

The “Johannine Community” in (More) Current Research: A Critical Appraisal of Recent Methods and Models

Wally V. Cirafesi

McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

Recently, and within a very short period of time, several studies have appeared that have sought to influence the current direction of research on the so-called “Johannine Community” debate, especially as it concerns the methods and models used in reconstructing elements of John’s audience. This article functions as an addendum to an earlier piece that surveyed approaches to the “Johannine Community” starting with J. L. Martyn’s influential work in 1968 and intended to bring the reader up-to-date on recent research (Cirafesi 2014). However, due to the rapid rate of publication, that piece was unable to treat three important works that are related in different ways to the debate. The present article, therefore, represents a critical review of these works, and suggests that Johannine scholarship is rightly heading in a direction that favours a broad, non-sectarian understanding of the Fourth Gospel’s audience. The article intends to advance the debate through critical interaction with the methodologies used in these studies, offering in certain places alternative readings of ancient sources and proposing new analytical categories. The overarching aim is thus to assert the basic correctness of the non-local/non-geographical approach to gospel audiences, especially John’s.

Key Terms

Johannine Community debate; gospel audiences; Graeco-Roman associations; critical realism; register theory; Richard Last; Jonathan Bernier; David Lamb¹

¹ I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers of *Neotestamentica* for their helpful criticism, from which this article benefited. Parts of section 2.3 below were presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Baltimore, Md., 26 November 2013 in the Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics Section. Thanks are due to Andrew Rozalowsky,

1 Introduction

Over the course of the last fifty years, few topics within New Testament scholarship have been debated more intensely and frequently than the audience of John's Gospel. Rate of publication has been so rapid that my recent article surveying the Johannine Community hypothesis from "1968–Present" (Cirafesi 2014) was outdated before it was even in print. In an effort to bring the reader further up-to-date on scholarship deemed influential for study of the so-called "Johannine Community," this article critically reviews three contributions that have appeared approximately within the last two years and have challenged the methodological directions of much past research.

2 Critical Appraisals of Recent Research

2.1 Richard Last's "Communities That Write"

Addressing the gospels as a whole, Richard Last's 2012 article, published in *New Testament Studies*, is the most recent study of significance, attempting to counter Richard Bauckham's paradigm shifting work in *The Gospels for All Christians* (1998). The article's main contribution lies in its bringing to bear upon the gospel communities debate recent research into Graeco-Roman associations, particularly as advanced in the work of J. S. Kloppenborg, R. S. Ascough, and P. Harland. The core of Last's argument is that, contrary to the "Gospels for all Christians" theory of Bauckham et al., evidence from Graeco-Roman associations shows that ancient communities—including the analogous early Christ-groups—produced their writings communally and wrote very much out of their own self-interests, understanding their audiences to be restricted narrowly to members of that particular community (see, e.g., Last 2012, 175–176). Drawing primarily upon epigraphical evidence, Last suggests that the narratives left behind by these associations reflect their interest in recounting their own communal histories, while their other writings, such as bylaws and decrees, "were composed for the collective good of the community" (p. 176).

To support these claims, Last's study proceeds in several stages. The first revolves around his need to establish the legitimacy of comparing early Christ-groups and their literature to Graeco-Roman associations in

Benjamin Hunt, Zachary Dawson, and Gregory P. Fewster for their helpful comments, all of which improved this article greatly.

the first place (pp. 176–178). Here Last prudently admits two methodological difficulties facing his comparative analysis. One difficulty involves the fact that we simply do not know enough about the early Christ-groups responsible for the production of the gospels to label them “associations” with any certainty.² Despite this admission, Last points to evidence from several ancient sources that supposedly puts the resemblance between the two groups on “solid ground” (p. 178). For example, he cites Pliny the Younger’s representation of Christian groups as *hetaeriae* (*Ep.* 10.96), a term regularly used to describe associations; Lucian’s identification of Christianity as a “new mystery” (καὶνὴν τελετὴν) and of its leaders as θιασάρχης, προστάτης, and other association titles (*Peregr.* 11); Celsus’s comment that Christians established “secret societies” (Origen, *Cels.* 1.1); and Eusebius’ description of Christians as θιασῶται (*Hist. eccl.* 1.3.12; Last 2012, 178).

The second methodological difficulty Last admits is that association writings—their narratives, bylaws, and honorary decrees—are not generally analogous to the gospels. While he never answers it straight on, Last poses the question: “What do these kinds of writings have to do with gospel audiences? The significance of bylaws, decrees, and association narratives is that they were written by communities analogous to (or the same as) Christ-groups and therefore inform us of the ways and reasons that these communities took part in writing” (Last 2012, 178).³ Last then redirects his argument towards an engagement with the genre-based approach to gospel audiences, which is developed most thoroughly in the work of Richard Burridge (Last 2012, 178–181; see Burridge 1992 [rev.

² One wonders whether the *raison d’être* of this difficulty lies in the very likely possibility that “groups,” as Last understands them, were not in fact responsible for the production of the gospels. Last is quite dismissive of this point, and simply appeals to a supposed “scholarly consensus” that the gospels were produced within communities (see pp. 174–175 and n. 7). Further, the problem I see with Last’s argument here is that he is attempting to compare to associations not early Christian groups in general but rather “gospel communities” specifically (p. 178). However, the very existence of “gospel communities” is precisely what is under dispute and thus should not be used in the comparison. In other words, Last’s argument would appear to be upon “solid ground” if he restricted his comparison to associations and, say, Pauline churches, where there is a more clearly discernible “community” element in Paul’s letters. This seems to be what Last has in fact done in some of his other work (see Last 2013).

³ One may note that there are a number of assumptions in this statement by Last, the most significant ones being that associations are analogous to early Christ-groups, and that the gospels were composed by communities.

ed. 2004], 1998). His two major criticisms of this approach are (1) that the genre of the gospels (biography) says very little about their intended audiences, and (2) that “the intended audience of communal writings was not determined solely (or at all) by genre . . . [C]ommunities wrote everything, regardless of genre, in the interest of their group’s preservation and values” (p. 180).⁴

After his criticisms of Burridge,⁵ Last moves into the heart of his article and presents the ancient data from association narratives (pp. 182–187) as well as from bylaws and honorary decrees (pp. 188–193).⁶ The

⁴ David Lamb is undoubtedly correct when he says in a footnote that Last is overly dismissive of Burridge’s biography-based approach to gospel audiences (Lamb 2014, 20 n. 73). Further, although he cites him on p. 174 n. 5, Last has not given enough serious attention to the work of Justin M. Smith (2007; 2010), which addresses both of these issues. In his 2007 article, Smith proposes four categories of sub-genre and audience, which he believes has potential application to the canonical gospels: (1) ancient-definite, (2) contemporary-definite, (3) ancient-indefinite and (4) contemporary-indefinite. The ancient/contemporary distinction refers to whether or not the subject of the biography existed within the author’s living memory, and the definite/indefinite distinction refers to whether or not the biography was intended for a definite audience. For Smith, however, even “definite” biographies were probably never intended for very restricted audiences or “communities” (see Smith 2007, 203–211; see also Smith 2010). Smith’s monograph-length study, to appear in 2015, promises to advance this trajectory.

⁵ Last’s almost exclusive engagement with Burridge leads to a neglect of other evidence for and contributions to the “Gospels for all Christians” theory. For example, he never addresses the issues of book production and circulation within early Christianity, travel and communication between early Christian churches, hermeneutics, or gospel relations (on these, see the essays in Bauckham 1998).

⁶ On pp. 185–187, Last attempts to buttress his treatment of the data from associations with evidence from other narratives about community founders written “within Judean associations and directed toward narrow audiences . . .” (p. 185). The examples he uses are the “pseudepigraphic” books of *Jubilees* and *Joseph and Aseneth*. Time and space prevent a comprehensive critique of this facet of Last’s argument, but I mention two points here. Firstly, Last presents these texts as if they provide clarifying evidence for his theory about the existence of gospel communities. Yet both *Jub.* and *Jos. Asen.* are just as ambiguous regarding their origins and audiences as the gospels are, which explains why scholars are just as divided about these issues as they pertain to *Jub.* and *Jos. Asen.* In other words, these texts are worthy of comparison with the gospels only if they are approached with the same fundamental hermeneutical bias that they were written by communities about their founder for narrow audiences. Secondly, Last’s particular use of *Jos. Asen.* as evidence for his theory and his dependence upon Gideon Bohak’s (1996) interpretation are problematic. Last presents Bohak’s study, in which *Jos. Asen.* is a historical allegory about a Jewish community in connection with Onias’s temple in Heliopolis (2d cent. B.C.E.), as a “convincing case” (p. 186), but he never

two ideas he stresses are, firstly, that these association texts—especially the narratives—are written about and for specific communities, with the intention of recounting the community’s collective history and identity in relation to its god;⁷ and secondly, he contends that association bylaws and decrees are particularly good ancient examples of the collaborative writing process, in which an entire association gave its input and approval for the production of a text.⁸ In view, then, of the parallel between associations and Christ-groups, Last believes we can assume that early Christ-groups practised similar writing habits. This leads to the conclusion that the gospels were indeed written by, for, and about specific communities and certainly not “all Christians.” The remaining two very short sections of his article are devoted to demonstrating how gospel narratives reflect gospel communities—although most of Last’s attention is oddly given to non-gospel texts, that is, Acts and Paul—and how the gospels came to be distributed widely at a later time (pp. 193–197). On p. 194, Last makes his only comment about John’s Gospel, which is a favourable citation of Brown (1979): “R. Brown suggests that before the Fourth Gospel was composed its community was expelled from Judean synagogues, an event that they wrote into their Jesus story (see 9.22; 16.2).”⁹

I focus my criticism upon the two major methodological difficulties that Last himself admits his study must overcome. Firstly, Last’s reading of the ancient sources to establish the alleged parallel between “gospel communities” and associations lacks nuance and is, at points, misleading in terms of the level of clarity he attributes to these texts. For example, it is not at all clear that Pliny’s statement in *Ep.* 10.96 is, strictly speaking, a

acknowledges that Bohak’s view has been seriously questioned and rejected by a number of scholars, for example, Kraemer (1998); Humphrey (1999); Nickelsburg (2005); Ahearne-Kroll (2005); Standhartinger (1996, 2014). Further, Last seems to lack awareness of the range of critical issues surrounding *Jos. Asen.* that have been, and continue to be, intensely debated, e.g., its date and provenance, its genre, and its enigmatic manuscript tradition (see Standhartinger 2014 for a survey of these issues). Each of these issues is relevant for understanding how, if at all, *Jos. Asen.* might impact the gospel communities debate.

⁷ Some examples he gives are: *IG* XI/4 1299 (166 B.C.E.); *Syll*³ 985 (1st cent. B.C.E.); *I. Tralleis* 1 (2d or 3d cent. C.E.); *IG* II² 1366 (2d or 3d cent. C.E.).

⁸ Some examples he gives are: *IG* II² 1369 (2d cent. C.E.); *IG* II² 1368.80 (164/5 C.E.); *SEG* 31.122 (early 2d cent. C.E.); *IG* II² 1324.11–20.

⁹ This citation demonstrates a lack of engagement with scholarship that would undermine and run contrary to Brown’s (now dated) community model—e.g., the much older J. A. T. Robinson (1976, 272–275); and the more recent Klink (2008, 99–118; 2009, 175–184).

“depiction of Christian groups as *hetaeriae*” (“political associations”). In this passage, Pliny, who is narrating to Trajan his first encounters with Christianity, tells the emperor of his procedure for interrogating those accused of being Christians. Some, he says, admitted that they had been Christians but were no longer so. One of the practices of this particular group of people, Pliny says, was that they would “partake of food—but ordinary and innocent food.” He goes on to say, however, that “even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your [Trajan’s] instructions, I had forbidden political associations (*hetaeriae*).” In other words, Pliny, who at the time likely had no prior knowledge of Christianity, had issued a prohibition meant to regulate certain practices of food consumption within various *hetaeriae*. However, even though Christians, in distinction from the *hetaeriae*, were not in violation of this edict in the first place—for their food was “ordinary” and “innocent”—they gave up their practice anyway in an effort to pre-empt the possibility of being perceived as *hetaeriae*. Thus, while Christians appear themselves to have heeded (perhaps needlessly) the edict Pliny intended for *hetaeriae* specifically, it does not follow that Pliny is here depicting Christ-groups in general as *hetaeriae*. In fact, after torturing two female slaves who were called “deaconesses,” Pliny himself seems to declare just the opposite, that instead of a political association he found Christianity to be a “depraved, excessive superstition,” a superstition, however, that was spreading rapidly through the cities, villages, and farms.

In contrast to Last’s interpretation, Lucian’s depiction of Christianity in *Peregr.* 11 as a “new mystery” (or “new mystic cult”) could very well be interpreted as a reference to Christianity as an *entire movement*, not to individual local Christ-groups. That is, in this text Lucian presents Christianity holistically as a cultic phenomenon introduced to the world by Jesus himself, not as distinct phenomena resembling local associations within the Roman world. Furthermore, Last’s assertion that Lucian depicts leaders (note the plural) within the early Christian movement through the use of association terms such as *θιασάρχης* and *προστάτης* is inaccurate, since Lucian in fact uses these words to describe *the single subject* of his biography, the Cynic philosopher Peregrinus. In recounting Peregrinus’s temporary coming over to Christianity, Lucian describes him as a “prophet and cult-leader (*θιασάρχης*),” and narrates his work among Christians who revered him,

as a god, made use of him as a lawgiver, and set him down as a protector (προστάτην), next after, to be sure, whom they still worship, the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult (καινήν ταύτην τελετήν) to the world.
(trans. Harmon, LCL)

This text should not be used, then, to establish the manner in which early Christ-group leaders were depicted as a whole. Instead, Lucian, rather than describing Peregrinus as simply another leader within the Christ-group movement, means to juxtapose his subject with Jesus himself. To my knowledge, no other early Christ-group leader is depicted as a “god” and “lawgiver,” nor is considered as standing “next after” the man Jesus. Thus, based on this passage, if Lucian indeed perceives Christianity as an association, it is on the level of Christianity as a whole and not as a movement comprised of individual isolated communities.¹⁰ Even if Lucian understands the Christ-group movement as numerically rather small, in *Peregr.* 11 he gives no indication that he views the internal structure of the movement as constituting disparate communities that were geographically confined and relationally constricted.

A similar argument can be made regarding Last’s use of Origen, *Cels.* 1.1; Last assumes that Origen is speaking of Christianity in terms of isolated communities rather than Christianity as an entire movement. In his critique of Celsus, Origen certainly does not deny the fact that Christians formed “associations” (συνθήκας). The issue for him is Celsus’s accusation that these associations are somehow violations of Roman public law (τὸν κοινὸν νόμον) and cast disrepute on the Christian faith.¹¹ Origen

¹⁰ In citing Pliny and Lucian as Roman outsiders, Last does not fully appreciate the significance of the critical interpretative question: “from who’s perspective?” It is one thing to say that Christ-groups were perceived as associations by outsiders, but it is quite another to say that the early Christ-followers perceived themselves that way and thus engaged in association practices (e.g., writing). Last may be trying to pre-empt this criticism by his citing Christian writers such as Origen and Eusebius, but for these texts—which are from the third and fourth centuries C.E., respectively—the problem of perception still stands.

¹¹ This makes Last’s comparison somewhat odd, since, while Celsus accuses Christians of forming συνθήκας κρύβδην (“secret associations”), he goes on to say that these sorts of associations stand in violation of Roman law. The question, then, is: does this text from Origen speak about Christ-groups resembling an association markedly different from public (and legal) associations in the Graeco-Roman world, that is, the ones with which Last wants to compare early Christ-groups? Last is unclear on the relation

responds by attempting to rationalise the formation of such associations in terms of their acting as a unifying defence for Christians against pagan laws and the tyranny of the devil:

Christians . . . form leagues [συνθήκας] contrary to the laws of the devil, against his power, and for the safety of those others whom they may succeed in persuading to revolt from a government which is, as it were, “Scythian,” and despotic. (trans. Roberts and Donaldson)

Therefore, rather than to presenting early Christ-groups as “secret societies” that were somehow in competition with and/or largely in isolation from each other, this passage portrays the associations of Christians as a means of unifying like-minded people (note Origen’s use of the phrase τοὺς τὰ αὐτὰ αὐτῷ φρονοῦντας) who wish to revolt against the devil and protect those they persuade to join their ranks.

Last’s citation of Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 1.3.12 and the use of θιασῶται is odd and could even be seen to contradict his own argument. Eusebius uses the word θιασώταις here to describe *all Christians* as followers of Christ, not as members confined to their local group or association:

And as himself the true and only Christ of God, he has filled the whole earth with the truly august and sacred name of “Christians,” committing to his followers (θιασώταις) no longer types and images, but the uncovered virtues themselves, and a heavenly life in the very doctrines of truth.

Even though an association term is used to depict Christians (θιασῶται), the description here is rather clearly of a *trans-local* movement, namely, one involving “the whole earth” and thus all of its followers.¹²

between secret (and thus illegal) associations and public (and thus legal) associations, and where he wishes to situate early Christ-groups among them.

¹² It is peculiar that Last marshals evidence from Eusebius for his theory that early Christ-groups resembled associations, when other passages from Eusebius would seem to contradict this theory. For example, as noted above, Last essentially assumes that the gospels were not composed by individuals but rather by communities. Evidence from Eusebius, however, conflicts with this assumption. See, e.g., *Hist. eccl.* 2.15.1–2; 2.16.1; 3.39.14–17; 6.14.5–7, where Eusebius attributes the origins of the gospels to individual authors. From this angle, one wonders whether Last is guilty of special pleading.

The second point of criticism is that the evidence from association writings that Last proffers, especially the narratives, is fundamentally different from what we possess in the gospels, both in terms of their content and materiality. For example, Last draws attention to the self-reflexive subject matter of *IG XI/4 1299*, an inscription from 166 B.C.E., which he says is typical language of association narratives, namely, the use of phrases referring to *their* god and *their* community. However, this is precisely the type of language the New Testament gospels lack.¹³ Furthermore, Last never addresses the range of issues related to the material aspects of the evidence. Most of the data from associations he discusses are short inscriptions. This stands in stark contrast to the extant evidence for the gospels, which indicates that these texts only ever circulated as relatively long documents written with ink on either papyrus or parchment and found for the most part in the form of a codex. While the social and functional implications of these material differences are numerous (see Parker 2008, 17), just a few are noteworthy. The most fundamental differences between the use of inscriptions and the use of papyri involve the issues of permanence, mobility, and ease of distribution and circulation. Whereas inscriptions were permanent yet immobile and generally much more difficult to distribute and circulate broadly, papyri were ephemeral yet mobile and generally much easier to distribute and circulate (Bagnall 1995, 9–10).¹⁴ From this perspective, it certainly makes sense that association writings—which were indeed, as Last says, written by, for, and about specific communities—predominately took the form of fixed and immobile inscriptions. Regardless of when they were actually penned, we have no evidence that the gospels were ever fixed in this material manner. Instead, the evidence points in the direction of their being written down on papyrus (or parchment) from the start and incorporated, perhaps very early on, into the use of the codex (Parker 2008, 13–20).

¹³ Perhaps the closest parallel to “self reflexive subject matter” in the gospels is from John 21:24–25, where we see the in-breaking of the narrator via the use of the first person singular and plural: “This is the disciple who testifies about these things and has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. There are many other things that Jesus did. If every one of them were written down, I suppose the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

¹⁴ The ancient perspective on the ephemerality of papyrus is supremely displayed by the fact that dozens of papyri, famously discovered at Oxyrhynchus, were found essentially in a garbage dump (see chs. 1 and 2 in Parsons 2007). The use of papyrus in the writing of letters, business contracts, and other sorts of documents needing the ability to travel over a certain distance demonstrates ease of circulation and distribution.

Unlike for association inscriptions, this would have provided the much longer texts of the gospels with a more functional mode of production and with ease of mobility and distribution, a point which coincides nicely with a broad, if not an “all Christians,” theory of gospel audiences.¹⁵

In my view, the conclusion regarding Last’s work is that—while certainly creative and provocative in its approach—it leaves too many unresolved issues and unanswered questions to be considered persuasive. The parallels he identifies between supposed “gospel communities” and Graeco-Roman associations, and between their writing practices, are quite strained and sufficiently weak to undermine both his methodology and hypothesis. I agree that certain evidence from Graeco-Roman associations has great potential to function heuristically in the work of reconstructing socio-historical elements of early Christianity, particularly the institutional origins of Pauline churches. However, I remain unconvinced that the evidence Last presents us with is all that helpful for the study of gospel origins and audiences, specifically those of the Gospel of John.¹⁶

2.2 *Jonathan Bernier’s Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John*

Jonathan Bernier’s 2013 monograph on the Johannine expulsion passages represents a project of a fundamentally different methodological orientation from prior work on the topic. The study is far more concerned than previous scholarship has been with the development of a philosophy of history adequate for the task of making historical judgments. While the book does not set out to address the existence of a “Johannine Community” directly, it does address straight on what has been the evidential centre-piece of nearly every reconstruction of a “Johannine Community” since J. L. Martyn’s influential 1968 study,¹⁷ namely the

¹⁵ On the formation and distribution of early Christian books, see Gamble (1995); Alexander (1998); and Kruger (2013). This point, of course, is not meant to settle decisively the issue of the material differences, but rather is to point out the fact that Last certainly needs to address this fundamental issue.

¹⁶ See the recent monograph by Vine (2014) on the audience of Matthew’s Gospel, in which the author highlights many of the methodological and theoretical problems facing scholars, like Last, who still wish to posit various gospel community reconstructions.

¹⁷ For a survey of these reconstructions, see Cirafesi (2014). Bernier bifurcates the history of scholarship on the topic since the time of Martyn into scholars of the classical Martynian perspective and those of the neo-Martynian perspective. While both perspectives see the expulsion passages as not recounting events that happened during

historicity of the ἀποσυνάγωγος passages (John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). Bernier's central argument is that, contrary to the common claim that these passages are anachronistically inserted into the time of Jesus' ministry and reflect a later period in the history of the "Johannine Community" (usually ca. 80–90 C.E.), it is historically probable that the events recorded in these texts did indeed take place during Jesus' lifetime (Bernier 2013, 12). If Bernier's thesis is considered persuasive, then the evidential basis for many traditional "Johannine Community" reconstructions would be essential removed.

Bernier organises his study into four chapters that progressively build to a fifth in which he lays out clearly his judgment of probability on the historicity of the expulsion passages. In Chapter 1 (see esp. pp. 23–26), he articulates the hermeneutical tradition to which his study is indebted, namely the critical realist epistemology of Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan and (especially) New Testament scholar Ben F. Meyer (see Lonergan 1971; Meyer 1989; Meyer 2002). Like Meyer, Bernier distances his study from the traditional criteria approach to the study of the historical Jesus, preferring the use of "indices of historicity" instead of "criteria" and employing Meyer's model of "direct" and "oblique" patterns of inference for making historical judgments (Bernier 2013, 23).¹⁸ At the heart of both patterns is the notion of *intentionality*. With direct inferences, the intention of the writer can be explicitly defined; thus, if the writer intends a level of factuality about a particular event, is plausibly knowledgeable about it, and there is no reason to suspect the writer of fraud, then historicity may be inferred. Oblique inferences, on the other hand, do not depend upon an author's defined intention but are obtained by approaching the narrative only indirectly (Bernier 2013, 24; Meyer 2002, 85; see note 17 above).

the life of Jesus, the neo-Martynian tradition suggests that formal expulsion of Christians from the synagogue never happened at all, let alone at a later time.

¹⁸ Here Bernier also refers to Keith (2011) and Keith and LeDonne (2012), which are the most recent studies that have called into question the "criteria approach" to Jesus studies. On the surface of it, Meyer's use of "oblique inferences" seems to come rather close terminologically to the traditional "criteria," since, for making such inferences, he proposes seven "indices of historicity": Discontinuity, Originality, Personal Idiom, Resistive Form, Multiple Attestation, Multiform Attestation, and Aramaic Substratum (Meyer 2002, 87). However, for Meyer (and for Bernier), the all-important difference between a "criterion" and an "index" is that, in contrast to "criterion," the presence of a particular "index" favours historicity but its absence does not immediately imply a judgment of non-historicity (Meyer 2002, 87).

In Chapters 2–4, Bernier employs his oblique patterns of inference by considering the Johannine expulsion passages within the contexts of the ancient synagogue (ch. 2), Jesus’ messianic identity in John (ch. 3), and John’s imperial setting (ch. 4). Within each of these contexts, Bernier argues that a judgment of *plausibility* regarding the historicity of the *aposynagōgos* passages is warranted. However, in Chapter 5, Bernier employs a direct pattern of inference and pushes his argument one step further through an analysis of several Johannine texts (John 1:14; 2:19–22; 14:26; 19:35; 20:30–31; 21:24–25; and 1 John 1:1–3) that frame John’s relationship to history and indicate that John indeed intends factuality in recounting the events, was plausibly knowledgeable about them, and need not be suspicious of fraud (Bernier 2013, 114–132). The conclusion, then, is that the Johannine expulsion passages are not simply historically *plausible* but are rather historically *probable*.

While Bernier’s thesis is convincing, in many ways it is not unique. For example, J. A. T. Robinson argued in 1976 that there is no likely reason to believe that the Johannine *aposynagōgos* passages do not recount events of Jesus’ lifetime. He likewise cast severe doubt upon the use of the *Birkat ha-Minim* as the historical context for the contemporary experience of the “Johannine Community,” describing Martyn’s reconstruction of the history of the Fourth Gospel as “highly imaginative” (Robinson 1976, 272–275, here 273; see also Klink 2008, 2009; Wright 2009). Further, one of the strongest arguments posed by Robinson—which Bernier’s study does not mention but would have benefited from—is that the experience of being driven out or expelled from the synagogue or some other Jewish gathering is a concept not entirely unique to John’s Gospel, even though the technical term ἀποσυνάγωγος is. For example, Robinson identified parallels in some of the exclusion passages of the Qumran literature,¹⁹ and suggested that material from Luke–Acts also reflects conceptual overlap with the Johannine passages.²⁰ Regardless of whether it qualifies as a distinct “oblique pattern of inference,” the strength of this argument is that it sets the Johannine expulsion accounts firmly within the broader socio-religious context of early Jewish and Christian experience.

A second point to note is that Bernier is at times unclear on his application of Meyer’s “oblique patterns of inference.” For Meyer, oblique

¹⁹ For example, 1QS 5.18; 6.24–7.25; 8.16, 22; and CD 9.23.

²⁰ See, e.g., Luke 4:29; 6:22; Acts 7:58; 13:45–50; 14:2–6, 19; 17:5–9, 13; 18:6, 12–17. See also 1 Thess 2:14ff., events which are described in Acts 9:29 and perhaps also in 22:18.

patterns are seen to yield inferences of historicity but these patterns are understood to derive from the various indices that Meyer proposes: Discontinuity, Originality, Personal Idiom, Resistive Form, Multiple Attestation, Multiform Attestation, and Aramaic Substratum (Meyer 2002, 85–87; see n. 17 above). As far as I can tell, while Bernier seeks to employ these types of patterns by drawing upon the data of ancient synagogues, Jesus’ messianic identity in John, and John’s imperial setting, he does not seem to situate these patterns as derivative of their respective indices. In other words, based upon which of Meyer’s proposed indices does Bernier infer historicity when discussing ancient synagogues, Jesus’ messianic identity, and Roman Empire? This point does not invalidate Bernier’s judgment of plausibility for the expulsion passages, but it does suggest that he has made an important step in Meyer’s methodology less than obvious for his readers.

Despite these criticisms, Bernier’s study is remarkable for at least three reasons. Firstly, it exposes the foundational historical and hermeneutical problems with Martyn’s two-level reading strategy,²¹ at the centre of which stands the question of the historicity of the Johannine expulsion passages. Secondly, and conversely, Bernier puts a one-level reading strategy of John’s Gospel on quite solid hermeneutical and historical ground. He does this by rightly prioritising the textual evidence of John rather than an allegorically constructed “Johannine Community” standing behind the text.²² Thirdly, by stressing the importance of the epistemological category of *intentionality* within a critical realist framework, the book advances an understanding of the mutual relationship

²¹ According to this strategy, John’s Gospel is to be read (1) on the level of Jesus’ earthly life, and (2) on the level of the contemporary circumstances of the “Johannine Community” (Martyn 1979, 15–21; see Cirafesi 2014, 174–175). This two-level reading strategy has most recently been employed in Ashton (2014). In exposing Martyn’s skewed hermeneutical approach to history, Bernier has quite rightly appreciated the full force of Francis Watson’s critique of the community approach to the gospels. Watson argues that, at the heart of it, community criticism is a biased hermeneutical—or better yet, theological—program that de-historicizes the gospels as evidence for Jesus, but at the same time favours an allegorical reading that imbues them with the history of their respective communities (see Watson 1998, 195–218).

²² The history of the community (*Gemeindesgeschichte*) was, of course, the hermeneutical centre-piece for 19th and 20th-century form critics such as J. Wellhausen, M. Debelius, and R. Bultmann.

between history and theology in John's Gospel (see esp. ch. 5).²³ The outcome is that the study philosophically problematises any approach that is uncritically suspicious of John's intention to recount factually the events of Jesus' life, especially the expulsion events. Admittedly, even if the expulsion passages are deemed historical, such a judgment does not immediately disprove the existence of a "Johannine Community." It does, however, suggest that interpretive recourse to an alleged community standing behind these passages is no longer necessary to explain the texts and, therefore, can no longer be assumed. Instead, the passages may very well be interpreted as simply recording Jesus' own conflict with the religious leaders of his day rather than referring allegorically to a later Jewish–Christian community in conflict with the synagogue.

2.3 *David Lamb's Text, Context and the Johannine Community*

David Lamb's sociolinguistic analysis of the Johannine literature marks another distinct methodological turn in the "Johannine Community" debate.²⁴ Looking to the functional linguistic theory of register—especially as articulated in the works of M. A. K. Halliday and Douglas Biber—Lamb attempts to develop a heuristic model for relating a text to its social context (Lamb 2014, 27–28).²⁵ In this sense, his study coincides rather closely with the aims of Bernier and represents a growing concern among scholars for prioritising the text of John's Gospel itself in the reconstruction of the Gospel's audience. Lamb's fundamental contention is that an analysis of the interpersonal linguistic structure of the Johannine

²³ Bernier's understanding of the Johannine synthesis of history and theology is generally in line with the trajectories set in Byrskog (2001); Anderson, Just, and Thatcher (2007, 2009); and Bauckham (2006, 2007).

²⁴ The reader will note that, as one who has done work in modern linguistic approaches to the NT, I have a particular interest in Lamb's model, and so give more detailed criticisms of his work.

²⁵ At its most fundamental level, register theory in Hallidayan terms refers to the idea that, in every instance of language use, language users situate themselves in relation to (1) other possible linguistic behaviours available to them within their linguistic system, and (2) their social context (see Halliday 1978, 32; Porter 2000, 198). The essential principle is that language variation determines and is determined by its use in particular contexts of situation or "situation types," which involve the exchange of meanings between both Senders and Recipients. Thus, the idea is that if register theory is applied to John's Gospel, it may allow the interpreter to explain the Gospel's linguistic structure in terms of a plausible communicative situation type between author and audience and to offer a linguistic profile that allows for a reconstructable Johannine audience.

literature—that is, the features of John’s language that construct the social roles and relations of author and reader—significantly undermines the classic community hypotheses of J. L. Martyn and (especially) R. Brown,²⁶ as well as the sectarian community hypothesis supported by numerous other scholars (Lamb 2014, 55).

Chapters 3–5 form the heart of Lamb’s study. In these chapters he sets forth his sociolinguistic method of relating text to context, focusing primarily on the notion of register (ch. 3); he rightly criticises the (mis)use within biblical scholarship of Halliday’s concepts of “antilanguage” and “antisociety” (ch. 4); and he applies his method to the Johannine writings (ch. 5), concluding that “there is little to no linguistic evidence” that either the Gospel or the letters of John reflect an origin and audience of an isolated sectarian community (Lamb 2014, 197).

There is, in my view, significant value in Lamb’s use of register theory for addressing the “Johannine Community” conundrum. However, his analysis has numerous problems and deficiencies, only two of which can be addressed presently.²⁷ Firstly, in drawing upon Biber and Halliday,

²⁶ The entirety of ch. 2 is devoted to an examination and assessment of Brown’s five-stage compositional model of the Johannine literature and his four-stage model of the history of the “Johannine Community.”

²⁷ Besides the two issues I note below, it is worth briefly mentioning three others, which are perhaps less severe. Firstly, his development and use of register analysis is overly simplistic (a point which is the likely cause of my further criticisms below; see point 2). This is seen, among other ways, in (1) his failure to engage the work of two major systemic functional linguists, M. Gregory (esp. in Gregory and Carroll 1978) and J. R. Martin (esp. 1992; 1999; and Martin and Rose 2007); and (2) his depiction of “tenor” as realised simply in terms of modality (itself a very vague notion with regard to ancient Greek) and certain discourse choices (see Lamb 2014, 95–101). In reality, tenor relations, which are closely tied to the interpersonal semantic component of language—involve much more. For example, in Halliday’s framework, “tenor” (as well as “field”) is comprised of first and second order role relations. First order role relations are typically defined without reference to the linguistic system (they are extra-linguistic), as in the examples of a wife’s relation to her husband, a coach’s relation to his players, or teacher’s relation to a student. Second order social relations are defined with reference to the linguistic system, as in the functional speech roles of asserting, projecting, or directing (Halliday and Hasan 1985, 12; Halliday 1978, 143–144). In Gregory’s work, tenor is divided into “personal tenor”—which is concerned with the formal speech roles encoded within a text—and “functional tenor”—which is concerned with the role that language is playing within a given situation between Sender and Receiver, e.g., to teach, persuade, or narrate (Gregory and Carroll 1978, 48–55). Secondly, by focusing his analysis solely upon the interpersonal features of the Johannine literature and thus on tenor relations, Lamb does not take seriously enough Leckie-Tarry’s point that tenor

Lamb asserts that “the register of a given text carries with it significant information about its social context” (Lamb 2014, 63). Similarly, in drawing upon Porter (2000), he says that there is a “reciprocal” relationship between a text and its context (p. 88). However, Lamb is never explicit about the nature of this reciprocal relationship or his method for determining such a relationship. The model he develops for analysing tenor relations²⁸ revolves around merely identifying certain lexico-grammatical choices (e.g., mood and modality) and discourse choices²⁹ made in the text and then suggesting the contextual characteristics that most likely correspond to those choices, namely, *power*, *contact*, and *affective involvement*. But the reader is left without any sense of how Lamb is able to move from simple lexico-grammatical forms (the words and wording of the text) to these particular situational features (context). For example, with reference to the various kinds of speech functions (statement, question, offer, command) he says: “[T]he use of a statement alone in a discourse suggests a situation of low affective involvement” (p. 96). Yet there is no method presented for how one makes this move from the use of the indicative mood (the mood form typically used for statements/assertions) to “low affective involvement” (a feature of context). The result is that the analysis lacks principle and theoretical robustness.

The above comments suggest that Lamb has not quite appreciated the fact that register was initially conceived within Systemic Functional

cannot be separated from the contextual categories of field and mode (see Lamb 2014, 147 n. 7). That is, an understanding of the social roles and relations that are reflected in a text necessarily involves an understanding of the content of the text (its ideational features and the field of discourse) and its organisation (its textual features and the mode of discourse). While Leckie-Tarry allows that certain genres may have a “focus” upon either the ideational or interpersonal components, she never says one can be effectively analysed independently of the other (Leckie-Tarry 1995, 43). Thirdly, some of Lamb’s conclusions in his application of register to the Johannine Epistles are quite difficult to accept. For example, while it is true that 1 John’s use of ἀγαπητοί, τέκνία, and παιδιά does not demand that we see standing behind it a close-knit sectarian community, it is hard to see the use of these terms as not involving a higher level of contact and affective involvement than Lamb allows. This is especially true in light of the use of ἀγάπητος in other early Christian texts (see, e.g., 1 Cor 4:14; Phil 2:12; 1 Thess 2:8; Jas 1:16, 19; 2:5; 1 Clem 1:1; Ignatius, *Mag* 11:1).

²⁸ “Tenor relations” here refer to the extra-textual social relationships that are reflected by a text’s interpersonal meaning structure, for example, a doctor–patient relationship or a teacher–student relationship.

²⁹ The only “discourse” choice that Lamb notes is *ellipsis* (pp. 100–101).

Linguistics (SFL), especially by Halliday, as primarily *predictive* in nature. That is, it was never meant as a means by which to reconstruct a situational context but was meant rather as an explanatory concept that would enable the linguist to predict—in light of the already known context of situation—the patterns of semantic and lexico-grammatical realisation that s/he would encounter in a given text (Halliday 1978, 32). In other words, whereas Lamb attempts to go bottom-up (from linguistic forms to context of situation), SFL register analysis is typically performed top-down (from already known context to the prediction of linguistic forms).³⁰ Thus, one may surmise that the lack of methodological robustness detectable in Lamb's procedure stems from his using register as it was not originally intended.³¹

Secondly, Lamb rightly acknowledges the difficulties involved in analysing the register of the Johannine writings as ancient written texts that are potentially literary in character, and thus admits the limitations of

³⁰ In doing this, Lamb, is guilty of several other oversights. For example, he never acknowledges the two very important concepts within SFL of *stratification* and *realisation*. These concepts refer to the SFL understanding of language as being composed of at least three *strata*: lexico-grammar, semantics, and context, with semantics *realising* context, and lexico-grammar *realising* semantics (see Halliday 1992: 20). From the view point of stratification, then, one of Lamb's oversights is his failure to address the semantic stratum and how the situational features of *power*, *contact*, and *affective involvement* are realised on that level and are subsequently related to their lexico-grammatical realisations.

³¹ This is not to suggest that Lamb is necessarily wrong in what he does, but rather that his model is in need of much further nuance and development before it can be of any substantial heuristic value. In this regard, all Lamb would have needed to do was turn to Halliday himself in order to provide his study with the methodological adaptations necessary for making the model applicable to the Johannine writings. In particular, Halliday's articulation of the concepts of *construal* and *bi-directionality* would have given at least some methodological license for Lamb's bottom-up direction of interpretation (text to context). Whereas, for Halliday, *realisation* refers to the top-down (context to text) relationships among the three strata of language and highlights the constraining force of context upon semantic and lexico-grammatical choices in a text, *construal* refers to the bottom-up relationships among the strata and highlights the power that lexico-grammar and particular semantic configurations (i.e., registers) have to construe and even create contexts. Thus, the notions of *realisation* (top-down) and *construal* (bottom-up) together highlight the *bi-directional* nature of text and context; neither operates independently of the other but rather they are mutually reinforcing (Halliday 1992). These principles still do not immediately warrant Lamb's simple movement from lexico-grammar to situational context (note he skips the semantic stratum), but they do at least create some methodological space for it.

Biber's and Halliday's models (Lamb 2014, 76–81, esp. 79).³² However, one limitation he does not fully recognise is that neither Biber's model of register nor Halliday's is explicitly concerned with the category of "audience" or with audience reconstruction.³³ Evidently, Lamb believes he can circumvent this issue by focusing on the explanatory notes (narrative asides) of John's Gospel (2:21–22; 12:6; 19:35–37; 20:30–31; 21:23–25), which he suggests are the most reliable indicator of the author–intended-reader dynamic (Lamb 2014, 81–83).³⁴ Although I think Lamb is on the right track in focusing on the narrative asides as indicative of the extra-textual social role of the narrator, I suggest there is more we can do in the way of a positive reconstruction of John's audience. In other words, while Lamb is rightly careful to distinguish between the function of narrative genres in contrast to epistolary forms, his model of register still stands without an audience-oriented mechanism that allows for the positive reconstruction of the nature of John's addressees. Thus, below I wish to

³² Here Lamb points to the pioneering work of R. Hasan (1975, 1989) on the situational interpretation of literary texts to justify the use of register in approaching the Johannine literature, which, like most literary texts, lacks reciprocal discourse and possesses an undefined relation to context. Hasan has demonstrated that literary texts—which are the kind of texts least restrictively dependent upon their extra-textual context and typically do not have an explicit audience—are still relatable to a context of situation, though in a less concrete manner than non-literary texts (Hasan 1999, 2007). Lamb seems, in the end, to distance himself from a strict divide between "literary" and "non-literary" for the Johannine writings, since he believes that by focusing on the authorial asides he can distinguish the extra-textual social relation of author and audience (Lamb 2014, 80). Although Lamb does nothing with it, Hasan's work on literature and context would seem to bolster Lamb's thesis, since, if the Johannine writings (especially the Gospel) are literary in character, they would naturally be less dependent on their context of situation. This would support the conclusion that the Johannine literature does not reflect an origin and audience of a confined closely knit sectarian community.

³³ This is likely because of (1) the predictive (top-down) nature of register (noted above), which simply assumes knowledge of both author/speaker and reader/listener, and (2) most of their work on register having involved conversational discourse in which there is two-way communication between author/speaker and reader/listener (see, e.g., Halliday and Hasan 1985). Lamb does mention toward the bottom of p. 100 that "[T]he tenor of the Jn writings could be more readily established if we had examples of reciprocal discourse, such as a letter from Gaius replying to 3 Jn—although, in fact, the author of 3 Jn (and the other letters) may not actually have invited such reciprocity." Thus, he does seem to recognise at least that register analysis is more easily done in cases where there is reciprocal discourse.

³⁴ Lamb supports this assertion by pointing to the literary work of Culpepper (1983).

propose such a theoretical feature for John's Gospel that is based within the same methodological tradition out of which Lamb's work largely comes, that being SFL.³⁵

Ruqaiya Hasan is one of the leading scholars within SFL and has probably done the most relevant work for modelling how different kinds of texts construct the addresser–addressee relationship. In developing her own model of this relationship, for both spoken and graphic modes of discourse, Hasan makes the interesting distinction between *virtual* addressees and *actual* addressees (Hasan 1999, 237–239).³⁶ Virtual addressees—most often a category associated with graphic texts—are imaginary persons “corresponding to the text-producer's idea of a type of person who might be interested in reading and therefore perhaps in purchasing the publication in question” (p. 238).³⁷ They are an image of some prototypical reader possessing certain qualities and characteristics, which a text-producer appeals to by means of particular linguistic strategies. Hasan notes that, in texts where the addressees are virtual, “all aspects of the interactant relation—their respective status, their social distance, the specific attributes of the addressee—are logically entirely created by the language of the text, none having a basis in reality for obvious reasons” (p. 238). That is, in these cases, the nature of the extra-textual addresser–addressees relation is entirely construed through the text's linguistic structure.³⁸

The category of actual addressees is rather easy to define. Hasan defines actual addressees as those with whom the writer/speaker has some

³⁵ I am knowingly restricting myself to John's Gospel here, although what I propose below would certainly relate to 1 John as well. Further, Lamb does attempt to offer a positive reconstruction of the audience of John's Gospel on pp. 202–205, but he does not arrive at this reconstruction via an analysis of John's register, but rather via Brian Stock's concept of “textual communities.”

³⁶ Lamb does not engage or even cite this important essay by Hasan.

³⁷ This description is remarkably similar to the notion of “audience types” or “audience markets,” which several biblical scholars have proposed with reference to the intended audiences of the gospels. See, for example, Burridge (1998); Smith (2007, 2010); Klink (2007). The association of virtual addressees with graphic texts also supports Bauckham's point that the fact that the gospels were written down naturally argues against their having as their audiences self-confined specific communities (Bauckham 1998a, 28–30).

³⁸ Hasan gives the example of a marketing blurb on the back of a book to illustrate virtual addressees. In this example, there is no real person or group of people that the blurb addresses. Rather, it addresses a type of person imagined as the best fit for the book's readership (Hasan 1999, 238).

“actual experience” (p. 238) and to whom the writer/speaker intends to restrict his/her communication. That is, actual addressees are a defined group who have their basis in reality and actually exist (e.g., the recipient of a birthday card or a letter of congratulations).

The distinction between virtual and actual addressees is textually significant, and it greatly influences our understanding of the role that language plays in construing the Fourth Gospel’s context of situation. If John’s addressees are virtual—a conclusion to which Lamb’s register analysis certainly leads us³⁹—then we can conclude two things: (1) that the language of John’s Gospel, rather than being constrained by its context, indeed construes its context of situation for its audience; and (2) that, if the Gospel’s language is less dependent upon its context, then the degree of social distance between addresser and addressees is maximal.⁴⁰ In the end, this register-based approach to audience reconstruction gives a positive vision of John’s addressees, and in reality coalesces well with other contemporary methodologies—especially literary, sociological, and historical ones—that have begun to re-envision the audience of John in terms of a broad, non-geographic audience type, rather than an individual and isolated sectarian community.⁴¹

Despite these criticisms, the conclusion regarding Lamb’s work is largely a positive one. Even though his methodology would benefit from further development, his final conclusions regarding the non-existence of a sectarian “Johannine Community” are likely correct. The major contribution of his work, however, is its prioritisation of the text of John’s Gospel in the reconstruction of its social context. While he prudently acknowledges the problematic nature of claiming objectivity and the superiority of one methodology over another (Lamb 2014, 206–209), his study—like Bernier’s—is based upon what the interpreter has, namely the

³⁹ For example, his conclusions that (1) the author of John’s Gospel holds all the *power* in the communication, (2) the text evinces very little *contact* and *affective involvement* between author and reader, (3) and the text reflects formal discourse in which the *social distance* between author and reader is maximal, all suggest an audience that is *virtual* rather than *actual*.

⁴⁰ On the notion of “social distance,” see Hasan’s comments in Halliday and Hasan (1985, 56–57).

⁴¹ Here I have in mind especially the works by Bauckham (1998); Burridge (1998, 2004); Smith (2007); Klink (2007, 2010); and Bernier (2013).

text, rather than what the interpreter lacks, namely the “Johannine Community.”⁴²

3 Conclusion

This survey of recent research related to the so-called “Johannine Community” debate has hopefully provided the reader with a helpful overview of content as well as with a critical evaluation of some recent methods and models that have been employed. The reader will note that the evaluation clearly favours the trajectory set forth in the studies of Bernier and Lamb, and recommends a great deal of caution, if not outright rejection, regarding that of Last. The current flow of Johannine scholarship, and gospels scholarship in general, is indeed headed in a direction in which the existence of narrow and distinct gospel communities can no longer be assumed. In this sense, the works of Bernier and Lamb stand as valuable contributions.

Bibliography

- Ahearne-Kroll, P. D. 2005. Joseph and Aseneth and Jewish Identity in Greco-Roman Egypt. Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago.
- Alexander, L. 1998. Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels. Pages 71–111 in Bauckham, ed. 1998.
- Anderson, P. N., F. Just, and T. Thatcher, eds. 2007. *John, Jesus, and History. Vol 1: Critical Appraisals of Critical Views*. Atlanta: SBL.
- . 2009. *John, Jesus, and History. Vol 2: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*. Atlanta: SBL.
- Ashton, J. 2014. *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Bagnall, R. S. 1995. *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History*. New York: Routledge.
- Bauckham, R., ed. 1998. *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁴² This observation is generated by the remarks of some scholars who have voiced dissatisfaction with the ability of traditional historical criticism to address the “Johannine Community” issue. Such dissatisfaction is seen, for example, in Wengst (1983, 32 n. 84), where he equates aspects of Brown’s reconstruction with seeing ghosts in the dark, saying: “And in the dark one is not necessarily protected from seeing ghosts. Especially the last article of Brown seems to me to have succumbed to this risk” (translation mine). Wengst’s own reconstruction is considered by Hengel to be an “invention of scholarly fancy” (Hengel 1989, 116). Canonical critic B. Childs accuses such historical reconstructions of being “creative imaginations” (1984, 483). I should note also that Lamb is careful to clarify that he only accepts the designation of a “Johannine Community” in the very limited sense of a loose network of “associates” to whom John’s Gospel and Epistles relate (p. 205).

- Bauckham, R. 1998a. For Whom Were Gospels Written? Pages 9–48 in Bauckham, ed. 1998.
- . 2006. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- . 2007. *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Bernier, J. 2013. *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John: Rethinking the Historicity of the Johannine Expulsion Passages*. Leiden: Brill [BibInt Series 122].
- Bohak, G. 1996. Joseph and Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis. Atlanta: Scholars [SBLEJL 10].
- Brown, R. E. 1979. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Burridge, R. A. 1998. About People, by People, for People: Gospel Genre and Audiences. Pages 113–145 in Bauckham, ed. 1998.
- . 2004. *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Byrskog, S. 2000. *Story as History—History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck [WUNT 1.123].
- Childs, B. S. 1984. *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Cirafesi, W. V. 2014. The Johannine Community Hypothesis (1968–Present): Past and Present Approaches and a New Way Forward. *Currents in Biblical Research* 12(2):173–193.
- Culpepper, R. A. 1983. *The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Gamble, H. Y. 1995. *Books and Readers in the Early Church*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ghadessy, M., ed. 1999. *Text and Context in Functional Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Gregory, M., and S. Carroll. 1978. *Language and Situation: Language Varieties and Their Social Contexts*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul [Language and Society Series].
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1978. *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 1992. How Do You Mean? Pages 20–35 in *Advances in Systemic Linguistics: Recent Theory and Practice*. Edited by M. Davies and L. Ravelli. New York: Pinter.
- Halliday, M. A. K., and R. Hasan. 1985. *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hasan, R. 1975. The Place of Stylistics in the Study of Verbal Art. Pages 49–62 in *Style and Text: Studies Presented to Nils Erik Enkvist*. Edited by H. Ringborn. Stockholm: Skiptor.
- . 1989. *Linguistics, Language and Verbal Art*. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- _____. 1999. Speaking with Reference to Context. Pages 219–328 in Ghadessy, ed. 1999.
- _____. 2007. Private Pleasure, Public Discourse: Reflection on Engaging with Literature. Pages 13–40 in *Language and Verbal Art Revisted: Linguistic Approaches to the Study of Literature*. Edited by D. R. Miller and M. Turici. London: Equinox.
- Hengel, M. 1989. *The Johannine Question*. London: SCM.
- Humphrey, E. 1999. On Bees and Best Guesses: The Problem of Sitz im Leben from Internal Evidence as Illustrated by Joseph and Aseneth. *CurBS* 7:223–236.
- Keith, C. 2011. *Jesus' Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee*. London: T&T Clark [LNTS 413].
- Keith, C., and Anthony Le Donne, eds. 2012. *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*. London: T&T Clark.
- Klink, E. W. 2007. *The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [SNTSMS 141].
- _____. 2008. Expulsion from the Synagogue? Rethinking a Johannine Anachronism. *TynBul* 59:99–118.
- _____. 2009. The Overrealized Expulsion in the Gospel of John. Pages 175–184 in Anderson, Just, and Thatcher, eds. 2007.
- Kraemer, R. S. 1998. *When Aseneth Met Joseph: A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and His Egyptian Wife, Reconsidered*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kruger, M. J. 2013. Manuscripts, Scribes, and Book Production in Early Christianity. Pages 15–40 in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Leiden: Brill [TENT 9].
- Lamb, D. A. 2014. *Text, Context and the Johannine Community: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Johannine Writings*. London: T&T Clark [LNTS 477].
- Last, R. 2012. Communities That Write: Christ-Groups, Associations, and Gospel Communities. *NTS* 58(2):173–198.
- _____. 2013. The Election of Officers in the Corinthian Christ-Group. *NTS* 59(3): 365–381.
- Leckie-Tarry, H. 1995. *Language and Context: A Functional Linguistic Theory of Register*. Edited by David Birch. London: Pinter.
- Lonergan, B. 1971. *Method in Theology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Martin, J. R. 1992. *English Text: System and Structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- _____. 1999. Modelling Context: A Crooked Path of Progress in Contextual Linguistics. Pages 25–62 in Ghadessy, ed. 1999.
- Martin, J. R., and David Rose. 2007. *Working with Discourse: Meaning Beyond the Clause*. 2d ed. London: Continuum.
- Martyn, J. L. 1979 [1968]. *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. 2d ed. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Meyer, B. F. 1989. *Critical Realism and the New Testament*. Eugene: Pickwick.
- _____. 2002. *The Aims of Jesus*. Eugene: Pickwick.
- Nickelsburg, G. W. E. 2005. *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*. 2d ed. Minneapolis: Fortress.

- Parker, D. C. 2008. *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parsons, P. J. 2007. *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Greek Lives in Roman Egypt*. London: Phoenix.
- Porter, S. E. 2000. Dialect and Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Theory. Pages 190–208 in *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by M. Daniel Carroll R. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic [JSOTSup 299].
- Robinson, J. A. T. 1976. *Redating the New Testament*. London: SCM.
- Smith, J. M. 2007. Genre, Sub-Genre and Questions of Audience: A Proposed Typology for Greco-Roman Biography. *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 4:184–216.
- _____. 2010. About Friends, by Friends, for Others: Author–Subject Relations in Contemporary Greco-Roman Biographies. Pages 49–67 in *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*. Edited by Edward W. Klink III. London: T&T Clark [LNTS 353].
- Standhartinger, A. 1996. From Fictional Text to Socio-Historical Context: Some Considerations from a Textcritical Perspective on Joseph and Aseneth. *SBLSP* 35:303–318.
- _____. 2014. Recent Research on *Joseph and Aseneth* (1988–2013). *Currents in Biblical Research* 12(3):353–406.
- Vine, C. E. W. 2014. *The Audience of Matthew: An Appraisal of the Local Audience Thesis*. London: T&T Clark [LNTS 496].
- Watson, F. 1998. Toward a Literal Reading of the Gospels. Pages 195–217 in Bauckham, ed. 1998.
- Wengst, K. 1983. *Bedrängte Gemeinde und verherrlichter Christus: Der historische Ort des Johannesevangeliums als Schlüssel zu seiner Interpretation*. 2d ed. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener [Biblisch-Theologische Studien 5].
- Wright, W. M. IV. 2009. *Rhetoric and Theology: Figural Reading of John 9*. Berlin: de Gruyter [BZNW 165].

cirafew@mcmaster.ca

University Hall, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON L8S 4L8, Canada

License and Permissible Use Notice

These materials are provided to you by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) in accordance with the terms of ATLA's agreements with the copyright holder or authorized distributor of the materials, as applicable. In some cases, ATLA may be the copyright holder of these materials.

You may download, print, and share these materials for your individual use as may be permitted by the applicable agreements among the copyright holder, distributors, licensors, licensees, and users of these materials (including, for example, any agreements entered into by the institution or other organization from which you obtained these materials) and in accordance with the fair use principles of United States and international copyright and other applicable laws. You may not, for example, copy or email these materials to multiple web sites or publicly post, distribute for commercial purposes, modify, or create derivative works of these materials without the copyright holder's express prior written permission.

Please contact the copyright holder if you would like to request permission to use these materials, or any part of these materials, in any manner or for any use not permitted by the agreements described above or the fair use provisions of United States and international copyright and other applicable laws. For information regarding the identity of the copyright holder, refer to the copyright information in these materials, if available, or contact ATLA at products@atla.com.

Except as otherwise specified, Copyright © 2016 American Theological Library Association.