Introduction

The framework for this issue began with a panel discussion in a session on the Historical Jesus at the 2019 Annual SBL Conference in San Diego; and at this writing it will expand into a Nangeroni conference organized by the Enoch Seminar in collaboration with jshj, to be held in January of 2021. The occasion is Joel Marcus's *John the Baptist in History and Theology*,¹ which in coming to print has both signaled and helped catalyze a surge of scholarly interest in this 'burning and shining lamp' of 1st century Judaism. We here offer a broad review of that work, along with a considered response from its author, with a view toward celebrating its publication and elucidating the contours it brings to further inquiry.

The original discussants (in San Diego) numbered four: Erin Roberts, Jonathan Klawans, Cecilia Wassén and Robert Myles. For this issue they have been joined by four more: Federico Adinolfi, Joan Taylor, Clare Rothschild and Albert Baumgarten. We proceed in three parts: a brief summary of the book by Prof. Marcus; the reviews themselves; and a response by Prof. Marcus. And for the sequence of reviews, I have attempted to counterbalance similar concerns between reviewers with issues of peculiar interest to each. Several topics broached by Prof. Marcus are taken up by a number of participants – John and Qumran especially, but also the nature of John's baptism and the 'competition hypothesis'. Alongside these interests almost every discussant has also raised questions not shared (or addressed as much) by others, be they on the data (John and law, John and the Gentiles) or method (the gospels and memory theory or writing practices); and in setting them out I've tried to stagger between the one (common concerns) and the other (distinctive concerns), so as to capitalize on the diversity that pervades consensus.

Before all begins, a few notes; several, editorial. Throughout the issue Prof. Marcus's book is referenced as *JBHT*, and its pages are listed simply within parentheses – either with or without '(p)p', depending on what suits the

1 Studies on Personalities of the New Testament (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2018).

context. Also, the responses by Profs. Adinolfi and Taylor are joined in a single article, which thereby is about double the length of others. More substantively, it should be noted that, while the debates herein surely mark the cusp of current scholarly interest in John, they do not exhaust the treatment that Prof. Marcus gives of him. Particularly in its appendices, *JBHT* could be mined for material and views on an array of issues not mentioned or given only little attention (understandably so) in the discussion below; and so it is that, for all we convey here, there is more to be gained in reading the work itself.

Michael Daise

Department of Religious Studies, Program in Judaic Studies College of
William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA, USA
madais@wm.edu