

developments in recent biblical scholarship: the Roman empire as the critical backstory to the passion accounts, new insights about the identity and mission of Paul, and the reassessment of “Judaism” and “Christianity” as distinctive religions in the first three centuries of the common era. *Boys* also offers some practical suggestions about dealing with the passion in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and the Seven Last Words of Jesus.

G. M. BURGE, *Interpreting the Gospel of John. A Practical Guide* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013, paper \$21.99) xvi and 224 pp., 9 figs. Bibliographies. Indexed. LCN: 2013022768. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4884-5.

First published in 1992 [see *NTA* 37, p. 274], this expanded second edition has been revised throughout to take account of current scholarship and introduce software tools that have become available since the original edition was published. This work is intended as a primer to Johannine studies for beginning students or as a supplement to a course on the Fourth Gospel. After a three-page introduction, it treats the following topics: the history of interpretation, authorship, how the Fourth Gospel was built, Johannine style, the text, the literary context, building a bibliography, the cultural context, word searches, word meanings, the problem of horizons (hermeneutics and contextualization), preaching from John, and commentaries. Burge is professor of NT at Wheaton College in Illinois.

S. D. BURKE, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch. Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts*, Emerging Scholars (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013, paper \$49) v and 195 pp., 3 tables. Bibliography. Indexed. ISBN: 978-1-4514-6565-5.

The revised version of a doctoral dissertation directed by M. A. Tolbert and presented in 2011 to the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, this volume seeks to understand through a study of Acts 8:26-40 how Christian communities negotiate difference, especially as it relates to admission and participation in the life of the community. After a seventeen-page introduction, it considers whether it is legitimate to read the Ethiopian eunuch as a castrated male. Next it introduces queer theory and examines several strategies that queer theorists have developed for engaging issues of identity, difference, and ambiguity. Then it analyzes the dominant Greco-Roman construction of masculinity in antiquity, as well as constructions of masculinity in several ancient Jewish subcultures. Next it discusses the identity of eunuchs in relation to the discourses of gender, sexuality, class, and race underlying the ancient constructions of masculinity. Then it presents a social-rhetorical analysis of the story of the Ethiopian eunuch and its role in the book of Acts. Burke, assistant professor of religion at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, concludes that when the story of the Ethiopian eunuch is read as central to the book, it inscribes into early Christian discourse a rhetorical strategy that can be described as queering (i.e. in this case the deconstruction of identity categories creates space for more bodies to be included in the community of Jesus believers).

D. K. CAMPBELL, *Of Heroes and Villains. The Influence of the Psalmic Lament on Synoptic Characterization* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013, paper \$23) xiv and 197 pp. Bibliography. ISBN: 978-1-62032-923-8.

Campbell, visiting lecturer of NT and Christian studies at Shanghai Normal University, aims to understand how the Synoptic authors appropriate Israel’s psalmic lament in characterizing Jesus (the hero of the Gospels) and Jesus’ opponents (the villains of the Gospels). He builds on S. P. Ahearne-Kroll’s contention that Mark characterizes Jesus in his passion as the Davidic lamenter par excellence, by exploring the psalmic lament motif more broadly in Mark, and by extending the investigation to the other two Synoptic Gospels. After a 28-page introduction on his methodological framework, he explores in three chapters the literary usage of the lament psalms in Mark, Matthew, and Luke, respectively. He finds that Mark characterizes Jesus and Jesus’ opponents as the paradigmatic hero and villains, respectively; Matthew emphasizes Mark’s rhetorical effect in characterizing Jesus’ opponents as paradigmatic OT villains; and Luke downplays the significance of characterizing Jesus’ opponents as those of the Davidic psalmist, but pervasively characterizes Jesus as the OT paradigmatic hero.

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