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### e) Gospel of John

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### aa) The profiling of the author

A number of points have already been made about John, the evangelist, in connection with the treatment of Papias. John is one of the great enigmas of the New Testament and early Christianity, namely he as a person, as an evangelist, as well as the Gospel associated with his name, the three epistles written in his name and the Book of Revelation. As for the Gospel, it was stated that it was "at once the most Jewish and the most anti-Jewish".[[1]](#footnote-1)

As far as the person of John is concerned, the enigma is related on the one hand to the fact that the name not only enjoyed extreme popularity at the time - we know of 122 bearers of this name from the time of Jesus alone[[2]](#footnote-2) - but on the other hand also to the fact that the information about him, we find in the sources, is extremely scanty. As an apostle he appears only once alone, in a few other places in the company of his brother James (Mk 1:19-21; Mt 4:19-22; Jn 1:35-42; his vocation story is conspicuously missing in \*Ev and Lk), and together with him and Peter he is regarded as one of the three pillars of the community in Jerusalem (Gal 2:9). By the last two verses of Jn, the evangelist is identified with the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (Jn 13:23; 19:26; 21:20), also mentioned anonymously several times in Jn (Jn 21:20-25), and by the titling of the Gospel "according to John" he is equated with the apostle. These combinations are taken even further by also attributing to him the Book of Revelation and the three letters of John which make him a kind of "super-apostle, at once young and old, seeing and virginal", one of the most popular eponyms, so that the first name "John was the most commonly given in France until the 1960s and, among the forms Jan or the form Jean, is still the most common first name in Belgium today".[[3]](#footnote-3)

Now there is only one passage in the canonical New Testament where the apostle John utters a word, but this word is only preserved in \*Ev 9:49, Mk 9:38 and Lk 9:49 - not in any of the Johannine works, neither in Mt. The absence in Jn is perhaps explained by the fact that Jesus rejects John with this saying - and this in a passage that deals precisely with the question of superiority and subordination among the apostles, but also concerning the group of Jesus's disciples and people who imitate Jesus but do not act in his name:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Lk 9:46-50** | **Mk 9:33-41** | **\*Ev 9:45b-50** |
| 45b And they were afraid to ask him about this saying, 46 But a discussion arose among themselves as to which of them was the greatest. | 33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. 35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” | 45b And they were afraid to ask him about this saying, 46 which of them was the greatest |
| 47 But Jesus, knowing the thought in their hearts, took a child, placed  it by his side, 48 and said to them:  “Whoever accepts this child in my name, accepts me and and he who receives me receives him who sent me. For the least among you all, is great.” | 36 He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 37 “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.” | 47 But Jesus, knowing the thought in their hearts, took a child, placed  it by his side, 48 and said, “Whoever accepts this child in my name, accepts me and the one who sent me. For the least among you all, is great.” |
| 49 John answered, saying, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name. And we stopped him because he does not follow together with us.” 50 But Jesus said to them, “Do not stop him, for he is not against you and not for you. | 38 “Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”  39 “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us. | 49 But John answered, saying, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name. And we stopped him because he does not follow together with us.” 50 But Jesus said to them, “Do not stop him, for he is not against you and not for you. For there is no one who does a deed of power, except in my name.” |

After Jesus has announced to his disciples for the second time in \*Ev his future surrender into the hands of men and his suffering, words which the disciples again do not understand, this scene follows. It heightens the tension between Jesus, who is ready to suffer, and the disciples, who are fighting over rank. With the help of a child whom Jesus places with him, he makes it clear: “whoever accepts this child” - meaning a small, uneducated, incomprehensible person - "in my name, accepts me and he who sent me" (\*Ev 9:48), and Jesus concludes: "For the least among you all, is great".

How little the disciples understand this word of Jesus, however, is demonstrated by \*Ev with the example of John - \*Ev consequently criticises not only Peter, but also John and all the apostles. In the example of John, however, it is no longer about the internal ranking, but about the previously implied question of whether the apostles as such are above others who do not belong to them and follow Jesus with them. In the specific case, the question is whether someone can cast out demons in Jesus's name even if he is not an apostle or one of the disciples.

Because John, who could have already given himself the answer from the example Jesus had previously chosen, shows a lack of understanding, Jesus has to follow up. The apostles are not to hinder the unknown exorciser, as Jesus admonishes: "he is not against you and not for you", that is, the exorciser actually has nothing to do with the apostles, and yet, according to Jesus, no one exercises power - here to cast out demons - "except in my name". Accordingly, Jesus does not even demand a confession of him, but the mere fact that someone does healing is enough. Jesus claims that such action is also action in his name. Klinghardt, who only included the final verse of this passage in his revised English edition of the reconstruction of \*Ev - but rightly so, in my opinion - comments: "With this answer, Jesus directly contradicts John who requires being a disciple as a prerequisite for the legitimacy of exorcisms."[[4]](#footnote-4)

If we compare how Mk deals with this radical dehierarchisation and expansion of Jesus's reach, we see that he makes an effort to defuse the contradictions from the beginning. This already begins with the narrative dressing, which turns the question of hierarchy into an instruction in group dynamics. The child is taken as an example of how to take care of each other, especially the smallest and weakest. The theme of hierarchy (\*Ev 9:48: "For the least among you all, is great") is passed over in silence, even though it is the actual answer to the initial question, "which of them was the greatest" - an indication of how unskilful the editing of Mk is at this point.

Jesus's answer to John is also trivialised. It is no longer a matter of everyone who heals, acts in the name of Jesus, even without authorisation and without belonging to Jesus's chosen ones; instead, it is argued that Jesus merely meant that anyone who does a deed of power in his name cannot easily speak ill of him. Even more, with the statement "whoever is not against us is for us", all those people who do good in Jesus's name are taken on board of the Jesus-group. In this way, however, discipleship is made the centre, contrary to Jesus's answer in \*Ev that small things are great and that hierarchies are not important. In Mk, the environment is ordered towards the disciples, which is also indicated by the change of pronoun. The "against you" and "for you" of \*Ev has become "against us" and "for us". Hereby Jesus assigns himself to the disciples, and consequently the conclusion is valid that no one can accomplish good unless he is part of the Jesus circle ("us"). Again Klinghardt comments convincingly:

"Mark replaces the indifference toward the disciples (‘neither for you nor against you’) of \*Ev by an all-encompassing extension of social boundaries: Without further ado, all strangers/all strange exorcists are engrossed by the one group of disciples, if only they do not disqualify as Christians by vilifying Jesus:"[[5]](#footnote-5)

Let us look at Lk. He too readjusts the passage at the beginning by relating the first sentence with the fear of the disciples to the preceding scene and, similar to Mk, places the key question of hierarchy in a narrative scene of a discussion. However, he includes Jesus's final statement that the "least … is great". In contrast, he deletes the last sentence of Jesus's answer to John. In doing so, however, he joins the solution in Mk with the same social-hierarchical consequence.

Both revisions show "an increased interest in legitimacy claims and social boundaries. The implied claim is complex: There is only one legitimate group that belongs to Jesus and acts ‘in his name’ – and that is ‘us’."[[6]](#footnote-6) Klinghardt thinks that this claim to religious legitimacy is due to the historically concrete constellation in which the representatives of the nascent church and the Marcionites found themselves. In my opinion, however, this explanation can be broadened, because it also concerns the question of one's own identity in general. Marcion's antithesis between "Judaism" and "Christianity" with its antithetical demarcation of Jewish tradition and the novelty of Christianity taken by him to derive from Paul and Jesus did not, in his opinion, as expressed in \*Ev, lead to a monopolisation of salvation. Antithesis therefore means neither superordination nor opposition, but rather criticism of an understanding of Jewishness that was misunderstood by Jesus's followers as exclusivity. The opposition, then, is not between being Christian or Jewish, nor being Christian or Roman, nor between any other social, cultural or religious position or group, but Marcion’s critique is that of his own in-group, aiming at not excluding others, neither Jews, Romans or anybody else. In the face of claims to authority and the appropriation of others, even those outside one's own group, Marcion criticizes not only the leading apostles, but also the writings that were put out in their names. For these cement the misleading of Christian groups by claims to self-exaltation, exclusivisation and monopolisation. As we can see from the revisions of \*Ev, however, Marcion’s position seemed for many too radical and the alternatives, criticized by Marcion, found their way into Irenaeus's larger collection. In \*Ev’s place - despite all the admonitions of Jesus, and despite the indications that none of the apostles, not even John, had understood his words - the antithesis was cut short and now directed against all salvific activity outside the own group of disciples. Thus the original radicalism was retained, but the content was turned upside down. The result was the demand that all salvific action be done "in the name of Jesus", a prefiguration of Cyprian's idea that "outside the Church there can be no salvation" (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*).[[7]](#footnote-7)

It is therefore not surprising that Marcion, when reading the four Gospels, was able to recognise his own Gospel as a Vorlage, but was horrified to read the falsifications of most central ideas of his. Hence, he did not want to and could not identify with these plagiarisms, which is why he wanted to expose them through putting his Gospel together with the Pauline letters and his preface in, what he then called “The New Testament”. To Marcion it was this single Gospel that preserved the good news of Jesus as it was conveyed by Paul. While Mt and Jn deleted the criticism of the apostle John altogether, it was softened in Mk and Lk. Marcion could not have known that after his death there would not only be further revised editions of his Gospel, but continuous efforts in countering his “New Testament” by an enlarged version where his “New Testament” provided only a nucleus. In the revised Irenaean edition, not only was Marcion’s preface deleted, but the four Gospels were reworked, slightly harmonised with each other and, amongst many other things like the inclusion of a whole range of pseudonymous writings, the image of the apostle John in particular was brushed against the grain.

The end of Jn offers several accounts in which clear criticism of Peter (and the other disciples) is voiced. They begin with the race between Peter and the "disciple whom Jesus loved" to the tomb of Jesus (Jn 20:1-10). Peter is the slower and, even though he dares to be the first to enter the tomb, he is not the one who becomes the first witness of faith, but the "disciple whom Jesus loved" is said to have "seen and believed". Jn 20 offers a closing formula:

" 30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Not only the following chapter 21, but already this concluding formula seems to have been added only by redaction.[[8]](#footnote-8) In his linguistic study of this chapter, Boismard had found that the redactor probably made an effort to use and imitate typically Johannine vocabulary and formulations, but the attentive reader encounters in this so short chapter "almost in every verse" a term "unusual" for John.[[9]](#footnote-9) After reviewing and comparing chapter 21 with the rest of the Gospel, Boismard concludes that "the unusual expressions multiply to such an extent that they increase the finding to the point of evidence, as seems to be the case here" that "argues against Johannine authenticity".[[10]](#footnote-10)

The conspicuousness already begins in the quoted closing formula. For the "many others" (πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα) is otherwise attested only in Lk, and that in a passage not contained in \*Ev (Lk 3:18), and it occurs again in Acts 25:7. Likewise, a number of expressions and phrases that are also found in Jn 21 reappear exclusively in Lk and Acts.[[11]](#footnote-11) We will come to Acts in more detail below, but it should be noted here already that in John’s many appearances he is always put together with Peter as his companion (Acts 1:13; 3:1, 3, 4, 11; 4:13, 19; 8:14; 12:2-3).[[12]](#footnote-12)

In Jn 21, the criticism of Peter and the criticism of the other apostles is continued, but "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is set apart from them even more and placed above them. Three times Jesus asks Peter if he loves him, the first time if he loves him more than the rest of the apostles, in order to invite him at the end: "Follow me!" But instead of following without hesitation, Peter turns around and sees that the disciple "whom Jesus loved" is following Jesus. More than that, by this chapter this nameless disciple is identified with the evangelist, thus turning the original criticism of John (which corresponded to the criticism of Peter and all the apostles in \*Ev) into an exaltation and preference for John:

"20 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) 21 When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?” 22 Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” 23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?” 24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. 25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." (Jn 21:20-25)

Already the explicit reference that “these things” are testified and written down as "testimony” which “is true" (Jn 21:24) attracts the critical reader’s attention. Statements of truth are often a characteristic of editorial forgery in late antiquity,[[13]](#footnote-13) not differently here. Such falsification was all the easier in the case of John because we otherwise have little knowledge of him and he is really only ever "the second apostle alongside another".[[14]](#footnote-14) Nevertheless, arguments were put forward in history to support the equation of the unnamed disciple, named only in Jn, whom Jesus loved, and John, one of the sons of Zebedee and an apostle called by Jesus.[[15]](#footnote-15) But even though this equation was already questioned during the Enlightenment,[[16]](#footnote-16) it persisted into the 20th century.[[17]](#footnote-17)

If we look into the oldest testimonies, we again come across Papias, whose account does not need to be repeated here, since we have already quoted and discussed it above.[[18]](#footnote-18) But Papias does not report anything about an identification of the disciple whom Jesus loved and who rested at his breast and the evangelist. Nor does the tradition that builds on Papias know of this equation. Instead, Eusebius considers John, named by Papias in his list of witnesses together with Peter and James, to be the Evangelist[[19]](#footnote-19) and distinguishes him from another John, to whom he attributes the Book of Revelation. The reason for this distinction is the belief in a millennial reign professed in Revelation,[[20]](#footnote-20) which Eusebius rejected. In this way, he did not have to attribute millenarianism to the evangelist, but could attribute it to John, the author of Revelation, who was distinguished from the evangelist. However, Justin Martyr, after 160 CE, also attributed Revelation to the Apostle.[[21]](#footnote-21) Yet, the same Justin shows little knowledge of John, and never mentions him, even though, according to him, he stayed in Ephesus after the end of the so-called Bar Kokhba revolt and was even converted there before travelling on to Rome.[[22]](#footnote-22)

The next to inform us about John is Irenaeus; however, unlike Justin, he does not make the Apostle John the author of the Gospel and the Book of Revelation, but in his opening of Book III, chapter 1 of Adversus haereses he writes: "Finally, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia."[[23]](#footnote-23) Irenaeus, then, here and in the rest of his work, equates the evangelist with the disciple who lay at Jesus' breast (John 13:24; 21:20) and whom Jesus loved, but not with John the Zebedaid.[[24]](#footnote-24) This John, whom Jesus loved, had then also lived and taught until the times of Trajan (98-117 CE).[[25]](#footnote-25) Of him he also reports:

"John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that "knowledge" falsely so called".[[26]](#footnote-26)

Even though Irenaeus here sees the Gospel as being directed against Cerinthus and the even much older Nicolaitans, and thus against what he here also “knowledge” (“gnosis”), his next section makes it clear who his contemporary opponents are, on whom he is merely putting these heretic hats of the past:

" John, however, does himself put this matter beyond all controversy on our part, when he says, "He was in this world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own [things], and His own [people] received Him not." But according to Marcion, and those like him, neither was the world made by Him; nor did He come to His own things, but to those of another. And, according to certain of the Gnostics, this world was made by angels, and not by the Word of God. But according to the followers of Valentinus, the world was not made by Him, but by the Demiurge."[[27]](#footnote-27)

As already noted above in relation to this quotation, Marcion and the Valentinians are the teachers who are criticized by Irenaeus. He sees them opposed by John, the disciple whom Jesus loved[[28]](#footnote-28) to whom he also attributes the Book of Revelation[[29]](#footnote-29) and the First Letter of John.[[30]](#footnote-30) Although Irenaeus himself does not yet identify this disciple whom Jesus loved with the Zebedaid, he lays the foundation for the later tradition by making this John a man who reached a great age, who was recognised as an authority in Asia Minor, and who had migrated to Ephesus where he died.[[31]](#footnote-31)

The impact of Acts, which appeared at the time of Irenaeus and was included in his collection, on the biography of John is shown by an excerpt from a letter of Polycrates of Ephesus, who is said to have been bishop of that city in the years 189-198, to the Roman bishop Victor, handed down by Eusebius:

" For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the last day, at the

coming of the Lord, when he shall come with glory from heaven and shall seek out all the saints.

Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, and his two aged

virgin daughters, and another daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and moreover John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and being a priest wore the sacerdotal plate. He also sleeps at Ephesus."[[32]](#footnote-32)

Just as Philip, one of the seven who served at the tables, is here promoted to become the apostle Philip, so John's authority is further elevated by equating him with a John named in Acts 4:5-6[[33]](#footnote-33) from the list of high priests when John is said to have worn "the forehead shield", the sign of high priestly dignity (Ex 28:36-39; Lev 8:9).[[34]](#footnote-34) Even more, he is not only described as a priest and teacher, but even as a martyr, whereas in the Acts of John, for example, he dies a natural death.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Another testimony to John the Evangelist is found in the earlier mentioned Canon Muratori, which, as said, cannot be dated with certainty:

"The fourth of the Gospels is that of John one of the disciples. When his fellow disciples and bishops urged him, he said: "Fast together with me from today for three days and, what shall be revealed let us tell to each to each other." On that same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that, with all of them reviewing it, John should describe all things in his own name. And so, although different beginnings might be taught in the separate books of the Gospels, nevertheless it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since all things in all of them are declared by the one sovereign Spirit — concering His nativity, concering His passion, concerning His resurrection, concerning His conversation with His disciples, and concerning His double advent: the first in humility when He was despised, which has been; the second in royal power, glorious, which is to be. What marvel, therefore, if John so constantly brings forward particular matters also in his Epistles, saying of himself: "What we have seen with our eyes and have heard with our ears and our hands have handled, these things we have written to you." For thus he declares that he was not only an eyewitness and hearer, but also a writer of all the wonderful things of the Lord in order.”[[36]](#footnote-36)

The literary development of John the Evangelist progresses in a legendary way further, even if the text of the Canon Muratori is not without tensions in terms of content. John is no longer considered only a fellow disciple, but also a bishop, although he is not initially the authority for the knowledge himself, but the apostle Andrew receives the nocturnal revelation, which is then also first examined by all the apostles before John is commissioned to write it down. The following refers to John, but also to the other Gospels cited earlier in the text. When we come to the letters of John, these are attributed to the evangelist. This attribution is important because from the first letter (1 Jn 1,1-3[[37]](#footnote-37)) it is now gained that John himself is an eye and ear witness and not only a "writer of all the wonderful things of the Lord" (Can. Mur. 22).

Various authors and works show how productive the creation of legends is. Tertullian, for example, tells us at the beginning of the 3rd century in his work De praescriptione haereticorum, which is directed above all against Marcion, Valentinus and other heretics:

"[5] Was anything hidden from John, the most beloved of the Lord, who lay on His breast [Jn 13:25], to whom alone the Lord beforehand pointed out Judas the traitor, and whom he commended to Mary as son in His own place [Jn 19:26]? Who can maintain that they were ignorant [6] to whom He even manifested his own glory, and Moses with Elijah, and the voice of His Father from heaven [\*Ev 9:28-36; Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36]? Not as though He were rejecting the other Apostles, but because “by three witnesses shall every word be established” [2 Cor 13:1; Dt 19:15; Mt 18:16]."[[38]](#footnote-38)

Tertullian goes beyond Irenaeus and connects the disciple whom Jesus loved and who lay at his breast with the Zebedaid, he grants him the knowledge of things to come, especially since he was present at the transfiguration of Jesus. But Tertullian rejects the version of the transfiguration as he knows it from the \*Ev, which he commented on.[[39]](#footnote-39) For there this scene precisely showed Peter's (and not only Peter's, but also John's and James') lack of understanding - indeed, the transfiguration in the \*Ev served to make clear that one should listen neither to the prophets (Elijah) nor to the law (Moses), but only to the beloved Son. Therefore, there cannot be three tents, but only one, namely the dwelling place of Jesus. Against this narrative of Marcion, Tertullian writes that it was not a matter of setting someone back, but - as the Synoptic Gospels put it - of witnessing the glorification of Jesus through three witnesses.

In the same writing, De praescriptione haereticorum, Tertullian comes back to John a little later when he describes the main Christian churches:

"[1] Come now! Though who want to exercise your curiosity to better purpose in the business of your salvation: go through the Apostolic Churches where the very thrones of the Apostles at this very day preside over their own districts, where their own genuine letters are read which speak their words and bring the presence of each before our minds. [2] If Achaia is nearest to you, you have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi. If you can travel into Asia, you have Ephesus. Or if you are near to Italy, you have Rome, where we too have an authority close at hand. [3] What a happy hurch is that, into which the apostles have poured the fullness of doctrine to overflow with their blood, where Peter is made like the Lord in the way of suffering, where Paul is crowned with the manner of John's death, where the apostle John, having suffered no harm after being dipped in boiling oil, is banished to an island!"[[40]](#footnote-40)

Tertullian is a witness to the effectiveness of the Irenaean collection of writings, which he, like Irenaeus, does not yet call the "New Testament", because he, like Irenaeus, assigns this title to the collection of Marcion.[[41]](#footnote-41) But he counters Marcion by saying that the original letters of the apostles (*authenticae litterae*) are still read in their churches, and he therefore believes that they still preserved the manuscripts of the apostles' letters.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Tertullian associates the martyrdom of Peter and Paul[[43]](#footnote-43) with John's torture in boiling oil, which he survived unscathed.[[44]](#footnote-44) The banishment to "an island" makes him appear to be the author of Revelation, even though here the place from which John is sent into exile is not Ephesus but Rome.

Tertullian's account is later spun out further, according to which Emperor Domitian (81-96 CE) had John immersed in a vat of boiling oil, but he was saved by the Lord, which is alluded to as early as the 7th century in a Roman sacramentary that reports a feast day "Natalis S. Johannis ante Portam Latinam" on 6 May. Since the dramatic events surrounding John took place at the gateway to Rome in the direction of Latium, the famous book of the popes, the Liber Pontificalis, written under Hadrien I (772-795 CE), states that the church of San Giovanni a Porta Latina was erected there in honour of John.[[45]](#footnote-45) The church may have been built as early as around 490 under Pope Gelasius I (492- 496),[[46]](#footnote-46) although S.L. de Blaauw now dates it more cautiously to the middle of the 6th century.[[47]](#footnote-47) Although the ordeal had not led John to martyrdom, a quasi-martyrdom feast day was created by celebrating the inauguration of S. Giovanni a Porta Latina on 6 May, first recorded in the Sacramentary of Hadrian from the time of Charlemagne.[[48]](#footnote-48) The question of how this memory developed in the collective memory of a limited group of Christians in Rome, de Blaauw admits, remains without an answer.[[49]](#footnote-49) And he refers to research on collective memory that showed that it does not offer accounts of past events, but reveals contemporary needs and hardships.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Another “myth, which is not a mere myth, but a narrative” is told by Clement of Alexandria, which is handed down to us by Eusebius.[[51]](#footnote-51) It reports that the aged John, after returning to Ephesus from his exile on Patmos, "went away … to the neighboring territories of the Gentiles, to appoint bishops in some places, in other places to set in order whole churches, elsewhere to choose to the ministry some one of those that were pointed out by the Spirit".[[52]](#footnote-52) In the process, he discovered a young man whom he placed in the care of a bishop. The bishop educated him, baptised him, but the young man later failed and became a thief and gang leader. In an adventurous way, John finally seeks and saves him, confronting him in the midst of his gang and telling him that he himself is ready to go to his death for him. Moved by tears, the latter he received a second baptism and thus became "a great example of true repentance".[[53]](#footnote-53) What Burnet calls a "nice tale" was already called a "myth" (μῦθος) by Clement, but in Eusebius the narrative is already considered a "story" (*historia*).

Unfortunately, for further information on John, apart from the further explanations of Papias, Clement, Origen and the sources dependent on them, which have already been discussed above, we can today only refer to the not completely preserved Acts of John. It is neither known when nor where exactly they were written,[[54]](#footnote-54) even though the dates range from the second half of the 2nd century,[[55]](#footnote-55) through the first half of the 3rd century,[[56]](#footnote-56) to the end of the 3rd, beginning of the 4th century at the latest.[[57]](#footnote-57) They recount several miracle-working sojourns of the ascetic and virgin John (ch. 113) in Ephesus (ch. 37-55, 58-86, 106-115), in between which he also heals in Smyrna (ch. 56-57). As one of the apostles through whom Christ shows himself (ch. 112), he converts people to the Christian faith, and his very image encourages the brothers (ch. 28-29). Yet it is not he who is the source of all this, but the Lord himself who uses John as a mediator.[[58]](#footnote-58) God graces him with foreknowledge of future things such as the death of Cleopatra (ch. 24), that of Fortunatus (ch. 86), and he knows the hidden thoughts of men (ch. 46-47).[[59]](#footnote-59) In this text, as in most accounts of John, the apostle dies not as a martyr but of a quiet death in old age.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Origen gives us a more sober account of what Eusebius passes on to us:

"9. Why need we speak of him who reclined upon the bosom of Jesus, John, who has left us

one Gospel, though he confessed that he might write so many that the world could not contain

them? And he wrote also the Apocalypse, but was commanded to keep silence and not to write the words of the seven thunders. 10. He has left also an epistle of very few lines; perhaps also a second and third; but not all consider them genuine, and together they do not contain hundred lines."[[61]](#footnote-61)

From this note by Origen it is clear, as we have already seen with Tertullian, that the collection of Irenaeus has been read and was recognized, even when critical minds like Origen expressed some scepticism about writings that he saw as being on the edges of this collection, like here the second and the third letters of John. Irenaeus’s identification of the disciple, whom Jesus loved, with the author of the Gospel, the first letter of John and the Book of Revelation, perhaps even of the second and third letter of John, begins to convince those who use it. However, the Book of Revelation, as we have already seen, in particular has its opponents, which is confirmed by a disciple of Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria:

"1. … Some before us have set aside and rejected the book altogether, criticising it chapter by chapter, and pronouncing it without sense or argument, and maintaining that the title is fraudulent. 2. For they say that it is not the work of John, nor is it a revelation, because it is covered thickly and densely by a vail of obscurity. And they affirm that none of the apostles, and none of the saints, nor any one in the Church is its author, but that Cerinthus, who founded the sect which was called after him the Cerinthian, desiring reputable authority for his fiction, prefixed the name. 3. For the doctrine which he taught was this: that the kingdom of Christ will be an earthly one … 4. But I could not venture to reject the book, as many brethren hold it in high esteem. But I suppose that it is beyond my comprehension, and that there is a certain concealed and more wonderful meaning in every part. For if I do not understand I suspect that a deeper sense lies beneath the words. 5. I do not measure and judge them by my own reason, but leaving the more to faith I regard them as too high for me to grasp. And I do not reject what I cannot comprehend, but rather wonder because I do not understand it."[[62]](#footnote-62)

As Dionysius points out, the author's name of an apostle is considered proof of the credibility of a writing. This quotation also shows that the collection of Irenaeus did not remain unchallenged even after decades, but that there were obviously heated discussions about individual writings. However, these are no proof that the collection of Irenaeus did not exist and that the value of individual writings was discussed independently of the collection. It is precisely such discussions that prove that the attribution of Johannine authorship through the collection, which led to an identification of the apostle and the author of the Book of Revelation as well, was objectionable. This is also evident in the continuation of the text, in which Dionysius "like a 21st century biblical scholar"[[63]](#footnote-63) compares Rev with Jn and the Epistles of John stylistically. Dionysius concludes:

"12. But that he who wrote these things was called John must be believed, as he says it; but

who he was does not appear. For he did not say, as often in the Gospel, that he was the beloved disciple of the Lord, or the one who lay on his breast, or the brother of James, or the eyewitness and hearer of the Lord. 13. For he would have spoken of these things if he had wished to show himself plainly. But he says none of them; but speaks of himself as our brother and companion, and a witness of Jesus, and blessed because he had seen and heard the revelations. 14. But I am of the opinion that there were many with the same name as the apostle John, who, on account of their love for him, and because they admired and emulated him, and desired to be loved by the Lord as he was, took to themselves the same surname, as many of the children of the faithful are called Paul or Peter. 15. For example, there is also another John, surnamed Mark, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, whom Barnabas and Paul took with them [Acts 12:25], and of him also it is said: And they had also John as their attendant' [Acts 13:5]. But that it is he who wrote this, I would not say. For it not written that

he went with them into Asia, but, ‘Now when Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem' [Acts 13:13]. 16. But I think that he was some other one of those in Asia; as they say that there are two monuments in Ephesus, each bearing the name of John. 17. And from the ideas, and from the words and their arrangement, it may be reasonably conjectured that this one is different from that one."[[64]](#footnote-64)

It is even clearer from this quotation than from the previous ones that it was the context of the collection that provided the basis for the discussion, when information from Acts is used here in the question of the author of Rev, to which observations of local cults are then added. As the further course of the text shows, the semantics, style and quality of the Greek will be added to this, whereby other texts of the collection, such as the Pauline Epistles, are also included.

After all this, Eusebius "fixes the legend" of John.[[65]](#footnote-65) He states and confirms Papias, according to which John worked in Asia and died in Ephesus. Furthermore, he explicitly confirms Irenaeus:

" 1. It is said that in this persecution the apostle and evangelist John, who was still alive, was

condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos in consequence of his testimony to the divine word. 2. Irenæus, in the fifth book of his work Against Heresies, where he discusses the number of the name of Antichrist which is given in the so-called Apocalypse of John, speaks as follows concerning him: 3. If it were necessary for his name to be proclaimed openly at the present time, it would have been declared by him who saw the revelation. For it was seen not long ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian.'"[[66]](#footnote-66)

John, apostle and evangelist, is also the author of the Book of Revelation and "it is said" (κατέχει λόγος) to have lived until the end of Domitian's reign (81-96 CE), although Eusebius is not quite sure of this. As for John's return from exile, he must also rely on the tradition of the elders.[[67]](#footnote-67)

As far as the discussion of authorship is concerned, Eusebius sticks to the context of the collection, which he now unapologetically calls the "writings of the New Testament", which he lists as follows and thus also clarifies the question of authorship for John:

"1. Since we are dealing with this subject it is proper to sum up the writings of the New Testament which have been already mentioned. First then must be put the holy quaternion of the Gospels; following them the Acts of the Apostles. 2. After this must be reckoned the epistles of Paul; next in order the extant former epistle of John, and likewise the epistle of Peter, must be maintained. After them is to be placed, if it really seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These then belong among the accepted writings. 3. Among the disputed writings, which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, also the second epistle of Peter, and those that are called the second and third of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name. 4. Among the rejected writings must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these the extant epistle of Barnabas, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles; and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books. 5. And among these some have placed also the Gospel according to the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews that have accepted Christ are especially delighted. And all these may be reckoned among the disputed books. 6. But we have nevertheless felt compelled to give a catalogue of these also, distinguishing those works which according to ecclesiastical tradition are true and genuine and commonly accepted, from those others which, although not canonical but disputed, are yet at the same time known to most ecclesiastical writers—we have felt compelled to give this catalogue in order that we might be able to know both these works and those that are cited by the heretics under the name of the apostles, including, for instance, such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or of any others besides them, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles, which no one belonging to the succession of ecclesiastical writers has deemed worthy of mention in his writings. 7. And further, the character of the style is at variance with apostolic usage, and both the thoughts and the purpose of the things that are related in them are so completely out of accord with true orthodoxy that they clearly show themselves to be the fictions of heretics. Wherefore they are not to be placed even among the rejected writings, but are all of them to be cast aside as absurd and impious."[[68]](#footnote-68)

Without going into all aspects of this lengthy quotation here, I will only emphasise that we are presented with the four sub-collections of the New Testament, first the Gospels, then Acts (though the Catholic Epistles are mentioned later), third the Pauline Epistles and, with some reluctance, fourth the Book of Revelation. The fact that Eusebius does not mention the Catholic Epistles together with Acts is probably due to the fact that, as with the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles, he does not consider the individual writings, but only the sub-collections, and only in relation to these does he speak of their order. On the other hand, he considered Rev to be controversial, so he only treats it in the next section together with other controversial texts. Here he sees 1 Jn like 1 Peter to be genuine, and also considers Rev to be acceptable, even though he mentions it again afterwards because it is rejected by some, while considered genuine by others. Even though Jas, Jude and 2 Peter, as well as the two other Epistles of John, are controversial, Eusebius adds that they are "recognized by many … whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name".

Here, too, Eusebius clearly has the Irenaean collection in mind, which, however, even in his time was not yet undisputed in all its elements. Nevertheless, Eusebius refers to the collection as such as a "canon", i.e. a guideline, a reference collection, which is evident from this systematic list and discussion by Eusebius. Its weight is especially evident in the clarity with which Eusebius sets it in relation to the rejected writings" in demarcating between "the writings of the New Testament" and others. This is a significant documentation of the status of John's writings by Eusebius.

On the other hand, if one looks at the further hagiography of John, one can hardly imagine the creativity of the representation of his person, his activity and his death more colourful. The discussion about the canonical affiliation of Johannine writings did not put a stop to this. On the contrary, one can refer to existing representations,[[69]](#footnote-69) even if at this point only the one testimony of John's prologue of the Latin Church is to be considered, as was the case earlier with Mk and Lk:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Prologue to the Gospel of John (α-version)[[70]](#footnote-70)** | **Prologue to the Gospel of John (β-version)** |
| The Apostle John, whom the Lord Jesus loved exceedingly, was the last of all to write this Gospel on behalf of the bishops of Asia Minor against Cerinthus and other heretics, but above all against the false doctrine of the Ebionites, which was rising at that time and which, in the falseness of their spiritual simplicity (that is what the name Ebionites means), claimed that Christ did not exist before the birth from Mary and was not born before all time from God the Father. For this reason, he also felt compelled to publicly announce Christ's divine birth from the Father. However, another reason is given for the writing of this Gospel: John, when he read the Gospel books of Matthew, Mark and Luke, had approved of their account of historical events and affirmed that they told the truth, but they had merely presented the historical events of a year in which John also suffered martyrdom after his incarceration. Therefore, he skipped the year whose events had been presented by the three, but rather recounted the events of the earlier time, before John was locked in the dungeon, as anyone who reads the four Gospel books carefully will be able to see for themselves. |  |
| This gospel, i.e. written after the revelation, was published by John while he was still alive and handed over to the congregations, as the Hierapolitan, called Papias, the beloved disciple of John, has reported in his explications (exotericis?), namely the last five books. Marcion, the heretic, however, wrote down a gospel/described the Gospel, while John dictated the true one. Since he [Marcion] has been disapproved by him [John], because he [John] noticed the Antitheses against him, John rebeuked him. He [Marcion], indeed, had brought to him writings or letters from the brethren who were in Pontus.” | The Gospel of John was published and distributed to the churches by John while he was still alive, as the Hieropolitan, called Papias,[[71]](#footnote-71) the beloved disciple of John, has reported in his explications (?), namely the last (?) five books. Marcion, the heretic, however, wrote down a Gospel/described the Gospel [as a false one], while John dictated the true one. Since he [Marcion] has been disapproved by him [John], because he [John] noticed the Antitheses against him, John rebuked him. He [Marcion], indeed, had brought to him writings or letters from the brethren[[72]](#footnote-72) who were in Pontus.[[73]](#footnote-73) |

As I have already noted with regard to the other prologues, it seems to me that in this case too the α-version of this text was written later than the β-version, even though there are arguments to the contrary. But the preceding profiling of John in the course of history shows that in the α-version many of the earlier elements became included, while the β-version is still free of some of these legendary features and presents a rather sober account that is fed by one source, namely Papias. The author of the α-version included the account of the β-version largely unchanged and appended it to his compilation of legendary elements he found elsewhere.

The source for these traditional and legendary elements seems to be primarily Eusebius, although sources beyond him from which he quotes have also been used. Irenaeus makes a start with his identification of the apostle John and the disciple whom Jesus loved, a passage which, as we have seen, comes from the beginning of Book III of his Adversus haereses, which Eusebius does not cite.[[74]](#footnote-74) The indication that the Gospel is directed against Cerinthus is also encountered in Irenaeus a little later in the same book.[[75]](#footnote-75) However, it is not the Ebionites but the Nicolaitans who are subsequently named there as further heretics. The Ebionites could possibly represent a prescription or confusion. However, the claim that "Christ did not exist before the birth from Mary and was not born before all time from God the Father" fits with Irenaeus's statement that the Ebionites believed Christ "to be the natural son of Joseph".[[76]](#footnote-76) That John wrote his Gospel "on behalf of the bishops of Asia Minor" we find implied in the Canon Muratori. What is said about the reading of the three Gospels is strongly reminiscent of the passage from the Acta Timothei quoted above (8-10). Since in John's prologue explicit reference is made to a source ("However, another reason is given ..."), it is probable that this prologue either refers to these Acta or is based on a common source. Also the somewhat awkward connection "this gospel, i.e. written after revelation" - which was not mentioned at all before - bears the trace of a later compilation, so that the following, as we have it in the β-version, seems to be older than the α-version. I do not need to go into the content of this piece again here, because we have already discussed it above.

The overview shows: even more than with the other three evangelists, with the exception of the few elements that Papias offers us, there seems to have been hardly any historical knowledge about John. This, however, did not prevent the human imagination, but rather spurred it on to give John an ever stronger historical profile, so that quite soon there were legends about John's person and actions. The multiple existence of different bearers of the name John, which invited various possible combinations, also invited this profiling. In any case, the distinction between history and imagination becomes blurred with each decade, and a blending of the different John figures continuous to take place.

### bb) John the Baptist, Jesus and Peter

As in Mk and Lk, John also appears in the first passages of Jn,[[77]](#footnote-77) but he is not called "Baptist" even though he baptises (Jn 1:24; 10:40-42). He is told that he rejects being Elijah (Jn 1:21).[[78]](#footnote-78) And he is "quite explicitly denied any miraculous activity" (Jn 10:41).[[79]](#footnote-79) In general, John is not granted any "titles of authority" (even though he is called "rabbi" in Jn 3:26), instead the evangelist emphasises his "divine mission" (Jn 1:6, 33; 3:28).[[80]](#footnote-80)

(1) The first passage, Jn 1:6-18, has already been dealt with above (pp. xxx) and especially its antithetical nature highlighted, culminating in the statement: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17). When John continues, "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known", then this actually excludes Abraham, Moses and all those who claim to have seen Theophanies, and of whom the Jewish scriptures speak, also the prophets and therefore also John (twice explicitly noted, Jn 1:31, 33: "I myself did not know him"[[81]](#footnote-81)).

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| **John 1:15-34** | **Lk 7:27; 16:16-17;**  **3:4-6, 15-16, 21-22** | **Mt 11:10; 17:10-13; 3:3, 11, 16-17** | **Mk 9:11-13; 1:2, 7-8, 10-11** | **\*Ev 7:27; 16:16-17** |
| 15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, |  |  |  |  |
| “This is the one I spoke about when I said, He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.” 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. | 7:27 “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.” | 11:10 “This is the one about whom it is written:  I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.” |  | 7:27 “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.” |
| 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. 19 Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” | 16:16 The law and the prophets were prophesied until John. Since then the kingdom of God is being proclaimed, and everyone forces his way in. 17 Heaven and earth pass away faster than even a single stroke of the law. |  |  | 16:16 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. |
| 21 They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” 22 Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” |  | 17:10 The disciples asked him, “Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first? 11 Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. 12 But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” 13 Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist. | 9:11 And they asked him, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?” 12 Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? 13 But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.” |  |
| 23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” | 3:4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. 5 Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.  6 And all people will see God’s salvation.’”  15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. | 3:3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” | 1:2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.” |  |
| 24 Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” |  |  |  |  |
| 26 “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.” 28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. | 16 John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. | 3:11 “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. | 1:7 And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” |  |
| 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” |  |  |  |  |
| 32 Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.” | 3:21 … 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.” | 3:16 At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” | 1:10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” |  |

As the comparison shows, the author of Jn cuts out various parts of his texts, revises them and puts them together again. What is most striking is that he does not begin with the baptismal scene like the Synoptic Gospels and then pack the Baptist's message into it, but that he begins with John's message. It is found in \*Ev as well as Mt and Lk and, since Jn uses this text in his opening scene, one would think that he is simply following Mt here. Even if this can be his starting point, however, the continuation (Jn 1:17-18) underlines that Jn rather reacts to \*Ev and is inspired by it. For it is this antithesis which, as has been shown, led the synoptic gospels to design their portrayal of the Baptist in order to soften the radical opposition of John and Jesus or to replace it with their salvation-historical relation.

At this point, as before, Jn shows itself to be more of a middle way between the Synoptics and \*Ev. For it takes over from the Synoptics that the "Baptist" refers to John as a forerunner of Jesus,[[82]](#footnote-82) consequently must have known about Jesus and serves him. But the evangelist develops the salvation-historical theme further by reversing the relation of forerunner and follower: "He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me" (Jn 1:15) - to ensure that the Baptist would not be valued more highly than Jesus, since in the ancient world the older something was the better and in higher regard it was taken. The same phenomenon of age and authority we have seen above in Lk’s redaction of the wineskin example. Instead of a reversal, one could also speak of a certain "simultaneity of the witness and the witnessed in their appearance", but in any case, there is a blatant contradiction to "the chronological breakdown of Mark's Gospel", which was followed by Mt and Lk.[[83]](#footnote-83) This is why we also find the emphasis in Jn that grace does not come from John, but grace upon grace comes from Jesus. In fact, in Jn the sermon on repentance is put into Jesus's mouth (Jn 8:33, 37-39, 56), which according to Mt 3:9 and Lk 3:8 had been preached by the Baptist.[[84]](#footnote-84) But John "is a witness", namely "the witness par excellence for Christ (Jn 1:5, 15, 33 etc.)", a "characterisation that is completely missing in the Synoptics".[[85]](#footnote-85)

However, as has already been pointed out, the author of Jn also takes up Marcion's objectionable central idea, according to which "the law and the prophets" reach as far as "John", but then "the kingdom of God is being proclaimed". Jn reformulates somewhat here, but in principle preserves the Marcionite antithesis when he contrasts the law given through Moses with the truth that came through Jesus Christ. For with this, the Jewish Torah does not offer the truth of Christ. Even more, the criticism of Marcion's Jewish prophecy is also taken up and confirmed in Jn, as already noted. As in \*Ev, Jesus is the only prophet who brings news of the Father, even though the evangelist later confesses that "Moses” wrote of Jesus “in the Law" and "the prophets" (Jn 1:45).

This dichotomy in the preoccupation with the Jewish tradition in Jn has been pointed out as a characteristic of this text:

"In none of the Gospels does Jesus appear so extensively as a teacher in the Temple as in Jn. In no other Gospel is the overall structure so strongly determined by the pilgrimages to Jerusalem and the Jewish festival calendar as in Jn. None of the evangelists mentions Moses as often as Jn. And yet none of the evangelists portrays Jesus in such a continuous confrontation with the Jews as does the fourth. Chapters 5-10 in particular are dominated by these conflicts. The passage 8:31-59, in which the 'Jews' who do not want to believe in Jesus are called 'children of Satan' (8:44), has become sadly famous."[[86]](#footnote-86)

To clarify the difference – in the sense of serving Jesus – John’s response to the priests and Levites of Jerusalem in Jn is that he is neither Christ nor Elijah nor even a prophet. Using the same passage from Isaiah (Isa 40:3) as the Synoptics, Jn refers to the John as "the voice of one calling in the wilderness" (Jn 1:23).

In response to the question of those who are now identified as belonging to “the Pharisees" as to why John then baptises, the hierarchy between John and Jesus is again marked with the words taken from the Synoptics: John baptises with water, he is not worthy to untie the straps of the sandals of him who stands in their midst.

The fact that John is not recognised by the Pharisees again reflects a motif from \*Ev of the strangeness of the Revelator, who, as the author of Jn also thinks later, has come "from heaven" (Jn 3:13). In order to underline the closeness of the Baptist and Jesus because of their common origin from heaven, Jn also does not offer an account of Jesus's baptism itself, but again chooses a passage from the Synoptics that contains the opening of heaven, the descent of the Spirit "as a dove", but Jn adds the confession that comes close to Marcion and his understanding of the Law and Jewish prophecy, including the Baptist: Not even John knew Jesus, the Lamb of God!

Jn connects John and Jesus directly through the God, the Father, that is, through the one who "sent" John to baptise. At the same time, the Gospel speaks not only of the "beloved Son", but of the "Son of God" to elevate Jesus above John.

(2) The increasing significance of the figure of the Baptist from Mk to Jn can also be seen in the first story of the calling of disciples in Jn, in which he again uses his Vorlagen Mt and Mk by continuing their narrative of the Baptist:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **John 1:35-42** | **Mt 4:18-22** | **Mark 1:16-20** |
| 35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” 37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” 39 “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. 40 Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter). | 18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. | 16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. |

While the two brothers, Simon (or Simon, called Peter) and Andrew are not brought into any relationship with John by either Mk or Mt, Jn includes them in his story of the scene of baptism. One of the two, Andrew, is a disciple of John – whether or not Peter is one, too, is not clear – along with another who is not named.[[87]](#footnote-87) John refers Andrew and the other disciple to Jesus, and both follow John's hint as well as Jesus's call. Andrew eventually meets Simon Peter and leads him to Jesus, who eventually makes him "Cephas".

This use and further development of John's story and the vocation story is remarkable in several respects. Here, however, I will only highlight the aspect that has not been seen before: The vocation story serves the author of Jn to change the Marcionite antithetics between the disciples of John and Jesus into a doctrinal genealogy. The contrasting teachers John and Jesus become not only related, John, the forerunner of Jesus, but John is now also the preparatory teacher who passes on his own disciples to the higher teacher, the Master (Rabbuni = "our Great/Master"), Jesus. It is the brother, Andrew, who recruites Peter, the one who is finally called by Jesus the "rock" of his own discipleship. This chain of disciples together with the elevation of Peter is best understood as a direct critique and correction of Marcion’s debasing and critique of Peter that runs through \*Ev and which Tertullian, as already noted, chalks up to Marcion.

(3) The extent to which Jn occupies an intermediate position between the Synoptics and \*Ev is also shown by the recasting of the two scenes of the fasting of John's disciples (\*Ev 5:33-38 par.) and the question of whether John's baptism is from heaven or from earth (\*Ev 20:18, 19 par.) in the following sequence of Jn 3:22-36; 4:1-3. Both scenes are taken more fundamentally as a question about the competition of John and Jesus:

"3:22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. 23 Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. 24 (This was before John was put in prison.) 25 An argument developed between some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. 26 They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.” 27 To this John replied, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. 28 You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ 29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. 30 He must become greater; I must become less.” 31 The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. 33 Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. 34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them. 4:1 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— 2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee." (John 3:22-34; 4:1-3)

The historicisation of the pericope with a precise indication of the place (Aenon near Salim) and the hint that there was "plenty of water" there are intended to increase the narrative plausibility. What is actually at stake here is the transformation of the theme, which does not concern purification, but the question of the relationship between John and Jesus. In question, then, is the teaching authority of the two and their resonance among the people, as indicated by the address "Rabbi" to John and evidenced by John's response. In \*Ev, Jesus is described as the one who came from above (\*Ev 3,1; cf. also Jn 8,23) and antithetically contrasted with the Baptist, the earthly one. But the author of Jn again undermines this antithesis by drawing John as a friend of Jesus who, though not from heaven himself, hears the voice of his friend who is from heaven, while Jesus is said not to baptise himself. The antithetical relationship between the one who must grow and the one who must become lesser is present and has become a hierarchical relationship of teachers in which the one who is above all bears witness to those who do not accept "his testimony" and engages further witnesses. This need brings Jesus and John closely together, so that John becomes a messenger, gifted by God's Spirit, who believes in the Son and has eternal life.

(4) The imprisonment of John is only briefly mentioned, without any motive being given, and the account of the beheading is also missing.

However, John adopts the drastic message of threat and judgement of the Synoptics, criticised by Marcion, as already briefly indicated. For he speaks undisguisedly of "God's wrath" towards those who disobey the Son. For Jn, God is the judge (cf. also Jn 8:16, 50), even though in a later passage he specifies this and transfers the judging from the Father to the Son (Jn 5:22-30). Following this talk of judgement, Jn again refers to John in Jn 5:30-40:

"30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. 31 “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true. 33 “You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. 34 Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. 35 John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. 36 “I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. 39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life." (John 5:30-40)

In his speech Jesus presents himself as the righteous judge - in contrast to Marcion who distinguishes god, the judge, and his Messiah, from the forgiving God of Jesus and the forgiving Jesus himself. To secure the truth of the righteous judge, Jn introduces the reference to the testimony of another - a common criterion of truth then as now (cf. also Jn 8:1 -18). John is mentioned first as such an external witness. Jesus outdoes him ("I have testimony weightier") with the works of the Father, indeed the Father himself bears witness to Jesus. But all witnesses here only serve to demonstrate that people either do not stay long with the truth of the witness, as in John's case, or do not accept the testimony at all, neither the works (cf. also Jn 10:25) that Jesus does, nor the confirmation by the Father. The same applies to "the Scriptures", which are not acknowledged, although they also "testify" to Jesus. This attitude towards the Jewish Scriptures also reflects John's intermediate position between accepting Marcion's criticism of these wrotomgs and bringing the Johannine message closer to the Synoptics. Jn’s solution is a third way, which, while also claiming these writings as witnesses for Jesus, like the one of John, it emphasises that the people do not accept Jesus.

(5) Another passage in Jn (Jn 6:60-70) is significant even though neither John's person nor name appear in it; this becomes apparent when the scene is understood against the background of \*Ev 7:17-28:

"60 On hearing it, many of his [Jesus’s] disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” 61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.” 66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” 70 Then Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!” 71 (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)." (John 6:60-71)

The offence that John took at Jesus, as reported in \*Ev 7:23 in the context of the questions who Jesus was, is now turned into a narrative of Jesus and his own disciple. This corresponds with Jn’s approach to align John’s disciples with those of Jesus, here, however, in the negative sense of exposing Jesus’s disciples to be no better than those of John and John himself. This time it is not Jesus’s deeds of power but his speeches that make disciples take offence at him, for some of them do not believe and "many of his disciples" withdraw from him after these words "and no longer followed him". The topic of taking offence recalls the scene with John’s disciples asking about the nature of Jesus. Consequently, whereas John’s and Jesus’s disciples were contrasted there in \*Ev, and despite Peter's confession ("You are the Christ", \*Ev 9:20 par.) the criticism concentrated on him and the Twelve, Jn moves John even closer to Jesus, just as the Gospel links the disciples of the two teachers, while shifting the blame on Judas.

(6) John appears one last time in Jn in the following brief account Jn 10:40-42:

"40 Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. There he stayed, 41 and many people came to him. They said, “Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true.” 42 And in that place many believed in Jesus." (John 10:40-42)

In all the mentions of John, the effort of Jn to bring John and Jesus closer together is noticeable, as also in this brief note here. After Jesus was to be persecuted and arrested by the Pharisees and by the "Jews" in general, he withdraws and remains "where John had been baptizing in the early days". It is not only about the place of John's encounter with Jesus, but more importantly the confession of the people that shows how much John's testimony proves to be true. Contrary to the previously expressed scepticism about the testimonial value of John, "many" do "come to faith" at this place.

If one wants to summarise the observations on the relationship of John to Jesus in Jn, the closeness and distance of the two stand out first. I have therefore repeatedly spoken of an intermediate position of Jn between the Synoptics on the one hand and \*Ev on the other. In principle, Jn shares the antithetics with Marcion, but he undermines and reverses the intended distinction between the prophecy of John and the prophet Jesus. Even though Jn is more critical of the Law of Moses, the Scriptures and the Jewish Prophets than the Synoptics, this Gospel still maintains that the prophets speak of Christ, even though neither those of that time nor those of Jesus’s time have seen and recognised him. In contrast to the Synoptics, John has lost the eschatological character and becomes Jesus's witness. His baptism is not one of repentance, but a "means of revelation".[[88]](#footnote-88) The fact that he baptised Jesus remains unmentioned and can "at most be read out between the lines with the help of the corresponding prior knowledge from the Synoptics".[[89]](#footnote-89)

Another characteristic of Jn is how it historically brings together the calling of the disciples, John's disciples and Jesus' disciples. Probably for this reason, the evangelist has omitted key passages where the antithesis between these two groups of disciples in \*Ev (such as the Lord's Prayer) are made clear, wherein he follows the tendency of Mk to suppress such narratives.

1. J. Beutler, Gesetz und Gebot in Evangelium und Briefen des Johannes (1998), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. T.a. Ilan, Lexicon of Jewish Names in late antiquity. 1. Palestine 330 BC - 200 CE (2002), 134-143. See also R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 343-408. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 343. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. M. Klinghardt, The Oldest Gospel and the Formation of the Canonical Gospels (2021), 751. However, I believe that Klinghardt still interprets this verse too much from the perspective of Mk and Lk. In my opinion, it is not a matter of Jesus setting the precondition that such exorcisms take place "in his name", but the other way round, that every exorcism is a work that takes place "in his name", whether it is designated and known as such or not. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cypr., Ep. 73,21. See on this M. Lamberigts, "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus"? The Past, Present and Future of a Contested Maxim (2013); C. Markschies, Extra ecclesiam nulla salus? Oder: Wer wird gerettet? (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Without the information provided by Irenaeus, see on this M.E. Boismard, Le chapitre xxi de saint Jean: Essai de critique littéraire (1947). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid. 484. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid. 494. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See, for example, Joh 21:23 (ἐξῆλθεν οὖν οὗτος ὁ λόγος εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς …), whereby ἐξῆλθεν cannot be found again in Jn carrying this meaning, instead, however, we read it in Lk 4:14 und 7:17; Boismard provides further examples, ibid. 500. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. R.A. Culpepper, John, the son of Zebedee. The life of a legend (1994), 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See for a similar phenomenon in the so-called inscription of Abercius, M. Vinzent, Writing the history of early Christianity: From reception to retrospection (2019), 126-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 345. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See ibid. 352. B.d. Solages, Jean, fils de Zébédée et l’énigme du « disciple que Jésus aimait. » (1972). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. E. Evanson, The dissonance of the four generally received evangelists, and the evidence of their respective authenticity examined By Edward Evanson, A.M (1792); K.G. Bretschneider, Probabilia de Evangelii et epistolarum Joannis apostoli, indole et origine (1820); J. Moffat, Ninety Years After: A Survey of Bretschneider's "Probabilia" in the Light of Subsequent Johannine Criticism (1913); A.J. Köstenberger, Early Doubts of the Apostolic Authorship of the Fourth Gospel in the History of Modern Biblical Criticism (2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Raymond E. Brown and Rudolf Schnackenburg, who both only later in their research moved away from this equation, on these see R.A. Culpepper, John, the son of Zebedee. The life of a legend (1994), 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See p. xxx. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. III 39,5. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Rev. 20:4-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Just., Dial. 81,4. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Just., Dial. 1-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Iren., Adv. haer. III 1,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 366-367. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Iren., Adv. haer. II 22,5. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Iren., Adv. haer. III 11,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Iren., Adv. haer. III 11,2. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See also Iren., Adv. haer. III 3,4. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Iren., Adv. haer. V 26,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Iren., Adv. haer. III 16,8. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. III 31,3. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Acts 4:5-6: “5 The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest’s family.” [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See R. Eisler, The Enigma of the Fourth Gospel. Its Author and its Writer (1938), 39-46; H. Delff, Das vierte Evangelium. Ein authentischer Bericht über Jesus von Nazareth (1890); R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Act. Ioh. 115 (even though there are different versions to the ending of these Acts, which speak of a disappearance of John’s corps); I am grateful to Jan N. Bremmer for drawing my attention to these Acts. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Can. Mur. 10-22: “[10] quarti euangeliorum iohannis ex decipolis [11] cohortantibus condescipulis et eps suis dixit [12] conieiunate mihi. odie triduo [13] et quid cuique fuerit reuelatum alterutrum nobis ennarremus [14] eadem nocte reuelatum andreae ex apostolis ut recogniscentibus cuntis iohannis suo nomine cuncta discriberet [15] et ideo licit uaria sinculis euangeliorum libris principia doceantur [16] nihil tamen differt credentium fidei [17] cum uno ac principali spu declarate sint in omnibus omnia [18] de natiuitate de passione de resurrectione de conuersatione cum decipulis suis [19] ac de gemino eius aduentu primo in humilitate dispectus quod fotu secundum potestate regali preclarum quod foturum est. [20] quid ergo mirum si iohannes tam constanter sincula etia in epistulis suis proferam dicens in semeipsu [21] quae uidimus oculis nostris et auribus audiuimus et manus nostrae palpauerunt haec scripsimus uobis [22] sic enim non solum uisurem sed & auditorem sed & scriptore omnium mirabiliu dni per ordinem profetetur” (trans. Theron, revised); text in D.J. Theron, Evidence of tradition. Selected source material for the study of the history of the early church. Introduction and canon of the New Testament (1957), 106-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. 1 John 1:1-3: “1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Tert., De praescr. 22,5-6 (trans. here and later, with revisions: Bintley). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See M. Vinzent, Tertullian's Preface to Marcion's Gospel (2016). And see before, p. xxx. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Tert., De praescr. 36,1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See W. Kinzig, Καινὴ Διαϑήκη: The Title of the New Testament in the Second and Third Centuries (1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. So Q.S.F. Tertullianus, F.o. Refoulé and P.C.d. Labriolle, Traité de la prescription contre les hérétiques (1957), 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. D.L. Eastman (trans.), The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts of Peter and Paul (2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. On the presumably oldest witness to a martyrdom of Peter in Rome, the Apocalypse of Peter (whether it should be dated to the first half of the second century based on the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, however, still seems questionable to me), W. Grünstäudl, Ein apokryphes Petrusbild im Neuen Testament. Zur Konstruktion apostolischere Autorität in OffbPetr und 2 Petr (2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. On the church and John’s martyrdom, see S.L.d. Blaauw, Church Beyond Canon. Notes on the Martyrium of John the Evangelist in Rome and the Basilica of San Giovanni a Porta Latina (2021). See also the older study S.L.d. Blaauw, De ziener van Patmos voor de Latijnse Poort: De universaliteit van de kerk van Rome en de geschiedenis van een kerkgebouw (Valedictory

    lecture Radboud Universiteit) (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. See H.G. Wehrens, Rom. Die christlichen Sakralbauten vom 4. bis zum 9. Jahrhundert: Ein Vademecum (2017), 277-281; H. Brandenburg and A. Vescovo, Die frühchristlichen Kirchen in Rom vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert; der Beginn der abendländischen Kirchenbaukunst (2013), 238; R. Krautheimer, S. Corbett, W. Frankl and A.K. Frazer, Corpus basilicarum christianarum Romae (IV - IX sec.) = Le basiliche paleocristiane di Roma = The early Christian basilicas of Rome : (IV - IX cent.) 1.304-319; R. Krautheimer, An Oriental basilica in Rome: S. Giovanni a Porta Latina (1936). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. S.L.d. Blaauw, Church Beyond Canon. Notes on the Martyrium of John the Evangelist in Rome and the Basilica of San Giovanni a Porta Latina (2021), 248. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. L. Duchesne, Origines du culte chrétien. Étude sur la liturgie latine avant Charlemagne (1908), 298. S.L.d. Blaauw quotes the martyrology of Ado of Vienne from the 9th c., that reports about the 6th May of John the apostle and the persecution of Domitian that John was brought from Ephesus to Rome, where he was condemned and put into a barrel of hot oil in front of the Porta Latina, the reason for building the church to his memory at that place: „Natale sancti Iohannis apostoli ante portam Latinam Romae, qui ab Epheso, iussu Domitiani fratris Titi, secunda persecutione, quam ipse post Neronem exercuit, ad urbem Romam perductus, praesente Senatu, ante portam Latinam, in ferventis olei dolio missus est, agente hoc impio principe, qui christianorum infestissimus persecutor erat. Sed beatus apostolus tam immunis a poena inde exiit, quam a corruptione carnis fuerat immunis. Tunc in Pathmum insulam relegatur exsilio, ubi Apocalypsim vidit. Ad commendandum ergo ipsius dignam memoriam, et pro fide apostolicam constantiam, christiani ecclesiam venerationem eius gestantem, in supradicto loco, ante portam Latinam, praeclaro et miro opere condiderunt, ubi festivum concursum II. Non. Maii usque hodie faciunt“, Martyrologium Adonis II Non. Mai, J. Dubois and G. Renaud, Eds., Le martyrologe d'Adon: ses deux familles, ses trois recensions. Texte et commentaire (1984), 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. S.L.d. Blaauw, Church Beyond Canon. Notes on the Martyrium of John the Evangelist in Rome and the Basilica of San Giovanni a Porta Latina (2021), 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ibid. See further on collective memory A. Erll, Medium des kollektiven Gedächtnisses: Ein (erinnerungs-)kulturwissenschaftlicher Kompaktbegriff (2004), 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Clem. Alex., Quis div. 42 = Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. III 23,6-19, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid. III 23,19. See E. Junod, Un écho d’une controverse autour de la pénitence: l’histoire de l’apôtre Jean et du chef des brigands chez Clément d’Alexandrie (Quis dives salvetur 52,1-15) (1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. See R.M. Hübner, Acta Iohannis, Kap. 94-102. 109 - gnostisch oder monarchianisch? Die Nachwirkungen der paradoxen Antithesen des Noët von Smyrna (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. E.r. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli, Acta Iohannis 2 Textus alii - commentarius - indices (1983), 694-700; P.J. Lalleman, The relation between the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Peter* (1998), 168; H.-J. Klauck, Apokryphe Apostelakten. Eine Einführung (2005), 32; J.N. Bremmer, Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity. Collected Essays I (2017), 111-114. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. K. Schäferdiek, Herkunft und Interesse der alten Johannesakten (1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. O. Zwierlein, Die Datierung der Acta Iohannis und der Papyrus Kellis Gr. Fragm A I (2010), 65-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. E.r. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli, Acta Iohannis 1 Praefatio - textus / Eric Junod et Jean-Daniel Kaestli (1983), 184-185. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 377. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid. 378. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. So in Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. VI 25,9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. In Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. VII 25,1-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 382. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. In Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. VII 25,12-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 384. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. III 18,1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. See Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. III 20,9. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Euseb. Caes., Hist. eccl. III 25,1-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. R.g. Burnet, Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien (2014), 386-408; R.A. Culpepper, John, the son of Zebedee. The life of a legend (1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. The critical edition of both versions can be found in O. Zwierlein, Die antihäretischen Evangelienprologe und die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments (2015). The translation of the β-version follows my own critical edition M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels (2014). Comments on both versions have already been made above (pp. xxx) and will not be repeated here. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. That "episcopus" inserted here in the α-tradition is supposed to be an indication of the greater reliability of this manuscript tradition is not clear to me. Rather, one would expect that Papias, who was not designated as a bishop by Irenaeus but stylised as such by Eusebius, would also be marked as a bishop in this text by later witnesses in dependence on Eusebius, *pace* O. Zwierlein, Die antihäretischen Evangelienprologe und die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments (2015), 23. Jan N. Bremmer agrees with my observation (noted by him in the draft of the present book). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Again, the α-tradition with the addition "erant fideles in Christo Iesu Domino nostro" seems to me to be secondary. Because of these two secondary additions, it also seems to me that the change in sentence structure from "descripsit vero evangelium dictante Iohanne recte verum Marcion haereticus .. abiectus est a lohanne" to the text in the α-tradition "qui hoc evangelium lohanne sibi dictante conscripsit verum Marcion haereticus ... proiectus est [a lohanne]” is a secondary editorial change to stamp Marcion alone as a condemned man. Consequently, I also consider the biographical introduction to John, which parallels the other prologues of Luke and Mark, to be just as secondary as this one. Even in these two versions, the tendency of the α-tradition is to extend the shorter account of the β-tradition in an anti-Marcion way. In addition, the passage under discussion here is marked as an addition in the α-tradition (hoc igitur ...), see also above in the main text and below on John. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. For the Latin text with new edition, see M. Vinzent, Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels (2014). A new edition with different punctuation and translation, adding other variants, see O. Zwierlein, Die antihäretischen Evangelienprologe und die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments (2015), 7. 23-30. See also Papias, frg. 21 Hübner. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Iren., Adv. haer. III 1,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Iren., Adv. haer. III 11,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Iren., Adv. haer. III 21,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. See on John and Jesus’s baptism with further literature C.K. Rothschild, John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel (2018). Already in the first note the author highlights that the title “Baptist” in the title of her contribution is only retained, in order not to mistake this John for another one, even though in the Gospel of John, the title “Baptist” is missing. Three different traditions of the Baptist is outlined by A. Ottillinger, Vorläufer, Vorbild oder Zeuge? Zum Wandel des Täuferbildes im Johannesevangelium (1991), 262-295. On the various attempts to discover a source behind the narration on the Baptist, see ibid. 31-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. J.P. Meier, John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel (1980), 385. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. A. Ottillinger, Vorläufer, Vorbild oder Zeuge? Zum Wandel des Täuferbildes im Johannesevangelium (1991), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid. 23.25. So also C.K. Rothschild, John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel (2018), 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See C.K. Rothschild, John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel (2018), 27-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. J. Ernst, Johannes der Täufer. Interpretation - Geschichte - Wirkungsgeschichte (1989), 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. U. Busse, Das Eröffnungszeugnis Joh 1,19-34 - Erzählstrategie und -ziel (1998), 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. A. Ottillinger, Vorläufer, Vorbild oder Zeuge? Zum Wandel des Täuferbildes im Johannesevangelium (1991), 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ibid. 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. J. Beutler, Gesetz und Gebot in Evangelium und Briefen des Johannes (1998), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. It is inexplicable to me how, in view of Jn 1:35, it can be claimed that Jn 1:25 does not speak of John's disciples, when one must read this verse in context, *pace* C.K. Rothschild, John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. J.P. Meier, John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel (1980), 385. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. A. Ottillinger, Vorläufer, Vorbild oder Zeuge? Zum Wandel des Täuferbildes im Johannesevangelium (1991), 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)