

STUDIES IN  
THE CULT OF YAHWEH

VOLUME TWO

*New Testament, Early Christianity,  
and Magic*

# RELIGIONS IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

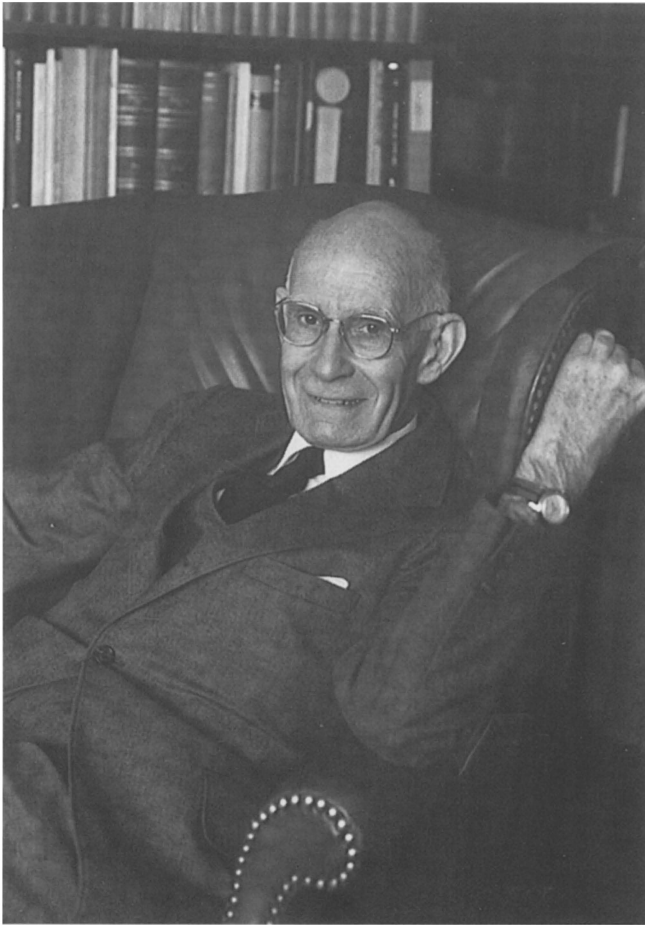
EDITORS

R. VAN DEN BROEK   H.J.W. DRIJVERS  
H.S. VERSNEL

VOLUME 130/2







Professor Morton Smith

# STUDIES IN THE CULT OF YAHWEH

VOLUME TWO

*New Testament, Early Christianity,  
and Magic*

BY

MORTON SMITH

EDITED BY

SHAYE J. D. COHEN



E.J. BRILL  
LEIDEN · NEW YORK · KÖLN  
1996

*This series Religions in the Graeco-Roman World presents a forum for studies in the social and cultural function of religions in the Greek and the Roman world, dealing with pagan religions both in their own right and in their interaction with and influence on Christianity and Judaism during a lengthy period of fundamental change. Special attention will be given to the religious history of regions and cities which illustrate the practical workings of these processes.*

*Enquiries regarding the submission of works for publication in the series may be directed to Professor H.J.W. Drijvers, Faculty of Letters, University of Groningen, 9712 EK Groningen, The Netherlands.*

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Smith, Morton, 1915-

Studies in the cult of Yahweh / by Morton Smith ; edited by Shaye J.D. Cohen.

p. cm. — (Religions in the Graeco-Roman world ; v. 130/1- )

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Contents: v. 1. Studies in historical method, ancient Israel, ancient Judaean.

ISBN 9004104771 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Judaism—History—To 70 A.D. 2. Jews—History—To 70 A.D.

3. Middle East—Religion. I. Cohen, Shaye J.D. II. Title.

III. Series.

BM165.S64 1995

296'.09'01—dc20

95-39979

CIP

ISSN 0927-7633

ISBN 90 04 10477 1 (Vol. 1)

ISBN 90 04 10479 8 (Vol. 2)

ISBN 90 04 10372 4 (Set)

© Copyright 1996 by E.J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.*

*Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by E.J. Brill provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910 Danvers MA 01923, USA.  
Fees are subject to change.*

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

## CONTENTS

Preface.....	vii
--------------	-----

### PART FOUR: NEW TESTAMENT, EARLY CHRISTIANITY

21. Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretalogies, Divine Men, the Gospels and Jesus.....	3
<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> 90 (1971) 174-199	
22. On the History of the Divine Man.....	28
<i>Paganisme, Judaisme, Christianisme: Marcel Simon Festschrift</i> (Paris: de Boccard, 1978) 335-345	
23. Messiahs: Robbers, Jurists, Prophets, and Magicians.....	39
<i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i> 44 (1977) 185-195	
24. Ascent to the Heavens and the Beginning of Christianity.....	47
<i>Eranos</i> 50 (1981) 403-429	
25. Two Ascended to Heaven – Jesus and the Author of 4Q491.11.1....	68
<i>Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> , ed. J. H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 290-301	
26. The Origin and History of the Transfiguration Story.....	79
<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i> 36 (1980) 39-44	
27. The Reason for the Persecution of Paul and the Obscurity of Acts.....	87
E. E. Urbach, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and C. Wirszubski (edd.), <i>Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to G. G. Scholem on his Seventieth Birthday</i> (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967) 261-268	
28. Pauline Worship as Seen by Pagans.....	95
<i>Harvard Theological Review</i> 73 (1980) 241-249	
29. Paul's Arguments as Evidence of the Christianity from which he Diverged.....	103
<i>Harvard Theological Review</i> 79 (1986) (= <i>Paul among Jews and Gentiles [Stendahl Festschrift]</i> , ed. G. Nickelsburg [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986]) 254-260	
30. Transformation by Burial (1 Cor 15:35-49; Rom 6:3-5 and 8:9-11).....	110
<i>Eranos</i> 52 (1983) 87-112	
31. Salvation in the Gospels, Paul, and the Magical Papyri.....	130
<i>Helios</i> 13 (1986) 63-74	
32. The Account of Simon Magus in Acts 8.....	140
<i>Harry A. Wolfson Jubilee Volume</i> (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1965) 735-749	

33. De Superstitione (Plutarch, *Moralia*, 164E-171F) ..... 152  
*Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature*, ed.  
H. D. Betz, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974) (*Studia ad Corpus*  
*Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*, III), 1-35
34. The History of the Term "Gnostikos" ..... 183  
*The Rediscovery of Gnosticism II: Sethian Gnosticism*, ed. B.  
Layton (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981) 796-807
35. On the History of APOKALYPTO and APOKALYPSIS ..... 194  
*Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed.  
D. Hellholm (Tubingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983) 9-20

## PART FIVE: MAGIC

36. How Magic Was Changed By the Triumph of Christianity ..... 208  
*Graeco-Arabica: Papers of the First International Congress on*  
*Greek and Arabic Studies*, edd. V. Christides and M.  
Papathomopoulos (Athens: Association for Greek and Arabic  
Studies, 1983) 2.51-58
37. The Eighth Book of Moses and How it Grew (P Leid. J 395) ..... 217  
*Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia*, edd. M.  
Gigante et al. (Naples, 1984) 2.683-693
38. P. Leid J 395 (PGM XIII) and Its Creation Legend ..... 227  
*Hellenica et Judaica: Valentin Nikiprowetsky Festschrift*, edd. A.  
Caquot et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 1986) 491-498
39. A Note on Some Jewish Assimilationists: The Angels ..... 235  
*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society 16-17 (Bickerman*  
*Festschrift)* (1984) 207-212
40. The Jewish Elements in the Magical Papyri ..... 242  
*Seminar Papers* (Society of Biblical Literature, 1986) 455-62
- Writings of Morton Smith ..... 257
- In Memoriam Morton Smith ..... 279
- Index ..... 287

## PREFACE

*Papers on the Cult of Yahweh* was the title chosen by Morton Smith for the collection of his scholarly articles that he first planned in 1972. Unfortunately, the pressure of other commitments – a glance at the list of his publications will reveal how much he accomplished after 1972! – and then, towards the end of his life, ill-health combined to prevent him from realizing this project. A year or two before his death he asked me to serve as his literary executor and empowered me to republish whichever of his articles I thought worthy. I set before me his 1972 outline, retained about half of it, and filled out the collection with work from his later period. I also changed the title slightly. No doubt Smith himself would have found much to correct and much to supplement in these essays – all of them need bibliographical updating, and not a few need some polishing – but I have left the essays in their original form with only minor changes. I have introduced a measure of consistency in the transliteration of Hebrew, in the citation of biblical, classical, and rabbinic texts, and in the footnote style, but I did not allow myself to become obsessed with absolute consistency, and I know that inconsistencies remain. In the course of re-typing and re-setting the essays, I have tacitly corrected numerous mistakes (incorrect references, typographical errors, etc.) but whatever joy I experienced by the removal of errors from my teacher's work is offset by the certain knowledge that, in spite of all my exertions, I have introduced new errors into the text. For all the errors and inconsistencies for which I am responsible, I beg the reader's indulgence and Smith's forgiveness.

These corrections aside, any intentional deviation from the original text of these essays has been indicated by **brackets**. In chapters 21, 26, 33, and 34 Smith himself is responsible for the text in brackets: these are corrections that Smith entered on the margins of his offprints of the original publications. In chapter 40 I (with my student William Gilders) am responsible for the text in brackets, as the opening note to the chapter explains. (Throughout the essays, Smith occasionally uses brackets to fill out self-understood but unexpressed words in quotations; this is a common usage which is easily recognizable and should not be confused with the additions and corrections that I am now describing.) To facilitate reference, the original pagination is indicated in each article, this too in brackets; all cross references within the volume are to the original pagination.

I would like to thank the following people:

the holders of the copyright of the original publications, for permission to reprint;

my student William K. Gilders for assistance in checking the proofs;

my students William K. Gilders, Andrew Jacobs, and Mitchell Verter for their assistance in compiling and checking the list of Smith's publications.

Shaye J. D. Cohen  
Providence, R.I., USA  
30 November 95

**PART IV**  
**NEW TESTAMENT AND**  
**EARLY CHRISTIANITY**



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### PROLEGOMENA TO A DISCUSSION OF ARETALOGIES, DIVINE MEN, THE GOSPELS AND JESUS

#### I. The Problems

[174] So far as I know, the first man to complain about the practice of reconstructing a lion from a single claw was the poet Alcaeus about 600 B.C.<sup>1</sup> The complaint had obvious justification and became a proverb,<sup>2</sup> but it is equally obvious that one can, from a claw, make some reasonable guesses about the size, shape, habits, and habitat of the animal that produced it.

Our knowledge of aretalogies is mostly made up of such guesses. They seem to have begun in the sixteenth century with attempts to explain the word *aretalogus* in Suetonius' *Life of Augustus*, 74. Augustus' dinner parties were modest but pleasant; he kept the conversation going and brought in musicians or actors or even low-brow jugglers from the circus, and quite often *aretalogi*. The word had not been explained by the lexicographers.<sup>3</sup> Turnebus, in ch. XII of his *Adversaria*, supposed that it came from ἀρεστά. He was followed by Torrentius, citing Juvenal 15.16, where Ulysses, telling his adventures to Alcinoos, is compared to a "lying *aretalogus*." Casaubon, however, in his commentary, preferred "mendicant philosopher,"<sup>4</sup> and his interpretation generally prevailed [175] until 1885, when Reinach argued strongly that the first half of the word comes from ἀρεταί, meaning "miracles," and the ἀρεταλόγος was therefore an interpreter of miraculous events (*prodigia*) and thence, by extension, a teller of

---

<sup>1</sup> In Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum*, 3 (410C).

<sup>2</sup> Diogenianus, *Paroimiai*, V.15; in Leutsch-Schneidewin, *Corpus paroemiographorum graecorum*, I.252 (with many examples).

<sup>3</sup> It is not in Pollux, Suidas, Hesychius, the Lexicon gudianum, the Etymologicon magnum, or the Lexica segueriana, to say nothing of Photius and the Atticists. In Latin it is not in Sextus Pompeius Festus or in the Glossaria indexed by Goetz; but the Bobbio scholiast on Juvenal 15.16 wrote: "aretalogoi sunt, ut quidam volunt, qui miras res, id est deorum virtutes, loquuntur. mihi autem videtur aretalogos illos dici, qui ea quae dicta non sunt in vulgus proferunt" (P. Weissner, *Scholia in Iuvenalem vetustiora* [Stuttgart, 1967], *ad loc.* "Ea quae dicta non sunt" translates ἀρρητα λόγια, an explanation of ἀρεταλόγια also found in some MSS of Ben Sira 36:13 (19) and followed by the Vulgate (36:16), "inenarrabilibus verbis." R. Reitzenstein's emendation to *ficta* (*Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* [Leipzig, 1906], p. 8) is unjustified.

<sup>4</sup> All this from P. Burmann, *C. Suetonius Tranquillus, cum notis integris*, etc. (Amsterdam, 1736), *ad loc.*

miracle stories.<sup>5</sup> This explanation was accepted with some modification by Crusius in the *RE* article of 1895;<sup>6</sup> it has since been confirmed by further evidence and is now generally accepted.<sup>7</sup> Crusius quietly dropped the interpretation of prodigies and emphasized the second part of Reinach's definition—teller of miracle stories—which he specified more closely as the myths and miracles of a deity, so that the *aretalogus* came close to the *hymnologus*.<sup>8</sup> Some *aretalogi*, in fact, are plausibly supposed to have been temple functionaries,<sup>9</sup> and the Graeco-Roman hymns to Isis and her associates are commonly—and probably correctly—described as aretalogies.<sup>10</sup> But Juvenal's usage suggests strongly that the word's reference had been extended also to profane storytellers, and it is hard to believe that Augustus entertained his dinner guests with hymn singing.<sup>11</sup> Since the word came from popular usage (not from the technical terminology of classical literary criticism) its usage in antiquity was probably somewhat inconsistent; if so, a precise modern definition would be inaccurate.

Consequently ἀρεταλογία—what the *aretalogus* did—is also somewhat vague. It means both telling tall stories<sup>12</sup> and the praises of [176] a god.<sup>13</sup> No text identified in the manuscript as an ἀρεταλογία has

<sup>5</sup> S. Reinach, "Les arétalogues dans l'antiquité," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, 9 (1885), pp. 257ff. [Reprinted with minor additions in his *Cultes, mythes, et religions*, vol. 3 (1913), pp. 293ff.]

<sup>6</sup> F. Crusius, "Aretalogoi," *RE*, 2/1 (1895), cols. 670-72.

<sup>7</sup> W. Aly, "Zum Art. Aretalogoi," *RE* Supplementband 6 (1935), cols. 13-15; references to divergent opinions are given by both Crusius and Aly.

<sup>8</sup> Crusius was followed in this by E. Norden, *Agnostos theos* (Berlin, 1923), pp. 149f., 154, 164f., who wholly neglects the profane side.

<sup>9</sup> W. Otto, *Priester u. Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten* (Leipzig, 1908), 2.226, n. 3; cf. R. Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros* (Philologus Suppl. 22/3; Leipzig 1931), p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> So by A. Festugière, "A propos des arétalogies d'Isis," *HTR*, 42 (1949), pp. 209ff.; D. Müller, *Ägypten und die griechischen Isis Aretalogien* (Abhandlungen, Leipzig, 53; Berlin, 1961); J. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis, Studien zum memphitischen Hintergrund der gr. Isisaretalogien* (Uppsala, 1968); etc. Bibliography to 1961 in Nilsson, *GGR*<sup>2</sup> 2, p. 626, n. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. L. Friedlaender, *D. Junii Juvenalis satyrarum libri V* (Leipzig, 1895), on XV.16, though his etymology seems unlikely. The supposition of A. Kiefer, *Aretalogische Studien* (Leipzig, 1929), p. 23, that the profane aretalogy was primary is not adequately supported by the evidence he adduces (Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 177 and its scholion, the use of *prosimetrum* in many aretalogies) and also involves unlikely etymology. On the *prosimetrum*, see Christ-Schmid, *GGL*, 1, p. 89, n. 6; on Kiefer in general, see W. Aly, *op. cit.* Reitzenstein, *Wundererzählungen*, pp. 9-13, made a good case for the primacy of the religious meaning and secondary development of the profane. H. Werner, "Zum ΛΟΥΚΙΟΣ Η ΟΝΟΣ," *Hermes*, 53 (1918), pp. 225ff., failed to demonstrate the original independence of a profane type. That there were profane stories of marvels and wonders is altogether probable; but these would not be called *aretai* unless they were thought of as the works of some person, presumably of supernatural powers.

<sup>12</sup> Manetho, *Apotelesmaticorum* (ed. Koehly), 4, p. 447.

<sup>13</sup> Ben Sira 36:13 (Rahlf's) or 19 (Tischendorf), codex B only; the Hebrew reads אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּמִים. "God" is here used loosely to include heroes, *daimones*, etc.

come down to us, but a miracle story was entitled Διὸς Ἡλίου μεγάλου Σαράπιδος ἀρετή, i.e., “A miracle of Zeus Helios, great Sarapis.”<sup>14</sup> And an inscription of thanksgiving is headed ἀρετῆν Ἀμενώτου, i.e., of the god Amenothis.<sup>15</sup> The use of ἀρετή in the sense of “a demonstration of divine power, a miracle,” is also common.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, there is general agreement that an “aretalogy” was a miracle story or a collection of miracle stories and that the primary use of such collections was praise of and propaganda for the deity supposed to have done the deeds.<sup>17</sup> Such were surely the aretalogies produced by aretalogoi attached to the temples, and probably by pious private practitioners. But what of the after-dinner entertainers who could be hired in the circus, the liars to whom Juvenal compared Homer, and the characters Manetho said were born under the adverse influence of the planet Hermes, “tellers of myths and shameful and nonsensical stories, leaders in mockery, and scornful laughter, who have in their aretalogies all sorts of <deceitful> yarns, experts in shell games, who live noisily on their takings from the crowd and wander the earth forever?”<sup>18</sup> The *Satyricon* of Petronius is a parody of the *Odyssey* in which the hero is driven from one wild adventure to another by the wrath, not of Neptune, but of Priapus.<sup>19</sup> Was it this which Juvenal had in mind, and do the marvelous achievements and miraculous escapes of Encolpius constitute a burlesque aretalogy?<sup>20</sup>

Whatever the extension of the term in antiquity, the effect on NT criticism of its modern rise to prominence was to call attention to the similarities between the Gospels and Acts on the one hand and ancient collections of miracle stories and lives of wandering holy men on the other.<sup>21</sup> These similarities were already mentioned by Reitzenstein in

<sup>14</sup> P. Oxy. 11, 1382, lines 22ff. (2nd cent. A.D.).

<sup>15</sup> Egyptian Museum, Cairo, No. 67300 (261/60 B.C.); in *Sammelbuch*, 5, 8266, line 5 (see bibliography there).

<sup>16</sup> LSJ *sub voce*, section b. The statement of H. van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus (Supplements to Novum Testamentum, 8; Leiden, 1965)* p. 118, n. 1, that “Aretē is not identical with miracle,” can be defended only by taking “identical” in the strictest sense. A “miracle” (θαῦμα, I suppose he means) would then be any marvelous occurrence; an ἀρετή would be a θαῦμα considered as a demonstration by some deity of his or her power. O. Bauernfeind (“ἀρετή,” *TWNT*, 1 [1933], p. 459), whom van der Loos cites as evidence of the difference, actually says “ἀρετή steht—als meist umfassenderes Synonymon—neben der δυνάμεις der wunderbaren göttlichen Machtwirkung.”

<sup>17</sup> As usual, the common opinion is well stated by Nilsson, *GGR*<sup>2</sup> 2, pp. 228f.

<sup>18</sup> *Apotelesmaticorum*, 4, 445-449. ποικίλα in this context is certainly abusive, cf. W. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum NT* (5th ed.; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1958) *sub voce*, no. 3.

<sup>19</sup> 139.2.

<sup>20</sup> So Reitzenstein, *Wundererzählungen*, pp. 30f.; Kiefer, *Studien*, pp. 41ff.

<sup>21</sup> For Acts, which we shall not discuss, see R. Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten u. die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (Würzburger Studien zur Altertumswissenschaft, 3; Stuttgart, 1932), followed by K. Schäferdiek and W. Schneemelcher in the latter's *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen* (3rd ed.; Tübingen, 1964), 2, pp. 115f. (with bibliography on p. 110).

[177] 1906;<sup>22</sup> and by 1908 so distinguished a critic as Eduard Schwartz<sup>23</sup> wrote of the Gospel stories of Jesus' miracles as ἀρεταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ and of John as "ein ἀρεταλόγος allerbesten Art."<sup>24</sup> In 1909 came Weinreich's careful study of pagan miracles of healing,<sup>25</sup> which excluded the NT material but made the similarities amply apparent. Accordingly when, after World War I, K. Schmidt raised the question of the literary form of the Gospels,<sup>26</sup> it was understandable that he insisted on the centrality of the miracle stories (p. 131) and found the closest ancient analogue in a popular collection of the miracles of a holy man—Damis' stories of Apollonius of Tyana (p. 83).

Damis' work is known solely by inference from the *Life of Apollonius* by Philostratus. Schmidt's choice of it was significant of the fact that, although there were many collections of miracle stories in the ancient world, few have come down to us.<sup>27</sup> Not only those few,

<sup>22</sup> *Wundererzählungen*, pp. 36, 82f.

<sup>23</sup> Whom A. D. Nock once spoke of as the greatest scholar he had known.

<sup>24</sup> *Aporien im vierten Evangelium: II. Nachrichten* (Göttingen, 1908), p. 121; and *Aporien ... IV*, p. 516.

<sup>25</sup> O. Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder* (RGVV, 8/1; Giessen, 1909). This was reprinted in Berlin, 1969; the reprint should have included as a supplement the material made available since 1909, mainly from inscriptions and papyri. The collection and edition of this material would make a useful (as opposed to an ordinary) Ph.D. thesis.

<sup>26</sup> "Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte," *Εὐχαριστήριον* (Gunkel Festschrift; Göttingen, 1923), 2, pp. 51ff.

<sup>27</sup> Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, 2.44, end: dreams sent by Sarapis and his prescriptions and cures were collected in three books by Geminus of Tyre, in five by Demetrius of Phalerum, in twenty-two by Artemon of Miletus—on the dubious attributions made here, see O. Weinreich, *Heilungswunder*, p. 119, n. 4; 4.22: many write false stories of divine prescriptions—and, presumably, of cures; Strabo, *Geography*, 17.1.17, p. 801: at the temple of Canopus some of the local litterati wrote up the cures done by Sarapis, others the aretai—?, the text is perhaps corrupt; 8.6.15, p. 374: the cures of Asclepius were recorded in his temples at Epidaurus, Cos, and Trikka, but this probably refers only to stelae with single cures of private individuals; so Dittenberger, *SIG*<sup>4</sup> 1168, n. 2; Pausanias, 2.27.3 and 2.36.1: there was an ancient collection at Epidaurus of accounts of Asclepius' cures; this was in a series of inscriptions; Aristides, 45 (On Sarapis), 29: temple libraries—λεπὰ θεῖα?—have countless holy books of Sarapis' miracles; *Inscriptiones creticae* (ed. M. Guarducci; Rome, 1935), 1, p. 169 (Lebena 19, 2-1 cent. B.C. [=SIG<sup>4</sup> 1172]: a patient who had seen many of Asclepius' ἀρετὰς was commanded by the god to write an account of them; *P. Oxy.*, 11.1381: the author was commanded by Imouthes-Asclepius to translate from Egyptian into Greek a book giving an account of the god's τερατώδεις ἐπιφανεῖας; B. Latyshev, *Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini* (2nd ed.; St. Petersburg, 1916), 1, no. 344 (Chersonesos, 3 cent. B.C.): one Syriskos was honored by the city because he had written and read publicly an account of epiphanies of the Virgin—Athena, of course. That her epiphanies were miracles for present salvation is shown by the account of one [no. 352]; Lindos, *Fouilles de l'Acropole 1902-1914: II. Inscriptiones* (ed. C. Blinkenberg; Berlin, 1941), vol. 1, no. 2 [=KT 131 (1915); *FGrHist* 532]: the "Lindean Chronicle:" by vote of the authorities the important items from the archives of the temple of Athena, and among them the records of the epiphanies of the goddess, were recorded in an inscription; here again the epiphanies—section D in this edition—were saving miracles.

Besides these references to collections of miracle stories, there are fragments of collections preserved in *IG* IV<sup>2</sup>.i,121-124; (cf. *SIG*<sup>4</sup> 1168-69: cures by Asclepius at

however, but [178] most of which we have reports, seem to have been rather bare strings of stories with, at most, some narrative introduction, telling how the document came to be composed, but with almost no connective material.<sup>28</sup> There is nothing like a “life and adventures” of the deity celebrated; they begin at no beginning and lead to no conclusion. The contrast with the *canonical* Gospels is obvious, the more so because Asclepius, for instance, did have a “life and adventures” reported in mythology. But, to judge from the preserved material, the myth and the “historical” miracle stories—those of recent times—were never combined in a single account.<sup>29</sup> The miracle stories contain many close parallels to those in the Gospels; the resemblance was noticed already in antiquity<sup>30</sup> and is important for the criticism of the Gospels, since it indicates that the two groups grew up in similar cultural environments with similar concern for veracity.<sup>31</sup> But the collections of miracle stories which circulated in the Graeco-Roman world do not seem, *as collections*, to have been similar in literary form to the canonical Gospels. This was why Schmidt had to turn for a closer parallel to Damis’ reported ὑπομνήματα of

Epidaurus, ca. 320 B.C.); *IG* 3.966 (cf. *SIG*<sup>4</sup> 1173: cures by Asclepius in the Insula Tibertina at Rome, after A.D. 138); *Inscriptiones creticae*, 1, p. 159, inscriptions 8-12 (cures by Asclepius at Lebena, 2 cent. B.C.); and *P. Oxy.*, 11.1382 (a fragment of what seems to have been a collection of ἀρετά of Zeus Sarapis, 2 cent. A.D.).

This list does not include collections of miracles from mythology (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, etc.), nor from legendary antiquity (Istros’ Epiphanies of Apollo, Epiphanies of Heracles, etc. [*FGHHist*, 334, nos. 50-53]), nor from the late collections of *apotelesmata* of Apollonius of Tyana; nor does it include collections of miracles performed by diverse divinities (e.g., Valerius Maximus 1.8). It excludes also merely conjectured collections for which there is no clear evidence (e.g., M. Rostowzew, “Epiphaneiai,” *Klio*, 16 [1920], pp. 203ff.; F. Pfister, “Epiphanie,” *RE Suppl.* 4 [1924], cols. 277-323). Of all the material thus attested, nothing has come down to us but the fragments of inscriptions and papyri, the surviving evidence of what the literary tradition and the Christian Middle Ages did not choose to preserve.

<sup>28</sup> The most likely exception would be *P. Oxy.* 11.1381.

<sup>29</sup> On Asclepius and Jesus, see F. Dölger, “Der Heiland,” *Antike und Christentum* 6/4 (1950) pp. 241ff. An outline of the myth of Asclepius with reference to the “historical” miracles was given by Julian, *Against the Galilaeans*, 200Af.; but as Dölger (253) remarks, this is by imitation of Christ.

<sup>30</sup> Justin, *I Apology*, 22.6; 54.10; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 1.49.

<sup>31</sup> The denial of this importance by H. van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus*, pp. 136f., is apologetic. A similar case in antiquity was that of Eusebius, whose *Against Hierocles* pretended to discuss the comparison of Jesus with Apollonius of Tyana, but never noticed that any of Apollonius’ miracles in any way resembled any of Jesus’. For another case, see L. McGinley, *Form Criticism of the Synoptic Healing Narratives* (Woodstock, Md., 1944). It may be worth noting that the three distinctions made by W. Grundmann, *Der Begriff der Kraft in der neutestamentlichen Gedankenwelt*, (BWANT 4F8; Stuttgart, 1932), pp. 65ff. are all false: NT miracles show many traits of magic (see S. Eitrem, *Some Notes on the Demonology in the NT* [Symbolae Osloenses, Suppl. XX; 2nd ed.; Oslo, 1966]); they are not always performed by the word of Jesus or an apostle (Mark 5:29; 6:56; Acts 5:14; 19:12); and they do not always require faith (Mark 5:39ff.; 6:5f.; John 20:26f.)

Apollonius<sup>32</sup> which, like Justin's ἀπομνημονεύματα of the Apostles (ἀ καλεῖται εὐαγγέλια),<sup>33</sup> contained not only the stories of the hero's miracles,<sup>34</sup> but also an account of his travels, sayings, prophecies,<sup>35</sup> martyrdom, escape from death, and appearances thereafter.<sup>36</sup>

Here is a pattern quite different from the bare list of miracles. This is the life of the hero as a holy man. Its ramifications in folklore and mythology run through all ages and continents, appear in widely different forms, and are therefore extraordinarily difficult to study. Books which attempt to survey all the material, or even one of the major branches of it, are almost necessarily pretentious, superficial, and of little scholarly value.<sup>37</sup> This should not be made an excuse for denying the existence of the pattern, but it will excuse the limiting of our consideration here to one class of examples—the holy men of the Graeco-Roman world.

Of these our knowledge is limited by the snobbishness of the literary tradition of antiquity. Ancient literature is almost entirely upper-class<sup>38</sup> and rationalistic. Middle and lower class characters appear mainly as figures in comedies, historical events, or the lives of upper-class individuals. Thus we have a life of the millionaire politician and admiral, Nicias, but almost nothing about the prophets whose counsels finally in 413 B.C. brought both him and Athens to disaster.<sup>39</sup> The suppression of the Bacchanalia by the Roman Senate in 186 B.C. was triggered by a plot against a young Roman of wealth and good family<sup>40</sup> and was excused [180] as the suppression of a conspiracy against the state.<sup>41</sup> Livy tells us all about the proposed victim, but describes the founder of the cult merely as "graecus ignobilis ... sacrificulus et vates ... occultorum et nocturnorum antistes sacrorum." One sentence suffices.<sup>42</sup> The Arcadian prophet Kleandros is remembered only because he persuaded the slaves of Argos to attack

---

<sup>32</sup> Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, 1.3.

<sup>33</sup> *I Apology*, 66.3: cf. 67.3; *Dialogue* 100-107 passim; Papias 2.15.

<sup>34</sup> 4.15f., 25 end; 7.38 end, etc.

<sup>35</sup> 1.3.

<sup>36</sup> 7.10 end, 15, 28, 35, 38 end, 41, 42; 8.11ff., 29.

<sup>37</sup> So E. Butler, *The Myth of the Magus* (Cambridge, 1948); J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York, 1949). A better approach is that of Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism* (Bollingen Series, 76; New York, 1964); on which, however, see my remarks in "Historical Method in the Study of Religion," esp. 14-16, (volume one of this collection, chapter one).

<sup>38</sup> This is one of the main reasons why the New Testament, a lower-middle-class product, seems so different from Greek and Roman literary works.

<sup>39</sup> Thucydides 7.50.4: contrast Plutarch, *Nicias*, 23.5: 4.1; 5.3.

<sup>40</sup> His aunt was an acquaintance of the consul's mother-in-law (Livy 39.11, 4ff).

<sup>41</sup> 39.15-16.

<sup>42</sup> 39.8,3f. On the whole affair, see H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos* (Paris, 1951), pp. 454ff., 502; K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (Munich, 1960), pp. 270ff.

their former masters.<sup>43</sup> The slave Eunus was a prophet of the Syrian goddess; his master made him prophesy for the entertainment of dinner guests (who used to give him food and ask him to remember them when he came into his kingdom). He was a miracle worker and actually breathed fire, like Yahweh or one of Yahweh's prophets,<sup>44</sup> but we hear of him only because he became the leader of a huge slave revolt in Sicily about 135 B.C. From the first century, for similar reasons, we hear of many messianic prophets in Palestine.<sup>45</sup> In the late second century Celsus could claim that in Palestine and Syria there were many "who wander about begging both in and outside temples and frequent both cities and camps on the pretense of prophesying. And any one of them is ready and accustomed to say, 'I am the god,' or 'a son of god,' or 'a divine spirit,' and, 'I have come, for the world is already on the point of destruction, and you, O men, will perish because of your injustice. But I wish to save (you) and you shall see me again returning with heavenly power. Blessed is he who has worshipped me now. On all others, both in cities and in the countryside, I shall cast eternal fire. And men who do not know the penalties awaiting them will repent in vain and mourn, but those whom I have persuaded I shall save forever.'"<sup>46</sup> Origen, replying to Celsus, does not say there are no such people; he merely says they have done nothing like the OT prophets.<sup>47</sup> But this he could well say, for the message of Celsus' prophet is not that of an OT prophet, but of a supernatural savior, one of the many (of whom Jesus reportedly prophesied) that would come, saying, "I am," and "the time is at hand."<sup>48</sup> Origen himself, when arguing on a different point, knows of many sons of gods like Apollo and Asclepius, and also of wise men who have, by their ἀρετή, ascended to heaven.<sup>49</sup> How much truth [181] then was there in Celsus' statement? We can never be sure because the spiritual underworld of antiquity—the world of wandering prophets and magicians and miracle workers—is known to us only by occasional glimpses. Not until the Antonine age, when rationalism was losing its grip, do full-length "lives" of such holy men, by pagan authors of repute, become so popular that copies of them have come down to us.

---

<sup>43</sup> Ca. 485 B.C.; see Herodotus 6.83,2.

<sup>44</sup> Diodorus 34.2,5-8; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, pp. 384ff. Cf. Luke 23:42; Ps 18:9; Apoc 11:5; *PGM* 5.154.

<sup>45</sup> Acts 5:35ff.; Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2.258-64; E. Meyer, *Ursprung u. Anfänge des Christentums* (Berlin, 1921), 2, pp. 404ff.

<sup>46</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, 7.9; cf. E. Fascher, ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ (Giessen, 1927), pp. 206f.; G. Wetter, *Der Sohn Gottes* (Göttingen, 1916), pp. 4ff.; R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres* (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 222ff.

<sup>47</sup> 7.8.

<sup>48</sup> Luke 21:8 and parallels.

<sup>49</sup> *Against Celsus*, 5.2, end.

Even these are at first satirical—e.g., Lucian's portraits of Alexander and Peregrinus.

To make matters worse, though one can discern (with the eye of historical faith) a common social pattern behind a number of the figures mentioned above, Graeco-Roman antiquity knew many holy men of many different patterns. There were the heroes in the strict sense of the word—local tutelary powers among the dead—whose company had been enlarged by the addition of some minor deities, mostly demigods, and the heroes of the Homeric poems, and also by the heroization of deceased public benefactors.<sup>50</sup> There were gods who had been born and had various adventures—including servitude, suffering, and death—like those of men.<sup>51</sup> Almost any god was likely to appear in human form, and consequently a number of historical persons had been supposed to have been deities or *daimones* in disguise.<sup>52</sup> There were mythical demigods (men born of a union between mortals and gods), who had achieved full godhood,<sup>53</sup> and there were historical men who thought—or pre[182]tended—that they were gods or similar supernatural beings.<sup>54</sup> This complexity was further

<sup>50</sup> S. Eitrem, "Heroes," *RE* 8/1 (1912) 1111-45; A. D. Nock, "The Cult of Heroes," *HTR*, 37 (1944), pp. 141ff., shows the complexity of the concept.

<sup>51</sup> So Zeus himself, whose grave in Crete was notorious; cf. Fehrle in Roscher, 6 (1924-37), pp. 578ff.; see further in Roscher, on Apollo, Ares, and Hermes.

<sup>52</sup> For divine appearances see Pfister, "Epiphanie," *RE* Suppl. 4 (1924), pp. 277ff.; E. Pax, *ΕΠΙΦΑΝΕΙΑ* (MTS 1.10; Munich, 1955); J. Jeremias, *Theophanie* (WMANT 10; Neukirchen-Vhlyn, 1965) [OT only]. On entertaining deities unawares (see Heb 13:2), cf. Gen 18:1-15 with the myth of Philemon and Baucis (e.g., Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 8.620ff.); and see my article, "On the Wine God in Palestine." Examples of men supposed to be gods, *daimones* or demigods, are not only such legendary figures as Orpheus, Lycurgus, and Abaris, but Pythagoras (Aristotle, *Fragments* 191 and 192, Rose [=Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 4.17]); Diogenes Laertius 8.11; Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorica*, 31; Theagenes of Thasos (Pausanias, 6.11), Xerxes (Herodotus, 7.56.2), Alexander (Curtius Rufus, 4.7,25ff.; Plutarch, *Eumenes*, 13), Ptolemy I and Berenice (Nock, "Deification and Julian," *JRS*, 47 [1957], pp. 115-23), Cleomenes III (Plutarch, *Agis and Cl.*, 39.2: θεῶν παῖδα), Pompey (Cicero, *De imperio Cn. Pompei*, 41; cf. Acts 14:11), Caesar (Suetonius, *Vita Caes.*, 88), Augustus (Nock, *JRS*, 47 [1957], pp. 115-20), Jesus (Mark 3:11; 5:7; 15:39; etc.), Peter (Acts 10:26f.); Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14:11; 28:6), Apollonius of Tyana (V.A. 7.28; 8.7.7). "They will think you a god," was a literary commonplace (Marcus Aurelius 4.16). See further, below, those who claimed to be gods.

<sup>53</sup> Notably Dionysus, Asclepius, (see below), and Hercules (on whom see M. Simon, *Hercule et le Christianisme* [Paris, 1955], where the earlier literature is discussed). A number of cities had two cults of Hercules, one as hero and one as god; see Herodotus, 2.44, end.

<sup>54</sup> So Empedocles (Diels *Fr<sup>7</sup>* Frag. 112 [=Diogenes Laertius, 8.62]), Menecrates, Alexarchus, the founder of Ouranopolis, Nicostratus of Argos, and Nicagoras of Zeleia (Clement, 4.54; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 3.98d-e; 7.289-90), Clearchus of Heracleon (Justinus, 16.5.7; Memnon in *FGrHist* 434 F1; Aelian, fr. 86 [Hercher]), Scipio Africanus (Livy 19.26, 3ff.; Gellius VI.1.6), Hannibal (Appian, *Hannibalic War*, 2.6; cf. *Acts of John*, 88ff.; Origen, *Against Celsus*, 2.63ff.), Jesus (Mark 14:61f. Matt 21:43; John 10:36), Paul (Gal 2:20), Dositheus, Simon Magus, Menander, Theudas, and Judas of Galilee (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.57; 6.11; Acts 8:10; Justin, *I Apology*, 26—of Menander, Theudas, and Judas the reports are dubious), Apsethus or Psaphon or Hanno

complicated by the Greek habit, beginning in 404 B.C., of honoring great public benefactors, especially rulers, by giving them the same sort of cults which were given to gods. "To honor a man *as a god*" (σέβειν ὡς θεόν) is ambiguous—since "as" may mean "as being," or "as if." In Greece, it usually meant "as if," but the other possibility was constantly suggested to the mind.<sup>55</sup>

Philosophy and religion, as usual, contributed to the intellectual confusion. Philosophy—and especially Plato whose influence was all-pervasive—popularized the notion that man is composed of a divine soul imprisoned in a material body; thus every man is essentially divine, and those whose souls are most powerful or who subjugate their bodies completely are almost present deities.<sup>56</sup> In this belief, despite various metaphysical modifications, the Stoics and the Cynics followed Plato as, in the *Phaedrus*, the sweating, struggling procession of human chariots follows the winged car of Zeus.<sup>57</sup> Even the Epicureans believed [183] themselves to be of the same substance as

(Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, 6.8; Aelian, *Varia historia* 14.30; Maximus of Tyre, 35.4; Apostolius, *Synagogue Paroimion*, 18.48), Caligula (Suetonius 22); Sostratus (Lucian, *Demonax*, 1), Agathio (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, 2.1.553), Palestinian prophets (Origen, *Against Celsus*, 8.9); magicians commonly identified themselves at least temporarily with deities (*PGM* 4.2999; 5.145; 12.232ff.; 13.254). Alexander, Caesar, and some other rulers are dubious cases.

<sup>55</sup> "Basic" to this discussion is C. Habicht, *Gottmenschentum und griechische Städte* (Zetemata 14; Munich, 1956), which surveys all the *city* cults of historical individuals. It excludes—as different, though related, problems—the royal cults set up by Alexander and his successors and the cult of the Roman emperors (on which see L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, *Un concurrent du christianisme: Le culte des souverains dans la civilisation gréco-romaine* [Bibliothèque de théologie, 3/5; Tournai, 1957]; also the outstanding article by E. Bickerman, "Die römische Kaiserapotheose," *ARW*, 27 (1929), pp. 1ff. Habicht recognizes the close relation of the cults of living men as gods to the (much older) cults of dead men as heroes, and the lack of certain boundaries between them (pp. 204f.). But he does not recognize that some of the awe felt for heroes might thus be carried over into the cults of the living. Despite his arguments (pp. 213ff.), it remains clear that the ruler cults were attacked *in part* because the rulers were not divine (Philippides in Plutarch, *Vita Demetrii*, 12.3-8). This attack would be inexplicable had not the cults suggested the contrary.

<sup>56</sup> *Timaeus*, 41A-D (cf. A. E. Taylor's commentary [Oxford, 1928]); *Phaedrus*, 245C-249C; *Phaedo*, 80D-84B.

<sup>57</sup> Zeno, *Diogenes Laertius*, 7.119; Cicero, *De divinatione*, 2.129, end. The good life for the Stoics is τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν (Stobaeus, *Anthol.*, 2.7, ed. Wachsmuth II.78); and φύσις is θεός and Zeus (*SVF* 4.159). Therefore the σοφός has all the divine virtues (*SVF* 4.128-133) and is himself divine at least as to the ψυχή (=πνεῦμα, =θεός, *SVF* 4.166, 116). But he is not commonly called θεός; the two cases cited probably reflect the school's willingness to claim for him any quality commonly admired; if so they testify to a common usage and a common ideal figure. In Cynicism the common usage was (as one would expect) more important. Diogenes said, "The gods need nothing; the godlike, little" (Diogenes Laertius 6.104). Crates was remembered as a *lar familiaris* and the true Hercules (Apuleius, *Florida*, 22). The imitation of Hercules was to be an important theme in the sect's tradition (see Lucian, *Peregrinus*, 4.24f.). Menedemus pretended to be a Fury (Diogenes Laertius 6.9; if true, it was probably a mere publicity stunt).

the gods, defined the good life as imitation of the gods, declared Epicurus a god, and worshipped him.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, Euhemerus maintained that all the gods had originally been great men who had been deified by their fellows or successors.<sup>59</sup> While philosophy was thus preaching deification by achievement, whether objective or subjective,<sup>60</sup> religion and magic were offering easier ways to the same goal. The Orphic tradition is commonly supposed to have taught that men were by nature divine and that those who were aware of this and properly prepared to plead their own cause could at least after death regain admission to the company of the gods. Whether Orphic or not, the teaching was widely disseminated and acted on.<sup>61</sup> From remote antiquity the Eleusinian mysteries had promised men after death the most important attributes of divinity—a blessed and eternal life.<sup>62</sup> By the second century A.D. there were mysteries and magical rites which promised immediate—or, at least, immediately [184] anticipated—deification.<sup>63</sup> To these the development of Platonism by the Hermetica, with their insistence on the divinity of the sage, had doubtless contributed.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> H. Usener, *Epicurea* (Leipzig, 1887), pp. 237f., 405; A. Festugière, *Epicure et ses dieux*, pp. 94f.; Lucretius 3.18-30; 5.1-54; 6.58-79.

<sup>59</sup> Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 1.119 (see the commentary of A. Pease [Harvard, 1955], vol. 1, pp. 517f. (bibliography)).

<sup>60</sup> I.e., self-conquest, learning, etc. (The approach to truth=the ascent to a deity [*Parmenides*, Fr. 1; see the review of the interpretations in L. Tarán, *Parmenides* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 17-31]). I cannot understand the verses as shaped by a literary convention of which there are no prior examples, nor as a mere introduction to the following revelation; for that ταῦτ' ἔλεγεν ὁ θεός would have sufficed. Why did Parmenides, in order to receive this revelation, have to go to the place from which Night and Day begin their courses and pass through the gates of which Justice holds the keys?

<sup>61</sup> A. Olivieri, *Lamellae aureae orphicae* (KT 133; Bonn, 1915), A3, 10; a 6, 11; b 3; C 5. These beliefs were still current in the time of Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 2.62.

<sup>62</sup> Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 316-53. Connections with the preceding inscriptions are noted by L. Radermacher in his commentary (Sitzungsberichte 198/4; 2nd ed.; Vienna, 1954), p. 186. Initiation at Eleusis may have been thought to have made Asclepius a god, whereas before he had only been a hero. Pausanias (2.26,8) may have this meaning, or may mean merely that from this date on the cult of the god became legal in Attica. Support for the first interpretation can be found in the possibility that the god's cult was established in the Piraeus before it was brought to Eleusis (see F. Robert, "Le Plutus d'Aristophane et l'Asclépiéion du Pirée," *RP*, 57 [1931], pp. 132ff.).

<sup>63</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 11.24; H. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Cairo 1956), ch. 3; Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, 10.4-6; *PGM* 1.96-196; 4.154-221, 475-750. The deified initiate of course remained in this world as did the Colossians who had died and whose lives had been hid in God (3:3); cf. the Chaldean rite and *PGM* 4.154ff. (for the ritual death).

<sup>64</sup> *CH* 4.7; 12.1; 13.3-13 may reflect some rite which produced the hallucination of ἔκστασις; cf. *PGM* IV. 475-750 and P. Mimaout in Festugière's notes to Asclepius 41: χαίρομεν ὅτι ἐν πλάσμασιν ἡμᾶς ὄντας ἀπεθέω[σ]τας τῇ σεαυτοῦ γνώσει. The possibility of deification while in the body was denied by *CH* 10.6 and *CH* excerpt 6 (from Stobaeus, sec. 18). If there is a difference of opinion here, the dispute on the subject in theosophical circles may have already begun in Paul's time and may account for the odd parenthesis which interrupts 2 Cor 12:2 (as much as to say, "Don't bother

Behind this mob of divine or deified men and their many varieties lay the Greek notion of the gods as beings like men, possessing the human virtues to a higher degree, and possessing also gifts that men wanted, above all immortality and eternal youth.<sup>65</sup> Hence it was natural and common to describe as “divine” any man who excelled in any desirable capacity—beauty, strength, wisdom, prestige, song, fame, skill in speaking, or success in love. The patterns of speech thus established persisted to NT times as conventional exaggerations and served further to complicate the census of “divine men.”<sup>66</sup>

Worst of all, nothing in this complex was stable. As men’s notions changed, so did their gods, and as the gods changed, so did the ways in which men might be thought to be like them or related to them. Simon has shown well how the figure of Hercules developed, with changes of fashion, in the same ways and at the same times as the figure of Christ.<sup>67</sup> The history of the Asclepius figure is also worth looking at. Asclepius inherited from folklore a prodigious death;<sup>68</sup> Epidaurus provided him, also from folklore, with a typical birth story.<sup>69</sup> When Epidaurus came [185] under the protection of Delphi he taught Delphic morality;<sup>70</sup> when admitted to Athens he was associated with the Eleusinian mysteries and became an initiate.<sup>71</sup> When the Stoic equation of the gods with the elements became fashionable he was equated with the air.<sup>72</sup> When neo-Platonism prevailed, he became the soul of the universe, that which maintains the natural order, the equivalent, in this respect, of the *logos*.<sup>73</sup> And when solar theology was in style, he was identified with the sun or with its outflowing power.<sup>74</sup>

---

me with that question now!”). But there may be no difference of opinion in *CH*; the passages which deny the possibility of deification while in the body may presuppose some technique for getting out of it (and back in).

<sup>65</sup> See D. Roloff, *Gottähnlichkeit, Vergöttlichung, und Erhöhung zu seligem Leben* (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte, 4; Berlin, 1970), where most of the occasions of “deification” listed in the following sentence are fully illustrated.

<sup>66</sup> Thus Sappho’s *φαίνεται μοι κήνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν* is translated by Catullus (52) and quoted in *περὶ ἠψους* (10). It was also developed; Propertius 2.15.40: *nocte una quivis vel deum esse potest*. Quintillian can speak of the ideal scholar as “*consummatus undique et, ut dicant, mortalis quidam deus*” (I.10.5).

<sup>67</sup> M. Simon, *Hercule et le christianisme*, (Paris, 1955), ch. III.

<sup>68</sup> Edelstein, T 105, 107-109. On sanctification by lightning, see E. Rohde, *Psyche* (tr. W. Hillis; London, 1950), pp. 581ff.

<sup>69</sup> Pausanias 2.26,4 (the abandoned baby; cf. L. Bieler, *θεῖος ἀνὴρ* [2 vols., Vienna, 1935-36], 2.106).

<sup>70</sup> Edelstein, 2.70, 127f.; T 318, 319.

<sup>71</sup> Edelstein, 2.127; T 720, 564.

<sup>72</sup> Edelstein, 2.105f.; T 291 (=Pausanias 7.23,7f.).

<sup>73</sup> Edelstein, 2.107f.; T 302-309.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

He was the light of men,<sup>75</sup> the savior.<sup>76</sup> When mysteries were in demand, mysteries of Asclepius were developed.<sup>77</sup> When “new gods” came in, there were “new” Asclepii, one a θεός ἐπιφανής.<sup>78</sup> In Syria and Palestine, where dying and reviving gods were popular, he was identified with Eshmun, a figure of the Tammuz-Adonis type.<sup>79</sup> When oracles had a revival, in the second century A.D., he gave oracles;<sup>80</sup> for men who wanted longer revelations, he mediated those of Hermes Trismegistos;<sup>81</sup> but his power could be compressed in an amulet,<sup>82</sup> and he was great in magic (where he appears as “the true [186] prophet”—cf. *Clementine Homilies*, 1.19; 2.5ff.—sent forth by him “who sitteth upon the cherubim”).<sup>83</sup> He had been, of course, katasterized,<sup>84</sup> and became for astrologers the ruler of one area of the zodiac.<sup>85</sup> In sum, he became all things to all men. And he was not unique; a similar, though less extensive, list of adaptations can be made for Sarapis,<sup>86</sup> and

<sup>75</sup> Lucian, *Alexander*, 18. The parallels to John 8:12 and *CH* 1.6 were noticed by M. Caster, *Études sur Alexandre* (Paris, 1938) pp. 35f., who also discusses other attributes of Asclepius: βασιλεύς, δεσπότης, κύριος, φιλάνθρωπος.

<sup>76</sup> P. Wendland, “Soter,” *ZNW*, 5 (1904), p. 336; M. Fränkel, *Die Inschriften von Pergamon* (2 vols.; *Altertümer von Pergamon* 8.1,2; Berlin, 1890-95), nos. 246, 267, 290, 296.

<sup>77</sup> Edelstein, 2.213, esp. no. 21; T 498b; Lucian, *Alexander*, 38f.

<sup>78</sup> Caster, *Études*, pp. 35f.; cf. 2 Tim 1:10; *Inschriften von Pergamon*, no. 365 (of Hadrian); Lucian, *Alexander*, 43 (of Glycon).

<sup>79</sup> F. Cumont, “Eshmun,” *RE* 6/1 (1907) col. 678; W. Baudissin, *Adonis* (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 219ff. R. de Vaux (“Sur quelques rapports entre Adonis et Osiris,” *RB*, 42 [1933], pp. 31ff.) tried to show that the revival of these gods was a late Egyptian addition to their rites; but this seems unlikely because (1) Lucian’s evidence for the revival (*De syria dea* 6) cannot be discredited by the obscure phrase καὶ εἰς τὸν ἀέρα πέμπουσι, since the obscurity does not affect the point in question; (2) the silence of the poems about the mourning is inconclusive, since reference to the expected revival would spoil the effect (cp. *tenebrae*); (3) Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, 302, would ordinarily be taken to refer to death and resurrection; (4) resurrections are attested for neighboring and probably related deities: Baal (*ANET*<sup>2</sup> 139f.); Melkart-Hercules (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.146 [with Marcus’ note]; *Apion* 1.119); and Jesus.

<sup>80</sup> Edelstein, T 427-42; Lucian, *Alexander, passim*; Origen, *Against Celsus*, 3.24; H. von Gaertringen, “Ein Asklepiosorakel aus Athen,” *ARW* 32 (1935) pp. 367ff.; against Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 100, n. 52 (based on Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.20.4), see Lucian, *Deorum concilia* 16.

<sup>81</sup> *CH* 2, 9, 10, 14, 16, the Asclepius, etc.

<sup>82</sup> Bonner, *Studies*, 42 and pl. III, no. 58 (note the identification, Iao=Yahweh); Delatte-Derchain, nos. 234, 235.

<sup>83</sup> PGM 7.634; cf. 8.81 and Hippolytus, *Philosophumena* 4.32f.

<sup>84</sup> Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 582, citing Eratosthenes, *Catasterismoi* VI (Ὀφιοῦχος, note the epiphany); Hyginus, *Astronomicon* 2.14.

<sup>85</sup> “Persian” tradition in Cosmas of Jerusalem (Migne, *PG* 38.461), cited by Bidez-Cumont, *Mages* 2.271ff.

<sup>86</sup> Mysteries (Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, 2.39; Paulinus Nolanus, *Carmina* 32.123ff.; H. Gressmann, *Die orientalischen Religionen* [Berlin, 1930], pp. 44ff.; H. Youtie, “The Kline of Sarapis,” *HTR*, 41 [1948] 9ff.); oracles (Dio Chrysostom 32.12f.); sun god (*P. Oxy.* 11.1382; *OGIS* 678; Julian, *Oratio*, 4.136; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.20.17); order of the universe (*PGM* 13.620, 640; Aristides, *Oratio* 45.23ff.); light of men (Macrobius, *loc. cit.*; Aristides, *Oratio* 45.33); lord and savior (Aristides, *Oratio* 45.20; Artemidorus,

probably could be for other deities (Isis, Apollo, Helios, Eros). But it will have been obvious that these characteristics acquired by the gods in hellenistic and imperial times are also those which appear at the same time in the legends of "divine men." Both Jesus and Apollonius, to mention only two, were like Asclepius, primarily famous as miracle workers, especially healers, but like him acquired divine fathers and birth stories elaborated with motifs from folklore. Both were represented as teachers of morality who reformed established temple procedures and participated in or themselves instituted mysteries. Jesus rivaled Asclepius in becoming a principle of cosmic order and a solar deity;<sup>87</sup> we do not have the theological epistles of Apollonius' believers, which no doubt speculated about the god that was in him.<sup>88</sup> Both were conceived as saviors and as epiphanies of divine beings, and their prophetic oracles were preserved by their followers. Their opponents accused both of magical powers, and magicians tried to make use of these.<sup>89</sup> Jesus and Asclepius survived death, while Apollonius escaped it by a miracle, and all three were finally taken up to heaven.

This extensive equation of the characteristics of Graeco-Roman gods with those of "divine men," shows that the development of the "divine man" figure in the Graeco-Roman world was part and parcel of the general development of that world's imaginations and desires. Consequently, it is very hard to establish specific influences and relationships between stories of different holy men, since similar elements may always have [187] come, not from another example of the pattern, but from the general religious and intellectual milieu. One can distinguish roughly the different social types of those who claimed or were credited with divinity—prophets, poets, philosophers, rulers, athletes, physicians, magicians—and one might attempt a history of each type. But there are too many border-line cases and too many ties-in from one type to another. For example, it would seem at first glance that the prophets were clearly distinct from the rulers. But members of both groups frequently appear as leaders—or would-be leaders—of risings of the lower classes. What seems to be a clear difference of basic type might sometimes dissolve, on closer inspection, into differences of success or failure, sophistication, and type of

---

*Onirocritica*, 2.39; *OGIS* 87, 699); god of wisdom (Aristides, *Oratio* 45.17) and of magic (Bonner, *Studies*, pp. 46, 162, 235 and pl. XIX, no. 354; Delatte-Derchain, nos. 100, 101; *PGM* 4.227, 1715; 5.1-53, 447, 13.620, 640; 19a.6).

<sup>87</sup> F. Dölger, *Sol salutis* (Liturgiegeschichtliche Forschungen 4/5; 2nd ed., Münster in W., 1925).

<sup>88</sup> 2 Cor 5:18; *Vita Apollonii*, 1.4; 8.7.7.

<sup>89</sup> Mark 9:38; Acts 19:13; *PGM* 11a.1.

tradition. The genuine letter of Pilate no doubt represented Jesus as a would-be ruler, and the Gospel of Hannibal, as preached in 216 by a Gaul who believed in his leader's divinity, would be a valuable corrective to Livy. Again Menecrates,<sup>90</sup> a doctor who claimed to be a god because he could save men's lives, seems utterly alien to Jesus and Apollonius—until one learns that what he cured was “the holy disease”<sup>91</sup> (the Greek equivalent of “demonic possession”) and that he attached those he cured to himself as disciples, referred to them as οἱ ἄν ἐμοὶ πείθονται, and claimed to make them gods (in Gospel terms, to give them the Kingdom). And Apollonius is brought into the picture by the report that his reputation for divinity rested largely on the outcries of the insane who hailed him and prayed to him as a god.<sup>92</sup> Yet again, one might be tempted to say that gods, like Asclepius and Sarapis, were utterly different figures from men like Apollonius and Alexander. But apart from the common elements in their stories, there is also the fact that Apollonius began his career by going to live in a temple of Asclepius. One of Apollonius' followers was the teacher of Alexander, and Alexander himself was the prophet of the “new Asclepius.”<sup>93</sup> Add to this the evident fraudulence of many of the Asclepius miracle-inscriptions (which must have been put up by the clergy of his temples) and the conjecture that a list of miracle-stories, like the Asclepius collections, may have been the basic element in the tradition about Apollonius, and once again a pattern begins to appear.

These patterns suggest the complex interrelationships of the different elements in this material, and this complexity, together with that of the [188] material itself, will explain why the studies of the problem have been either partial or not wholly satisfactory.<sup>94</sup>

## II. The Studies

The studies of these topics began with apologetics. The similarities between the legendary career (divine paternity, etc.) of Jesus and those of other demigods and pretenders to divinity were noticed by

---

<sup>90</sup> Besides the sources cited above, see O. Weinreich, *Menecrates Zeus und Salmeoneus* (Tübinger Beitr. z. Altertumswissenschaft; Tübingen, 1933).

<sup>91</sup> See H. Grensemann, *Die hippokratische Schrift “Über die heilige Krankheit”* (Ars medica, II. Abteilung, 1; Berlin, 1968).

<sup>92</sup> *Vita Apollonii*, 8.7,1. This Philostratus certainly did not invent; he tries to explain it away.

<sup>93</sup> *Vita Apollonii*, 1.9ff.; Lucian, *Alexander*, 5, 10ff.

<sup>94</sup> The following bibliography is limited to works relevant to the “divine man” as a free-lance prophet, philosopher, or the like, and, within this group, to works important for the understanding of the Gospels. Omitted are most of the works discussed above on the aretology as a literary form, all works on the ruler cult after Lohmeyer, works on early Pythagoreanism after Rohde (except those dealing directly with the Gospels) and miscellaneous minor groups. Even with these limitations the list is far from complete.

Justin who explained it as a demonic imitation of Christianity.<sup>95</sup> Pagans noticed them too and consequently denied the peculiarity of Jesus, comparing him unfavorably with the demigods and philosophers, or equating him with the magicians and wandering prophets.<sup>96</sup> Apollonius of Tyana was brought into the discussion,<sup>97</sup> and about A.D. 307 an imperial administrator named Hierocles wrote a book against the Christians, containing a long, unfavorable comparison of Jesus to Apollonius.<sup>98</sup> This was answered by Eusebius. "Passing over" the greater success of Jesus' cult, he argues that human achievements are limited by the laws of nature;<sup>99</sup> therefore, if the miracle stories told about Apollonius are true he was a magician; if false, he may have been a mere philosopher.

With the success of Christianity the apologetic question lost importance, and, apart from passing references,<sup>100</sup> the discussion slumbered. [189] It was awakened by the rationalistic and antiquarian interests of the eighteenth century which engendered a series of works culminating in F. Baur's *Apollonius von Tyana und Christus*.<sup>101</sup> Baur was interested in the *Life of Apollonius* as a document of later paganism; he thought the real Apollonius had been a magician whom Philostratus had written up, using the Gospels as models, to set forth the syncretistic religion of the Severan court. That syncretism made much of divine men, among whom Jesus was included.<sup>102</sup> Baur pointed

<sup>95</sup> Justin, I *Apology*, 21-27.

<sup>96</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, 2.49ff.; 3.3, 42f.; 6.8-11; 7.9, 53; etc.

<sup>97</sup> A. von Harnack, *Porphyrus "Gegen die Christen"* (Abhandlungen 1916, 1; Berlin, 1916), no. 63.

<sup>98</sup> O. Seeck, "Hierokles 13," *RE*, 8/2 (1913) col. 1477; cf. *RE*, 6/1 (1907) cols. 1394-95; Eusebius, *Against Hierocles* (=Against Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*), 1.

<sup>99</sup> In sec. 6 he admits that a man favored and illuminated by God may truly, because of the ray of divine light within him, be called θεός, "since he carries in his soul the image of some great god." But such a man would illuminate the whole world and leave a record "of the—or his—eternal divinity" to succeeding time. And even such a man could not do miracles. (And, it is implied, Apollonius' obscurity proves that he was no such man.) This is an example of the (not to be forgotten) rationalistic strain in Christianity, here contradicting the common notion of "the divine man," according to which the internal divinity would express itself in miraculous powers (e.g., *Vita Apollonii*, 3.18; 6.10f.). How his arguments would have applied to the Gospels, Eusebius did not consider; and he avoided references to the similarities between the legends of Apollonius and of Jesus.

<sup>100</sup> E.g., Jerome, *Tractatus in librum psalmsorum*, Ps 81, end (Anecdota Maredsolana 3/2; ed. G. Morin; Oxford, 1897), p. 80.

<sup>101</sup> Tübingen, 1832; earlier works are reviewed on pp. 1-18, 104ff.

<sup>102</sup> *Historia Augusta*, Severus Alexander, 29.2: Alexander had a private chapel in which there were statues of the deified rulers (optimos electos et animas sanctiores, in quis Apollonium et ... Christum, Abraham et Orpheum et huiuscemodi ceteros habebat), and images of his parents. This is suspiciously like Ammianus Marcellinus, 21.14: Men who excelled by the aid of guardian spirits: Pythagoras, Socrates, Numa, Scipio, Marius, Augustus, Hermes Trismegistus, Apollonius, and Plotinus. Recent scholarship tends to date the *Historia Augusta* near or after Ammianus (see R. Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* [Oxford, 1968], pp. 214-19; Syme opts for a date after 390). But the

out the importance of the Pythagoras legend for this sort of figure (pp. 175ff.), referred also to Abaris and Aristeas (*ibid.*), and recognized the parodies of it in Lucian's *Alexander* and *Peregrinus* (pp. 121ff., 134ff.). His clear presentation remained, until the work of Reitzenstein, the most important study of the subject. Its influence removed Apollonius from NT criticism to the history of paganism in the post-Antonine age.

Things began to change with the work of Rohde, who in 1871 analyzed the Pythagorean tradition, making a strong case for his theory that the supernatural side of it went back to the origin and was early embodied in a collection of miracle stories current before Aristotle's time.<sup>103</sup> Then in 1904 came Wendland's ΣΩΤΗΡ,<sup>104</sup> demonstrating this hellenistic element in NT usage,<sup>105</sup> and Reitzenstein's *Poimandres*, investigating the revelator of the Hermetica, whose affiliates spread like crab-grass through Christianity, Egyptian religion, Judaism, gnosticism, and magic. Next year (1905) Cumont gave his lectures at the Collège de France on oriental religions in Roman paganism, revealing the wide importance of the eastern mysteries and their savior deities;<sup>106</sup> and in 1906 Reitzenstein's *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* went beyond the literary form of the miracle story to study, as "aretalogies," the "lives" into which [190] collections of miracle stories had been inserted. En passant, his source analysis of the life of Apollonius (pp. 39-54) superseded Baur's notion of its composition and put the study of it on a new footing. Weinreich's *Antike Heilungswunder*, in 1909, demonstrated the interchangeability of stories of human and divine healers; and when Fiebig, *Jüdische Wundergeschichten* (1911), tried to show that similar stories were common in the earliest rabbinic literature, Schlatter, *Das Wunder in der Synagoge* (1912), refuted him.<sup>107</sup> That same year Holl showed the theological and structural relationship of the miracle stories to the lives<sup>108</sup>—they are the demonstration of the divinity—and Eitrem's article "Heros" traced the history of the concept.<sup>109</sup>

report in *Historia Augusta* is not unlikely, and Baur could refer to Alexander's mother's conversations with Origen (Eusebius, *HE*, 6.21,3) and Caracalla's heroön to Apollonius (Dio Cassius, 77.18, end).

<sup>103</sup> E. Rohde, "Die Quellen des Jamblichus in seiner Biographie des Pythagoras," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, NS 26 (1871), pp. 554ff.;=*Kleine Schriften* [2 vols.; Tübingen, 1901], 2, p. 105.

<sup>104</sup> *ZNW*, 5 (1904), pp. 335ff.

<sup>105</sup> This is not to say that he denied the Jewish element, see p. 349. Foerster and Fohrer (σώτηρ, *TWNT*, 7 (1964), pp. 1013ff.) go farther.

<sup>106</sup> F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (4th ed.; Paris, 1929).

<sup>107</sup> Ignorant of this, I also refuted him, in *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels* (Philadelphia, 1951), pp. 81ff.

<sup>108</sup> K. Holl, "Die schriftstellerische Form des gr. Heiligenlebens," *Neue Jahrbücher*, 29 (1912), pp. 406f. Holl's distinction between lives of divine men (with attached collections

Thus far, this learning had little influence on NT criticism.<sup>110</sup> In 1913, however, Norden's *Agnostos Theos* revealed in Acts 17 the preaching of the revelator of Reitzenstein's *Poimandres*,<sup>111</sup> and Bousset's *Kyrios Christos* traced the growth of the cult of Jesus as Lord in the hellenistic world, exploring the divine implications of that title. Then in 1916 Wetter's *Der Sohn Gottes* set out to show that a "son of god" was a person of a known sociological type; the title might vary (god, son of god, angel, prophet, or apostle of the god) but the practice (wandering miracle worker, called by his enemies a magician) and the claims (to be sent of god, to have come down from heaven, to judge the world, to save those who believe in him, and to return to heaven) were uniform. Wetter found the figure most clearly presented in John, so he collected from John the proof passages for each point and adduced for each the parallels from Graeco-Roman usage. But, as we saw, that usage applied the same terms to a wide range of figures. Wetter discredited his argument by drawing parallels from all of these; many seemed to be only verbal similarities, and this weakened the effect of the rest. Moreover, having found his pure type in John, he concluded that the use of the term "son of god" in the other Gospels was dependent, not indeed on John, but on [191] the developed hellenistic Christianity that John represented (pp. 137-44). Finally, the book's impact was weakened by its publication in 1916—the war obliterated it. After the war W. Bauer spoke of it favorably,<sup>112</sup> but it never got the attention it deserved.

With its appearance the scattered material had been brought together, the similarities recognized, the problem stated. What had to follow was analysis, definition, completion. Thanks to the war, they followed slowly. Meyer's careful study of Apollonius and Reitzenstein's *Die Göttin Psyche*, both in 1917,<sup>113</sup> were the aftermath of the earlier age. Lohmeyer's *Christuskult und Kaiserkult* (1919) marked the beginning of many detailed studies of the ruler cults; these we pass over. A decade of minor studies on other subjects may be

of miracle stories) and "aretalogies," has not survived in usage and was dubious in fact; worse than dubious was his derivation of the notion of the "divine man" from Posidonius. The Pythagoras legend is earlier.

<sup>109</sup> *RE*, 8/1, cols. 1111ff.

<sup>110</sup> For instance, B. Bacon, "Jesus the Son of God," *HTR*, 2 (1909), pp. 277ff., is written as if Jesus and his followers knew nothing but the OT, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha. It is unlikely that the authors of the NT should have been as ignorant as the critics of it.

<sup>111</sup> The notion that Paul's speech comes from a sermon by Apollonius has been justly rejected; but the fact that such a notion could be advanced by a scholar of Norden's stature shows the similarity of the figures.

<sup>112</sup> In *TLZ* 43 (1918), p. 29 and *ThRu*, NF 1 (1929), pp. 135ff.

<sup>113</sup> E. Meyer, "Apollonius von Tyana," *Hermes*, 52 (1917), pp. 371ff.; R. Reitzenstein, *Die Göttin Psyche* (Sitzungsberichte 10; Heidelberg, 1917).

relegated to the notes.<sup>114</sup> Reitzenstein got lost in the Iranian desert.<sup>115</sup> Eventually Weinreich's *Menekrates Zeus und Salmoneus* (1933) marked the beginning of better things. The brilliant but controversial<sup>116</sup> *Paulus und Christus* of Windisch (1934) was followed in 1935-36 by the two volumes of L. Bieler's *θεῖος ἀνὴρ*, the fullest analysis of a large selection of material: Lucian's *Peregrinus*, *Alexander*, and *Demonax*, selected lives of philosophers, sophists, legendary poets and monks, the Gospels and Acts, Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander*, Suetonius and Nicholas of Damascus on Augustus, and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*. From these Bieler collected the evidence about [192] the divine man's life-history, appearance, character, supernatural knowledge, powers, mission, teaching, followers, relation to the surrounding world, and relation to the gods. He showed that on each of these points the bulk of the material fell into a pattern. But (as in Wetter's work) secondary factors diminished the impact of the book: it was somewhat careless; the references were sometimes false and the texts sometimes misinterpreted; the choice of sources was questionable. Publication in 1937 of Pfister's absurd *Herakles und Christus*<sup>117</sup> (demolished in 1938 by Rose, *Herakles and the Gospels*)<sup>118</sup> did something to discredit the method. And the Second World War was imminent. The last year of nominal peace saw the publication of H. Lewy's *Aristotle and the Jewish Sage*,<sup>119</sup> which not

<sup>114</sup> O. Weinreich, *Antikes Gottmenschum* (Neue Jahrbücher 2 [1926], pp. 633ff.) is a good popular exposition. I. Lévy, *La légende de Pythagore* (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, 250; Paris, 1927) is important for its source-analysis of the lives of Pythagoras, and for its observation of the Greek—especially Pythagorean—parallels to Palestinian material of the first centuries B.C. and A.D.; but the statements of "fact" are often unreliable, the judgments usually so. Nevertheless M.-J. Lagrange, "Les légendes pythagoriques et l'évangile," *RB*, 45 (1936), pp. 481ff.; 46 (1937), pp. 5ff., in trying to minimize the supernatural side of the pre-Christian Pythagoreanism and explain as imitations of the Gospels most of the parallels between them, Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras, and Philostratus' Life of Apollonius, is probably no less mistaken. One of the cases that looks most like imitation is the raising of the dead girl in Rome (*Vita Apollonii*, 4.6), as of the young man of Nain (Luke 7:11ff.). But this story of a healer stopping a bier on its way to the tomb was an aretalogical motif to be found also in the stories about Asclepiades, a doctor of the first century B.C. (see *RE*, 2/2 (1896), cols. 1632f., citing Pliny, *Natural History*, 7.124; 26.15; Celsus, *De medicina*, 2.6; and Apuleius, *Florida*, 19). R. Hanslik, *Christus und die hellenistischen Göttesmänner* (Theol. d. Zeit, 1 [1936], pp. 203ff.); and S. Loesch, *Deitas Iesu und antike Apotheose* (Rottenburg, 1933) non vidi.

<sup>115</sup> *Das mandäische Buch des Herrn der Grösse und die Evangelienüberlieferung* (Sitzungsberichte, 12; Heidelberg, 1919); *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium* (with H. Schaefer; Bonn, 1921); *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* (3rd ed., 1927).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. the reply by M.-J. Lagrange, "Socrate et N.-S. Jésus-Christ," *RB*, 44 (1935), pp. 5f.

<sup>117</sup> *ARW*, 35 (1937), pp. 42ff.

<sup>118</sup> *HTR*, 31 (1938), pp. 113ff.; see also Simon, *Hercule*, pp. 51ff., who refers to Toynbee's work on the same subject, *A Study of History* (Oxford, 1939), 6.465-76.

<sup>119</sup> *HTR*, 31 (1938), pp. 205ff.; see further A. Festugière, "Greco et sages orientaux," *RHR*, 130 (1945), pp. 29ff.

only collected data on Jews cast in the role of divine men, but also threw light on the circles of Plato's disciples and disciples' disciples—Heraclides Ponticus, Philip of Opus, Xenocrates, Clearchus of Soli—who seem to have transmuted Platonic philosophy into popular flimflam.<sup>120</sup> In the same year, finally, appeared the great work of Bidez and Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*,<sup>121</sup> which dragged out into the light these shady divine men.

After the war came the reaction, the flight to pseudorthodoxy. Consequently from 1946 to 1960 I know of no important comparative work on this subject save the studies, already cited, on Hercules by Simon and on Apuleius by Dolger, McCasland's *By the Finger of God* (1951) (an admirable study of the exorcisms, with valuable material on religious healing in Palestine), the Nock-Festugière edition of *CH*, and the magisterial *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* of Festugière (4 vols., 1950-54). The decade '50-'60 is filled with a series of works intended to prove Jesus fundamentally different from similar pagan figures. In 1951, Bieneck, *Sohn Gottes als Christusbezeichnung der Synoptiker*, 70ff.:  $\alpha\delta\varsigma$   $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  in the Gospels cannot have its Greek meaning because it occurs in a Jewish milieu; therefore the god is the solitary Jewish god, not a Greek one, the son is obedient to him, the reference is to the historical Jesus, and the term has OT overtones. These arguments are obviously trivial. Of course, Jewish Christians identified the divine man as Jesus, put him in a Jewish world, and used him for Jewish purposes, but this does not tell us where they got the divine man.<sup>122</sup> In 1952/53, Preisker, [193] *Wundermächte und Wundermänner*:<sup>123</sup> the raising of Lazarus is not like a divine man's miracle because (1) it represents a breakthrough of the kingdom,<sup>124</sup> (2) Jesus demands and produces faith,<sup>125</sup> and (3) "Jesus bleibt bei seinem Helfen das Numinosum erhalten." Of this I cannot make sense. In

<sup>120</sup> See J. Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (Phoenix Supplementary Vols., VII; Toronto, 1966), pp. 10-15, also 209ff. (bibliography).

<sup>121</sup> See the review by Nock, *JRS*, 30 (1940), pp. 191-98.

<sup>122</sup> An additional argument, that the title is not confirmed by the miracles, is false. The exorcisms are performed by the power of the deity whom the demons recognize. O. Bauernfeind, *Die Worte der Dämonen* (BWANT, 3F/8; Stuttgart, 1927), pp. 16, n. 5; 25.

<sup>123</sup> *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Univ., Halle-Wittenberg*, 2 (1952/3), pp. 519ff.

<sup>124</sup> This is a common assertion and is justified by the framework, but the kingdom seems to be absent from the primitive elements of the miracle stories. Even if it were present, it would not be a fundamental difference, but another example of the adaptation of the stories to Jewish purposes.

<sup>125</sup> But sometimes he does not: Mark 5:39ff.; 6:5f., 51f.; 8:17-21. These may be part of Mark's mystery-framework, but they indicate that faith was not a primitive element of the stories. Also "faith," as theologians use it, means faith in the post-resurrection Gospel, a different thing from trust in the healing power of a divine man. If the story in Mark 5 can be trusted, it was trust, not faith, that cured, not saved, the woman with an issue (Mark 5:34). But both the RSV and the NEB here mistranslate  $\pi\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ .

1953, Maurer, *Knecht Gottes und Sohn Gottes im Passionsbericht des Markusevangeliums*:<sup>126</sup> a careful study, stemming from Jeremias-Zimmerli, *παῖς θεοῦ*,<sup>127</sup> and showing that υἱὸς θεοῦ in Mark 13:1ff. is equivalent to *παῖς θεοῦ*, as in Wis 2:13, 18, and therefore to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 42, 50, 52, 53, of which reminiscences are discernible (more or less) throughout the passion story. Hence the same meaning is found in or read into the other Marcan uses of the term, and Mark becomes consistent evidence for the “primitive Palestinian” interpretation of Jesus as the Suffering Servant. But since the trial scene was shaped by Wisdom 2 (p. 28), it came from a Greek-speaking church. The last page (38), facing, at last, the question why υἱός, throughout Mark, was substituted for *παῖς*, explains the substitution by (1) the influence of Wisdom 2 (but Wisdom uses both titles), (2) the resistance of the hellenistic world to the notion of servitude to a god, (3) most important, the fact that υἱός was more suitable than *παῖς* for the risen Christ. So υἱός was substituted for *παῖς* because it had other connotations! What other connotations? The question is not asked. Maurer seems to suppose that if one connotation can be demonstrated, it must have been the total meaning of the term. In 1954, Jeremias, *Abba*,<sup>128</sup> found in the peculiarity of Jesus’ (reported) use of this term evidence that his conception of himself as son of God was rooted in his peculiar psychological experience; this explanation of this “sonship” was essentially that of Grundmann, *Die Gotteskindschaft in der Geschichte Jesu* (1938) who had [194] found theological differences distinguishing both Greek and Hebrew usage from that of Jesus, and therefore derived the latter from Jesus’ personality (pp. 52f.). In 1956 Grundmann, in *Sohn Gottes*,<sup>129</sup> restated this position. It is not unlikely, but it does little to tell us what sense Jesus attached to the term. Again, in 1962, de Kruijf, *Der Sohn des lebendigen Gottes* merely collected examples of usage from the two Testaments, the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and Qumran documents. This method might be justified if the NT were a homogeneous outgrowth of the Old, but it is not. The closest students and most devoted adherents of the books of the OT were among Jesus’ most determined opponents. The official representatives of OT religion handed him over to the Romans for execution. His followers were thrown out of synagogues and eventually excommunicated. Their claim that he and they were the fulfillment of the prophecies was one which the Fathers were forced to defend by allegorization and

---

<sup>126</sup> *ZTK*, 50 (1953), pp. 1ff.

<sup>127</sup> *TWNT*, 5 (1954), pp. 653ff. (1954 is the year of the volume’s completion, the fascicles had appeared earlier).

<sup>128</sup> *TLZ*, 79 (1954), cols. 213f.

<sup>129</sup> *ZNW*, 47 (1956), pp. 113ff.

dismemberment of the OT texts; both the defenses and the claim are worthless as accounts of the original meanings of those texts. All this being so, it is plausible both to suppose that there was some radical difference between Christianity and the other forms of first-century Judaism, and to look for the source of this difference in the Graeco-Roman culture *and* the continuing Semitic paganism of first-century Palestine.

With the sixties<sup>130</sup> this investigation was resumed.<sup>131</sup> Betz in *Lukian von Samosata und das NT* (1961) devoted half of his book to a detailed but clear presentation of the divine man material in Lucian, and of the miracle stories often associated with it. In 1963 Schulz, *Die Bedeutung des Markus für die Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums*,<sup>132</sup> argued that neither the son of man nor the messiah had a personal history, neither Pharisaism nor Qumran produced historical works; Paul, Q, and the Gospel according to Thomas show Jesus' sayings without a historical frame; so Mark introduced the historical frame, taking the idea from hellenistic lives of divine men. Perhaps so, but there is much pseudo-historical writing in apocalyptic literature. Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief* (1964), made a good case for supposing that Paul's opponents conceived both themselves and Jesus as divine men. In the following year Moses Hadas and I published *Heroes and Gods*. Hadas wanted to trace the development of the hero, especially the transition [195] from physical and military to moral and spiritual heroism; I wanted to make available brief outlines of four major works influenced by the divine-man type of aretalogy, with just enough introduction to indicate their historical contexts and common pattern. In 1967 Schille, *Die urchristliche Wundertradition*,<sup>133</sup> argued that the Gospels' miracle stories, with few exceptions, have not been influenced by the "divine man" motif, but come from a Galilean missionary movement which began already in Jesus' lifetime. On the contrary Betz, *Jesus as Divine Man*,<sup>134</sup> placed the "divine man" Christology in relation to the other Christologies of the NT, described it, indicated the passages in which it is to be found, and showed how the Evangelists had, in different ways, adapted these passages to their

<sup>130</sup> G. Eder, *Der göttliche Wundertäter* (Girsching, 1957), non vidi.

<sup>131</sup> Not, however, so conspicuously as to leave any considerable trace in the current reviews of the literature, e.g.: J. Bedenbaugh, "The First Decade of the New Quest for the Historical Jesus," *Lutheran Quarterly*, 16 (1964), pp. 239ff.; W. Kummel, "Jesuforschung seit 1950," *ThRu*, 31 (1966), pp. 15ff., 289ff.; R. Songer, "The Gospel of John in Recent Research," *Review and Expositor*, 62 (1965), pp. 417ff.

<sup>132</sup> *Studia Evangelica*, 2 (1963), pp. 135 ff.

<sup>133</sup> *Aufsätze und Vorträge zur Theologie u. Religionswis.*, 35 (1966), pp. 11ff. (=Arbeiten Zur Theologie, 1 (1967), pp. 7ff.).

<sup>134</sup> In *Jesus and the Historian* (Colwell Festschrift; ed. F. Trotter; Philadelphia, 1968), pp. 114ff.

own views—whether of Jewish apocalyptic, of logos Christology, or whatever. Hence, if Betz is right, it follows that the “divine man” Christology was prior to, and widespread before, the composition of any of the existing Gospels. Finally, the past three years have seen the publication of vols. III to V of Neusner’s *History of the Jews in Babylonia*<sup>135</sup> in which for the first time we have an extensive study of “The Rabbi as a Holy Man” and of rabbinic thaumaturgy.<sup>136</sup>

### III. Postscript

The preceding pages were written for discussion in the Gospels Seminar at the 1970 meeting of SBL. From that discussion it seems that the following observations should be added.

The term “literary form” is ambiguous. Of some literary forms the definition is precise and completely formal: the limerick, the double ballade, and so on. Such forms may be used for any content—one could write a double ballade on the synoptic problem. But other literary forms have no precise formal definitions and are therefore determined largely by content; so, for example, the novel—a novel is a composition normally in prose and rather long (whatever that means) which must tell a story about people; no extended prose treatment of the synoptic [196] problem would be a novel. The aretalogy belongs to this latter type of literary form. It has no precise formal definition but is determined by its content; it must have a hero whom it celebrates, by reporting one or more of his marvelous deeds. Ἀρεταλογία was used in antiquity both for the act of reporting and for the resultant reports (Manetho 4.445ff.; Ben Sira 36:13/19).

Whether the ancients would have recognized some of these reports as examples of a distinct literary form or forms is a question unanswerable for lack of evidence and not of much importance for NT criticism, since nobody thinks of any Evangelist as a literary man sitting down to produce a composition of a recognized form, in the way one might sit down to write a double ballade. The important question is whether or not those literary forms which, because of their distinctive content, modern critics have agreed to call aretalogies, so influenced either Jesus or his followers that many traditions about him

---

<sup>135</sup> Leiden, 1968-70.

<sup>136</sup> Vol. 3, pp. 95ff., esp. 102ff.; Vol. 4, pp. 279ff., 309-63; Vol. 5, pp. 174-93. Talmudic passages on magic had been collected by L. Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen* (Jahresbericht der Landes-Rabbinerschule in Budapest 1897-98; Budapest, 1898), and noticed by many authors; but Neusner is the first to study the Babylonian rabbi’s role as a social figure who was, in his society, an active center of supernatural power. For something similar on the Palestinian rabbis, one must go back to M. Friedländer, *Ben Dosa und seine Zeit* (Prag, 1872); but this was deformed by Friedländer’s determination to make Ben Dosa a nineteenth century liberal and misunderstood mystic, like Jesus.

and, eventually, the Gospels themselves were automatically cast in similar forms.

Here “form” is evidently being used in the Platonic sense of “essential structure,” the sense in which a typist’s chair and an overstuffed armchair have the same “form,” *qua* chair. It is, consequently, irrelevant to object that the life of Apollonius of Tyana is overstuffed, or that different specimens have different upholstery (local color), or that one example has some peculiar elements, another lacks some common ones. Admittedly, too, there will be some dubious cases: Was a curule chair a chair or a stool? Was the passion story, if it existed by itself, an aretalogy? But such questions are comparatively unimportant if two facts are admitted: (1) *many accounts of ancient “divine men” are variants of a recognizable aretalogical form;* (2) *the Gospels are more similar to these accounts than to any other ancient non-Christian works that we know of.* I think that these facts are demonstrated by the material reviewed above in section II. It may be added that there is no Jewish account prior to the time of Jesus of any messianic figure which at all closely resembles him. Elijah and Elisha did miracles, but were not messianic;<sup>137</sup> the Servant suffered, but was not a miracle worker and had no extended personal history. (Also, there is little evidence and less likelihood that Jesus suffered much prior to his arrest and execution. But his identification with the Suffering Servant was probably a consequence of his suffering, therefore posterior to his execution. What, then, did he do *before* his execution that led his followers *afterwards* to make this identification? Miracles. Because of his miracles he was thought to be the Messiah [Mark 6:14-16+8:27-30; Matt 11:2ff.; 12:22f.; John 1:49; 3:2; 6:14f.; etc.]. Because he was the Messiah, he must have been prophesied. What suffering savior could be found in the prophecies? The Servant. Thus the miracles were historically prior to his identification as Suffering Servant.)

Beyond these obvious matters one comes to the thornier question: [197] From which strata of the traditional material did the aretalogical elements of the Gospels come? Here the discussion focused on Mark. It was demonstrated:

---

<sup>137</sup> [However, Stanley Isser points out Ben Sira 48:1-11 on Elijah, who there is messianic. This is really a little aretalogy and an example of how close the Hebrew and the Greek traditions were. Furthermore, as Isser notes in his *The Dositheans* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), p. 129, following Kippenberg, the messianic prophets reported by Josephus fit the “prophet like Moses” pattern. If so, there must have been a pattern to fit, that is, a Moses aretalogy must have been in circulation prior to the appearance of these pretenders. This is why, in the transfiguration, Jesus is seen with Moses and Elijah, his predecessors and prototypes.]

(1) That the miracle stories in Mark 1-10 were not originally signs of the coming of the kingdom. This sense has been imposed on them, sometimes by the Marcan framework, and is attributed to them in the Beelzebub dispute (Mark 3:26), but it is indicated by *nothing* in the stories themselves save the title “Son of David” in 10:48 and the clause ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς in 1:24. But this clause is suspect, because it is not paralleled in other exorcisms where the demons implore mercy or declare their opponents’ name but say nothing of his mission. Accordingly, standing as it does *unparalleled* at the head of the *first* Marcan miracle story, the clause would seem to be an interpretive, editorial addition.<sup>138</sup> (Nothing in the stilling of the storm indicates that it was a conquest of the whole demonic world or that it produced any substantial change in the cosmic order; magicians were expected to command demons and still storms [*PGM* 1.120; 5.137; 7.321, 395ff., 417ff.; 19; 36]. There is no indication in the text of the transfiguration story that the glory there beheld was future; rather the disciples saw him as he really was.)

(2) If the first half of Mark was produced by the expansion of a single document, by insertion into it of disparate shorter pericopes, that document must have been either a very brief outline of Jesus’ career, as supposed by Dodd,<sup>139</sup> or a collection of miracle stories; nothing else—neither parables, nor dispute stories, nor sayings—could have served as the general basis. A collection of miracle stories which began with Jesus’ becoming the Son of God at his baptism and ended with the revelation of his true title and nature at his transfiguration would make a comprehensible unit; and the transfiguration story looks like a conclusion. Such an aretalogy of the divine man might have been composed even during Jesus’ lifetime—which would explain its ignorance of the crucifixion. And the present first half of Mark would be understandable as an expansion and judaizing reinterpretation of this primitive aretalogy. (Matthew would then be a later and more extreme example of such secondary judaization.)

(3) It is not necessary to suppose that all the miracle stories now in Mark 1:9-10:52 were part of this hypothecated original aretalogy. The story of Bartimaeus (10:46-52), with its υἱὲ Δαυῖδ, may come from [198] another source (the other miracle stories never mention either David or the kingdom). The demoniac boy (9:14-29) may have been added by the editor, or transposed by him; the miracles in the dispute

<sup>138</sup> “Son of Man” in 2:10 is clearly part of the addition in 2:5b-10, which has turned the primitive miracle story into a dispute story (whence the repetition of λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ 2:5αβ, 10b).

<sup>139</sup> “The Framework of the Gospel Narrative,” in *New Testament Studies* (Manchester, 1933), pp. 1ff.

stories (2:1-12 and 3:1-5) probably came to the Gospel in that collection, not in the aretalogy. The question as to the composition of the aretalogy—whether it was made up of single stories, or yet earlier collections<sup>140</sup>—would require further consideration. In that consideration it might be useful to follow Kee<sup>141</sup> in distinguishing different types of miracle stories—those with more and those with less narrative detail, those which conclude with memorable sayings and those which do not—but it is unlikely that these distinctions can be used to distinguish “hellenistic” from “Palestinian” material. We have so little Palestinian material of this time and sort that we can prove nothing of its possible range. But the country was so widely hellenized that the impossible burden of proof lies on anyone who would deny that a given Marcan story could have been written there. Since Philip and Andrew appear among the disciples, there is nothing unlikely in supposing that material about Jesus began to circulate in Greek as early as in Aramaic. That some stories use hellenistic terminology, others Semitic, may indicate that they came from different circles; but it tells us nothing of their place of origin or their age.

---

<sup>140</sup> See P. Achtemeier, “Toward the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae,” *JBL*, 89 (1970), pp. 265-91, and the literature there cited.

<sup>141</sup> H. Kee, *Jesus in History* (New York, 1970), pp. 271ff.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### ON THE HISTORY OF THE 'DIVINE MAN'

[335] Since Professor Simon has done so much to locate Christianity precisely in the intellectual geography of the Greco-Roman world, it seems appropriate to offer in recognition of his achievements a further contribution to the same task, in this instance an attempt to clarify and make more precise the discussion of the *theios aner*. A notable advance in this discussion has recently been made by the thesis of Dr. D. L. Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker*.<sup>1</sup> Many scholars had noticed the diversity of the figures from which our notion of the *theios aner* was drawn,<sup>2</sup> but none had clearly distinguished, among these figures, the principal types. Now Dr. Tiede has tried to show that there are two major types—one the wise man, the other the miracle worker. These two types are contrasted, he says, in Plutarch's *De genio Socratis*, where Theocritus, a prophet, maintains that Socrates was divine by virtue of his indwelling daemon which guided him always and enabled him to prophesy the future (580 C-F), whereas Polymnis maintains that he was not guided by any external voices or omens, but by "correct and mighty judgment and principle" and "unshaken reason."<sup>3</sup>

Here, Tiede declares, "Although abbreviated in this case, the form of the first account is a recitation of miraculous acts with the function of evoking religious awe, based on a conception of divine presence as revealed in powerful acts. The form of the second is a recitation of the trials and moral courage of the philosopher, particularly as he faces death, with the function of inculcating the life of moral reason, based on a conception of divine presence as revealed in superior intellectual resolve. This discrimination between differing notions of divine presence and their corresponding [336] semi-literary forms is basic to this study. In order to create the complete aggregate portrait of the 'divine man,' it was necessary for Hellenistic (*sic*) authors like Philostratus and Porphyry to superimpose these contrasting images and to mix the forms in a way similar to the editorial work of the authors of ... Mark and John. Largely because of the continuing vitality

---

<sup>1</sup> Missoula, Montana, 1972 (*Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series 1*).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. M. Smith, "Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretalogies, Divine Men, the Gospels and Jesus," chapter twenty-one in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> 581 C-D; Tiede, p. 40.

of the Platonic image of Socrates, authors like Plutarch, Lucian, and Celsus are able to resist such syncretism."<sup>4</sup>

This thesis Tiede tries to demonstrate by a study of ancient accounts of 'divine' philosophers and of Hercules. He then goes on (pp. 101-240) to examine the accounts of Moses in Greco-Roman Judaism (Philo and Josephus present the philosopher, Artapanus has a hero of national romance, like Sesostris, neither philosopher nor thaumaturge) and then the Gospels (241ff.): at least some of the miracle stories used by Mark came from a tradition that pictured Jesus as a divine thaumaturge (266ff.), John and Luke show different revisions of similar material in the direction of the philosophic ideal. Since it thus appears that the term *theios aner* was in antiquity used of two fundamentally different figures, represented by two different literary forms and traditions, its modern use is dangerously ambiguous and always requires further definition. It does not refer to any single, basic concept (289ff., cf. 240).

This thesis is admirably clear, one can only regret that it does not fit the facts. Tiede recognizes, at the beginning of his work, that "it is vital to ... this essay to demonstrate that the origins of the following two traditions are discrete" (p. 5). But when he looks for the first "divine" philosophers he finds Pythagoras and Empedocles staring him in the face. For Pythagoras, admittedly a dubious figure, he argues that, "Even if Pythagoras was able to unite the roles of shaman and scientist in his person, *his followers* apparently viewed him as functioning either in one of these capacities or in the other" (p. 16, my italics). What, then, becomes of the *original* differentiation of the traditions? As a matter of fact, even the later traditions are not so sharply differentiated as this suggests; already in Empedocles—almost our earliest evidence—we find a Pythagoras who is both a wise man and a supernatural being,<sup>5</sup> and the combination persists from then on. [337] Moreover, Empedocles himself was unquestionably a philosopher and also claimed to be a miracle worker and a god among men. He makes the claim unequivocally in his preserved verses.<sup>6</sup> So in his case, too, the *original* distinction of the figures is indefensible.

<sup>4</sup> Pp. 41f. Plutarch would not have liked this company, and it is inappropriate in this connection, since *De genio Socratis* goes on to defend the theory that good men are guided by supernatural beings. See the discussion by A. Corlu, *Plutarque, Le Démon de Socrate*, Paris, 1970 (Études et Commentaires 73), pp. 47-81.

<sup>5</sup> Empedocles, fragment 129, in H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 7 ed., ed. W. Kranz, Berlin, 1954; = Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae*, 30. W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, tr. E. Minar, Jr., Cambridge, Mass., 1972, brilliantly demonstrates the shamanistic side of Pythagoras but, I think, goes too far in *denying* the philosophic, see my review in the *Anglican Theological Review* 56 (1974) 493 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Fragment 112 in Diels, *Fragmente*<sup>1</sup>; = Diogenes Laertius VIII. 62.

Moreover, Pythagoras and Empedocles seem to be only the best known of a considerable number of supernatural sages credited with miracles as well as wisdom. Dodds classes with them Epimenides, Abaris, Aristetas, and Hermetimus;<sup>7</sup> Burkert adds yet others;<sup>8</sup> and Tiede himself quotes with approval Dodds' statement that "Empedocles represents not a new, but a very old type of personality, the shaman who combines the still undifferentiated functions of magician and naturalist, poet and philosopher, preacher, healer, and public counselor."<sup>9</sup> And sometimes—he might have added—priest and king.

Thus we find at the beginning of Greek tradition the single figure of the omniscient divine man (omniscient because divine). From this figure the divine men who are exclusively miracle workers or philosophers or rulers are derived by later specialization. But how far did the specialization go? Was the primitive figure of the omniscient divine man completely eliminated, so that its reappearance in the second century A.D. and later is to be seen as a consequence of the fusion of two quite separate traditions? This course of events would save at least the most important point of Tiede's argument.<sup>10</sup> Or did the primitive figure live on in popular thought, and are the specialized figures to be seen as modifications of it produced by special groups, either trying to appeal to the popular belief, or deliberately contradicting it? The alternative is of considerable importance in attempts to reconstruct historical men for whom most of our evidence is late—as it is for many. If the old figure of the divine man survived in popular thought around the Mediterranean, then individuals like Hannibal and Jesus may be supposed to have used it to understand themselves, or imitated it to attract a following. If, on the other hand, no such figure was known to popular thought from the death of Empedocles (after 440 B.C.) to the appearance of [338] Apollonius of Tyana (before A.D. 60), then later reports of such figures in the intervening 500 years are to be suspected as contaminations of traditions which originally represented "pure" statesmen *or* philosophers *or* wonderworkers.

What is the evidence? The most conspicuous divine philosopher of early antiquity is Socrates. Plato has a purely philosophic theory to account for Socrates' divinity and for that of every good philosopher—the sage contemplates the idea of the Good and so is formed by it and participates in its divinity *qua* form; he is good, but is not the Good.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> E. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley, 1951, 141ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Lore and Science*, 147ff.

<sup>9</sup> Tiede, p. 20; Dodds, *Greeks*, p. 146.

<sup>10</sup> Pp. 59ff., 88ff., etc.

<sup>11</sup> *Republic* 508 C-509 C; cf. *Theaetetus* 176 A-C.

But Plato has other theories, too, which are less philosophic than demonological. The rational soul of every man is a divine being which resides in him; poets and prophets, however, can do nothing by their own reason; only when they are possessed by the gods who speak through them, are their words worthy of attention.<sup>12</sup> Socrates himself had a divine voice, though it only warned him away from what was evil; but he was also commanded by "the god" to pursue his philosophic discussions, the commands being given "by prophecies and by dreams" and in other ways.<sup>13</sup> And these are defensive admissions. Socrates' claim to have his own inspiring deity was one of the points in the charges against him. "He recognizes," the accusers said, "not the gods recognized by the city, but other new deities."<sup>14</sup> Hence we may suppose that Plato minimized as far as possible this side of Socrates' character. Our supposition is confirmed by the fact that Xenophon makes more of this. He says Socrates' actions were in accord with those of all men who believe in prophecies, omens, and the like. In the same way, "on the basis of his experience Socrates ... declared that his daemon gave him advance information, and he told many of his associates to do certain things and not to do others, (saying) that the daemon had told him beforehand. Those who followed his advice prospered, those who did not, repented."<sup>15</sup>

Thus the original Socrates was somewhat nearer to the primitive *theios aner* than was the Socrates of Plato's *Apology*, and even the Socrates of the *Apology* (from which came the demonological data cited above) was nearer the primitive *theios aner* than was the pure philosopher of Plato's later works. [339]

Plato's treatment of Socrates thus both shows and explains a bifurcation of the *theios aner* tradition into philosophic and thaumaturgic types. But even in Plato's work the transition is not complete. To the end there is tension between myth and dialectic, between the gods and the ideas, between men who are deities dwelling in bodies, and men who are at best able to perceive, imitate, and thus, to some extent, share the form of the divine. This tension results from the fact that Plato's philosophy is not a pure intellectual structure, but has been shaped by the influence of old religious patterns Plato knew from contemporary society. Among these was that of the *theios aner* in terms of which, we may suppose, Socrates had partially understood his irrational imperatives and also his rational genius and his uncanny power over other men.

---

<sup>12</sup> *Timaeus* 41f., 90; *Io* 534 B-E.

<sup>13</sup> *Apology* 31 C-D; 33 C.

<sup>14</sup> *Apology* 24 B; cf. 31 C-D; it was his daemon that was the basis of this point in Meletus' charge. This is confirmed by Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I.1.2.

<sup>15</sup> *Memorabilia* I.1.3-4.

Plato's reinterpretation of this figure did not put an end to the occurrence of specimens in the surrounding world. But it set an example for the philosophic tradition or, at least, that part of it which has come down to us. Hence the philosophic systems of the fourth and third centuries show similar reinterpretations of the *theios aner* to fit their several systematic requirements. As philosophy became a highly technical discipline, "divine men" of the old sort were no longer classed as philosophers, but were called prophets, healers, and politicians. Examples are Menecrates, Alexarchus of Ouranopolis, Nicagoras of Zeleia, and Clearchus of Herakleia,<sup>16</sup> not to mention Alexander the Great. These examples are admittedly atypical figures, several of whom were thought to be mad and probably were so. But "divine men" were always, by definition, extraordinary, and even in primitive societies shamans are often thought to be possessed by demons—as was Jesus (John 10:20; Mark 3:21f.; etc.).

Such occasional examples are evidence that the pattern or ideal was not wholly forgotten, but there is more significant evidence that it lived on as an important element in popular thought. This evidence is admittedly indirect. Our literary information about the Greco-Roman world comes mainly from the rationalistic upper class. We have very little direct evidence of popular thought on [340] speculative matters, and even less on superstitions likely to produce charismatic leaders dangerous to the rulers—men like the literally fire-breathing prophet Eunus, who led a Sicilian slave revolt, or the similar figures who led similar risings in Palestine.<sup>17</sup> But the indirect evidence is substantial, widespread, clear in its implications when seen as a whole (which it has not been), and important for our understanding of Greco-Roman culture. It comes from the fields of philosophy, politics, and religion, and consists of the ways in which the philosophic schools, the hellenistic kingdoms, and the devotees of popular deities, all try to make their heroes fit the *theios aner* type, in spite of the fact that this type does not accord with the philosophic tenets of the schools, the historical facts of the monarchies, the traditional myths of the heroes, or the rationalistic temper of the upper class culture. Why after all, should monarchs and philosophers have been called divine and

---

<sup>16</sup> Menecrates, IV c. B.C., Athenaeus VII.289f.; Aelian, *Varia* XII.51; Plutarch, *Apophthegmata regum* 191 A = *Apophthegmata Laconica* 213 A = *Vita Agesilai* XXI end; Clement of Alex., *Protrepticus* IV.54. Alexarchus of Ouranopolis, early III c. B.C., Athenaeus III.98 D-F; Strabo VII, frag. 35; Clement, *loc. cit.* Nicagoras of Zeleia, IV-III B.C., Athenaeus VII. 289 C; Clement, *loc. cit.*; cf. F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Berlin and Leiden, 1923ff., IIIa, commentary on no. 268, F. 2. Clearchus of Heraclea, IV c. B.C., Justinus XVI.5.7-11; Photius cod. 224; Suidas, s.v. *Klearchos*. See further "Prolegomena," 182, n. 54.

<sup>17</sup> Eunus, Diodorus 34.2.5-8 = Photius, cod. 244, fol. 384 b ff. Palestinian prophets, Acts 5:35ff.; Josephus, *War* II.258-264; *Antiquities* XX.97, 160, 188, etc.

credited with supernatural attainments and even worshiped, of all times, in the hellenistic world, the apogee of ancient rationalism? None of this reshaping is explicable from the systems or beliefs of the men who managed it. It can be understood only as propaganda, that is, as an attempt to win over the people by satisfying a popular ideal. Its extent and roughly approximate uniformity (*mutatis mutandis*) are indications of what the people were thought to believe and to hope for in a leader.

Perhaps the clearest part of the evidence is the consistency with which the various philosophic schools claim for their ideal men the attributes of the *theios aner*, in spite of the fact that these do not follow from their philosophic positions—indeed, they often contradict the positions.

The worship of Epicurus by his followers may have been reconciled with this philosophy, but cannot have arisen from its principles. Epicurus in his will provided for a party on the twentieth of each month in his memory, and an annual one on his birthday. Cicero protested rightly that even these provisions seemed inconsistent with his teachings, and as for the cult of him established by his followers, he said, "I often marvel at the insolence of certain philosophers who admire the scientific understanding of the physical world and give unrestrained thanks to its first founder and discoverer and venerate him as a god."<sup>18</sup> But even without [341] Cicero's protest, the arguments with which Lucretius (V.1-54) felt it necessary to justify this practice might have led us to infer philosophic opposition. A practice which thus laid the school open to attack and which did not follow from its own teachings is most plausibly explained from the environment, and the environment is one in which we find not only a number of the figures mentioned above, but also the beginnings of the hellenistic ruler cults.

Plato's philosophy does not suffice to explain the fact that he was said to be the son of Apollo, and this by his nephew Speusippus who succeeded him as head of the Academy. Later historians of philosophy repeated the claim as "a story commonly told in Athens,"<sup>19</sup> which probably indicates that it was made up for popular appeal and did appeal successfully to popular beliefs. That Speusippus himself believed it seems unlikely; it carries veneration of a rich uncle a little too far.

---

<sup>18</sup> *De finibus* II.31.101f. The quotation comes from *Tusculanarum* I.48 understood by H. Munro, *T. Lucreti Cari ... libri sex*, 4 ed., Cambridge, 1893, as a comment on Lucretius II.1092 and V.8 (see *ad locc.*); for a similar protest see Plutarch, *Adv. Coloten* 17 (*Mor.* 1117 B).

<sup>19</sup> Diogenes Laertius III.2, cp. Matt 1:18-20, 24f.

From the same root, presumably, grew the figure of “the Stoic sage.” Most of its traits can, with some violence, be reconciled with the principles of Stoic philosophy. But would rational philosophic investigation—or even a fondness for paradox, a passion for publicity, and a mania for shocking the bourgeoisie—have persuaded a whole school of intelligent thinkers to concoct and perpetuate such a philosophic liability? That the wise man will be always guided by the Logos as an indwelling god,<sup>20</sup> will therefore always act rightly,<sup>21</sup> will be the only good orator, doctor, general, prophet, priest, lawgiver, king, etc., the only “truly” free, rich, sane, happy, and even beautiful man<sup>22</sup>—all this was no doubt to be expected. Plato had played with these paradoxes, and so, probably, had Socrates; they sound like Socrates at play. Similarly, it is not surprising that the wise man should be indifferent to all physical misfortunes—after all, as Paul said, nothing can separate him from the Logos.<sup>23</sup> But when the wise man is further declared impassable, inerrant, and omniscient,<sup>24</sup> one whose soul will survive as a hero after his death,<sup>25</sup> we are beyond the limits of rational deduction and need to look for some other explanation of the structure. [342]

The need is made acute by the conclusion of Chrysippus, that there have been at most one or two true sages, but perhaps none at all.<sup>26</sup> Pohlenz was therefore able to excuse the whole picture as a “fantasy ... the myth of the wise man ... the ideal ... an unattainable eminence.”<sup>27</sup> But what were the source and reason for such a myth? Is it mere coincidence that the figure they produced was that of the divine wise man, at once prophet, priest, and king, essentially primitive as Pythagoras? In fact, Stoics were influenced by Cynics, and Cynics by Pythagoreans.<sup>28</sup> When we hear that the Cynic Menippus of Gadara, a Jordanian by origin or adoption, and a contemporary of the early Stoics, claimed to be a supernatural being who by magical arts had gone down into the underworld and ascended into heaven, and that he dressed for the part in tragic buskins, long grey robe, and a huge hat with the signs of the zodiac woven into it,<sup>29</sup> we can be sure that the

<sup>20</sup> Diogenes Laertius VII.119; Cicero, *De divinatione* II.129 ff.

<sup>21</sup> J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* (hence forth *SVF*), Leipzig, 1903-1924, 4 vols. II.42; III.80, 151, 164.

<sup>22</sup> *SVF* IV.131-133.

<sup>23</sup> *SVF* III.150ff; cf. Romans 8:39.

<sup>24</sup> *SVF* I.99; III.109; I.16f.; III.147, 150.

<sup>25</sup> Diogenes Laertius VII.151; cf. *SVF* II.223f.

<sup>26</sup> *SVF* III.166f.; 216f.

<sup>27</sup> M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, 2 ed., Göttingen, 1959, p. 158.

<sup>28</sup> Burkert, *Lore and Science*, pp. 202ff.

<sup>29</sup> W. Crönert, *Kolotes und Menedemos*, Vienna, 1906 (*Studien zur Paleographie und Papyruskunde* VI), pp. 1-4, on Diogenes Laertius VI.102; R. Helm, “Menippus 10”, *RE* XV.1 (1931) 888-893.

primitive figure lived on, at least as a subject of parody. How far Menippus hoped to impose on his audience, there is no telling. But the notion of the supernatural, miracle-working philosopher was still influential in the second century B.C. when the author of the pseudo-Platonic *Theages* followed Xenophon rather than Plato and went beyond him in representing Socrates, in Tiede's words, as possessed of "a miraculous, even magical" demonic power that controlled his companions.<sup>30</sup>

The same conclusion is suggested by the practice of the politicians and the development of the cults of the newly popular gods. The old notion of the divine king was still alive in the fourth century. Xenophon, for instance, declared that kingliness, by which he meant leadership, was not something that could be learned by observation or from lectures; the leader must be of divine nature, as is leadership itself (*Æconomicus* XXI.10ff.). And Demonsthenes had to persuade the Athenians that they should not consider Philip a god and his conquests unchangeable, but should think him subject to the same infirmities as ordinary man (*Philip* I.8). Philip was, in fact, already being worshiped and parading his own statue with those of the Olympian gods.<sup>31</sup> As [343] everybody knows, Philip's son, Alexander, demanded that the Greek cities recognize him as a god, and the cities complied. Of Alexander's successors, Ptolemy I while still alive was worshiped as a god by the Rhodians, on their own initiative; Lysimachus, by Priene, Samothrace, and Cassandreia; Seleucus I, by half a dozen cities; Antigonus I and Demetrius, by Skepsis, Athens, Sicyon, and other towns. State cults of the living monarchs began in Egypt under Ptolemy II, in the Seleucid empire under Antiochus III.<sup>32</sup> These cults were in Greek style, initiated by Greeks (including Macedonians), conducted in Greek, and intended to attract Greek worshipers. Either their founders actually believed the rulers divine, or the foundations are to be seen as political maneuvers intended to secure the loyalty of the Greeks in the area concerned. The later seems more likely in most instances. If so, the great sums and efforts expended for these cults are evidence that the politicians who promoted them thought the people would believe and worship. They counted on a widespread and important belief in the possibility that some men might be divine, and that the worship of such divinities would be worth while.<sup>33</sup> The worship is particularly important for our

<sup>30</sup> *Theages*, esp. 128 B-130 E. Cp. Tiede, p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> Diodorus XVI.92.5; 95.1. L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, *Le Culte des souverains*, Tournai, 1957 (*Bibliothèque de Théologie*, série III.5), pp. 124ff.

<sup>32</sup> Cerfaux-Tondriau, pp. 172ff.; 194ff.; 201, 233-239.

<sup>33</sup> Cerfaux-Tondriau, pp. 262-267, cf. p. 207.

purpose—there is no point in worshipping a man made divine by reason.

Closely allied with the ruler cults as well as with Cynicism and Stoicism is the reinterpretation of the old deities and heroes who now become objects of popular devotion. A conspicuous example is Herakles, whose cult and influence have been so well studied by Professor Simon in his *Hercule et le Christianisme* (Strasbourg, 1955). Tiede takes the Cynic and Stoic treatment of Herakles as evidence of “the idealization of the wise man” and “the ideal of political kingship,” (p. 71). But why was Herakles chosen for this role? Obviously, because of his prior legend. In that legend Herakles was a doer of superhuman deeds—*thaumata*, miracles. Though he did them by his physical strength, they were none the less miracles, for a miracle is that which makes one marvel, a *thauma*; thus Herakles’ strength was miraculous. Even Theagenes of Thasos, a historical superathlete, would be worshiped as a god because of his victories, and credited with healings as well as his recorded miracles of athletic prowess (Pausanias VI. 11.2-9). In Herakles, the Cynics and Stoics found a hero, a son of the highest god, unjustly subjected by an unworthy ruler to a series of terrible trials from which, thanks to his miraculous power, he emerged victorious. He overcame and destroyed the evil things [344] that afflicted his fellow men; he descended into Hades and returned; he crowned his life with voluntary and expiatory death, and so became a god. The popularity of this myth (need I mention its familiar type?) was what made the Stoics choose Herakles. He had absolutely no reputation for intelligence—quite the opposite! It is impossible to see the figure of pre-Cynic legend as a man deified by wisdom, to whom miracles were subsequently attributed. He was unquestionably a primitive wonder worker reinterpreted as philosopher. But why should the Cynics and Stoics have chosen to allegorize such a figure if there had not been a popular belief—which they wanted to match—that the truly wise man was a divine man whose wisdom was proved by his miraculous powers? It is too easy to dismiss the question with the proverb that philosophers are normally irrational. When the ideal man of most ancient schools of philosophy turns out to be a figure whose attributes cannot be rationally justified, one has to look for some further cause, and it seems most likely that the cause was the common belief of the people to whom the philosophers wanted to appeal.

When it further turns out that would-be practical politicians followed the same course, and that the popular cults of other heroes and gods—Asclepius, for instance<sup>34</sup>—show the same tendencies, the case seems strong for supposing that there was some common body of

---

<sup>34</sup> On Asclepius see Smith, “Prolegomena,” 184ff.

popular superstition to which they all wanted to appeal. And this by no means exhausts the evidence. For instance, other devices of popular leaders, besides the rule cults, point to the same superstition. I have mentioned Hannibal, Eunus, and the Palestinian prophets. I might just as well have mentioned Hannibal's great opponent, Scipio Africanus.<sup>35</sup> And there would be many more. But these are all that space permits and more than enough to prove the point. We have now come down to the third century B.C. and, as Tiede admits, "From the second century B.C. onward it is easy to document the growing interest in paradoxography ... A growing number of marvelous tales about Pythagoras and his disciples figured prominently in this literature ... Further study is needed to clarify the precise intent of making such collections" (p. 23). On the basis of the evidence reviewed, it seems most likely to suppose that the intent behind such "marvelous tales" of politicians and philosophers was to present them to the public as "divine men" who would satisfy the public's demand for leaders it could worship. Again we come back to the wisdom [345] of Voltaire, "If God did not exist He would have to be invented."<sup>36</sup> So He was.

#### TERMINAL NOTES

Apropos of this discussion of the *theios aner*, let me take the opportunity to warn the reader against an article by H. Kee, "Aretalogy and Gospel," *JBL* 92 (1973) 402-422 which attributes to me three assumptions I have never made: "that in hellenistic-Roman times there was a fixed literary form called *aretalogy*; ... that since miracle stories are an essential ingredient in aretalogies, the presence of a miracle story is a sign that we are in the presence of an aretalogy; ... (that) the intention of the gospel's (sic) miracle tradition is to represent Jesus as a *theios aner*." (p. 402).

In the first of these propositions "fixed" is false; the second is wholly absurd; the third is false if read as meaning that the miracles *as now told* in the gospels have the purpose here attributed to them. (That *some* of the gospel miracle stories came from aretalogies with the alleged purpose seems to me probable.)

Having made up these false assumptions for the purpose of refuting them, Kee might have been expected to do so without difficulty. However, his article swarms with so many non-facts and non-sequiturs that it neither accomplishes its objective nor deserves refutation.

\* \* \*

Mr. Tiede, with whom I have discussed this paper, has written me (24/XI/76), saying he did not intend to maintain that there never were

<sup>35</sup> Scipio: Livy XXVI.19.3ff.; Gellius VI.1.6; Hannibal: Appian, *Hannibalic War* 6(22).

<sup>36</sup> *Épître à l'auteur du livre "Des trois imposteurs"* (Nov. 10, 1770).

persons renowned both as miracle workers and as sages. “On the contrary, it is essential to the entire dissertation to demonstrate that Hercules (etc.) ... were touted as miracle workers in certain settings, and as divine philosophers in others, but that the forms that the propaganda took were discrete, corresponding to ‘originally discrete aretalogies’.” For my part I see no adequate evidence for *originally* discrete aretalogies, and I think the evidence here presented for survival in popular thought of the omniscient figure justifies the suppositions in *Heroes and Gods* which Tiede’s work called into question.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### MESSIAHS: ROBBERS, JURISTS, PROPHETS

[185] Some years ago I discussed the various uses of the term *mashiah* and its equivalents in the Greco-Roman period<sup>1</sup> and tried to show that it did not invariably have eschatological connotations, that there were both messiahs without ends of the world and ends of the world without messiahs, that even those messiahs who were connected with some end had different roles in the different programs for the end which were being circulated, and that these different programs, while evidently of considerable importance in the thought of the time (to judge from the number of works about them and the stories of messianic disturbances) were not matters of credal authority, but rather of free speculation: many mutually contradictory programs might be collected in the literature of a single group, or even in a single document like the Book of Enoch. Hence it seemed unlikely that adherence to any program, or even to any particular messianic figure, was the cause for the separation and distinction of any sect of the time, nor should the rituals of any sect be seen as the acting out of a particular eschatological myth. The causes of sectarian splits seemed rather such differences about questions of halakah as might lead to irreconcilable differences of practice. Questions of theory, especially those belonging to the realm of haggadah, are not known to have led to the formation of separate sects.

This position I supported in a number of other papers, examining the alleged reasons for the formation of several sects,<sup>2</sup> and particularly for the separation and persecution of Christianity. These latter seem to have resulted, in the main, not from the preaching that Jesus was “*the Messiah*,” still less from any theory of messianism, but rather from Jesus’ claim to set some of his followers free from the Law, from the consequent (though often *sub rosa*) neglect of the Law by many of his followers, and from their claim to offer the same freedom to their converts.<sup>3</sup>

So far, so good. The theory was coherent, supported by many passages in the primary sources, and consistent with the general characteristics of Greco-Roman Judaism. But how could one explain

---

<sup>1</sup> “What is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures?” *JBL* 78 (1959), 66-72.

<sup>2</sup> “The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism,” *NTS* 7 (1960-61), 347-360; “Zealots and Sicarii, Their Origins and Relation,” *HTR* 64 (1971), 1-19.

<sup>3</sup> “The Reason for the Persecution of Paul and the Obscurity of Acts,” chapter twenty-seven below; “Jesus’ Attitude Towards the Law,” in *Papers of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem, 1967, vol. I, pp. 241-244.

the libertine element in Jesus' teaching? Whence and how did his notion of freedom from the Law arise? For this question the evidence led to types of thought quite different from halakah and also from messianic and eschatological speculations. Miracles and their magical parallels, the miraculous and magical contexts in which the term "Son of God" is commonly used in the Synoptics,<sup>4</sup> the magical parallels to the union with Jesus promised in [187] baptism and the eucharist, and the salvation and release from the Law effected by that union (this theme is the heart of Paul's preaching)—all these now came to the fore as essential elements of the picture and were so presented in my books on the secret gospel of Mark.<sup>5</sup>

This was a somewhat disconcerting result. The argument had set out from the evidence that messianic beliefs were not uniform even within sects that held them; it had therefore sought in halakic differences the universal basis for sectarian differentiation. But now the halakic—or, anti-halakic—peculiarity of Christianity led back to peculiar beliefs about the role of a figure believed to be a messiah. But there was a complication. While the figure was identified as "the Messiah," those elements of the role that were essential to freedom from the law were

---

<sup>4</sup> Mark 3:11, exorcism; 5:7 and parallels, exorcism; 15:39, after *the prodigia* accompanying his death; Matt 4:3, 6 and parallels, the devil demands miracles; 14:33, the disciples' inference from the stilling of the storm; 16:16, the revelation given through Peter (cf. 17); 27:40, 43, the mocking of his inability to perform a miracle; Luke 1:35, the angel's prediction of his birth; 4:41, exorcism; Mark 1:11 and parallels, the voice from heaven after the baptism (*ho huios mou*); 9:7 and parallels, the voice at the transfiguration (*ho huios mou*); Matt 11:27 and parallel, none knows the Son save the Father, nor the Father save the Son. Against all these in clearly magical or esoteric contexts can be set only Mark 14:61 and parallels, the use as the critical question in the trial before the Sanhedrin (but this is a demand for esoteric information! Mark makes the High Priest say *ho huios tou eulogetou*, but Matt and Luke have *tou theou*); and Mark 1:1, the book's title. In three passages persons other than Jesus are promised that they will eventually be called sons of God: peacemakers in Matt 5:9; those who love their enemies, do good, and lend without hope of repayment in Luke 6:35 ("sons of the Highest"); and those thought worthy of the other aeon and the resurrection from the dead, in Luke 20:36. These evidently belong to a wholly different tradition than the sayings about Jesus. So does the parable of the wicked tenants in Mark 12:1-12 and parallels, where the owner of the vineyard, i.e. God, decides to send his "beloved son" (Mark and Luke, Matt only "son") to collect the rent. This is the only instance in the Synoptics in which anything like "Son of God" is used in an eschatological prophecy; all other such passages use "Son of Man" or "Son of David." The difference is hardly accidental. "Son of God" is connected with "Christ" or "Messiah" only in the title of Mark, the trial before the Sanhedrin, and by Matthew's addition of it to the confession of Peter and the mocking on the cross. Elsewhere "Messiah"/"Christ," like eschatology, always goes with "Son of Man" or "Son of David." This distribution of the material strongly suggests that "Son of God" in the Synoptics was not primarily an eschatological or messianic title.

<sup>5</sup> *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, Mass., 1973; *The Secret Gospel*, N.Y., 1973. For the magical parallels to baptism and eucharist, see *Clement*, pp. 217ff., 221, 232. For release from the law by union with Jesus, and the role of this concept in Paul's thought, see *ibid.*, pp. 213-217; 231f.; 248-265.

not typically messianic. Nobody before had ever been baptized into a messiah,<sup>6</sup> let alone eaten one. (I know that Rabbi Hillel said “There is no Messiah [188] for Israel because they ate him up in the days of Hezekiah,”<sup>7</sup> but R. Hillel probably spoke in the fourth century,<sup>8</sup> and his metaphor is so strange that I think it may involve a mocking reference to the eucharist: If Jesus had given his flesh and blood to his disciples, he, too, would by that time have been wholly consumed.)

So in Jesus’ case the messianic image contains elements hitherto unparalleled. I do not want, here, to review the evidence that may serve to identify those elements—that is cited in my books and anyone interested can find it there.<sup>9</sup> Instead I want to approach the general problem of first-century messianic and related figures from the other side—that of the practically possible types of figures, and the steps by which different men might come to be thought messianic.

We have here a problem arising from the continuous interplay between behaviour and vocabulary. Society presents the vocabulary, the types which a child is encouraged to imitate or avoid (“What do you want to be when you grow up?” or “You don’t want to be like that when you grow up.”). Individuals produce a constant supply of new behaviour which both constitutes the social types and, so far as it differs from the previous norms, changes the types. The society constantly struggles to describe and categorize these changes, using old words in new senses, making up new terms to fit new behaviour, and so producing a new vocabulary, a new set of types which a new generation will, in its turn, begin to imitate, reject, and alter.

In terms of the problem before us, these generalizations mean that the Jews of first-century Palestine had inherited many fantastic accounts of the world, both present and future. In these accounts there were many different figures called messiahs, and these figures could serve both as models to men who wanted to be thought messiahs, and as categories used by other men who were trying to [189] identify the various and surprising figures that the world presented. Both processes, imitation and identification, were necessarily somewhat slipshod. A man who wanted to be thought a messiah usually could not do everything with which his model was credited, he would imitate only such traits as he could. Similarly, when trying to decide whether or not a man was a messiah, his contemporaries would find that he

<sup>6</sup> *Pace* St. Paul, 1 Cor 10:2, on which see my *Clement*, p. 215, n. 6. Paul’s argument indicates the existence of a belief that people could be baptized into the Messiah, but is not good evidence for any actual baptisms; cf. J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 9 ed., Göttingen, 1910, repr. 1970, *ad loc.* (p. 250).

<sup>7</sup> Sanhedrin 98b, 99a.

<sup>8</sup> W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, Strassburg, 1892-99, vol. III, p. 703.

<sup>9</sup> *Clement*, ch. IV, pp. 195-266.

matched their favorite picture in some points, but not in others. Insofar as the messianic pretender won followers, or those determined to be followers found a figure they could identify as a messiah, the meaning of the term "messiah" was changed to accommodate these new phenomena. While every instance of such identification was, of course, peculiar, yet it seems possible to pick out, mainly from the material in Josephus and the New Testament, a number of typical careers that might lead to messiafication. Let me sketch four of these as examples.

The most likely way to become a messiah was to begin as a robber. If an industrious and affluent robber decides to move his business out of the city, finds himself a stronghold in the countryside, attracts a gang of followers and preys on wealthy travelers and the country estates of the rich, he becomes a bandit. It's a recognized social position and normally terminal; he may remain a bandit for years without any higher pretensions. But if his band is drawn largely from the surrounding villages and consequently has many friends and supporters there, if he builds up a following among the poor, if the country is governed by an alien power to which, and to its agents, the people are generally hostile, and if this power is losing its grip, so that bandits are not put down promptly, our man can develop into a local political leader. He will then gather more forces: if the situation deteriorates further he may venture to attack government garrisons, or even defeat a force sent to capture him. He thus becomes a revolutionary; his band will grow yet larger; he may win the allegiance of some other bandit chiefs, dream of making himself king, and claim in advance to be the destined king, the Lord's Messiah. After all, David had made it.

Another such pattern is that leading from teacher of the Law to [190] messiah. If a persuasive teacher, helped by the prestige of his position, extends his teaching from his classes to sermons in the synagogue and public lectures, if he forms around himself a study group of devoted disciples, and advances an interpretation of the kingship of God so extreme as to prohibit ordinary acts of obedience to civil authorities, he will soon find himself the leader of a potentially revolutionary circle. If he then incites his followers to open defiance of the authorities and organizes a campaign of civil disobedience, if he develops a casuistic justification of violence for the sake of "the cause," and first excuses, and then encourages his followers' acts of violence, he will head a criminal revolutionary secret society. The members of this society will need encouragement and will probably derive it from the pervasive eschatological thought of the time: God will surely intervene to destroy the wicked (i.e. their enemies), reward the righteous (i.e. themselves), and establish a new kingdom of which

the destined king, the Lord's Messiah, will surely be their revered teacher (or his legitimate successor—in such a closed group the messiahship can become hereditary).

Another possible pattern began with mental derangement. Of course, the village halfwit was a familiar figure for whom nobody felt any reverence. If he had violent fits and was dangerous he might be thought possessed by some demon, and his words and actions might then have ominous importance as demonic utterances. But if he was harmless while possessed and merely “spoke with tongues” (i.e. poured forth inarticulate sounds), or uttered more or less comprehensible tirades like the obscure passages of the Biblical prophets, and if he had the extraordinary drive and intuition that sometimes characterizes such persons in their lucid intervals,<sup>10</sup> then he might be thought a prophet. The expectation of prophets was alive in the land. He might encourage this interpretation by acting the part, dressing himself like Elijah in a camel's hair cloak and a leather girdle, and affecting [191] extraordinary ascetic practices.<sup>11</sup> Even with such added attractions he would be lucky if he got much following;<sup>12</sup> but if he did, mobs would follow him into the desert, or march on Jerusalem, or climb the holy mount of Gerizim and expect him to produce the hidden vessels of the tabernacle.<sup>13</sup> His followers would surely identify him as the prophet like Moses, promised in Dt 18:18;<sup>14</sup> but they might also believe that he had been anointed by God as Elisha should have been by Elijah,<sup>15</sup> and they could, therefore, even after his death, revere him as the Lord's anointed, the Messiah.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Notably Paul, who boasted that he more often “spoke with tongues” than did any of his Corinthian converts, 1 Cor 14:18.

<sup>11</sup> The asceticism (Mark 1:6 and parallels; Matt 11:18; Luke 7:33) is an interesting trait. It is not clearly characteristic of Biblical prophets and probably comes from Cynicism. The Baptist evidently took it for granted that a prophet of Yahweh must be a “holy man” by current Greco-Roman standards and set out to satisfy the demands of both traditions. Jesus refused to go to the trouble, and his reputation suffered in consequence, Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34. The hellenized Palestinian Jewish population expected asceticism of holy men. Luke 1:15 biblicalized the tradition by making the Baptist a Nazirite.

<sup>12</sup> Prophets seem to have been in oversupply, Mark 13:5f., 22 and parallels, and many similar passages. Consequently the tacit competition for followers was probably pretty sharp and we may suppose that only the exceptional figure achieved enough significance to secure notice in our sources. The same situation prevails at present.

<sup>13</sup> Desert and Jerusalem, Josephus, *War* 2.258-263; *Ant.* 20.167-112; Gerizim and tabernacle, *Ant.* 18.85.

<sup>14</sup> John 1:21 and the studies by H. Teeple, *The Mosaic Eschatological Prophet*, Philadelphia, 1957 (*JBL. Monograph Series*, X), and W. Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, Leiden, 1967 (*Supplements to Novum Testamentum*, XIV). The study of Dositheus by S. Isser, published in *Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity*, presents evidence indicating that the messiahship of Dositheus was also of this type.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Kings 19:16.

<sup>16</sup> As John's disciples reportedly did, *Clementine Recognitions* I. 54.8; Ephraem Syrus, *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant*, tr. L. Leloir, Louvain, 1954 (*CSCO* 145, *Armeniaci* 2), Appendix de sectoribus, 1, p. 249.

Yet another pattern began not with insanity but with its cure. As the connection between mental derangement and psychiatric ability is proverbially close in our own time, so it was in antiquity. The Greek expression, "He has a demon," is ambiguous—it leaves uncertain which of the two is in command. No doubt the [192] uncertainty was often justified. But if the man emerged triumphant from the struggle with what we should call his subconscious (what the gospels called Satan), then he might well believe himself and be believed by others to be able to command not only his own demon, but the rest of the demonic powers. Such belief, with his own experience, might enable him to quiet lunatics (in ancient terms, to cast out demons) and to produce apparently miraculous cures of blindness, deafness, aphasia, paralysis, and the like, cures which are now explained as the sudden cessation of hysterical symptoms.

Such cures and exorcisms, in ancient Palestine, were often thought to be effected by magic. Josephus boasts that the Jews were famous for their skill in this branch of the magic arts, and tells of a demonstration given by an exorcist in the presence of Vespasian.<sup>17</sup> This exorcist was a professional who worked with an inscribed ring, the root of some plant prescribed by Solomon, and spells from a Solomonic manual. But magical manuals preserved on papyri teach that magical operations can be effected without any such paraphernalia by one who has command of a powerful spirit.<sup>18</sup> Again, Josephus' man, though an exorcist of repute, was apparently not involved in politics. But we can easily imagine that a man with remarkable gifts of this sort, if he made his powers available freely, would soon be the center of crowds of persons come in search of cures and anxious to believe. In such crowds, some cures and exorcisms would certainly occur, and each would intensify the expectations and exaggerate the rumors and elicit new speculations: Who do you think he is? What is the source of his power? Is he a prophet? Is he the Messiah? Is he the son of a god?

We should ask rather, What would he think of himself? That would doubtless depend on the history of his case. If he had had experiences of the sort commonly described as "illuminations" he might easily conclude that he had become some supernatural [193] being, above the laws of ordinary life. It would be understandable that he should try to communicate his powers and privileges to his closest disciples, and should use both religious and magical ceremonies, like baptism and a communion meal, for this purpose. It would be expectable that he should interpret his experiences in terms of the mythology current in

---

<sup>17</sup> *Antiquities* 8.46.

<sup>18</sup> *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, ed. K. Preisendanz, 2 ed., ed. A. Henrichs, Stuttgart, 1973, Papyrus I, lines 181ff.; etc.

Jewish Palestine—stories of ascents into the heavens, speculations about the coming of a messiah, and so on. Of the possible identifications this mythology offered him, he might easily opt for a messiahship, and if he did, it might easily cost him his life. Roman provincial governors were not *au courant* in questions of messianic typology; anybody who got to be known as a messiah was likely to end on a cross.

I submit that these four ultimately messianic careers—the robber's, the teacher's, the prophet's, the magician's—are all of them credible within the society of first-century Palestine. If so, this fact would resolve the apparent contradiction set forth at the beginning of this paper: The variety of the meanings of the term "messiah" remains clear, and the basis for the distinction of Christianity as a peculiar sect remains, not messianic belief as such, but the libertine consequences drawn by many members of the sect from the teachings and practices of its particular messiah. These teachings and practices, and the consequences drawn from them, were not, as such, messianic. Jesus might have decided to reject the title "messiah" and to claim some other—"the prophet"<sup>19</sup> or "Elijah,"<sup>20</sup> or "Jeremiah,"<sup>21</sup> or "John the Baptist,"<sup>22</sup> or "the Son of Man,"<sup>23</sup> or "the Son of God,"<sup>24</sup> or, as his competitor in Samaria was called, "the Great Power of God."<sup>25</sup> The first half dozen of these titles are said to have been attributed to him, and several were not wholly rejected. His choice of "messiah" [194] turned out to be a fatal mistake, but would the choice of any other have saved him? An idle question, but it serves to emphasize the extent to which the "messianism" of early Christianity is secondary and superficial.

So, too, would be the "messianism" of the other careers and the movements that might arise from them. For the robber the essential facts would be the gradual growth of his military and hence his political power, and his decision to take advantage of the weakness of Rome with the hope, no doubt, of winning some favorable settlement. His messianic claims would be a political device adopted late in his career with the hope of winning additional support. For the teacher of the law, or his descendants, the messianic claim was surely not their original point of departure; it must have emerged as a late corollary of the working out of a line of legal interpretation that led to the creation

---

<sup>19</sup> John 1:21.

<sup>20</sup> John 1:21; Mark 8:28 and parallels.

<sup>21</sup> Matt 16:14.

<sup>22</sup> Mark 8:28 and parallels.

<sup>23</sup> Matt 16:13; etc.

<sup>24</sup> Matt 16:16; etc.

<sup>25</sup> Acts 8:10.

of a terrorist revolutionary party whose members ultimately saw that they had to dominate the revolution or be destroyed by it. For the prophet the basic things were his prophetic experiences. For those prophets who gained any considerable following, these experiences must have issued in some sort of message or messages. While it is not impossible that some of these immediately identified the speaker as a messiah,<sup>26</sup> it is likely that the main concern was usually something more tangible, “Put off your sins by baptism,” “Follow me into the wilderness to be purged of your sins,” “Follow me to Jerusalem” (or “to Gerizim”) “to see the Lord’s salvation,” or something of the sort. What would happen when the Lord’s salvation arrived, and just what role the prophet would have in the new order, were questions that doubtless received answers at least as various as those preserved in apocalyptic literature. Accordingly, while some prophets may have emerged as messiahs, it is likely that more had messianic dignity thrust upon them. As we know even from Tacitus<sup>27</sup> and Suetonius,<sup>28</sup> messianic speculation was wide-spread, and the identification of one or [195] another individual as the messiah could have important consequences. Even Vespasian was not above taking advantage of such claims.<sup>29</sup> But for most of the claimants, as for Vespasian, the claim was probably an afterthought. The atmosphere of speculation was not produced by the would-be beneficiaries, nor did it, usually, produce them. They rose to prominence for more practical reasons—power politics, or legal teaching and sectarian leadership, or personal psychology—and then took advantage of existent messianic expectations, some of them, no doubt, with complete cynicism, others, probably, with complete sincerity, finding in these fantastic prophecies and symbolic figures the terms they needed to explain themselves to themselves.

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the use of Isa 61:1f. for Jesus in Luke 4:18.

<sup>27</sup> *Histories* 5.13.

<sup>28</sup> *Life of Vespasian* 4.5.

<sup>29</sup> Josephus, *War* 3.399-407; 6.313. This propaganda was paid for by the emperors, *Vita* 361ff., 423; *Apion* 1.50ff.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR  
ASCENT TO THE HEAVENS  
AND THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY

1. Problem and Method

[403] History is a work of the imagination within limits set by the imagination. We must try to imagine what actually happened, that is, what accords both with our image of the preserved evidence and with our image of the real world. Let me try to illustrate this principle by examining two historical problems: Did Jesus think he had ascended into the heavens? Did he tell his most intimate disciples that he had done so?

By “the heavens” I mean a series of regions, one above the other, beginning with the sky, going on up away from the earth, and inhabited by supernatural beings. I don’t think there are any such regions or beings, consequently I don’t think anybody could have ascended to them, but I do think people could make others and even themselves believe that they had ascended or were actually ascending, and believe so strongly that they experienced by hallucination whatever they expected to experience during an ascent. So much for problem and presuppositions. Now for method.

To ask any historical question about Jesus is to beg a question about the evidence on which our knowledge of him is based. This commonly leads to a discussion of the sources of the gospels, the tacit assumptions being that the gospels contain the earliest reports about him, and that the earliest reports about a man are necessarily the most reliable. Both assumptions are false. Paul’s letters, written in the forties and fifties, are a whole generation earlier than the gospels, and a man’s contemporaries can tell stories about him no [404] less fantastic than those invented by later ages. It was Onesicritus, a companion of Alexander, who started the story of Alexander’s meeting with the queen of the Amazons.<sup>1</sup> Of course in evaluating historical reports the question of priority is important and must always be considered, but it is not decisive. One must begin by establishing, from all reports, the main facts about a man’s career, the when, where, and what. Only after this can particular stories be evaluated by their agreement with the main facts. I have tried to give an example of this

---

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 46.

method in *Jesus the Magician*,<sup>2</sup> and I must refer you to that for evidence of the main facts which are, briefly, that he was a Jewish miracle man active in Palestine during the late twenties and/or the early thirties, who attracted so great a following that the authorities feared he might become the center of a revolutionary movement. They therefore had him crucified and his followers began to see him risen from the dead.

In the case of Jesus a clear grasp of these main facts is particularly important because we have to do with material from an oral tradition that was both highly imaginative from the beginning and extraordinarily retentive for at least a century after his death. Of different aspects of this tradition our earliest preserved documents are the letters of Paul from the forties and fifties, next come the canonical gospels, from Mark, the earliest, about 75, to John, the latest, about 100, and from this same quarter century come most of the other works later included in the New Testament, as well as the beginnings of other bodies of evidence—Christian works that were not canonized, references in Josephus, sayings later reported in rabbinic traditions. [405]

## 2. Varieties and frequency of beliefs in ascents to heaven: pagan and Old Testament evidence

To evaluate the evidence about Jesus we must begin by asking what role the notion of ascent to the heavens played in the world of Jesus' time, and first of all, what were the varieties of the notion itself. Some stories tell of ascents in dreams, others, in waking visions, others, of ascents by the soul leaving the body either before or after death, and yet others of bodily ascents either in this life or after resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

Those who ascend in the body may go by a variety of means. The simplest was climbing a mountain, since the gods used to live on mountains. The ancient near eastern "mountain of the gods" was a sort of family tenement. In the Old Testament it has become a bachelor's private dwelling, "the mountain of Yahweh,"<sup>4</sup> and although Yahweh's principle residence is in the sky, he still comes down on Mt. Sinai, as a half-way house, to meet with Moses (Exod 19:18ff.). Consequently in hellenistic times Sinai had to be heightened. When Moses was enthroned on it as cosmocrator by Ezekiel, the tragic poet,

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco 1978; German, *Jesus der Magier*, Munich 1981; English corrected reprint, San Francisco 1981.

<sup>3</sup> A good survey of the relevant material is given by A. Segal, "Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity, and their Environment," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, II, Principat*, vol. 23.2, Berlin 1980, pp. 1333-1394.

<sup>4</sup> Gen 22:14; Isaiah 2:3; 30:29; Micah 4:2; Zech 8:3; Ps 24:3.

he could see the stars revolving below him.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, in pre-biblical times men's images of the cosmos were so limited that they even believed artificial mountains could be built to reach the gods. The ziggurats of Babylonia were so explained as early as the time of the Biblical story of the tower of Babel, which knows them as unfinished and abandoned, probably as ruins, and explains their ruin by their impious purpose—"Let us build a tower (so high that) its top will be in the heavens" (Gen 11:4). The Titans, who were less advanced in technology, tried to [406] get to the top of Mt. Olympus simply by piling Mt. Pelion on Mt. Ossa,<sup>6</sup> as little children pile one chair on top of another to reach the cookie jar on the top shelf. Even earlier, at least psychologically, is the story of Jack, who got to the world of the giants by climbing a beanstalk. The giants, of course, are the gods as seen by their little opponents. Both giants and gods are huge and very powerful, i.e., they are grown-ups. The gods are grown-ups as seen by obedient children: they are not only big and strong, but good, wise, and immortal. The giants are grown-ups seen by refractory children—big and strong, but bad, stupid, and, their one redeeming feature, mortal. Jack, therefore, was able to kill the giant and so realize the ultimate goal of the Little People's Revolutionary Party.<sup>7</sup> The cosmic equivalent of Jack's achievement occasionally appears in what is called "gnostic" mythology,<sup>8</sup> but we shall be concerned today with more amicable adjustments.

In any event, beanstalks as means of access to the gods went out early, and other gods as well as Yahweh soon moved to less dangerous quarters in the sky. Consequently their visitors had to go by air. Already in ancient Mesopotamia they were taken up by birds, most famous was the eagle of Etana.<sup>9</sup> Later on, for Ganymede, Zeus himself served as eagle,<sup>10</sup> whence the eagle psychopomp became standard in classical imagery—a famous example is the Apotheosis of Germanicus.<sup>11</sup> That such stories were not told merely for amusement, but were understood as symbols [407] of religious experiences, is shown not only by the use of the eagle as psychopomp on tombs, and the like, but also by more explicit references, for instance the

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX. 29.4f.

<sup>6</sup> Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* I. 7.4.

<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the story see B. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, New York 1976, pp. 183-93.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Hippolytus' account of the teachings of Saturnilus and Carpocrates, *Refutatio* VII.28 and 32.

<sup>9</sup> J. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 2 ed., Princeton 1955, pp. 114ff., esp. 118.

<sup>10</sup> The sources are collected by P. Friedländer in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie* VII.I (1910) 737-49.

<sup>11</sup> On a cameo in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris (Chabouillet, *Catalogue*, no. 209; G. Richter, *Engraved Gems of the Romans*, London 1971, no. 498, text and plate).

representation of the apotheosis of Ganymede on a vault of the subterranean basilica by the Porta Maggiore.<sup>12</sup>

The same is true of stories about flying chariots, in which the gods themselves, according to the *Iliad* (*passim*), travelled from heaven to earth and back again. Elijah was carried off in such a chariot, “a chariot of fire and horses of fire,” as 2 Kings (2.11) specifies. By Parmenides’ time, the end of the sixth century B.C., stories of such ascent could be used as symbols of the mind’s progress, by philosophical abstraction, from the lower world of appearances to the realm of truth,<sup>13</sup> an image that Plato, over a century later, developed with great power in the *Phaedrus*. Plato’s influence will often have affected the choice of chariot journeys as motifs for tombstones,<sup>14</sup> motifs later taken over by Christians who identified the chariot as that of Elijah.<sup>15</sup>

However, such physical devices were not necessary. The gods when they wished could simply pick up mortals and carry them [408] anywhere, as they did the heroes of the *Iliad* (3.380; 5.344; etc.), and Enoch who “walked with God and was not (to be seen), because God took him” (Gen 5:24). Again, like other sacrifices, men could be sent or send themselves up to the gods by burning. The classic example was the myth of Heracles’ self-immolation on Mt. Oeta,<sup>16</sup> but in spite of this precedent, when the Greeks encountered the real thing as practiced by the Brahmins of Alexander’s time, it made a profound impression and elicited a series of imitators of whom the most famous was the infamous Peregrinus.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Picture, description, and bibliography in E. Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, New York 1961 vol. I, pp. 169-73. Whether or not “neo-Pythagorean,” the structure was certainly made for some religious group which presumably attributed allegorical significance to the figures it chose for the walls and ceiling.

<sup>13</sup> L. Tarán, *Parmenides*, Princeton 1965. Tarán denies that there “is ... symbolism in the poem,” and argues that “it was customary to talk of the way of song and of the chariot in a metaphorical sense,” pp. 30f. He does not make clear his distinction between the symbolic and the metaphorical. What is clear is that the poem represents the mind’s progress towards truth as an ascent by chariot to the gates of the heavens.

<sup>14</sup> Found in Attica from at least the sixth century B.C. (G. Richter, *The Archaic Gravestones of Attica*, London 1961, no. 45, pp. 32f. and figs. 126 and 128). Originally perhaps merely a reminder of the wealth and status of the deceased. So Richter, who emphasizes status, but refers to other suggestions. Later common and clearly symbolic of ascent to the heavens (F. Cumont, *Lux Perpetua*, Paris 1949, pp. 291ff.).

<sup>15</sup> A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography*, Princeton 1969 (Bollingen Series 35.10) pp. 35 and 117 and illus. 281f.

<sup>16</sup> W. Roscher, *Aüsführliches Lexikon der gr. und röm. Mythologie*, 1.2 repr. Hildesheim 1965, pp. 2240f.; C. Robert, *Die griechische Heldensage II. Die Nationalheroen*, repr. Dublin 1967, pp. 597ff.

<sup>17</sup> J. Schwartz, ed., *Lucien de Samosate ... De morte Peregrini*, 2 ed., Paris 1963, pp. 65f. and 109ff., especially the latter, on secs. 36-40; K. von Fritz, “Peregrinus 16.” in Pauly-Wissowa (above, note 10) 19.1 (1937) 656-63. Column 661 deals with the precedents.

Of all these methods I have chosen mainly pre-Christian examples because I wanted to show the variety and extent of this belief in the Greco-Roman world before Jesus' time. By his time it had been further popularized and is found everywhere in the literature of the late republic and early empire. Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* is the most famous of many examples, but the most important was the official deification of Augustus, which was justified by the legal testimony of a Roman senator, that he had seen the late emperor ascending into heaven.<sup>18</sup> A hundred and fifty years thereafter the simple ceremony of false witness was replaced by an elaborate ritual for deification by fire: a wax image of the dead emperor was identified with him by being clothed in his garments, the true body was cremated promptly with comparatively little ceremony, but the wax image was given an elaborate state funeral and burned on a magnificent pyre from which the burning released an eagle—supposed to be the emperor's soul whose flight into heaven could be seen by all. Then the senate officially recognized the emperor's ascent to the heavens by voting [409] appropriate honors to the new divinity.<sup>19</sup> I remark in passing that the identification of an image with a man by use of the man's garments is a familiar magical technique,<sup>20</sup> but I want to emphasize that the introduction of this official use of the notion of ascent to the heavens, for imperial propaganda, is the strongest evidence that the Roman ruling class thought the notion universally familiar and widely credited.

This official evidence is confirmed by the wide range of first and second century A.D. material testifying to private belief—not only the literary uses and funerary imagery already referred to, but also the appearance and popular success of magicians who claimed to be able to ascend and to enable others to do so. Apollonius of Tyana claimed to have learned the art from the Brahmins and declared it the true goal of philosophy (*Vita*, 6.11 end, 8.30). The famous “Chaldeans,” a pair of fakirs who practiced at the courts of Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius, had an elaborate ritual to give their patients the experience.<sup>21</sup> Just what they did, we do not know, but we do have, in the Paris Magical Papyrus, an actual rite of the same period for the same purpose, the so-called “Mithras Liturgy.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Suetonius, *Augustus* 100.4; Dio Cassius 56.46.2.

<sup>19</sup> The evidence was collected and the rite described by E. Bickermann, “Die römische Kaiserapotheose,” *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 27 (1929) pp. 1-31.

<sup>20</sup> This Bickermann pointed out, *op. cit.* p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> See the attempted reconstruction by H. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*, Cairo 1956 (Inst. fr. d'archéol. orientale, *Recherches d'archéologie*, etc., 13) ch. 3, pp. 177-226.

<sup>22</sup> *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (henceforth *PGM*) 2 ed., edd. K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, Stuttgart 1973-74, vol. I, pp. 88-101 (papyrus IV, lines 475-829).

I hope these examples suffice to prove that by the time of Jesus it was commonly believed in the Greco-Roman world that men could ascend into the heavens, not only after death, but before it, not only in dreams and visions, but even bodily. The uniformity with which the essential fact of ascent is reported contrasts with the variety of the reported conditions and means. The contrast suggests that we have here many reflections of some sort of [410] abnormal experience in which the subject's attention is so concentrated on his hallucinations that he is indifferent to and unaware of his physical circumstances. This suggestion is confirmed by St. Paul, who wrote, "I knew, in Christ, fourteen years ago, a man whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know—caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor 12:2f.). Such uncertainty, by a man claiming direct acquaintance with someone who had made the ascent, accounts for the variety of the stories surveyed. Against that variety let me point out a further element all these stories have in common: they tell not merely of ascent—of mountain climbing, flying, or the like—but of ascent *to another world or realm*, the realm of the gods. I suppose this is their *raison d'être*. They express, as Shelley said,

The desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,  
The devotion to something afar,  
From the sphere of our sorrow.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Importance and extent of the belief in Jesus' time: Palestine

By Jesus' time Palestine was, and for centuries had been, part and parcel of the Greco-Roman world. Consequently we should expect to find such stories also there. In fact we find lots of them. Some were told for their own sake, more were adapted to the purposes popular at the time: to teach morality, to guarantee the authority of the Jewish priesthood, to explain cosmology, the arrangement and content of the various heavens, to console the Jews for the pollution or destruction of the Temple, to promise the coming end of the world, punishment of the wicked and reward of the righteous, but also to teach the possibility of salvation here and now, of a man's being transformed during ascension to a supernatural being, then sent back to earth, disguised by his old [411] appearance, but armed with supernatural powers. We have examples of such stories told about Adam (in two versions), Enoch (in three versions), Abraham (in two versions), Levi,

---

<sup>23</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. H. Newbolt, London N.D., p. 409, "To —".

Moses, Isaiah, and Baruch.<sup>24</sup> Daniel promises that the righteous, in the end, will shine as the stars (12:3). Josephus tells us that the Essenes attracted their followers by their teaching that the soul would ascend to heaven after death (*Bellum* 2.154f.; 7.344).

The unusual frequency and importance in Palestinian literature of these stories of ascent led several scholars to conjecture that there must have been some sort of pious practice—meditation, or prayer, or whatever—that centered on the theme and perhaps led the imaginative to believe that they, too, experienced the sort of heavenly ascents they read and wrote of.<sup>25</sup> These conjectures have now been confirmed by discoveries in the documents of the Dead Sea sect. The *Hymns*, in particular, often insist that the members of the sect are “together with the angels of the presence and there is no need of an interpreter between them.”<sup>26</sup> The same claim is made by the *Manual of Discipline* (11.5-10). Sometimes these texts suppose that the angels come down to participate in the sectarians’ worship, but in other passages (those already cited) the supposition seems to be that the sectarians go up to heaven and worship with the angels. Presumably some sort of rite was required for the ascent. A reference to it may be found in Josephus’ statement that the Essenes “immortalize” (*athanatizousin*) “the souls, thinking [412] the approach of the righteous to be much fought over” (*Antiquities* 18.18). Bousset conjectured that the “much fought over approach” was that of the righteous to the heavens—they are often attacked *en route* by demons or by the angels guarding the gates.<sup>27</sup> This interpretation is now confirmed by the “Mithras Liturgy,” which describes its rite for ascent to the heavens with a cognate word (“immortalization,” *apathanatismos*).<sup>28</sup> In that rite, as in what are called the *Hekalot* hymns—later Jewish hymns for access to the throne of Yahweh<sup>29</sup>—a

<sup>24</sup> Adam: *Apocalypse of Moses* 37-39, and *Adam and Eve* 25-28; 1, 2, and 3 *Enoch*; the *Testament* and the *Apocalypse* of Abraham; *The Testament of Levi* (in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*) 2.6-5.3; *The Assumption of Moses*; *The Ascension of Isaiah*; the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*. All these are extensive texts; many other works of the same sort are known, from references and/or brief fragments, to have existed.

<sup>25</sup> So P. Eppel, *Le piétisme juif dans les Testaments des douze patriarches*, Strasbourg 1930 (*Etudes de philos. et d'hist. relig.* 22) p. 66; D. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, Philadelphia 1964, pp. 158f.; G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism* (etc.), 2 ed., New York 1965, ch. 3, pp. 14-19, esp. 17f.

<sup>26</sup> 6.13; cf. 3.20ff.; 11.10ff.; frag. 2.10.

<sup>27</sup> W. Bousset, “Die Himmelsreise der Seele,” *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 4 (1901), p. 143.

<sup>28</sup> *PGM* (above, note 22), papyrus IV, lines 741, 747, 771. The emphasis on immortalization in the opening section of the ritual—lines 479, 500, 504, 505, etc.—is conspicuous. Cp. the “Prayer of Jacob” in papyrus XXIIb, esp. line 24.

<sup>29</sup> In these hymns the access is commonly described as “descent” to the throne, but it is clearly the same sort of process, with much of the same itinerary, as the “ascent” in the other texts. The reason for the reversal of the terminology is uncertain. See my article,

most important element is the revelation of the names of the gods or angels who will be encountered on the way. Like watchdogs, they are friendly if you can call them by their names, but if not, they will attack. This explains why the Essenes attributed so much importance to knowledge of the names of angels, as Josephus tells us they did (*Bellum* 2.142). The explanation is further supported by the fact that the Hekalot hymns and some of the liturgical texts of the Dead Sea sect have striking stylistic similarities.<sup>30</sup> Taken together, these considerations make it probable that the Dead Sea sectarians had a technique, like that of the “Mithras Liturgy” and the Hekalot mystics, to induce hallucinations interpreted as ascents into the heavens. We may have another echo of the practice in the Epistle to the Ephesians, 6:11ff.: “Put on the whole armor of God, ... for our battle is ... against ... spiritual powers of evil in the [413] heavens.” Ephesians was written by an imitator of Paul and has important contacts with the Dead Sea material.<sup>31</sup>

Such practices seem to have been going on along the Palestinian coast for a long time. Centuries earlier Ezekiel attacked the King of Tyre:

Thus says my lord, Yahweh, ‘Because you are proud and say, “I am a god. I have sat in the throne of God in the midst of the sea,” whereas you are [actually] a man and not a god ... Therefore I am bringing foreigners against you ... and they shall bring you down and you shall die ... Will you really say, when you face those who will kill you, “I am God,” although you are a man and not a god? ... You shall die by the hands of foreigners’. [...] The word of Yahweh [came] to me, saying, ... ‘Lament for the King of Tyre and say to him, “Thus says my lord, Yahweh... ‘You were in Eden, the garden of God. You were clothed with every precious stone.... You were in the holy mountain of God. You walked among the burning coals.... And you sinned and I polluted you, [forcing you to leave] the mountain of God. And I shall destroy you, covering cherub, from among the burning coals’”’ (28:1-16).

A little later, another prophet, whose work is now preserved in the Book of Isaiah (14:12ff.), made similar pronouncements against the King of Babylon:

How are you fallen from heaven, famous son of Dawn ... You said to yourself, ‘I will go up to heaven. I will set my throne above the divine

---

“Observations on *Hekalot Rabbati*” in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. A. Altmann, Cambridge, Mass. 1963, pp. 142ff., which demonstrates the similarity of that text to the “Mithras Liturgy.”

<sup>30</sup> See J. Strugnell, “The Angelic Liturgy,” *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* VII, Leiden 1960, pp. 318-45, and the observations of G. Scholem in *Jewish Gnosticism* (above, note 25), pp. 29 and 128.

<sup>31</sup> K. Kuhn, “Der Epheserbrief im Lichte der Qumrantexte,” *New Testament Studies* 7 (1961) 334-46. On p. 345 Kuhn suggested that Eph 6:10-20 reflected Essene tradition.

stars and I will dwell in the mountain of the assembly (of the gods) on the peak of Mt. Zaphon. I will go up on the high places of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.' But in fact you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit.

These two passages are not sufficiently similar for either to have been modeled on the other. They are therefore independent pieces of evidence either of royal propaganda or of practices attributed by the prophets to the kings. Now we have specimens of Phoenician royal sarcophagi and of the propaganda of the neo-Babylonian kings,<sup>32</sup> and nothing in them matches these claims. It would seem, [414] therefore, that the prophets referred to magical rites these rulers were supposed to practice. In any event, the passages prove that men believed in the possibility of ascent to the realm of the gods, on top of their holy mountain above the clouds and the stars, in the garden among the burning coals, and this ascent was thought to make the man who accomplished it an angel or a god.

Centuries later we find similar beliefs in the Enoch tradition, from which we have the earliest of the preserved Jewish accounts of ascents into the heavens.<sup>33</sup> We have also the evidence already reviewed, indicating that some sort of technique for ascent was practiced in the Dead Sea sect. Another century later, about A.D. 50, we find Paul answering the claims of his Palestinian competitors<sup>34</sup> who prided themselves on their visions and revelations of the Lord. Paul's answer is that he, too, is a speaker of Hebrew, an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, and an apostle, and that fourteen years ago he knew a man who went up to the paradise in the third heaven (2 Cor 12:1ff.). The answer is not a strong one. Paul does not claim to have gone up to heaven himself. His modesty was perhaps necessitated by his readers' knowledge, but it does do something to accredit his report. And his introduction of a theme in which he would make so poor a showing is practically proof that his opponents were making the sort of claim

---

<sup>32</sup> Phoenician sarcophagi in H. Donner and W. Röllig, edd., *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, 2 ed., Wiesbaden, vol. I 1966, section A 1. Neo-Babylonian inscriptions in J. Pritchard, *op. cit.* (above, note 9) pp. 307-312; and *id.*, *Supplement*, Princeton 1968, pp. 560-63.

<sup>33</sup> Walking (no longer on a mountain, but in heaven) among the flames of fire, J. Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, Oxford 1976, pp. 194f. Entrance of the garden of God, *idem* pp. 201, 221, 232. Ascent, M. Knibb and E. Ullendorff, edd., *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, Oxford 1978, ch. 14.8-25; garden(s) of God, chs. 24-32; transformation of the seer, 71.11. In 2 *Enoch* the account of heaven and the transformation is fuller; Enoch becomes an angel: A. Vaillant, ed., *Le Livre des Secrets d'Hénoch*, Paris 1952, ch. 9, especially the end. The seer's omniscience, ch. 13. He no longer eats or drinks, ch. 14.

<sup>34</sup> They were "Hebrews" (i.e., probably, Hebrew was their native language), "Israelites" (Jews by race as well as by religion), "descendants of Abraham" (therefore heirs of his promise), and "*par excellence* apostles": 2 Cor 11:22; 12:11. The last of these qualifications may indicate some claim of authorization by Jesus himself.

[415] he was trying to match. In Colossians, too, we find a reference to some Christian who was trying to justify observance of Jewish laws and worship of angels by appealing to things he had seen while “going up”—presumably, to the heavens (Col 2:16ff.). In Romans Paul insists that his message is not something hidden in the heavens, which a man would have to go up there to bring down (10:6).<sup>35</sup> Why should the Romans have thought it was? I suppose, because some of his competitors, like the man attacked in Colossians, claimed to be teaching secrets they had learned while “going up.” There is no question that John, the author of the Apocalypse, claimed to have gone up to heaven (4:1f.). Unlike the authors of earlier apocalypses, he did not put the claim in the mouth of some long dead worthy. As a disciple of Jesus, he made it for himself. It probably shows the sort of thing that was being claimed by Paul’s opponents.

Finally, we have to recognize that all these bits of evidence concern what was presumably secret teaching about which no explicit reports were likely to be preserved. So what is preserved must be only the tip of the mountain of revelation. Hence we can fairly conclude that one or more techniques for ascent into heaven were being used in Palestine in Jesus’ day, and that Jesus himself may well have used one.

#### 4. Evidence that Jesus did use such a technique:

##### *A. Ascent in the beliefs of his followers*

Clearly ascent was not one of those aspects of Jesus’ practice that the evangelists chose to publicize. But we know that they kept other important elements secret, too. The fourth Gospel suppressed the institution of the eucharist, but discussed the rite in terms clear to those who knew it and riddling to those who did not (John 6:48-59, etc.). Mark wrote of a “mystery of the kingdom of God” [416] given to the disciples, but he never told us what it was (4:11). Consequently we cannot suppose that the gospels fully report everything Jesus did and taught. We must look at the indirect evidence.

Important indirect evidence of what a man did and taught is what his followers believed and expected. We anticipate some distortion and innovation, but the proposition that a man’s devoted followers radically misrepresented his teachings is *a priori* improbable. It may sometimes be true, but its truth has to be proved by strong evidence for every point concerned. I see no strong evidence *against* the proposition that Jesus taught and practiced ascent to the heavens.

There is no question that Jesus’ followers often anticipated ascent to the heavens as their goal. They reported that Jesus had ascended

---

<sup>35</sup> Nor is it something in the underworld of the dead (10:8)—perhaps a hit at Christians who practiced necromancy.

after his resurrection—a full story is told in Acts 1, the belief appears already in Philippians 2:9 and a string of later passages.<sup>36</sup> They themselves hoped to ascend when the End came. Paul (or, if not Paul, the author of 1 Thess 4:16f.) was explicit:

The Lord himself ... with a godawful trumpet blast will come down from heaven, and the dead Christians will arise first, and then we the living ... will be caught up together with them in the clouds for a meeting with the Lord in the air. And thus we shall be always with the Lord.

A few other passages have the same basic idea with less detail.<sup>37</sup> However, more New Testament passages expect the righteous to ascend immediately after death, as Paul in 2 Corinthians (5:1-10) longs to leave the body and go home to the Lord, to his “eternal dwelling ... in the heavens.”<sup>38</sup>

This fact, that the ascension of Christians is not necessarily connected with the end of the world, suggests that the root of the notion was not in expectations of the End, i.e., in the apocalyptic tradition, but rather in some immediate experience in Christian [417] life. So the author of Hebrews (12:22-28) assures his hearers (in 22f.) that they “have” already “come to Mt. Sion and the city of the living God, Jerusalem in the heavens ... and the church of the first born (whose names are) inscribed in the heavens, and ... the spirits of the righteous who have been perfected.” Even this heavenly realm is yet to be purified (26), but the Christians “are” already “receiving” the eternal kingdom (28). This looks like a passage announcing salvation here and now, adapted by an awkward postscript to eschatological expectations. (I avoid the self-contradictory term “realized eschatology,” since what is now realized is not put off to the End, and there is no compelling reason to think that these present blessings were even originally connected with the End. We must reckon with the possibility that Jesus primarily promised present salvation.) Another such passage in Hebrews is 10:19ff., where the author praises Jesus as the High Priest who has prepared “a *ready* and living road” by which to enter the holy place of the heavenly temple, and urges his readers, since they have been purified by the sacraments, to enter at once. Here, too, an eschatological reference is awkwardly tacked on. A similar passage, with a similar contradiction, is found in John 14:4, where Jesus, having promised to go to his father’s house, prepare a place for his disciples, then come back and take them with him, adds casually, “And where I am going, you know the road”—as much as to

<sup>36</sup> John 20:17; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 7:26-8:1; 9:24; etc.

<sup>37</sup> John 14:2f.; 1 Pet 1:4f.; perhaps Phil. 3:20f., though it is ambiguous.

<sup>38</sup> Cp. Phil 1:23; Luke 23:43; probably 12:33f.; certainly Apoc 7:9-15 (notice the change of tense in 16f., another eschatological postscript); probably 3:21.

say, “You can follow whenever you want to.” This understandably puzzled the copyists, so the manuscript tradition is much confused. The sentence suggesting heaven’s immediate accessibility can claim respect as the more difficult reading.

Another passage of the same sort is 2 Pet 1:11, where the readers are urged to be virtuous because “thus you will be plentifully provided with entrance into the eternal kingdom.” Nothing indicates that the entrance need be put off till death, and the adverb “plentifully” would seem to refer to repeated access. Finally Paul (if Paul was the author of Colossians) insists that all Christians have already ascended into the heavens along with Jesus, “being buried with him in baptism, in which you *have* also [418] been raised with him ... who stripped off the (cosmic) rulers and authorities... (and) led them... (as defeated enemies) in a triumphal procession... If then you, with Christ, *have* been liberated by death from the elements of the cosmos... (and) if *you have* been raised together with Christ, seek the things on high, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Think of the things on high, not those on earth, for you *have* died and your life *has been* hidden with Christ in God” (2:12-3:3).

In sum, early Christianity, as we see it in the earliest texts it preserved, was constantly oriented towards ascent to the heavens. Christians not only believed that Jesus had ascended after his death, they also expected to do the same themselves. Some thought ascent would come only at the end of the world, but more expected that it would shortly follow their own deaths. This suggests that they had not come to the expectation from eschatological prophecies, but from the importance of the present experience, or of pretensions to it, in Christian communities. This suggestion is confirmed by passages in Hebrews and Colossians which claim that Christians have already ascended and are now in the heavens as well as on earth. While such claims for all Christians might be dismissed as mere theological theory or rhetorical exaggeration—as they are generally thought to be—and the frequency of expectations of ascent after death indicates that many did not expect it immediately—nevertheless, we have reports of specific Christians who did claim and were believed to have gone up to heaven while yet alive (the author of the Apocalypse and the man known to Paul), and we have reason to believe that similar claims were made by some of Paul’s Palestinian competitors. For some, at least, in primitive Christianity, ascent to the heavens was not only a post-mortual reward, but a goal exceptional individuals could achieve and had achieved in this life. The orientation of the cult towards it appears in some of the earliest evidence we have, within fifteen or twenty years of Jesus’ death. We should normally suppose it a reflection of Jesus’ own teaching and practice. [419]

### *B. Sayings of Jesus and reports about him*

Those who resist the notion that Jesus practiced ascent commonly resort to argument from silence. They claim that no reference to ascent into the heavens, still less to any actual ascent, can be found in the genuine sayings of Jesus and the reliable stories about him.

I grant that arguments from silence can sometimes be practically conclusive. But they do have to be handled carefully, and they all have one weakness, they depend entirely on one piece of evidence—silence. An argument from silence that has to produce the silence, by getting rid of all the evidence that breaks it, is hardly worth stating. So what is the evidence about Jesus' teaching and practice that this argument from silence has to get rid of?

There is much in stories told about Jesus by his enemies, and a little in Christian pseudepigrapha, but in such literature the theme cannot confidently be traced much before the middle of the second century A.D., when the *Actus Petri cum Simone* also credits Peter and Simon Magus with similar achievements. This is no great help.

Among the sayings of Jesus reported by the synoptic gospels are about a score in which he speaks of the kingdom of God as present and of his followers as already in it, or able to enter it now.<sup>39</sup> For instance, he attacked the scribes and the Pharisees because “you lock the kingdom of heaven shut in men's faces, for you (yourselves) do not go in, nor do you permit those who are going in to enter” (Matt 23:13; cp. Luke 11:52). Since the kingdom was commonly thought to be in heaven—as we all know from the Lord's prayer—such sayings would seem to indicate access to the heavens. Moreover, because they do not fit ordinary Jewish apocalyptic or moral teachings, but are peculiar to Jesus, they are commonly thought to be genuine. However, they are not conclusive. The kingdom was supposedly in heaven, but Jesus' disciples were certainly on earth, so we are left with a problem, not an [420] answer. Other sayings in the synoptics, like Jesus' claim in Luke, “I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven” (10:18), are of equally dubious significance and more dubious authenticity.

In John we have Jesus' statement, already mentioned, that the disciples know the way to the heavens, whither he is going (14:4). He then declares that he is, himself, the way (14:6). This would be understandable if we supposed the disciples had experienced ascent as part of an initiation in which they were magically and psychologically identified with him. The rituals for ascent in the “Mithras Liturgy” and in the Hekalot texts contain directions for taking assistants along, and Paul understood baptism as a ritual for identification with Jesus (Rom

---

<sup>39</sup> These sayings are collected and discussed in my *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, Mass. 1973, pp. 211ff.

6:3ff., 8:9f.). The identification of him as “the way” (echoed by Hebrews 10:20) is particularly vivid in his saying in John 1:51, “You shall see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” “The Son of Man” is a title characteristic of the earlier strata of the gospels. In this saying Jesus identifies himself with the ladder between earth and heaven, foreseen in Jacob’s dream (Gen 28:12). Aphraates, one of the earliest Christian writers of Mesopotamia, declared, “The ladder is the mystery [initiated by] our saviour, by which righteous men ascend from the lower world to the world above” (*Demonstratio* 4.5). What mystery he had in mind is not known. It would seem to have included a technique for ascent.

We may have a reflection of it in the story of the transfiguration, which circulated in several forms.<sup>40</sup> The oldest form we have, that in Mark, reports that Jesus took three of his closest disciples, Peter, James, and John, “by themselves alone” up a high mountain, and was transfigured before them. His clothes became [421] shining white. Elijah and Moses appeared and talked with him. Thereupon Peter made a stupid remark, and as soon as he spoke a cloud covered them. A voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved son, hear him.” “And at once, looking around, they no longer saw anybody except Jesus alone with themselves.”

This is a story of a well known magical type—the interrupted rite. Some ignorant person is involved in a magical operation, extraordinary things begin to happen, then the ignoramus says or does something unpropitious, the magical scene vanishes, and the ignoramus finds himself back in his original situation, if not in a worse one.

So we have here a folk tale about Jesus and his disciples. But what was the basis for the folk tale? People are to some extent characterized by the stories told about them. Nobody would have told such a folk tale about Jesus’ distinguished contemporary, the emperor Caligula, though he, too, claimed to be a god. Why, then, was this told about Jesus? For what purpose would Jesus take three disciples apart, up a mountain, and why would they see him in glory, with supernatural beings? When we recall the prophecies attacking kings who were said to have gone up into the mountain of the gods, above the clouds, and there been clothed with precious stones and become gods (Ezekiel 28

---

<sup>40</sup> Mark 9:2-8; Matt 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Pet 1:16ff. See my discussion, “The Origin and History of the Transfiguration Story,” chapter twenty-six below. The common claim that this is a misplaced resurrection story is based on trivial similarities of wording and content (two men, white/shining garments, etc.), elements commonplace in stories of all sorts of epiphanies; it overlooks the essential differences of content that clearly distinguish the transfiguration tale from the resurrection legends.

and Isaiah 14, above), the sort of practice that gave rise to the folk tale is not hard to guess.

There may be a few other traces of the rite. The ancient Gospel according to the Hebrews reported that Jesus said, "My mother, the Holy Spirit, took me by one hair and carried me off to the great mountain, Tabor."<sup>41</sup> What happened then, we are not told. More important, Paul said of the Israelites who came out of Egypt that, "They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor 10:2). That he should have interpreted crossing the sea [422] as a baptism is not very surprising,<sup>42</sup> but where did he get the notions of baptism into Moses, and baptism in a cloud? Baptism into Moses might come by retrojection from "baptism into Jesus,"<sup>43</sup> since the old revelation had to prefigure the new one. But when were people baptized into Jesus in a cloud? If the rite of ascent involved identification with Jesus (as we were led to think it did), and if the identification was effected by baptism (as Paul said it was), and if the hallucination of ascent commonly ended in loss of the vision and a confusing, cloudlike moment of readjustment to the real world (as the transfiguration story reports),<sup>44</sup> then the legendary clouds of the ancient mountain of the gods, and the cloud of the exodus, would be understandably connected with baptism, and Paul's exegesis of the exodus story could be explained.

This theory is supported by several very early passages which indicate that Jesus was believed to have ascended into the heavens during his lifetime. The first is a famous fragment of a Christian hymn cited by Paul in Philippians 2:5-11, therefore substantially earlier than Paul's letter, and thus one of the earliest pieces of [423] evidence about Jesus that we have. Paul has been urging the Philippians to practice

<sup>41</sup> Origen, *Commentary on John*, Book II, 12.87; parallels collected by K. Aland, *Synopsis quattuor evangeliorum*, Stuttgart 1964, p. 34, on Mark 1:12f.

<sup>42</sup> Although, according to Exodus 14:22 and 29, the Israelites never got wet. A pious exegete cannot be expected to pay close attention to the sacred text; he must be intent on discovering its true meaning, as distinct from what it says.

<sup>43</sup> Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12:12-27.

<sup>44</sup> From discussion with a number of the psychotherapists present at the Eranos Conference when this paper was presented, I understand that disorientation and blurred vision are common in patients emerging from certain types of hallucinations. Mr. Robert E. Bosnak, holder of a diploma from the C.G. Jung Institute, has since written me as follows: "After work on dream images and distant memories, in a state of trance-like concentration ... two male patients reported a state of dizziness and blurred vision ... In one case it took more than a minute for the eyes to come back to focus. These patients were not suffering from psychiatric disorders. They were both quite depressed. The trance-like experiences of the imagery... had profound impact on both of them. In other cases (4) I have noticed a state of disorientation upon awakening from a trance-like state. Blurred vision was not specifically reported, but these patients were also unable to get up immediately." He adds that none of these six usually wore glasses, and none, at the time of these experiences, was under the influence of drugs which might have affected vision.

charity. He winds up, “You should have among yourselves that intention which was also in Christ Jesus who”—here comes the hymn—“being in the form of God, did not think he should grasp at equality with God, but made himself contemptible, taking the form of a slave, becoming like men, and being cast in a human role, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even to death, and death by crucifixion.” Modern exegetes have commonly overlooked Paul’s introduction and understood the first words of this hymn as a reference to the preexistent Christ. But Paul says explicitly that it was *Jesus* who was in the form of God, but did not grasp at equality with God, submitting instead to take the form of a man and be crucified. Moreover, his statement cannot be explained away as a bit of careless wording. He says the same thing again, more briefly, in 2 Cor 8:9, “You know the kindness of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, how he impoverished himself for you, when he was rich, so that you might become rich by his poverty.”

These statements show a pre-Pauline notion of Jesus, one shaped by the Enoch legend. Enoch was one of the antediluvian patriarchs of whom the Old Testament said that “he walked with God and he was not (to be seen), because God took him” (Gen 5:24). This brief remark may be either the cause or the consequence of a story about Enoch’s being taken up to heaven. The story became so popular that we have it in three major preserved versions and several minor ones.<sup>45</sup> According to the fully developed legend, Enoch was taken up to the highest heaven and introduced to God Himself. Since one becomes like what one looks on—a principle we have heard from Jean Brun and Daryush Shayegan—Enoch, when he saw God, became like him in appearance (1 Enoch 71:11-16, 2 Enoch 9 end). But unlike the [424] wicked Jack of the beanstalk, he did not try to destroy his rival. Instead he remained obedient and was sent back to earth to preach to men (1 Enoch 81:5, 2 Enoch 11). On his way down he was transformed again to the appearance of a man (2 Enoch 13). He thus carried out his mission on earth and died. Thereupon he was again taken up to heaven, restored to glory, and given, as Paul’s hymn, too, went on to say, the name of God himself, YHWH (3 Enoch 12, cp. 16, Phil 2:9ff.). Thus the good boy solved his Oedipal problem by identification with his father. That may have been one of the reasons for the popularity of the Enoch story. At all events, Paul was not the only Christian to use it. The author of *The Ascension of Isaiah* did much the same thing, though he chose Isaiah rather than Enoch for his Old Testament hero.

---

<sup>45</sup> The best editions are, for *1 Enoch*, Knibb and Ullendorff (above, note 33), for *2 Enoch*, Vaillant (*ibid.*), for *3 Enoch*, H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, repr. with prolegomena by J. Greenfield, New York 1973. There are also important fragments in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.

This neglected episode of early Christological speculation has distracted us from our main concern here—that the use of the Enoch story as a model for Jesus' career implies the belief that he had already ascended to heaven and become like God before the beginning of his public ministry. Another reflection of this same outline may be found in another fragment of an old Christian hymn, that quoted in 1 Tim 3:16, where Jesus is said to have been “revealed in flesh, justified in spirit, seen by the angels, preached in the nations, believed in the world, taken up in glory.” Notice that “seen by the angels” precedes “believed in the world” and “taken up in glory.” These hymns can obviously be understood as interpretations, by adherents, of the career of a magician who claimed to have ascended to heaven and become a god, but had to live on earth and was eventually crucified.

Another trace of the same outline turns up in John 3:13. Jesus is lecturing Nicodemus on baptism as spiritual rebirth. Nicodemus is politely incredulous, so Jesus assures him that, when speaking of heavenly things, he (Jesus) is unique because he knows what he's talking about. “For nobody,” he says, “has gone up to heaven, except he who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.” Here Jesus claims not only to have come down from heaven<sup>46</sup>—a [425] claim John constantly puts in his mouth, to emphasize that he was the pre-existent Logos—but also to have gone up to heaven at some time before his conversation with Nicodemus. This latter claim is not in line with John's usual teaching, so we may suppose he took over the saying, in a moment of carelessness, from one of his sources. Its original *Sitz im Leben* was probably a controversy between Jesus' followers and those of some other Palestinian teacher who also claimed to have gone up to heaven. Besides the followers of Jesus and the Dead Sea sectarians we know of one other teacher of Jesus' time who is said to have made the claim—Simon Magus. No doubt there were others, too. Such indemonstrable claims are easy to imitate and commonly imitated.

Finally we come back to a passage twice cited already—Paul's report in 2 Cor 12 that he himself knew a man who had gone up to the third heaven. Who was that man? Exegetes have long been divided between those who think it Jesus and those who think it Paul himself. The Paul party is much more numerous. I adhered to it when I wrote *The Secret Gospel*, but I have since come round to the other view. To explain my conversion, let me explain the passage.

Paul is writing in his own defense. His hold on the Corinthians is challenged by competitors who boast of their qualifications and belittle his. They are apostles, indeed, he ironically calls them, “superapostles” (12:11). They are Hebrews, Israelites, descendants of Abraham

---

<sup>46</sup> John 1:9; 3:17ff.; 12:46; 16:28; etc.

(11:22). They have labored and suffered for the cause (11:23). They pride themselves on “visions and apocalypses of the Lord” (12:1), and on “signs and wonders and powers,” miracles they perform as evidence of their apostolate (12:12). They also are proud of their apostolic authority to require their adherents to support them (12:13), and they seem to have permitted or even encouraged their adherents to indulge in sexual promiscuity and other practices Paul thought “impure” (12:21).

Paul’s answer is to claim, as far as he can, superiority, failing that, equality, failing that, something else just as good, if not better. As remarked before, his relative modesty suggests that he [426] was writing to a well informed audience. Nevertheless he claims to be no less an apostle than his competitors and to have done just as many miracles (12:11-13). Like them, he is a (speaker of) Hebrew, an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham (11:22). He has worked more and suffered more for the cause than they have (11:23-33, this was evidently his long suit). That he has not made the Corinthians support him has been due to his virtue, not lack of authority (12:13-18). As for those who have been indulging in improper practices, they had better repent now, or when he comes they will learn, to their grief, his spiritual power (12:19-21). So far, so good, a powerful answer. But right in the middle of it is the passage that concerns us (12:1ff.).

I now come to visions and apocalypses of the Lord. I knew in Christ, fourteen years ago, a man—whether in the body or out of the body, I don’t know, God knows—caught up ... to the third heaven. And I knew this man—whether in the body or out of the body, God knows—that he was caught up into the paradise and heard words not to be reported.... About that sort of man I will boast, but about myself I will not boast, except about my infirmities. For if I should wish to boast—I will not be foolish, for I will tell the truth: Briefly, I go easy, lest someone should have a higher opinion of me than [that justified by] what he sees of me and hears from me, and [should have it because of] the excess of my revelations. Therefore, so that I should not be stuck up, I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan, to keep striking me ... About him I entreated the Lord three times, that he should leave me, and [the Lord] said to me, ‘My grace is enough for you.’ For [his] power is made strongest in weakness. Therefore I would much more gladly boast of my infirmities, so that the power of Christ may dwell on me.

This last paradox is developed a little further, and so the passage ends. Now what can be done to identify the man Paul says he knew? First of all, was he Paul himself?

The only important reason for thinking him Paul is that Paul’s purpose throughout the chapter is to praise himself. If he merely claimed to have known some other man who was taken up to heaven,

when his opponents were claiming to have gone up themselves, he would have cut a poor figure.

This argument is strong and seems to require that the man be [427] Paul. However, the text cannot be made to say that he is. Paul clearly distinguishes the man from himself, saying, “about such a man I will boast, but about myself I will not.” He gives no indication anywhere in the passage that the man was himself. But if he could have claimed such an ascent for himself he certainly would have done so, and clearly. It was just what he needed to answer the claims of his opponents. So the fact that he makes no clear claim is proof that he could not make any claim at all. The plain sense of the text has to be accepted: the man was not Paul.

Who, then, was he? We have a clue in Paul’s statement, “About such a man I will boast.” Paul was much concerned about boasting. The ancients in general were less inhibited than we by attitudes like modesty and pity, which we call virtues and cherish because they blur the distinctions between good and bad. The richer a society is, the more it can afford to tolerate dysfunctional traits. Ancient society, even that of the Roman empire, was almost unimaginably poorer than ours, so for most of its members the distinctions between good and bad were very clear and important. They blamed, ridiculed, and otherwise tried to destroy what they thought bad, with very little of the pity or latent self-criticism which David Miller so persuasively described; they encouraged and praised what they thought good, and were proud of and unashamedly boasted about their own merits, in ways which we, according to our temperaments, find tasteless, tactless, or enviable. For Paul, pride and boasting had an importance unusual even in the ancient world; the subject comes up in every one of his major letters.<sup>47</sup> He admits to boasting about his converts,<sup>48</sup> he expects them to boast about him,<sup>49</sup> he boasts about himself to match the boasting of his opponents (2 Cor 10-12), but he also insists repeatedly that he will boast about no one but Jesus,<sup>50</sup> and he even defines Christians as “those who boast about Christ Jesus” (Phil [428] 3:3). Consequently his identification of the man taken up to heaven as the sort of man he will boast about, identifies him as Jesus.

The reference to Jesus also explains why Paul can claim that he, because of this man’s ascent, equals his (Paul’s) opponents. For Paul has often asserted or implied that he and Christ are one.<sup>51</sup> That he should refer to Jesus as a man he knew “in Christ” fourteen years ago,

---

<sup>47</sup> A few examples from each appear in the following notes.

<sup>48</sup> 2 Cor 7:4, 14; 8:24; 9:2f.; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Thess 1:4.

<sup>49</sup> 2 Cor 1:14; 5:12; Phil 1:26.

<sup>50</sup> Rom 15:17f.; 1 Cor 1:29-31; 2 Cor 10:17; 12:5; Gal 6:14.

<sup>51</sup> Gal 2:20; Rom 8:9f.; 14:8; 2 Cor 4:10f.; Phil 1:20; Col 3:3.

is surprising, but not impossible. He elsewhere declares that he no longer knows anyone “according to the flesh,” i.e. in a merely physical way, and he adds, “Even if we knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer know (him thus)” (2 Cor 5:16) . The alternative to knowing “according to the flesh” is knowing “in Christ,” i.e., as a constituent of the total Christian experience. That Paul dates the beginning of this knowledge fourteen years back gives us an approximate date for his conversion—fourteen years prior to the date of this letter when his knowledge of Jesus “in Christ” began.<sup>52</sup> Since this was after the crucifixion, the ascension of Jesus that he refers to might be that after the resurrection, but the statement that he “was caught up into the third heaven ... and heard words not to be reported” seems to refer to some ascent that occurred during Jesus’ lifetime and led to a revelation, rather than to the final exaltation after his death.

Thus Paul’s argument can be summarized as follows: Concerning visions and apocalypses: For the past fourteen years I have known (Jesus) as part of my Christian life (in which I am united with him). He, whether in the body or out of it, was once caught up to the paradise in the third heaven and heard ineffable words. About Jesus, therefore, I will boast (since I am one with him). About myself (apart from him), I will not boast, except about my infirmities. These were inflicted on me to keep me from seeming [429] insufferably great on account of my many revelations, and they are accompanied by the gift of grace to endure them.

From this argument we may infer that Paul was bluffing about his own revelations and did not himself have any experiences of ascent into heaven that he could honestly set up against his opponents. But we may also infer that he did attribute to Jesus an ascent, during his lifetime, into the paradise in the third heaven, where “he heard words not to be reported” (except to the chosen few).

Thus Paul, an early source used by John, and the early hymns quoted in Philippians and 1 Timothy, agree in crediting Jesus with an ascent to the heavens. Preparation for such an ascent is the most likely explanation of the interrupted rite reflected in the transfiguration story. The ascent itself, and the practice of ascent, explain a number of puzzling sayings attributed to Jesus. They also explain why Jesus’ enemies charged him with the practice, as an act of magic, why some of Jesus’ followers carried on the practice and used Paul’s inability to do so as an argument against him, and why early Christians generally accepted the story of Jesus’ ascension after death, looked forward to

---

<sup>52</sup> Whether or not this date can be reconciled with the reports in Galatians 1-2 (not to mention Acts) is a secondary question. What Paul claimed must first be determined, before asking whether any one of his claims was true.

similar ascent for themselves, and sometimes claimed to have ascended already by virtue of the sacraments. All in all, this is a large body of essentially consistent evidence from diverse, independent sources, among them several of the earliest we have. The existence of such a body of evidence has to be explained. I think the most likely explanation is that Jesus, in his lifetime, believed he had ascended into the heavens, told his most intimate disciples of his experiences, and thus—and perhaps by other methods—induced similar hallucinations in some of them.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> For further evidence and fuller discussion, see my books cited above, notes 2 and 39. Also *The Secret Gospel*, New York 1973, reprinted in San Francisco by The Dawn Horse Press in 1982.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### TWO ASCENDED TO HEAVEN— JESUS AND THE AUTHOR OF 4Q491

[290] I write this article with unusual pleasure because it reports new evidence that confirms a conjecture I published in 1973. To make the matter clear, however, I must review rapidly the evidence that led to the conjecture. Hence, readers familiar with my earlier work may find the first section of this chapter somewhat repetitive. The new material begins with section II.

#### I

Clement of Alexandria says that in his church (175-200 C.E.) a “secret gospel” believed to have been written by Mark was “carefully guarded” and read only to those being initiated into the great mysteries.”<sup>1</sup> He also quotes fragment of this gospel, a version of the Lazarus story of John 11:1-44. This version is written in Marcan style and is form-critically more primitive than the Johannine text.<sup>2</sup> Moreover it goes on to report that Jesus and the disciples went to the house of the young man after he had been raised and stayed with him for six days, after which he came to Jesus, “wearing only a linen cloth” and “stayed with him that night, for Jesus taught him the mystery of the Kingdom of God.”<sup>3</sup> [291]

Whether or not this report was written by the author of canonical Mark, it was almost certainly revered and read in the “mysteries” celebrated in Clement’s church in Alexandria. Clement, to judge from his preserved works, was a model of ascetic propriety. The story, therefore, must have been understood to have an edifying meaning.

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Theodore, folio 1, verso, lines 1-5, in M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973) pp. 448-53; hereinafter, *Clement*. The Greek text is reprinted in *Clemens Alexandrinus III*<sup>2</sup>, ed. O. Stählin, L. Früchtel, and U. Treu (GCS; Berlin, 1970). Many scholars have accepted the letter as probably authentic (*Clement*, p. 67), and study of the language and style has brought the probability close to certainty (*Clement*, pp. 5-85). Nevertheless, the content of the gospel fragment which the letter quotes has prompted a number of attacks. For the state of the question in the early 1980s see M. Smith, “Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark, the Score,” *HTR* 75 (1982) 449-61. For the present location of the manuscript (the Patriarchal Library in Jerusalem), see. T. J. Talley, “Liturgical Time in the Ancient Church,” in *Liturgical Time: Papers read at the 1981 Congress of the Societas Liturgica*, ed. W. Vos and G. Wainright (Rotterdam, 1982) p. 45 (also in *Studia Liturgica* 14 nos. 2-4 [1982]).

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *Clement*, 148-58; contra R. E. Brown, “The Relation of ‘The Secret Gospel of Mark’ to the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 36 (1974) 466-85. Brown’s examination of the texts prudently stops just before their parallelism becomes close enough to yield probable conclusions.

<sup>3</sup> Folio 2, recto, lines 6-10; Smith, *Clement*, p. 452.

The key to this meaning is the linen cloth worn as the sole garment. This was a common costume for ancient religious, especially mystery, ceremonies; it was customary for magically induced visions, and it became the standard costume for Christian baptism, the initiatory mystery of the church.<sup>4</sup>

A quarter of a century before Mark wrote, baptism and the Eucharist had been classed by Paul among the “mysteries of God” which he administered (1 Cor 4:1). Therefore, given the characteristic costume, the nocturnal setting (mysteries were commonly celebrated at night), and the concluding explanation (that Jesus “taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God”), it seems the reader was expected to understand that Jesus administered a mystery.<sup>5</sup> If the reader were a Christian, he would also understand that the initiatory rite of this mystery was baptism.<sup>6</sup>

That Jesus should have founded a mystery cult should not be surprising. It was something men of extraordinary religious powers were expected to do. Such cults were generally attributed to great men of the past (including Moses),<sup>7</sup> but some were founded in historical times. There were, for instance, mysteries of Ptolemaic kings and of Roman emperors.<sup>8</sup> Lucian (who classed Christianity as a mystery cult<sup>9</sup>) has left us a full account of the founder and founding of an unusually successful second-century cult well documented by the coinage minted in honor of its peculiar god.<sup>10</sup> The cults founded by Simon of Samaria and by other miscalled “gnostics” would probably be recognized as “mysteries” had not their distinguishing traits been obscured by immersion in Irenaeus’s “gnostic” stew.<sup>11</sup> W. Burkert has done well, in his perceptive book *Mystery Cults*, to emphasize that these were *cults*

<sup>4</sup> For pagan usage, see Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.3; W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*<sup>4</sup>, no. 736 (Andania), sec. 4; W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987) figs. 6 and 12. For magical visions, see K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, eds., *PGM* 3.706, 712; 4.88, 171-75, 3095. For Christian practice, see Smith, *Clement*, pp. 175-77.

<sup>5</sup> When writing *Clement*, I supposed that an objection to this theory could be brought from the statement “Jesus taught him the mystery,” since mysteries were commonly “given,” not “taught” (*Clement*, p. 183). Half a dozen reviewers, no less ignorant than I, appropriated my objection and announced that it refuted my theory. Therefore, I am glad to have found evidence of my error—a good number of passages in which mysteries and/or magical rites are said to have been “taught”: Herodotus 2.171; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 1.68; Porphyry, *De abstinencia* 4.16; *Orac. Chald.* (ed. des Places) 224.1; *PGM* 4.750, 1372.

<sup>6</sup> John’s statements that Jesus baptized (3:22; 4:1) are supported by important historical considerations; see Smith, *Clement*, 201-64.

<sup>7</sup> Diodorus 3.65.6; 5.64.4, *PGM* 12.92-95.

<sup>8</sup> M. Nilsson, “Royal Mysteries in Egypt,” *HTR* 50 (1957) 65ff.; H. Pleket, “An Aspect of the Emperor Cult,” *HTR* 58 (1966) 331ff.

<sup>9</sup> *De morte Peregrini* 11.

<sup>10</sup> Glykon. See Lucian, *Alexander*; and *Lexicon Iconographicum* 4.1.279-83; 2.161-62.

<sup>11</sup> I.e., *Contra haereses* 1.

and to “abandon the concept of mystery *religions* from the start” (his italics) because “in the pre-Christian epoch” the mysteries “appear as varying forms, trends, or options within the one disparate yet continuous conglomerate of ancient religion” (pp. 3-4). Here I need add only that the work of Jesus occurred in the pre-Christian epoch.

If we suppose that Jesus founded a mystery cult and that the initiatory rite was some sort of “baptism” (or immersion),<sup>12</sup> we have now to ask, What was the mystery? Mark 4:11 and “Secret Mark” say that it was “the mystery of the kingdom of God” This makes it somewhat different from [292] the other cults. They were “mysteries of” various gods, and the mystery revealed by each was some sort of practice and/or knowledge by which the initiate could gain the god’s favor and consequently enjoy, both in this life and hereafter, the blessings that the god might give.

The kingdom of God, however, was impersonal. We should not think about it as a mere metonymy for “God,” since one is said to “enter” it. The kingdom of God is commonly spoken of as a place, but a place that could move and “come” The most likely explanation conceives of it as the area of God’s rule, which he will soon extend. Therefore, the “mystery” of it—the way to derive benefit from it—might have been by knowing when it would “come,” that is, be extended to the earth. However, although the Gospels contain many assurances that it is “near,”<sup>13</sup> the precise time of arrival is never specified. There are likewise many warnings to watch for and expect it, and statements that it will come when least expected, for instance, “as a thief in the night.”<sup>14</sup> Besides, Jesus is credited with the statement that even the Son does not know when it is coming; only God knows (Mark 13:32; Matt 24:36; “credited,” because this time he was right). If we can trust the Gospels, therefore, the proximity of the kingdom was, for Jesus, not a mystery but a message to be proclaimed.

A different set of sayings either heightens or, depending on the exegete’s attitude, contradicts the preceding. These declare that the kingdom is not only near; it is here. By contrast with the preceding, they are usually less clear—so, for instance, the series of parables indicating that the kingdom is already in the world, a treasure to be taken now (Mark 4:26, 30; Luke 13:21; Matt 13:44, 46). These look like fragments of teaching intended—as Jesus said they were—not to be understood by outsiders (Mark 4:11-12). To have a mystery is a profitable thing; people will pay to be initiated, as Alexander of Abonuteichos and Sigmund of Vienna demonstrated. Then there are

<sup>12</sup> Ephesians’ insistence that its readers should recognize only “one baptism” (4:5) is explained by the reports in Acts that there were several (8:12-17; 18:24-26; 9:3-4).

<sup>13</sup> Mark 1:15; 13:28, 29; Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; and parallels.

<sup>14</sup> “Watch out” (Mark 13:35, 37 and parallels); “like a thief” (Matt 24:43 and parallels).

sayings which indicate that the kingdom is now accessible: it is within your grasp (Luke 17:21); it can be had by violence and violent men seize it (Matt 11:12; the parallel in Luke 16:16 says everybody pushes in, a wishful revision); those who *were* entering were hindered (Matt 23:13); a scribe can already be a disciple of the kingdom (Matt 13:52). These are capped by another series promising that what we saw were the common objectives of mystery cults—the benefits the initiates might gain: they are exempt from fasting—or were, while Jesus was with them (Mark 2:19); they need not observe the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-27) or purity laws (Mark 7:2-13); they can exorcise (Mark 3:15; 6:7; Luke 10:17); they can heal the sick and proclaim the coming of the kingdom (Luke 10:9). The least among them is greater than the Baptist (Luke [293] 7:28). They will get whatever they ask (Luke 11:10); or at least they are sure of food, drink, and clothing (12:29-31); and Jesus will give them rest (Matt 11:28). Their names are already written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

With all these promised benefits<sup>15</sup> to be had by entering the kingdom, and the assurance that it can be done now (at least, by violence), we are led directly to the questions, Where is the kingdom? and, How can we get in? These the Gospels do not answer. Presumably the answer was given in “the mystery of the kingdom of God.”

This convenient presumption leads to a further question: What could Jesus have done in his mystery rite to persuade his initiates that they had entered the kingdom and would now enjoy these benefits, and to do this so powerfully that they not only left everything to follow him around Palestine but, even after he had been taken and crucified, saw him risen from the dead, watched him ascend into heaven, and reshaped their hopes so as to continue to believe in him? Whatever he did, its effect was dazzlingly different from that of any rabbinic teaching known to us. The nearest Old Testament analogue is Elijah’s call of Elisha, but the similarities are minor and the consequences comparatively trivial. Hence, we must conjecture.<sup>16</sup>

The steps of the conjecture are as follows: First, with regard to baptism. Bits of evidence suggesting that Jesus baptized have been touched on above, but what chiefly leads us to conjecture that he did

---

<sup>15</sup> None of which, by the way, has anything to do with a change of the government of Palestine, much less of the Roman Empire.

<sup>16</sup> To this point the argument has followed closely the plain sense of the Gospels. That is why so many commonplace critics have found it unacceptable—the liberal, since it recognized as genuine many elements they gladly dismissed as “unhistorical”; the conservative, because it held to the plain sense of many they disposed of by “exegesis.” Both sides exemplify the paradox of the past century’s New Testament study: the combination of a “search for the historical Jesus” with a determination not to recognize his historical features.

so is the great change from the baptism of the Baptist to that known to Paul. The baptism of John (about 30 C.E.) merely removed impurity and remitted sin, but according to Paul—if we suppose him to have held faithfully to the teaching given him when he was baptized (about 35 C.E.)—in baptism he died, his body was taken over by the spirit of Jesus, and he and his body were raised by this spirit to a new life, a long battle in which the spirit would finally subjugate and remake the body (2 Cor 4-5; Rom 6-8). These ideas may reflect the imagery of death and resurrection after the Easter experience, but that is not basic. The basic notion is that of possession by a more powerful spirit, which drives out not only death but also sin and subdues the body to order. This goes back beyond Easter to Jesus' work as an exorcist. Many of his followers are said to have been women from whom evil spirits had been driven out (Luke 8:2-3)—we should say, by the power of his personality, but they said, “by his spirit.” We may therefore conjecture that the baptism given in his mystery was a baptism similar to the one that he—unlike the Baptist's other followers—had himself experienced, one in which the initiate was possessed by the spirit. This was what Paul believed and is what the church still officially teaches. It may have been true. [294]

Second, with regard to the entrance to the kingdom. Let us accept the common opinion that the kingdom of God is the area of God's rule, primarily the heavens, where God and his throne are (Matt 6:1, 9, etc.; Rev 4:2, etc.).<sup>17</sup> Thither Jesus was thought to have ascended at or after his resurrection,<sup>18</sup> and Christians hoped to go there immediately after death,<sup>19</sup> a belief that contradicted the prevailing Jewish one. Some claimed even to have gone there while alive.<sup>20</sup> Hence it is not surprising that John 3:12-13 makes Jesus himself claim to have been in heaven (and 3:32 adduces unlikely confirmation of this claim from the Baptist). A lot of secondary evidence—not probative, but not certainly worthless—tends to corroborate the assumption that Jesus claimed during his lifetime to have ascended to heaven.<sup>21</sup>

Such ascent stories were popular in the thought of the time, particularly among the Jews. Half a dozen Old Testament pseudepigrapha credit their heroes with visits to the heavens.<sup>22</sup> So there is no doubt that the idea was well known to Jesus. More important is the fact that there was a method for attaining the

<sup>17</sup> For fuller references, see Smith, *Clement*, pp. 202-4.

<sup>18</sup> Col 3:1; John 20:17; Acts 1:9; Luke 24:51.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Cor 5:1-10; Phil 3:20; Mark 10:21; Luke 6:23; 12:23; etc.

<sup>20</sup> 2 Cor 12:1-5, presumably to match the claims of Paul's rivals; Col 2:18; Rev 4:1-2;

1 Pet 1:11.

<sup>21</sup> The material is collected in Smith, *Clement*, pp. 240-48.

<sup>22</sup> See Smith, *Clement*, 238-40, bibliography in n. 1. Adam and Eve 25; 1 Enoch passim; T. Abraham 10; Apoc. Abraham 15; T. Levi 6-8; 3 Bar 2-4; etc.

experience by self-hypnosis (presented as magic, but involving expectation of the events, recitation of repetitive formulas, gazing at the sun (perhaps), and regulation of breathing; see *PGM* 4.475-829, esp. 537-40).<sup>23</sup> The same rite includes instructions for “using a fellow initiate so that he alone may hear with you the things spoken... and if you wish to show him (the things seen)...” Directions follow for preliminaries that would incline him to submit to hypnosis.

If it is in fact true that a man practicing self-hypnosis can communicate his hallucinations to a companion, we have here the sort of means by which Jesus might have introduced his initiates to the kingdom of God and given them experiences, like that of his transfiguration, which prepared them to see him risen from the dead and, by their worship, to make him the “Savior of the world.” This conjecture seemed, and seems, to me the most likely explanation of the data.

## II

This conjecture was of course rejected at once by most New Testament scholars since they had “never heard of such a thing”—to their minds this was an adequate reason. So I let the matter ride.

Now, to my amazement, the Qumran fragments have provided a little [295] poem by some egomaniac who claimed to have done just what I conjectured Jesus claimed, that is, entered the heavenly kingdom and secured a chair with tenure, while yet commuting to earth and carrying on his teaching here.

The fragment in question is printed as col. 1 of fragment 11 of 4Q491.<sup>24</sup> M. Baillet says that it and the material printed as col. 2 of the same fragment have been pieced together from seventeen scraps and that the small connection between the two columns is “only probable.”<sup>25</sup> He might have added, “if that,” since the second column

---

<sup>23</sup> *PGM* 4 is of the fourth century C.E., about the same date as the *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* manuscripts of the New Testament, the oldest of the New Testament uncials. It is a collection into which many earlier manuscripts have been copied. The source of lines 475-829 was a manuscript in which a yet earlier text (a rite for a man's immortalization by the sun god) had been reworked as a letter telling a woman how to get a favorable oracle from the god of the pole star. It seems sure that the letter writer did not use the first copy of the original spell, and almost sure that the anthologist of *PGM* did not use the first copy of the letter, and very likely that the text we have is not the first copy of the anthology. Therefore, the text we have is presumably *at least* of the sixth literary generation, if we count the original spell as the first (i.e., spell, copy, letter, copy, anthology, copy). Allowing an average of thirty or forty years to a literary generation (i.e., to the span between the autograph and the *preserved* copy) this would date the original spell to the second half of the first, or the first half of the second, century C.E. The Gospels would seem to be products of about the same time as this spell.

<sup>24</sup> M. Baillet, *DJD* 7 (Oxford, 1982) pp. 26-29; pl. VI.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

is clearly a fragment of the War Scroll text, in which this bit of self-glorification has no apparent place. Baillet's description of the main part of col. 1 as "a song by the archangel Michael" was probably an act of desperation. Since the scraps have been put together mainly on the basis of similarities of hand and handwriting, and since it is likely that the same scribe with the same hand may have written several different texts on different pieces of the same skin, assignment of this text to the War Scroll is not likely. Yet more dubious is its location in the War Scroll. Apparently there was no external evidence for the order of the fragments. Baillet seems to have arranged those that had parallels with the War Scroll in the sequence in which the parallels occurred in that text, and then inserted the unparalleled ones wherever he thought they would go. Consequently, this text can be treated by itself. This material may have come from a collection of poems like the Thanksgiving Hymns, and an oversized *lamed*, which appears on Baillet's printed text, but of which only a vertical line shows on his manuscript—and of which he could not guess the use—may, if correctly conjectured, have been the number of the poem (or book of poems?) that begins beside it.<sup>26</sup>

I discussed Baillet's text in the 1986 New York University conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>27</sup> My paper discussed the details of textual criticism and the calculations on which must be based the restorations in the (relatively small) lacunae.

From the corrected and completed text it appears that the preserved remains of col. 1 contain fragments of three poems. The first, which ends with *'ōlāmim* in Baillet's line 11 (p. 26), is the end of a hymn in praise of God; it does not concern us. The third, beginning with Baillet's line 20, is plausibly described by him as a "canticle of the righteous"; neither does it concern us. The nine lines intervening are a brief paean of self-praise, which will be clearer if translated as verse. Differences from Baillet's readings are indicated in the notes to the translation.<sup>28</sup> [296]

[El Elyon gave me a seat among] those perfect forever,  
 a mighty throne in the congregation of the gods.  
 None of the kings of the east shall sit in it  
 and their nobles shall not [come near it].  
 No Edomite shall be like me in glory,  
 and none shall be exalted save me, nor shall come against me.  
 For I have taken my seat in the [congregation] in the heavens

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. VI.II.11 and p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> The papers of that conference are published as *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin*, ed. L. H. Schiffman (JSPS; JSOT/ASOR 2; Sheffield, 1990); my article is pp. 181-88.

<sup>28</sup> Professors Shaye Cohen and Burton Visotzky and Dr. Seth Schwartz have made helpful suggestions for restorations in the text and saved me from several errors.

And none [find fault with me].<sup>29</sup>  
 I shall be reckoned with gods  
 and established in the holy congregation.  
 I do not desire [gold,] as would a man of flesh;  
 everything precious to me is in the glory of [my God].  
 [The status of a holy temple,] not to be violated,<sup>30</sup>  
 has been attributed to me, and who can compare with me in glory?  
 What voyager will return  
 and tell<sup>31</sup> [of my equivalent]  
 Who [laughs] at griefs as I do?  
 And who is like me [in bearing] evil?  
 Moreover, if I lay down the law in a lecture<sup>32</sup>  
 [my instruction] is beyond comparison [with any man's].  
 And who will attack<sup>33</sup> me for my utterances?  
 And who will contain the flow of my speech?  
 And who will call me into court and be my equal?  
 In my legal judgment [none will stand against] me.  
 I shall be reckoned with gods,  
 and my glory, with [that of] the king's sons.  
 Neither refined gold, nor gold of Ophir  
 [can match my wisdom].

Since Baillet attributed the poem to Michael, that attribution must be briefly discussed.<sup>34</sup>

Michael is never mentioned in this text. In the War Scroll his name is written on some shields (9.15-16); and after the wicked have gained their one permitted victory, the head priest, trying to cheer up the righteous, promises that El will send Michael to help Israel (17.6-7)—hardly the place [297] for the hero to praise his prowess as a lawyer. Would an archangel have stooped to brag that none of the kings of the east can sit in his heavenly throne, nor any of their nobles come near it? When he goes on to say that no Edomite can rival him in glory, the Edomite he has in mind is probably Herod the Great.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, the nobles of the kings of the east, who preceded the Edomite, were probably the Parthian backers of Antigonos, who preceded Herod and was ousted in 37 B.C.E. That the speaker thinks it worthwhile to contrast himself with them probably dates the speech to the early years

<sup>29</sup> Reading *yodh* before *mem*, instead of Baillet's *waw*, which he marked as dubious.

<sup>30</sup> *y* for negation, here with a final aleph, is dubious in Job 22:30, but common in the Mishna. Its use may have increased because of the need to render the Greek *alpha* privative, e.g., *y 'psr* for *adynaton*, *y lbwz* for *asylon*, etc.

<sup>31</sup> Reading *mem* for Baillet's *kaph*, and a medial *peh* for his final one. He marked both his readings as dubious. Also reading *yodh* for his *waw*.

<sup>32</sup> Deleting *nun*, probably due to dittography, and reading *beth* for *waw* before *horayah*.

<sup>33</sup> *Gdd*, "attack"; Ps 94.21; CD 1.20. As the dots in the manuscript indicate, the second *waw* should be deleted.

<sup>34</sup> These comments follow, with minor changes, my remarks in the conference article.

<sup>35</sup> Baillet missed the reference because the aleph of *'edōmi* was separated from the *dalet* by a slight gap. Such gaps within words are fairly frequent in this text; see plate VI.I.

of Herod's reign. On palaeographic grounds Baillet thought the manuscript late Herodian, or early Herodian.<sup>36</sup>

Michael would not have had to emphasize his indifference to money. The speaker suggests that his got him the status of a temple not to be plundered, an honor much sought in late republican times—but not by archangels, who hardly needed it. The speaker may be contrasting himself with the Temple of Jerusalem. It and the entire city had been granted inviolability in Seleucid times (Josephus, *Ant* 13.51), but had not thereby been saved from looting. As Jesus would say, sixty years later, “A greater one than the Temple is here” (Matt 12:6)—a great claim, but not one likely to be attributed to an archangel.

More anticlimaxes follow. The speaker is unique in glory; no sailor could report having seen the likes of him. Were sailors expected to tell of cruising archangels? This glorious being laughs at sorrows and is uniquely able to bear evil, but the only angels who might have wanted to make such claims were the evil ones. The speaker is unparalleled as a legal teacher, and no one dares call him into court. How often are archangels summoned? He has been “reckoned with the gods”; therefore, he was not originally one of them. In glory he ranks with the king's sons, not even with the king!

In summation, Baillet's attribution of the speech to Michael is useful only because it demonstrates that he has not understood it, and so strengthens the case for immediate photographic publication of all the Dead Sea Scrolls. Baillet's work makes the case clear, but its practical utility does nothing to answer the literary question, Who is this new-made deity with all these human virtues?

One thinks immediately of the author of the Thanksgiving Hymns. There are important similarities: the same insistence on sufferings, though not so much pride in bearing them (1QH 3.7-13; 5.8ff.; etc.); the claim to be purified and free of carnal concerns (4.36ff.; 6.3ff.; 7.16ff.); the pride in his irresistible teaching (2.8ff., 8.16ff.; 10.20ff.; 11.4ff.); the claim to have been admitted to the company of angels (3.22-23), to be united with them [298] (fragment 2.10), to be in the lot (*gōrāl*) of the holy and join the company of heaven (11.11f.) and have glory like that of God (9.26).

However, the angels of the Thanksgiving Hymns and those of the War Scroll usually come down into the assemblies of the saints. This speaker's claim to have been taken up and seated in heaven and counted as one of the gods (*'elîm*) is more direct and explicit than anything I remember in the Thanksgiving Hymns or in any other of the Dead Sea Scrolls hitherto published. To continue the contrast with the Thanksgiving Hymns, there is nothing here of the emphasis on

---

<sup>36</sup> Late Herodian: DJD 7, p. 12; early Herodian: DJD 7, p. 45.

revelation, on the secrets of the heavens, the role of the spirit, and the distinction between the (*'elim*) and the one God “with whom there is no other” (12.11). But the silence of the present text on such points cannot be pressed, since a fragment of twenty-eight lines cannot be expected to touch on many themes. Nevertheless, it is probably better to suppose that the Dead Sea group or groups produced more than one preposterous poet with an exaggerated notion of his own sanctity.

Their frequency should perhaps be attributed to the influence of speculation about deification by ascent toward or into the heavens, speculation probably connected with magical practices that produced extraordinary experiences understood as encounters with gods or angels. Ezekiel’s attack on the Prince of Tyre, and pseudo-Isaiah’s on Lucifer, son of the morning, both seem to have been directed against such practices and consequences in their authors’ environments. In the Enoch books and in the legends about the ascension and enthronement of Moses<sup>37</sup> we can see that these ideas (and guess that these practices) have made their way into Judaism. In the fragment discussed here we see that they inspired not only literary fantasies about long-dead heroes but claims by living persons to have made such ascents and to have enjoyed the resultant benefits.

Whether the claims made by the author of 4Q491 ii.1 are completely false, or whether they reflect hallucinations he actually experienced, we have no way of knowing. In either event they prove that fifty or sixty years before Jesus’ crucifixion, men in Palestine were actually making claims of the sort that John was to attribute to Jesus. E. R. Goodenough, who argued for years that the Fourth Gospel expressed an early Palestinian theology derived from mystical Judaism, was a voice crying in the stacks of the Yale library. Everybody—and I among them—thought he was riding his hobby too far. Now, I must wonder. As to Philonic philosophy, which he had in mind, I see little sign of it in Palestine, but I must admit that we have no literary remains from the higher priestly circles (I don’t trust Josephus’ claims). On a more plebeian level, however, it now seems possible and, [299] given the Gospel reports, even likely that Jesus taught a “mystery of the kingdom of God” in which, by means like those known from contemporary magic, initiates were given what they thought was an experience of entering the heavens and they were thus trained to have such visions as those reworked in the transfiguration and resurrection stories. That Jesus ever read 4Q491 ii.1 seems to me utterly unlikely. I doubt that he ever went near Qumran and I think that if he had they would have spat on him—if they hadn’t feared a

---

<sup>37</sup> On these see P. van der Horst, “Moses’ Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist,” *JJS* 34 (1983) 21-29; idem, *Mnemosyne* 37 (1984) esp. 363-69.

fight with the tough men among his followers. But there is considerable likelihood that both this Qumran document and the mystery material in the Gospels are mushrooms of the same ring, connected not directly but by the ramified root system of popular piety and superstition from which they independently arose.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION STORY

[39] The story of the transfiguration is found in the Synoptics (Mark 9:2-10; Matt 17:19; Luke 9:28-36) in forms so similar that their dependence on a common source is virtually certain. The source was a text almost identical with that of Mark, since both Matthew and Luke have corrected it in their characteristic ways, while Mark shows no knowledge of the corrections of either.<sup>1</sup>

The priority of Mark to Matthew and Luke does not prove that the Markan form and interpretation of the story were the original ones. Caution is dictated by the fact that the story circulated in other forms. We find in 2 Peter 1:16ff. a reference to it that knows nothing of Peter's speech and the cloud, nor of Elijah and Moses and their miraculous disappearance. Luke, too, seems to have known another version beside Mark's. Where else did he get the apostles' sleep (9:32), the departure of Moses and Elijah *before* Peter's speech (9:33)—incompatible with Peter's following proposal to make tabernacles for them and with their yet later disappearance (9:33, 36)?

Since Mark was using a story that circulated in several forms, we have to ask whether or not he interpreted it correctly. He understood it as a confirmation of Peter's pronouncement at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus was "the Messiah" (Mark 8:29). He had used Peter's pronouncement to introduce several sayings by Jesus, but immediately

---

<sup>1</sup> Specifically: In 9:2 Mark is pleonastic, "privately alone"; Matthew omitted "alone." Luke omitted both. In 9:3 Mark is vulgar, Jesus's clothes glittered "like a washerman on earth cannot whiten so"; both Matthew and Luke omitted this, and both added, but in different words, a statement that his face was also transfigured—both wanted him to equal Moses. In 9:4 Mark, for the sixth time in succession, begins a sentence with *kai*—"And they were talking"; both Matthew and Luke changed the sentence structure, and Luke added an explanation of what was being said. In 9:5 Mark again started with *kai*; both Matthew and Luke again changed the construction. Mark let Peter call Jesus "Rabbi"; Matthew changed the title to "Lord;" Luke to "Master." Still in 9:5, Peter's speech is non-sequential—"It is good for us to be here. And let us make three tabernacles"; Matthew tried to blur the break by inserting, "If you wish." Mark himself apologized for Peter by adding 9:6, "For he did not know what he could say, for they were terrified." Matthew omitted this unedifying picture of the apostle; Luke omitted the last clause, but altered the first to excuse Peter's words as an omen, "Not knowing [the providential significance] of what he says." In 9:7 Mark again begins with *kai* followed by a verb; both Matthew and Luke replaced this by more elegant genitive absolutes, again differently worded. All these changes show independent improvement by Matthew and Luke of a common Markan text; only critics who cannot recognize bad Greek or embarrassing material will fail to understand why Matthew and Luke independently corrected the same places.

after those he went on to the transfiguration story and tied it to the pronouncement story by a time reference (9:2, “And six days after [this discussion]...”). What Peter had conjectured and Jesus (according to Mark) had claimed is now confirmed by the voice from the cloud.

Fortunately, Mark was not a critical student of *Traditionsgeschichte*. He had collected stories and sayings of Jesus from many sources; he put them together with ecumenical indifference to their different terminologies, which reflected the different notions of Jesus held by the different Christian circles whence they had come. Thus to Peter’s pronouncement that Jesus was “the Messiah” he made Jesus assent by implication (8:30), but then go on to speak of himself as “the Son of Man.” For our purposes, whether or not the “Son of Man” sayings *originally* referred to Jesus is irrelevant; here, the point is that the compiler of Mark understood them, and intended them to be understood, as referring to Jesus, and therefore attached them to Peter’s pronouncement as explanations of its import, neglecting the difference of the terms used. Yet more, to confirm both Peter’s and Jesus’s sayings, he went on to report that the voice from the cloud (God’s, of course) declared Jesus “My Son” (9:7), and he made Jesus comment on this by another reference to “the Son of Man” (9:9). For Mark “Messiah,” “Son of God,” and “Son of Man” were all titles of Jesus and therefore practically equivalent; he makes this clear by equating them in his great trial scene. The High Priest asks, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed” [God]? Jesus replies, “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man [me] sitting at the right hand of the Power” (of God—14:61f.). Such editorial equation must not be allowed to conceal from us the different meanings that the terms originally had, as revealed by the different, older, pre-editorial contexts in which they occur. [40]

“The Son,” our present concern, is a figure originally at home in miracle stories, where he has nothing to do with either a suffering Son of Man or a triumphant Messiah. Specifically, his native habitat in Mark is:

- 1:11, the voice from heaven at the baptism, “You are my beloved Son”
- 3:11, the demoniacs cry out, “You are the Son of God”
- 5:7, another demoniac calls him “Jesus, Son of the Highest God”
- 9:7, the voice from heaven at the transfiguration, “You are my beloved Son”
- 15:39, the centurion at the cross, seeing Jesus’s miraculous death, says, “Truly this man was Son of God.”

(With these passages may perhaps belong Jesus’s statement in his apocalyptic prophecy, 13:32, that neither the angels “nor the Son” know the date of the End. This shares the notion of “the Son” as a heavenly being, but is so loosely connected with the context that it

seems a gloss. The heading of the whole Gospel, 1:1, is of course editorial, if not later.) These, with 14:61, are *all* the passages in which “Son” (of God) occurs as a title in Mark.

Obviously the “Son” was a power used in exorcism, supposedly the casting out of demons, which was one of the most popular forms of magic. Since Jesus seems to have supported himself and his travelling company largely by exorcisms, it is plausible to find in them the title’s primary role. Thence its appearance in the baptism is explicable by the facts that Jesus, like other magicians, was credited with having/being the power he invoked, and that the baptismal story is a legendary account of how he got/became that power. Like most legends it is a combination of history and imagination. The first part—the report that he was baptized by John—is almost certainly historical; the second—the descent of the spirit and the voice from heaven—is modeled on magical rites by which the magician was supposed to get a spirit as his alter ego. This I have shown in *Jesus the Magician* (Harper and Row, 1978), pp. 96-104, where some magical parallels to the baptismal story are presented in full. Significantly, one of them leads to the magician’s identification as “the Son” (*Papyri graecae magicae*, no. IV, line 535). Since the heavenly voice of the baptism repeats itself in the transfiguration, it would seem that in the transfiguration, too, the Son is this supernatural being. Like the baptismal legend, the transfiguration story proper (as opposed to its Markan framework) knows nothing of his being the Messiah or the Son of Man. Therefore Mark’s use of the story, to confirm both Peter’s identification of Jesus as the Messiah and Jesus’s identification of himself as the Son of Man, was not justified. Mark misinterpreted the story. To find out what it originally meant we must look at what it says.

The Markan story reports:

- (1) date and relation to Peter’s pronouncement
- (2) Jesus’s taking the disciples and ascending the mountain
- (3) the disciples’ vision of Jesus metamorphosed and of two men, identified as Moses and Elijah
- (4) Peter’s saying and his proposal to make tabernacles
- (5) the cloud’s covering them
- (6) the voice from the cloud
- (7) and the disappearance of the men (and, presumably, of Jesus’s glory).

Of these, (1) is secondary (and so, of course, is the conclusion, 9:9, not mentioned in this outline); and (6), the voice, may be secondary—if it were omitted, a good transfiguration story would remain. Otherwise the account seems a unit. It cannot be separated into two stories, one of transfiguration, the other of two men with Jesus; the first would have no [41] conclusion, the second, no beginning. Excision

of Peter's remarks would remove the occasion of the cloud's descent. So verses 1b-7a, possibly 7b, and certainly 8, made up the pre-Markan story.

The common supposition that this is a misplaced resurrection story is unsatisfactory because *the story contains no reference to resurrection*. Moreover, this supposition (a) is supported only by trivial similarities—shining garments, visions of men, etc.—expectable in any report of a vision of supernatural beings; (b) fails to account for the characteristic and essential elements of this story—transfiguration, identification of the men as Elijah and Moses, Peter's speech and its content, the cloud (and the voice, if original), the sudden disappearance; and (c) is based on rationalistic faith, as expressed by Bultmann, that “das visionäre Schauen des leiblich anwesenden Jesus doch ein kaum glaubliche Sache ist” (“that Jesus was seen in visions while he was still present in the body is, after all, something unbelievable.”)<sup>2</sup> It is historically unjustified to suppose that things unbelievable in modern Marburg could not have been experienced in ancient Palestine, or that the failure of Bultmann's disciples to see him robed in glory proves that Jesus's disciples must have been equally incredulous. What is really *kaum glaubliche* is that such a statement should have been made by a modern teacher of religion, even if only of New Testament, who might have been expected to know something of the phenomena of ecstatic cults. However, there it is in print, and we should accept the evidence of Bultmann's text, as we should of Mark's.

Besides these decisive objections to supposing the transfiguration a resurrection story, there is another, less probative, but more important: the resurrection stories have to be accounted for. If it is difficult to believe that a man's disciples saw him transfigured while he was alive, it is yet more difficult to believe that they saw him so after he had been arrested, “crucified, dead, and buried.” All the talk about Christian faith as “based on the resurrection experience” has overlooked the fact that the resurrection experience was presumably based on Christian faith. If not, why did it occur? If it was customary to see your defunct teacher risen from the dead, why have we no resurrection stories about the great rabbis? Some of them, too, were executed; their disciples, too, believed in resurrection and life after death. But they did not reappear. Evidently there was something peculiar in the pre-resurrection experiences of Jesus's disciples that prepared them to have the resurrection visions. Such similarities as there are between the resurrection stories and that of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Rudolph Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 4th ed., p. 278, n.1.

transfiguration suggest that the peculiar preparatory experiences were of the sort the transfiguration story describes.

A review of the other “explanations” proposed for the transfiguration story would be a waste of time; they are chiefly of interest as evidence of the proponents’ ignorance. So, for instance, the supposition that the reference to “tabernacles” connects the tale with the Feast of Tabernacles. In that feast the tabernacles are made to eat—and sometimes, sleep—in. There is no indication of such intentions in the transfiguration story, and if they had been latent they would have dictated *one* tabernacle for the whole party, not one for each of the three dignitaries. Were they going to be so uncivil as to eat alone? The most to be said for this theory is that some other conjectures have been even worse.

To avoid such nonsense, let us begin by asking what sense the Markan story would have had for Christians familiar with the books now in the Old Testament. They might well have seen, in Jesus’s taking three chosen disciples for ascent of a mountain, a parallel to Moses’s ascent of Sinai with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu (Exod 24:9) leading to their vision of “the God of Israel”; after this Moses went up alone, entered a cloud, and received [42] the Law for making *the* “tabernacle,” a tent-temple in which God would dwell among his people (Exod 24:18; 25:1ff.). Like Jesus, Moses was metamorphosed on the mountain: his face still shone when he came down (Exod 34:30) and, as we have seen, Matthew and Luke added to Mark’s story the claim that Jesus’s face was transfigured, too (Matt 17:2; Luke 9:29). They, at least, certainly saw the parallelism. However, it entails a problem: Moses saw God and received the Law; Jesus saw only Moses and Elijah, and received nothing. Does not this make Moses greater than Jesus and, if so, is not this interpretation unlikely for an early Christian story? Yet the parallelism is undeniable. Consequently the point must be in the differences. Moses’s companions saw only “the God of Israel”; Jesus’s companions saw Jesus in glory. Jesus, therefore, is greater than the God of Israel. The point is driven home by the story that Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets, appeared as Jesus’s subordinates. Moreover, when Peter was so foolish as to suggest making three tabernacles—tent-temples—for the worship of Jesus, the Law, and the Prophets, the cloud of the true, hidden God, the Father of Jesus, came down and His voice declared that Jesus (alone) was His Son and Jesus (alone) was to be obeyed (“heard”—in the Greek for “Hear ye him,” *akouete autou*, the “him” is emphatic, [while the whole phrase echoes Deut 18:15: Jesus supersedes Moses<sup>3</sup>]). Thereupon the Law and the Prophets (Moses and Elijah) vanished and the disciples

---

<sup>3</sup> [This last observation I owe to Prof. Earle Ellis].

were left with Jesus alone to be worshipped, the present deity, the sole and sufficient guide of Christian life.

Thus the pre-Markan purpose of the Christian story used by Mark was to establish Jesus's supernatural status and authority. This also is the stated purpose of 2 Peter in using it (1:16—the *parousia* is that of a present god). Thus, too, it appears that the voice was part, indeed, the climax, of the early Christian story, which was propaganda for a Jewish-Christian libertine group—a group that thought the Law and the Prophets had vanished from “the freedom in which Christ has made us free,” as Paul put it (Gal 5:1). Such a group was, at least in this respect, close to Paul's theological position, if not actually Pauline. But where did the story that the group used for its propaganda come from? And why did they use it?

As to where it came from, there is no doubt. It came, as did the voice and the descent of the spirit in the baptism story, from the world of magic. It exemplifies a well-known type of story in which someone is involved in a magical company or operation or landscape—a witches' sabbath, or fairyland, or the like—which suddenly vanishes when the wrong word is said or the wrong action performed. The most famous example in English is probably Burns's *Tam O'Shanter*. Reports of witchcraft trials swarm with such yarns.<sup>4</sup> The root of such stories is not only the experience of waking from dreams, but also that of the sudden breaking of hysteria, and that of the sudden return to the normal world from hypnotic experiences. Since these latter were the magicians' stock in trade—and they also dealt in dreams—the connection between such stories and the world of magic was not accidental. Indeed, it was so close that we can feel justified in concluding, because the magical stories do not have the heavenly voice, that the source of the transfiguration story likewise did not have it. It was probably a Christian addition, perhaps taken over from the baptism story.

Why, however, should Jesus's followers have chosen to use the prototype of the transfiguration story for their propaganda about Jesus? Its essential elements—the transformation of Jesus's appearance and the sudden disappearance of his interlocutors and his glory—both suggest that it may have been an illusion; thereby they undercut its credibility and effectiveness. The problem is made more difficult by the fact that, although the story as it now stands in Mark cannot be dissected (except by removing the introduc[43]tion, conclusion, and voice) other stories resembling one or another of its

---

<sup>4</sup> See M. del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum*, e.g. 11.16. The oldest evidence I know of the type's existence is the parody of it in Horace, *Satires* 1.8, pointed out to me by Ms. Diana Delia.

elements in isolation seem to have been going around. Luke knew one in which the disciples fell asleep and awoke to see Jesus in glory talking with two men who then went off of their own accord. A story of a voice from heaven that publicly testified to Jesus, appears in John 12:28; something similar may have been adapted, but only slightly, to the Markan story, by the writer of 2 Peter 1:16f. But if the elements thus existed separately, why was not something more edifying made of them?

To suggest that the blessed Evangelists, not to mention early Christians in general, wanted to tell what they believed to be the truth, is to strike at the very root of Formgeschichte. Nevertheless, I think it likely that the transfiguration story was not made up of other stories of events like its component parts, but was told as it was because it was basically a report of something that once happened. It has the typical structure of the magical stories, because Jesus practiced magic. He once took three disciples up a mountain for an initiation ceremony that led, presumably through hypnosis, to a vision of him in glory with [one or] two other figures.<sup>5</sup> The ceremony required silence. When one of the disciples, excited by the vision, spoke, the hypnosis was broken and the enchantment ended.

People who tell the truth commonly improve on it. The disciples had to be identified, and for the circle from which most of Mark's stories came they could only have been Peter, James, and John. The speaker must have been Peter, as usual. To emphasize how innocuous his remark was, it was "reported"—"Rabbi, it's good we're here." The interlocutors, too, had to be identified; they turned out to be Moses himself, and, of course, Elijah. The one creative thinker, not to say "liar," who went beyond such innocent specification was, as might be expected, a theologian—the libertine apologist who saw the opportunity of subordinating the Law and the Prophets to Jesus, and drove home his point by having Peter propose to make temples for all three, using this proposal to precipitate the disappearance of the Law and the Prophets, and introducing the voice of God to contradict the implication of Peter's proposal. (By these changes he produced a non-sequitur: "It's good we're here. And let us make three tabernacles." No matter; theologians are tolerant of non-sequiturs.) A generation later Mark knew this form of the story and thought he saw in it a

---

<sup>5</sup> [Mark's report that the beings seen were "Elias, with Moses" (9:4) suggests that the original story was of an appearance of Elijah only (there were many such). The Pauline reviser added Moses to make Jesus take precedence of the Law and the Prophets. When remodeling the old story he thoughtlessly introduced Moses *as an addition*, thus leaving a trace of his work, but in his freely composed explanation of Peter's speech (9:5d), he of course put them in the right order ("Moses ... and Elijah") and both Matt 17.3 and Luke 9:30 corrected Mark 9:4 accordingly].

confirmation of Peter's messianic pronouncement and Jesus's references to himself as "Son of Man." Mark's use, followed by Matthew's and Luke's, preserved the story, but the social history of Christianity refuted the libertine theologian. Moses and Elijah did not vanish. The legalist and Judaizing elements in the Church were strong enough to preserve the Law and the Prophets as parts of the Christian sacred tradition. Hence the meaning of the libertine story became incredible and Christian exegetes went on for almost two thousand years trying to find other interpretations.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### THE REASON FOR THE PERSECUTION OF PAUL AND THE OBSCURITY OF ACTS

[261] The Eranos Yearbooks, for which Professor Scholem did so much, have shown by many examples how certain patterns recur in the history of religion. This recurrence greatly increases the importance of Scholem's specialized studies, for instance, of the Sabbatians and of the Frankists. Not only have these studies clarified areas hitherto obscure in the history of Judaism, but they have provided students of all religions with exemplary dissections of extreme cases of religious pathology, cases in which, just because they are extreme, it is possible to see the full development and understand the essential nature of tendencies that in less extreme cases remain obscure and sometimes are barely recognizable.

One such case is the early history of Christianity, in which we find a similar complex of Messianic claims and antinomian consequences, secret doctrines and subterranean conventicles. In *Jesus' Attitude Towards the Law*,<sup>1</sup> I argued that the essentials of this complex went back to Jesus himself, that his teaching included not only two types of legal interpretation—one for ordinary Jews, the other for the crowds who followed him, whom he considered the bridal party of the Messiah (Mark 2:19)—but also a secret initiation by which he admitted his intimates to the Kingdom of God and thereby enabled them to escape from the authority of the Law (Luke 16:16; Matt 11:11).

One of my arguments for this theory was drawn from the persecution of the early Christians by their fellow Jews. I argued that this persecution is too well attested to be denied (2 Cor 11:24f.; 1 Thess 2:15f.; Mark 13:9 and parallels; Matt 23:34; Luke 11:49; John 7:13; 9:22; 12:42; 16:2; 19:38; Acts 4:2ff.; 5:17ff.; 6:11f.; 8:1ff.; 12:3 and many passages to be cited later in this essay). It is also too serious to be explained by the supposition that Jesus' teaching differed [262] from that of the other teachers of his time only in such minor details as we find disputed between the authorities of Rabbinic literature. Similarly, the persecutions cannot be explained solely by reference to the peculiar Messianic beliefs of the Christians, since peculiarities of Messianic belief seem to have been matters of comparative indifference in the first century, *provided* they did not lead to

---

<sup>1</sup> Published in the report of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies.

peculiarities of practice.<sup>2</sup> What we must find, therefore, is some peculiarity of primitive Christian practice sufficient to explain the persecution. This peculiarity, I argued, was Jesus' teaching of freedom from the Law and the libertine consequences which he and his followers drew from it.

In the present article I wish to support the above argument by special consideration of the case of Paul, whose letters are the earliest Christian documents known to us (probably earlier by a quarter of a century than any other Christian text now preserved as an independent document).

As to the main outlines of Paul's teaching concerning the Law there is little doubt—they are set forth at length in his own letters, especially Romans and Galatians. It is worth remarking, however, that Paul is not antinomian. The Mosaic Law, he insists, is holy and spiritual (Rom 7:12, 16); it not only was, but still is, valid; even Christians who accept its yoke are bound to follow it in *all* details (Gal 5:3). But no man is capable of obeying it perfectly (Rom 3:20; 7:21ff.; Gal 2:16; 3:11). Therefore the practical effect of its revelation of the demands of God is merely to turn man from an unintentional to a deliberate transgressor (Rom 3:20; 5:13; 7:7). This, indeed, was why God gave it, that men might recognize their sinfulness and so be led to Jesus, the true means of justification (Rom 5:20; Gal 3:19-24). Liberation from the Law is effected by a magical ceremony, baptism, in which the recipient is identified with Jesus (Rom 6:1-11; Gal 2:19f.; 3:27). Jesus had died and thereby both satisfied and escaped the Law; he had also risen again and was now living a new life on which the Law had no claims; the believer identified with him by baptism participated at once in the death, the escape, and the new life of freedom (*loc. cit.* Rom 7:5ff.; 8:10f.). The notion that death sets a man free from the claims of the Law probably came to Paul from his Pharisaic background (cf. *Shabbath* 151b etc.). The free Christian might, indeed, condescend to go through the [263] forms of legal observance, either to win converts (1 Cor 9:20) or to keep from offending conservative Christians (1 Cor 10:28-32) but this was mere pretense, and did not modify the essential doctrine.

It is at once apparent—especially in the light of the better documented Sabbatian and Frankist histories—that these doctrines would immediately lead to serious trouble. Especially dangerous would be the permission of occasional conformity, which could easily be made an excuse for hypocrisy and would make it possible for legally impure and untrustworthy men to penetrate observant communities. It

---

<sup>2</sup> Evidence for this will be found in my article "What Is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures," volume one, chapter twelve, above.

therefore stands to reason that these doctrines, which appear from Paul's letters to have been his major concern, were also the major reason for his persecution.

However, it is satisfying to find this inference supported by the statements of Paul himself. It is true that he once refers to his preaching of "a crucified Messiah" as "a scandal to the Jews" (1 Cor 1:23) without stopping to explain why it should be so. And it is also true that this verse has been made the hair on which to hang mountains of nonsense about Jewish resistance to the substitution of a spiritual Saviour for a military Messiah. But the actual Jewish indifference to vagaries of Messianic speculation has been noticed above, and it requires that another explanation be found for 1 Corinthians 1:23. That explanation is indicated by Galatians 5:11: "And as for me, brethren, if I still preach circumcision [*sc.* as I did when a Pharisee], why am I now persecuted?" Evidently Paul's nomistic Christian opponents had been claiming that he secretly admitted circumcision was necessary for salvation, but concealed this doctrine from his pagan converts in the elementary stages of their instruction, so as to win more. Paul's reply to this takes for granted that the only reason anybody could allege for his persecution would be his rejection of the Law (not his teaching that the Messiah had been crucified). Of course he *did* teach that Jesus was the Messiah, and of course the fact that the Messiah had been crucified was essential to his theology, but it was essential merely as a means to an end: It was merely the way to death, and death to resurrection, and resurrection to the new life free of the Law, and this life and this freedom were what mattered. They were the experiential elements, the sources of the power of Paul's theology; the preceding elements were merely his attempt to explain and justify the free life.

The state of affairs is even clearer in Galatians 6:12 where Paul is [264] attacking his opponents: "All those who want to make a good appearance in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised, only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of the Messiah." These opponents were Christians; they must have been preaching that Jesus was the Messiah; there is no indication that they denied his crucifixion (and had they done so, Paul certainly would have attacked them for it). So they, like Paul, were preaching a crucified Messiah. Therefore the verse must indicate that they could do so with impunity, provided they took care to pretend to observe the Law; i.e. provided they did not draw, from Jesus' death, Paul's conclusions. The cause of the persecution, therefore, was not the preaching of the crucifixion, but the open teaching and practice of freedom from the Law. Notice Paul's charge that even those who are circumcised do not, themselves, keep the Law (Gal 6:13). Evidently there were elements of libertinism

in even the most conservative of early Christian parties, a fact which strengthens our supposition that this side of early Christian thought went back to Jesus himself.

If the above explanation of the persecution of Paul be correct, we have next to explain why Acts ignores it. Acts constantly represents Paul as persecuted by the Jews (about twenty instances, against two in which persecutions are organized by gentiles—and those two are attributed to personal concerns, 16:19; 19:25). Yet in most cases Acts gives no cause at all for the persecution by Jews, or insists that Paul is utterly innocent, without saying, of what (9:29; 14:2, 19; 17:13; 20:3, 23; 21:4, 11; 23:12, 29; 25:7f., 9, 11, 26; 26:31f.; 28:17, 19, 22). This failure to specify the charges suggests that they may have been justified.

Next most often the blame is put on the Jews: They are jealous of their position as God's chosen people and do not wish to share it with the gentiles, therefore they make trouble when they see the gentiles being taught or converted (13:45ff.; 17:5; 22:21f.; 26:21). This theme appears in Romans 10:19; 11:14 (where the tone is more favourable than in Acts—the jealousy of the Jews may lead them, too, to conversion) and in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 (where the tone is even more hostile than that of Acts, which has sometimes occasioned doubts of the passage's, or the letter's, authenticity). It is probable that the sudden conversion of large numbers of outsiders would produce some hostile reaction in an ancient synagogue, as in a modern church. But the exaggeration of the theme in Acts is to be explained by polemic theology, akin to that in 1 Thessalonians, as well as by [265] apologetic concern. If 1 Thessalonians 2:16 be genuine, as seems likely, it may have inspired Acts' development of the motif.

On four occasions Acts indicates the charges made by Jews to the Roman authorities: They accuse Paul of saying Jesus, not Caesar, is King (17:7), of teaching a form of religion contrary to the law (18:13; 25:18f.), and of inciting to riot and trying to profane the Temple (24:5f.). These charges Acts represents as false. The first of them would hardly have accounted for persecution by the Jews (which is here our concern), while the third and fourth—even if true—would have applied in only one occasion. As for the second charge: Acts represents the Roman governor as ruling that the law concerned is the Jewish Law and therefore throwing the case out of court. The author's purpose here is to tell us that the charge as made in the Roman court was unjustified (18:15). He indicates indirectly—at most—the real cause of the Jews' hostility to Paul.

Acts makes Paul claim in his Jerusalem trial and subsequent apologies that he is persecuted because he preaches the resurrection of the dead (23:6; 24:21; 26:23 + a suffering Messiah!; 28:20?). With these may be associated 9:20ff., where the persecution is aroused by Paul's

preaching that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah. “Son of God” is probably here to be understood as a Messianic title<sup>3</sup> and the alleged offence is probably in all cases the same: identifying the Messiah with a passible man. The transformation of this into preaching “the resurrection of the dead” (one of the bases for the identification) is represented as a clever idea of Paul’s, by which he got some Pharisees on his side (23:6-9). But if only the Sadducees objected to preaching “the resurrection of the dead” (cf. Acts 4:2), then this, too, could not be the common cause of most of the Jewish persecution, since it seems unlikely that the Sadducees were widely influential in the Diaspora, where most of the persecutions arose. Once again we have an interesting concord with Paul’s letters. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:23 specified his preaching of “a crucified Messiah” as “a scandal to the Jews,” without saying why; Acts again develops the motif, also without explaining it.

And in Acts, as in Paul, the explanation comes out elsewhere. In Acts’ perhaps wishful picture of the friendly, confidential conversation between James and Paul, James is made to warn Paul that he (Paul) is everywhere accused of teaching apostacy from the Law (21:21). [266] The same charge is the essential exaggerated by the Jews who try to lynch him in the Temple (21:28—teaching against the people, the Law, and the Temple; trying to profane the Temple). It must be emphasized that these are the only instances in Acts where the complaints are stated simply and directly; in the other instances when any reasons whatever are given for the persecutions, we have, not what the Jews said, but what Acts’ believed their motive to be, or else we have material distorted by obvious concerns—charges made to influence the Romans, pleadings in answer to these charges. Only here do we have frank statements, made directly to Paul, of the reason for the hostility against him. And these two statements coincide, in essential, with Paul’s own understanding of the matter, as indicated in Galatians 5:11 and 6:12.

But there is more: After letting James state, as something Paul’s enemies say, that Paul is everywhere teaching *the Jews* to cease observing the Law (21:21), Acts goes on to make James recommend that Paul make a public display of his observance of the Law, so that γνῶσονται πάντες ὅτι ὤν κατήχηται περὶ σοῦ οὐδέν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ στοιχεῖς καὶ αὐτὸς φυλάσσω τὸν νόμον (21:24). This is beautifully ambiguous. It may mean, “All will know that there is nothing (no truth whatever) in the things they have been told about you, but you yourself always observe the Law.” Or it may mean, “All will know that the things they have been told about you are unimportant, but that you

<sup>3</sup> So E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen 1959), *ad loc.*

yourself go along with observing the law (on occasion)”. Now on one occasion the arrival in Antioch of James’ representatives had occasioned a scandal. When they came, all the Jewish leaders of the Christian community, including Peter, who had formerly been eating with the gentile converts, suddenly began to be fussy about purity and to eat by themselves. Only Paul continued to eat with the gentiles, and not only that, he gave Peter a *public* calling down for hypocrisy (Gal 2:11-21, ἐμπροσθεν πάντων, 14). Presumably James’ representatives reported all this when they got back to Jerusalem. It is also likely that Paul’s enemies forwarded to the authorities in Jerusalem copies of his angrier letters (Galatians, for instance!). So James must have had a pretty good idea of Paul’s actual position, and the request in Acts 21:23f. must have been in fact for a demonstration of occasional conformity. Once again we find the picture given by Acts following the principles laid down in Paul’s letters, this time in 1 Corinthians 9:19ff. [267]

Being free from all [laws] I submitted myself to all [observances] in order that I might win over the more [converts], and I became to the Jews, like a Jew, in order that I might win over Jews; to those under the Law, like [a man] under the Law—although I was not, myself, under the Law—in order that I might win over those under the Law; to those who did not observe the Law, like a man who did not observe it... in order that I might win over the nonobservant... I became all things to all men in order that by all means I might save some.

The same principle reappears just below the surface of Acts in the famous episode of 16:1-3. Passing through Lycaonia Paul found a reputable young man named Timothy, the son of a Jewess who had joined the Christian sect and of a Greek father. Paul decided to take him as a companion, therefore “he circumcised him *because of the Jews thereabouts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek*”. Here the superficial reader will find—and was meant to find—a clear case of Paul’s obedience to the Law. But what is the meaning of the italicized words? They are an apology for this obedience; they indicate clearly that if the Jews had not known, Paul would not have circumcised. This was another case of occasional conformity.

The same sort of apology, tacked on, in the same way, after a similar example of legal observance, is to be found in the chapter just before the Timothy story—Acts 15. Here we have the account of the council in Jerusalem to discuss the question, whether or not gentile converts should be required to keep the Mosaic Law. After the discussion (which we need not here discuss) Acts represents James as formulating the following proposal:

It is my opinion that those of the gentiles who have turned to God [*sc.* to us] should not be burdened [by being required to observe the Law], *but*

that we should write to them to abstain from [food] polluted [by having been offered to] idols and from irregular sexual connections and from things strangled and from blood, *for Moses, from long since, has those who preach him in the synagogues, being read [there] every Sabbath* (15:19ff.).

The italicized words here have the same structure, sense and function as do those in 16:3, quoted above. They are again an appended apology for occasional conformity. If Moses had not had his advocates everywhere, James would not have recommended observance of these conspicuous details of the Law. But “because of the Jews,” who are everywhere ready to make trouble, gentile Christians should be ordered to keep up these minimal appearances מִפְּנֵי דַרְכֵי שְׁלוֹם. [268] Here again the thought of Acts reflects the principle stated in 1 Corinthians 9:19ff. We can therefore understand, not only that Paul accepted the outcome of the council, as both Acts (15:25) and Paul himself (Gal 2:1-10) declare, but also that Paul could maintain it had made no change in his essential doctrine (*ibid.*). The question as to the historicity of Acts’ account of the council is not here raised; nor is it here in point. The point is that Acts’ account of the council—be it true or false—is shaped by that principle of occasional conformity, not to say hypocrisy, of which the classic expression is to be found in Paul’s letters.

Why then, it may be asked, if Acts knew Paul’s letters and followed Paul’s advice, was it so reticent as to Paul’s essential teaching? Probably because it was written for catechumens or Christians in the earliest stage of initiation, who had just finished the catechumenate (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1). By the time of Acts, the doctrine of liberation from the Law had produced some extremely embarrassing libertine consequences<sup>4</sup>—indeed, it had already begun to do so in Paul’s time (Rom 3:8; 6:1-23; 1 Cor 4:14-5:13, etc.). Against these, respectable, middle-class Christianity (that cultural level which the author of Acts represents) was closing the ranks, and the letters and doctrines of Paul were being pushed into the background.<sup>5</sup> Acts, therefore, treats Paul with Paul’s own medicine. The doctrine of liberty from the Law governs the action, at important moments, but is never expounded. The persecutions which resulted from it are left unexplained, or are attributed to what were actually minor factors—Jewish jealousy of gentile converts, Sadducean dislike of the teaching of resurrection. The

<sup>4</sup> These will be discussed in Chapter IV of my edition of a letter attributed to Clement of Alexandria.

<sup>5</sup> For studies of the later stages of this process see A. Benoit, *Le baptême chrétien au second siècle* (Paris 1953); C. Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” *New Testament Studies* 11 (1965), pp. 138ff.

story told by the book is notoriously puzzling, because its underlying principle was deliberately concealed.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### PAULINE WORSHIP AS SEEN BY PAGANS

[241] In *Jesus the Magician*<sup>1</sup> I argued that the earliest pagan reports of persecutions of Christians—those in Suetonius, Tacitus, and Pliny the younger<sup>2</sup>—indicate that the persecutors believed the Christians were practicing magic. Here I want to explain their belief by reviewing the earliest evidence for Christian congregational practices and indicating how these practices would have been understood by the ancient Christians' neighbors. This does not imply that there were not other grounds for the persecutors' belief. Magic seems to have figured in the charges for which Jesus was condemned;<sup>3</sup> it certainly was prominent in the propaganda against his cult that was spread by rival Jewish groups.<sup>4</sup> Such propaganda doubtless shaped the expectations with which many outsiders viewed early Christianity, and people are apt to see what they expect to see. Nevertheless, Pliny's famous letter shows that Roman authorities sometimes tried to get beyond rumor to the facts. Accordingly we should ask what the facts would have looked like to men of the Greco-Roman world in the late first and early second centuries, a world in which magic was practiced on all levels of society and almost universally believed to be effective. As "the facts" we may take, with some reservations, the evidence about Christian congregations to be found in Paul's relatively unquestioned letters—Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Philemon. [242]

At or near the beginning of membership in a Christian cell-group stood baptism. Paul in Romans 6:3-11 appeals to what he hopes will be taken as the common Christian understanding of the rite.

Don't you know that such of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him, by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too may live a new (kind of) life. For if we were planted with him in the image of his death, then we shall also (live in the image) of his resurrection... Thus you, too, consider yourselves dead to sin, but living, in Christ Jesus, to God.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978) 50ff. and the notes on p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius *Nero* 16.2; Tacitus *Annals* 15.44.3-8, Pliny *Letters* 10.96.

<sup>3</sup> *Jesus the Magician*, 41.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-60.

<sup>5</sup> This argument seems to have been originally designed as a proof for the resurrection, perhaps in connection with the dispute reflected in 1 Corinthians 15. However, as the context shows, Paul is here reusing it as an argument to prove that the Christian life *here*

Such rites, beginning with an imitation death and ending with resurrection by receipt of a divine spirit, to a new life, are familiar in magical material. One, for instance, directs the initiate to lie down on a roof naked and wrap himself up “like a mummy” before saying a prayer in which he describes himself as a soldier of his god, killed by the gods of this world (cf. 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; 1 Cor 2:8) and asks the god he serves (Typhon) to raise him from the dead. In response to his prayer, as a sign of his communion with the god, a bird will descend on him. At this sign he should arise, clothe himself in white (as raised from the dead), sacrifice incense, and pray, saying, “I have been united with thy holy form, I have been empowered by thy holy name, I have received the effluence of thy goodness, Lord, God of gods,” etc. “Having done these things,” the text concludes, “go down (from the roof) having attained a nature equal to the god’s.”<sup>6</sup> A similar ritual of imitation death, union with the god, and resurrection to “a new, superhuman life” has been reconstructed by H. Lewy from the *Chaldaean Oracles*,<sup>7</sup> and the same pattern seems to have been followed in [243] some Isiac and Mithraic initiations.<sup>8</sup> Both the Egyptian and the Mithraic parallels may be reflected by the engravings of ancient magical gems.<sup>9</sup>

Paul referred more briefly to the same notions of baptism in Gal 3:27 (“Those of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”) and 1 Cor 12:13 (“We have all been baptized by one spirit into one body”); they are the background of his remarks on the subject in 1 Cor 1:13-7 (explaining his insistence that nobody was baptized “into” *his* name), and are echoed by Col 2:12 (“being buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him”).<sup>10</sup> His question,

*and now* is of a different sort than before baptism, and that the change of nature should be reflected in a new morality.

<sup>6</sup> *Papyri graecae magicae* (henceforth *PGM*), ed. K. Preisendanz. (2d ed., ed. A. Henrichs; Leipzig, 1973-74) 2 vols., cited by papyrus number (in this collection) and line. Here 4.154-220ff. Salvation by union with a god’s form appears in 2 Cor 3:18, cf. Phil 2:6. There are numerous other NT parallels, see *Jesus the Magician*, 193, first note to p. 104. For parallels to Paul’s equation of “being in” Christ and “having” Christ or the spirit, see R. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* (3d ed., 1927; reprint ed., Darmstadt, 1956) 73.

<sup>7</sup> H. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Cairo, 1956) 204-13; (recently reedited by M. Tardieu).

<sup>8</sup> Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 11.23 with the commentaries of Griffiths (1975) and Hildebrand (1842); “Lampridius,” *Commodus* 9, with those of Casaubon and Salmasius (in the Hacks edition, Leiden, 1671).

<sup>9</sup> E.g., A. Delatte and P. Derchain, *Bibliothèque Nationale ... Les Intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes* (Paris, 1964) 89-104; 221-31.

<sup>10</sup> Further expressions of important elements of the notion, especially death and resurrection in Christ, appear in 1 Cor 6:14 (read *exegeirei*, the *lectio difficilior*; 2 Cor 5:15ff.; Gal 2:19f.; 5:24; Phil 1:21; etc).

“What will those do who are baptized on behalf of the dead?” (i.e., if the dead are not raised, what will be the sense of the baptism? 1 Cor 15:29) shows another magical notion—that ceremonies performed on a substitute for an intended object will affect the object. This notion, the basis of all substitutionary magic, is so familiar that it need not be illustrated.

Between Christian baptism and the recognizedly magical rites there was an important difference. In the other magical (and/or mystery) rites known to us, the initiate’s death and resurrection were not conceived as participation in events previously experienced by the god. The death was symbolic of the initiate’s present condition; union with the deity was attained only by/in resurrection. The Christian’s god, however, had been executed, died, and been raised; the initiate’s union with him began with magical participation in his death, and *thence* in his resurrection. Because of this peculiar history of its god, Christianity was allied with another type of magic, that by which the recalled spirits (*not* resurrected bodies) of executed criminals and of persons who had died unmarried or childless were invoked to aid the magician.<sup>11</sup> Jesus belonged to all three of these categories. The spirits of such persons were the most powerful of the *nekydaimones*, “spirits of the dead,” who might be acquired as *paredroi*—spirits in attendance on the magician and ready to obey his orders, so that no [244] considerable rite was needed to activate them.<sup>12</sup> Such a “familiar”—to use the old English term—might play a role in the magician’s life not dissimilar to that of “the spirit” in Paul’s. That Paul recognized the similarity is shown by his recommendation of celibacy on the ground that it would free the Christian from distractions and make him *euparedron* for the Lord—well suited to be joined with Jesus as a *paredros*.<sup>13</sup> In modern terms, the lack of normal sexual satisfaction is likely to lead to compensatory connections with spirits, hence the requirement of celibacy by many shamanistic and priestly groups has probably some functional justification. The medicine man is more likely to get the spirit if he foregoes the flesh. It is worth noting that the ordinary magician got a spirit as *his paredros*, but Paul wants the Christian to be the *paredros* of the spirit (i.e., of Jesus). Since a *paredros* is properly a judge’s advisor/associate, literally “one who sits beside” him, Paul’s insistence that the Lord is to have the central seat—the spirit is to be

<sup>11</sup> PGM 4.333ff.; 1391ff.; 1871ff.; 2730ff.; 5.330ff.; 58.

<sup>12</sup> PGM 4.2000-99 is the best example.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor 7:35. As Lietzmann suggested (*ad loc*) the word seems to have been coined by Paul. The earliest subsequent usages (Dorotheus of Gaza, Pseudo-Macarius) are based on this text, of which they show the developed orthodox interpretation. The editors of *TWNT* omitted the word as of no theological importance.

in control, not the man—indicates an important difference between Pauline Christianity and ordinary magic, cf. Rev 3:21.

Not all *paredroi* were constant companions. Many had to be called when needed for one or another purpose. It is clear from Paul's descriptions that the services in Corinth were largely devoted to calling spirits and to expression of utterances the spirits were thought to inspire. Fossilized remains of such practices can still occasionally be found in Christian services; "Come, Holy Ghost," is a hymn of which the meaning would shock the average congregation only a little less than would the Holy Ghost's arrival. Paul's converts, however, were, he says, "wild about spirits" (1 Cor 14:12) and from the rules he had to lay down in 1 Cor 14:26-40 it seems that his suggestion of what unbelievers would think if they walked into a Christian meeting ("that you are mad" 14:23) was on the charitable side. We should have expected, "that you are possessed" (*daimonate*), but Paul's pretensions prohibited the implicit comparison of the *daimonia* with the spirits who came to the Christians. Notice the plural, "spirits," in 14:12. It appears also in 14:32 and 12:10, where "distinguishing between spirits" is one of God's gifts to the Church. [245]

This contradicts Paul's repeated accounts of all Christian utterance as the work of "the one and the same Spirit" (of Jesus).<sup>14</sup> Insistence on a single source fits Paul's theology and is motivated by his need to minimize the rivalries in his churches, hence the discordant passages, indicating contacts with a considerable number of spirits, not all of them good, are the more trustworthy and presumably reflect what was actually going on. Paul himself, at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 12, gave a rule of thumb by which spirits could be judged: If anyone speaking "with a spirit" says "Jesus is anathema," that spirit is not "of God." This shows how far the variations went. Other references in 1 John 4:1; 1 Tim 4:1, and magical material,<sup>15</sup> to things that must be done to make sure of getting the sort of spirit one wants, prove that the problem, and, therefore, the practice that occasioned it, were not peculiar to the Pauline churches. On the other hand, they were rare in ordinary pagan worship as distinct from magic. Ordinary pagan worship was a matter of offerings (sacrifices, libations, incense) and petitionary prayer; on solemn occasions a choir might sing hymns praising the gods and asking them to be present at the sacrifice and favor the petitioners. Such requests meant no more than "Come, Holy Ghost," now does. A Pauline service devoted to effectual invocation of spirits for observable results differed from such respectable, public

<sup>14</sup> 1 Cor 12:11; cp. 12:4-9; Rom 12:5ff. In 1 Cor 12:28 all are gifts of the one God.

<sup>15</sup> *PGM* 7.635 (a spell to get "the true Asclepius and not some deceptive demon instead of the god"); 8.81 (a spell to get "*the true prophet*"). Iamblichus *De mysteriis* 2.3ff. gives a long list of criteria by which spirits of different sorts can be distinguished.

performances, as a voodoo ritual differs from solemn high Morning Prayer.

The plurality of spirits in Pauline and other Christian passages indicates that Paul's peculiar theology, which represents *all* aspects of the Christian life as the work of "the one" constantly indwelling and ever-active Spirit, is an idealization—perhaps a projection of Paul's own spiritual ambition, but also propaganda for himself. It enabled him to claim, like other magicians, that his utterances were those of his god,<sup>16</sup> that he had the mind of his god,<sup>17</sup> that he [246] was the revelation of his god,<sup>18</sup> etc. Such claims, however, implicitly contradict his many other claims to special revelations<sup>19</sup> which, if he had had the mind of Christ, should have been needless. In fact, his spiritual state seems to have been anything but stable. He spoke with tongues more than any of the Corinthians (1 Cor 14:18). Accordingly we should suppose that for Paul, as well as for the other members of the Corinthian church, its meetings were largely group *séances* of which the most important elements were invocation of spirits, the utterances they inspired, and the changes they produced in the personalities of the possessed—this notwithstanding the fact that all members had received "the spirit" in baptism. The same contradiction persists in "Pentecostal" and similar sects to the present day; apparently the intellectual problem causes no great difficulty to members of such groups.

The content of a typical Pauline prayer meeting is outlined by Paul himself in 1 Cor 14:26: "When you come together each has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation." This list seems to begin with liturgical elements imitative of those in traditional Jewish worship—psalms, instruction—go on through new revelations to the climax of inarticulate utterance ("speaking with tongues") and then subside to articulate "explanation" of what had just been gibbered. Invocation of spirits to prophesy was perhaps the commonest of ancient magical practices.<sup>20</sup> It regularly led to revelations, commonly given by a medium who reported what he saw or what the god said to

---

<sup>16</sup> 2 Cor 13:3; contrast 1 Cor 7:10, where he did have good tradition, therefore appealed to it, and therefore was more modest in 7:12. Magicians often represented themselves as the god present and speaking; references to such passages, under *ego*, fill most of a column in the index of *PGM*.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor 1:16; cp. *PGM* 3.591ff., "We recognize (our debt of) thanks to Thee (Helios) ... who hast given us mind ... that we may know thee ... who hast deified us by knowledge of thyself."

<sup>18</sup> Gal 1:15f.; see the many passages collected in *Jesus the Magician*, 125f. and notes.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Cor 12:6ff.; Gal 2:2; and often.

<sup>20</sup> For a full account see T. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber* (Leipzig, 1921-24) 2 vols. (*Studien zur Palaeographie und Papyruskunde*, 21 and 23).

him.<sup>21</sup> Alternatively, the magician himself might be identified with the god and go on to a divine pronouncement that would assure the occurrence of what was said. Such pronouncements often culminated in inarticulate utterances which seem to have resembled very closely the noises the Christians made when they “spoke with tongues.” [247]

Paul’s best known discussion of “speaking with tongues,” that in 1 Corinthians 12-14, was written to correct the divisive conceit of some Corinthian Christians who prided themselves on their performances. This explains Paul’s insistence (1) that *all* Christian activities are equally works of the spirit, (2) that all are subordinate to love, which should unite all members of the congregation, (3) that in particular “speaking with tongues” is inferior to teaching and prophecy which are immediately edifying, (4) that Christian meetings are to be conducted “decently and in order” (14:40)—even the spirits of the prophets should be disciplined: it was the prophets’ duty to keep them under control and make them yield the floor to their fellows (14:29-32).

Elsewhere, when free of such disciplinary concerns, Paul wrote of “speaking with tongues” much more favorably. When he could, he found meanings for the utterances. If his converts cried *abbaabbaabba* he explained, that, by receiving the spirit of Jesus, they, too, had become sons of God, and that *abba* meant “father” in Aramaic (God’s language); the spirit was prompting them to claim divine paternity.<sup>22</sup> When he had to admit that the sounds were incomprehensible, he explained that the reward destined for Christians exceeds imagination. “Therefore we do not know for what we ought to pray,” but “the spirit helps out our weakness” for it “entreats on our behalf with inarticulate groanings” (*stenagmois alalētois*) and God knows what it intends to say (Rom 8:26f.). Such utterances are thus made the supreme prayer of the Church, precisely as they are the climaxes of many prayers in the magical papyri. *Stenagmos* was a term for a characteristic form of magical utterance,<sup>23</sup> and later Christian texts which try to represent the secret prayers of Jesus present passages of jabberwocky filled with

---

<sup>21</sup> For “revelation” Paul uses *apokalypsis*, but this need not be taken to refer to a work having literary form or eschatological content like those of the NT Apocalypse. The use of *apokalypsis* for works of this latter sort began (so far as we know) with the title of the NT book, probably given it half a century or more after Paul’s time. See my article in the volume of the International Conference on Apocalyptic, chapter thirty-five below. Paul unquestionably used *apokalypsis* for revelations that answered immediate, practical questions, e.g., Gal 2:2. It seems likely that most revelations given the members of Pauline communities, like most of those sought in the magical papyri, were of this sort.

<sup>22</sup> Rom 8:14ff. (*ho pater* is Paul’s translation); again Gal 4:6. With *abbaabba* compare *hubbahubba* and the like in modern popular songs; ecstatic utterances in western society have probably changed little through the ages.

<sup>23</sup> C. Bonner, “Traces of Thaumaturgic Technique in the Miracles,” *HTR* 20 (1927) 171ff.

“words” found also in magical texts: *iao*, *aoi*, *psinother*, *thernops*, *zagoure*, *pagoure*, *thobarrabau*, *sabaoth*, etc.<sup>24</sup> Such passages probably reflect prayers actually made in the authors’ congregations.

Finally, besides these *séances*, the Corinthian Christians met for meals in which they ate bread and drank wine identified with the body and blood of Jesus. Such consumption of food identified [248] as the body or blood of a god was a familiar form of love magic. As in the case of baptism, *no other ancient parallels to Paul’s words are so close as those in the magical texts.*<sup>25</sup> In Christianity the rite seems to have been introduced by Jesus (as I argued in *Jesus the Magician*, see the citations in the preceding note) probably to bind his followers to himself when persecution seemed imminent. Paul’s discussion of the rite in 1 Cor 10:16-22 and 11:17-34 takes for granted the identification of the elements with Jesus’ blood and body (10:16) and the unitive function (10:17). Paul argues that in pagan sacrifices, too, those who eat of the elements partake of the gods (*daimones*—16:20); this was particularly the case in magical rites (see the examples cited in the note above). The wording of 11:23ff. suggests that by Paul’s time the magical identification of elements, body, and blood was thought to be effected by telling the story of what Jesus did; such paradigmatic storytelling often served as the essential element of magical rites.<sup>26</sup> That those who eat the elements without adequate preparation fall sick or even die (1 Cor 11:27-32) is further proof of the sacrament’s magical power.

The body and blood of a sacrificed and life-giving god might figure not only in magical rites, but also in the sacred meal of a cult group that celebrated the god’s mysteries. Consequently it is not surprising that as Christianity gained more upper class followers the eucharist was commonly treated as a “mystery,” described with the language of the mysteries and protected by their discipline. This development, familiar from patristic material, should be seen as one of the adjustments of Christianity to respectable Roman imperial society. Paul’s claim to “speak the wisdom of God in a mystery” (1 Cor 2:7) and to be “an administrator (*oikonomos*) of the mysteries of God”

<sup>24</sup> *Pistis Sophia*, trans. Schmidt-Till, chaps. 136, 142, discussed in my *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1973) 233, where the many parallels from magical texts are cited.

<sup>25</sup> PGM 7.643ff. *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (henceforth *DMP*) eds. F. Griffith and H. Thompson (London, 1904; cited by column and line) 15.1-23; 21.10ff. See *Jesus the Magician*, 110ff. (where PGM 7.643 is translated), 122 (where *DMP* 15.8ff.) and 146f. for a brief discussion of some other proposed explanations of the rite. E. Bickerman (“Ritualmord und Eselskult” *MGWJ* 71 [1927] 171ff. and 255ff.) has shown that drinking human blood is a rite used in primitive societies all over the world to establish alliances. Such usage presumably often reflects belief in its magical efficacy.

<sup>26</sup> In PGM the great example is 13.139-209, parallel 441-563, but there are many minor instances: 4.95ff., 2978ff., etc.

(4:1) may reflect the beginning of the process, but Mark 4:11, now supported by the secret text of Mark used in Clement's church in Alexandria, makes it seem more likely that Jesus himself called at least one of his magical rites "the [249] mystery of the kingdom of God." Mysteries and magic cannot always be sharply distinguished; respectable Greek tradition (e.g., Ephorus *apud* Diodorus 5.64.4) attributed the institution of mysteries to magicians (*goētes*) and Paul may have been influenced by such notions. They, conversely, influenced the pagan notion of Paul. In the fourth century, when the interpretation of Christianity as a "mystery" was well established, the emperor Julian, himself experienced in magic and far from prejudiced in Paul's favor, would describe him as "the man who surpassed all magicians and deceivers that ever were, anywhere."<sup>27</sup>

Here we cannot go on to discuss the many other magical aspects of Paul's work, for instance, his "handing over" an opponent to Satan "for destruction of his flesh"—an idea expressed, with some of the same words, by many magical curse tablets;<sup>28</sup> his repeated claim that his converts had been won by his success in working miracles and invoking the spirit, *not* by his skills as a preacher;<sup>29</sup> his references to some sort of magical power over the members of his churches, a power by which, if they are not obedient, they may be harmed (1 Cor 4:19ff.; 2 Cor 10:1ff.; 12:20ff.; 13—hence his congregations received him "as an angel of God ... Christ Jesus" Gal 4:14); his claim to have the same magical marks (tattooing?) as Jesus;<sup>30</sup> and most important, the many magical traits in his teaching, beginning with its essential element, the belief that the death or life of one creature can be ritually imparted to another.<sup>31</sup> As initially indicated, the primary purpose of this paper has been to show what Paul's pagan contemporaries would have seen if they had been able to see the services in his churches *as he himself described them*. That they would have thought such services magical rites is presumable from the parallels cited. The presumption is confirmed by the fact that they did think them so and acted accordingly.

---

<sup>27</sup> *Against the Galileans* 100 A.

<sup>28</sup> See the evidence in *Jesus the Magician*, 110 and notes on 196.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 1:12; 12:12; Rom 15:19; cf. Gal 3:2.

<sup>30</sup> *Jesus the Magician*, 47ff. and notes.

<sup>31</sup> 2 Cor 4:10 and the many parallels cited *ad loc* in Nestle-Aland. *PGM* 1.1ff. (the life of the drowned and thus *deified* hawk); 4.1823ff., 2943ff.; 7.335ff.; 12.32ff., 311ff.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### PAUL'S ARGUMENTS AS EVIDENCE OF THE CHRISTIANITY FROM WHICH HE DIVERGED

[254] While the topic of this paper is familiar, I believe that one source of information has been generally neglected: the arguments that Paul does not use. Since Bishop Stendahl has done so much to illuminate Paul's words, it seems appropriate to dedicate to him this brief sketch of things to be learned from Paul's silence.

First Corinthians is the epistle with which to start; it tells us most about the community to which Paul was writing, and shows him in closest dialogue with its members. Paul claims to have founded the community ("I planted, Apollos watered," 3:6; there is a suggestion that Kephas came third, 1:12), but we cannot assume that when Corinthian practices differed from Paul's wishes the differences were merely distortions of Paul's teachings. His converts may not have been forgetting his lessons, but learning from others'. Later missionaries may have brought earlier practices. Kephas certainly could have—Paul claims to have made his first friendly contact with the Jerusalem church by going to see him (Gal 1:18). Again, if Acts 18:25 truly reports that Apollos at first "taught accurately the things about Jesus, understanding only the baptism of John," he would seem to have come from a circle of Jesus' followers that antedated or, at least, preserved a tradition independent of that of the Jerusalem group.

Against the supposition that the Corinthians' misbehavior resulted only from misunderstandings of Paul, there is also the fact that Paul has no hesitation about pointing out a misunderstanding when he thinks one has occurred (as in 5:9-10). Thus when he does not allege misunderstanding we should not suppose it, though it cannot always be ruled out.

On other matters, however, Paul is far more reticent. For instance, when making attacks he does not usually name names. Thus his attack on worldly wisdom and especially on rhetoric, in 1:17-2:16, is generally [255] thought to be aimed at Apollos, but Apollos is mentioned only before it, and afterwards when subordinated to Paul in 3:4-6. Acts praised Apollos for his learning and eloquence (18:24). If he brought these accomplishments to a community in which there were "not many wise by worldly standards, not many powerful, not many well born" (1:26), as Paul had brought speaking with tongues (which he did more than any of his converts, 14:18), such personal distinctions, though not primarily matters of the new cult, doubtless led to the formation of

different groups around the different leaders. This may account for Paul's reluctance to name Apollos in the attack. To have attacked him by name would have alienated his adherents, some of whom Paul may have hoped to win over.

If this suggestion seems plausible, it may apply also to the next section, the attack on sexual libertinism, where again the chief offender is unnamed. Of course he was not Apollos, but can we infer that, like Apollos, he was not a mere eccentric, but a ringleader? Is not this implied by Paul's complaint that many Corinthians are proud because he is committing incest (5:2) and are claiming that "all things," and particularly irregular sexual relations, "are permissible" (6:12 *bis*)? If such liberty had become an important element in the cult (as pagans long charged that it was; Justin *Dial.* 10.1, etc.) we can be sure it had not come from Paul. He was of ascetic disposition, unmarried (9:5), beating his body (flagellation?), and keeping it under as a slave (9:27). Paul had already written the Corinthians that they should not associate with licentious persons (5:9). Does he again deliberately avoid specification when he suggests that they misunderstood and thought he referred only to non-Christians? This enables him to ignore their defiance and merely correct their mistake.

He insists that he has already judged the single, unnamed offender (so as) to hand him over to Satan for "the destruction of the flesh" (5:3-5). Is this an allusion to the man's having fallen ill, or an attempt to represent his further indulgences as self-destruction consequent on the demonic possession for which, as disciplinary, Paul claims credit? He also claims that, although not in Corinth, he had, "by the power of our Lord Jesus" (presumably an invocation using Jesus' name) united the Corinthians' spirits with his own in this disciplinary action. They would have known nothing of this, since their spirits would have been called out of them at the time. Now they are told of it and warned that they have willy-nilly been united with Paul in this curse. The act has been done; the consequences follow.

Being parties to the curse, they are not to eat with, but to treat as impure, any Christian (again Paul names none) who has a bad [256] reputation for sexual or other vices. Shortly afterwards (6:12-20) Paul returns to the subject with additional arguments central to his theology: their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and members of the body of Christ. This emphasis on mystical union again enables him to pass over the actual schism.

From this height he comes down to answer a letter some Corinthians have sent him. It, too, began with a question on sexual relations. He begins, this time, with a general rule: "It is best for a man not to touch a woman" (7:1). That this is his rule, not the Corinthians', appears not only from its incompatibility with what was evidently

going on in Corinth, but also from the fact that Paul defends it as an ideal (7:8, 32-35, 37) and permits marriage (for the incontinent) only grudgingly, because "it is better to marry than to burn" (7:9). That the teachings of such a man had given rise to the practices of the Corinthians is incredible. Where did the practices come from? Apollos? Or Kephass? The teaching that sexual acts are morally indifferent could easily have been derived from Jesus' reported saying, "There is nothing outside a human being which, by entering, can make the recipient impure" (Mark 7:15).

The opponents must have had some strong support because Paul now makes an amazing concession: "All things are permissible for me, but not all things are beneficial; all things are permissible, but I will not be subjected by any" (6:12). But if all things are permissible, then fornication is permissible, and argument must show that it is not beneficial, or enslaves the practitioner, or whatever. Paul has already used the arguments that Christians are bodies of Christ and temples of the Spirit, but these are inconclusive. What if Christ and the Spirit should be indifferent to the physical activities of the bodies they dwell in, as they must be to their physical impurities? The doctrine of salvation by union with a deity lays wide open the possibility of moral indifference, and Paul was much too clever to be unaware of this. Hence his resort to rhetoric instead of reason.

Why, however, should he have put himself into so weak a position? Why such a damaging concession? We are almost compelled to suppose that "all things are permissible" was, in Corinthian Christianity, a generally accepted principle, and that Paul, since he wished to persuade his readers, had to argue from this principle that they all accepted. Once he had made the concession he tried to cut down its implications as far as he could.

These suppositions are supported by the fact that Paul had to come back, later on, to the same damaging doctrine, this time with reference to eating things sacrificed to idols, and he used exactly the same [257] technique, even the same rhetorical device: Yes ... but. "All things are permissible—but not all things are beneficial. All things are permissible—but not all things are constructive" (10:23). The essential claim of the libertine position is conceded, *but* prudential considerations are then introduced to limit the practice of Christian liberty. Anything may be eaten, *but* idols represent demons, and demons may dwell in the meat that has been sacrificed to them, and therefore to eat it may result in demonic possession, and might make Jesus jealous; besides, it might scandalize a weaker brother. This begs the obvious answers: the Christian, united with Christ, should fear no demons; God cannot be jealous of nonentities; the ignorant brother should be instructed, not hoodwinked. Paul's position is again

untenable, again because of the same concession. Why did he repeatedly concede a principle of which he was repeatedly unwilling to face the consequences? Most likely because he found this principle embedded in the religion he had first persecuted and then, by involuntary conversion, been forced to accept. Often, when the ego is defeated, it goes on fighting; the fallen Pharisee becomes a reluctant and sanctimonious libertine. No wonder Paul's personality so often broke down that he was famous for speaking with tongues.

The two verses just discussed, 6:12 and 10:23, are the only ones in which Paul says that all things are permitted, or even uses the verb form *exestin*. We have so little of Paul's writings that I have little faith in fashionable discoveries which show the vocabulary of one or another passage to be "non-Pauline" and argue thence that the passage reflects Paul's use of "an earlier source." (Use of "a later source" is very rare.) Paul must have had a vocabulary larger than the two thousand-odd words used in his genuine letters, and a man's vocabulary and style can change widely in the different circumstances of a dozen years. Nevertheless, I must admit that in this instance, because of the evidence from the contexts, this peculiarity of wording does seem evidence that *panta exestin* ("all things are permissible") was not Paul's own formula, but a cliché of the Corinthian church.

Paul's concession of this principle, however unwilling, was of course exploited by his nomistic opponents. They drew from the principle the same conclusions as did the libertines, but used them as reductions to absurdity. When Paul explained the Mosaic Law as introduced to increase sin, that Christ's grace might be given more fully to overcome the sin, they cynically went on to the consequence, "Let us do evil that good may come" (Rom 3:8) and attributed this to Paul. His indignant reaction does not conceal his inability to refute the argument; nor does the malicious misrepresentation prove that such conclusions were based [258] on teachings peculiar to Paul. That they were not is proved by his character, and by the innumerable attempts in his letters to avoid or mitigate such consequences of principles he must have found in his new faith.

These attempts, in turn, drew attacks from the libertines, attacks reflected in 1 Corinthians where, after having discouraged marriage, outlawed all sexual irregularities, and cut down drastically the use of food offered to idols, he bursts out in an angry passage of self-defense: "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus, our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least to you I am! ... My apology to those who judge me is this: Do we not have authorization to eat and drink? Do we not have authorization to lead around a Christian woman, as do the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Kephas? Or do only I and

Barnabas not have authorization not to work?" (9:1-6). From this he goes off into a long defense of his refusal to accept support from them, and then comes around to his underlying principle, "Being free of all requirements, I have subjected myself to all, in order to win more converts.... I became all things to all men so that by all means I might save some" (9:19, 22).

This tells us clearly what his opponents were saying: He was not really an apostle of Jesus. He had never even seen Jesus. Consequently he did not have the special authorization Jesus was thought to have given to his apostles and brothers (but not to his other followers?). This authorization included freedom (from the Mosaic Law), and especially the rights to eat and drink what they chose, to keep a Christian consort (the Greek word means both "woman" and "wife"), and to exact payment for their services, as would any qualified magician. Christian salvation was evidently conceived as a special supernatural service which only Jesus' authorized representatives could provide, and for which he had authorized them to charge as they saw fit. Psychoanalysis provides a striking parallel.

These accusations against which Paul defends himself are precisely the ones he again tries to meet in the last section of 2 Corinthians, chaps. 10-13, a section so often discussed that I must apologize for summarizing it once more. (My excuse is that the discussions have necessitated restatement of the plain sense and implications of the text.) Plainly Paul has an opponent who claims to be "of Christ" (10:7). Paul does not deny it, but replies, "So am I," and asserts his authorization by the Lord (10:8). He will not compare himself with "those who recommend themselves" (10:12—presumably members of a group with whom he would not compare well). So he appeals, as [259] before, to his work, especially his conversion of the Corinthians (10:13-18). However, lest they be corrupted as the serpent corrupted Eve (in rabbinic legend, sexually), he insists that "the one who has come" to them preaches no other Jesus and gives no other spirit than they had already received from him, Paul (11:1-4). "For I reckon I am in no respect inferior to the apostles of the highest rank.... Was it a fault ... that I preached the gospel ... to you without charge?" (11:7-11, again defending his authorization). Now the competitors become clearer. They are "Hebrews," "Israelites," "seed of Abraham," "servants of Christ"—all these Paul is too, and more (11:22-29). They have "visions and revelations of the Lord" (12:1); Paul has had so many revelations that God had to afflict him with some sort of physical infirmity to prevent him from being thought a supernatural being (12:6-10). He has performed "the signs of an apostle"—the marvels and miracles—just as the others have (12:12). Finally, as before, the Corinthians, influenced by these opponents, have become proud and

been guilty of “impurity and fornication and lasciviousness” (12:21) and Paul once again warns that he will use against them his mysterious spiritual power, which he still hopes will not hurt them (chap. 13). There should be no mistaking the close correspondence of this situation to that in 1 Corinthians, and the leader of these opponents, described as they just have been, must here be Kephias, who was already there. The competition has become more severe, Apollos is now inconspicuous, the areas of dispute have widened and the emphases have shifted a bit, but the structure remains the same.

How can all this be reconciled with Galatians? Paul never tried to reconcile them. In Galatia he was involved in a different argument. In Corinth he is claiming to be equal to Kephias and the other original apostles; they offer no other Jesus than he does. In Galatians his claim is to be *sui generis*. He received his gospel not from men, and particularly not from the Jerusalem apostles, but from Christ himself. When he did go up to consult with them, the “pillars” of the Jerusalem church, James and Kephias among them, added nothing (well, almost nothing) to his message, but agreed that he and Barnabas should have the apostolate of the uncircumcised, they, of the circumcised (Gal 1:1-2:10).

After this there were evidently changes in Jerusalem, for when Kephias came to Antioch he at first ate with Gentiles, but then was so frightened by the arrival of the representatives of James, “those of the circumcision” (2:12), that he gave up the practice and hypocritically pretended to observe the Jewish food laws. Paul then attacked him in an argument which took for granted their agreement that salvation by [260] Christ had freed them from the requirements of the Mosaic Law (2:14-21). By contrast to this, Paul attacks the Judaizers for introducing “a different gospel” (Gal 1:6)—presumably that of the apostolate of the circumcision, since the attack in the body of the letter centers on the requirement of circumcision. The opponent behind the trouble in Galatia is someone of importance (therefore again unnamed) “who shall bear (his) judgment, whoever (i.e., however great) he is” (Gal 5:10). There is intense hostility (5:12), but no clear indication of such personal rivalry as appears in 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Beyond this Paul’s characteristic silence does not permit us to go. But the story in Acts 12:17 suggests that about 44 Kephias fled Jerusalem and James was left in charge. We know Paul spoke of Kephias as his first important friend in the Jerusalem church and as one of the leading parties in the agreement eventually reached with the authorities there (Gal 1:18; 2:9). John 1:43 tells us that Kephias was Peter, and Acts 10:1-11:18 tells us that Peter took the lead in converting uncircumcised Gentiles; 15:7-11 makes him speak in favor of such conversion and in support of Paul and Barnabas at the

legendary "Council of Jerusalem." Is it unlikely that, after Kephas left, the Jerusalem authorities decided to extend more vigorously to the Gentiles their own "apostolate of the circumcision"? And is it not likely that Kephas and others of Jesus' original followers, who had prudently, while in Jerusalem, maintained an appearance of legal observance, rapidly dropped this when they went out among the Gentiles, and behaved as Jesus had and as Paul says Kephas initially did? That in view of James' hostility Kephas was won over by Paul's pleading (or by his own interests and inclinations) would not be surprising.

These likely events would explain the opposition Paul encountered from both sides. His legalistic opponents, "those of the circumcision," doubtless appealed to the authority of James. His libertine opponents were those of the circle of Kephas, whose members soon gave up the pretense of legal observance, took full advantage of their prestige in Gentile churches as true Israelites and fully empowered apostles of the Messiah, and returned with gusto to their Lord's original neglect of the Law. We may see in them the first "back to Jesus" Christians.

POSTSCRIPT: The story in Acts 21:18-26 of the meeting of Paul and James, though not impossible, is so likely to be harmonistic that it cannot be used for evidence in this matter.

## CHAPTER THIRTY

### TRANSFORMATION BY BURIAL (1 COR 15:35-49; ROM 6:3-5 AND 8:9-11)

[87] 1 Cor 15:44—in the King James translation, “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body”—is one of the many in the New Testament which are well known but badly understood. It is well known not only because it occurs in one of the most often read letters of Paul, but also because the part of that letter in which it occurs is used in the burial service. This use in the burial service contributes to the lack of understanding. People hear it when they are bereaved, when the thing they most want is assurance that their loss will not be permanent, and the thing they want least is a discussion of what Paul actually meant. Accordingly the text lives in popular exegesis simply as the climax of a great rhetorical argument for some kind of bodily resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

This argument began in verse 35. Paul had been defending, all through this chapter, his teaching that the dead will be raised—a teaching that some Corinthian Christians rejected (15:12). Evidently the challenge was serious because Paul, in answering it, was not content with appealing to the example of Jesus, but went on to adduce a series of other sorts of evidence: the agreement of the apostles, the content of Christian preaching, etc. Having wound up this defense he turned, in vs. 35, to face an imaginary opponent: “But somebody will say, ‘How are the dead raised, and in what sort of body do they come?’ Fool! Whatever (grain)<sup>2</sup> you sow is not made alive unless it die; and when you sow, you do not sow [88] the body that will come into being, but a bare seed ... And God gives it (the sort of) body he wishes, and (gives) to each (kind) of seed its own (proper) body. Not all flesh is the same (kind of) flesh, but (that) of men is one (kind), and another is the flesh of cattle, and another of fowl, and another of fish. Also there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is different from that of the earthly. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another in glory. And the resurrection of the dead is similar. It is sown corruptible, it is raised incorruptible; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in

---

<sup>1</sup> E.g. A. Peake and A. Grieve, *A Commentary on the Bible*, London, 1925, *ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> In quotations, round parentheses ( ) indicate words not in the text but implied by it; square brackets [ ] indicate my comments.

power; it is sown a natural [literally, a 'psychic'] body, it is raised a spiritual."

From this Paul goes on to argue that, just as there is a natural, in Greek, "psychic" body, so there is a spiritual, in Greek "pneumatic," body. His argument runs as follows:

"If there is a natural body, there is also (necessarily) a spiritual body. (Not only can this be inferred from analogy, but) also, in accordance with this, it is written [in the Septuagint translation of Genesis 2:7, 'And man became a living *psyche*', i.e.] 'The first man, Adam, became a *psyche*'—(a principle of natural, physical life)—'living in a body'. [And we know from other writings—he probably had some apocryphal text in mind—that] the last Adam (that is, Christ, became) a lifegiving spirit (*pneuma*). But the first (one) was not the spiritual, but (the natural,) the psychic, (and) then (afterwards came the spiritual,) the pneumatic. The first man (was made) from earth (and therefore) earthly, the second man (was) from heaven. As (was) the earthly (man), so also (are) the earthly (men, his descendants), and as (is) the heavenly (man, Christ), so also (are) the heavenly [men, that is, the Christians, who are united with Christ and become of one nature with him]. And as we wore the image of the earthly [man, that is, we had physical bodies of human form, so] we shall also wear the image of the heavenly [man, that is, we shall have spiritual bodies, like the body of Christ]." [89]

All this sounds very complex, and is so. The reason for the complexity is that the argument is bad. Its first point is merely a rhetorical analogy—if there is a natural body there must be a spiritual body—to which all one need say is, 'That doesn't follow.' Paul may have been aware of this, since he tried to find a proof from scripture. Unfortunately, the best thing he could find seems to have been an apocryphal text that said something like, 'Adam became a lifegiving spirit'. There was a Jewish legend to the effect that Adam was reborn again and again (*Clementine Homilies* III.20; Epiphanius, *Haer.* 30.3). Thence Paul took the idea that Christ was the last Adam, and used his apocryphal text to contrast Christ, as lifegiving spirit, with the first Adam, as a mere living body. However, this did not much help his case. His argument seems to be, essentially, an appeal to what was probably common belief, that Christ is a spirit (*pneuma*). That Christ is in bodily form is taken for granted, as is the conclusion: Therefore there *is* a spiritual body. Instead of spelling this out, he turns directly to one of his favorite notions, that we must be metamorphosed, reshaped into the form of Christ, and that when we are so we shall be rid of our old form/man/body (he shifts from one term to another as convenience dictates). The great example is 2 Cor 3:5, where he begins in 3:6 by contrasting the new covenant of the spirit with the old

covenant of the letter, develops this at some length, and then concludes (in vs. 17), “But the Lord is the spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord (is, there is) freedom, and all of us ... gazing at the glory of the Lord, are transformed according to that same image, from (the) glory (of the old man or covenant) into (the) glory (of the new), inasmuch as (this transformation is effected) by the spirit of the Lord. Therefore ... (4:3) if our gospel is hidden, it is hidden (from the sight of) those who are going to destruction, in whom the god of this world blinded the minds, (that is, the minds) of the unbelievers, to the (end that they) may not glimpse the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is image of God ... (4:6) For (it is) the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’, who shone in our hearts to light up the knowledge of the glory of God [90] in the face of Jesus Christ. However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels [that is, our physical bodies], ... suffering persecution, ... (4:10) always carrying around the death of Jesus in our body, in order that the life of Jesus, too, may be revealed in our body.... (4:16) Therefore we do not take this badly, but even though our external man is being destroyed, yet our internal man is renewed day by day,” and so on, through most of the next chapter. Compare Romans 12:2: “Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

By means of this notion of the Christians’ transformation from physical bodies into spiritual bodies, Paul is able to reconcile his argument for resurrection of the dead with his assertion, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 15:50). This assertion may have been a concession to his opponents, or to early Christian opinion in general—we find the same idea implied in John 3:5f., where Jesus says, “Unless one be born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit” with the implication that only spiritual beings can enter the spiritual kingdom. On the other hand, it is possible that Paul’s statement is simply an explanation of his own position and a transition to the eschatological conclusion that will follow. In either event it concludes the argument in which our text occurs, and we can now step back and look at that argument as a whole.

It’s a surprisingly indirect argument, and a weak one. Paul was not alone in speaking of seed as dying when planted; we find the same metaphor in John 12:24, although with a different application: Jesus says, concerning his own death, “Unless the seed of grain die when it falls into the ground, it remains alone, but if it die, it bears many grains.” Probably the image was one in common parlance, as it remained to the time of Burns’ *John Barleycorn*.

There were three Kings into the east,  
 Three Kings both great and high,  
 An' they hae sworn a solemn oath  
 John Barleycorn should die. [91]

The poem goes on to tell how he did die, rose up as grain, was harvested, threshed, roasted, and became distilled spirits. But even if Paul's metaphor was taken from common speech, the point is that it is not in point. The question to which Paul had to address himself was, "With what kind of body will the dead be raised?" To answer, "Death is the only way to a new life," is irrelevant.

Very well, Paul might say, the relevance is that of the whole metaphor. The revival of vegetation from the earth is one of the common symbols of, and arguments for, the revival of individual life from the tomb. Now when vegetation revives it comes up with a different sort of body than that of the seeds; so when individuals revive, their bodies will be different from those that were buried.

This unlikely analogy is mainly of interest as showing how badly off Paul was for an argument. There was little support for his position in the Old Testament, which has almost nothing to say about life after death. Ezekiel 37 reports a vision of dry bones coming back together, growing flesh and sinews, and becoming once more living bodies. But this was only a vision, less prophecy than allegory, and yet worse, it foresaw restoration of the old, natural body—just what Paul did not want. His departure from such precedent is surprising, the more so because he had doubtless been following Pharisaic teaching (as he often did) by insisting on bodily resurrection. At the same time, however, he was reinterpreting it drastically (as he often did) by teaching that the body to be raised would not be this present one of flesh and blood controlled by the principle of natural life (*psyche*), but something made of spirit (*pneuma*), different in substance as well as in qualities from our previous dwelling. Pharisaic teaching—if we suppose that in this matter it can be inferred from rabbinic—insisted that the resurrected body would be of the same physical sort as the present one. The resurrected righteous will not only enjoy the enormous Messianic banquet, but keep their heads and their liquor, and go on, after dinner, to beget children.<sup>3</sup> This is an [92] agreeable picture of the future, and while one is indulging in miracles, one might as well make the most of the opportunity. Why, then, was Paul breaking with his background?

---

<sup>3</sup> H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, München, 1922-41, on Matt 22:28, and vol. IV, 2, *Exkurse* 29.II. C, Nr. 2, p. 890; *Exkurse* 31.III. Nr. 4, pp. 1146ff.

What follows in his argument gives no answer to that question, nor to the one Paul was supposedly addressing. It is another and yet feebler analogy: As there are different kinds of vegetables, so there are different kinds of meat—flesh, fish, and fowl. Again the idea harks from his Jewish background,<sup>4</sup> in which distinction of different kinds of meat was important, but again, both the background and the idea are unimportant. The idea serves merely as a transitional element in the series Paul is constructing: different types of vegetable bodies, different types of fleshly bodies, different types of spiritual bodies. Consequently he goes on at once to his goal—another analogy: heavenly bodies, too, differ from earthly bodies and also differ from each other in glory. “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars” (1 Cor 15:41). That magnificent opportunity was what Paul the rhetorician had been after.

By this circuitous route he has also come near his desired conclusion and has suggested, in advance, biblical support for it. The notion that the resurrected dead will resemble the luminaries appears in Dan 12:2f., “Many of those who sleep in the dust of earth will awake, ... and those who make (men) intelligent will shine as the glory of the sky, and those who make many righteous, as the stars forever and ever.” We cannot be sure this verse was in Paul’s mind—he never cited Daniel and probably never echoed him<sup>5</sup>—but the idea that the dead would be stars or would join the stars was widespread at the time.<sup>6</sup> For the Stoics (whose opinions were rapidly becoming a sort of common consensus among the [93] *bien pensants* of ancient society) the supreme God, the mind, the world, the stars, and the souls of individuals were all forms of “spirit” (*pneuma*).<sup>7</sup> For individuals, in particular, Diogenes Laertius (VII.156) declared that the Stoics “say the soul is the spirit (*pneuma*) which grows together with us; it is therefore a body and survives after death.” Accordingly, having reached the heavenly bodies which were thought to be composed of spirit, Paul had no difficulty in concluding that, as there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. His argument from the example of Christ was primarily to identify the Christian’s spiritual body with the body of Christ, and so equate the metamorphosis of the person into a spiritual body with the metamorphosis of the personality into the body of Christ.

All right. There are spiritual bodies and when you rise from the dead you will have one, and this is the direct answer to the question

<sup>4</sup> See Strack-Billerbeck, on 1 Cor 15:39.

<sup>5</sup> Never unless (A) he wrote 2 Thess, and (B) 2 Thess 2:4 is an echo of Daniel. Both A and B are dubious.

<sup>6</sup> F. Cumont, *Lux perpetua*, Paris, 1949, 144ff., 159f., 167, etc.

<sup>7</sup> “Plutarch”, sc. Aetius, *Placita philosophorum* 1.7.33.

from which he started ten verses before. But why did it take him so long to say so? When he asked himself the question, “With what sort of body will the dead be raised?” and had up his sleeve a commonly respected answer, “With a spiritual body”, why didn’t he simply give the answer?

In part, I think, he wanted to hark back to the first section of the dispute and to bring one more argument for the resurrection of the dead—the argument from the annual revival of vegetation, a great pagan commonplace he had not been able to work into the Biblical and Christian context of the first half of the chapter.

Another reason, perhaps, was that he was aware of a weakness in his answer. If that which dies at death is a man’s physical, “psychic” body, then giving him a spiritual, “pneumatic” body is not quite resurrection of the dead, i.e., of that which died, just as giving a mutilated man metal limbs is not the same as making the old ones grow back. The new body may be better than the old one in some respects, but it is not the old one come back to life, and Paul needed continuity, not only to answer his opponents, but also because of his own theory of living metamorphosis into the body [94] of Christ. Consequently he had to compromise when expressing himself about the novelty of the resurrected body.<sup>8</sup>

Another reason for Paul’s compromise may have been the contradictory traits in the resurrection stories known to him, for they, too, were composed to serve contrary purposes. On the one hand they were to defend the actuality of the resurrection of Jesus’ body, and to silence reports that the witnesses had merely seen a ghost. Hence both in Luke 24:39ff. and John 20:20,27, the risen Jesus is made to show his wounds; in John 21:9ff. he cooks and serves food, and in Luke he eats; even in Matthew the women take hold of his feet (28:9). On the other hand, these stories were to demonstrate his supernatural powers; therefore, besides having risen from the dead, he miraculously appears and disappears, goes through locked doors (in John) and in Acts 1 ascends into heaven. Behind these stories, in turn, may lie not only the mixed motives of those who told them, but the mixed hallucinations of

---

<sup>8</sup> Paul’s compromise was to have far reaching consequences in Christian exegesis. The easterners, with their interest in spiritual gifts and freedom from bodily necessities, generally insisted on the distinction of spiritual from natural body, and found other texts in Paul for that purpose—the Christian, reborn in Christ, was to be neither Greek nor Jew, neither male nor female, but a new creature (Gal 3:28 and parallels), etc. The westerners, with their interest in morality, legal liability, and the like, found other texts to justify their insistence that the resurrected body would be the same, and would therefore have the same legal claims and liabilities, as the one buried. F. Altermath, who has written a model history of the early Christian exegesis of 15:44—*Du corps psychique au corps spirituel*, Tübingen, 1977—has traced the two lines clearly, and astutely remarks that what held them together was their common acceptance of the contradictory elements of the resurrection myth, e.g. in John 20:19-29.

the earliest Christians, who may actually, after the crucifixion, have “experienced” not only illusory sights and sounds, but also tactile sensations. The consequently conflicting reports, compounded with Paul’s own experiences, could easily have made him hesitant about specifying the nature of the bodies with which the dead would be raised (cp. 2 Cor 12:2).

These considerations may explain, too, why, in his round-about way of dealing with the question, he began with burial. That [95] beginning may be a tacit appeal to a widespread ancient belief. Many, in Paul’s time, thought burial a rite by which the buried were made beings of a higher order. Paul’s emphasis on the burial—the sowing of the seed—would therefore suggest to many of his readers some justification for his claim that the resurrected body would be somehow greater, but still, even if different in substance, the body of the same person.

For this view of burial and its consequences there is a huge body of evidence, and around that body there is a colossal cocoon of dispute, so we cannot possibly discuss the question thoroughly. All I hope is to point out some major sorts of evidence that argue for existence of the belief as a factor in the Greco-Roman world of Paul’s time, and to show how the belief was expressed in some ritual practices which will help to explain Paul’s thought.

First, let me emphasize that this is a question of the Greco-Roman world. Of course the dead had been deified in Egypt from time immemorial, but I see no evidence of Egyptian influence on this side of Paul’s thinking. As for Palestine and Syria, there is no question that in some Semitic pagan thought the dead were gods. The witch of En Dor, when she called up Samuel, cried out, “I see a god rising from the earth.”<sup>9</sup> However, the Old Testament and Pharisaic Judaism had so completely turned their backs on this side of Semitic paganism that we can more probably suppose Paul’s break with the tradition is due to the Greco-Roman part of his experience than to any contacts he may have had with pagan Semites. Perhaps my opinion, here, is simply due to the fact that so much more is known about the Greco-Roman material.<sup>10</sup> That being the case, let us discuss the material known. [96]

Of course we can’t begin at the beginning. We never can, because in history, as in personal life, we have lost all conscious memory of the beginning. But for history, archaeology tells us that during the dark

---

<sup>9</sup> 1 Sam 28:13. The plural of the participle is contradicted by the singular in the following verse, and is probably to be explained as reverential, to prevent confusion of this god with Yahweh.

<sup>10</sup> Here things at last begin to change. The collection of iron age Semitic inscriptions and the study of their religious content in works like J. Teixidor’s *The Pagan God* (Princeton, 1977) promise a better future. For the present, however, I must leave the Semitic side aside.

ages of gestation and infancy that preceded the beginning of the Greeks' historical memories in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., they had already begun to revere tombs and, presumably, the tombs' supposed inhabitants. The basis of this reverence was probably, in large part, architectural. To invaders scarcely able to build hovels, the great tholos tombs that survived from Mycenaean times were evidence of mysterious powers far beyond their own. The dead who had made and who continued to live in them were therefore powerful beings to whom one might turn in times of need. They were not the invaders' own dead, so the invaders felt no obligation for their regular care and tendance, but the tombs were honored, enclosed, and protected, and when occasions of need arose, occasional offerings were left there.<sup>11</sup>

When the invaders settled down, their own dead settled with them. After a century or so their great men were no longer buried far away, in the old country, but near at hand, where they had lived only a few years before. So their descendants turned to them, as well as to the builders of the great tombs, for counsel and help. Since these were their own dead, they also had to take care of them. Regular tendance soon developed, and soon thereafter was confused with worship. As powerful beings in the underworld, the dead often came to be identified with some of the non-human underworld powers, and vice versa. The resultant complex of Greek chthonic and hero cults is of notorious complexity<sup>12</sup> but from it, one simple fact emerges: Ancient Greek religion was characterized from the earliest times historically known to us by the important place it gave to worship of the dead. Especially in [97] the classical period, shrines of heroes were in some places as many as the shrines of gods, and some heroes were the objects of more day-to-day observances and popular devotion than most gods received. Theseus in Athens, Asklepios in Epidaurus and later in Cos and elsewhere, Herakles in innumerable sites (where he was worshipped as a hero, not a god) are merely the first examples that come to mind. The list could easily be extended and would be long. Two of the most important oracles in Greece—those of Amphiaraos and Trophonios—were accredited to heroes, though Trophonios may have been a god before he became a hero, as Hyacinthus certainly had been. The practice of treating minor gods as heroes was widespread, and shows the importance of heroes vis-à-vis gods. From this background, perhaps, Euhemerism, the theory that all the gods were great men of old, later emerged.

---

<sup>11</sup> See J. Boardman and D. Kurtz, *Greek Burial Customs*, London, 1971, pp. 22ff. Dr. Kurtz neglects the irregular character of much ancient worship.

<sup>12</sup> See the discussion in M. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 2 ed., Munich, 1.1955. 183ff.

Incidentally, in view of what we shall see later, it is important to note that the cults of heroes were closely connected with the physical remains of their bodies, to which great importance was therefore attached. The Spartans were told by the oracle of Delphi that they would not be given victory over their neighboring rivals until they had discovered, brought back to Sparta, and buried properly the remains of the hero Orestes. They did so and were thenceforth victorious (Hdt. 1.67f.). Kimon much increased his popularity by bringing home to Athens, from Skyros, the remains of Theseus (Plutarch, *Theseus* 36, 3f.; etc.). Again, these are only the examples that come at once to mind, others could surely be found, and all go to explain the importance attached to burial.

Let me say, at once, that I have chosen "burial" as an ambiguous term, to head off any discussion of the relation of cremation to inhumation. Cremation was customarily followed by inhumation of the ashes, in an urn, or storage of the urn in an underground chamber, so "burial" will customarily do for cremation. One of A. D. Nock's public services was to go through carefully the evidence for cremation and burial in the first three centuries of the Roman Empire, and discuss its theological significance in an important [98] paper.<sup>13</sup> His conclusion was that, throughout this period, in most pagan circles, the choice of one or another was determined usually by fashion and considerations such as economy. This being the case, the concern at that time was evidently not to preserve even the main structure of the dead man's body, but to make sure that its remains, whatever their condition, were treated as society thought proper. For brevity's sake we may call any such proper treatment "burial".

However disposed of, the dead were believed to keep their human form. Everybody knew that, with few exceptions, they did so, because they were often seen, both in dreams and in waking visions. Moreover, they were often recognized, which few could have been unless they had kept their old appearances. Everyone knew the wonderful scene in the Iliad, when Achilles was visited by the soul of Patroclus, "like him in every respect—stature, and beautiful eyes, and his voice, and the garments he wore," (XXIII. 66f.) and after their talk Achilles "reached out with his dear hands" to take him "and did not grasp him, but the soul went away like smoke" (99f.). And everyone knew, too, the account of the underworld in the Odyssey (XI), where Odysseus, while awake, meets his mother and his dead companions, all in their familiar bodily forms, but the bodies now are intangible, as was Patroclus' (204-

---

<sup>13</sup> A. D. Nock, "Cremation and Burial," *Harvard Theological Review* 25.321-59, reprinted in his *Essays*, Oxford, 1972, 1.277-307.

222). A fixed circumlocution for “souls” (*psychai*) is “the likenesses (*eidola*) of the dead.”

Both Patroclus and the first of Odysseus’ companions who approached him, Elpenor, came to request burial, and the request of both was urgent. Patroclus besought Achilles, “Bury me as quickly as possible, so that I shall pass through the gates of Hades. The souls, the likenesses of the dead, keep me far off and do not let me mix with those beyond the river, but I wander by myself beside the wide entrance of Hades’ house” (*Il.* XXIII.71-4). Similarly Elpenor plead with Odysseus, “I entreat you, by those whom we left behind, ... by your wife and your father, ... and Telemachus, [99] whom you left as your only child... do not leave me behind unburied and unmourned when you set out for home, lest I become a cause for the gods to hate you, but burn me with my gear, such as I had, and heap up a mound for me” (*Od.* XI.66-75).

With such passages in the Homeric poems it is understandable that in Greek classical culture, shaped by these poems, burial was a sacred duty. That, however, was not the consequence of these passages alone; rather these should be seen as expressions of a widely shared and deeply held conviction that burial was necessary for the well-being of the dead, a conviction of which there are so many other expressions in Greek art and literature that it suffices to mention only the greatest, Sophocles’ *Antigone*. Not only was burial, for the Greeks, a sacred duty, it was also, even the burial of strangers, a legal obligation.<sup>14</sup>

These archaic beliefs—that the dead had supernatural powers, so that many were important as protectors and helpers (the Greek word was “saviours”), and that the well-being of the dead was somehow dependent on their being given burial—were by no means lost in hellenistic times. With the decline in importance of the city states, civic heroes, like other civic officials, lost something of their old political importance, but heroization, as a practice, not only continued, it was extended. All sorts of people were heroized: founders and legislators of states, great generals and the soldiers who had died in great battles, poets and philosophers and even athletes; and many of these new heroes were worshipped not only because of their past achievements, but also with the hope of their future help.<sup>15</sup> Even well-to-do private persons set up, by their wills, cults for themselves and their relatives, to be maintained by the beneficiaries of their bequests.<sup>16</sup> This may be

<sup>14</sup> J. Kollwitz, “Bestattung,” *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. T. Klauser, II, 1954.200.

<sup>15</sup> The classic account is L. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, Oxford, 1921, Ch. 13 (pp. 361-72), with many examples.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. B. Laum, *Stiftungen in der griechischen und römischen Antike*, Leipzig, 1914, I, pp. 68ff., II, nos. 43, 45, 117.

thought evidence [100] for the devaluation of the concept, but along with it we find evidence for even greater reverence of the dead. Heroes had been, at best, theoretically inferior to gods, but with hellenistic and Roman times the deification of men, both living and dead, becomes increasingly common. Not to mention Alexander and the diadochoi, epitaphs for private individuals explicitly deify the deceased.<sup>17</sup> So do funerary reliefs. A recent collection of those that so honored private persons contained a catalogue of 345 items.<sup>18</sup> These are only those preserved.

Besides such worship of exceptional individuals, ancestor worship, for all deceased parents of the family, continued and probably increased in importance with the increasing power of Rome. It had “always” been an established part of Greek domestic religion, but it was a much more important part of Roman.<sup>19</sup> For the Greeks, Farnell, who was inclined to minimize it and to explain all he could as mere “tendance” or precautionary measures, nevertheless felt himself obliged to write, “We cannot determine when first the souls were habitually spoken of as *hoi kreittones* (the more powerful), a title which certainly suggests worship,”<sup>20</sup> and he goes on to cite Aristotle’s statement, “Besides thinking the dead blessed and fortunate, we ought to think it impious to say anything false against them, ... because we should be speaking against persons who had already become better and more powerful (than we). And these principles are so ancient and archaic in our society that nobody at all knows either when they began or who first laid them down, but they are simply convic[101]tions that have always been held.”<sup>21</sup> This reverence was backed up by the regular family cult familiar from Rohde’s charming description.<sup>22</sup> As for the Romans, they had from the earliest times regular cults both of the *di parentes*—the divine ancestors of a given family—and of the *di manes*, literally “the good gods,”<sup>23</sup> the divine spirits of all the dead, at first a collectivity, but early given narrower references, so that in some contexts *di manes* and *di parentes* become almost interchangeable. With imperial times the plural, *di manes*, comes into common use for

<sup>17</sup> R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Roman Epitaphs*, Urbana, 1942 (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 28.1-2), pp. 100-106.

<sup>18</sup> H. Wrede, *Consecratio in formam deorum*, Mainz, 1981, with some of the world’s funniest funerary monuments.

<sup>19</sup> For the Greek practices see Farnell, *Hero Cults* (above, n. 12), 355ff. For Rome, A. D. Nock, “Deification and Julian,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 47.1957.121; = *Essays* II. 833-46, esp. 842f.

<sup>20</sup> Farnell, *Hero Cults*, 351.

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *Fragmenta* (ed. Rose), no. 44, from Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 115 B-C.

<sup>22</sup> E. Rohde, *Psyche*, 4 ed., Tübingen, 1907, I.240ff.

<sup>23</sup> A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*, 3 ed., Paris, 1951, *sub voce* “*manes*.”

the soul of a single individual. Cicero (*De legibus* II.9.22) when outlining his ideal Roman law code, rules: "The legal rites of the divine *manes* are to be maintained, and each man is to think of these deceased as gods," and he goes on to argue from ancient customs that from time immemorial Roman authorities had wished the dead to be considered gods (II.22.55). In this matter he expressed popular opinion. The *manes* were expected to be the protectors of the righteous in the hereafter; the funeral eulogy of a good woman ends with the prayer, "may your divine *manes* protect you."<sup>24</sup> And they were also the helpers of the living. Nock, who particularly emphasized expectation of help as a criterion of true worship of the gods, conceded that, "Roman *parentatio* seems to imply the hope that the dead can help, just as it is stated by Plato, *Laws* 927A", and he cited as probably genuine prayers (not mere funerary rhetoric) two epitaphs, one asking the dead to "save all [102] your kinsfolk", and another by parents who spoke of their dead child as a "god who hears (prayers)".<sup>25</sup>

As for the importance attributed to burial: Vergil in *Aeneid* VI took over completely the Homeric tradition. Aeneas' care for the body of Palinurus was presumably one of the many items in the poem that were intended to be exemplary. The importance of the disposition of dead bodies, as a matter of Roman law, is not in doubt—it is demonstrated by Cicero, *De legibus* II. A noted peculiarity was the requirement of interment, as distinct from cremation, and the legal satisfaction of this requirement by cutting off, from a body about to be cremated, one small member (which had to contain at least one bone) to be interred. Cremation was permitted, but interment was legally required.<sup>26</sup> Much more conspicuous evidence of the importance Romans attached to the disposition of their dead is given by the miles of funerary monuments that lined the approaches to Roman cities, an obvious record of vast financial sacrifices.<sup>27</sup> Along the Appian Way such structures ran continuously, on both sides of the road, all the way to the Alban Mount, some 14 miles. And the Appian Way was only one of the eight or ten great roads leading out of Rome that had such accumulations. Even around small cities they were conspicuous, as

<sup>24</sup> *Laudatio Turiae*, end. M. Durry, in his edition (Paris, 1950), thought this referred to the two *daimones* supposed (by Persian mythology and theories derived from it) to be assigned to each man at birth. However, one of these *daimones* was evil, so the wish that your (plural) *manes* will protect you cannot refer either to both or to the (single) good one. Consequently its most probable reference was to the *di parentes*. Nevertheless, Durrie was inconsiderately followed by E. Wistrand, in his edition, Lund, 1976.

<sup>25</sup> A. D. Nock. "Deification and Julian" (above, n. 19), p. 843. The epigrams are Buecheler, *Carmina latina epigrapha* (= *Anthologia latina, pars posterior*) 576 and Kaibel, *Epigrammata graeca* 314.

<sup>26</sup> G. Rohde, "Os resectum," Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie* 18.2. 1942, *sub voce*.

<sup>27</sup> S. Showerman, "Death and Disposal of the Dead, Roman," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, Vol. 4, 1911, p. 506.

anyone knows who has walked the long stretch of road lined with tombs from Pompeii to the Villa dei Misteri.

To explain all this as social ostentation would beg the question. Why was this form of ostentation chosen, when so many others, more enjoyable and equally conspicuous, were available? The answer may be inferred from the many epitaphs in which the dead ask or give thanks for offerings, praise those who help to preserve [103] their tombs, or curse those who would damage them and, as one dead man said, “trouble me.”<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, though the dead continued to be revered and burial to be important, changes occurred. More and more men came to believe that burial was not enough. Even Homer had been aware that not everyone’s troubles ended with admission to the underworld. There was also the question of what would happen to you there. Homer’s moral standards were low, so he pictured punishments only for the worst offenders against the gods. But besides the question of punishment there was also that of pleasure. Even Achilles, the greatest of heroes, although in the underworld he was still a ruler, replied to Odysseus’ congratulations with the chilling comment that he would rather be a serf among the living than king it over the dead (*Od.* XI.482-91).

Clearly there was a market for a more agreeable afterlife. Several were soon made available. The most famous was that offered by the priests of Eleusis to those who came to them for initiation, but other sites had other rites, and cults not attached to special sites developed new rites that could be performed anywhere. Consequently, by the end of the hellenistic age the Greco-Roman world was full of competing cults, offering the protection of various gods who promised their worshipers assorted benefits in this life and, often, a happier hereafter. These cults usually claimed to secure their gods’ favors for particularly generous patrons by putting such benefactors through some special ritual(s), almost always secret; the cults that used such rituals are commonly called “the mystery religions.” The rituals were complex and differed greatly, but the most important of them seemed to have had one trait in common, by which they differed from ordinary Greco-Roman cultic rites. The ordinary rites were conceived, as Plato remarked, somewhat as business dealings (*Euthyphro* 14 b-e)—services owed to the gods as rulers and owners were performed as required by [104] tradition or religious law, gifts were brought them to atone for offenses or to secure favors, or in thanks for favors that had been granted, and so on. But the mystery rites were intended to

---

<sup>28</sup> Lattimore, *op. cit.* (above, n. 17), pp. 100-25, 220-29. The quotation is from p. 111 (my translation, Lattimore has “injures me”).

produce in the initiates some important psychological change, in Aristotle's famous words, to make them "not learn something, but experience something and be set right."<sup>29</sup>

For ceremonies that would have these effects, the creative liturgiologists of the hellenistic and early Roman worlds—and there must have been many of them—turned to the situations of their society in which alterations of consciousness occurred. Intoxication, wild parties (especially nocturnal) and the breakdown of personality that takes place in such circumstances and was often, in antiquity, thought the result of divine possession—this group was a natural choice and was understandably exploited in the mysteries of Dionysos, god of wine. Understandably, too, in Italy these mysteries soon ran afoul of the Roman authorities.<sup>30</sup> Thereafter their practices were considerably curtailed, but their iconography was perpetuated by wishful thinking on innumerable funerary monuments which show us what men hoped to have in the hereafter and generally could not have in the Greco-Roman world of small, strait-laced cities.

Since alcoholic alteration of consciousness had to be used with restraint, the producers of mysteries turned to two other classes of experiences—first, to those acts of everyday life that considerably alter our attitudes, second to the *rites de passage* of ancient society, which not only marked changes of social status, but also signaled and helped to produce changes of personality in those who went through them. Of the everyday acts, abstinence from food, wine, and sex were important preparatives to increase the effects of the ceremonies, and were almost universally used,<sup>31</sup> though not [105] admittedly for that reason. The commonly alleged purpose was to ensure purity. These abstinences, though prescribed, were usually private observances, not part of the mystery rituals proper. In those, the first everyday act suitable for liturgic imitation was washing, from which many rites were derived, above all, Christian baptism.<sup>32</sup> Anointing and clothing were often used,<sup>33</sup> eating and drinking yet more often—in Christianity they

<sup>29</sup> Synesius, *Dion* 8.48, "Set right" translates Greek *diatithesthai*.

<sup>30</sup> Livy 39.8-19.

<sup>31</sup> Livy 39.9f.; Apuleius, *Met.* II.23, 28, 30; *Papyri graecae magicae*, 2 ed., edd. K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, Stuttgart, 1973-4, cited by numbers and lines of the papyri (and henceforth as *PGM*), IV. 734f.; F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans l'empire romain*, 4 ed., Paris, 1929 (henceforth, Cumont, *RO*), p. 217, n. 39; p. 225, n. 35. These references, and those that follow in notes 32-34, give only examples. Nothing approaching a complete list has been attempted.

<sup>32</sup> Livy 39.9.4, Apuleius, *Met.* 11.23, Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles* 207, Nock, *Essays* 97f., Cumont, *RO* pp. 140, 145, also 35f., and note 34.

<sup>33</sup> Anointing: *PGM* IV.746, 770-75, Cumont *RO* 36. Clothing (and crowning): Apuleius, *Met.* 11.23f., *PGM* IV.176, 214f., Cumont, *RO* 36, n. 36, (denuding); 320 s. v. "habit sacerdotale".

became the basic acts of the eucharist.<sup>34</sup> Both singing and dancing were widely used by pagans, but by Christians, chiefly singing.<sup>35</sup> Among the *rites de passage* of ancient society which the mysteries took over, the most important was marriage, which of course produced deep psychological changes in a world that highly valued premarital virginity of women and took strong measures to preserve it. However, that world also took strong measures against adultery and other sexual offenses, so, although copulation sometimes occurred, “sacred marriages” are probably more important in modern literature than they were in ancient practice.<sup>36</sup> Birth was not easily adapted to liturgical treatment, and the rites that accompanied the attainment of adult status were not much used by the mysteries, perhaps because the event they symbolized was fully conscious, produced [106] no sudden personality change, and was often recognized with some reluctance. There is much talk of birth or rebirth, of growing to the full stature of a man, and the like, in the homiletic literature,<sup>37</sup> but little representation of these events in the ceremonies. No doubt the same considerations limited the ritual use of death and burial. The alteration of consciousness that death seems to produce is not one generally desired, and that apparently produced by burial is nil. Therefore the occurrence of death and burial symbolism in ancient religious rituals is *prima facie* evidence of belief in some afterlife or alternate life to which death and burial were seen as entries. (I say “alternate” because we meet the idea of dying to this world spiritually, but continuing to live here in the body, while living spiritually elsewhere.)

Belief in the afterlife had been rationalized to some extent by the development of Greek scientific theories which distinguished different sorts of matter. Homer’s souls, *psychai*, had been of no stated material—mere inexplicable doubles of the persons from whom they came, and whom they resembled in all respects except intangibility. Now that the types of matter were classified, the question arose as to what the *psychai* was made of. “Spirit” (*pneuma*) was commonly said to be the most rarified and powerful form of matter; consequently it was also that most often supposed to be the material of souls, and the expression “his spirit”—which had formerly meant “his breath”—began to replace the old fashioned “his soul”. This pseudo-scientific

<sup>34</sup> Livy 39.8.6ff.—9.4, Apuleius, *Met.* 11.24, Philo, *Vita contemplativa* X (64-82), Cumont, *RO* 37, 65 and notes 75-77; 109 and note 52; 140, 198, 201 and note 51.

<sup>35</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* 8.27, Philo, *Vita contemplativa* XI (83-88), A. Nock, “A Cabiric Rite,” *Am. Journal of Archaeology* 45.577ff., Cumont, *RO* 243 and note 96; 101-2 and note 25; 203 and note 68.

<sup>36</sup> Livy 39.8.7 and 10.7, R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 3 ed., Berlin, 1927, 99f., 246ff.

<sup>37</sup> A. Harnack, “Die Terminologie der Wiedergeburt,” *Texte und Untersuchungen* 42.3. 1918.97ff., 1 Cor 13.11, Gal. 4.1-6, Eph. 4.13 and ff.

progress may have done something to extend the belief in an afterlife, but otherwise probably affected it little, partly because there was much disagreement about the terminology. For the Stoics and their friends the *psyche* was made of *pneuma*, for others the *psyche* was a lower power controlling physical growth, as opposed to the spiritual *pneuma* (so Paul); yet others declared the *pneuma* subordinate to the *psyche* (so *Corpus Hermeticum X*, where the *nous*—mind—is superior to both). While philosophers and theologians thus [107] juggled the terminology, most men continued to think of the dead as the doubles of the departed, intangible when they appeared, and gifted with sudden, miraculous, mobility, but able to speak, hear, and sometimes move objects or perform other bodily functions. Theories come and go, but superstitions are perennial.<sup>38</sup>

Accordingly it is not surprising to find that a number of pagan rituals tried to change men's consciousness by putting them through rites that mimicked death, burial, and resurrection. Perhaps this had already been a practice of the Bacchanalia that were suppressed at Rome in 186 B.C. For those we have only the account of Livy (39.10ff.), and Livy is wholeheartedly on the side of the authorities who suppressed the rites. According to him the cult had become a conspiracy for crime and debauchery, especially sodomitic rape, and the conspirators resorted freely to murder in ritual guise. Those of their initiates who seemed likely to make trouble were offered as sacrifices or attached to mechanical devices which suddenly plunged them into deep caves, their disappearance being explained by the story that they had been carried off by the gods (39.13.11ff.). This suggests that there were rites of some sort which led up to these sacrifices and sudden disappearances. One wonders whether or not these rites always had fatal results. Or were they usually preludes to ritual or hypnotic visits to the other world, so that occasional fatal results could be explained as due to the "unworthiness" of particular candidates? Without further information, we shall never know.

Our next comparatively datable evidence comes from Apuleius. About A.D. 150 he was initiated into the mysteries of Isis. The priest in charge told him in advance that the rite was "modeled on a voluntary death and a deliverance attained by prayer when ... the goddess ... put those who were, in a way, reborn, back on a new course of life" (*Metamorphoses* 11.21). After he himself had [108] gone through the rite, he claims, "I reached the limit of death, and when I had crossed the threshold of Persephone [Queen of the world of the dead], I

<sup>38</sup> For this same conclusion in different words, see F. Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel, Interprétation de 1 Cor 15.35-49 par les auteurs chrétiens des quatre premiers siècles*, Tübingen, 1977 (*Beiträge zur Geschichte der Biblischen Exegese* 18), 244.

returned" (11.23, end). This was all he wished to say as an account of the secret ceremonies.

At about the same time, two magicians in Rome, a father and son, both called "Julian the Chaldaean," were working out a set of similar rituals which the son continued to use for about the next thirty years. These they justified and explained (not to say "obscured") by a collection of "oracles," called after them, *The Chaldaean Oracles*, which became one of the sacred texts of later neoplatonism. From the preserved fragments of the *Oracles* and the neoplatonists' occasional remarks about the Chaldaeans' practices, their rituals have been ingeniously reconstructed by Hans Lewy, who was the first to point out that his reconstruction was necessarily conjectural.<sup>39</sup> That is not a serious objection, since all history is necessarily conjectural. The important question, in each case, is whether the conjectures are probable and well grounded. Lewy's conjectures were carefully based on texts and extremely cautious. He wrote: "The ascent of the theurgist's soul [to the heavens] was the concluding act of the principal Chaldaean sacrament. Several texts prove that it was preceded by another act which signified the death of the mortal body" (204f.). Then, after discussion of the texts, he went on, "The neophyte who ... has undergone the prescribed lustrations, is bidden to lie down upon the ground and to cover up his body, but not his head. Sacrifices for the dead are offered up as he lies." Then his soul is called forth, [109] probably by the rites used in necromancy, and sent on high by union with rays of light, as in the "Mithras Liturgy" (pp. 207f.).

As this last passage shows, Lewy drew for his reconstruction not only on reports about the Chaldaeans, but also on magical texts found in papyri, especially the so-called "Great Paris Magical Papyrus,"<sup>40</sup> which was written in the early fourth century but contains a large collection of texts, some of them probably two or three centuries earlier than the manuscript. One of these texts, commonly but inaccurately called "The Mithras Liturgy" (lines 475-820) has the form of a letter from a spiritual director to a "daughter," telling her how to attain immortality, essentially by reciting a spell and breathing in the rays of the sun, which will cause the magician (in spite of the address,

---

<sup>39</sup> H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*, 2 ed., ed. M. Tardieu, Paris, 1978. This includes (pp. 703ff.) an article, "Bilan et perspectives," by P. Hadot, who follows E. des Places in denying the attribution of the *Oracles* to the Julians, but, like him, has to rely for his objections on the lateness and confusions of the tradition, and is unable to explain how the oracles came to be called "Chaldean" if they were not by the Julians. However, confusions in a late tradition about a secret book are to be expected, and des Places' other arguments are from silence—a silence produced by excluding evidence which does not serve his purpose.

<sup>40</sup> Bibliothèque nationale, *suppl. gr. 574*, = *PGM IV*.

the text is consistently in the masculine)<sup>41</sup> to rise from the earth into the heavens and there, with the help of yet more spells, to meet various gods and receive various favors. In the course of the spells there are several references to the magician's "present and strongly pressing need" (and the like), and these have been taken to refer to the proximity of either real or ritual death,<sup>42</sup> but the reference is not clear. A postscript says, "This immortalization can be performed three times a year" (746-8), but this probably comes from a revision the text underwent some time prior to the present copy. The reviser turned it into a ritual for divination, which had to be repeated as new questions arose, but kept the wording of the earlier text which shows that its original purpose was once-for-all "immortalization" i.e. deification ("the immortals" are the gods). Among the [110] original elements seems to be a passage to compel the magician's corruptible, psychic nature—here, as in Paul, the psychic is inferior—to withdraw and leave him pure for the ascent, but with the provision that he is to be taken back, healthy, after the rite (lines 523-7, 530-35) This is followed by a warning that in the ascent "you will hear no sound of man or of any other animal, nor will you see any of the mortal things on earth" (542-4) This agrees with *Corpus Hermeticum* 10.6, a theosophic tract of about the same period (first or second century A.D.) which describes the total lack of movement, sensation, speech, and thought in the attainment of knowledge of the author's god. The rest of *Corpus Hermeticum* 10, also, with its account of how the bodily elements withdraw from the mind and the mind flies up to heaven and leaves the body as a mere animal (chs. 16 and 24) is closely related to our text, and the relation is evidence that these "Hermetic" tracts had behind them not only speculation, but practice involving trances of a sort that could easily have been understood as ritual death, and as means of ascent to the heavens and of deification.

Not only the trances, but also the deification, the change of nature believed to result from performance of these rituals, was likewise understood as death. At the end of the "Mithras Liturgy," when the great god has finally appeared, the magician says, "Lord, assuming a new being I cease to be. Being made greater ... I die. Emerging from physical becoming and set free, I go into cessation of being ... as you have ordained and according to the mystery you have made" (718-24).

---

<sup>41</sup> This suggests that the address to the "daughter" is genuine. The writer who sent the text to her did not compose it, but used an earlier one written for men. This use preceded the remaking of the text from a ritual for immortalization to one for divination, and that, in turn, preceded the present copy, so the original text was at least three literary generations older than our mid-fourth century manuscript.

<sup>42</sup> Reitzenstein, *Op. cit.* (above, n.36) 182, on lines 503f., 525f., etc. (which he cites as 29 and 34).

“When you say these things [he will at once give you an oracle and]<sup>43</sup> your psyche will be dissolved (?) and you will no longer be in yourself” (724-6).

Another passage of the Paris Magical Papyrus is even more to our point. It, too, is a pretended letter (lines 153-285), this time pseudonymous: “From Nephotes to Psammetichus,” and it, too, tells how to attain divinity/immortality. The rite is to be done with [111] a director, though his functions are never specified. It is simple: Spread a sheet on a roof and lie down on it, supine and naked, at about 11 A.M. Have your eyes covered with a black band and yourself wrapped up like a dead man (i.e., presumably, a mummy). Turn your eyes to the sun and shut them, and recite the specified spell to the god Typhon. “Mighty Typhon, ruler and dynast of the world above, god of gods, King ... I am he who, with you, dug over the whole world and found the great Osiris, whom I brought to you, a prisoner. I am he who fought with you against the gods. I am he who closed the double doors of heaven and put to sleep the invisible dragon, who stopped the sea, the tides (?), the streams of the rivers, until you could master this realm. I, your soldier, have been conquered by the gods; I have been thrown prostrate because of unjustified anger. Raise up, I beseech you, your friend, I entreat you, and do not cast me down on the earth, King of the gods.... Empower me, I beseech you. Grant me this favor, that, when I tell any of those gods to move, I shall at once see him moving because of my spells” (179-200).... “When you say these things three times, you will have the following sign of the god’s attention ... A sea hawk, flying down, will strike you with his wings, on your face (?) thus indicating that you should arise. You, then, getting up, clothe yourself in white garments, and burn ... incense ... saying as follows: ‘I have been united with your holy form. I have been empowered by your holy name. I have received the overflow of your goodness, lord, god of gods, King, *daimon*’... When you have done these things go down (from the roof), having attained a nature equal to a god’s” (210-220).

The mythology behind that hymn is a fascinating puzzle, but the main outline of the action is, I think, clear. The ritual death and burial is the justification of an entreaty which gets from the god a favor (Greek *charis*, in Christian texts commonly translated “grace”). The god’s servant is not merely raised from the dead, but is given divine nature. He is, as Paul said of Jesus at the beginning of Romans, “according to (the operation of) the holy spirit [in *PGM IV*, as in the Gospels’ baptismal stories, the spirit is mediated [112] by a bird]

---

<sup>43</sup> Here the bracketed words are in the Greek text, but they probably came from the reviser who made the text into a ritual for divination.

designated from the resurrection of the dead as son of god [a derivative divine being] with power” (Rom 1:4).

I hope this evidence for the importance of burial in the first and second centuries A.D. as a means of attaining supernatural status, will help explain not only the text from which we started—where Paul, to explain the supernatural bodies of the resurrected dead, began with burial—but will also explain the more important texts in which Paul makes Christian baptism the symbol of Christ’s burial. That symbolism was not a likely one. Baptism and burial are conspicuously different. Christ had been baptized, as well as buried, and his baptism had reportedly been followed by the declaration of his divinity, “This is my beloved son” (Matt 3:17, etc.). Accordingly it would have seemed appropriate to make Christian baptism a symbol of the baptism of Christ. Paul, however, wrote in Romans 6:3f., “Don’t you know that all of us who have become (parts of) Christ by baptism<sup>44</sup> have become, by baptism, (participants of) his death? That is to say, we were buried with him in death by baptism, in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead ... thus we, too, should live a new life.” I trust that the reason for Paul’s strange symbolism, and the sort of thing he had in his conscious mind, will now be clear.<sup>45</sup> What he may have had in his subconscious mind is another question. Whether or not these rituals of death were devised to gratify the desire for it, whether or not the spiritual body expected in the resurrection was a projection of the desired body of our dreams, which we dream of attaining in the deeper sleep of death—these are questions to which history leads us, but to which only psychology may find the answers.

---

<sup>44</sup> Literally, “have been baptized into Christ,” *Eis* has the sense of “into” in the English expression “drafted into the army”.

<sup>45</sup> The image was an important one in Paul’s thought. Notice the repetition (or imitation?) in Col 2:12.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

### SALVATION IN THE GOSPELS, PAUL, AND THE MAGICAL POPYRI

[63] I wish I could begin this paper by asking for a show of hands. If you were making a list of things you must do or get in the coming week, how many of you would include “salvation”? My expectation is that not one hand would rise. Salvation is like the kingdom of God—something we all hope for, but in the far future. “Thy kingdom come, but not just now” is a familiar prayer. Consequently, in our mental shopping lists of *immediate* concerns, salvation rarely figures, though we should all claim to want it eventually. This is true of the shopping lists we take to the gods, no less than of those we take to the supermarkets. Therefore the supermarkets of the gods, religion and magic, though they always stock salvation, don’t sell much of it. The day-to-day, bread-and-butter business of the average priest, like that of the average magician, concerns the problems, big and little, of everyday life.

For religion, this was pointed out brilliantly by Versnel (1981: 1-68). He began by citing a book I have not been able to get my hands on and must therefore cite from him: Bonnet (1977), a collection of prayers from French churches and pilgrimage shrines. “Holy Virgin, your great grace and protection for my air trip to Hungary, April 15, leaving 11:50, and for son, daughter-in-law, and grandson April 27, 10 past 10, arriving 1:35; return May 14, 3:50 to 6:40. Heartfelt thanks of a mother.” Another was simpler, “Cure my goat.” Another showed more altruism: “For the conversion of our President and all our government.” (There is true faith; the belief that all things are possible to God!) From my own experience I can assure you that in this matter French and Americans are at one. The church to which I was attached during most of my service as a priest kept a box into which members of the congregation could drop requests that they wished to have made in the secret prayers at the consecration of the eucharist; so, day in and day out, I offered the blessed sacrifice “with special intention” for Mary’s relief from hay fever, the [64] reconciliation of Jack and Jill, the victory of the church team in next Saturday’s game, Susan’s passing her examinations, and so on and on. To the best of my recollection, nobody ever asked prayers for anybody’s salvation—except, of course, for that of the dead or deathly sick. Except when death is near or here, in the everyday life of ordinary people, salvation is not thought of as a pressing need.

Nevertheless, occasionally, many people can be persuaded that they need it now. This the success of its salesmen shows. Salesmen of patent medicine had similar spectacular successes, before their activities were limited by law. But besides the legal limits, there are natural ones. Rarely does a revivalist rise to the control of any sizable society (the outstanding exceptions occur in politics, rather than recognized religion—Hitler, for instance, and Robespierre). Nevertheless, in every generation a few religious revivalists do attract large followings and accumulate large fortunes, as tangible evidence of the sizable minority market for what they offer. Women begin to need salvation when they lose their looks and their fertility; men, when they come to suspect their own unimportance. The onset of old age is apt to produce a need for it; so do serious disease and death, mentioned above. Adolescents, in our society, often decide they need it when they are forced to leave the playpen in which we confine children, to look at the rest of their life as a whole and face the awful question, What do you want to be?

“Saved” is a short, easy answer, but it begs another question, What do you mean by salvation? The common answers to this can be classified in various ways, one being, for instance, by the way they relate salvation to time and space. Some promise it in the present; others, soon after death; others, at the end of the world. Various combinations are possible, but the antithesis between present and future types is so prevalent and important that it has been used, for instance, by Wilson (1973) as the basic criterion by which to classify many enthusiastic religions. (What he bluntly calls “magic” is more often politely termed “realized eschatology.”) [65]

Besides differing about time and place, notions of salvation differ in content over a range that runs from popular ideas of the goings on in Mohammed’s “garden” to the wheeling circles of stars in Dante’s *Paradiso*. The root word, *sōs*, originally meant “as ever, alive and well, undamaged,” and the verb, *sōizein* meant “to save from harm, keep a thing in its proper physical condition,” whence came the secondary meanings, “rescue, heal preserve,” etc. This is the range of meanings the verb usually has in its forty-odd uses in the synoptics,<sup>1</sup> where the word “salvation” (*sōtēria*) never occurs except in four verses of Luke, three of which imitate Old Testament references to the “salvation”—i.e. preservation—of Israel.<sup>2</sup> However, the thought of protection/preservation was soon carried over from the physical to the moral sphere, and so the gospels occasionally speak of saving from sins (Matt 1:21 *etc.*), and among circles that took a darker view of this present life

<sup>1</sup> In all but one of the thirteen instances in Matt (1:21, “save from sins”; 18:11 is spurious); in all thirteen instances in Mark (contrast 16:16, which is spurious); in all but four of the sixteen instances in Luke (exceptions: 8:12; 9:24; 13:23; 19:10; spurious, 9:56).

<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:69, 71, 77; the fourth is 19:19—“salvation came to this house.”

“save” came to refer not to preserving it, but to getting out of it and into a better. This meaning the verb seems to have in three exceptional verses of Luke, and three spurious verses of the synoptics,<sup>3</sup> though in expressions so brief the precise sense is somewhat uncertain. The same meaning appears in John 5:34 and 10:9,<sup>4</sup> and is common in Paul, who uses *sōtēria* (“salvation”) a dozen times, in all but one of which it refers not to preservation of this life, but to the attainment of a different one.<sup>5</sup> As to whether the difference would be one of nature and qualities, of time and setting, or both, Paul did not choose to be clear, and so we shall not try to be. We shall put off the question, as he did, with the words: “Whether in the body or out of the body, I know not. God knows” (2 Cor 12:3).

In their use of *sōs* and its cognates the *NT* texts can well be compared with the magical papyri. The papyri turn out to side with the synoptics rather than Paul. This is understandable, since Jesus seems to have been a more typical magician than Paul, more concerned with individual cases—cures, exorcisms, and the like—less tangled in administrative efforts and theoretical disputes. Differences between the usage of the magical papyri and that of the synoptics are also understandable. The gospels tell stories of [66] one magician and his chosen practices; the papyri give formulae and directions that many magicians had produced for many purposes. The magicians of the papyri were more interested in divination, less in medical magic; thus the papyri’s use of *sōs* and its derivatives, which commonly refer to health, is, in proportion to their total text, considerably less frequent. However, they use the verb *sōizein* half a dozen times, five meaning “protect, preserve” and one, in the middle voice, “be saved,” i.e. recover from an illness.<sup>6</sup> Of the first five, four speak of healing or protection procured by magic,<sup>7</sup> two describe the god addressed as one who saves/rejoices in saving his own (worshippers),<sup>8</sup> and one, in a prayer for exorcism addressed to the headless *daimon*, affords a parallel to the absolute use of *psychēn sōsai* in Mark 3:4 with the meaning “to cure a man.”<sup>9</sup> Besides these, a magical list of salutations

---

<sup>3</sup> Those specified above in note 1.

<sup>4</sup> In John we also find the notion that the whole cosmos will be saved: 3:17 and 12:47.

<sup>5</sup> The one (possible) exception is Phil 1:19. 2 Cor 6.2 quotes the word from Isaiah 49:8, but gives it Paul’s meaning.

<sup>6</sup> *PGM* 30(c).3, a question to an oracle. The others are 3.215 (cf. vol. 2, pp. 241ff.); 4.121ff.; 5.140; 57.4; 70.19. Their dates range from the early second to the fourth centuries A.D. as do those of the early N.T. papyri.

<sup>7</sup> In 57.4 it is the magician who promises to protect the god.

<sup>8</sup> 3.215, cf. p. 241, 1.19; and 4.121ff.

<sup>9</sup> 5.140. The petition does not prove that the possessed was thought to be in danger of death.

addresses one of its gods simply as “Saviour;”<sup>10</sup> Artemis-Selene is once described as “saving from fear” (*PGM* 4.2288); and there are three petitions for “salvation,” in all of which it is closely linked with “health.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, in sum, the papyri generally speak of salvation as saving/preserving the present life, rescuing it from danger, preventing/repairing damages, occasionally improving it, but principally keeping things going. All this is, as we have seen, the synoptics’ common usage. So much for the evidence from the terms.

By contrast, when it comes to facts, the papyri and Paul are surprisingly similar. Here, however, I must face a preliminary problem. To describe the religion of Paul is, in Shakespearean terms, to take up arms against a sea of quibbles and expose oneself, on every side, to the slings and arrows of outrageous exegetes (cf. *Hamlet* 3.1.58f). Therefore I shall call on Paul and make him speak for himself. He says his gospel is “the power of God for salvation” (Rom 1:16), because “the kingdom of God is not a matter of words, but of power” (1 Cor 4:20). This power is “the power of the spirit” (Rom 15:19). “The spirit is the Lord” (Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 3:17 and “he who adheres to the Lord is one spirit” (with him, 1 Cor 6:17). Hence Paul can say, “I live no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal [67] 2:20). “By the spirit one man is given wisdom in speaking, another ... knowledge ..., another faith ..., another (miraculous) gifts for healings ..., another the ability to distinguish (inferior) spirits. All these things one and the same spirit (i.e. the Lord) does” (1 Cor 12:8-10). This spirit—the list of whose works could be greatly extended—is “the part-payment made in advance” (*arrabōn*) of our full salvation (2 Cor 5:4f.), for “the life of Jesus should be manifest in our body” (2 Cor 4:10) as we also “carry about the death of Jesus in our body” (*ibid.*). “All who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death; we have been buried with him by baptism into death in order that, as Christ was raised ..., thus we, too, may walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:3f.). Therefore “our outer man is destroyed, but our inner is renewed day by day. For the present light (burden) of our affliction secures for us, beyond all measure, an eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor 4:16f.). Therefore, too, union with Christ is, paradoxically, not yet full salvation; it is only the advance payment. We progress towards it; it “is now nearer than when we (first) believed” (Rom 13:11) and Paul still

<sup>10</sup> 81.3. The other recognizable names in the list are Helios, Sarapis-Kneph (?), Abrasax, Elohim, Adon, and Cherubin (?).

<sup>11</sup> 3.577; 7.333; 13.803. In the first and last of these the similar lists of desiderata have different terms in different orders except for the pair *hygeian, sōterian*, which seems an almost synonymous unit. 3.577 is interesting because, as a *quid pro quo* for the gifts requested, it invites Lao to “come with joyful face to the bed you yourself desire.” Much has been written about magicians trying to compel the gods; that they also tried to make them has been strangely neglected.

has to “hold down his body and treat it like a slave” lest he should not reach the goal (1 Cor 9:27).

These quotations from Paul seem to me to fit together (roughly) and outline a recognizable account of salvation not *of* our present life, but *from* it. This account, however, raises some questions. First, how do we get the spirit? If immediately when we hear the gospel and believe (Gal 3:2), then, since the spirit is Christ, we should at once become participants in Christ’s death and resurrections and new life. How, then, can we account for Paul’s description of baptism as a magic rite by which one who has already believed is at last made to share the death and resurrection of the god (Rom 6:3f.)? Is not this otiose? Since the statement that the convert “received the spirit ... by the hearing of faith” (Gal 3:2) fits Paul’s general position, he should have recognized that baptism is open to the same objections that he brought against circumcision: “Having begun with the spirit, will you now be finally made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal 3:3). How can such inconsistency be [68] explained? Probably by the fact that he has combined two sources—his own and other missionaries’ experiences (those who hear the preacher are seized by the spirit)<sup>12</sup> and the tradition, ritual and teaching of the Jerusalem church which had perpetuated Jesus’ baptismal practice,<sup>13</sup> but abbreviated it and interpreted it in the “light” of his death and its members’ resurrection experiences. (Note that their interpretation was no less magical than the original rite!) Jerusalem’s influence reached many churches, so the disagreement between the baptismal ritual and the missionaries’ experience affected others as well as Paul (cf. the Petrine traditions in Acts 10:47; 11:16f.). Yet other theories about the gift of the spirit were developed,<sup>14</sup> and the question is even now disputed by those who still believe in spirits.

Another question raised by Paul’s account concerns the consequence of receiving the spirit. If the baptized believer adheres to the Lord so that the two become one and he thenceforth lives no longer as himself, but Christ lives in his body (1 Cor 6:17; Gal 2:20), then to whom is Paul talking when he urges his converts to side with the spirit against the flesh (Gal 5:16; Rom 7:14-25)? To a congregation of incarnate Jesus Christs? The exhortation would seem needless. Of course this difficulty can easily be solved by dismissing “I live no longer I” and similar expressions as mere rhetorical exaggerations. Admittedly, Paul is prone to rhetoric, but in such passages it seems more likely that he meant what he said. Perhaps, therefore the difficulty should not be “solved,” but recognized, because it reflects

<sup>12</sup> Gal 3:2; cp. Acts 10:44; 11:15.

<sup>13</sup> On Jesus’ use of baptism see Smith, 1973: 209-54.

<sup>14</sup> Acts 8:15-19; 19:1-6; evidence of developing episcopal discipline, not to say “power grabbing.”

the actual inconsistency in the experience of persons whose personalities are liable to drastic changes. Such inconsistency is well illustrated by many passages in the magical papyri which were written to induce “daimonic possession” and which anticipate its consequences.

Getting spirits is one of the major functions of the magic of the magical papyri. Without counting, I should guess that about 70% of the longer texts in *PGM* deal with ways of getting spirits and things one can hope to do with their help. In many of these rites the magician, to control an inferior spirit, declares, especially at the climax of a spell, [69] that he “is” a greater one: Iao, or the headless *daimon*, or Moses, or some other supernatural entity (*PGM* 5.110, 145, 147; *et passim*). These identifications are even more transient than Paul’s. No consequences are drawn from them save that for which they are asserted—to compel the obedience for the inferior power. They show us alteration of the personality—deliberate, probably auto-hypnotic, alteration—at its most transient, almost like that of the actor “possessed” by his part, or the conductor by his score, but they are first steps towards the more enduring, but still partial, possession of the sort claimed by Paul.

As we said, most of the magical papyri are concerned with salvation in the synoptic sense—attaining, improving, or perpetuating our good life in this world. Consequently, when they call up spirits it is usually for one or another particular task, most often prophecy. These are strictly “ministering spirits” which must be kept in their place and made to obey (*PGM* 1.80; 3.288; etc.), as Paul insists that “the spirits of (sc. called up by) the (Christian) prophets are to be subject to the prophets” (1 Cor 14:32). It was for dealing with such spirits that the gift of “discerning (i.e. distinguishing, knowing the nature of) spirits” was important in Paul’s churches (1 Cor 12:10; 14:29). Here, too, the spirits spoke through those who called them up—that is why they are called “the spirits of the prophets,” i.e. of those through whom they speak. The practice was evidently like that of modern “mediums” and represents another form of comparatively brief, auto-hypnotic “possession.”

A few rites, however, have as their object permanent deification or, at least, transformation of the magician’s nature so as to take him out of/save him from the world/life in which he has hitherto lived. Most significant as parallels to Paul are the very few in which this transformation and salvation are to be effected by union with a spirit. However, we may first look at one or two that only partially match the Pauline pattern.

One, the pretended letter of “Nephotes to Psammetichus” in *PGM* 4.153-221, is a rite for union with a god, the union to be effected, like

Paul's by a ritual funeral. Instead of [70] being buried in baptism, one lies down beneath the sun, dressed as a sacred mummy, and recites a prayer to Typhon, declaring oneself his soldier killed by the hostile cosmic powers, and asking his help. His power comes down, as Iao's did on Jesus, in the form of a bird. The initiate is then to rise from the dead, dress in white garments, as a victor, burn incense and say, "I have been united with your holy form (cf. 2 Cor 3:18). I have been empowered by your sacred name (cf. Acts 3:16). I have received the effluence of your goodness; Lord, God of gods, King, Daimon." A rubric concludes, "Having done these things, go down (from the roof) having attained a nature equal to the god's" (cf. John 5:18).

Since the spirits of the dead were an important species of *daimones* (the genus of supernatural beings to which even the gods belonged) dying might be one form of upward mobility. Vespasian's deathly sick joke, "I fear I am becoming a god" (Suetonius, *Vespasian* 23.4), referred not only to the Roman imperial cult, but also to common opinion. In Egypt sanctification was effected by drowning; even an animal or an insect could be "made an Osiris" by being properly drowned, mummified, and worshipped (*PGM* 1.5 [hawk]; 3.1 [cat]; etc.). This may be the background for the equation of baptism with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection—a problem generally neglected, but not negligible. Immersion in water does not resemble crucifixion at all, nor burial closely, so the probably pre-Pauline interpretation of *baptism* as a means of acquiring Jesus' spirit/nature through participation in Jesus' *death by crucifixion and burial*, is odd. The deification points to Egypt, and the earliest connection between Christianity and Egypt may be Rabbi Eliezer's report, about A.D. 80(?), that Jesus had gone to Egypt and learned magic there.<sup>15</sup> I argued in *Jesus the Magician* (1978), p. 48, that this was supported by Matthew's legend of the flight into Egypt (made up to "explain" Jesus' having been there); it is also supported by the many Egyptian elements in Jesus' magic, particularly the eucharist, to which the closest parallel is in the *Demotic Magical Papyrus (DMP)*.<sup>16</sup> Consequently it is not [71] implausible to suppose that Jesus took over baptism from the Baptist but, in the light of his own experience (Mark 1:9-11) and his knowledge of Egyptian magic, equated it with death by drowning, as a means of becoming what he had become after baptism, a son of God. This would have left his followers a baptismal rite already equated with dying and attaining Jesus' nature; to interpret it as participation in

---

<sup>15</sup> *Tosefta Shabbat* 11.15 and the Talmuds, *Babli Shabbat* 104b, *Sanhedrin* 67a, *Yerushalmi Shabbat* 12.4(13d). Some censored editions may not contain some of these passages. See Smith, 1978: 47 and 178.

<sup>16</sup> 15.1ff., on which see Smith, 1978: 122f.

Jesus' death (in spite of the latter's inappropriate form) could have been done, and apparently was done, before Paul was baptized.<sup>17</sup>

Another magical rite that resembles Paul's, but not wholly, is the famous immortalization (= deification) of the so-called "Mithras Liturgy" (*PGM* 4.475-820) where the change is effected by hallucinatory ascent into the heavens. This I pass over as familiar.<sup>18</sup>

A spell yet closer to Paul is found in the second half of the Leiden papyrus (*PGM* 13.783-806):

You, Lord of life, ruling the heavens and the earth and all things living in them, you whose justice is not turned aside, whose glorious name the Muses sing, whom the eight powers (the Egyptian Ogdoad) escort, who have truth without any lie, your name and your spirit are upon good men. Come into my mind and my intelligence for the whole time of my life, and accomplish for me all the wishes of my soul. For you are I and I am you.

This has a couple of parallels in *PGM* (12.238-57; 21[c]). The version just quoted concludes with words practically equivalent to Paul's, and they are followed by a list of expected gifts of the spirit, in which we find a good many of those listed by Paul. Admittedly, there are differences. The magicians of *PGM* do not seem to have formed organizations and so the administrative gifts are not asked for in such lists, but cures and exorcisms, discerning spirits, and so on, are often promised or requested. The most important element of Paulinism lacking in *PGM* 13 is the reference to life after death.

That, however, is found in two spells. The clearer is *The Familiar Spirit of Pnoutheos, the Temple Scribe* (*PGM* 1.43-196), a long description of how to get an "angel" (also called a "god"—the interchange of the terms is found already in Judges 13:21f.). Pnoutheos' angel will perform all [72] sorts of services and will "always remain with you" (165); this means "within your call," for just as Paul and Jesus, in spite of their possession of the holy spirit, repeatedly pray to their god and call on him, so do the magicians. Finally, Pnoutheos' spirit, "when you die, will wrap up the body as befits a god (i.e., as a mummy) while, carrying your spirit, he will bring it into the air with him. For you will not go into Hades, having been established by a powerful familiar as an aërial spirit; for to him all things are subject."

<sup>17</sup> This contradicts my previous belief that equation of baptism with dying began after, and as a consequence of, Jesus' death (cf. Smith, 1973: 216f.). This will entail reconsideration of a number of gospel passages in which the equation appears.

<sup>18</sup> On the role of a similar ascent into the heavens, in Jesus' baptismal rite, see Smith, 1973: 237-48; for the "Mithras Liturgy" see the translation by M. Meyer, Scholars Press, 1976 (*Society of Biblical Literature, Texts and Translation*, 10). The spell was originally for immortalization (= deification), but has been made over into one for divination; the redactional alteration are fairly clear. Another text for deification (without ascent) is the *Prayer of Jacob*, *PGM* 22(b).

Compare Paul: “At the trumpet of God ... those dead in Christ will rise first, then we, the living, will be caught up with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess 4:16f.). Since the familiar of Pnouthos is identified as “the Lord of the air” (*PGM* 1.128f.), who was also known to the forger of Ephesians (2:2), we may expect something like a school reunion. Many magical gems show some god or *daimon*, half-running, carrying over his head a mummy. Often the victor’s palm and/or wreath are in the field, as they are in the background of Christian rhetoric (Apoc 4:4; 7:9).

The other spell asking salvation of the Pauline sort is in the Mimaut Papyrus (*PGM* 3.550-90). It reads, in outline, as follows:

Come to me, creator of all, God of gods ... (etc., a creation hymn); come to me, Lord, who once brought forth light ...; hear me, Lord, me (so-and-so), mercifully and pleasantly and with good result ... for I call on your holy name ... Fill me with (your) spirit. Your name is ... Iao (and vowels, etc.). Come to me with joyful face, to the bed you yourself wish, giving me (so-and-so, masculine) life, health, salvation (*sōtēria*), wealth, good children, knowledge, good repute, good disposition, good counsel, glory, memory, favor, form, beauty in the eyes of all men who see me (etc., more magical names). I beseech you, King, accept my entreaty ... so that now you may enlighten my knowledge of the things you love, and after my physical body is well put away, I beseech, Lord, accept this my request ... that my spirit be taken up from my bier (?) and come to you, the Lord of all, that you may do all the things of my prayer, begetter of the gods.

Notice that the salvation here requested is a condition to be realized in this life, one of the many here-and-now benefits requested. It is therefore distinct from the [73] postmortal translation to the heavens which the magician also requests. This combination of partly realized present, and anticipated future, beatification is just what we find in Paul (e.g. 2 Cor 4:1-5:10). It shows that not all of Paul’s inconsistencies need to be explained as consequences of his combination of different stands of magical and Christian tradition. Some of them were indigenous to pagan magic, as well as to Christianity which was magical to begin with.

**Works Cited**

- Bonnet, S. *Prières secrètes des Français d'aujourd'hui*. Paris: A. Colin, 1977.
- DMP* = *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*. F. Griffith and H. Thompson, eds. London: Grevel, 1904. Oxford University Press, 1921, 3 vols.
- NT* = *The New Testament = Novum testamentum graece*. E. and E. Nestle, K. Aland, et al., eds. 26th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979.
- PGM* = *Paypri graecae magicae*. K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, eds. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973-74. 2 vols. Cited by papyrus and line.
- Smith, M. *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- . *Jesus the Magician*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978.
- Versnel, H. "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer." *Faith, Hope, and Worship*. Ed. H. Versnel. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981 (= *Studies in Greek and Roman Religion* 2).
- Wilson, B. *Magic and the Millennium*. London: Heinemann, 1973.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

### THE ACCOUNT OF SIMON MAGUS IN ACTS 8

[735] Professor Wolfson's lucid analysis of the intellectual make-up of gnosticism has cleared the way for a restudy of the historical traditions concerning the individual gnostics, of whom Simon Magus was often said to have been the earliest.<sup>1</sup> The first major element in the Christian tradition about Simon is the story in Acts 8:4ff., probably written about 80 A.D. In the Revised Standard Version it reads as follows:

Now those who were scattered (from Jerusalem by the persecution which arose after the death of Stephen) went about preaching the word. Philip went down to a city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs which he did. For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice; and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city. But there was a man named Simon who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the nation of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. They all gave heed to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is that power of God which is called Great.' And they gave heed to him, because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even [736] Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me also this power, that

---

<sup>1</sup> H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (Cambridge, 1956), I, 495ff., esp. 512ff. Simon appears as the first of heretics in Justin, I *Ap.* 26; Irenaeus 1.16ff. and many subsequent writers.

any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, 'Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.' And Simon answered, 'Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.'

This is a piece of Christian propaganda against the followers of Simon. Its primary object is to show that the cult of Simon is inferior to that of Jesus because Simon himself was converted to Christianity and baptized by a Christian. Moreover, it intends to show that Simon was inferior to the apostles, as well as to Jesus, because he never received the power to communicate the holy spirit to his followers, though he tried to buy it, and was publicly rebuked by the apostles and accepted their rebuke and asked them to pray for him. Just for good measure it adds that Simon had a shady past: He had previously been a magician and it was his magical prowess which had made his followers believe that he was the Great Power of God.

Of criticisms of the story to date, the most challenging has been one which takes as its point of departure the break in the middle.<sup>2</sup> [737] After Simon's baptism the narrative jumps to Jerusalem whence Peter and John are sent down to Samaria and by their prayers and laying on of hands bring down the holy spirit on those whom Philip had already baptized. Since there is a similar incident in Acts 19:1ff. where Paul by rebaptism and laying on of hands gives the spirit to a group of disciples in Ephesus (who had hitherto been baptized only into the baptism of John) critics have supposed the notion that only apostles could give the spirit was a special concern of the author of Acts, who remodeled the story of Simon to introduce it. Originally the story represented Simon as trying to buy from Philip the power to do miracles, and getting his rebuke for that.

But Acts sometimes<sup>3</sup> represents the spirit as given without laying on of apostolic hands, so this theory of its motivation is dubious, and the internal evidence for remodeling is not conclusive. In particular, it is not likely that Simon the magician should be represented as bidding for the power to do miracles. Let us therefore turn from the question of the laying on of hands to the story of the baptism.

---

<sup>2</sup> Most effectively presented by A. Loisy, *Les Actes des Apôtres* (Paris, 1920), *ad loc.*

<sup>3</sup> Acts 10:44 and 11:15.

We have another example of a first-century Palestinian figure who was baptized into one Jewish sect and then proceeded to set up his own in competition. This was Jesus. The story of Simon's baptism looks very much like a Christian's telling against the Simonians the sort of story which the followers of John the Baptist were telling against the Christians to prove Jesus' inferiority to John. That such a story was told by the followers of John can be inferred with confidence from the Christian attempts to answer it, for instance, the way Matt 3:13-15 develops the Marcan account of the baptism (Mark 1:9-11) by making John protest his inferiority and Jesus demand to be baptized anyhow, "for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."<sup>4</sup> If Simon really was baptized by a Christian, the Simonians must have had their account of the matter, [738] explaining that it, too, was necessary "to fulfill all righteousness" (or something equally vague).

Thus considerations of polemic interest require us to question the report of the baptism and it is obvious that similar questions are raised by the report of the attempt to buy the power to confer the spirit. At most it may be evidence that the Simonians did not claim to confer the spirit by the laying on of hands and that Pauline Christians alleged this as proof of the inferiority of the Simonian sect and invented this story to rub in their allegation.<sup>5</sup> Similar questions, too, are raised by the charge that Simon practiced magic. That charge is common ancient abuse, applied alike to all sorts of people: Jesus, Apollonius of Tyana, the philosopher Apuleius and the emperor Tiberius. Used of religious leaders like Simon and Jesus it probably means that their fame as miracle workers was so well established that their opponents could not deny it. This is not to say that they may not also have practiced magic. Common abuse is often true, that's why it is common. But just because it is common we cannot (without further evidence) be certain of its truth in any particular instance.

Here let us cast a preliminary balance. What now seems to emerge from the story in Acts? It would seem to indicate that about 80 A.D. the author of Luke-Acts knew a tradition—either written or oral, we need not try to decide—to the effect that one Philip, of the Jerusalem community, had gone to Samaria to preach the gospel, and had made many converts there. Luke dated this after the death of Stephen, probably in the late thirties. He also knew and was anxious to embarrass the followers of a certain Simon, whom he believed to have been active in Samaria about that time. Simon had a great reputation as a miracle worker, which Luke could not deny, but explained by

<sup>4</sup> John's avoidance of the story of Jesus' baptism is no less informative in this respect than Matthew's apology for it.

<sup>5</sup> For the basic importance of the gift of the spirit in Pauline circles, see Gal 3:2ff., a good commentary on Acts 19:1ff.

calling him a magician. To provide his fellow Christians with further ammunition against the Simonians he reported or elaborated or invented two stories, one, that Simon had been baptized by Philip, the other, [739] that he had tried to buy from Peter and John the power to confer the spirit and had been refused and humiliated.

Of these two stories we have seen that the account of the baptism had a striking parallel in the account of Jesus' baptism being circulated by the followers of John the Baptist. This alone might have given Luke the idea of transferring it to Simon, but the idea would have been more easily come by if Simon had actually been baptized.

That Simon was baptized by a Christian, however, is quite unlikely, because Christian tradition contains a number of hostile accounts of him which depend on sources other than Acts. Had he really been baptized by a follower of Jesus, they would not have failed to emphasize the fact as a demonstration of his inferiority, just as Acts does. Since they say nothing about it, the probability is that it never occurred.

But this does not exclude the possibility of Simon's having been baptized by some other group, whose rite would not have had the same value for Christian propaganda (particularly if it has also been administered to Jesus), but would have sufficed to suggest to Luke (or his source) the slander which now stands in his text. And as a matter of fact it is reported that Simon was originally a member of the sect of John the Baptist.<sup>6</sup> Therefore it is not unlikely to suppose that he was at one time baptized by John or one of John's followers.

This supposition is confirmed by the details of the story in Acts, especially the facts that the baptism is in Samaria and that it is not accompanied, but followed, by the gift of the spirit. As remarked above, the other instance in Acts where a baptism is followed by a separate gift of the spirit is a case where the first baptism was Johannite. And in the fourth Gospel we have two contradictory traditions about the conversion of Samaria. On the one hand, this Gospel claims it was begun by Jesus;<sup>7</sup> on the other, it reports a saying of Jesus', addressed to his disciples, that in Samaria "others labored and you have entered into their labors," others [740] sowed and you reaped, "that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together."<sup>8</sup> This is very like another saying which the fourth Gospel puts in the mouth of the Baptist, making him declare himself the friend of the bridegroom who rejoices together with the bridegroom.<sup>9</sup> If the sower in Samaria who rejoices with the reaper is John who rejoices with Jesus, then the

---

<sup>6</sup> *Clementine Homilies* 2.23.

<sup>7</sup> John 4:41.

<sup>8</sup> John 4:36-8.

<sup>9</sup> John 3:29.

conversion of Samaria and the baptism of the converts must have been begun by John or his followers. A likely explanation of the above facts would be that Simon was baptized by them and later started a sect of his own, claiming to be the Great Power of God, come down to earth. Yet later Philip came from Jerusalem and won over many of the Samaritans, including a good many of Simon's followers, to Christianity. This may have been facilitated by the fact that Philip belonged to a group of Jerusalem Christians, the so-called "hellenists" which had many similarities with the Qumran sect, and the Qumran sect, in turn, had important points of contact with the Johannites and with Samaria.<sup>10</sup> If so, the story of the coming of Peter and John to Samaria and their introduction of the rite of giving the spirit by the laying on of hands, may reflect the yet later advent to the city of a Pauline type of Christianity, different in this and perhaps other respects from that of the "hellenists." But such speculations, though not inherently improbable, cannot be confirmed. The most we can say is that the story of Simon's baptism, in Acts, the report about Simon in the Clemen[741]tina, and the contradictory traditions in the fourth Gospel about the conversion of Samaria, all fit together if we suppose Simon to have been a disciple of John the Baptist.

Acts says Simon had been astonishing the Samaritans by his magic "for a long time" before Philip arrived, so his career would seem to have begun about the same time as that of Jesus. But, like Jesus, he did not remain a Johannite; he started a sect of his own. In Luke's time his enemies reported that he claimed to be "somebody great" and his followers said that he was "that Power of God which is called Great."

The claim to be "somebody great" was also attributed by Rabban Gamaliel, if the western text of Acts reports him correctly,<sup>11</sup> to an earlier troublemaker called Theudas. Josephus<sup>12</sup> tells us that Theudas was a magician (i.e. worked miracles) and said he was a prophet and persuaded the people to follow him to the Jordan, saying he would divide the river by his command and enable them to cross. His followers were cut to pieces by a troop of Roman horsemen and he

---

<sup>10</sup> For the similarities of the hellenists to the Qumran sect see M. Simon, *St. Stephen and the Hellenists* (London, 1958 [Haskell Lectures, 1956]), pp. 90-91, and the earlier studies by Cullmann and Johnson, referred to there. For Qumran's connection with Samaria, J. Bowman, "Contact between Samaritan Sects and Qumran?," *Vetus Testamentum* 7 (1957), 184ff.; with John, W. Brownlee, "John the Baptist," in *The Scrolls and the NT*, ed. K. Stendahl (N.Y., 1957), p. 33ff.; S. McCasland, "The Way," *JBL* 77 (1958), 222ff., Cullmann's reconstruction, which refers the "others" of John 4:38 to the hellenists, is unconvincing because it supposes a greater separation between the hellenists and the twelve than that suggested by the account in Acts. Of course, the account in Acts is apologetic; nevertheless, as the evidence stands, it is better explained by taking the "others" to be the Johannites.

<sup>11</sup> Acts 5:36.

<sup>12</sup> *Antiquities* 20.97f.

was beheaded. This was one of those Palestinian risings of which Eisler long ago demonstrated the messianic character.<sup>13</sup> We may take it, therefore, that the claim to be "somebody great" was a messianic claim and that by attributing it to Simon, Luke meant to stigmatize him as a messianic pretender like Theudas and—we may add, though Luke would have distinguished—like Jesus.

This is perfectly in accord with what is known about Samaritan history at this time. The Samaritans were no less agitated by messianic pretenders than were the Jewish sects. About 35 A.D., for instance, some unlucky leader persuaded many of them to assemble at their holy mountain, Gerizim, where he promised to reveal to them the holy vessels which were supposed to have been hidden there, and of which, it was believed, the revelation would mark the end of foreign rule and the beginning of the kingdom of God. [742] Pilate used troops to break up this gathering and a number of the participants were killed.<sup>14</sup> So it is no less likely that Simon claimed to be the Messiah than that Jesus did so.

But Simon's followers, like those of Jesus, conceived their Messiah as a supernatural being. Simon's are said to have identified him as "that Power of God which is called Great." So Acts reports, and the report is perfectly credible. The concept of "powers" as properties of objects is one of the most widespread and influential in Hellenistic thought, and the personification of "powers" as supernatural beings was common.<sup>15</sup> Such personification is not found in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, but it appears in the Greek translations, beginning with the LXX. Here the Hebrew expression "the Lord of Hosts" is regularly translated "the Lord of the Powers," and the Powers of the Lord are urged to praise him.<sup>16</sup> This usage was taken over and developed by the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,<sup>17</sup> Philo,<sup>18</sup> and the New Testament,<sup>19</sup> and is continued in the later Samaritan liturgy.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, it was certainly believed well before Simon's time that these powers occasionally came down and appeared on earth. Appearances of angels on earth were frequently reported by the Old Testament and

<sup>13</sup> R. Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*, tr. A. Krappe (London, 1931), p. 253ff.

<sup>14</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.85-87. On the revelation of the sacred vessels as one of the functions of the Messiah, A. Merx, *Der Messias oder Ta'eb der Samaritaner* (Giessen, 1909), ZAW Beiheft 17, pp. 28 and 39ff.

<sup>15</sup> M. Nilsson, *Greek Piety*, (Oxford, 1948), pp. 103-10.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Sam 6:2, 18 etc.; Pss 102:21; 148:2; Dan 3:61.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Macc 3:28; 4 Macc 5:13; Enoch 61:10; T. Levi 3:33; T. Judah 25:2; T. Abr. 14; 3 Bar. 1:8; 2 Enoch 29:4; Ascen. Is. 1:3; 2:4; 4:2; 5:9 etc.; T. Sol. 2:4; 6:8(P) etc.

<sup>18</sup> *De fuga* 101; *de mut. nom.* 29; *de conf. ling.* 30.

<sup>19</sup> Matt 24:29; Acts 10:38(?); Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 1:24; 15:24; Eph 1:21; 1 Pet 3:22.

<sup>20</sup> A. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, (Oxford, 1909), II, LVI, s.v. *hyl*.

(as Prof. Wolfson has shown)<sup>21</sup> angels were identified by Philo as those divine powers which God sent into the world for the care of mankind. From the Old Testament reports it was of course common belief that when the angelic powers [743] appeared in this world they did so in human forms and spoke and acted like men.

The notion that a particular historical human being was actually the appearance or incarnation of a particular supernatural power seems also to have been common in Palestine during the first century A.D. No less than five Palestinian teachers of this century—Dositheus, John, Jesus, Simon and Menander—were believed by their followers to have been such supernatural beings.<sup>22</sup> In the second century the pagan philosopher, Celsus, said that the wandering prophets of the Palestinian coast regularly made such claims, and his Christian opponent, Origen, did not deny this.<sup>23</sup>

Celsus' statement is confirmed by the frequency with which first-century Christian and Jewish literature either advances or attacks such claims to supernatural character. The claims made for Jesus are, of course, familiar; we need remark only that for Paul, our earliest witness, Jesus the Messiah was "the Power of God,"<sup>24</sup> as Simon the Messiah was for the Simonians. Moreover, Paul himself claimed to be an incarnation of the Messiah. "I live," he wrote, "no longer I, but the Messiah lives in me."<sup>25</sup> Some similar concept may have accounted for the claim of Menander, Simon's disciple, to supernatural status.<sup>26</sup>

The case of Menander, for lack of evidence, we cannot decide, and that of Paul, for variety of evidence, is so complex that we cannot discuss it here.<sup>27</sup> As far as our present purpose goes, it is enough to point out that Paul's conception of the indwelling of the Spirit of the Messiah in himself and in all believers is concrete [744] in the extreme. For instance, when believers do not know what to say in prayer, the Spirit dwelling in them, using their voices, makes supplication on their behalf with inarticulate groanings.<sup>28</sup> This is the same belief which we meet in the Gospels, where Jesus questions the demons dwelling in a man and they answer him, using the man's voice.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>21</sup> H.A. Wolfson, *Philo*, (Cambridge, 1947), I, 372ff.

<sup>22</sup> Dositheus, Origen, *Against Celsus*, 6.11; John, *Clementine Recognitions* 1.54; Vigilius of Thapsis, *Contra Arium* 20; Ephraem Syrus, *Commentaire de l'Evangile concordante, version armenienne*, tr. L. Leloir (Louvain, 1954), CSCO Armeniaci 2, 249; Menander, Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* 26; Epiphanius *Panarion*, XXII.

<sup>23</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, 7.9.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Cor 1:24.

<sup>25</sup> Gal 2:20.

<sup>26</sup> See above, note 22.

<sup>27</sup> See H. Windisch, *Paulus und Christus*, (Leipzig, 1934) and the discussion which it occasioned.

<sup>28</sup> Rom 8:26.

<sup>29</sup> Mark 5:9.

A neglected corollary of this notion of the indwelling of the Messiah in the Christian is the notion of the indwelling of Belial in the unbeliever. Thus Paul argues that, since the Messiah and Belial cannot dwell together, there can be no marriage between a believer, who is a temple in which God dwells, and an unbeliever, who is an idol inhabited by a demon.<sup>30</sup> As by eating the Christian Eucharist the believer shares in the body and blood of the Messiah, so by eating things sacrificed to demons the unbeliever shares in the life of the demons.<sup>31</sup> As the ministry of Paul, the man of God,<sup>32</sup> reveals the incarnation of the Messiah “according to his working which works in me in power,”<sup>33</sup> so there is an anti-Paul, a man of Belial, who also claims to be an incarnation of God, but whose ministry is a revelation “according to the working of Satan in all power and signs and false miracles.”<sup>34</sup>

Paul’s further description of his opponent’s claims echoes Daniel 11:36, which reflects the claim of Antiochus Epiphanes to be a manifest god.<sup>35</sup> Since Antiochus’ time that claim had been made by many. Therefore it is not surprising that the synoptic Gospels make Jesus prophesy the coming of “false Messiahs and false prophets who will give signs and do wonders so as to lead [745] astray, if possible, the elect”<sup>36</sup>—a prophecy which early Christian commentators understood as referring to Simon Magus.<sup>37</sup> The letters of John were written, probably between 90 and 100, to Christians who believed such prophecies; the author assures them that anyone who denies that Jesus is the Messiah, or that he came in the flesh, is an antichrist, since in him dwells the spirit of the antichrist.<sup>38</sup> (The denial that Jesus came in the flesh appears later as one of the standard charges against the followers of Simon.)<sup>39</sup> Probably from about the same time, the *Didache* declares that “In the latter days (by which it means the time when it was written) false prophets will be multiplied...and then the deceiver of the world will be revealed as son of God and will do signs and wonders and the earth will be given over into his hands and he will

<sup>30</sup> 2 Cor 6:14ff.; cp. Rom. 7:17.

<sup>31</sup> 1 Cor 10:16ff.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 4:17.

<sup>33</sup> Col 1:29; cp. Rom 15:18.

<sup>34</sup> 2 Thess 2:3-9. The Greek “man of lawlessness” almost certainly renders the Hebrew “man of Belial”; see the evidence diligently collected and misunderstood by B. Rigaux, *Les Épiures aux Thessaloniens* (Paris, 1956), pp. 656-7.

<sup>35</sup> J. Montgomery, *A Critical... Commentary on... Daniel* (N.Y., 1927), p. 461.

<sup>36</sup> Mark 13:22, cf. 13:6; Matt 24:5, 24; cf. Luke 21:8.

<sup>37</sup> Origen, *On Matt* 33 and 41; *On Jer.* 5:3; *On John* 1:33(38); Hilary of Poitiers, *On Matt* 24:5; Apollonaris of Laodicea, *On Matt* 24:5; Jerome, *On Matt* 4:24; Macarius Magnes, *Apocrit.* 4.15; *Opus imperfectum in Matt*, on 24:5.

<sup>38</sup> 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7.

<sup>39</sup> So the *Epistula apostolorum*, Irenaeus, Pseudo-Tertullian, etc.

do unlawful things which had never been done before.”<sup>40</sup> (The Simonians were charged with all manner of unlawful practices.)<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the author of the Apocalypse saw “a beast from the sea” who had been given power by the devil to blaspheme God (in terms again recalling Daniel 11:36), make war against and defeat the saints, and be worshipped by all the rest of mankind; moreover, he had a false prophet, “a beast... from the land,” who looked like a lamb but spoke like the devil, and who acted with the demonic power of the first beast and made all the inhabitants of the earth worship him and did great miracles, calling fire down from heaven and vivifying the image of the first beast so as to make it breathe and speak.<sup>42</sup> [746]

It is generally conceded that such passages reflect ancient apocalyptic motifs, but the fact that they do so does not exclude the possibility that they refer also to contemporary persons and events.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, apocalyptic literature generally—the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament and the works of the Qumran sect, no less than Christian works—is precisely the product of that vision which sees in contemporary events and persons the fulfillment of ancient prophecies and the manifestations of primaeval supernatural powers. The imaginative fusion and confusion of ancient motifs with modern figures is not merely the characteristic, but the essential content of these works. To produce it, both the ancient and the modern elements are deliberately distorted, in the effort to prove that the one prophesied the other. We cannot look to such literature for accurate pictures of contemporary individuals or events, but we can expect it to reflect in caricature the major concerns of the men who wrote it.

Therefore in estimating the significance of the above passages we must keep in mind the great success of Simon’s church during the late first and the early second century. In the mid-second-century Justin Martyr declares plainly that Simon had had a great success in Rome and that “almost all Samaritans, and a few, even, among other peoples, confessing him to be the first God, do him worship.”<sup>44</sup> Even at the end of the second century Irenaeus still considers Simon as the founder and father of all heresy.

That in the first century Simon was identified as the Antichrist is the most likely interpretation of Sibylline Oracles 3.63ff. “From the

<sup>40</sup> Didache 16:3, for the date see J.-P. Audet, *La Didache*, (Paris, 1958), and my review in *Anglican Theol. Rev.*, 1961.

<sup>41</sup> Celsus in Origen, *A.C.* 6.6; Irenaeus 1,16ff.; Clement of Alex. *Stromateis* 7,17,107; etc.

<sup>42</sup> Apoc 13; *exousia* is *miraculous power*, not merely *authority*, cp. 19:20 and see the remarks in W. Bauer, *Worterbuch zum NT* (Berlin, 1952), *s.v.*

<sup>43</sup> See the wise remarks of W. Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*, tr. A. Keane (London, 1896), pp. 11-12 (neglected by E. Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 2 ed., Tübingen, 1953, HNT 16, p. 113f.).

<sup>44</sup> Justin, *I Apol.* 26.

men of Sebaste (Samaria) Beliar shall come hereafter, and will shake the height of the mountains, shall make the sea stand still, shall stop the great, fiery sun and the shining moon, and shall raise the dead and do many signs for men. But he shall have no power to fulfill (the prophecies, for which his signs gain credit). But, indeed, he deceives men. He shall deceive many believing [747] and elect Hebrews and other, lawless, men who have not yet heard the word of God. But as soon as the threats of the great God draw near, then a fiery Power will come through the swelling sea to the land and will burn up Beliar and all overweening men such as put their trust in him.” (And then the world shall be ruled by a woman, men shall throw their gold and silver into the sea, and God shall roll up the heavens like a book and all shall revert to fire). That this was written while Simon was alive is suggested by the fact that it expects him to be destroyed by a spectacular miracle which did not happen, and his destruction to be followed almost immediately by the end of the world. (That the world should be ruled by a woman is not a reference to Cleopatra, it is a thing as unlikely as that men should throw their gold and silver into the sea.)<sup>45</sup> Other passages in the Sibylline Oracles, notably 2.166f., may also refer to Simon, but are so vague that the reference is uncertain; his figure was evidently fused in apocalyptic imagination with that of Nero *redivivus*, whose coming was also expected to herald the end of the world, and in later passages we find Nero credited with miracles—raising the dead, flying through the air—which are undoubtedly parts of the Simon legend.<sup>46</sup>

A similar association of Nero and Simon (the Samaritan false prophet) appears in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, where both, again, are manifestations of Beliar.<sup>47</sup> Their association is the work of an early second century editor, who took older material, in which the individual figures had different references, and put it together as an expression of the concerns of his own time.<sup>48</sup> To investigate [748] the details of his reinterpretation—particularly his application to Jesus of the probably Simonian myth of the Messiah’s descent through the heavens in disguise—would take us too far from our present concern, which is merely to demonstrate the frequency, in the first century, of the notion

<sup>45</sup> The interpretation proposed here is that of Geffcken, accepted most recently by A. Kurfess, *Sybillinische Weissagungen* (Tusculum, 1951), *ad loc.* W. Bousset’s supposition (*The Antichrist Legend*, p. 96, followed by R. Charles and others) that *Sebastenon* means *of the imperial race*, is to the best of my knowledge, not supported by ancient usage of the term in that sense, cf. B. Rigaux, *L’Antéchrist* (Gembloux, 1932), p. 200.

<sup>46</sup> Sibylline Oracles 5.217 and 370; see the note by H. Lancheater to 5.216 in R. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford, 1913), p. 401.

<sup>47</sup> *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:2; 5:9.

<sup>48</sup> R. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (London, 1900), pp. xiff.; E. Tisserant, *Ascension d’Isaïe* (Paris, 1909), pp. 56ff.

that a particular historical individual is a supernatural being, whether “appearing” or “embodied” or “indwelling,” at all events, in one way or another, effectively present. (We cannot expect of first century thought an accurate awareness of the problems of fifth-century Christology.) We have seen this belief adopted by the followers of a number of first-century Palestinians (Dositheus, John, Jesus, Simon, Menander) and peculiarly developed by Paul. We have seen also that it accounts for the widespread expectation of a supernatural Antichrist. We may now, in conclusion, mention a number of miscellaneous instances.

*The Prayer of Joseph*, a work probably of the first century, represents the patriarch Jacob as an incarnation of an archangel called Israel.<sup>49</sup> Incidentally, the *Prayer of Joseph* was also part of that apocalyptic literary tradition—*Jubilees*, *Enoch*, etc.—which Christianity had in common with the Qumran sect. We know of it chiefly because Origen quoted it to defend his own opinion that John the Baptist may have been a supernatural Power appearing on earth as a man.<sup>50</sup> This opinion, we have seen, was held by John’s followers and also (according to the Gospels) by Herod Antipas<sup>51</sup> and by many others in Palestine who thought Jesus was a reappearance of John,<sup>52</sup> as Simon was later thought (and may have claimed) to be a reappearance of Jesus, i.e. of the Power which had appeared as Jesus.<sup>53</sup> The existence of some similar belief about Jacob is evidenced also by the occurrence of his name in lists of names of supernatural beings in the magical papyri (for [749] instance, in the *Sword of Dardanus*, in the Paris Magical Papyrus, he is linked with Eros, Adonai and Iao.)<sup>54</sup> The same beliefs were held about Jesus in his own lifetime by persons who were not his followers, but who used his name, as the name of a supernatural being, to cast out demons.<sup>55</sup> And the same beliefs were held about Paul, too (if we can believe Acts), by the sons of a Jewish “high priest” who used his name, along with the name of Jesus, for the same purpose. Their opinion was confirmed by the demon’s acknowledgment.<sup>56</sup>

In sum, then, the belief that a particular individual might be a supernatural Power come down to earth and appearing as a man, was

---

<sup>49</sup> M. James, *The Lost Apocrypha of the OT*, (London, 1920), pp. 21ff. The work was known by the editor of the *Ascension of Isaiah*, 4:22.

<sup>50</sup> On John 2:31.

<sup>51</sup> Mark 6:14.

<sup>52</sup> Mark 8:28.

<sup>53</sup> Irenaeus 1,16 and many subsequent authors.

<sup>54</sup> *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, ed. K. Preisendanz, I (Berlin, 1928), 126 (Pap. IV, lines 1730ff.)

<sup>55</sup> Mark 9:28.

<sup>56</sup> Acts 19:15.

reasonably common in first century Palestine. There is no cause whatever to doubt Acts' statement that the followers of Simon, in his own lifetime, believed him to be such a supernatural being. Whether or not Simon made the claim for himself, Acts does not say. He may well have done so.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

### PLUTARCH, DE SUPERSTITIONE (MORALIA 164E-171F)<sup>1</sup>

[1] The tractate *Περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας* (hereafter ΠΔ) is found in the thirteenth-century Planudean corpus of Plutarch's *Moralia*<sup>2</sup> and the title appears in the "Lamprias Catalogue" of Plutarch's works.<sup>3</sup> The author twice refers to himself as "Plutarch" (170A). Accordingly the work has generally been accepted as Plutarch's,<sup>4</sup> but the evidence is not strong. The Planudean corpus is a late collection and the catalogue, though its beginnings may have been early, was always liable to expansion.<sup>5</sup> The self-identification is so atypical<sup>6</sup> that it rather requires defense than affords proof of authenticity; it might be explained as a clumsy attempt to pass the work off as Plutarch's.<sup>7</sup> [2]

The style has many parallels with Plutarch's other works, but the content is not what one would expect of Plutarch. The tractate is not merely "About δεισιδαιμονία," but, "About δεισιδαιμονία, that it is worse than atheism," and the argument goes as follows: Ignorance of the gods produces, in the tough-minded, atheism, in the soft-headed, fear (δεισιδαιμονία). Of these two, atheism is the less harmful because: 1. Atheism is mere error, while δεισιδαιμονία involves both error and πάθος (emotional disturbance). Moreover this πάθος, fear (φόβος), is particularly bad. It inhibits action and so prevents escape, it affects all aspects of life, there is no relief from it in sleep nor in waking, nor by

---

<sup>1</sup> This article was read by Prof. H. D. Betz and Miss Ruth Dannemann; Miss Dannemann also verified the references of the first draft. To both of them I am indebted for many corrections.

<sup>2</sup> As no. 21. F. Babbitt et al., ed., *Plutarch's Moralia* (London, 1927ff.), vol. I, p. xxii. References to the *Moralia* throughout this article are to this edition, unless otherwise specified. References to the *Lives* are to B. Perrin, ed., *Plutarch's Lives* (London, 1914-26), 11 vols. (again, unless otherwise specified).

<sup>3</sup> As no. 155. *Moralia* XV, p. 22; K. Ziegler, "Plutarchos von Chaironeia," *PW* XXI/1, 1951, 636ff. (henceforth cited as "Ziegler, PW"), col. 700. Here the title is followed by the words πρὸς Ἐπίκουρον either an erroneous addition, or an indication that the title referred to some other—now lost—tractate, or itself a title of another—now lost—work.

<sup>4</sup> So by Ziegler, *PW* 825f and by the more recent monograph of H. Moellering, *Plutarch on Superstition*, revised ed. (Boston, 1963) (henceforth "Moellering"). Moellering mentions, as having denied the work to Plutarch, only J. Hartmann, *De Plutarcho Scriptore et Philosopho* (Leiden, 1916).

<sup>5</sup> On the date of the catalogue see F. Sandbach in *Moralia* XV, pp. 6ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ziegler, *PW*, 826 *infra*.

<sup>7</sup> This attempt might have been made by a forger who composed the whole work after Plutarch's time, or by an editor who revised the work and wished to pass off his revision as Plutarch's, or by a mere interpolator who inserted Plutarch's name in 170A, either because he thought Plutarch the author, or because he wished others to think so. (The opinion might have increased the acceptability of the work, or its monetary value.)

flight nor by change of masters, nor in *asylla* nor even in death. 2. Although atheism is blindness to the gods, blindness is preferable to misapprehension, and fear of the gods rests on misapprehension. 3. In misfortune fear of the gods is worse than atheism because it adds to the actual misfortune the fear of further evils from the gods, and it inhibits preventative and curative measures, as resistance to the gods; it inspires disgraceful apotropaic rites, and finally it produces despair which sometimes makes even minor misfortunes fatal. 4. In good fortune, too, fear of the gods is worse than atheism; especially in religious festivals the atheist merely mocks, the man who fears the gods is in terror. 5. Fear of the gods is worse impiety than atheism, for it is less impious to deny the existence of the gods than to think them evil—as mythology and popular religion represent them. 6. Fear of the gods makes for atheism, since those who fear the gods must hate them, and those who hate them must wish they did not exist and wish to disbelieve in them, without daring to do so. 7. Fear of the gods is the cause of atheism, for nothing in the order of the physical world, but only the absurd rites of those who fear the gods, lead men to deny them. 8. The cultic consequences of fear of the gods are worse than those of atheism, as shown by numerous examples. Conclusion: Flee, therefore, the fear of the gods, but do not fall into atheism. Piety lies between them.

From this outline it is clear that Babbitt's title for the tract, "Superstition," is a mistranslation. The tractate touches only occasionally and incidentally on what are commonly called superstitious practices; they are among the evil consequences of the fear of the gods, but are not even the major consequences, let alone the fear itself. "Scrupulosity" would be better, but its reference is limited to self-examination and the performance of obligations, [3] whereas *δεισιδαιμονία* includes fear of the gods as dangerous objects, without reference to any individual's offences. The best translation seems therefore "fear of supernatural beings," since the treatise pays no attention to the distinction between gods and demons, but lumps all together.<sup>8</sup> However, "supernatural beings" is a cumbersome expression, so we shall translate simply "fear of the gods."

The argument of the work depends wholly on the supposition that the gods are not to be feared *at all*. They are purely benevolent and devoid of wrath (167D); the notion that they can do harm is the result of ignorance and a fundamental error (165C); the notions that they are

---

<sup>8</sup> This is the meaning *δεισιδαιμονέστερος* has in Acts 17:22. In Acts 25:19 the *δεισιδαιμονία* of the Jews is approximately equivalent to *religio*, the complex of practices both official and private, resulting from fear of the gods, a meaning it does not have in ΠΔ but may have in some passages of Plutarch, e.g., *Camillus* 19; *Numa* 10. See below, n. 26.

capable of anger, hate evil, and are grieved by blasphemy, are errors proved false by the impunity of the myth-makers (170C); consequently *no* fear of them is justified, and one of the good things to be said for atheism is that it does get rid of this fear (165B). In this life the atheist suffers by his neglect of them only as a blind or deaf man suffers by his inability to perceive beautiful things (165B-C, 167A-D). As “human life ends with death” (166F), after that there is nothing to fear. Threatening dreams are to be laughed at (165F); stories of Hades and the like are mere fantasies of *δεισιδαίμωνία* (167A). The same argument applies without distinction to demons and gods alike (168A-D, 171C), though generally the gods alone are mentioned, as the more important group. There is no suggestion of the existence of evil or dangerous demons who might have to be placated or driven off. The myths telling of divine punishments are impious (170B-D) and there is no hint that they should be explained allegorically. The myths of Apollo are mentioned as disgraceful (170B); so are the religious ceremonies of the Egyptians (171E).

All these characteristics are antithetical to those of Plutarch, who elsewhere defines the proper attitude towards the gods as *εὐλάβεια*<sup>9</sup>—“handle with care”—prefers the fear of the gods and even superstition to atheism,<sup>10</sup> describes at length the divine punishment of the wicked in the afterlife,<sup>11</sup> is full of divine warnings [4] given in dreams,<sup>12</sup> distinguishes gods from demons, and assigns an important role to evil demons who have to be placated even by human sacrifice.<sup>13</sup> Moreover Plutarch regularly allegorizes embarrassing myths and is particularly concerned to defend Apollo and the Egyptian cults.<sup>14</sup>

These discrepancies have often been recognized more or less clearly<sup>15</sup> and have been explained by the supposition that ΠΔ was [5]

<sup>9</sup> *Camillus* 6 end; *Coriolanus* 25.

<sup>10</sup> *Non posse suaviter* 21; *Adversus Colotem* 30f.

<sup>11</sup> *De sera numinis vindicta*.

<sup>12</sup> *Septem sapientium convivium* 15 end; *Quaestiones convivales* 8.10; *Caesar* 63; *Cimon* 18; etc.

<sup>13</sup> Moellering, 128ff.

<sup>14</sup> Moellering, 96ff.

<sup>15</sup> Moellering, 96-147, discusses at length a number of the major points and reviews earlier “explanations.” One requiring special attention is that of H. Erbse, “Plutarchs Schrift Περὶ δεισιδαίμονίας,” *Hermes* 80, 1952, 296ff (hereafter, “Erbse”), an attempt to defend Plutarch from the charge of superstition. Erbse finds it “eindeutig klar” (p. 298) that in ΠΔ *δεισιδαίμωνία* can refer only to “false fear of gods” as opposed to demons. (But there is no opposition between gods and demons in the text, and the author seems to equate them in 166A-B where the *ἐνυπνιον φάντασμα* is presumably demonic, 168A-D, and 171C. Nor is there any distinction in the text between “true” and “false”—read “proper” and “improper”—fear of the gods; the author never says anything about any “proper” fear of the gods, and he repeatedly bases his argument on the supposition that the gods are wholly and solely beneficent and that any fear of them is therefore unjustified. P. Koets, *Δεισιδαίμωνία*, Purmerend, 1929, 102, finds that Christian authors were the first to use the term for fear of demons as opposed to gods.) Neglecting these

an early work<sup>16</sup> and the fact that it was a rhetorical one. It is said that Plutarch, when he set himself the task of abusing fear of the gods, was prepared to represent it as worse than atheism; when he was abusing atheism, he would tip the scales to the other side. In either case he would say nothing about modifying considerations, the more so because his purpose was always moral as well as rhetorical; he wished not only to display his skill but to dissuade his readers from whichever evil he was attacking.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly the contradictions between ΠΔ and his supposedly later works show a considerable change of attitude and emphasis, but not a radical conversion (of which there is no evidence in his many references to his own life, nor in the reports about him).

This explanation is less than completely convincing. It is supplemented, however, by the supposition that in ΠΔ Plutarch was using a source—a diatribe by the cynic Bion of Borysthenes, whom he quotes for one detail (168E)<sup>18</sup>—and appropriated this source by slight changes, mainly those representing true piety as a mean between the extremes of superstition and atheism. In favor of attribution of the revised work to Plutarch is the fact that the notion of piety as a mean,

facts, Erbse goes on to argue that since Plutarch later held that rejection of belief in the afterlife undermined morality, his rejection of it in ΠΔ must not be taken at face value (p. 302). When Plutarch later reports prodigies and the like, he is merely repeating his sources and his occasional expressions of scepticism about some indicate that he held a rationalistic attitude towards all (p. 302-303). Of course Plutarch had an elaborate demonology—in fact, he had at least two inconsistent demonologies, but he should not therefore be thought uncritical (p. 304), and when the passages exemplifying gross superstition are removed from consideration, because exceptional, there are no passages that exemplify gross superstition (p. 305 and n. 2). Moreover, all this has nothing to do with δεισιδαιμονία as discussed in ΠΔ, because that by Erbse's definition, refers only to fear of *gods*. Admittedly, Plutarch often does use θεός and τὸ θεῖον in the sense of δαίμων and vice versa, but all such instances are to be explained as copied from his sources (pp. 306-7). All improper opinions about the gods can thus be taken as referring to demons; therefore Plutarch's opinions about the gods were of the purest philosophical rationality (pp. 307, 309). As for his demonology, that does, indeed, by modern standards, look like superstition, but since it can be seen as the expression of a philosophical system (except when it doesn't fit that system) and since Plutarch thought that some men by virtue could escape the power of the demons, he cannot be called superstitious (pp. 313-314). Q.E.D. Contrast the recognition by H. Braun, *Plutarch's Critique of Superstition in the Light of the NT*, Claremont, N.D. (Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, *Occasional Papers* 5) p. 4, that the gods of ΠΔ are wholly benevolent. This destroys the basis for Erbse's notion of a "proper" fear of them.

<sup>16</sup> So Ziegler, *PW*, 826, though he admits that the rhetorical development is not the work of a student, but of an experienced rhetorician.

<sup>17</sup> J. Oakesmith, *The Religion of Plutarch* (London, 1902), 185ff.

<sup>18</sup> So especially G. Abernethy, *De Plutarchi qui fertur de superstitione libello* (Konigsberg, 1911), who thought he could distinguish Plutarch's additions from the original Cynic material. Ziegler, *PW*, 826 *infra*, thinks the attribution to Bion too definite—there must have been many intermediaries between his work and Plutarch's. The attempt to distinguish Plutarch's additions, he thinks naive.

and some of the general statements about atheism, piety, and δεισιδαιμονία, are strikingly paralleled in Plutarch's undoubted works.<sup>19</sup> However, it remains difficult to explain why Plutarch should have appropriated a work which contradicted not only a number of his particular beliefs—in divine admonitions, rewards and punishments, the allegorical significance of myths, and so on—but also his general attitude of superstitious piety. He was—*pace* Erbse—a regular reporter of omens and prodigies and instances of divine favor and resentment and cases of nemesis and so on, and he sometimes goes out of his way to find reasons why such causes may have been active and to cast doubt on [6] rationalistic explanations of the events he reports.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, the piety of ΠΔ is Epicurean—the gods exist, and men should believe in them, but they are indifferent to human opinion and harm no one, so the unbeliever is afflicted only by his own blindness.<sup>21</sup> This basically Epicurean attitude—which certainly did not come from Plutarch—does something to discredit the notion of general dependence on a Cynic source.

Further discussion of the reliability of the attribution of ΠΔ to Plutarch would not be germane to the purpose of this article. What has been said is sufficient to indicate that some caution should be observed in citing material from ΠΔ as evidence of Plutarch's usage. The tractate presents us with a problem of authenticity comparable to those presented by Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastorals. One more factor of this problem may be mentioned. ΠΔ is remarkable because it takes its subject so seriously. By contrast, Theophrastus' treatment is comic and reduces δεισιδαιμονία to "superstition."<sup>22</sup> Theophrastus was followed by Menander, the cynics, and Lucian.<sup>23</sup> ΠΔ, on the other hand, though it uses the peripatetic definition of piety as

<sup>19</sup> *De Iside* 71 end; *Alexander* 75; *Camillus* 6 end; more in Erbse, 300f.

<sup>20</sup> Omens and prodigies, *Romulus* 24, 27f.; *Numa* 2, *Poplicola* 13; *Camillus* 3, 14, 30; *Fabius* 2f; *Coriolanus* 37; *Timoleon* 8, 12 end; *Paulus* 24f; *Pelopidas* 31; *Marcellus* 4, 28f.; etc. Divine favor/resentment, *Marcellus* 30; *Sulla* 6; *Phocion* 30; *Romulus* 28; *Dion* 2; etc. Nemesis, *Theseus* 2; *Camillus* 13; *Paulus* 22 end, 36 end; *Philopoemen* 18; etc. Reasons for belief, or for doubting rationalistic explanations, *Brutus* 37, 48; *Dion* 2; *Pericles* 6; *Coriolanus* 38; *Paulus* 25; *Sulla* 7, etc.

<sup>21</sup> Gods exist, ΠΔ 165B, 167B, D; etc. H. Usener, *Epicurea* (Leipzig, 1887), 60. Men should believe in them, ΠΔ locc. cit. and 171E-F; Usener 60. They are indifferent to human opinion, ΠΔ 170C; Usener 71. They harm no one, ΠΔ 166D-E, 167D; Usener pp. XXf. Thus the unbeliever suffers only from his own blindness, ΠΔ 165C, 167A-B, D; Usener p. XXI. Other traits, too, are borrowed from Epicureanism, see A. Festugiere, *Epicure et ses dieux*, 2 ed. (Paris, 1968), 78 and n. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Contrast P. Steinmetz' commentary in his edition of Theophrastus, *Charaktere*, vol. II (Munich, 1962) (*Das Wort der Antike* VII), 186. But Steinmetz is concerned with the abstract definition of δεισιδαιμονία rather than the question of its practical meaning, which includes that of the attitude towards it.

<sup>23</sup> P. Koets, *Deisidaimonia* (Purmerend, 1929), 34-41.

the mean between atheism and fear of the gods,<sup>24</sup> stands closest to Lucretius in its extended, systematic attack on all forms of the fear of the gods, including fear of retribution after death. This resemblance has been concealed by the [7] fact that the object of Lucretius' attack is *religio*,<sup>25</sup> but *religio* may be Lucretius' translation of *δεισιδαιμονία*, the word he probably found in his Greek sources.<sup>26</sup> Any careful study of the authenticity of ΠΔ will have to seek the source of this serious concern about the fear of the gods as a major factor in human unhappiness.

The fact that the work is a diatribe leads to another line of investigation we shall not follow here. As a diatribe, the NT works which stand closest to it in literary form are Hebrews (apart from its pseudoepistolary ending) and James. Bultmann described in his doctoral thesis<sup>27</sup> the many respects in which the diatribe has influenced NT writings, especially Paul's, so examination of the parallels in literary form between the NT books and ΠΔ qua diatribe would at best add more details to a large body of evidence for an already familiar relation.

It seems therefore more important to discuss the parallels of content between ΠΔ and the NT, especially because these are more complex than might be supposed. Christianity, like Judaism, was attacked by the pagans not only as *δεισιδαιμονία*, but also as atheism,<sup>28</sup> and it returned both compliments. An important side of Christian propaganda was its rationalistic attack on pagan myths and practices,<sup>29</sup> an attack which carried on the traditions—and probably did much to save the texts—of Greek philosophy.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, the NT yields two sets of content-parallels to ΠΔ, one set exemplifying the Christians' fear of their own god and its [8] issuance in the sorts of

<sup>24</sup> Koets, 43f; Erbse, 299. The peripatetic notion appears mainly at the beginning and the end of ΠΔ and has little to do with the main course of the argument. It is most likely an editorial addition.

<sup>25</sup> Consequently Lucretius' work is not considered by Koets.

<sup>26</sup> For *δεισιδαιμονία* as a translation of *religio* see Polybius 6.56.6; Strabo 1.2.8; Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.228, 232, 237, 240; more in H. Stephanus, *Thesaurus graecae linguae*, edd. C. Hase and G. and L. Dindorf (repr. Graz, 1954), s.v. *δεισιδαιμονία*. The Latin parallels to Polybius 6.56 collected by W. Otto, "Religio und Superstitio," *ARW* 12, 1909, 542 are striking evidence of the equivalence of the two terms (which Otto overlooks).

<sup>27</sup> R. Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen, 1910).

<sup>28</sup> *Δεισιδαιμονία* (= *superstitio*) used of Judaism, Agatharchides of Cnidus in Josephus, *Ant.* 12.5; *C. Apion.* 1.208; Diogn. 1; of Christianity, Tacitus, *Annals* 5.44.4 "Atheism" used of Judaism, Josephus, *C. Apion.* 2.14; of Christianity, MPol 3.1; 9.2; Lucian, *Alexander* 25; etc.

<sup>29</sup> Pagans accused of atheism, MPol locc. citt.; of *δεισιδαιμονία*, passages collected by Koets, 89ff; these contain also many charges of atheism. The two accusations—ignorance of the true god and worship of false ones—are closely connected.

<sup>30</sup> See the classical study by Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 4 ed. (Leipzig, 1924), Book II, Ch. VI, "Die Religion ... der Vernunft," pp. 239ff.

practices that ΠΔ attacks, another set exemplifying Christian attacks on fear of the pagan gods and on similar pagan practices. Having to deal with these two sets, we shall limit ourselves to matters of content which are substantial elements in the argument of ΠΔ. Other parallels, to incidental remarks, words, etc., will be mostly passed over.

We begin with those passages exemplifying the Christians' fear of god. (Both the notion and the experience were commonly expressed in antiquity and particularly in the OT, see the passages in TWNT s.v. φοβέω. Ps 2:11, which commands, "Serve Yahweh with fear and rejoice with trembling," presents a remarkable parallel to ΠΔ 169E—the man who fears the gods "when he wears a wreath (in a religious festival) turns pale, he sacrifices and is terrified, he prays with a quavering voice and puts incense on the fire with trembling hands.")

164E IGNORANCE OF THE GODS PRODUCES, IN THE TOUGH-  
165B MINDED, ATHEISM, IN THE SOFT-HEADED, FEAR. OF  
THESE TWO, ATHEISM IS THE LESS HARMFUL, BECAUSE  
ATHEISM IS MERE ERROR, WHILE ΔΕΙΣΙΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΑ  
INVOLVES BOTH ERROR AND ΠΑΘΟΣ. (EXAMPLES  
INCLUDE AN ATTACK ON THE LOVE OF MONEY AS A  
PASSION WHICH DESTROYS ALIKE PEACE OF MIND AND  
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION—ΠΑΡΗΣΙΑ).

*Ignorance of god* is, for the NT too, a basic cause of evil and a condition from which men must be saved, cf. Bultmann, TWNT 1, s.v. ἄγνοια. This ignorance is said in 1 Cor 1:20f.; 2 Thess 2:10ff. to be caused by the Christian god. Even some Christians still suffer from ignorance of god, at least to some degree, 1 Cor 15:34. It is also caused by one of the lower gods—the god of this world, 2 Cor 4:4. As for ΠΔ so for Paul, it leads to enslavement, Gal 4:8—for Paul the observance of the Law given by the angelic-cosmic powers, for ΠΔ 166D scrupulous observance of the requirements of pagan belief. (Unlike ΠΔ, Paul thought it would lead its victims to eternal destruction, 2 Thess 2:11f.) Paul and ΠΔ agree that knowledge of god brings release from servitude—Gal 4:9; ΠΔ 167D-E—but in Paul this is servitude to false gods, in ΠΔ, unreasonable concern about true ones. Also Paul thinks knowledge (of god) may be dangerous as a cause of arrogance (1 Cor 8:2); ΠΔ has no such fear—it is, in fact, a good example of the sort of argument Paul would have attacked as arrogant. For 2 Peter knowledge of god is the source of [9] all good gifts and especially, as for ΠΔ, the basis of true piety (εὐσέβεια), 1:3ff. The same notion is found in 1 John 2:3. Competing Christian groups also claim knowledge of god, that is to say, of the depths, perhaps of Satan—it is hard to decide whether or not the specification comes from the author of Rev 2:24.

*The tough-minded are atheists, the soft-headed, believers.* Acts 7:51; 19:9; Rom 2:5; 9:18; Heb 3:8, 13, 15; 4:7 (showing the OT background of the antithesis).

*The notion that atheism is less harmful than fear of the gods is unparalleled in the NT.*

*Fear of the gods:* The Christian material is ambivalent. It divides supernatural beings into five classes: the high god or Father, his son Jesus, the holy spirit, angels, and evil spirits. The boundaries of these classes are not always sharp—Jesus is said to be the (holy) spirit, 2 Cor 3:17. Satan has his angels, who are presumably evil spirits, Rev 12:7; 20:2; 2 Cor 12:7; and in which group of angels we should locate the cosmic powers through whom the Law was given, is not clear.

Of these groups, the evil spirits (including Satan, the devil, etc.) are to be feared, 1 Cor 7:5; 10:20; 11:10; 2 Cor 2:11, 10:3ff.; 11:14f.; Eph 2:2; 4:27; 6:11ff.; cf. Matt 6:13; 1 Thess 2:18; 3:5; 2 Thess 2:8f.; 1 Tim 3:6f.; 4:1; 5:14; 1 Pet 5:8; 1 John 3:8ff.; 4:1ff.; 5:18ff.; Rev 2:10, 13; 3:9; 6ff. *passim*. These many passages, together with the exorcism stories in the Gospels, show that the early Christians thought they lived in a world full of δαιμόνια who threatened them constantly with everything from assault to seduction. Fear of δαιμόνια therefore seemed to them necessary and normal. But the δαιμόνια can also be used by god or by Christians to punish the wicked—Paul gave over to Satan the man who practiced incest, 1 Cor 5:5; cf. 2 Cor 12:7; 1 Tim 1:20; Rev 9:3ff.; etc. Moreover, with the help of Jesus and the spirit the Christian can resist or escape them successfully—this is shown by the apostles' exorcisms, further Rom 8:38f.; 16:20; Gal 1:4; Eph 6:11-16; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9; Rev *passim*. Jesus came into the world to defeat the devil, did so, and has thereby liberated those who through fear of death were in lifelong slavery, Heb 2:14f.; cf. 1 John 3:8f.; 1 Cor 15:57. So the fear of these δαιμόνια should engender, in the Christian, proper caution rather than the sorts of servitude attacked by ΠΑ and by Paul.

As in the public press, so in the NT, the bad guys get more attention than the good, demons have a much more conspicuous [10] role than angels. But angels, too, are dangerous and occasionally objects of fear, Matt 28:4; Luke 1:12; Acts 10:4; 12:23; Rev 6ff.; and *passim*. Some Christians are even accused of worshipping them (that seems, at least, to be the more likely interpretation of Col 2:18),<sup>31</sup> and such worship may have been fairly common in Judaism: the *Sepher ha-Razim* (ed. M. Margoliotz, Jerusalem, 1966) gives us adequate examples, the angel of the Apocalypse warns John not to worship him, 19:10; 22:8f., and there are a number of other references. But for the NT in general, fear

<sup>31</sup> I am not persuaded by attempts to explain this verse as referring to the angels' worship.

of good angels is not a major concern; nor is any affection shown them, though they occasionally appear as divine messengers to help the heroes (Luke 22:43; Acts 12:11; Rev 6ff.; and *passim*).

A more important class of divine messengers who are and should be objects of fear are the apostles. They are dangerous—Peter kills Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:5ff., and not only is the church terrified, but also the fear of the apostles in the church is reflected by the fear of the Christians in the surrounding world, and the author of Acts obviously thinks this is a good thing (5:13). Paul blinds Elymas, Acts 13:10, and makes sinners over to Satan, 1 Cor 5:1-5, and warns the Corinthians of the power he has over them, the clear implication being that they had better fear, 2 Cor 13:1-10. He himself was afraid of the Jerusalem apostles, Gal 2:2. The consequence of apostolic power was awe, if not fear: Acts 10:25; 14:11ff.; 28:6; Gal 4:14; etc. and the apostles are represented as prohibiting men to worship them. (Perhaps these prohibitions were intended to be exemplary; Simon Magus and perhaps some other gnostics did not prohibit worship.)

The power of the apostles is commonly represented as the work of the holy spirit, but the spirit itself is not (never?) an object of fear.<sup>32</sup> It directs the apostles' actions and can prevent them from doing as they want, Acts 13:2f.; 15:28; 16:6f.; 20:22; etc., but its guidance is sometimes rejected, Acts 21:4f., 10-14, and Paul directs that the spirits of the Christian prophets should be subject to the prophets, 1 Cor 14:32. (Which spirits were these, if not the holy [11] spirit? Were any Christians still prophesying by Apollo, like the girl in Acts 16:17?)

Jesus is an object of fear mainly in two respects, because of his miracles, and because of his destined role as judge in the last judgment. While his miracles were commonly beneficial (though he did blast the fig tree, Mark 11:12ff., and the revelation of him struck Saul blind, Acts 9:8; 22:11, and made John drop as if dead, Rev 1:17) they commonly produced fear—as do NT miracles generally, Matt 8:33f.; 9:8; 14:16; 17:6; 24:48; 27:54; Mark 4:41; 5:15, 33; 6:49; Luke 1:12, 65; 2:9; 5:8f., 26; 7:16; 8:25, 35ff.; 9:34, 45; 24:37; John 6:19; Acts 5:1-13; 19:17-19; etc. These passages adequately indicate what the early Christians thought to be the primary and proper reaction to the supernatural, cf. John 19:8. Jesus' activity has not ended with his death—he is still dangerous. He hates the works of the Nicolaitans, and the church of Ephesus does well to do likewise, Rev 2:6; he threatens to kill Jezebel's followers, Rev 2:22f. But his coming role in the end is a particular cause of fear. It is mainly conceived as that of

<sup>32</sup> That blasphemy against it was thought by some an unforgivable sin (Mark 3:28f. and parallels) need not indicate fear of it; the spirit does not seem to be the active authority either in determining the offense or in imposing the penalty. There is no mention of fear, for instance, in the account of the epiphany of the spirit in Acts 2.

judgment, Matt 24:30; John 9:39(?); Acts 10:42; 17:31; Phil 1:10; 2 Thess 1:8f.; etc. But 2 Thess and Rev present the no less frightening picture of the leader of the angelic army sent to defeat the evil, Rev 19:11ff., and subsequently to preside over their torture, Rev 6:16f.; 14:10. This material is countered to some extent by a number of passages in which Jesus tells his followers not to fear him, Matt 14:27; 28:10; Mark 6:50; Rev 1:17. The notion of final judgment evidently gave some trouble in John's circle. John 3:17ff contradicts it and reduces the judgment to presentation of a revelation which must be accepted or rejected, but this is an eccentricity of the Johannine material. And for John as for the rest of the NT fear is an important and proper element in the attitude toward Jesus.

Finally, fear of the Father: This is not only a major motif in the literature, but a major structural factor in the religion which the literature presents. It is motivated by the Father's nature—he is a devouring fire, Heb 12:28f., and it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands, Heb 10:31. He is liable to wrath, even to fury, and these will be major factors in his coming destruction both of the wicked and (sometimes) of the whole world, John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 5:9; 9:22; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6; 1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; Rev 11:18; 14:10, 19; 15:17; 16:19; 19:15; Heb 12:25-27. Eschatological threats recur frequently throughout all the books of the NT and form not merely the back-[12]ground, but an essential element in the explanation of the whole course of events, Matt 5:19; 7:23, 25ff.; 8:12; 10:15, 23; 9:22ff.; 12:36f., 42ff.; 13:30; 24-25; Mark 8:36ff.; 9:42-49; 13:26-37; Luke 6:24ff., 49; 12:47f.; 13:3, 5, 9; 14:24; 17:26-30; 19:27; 21:25ff.; 23:28-31; Rom 2:2f., 5ff., 16; 14:10ff.; 1 Cor 3:13ff., 17; 7:29; 10:11f.; 11:32; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Thess 5:2f.; 2 Thess 1:8f.; Heb 6:4-8; 10:26ff.; 13:4; 1 Pet 3:12; 4: 5; 2 Pet 2:9, 12, 17; 3:10-13; 1 John 2:17; Rev 1:1 and *passim*. (Note the emphasis on the proximity of the End, its sudden and unexpected coming, etc. Most such passages contain an element of threat.)

Besides planning to destroy the world, the Father also destroys individuals. The prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," Matt 6:13; Luke 11:4, indicates a fear that he may do so, a notion Paul accepted in 2 Thess 2:9-12; 1 Cor 10:13—God creates temptations—and James found it necessary to contradict in 1:13. He made the Israelites worship the cosmic powers, Acts 7:42 (cf. above, on the ignorance of god) and he was the cause of their rejection of Jesus, Rom 11:8; John 12:40 (cf. Matt 13:14; Acts 28:26f.). Indeed Paul thought that God deliberately creates some men as "instruments of (his) wrath," that is, for the sake of destroying them, Rom 9:22. In this matter his choice is absolutely arbitrary and is not affected by any consideration of human merits, Rom 9:16f.; nor is even his arbitrary choice irreversible, therefore Paul says, he is particularly to be feared, Rom 11:21. He makes foolishness

of the wisdom of this world, and rejects all human virtues, 1 Cor 1:19ff., 27ff.; 3:19ff.; 2 Cor 1:12. But even those whom he arbitrarily chooses are not safe. He tests and punishes those he loves, Rev 3:19; Heb 12:17, so that Christians, too, are in danger of falling and should therefore fear, Rev 2:5, 10, 25; 3:3, 11, 15ff.; 2 Pet 3:17; 2 John 8; 1 Cor 10:21; 11:32; Paul himself does not feel quite safe, 1 Cor 9:27. And Jesus is credited with the saying “I’ll show you whom to fear. Fear him who, after killing, has the power to cast into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear him,” Luke 12:5; Matt 10:9. The command to fear God is repeated in Phil 2:12; Rev 14:7. The righteous are those “who fear him,” Rev 19:5; Acts 10:2 (= εὐσεβής); 10:22 (= δίκαιος); Luke 1:50; but even a murderer may be expected to feel this fear (Luke 23:40). Any man who does not fear God is absolutely wicked, Luke 18:2. Good Christian behaviour is to live in fear, 1 Pet 3:2; Heb 12:28f.; Phil 2:12; Acts 2:43; 9:31. Piety is εὐλάβεια—timidity, Acts 2:5 (so it is for Plutarch generally, in contrast to ΠΑ). And a good presentation of the gospel produces fear, Acts 24:25, (but contrast 1 Tim 1:5). [13]

It must be made clear, first, that all this is only one side of Christian teaching. There is another, that of grace, peace, confidence, and joy, which is equally well-attested—beginning with the word εὐαγγέλιον, “good news.” Christianity made large use of fear and threats, but its primary instrument seems to have been hope and it seems to have spread as a promise of a salvation which was often conceived as spiritual tranquillity. Galatians as a whole is an example of this, and to a lesser degree the other Pauline letters. See also Matt 11:29; John 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Eph 6:15. Notice the frequent recurrence of the command, “Fear not,” with reference to religious fear: Matt 1:20; 14:27; 17:7; 28:5, 10; Mark 6:50; Luke 1:13, 30; 2:10; 5:10; 12:32; John 6:20; 14:1; etc., and also the recurrence of “grace” and “peace” in the greetings of almost all the epistles. 2 Tim 1:7 declares “God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of peace and love and self-control.” And 1 John 4:18 even looks forward to the complete elimination of fear, declaring, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear entails punishment and he who fears is not perfected in love.”

In the second place, the role of fear in the NT is a continuation of its role, already mentioned, in the OT and intertestamental Judaism. Christian threats and promises alike seem to have been especially effective with those groups in the synagogues known as “the god-fearing,” Acts 13:16, 26, etc. This suggests that scrupulosity—a painful psychological condition to which adherents of legalistic religions are particularly exposed—played a considerable part in the success of Christianity. This suggestion is supported by a number of NT texts which attack the Law as “a yoke neither we nor our fathers were able

to bear,” Acts 15:10; Gal 3:10, cf. Matt 11:30, and which promise Jewish hearers “remission ... from all those (sins) from which you could not by the law of Moses be justified,” Acts 13:38; cf. 5:31; 10:43; Heb 9:9; 10:1ff.; Gal 2:16; etc. Such a background would explain the unusually acute contrasts of the NT texts, which combine the most outspokenly terrifying apocalyptic framework with a constantly reiterated and perhaps slightly nervous insistence on grace, mercy, love, peace, confidence, and joy.

*Avarice:* It is typical of the philosophical and moral fashion of the time that ΠΔ 164F should choose the notion “that wealth is good” as its first example of an error combined with passion that destroys the soul. NT attacks on avarice reflect not only current Greco-[14]Roman fashion, but also an OT tradition already fully expressed in Psalms; thus Luke 12:15; 16:14; 1 Cor 5:10f.; 6:10; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; Heb 13:5. These are merely passing references which reflect the common convention of abuse; 1 Tim 6:9f has a brief development which follows the same line as that in ΠΔ: the desire for wealth is wicked not because it leads to injustice to the poor (the OT line) but because it destroys the peace and threatens the spiritual development of those who indulge in it—the Stoic commonplace.

*Boldness* (παρρησία) is a Cynic virtue. ΠΔ 165 warns that the desire for wealth destroys it, and this warning is the end and climax of its attack. In the NT παρρησία plays a large role not only in Paul, but also in John’s portrait of Jesus, and in Acts’ of the apostles. It is also prominent in Hebrews and 1 John as a virtue which the writers exhort their readers to enjoy or display, cf. TWNT (TDNT), s.v. In the NT this is not only a reflection of Cynic influence—it has no (?) OT root (but cf. Jer 15:20; 20:11; Exod 4:11)—but also an element of the confidence-complex discussed at the end of the note on fear, above (and see also πεποιθεις, and καύχημα). That the NT authors in their use of the term meant just what Plutarch meant is unlikely, but their appropriation of it is significant as an example of the way in which Christianity was taking over the terms of approval and laying claim to the virtues of pagan society.

165D OF THE ΠΑΘΗ, FEAR IS PARTICULARLY BAD BECAUSE: A. IT INHIBITS ACTION AND PREVENTS ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE. B. FEAR OF THE GODS AFFECTS ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE (EARTH, SEA, AIR, HEAVEN, DARKNESS, LIGHT, SOUNDS, SILENCE, DREAMS).

Πάθος: That the πάθη are bad is a Stoic commonplace, probably not reflected in Rom 1:26 where the construction suggests a Hebrew construct state (cf. M. Pohlenz, “Paulus und die Stoa”, ZNW 42, 1949,

82). The other NT usages (Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:5) are also unfavorable, but otherwise nondescript.

*Φόβος as a πάθος*: Discussed in the NT only in 1 John 4:18: There is no fear in love, etc. quoted above. Even such a brief psychological comment is surprising in the NT and an unexpected contact with the ΠΔ.

*Fear of earth, sea, air, etc.* The man who fears the gods fears all of these not only because they may be instruments of divine punishment, but even more because they are the means by which the gods give *omens*, therefore their least details may portend [15] disaster. In the NT *earth* and *darkness* are represented as sources of omens by the earthquake and darkness at the crucifixion, Matt 27:45, 51; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44f.; the earthquake at the resurrection, Matt 28:2; other earthquakes, Rev 6:12; 8:5; 11:13; 19; 16:8. Light is a sign of the supernatural in the transfiguration story, Matt 17:2; Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29; the appearances of the angels at the resurrection, Matt 28:2ff.; Luke 24:4f.; and at the deliverance of Peter, Acts 12:7; Jesus' appearance to Paul, Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13; etc.; *sounds*, the voices at the baptism, Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; the transfiguration, Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; 2 Pet 1:17; the voice from heaven in John 12:28 (thought to be thunder, 12:29); in the Apocalypse these become almost a conversation; *silence*, Rev 8:1; *dreams*, see the following section. This makes no pretense of being a complete list.

165E C. THERE IS NO ESCAPING FEAR OF THE GODS BY SLEEP  
 165F — IT MAKES SLEEP A TERROR — NOR BY WAKING — IT  
 166A DRIVES MEN TO ABSURD APOTROPAIC RITES  
 [IMMERSION IN THE SEA, SITTING ON THE GROUND,  
 SMEARING WITH MUD, WALLOWING IN MUD,  
 IMMERSIONS, FALLING ON THE FACE, SITTING BEFORE  
 166B (THE GODS?), ΠΡΟΣΚΥΝΗΣΙΣ, THE USE OF FOREIGN  
 166C NAMES AND BARBAROUS WORDS] AND CUTS THEM OFF  
 FROM THE COMMON WORLD .

*Sleep and dreams*: Sleep in the NT is treated matter-of-factly (except for one metaphorical usage, of moral negligence, in Rom 13:11). Dreams play a surprisingly small part except in Matthew's birth stories (Matt 1:20; 2:12, 13, 19, 22). Luke uses "visions in the night," Acts 16:9; 27:23, which he probably did not think of as dreams. The only properly frightening dream—a god-sent admonition—is that of Pilate's wife, Matt 27:19—also a Matthaean addition. Cornelius, in Acts 10:4, was frightened when the angel appeared—the normal reaction to angels, see above—but this was a "vision," not a dream, and the content was reassuring.

*Apotropaic rites: Immersions.* Baptisms for remission of sins begin with John in Matt iii. As to Jesus' practice we have the contradictory testimony of John 3:22; 4:1f. They resume with Acts 2:38 and are thenceforth frequent. With Acts (ib.) appears the connection between the gift of the spirit and baptism; with Rom 6:3ff the interpretation of baptism as participation in Christ's death and resurrec[16]tion. 1 Pet 3:21 insists that baptism is not efficacious qua washing; i.e. not its natural but its magical effect is what matters—it is precisely the sort of rite attacked by ΠΔ. Heb 9:10; 13:9 is parallel to ΠΔ in its contempt for the διάφοροι βαπτισμοί, prescribed by Jewish law; it dismisses them as ineffectual. In 10:22 it refers obscurely to the cleansing of the body by water. Other purifications by ablution appear in John's footwashing, 13:5ff—here again with the insistence that its efficacy is not merely physical, 13:10—and in Pilate's handwashing, Matt 27:24, which Matthew probably understood as effective: Matthew wanted to put the blood-guilt on the Jews, 27:25.

*Sitting on the ground* is not directly paralleled in the NT, [but in the OT see 2 Sam 12:16-20; 13:31; Job 2:13]. Another manifestation of the same basic belief may appear in the command to go barefoot on holy ground, an OT fossil in Acts 7:33. *Smearing with mud and wallowing in the mud.* The latter does not appear in the NT; the former (or something like it) is prohibited in Matt 6:16. [In the OT, putting dust and ashes on the head is a sign of mourning: Job 2:12; Ezekiel 27:30]. (Jesus' use of mud in healings, John 9:6, is probably not relevant here; it belongs to a different branch of magic, medical rather than apotropaic.) *Fallings on the face—as distinct from προσκύνησις—and sitting before (the gods?) as religious practices* have no NT parallels: [in the OT see Job 1:20]. Προσκύνησις occurs often—see the concordance—and is occasionally prohibited when addressed to men or angels (Acts 10:26; Rev 19:10; 22:8f.) but is the approved way of approaching a deity. H. Bolkestein, *Theophrastos' Charakter der Deisidaimonia*, Giessen, 1929 (RGVV xxi.2), 38ff., has tried to show it was common and respectable in Greece by Theophrastus' time. It certainly was so by the time of ΠΔ—Roman imperial—and the complaint about it is perhaps a bit of archaism, softened by the obscure ἀλλόκοτος. *The use of foreign names and barbarous words* may be prohibited in Matt 6:7f (μὴ βατταλογήσατε). Belief in the efficacy of such words may account for the preservation of some phrases of Jesus' Aramaic in healing formulae, Mark 5:41; 7:34; and in the words from the cross, Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34 par.; and of Paul's μαρναθα 1 Cor 16:22. Μαμωνας may have been saved in part by the belief that it was a demon's name (Matt 6:24; see, however, Luke 16:9-13), like Beelzeboul. Rom 8:26 and the Pauline references to speaking with tongues show the use, not of "foreign names and barbarous words,"

but of inarticulate (ἀλάλητοι) sounds, which, however, were believed to belong to some foreign language. The two categories were not sharply distinguished. [17]

166D-F NOT BY FLIGHT, NOR BY CHANGE OF MASTERS—THOSE WHO FEAR THE GODS ARE SLAVES WITHOUT HOPE OF ESCAPE—NOR IN ASYLA, NOR IN DEATH.

*Flight:* Ps 139:7-9 is so striking a parallel that it must be quoted: “Whither shall I flee from your presence? If I go up into the heavens, you are there, if I make my bed in Sheol, there you are; if I take the wings of the dawn and dwell at the end of the sea, there too your hand will lie upon me... If I say, surely darkness will cover me, the night is like light.” The story of Jonah comes also to mind. There are no NT parallels. The attempt of H. Hommel, “Der allgegenwärtige Himmels-gott,” *ARW* 23, 1925, 193-206, to prove a common Indo-European source for ΠΔ, Ps 139, Jer 23:23, and Atharvaveda 4:16 1-5, fails.

*Change of masters:* Paul plays on this idea in Rom 6:15-23, and his thought has another parallel in John 8:31-36, but in the latter case the notion is of liberation. Romans thinks of exchange of masters—first sin, then righteousness—and in that respect is closer to ΠΔ, but not so close as to call for further comment.

*Slaves of the gods:* This the NT authors regularly style themselves (see the concordance, s.v. δούλος), but they make no attempt to escape. The only parallel for that (after Jonah) is Paul’s disobedience before he realized his enslavement, and the comment of Jesus, Acts 26:14.

*For all men the end of life is death* (166F). This appears in Demosthenes, *De corona* 97, but was perhaps proverbial already in his time. Plutarch quotes it again in *Moralia* 333C (on which see Babbitt’s note); “Lucian” in *Demosthenis encomium* 5; Clement of Alexandria in *Stromateis* 6:22 5. In ΠΔ another proverb is used in 167F: “To fail in some things is common to all men.” Parallels are collected by Wytttenbach<sup>33</sup> on *Moralia* 103B. Appeal to proverbs is a common phenomenon of popular literature, represented in the NT by Matt 11:17; Mark 9:18; Luke 4:23; 7:32; 1 Cor 15:32f.; Tit 1:12; 2 Pet 2:22; etc. Pronouncements about “all men” are likely to be Greek in background; for the same purpose Hebrew prefers “the children of men” (frequent in rabbinic literature, in NT only Mark 3:28; Eph 3:5) or the singular, either anarthrous or with the definite article in the sense of the English indefinite (“a/any man”): Matt 4:4; [18] 12:35, 43; 15:11, 18; 19:10; Mark 7:15, 18, 20, 23; 10:7; Luke 4:45; 6:45; 9:25; John

<sup>33</sup> D. Wytttenbach, ed. *Plutarchi-Chaeronensis Moralia* (Oxford, 1795-1829) 8 vols. in 16.

3:27; Rom 3:28; 7:1; 1 Cor 11:28; Gal 1:12; 2:6, 16; 3:15; 6:7; Eph 5:31; Jas 1:23; etc. NT sayings with the plural and πάντες do occur (Luke 6:26; Acts 17:30; 22:15; Rom 5:12, 18; 12:17; 1 Cor 7:7; 2 Cor 3:2; Phil 4:5; 1 Thess 2:15; 1 Tim 2:1, 4; 4:10; Tit 2:11), but the more common form of generalization in the NT is simply the plural with or without the article (Matt 12:31; 19:26; Mark 7:21; 10:27; Luke 6:22; 16:15; 18:27; John 1:4; 3:19; 5:41; 6:10; 12:43; 17:6; Acts 4:12; 5:29, 38; Rom 2:16, 29; 1 Cor 1:25; Gal 1:10; Heb 6:16; 1 Pet 2:4; Rev 14:4; 16:8). Πᾶς without ἄνθρωπος for generalizations occurs in the NT (e.g. Matt 7:21; Luke 12:8, 10) but is comparatively rare; Paul has a number of quite anomalous forms (ὁ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς Rom 2:1; 9:20; πᾶσα ψυχή/συνείδησις ἀνθρώπων Rom 2:9; 2 Cor 4:2). It is remarkable that almost all these sayings refer to all men only indirectly—"when all men praise you," or "the light of men," or the like. Statements that "all men do" this or that, with the interest in the general rule about all men, like the proverb in ΠΔ, are very rare. Examples are John 2:10; Heb 6:16; cf. Jas 3:8. One is tempted to say that Greek literature is interested in general rules about human behaviour, the NT in divine actions by which men are affected.

In ΠΔ the proverbial saying, "Death is the end of life," is given an unusual interpretation; instead of being a sigh of resignation, it is taken by the Epicurean tradition as an assurance of safety. The notion appears once in the NT, but only to be denied: In the End men shall seek death, but shall not find it (Rev 9:6). The NT passages that welcome death as a means to eternal life (so Christ's death, Rom 5:10; 6:3ff.; Phil 3:10; Col 1:22; Heb 2:9, 14; 9:15; but also the believer's death, 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:21, 23) reflect a quite different world view—one that even the NT does not consistently sustain; many passages absentmindedly reflect the common dislike of death (Matt 4:16; 10:21; 15:4; 16:28; 20:18; 26:38, 66; Mark 7:10; 9:1; etc.) Other NT notions of death (a demon, Rev 6:8; 20:13; 1 Cor 15:26, 54ff.; etc.) do not here concern us. That all men are mortal is explicitly denied in Heb 11:5 (Enoch did not die), contrast Rom 5:12ff (death passed to all men as a result of Adam's sin); Paul was interested in developing his general argument and did not want to be bothered with awkward details.

167A FEAR OF THE GODS ADDS TERRORS TO DEATH BY IMAGINING HADES AND ITS HORRORS. ATHEISM IS IMMUNE FROM THESE. [19]

*The horrors imagined are:*

(1) *The gates of Hades.* These appear in Matt 16:18, their keys in Rev 1:18. NT writers freely refer to Hades (see the concordance), apparently the original reference to a pagan deity has been forgotten. That it becomes a demon in the Apocalypse (6:8; 20:13) is probably

not a reflection of the old mythology, but a beginning of the new one. Death, too, is made a demon in the Apocalypse, see above.

(2) *Rivers of fire*. The future fire that will consume or eternally torment the wicked is one of the fundamental elements of NT faith, see the concordance and TWNT (TDNT), s.v. πῦρ. The localization of the fire in a river or rivers is a classical trait not found in the NT.

(3) *The Styx*. Not in the NT.

(4) *Darkness*. In the NT this present world is most often the realm of darkness: Matt 4:16; Luke 1:79; 22:53; John 1:5; 12:46; Rom 2:19; Eph 6:12; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 5:5; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 2:9, 11. References to darkness in the after-life or the End are most conspicuous in Matt (8:12; 22:13; 25:30—all of the “outer” darkness into which the wicked will be cast). Also in Acts 2:20; 2 Pet 2:17 = Jude 13; cf. 2 Pet 2:4. All these are in eschatological contexts. In the Apocalypse the luminaries are repeatedly darkened and darkness appears among the plagues of the End (16:10, reflecting the plague of Egypt, Exod 10:21). It is typical of their different world views that the NT should be interested in general eschatology, ΠΔ in the individual after-life; but the NT’s interest in the End should not be understood as a denial of an immediate after-life, which Luke certainly expected (23:43, etc.)

(5) *Demons*. The god-fearing man of ΠΔ conceives them as ugly, wailing, judges, and torturers. The NT, like the OT and the Rabbinic material, is not usually sensitive to *ugliness* and never specifies it as an attribute of the demons. The monsters of the Apocalypse are terrible and unnatural but not specifically ugly; contrast the Greek feeling of ΠΔ. *Mourning*, like darkness, is most prominent in Matt, where the two go together—in the darkness there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28). In ΠΔ the god-fearing conceive the *judgment* after death as a trial in a Greek court with indefinitely plural and hostile δικασταί, for the NT it is a trial before a single κριτής, Jesus (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 5:9; etc.) who is commonly conceived as a king (Matt 25:34ff.; etc.) and who will condemn the wicked, but reward the righteous (loc. cit.). Nevertheless, for Christians too [20] the final judgment is an occasion of fear, and the terms δίκη and κρίμα may be used by themselves for “damnation” (2 Thess 1:9; Jude 7; Luke 20:47; Rom 2:2f.; 3:8; Heb 6:2; etc.) The only NT passage that seems to refer to a demonic judge, 1 Tim 3:6, is ambiguous; it may refer to a judgment imposed on the devil; the best review of the discussion and evidence is that of C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, Paris, 1947, ad loc. By contrast, *torturers*, presumably demonic, are plentiful: Matt 5:25; 18:34; Luke 12:58; 1 Tim 3:6; Rev 14:10; cf. 2 Pet 2:9; Matt 25:46; Rev 20:10 (eternal torture).

(6) *Chasms*. A great chasm separates Dives from Lazarus after death, though conversation can be carried on across it (Luke 16:26).

The Apocalypse refers to an abyss from which demons emerge and into which they will eventually be cast (9:1; 20:3; etc.)

*None of these horrors of hell confronts the atheist.* (The punctuation in the Loeb edition is misleading. This is the concluding clause of the preceding discussion. The new paragraph should begin with 'Ἄλλ' ἢ μὲν which introduces an imagined objection to the trend of the argument. Such use, without explanation, of imaginary objections, is a regular feature of diatribe style, and therefore frequent in Paul, e.g., Rom 3:1-9, 27-31; 6:1, 15; 7:7, 13; etc.). Eph 2:12 gives us the converse of this; the gentiles have no hope, since they are ἄθεοι. But here ἄθεοι means rather “without any divine protector” than “without belief in gods.”

167A-B BUT IGNORANCE IS ALWAYS BAD, AND ATHEISM, BEING IGNORANCE OF THE GODS, IS A GREAT MISFORTUNE—THE BLINDNESS OF THE SOUL'S BEST EYE.

*Ignorance.* This reflects the Stoic usage of ἄγνοια, also reflected in Acts 17:30; Eph 4:18; 1 Pet 1:14; cf. Bultmann, TWNT (TDNT) s.v. ἀγνοέω.

*The eye of the soul,* already metaphorical, none the less reflects the peculiar belief that souls are anthropomorphic. Similar reflection appears in Luke 12:19 where the rich fool says to his soul, “Relax, eat, drink, enjoy yourself”; and probably in the story of Lazarus and Dives, 16:26. Similarly the souls John saw in Rev 6:9; 7:9; 20:4; etc., would certainly have been in human form.

Νόησις does not appear in the NT, which uses γνῶσις for knowledge of God. For the idea see Bultmann, TWNT (TDNT), on ἀγνοέω and γινώσκω. [21]

167B-D (BUT FEAR OF THE GODS ALSO RESULTS FROM IGNORANCE, AND IGNORANCE COMPLICATED BY FALSE OPINION) TO WHICH DISTURBING PASSIONS ARE ATTACHED. PLATO EXPLAINS THE USE OF MUSIC TO HARMONIZE THE SOUL, BUT PINDAR SAYS EVIL BEINGS FLEE MUSIC AND IT DRIVES TIGERS TO SUICIDE. FOR THEM, DEAFNESS WOULD BE PREFERABLE, AS IGNORANCE WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR TIRESIAS, ATHAMAS, AGAVE, AND HERACLES.

*All this is completely alien to the NT,* which never uses δόξα to mean “opinion” (TWNT [TDNT], s.v. δόξα), never refers to “music” as such,<sup>34</sup> never refers to Plato, let alone Pindar, never uses the word ἄρμονία (the notion of salvation as restoration of harmony, with its psychotherapeutic possibilities, is completely absent), has none of the

<sup>34</sup> Μουσικός in Rev 18:22 probably means “singers,” by contrast to the named instrumentalists.

pseudo-learned zoology that circulated in the upper classes, uses examples from Israelite, not Greek, mythology, and does not even declare *explicitly* that those who hear the gospel and reject it, or those who are converted and then relapse, would have been better off had they remained in ignorance. This conclusion is fairly clear, however, in Matt 11:20ff.; Luke 10:13ff.; John 9:41; 15:22, 24; Rom 7:9f etc.; Heb 6:4ff.; 10:26ff.; and is latent in other passages. It was soon drawn by later Christians, and underlies, for instance, Constantine's delay of baptism to the threshold of death, and Basilides' conception of the salvation of most of the world as restoration of its ignorance of God. (Miss Dannemann remarks that the NT has only two groups, those who know and the ignorant, while Plutarch has three, those who know, the merely ignorant, and those who hold false opinions, which are worse than mere ignorance.) Therefore the NT implies that ignorance may sometimes be preferable to knowledge (if those to whom the knowledge has been made available reject it) whereas Plutarch argues that mere ignorance is always preferable to false opinion.

167D-E THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ATHEISTS AND THE GOD-FEARING IS THAT ATHEISTS DO NOT PERCEIVE THE GODS AT ALL BUT THE GOD-FEARING THINK THEM EVIL AND ARE PERSUADED BY ARTISANS THAT THEY ARE ANTHROPOMORPHIC. CONSEQUENTLY THE GOD-FEARING WORSHIP IDOLS. MOREOVER THEY ARE CONTEMPTUOUS OF PHILOSOPHERS AND STATES-[22]MEN WHO REPRESENT THE GODS AS WHOLLY BENEVOLENT. THUS ATHEISTS ARE INSENSITIVE, BUT THE GOD-FEARING SUFFER FEAR AND DISTURBANCE, AND ARE AMBIVALENT TOWARDS THE GODS.

*The structure of this passage* is remarkably similar to that of Rom 1:18-32 where misapprehension of the divine nature also leads to idolatry, folly, and moral corruption. The differences between the passages are equally remarkable. ΠΔ says nothing of the causes of ignorance of the gods and their nature, but Paul begins by insisting that the essential facts of his god's existence and power can be inferred from creation, and that consequently misapprehension is due to man's wickedness. Therefore he cannot distinguish between misapprehension and mere ignorance, as ΠΔ does. For Paul the bad consequences are divinely inflicted punishments that fall on all the ignorant alike; for ΠΔ they are the natural results of misapprehension and therefore do not affect the merely ignorant. (Acts 14:15ff and 17:24ff show the same conception as Paul's, though less clearly.)

*Of the divine attributes*, εὐμενές, πατρικόν, κηδεμονικόν, and ἀμήλυτον, only πατρικόν has a closely cognate term in the NT (at Eph

3:15, where the Father is he from whom every πατριά—family—in the heavens and on earth derives its name).

*Of the attributes falsely predicated of the deity by the god-fearing, φοβερὸν, τυραννικόν, βλαβερόν, ἄγριον, and θηριῶδες, only φοβερόν has, in the NT, any connection with divinity. Hebrews says it is φοβερόν to fall into the hands of the living god (10:31) and describes his epiphany at Sinai as φοβερόν (12:21—even Moses was scared).*

*All these attributes are in the neuter in ΠΔ because they refer to τὸ θεῖον (understood here, expressed in 167E etc.) which occurs only once in the NT, significantly in Acts' mission speech in Athens (17:29), an attempt to argue for Christianity from pagan concepts.*

*Idolatry instituted by artisans:* This theory is not propounded in the NT; Isa 44:9-20 comes close to it (though the artisan's persuasion of others is not made clear). Artisans defend idolatry in Acts 19:23-40.

*The attack on idolatry* does not make clear whether its basic objection is, (1) that the gods are not actually similar in form to the images; or, (2) that the images are not the gods and therefore should not be worshipped; or, (3) both of these. Likewise most references to [23] idolatry in the NT are simply contemptuous, without alleging their reasons (see the concordance under εἰδωλολάτρης, εἰδωλολατρία, εἶδωλον). This probably happens because both the Epicureans and the Christians did think the gods human in form—Jesus certainly was; the Father probably was conceived thus (Acts 7:55; Rev 4:3ff.); the Epicureans thought men's visions of the gods were produced by effluence from the divine forms and revealed their true shapes (Aetius 1.7.34 = H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, Berlin, 1879, 306f.; W. Cronert, *Kolotes und Menedemos*, Leipzig, 1906, 112; the importance of Epicurean ideas in ΠΔ has already been noticed). In the NT, passages like Rom 1:23 and Acts 17:29 that deny any resemblance between the deity and the images are exceptional polemic, and, in the case of Romans, weasel—worded; cf. 1 Cor 15:47f.; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15.

*Προσκύνησις, to images* is attacked particularly in Rev 9:20. The meaning is uncertain; with Bolkestein, cited above on 166B, cf. E. Bickermann, "A Propos d'un passage de Chares de Mytilène," *La Parola del Passato* 91, 1963, 241-255.

*The contempt of the god-fearing for philosophers and prominent men* is exemplified in the NT, but indirectly. Acts 17:18, the only mention of philosophers in the NT, is not explicitly contemptuous; 1 Cor 1:18-31; Matt 11:25f. // Luke 10:21f. (I thank thee, Father) are contemptuous, but do not refer explicitly to philosophers; Col 2:8 thinks philosophy a danger. Contempt of rulers is mainly directed at the Jewish rulers (Luke 23:35; 24:20; John 7:48; cf. 12:42; Acts 3:17; 4:5, 26; 13:27; 23:3f.); to other municipal or imperial authorities the attitude of the NT varies with the various books, from hostile (Rev 6:15; 17-18)

to respectful (Rom 13:1-8). They are never represented as teaching theological principles, which is their role in ΠΔ. (“The rulers of this age” of 1 Cor 2:6 are probably demonic.)

*Of the divine attributes inculcated by the philosophers and rulers,* σεμνότης, χρηστότης, μεγαλοφροσύνη, εὐμενεία, κηδεμονία (and, by implication, ἀγαθότης), four are not used of God in the NT, but χρηστότης is frequent there as a divine attribute (Rom 2:4; 11:22; Eph 2:7; Tit 3:4; χρηστός Luke 6:35; Rom 2:4; 1 Pet 2:3) and ἀγαθός is a divine attribute in Mark 10:18 and parallels.

*The παραχή of the god-fearing* appears in the synoptics as the response of its heroes to the supernatural (Matt 14:26; Mark 6:50; Luke 1:12; 24:38, all forms of the cognate παράσσομαι) but in each [24] case is followed by a command, from the supernatural being concerned, not to be terrified. Thus the NT agrees with ΠΔ in thinking terror a common but improper attitude toward the supernatural; they differ in the reasons for their disapproval, ΠΔ thinking the supernatural always beneficent, the NT limiting its beneficence to the elect. (On fear of the gods in general, see above on 164E-165B.)

*The ambivalence of the god-fearing*—they both fear and flee to, flatter and abuse, pray to and blame the gods. *Fear in approaching* the gods is illustrated especially by Heb 12:12-29 (note δέους in the climax, 28); Paul thought it the proper attitude of the believer (Rom 11:20). *Flattery* of a perfect deity is impossible, but praise of the Father and Jesus in the NT is of course common (see the doxologies in the epistles, e.g. Rom 16:25ff.) and the acclamations of the heavenly court in Rev 4:11; 5:9, 12, 13, etc. resemble, both as a procedure and in general tone, those of the Roman senate in the *acta* prefixed to the Theodosian code (sec. 5). *Abuse and blame* of the gods appears in Rev 16:9 as a reaction of the wicked to the plagues of the End; it was not uncommon in antiquity: Odyssey 20.201f.; Herodotus 3.40; 7.46; etc.; Appian, *Punic (Libyan) Wars* 56, 92; *Macedonian Affairs* 19; see the abusive epithets in C. Bruchmann’s *Epitheta deorum*, Leipzig, 1893 (= W. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der ... Mythologie, Supplement*).

167F TO FAIL IN SOME THINGS IS COMMON TO ALL MEN;  
ONLY THE GODS ARE BEYOND MISFORTUNE.

*On the use of proverbs*, see above, 166F. *For this proverb* the NT has no parallel; not only διευτυχεῖν, but even εὐτυχεῖν and δυστυχεῖν, and τύχη itself are not in its vocabulary.

*A quotation from Pindar* “proves” the commonplace about the unique felicity of the gods. ΠΔ uses the classics, as the NT the OT, as a mine of proof texts for its own opinions, but does not find classical stories typologically fulfilled in current history.

*The attributes of the gods* adduced from Pindar are freedom from sickness, old age, troubles, and death. The first two the NT never considers. *Freedom from age* is strikingly contradicted by Dan 7:13, 22 where the deity is “ancient of days.” Was it more advantageous to be old in Jewish society than in Greek? ἀπειροὶ πόνων has a verbal resemblance to ἀπειραστός κακῶν in James 1:13, but the content is [25] reversed: in James he is not tempted to do evil things. *Immortality* appears as a divine attribute in 1 Tim 6:16; 1 John 5:20.

167F-168C THE ATHEIST REACTS TO MISFORTUNE, AT BEST SENSIBLY, AT WORST WITH COMPLAINTS OF THE WORLD’S INJUSTICE; THE GOD-FEARING MAN TAKES MISFORTUNE AS A SIGN OF DIVINE DISPLEASURE, HENCE FEARS, LAMENTATIONS, AND NEGLECT OF THE ACTUAL CAUSES. THIS DIFFERENCE IS ILLUSTRATED BY THEIR REACTIONS TO SICKNESS, FINANCIAL LOSSES, LOSS OF THEIR CHILDREN, AND POLITICAL FAILURES, WHICH THE GOD-FEARING MAN SEES AS DIVINE BLOWS AND DEMONIC ATTACKS.

*The picture of the sensible man* is unparalleled in the NT, where the adjective μέτριος, so important for classical morality, never occurs.

*The world’s injustice* is a common theme in the epistles (Gal 1:4; 1 John 5:19; etc.) and is particularly important in John (1:5; 16:33; 17:14, 25; etc.) but ΠΔ by its praise of the man who takes practical measures to meet misfortune and does not worry about divine displeasure, implies that any injustice is due to lack of supernatural control; in the NT it is due to the rule of the demons (John 12:31; 1 Cor 2:8; Eph 6:12; etc.). It is interesting that πρόνοια is never used in the NT for divine governance of the world.

*That misfortunes are signs of divine displeasure* is commonly stated or supposed in the NT, most often with reference to particular cases (1 Cor 10:6-11; 11:30; Heb 12:4-11; 1 Pet 4:17-19; Luke 13:2-4; John 9:2f.; Rev *passim*). Of the examples mentioned by ΠΔ, *sickness* is specified as a result of unworthy communion in 1 Cor 11:30; *financial loss* does not appear as an affliction in the NT; *the death of children* is to be part of God’s punishment of Jezebel of Thyatira in Rev 2:23 (cf. Luke 19:44; 23:28; Matt 27:25; the classical case is 2 Sam 12:13-23; cf. 1 Sam 2:31-34).

“*Divine blows*” and “*demonic attacks*” are tautologous for ΠΔ. In the NT πληγαὶ θεοῦ appear, e.g., in Rev 8-22 *passim* (most are administered by angels; cf. 2 Cor 12:7: God (?) sent an angel of Satan to humiliate Paul); these are distinct from misfortunes caused by the devil or Satan, presumably *motu proprio* (Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38; 1

Tim 3:6f.; Heb 2:14f.; Rev 2:10). In 1 Cor 5:5 and 1 Tim 1:20 Paul and his imitator make individuals over to Satan for punishment.

168C CONSEQUENTLY THE GOD-FEARING MAN DOES NOT DARE TRY [26] TO RELIEVE OR RESIST HIS MISFORTUNE, LEST HE SHOULD RESIST THE GODS. HE REFUSES ADVICE AND CONSOLATION, SAYING "LET ME, HATED BY THE GODS, PAY THE JUST PENALTY".

*The parody of an opponent's imagined speech* is a literary device used occasionally in the NT, the most famous example being the Pharisee's prayer, Luke 18:11f.

*The language and concepts* of this passage are frequently paralleled in the NT, but *the essential notion*, that because misfortunes are sent by the gods nothing may be done to relieve them (cf. 168E), does not appear. (βοηθέω in appeals for help: Matt 15:25; Mark 9:22, 24; Acts 16:9; θεραπεύω, constantly used of Jesus and the apostles: 15 instances in Matt, 5 in Mark, 12 in Luke, 1 in John, 4 in Ac). *Resistance to supernatural beings* is advocated, but the being to be resisted is the devil (and the verb is not ἀντιτάσσομαι but ἀνθίστημι: Jas 4:7; in 4:6 God ὑπερῆφάνους ἀντιτάσσεται; the classical passage is Eph 6:10-18). The essential difference is that for paganism the supernatural world was not well organized, therefore supposedly supernatural afflictions were not seen as part of a larger pattern; for Christianity the supernatural world is organized in two opposing parties and the evils emanating from it are therefore to be distinguished—those which come from the enemy are to be resisted, those which come from the high command of one's own party are to be understood as punishments or trials or necessary hardships, and born with submission and patience, 1 Pet 1:6; 5:5f.; Rom 5:3ff.; 2 Cor 12:9. It is of course permissible to ask for relief from them, Mark 14:35f. is the *locus classicus*, cf. 2 Cor 12:8.

Κολάζω of divine punishment of the wicked, 2 Pet 2:9; cf. above, on 167A, item 5. θεομαχεῖν, verb, is not in the NT, but Gamaliel warns the Pharisees in Acts 5:39 that they may be θεομάχοι if they oppose Christianity. δίκη meaning "divine punishment" is not "given" in the NT, but "paid," 2 Thess 1:9, and "endured," Jude 7; again see above, on 167A, item 5. ἀσεβής is freely used for opponents of the Christians (10 instances), but not of Christians. ἐπάρατος is used only by the high priests and Pharisees, of the crowd ignorant of the law, John 7:49 (κατάρατος, Gal 3:10 = Dt 27:26, LXX ἐπικατάρατος). μισέω of the Father, Rom 9:13 (Esau); of Jesus, Rev 2:6 (the Nicolaitans).

168D AN ATHEIST AFTER MISFORTUNE MAY WIPE AWAY HIS TEARS, [27] SHAVE HIS HEAD AND CHANGE HIS CLOTHING, BUT THE GOD-FEARING INDULGES IN ABSURD PENITENTIAL AND APOTROPAIC PRACTICES .

*Wiping away tears*, Rev 7:17; 21:4; in the NT the afflicted do not wipe away their own tears, but wait for the deity to do it. *Shaving the head*, Acts 18:18, for a prayer or vow (εὐχή) of unknown nature (E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Philadelphia 1971, and H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Tübingen 1963, recognize the obscurity); *changing clothing*, not in the NT as a reaction to misfortune.

*Of the god-fearing man's behaviour* ΠΔ specifies: *sitting in sackings and dirty clothes*, indicated as a penitential practice by Matt 11:21 // Luke 10:13 (for the cities of Galilee; Luke adds καθήμενοι, cf. Rev 11:3); *rolling naked in the mud*, not done in the NT; *confessing* (ἐξαγορεύειν) *sins and failings*, the NT uses ἐξομολογοῦμαι for confession of sins, which in the Gospels, is practiced only by the clients of the Baptist, never by Jesus' followers; it is recommended by Jas 5:16 and 1 John 1:9, but may perhaps be attacked by Rom 4:7, "Blessed are they... whose sins are covered."

*The sins that the god-fearing man will confess* are specified as *eating and drinking* (prohibited) *things* and "walking a road the δαίμων did not permit." As to the former the range of NT opinions about food laws is known to run the gamut from the flat declaration of Jesus in Mark 7:15 "There is nothing that, going into a man from outside, can make him impure," through the casuistry of Paul ("All things are permitted, but not all things are beneficial," 1 Cor 10:23; see chs. 8-10 entire and cognate passages) and the prudential prohibition of Acts 15:29; 21:25; to the attitude of the Apocalypse, which equates fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols (2:14, 20)—the attitude held by much of the early church (Justin, *Dialogue* 34.8f.; Irenaeus, 1. 6.3 (ed. Stieren); Tertullian, *De idolatria* 13; Novatian, *De cibis iudaicis* 7; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8.30f.; Cyprian, *De lapsis, passim*). *Roads forbidden by a supernatural being* are implied by the NT references to the limitation of travel on the sabbath (Matt 24:20; Acts 1:12—evidently this taboo was observed by some early Christian communities); see also Matt 2:12; 10:5; Acts 16:6f.; Rom 1:13. The metaphorical use of "walk in a way" for "practice a sort of behaviour" ("walk in the way of Yahweh," etc.) is probably here irrelevant. [28]

Either in expiation of these offenses or to prevent further misfortunes the god-fearing may stay at home, call in a witch, and have himself *fumigated* and *wiped off* and *hung with amulets*, practices unknown to the NT except for the scornful reference to *tefillin* as φυλακτήρια in Matt 23:5.

168E THESE GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ARE CONFIRMED BY THE EXAMPLE OF TIRIBAZOS.

*Examples from classical history* in ΠΔ are replaced by examples from Israelite history in the NT. Have you not read what David did? (Mark 2:25; etc.).

168E-F WHILE OTHERS RESIST MISFORTUNES, THE GOD-FEARING MAN TELLS HIMSELF THAT HE SUFFERS AT THE COMMAND OF A GOD AND THEREWITH GIVES OVER HOPE AND EFFORT, AND REJECTS HELP.

*At the command of a god* sufferings are sent, in the NT, both on individuals and on the world (2 Cor 12:7, Paul's thorn in the flesh; Rev *passim*; see above on 168C). That some of these must be borne without resistance because sent by God is implied in 2 Cor 12:9 ("My grace is enough for you."); cf. Acts 5:39; 26:14 (kicking against the prick).

*Rejection of help:* The most famous case in the NT is that of Jesus at his arrest. In Matt 26:52ff and John 18:2 he commands his followers not to fight, and in Matt he also rejects the assistance of more than twelve legions of angels (72,000), his reason being, as the preceding prayers have made clear, and as John makes him say explicitly, that he must bear the suffering to which the Father has destined him. Matt also adds to the scene a reminiscence of the Lord's prayer (26:42, "Thy will be done"), but neither this petition nor the corresponding commandments μή ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ, etc. (Matt 5:39ff.; Luke 6:29f.) seem to have done much to inhibit defensive action by Christians, so the refusal of assistance by Jesus remains isolated in the NT.

168F-169B MODERATE MISFORTUNES MAY BE MADE FATAL BY FEAR OF THE GODS WHICH CAUSES DESPAIR. THE EXAMPLES OF MIDAS, WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE BECAUSE OF DREAMS, ARISTODEMUS, BECAUSE OF PORTENTS AND PROPHETS, AND NICIAS, FRIGHTENED BY AN ECLIPSE. [29]

*Dreams*, see above, 165F.

*Portents* accompany the Markan crucifixion (15:33, 38, the sun darkened, the veil of the temple split) and are greatly increased in the Matthaean version (27:51ff., earthquake, resurrection, etc.). They frighten the centurion and his companions. Others are promised for the End by Mark 13:8, 24f. and parallels (wars, earthquakes, famines; eclipses of sun and moon, shooting stars, etc.). Luke 21:25f. adds that these will cause general helplessness and terror. But nobody in the NT is paralyzed by a private portent (cf. above 165 D).

*Prophets* were plentiful in early Christianity, but in Acts 21:4, 11ff., Paul carried out his plans regardless of them. On other occasions, when their prophecies were taken seriously, Christians took practical

measures to counter the predicted events, Acts 11:27ff. (for a full collection of references see TWNT s.v. προφήτης).

*Eclipses* taken as signs of divine displeasure and impending doom Mark 13:24 and parallels; 15:33 and parallels; Acts 2:20; Rev 6:12; 8:12; 9:2. They are a standard class of portents.

169B-C EXAMPLES FROM ARCHILOCHUS, HESIOD AND HOMER TO SHOW THAT PRAYER SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY SELF-HELP, CONCLUDING WITH THE PRINCIPLE, GOD IS THE HOPE OF VIRTUE, NOT THE EXCUSE OF COWARDICE. CONTRAST THE JEWS, WHO LOST THEIR CITY BECAUSE THEY FEARED TO DEFEND IT ON A SABBATH.

Θεοὺς ἐπικαλεῖται σωτήρας. No one in the NT is directly addressed as σωτήρ, but both the Father and Jesus are often described as such (24 instances, see concordance; bibliography in TWNT (TDNT), s.v. σῶζω).

εὔχεσθαι κελεύειν τοὺς Ἕλληνας ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τοῖς θεοῖς. Requesting the prayers of others is a NT practice: 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1; Col 4:3; Heb 13:18; so is prayer for others, Matt 5:44; 19:33; Luke 6:28; Acts 6:6; 8:15; 14:23; 28:8; Phil 1:9; Col 1:3, 9; 2 Thess 1:11; 1 Tim 2:8; Jas 5:14ff.; etc.

ἀρετῆς γὰρ ἐλπίς ὁ Θεός ἐστιν, οὐ δειλίας πρόφασις. In Acts 27:21-36 Paul has been told by an angel that they will be saved, but takes practical measures to make the prophecy come true. The most important application of the principle is Paul's struggle against the idle in the churches, who presumably relied on the Lord for their support, appealing to sayings like those collected in Matt 6:19-34 (μὴ θησαυρίζετε...μὴ...μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὔριον, [30] κτ.λ.); against these Paul argues in 2 Thess 3:6-12; cf. 1 Thess 4:11; cf. Eph 4:28.

ἀρετὴ in the NT is rather moral than practical virtue (Phil 4:8; 2 Pet 1:5); elsewhere "miracle" or "supernatural power" (1 Pet 2:9; 2 Pet 1:3). These are all the instances of its use. The discussion by Bauernfeind is, as usual in TWNT, distorted by the imposition of modern theology on ancient thought.

ἐλπίς ὁ θεός, in the NT, for the resurrection, Acts 24:15; Rom 15:13; 1 Pet 1:21. Χριστὸς ἡ ἐλπίς 1 Tim 1:1; Col 1:27 (τῆς δόξης).

δειλία: 2 Tim 1:7 οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεός πνεῦμα δειλίας, ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ. This is the only NT use.

ἀλλ' Ἰουδαῖοι: *The story* was famous; variants appear in Dio Cassius 37:16; 49.22.4; Josephus *Ant.* 12.6; 14:63f.; *Apion* 1.205ff.

*Christian attacks on sabbath observance*: Jesus, Mark 2:23-28 and parallels; 3:1-4 and parallels; Luke 13:10-16; 14:1-5; John 5:1-16; 7:22f.; 9; Paul, Rom 14:5; Gal 4:10; Col 2:16. Evidence for early *Christian*

*observance of the sabbath*, Luke 23:56; Acts 1:12; Rom 14:5; Gal 4:10; Col 2:16. Heb 4:1-13 conceives of salvation as a sabbath. *Jewish δεισιδαιμονία* was proverbial, Josephus, *C. Apion.* 1.205ff., etc.; Acts 17:22 puts a reference to it into the mouth of a pagan (probably irony); it begins its career as a Christian cliché in Diogn. 1.1.

169D-E BAD IN MISFORTUNES, THE FEAR OF THE GODS IS EQUALLY BAD IN HAPPY OCCASIONS. THE GOD-FEARING ARE TERRIFIED IN RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AND APPROACH THE TEMPLES OF THE GODS AS IF THEY WERE LAIRS OF MONSTERS.

ἥδιστα δὲ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἑορταί. Heb 12:22f., salvation compared to the approach to Jerusalem in a festival; cf. 4:1-13, salvation a sabbath. Are these unique in the NT? It often mentions religious festivals, but never (?) elsewhere as occasions of rejoicing.

*The god-fearing man* θύει καὶ φοβεῖται ... χερσὶν ἐπιθυμιᾷ τρεμουσiais. Ps 2:11, serve Yahweh with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Heb 12:18-21, the fear of the Israelites and Moses at Sinai.

ὡσπερ ἄρκτων φλωεῖς ... τοῖς τῶν θεῶν μεγάροις ... προσιόντες. In Mark 11:17 and parallels, the Jerusalem temple is compared to a robbers' cave, but the reason for the comparison is the priesthood, not the deity. [31]

169F-170D IT IS LESS IMPIOUS TO DENY THE EXISTENCE OF THE GODS THAN TO SAY OF THEM WHAT THE MYTHS SAY.

*This and the following section* (170B-D) are examples of the *application to the gods of human moral standards*. The process has two forms. One, the attribution to the gods of human virtues (justice, mercy, etc.) is so common as to need no illustration; the other is the criticism of the gods, exemplified in this passage. Here, as often, it is based on mythology; elsewhere it arises when the god is made responsible for the cosmos, the facts of human life (notably, death), or unpleasant social practices, especially cultic. Examples of this latter type are frequent in gnosticism. Both types are common in Greek literature. In the NT see Rom 3:3f., 5; 9:14, 19; Jas 1:13; Rev 16:5. The passages from Romans show the influence of the style of the diatribe in which false conclusions were often attributed to imaginary opponents in order to provide opportunities for refutation.

ἀβέβαιος, εὐμετάβολος, εὐχερῆς πρὸς ὀργήν, ... τιμωρητικός, μικρόλυπος. Such lists of vices are prominent in the NT, e.g. Rom 1:28-32; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 4:31; 5:3ff.; Col 3:5, 8; 1 Tim 1:9; 6:4; 2 Tim 3:2-4; Tit 3:3; 1 Pet 4:3; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15; see S. Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im NT*, Berlin, 1959 (*ZNW Beihefte* 25). The NT lists are mainly concerned with serious vices, sins, and crimes—murder, adultery, theft, drunkenness, etc.—ΠΔ lists the moral failings

of a would-be philosophic gentleman; of the five terms given, only one, *ἐυχερῆς πρὸς ὀργήν*, is paralleled in the NT (Tit 1:7; Col 3:8; 1 Tim 2:8; Jas 1:19; Matt 5:22). Since the ΠΔ list is a catalogue of the failings of pagan gods, it is interesting to see how those of the NT come off by these standards: *μικρόλυπος*: τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ is grieved by evil speaking, Eph 4:30. *ἀβέβαιος*: ἀλήθεια and ἀληθής are often specified as attributes of the Father or of Jesus, John 1:17; 3:33 and *passim*; Rom 1:25; 3:4, 7; 5:8; etc. Heb 6:18, however, reports that when the Father wished to prove his unchangeable determination about one matter he swore by two things ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι θεόν (for the various interpretations see C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, Paris, 1952-3, 2 vols., *ad loc.*). *εὐμετάβολος*: Jas 1:17 denies any τροπής ἀποσκίασμα in God. *ἐυχερῆς πρὸς ὀργήν*: ὀργή is a prominent attribute of the Father; “the coming wrath” is one of the main motive factors of the religion, Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6; 1 Thess 1:10; Rev 19:15; etc. Anger is attributed to [32] Jesus in Mark 1:43 and 3:5. *τιμωρητικός*: the Father is the source of τιμωρία in Heb 10:29. The ΠΔ list recurs with variations in 170E, see there.

*Punishment sent by the gods for neglect of their cults*: They (1) eat men, not in the NT; (2) kill their children—the general principle that children are punished for their parents’ sins is stated in the ten commandments, Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9; denied in Ezek 18; cf. John 9:2; (3) send wild beasts to destroy their property, Lev 26:22; Exod 14:15. None of this appears in the NT, except perhaps in Paul’s notion of the consequences of Adam’s sin, Rom 5:12. αἴτε κακὴ νεκρῶ παρούσα ἀμπεφυρμένα ἐσῆλθες. Isa 63:1-6: “Who is this that comes from Edom, with crimson garments from Bozrah? ... I ... who am mighty to save ... Why is your clothing red? ... I have trodden the winepress alone ... I stamped them down in my anger, and their blood is sprinkled on my garments, and I have polluted all my clothes.” This is echoed in Rev 14:14-20; 19:11-16; but the pollution of the deity is not specifically mentioned. The criticism of the old religious text, explicit in ΠΔ, is tacit in the NT.

τρέμουσι καὶ δεδοίκασι (οἱ δεισιδαίμονες τοὺς θεούς): 1 Pet 2:10, the wicked δόξας οὐ τρέμουσιν βλασφημοῦντες. Heb 12:28, the worship pleasing to the Father is that μετ’ εὐλαβείας καὶ δέους. δεῖδω is too classical for the NT.

*Divine penalties for trifling offenses are disproportionately severe*. The NT conceives of both reward and punishment as eternal (Matt 19:16, 29; 25:41, 46; Rev 20:10; etc.). Consequently some passages contrast the brevity of human action with the eternity of consequences (usually brief suffering with eternal reward): John 12:25; 2 Cor 4:17; Phlm 15; Heb 5:7ff.; 9:12. There is no question of the justice of the system. The contrast was to play a large role in Christian homiletics.

*Attributes implicitly denied the gods:* χολήν εἶχε, cf. Acts 8:23 (not clear). μισοπόνηρος ἦν, for μισέω see above, 168C, end. Leto ἤλγει κακῶς ἀκούουσα, no verbal parallels in the NT; for the idea see the concordance, s.v. βλασφημέω and βλασφημία (that against the spirit is unforgivable, Mark 3:29 and parallels). μὴ κατέγελα τῆς ἀθροπίνης ἀμαθίας. Yahweh laughs at the wicked, i.e. the gentiles, Ps 2:4; 59:9; but this does not imply that he will let their sins go unpunished—quite the contrary; he laughs because he intends to punish them. The NT never uses γελάω or γέλως of the Father or Jesus. ἀλλ’ ἤγανάκτει, Mark 10:14 uses the verb of Jesus; never of the Father. [33]

*Sickness sent by the gods:* Lev 26:16; Deut 28:21ff.; Ezek 14:8ff.; often in the OT, especially in apocalyptic; Luke 21:11; Rev 6:8; 16:2, 8ff.

170D-F IT IS THOUGHT, NOT UTTERANCE, THAT CONSTITUTES BLASPHEMY. SINCE THE GOD-FEARING THINK THE GODS EVIL THEY MUST HATE THEM, BE THEIR ENEMIES, AND SERVE THEM ONLY AS MEN SERVE TYRANTS; THEY WOULD BE ATHEISTS IF THEY DARED.

*It is thought, not action, that constitutes a sin:* Matt 5:21f., 28; 1 John 3:15.

ἔμπληκτοι, ἄπιστοι, εὐμετάβολοι, τιμωρητικοί, ὠμοί, μικρόλυποι—attributes of the gods as conceived by the god-fearing. For lists of vices, and for τιμωρητικοί and μικρόλυποι, see above, 170A. None of the other vices in the list is mentioned in the NT. A further list in 171B adds ὕβρισται and μικρολόγοι; the NT uses ὕβριστής only of men, Rom 1:30; 1 Tim 1:13; and never uses μικρολόγος.

*Enmity to the gods.* H. Braun (op. cit. sup. n. 15, end) compares Rom 8:7 τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἔχθρα εἰς θεόν. In Paul the hatred results in all men from a conflict of wills, in Plutarch it is merely the consequence in some men of their misconception of the gods' nature.

*The god-fearing man* κ' ἂν δεδοίκη, προσκυνεῖ γε καὶ θύει καὶ κάθηται πρὸς ἱεροῖς. Fear of the gods, above 164E; προσκύνησις, 166A; κάθηται πρὸς ἱεροῖς only of a beggar, Acts 3:2, 10. *Unwilling worship*, in the NT, not by men, but by demons, Mark 1:24; 3:11; 5:7; etc.; Phil 2:10f.

πιστεύει δ' ἄκων, Jas 2:19 καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια πιστεύουσιν καὶ φρίσσουσιν

ὁ δὲ δεισιδαίμων τῇ προαιρέσει ἄθεος ὢν ἀσθενέστερός ἐστιν ἢ ὥστε δοξάζειν περὶ θεῶν ὃ βούλεται. This reverses Mark 9:24, πιστεύω, βοήθει μου τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. ἀσθενής and cognates are used of faith in Rom 4:19; 14:1f., 21 v.l.; 15:1; 1 Cor 8:7-12; 9:22; 1 Thess 5:14. From the NT this would seem a peculiarly Pauline usage, to find it in

ΠΔ is therefore a warning against reliance on NT evidence alone. As in Paul, too, the opposite of the ἀσθενής is the ἐλεύθερος.

171A-B ATHEISM DOES NOT CAUSE FEAR OF THE GODS, BUT FEAR OF THE GODS CAUSES ATHEISM BY INSPIRING RIDICULOUS RITES AND PASSIONS AND BY REPRESENTING THE GODS AS EVIL. [34]

οὐ γὰρ ἐν οὐρανῷ τι μεμπτόν οὐδ' ἐν ἄστροις (κ.τ.λ.) ... οὕτως ἀθεότητα τοῦ παντός κατέγνωσαν, ἀλλὰ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἔργα καὶ πάθη καταγέλαστα. Rom 1:18-32 is stronger: the cosmic order not merely gives no occasion for atheism, but proclaims the existence and nature of the deity; the ridiculous practice of idolatry is not the cause of atheism but the result of men's turning from the creator to the creature. In Paul, however, as in ΠΔ, the reprehensible rites are the cause of moral evils in the worshipers, though the πάθη of Rom 1:26ff are mainly sexual and moral offenses, those of ΠΔ are primarily philosophical failings—fear, emotional disturbance, etc. The general notion that wickedness causes disbelief is expressed in the NT by the Hebrew use of σκάνδαλον, σκανδαλίζω, for which see the concordances. The types of wickedness are different: for the NT, Jesus' crucifixion, the persecution of Christianity, teachings of which the writers disapprove, behaviour that violates common rules, especially in regard to purity and sex; for ΠΔ, ritual practices. Contemptuous references to rival rites are found in the NT (Mark 7:3f.; Eph 5:11f.; Col 2:18; Heb 9:9f.; Rev 2:21, 24; etc.) but they are not attacked as causes of disbelief.

γοητεῖαι καὶ μαγεῖαι ... ἀκάθαρτοι μὲν καθαρμοὶ ῥυπαραὶ δ' ἀγνεῖαι. In these the author would probably have classed baptism and the eucharist, had he thought of them, but nothing indicates that he did.

ὑβιστάς, ... μικρολόγους καὶ μικρολύπους, of the gods. See above, 170E.

171B-E WORST OF THESE RITES OF THE GOD-FEARING IS HUMAN SACRIFICE, AS SHOWN BY EXAMPLES: THE GAULS, SCYTHIANS, CARTHAGINIANS, AND AMESTRIS.

*Human sacrifice* is often attacked in the OT, Lev 18:21; 20:2ff.; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer 32:35; etc. In the NT its rejection is taken for granted, except for that of Jesus (Heb 9:11-10:22; John 1:29, 36; 19:36; Acts 8:32; 1 Cor 5:7; 11:24f. and parallels; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6, 9f., 12) and the living self-sacrifice of the faithful (Rom 12:1; 15:16; Heb 13:15; 1 Pet 2:5; etc.).

ἄρνας ἢ νεοσσούς: common sacrificial animals, classical forms of the nouns. The NT uses ἀρῆν only once (Luke 10:3), ἀρνίον commonly (sacrificial in Rev 5ff.); for νεοσσός; it has νοσσός (Luke 2:24).

φιλόανθρωπον ... καὶ σοφὸν καὶ πλούσιον, attributes of Hades. φιλόανθρωπος is not in the NT, but Tit 3:4 speaks of ἡ [35] φιλοανθρωπία ... τοῦ ... θεοῦ. σοφός, Rom 16:27 μόνω σοφῷ θεῷ, cf. 1 Cor 1:25; πλούσιος, 2 Cor 8:9, Jesus δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν. (Eph 2:4 shows a metaphorical usage, here irrelevant.)

171E MOURNING FOR THE GODS IS ALSO RIDICULOUS, AS REMARKED BY XENOPHANES.

εἰ μὲν θεοὶ εἰσι, μὴ θρηνεῖτε αὐτούς· εἰ δ' ἄνθρωποι, μὴ θύετε αὐτοῖς. This antithesis is part of the background of 1 Cor 1:23: Χριστὸν ἔσταυρωμένον, Ἰουδαίους μὲν σκάνδαλον, ἔθνεσιν δὲ μωρίαν; cf. Gal 5:11.

171E-F FLEE, THEREFORE, THE FEAR OF THE GODS, BUT DO NOT FALL INTO ATHEISM. PIETY LIES BETWEEN THEM.

νόσημα, of an opinion, cf. 1 Tim 6:4: νοσῶν περὶ ζητήσεις καὶ λογομαχίας.

φευκτέον, of sins, errors, etc., 1 Cor 6:18; 10:14; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22. In the NT there is only one instance of this classical use of a verbal adjective in -τέος, and even that one (in Luke 5:38) produced textual variants. (Mark 2:28 was corrupted from Luke.)

εὐσέβεια is also an ideal in the NT, where it is characteristic of the deutero-Pauline material (one usage in Acts, eight in 1 Tim, one in 2 Tim, one in Tit, four in the framework of 2 Pet). It is thus an evidence of the influence of the Greco-Roman environment.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

### THE HISTORY OF THE TERM GNOSTIKOS

[796] This article continues a discussion with Prof. Bianchi which began with my review of the papers of the Messina conference,<sup>1</sup> when I pointed out, *inter alia*:

1. That the “working hypothesis” proposed by the “final document” of the conference would not work—the “coherent series of characteristics” it tried to find in second-century gnosticism was not coherent; each of its elements was absent from one or more of what are commonly called “the gnostic systems,” and some of them contradicted major points of major systems.

2. That Prof. Jonas’s attempt, in his paper at the Messina conference, to describe an “ideal type” of gnosticism, was a failure—the resultant miscarriage had few traits that were common to all systems and itself corresponded to none.

3. That none of the conference’s speakers who had attempted to define gnosticism had thought of asking which groups actually called themselves “gnostics” or were called so by their neighbors.

To these objections Prof. Bianchi replied in his paper at the Stockholm conference.<sup>2</sup> First he mixed up my criticisms of Jonas’s paper with my remarks on the conference’s document, and took me to task for accusing the conference of trying to establish an “ideal type” of gnosticism<sup>3</sup> (which I had not done), then he reiterated his notion of trying “d’*établir une série cohérente (d’une cohérence objective) de traits qui soit indubitablement gnostique*” (*ibid.*) this in spite of the [797] fact that not only I but also Prof. Drijvers had pointed out that the elements of his “coherent series” did not cohere, but were found in different “systems” most of which lacked or even contradicted one or more of them.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In *JBL* 89 (1970) 82ff.

<sup>2</sup> U. Bianchi, “A propos de quelques discussions récentes sur la terminologie, la définition et la méthode de l’étude du gnosticisme,” *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Gnosticism, Stockholm, Aug. 20-25, 1973* (G. Widengren and D. Hellholm, eds.; Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens, *Handlingar, Filol.-Filos. Ser. 17*; Stockholm, 1977) 16ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. Jonas, whose paper I had criticized for this attempt, not only made it, but dogmatically declared “the ‘ideal type’ construct” a thing “which the historian, at least for heuristic purposes, cannot do without”—an interesting specimen of unusually pure poppycock: H. Jonas, “Delimitation of the Gnostic Phenomenon—Typological and Historical,” in *The Origins of Gnosticism, Colloquium of Messina* (ed. U. Bianchi; Leiden, 1967) 90.

<sup>4</sup> Drijvers’s criticisms are cited by Bianchi, “Quelques discussions,” 21.

To meet these criticisms he fell back on the claim that if even one of his proposed traits—for example, the creation of the world as the consequence of a divine *crise*—was found “dans les contextes respectifs” (by which I suppose he means, “in several systems commonly called ‘gnostic’”) it would necessarily be “une idée typiquement gnostique.”<sup>5</sup> Hence, I suppose, he thought we could collect a set of the typical ideas of “gnosticism.”

However, this notion overlooks the problem indicated by my third objection, that none of the writers of the Messina conference had considered the question, “Which groups in antiquity did call themselves ‘gnostics’ or were so called by their neighbors?” Here I may have led Prof. Bianchi into error. I pointed out that if ancient usage had been considered, “Someone might have noticed that the most insistently self-styled ‘gnostic’ whose works have come down to us is Clement of Alexandria. As things were, orthodox Christian gnosticism was wholly ignored.”<sup>6</sup> By “orthodox Christian gnosticism” I meant, of course, that gnosticism which eventually, thanks to the victory of the “catholic” Christians, came to be thought “orthodox.” But Prof. Bianchi commented, “Il nous semble que cette phrase contienne la source de confusions remarquables, car elle juxtapose dans une même proposition herméneutique [whatever that means] les groupes qui s’appelaient ‘gnostiques’, comme dénomination d’une ‘secte’, et l’appellation de ‘gnostique’, voire de ‘vrai gnostique’ que Clément s’attribue dans le contexte d’une école, mieux dans le contexte de la révéndication des profondeurs (et de l’orthodoxie) d’une théologie.”<sup>7</sup>

For my part, I think Prof. Bianchi’s comment not the source, but the result of profound misunderstandings, viz., the notions: (1) that the gnostic groups considered themselves “sects” (in the modern sense, viz., as opposed to the Church, which I take to be the sense Prof. Bianchi had in mind); (2) that none of the gnostic groups could have thought themselves schools within the Church; and (3) that their use of [798] *gnostikos* did not indicate the claim to a profound and orthodox theology. Yet worse is (4) the notion that words must have had in antiquity, as *distinct* meanings, the different senses assigned to them by modern dictionaries. (Sometimes they did, but more often they had one meaning which the ancients perceived as appropriate for matters we feel it necessary to describe by various terms.) Worst of all is (5) the notion that to investigate the ancient usage of a word will be a “source of remarkable confusions” if it reveals that the usage does not

---

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>6</sup> *JBL* 89 (1970) 83

<sup>7</sup> “Quelques discussions,” 20f.

accord with modern terminology. Here the problem, for Prof. Bianchi, becomes acute because he is trying to find the “*idées typiquement gnostiques*” of “*les systèmes du II<sup>e</sup> siècle que tout le monde s’accorde à dénommer gnostiques.*”<sup>8</sup> But which world? Not, it seems, the ancient world of the gnostics themselves, but rather the *beau monde* of contemporary scholarship. To paraphrase Louis XIV, “*Le monde, c’est nous.*” By our academic prerogative, without considering ancient usage, we recognize certain schools as “gnostic”; hence the ideas held by those schools become “typically gnostic”; hence “gnosticism” will be defined; and the resultant definition of “gnosticism” will prove the “gnostic” character of these schools. Since Plato said “the most perfect of forms” was that most completely circular (*Ti.* 33b), we may describe this research program as Platonically perfect.

I propose, however, to break the magic circle and descend from the neatly constructed pleroma of Platonic ideas into the chaos of material, historical facts. Like Sophia, I want to know:

1. What was the original meaning of *gnostikos*, and how did it develop, down to early Christian times?
2. What Christians, individually or in groups, claimed to be *gnostikoi*, and when, and why?
3. What, if any, non-Christians made the same claim, and when, and why?
4. What Christians and non-Christians came to use the word as a term of abuse, and when, and why, and for whom?

In proposing these questions I do not have the answers up my sleeves. All will require long research; for some, no doubt, the lack of evidence will prevent us from reaching answers better than conjectural. However, I have made some preliminary investigations with the indices verborum available to me, and the results have surprised me. They are as follows.

*Gnostikos* was not a common word. Perhaps it was coined by Plato. [799] At all events, in preserved material it seems to have been first used by Plato<sup>9</sup> in the *Politicus* 258e-267a, where the *gnostike techne*—the art of knowing—is opposed to the *praktike*, and where the ideal politician is defined as the master of the gnostic art; if such a being were to appear he would be a god come down to rule mankind. From Plato’s time to the second century A.D. I have found *gnostikos* used

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 18f.

<sup>9</sup> Its appearance in Psellus’s description of Anaxagoras’s teachings (*De omnifaria doctrina*, ed. Westerink, 46, end) is probably due to Psellus’s rephrasing. This seems to have been the opinion of Diels, who put the description in the *testimonia*, not in the *fragmenta*: *Vorsokr.*, 7th ed., 2. 30 (101a).

only by Aristotle,<sup>10</sup> the Aristotelian Strato of Lampsacus,<sup>11</sup> a series of “Pythagoreans” (Archytas,<sup>12</sup> Clinias,<sup>13</sup> Ocellus Lucanus,<sup>14</sup> and perhaps Ecphantus<sup>15</sup>), Philo Judaeus,<sup>16</sup> Plutarch (only in the *Moralia*),<sup>17</sup> and Pseudo-Plutarch.<sup>18</sup> The meanings are, roughly, “leading to knowledge, [800] resulting in knowledge, capable of knowing, cognizant of.” The term describes types of study, powers or elements of the personality, and thence, if Delatte’s conjecture for Ecphantus’s text is correct, an individual possessed of such powers. As in Plato (and the coincidence strengthens Delatte’s case) this individual would be the ideal king, the only man capable of knowing God, who would therefore act as the mediator between God and man; he would be, in effect, the *nous* of his subjects, in whom he would restore their lost contact with the heavenly world from which he came.<sup>19</sup>

This picture of the usage is derived from incomplete indices verborum; it will have to be tested by the *Thesaurus*. If it prove correct, some conclusions will follow.

<sup>10</sup> *A.Po.*, end (100a11): general concepts, being *hexeis* (states/conditions), arise from experience, not from other, more “gnostic” *hexeis*. Ross translates “more cognitive.”

<sup>11</sup> On the origin of dreams: they arise in the irrational element of the mind, which becomes more capable of sensation in sleep and is therefore moved by the “gnostic” (cognitive) element. Quoted as Strato’s by Pseudo-Plutarch, *De placitis philosophorum* (*Moralia* 904, end). Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* 416, thinks this drawn from Aëtius, *Placita philosophorum*, of the first or second century A.D.

<sup>12</sup> *Peri nou*, Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.48.6, end (Wachsmuth-Hense. p. 317) = Iamblichus, *Comm. Math.* 8 (Festa, p. 36): like is always “gnostic” (capable of the knowledge) of like, etc. *Peri andros agathou*, Stobaeus, *Anth.* 3.3.65 (Wachs.-He., 218): prudence arises from two practices, one, that to acquire a scientific and “gnostic” *hexis*, the other, to see much and have much practical experience. *On the Categories*, ed. Thesleff, *Pythagorean Texts*, p. 32: science, beginning with finite matters, becomes “gnostic” (capable of knowing) infinite ones.

<sup>13</sup> Stobaeus, *Anth.* 3.1.75 (Wachs.-He., 31): those who have the noetic and “gnostic” element of *arete* are called subtle (*deinoi*) and intelligent.

<sup>14</sup> *De universi natura* 25, end (ed. Harder, p. 17 = Thesleff, p. 131): touch is “gnostic” and “critical” (that by which we know and judge) of the distinguishing qualities of physical objects (heat, cold, etc.).

<sup>15</sup> L. Delatte, *Les traités de la royauté d’Ecphante, Diotogène et Sthénidas* (*Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie ... de l’U. de Liège* 97; Liège, 1942) 183f., on Ecphantus, *Peri basileias*, in Stobaeus, *Anth.* 4.7.64 (Wachs.-He., 272, 15), where the text is corrupt. Many conjectures have been proposed. Delatte suggested *gnostikon* in his notes (*loc. cit.*), but printed *ennoetikon* in his text (p. 28).

<sup>16</sup> *Op.* 154, end, according to all MSS except M (Laurentianus plut. X cod. 20), which reads *horistikou*. Wendland needlessly conjectured *gnoristikou*, but *gnostikou* makes perfect sense: “By ‘the <power> capable of knowing good and evil <things>’ Genesis refers to > prudence.”

<sup>17</sup> *Gryllus* 7 (990a): taste occurs in the tongue when the juices of food are mingled with the “gnostic” (organ, i.e., that capable of discerning them). *An. proc.* 23 (1023e): the souls of mortals have a power “gnostic” (capable of the knowledge) of what is sensibly perceptible.

<sup>18</sup> For *De placitis* (904f.) see above, note 11, on Strato. Again in *De musica* 33 (1142f): each science studies some special object, thus harmonics is “gnostic” (takes cognizance) of the relations of sounds.

<sup>19</sup> Delatte, *Traités*, 183f., where the similarity of this doctrine to “gnosticism” is noticed.

First: the claim to be a *gnostikos* must be a claim to be a figure defined by the Platonic-Pythagorean philosophic tradition. The term is not Stoic; the only uses in *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* occur in passages cited from Clement of Alexandria; Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius did not use it.<sup>20</sup> I have not found it in Greco-Roman religious texts or inscriptions, nor in texts marginal to the official religion (Orphica, Hermetica,<sup>21</sup> magical texts). It was not common in Judaism: it is not in the Septuagint, the Greek pseudepigrapha to which I have indices,<sup>22</sup> the *Corpus Papyrorum Iudaicarum*,<sup>23</sup> or Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum* 1; the one (dubious) usage in Philo (above, n. 16) is probably Platonic. Its rarity in Greek literature is surpassed by its apparently total absence from Greek popular usage.<sup>24</sup> Consequently I think we may conclude that the *gnostikoi* probably got their claim to be *gnostikoi* from the Platonic-Pythagorean tradition. This does not settle the question whence they got their doctrines, but it does [801] establish a strong presumption in favor of Platonic and Pythagorean origins.

Second: the claim to be a *gnostikos* was rather to be capable of knowing than to possess particular items of information. The second meaning is not excluded, but, if the word were used in its customary sense, it would be at best subordinate. Thus being gnostic would seem to have been the essential claim, and having gnosis merely a consequence. However, if gnosis was the means and sine qua non for salvation, its importance in the thought of a group pursuing salvation may have become so great as to cause a shift in the meaning of *gnostikos*.

So much for the term; now when, how, and why did Christians come to use it? It is not in the New Testament, Apostolic Fathers, or second-century Apologists. As far as I know, the first record of Christian usage is the report of Celsus that among the many different sorts of Christians there are some who call themselves "gnostics."<sup>25</sup> These Celsus distinguishes from the Catholics and also from the Sibyllistai,

<sup>20</sup> At least, it was not one of those words in Marcus's text that Farquharson saw fit to index.

<sup>21</sup> The reference in the index graecitatis of Scott's *Hermetica* (4.156) is to an attack on heretics attributed to Anthimus of Nicomedia, about 300 A.D.

<sup>22</sup> *Greek Enoch, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Joseph and Asenath, Testament of Solomon, Prophetarum Vitae, Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, Sibylline Oracles III, Letter of Aristeas*. It does not occur in any of the brief indices made by James for the texts he published.

<sup>23</sup> The relevant indices are headed "Technical Terms," but are fairly full.

<sup>24</sup> It is not in the indices to *Inscriptiones Graecae, Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum, Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum, Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, Robert's *Bulletin Epigraphique*, the dictionaries of the papyri by Preisigke and Kiessling, the *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*.

<sup>25</sup> Origen, *Cels* 5.61f.

Simonians, Marcellians who follow Marcellina, Harpocratians who follow Salome, others who follow Mariamme, others Martha, others Marcion, and yet other groups whom Origen identifies, on the basis of characteristics given by Celsus, as Valentinians and Ebionites. Clearly if one group can be distinguished as “those who call themselves ‘gnostics’” from all these others, then none of the other groups called itself, as a group, “gnostics,” and their members did not, as individuals, make the claim in such a striking fashion that their groups could be distinguished by this trait. However, some individuals in these other groups may have claimed to be gnostics; Clement, a Catholic, did. Against Prof. Bianchi, I see no reason to suppose that the claim made by a group or all its members must have been essentially different from that made by an isolated individual. Finally, Celsus may have been misinformed, confused, dishonest, or all three, and may have reported different characteristics of Christians in such a way as to suggest that each one defined a different group; his objective, after all, was to show up Christian divisions and self-contradictions. Some of the characteristics he listed may have been shared by several groups; etc. Granting such possibilities, we must also grant that Celsus’s report does seem, in the main, probably true. We should expect that by his time some Christian groups were beginning to have philosophic pretensions, and one may have distinguished itself [802] by claiming to be *the gnostikoi*—the group of those able to know the things that mattered.

In fact our next evidence from Alexandria shows approximately this state of affairs. Clement himself claims to be a gnostic and his account of the meaning of the term is our fullest explanation of why an early Christian should have claimed it. To this one of my questions the answer is therefore so extensive that I pass over it, with the hope that much of the answer will appear in the paper by Prof. Mehat (published in volume 1 of these proceedings). Besides Clement, other Christians claimed the term for other reasons and understood it to have other meanings. Clement knows some of these who seem to be members of his own church.<sup>26</sup> He is also given to attacking all “self-loving and notoriety-loving heresies” as “not having learned or received tradition correctly, but having acquired a false opinion of <their own> knowledge (*gnosis*)”—GCS 3.64.21ff. Such attacks do not indicate that all these heretics were, or claimed to be, “gnostics” (2.35.5-15; 138.15ff.). He does know one group, the followers of Prodicus, whom he stigmatizes as “falsely calling themselves gnostics” (2.209.30; cf. 3.31.2ff.), and he distinguishes them clearly from other groups, such as

---

<sup>26</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, ed. O. Stählin and L. Früchtel (3 vols.; 2d-3d eds.; GCS; Leipzig, 1936-70). I cite GCS vol., page, and line. Here 1.104.23ff.; 2.298.23ff. (perhaps).

the Antitactites, who apparently made no such claim (2.208-211). In his many attacks on the Carpocratians he never calls them “gnostics” nor says directly that they claimed to be so, but he comes very near it when he says that Epiphanes, the son of Carpocrates, “was taught by his father the <subjects proper to a> liberal education and also the <teachings> of Plato, and himself was the first to teach the monadic gnosis, and from him <comes> the heresy of the Carpocratians” (2.197.25ff.). At the end of book 3 of the *Stromateis*, in which Clement reviewed the whole range of heresies (many certainly not “gnostic”) and particularly the libertine sects, he concluded with a general denunciation of those “who teach others to give up self-restraint for dissolute living” and “choose for themselves, under the false name of knowledge [*gnosis*], the road into outer darkness” (2.246.26ff.). It is hard to decide here whether to write “knowledge” or “gnosis,” but probably “knowledge” is right, since I know of no other passage in which Clement even seems to refer to all the libertine groups as “gnostics,” and I cannot believe he would have passed over the claim in silence if most of them had made it. His specification of the followers of Prodicus, and [803] perhaps of the Carpocratians, would be surprising if the claim were general.

The specification of Prodicus only is found also in Tertullian. In his *Scorpiace* he begins with the observation that, as scorpions come out in summer, so when faith grows fervid “tunc Gnostici erumpunt, tunc Valentiniani proserpunt” (1.5). This looks like a distinction of Gnostics from Valentinians; it is proved to be so by the end of the tractate, where he comes back to the antithesis, but makes the contrast between Prodicus and Valentinus (15.6). So the “Gnostici” of the beginning are presumably the followers of Prodicus, as Clement said they were. Elsewhere Tertullian says little of them. In *De praescriptione haereticorum* he attacks Hermogenes, Phygelus, Philetus, Hymenaeus, Apelles, Valentinus, Marcion, Ebion (whom he thinks a heresiarch), Simon, Nigidius (“nescio qui”), the Nicolaitans and the Cainites, but never mentions gnostics. Similarly Hippolytus refers to only a few groups as “calling themselves gnostics”—the Naassenes/Ophites and their subspecies, the followers of Justin.<sup>27</sup> The presumption, again, is that if these groups could be distinguished by the fact that they claimed to be gnostics, the other groups, at least as groups, did not

---

<sup>27</sup> *Haer.* 5.2; 5.6.4; 5.8.1.29; 5.11.1; 5.23.3. His statement in 7.36.2ff. that the different sorts of gnostics were (all?) misled by the Nicholas of Rev 2:6 is presumably false. N. was a notorious libertine, so this is a reference of libertine sects to a common ancestor. However, it does indicate that the “gnostics” were seen as a single set of heretics, distinguished sharply from the many others. Hippolytus accuses Theodotus of Byzantium (7.35; 10.23) and Elchasai (9.4) of borrowing ideas from the gnostics, but not of being gnostics themselves, still less of claiming to be so.

make this claim. Accordingly Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (the first Greek lexicon I know to give even a roughly correct account of the Christian use of *gnostikos*) states that "modern use of the term for a variety of second-century dualistic heresies is probably of eighteenth-century origin." (Here "dualistic" shows the continuing influence of Jonas's early errors; contrast Clement's reference to "the monadic gnosis," cited above. As an authority on gnosticism, Clement has one great advantage over Jonas—he knew what he was talking about.)

Not all the blame, however, can be put on eighteenth-century scholars. They were following Irenaeus, in whose works we find a change of terminology. He says Valentinus "was the first who from the so-called gnostic heresy reshaped the principles into a teaching of his own with a peculiar character."<sup>28</sup> This seems an attempt to suggest that the Valentinians were gnostics, without quite saying so. [804] A little later (1.5.3) he mentions other Valentinians who claim that there are powers prior to Bythos and Sige, and pretend to know them, "in order that they may seem more fully initiated than the full initiates and more gnostic than the gnostics." Again the implication that the Valentinians are gnostics, even when he distinguishes them from the gnostics! Similar hints abound in his description of Marcus's doctrines (1.7.5f.; 8.13; 14.3f.; [note especially 1.7.1 which suggests that Marcus used the term "gnostic"]). Next he says Simon Magus' followers were the source of "pseudonymous gnosis" [*sicut ex ipsis assertionibus eorum adest discere* (1.16.3)—which comes close to saying that they called themselves "gnostics"]. The role of knowledge and knowing is heavily emphasized in the account of Basilides' teaching (1.19.2ff.). It is bluntly said that the Carpocratians "call themselves gnostics" (1.20.4), although it is also said that they teach, "We are saved by faith and love, all else is indifferent" (20.3)—an odd teaching for gnostics. Next "all who in whatever way adulterate the truth and harm the image of the Church are disciples and successors of Simon the Samaritan magician, *although they do not admit the name of their teacher*" (1.25.2, my italics; cf. 1.15, end). Here the polemic nature of these charges is clear. We go on to learn that the Barbelognostics, too, arose from Simon (1.27.1ff.). The Cainites say only Judas, of all the disciples, had the true gnosis (1.28.9). Finally Irenaeus explains, "It has been necessary to prove clearly that those who come from Valentinus <are derived> from such mothers, fathers, and ancestors [i.e., from Simon, the Carpocratians and the Barbelognostics] as their own teachings and rules show them <to be>" (1.29). Clear polemic supported by inferential argument, presumably to contradict denials by the parties attacked. More of the same recurs at the beginning of book 2: we have

---

<sup>28</sup> Ed. Harvey, 1.5.1; I follow the Greek here, as Harvey advises.

exposed Simon and “the multitude of those gnostics who descended from him” (including the Valentinians and the Marcosians) and “have demonstrated that all heretics deriving their origin from Simon have introduced impious and irreligious teachings.”

To understand such stuff we should imagine what the history of our own time would look like, fifteen hundred years from now, if the Communists should win their present struggle for control of the world. The surviving documents would then report that, in spite of the outcome of the Second World War, western Europe and the Americas, except for Cuba, continued to be ruled by “Fascists” and “Nazis” throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Scholars of the fourth millennium would be divided between those who held that “Fascists” and “Nazis” were identical, and those who tried in various ways to distinguish them. Both sides would search the surviving works [805] of the holy Fathers of the Party for evidence from which they could construct an “ideal type” of Fascism, or put together a set of “typical Nazi ideas” from the fragments quoted by Communist writers from Hitler, Mussolini, Churchill, Truman, de Gaulle, Nixon, Golda Meir, and other figures “que tout le monde s’accorde à dénommer” Nazi.

By analogy, I think it fairly easy to see what Saint Irenaeus did. With characteristic concern for veracity, he picked a few outstandingly unpopular heretics—Simon Magus and the notoriously libertine “gnostics” and Carpocratians—and he set out to represent all other heretics as descendants and secret followers of these loathsome ancestors. Since he had to argue by inference and innuendo, we can be fairly sure his arguments were false. However, they were popular, and he was a bishop and became a martyr and a hero of the party that ultimately won. Later Christian usage is shaped by his polemic, though not entirely. In the East, for instance, the influence of Clement continued to be felt and “gnostic” remained a term of praise to which writers of the victorious “catholic” party continued to lay claim. In polemics against the sects attacked by Irenaeus, however, his usage was followed. We may conjecture that it was particularly successful at Rome, where he had worked.

Perhaps its success there decided Porphyry, when editing Plotinus’s tractates, to make up the title, “Against the Gnostics” for one that had been written to refute some schismatic Platonists. On the other hand, it is possible and not unlikely that these groups may have called themselves “gnostics.” As we have seen, the term comes from the Platonic tradition and some small schools claiming it had been active in Alexandria for half a century. That Roman Platonists should imitate Alexandrian ones after such an interval is not surprising. Porphyry describes Plotinus’s opponents as “members of the sects derived from the old philosophy, the followers of Adelphius and Aquilinus, who had

got hold of many works of Alexander the Libyan and Philocomus and Demonstratus and Lydus and, trotting out apocalypses of Zoroaster and Zostrianus and Nicotheus and Allogenes and Messus and suchlike others, were deceiving many and themselves deceived, <pretending> that Plato had not penetrated into the depth of noetic being.”<sup>29</sup> These Porphyry distinguishes from the “many Christians of many sorts” who also buzzed about Plotinus. Whether Plotinus’s [806] refutation (*Enn.* 2.9) was intended to refute the Christians, too, is not clear, either from its text or from Porphyry’s report. Two books with titles Porphyry mentions—*Zostrianos* (perhaps subtitled “Zoroaster”), and *Allogenes* (to Messus) have turned up at Nag Hammadi (VIII,1 and XI,3). Neither contains any Christian trait, and of course appearance at Nag Hammadi does not prove them Christian. Portions of Plato’s *Republic* and the Hermetic *Asclepius* were also included in the Nag Hammadi library. Nor does the use of these books by Porphyry’s groups prove that those groups wrote them; in fact, Porphyry speaks as if they had “got hold of” them from others. Thus even if Porphyry’s groups called themselves “gnostics” it would not be certain that the authors of these books did so; on the other hand, if the books were known to be gnostic, the groups’ use of them may have led Porphyry to extend the term to the users. Of such various possible relations we simply do not know which actually pertained.

At least it is not improbable that we should add the followers of Adelphius and Aquilinus to those of Prodicus and Carpocrates and the Naassenes/Ophites in the list of those ancients who actually claimed to be “gnostics.” They show us that the claim was not limited to Christians, and they confirm our conclusion that it was primarily a phenomenon of later Platonism. It seems to have been made by a few small circles characterized by wild proliferation of Platonic mythology; also those mentioned by the Christian heresiologists had practices so scandalous that Irenaeus chose to make them and Simon Magus the spiritual ancestors of the many Christian schools he wished to discredit. (The opponents of Plotinus, too, practiced magic—2.9.14.) This is not to say that the true gnostics may not have had many traits in common with the victims of Irenaeus’s attack. True Nazis, Fascists and Communists held many opinions also held by persons to whom those terms are unjustly applied, but in talking of them most educated people know enough to distinguish between ideas generally current and those peculiar to these particular parties. In talking of gnostics we should try to achieve similar precision. When lack of information makes precision impossible, we should at least try not to know too much.

---

<sup>29</sup> *Plot.* 16.

I am sure that this recommendation will not be widely followed. Not only is it psychologically repulsive, but it neglects a much neglected subject—the influence of modern economics on ancient history. The term “gnosticism” has become in effect a brand name with a secure market. “Gnosticism” is salable, therefore it will continue to be [807] produced. Indeed, our lack of information about true, ancient gnosticism will probably prove a great advantage to manufacturers of the modern, synthetic substitute. They need no longer be distracted by consideration of ancient data, since those prove to be mostly unreliable. Now they can turn without restraint to the important question, the philosophic definition of the concept. As gnostics themselves, they can follow the gnostic saviour, escape from the lower world of historical facts, and ascend to the pleroma of perfect words that emanate forever from the primaeval void.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

### ON THE HISTORY OF ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ AND ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ

[9] As a first step towards discussing “the apocalyptic movement” in antiquity it seems necessary to find out who then used the terms “apocalyptic” and “apocalypse,” and what they used them for.

#### 1. ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΙΚΟΣ

So far as I know, ἀποκαλυπτικός never occurs in classical Greek. Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon*<sup>1</sup> cites it first from Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagogus* 1.1) as meaning “revealing”; the divine Word, Clement says, when engaged in intellectual teaching—as in his former work, the *Protreptic*—is “clarifying and revealing” (δηλωτικός καὶ ἀποκαλυπτικός), whereas in his present work its concern will be moral reformation. Here the adjective has nothing to do with what we should call apocalypses. From Lampe’s brief entry, I suppose it never did. It seems to have been a comparatively rare word even in the Christian vocabulary. Christians of the patristic period were undoubtedly aware of “the apocalypse” as a literary form; they used the noun to describe many works; but apparently they never used this adjective for that purpose.

#### 2. ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ

2.1. From the adjective, therefore, we turn to the noun and the verb, both of which were masterfully mishandled by Oepke in his *ThWNT* article on καλύπτω κτλ.<sup>2</sup>

2.1.1. Oepke did, however, correctly observe that ἀποκαλύπτω is a comparatively rare word, and for ἀποκάλυψις he appositely cited Jerome: *proprie scripturarum est ... a nullo sapientium saeculi apud Graecos usurpatum (Ad Galatas 1:11f.)*.<sup>3</sup> Jerome went on to argue from this that the translators of the Septuagint, to indicate that the true, Israelite revelation was like [10] nothing in the pagan world, had created peculiar terms to describe it, *nova novis rebus verba fingentes*. Oepke happily followed this lead. Having collected a few late examples of ἀποκαλύπτω and ἀποκάλυψις used with reference to things divine, he concluded from no substantial evidence that they were not native to Greek but imported from the east and probably from the

---

<sup>1</sup> Lampe 1968, 194, s.v.

<sup>2</sup> Oepke 1938, esp. 565-597.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 573; ed. Vallarsi, VII, 1, 387.

Septuagint. Hence he took off in a eulogy of the unique character of Old Testament revelation. When he finally came down to the data (pp. 579f.) he had to recognize that the Septuagint never uses ἀποκάλυψις of matters divine,<sup>4</sup> and more often than not uses ἀποκαλύπτω of matters human. In fact, there are about a dozen uses in equivalents of the idiom “uncover the shame,” half a dozen of the idiom “uncover the ear,” and more than two dozen of miscellaneous uses for human matters, against only two dozen in which God is explicitly the subject of the verb. Moreover, even when God is the subject, there is commonly no apocalyptic implication. When he “uncovers the ear” of Samuel or “uncovers the backside” of the wicked city (Jer 13:26; Nah 3:5 LXX), the act is no doubt revelatory, but so is that of a strip-tease artist, and a revelation does not become “apocalyptic” (in the modern sense) whenever it is described by a common verb meaning “uncover.”

2.1.2. (Another slip that may be mentioned in passing is Oepke’s statement, p. 579, that when ἀποκαλύπτω is used of God’s giving knowledge it refers not to factual information, but to “intuitive contact with that which is yet hidden in the Transcendent.” To the contrary we have 1 Sam 9:15f.:

“And Yahweh uncovered the ear of Samuel one day before Saul came, saying, ‘About this time tomorrow I shall send you a man from the territory of Benjamin, and you are to anoint him to be the leader of my people Israel.’”

These are specific facts).

2.2. The main points to be noted, however, are that the Septuagint does not use ἀποκάλυψις to refer to what we should call “an apocalypse” nor, in fact, to any sort of divine revelation; it does not use ἀποκαλύπτω *in the main* for divine revelations, and when it does so use the verb, the revelations referred to are never of what we should call the apocalyptic sort. Consequently the use of these terms for what are commonly called apocalyptic works cannot be derived directly from the Septuagint. It is rather a development of common usage, of which usage the Septuagint is the richest example—richest in large part because it had to translate literally the common Hebrew idioms mentioned above.

2.3. When we look in pagan authors for other evidence of the common usage we find the literal sense of ἀποκαλύπτω “uncover,” already in [11] Herodotus (1.119), the figurative, for uncovering one’s opinion or abilities, in Plato.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Oepke’s list of the instances omits 1 Kings 20:30.

<sup>5</sup> *Protagoras* 352a; *Gorgias* 455d.

Ἀποκάλυψις, the noun, is almost as rare as Jerome thought, but it does appear at last in Philodemus<sup>6</sup> with reference to uncovering the head; thereafter come other non-religious uses, both literal and figurative. Both words are rare, and surprisingly so in the papyri,<sup>7</sup> which suggests that their survival was probably due to lower class Greek usage rather than near-eastern influence. On the other hand, the question of subject matter is important in evaluating the evidence of such documents. We know from literary evidence that ἀποκαλύπτω/ἀποκάλυψις were important in Greek speaking Jewish and Christian circles, but they do not appear in the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*<sup>8</sup> and I have not found either in the collection of Jewish inscriptions appended to *CPJ* nor in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*.<sup>9</sup> Neither appears in the volume of Greek inscriptions from Beth She‘arim, nor in Naldini’s collection of Christian letters on papyri.<sup>10</sup> In the Cairo Museum’s great collection of Byzantine papyri ἀποκαλύπτω appears only once—in a promise that evidence will be revealed to a court, and this promise was written by a literary man.<sup>11</sup> Admittedly these collections are far from being sufficient for a complete search, but I think they do suffice to show that matters of considerable importance in the religious life of a community may leave little or no trace in its public and private documents, as distinct from its literary works. Hence the rarity of ἀποκαλύπτω/ἀποκάλυψις in pagan inscriptions and papyri may not justify the conclusion that there were no apocalypses in the pagan literature now lost.

2.3.1. In all such efforts to trace rare words we are terribly at the mercy of the accidents of preservation, not to mention the catastrophes of inadequate indexing. The *Thesaurus*, when readily accessible, should begin a new era for studies of this sort. While awaiting that dayspring from on high, in the darkness of the present dispensation (made doubly dark by the loss of so much hellenistic material) the report of what a fairly thorough search has yielded may prove misleading. For better or worse, however, by searching most of the indexed literary works and the major papyrological and epigraphic collections covering the hellenistic and early Roman [12] periods, I have found only very few instances of ἀποκαλύπτω and none of ἀποκάλυψις in the hellenistic period prior to Philodemus, who used

<sup>6</sup> *Peri kakion* 22.15.

<sup>7</sup> Except for the technical term γῆ ἀποκεκαλυμμένη, “land left exposed” (by the recession of the Nile’s flood waters), which is frequent after the first century A.D.

<sup>8</sup> Tcherikover/Fuks 1957-1964.

<sup>9</sup> Frey 1936/1952.

<sup>10</sup> Naldini 1968.

<sup>11</sup> Maspero 1916, no. 67295, col. II line 8. The document is a VI century copy of a late V century letter by the pagan philosopher Horapollo, author of the *Hieroglyphics*, who eventually became a Christian.

both. He was born in Gadara about 110 B.C. and died shortly after 40 B.C. in Herculaneum, where he had been installed by his Roman patron, L. Calpurnius Piso Caesonius, consul in 58, sometime father-in-law to Julius Caesar, and one of the leading figures of the Epicurean circle that had Philodemus among its influential teachers and Lucretius, the young Vergil, and, later on, the younger Horace among its more influential pupils.<sup>12</sup> After Philodemus' time, ἀποκαλύπτω appears fairly often in pagan writers, and ἀποκάλυψις occasionally; the citations in Liddell-Scott-Jones<sup>13</sup> adequately reflect the distribution. I hope this statement of the facts will not be taken to imply that I think Philodemus had anything substantial to do with the popularization of ἀποκαλύπτω/ἀποκάλυψις; I see no reason to think he did. He simply happens to be the first pagan author in whose works we find evidence of their increasing popularity. Why ἀποκαλύπτω which was in good usage in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., drops almost out of sight in the third, and then slowly begins a resurgence that will eventually place its derivatives among the most important religious terms of the western world, is uncertain. One thing seems clear: its success was not due to its suitability to the type of revelation it and its derivatives were eventually used to describe. Apocalyptic revelations are not customarily effected by removing a cover; the heavens are not stripped away, nor the lid of the earth taken off; even the old folkloristic notion of taking a cover off the eyes, so that they can see spiritual beings (for which ἀποκαλύπτω was used in the story of Balaam, Num 22:31) is not developed, in spite of the increasing popularity of the words (which would favor the development). Perhaps, however, I may now advance a conjecture suggested to me by the evidence that will follow. I conjecture that the actual course of events went like this: In the last centuries B.C. ἀποκαλύπτω came to be commonly used of revealing secrets. At about the same time began a great increase of the belief that the god(s) had very important secrets to reveal, secrets about the structure and future of the world that would enable those who knew them to escape impending disaster. In the lower-middle-class, eastern Mediterranean milieu where these ideas first caught hold, ἀποκαλύπτω was already the common word for revealing secrets, so it eventually came to be used for revealing these, and their ultimate success carried it with them, in spite of the inappropriateness of its root meaning for its new role. [13]

2.3.2. Before leaving Philodemus, let me add that he is a figure who tempts speculation, the more so because his fellow Gadarene,

<sup>12</sup> Caesar was sometime backer of C. Memmius; Memmius was patron of Lucretius, Catullus, and Cinna; their friend C. Asinius Pollio became an elder friend of Horace and Vergil.

<sup>13</sup> *LSJ* 1940; *LSJSup* 1968 gives no additional references.

Meleager, the famous collector of epigrams, bragged in his epigrammatic epitaph of being able to speak to Syrians and Phoenicians, as well as to Greeks, in their native languages.<sup>14</sup> Meleager's floruit was within a decade or so of Philodemus' birth, and Meleager was then already in Tyre, so there is no likelihood of direct influence. However, the two authors may be taken as evidence that Gadara was both a center of Greek culture and a city where men acquainted with Greek literature might also be acquainted with the language of the Semitic world around them. It is not impossible that Philodemus may have known Semitic languages well enough to amuse himself by reading the Aramaic and Hebrew prophecies that probably circulated in his time both in the Decapolis and in Italy.

2.3.3. Let me indulge in one more aside, on the role of ancient prophecy as a form of entertainment. Ezekiel complains that men come to hear him as a singer, rather than a prophet (33:32). A century before Philodemus, a Syrian named Eunus was enslaved in Sicily. He was a prophet of the Syrian goddess, who had promised to make him king. His master used to have him brought in after dinner to amuse the guests by prophesying in her name; they sometimes gave him tidbits and asked him to remember them when he came into his kingdom. He later led the great slave revolt of 135 B.C. which his master probably found less amusing.<sup>15</sup> Just about the time of Philodemus' death Vergil chose to parody such prophecies in his delightful nonsense poem for a child's birthday, the fourth *Eclogue*. Some of the nonsense, it is true, may come from the prophetic original, but the fact that Vergil perceived it as nonsense, and used it deliberately to amuse, is proved not only by the absurdity of the opposite supposition—to suggest that he took it seriously would equate him in stupidity with his interpreters—but also by the poem's conclusion (4.66-70):

*Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem ...  
Incipe, parve puer; qui non risere parenti  
Nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est.*

2.4. Now back to our mutttons: Evidence of the revival of δ ποκαλύπτω/d ποκάλυψις by literary circles in the eastern Mediterranean began with the Septuagint, of which the evidence has already been reviewed. The Septuagint probably covers a span of about a century and a half; its earliest element, the Pentateuch, may have been translated shortly after 275, its latest may be the preface written by Ben Sira's grandson in 117 B.C. "Aristeas" used the verb of uncovering a physical object (177); Josephus [14] twice in that sense,

<sup>14</sup> *Anthologia Palatina* 7.419.

<sup>15</sup> Diodorus 34/35.2.8.

and twice of revealing human secrets.<sup>16</sup> Otherwise I have not found the words in the Jewish historians. They do not occur in the Jewish imitations of classical poetry (including *Sibyllines* III). As to their use in what are commonly called “the pseudepigrapha,” it is difficult to judge because so few of these texts have been preserved in Greek and the Greek texts of those few are commonly late and interpolated. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* use the verb eight times, five of these in references to revealing secrets. In two instances it is God who reveals the secret—Reuben’s adultery and Potiphar’s wife’s plan to poison Joseph—he also reveals Levi’s imminent death. Levi is made to prophesy the coming of “a new priest, to whom all the words of the Lord will be revealed.” What seems a Christian interpolation says that God will reveal his salvation to all the gentiles.<sup>17</sup> In *Joseph and Aseneth* there are three uses of the verb: Aseneth reveals her sins in confession to God (12:4); consequently an angel is sent to read her a lecture, give her a piece of heavenly honeycomb, and assure her that the secrets of God have been revealed to her (16:7); later, when she makes friends with Levi, he reads things written in heaven and reveals them to her in secret (22:9).

2.5. Remarkable is the rarity of the words in works now commonly called “apocalypses.” I do not know any such text prior to the New Testament Apocalypse which either describes itself or the proceedings in it as ἀποκαλύψεις or even uses the verb ἀποκαλύπτω for the whole of the revelation. A number of such works are referred to by partistic writers as “apocalypses,” but such references pose a problem to be considered later.

2.5.1. The immediate problem is that of the use of the words in the New Testament. They are rare in the Gospels—ἀποκάλυψις only once, in Luke’s reference to Jesus as “a light for enlightenment (?) of the Gentiles” (2:32—a unique usage). Ἀποκαλύπτω appears in four items about revealing secrets and two about revealing God,<sup>18</sup> in John’s quotation of Isa 53:1, “To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (12:38), and—at last!—in a single “apocalyptic” passage, of “the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed” (Luke 17:30). The references to revealing secrets continue the usage we have just noticed in Josephus, *Joseph and Aseneth*, and *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*; it is even more conspicuous in ben Sira who has a dozen

<sup>16</sup> Josephus: *Bell* 1.297; 5.350; *Ant.* 12.90; 14.406.

<sup>17</sup> Secrets: *Reuben* 3:15; *Judah* 16:4 (*ter*); *Joseph* 6:6, of these the first and last are revealed by God. Levi’s death: *Levi* 1:2. Salvation for the gentiles: *Benjamin* 10:5 (the ἕως clause seems a Christian attempt to void the initial command; notice the change from θεός to Κύριος). The new priest: *Levi* 18:2. See below, notes 25ff., for similar Christian changes in other texts.

<sup>18</sup> Secrets: Matt 10:26/Luke 12:2; Matt 11:25/Luke 10:21; Matt 16:17; Luke 2:35; God: Matt 11:27/Luke 10:22.

uses with this reference against three or four with others. All in all, the gospel usage can hardly be made into evidence of a major theme, or of [15] clear connection with Palestine, two of the nine instances being peculiar to Luke, one Johannine, and four from the peculiar “Johannine” pericope of Q. Outside the Gospels, the words are *exclusively* Pauline and deutero-Pauline (*i.e.* in Ephesians and 1 Peter), except for the solitary use as the first word of the Apocalypse. (Was it part of a title? If so, was the title secondary? Who knows?)

2.5.2. For Paul, as we know him in his letters, ἀποκάλυψις is the core of his life, but this ἀποκάλυψις means “revelation,” not “apocalypse,” and this revelation has nothing to do with “uncovering.” Paul’s choice of the word can be explained neither by its root meaning, nor by its later connection with the apocalypses. The explanation must lie in some aspect of its previous usage, most likely in that for revealing secrets, but the connection is not clear and the data are puzzling. What is clear is that the center of Paul’s concern is not any revelation to Paul, but the revelation in Paul. Gal 1:12, where he insists that “I did not receive” my gospel “from men ... but by revelation of Jesus Christ” is explained by the following reference in 1:15f. to God who “was pleased ... to reveal his Son *in* me, that I might proclaim him,” and this “in” cannot be read as “by”—it is used in preparation for Paul’s clinching argument in the dispute with Peter to which this section of the letter is leading, “I live no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (2:20), where even the most ardent advocate of “ἐν instrumental” would not dare to use “by.” Paul’s notion that he is the living revelation of Jesus is spelled out fully in 2 Cor 3-5 and Rom 6-8, which make clear that the revelation is conceived not as vision, but as possession and progressive transformation, and is extended, by Paul’s preaching, the rite of baptism, and the gift of the spirit (which is Jesus, 2 Cor 3:17), to his converts. Moreover, it is not a single event, but a continuing process, the acts and powers of the spirit being the constant witness in the believers that they are continually “receiving the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:7).

2.5.2.1. This revelation, as expressed in Paul’s gospel, is not only of the immediate powers of God, but also of his future purposes; it reveals his wrath to the wicked, to the righteous his justice (Rom 1:17f.) and the things he has prepared for them (1 Cor 2:10); it is thus a revelation of the long-secret mystery of his will (Rom 16:25). Because continuing, it is not yet complete—more will be revealed at the end, first the Antichrist (2 Thess 2:3; 6:8), then the heavenly return of Jesus with the angels (2 Thess 1:7), the fiery test of what each man has done (1 Cor 3:13), the just judgment of God against the wicked (Rom 2:5), and the destined glory of the saints (Rom 8:18f.).

2.5.2.2. While awaiting these final revelations, Paul and the other saints enjoyed frequent specific revelations from the spirit that dwelt in them, and [16] these revelations were often of secrets. This accords with the usage of ἀποκαλύπτω for revealing secrets, as we saw it in the Gospels and in earlier Jewish works. The secrets revealed by God might, in human terms, be answers to particular questions. Jews and Christians used their deity as pagans used the oracles of their gods and modern believers in alien wisdom use the columnists and television seers who live by telling people what to do. Thus Paul claims that his second trip to Jerusalem after his conversion was dictated by revelation (Gal 2:2); he promises the Philippians that God will reveal to them the truth of competing opinions (3:15).

2.5.2.3. The meetings of the Pauline congregations seem often to have been devoted to encounters with the spirit, which expressed itself in different oral forms. 1 Cor 14:6 opposes speaking with tongues to several forms of rational speech—revelation, “knowledge” (proverbs?), prophecy, and teaching. Here, as in the preceding passages, the word translated “revelation” is ἀποκάλυψις and a reader unaware of its meaning elsewhere in Paul might be tempted to translate it by “apocalypse” and take it to mean “a report of a vision of the sort described in the literary apocalypses.” But we have found no evidence that at Paul’s time the literary apocalypses were called “apocalypses,” and Paul clarifies his meaning here by his argument later in the chapter (vss. 23ff.):

“If the whole church is assembled and everybody speaks with tongues, and some who are uninitiated or unbelieving come in, won’t they say you are mad? But if everybody prophesies and some unbeliever or uninitiate comes in, his vices will be exposed by everybody, he will be judged by everybody, his hidden thoughts will be laid open, and consequently, prostrating himself, he will worship God.... So what is (to be done), brethren? When you come together (and) each has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a ‘tongue,’ an interpretation, arrange everything so (that the proceedings will be) edifying.”

Clearly, “prophecy” here refers not to foretelling eschatological events, but to revealing the thoughts and characters of persons present—a remarkable gift of Old Testament prophets, as Gehazi learned to his grief (2 Kings 5:26f.). By analogy with this use of prophecy, and in the light of the previous passages, I think “revelation” here probably means “answer to some question,” whether practical (“Should Paul go up to Jerusalem?”) or dogmatic (“What is to be thought of Peter’s teaching?”), or the like.

2.5.2.4. The same meaning is indicated in 2 Cor 12:1ff. where Paul is forced to boast of his “visions and revelations given by the Lord.” He boasts first of the visions (ὄπτασιαι) especially of a former experience,

perhaps his own, more likely that of Jesus who now lives in him and of whom alone, he has said, he will boast.<sup>19</sup> This experience was an ascent to the third heaven, where things ineffable were heard. Next he goes on to his own present condition: he will (after all) boast of his illness, since it was [17] given him as a humiliation lest he should think too highly of himself because of “the excess” (ὑπερβολή) of his revelations. The text here (12:6-7) is notoriously corrupt and “excess” certainly refers to quality as well as number, but there is clear contrast between these plural, excessive, evidently current ἀποκαλύψεις and the one great ὀπτασία for which Paul has to go back fourteen years and more, and which he describes in such a way as to suggest it was not his own. Ὀπτασία, moreover, is a good translation of the Hebrew *mar’eh*, the chief term for the visions in Daniel 8, 9 and 10; it was thus appropriate for the first experience Paul described. Accordingly we should not suppose the content of the former vision was identical with that of the present revelations, nor think that Paul was constantly commuting to the third heaven. Rather, the boasting here and the connection of the revelations with his illness recall 10:8, where he said that he would boast of his authority over the churches, and 11:28ff., where he speaks of his direction of the churches as the climactic item in a list of his burdens as servant of Christ, from which he goes directly to his (consequent?) illness as something to boast of. These connections suggest that his administrative and political decisions entailed not only the anguish often expressed in his letters, but also psychosomatic disturbances which produced both the physical symptoms he left undescribed and the frequent revelations by which the Lord settled difficult problems as Paul wanted them to be settled.

2.5.2.5. The deuterio-Pauline uses of ἀποκαλύπτω and ἀποκάλυψις testify to the importance of the terms in Paul’s work, and slightly extend their meanings, along Pauline lines.<sup>20</sup> Ignatius, as usual, is close to the deuterio-Paulines.<sup>21</sup> 1 Clement, like John, uses only ἀποκαλύπτω (16:3) and that only in a quotation of Isa 53:1. In sum, down to Domitian’s time, or perhaps well thereafter (if we reject the traditional date of the canonical Apocalypse), the preserved Christian uses of ἀποκαλύπτω and ἀποκάλυψις are, with few exceptions, not apocalyptic.

2.5.2.6. This fact brings into focus the inconsistency latent in Paul. The revelation from within, by Jesus living in and working through the believer, which is Paul’s main concern, differs markedly from the final revelation to be given by external events—the Antichrist, the external

<sup>19</sup> Cf. 12:5 and 10:17.

<sup>20</sup> Revelations as means of solving present and past church problems: Eph 1:7; 3:3ff.; 1 Pet 1:12. Revelation of Christ in the believers: 1 Pet 1:7, 13 (?). Revelations of Jesus, glory, and salvation, to be given in the End: 1 Pet 4:13; 5:1; 1:5.

<sup>21</sup> Ign. *Eph.* 20:1, he hopes for further revelations of the nature of his life in Christ.

Jesus and his angels, etc. As is well known, the clearest Pauline references to these events are concentrated in 2 Thess and have led many to think it spurious. For our present purpose that question can be left aside; the important thing is that in the Pauline corpus this final, external revelation [18] appears as a different sort of thing from the internal revelation that was Paul's main concern. The external revelation has of course much cognate material in the Old Testament, pseudepigrapha, and Gospels; but for this material, so far as can be judged from the preserved evidence, the term ἀποκάλυψις had not hitherto been used and would not have been the most likely choice, since the material is commonly presented as visions, with terms like *mar'eh* and *hizzayon*, which ἀποκάλυψις does not render accurately. The first vision of this sort to carry the Pauline title ἀποκάλυψις is now the canonical Apocalypse. Should we therefore think the title came from Pauline circles? Little else in the work seems to be Pauline, in particular Paul's essential notion of internal revelation is hard to find there. But if its title did not come from Paul, what was the source from which both it and Paul derived this somewhat unlikely term for such material? Are we dealing with the literary Greek of Palestine and Jewish circles in Alexandria, or with the lower-middle-class Greek of Corinth and of the cities of Asia Minor? For want of evidence, the questions are open.

2.5.3. We have much better evidence for the great success of the term ἀποκάλυψις for this type of work in the second century and thereafter. The canonical Apocalypse is closely followed by that of Hermas (in the lower-middle-class Greek of Rome). From then on, as Lewis Carroll said, "Thick and fast they came at last, and more, and more, and more."<sup>22</sup> This suggests a problem that should be investigated: If literary works of the class now called "apocalypses" were first commonly so named by the Church fathers, which fathers did most to extend this nomenclature? Which circles took it up, and why? But here again, caution is in order. Because we have and hear of Christian and cognate apocalypses, we are apt to think of this epidemic as traceable within the Christian tradition—at least if "Christian" be used in its larger sense, to include the so-called "gnostics."

However, by the end of the third century Iamblichus was using the same terminology, and *he* is not likely to have taken it over from the Christians.<sup>23</sup> In the late fourth century Synesius as a young man wrote to his brother, from Alexandria, "We have had a swarm, of both private individuals and priests, forging dreams which they call 'apocalypses'; they would make my waking life a nightmare were I not

<sup>22</sup> *Through the Looking Glass*, ch. IV.

<sup>23</sup> *De Mysteriis*, 6.7 (248), for revelations that would destroy the world.

soon to get away to holy Athens.”<sup>24</sup> The priests were presumably pagans. Synesius had been studying Platonism with Hypatia, whose relations with the Christians were somewhat cool. The lateness of this evidence prohibits any conclusion about the early period, but its mere existence suggests that pagan circles may have contributed to the spread of the terminology. [19]

2.6. One consequence of the spread was the introduction of ἀποκαλύπτω/ἀποκάλυψις into earlier Jewish texts about revelations. Theodotion, for instance, in his second century A.D.(?) revision of the Septuagint, used ἀποκαλύπτω in half a dozen passages of Daniel where the earlier Greek had other verbs; he thus first gave the vision of chapter 10 a linguistic claim to be an apocalypse.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the words were not in the oldest text of *The Lives of the Prophets*, but were twice introduced in later expansions;<sup>26</sup> they were not in the oldest text of the *Testament of Solomon*, but appear twice in later versions;<sup>27</sup> they were not in the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, but appear now in the Christian title and introduction, and in a Christian interpolation;<sup>28</sup> they were not in the original *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, but *revelatio* (for ἀποκάλυψις?) was used in the Christian addition, the *Ascension* (6:14). We have already noticed a use of ἀποκαλύπτω in what seems to be a Christian addition to the *Testament of Benjamin*.<sup>29</sup> *The Testament of Abraham* never uses either word, but was probably described by Epiphanius as an “apocalypse”;<sup>30</sup> he says the Sethians already called it so. To the best of my knowledge, all other pseudepigraphic apocalypses of the last centuries B.C. and the first A.D. which are commonly listed as evidence of “the apocalyptic movement” owe their apocalyptic titles either to patristic references, or to late manuscripts, or to modern scholars—and none of these sources is reliable.

2.7. In sum, as far as the preserved evidence goes, we must say that the literary form we call an apocalypse carries that title for the first time in the very late first or early second century A.D. From then on, both title and form are fashionable, at least to the end of the classical period. Their fashionableness is part of the well known growth of superstition and of claims to special revelations and to occult knowledge, complementary characteristics of the later Roman Empire which forms their fairly familiar social background.

<sup>24</sup> *Epistulae*, 54.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Theodotion and LXX for Dan 2:19, 22, 28, 29, 30, 47; 10:1; 11:35.

<sup>26</sup> *Epiphanius recensio prior* 19; *Dorothei recensio*, ed. Schermann 1907, 38.

<sup>27</sup> Ed. McCown 1922, 8\* line 8; 87\* line 7.

<sup>28</sup> The whole conclusion of ch. 4, at least from f. 176 on, is a Christian interpolation; it breaks the connection of 175b with ch. 5. Ἀποκαλύπτω appears twice in 4:13f.

<sup>29</sup> Above, n. 17 on paragraph 2.4.

<sup>30</sup> *Panarion* 39:5, if our text be that of which he is speaking.

## [20] Bibliography

- Frey, J. B. 1936/1952: *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, Vol. I-II, Rome 1936/1952.
- Lampe, G. W. H. 1968: *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1968.
- Liddell, H. G./Scott, R./Jones, H. S. 1940: *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1940.
- Liddell, H. G./Scott, R./Jones, H. S./Barber, E. A. 1968: *A Greek-English Lexicon. A Supplement*, Oxford 1968.
- Maspero, J. 1916: *Papyrus grecs d'epoque byzantine*, Vol. III, Cairo 1916.
- McCown, C. C. 1922: *The Testament of Salomon...*, with Introduction (UNT 9), Leipzig 1922.
- Naldini, M. 1968: *Il Cristianesimo in Egitto*, Florence 1968.
- Oepke, A. 1938: "καλύπτω κτλ.," in: *ThWNT* III (1938), 558-597.
- Schermann, Th. 1907: *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae, Indices apostolorum discipulorumque Domini* (BiTeu), Leipzig 1907.
- Tcherikover, V. A./Fuks, A. 1957-1964: *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, Vol. I-III, Cambridge/Mass . 1957-1964.



PART V  
MAGIC

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

### HOW MAGIC WAS CHANGED BY THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY

[51] The intimate, almost incestuous, relations of magic and religion should lead us to suppose that the great change of religion which took place in the ancient world, when Christianity displaced paganism, must have been accompanied by a correspondingly great change of magic. Few scholars, however, have made this supposition, and almost none have discussed it. This neglect has resulted in part from the general neglect of magic as an aspect of civilization, in part from the notion that magic is timeless and changeless, either because a survival of primitive culture, or because a spontaneous expression of some aspect of human nature, and therefore has no more history than does sleep or copulation. Both of these reasons, as well as the notion they are used to justify, are false. Here, however, we cannot argue these questions in general. We must limit ourselves to one instance, the change of Greco-Roman magic as a result of the triumph of Christianity.

To discuss the change we must begin with an account of classical magic before Christianity triumphed. It was complex. The real *magoi* had been Median priests. The Greeks probably first got to know them as religious officials attached to Cyrus' army, and coined *mageia* to refer to the strange things they did. Soon, however, the word acquired a second meaning as a term of abuse like our "hocus pocus," and as such was used to describe a lot of religious practices, most of them native Greek, that were going out of fashion (at least, among the upper class) because of the rise of rationalism: the things done by prophets, bird watchers, interpreters of dreams, men who used sacrifices to foretell the future, singers of spells, old women who sold love potions and sometimes more deadly drugs, and so on and on. All such practices had originally been perceived as distinct; each had its proper Greek name. Only when rationalism came to see and represent them as a class was a general name for the whole class needed, and the foreign term, *mageia*, because of its abusive connotation, was pressed into service for this purpose.

Once the class was conceived and named, its memberships grew, as more and more practices were thus discredited. It probably grew much in hellenistic times as the Greeks spread across the near east and encountered strange observances; it certainly [52] grew much in Roman times when Italian practitioners of shady supernaturalism were added—*haruspices*, *strigae*, and so on. Also pretenders to hellenistic

psuedo learning and to near eastern wisdom—*mathematici, physici, astrologi, Chaldaei*—were gradually assimilated in popular opinion to the *magoi*, and their practices, too, came to be classed as *mageia*, or, in Latin, *magia*, for the Romans borrowed the word as well as the concept.

These various practitioners used an even greater variety of practices for which they pretended to rely on equally various powers. A mere catalogue of this complexity would take more space than is here available. We must fall back on the traditional distinction into two great classes—“natural magic,” which relied on powers supposed to be inherent or revealed in natural objects or events, and “daemonic magic,” which claimed to work by invocation or compulsion of various sorts of supernatural beings ranging from ghosts to gods.

This seems a reasonably clear distinction, but in fact it was constantly blurred because natural objects and events were commonly personified. Not only were the planets, sun, and moon sometimes assigned to gods or angels, sometimes identified with them, but even the perfume myrrh was invoked as a deity (*Papyri Graecae Magicae* XXXVI.333ff.) and there were spells to be used to secure the good offices of any plant (*id.* IV.2977ff.). Even in the realm of religion, *bonus eventus* (successful outcome) was a god to whom prayers were offered.

Nevertheless, for convenience’s sake, we can fairly lump together the procedures (commonly classed as magic) that relied on knowledge of, or belief about, the “powers” of plants and stones and parts of animals and celestial bodies; this included most medical magic, much love magic, alchemy, and astrology. A second great group dealt with interpretations of events: dreams, movements of animals or of incense, configurations of the entrails of animals, chance encounters and utterances, lightning, thunder, and other weather signs, and so on. Many such interpretations had roles in established religion, but magicians made use of them, too, and did so to such an extent that the Latin *haruspex* (examiner of entrails), for instance, comes to be practically equivalent with Greek *magos* or *goes*. Hippolytus of Rome, when attacking magicians in his *Refutatio* (4.28ff.), gives directions for producing imitation thunder, livers with abnormal markings, and the like, which the magician will then “interpret” to suit his needs.

All such practices differed basically from the other great class of magical operations which were thought to be performed by invocation of daemonic powers. I use “daemonic” in its widest sense to include the spirits of the dead on the one hand, the gods on the other, and all the beings in between. The differences separating them did not matter greatly for practical purposes. Though various ones had to be invoked in various ways, all could be called on effectively and compelled or

persuaded to perform their appropriate functions. Indeed, the surpris[53]ing thing is the relative uniformity with which such beings are treated in classical magic. Even alien gods—Mithras of Persia, for instance, and Yahweh of Israel, and a lot of Yahweh’s alter-egos and angels (Adonai, Sabaoth, Elohim, Pantocrator, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Ouriel, and so on)—were all taken into this divine democracy on equal terms. Yahweh even rose to become its most prominent citizen. The Greek form of his name, ΙΑΩ, is half again as frequent in the magical papyri as that of any other god.

These daemonic powers were sometimes referred to in natural magic, especially in astrology because of the identification of some of them with the luminaries, but they were mainly used in various sorts of operations we may describe as “callings,” and these had only peripheral connexions with natural magic. *Daimones* might be called on simply to do their proper work, or to obey the magician by performance of some special task. They might be called out of something or someone and banished, or they might be called into someone, either the magician or his assistant, and this either for a brief period or, in the case of magician, permanently. Thus the oldest *defixiones* (curse tablets sunk in graves or wells or the like) simply “made over” their victims to the underworld gods for the destruction those gods would naturally inflict. (St. Paul followed this old pattern when he “made over” to Satan, for physical destruction, his opponent in Corinth (1 Cor 5:3). Jesus, as conceived in Luke 7:1ff., sent his angels like soldiers for the specific purpose of healing the slave of the centurion of Capernaum; conversely, he not only ordered the demons out of the Gerasene demoniac, but told them where to go: into a herd of pigs (Mark 5:1ff.). Such *ad hoc* callings and sendings are frequent in the Gospels and in other magical material. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, urges them to invoke spirits not simply for the pleasure of being possessed and speaking ecstatically, but for the practical purpose of prophecy (1 Cor 14). Prophecy is likewise the commonest purpose of invocation in the magical papyri, but there are many others, especially erotic. *Daimones* were often sent to bring lovers, but were also asked to give the magician such power that anyone whom he called would immediately drop everything and follow him, as the disciples did when Jesus called them (Mark 1:18, 20, etc.). Beyond such particular services, *daimones* were also called to enter the magicians and unite with them, so that the magician could say, “I am you and you are I,” or, as Paul said, “I live no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). Such identification was sometimes, especially for erotic purposes, effected by physical means. The magician, when identified with a god, might identify a cup of wine with his blood—the blood of the god—and give it to another to drink. Whoever drank it would be

joined to him in love. These rituals are the closest known parallels to the eucharist (see M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, San Francisco, 1978, pp. 122 etc.).

In this brief description of Graeco-Roman magic I have pointed out some of [54] the many parallels to Christian stories, teachings, and practices, because such parallels explain why Christianity was so often identified by ancient writers as magic and was prosecuted accordingly. The similarities did not stop with New Testament times, nor did the prosecutions. The later Christian collection of the remains of martyrs' bodies was suspiciously like magicians' collection of the remains of bodies of executed criminals (the martyrs were legally criminals) whose spirits they wished to control. We have many ancient stories of thefts of dead bodies for magical purposes; the practice was evidently common and may explain the disappearance of Jesus' body and the empty tomb. Be that as it may, the Christians' frequent gatherings around tombs and in catacombs must have seemed to most pagans an indication of necromancy. Such similarities and suspicions had important consequences for the social position of magic when Christianity, so long identified with it, was legalized and given a privileged position by Constantine. It was no accident that through the following centuries, from Iamblichus to Proclus, magic was everywhere.

During this period Christianity, like magic, was an extremely complex entity. Not only was the Catholic Church divided by important heresies and schisms—the Arian struggle with its innumerable subdivisions, and the Donatist and Meletian and Novatian schisms, to mention only the most important—but also many earlier Christian sects lived on, some in important numbers—Marcionites and Montanists and Valentinians and Ebionites and so on—each one claiming to be the Christian Church.

Therefore it was impossible for the Christians, as a whole, to take a single position about magic. Besides, even within the different parties of the Catholic Church that at different times were dominant during the fourth century, widely different positions on magic were to be found. They stemmed from inconsistencies in the Old Testament itself, about pagan gods and practices. At one extreme were statements like Deut 4:19 which says that Yahweh assigned the celestial bodies to the gentiles that they might worship them; such worship has therefore divine origin and justification. At the other extreme were many verses like Ps 135:15ff.: "The idols of the gentiles are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths but do not speak, eyes, but do not see, ears, but do not hear," etc. Between came passages which implied that the pagan gods were living beings, albeit inferior in power to

Yahweh; the classic statement was the Septuagint's rendition of Ps 96:5, "All the gods of the heathen are *daimonia*" (LXX Ps 95:5).

To what extent the worship of *daimonia*, especially for magical purposes, might be thought permissible even in Judaism, is now shown by *The Book of Secrets*, a fourth or fifth century Jewish text pieced together by the late Prof. M. Margalioth from fragments of the Cairo Genizah (*Sefer harazim*, Jerusalem, 1966). The work is a handbook for magical practices, arranged as a "Who's Who [55] in the Heavens." It lists the angels of each heaven, from the first to the sixth, telling for which purposes and with what incantations and (sometimes) sacrifices each should be invoked. A number of pagan gods appear among the angels, one of them is Helios, to whom part of a Greek prayer, like those in the magical papyri, is addressed in Greek transliterated into Hebrew letters. But when the author reaches the seventh heaven, he bursts into hymns of praise for Yahweh as the only God and creator of all. This text was not an isolated eccentricity. It must have been, in Jewish circles, an early Byzantine best seller, for it was represented in the Genizah by fragments of half a dozen manuscripts, and it was widely echoed and adapted in early mediaeval Jewish literature. Besides this direct evidence, there are numerous Christian patristic texts which report Jewish worship of angels and are thus confirmed.

The fathers also report that their Christian competitors, whom they called, and by whom they were called, "heretics," practiced magic and worshiped angels. These reports, too, are partially confirmed and altogether likely. It is also likely, though not reported, that the cult of angels was carried on for magical purposes by many Catholic Christians. J. Barbel's *Christos Angelos* (repr. Bonn, 1964) has collected passages, from Justin Martyr down, in which Christ is described as an angel, and has used this tradition to explain the hold of Arianism. A history of the cults of the angels, with attention to magical parallels, would yield interesting material. More could be found in the cults of the saints, with some of whom a number of pagan deities important in magic had close ties—Helios with St. Elias, Serapis with St. Menas, etc.

Other aspects of ancient magic that notoriously survived were among those I classed as "natural magic," both the learned pseudo-sciences—alchemy, astrology, magical medicine, interpretation of dreams and portents—and the enormous number of peasant practices which usually escaped persecution because they were not tied to any named pagan deities, and because neither the Church nor the Empire had the strength to stop them. Constantine had implicitly recognized this in his early legislation (*Codex Theodosianus* 9.16.3, dated 319) when he provided that "maleficent arts" practiced to harm others or to gratify lust are to be punished, but no accusation is to be permitted

concerning remedies for human bodies or rural rites for protection of crops.

This is a commonsense distinction and was probably followed not only by imperial officers but also by many church authorities (who were perhaps more important because they had a vastly greater number of interested informers). At all events, the archaeological evidence for maleficent and erotic magic (mainly *defixiones* and papyri) gradually dwindles away after the definitive Christian [56] triumph in the fifth century, though the Christians themselves continued to produce imprecatory prayers, with magical traits, well into the 500's (see G. Björck, *Der Fluch des ... Sabinus*, Uppsala, 1938). In the fifth century, too, amulets with pagan figures and prayers are gradually replaced by amulets with saints' figures and Christian prayers for much the same purposes. Besides the saints, the Blessed Virgin and Jesus now become prominent in such prayers. The Holy Spirit rarely appears except in trinitarian formulae. After Montanism, if not before, the Church turned its back on the Pauline tradition of personal possession; the Holy Spirit continued to be invoked *pro forma*, but no directly observable response was desired. Another Pauline magical trait that disappears is identification with the deity. Since Paul's letters remained authoritative, it remained and remains a matter of doctrine that Christ lives in all baptized Christians. But any Christian who draws the practical conclusion—Christ lives in me; I therefore have his power and shall use it for a specific, observable miracle—will be an extraordinary figure and probably soon in trouble.

While in these ways the triumph of Christianity diminished magical practice, in another way it greatly increased magic. It classified as magical all the rites of pagan religion, and so made magicians and witches (at least for legal purposes) of the innumerable pagans who still practiced them. The Biblical basis for this was the Septuagint's pronouncement already cited, "All the gods of the heathen are *daimonia*" (Ps 95:5). When *daimonia* were distinguished from the one God not merely as inferior, but as evil beings, then pagan worship became, as magic had long been said to be, the cult of evil demons, and its prohibition could be justified.

The fathers of the Church, from Justin Martyr on, had been identifying the pagan gods with evil demons, but the civil government was not prepared to follow them, much less draw the consequences for the erstwhile civic religion. Whatever Constantine's personal convictions, he had to keep the loyalty of important pagan elements in his court and his army, so his legislation was limited in scope and terminology. As we saw, he prohibited maleficent magic, but did not identify it with pagan religion, and even permitted medical magic and agricultural rites (*Cod. Th.* 9.16.3). Similarly he provided that

soothsayers (*fatidici*) might be consulted when buildings were struck by lightning and that the customary rites for such occasions might be observed “provided there is no sacrifice” (*Cod. Th.* 16.10.1)—the terminal provision looks suspiciously like a gloss. Eusebius says he prohibited sacrifice (*Vita Constantini* 2.45.1) and a law of Constantius refers to this prohibition (*Cod. Th.* 16.10.2), but Constantine’s prohibition, if any, has not been preserved and the truth of Eusebius’ report is disputed. That Constantine classed *venefici* and *malefici* (customary terms for magicians, though of wider reference) among the criminals liable to capital punishment (*Cod. Th.* 9.40.1), whose property should be confiscated (9.42.2), whose appeals from verdicts were not to be [57] considered unless supported by strong evidence (11.36.1), and who were excluded from the general pardons given on festive occasions (9.38), merely extended traditional Roman laws against magic. A new departure was his prohibition of haruspices from entering private houses (9.16.1), but if the ancient board of official haruspices had already lapsed, and the haruspices had returned to the status of private practitioners, this prohibition would not have affected Roman *public* religion. Only the prohibition of sacrifices would have done that, and animal sacrifices had long been attacked by some pagan thinkers as superstitious (Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 8.7.10).

After a generation of imperial patronage of Christianity, with consequent increase of its adherents, Constantius could go further. He prohibited consultation of *haruspices*, *mathematici*, *harioli*, *augures*, *vates*, *Chaldaei*, *magi*, “and all the rest whom the common people call *malefici*” (9.16.4), and in other laws he prescribed death for “those who summon the spirits of the dead to torment their enemies” (9.16.5), and ruled that none accused of any of the above practices, nor any interpreter of dreams, should, even if members of the imperial staff, escape torture to compel admission of guilt (9.16.6). The inclusion of augurs in this list is important, since they had formerly been high officials of Roman state religion.

Constantius’ laws on these subjects presumably lapsed under Julian. Valentinian and Valens issued new legislation along the lines Constantius had laid down, but perhaps found that they had gone too far. In 371 Valentinian found it prudent to rule that “Haruspicy has no connexion with magic. This *religio*, and all others allowed by our elders, is not to be considered a crime. Everyone is to be free to follow his belief. We do not condemn divination, but we do forbid it to be practiced harmfully” (*Cod. Th.* 9.16.9). Ammianus Marcellinus (29.2) reports that in this year prosecutions for magic by imperial officials had produced a reign of terror in the court, so this law may reflect a temporary reaction.

In all this legislation against magic it has not been equated with heresy, nor have the heretics, who are the objects of equally frequent and virulent legislation, been accused of magic. In one exceptional instance, *Cod. Th.* 16.5.34, we find a ruling that persons who try to preserve the books of Eunomians and Montanists by concealing them are to suffer capital punishment “as guilty of magic,” but “as” probably means, “in the same fashion as if,” i.e., it equates the punishments, not the crimes.

Yet more remarkably, this legislation against magic makes no frontal attack on Roman religion generally. The approaches to such an attack begin under Theodosius, when all extispicy is prohibited as “an attempt to break down the laws of nature” (*Cod. Th.* 16.10.12), and offerings to images are prohibited as services of “pagan superstition”. From then on, references to pagan cultic acts as [58] “superstitious” are frequent (16.10.16, 17, 18), but only under Honorius and Theodosius II in 423 is it flatly declared that sacrifices to pagan gods are sacrifices to demons (16.10.23). With this the reversal is complete. Christianity which previously, by Roman law, was magic, has become the official religion, and the official religion of ancient Rome has become, by Roman law, magic. The notion that magic has no history could hardly be more conspicuously refuted.

By way of postscript it should be said that the changes in magic produced by the triumph of Christianity were by no means limited to these comparatively immediate results. Christianity not only brought with it a new supernatural population of benevolent beings—the Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, the saints—whom Christians promptly pressed into service, often by the old magical rites, for many of the old magical purposes, but besides this, and more important, Christianity gave to magic Satan—a supreme ruler of the powers of evil, whose realm could be conceived as an empire opposed to that of God. The classical world of *daimones* had been literally a pandemonium. No god was always in control; few were wholly beneficent or wholly evil, and those few were comparatively unimportant; the magician turned to one or another as the task in hand seemed to indicate, with no apparent thought to ulterior consequences. The triumph of Christianity, however, brought also the triumph of Satan, though this consequence was only slowly realized. The Roman/Persian dichotomy was shifted to the supernatural world. To practice magic became to side with the opposition, to enter the service of the great enemy, the Kingdom of Evil and its rulers, the Power of Darkness. Thus magic began to be Satanism, a counter religion. This is not to say that Satan was a Christian invention. His “name” is really a Hebrew title, “the accuser”—the official informer of the divine court—and his role as ruler of all other evil spirits probably came from Persia. But

Christianity made him one of the great figures of occidental mythology, and once it had done so, the power of this concept, like a magnet, attracted to itself and arranged in order the hitherto scattered and unrelated elements of classical magic.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

### THE EIGHTH BOOK OF MOSES AND HOW IT GREW (*PLEID.* J 395)

[683] Since there are so few magical papyri earlier than the third century A.D., and since a great change in magic seems to have occurred about the first century A.D., we are led to hope that by source analysis of the later papyrus texts we may learn something of the content and structure of works of the earlier, critical period.

For this purpose *PLEid.* J 395 (= *PGM* XIII) is particularly valuable because it gives us three different versions of a work with various titles, which is commonly called by one of them *The Eighth Book of Moses*. As a table of contents of the entire papyrus (*Appendix A*) shows, the first 734 lines are filled by these three versions (hereinafter A, B, C), interrupted only by a list of the uses of the text, appended to A, lines 231-343, and a brief invocation of Sarapis, lines 618-45. The remainder of the papyrus contains other texts the compiler thought cognate.

The three versions of *VIII Moses* differ considerably (contrast the common dogma that magical texts had to be preserved and recited without change of a single letter). Here the second version has shifted to the end a long spell which the first version has in the middle, while the third version has almost wholly omitted both this spell and another, referring to them as already known, without giving their texts. Besides these, there are many minor peculiarities of each version, but all versions so often agree verbatim that there can be no reasonable doubt of their all being variants, at various removes, of a single basic text.

The basic text was intended to make the greatest god—the god who contains/controls all things, and who created the world—appear to the magician and give him valuable information. It described the equipment and preliminary purifications necessary for the rite, the proper time for performance and the proper costume, amulets, offerings and invocations to win over the gods of the weeks, hours, and days, and magical proceedings—writing on a plaque of natron the [684] name of the greatest god and an invocation of him, licking off one of these inscriptions and washing off the other into a krater of mixed milk and wine, drinking this mixture and lying down to recite a long invocation that began with the praises of the greatest god and went on to an account of how he had created the cosmos by laughing seven times, each burst of laughter producing a god or pair of gods to

control one or another aspect of the physical, social, or psychological world. This invocation was to end with the seven vowels. Thereupon the god would enter, and the magician was told how to act in his presence and get the desired information. The text then closed with directions for discovering which god ruled any given day.

This reconstruction of the basic text relies on the fact that all the elements specified either stand in all three of the versions now in the papyrus, or stand in two and can be shown by fairly strong arguments to have stood in the source from which the remaining one, version C, was abbreviated. Thus, for instance, version C says nothing of the first long invocation until it orders the magician to recite it, and says nothing of the drawings on the natron plaque, until it orders the magician to wash them off. But these orders indicate that it was abbreviated from a text in which both invocation and drawings had previously been specified and which therefore, in these points, paralleled, at least in the main, versions A and B.

However, the complete basic text, thus identified, is not preserved in any of the versions without some corruptions, both additions and omissions. The additions and omissions that have occurred in only one of the three versions are fairly easy to identify, especially when something essential to the structure has been omitted, as in the examples just considered, or when the material added is clearly a digression, like the dubious information given by the B version about the songs of the crocodile. Often, however, we must remain in doubt, since it is not impossible, nor even unlikely, that two versions sometimes made independently the same omissions, or additions at least similar, or that such changes were made in both by the compiler of the present collection (i.e. the archetype of the preserved papyrus).

An especially important example of such possibilities is given by the directions that, in each version, follow the recitation of the creation story. The A version says (lines 210ff.):

When the god comes in, look down and write what he says and the name for himself that he gives you. And do not go out of your [685] <initiation> tent until he also tells you accurately the things about yourself (i.e., your fate).

The B version (lines 564ff.) has almost exactly the same words (a suspicious fact, because it has no previous reference to any initiation tent). Version C (lines 704ff.) differs widely:

When the god comes in, do not gaze at his face, but look at his feet while beseeching <him> as indicated and thanking <him> that he did not despise you, but that you were thought worthy of the things about to be said to you for correction of <your> life. You, then, ask, 'Master, what is my fate?' and he will tell you both about <your> star, and what sort of *daimon* you have, and which <planet was> sovereign <at your birth>,

and where you will live and where you will die. And if you hear anything bad, do not cry out or lament, but ask that he may wash it out or avert it. For all things are possible to this god (Cp. Matt 19:26).

Here the remarkable thing is that nothing is said in C about the god's telling his true name, or the magician's asking it, and this in spite of the fact that the titles of both the A and the B versions declare that the rite is "about the holy Name" or "the Name that contains/controls all things." But the C conclusion cannot be summarily dismissed, because the B version has a similar conclusion at the end of the spell to be written on the natron—a spell which, as already remarked, B does not give in its directions for the rite, but adds as a postscript at the end where (lines 608ff.) it says:

An angel will come in, and you say to the angel, 'Hail, Lord. Both make me successful in these my affairs, and help me, and let the circumstances of my birth be revealed to me. And if he says anything bad, say, 'Wash away from me the evils of fate. Do not hide yourself, but reveal to me everything, by night and day, and in every hour of the month, to me, so-and-so the son of so-and-so. Let your good form appear to me, for I serve, under your order, your angel *Anagbiathi*, (etc.).

Here too there is nothing about revelation of the god's name. The rite is understood as one to reveal the magician's fate and enable him to avert its unpleasant elements. Yet one of the titles which follows version C again refers to the "Hidden book of Moses about the great Name."

What, then, was the purpose of the basic text? Probably divination [686] and correction of fate, since that appears in all four [? does Smith mean three?—SJDC] versions, whereas revelation of the name, though promised in all the titles, is provided in only two of the actual rites. Moreover, the compiler of the archetype of *PLeid*. J 395 was much interested in the true/great name and its use. He added to version A (unless he already found there) a long list of magical acts that could be performed by saying the name (lines 231-343); he inserted between B and C a formula for invoking Sarapis by use of his true name (lines 618-45); he added after version C two or three spells (the division is uncertain) for calling the great god by his true name, and then a long list of true names as given by assorted authorities (lines 933-1001). Consequently we can probably attribute the references to "the great Name" in the titles of *VIII Moses* and in the conclusion of versions A and B to the compiler of the collection, and say with some likelihood that they did not stand in the basic text.

Another such example is afforded by the numerous prescriptions for sacrifice in version B. Versions A and C do not prescribe sacrifices, but still have the prescriptions for a knife and sacrificial animals. Evidently, therefore, the basic text prescribed sacrifices, but A and C

have eliminated them. The elimination may reflect either the reported Constantinian prohibition of sacrifices, or the increasing prestige of vegetarianism which left similar contradictions in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* for Eusebius, in ch. X of his attack on the *Life*, to pounce on as evidences of dishonesty.

In *VIII Moses*, however, the discrepancies go beyond such editorial adjustments. The basic text itself was not a single, unified composition. This appears first in the preliminary directions, see the synopsis (*Appendix B*). Versions A and B run roughly parallel until the Name is being written on the natron plaque. After specifying its second element, both interrupt the writing to prescribe invocation of the gods of the hours, days, and weeks—an invocation both had prescribed only a few lines earlier. With this their parallelism breaks off. Version A goes on at once to the invocation that must be written on the natron, but, after this, begins a new set of preliminary directions—equipment, costume, tent for initiation, amulets, etc.—all of which are practically unparalleled in B, but almost exactly paralleled in C, which begins at this point. A and C now go through the rite again, from the beginning, and are joined by B only when they come to the point at which the invocation is written on the natron and licked, or washed off. Since B put the text of the invocation at the end of its version, it has almost [687] nothing between the point where its parallelism with A broke off and the point at which it resumes.

The meaning of all this for source criticism is clear. There were two basically similar, but considerably different, texts giving preliminary prescriptions for the rite. B used one, C used the other, A used both, one after another. Hence its parallelism, first only with B, then only with C, and its jump backwards to the beginning of the rite—a jump that occurs just where the parallelism changes.

A similar conclusion is implied by the appearance of the angel and the revelation at the end of B's appended invocation. In the basic text from which A, B, and C, ultimately derived, that invocation was only the first of two. It was to be written on natron and licked off (eaten) or washed off and drunk by the magician, so that he would have it inside him and could genuinely produce it for the second invocation that would bring the god. Therefore to have an angel come at the end of the first invocation and anticipate the god's revelation is structurally anticlimactic and only to be explained by the supposition that there was an earlier, simpler form which used only one invocation, after which, without any licking, drinking, or repetition, the revelation would occur. The compiler of B used this form, therefore kept the invocation at the end, where it stood in his source, and carelessly kept the appearance and the revelation at the end of it, although he should have delayed them until the end of his second invocation.

This conjecture is confirmed by two facts. One we have already noticed—the magician's appeal to the angel at the end of B's appended invocation is paralleled by that to the god at the end of C's final invocation, and both show the original form, a request for revelation and amendment of the magician's fate, not the secondary request for revelation of the Name, which appears at the ends of A and B. The second fact is that in all three versions the two invocations—that to be written on the natron and the second, which begins the *kosmopoiia*—are essentially identical: I call on you, the supreme, creator god ... I call on you as do your first created gods/angels, notably the sun; I call on you in bird language, in hieroglyphic, in Hebrew, in Egyptian, etc. (each of these categories being filled out, in both invocations, by much the same magical words).

Thus we can go with some confidence a step behind the 'basic form' that was the common source of the A, B and C versions, to an earlier, simpler form in which the god was called by a single invocation. When the notion came in that the magician must get the prayer inside him [688] before he could utter it, the original form was changed by adding the write-and-lick/drink directions, and the original invocation was repeated, with modifications, as conclusion of the rite. At a yet later date this was expanded by addition of the story of creation by laughing, a story which had its own prehistory. But that is another story.<sup>1</sup> [689]

---

<sup>1</sup> For those to whom the obvious is not obvious, let me add that if the above observations are correct, *PLeid. J 395* is at least the fifth generation of a literary family. The first generation was a simple invocation of the creator god. In the second generation this was doubled, connected by the write-and-consume ritual, and otherwise expanded to produce the common source of the three versions of *VIII Moses*. In the third generation this common source was altered to produce the three versions (for C the alteration involved at least two stages, the second being abbreviation, so probably several generations should be allowed here). In the fourth (by minimal reckoning) generation, the three versions were collected with other material to produce the archetype of the present manuscript. In the final generation this archetype was copied to produce the text we now have. How many years should be allowed for five generations?

APPENDIX A: CONTENT OF *PLEID*. J 395=*PGM* XIII

lines

- 1-230 “Sacred Book called Monad or Eighth of Moses about the holy Name”
- 231-343 “The uses of the Sacred Book which all the *sophistai* practice”
- 343-618 “Sacred Hidden Book of Moses called Eighth or Holy, and this is the rite of the Name that contains/controls all”
- 618-645 An invocation of Sarapis by his genuine name
- 646-734 An abbreviated version of *VIII Moses*, with a terminal title, “Eighth, Hidden <Book> of Moses. In another I found was written <as title> ‘Hidden Book of Moses about the great Name’”
- 734-746 Directions about names said to be concealed in the preceding book
- 746-759 Other names and their uses
- 760-911 “Directions for the seven-letter name and the spell the god hears”
- 912-933 A fragment of an invocation cognate to the above, for meeting the god
- 933-1001 Different great names, as given by a dozen authorities, including Orpheus, Egyptians, Zoroaster, Pyrrhus, “Moses in the Archangelic <Book>” and “in Jerusalem”
- 1001-1057 Directions for making and using an amulet to control fear or anger
- 1058-1077 “Moses’ Hidden Moon <Book> “ (evidently a collection of short spells)
- 1078 “The Hidden or Tenth <Book> of Moses” [690]

APPENDIX B: SYNOPSIS OF THE THREE VERSIONS OF  
*THE EIGHTH BOOK OF MOSES*

<i>A. lines 1-230</i>	<i>B. lines 343-618</i>	<i>C. lines 646-734</i>
Title	Title	
40 days' purity	40 days' purity	
new moon in ram	new moon in ram	
clean house, ground floor, etc.	sleep on ground, sacrifice	
ingredients of incense		
Hermes stole names	burn incense (no gods)	
incenses & their gods, flowers and their preparation	flowers and preparation, wear cinnamon	
Explanation of <i>Key</i>	breakfast, milk of a black cow and wine	
	tasting the sacrifice when the day comes, ingredients and sacrifice	
	incenses, flowers, and sacrifice	
	tasting the sacrifice, sacrifice again	
invoking the hour gods	invoking the hour and day gods	
	Moses stole (?) names.	
initiation to them by cakes	initiation to the hour gods	
writing the name on natron	writing the name on natron	
(1) popping: crocodile and ennead	(1) popping: crocodile and ennead (songs of the crocodile) (2)	
(2) whistling: ouroboros	whistling: ouroboros	
the 9 names (of?) the hour gods said first	the 9 names (of?) the hour gods said first	
Invocation to be written on the natron	(B puts this after the rest of the text)	
Equipment: pinax, knife <i>if</i> you should sacrifice costume, tent for initiation.		Equipment: pinax, knife <i>if</i> you should sacrifice costume, tent for initiation. [691]

wear cinnamon.  
 amulet: Apollo and snake  
 Hallow yourself 7 days.  
 Sleep on the ground at the  
 dark of the moon.  
 Rise to greet the sun for  
 seven days.  
 Entreat hour, week, day  
 gods.  
 On the 8th day, at  
 midnight,  
 light altars and lamps,  
 have roosters ready,  
 recite the invocation  
 for the natron, and the  
 mystery of the god.  
 Have a krater of milk and  
 wine.

Write invocation on both  
 side of natron  
 Lick off one side and wash  
 off the other into the  
 krater.

The natron is to be written  
 with ink of incense and  
 flowers.  
 Before drinking the milk  
 and wine say this (?)  
 entreaty.

Lie down with tablet and  
 stylus  
 and say *Hermaikos*.

Invocation introducing the  
 story of creation.  
 Story of creation by  
 laughter, sputtering and  
 hissing.

Having put some flowers  
 into the ink,

write invocation on both  
 sides of natron.  
 Lick off one side and wash  
 off the other into the  
 krater.

Before washing off,  
 sacrifice one rooster,  
 have the other and the  
 dove ready,  
 then call on the hour gods,

then drink the milk and  
 wine.

Invocation introducing the  
 story of creation.  
 Story of creation by  
 laughter, sputtering and  
 hissing.

wear cinnamon.  
 amulet: Apollo and snake  
 Hallow yourself 7 days.  
 Sleep on the ground at the  
 dark of the moon.  
 Rise to greet the sun for  
 seven days.  
 Entreat hour, week, day  
 gods.  
 On the 8th day, at  
 midnight,  
 light altars and lamps,  
 have roosters ready,  
 recite the invocation  
 for the natron, and the  
 mystery of the god.  
 Have a krater of milk and  
 wine.

Write invocation on one  
 side of natron only.  
 Lick it off.  
 Wash off the other side, on  
 which are the pictures,  
 into the krater.

The natron is to be written  
 with ink of incense and  
 flowers.  
 Before drinking the milk  
 and wine say this (?)  
 entreaty.

Lie down with tablet and  
 stylus  
 and say the *kosmopoiia*  
 which begins with the  
 first line of the  
 invocation.

Lord, I imitate the seven  
vowels, come in and  
hear me.

When the god comes in  
look down.

Write the things said and  
the name for himself  
that he gives.

Do not go out of your tent.

till he tells you about  
yourself

When the god comes in  
look down.

Write the things said and  
the name for himself  
that he gives.

Do not go out of your tent.

till he tells you about  
yourself

Invocation to be written on  
the natron (=A, above,  
p. 690)

An angel will come in. Say  
to him, 'Hail, Lord.

Prayers for success and  
for revelation of fate.

And if he says anything  
bad ask him to wash it  
off,

and to reveal everything at  
all times,

and to appear in a good  
form,

"because I serve under  
your angel."

When you come to the  
seven vowels, say

'Lord, I imitate the seven  
vowels, come in and  
hear me'. [692]

Then, too, the name of the  
27 letters.

And be lying on a rush mat  
spread on the ground.

When the god comes in do  
not look at his face, but  
at his feet,

both beseeching and giving  
thanks ... (for) the  
things to be said for  
correction of life.

Ask, 'What is my destiny?'  
and he will tell you.

And if you hear anything  
bad ask him to wash it  
out or avert it.

When you learn, give  
thanks.

Always sacrifice thus, for  
thus he hears.

How to determine which  
star controls the pole  
(table).

I have set forth for you  
these things which not  
even kings were able to  
grasp (cp. Luke 10:24).

Write on the natron with  
ink made of flowers and  
incense. [693]

Similarly make the “vetch”  
of which I spoke  
allegorically in my *Key*.

I have set forth for you, my  
child, the complete  
initiation of the *Monad*.

How to determine which  
star controls the pole  
(table).

<The> *Eighth Hidden*  
<Book> of Moses. I  
found written in  
another <copy> <The>  
*Hidden Book of Moses*  
concerning the great  
*Name* (etc.).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

### P LEID J 395 (PGM XIII) AND ITS CREATION LEGEND

[491] Since Prof. Nikiprowetzky, in the tragically short time allotted him, contributed so much to our understanding of hellenized Judaism, it seems appropriate to dedicate to his memory this study of a document of Judaized hellenism—the opposite effluent from that mysterious swamp produced by the juncture of the two traditions.

Our document, P. Leid J 395 (PGM XIII),<sup>1</sup> has been famous since Dieterich devoted to it his pioneer study *Abraxas* in the *Festschrift* for Usener,<sup>2</sup> a great tribute to a great teacher. Unfortunately, Dieterich wrote at the height of the nineteenth century's faith in source criticism so he began by trying to reconstruct exactly the source of the two versions of the creation legend given in the papyrus. Consequently his reconstruction was attacked in the next generation by Reitzenstein,<sup>3</sup> who went to the opposite extreme and maintained that the basic text had been completely fluid, a revelation every magician made over to suit himself.

For this, and for his description of Dieterich's attempt as "volkommen verfehlt," Reitzenstein tried to make amends in his own work on the text, *Die Göttin Psyche*,<sup>4</sup> where he praised *Abraxas* for its "great and enduring service" (p. 29) and himself tried to recover the original text of the creation legend, using conjectures far more hazardous than any Dieterich had dared.

His work was a brilliant disaster. Half a dozen points papyrologically preposterous were promptly indicated by Preisendanz,<sup>5</sup> but with prudent politeness to his distinguished senior colleague Preisendanz insisted that such errors did not in the least affect the main argument—that the chief [492] elements of the creation legend were derived from ancient Persian cosmology (unfortunately unknown). In *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*<sup>3</sup> (1927) Reitzenstein withdrew one or two of his worst howlers (e.g. p. 216, n. 3), but reasserted his basic position. Consequently his work has

---

<sup>1</sup> *Papyri graecae magicae*<sup>2</sup>, edd. K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, Stuttgart. 2 v., 1973-4, vol. 2, pp. 86-131.

<sup>2</sup> A. Dieterich, *Abraxas, Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des spätern Altertums ... Festschrift Hermann Usener zur Feier seiner 25jährigen Lehrtätigkeit an der Bonner Universität*, Leipzig, 1891.

<sup>3</sup> R. Reitzenstein, "Die Areopagrede des Paulus," *Neue Jahrbücher* 31 (1913) 393-422, esp. 421.

<sup>4</sup> *Sitzungsberichte*, Heidelberg, 1917.10, pp. 23-44.

<sup>5</sup> K. Preisendanz, "Zur Göttin Psyche," *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 1917.1427-33, esp. cols. 1432-3.

remained the chief obstacle for further study—a body of enormous learning, brilliant observations, astonishing conjectures and incredible conclusions. To refute it point by point would take forever. To ignore it is to beg the question. Let me beg the question.

Simply by looking at the text (more accurately, at Preisendanz' edition of the text)<sup>6</sup> it can be seen that *PGM XIII* is a clean copy of a papyrus put together by somebody much interested in supposed powers of divine names, and in magical works attributed to Moses. The compiler not only collected such texts, but compared them, cited variants from one when he copied another, and even went to the trouble of copying different versions entire. We should therefore not suspect him of harmonization. In *PGM XIII*, lines 1-734, he copied two complete versions of *The Eighth Book of Moses*, and added an abridgment of a third (lines 646-731).

All versions (in his structure) served the same purpose—to make a great god appear, foretell the magician's fate, and eliminate from it anything evil.<sup>7</sup> They all told the magician to secure this service by writing an invocation on natron (hydrogenated sodium carbonate) then ingesting it (by licking it off or washing it off and drinking the water), and then reciting a different form of it. This would bring the god.<sup>8</sup> The doubling of the invocation is odd, and was probably not original, since the second version seems originally to have lacked it. However, the doubling results from the notion that magical knowledge or power can be acquired by [493] eating or drinking, and this notion is widespread and ancient.<sup>9</sup> More surprising is the fact that all three versions were altered for the same purpose—the doubling of the invocation—but not in the same ways. Why three similar texts should

<sup>6</sup> Far from the same thing. A new edition is needed. For what follows see M. Smith, "The Eighth Book of Moses and How it Grew," chapter thirty-seven above.

<sup>7</sup> The directions to make him tell his true name are lacking in one version and probably secondary, but may have been added early, since they got into two of the three.

<sup>8</sup> The uniformity of structure is somewhat concealed by the fact that the second version does not have the first invocation at the place where its writing and drinking are ordered (lines 433-42), but puts it at the end, as an appendix (lines 567-608). The third version, too, is somewhat muddled, but it unquestionably required the use of at least two invocations. "Ἀρξαι λέγειν τὴν στήλην in 684 must mean "Begin (the rite for) recitation of the (text on the) stela"; otherwise there are too many recitations. The rite begins with writing, licking, and washing (688-92), then the recitation of "this entreaty" (695), which must be the one written on the stela—it has the same beginning (cp. 62f., 568ff., 689f.). This is to be said before drinking the washwater. Then, presumably after drinking, follows the second invocation (139ff. = 443ff. = 698ff.), here called τὴν κοσμοποιῶν: evidently it had the creation legend attached to it, as it does in the other two versions.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 2 ed., Bloomington, 6 vols., 1966, Sections B 161-5, 217; D 980-1046, 1240-1248, 1301, 1310, 1357-8, 1793, 1811; M 312; V 132; Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 2:9-3:4; John 6:53-58; Apoc 10:8-11.

independently have been altered in different ways but in all instances to make the same unnecessary change, is a mystery.

In the first and second versions we can be sure of the passages assigned to be written and recited, and can see that they had much the same basic structure. Those to be written on the stelai (lines 61ff. and 567ff.) can be outlined as follows:

- I invoke you greatest of all, creator of all, etc.  
(attributes, culminating with invisibility and metamorphoses).
- I invoke you, Lord, that you may appear to me in your true form, for I serve ... your angel, *voces*,<sup>10</sup> Helios (attributes).
- I invoke you, Lord, as do the gods who appeared by your order, that they may have power, *voces*.
- I invoke you Lord, in birdglyphic, *voces*, in hieroglyphic, *voces*, in Hebrew, *voces*, etc. (Egyptian, baboonic, hawkic, hieratic).
- Then clap three times, make many popping sounds, give a long whistle/hiss.
- Come to me Lord, perfect, etc. (attributes).

The invocations to be recited in 138ff., 443ff., show a variant of this form. The initial aretology is shorter, the request for an epiphany (redundant after “invoke”) is omitted, the prayer is interrupted by a note about the first angels and begins to attribute the different languages to different “angels,” but soon drops this practice to specify instead the different speakers appropriate in Egyptian thought to the different languages.<sup>11</sup>

That the differences between the pairs of forms can be listed so briefly confirms the observation above, that all are variants of a single type. [494] Consequently their difference is a further reason for thinking the doubling secondary; had it been original, the first form given and its double would have been identical. The doubling was probably effected by conflation of texts originally close, but separated long enough to have developed peculiarities preserved when they were put together.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, the forms are still so close that the second pair should end, as the first does, with directions for making inarticulate noises and

<sup>10</sup> *Voces*, sc. *magicae*; I shall use this term for all combinations of letters that do not form recognized words or names, unless their conjectured content (e.g. “sun of the world” or “eternal sun” for *semesilam*) seems to justify specification.

<sup>11</sup> Helios—hieroglyphic; (name omitted?)—Hebrew; “the sun disc, saying, I precede you” (etc. and uttering) “your magical name in Egyptian”; the baboon “in his own dialect” (= “baboonic” in the preceding text); the hawk (likewise = “hawkic”); the ennead—hieratic. This reconstruction proposes transposition of  $\delta$   $\delta\lambda\sigma\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ , which now stands without grammatical connexion in lines 152 and 461, to precede and serve as subject of  $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\nu$ , which now has no adjacent subject, in lines 151 and 460. The utterance is exactly appropriate for the sun disc.

<sup>12</sup> The note on Jewish angels in the second form probably indicates that a Jewish copyist worked on it before its inclusion in the source of both the versions used for the manuscript copied by our present text.

then calling in the god: εἶτα κρότησον γ' etc. However, the second pair are broken off, at lines 161 and 471, by an insertion perhaps due to homoeoarchy: εἰπὼν ἐκρότησε γ' etc. This insertion was easier because the participle could be read as continuing the account of what the ennead ("the nine-formed") did. But the invocation had been addressed to the creator god in the second person; the text now goes on in the third person: καὶ ἐγέλασεν ὁ θεὸς ζ' etc. The break is apparent and the appearance is confirmed by the unsuitability (for an invocation) of the long account of creation which now follows in both fully preserved versions and seems to have done so in the third, to judge from the reference to τὴν κοσμοποιίαν in 697.

The beginning of this creation legend has evidently been lost. If the loss was due, as we conjectured, to homoeoarchy, the preserved beginning, εἰπὼν ἐκρότησεν γ', must have stood near the similar phrase in the end of the invocation. But the proximity may have been either in the next few lines, or in an adjacent column, so either a small or a large initial loss may be supposed. The change of subject and style argues in favor of a large loss, and therefore of the conclusion that we cannot reconstruct what is missing.

Fortunately, the preserved conclusions, if not of the legend, at least of the section here quoted from it, enable us to recognize the purpose for which it was quoted. It not only tells us, as does the *Sefer haRazim*, which god is in control of what, and so provides a handy guide for effective petitions, but it also leads to the appearance of *Iao* and to his establishment, together with *Phobos* (Fear), as the final resort in every need or necessity (ἀνάγκη), see lines 196-206, 536-563.<sup>13</sup> Recitation of [495] the story was probably intended to produce the god's epiphany (the purpose of the entire rite) as well as to secure his attention. Telling a story to produce a desired effect is a common magical practice, familiar, e.g., in the canon of the mass, which is roughly contemporary with this text and, like it, begins with prayers and invocations before going on rather abruptly, to the narrative expected to produce what it describes.

This purpose of the quotation, however, can hardly have been that of the original legend—it is considerably too complex. The fragment we have begins with the inarticulate end of a conversation. Someone, who had just said something, clapped, or struck something three times. Thereupon "the god" laughed seven times and a series of gods who encompass/control the cosmos came into being. They were:<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The association of *Iao* with Fear may have seemed, to the editor who produced it, justified by such verses as Prov 9:10; Ps 111:10 (LXX 110:10); etc. ("The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Yahweh.")

<sup>14</sup> Henceforth the first text, lines 1-230 = "A"; the second, 343-618 = "B," the third, 646-734 = "C."

- First laugh: *Phos, Auge* (Light, Radiance), illuminated all, became god of the cosmos and of fire.
- Second: An unnamed god, set over the abyss, controls increase and decrease of fluids.
- Third (the laugh merely desired or intended?): *Nous, Phrenes* (Mind, Intelligence), called *Hermes* and *Semesilam*.
- Fourth: *Genna* (Generation), controls *Spora* (Seed) and sowing.
- Fifth: *Moirai* (Fate) holding a scale. Contends with *Hermes* for control of justice. The contest is settled by "the god": Justice is to be determined by both, but all things in the cosmos are subject to *Moirai*.
- Sixth: *Kairos* (Time) holding a sceptre which he gave to "the first-created god." In return for the gift he is clothed with the glory of *Phos* and is to be with the first-created god (cp. 1 Cor 15:24-28). Here B has a long passage not in A: *Kairos* is given control over all things past and future. "When he put on the glory of *Phos*, the disc that turns towards *Phos* showed a certain effluence. The god said to the Queen, 'You, putting on the effluence of *Phos*, will be with him ... You will increase with *Phos*, receiving (light) from him, and again you will wane.'" etc., 510-521.

We now come to the only major transpositions and contradictions in the creation legend. These are far too small to justify Reitzenstein's original theory of a wholly fluid basic text.

- Seventh: *Psyche* (*Soul*). A, 192-206: When *Psyche* came into being, while laughing, the god wept. Then he hissed, whereupon Earth humped itself and begot the Pythian serpent who foreknew everything. The god called him *voces 1*. But, seeing him, the god was also terrified and made a popping noise, at which there appeared an armed man called *voces 2*. Seeing him, the god was again terrified, (fearing) lest Earth had cast up a god, (so) looking down at Earth he [496] said, "*Iao*." From the noise (*echos*) was born a god who is lord of all. The former (the armed god) contended with him, saying, "I am more powerful." The god said to the strong one, "You come from a popping noise, this (god, *Iao*,) from a sound (of speech? *echos*). You shall both be in control of every necessity." So he (which?) was thenceforth called *voces 2*.
- B. 522-59: When *Psyche* appeared all things were moved/began to move. The god said, "You will move/animate all things, and all will be gladdened, so long as *Hermes* guides you." Thereon everything was uncontrollably filled with spirit. Seeing this the god made a popping noise and everything was frightened and *Phobos* (Fear) appeared armed and was called *voces 2*. Then, bending towards Earth, the god whistled and Earth opened to receive the noise and begot "its own creature," the Pythian serpent, who foreknew everything. His name is great and holy, *voces 1*. When he appeared, Earth rose up and was greatly exalted ... but the god said, "*Iao*," and everything stood still and a greatest great god appeared, who fixed in place the things past in the world and those yet to be, so that none of the aerial beings was thenceforth disorderly. *Phobos*, seeing one more powerful than himself, opposed him, saying, "I am before you." He, however, said, "But I fixed everything in place." The god said, "You (*Phobos*) arose from a sound (*echos*), but this one (*Iao*) from an utterance (*phthoggos*) (?). Now an utterance is better than a sound, and (therefore) the power of both will belong to you who appeared later (*Iao*), so that all things may be fixed in place. And he

(*Iao?*) was thenceforth called by the great and marvelous name, *voces 2* (cp. Phil 2:9). Wishing, however, to give honor also to him (*Phobos?*) who had arisen together with him (*Iao?*), the god gave him (*Phobos?*) precedence of the ennead and power and glory equal to theirs, and he was called *voces*, etc.

This summary has of course omitted many significant details, not only because there was no space for them in this article, but also because I think the significance of details usually uncertain until that of the structure in which they stand is determined. What can we learn from the structure here?

First, it appears as a continuation of the preceding invocations of the god. Those invocations are directed to Horus-Harpocrates. His appearance rising on the sky-boat, with the solar disc above (i.e. preceding) him, the adoring baboon on the boat in front of him, his hawk perched on the stern, and all creatures, in groups, each group worshipping him in its own language, is familiar from many magical gems<sup>15</sup> (and was perhaps a model for Luke's miracle of pentecost, Acts 2:1-16). Since the cosmology was at least a close sequel to the invocations, there is some probability, but nothing approaching certainty, that its supreme god was also Harpocrates. On the other hand, the cosmology in its present form leads to [497] *Iao*, so the compiler may have thought the invocations directed to him. He was often conceived as a solar god; his appearance on the sky boat would not, in Egypt, be surprising.<sup>16</sup>

Since the evidence from the invocations is uncertain what of the cosmology? It is of the magical type—production by utterance rather than by physical means (operations on external objects, bodily emissions, childbirth). At first it resembles the Genesis story, which is also of this type: creation begins with light,<sup>17</sup> earth and water are not created but are there from the beginning, etc. Since it celebrates *Iao*, influence of Genesis is not unlikely, but the differences are so great that it is not likely to have gone far.

First, this is a theogony rather than a cosmology; it rarely reports the origins of elements of the physical world, usually of rulers controlling some aspect of life. Second these divine rulers appear so often in male-female (or female-male) pairs that it is easy to suppose an original list of the following syzygies:

*Phos-Auge*

Earth-Water (masculine in semitic)

*Nous-Phrenes*

<sup>15</sup> C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets*, Ann Arbor, 1950 (*U. of Michigan Humanistic Series* 49) Plate 10, nos. 203-210; Pl. 21, no. 391.

<sup>16</sup> See M. Smith, "Helios In Palestine," volume one, chapter eighteen.

<sup>17</sup> As it does if the first verb of Genesis be read as an infinitive which it can be.

*Genna-Spora* (masculine in semitic)

Moira-Hermes

*Kairos*-the Queen (= Helios-Selene)

Psyche-the Pythian serpent.

*Phobos* and *Iao* cannot make a masculine-feminine pair, so they are probably to be seen as a supplement to the seven syzygies, although, like those, their powers, if not their persons, are finally united. Similarly, in the Valentinian system, after the paired aeons had appeared the Father sent forth their boundary, Horus, as a final, single emanation, Irenaeus 1.1.3. The similarity is increased by the fact that *Phobos* was probably at first alone. The function of fear is to freeze, to fix everything in its place. This being *Phobos*' proper function, there was no need to introduce *Iao* to perform it; the introduction of *Iao* leaves *Phobos* with nothing to do; *Iao* does nothing but what *Phobos* should have done; and the final union of their powers is bungled albeit differently, in both texts—a sign that the original was satisfactory to neither redactor. Moreover, *Iao* is the only semitic deity in the whole series; otherwise the above series is [498] wholly Greek, though the genders show that it was compiled in semitic. Finally, *Phobos* is introduced without any mention of the law. He is not the Old Testament giver of moral law, but the Hesiodic power of the god who maintains the order of the physical cosmos. In sum, we find a hellenistic theogony that issues in a world ruled by Fear. It shows no trace of Jewish influence,<sup>18</sup> but was composed in some semitic environment, very likely Egypt where such lists of pairs of primaevial gods were prominent, where notions of creation as beginning with the appearance of light and the separation of earth from water were widely accepted,<sup>19</sup> and where the papyrus was found. This looks like the sort of stock to which Old Testament material was later grafted by Valentinus, Basilides, and others in the second century, as it was perhaps earlier, in the text behind our document, by the addition of *Iao*. If the structure was originally hellenistic Egyptian, the secret divine names, which we have left aside (following Reitzenstein, who dismissed them with contempt as late, “magical” additions to a primarily “religious” text) will have to be reconsidered as potentially primitive elements, since such names of the doorkeepers of the invisible world were of great importance in Egyptian religion from pharaonic times on. This does not prove that the particular ones found in the present text are ancient, for in the present text the original

<sup>18</sup> The seven syzygies, with none designated for rest, reflect the influence of the pagan, astrological week, not of the Jewish one. E. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World*, 2 ed., London, 1980, p. 61.

<sup>19</sup> H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin, 1952, p. 864 (“Weltbeginn”).

theogony has been forgotten and mutilated—translation into Greek has obscured the sexual relations, Hermes has been attached to Nous-Phrenes, the Queen has been dropped (from one version), and so on.

Nevertheless, enough of the original structure remains, like the stylobate of an Egyptian temple used as the foundation for a string of village houses, to tell something of the Greco-Egyptian religion that tried to appropriate the power of the great god of Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

### A NOTE ON SOME JEWISH ASSIMILATIONISTS: THE ANGELS (P. BERLIN 5025b, P. LOUVRE 2391)

[207] Professor Bickerman's particular interest in relations between Jews and gentiles as a continuing theme in Jewish history makes it seem appropriate to dedicate to his memory this note on a minority group of Jewish immigrants who entered Europe from the Near East about the beginning of the present era, prospered mightily, after their (probably involuntary) conversion to Christianity, became an important part of the ruling class, and in many cases assimilated with, in others reportedly drove out, the earlier inhabitants of their own sort (this in spite of the fact that they also remained active in Jewish affairs). I refer to the angels.

That they were originally a Jewish family—or even a family at all—is disputed. Certainly they had close relatives in Palmyra and elsewhere along the Palestine-Syrian coast, where their name can be traced back to the bronze age. It was originally *mal'ak*, a functional name meaning 'envoy' or, by extension, 'agent.' In early times it seems to have been used for any men or deities, or even animals, who ran errands for their superiors. This was true also of its Greek (not quite) equivalent, *angelos*, 'messenger,' which in hellenistic times, if not before, became its common translation. By Roman imperial times, however, the trade union was well on towards becoming a family group. When writers of the Antonine period and later speak of "the angels" they usually mean a special class of beings, commonly conceived as a sort of racial group distinct from the other groups of the (usually) invisible population—the gods, ghosts, demons, etc.

To trace the stages—let alone the causes—of this transition would be a task far too complex for the present paper. Here we shall focus on one small stage of the process, a stage documented by two invocations in the magical papyri, one which I shall call L, in P. Louvre 2391,<sup>1</sup> the other, B, in P. Berlin 5025b.<sup>2</sup> In both papyri these have been run together with other metrical passages and therefore have not, so far as I know, been [208] considered separately, in spite of their differences from their contexts. L follows a hymn to the sun (who is addressed as 'Titan') and is followed—after two lines of uncertain content—by a

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 211-24, according to the numeration of K. Preisendanz, *Papyri graecae magicae*, ed. A. Henrichs (Stuttgart, 1973-74, 2 v.; henceforth P), in which P. Louvre 2391 is no. III, often called P. Mimaut; its fragments have been arranged and its lines numbered in various ways by various editors, see the table by G. Moeller in P, I.32f.

<sup>2</sup> P no. I, lines 300-305.

conjunction of some single individual; the purpose of the conjunction is not stated. B follows a brief invocation of the Pythian Apollo, and is immediately followed by a conjunction related to that in L. Here, too, the conjunction has no stated purpose and no apparent connexion with the invocation of the angels. The similar arrangement in both papyri of two apparently unrelated pieces of material suggests that both papyri used some smaller collection, which apparently existed in widely different forms, evidence of rather long descent from its original, but this is a side road we cannot follow.

Both L and P have been reprinted as verse, along with their quasi metrical contexts, in the appendix to P. The versions given there are based on the observations and conjectures of many scholars who have tried to make sense and hexameters of the letters in the papyri.<sup>3</sup> Let us suppose the results of their scholarship approximately correct. If so, those elements of the content which will concern us are mostly reliable. Serious uncertainty about them occurs only in the case of L, about the preserved initial of the lost name at the end of line 2, and about considerable elements in lines 4, 5, 7, and 13. We may put these problems aside till we come to them, and may here pass over the general questions of palaeography, wording, and grammar (which have hitherto had most attention) so as to come to those of composition and content (hitherto comparatively neglected). The two texts, as printed in the appendix to P, read as follows:<sup>4</sup>

- B: ἄγγελε πρῶτε θεοῦ, Ζηνὸς μεγάλοιο, Ἰάω,  
καὶ σὲ τὸν οὐράνιον κόσμον κατέχοντα, Μιχαήλ,  
καὶ σὲ καλῶ, Γαβριήλ, πρωτάγγελε, δεῦρ' ἀπ' Ὀλύμπου,  
ἀντολίης Ἀβρααῆς κεχαρημένος, Ἰλαος ἔλθοις,  
5 ὅς δούειν ἀντολιθην ἐπισκοπιάζῃ, Ἀδωναι.  
πᾶσα φύσις τρομέει σε, πάτερ κόσμοιο, Πακερβήθ.
- L: κλήζω πρώτοιν τὸν Διὸς ἄγγελον, θε<ι>ον Ἰάω,  
καὶ σε τὸν οὐράνιον κόσμον κατέχοντα, Ρ[αφαήλ,  
ἀντολίης χαίρω]ν, θεὸς Ἰλαος ἔσ<σ>ο, Ἀβρααῆξ,  
καὶ σε, μέγιστε <καί> αἰθέριε, κλήζω (αἰρωγον σου) <σε> Μιχαήλ,

<sup>3</sup> Notably: G. Parthey, *Zwei griechische Zauberpapyri des Berliner Museums*, Berlin, 1865 (= *Abhdl.* Berlin, 1865), 109-49; E. Abel, *Orphica* (Leipzig, 1885), 286; L. Fahz, "Ein neues Stück Zauberpapyrus," *ARW* 15 (1912), 409-21; S. Eitrem, *Les Papyrus magiques grecs de Paris* (Kristiana, 1923 = *VSK Skrifter* II.1); K. Preisendanz, P; E. Heitsch, *Die griechischen Dichterfragmente der röm. Kaiserzeit* (Göttingen, I<sup>2</sup>, 1963 = *Abhdl.* Gött., 3 Folge, 49). Further bibliography in P.

<sup>4</sup> B = II.262, no. 23, lines 3-8; L = II.241f., no. 5, lines 14-26, a reprint of Heitsch, LX.5, lines 14-26. The apparatus given by Preisendanz and Heitsch do not suffice for accurate determination of the texts of the papyri, nor for a history of the proposed emendations; hence it does not seem worthwhile to reprint them here.

- 5 καὶ σώζοντα βί[ου]ς ιδίω<ν>, Διδ[ος] ὄμμα τέλειον,  
καὶ φύσιν ἀέξοντα καὶ ἐκ φύσεως φύσιν αἰῶθις,  
καὶ κλήζω ἀθανάτων [.....] σεσε[ινγεν]βαρφαραγγης  
παντοκράτωρ θεὸς ἔσσι, σὺ δ', ἀθάνατ', ἔσσι μέγιστος.  
ἰκνοῦμαι νῦν λάμπων, ἀναξ κόσμοιο Σα[βα]ώθ,  
10 ὅς δύοσιν ἀντολίησιν ἐπισκεπάζε<ι>ς, Ἀδωναί,  
κόσμος ἐὼν κόσμον μόνος ἀθανάτων ἐ[φοδε]ύεις, [209]  
αὐτομαθής, ἀδίδακτος, μέσον <τὸν> κόσμον ἐλαύνων  
(?)τῆ[ς] νυκτὸς <κ>αιρούς ιδεῖ ἡοῦς, Ἀκραμμαχ[ά]ρι

From this juxtaposition it is clear that we have two versions of an original invocation of five angels. Lines 1 and 2 of both are obvious variants; line 3 of B is probably a remote variant of line 4 of L (see below); line 4 of B and line 3 of L are variants; so are lines 5 of B and 10 of L. These are the only lines of which variants appear in both texts, and in four cases of five they invoke the same angels: Iao, Michael, Abrasax, and Adonai. Except for one inversion, the lines occur in the same order in both texts. No angel, save those attached to matching lines, appears in both texts; with two exceptions, no pair of lines occurs save with identical angels. A clearer case of common source and independent developments could hardly be found.

The Michael-Raphael-Gabriel exchange is puzzling, the more so because doubt as to the name in line L2 (where the letter read above as initial R has also been read as M) and serious corruption in L4 make the wording uncertain. That the line of which B3 and L4 are different descendants was part of the original seems likely because the verb in it is essential for B. That B 1 and 2 and L 1 and 2 were in the original is clear from their similarity. The angel invoked in B2 was probably at first Michael because the function specified—maintaining order in heaven—is one appropriate to him,<sup>5</sup> not to Raphael, a doctor, as his name declares. One may guess that Raphael was introduced because of the importance of cures to the magicians who used these texts. If so, the fact that he had to be introduced will indicate that the spell did not originate in medical magic, but was later adapted to it. With the introduction of Raphael (and into second place!) Michael was shifted to the end of L4, displacing Gabriel, his less colorful second in command.<sup>6</sup> The original list will have been Iao, Michael, Gabriel, Abrasax, Adonai—an all-Jewish team (if one accept Barb's derivation of Abrasax from 'arba')<sup>7</sup> and probably a charm for warriors,

<sup>5</sup> W. Lueken, *Michael* (Göttingen, 1898), 22ff. For Michael's cosmic rule see 1 Enoch 69:14ff.; he is regularly "the chief commander" of the heavenly armies, *Tosefta Hullin* 2.18, etc., anticipated in Dan 12:1.

<sup>6</sup> Lueken, *Michael*, 32ff.

<sup>7</sup> A. Barb, "Abraxas Studien," in *Hommages à W. Deonna, Latomus* 28 (1957), 67ff.

given the prominence of Michael and Gabriel. (Iao, of course, was a warrior from of old, cf. Ps 24.)

Barb's argument, however, would also persuade us that Abrasax was *YHWH*, the god of the tetragrammaton, whose sacred number was four,<sup>8</sup> whose throne was borne by four holy beasts and attended by four archangels. The god and the four angels would make five, but here we have five angels, all of them presumably servants of Zeus, who is "god." Admittedly, the pentagram was occasionally used by Jews in antiquity, perhaps as an apotropaic symbol. However, the number five had strong ties with paganism.<sup>9</sup> So do the angels of this text: Iao appears as an angel of Zeus; Gabriel is called from Olympus. The original text was probably written by a completely assimilated Jew who invoked these Jewish angels as powerful, albeit subordinate, members of the imaginary supernatural society.

Perhaps the original text had a conclusion now lost. To take *Adonai* as the final word leaves things in the air. Indeed, it is so unsatisfactory that the strongest reason for [210] thinking it the end of the original is that both independent developments left the original here. The original may have intended them to leave. Many spells simply provide the power—the magic words, the invocation that will call up the spirit—and then leave it to the magician to use the power as he wishes.

That the last line of B is a later addition is argued not only by its absence from L, but also by the fact that *Pakerbeth* is not a Jewish angel but a fusion of words from a formulaic invocation of the Egyptian god Seth, another power generally useful for destruction. The whole formula is described in P XIVc.21 as his "authentic" name, and the word here taken from it may stand as *pars pro toto* for the whole, thus adding Seth, who was often identified with Iao, to this list of Iao and his affiliates. Alternatively, *Pakerbeth* may have been used here, as Bonner claims it often was,<sup>10</sup> merely as a 'word of power,' a sort of 'Amen' to validate the preceding invocation (of which the clause ending, "father of the world," would then refer to *Adonai*). A further consideration is the fact that addition of *Pakerbeth* as an angel's name would produce a list of six names, and six, falling between Greek five and Hebrew seven, was comparatively neglected in magic.<sup>11</sup> Given these contrary considerations, the question must be

<sup>8</sup> Barb, *Latomus* 28.81ff.

<sup>9</sup> J. Schouten, *The Pentagram as a Medical Symbol* (Nieuwkoop, 1968), 19-27.

<sup>10</sup> C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* (Ann Arbor, 1950 = *U. of Mich. Studies, Humanistic Series*, 49), 163f.

<sup>11</sup> The unpublished index of P lists 32 uses of *pente*, 24 of *hex*, and 99 of *hepta*. These figures include both names and numerals, and also uses in compounds, except in other numbers (thus *pentegrammaton*, but not *dekapente*). My single count of the passages cited in Preisendanz' lists may be somewhat off, but hardly enough to misrepresent the relative infrequency of *hex*.

left open, though the prior structure of the invocation—one line per angel—argues strongly for the supposition that the word is here used as a name. So much for B.

The development of L is more uncertain because of the uncertainty of its text. “Perfect eye of Zeus” is a brilliant conjecture—it has the brilliance of thin ice. *Sesengenbarpharanges* is perhaps a marginal gloss<sup>12</sup> and certainly hard to adapt to the meter. *Pantokrator* may be either an epithet or the name of an angel; in magical usage the word was in the tadpole stage. That it was placed at the beginning of the line, while most angelic names come at the ends, may indicate that it was to be read as an epithet of the angel whose lost name preceded it. On the other hand, its Hebrew equivalent, *Sabaoth*,<sup>13</sup> is almost certainly here the name of another angel. Though in the Old Testament it was merely an epithet of *YHWH*, in magical texts it commonly refers to an independent god.<sup>14</sup> This argues that *Pantokrator*, too, should be taken as a noun. So does the prior structure of the invocation.<sup>15</sup> After *Sabaoth*, however, the one-line-per-angel structure seems to be abandoned and the “who” of line 10 appears to be carrying the sentence on. But this appearance is misleading. Comparison with B shows that we now return to the original text and that the “who” should be taken as an anticipatory reference to *Adonai* (“<And thou> who..., <O> *Adonai*”), here a second vocative after “shine forth.” Consequently *Adonai* should be followed by a period. Lines 11-13 [211] (which indisputably break the structure, as did lines 5-7) would seem by analogy to lead to *Akrammachari* as the name of a final angel. However, this name is a variant of *Akrammachamari*, which has been convincingly explained by Scholem as an imperative, “uproot the spells.”<sup>16</sup> This imperative makes good sense as a conclusion for the invocation, and it accords with the introduction of Raphael, as part of a remodeling of the invocation for medical purposes. To take it as an angel’s name would leave the invocation without any point, another example of the type mentioned above (on *Adonai*). But the interpolator—if his work is rightly restored—did not even know how to spell the word he introduced, so he may be suspected of ignoring its semitic meaning and of thinking it merely a name; it is often used by itself as if it were one.

<sup>12</sup> P on III.217, “von cece an auf den Rand geschrieben,” is not clear about this.

<sup>13</sup> *Pantokrator* is the regular translation of Hebrew *Šeba’ot*, see Hatch and Redpath, s.v.

<sup>14</sup> This will be shown fully by the forthcoming *index verborum* to the translation of the magical papyri (ed. H. D. Betz, U. of Chicago Press, 1986).

<sup>15</sup> The proposal of E. Heitsch, “Drei Helioshymnen,” *Hermes* 88 (1960), 154f., to read the names as various epithets for one solar deity, founders on the undoubted distinction of the figures in the original text.

<sup>16</sup> G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition?* (New York, 1965), 97.

*Sesengenbarpharanges*, although marginal, was probably intended to replace or identify some name in the text. If we take it, *Pantokrator*, and *Akrammachamari* as names, we have nine angels, the number of the holy Egyptian ennead. But the ogdoad and the hebdomad were hardly less holy, so numerology, as often, leaves us a free field for choice.

More significant is the fact that all the names added in this expanded text come from the same Jewish magical background as do those of the original text, so the expansion, as well as the original composition, probably went on in circles either Jewish or in close touch with Judaism. Yet the identification of Iao as “angel of Zeus” was not eliminated, and “eye of Zeus”—if correctly discerned—appears as a new pagan epithet. The angels now have active roles in physical creation (line 6), they are also rulers of the world (8), drive it and oversee it (10-12), as do the visible gods (the planets) of Platonism. This anticipates the Palestinian synagogue mosaics with the angel of the sun in their centers, and the other material, both Jewish and Christian, that indicates Jewish worship of angels.<sup>17</sup> The pagans may have learned angelolatry, as well as monotheism, from Jews as well as Christians.

Finally, dates: P. Berlin 5025 was written about A.D. 400, P. Louvre 2391 about 300 or a bit later. Both are probably copies of earlier texts like themselves. Those texts (or their ultimate ancestors) had been put together from smaller collections which, before being thus used, had diverged widely and independently from their originals. Such divergence implies a manuscript history of several generations. The invocation which the original collection contained was hardly written by the collector; it differs too markedly from the other elements. Before incorporation into the collection it presumably had a history of its own. The steps from the present manuscripts back to their archetypes, and from the archetypes back to the collections they used, and from the two different collections back to their common original, and from that original back to the first form of the included invocation, could perhaps be squeezed into a couple of centuries, but, given the wide divergence of the preserved texts, might reasonably be thought to have taken longer.

The fact that not only the original, but also its major expansion in L, are entirely Jewish in nomenclature, argues for a date before the near-extirmination of the Egyptian Jews in 115-117. After that, indeed, Jewish material survived in manuscripts and [212] undeniably continued to be used, but one would expect, when a text was being expanded, some admixture of pagan personnel. A first century A.D.

---

<sup>17</sup> M. Smith, “Helios in Palestine,” chapter eighteen of this collection.

date would be more likely, but perhaps, for the sociological background, one should go back to a yet earlier time, when Jewish warriors needed such spells, and when the picture of Jewish angels in the service of Zeus could be modeled on the sight of Jewish generals in the service of the Ptolemies (e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 13.354). This would put us in the first two thirds of the first century B.C., roughly 350 years before the writing of P. Louvre 2391. Is this too large a gap? I think not. Many manuscripts written as late as A.D. 1500 contain texts of “the Lord’s prayer.”

## CHAPTER FORTY

### THE JEWISH ELEMENTS IN THE MAGICAL PAPYRI

To speak of the Jewish elements in the magical papyri is to beg the question, what was Judaism in the times and places where the papyri were written? This question cannot be answered precisely. We know from preserved evidence that ancient Judaism took many different forms, some of them surprising (primitive Christianity, for instance), but we don't know what more surprising forms may have been represented by the great majority of the evidence—that now lost. The same holds for paganism and Christianity. Consequently it is better not to begin by trying to apply denominational labels to fringe material. The first thing to do is to get a clear account of what forms have been preserved, and which seem to go with which.

Accordingly, let us begin by looking for elements that seem to have come, at least indirectly, from the OT, apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, and Jewish cult. Then we can look at other elements commonly found together with these, and so, gradually, piece together a picture of what Judaism may have, in those times and places, included, or, at least, given rise to.

A difficult necessity is, not to be hasty. This is not palaeontology. Ancient Judaism was not a single, uniform species, within which the whole of any specimen could be accurately inferred from the discovery of one of its parts. Rather it was a genus comprising a great number of species so widely different that their basic similarities are sometimes almost unrecognizable.

For example, consider the Jews of Elephantine, who worshipped several gods, along with Yaho. They *may* not have had any biblical books; no trace of any has been found in their remains. To conclude from this fact that they *did* not have any, would be a rash argument from silence, that is, from lack of evidence. But to suppose—as often is supposed—that, when the preserved evidence comes to an end, these Jews and their sort of Judaism had been completely exterminated, would be a rash conclusion from ignorance. As a matter of fact we continue to find in Egypt, through the succeeding centuries, persons with Jewish names, sometimes as worshippers of Egyptian gods, sometimes, of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> Hence it is not unlikely that some of the

---

[My student Mr. William K. Gilders and I have constructed this essay from the following sources: Smith's typescript of the text that appeared in the SBL Seminar Papers; Smith's corrections to that text; Smith's typescript of the remarks that he delivered at the SBL session devoted to the discussion of this paper; Smith's corrections to that text. In the counting and classifying of magical texts and Jewish elements, Smith changed his mind

syncretistic worship of Yahweh attested in the magical papyri may have come from an old, Egyptian cult of Yahweh relatively unaffected by Palestinian developments. The Amherst Egyptian papyrus no. 63 shows that in the second century B.C., at the latest, an Aramaic hymn closely related to Ps 20:2-7, but appealing to Horus (?), Adonai, Sahar (?), El Bethel, and the Baal of Heaven, as well as to Yaho/Yahweh, was transliterated into Demotic and included in a manuscript buried at Thebes.<sup>2</sup> The Demotic transliteration has been plausibly attributed to an Egyptianizing Jew of Edfu. Be that as it may, the papyrus shows that when it was written these gods were associated in Demotic worship. Therefore when we find similar groups of gods in the magical papyri, some hundreds of years later, we may be looking at survivals of old time religion, not degenerate novelties. [I shall return to this point in my conclusion.] Thebes, by the way, was the site of the most important discoveries of magical papyri.

One difficulty in the way of recognizing such survivals is that many themes characteristic of the cult of Yahweh in the OT and the works derived from it turn out to have been characteristic also of the cults of other gods. They, too, were "living gods," "creators of heaven and earth," "creators of all living things," even of the other gods, consequently "gods of gods" and "lords of the spirits," as well as "rulers of heaven and earth and of the things under the earth." They had "set in order the stars," ruled the sun, moon, winds, and sea, caused vegetation to arise, and created all animals and man. They also had "great names" and, like Yahweh, were much concerned about their own glory. One of the best ways to secure their favor ("grace")

any number of times, and it was not always clear to us exactly what he meant. Smith himself remarks in the essay that his math may have been faulty. In several places we were able to correct Smith's math; we also have tightened up the essay throughout and have reorganized it. All of our corrections and additions are in brackets. This essay clearly needs a good deal more polishing but we have not felt authorized to tamper with it any more than we have already done. Still, even as it stands, the essay makes an important contribution to the study of the magical papyri, a point that was impressed on us by Prof. Hans Dieter Betz, to whom we are indebted for sending us a copy of Smith's typescript. Since the version printed here differs extensively from the original published in the Seminar Papers, we have not indicated the page numbers of the original. – SJDC]

<sup>1</sup> See M. Smith, "Jewish Religious Life in the Persian Period," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, edd. W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, Cambridge, 1984, esp. p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> See C. Nims and R. Steiner, "A Paganized Version of Ps. 20.2-6," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 261-74, with the corrections in "You Can't Offer Your Sacrifice and Eat it Too," *JNES* 43 (1984) 89-113; and cp. S. Vleeming and J. Wesselius, "An Aramaic Hymn," *Bib. Or.* 39 (1982) 501-10, who independently studied the same text and reached results substantially similar. My question marks indicate differences of opinion. Only Nims and Steiner traced the manuscript to the Theban burial and made the connection with Edfu.

was to proclaim that you had declared or would declare their names.<sup>3</sup> And so on. Consequently when such attributes are given to pagan gods in spells of which nothing else seems to be Jewish, we should probably suppose them part of an international theological language which expressed what I long ago called “the common theology of the ancient near east”—a description that has been widely accepted.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, although such attributes cannot confidently be taken as signs of Jewish influence in pagan spells, or of pagan influence in Jewish, they *may* sometimes be the one, sometimes the other. Even attributes that seem more specific are sometimes misleading; we have a spell addressed to the god Menophris “who sitteth upon the cherubim” (*GMPT* VII.628-43).<sup>5</sup> Had the name been lost, an editor would surely have restored “Iao Sabaoth.” Traits that seem references to events of biblical stories are more likely to indicate OT influence, but even these are not always reliable. Dionysus led his followers through the wilderness and made springs flow in the desert; historians reported that, thanks to a wind, the sea went back and enabled Alexander and his army to cross.<sup>6</sup> Pious pagans surely thought that the wind was sent by one of their gods. If we knew more pagan history and mythology we might know that more traits need not be Jewish.

What is true of attributes and seemingly historical references is even truer of names. “Yahweh” having become “Iao” in Greek, it was ideal for inclusion in the long lists of vowel combinations with which ancient magicians called on their gods. If the seven Greek vowels were to be combined in groups of three, as they often were, IAO had to turn up in the list. “Ia” (=“Yah”) seems to have been a common Greek representation of a cry (cf. *iazein*) and “Io” was a cry particularly common in Greek religion. Hence we should expect IAO to turn up almost everywhere and, especially in lists of vowels or isolated cries, to be normally without specific theological reference. The Amherst papyrus has shown us Adonai, as well as Iao, setting out on its own, as a holy name, in the second century BC. The lead curse tablets of Greece show that the magicians there, in the first or second century AD, were trying to reinforce their appeals to the old local gods by the use of “Hebrew conjurations” and “the holy names.”<sup>7</sup> Sabaoth, too,

<sup>3</sup> In *GMPT* (*The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, ed. H. D. Betz, Chicago, 1986; cited by papyrus number – Roman – and lines) see VII.690ff.; VIII.1-63; XIII.636ff.; XIV.135ff., 195ff.; XXXVI.165f.

<sup>4</sup> M. Smith, “The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East” (chapter 2 in this collection).

<sup>5</sup> The cherubim probably came to Egypt, as they did to Israel and to all the Phoenician coast, from Assyria, and were early standardized as supporters of royal throne seats, so there is no need to suppose Israelite influence here.

<sup>6</sup> Plutarch, *Vita Alexandri* 17.3ff.; Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.26.1f. [and Josephus, *Ant.* 2.347f.]

<sup>7</sup> R. Wünsch, *Antike Fluchtafeln*, 2 ed., Bonn, 1912 (*KT* 20), #1.

became very popular; so did Abraham, Jacob, Michael, and, to a lesser extent, El and Gabriel. All seem to have become elements of a transcultural magical lingo; we find one here, one there, in wholly pagan material where they seem to serve only as “words of power”—a use long recognized and too long made an excuse to deny their reference, in many other passages, to the OT god, his angels, and his favorites. Similar transcultural diffusion evidently extended the use of a number of non-biblical locutions, called “*voces*,” commonly associated, in magical texts, with OT material. I shall take as examples Ablanathanalba, Abrasax, Akrammachammari, Arba(th)-iao/i(a)oth, Semesilam, and Sesengen bar Pharanges: the list could easily be extended. These are less troublesome because their connection with Jewish material is less readily recognized by dilettanti, hence “discoveries” of Jewish influence are less often based on them, though they sometimes do indicate it.

So much for the prolegomena; now for the texts:

I shall limit these remarks mainly to material in the new Chicago corpus, *Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (ed. H. D. Betz, University of Chicago Press, 1986, henceforth *GMPT*), and, of that material, to texts in Greek or Demotic, written on papyrus, and not apparently Christian. These limitations exclude much relevant data, but leave a body homogeneous in some important respects and larger than we can now itemize—well over 100 texts.<sup>8</sup> This is not the whole body of the evidence, not even within the limitations I have set; the evidence keeps growing almost from day to day.<sup>9</sup> By comparison with what has formerly been available, however, it seems to me sufficient to justify reconsideration.

Since many of the texts are collections of rites or spells often quite diverse, reconsideration must be based on the individual sections, not on the collections as such. *Almost* none of the compilers of the

<sup>8</sup> The 81 numbers of Preisendanz *Papyri Graecae Magicae*<sup>2</sup> (henceforth *PGM*<sup>2</sup>) included some 102 texts. Of these texts *GMPT* has omitted 17 [??] as not magical or not comprehensible, but has retained, for those remaining, the original numeration. To the original 81 numbers it has added 49 numbers, for a total of 130, and to these one supplementary text, the Demotic P. Louvre E 3229. The added numbers stand for one text each, except for two numbers, each standing for six texts. Thus the total of the texts in *GMPT* (102-17+49+1+10) is 145. Of these 145 I have left [16] out of consideration as Coptic, Christian, not magical, not legible, or not on papyrus, viz., nos. XXVc, XXVIIIc [does Smith mean XXIX?], XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXVII, XLVII, XLVIII, LXXII [?], LXXXII, LXXXIII, LXXXV, XCIII, XCIX, C, CXXVIII, CXXIX. Of the remaining [129], a few are so badly preserved as to be of little use, but those which are useful number well over 100.

<sup>9</sup> Twenty-eight more texts, of which most will soon be published, are to be listed in the forthcoming article by W. Brashear in *ANRW* [“Die Zauberpapyri aus Ägypten,” to appear in *ANRW* II.18.5]. By the time those are out there will be yet more unpublished, some, probably, from new excavations, but others, almost certainly, from reexcavation of old collections of which the editors have hitherto passed over magical material.

collections seem to have done any considerable editing of the rites collected.<sup>10</sup> We find nothing comparable to the rewriting that prevails in the gospels. Because these collectors wanted their spells to work, they were more concerned about accuracy than were the evangelists, and took fewer liberties with the sacred texts that had come down to them. Or, perhaps, they were just lazy. If so, their laziness was our good luck. We can hear each prayer and rubric speak for itself, and the breaks between items are usually clear.<sup>11</sup> This makes possible a count of the items. In the texts selected<sup>12</sup> I have counted 560.<sup>13</sup>

Here I must emphasize that this, and most figures hereinafter, should be taken as approximate. This is a report on research I am now beginning. For this report I have gone over *once* in Greek and, for the Demotic material, in English, all the texts in *GMPT*, analyzing them and making notes as I went. Those notes have not been checked, and the following figures are unchecked transcriptions from them. I suppose that careful checking will turn up some mistakes in analyses, transcriptions, and arithmetic. I also suppose that such mistakes will not be of much importance for the major results now to be discussed. For example, I discover on rereading that in my 560 sections, I found 378 that contained nothing Jewish. This should leave 182 with Jewish elements. However, the numbers I give for [the sections containing Jewish material] add up to [200]. Evidently, I changed my mind (or made mistakes in counting) a dozen times. I will not go over all the instances to discover the errors.

In reviewing I divided the 560 sections into seven classes, according to what they showed of the seemingly OT and related material, including the *voces* listed above. The classes are:

- I. Those without any Jewish element—[approximately] 378 items.
- II. Those with nothing Jewish but the name IAO—19 items.
- III. Those with magical *voces* (Abraxas, etc.) commonly thought to be of Jewish origin, either with or without IAO—23 items.
- IV. Those with OT divine names (e.g. Sabaoth, Adonai, Eloë/im) or well-attested angel names (Michael, Gabriel, Raphael) or names of OT personalities (the patriarchs, Moses, David, Solomon, etc.) used as words of power or prestige, without indication of their OT contexts—71 items.

<sup>10</sup> For the outstanding exception, *GMPT* XIII, see M. Smith, "The Eighth Book of Moses and How It Grew" (chapter 37 in this collection).

<sup>11</sup> The uncertain instances are mostly due to damage to the papyri.

<sup>12</sup> I.e., those in *GMPT*, minus those listed in n. 8 as omitted.

<sup>13</sup> My count of the items differs occasionally from that of *GMPT*, mainly because that does not treat as separate the short spells that are often tacked on to the ends of long ones. I doubt that the differences would alter the count by as much as 5%.

- V. Those showing a number of the preceding, especially if put together in the biblical way or with evident knowledge of a biblical or parabiblical context—[50 items].
- VI. Those pagan texts in which isolated bits of OT or cognate material seem to be glosses or interpolations—33 items.
- VII. Those Judaized by modern (editorial) restorations—4 items.

[I shall now briefly discuss each of these seven classes.]

[Class I.] The most important result of the review is that the great majority of the items—378 out of 560—contain *no* OT or Jewish elements. I conclude that the magic of the papyri did not come, in the main, from any Judaism of any sort known to us. Some is purely Greek, some purely Egyptian; my impression is that most combines Greek and Egyptian elements.

[Class] II. Much to my surprise, occurrence of IAO as the *only* OT element in a spell is rare. I noted only 19 passages.<sup>14</sup> This may indicate my carelessness; the little word is easy to overlook. But even if I missed a third of the isolated occurrences, the number would still be low. It would seem that, although IAO appears very often—no other divine name in the papyri approaches it in frequency—it usually is accompanied by one or more of the OT names or *voces*. This tends to discredit the common belief that it was *usually* a mere word of power or collection of vowels, without any thought of its OT reference.

[Class] III. The *voces* also rarely appear alone. I found 23 instances, mostly of Abrasax or (less often) of Ablanathanalba as the effective word of an amulet or short charm. Also, they are often found with nothing biblical save IAO; the few such instances are included in the 23.<sup>15</sup>

[Class] IV. This catch-all class has 71 examples—a little surprising, since it included so many words. I expected more, and should not have been surprised to find forty or fifty uses of Sabaoth alone. Perhaps I had noticed OT elements more than pagan ones because of their relation to material I knew. If so, then, conversely, most Egyptians would probably have found them comparatively inconspicuous, and may have perpetuated them habitually, as they did *Ereschigal*, with only the vaguest notion of what they stood for. It must be remembered that all the uses reviewed to this point, of OT and related terms, *might*

<sup>14</sup> To wit: III.575-90; IV.154-285, 1872-1972, 3209-54; V.1-53, 172-212; VI.1-29; VII.300a-310, 374-6, 579-90, 703-26; X.24-35; XII.99-103, 107-21, 153-60, 160-78, 182-89; *PDM* XII.76-107 (*PDM* prefixed to numerals indicates Demotic texts, which sometimes occur in the same papyrus as Greek ones, and therefore have the same numbers, but different line numeration; all are included in *GMPT*); *PDM* XIV.563-74.

<sup>15</sup> These are: I.1-42; III.424-41, 690-730; IV.1323-30; V.440-45; *PDM* XIV.695-700, 1163-79; XVIIa; XVIIc; XVIII; XXXVI.102-33, 134-60, 231-35; LVIII; LXVIII; LXIX; LXXI; LXXXIX; XCI; XCIV #2, #8; CXVI; CXXIII.55-9.

be explained by the words-of-power theory, since these words have usually stood alone or almost so, with little or no indication of any knowledge of what they meant. The fact that IAO and the *vores* usually appeared in the company of other OT related terms does argue against this theory, as remarked above, but the argument is not conclusive, because many words are perceived as members of groups, so that, if one appears, the others are likely to follow, and this sort of group association can precede accurate knowledge of what the individual terms mean—as will be clear to anyone familiar with the profanity of kindergarten children. In magical, as in many other, religious texts we are dealing with forms of mentality not remote from the kindergarten, so we turn with interest to the passages on which any further account of Jewish influence must be built, those in which the words appear in contexts indicating the larger groups to which they belonged and the writers' notions of their significance.

[Class] V. Of this class there are 50 examples.<sup>16</sup> They are of two types, which may be called “liturgical” and “indicant.” The “liturgical” [with 31 examples]<sup>17</sup> are the invocations, self-predications, conjurations, and the like, in which the magician calls on a series of biblical and parabiblical beings. We can thence discern that he knows of them; sometimes we can make out a bit more, but these spells were not intended to inform us and often they give only a list of names. Nevertheless, they suffice to show us that these magicians knew little about Jewish demonology and less about Hebrew. We find in them Iao, Adonai, Sabaoth, Eloai (*ai* was pronounced as *e*), “I am what I am” (which the LXX rendered “I am the being”), “the being God” (reflecting the LXX rendition), Abraam, Isak, Iakob, Enoch, Solomon, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Ouriel, Israel (usually *Istrael*, and [usually] an angel), Emmanuel (also an angel), the cherubim, an occasional phrase—*barouch Adonai Eloai Abraam*. These practically exhaust the biblical and parabiblical terms.<sup>18</sup> We also find amazing mistakes. The Hebrew *beshem* (“in the name of” somebody) has become an angel *Basym* (IV.1376 and often); the patriarchs are usually angels too; the name of God in Hebrew is said to be Ablanathanalba (V.475), and “the true God, Iao, Lord, Pantokrator” and Ablanathanalba are addressed as one person (LXX).<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere Iao is said to be “one of

<sup>16</sup> [Corrected from 52. 31 + 21 - 2 duplicates = 50.]

<sup>17</sup> Viz.: III.262, 441-65; IV.1331-89, 1496-1595, 1716-1870; V.53-69, 459-89; VII.218-21, 311-16, 619-27, 973-80, 1009-16, 1017-26; X.1-18; XIc; XII.261-70, 270-350; XIII.760-932; PDM XIV.239-95; XIXa; XXIIa; XXIIb.1-26; XXVIIIa and b; XXXVI.35-68, 171-7; XLIII; LXXI; XC.1-13; CI, CVI. Two of these references will recur in the list of “indicant” passages; one section may share both traits.

<sup>18</sup> XII.264 got a Jewish title of God right.

<sup>19</sup> The author of III.119 seems to have thought that the *abramenthooü* logos was Hebrew.

the holy assistants of the great God"; and he, Sabaoth, Adonai, Ablanathanalba, etc. are adjured "by the great name *Abraam*" (VII.314). There is no sense of a distinction between biblical names and magical ones; in the thirty-one passages cited, many of them sizable, there are not more than half a dozen short strings of biblical terms *not* interrupted by *voces*. I say nothing of mistakes of spelling (sometimes grotesque) –there is no telling how many are due to copyists.

Nevertheless, knowledge of Hebrew was surely behind this stuff, though far behind. Even the misunderstanding of *beshem* implies knowledge, at some time, of Hebrew spells in which spirits were commanded "in the name" of some power. Those spells presumably went out of usage some time before the composition of the ones we have, and the ones we have were composed and circulated before they were collected in handbooks (these handbooks being collections of diverse texts, not compositions by single authors) And who knows how long the handbooks were handed down before the making of the copies we have? Shall we say that the Hebrew background was probably more than a century prior to the preserved manuscripts?

The "liturgical" passages are mostly mere lists of names that tell us nothing of their own sources and little of what their authors thought about the deities they called on. Many differ from class IV passages only by the number of beings invoked. So many texts were on the margin between classes IV and V, judgments were often difficult, and some will probably be found mistaken. However, the principle of differentiation is clear, and there is another group of class V passages that has a yet clearer distinction, the group of those that, beside names and magical directions, contain some additional material. I have therefore called these texts "indicant" [with 21 examples].<sup>20</sup> (Two of these also contain "liturgical" passages, and thus appear in both lists.)

In these, Jewish influence is clear. The questions are, What kind of influence, and how and when exercised? Let us begin with those that have or claim connections with the Temple.

IV.1217-1226: This petition is markedly different from the syncretistic material that precedes it. The notions of Yahweh's light appearing in the gold lamella worn by the High Priest (Exod 28:36ff.), and of the unquenchable light in the Holy Place, would have lost their force after 70. Nothing indicates a later date. The general (or generally supposed) utility of the text would explain its circulation as a separate item.

---

<sup>20</sup> Viz.: IV.1217-26, 3007-86; V.96-172; VII.260-71, 593-619; XII.92-5; XIII.1ff., 970-74, 975-78, 997-1001, 1001-58; *PDM* XIV.117-49, 1026-45, 1110-29; XXIIa.18-27 (cp. XXXV & XCII); XXIIb.1-26; XXXV; XXXVI.187-210, 295-311; LXII.19-24; XCII.

IV.3007-86: A pseudepigraphon. Pibechis is mere window dressing,<sup>21</sup> but the prescription and phylactery seem primitive. The conjuration is probably the work of a pagan who uses a Jewish text—carelessly. “The god of the Hebrews, Jesus” seems unlikely for either a Jew or a Christian, and the many historical mistakes also favor pagan authorship, though only slightly; the biblical ignorance of both Jews and Christians should not be underestimated. Again the unquenched fire in Jerusalem suggests a date prior to 70 for the text the pagan used. So does the description of Jesus, reflecting a pagan’s impression of Christianity in its first appearance, and so does the favorable attitude of an Egyptian toward Jews, unlikely after 115-17.

XIII.997-1001 (in a list of magical names): “And the great name, that in Jerusalem, by which they bring out water when there is none in a cistern (?): ‘ACHME IEEOE IEEO IARABBAO/YCHRABAOA, do the NN thing, unutterable name of great god.’”

LXII.19-24: Another brief conjuration dated by its reference to the unquenched fire. That seems to have been a much advertised “wonder,” so its extinction would have been a considerable embarrassment and would have discouraged reference to it after it had been so conspicuously discredited. This and the preceding references are due to the conservative attitude toward texts, common in magic.

From the Temple, let us now turn to biblical legend.

XXIIb.1-26, “The Prayer of Jacob”: another text that may be first century. It fits first century Judaism, and has no elements requiring a later date. Archangels had appeared in Daniel. The interpretation of seraphim as “serpentine gods” supposes knowledge of Hebrew—*seraphim* are serpents in Num 21:6f.—and of the equation of angels with “gods,” inferred from Psalms [82:1, 6]. God enthroned on Sinai [appeared] in Ezekiel *tragicus*, which also took up Exodus’ use of “Hebrews” for Jews. “The God of the Hebrews” is the deliverer in Exod 3:18; 5:8; 7:16; 9:1. Promise of the kingdom to Abraam<sup>22</sup> would have appealed to the Jews who began the revolt. Multiplication of angels with outlandish names appears in the pseudepigrapha; Josephus said it was a hobby of the Essenes [(BJ 2. 142)]. That the name “sabaoth” was still “secret” to Egyptian Jews ignorant of Hebrew, also suggests an early date; a century later it was becoming popular for amulets. The desire to become an angel on earth is one which the author of 4QM<sup>a</sup> claimed to have realized.<sup>23</sup> All of this makes *The Prayer of Jacob* a rarity, since *GMPT* contains no other purely Jewish texts larger than amulets and brief conjurations.

<sup>21</sup> A familiar device, like the story of the secrecy oath exacted in the Temple, XIII.233f.

<sup>22</sup> [Smith wrote “Moses.”]

<sup>23</sup> *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* VII, no. 491, on which see “Two Ascended into Heaven,” (chapter 25 in volume 2 of this collection).

V.96-172; XII.92-5; XIII.1ff.; 970-74; etc. These pretensions to “be” Moses and to have Mosaic books tell us only that Moses’ magical prestige survived the Jewish debacles. That the “mysteries” it is here used to recommend are identified in V.110 with those of Israel, suggests that the latter were not likely to be known by the expected readers.

V.115ff.;<sup>24</sup> XIII.970ff.; 975ff.; 997ff.; 1001-58: These absurd speculations about “the great name” carry similar suggestions, particularly when combined with a ritual in which the name is written in characters explained in part as the name of Ptah, and when these, to be used, must be rewritten on Apollo’s sacred laurel leaves and shown to the sun. The reworking of this solar spell to serve Iao goes with the interpolations to be considered in the next section.

VII.260-71; XIV.117-49; 1026-45; 1110-29; XXXVI.187-210; 295-311. Any of these brief prayers and conjurations may have come from a Jew, a Christian, or a pagan. All show a little knowledge of OT stories and/or related pseudepigrapha, being put to practical (magical) use. The best informed is XXXVI.295-311; its author could name (almost correctly) all five of the cities destroyed [by] Yahweh in the Sodom episode. Few modern biblical scholars could do as well. Perhaps he taught in a Jewish or Christian school, or was a closet reader of the OT. At all events he used his knowledge to conjure sulphur (one of the active elements in Yahweh’s [destruction of the cities]) by Iao, Sabaoth, Arbathiao, Michael, Zouriel, Gabriel, Sesengen bar Pharanges, Istraël, Abraam, and associates, to resume its former role and make a young lady come to him to participate in the “mystery of Aphrodite.” The others used inferior information for purposes sometimes better.

Even less demonstrative are the texts which show development of an angelic hierarchy, mostly by asking for the good qualities of the angels (one of the requests is addressed to Kypris, i.e. Aphrodite), but once by listing gods and angels whom the magician says his girl friend has slandered—he hoped they would punish her by making her desire him; a truly modest man (VII.593-619; XXIIa; XXXV; XCII). Significantly, the lists of gods, angels, and qualities change in each instance.

In sum, apart from *The Prayer of Jacob* and perhaps a few minor texts, we cannot speak of any unquestionably Jewish magical compositions in *GMPT*, although [several] texts in the collection

---

<sup>24</sup> In V.115ff. the *GMPT* translation is mistaken. Read (with Preisendanz) “I am the messenger of Pharaoh O...This, which had been transmitted...is your true name (Hear me!), Abathiao” etc.

contain elements derived from the OT, and many may have been written by Jews—whatever Jews then were.

[Class VI.] The paradoxical situation is complicated by the fact that many texts of *GMPT* were interpolated in antiquity by persons who added words, sentences, or entire passages, occasionally even changing the outlines and declared purposes of elaborate rites (as they did in the Mithras liturgy and in PGM XIII). Many of the interpolations added what we have been calling “Jewish material.” Since we have no time for a full account I shall merely list some passages in which I have noticed interpolation of Jewish material. Closer study would probably reveal more, and might reveal that a few of those listed are not, in fact, interpolated. Consequently I hope for further study and present this preliminary list to encourage it.

No.	Date of papyrus	Literary Unit	Interpolated lines	Content of interpolation
1	c. 400	I.42-148	105-106	“but as for pork...at all!”
2		.263-347	300-314	“First angel...heart and soul.”
3	300-350	III.1-164	76-80	“for I conjure you,” etc.
4		.1-164	145-161	“I am Adam...the whole inhabited world”
5		.187-262	211-229	“I call...when it hears.”
6		.549-75	572-575	“From the right of the axis...OA OAI.”
7	300-350	IV.930-1114	980-983	“and am now going to speak....INAX”
8		.1035-1045	1035, 1040, 1045	IAO, AOI, etc.
9		.1390-1495	1485-1486	“IAO SABAOOTH and ADONAI”
10		.2708-2784	2768-2771	“and MICHAEL,” and “ADONAI”
11	c. 350	V.1-52	22-30	“IAE IAO....the pronunciation.”
12	c. 350	VII.222-249	236	ARBATHIAO
13		.255-259	257	“and my lord, the archangel Michael.”
14		.540-578	565	IAO ELOAI
15		.643-651	646-649	“the guts of IAO.... ADONAI ABRASAX”
16		.756-794	759-760	“except him who made..., IAO”

No.	Date of papyrus	Literary Unit	Interpolated lines	Content of interpolation
17	c. 400	VIII.1-63	46-49	"and the second name... ABRASAX."
18		.1-63	60-61	"write also...IAO SABAOTH," etc.
19		.64-110	96	"IAEO SABAOTH ADONAI ZABARBATHIAO"
20		.64-110	102-103	"SABAOTH ADONAI IE IE IE IE"
21	c. 400	IX.1-14	6-7	"for you have put...SABAOTH."
22		.1-14	8	ABRASAX
23		.1-14	14	"Say this name," etc.
24	300-350	XII.14-95	54-55	"You are ATEPHTHO... ADONAI"
25		.14-95	63	"on order from the most high god," etc.
26		.14-95	74	"IAON (sic) SABAOTH...IARABBAI"
27		.14-95	92-94	"ADONEAI. I am he whom you met," etc.
28	200-250	XIV ( <i>PDM</i> ) .585-593	592	"listen O IAHO SABAHO," etc.
29		.1031		"the longing the god, the son of Sirius, felt for Moses"
30	350	XXXVI .333-360	349-351	IAO SABOATH... SEMESILAM"
31	120-150	LXII.1-24	12-16	"I will go inside...created from them."
32		.1-24	19-22	"I adjure you by the great god...ADONE"
33	250	LXXVIII .1-14	13-14	"Name of the all-[powerful] god: IAO IAO IAO."

Classification [of interpolations] (T = Terminal, i.e. appended to spell or unit in a spell.)

Brief glosses: 1(T), 6(T), 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20(T), 22(T), 23(T), 33(T)

Extended invocation: 2, 5 (these had a common source)

Lists of Jewish names/voes in conjuration: 3, 4, 9(T), 15, 18, 19, 25(T), 28 (T), 30(T)

Reminiscences of biblical stories *vel. sim.*: 4, 27(T) (common source?), 29, 31

Conjuration by Iao/Adonai with attributes/vowels: 8 (ter, 1T), 11, 32(T)

These interpolations are only the Jewish ones. There are many pagan ones (e.g. IV.2242-2347; XIII.618-639), a few certainly Christian

(e.g. XIII.289-292), and more of dubious origin. However, the Jewish interpolations seem most frequent.

What have I considered evidence of interpolation? Interruption of the grammatical or intellectual structure of a passage; [appendage] of irrelevant material, or material contradicting or correcting the sense of a passage or of some of its details; elements that look like inserted footnotes; and so on. Admittedly, none of these criteria is singly decisive, but one may suffice for suspicion, and several, taken together, approach proof.

I was particularly suspicious of Jewish material that appeared suddenly or [inexplicably] in pagan texts that contained nothing else Jewish except, perhaps, an isolated IAO in a string of *vores*. Adonai and Sabao/th, when isolated, like IAO have little evidential value as signs of Judaism. Already in the Demotic-Aramaic psalm we see Adonai setting out on its own. Sabao should probably be studied in connection with the problem of the SABBA phoneme that appears in Sabazios, Sabbath, Sambathe, etc.

Even Moses is not always reliable. His name became prestigious, like those of Orpheus and Zoroaster, and all sorts of stuff was sheltered under it. The process began already in the books now biblical, e.g. Ps 90, "The Prayer of Moses, the Man of God." So it is not surprising that PGM XIII, which presents three texts of "The Eighth Book of Moses" and refers to half a dozen "Mosaic" works, contains nothing similar to the pentateuchal texts.

[Class VII.] I have noticed four passages in which Jewish material appears only thanks to the conjecture of modern editors.<sup>25</sup>

### *Conclusion*

I shall now comment briefly on the whole body of material I have been calling "Jewish." First: None of it comes from the literature or liturgy of rabbinic Judaism, not even when that is most congenial to the content. *Yithgaddal weyithqaddash shemeh rabbah* ("Magnified and sanctified be his great name") would fit perfectly into magical thought, but unless I have overlooked it, its exact equivalent does not appear in PGM. Nor does any of the other conspicuous elements of synagogal prayer, so far as I have noticed. And prayer by blessing, so conspicuous in the synagogue, is extremely rare.

Second: Even material from the Pseudepigrapha is almost nil. There are a few references to OT persons in situations unknown to the OT—some of them indiscreet. We hear, for instance, of "the longing that the god, the son of Sirius, felt for Moses when he (Moses) was going up the hill of Ninaretos to offer water to his god, his lord, his IAHO

---

<sup>25</sup> Viz.: VII.1005-9; XIV.304; LVII part 2; LXVII.

Sabaho, his....Muse" (PDM XIV.1031f.). But these interesting details seem to come, not from the known "pseudepigrapha," but from a body of legend otherwise unattested.

Third: Thus, when I looked for "Jewish" elements I found almost exclusively OT elements, but even these were often distorted and developed by memory or imagination or both, and often in ways unparalleled, so far as I know.

[Whence comes this material?] From Christians? If so, why are there no references to Jesus and [other New Testament figures]? From Samaritans? Some [material] perhaps. But it would seem unlikely to attribute to Samaritans exclusively *all* this sort of material in so many different papyri. From "the gnostics"? "The gnostics" are a common junk heap, onto which anything otherwise unassignable is thrown. In fact there was no such thing as "the gnostic church." There were a lot of small sects, with little in common. A few of them called themselves "gnostics," many of the others were called so by their fellow Christians for no reason better than normal Christian sectarian hostility. Consequently reference to "the gnostics" is worthless. One must refer to one or another particular sect, and those sects of which we know enough to make a reference meaningful gave such importance to Jesus that the rarity of references to him in the papyri makes their authorship as unlikely as that of "orthodox" Christians.

All things considered, I think it most likely that the bulk of this material comes from pagan magicians who were trying to strengthen their spells by calling on the famous Jewish god and his supernatural associates, and occasionally referring to stories about his cult and his people.

Such stories had been circulating in Egypt, and the cult of Yahweh had been living there, since Assyrian times at least. With the Assyrians came—reportedly—the Jewish garrison whose descendants lived at Elephantine and served the Persians. From their documents and related finds we can see that there were other Jewish settlements in the land, and from their time on we can trace a succession of names and documents testifying to the continuance of the cult of Yahweh in the country. In the time of the Elephantine garrison, this cult was neither monotheistic—other gods were also worshiped—nor biblical—no biblical texts were found in the remains—nor subordinate to Jerusalem. But it did have connections with the Persian governors of Samaria, who were themselves Samaritans, and either from them or from Jerusalem the Pentateuch probably made its way into the Egyptian cult in at least the succeeding century. However, to judge from the scraps of information that we have, the worship of other gods along with Yahweh continued. When masses of Palestinian immigrants arrived, many of them unwillingly, in Ptolemaic times, the conflict

between syncretists and adherents of the worship of Yahweh alone will have been imported with them, and the syncretists may have found important allies in the long established Judeo-Egyptian cult, a form of lower-class “native” worship sharply distinct from the aristocratic hellenized Judaism of Philo and [of] the Jewish poets and historians whose works were collected by Alexander Polyhistor. From this native syncretistic cult [pagan] magicians drew their knowledge of and references to IAO and his associates, not from the Septuagintal circles, with their upper class adherents. Evidence of this is the fact that the LXX never uses IAO. Further evidence is the continuance of this off track, quasi Old Testament material in those papyri whose roots lie in the second and third centuries A.D., a time when Jews had been almost wholly driven out of Egypt.<sup>26</sup> [The Greek magical papyri are also marked by] the total absence of Palestinian and Rabbinic liturgical traits. What we find there instead are the traces of the old native Judeo-Egyptian syncretistic cult of Yaho/Iao.

---

<sup>26</sup> [On the destruction of Egyptian Jewry in the war of 115-117, and] the near total absence of Jews between 118 and 337, attested by the papyri, see V. Tcherikover, *CPJ*, I, pp. 92-98; III, p. 3.

## WRITINGS OF MORTON SMITH

Note: This bibliography was compiled from various sources: Morton Smith's own curriculum vitae and publication files; "A Bibliography of the Writings of Morton Smith to December 31, 1973" by A. Thomas Kraabel, in *Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975) 4.190-200; and various bibliographical data bases. I am grateful to Prof. Kraabel for permission to use his work, and to my student assistants William K. Gilders, Andrew Jacobs, and Mitchell Verter for their help. Papers reprinted in this collection are marked with an \*.

### *Abbreviations:*

AC	Antiquité classique
ACR	American Classical Review
AHR	American Historical Review
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJP	American Journal of Philology
ATR	Anglican Theological Review
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BO	Bibliotheca Orientalis
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CNI	Christian News from Israel
CR	Classical Review
CS	Cahiers sioniens
CW	Classical World
EB	Estudios Bíblicos
EI	Eretz-Israel
GOTR	Greek Orthodox Theological Review
GR	Greece and Rome
GRBS	Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies [originally Greek and Byzantine Studies]
HLB	Harvard Library Bulletin
HR	History of Religions
HT	History and Theory
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JBR	Journal of Bible and Religion

JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JPC	Journal of Pastoral Care
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JRT	Journal of Religious Thought
NTS	New Testament Studies
OLZ	Orientalische Literaturzeitung
PAAJR	Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research
RB	Revue Biblique
RHE	Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions
RIL	Religion in Life
RSPT	Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques
RSR	Religious Studies Review
SOTSBL	Society for Old Testament Study Book List
STK	Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift
TLS	Times (London) Literary Supplement
TLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
TR	Theologische Revue
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZfK	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

### 1945

1. Notes on Goodspeed's *Problems of New Testament Translation*, JBL 64, 501-514.
2. *Maqbilot ben habbesorot lesifrut hattanna'im*, Jerusalem (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University) (degree awarded 1948). See no. 4.

### 1949

3. *Psychiatric Practice and Christian Dogma*, JPC 3, 12-20.

### 1951

4. *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels* (JBL Monograph Series, VI), pp. xii + 215. (a revision and English translation of no. 2).

Reviews: J. A., *Studios Ecclesiasticos* (July 1952); E. P. Arbez, CBQ 14 (1952) 191-94; P. Benoit, RB 59 (1952) 120-22; L. Cerfaux, RHE 48 (1953) 990-91; S. S. Cohon, JBL 72 (1953) 64-66; M. Goldstein, JBR 19 (1951) 223; J. Jeremias, TLZ 78 (1953) 222; H. Ljungman, STK 28 (1952) 62-64; C. van Puyvelde, *Recherches de théologie ancienne et medievale* (Louvain) 20 (1953) 155-56; O. S.

R[ankin], SOTSBL (1952); J. M. G. Ruiz, EB 11 (1952) 346; R. Schnackenburg, TR 49 (1953) 149-50; C. Spicq, RSPT 37 (1953) 142-43; G. Vermes, CS 9 (1955) 102-4; P. Vielhauer, ZfK 64 (1952/3) 191; P. R. Weis, AC 21 (1952) 239-40; S. Zeitlin, JQR 43 (1952-53) 196-99.

5. The So-Called "Biography of David" in the Books of Samuel and Kings, HTR 44, 167-169.

### 1952

6. Catalogue of microfilmed selections from Greek manuscripts of the tenth to nineteenth centuries found mainly in monastic libraries (deposited in the Brown University Library, Providence).
- \*7. The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East, JBL 71, 135-147.
8. Mt. 5:43: "Hate Thine Enemy," HTR 45, 71-73.

### 1953

9. Minor Collections of Manuscripts in Greece, JBL 72, xii (= Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1952).
10. rev. W. D. Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come* (1952): JBL 72, 192-194.
11. rev. V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (1952): JRT 11, 64f.

### 1954

12. The Manuscript Tradition of Isidore of Pelusium, HTR 47, 205-210.
13. rev. E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, I-III* (1953): ATR 36, 218-220.

### 1955

14. Comments on Taylor's Commentary on Mark, HTR 48, 21-64.
15. The Religious History of Classical Antiquity, JRT 12, 90-99.
16. rev. E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, IV* (1954): ATR 37, 81-84.

### 1956

- \*17. Palestinian Judaism in the First Century, in M. Davis (ed.), *Israel: Its Role in Civilization* (New York: Harper and Brothers), 67-81.
18. The Jewish Elements in the Gospels, JBR 24, 90-96.
19. Symmeikta: Notes on Collections of Manuscripts in Greece, *Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon* 26, 380-393.

20. rev. S. Lieberman, *The Tosefta, according to the Codex Vienna, I* (1955) and *Tosefta ki-fshutah, I-II* (1955): JBL 75, 243-245.

### 1957

21. *Judaism in Palestine I: To the Maccabean Revolt*, Cambridge, MA (Th.D. dissertation, Harvard Divinity School).
22. Pauline Problems, Apropos of J. Munck, *Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte*, HTR 50, 107-131.
23. rev. W. R. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus* (1956): ATR 39, 259-261.
24. rev. E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, V-VI* (1956): ATR 39, 261-264.
25. rev. C. H. Kraeling, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report VIII, Part I, The Synagogue* (1956): JBL 76, 324-327.
26. rev. H.-J. Schoeps, *Urgemeinde, Judenchristentum, Gnosis* (1956): ATR 39, 179-181.

### 1958

27. *Manuscript Material from the Monastery of Mar Saba, discovered, transcribed and translated by Morton Smith*, New York: privately published, pp. i + 10. (See nos. 146 and 147.)
28. An Unpublished Life of St. Isidore of Pelusium, edited from Manuscripts in Athens and Mt. Athos, in G. Konidaris (ed.), *Eucharisterion* (Hamilcar Alivisatos Festschrift), 429-438.
29. Aramaic Studies and the Study of the New Testament, JBR 26, 304-313.
30. The Description of the Essenes in Josephus and the Philosphumena, HUCA 29, 273-313.
31. Hebrew – Why Not Greek?, *The Orthodox Observer* (= *Ho Orthodoxos Parateretes*) 24, 197f.
- \*32. The Image of God: Notes on the Hellenization of Judaism, with Especial Reference to Goodenough's Work on Jewish Symbols, BJRL 40, 473-512.
33. Toward Uncovering Original Texts in the Zadokite Documents, by R. A. Soloff, NTS 4, 62-67.  
[This article develops a suggestion by Morton Smith.]
34. rev. K. Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (1957): ATR 40, 323-326.

## 1959

35. A Byzantine Panegyric Collection, with an Unknown Homily for the Annunciation, GRBS 2, 137-155.
36. Further Notes on "A Jewish-Gnostic Amulet of the Roman Period" [by E. R. Goodenough], GRBS 2, 79-81.
37. "God's Begetting the Messiah" in 1QSa, NTS 5, 218-224.
38. Greek Monasteries and their Manuscripts, AJA 63, 190f. (resume of no. 44)
39. On the New Inscription from Serra Orlando, AJA 63, 183f.
- \*40. What is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures?, JBL 78, 66-72.
41. rev. C. Rabin, *Qumran Studies* (1957): JNES 18, 282f.
42. rev. M. Simon, *St. Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church* (1958): RIL 28, 628f.

## 1960

43. *The Ancient Greeks*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, pp. xiv + 144.  
Reviews: (anonymous) GR 9 (March 1962) 95; H. D. Baldry, CR 76 (December 1962) 274; M. Chambers, AHR 66 (April 1961) 707-708; Van Ijzeren, Hermeneus (1961) 145; G. Van Hoorn, BO 22 (1965) 197; J. E. Rexine, CW 54 (December 1960) 95.
44. Monasteries and their Manuscripts, *Archaeology* 13, 172-177.
45. *Hellenika Cheirographa en tei Monei tou Hagiou Sabba, Nea Sion* 52, 110-125, 245-256.
46. New Fragments of Scholia on Sophocles' *Ajax*, GRBS 3, 40-42.
47. The Report about Peter in I Clement V.4, NTS 7, 86-88.
48. rev. Z. Ankori, *Karaites in Byzantium, the Formative Years, 970-1100* (1958): GOTR 6, 87f (= *The Orthodox Observer*, July, 1961, 220).
49. rev. W. Braude (trans.), *The Midrash on Psalms* (1959): RIL 29, 161.
50. rev. N. Lewis (ed.), *Samothrace I. The Ancient Literary Sources* (1958): AJA 64, 387f.
51. rev. C. B. Welles, R. O. Fink and J. F. Gilliam, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report V, Part I: The Parchments and Papyri* (1959): CW 53, 264.

**1961**

- \*52. The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism, NTS 7, 347-360.
53. rev. B. V. Bothmer, et al., *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period, 700 BC to AD 100* (1960): CW 54, 294.
54. rev. L. M. Positano, D. Holwerda and W. J. W. Koster (edd.), *Jo. Tzetzae Commentarii in Aristophanem, Pars IV, Fasc. I* (1960): CW 54, 158; *Fasc. II* (1960): CW 54, 189.
55. rev. J. A. Sint, *Pseudonymität im Altertum* (1960): JBL 80, 188f.
56. rev. G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition* (1960): JBL 80, 190f.
57. rev. G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (1961): JBL 80, 377-379.

**1962**

58. Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible IV*, 575-579.
59. Hebrew Studies within the Study of History, *Judaism* 11, 333-344.
60. The Religious Conflict in Central Europe, *GOTR* 8, 21-52.
61. rev. T. J. J. Altizer, *Oriental Mysticism and Biblical Eschatology* (1961): RIL 31, 650.
62. rev. G. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (1961): CW 55, 139.
63. rev. E. Nash, *A Pictorial History of Ancient Rome, I* (1961): CW 55, 144.
64. rev. R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (1961): ATR 44, 231-234.

**1963**

65. Observations on Hekalot Rabbati, in A. Altmann (ed.), *Biblical and Other Studies* (Philip Lown Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies, Brandeis University), 142-160.
66. A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition, *JBL* 82, 169-176 (review article on B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* [1961]).
- \*67. II Isaiah and the Persians, *JAOS* 83, 415-421.
68. rev. M. A. Beek, *Atlas of Mesopotamia* (1962): RIL 32, 484f.
69. rev. H. Bengtson, *Griechische Geschichte, zweite auflage* (1960): *AJP* 84, 103-106.

70. rev. W. Hartke, *Vier urchristliche Parteien und ihre Vereinigung zur apostolischen Kirche* (1961): JBL 82, 363.
71. rev. K. Kerényi, *Die Mysterien von Eleusis* (1962): CW 56, 137f.
72. rev. E. Nash, *A Pictorial History of Ancient Rome, II* (1962): CW 56, 141f.
73. rev. L. M. Positano, D. Holwerda and W. J. W. Koster (edd.), *Jo. Tzetzae Commentarii in Aristophanem, Pars IV, Fasc. III* (1962): CW 56, 182.
74. rev. D. Rounds, *Articles on Antiquity in Festschriften: The Ancient Near East, Old Testament, Greece, Rome, Roman Law, Byzantium* (1962): CW 56, 216.
75. rev. Upton C. Ewing, *The Prophet of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1963): GOTR 9, 320.

#### 1964

76. rev. R. Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike* (1962): CW 57, 378.

#### 1965

77. *Heroes and Gods: Spiritual Biographies in Antiquity* [in collaboration with Moses Hadas]. Religious Perspectives, XIII. New York: Harper and Row, pp. xiv + 266.  
Reviews: (anonymous), *Christian Century* (1 December 1965) 1484; (anonymous), *TLS* (2 December 1965) 1111; D. M. Brown, *Interpretation* 20 (October 1966) 476-477; L. Casteel, *Kirkus Service* (1 June 1965) 567; J. E. Nyenhuis, CW 60 (1966) 18; R. L. Perkins, *Library Journal* (1 September 1965) 3459.
78. Das Judentum in Palästina während der Perserzeit, in H. Bengtson (ed.), *Fischer Weltgeschichte, V: Griechen und Perser*, 356-370. (English trans., American edition: *Delacorte World History* [British edition: *Universal History*], V: *The Greeks and the Persians from the Sixth to the Fourth Centuries*, tr. J. Conway [1968]; translated also into French, Italian and Spanish).
79. Das Judentum in Palästina in der hellenistischen Zeit, in P. Grimal (ed.), *Fischer Weltgeschichte, VI: Der Hellenismus und der Aufstieg Roms*, 254-269. (English trans., American edition: *Delacorte World History* [British edition: *Universal History*], VI: *Hellenism and the Rise of Rome*, tr. A. M. Sheridan Smith and C. Wartenburg [1968]; translated also into French, Italian and Spanish).

- \*80. The Account of Simon Magus in Acts 8, in *H. A. Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 735-749.
81. Memorial Minute [for E. R. Goodenough], *Numen* 12, 233-235. (= no. 90).
82. rev. E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, IX-XI* (1964): CW 58, 13.
83. rev. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (1964): CW 58, 177.
84. rev. D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, 200 BC-AD 100* (1964): *Theology Today* 22, 132-134.
85. rev. H.-J. Schoeps, *Das Judenchristentum* (1964): JBL 84, 176-178.
86. rev. G. Scholem, *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala* (1962): CNI 16, 40-43.
87. rev. E. B. Thomas, *Römische Villen in Pannonien* (1964): CW 58, 22.
88. rev. Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Study* (1963): AHR 70, 121f.

### 1966

89. Religions in the Hellenistic Age, in J. Neusner (ed.), *Religions in Antiquity* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Comparative Studies Center), 158-173.
90. Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough (1893-1965), HR 5, 351f. (= no. 81).

### 1967

- \*91. The Reason for the Persecution of Paul and the Obscurity of Acts, in E. E. Urbach, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and C. Wirszubski (edd.), *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to G. G. Scholem on his Seventieth Birthday*, 261-268.
92. Jesus' Attitude Towards the Law, in *Papers of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies* [1965], I, 241-244.
- \*93. Goodenough's *Jewish Symbols* in Retrospect, JBL 86, 53-68.
- \*94. The Work of George Foot Moore, *Harvard Library Bulletin* 15, 169-179.
95. rev. B. Cohen, *Jewish and Roman Law, a Comparative Study* (1966): JBL 86, 238-241.
96. rev. A. Delatte and P. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes* (1964): AJA 71, 417-419.

97. rev. H. Mattingly, *Christianity in the Roman Empire* (1967): CW 61, 161.
98. rev. J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia, I* (1965): JAAR 35, 180-182.
99. rev. W. Peek (ed.), *Griechische Grabgedichte* (1960): Helikon 7, 619f.

### 1968

100. In Memoriam, and
- \*101. On the Shape of God and the Humanity of Gentiles, in J. Neusner (ed.), *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (Supplements to Numen, XIV), 1f., 315-326.
- \*102. Historical Method in the Study of Religion, *History and Theory*, Beiheft VIII, 8-16.
103. rev. E. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible: Jonah, Daniel, Koheleth, Esther* (1967): JAAR 36, 246f.
104. rev. S. Pines, *The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity According to a New Source* (1966): JAOS 88, 551.

### 1969

105. The Origin and Development of Cynicism, *Minutes of the Columbia University Seminar on the Nature of Man*, October 17, 1-12.
- \*106. The Present State of Old Testament Studies, JBL 88, 19-35.
107. rev. E. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible: Jonah, Daniel, Koheleth, Esther* (1967): ATR 51, 70.
108. rev. G. Buccellati, *Cities and Nations of Ancient Syria* (1967): AHR 74, 1253f.
109. rev. U. Kellermann, *Nehemia: Quellen, Uberlieferung und Geschichte* (1967): ATR 51, 68f.
110. rev. E. Yamauchi, *Mandaic Incantation Texts* (1967): AJA 73, 95-97

### 1970

111. Classification of Parallels, *Report of the Corpus Hellenisticum Colloquium*, (separately paginated) 1-4 (Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont, California)
112. rev. U. Bianchi (ed.), *Le origini dello gnosticismo. Colloquio di Messina 13-18 aprile 1966* (1967): JBL 89, 82-84.

- 113.** rev. A. B. Ehrlich, *Mikra Ki-Pheshuto: The Bible according to its Literal Meaning* (1969) [1899-1901]: CBQ 32, 115f.
- 114.** rev. W. S. McCullough, *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Bowls in the Royal Ontario Museum* (1967): AJA 74, 219f.
- 115.** rev. J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia III* (1968), IV (1969), V (1970): JBL 89, 491f.
- 116.** rev. O. Pettersson, *Mother Earth* (1967): CW 64, 25.
- 117.** rev. E. des Places, *La religion grecque* (1969): CW 64, 88f.

### 1971

- 118.** *Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament*, New York, Columbia University Press (Lectures on the History of Religions, sponsored by the A.C.L.S., New Series, IX), pp. viii + 348 (an extensively revised version of the 1957 Th. D. dissertation). Second edition: London: SCM Press, 1987. Italian trans.: P. Xella, *Gli Uomini del ritorno*, Eessdue Edizioni, 1984.
- Reviews: (anonymous), *Choice* (March 1972) 72; (anonymous), *Christian Century* (13 October 1971) 1213; G. W. Ahlström, *HR* 12 (1972-1973) 372-377; J. Barr, *SOTSBL* (1972) 44; J. Bright, *Biblica* 55 (1974) 96-98; G. W. Buchanan, *CBQ* 34 (1972) 246-48; A. Caquot, *RHR* 183 (April 1973) 194-196; F. Christ, *TZ* 30 (May-June 1974) 173-174; R. Coggins, *Theology* 91 (1988) 526-527; G. Fohrer, *ZAW* 84 (1972) 285-86; G. Garbini, *Oriens Antiquus* 26 (1987) 155-7; R. Gordis, *New York Times Book Review* (9 January 1972) 5; P. D. Hanson, *JAOS* 94 (1974) 278-79; D. Hillers, *JNES* 33 (1974) 264-65; A. T. Kraabel, *AHR* 77 (1972) 1418; J. L. McKenzie, *ATR* 54 (1972) 122-24; C. Mielgo, *Estudio Agustiniano* 23 (1988) 699-700; A. Pietersma, *JBL* 91 (1972) 550-52; I. W. Provan, *Expository Times* 99 (1987-1988) 340-341; L. Wächter, *TLZ* 100 (1975) 28-31; G. Wallis, *OLZ* 72 (1977) 270-273.
- 119.** Bickerman, Elias, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* IV, 978.
- 120.** Goodenough, Erwin, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* VII, 778f.
- 121.** Moore, George F., *Encyclopaedia Judaica* XII, 293f.
- \***122.** Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretologies, Divine Men, the Gospels and Jesus, *JBL* 90, 174-199.
- \***123.** Zealots and Sicarii, Their Origins and Relation, *HTR* 64, 1-19.
- 124.** Josephus and Judaism, in *Minutes of the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins*, Vol. 8, set 7 (May 13, 1971)
- 125.** rev. W. F. Jackson Knight, *Elysion: On Ancient Greek and Roman Beliefs concerning a Life after Death* (1970): *ACR* 1, 244f.
- 126.** rev. E. Lövestam, *Spiritus Blasphemia* (1968): *JBL* 90, 246f.
- 127.** rev. F. M. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity* (1970): *AHR* 76, 139f.

128. rev. J. Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (1970): *Theology Today* 28, 126-128
129. rev. L. Vidman, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionis Isiaca et Sarapiacae* (1969): *ACR* 1, 141
130. rev. R. L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (1971): *Judaism* 20, 370f.
131. rev. J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (1969): *AHR* 76, 489f.

## 1972

132. Classical Antiquity: Jews and Greeks, and
133. Classical Antiquity: Rome [both in collaboration with Elias Bickerman], J. A. Garraty and P. Gay (edd.), *The Columbia History of the World*, 136-189, 190-249. (See no. 172.)
134. Ezra, in J. Bergman, K. Drynjevff and H. Ringgren (edd.), *Ex Orbe Religio: Studia Geo. Widengren Oblata I*, 141-143.
135. Forms, Motives and Omissions in Mark's Account of the Teaching of Jesus, in J. Reumann (ed.), *Understanding the Sacred Text: Essays in Honor of Morton S. Enslin on the Hebrew Bible and Christian Beginnings*, ed. J. Reumann, 153-164.
- \*136. Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Literary Tradition, in *Pseudepigrapha I* (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique, XVIII), 191-215 + discussion 216-227.
137. rev. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans, (edd.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible, I: From the Beginnings to Jerome* (1970): *AHR* 77, 94-100.
138. rev. M. Gaster, *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Medieval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha and Samaritan Archaeology* (1971 [1928]): *JBL* 91, 130-132.
139. rev. T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament* (1969): *Biblica* 53, 583-586.
140. rev. R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *Études sur les dieux phéniciens hérités par l'empire romain* (1970): *JBL* 91, 585.
141. rev. S. Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes* (1970): *JBL* 91, 548-550.
142. rev. J. Neusner, *Development of a Legend: Studies on the Traditions concerning Yohanan ben Zakkai* (1970): *Conservative Judaism* 26, 76f.
143. rev. S. Pines, *An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum and Its Implications* (1971): *JBL* 91, 441f.

144. rev. H. S. Versnel, *Triumphus* (1970): AJA 76, 243f.  
 145. rev. L. Vidman, *Isis und Sarapis bei den Griechen und Römern* (1970): ACR 2, 265f.

### 1973

146. *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, pp. x + 454.  
 Reviews: see no. 221.
147. *The Secret Gospel*, New York, Harper and Row, pp. ix + 148 [London: Victor Gollancz, 1974].  
 Reviews: see no. 221.
148. The Aretalogy used by Mark, in W. Wuellner (ed.), *Protocol of the Sixth Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture*, 1-25.
149. Mark's "Secret Gospel"?, *America*, August 4, pp. 64f. (reply to J. A. Fitzmyer, How to Exploit a Secret Gospel, *America*, June 23, 1973).
150. On the Problem of Method in the Study of Rabbinic Literature, JBL 92, 112f. (reply to B. Z. Wacholder's review of J. Neusner, *Development of a Legend*, JBL 91 [1972] 123f., cf. B. Z. Wacholder, A Reply, JBL 92 [1973] 114f.)
- \*151. On the Differences Between the Culture of Israel and the Major Cultures of the Ancient Near East, *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 5 (Gaster Festschrift), 389-395 (a slightly different version in BAR 2,3 [1976] 31-44).
152. rev. C. Bussmann, *Themen der paulinischen Missionspredigt auf dem Hintergrund der spätjüdisch-hellenistischen Missionsliteratur* (1971): CBQ 35, 518f.
153. rev. J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I: A Commentary* (1971): JBL 92, 626f.
154. rev. F. Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (1971): AJA 77, 115f.
155. rev. A. D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Z. Stewart (1972): CW 67, 41.
156. rev. R. Van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix according to Classical and Early Christian Traditions* (1972): AJA 77, 462.
157. rev. J. Wevers and D. Redford (edd.), *Studies on the Ancient Palestinian World, Presented to Professor F. V. Winnett* (1972): AHR 78, 410f.

- 158.** rev. J. Leclant and G. Clerc, *Inventaire bibliographique des Isiacs* (1972): ACR 3, 50.
- 159.** rev. L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd, ed., *Posidonius, I: The Fragments* (1972): ACR 3, 81.

#### 1974

- \***160.** De Superstitione (Plutarch, Moralia, 164E-171F), in *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature*, ed. H. D. Betz, Leiden, (Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti, III), 1-35.
- 161.** rev. T. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (1971): AHR 79, 768.
- 162.** rev. D. Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker* (1972): *Interpretation* 28, 238-240.
- 163.** rev. B. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium* (1973): ATR 56, 512-515.
- 164.** rev. W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (1972): ATR 56, 493-496.

#### 1975

- \***165.** On the Wine God in Palestine, in *Salo W. Baron Jubilee Volume* (The American Academy for Jewish Research), Jerusalem, 815-829.
- 166.** The Veracity of Ezekiel, the Sins of Manasseh, and Jeremiah 44.18, *ZAW* 87, 11-16.
- 167.** Response to H. Kee, "Aretalogies", W. Wuellner (ed.), *Protocol of the Twelfth Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture*, 32-35.
- 168.** Merkel on the Longer Text of Mark, *ZTK* 72, 133-50.
- 169.** A Note on Burning Babies, *JAOS* 95, 477-479.
- 170.** rev. B. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in I Corinthians* (1974): CBQ 37, 287-289.
- 171.** rev. M. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (1974): JAAR 43, 604-606.

#### 1976

- 172.** *The Ancient History of Western Civilization* (with Elias Bickerman), Harper and Row. (a much expanded version of nos. **132** and **133**.)

Reviews: G. T. Thomas, *Echos du Monde Classique/Classical News and Views* (Ottawa) 20 (1976) 102.

- 173.** On the Authenticity of the Mar Saba Letter of Clement, *CBQ* 38, 196-199.
- 174.** *To Dikaion* and Society in Third Century Greece, in *Essays in Archaeology and the Humanities, in memoriam Otto J. Brendel*, Mainz, 87-93.
- 175.** Varieties of Judaism in the Early First Century C.E., *Newsletter of the Association for Jewish Studies*
- 176.** rev. G. N. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching* (SNTS Monograph Series, 27) (1974): *JAAR* 44, 565f.
- 177.** rev. W. H. Schoff, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (1974) and G. E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography* (1974): *CW* 70, 58f.
- 178.** rev. J. R. Hinnells, ed., *Mithraic Studies* (1975): *CW* 70, 216.
- 179.** rev. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (1972): *ACR* 3, 202.

### 1977

- 180.** Response to A. Dundes, "The Hero Pattern," in W. Wuellner (ed.), *Protocol of the Twenty-Fifth Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture*, 62-65.
- 181.** Response to W. Burkert, "Orpheus and Bacchic Mysteries," in W. Wuellner (ed.), *Protocol of the Twenty-Eighth Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture*, 29f.
- 182.** The Question of Jesus' Relation to Magic, *Minutes of the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins*, vol.14, set 4 (March 15, 1977).
- 183.** Early Christianity and Judaism, in *Great Confrontations in Jewish History* (The J. M. Goodstein Lectures), edd. S. Wagner and A. Breck, Denver, 41-61.
- 184.** The Transfiguration and its Greco-Roman Parallels, *Minutes of the Columbia University Seminar for New Testament Studies* (Nov. 4, 1977).
- 185.** What May Be Hoped from Modern Greek Manuscripts, in *Studia Codicologia* (Richard Festschrift), ed. K. Treu, Berlin (Texte und Untersuchungen 124), 457-460.
- \*186.** Messiahs: Robbers, Jurists, Prophets, and Magicians, *PAAJR* 44, 185-195.

187. rev. M. Avi-Yonah, ed. *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 7 (1975): AHR 82, 705f.
188. rev. J. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (1975): JAAR, 44, 726.
189. rev. J. de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (1975): CW 70, 396.
190. rev. O. von Böcher, *Dämonenfurcht und Dämonenabwehr* (1970) and *Christus Exorcista: Dämonismus und Taufe im Neuen Testament* (1973): ATR 59, 467f.
191. Galbraith on Hitler and Keynes, Harvard Magazine (Sept-Oct. 1977) 6

### 1978

192. *Jesus the Magician*, New York, Harper and Row (British ed., Gollancz 1979; German, Paul List, 1980; paperbacks, Harper and Row, 1981; British, Aquarian Press, 1985).
- Reviews: (anonymous), Publishers Weekly (23 January 1978) 366; (anonymous), Kirkus Service (1 March 1978) 291; (anonymous), Spectator (23 September 1978) 66; L. F. Badia, Theological Studies 39 (1978) 812-813; P. Beskow, Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok 45 (1980) 156-158; P. Bilde, Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift 43 (1980) 214-216; J. A. Buhner, Evangelische Theologie (March-April 1983) 156-175; T. Callan, Library Journal (15 June 1978) 1278; B. Crawford, JAAR 47 (1979) 321-322; O. C. Edwards, ATR 61 (1979) 515-517; J. Faur, Midstream (August/September 1980) 54; J. M. Ford, Critic (1 October 1978) 4; D. Fraikin, Queen's Quarterly (Winter 1979-1980) 691; S. Freyne, CBQ 41 (1979) 658-661; R. H. Fuller, New Review of Books and Religion (9 February 1979) 3; E. V. Gallagher, Horizons (Spring 1979) 126-127; H. J. Greschat, ZAW 132 (1982) 437; D. J. Harrington, America (10 June 1978) 468; W. J. Hynes, Christian Century (19 July 1978) 714; F. Kermode, New York Review of Books (26 October 1978) 9; F. Kerr, New Blackfriars 60 (1979) 283-284; I. H. Marshall, Expository Times 90 (March 1979) 182-183; B. Viviano, Theology Today 31 (1979) 186-187; H. Wansborough, Tablet, 232 (1978) 1042-1043; H. F. Weiss, TLZ 108 (October 1983) 731-734.
193. A Rare Sense of *prokopto* and the Authenticity of the Letter of Clement, in *God's Christ and His People* (Dahl Festschrift), edd. J. Jervell and W. Meeks, Oslo, 261-263.
194. Rome and Maccabean Conversions: Notes on I Maccabees 8, in *Donum Gentilicium* (Daube Festschrift), edd. E. Bammel and C. Barrett, Oxford, 1-7.
- \*195. On the History of the Divine Man, in *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme* (Marcel Simon Festschrift), Paris: de Boccard, 335-345.

- 196.** Lydus, De Magistratibus 1.27, and the Quaestors of 267 B.C., in *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 15 (N. Lewis Festschrift), 125f.
- 197.** The Double Paternity of Jesus, BAR 4, 45.
- 198.** Mk. 6:32-15:47 and Jn. 6:1-19:42, in *Seminar Papers* 14, Society of Biblical Literature, vol. II, 281-288.
- \*199.** East Mediterranean Law Codes of the Early Iron Age, *Eretz Israel* 14 (H. L. Ginsberg Volume), 38\*-43\*.
- 200.** rev. E. J. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History I* (1976): JAAR 45, 511f.
- 201.** rev. A.-M. Tupet, *La magie dans la poésie latine I. Des origines à la fin du règne d'Auguste* (1976): CW 71, 478f.

### 1979

- 202.** Sun Worship in Qumran, *Minutes of the Columbia University Seminar for New Testament Studies* (Jan. 26, 1979).
- 203.** Relations between Magical Papyri and Magical Gems, in *Actes du XVe Congrès International de Papyrologie, IIIe Partie*, Brussels (Papyrologica Bruxellensia 18), 129-136.
- 204.** rev. R. Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews, The Origins of Samaritanism Reconsidered* (1975): ATR 61, 252f.
- 205.** rev. J. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory* (1978): *Sciences religieuses/Studies in Religion* 8, 455-457.

### 1980

- 206.** *Hope and History*, New York: Harper and Row.  
Reviews: (anonymous), Kirkus Service (15 November 1979) 1368; J. M. Cameron, New York Review of Books (17 April 1980) 36; D. J. Dietrich, Library Journal (1 December 1979) 2574; Vernard Eller, Christian Century (May 1980) 590-92; C. A. Raschke, Theology Today (October 1980) 375.
- \*207.** Pauline Worship as Seen by Pagans, HTR 73, 241-249.
- \*208.** The Origin and History of the Transfiguration Story, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 36, 39-44.
- 209.** Miracle, *Encyclopaedia Americana* 19, 217.
- 210.** Rome, Religion, *Encyclopaedia Americana* 23, 751-753.

### 1981

- 211.** Psalm 151, David, Jesus, and Orpheus, ZAW 93, 247-53.

- 212.** The Hymn to the Moon, PGM IV, 2242-2355, in *Proceedings of the XVI International Conference of Papyrology*, Scholars Press, 643-54.
- \*213.** The History of the Term "Gnostikos," in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism II: Sethian Gnosticism*, ed. B. Layton, Leiden, 796-807.
- 214.** Old Testament Motifs in the Iconography of the British Museum's Magical Gems, in *Coins Culture, and History* (B. Trell Festschrift), ed. L. Casson, Detroit, 187-194.
- \*215.** Ascent to the Heavens and the Beginning of Christianity, *Eranos* 50, 403-429.
- 216.** Superstitio, *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, Scholars Press, 349-355.
- 217.** rev. B. E. Thiering, *Redating the Teacher of Righteousness* (1979): JAAR 49, 495f.

### 1982

- \*218.** Helios in Palestine, *Eretz Israel* 16 (H. Orlinsky Volume), 199\*-214\*
- 219.** Was Jesus a Magician?, *Free Inquiry* 3,1, 20-24.
- 220.** Elias J. Bickerman (Memorial Article), *Gnomon* 54, 223f. (see no. **231** below)
- 221.** Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark: The Score at the End of the First Decade, *HTR* 75, 449-61.
- 222.** rev. *Eretz Israel* 15 (Aharoni Memorial Volume): BAR 8 #3, 61f.
- 223.** rev. C. Roberts, *Manuscripts, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (1979): JAOS 102, 201f.
- 224.** rev. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II* 23.2, *Vorkonstantinisches Christentum*: JAOS 102, 544-546.
- 225.** rev. M. Hengel, *Jews, Greek and Barbarians* (1980): JAAR 50, 156.

### 1983

- 226.** On the Lack of a History of Greco-Roman Magic, in *Althistorische Studien* (H. Bengtson Festschrift; *Historia Einzelschriften* 40), Wiesbaden, 251-257.
- \*227.** Terminological Boobytraps and Real Problems in Second-Temple Judaeo-Christian Studies, *Traditions in Contact and Change: Proceedings of the XIV Congress of the International*

- Association for the History of Religion*, edd. P. Slater and D. Wiebe, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 295-306.
- \*228. On the History of APOKALYPTO and APOKALYPSIS, in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed. D. Hellholm, Tübingen, 9-20.
- \*229. How Magic Was Changed By the Triumph of Christianity, in *Graeco-Arabica: Papers of the First International Congress on Greek and Arabic Studies*, edd. V. Christides and M. Papatomopoulos, Athens: Association for Greek and Arabic Studies, 3 vols., vol. 2, 51-58.
- \*230. Transformation by Burial (I Cor. 15.35-49; Rom. 6.3-5 and 8.9-11), in *Eranos* 52, 87-112.
231. Elias J. Bickerman (Memorial Article), PAAJR 50, xv-xviii. (slightly different versions appear in no. 244, pp. ix-xii, and in Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, part 3, Leiden, Brill, 1986, xi-xiii).
232. rev. E. J. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History II*: JBL 102, 120f.
233. rev. W. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (1983): The Washington Post, Book World 13 #15 (Sunday, April 10), 15.
234. rev. R. Bagnall and P. Derow, *Greek Historical Documents: The Hellenistic Period* (1981): RSR 9, 271.

#### 1984

235. The Case of the Gilded Staircase, BAR 10 #5, 50-55.
236. Jewish Religious Life in the Persian Period, *The Cambridge History of Judaism, vol I, the Persian Period*, edd. W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, Cambridge, 219-278.
- \*237. The Eighth Book of Moses and How it Grew (P. Leid. J 395), in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia*, edd. M. Gigante et al., Naples, vol. 2, 683-693.
238. Regarding *Secret Mark*: a response to the account by Per Beskow, JBL 103, 624.
239. O'Keefe's *Social Theory of Magic* [a review article], JQR 74, 301-313
- \*240. A Note on Some Jewish Assimilationists: The Angels, *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 16-17 (Bickerman Festschrift), 207-212 [pub. 1987].
241. rev. B. Mazar ed., *Thirty Years of Archaeology in Eretz-Israel, 1948-1978* (1981): JAAR 52, 169.

242. rev. M. Reinhold, *Diaspora* (1983): *Classical Outlook* 61, 102.

243. rev. P. Beskow, *Strange Tales about Jesus* (1983): *JAAR* 52, 597.

### 1985

244. co-editor [with Emilio Gabba], Elias J. Bickerman, *Religions and Politics in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Como, Italy. (see no. 231 above)

245. rev. J. van Seters, *In Search of History* (1983): *JAAR* 53, 133.

### 1986

\*246. Salvation in the Gospels, Paul, and the Magical Papyri, *Helios* 13, 63-74.

247. The Historical Jesus, in *Jesus in History and Myth*, edd. R. Hoffman & G. LaRue, Buffalo, 47-54.

\*248. Paul's Arguments as Evidence of the Christianity from which he Diverged, *HTR* 79 (= *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* [Stendahl Festschrift], ed. G. Nickelsburg, Philadelphia), 254-260.

\*249. The Jewish Elements in the Magical Papyri, *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, Scholars Press, 455-62.

250. Pagan Dealings With Jewish Angels, P. Berlin 5025b, P. Louvre 2391, *Studii Clasice* 24 (Pippidi Festschrift), 175-179.

251. foreword to L. H. Feldman, *Josephus: A Supplementary Bibliography*, New York, ix.

252. Asinaeus and Anilaeus, *Encyclopedia Iranica* 2, 765.

\*253. P. Leid J 395 (PGM XIII) and Its Creation Legend, in *Hellenica et Judaica* (V. Nikiprowetsky Festschrift), edd. A. Caquot et al., Leuven: Peeters, 491-498.

254. Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, Chicago (second edition, 1992), translation of PGM IV 1596-1715, 2125-2139, 3125-71; V 213-303, 304-69, 447-58; VII 311-16, 317-18, 417-22, 429-58, 490-504, 579-90, 628-42; XII 201-69, 270-350; XIII 1-734, 734-1077; XXXVI 1-34, 178-87, 256-64; XLVII 1-17; LIX 1-15; LX 1-5; LXII 47-51; LXXI 1-8

255. rev. M. Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee* (1983): *CW* 79, 202.

256. rev. M. Schlüter, "Deraqôn" und Götzendienst (1982): *JQR* 76, 386f.

### 1987

257. Biblical Arguments For Slavery, *Free Inquiry* 7 #2 (Spring), 28-31.

- 258.** The Occult in Josephus, in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, edd. L. Feldman and G. Hata, Detroit, 236-256.
- 259.** On the *yôser* and Related Texts, in *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. Levine, Philadelphia, 87-95.
- 260.** rev. S. Miller, *Studies in the History and Traditions of Sepphoris* (1984): JAOS 107, 543f.
- 261.** rev. G. Luck, *Arcana Mundi* (1985): CW 80, 388.
- 262.** rev. J. B. Russell, *The Devil* (1977) and *Satan* (1981): JAAR 55, 410f.

### 1988

- 263.** The Synoptic Problem in Rabbinic Literature: A Correction, JBL 107, 111f
- 264.** On Slavery: Biblical Teaching v. Modern Morality, in *Biblical v. Secular Ethics*, ed. R. Hoffmann and G. Larue, Buffalo, 69-77.
- 265.** rev. Villalba I. Varneda, *The Historical Method of Flavius Josephus* (1986): AHR 93, 1305.
- 266.** rev. G. R. Morrow and J. M. Dillon, *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* (1987): RSR 14, 249.

### 1989

- 267.** co-editor [with R. Joseph Hoffmann], *What the Bible Really Says*, Buffalo: Prometheus Books.  
Reviews: Paula M. McNutt, *Bible Review* 6,5 (1990), 12-13; C. S. Rodd, *Expository Times* 101 (1989) 123.
- 268.** Preface, *What the Bible Really Says*, 7-10
- 269.** Slavery, *What the Bible Really Says*, 137-146
- 270.** The Last Social Function of Christ, *Spring: A Journal of Archetype and Culture* (Putnam, CT)
- 271.** rev. D. H. Roberts, *Apollo and his Oracle in the Oresteia* (1984): RSR 15, 163.

### 1990

- 272.** Errors that Would not Occur if Photos of all Dead Sea Scrolls were Available, BAR 16 #6, 16.
- 273.** Ascent to the Heavens and Deification in 4QMa, in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. L. Schiffman, Sheffield, 181-188.
- 274.** rev. T. Fischer, *Seleukiden und Makkabäer* (1980): JQR 81, 206.

275. rev. G. Garbini, *History and Ideology in Ancient Israel* (1988): AHR 95, 1500.

### 1991

276. Why were hundreds of dogs buried at Ashkelon: a response to Lawrence Stager, BAR 17 (Nov/Dec) 13-14

### 1992

277. On the History of Angels, in “*Open Thou Mine Eyes ...*” *Essays on Aggadah and Judaica presented to Rabbi William G. Braude*, edd. H. J. Blumberg et al., Hoboken, 285-294
- \*278. Two Ascended to Heaven – Jesus and the Author of 4Q491.11.1, in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, New York, 290-301

### 1994

279. Campbell Bonner, *Biographical Dictionary of North American Classicists*, ed. W. W. Briggs, Westport: Greenwood Press, 53-55

### Forthcoming

- \*280. The Gentiles in Judaism 125 BCE – AD 66, *Cambridge History of Judaism III*
281. The Troublemakers, *Cambridge History of Judaism III*
- \*282. Were the Maccabees Priests?
283. Ostanes, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

### Festschrift

- Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. J. Neusner. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 12. [rev. A. Momigliano, JTS 29 (1978) 212-217 = *Sesto Contributo alla Storia degli Studi Classici* (1980) 773-778]

### Memorial Volume

- Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, ed. Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers (Leiden: Brill, 1994; Studia Post-Biblica 41)

### Biographica

- Who's Who in America*, 44th ed. (1986-1987) 2896.
- New York Times*, Saturday 13 July 1991, 9.

- William M. Calder, Morton Smith, *Gnomon* 64 (1992) 382-384.
- William M. Calder, Morton Smith, *Biographical Dictionary of North American Classicists*, ed. W. W. Briggs. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994. 600-602.
- Hershel Shanks, Morton Smith, *BAR* 17 (Nov/Dec 1991) 6
- Shaye J. D. Cohen, Morton Smith and his Scholarly Achievement, *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, 1-8 (=PAAJR 58 [1992] 37-40)
- Shaye J. D. Cohen, Are there Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels?, *JAOS* 116 (1996)

**Doctoral Theses Directed  
Columbia University (New York, NY)**

- Albert Baumgarten, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos* (1972) [published Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981; *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain* 89]
- Stanley J. Isser, *The Samaritan Dositheans* (1973) [published as *The Dositheans: A Samaritan Sect in Late Antiquity*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976; *Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity* 17]
- Shaye J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* (1975) [published Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979; *Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition* 8]
- Joseph Sievers, *The Hasmonians and their Supporters from Mattathias to John Hyrcanus I* (1981) [published Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990; *South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism* 6]
- Seth Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaism from 70 to 100 of the Common Era* (1985) [published as *Josephus and Judaeae Politics*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990; *Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition* 18]
- Joseph John Portanova, *The Supporters of King Mithridates VI of Pontus* (1988)

## IN MEMORIAM MORTON SMITH

Morton Smith (1915-1991) was a great scholar, blessed with extraordinary acuity, mordant wit, and expansive range. He received an A.B. from Harvard College in 1936 and an S.T.B. from the Harvard Divinity School in 1940. At Harvard Smith studied New Testament with Henry Cadbury, Judaism with Harry Wolfson, and Greco-Roman religions with A.D. Nock. Awarded a travel fellowship, Smith spent four years in Jerusalem at the Hebrew University and the American School of Oriental Research, and studied Hellenistic Judaism with Moshe Schwabe and Hans Lewy, and Jewish mysticism and magic with Gershom Scholem. Smith returned to the United States in 1944 but continued work on his doctoral dissertation which was accepted by the Hebrew University in 1948. After teaching at Brown University and Drew University, and some post-doctoral work at Harvard (which resulted in the Th.D.), Smith joined the History Department of Columbia University in 1957 where he remained until his retirement in 1985.

Smith wrote seven books, some one hundred and twenty articles, dozens of book reviews, and co-authored two books (one with Moses Hadas, the other with Elias Bickerman). This impressive body of scholarship had four main focal points: Ancient Israel; New Testament and Early Christianity; (Ancient) Judaism; Magic. Of course, many of Smith's works resist monothetic classification, and cross the lines separating these four fields – in fact, one of Smith's major goals precisely was to bridge the gaps between and among these four fields, as I shall discuss below – but this classification remains useful. It also has the advantage of having been suggested by Smith himself for *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*, the collection of his articles that he first planned in the mid 1970's and that I have now completed on his behalf. I shall briefly assess Smith's contribution to each of these four fields, and then treat some general features of his scholarly achievement.

### *Ancient Israel*

The Hebrew Bible – its text, its history, its background, and its influence – remained one of Smith's central interests from his first publications (5 and 7)<sup>1</sup> to his last (236). In this field Smith is probably best known for his *Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old*

---

<sup>1</sup> Numbers in parentheses refer to the items in Smith's bibliography.

*Testament* (118). In this book Smith argued that the entire Tanak – indeed virtually all of Israelite and early Jewish history – should be seen as the product of two conflicting schools or “parties.” The “Yahweh-alone” party was the party of the prophets and the Deuteronomists, who uncompromisingly railed against the “syncretists.” Because the “Yahweh-alone” party ultimately triumphed, it shaped the creation of the Tanak and the historiographical image of the “syncretists” as wicked rebels against God. But, Smith argued, the syncretists were not “sinners” and “apostates” but a genuine and authentic expression of Israelite religion, even older than the monotheists of the “Yahweh-alone” party. Not only in the time of the first temple but even in the second temple period and later as well, syncretistic Judaism was much in evidence; witness the material remains of Judaism in both the homeland (165 and 218) and the diaspora, and, most importantly, the magical texts and rituals of late antiquity. I shall return to this below.

#### *New Testament and Early Christianity*

The New Testament, like the Old Testament (if I may use the Christian appellations employed by Smith), was always at the heart of Smith’s work and the subject of some of his earliest articles. Smith’s doctoral dissertation, originally written in Hebrew but published in English as *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels* (4), was primarily a contribution to rabbinic studies. Contrary to what the title suggests, this book was not inspired by Lightfoot or Billerbeck; its goal was not the collection of rabbinic passages that illuminate this or that New Testament text. Rather, it was a study of literary form, “the first extensive application, to rabbinic literature, of synoptic criticism and form criticism.” This book launched the modern form critical study of rabbinic literature, but its relevance to New Testament studies too is obvious. In *Heroes and Gods* (77), published in 1965 and written jointly with Moses Hadas, Smith argued that Jesus should be understood as a “divine man,” a type well attested in Greco-Roman antiquity, and that the gospels were akin to an aretalogy, a recitation of the miraculous powers of a god. This book, amplified by some subsequent articles (122, 186, and 195), launched a new approach (or, perhaps better, revived the old *religionsgeschichtlich* approach) to the study of the Jesus traditions.

Smith achieved fame (some would say notoriety) in 1973 with his publication of *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (146). While traveling through the Levant looking for manuscripts of the letters of Isidore of Pelusium (12 and 28), in 1957 at the monastery of Mar Saba (not far from Jerusalem) Smith stumbled on a fragment

of an otherwise unknown letter attributed to Clement of Alexandria. In the letter Clement writes to an otherwise unknown Theodore and instructs him how to respond to the Carpocratians, a Christian sect of the second century, who rely on a “secret gospel of Mark” which is similar to, but longer than, the canonical Mark. In his book Smith argued brilliantly that the attribution of the letter to Clement was authentic, a point conceded by most reviewers (except for those who broadly implied that Smith had forged the whole thing), and that the “secret gospel of Mark” was an important source not only for the history of the second gospel but also for the history of earliest Christianity, a point disputed by many if not most reviewers. In Smith’s view early Christianity was a Jewish movement which centered on magic, mysticism, healings, heavenly journeys, ecstatic possession, and secret initiations. This portrait was filled in with even greater detail in *Jesus the Magician* (192), in which Smith argued that the actions attributed to Jesus by the gospels could best be understood against the backdrop of magic in antiquity. Smith used as evidence not only the gospel accounts but also the traditions about Jesus contained in rabbinic and classical literatures, a perspective also advanced in a wonderful article “Pauline Worship as Seen by Pagans” (207). At his death Smith was working on *Paul the Possessed*, whose thesis was to have been that Paul is a primary example of “spiritual possession.”

#### *Ancient Judaism*

All four of Smith’s books so far mentioned – *Tannaitic Parallels to Gospels, Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament, Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, and *Jesus the Magician* – make direct and important contributions to the study of ancient Judaism, as I hope my brief summaries above have made clear. One of his most influential publications was a brief unannotated article that appeared in a collection of essays of the sort not normally the expression of innovative and original scholarship. But Smith’s essay was both innovative and original. Entitled “Palestinian Judaism in the First Century” (17), it argued, inter alia, that the Pharisees were not the dominant religious-political party in Judaeon society and that Pharisaic Judaism was not the dominant or normative variety of Judaism. The thesis that the Pharisees and their rabbinic continuators did not dominate the religious life of Judaism was not new, of course. It had been advanced fifty years earlier by Wilhelm Bousset. But Bousset’s account was flawed in two respects: it ignored rabbinic material out of ignorance – an ignorance that was seized upon by Bousset’s Jewish critics, notably Felix Perles, and that was somewhat remedied only in the 1926 revision by Hugo Gressman – and it

advanced the very dubious hypothesis that the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic works give us a glimpse of real folk piety, of Judaism as lived and believed.<sup>2</sup> But there is no reason to think that these recondite and fantastic works represent the mind of the masses any more than the recondite and fantastic works of the rabbis. Smith avoided both of these pitfalls. Unlike Bousset, he knew rabbinic literature first-hand, and his picture of “the people of the land” was far more sophisticated than Bousset’s; the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic works played virtually no role in Smith’s reconstruction.

What was entirely novel about Smith’s thesis was the historiographical argument. Smith argued that Josephus in the *War* still favored “the group of which his family had been representative – the wealthy, pro-Roman section of the priesthood,” while in the *Antiquities*, written some twenty years later, he favored the Pharisees instead. The contrast between the *War* and the *Antiquities* reflects the shift in the fate of the Pharisees and their successors between the pre- and post-70 periods. Smith would later support this thesis in *Jesus the Magician* with the argument that most of the synoptics’ references to, and virtually all of the synoptics’ polemics against, the Pharisees, are found in post-70 CE insertions in earlier material (192 pp. 153-157). Thus in both Josephus and the synoptics the picture of Pharisaic dominance is a projection of post-70 CE conditions upon the pre-70 CE period.

This bipartite thesis – the historical argument that the Pharisees were a small but influential group, and the historiographical argument that Josephus’ picture of the Pharisees developed over time – has been enormously influential. It was widely publicized through the voluminous and repetitive publications of Jacob Neusner, and has aroused continuing controversy.<sup>3</sup> Smith clearly overstated the distinction between the *War* and the *Antiquities*, but put his finger on an important point, and no matter how the Josephan passages are interpreted the problem of the Pharisees and their influence still remains.

The essay “Palestinian Judaism in the First Century” addressed another of his favorite concerns: the Hellenization of Judaism. Smith never ceased railing against the misleading distinction between “Hellenistic Judaism” and “Palestinian Judaism,” arguing that Palestinian Judaism was no less Hellenized – albeit in different ways,

---

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1903); *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, rev. Hugo Gressman (3rd ed. Tübingen: Mohr, 1926).

<sup>3</sup> See especially Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees* (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

perhaps – than Judaism of the diaspora. The literary forms, the social types, the scholarly techniques, much of the theology, much of the art, and virtually all of the realia of life, of Judaism in late antiquity were derived from, or at least heavily colored by, the ambient culture (32, 118 pp. 57-81, and 240).

### *Magic*

The study of ancient magic was important to Smith for several reasons. First, Smith was always more interested in the narratives about Jesus than in his sayings, and the narratives in large part feature healings and miracles, in other words, magic. Second, magic was the great meeting ground and melting pot of religions in late antiquity. The Greek magical papyri (254) are composed of Egyptian, Jewish, and Greek elements, with a generous admixture from other cultures as well. Here, then, was clear proof for cultural and religious mixing, precisely the sort of thing that Smith always found interesting. Third, magic was usually suppressed, and occasionally persecuted, by the authorities. Magic, then, was the religion of the outsider, the one who did not get to write the canonical books or the authoritative laws. Magic provided clear proof for the one-sidedness of the literary tradition, and for the necessity of reconstructing other traditions alongside those of the “winners.” Smith always enjoyed discomfiting “winners” (see below).

Smith planned to write a catalogue of the magical gems of the British Museum and a History of Magic in Greco-Roman Antiquity, but made little progress on either project. Instead, we have extensive discussions of magic in *Clement of Alexandria* (146 pp. 220-237), *Jesus the Magician* (passim), and a series of articles on magical gems and magical papyri.

### *General themes and concerns*

Certain themes and concerns unite all of Smith’s work. First, a determination to destroy boundaries. Smith was a man who worked comfortably in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and had a good working knowledge of Syriac. He read Sophocles, Septuagint, Soferim, and Cyprian with equal ease. He believed that the world of antiquity was a single whole, and that the scholarly conventions of dividing the ancient world into Jewish, Christian, and classical, and subdividing in turn each of these three, were impediments to scholarship. Smith argued that early Christianity was part of Judaism, that Judaism was part of the Hellenistic world, and that neither Christianity nor Judaism nor Hellenistic culture could be understood in isolation from the other. Because of his ability to see the ancient world as a whole, Smith was capable of some remarkable insights. Nehemiah was a tyrant of the

sort described by Herodotus (118 pp. 136-144); through their conquests the Maccabees created a league of *Ioudaioi* akin to the Aetolian league and the other leagues of Hellenistic Greece (280); Jesus was a magician like other ancient magicians (192); as a social type the rabbis of the Mishnah were philosophers (17).

Second, a concern for varieties of Judaism and Christianity, especially varieties that would counter the traditional and respectable versions of Judaism and Christianity known to most people. Smith saw his own work as complementing that of Walter Bauer on early Christianity and Erwin Goodenough on early Judaism (102 pp. 10-11). In his *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, Bauer argued, against Eusebius, that "Orthodoxy" does not precede "heresy" but the opposite: early Christianity was a variegated phenomenon in which many movements and schools which would later be styled "heretical" were at first not heretical at all but were perfectly valid and (in their own environment) acceptable forms of Christianity. They did not become "heretical" until an emerging "Orthodoxy" would later make them so. In his *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* Goodenough argued that the medieval triumph of rabbinic Judaism should not obscure the fact that in Roman and early Byzantine times rabbinic Judaism was neither dominant nor "Orthodox"; among Greek-speaking Jews and the Jewish masses there thrived a decidedly non-rabbinic, mystical, and Hellenized, Judaism. Goodenough found evidence for this non-rabbinic Judaism in various patristic texts, in ancient magic, and especially in Jewish art. Like Bauer Smith argued that in Judaism, as in Christianity, heresy preceded orthodoxy: the "Yahweh-alone" party was a pietist reaction to the reigning syncretism of the day; the Pharisees were an important, but hardly the dominant, group in the Judaism of the first century CE. Like Goodenough Smith argued that Jewish magic and art provided clear evidence that non-rabbinic Judaism persisted well into "the rabbinic period." In a brilliant review article of Goodenough's work, Smith observed that Goodenough's mystical thesis failed to convince, but that Goodenough, like Columbus, had discovered new worlds in the course of his failure (93).

Third, the concern for varieties was abetted by a great concern for terminological precision (227). Smith argued that scholars use words like "Judaism," "Hellenism," "gnostic" (213) and "apocalypse" (228) without realizing their ambiguities and without defining them precisely. The exact meaning of "Jew" or *Ioudaios* was a question to which he returned a number of times in the course of his life. In an influential article Smith argued that Sicarii were not Zealots, and Zealots were not Sicarii; the terms and the groups must be kept

distinct (123). Fourth, a concern for the big picture. Smith never allowed himself to be so blinded by varieties as to deny the fundamental unity of the phenomena we conventionally call Judaism and Christianity. A current scholarly fad is the term “Judaisms”; Smith never used this awkward word, always preferring instead “varieties of Judaism” or similar locutions. Smith believed that one could talk meaningfully of ancient Judaism, its patterns and paradigms (52). Similarly, one could even speak of “The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East” (7).

Fifth, scorn for pseudo-scholarship, that is, pronouncements and opinions born of religious faith and confessional conviction but masquerading as “objective scholarship.” Smith argued that “the Bible” is a theological category inherited from Judaism and Christianity, and as such is an obstacle to a proper understanding of ancient Judaism and Christianity. Smith had only scorn for those who believed that any truth might somehow be lurking in the New Testament miracle stories (except insofar as the cures allegedly effected by Jesus might have been psycho-somatically induced cures of psycho-somatically induced illnesses). Smith had only scorn too for those who saw any truth in the prophetic experiences of either the Old Testament or the New Testament, as if God or any god would ever or did ever communicate in such a way with humans. For Smith the ideal of scholarly objectivity could be met only through atheism or Epicureanism, that is, the assumption that if the gods exist, they intervene not at all in human affairs (102). (Whether Smith actually was an atheist or an Epicurean, I do not know.)

Smith never tired of discomfiting the faithful. An ordained Episcopalian priest who left the church (but was never defrocked), Smith well knew that his portrait of Jesus the Magician, and his picture of a Christianity dominated by magic, heavenly ascents, and spiritual possession, was far from the respectable, rational, middle-class Christianity of most of his readers. Smith well knew that his picture of a syncretistic Judaism living on from biblical to rabbinic times would discomfit many of his Jewish readers. Smith reveled in this. But in private life Smith was hardly the wild-eyed radical or the strident orator. On the contrary. In person he was staid and somewhat stiff, always well dressed, perfectly mannered, and an impeccable gentleman. His memory will endure.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> On various points I was aided by William M. Calder, “Morton Smith,” *Gnomon* 64 (1992) 382-384.



## INDEX

- 2 Maccabees, 145
- 2 Peter, 58, 60, 79, 84-85, 158, 161-162, 164, 166, 168, 174, 177, 182
- Abel, F., 236
- Acts, 5, 7, 9-10, 15, 19-20, 28, 32, 39, 42, 45, 57, 66, 70, 72, 87, 90-93, 103, 105, 108-109, 115, 123-124, 134, 136, 140-145, 150-151, 153, 159-171, 173-178, 180-182, 200, 215, 219, 232
- Alexandria, 40, 59, 68, 93, 101-102, 139, 166, 184, 187-188, 191, 194, 203
- Altermath, F., 115, 125
- angel(s), 19, 40, 53-56, 60, 63-64, 76-77, 80, 102, 137, 145-146, 159-160, 164-165, 173, 176-177, 199-200, 203, 209-210, 212, 219-221, 225, 229, 235-241, 245-246, 248, 250-252
- Antipas, 150
- apocalypse, 53, 56, 58, 100, 148, 159, 164, 167-169, 175, 187, 194-195, 199-204
- apocrypha, 19, 22, 111, 145, 149-150, 242
- Apollo, 6, 9-10, 15, 33, 154, 160, 224, 236, 251
- Apollonius, 6-8, 10, 15-20, 25, 30, 51, 142, 220
- Apuleius, 11-12, 20-21, 69, 96, 123-125, 142
- aretalogus, aretalogy, 3-5, 16, 23-27, 37, 229
- ascent to heaven, 12, 47-48, 50-53, 55-61, 65-67, 71-72, 77, 83, 126-127, 137, 193, 202
- Asclepius, 6-7, 9-10, 12-16, 36, 98, 192
- Assyria, 244
- Baal, 14, 243
- Babylon, 24, 49, 54
- bandits, brigands, 42
- baptism, 26, 40-41, 44, 46, 58-59, 61, 63, 69-72, 80-81, 84, 88, 95-97, 99, 101, 103, 123, 129, 133-134, 136-137, 140-144, 164-165, 170, 181, 200, 213
- Ben Sira, 3-4, 24-25, 198-199
- Bickerman, E., 11, 51, 101, 171, 233, 235
- Bousset, W., 19, 53, 148-149
- Bultmann, R., 82, 157-158, 169
- burial, 110, 116-119, 121-122, 124-125, 128-129, 136, 243
- Burkert, W., 29-30, 34, 69
- Caesarea, 79
- Carpocrates, Carpocratians, 49, 189-192
- Celsus, 9-10, 14, 17, 20, 29, 146, 148, 187-188
- Christianity, 1, 17-19, 23, 28, 39-40, 45, 47-48, 58, 69, 86, 87, 93, 95, 97-98, 101-102, 103, 105, 123, 136, 138, 141, 144, 150, 154, 157, 162-163, 171, 174, 176, 181, 208, 211, 213-216, 235, 242, 250

- circumcision, 89, 92, 108-109, 134
- Clement of Alexandria, 10, 32, 40-41, 59, 68-69, 72, 93, 101-102, 139, 148, 166, 184, 187-191, 194, 202
- Cohen, Shaye, 9, 14, 25, 29, 32, 42-44, 46, 48, 53-54, 74, 76-77, 144-145, 157, 177-178, 198-199, 241, 250
- Colossians, 12, 14, 17, 56-58, 65, 72-74, 96, 129, 147, 152, 156, 159, 161, 163-164, 167-168, 171, 177-179, 181, 196
- communion, 44, 96, 173
- conversion, 63, 66, 90, 106-108, 130, 141, 143-144, 155, 170, 201, 235
- Corinthians, 12, 15, 41, 43, 52, 55, 57, 61-66, 69, 72, 87-89, 91-93, 95-102, 103-108, 110-112, 114, 116, 124-125, 132-136, 138, 145-147, 158-163, 165-167, 171-176, 179-182, 200-201, 210, 231
- cremation, 118, 121
- Cumont, F., 14, 18, 21, 50, 114, 123-124
- daimon, daimones, 4, 10, 101, 121, 128, 132, 135-136, 138, 210, 215, 218
- Daniel, 53, 114, 147-148, 202, 204, 250
- David, 26, 40, 42, 65, 176, 246
- Demotic, 101, 136, 139, 243, 245-247
- Deuteronomy, 83, 179-180, 211
- diaspora, 91
- Dionysus, 10, 244
- Egypt, 5-6, 14, 18, 35, 61, 69, 96, 116, 136-137, 154, 168, 221, 229, 232-234, 238, 240, 242-244, 247, 250, 255-256
- El, 74-75, 243, 245
- Elephantine, 242, 255
- Elijah, 25, 43, 45, 50, 60, 71, 79, 81-83, 85-86
- Enoch, 39, 50, 52-53, 55, 62-63, 72, 77, 145, 150, 167, 187, 237, 248
- Ephesians, 54, 57, 70, 124, 138, 145, 156, 159, 161-163, 166-170, 172-174, 177-179, 181-182, 200, 202
- Essene(s), 53-54, 250
- Eusebius, 7, 17, 49, 214, 220
- Exodus, 48, 61, 83, 163, 168, 179, 249-250
- Ezekiel, 48, 54, 60, 77, 113, 165, 179-180, 198, 228, 250
- Gadara, 34, 197-198
- Galatians, 10, 65-66, 84, 88-89, 91-93, 95-96, 99-100, 102, 103, 108, 115, 124, 133-134, 142, 146, 158-160, 162-163, 167, 173-174, 177-178, 182, 200-201, 210
- Galilee, Galilean, 10, 23, 175
- Genesis, 10, 48-50, 60, 62, 111, 186, 232
- gentile(s), 90, 92-93, 108-109, 169, 180, 199, 211, 235
- gnosticism, 18, 49, 53-54, 69, 140, 160, 178, 183-193, 203, 239, 255
- Goodenough, Erwin, 77
- Gressmann, H., 14

- Hebrews, 10, 55, 57-58, 60-61, 63, 107, 149, 157, 159, 161-163, 165, 167-168, 170-174, 177-179, 181, 250  
 Hekalot, 53-54, 59  
 Hellenism, 15, 18-19, 22-23, 27, 28, 32-33, 43, 48, 119-120, 122-123, 145, 196, 208, 227, 233, 235, 256  
 Herakles (Hercules), 10-11, 13, 20-21, 29, 36, 38, 117  
 Herod, 75-76, 150  
 Hillel, 41  
 Hippolytus, 10, 14, 49, 189, 209  
 IAO, 14, 101, 133, 135-136, 138, 150, 230-233, 237-238, 240, 244, 246-248, 251-254, 256  
 Idumea, Idumean(s), 74-75  
 Irenaeus, 69, 140, 147-148, 150, 175, 190-192, 233  
 Isaiah, 22, 48, 53-54, 61-62, 132, 149-150, 204  
 Isis, 4, 15, 125  
 Israelite(s), 55, 61, 63-64, 107, 109, 161, 170, 176, 178, 194, 244  
 James, 60, 85, 91-93, 108-109, 110, 121, 150, 157, 159, 161, 167-168, 173-175, 177-180, 187  
 Jeremiah, 45, 147, 163, 166, 181, 195, 228  
 Jerusalem, 14, 39, 43, 46, 57, 68, 76, 90, 92, 103, 108-109, 134, 140-142, 144, 159-160, 178, 201, 212, 222, 234, 250, 255  
 Jesus, 3, 5-7, 9-10, 14-17, 19, 21-27, 28-30, 32, 37, 39-41, 43, 45-46, 47-48, 51-52, 55-63, 65-67, 68-73, 76-77, 79-86, 87-91, 95-102, 103-109, 110, 112, 115, 128, 132-134, 136-137, 139, 140-147, 149-150, 159-166, 168, 171-172, 174-177, 179-182, 199-200, 202-203, 210-211, 213, 250, 255  
 John, Letters of, 147, 162  
 John, 57, 69, 87, 98, 132, 136, 143-144, 147, 158-162, 164-171, 173-175, 177, 179, 181  
 John the Baptist, 45, 142-145, 150  
 Josephus, 6, 9-10, 14, 19-21, 25, 29, 32, 37, 42-44, 46, 48, 53-54, 69, 74-77, 144-145, 148, 157, 177-178, 191, 198-199, 241, 244, 250, 256  
 Jubilees, 150  
 Judaism, 18, 23, 29, 39, 43, 48, 77, 87, 116, 157, 159, 162, 187, 212, 227, 240, 242, 247, 250, 254, 256  
 Judas of Galilee, 10  
 Jude, 168, 174  
 Judges, 137, 168  
 Kings, 43, 50, 55, 60, 69, 74-75, 113, 181, 195, 201, 226  
 Leviticus, 179-181  
 Lewy, H., 12, 20, 51, 96, 123, 126  
 Luke, 9, 20, 29, 40, 43, 46, 57, 59-60, 70-72, 79, 83, 85-86, 87, 93, 115, 131-132, 142-145, 147, 159-178, 180-182, 199-200, 210, 226, 232

- magic, 7, 9-10, 12, 14-15, 18, 24, 26, 34-35, 40, 44, 51, 53, 55, 60, 66, 69, 73, 77, 81, 84-85, 88, 95-102, 123, 126-128, 130-139, 140-142, 144, 150, 165, 185, 187, 192, 206, 208-216, 217, 219, 221-222, 224, 227-230, 232-233, 235-241, 242-252, 254-256
- Mark, 7, 10, 15, 21-23, 25-26, 28-29, 32, 40, 43, 45, 48, 56, 59-61, 68-72, 79-86, 87, 101-102, 105, 131-132, 136, 139, 142, 145-147, 150, 160-162, 164-167, 172, 174-182, 210
- Matthew, 10, 25-26, 33, 40, 43, 45, 59-60, 70-72, 76, 79, 83, 85-86, 87, 113, 115, 129, 131, 136, 142, 145, 147, 159-168, 170-177, 179-180, 199, 219
- Meleager, 198
- Mesopotamia, 49, 60
- messiah(s), 9, 23, 25, 39-46, 79-81, 86, 87-91, 109, 113, 145-147, 149
- milk, 217, 223-224
- Mithras Liturgy, 51, 53-54, 59, 126-127, 137, 252
- monotheism, 70, 77, 98, 212-213, 240
- Moses, 23, 25, 29, 43, 48, 53, 60-61, 69, 77, 79, 81-83, 85-86, 93, 135, 163, 171, 178, 217, 219-223, 226, 228, 246, 250-251, 253-254
- mystic, mysticism, 24, 77, 104, 239
- Neusner, Jacob, 24
- New Testament, 1, 8, 26, 42, 48, 54, 57, 71, 73, 82, 93, 110, 139, 145, 187, 199, 211, 255
- Nicholas of Damascus, 20, 189
- Nock, A. D., 6, 10, 21, 118, 120-121, 123-124
- Numbers, 90, 123, 197, 211, 238, 242, 245-247, 250
- Old Testament, 9-10, 19, 21-23, 48, 62, 71-72, 83, 110, 113, 116, 131, 145-146, 148, 150, 158-159, 162-163, 165, 168, 172, 180-181, 195, 201, 203, 211, 233, 239, 242-248, 251-252, 254-256
- Palestine, 9-10, 14, 20-24, 27, 32, 37, 41, 43-45, 48, 52-56, 58, 63, 71, 77, 82, 116, 142, 145-146, 150-151, 200, 203, 232, 240, 243, 255-256
- Paul, 10, 12, 19, 23, 34, 39-41, 43, 47-48, 52, 54-59, 61-66, 69, 72, 84, 87-93, 95-102, 103-109, 110-116, 125, 127-129, 130, 132-138, 141, 146-147, 150, 157-167, 169-170, 172-177, 179-181, 200-203, 210, 213
- Pentateuch, 198, 255
- Peter, 10, 40, 59-60, 79-86, 92, 108, 140-141, 143-144, 158, 160, 164, 200-201
- Pharisee(s), 59, 88-89, 91, 106, 113, 116, 174
- Philemon, 10, 95, 179
- Philippians, 57, 61-62, 65-66, 72, 95-96, 132, 161-162, 167, 171, 177, 180, 201, 232
- Philo, 29, 77, 124, 145-146, 186-187, 256
- Philodemus, 196-198
- Phoenicia, 55, 198, 244

- Plato, 11-12, 21, 25, 29-35, 50, 121-122, 169, 185-187, 189, 191-192, 195, 204, 240
- Plotinus, 17, 191-192
- Plutarch, 3, 8, 10-11, 28-29, 32-33, 47, 114, 118, 120, 152-156, 162-163, 166, 170, 180, 186, 244
- Pompey, 10
- prayer, 53, 59, 96, 98-100, 121, 125, 130, 132, 136-139, 146, 150, 161, 174-177, 212, 221, 229, 241, 246, 250-251, 254
- priest(s), 30, 34, 40, 52, 57, 75, 80, 122, 125, 130, 150, 174, 178, 199, 203-204, 208, 249
- prophet(s), 8-10, 14-17, 19, 25, 28, 31-32, 34, 37, 39-40, 43-46, 54-55, 80, 83-86, 98, 100, 113, 135, 144, 146-149, 160, 176-177, 198, 201, 204, 208, 210
- Psalms, 9, 17, 48, 75, 99, 145, 158, 163, 166, 178, 180, 211-213, 230, 238, 243, 250, 254
- pseudepigrapha,  
 pseudepigraphy, 19, 22, 59, 72, 145, 148-149, 187, 199, 203-204, 242, 250-251, 254-255
- pseudorthodoxy, 21
- purity, 71-72, 92, 108, 123, 181, 223
- Pythagoras, Pythagorean, 10, 17-18, 20-21, 29-30, 34, 37, 186-187
- Qumran, 22-23, 39, 53-55, 63, 73-74, 76-78, 144, 148, 150
- rabbis, rabbinic Judaism, 18, 24, 48, 71, 82, 87, 107, 113, 166, 168, 254, 256
- Reitzenstein, R., 3-5, 9, 18-20, 96, 124, 127, 227, 231, 233
- resurrection, 14, 40, 48, 57, 60, 66, 72, 77, 82, 89-91, 93, 95-97, 110, 112-113, 115, 125, 129, 134, 136, 164, 176-177
- Revelation, 12, 26, 40, 54, 56, 61, 66, 72, 77, 88, 98-100, 145, 147-148, 158-162, 164-165, 167-169, 171-181, 189, 194-195, 197, 199-203, 219-221, 225, 227
- Romans, 22, 34, 49, 56, 59, 61, 65, 69, 72, 88, 90-91, 93, 95, 98, 100, 102, 106, 110, 112, 120-121, 128-129, 133-134, 145-147, 159, 161, 163-172, 174-175, 177-182, 200, 209
- Ruth, 152
- Sabbath, 71, 84, 93, 175, 177-178, 254
- sacrifice(s), 50, 96, 98, 101, 121, 125-126, 130, 154, 158, 181, 208, 212, 214-215, 219-220, 223-225, 243
- Sadducee(s), 91, 93
- salvation, 6, 40, 46, 52, 57, 89, 96, 105, 107-108, 130-135, 138, 162, 169-170, 178, 187, 199, 202
- Samaritan(s), 43, 45-46, 69, 140-145, 148-149, 190, 255
- Samuel, 116, 145, 165, 173, 195
- Sarapis, 5-6, 14, 16, 217, 219, 222

- Scholem, G., 53-54, 87, 239
- Secret Gospel, 40, 59, 63, 67, 68, 70, 101, 139
- sect(s), 11, 39-40, 45, 53-55, 92, 99, 142-145, 148, 150, 184, 189, 191, 211, 255
- Sefer Harazim, 212, 230
- Septuagint, 111, 145, 174, 187, 194-195, 198, 204, 212-213, 230, 248, 256
- Sicarii, 39
- Simon Magus, 10, 59, 63, 140-141, 147, 160, 190-192
- Solomon, 44, 187, 204, 246, 248
- Stoics, 11, 13, 34, 36, 114, 125, 163, 169, 187
- Strabo, 6, 32, 157
- Suetonius, 3, 10, 20, 46, 51, 95, 136
- Sun, 5, 13-15, 73, 99, 110, 114, 126, 128, 133, 136, 149, 176, 209, 212, 221, 224, 229, 232, 235, 240, 243, 251
- synagogue(s), 10, 22, 42, 90, 93, 162, 240, 254
- syncretism, 17, 29, 243, 249, 256
- Syria, 9, 14, 116
- Tacitus, 46, 95, 157
- temple, 4, 6, 15-16, 52, 57, 75-76, 90-91, 137, 147, 176, 178, 234, 249-250
- Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, 53, 187, 199
- Thessalonians, 57, 65, 87, 90, 114, 138, 147, 158-159, 161, 164, 167-168, 174, 177, 179-180, 200, 203
- Tiede, D., 28-30, 35-38
- Timothy, 14, 63, 66, 92, 98, 147, 159, 162-163, 167-168, 173-174, 177-180, 182
- Tosepta, 136, 237
- transfiguration, 25-26, 40, 60-61, 66, 73, 77, 79-85, 164
- Tyre, 6, 10, 54, 77, 198
- wine, 10, 101, 123, 210, 217, 223-224
- Wolfson, Harry, 140, 146
- Xerxes, 10
- Yahweh, 9, 14, 43, 48-49, 53-54, 116, 158, 175, 178, 180, 195, 210-212, 230, 242-244, 249, 251, 255-256
- Zealot(s), 39
- Zechariah, 48
- Zeus, 5-6, 10-11, 16, 20, 49, 238-241
- Zoroaster, 192, 222, 254

# RELIGIONS IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

## *Recent publications:*

114. GREEN, T.M., *The City of the Moon God*. Religious Traditions of Harran. 1992. ISBN 90 04 09513 6
115. TROMBLEY, F.R., *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370-529*.  
Volume 1. Reprint 1995. ISBN 90 04 09624 8  
Volume 2. Reprint 1995. ISBN 90 04 09691 4
116. FRIESEN, S.J., *Twice Neokoros*. Ephesus, Asia and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09689 2
117. HORNUM, M.B., *Nemesis, the Roman State, and the Games*. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09745 7
118. LIEU, S.N.C., *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East*. 1994. ISBN 90 04 09742 2
119. PIETERSMA, A., *The Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres the Magicians*. P. Chester Beatty xvi (with New Editions of Papyrus Vindobonensis Greek inv. 29456 + 29828 verso and British Library Cotton Tiberius B. v f. 87). Edited with Introduction, Translation and Commentary. With full facsimile of all three texts. 1994. ISBN 90 04 09938 7
120. BLOK, J.H., *The Early Amazons*. Modern and Ancient Perspectives on a Persistent Myth. 1994. ISBN 90 04 10077 6
121. MEYBOOM, P.G.P., *The Nile Mosaic of Palestrina*. Early Evidence of Egyptian Religion in Italy. 1994. ISBN 90 04 10137 3
122. MCKAY, H.A., *Sabbath and Synagogue*. The Question of Sabbath Worship in Ancient Judaism. 1994. ISBN 90 04 10060 1
123. THOM, J.C., *The Pythagorean Golden Verses*. With Introduction and Commentary. 1994. ISBN 90 04 10105 5
124. TAKÁCS, S.A., *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World*. 1994. ISBN 90 04 10121 7
125. FAUTH, W., *Helios Megistos*. Zur synkretistischen Theologie der Spätantike. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10194 2
126. RUTGERS, L.V., *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome*. Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10269 8

127. STRATEN, F.T. VAN, *Hiera kalá*. Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10292 2
128. DIJKSTRA, K., *Life and Loyalty*. A Study in the Socio-Religious Culture of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman Period Based on Epigraphical Evidence. 1995.  
ISBN 90 04 09996 4
129. MEYER M. & MIRECKI P. (eds.). *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10406 2
130. SMITH, M.; COHEN, S.J.D. (ed.). *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*. 2 volumes. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10372 4 (set)  
Vol. 1: *Studies in Historical Method, Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism*. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10477 1  
Vol. 2: *Studies in New Testament, Early Christianity, and Magic*. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10479 8