

The Reception of “Mark” in the 1st and 2nd Centuries C. E. and its Significance for Genre Studies

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The Markan Gospel was at its literary height early on. As far as we can see “Mark”¹ was immediately spread, read, and used, eventually by John, in any case by Matthew and Luke, who are its earliest readers and transmitters. Thus, we can guess that the Markan Gospel was successfully circulated already between 70–90 C. E. And according to Eusebius,² Mark’s Gospel also received an early attribution of apostolic authorization: it was Papias of Hierapolis who called Mark the interpreter of Peter (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15)³ and thus, in the first half of the second century, associated Mark with apostolic traditions.⁴

Nevertheless, we also get the impression that Mark’s reception-history did not continue – at least, not consistently – during the second century. Such an impression is based on various facts and observations which we will look at now. It will become evident here that in the second century C. E. we basically have to deal with phenomena like textual inconsistency and literary diversity of Mark. These observations will force us to re-define what we actually mean when investigating Mark’s early reception-history (s. 1.). In order to understand these phenomena more comprehensively and to discuss Mark’s literary ‘success’ we will then have to enter the field of *genre studies* and literary history (s. 2.).

1. Defining and Re-defining “Mark”

We start with the recognition that there is no strong material evidence for the early reception of Mark on the level of manuscript-transmission.⁵ While the first

¹ When we talk about the “Markan Gospel” we basically mean here and later on the canonical gospel-writing as we find it in Nestle-Aland^{27/28} (pp. 88–147/102–76).

² For further patristic references to Mark, the Evangelist, cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.8.3; 2.15; 3.24.7; 5.14.6; 6.25.4f.

³ Cf. W. C. van Unnik, “Zur Papias-Notiz über Markus,” *ZNW* 54 (1963): 276–7.

⁴ The reception of the Markan Gospel is partly affiliated with the reception of the figure of John Mark also (cf. 1 Pet 5:14) who, especially in relation to Barnabas (Acts 12:25; 15:36 ff.), plays an important role up to the end of the fifth century – e.g. as the author of the *Acts of Barnabas* (2.2.292–302). Cf. F. R. Prostmeier, “Barnabas-Literatur,” in *LACL* (ed. S. Döpp and W. Geerlings; 3rd ed.; Freiburg etc.: Herder, 2002), 107–8.

⁵ For the (early) reception history of the Markan Gospel, cf., recently, B. D. Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice: The Reception of the Gospel of Mark* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), esp. 35–62.

and only *papyrus*-manuscript documenting Mark is P⁴⁵ (third century),⁶ we do have much more and even older *papyri* for Matthew. These document the rich material evidence for the Matthean Gospel during the 2nd and 3rd centuries.⁷ It is only in the important *codices* of the fourth and fifth century, like *Sinaiticus* (Ⲙ 01), *Vaticanus* (B 03), *Alexandrinus* (A 02) and *Bezae Cantabrigiensis* (D 05), that the broad material evidence for the Markan Gospel is available to us. Interestingly, here Mark indeed is delivered in its entirety, i.e. in its full length. It seems hardly accidental⁸ that the Gospel of Matthew is much better witnessed than Mark in the second and third centuries. This might rather tell us something about the specific character and the early reception-history of the Markan Gospel also. Consequently, Dieter Lührmann started his commentary on Mark by problematizing the slim textual basis which we have for Mark and its consequences for Markan exegesis.⁹ And Harry Gamble has pointed to the fact that there is indeed a relationship between material evidence, reception-history, and the gain of textual consistency: “In the absence of controlled transmission, an ancient text acquired stability not in proportion to the extent of authority lodged in it, but by the broad circulation of enough copies to establish and sustain a consistent, self-reinforcing textual tradition.”¹⁰ But this means, in other words, that if we can prove in Mark’s case that there is textual inconsistency in the second century, then the weak material evidence can have significance for Mark’s early reception-history also. And, in fact, there are different types of indications for questioning Mark’s early textual consistency. By considering these indications we will, however, get beyond Gamble in that we will detect how textual inconsistency and literary diversity are interrelated.

(a) The Markan ending in 16:8 is still under dispute. Even if we follow Kurt Aland and others in assuming that the original ending of Mark is in place in 16:8¹¹ – as documented, e.g., in *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* – and that this ending

⁶ Some parts of Mark 1 and 16:9 are documented in Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.10.6); cf. also E.-M. Becker, “Dating Mark and Matthew as Ancient Literature,” in *Mark and Matthew I, Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First Century Settings* (ed. E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 123–43, 127f., esp. n. 24.

⁷ These *papyri* date from ca. 200, the second/third century (P^{64.77}), or the third century (P^{1.37, 45, 53, 70}).

⁸ Of course, we cannot be sure whether the history of the textual transmission of Mark is to a large degree contingent: it could be that the number of early *papyri*-manuscripts containing Matthew is simply higher because of chance. On the other hand, even if we can neither exclude factors like coincidence nor be certain about whether all early remaining manuscripts of Mark have as yet been found, we are also working with comparative indicators like probabilities, and parameters like average.

⁹ Cf. D. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 1–3. In this context, he also points to the various concrete implications for exegesis: he reflects, for instance, on the consequences for textual criticism of Markan texts: “Die Textkritik hat grundsätzlich derjenigen Lesart den Vorzug zu geben, die als nicht von Parallelversionen der anderen Evangelien beeinflusst zu erweisen ist” (2).

¹⁰ H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995), 126.

¹¹ Cf. the resumé in E.-M. Becker, *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 238–9.

is intentional, we cannot, however, avoid admitting that several additions to the text, such as the Freer-Logion in Codex W (fourth/fifth century C. E.), the shorter ending, and the longer ending, are obviously meant as later attempts to complete the Markan Gospel literarily.¹² Such supplementations¹³ had possibly been put into the manuscripts already during the second century.¹⁴ In other words, in comparison to Matt 28:9–20, Luke 24:13–53, and John 20:11–21:25, the original ending of

¹² For an overview, cf., e.g., J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus: 2. Teilband Mk 8,27–16,20* (5th ed.; Zürich/Düsseldorf: Benziger Verlag, 1999), 350–8, or A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 802–18.

¹³ Dibelius called them disconcertingly 'wilde Überlieferungen,' what presupposes a firm and distinct type of transmission: M. Dibelius, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Herausgegeben v. F. Hahn* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1975), 47 ff. He meant Jesus-traditions that were probably orally delivered, either before being affiliated to already existing texts (cf., e.g., John 7:53–8:11) or before being transformed into a written text individually (cf., e.g., *Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840*). I refer here and later to Dibelius because already in 1926 he approached the apocryphal gospels programmatically by means of a *literary history*. Concerning the remains of Papyri of Apocryphal materials in general, cf. D. G. Martinez, "The Papyri and Early Christianity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (ed. R. S. Bagnall; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 590–622, 598 f. Concerning the 'Oxyrhynchus Scholars' in particular: W. A. Johnson, "The Ancient Book," in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, 256–81, 270–7. Parts of the secondary ending of the Markan Gospel, e.g. the *Freer Logion*, might also fit to that category of 'wilde Überlieferungen.' More carefully, J. Frey, "Zu Text und Sinn des Freer-Logion," *ZNW* 93 (2002): 13–34: "Das Freer-Logion ist ein ... singulärer, vielleicht von einem einzelnen Schreiber in die Textüberlieferung eingetragener Einschub in den langen Markus-Schluß" (34). For the theological tendencies of the so-called Freer-Logion, cf. J. Dochhorn, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie: Der eschatologische Teufelsfall in Apc Joh 12 und seine Bedeutung für das Verständnis der Johannesoffenbarung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 284–93. For textual criticism and Codex W, cf. T. R. Shepherd, "Narrative Analysis as a Text Critical Tool: Mark 16 in Codex W as a Test Case," *JSNT* 32 (2009): 77–98. Today, we might thus better speak of *Einzelüberlieferungen* (individual traditions), where we subsume the so-called *agrapha* as well as separately preserved Jesus-traditions.

¹⁴ The following datings are suggested: the general *terminus ad quem* for the Freer-Logion is Jerome (*Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* 2.15); nevertheless, scholars tend to think that it had already been formed during the second century: J. Jeremias, "Freer-Logion," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung* (6th ed.; ed. W. Schneemelcher; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1990), 204–5, says: "das Stück erweist sich "als altertümlich" (204). Differently, P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 681 f., who discusses the role of the Freer-Logion within the group of texts which are called 'Dialogues of the risen Christ with his disciples,' and does not think that it represents the oldest version of that kind of literature. In accordance to Kurt Aland ("Der Schluß des Markusevangeliums," in idem, *Neutestamentliche Entwürfe* [München: Kaiser, 1979], 246–83) some scholars have tended to date the shorter as well as the longer ending to the second century C. E. (cf. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, 268). In the case of the longer ending the *terminus ad quem* is Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.10.5 f.) and even Justin (1 *Apol.* 45); cf. J. Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009), 1088, and Gnllka, *Evangelium*, 354. J. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 157 ff. and 473 ff. even tries to show that the longer ending was composed by an individual author between the first half and the midst of the second century C. E. The *terminus ad quem* for the shorter ending would be the longer ending itself, because otherwise the shorter ending would have been suppressed and would not have been transmitted further on; cf. Gnllka, *Evangelium*, 351.

Mark in 16:8, which does not refer to any epiphany of the risen Jesus, must have been understood as insufficient and incomplete. And yet some manuscripts like Sinaiticus and Vaticanus do prove that Mark 16:8 had in some cases been understood as a reasonable ending. Thus, additional endings were optionally appended to it. Interestingly, textual inconsistency and a multiplication of literary versions go hand in hand: as a consequence of defining Mark's ending, there was thus not only an increase of textual inconsistency but there was also multiplication of various literary versions of "Mark."

There is additional evidence for assuming that literary diversity and textual fluidity are interconnected. (b) If we should hold that Clement of Alexandria's reference to a "Secret Gospel of Mark" is authentic,¹⁵ we do not only get insight into a specific literary adaption of Mark in the second half of the second century in Alexandria,¹⁶ but rather also into continuing 'heretical' attempts of the so-called Carpocratians (cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.25.1–6) to utilize the Markan Gospel by yet further enlarging and extending it.¹⁷ In this letter, Clement even tells the story of at least three different versions of the Markan Gospel that were known to him comprehensively: he mentions first "an account of the Lord's doings" (ἀνέγραψε τὰς πράξεις τοῦ κυρίου), that was composed by Mark in Rome; secondly, he speaks of "a more spiritual Gospel" (συνέταξε πνευματικώτερον εὐαγγέλιον), i.e. the "secret Gospel" (τὸ μυστικὸς εὐαγγέλιον) that was composed by Mark after his coming to Alexandria; and thirdly, he refers to a "polluted" (καὶ ἐμίανε) version of this gospel-account, arranged by a certain Carpocrates.¹⁸ Finally, Clement tries to defend the "secret Gospel"-version against the Carpocratian interpretation. We will not discuss here Clement's intentions with authorizing the "Secret Gospel" of Mark.¹⁹ It is rather more interesting to see how natural it obviously was up to the end of the second century to think of diverse literary versions of *one* gospel-writing such as Mark while its textual character was not yet fully consistent.

¹⁵ Cf. M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), esp. 448–52.

¹⁶ For the beginnings of Christian theology and literature in Alexandria, cf., in general, A. Fürst, *Christentum als Intellektuellen-Religion: Die Anfänge des Christentums in Alexandria* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2007); M. Clauss, *Alexandria: Eine antike Weltstadt* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004), esp. 202–12.

¹⁷ E. Rau, "Zwischen Gemeindechristentum und christlicher Gnosis: Das geheime Markus-evangelium und das Geheimnis des Reiches Gottes," *NTS* 51 (2005): 482–504; idem, "Das Geheimnis des Reiches Gottes: Die esoterische Rezeption der Lehre Jesu im geheimen Markus-evangelium," in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen: Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen* (ed. J. Frey and J. Schröter; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 187–222.

¹⁸ Folio 1, recto, line 16 until folio 1, verso, line 10. Text and translation in Smith, *Clement*, 446 f. and 448–50.

¹⁹ For the whole spectrum of discussion, cf., e.g., P. Jeffery, *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled: Imagined Rituals of Sex, Death, and Madness in a Biblical Forgery* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2007); S. G. Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel: Rethinking Morton Smith's Controversial Discovery* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007).

What we see so far is that there obviously was an interdependency of a limited amount of copies available and textual inconsistency as well as the development of diverse literary outlines. The processes of transmitting differing literary versions of the Markan gospel-account during the second century C. E. obviously were dynamic for various reasons: these could be either matters of literary completion and creativeness or matters of specific, viz. 'heretical,' teaching which finally led to the production of a variety of Markan gospel-versions, in fact possibly without producing a bulk of manuscript-copies. As I will argue in this contribution, the reason for these processes could point back already to the last third of the first century C. E.: the Matthean Gospel, in fact, as an inclusion or 'incorporation' of Mark, was an early literary re-shaping of Mark's gospel-outline. Literary diversity was initiated here. The argument might then support the insight that already at that time literary variety and textual inconsistency go hand in hand.

(c) Here, we can take into account that there were probably various textual versions of Mark existent around, and possibly before, Matthew's time. Such an assumption is based on the observation of the so-called *minor and major agreements* that exist between Matthew and Luke against "Mark" while using him: accordingly, some scholars have made a proposal on grounds of *Literarkritik* that there was either a 'Deutero-Mark' or a 'Proto-Mark' that was used by Matthew and Luke and that differs significantly from the Markan version that is known to us.²⁰ We cannot discuss those hypotheses in detail here. More importantly, we need to start from various observations on the fact that the "Markan Gospel" as a textual entity is neither unchanging nor stable. It is obvious that the nature of the gospel-writing as a *literary* concept is such that it provokes and shapes further literary plurality and diversity from the very beginning. We are thus dealing here with *generic* questions. By saying this we are close to Werner H. Kelber's insights regarding the differences between the "Oral and the Written Gospel" (1983).²¹ This means that Mark's reception history can best be approached from the point of view of literary-history.

(d) When considering the literary dynamics that are implied in the written gospel-concept, we should go back to Papias²² and read more carefully what his witness on the Markan Gospel actually means: Papias' valuation of Mark as a literary

²⁰ Cf. again the resumé in Becker, *Markus-Evangelium*, 29 f.

²¹ Cf. W. H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). Here Kelber has emphasized the shift to an alternative mode of conceptualizing gospel-traditions as it was initiated by the shape of a 'written gospel.' The concept of a 'written gospel' was soon imitated, modified, and multiplied: "Nowhere in early Christianity is it more obvious than in the gospel of Mark that preservation of oral tradition is not a primary function of writing ... Both in form and content the written gospel constitutes a radical alternative to the oral gospel ... Mark's massively reflexive reconstruction of Jesus' past is his form of demythologizing the orally perceived presence of Jesus" (207 and 210).

²² However, we should keep in mind also that Papias as a patristic author was controversial (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.11–13; Irenaeus, *Haer* 5.33.4): Cf. E. Schulz-Flügel, "Papias von Hierapolis," in *LACL*, 545–6.

concept needs to be seen against the background that he prioritizes oral traditions over written texts (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.4). From here, we can more particularly understand what he had in mind when stating that there is a lack of *τάξις* in Mark which results from the deficit of not being affiliated directly to the group of Jesus-disciples (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15). It seems that Papias himself rather maintains a critical attitude towards Mark's gospel-concept than a strong support for it. In any case, he documents certain difficulties and insufficiencies regarding the early reception of Mark in the first half of the second century C. E. His note on a literary deficiency might indeed to some degree be seen parallel to the receding of Mark in the textual tradition.²³ For obvious reasons of textual stability, Papias has privileged processes of oral transmission. It is not accidental then that Justin Martyr around the middle of the second century C. E. was referring to the gospel's literacy (= 'Literarizität')²⁴ as well as to its plural and manifold appearances (1 *Apol.* 66; cf. *Dial.* 10.2; 100.1).²⁵ Literacy and literary plurality again seem to be two sides of the same coin. This is why literacy generates canonization, i.e. the formal definition of textual entities as well as collections of texts.²⁶

So, how should we envisage best this interrelation of literacy, literary multiplicity, textual inconsistency, and reception-history? I will suggest this to be a literary and/or generic phenomenon first of all. Accordingly, we should approach these potential relationships on the basis of *literary-history*. In this contribution I will thus raise the question: how can we best reconstruct the early reception of Mark up to the pre-canonical collection of the 'Four Gospels' (*Vierevangelienkanon*), including Mark, is shaped between ca. 170 and 180 C. E.,²⁷ as Irenaeus documents (*Haer.* 3.1.1.) – a process which possibly developed in controversy with Marcionite 'heresy'²⁸? So far, I have referred to the variety of textual versions of Mark that had been shaped during the second century and that are out of proportion to the number of manuscript-copies. Such a variety of texts points to the fact that during this period of time "Christian scriptural texts were still relatively fluid and subject

²³ In difference to this, Eusebius, ca. 200 years later than Papias, is mostly interested in depicting a strong apostolic authority for the four gospel-writings, including Mark, and hereby reflects how the gospel-writings are received in the early fourth century.

²⁴ 'Literature' and 'literacy' can to a certain degree be understood synonymously; cf. S. Greenblatt, *Was ist Literaturgeschichte? Mit einem Kommentar von C. Belsey. Aus dem Englischen von R. Kaiser/B. Neumann* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000), 19 with reference to R. Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 151.

²⁵ Cf. also Marcion, who names his redaction of Luke as 'gospel'; e.g., Tertullian, *Marc* 4.2.

²⁶ Cf. E.-M. Becker, "Antike Textsammlungen in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion: Eine Darstellung aus neutestamentlicher Sicht," in *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion: Kanonisierungsprozesse religiöser Texte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart – Ein Handbuch* (ed. E.-M. Becker/Š. Scholz; Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 3–31.

²⁷ Cf. T. K. Heckel, *Vom Evangelium des Markus zum viergestaltigen Evangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 30. Heckel distinguishes between a "Vierevangelienammlung," that was shaped first, and a "Vierevangelienkanon" – only regarding the latter can a positive and a negative concept of canon be used.

²⁸ Cf., e.g., H. Freiherr von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1968/Nachdr. 2003), 201–2.

to revision,²⁹ and that textual inconsistency and literary diversity are interrelated. By being aware of the multiplicity of textual versions, we thus get in touch with the literary dynamics by which the Markan Gospel as a narrative concept was received and transmitted: from early on "Mark" was obviously less important as a stabile text meeting certain social needs than as a literary "source" (cf. Luke) or *Vorlage* (cf. Matthew)³⁰ – in any case, as a *literary concept* that could be continued as well as improved. From here we can better understand how various textual as well as literary versions or re-writings of "Mark" came into being.³¹ Considering the number of different literary versions of Mark and the simultaneous rise of apocryphal gospel-writings in the second century C. E. we should then conclude that literacy during this period of time widely stimulated creativity and multiplicity in the field of narrative prose.³²

In what follows, I will try to explain by means of *genre studies* (s. 2.) how the first ca. 100 years of Mark's reception history might have looked and what we can deduce from this for the early history of Christian literature: it will become evident then that it was the Matthean attempt of incorporating Mark, rather than suppressing Mark (s. 2.1.), that initiated further literary creativeness by which other gospel writings – the so-called "apocryphal gospels" – appeared on the scene (s. 2.2.). In the end, we can understand the gospel-writing best as a literary concept that implies the shape of literary plurality in early Christian narrative literature (s. 3.). Accordingly, the Markan Gospel could also hereby assert its position in the long run.

2. Genre Studies (Gattungsgeschichte)

Let us begin with some remarks on definition. It is *genre studies* (*Gattungsgeschichte*)³³ that – as a field of *literary history* (*Literaturgeschichte*)³⁴ – can give us relevant

²⁹ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 125 f.

³⁰ We need to take into account here and later that Matthew and Luke vary technically, i.e. heuristically in their usage of Mark: while Luke considers Mark to be a historical source in that it is a preliminary narrative attempt of which he can make use, Matthew obviously understands Mark as a *Vorlage* in that he incorporates most of Mark in a material sense.

³¹ In this regard we have to discuss critically Martin Dibelius' idea concerning early Christian literary history: he thought that "literaricity leads to deadness" ("Buchwerdung bedeutet hier ... Erstarrung des Lebendigen"); Dibelius, *Geschichte*, 48.

³² Orality rather tends to oblige memorization; cf., e.g., A. Kirk and T. Thatcher, eds., *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005). Cf. E.-M. Becker, "Literarisierung und Kanonisierung im frühen Christentum: Einführende Überlegungen zur Entstehung und Bedeutung des neutestamentlichen Kanons," in *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion*, 389–97.

³³ Terminology and methodology can rarely be translated into other languages and transferred to corresponding academic spheres with satisfaction: there hardly exists an equivalent term to *Gattungsgeschichte* in the Anglo-American exegesis (for *Gattungsgeschichte*, cf., e.g., K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," in ANRW II.25.2 [1984]: 1031–1432 and 1831–85; A. Wagner et al., "Gattung[en]," in *Lexikon der Bibelhermeneutik: Begriffe – Metho-*

insights into how the gospel-genre as a specific literary concept (*genre*)³⁵ has been established and how it was received: it might help us to explain how the gospel-genre has been imitated and modified in early times and how different gospel-writings hereby promote literary creativeness and serve various *literary strategies* or concepts of authorization.³⁶ *Genre studies* are thus focused on a descriptive valuation of how the gospel-genre functions as a literary concept.³⁷ By “gospel”-writing we understand a certain literary form that is primarily coined by its content: it designates the literary form in which we find the narration of Jesus’ life, mission, and death.

den – Theorien – Konzepte [ed. O. Wischmeyer, et al.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009], 189–91; S. Trappen, M. Rösel, and D. Dormeyer, “Formen/ Gattungen,” in *RGG* [ed. H. D. Betz et al.; 8 vols.; 4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–2007] 3:185–96). Therefore, we have to deal with *genre studies* – and not *genre criticism* – here: while *genre criticism* primarily is concentrated on a comparative survey of literary characteristics (cf., e.g., D. E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* [Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1988], 22–3), *genre studies* focus on the investigation of how literary forms and genres developed within a historical frame. This is what *Gattungsgeschichte* implies: “Gattungen haben Geschichte ... Im Rahmen einer Gattungsgeschichte gibt es Vorstufen, Entstehen, Vergehen und Neu-Lokalisieren von Gattungen”, K. Berger, *Einführung in die Formgeschichte* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 1987), 38. At the same time such a shift in terminology (*Gattungsgeschichte* and “genre studies”) enables us to develop the approach of “literary history” even further. Today, *genre studies* play an important role again in cultural studies also, where they are frequently related to discourses on emotions and emotionality; cf., e.g., B. Meyer-Sickendiek, *Affektpoetik: Eine Kulturgeschichte literarischer Emotionen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005): “Eine Affektpoetik geht davon aus, daß sich spezielle literarische Gattungen als von den menschlichen Affekten geprägte und von den Affekten erzählende Formen begreifen lassen” (9).

³⁴ This is a field of studies in literature that already dates back to antiquity itself: e.g., Quintilian, *inst or* 10; Suetonius, *De grammaticis et rhetoribus*. For modern New Testament studies, cf., already, R. G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible: An Account of the Leading Forms of Literature Represented in the Sacred Writings* (Boston/London: Heath/Isbister, 1896); R. Bultmann, “Literaturgeschichte. II. Urchristentum,” in *RGG* (ed. H. Gunkel and L. Zscharnack; 6 vols.; 2nd ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1927–32) 3:1675–7 and 1680–2.

³⁵ For the recent discourse on *genre* in literary sciences, cf. P. Wenzel, “Gattungstheorie und Gattungspoetik,” in *Grundbegriffe der Literaturtheorie* (ed. A. Nünning; Stuttgart/Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2004), 73–8.

³⁶ Cf. J. Hartenstein, “Autoritätskonstellationen in apokryphen und kanonischen Evangelien,” in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*, 423–44. By raising these questions, the quest for the Sitz im Leben could also be relevant – especially when approached on the basis of indications given by papyriology and codicology (cf. C. Marksches, “Was wissen wir über den Sitz im Leben der apokryphen Evangelien?” in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*, 61–90) rather than by means of *Formgeschichte* where the social and religious setting of the audience(s) was considered to be an important ‘agent’ (*wirkende Kraft*) as, for instance, Walter Bauer once thought: W. Bauer, *Das Leben Jesu im Zeitalter der neutestamentlichen Apokryphen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1909), 520–41.

³⁷ For this discussion from the point of view of apocryphal gospels, cf., e.g., J. Hartenstein, “Das Petrus-evangelium als Evangelium,” in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus: Text, Kontexte, Intertexte* (ed. T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 159–81, 160: “Als Evangelien bezeichne ich diejenige frühchristliche Literatur, die vom irdischen Wirken Jesu berichtet und damit den Lesenden heilsrelevante Informationen geben will.” Cf. also J. A. Kelhoffer, “‘Gospel’ as a Literary Title in Early Christianity and the Question of What Is (and Is Not) a ‘Gospel’ in Canons of Scholarly Literature,” in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*, 399–422.

In terms of chronology and genealogy the Markan Gospel – as far as we know – represents the proto-type of this kind of a literary concept.³⁸

Against this background, comparative studies in Mark and Matthew are the initial basis for reconstructing descriptively how the history of early Christian gospel-literature came into being and how it developed rapidly thereafter. Matthew's use of Mark is illuminating much beyond questions of literary dependency: it can reveal to us how and why the earliest gospel-writing ("Mark") was not simply copied and preserved, i.e. considered as a concise textual outline. To the contrary, it was rather more imitated, enlarged, modified, and – tentatively – substituted. Matthew basically is a re-shape of Mark. From here, we can also get a better impression of how the apocryphal gospels as legitimate successors of the written gospel-concept came into being in the second century C. E. Or to put it the other way round: we can hardly grasp the dynamics that are implied in various literary concepts of the apocryphal gospel-writings, such as the Gospel of Peter, without considering how it was already Matthew who had to relate to Mark. In this context we will, of course, also discuss whether there is a qualitative difference between how Matthew follows Mark and how the Gospel of Peter succeeds Mark and Matthew.

Hereby, we are primarily *not* raising questions of literary dependency, as, for instance, the extent to which the Gospel of Peter depends on earlier gospel-writings, such as Mark and Matthew. Those questions are still very much under dispute.³⁹ In contrast to this, we will only presuppose the fact *that* later authors were familiar with gospel-writings as a certain type of Christian literature⁴⁰ – as later letter-writers were familiar with predecessors (cf. Ignatius and Paul). By employing *genre studies*, we will thus figure out how different gospel-authors choose a common literary model or type, and how and for what literary purpose they fill it with substance and strategy. I will start by summarizing our state of knowledge concerning the literary concept behind the earliest gospel-writing: Mark.

2.1 From Mark to Matthew

In terms of chronology and genealogy the "Markan Gospel"⁴¹ is a proto-type, or a 'literary model' for what gospel-literature implies in early Christian times. What do we know about Mark's literary intentions and ambitions? The author of the Markan Gospel composes a prose-narrative shortly after 70 C. E. that has – as far

³⁸ Cf. E.-M. Becker, "Evangelium, Evangelienliteratur I. Neutestamentlich," in *Lexikon der Bibelhermeneutik*, 164–5.

³⁹ Cf., e.g., J.D. Crossan, "The Gospel of Peter and the Canonical Gospels," in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*, 117–34, 118 ff.; T. Nicklas, "Das Petrus-evangelium im Rahmen antiker Jesustraditionen," in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*, 223–52.

⁴⁰ Here, I would agree to similar ideas mentioned by T. Nicklas, "Petrusevangelium," 251: "das Petrus-evangelium setzt bereits vorliegende Jesuserzählungen voraus."

⁴¹ In what follows I indeed choose as an initial point for the "Markan Gospel" the version that is presented to us in Nestle-Aland.

as we can see – no forerunners and no contemporaries.⁴² This type of literature is named after the *incipit / initium* in Mark 1:1/1:1–3 as a gospel-writing (εὐαγγέλιον). Mark shapes a *proto-type* of a writing, which does have immediate (Matthew and Luke) and later (apocryphal gospels) successors. Because the Markan Gospel deals with a sequence of a ‘history of events’ that is related to the activity of a specific person (Jesus of Nazareth) and his mission, it might in terms of its macro-*genre* best be placed in the broader frame of ancient historiographical writings in which it appears more precisely as a ‘person-centered pre-historiographical account.’⁴³

The conceptual and literary performance of what the author is doing here becomes evident on different levels, mainly on a technical, on a structural, and on an interpretative level: on a *technical* level, Mark has combined different types and strands of traditions like ‘sayings’ and narrative traditions (miracle-stories, passion narrative)⁴⁴. We might assume that those traditions can partly be contextualized in Jerusalem (esp. passion narrative), partly in Galilee (popular miracle traditions),⁴⁵ perhaps partly in Judaea.⁴⁶ By composing his narrative, Mark, however, does not only stick to the topographical defaults; he rather shapes his own topographical as well as a chronological frame where he subsumes these traditions. The *topographical* frame is based on Jesus’ move from Galilee to Jerusalem – a conceptual idea that is worked out extensively in the Lukan Gospel (Luke 9:51 ff.). The *chronological* frame consists of a short period of time, perhaps even only one month, in Jesus’ life (Mark 2:23; 14:1),⁴⁷ where Jesus’ ministry is situated in a hasty sequence of events (εὐθύς). On a *narrative and on an interpretative* level Mark thus does not only serve processes of transmission; he rather more creates a comprehensive literary concept, i.e., a gospel-writing in which the diverse sequences of Jesus’ ministry are connected topographically and chronologically (= *story*) as well as logically (= *plot*).⁴⁸ On that level Mark also gives his theological clue to interpreting the gospel-narration (cf., e.g., Mark 3:6; 8:31–33; 15:39). By creating the ‘written gospel’ Mark thus does not only appear as a conservative collector of traditional material

⁴² Q could at the most only be understood as a fragment of a gospel: Cf. C. Heil, “Einleitung,” in *Die Spruchquelle Q: Griechisch und Deutsch* (ed. C. Heil and P. Hoffmann; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002), 7–28, 17–9.

⁴³ The Markan gospel-concept thus stands for a *genre sui generis*, i.e. a micro-*genre* of a narrative that can be best related to the huge field of ancient pre- or sub-historiographical types of prose-literature; Cf. Becker, *Markus-Evangelium*.

⁴⁴ Cf. Dormeyer, “Formen / Gattungen,” 192–4; G. Bornkamm, “Formen und Gattungen II. im NT,” in *RGG* (ed. K. Gallig et al.; 6 vols.; 3rd ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1957–62), 2:999–1005. Cf., in general, R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition: Mit einem Nachwort von G. Theißen* (10th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (6th ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1971).

⁴⁵ Cf. G. Theißen, *Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).

⁴⁶ Cf., e.g., Becker, *Markus-Evangelium*, 383–96.

⁴⁷ Mark 2:23 refers to a month in spring, probably March or April, when the grain is ripe.

⁴⁸ Concerning the distinction between ‘story’ and ‘plot,’ cf. M. Martinez and M. Scheffel, *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie* (4th ed.; München: C. H. Beck, 2003), 109 f., with reference to E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (repr.; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966).

and does not only act as a redactor or interpreter of those traditions either. Rather more, he acts also as a literary author who comments on the story several times by interpreting (Mark 7:19b) or illustrating it (Mark 9:2, 3b).⁴⁹ Therefore the Markan Gospel is much more than a contingent collection of traditions:⁵⁰ its author is the inventor of the written gospel-concept, which finally serves the gospel-proclamation in a peculiar sense.⁵¹

The Gospel of Matthew is *ca.* 20 years later than Mark, basically confirming Mark's approach: Matthew again focuses on telling Jesus' Galilean ministry and the passion events in Jerusalem within a narrative account. By joining Mark's gospel-outline, Matthew in fact does two overarching things. *On the one hand*, he continues the Markan gospel-concept quite steadily.⁵² In contrast to Luke for whom earlier reports (διήγησις) on the gospel-story serve as preceding concepts which he can either use as a historical "source" or which he can consider as literary works he will compete with (Luke 1:1–4), Matthew uses Mark as a literary *Vorlage* in that he restricts himself to the Markan outline:⁵³ as far as we know, Matthew – in contrast to Luke and John – takes over most of the Markan material and keeps the topographical as well as the chronological order behind the basic parts of the gospel-story (Galilee-Jerusalem; one-year-ministry). We could speak here of an 'enlargement'⁵⁴ or better a *literary inclusion or incorporation* of the Markan Gospel. Possibly, the so-called Gospel of the Nazareans (*Gos. Naz.*),⁵⁵ which is generally counted among the so-called Jewish-Christian Gospels (JE),⁵⁶ for its part relates

⁴⁹ Cf. Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 421. Cf. also Becker, "Dating Mark and Matthew as Ancient Literature," 138–40.

⁵⁰ A substantial critique towards such a literary undervaluation of Mark can already be found in, e.g., E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums: In drei Bänden. Erster Band. Die Evangelien* (Stuttgart/Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1924), 121.

⁵¹ Cf. W. H. Kelber, "Narrative and Disclosure: Mechanisms of Concealing, Revealing, and Reveiling," *Semeia* 43 (1988): 1–20, who argues that the narrativization finally serves the unveiling of the gospel-proclamation. I would like to thank Erin J. Wright (Aarhus) for this reference.

⁵² In Matthew's case questions of literary dependency can thus nearly be solved.

⁵³ Further distinctive work on terminology ("source," *Vorlage*) is needed here beyond E.-M. Becker, "Art. Quelle(n) II. Neutestamentlich," in *Lexikon der Bibelhermeneutik*, 472–3.

⁵⁴ Cf., e.g., U. Luz, "Intertexts in the Gospel of Matthew," *HTR* 97 (2004): 119–37, 125.

⁵⁵ Concerning the problems of reconstructing *Gos. Pet.* and relating it to *Gos. Heb.* or to another, no longer known gospel, cf. H.-J. Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 43.

⁵⁶ The identification of the so-called Jewish-Christian Gospels (JE) is complicated since the so-called church-fathers – beginning with Irenaeus until Cyril of Jerusalem (cf. P. Vielhauer and G. Strecker, "Judenchristliche Evangelien," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen I*, 114–47, 116–27) – do not provide clear or uniform references to what they mean by JE. By mentioning the JE they do not refer to specific gospel-writings either (cf. Vielhauer and Strecker, "Judenchristliche Evangelien," 115: "Unsicher ist ... die Zahl der JE ..., unsicher ist ferner die Identifizierung der einzelnen Fragmente, unsicher schließlich der Charakter und das gegenseitige Verhältnis der einzelnen JE"). On these problems of interpretation, cf. already Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, 251–63 (in discussion with Adolf von Harnack and Theodor Zahn); cf., recently, J. Frey, "Zur Vielgestaltigkeit judenchristlicher Evangelienüberlieferungen," in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*, 93–137. Thus, Vielhauer and Strecker and lately Hans-Josef Klauck tend to speak

to Matthew in the similar way of incorporating him.⁵⁷ Compared to Matthew, *Gos. Naz.* has at least a secondary literary character,⁵⁸ regardless of whether individual traditions in *Gos. Naz.* pre-date Matthew.⁵⁹

On the other hand Matthew yet feels himself free to re-arrange his Markan *Vorlage* and to move significantly beyond it. By doing so he demonstrates that the written gospel-concept – even though read and used as a *Vorlage* – does not function as any kind of normative text but rather more as a literary concept that can be re-defined in its narrative outline so that it is re-arranged and tentatively even substituted. Accordingly, Matthew completes, varies, and/or modifies the Markan gospel-story. Those modifications can, again, mainly be observed on a technical, on a structural (topographical/chronological), as well as on a narrative or interpretative level.⁶⁰ On a *technical* level, Matthew completes the Markan outline by including more strands of tradition known to him, namely Q and M. The inclusion of these materials, however, is not only due to reasons of conservation but rather meets Matthew's narrative interests of broadening the view on Jesus' life and, especially, on Jesus' teaching.

On a *structural* level, Matthew varies the Markan narration topographically and chronologically: by presenting the birth-story (Matt 2) and reporting the resurrected Jesus' return to Galilee (Matt 28:16–20) the *topographical* outline changes now to Judaea-Galilee-Jerusalem-Galilee. Parallel to this the Gospel's *chronological* frame is modified: the Matthean gospel-story starts *ca.* 30 years earlier (cf. Matt 1:18 and Mark 1:4) and also runs at least some hours or days longer (Matt 28:16 and Mark 16:8) than the Markan narration does. On a *narrative and on an interpre-*

of three types of JE-literature: the *Gospel of the Hebrews* (*Gos. Heb.*), the *Gospel of the Nazareans* (*Gos. Naz.*), and the *Gospel of the Ebionites* (*Gos. Eb.*) (cf. Vielhauer and Strecker, "Judenchristliche Evangelien," 128; Klauck, *Gospels*, 36–54). Even if the contextualization of the JEs in the history of early Christian theology is still problematic, we find in some of these texts – *Gos. Heb.* might be an exception – a tendency of continuing and supplementing the Matthean Gospel (esp. *Gos. Naz.*; *Gos. Eb.*). This is specifically true in the case of *Gos. Naz.*

⁵⁷ There are, for instance, several indications for assuming that the *Gospel of the Nazareans* (*Gos. Naz.*) is an attempt at incorporating, perhaps preserving or even substituting Matthew. I will name some examples here: The *Gos. Naz.* presents variant readings to Matthew (e.g. Matt 6:11 and *Gos. Naz.* frg. 5) or references to scriptural quotations (e.g. Matt 23:35 and *Gos. Naz.* Frg. 17). It offers additional information to the gospel-story (e.g. Matt 12:13 and *Gos. Naz.* frg. 10). Those textual variants or additions to the Matthean text can also be found in sections of M-material (see above; e.g. Matt 27:65 and *Gos. Naz.* frg. 22), so that *Gos. Naz.* *de facto* seems to presuppose the comprehensive reading and perception of Matthew. Similar to how Matthew doubles narrative sequences from the Markan *Vorlage* (cf. Matt 20:29 ff. and Mark 10:46 ff.), *Gos. Naz.* doubles the Matthean narrative again (cf. Matt 19:16–24 and *Gos. Naz.* frg. 16). So *Gos. Naz.* is sometimes considered to be a Semitic *Nebenform* or a *Weiterbildung* of the Greek Gospel of Matthew (Vielhauer and Strecker, "Judenchristliche Evangelien," 129 and 133) that basically follows the narrative outline of the Matthean Gospel.

⁵⁸ Cf. J. Frey, "Die Scholien nach dem 'jüdischen Evangelium' und das sogenannte Nazoräer-evangelium," *ZNW* 94 (2003): 122–37; Frey, "Vielgestaltigkeit," 128.

⁵⁹ Questions of *Traditionsgeschichte* hardly lead us further here.

⁶⁰ The following observations presuppose the Two-Source-Theory which is still the most probable hypothesis for explaining the origins and the rise of the Synoptic Gospels.

tative level it becomes evident that Matthew goes much beyond the Markan outline and prefigures here what can be found in later gospel-writings much more extensively: (1) Matthew does pick up a Markan impetus (Mark 4; 13) when he presents Jesus as a teacher. According to Matthew, however, Jesus appears frequently and continuously as such, as a comprehensive speaker and teacher (Matt 5–7 etc. until chs. 23–25) whose teaching retains ongoing significance beyond Jesus' life and mission (Matt 28:20). In other writings, the 'speaking Jesus' is even chosen as the basic paradigm of literary conceptualization.⁶¹

(2) Matthew has the resurrected Christ appear and speak to the women at the empty tomb on the Easter morning (Matt 28:9–10). According to Matthew, Jesus even reveals himself to his disciples by teaching them and giving them missionary instructions (Matt 28:16–20). These passages, based on the traditions of post-Easter-epiphanies (cf. 1 Cor 15:5–8), will pre-figure later epiphany-narratives⁶² as well as revelatory dialogues.⁶³ (3) Matthew includes unique narrative sequences especially in the pre-history of his gospel (Matt 1–2) as well as within the passion narrative (Matt 27–28).⁶⁴ Those sequences in general derive from M and tend to give a 'legendary' coinage to the gospel-story.⁶⁵ The inclusion of these traditions pre-figure what is either worked out in later so-called infancy-gospels (e.g. *Prot. Jas.*) or what can be found in those gospel-writings that focus on the narration of passion-events.⁶⁶

(4) By including the so-called rock-*logion* (Matt 16:18–19), Matthew not only emphasizes Peter's role and position, but also attaches legitimating personal traditions to the gospel-story that go much beyond the Markan *Vorlage* (cf. Mark 8:29–33). Thereby he prepares for later attempts of shaping a literary focalization on certain apostolic figures.⁶⁷ (5) Finally, by including single sayings or parables (cf., e.g., Matt 13:24–30, 36–52; 25:1–13, 31–46) Matthew multiplies the amount of sayings-material significantly. At the same time he arranges and conceptualizes these materials in an innovative way (speech-concept, s. above).

These examples show *how* Matthew moves clearly beyond his *Vorlage*. This fact might lead us to some conclusions: Matthew does not limit himself to the reproduction of Mark but rather develops literary creativity by enlarging the literary *Vorlage* delivered to him and giving a revised concept to his account. Here, it becomes evident that Matthew has certain literary intentions himself when writing his gospel-narrative: his technique of incorporating Mark can only partly be understood as a *preservation-strategy*. He indeed sticks to what he gets from

⁶¹ *Gos. Thom.* (NHC II:2); *Gos. Eg.* [Gr] (?).

⁶² *Ep. Apos.* 10:21–12:23; cf. also e.g. John 21.

⁶³ *Ep. Jas.* (NHC I:2); *Ep. Apos.* 13:24 ff.; *Gospel of Bartholomew*; *Letter of Peter to Philip* (NHC VIII:2); cf. also Mark 16:15–16.

⁶⁴ Matt 27:3–10; 27:19, 24–25; 27:51–53; 27:62–66; 28:2–3, 9–10; 28:11–15.

⁶⁵ Cf., e.g., Matt 27:3–10; 27:19, 24–25; 27:51–53; 27:62–66; 28:2–3, 9–10; 28:11–15.

⁶⁶ Cf., e.g., *Gos. Pet.* 4:10–8:33; *Gos. Nic./Acts Pil.* To infancy-gospels s. latest: *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (ed. C. Clivaz et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

⁶⁷ Peter: e.g. *Gos. Pet.* 14; James: e.g. *Gos. Heb.* Frg. 7 (= Jerome, *de vir inl* 2).

Mark but he is not limited to the materials found there. In that Matthew does not only incorporate Mark, but rather enlarges, broadens, and re-defines the Markan gospel-narration he obviously intends to replace the Markan Gospel, while at the same time to uphold the tradition of this literary concept.⁶⁸ Thus, Matthew's technique of a literary incorporation finally seems to serve a *replacement-strategy*. Hereby, Matthew might be seen to differ significantly from what Luke as well as what John probably intended to do.⁶⁹

From here, we can also draw some conclusions regarding Mark's early reception-history. Before Irenaeus' time – i.e. before Mark's entry into a proto-canonical collection of gospel-writings, by which its textual entity was secured for the future – the overall 'literary success' of Mark's literary invention could only become evident *sub contrario*: in that the Markan Gospel is gradually upheld or even suppressed by others and in that textual inconsistency and literary multiplicity correspond, Mark's impetus for shaping a gospel-account as a current narrative conceptualization and interpretation of Jesus-traditions finally gains an objective. Thus, the Markan gospel-outline moves into a history of success precisely because Mark's successors will indicate how that narrative concept works, how far it is useful, and where it possibly needs to be improved or focalized.

2.2 From Mark and Matthew to the Gospel of Peter

The literary creativity behind gospel-writing becomes even more evident when we move into the second century and analyze such types of 'Jesus-literature'⁷⁰ that consist of *narratives and/or sayings-material* and, thus, basically follow up Mark's literary concept:⁷¹

⁶⁸ Cf. D. Sim, "Matthew: The Current State of Research," in *Mark and Matthew I*, 33–51.

⁶⁹ Matthew does not seem to be willing to compete with his forerunner's work in the sense of ancient *aemulatio*. Luke, however, chooses such a methodological approach to the 'written gospel-concept' that he indicates his literary distance to his sources as well as to his own narrative (Luke 1:1–4) and, thus, relates his story more evidently to the macro-*genre* of ancient historiography. So Luke's strategy might be a *competition-strategy*. The Gospel of John, however, is obviously neither interested in a preservation-strategy, nor in a replacement- or competition-strategy: we do not know whether John presupposes Mark and possibly Luke. But we might assume that he was in any case familiar with the gospel-*genre* as a literary type of writing. His narrative concept mainly serves a specific theological idea that is based on a pre-existence-Christology (see John 1:1) and that intends to stress the revelatory aspects of Jesus' mission (John 1:1–14; chs. 14–17). So John might have a *focalization- or interpretation-strategy* that aims at conceptualizing the gospel-story genuinely – on the basis of a theological, viz. Christological, idea (John 1:14). He does not seem, however, to be willing to substitute his forerunner's works.

⁷⁰ Cf. Aune, *The New Testament*, 68 ff.

⁷¹ Nevertheless, the so-called 'gospels' in the *Nag Hammadi*-library (e.g. *Gospel of Philip*; *Evangelium veritatis*) cannot be excluded from our investigation because they do continue certain ideas of gospel-writing also. Differently: Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, 614: "In den Zusammenhang der apokryphen Evangelien gehören nur Texte, die aus Jesus-Traditionen, sei es Wort- oder Erzählstoff bestehen, gleichviel ob sie expressis verbis den Titel Evangelium aufweisen oder nicht."

*Jewish Christian Gospels:*⁷²

Gospel of the Nazareans

Gospel of the Ebionites

Gospel of the Hebrews

*Gospel of the Egyptians*⁷³

*Gospel of Peter*⁷⁴

*So-called Infancy Gospels,*⁷⁵ e.g.:

*Protevangeliem of James*⁷⁶

*Gospel of Bartholomew*⁷⁷

*Gospel of Gamaliel*⁷⁸

In all of these non-canonical gospel-writings it is obvious that some authors tend to re-shape the gospel-concept. This is partly done by *focalizing* in their gospel-account, for instance, on birth stories.⁷⁹ Partly they leave or re-define the gospel-concept in a generic sense nearly completely when they stick to sayings material exclusively or when they conceptualize revelatory dialogues of the resurrected Christ. Accordingly, we find gospel-material that only consists of a sayings-sequence (*Gos. Thom.*), or that is brought into a letter-form (e.g. *Jas.*; *Ep. Apos.*). Other materials are put instead into the frame of *acta*-literature with strong novelistic elements (*Gos. Nic.*; *Acts Pil.*).⁸⁰ How should we evaluate these processes of transforming or re-defining the gospel-*genre*? We will best understand them as processes of an ongoing literary creativeness in which the varying and merging of various traditions led to a variety of narrative accounts also. This happened in a period of time where the phenomenon of literacy already was regarded as a stimulating factor in shaping various forms of prose-literature.⁸¹

⁷² Cf. Vielhauer and Strecker, "Judenchristliche Evangelien," 114–47; C. Moreschini and E. Norelli, *From Paul to the Age of Constantine* (trans. M. J. O'Connell; vol. 1. of *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature: A Literary History Translated*; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 56–63.

⁷³ Cf. W. Schneemelcher, "Ägypterevangelium," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen I*, 174–9; Moreschini and Norelli, *Literature*, 63–64.

⁷⁴ Cf. C. Maurer and W. Schneemelcher, "Petrusevangelium," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen I*, 180–8; Moreschini and Norelli, *Literature*, 71–74.

⁷⁵ Cf. O. Cullmann, "Kindheitsevangelien," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen I*, 330–72; Moreschini and Norelli, *Literature*, 148–153.

⁷⁶ Cf. Cullmann, "Kindheitsevangelien," esp. 334–8.

⁷⁷ Cf. F. Scheidweiler and W. Schneemelcher, "Bartholomäusevangelium," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen I*, 424–40.

⁷⁸ Cf. M.-A. van den Oudenrijn, "Das Evangelium des Gamaliel," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen I*, 441–2.

⁷⁹ According to Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, 651 f. the "'Vorgeschieden' waren überhaupt ein fruchtbarer Boden für Wachstum und Wucherung der Legenden." Something similar can also be demonstrated in regard to Luke's impact on later gospel-stories; e.g. Luke 2:41–52 and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* = *Inf. Gos. Thom.*

⁸⁰ Cf. F. Scheidweiler, "Nikodemusevangelium: Pilatusakten und Höllenfahrt Christi," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen I*, 395–424. Cf. O. Ehlen, *Leitbilder und romanhafte Züge in apokryphen Evangelientexten: Untersuchungen zur Motivid und Erzählstruktur (anhand des Protevangelium Jacobi und der Acta Pilati Graec. B)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004).

⁸¹ By assuming the latter we recall one of Franz Overbeck's (1882) ideas about the meaning of

In this context, the so-called *Gospel of Peter* (*Gos. Pet.*) is of specific interest. The most important version of the text⁸² is documented by PCair 10759, a parchment codex found in Akhmim in 1886/1887,⁸³ which saw its *editio princeps* in 1892 (U. Bouriant).⁸⁴ This codex also contains the *Apocalypse of Peter*⁸⁵ and, thus, already functions as a small pre-collection of Petrine writings. This fact is interesting because in patristic times the Petrine writings, as a particular group of texts, had been subject to extensive discussion concerning their literary and theological validity, as for example Eusebius indicates (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.2; 3.25.6). It is generally stated that *Gos. Pet.* had been written in the second half of the second century C. E.⁸⁶ According to Dibelius, the work belongs to a group of traditions or testimonies (*Reste der apokryphen Evangelien*) which give evidence of the existence of diverse written gospels as comprehensive literary texts (e.g. also *Gospel of the Nazareans*).⁸⁷ But what are the literary characteristics of *Gos. Pet.*, and how do we meet literary creativeness here that goes beyond the Markan as well as the Matthean narrative outline?

(1) What we find in *Gos. Pet.* programmatically is a literary shape of Peter as author, viz. narrator, of the gospel-account (esp. 14:58, 60). To make Peter act as a *literary author* who is even legitimated to write in the first person singular, however, presupposes him being already established as an apostolic authority in a literary sense. There are two factors in the early history of apostolic traditions that might have prepared for such a literary authority. *First*, Peter is not only named

the apocryphal gospels, which are certainly true: "An ihrem Teile also dient die apokryphe Literatur nur der Behauptung zur Bestätigung, daß Evangelien, Apostelgeschichte und Apokalypse Formen sind, die schon zu einer Zeit, wo, was sich als christliche Literatur am Leben erhalten hat, zu existieren eben nur begonnen hatte, aufgehört haben, darin noch möglich zu sein"; F. Overbeck, *Über die Anfänge der patristischen Literatur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 24.

⁸² Cf., according to D. Lührmann, "Die Überlieferung des apokryph gewordenen Petrus-evangeliums," in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*, 31–51; eventually also: POxy 2949; POxy 4009; PVindob G2325. Cf. also, in general, Klauck, *Gospels*, 82f. For a critical view on Lührmann, cf. P. Foster, "Are there any Early Fragments of the So-called *Gospel of Peter*," *NTS* 52 (2006): 1–28. More carefully: T. J. Kraus, "Die Sprache des Petrus-evangeliums?" *Methodische Anmerkungen und Vorüberlegungen für eine Analyse von Sprache und Stil*, in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*, 61–76, 63f.; T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas, in *Das Petrus-evangelium und die Petrusapokalypse: Die griechischen Fragmente mit deutscher und englischer Übersetzung* (ed. T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter: 2004), 5–7 and 55–68.

⁸³ For a description of the codex, cf. P. van Minnen, "The Akhmim *Gospel of Peter*," in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*, 53–60.

⁸⁴ For a recent edition of the Akhmim-Codex (P Cair 10759): *Das Petrus-evangelium und die Petrusapokalypse*, 32–49.

⁸⁵ Cf. O. von Gebhardt, *Das Evangelium und die Apokalypse des Petrus: Die neuentdeckten Bruchstücke: Nach einer Photographie der Handschrift zu Gizeh in Lichtdruck herausgegeben* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1893). For a recent critical edition: A. E. Bernhard, *Other Early Christian Gospels: A Critical Edition of the Surviving Greek Manuscripts* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 49–83.

⁸⁶ Concerning the *terminus ad quem*, cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.12.3–6 (Serapion); Origen, *Comm in Mt* 10.17. Cf. recently, *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*.

⁸⁷ Dibelius, *Geschichte*, 51 ff.

as an *apostolic authority* in the history of early Christianity (cf. 1 Cor 15:5; Gal 2; Acts) but also literarily styled as such an authority. In texts like Mark 8:29 par.; Matt 16:18–20; Luke 24:12; John 21 we furthermore see that this tendency has been increased already from Mark to Matthew. *Secondly*, the first person singular concept (*Gos. Pet.* 7:26 f.; 14:60) that is significant for *Gos. Pet.*, in fact, already derives from 1 Peter as a literary concept of apostolic authority and specifically from a text like 2 Pet 1:16–18, where we find an important reference to the transfiguration scene (cf. Mark 9:2–8 par.) displayed as a kind of 'authentic' Petrine report. Such a significant overlap between *Gos. Pet.* and the Petrine letters is also visible in regard to the *motif* of Jesus' preaching in the *Hades* (cf. *Gos. Pet.* 10:41 and 1 Pet 3:19 f.).⁸⁸ The *Gospel of Peter* was therefore written in a period of time where the concurrent reading of gospel- as well as letter-literature needs to be presupposed.

(2) As far as we can see on the basis of the textual fragments, *Gos. Pet.* is focused on the passion narrative and the Easter events.⁸⁹ This focus, again, is not accidental, but rather due to *Gos. Pet.*'s affiliation to the 'Peter'-figure: Peter's specific involvement in the passion (*Gos. Pet.* 7:26 f.) and Easter events (*Gos. Pet.* 14:60) already derives from earlier traditions, which are mainly documented by Paul (cf. 1 Cor 15:5) as well as the canonical gospels (cf. Mark 14:66–72 par.; Mark 16:7 par. Luke 24:12) and the later ending of John (John 21). How can we thus contextualize *Gos. Pet.* in the literary-history of the gospel-writings? I think *Gos. Pet.* is a good example for demonstrating how an apocryphal gospel does stand in line with the earlier gospel-narratives but at the same time re-defines the gospel-concept significantly: it shortens the gospel-story's focus to the passion and Easter events and includes much additional, viz. legendary, material to this specific outline. This, again, I would primarily call a *focalization-strategy*, even if aspects of preservation can also be found: there are, for instance, traditions used that equal the synoptic material nearly verbally (*Gos. Pet.* 11:45; cf. Mark 15:39).⁹⁰ These observations lead us to the question how *Gos. Pet.* possibly upholds the gospel-outline according to Mark and Matthew in a textual, viz. material, sense.

(3) The *Gospel of Peter* presents certain *motifs* which have literary parallels in the canonical gospels. We can at least distinguish between four types of material. (3.1)

⁸⁸ For this motif, cf. also the *descent of Christ* in *Gos. Nic. / Acts Pil.* 17–27; *Gos. Bar.* I:9 ff.

⁸⁹ If POxy 4009 which "recounts the sending of the disciples by Jesus ... derives from the Gospel of Peter (and this is not clear), this would suggest that this gospel originally included pre-passion material"; J. B. Green, "Gospel of Peter," in *Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in late Antiquity: Pagan, Judaic, Christian* (ed. J. Neusner and A. J. Avery-Peck, et al.; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 145–6, 145.

⁹⁰ *Gos. Pet.*: ἀληθῶς υἱὸς ἦν θεοῦ; Mark: ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν. I do not think, however, that the relation of *Gos. Pet.* to the canonical gospels can be analyzed by means of *Literarkritik*, as, for instance, *Theodor Zahn* (1893) once suggested; cf. T. von Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Petrus: Das kürzlich gefundene Fragment seines Textes* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1893). For a literary-historical approach to passion narratives, cf. also, F. Herrmann, *Strategien der Todesdarstellung in der Markuspassion: Ein literaturgeschichtlicher Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

There are certain *motifs* which are already known from the Markan passion narrative (cf. *Gos. Pet.* 5:15 and 5:20 and Mark 15:33 par. and 15:38 par.). (3.2) We know a relatively large group of *motifs* that occur in *Gos. Pet.* only from M otherwise (cf. Matt 27:62–66 and *Gos. Pet.* 8:28–33; Matt 27:52 f. and *Gos. Pet.* 6:21). Thus, we could assume that the Matthean Gospel functions as a basic literary frame for *Gos. Pet.*⁹¹ (3.3) We also find parallels to the Lukan passion narrative that derive from L (cf. Luke 23:6–12 and *Gos. Pet.* 1:1–2; 2:3–5; Luke 23:39–43 and *Gos. Pet.* 4:13). (3.4) Additionally, we could discuss whether *Gos. Pet.* even evidences knowledge and use of John 21 (cf. *Gos. Pet.* 14:60). Today, it is still under dispute whether these *motifs* and parallels point to an author who really made use of the so-called canonical gospels in a comprehensive sense.⁹²

(4) At the same time, *Gos. Pet.* presents material that is *de facto* not known from the field of canonical gospels at all. The valuation of this material, however, remains ambiguous. *On the one hand*, *Gos. Pet.* offers scriptural interpretations of Jesus' passion that avoid explicit quotation-formulas (cf. *Gos. Pet.* 3:7; 5:18) and, thus, seem to be older than scriptural interpretations found in the canonical gospels. Therefore, Dibelius has called these elements 'archaic material.'⁹³ *On the other hand*, *Gos. Pet.* contains many legendary *motifs* (e.g. 8:31; 9:35–49) that point to a late stage of passion narratives. Can we explain this ambiguity by assuming that *Gos. Pet.* has used the canonical gospels *via* memory and concurrently was influenced by oral-kerygmatical, possibly old and valid traditions, as Dibelius and Philipp Vielhauer once thought?⁹⁴ We can hardly reconstruct satisfyingly enough the process of composing *Gos. Pet.* according to matters of *Traditionsgeschichte* or *Literarkritik*. Therefore I would rather understand *Gos. Pet.* as an individual member of gospel-literature that continues the basic concept of a written gospel-*genre* by making use of a *focalization-strategy*⁹⁵ in particular.

3. Conclusions and Prospects

What can we finally gain from these observations for the quest for Mark's early reception-history as well as for the study of literary history and the study of the gospel-*genre* in particular? I will formulate some concluding remarks and after-

⁹¹ Cf. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, 645: "Als Basis der erhaltenen Erzählung dient der Mt-Bericht."

⁹² Bauer, *Das Leben Jesu*, 497 f., e.g., argued clearly in favor of such a literary dependency. Much more careful is Nicklas, "Petrusevangelium," and see above.

⁹³ Cf. also Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, 646.

⁹⁴ In recent days the concept of "cultural memory" is being used in a similar way in order to explain *Gos. Pet.*'s relation to the canonical gospels; cf. A. Kirk, "Tradition and Memory in the Gospel of Peter," in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*, 135–58.

⁹⁵ "Focalization" is here and earlier (s. above) understood rather in the general sense of a narrative concentration than in a sense of narrative theory as is suggested by M. Bal (*Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* [2nd ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997]) and applied to the interpretation of Mark by Herrmann, *Strategien*, or to *Gos. Pet.* by Hartenstein, "Petrusevangelium," 165–7.

wards give a short prospect on how studies in the apocryphal gospels can profit also from a comparative approach to Mark and Matthew.

So far, the comparative approach could help us to illuminate Mark's early reception-history in a literary dimension: by comparing Mark's and Matthew's gospel-outline, we could see that Mark's primary impact on the further history of the gospel-*genre* obviously lies in its inventive power of creating a literary concept of a gospel-writing that is soon imitated and modified. It is the Markan Gospel that opens up the floor for a creative conceptualizing of the gospel-story on the literary level rather than for a reception of the text that would have provided textual consistency and literary conservatism. Matthew approves and confirms that idea by using and continuing, but also by broadening Mark's outline – in any case by not limiting himself to his *Vorlage*. The result of this was quite successful: on the basis of textual evidence it seems that Matthew would quickly overshadow the Markan outline in the second century. This happened because of the incorporative character of his writing as well as the comprehensiveness of the material included. The Matthean gospel-narrative could thus appear as a much more thorough gospel-version so that it obviously also functioned much better than Mark as a material point of departure for later gospel-writings, following either perception- or focalization-strategies. In other words, Matthew could have been understood as a legitimate climax of Mark.

Nevertheless, the Markan Gospel could also make its own way. In the middle and up to the end of the second century C. E. there must have taken place a literary as well as a theological reversion to "Mark" that was probably due to its affiliation with apostolic authority (cf. Papias): Justin, Tatian, and Irenaeus reflect the increasing meaning of a 'Four Gospel-collection,' and also Clement Alexandrinus – from his point of view – indicates that there was a tremendous need for defining and securing the "Markan" text. As a consequence of this, a search for textual consistency must have been started, by which nevertheless the plurality of literary versions could not be blanked out entirely, as the *codices* W and k (Bobinensis) document. And yet we might assume that it is in fact a 'canonizing interest' that finally put an end to textual inconsistency⁹⁶ and literary creativity by which various literary versions and re-shapings of Mark – including Matthew – had been produced still during the second century. So it is precisely between *ca.* 70 and 170 C. E. that there hardly existed a well-defined book named the "Gospel of Mark" but rather only a tested literary concept. In other words, the gospel-*genre* was still 'in the making' during this period of time. And the reception-history of the Markan Gospel reflects this process paradigmatically. Partly by chance, partly because of quality and authority or textual variety that has raised questions of definition also, but certainly because of its strong conceptual impact, this literary concept, which we call "Mark," could achieve a firm place in the formation of the early Christian library, the New Testament canon.

⁹⁶ Cf. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, e.g. 125–7.

From here we might finally get fresh ideas for further studies in the gospel-literature of the second century. Hereby, it seems as if we need to reconsider our methodological approach to the apocryphal gospel-writings when taking into consideration the literary dynamics by which gospel-literature was shaped and re-shaped already in earliest times. So the literary-historical approach to Mark's reception-history even provides crucial insights into the rise and the further development of the apocryphal gospels. We thus should adjust our academic interest in the apocryphal gospels correspondingly – an interest that is not at all new, but rather dates back to 16th century protestant theology (Michaelis Neander Soraviensis, 1564/67)⁹⁷ and that has continued since,⁹⁸ up to our most recent debates.⁹⁹

There can be no doubt that from the late 19th century onwards, the discussion reached a new quality and brisance since various new fragments and portions of apocryphal texts, such as *Gos. Pet.*, were found. Thus, the so-called apocryphal gospels were now analyzed with even higher expectations and played a prominent role in Patristics, Classics, and academic arts,¹⁰⁰ as well as in New Testament studies¹⁰¹ and canon history (*Kanongeschichte*).¹⁰² They are available to us in a

⁹⁷ Cf. M. N. Soraviensis, "Apocrypha: hoc est, narrationes de Christo, Maria, Joseph, cognatione et familia Christi, extra Biblia etc.," in *Catechesis Martini Lutheri parva, Graeco-latina* (Basiliae, 3rd ed., 1567). Reference to this in R. Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen im Zusammenhang aus den Quellen erzählt und wissenschaftlich untersucht* (Leipzig: Friedrich Voigt, 1851), XIV; E. Hennecke, ed., *Handbuch zu den neutestamentlichen Apokryphen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1904), 6. Hennecke starts his overview on the history of research (5–9) by mentioning Jacobus Faber Stapulensis (1498), who edited, e.g., the letters of Polycarp and Ignatius (5).

⁹⁸ Cf. R. Hofmann, *Leben Jesu*. He bases his reconstruction on "Protevangeliium Jacobi minoris ..., Evangelium de nativitate S. Mariae ..., Historia de nativitate Mariae et de infantia Salvatoris ..., Historia Josephi fabri lignarii ..., Evangelium infantiae Servatoris ..., Evangelium Thomas Israelitae ..., Evangelium Matthaei ..., Evangelium de pueritia secundum Thomam ..., Syngramma Thomae ..., Evangelium Nicodemi ..." (XI–XIV). He also gives an overview on more contemporary interpretation of the apocryphal writings, up to his time, e.g., ca. 1850. Cf. programmatically, Bauer, *Das Leben Jesu*.

⁹⁹ Cf., e.g., P. Foster, *The Apocryphal Gospels: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Klauck, *Gospels*; J. Frey and J. Schröter, eds., *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*.

¹⁰⁰ Cf., e.g., J. Geffcken, *Christliche Apokryphen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1908). On these expectations and their relevance in the field of early Christian art, cf. G. Stuhlfauth, *Die apokryphen Petrusgeschichten in der altchristlichen Kunst* (Berlin/Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1925), 1–3.

¹⁰¹ For the immediate reactions on the findings of the *Gospel of Peter*, cf. P. Foster, "The Discovery and Initial Reactions to the So-Called Gospel of Peter," in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus: Text, Kontexte, Intertexte* (ed. T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 9–30.

¹⁰² The aim then is to testify to what degree these boundaries are built 'reasonably' by the church fathers or if those boundaries as well as the factor of canonicity should rather be widened or even ignored; cf., e.g., H. Koester, "Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels," *HTR* 73 (1980): 105–30; J. K. Elliott, "The Apocryphal Gospels," *ExpTim* 103 (1991): 8–15. Cf., recently, S. Luther and J. Röder, "Der neutestamentliche Kanon und die neutestamentliche apokryphe Literatur: Überlegungen zu einer Verhältnisbestimmung," in *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion*, 469–501; J. Schröter, "Die apokryphen Evangelien und die Entstehung des neutestamentlichen Kanons," in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*, 31–60. The hermeneutical discourse on the boundaries of the New Testament canon is partly related to the controversies about how

collection edited by Edgar Hennecke (1904) and Wilhelm Schneemelcher et al. (6/1999/7/2012).¹⁰³ For contemporary scholarship the apocryphal gospels are either of interest for religious history¹⁰⁴ or for Jesus research in a broader sense.¹⁰⁵ But how and why should we adjust our heuristics when studying gospel-literature of the second century?

In my point of view we should try out more comprehensively a literary-historical approach,¹⁰⁶ since gospels are religious *literature* also. Accordingly the

to approach the New Testament between theology and religious studies; cf. E.-M. Becker, "Antike Textsammlungen in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion."

¹⁰³ Cf. Hennecke, ed., *Handbuch*; W. Schneemelcher, ed., *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung, Bd. I: Evangelien* (6th ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1990). Cf. recently, however, not available while completing this contribution: C. Marksches and J. Schröter, eds., *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung I. Band: Evangelien und Verwandtes. 7. Auflage der von Edgar Hennecke begründeten und von Wilhelm Schneemelcher fortgeführten Sammlung der neutestamentlichen Apokryphen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

¹⁰⁴ It seems as if one hidden agenda behind studies in apocryphal writings is still to find valid criteria for describing the rise of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' in early Christianity beyond the attempts of Walter Bauer and his successors; cf., e.g., M. F. Bird, "Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Groups? The Non-canonical Gospels and Bauckham's *The Gospels for all Christians*," in *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and the Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity* (ed. E. W. Kling; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 27–48. Cf., specifically, B. D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); idem, *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make it into the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); idem, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 91 ff. For a critical view on this, cf. also M. Meiser, "Das Petrus-evangelium und die spätere großkirchliche Literatur," in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*, 184–96, esp. 189: "Bekanntlich sind die Grenzen zwischen dem, was später als Häresie bzw. Orthodoxie gilt, im zweiten Jahrhundert noch fließend."

¹⁰⁵ Here scholars discuss whether reception-history up to the second century could tell us something about how far we can get back to the earliest traditions concerning Jesus' life and mission: "Die Bedeutung der apokryphen Jesusüberlieferungen liegt zunächst ... darin, dass sie die Breite und Vielfalt der *Rezeption* der Gestalt, des Wirkens und Geschicks Jesu im antiken Christentum vor Augen führen"; J. Frey and J. Schröter, "Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen: Zur Einführung in Thema und Konzeption des vorliegenden Bandes," in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen*, 3–30, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Such an approach is not undisputed: Vielhauer, for instance, explicitly rejects the idea of approaching the apocryphal gospels from a literary-historical point of view. He refers to the uncertainty in drawing lines of historical development and literary dependency between different texts (cf. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, 614). He mentions the difficulty in a "literaturgeschichtlich sachgemäßen Gruppierung des Materials ... Man muß auf das Nachzeichnen von literaturgeschichtlichen Entwicklungslinien in diesem Material einstweilen verzichten." By articulating this skepticism he is right, especially when considering the fact that we do not have any certainty regarding literary dependency between diverse texts. On the other hand, *Gattungsgeschichte*, viz. *genre studies*, cannot avoid raising historical issues also. By reconstructing processes of literary evolution we do try to characterize the historical development of a certain *genre*, like gospel-literature. Accordingly, in more recent times, Theissen, suggests understanding the apocryphal literature as a certain kind of a continuation and a revision of earlier Christian literature. For him apocryphal literature is an "Ausdruck neuer charismatischer Anfänge," a "Weiterführung der pseudepigraphen Literatur," and a "Ausdruck der Tendenz zu funktionalen Gattungen"; G. Theissen, *Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments als literaturgeschichtliches Problem: Vorgetragen am 27.11.2004* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007), 37.

diversification of gospel-stories in the second century C. E. basically appears as a literary-historical phenomenon. And more particularly, it is already Mark's and Matthew's literary creativeness which had important effects on later literature. In other words, later gospel-writers have obviously built upon Mark's and Matthew's literary concepts – though revising them and developing their own literary strategies even further. My argument, presented here, thus implies the idea that the authors of the apocryphal gospels basically have continued the impetus of literary creativity as it was defined by Mark and further developed by Matthew. In continuing and re-defining, broadening and shortening, incorporating, and focalizing the narrative gospel-account, the gospel-*genre* as a literary concept was finally approved. Consequently, the reception of Mark's Gospel *must* have ended in a literary diversity as represented most evidently in the so-called apocryphal gospels. It may well be that precisely against this background the search for a textually as well as literarily stable version of "Mark" was finally urged: it was on the basis of textual fluidity and literary diversity that Mark's identity was founded at last.