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## Aspects of Historicity in John 5-12: A Response (from John, Jesus and History, vol. 2)

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## ASPECTS OF HISTORICITY IN JOHN 5–12: A RESPONSE

*Paul N. Anderson*

In responding to the eight essays in part 2 of this volume, I am impressed at the variety of approaches to aspects of historicity in the Gospel of John. Employing religious-anthropological, archaeological, contextual, and historical-critical studies, these essays cover the middle section of the Fourth Gospel, which includes three of Jesus' four trips to Jerusalem and rising opposition from the Judean religious leaders. The one miracle narrated in all four canonical Gospels—the feeding of the five thousand—and its attending features makes John 6 the premier locus of Gospel-comparison analysis, yet the Lazarus story of John 11 has captured the attention of three of our eight essays in this section. In addressing aspects of historicity in John 5–12, a number of advances are made with a variety of methodological approaches in play.

In the first essay, Brian Johnson highlights the diversity of Jewish feasts presented in John. In contrast to the Synoptics, which mention only the Sabbath and the Passover, John also mentions the Feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication and an unnamed feast. In arguing for the essential plausibility of Jesus' multiple visits to Jerusalem and public ministry during the various feasts, Johnson asserts that their primary value is theological and content-oriented rather than spatial or temporal.

Johnson's first conclusion—that John's presentation of Jesus as a Galilean Jew who "regularly participated in pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feasts"—is robust in its plausibility. Even though the Synoptic presentation of a single Passover coming at the culmination of Jesus' ministry appeals to many scholars, it is highly unlikely that an observant Jew from northern Palestine would *not* have participated in more than one Passover feast in Jerusalem; further, if Jesus participated in Passover celebrations, he probably attended other festivals as well. While the Johannine feasts indeed play theological roles in the narrative, however, chronological markers are not absent. Thus, the Johannine multiple-visit presentation sketches a textured backdrop, heightening political and religious understandings of the religious leaders' decisive opposition to the northern prophet.

Johnson's second conclusion—that the presentation of the Johannine feasts "makes it difficult to argue for a temporal or spatial setting for Jesus' ministry"—is

mixed, however, in its strengths. While the narrator's theological and dramatic interests affected his use of feasts as vehicles to move the narrative forward, this does not eclipse the chronological markers within the text. A chronologically fitting progression between the Feasts of Tabernacles (John 7), Dedication (John 10), and Passover (John 13) is certainly apparent, and the Feast of Dedication is even situated *correctly* in winter (10:22). The main chronological question is what to do with the first two Passover references in John 2 and 6. Here Johnson fails to develop the implications of the Passover reference in John 6, and then he overextends his argument in claiming that an *inclusio* between John 2 and the passion narrative suggests that "the Passover of John 2 is not a separate Passover at all." Two points here deserve to be made.

First, while John 6 appears to have been inserted between John 5 and 7 (so, whether it serves an explicitly chronological purpose within the narrative is questionable), the Passover reference in 6:4 still appears to be chronologically sound, at least seasonally. The plentiful grass (John 6:10; Mark 6:39) suggests a spring-time setting, and the number of only men being counted (a reference to potential soldiers?), who are then set in "groups" (companies?) of fifty and one hundred (Mark 6:40), has led some scholars to associate this event with Galilean hopes of a Passover political deliverance. The crowd's wanting to rush Jesus off for a political coronation (John 6:14–15) contributes to the political realism of the Johannine presentation of these events, which is also palpable in John 2 and 11–12.

Second, Johnson's assertion that an *inclusio* as a narrative feature eclipses or discredits the historicity of a presentation is somewhat fallacious. This may be the case, but it is never necessarily so. Whether or not John's three Passovers represent two or three Passovers in history, the claim that the Johannine *narrator* conceives of the events in 2:13–23 as happening at the *same* Passover as in John 11–19 is highly problematic for several reasons. (1) The reference to many having believed because of the signs Jesus was doing in Jerusalem at the Passover in John 2:23 is followed by the claim that Jesus did not entrust himself to the people (2:24–25), implying the continuity of his ministry after the original Jerusalem incident. (2) John 4:2–3 declares that Jesus left Judea and departed for Galilee through Samaria (also claimed in 4:47, 54); the only trip to Judea mentioned since the Cana wedding is his trip to Jerusalem in John 2—a direct spatial and temporal claim. (3) John 4:45 states that the Galileans had witnessed the sign Jesus *had performed in Jerusalem at the festival*, which clearly implies that the temple incident was earlier, not later. (4) The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem begin plotting to kill Jesus already in John 5:18, an unlikely response to an otherwise benign healing, despite the seriousness of Sabbath-law infractions. It implies an earlier offense—hence, an earlier temple incident rather than a later one. While Johnson correctly notes connections between the first and last Passovers in John, it is problematic to say that the Fourth Evangelist saw them, or portrayed them, as the same festival.

Johnson's third conclusion—that the Fourth Gospel's presentation of the feasts is consistent with first-century Jewish practice—is sound, and his inference

that it might even illumine first-century Judaism is suggestive. Especially fruitful could be social-science analyses of religion, politics, and power within first-century Palestine. However, this might also suggest that heroic welcomes may have involved the waving of palm branches, even at Passover, despite their traditional associations with Tabernacles, calling into question Johnson's own questioning of John 12:13.

Johnson's fourth conclusion—that the Johannine presentation of the feasts reflects a pre-70 Jewish situation and even a set of precrucifixion perspectives—is also on target. The Evangelist's many earlier-versus-later interpretive comments acknowledge theological understandings, but they also distinguish them from first impressions, which arguably suggest traditional primitivity. In presenting the religious realism of the Jewish feasts in John's Gospel, Johnson elucidates their place in the Johannine narrative, while also suggesting ways they might provide valuable historical knowledge about first-century Judaism and the historical ministry of Jesus.

Craig Evans's impressive essay on John 6 raises several implications for aspects of historicity in John and the Synoptics. Rather than taking the so-called "eucharistic" features of the narrative as later additions to the text, Evans asks whether the manna theme might have been a primitive association, perhaps even made by Jesus himself. Evans's drawing in of contemporary messianic figures presented by Josephus strengthens his case. Indeed, the prophetic heroes of the Hebrew Scriptures provided the backdrop for nationalistic, religious, and political messianic movements within the Judaism of Jesus' day, and this certainly functioned in ways similar for John the Baptist and Jesus alike. Evans correctly notes that these Moses- and Elijah-associations are rife within John 6, while more muted in the Synoptic renderings, arguing for John's more primitive and coherent presentation of these events. Several implications follow.

First, the overall Johannine rendering of the feeding, sea crossing, discussions of the loaves, and Peter's confession are *more unified and fully presented* in John 6 than in the Synoptics. Indeed, what is truncated and disjointed in the Synoptics among the five feeding accounts (Matt 14:15–21; 15:29–38; Mark 6:33–44; 8:1–9; Luke 9:12–17), five sea-crossing accounts (Matt 8:23–27; 14:22–33; Mark 4:35–41; 6:45–52; Luke 8:22–25), two discussions of signs and loaves (Matt 16:1–12; Mark 8:11–21), and three confessions of Peter (Matt 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20) is integrated and meaningfully narrated in John as a coherent whole. This suggests Johannine traditional integrity rather than a disjointed set of disparate sources and forms of material. Luke apparently departs from Mark and sides with John, describing one feeding and sea crossing instead of two and moving Peter's confession to follow the feeding of the five thousand (instead of the four thousand), as it is in John 6 (Anderson 1996, 167–220; 2006b, 101–26).

Second, Evans correctly judges the associating of Jesus with the Mosaic prophet of Deut 18:15–22 to be a prevalent and contemporary Palestinian messianic understanding, rather than a later christological addition to the text. This

motif is entirely missing from the New Testament's christological hymns (Phil 2:5–11; Col 1:15–21; Heb 1:1–4), but it *is* a messianic motif argued by Peter and Stephen in Acts (3:22; 7:37). This suggests its primitivity, perhaps even going back to the self-understanding of Jesus and ways he conceived of his own ministry (Anderson 1999). This also would account for how the feeding incident was misinterpreted nationalistically, as the crowd wanted to rush him off as a prophet-king like Moses in John 6:14, causing Jesus to flee their designs on his future (6:15). This self-effacing action by Jesus is entirely parallel to the secrecy motif in the Synoptics, cast in an alternative-yet-realistic way.

Third, Evans's correct connecting of the "eucharistic" motif with the feeding of the multitude makes several historical advances, although they could be put a bit differently. (1) I might soften the cultic emphasis of the "eucharistic" feeding, seeing it as tied more closely to table fellowship associated with the Jewish understanding of eating bread together in the presence of God (Gen 18:5; Ps 23:5; Job 42:11). The meal here seems closer to other alimentary meals than to a cultic or symbolic one (Luke 5:29; Acts 2:42–47; note 1 Cor 11:17–22, *before* Paul advises believers to eat at home in 1 Cor 11:23–34, instituting a symbolic meal). (2) The appeal to ingest the flesh and blood of Jesus in John 6 is more directly a reference to the willingness of believers to undergo suffering and martyrdom if required by the truth rather than a cultic requisite. This is precisely the meaning of participating with Jesus in his baptism and in drinking his cup as declared to the Zebedee brothers in Mark 10:38–39, as the "bread" Jesus offers is his flesh given for the life of the world on the cross (John 6:51; see Anderson 1996, 110–36, 194–220). (3) This being the case, the absence of the words of institution in John 13 may reflect a more primitive memory from a cultic perspective than the more formalistic Synoptic presentations, which have clearly co-opted the Jewish Passover meal into a Christian meal of remembrance. John's cultic informality thus appears more primitive and undeveloped than in parallel traditions.

Here Evans's focus on the eschatological emphasis of Jesus' ministry comes into clearer focus. Rather than seeing Jesus as conducting a political maneuver over the Romans or winning a midrashic triumph over Jewish leaders, his emphasis is on not what Moses gave but on what the Father *now is giving* (John 6:32) throws the scandal of the Revealer into sharp relief. As the eschatological agent from the Father, Jesus declares the eschatological availability of divine instruction (John 6:45; see Isa 54:13), which must have scandalized original Jewish audiences as it did later Christian ones. Challenges related to the Torah's authority and even wonder-cravings are debated by means of standard manna rhetoric (Anderson 1997, 11–17), and some of these presentations may even reflect originative, as well as developing, Jewish argumentation. By showing the overall coherence, Jewish political realism, and eschatological challenges of Jesus in John 6, Evans contributes profound and important insights into the historical ministry of Jesus.

Sean Freyne's essay on the ironic Judean rejection of the Galilean prophet bears to bear a lifetime of critical scholarship on our subject. As the leading

authority on first-century Galilean religion and society, Freyne argues that the narration of Jesus' inflammatory reception in Jerusalem in John 7 bears a striking resemblance to how the historical ministry of Jesus as a northern prophet would have been experienced, and responded to, by Judean leaders originally. In doing so, he approaches his task by means of two critical strategies: source/redactional analysis and contextual plausibility.

From a source/redactional perspective, Freyne suitably adopts a more synchronic approach rather than a diachronic one<sup>1</sup> and correctly focuses on the material most likely to be considered traditional. Indeed, the Johannine presentation of Jesus as both "prophet and Messiah" coheres more closely with the mission of the historical Jesus than later Davidic associations. While Freyne shows how Jewish messianic expectations in the first century C.E. were diverse religiously and geographically, he also shows how particular typologies evolved and developed from one epoch to another.

This raises several questions for further consideration. (1) Parallel to Qumran-Jerusalem religious debates, might there have been a similar set of Galilean-Jerusalem messianic debates, which make several features of John 5-12 understandable? If so, this would also explain the Galilean prophet's critique of religious leadership in Jerusalem and why Jesus was experienced as a threat. (2) Could it be that the Johannine presentation of Jesus as fulfilling the typology of the Mosaic prophet rooted in Deut 18:15-22 also represents a closer portrayal of Jesus' self-understanding of his mission than alternative messologies, such as the Davidic king? This seems likely, despite the fact that the authority of Moses played an accentuated role during the Jamnia period. (3) As such, might challenges to the northern prophet on the basis of a Davidic typology<sup>2</sup> have been employed by Judean leaders in staving off the messianic claims of Jesus and his followers? As a response, critiques such as those of the Jerusalem leaders in John 7:42, the Matthean tripling of the six Markan references to David, and the Lukan doubling of references to David were marshaled accordingly in the later Gospel traditions. The Johannine response, other than marshalling Davidic associations from Zechariah and a few other references, simply argues for Jesus' messianic authenticity on the basis of the Mosaic agency typology, which is why the oneness of the Son and the Father is argued within the developing Johannine tradition (Anderson 1999).

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1. With Ashton (2007, 11-53, 233-40), I find Bultmann's inference of multiple sources underlying the Johannine narrative to be lacking in terms of critical evidence (Anderson 1996, 70-167); thus, the Johannine tradition is rightly considered autonomous.

2. Contrary to Freyne's claim, the Mic 5:2 prediction of a ruler coming from Bethlehem, David's hometown, does seem to have posed a messianic warrant; the question is whether it was regarded with the same weight beyond Judean Judaism.

In his development of the *contextual plausibility* of Jesus as the northern prophet, Freyne astutely appropriates the criterion for determining historicity put forward by Theissen and Merz. Here Freyne approaches the issue by asking how likely it is that the historical Jesus might have been marginalized by a pejorative label such as *'am ha'arets* in the third decade of the first century C.E. This seems likely, especially if he was garnering a following in Jerusalem, thus posing a threat to the religious establishment and their biblical warrants for their stances and status. Such was argued against Peter and John in Acts 4:13–16, and it is not unlikely that such a challenge may have been levied against Jesus as one who taught with authority without having achieved formal educational endorsements.<sup>3</sup> Jesus may have also been accused of cultic deficiency (*'am ha'arets lemitswot*), as reflected in the Johannine memory.<sup>4</sup>

While stories of tensions between Jewish leaders and Jesus played vividly when confronting Jewish authorities in Asia Minor, they did not begin there. In his compelling essay, Freyne shows many ways such tensions would also have been intrinsic to the historic ministry of Jesus, reflecting understandable conflicts between the established Jewish leaders of Jerusalem and the rustic prophet from the hinterlands. Indeed, the irony would have been thick in earlier and later stages of the Johannine tradition, as Diaspora “experts” on Scripture failed to connect Jesus with the prophet about whom Moses wrote (John 1:45; 5:46). Geographic irony, however, slices evenly the other way as well. In declaring their knowledge of Jesus’ origin topographically (7:27), the Judean leaders expose their ignorance of his missional origin as being sent from the Father in keeping with the Mosaic prophet typology. While laced with theological meaning, the Johannine Jesus’ ambivalent reception in Jerusalem also betrays aspects of historicity, in both originative and developing terms.

The essay by Urban von Wahlde on the second pool recently discovered below the traditionally identified Pool of Siloam breaks new ground in terms of

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3. Parallels with Acts 4:1–31 corroborate Freyne’s analysis, as Peter and John are imprisoned by the religious leaders *in Jerusalem* for teaching about the messianic identity and mission of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (the Galilean prophet) and are dismissively regarded as being *ignorant and unlettered* (ἀγράμματοι ... καὶ ἰδιῶται; Acts 4:13). Like Jesus in John 7, Peter and John are also regarded as *'am ha'arets letorah*, as Galilean itinerants before the Jerusalem authorities.

4. The case could also be made for the Johannine Jesus challenging Jewish cultic norms, as his first sign made merriment out of *purification* jars (John 2:6), he cleansed the *temple* as an inaugural prophetic sign (2:13–23), his spoken ministry took place in the *temple* (2:19; 5:14; 7:14, 28; 8: 20; 10:23; 18: 20) and around Jerusalem *feasts* (2:23; 5:1; 7:2, 14), the debate between John the Baptist’s disciples and a Jewish leader from Jerusalem was over *purification* (3:25), Jesus’ healings on the *Sabbath* were regarded as breaking cultic norms (5:5–18; 9:14–16), *washings* accompany Jesus’ miracles (9:7, 11), and Jesus poses an alternative form of *cleansing* (13:10–11; 15:3). Indeed, even the Jewish leaders’ opposition to Jesus in John 7:21–24 appears to be a direct result of his having broken the Sabbath by healing the invalid on the *Sabbath* in John 5.

archaeology and Johannine studies alike. While the northern pool was excavated over a century ago, the discovery of the southern pool in 2004 is highly significant for a variety of reasons. Because it is much larger than the upper pool and more clearly functioned as a *miqveh* used for ceremonial bathing, with running (living) water flowing through it, the command of Jesus to the blind man to wash in the Pool of Siloam makes better historical sense as a result of von Wahlde's work. As a means of attaining purification, the transformation of the man's religious status—not simply his restored sight—must be viewed as a matter of pointed discussion between the religious leaders and Jesus in John 9. Whereas modern interpreters have characteristically doubted the historicity of the narrative because of the narrator's explicit comment on the meaning of the name Siloam, "sent" (9:7), von Wahlde's essay obliterates the basis for such moves. The name of the pool is indeed theological, but there also was a real pool by that name. Its newly discovered features call for a radical reevaluation of the originative historical backdrop of John 9.<sup>5</sup>

The evidentiary work of von Wahlde requires little comment, as it stands well on its own merits. It will also be interesting to follow any future archaeological developments in Jerusalem to see what further insights and discoveries emerge. Especially relevant, however, is his treatment of what constitutes "living water" in terms of Jewish purification rites. If a stagnant pool of water could be purified by an *otzer*, or a small adjoining pool replenishing the *miqveh*, the added knowledge about the Pool of Siloam as a pool of purification adds several levels of meaning to the Johannine narrative.

First, the archaeological implications of this new discovery are astounding! The vast system of pools as means of purification give a much fuller picture of activities associated with pilgrimages to Jerusalem and the importance of the larger temple complex. Because the materials (coins, debris, etc.) found in the larger pool demonstrate that its use was discontinued following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E., this confirms its use in Jerusalem *before* 70 C.E. The Siloam references would thus have made no sense to audiences in Asia Minor or elsewhere in the 80s and 90s of the first century, unless the narra-

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5. Similar fallacious reasoning has at times been exercised by scholars who have taken the five porticoes around the Pool of Beth-zatha in John 5:2 to be a theologizing reference rather than a historical one. The thinking has simplistically assumed that, because pentagonal structures were uncommon in Palestine and the Greco-Roman world (a fact), the five porticoes "obviously" must have referred to legalistic paralysis in bondage to the fivefold Law of Moses, causing the man to languish for thirty-eight years, as did Israel in the wilderness. Jesus therefore delivered the man by grace, and he overcame both legalism and its paralyzing effects in becoming a follower of Jesus. As meaningful as such interpretations might be to dehistoricizing scholars, the discovery of two pools side by side, with three rows of columns running lengthwise and two other rows at right angles (thus supporting *five* porticoes), has made such theological speculation come across as naïve and wrongheaded.



tor and audiences alike had been familiar with pre-70 Jerusalem. With Albright's important essay half a century ago, von Wahlde's essay argues for the primitivity of John's tradition.<sup>6</sup>

Second, connections between the curative and transformative power of the "troubled waters" of the Pool of Bethesda in John 5 and Jesus' commanding the blind man to wash in the Pool of Siloam in John 9 illumine the salutary character of purification issues alluded to in both stories. In addition, Jesus' declaring in the temple that from one's innermost being shall flow "rivers of living water" (7:38) takes on new meaning in the light of von Wahlde's work. Jesus offers spiritually from within what the restorative and empowering work of "living water" avails from without. Archaeological history here clarifies an important Johannine theological point.

A third contribution of von Wahlde's work clarifies the religious and societal implications of the pool cleansing in John 9, explaining why the blind man appeared before the priests and why he was interrogated so severely. Not only was his sight restored, but his deliverance from his physical ailment also brought restoration religiously and socially. As the Jerusalem leaders had been threatened by the healing of the paralytic in John 5, were they again scandalized in John 9 by Jesus' demonstration of curative power, which threatened their religious prescriptions for healing, cleansing, and restoration? Add the detail that *both* healings were performed on the Sabbath, in Jerusalem, and the very structures of religious authority and promise are threatened, being outperformed by the nonauthorized Galilean prophet. Jesus' work brought about the wholeness claimed to be dispensed by religious and cultic prescriptions alone, and it did so in unauthorized ways—even in transgressing Sabbath laws.

While strict advocates of naturalistic measures of historicity will demur at the healings of Jesus in all four canonical Gospels, the archaeological backdrop of Jesus' Jerusalem ministry in John presents a Jesus every bit as historically engaged as the Synoptic Jesus. On contributing fresh insights into the threatening of religious structures and authorities by the charismatic leader and his ministry, von Wahlde's essay may only be the tip of the iceberg.<sup>7</sup>

Edward W. Klink III's essay picks up where the previous one leaves off. Given that the primary historical treatment of John 9 over the last four decades has engaged the work of J. Louis Martyn (1968) distinguishing two levels of his-

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6. Von Wahlde's raising our awareness of the work done on the Pool of Siloam and its implications for Johannine studies promises to do for John 9 what the work of Albright (1956) did for John 5.

7. One wonders, for instance, what sort of insights would emerge if von Wahlde would perform this sort of analysis upon all twenty of the Johannine topographical and archaeological sites he treats in his important contribution to Charlesworth's *Jesus and Archaeology* (von Wahlde 2006). In the Scripture index of that collection there are half again as many references to the Gospel of John as there are to the other three Gospels *combined*!

tory—the originative history and the history of the contemporary audience at the time of the narrative's delivery—Klink's focus is a worthy one, historically. While Martyn did not claim to diminish the historicity of the originative events, the robust impact of developing the second level of history has tended to function in that way among many interpreters. Klink sets out to rectify that tendency by showing that a central aspect of Martyn's thesis—the mass expulsion of Jesus adherents from local synagogues—is an overreading of the evidence. Put otherwise, contravening evidence of Christian-Jewish cooperation during the late first century calls for a revised approach to the history of the Johannine situation and the contextual backdrop of John 9.

Helpful within Klink's approach are several things. First, he reminds us that Martyn was not the first to argue such a theory, and he points us to other treatments for further consideration. Second, he represents clearly several of the major critiques of Martyn's thesis, especially those by Kimelman, Wilson, Reinhartz, and Boyarin, showing a convergence of disenchantment with Martyn's hypothesis. Third, he shows how the larger narrative is disrupted if John 9 is either removed from its place or taken to be the hermeneutical key for interpreting the rest of the Johannine *Ioudaioi*-engagement scenarios. The many positive presentations of "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel call into question a pervasive adversarial stance against Jewish members of the Johannine audience. Fourth, Klink helps us think about what excommunication and being declared a "heretic" might have meant as intra-Jewish realities in contemporary settings, qualifying our understandings of the issues. Finally, and most significantly, Klink argues that intra-Jewish tensions were likely earlier than the 80s and 90s of the first century, reflecting a long history of religious tensions, rather than an abrupt one. For the purposes of the John, Jesus, and History Project, this likelihood bolsters the connections between the first and second levels of Johannine history.

While the overall thrust of Klink's work is compelling, questions regarding his treatment of the subject nonetheless emerge. The first problem involves an "overreading" of Martyn—if not by Klink, certainly by Martyn's critics, whose views Klink incorporates somewhat uncritically. To be fair, Martyn never claimed that expulsions from the synagogue in the Jamnia period were pandemic or universal; nor did Martyn's supporters assert that they were thoroughly effected in particular contexts. Therefore, citing examples of close Jewish-Christian relations as evidence against *any* expulsion of Jesus-adherents from Jewish synagogues fails to convince in the opposite direction. It may even qualify and support Martyn's essential thesis, in that *territoriality exists only among members of like species*. Therefore, familial closeness with Jewish communities would have exacerbated the tensions over Johannine Jewish believers' claiming Jesus to be the Messiah. Put otherwise, how many devout first-century Jewish synagogues would have tolerated the reading of the Johannine Prologue by its members *within* the Jewish meeting for worship? Arguments against *any* disciplining of Christian ditheism within first-century Judaism come across as overstated and unrealistic. While Klink does not commit

this error, some of the most ardent critics of Martyn appear to, thus making some of their critiques less than compelling.

A second overreading of Martyn fails to account for the presence of believing *Ioudaioi* on the second level of discourse. Just as Raymond Brown's treatment (1979) of Nicodemus as a representative of "crypto-Christians" (who in later decades feared to confess Jesus openly for fear of suffering alienation from their leading religious peers) posed a more textured inference of Jewish-Johannine relations, so do the presentations of believing and friendly *Ioudaioi*. Even some of the Jews in Jerusalem believed in Jesus as the Messiah (John 7:31; 8:30–31; 10:42; 11:45), although it is emphasized that, while many of the leaders believed, the Pharisees did not believe (7:48; 12:42). The point is that if the Johannine-Jewish dialogues were highly dialectical, some excommunication from some synagogues may have been happening,<sup>8</sup> some Jewish authorities and commoners may have been warm to the Jesus movement, some may have offered assistance and support to individuated Johannine believers, and some may even have believed in Jesus privately while being reluctant to profess their loyalty openly. Rather than overturning Martyn's work, the recent critiques do more to qualify it as a dialectical set of engagements thoroughly represented by the diverse presentations of Judean responses to Jesus in John.<sup>9</sup>

Again, the most important contribution of Klink's work qualifies the Jewish-Johannine relationships as being much broader and more complex than an acute set of excommunication debates in the Jamnia period alone. These tensions were much earlier and later, and they were multileveled and multifaceted. With the work of Instone-Brewer, Alexander, and Neale, the marginalization of the *minim* within Judaism would have extended to Jesus-adherents shortly after his ministry—perhaps even reflecting critiques of the northern prophet of Galilee himself,

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8. At this point, Kimelman's comment (1981) about Christian leaders' pressuring their members not to affiliate with the Jewish synagogue is plausible, especially if it involved abandoning the emerging Christian community. This is precisely what I believe was happening in the situation of 1 John 2:18–25 (Anderson 1997; 1999). Having departed from the Jewish community, either volitionally or forcibly, some Johannine members apparently abandoned their fledgling community and returned to the synagogue, seemingly allowed to do so if they would diminish their belief in Jesus as the Christ. As the Jewish challenge to perceived ditheism was levied in support of Jewish monotheism and singular allegiance to "the Father," the Elder levies the monotheistic claims of the proselytizers directly back in the opposite direction (1 John 2:23): "No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also." To deny the Son, who represents the Father authentically (Deut. 18:15–22), is to forfeit the focus of one's goal of pleasing the Father; conversely, to embrace the Son is to be embraced by the Father as his children (John 1:12–13).

9. This, I believe, is also a better way to read Wayne Meeks's position. It is significant that Moody Smith (1996) continues to assert the historical plausibility of the basic Martyn hypothesis, despite its recent challenges; Klink thus overstates the case that criticisms of Martyn's claims have been universal.

as developed above by Freyne. That being the case, these tensions were early as well as late, thus elucidating what may also have been the first level of Johannine history as well as later ones. On this matter, Klink's essay serves the John, Jesus, and History Project well, in that it illuminates the originative features of Johannine historicity, as well as its later ones. The fallacy, of course, is to assume that the illumination of one level of history eclipses all others.

Richard Bauckham's essay on the Bethany family in John 11–12 puts the question directly: Are the differences between John and the Synoptics around these events and the varying presentations of characters best explained as John's account being a factor of fiction rather than history? Bauckham's conclusion is negative, and this judgment is well-founded. For one thing, the raising of Lazarus seems a more plausible explanation for the Jewish leaders' conspiring to put Jesus to death—or at least one less likely to have been “concocted” (using Bretschneider's term)—than the Markan temple incident. A threat to the religious leaders' spiritual authority would have been far more of a challenge than a mere temple disturbance. Noting also the structuring of the Markan narrative, we see in this case an example of Mark's crafting *his* chronology around thematic interests as a central focus. Moreover, Mark's saving all the Jerusalem events—and nearly all of the judgment sayings of Jesus—for the culmination of Jesus' ministry during a “single” visit to Jerusalem reflects not a factor of strict chronology but of narrative denouement. Thus, with reference to the number of days before the Passover, as well as the events leading up to the arrest of Jesus, the Markan presentation, followed by Matthew and Luke, betrays features of conjectural arrangement and narrative climax more so than the Johannine rendering.

A second contribution of Bauckham's approach involves his attempts to reconcile the Johannine and Synoptic accounts on the basis of intertraditional contact. Strongest is his inference that the Johannine Evangelist was familiar with the Markan narrative, though not dependent on it. This raises questions, of course, as to *why* John's presentation is so different from Mark's account. If the Fourth Evangelist was familiar with Mark, was his distinctive narrative augmentive or even corrective? Certainly John 11 should be seen as an addition of narratives not included in Mark, similar to the other four signs in the first edition of John.<sup>10</sup> One might even see the exclamation of the steward in John 2:10, prefiguring Jesus' saving the best for last, as an indirect reference to the climactic Lazarus miracle, although it could also be a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus. By

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10. If indeed John 6 and 21 (along with the Prologue and John 15–17) were added to the first edition of John after the death of the Beloved Disciple, the first edition of John was likely the second Gospel narrative to be gathered, and all five of its signs are nonrepetitive of the Markan miracles. The first two signs (John 2; 4) fill out *the early ministry of Jesus* before the narrated events in Mark 1; the other three signs (John 5; 9; 11) fill out *the southern ministry of Jesus* in contrast to a largely northern ministry in Mark.

implication, the Johannine rendering poses an alternative narration to the Markan rendering of Jesus' ministry, with its own claims to traditional knowledge.

Bauckham is less certain about the Johannine-Lukan connection. While he rightly notes the Lukan additions to Mark's narrative, the most conspicuous feature of Luke's departure from Mark receives little attention. Given that Mark's presentation of the event as a head-anointing clearly inaugurates Jesus as a royal Messiah figure (followed by Matthew), why would Luke change the event (I think it *was* the same event) to a more servile anointing of Jesus' feet? Luke probably had a traditional reason for doing so rather than a rhetorical one. Given John's rendering, the fact that Luke departs from Mark and sides with John in an unlikely-to-be-concocted move suggests Luke's access to, and dependence upon, the Johannine tradition.<sup>11</sup> That being the case, Luke's additions of Mary and Martha as sisters playing similar roles, a parabolic story about a dead man named Lazarus, and even an attributed motive for the woman's anointing of Jesus suggest Luke's familiarity with the oral rendering of the Johannine tradition. While the case cannot fully be argued here, the anointing of Jesus' feet by a woman such as Mary (now *which* Mary was that?) suggests Luke's familiarity with, and indebtedness to, the Johannine rendering in presenting his "orderly" report, in which he includes that which has been seen and heard by eyewitnesses and servants of the λόγος (Luke 1:2).

Less convincing is Bauckham's inference of protective anonymity as a basis for omitting names of characters in the story, although he correctly resists inferring the adding of names by a narrator. When Matthew and Luke incorporate Mark, they more commonly omit names, places, times, and illustrative details rather than add them. This being the case, the predominance of graphic details in the Markan and Johannine accounts suggests primitive oral tradition rather than later additions (Anderson 1996, 94–104). Some of these details are even shared between Mark and John, though never presented identically, suggesting contact during the oral stages of the pre-Markan and early Johannine stages of their respective traditions. Given the more common Markan tendency to include details omitted by Matthew and Luke, the more plausible inference is that Mark's failure to include the name of the anointing woman was a feature of ignorance rather than protection. The strongest feature of Bauckham's account is the likelihood of particular, grounded Johannine familiarity with the Lazarus family of Bethany. Based on his analysis, the Johannine presentations of detail and relationships bear the trademarks of independent, traditional knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

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11. The thesis that Luke allegorizes and moralizes around Johannine narrations bears greater plausibility than the inference that John fabricates moralizingly innocent historical narrative out of Lukan paraenetic scenarios. For a fuller development of Luke's dependence on the Johannine oral tradition, see Anderson 2006b, 101–26.

12. Kundsins's (1925) argument for geographically localized traditions may also account for Johannine distinctive material not found in the Synoptics.

One final point deserves to be made here about the historicity of the foot anointing in John and Luke rather than the more royal head anointing in Mark and Matthew. As Freyne has argued above, the Jerusalem leaders' claim that Jesus could not be the Messiah on the basis of his being a northern Galilean rather than coming from David's city in the south is answered by Mark and, more fully, by Luke and Matthew. While all four Gospels present Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as an enactment of Davidic typologies from Zechariah, Mark's and Matthew's presenting Jesus as receiving a royal anointing appears to be rooted more clearly in apologetic interests than historical ones. Rather than following royal rhetorical developments, Luke here follows the more modest and servant-oriented Johannine rendering of a foot anointing, even moving Jesus' admonition to his disciples to serve one another to the Last Supper context—as it is in John.

These and other features, as argued by Bauckham, should give us pause before consigning the distinctive-yet-similar material in John 11–12 to the canons of fiction rather than history. Again, they may be fictive, but such is less than demonstrable on the basis of Johannine-Synoptic contrasts alone. Especially with reference to the Johannine familiarity with the family of Bethany, something rooted in personal knowledge and history is here apparent.

Following Bauckham's lead on Johannine links with the Lazarus family, Ben Witherington III drives the connections further. If the unnamed Beloved Disciple can be identified as the source of the Johannine tradition, and also connected directly with Lazarus (whom the text singles out as one whom Jesus loved: John 11:5, 36), not only might the historicity of the Johannine tradition be explained, but also the origin of John's southern (Judean) material and anti-Petrine bias. This approach is not new, but Witherington argues it here vigorously with a particular interest in establishing a basis for aspects of historicity in John. As such, it has several appeals.

First, if the Fourth Gospel was written by an eyewitness from the south, this would explain the presence of the rife archaeological detail in the narrative; the focus on Jesus' visits to Jerusalem; the emphases on the feasts, Jesus' ministry, and related events in Bethany; the Beloved Disciple's access to the high priest; Jesus' entrusting his mother to someone living nearby; the Jerusalem authorities' animosity against Jesus and his followers; and other Judean features of the Johannine text.

A second appeal to this approach is its attempt to solve the "problem" that every scene in which the sons of Zebedee are mentioned in the Synoptics is missing from the Gospel bearing the name "John." How could this writer, if he is the same person referred to in the Synoptics, *not* tell any of the stories related to scenarios in which he is directly involved in the Synoptics? Further, how could a member of the Twelve challenge the role of Peter and apostolic authority? Witherington's answer: the author was an eyewitness but not one of the Twelve.

A third appeal of the Lazarus hypothesis is that it might account for the distinctive theological slant of the Johannine narrative. After all, how might

one who has undergone a life-after-death experience have thought about Jesus' words and works? To use Robert Browning's famous imagery in *A Death in the Desert* (1864), what were once "guessed as points" were later known as stars. Might the transcendental perspective of someone like Lazarus be responsible for the highly theologized Johannine narrative, despite its accompanying mundane features? Worse inferences have been made. With Witherington, the Johannine Elder does appear to be the final editor of the Johannine Gospel and the three Epistles.

Despite these attractive features, however, the case for Lazarus being the Fourth Evangelist is less than compelling. This is not Witherington's fault; he argues his thesis with creativity and verve. Rather, it is a factor of the reality that all of the strengths attributable to the Lazarus hypothesis could just as easily be argued for another individual. Does the mention of Jesus' loving Lazarus (as well as Martha and Mary in John 11:5) really prove that the Beloved Disciple was Lazarus? Why not Mary or Martha? Does the presence of Judean detail in John *prove* the narrator had to have been someone living in the south instead of one visiting Jerusalem and its environs, as most devout Galilean Jews would have done? Was it only Jesus but none of the Twelve who knew the Bethany family and situation, or might other members of the Galilean band also have known Bethany and Jerusalem's environs? Because Judas Iscariot was the *one* member of the Twelve who came from Judea, does this prove that he is the most likely Fourth Evangelist among them on that basis? Further, why does Jesus commission Peter and John (Luke 22:8) to find a place for the Last Supper? Unless the man they spoke with was an agent of the Lazarus family, it would seem that Peter and John were the hosts of the meal, not Lazarus or Simon the Leper. Finally, in Acts 1:14 Mary is with the disciples and Jesus' brothers in Jerusalem; it says nothing of she or they having established residence there. The criteria used by Witherington to pinpoint Lazarus need not point to Lazarus alone; it could also point to others, and often more fittingly so.

A second drawback of the Lazarus hypothesis is that it creates a new set of problems that Witherington leaves unaddressed. If Lazarus as the Beloved Disciple really was a close companion of Peter, as referenced explicitly in John (13:23–38; 20:1–10; 21:1–24), why is he nowhere mentioned in the Synoptics as a follower of Jesus? Conversely, the sons of Zebedee are mentioned many times as being in the company of Peter as the "inner ring" among the Twelve (Mark 1:29; 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33), and Acts mentions Peter and John together eleven times (Acts 1:13; 3:1, 3, 4, 11; 4:1, 13, 19; 8:14, 17, 25), so the Lazarus hypothesis on the basis of presentational textual evidence fares less well than the traditional view. Indeed, it could be that someone who was *not* one of the Twelve played a role as the exemplar of discipleship—leaning against the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper, present at the cross, entrusted with custody of Jesus' mother, visiting the tomb after the crucifixion, and fishing with the disciples after the resurrection (in *Galilee*)—but the Lazarus hypothesis creates new problems not addressed by Witherington.

Third, Witherington's treatment here fails to consider alternative views adequately. He does not, for instance, challenge the view of James Charlesworth (1995) that the Beloved Disciple was Thomas, nor does he consider the one disciple present at the beginning and end of Jesus' ministry who is not one of the Synoptic Twelve, namely, Nathanael. How about John Mark and his mission to the Gentiles? Further, Witherington's dismissal of John the son of Zebedee as a possibility for the narrative source of the Johannine tradition—mirroring Pierson Parker's touting (1962) of the "one assured result" of modern biblical critical scholarship—borders on the cliché.<sup>13</sup> Of Parker's twenty-one reasons why John the son of Zebedee could not have been the Johannine Evangelist, *none* of them is compelling.<sup>14</sup> It could even be that John's juxtaposition of Peter and the Beloved Disciple reflects a dialogue *within* the apostolic band rather than assuming a pristine unanimity about power, authority, and governance among the Twelve.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, the death of the Beloved Disciple would have been a problem for early Christians if he were standing there in the situation mentioned in Mark 9:1—the last hope for the Parousia prior to the death of the last of the Twelve—which is clarified as an alternative meaning in John 21:18–23. It need not imply Lazarus; it seems to have implied one of the Twelve, echoing and correcting Mark.

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13. Rudolf Schnackenburg considers Parker's essay (1962) "possibly the most complete collection of the reasons which seem to exclude the authorship of the son of Zebedee" (Schnackenburg 1980, 1:92), while also judging the essay to be fraught with weaknesses and finally unconvincing. Of course, Parker's larger interest was to show that the Johannine Evangelist was John Mark, accounting for its Hellenistic character, which required a deconstruction in order to clear space for an alternative view of authorship.

14. Worse, some of Parker's assertions reflect less than adequate critical thought. (1) A fisherman must have been an ignoramus; a bit classist—never mind that Zebedee was an employer of several workers (including Peter) and would likely have had material resources as a business owner enough to provide for educating his children. (2) The omission of Markan material implies that John could not have been the author; an argument from silence—never mind the fact that the one disciple mentioned in the Synoptics as being uncomfortable with other exorcists (and their exorcizing work, proper?) is *John the son of Zebedee* (Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49), posing a plausible accounting for the absence of exorcisms in John. (3) The argument that John the son of Zebedee died at the same time as James (around 44 C.E.) is taken at face value; flawed historiography—never mind the fact that its inference is based primarily on a ninth-century borrowing of a fifth-century misreading of a second-century comment by Papias upon an indirect reference to the martyrological fates of the sons of Zebedee as a fallacious reading of Mark 10:39, when the second-century views of John's death locate it during the reign of Trajan around 100 C.E. (e.g., Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.22.5).

15. *Contra* Raymond E. Brown (1979), the juxtaposition of Peter and the Beloved Disciple in John does not represent a critique of Petrine hierarchy from outside the apostolic band; more compellingly, it reflects a dialectical critique from within the apostolic band, seeking to correct problematic features of rising institutionalism in the late first-century church (Anderson 1997, 24–57).



Especially if the first edition of the Johannine Gospel was designed as a complement to Mark, most of Witherington's objections to the Fourth Evangelist having been a member of the Twelve on the basis of Synoptic silences fall by the wayside.<sup>16</sup> In addition to the prevalent second-century opinion connecting John's authorship with John the apostle, an unwitting first-century clue to Johannine authorship has been overlooked by all sides of the debate.<sup>17</sup> The only time John speaks in Luke's second volume is at Acts 4:19–20, where Peter and John utter characteristically Petrine and Johannine sayings. The first saying, arguing in Platonic terms the priority of obeying God rather than humans (4:19), is replicated as a Petrine statement also in Acts 5:29 and 11:17. The other statement, however, "we cannot help from speaking *about what we have seen and heard*" (4:20), is replicated as a Johannine saying twice in 1 John 1:1–3. As a first-person plural past reference, this same phrase is not uttered identically elsewhere in Luke-Acts (despite some 150 hearing verbs and 250 seeing verbs, although see the second-person instances in Luke 7:22 and Acts 22:15); rather, its closest parallels are when Jesus declares what he has "seen and heard" from the Father (John 3:32) and when the Johannine Epistle writer says, "we declare to you *what we have seen and heard* so that you may also have fellowship with us" (1 John 1:3). Problematic as it may be, this first-century presentation of John the apostle uttering an unmistakably Johannine saying—a full century before Irenaeus—approximates a fact.

The point here is that John's *non*authorship might not be as much of an open-and-shut case as critical scholars have thought, thus challenging the certainty with which alternative theories are advanced. Nonetheless, Witherington's overall approach is worthy. Like Charlesworth, he is on the right track arguing for a personal source and perspective accounting for the bulk of the Johannine tradition as an alternative to the Markan (or Petrine) account. In that sense, the arguing of Lazarus or Thomas or Nathanael—or even the son of Zebedee himself—deserves critical consideration as at least one factor in the distinctive presentation of Jesus in the Johannine Gospel. While I might argue that the critical case is much stronger for the son of Zebedee than recent scholarship has assumed, Witherington nonetheless is on the right track in asserting an independent memory of Jesus and its alternative perspective as the basis for the Johannine tradition.

Derek Tovey's essay directly takes on the issue of the historicity of John's Lazarus tradition, and he does so appropriately by considering the narrative's epistemological character. While this is the most historically problematic of the Johannine scenarios from a naturalistic standpoint, it is precisely the sort of treatment needed for assessing aspects of John's historicity. In doing so, Tovey

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16. With Bauckham (1998a), if the first edition of John was produced for hearers and readers of Mark, its noncongruity with Mark is intentional as an alternative presentation, rather than a scandal.

17. This thesis is first argued in appendix VIII of Anderson 1996, 274–77.

addresses the problems engaged negatively in the post-Enlightenment programs of Strauss, Baur, and others, while bringing to bear recent interdisciplinary treatments of Johannine historiography by Meier, Sproston North, Esler and Piper, Byrskog, and Bauckham. Tovey thereby concludes that the Johannine Lazarus scenario fits better into the category of theologized history than historicized theology, and he does so compellingly.

While Tovey indeed acknowledges the typological function of the characters in the Lazarus story, he asks whether the subjects of the story betray a referential character. In other words, do they reflect real persons, places, and events supposedly known or knowable by early audiences, as opposed to fictive features never intended to be encountered by later audiences? This is an important matter, as the "theological purpose of the Evangelist" is all too easily employed uncritically by biblical scholars as a feature of theologizing speculation gone awry.<sup>18</sup> In doing so, Tovey acknowledges the author's reasons for telling his story in "concrete terms" while also assessing the traditional character of the material.

Tovey also notes the frequent presence of the names of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus on ossuaries of the day and sides with Bauckham on their being presented as guarantors of the Johannine tradition. In addition, the presence of details characteristic of pre-70 C.E. Judea suggests the primitivity of the Johannine narrative, although Tovey also rightly acknowledges the fact that little more can be ascertained as to "what actually happened." In that sense, Tovey's analysis presses the issue of what is meant by "history," and he calls for a more adequate means of approaching Gospel historiography, including interpretive and experiential features in the mix rather than limiting subjective memory and reflection to objectivistic and naturalistic measures alone. While Tovey does not claim to make much advance upon the question of whether the reported events took place in history, he advances the inquiry by assessing the epistemological character of the Lazarus material.

Indeed, the question of why the Lazarus story is missing from the Synoptics is an enduring one, and Tovey could have done more with the question of whether its inclusion in John is designed to augment, or even supplant, the ministry of Jesus in Mark. If the rising of Jairus's daughter in Mark 5:22–43 might have evoked the impression that Jesus performed a resuscitation of the "sleeping" girl, the Johannine story of Lazarus leaves no doubt. Lazarus had been dead four days, heightening the striking character of the purported event. Nonetheless, his pointing out the reference in the Q tradition (Matt 11:5; Luke 7:22) that the dead being raised provides external attestation to precisely the sort of thing that is reported

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18. Four gradations of symbolization can be identified in the Johannine text: explicitly symbolic, implicitly symbolic, possibly symbolic, and nonsymbolic (Anderson 2006c). However, just as symbolic presentation does not demonstrate a detail's ahistoricity, neither does a detail's symbolic innocence determine its historicity.

in John 11. With Tovey, not only did the Johannine account of Lazarus prefigure the resurrection of Jesus, but it also testified to the signs-producing authority of Jesus in presenting him as the Messiah. Like fiction, there is no such thing as nonrhetorical history. In that sense Tovey's work suggests that we have in John not only a "narrative mode and theological claim" but a "narrative mode and historical claim."<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, the eight essays in part 2 of this collection all advance our knowledge of aspects of historicity in John. As an independent perspective and presentation of the ministry of Jesus, the middle section of the Fourth Gospel heightens the reader's sense of its political and religious realism. By using a variety of approaches, the scholars in this section shed valuable light upon the northern prophet's ministry and conflicts in Galilee and Judea alike. Implicit are aspects of the Johannine tradition's dialogical engagement with other traditions, but those do not appear to reflect dependence. In all, the Fourth Gospel retains its own voice and points with dramatic flair to the Christ of faith *and* the Jesus of history.

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19. Here, of course, the important work by Gail O'Day (1986) is expanded to include history as well as theology as a claim of the Johannine narrator. While theology is indeed pervasive as a central interest of the Johannine narrative, so are its claims to historicity—wrongly or rightly.