### 3 Individual Gospels

In the following we will look at five individual Gospels which, in my opinion, belong directly to the context in which the two most important collections, the New Testament of Marcion and the extended collection of Irenaeus, were written. First of all, the topic of authorship will also be considered, as it has developed over time, in the profiling of those people who were reckoned to be the authors of these Gospels. In a second sub-heading, a central theme is dealt with in each case, which Tertullian sets out. It is the central antithesis in \*Ev, which Tertullian quotes from Marcion’s preface, namely of Jewish law and prophets on the one hand and the proclamation of the kingdom of God through Christ on the other, which is concretised in the antithesis of John the Baptist and Jesus, as it says in \*Ev 16,16: "The law and the prophets were prophesied until John. Since then the kingdom of God is being proclaimed".

### a) Gospel of Marcion (\*Ev)

### aa) The profiling of the author

On the question of the authorship of \*Ev, some things have already been said before which do not need to be repeated here in detail. The most important observation, however, is that this text was given the simple title "Gospel", no name of an author was attached. It seems that we are dealing with a heading rather than a more common titulature at the end of the text in antiquity. Codex D (05) consequently has the simple designation "Gospel" as a column title.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Tertullian describes the Gospel several times in his fourth book. First, he mentions that with his commentary he "now proceeds to the exposition of the Gospel, not a Jewish one, of course, but a Pontic one", thus drawing attention to the Marcionite origin of the text, which he will discuss.[[2]](#footnote-2) Shortly afterwards, it is said that "Marcion does not ascribe an author's name to the Gospel, although it is certainly his own".[[3]](#footnote-3) Towards the end of his commentary, Tertullian mentions that "Marcion, I believe, deliberately refrained from erasing from his Gospel some things that contradicted it".[[4]](#footnote-4) In all these cases, Tertullian speaks only of the "Gospel" and of one that not only sounds Pontic but is also Marcion's, to which the latter should therefore have ascribed his own name. Later witnesses confirm Tertullian, for example, when Epiphanius states:

"I have taken the books of the aforementioned [i.e. Marcion] ... namely the book he called 'Gospel' (τό τε παρ̕ αὐτῷ λεγόμενον εὐαγγέλιον) and the book he called 'Apostolikon' (’Αποστολικόν)."[[5]](#footnote-5)

Epiphanius thus had both the Gospel and the collection of Pauline letters, here called the Apostolicon, before him, and in the same order in which Tertulian comments on these books. Just as Epiphanius refers to the two books as those of Marcion, Ibn an-Nadim writes in his encyclopaedic work *Kitab al-Fihrist* shortly before the turn of the millennium that "Marcion wrote a book which he called 'Gospel'".[[6]](#footnote-6) Again, all these statements refer to Marcion's own work.

A Marcionite voice, however, sees the authorship differently and explains why Marcion did not put his own name to the Gospel, even though this does not deny that it was he who compiled this text. For in Adamantius's dialogue with the Marcionite Megethius, it is stated:

"(Megethius) I will prove that the Gospel is one. (Adamantius) Who is the writer of this Gospel which you said is one? - (Meg.) Christ. - (Ad.) Did the Lord Himself write that He was crucified, and rose on the third day? Does He write in this way? - (Meg.) The Apostle Paul added that."[[7]](#footnote-7)

The authorship of Marcion's Gospel, then, is not a matter of debate only in modern scholarship. As we saw with Tertullian, the debate started because Marcion let this Gospel go out without an author’s name. Adamantius now takes up this critical point and raises the question of authorship. His interlocutor, the Marcionite Megethius, however, in his answer attributes the Gospel not to Marcion but to Christ himself as the actual author.[[8]](#footnote-8) The astonished question makes it clear that Adamantius would actually have expected that Megethius would now have to refer to the author Marcion, for how could the Lord himself, as the author of this text, have written of his own death and resurrection? Such a report was only possible posthumously, i.e. the task of a later evangelists. Megethius is shown to be embarrassed - in terms of haeresiology - by deviating from his first answer and now adding evasively that the apostle Paul had added things to the Gospel. If one tries to deduce from this the possible historical background, the Marcionite - like Marcion himself - still seems to want to ascribe the gospel not to Marcion, but to Christ or Paul as authorities behind the gospel. For Marcionites, therefore, the text did not express the specific views of Marcion, but that of Christ and Paul.

The fact that the Gospel originally bore only this authorless title probably made it easier for this text to be read, used and rewritten in various ways by others. The lack of an author's name may even give us a clue as to the editorial stage we are at with this text. For Marcion's contemporary, the famous physician Galen from Asia Minor, we know from his work "On My Books" that he gave such works "without a title" to "friends or pupils" "since he did not write ‘with publication in mind, but for those who asked to have a record of what they had heard’".[[9]](#footnote-9) If this had also been the case with Marcion, then the Gospel without an author's name would have been nothing more than a book that Marcion had given to his students and friends as a summary of his lectures. In this respect, the Gospel resembles a text for use, as we are often familiar with in pedagogical, catechetical, liturgical and juridical fields, in which users saw themselves virtually invited to make adaptations, applications and updates to scripts. Even though other texts attributed to specific authors were not infrequently revised in antiquity, there was already at that time an awareness of authorship and intellectual property as well as of forgery and plagiarism. Other Christian as well as non-Christian examples could easily be cited.[[10]](#footnote-10) A particular lesson is the already mentioned and quoted prologue of Tertullian to his books "Against Marcion", in which he complains at the beginning of Book I about the dissemination of a version of this text that he did not author. In contrast to the Gospel as a stand-alone text, it received an attribution as part of the collection of the "New Testament", which designated it as Christ's last will. This also explains Megethius' attribution of this Gospel to Christ.

In fact, as already shown by Marcion's complaint in his preface, the *Antitheses*, referred to by Tertullian, Marcion had not left his Gospel without an indication of author because he wanted to see in it an authorless text in the sense of free availability. To make this clear, he had included the Gospel in his collection of the New Testament, prefaced it and, as this shows, developed a clear idea of the content of this collection. Tertullian, who knew the four "Gospels according to ...", drew from this the rhetorical conclusion that \*Ev was a "Gospel according to the *Antitheses*" (*evangelio quoque secundum Antitheses credendo patrocinaretur*).[[11]](#footnote-11) How scholarship can deny that this Gospel was regarded by Tertullian to be Marcion’s own, is a riddle.

The fact that Marcion nevertheless did not give the Gospel his own name in his collection of the "New Testament" is probably connected with the reason just mentioned, that he did not want to and could not attribute the contents gathered in it to himself and also not to a certain other author, as he must have believed that he did not offer anything more than his collection of traditions, which he had carefully collected not unlike the testimonies of Paul. Perhaps, as was explained above with regard to Rom 2:16 ("the gospel according to me" - κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου), Marcion had also given this collection of oral tradition this Pauline term,[[12]](#footnote-12) but not an author, because he had understood it as the implementation of what Paul referred to in his letters, without Paul himself having made such a collection on the words and deeds of Jesus. As can be seen from Marcion's naming of Paul as the author of the collection of letters, Marcion had in any case not been afraid to refer to the right author where he had encountered one in the sources. But with the Gospel, things were obviously different. If he had taken his material that was the basis for \*Ev from an authored source, why would he remain silent about the author, since he gave Paul as author of the letters? From how Marcion deals with Paul’s letters we must conclude that with regards to \*Ev he had no indication of an author and, perhaps, rather worked on oral testimonies. He certainly did not see himself as author of the Gospel, perhaps at best as its editor.[[13]](#footnote-13) The above remarks on questions of writing and the strong emphasis, confirmed by Irenaeus, on oral traditions that his opponents were following, make it rather unlikely that the Gospel material and perhaps even the Pauline letters had been available to him in written form.

Thus, if Marcion did not see himself as the author of the Gospel and the Pauline letters, but merely as the editor, he probably left aside his name as he regarded himself merely as the medium by which both the Gospel and the Pauline letters were put into writing and made available to the audience and readership. That he nevertheless had a clear idea of both is already clear from his preface, in which he laments about the misuse of the Gospel,[[14]](#footnote-14) and also from the fact that with the preface he had decided on an authorised publication of his two sub-collections comprising a collection to which he gave the innovative title "New Testament". Despite his preface, even this "New Testament" did not carry Marcion’s name.

The question, of course, arises as to how \*Ev could become the Vorlage for the other evangelists. Why was it taken up, adopted and adapted by others? The main reason seems to be that Marcion lived and worked in the community as a respected founder and teacher for several years after his arrival in Rome. Thus, tensions between Marcion and other teachers seem to have arisen only when these competitors plagiarised and altered his text. Marcion's theological profile is clearly inscribed in this Gospel, as we will see in the further course of this study, and as a reaction to these tensions, Marcion seems to have separated himself from the Roman community and founded his own only after he, in the same context of writing his *Antitheses*, drew a clear line of demarcation not only from other Jews, but especially from those who, like him, worshipped the Messiah Jesus Christ, but remained attached to the Jewish traditions. Befor the publication of his New Testament, at the time when he had presented his Gospel, Marcion was and also was seen a full member of the wider Roman Jewish community that referred to Jesus as Messiah. There was not yet a shadow lying over him, and no indication existed that a few decades later he would be regarded as a heretic. When Tertullian speaks of one and several expulsions of Marcion,[[15]](#footnote-15) he gives as a date for it the reign of the Roman bishop Eleutherius. As Eleutherius, however, was in charge of the community only long after Marcion’s death, Tertullian underpins that during Marcion’s lifetime he had neither been charged with heresy nor does he seem to have been seen as somebody who had revolted against the Roman community. Still around the middle of the 3rd century, we know of the sacramental community between Marcionites and bishop Stephen of Rome, hence Marcion, the heretic or even arch-heretic, is an accusation that derives from the later 3rd or even the 4th century and after that time.[[16]](#footnote-16) Marcion himself would probably never have imagined to be called a heretic.

Furthermore, it can be asked whether the period of adoption and adaptation, i.e. the time after Marcion's arrival in Rome following the end of the Second Jewish War (after 135 AD) and his publication of his "New Testament" in 144, i.e. a mere eight years, is not far too short for the creation of the later canonical four Gospels.[[17]](#footnote-17) Connected with this question is the subsequent question of whether these four Gospels could actually have been created not only in such a short time, but then also in spatially close connection of their authors.[[18]](#footnote-18) Does not too much different local colours emerge from the four Gospels, and are they not shaped by various geographical and culturally different community traditions? Are they not addressed to such incomparable communities that neither a temporal nor spatial proximity of their origin is conceivable?[[19]](#footnote-19) Even if these questions can only be answered in detail from within the texts themselves, I will at this point venture a refinement of my earlier attempts at an answer in this regard.

(1) As for the question of Marcion's theological profile and the objection implied by it, how could Christians who were attached to the Jewish tradition and who, unlike Marcion, wanted to hold on to the Jewish Scriptures and the Jewish God, have had the idea of taking up a text like this Gospel, which is focused on the separation of Law and Gospel? The answer to this is:

If this Gospel indeed formed the oldest written collection of the oral traditions not only of Jesus's words but also of his deeds, it must have been attractive through the lack of comparable writings to all those who were interested in Jesus, even if they found some of the statements hard to digest, offensive or even repugnant.

In this regard, I refer to the parallel of Paul's letters; they too, as we know from statements, did not appeal to every Jewish Christian in terms of content and yet they were used, adopted and adapted, if sometimes ignored. The letters which even today are regarded to be genuin were soon supplemented by letters, such as Eph and Col that imitated the older ones. The new pseudonymous letters supplemented and also corrected the existing Pauline writings in theological, ethical and historical perspectives. Later even, further pseudonymous letters were added, the Pastoral Epistles which make even greater differences to and corrections of Paul. Thus, the creation of pseudonymous writings, the growing of collections was certainly no anomaly of this time.

Even more important is the fact, to which I have already referred, that Marcion was obviously a full member of the congregation, first in Pontus, then also in Rome, i.e. precisely at the time when, according to his allegation, plagiarisms were being made, and he had worked there as a teacher unchallenged beyond the publication of his "New Testament". Even after his death, especially in Rome, contact with his followers were not broken off - which makes us doubt Tertullian's tendentious report.

There remains the question of distancing from the Jewish tradition and the distinction made in the *Antitheses* between "Judaism" and "Christianity", between the God of the Jews and the God of Christ. In this regard, the reading of the later canonical Gospels to which we are accustomed gives the impression that Marcion took an outsider's position with his idea of Christianity's own identity, renouncing the traditions of Judaism. However, this is an anachronistic view when compared to some other witnesses from the period immediately after the Second Jewish War. First of all, we can point to the so-called apologists, who appear at the earliest during Hadrian's late reign, i.e. at the end of the Second Jewish War or under his successor on the imperial throne, Antoninus Pius. If we take among these the first apologist whose work has come down to us, we find in Aristides. He, however, expounds similar views to Marcion.[[20]](#footnote-20) With regard to the relationship between Jews and Christians, Aristides judges like the Marcion. Regardless of which of the three extant versions of his Apology we consider, be it the Greek, Syriac or Armenian one, in all of them Aristides introduces different groups of people - in the Greek version three ("worshippers of the gods", "Jews", "Christians"), in the Syriac and Armenian four ("barbarians", "Greeks", "Jews", "Christians"). In all three versions Aristides traces the god-worshippers back to their ancestors, the barbarians and Greeks or the worshippers of the gods to Zeus, the Jews "to Abraham" and after their migration to Aegypt to "their lawgiver (the Greek version adds: Moses), so that (the Armenian version inserts: after their arrival in the Promised Land) they finally were called Jews". The “Christians”, however, Aristides does not trace back to the Hebrews, Jews, Abraham or Moses, but writes: "Christians take their beginning from the Lord ("Lord" is missing in the Syriac version) Jesus Christ".[[21]](#footnote-21) The only connection there is between Christians and Hebrews, according to the Syriac and Armenian versions, is the birth of Mary, the "Hebrew virgin", but even this designation is missing in the Greek version were we read instead that Christ is born from a "pure, unproduced and spotless virgin", omitting the reference to the Hebrews. Just as for Marcion, according to Aristides Christians have nothing in common with Hebrews and Jews (as little as with Greeks, Barbarians or Egyptians), but are a group of their own.

(2) Let us turn to the second question, whether the period of time for the composition of the four Gospels is not too short at just under eight years. The answer will depend on historical probabilities. The outset is the synoptic phenomenon: at least three of the later canonical Gospels are so closely related textually and agree with each other in so many ways, that they are called ‘Synoptic Gospels’, but even the fourth Gospel, Jn, has so much in common with these other three that, despite extensive research in the past 150 years, no consensus is emerging as to how the mutual dependencies of the three or four can be explained in principle and also in detail. Admittedly, there are major research directions, such as the two-sources hypothesis, which reckons with a lost source (Q), the priority of Mk and the Gospels of Mt and Lk, which are dependent on these two sources either independently of each other or, as some claim, dependent on each other, while Jn is seen as a later creation (so-called two-sources or two-documents hypothesis by Weisse-Streeter).[[22]](#footnote-22) This position, then, was turned on its head by considering Mk as dependent on Mt and Lk (Owen-Griesbach-Farmer hypothesis).[[23]](#footnote-23) Finally, the first theory was heavily criticised by my Birmingham colleague and friend Michael Goulder (now sadly deceased) and his student Mark Goodacre, whose critique is supported by an admittedly smaller but no less tenacious group of scholars who dispense with the source Q and do indeed reckon with a direct dependence on Mt and Lk (Farrer-Goulder-Goodacre hypothesis).[[24]](#footnote-24)

Matthias Klinghardt, who even in 2008 still held to the priority of Mk, even after he had already suggested that not \*Ev depends on Lk, but Lk on \*Ev, has changed his opinion in the course of the reconstruction of the \*Ev and now suggests that the synoptic questions can be solved better and with greater historical probability through the priority of \*Ev.[[25]](#footnote-25)

It seems that the imposibility of scholarship to agree on a satisfying answer even after decades of work[[26]](#footnote-26) seems to make a new start imperative. Non of the older theories have led to a consensus. If I am not mistaken, one of the fundamental problems is the methodological approach by which scholars look for genealogical dependencies of these four Gospels, having excluded Marcion’s Gospel since the discussion of it in Irenaeus. If the above reconstruction were true, we would have to reckon with decades of mutual interchanges between teachers, gospelwriters, editors and redactors, also of the Pauline letters. Teachers made use of their peer’s works and, in turn, these peers made use of texts that had been reworked by others. In the study of manuscripts, such a phenomenon is called cross-contamination of witnesses. And it seems that the close collaboration, also competition, by which scholars at the time made mutual use of their products is historically more likely than the view that the production of the New Testament texts, particularly the Gospels, were produced far apart in time and location. When Marcion complaints about the four Gospels, he must have known of them, before he published his New Testament, hence, what we encounter, is potentially not a text that has not been impacted upon by those four Gospels, just as these Gospels had been impacted by Marcion’s Vorlage.

The temporal or spatial proximity of their creation, therefore, make the final products of the Synoptics and Jn more likely and plausible than a distant production of these works. It also explains the discrepancy shown many times by Klinghardt between the pre-canonical versions of the Gospels (to which I would also like to assume one of Lk, not only like him of Mk, Mt and Jn) and the versions as we know them from the later canonical New Testament.[[27]](#footnote-27)

(3) Finally, there remains the question, connected with the previous problem, of the different theological and local colouring of the later canonical Gospels. Could they have been written close to each other in time and place, when they show such different colouring? The hypothesis presented here reckons with the origin of the Gospels and of Marcion's "New Testament" in Rome between the years 135 and 144 CE. We know from our witnesses of the 2nd and 3rd centuries that these were turbulent times in the capital and metropolis of the Roman Empire as well as in Palestine and Syria in general. As already explained about the life of Marcion, for the first time, as a result of the end of the Second Jewish War (135 CE), not only were the Jews expelled from the city of Jerusalem for decades and centuries, but even Jews living in the Diaspora were forced to migrate. Historical witnesses tell us that for the first time, precisely in this period, a number of Christian teachers had moved from Palestine, Samaria, Syria and Asia Minor to Rome and established their teaching houses and class rooms there. Conversely, we know that a rich and diverse Jewish life of very different communities existed in the metropolis of Rome for a long time, with synagogues such as those of the Agrippesians, Augustesians, Calcaresians, Campesians, Elaeans, Hebrews, Secenians, Siburesians, Tripolitanians, Vernaclians, Volumnesians.[[28]](#footnote-28) From these names alone, a wide variety of identifiers emerge, be they geographical connections, individuals, families, patrons or languages. As for the Christian teachers who came to Rome and lived there, known by name (Justin, Valentinus, Ptolemaeus, Marcion), a wide range is also found in terms of origin and cultural orientation. Each of them had their own background, lived within different networks, spoke different languages and dialects (for example, Justin came from Samaria, Marcion from Pontus, Valentinus from Egypt), so that the diversity reflected in the Gospels only mirror what one would expect as results from such varied thinkers. The diversity of texts does not necessitate their creation in different countries and at different times – in a metropolis like Rome, one would find all of this at the same time, not unlike the cultural, cultic and ideological differences one encounters in a big city today. Rome also offered teachers of different colours the opportunity to get to know each other, so that they could take an interest in each other and in their latest products, get their hands on them and react to each other, even before these works were cast into a form in which they were to go public.

If Marcion did not see himself as the author of the Gospel, the profile of his collection, which can be ascertained from his commentators Tertullian and Epiphanius, has fixed his name to it. Whether the Gospel was more important to him in terms of content than the Pauline epistles cannot be decided, since although he places the Gospel before the epistles, the sequence in which he arranges the Pauline epistles reveals not only a principle of content but also a historical principle of organisation. I have already pointed out above that Marcion offers these letters in historical-biographical and geographical order, consequently the preordering of the Gospel may also show Marcion’s primary interest in the angelic saviour, since this Gospel offers the basis of the message of Jesus, his deeds and the new law, on the basis of which Paul then propagates this "Gospel" in his letters.

Undoubtedly, however, Marcion saw a close connection between these two parts of his "New Testament", and the question will arise as to how these references are to be described in more detail. It is also striking that the same organising principle according to which he arranges the Pauline letters also governs the arrangement of the oral tradition on Jesus. For here, too, the deeds and words of Jesus are placed in an order that his historical, biographical and geographical, by which the very genre was formed that we associate with a "gospel".[[29]](#footnote-29)

### bb) Law and Prophecy versus Gospel - John the Baptist and Jesus

As a preliminary remark, it should be added here that I base the following considerations on the Gospel of Marcion (\*Ev) as reconstructed by Matthias Klinghardt.[[30]](#footnote-30) It is helpful for the task here that Klinghardt has based his construction of \*Ev almost exclusively on literary and text-critical principles, i.e. on the attestation and non-attestation of whole pericopes and connected units, then looked at individual verses and finally at individual words and word forms, combining these principles with tradition-historical observations.[[31]](#footnote-31) For the reader, this means that the content of the texts and, particularly, theological motifs are largely disregarded in Klinghardt's work, so that philology prevails without a preconceived theological assumption to avoid any circular reconstruction.

1. First of all, the framework of the Gospel catches the eye:[[32]](#footnote-32) \*Ev begins after the title "Gospel" with historical dates ("In the 15th year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pilate was prefect of Judea"[[33]](#footnote-33)), the descent of Jesus and the exorcism in the synagogue of Capernaum (\*Ev 3:1a; 4:31-37), before the scene of rejection in the synagogue of Nazareth is narrated (\*Ev 4:16-30). This opening may seem somewhat surprising, since these two narratives appear in reverse order in Lk. Scholars, however, have long wondered that in the Nazareth scene reported first in Lk, Jesus refers to what he had done in Capernaum (Lk 4:23), even though Lk only brings up the Capernaum scene after that of Nazareth (Lk 4:31-17).[[34]](#footnote-34)

The end of the \*Ev is the Bethany scene with the mission, the departure of Jesus, the return of the disciples and the closing formula, "they praised God always" (\*Ev 24:50-53), i.e. \*Ev does not know an ascension of Christ.

According to Tertullian's above quoted section from Marcion's preface, the Gospel aimed at the exposition of the "absolute opposition, such as that between justice and kindness, between law and gospel, between Judaism and Christianity."[[35]](#footnote-35) Tertullian pointed at a special feature of Marcion's description of John the Baptist as the boundary between the Jewish law and prophecy on the one hand and the gospel on the other that highlights the antithetical character of his Gospel. It was in particular the verse \*Ev 16,16 -17 that stated this opposition: "The law and the prophets were prophesied until John. Since then the kingdom of God is being proclaimed. 17 Heaven and earth pass away faster than even a single stroke of the words of the Lord"). While Tertullian wants to hold on to Marcion's distinction between old and new, he does heavily object to understanding John as a boundary. Instead, he calls John a connecting "in-between" (*interstite*),[[36]](#footnote-36) so that, unlike in Marcion, “the kingdom of God does not take its origin from any imaginable source except the sunset of the law and the prophets upon John, just like the daybreak that came after (the night)."[[37]](#footnote-37)

With the poetic image of an organic transition from dawn at daybreak, Tertullian interprets John to counter the contrast that Marcion's inorganic and disruptive understanding of John as the division of history and faith provoked.

To flesh out the picture of the Baptist in \*Ev, we can take a look at some other mentions of him.

The Baptist is first encountered in \*Ev 7:17-22:

"17 And this news about him spread throughout Judea, even to John the Baptist. 18 When he heard of his deeds, he took offense. And he summons two of his disciples, 19 saying, ‘Go, say to him, Are you the one who comes, or shall we wait for another?’ 20 But when the men came to him, they said, ‘John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, Are you the one who comes, or shall we wait for another?’ 22 And he answered, saying to them, ‘Go and tell John what your eyes have seen and your ears have heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor are proclaimed good tidings. 23 And blessed are you, if you take no offense at me!"[[38]](#footnote-38)

A first, important question is why Marcion mentions John at all in his Gospel. Did he know the non-Christian account of John the Baptist in Flavius Josephus’s Antiquities? Yet, scholarship is becoming more sceptical about the reliability of Josephus.[[39]](#footnote-39) Whatever source Marcion has in mind, his mention of John speaks for his assumption that the Baptist was a historical figure, so that he could use him to mark the boundary between the time of Jewish prophetism and the novelty that was brought by Jesus. From the way he portrays him, Marcion saw him as a prophet and teacher of righteousness,[[40]](#footnote-40) and he must have seen the danger that Jesus's message could either be identified with or at least equated with that of John. As we can see from Marcion's search for and presentation of Paul's letters, which is confirmed in his handling of the Gospel material of the oral tradition, Marcion seems to have been a thorough historian and did not aim at writing historical fiction. This is all the more true since a prophetic figure unknown to his audience and readership could hardly have served Marcion's argument. It is therefore astonishing that Marcion hardly receives any attention in the relevant research on John.[[41]](#footnote-41) Nevertheless, as already the placing of John demonstrates, Marcion sharpened his material and brought it in line with his historical and theological views, outlined by Tertullian in his report about Marcion’s preface, the *Antitheses*.

The first introduction of the Baptist in \*Ev clearly prepares the core antithetical passage of \*Ev 16, quoted before with the Baptist being regarded as the border between the Jewish Law and Prophets on the one side, and the Gospel on the other. For it is said in \*Ev that the news of Jesus's miracles - preceded by the raising of the young man of Nain (\*Ev 7:11-16) - reached John the Baptist, but that John "took offence" "when he heard of his (= Jesus') deeds" (\*Ev 7:18), a remark, as we will later see in more detail, has been cut out by the redaction that turned \*Ev into Lk.

In \*Ev, Jesus's answer to the question of John's disciples whether it was he who was coming or whether they should expect someone else - which in Lk sounds somehow random - reads: "Blessed are you if you take no offence at me!" (\*Ev 7:23). The verse refers directly to vers 7:18 and makes clear that John did, indeed, take offence at Jesus. That John is seen as a person who is not blessed by Jesus underlines the gulf that Marcion sees between the Baptist and the Saviour. This is precisely, how Tertullian understands this passage and comments on it: Following Marcion, "John took offence when he heard of Christ's powers, as if Christ were of another",[[42]](#footnote-42) indeed, as if he were "another Christ" who "taught or worked new things".[[43]](#footnote-43) Tertullian contradicts Marcion by emphasising that "John however, both as Jew and as prophet, was quite sure that no one is God except the Creator", hence that the Christ of the Gospel was not sent by another God than the God who is depicted in the Torah as the Creator and who has sent the Jewish prophets.[[44]](#footnote-44) Tertullian’s commentary shows that he understood \*Ev to be an expression of Marcion’s antithetical view, a crux which he highlighted, contradicted and which, as we can see from the alteration that the text underwent in the redaction of Lk was eradicated from this Gospel. Just as Tertullian wished to see John not as a division between on the one side Law and Prophets and on the other the Gospel, but rather as a bridge, a parenthesis[[45]](#footnote-45) or an ‘in-between’ between Jewish and Christian traditions, so the canonical editors redacted \*Ev to remove Marcion’s edge of John serving as a boundary marker.

Marcion, however, is consistent in \*Ev, as can be seen from Tertullian who refers to this consistency when he states his intention to contradict him in his views on John:

"I shall make it my purpose to show both that John is in accord with Christ and  
Christ in accord with John, the Creator's Christ with the Creator's prophet, that so the heretic may be put to shame at having to no advantage made John's work of no advantage."[[46]](#footnote-46)

This comment argues against the missing of the verses on Christ’s baptism by John in \*Ev. According to Tertullian, \*Ev lacked this passage that one can find in Lk 3:21-22,[[47]](#footnote-47) because this act of baptism served Marcion as a justification for the antithesis between John and Christ, and, as the next pericope will show, between John’s disciples and Jesus's disciples. “For”, Tertullian argues,

"if John's work had been utterly without effect when, as Isaiah says, he cried aloud in the wilderness as preparer of the ways of the Lord by the demanding and commending of repentance, and if he had not along with the others baptized Christ himself, no one could

have challenged Christ's disciples for eating and drinking, or referred them to the example of John's disciples who were assidous in fasting and prayer: because if any opposition had stood

between Christ and John, and between the followers of each, there could have been no demand for imitation, and the force of the challenge would have been lost."[[48]](#footnote-48)

From this Tertullian concludes that Christ belongs to John, and John to Christ, and both to the Creator, that both were "preachers of the Law and of the Prophets."[[49]](#footnote-49) In \*Ev 5:33-37, on the other hand, it is said:

"33 And they said to him: 'Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees fast steadily and offer prayers, but yours eat and drink?' 34 Jesus said to them: "Can the wedding guests possibly fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days. 37 New wine is not poured into old wineskins. But if so, the new wine will burst the skins, then the wine is lost, and also the wineskins. 38 Instead, new wine is poured into new wineskins. And both remain preserved.↑36b And no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth onto an old cloak. But if so, it all tears, and it will be of no use for the old. For it will result in a larger tear.’↓"[[50]](#footnote-50)

What Tertullian read as a criticism of John's disciples and of John's way of life was certainly not without anti-Jewish and -pharisaeic undertone. Yet, was this Marcion’s intention? For to mention the fasting of John's disciples in the same breath as that of the disciples of the Pharisees, and to reproach both of them for practising constantly prayers and accusing the disciples of Jesus of non-asceticism, was certainly no praise of John's piety. Jesus’s answer rejects the Johannean criticism and equates Christ with the bridegroom in whose present celebrations replace ascetic practices.[[51]](#footnote-51) Moreover, Tertullian believes he has discovered an inner contradiction in Marcion, who otherwise insisted on asceticism himself: "Now deny, if you can, your utter madness, Marcion: you go so far as to assail the law of your own god."[[52]](#footnote-52) - for how could he call Christ a "bridegroom", if Marcion otherwise preached marital abstinence and insisted on asceticism?

The following comparison from the quoted verses 36 -37 is no less contradictory, for these angered Tertullian even more, since he did not want to read again Marcion’s contrast between the "best God" and the "Creator" that was laid out in them.[[53]](#footnote-53)

From reading Tertullian it thus becomes even clearer than from mere sight that Marcion used the example of the new wine and the old wineskins to impart his message, that his saviour Christ revealed a new way of life, a series of new commandments and a new form of Scripture, i.e. the new wine that does not fit into the old wineskins of the Law and the Prophets and thus into the Jewish tradition. The reasoning in \*Ev is not insignificant: Christ would "tear apart" the Jewish tradition, which would mean a larger gap for both sides with a downfall of both, just as the pouring of Christian novelty into the old frame of Judaism would destroy both – as the novel cult is only served by a novel container or grounding, the older cult will not be threatened by the novel content, and both will have a future.

As this argument reveals, Marcion did not recognise in Christ's appearance an anti-Johannean, anti-Pharisaic or at all anti-Jewish attack directed against Law and Prophets, as Tertullian interpreted Marcion, but Marcion advocated a novel frame for Christ and his new message, which he only saw guaranteed in a new form, based on a new scriptural foundation.

But even though the qualification of the Jewish tradition as "old" could also be quickly misunderstood as a disqualification and devaluation, as happens with Tertullian (and Justin before him), Marcion was also concerned with the fate of the Jewish tradition. For it is clear from the second example of the unrolled patch on an old garment that Marcion was also concerned that neither new nor old should tear when he speaks of the new then being of "no use to the old".

Accordingly, Marcion also saw a benefit of the "Gospel" and Christ for the Jewish tradition. What did this consist of? In the image of the example, it is first of all that there is no "greater rift". Even though Marcion provided Jewish (and non-Jewish) followers of Christ their distinct identity (*Christanismus*) in setting them in antithesis to a Jewish identity (*Judaismus*), as he stated in his preface, his intention was the avoidance of a separation or an antagonism between these two cult forms. Hence he was neither anti-Jewish nor did he press for a downfall of the old Jewish tradition. The reflexion upon the possibility, however, that the Christians could be a threat to Jews and Jews to Christians might be mirroring the historical situation after the Second Jewish war, when the identity of both were fragile. The example of the wineskins and the cloak also intimate that despite Marcion’s stressing of innovation, he admits that Christianity was inconceivable without its antithetical counterpart, Judaism. Or, taken it as a political statement, Christianity sailed under Roman-political protection of Jewish privileges which was only possible as long as Christianity and Judaism were further recognized as belonging together and both survived.

Perhaps Marcion had already seen the danger of Christianity going its own way at the cost of Judaism, as it will develop in confrontation with and downright against the position of Jews in the period that followed. For the post-Marcionite history of the Christian-Jewish relationship moved in a completely different direction than the one Marcion had wished for. While Marcion opted for a distinct identity of Christians in antithetical conjunction with Jews, slightly younger scholars like Justin rejected the ownership of Jews of their tradition and prophets and developed a supersessionist Christian theology towards the Jews. Against Marcion's intention, his antitheses have nevertheless set a fuse that has been lit again and again in the course of history by less reflective igniters and led in the 20th century to the explosive catastrophe of the Holocaust.

(2) The next mention of the Baptist also follows this tendency to set John and Jesus antithetically against each other. It is the passage in which Jesus asks his disciples who the people think he is (\*Ev 9:18-22). The disciples' answer is: "John the Baptist, others Elijah or one of the prophets" (\*Ev 9:19). Herod is reported (\*Ev 9:7- 9):

"But when King Herod heard about what happened, he became perplexed, because some said: 'John has been raised from the dead', and others, 'Elijah has appeared', and yet others said, 'One of the ancient prophets has arisen'. But Herod said, ‘I have beheaded John. Who is this man about whom I hear such things?' And he sought to see him".[[54]](#footnote-54)

Marcion describes what he considers to be the other misunderstanding, according to which Jesus's words and deeds were given a place in the Jewish prophetic tradition. Now he has Jesus ask his disciples: Who do you think I am? Peter answers, "You are the Christ, the Son" (\*Ev 9:20). As in \*Ev 16:16 -17, Jesus Christ is clearly set apart from the prophets and also from the Baptist. However, the extent to which this confession is to be understood as a provocation is shown by the reaction of Christ described in this passage (\*Ev 9:21-22):

"21 But he [Jesus] berated them and demanded to tell this to no one, 22 saying, ‘It is necessary that the Son of Man suffers much and be killed, but after three days raised again’."[[55]](#footnote-55)

With this first announcement of suffering it is corroborated that the special position of Christ, that cannot be derived from Jewish prophecy – a position which Tertullian rejects in his commentary to this passage –,[[56]](#footnote-56) will lead to conflict with the Jewish authorities. Consequently, in \*Ev the dispute is sharpened by the claim that the Jewish prophets had not been capable to forsee Christ’s appearance on earth. In contrast, Tertullian holds that Peter's confession "*Thou art the Christ*,he cannot have supposed him a novel Christ, but only the one he knew in the  
scriptures and was now observing in deeds."[[57]](#footnote-57)

(3) This does not say everything about the Baptist. Following on from what has just been discussed, \*Ev 7:24-28 states:

"24 When John's messengers had gone, he began to speak to the crowds about John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? Perhaps a reed shaken by the wind? 25 Or what then did you go out to see? Perhaps a man covered in soft robes? See, those who live in festive clothing and in luxury are in the palaces! 26 What then did you go out to see? - Perhaps a prophet? Yes, I say to you, and even more than a prophet! For amongst those born of women there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist. 27 He is the one about whom it is written: 'See, I am sending my messenger before your face who will prepare the way for you.' 28 But the least in the kingdom is greater than he."[[58]](#footnote-58)

According to \*Ev, Jesus is not negative towards the expectation of people to see and experience a prophet, nor is he negative towards John, but the very praise that "among those born of women" there is none greater than John and the fact that the prophet Malachi 3:1 was read as if he had prefigured John as a forerunner, makes the final statement all the more drastic, that "the least in the kingdom is greater than he". What appears here to be hedged in, hardly to grasp for the modern readers seems obvious to contemporaries, and especially to those who knew Malachi and \*Ev. For Mal 3:5[[59]](#footnote-59) presents the one to come as a judge who puts the offenders on trial – one of the reasons why Marcion associates John with the judgemental God and his prophets who marks the border between him and the God of Jesus Christ, the non-judgemental "Best God".

(4) Once again Marcion sets Jesus apart from the Baptist and his disciples by making Jesus teach his disciples a prayer that is different from the one the Baptist taught his (\*Ev 11:1-2):

"And it happened as he was praying at a certain place. And after he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us pray as John also has taught his disciples.’ But he said, ‘When you pray, do not stammer like the others. For some think that they shall be heard if they talk a lot."[[60]](#footnote-60)

Here Jesus is more explicit than before. John's prayer is compared to the stammering and many-word making of John's disciples, making his own terse Lord's Prayer the antithesis of the wordy prayer of John's disciples.[[61]](#footnote-61) Jesus's disciples, then, are not to pray "like the others" which which John’s displices are referred to, but to learn a new prayer given by Jesus, instead.

As we shall see, none of the later canonical Gospels offers this antithesis. In general, neither in Lk nor in Mt does a criticism of John occur, and even if Mt, as far as prayer is concerned, has a parallel formulation to \*Ev 11,2, Mt explicitly does not repeat the criticism - against the own context of this verse - to Jews, certainly not to John, but rather molds the criticism to Gentiles ("... do not stammer *like the Gentiles*, for they think that by many words they will be listened to"… μὴ βατταλογήσητε *ὥσπερ οἱ ἐθνικοί*, δοκοῦσιν γὰρ ὅτι ἐν τῇ πολυλογίᾳ αὐτῶν εἰσακουσθήσονται). In \*Ev the Lord’s Prayer is introduced as an alternative prayer to that of John and his disciples.

Now we can ask did the wording of Marcion's Lord's Prayer reflect this antithetical nature. Unfortunately, we do not know any specific prayer of John's disciples, so that we cannot directly compare, but need to work from the text in \*Ev. Does this text of the Lord's Prayer offer clues to antithetical elements?

In view of the beginning of the prayer "Father" (perhaps also with the extension "You who are in heaven"[[62]](#footnote-62)), we can ask about its Jewish background. The concept of father in the Jewish Bible is not a cosmological one, but expresses the fact that God is the Father of Israel.[[63]](#footnote-63) In general, the father epithet is not found frequently in the Jewish Scriptures and in Jewish writings.[[64]](#footnote-64) Nevertheless, it is also found in Philo in connection with God's creation, and in rabbinic literature it returns more frequently as "Father in heaven".[[65]](#footnote-65) Whether with or without the addition ("you who are in heaven"), Tertullian explains that Marcion wanted to use this title of Father to designate the completely transcendent God, whom he opposed to the Creator and Judge of the Jewish Bible. For Marcion, “father” expressed mercy, goodness, a tender power and loving recognition, certainly in marked contrast to an understanding of how "father" was understood in the Greco-Roman world of the Jews.[[66]](#footnote-66) The fact that it was about the Father "in heaven", i.e. the completely transcendent God, must already have bothered Luke, who therefore omits the "in heaven", and it also seems to have bothered him, as well as the other tradents, that this Father, unknown before Jesus' arrival, should let the Holy Spirit come upon people for the cleansing of them.[[67]](#footnote-67) While Marcion may not have included the request for the coming of the kingdom in his first version, he seems to have added it to his version in which the Gospel was included in his "New Testament".[[68]](#footnote-68) For the fact that Jesus' prayer is one for the sending of the Spirit and the dawning of the kingdom of God is emphasised by the antithesis in \*Ev 16,16-17.

In Marcion's version, therefore, an antithetical element to the Baptist can be clearly discerned. For according to Lk 3:1-9 and Mt 3:1-10 (cf. also Mk 1:2-6) John preached the baptism of repentance. Purification does not come from above as in \*Ev, but is mediated by the ascetic John with threats, calling to repentance and baptism of repentance. In contrast to \*Ev, which does not know of John baptising Jesus, the later canonical gospels (Lk 3:21-22; Mt 3:13 -17; Mk 1:9 -11; Jn 1:29 -34) report that Jesus had to undergo this baptism by John, thus accepting Jesus was exposed to the call to repentance, the precondition for making him a follower in the footsteps of the Baptist. The request for the descent of the Holy Spirit and purification is replaced in Matthew[[69]](#footnote-69) by the more general request that God's will be done in heaven as on earth. Thus in Lk (as in Mt) the antithesis to John is again missing, while the other two witnesses, by generalising, show no criticism of John.

(5) Somewhat later in \*Ev (20:1-8) there is yet another mention of John the Baptist (encountered almost identically also in Lk 20:1-8.19):

"1 And it happened, as he was teaching the people in the temple on one of the days, that the Pharisees got up 2 and spoke, saying to him, ‘Explain to us, by what authority are you doing these things, and who has given you this authority!’ 3 But he answered, saying to them, ‘I will also ask you a question which you shall answer me: 4 Was the baptism of John from heaven or of men?’ 5 But they deliberated and said to one another, ‘If we say, from heaven, he will say, Why then did you not believe him? 6 But if we say, of men, all of the people will stone us because they are convinced that John is a prophet.’ 7 And they answered that they knew not from where it came. 8 And Jesus said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.’ 19 And they sought to lay hands on him, but they were afraid."[[70]](#footnote-70)

\*Ev has Jesus's answer whether they believed that John's baptism was from heaven or from men formulated in the form of a query to the Pharisees, who had already appeared as his opponents at the entry into Jerusalem (\*Ev 19:39). In place of the Pharisees Luke mentions the high priests and the scribes with the elders.[[71]](#footnote-71) Thus this dialogue in \*Ev is set in a different framework than in Lk. For \*Ev, as Tertullian has correctly understood,[[72]](#footnote-72) is concerned with the question of whether John also baptises out of the same heavenly authority out of which Jesus preaches. This shows that \*Ev shows knowledge of John baptising, even though it does not give a report on Jesus’s baptism by John. Was the baptising John gleaned from Josephus or did Marcion know about him from oral tradition? As we have seen before, however, \*Ev prepares the ground for those plagiarists who took up this open narrative thread to spin it further.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Jesus's query had put the Pharisees in a predicament because both answer options had to seem disadvantageous to them, firstly because of the possible self-contradiction, secondly because of the external pressure. But the expected answer that they would consider John's baptism to be one "of men" is also revealing, because it is contrasted with the view of the people who consider John to be a prophet, i.e. assume that he acted out of heavenly authority. As for Jesus's own authority, the narrator, along with his protagonist, is shrouded in silence.

\*Ev gives Jesus a wide variety of titles,[[74]](#footnote-74) "physician" (\*Ev 4:23 Ἰατρός), "the Holy One of God" (\*Ev 4:34 ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ), "prophet" (\*Ev 4:24 προφήτης),[[75]](#footnote-75) "Son of God" (\*Ev 4:41 ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ), "the Christ" (\*Ev 4:41 ὁ Χριστός), "the herald/angel messenger of the kingdom of God" (\*Ev 4:43 ἀπαγγελίσασθαι τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ), "herald" (\*Ev 4:44 κηρύσσων), "teacher" (\*Ev 5:5 διδάσκαλος), "the bridegroom" (\*Ev 5:34 ὁ νυμφιός), the "praying one" (\*Ev 6:12), the one "who is as perfect as his teacher" (\*Ev 6:39f.), "Son of Man" (\*Ev 5:24; 6:10; 6:22; 9:18 et al. ), "the Lord of David" (\*Ev 20,41-44, not the "Son of David"), "the Son" (\*Ev 9,20), "the Beloved (Son)", he and not Moses (= Law) or Elijah (= Prophets) is to be followed (\*Ev 9,28 -36). But of all the designations, the most clearly anti-Johanean is that of the "great prophet" (\*Ev 7:16 μέγας προφήτης) in the passage immediately preceding the above remarks on the Baptist.

In addition to the differentiation of Jesus from John the Baptist, the Jewish prophetic tradition and the Law, other typical characteristics of \*Ev could be pointed out, but for the comparison with the later canonical Gospels, the characteristic named by Tertullian from the preface will suffice here. In chapter 3 below, further thematic differences will be examined by way of example. But already this first characteristic of \*Ev presented here shows, in my opinion, that \*Ev was not an anonymous gospel that Marcion had found and included into his “New Testament” without laying hands on. The position that John is given fulfills precisely the antithetical character of Marcion’s New Testament that Tertullian has described in his report about Marcion’s preface, the *Antitheses*.

The historical context in which Marcion formulated this text and attempted to give a corresponding answer to the challenges of his time will be considered following the discussion of how the later canonical Gospels dealt with \*Ev and its positioning of John.

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1. D.C. Parker, Codex Bezae : an early Christian manuscript and its text (1992), 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 2,1: „Transeo nunc ad evangelii, sane non Iudaici sed Pontici, interim adulterati demonstrationem, praestructuram ordinem quem aggredimur.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 2,3-4: „Contra Marcion evangelio, scilicet suo, nullum adscribit auctorem.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 43,7: „Et Marcion quaedam contraria sibi illa, credo industria, eradere de evangelio suo noluit.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Epiph., Pan. 42,10,2 (106 Holl). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibn an-Nadīm, Kitāb al-Fihrist (160 Flügel). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Adam., Dial. 1,8. Trans.: Adamantius, R.A. Pretty and G.W. Trompf, Dialogue on the true faith in God = De recta in Deum fide (1997), 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The same issue can be found in Aphrahats Dem. 1,10, see on this and the parallel to the answer by Megethius: T. Baarda, The Diatessaron and Its Beginning. A Twofold Statement of Tatian (2019), 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See M. Hengel, Studies in the Gospel of Mark (1985), 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See S. McGill, Plagiarism in Latin literature (2012); B.D. Ehrman, Forgery and counterforgery. The use of literary deceit in early Christian polemics (2013); E.R. Richards, Was Matthew a Plagiarist? Plagiarism in Greco-Roman Antiquity (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 1,1: „Et ut fidem instrueret, dotem quandam commentatus est illi, opus ex contrarietatum oppositionibus Antitheses cognominatum et ad separationem legis et evangelii coactum, qua duos deos dividens, proinde diversos, alterum alterius instrumenti, vel, quod magis usui est dicere, testamenti, ut exinde evangelio quoque secundum Antitheses credendo patrocinaretur.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See J.K. Elliott, New Testament textual criticism : the application of thoroughgoing principles : essays on manuscripts and textual variation (2011), 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Editor or redactor here understood in the formal and historical sense by making use of “sources (for example the passion narrative … an apocalypse) and redacted textual passages which he related to each other, elaborated on, hence worked as a historiographical writer’, so the definition in E.-M. Becker, Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie (2019), 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The fact that Marcion does not mention any falsification of his Pauline Epistle collection indicates that these Epistles were only edited later in the course of their incorporation into the collection of Irenaeus. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. So Tertullian about Marcion and Valentinus: Tert., De praescr. 30,2: „In catholicae primo doctrinam credidisse apud ecclesiam Romanensem sub episcopatu Eleutherii benedicti, donec ob inquietam semper eorum curiositatem, qua fratres quoque uitabant, semel et iterum eiecti.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Cyprian, Ep. 73,4. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See the arguments in B. Aland, Rezension zu M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels (2014), D. Roth, The Text of Marcion’s Gospel (2015), M. Klinghardt, Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien (2015) (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See on this M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 400-401. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. It is one of the standard explanation of the origins of the canonical Gospels that they derive from very different geographical places and were written at temporal distances of decades from each other, see U. Schnelle, The First Hundred Years of Christianity. An Introduction to its History, Literature, and Development (2019). Mk is supposed to have been written in Rome around 70 CE for a predominantly pagan community (ibid. 318), Mt in Syria around 90 CE, representative of a hellenized Jewish community (ibid. 322), Lk and Acts to be composed by the same author around 90 to 100 CE (ibid. 326-327), and Jn perhaps even later, so the circumstances are somewhat unclear (ibid. 345-360). For the different local traditions and backgrounds of the Gospels, see A. Destro and M. Pesce, Il racconto e la Scrittura. Introduzione alla lettura dei vangeli (2014), 81-136. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See on Aristides with older lit.: M. Vinzent, Writing the history of early Christianity: From reception to retrospection (2019), 196-265; M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels (2014), 228-251; W.A. Simpson, Aristides' «Apology» and the Novel «Barlaam and Ioasaph» (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Arist., Apol. 15 (Greek version). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See with further lit. M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels (2014), 201-207. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See ibid. 207-208. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See ibid. 208-212. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021). He also gives further lit. on the synoptic question and Jn. On the growing literatur discussing Klinghardt’s position, see C. Gianotto, Alla ricerca del vangelo più antico. Il Vangelo di Marcione e la datazione dei vangeli canonizzati (2020); A. Nicolotti, Due nuovi studi sul Vangelo di Marcione (2018); J. Heilmann, Die These einer *editio princeps* des Neuen Testaments im Spiegel der Forschungsdiskussion der letzten zwei Jahrzehnte (2018); E.-M. Becker and M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of Mark and the Synoptic Gospels (2018); M. Vinzent, Methodological Assumptions in the Reconstruction of Marcion’s Gospel (Mcn). The Example of the Lord’s Prayer (2018); U. Heil, Themenheft Marcion and His Gospel (2017); J. BeDuhn, New Studies of Marcion's *Evangelion* (2017); T.R. Karmann, Markion, Harnack und das Wesen des Christentums: Anmerkungen zur theologischen Relevanz patristischer Forschung (2017); B. Aland, Rezension zu M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels (2014), D. Roth, The Text of Marcion’s Gospel (2015), M. Klinghardt, Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien (2015) (2016); J.M. Lieu, Marcion and the making of a heretic: God and scripture in the second century (2015); D.T. Roth, The Text of Marcion's Gospel (2015); M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels (2014); J. BeDuhn, The First New Testament. Marcion's Scriptural Canon (2013); V. Lukas, Rhetorik und literarischer "Kampf". Tertullians Streitschrift gegen Marcion als Paradigma der Selbstvergewisserung der Orthodoxie gegenüber der Häresie. Eine philologisch-theologische Analyse (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See, for example, E. Eve, Relating the Gospels: Memory, Imitation and the Farrer Hypothesis (2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021). For more see my forthcoming M. Vinzent, Concordance to the precanonical and canonical New Testament (2023). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See O. Brandt, D. Mitternacht and B. Olsson, The synagogue of ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome: interdisciplinary studies (2001); L.M. White, Reading the Ostia synagogue. A reply to A. Runesson (1999); A. Runesson, The oldest original synagogue building in the diaspora. A response to L. Michael White (1999); L.M. White, Synagogue and society in imperial Ostia: Archaeological and epigraphic evidence (1998); D. Noy, Jewish inscriptions of Western Europe 2. The City of Rome (1995); L.V. Rutgers, The Jews in late Ancient Rome: Evidence of cultural interaction in the Roman diaspora (1995); E.S. Brettman, Vaults of memory: Jewish and Christian imagery in the catacombs of Rome : an exhibition (1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See R.A. Burridge, What are the Gospels? a comparison with Graeco-Roman biography (2018); T. Smith, The Fourth Gospel and the manufacture of minds in ancient historiography, biography, romance, and drama (2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. According to its second edition of 2021, not without suggesting corrections in a few places, see M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid. 506. I have also always compared his first edition, M. Klinghardt, Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien (2015). A robust answer to the critiques of his methodology he has given in his epilogue in M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 409-441.. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. I agree with Meier’s methodological remark that any adequate reconstruction and interpretation also needs to take into account the narrative consistency – a suggestion that Klinghardt, just as before him BeDuhn, follow, see J.P. Meier, John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel (1980), 387; J. BeDuhn, The First New Testament. Marcion's Scriptural Canon (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. “when Pilate was prefect of Judea” is left out in Klinghardt’s reconstruction, whereas BeDuhn includes it in his, see J. BeDuhn, The First New Testament. Marcion's Scriptural Canon (2013), 99. Tertullian does not refer to Pilate, but we find this reference in Adam., Dial. 2,3 (823b): ἐπὶ τῶν χρόνων Πιλάτου, and also Irenaeus mentions him with the same dating, Iren., Adv. haer. I 27,2: „temporibus Pontii Pilati praesidis, qui fuit procurator Tiberii Caesaris.“ Klinghardt reckons with the possibility of Pilate being present in \*Ev, but remains cautious and would follow Adamantius rather than Irenaeus so that the *nomen gentilicium* remained a typical feature of the later redaction when \*Ev was turned into Lk, see M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 515-516. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. F. Schleiermacher, A Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke (orig. id., Über die Schriften des Lucas: Ein kritischer Versuch [Berlin, 1817]) (1925), 53-54; L. Brun, Der Besuch Jesu in Nazareth nach Lukas (1931), 7; I.H. Marshall, The gospel of Luke : a commentary on the Greek text (1978), 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 6,1.3: „… differentiam scindit, quantam inter iustum et bonum, quantam inter legem et evangelium, quantam inter Iudaismum et Christianismum.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The engl. Translator misinterprets this as “the point of division” – Tertullian’s argument shows, he means the opposite of it. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 33,8: „interstite Ioanne, non erit mirum quod ex dispositione est creatoris, ut undeunde magis probetur quam ex legis et prophetaram in Ioannem occasu et exinde ortu regnum dei.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Reconstruction in M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 638. The Engl. trans. Ibid. 1290. As can be seen from the numbers, vers 21 of this passage in Lk (“At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind”) is missing in \*Ev. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See the sceptical view in C.K. Rothschild, “Echo of a whisper”. The uncertain authenticity of Josephus’ witness to John the Baptist (2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. A similar portray is painted by my former colleague at London King’s College, J.E. Taylor, The immerser. John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism (1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. No mentino of him, for example, is made in ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 18,4: „Sed scandalizatur Ioannes auditis virtutibus Christi, ut alterius.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 18,4: „qua alium Christum sperans vel intellegens qui neque [haberet] unde speraret, ut nihil novi docentem vel operantem.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 18,5: „Ioannes autem certus erat neminem deum praeter creatorem, vel qua Iudaeus, etiam prophetes.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See J. Ernst, Johannes der Täufer - der Lehrer Jesu? (1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 11,4: „Nunc illud tuebor, ut demonstrem et Ioannem Christo et Christum Ioanni convenire, utique prophetae creatoris, qua Christum creatoris, atque ita erubescat haereticus, Ioannis ordinem frustra frustratus.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. “21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’” [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 11,5 continuing what has been quoted from Tertullian before: „Si enim nihil omnino administrasset Ioannes, secundum Esaiam vociferator in solitudinem et praeparator viarum dominicarum per denuntiationem et laudationem paenitentiae, si non etiam ipsum inter ceteros tinxisset … quia, si qua diversitas staret inter Christum et Ioannem et gregem utriusque, nulla esset comparationis exactio, vacaret provocationis intentio.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 11,6: „Adeo Ioannis erat Christus et Ioannes Christi, ambo creatoris, et ambo de lege et prophetis praedicatores et magistri.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. For the trans. (with minor alterations) see M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 1287. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. See Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 11,6. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 11,6: “Nega te nunc dementissimum, Marcion. Ecce legem tui quoque dei impugnas.” [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. On Marcion’s “best God”, see, for example, Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 15,2; 16,7 (deus optimus et tantum bonus, patientiae iniuriam facere). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Trans. from M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 1294. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Trans. from ibid. 1295 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. See Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 21,7. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 21,7: „Tu es Christus, non potest novum eum sensisse Christum, nisi quem noverat in scripturis, quem iam recensebat in factis.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Trans. in M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 1290. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me, says the Lord Almighty.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Trans. in M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 1298. See on the following M. Vinzent, Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in liturgischem Übungswissen des frühen Christentums (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. That the short prayer is nothing unknown in Judaism has already been observed, for there was the tradition of the "short prayer" which could be used especially in danger, S.T. Lachs, A rabbinic commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (1987), 118-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Klinghardt takes this clause for absent in \*Ev, though it is present in the witnesses D (06) it sy, so that there is some evidence that it was, in fact, present. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. See A. Goshen-Gottstein, God the Father in Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity: Transformed Background or Common Ground? (2001), 475. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. See ibid. with further literature. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid. 477. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. See Tert., Adv. Marc. II 13,5: „Usque adeo iustitia etiam plenitudo est divinitatis ipsius, exhibens deum perfectum et patrem et dominum, patrem clementia, dominum disciplina, patrem potestate blanda, dominum severa, patrem diligendum pie, dominum timendum necessarie, diligendum quia malit misericordiam quam sacrificium, et timendum quia nolit peccatum, diligendum quia malit paenitentiam peccatoris quam mortem, et timendum quia nolit peccatores sui iam non paenitentes. Ideo lex utrumque definit: Diliges deum, et, Timebis deum.“ [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Markion’s alternative concept of a father who sends his spirit for cleansing human beings is repeated in later Patristic witnesses, as we can see in Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus Confessor. See M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 812-816. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. See on this complex issue ibid. 814-815. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. So also the early Christian catechism, the Didache (Did. 8,2-3), if this passage is not already influenced by Mt. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Trans. in M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 1313. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. So also Mk 11:27, whereas Mt 21:23 mentions only high priests and the elders of the people. M. Klinghardt points out that it is a characteristic of the Lukan redaction of \*Ev ist, to keep the Pharisees clean of plotting against Jesus when entering the city of Jerusalem, see ibid. 1058. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 38,2. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. So already M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 1061. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Only a selection is given here. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Connected with this title is the description that God gave him ‘disciples’ at hand, one of the features in Jewish Scriptures that was only attributed to prophets, see C. Hezser, Followers, Servants, and Traitors: The Representation of Disciples in the Synoptic Gospels and in Ancient Judaism (2018), 72-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)