The Gospels and Their Stories in Anthropological Perspective

Edited by
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Abbreviations

AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und Urchristentums
AncB	The Anchor Bible
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*
APA	American Philosophical Association
ARA	Annual Review of Anthropology
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BiTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BThSt	Biblisch-theologische Studien
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CQ	*The Classical Quarterly*
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DDD	K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, P. W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1995)
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DNP	Der Neue Pauly
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FzB	Forschung zur Bibel
GNT	Grundrisse zum Neuen Testament
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ITQ	*Irish Theological Quarterly*
IESS	*International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBLMS	Journal of Biblical Literature. Monograph Series
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JHS	*The Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JLH	The Journal of Library History
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSSR	*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library

LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
LTK	*Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*
MAAR	*Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*
MEFR (A)	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*
MTSR	*Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTOA / StUNT	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus/ Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTTSD	New Testament Studies, Tools, and Documents
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
R&T	*Religion & Theology*
REA	*Revue des Études Anciennes*
RRR	*Review of Religious Research*
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies. Monograph Series
STAC	Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christitanity
SupplJSNT	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of the New Testament
SupplJSOT	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
SupplNT	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
SupplVChr	Supplements to Vigiliae Christinae
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
ThGl	*Theologie und Glaube*
ThKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ThPQ	*Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift*
TWNT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*
TynBull	*Tyndale Bulletin*
USQR	*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*
VigChr	*Vigiliae Christianae*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNT	*Zeitschrift für Neues Testament*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Introduction

Joseph Verheyden and John S. Kloppenborg

Christianity originated in a world that in many respects was very different from ours. The differences involve certain practices, beliefs, and on a broader level, worldviews, and the language that is used for expressing one's convictions. The evidence can be traced through the literary sources and the archaeological remains that have come to us. This conference focused on the literary sources, as they are often thought to present a more direct entrance to the matter. In particular, attention was paid to the New Testament gospels and what they can tell us about these religious practices, beliefs and language. This evidence was studied against the broader background of Greco-Roman literature dealing with identical or similar phenomena and using an approach that is informed by recent research in (historical) anthropology.

The conference brought together a number of expert biblical scholars, specialists of ancient Greek and Roman religion, and proponents of an anthropological approach to early Christian and Greco-Roman religious tradition. Several of the speakers are members of the so-called "Context Group" that since several decades has been a leading voice in developing social-scientific approaches for studying early Christianity and that has been instrumental in getting the results trickling down in biblical studies at large. The meeting also offered an opportunity for entering in discussion with colleagues who, while fundamentally interested in the method and its results, have been working with a more classical paradigm of reading the earliest Christian sources against the background of the Greco-Roman sources to discover similarities and dissimilarities in beliefs and practices.

The speakers were asked to focus on a particular topic in the field of religious practice or belief that is found in the gospels and in other ancient literature and study this topic in dialogue with recent scholarship and with a specific interest for the insights that can be gained from an anthropological approach. The essays here collected are divided into four sections. The first one is entitled "Bodies, Demons, and Magic" and consists of five studies. Giovanni Bazzana analyses the Beelzebul controversy in Mark and Q focusing on the relationship between (the demon) Beelzebul and Satan, the mysterious reference to "a strong one" who is to be conquered, the type of accusation that is levelled against Jesus as healer and exorcist, and the way the powerful intervention of God is expressed. Laura Feldt continues her research on monstrosity in an essay dealing with

Mark's construction of the demoniac as monstrous, but also as ambiguous and as provoking deeply traumatising emotions. Sarah Rollens asks why Mark shows a special interest in developing the motif of assaulting or hurting the bodies of major characters of the story (Jesus and the Baptist, but also the believers) and links it to the genre of Mark as a "mythic" account on identity creation in a particular group. Brigidda Bell studies the topic of the "false prophet" in Matthew (7:15) and the *Didache* (11:8) from the perspective of a typology of discernment, comparing the ancient sources to the practice of embodied discernment in a contemporary evangelical community in the USA and in ancient Greek religion. William Arnal contributes a lengthy essay on magic in Mark and Acts read against the background of modern socio-anthropological trends in studying ancient magic and the perception of magic in the ancient world itself. Among the New Testament passages to be studied in some detail are Mark 7:32–6 and Acts 16:16–9 and chapter 19.

Two essays are listed under the heading "Practices". Zeba Crook deals with coercive prayers, exploring the relationship between religious and magical practice in using prayer as a tool to obtain something from the divine and the complicated interaction it creates by working with a model of reciprocity to obtain what is asked for all while making sure the gods remain satisfied. Martin Ebner studies the figure of Jesus as a teacher and preacher accompanied by his disciples in the four gospels in comparison with Roman models of the teacher – disciple *topos* in (primarily) philosophical tradition, thereby focusing on the distinctive features that can be found in each of the gospels with regard to how Jesus' power and authority are represented.

The section entitled "Spaces" contains two essays dealing with space, though in quite different ways. Halvor Moxnes connects the concepts of secrecy and separation as it is developed in Matt 6:1–18, 11:25–7 and chapter 13 with that of identity formation and the creation of another kind of spatial context that allows the group to understand itself as "different" or even as an alternative to the society in which it comes about. Dan Smith is rather more interested in "real" spatial categories as these are linked up with the missionary ambitions of the earliest Christian communities and evidenced in Q and in the synoptic gospels, the oldest of which interprets the move into new territory as incursion, while the two others seem to look upon it as forms of conquering or appropriating.

The last section bears the title "Visions" and brings together three essays, the first of which analyses gospel passages depicting visions by Jesus while the other two deal with the resurrection stories. Santiago Guijarro connects visions with specific states of consciousness, situates Jesus' visions in line with those of Jewish prophets that are told about in Hebrew Scripture, and ends with a brief survey of the visions of the disciples after the resurrection. Jan Bremmer studies resurrection narratives in Luke and Acts against the background of similar stories as told later on in Greek novels and in Philostratus' Life of Apollonius, with special

attention to the issue of the "reality" of what is seen and told. Pieter Craffert proposes to read the resurrection narratives in the gospels in a neuro-anthropological perspective focusing on the particularities of visionary experiences.

Simon Coleman was asked to contribute a response to the essays from the perspective of an anthropologist recalling first how anthropology has evaluated some of the claims made in Scripture and in early Christianity about its identity before offering some brief but well-informed comments on each of the essays in this volume.

Over the past three or four decades, biblical scholars and scholars of early Christianity have gradually become more aware of the importance of the social sciences for their own field. This has produced a steady flow of studies rooted in work that was done in the fields of religious psychology, group formation psychology, the sociology of emerging groups and movements and the sociology of religion, ethnology, and historical anthropology. The Leuven conference wished to offer an inevitably selective survey of what has been achieved over these years and to reflect on how these efforts should be pursued in the future. It was the explicit purpose not to limit ourselves to purely methodological reflections, but to explore and evaluate how concepts and constructs can be developed and then also checked in applying them to specific cases and topics that are typical and crucial for understanding earliest Christianity.

Bodies, Demons, and Magic

Beelzebul vs Satan: Exorcist Subjectivity and Spirit Possession in the Historical Jesus

Giovanni B. Bazzana

No scholar denies that "spirit"[1] possession played an extremely significant role in the experience of the Jesus groups, beginning already with the historical Jesus, about whom all the sources attest to a rich and successful exorcistic activity. Nevertheless, scholarship almost systematically marginalizes this aspect or tries to "explain it away" in reductionistic fashion. Thus, possession is often attributed either to psychopathology (even today, when large sectors of the field are progressively becoming more and more conscious of the implications of certain representations of disability) or to the need to "vent out" in order to find a momentary relief from the oppressiveness of unequal social and political situations.[2] Such a tendency in biblical scholarship cannot be surprising when one takes into account the long-standing aversion of institutional Christian theology towards "mystical" phenomena that are often deemed dangerous for their supposed individualistic and amoral thrust. However, there are in fact deeper reasons behind the inadequate treatments of possession that one encounters in New Testament academic writing. Indeed, the very phenomenon of possession entails aspects that are fundamentally at odds with some of the principles on which critical scholarship has been built since the Enlightenment.[3] By definition, possession presupposes a fracture of the modern autonomous and coherent self or results in an embodiment of cultural scripts and idioms that is largely independent from linguistic and textual mediation. Given such premises, it is almost natural that the tools of traditional historical-criticism prove themselves inadequate to

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[1] I will write "spirit" throughout as a way to acknowledge the fact that using this term to translate the Greek πνεῦμα as it occurs in the New Testament and in other ancient texts imports a dualistic worldview of Platonic origin that was scarcely at home in those writings.

[2] The second approach (which has the undeniable advantage to take into consideration the social context of possession) is often carried too far in New Testament scholarship on account of too wooden a reception of the influential (but by now seriously outdated) functionalist paradigm of I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (London: Routledge, 2003[3]).

[3] Such a thought is advanced insightfully already by H. Moxnes, 'Ethnography and Historical Imagination in Reading Jesus as an Exorcist', in *Neot* 44 (2010), 327–41, on the basis of theoretical proposals of Jean and John Comaroff.

deal with this phenomenon and that consequently most scholars see themselves forced to resort to strategies of reductionism or marginalization.

Fortunately, cultural anthropology has also experienced (going back to the very first steps of the discipline in the nineteenth century) a trajectory comparable to that observed in biblical studies in its dealings with possession.[4] However, ethnographers enjoy the great advantage of witnessing these episodes first-hand and of interrogating the human subjects involved in them in a way that is simply impossible for those scholars who have only ancient textual reports at their disposal. Thus, by building on an enormously rich treasure of ethnographic accounts, anthropologists have been able in recent years to move beyond the functionalist and structuralist interpretations that had characterized a previous generation of scholarship on possession. The most recent ethnographic literature on the subject shows very compellingly that possession as an embodiment of Otherness is a jarringly traumatic experience for mediums, but also that it can be turned into a very positive cultural impulse when it empowers them to heal, gives them a way to know the mythical as well as historical past of their group, or even provides them with means to reflect on and confront dialectically their socio-cultural conditions. Several theorists, such as Michael Lambek, Janice Boddy, and Adeline Masquelier, have succeeded in illustrating that possession is not merely a mechanistic response to psychological or social conditions, but that it has a strong "productive" role in enabling humans to reflect on their culture, to embody their personal and group history, and to construct new forms of moral agency and subjectivity. For these reasons, I too would like to treat possession as an *ordinary* phenomenon, moving away from the exoticizing (and thus ultimately marginalizing) note that is usually sounded in the earlier New Testament scholarship that has often associated these phenomena with "magic" and witchcraft.

This paper is part of an ongoing attempt to employ the results of ethnographic studies of possession to help the historical imagination when the ancient record of the early Christ groups is lacking in full descriptions of ritual performances or in detailed representation of the intimate relationship between human "hosts" and their "spirits". After all, in the words of Jean and John Comaroff, "no humanist account of the past or present can (or does) go very far without the kind of understanding that the ethnographic gaze presupposes. To the extent that historiography is concerned with the recovery of meaningful worlds, with the interplay of the collective and the subjective, it cannot but rely on the tools of the ethnographer".[5] This paper constitutes an attempt to apply such an approach

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[4] For a good, but now slightly outdated, summary of the state of anthropological scholarship on possession, see J. Boddy, 'Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality', in *ARA* 23 (1994), 407–34.

[5] J. Comaroff, J. L. Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder CO: Westview, 1992), 13–5.

to the figure of the historical Jesus as a possessed individual.[6] Combining tradi-
tional historical-critical methodologies and insights drawn from anthropological
literature, the examination of a key Gospel pericope (the so-called "Beelzebul ac-
cusation") will show that possession in all likelihood constituted for the historical
Jesus a traumatic experience of penetrability and fragmentation of the self, but
also a moment of empowerment through the construction of a new subjectivity
(one could almost say, an "assemblage") as exorcist.

I. Beelzebul vs. Satan?

It might be convenient to begin this analysis not from the "charge" that Jesus
is performing his exorcisms "with the help" of Beelzebul, but from the rather
puzzling answer that he gives to his interlocutors (I will come back in due course
on the nature of this "alliance" and on the issue whether this pericope was an
"accusation" at all in its "original" stages).

Mark 3:23: Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς ἐν παραβολαῖς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· πῶς δύναται
Σατανᾶς Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλειν; 24 Καὶ ἐὰν βασιλεία ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτὴν μερισθῇ, οὐ δύναται στα-
θῆναι ἡ βασιλεία ἐκείνη; 25 Καὶ ἐὰν οἰκία ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτὴν μερισθῇ, οὐ δυνήσεται ἡ οἰκία ἐκείνη
σταθῆναι; 26 Καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἀνέστη εφ᾽ ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἐμερίσθη, οὐ δύναται στῆναι ἀλλὰ
τέλος ἔχει.

And he summoned them and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive
out Satan? And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom is not able to stand. And
if a household is divided against itself, that household will not be able to stand. And if Satan
has rebelled against himself and he is divided, he is not able to stand, but is at an end".

Q 11:17 Εἰδὼς δὲ τὰ διανοήματα αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πᾶσα βασιλεία μερισθεῖσα [καθ᾽]
ἑαυτῇ[ς] ἐρημοῦται καὶ πᾶσα οἰκία μερισθεῖσα καθ᾽ ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται. 18 Καὶ εἰ ὁ
Σατανᾶς ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἐμερίσθη, πῶς σταθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ;

But, knowing their thoughts, he said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is left
barren, and every household divided against itself will not stand. And if Satan is divided
against himself, how will his kingdom stand?"

Despite its apparent straightforwardness, however, the argument Jesus develops
here has generated significant exegetical problems. There are basically two op-
tions for understanding the final rhetorical question posed by Jesus in the overall
context of the entire pericope.[7] On the one hand, Jesus is presenting an actual

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    [6] I will assume throughout that the pericope does not only reflect a historical charge leveled
at Jesus, but also that he had to be possessed to begin with in order to perform his exorcisms
(as it is almost the norm cross-culturally). A similar conclusion is also reached by S. L. Davies,
Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance, and the Origins of Christianity (London: SCM, 1995), 91, and
P. F. Craffert, *The Life of a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in Anthropological-Historical
Perspective* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2008), 231–2.
    [7] Or one can simply dismiss the verses as done by G. Van Oyen, 'Demons and Exorcisms in

scenario, in which the realm of Satan is in turmoil and even threatens to come to its *telos*. If one adopts this interpretation, then Jesus is admitting that he is performing his exorcisms and healings *by virtue of* the power of Beelzebul and against that of Satan. On the other hand, one might take Jesus' final question as a *reductio ad absurdum*, a rhetorical ploy that depicts an impossible outcome in order to show that the implicit premises of the accusation are logically untenable. In this case, Jesus would prove that Beelzebul does not possess him by showing that it is absurd to assume that Satan's rule might be divided, since it does not seem to be coming to an end.

There is little doubt that the two options present problems, both theological and in the rhetorical construction of the pericope. One of the most accurate readings of this section (which is usually side-stepped by commentators)[8] is Joel Marcus', who compellingly shows that the only two viable positions are those summarized above. Marcus chooses to interpret the last question of Jesus as a *reductio ad absurdum*. While Marcus' choice is argued in a very convincing way overall, there are two major points at which he does not seem to provide a completely satisfactory explanation. The first issue concerns the interpretation of the verses immediately following the rhetorical question. Both in Mark (3:27, the burglary of a strong man's house) and in Q (11:19–20, Jesus' saying on the exorcisms performed with the "finger of God"), it appears that exorcisms do indeed signal at the very least the beginning of Satan's downfall and – more implicitly – of the victory of God's sovereignty. It is worth emphasizing straight away that, were one to adopt Marcus' *reductio ad absurdum* option, one ought to also provide a convincing explanation for this logical contradiction in the space of a few verses.

The second problem with the reading of the "divided kingdom" saying as a *reductio ad absurdum* is that this interpretation is forced to assume that the two names "Beelzebul" and "Satan" refer to the same entity. Most scholars seem to take this assumption for granted, but its historical support is actually quite flimsy. The name "Beelzebul", in particular, is almost unknown before the time of composition of the gospels and this has generated a significant debate concerning its correct spelling and its etymology.[9] Indeed, the lone mention of the name in the Hebrew Bible occurs in 2 Kings 1, where King Ahaziah is injured because of a fall out of a window and sends for the help of "Beel-zebub, the god

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the Gospel of Mark', in N. Vos, W. Otten (eds.), *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, SupplVChr 108 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99–116, who summarizes Jesus' words like this: "So what? What are you worried about? Let me do as I like to do, as long as the outcome will be that Satan will be beaten" (110).

[8] For instance, A. Witmer does not even mention these verses in her rather long treatment of the Beelzebul episode (*Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist: His Exorcisms in Social and Political Context*, LNTS 459 [London: T&T Clark, 2012], 109–29).

[9] The scholarly positions and the related evidence are conveniently summarized in W. Herrmann, s. v. Baal-zebul, in *DDD*, 154–6.

of Ekron". This action is perceived as an affront to the God of Israel and leads to the opposition of the prophet Elijah and ultimately to the death of the king. It is almost universally accepted that the deity mentioned in 2 Kings is the same that appears in the gospel accounts as "Beelzebul". The variation in spelling is in all likelihood due to the fact that the Hebrew text plays with the originally honorific name by transforming it into "Lord of the flies".[10] The documents discovered at Ras Shamra have proved that the Gospels preserve the correct spelling of the name as "Beelzebul", in which the radical *zbl* means "raised" or "exalted", so that a more adequate translation of the title ought to be "high Lord". Nevertheless, as far as the present analysis is concerned, it is noteworthy that the Jesus traditions have preserved this name despite the lack of other chronologically closer attestations.[11] The data seems to indicate that – in this case – a mythical and historical tradition has survived in the embodied form of possession better than through the channels of learned textualization.

Significantly different is the situation of "Satan", a name that is equally sparsely attested in the Hebrew Bible, but that seems to have become more relevant in the Second Temple period.[12] However, even though one encounters an increased number of occurrences of "satan" in this period, it does not yet seem to have become a personal name, as it was the case in the Hebrew Bible (for example, in Job's famous opening scene in heaven). For instance, in the handful of occurrences among the Qumran documents "satan" ought clearly to be understood "not as a proper name, but rather as the description of a figure who could also be a human adversary".[13] A possible exception might be 11Q15. However, in this apotropaic prayer "satan" is paralleled with "a spirit of uncleanness", an association that underscores once more the generic nature of the designation.[14] The same conclusions may apply to *Jubilees*, a text in which "satan" often generically indicates one of the evils that humans might face when they stray from God's commandments.[15] It is important to note that, while *Jubilees* does indeed know of a male-

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[10] The wordplay is picked up and rendered intelligible for a Greek audience by Josephus, who – in his retelling of the episode in *Jewish Antiquities* 9,19 – calls the god τὴν Ἀκκάρων θεὸν Μυῖαν ("the goddess Fly of Akkaron").

[11] D. L. PENNEY, M. O. WISE ('By the Power of Beelzebub: An Aramaic Incantation Formula from Qumran [4Q560]', in *JBL* 113 [1994], 627–50) have suggested that the Aramaic version of the name could be reconstructed in a Qumranic fragment, but such reading is declared paleographically impossible by É. PUECH, *Qumran Grotte 4. XXVII: Textes en Araméen, deuxième partie*, DJD 37 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2009), 296.

[12] See the materials collected in P. L. DAY, C. BREYTENBACH, s. v. Satan, in *DDD*, 726–32, even though the almost complete absence of references to the Qumran documents limits the usefulness of the entry.

[13] L. T. STUCKENBRUCK, *The Myth of the Rebellious Angels: Studies in Second Temple Judaism and New Testament Texts*, WUNT 335 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 94–5, here: 94.

[14] See the discussion of this passage *ibid.*, 95.

[15] See, for instance, as part of the description of the blessed state of humankind in the end time: "They will complete and live their entire lifetimes peacefully and joyfully. There will be neither a satan nor any evil one who will destroy. For their entire lifetimes will be times of blessing

volent "chief adversary" of God, the latter figure is regularly called "Mastema". However, it seems that the figure of the "chief adversary of God" begins to overlap with *the* "Satan" at least in one passage that describes the harmful activities of the demons.[16] Eventually, it is in texts that come from the early Jesus groups that one can see a more consistent transformation of "Satan" into the personal name of the devil. The Gospel of Mark occupies a sort of intermediate position along such a trajectory, since it includes passages in which the name is still treated in a generic way,[17] passages in which the term almost seems to indicate a specific being who however performs a generic "adversarial" function,[18] and passages (such as the present one) in which "Satan" is the ruler of a kingdom directly opposed to God's.

These brief remarks should have clarified that "Beelzebul" and "Satan" are two names whose overlap is far from being a given and – most important of all – is not supported by any Jewish or Christian evidence from the Second Temple period. As far as the "Beelzebul controversy" is concerned, many exegetes assume the identification, but the most accurate ones are also aware of the difficulties inherent in such an interpretive move.[19] Indeed, such difficulties become even more significant when one attends to the specific features that distinguish the figure of Beelzebul from that of Satan. As illustrated above, the lone story involving Beelzebul that might conceivably have occurred to a first-century CE Jew is that of 2 Kings 1. In that account two traits are clearly associated with the figure

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and healing" (*Jubilees* 23:29, in J. C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*, CSCO 511 [Leuven: Peeters, 1989], 149); for similar occurrences, see also 40:9; 46:2; 50:5.

[16] "All of the evil ones who were savage we tied up in the place of judgment, while we left a tenth of them to exercise power on the earth before the satan" (*Jubilees* 10:11, *ibid.*, 60).

[17] In the famous answer of Jesus to Peter, who had been shocked by the prophecy of the Passion: "Get out of my sight, Satan, because you do not set your mind on the affairs of God, but on human affairs" (Mark 8:33, on which see A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* [Minneapolis MN: Fortress, 2007], 407).

[18] In the short Markan mention of Jesus' "temptation" ("And he was in the wilderness forty days, being put to the test by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving him", Mark 1:13), the tester is called "the Satan" with a determinative article. The longer Q account of this episode (Q 4:1–13) designates the adversary of Jesus – in a more Septuagintal way – as ὁ διάβολος, literally "the accuser" or "the slanderer".

[19] The already mentioned Joel Marcus notes that the argument of Jesus in these verses (as Marcus understands it) "would have no force unless the equivalence were accepted by both sides in the dispute", but the best he can say is that Beelzebul "had probably become an alternate name for Satan" at this time ('Beelzebul', 247, n. 2). J. P. Meier (*A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. II: Mentor, Message, and Miracles* [New York: Doubleday, 1994], 462–3) leaves a similar admission buried in one of his footnotes ("Theoretically possible, however, in the confusing and variegated world of demonology is the interpretation that Satan is indeed the king of the 'kingdom' of demons, while Beelzebul is one of his subordinate ruling princes") and then goes on to discount it in a very gracious – but not at all scientific – way ("Perhaps the Beelzebul complex [sic!] in the Synoptics reflects similar ideas about the reign of Satan/Beelzebul over a kingdom of demons, ideas held by Jewish peasants in Palestine around the turn of the era. Naturally, the last thing we should look for in popular beliefs about Satan and demons is the consistency of systematic theology").

of the non-Jewish deity-turned-demon. First, Beelzebul is connected with the healing of bodily ailments, an element that can certainly fit his reappearance in Mark and Q with their fundamental lack of distinction between illness and spirit possession. Second, Beelzebul is quite evidently a foreign entity, not only because it is a non-human demon, but, even more meaningfully, because the story of the ill-conceived consultation of King Ahaziah revolves around the assertion that Beelzebul cannot be a good healer for an Israelite and that asking for his help is tantamount to a breach of the loyalty owed by Israel to God. Both these traits are missing from the portraits of "Satan" that one finds in the Jewish sources of the Second Temple period. There is no healing power – not even a fraudulent or "pagan" one – associated with Satan. But also the foreign label that comes attached to Beelzebul is missing from Satan. There is no doubt that the latter is represented as *the* adversary of God and of God's sovereignty, but – as Elaine Pagels observed roughly twenty years ago – the construction of an all-encompassing enemy that starts in Second Temple Jewish texts and is later developed within the Christ movement is that of an internal or – even better – of an "intimate" opponent.[20] In turn, the "adversarial" nature of "Satan" is inscribed in the very name of the "spirit" and in its appearances in the Jewish traditions in a way that cannot fit "Beelzebul" if the identification between the two figures is not assumed, but proved on the benchmark provided by the ancient evidence.

It is also appropriate to add to these remarks the observation that the text of the controversy emphasizes the difference between Beelzebul and Satan at the level of their respective placements within the hierarchical structure of the "spiritual" or demonological realm. Indeed, while Satan is implicitly designated as a "king" (βασιλεύς) who can even foolishly fancy himself a rival of God's cosmic rule, Beelzebul is simply indicated as a "chief" (ἄρχων) and one cannot help but notice that this appointment is over as fickle and ambiguous "soldiers" as the δεμόνια. It is difficult to imagine that such hierarchical distinctions might have been lost on the authors and early readers of texts such as Mark and Q.[21] Clearly, these are additional indications that must be taken seriously as signifiers of a distinction between the two beings and of the nature of their relationship. Thus, the few exegetes who conclude that our verses do not superimpose Beelzebul and Satan, seem to be on the right track[22] – a conclusion that is all the more likely when one takes into consideration the additional benefits of avoiding the

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[20] E. PAGELS, 'The Social History of Satan, the "Intimate Enemy": A Preliminary Sketch', in *HTR* 84 (1991), 105–28, even though the overall historical reconstruction – based as it is on a binary opposition between canonical and apocryphal Jewish texts – might be problematic.

[21] On Q's attention for hierarchies as evidence of the bureaucratic ethos behind the Sayings Gospel's political theology, see G. B. BAZZANA, *Kingdom of Bureaucracy: The Political Theology of Village Scribes in the Sayings Gospel Q*, BETL 274 (Leuven: Peeters, 2015).

[22] P. SELLEW, 'Beelzebul in Mark 3: Dialogue, Story, or Saying Cluster', in *Forum* 4 (1988), 93–108, here: 106, and J. J. ROUSSEAU, 'Jesus, an Exorcist of a Kind', in *SBLSP* (1993), 129–53, here: 151 (even though Rousseau's categories should give one pause).

complex *reductio ad absurdum* advocated by Joel Marcus and of preserving a more coherent flow for the rhetorical argument developed in the remnant of the pericope.[23]

What are the consequences of such a relationship between the historical Jesus and Beelzebul for our understanding of "spirit possession" in the Christ movement? Once more, the situation is significantly clarified when the data derived from ancient texts are compared with those of contemporary ethnographic studies of these phenomena. First, that a healer and exorcist is himself or herself possessed is quite a common occurrence. Moreover, in several possession cults the "spirits" are envisaged as beings with foreign personalities, quite often at odds with the cultural expectations and personal proclivities of their hosts.[24] This is the case also for the "spirits" that are exorcized by Jesus both in Mark and in Q, where their most common designation is the generic "impure spirits", which underscores their foreignness and opposition to the normative and identitarian paradigms of the audiences to whom these narratives are addressed. Foreignness cannot be surprising for beings that are pictured as inhabiting the liminal areas of culturally constructed space both in a very concrete sense ("spirits" tend to appear in deserted areas away from cities and other places identified as "civilized") and in ways that have more to do with cosmology and ontology (as witnessed by the uncertain status of demons forever suspended between the material and the immaterial). Nevertheless, the foreignness of these "spirits" is always relative since it is through their "possession" that humans can literally embody their own culture's mythology and history.

II. Binding the "Strong One"

Jesus' alliance with Beelzebul, conceived as a "chieftain" within Satan's kingdom, brings about the latter's demise, since control cannot be effectively maintained in the presence of divisions of authority.[25] This dynamic within demonic power

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[23] MOXNES ('Ethnography', 338–9) comes closer than many others to see the distinction between Beelzebul and Satan, but his conclusions are undermined by his assumption that the pericope can only be a charge moved by the opponents of Jesus and that Jesus must thus reject the label of "otherness" that might come with Beelzebul. However, this leads even Moxnes to misinterpret the actual cultural dynamics of possession and ultimately to read Jesus' exorcisms as allegorical presentations of a political contrast.

[24] A classic analysis of this feature of possession in the case of the *zar* cults of northern Sudan is J. BODDY, 'Spirits and Selves in Northern Sudan: The Cultural Therapeutics of Possession and Trance', in *American Ethnologist* 15 (1988), 4–27, but this is a widespread feature of African spirit possession. Nevertheless, it is very much present in the Caribbean and in Brazil as well: see, for instance, R. ROMBERG, *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2003).

[25] That the entire pericope is about theological political authority is also noted by VAN OYEN, 'Demons', 111.

is reiterated in the following sub-section of the Beelzebul pericope, by way of the use of the well-known image of a robbery perpetrated against a "strong one":

Mark 3:27: Ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δύναται οὐδεὶς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ εἰσελθὼν τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ διαρπάσαι, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸν ἰσχυρὸν δήσῃ, καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ διαρπάσει.

But no one is able to enter a strong one's house and steal his vessels, unless he first binds the strong one; then he will thoroughly plunder his house.

This is a passage in which the wording of the Q parallel to Mark 3:27 cannot be established with any degree of reliability. Indeed, the Matthean version (Matt 12:29) follows Mark very closely (so closely that in all likelihood it depends on it), while the Lukan saying (Luke 11:21–2) shows almost no lexical analogies with the other two and actually appears to be largely indebted to the more sophisticated linguistic preferences of the author of the third gospel.[26] However, while the Q wording of the "strong man" saying cannot be reconstructed with any degree of certainty, it is quite safe to conclude that Q also had a saying very similar in content to Mark 3:27 at this point. Such a conclusion is supported by the observation that both Matthew and Luke have a series of materials that are arranged exactly in the same way despite being quite divergent from a strictly linguistic point of view. Thus, as we have seen above, both Matthew and Luke include the Beelzebul accusation immediately followed by Jesus' response concerning divided kingdoms and households (in Matt 12:24 / Luke 11:15 and Matt 12:25–6 / Luke 11:17–8, respectively). In both gospels these sayings segue directly into the important saying on the "spirit/finger of God" (Matt 12:27–8; Luke 11:19–20) that will be examined in the next section. After this saying, both Matthew and Luke have the saying on "binding the strong man" (Matt 12:29; Luke 11:21–2), which thus falls into the same relative position with respect to other materials within this cluster of sayings. On these grounds, it is easy to see how the "strong one" quite probably closed the entire argument in its "original" articulation that was later rewritten in slightly different forms in Mark and Q. The chief evidence for the difference between these two early rewritings is the Q insertion of the sayings on the "spirit/finger of God", which clearly was not done by either Matthew or Luke and which changes significantly the thrust of the overall argument in ways that will be discussed later.[27]

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[26] Luke 11:21–2 Ὅταν ὁ ἰσχυρὸς καθωπλισμένος φυλάσσῃ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ αὐλήν, ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἐστὶν τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ· ἐπὰν δὲ ἰσχυρότερος αὐτοῦ ἐπελθὼν νικήσῃ αὐτόν, τὴν πανοπλίαν αὐτοῦ αἴρει ἐφ᾽ ᾗ ἐπεποίθει καὶ τὰ σκῦλα αὐτοῦ διαδίδωσιν ("When a strong one, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder"). On the Lukan flavor of these terms, see S. LÉGASSE, 'L'"homme fort" de Luc 11,21–22', in *NT* 5 (1962), 5–9.

[27] The evaluators of the *Critical Edition of Q* concur with this conclusion by signaling that something must have been in Q 11:21–2, but that no part of the Q wording can be reconstructed with any certainty (against the early opinion of the *International Q Project* that had proposed

The saying on "binding the strong one" sits quite well in the context of a discussion on spirit possession and exorcism. First of all, all commentators agree on the fact that the "strong one" ought to be identified with Satan, mentioned in the preceding verse.[28] The notion that Satan is "bound", and thus defeated, flows naturally from the sayings on the divided kingdom and household, once the latter are taken not as a *reductio ad absurdum* (as suggested by Marcus), but as an indication of the means (internal dissension and betrayal in his dominion) through which Satan is fatally weakened.[29]

The means and goals of the action against the "strong one" are also described in ways that fit quite well with the world of the "spirits" and their control. In particular, as most exegetes recognize, the fact that Satan is "bound" is reminiscent of a host of Jewish mythical traditions that have to do with demonology and the etiology of evil. The preferred designation (shared by Mark and Q) of the demons as "unclean spirits" signals the connection between the demonology of these texts and the traditions concerning the primordial fall of the angels. The earliest written witness to this myth is probably the so-called *Book of the Watchers* that opens the collection designated as *1 Enoch*. There, God instructs the angel Raphael to "bind" Asael, the leader of the watchers, and to cast him into the darkness right before the Flood and the healing of the earth that had been desolated by the fallen angels.[30] Besides such mythical references, the Greek verb δέω cannot fail to evoke the quasi-technical terminology employed to designate the "magical" operations and the spells (καταδεσμοί) through which "spirits" are controlled in order to assist in damaging opponents or in achieving other beneficial results.[31]

Another (but not as often recognized) element of the saying that ought to evoke the idea of spirit possession is the designation of the goods stolen from the "strong one" as σκεύη (literally "vessels"). In and of itself, this lexical choice is less puzzling than it is sometimes made out to be: σκεύη can and is used to designate – generically and with an extension of its basic meaning – the implements that constitute the property of a given household and that could conceivably be taken

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for Q a text similar to Luke 11:21–2 and against the dissenting opinion of Paul Hoffmann, who prefers a text largely modeled on Mark 3:27).

[28] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 233–4.

[29] Yarbro Collins (*ibid.*) suggests that Jesus "binds" Satan ("the strong one", ὁ ἰσχυρός) because he is "the stronger one" (ὁ ἰσχυρότερος) announced by John the Baptist in Mark 1:7. However, such christological nuance seems unwarranted for the earlier version of the saying as it is preserved in Mark 3:27. Indeed, there is no mention here of a "stronger one" and actually Luke might have inserted it in his rewriting (Luke 11:22) because he had picked up exegetically the potential reference to Mark 1:7, which he had already included in the depiction of John's proclamation in Luke 3:16.

[30] *1 Enoch* 10:4–8.

[31] C. A. Faraone, 'The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells', in Id., D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3–32.

away by a robber. Nevertheless, the term is also employed to indicate the "human body", conceived as a "vessel" that contains the true human "essence" that can then be indicated as "soul" or with other similar labels.[32] Yet, in the context of the Beelzebul pericope and its consistent focus on the themes of spirit possession and of the power relationships entailed within it, σκεύη, understood as "bodily vessels", can take on an additional nuance of meaning. There are indeed several early Christian texts in which the Greek term is used to designate the human body as a "container" for benign or malevolent "spirits". Such a nuance fits the context and the content of the saying on "binding the strong one" quite well. Thanks to Jesus' newly found exorcistic power, Satan can be "bound" and its "vessels" – the human beings whom it has possessed – can be taken away from him.

All the political theological resonances of the saying on divided kingdoms and households and this use of σκεύη strengthen the impression that power relationships are constitutive of the ambiguity of possession. The latter is all the more salient here because the phenomenon of possession touches on the very bodily existence of human beings and compromises the very unity of their subjective consciousness. What should one make then of the "alliance" between Jesus and Beelzebul? Does it entail a subjection of the human "host" to the "chief of demons"? But, if that is the case, how can this very alliance bring about the downfall of Satan? Ethnographic literature helps us to see that such a sharp binary is inappropriate and that in fact the interpretive effort calls for a more nuanced model.

Several studies offer interesting descriptions of the complex process that leads mediums and their "spirits" to become acquainted in ways that can prove beneficial for both the community and the individual host. Recently, Diana Espirito Santo has described with great theoretical sophistication the means through which Cuban *espiritismo* practitioners educate their "attention" to receive, discern, and interpret the information conveyed by their *muertos* (protective spirits of the dead).[33] Instead of being a process through which notions are *learned* (as in the intellectual western understanding of "education"), such "attention" is cultivated in a different way, since it must encompass more than mere notional knowledge to include affects and bodily practices. Western educational paradigms are predicated on the assumption of an ontological and unavoidable distinction between body and mind, with the latter being impermeable to foreign "possession". However, the very phenomenon of spirit possession, as it

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[32] The best-known occurrence of this use in the New Testament is certainly 2 Cor 4:7, in which the "treasure" that people currently have in "clay jars" (ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) is usually construed to be their "souls" (for a similar Pauline reference to the human body, see also 1 Thess 4:4). Such usage emphasizes passivity and lack of agency: indeed, Polybius can employ σκεύη to designate accomplices who are mobilized as veritable "instruments" in carrying out a political plot (in *Histories* 13,5,7, the spy Damokles is designated as an ὑπηρετικὸν σκεῦος εὐφυές, "a well-suited menial instrument".)

[33] D. Espirito Santo, 'Imagination, Sensation, and the Education of Attention among Cuban Spirit Mediums', in *Ethnos* 77 (2012), 252–71.

has been described so far, disrupts dichotomies such as body/mind and trance/awareness. From this perspective, then, educating one's attention to the presence of the spirits requires, in Espirito Santo's words, the "enskillment of one's self".[34] The Portuguese anthropologist describes a couple of instances in which such "enskillment" has taken place over time, as mediums started off with a conflicted relationship with their *muertos* and over time established a mutually beneficial balance. "Spirits" are at first usually unruly and "wild", so much so that their presence is almost always made evident not only through bodily illnesses, but also psychological and existential distress for the potential medium.[35] Espirito Santo points to the subtle but no less fundamental distinction between "spirits" that "come with" their hosts (and are thus disruptive for their personal and social lives) and "spirits" that are "theirs". The latter outcome is not the necessary result of every experience of spirit possession, but in order to be achieved it calls for "a gradual and conscious interpenetration between such entities and the sentient, moving bodies" of the mediums. Such education of "attention" can be described as "a means of ascertaining the possibilities and limitations of one's condition, and of subverting them through the careful production of oneself via knowledge of these entities".

Adeline Masquelier describes a similar process of construction of the self on the part of a "host", based on her ethnographic work on the *bori* cults of Niger.[36] Masquelier analyzes the story of Zeinabou, a young woman who had been subjected by the violent "spirit" Rankasso to a traumatic and shameful public "confession" of past and, up to that moment, secret transgressions in her familial and sexual life. The description of how Zeinabou comes to cope in the space of years with the very public consequences of such an event is a powerful exemplification of the trajectory followed by mediums when they start off as veritable "hostages" of their "spirits" and then become truly their "hosts". In Masquelier's words, possession "is about the ongoing negotiation of identity and autonomy between spirit and host, a negotiation that may entail profit as well as pain for the human party as both beings struggle to coexist within a single corporeal frame".[37] The process through which mediums come to embrace the radical otherness of the "spirits" is often painful beyond the purely physical illnesses experienced at the onset of possession. The case of Zeinabou aptly illustrates the social and moral

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[34] The "spirits" become present in the medium's body, calling for an alternative definition of the latter, not based on an ontological binary matter/spirit and which Espirito Santo draws from B. LATOUR's understanding of the body as "an interface that becomes more and more describable as it learns to be affected by more and more elements" ('How to Talk about the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies', in *Body & Society* 10 [2004], 205–29).

[35] See also S. PALMIÉ, '*Fascinans* or *Tremendum*? Permutations of the State, the Body, and the Divine in Late-Twentieth-Century Havana', in *New West Indian Guide* 78 (2004), 229–68.

[36] A. MASQUELIER, 'From Hostage to Host: Confessions of a Spirit Medium in Niger', in *Ethos* 30 (2002), 49–76.

[37] *Ibid.*, 50.

implications of dealing with an unruly "spirit", but it also shows how such a situation provides mediums with a relatively safe opportunity to express feelings of guilt and to come to terms with new expectations. Following Lambek, Masquelier thus can describe possession as "a system of communication that mystifies agency, authority, and accountability at the same time that it provides a means to relocate one's selfhood within a concrete and enduring web of mythical, moral, and material relations".[38]

It is appealing to read the "accusation" of performing exorcisms with the help of Beelzebul and Jesus' slightly clumsy riposte based on the analogy between human kingdoms and Satan's rule as an instance of the same process of education of "attention". In such a reading, Jesus appears to have been in the same situation as Zeinabou, for whom "the confession 'she' made while she was in the throes of possession provided a critical space of reflexivity and retrospective elaboration at the same time that it authorized further strategies for the redefinition of her selfhood and subjectivity".[39] As far as Jesus is concerned, the association with the foreign and dangerous power of Beelzebul provides a critical opportunity to reconstruct and reproduce his own subjectivity (or his own assemblage) as an exorcist and a principal fighter in the battle against Satan.

III. The "Accusation"

These observations lead to a reconsideration of the nature of the "alliance" between Jesus and Beelzebul. In particular, both Mark and Q employ a phrase that has proved itself quite problematic for the exegetes. Mark, in particular, appears to be quite fond of saying that someone literally "is in a spirit": in the first exorcism performed by Jesus in a synagogue in Capernaum (Mark 1:23) and in the longest exorcism narrative of the entire Gospel , that takes place in Gerasa (Mark 5:2), the exorcist is confronted with two men who are described as being ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ (literally "in an impure spirit").[40] Such a phrase does not sit well with the idea of human hosts controlled by the spirits, but it also does not make sense from a purely grammatical standpoint. A common solu-

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[38] *Ibid.*, 60.

[39] *Ibid.*, 71.

[40] It is worth mentioning that at Mark 7:25 (the exorcism of the daughter of a Syro-Phoenician woman) the manuscripts are in disagreement, since the majority reads "a woman whose daughter had a πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον", while a few others (and notably P[45], a third-century papyrus that is basically the only witness to the Gospel of Mark dated before the time of Constantine) have "a woman, whose daughter had ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ". The Greek of the latter reading is atrocious and one could rightly say that is meaningless, but it is worth considering whether P[45] might have preserved the traces of an incomplete attempt to improve an original text that looked more or less like the other Markan texts mentioned above. There is a distinct possibility that here too the original reading might have been the usual ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ.

tion advanced by commentators is that of imagining the influence of a Semitic background, a strategy that is often applied in the case of Mark's Greek, since the quality of the latter is quite poor and Christian interpreters are often invested in making the Gospel look "Jewish" in order to push it as close as possible to the "historical Jesus".[41] However, in this, as in several other cases within the Gospel, hypothesizing an alleged Semitic influence is unnecessary, since most linguistic phenomena apparent in Mark can be adequately explained as traces of "popular" *Koine* Greek. A controlled comparison with similar evidence in Egyptian documentary papyri has proved decisive since the time of the initial explorations of Adolf Deissmann and James Hope Moulton. The latter, in particular, had already observed almost a century ago that the particle ἐν had become a "maid-of-all-jobs"[42] – meaning that in the *Koine* period the particle ἐν had lost much of its specific link to spatial indexicality and had instead become something that speakers and writers used very freely to establish any sort of connection between verbs and predicates, more often than not even in cases in which "regular" Greek would have required a simple dative. In the long run, this development brought about the disappearance of ἐν in Byzantine Greek, but for the *Koine* period the particle was used with an extremely wide range of functions, which we now have to adjudicate appropriately in light of the overall textual context.

Documents from Egypt attest to at least two ways in which ἐν occurs in documentary papyri, ways that can be considered suitable parallels for the Markan ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ. Sometimes the particle is employed to indicate the condition or the state in which someone or something is found.[43] Such usage is easily explained as an expansion of the original locative function of ἐν, followed by a dative. This explanation fits very well for some Markan passages, such as the reference to the "woman in an issue of blood" (ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος) in 5:26, a text situated not far from the episode of the Gerasene demoniac. The opportunity of equating demonic possession and a "biomedical" ailment as that of the hemorrhaging woman is intriguing. Such "confusion" (at least, from a Western perspective) of plans has parallels in other Gospel traditions, which are reminiscent of the cross-culturally widespread habit of describing initial spirit possession

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[41] The Semitic background is invoked, for instance, by J. Marcus (*Mark 1–8*, AncB 27 [New York: Doubleday, 1999], 187), but then the same author goes on to say that the phrase "should be taken more literally"(!) to mean that "the man has been swallowed up by its possessing spirit" (*ibid*., 342). Marcus states that "we should not look for too much consistency when dealing with things as ambivalent and protean as demonic spirits", but one may wonder whether the same treatment ought to be given to grammar too; obviously, Marcus goes on to translate Mark 5:26 as "a woman who *had* a flow of blood" (*ibid*., 355).

[42] J. H. Moulton, G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), s. v. ἐν.

[43] For instance, in *P.Petr* 2:11 (Alexandria, middle of the third century bce) at the end of a brief letter Polykrates asks to his father Kleon to write back ἵνα εἰδῶμεν ἐν οἷς εἶ ("so that we may know in what conditions you are").

using the idiom of illness.[44] However, there appears to be a second Koine use of ἐν followed by a dative that may fit the Markan case examined here equally well. Indeed, there are passages in documentary papyri in which the particle functions in ways that are virtually indistinguishable from those of a simple instrumental dative in classical Greek texts.[45] In such instances, ἐν seems to perform the functions that other Greek texts attribute to the prepositions σύν or μετά.[46]

Whether one thinks that the Markan phrase ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ is better explained as an indication of condition or as an instrumental/locative, it is clear that neither option can be completely satisfactory. In particular, it seems impossible to construe such a phrase as referring to a "possession" in the sense of the human hosts being completely controlled by the spirits. For there are several other pieces of evidence – both in Mark and in Q – that indicate that these texts (or, at the very least, the traditional materials that have been preserved in them) envisage a much more complex relationship and employ ἐν followed by a dative as a sort of placeholder, suggesting a much more indeterminate relationship. The most significant indicator occurs at the very beginning of the Gospel (Mark 1:7–8), when Mark relates John the Baptist's announcement of the arrival of "one stronger" than him, who will baptize the people not "with water", but "in the Holy Spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ).[47] In this verse "water" is clearly treated as a pure tool in the performance of the baptismal ritual (and thus a simple dative is used for it). The "Holy Spirit" is expected to participate in the new form of the ritual in a significantly different way, which is remarkably similar to the way in which "impure spirits" are connected to human hosts in other places within the Gospel.[48] Furthermore, the impression of complexity and indeterminacy in the relationship between spirits and human hosts is confirmed by the phrase that

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[44] The most notable case is that of Peter's mother-in-law, whose fever is healed by Jesus through an exorcistic "rebuke" in Luke 4:38–9.

[45] For instance, *P.Tebt* 41 (105–90 BCE) relates the violence of the *topogrammateus* Marres on the villagers of Kerkeosiris: Μαρρείους τοπογραμματέως σὺν ἄλλοις πλείοσι ἐν μαχαίραις παρ[α]γινομένου εἰς τὴν κώμην ("the *topogrammateus* Marres came into the village with many others armed with swords"). J. C. DOUDNA (*The Greek of the Gospel of Mark*, JBLMS 12 [Philadelphia PA: SBL, 1961], 24–5) thinks that this occurrence and other similar might be considered instances of dative used as locative, but clearly in a heavily metaphoric way.

[46] A comparable New Testament use occurs in Luke 22:49 in the Gethsemane episode, when those who are with Jesus ask him whether they have to strike the guards coming to arrest him "with swords" (Κύριε, εἰ πατάξομεν ἐν μαχαίρῃ).

[47] Mark 1:8 raises important textual critical problems in itself, since several manuscripts add ἐν in front of ὕδατι or take it away before "holy spirit". However, a balanced evaluation of the relative weight of the witnesses indicates that the text printed in Nestle-Aland should be considered original. See the discussion in B. M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 63.

[48] Treating the Holy Spirit here as pure instrument is also theologically unsatisfactory for many commentators, who thus resort to less grammatically grounded translations, such as "by the power of" or similar. In this case, one should seriously consider a purely locative translation analogous to the one that should be adopted for the Pauline phrases ἐν πνεύματι and ἐν Χριστῷ.