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# Beyond the Shade of the Oak Tree: The Recent Growth of Johannine Studies



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*The recent growth within Johannine studies has developed as a result of several factors. First, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls led to an appreciation of the Jewishness of John's origin. Second, new approaches to John's composition have emerged, followed by a larger set of inquiries as to the Johannine tradition's relation to parallel traditions. This has been accompanied by a fourth interest: the history of the Johannine situation. Fifth, new literary studies have posed new horizons for interpretation, and sixth, theories continue to abound on the identity of the Beloved Disciple. A seventh development involves new ways of conceiving John's theological features, leading to an eighth: reconsidering John's historical features and re-envisioning its historical contributions in new perspective.*

## KEYWORDS

*Composition of John, Johannine-Synoptic relations, Johannine situation; new readings of John; Johannine Theology, Johannine Christology, Johannine Historicity*

What does the new growth within Johannine studies look like? Ernst Haenchen fittingly described the contribution of Rudolf Bultmann's commentary on John as a massive oak tree under in whose shade nothing was able to grow, but that judgement was made, according to Ulrich Busse, just over two decades after its publication in 1941. Bultmann's commentary represents the pinnacle of modern critical interpretations of John, wedding history-of-religions parallels with source and redaction theories. While the tree itself has withered some, new shoots have grown up from the root system, and other projects have developed with their own critical claims and interpretive appeal.

Recent growth in Johannine studies has come as a result of several factors. First, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls led to an appreciation for the Jewishness of John's origin. Second, new approaches to John's composition have emerged, followed by fresh analyses of John's relations to parallel traditions. This has been accompanied by a fourth interest: the history of the Johannine situation. Fifth, fresh literary studies have posed new horizons for interpretation, and sixth, theories

continue to abound on the identity of the Beloved Disciple. A seventh development involves new ways of conceiving John's theological features, leading to an eighth: reconsidering John's historical features and re-envisioning its historical contributions.

Of course, keeping up with the Johannine secondary literature itself is itself a daunting challenge! The Johannine Literature website, organized by Felix Just SJ (<http://catholic-resources.org/John>), lists over 1,000 Johannine books written since 1900, some 200 of which were written since 2000. And it is by no means an exhaustive listing!<sup>1</sup> Among the best of journal reviews of Johannine studies are the *Expository Times* reviews by A. M. Hunter (1960) and Stephen Smalley (1986), and this review picks up where those essays left off.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Kysar's literature reviews still stand out as some of the most extensive and helpful (2005, 53-146), as are the five literature reviews in *John, Jesus and History, Volume 1* (Anderson *et al.* eds., 75-159). Perhaps the most extensive treatment of Johannine literature in the English language, covering nineteen centuries of secondary literature, is Seán P. Kealy's two-volume work (2002).

## 1. *The Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and John's Jewish Background*

For over a century the Fourth Gospel had been assigned to a Hellenistic setting, rather than a Jewish one. John's dualistic presentation of Jesus and his reception was thought to differ radically from a monistic perception of contemporary Judaism. With the discovery of the Qumran writings, however, that judgement fell by the wayside with a sonorous 'thud'. As A. M. Hunter argued so clearly nearly five decades ago, the dualism and religious ethos of the Dead Sea Scrolls seems far closer to John's perspective than Hellenistic literature, so the basis for assigning John to a non-Jewish provenance has largely disappeared. Martin Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism* (1974) shows the interwovenness of Judaism and Hellenism, so that the two worlds cannot be divorced with the ease they once had been. Given John's extensive treatments of Jewish themes, C. K. Barrett and others have come to see John as *the most Jewish of the Gospels*.

The result of this movement is twofold. First, Hellenistic mythology becomes difficult to assert as a primary origin of John's material. Therefore, Bultmann's inferred Gnostic Revelation-Sayings source lost its contextual appeal, and the unity of John's tradition was strengthened. Second, assertions against the Palestinian origins of John's material have also foundered, as have arguments in favour of an Alexandrian setting for John's *Logos* Christology over and against an Asia Minor setting. John's material appears to have been finalized in Asia Minor – and there is no more arguable setting than the traditional Ephesus – while having also had an earlier, Palestinian origin.

As a result, nearly all interpretations of John over the last three or four decades have interpreted John against a pervasively Jewish backdrop. Craig Keener's massive two-volume commentary (2003), purportedly containing 20,000 citations from ancient Hellenistic and Jewish literature, illumines both origins of John's tradition. While finalized in a Greco-Roman context, the pervasive Jewishness of John's material must also be taken seriously.

## 2. *The Development of the Johannine Tradition*

Was John's material an independent tradition, or did it emerge as a patchwork of disparate material gathered together by a later editor? With the

great commentaries of Raymond Brown, Rudolf Schnackenburg and Barnabas Lindars, critical theories of John's composition have changed from largely diachronic to synchronic ones. While theological tensions are present within the Gospel, this in no way implies that the narrator was using alien material instead of his own Johannine tradition. The evangelist engaged his own tradition dialectically; moreover, echoes of Synoptic material do not imply a derivative relationship. Contextual tensions are best explained on other bases, such as a two-edition theory of composition and the dialectical thinking and operation of the evangelist (Anderson 1996, 2006).

Raymond Brown had originally described his theory of composition in five phases, but criticism for the complexity of this approach led him to simplify it into three phases (2003), although two of his phases still have two parts to them. According to Brown, John's material developed from preaching units into a narrative; it was rendered in a first edition, and then material emerging from the ongoing ministry of the Beloved Disciple was crafted into a final composition by the editor.

The simplest and most efficient two-edition hypothesis is that of Barnabas Lindars (1981). For him, the first edition of John (in my view around 80–85 CE) was followed by the continued preaching of the Evangelist. As supplementary material, the Prologue, chapters 6, 11, 15–17, 21, and the Beloved-Disciple/eyewitness passages were added later. While Lindars thought the Evangelist finalized his own work, Bultmann's suggestion that it was the work of an ecclesial redactor seems stronger. The supplementary material shows impressive similarities with the ecclesial interests of the Epistles, implicating the Elder as the final editor (in my view around 100 CE).

## 3. *Johannine-Synoptic Relations*

Did John's author know the Synoptics, and if so did he draw from them in a derivative way? Or, did he consciously pose an alternative perspective? Further, might John's tradition have had different sorts of relationships with different parallel traditions at different times and in different ways? While the view of P. Gardner-Smith (1938) that John was independent of the Synoptics had carried the day for some time, competing views have also been advanced. Along with C. K. Barrett and others,

Franz Neiryck and the Leuven School have sought to explain the origin of John's material as dependent on the Synoptic traditions. Tom Brodie (1993) has interpreted all of John's Synoptic contacts as a factor of derivation and spiritualization, but that might not be the best explanation.

Indeed, every contact between John and the Synoptics is always distinctive instead of identical. While Gardner-Smith noted four similarities-yet-differences between John 6 and Mark 6, one may identify at least forty-five similarities between John 6 and Mark 6 and 8, but *none* of them is identical (Anderson, 1996, 97-103). Likewise, within the Passion narrative, of all John's similarities with Mark none of them suggests direct literary dependence. This confirms the expert judgement of D. Moody Smith, who has long maintained John's independence from the Synoptics. Interestingly, though, in his revised edition of *John Among the Gospels* (2001), Smith clarifies that John's independence from the Synoptics need not imply isolation. I might call it John's 'dialogical autonomy' (2006, 37-41), reflecting an autonomous tradition, which may have engaged other traditions dialectically as it developed.

Did 'influence', however, travel in only one direction - toward John's tradition instead of from it? Recently, several scholars have argued for John's being the earliest of the Gospels, and at the 2000 Salzburg Symposium celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of J. A. T. Robinson's *The Priority of John*, at least three papers argued for John's being the first of the Gospels to be written (Hofrichter, Berger, Charlesworth). Early material, however, does not imply John's early finalization, so that is a weakness of such views. In the collection of essays for and against the priority of John (Hofrichter, ed. 2002) several new perspectives emerge, including 'interfluence' between John and the Synoptics.

When John's material is compared and contrasted with each of the Synoptic traditions, the following patterns emerge. (1) Interfluent contact between the oral stages of the pre-Markan and early Johannine traditions seems likely. If two preachers overheard each other telling stories of Jesus' ministry (see, for instance, Acts 8) this could account for the buzz-words and graphic detail particular to Mark and John, but omitted by Matthew and Luke. (2) The Johannine evangelist may have been familiar with Mark (heard it read in a meeting for worship? Cf. Mackay 2004; supporting Bauckham 1998),

causing the first edition of John to be a complement (perhaps a corrective?) to Mark as an alternative history. (3) Luke appears to have sided with John against Mark at least six dozen times, adding Johannine material and siding with John's theology. Mark Matson (2001) infers Luke's use of John's written Passion narrative; my view is that Luke has access to John's oral tradition and depends on it (Anderson 2006, 101-126). (4) The 'bolt out of the Johannine blue' (Matt 11:25-27; Luke 10:21-22) is best explained as the Q tradition's employment of a clearly Johannine theme. (5) Johannine-Matthean contacts suggest an interfluent set of dialogues between these two traditions around the time the Johannine Epistles were written, addressing matters of ecclesiology and church leadership (Anderson 1996, 221-251).

In these ways, John's tradition appears to be an autonomous trajectory, which developed in several types of dialogical relationships, internally and with other traditions: hence, John's *dialogical autonomy*.

#### 4. An Interest in the Johannine Situation

John Ashton has well described J. L. Martyn's book on the history and theology of the Fourth Gospel as the most important book since Bultmann's commentary, although R. E. Brown's works have done the most to sketch the fuller Johannine situation. Martyn's book (1968, rev. 1978, 2003) argues that the *Birkat ha-Minim* (the 'blessing against the heretics' - followers of 'the Nazarene'), an enactment of Jamnia, explains the three references to 'even back then' when those who confessed Jesus openly were cast out of the Synagogue (John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). This was apparently happening acutely in the late first-century Johannine situation. While Martyn's thesis is impressive, reactions have been several.

First, some have over-read Martyn's approach to imply a universal expulsion of all Christians everywhere. Examples of Christian-Jewish positive relations in the first and second centuries have nonetheless been levied by Stephen Katz, Reuven Kimmelman and Adele Reinhartz (2001) to argue that expulsions of Christians from local Synagogues did not happen as Martyn supposes. Close relationships, however, might actually suggest the opposite. While a programmatic expulsion probably did not happen (I have argued that the *Birkat ha-Minim* more likely represents a codification of existing practice

rather than the launching of a new one, Anderson (1996), Jewish-Christian proximity is more likely to have *caused* tensions than to have eliminated them. Territoriality exists only between members of like species, and Johannine and local Jewish leaders were probably both vying for the same mantle of Jewish authority and legitimation. As Johannine Christianity collided with Jewish monotheism, this undoubtedly raised consternation among Jewish neighbours, leading to the disciplining of 'ditheists'. While Martyn has backed off some of the particulars of the *Birkat ha-Minim*, the case for Jewish-Christian dialogues within the Johannine situation remains strong.

A second reaction pits the Jewish-Christian tensions against other crises encountered by Johannine Christians. Some argue the Johannine adversaries were one group instead of another, but religious communities rarely enjoy the luxury of fighting only on one front at a time. Here the works of Raymond Brown (2003) and others are important. Brown infers Johannine socio-religious dialogues with southern Judeans, Baptist adherents, contemporary Jewish leaders in Ephesus, docetizing Gentile believers, apostolic Christians, and with Synoptic traditions. I might add tensions with the local Roman presence, especially in Asia Minor during the reign of Domitian (81–96 CE; Cassidy 1992) where expectations of emperor worship were heightened. Given the fact that John's tradition likely developed in Palestine (before 70 CE) and also in a Hellenistic setting (70–100 CE), three periods are likely, with at least two crises encountered within each. In my view, it is possible to discern seven crises in the Johannine situation over seven decades (Anderson 2007), as members of John's audience are drawn into dialogue with the Johannine Jesus by means of the rhetorical function of John's dialogical narrative.

A third set of questions has been raised by Richard Bauckham (1998) as to whether or not the Johannine Gospel was written for a particular community or for all Christians. Indeed, John was written *from* a community, but not *for* that community alone. Further, the Johannine Epistles imply that the Johannine milieu was made up of a number of communities, within a local region and beyond. Despite the views of some interpreters, an emphasis upon John's situation history need not undermine the historicity of John's tradition; that is a separate issue.

## 5. *New Literary Approaches to the Johannine Narrative*

By far the most prolific new growth in Johannine studies over the last two decades has followed the work of David Wead (1970) and Alan Culpepper (1983). I consider Culpepper's *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* the most significant work in Johannine studies over the last quarter century, and the great number of subsequent literary-critical treatments of John testifies to its importance. Culpepper begins by distinguishing real and implied readers and authors in the Johannine text. Despite his earlier monograph on the Johannine School, Culpepper does not limit his analysis to a particular context. He asks whether John's narrative has a plot and then considers the function of characters in the Gospel narrative. He also highlights the omniscient perspective of the Johannine narrator as a guide to interpretation and raises up implicit features of the narrator's commentary. In doing so, this new paradigm offers a versatile critical means of engaging the Johannine text in its present form, without getting bogged down by historical-critical impasses.

Furthering this new literary approach to John, Gail O'Day's *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel* (1986) shows how John's theological claims are expressed in narrative mode. Jeff Staley's introduction of *reader-response analysis* asks what sort of response is elicited from the reader on the basis of considering the presentation and function of the Johannine narrative (1988). And, Mark Stibbe's analysis of John's literary artistry applies new genre analysis and narrative criticism in the interpretation of John (1992).

Paul Duke's *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (1985) poses a full treatment of how local and extended irony function in John's narrative. Craig Koester's *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (2003) is one of the most helpful of all the books on John's literary-rhetorical features. Beginning with an analysis of John's symbolism within its cultural context, Koester treats the symbolic functions of John's representative figures, Jesus' actions, light-darkness dualism, water, and the crucifixion. He then develops the function of John's symbolism within Johannine Christianity and poses guidelines for interpretation. In addition to these approaches, studies on characterization, imagery, misunderstanding, gender, alterity, and genre in John have led to a rich variety of approaches

among the new literary readings of the Fourth Gospel.

One of the recent watershed contributions in Johannine literary analysis is the two-volume collection of essays, *What Is John?*, edited by Fernando Segovia (1996, 1998). In this collection, innovative methodological approaches include psycho-literary, autobiographical, feminist, sectarian, sociological, intercultural, political, ethnographic and social-sciences readings of John. In acknowledging the importance of this new literary thrust, John Ashton's second edition of *Interpreting the Fourth Gospel* (1997) includes five new essays addressing the reader (F. J. Moloney), a feminist interpretation (S. M. Schneiders), a structuralist reading (M. W. G. Stibbe), a deconstructionist reading (S. D. Moore), and narrative/historical criticism (M. C. de Boer) of the Fourth Gospel. More recently, Musa Dube and Jeff Staley have edited a new collection on *John and Postcolonialism* (2002).

### 6. *The Identity of the Beloved Disciple*

One of the enduring questions within Johannine studies is the identity of the Beloved Disciple and his role in composing the Johannine Gospel. The traditional view of John's authorship has several problems to it, not least that John's narrative is very different from the Synoptics. More pointedly, virtually every scene in which the sons of Zebedee are mentioned in the Synoptics is missing from the Fourth Gospel, and the sons of Zebedee are mentioned only once, in John 21:2. In addition, the final editor attributes the writing of the narrative in third-person terms to the unnamed Beloved Disciple but then asserts that Jesus never said he would not die (21:23). Does this imply that the evangelist *had* died by the time the material was finalized?

This makes John the Elder a candidate for the writer of the Fourth Gospel, or at least its final editor. It also accounts for John's differences as representing an independent tradition – perhaps even an eyewitness tradition – without asserting membership within the apostolic band. Given the fact that the author of 2 and 3 John calls himself 'the Elder', this view makes sense – perhaps even accommodating the Elder's having compiled and edited the testimony of the Beloved Disciple, whether he might have been John the apostle or another, unknown figure. Martin Hengel develops this view extensively (1989).

Given that Jesus' having loved Lazarus, Mary, and Martha is mentioned explicitly, some have located the Beloved Disciple within the Lazarus household (11:5). The use of male pronouns and nouns (13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 21:20) rules out the reference to one of the women. Lazarus, however, is another matter. Such scholars as Mark Stibbe (1992) and Ben Witherington (1995) have argued that such a connection explains the Johannine Judean material, relation to the High Priest, diminished presentations of 'the twelve', and a transcendental perspective on Jesus' ministry. How else might a person have thought about Jesus after an after-death experience?

Critical of such associations, however, is James Charlesworth, who in *The Beloved Disciple* (1995) asks in the subtitle: *Whose Testimony Validates the Gospel of John?* Charlesworth also rejects the views that the Beloved Disciple was an unknown figure, and that the Johannine witness was not attributable to an independent memory. In turn, he connects the Beloved Disciple with Thomas, whose climactic confession at the end of John 20 signals his being the Johannine witness. Problematic, however, is Thomas' not yet believing in 20:26, while the Beloved Disciple had indeed believed in 20:8.

Alan Culpepper's book on the Beloved Disciple traces historical and legendary associations regarding the son of Zebedee (1994), and Charles Hill contributes to the discussion by performing a masterful analysis of perceptions of the Fourth Gospel in the second century (2006), challenging critical claims that John was treated with suspicion by orthodox early Christian leaders and beloved by the Gnostics. Alternatively, Richard Bauckham (2007) has explained the anonymity of the Beloved Disciple as a literary device, engaging the reader in an ongoing way as the ideal author. Bauckham believes the Fourth Gospel was the only Gospel to be written by an eyewitness, but he does not believe it was written by the son of Zebedee. While he claims to reject the 'dominant position' of critical scholarship on most matters, he accepts it on this point.

One wonders, however, if an overlooked first-century clue to John's authorship might make a difference in these discussions, critically. In Acts 4:19–20 Peter and John are quoted, citing two characteristic statements. The first, claiming God's authority over humans', is a statement associated with Peter's use of God-versus-man rhetoric elsewhere in Acts (5:29; 11:17). The second statement, however,

bears an undeniably Johannine ring to it: 'For we cannot keep from speaking about *what we have seen and heard*.' The closest association anywhere in the New Testament is 1 John 1:3: 'We declare to you *what we have seen and heard*...' While this link might not prove anything about John's authorship necessarily, it challenges the view that no clear association between the apostle John and the Fourth Gospel existed until Irenaeus, and it does so a full century earlier (Anderson 1996, 274-277). Whatever the case, the quest for the Beloved Disciple still continues within Johannine studies.

### 7. Recurring Theological Concerns

While the Fourth Gospel has long been the great source of theological controversy within Christianity, these discussions have extended recently to its interreligious implications. First, a question: is John's negative portrayal of the *Ioudaioi* (is that 'the Jews', or 'the Judeans?') pro-Jewish or anti-Semitic? While John has been employed politically (sometimes by non-Christians) to further anti-Semitic agendas, the Fourth Evangelist was clearly Jewish, and his main concern was to show that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. Further, most references to the *Ioudaioi* in John refer to Judean and Jerusalem-based religious leaders. In one of the most significant collections of essays on the subject, most of the essays show John not as anti-Semitic but as a reflection of the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity (Bieringer *et al.*, eds., 2001). Alternatively, Adele Reinhartz points out the interpretive dangers related to John's presentations of the Jews. Alan Culpepper describes John not as anti-Semitic but as anti-Jewish, but here Bultmann's judgement is preferable: the Johannine Revealer scandalizes all that is religious, implicitly including Christian religious forms as well. Indeed, many of the *Ioudaioi* in John do believe and receive the revelation to which Moses and Scripture point. Therefore, the rejection of the Revealer by the *Ioudaioi* reflects a critique of religious, political, and popular conventionality rather than the favouring of one religion over another.

Second, is John universalistic or exclusivistic? On the one hand, Jesus is the only way to the Father (14:6); on the other hand, Jesus is the Light that enlightens all (1:9). Rather than seeing these as opposites, they find their connection in John 6:44: no one *can* come to the Father except by being drawn by the Divine Initiative, and this happens

through the saving-revealing work of the Son. Again, divinely originating revelation challenges religion as a human-made construct, and this informs a third interest: John's dualism. After the fashion of Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, light and truth are presented as liberating; those who prefer darkness do so lest their lives be exposed as rooted in creaturely soil rather than in God (3:17-21).

Third, John's presentations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the subjects of recent important studies, including Marianne Meye Thompson's book on the life-giving work of the Father (2001), William Loader's book on the agency of the Son as central to the Christological structure of the Fourth Gospel (1989), and Gary Burge's book on the impact of the Holy Spirit upon the community of believers (1987). Central to these topics is the Jewish Prophet-like-Moses agency schema rooted in Deuteronomy 18:15-22 (Anderson 1999). The Son is equal to the Father precisely because he does nothing on his own behalf, but only what the Father commands. The Father and the Son then send the Holy Spirit, who empowers believers and sends them out into the world as apostolic agents of the Lord.

A fourth set of interests orbits around John's ecclesial teachings. Sacramental realities are presented as non-formal and incarnational realities, rather than cultic ones. Authentic worship is in Spirit and in Truth, the baptism of Jesus is with the Holy Spirit, authentic communion is a factor of abiding in Jesus and his community, and ingesting the flesh and blood of Jesus implies the willingness to suffer and die for him if required by the truth (Anderson 1996). Ministry in John is inspired in its empowerment, compassionate in its character, and inclusive in its scope. Women are presented as leaders and partners with Jesus in carrying out his mission, and Peter is portrayed as 'returning the Keys of the Kingdom' to Jesus before his confession in John 6: 'You have the words of eternal life' (not I). In contrast to Matthew 16:17-19, every believer has access to the leadership of Jesus through the Johannine presentation of the *Paraklētōs*. In that sense, John presents a corrective to rising institutionalism in the late first-century situation.

### 8. Re-envisioning Johannine Historicity

A final, persistent question concerns John's historicity, especially in the light of its highly theological narrative. First, however, the fact something is theological does

not mean it cannot be historical. Second, John has more archaeological and topographical data than all the other Gospels put together. While John is the most theological of the Gospels, it is also the most mundane. Third, much of John's presentation comes across as superior to that of the Synoptics in terms of historicity. Jesus' ministry lasting more than one year with multiple trips to Jerusalem tops the list of distinctive features of John's presentation of Jesus that have greater historical realism than those of the Markan Gospels.

This brings us back to the Johannine-Synoptic discussions. Given Mark as a source for Matthew and Luke, the differences really are not three-against-one, but a contrast between John and Mark, 'the Bi-Optic Gospels' (Anderson 2006). Mark was also highly theological, and if Mark's sequence was more conjectural than chronological this was followed by Matthew and Luke. Further, archaeological discoveries continue to confirm John's presentation rather than diminish it. The five porticoes around the Jerusalem Pool of Beth-zatha (5:2) have been discovered as surrounding two pools, and despite the explicitly symbolic reference to the Pool of Siloam (9:7, meaning 'sent'), this pool has recently been discovered in Jerusalem. John's baptizing across the Jordan, a worship site on Mount Gerizim, the stone pavement for Pilate's tribunal – all of these suggest Johannine historical realism rather than theologizing concoctions.

For a lively debate for and against John's historicity, one might consult the books of Craig Blomberg (2002) and Maurice Casey (1996). In his staunchly skeptical attack on the Gospel of John's veracity, Casey interprets John to be anti-Jewish and therefore flawed from beginning to end in its presentation of Jesus, his ministry, and the Jewish people. Casey thus argues that later debates with Judaism in Ephesus led Johannine Christians to project their view of Christ over the Jesus of history, making John's presentation of Jesus 'profoundly untrue'. Craig Blomberg, on the other hand, catalogues many reasons for accepting John's historicity rather than questioning it. In so doing, Blomberg sees the Gospel of John as composed in a way complementary to Mark and the Synoptics, yet with its own story to tell and its own claims to eyewitness derivation and authenticity.

Have the ways scholars envision 'historicity' also been changing? From a Social-Sciences perspective, such scholars as Jerome Neyrey (1988), Tricia Gates-

Brown (2004), and Philip Esler and Ronald Piper (eds., 2007) have analysed the socio-religious context of the ancient Mediterranean world, leading to fresh insights on Johannine perspectives. From a *Cognitive-Critical* perspective, my own work has sought to contribute and understanding of how the Fourth Evangelist came to think dialectically, applying the works of James Loder and James Fowler to the origin and formation of Gospel traditions (1996). From a *New Historicism* perspective, Colleen Conway (2002) has analysed the perspective represented by the Johannine Evangelist and his community, showing how an alternative perspective might inform gospel historicity by clarifying first 'whose history' is being narrated.

One of the more interesting developments in recent years is the John, Jesus, and History Project launched at the national SBL meetings in 2002. In welcoming papers from all sides of the debate, this group has assessed critically two modern platforms: the *dehistoricization of John* and the *de-Johannification of Jesus*. While some good reasons exist for all the planks comprising these platforms, each of them also has its own set of weaknesses, calling for more work to be done. With the first volume appearing in 2007 (Anderson *et al.*, eds.), major reviews of the literature are accompanied by disciplinary approaches and case studies. Volumes II and III (scheduled for 2008 and 2011) will address aspects of historicity in John, and glimpses of the historical Jesus through the Johannine lens.

While no particular paradigm has carried the day within Johannine studies in ways comparable to Bultmann's programme two-thirds of a century ago, a good deal of growth continues to flourish within Johannine studies. Most promising are those approaches that integrate the strongest findings of the best disciplinary studies in interdisciplinary ways. That being the case, while new growth continues to develop, it is always indebted to the old growth that has gone before. It is said that biblical studies are an inch wide and a mile deep; that certainly is the case for the recent growth in Johannine studies.

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