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Abstract

The present study explores in what ways the name of Jesus was invoked by Pagans, Jews, and Christians. It is shown that in contrast to famous worthies of the past, such as Solomon and the patriarchs, whose reputations grew over the centuries, the name of Jesus was invoked during his public ministry and continued for centuries following the Easter proclamation. Besides important texts, the artifactual evidence is also examined.

Keywords

charms, demons, evil spirits, exorcism, invocations, Jesus, magical papyri, spells

Introduction

Since the inauguration of the largely western quest of the historical Jesus in the late 18th century, the demonological and exorcistic elements in the Gospels have been all too often ignored by the scholars of the quest.¹ The Gospel passages briefly mentioned earlier were the source of embarrassment for many ‘rational’ thinkers in this period. Influenced by the Enlightenment, these scholars searched for a Jesus largely devoid of exorcisms and miracles.

In recent years assumptions have changed, with scholars adopting a more open mind on this question.² They have done so, in part, because of a wealth of data that has come to light. Amulets, magic bowls, magic papyri, lamellae, testimonials (literary and inscribed on stone) have made it increasingly difficult to set aside what is clearly a central element in the public life and activities of Jesus of Nazareth. The understanding of history and the role of the historian has also changed. Historians recognize their task in more descriptive terms, seeking to present what humans in times past did, said, and observed. Historians are not philosophers or scientists whose task is to try to explain the metaphysics or science that lies behind what the ancients think happened and attempted to describe.³ Attitudes have also changed because of credible, first-hand accounts of spiritual, supernatural events, often in developing world settings, that cannot be dismissed.

We have entered a phase of biblical scholarship and historical study that rightly recognizes that the essence of Jesus’ preaching and the goals of his public activities cannot be adequately understood if the demonological and exorcistic elements are not taken into account.⁴ The purpose of the present essay is to probe what may be regarded as some of the most important features of these elements and ask what we can learn from them in Christian work around the world.

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A Survey of the New Testament Data

The writings of the New Testament are replete with references to Satan, demons, and evil spirits. These data will be surveyed in only cursory fashion. Special attention will be given to three passages at the end of this section.

Satan (*ho satanas*) occurs some three dozen times in the New Testament, almost half of these in the Gospels. Jesus faces Satan in the wilderness, where he is tempted (Matt 4:10; Mark 1:13).⁵ We are told that Jesus ‘was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him’ (Mark 1:13). The ‘wild beasts’ (*theria*) should probably be understood as Satan’s allies, perhaps even demonic powers. Jesus is accused of being empowered by Satan, enabling him to cast out demons (Matt 12:26; Mark 3:23, 26; Luke 11:18). Jesus sees Satan fall from heaven (Luke 10:18). When Peter opposes Jesus’ shocking disclosure of his impending suffering, he is rebuked with surprising severity: ‘Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men’ (Mark 8:33; Matt 16:23). Jesus defends his act of healing the woman with the curved spine on the Sabbath, asking: ‘And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?’ (Luke 13:16).

Beelzebul (*Beelzeboul*) occurs seven times in the Gospels, all in reference to the accusation leveled against Jesus that his remarkable success in exorcism is due to the assistance of Beelzebul, the ‘prince of demons’ (Matt 12:24, 27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15, 18, 19). Jesus warns his disciples that if their critics ‘have called the master of the house Be-elzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household’ (Matt 10:25).

Devil (*ho diabolos*) occurs some three dozen times in the New Testament, with just under half appearing in the Gospels. The devil tempts Jesus (Matt 4:1, 5, 8, 11; Luke 4:2, 3, 6, 13). It is the devil who sows the tares in the field (Matt 13:39). It is the devil who snatches the word of the gospel from the hearts of people who hear it (Luke 8:12). The wicked will be sent away ‘into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’ (Matt 25:41). Jesus accuses his critics and those who plot his death that they are of their father the devil, who from the beginning was a liar and murderer (John 8:44). Not only does the devil put villainy into the heart of Judas Iscariot (John 13:2), Judas is even referred to as a devil (John 6:70).

Evil One (*ho poneros*) occurs nine times in the New Testament, three of which appear in the Gospels. It is the evil one who comes and snatches away the gospel of God’s rule (Matt 13:19). The tares sown in the wheat field are ‘the sons of the evil one’ (Matt 13:38). Jesus prays that God protect his disciples from the evil one (John 17:15). The Lord’s Prayer may also refer to the evil one: ‘And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one [*apo tou ponerou*]’ (Matt 6:13).⁶

In this brief overview it is readily observed that Satan, devil, and evil one are used interchangeably. A few other epithets for Satan will be mentioned in passing.

Dragon (*ho drakon*) occurs some 13 times in Revelation. *Serpent* (*ho ophis*) occurs four times in Revelation (Rev 12:9, 14, 15; 20:2 [*ho ophis ho archaios*]).⁷ Related is Jesus’ promise to his disciples that he has given them ‘authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions [*tou patein epano opheon kai skorpion*], and over all the power of the enemy’ (Luke 10:19). Here ‘serpents’ does not refer to Satan, but to his subordinates. And finally, *Belial*/*Beliar* (*Beliar*) occurs once, in Paul’s rhetorical question: ‘What accord has Christ with Beliar [*Beliar*]?’ Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?’ (2 Cor 6:15).

By far the most frequent are the many references to demons and unclean spirits. *Demon* (*ho daimon/to daimonion*) occurs more than 60 times in the New Testament, most of these in the Gospels.⁸ The list grows longer when we add the verb *demonized* (*daimonizesthai*). This verb occurs thirteen times in the New Testament, all in the Gospels. The list grows considerably longer when we include the many occurrences of (*unclean*) *spirits* (*ta pneumata ta akatharta*).⁹

From the very outset of Jesus' public life he encounters demons and unclean spirits. In Capernaum's synagogue (Mark 1:21–28; Luke 4:31–37) Jesus is confronted by an unclean spirit: 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God' (Mark 1:24). Jesus silences the spirit and casts it out. Jesus' action and the immediacy of the results are so impressive the congregation cries out: 'What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!' (Mark 1:27). The evangelist's summaries imply that exorcism was a commonplace in the ministry of Jesus: 'And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons' (Mark 1:34; cf. 1:32, 39; Matt 4:24; 8:16; Luke 8:2); 'And whenever the unclean spirits beheld him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God"' (Mark 3:11).

Jesus authorizes his disciples to proclaim the kingdom of God and to cast out evil spirits (Mark 3:13–15; 6:7; Matt 10:1; Luke 9:1–2). The disciples rejoice that the 'demons are subject' to them 'in the name' of Jesus (Luke 10:17). Nevertheless, they find that some evil spirits are too difficult for them (Mark 9:14–29; Matt 17:14–20; Luke 9:37–43). But they are not too difficult for Jesus (Mark 9:25; Matt 17:18; Luke 9:42).¹⁰

Two of the exorcisms are especially noteworthy. In one Jesus casts out a demon from a distance (Mark 7:24–30 'she went home, and found the child ... and the demon was gone'; Matt 15:21–28 'her daughter was healed instantly'). In the other Jesus is confronted by a man possessed of a 'legion' of demons (Mark 5:1–20; Matt 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39). The possessed man was not ordinary in any way. He lives among the tombs (Mark 5:2–3), perhaps suggesting a necropolis. No one had been able to bind him. Nothing could restrain this man, for he wrenched apart chains and broke the fetters (5:3–4). This description brings to mind the mighty Samson, who could not be bound by anything (cf. Judg 16:7–12).¹¹ The wretched man howls day and night and bruises himself with stones (Mark 5:5). His self-designation as 'Legion, for we are many' (5:9) would bring to mind the Roman legions stationed throughout the empire. The casting of this legion of demons into a nearby herd of swine (5:11–12) may well have brought to mind Legion X Fretensis, stationed in Israel throughout much of the first and second centuries, whose mascot was the boar's head.¹² The drowning in the Sea of Galilee adumbrates the final fate of evil spirits, who will be cast into the abyss of hell (cf. Matt 12:43; *T. Sol.* 5:11; 11:6, for examples of demons' fear of water). From a Jewish perspective, the demonized man was an example of wretchedness and uncleanness that could not be surpassed. Yet, after his encounter with Jesus, this man sits before Jesus (perhaps as a student?), clothed, and in his right man (5:15). Indeed, so restored is this man that he begs to accompany Jesus and take part in his ministry (5:18–20). This man, in effect, becomes Jesus' first apostle to the Gentiles: 'And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and all people marveled' (5:20).

Jesus' exorcistic and healing power is such that his critics accused him of being in league with Satan himself: 'He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons' (Mark 3:22; cf. Matt 9:32–34; 12:24; Luke 11:15; John 7:20 'You have a demon!'; 8:48, 49, 52; 10:20, 21). Even John the Baptist, because of his asceticism, was accused of being demonized (Matt 11:18; Luke 7:33). A worried Herod Antipas hears of Jesus' amazing powers, including his exorcisms (as the context clearly implies; cf. Mark 6:13–15), and concludes that surely it must be the beheaded John the Baptist come back to life (Mark 6:16).¹³ He fears that the very ghost (or demon) of John, having returned from the other side, now inhabits and empowers Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁴ These accusations and confused speculations were not intended to pay respect, but reflect the awesomeness of Jesus' powers and how they impressed Jesus' contemporaries. We hear of remarkable confession and acclaim: 'What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him' (Mark 1:28); 'Never was anything like this seen

in Israel' (Matt 9:33; cf. 22:33). Indeed, people press against Jesus attempting to touch him and by doing so hope to be healed (Mark 3:9–10; 5:28–29; 6:56). It is widely recognized that extraordinary power has been given to Jesus: 'Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands!' (Mark 6:2).

Exorcism and the Reputation of Jesus Before Easter

There are three very important passages that provide insight into how Jesus as exorcist was viewed during his public, pre-Easter activities: (1) Mark 9:38–40; (2) Luke 11:19–20; and (3) Matt 12:41–42. These passages have been chosen because taken together they help us recognize the great significance the demonological and exorcistic dimension is for understanding accurately the public teaching and activities of Jesus and the reputation he acquired.

Passage One: Mark 9:38–40

The story in which the disciples report to Jesus the activities of the exorcist not of their following who casts out demons in the name of Jesus is truly remarkable and warrants attention:

³⁸ John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us.'³⁹ But Jesus said, 'Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me.'⁴⁰ For he that is not against us is for us.'

The authenticity of this passage is virtually guaranteed by the improbability that early Christians would invent a saying of Jesus that expresses no objection to someone outside of the movement making use of Jesus' name.¹⁵ The early Church's discomfort is seen in several places. The offer of Simon Magus to purchase with silver the Holy Spirit, so that he too might engage in apostolic work, including the laying on of hands, is sternly rebuked (Acts 8:9–24). Peter says to Simon:

²⁰ Peter said to him: 'Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.'²² Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.'²³ For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.'²⁴ And Simon answered, 'Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.' (Acts 8:20–24)

Trafficking in powers and spirits has no place in the Spirit-driven movement of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is not a commercial commodity. An outsider, that is, one who has not repented and come to faith in Messiah Jesus, God's Son, cannot simply purchase the Holy Spirit and enjoy its healing, restorative power.¹⁶ It is not hard to see why the early Christian community would be uncomfortable with a professional exorcist that makes use of the name of Jesus and yet is not one of Jesus' followers.¹⁷

A second passage in Acts illustrates a similar principle. In this story we hear of a woman with a spirit of fortune-telling, a spirit that accurately recognizes who Paul and his companions are (Acts 16:16–24). In this 'we' passage we have the report of an eyewitness:

¹⁶ As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.¹⁷ She followed Paul and us, crying, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.'¹⁸ And this she did for many days.

But Paul was annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, 'I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour. (Acts 16:16–18)

The slave girl amounts to little more than an investment for her owners. Because she accurately describes Paul and his companions ('These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation') readers of Acts will assume that she truly does possess a 'spirit of divination', or, more literally, 'a python spirit' (*pneuma puthona*), a spirit often associated with the Greek god Apollo.¹⁸ Moreover, when Paul casts out the spirit, the girl loses her fortune-telling ability (*manteuomene*) and her owners seize Paul and Silas, dragging them before the city magistrates (Acts 16:19–21). In short, the owners are bringing a civil action against the apostle and his colleague.

From a Christian point of view, the slave girl (or perhaps we should say the spirit prompting her) has said nothing wrong. What is not acceptable is that her confession is energized by a spirit that is estranged from the Spirit of God. Paul's silencing the confession of the python spirit is analogous to Jesus' refusal to allow evil spirits to speak (e.g. Mark 1:24–25, 34; 3:11–12). One also thinks of Paul's assertion that "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3).

A third story in Acts provides a very close parallel to the story of the strange exorcist in Mark 9. Here we encounter professional exorcists, who become aware of the potency of Jesus' name (Acts 19:11–20). As professionals they acquire charms and incantations, as well as paraphernalia thought to possess powers that will assist in attempting to heal and cast out evil spirits. Part of the story reads as follows:

¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, 'I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.' ¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. ¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?' ¹⁶ And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (Acts 19:13–16)

This remarkable story presupposes knowledge of exorcistic techniques and assumptions. Ancient readers and hearers of this story would immediately assume that the seven sons of Sceva were among the most capable exorcists (*exorkiston*). This is because they are itinerant (*ton perierchomenon*), suggesting exorcism was their vocation, hence they are professionals, they are Jewish (and Jewish exorcists, charms, and incantations were valued in late antiquity; cf. *PGM* IV.3007–27),¹⁹ they were seven in number (a propitious number), they were brothers (providing solidarity and mutual reinforcement), and they were sons of a ruling priest (suggesting inherited power and ritual). In other words, their credentials were impeccable.²⁰ Moreover, the reference to fleeing naked will remind readers of their clothing. In all probability their robes were adorned with symbols and letters thought to enhance power and provide protection against evil spirits. Alas, this was not the case.

Not only were the seven exorcists completely and shamefully defeated by the evil spirit, the spirit confessed its knowledge of Jesus and his apostle: 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?' (Acts 19:15). The implication is that the evil spirit respects both Jesus and his apostle, but has no regard whatsoever for the seven professional exorcists. Their defeat results in a collapse of confidence in magic in Ephesus, with many coming forward and confessing their practices and burning their books of magic (Acts 19:17–19).²¹ With this retreat of evil, surely understood as a setback for the rule of Satan, the 'word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily' (Acts 19:20).²²

These three passages from Acts strongly support the contention that the story in Mark 9 is no pious creation of the early Church. Standing in tension with the Church's negative view of exorcistic activity

outside the Christian community, Jesus, disagreeing with John (a prominent apostle in the early Church), commands his disciples: ‘Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us’ (Mark 9:39–40).

The implications of this story are quite remarkable. In a short time Jesus has become so well known as an effective healer and exorcist that at least one professional exorcist invoked his name, much as other exorcists invoked the names of Old Testament worthies, among them especially Israel’s famous wise king Solomon (as we see in Eleazar, the exorcist described by Josephus, *Ant.* 8.46–47, and in many magic papyri, lamellae, and bowls). To the best of my knowledge this is unprecedented. The legend of Solomon as master exorcist took centuries to develop. The legend of Apollonius of Tyana took at least one hundred years and in fact may have been exaggerated in response to Christian preaching and missionary activity. Legends about various Jewish holy men (Honi the Circle Drawer and Hanina ben Dosa, to name two of the best known) took generations to grow. Even here, though, no one in the Judeo-Christian tradition invoked the names of these respected teachers. Invoking the name of Jesus in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and later centuries is in some ways not too surprising, but the invocation of his name *during his public ministry*, which at the time could not have perdured for more than one or two years, is truly remarkable.

Passage Two: Luke 11:19–20

The second significant text is part of the controversy over Jesus’ effectiveness in healing and exorcism. It has already been noted that his contemporaries remarked favorably upon seeing works of power that from their experience were simply unprecedented. Others also recognized the unprecedented nature of Jesus’ works of power, but chose to find the source of these works not in God but in Satan.

Jesus replied to the charge of collusion with Satan by pointing out the lack of logic in the accusation. Why would Satan cast out Satan? If his house or kingdom is divided, then he surely is coming to an end (Mark 3:23–26; cf. *T. Moses* 10:1). Jesus’ remarkable success is possible only if the ‘strong man’ (i.e. Satan) has been bound by one who is stronger (i.e. Jesus). When bound, the strong man’s goods can be plundered (Mark 3:27), that is, Jesus can rescue those taken captive by Satan.

Most of Jesus’ reply is expected, even conventional. But part of it, evidently preserved in what Gospel scholars usually identify as Q, is especially interesting and not easily explained as produced by the Christian community. Once again we encounter a saying of Jesus that stands somewhat in tension with Christian thinking in the years following Easter. Jesus replies to his critics:

¹⁹ And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁰ But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Luke 11:19–20; cf. Matt 12:27–28)

This passage offers two strong points that support authenticity.²³ The first (v. 19) is the final rebuttal to the charge that Jesus is empowered by Satan. If his exorcisms are evidence that he is in league with Satan, then can the same be said of the ‘sons’ (or disciples) of his scribal critics? The logic behind Jesus’ rhetorical question is consistent with his openness to the strange exorcist mentioned in Mark 9, for Jesus is ready to acknowledge that there are those who have the power to cast out Satan. For reasons already advanced, the saying we see here in Luke 11:19 resists being set aside as a community creation. What Christian would invent a saying in which Jesus, in defending himself, concedes that the *disciples of his critics* are also able to exorcise evil spirits? Jesus’ saying reflects the realities of early 1st-century Jewish Palestine, not the theological sensitivities of the early Church.

The second point that supports the authenticity of the passage is seen in the unusual diction that Jesus has employed: ‘But if it is by the finger of God [*en daktulo theou*] that I cast out demons ... ’ (v. 20). The language is so odd that even Matthew, writing for a primarily Jewish audience, well versed in Scripture and synagogue, changes the saying to read: ‘But if it is by the Spirit of God [*en pneumati theou*] that I cast out demons ... ’ (Matt 12:28). Although it is debated, most commentators regard Luke’s wording as original and Matthew’s wording as redactional.²⁴

If Luke’s ‘by the finger of God’ is original, it almost certainly alludes to the confession of Pharaoh’s magicians, with respect to the works of power God performed through Moses and Aaron: ‘This is the finger of God’ (Exod 8:19). The magicians could imitate some of the mighty deeds of Moses and Aaron, but not all. They truthfully informed Pharaoh that what Moses and Aaron were doing could only come from God, not from magic or trickery. In later Jewish tradition (e.g. CD 5:17–19 ‘Belial raised up Jannes and his brother’; *Exod. Rab.* 9.11 [on Exod 7:22]; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 7:11; cf. 2 Tim 3:8), Pharaoh’s magicians are identified as Jannes and Jambres, who were raised up by Satan and whose works of power were aided through witchcraft and ‘angels of destruction’ (i.e. demons).

The allusion to Exod 8:19 and the interpretive tradition that developed alongside it regarding the Satanic orientation of Pharaoh’s magicians makes Jesus’ deeds all the more impressive. If he is not in fact in league with Satan (as were Pharaoh’s magicians, who opposed Moses and Aaron and accordingly opposed Israel’s liberation), then he may rightly claim that his mighty deeds are ‘by the finger of God’ and by no other power.

Jesus’ claim is extraordinary. His allusion to the confession of Pharaoh’s magicians put himself in the company of the great Moses and his brother Aaron, through whom God performed his greatest saving deeds, delivering Israel from the bondage of Egyptian slavery. Consistent with hints of wilderness typology seen elsewhere, Jesus is suggesting that through his ministry, especially seen in the exorcisms, God is effecting a new deliverance of Israel.

Passage Three: Matthew 12:41–42

Jesus makes another startling comparison in a context in which his critics demand of him a sign. In the Matthean context the request for a sign (12:38) follows directly after the accusation of being in league with Satan (12:22–37). It is probable that the requested sign should be understood in this context. In other words, what sign can Jesus provide that will prove that his works of power, including and especially his exorcisms, are truly of divine origin?

Jesus declares that an evil generation will only receive the sign of Jonah. The precise point of this analogy and the complicated source critical questions that attend it are not of concern here. But what is of interest is the subsequent points of comparison. Jesus asserts:

⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴² The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (Matt 12:41–42)

Not only has Jesus claimed to be greater than Jonah, who survived a remarkable ordeal and went on to call an entire pagan city to repentance, he has claimed to be greater than Israel’s greatest monarch, Solomon. This comparison of course is highly significant in the present context, for in the time of Jesus Solomon was regarded as the greatest exorcist who ever lived. That Jesus could claim to be ‘something greater than Solomon’ is quite remarkable.

Taken together, the three passages (Mark 9:38–40; Luke 11:19–20; Matt 12:41–42) that have been considered underscore the need to take carefully and fully into account Jesus' exorcisms. His proclamation of the kingdom (or rule) of God and the retreat of the kingdom of Satan cannot be assessed adequately if the miracles, especially the exorcisms, are put aside and either ignored or treated superficially.

Exorcism and the Reputation of Jesus After Easter

The final part of this paper surveys four Pagan texts and two Jewish texts, in which the name of Jesus is invoked.²⁵

No. 1: A Tested Charm against Demons (PGM IV.3007–86; late 3rd Century)

A tested charm of Pibechis for those possessed by demons: take oil of unripe olives with the herb mastigia and the fruit pulp of the lotus, and boil them with colorless marjoram, while saying, 'IOEL OS SARTHIONI ... Come out of ____ (add the victim's name)'. The Phylactery: on a tin lamella write 'IAEO ABRAOTH ...' and hang it on the patient. It is terrifying to every demon, a thing he fears. After placing the patient opposite you, conjure as follows: 'I conjure you by the God of the Hebrews, Jesus [*horkizo se kata tou theou ton Hebraion Iesou*], IABA IAE ABRAOTH ... who appears in fire, who is in the midst of land, snow, and fog ... let your angel, the implacable, descend and let him assign the demon flying around this form, which God formed in his holy paradise, because I pray to the holy God ... who saved his people from Pharaoh and brought upon Pharaoh ten plagues because of his disobedience ... I conjure [*horkizo*] you by the seal that Solomon placed on the tongue of Jeremiah ...' (lines 3007–41).²⁶

Pibechis was a legendary magician from Egypt. Accordingly, appeal to such a figure immediately makes us think this incantation for the demon possessed was originally pagan. However, the pagan author, or editor of an older charm, knows full well that he has incorporated Jewish traditions, for in lines 3079–85 he enjoins the patient to be pure and not to eat pork, for the charm is 'Hebraic' (*Hebraikos*).

Adolf Deissmann suspects that 'Jesus' (*Iesous*) was also a later interpolation, thus identifying him with the 'God of the Hebrews'. Describing Jesus this way is consistent with a pagan origin of the text. Deissmann comments: 'The name *Jesu* as part of the formula can hardly be ancient. It was probably inserted by some pagan. No Christian, still less a Jew, would have called Jesus "the god of the Hebrews"'.²⁷ Deissmann is probably correct.²⁸ In PGM XXIIb.18 we find 'god of the Hebrews,' in what is clearly a Jewish text, in this case, the pseudepigraphal *Prayer of Jacob*.²⁹ The epithet also appears in *T. Joseph* 12:3, but on the lips of an Egyptian woman. But in none of these cases do we encounter something as heterodox and unlikely in a Jewish writing as identifying the 'god of the Hebrews' with a person, be it Jesus or someone else.

No. 2: A Marvelous Love Spell (PGM IV.296–433 + P. Mich. 757; 3rd/4th Century)

A marvelous love spell that binds. Take wax (or clay) from a potter's wheel and mold two figurines, a male and a female. Make the male as an armed Ares, holding in his left hand a sword, striking her in the right clavicular region. Make her with her arms behind her back and kneeling ... The incantation which is written and recited is: 'I deposit with you this binding spell, gods of the underworld, Yesemigadon and Koure Persephone Ereschigal and Adonis ... Hermes-Thoth of the underworld and mighty Anoubis, who holds the keys to the (gates) of Hades ...' (PGM IV.296–303, 335–341).³⁰

I deposit with you this binding spell, gods of the underworld, Pluto and Kore Yesemmeigadon and Koure Persephone Ereschigal and Adonis, who is also *barbaritha*, and underworld Hermes-Thoth *phokensepseu earektathou misonktaich* and mighty Anubis *pscriphthat*, who holds the keys to the (gates) of Hades ... (P.Mich. 757, lines 1–4)³¹

In the incantation that is to be recited (beginning with ‘I deposit’) we find mention of ‘Yesemigadon’ (*uesemigadon*) in *PGM* and ‘Yesemmeigadon’ (*uesemmeigadon*) in the Michigan Papyrus. The first part of this strange name, *uese*, may approximate a transliteration of Jesus. The entire word could be a slurred form of ‘Jesus the Great Lord’ (i.e. *Iesous megas adon*),³² or perhaps ‘Jesus the Megadon’.³³ We find unmistakable references, often oddly spelled, to names of the Hebrew deity elsewhere in this charm (and in others that will be considered below). Adonai ([Greek] *adonai* = [Hebrew] *’adonai*)³⁴ and Iao Sabaoth ([Greek] *iao sabaoth* = [Hebrew] *yahweh sebaoth*) also appear in line 17 of the Michigan Papyrus, and similar forms of both epithets appear in line 44. A transliteration of Yahweh may also appear in *PGM* (at line 399: *iaeo*). The Greek transliteration *adon* occurs in LXX Jer 41:5 (= MT 34:5 *’adon*), while *sabaoth* occurs dozens of times in the Old Greek (e.g. Josh 6:17; 1 Sam 1:3, 11, 20, etc.). Approximations of these names and other names of various deities and demons occur in most of the charms and incantations.

The reference to mighty Anubis, ‘who holds the keys of the (gates) of Hades’ (*to tas klidas echonti ton kat’ hadous*),³⁵ is especially interesting. The appearance of this descriptive phrase in close proximity to a possible mention of Jesus is suggestive, when one recalls the words spoken to Simon Peter: ‘I will build my church, and the gates of Hades [*pulai hadou*] shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys [*tas kleidas*] of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind [*deses*] on earth shall be bound [*dedemenon*] in heaven’ (Matt 16:18b–19a). The promise that Peter will have ‘binding’ (*dein*) authority on earth (and in heaven) suits very well the basic purpose of charms and incantations in which various beings are ‘bound’. Similarly, the charm under consideration begins by describing itself as ‘a binding spell’ (*katadesmon*).³⁶

In view of these parallels we must ask if this love spell has alluded to dominical tradition. The evidence is not unambiguous, of course. Nevertheless, the approximate transliteration of the name Jesus, along with clear transliterations of Hebrew names of the deity,³⁷ and language that at points coheres with Jesus’ famous words to Peter, encourages the suggested identification of *uese* with Jesus. Accordingly, we may well have another pagan charm, in which rough allusions are made to Jesus and to the God of Israel.³⁸

No. 3: A Charm to Induce Insomnia (PGM XII.376–96; 4th/5th Century)

Take a living bat and on the right wing paint with myrrh the following figure, and on the left write the seven names of the god [*ta z’onomata katagrapson theou*] as well as, ‘Let her, NN whom NN bore, lie awake until she consents’. And so release the bat again ... The names to be written on the left wing are these: ‘I call upon you, great god, *Thathabathath Pepennabouthi Peptou Bast Jesus [Eiesous] Ouair Amoun* ... let her, NN, lie awake through the whole night and day, until she dies, immediately, immediately; quickly, quickly’.³⁹

The possessive and selfish person who paid to have this charm produced desires a woman so badly that he engages in magic (painting the right wing of a living bat red, drawing a figure, writing out the seven names of God, as well as the petition that this poor woman – not named – ‘lie away until she consents’). So obsessive and mean-spirited is this person that he even is willing to risk her death, if she does not consent.⁴⁰

Tradition held that there were ‘seven names of the God’ (though in the Hebrew Bible the count is somewhat higher). Note also *1 Enoch* 20:7: Gabriel is identified as ‘one of the holy angels, the one over paradise and the dragons and cherubim; seven names of the archangels’. Most or all of this verse is textually uncertain.

On the ‘seven names of the god’, see *T. Sol.* 18:15, where a demon asserts that he is thwarted by names written on seven leaves of laurel. The leaves must be soaked in water and then the water must be sprinkled in the house. See also P.Mich. 3023a (‘Michael, Gabriel ... Phanuel’) and 3472 (‘Michael, Gafriel, Raphael, Uriel, Suriel, Phanuel, Manuel’), which list the names of what are probably the seven archangels.⁴¹

The name Jesus in Hebrew in late antiquity was spelled either *Yeshu’a*, a shortened form of *Yehoshu’a* (or Joshua), or, in an even shorter form *Yeshu*,⁴² or *Eshu* (as in no. 5 below), and was transliterated in Greek in a variety of ways. Attested Greek forms include *Iesous*, *Iesios*, *Iesouos*, and *Isouos*. Accordingly, the unconventional spelling *Eiesous* is not remarkable.

Invoking the ‘great god, *Thathabathath Pepennabouthi Peptou Bast Jesus [Eiesous] Ouair Amoun*’, suggests that the author of the charm was a pagan, who, as in nos. 1 and 2 above, has made use of the name Jesus, perhaps in the sense of a magical word, along with the other magical words *Thathabathath*, etc. Of course, Christians themselves also made use of pagan elements, including magical terms, which may be the case here.

No. 4: A Magician’s Cup (Alexandria, 1st century AD?)

The magician (performs) by Christ [*dia Chrestou*].

One more example in which ‘Christ’ may appear in what is probably a pagan inscription should be mentioned. In the fall of 2008 French marine archaeologist Franck Goddio, co-founder of the Oxford Centre of Maritime Archaeology, announced the discovery of a ceramic cup during underwater exploration of the ancient city of Alexandria, Egypt.⁴³ Goddio and his team found a cup on which are inscribed the words *DIA CHRESTOU HO GOISTAIS*, which may mean ‘the magician by Christ’ or ‘by Christ (performs/acts) the magician’,⁴⁴ perhaps in the sense that ‘the magician (possesses his power) by (or through) Christ’. Goddio and Egyptologist David Fabre date the cup sometime between late second century BC and early first century AD. If the reference is to Jesus Christ, then it would indeed be the earliest inscriptional reference to the founder of Christianity.

However, there are several problems with this suggestion. Although the spelling *Chrestos* (instead of *Christos*) is attested in reference to Jesus Christ (e.g. *PGM* IV.1227–64), the early date of the cup is problematic. Of course, the inscription itself may post-date the cup by a century or more. Another problem has to do with the odd spelling *HO GOISTAIS*. Is this really a variant for *ho goetes* (‘magician’ or ‘enchanter’), or some other form of word that means *magician*? Klaus Hallof, of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, and Bert Smith, professor of classical archaeology and art at Oxford, have suggested that the inscription should be read *OGOISTAIS*, in reference to the god Ogoa, mentioned by Pausanias (c.160 AD), whose followers may have been called Ogoistai.⁴⁵ If so, the inscription should perhaps be translated ‘Among the Ogoistai by Christ (or Chrestus)’.

Although the possibility that the inscription may have referred to Jesus, whose power was invoked by a magician, cannot be ruled out, in my view it is more likely that the reference is to someone named Chrestus (a common enough name), who was either a magician and/or was among the Ogoistai. (For another pagan charm, in which the name Jesus appears, see No. 3.)

BGU 8319 preserves a spell in which a cup is mentioned: ‘I beg and [invoke] you today, that [you come] down to me on this cup [that] is in my right hand, me, [—], so that at the moment that I [give it to —], you will make it become [for him] a cup of healing and cleansing’.⁴⁶ The fragmentary spell ends with the Christian cross (†). This spell and the cup to which allusion is made date from a time much later than the date assigned to the Goddio cup. It is not at all clear if in this case the cup mentioned in *BGU* 8319 functioned in the way we think the Goddio cup functioned.

No. 5: Magic Bowl 163 (5th/6th Century)

And may they block up his lot and his fate and his stars and his star signs and his bindings and his idols. In the name of I-am-that-I-am YHWH Sebaoth and in the name of Jesus [*beshemiah d’eshu*] who conquered the height and the depth by his cross and in the name of his exalted father and in the name of the holy spirits for ever³⁰ and eternity. Amen amen selah. This press is true and established. (M163, lines 29b–30)⁴⁷

Incantation bowls were quite popular in the 4th through 7th centuries.⁴⁸ Their purpose was to bind or capture evil spirits. Aramaic Jewish incantation bowls often appeal to David and/or, especially, to Solomon. In the bowl cited above we have an unmistakable reference to Jesus, even though the unusual spelling for Jesus, *’eshu*, is nowhere else attested. Dan Levene wonders if the spelling reflects Christian Syriac vocalization.⁴⁹ This could be the case. Other elements, including the phrase ‘by his cross’ and the Trinitarian formula (‘in the name of Jesus ... in the name of his exalted Father and in the name of the holy spirits’), may also echo Syrian traditions (see *Acts of Judas Thomas* §39 and §123). The plural ‘holy spirits’ (*ruachi’ qedishta*) may be an imperfectly spelled feminine (i.e. *ruachiah qedishta*) and so should read ‘Holy Spirit’. Again we have coherence with Christian Syriac tradition, in which the Holy Spirit is regularly construed in the feminine.⁵⁰

In my opinion most, if not all of the ‘in the name of’ material in lines 29b–30, is a later interpolation. The text of this Aramaic magic bowl was originally Jewish. Either a Christian took it over or a Jew with syncretistic tendencies glossed the text. I find the latter more probable, for I would think a Christian would have taken the opportunities to gloss the text elsewhere (e.g. in lines 13, 14, and 26).

No. 6: Magic Bowl 155 (5th/6th century)

This amulet shall be to heal Mahadukh² daughter of Neiwandukh. May she be healed from the spirit of the belly³ in the name of ... YHWH holy God,⁴ holy God, holy God, brave God, brave God ... who⁵ sits upon the throne of glory by his word and by the countenance of his glory he created the heavens and completed the world. On account of his great name⁶ may Mahadukh daughter of Neiwandukh be protected, and not be harmed, not in the shade, not in the sun, not in the daytime and not in the night-time ...⁸ In the name of YHWH Sebaoth Elohim the God of Israel who dwells in a temple of fire and ice ...¹² Change your path just as a primal demon [changed his]. In the name of ZWKSYN ZWKSYN A’S^T Christ [*qristos*] accept this rebuke and carry away the evil spirit from the belly of Mahadukh daughter of Neiwandukh. From [...] amen amen selah. (M155 lines 1–6, 8, 12)⁵¹

Allusion to Jesus Christ in this very interesting Aramaic Jewish incantation bowl is less obvious. Half way through line 12 we find a word that appears to read *qristos*, which then should be rendered ‘Christ’. However, the reading could be *qdystos*, in which case we probably have the name of another deity (QDYSTWS).⁵² Even if we accept the reading ‘Christ’, it is not clear that the name

is being used in conscious reference to the founder of Christianity. The author of this incantation may have simply been familiar with the name ‘Christ’ as one of several divine and angelic names, or magical words, to be invoked for protection against evil spirits. On the other hand, a Jew deliberately inserting the name Christ, as the name of a divinity widely regarded as possessing the power to heal sickness and protect against evil spirits, is not hard to imagine.⁵³

Conclusion

We find in these interesting materials a remarkable degree of syncretism. Jewish, Christian, and pagan elements are exploited in attempts to gain the help of heaven, whether for healing, protection against evil spirits or curses, or other matters. What is especially intriguing is the invocation of the name of Jesus by pagans and, on occasion, even by Jews – necessitating a rabbinic ruling against such a practice (cf. *t. Hullin* 2.22). What we see in these incantations, prayers, and curses, many of which admittedly date to three or more centuries after the time of Jesus, is a continuation of a tradition that had its origins in the time of Jesus’ public activities. Long before Easter and the Christian movement’s proclamation of the resurrection and heavenly enthronement of its Lord and Master, professional healers and exorcists of all stripes had begun to invoke the name of Jesus. One of the elements of Jesus’ ministry that impacted his contemporaries, for which he would be remembered by many succeeding generations, was his ability to heal and cast out evil spirits.⁵⁴ For this astounding power, Jesus was well remembered. The reality of the world of spirit and the appeals to the name of Jesus, even by non-Christians who respect the power of his name, in late antiquity mirror a reality today as seen in various parts of the world. Christian studies in cultural contextualization will profit from comparative analysis of these interesting phenomena.

Notes

- 1 There were, of course, important exceptions, which are reviewed in G. H. Twelftre (2007) *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, pp. 25–33.
- 2 I probe this shift in C. A. Evans (1993) ‘Life-of-Jesus Research and the Eclipse of Mythology’, *Theological Studies* 54: 3–36.
- 3 On this important point, see P. R. Eddy and G. A. Boyd (2007) *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, pp. 39–90.
- 4 For succinct summaries of the most important material, see F. E. Brenk (1986) ‘In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period’, *ANRW* II.16.3, pp. 2068–45; and R. D. Kotansky (2000) ‘Demonology’, in C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (eds) *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, pp. 269–73. For an important study on Jesus and demonology, see G. H. Twelftree (1993) *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (WUNT 2.54; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck]; repr. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993).
- 5 E. Best (1965/1990), *The Temptation and the Passion* (SNTSMS 2), 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 6–27.
- 6 For arguments that ‘evil one’ is in view, see R. A. Guelich (1982) *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding*. Waco, TX: Word, p. 297; D. A. Hagner (1993) *Matthew 1–13* (WBC 33A; Dallas, TX: Word, pp. 152–2. See also H. D. Betz (1995) *The Sermon on the Mount*. Hermeneia; PA: Fortress, pp. 411–13. Although Betz favors the reading ‘from evil’, he acknowledges that ‘the power of Satan played an important role in Jesus’ thought’.
- 7 See J. W. van Henten, ‘Dragon’, *DDD* 265–7; W. Foerster (1964) ‘drakon’, *TDNT* 2: 281–3; R. S. Hendel, ‘Serpent’, *DDD* 744–7; J. Fichtner, W. Foerster, and O. Grether (1967) *ophis*, *TDNT* 5: 566–82.

- 8 See G. J. Riley, 'Demon', *DDD*: 235–40; Brenk, 'Demonology in the Early Imperial Period', esp. p. 2093–4 (on Jewish thought), 2098–107 (on Philo), and 2107–16 (on the New Testament).
- 9 For an important note on 'demons' and '(unclean) spirits', see P. G. Bolt (1996) 'Jesus, the Daimons and the Dead', in A. N. S. Lane (ed.) *The Unseen World: Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons and the Heavenly Realm*. Carlisle: Paternoster; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, pp. 75–102, here p. 77 n.3. In the New Testament one occurrence of the adjective 'demonic' is found: 'This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic [*daimoniodes*]' (James 3:15).
- 10 The difficulty for the disciples may have been due to the nature of the demon, described as a 'dumb spirit [*pneuma alalon*]' (Mark 9:17). See also Matt 9:32 (*kophon daimonizomenon*) and 12:22 (*daimonizomenos taphlos kai kophos*). On a spirit that causes muteness and deafness, see *T. Sol.* 12:2: 'I close up ears and I make them mute and deaf [*ota epidino kai poio auta boba kai kopha*]'.
- 11 On possible allusions to the Samson stories, as well as other aspects of background, see R. D. Aus (2003) *My Name is 'Legion': Palestinian Judaic Traditions in Mark 5:1–20 and Other Gospel Texts* (Studies in Judaism). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- 12 On this interesting possibility, see M. Lau (2007) 'Die *Legio X Fretensis* und der Besessene von Gerasa. Anmerkungen zur Zahlenangabe "ungefähr Zweitausend" (Mk 5,13)', *Biblica* 88: 351–64.
- 13 In the Gospel of Luke we are told that Jesus has a message for his enemy Antipas: 'Go and tell that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course"' (Luke 13:32).
- 14 See R. H. Gundry (1993) *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, pp. 303. Herod's thinking would have been something to this effect: 'John's being raised has enabled him to work wonders which outstrip anything he did prior to his execution'. The value that magicians and soothsayers attached to blood and body parts of the dead, especially those who had died violently, supports this view.
- 15 Rightly C. E. B. Cranfield (1959) *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, CGTC. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 309. See also R. Pesch (1977/1991) *Das Markusevangelium*, 2 vols., HTKNT 2.1–2; Freiburg: Herder, 2:109. For further discussion of the passage, see Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 125–7.
- 16 The portrait of Simon Magus in Acts sparks an interesting legend of the arch-heretic, who in time will be vilified as a Gnostic and practitioner of black magic. See M. Dickie (2001) *Magic and Magicians in the Graeco-Roman World*. London: Routledge, p. 208.
- 17 For helpful discussion of many details touching magic and exorcism, see H.-J. Klauck (2003) *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, pp. 13–23.
- 18 For more details, see Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, pp. 63–72, esp. pp. 65–6; Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, p. 247.
- 19 On this point and related issues, see G. Lacerenza (2002) 'Jewish Magicians and Christian Clients in Late Antiquity: The Testimony of Amulets and Inscriptions', in L. V. Rutgers (ed.) *What Athens has to do with Jerusalem: Essays on Classical, Jewish, and Early Christian Art and Archaeology in Honor of Gideon Foerster* (Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 1). Leuven: Peeters, pp. 393–419.
- 20 For discussion of these details, see Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, pp. 98–102; Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, p. 231.
- 21 The author of Acts says, 'bringing their books [*tas biblous*] they burned them'. One recalls the action of Emperor Augustus, who in 13 BC 'collected whatever prophetic writings of Greek or Latin origin were in circulation anonymously or under the names of authors of little repute, and burned more than two thousand of them' (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 31.1). This is the translation of J. C. Rolfe (1998) *Suetonius*, Volume I (LCL 31; rev.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 197. However, the 'prophetic writings'

- (*fatidicorum librorum*) should probably be translated ‘divination books’ or ‘magic books’, as is understood by H. D. Betz (1992) ‘Introduction to the Greek Magical Papyri’, in H. D. Betz (ed.) *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells: Volume One: Texts*, 2nd edn. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, p. xli: ‘Augustus ordered 2,000 magical scrolls to be burned’. The Latin *fatidicus* is often used in reference to soothsaying and announcements of fate. The Jewish author of Ps.-Phocylides enjoins his readers to ‘keep away from magical books [*magikon biblon*]’ (149). For the use of *biblos* in reference to books of magic, see Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 1.44.4; *PGM* III.424 (‘holy book’); XIII.735 (‘in the book’), 737 (‘in the first book’), 739 (‘what brings alive all your books’), 740 (‘the oath that precedes each book’), 741 (‘the power of the book’). For more on magicians and soothsayers as enemies of the Roman government, see R. MacMullen (1966) *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 95–127.
- 22 For recent studies of the several passages in Acts that have been reviewed here, see D. Marguerat (2003) ‘Magic and Miracle in the Acts of the Apostles’, in T. Klutz (ed.) *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon* (JSNTSup 245). London and New York: T & T Clark International, pp. 100–24; S. E. Porter (2007) ‘Magic in the Book of Acts’, in M. Labahn and B. J. Lietaert Peerbolte (eds) *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and its Religious Environment* (LNTS 306). London and New York: T & T Clark International, pp. 107–21.
- 23 Most Gospel scholars are confident that Luke 11:20 = Matt 12:28 derives from the historical Jesus. This may be illustrated in work that has appeared over the course of the last century or so, from R. Bultmann (1921/1972) *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972 [German orig. 1921]) 14, 52, to H. K. Nielsen (1987) *Heilung und Verkündigung: Das Verständnis der Heilung und ihres Verhältnisses zur Verkündigung bei Jesus und in der ältesten Kirche* (ATDan 22). Leiden: Brill (Danish orig. 1986), pp. 32–40, and J. D. G. Dunn (1988) ‘Matthew 12:28/Luke 11:20 – A Word of Jesus’, in W. H. Gloer (ed.) (1988) *Eschatology and the New Testament: Festschrift for George R. Beasley-Murray*. Peabody: Hendrickson, pp. 29–49. One may also consult the major commentaries.
- 24 For examples, see D. A. Hagner (1993) *Matthew 1–13* (WBC 33A). Dallas: Word, p. 343; R. Schnackenburg (2002) *The Gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, p. 116: ‘Luke 11:20 ... is certainly the original reading’. Of course, as D. C. Allison Jr. notes, in Hebrew Scripture epithets such as ‘finger of God’ and ‘hand of God’ are the equivalent of ‘Spirit of God’. See D. C. Allison Jr. and W. D. Davies (1991) *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*. Volume II: *Commentary on Matthew VIII–XVIII* (ICC). Edinburgh: T & T Clark, pp. 339–40.
- 25 See G. H. Twelftree (2007) *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- 26 For critical Greek text, with textual notes, see K. Preisendanz (ed.) (1928–1931/2001) *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2 vols.), ed. A. Henrichs. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, Vol. 1, pp. 170–2. For translation and notes, see H. D. Betz (ed.) (1992) *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells: Volume One: Texts*, 2nd edn. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 96–7. For further discussion of this text, see A. Deissmann (1927/1995) *Light from the Ancient East*. Peabody: Hendrickson, pp. 256–4; C. K. Barrett (1989) (ed.) *The New Testament Background: Writings from Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire that Illuminate Christian Origins*, rev. ed. San Francisco: HarperCollins, pp. 34–7; P. W. van der Horst, ‘The Great Magical Papyrus of Paris (*PGM* IV) and the Bible’, in Labahn and Lietaert Peerbolte (eds) *A Kind of Magic*, pp. 172–83. Twelftree (p. 39) aptly describes *PGM* IV as a ‘3,274-line handbook for preternatural therapists’. For plate of this portion of text (i.e. *PGM* IV.2993–3042), see Deissmann, *Light*, figures 48 and 49. For a concise overview of the magical papyri, see C. E. Arnold, ‘Magical Papyri’, in C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (eds) (2000) *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, pp. 666–70.
- 27 Deissmann, *Light*, p. 260 n. 4.

- 28 Pace W. L. Knox (1938) 'Jewish Liturgical Exorcism', *HTR* 31: 191–203. The adoption of Judaic elements in itself is not proof that the charm was originally Jewish. In the case of the charm under consideration, it has been speculated that a lost rabbinic midrash involving Jeremiah has been adopted. See D. Sperber (1985) 'Some Rabbinic Themes in Magical Papyri', *JSJ* 16: 93–103, esp. 95–99; Alexander, 'Incantations and Books of Magic', p. 345.
- 29 See Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, p. 261. For Greek text and notes, see Preisendanz (ed.), *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, Vol. 2, pp. 148–9.
- 30 For the Greek text of PGM IV.296–466, along with notes, see Preisendanz (ed.), *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, Vol. 1, pp. 82–9. For English translation, see Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 44–7.
- 31 For text and critical study, see D. G. Martínez (ed.) (1991) *P. Michigan XVI: A Greek Love Charm from Egypt (P. Mich. 757)* (American Studies in Papyrology 30). Atlanta: Scholars Press. Martínez also provides text, translation, and notes of the parallel text in PGM. The translations given above are based on Martínez, pp. 14, 30.
- 32 With *adon* transliterating the Hebrew Adon (or Adonai), 'Lord'.
- 33 Martínez (*Michigan Papyrus XVI*, 40) suggests 'Jesus of Magedon', perhaps denoting Jesus as an apocalyptic warrior. In the notes in Betz (ed.) *The Greek Magical Papyri*, pp. 44, the possibility of a reference to Jesus is not explored.
- 34 In the charm the transliterated Hebrew word receives a genitive inflection: *adonaiou*.
- 35 The standard spelling, of course, is *kleidas*.
- 36 And in PGM IV.296 the charm is said to be a *philtrokatadesmos* ('wondrous binding spell').
- 37 Martínez (*P. Michigan XVI*, 33) remarks on the syncretism of both Yahweh and Jesus with the names of Egyptian deities.
- 38 Martínez (*P. Michigan XVI*, 40) suspects that Jesus is indeed referred to, with the curious transliteration possibly meant to echo the name Isis as well. Moreover, Martínez (p. 33) notes that the opening magic name in line 3 of the Michigan Papyrus, *abramenthos*-, is used in reference to Jesus in the Gnostic work *Pistis Sophia* (IV.136, 139, 140).
- 39 Trans. R. F. Hock, in Betz (ed.) *Greek Magical Papyri*, pp. 166–7. For Greek text, see Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, Vol. 2, pp. 82–3.
- 40 For another example of a charm that petitions insomnia, see J. Obermann (1940) 'Two Magic Bowls: New Incantation Texts from Mesopotamia', *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 57: 1–31, esp. 19–20. The first four lines (of the second bowl) read: ¹And let them not restore sleep to her eyes; ²and let them not restore slumber in her body; ³in her dreams and her visions, let their images awaken her; ⁴and let life be made unfit for her'.
- 41 See W. Heitmüller (1903) 'Im Namen Jesu.' *Sprach- und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Neuen Testament, speziell zur altchristlichen Taufe* (FRLANT 1/2). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, pp. 176–80; H. Seyrig (1934) 'Invidiae Medici', *Berytus* 1: 1–11, here 6; Jordan, 'A New Reading of a Phylactery from Beirut', 67; R. D. Kotansky (1991) 'Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets from Syria', *IEJ* 41: 267–81, esp. 274–80 (amulet B), where a number of angelic authorities are listed.
- 42 The spelling *yysu* is attested in a Parthian amulet. See W. B. Henning (1947) 'Two Manichaean Magical Texts with an Excursus on the Parthian Ending – *endehi*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 12: 39–66, here 40.
- 43 The report was featured in a documentary that aired on Discovery Channel. I acknowledge with gratitude the helpful information provided by the staff of the Franck Goddio Society.
- 44 *GOISTAIS* would be understood as a variant of *goetes* or *goes* ('enchanter').
- 45 Ogoa, or Osogoa, is another name for Zeus. See Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.10.3 ('the sanctuary of the god [i.e., Zeus], called in the native tongue Osogoa'); also Strabo, *Geography* 14.

- 46 For translation and brief commentary, see M. W. Meyer and R. Smith (eds) (1994/1999) *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 102–3 (no. 56).
- 47 For text, translation, and notes, see D. Levene (1999) “... and by the name of Jesus ...” An Unpublished Magic Bowl in Jewish Aramaic’, *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 6: 283–308; D. Levene (2003) *A Corpus of Magic Bowls: Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity*. London and New York: Kegan Paul, pp. 120–38, here 124–5.
- 48 For a recent surveys, see T. Harviainen (1995) ‘Pagan Incantations in Aramaic Magic Bowls’, in M. J. Geller, J. C. Greenfield, and M. P. Weitzman (eds) *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches* (JSSSup 4). Oxford: Oxford University Press: 53–60; E. C. D. Hunter (1998) ‘Who are the Demons?: The Iconography of Incantation Bowls’, *Studi epigrafici e linguistici* 15: 95–115 + 7 plates.
- 49 Levene, *Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 137.
- 50 Levene, *Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 138.
- 51 For text, translation, and notes, see Levene, *Corpus of Magic Bowls*, pp. 110–15, here 111–12.
- 52 Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, p. 42 n. 32: ‘perhaps in the name of Christ’.
- 53 For a similar, but briefer, Aramaic incantation, see E. M. Cook (1992) ‘An Aramaic Incantation Bowl from Khafaje’, *BASOR* 285: 79–81. The incantation calls for the protection of the son of Mahduk (or Mahadukh), refers to the ‘seal of the head of the kingdom of fire, who has a countenance of bright fire’ and concludes ‘In the name of the God of Israel, amen, amen, selah’.
- 54 See P. G. Bolt (2003) *Jesus’ Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark’s Early Readers* (SNTMS 125). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Bolt argues that a major component of early Christian apologetic centered on Jesus’ power over sickness, death, and evil, which were elements that terrified people of late antiquity.

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