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This study is centred around the question what significance, if any, is attached to the geographical settings in which John the Baptist is portrayed in the first-century narratives in which he occurs. In contrast to earlier studies which pursue questions pertaining to the location or locations associated with John with the historical Baptist in mind, the focus of this study is on the significance of the geographical settings in which the Baptist is portrayed from a narrative-critical point of view.

The findings of this study show that in the context of a particular narrative it makes perfect sense to ask for the significance of the geographical settings in which John appears. Although the specifics are unique in each case, a common pattern can be discerned in that the geographical settings in which the Baptist appears contributes to a better understanding of the character of the Baptist in relation to the main characters and to major themes in the first-century narratives in which John the Baptist figures. Furthermore, the geographical settings ascribed to the Baptist differ from narrative to narrative, even with respect to the place of John's execution. Apparently, in ancient texts, even ancient non-fictional texts, the geographical setting of a certain event is not considered something that needed to be preserved throughout tradition unchanged.