

JOHN, JESUS, AND HISTORY, VOLUME 3:  
GLIMPSES OF JESUS THROUGH  
THE JOHANNINE LENS

SBL Press

# EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND ITS LITERATURE

David G. Horrell, General Editor

*Editorial Board:*

Warren Carter

Amy-Jill Levine

Judith M. Lieu

Margaret Y. MacDonald

Dale B. Martin

Number 18

SBL Press



JOHN, JESUS, AND HISTORY, VOLUME 3:  
GLIMPSES OF JESUS THROUGH  
THE JOHANNINE LENS

*Edited by*

Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, S.J., and Tom Thatcher

SBL Press



**SBL PRESS**

**Atlanta**

Copyright © 2016 by SBL Press

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by means of any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed in writing to the Rights and Permissions Office, SBL Press, 825 Houston Mill Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 USA.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

John, Jesus, and history / edited by Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher.

p. cm. — (Society of Biblical Literature symposium series ; 44)

Contents: v. 1. Critical appraisals of critical views.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN: 978-1-58983-293-0 (paper binding : alk. paper)

1. Bible. N.T. John—Criticism, interpretation, etc.—Congresses. 2. Jesus Christ—Historicity—Congresses. I. Anderson, Paul N., 1956– II. Just, Felix. III. Thatcher, Tom, 1967–.

BS2615.52.J65 2007

226.5'067—dc22

2007035191

Volume 2: ISBN 978-1-58983-392-0 (Society of Biblical Literature Early Christianity and its literature ; 2)

Volume 3: ISBN 978-0-88414-082-5 (paper binding : alk. paper) — 978-0-88414-083-2

(ebook) — 978-0-88414-084-9 (hardcover : alk. paper) (Society of Biblical Literature Early Christianity and its literature ; 18)

Printed on acid-free paper.



Dedicated to D. Moody Smith

During the finalization of this manuscript we learned of the passing of Moody Smith, a member of the original steering committee of the John, Jesus, and History Project. Moody was one of the leading American New Testament scholars over the last half-century and a luminary in the international “Johannine School,” so it is only fitting that this volume is dedicated to him. Thanks, Moody, for your contribution and example; your measured and reasoned legacy abides.

SBL Press

SBL Press

## CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	xi
Abbreviations.....	xv
Introduction and Overview	
Paul N. Anderson and Jaime Clark-Soles .....	1
Part 1: Glimpses of the Passion of Jesus through the Johannine Lens	
The Last Days of Jesus in John: An Introduction to the Issues	
Paul N. Anderson.....	29
History and Theology in the Johannine Presentation of the Causes for the Death of Jesus: John 11:45–53 as Convergence Point	
Donald Senior, C.P. ....	43
Jesus and Pilate: Memories in John’s Gospel?	
Warren Carter.....	59
“What Is Truth?”: Pilate’s Perspective on Jesus in John 18:33–38	
Craig S. Keener .....	77
The Hour of the Lamb? Some Remarks on John 19:14 and the Hour of Jesus’s Condemnation and/or Crucifixion	
Stephan Witetschek.....	95
Story, Plot, and History in the Johannine Passion Narrative	
Jean Zumstein.....	109
Points and Stars: John and the Synoptics	
Wendy E. S. North.....	119

Traces of Jesus in a Pre-Johannine Passion Narrative Robert T. Fortna .....	133
The Passion of Jesus and the Gospel of John: Progress and Prospects Tom Thatcher .....	141
Part 2: Glimpses of the Works of Jesus through the Johannine Lens	
The Works of Jesus in John: An Introduction to the Issues Paul N. Anderson .....	173
Who Were the First Disciples of Jesus? An Assessment of the Historicity of the Johannine Call Narrative (John 1:35–51) Andreas J. Köstenberger .....	189
The Perspective of a Jewish Priest on the Johannine Timing of the Action in the Temple James S. McLaren .....	201
Jesus in Relation to John “the Testifier” and Not “the Baptizer”: The Fourth Gospel’s Portrayal of John the Baptist and Its Historical Possibilities Robert L. Webb .....	215
The Signs in the Gospel of John Udo Schnelle .....	231
The Geopolitics of Water and John 4:1–42 Jo-Ann A. Brant .....	245
Siloam, Bethesda, and the Johannine Water Motif Gary M. Burge .....	259
John, Jesus, and Virtuoso Religion Tim Ling .....	271



The Last Days of Jesus in John and the Synoptics: The Evidence from Astronomy and Chronology Colin Humphreys.....	283
Response to the Essays in Part 2 Annette Merz .....	299
Part 3: Glimpses of the Words of Jesus through the Johannine Lens	
The Message of Jesus in John: An Introduction to the Issues Paul N. Anderson .....	321
The Aphorisms of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel: A Look at John 4:35 Linda McKinnish Bridges .....	337
Jesus Sayings in the Johannine Discourses: A Proposal R. Alan Culpepper.....	353
Johannine Dominical Sayings as Metatexts of Synoptic Sayings of Jesus: Reflections on a New Category within Reception History Michael Theobald.....	383
Semitic Language and Syntax within the Speech of the Johannine Jesus Steven A. Graham .....	407
Observations on God's Agent and Agency in John 5–9: Tradition, Exposition, and Glimpses into History Peder Borgen.....	423
From the "Kingdom of God" to "Eternal Life": The Transformation of Theological Language in the Fourth Gospel Jörg Frey .....	439
The Johannine Son of Man and the Historical Jesus: John 9:35 as a Test Case Benjamin E. Reynolds.....	459

What Happened to “Good News for the Poor” in the Johannine Tradition?  
 William Loader.....469

Some Reflections on the Historicity of the Words “Laying Down Your Life for Your Friends” in John 15:13  
 Jan van der Watt .....481

John and the Historical Jesus: A Response  
 James D. G. Dunn.....493

Conclusion

Contributions of This Volume and the De-Johannification of Jesus  
 Paul N. Anderson .....507

Works Cited.....537

Contributors.....587

Index of Ancient Sources.....595

Index of Names.....629



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No important venture happens in isolation, and many have contributed to the success of the present volume. The editors appreciate the more than five hundred scholars around the world who asked to receive papers before they were presented in the sessions of the John, Jesus, and History Group and who contributed to the discussions on many levels. Attendance at our sessions has continued to be strong, ranging between fifty and three hundred at the annual Society of Biblical Literature meetings, but we are also aware that discussions have continued beyond our sessions. We also value working closely with the other groups, including holding joint sessions with the Johannine Literature, Historical Jesus, and Synoptic Gospels Sections of the Society of Biblical Literature, as well as the Bible in Ancient and Modern Media Group. Since this is a highly interdisciplinary venture, dialogic exchange between scholars who are experts in differing subjects is profitable on many levels.

As colleagues on the steering committee, we must express our gratitude for the high privilege of doing good work together for the Group's first nine years: Tom Thatcher; Felix Just, S.J.; Paul N. Anderson; Jaime Clark-Soles; D. Moody Smith; R. Alan Culpepper; and Mary Coloe, PBVM. As some of our members transitioned off the steering committee and as our status as a Group was approved for another two triennia, new members of the steering committee included Craig Koester, Catrin Williams, Helen Bond, and Chris Keith. In addition to Felix Just's contribution maintaining the website (<http://johannine.org/JJH.html>), we thank Mary Coloe and Tom Thatcher for gathering a collection of essays on John and Qumran, Tom Thatcher and Catrin Williams for gathering a special collection of essays celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Dodd's *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, and Alan Culpepper and Paul Anderson for gathering a collection of essays on the Johannine Epistles. Therefore, the books resulting directly from the work of the John, Jesus, and History Project include the following:

- Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher, eds., *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 1: Critical Appraisals of Critical Views*. SymS 44. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.
- Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher, eds., *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 2: Aspects of History in the Fourth Gospel*. ECL 2. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009.
- Mary Coloe and Tom Thatcher, eds., *Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Sixty Years of Discovery and Debate*. EJL 32. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.
- Tom Thatcher and Catrin H. Williams, eds., *Engaging with C. H. Dodd on the Gospel of John: Sixty Years of Tradition and Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Paul N. Anderson and R. Alan Culpepper, eds., *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles*. ECL 13. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

Appreciation is also expressed for those who have served as chairs and cochairs of the John, Jesus, and History Project: Tom Thatcher (chair, 2002–2004), Tom Thatcher and Paul Anderson (cochairs, 2005–2007), Paul Anderson and Jaime Clark-Soles (2008–2010), Jaime Clark-Soles and Craig Koester (cochairs, 2011–2013), and Craig Koester and Catrin Williams (cochairs, 2014–2016). We also appreciate the work of Jimmy Dunn, whose language of “Jesus remembered” has been co-opted in the planning of our current triennia, focusing on Jesus Remembered in the Johannine Tradition (2011–2016) and Jesus Remembered in the Johannine Situation (2014–2016). We also appreciate the permission to publish again slightly different versions of several essays that were published elsewhere after they had been presented in our sessions. Specifically, earlier versions of the essays by Linda McKinnish Bridges and Benjamin E. Reynolds were published in the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9.2 (Bridges 2011, 207–29; Reynolds 2011, 230–42); the essay by Wendy North was published in North 2015, 207–19; earlier forms of the essays by Peder Borgen (2004), Jan van der Watt (2014), Stephan Witetscheck (2011), Gary Burge (2011), and Donald Senior (2011, 215–32) were published elsewhere.

Furthermore, we want to express our appreciation to the staff of the Society of Biblical Literature, who have supported our sessions and made this collaborative work possible: Matthew Collins and Charlie Haws (Directors of Congresses) and Kent Harold Richards and John F. Kutsko

(Executive Directors). Their helpfulness is greatly appreciated, and it has been excellent to work with Victor H. Matthews, Gail R. O'Day, Judith H. Newman, and David G. Horrell (Editors of the Symposium series, the Early Judaism and Its Literature series, and the Early Christianity and Its Literature series) and with Leigh Andersen, Nicole Tilford, Kathie Klein, and especially Bob Buller and the rest of the SBL Press editorial staff for their wonderful helpfulness! In addition, the amazing work of Paula Hampton, Administrative Assistant in the George Fox University College of Christian Studies, is greatly appreciated in helping with proof-reading and gathering the indexes, along with our fine students: Joanna Painter, Johnny Walker, Taylor Staman, Emma Bloomquist, Mercie Hodges, Megan Dahlberg, Makenna Wimmer, Conor Foley, and Courtney Bither—a fine group of helpers, indeed!

Finally, we thank our authors and readers for being willing to engage rigorously a controversial yet momentous set of subjects, plying the best of their skills and judgment to the issues at hand. Beyond uncritical traditionalism, beyond corrective criticality, beyond second naïveté, a new form of inquiry is required—perhaps something like second criticality, wherein tradition and criticism are both assessed analytically—if some of these longstanding biblical conundrums are to be addressed suitably. So, we hope that this work will not simply mark the conclusion of our third John, Jesus, and History triennium but that it will also launch further meaningful interdisciplinary contributions. Such is the value of compelling critical scholarship, whatever direction it may lead.

SBL Press

SBL Press

## ABBREVIATIONS

### Primary Sources

<i>1 Apol.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>First Apology</i>
1 En.	1 Enoch
1QH <sup>a</sup>	Thanksgiving Hymns
1QM	War Scroll
1QpHab	Pesher Habakkuk
1QS	Rule of the Community
3 Regn.	<i>Kingship 3</i> , Dio Chrysostom
4QTest	4QTestimonia
11QT <sup>a</sup>	Temple Scroll
<i>Ab urbe cond.</i>	Livy, <i>Ab urbe condita</i>
Abr.	Philo, <i>De Abrahamo</i>
<i>Ad Nic.</i>	Isocrates, <i>Ad Nicoclem</i>
<i>Adul. amic.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur</i>
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Agricola</i>
<i>Alc.</i>	Euripides, <i>Alcestis</i>
<i>Alex.</i>	Arrian, <i>Anabasis Alexandri</i>
<i>Amic.</i>	Cicero, <i>De amicitia</i>
<i>Amic. mult.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De amicorum multitudine</i>
<i>An.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De anima</i>
<i>Anab.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Anabasis</i>
<i>Andr.</i>	Euripides, <i>Andromache</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>Ant. rom.</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Antiquitates romanae</i>
<i>Ap. Jas.</i>	Secret Book of James
<i>Aph.</i>	Hippocrates, <i>Aphorisms</i>
<i>Att.</i>	Cicero, <i>Epistulae ad Atticum</i>

b.	Babylonian Talmud
<i>Bapt.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De baptiso</i>
Bar	Baruch
Barn.	Barnabas
Ber.	Berakot
<i>Bib. Hist.</i>	Diodorus Siculus, <i>Historical Library</i>
<i>Brut.</i>	Cicero, <i>Brutus</i> or <i>De claris oratoribus</i>
<i>Calig.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Caius Caligula</i>
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document
<i>Cic.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Cicero</i>
<i>Civ. W.</i>	Lucan, <i>Civil War</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	Philo, <i>De confusione linguarum</i>
<i>Cons.</i>	Augustine, <i>De consensu evangelistarum</i>
<i>Crit. frg.</i>	Philodemus, <i>On Frank Criticism</i>
<i>Cyr.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Cyropaedia</i>
<i>De fer.</i>	Fronto, <i>De feriis Alsiansibus</i>
<i>De. or.</i>	Cicero, <i>De oratore</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	Philo, <i>De decalogo</i>
<i>Deipn.</i>	Athenaeus, <i>Deipnosophistae</i>
<i>Demon.</i>	Lucian, <i>Demonax</i>
<i>Descr.</i>	Pausanius, <i>Graeciae descriptio</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin, <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
<i>Dial. Sav.</i>	Dialogue of the Savior
<i>Diatr.</i>	Epictetus, <i>Diatribai</i>
<i>Did.</i>	Didache
<i>Dig.</i>	Digesta
<i>Ench.</i>	Epictetus, <i>Enchiridion</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Eph.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Ephesians</i>
<i>Epic.</i>	Diogenes, <i>Epicurean Maxims</i>
<i>Epig.</i>	Martial, <i>Epigrams</i>
<i>Epist.</i>	Jerome, <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Epit.</i>	Arius Didymus, <i>Epitome of Stoic Ethics</i>
‘Erub.	‘Erubin
<i>Eth. eud.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Ethica eudemia</i>
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Ethica nicomachea</i>
<i>Exil.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De exilio</i>
<i>Exod. Rab.</i>	Exodus Rabbah
<i>Fab.</i>	Phaedrus, <i>Fables</i>



<i>Facta</i>	Valerius Maciumus, <i>Facta et dicta memorabilia</i>
<i>Fin.</i>	Cicero, <i>De finibus</i>
<i>Flacc.</i>	Philo, <i>In Flaccum</i>
<i>frg.</i>	fragment
<i>Fug.</i>	Lucian, <i>Fugitivi</i>
<i>Gos. Heb.</i>	Gospel of the Hebrews
<i>Gos. Thom.</i>	Gospel of Thomas
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus Haereses</i>
<i>Hell.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Hellenica</i>
<i>Her.</i>	Philo, <i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Heracl.</i>	Euripides, <i>Heraclidae</i>
<i>Hermot.</i>	Lucian, <i>Hermotimus</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Historiae</i> ; Polybius, <i>Histories</i>
<i>Hist. Eccl.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>Hypoth.</i>	Philo, <i>Hypothetica</i>
<i>Icar.</i>	Lucian, <i>Icaromenippus</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	Quintillian, <i>Institutio oratoria</i>
<i>Is. Os.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De Iside et Osiride</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	Jubilees
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
<i>Lam. Rab.</i>	Lamentations Rabbah
<i>Leg.</i>	Philo, <i>Legum allegoriae</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	Philo, <i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
<i>Let. Aris.</i>	Letter of Aristeas
<i>Life</i>	Josephus, <i>The Life</i>
<i>Lucil.</i>	Seneca, <i>Ad Lucilium</i>
<i>Lys.</i>	Plato, <i>Lysis</i>
<i>m.</i>	Mishnah
<i>Mem.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Memorabilia</i>
<i>Merc. cond.</i>	Lucian, <i>De mercede conductis</i>
<i>Metam.</i>	Apuleius, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	Philo, <i>De migration Abrahami</i>
<i>Miqw.</i>	Miqwa'ot
<i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	Philo, <i>De vita Mosis</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	Censorinus, <i>De die natali</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	Pliny the Elder, <i>Naturalis historia</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	Seneca, <i>Naturales quaestiones</i>
<i>Noct. att.</i>	Aulus Gellius, <i>Noctes atticae</i>

<i>Oct.</i>	Minucius, <i>Octavius</i>
<i>Or.</i>	Dio Chrysostom, <i>Orationes</i> ; Isocrates, <i>Orationes</i> ; Lysias, <i>Orationes</i>
<i>Or. Brut.</i>	Cicero, <i>Orator ad M. Brutum</i>
<i>Orat.</i>	Libanius, <i>Orationes</i>
<i>P.Fay.</i>	<i>Fayum Towns and Their Papyri</i> . Edited by B. P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt, and D.G. Hogarth. Egypt Exploration Society. Graeco-Roman Memoirs 3. London, 1900.
<i>P.Oxy.</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> . Published by the Egypt Exploration Society in Graeco-Roman Memoirs. London.
<i>p. Ta'an.</i>	Pesher Ta'anit
<i>P.Thead.</i>	<i>Papyrus de Théadelphie</i> . Edited by P. Jouguet. Paris, 1911.
<i>Peregr.</i>	Lucian, <i>De morte Peregrini</i>
<i>Pesah.</i>	Pesahim
<i>Phil.</i>	Cicero, <i>Orationes philippicae</i>
<i>Philops.</i>	Lucian, <i>Philopseudes</i>
<i>Pisc.</i>	Lucian, <i>Piscator</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	Philo, <i>De plantatione</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Politica</i>
<i>Princ. iner.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Ad principem ineruditum</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	Psalms of Solomon
<i>Pud.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De pudicitia</i>
<i>Pyth.</i>	Iamblichus, <i>Life of Pythagoras</i>
<i>QE</i>	Philo, <i>Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum</i>
<i>QG</i>	Philo, <i>Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin</i>
<i>Quaest. rom.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Quaestiones romanae et graecae</i>
<i>Quint. frat.</i>	Cicero, <i>Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem</i>
<i>Reg. brev.</i>	Basil, <i>Regulae brevius tractatae</i>
<i>Res.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De resurrectione carnis</i>
<i>Resp.</i>	Plato, <i>Respublica</i>
<i>Rom. Hist.</i>	Dio Cassius, <i>Roman History</i>
<i>Rosc. Amer.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino</i>
<i>Šabb.</i>	Šabbat
<i>Sanh.</i>	Sanhedrin
<i>Sat.</i>	Horace, <i>Satirae</i> ; Juvenal, <i>Satirae</i> ; Macrobius, <i>Satirae</i>
<i>Sept. sap. conv.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Septem sapientium convivium</i>
<i>Sest.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Sestio</i>
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	Sibylline Oracles

<i>Smyr.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to Smyrna</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	Plato, <i>Sophista</i>
<i>Spec.</i>	Philo, <i>De specialibus legibus</i>
<i>Symp.</i>	Plato, <i>Symposium</i>
t.	Tosefta
<i>Tract. Ev. Jo.</i>	Augustine, <i>In Evangelium Johannis tractatus</i>
<i>Ver. hist.</i>	Lucian, <i>Vera historia</i>
<i>Verr.</i>	Cicero, <i>In Verrem</i>
<i>Vit.</i>	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Lives of Eminent Philosophers</i>
<i>Vit. Apoll.</i>	Philostratus, <i>Vita Apollonis</i>
<i>Vit. auct.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Vitarum auctio</i>
y.	Jerusalem Talmud
Yad.	Yadayim

## Secondary Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Double Day, 1992.
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AcBib	Academia Biblica
ACNT	Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Part 2, <i>Principat</i> . Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AThR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BAGD	Bauer, Walter, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
BAR	<i>Biblical Archeological Review</i>
BASP	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBB	<i>Bulletin de bibliographie biblique</i>

BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	The Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BTZ</i>	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>BZNW</i>	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte</i>
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>ClQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
ETS	Erfurter theologische Studien
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExAud</i>	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion

HKNT	Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HThKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
ITS	Innsbrucker Theologische Studien
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JSHJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KBL	Koehler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner. <i>Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros</i> . 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 1958.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
<i>LASBF</i>	<i>Liber Annuus Studii Biblici Franciscani</i>
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
NAB	New American Bible
NAC	The New American Commentary
NIBCNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>

NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTL	New Testament Library
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
OCPHS	Oxford Center for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies Series
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
QRT	<i>Quaker Religious Thought</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
RelSRev	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> . Edited by Hans Dieter Betz. 4th ed. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–2007.
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
ScrB	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTSU	Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
SR	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
SSP	Sacra Pagina
SymS	Symposium Series
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlicher Zeitalter

TBC	Torch Biblical Commentary
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Bible Today</i>
TBT	Theologische Bibliothek Töpelmann
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
TTS	Theologische Texte und Studien
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	<i>Word and World</i>
YCS	Yale Classical Studies
ZNT	<i>Zeitschrift für Neues Testament</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

SBL Press

SBL Press



## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

*Paul N. Anderson and Jaime Clark-Soles<sup>1</sup>*

In November 2010, Professor Gregory Sterling opened the joint session between the John, Jesus, and History Group and the Historical Jesus Section of the Society of Biblical Literature by correctly acknowledging that the two disjunctions levied by David F. Strauss of Tübingen a century and a half ago were largely accepted by Jesus researchers and New Testament scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. First, Strauss argued that the Jesus of history must be divorced from the Christ of faith. Second, given some irreconcilable differences between the Synoptics and John, and the three-against-one reality, one must choose between the Synoptics and John. While John may serve theological purposes, so critical scholars have since assumed, the Synoptics trump the Johannine presentation of Jesus on nearly all historical accounts—at least the important ones.

These either/or stances, furthering the earlier stance of F. C. Baur, provided momentous critical bases for the dehistoricization of John and the de-Johannification of Jesus in the modern era. Given John's highly theological presentation of Jesus and extensive differences with the Synoptics, these judgments are certainly understandable. After all, the subjective investment of an author invariably jeopardizes the objectivity of that report. And, given that John's narrative is introduced by a worship hymn to Christ as the preexistent Logos, such a cosmic perspective may seem to eclipse, or at least override, the mundane character of John's earth-bound features. One can thus appreciate why the historical quests for Jesus over the last century and a half have largely excluded the Fourth Gospel from

---

1. Jaime Clark-Soles and Paul N. Anderson served as Co-Chairs of the John, Jesus, and History Project from 2008 to 2010. A slightly different form of this essay was published on The Bible and Interpretation site: <http://www.bibleinterp.com/PDFs/Anderson3.pdf>.

the database of worthy sources. Then again, problems with such totalizing disjunctions are real.

For one thing, Strauss's move to radically divorce history and theology creates new problems. While John is indeed theological, so are the Synoptics. Mark's content is highly theological in its calls to discipleship and the way of the cross, and its narrative is clearly crafted climactically in its design. All roads lead to Jerusalem in Mark, and it has rightly been called (by Martin Kähler and others) "a passion narrative with an extended introduction." Likewise, Matthew and Luke also have their own pronounced theological interests, so the Synoptics are every bit as theological as John. Further, while John is highly spiritualized, it also features a great deal of distinctive mundane and theologically innocent material, requiring critical consideration. As historicity itself is a highly subjective interest, "totally objective history" is a myth that may be as misleading as it is prized among modern audiences. There is no such thing as nonrhetorical history, since every historical claim, or challenge, is itself a rhetorical assertion. The problem, of course, is that Strauss's first point is critically flawed from the start. Therefore, while the dialectic between history and theology is worth noting, its programmatic role in disparaging the one Gospel that explicitly claims first-hand contact with its subject is problematic within the historical quest for Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>2</sup>

Strauss's second dichotomy also suffers critical inadequacy when plied unreflectively against John. Given that Matthew and Luke used Mark extensively, we have here not a three-against-one contest (the Synoptics versus John), but a one-to-one contrast, a Johannine-Markan set of issues to be assessed critically. Further, if some sort of familiarity or inter-traditional engagement may have characterized the Johannine tradition's relation to Mark's (or to other traditions), differences of inclusion and slant may be direct factors of historical interests and knowledge rather

---

2. Interestingly, Strauss claims that the last chain in the harbor blocking Christian theology from "the open sea of rational science" is the linking of the full humanity of Jesus with his transcendent nature. Therefore, to "break this chain is the purpose of the present work, as it has been in all of my theological writings" (Strauss 1977, 5), so he claims. Therefore, if Strauss is right that theology displaces historicity, then his life's work is historically untenable, as he declares his life-long interest to be theological. Of course, Strauss is wrong in that first assertion, and a more nuanced reading of the Gospels, and Strauss, is called for among reasoned scholars (for a fuller critique of Strauss, see Anderson 2013b).

than indicators of ahistorical theologization proper. As other Jesus narratives are acknowledged by the author(s) of John 20:30–31 and 21:24–25, claiming a desire *not* to duplicate other accounts, might this explain *why* over 85 percent of John is not found in the Synoptics? What if John is different from Mark and the other Gospels on purpose, for historical reasons, rather than accidentally or for theological reasons? Or, what if John was written first, or in isolation from the other Gospels? Might John's autonomy and independence from the Synoptics thus explain its differences? These are the sorts of issues that must be engaged critically, since one's views on John's character and development affect one's criteria for determining Johannine historicity or ahistoricity.<sup>3</sup>

Then again, what is to be made of Johannine-Synoptic similarities? It could be that they reflect John's use of Synoptic material, although none of the similarities are word-for-word identical for more than a two- or three-word string of agreements. Even so, the setting or function of a similar phrase is different. If there were some sort of intertraditional influence, however, why is it assumed that it happened only at one time or manner or that it happened only in one direction? Echoes of stories and details might also have flowed back and forth between traditions during the oral and written stages of their development. Thus John's formative tradition might have influenced some Synoptic accounts, even if it was finalized last. Might Johannine-Synoptic similarities and differences suggest some sort of intertraditional contact, or are such features actually independent corroborations of the ministry and message of the Gospel's subject: Jesus?

Whichever of the above scenarios is the case, simply considering the Synoptics "historical" and John "ahistorical" is naïve and overly simplistic. It does not account for the many dozens of exceptions to its speculative assumptions when the component elements of such a view are assessed critically. Admittedly, including John in the quest for Jesus also brings with it new sets of problems for traditional and critical scholars alike—especially if some of its contributions are found to be historical, not simply theological. Pointedly, if John's presentation on a certain matter is judged historically superior to the Synoptics, and assuming that harmonization is

---

3. Note the works of Robinson 1985, Hofrichter 1997, and Berger 1997, which argue Johannine priority, and even Mark's dependence on John (Hofrichter and Berger); note the works of Bauckham 1998, and Anderson 2013c, which see John as written for readers of Mark, as something of an augmentation, or even a corrective, of Mark.

elusive, would that imply that the three Synoptics are historically flawed when compared against John? Along those lines, sidelining the Johannine witness as merely theological has made things easier for both traditional and critical scholars; but ease is not the goal of critical studies—including the John, Jesus, and History Project. If anything, discerning aspects of historicity in the Johannine account of Jesus and his ministry adds new problems as well as alleviating some others. In whatever directions the critical evidence may lead, interpreters will have to deal with the most compelling results and with their implications.

Given that the first three quests for Jesus have largely followed the ground rules laid down by Strauss and others, it follows that if Strauss and his companions were wrong, so are those who have followed in their wake.<sup>4</sup> The implications here are extensive. Just as it is wrong to put the Synoptics or John in a history-only straightjacket, it is wrong to put John or the Synoptics in a theology-only straightjacket. One must recognize that the Synoptics are both historical and theological and that John is both theological and historical. Thus, many of the bases for determining reliable data for understanding Jesus of Nazareth are called into question—including methodologies for determining Johannine historicity, assumptions regarding the origin and development of the Johannine tradition, inferences made regarding John's relation to the Synoptics, and views on the relation between history and theology among the gospel traditions.

Recent quests for Jesus have sought to make use of apocryphal texts and gnostic gospels, while excluding the one canonical gospel claiming first-hand memory of Jesus and his ministry. But is the programmatic exclusion of John from Jesus studies, while including everything else, a sound critical move? Certainly not.<sup>5</sup> Further, while a good deal of material in John is highly theological, much or most of it is not—neither implicitly nor explicitly.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps we need a *fourth* quest for Jesus: one that includes

---

4. For an overview of the history of the quests for the historical Jesus, see Jaime Clark-Soles 2010, 103–26.

5. Such is the overall judgment of Anderson, Just, and Thatcher 2007. See in particular the critical reviews of the literature in that volume regarding Johannine studies and the quests for Jesus by Robert Kysar, Jack Verheyden, Mark Allan Powell, and Donald Carson.

6. See the many ways in which aspects of historicity are abundantly evident in John's Gospel; such is the overall conclusion of the essays in Anderson, Just, and Thatcher 2009. Consider, for instance, this analysis of gradations of symbolization in John 18–19 (the section in John, along with John 6, that contains the most similarities

John critically rather than excluding it programmatically. Such an inclusive quest has already begun in the new millennium, with the John, Jesus, and History Project playing a key role within that development. The question, of course, is how to approach John's historicity and how to make sense of its content in the attempt to learn more about the Jesus of history, not necessarily the Christ of faith. And, such is what this third collection of essays within that venture aspires to advance.

### The John, Jesus, and History Project: Its Third Triennium

Since its beginning at the turn of the new millennium, the overall mission of the John, Jesus, and History Project has been to assess critically the relationships between the Gospel of John, Jesus of Nazareth, and the nature of historiography itself. As an overview, our first triennium (2002–2004) posed *critical appraisals of critical views*, critiquing two dominant trajectories in the modern era: the *dehistoricization of John* and the *de-Johannification of Jesus*. Literature reviews, an evaluation of critical platforms, methodological essays, and a case study set the larger inquiry into motion. The results of those inquiries were published in *John, Jesus, and History 1* (Anderson, Just, and Thatcher 2007), and following studies carried this inquiry further.

Our second triennium (2005–2007) explored *aspects of historicity in the Fourth Gospel*, examining relevant historical features in John 1–4, 5–12, and 13–21, respectively. *John, Jesus, and History 2* (Anderson, Just, and Thatcher 2009) features the results of that endeavor. Significant within this collection is the way that it directly challenges the dehistoricization of John as a critically engaged collection. While it is obvious that not everything in John is historically crafted, at least some of it appears to be—in critical perspective. Thus, a more measured approach to the issues serves well all sides of the debate.

Our third triennium (2008–2010) has therefore sought to yield *glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine lens*; scholars worked through the passion narratives, the works of Jesus, and the words of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. Like our previous two triennia, we did not prescribe particular approaches

---

with the Synoptics), where we find fifteen instances of explicitly symbolic or theological detail, seventeen instances of implicitly symbolic or associative detail, sixteen instances of possibly symbolic or correlative detail, and eighteen instances of unlikely symbolic or theologically innocent detail (Anderson 2006c).

or outcomes; we simply sought to connect first-rate biblical scholars with important subjects and asked contributors to substantiate critically any judgments they reached. The results are included in this volume, and significant is the way these essays challenge the de-Johannification of Jesus.

### Special Sessions and Related Projects

In addition to hosting two main sessions on glimpses of Jesus in John each of the three years from 2008 to 2010, we organized several ancillary sessions and projects that focused on important related subjects. Some of these special sessions or celebrated anniversaries have addressed what was needed at the time. For instance, leading up to the sixtieth anniversary of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Society of Biblical Literature organizers encouraged the John, Jesus, and History Group to organize a special session on the subject at the 2007 Society of Biblical Literature meeting in San Diego, which led to a state-of-the-art analysis of the issue and the publication of an important collection of essays edited by Mary Coloe and Tom Thatcher (2011). The Society of Biblical Literature meetings that year also included a set of joint sessions with the Johannine Literature Section that featured essays by senior and junior Johannine scholars worldwide, which were gathered and edited by Tom Thatcher (2007b). While these sessions and book-length projects did not deal directly with our main foci, they did bolster explorations of aspects of historicity in John and implications for Jesus research.

Leading up to the 2008 Society of Biblical Literature meeting in Boston, it was becoming apparent that aspects of Johannine historicity and quests for Jesus in Johannine perspective were emerging in scholarly literature, so we organized a major book-review session engaging three books: *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus* by Paul Anderson (2006b); *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* by Richard Bauckham (2007b); and *The Fourth Gospel in Four Dimensions* by D. Moody Smith (2008). Engaging each of these books, Judith M. Lieu addressed “Implications for the Study of John,” Amy-Jill Levine commented upon “Implications for the Study of Jesus,” and Andreas J. Köstenberger explored “Implications for the Study of History.” The discussion revealed that understandings of gospel traditions and their developments deserved a new look—perhaps even a reconsideration of the critical exclusion of eyewitness testimony from gospel traditions, especially in Mark and John. Discerning the trajectory and development of the Johannine tradition is itself a monumental task, but all

three of these works argued for some form of autonomous Jesus tradition underlying the Johannine narrative rather than its being derivative from the Synoptics or from hypothetical sources. Such inferences, of course, have implications for understanding the historical subject of John's narrative—Jesus—despite its being a stylized and theologically laden rendering of his ministry.

Given that many criteria for determining historicity in the modern quest for Jesus have been designed to privilege Synoptic presentations of Jesus over and against the Johannine witness, we organized a special session on “Methodologies for Determining Johannine Historicity” for the 2009 Society of Biblical Literature meeting held in New Orleans; a second session was organized for the 2014 Society of Biblical Literature meeting in San Diego. These presentations and discussions explored considerations of ancient historiography as well as developments within understandings of historicity and ahistoricity in the modern era. A third set of papers will likely lead to a self-standing volume on that subject, as criteria for determining historicity within gospel studies are themselves coming under review by scholars internationally.

Following on Urban C. von Wahlde's paper presented in 2005 (see von Wahlde 2009b), which featured the archaeological discovery in Jerusalem the previous year of the second Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem, it became apparent to the John, Jesus, and History steering committee that we needed to host a sustained set of presentations on John and archaeology. Therefore, an additional session was organized for the 2009 meetings, as the first of three sessions on “Archaeology and the Fourth Gospel.” Papers were thus solicited from top archaeologists in the world, commenting on particular features in the Gospel of John that demonstrate a striking correlation with recent archaeological discoveries. Attendance at these sessions was very strong, and despite a diversity of approaches and outcomes, it became clear that the extensive presence of archaeologically relevant references in John calls for a reassessment of its “otherworldly” orientation. These and other essays will be published in a collection entitled *Archaeology and the Fourth Gospel*, bolstering the other work being furthered by the project.<sup>7</sup>

---

7. Publication by Eerdmans is anticipated in its Studying the Historical Jesus series; such a collection on this subject has never before been gathered.

While the John, Jesus, and History Group had cosponsored several joint sessions with the Society of Biblical Literature's Johannine Literature Section over the years, we had yet to feature a joint session with the Society of Biblical Literature's Historical Jesus Section. So in 2010 we organized such a session devoted to *The Use/Disuse of the Fourth Gospel in Historical Jesus Research*.<sup>8</sup> Impressive among the papers and the subsequent discussions is that each scholar posed a way forward in making use of John in Jesus research, albeit with different approaches to the venture. Worth reconsidering are several issues: an independent eyewitness tradition as a plausible source of the distinctive Johannine presentation of Jesus, John's awareness of archaeological and topographical features of pre-70 CE Palestine, the Johannine and Markan perspectives as two individuated renderings of Jesus's ministry, and ways of assessing the early and late character of John's presentation of Jesus—extending even into the second-century noncanonical texts.

As these overviews of the extra sessions organized by the John, Jesus, and History Group suggest, a good number of bases for making use of John in the quest for Jesus have been explored in a variety of ways, laying foundations for a new quest for Jesus—one that includes John, rather than excluding it. Therefore, as this third volume of the John, Jesus, and History Project is being published, it is becoming more and more apparent that we are witnessing a paradigm shift within New Testament studies, which the present volume accompanies and also advances.

#### A Paradigm Shift within Jesus Studies in the New Millennium

In addition to the work presented within the John, Jesus, and History Project over the last decade or so, larger sets of discussions have evinced a marked shift within New Testament and Jesus studies overall. In the new millennium, some Jesus scholars have not so rapidly dismissed John from the canons of historicity and the historical quest for Jesus. While C. H. Dodd

---

8. The session was chaired by Greg Sterling, and presentations were made by the following: James H. Charlesworth on "Using the Witness of John in Jesus Research"; Paul N. Anderson on "The Dialogical Autonomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Theologically Engaged Jesus Tradition and Implications for Jesus Studies"; Ismo Dunderberg on "How Far Can You Go? Jesus, John, the Synoptics, and Other Texts"; and Richard A. Horsley on "Rethinking How We Understand the Gospels as Historical Sources for Jesus-in-Context."



(1963), Raymond Brown (1966–1970), and others had called for a reconsideration of the historical tradition underlying the Fourth Gospel, and even Bultmann's inference of underlying sources sought to account for John's distinctive historical material, the move toward connecting Johannine data with the historical study of Jesus by critical scholars is a relatively recent development. Mark Allan Powell notes this shift in his *Word and World* essay (2009) and also in the second edition of his analysis of Jesus research (2013). Likewise, James Charlesworth (2010) not only calls for a paradigm shift in Jesus studies—away from ignoring John to including John—but he notes that such a paradigm shift is already underway. Charlesworth thus features five compelling examples of scholars who have already made the shift in their own approaches to Jesus and Johannine issues and then contributes to the venture himself.<sup>9</sup>

This movement within Jesus studies is also accompanied by the advancement of archaeological and material-culture studies of Palestine at the time of Jesus. Following the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, increased interest in economic, political, religious, and cultural realities of pre-70 CE Galilee, Samaria, and Judea has also yielded considerable knowledge of the context in which Jesus ministered. For instance, K. C. Hanson and Doug Oakman (2008) illuminate social structures and conflicts during the time of Jesus, and Jonathan Reed (2000) sheds valuable light upon the economic and social realities in the regions of such cosmopolitan cities as Beit She'an (Scythopolis), Tiberias, and Sepphoris. Under Roman occupation and under the provincial reign of Herod Antipas, awareness of economic and political realities forms an essential backdrop for understanding the situation into which Jesus came and ministered. In the unprecedented collection of essays on Jesus and archaeology gathered by James Charlesworth (2006), over half of the essays addressed features particular to the Gospel of John.<sup>10</sup> Only within the last decade or so have these developments piqued an interest in connections between John, archaeology, and Jesus, actually building upon some of the insights of Wil-

---

9. Charlesworth here lists works of John P. Meier, Gerhard Theissen, Annette Merz, Richard Bauckham, Paul N. Anderson, and D. Moody Smith (cited below). See also the work of the Princeton-Prague Symposia on the historical Jesus (Charlesworth et al. 2009, 2014, 2016).

10. The essays in this collection by von Wahlde (2006a) and Anderson (2006a) identify over two-dozen instances of details in the Fourth Gospel coinciding with archaeological or topographical realities.

liam Foxwell Albright six decades ago (1956), where he notes intriguing links between John's narrative and material archaeological realities.<sup>11</sup>

International interest in this shift in Jesus studies is also reflected by a request from the *Zeitschrift für Neues Testament* for a report on the history of the John, Jesus, and History Project for European audiences, including an outlining of a Bioptic Hypothesis as a potential successor to Bultmann's approach to the issues (Anderson 2009b). This international interest was extended in a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) grant in 2010, hosted by Ruben Zimmermann at the University of Mainz, which led to academic courses devoted to the John, Jesus, and History Project and a "Fourth Quest for Jesus"—one that includes John centrally in the endeavor. Lectures were then invited on these subjects at the Universities of Nijmegen, Münster, and Marburg, and Fulbright Specialist visits to Nijmegen in 2013 and 2014, hosted by Jan van der Watt, continued those engagements. Given the international interest and multiple new approaches to the issues, a paradigm shift within the last decade or so appears indeed to be underway within American and European scholarship.

Another contribution to Jesus studies aided by the Fourth Gospel is volume 9.2 in the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*. In especially incisive ways, the four essays in that volume address the most difficult issue at hand: the sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John, given their differences from the same in the Synoptics. Subjects engaged include the Son of Man sayings (Reynolds 2011), agrarian aphorisms (McKinnish Bridges 2011), and parabolic speech (Zimmermann 2011) in John, as well as parallels to the Johannine "I am" sayings and metaphors in the Synoptics (Anderson 2011a).<sup>12</sup> Several implications of these four papers follow: (1) Son of Man sayings in John and the Synoptics cohere in interesting ways, showing something of an apocalyptic thrust of Jesus's ministry in dual perspective; (2) mundane and agrarian elements in Jesus's teaching are found also in John, not just the Synoptics; (3) parabolic sayings—even if somewhat different in form—are found in John as well as the Synoptics; and (4) all nine of the "I am" metaphors in the sayings of the Johannine Jesus are also found in the Synoptics, though undeveloped christologically, as well as absolute "I am" sayings and a reference to the burning

---

11. Raymond Brown builds on this essay in his treatment of the problem of historicity in John (1965, 191–221); see also Moloney 2000.

12. The essays by Reynolds and McKinnish Bridges are included in the present volume in slightly modified form.

bush of Exod 3:14 (Mark 12:26). Therefore, when viewed alongside the Synoptics, John's rendering of Jesus's teachings is distinctive but not categorically other.

In addition to developments within historical Jesus studies, understandings of history and historiography themselves have also undergone significant development in the last few decades, especially in the aftermath of structuralism-post-structuralism debates. Challenging the nineteenth century empiricist interpretation of Leopold von Ranke's definition of history as *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* (how things actually happened), E. H. Carr (1961) questioned empiricist understandings of what is meant by "history." A crossing of the Rubicon was not in itself historic; rather, Julius Caesar's crossing of this river in 49 BCE was *deemed* historic because of its inferred significance. Subjective factors impact what is considered "historic" every bit as much as objective facts, as Karl Popper (1957) had noted earlier. Hayden White (1973) continued the challenge to modernist understandings of history with his work on metahistory, showing the elective affinities that comprise central components of any process of historical inference.<sup>13</sup> Raising the question of contextual perspective and *whose* history is being reported, "new historicism" has challenged determinations of "history" as reflections of dominant interpretations rendered by military or societal victors.<sup>14</sup> Along these lines, analyses of historiography and the historian's craft have built on Marc Bloch's earlier work (1953), and disciplinary understandings of the character, tools, sources, and operations of ancient and modern historiography have refined the discipline in recent decades.<sup>15</sup> Of course, numerous fallacies abound within any discipline, and yet historicity itself sometimes requires a defense in the light of apparent historical relativism.<sup>16</sup> The importance of critical theory applied to historical criticism is that it accounts for some of the impasse within

---

13. Note that shortly after White's monograph was published (1973), Moody Smith (1977) describes John's presentation of Jesus as metahistorical.

14. Following on Karl Popper's (1957) critique of historicism and the works of Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt, attempts to advance new approaches to historicism have been proposed within the new historicism movement, including Wesley Morris (1972) and the essays gathered by Aram Veesser (1989). In 2002, Gina Hens-Piazza introduced the field to biblical studies.

15. See Ernst Breisach (1983), Keith Jenkins (1991), John Gaddis (2002), Georg Iggers (1997), and Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier (2001).

16. For an extensive critique of historians' fallacies, see Fischer 1970; for a defense of history, see R. Evans 1999.

the quests for the “historical” Jesus, although biblical scholars are often not up to date on historiography scholarship as a discipline. As different approaches to historiography itself proliferate, what is meant by “history” must also be considered within the inquiry itself. Perhaps more importantly, certainty becomes more and more elusive regarding what “cannot” be considered historical, as a result of more probing disciplinary inquiry.

Finally, in terms of genre studies, Richard Burridge (2004) and others have established that the Gospels are written in the literary form of Greco-Roman biography. While Jewish hero-narrative features are also present,<sup>17</sup> the Gospels exhibit features consonant with traits of contemporary historical narrative—including John—so they deserve to be treated accordingly. These and other developments have impacted the role of the Johannine tradition within historical studies and Jesus studies, challenging many of the key bases for excluding John’s witness to Jesus from historical consideration. Finding effective ways to evaluate and make use of the Johannine tradition for historical studies and Jesus studies, of course, is another matter, and ways forward along those lines hinge upon recent developments in Johannine studies.<sup>18</sup>

### Recent Developments within Johannine Studies

In addition to the developments outlined above, recent advances within Johannine studies also impact the work of the John, Jesus, and History Project. Approaches to addressing the Johannine riddles (literary, historical, theological) have themselves been at odds among leading Johannine scholars internationally for more than a century, so this field is also highly complex. Notably, theories of Johannine composition are tied to inferences of authorship, and those inferences are often connected to understandings of Jesus rooted in Synoptic studies. Some theories hinge upon an inference of who the Beloved Disciple must have been (a known or unknown follower of Jesus) or cannot have been (forcing dependence on either inferred sources or the Synoptics); but the strongest way forward is to proceed with assessing the data critically regardless of who the evangelist and/or the final editor may or may not have been.<sup>19</sup> As such, the

---

17. Note, for instance, the treatment of Mark by Michael Vines (2002).

18. For recent overviews of Johannine scholarship, see Attridge 2002 and Anderson 2008a.

19. For an analysis of a dozen theories of composition and how each does and

John, Jesus, and History Project makes no attempt to advocate or attain consensus over how to approach any of the Johannine riddles, although clarity on one issue will invariably impact approaches to others. As even modest insight regarding aspects of historicity and glimpses of Jesus in John is garnered, such advances will indeed be of service to understanding its intratraditional and intertraditional dialectics and developments. For instance, dialogues between earlier and later understandings within the Johannine tradition are apparent, as are dialogues between John's tradition and those represented in the Synoptic Gospels (Anderson 1996).

Four further developments in Johannine studies over the last decade or so also inform the interdisciplinary character of the John, Jesus, and History Project, albeit indirectly. The first is an expanded understanding of how gospel traditions developed and functioned, moving from orality to literacy in the light of media theory and memory theory, and sometimes back again. Building on Walter Ong's work on secondary orality (1982) and Werner Kelber's work on oral and written gospel-tradition developments (1983, 1985, 1987a, 1987b), analyses of the Fourth Gospel in first-century media culture have gone some distance in accounting for John's similarities with and differences from the Synoptics. In particular, the collection of essays on that topic edited by Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher (2011) argues the importance of liberating the Johannine tradition from text-bound confines as the primary critical basis for evaluating its historical contribution. In Thatcher's synchronic analysis of John's composition and purpose, for instance (2006), he argues that John's Gospel includes a good deal of historical memory, crafted apologetically, and that its purpose is more historical than that of Luke and Matthew. Given the constructive work that James Dunn (2013) has produced on the development of oral gospel traditions and the Johannine tradition's place within that mix, these interdisciplinary media and memory studies call for a new day in understanding the origin and character of gospel traditions, including John's distinctive presentation of Jesus. No longer is the Johannine text relegated to step-sister status, beholden to synoptic hegemony; the Fourth Gospel possesses its own claims to being a representation of the message and mission of Jesus of Nazareth, to be considered in its own right.

---

does not address adequately various Johannine riddles, see Anderson 2011b (95–124). John's historical riddles are also outlined (45–65) and accounted for, and a chapter on John's contribution to Jesus studies is included between two chapters on John's theology (175–237).

The second advance in Johannine studies involves a continuing understanding of the literary design and function of the Johannine narrative, so as to connect its rhetorical crafting with the emerging Johannine situation in which it was delivered. Most significant in the new literary studies performed on the Fourth Gospel over the last three decades or more has been the work of Alan Culpepper (1983), elucidating the literary design and function of the Johannine narrative. A number of important studies on characters and characterization have been developed in the meantime. Norman Peterson (1993) made connections between the rhetorical features of the narrative and the targeted Johannine audience.<sup>20</sup> Taking characterization studies further, David Beck (1997) and Nicholas Farelly (2010) analyzed the discipleship implications of the characterization of anonymous figures and disciples in John, Adeline Fehribach (1998) performed a feminist-historical analysis of female characters in John, and Colleen Conway (1999) assessed critically the presentation of men and women in John as a feature of characterization within gender theory. Stan Harstine (2002) performed an analysis of the characterization of Moses in John, and Cornelis Bennema (2014) developed an overall theory of characterization to be applied to the Johannine narrative. After the first edition of Bennema's work in 2009, two major collections of Johannine characterization studies were published in 2013,<sup>21</sup> establishing Johannine characterization studies as a robust field of inquiry. In addition to characterological studies, Tom Thatcher and Steven Moore gathered a set of new literary-critical analyses of the Johannine text in honor of Alan Culpepper's contribution a quarter century earlier (Moore and Thatcher 2008), and Kasper Bro Larsen (2012) contributed meaningful insights on literary character of John's recognition scenes.<sup>22</sup> The value of these studies for historical analysis is incidental in that fictive and historical narratives both employ rhetorical designs. Thus, while John's literary features could explain the character of its content, they fall short of helping to determine

---

20. See also a Bakhtinian analysis of the rhetorical function of the Johannine dialogue within the emerging Johannine situation, Anderson 1997, 2007c.

21. See the collections edited by Christopher Skinner (2013) and by Steven Hunt, François Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann (2013); the latter contributes some seventy essays—the most extensive collection of analyses performed on any biblical text.

22. Regarding the polyvalent character of the Johannine text, see Anderson 2008c; and of the Johannine dialogues, see Tomaskutty 2015.

its origin. Literary analysis nonetheless helps one appreciate what is being said by noting how it is expressed.

A third recent development in Johannine studies involves a more nuanced appreciation for the development of John's tradition alongside the synoptic traditions. While some scholars continue to lump John with or pit John against "the Synoptics" as a gathered collection, the Synoptics were probably not gathered together until half a century or so after they were finalized. Therefore, considering John's tradition in relation to each of the synoptic traditions requires a more refined approach to the issues. Regarding the Johannine and Markan traditions, Raymond Brown (2003) inferred some sort of cross-influence (or interfluence) between their preliterary stages of development. Richard Bauckham (1998) saw the Johannine narrative as crafted to pose a dialectical corrective for readers of Mark, and Ian Mackay (2004) saw John's pattern to be indebted to Mark—perhaps familiar with an oral performance of Mark but not dependent on a written text. Following the work of Lamar Cribbs (1973), a number of scholars have come to see Luke's departures from Mark in ways that coincide with John as plausible indicators of Luke's access to the Johannine tradition (see Moody Smith's analysis of John among the Gospels, 1992). As a result, Mark Matson (2001), Barbara Shellard (2002), and Paul Anderson (1996, 274–77) came to see Luke's coinciding with John in its departures from Mark as hints of Luke's dependence on the Johannine tradition. The provocative work of Ernst Käsemann (1968) carried the work of von Harnack and others further in seeing John's spirit-based ecclesiology as being in tension with Matthean Christianity in the late first-century situation, including the rise of institutionalism within some settings (see also Barker 2015). In Käsemann's view, therefore, the Johannine tradition should not be seen as beyond the mainstream Christian movement, but closer to the center than previous scholars had allowed.

A fourth recent development within Johannine studies notes the history of the Johannine tradition within its developing historical situation. While it will be of no surprise that some one-volume Johannine commentaries have embraced John's historical features (see especially Michaels 2010 and Bruner 2012), one of the most significant diachronic commentaries on John by Urban von Wahlde (2010) provides a critical path forward in accounting for its first-hand knowledge of pre-70 CE Palestine.<sup>23</sup> Accord-

---

23. The John, Jesus, and History Group thus organized a special session in 2011,

ing to von Wahldé's three-edition theory of John's composition (locating the writing of the Epistles between the second and third editions), the first edition represents an independent Jesus narrative that was written in the 60s by an unknown follower of Jesus. This accounts for the abundance of archaeological and topographical detail within the Johannine narrative as well as the account's originative independence from Mark and other traditions. Casting light on the Jesus of history, this early narrative also presents Jesus of Nazareth as a prophet like Moses, whose agency from the Father was eventually cast into a more Hellenistic Logos schema later within the tradition. Palpable within the early material is also the north-south tension between the Galilean prophet (and his followers) and the Jerusalem-centered leadership, where the religious adversaries are the "Pharisees," "rulers," and "chief priests" rather than the *Ioudaioi* (a term assigned to the second-edition material in his theory). In the early material, Jesus's signs show him to be a charismatic Jewish prophet, and his teachings show him to be a bringer of the Spirit; the divine Logos association came later. While not all scholars will be convinced by von Wahldé's intricate and extensive delineation of literary layers, his theory constitutes an impressive critical accounting for the relationships between the history and theology within the Johannine tradition, bearing implications for Jesus and Johannine studies alike.

Parallel to von Wahldé's approach, but simpler in its design, is the overall Johannine theory of Paul N. Anderson, elucidating John's dialogical autonomy (2011b). Within this theory, (1) the Johannine narrative is produced by a dialectical thinker, which explains many of its both-and characteristics; (2) John's oral tradition developed alongside the pre-Markan tradition, showing some interfluence in the preservation of similar sound bites and memorable details; (3) the Father-Son relationship in John is founded upon a Jewish agency motif, showing two dozen parallels with Deut 18:15–22; (4) following familiarity with the Markan narrative, perhaps as performed in a meeting for worship, a first edition of John was gathered as the second gospel narrative—an augmentation of and modest corrective to Mark; (5) John's story of Jesus is performed within a post-70 CE diaspora setting, and several crises over several decades are apparent in the emerging Johannine situation; (6) following the Johannine Epistles

---

featuring reviews of von Wahldé's commentary by Craig Koester, Paul N. Anderson, and Alicia Myers, to which the author responded.



and the death of the Fourth Evangelist, the Johannine Elder gathers the witness of the Beloved Disciple and adds the Prologue, chapters 6, 15–17, and 21, and other material, including eyewitness and Beloved Disciple references; (7) the Johannine tradition's relations to other traditions include a formative impact on the Lukan tradition (and perhaps Q) as well as some interfluent engagement with later Matthean tradition on ecclesiology and on Jewish apologetic thrusts. This modest two-edition theory of John's composition, based upon the theory of Barnabas Lindars (1972), deals most efficiently with John's most problematic aporias.

While none of the authors in the present volume were expected to be aware of or in agreement with any of these developments in Johannine studies, it is instructive to note how one's approaches to John's composition, tradition development, relation to the Synoptics, and literary design impact one's inferences regarding John's historicity. Further, there is a considerable degree of difference within the John, Jesus, and History steering committee as to how to approach Jesus studies and how to understand the origin and development of the Johannine tradition. Nonetheless, scholars learn from each other through their dialogues together, and in arguing a thesis along with its supporting evidence, discovery and learning are both effectively advanced.

### Critical Ways Forward

In furthering the central thrust of this collection, several critical issues deserve to be addressed. First, given that the criteria for determining historicity within the Gospels have largely been designed to favor synoptic features over and against Johannine ones, new criteria for determining gospel historicity are required. Several of the leading criteria might be re-envisioned as follows.<sup>24</sup>

---

24. These criteria were presented by Paul Anderson at the 2009 Society of Biblical Literature meeting in our methodology session in his paper, "Dialectical History and the Fourth Gospel." They were later developed following Anderson's public dialogues with Marcus Borg in 2010, exploring the Gospels and Jesus in Bioptic perspective (Anderson 2010b) and were later summarized in his contextual introduction to the New Testament (Anderson 2014, 175–76).

### Inclusive Criteria for Determining Gospel Historicity

(1) *Corroborative Impression Versus Multiple Attestation.* A huge problem with the criterion of multiple attestation is that by definition it excludes everything that might be added to Mark's account of Jesus's ministry by other gospel traditions and writers. Further, if Mark was used by Matthew and Luke, then triple-tradition material may simply denote their uses of and expansions upon Mark rather than reflecting independent attestations of a historical memory or event. And, if anything within the Gospel of John, or Matthew or Luke, is intended to augment or correct Mark, it is automatically excluded from consideration, even if the basis for such a judgment is flawed. A more adequate approach looks for corroborative sets of impressions, wherein paraphrases, alternative ways of putting something, or distinctive renderings of a similar feature inform a fuller understanding of the ministry of Jesus. Such an approach would thus include the Johannine witness rather than excluding it programmatically.

(2) *Primitivity Versus Dissimilarity or Embarrassment.* While the criteria of dissimilarity and embarrassment might keep one from mistaking later Christian views for earlier ones going back to Jesus, they also tend to distort the historiographic process itself. What if apostolic Christians and their successors *actually did get something right* in their memories of Jesus? Or, what if Jesus of Nazareth *actually did teach conventional Jewish views* during his ministry? The criterion of dissimilarity would thereby exclude such features from historical consideration, allowing only the odd or embarrassing features to be built upon. Even if such data are unlikely to be concocted, to exclude other material from the database of material creates an odd assortment of portraiture material, which if used, is likely to produce a distortive image of Jesus. A more adequate way forward is to seek to identify primitive material, seeking to distinguish it from its more developed counterparts. This may include Palestine-familiarity features, Aramaic and Hebraic terms, and other undeveloped material less influenced by the later mission to the Gentiles.

(3) *Critical Realism Versus Dogmatic Naturalism or Supranaturalism.* Just as dogmatic supranaturalism is an affront to historical inquiry, so is dogmatic naturalism—especially when it functions to exclude anything that might approximate the wondrous in gospel narratives. John's Prologue was probably added to a later or final edition of the Gospel, so its cosmic perspective should not eclipse or distort the more conventional features of John's narrative, just as the birth narratives of Matthew and

Luke should not eclipse their more mundane features. Rather, political realism, religious anthropology, and social-scientific analyses should provide helpful lenses for understanding the perception of Jesus as a Galilean prophetic figure in all four gospel traditions (Freyne 2009; on critical realism, see Meyer 1989). After all, John's narrative begins in ways similar to Mark's, launched by the association of Jesus with John the Baptist. Therefore, historical and critical realism acknowledges the historical problem of wondrous claims, but it also considers cognitive, religious, political, and societal aspects of realism that might account for such impressions.

(4) *Open Coherence Versus Closed Portraiture*. Two central flaws in coherence-oriented criteria for determining historicity in the quest for Jesus include the circularity of the approach and the closed character of its portraiture. On one hand, the Gospels form the primary database for determining a coherent impression of Jesus of Nazareth; on the other, those same Gospels are evaluated on the basis of information contained within them. Further, scholars too easily base a view of what cannot represent a feature of Jesus's ministry based upon the narrowing down of what he must have done and said, as though a likely inference excludes other possibilities.

In addition to these proposed considerations, other criteria for determining historicity will also be serviceable, and scholars are encouraged to develop their own criteria for conducting gospel historiography with John in the mix. Whatever the case, scholars must at least be mindful of the assumptions upon which a judgment is made, qualifying the outcomes of their inquiries on the basis of those givens. This is something that the Jesus Seminar did quite explicitly, to its credit. They clarified that the results of their judgments were based upon particular criteria, which had been developed over some time. While some of our contributors have employed some of these new criteria, others have employed earlier criteria, and that in itself will determine much of their analyses and their outcomes.

### Gradations of Certainty

While the Jesus Seminar sought to drive an either/or wedge between the opinions of scholars on the question of historicity, such an approach fails to account for a potential middle ground, given that some issues are terribly difficult to decide based on the available evidence alone. As the editors did not stipulate how our authors should approach their subjects, we simply asked them to perform their analyses of Johannine themes and texts based

on evidence and to describe any implications that might follow regarding the historical Jesus. Therefore, whether a detail or feature of the Johannine text advances or does not advance knowledge of the historical Jesus, we asked each of our authors to describe the degree of certainty regarding each judgment, including its critical basis. We encouraged our authors to locate their various judgments along the following grid, although they exercised liberty along these lines:

- Certainly not (1–14 percent)
- Unlikely (15–29 percent)
- Questionable (30–44 percent)
- Possible (45–54 percent)
- Plausible (55–69 percent)
- Likely (70–84 percent)
- Certain (85–99 percent)

An important advantage of allowing a larger middle area is that both positive and negative certainties are extremely elusive within any historical venture, especially the quest for Jesus. On this matter, positivism—if it is employed in any approach to ancient historiography—must be plied with reference to falsification as well as verification. Too often, calls for positivistic confirmation are levied only in one direction: challenging historical claims, yet failing to establish asserted falsification. While claiming certainty that something happened is an elusive matter, so is claiming that something cannot have happened, or did not happen—an error that positivist scholars too easily commit.

Put otherwise, a trenchant problem with modern critical studies involves moving from “not certain” to “certainly not.” Therefore, judgments need to be more measured in their analyses. An “unlikely” appraisal of certainty need not be jammed within a “certainly not” category, when proving such a thesis lacks a compelling basis. Likewise, an inference might not fall into categories of “certain” or “likely,” but it might simply be “plausible”—posing at least some service to the historical quest for Jesus in corroborative ways. Overall, no category is advocated either for 0 percent impossibility or 100 percent certainty, and a modest middle category of what might be “possible” sometimes offers the most suitable of options regarding issues that are simply impossible to decide. Historical agnosticism must thus remain an option for honest inquiry, rather than forcing a judgment pro or con in all cases. Whatever gradations of certainty schol-

ars may choose, however, we ask them to articulate why they make such a judgment, which invites other scholars to engage both judgments and their bases, as well as their implications.

### Comparing John and the Synoptics

The issues that present themselves when scholars seek to ascertain Johannine historicity depend on analyses of John in relation to the Synoptics; it cannot be otherwise. Given the fact that New Testament scholars vary in their understandings of these traditions, their developments, and their relationships, this also accounts for differences in judgment regarding John's historicity among scholars. Therefore, the essays in each of the three parts of this book will address various components of these issues, and the introductions to each section will outline several features worth considering in the process of determining John's contribution to Jesus studies.

First, John's parallels to the Synoptics will be outlined, noting also where the details are similar and/or different. Within that comparison/contrast, of course, if a scholar views John's tradition as an autonomous account, John's material could be seen as an independent attestation to a particular feature of Jesus's ministry, thereby contributing to a historical understanding of his mission and work. Conversely, if a scholar believes John is dependent on Mark or one of the other Synoptics, then John will be seen as having very little to contribute in terms of its historical value. Jesus's healing on the Sabbath, ministering with his disciples, and last days in Jerusalem are examples of Johannine-Synoptic convergences.

A second category involves incompatible differences between John and the Synoptics. While some differences in terms of historicity can be harmonized, others cannot, forcing a choice between the Synoptics and John. On these matters, scholars who believe John is familiar with Mark will likely see John's departures as a set of dialectical engagements, or perhaps correctives, over and against Mark. Conversely, if scholars see John's serious differences with Mark as rooted in theological interests, not historical engagement, this might excuse one from having to choose between two differing histories. It could also be that John's narrator was simply unaware of the Synoptics on one or more accounts and that Synoptic authors were unaware of John. The dating of the temple incident and the last supper are prime examples of this conundrum, and sometimes a scholar must choose between John and the Synoptics. One cannot have it both ways.

A third feature of John's differences with the Synoptics involves John's distinctive material that is not found in the Synoptics, as this represents about 85 percent of John's content. Again, where it is assumed that John is familiar with Mark at least, John's distinctive material might be seen as an augmentation. The problem with this type of material, however, is that if John's material is absent from the Synoptics, this raises a question as to why it is not also included in one or more of the other traditions. One can thus understand why scholars might view John's distinctive presentations of Jesus as extensions of the evangelist's theological interests rather than representations of historical knowledge. In all three of these categories, a scholar's view of the history of the Johannine tradition and its relation to the Synoptics will affect what he or she does with the facts of John's similarities with and differences from Mark and the other Synoptic Gospels.

### Perspectives on John's Tradition Development and Relation to the Synoptics

Regarding the development of the Johannine tradition, scholarly opinions vary greatly. Leading views include the following: first, that John's is an independent tradition, reflecting some awareness of other traditions, especially Mark's, but developing within its own contextual situation in one or more editions; second, that the Johannine evangelist may have made use of other sources, although these remain unavailable; third, that John's tradition had no history of its own but was dependent upon one or more of the Synoptics, which it spiritualized and developed theologically; fourth, that the Johannine narrator had no interest in history, but rather employed mimetic imitations of reality as a means of making the narrative seem rooted in history, when it actually was not. The John, Jesus, and History steering committee has not sought to advocate any of these positions, although individual scholars have their views, of course. Most authors in this collection favor the first view regarding John's being an independent tradition, while others infer the use of other sources or synoptic traditions.

On the development of the Johannine tradition itself, scholars tend to gravitate toward one of two options. Synchronic approaches to John note that the completed text as we have it made sense to someone, so it should be viewed as a literary whole, however it came together. Diachronic approaches to John's composition note that a final editor seems to make reference to the writer of the gospel narrative in John 21:24, inferring at least two hands in the composition process. Within that process, at least

two editions of the gospel narrative are apparent, although scholars differ on the particulars.<sup>25</sup> If something like this scenario were the case, John's first edition seems to have concluded at John 20:31, expressing its purpose as seeking to lead audiences to believe in Jesus as the Messiah/Christ. The thrust of the later material calls for solidarity with Jesus and his community, emphasizing the guiding and empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Johannine Epistles seem to build on some of the material in John's narrative, while the Gospel's later material seems to address the centrifugal issues represented in the Johannine Epistles.<sup>26</sup> Within this analysis, at least some of the later Johannine material seems crafted to address the later history of the Johannine situation as much as it represents a memory of the ministry of Jesus.

A final issue that affects discussions of historicity in John involves the relation between history and theology within the Johannine tradition. As argued by Strauss above, one approach to history and theology in gospel traditions is to infer that if a text is theological it cannot be historical. In this view, theology eclipses history. Given John's highly theological thrust, the identification of a feature as theological discredits its historical worth. Yet historicity itself is always fraught with meaning, and meaning will invariably have theological implications. Therefore, a nuanced approach to this issue must be embraced if one's analysis is to be critically adequate.

A second theology-history issue involves the origin of the wondrous and divinely commissioned role of Jesus. Was it rooted in the history of Jesus's ministry, or did it originate in the religious history of John's Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts? While John's material included some parallels with contemporary religions, though, identifying the packaging might

---

25. A form of this modest approach to dealing with the most problematic of John's aporias, or literary perplexities, was first put forward by Barnabas Lindars (1972) and endorsed also by John Ashton 1991. A multiplicity of Johannine composition theories abounds, and some scholars insist on interpreting John as a whole, as it made sense to whoever the final author/editor might have been (Thyen 2005, 2007). A dozen leading theories of John's composition and development are laid out and analyzed according to their strengths and weaknesses in Anderson 2011b, 95–124.

26. Including the Johannine Epistles within the composition process of the Johannine Gospel is clearly seen as an emerging consensus in the collection on the Epistles edited by Culpepper and Anderson (2014). An estimation of which parts of John's narrative scholars see as added to an earlier narrative, in descending order, include: first, John 21; second, John 1:1–18 (or sections thereof); third, eyewitness and Beloved Disciple passages; fourth, John 15–17; and fifth, John 6.

not necessarily denote the origin or character of the content. A third history-theology issue in John involves the tension between its delivered history and its originative history. Given that John's narrative seems to be engaging followers of John the Baptist, audiences experiencing Galilean-Judean tensions, later Johannine-Synagogue tensions in a diaspora setting, issues related to the Roman imperial presence, docetizing developments within gentile Christianity, and institutionalizing movements within the early Christian situation, the question is whether John's situation history eclipses the originative history of its tradition.

### Glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine Lens

In approaching the present subject, the John, Jesus, and History steering committee sought to move from the more historically certain to the more difficult aspects of the inquiry. Thus we began with the passion narratives and then proceeded to the works and words of Jesus. Incidentally, it can be noted that the present approach bears a closer procedural parallel to C. H. Dodd's than to that of Robert Funk and the Jesus Seminar.<sup>27</sup> Of course, Dodd's first monograph (1953) engaged the socioreligious milieu of the Johannine tradition, but a history-of religions analysis could not in itself account for the distinctive historical material in John, requiring a second magnum opus (1963). While Dodd stopped short of applying the implications of his analysis to Jesus research, the present collection seeks to advance critical inquiry within Johannine and Jesus studies alike.

Knowing that each scholar works within his or her own understanding of the Johannine tradition's development and its potential relations to other traditions (synoptic or otherwise), it is interesting to note each scholar's inferences regarding Johannine-Synoptic relations. While most of our contributors infer some sort of autonomous tradition underlying the Johannine witness, some infer a spiritualization of tradition found in the Synoptics (e.g., North), while a founding member of the Jesus Seminar infers a hypothetical "Signs Gospel" upon which the final narrative is thought to be based (Fortna), and some scholars (e.g., Koestenberger) see

---

27. Dodd (1963) began with Part I, "The Narrative" ("The Passion Narrative," 21–151; "The Ministry," 152–247; "John the Baptist and the First Disciples," 248–312) and proceeded to "The Sayings" (313–420); the Jesus Seminar began with asking, "What did Jesus really say?" (Funk, Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar 1993), moving then to the question, "What did Jesus really do?" (Funk and the Jesus Seminar 1998).



John's presentation as a corroboration of Mark's. Thus, differences among the following essays also reflect the various scholars' approaches to the larger set of the Johannine riddles.

Each of the three parts of this collection is introduced with an essay highlighting relevant historical-Jesus issues, including a breakdown of John's similarities with and differences from the Synoptics. A noted Jesus scholar then responds to each set of essays, allowing evaluative engagements along the way. The concluding essay then reflects upon the contributions made by this particular collection and suggest ways forward as the present inquiry continues. In all of the following contributions, however, the central question at hand is not a matter of putting forward a theory of composition, a view of John's relation to the Synoptics, or even the history of the emerging Johannine situation. Rather, the goal is to ascertain the degree to which the Johannine story of Jesus offers glimpses into his ministry and message—and if so, how so; and if not, why not? Given that the first of the modern critical platforms on the present subject—the de-historicization of John—was addressed in the previous volume, the second critical platform—the de-Johannification of Jesus—is addressed in the present. So, let the critical inquiry begin!

SBL Press