

Edited by Jörg Frey and Udo Schnelle. *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: Das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditions-geschichtlicher Perspektive*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 175. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004. Pp. ix + 799.

The present volume on contexts of John's Gospel includes papers originally read at a New Testament symposium in Oberwaiz near Bayreuth, Germany, in November 2001 plus several additional contributions. The occasion for this gathering was the publication of the "Neue Wettstein," a compendium with parallel texts to John's Gospel from the Greco-Roman world as well as Hellenistic Jewish traditions, in an effort to combine the work on Greco-Roman backgrounds in Halle with the research on ancient Judaism in Munich. In the preface, the editors express their conviction that only an integrative approach is able to do justice to the complex tradition- and religion-historical issues raised by John's Gospel.

After introductory essays by the editors, the volume features essays under two separate headings: Early Jewish and Hellenistic Contexts; and Early Christian Contexts. Under the former heading, articles (for convenience's sake, the titles in the German original are translated here into English) include: "Jesus in the Image of God: Allusions to the Old Testament in John's Gospel (John 10)" (Ruben Zimmermann), "Light from the Caves? The 'Johannine Dualism' and the Qumran Texts" (Jörg Frey), "The Prayer in John 17 in the Context of Prayers in Contemporary Pseudepigrapha" (Carsten Claussen), "Signs: Johannine Miracle Terminology and Early Rabbinic Tradition" (Michael Becker), "The Logos, 'Older Son' of the Creator and 'Second God': Philo's Logos and John's Prologue" (Folker Siegert), "The Logos and Creation: Flash Points in Philo (*Op* 20–25) and John's Prologue (John 1:1–18)" (Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer), "The *parrēsia* of the Son of God in John's Gospel: Theological Hermeneutics and Philosophical Self-Understanding" (Michael Labahn), "Johannine Farewell Discourses and Seneca's Literature of Consolation: How Could a Roman Read John 13:31–17:26?" (Manfred Lang), and " 'Greater Love Has No One than This, that He Give His Life for His Friends' (John 15:13): Hellenistic Ethics of Friendship and John's Gospel" (Klaus Scholtissek).

The following essays are included under the heading "Early Christian Contexts": "John and the Synoptics: Positions and Impulses since 1990" (Michael Labahn, Manfred Lang), " 'There You Will See Him' (Mark 16:7)" (Zbynek Studenovský), "The Art of Repetition: Repetition, Variation, and Amplification in the Fourth Gospel" (Thomas Popp), "Johannine Theology in the Context of Pauline Thought?" (Christina Hoegen-Rohls), "The Unity of the Church in John's Gospel and in Ephesians: A Comparison of Ecclesiological Structures" (Ulrich Heckel), " 'I Am the Light': Reflections on the Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Johannine Writings in Light of the Light Metaphor" (Enno Edzard Popkes), "Concerning the 'Gnostization' of the Johannine Tradition: The 'Secret Gospel of John' (Apocryphon of John) as Additional Gnostic Revelation to John's Gospel" (Titus Nagel), and "What Does Irenaeus Know about John's Gospel?" (Bernhard Mutschler).

Space does not permit a review of individual essays; a few summary comments must suffice. The first observation that can be made from a survey of the contents is the striking absence of contributions dealing with the so-called "Johannine community." In light of the virtually paradigmatic status enjoyed by this hypothesis not very long ago this is a stunning omission. After Martin Hengel's vigorous critique of this hypothesis in *Die johanneische Frage* (Mohr Siebeck, 1993), and the similarly strong critique in Richard Bauckham's *The Gospels for All Christians* (Eerdmans, 1997), not to mention Robert Kysar's recent denunciation of the hypothesis which he held for decades, this is yet another indication that the consensus that had

coalesced around the various permutations of the “Johannine community hypothesis” has begun to crumble.

A second, and related, observation is that the present volume, by its own admission, does not portend to present a unified picture of the setting and origins of John’s Gospel but rather offers a collection of essays on various related topics that are not always complementary and require further integration. While the editors make a case for an integrative approach in principle, they do not accomplish the actual integration that needs to be done. This means that the value of the present volume lies primarily in providing a variety of materials for such integration that still awaits future completion. It is worthy of note that a forthcoming volume in the same series will gather papers originally presented at a meeting of the Tyndale Theological Fellowship on the Gospel of John (see also my paper on the destruction of the Temple and the composition of John’s Gospel in *TrinJ* 26 n.s. [Fall 2005]: 205–42).

Serious students of John’s Gospel who are able to read German (all the essays are in German; doctoral students, take note!) will certainly want to digest the various contributions to this volume.

Andreas J. Köstenberger
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