent was, will aid our understanding of how John used the term.

In an important philological study of the word Ἰουδαῖος, Shaye Cohen argues that its meaning changed over time—from being primarily an ethnic-geographic term for Judaeans Jews before the mid-to-late Second Century BC to anyone who was affiliated to the religion or state of Judaea (whether or not resident in Judaea or an ethnic Judaeans) by the second half of the Second Century BC.¹⁸ According to Cohen, the ‘religious’ meaning of Ἰουδαῖος in Jewish literature is first attested in the Second Century BC (Bel 28; 2 Macc. 6:6; 9:17), and by the end of the First Century AD Ἰουδαῖος had emerged in Graeco-Roman literature as a designation for anyone who venerated the God of the Judaeans.¹⁹

¹⁶ Nevertheless, we shall bear in mind Ashton’s warning that exegesis demands a total reading and ‘reference’ and ‘sense’ must be studied together (‘Identity’, 58-59). I elaborate on the ‘sense’ of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009): ch. 4.

¹⁷ For this aspect, see Leibig, ‘John’, 223-34; Motyer, *Father*, 211-15; R. Alan Culpepper, ‘The Gospel of John and the Jews’, *RevExp* 84 (1987): 273-88, esp. 282-86; Rensberger, ‘Anti-Judaism’, 130-57; the various essays in *Anti-Judaism* (see n. 1 for details); and Boyarin, ‘Ioudaioi’, 222, 239.

¹⁸ Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 31; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999): ch. 3, esp. 70-82.

¹⁹ Cohen, *Beginnings*, 84-96.

Seán Freyne makes a similar case that by the second half of the Second Century BC the name Ἰουδαῖοι began to be used for all who embraced the Jewish temple ideology by worshiping in Jerusalem.²⁰ A substantial part of Freyne's argument is based on Josephus. Josephus seems to have extended the meaning of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι from those of the tribe of Judah to those Jews who had returned from the Babylonian exile and were loyal to the temple (*Ant.* 11:173). He could even call the inhabitants of Galilee Ἰουδαῖοι (*J.W.* 2:232; cf. *Ant.* 20:118–120).²¹ Similarly, in *Life* 112–113, Josephus uses the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι to designate certain Galileans who were strict adherents of the Torah and whose religious loyalties lay with Jerusalem.²²

Boyarin presents a case similar to Cohen and Freyne, but argues that the religious meaning of the term Ἰουδαῖος goes back as far as the Fifth Century BC—to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah when the Babylonian exiles returned to Jerusalem.²³ According to him, the Judaeen elites who were deported to Babylonia became a 'confessional community' during the exile.²⁴ Upon their return to Palestine, these returnees controlled the new Temple-State in and around Jerusalem and were identified as *Yahudim* (יהודים) or Ἰουδαῖοι (e.g. Ezra 4:23; 5:1, 5; 6:7-8, 14; Neh. 3:33-34). According to Boyarin, Ezra 4:12 even suggests that this group may have received the name Ἰουδαῖοι in the Babylonian exile: 'Be it known to the king that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who came up from you to us [the 'people of the land'] have arrived in Jerusalem.'²⁵ These *Yahudim* or Ἰουδαῖοι saw themselves as religiously superior to the so-called 'people of the land', the Israelites who had not gone into exile. Boyarin claims that *Yahudim* or Ἰουδαῖοι would have been from the very beginning a geo-religious term, the name for a particular Jewish group which strictly preserved its identity and was not co-extensive with the 'people of the land' or Israelite non-Ἰουδαῖοι (cf. Ezra 9–10; Neh. 13). Nevertheless, the latter could adopt the beliefs and practices of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and perhaps even join that

²⁰ Seán Freyne, 'Behind the Names: Galileans, Samaritans, *Ioudaioi*' in *Galilee and Gospel: Collected Essays*, ed. Seán Freyne (WUNT 125; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000): 114-31, esp. 125-31.

²¹ Freyne, 'Names', 127-31.

²² Seán Freyne, 'Galilee-Jerusalem Relations According to Josephus' *Life*' in *Galilee and Gospel*, 73-85, esp. 80-84.

²³ Cohen rejects a similar proposal for such an early date (*Beginnings*, 70 n. 1).

²⁴ Boyarin, 'Ioudaioi', 223-24.

²⁵ Boyarin, 'Ioudaioi', 226-27.

community.²⁶ Boyarin then argues that John used the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in a similar fashion, namely to denote a religious group, ‘the members of the particularist and purity-orientated community in and around Jerusalem’, headed up by the Pharisees.²⁷ *Contra* Martyn, Boyarin contends that the Gospel of John evidences an already existing rift within first-century Palestine—οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and Israelite non-Ἰουδαῖοι—rather than an assumed split between the church and synagogue in the late First Century.²⁸

The main contention between Boyarin and Cohen-Freyne is over *when* the term Ἰουδαῖος acquired a religious meaning. While Boyarin suggests this happened after the return of the Babylonian exiles to Jerusalem/Judaea (or even during the exile) in the Fifth Century BC, Cohen and Freyne argue this occurred only during the second half of the Second Century BC. Without attempting to resolve this disagreement, we glean what is important for our study, namely the common denominator that the religious meaning of the term Ἰουδαῖος was employed well before the First Century AD, and hence would be readily available for John to use.²⁹ Although the term Ἰουδαῖος probably retained something of its ethnic-geographic connotation, its referent was extended to include any Jew who was loyal to the temple ideology or Judaeian religion. It thus follows that the referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι cannot be restricted *exclusively* to Judaeians or to the religious authorities. We must now examine whether John had this extended referent of Ἰουδαῖος in mind.³⁰

²⁶ Boyarin, ‘Ioudaioi’, 227-28.

²⁷ Boyarin, ‘Ioudaioi’, 234-36 (quotation from 235).

²⁸ Boyarin, ‘Ioudaioi’, 228, 239.

²⁹ Others who recognise the extension of the term Ἰουδαῖος beyond the ethnic-geographic referent to a religious referent are: Ashton, *Understanding*, 152-57; John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996): 402-404; Motyer, *Father*, 55-56; John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2nd edn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000): 19; James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (vol. 1 of *Christianity in the Making*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003): 262-63, 294-97; Hakola, *Identity*, 10-11.

³⁰ Although Motyer acknowledges the broad definition of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as referring to all who claim allegiance to the religion of Judaea, he limits the *Johannine* Ἰουδαῖοι as referring to a smaller group within this broad definition, namely the Pharisaic-type of scrupulous adherents to the Judaeian religion (*Father*, 54-56).

3. Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Judaeen Authorities

The term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι occurs sixty-six times in the Gospel of John,³¹ and we shall elucidate its important points of contact with the Jewish or Judaeen religious authorities such as Φαρισαῖος (20×), ἀρχιερεύς (21×), ἄρχων (7×), and ὑπηρέτης (9×).³²

3.1 *The Pharisees*

The Pharisees were experts in Torah-learning and, according to Josephus, were the most influential school, enjoying the general support of the populace (*Ant.* 13:298; 18:15-20; *J.W.* 2:162, 411). Pharisees came from all classes and professions in Jewish society, i.e. they were laity and did not belong to the priesthood, and were spread across Judaea and probably also lived in Galilee.³³ The scope of the Pharisees' political interest and (judicial and religious) power is an issue of considerable debate amongst scholars.³⁴ However, there seems to be a growing consensus that the Pharisees in Jesus' time had the power of *influence* rather than control.³⁵ They were not only able to influence the common people but also those who had the power of

³¹ In addition, the term is anarthrous in 4:9, and is used in the singular in 3:22, 25; 4:9; 18:35.

³² The term ἀρχιερεύς denotes both 'chief priest' and 'high priest'. Ἄρχων refers in the plural to the Jewish authorities (7:26, 48; 12:42), and in the singular to Nicodemus (3:1) and the devil (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Ὑπηρέτης refers to the Jewish temple police, except for 18:36 where Jesus refers to his 'police force'. We do not consider οἱ γραμματεῖς (8:3) and οἱ πρεσβύτεροι (8:9) since 7:53–8:11 is a later addition. An investigation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in relation to the Roman authorities or ὁ κόσμος is beyond the scope of this study. For the latter relationship, see Lars Kierspel, *The Jews and the World in the Fourth Gospel: Parallelism, Function, and Context* (WUNT 2.220; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

³³ Cf. Rudolf Meyer, 'Φαρισαῖος', *TDNT* 9:11-35; Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001; repr. Wilmington: Glazier, 1988): *passim*. Yet, the lines between the priesthood and the Pharisees are not always clear (Steve N. Mason, 'Priesthood in Josephus and the "Pharisaic Revolution"', *JBL* 107 [1988]: 657-61; cf. Hezser, *Structure*, 481).

³⁴ Cf. Taylor's outline of the current debate (*Immerser*, 156-67).

³⁵ With variations: Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984): 27, 53; Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 106, 132-33, 281-97; Mason, 'Priesthood', 660-61; idem, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992): 141-43; Martin Hengel and Roland Deines, 'E. P. Sanders' "Common Judaism", Jesus and the Pharisees', *JTS* 46 (1995): 1-70; Taylor, *Immerser*, 162, 167; Ellis Rivkin, 'Who Were the Pharisees?' in *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Part Three Volume Three: Where We Stand: Issues and Debates in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner (HdO 53; Leiden: Brill, 2000): 1-33; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 268-69.

control and policy making. We therefore include the Pharisees among the religious authorities, though not as the main leaders.³⁶

There is ample evidence in the Gospel of John that the Pharisees are a subset of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. John 1:19 speaks of a delegation of priests and Levites sent by οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι from Jerusalem to question John. Since priests and Levites normally come under the jurisdiction of the temple authorities, we may assume that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι mentioned here are the religious authorities in Jerusalem. In 1:24 we learn that this delegation was sent by *the Pharisees*, suggesting that they are part of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.

John 8:12-59 is undoubtedly the most poignant episode in the conflict between Jesus and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. While the Pharisees are in view in 8:13-20, 8:22 mentions a ‘new’ audience—οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. The transitional verse 8:21 does not clarify this change since it starts with εἶπεν οὖν πάλιν αὐτοῖς. The conjunction οὖν is probably used in a consecutive sense (rather than an inferential, emphatic or adversative sense), so that it either introduces a new phase in a discourse (‘now’, ‘then’) or resumes the main narrative (‘so’, ‘as I was saying’)—and thus allows for the same audience. Besides, for the referent of αὐτοῖς, we must go back to 8:13. Thus, although from 8:22 onwards Jesus’ audience is identified as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, the Pharisees probably belong to this group. This becomes obvious in 9:13-41, which describes the aftermath of Jesus’ healing a blind man on the sabbath. That οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι question the man for a *second* time (9:24), after he had previously been interrogated by the Pharisees (9:13-17), almost demands the conclusion that the Pharisees are part of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.

Regarding 11:45-57, some Ἰουδαῖοι report Jesus’ raising of Lazarus to the Pharisees, precipitating a crucial meeting of the Sanhedrin. This shows that not all οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are Pharisees, or chief priests. Rather, the Pharisees and chief priests are subsets of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, probably representing the religious authorities. The

³⁶ Cf. the influential laity as part of the Jewish administration (Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* [London: SCM, 1969]: 222-32; James S. McLaren, *Power and Politics in Palestine: The Jews and the Governing of their Land, 100 BC–AD 70* [JSNTSup 63; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991]: 204-206, 218-19). McLaren seems to downplay the Pharisees’ political interest and strength because he does not regard the Pharisees *as a group* to be part of the influential laity; he considers only some *individual* Pharisees as influential laity, such as the leading Pharisee in Luke 14:1, Nicodemus in the Gospel of John, and Gamaliel in Acts 5:34 (*Power*, 205 n. 1, 208-209, 221). We contend, however, that the (Johannine) Pharisees are part of the influential laity and belonged to the religious authorities, and some notable Pharisees could even belong to the narrower body of the Sanhedrin.

penultimate reference to the Pharisees in 12:42 follows the same lines. John refers in his gospel to ‘the fear of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι’, which is the fear of expulsion from the synagogue of those who openly confessed that Jesus is the Messiah (7:13; 9:22; 19:38; 20:19). In 12:42, this fear of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is now described as the fear of *the Pharisees*.

Some Pharisees even belonged to the ruling body of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι called the Sanhedrin—the highest Jewish authority on judicial-religious matters. For example, it is important to note that Nicodemus, though a Pharisee, is also an ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων (3:1), i.e. he is not only one of the religious authorities but even a member of the Sanhedrin (cf. section 3.3). We find more evidence to support this observation when we consider 7:45-52 and 11:45-53. In 7:45-52, Nicodemus is present at a meeting of the chief priests and Pharisees, and such a meeting is explicitly called συνέδριον in 11:47. Although συνέδριον can simply refer to a local council or assembly in a Jewish town, the ‘town’ in 11:45-53 is Jerusalem, so it must refer to the Jewish supreme court in Jerusalem—the Sanhedrin. Thus, the Pharisees were not only part of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι but some even belonged to the narrower body of the Sanhedrin.³⁷

There is good reason to believe that the Pharisees are *not* the main leaders or core of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι when we consider *who* is responsible for Jesus’ death, because this would reveal who the dominant or controlling party is. John implicates two parties in these acts. Both οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and the chief priests hand Jesus over to Pilate and demand the death penalty (18:28-31, 35; 19:6-7, 15). The Pharisees, however, seem to be absent from the scene. Although the last mention of the Pharisees occurs in 18:3, this is merely part of the technical term ‘the temple police of the chief priests and the Pharisees’ and does not indicate an active presence of the Pharisees. The reference is to the Jewish temple police, who are under the authority of ‘the chief priests and the Pharisees’, to distinguish it from the other force, a cohort of Roman soldiers. In John 18–19, the active presence of οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, as we find in 7:32, 45; 11:47, 57, is lacking precisely because *the Pharisees* are absent.³⁸ John’s last mention of the

³⁷ Cf. Taylor, *Immerser*, 181-82.

³⁸ Many scholars find this combination of chief priests and Pharisees historically awkward and anachronistic, arguing that such an alignment reflects either the setting of the Jewish war (AD 66–70) or the post-war situation (e.g. Martyn, *History*, 86; Taylor, *Immerser*, 186-91; Tomson, “‘Jews’”, 196-98). However, Urban C. von Wahlde

Pharisees' physical presence is in 12:19 (12:42 merely mentions a general fear of the Pharisees that was around at that time) after which they disappear from the Johannine stage, indicating that their part is effectively over.

In sum, the Pharisees are part of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, probably even of the religious authorities. Some could even belong to the more exclusive body known as the Sanhedrin. As such the Pharisees were part of the opposition to Jesus and participated in plotting his death (cf. 11:45-57), but they did *not* actually arrest Jesus, bring him to trial or demand his death. The Pharisees are in effect dissociated from Jesus' passion, and John holds οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in general, but the chief priests in particular, responsible for Jesus' death.³⁹

3.2 *The Chief Priests*

The chief priests were members or leaders of the various highpriestly families—the priestly aristocracy—and the high priest was the leading chief priest (ἀρχιερεύς denotes both 'chief priest' and 'high priest'). As such, the chief priests were the temple authorities, and they had the power to convene the Sanhedrin on judicial-religious matters. They were the political and religious authorities, the ones with the power to control and make policy (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 20:251).⁴⁰

The chief priests only come to the fore in John 11–12, 18–19.⁴¹ Following Jesus' raising of Lazarus, many Ἰουδαῖοι believe in Jesus, but some Ἰουδαῖοι report the incident to the Pharisees (11:45-46). Consequently, the chief priests and Pharisees assemble the Sanhedrin

provides an excellent case for the historical reliability of the alliance of the chief priests and Pharisees, suggesting that the two recorded meetings of the Sanhedrin in John occurred in the context of an *impending national crisis* ('The Relationships between Pharisees and Chief Priests: Some Observations on the Texts in Matthew, John and Josephus', *NTS* 42 [1996]: 506-522, esp. 518 n. 34, 522 n. 43). Besides, Matthew mentions the combination of chief priests and Pharisees twice in a pre-war context (21:45; 27:62), and there is also evidence that Pharisees aligned with other authorities prior to the Jewish war, such as the Sadducees (Matt. 3:7; 16:1-12), the Herodians (Mark 3:6; 12:13), and the Sadducees/chief priests of the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:17-42; 23:6-9). Cf. Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 195-98.

³⁹ Cf. Ashton, 'Identity', 64-65. John may have inherited a similar tradition as the Synoptics, which also do not mention the Pharisees in the passion narratives (except for the isolated reference in Matt. 27:62).

⁴⁰ Cf. Gottlob Schrenk, 'ἱερός-ἀρχιερεύς', *TDNT* 3:221-83, esp. 265-83; Mason, *Josephus*, 118-31.

⁴¹ The two references to the chief priests in 7:32, 45 attribute no active role to them (cf. section 3.4).

to discuss a course of action (11:47-50). Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι can thus not simply be equated with the chief priests and Pharisees of the Sanhedrin. They are probably the Torah- and temple-loyalists who go to their leaders or perhaps the religious authorities in general.

Although οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 11:45-46 could just be common people who came from Jerusalem to console Martha and Mary (11:18-19, 31, 33), the wider context of John 9–10 seems to indicate otherwise. The group that responds with hostility to Jesus' healing of the blind man in 9:13–10:21 is a mix of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (9:18; 10:19) and the Pharisees (9:13, 40), representing the religious authorities in Jerusalem.⁴² In 10:22-39, the same hostile Ἰουδαῖοι are in view since Jesus, in 10:26-28, refers to his shepherd discourse of 10:1-18. Jesus then leaves for Peraea to escape the murderous attempts of these Ἰουδαῖοι (10:31, 39-40). His disciples are therefore surprised that Jesus wants to return to Judaea where he had encountered the hostility of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (11:7-8). Therefore, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 11 appear the kind of people Jesus encountered in John 9–10—the adherents of the particular Judaeian religion.⁴³

Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 11 could also be the religious authorities, albeit not the chief priests and the Pharisees who constitute the Sanhedrin. Although John only uses the categories ἀρχιερεῖς, Φαρισαῖος and ἄρχων for the religious establishment, this does not imply that no other categories existed.⁴⁴ Examining the political and social organisation of Palestine between 100 BC and AD 70, James McLaren mentions *inter alios* the so-called 'influential lay people' who formed a consistent, stable element in Jewish society and were actively involved in public affairs; as such they were prominent in the administration.⁴⁵ Hence, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι of John 11 may have been the lay aristocracy or prominent noblemen who were an influential element within the Jerusalem/Judaeian leadership—even if John does not name them specifically.⁴⁶

⁴² Although 10:1 introduces a change of topic, there is no change of audience.

⁴³ John 11:37 may indicate that some Ἰουδαῖοι were present at the events in John 9, where οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι refers to the adherents of the Judaeian religion.

⁴⁴ We do not consider οἱ γραμματεῖς and οἱ πρεσβύτεροι in 7:53–8:11, since this passage is a later addition.

⁴⁵ McLaren, *Power*, 204-206, 218-19. Cf. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 222-32.

⁴⁶ The idea of the Jerusalem authorities leaving their domicile is not unusual (cf. 1:19-28; Mark 7:1; Luke 5:17). Nevertheless, we must explain the coming of these Ἰουδαῖοι to Bethany. I suggest that Lazarus may have been a Ἰουδαῖος, perhaps even

We now come to the passion narratives in John 18–19. The law-enforcement arm of the temple authorities is referred to both as the temple police ‘of the chief priests and the Pharisees’ (18:3) and ‘of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι’ (18:12). Then, in 18:13-14 the reader is reminded of the advice given by the chief priest Caiaphas to the chief priests and Pharisees of the Sanhedrin in 11:50, referred to here as the advice of Caiaphas to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. This indicates that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι must include or be closely related to the chief priests and Pharisees. Furthermore, both during Jesus’ trial before Pilate and at his crucifixion, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and the chief priests are closely aligned (19:6-7, 14-15, 20-21). In fact, the particular phrase οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων (19:21) suggests that the chief priests are the leaders of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. The Pharisees are absent in John 18–19 and it is οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in general and the chief priests in particular who hand Jesus over to Pilate (18:30-32, 35-36), press charges and demand his execution (19:6-7, 12, 15-16). John holds these groups, with the chief priests leading οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, primarily responsible for Jesus’ death. This leads us to believe that *the chief priests* rather than the Pharisees are the main leaders of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and as such constitute its core.

3.3 *The Jerusalem Authorities*

The term ἄρχων occurs four times in the singular, referring to Nicodemus (3:1) and the devil (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). We have dealt with Nicodemus in section 3.1 and shall not be dealing with the devil, so we now turn to the plural ἄρχοντες in 7:26, 48 and 12:42.

Against the backdrop of the feast of Tabernacles in the Jerusalem temple, οἱ ἄρχοντες in 7:26, 48 probably refers to the temple authorities, i.e. the chief priests. Although οἱ ἄρχοντες could refer to other members of the Sanhedrin (e.g. the Pharisee Nicodemus), 7:48 distinguishes between οἱ ἄρχοντες and the Pharisees, in the context of

a wealthy nobleman (cf. the expensive perfume that his sister could buy [12:3-5]), which would explain fellow Ἰουδαῖοι coming for his funeral. Although it may be odd that Lazarus as a Ἰουδαῖος is identified as Jesus’ friend (11:3, 11), 11:45 reveals that not every Ἰουδαῖος was hostile towards Jesus (cf. section 5). In fact, these Ἰουδαῖοι were divided (11:36-37, 45-46)—and not for the first time (10:19-21). Thus, it is possible that a group of Ἰουδαῖοι who were already divided on the issue of Jesus had come to the funeral of their friend Lazarus, and Jesus’ raising of Lazarus only reinforced their opinions about him—those who were hostile reported him to the authorities; others who were open to Jesus came to believe in him.

a meeting of the chief priests and Pharisees (7:45). Hence, οἱ ἄρχοντες in John 7 must refer to the chief priests as part of the Sanhedrin.

The referent of οἱ ἄρχοντες in 12:42 is more problematic. This verse reads, ‘Nevertheless, even of the authorities, many believed in him [Jesus], but because of the Pharisees they did not confess in order not to be expelled from the synagogue.’ Who were these ἄρχοντες who secretly believed in Jesus, and how do we explain their fear of the Pharisees? I suggest that οἱ ἄρχοντες (whether chief priests or Pharisees) were afraid that if the Pharisees came to know about their sympathy towards Jesus, they would report it to the Sanhedrin or to the wider body of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.

That this is not an idle thought becomes evident from two previous incidents where the Pharisees precipitate events. First, when the Pharisees come to know of the crowd’s speculations about Jesus’ messiahship, the chief priests and the Pharisees send the temple police to arrest Jesus (7:32). Then, in a meeting of the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees are greatly annoyed, and even sneer at one of their colleagues (Nicodemus) when he raises a critical question (7:45-52). Second, following Jesus’ raising of Lazarus, some Ἰουδαῖοι report to the Pharisees, with the result (οὖν) that the chief priests and the Pharisees convene the Sanhedrin and decide that Jesus must die (11:45-53). Thus, the Pharisees seem influential and outspoken enough to cause trouble. Besides, the suggested fear of the Pharisees in 12:42 is specifically identified elsewhere as ὁ φόβος τῶν Ἰουδαίων (7:13; 9:22; 19:38; 20:19). This fear arose from the decision of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι to excommunicate from the synagogue those who openly confessed Jesus as the Messiah.⁴⁷ It is thus understandable that those authorities who secretly believed in Jesus were afraid that the Pharisees would report this to their colleagues.

In sum, while the reference to the Pharisee Nicodemus as ἀρχῶν τῶν Ἰουδαίων in 3:1 indicates that he is a member of the Sanhedrin, in 7:48 οἱ ἄρχοντες are distinguished from the Pharisees and hence must refer to the chief priests. Regarding the referent of οἱ ἄρχοντες in

⁴⁷ *Contra* Tomson who simply states that the Pharisees issued the synagogue ban (“‘Jews’”, 196). W. Horbury makes a good case for the existence of excommunication from the general Jewish body in the Second Temple period (‘Extirpation and Excommunication’, *VT* 35 [1985]: 13-38). Boyarin, however, contends that ἀποσυνάγωγος in 9:22 simply means to be thrown out of the synagogue, not excommunicated from the Synagogue (‘Ioudaioi’, 218 n. 10).

12:42, we remain equivocal—they could either be the chief priests or the Pharisees.⁴⁸ A reference to the chief priests—the leaders of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and more powerful than the Pharisees—being afraid of the Pharisees seems odd, but this fear can be explained by the influence that the Pharisees enjoyed and a general fear of being reported to the Sanhedrin about their belief in Jesus. A reference to Pharisees being afraid of other Pharisees also has an odd ring to it, but the Pharisees were capable of turning on one another (7:50-52) and being divided (9:16). Since Nicodemus was both a Pharisee and an ἄρχων we cannot conclude that οἱ ἄρχοντες always refers to the chief priests. Thus, the term οἱ ἄρχοντες denotes the ruling Jerusalem body of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, the Sanhedrin, which consists of both chief priests and some (notable) Pharisees.

3.4 *The Role of Pharisees and Chief Priests within οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*

In this section we shall examine where the Pharisees and the chief priests have a dominant presence in the Gospel of John. The following table shows the distribution of references to the various Jewish authorities across the gospel.

	John 1–4	John 5–6	John 7–10	John 11–12	John 13–17	John 18–19	John 20–21
οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (66×)	7	8	18	10	1	21	1
Φαρισαῖος (20×)	3		11	5		1	
ἀρχιερεύς (21×)			2	5		14	
ἄρχων (4×) ⁴⁹	1		2	1			
ὑπηρέτης (8×) ⁵⁰			3			5	

We observe that the weight of the presence of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is in John 5–12 (36× or 55% of all occurrences). Prior to John 5, Jesus encounters little opposition, but in John 5–12, Jesus faces increasing opposition from οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.⁵¹ Except for 6:1–7:9 and 10:40–11:6, all events in John 5–12 take place in or near Jerusalem, the religious-political

⁴⁸ Οἱ ἄρχοντες cannot refer to the temple police because in 7:48 the Pharisees speak of ‘οἱ ἄρχοντες and the Pharisees’ to the temple police. Instead, the temple police are subject to οἱ ἄρχοντες.

⁴⁹ Excluding the three references that refer to the devil.

⁵⁰ Excluding the reference to Jesus’ ‘police force’ in 18:36.

⁵¹ The encounter between Jesus and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 2:13-22 most likely reflects a later incident that John brought forward for theological reasons.

headquarters of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. Not surprisingly, this group is also a dominant force at Jesus' trial and death (21×).

The Pharisees appear mainly in John 7–10, which particularly substantiates the increasing hostility towards Jesus, and in the important passage 11:45–57 with which we deal separately.⁵² Although Jesus is aware of the potential threat of the Pharisees from early in his ministry (4:1, 3)—he leaves Judaea perhaps to avoid the kind of confrontation John had earlier (1:19, 24)—Jesus has no confrontation with the Pharisees prior to John 7 (discounting the Nicodemus story). The conflict between οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι/Pharisees and Jesus mostly centres on issues regarding the law (7:19, 23, 49; 8:13, 17; 10:34), sabbath (5:16; 7:23; 9:16), Moses (5:45–46; 7:19, 22; 9:28–29), Abraham (8:33–58), and blasphemy (5:18; 10:36).⁵³ In short, it is a *religious-theological* conflict, typical of the Pharisees who were seemingly more concerned with theological than political issues.

The chief priests feature primarily in John 11–12, 18–19. Before John 11, they only appear in 7:32, 45 along with the Pharisees. When the Pharisees learn that many people begin to consider Jesus as the Messiah, they mobilise the temple police (of the chief priests and Pharisees) to arrest Jesus (7:25–32). In the subsequent meeting of the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees are the dominant voice—the chief priests are not heard (7:45–52). Although the chief priests have the power to control, the Pharisees dominate this meeting, in keeping with their prominence in John 7–10.

The chief priests resurface in 11:45–57, which describes another meeting of the Sanhedrin. This time, the chief priests gain the upper hand. The Pharisees once again trigger off events (11:46–47), but they soon fade out and the prominent voice is that of ἀρχιερεὺς Caiaphas (11:49–50). The chief priests seem to have ignored Jesus during most of his ministry—perhaps because they did not perceive him as a threat. However, Jesus' raising of Lazarus, the resulting change of allegiance

⁵² Although the term 'Pharisee(s)' does not occur in John 10, their presence is implied since the same audience of Ἰουδαῖοι and Pharisees is in view as in John 9 (John 9–10 is one literary unit). Prior to John 7, the Pharisees occur in 1:24; 3:1; 4:1, and beyond John 11, they appear in 12:19, 42; 18:3 (cf. section 3.1).

⁵³ The strong language exchanged between Jesus and his opponents should be understood as an intra-family debate. Cf. Luke T. Johnson, 'The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic', *JBL* 108 (1989): 419–41. *Contra* Hakola, who argues that the Johannine community had already crossed the boundary of Jewishness and adopted a non-Jewish identity (*Identity*, 210–11, 226–28).

of many fellow Ἰουδαῖοι to Jesus (11:45/12:11), and the fear of Jesus' gaining more followers causing a Roman intervention that could potentially endanger their position, suddenly roused them to drastic action (11:47-53).⁵⁴ In sum, the bone of contention was a *religious-political* one.

The following picture emerges of how the Pharisees and chief priests operate within οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is a hostile presence throughout John 5–12, 18–19, but this hostility is not homogeneous. Their hostility to Jesus begins in John 5, and continues in 6:41-59, but from chapter 7 John starts to make significant distinctions in the nature of this hostility and the groups responsible for it. In John 7–10, during the middle part of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem and Judaea, the dominant hostile voice within οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is that of the Pharisees, who have disputes with Jesus over theological issues. In John 11–12, towards the end of Jesus' ministry, the chief priests, who primarily perceive Jesus as a political threat, emerge as the dominant hostile voice within οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.⁵⁵ The defining moment comes when Jesus raises Lazarus, causing many Ἰουδαῖοι to defect. The consequent meeting of the Sanhedrin, led by the chief priests, results in a plot to kill Jesus. John 11:45-57 becomes the turning point in the hostility towards Jesus, marking the transition from a Pharisaic dominance in the conflict to the supremacy of the chief priests in the conflict with Jesus. Indeed, in John 18–19 the Pharisees are absent and it is οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι spearheaded by the chief priests who orchestrate Jesus' death.

4. Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as Non-Judaeans and Non-Authorities

In section 2, we suggested that Second Temple Judaism knew of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as a reference to a particular religious group of Torah- and temple-partisans, found mainly but not exclusively in Judaea. Section 3, however, could create the impression that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John refers exclusively to the Judaeans religious authorities since the terms ἀρχιερεύς, Φαρισαῖος, ἄρχων

⁵⁴ Consequently, the chief priests (rather than the Pharisees) want to kill Lazarus also (12:10).

⁵⁵ Although the Pharisees and chief priests probably did not differentiate sharply between supposedly religious and political issues (cf. McLaren, *Power*, 218, 221), they seem to have different religious-political interests.

and ὑπηρέτης all refer to the authorities and are included in οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. In this section we shall show that for John οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι could also refer to non-Judaeans and non-authorities.

John 6:41, 52, for example, reveals the presence of Ἰουδαῖοι *outside* Judaea. Von Wahlde, who vigorously argues that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (in the hostile sense) refers exclusively to the religious authorities, admits that 6:41, 52 is a reference to the crowd or common people.⁵⁶ However, John seems to distinguish between ὁ ὄχλος and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 6; in fact, at the point where the conversation between Jesus and his audience becomes particularly hostile, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι *emerge* from ὁ ὄχλος.⁵⁷ These Ἰουδαῖοι could be the religious authorities, probably Pharisees, who had come from Judaea to Galilee. If οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι/Pharisees from Jerusalem could send a delegation to John in Peraea (1:19, 24, 28), they could well have travelled to Galilee. Alternatively, these Ἰουδαῖοι may be adherents of the Judaeans religion who reside in Galilee—perhaps Pharisees. Pharisees were widespread in both Galilee and Judaea, and had an influential presence in the synagogues.⁵⁸ This coheres with the setting in John 6 of a dispute between the Galilean Ἰουδαῖοι and Jesus in the *synagogue* of Capernaum (6:59).⁵⁹ It is therefore plausible that some Ἰουδαῖοι travelled or resided outside Judaea.

There is good reason to believe that not every occurrence of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John refers to the religious authorities. In

⁵⁶ Von Wahlde, ‘The Johannine “Jews”’, 44, 54; idem, “‘The Jews’”, 44-45.

⁵⁷ *Contra* Fuller (“‘Jews’”, 33) and Leibig (‘John’, 214), who argue that ὁ ὄχλος *becomes* Ἰουδαῖοι. Jouette M. Bassler proposes a dichotomy in the Gospel of John in terms of Γαλιλαῖοι (those who accept Jesus) and Ἰουδαῖοι (those who reject Jesus), and hence Γαλιλαῖοι *become* Ἰουδαῖοι in 6:41, 52 because they reject Jesus (‘The Galileans: A Neglected Factor in Johannine Community Research’, *CBQ* 43 [1981]: 243-57, esp. 253-56). However, she makes too much of the *only* occurrence of Γαλιλαῖοι in the gospel (4:45). Although these Galileans welcomed Jesus because they had seen his signs in Jerusalem, Jesus is critical of them—his use of the plural ‘you’ in 4:48 means he was not just addressing the royal official (cf. 2:23-25). Besides, a promising Galilean crowd (6:2, 24) turns out to be an unbelieving crowd (6:36). Finally, Bassler’s assertion, ‘although positive responses to Jesus in Judaea are recorded, these groups are not identified as *Ioudaioi*’ (‘Galileans’, 254) perhaps downplays the ‘positive’ responses of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 8:30-31; 11:45/12:11; 12:42 (Bassler does comment on 11:45) (cf. our section 5).

⁵⁸ Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 291-95; Taylor, *Immerser*, 161-64; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 306-308. The Synoptics also mention the presence of Pharisees in Galilee (Matt. 9:11; Mark 2:18, 24; 3:6; 7:1; Luke 5:17, 30) and in the synagogues (Matt. 23:2, 6; Luke 11:43).

⁵⁹ Cf. 18:20, which states that Jesus taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι gathered, and there is no hint that this refers only to Judaeans synagogues.

John 5, for example, Jesus' audience is simply identified as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and may just be the Torah- and temple-loyalists in Jerusalem. John 7:10-36 presents a mixed audience of common people (ὁ ὄχλος) and the particular religious partisans (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι), while their leaders (the chief priests and Pharisees) only appear in 7:32 and 7:45-52. Although Jesus' audience in John 8-10 could arguably be Pharisaic Ἰουδαῖοι, it could equally consist of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the religious non-authorities and their leaders the Pharisees (cf. sections 3.1-3.2). Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 11 are certainly not the chief priests and Pharisees that constitute the Sanhedrin. We have suggested that they are either the adherents of the Judaeen religion in general or the religious authorities, perhaps the influential laity as part of the religious leadership.

Although Jesus' audience in John 12 is ὁ ὄχλος or the crowd (12:9, 12, 17, 18, 29, 34), this is not simply a crowd of common Jerusalemites because John identifies this crowd as [ὁ] ὄχλος πολὺς ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων (12:9). The phrase does not refer to a great crowd of the religious authorities either because [ὁ] ὄχλος of 12:9 is contrasted with the religious authorities in 12:10-11, 18-19.⁶⁰ This ὄχλος πολὺς ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων is more likely a great crowd of Judaeen Torah- and temple-loyalists, corresponding to the πολλοὶ...ἐκ τῆς χώρας ('many [people]...from the countryside'), who went up to the Passover feast of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in Jerusalem (11:55). Finally, in John 18-19, the Jewish presence is most likely the Judaeen particularists and their leaders the chief priests.

Some scholars have gone further and argued for a reference to common people (cf. nn. 12-13). Reginald Fuller, for example, proposes that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is used with various nuances, arguing that *anyone* who is hostile towards Jesus (whether Pharisee or ὄχλος) becomes Ἰουδαῖος.⁶¹ Janis Leibig adopts Fuller's position and then extends his argument, stating that John indicts *all* the Jewish people for their hostility towards Jesus.⁶² However, the argument that certain people 'become' Ἰουδαῖοι when they are hostile towards Jesus, relates to the

⁶⁰ John 12:17-18 depicts different crowds: the crowd in 12:17 is the same as in 11:42, whereas the crowd in 12:18 has only *heard* of the miracle and relates to the crowd in 11:55; 12:9, 12, 29, 34 (cf. Rudolf Meyer, 'ὄχλος', *TDNT* 5:582-90, esp. 588-89; *pace* Bultmann, *John*, 419).

⁶¹ Fuller, "'Jews'", 32-33.

⁶² Leibig, 'John', 214-15.

sense of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (they *behave* like Ἰουδαῖοι) rather than its referent. Fuller and Leibig's argument still begs the question of the historical referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. More recently, James Dunn has argued that many 'neutral' references to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 6–12, 18–19 clearly denote the common people, the crowd.⁶³ Atypically, Dunn seems to have been careless in his exegesis. His distinction between οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 8:31 who believed and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 8:48 who rejected Jesus is mistaken since 8:31-59 refers to one group—the same Ἰουδαῖοι who initially 'believe' turn against Jesus when they grasp the implications of his teachings. Next, the πολλοί in 10:41-42 refers to common people rather than to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, while οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 19:20-21 most probably does not refer to common people. Adele Reinhartz applies Cohen's understanding of Ἰουδαῖος to the Gospel of John, and concludes that for John 'the term Ἰουδαῖος does not refer narrowly to a resident of Judaea but rather denotes a member of a national, religious, cultural, and political group for whom the English word *Jew* is the best signifier.'⁶⁴ However, a referent of the Jews in general (or even the *unbelieving* Jews) does not do justice to the many occasions where οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι refers to a particular religious group or is specifically associated with the Judaeian authorities (see section 3).⁶⁵

While these scholars correctly recognise that the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι has a broader referent than the religious authorities, their suggestion to include common people is an *over*-corrective. The self-identification of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as 'disciples of Moses' (9:28; cf. 5:45-46), and their preoccupation with the temple (2:13-22), sabbath (5:16), and the law (7:19) seem to point instead to the Torah- and temple-loyalists that we suggested earlier. Our understanding of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as a particular religious group within Judaism would also fit in with John's so-called 'neutral' usage of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in relation to festivals (2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 11:55) and customs (2:6; 19:31, 40, 42) as being references to the

⁶³ Dunn, 'Question', 198-200; idem, 'Embarrassment', 50 n. 20. Elsewhere he endorses the findings of Cohen and Freyne (*Jesus Remembered*, 294-97).

⁶⁴ Reinhartz, "'Jews'", 219-21 (quotation from 221). Similarly, Hakola argues that John has blurred the distinctions between different Jewish groups and uses the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι for the Jewish people in general to indicate that the Johannine Christians no longer understood themselves in terms of Jewish identity (*Identity*, 160-62, 226-31). See Boyarin for a critique that the Johannine Christians understood themselves as non-Jewish ('Ioudaioi', 232, 238-39).

⁶⁵ Reinhartz' claim that Ἰουδαῖοι is *never* used of a figure who is a believer ("'Jews'", 220) seems overstated. We shall show in section 5 that some Ἰουδαῖοι were sympathetic towards Jesus and even believed in him.

festivals and customs of the religion that was originally affiliated with Judaea. Besides, the difficult saying in 4:22 (ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν) can be explained as Jesus saying that salvation is rooted in the Judaeian religion, which now finds its focus in him. Consequently, Jesus' designation as ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων (18:33, 39; 19:3, 19, 21) denotes (beyond the obvious ironic use) that Jesus, a non-Judaeian, is the messianic king fulfilling the expectations of the Judaeian religion.

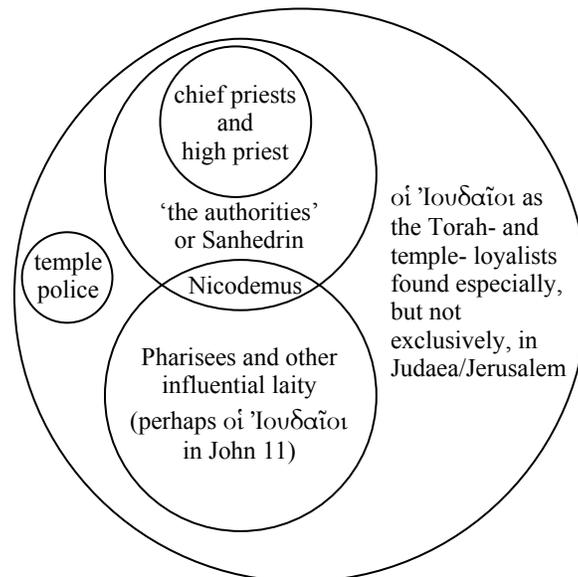
5. The Identity and Composition of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι

We must now synthesise our findings. John appears to employ the extended referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι that was known in Second Temple Judaism for the particular religious group of Torah- and temple-loyalists, found primarily (but not exclusively) in Jerusalem and Judaea. As such, the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι refers to the Judaeian religious authorities but also includes non-Judaeians and non-authorities.⁶⁶ We argued that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John is a composite rather than a homogeneous group, which is generally hostile to Jesus. The leaders of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι consists of *the controlling priesthood*—the priestly aristocracy or chief priests who had the power of control and policymaking—and *the influential laity*—the Pharisees who had the 'power' of influence.⁶⁷ We demonstrated that the chief priests or temple authorities are the main leaders of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and hence constitute its core, while the Pharisees seem to be an influential party that is able to mobilise the temple police and report people to the Sanhedrin. The 'authorities' or Sanhedrin refers to the narrower, ruling body of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in Jerusalem, comprising the chief priests and some notable Pharisees. The temple police were the Sanhedrin's law-enforcement arm, primarily under the authority of the chief priests and Pharisees (7:32; 18:3) but also of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (18:12).

⁶⁶ Our position is closest to Boyarin's, but he sees the Pharisees as the main leaders of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ('Ioudaioi', 233-36), and to Motyer's, but he effectively restricts οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι to the Pharisees (*Father*, 54-56, 213), whereas we have argued for more constituents.

⁶⁷ Cf. McLaren, *Power*, 218-21. The influential laity consisted also of other people (McLaren, *Power*, 204-206), such as perhaps οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 11. We disagree with McLaren in that we contend that the (Johannine) Pharisees as a group should be included in the influential laity as part of the religious authorities (cf. n. 36).

We argued that the hostility of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι towards Jesus was not homogeneous and that 11:45-57 appeared to be the turning point. John presents a shift in hostility from a religious-theological conflict with the Pharisees in the middle of Jesus' ministry to a religious-political conflict with the chief priests at the end of Jesus' ministry. Although the Pharisees were part of the opposition to Jesus and privy to the conspiracy to kill him, they may not have wanted his death. In fact, *all* the attempts to kill Jesus during his ministry are instigated by οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (5:18; 7:1, 19; 8:37, 40, 59; 10:31-33; 11:8). Besides, it is the chief priests who plot to kill both Jesus and Lazarus (11:50; 12:10-11). Thus, murderous thoughts and deeds are attributed to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and the chief priests rather than the Pharisees. The Pharisees are absent from the passion narratives and are not directly implicated in Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion.⁶⁸ For John, the primary responsibility for Jesus' death rests with οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in general and the chief priests in particular. The complex relationship between the various groups can be visualised in the following Venn diagram:



We must highlight that the hostility of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and its subgroups is neither uniform nor impenetrable (though this relates more to the sense of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι). Jesus' teaching and signs

⁶⁸ Although the Pharisees are absent from the passion narratives—they no longer have an active, independent role—they are probably implicitly present by virtue of being part of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.

occasionally causes division (σχίσμα) amongst the Pharisees (9:16) and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (10:19-21; cf. 11:36-37, 45-46).⁶⁹ Even Nicodemus, one of the Pharisaic authorities, though he does not display an explicit belief-response, is sympathetic to Jesus (3:1-15; 7:50-52; 19:39-40). John 8:30 mentions that many Ἰουδαῖοι ‘believe’ in Jesus, but when he probes further, this ‘belief’ seems to have little substance—they are unable to accept his liberating truth and even turn violent (8:31-59). Besides, many Ἰουδαῖοι who witnessed Lazarus’ resurrection ‘believe’ in Jesus (although perhaps only as a miracle worker), greatly upsetting their fellow Ἰουδαῖοι and leaders (11:45-48; cf. 12:10-11). Finally, even amongst ‘the authorities’ (either chief priests or Pharisees), there are ‘secret’ believers (12:42). However, John seems critical of a belief that is not openly confessed because of fear—notice how he sharply contrasts the positive, bold testimony of the blind man and his parents’ unwillingness to testify because of fear (9:18-34). Besides, these ‘believers’ were overly concerned with human approval (12:43), which, as Jesus pointed out earlier, prevents true belief (5:44). Thus, Jesus was able to get past the hostile attitude of his opponents and even win some over (whether publicly or secretly), though their belief seems to be inadequate at this point.⁷⁰ Simply because οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι has one referent it does not necessitate a single response from all its constituents—though, as a group, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι remains the quintessence of hostility, rejection and unbelief towards Jesus.⁷¹ Thus, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as a group is unchanging and fulfils a negative role in the

⁶⁹ In fact, John speaks of such a division at a cosmic scale in the reaction of ὁ κόσμος to Jesus’ coming (1:11-12). Most scholars recognise that ὁ κόσμος is a metaphorically extended referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (e.g. Bultmann, *John*, 86-87; Ashton, ‘Identity’, 65-68; Motyer, *Father*, 57; cf. Kierspel, *Jews*, 214-17).

⁷⁰ Cf. Culpepper, ‘John’, 276-80. *Contra* von Wahlde, who asserts that the hostile attitude of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι towards Jesus is constant and neither increases nor diminishes as the gospel progresses (‘The Johannine “Jews”’, 35). NB it is only towards *the end* of his ministry that Jesus is able to diffuse his opponents (10:19-21; 11:45-46; 12:42).

⁷¹ Our proposal of a single referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is also methodologically better than assuming a variety of meanings and having to determine the referent of each use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (so Fuller, “‘Jews’”, 32; von Wahlde, ‘The Johannine “Jews”’, 46-54; Kierspel, *Jews*, ch. 2). Von Wahlde, for example, creates the category of ‘Johannine use’, referring to the authorities who are always hostile, and the category of ‘neutral use’ (further divided into two sub-groups), containing all non-hostile occurrences. However, these categories seem artificial (as if John had such a complex scheme in mind) and, more importantly, von Wahlde is not able to fit in all passages neatly (nine passages within his category of ‘Johannine use’ cause him problems). Cf. the criticisms by Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 126) and Dunn (‘Question’, 196-98).

Gospel of John, but some individuals from this group change their allegiance to Jesus.

6. Conclusion

In an attempt to break the impasse in Johannine scholarship regarding the referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, we suggested a combination of a historical and narratological approach. The studies of Cohen, Freyne and Boyarin have shown that the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι acquired somewhere during the Second Temple period (but well before the First Century AD) a religious meaning, referring to the adherents of the Judaeen religion (whether or not living in Judaea). We then demonstrated that John had this extended referent in mind. Our study has led us to conclude that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John are a particular religious group within Judaism—the (strict) Torah- and temple-loyalists who are mainly located in Jerusalem and Judaea but could also have been present in Galilee. Their leaders consist of the chief priests who had the power of control and policymaking, and the Pharisees who had the ‘power’ of influence. We argued that John had a single referent in mind—albeit the referent is a composite group which does not present a uniform response.⁷² Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as a group is and remains hostile towards Jesus, but it is also divided about him and some individual Ἰουδαῖοι were able to express sympathy and even belief in Jesus—though not always in the full Johannine sense.

We demonstrated that John 11 constitutes the turning point in John’s portrayal of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. The raising of Lazarus and the resulting ‘defection’ of many Ἰουδαῖοι precipitates a meeting of the Sanhedrin. This marks a shift in hostility within οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι from the earlier religious-theological conflict with the Pharisees to a religious-political conflict with the chief priests near the end of Jesus’ ministry. While the Pharisees had the upper hand in an earlier meeting of the Sanhedrin (7:45-52), in keeping with their general dominance in John 7–10, in this meeting of the Sanhedrin it is the chief priests who have the dominant voice (11:47-53; cf. 12:10). When we come to the passion narratives, we see that John holds οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in general, and the chief priests in particular, responsible for Jesus’ death. Narratologically, the

⁷² *Contra* Kierspel, who contends that John seems ‘intentionally unspecific’ regarding the referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (*Jews*, 18).

Pharisees are absent and have been since the meeting of the Sanhedrin in 11:45-53 (12:19 records their last presence), but historically they may have been present at Jesus' passion as part of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.

Our findings indicate that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι was a distinct religious group in Jesus' time. Consequently, we refute the conclusion that John's use of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is anachronistic.⁷³ More can be said when we examine the relationship between the terms Ἰουδαῖος and Ἰσραήλ, in which the term Ἰουδαῖος reflects an outsider perspective (although it might be a Jewish one), whereas Ἰσραήλ reveals an insider or participatory perspective.⁷⁴ Although it is argued (especially by the Martyn-loyalists) that John's usage of the term Ἰουδαῖος simply betrays the parting of synagogue Judaism and Johannine Christianity, there is an alternative explanation. In John's dualistic world view, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are of the realm 'below' (8:23) whereas those who belong to Jesus (including the Johannine believers) are of the realm 'above'. Hence, John's perspective on his non-believing compatriots was an outsider's (though still Jewish) perspective, for whom he employed the appropriate term Ἰουδαῖος.⁷⁵ Our understanding of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in general and the Pharisees in particular may contribute broadly to Johannine studies, implicitly challenging the Martyn-hypothesis that a Johannine community was in conflict with a Pharisaic-dominated post-70 Judaism.⁷⁶

⁷³ *Contra* von Wahlde, 'Terms', 231-53; Tomson, "'Jews'", 197-98.

⁷⁴ Peter J. Tomson, 'The Names "Israel" and "Jew" in Ancient Judaism and the New Testament', *Bijdragen* 47 (1986): 120-40, 266-89. Cf. Karl Georg Kuhn, 'Ἰσραήλ, Ἰουδαῖος, Ἐβραῖος in der nach-antiken jüdischen Literatur', *TWNT* 3:360-70; J. H. Elliott, 'Jesus the Israelite Was Neither a "Jew" Nor a "Christian": On Correcting Misleading Nomenclature', *JSHJ* 5 (2007): 119-54.

⁷⁵ Cf. Boyarin, 'Ioudaioi', 232-33. Cf. the use of Ἰσραήλ in the Gospel of John (1:31, 49; 3:10; 12:13), while Ἰουδαῖοι is only used by the author and non-Jews such as the Samaritan woman (4:9), Pilate (18:33, 35; 19:19), and the Roman soldiers (19:3). The only exceptions are 4:22 and 18:36 where Jesus himself uses the term Ἰουδαῖοι as he speaks to non-Jews.

⁷⁶ Cf. Boyarin's thesis that Judaism and Christianity were not yet separate religions in the First Century AD and that the Gospel of John depicts an already existing split within the first-century Israelite communities ('Ioudaioi', 222, 238-39). *Contra* Hakola, who contends that the Johannine Christians no longer understood themselves as Jewish (*Identity*, 160-62, 226-31). For a detailed critique of Martyn's hypothesis, see Boyarin, 'Ioudaioi', 217-22; Tobias Hägerland, 'John's Gospel: A Two-Level Drama?', *JSNT* 25 (2003): 309-322; Edward W. Klink III, 'Expulsion from the Synagogue? Rethinking a Johannine Anachronism', *TynB* 59.1 (2008): 99-118.