A key passage in Jn’s presentation of Jesus as “the bread of life” is a quotation dealing with the manna in the wilderness. Like those in 7:42; 12:13; and 12:34, this citation occurs on the lips of the multitude who follow Jesus and is found nowhere else in the N. T. The formula καθώς ἐστιν γεγραμμένον ἀρτον occurs also in Jn 12:14 but nowhere else in the N. T. Cf. εἶδεν [τὸν] τόπον ὅπῃ ἦν γεγραμμένον (Lk 4:17). A common
formula in the N. T. is καθός γέραντης, 1) but it occurs nowhere in Jn. There is no one passage from the O. T. which completely satisfies this quotation, but the most direct sources are Ps 78: 24 and Ex 16: 4. In addition cf. Ex 16: 15, 35; Dt 8: 3, 16; Num 11: 6-9; Josh 5: 12; Neh 9: 15, 20; Ps 105: 40; Prov 9: 5; Wis 16: 20; 2 Bar 29: 8. The context seems to indicate that the writer may have had several O. T. passages in mind. The combination of manna and bread occurs in the O. T. in Dt 8: 3 as well as in Ps 78: 24, and the same combination occurs in Jn 6: 31 and 6: 48-50. Several Johannine terms, πνεύμα, δίδωμι, μάννα, δύσω, δύσος (Jn uses the verb δυσώ in 6: 35) occur in Neh 9: 20. Those O. T. passages may have influenced the thinking of Jn in developing the context of the quotation, especially his idea of Jesus as "the bread of life" and "the living bread" in 6: 35, 48, 51. Cf. also his idea of Jesus as the giver of "living water" in 4: 10 f.; 7: 38.

Philo is also interested in bread and manna. He says that "the sacred word bears abundant witness that the food of the soul is not earthly but heavenly" and then quotes Ex 16: 4 as evidence. "The soul is nourished not with earthly and perishable things but with such words as God shall have rained from the lofty and pure sphere which he [i.e., the writer or Moses or God] has called heaven." 2) Here the nourishment of the soul seems to be knowledge (ἐνοικία) because he says: "The people, and all that goes to make the soul, is to go out and gather and make a beginning of knowledge, not all at once but 'the day's portion for a day.' " 3) In Leg. Alleg. 3: 59 (169 f.) Philo quotes Ex 16: 15 f. and interprets τὸ δύσω (Heb נבום) of vs. 16 as the word of God. "You see of what sort the soul's food is. It is a word of God, continuous, resembling dew, embracing all the soul . . . ." In 3: 60 (172 f.) he says: "This bread is the food which God hath given to the soul, for it to feed on His own utterance and His own word; for this bread, which He hath given us to eat, is 'this word.' " In 3: 61 (175) he quotes Dt 8: 3 and says: "We have a proof . . . in His feeding us with His own most 'generic' (or 'all-embracing') word [λόγος] for 'manna' means 'something,' and this is the most generic of all terms. And the word [λόγος] of God is above all the world, and is eldest and most all-embracing of created

1) Cf., e.g., Mk 1: 2; Mt 26: 24; Lk 2: 23; Acts 7: 42; and frequently in Paul, e.g., Rom 1: 17; 2: 24; 1 Cor 1: 31; 2 Cor 9: 9.
2) Leg. Alleg. 3: 56 (= 162 f.).