

## **Professor Dr Dr Matthias Becker**

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### **Biography**

I studied Theology and Classics at the University of Heidelberg and the University of Tübingen, from which I also received a doctoral degree (Dr. phil.) in Greek Philology.

Before arriving in Heidelberg, I was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Tübingen (2011–2015) and the University of Göttingen (2015–2020). In 2017, I received a doctoral degree in Patristics (Dr. theol.) from the University of Göttingen, where I also completed my Habilitation degree in 2019 (*venia legendi*: New Testament Studies).

In 2014, I was awarded the Manfred Lautenschlaeger Award for Theological Promise. In 2015, I was awarded a Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which I held at University College, Oxford (UK) in 2016. Three years later (2019), a Feodor Lynen Alumnus Research Fellowship brought me to Yale Divinity School (New Haven, USA). Since 2020, I serve as professor of New Testament theology at the University of Heidelberg.

I teach at all levels and would be delighted to hear from anyone who is interested in pursuing a course of study at our Faculty of Theology, including a PhD programme.

### **Research Interests and Doctoral Supervision**

My research is generally devoted to the New Testament within the broad and multi-faceted context of Greco-Roman culture. Thematically, I am especially interested in (1) the New Testament and ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, (2) the study of the canonical Gospels within the context of ancient Greek and Roman biography (including the “remembered Jesus”), (3) literary polemics and communication of threat, and (4) New Testament theologies of marriage and family. Furthermore, having worked on pagan criticism of Christianity in the second and third centuries CE (Celsus, Porphyry), I am also interested in the reception of the New Testament in Greco-Roman paganism and in patristic literature. In my publications, I have devoted myself to early Greek poetry (Hesiod), late antique Platonism, including Platonic criticism of Christianity (Eunapius, Porphyry), Luke-Acts, the Pastoral Epistles, the Synoptics, the Pauline Epistles, the Epistle to the Hebrews, 2Peter und the Apocalypse of John.

I am happy to supervise scientific projects on the New Testament. I welcome applicants and I am interested in all topics of relevance to New Testament theology and literature, from both a historical-philological and a theological perspective. I am especially interested in the Greek and Roman contexts of the New Testament (and other early Christian writings), such as religion, rhetoric, literature, topics of pagan education and erudition as well as philosophy in general (esp. Platonism, Stoicism, Epicureanism; philosophical theology, cosmology, ethics, political theory, philosophy of marriage and the family). Furthermore, New Testament ecclesiology and pneumatology are of interest to me.

## Academic Appointments

- 2025–        Dean of Studies, Faculty of Theology, University of Heidelberg  
2020–        Full Professor of New Testament, University of Heidelberg  
2020        Lectureship, Institute of Protestant Theology, University of Osnabrück  
2019–2020    Postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Theology, University of Göttingen  
2019        Feodor Lynen Alumnus Research Fellowship (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) at Yale Divinity School (New Haven, CT, USA)  
2017–2018    Lectureship, Department of Classics, University of Göttingen  
2016–2020    Lectureship, Faculty of Theology, University of Göttingen  
2016        Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) at University College, Oxford (UK)  
2015– 2019    Postdoctoral researcher at the Collaborative Research Centre 1136 “Education and Religion” (University of Göttingen), project D02: “Religion in the Discourse of the Educated: Luke the Evangelist and the Greek orator Dio Chrysostom”  
2011–2015    Postdoctoral researcher at the Collaborative Research Centre 923 “Threatened Orders” (University of Tübingen); project D01: “Platonism and Christianity: Philosophical and Literary Constellations of Threat in Late Antiquity”  
2010–2015    Lectureship, Department of Classics, University of Tübingen

## Education

- 2019        Habilitation (New Testament Studies), University of Göttingen  
2017        Dr. theol. (Patristics), University of Göttingen  
2012        State Exam (Theology, Classical Philology), University of Heidelberg  
2011        Dr. phil. (Greek Philology), University of Tübingen  
2009        Magister artium (Theology, Greek Philology), University of Heidelberg  
2003        Certificate in Ancient Hebrew language (Hebraicum), Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology, Frankfurt am Main

## Selected Publications

### Monographs

- Lukas und Dion von Prusa. Das lukianische Doppelwerk im Kontext paganer Bildungsdiskurse (Studies in Cultural Contexts of the Bible 3). Paderborn: Brill/Ferdinand Schöningh 2020.
- Die Bedrohung der Polis. Hesiods *Werke und Tage* als Zeugnis literarischer Bedrohungskommunikation (Bedrohte Ordnungen 9). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2018.
- Porphyrrios: *Contra Christianos*. Neue Sammlung der Fragmente, Testimonien und Dubia mit Einleitung, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen (Texte und Kommentare 52). Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter 2016.
- Eunapios aus Sardes: *Biographien über Philosophen und Sophisten*. Einleitung, Übersetzung, Kommentar (Roma Aeterna 1). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2013.
- Ehe, Familie und Agamie. Die Begründung von Lebensformen angesichts gesellschaftlicher Pluralität im Neuen Testament und heute, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck <sup>1</sup>2024, <sup>2</sup>2025.

## Recent Articles

- Literarische Ikonen? Spirituelle Biographik mit Philon, Lukas und Plutarch, in: *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 150 (2025), 747–762.
- Pneuma im Orakelwesen. Die Inspiration der Pythia in Texten von Cicero bis Plutarch und ein Ausblick auf Geistprophetie im Neuen Testament, in: Benjamin Schliesser, Reinhard Feldmeier, Jörg Frey (Hg.): *Geist. Phänomenologie – Religionsgeschichte – Theologie. Ein Kompendium*. Unter Mitarbeit von Saskia Urech (WUNT 542), Tübingen 2025, 89–123.
- Philo's *Lives* and Luke's Gospel: Features of Hagiographical Discourse in Early Imperial-Era Biography, in: Maren R. Niehoff (Hg.), *The Art of Contextualizing Philo of Alexandria (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 190)*, Tübingen 2025, 235–261.
- Unbekannter Gott, in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 33 (2024), 71–88.
- Rhetoric, in: *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* 5 (2024), 688–697.
- Zeugnis und Medium des göttlichen Redens. Überlegungen zu Bibelphilologie und Schriftbindung, in: *Theologische Beiträge* 55 (2024), 175–195.
- Der Gott der Ehepaare und Kinder. Ehe- und Familientheologie bei den Apostolischen Vätern, in: Jan Doehorn, Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler (Hg.), *Über Gott. Festschrift für Reinhard Feldmeier zum 70. Geburtstag*, Tübingen 2022, 351–374.
- Psychagogische Schockrhetorik für Zermürbte. Bedrohungskommunikation im Hebräerbrief, in: *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift* 39 (2022), 247–273.
- Ekklesiologie der sanften Macht. Der 1. Timotheusbrief und die antike Fürstenspiegel-Literatur, in: *Biblische Zeitschrift* 64 (2020), 277–305.
- Petrus Socraticus? Socratic Reminiscences in Luke's Portrait of the Apostle Peter, in: *Philologia Classica* 15 (2020), 54–71.
- Metaphor III: Greco-Roman Antiquity, in: *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* 18 (2020), 974–976.
- Zwischen Gelehrsamkeit und Angleichung an Gott. Bildung in der spätantiken Philosophie, in: Peter Gemeinhardt (Hg.), *Was ist Bildung in der Vormoderne? (SERAPHIM 4)*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2019, 205–228.
- Luke-Acts III.A: Patristics and Orthodox Churches, in: *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* 17 (2019), 150–153.
- Die *Vita Procli* im Kontext neuplatonischer Philosophenviten, in: Irmgard Männlein-Robert (Hg.), *Über das Glück. Marinos, Das Leben des Proklos*. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit interpretierenden Essays versehen von Matthias Becker, John Dillon, Udo Hartmann, Christoph Helmig, Irmgard Männlein-Robert, Dominic O'Meara, Stefan Schorn, Benjamin Topp (SAPERRE XXXIV). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2019, 195–229.
- Origen the Sophist: Anti-Sophistic Polemic in Porphyry's *Contra Christianos*, in: *Vigiliae Christianae* 73 (2019), 159–173.
- A Template for Picturing Rivals? Paul's Depictions of Opponents and the Elements of Anti-Sophistic Polemic, in: *Biblische Notizen NF* 180 (2019), 105–129.
- Plutarch's *Septem sapientium convivium*: An Example of Greco-Roman Sympotic Literature, in: Soham Al-Suadi, Peter-Ben Smit (eds.), *T&T Clark Handbook to Early Christian Meals in the Greco-Roman World*. London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark 2019, 31–43.