

“thinking,” their motivations and conversations, is one of the elements of biblical narrative that raise serious difficulties for historical-critical arguments. The problem becomes obvious the moment one imagines reading what is purported to be a critical piece of United States Civil War historiography that suddenly quotes the very thoughts of, say, General Grant! How is this, then, “history” in any real sense? And if it is not, then how can we base historical conclusions on such narratives?

In her brief conclusion, N, states that she has tried to avoid the common observation that “somehow exilic writers discover the individual or invent the self, whereas earlier Biblical writers emphasize community and shared culture. Overt and explicit manifestations of personal religion, however, are preserved in noticeably large numbers in the written tradition in the period following the Babylonian troubles” (135). In other words, N. has concluded that there really is something to these older arguments, and her work explores many examples of this rather effectively.

If I had any criticism of this work, it would be that N.’s most provocative and interesting comments often come in the closing paragraphs of each chapter, and I found myself wishing that those precise points were developed a bit more or were even the central focus of the entire chapter, especially when N. began to address possible connections between social circumstances and diaspora existence as a foreign enclave in the Babylonian heartland. Still, one can certainly measure the success of a work in the questions it provokes—and this certainly is a fascinating series of studies.

*Daniel L. Smith-Christopher*  
*Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles*

*John, His Gospel and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice.* By Stanley E. Porter. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. Pp. xii + 297. \$30.

Porter has produced an excellent collection of essays on the Fourth Gospel, admirably subtitled “in pursuit of the Johannine voice,” and focusing on the Jesus of John’s Gospel. The author sees this book as a prolegomena to further investigations into the text, and refreshingly insists on the absolute necessity of refusing to be dominated by ideology in the scholarly reading of it. He is, as his admirers will know, unconvinced by those who deny the “historicity” of the gospel and those who insist on different (and late) levels of composition, with some very detailed, and to my knowledge, new arguments about the dating of papyri, or that it was written for a “sectarian” audience (this on the basis of the narrative stance of the gospel and the structure of the presentation of its characters). Here P. is in line with the recent swing towards an early date, and perhaps even apostolic authorship, for the Fourth Gospel.

The Jesus of John’s Gospel, he argues, is God’s incarnate word to all humanity, not just to a small and beleaguered group. All this makes the book a refreshing and interesting read, and certainly the arguments that he adduces, though they will not convince everyone, are carefully supported from John’s text. In particular (in his third chapter)

he argues against the traditional disjunction on the relationship between John and the Synoptics, that either they are mutually independent, or John absolutely depends on its three predecessors. Clearly, he argues, there are numerous common features; indeed P. produces no less than 23 incidents of overlap between the two traditions, especially in the Passion Narrative, where John has access to elements not found in the other Gospels. P. thinks it plausible that “much of the material goes back to Jesus himself” (63), and that the consensus against this is more broken than is sometimes supposed, which means that methodologically there remains a good deal of work to be done. It also means that we may no longer confidently and on principle exclude John from historical Jesus research.

One of the most sensitive parts of the book is chapter 4, on the Prologue, where he looks at the (undeniable) possibilities offered by form criticism and source criticism, both of which are hampered by a want of agreement among scholars pursuing these methods, and suggests that we might explore what is offered by “musical-liturgical” and “functional” criticism. Whether these are indeed two new methods remains to be seen, but the suggestion is undeniably interesting, as also is his treatment of Johannine Christology, by way of the *Ego Eimi*, of which he counts no less than 35 instances. P. argues (making, what seems to me to be a decidedly new point) that there is a “locative” use of the phrase, at 7:34, 36 (for example), and that this is used by the author to structure the revelation of who Jesus is. He also deals (as we all must) with the question of how, in a post-Holocaust world, one handles the use of “the Jews” or “the Judeans” in the Fourth Gospel, and argues that the term refers not to race or region but to religion, grounded in Jesus’s own self-understanding. P. undertakes a careful examination of the five ways in which the phrase is used in the Fourth Gospel, one of which is clearly negative, while another has negative connotations, and takes up John Ashton’s helpful distinction between “sense” and “reference”. The fact is that “the Jews” can refer to “all the Jewish people” but can also be restricted to groups of Jews, for example the Jews who were listening to Jesus in chapter 10. Some readers may ask whether this deals with the reaction of a Jewish reader who reads the text for the first time, but P. does not grapple with that question. In some ways chapter 7, which treats the question of “Truth,” is the most interesting, since it points out the basic certainty that God is Truth, and that if you accept (or reject) the Son, you accept (or reject) the One who sent the Son. The Paraclete passages come into this analysis, the Spirit playing the mediating role between God and humanity, which begins when Jesus (the first Paraclete) goes away; so the idea of “Truth” holds the entire gospel together. P. also takes a fresh look at the Passover theme that runs through the gospel, mentioned on no less than ten occasions, which is more than any other NT document, and includes a Moses–Exodus theme, evident in the Bread of Life discourse in chapter 6.

Finally P. looks at the old question of the place of John 21, and makes the important but too often neglected point that there is no external evidence at all that this chapter belongs anywhere else, and, contrary to what is sometimes claimed, that its language does not require a different author, as it has thematic unity with the rest of the Gospel.

Again and again P. offers a fresh reading of familiar texts in the gospel, providing new insights that deserve to be taken seriously, even if one does not always agree with his conclusions. The great thing is that he insists that the focus must always be on Jesus, but presented in a way that is uniquely Johannine, enshrining an eyewitness account, in a public (not private) proclamation of Jesus's teaching and ministry, organized in accordance with the Prologue and with the *Ego Eimi* sayings. He concludes that the Gospel of John is "a complex work that presents Jesus in a variety of profound and distinctive ways, with its own distinctive voice" (248). This is a book to be warmly recommended for its fresh treatment of Johannine issues.

Nicholas King, SJ  
St Mary's University, Twickenham, UK

*Beware the Evil Eye: The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World.* By John H. Elliott. Vol. 1: *Introduction, Mesopotamia, and Egypt.* Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015. Pp. x + 209. \$25.

*Beware the Evil Eye. The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World.* By John H. Elliott. Vol. 2: *The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World—Greece and Rome.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Press, 2016. Pp. x + 334. \$41.

This review covers the first two volumes of a four-volume work on the Evil Eye. Like good whiskey, this material has aged for over thirty years, as Elliott seined for text and images of the Evil Eye wherever they could be found. The volumes reviewed here cover the knowable origins of the concept and its evident transmission over centuries through ancient Greece and into late antiquity. This study, while written in English, is utterly Germanic in its sweep of the topic and its inexhaustible collection of literary citations. The sheer completeness of the study warrants maximum praise. Also, with a comprehensive index after each volume, one might easily decide to study this or that author or specific icons.

John Elliott was a pioneer in the use of social science criticism, his most successful example being *A Home for the Homeless*. He is as informed on the topic as is possible and spends the first third of the initial volume on an exposition of how he does his work and why. He defines, describes, and traces the Evil Eye, blessedly finishing the introduction with a report of his "method, aims, and procedures." Elliott's delight in his research and pervasive sense of humor put much fizz into what might seem heavy scholarship. He reports the origins of the Evil Eye in Mesopotamia and Egypt with a masterful command of their literature.

The second volume covers with comparable thoroughness the culture and literature of Greece and Rome. Any scholar investigating the Hellenistic world must know this book. As expected, the book begins with a detailed overview of Evil Eye belief and practice in the classical world. As a Baedeker for scholars, he lists the key features of the belief/practice, which guide readers to see what is said in the literature. His survey